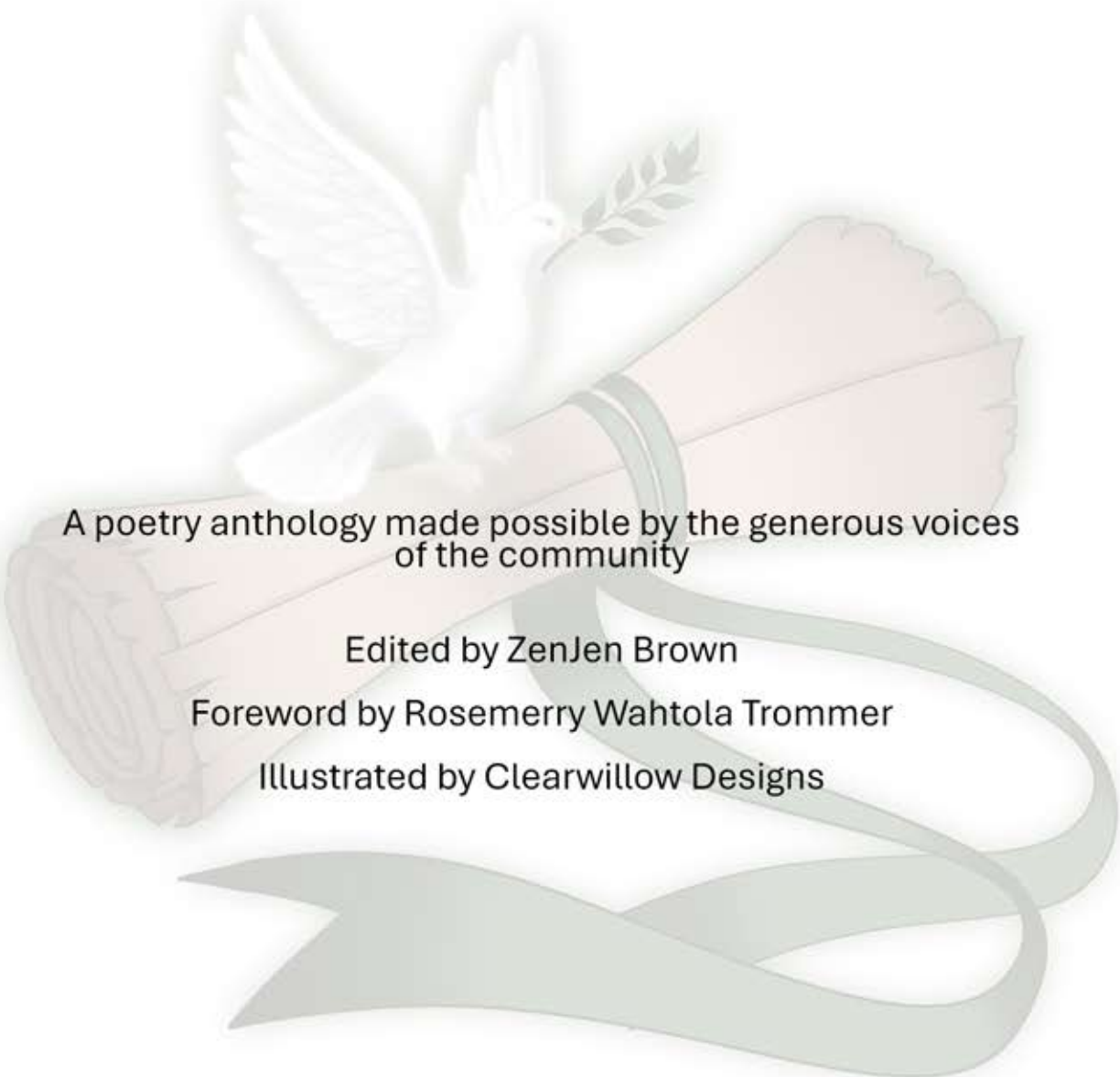


"Peace, Please"



A poetry anthology made possible by the generous voices of the community
Edited by ZenJen Brown

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Edited by ZenJen Brown

Foreword by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Illustrated by Clearwillow Designs

