

# *Journeys of the Spirit*



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## Journeys of the Spirit: Daily Reflections on Traveling With and Towards the Sacred

Welcome.

This is a collection of reflections about experiences that relate to the Sacred, God, the Ground of Being, or whatever you conceive the Spiritual Basis of Life to be. I use the term 'God' in many of the reflections because it is familiar to me, but similar terms from other traditions could be used as well. The title of the collection refers to journeys for two reasons: the reflections were written over several years of quiet contemplation while commuting to work on a train; and my belief that the spiritual aspect of life constitutes a journey for each of us, as we travel both with and towards the Sacred.

The ideas presented here are idiosyncratic, based on one person's experiences and biased by her perspective (North American, white, female, middle-aged, widow, working mother). They are not always consistent. They are not always entirely original, but often a fresh take on old wisdom. They are sincere though and, I hope, a window onto the human quest for something beyond ourselves, or perhaps something better within.

Also, over the years that these reflections were written, some of my thinking has changed. In the beginning I was much more focused on the nature of God. Having lost faith in myself, I needed something Greater to believe in. I found not one but many versions of the Sacred, suggesting that there are as many avenues to spirituality as there are seekers. Nevertheless, the avenues are human constructions; the Reality remains one.

Later, I became more interested in the nature of godly living, and what has prevented it from becoming the norm rather than the exception. The words from Micah "walk humbly with your God" rang true. Walking with God came to mean seeing what God sees: a mosaic of billions of unique and poignant lives that can only form a complete picture when they join, and recognize the Sacred in one another and beyond. It also meant seeing with sadness what prevents that joining: the poverty, injustice, and competitive, dehumanizing systems that focus each on his or her personal, immediate survival, even at the cost of the global environment that is needed for our long term survival as a species; the insecurities borne of generations of war and abuse that leave us vulnerable to empty promises of glory, even at the cost of our ability to see life's Miracle in the other and in our planetary home; an ability that is needed for lasting peace. Walking humbly came to mean knowing that there is always more than our personal ideas, ideals and experience; that we only find meaning when the self dissolves in a greater Solution; that love is an unearned gift from the Spirit; and that wonder can never die, as it is inspired by the eternal Unknown.

### Exploring the 'Journeys'

These reflections can be read in two ways. First, they can be read section by section. Although there is some overlap, the first five sections relate mainly to different and (I believe) complementary aspects of the Sacred; the latter sections relate mainly to ways one may encounter the Sacred in life. Thus, you can pick a section in order to read a set of reflections about one type of experience related to the Sacred. Then, read another section, and so on. Return to the sections or reflections that ring true. Ignore the ones that don't.

Alternatively, try reading a reflection each day. If you commute on a bus or train, try using that time. If not, try to find another time when you are unlikely to be disturbed and can be alone with your thoughts and feelings. Dwell on the reflection, respond to it in whatever way you are inspired to, and take that thought or feeling into the day. If read daily, the reflections will take you through about a year.

If you value what you find, share it with others.

*Dedication:*

*To all I have loved, whether they are with me or with God.*

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## 1. God in the Light

There are times when we seem bathed in God's peace, as in sunlight on a beautiful clear day. We experience wonder at what has been created for us, within as well as without.

### *Everywhere*

Some say You are in the mountains' splendor

Some say in the sunset's glow

Some say in the miracle of birth

Some say in the first sign of spring

Perhaps You are in all of these

But looking further too...

In each smile of recognition

Each new understanding gained

In the sigh of relief after harm is escaped

In every fond memory

In laughter at one's own expense

In hope that returns from the ash

In the silent peace of a favorite prayer

In the soul-stirring pulse of a drum

In every instant of meaningful life

In every place without fear

In every wonderful thing out there

In everything, in here

*Connection*

When we connect with God

Nothing is impossible

Nothing is shameful

Nothing is unbearable

Nothing is wrong with life.

*Fearless*

In faith, I need not fear

I need not fear pain

I need not fear anger

I need not fear being alone

I need not fear the crowd

I need not fear failure

I need not fear success

I need not fear tomorrow's possibilities

I need not fear yesterday's demons

I need not fear the night

I need not fear the day

I need not fear others

I need not fear myself

I need not fear death

I need not fear life

For life, death, time, place, others,

And my own troubled soul

All reside in God.

*Your way*

My way is straight as the crow flies  
Your way meanders like an old stream  
My way is cruel to stragglers  
Your way works with their strengths  
My way feigns independence  
Your way accepts help with thanks  
My way hoards for the future  
Your way gives everything now  
My way is walked with pride  
Your way is walked with grace  
My way is rooted in sand  
Your way is perennial  
My way is angry and fearful  
Your way is peaceful and loving  
And leads me Home

*Unknown Future*

I can't predict the unknown,

I can't control the unknown,

I can't plan for the unknown,

I can't prevent the unknown,

I can only trust God

To be there with me in the unknown

Whatever it may be

*Certainty*

In life

Nothing is certain

Nothing is predictable

Nothing is secure

But this:

That within you

And within me

Lie the seeds of God

If only we seek them

And nurture them

In ourselves

And in each other

*In the Garden*

Some plant, and water, and fertilize

Then watch each day for growth

Desperate to see results,

Whether in the garden,

In their projects at work,

Or in their children;

Others plant, and water, and fertilize

Then step away,

Knowing that what they have started is good

And the rest is up to God.

*Another Way*

In those moments  
Where I am caught between two impossibilities  
And ordinary reason fails  
But a new, third option suddenly appears,  
And I see a way out  
God seems there  
In the paradigm shift

*The Gift*

Life is too grand a gift  
To ever earn  
Or deserve  
Or repay the Giver  
All we can do is say thanks  
And make the most of the gift  
And no cruel or stupid human vice  
Can take away the gift  
Or remove us forever from God;  
God doesn't keep score  
But holds us  
Heals us  
And encourages us  
To find a better way  
Until all of our gifts can shine  
Revealing a beautiful world

*Freedom*

Fear says

Hang on to your job

Hang on to your land

Hang on to your reputation

Hang on to your time

Hang on to your spouse

Hang on to your salvation

God says

Let go of what's yours

Let go of you

Receive all life

Be free

*Climbing*

In my life  
I have trodden the narrow path  
And scaled the walls of rock  
And hung by my fingers over the abyss  
Always looking up to the summit  
Tiny pinpoint in the sky  
If only I were there,  
Not realizing  
That You are the mountain  
And whether I stand  
Whether I fall  
Whether I ascend to the peak  
Or languish in the depths  
I am one with You

*Seeing*

When I felt wretched

You said I was fine

When I felt alienated

You said I belonged

When I felt burdened

You said I was free

When I looked inward darkly

You showed me the world

And light

*The Day*

God is in the joy of the new day

The certainty of knowing what must be done with it

The strength to do it

And the peace of trusting it will end well

*There*

There is no hunger

No emptiness

No loneliness

In God

There is no fear

No humiliation

No confusion

In God

There is no rage

No despair

No retribution

In God

There is only God

There

*I Am Thankful*

For the chance to hug my children  
For laughter with close friends  
For music, warm baths, and good food  
For the moments of serenity  
When I am not tormented by the past  
Or threatened by a dire future  
For the moments of infinity  
When the strand of my life disappears  
And the Fabric comes into focus  
For surprising strength in a difficult spot  
For recovery from predictable lapses  
For the wisdom to find ever more to learn  
Ever more to do and improve on  
Yet know there is a time to recharge  
A time to ask for help  
And eventually a time to come Home

*You Are...*

The Peace that calms the torrent

The Love that knows no bounds

The Hope that rebuilds in the rubble

The Color when grey surrounds

The Home where none are outsiders

The Joy that overflows

The Cradle that all are rocked in

Life's Ocean where all are known

*Abundance*

God is not like the man  
Who invested a certain amount of time  
And a certain amount of energy  
And a certain amount of money  
Expecting a certain return.  
God gives what is needed  
As a mother to her child  
With no thought of compensation  
God is here, now,  
Offering everything

*God Plays*

Fun

Curiosity

Surprise

Awe

These things may not have a direct payoff

But life would be dreary without them

And, once in a while,

They jostle the gates of the soul

Enough for God to peek in

*Ever There*

No pit is so deep that You can't draw me out

No path is too twisted to find me

No act too repulsive to turn You away

No rage so severe You give up

Always I return, or You lead me home

I do not know which it is

But there You are in the chant that fills

The cracks in my broken-down soul

In the good-natured jab from a friend of few words

In the gentle walk with no goal

In the hope for tomorrow that helps me go on

In the kind words I speak to my child

In the courage to stand up for peaceful ways

In the wonder at all that is wild

*Thank You*

For gaps in the daily frenzy

For the eye of the turbulent storm

For the part of the race that goes downhill

For the ceasefire in every war

For the chance to regroup and rekindle

A love for life that is real

For the chance to meet and mingle

With people not afraid to feel

*With me*

When I celebrate life

God celebrates with me

When I suffer or inflict suffering

God weeps

When I am timid

God encourages

When I lose my way

God waits for my return

When I succeed or bring out the best in others

God rejoices

When I fail

God forgives

When I was born

God welcomed

When I die

God will abide

*Extraordinary Things*

Hope, respect, empathy

Draw us together

Until we seek something better for all

Awe, wonder, reverence

Displace petty personal pride

As we melt into a greater Whole

Joy, humor, gratitude

Lift us from the daily grind

Helping us believe in Love

*God Within*

There is a Place within  
Where you feel a solid Ground  
Where things beyond reason make sense  
Where Light can always be found  
Return to it often and rest there a while  
Remember the paths if you can  
Be connected with Strength  
Beyond strength that you have  
Find Hope for yourself and all life  
Dwell in the Dream of a better world  
Then go out and make it real

*Already There*

In God there is no time

So I am already

All that I hope to be

I live already

In gratitude and awe

I receive already

The blessings of all my ancestors

I create already

The peace that I yearn to find

I know already

The potential of all those I care for

I feel already

The connection with all humankind

I am already there

In God

## 2. God in the Shadows

God is there in our darkest days: carrying us when all strength is gone, suffering with us and with all tortured souls, whether we know it or not.

### *This Day*

Even when I cannot see

The land of my dreams

I can still get through this day

Diligently

Thoughtfully

Patiently

Courageously

Compassionately

Honorably

With God

*Churning Waters*

Sometimes there's a comforting, steady rhythm

That pushes towards shore

And I trust

Sometimes there's the gentle caress

Of water lapping my feet

And I am thankful

Sometimes there is total calm

I sense You in the silence

And I pray

But often massive swells rise up

Threatening to swallow the shore

And I cannot see You

Then whitecaps whipped by brutal wind

Crash in an endless roar

And I cannot hear You

Tiny needles of spray

Pepper my cheek till it's numb

And I cannot feel You

Why does life make it so hard to find You?

*Carried*

God does not send misfortune

God carries through misfortune

Until we can walk again

To where we are hopeful

Compassionate

And whole

*Home*

Sanctuary

Rest

Refreshment for my soul

Cradle

Holding

Securely until I let go

Mother

Father

Enveloping Spirit of Love

*Shepherd*

Whatever my weakness

God is with me

Whatever the limits of my mind

God is with me

Whatever turmoil in my soul

God is with me

Whatever memories bind me

God is with me

Whatever dread and trembling

God is with me

Whatever pain, despair and darkness

God is with me

And so I am whole

And so I am safe

And all will be well in time

*Being*

Thank you God

For being there

Even when I walk past your door

Even when I forget about You

Even when I act as in a dream;

Thank you God

For being there

Guiding me

Carrying me when needed

Sharing grief and joy

Thank you God

For being there

Thank you God

For being

*Surviving the Mine*

Sometimes I have to look back at the Light

Glistening on the lake of my soul

Even as I head into darkness

Thankful to have seen It

And felt its warmth

Able to recreate, at least in part

The feeling of being washed by its glow

Even as the grime settles into my pores

Trusting I will find It again

When I emerge from the mineshaft

That is my daily life

Into the glorious Shine

*Child of God*

To a child of flawed, human parents  
It is hard to imagine being a child of God  
There are so many uncertainties for the human child,  
And everything is known with God  
As a child of God  
All hurts are healed  
All illnesses cared for  
All upsets soothed  
A child of God is wanted and valued  
Even when arriving unexpectedly  
Or not achieving  
Or not trying to please  
A child of God  
Always has a place to belong  
And be loved  
Even if the human child  
Forever presses her nose against cold glass  
Yearning for warmth

*Being with God*

Belonging for who I am

Rather than what I do

Being accepted and at peace

Regardless of my guilt or innocence

Feeling I matter

Without needing to be special

Coming home

For my tattered soul to mend

This is what is missing in my human experience

This is being with God.

*Rocking Gently*

If I can cradle my child

I can cradle myself

Even if I have never been cradled

By another

For all cradles

Are gently rocked by God

*Patience*

When I cannot feel anything spiritual

When I am overcome

By fear

By doubt

By anger

By despair

God is there

Patiently awaiting my return

Keeping me out of the abyss

Until I can climb again

*Worthwhile*

When I cannot change it  
When my best efforts fail  
When it's beyond my control  
When the quest is proven futile  
I can still find something worthwhile  
Not by hiding away in shame  
But by stepping out  
Lending a hand  
Providing direction  
Offering comfort  
Healing my wounds  
Saying a prayer  
Watching white rays split the clouds  
And knowing I still live in God

*Home*

When I think of home,  
I think not of the disturbed and disturbing  
Environment of my youth  
But of being at home:  
At home in the universe,  
Accepted and belonging here  
Held by the Creator  
Securely  
Peacefully  
Completely  
Everywhere  
And always  
Home

*Joining God*

Whatever was missing in life

Is completed now

Whatever was unfinished in life

Is done

Whatever was blocked in life

Is freed now

Whatever was broken in life

Restored

*God knows*

God knows

I have all I need

But a greater sense of compassion

God knows

I am all I must be

And have a place in this world

God knows

I have done all I must do

So am free to make a difference

God knows this

And in God

So do I

*Hope*

At some point  
This senseless, shameful, guilty, painful experience  
Will seem meaningful  
At some point  
Its purpose will be obvious  
The shame will transform into empathy  
The guilt will spawn constructive change  
The pain will end;  
But some point is not now  
I cannot make it happen  
I cannot figure it out  
I cannot conjure it up  
I cannot anticipate how it will work;  
I can only believe  
That some point will come  
In God's time

*Perspective*

As it happened  
It felt like shards of glass  
Cutting the flesh from my bones  
Years later  
I looked back at the shards  
As through a kaleidoscope  
And saw a magnificent pattern  
And all I had to do  
Was keep living  
And keep looking  
Until I saw things  
From God's point of view

*Constant*

My ability to feel the spiritual waxes and wanes

But You are constant

My ability to feel hopeful waxes and wanes

But You are constant

My self-absorbed thinking waxes and wanes

But You are constant

My self-control waxes and wanes

But You are constant

My compassion for others waxes and wanes

But You are constant

My energy and patience wax and wane

But Your are constant

Nothing I am is consistent but this:

That I am loved as I am

Consistent or not

Never beyond Your reach

*Thankful*

I will not wait

For mountaintop wonder, for breathtaking sunsets,

Or for oceanic, universal love

Before I thank God

I am thankful for every day

That my son wakes from a nightmare, not a seizure

That my daughter catches up on her homework

That my aging parents are well

That my boss is kind

That my colleagues are helpful

That I can talk to a friend

That I don't feel overwhelmed

Or that I feel overwhelmed but survive it

I am thankful whenever the turmoil stops

And my soul, for that day, can rest

*Holy Ground*

I accomplish a great feat  
And forget the advantages  
That made it possible  
Proud of my success  
I am struck down by a random hurt  
And cry “unfair”  
Denying my own contribution  
To the mess  
I jump for joy  
Then rail against despair  
Again and again  
Meanwhile  
The Universe hums  
Deeply, gently, profoundly  
Beneath my human chatter  
Sacred Foundation  
Everywhere  
Always

*There*

When I focus on God daily  
I can trust that God is there  
And stop thinking about God all the time  
I focus on the task at hand  
Secure in the knowledge  
That I am doing what is good  
And that if I drift away from the good  
I can return to it again  
As a child to its loving mother  
Who is always there

*Leaving*

What I cannot predict

What I cannot control

What I cannot deny

What I cannot understand

I can leave with God

When I can do nothing further

When nobody can help

When I cannot live with what I am

When I cannot live without what I lack

I can leave it to God

After the hope is crushed

After the meaning is gone

After the thorns tear the heart

After the soul turns to stone

I have nothing to leave

But God is there

*Loss*

Someone I love dies

And I blame myself

Or blame others

Or blame God

Because it is easier to blame

And believe someone had the power to stop it

Than to accept

That it just happened

And cannot be changed

Only mourned and lived through

With God's help

*Unburdened*

Lighten the load

Finish the doable

Cancel the unnecessary

Let go the impossible

Then forge ahead

Lighten the load

Ignore the displeased

Agree to disagree

Say 'no' with a smile

Get some help

Lighten the load

Remove the clutter

Indulge the senses

Attend to the moment

Be free

Lighten the load

Keep well what matters

Give away the rest

Reach out and be reached

Say a prayer...

And there is no load

*Try*

Even in a sleepless stupor

Unbathed and nauseous

We try

Even in a joyless time

Of unintentionally inflicted pain

We try

Even when the mind is stuck

And the feeling well is dry

We try

Even when the words are rote

And the tune is sung off-key

We try

Even when self-respect is gone

And the tunnel light is dim

We try

Knowing that we are still accepted

Still hold interest for

And still are gently, respectfully held

By the One beyond our perception

As we try

*Tomorrow*

When what is

Is painful

Is horrible

Is impossibly difficult

Then you have to be able to look

Beyond the present

To hope

Of sincerity

And decency

And generosity prevailing

Regardless of what is happening today.

Sometimes God is in the moment;

Sometimes God is in the voice that says

“Don’t let the bastards get you down”

### 3. God of Redemption from Suffering

We all turn away from God, we all stray from our spiritual Centre from time to time, and become self-centered. The result is suffering. Alienated and confused, we eventually turn back. Remarkably, it's as if we had never left. Redemption is a universal human experience.

#### *Cry Out Loud*

Wherever it comes from  
Whatever the cause  
There is a meaning to suffering  
If it inspires us to do better  
Or if we bear witness  
So that others are so inspired  
The only meaningless pain  
Is pain hidden or denied

*Job's Answer*

He died  
A devastating, sudden death  
Two years later his doctor  
Discovered a new treatment  
“Why did You not let him live till then?”  
Was my anguished cry at the time  
Now I see  
That the treatment only came  
When the doctor could no longer bear saying  
“There’s nothing I can do”  
As he said to me  
And then felt compelled to act.  
There is a meaning  
In senseless events  
From a greater, god-like perspective  
But we rarely see it  
And never at the time

*Me First*

I plan revenge against a foe  
Unable to forgive  
I discard the weak, ineffective ones  
No longer of use to me  
I know these acts are malevolent  
And heavy with regret;  
I casually ignore a plea for help  
Too busy with important things  
I insult a friend, not even aware  
Of my words' life-destroying sting  
My ordinary carelessness  
Brings little shame or guilt  
But by its frequency  
Damages more than the vilest deed  
The opposite of good may not be evil  
But self-absorption  
Until "self" dissolves in God's dream

*Problems*

If a problem can be solved with money

It is easy, and it is not a real threat

If a problem can be solved

By letting go of hurt pride

It is easy, and it is not a real threat

If a problem can be solved

By seeing things from God's perspective

It is easy, and it is not a real threat

If a problem can be solved

By praying on it

It is easy, and it is not a real threat

So many problems are easy

So few represent real threats

When we let go and let God

*Attachment*

Attachment to possessions:

Sources of security

Attachment to relationships:

Sources of comfort

Attachment to habits:

Sources of reassurance

Attachment to accomplishments:

Sources of pride

Attachment to resentments:

Sources of self-righteousness

Attachment to timetables:

Sources of control

Attachment to all

That is not of God

Is attachment to the wind:

Blowing about empty promises

And ultimately despair

Attachment to your soul

And the Soul of all beings

Cannot be uprooted

And holds fast

*Projection*

We are afraid

And say that God is in charge of world events

We are angry

And say that God will smite our enemies

We are confused

And say that God will make sense of things

We despair

And say that God has abandoned or punished us

We attribute these human characteristics to God

To deal with our own overwhelming emotions

Yet if we stop and pray

In silence we find

God's peace

God's wisdom

God's love

Were there all along

And in that peace, wisdom, and love

We are restored

And we too can love

*When God Forgives*

When God forgives

I am not just absolved of guilt.

When God forgives

I am welcomed to His home

Without a doubt that I belong there

When God forgives

I am valued as a participant

In His ongoing creation

Of the best possible world

When God forgives

I am secure in His presence

Wherever I am

And for all time

*The Presence*

When I was disgusted with myself  
When I saw only fear and guilt and self-absorption

You were there

When I had broken every rule  
Committed the most heinous act

Lost all self-respect

You were there

When I had cried in despair

Raged without cause

Cynically accepted the worst

You were there

And in Your presence

My misery vanished

My self vanished

My hope returned;

For in Your presence

I was One with all that mattered

And was good

I lost myself

And was whole

*Forever*

You are the Still Point

Ever-welcoming my return

Ever-valuing this strange creature

Ever-holding this fragmented self

Ever-joining this community of beings

Ever-infusing hope

Ever-lending strength

Ever-beckoning us to love

Ever-knowing

Ever-present

Ever-yearning for life's fulfillment

Ever-there

*God's Fool*

I'm stuck in a swamp of self-absorbed rage

I sink in the depths of self-loathing

I'm trapped in a frightening basement of pain

I collapse into emptiness

Yet a part of me separates out from all that

Solves puzzles, tells jokes, plays with concepts

You show me that part

When I'm certain it's gone

Reconnect me with joy, and with others

You don't give up on this self-conscious wretch:

I escape my mind, and am wise

*Unfragile*

The separate self gets applause  
That reverberates in its hollow core  
Ever on the brink of collapse  
Defending its fragile shell  
That ultimately dies;  
But when filled with God's love  
It breathes again  
It grows again  
It yearns again  
For more  
No longer defensive  
Or broken as glass  
Everlasting, unlimited  
Joined with All Being  
Alive

*Trust*

I cannot love the forest  
Until I know I am a valuable tree  
I cannot see the web of life  
Until I have secured my strand  
I can only reach to aid another  
When my ship is anchored fast  
I can only give away my pearls  
When I know my children are safe  
Trusting God's love  
I can love  
Without it  
I look out for number one

*Time's End*

Knowing I am forgiven

I can forgive

And am freed from the past

Trusting in your Presence

I am healed

And am freed from the turmoil of today

Believing your Way will prevail

I can hope

And am freed from fearing what comes next

Becoming part of that Way

I am whole

I am grateful

I am no longer bound by time

*Holy, Wholly, Holy*

I am holy

Lacking much

Ever patching my Swiss-cheese soul

I am wholly

Wholly present

Listening, cheering, coaxing smiles

I am holy

As I am

Born of Love that shines from within

I am wholly

Wholly God's

And God does not make junk

*Generosity*

The opposite of anxiety is not serenity

But generosity of spirit

For when anxious

We anticipate being taken from

So hesitate to give

We anticipate being harmed

So protect ourselves

We anticipate being abandoned

So cling to people

When generous

We anticipate nothing

We give

We love

We let go

We open ourselves to life

*The Story*

Sometimes the fear of losing

My security

My reputation

My control of my life

Causes me to sacrifice

My kindness

My wisdom

My empathy for another being;

I strive to be the hero

Defending my ideals and my honor

And lose sight of the story

And the invisible hands that comfort

And make things turn out alright;

Don't be the hero

Be the story

*Reaching for Grace*

There is no peace

Without humility and respect

There is no hope

Without faith

There is no joy

Without gratitude and sharing

There is no love

Without forgiveness

What we yearn for most

Is within our grasp

If only we nurture its seeds

*The Good Life*

Pass along all good things you receive  
Resolve not to spread the bad ones;  
Pay forward every compassionate act  
Vow not to abuse as you were;  
For in becoming part of a Tide of goodness  
We transcend individual pain  
And in leaving our broken souls with God  
We become whole

*What It's All About*

It's not about whether you hurt me or heal me

It's not about whether you treat me fairly or unfairly

It's not about whether you respect me or humiliate me

It's not about you

It's not about whether I help you or not

It's not about whether I thank you or not

It's not about whether I apologize or not

It's not about me

It's about striving in every moment

To contribute to what is best

Or to allow what is best to emerge

So that the Best in the universe can manifest

More and more each day

*Hope*

Hope is not a count-down  
To better times ahead  
Hope is not a promise  
Of heaven when you're dead  
Hope is not a child  
Who may be great one day  
Hope is not the belief that God  
Will answer what you pray  
Hope is knowing in your heart  
That with you in the dark  
Is Peace, is Strength unfathomable  
Until the curtains part  
And when the Light within returns  
You will not hide its glow  
But be a beacon for all you touch  
Wherever you may go  
And when your candle flickers dim  
There always will remain  
A myriad lights to spread the Shine  
Displacing fear and pain

*Respect*

Respect yourself

And others will start to respect you

Respect others

And your enemies will be few

Respect your children

And free them from your burdens

Respect the truth

And all will learn and grow

Respect God

And your foolish pride will vanish

Respect all life

And become an agent of Peace

*Sacred Observer*

There is a part of me  
That is more than my thoughts  
More than my feelings  
More than my pain  
There is a part of me  
That is not tied to my history  
Tied to my culture  
Tied to my plans  
This part of me  
Sees me as if from a distance  
Chuckling at the pride  
Weeping at the abuse  
Of self and others  
This part of me  
Is ever-curious  
Ever-giving  
Ever-true  
This part of me  
Does not belong to me  
But to All

*Death and Rebirth*

When my self-conscious self dies

I can smile at my critics

Like the commuter who called me a roadblock

An object to be pushed aside

Or the reviewer who shredded my work

Five years of blood, sweat, and tears.

I can stop needing honors

Knowing I can do good

Whether recognized for it or not.

I can stop seeking fulfillment

Knowing I am whole

As long as I follow a just path

When my self-conscious self dies

I lose my public face,

Release what is best inside,

And walk as I worship:

With God

*Seeds*

The times of darkness

Of silence

Of bitterness

Of loneliness

Of pointlessness

Of ridiculousness

Of cruelty

Of despair

Like frozen ground

Hold the seeds of wondrous things to come

That we cannot imagine

And years from now

May even seem like blessings in disguise

As we reach a different point of view;

Don't give up

Just because nothing makes sense today

God can still reveal

Infinite possibilities

*Essence*

All about you that matters

Emanates from God

Whatever your history

Whatever your scars

You can leave them with God

Whatever your abilities

Whatever your loves

They come from God

Whatever you encounter

Whatever your thoughts

You can reflect on them with God

Whatever your hopes

Whatever your fears

They subside, as you rely on God

All about you that matters

Endures

As it emanates from God

*Another Point of View*

To know what is deepest within

I must look at myself

My thoughts, feelings, and desires

From without

As a good friend would,

As God would:

When I could see no way to go on

I suddenly saw

That I didn't deserve to die,

So I went to the movies instead.

*Our Place*

There is a place  
Where the Sacred and the ordinary intersect  
And I laugh at my human foibles  
From God's perspective  
And weep for all human sorrow  
With God's love  
May I dwell in that place more often  
And welcome others to inhabit it too

*Smile*

Life is a rollercoaster of joys and sorrows  
And just when you think you can't fall further  
The ride is over;  
So to find joy solely in one's own highs  
Can only result in despair  
But finding joy in others' triumphs  
In celebrations with friends  
In communities drawn together  
In seeing life improve over time  
Whether my part is acknowledged or not  
This is a joy that lasts  
This is a stable solace  
This is God smiling on the world  
And me smiling along

*Destinations*

What is heaven

But to have a sense of meaning and belonging

To Something greater than oneself

What is hell

But to feel disconnected from all that matters

What is life

But the quest for heavenly moments

What is death

But the end of the search

*Living Well*

Enjoying seeing things improve  
Whether my part is acknowledged or not  
Weeping whenever a being is harmed  
    As if for a family member  
Seeing evil as out of character  
    And seeking the Sacred in all  
Believing that every kind act is of use  
    Even if its impact is unknown  
Not measuring time in relation to goals  
    Not measuring self by achievements  
Walking gently until I can walk no more  
Reaching out until I can reach no more  
    Embracing until I can hold no more  
    Blessing until I can speak no more  
    Giving thanks for each moment

#### 4. Ground of All Being

Sometimes I think of God more as a dimension or substrate of life than a being; or perhaps as a common bond that all beings share and that joins them in a wonderful, intricate web.

##### *Ground of All Being*

All beings are One

In the Ground of All Being

They arise from It

Are rooted in It

Are nourished by It

Are united through It

And return to It

In the Ground of All Being

There can be no hatred

For how can I hate parts of my own being?

In the Ground of All Being

There can be no loss

For how can I lose what I am joined to?

In the Ground of All Being

There can be no end

All grows, decays, dies, and re-emerges

From the Ground of all Being

*The Beach*

I am a grain of sand  
On a beach of billions  
When I try to draw attention to myself,  
And think I am visionary,  
I am really just silly  
Or, worse yet, an irritant in someone's eye,  
For a single grain can do nothing  
But move and try to move its peers  
In a direction that is good  
So the beach becomes a gentle place  
That yields to the feet of running children  
And makes a pillow for a weary head  
And provides a foundation for the sea  
When the tide rolls in

*The Whole*

See the shining vessel  
Rather than the shattered glass  
See the unity that could be  
Rather than the broken world that is  
Beauty is not found  
By dissecting its components  
Go beyond the pieces  
To Peace

*Constant*

There is strength

In accepting vulnerability

There is vulnerability

In being strong while others struggle

There is joy

In feeling sustained in sorrow

There is sadness

In rejoicing alone

Feelings alternate

With the rhythms of life

What remains constant

Is our connection with other beings

And with the Ground of All Being itself

*Orchard*

We are rooted in the same Soil  
Take nourishment from the same Substrate  
Even when our individual ideas and feelings  
Are fickle as leaves blown by the wind  
Even when we are uncertain  
If our labors will ever bear fruit  
Still we draw on the same Source  
For strength, for peace  
For the ability to let others bloom  
And add their splendor to the world  
As if it were our own  
Knowing that all have the same Origin  
And dwell in the same Ground  
That endures and sustains  
All that matters

*Wave*

I am a wave on the sea of life.  
A temporary manifestation of the Eternal  
I fool myself sometimes into thinking I am separate,  
Just as the wave appears distinct  
Before it collapses into the foam at the shore  
And then merges again with the sea.  
My appearance, my genetic make-up  
May be unique;  
But my substance is one  
With all that is, all that has been, and all that is to come.  
Knowing this, I am never really alone  
And never far from compassion

*Signs*

To experience the Sea  
I follow rivers  
Known to eventually lead there,  
Many rivers, one Destination,  
Sometimes discouraged by vicious rapids  
So unlike the Tranquility I seek  
Or the pointless meanderings of old waters  
Which seem to have forgotten their Goal  
I may still perceive the Sea from a distance  
By opening my ears  
To the sound of Its waves in a shell,  
By opening my eyes  
To spot the seagull's flight,  
By smelling the salt air  
Or touching the sandy ground with my feet  
For the Sea's signs are everywhere:  
In a dewdrop,  
In a tear in a child's eye,  
In a cloud condensed from the ocean mist;  
If only I open my heart

*The Web*

My words reverberate  
In the hollow space that is my heart:  
I feel empty and alone.  
Until I see past this illusion  
Into the web of life  
And realize that I am a string  
Entangled with so many others  
And I cannot be plucked  
Without moving another  
Or at least being heard  
Even as those I am entwined with  
Slip away  
Even as my own string begins to fray  
The web continues  
And I am never separate from it  
Never banished or unacceptable  
Never imprisoned alone  
Because neither is possible  
In the Web  
Where all belong and are joined  
For all time

*Beyond Dimensions*

All are part of a sacred Realm

And that Realm is a part of all

In the complexity

The mystery

The totality

That is Life

*Barefoot*

We enter life naked  
And walk on holy Ground  
As children we feel It beneath our feet  
Squish the Sacred between our toes  
Then as we grow  
We are made to wear shoes and socks of civilization  
Then steel-toed boots to defend against harm  
Until we feel nothing  
But our own sweat and blisters  
Let us dare to go barefoot  
To be vulnerable to God  
Touching our common Base  
Feeling the gentle Support  
Walking on Timelessness

*Each of Us*

If each of us is one piece of all Being

One ornament on life's Tree

One cell of a sacred Body

One drop in the chalice of Time

So how can we not forgive?

For to diminish another

Diminishes the Whole

And to snuff another's light

Leaves us all in a darker place

And how can we not love?

For to adore another

Is to adore the Sacred in all

And to touch another

Is to join with all humankind

*The Wind*

The Wind blows over the chaos  
That I leave in my troubled wake  
Healing it and me  
The Wind pushes ever shoreward  
As I row in frantic circles  
Keeping me on course  
The Wind gently lifts my tangled hair  
Reminding me I will be guided  
If only I unfurl my sail.

*The Substrate*

From God we emerge

In God we live

Into God we submerge again

Wrinkles of a perennial Fabric

Ripples on an endless Stream

Photons of a holy Light

Each distinct

Yet inseparable

From its Source

*Individual Life*

Without this individual life

I could not choose

I could not change

I could not touch

Another's heart;

Without this individual life

I would not mourn loss

I would not feel shame

I would not diminish others

With my pride;

To be a blessing or curse

Depends upon remembering

What I emerged from

And will join again,

Where I am rooted

Sustained with all I need

The Origin, the Source, the Destination

Of this individual life

*We are*

We are held

We are joined

We are filled

We are

In You

*Shape-Shifters*

We are waves on a living Ocean

Wrinkles in the Fabric of time

Pulses of an infinite Current

Notes in eternity's Hymn

Rising and falling

Emerging and subsiding

Growing and dying

As the Ocean, Fabric, Current and Hymn

Go on

Sustaining us

Never separate from us

Allowing us to take form

Until it's time to come Home

*Attachment*

This particular thing  
This particular love  
This particular honor  
Are so precious to me  
That I scream when they are lost  
This marvelous world  
This community of beings  
This calling to fulfill God's dream  
Are so precious  
That they can never be lost  
And, as part of them,  
Neither can I

*Beloved*

Love flows through every bloodstream

Love weathers every storm

Love cries with every tear shed

Love calls at every morn

Love holds the broken wanderer

Love heals the twilight pain

Love strengthens the defeated

Love cares, and Love remains

*Tapestry*

All life is woven together  
No one strand lies apart  
All life sustains the Blanket  
With wishes from the heart  
With deeds that mend the torn bits  
With words that ripple on  
With thoughts that guide the weaving  
With Love that's never gone

*Decisions*

When we decide  
Based on the knowledge  
That we are all part of one Body  
One universal Soul  
No matter how difficult it is to see  
No matter how buried our sacred selves seem  
No matter how distant from God we feel  
Then we cannot help but decide what is best  
What is life-giving  
What is kind  
What is generous  
What shows gratitude  
What shows love  
What brings hope to a dying world  
And joy to each broken being  
Until all find their place  
In the one Being  
That is God

*Sacred Senses*

As we connect by touch

So we are joined by the Spirit

As we each eat a portion of a meal

So we each harbor pieces of God

As the rain washes over us all, without exception

So the Light bathes all that exist

As diverse sounds make a symphony

So we each play a part in God's realm

As the Sacred enlivens our senses

The ordinary takes on new meaning

*Friends' Blessing*

As we go forward  
May we be mindful  
Of the Spiritual Basis  
Of all that is, was, and will ever be  
That holds us  
Joins us  
And allows us to recognize the Sacred  
In ourselves  
And in one another  
Day by day  
Amen

*Sacred Ties*

I hear God's voice  
In the rhythm of waves  
But now the lake is frozen  
I feel God's touch  
In the sunset's glow  
But now the night is dark  
Yet God is still there  
Within life's course  
Within each breath, each day  
In the cadence of footsteps  
That lead me home  
In the lilt of kind words I speak  
In the crows-feet from smiling  
With so many friends  
In the muscles that lift up the weak  
In every moment I wish you well  
In every silent prayer  
Within the bonds that join us still  
Despite time's wear and tear

5.One

When I am tempted to hang onto this image or that image of the Sacred, I need only remind myself that God is within all and beyond all that can be imagined: God is One. Yet each of us perceives God through a different window, so none has a complete picture but all of us who look sincerely, humbly, and compassionately have something to contribute to the Vision.

*Head-games*

Whether I think of the Sacred  
 As a personal being, as God  
 Or as the inner strength that comes  
 From knowing that on some level  
 I am interconnected with all that is,  
 Has been, and will be  
 Merely reflects my preference  
 For the concrete or the abstract;  
 The Source is the same.

*Perception*

At times I choose to perceive  
God the Father  
Knowing there are many other facets of God  
Which are equally valid  
But knowing also  
That in my most tired  
Numb  
Angry  
Wretched  
Desperate moments  
Tuning in to the great Spiritual Dimension  
That unites all beings  
May not be possible  
But praying  
Complaining  
Confessing  
And crying out to a heavenly Father  
Still is.  
Then I choose to perceive God the Father  
Although the Father and the Spirit  
Are One

*Paths of Least Resistance*

Because I am an introvert

I perceive the Sacred more easily in myself

Than in others

Because I am a woman

I perceive the Sacred more easily when nurturing

Than when defending truth and justice

Because I am educated

I perceive the Sacred more easily by thinking

Than by doing

Because I am a Christian

I perceive the Sacred more easily in Jesus' sayings

Than in those of other holy ones

How limited are my perceptions!

And yet they are enough

For I am never left blind

Even in the darkest night.

*Both and Neither*

When I pray  
For the safe return of my children  
At the end of each day  
I believe earnestly  
In a personal, caring God  
When I reflect  
On the nature of the universe  
And its underlying Guiding Principle  
I believe in a wondrous Mystery  
That cannot be named  
As I drive  
From somewhere I've been  
To somewhere I'm going  
It suddenly strikes me  
As a sweet paradox  
That God is both of these and neither  
The loving Companion, Author of the cosmos,  
And its deeply reverberating Soul  
Are One

*Imagining as we need to*

We need to name God

And imagine God

When despair overtakes us

And we no longer feel God.

When hope returns,

We can experience the God that cannot be named

Or described in human terms

Then we speak of the God of despair

As a projection of the human mind

Distorted by human flaws

We pride ourselves in being more sophisticated

Than those “backward” fundamentalists

Until our fortunes change

*Seekers*

Some say a concrete image of God is idolatry,  
And results in divisive, fundamentalist beliefs  
Others say that a less tangible God is blasphemy,  
That denies the scriptures and dilutes faith.

If the first group is right  
What are children, mentally challenged people,  
Those without access to higher education,  
Or other concrete thinkers to believe in?

If the second group is right  
The educated must turn off their minds to believe,  
And large segments of humanity are doomed forever.

God is not bound by these human limitations:  
God has room for the thinkers, the believers,  
The sophisticated, the unsophisticated,  
The young, the old,  
The flexible, the inflexible,  
The traditionalists, the reformers

And every other kind of seeker of spiritual truth  
Who seeks that truth in humility and compassion

*Heaven*

Our Father

Who art in heaven:

The heaven within us

When at peace

The heaven around us

That could be

If we saw You in each face

The heaven beyond all time and space

That is our core, our home, and our destiny at once

The indescribable

That is simple and clear

In You

*Comfort Beyond Compassion*

There is a strange comfort in knowing  
That God is more than the sum of human kindness  
For human beings are limited and fickle  
And often anything but kind  
And the kind ones may die or disappear;  
We each carry a godly part  
But God is more than the sum of the parts:  
God is eternal, indescribable  
Within, without, and beyond  
Thank God

*Soul Food*

God the Presence

Fills the chasms of the soul

God the Father

Accepts it and forgives

God the Friend

Guides it in a caring way

God the Creator

Amazes it

God the One

Makes it whole

*Within, Without, Beyond*

God is with us

Accepting, holding,

Redeeming from pain

God is within us

Sustaining, inspiring,

Infusing with love

Overflowing and closing

The gaps that divide us

With us, within us

And beckoning beyond us

Is God

*We are*

Whether energy field

Or form

Whether present

Or eternal

Whether here

Or everywhere

Whether within, or without

Or beyond all arbitrary boundaries:

You are

And because You are

I am

And we all are

That's all that matters

*All*

I am one

With all that is, all that was

All that will ever be

I am one

With all that is here, all that is there

All that is everywhere

I am one

With all that is me, all that is you

All that is God

So it doesn't matter

If I look foolish or wise

If I succeed or fail

If I am rejected or loved

If I am captive or free

If I am happy or sad

If I am well or ill

It doesn't matter

If I am

For I am one

With All

*Each of Us*

The One includes

Those who pray

Those who ponder

Those who love

Those who wonder

Those who weep

Those who sing

Those who cherish

All living things

Those who give

Those who receive

Those who question

Those who believe

The One includes each

Reaches each

Heals each

Completing each being in whatever way is needed

Even when each being thinks

It has nothing in common with the others

In the One

*Indescribable*

All-knowing

Yet unknowable

All-loving

Needing us to love

Eternal

Yet present in each moment

Everywhere

Yet contained in each heart

Indescribable

Yet familiar

Wondrous

Yet reachable

One

*More*

More than my body

More than my soul

More than my thoughts

More than my goals

More than my present

More than my past

More than the words

That I think will last

More than a gospel

More than a prayer

More than a mystery

More than I dare

More than a paradigm

More than a creed

More than a comfort

More than a need

More than all this

Yet nothing at all

Containing all life

Yet breaking all walls

*We are One*

We are One

With all that is here

All that is there

All that is everywhere

We are One

With all that is now

All that was then

All that is yet to come

We are One

With all that is real

All that is imaginary

All that is beyond imagination

We are One

And weep for our foolish divisions

We are One

And sing for the wonder of Life

We are One

*Belonging*

We are God's  
Nothing can change that  
We come from God  
We are grounded in God  
We are connected through God  
We are filled with God  
We are held by God  
We contain pieces of God  
We are accompanied by God  
We are destined for God  
We can never be separate from God  
In life, death, and beyond  
At our best, at our worst  
In our joy and in utter despair  
Even when we forget God  
Even when we pervert the very idea of God  
Deserved or not  
We are God's

*Walk Humbly*

The heavenly Father

Is accessible to all

Regardless of ability or education

But often fuels intolerance

As competing factions claim

To understand Him better than others do

The Holy Mystery

Is difficult to fathom

And more difficult to relate to

But less susceptible to human failings

Less likely to lead to war

Only the knowledge

That our understanding is weak

Too weak to grasp the Ultimate

Though each of us grasps a part

Allows for both peace and God's comfort

Walk humbly:

Justice and mercy will follow

*Spirit of All Temperaments*

I see You in the darkness  
Others need blinding light  
I taste You in the bittersweet  
Others in Turkish delight  
I hear you in a lonely bell  
Others in a noisy din  
I feel You as I mourn my loss  
Others when they win  
How can these disparate roads converge  
Which seem to lead apart?  
How can we share this faith, this Love  
That stirs such different hearts?

*Infinite*

Because the Sacred is infinite  
It resides within you, within me,  
Within all beings,  
So I must honor you, myself, all beings,  
And the planet that sustains us  
If I am to honor the Sacred;  
Because the Sacred is infinite  
It knows all things and all beings  
But cannot be completely known  
So your description of it  
Though different from mine  
May be equally valid;  
Because the Sacred is infinite  
Its compassion has no limits:  
Yearning for all to be whole  
So It transforms us  
Until we share that yearning  
And cannot help but act

*May We Each Find*

May we each find a faith

That speaks to us

And teaches us how to listen;

May we each find a faith

That prods us

To manifest the Sacred within;

May we each find a faith

That holds us

When the world seems barren and cold;

May we each find a faith

That joins us

As children of one Soul

## 6. Beyond Mind

There is something spiritual about being perplexed, and recognizing contrasts and contradictions: accepting the limits of the logical mind can be liberating. As we go beyond logic, we go beyond self and so have a chance to join in a larger Vision.

### *Contrast*

Were it not for night

I would not welcome the day;

Were it not for silence

I would not enjoy harmony;

Were it not for the putrid smells

I would not savor the sweet;

Were it not for the ordinary

I would not value the Sacred.

I must be bound to yearn for freedom,

And confused to seek Enlightenment

*Participant in Life*

Heisenberg found that observation

Alters what is observed

Thus, whether I choose to or not,

I act,

I cannot sit in the audience,

I change the world

Simply by existing,

I am connected

Without reaching out or being reached

By being

I belong

*Mind and Spirit*

There is a part of the brain that, when stimulated,

Produces the experience of God's presence

Some say, this means there is no God

Outside the brain

There is another part of the brain that, when stimulated,

Produces the sensation of tasting strawberries

Does that mean there are no strawberries

Outside the brain?

Amazing

That the capacity for faith is hard-wired

*Faith*

Where did I come from?

Why am I here?

Where am I going?

Is there a God?

There are no factual answers

No answers that can be proven

No answers that can be seen

Yet we design answers

Not knowing if they're true

Not ever being sure

Believing nonetheless

Because living with uncertainty

Is what faith is all about

*Why?*

If we did not suffer

We would never need others

We would never learn from overcoming suffering

We would never be the heroes

Of our own life stories;

If others did not suffer

We would never feel compassion

We would never work for greater justice

We would never appreciate what we have so sincerely;

Perhaps it is wise

That God allowed suffering to exist,

Even though that wisdom is impossible

For the sufferer to see

*Timeless Companion*

God is before us

After us

And contemporary:

Born with us

Struggling with us

Laughing with us

Weeping with us

Dying with us

Yet eternal

*Because I am human*

Because I am human

I perceive God in terms of human relationships:

Being raised by parents

I perceive the Father;

Being involved in friendships;

I relate to God's human emissaries;

Being part of a community,

I feel welcomed by the spiritual unity of mankind.

Some say this makes God a projection of my human mind.

I say it is because of my human mind that I perceive this way:

Were I other than human,

I would no doubt perceive other aspects of God.

As the microbe, the gull, and the whale

All perceive different aspects of the ocean

That extends beyond all perception

*Sunday School*

When I examine

My own troubled mind

I see only confusion and doubt

When I teach others

About life, love, and God

It all becomes simple and clear

*Losing Religion*

Faith is inclusive  
Of all who believe that compassion  
Unites with the Sacred  
In Whom we all have our being  
No matter what the specific beliefs or practices  
Of one's religion:  
Lose religion,  
And believe

*Paradise*

If the world were perfect  
There would be nothing to do  
But languish in its perfection  
Games would quickly become boring  
Fruit would no longer taste sweet  
To dulled taste buds  
Pleasure would cease to be pleasurable  
As we'd start to take it for granted  
Existence would be pointless;  
Because life is imperfect  
We find hope in the contrasts  
Between what is, was, and will be  
We find joy in the absence of suffering  
Especially if we can make a difference  
And bring that joy to others;  
Without change there can be no hope  
Without suffering, no joy  
Without adversity, no heroes;  
Because of its imperfection  
Life is beautiful

*Change*

When I start noticing my flaws

And try to change

I try

And try

And try

To no avail;

When I feel accepted

Exactly as I am

And accept myself that way

Change happens

*Time*

Time divides  
As no other dimension  
Do we focus on heaven  
Some future bliss  
Or do what we can here on earth?  
Do we dwell on history  
Lest we forget  
Or forgive the past and move on?  
Time is fleeting when busy  
Time is endless when hurting  
Time is cruel to the stricken  
And kind to the weary;  
We blame time for our failings  
And our indecision:  
A convenient hook  
For responsibility's cloak;  
Yet All that is real  
Stands outside time:  
Neither now nor then nor ever,  
Simply here

*Hidden Reality*

Real pride

Comes not from success

But from effort;

Real wealth

Comes not from money

But from valuing people;

Real wisdom

Comes not from knowing

But from wanting to learn;

Real happiness

Comes not from feeling

But from doing

*Journey*

Because I belong to God

I have arrived:

I don't need to do anything else

Prove anything else

Be anything else;

I have arrived

And only because I have arrived

Can I attend to the journey of life

*Perfect*

How can the Creator be perfect  
If the creation is imperfect  
And Creator and creation are One?  
Unless the greater perfection  
Is to allow for imperfection  
So the creatures have something to do;  
By perfecting creation  
And thus its Creator  
We join in a greater Solution  
We find purpose  
That was missing in Eden

*Ignoring I*

When I am honored

Valued

Wanted

Welcomed

Celebrated

Cherished

Loved

I can ignore I

And honor

Value

Want

Welcome

Celebrate

Cherish

And love others

*Disappearing Act*

When I feel good enough

I ignore others' faults

When I feel loved

I love

When I am safe

I offer shelter

When I am well

I heal

When joy fills my soul

I inspire

When I am whole

I disappear

And live

*Dualities*

We are light:

Waves and particles at once

Waves in our interconnection

Our common propulsion towards a better world

Our common bond:

The Strength and Wisdom of the ages

That is with us and within us always;

Particles in the uniqueness of our lives

Which are never repeated twice

Each with its own myriad of perceptions,

Ideas, emotions, and acts

Which make life so awe-fully good

And distinguish it from other realms

We oscillate between these:

Experiencing our particle nature in one moment

Then waves in the next

As particular concerns become meaningless

And wave-like conformity unsatisfying

Struggling to find the Peace that surpasses all dualities

*Short Circuit*

Within

And beyond

In the moment

And eternal

All-powerful

And dependent upon us

All-loving

Needing creatures to love

Father and Force

Friend and Substrate

Perfectly consistent

And contradictory

God short-circuits the thought process

Leaving darkness

Leaving selfless belonging

Leaving Peace

*The Adventure*

If time can expand or contract  
As we approach the speed of light  
Then who knows what it does  
When we become light?  
Do we exist in the beginning of time or its end  
Or in that very moment  
Or is that question meaningless  
Because we are in another dimension  
That we only glimpse occasionally  
In the timeless moments of life?  
Wherever, whenever we go  
No-one can say exactly,  
So the only certainty  
Is that it will be a holy adventure

*Transformation*

When I feel safe here

I explore there

When I feel accepted as I am

I change

When I feel valued as an individual

I focus on others

When I feel held by a caring God

I praise the Ground of All Being:

I am open to new possibilities

When I feel loved

*Who are You?*

God loves as a Mother without restraint

Yet prods us like a friend

God is life's Goal just out of reach

Yet always close at hand

God is the Force that orders worlds

And the still, small Voice within

God is the Mystery we can't reveal

And the Place where thought begins

### 7. Meaningful Action

I sometimes envy those who can put their thoughts and feelings about God aside and “just do it”, working for a better world. I’m not always one of them, but they intrigue me. What motivates the saints? Here are some possibilities.

#### *God waits*

When the choice is between

Nurturing one’s relationship with God

And doing the right thing

Do it.

God’s not going anywhere.

*What Matters*

Are you Father?

Are you Mother?

Are you Force for Good?

Are you Ground of All Being?

Are you all of the above or none,

Or are you more than I can comprehend?

What does it matter?

As long as You hold me

And inspire me

To act out of love

*Opportunity*

I was taught to answer  
When opportunity knocks  
To recognize a chance for more  
And pursue it  
I acquired money, things, success,  
Even relationships this way;  
I was not taught to answer  
When my next-door neighbor knocks  
Or the man on the street who needs directions  
Or the woman who can't fit a bulky item in her car  
Or the young mother who is unsure  
How to teach her child to ride a bike  
These too are opportunities  
To make life better  
Only the result is not temporary gain  
But faith in the human condition  
That endures

*Priorities*

Do what you must  
To preserve yourself and your family  
Do what you love  
And make the most of your gifts  
Don't do what you should.  
Shoulds are driven by others' expectations  
And the desire to be liked by them  
They come and go as the people they serve do  
Musts and loves last

*Follow Your Bliss*

When you pursue stuff

When you pursue glory

When you pursue safety

When you pursue love

More often than not

You end up disappointed, troubled, and tired

Like a man drinking sea-water:

As each success increases the thirst for the next

And none brings relief or peace;

When you pursue your calling

When you dedicate yourself to a cause

When you strive for your personal best

When you become who you were meant to be

More often than not

You forget about your thirst

As you greet each day's possibilities

Boldly and with joy;

And the stuff, glory, safety, and love

Come along eventually too

*Motivation*

It is easier to forgive myself

Doing the wrong thing

For the right reasons

Than the right thing

For the wrong reasons

The first is a well-intentioned screw-up:

I learn from it and go on;

But to act out of fear or self-interest

Even if the result is good

Feels rotten

*Rest*

I use my circumstances  
To excuse myself for doing less  
When in truth  
I choose to do less  
Regardless of circumstances  
Why is it so hard to say  
'I choose to rest'  
Without shame?

*Choice*

When others control me  
They can set limits on my actions  
But not on my ideals  
I can rage against the limits,  
Succumb to despair,  
Or seek out those actions that are still possible  
And consistent with my ideals:  
I can always do something that has meaning

*Solid*

If the work I do is destroyed  
By a single adverse event  
That discourages those who work with me  
Then maybe it was not meant to last,  
Like a dune in the shifting sand.  
For what is good, and worth doing endures  
And becomes part of the collective Good  
As a solid mountain endures in the rain  
Even if it's craggy peaks are softened by the water's flow:  
It persists and defines a landscape

*What Matters*

I must let go of the belief that I can do

All that is required

Serenity lies in doing what matters

Taking pride in it

And not worrying about the consequences

Of what is undone.

The taskmasters of the undone

Will manage a day's delay

The chance to do what matters

May never come again

*Warmth*

A loving act

Is worth doing

Not only when repaid with thanks

Or used to foster greatness

Or paid forward to another

A loving act

Is worth doing

Even when the beloved

Cannot acknowledge it

Is unaware of it

Or is unable to love

Dying people,

Plants, animals,

Those with mental challenges

May not do much in response to love

But the act of loving them

Enriches life

As each ray of sunshine

Adds to the world's warmth

*Plodding Along*

There have been times  
When I have been incapable of joy  
Or spiritual feelings  
And the best I could do  
Was be aware of my misery,  
Trust that the joy would return one day,  
And in the meantime  
Try to resist the temptation  
To seek joy immediately in unhealthy ways  
Or to dwell on the misery so much  
That I could not say a kind, thankful, or encouraging word  
To anyone else;  
Sometimes the best you can do is put one foot in front of the other  
And remain steady in case others stumble

*Gifts*

Each day is a gift:

Receive it with gladness  
And bring joy to the Giver;

Spend it wisely

And bring joy to your soul;

Each person is a gift:

Receive her with gladness  
And bring joy to her Maker;

Engage with her wisely

And bring joy to you both;

Each place is a gift:

Receive it with gladness  
And bring joy to your senses;

Look after it wisely

And bring joy to the world

*Universal Dreams*

Whatever is good

Celebrates life

And life's Source

Whatever is good

Gives to life

And life's Source

Whatever is good

Receives from life

And life's Source

Never giving just to look good

Never taking just to use

Unchained from personal needs

Free to dream dreams

For All

*Locomotion*

When I seek my purpose

I stumble in the wilderness

When I seek God's purpose

I spring forward on a rubberized track

When God's purpose and my purpose are one

I fly

*Complicated...or Not*

When I try to decide  
If I should prioritize being  
An environmentalist  
A pacifist  
A socialist  
Or just a good global citizen  
It's all overwhelming  
And I don't know where to start;  
When I decide to regard every being  
As different from me yet fascinating and incredibly precious  
As I would regard my newborn  
I cannot destroy that being  
Or fail to help him or her flourish:  
The 'ists' don't matter  
Because only good things happen  
As I act out of love

*Prayer*

There is only one prayer  
That can ever be answered  
And that never fails:  
God grant me the wisdom to do what is right  
And the strength to do it  
And thank you for not giving up on me  
If I don't  
Amen

*Hands of God*

In all I do

May I treat others

With respect and gentleness

Without expecting these in return

So that human abrasiveness

Does not erode

Sacred purpose

*Heartbeat*

When being and doing are separate  
We do like chickens without heads  
And being is an indulgent respite  
From what the real world demands;  
When being and doing are one  
Our doing emanates from a common Source  
Our being connects with all beings  
We no longer fibrillate aimlessly  
Like muscle fibres twitching without a current  
We pump in unison  
Pushing life forward  
In a coordinated, holy Heartbeat

*Born Again*

It doesn't matter

What we imagine God looks like

Or sounds like in our favorite holy book

Or seems like when we practice

Our favorite religious ritual

Only what God does

Defines God

When God creates, sustains, and redeems

God is

When we co-create a better world

Look after each other and the planet

Forgive and love again

We are born

In God

*Hero*

When I linger a moment

To listen to my child

When I carry a tissue packet

To dry a tear if needed

When I do a tedious task

To save a colleague grief

When I shine the light on my team

To share some of the glory

When I work through the night

To create what may inspire

When I learn what I must from failure

To allow me to carry on

Then I infuse the ordinary

With humble, steadfast love

Then I become a hero

Greater than any story-teller could describe

*Shine*

May I understand ever more clearly  
How to be part of the solution  
Rather than part of the problem  
How to bring out the strength, wisdom, and beauty  
Of those I encounter  
Rather than the opposite  
How to focus on the abundant, just, life-giving world  
That may yet become a reality  
Rather than the obstacles to reaching it  
How to marvel that each pinpoint in a star-filled sky  
Is one of Your unknown worlds  
Rather than exalting my own petty schemes;  
May I understand this, live this,  
And join others in this  
Until our brief, inspired moments  
Become a continuous Shine

*Becoming*

May I become less eager to impress

More eager to help

Less eager to escape the dark

More eager to bring light

Less eager to spread cynicism

More eager to spread hope

Less eager to rest on my laurels

More eager to prompt change

Less eager to echo the status quo

More eager to sing life

*Focus*

When I focus

On personal aims

On personal gain

On personal fame

On avoiding shame

I live from deadline to deadline

And die a little each day;

When I focus

On where there's a need

A hunger to feed

A venture to seed

A cause to lead

I live unfettered by time

And refreshed by the Eternal

*Respond*

Respond to destiny

Don't pretend you can control it

Or fight to change its path

Respond to destiny

Give shelter from the cruelty

Give comfort to the harmed

Respond to destiny

Pursue the opportunities

To strengthen those in need

Respond to destiny

Tread gently through the world

And pause to rest in God

Respond to destiny

Be light where there is darkness

Be hope in times of despair

Respond to destiny

With Love

*A Wholesome Discipline*

Appreciate what's good in the present when you can

Daydream or remember what's good when you can't

But focus on what's good

Believe in the Spirit that fulfills all life when you can

Believe in a kind, holy Parent when you can't

But believe in a gentle God

Be the change that you seek when you can

Be a decent person when you can't

But be a source of peace

Do what you love and what inspires when you can

Do what is necessary when you can't

But do your best

That's enough

*Gifts*

Gratitude

Forgiveness

Hope

Compassion

Are healing gifts

But they don't always get things done

Self-respect

Perseverance

Equanimity

And the courage to stand one's ground

These bring important work to fruition

God grant us both

*Wisdom*

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do

Is to tackle a vexing problem

In your own life

Or the life of another

With all your ideas

Strength

And tenacity;

Sometimes we pray to get through suffering,

And at other times suffering is a signal

That it's time to stop praying

And act

*Justice*

We can pass a law  
That tries to redress injustice  
Or promote greater fairness from now on  
But a lawyer sees it as a challenge  
To prove her client the exception to the rule  
A judge sees it as a new means  
Of enforcing his old prejudices  
An ambitious person sees it as an obstacle  
To winning the competition with her neighbor  
A lazy person sees it as an opportunity  
To reap what he did not sow  
An anxious person sees it as a threat  
To a successful life for her child  
A depressed person sees it as more evidence  
That there is less to go around for all;  
A law may address the worst abuses  
But it cannot change human nature;  
Laws don't make a better world:  
Hopeful, tenacious people do  
God help us keep hope alive!

*Immortality*

Who will remember  
The headlines and books  
When the stores and libraries close  
Who will remember  
The websites and shows  
As the airwaves, as cyberspace goes  
Your fame, your name  
Will fade to black  
But left when you depart  
Is the hope you inspired  
The love you gave  
The footprints on another's heart

### 8. Relationship with the Sacred Being

In order to transcend my narrow, self-focused ways and work for a better world, I need to feel valued, connected to, and loved by the Sacred as I am; in order to change the world for the better, the Sacred needs the actions of transcendent human beings.

#### *Perfect Fit*

Without creation

There is no Creator;

Without motion

There is no Mover;

Without my child

I am not a mother;

Without us

There is no Divinity;

The Sacred and the human

Need each other

And make each other

Whole

*Evolution*

A Master of a fully formed world

Is like a parent of an unplanned child:

Taking responsibility for looking after it

Without much joy or hope

A Creator of a world in development

Is like a parent of a much-desired child:

Seeing not only the work of maintaining what is there

But the possibility of realizing

A unique, unpredictable, incredibly wonderful potential

By nurturing the best

With Love

*Wonderful Parent*

Because my very being  
Gives meaning to the Creator  
The Creator's presence in my life is unconditional  
I am not expected to dance  
Like a puppet on strings,  
I am not expected to reflect glory  
Like a human mirror  
I am not expected to think, or feel, or do  
As the Creator would  
Only to be open to a sacred Presence;  
For when living in that Presence,  
Justice, honesty, respect,  
And compassion for all living things  
Happen without even thinking about them;  
I love unconditionally  
As I am loved,  
I need no commandments,  
Only wonder

*Conduits*

For a short time on this earth  
We may be conduits of God's love  
We cannot claim anything for it  
For it is God's, not our own  
We cannot repay it  
For God has a limitless supply  
We can only help it flow forward  
Allowing what we have received  
To touch others as it has touched us  
And in so doing  
Change the world

*Thy Kingdom Come*

Let me forget

All the worries and doubts

All hopelessness and despair

Let me forget

All desires and goals

And needing to get my share

Let me forget

The shame and hurt

And burning for revenge

Let me forget

My mind's cruel jabs

Which on my soul impinge

That I may clear

A space within

A channel free from me

Where sacred Peace can flow at last

To heal and to let be

To join with those I touch in Love

To set their channels free

That Peace may unencumbered flow:

God's dream becoming real

*Becoming Change*

Sometimes my efforts to do good

Come from a need for security:

For the world's compensation for good deeds

Sometimes my efforts to do good

Come from a need for approval:

To know that I belong and am valued

Sometimes my efforts to do good

Come from a need for self-worth:

It just feels good to do good

But then there are those special times

When my efforts come from elsewhere:

From an ancient, universal Aching for change

From a powerful wellspring within

That flows with sacred Love

That manifests God's purpose

Unhindered by human needs

*Prisms*

My children are different from me  
At times I see the resemblance  
At times they surprise me completely  
They are people in their own right  
They don't need to be connected to me all the time  
Revolving in my orbit  
They don't need to match my feelings and ideas  
Like mirrors  
They don't need to do exactly what I teach  
Only take it and make something good out of it  
That is relevant to their life's time  
Like prisms refracting light into new colors.  
I can give my children this freedom, this separateness from me  
Why is it hard to believe that God does the same?

*Just the way they are*

Some parents only like  
Children who resemble them  
And mirror their desires

Some parents only like  
Children who accomplish things  
And reflect well on their homes

Some parents like their children  
Because they think they're neat

Just the way they are

Those children grow  
To resemble their parents  
To reflect well on their parents  
And to regard the next generation

With the same loving curiosity they experienced

With their own parents  
And we all experience  
With God

*New Beginnings*

When I am humbly aware  
Of all that I do not know  
Of how limited my mind  
Of how unskilled my hands  
Of how empty my soul  
Of all I have not learned  
God is my Teacher  
My Friend  
And the Force that guides my hands

*Peace*

We cannot find peace

Without God

The Spirit of Compassion;

God cannot make peace

Without us

The instruments of compassion

*God's-Eye View*

I have prayed, as others have,  
To become an instrument of Your peace  
What I have dared not pray  
Is to join Your peace:  
To be saddened by Your sorrows  
Which are the sorrows of all beings  
To be inspired by Your joys  
Which are the joys of all beings  
To be hopeful of Your dreams  
Which are the dreams of all beings  
For to pray this  
Is to pray for constant attunement to all beings  
And to never be complacent again

*The Flame*

As the Sacred joins us  
Uniting us in compassion  
Freeing us from the anger,  
The fear, the shame  
The self-consciousness  
So we join the Sacred  
Bringing together our scattered sparks  
Until they coalesce into a single flame  
That warms and brightens the world.  
As God completes us  
So we complete God

*The Tool Box*

We are co-creators

Of a better world

Partnering with the Sacred

Yet humbly aware

How limited our reach

How limited our hearts

How narrow our minds

How slow we are to grasp

What is truly important

Still, we are the instruments of peace.

God has no others

*Happening*

With our hands

God makes peace happen

With our feet

God makes change happen

With our minds

God makes hope happen

With our bodies

God makes bliss happen

With our mouths

God makes truth happen

With our arms

God makes love happen

With us

God happens

With God

Our happenings have meaning

And make a better world

*Power*

God is in the face of a child

An old person

A weak person

A fool

For like them all

God is helpless to act

Without the help of human hands

Yet powerful enough

To inspire giants

*If we do not*

If we do not forgive

They will not be forgiven

If we do not sustain this world

It will not be sustained

If we do not bless

There will be no blessing

If we do not live as one

There will be no peace;

How great our responsibility,

How great our thanks

For the opportunity to fulfill it

And be truly alive

*Living*

When God teaches us  
And we make things better  
When God inspires us  
And we create beauty  
When God loves us  
And we become that love to others  
When God is with us and within us  
And we move with and within God  
Then God's existence means something  
So God lives  
Then our existence means something  
So we live

*If God were Human...*

If God were human

What would He say

To guide you and help you decide?

If God were human

What would She give you

To prepare you for life's ride?

If God were human

Where would you be

And where directed to go?

If God were human

What would you cling to

And what release to the flow?

Imagine yourself an ever-loved child

Encouraged, embraced, and renewed

By a Parent, a Friend, a Being of Light

Or whatever form you choose

*What I Need*

When I am held

Cared for

Loved

By God

I can let go

Of I

Content to be merely a strand

In the tapestry of life

And contribute my small speck of colour;

I can let go

Of God's image

Knowing the fabric itself is blessed

Not just its Weaver;

I can let go

Of my confining, competitive mind

Join with all beings

Make a difference

And become what I was meant to be

*Purpose*

Bring God to life

By bringing God into life

Wherever you may go;

Meet God in life

By seeking God in every life

That you encounter;

Keep God alive

By keeping God in life

Whenever you remember;

Live God's Life

By joining God and life

However you are able

*Sacred Path*

May my ways  
Become part of your Way  
May my thoughts  
Never stray far  
May my deeds  
Realize your Dream  
May my goals  
Align with your Star  
May my children  
Keep your Light  
As my lifetime fades away  
May my soul  
Pour into your Ocean  
That I glimpse from a distance today

*The Visitor*

Within, without  
And with us through all  
Whether celebrating  
Or about to fall;  
Parent and Friend  
Foundation and Light  
Source, Destination  
And Lantern at night;  
Before and after  
And evermore  
Yet always knocking  
Till we open the door

*Vocation*

Each day

That I overcome suffering

In myself or another being

I find meaning;

Each day

That I see how my actions

Align with those of the Creator

I feel joy;

Each day

That my hands make manifest

A part of the Creator's dream

I am awe-struck

I am complete

I am a conduit of Timeless Love

*Enlightenment*

Enlighten me

With the light that I move towards

The light that streams and glistens

Leaving me amazed

The light that displaces what's dark

Enlighten me

Lighten the loads of my worries

Lighten my mood in the gloom

Lighten my endless responsibilities

Allow me to leave some with You

Enlighten me

Take me from knowledge to wisdom

Focus my mind on what counts

Show me the road to compassion

That I may enlighten too

*Credo*

I believe in a sacred Dimension  
That is limitless and beyond description  
That joins and holds all beings with love  
Now and forevermore  
I believe that the Sacred  
Works through us  
Compelling us to improve the welfare of all beings  
And of the planet as a whole  
In recognition of our common Bond  
Applying our strength, intelligence, and unique gifts  
Towards fulfilling creation's promise  
As we let go of our egotistical desires  
And respond to the Infinite

*Prayer to a Caring God*

Thank You

For creating life

Every day in our hearts and minds;

Help us

To help each other

Become what we were meant to be;

Forgive us

For all that drives us away

From your ways of peace and love

Inspire us

That with renewed strength we may seek

To fulfill your eternal dream

*Doing and Praying*

Whether I do good  
And experience compassion  
That draws me close to God  
Or I pray  
And am inspired by God  
To behave compassionately:  
The road between God and a better world  
Is a two-way street  
Paved with human compassion

### 9. Relationship with the Sacred in the Other

When I feel secure in my relationship with God, paradoxically I become less interested in theology and more curious about other people. Occasionally, that curiosity evokes something special in them and in me. Buber called it the “I and Thou” experience. I call it encountering the Sacred in the Other.

#### *Honor the person*

When I ask myself

How can I use this person

To get the job done?

I honor the job

And only the job gets done

When I ask myself

How can I affirm this person

As we do the job?

I honor the person

Allowing what is best in him or her to emerge

And permeate all they do

And the results are splendid

*I'm worried about you*

I'm worried about you  
Is one of the most honest  
Yet insistent statements;  
It's impossible to be angry with  
Yet impossible to ignore;  
It asks someone to help you  
By changing themselves;  
It acknowledges that you can't find peace  
Without the other person's response,  
You can't make them do something  
But you hope they will consider it  
For their own benefit  
As well as yours;  
It's caring, but not calming;  
It urges action, with love.  
When we meet remarkable people  
Inspired by the Sacred  
It's God's way of saying  
I'm worried about you

*Ribbon*

When I am with you  
Not to dream of tomorrow  
Nor cleanse my past  
Not to fix all your problems  
Nor have you fix mine  
Not to play with your feelings  
Nor elicit certain words  
Not to create something newsworthy  
Nor boast to my friends  
But to listen and respond  
As truly I am  
This moment is timeless  
This moment is a ribbon  
That binds us to one another  
And to God

*Friends*

In close friends I experience the Sacred  
On a more human level,  
Not so high and parental;  
I see their limitations and they mine,  
Give advice but respect their choices,  
And continue to believe in them  
Even when they behave foolishly  
Or stop believing in themselves;  
They give me the privilege of learning from their mistakes  
So I am spared some pain;  
They revel in my joy, and I in theirs;  
Through them I see what life might have been  
Had I chosen a different path  
It may not change the choice,  
But it may allow me to walk in a different way  
And experience something new

*Recognition*

May I recognize You  
In every place  
Every person  
Every moment of peace  
That I may treasure and preserve  
Every place  
Every person  
Every moment of peace  
And in so doing  
Preserve and extend  
Your essence  
And become more fully  
Made in Your image

*Bereaved*

The words I regret not saying  
More than any others  
Are 'thank you';  
To share someone's hopes, doubts,  
Joys, and sorrows  
Is a sacred privilege:  
Such bonds are rare  
And often all too brief

*Puzzle*

When I envy you  
And want what you have  
I try to remember  
That if nobody exceeded me  
In power, in talent, in grace,  
I would be perfect:  
Perfectly self-sufficient and alone;  
Because you have more of this and I have more of that  
We are drawn together  
Like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle  
Until God's picture is complete

*Gestures*

Why did you take my arm when I stumbled?

Why did your tears well up when I cried?

Why did you give this moment to me

When I had nothing to provide?

Was it the hope of some re-payment?

But you didn't make a demand

Was it the need to have someone need you?

Perhaps, but it wasn't your plan

This reliance on random kindness

Is awkward, humbling, and odd

Yet with every shared humane gesture

We see more of the face of God

*Being a Friend*

Be my friend, as a fellow child of God  
 Not for me to impress or look down upon  
     To rescue or be rescued by  
 To seek obsessively or be sought by  
 To try to possess or be possessed by  
     To control or be controlled by;  
     For all those patterns  
 Are unrequited dreams of youth  
 Of parents we could never have  
     Of lovers we could never find  
 And make your company a thing to feed a love-starved child;  
     Let me instead  
     Be curious about your daily life  
     Your stories of the unexpected  
     Your blind spots and your vision  
     Your progress and your pain  
 Amplifying your experience with echoes from my own  
 And sharing my thoughts, for what they're worth  
     Truthfully, whether you like it or not  
     Gently, to preserve your trust  
 Compassionately, to reflect our common Source

*Risking*

In faith

There is no future threat

As we open our minds to new possibilities

In friendship

There are no past demons

As we open our hearts to one another

In Love

We believe

We connect

We come alive

*You Belong*

This is what you ought to do

Says the judge

How you get there is up to you

This is what you ought to believe

Says the preacher

Making sense of it is up to you

This is how you ought to feel

Says the mystic

As you deal with impatient tellers and demanding bosses

This is who you ought to be

Says the saint

Who lived a thousand years before your time;

Only the knowledge

That you belong

And can be a blessing to all in the Web of belonging

As they can be to you

As each glimpses in the other a thread of God's Being

Will inspire action, belief, feelings, and a soul

That can overcome all impatient demands and cruelty in this world;

That can step outside the pain

And live authentically

*Silence*

Share the pain

When it is real pain

Not some misguided attempt to gain sympathy

Or to blame someone else for your woe

Share the joy

When it is real joy

Not idle gossip that titillates

Or boasting about a recent triumph

Share what is best

What comforts and inspires

And lets others comfort and inspire you

Allow silence for the rest

For in it you can fathom things

Which words diminish

And communicate things

Which go beyond conversation

*The Tide*

When the holy in me  
Encounters the holy in you  
We become sources of sacred Energy  
To one another  
No longer drained away  
By constant toil, hardship, and worry  
No longer polluted  
By the false gods of substances or social acclaim  
Or by fantasies of fulfilling old dreams  
But building a bottomless reservoir  
Of real hope  
Real love  
Real joy;  
Then give and take have no meaning  
As we become more  
Than the sum of our parts  
And for a moment  
Are one with the Tide

*Tongue-tied*

When I give what you need  
And you give what I need  
When I ask for what I want  
And listen to what you want  
Even if it is not what we each had in mind  
We sacrifice with gentle honesty  
Some of our fantasies  
Some of the smoothness  
In our relationship  
But in time  
We learn more  
We respect more  
We build more trust  
We store less resentment;  
Some of the most awkward moments  
Are also the most loving

*Become*

Become the well

To those thirsting for the Spirit

Become hope

To those trapped in despair

Become love

To those who have no family

Become joy

To those crushed by their cares

Become peace

To those wracked by fear and rage

Become life

To those dying inside

Become Grace

*Loved Child*

Love your children  
For in children who are loved  
Compassion flowers naturally  
Whenever they see someone in need;  
It is their very first impulse:  
They act on it without conscious effort  
In children who are rejected  
Or only loved when they perform  
Compassion is choked by the brambles  
Of fear, of defensiveness  
And the need to look out for number one;  
Their lives become a battle  
To keep the brambles at bay  
Rather than a celebration  
Of the beauty inside us all;  
There are ways of wisdom  
Ways of loving  
Ways of living  
That only a loved child can reveal

*Parenting*

Each day I try to help  
But cannot be there with them  
When they are tested  
Each day I try to understand  
But cannot get completely  
Inside their heads  
Each day I decide  
Based on my own intuition  
And an educated guess at their needs  
Each day I convince myself  
That I do what's best for them  
Though I know so little for certain;  
But if God knows them  
And I stop to know God  
Then maybe I can choose wisely

*Love*

If I need your approval

If I need you to act

A part in my play

If I seek to steal the show

If I laugh at your expense

I use you

If I hurt when you hurt

If I want to calm your fears

If I delight in your success

And pray that God bless you

If your smile lights up my day

I love you

*I See You*

I see in your eyes the history of time

In your smile a new beginning

I see in your gestures a sacred dance

In your laugh the universe singing

I see in your mourning the tears of the Earth

Wherever life has ceased

I see in your reaching the yearnings of all

In your walk their footsteps towards peace

*Born Free*

Born unplanned

Born disabled

Born with an imperfect mind

Part of a family

Part of a community

Part of a mother's heart

Connected by birth and by need to us all

They remind us of interdependence

They're free from gold chains

Of conventional success

That pale when compared to their grace

*Hospitality*

When you are as fascinating to me

As my newborn child

When you are as acceptable to me

As my best friend

When you are as respected by me

As my favorite teacher

Then I can welcome you

As an honored guest

Joining other guests

Until all beings are my guests

And life is a home never empty

*Community*

God happens

In every group united by a just cause

God happens

Whenever the differences between us and them

Melt into a larger 'we'

God happens

As we embrace each other's ideas

And envision a whole

Greater than the sum of the parts

God happens

Not just between me and you

But within a greater

Us

*Oratorio*

There is a gentle hum  
Beneath a choir of hundreds  
Diverse voices sharing a common song  
None standing out dramatically  
Yet all lending their strength to the sound;  
Like hundreds of ripples lapping the shore  
Forgoing the big splash  
But together changing the landscape;  
Like hundreds of smoldering coals  
Cooking hotter than any bright flame;  
Like hundreds of sand grains reshaping a sphinx  
That has withstood earthquakes;  
There is a power in community  
That no hero's feat can match  
That persists beyond mountaintop moments  
That warms the frozen soul  
And becomes a continuous prayer

*Thin Places*

There are places  
Where the boundary  
Between what is Sacred and what is human  
Is thin;  
We enter these places in silence,  
In reverence,  
In total devotion to a worthy task,  
In paradox that takes us beyond the mind,  
In visions that take us beyond ourselves;  
And we also enter them in encounters  
With people we heal  
Or who heal us,  
With those who seek to inspire,  
With those who pay forward  
And multiply their blessings,  
With those who persevere  
When few blessings are apparent;  
We enter these places  
In communion with God  
And with all who are touched by the Spirit  
Or whom we are able to touch

*This Child*

We can't decide  
How we begin  
Or where our birth will place us  
We can't decide  
What womb, what genes  
Or whether we are welcome  
Yet each arrival  
Is one more chance  
To live the human story  
To make it better, more complete  
To add to creation's glory  
A bet, a gamble to be sure  
But definitely worth the wager  
Who knows what brilliance yet unborn  
Will fill this crib or manger?

*One Chance*

In every moment

I must learn from you

Teach you

Learn about you

Reveal to you

Give to you

Receive from you

Touch you

Be touched by you

All that I can

For one of us may be gone by tomorrow

## 10. The Sacred in Reconciliation with Oneself and Others

Inevitably, we hurt and criticize each other and we hurt and criticize ourselves. Then, we carry the hurtful patterns from past relationships into new ones and inadvertently recreate the very pain we thought we had escaped. How can we get back to respectful, loving relationships in the face of human cruelty? How can we not? Few things separate us from the Sacred more than the inability to forgive and reconnect with others. May we learn again to love, to receive love, and ultimately to become Love.

### *New Being*

Rather than purging each sin  
And becoming focused on fault-finding  
Unleash the good within  
And selfish, hurtful words and deeds  
Will retreat  
As dust blown by the wind  
Or dirt washed away  
And a new being emerges  
Like a surfer piercing a fog bank  
Like a sculpture freed from its stone

*The Hardest Faith*

It is harder to believe in the goodness of another person

When that person betrays you

Or humiliates you

Or abandons you

Or treats you like something less than human

Than it is to believe in God,

Even though you can see the person

And only imagine God;

Yet if we cannot believe there is good

In each of God's creatures

Then how can we believe in the goodness of God?

And without our belief in their goodness

How will they ever learn to manifest it?

Our enemies are children

Descended from the Sacred

As we all are;

In desperate need of someone

To tell them who their Mother is

Whose essence they carry within

*The Best*

Look for the best in each moment

And you will not worry;

Look for the best in each person

And you will not hate;

Look for the best in yourself

And you will not fail;

Look for the best in humanity

And you will never be alone

*Love Songs*

To perceive the Sacred in others

Is still a struggle

To do this

I must look with different eyes.

I must look for the self-conscious, fearful part of them,

Subtract it from the whole,

And imagine what remains:

The music of their souls set free

*Teachers*

I feel drawn to those who are like me

Then learn to hate them

For showing me in their behavior

The very things I lack

Or despise about myself

Rather than seeing them as teachers

To guide me towards Wholeness

*Equals*

When I stop needing your praise  
When I am unhurt by your criticism  
When your opinion of me counts less  
Than my opinion of myself  
Then I can enjoy my connection with you;  
It will never be as close or exciting  
As when I sought your praise and feared your scorn  
But it will be infinitely more fun,  
More relaxed, more interesting and rich,  
More challenging, and more humane  
As I see you as an equal member of the same community:  
The community of mankind

*Working towards freedom*

Forgiveness does not mean feeling less animosity

Towards those who have hurt me;

But consciously deciding to no longer dwell on the past,

To no longer replay the way it could have or should have been

To no longer rehearse the perfect come-back or means of revenge

To no longer imagine an apology that is unlikely

To no longer lose today's joy for the sake of righting a wrong

Focusing instead on becoming a better person

A better member of the human family

Regardless of the past:

The decision comes first,

The feelings follow

*Flawed Fellowship*

You who honk at me to turn  
Into thick and dangerous traffic  
You who deny me mercy  
By quoting a regulation  
You who hide your mistakes  
And blame me instead  
You are a flawed human being  
Just like me  
Not an object  
Of my frustration, scorn and rage  
We are the same in the sight of God  
God accepts us  
Flaws and all  
Patiently waiting for us to learn  
To accept each other

*Noble Nemesis*

Through angry eyes

I am the innocent victim of a deliberate, personal, unfair attack

Through loving eyes

I am a jealous sore loser, beaten by the rules of the game.

Through angry eyes

I must restore safety and justice or die

Through loving eyes

I can risk peace and win-win solutions.

Through angry eyes

You are a powerful, evil, inhuman beast

Through loving eyes

We are both children of God

*Understanding*

If I resent her criticism blindly  
I risk losing a friend  
If I see it as either a possible truth  
Or a reflection of her own envy  
Of an ability I possess that she lacks  
It no longer stings:  
I understand  
So I do not need to forgive

*Sorry*

I'm sorry

Although I don't know if I could have acted differently

Or even would today

I'm sorry

Although I understand what took place between us

And no longer blame myself entirely

I'm sorry

Although I don't expect you to forgive me

Or even respond to these words

I'm sorry

Because you suffered and are suffering

And I wish you healing and peace

*Heal*

Preachers don't bring forgiveness,

Healers do;

For to forgive an unhealed wound

Is insincere

And invites further injury,

But when you heal the wound

Restoring yourself to health

Forgiveness happens without effort:

Don't forgive, heal

*Siblings*

It is so much easier  
To conjure up an idealized parent in the sky  
That divides deserving from undeserving siblings  
And to tattle on others when they misbehave  
Or accuse them of starting a fight  
Than to seek the sacred Spark within each:  
Their part of the timeless Flame  
That unites and fulfills us all

*Love Story*

Love means always having to say you're sorry  
Because you can't stand to see the other person hurting because of you

Love means always having to say 'I forgive you'  
Because you understand where the cruelty came from,

Love means always having to say 'please'  
Because you know the other person can't read your mind

Love means always having to say 'thank you'  
Because you want the other person to know what their actions mean to you

And the opportunity may not come again

*Choose Not to Dwell*

Some memories are too painful

Too brutally humiliating

But you can choose not to dwell on them;

Some guilt is too unbearable

Annihilating the soul

But you can choose not to dwell on it;

Some rage is too consuming

Too vicious to contain

But you can choose not to dwell in it;

Some people are too callous

Too casually destructive

But you can choose not to dwell with them;

Some systems are too rigid

Too mercilessly dehumanizing

But you can choose not to dwell within them;

Some things are not changeable

Some things are not forgivable

Some things are not forgettable

But you can choose not to dwell on them;

And in so choosing you are freed

To dwell in peace, with God

*Enemy?*

I recognize within you

A desire to honor the Holy

Whatever you conceive it to be;

I recognize within you

A possibility of friendship

Though veiled behind mistrust;

I recognize within you

Dreams of a better world for your children

That is every parent's hope;

I recognize within you

A capacity for tenderness

Though buried by layers of defenses;

I recognize within you

A part of your being that is free

From anger, fear, shame and despair;

I recognize within you

A deeply shared humanity

Yearning to surface

*Original Perfection*

Believing I have flaws, I try to hide them

And so hide my talents too;

I fear people seeing them

Humiliating me, abandoning me, taking advantage of me

Because of them

So I don't let people get close

And don't risk forgiving them

In case they hurt me again;

I cannot be open to new experience

For fear it will shatter the flawed self

Or make it lose control;

I compete to prove my worth

Then lose and feel more flawed

Or win and make others feel flawed;

Yet my main flaw is the belief I am flawed:

I am perfect

As I am

Unique, irreplaceably precious

A beautiful piece of life's puzzle

Made in the image of God

Knowing this, life becomes simple

*Old Hurts*

Surface scratches

That's all they are

A shredded self-esteem here

A few anxieties and addictions there

And periodic dips into the blackness;

Surface scratches

On a perfectly cast bronze

That comes from the same Foundry

That gives shape to all beings

And is joined to their substance;

Alone I am raw and unforgiving

Joined I am whole and at peace

*Forgiving Me*

When have I forgiven myself?  
When I can revisit the past freely  
Neither avoiding it  
Nor obligated to dwell there;  
When I can relate to others genuinely  
Neither hiding the truth  
Nor compulsively confessing it;  
When I can pursue joy  
As well as goodness;  
When I am truly thankful to be alive

*Bless You*

Bless you

Not only you who bring a smile to all,

Who turn a motley crew of tourists

Into a caring community

Just by your presence on the beach;

But you

Who anxiously defend your place from trespassers

And frighten small children in the process,

Whose surly look could sour honey,

Whose remarks could enrage a saint;

For you too are blessed

And have blessings to share:

You just haven't discovered them yet

*May You Be Well*

May you be well

May the demons that prodded your cruelty

Leave you in peace

May the thorns of daily harassments and cares

Pull away from your soul

May you heal

May you find wonder again

Like the babe for whom all things are new

May you be thankful again

Like the wise ones who smile every morning

For all that they've learned and can do

May you come to a place

Where you can say

To all whom you love

To all who have hurt you

To all whom you barely know

To all:

May you be well

*Who You Are*

What if every hurtful act

Were seen as being out of character?

What if every kindness

Were seen as a sign of one's true nature?

What if every failure

Were seen as a temporary stumble?

What if every accomplishment

Were seen as a discovery of hidden abilities?

What if we assumed that the best within is constant,

And the worst is an aberration?

What if we believed in a divine Spark in every being

Waiting to ignite and burn away the surface junk

Of fear, rage, discouragement and pettiness

If only we recognize it and give it some air?

*Undaunted*

I can't forget the abuse and pain

The dark humiliation

I cannot look in the person's eye

And wish for their salvation

I can only look at the path of life

And know they have not erased it

They have strewn sharp stones and changed its course

Till it seemed all my efforts were wasted

But I washed out the dirt and bandaged my wounds

And with God's help went on

I can let go the rage and the need for revenge

Because I can see a new dawn

*Cruelty*

Most cruelty is not planned

Most cruelty is not deliberate

Most cruelty is not a sign of a cruel character

Most cruelty happens

When we forget to be kind

When we are focused on goals

And lose sight of our companions on the journey

When we act without praying

React without reflecting

Get distracted

And lose sight of the Sacred

As all people do from time to time;

For this reason

Most cruelty is forgivable

For who can say they have never been cruel?

*Imperfect Parts*

If each of us is one part of all Being

One ornament on life's Tree

One organ of a sacred Body

One beat of a cosmic Pulse

Then how can we not forgive?

For to diminish another with blame

Diminishes the Whole

And to snuff out another's light

Leaves us all in a darker place

*May All Be Well*

May all be well

Those whose sorrows we see

And those whose are buried inside

May all be well

Those who share the earth

And those on the other side

May all be well

Those we meet on the journey

And those we have left behind

May all be well

Those we worry and pray for

And those out of sight, out of mind

May all be well

In whose wisdom we're rooted

And those to whom all things are new

May all be well

Who inspire, then leave us

And those growing old, needing You

May all be cradled in the hammock of time

May all be nourished by Love

May all discover their connection with You

Within, beside, and above

*Adversaries*

All who struggle against me  
Are one with me  
To condemn them  
Is to cut off a part of myself  
To understand them  
Is to know my own dark side  
To offer comfort to them  
Heals my own brokenness  
To wish them well as they go  
Sets my own inner demons free  
So I can focus once more on Love

*Celebrating*

I cannot forgive myself fully  
Unless I forgive others fully  
Not merely erasing  
Their sins from my ledger  
But celebrating their humanity  
That is our common humanity  
Our common goodness  
Our common Godness  
That binds the universe

*Choices*

Life is tragic

Choose to seek its comedies

The future is uncertain

Choose to believe it will work out

God is unknowable

Choose to believe in a comforting Image

The world is a battlefield

Choose to make peace with those near

The soul is turbulent

Choose to allow it to rest

People are harsh

Choose to give love a chance

*Misery's End*

There are those who destroy a reputation  
And try to destroy a life  
But as long as life persists  
There is a choice:  
To dwell in resentment  
And become bitter, wrinkled, and sad  
Or to decide  
That even if the wrong can't be righted  
It must be left to the universe  
Or to some Higher Power  
For the sake of stopping the pain;  
If I propagate misery  
My enemies win  
And the world becomes meaner and colder;  
If I don't  
Hope's flower can peak through the snow;  
May the misery stop with me

## 11. Mindfulness

Meditation is often thought of as focusing within one's mind, but really it is the opposite: setting aside the worries about the future, the hurts of the past, and the tendency to self-consciously evaluate oneself in order to be free to attend to what is there in the moment, dissolving 'self' in the task at hand. It can also be described as simply listening to God. I am refreshed by and thankful for these sacred moments.

### *Mindful*

When I am mindful

I eat when hungry,

Drink when thirsty,

Sleep when tired,

Think when interested

Or faced with a problem to solve,

Dance when happy,

Weep when sad,

Laugh when amused,

Tremble when afraid,

Honoring nature's needs

Moment by moment;

Finding comfort

In belonging to the Unity of all beings

*Act or Adore*

Crashing waves that shift the sand  
Carve out caves and harbors  
Refresh the swimmer and urge to shore  
Insistently pushing for change;  
Floating beams of yellow warmth  
Billowing down from the surface  
The diver enthralled in the heavenly light  
Perceives how all life is One;  
We strive for better,  
We're arrested by awe,  
Able to lose ourselves  
In meaningful action or in God  
Whichever is called for by the moment

*What Comes Along*

Enjoy what comes along:

The show that's surprisingly funny

The hour to walk by the sea

The unexpected coffee

With delightful company

The smiling child you lift up high

The friend who says you look great

The unplanned, undeserved little thing

The fortunate twist of fate;

Enjoy what comes along:

Take off the shackles and dance

Enjoy what comes along:

Stop marching and give it a chance

Enjoy what comes along:

Be thankful, end the quest

Enjoy what comes along:

Feel blessed

*What is Called For*

When I pray without doing good

I become self-indulgent

Diminishing God's gifts by not sharing them;

When I do good without praying

I become proud

And ignore the Source of all goodness;

When I open my heart

As I ready my hands

I am fulfilled

And 'I' doesn't matter:

I do what the moment calls for

Abandoning myself to God's dream

*Nurture*

What we nurture

We become:

When we think about being threatened

We become angry and afraid

When we think about friendship

We become better friends

When we imagine success

We become competitive

When we imagine new possibilities

We become curious

When we expose our senses to death

We become deadened inside

When we expose our senses to faith

We become hopeful

When we act out of obligation

We become drained of life

When we act out of love

We become life-affirming;

What we nurture

We become

Moment by moment

*No Past*

There is a season  
When there are no regrets  
And no resentments;  
When every tear has been shed,  
Every rage spent,  
Every question answered,  
Every sorrow healed or forgotten  
And you choose to look back no more;  
Some do not reach this season  
Till the winter of their days;  
Those who find it sooner  
Live now

*The Present*

In this moment

Nobody can hurt me;

In this moment

I can choose what to do;

In this moment

I don't need to judge myself

Or think about other people's judgments;

In this moment

I am free

*Judgment*

When I ask myself

“Am I happy yet?”

I can't find happiness

And I become miserable;

When I find something or someone

To focus on, explore, and try to understand

I come alive

And smile

*Now*

In the moment

There is freedom

From the dread and trepidation

Brought by past woe and pain;

In the moment

There is freedom

From plans that compel you to act

According to their prescription;

In the moment

There is no limit

To the possibilities

That might yet unfold;

In the moment

You can leave your head,

Choose a new path,

And live

*Mental Scenery*

They're just thoughts:

They can't help me,

They can't hurt me,

They can't make me do anything

Or stop me from doing anything;

They're just thoughts:

I can welcome them,

Choose to watch them come and go,

And be present here, now

*Alive*

If I dwell on my greatness  
Or dwell on my failure  
I am paralyzed;  
To truly live  
I cannot dwell:  
I must perceive my surroundings  
And choose how to respond  
Moment by moment  
Even if it scares me to death

*The Melody*

The Sacred is in the moment,

If you listen

Tune out the static of your thoughts,

Tune in to the Melody of the universe;

You are at home everywhere and always,

Connected to millennia of wisdom,

To the Wellspring of life itself:

You are at one with All

*What Is*

I pursue ever new projects and goals

Hoping to find meaningful work

Not realizing that happiness

Lies in finding meaning

In what I already do;

As long as I pursue

My focus is on the future;

Only when I stop

Can I be present

And perceive the wonder

Of what is

*Fix It*

Seeking to be the best

No matter how noble the goal

Focuses me on myself

And on the future;

Seeking to fix what's in front of me,

Whether it's a broken toaster or a runny nose,

Focuses me on problem-solving

And the satisfaction of day to day accomplishments

That runs deeper than a brief splash of fame

*Second by Second*

No matter how many worries

No matter how many doubts

No matter how disturbing the memories

No matter how badly worn out;

I can cope with this moment

This instant of time

And trust God that eventually

The rest will be fine

*Scholar*

When alone

Learning about my world

Or teaching what I know in writing;

When with people

Learning about my fellow humans

Or teaching what I know in speech;

This wonder

This curiosity

This agility of spirit and mind

This is the stuff of joy!

I leave with God

My troubles

My faults

Their troubles

Their faults

And everything that perturbs

This bliss

*Dance*

Gently embrace what is  
Not comparing it to the past  
And feeling loss  
Not comparing it to the future  
And feeling anxious  
Not comparing it to what others have  
And feeling jealousy  
Not clinging to it  
Fearing change  
Not pushing it away  
Fearing harm;  
Accepting the truth,  
The rhythm of life  
That is not nearly so harsh  
When we dance with it  
And trust it to lead us Home

*Sweetness*

The apple falls and rolls away

I chase it and fall on my face

I get up and run until weary

Then finally grasp it and bite:

It is sour;

I look in my other hand:

The sweet fruit was there all along

*Getting There*

How do I reach the moment?

With hope

I let go of the future

And all its anxious possibilities

Knowing it will ultimately be good;

With faith

I let go of the past

Its failures, losses, and guilt

Knowing I am redeemed;

With love

I live in today

Thankful for all I experience

Blessing others as I have been blessed

And am present, fully

*The Bridge*

The bridge  
Between the reverent spirit  
And the helping hands  
Is formed  
When we walk mindfully with God  
And every step  
Is a prayer

*Passing it On*

When I teach about fairness

I become fair

When I teach about kindness

I become kind

When I teach about hope

I become hopeful

When I teach about peace

I become peaceful

When I teach about all I aspire to be

I become it

In that moment

Simply by focusing

On passing it on

*Life Lessons*

Few things I worry about happen  
    But other awful things do  
Few things I fantasize about happen  
    But other wonderful things do  
Few hurts I hold onto are healed  
    But I learn from those I let go  
Few losses I grieve are restored  
    But in grieving them I am renewed  
And open once more to experience

*Constant*

As players cross a stage, coming and going

As the mist I sail through disappears

As cobwebs fall away

So my thoughts pass by

Leaving me still

Centered

Resting

In You

*Morning Train*

Ignore the clatter of the mind  
Hear the rails' quick rhythm  
See the blurr of autumn leaves  
Outside the window pane  
Fold your arms to save the warmth  
Munch your apple-a-day  
Smell Chanel across the aisle  
Smile for all that's good  
Rest in God's love  
Rest in God's love  
Rest in God's love  
For a while

*Forever Moments*

It's never too early for heaven

It's never too late for God

There's always a chance of connection

To the Love that joins us all

Time folds itself up when we're joyous

Accordions as we laugh

There is no before and after

Only one-ness with life's Path

*'Is'ing*

What I have

What I have learned

What I am capable of doing;

What I feel

What I perceive

What I remember fondly;

All of these I am thankful for

But I can only be truly grateful

When I am content with what is:

When I no longer yearn for more

Or different, or better;

When I no longer lack

Accomplishments, attributes, relationships;

When I no longer worry about

Health, family, security;

When I no longer hang on to

Money, resentments, and time;

Content with what is

Even if it is all there will ever be

Knowing I am well enough to savor

This moment, this gift from God

## 12. Compassion based on Our Common Being

We suffer when a family member suffers, as if a part of our own body were afflicted. We rejoice when a family member finds happiness, as if the happiness were our own. We belong to only one family: the human family, God's family. How can we not care for our kin? How can we imagine God not caring for any one of us?

### *God Includes*

God includes

All beings that have been

All beings yet to be

All beings we know about

All that we cannot see

All beings we treasure

All beings we hate

All beings regardless

Of nature, place, or date

*Related*

If I value

My relationship with God

And my relationship with you

Then I must value

Your relationship with God

Whatever it may be

And know that there are as many such relationships

As there are beings alive

And each is different

Yet loving

For God's capacity to love has no end

*Whose God?*

God does not belong to the successful

God does not belong to the democratic

God does not belong to the educated

God does not belong to the pious

God does not belong to the poor

God does not belong to the oppressed

God does not belong to the ignorant

God does not belong to the ostracized

God does not belong to anyone in particular...

We all belong to God

*The Mystics' Common Bond*

Jews cannot name God  
Muslims cannot depict Him  
My own church speaks of Holy Mystery  
And so, central to all faiths  
Is humble acceptance  
That the Sacred is beyond human description;  
If we remembered this  
We would live in peace  
For awe-struck people cannot fight

*Faiths*

So many wells to one Water Table

So many leaves stirred by one Wind

So many windows on Infinity

So many roads Home

*Many 'Gods'*

Don't just tolerate diversity of religion

Celebrate it

For without diversity

God would only be accessible

To those with certain abilities

To those of certain backgrounds

To those of certain temperaments

To those with certain knowledge

To those with certain education levels

To those with certain opportunities

To those living at certain times and places in history;

With diversity

Access to God is certain

For all

*God's Psychology*

Respect all life

And your individual goals come second

Submit to God

And you cannot pursue selfish ends

Let go of personal attachments

And you reach enlightenment

Remember you're chosen and have nothing to prove

And become free to do God's work

Lose your ordinary, self-centered life

And you will be reborn a child of God;

In different ways

All faiths seek to liberate from the focus on self

When pointing to the Sacred,

And so inspire compassionate action

*Never Alone*

Creator and creation touch  
In the recognition  
That God joins us in our suffering  
Yet transcends all suffering  
All time, all space, all life, all death  
And that in joining others in their suffering  
In seeking to give to others  
As God has given to us  
We are never alone  
And we too transcend

*Grace*

We strive to avoid suffering  
Then to find meaning in the suffering we encounter  
Or in spite of it, when suffering defies all logic  
Then we realize that much of life is suffering  
As long as we dwell on our feelings;  
God's grace eases suffering  
By taking us outside the particular feelings  
Outside the loss of love, of security, of face, of life  
To rest, to acceptance, to peace,  
To what we can still do  
That diminishes suffering all around

*Peace*

Every generation  
Estranged from God  
Estranged from Love  
By trauma, cruelty, and grief  
Rears children  
Estranged from God  
Estranged from Love  
Inflicting trauma, cruelty, and grief  
And war and violence continue;  
When we are able to raise a generation of children in peace  
And love them as God loves us:  
Attentively  
Authentically  
Unconditionally  
Honoring all beings  
As though we were never scarred,  
Then we will have peace

*Mine is Best*

I say my architect is best  
And lose sight of His handiwork

I say my prophet is best  
And forget his sacred Message

I say my book is best  
And claim mine is the only true Author

I say my rules are best  
And insist they be followed by all;  
The Architect, Message, Author,  
And Foundation of all meaningful rules

Weeps

Because the pride that says  
“Mine is the best”  
Pushes us apart  
And pushes us away  
From all that has ever mattered

*Letting Go*

Whatever you value

Don't insist that others value it

Whatever moves you

Don't insist that others be moved

Whatever you practice

Don't insist that others practice it

Whatever you believe

Don't insist that others be convinced

For there are as many paths to the Sacred

As there are worshippers

And as many truths

As there are tongues

And none knows the Answer completely:

Only in confessing our ignorance

Can we find a God for all;

Only in softening our individual ideals

Can we join to become agents of Good

*At War*

At war we vilify dissent  
And disrespect the individual  
Quashing human rights in the name of safety;  
At war we depict our enemies as inhuman  
And disrespect others  
Making them easier to kill;  
At war we become preoccupied with our traumas  
And disrespect our children  
Breeding insecurity: the seed of future wars;  
At war, history is written by the victor  
And we disrespect the truth  
That our crimes equal those of our enemies;  
At war we claim to know God's choice of sides  
And disrespect God  
Whose love embraces all;  
At war we convert our vital resources to arms  
And thoughtlessly scorch the earth  
As we disrespect, and ultimately destroy  
All life

*On Neither Side*

When God is forced to choose sides

God cannot be present

Except to take home the fallen

Comfort the bereaved

Strengthen the wise

Until they can stop the battle;

When God is forced to choose sides

God cannot be present,

For God unifies

Man divides

*Messiahs*

A God who feels

Human fear

Human isolation

Human hopelessness

Redeems us;

To walk with God,

To participate in redemption

We must feel

Human fear

Human isolation

Human hopelessness;

Only by joining those who suffer

Can we lessen their suffering

*Pilgrimage*

Only when I admit  
That I know almost nothing about You  
That I can never truly describe You  
That I cannot claim to understand You  
Any better than anyone else  
Can I be open to your Presence  
And see all who seek your Presence  
With the same humble bewilderment  
As kindred spirits  
And join them  
In seeking your Peace

*Welcome*

If you belong to a special group or special nation

And treasure that specialness

You are separated from the rest of humanity;

But if you value people

Special or not,

You will never be alone

*Never Alone*

What must I teach my children

I ask myself

As I fret on the morning train

Which of life's lessons to choose?

Only this:

That like me

Like everyone

They are part of the Ocean of Life

So no matter where they are

Or how they direct their energies

They are not alone

And I am not alone either

For in some way we are all connected

And in that connection

We cannot help but feel compassion for others

We cannot help but do what is right

We cannot help but be strong

In the face of danger and mortality

We cannot help but contribute

To the Tide of Love

*Sharing*

Compassion is natural

When understanding the unity of all beings

For how can I not empathize

With a part of myself?

How can I destroy another

Without diminishing myself?

How can I bring joy to another

Without rejoicing?

I am never alone

As long as I can see another's face

*Salvation*

Who wants to live forever

When all beings die?

Who wants to enjoy heaven

When others suffer in hell?

How can I save myself

And not return for my children?

We are all children of the same Universe

We are all saved or doomed together

*Immigrant*

It is not enough

To accept you

Tolerate you

Treat you with common courtesy

Allow you to live in my neighborhood

If I don't also

Comfort you

Nourish you

Value what you have to offer

Learn about your customs and beliefs;

To do this I must see you

As a fellow child of God

For only then

Can I befriend you

Treasure you

Advocate for you

Find joy in you

As I befriend, treasure, advocate for, and find joy in

My closest kin

*In the Unity of All Being*

In the Unity of All Being

There is both wonder and pain:

Wonder because we are part of Something

That is greater, wiser, stronger

More noble, more intricate, more generous,

More vast, more lasting

Than we can describe in words;

Pain because so many beings suffer

Hurt, cold, hunger

Injustice, exclusion

Fear, rage, despair

And in the Unity of All Being

Their suffering is ours;

In the Unity of All Being

Life's purpose is simple:

Share the wonder, reduce the pain

*Peace*

I sent a wish for peace  
On my Christmas cards, then realized  
That peace is more than the absence of war:

Peace is the awareness  
That all that we hope for  
All that we anticipate  
All that we aspire to  
All that we yearn for  
All that we seek  
All that we pray for  
All that we need, and want, and crave  
Is here, now  
In the discovery that we are one  
With each other  
And with all Being

*In You*

In You

We are one

So I cannot be cruel

For that would mean hurting myself

In You

We are blessed

So I cannot curse life

And deny the wonder of being

In You

I can only

Feel wanted and loved

And love and want those around me

In You

I can hope

That Your life-giving ways

Will some day touch every heart

*Joy*

I'd like to see my child do well  
Not to reflect well on its mother  
Or relieve her anxiety about its future  
But just because it gives me joy

To see it thrive;

I'd like to see you do well  
Not to reflect well on me  
Or relieve my anxiety about your future  
But just because if gives me joy

To see you thrive;

I'd like to see this group do well  
Not to reflect well on me  
Or relieve my anxiety about its future  
But just because if gives me joy

To see it thrive;

I'd like to see the human family do well  
Not to reflect well on me  
Or relieve my anxiety about its future  
But just because it gives me joy

To see it thrive

*Echoes*

Seek to feed

And you will not hunger

Seek to quench

And you will not thirst

Seek to understand

And you will be understood

Seek to calm

And you will find peace;

When you give what you desire most

You give to all Life

And what is given can't help but come back

As the music you play

Brings joy to your ears

And your own caring words

Make you whole

*When I am Grounded*

When I am grounded  
I make each moment count

When I am grounded  
I serve the Greater Good

When I am grounded  
I do not crave the spotlight

When I am grounded  
I seek to heal, to love

When I am grounded  
I join with those before me,  
Behind me, and around

When I am grounded  
I drink from ancient wellsprings  
And teach without a sound

When I am grounded  
I know my destination  
But focus on the way

When I am grounded  
I hurt with others' sorrows  
And hold instead of pray

*Loving Legacy*

Whether you succeed

Whether you fail

Whether people like you

Or you end up in jail

Whether the sun shines on you

Or you're caught in the pelting rain

Whether things work out

Or end in accidents and pain,

Know this always

That within your veins

Runs the Legacy of millions:

Their wisdom and their strength remains

### 13. Compassion based on Paying Forward

When we experience God's love on a personal level, as a love more unconditional than any parent can give, we want to pay back what we have received. Paying back is not possible though, so our only option is to pay forward: providing others with a similar but human version of what we have experienced.

#### *Golden Rule*

Do unto others not as you would have them do to you

But as God has done to you:

As God has given to you,

So give;

As God has forgiven you,

So forgive;

As God has held you,

So hold;

As God has accepted you,

So accept;

As God has loved you,

So love

*Family*

Live God's love

Not because you follow the commandments,

Not because you should,

Not to win approval,

Not because it's considered ethical

But because you cannot do anything else:

When you feel accepted

As a child of God

And you see others as God's children too,

That inner knowledge must come out

And compassion becomes as natural as breathing

*Shine*

White, brilliant light  
Contrasts with the darkness most:  
A symbol of inspiration,  
Of goodness conquering bad  
And yet, most of us prefer lamps to naked bulbs,  
Knowing intuitively  
That life is never that brilliant, that pure  
And a translucent, dusty shade  
Creates a softer light;  
Those who recognize their impurities,  
Experience forgiveness, forgive themselves,  
And then dare to shine with love  
Gently, persistently illuminate the world

*Parents*

God the Father or Mother  
Is the perfect metaphor,  
For no other human love  
Approximates God's Love  
Like the love of a parent for a child;  
To live God's love,  
I must love others  
As I have been loved  
As I love my children:  
Giving them always what I believe is best  
With no strings attached;  
The children of God  
Are parents to the world

*Giving*

If I give what I think is wanted

I seek approval,

If I give what I think will help

I seek self-worth,

If I give what I think is enough

I am stingy,

If I give what I think is good

I am proud,

If I give without thought

As I have been given

No matter what the response

And thankfully take others' gifts

Then my gift is a blessing

That brings into life

My Source of All Blessing

My God

*Mother*

As a mother

No matter how much my child hurt me

I would never give up on my child

Or stop teaching my child

What is necessary for life;

I would never leave my child

Without the means

To carry on without me;

I would never hate my child

Or point out flaws

That cannot be forgiven;

I would never send my child

Into a wilderness

That cannot be crossed;

I would always be there for my child,

I would always see promise in my child

Even if my child had horrible self-doubts,

My child would still be the most precious, special, unbelievably blessed being to me;

If I regard all I meet with a mother's love

Then I become a conduit of the love of God

*Becoming Blessing*

May I forgive

As I have been forgiven,

May I hold

As I have been held,

May I encourage

As I have been encouraged,

May I be present with others

As You are present with me

*The Generous Spirit*

The generous Spirit

Gives you the benefit of the doubt,

Approaches you with curiosity rather than judging,

Assumes you are just having a bad day

And encourages your strengths;

The generous Spirit

Sees past the defenses borne of fear

To the wounded child within,

Confident that the child will find courage,

Will heal,

And will shine forth with love,

And responds as though she already had

So she too can exude

The generous Spirit

*Paying Forward*

In forgiving

As God has forgiven me,

In welcoming

As God has welcomed me,

In embracing

As God has embraced me,

In encouraging

As God has encouraged me,

In liberating

As God has liberated me,

There is joy

*Heaven*

God is the Spirit of Compassion:  
I experience God's Compassion  
And experience compassion for myself  
And experience compassion for others  
And can go beyond experience  
To compassionate action;  
If others respond to that action  
By experiencing compassion too,  
Then the Spirit of Compassion  
Infuses more and more of life;  
Maybe that's how we make heaven happen

*Already There*

I am already loved by God,  
I am already valued by God,  
I am already encouraged by God,  
I already belong with God  
So I need not impress anyone  
And am free  
To love,  
To value,  
To encourage,  
And to share belonging  
With others

*Intervention*

When I pray for others

I can only pray:

Strengthen them

As You have strengthened me,

Forgive them

As You have forgiven me,

Love them

As You have loved me,

And teach me to do the same

*Gently*

Because God loves me gently

With forgiveness, acceptance, and encouragement

I can love others gently

With forgiveness, acceptance, and encouragement

And, if I remember,

I can love myself gently

With forgiveness, acceptance, and encouragement

*Honor*

Honor your body,

Honor your mind;

Take care of them,

Celebrate them,

Do not harm them

For through them

You communicate God's love;

Honor each person's body,

Honor each person's mind;

Take care of them,

Celebrate them,

Do not harm them

For through them

Each person communicates God's love

*Beginning at Home*

I yearn to participate  
In a good solution,  
In realizing God's dream,  
In fulfilling creation's promise  
Yet, as a part of that creation,  
I cannot act upon it  
Only within it  
And within myself;  
God's love spreads  
Into open hearts  
Willing to love and honor themselves  
And love and honor each other  
As God has loved and honored each one

*May I Be*

May I be authentic,  
Speaking the truth kindly;  
May I be inspiring,  
Sharing what I know with joy;  
May I be loving,  
Seeking what matters to each person I meet;  
Thankful for these goals  
And the means to reach them  
As I experience authentic, inspiring Love  
That is ever-present, everywhere  
Cradling the universe

*Vulnerable God*

God reaches out to the vulnerable  
And joins us in our vulnerability,  
Loving us unconditionally  
Whether or not we love back,  
Entrusting creation to our care;  
So how can we not  
Reach out to the vulnerable  
And join them in their vulnerability,  
Loving them unconditionally  
Whether or not they love back,  
Entrusting the future to their care

*Torch-Bearers*

As God entrusts the world to us  
So we must trust  
In the sacred Spark  
That exists in every being;  
Assume it is there  
No matter how deeply buried,  
Nurture it as we would a child  
By respecting those  
Who cannot respect themselves,  
By being proud of their deeds  
When they cannot take pride themselves,  
By forgiving them  
When they cannot forgive themselves,  
By loving them  
When they cannot love themselves;  
As we are trusted, so we must trust  
As keepers of Love's flame

*Belonging*

If I am God's  
Then I must forgive them  
As God forgives them,  
Then I must have hope for them  
As God has hope for them,  
Then I must listen to them  
As God listens to them,  
Then I must teach them  
As God teaches them,  
Then I must believe in them  
As God believes in them,  
Then I must love them  
As God loves them;  
For, if I am God's,  
Then I must know that all beings are  
And in that knowledge  
Embrace them

*As God*

As God has forgiven me

When I could not forgive myself

So must I now forgive you;

As God has understood me

When I could not understand myself

So must I now understand you;

As God has believed in me

When I could not believe in myself

So must I now believe in you;

As God has loved me

When I could not love myself

So must I now love you;

For even in the unforgiving, judgmental, discouraging, rejecting

Latrines of human existence

There is God,

There is hope,

And you are beautiful and strong

*God Be With You*

May the Sacred within you shine forth,

May you never cease to Wonder,

May the Force be with you,

May the Spirit move you,

May you be blessed

And be a blessing

To all you touch

Amen

### 14. Visions

Sometimes the Sacred is more apparent in images or in sensory experiences than in words. The meaning of these images and experiences may overlap with ideas already described, but it is expressed in a different way.

#### *The Diamond*

Free will, the philosophers say,  
Is there so I don't feel like God's puppet  
And God doesn't feel guilty for allowing evil;  
Free will, I say,  
Is there to allow each being  
Its own exploration of one facet  
Of the infinitely faceted Sacred;  
So that none are excluded  
Unless they fight over which facet is best  
And thereby diminish God

*Catch the Wind*

God is reached  
When I stop pursuing,  
And instead  
Watch, wait, and wonder  
Until touched by the gentle Breeze  
Of Grace

*Far from the Beach*

Surf the waves,  
Stop fighting them  
Or yearning for calm,  
And embrace others on the ride;  
Know that the current pushes towards Shore  
Even if you cannot see ahead;  
Observe the chaos  
And trust that,  
Frightening and inevitable as it is,  
It will pass  
And you will reunite with Peace

*Skiing*

When I look back at the trail  
Where I have panted uphill,  
Where glided with ease,  
Where dared a steep pitch,  
Where fallen and risen again  
Returning to my snowy plod,  
I thank my Companion,  
My limbs' Guiding Force,  
My Teacher,  
Trail-keeper  
And Maker of sun, snow, and air

*Kayaking*

Do not pray for an easy life  
For calm waters do not progress;  
Pray instead for a means to do the right thing  
For there is no greater joy  
Than to strive to do it and succeed;  
Even if the striving is turbulent  
As your work conflicts with the currents  
Of popular opinion  
And is degraded and obstructed  
By ignorant leaders currently in vogue;  
Fight the current  
Or skillfully paddle through it,  
Do not be relegated to a peripheral pond  
Unless it is to catch your breath  
And find your bearings  
For the next leg of the journey

*Leaving the Hospital*

Whatever tragedy has befallen,  
Whatever problems loom,  
Whatever grips my fevered mind,  
Whatever shakes my soul  
I feel the sunshine on my arm,  
Cool breezes blow my hair;  
I need only drive from here to there:  
This moment I am blessed

*The Marketplace*

Once I saw life as a road  
With each new career goal  
And each new relationship goal  
Marking the passage of time  
And occasionally I'd let myself stop  
To smell the flowers;  
Now I see that life is the flowers  
Which delight my senses  
And need my care,  
Giving to me and accepting from me  
As all beings give to and accept from each other,  
Give to and accept from the planet,  
Give to and accept from God;  
It's not a lonely road I see now  
But a marvelous, timeless  
Marketplace for all

*Amoeba*

What if we are all extensions,  
Individual yet inseparable limbs,  
Of one single-celled Being  
That forms us,  
Sustains us,  
Connects us,  
Draws us back into Itself  
But cannot define Itself,  
Move forward,  
Or impact the universe  
Without us?

*Creation Myth*

Once there was a Vase  
Perfectly cast and exquisite  
But empty;  
When It could stand the emptiness no more  
It shattered,  
Each piece taking on its own life  
Yet knowing its Origin deep within  
And yearning to rejoin It  
By joining with the other pieces;  
So the static, empty Vase  
Became dynamic and teeming with life,  
But only by breaking apart  
And trusting the pieces  
To one day make It whole

*Telescope*

We view the stars  
And think we see the universe,  
Yet if we saw them through the Hubble  
What myriad swirls of purple galaxies  
Would be added to our view!  
Some so distant that their brightness  
Might shine from centuries ago  
And hide what's there today;  
Still, Hubble's view is only a piece  
Of the unimaginable whole;  
We view our faith  
And think we see God  
The Creator of that whole,  
Yet the wisest sage or prophet  
Gives only a Hubble's view

*Vision*

See reality as God would have it be  
Even if it is not that way yet,  
See beyond your linear thought  
To curiosity about the inexplicable,  
See beyond your limited justice  
To limitless generosity,  
See beyond your conventional self-esteem  
To knowing you can endure more  
Reach more  
Be more  
Than you ever imagined

*Here and Now*

I am baptized by snowflakes

Melting on my brow,

Caressed by a cooling breeze;

I am calmed by the surf's sound

Drumming in my ears,

I feel the sunbeam's embrace;

At times like these

I stop pursuing

A seemingly elusive Truth:

Sometimes the Ground of All Being reveals Itself

As the ground beneath my feet

*Sunrise*

Success is not  
Achieving the spotlight;  
Success is  
Finding some small way  
To help bring about the Dawn

*Soul*

Whatever piece of me  
Is aware of being one  
With all beings,  
With all life  
And lives in ways  
Consistent with that awareness  
Becomes more than me,  
Becomes eternal,  
Becomes Love

*Walk*

If you are seeking God, walk  
Then walk some more;  
Walk until walking itself becomes a pleasure,  
Until you no longer think about how far you have come  
Or how far you have to go,  
Until you hear only  
The wind stirring the leaves  
And the steady pulse that sustains you,  
Until you see only  
The path beckoning ahead  
And the sweat on the tip of your nose,  
Until you feel only  
The soft, yielding earth below  
And the easy flow of air within,  
Until your arms swing without effort  
And your footsteps follow the Rhythm of the Universe

*Traveling*

When I am traveling  
I make the most of each day  
But don't fret if I cannot do everything planned;

When I am traveling  
I accept that some things are beyond my control  
And take unforeseen glitches in stride;

When I am traveling  
I am open to unexpected joys  
Savor the moments that hold them, and go on;

When I am traveling  
I have no image to maintain  
So am free to be more than my usual self;

But isn't all of my life

Traveling?

*Transparent*

The more I build my self up  
The less the light of God can shine through me;  
Knowing I am loved  
I can forget my self,  
I am transparent,  
Luminous  
And blessed

*Mountains*

I stand on the peak looking outward  
To the distant, glistening lake,  
Mighty summits to my left and right  
Forming an unbroken circle:  
Ancient guardians and friends  
Beckoning towards the turquoise pool;  
The chill of dusk approaches  
But the mountains remain warm,  
Glowing embers of the day;  
They surround me, envelope me,  
Hold me  
Until I feel held by all Time,  
Held by all Love,  
Held by the Universe itself  
Ready to float freely away if I choose  
Drawn to the light, to the lake, to the new horizon  
To the Infinity  
That is the Cradle of life and its end—  
But there's more work to be done  
So I take the gondola back down

*Window*

It doesn't matter

If I achieve great things,

It doesn't matter

If I fail;

It doesn't matter

If I resolve the past,

It doesn't matter

What comes;

It doesn't matter

If I am loved or scorned,

It doesn't matter

If I'm alone;

It doesn't matter

If I am confused or content,

It doesn't matter

If I feel pain;

It only matters

That in this encounter

I am Love:

I am a window for heaven's Light

To shine through this day

*The Way*

## God's Way

Celebrates the connection,  
The interdependence  
Between me and others,  
Between me and this time and place,  
Between me and God;  
And in so doing  
Dissolves me  
Into the greater Me  
That is its Origin  
Its Destiny  
Its Life

*Rainbows*

Only rain

Allows the sun's light

To show its true colours;

Only through despair

Do we truly understand Love

*Miracles*

There is no miracle but Love  
That survives within the darkness;  
There is no smoke-and-mirrors god  
That heals the sick by faith;  
There is no scientific feat  
That stems the ravages of time;  
There is no ingenious human plan  
That will save a dying planet;  
There is no miracle but Love  
And our ability to receive It

*The Cathedral*

How do you build a cathedral?

It can't be built alone

It takes architects, tradesmen, artists, and more

And still they can't finish the dome;

A boy comes along, a bit slower than most,

What can he add to the design?

"I'll tell people about it!" he sweetly chimes,

"I'll tell them and it will be fine!"

All beings are needed to finish God's home,

Every one has something to add;

This world's a cathedral: unfinished yet grand,

So receive others' gifts and be glad

*Labyrinth*

You cannot choose your path,  
Only how you walk it:  
Fast or slow,  
Poised or staggering clumsily,  
Intentionally, focused on each footstep,  
Or reactively, following every distraction,  
Taking the unpredictable turns with grace  
Or despairing of ever reaching your goal,  
Lingering in the quiet centre  
Then continuing on, as you must,  
Gently brushing past fellow travelers with a smile  
Or seeing them as frustrating obstacles,  
Never knowing how much further you have to go,  
Pursuing a seemingly random course  
Whose design is not clear until you end,  
Able only to trust that it leads somewhere good  
And that you are not alone on the journey

*Music*

If all I touch are those that hear my voice  
Or see my performance  
Or shake my hand  
Or read my book,  
Fame matters  
And when my fame dies, so do I;  
But if all life is connected in a wondrous Web  
And my tears are dewdrops that bend its strands  
And my words are fingers that strum it  
Then whatever I do ripples on across time,  
Whatever I am makes a difference  
To some broken soul,  
And when I am no longer seen or heard  
I'm still part of life's melody

*New World*

I cannot see the outcome  
Or tell when my work will bear fruit,  
I cannot hear a thank you  
Every time I try to help,  
I cannot know the impact  
My efforts will have over time,  
I cannot recognize the people  
Indirectly touched by my deeds,  
I can only trust  
That when I act with care  
Each encounter becomes like a prayer,  
A chance to welcome the Sacred in you  
And invite it to surface more often,  
And millions of encounters later, some day  
A world joined by Love will emerge

*Art*

At our best  
We are human expressions  
Of divine Intent,  
Artistic creations of the Sacred,  
Living manifestations  
Of an ancient Dream,  
Transforming, completing,  
And honoring life  
That it may reach its ultimate form  
In continuity and communion  
With all other beings on the tableau  
And with the Artist's brush

*Seeking Heaven*

Be the heaven you seek:

Be timeless,

Be selfless,

Worship your God without fear;

Be the heaven you seek:

Include all,

Respect all,

Grasp opportunities to give;

Be the heaven you seek:

Laugh often,

Thank always,

Never be too old to learn;

Be the heaven you seek:

Dream big,

Be open to love,

Look for the best in each being;

Be the heaven you seek

And if you can't,

Believe you can become it

*Great Soul*

Our souls,  
Those unique, sacred elements within each of us,  
Bleed together on life's canvas  
Forming one Great Soul  
That is without time  
Without boundary  
Without end  
And so knows us as no other  
And holds wisdom from all that live,  
Have lived, and are yet to be  
And in this Soul we have our being,  
However we describe It or relate to It;  
It fuels our desire to live  
Authentically, humbly, compassionately  
And with purpose  
Moving towards ever greater wholeness  
For ourselves,  
For each other,  
And for all creation

*Undivided Reality*

There is no young or old,

No traditional or modern,

There is only Love;

There is no winner or loser,

No hero or villain,

There is only Love;

There is no right or left,

No ally or foe,

There is only Love;

There is no man-made or natural,

No creature or creation,

There is only Love;

And no matter how clever our ideas,

How passionate our desires,

How powerful our actions,

How profound our deepest longings,

There is only Love,

There has only ever been Love,

And only Love will go on