A Zenful Conversations Publication

2025



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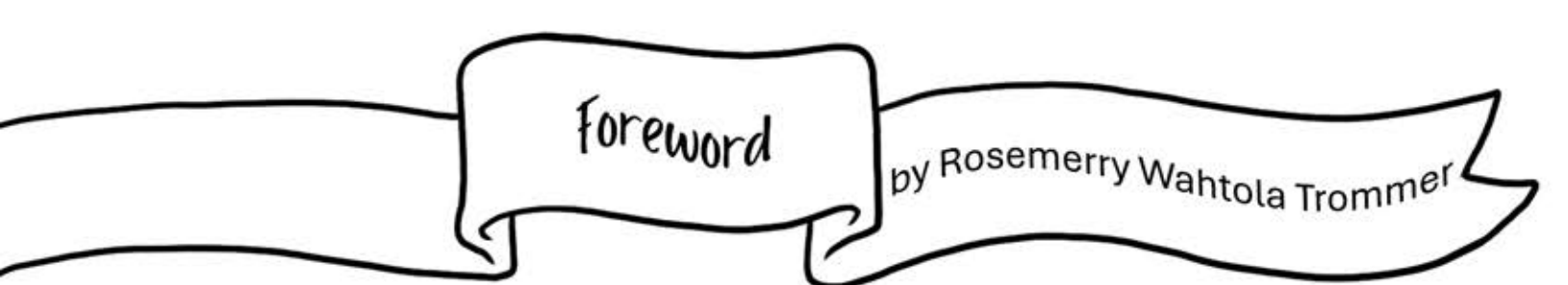
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For those who long for peace, and those who keep choosing it anyway.



foreword

by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

As a young girl, I used to love singing, especially in situations where I felt uncomfortable. Like at summer camp. Though I was awkward and generally didn't fit in well, I felt real joy and belonging when we all joined our voices around the fire or in the mess hall before a meal. Over forty years later, one of the songs that returns to me in quiet moments has a simple, repetitive lyric: *I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river in my soul.*

Even now, humming the tune alone in my room, I feel it again, the comfort it brings: the simple tune, the simple words, the memory of blending my voice with others. Less comforting, I hear a small, inner naysayer piping up with a challenge. *Do you really? Do you really have peace like a river in your soul?*

We live in a time rife with heartache. Division. Cruelty. War. Injustice. Derision. Brutality. What do I know of peace?

I know a few things peace is not. It's not a thing. It's not an object we attain. It's not a prize we earn. It's not dependent on conditions being perfect. It's not graspable. Not buy-able. Not impossible.

And what I do know of peace is that when I have felt it, it arrives not because I deserve it nor due to any effort of my own. In fact, I am not even sure it's correct to say peace arrives. I have felt it alone and with others. I have felt it when I was in a state of delight and also in the most difficult chapters of my life.

And all this is making me think it might be true—peace might, in fact, be like a river. Something both ever-changing and changeless. Something that transforms whatever it touches. Something that reflects us. Something filled with life. Something that will carry us if we let it.

That's what it feels like, reading this gorgeous anthology on peace—like being carried on a river of words. Poems that wrestle with difficult questions. Poems swirling with wonder and nuance and complexity. Poems thrumming with currents that change my inner landscapes, softening what has become hardened, eroding my inner walls.

I notice how joining our varied voices to make one offering brings comfort, just as it did when I was a girl at camp. I rest in the communion of it. The connection of it. The harmony of it. The beauty of coming together to contribute to something greater than ourselves.



foreword

continued

Often I find myself wondering, what can I do? How can I help create peace? I think of my spiritual teacher, Joi Sharp, who reminds me “not past the tip of the nose.” Which is to say that the first and most essential practice is within. Where is that peace like a river? *In my soul*. But that doesn’t mean we don’t follow what is ours to do in the world.

I am so grateful ZenJen Brown followed her own inner voices that whispered, “Make an anthology. This is something you can do.” And she did. It is no easy task to herd poets. To gather permissions. To find the right arc. But here, in your hands, is a glorious collaboration dreamed up by one person who thought, “This is what I can do.”

As she writes in the final poem in the book, *Let the words shared in these pages / settle softly within you. / Let them land wherever they’re meant to*. Yes. Let the words land like little waves on the shores of your understanding. Or perhaps like great waves that reshape you in surprising ways.

Peace. Like a river. May we gather on its banks and wade in its waters. May it carry us, even when, especially when, we are uncomfortable. May we know it and unknow it and reknow it from the inside out. May it flow.

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer
Placerville, CO
November 14, 2025



Introduction

by ZenJen Brown

Hi friends! I'm so happy you're here, truly!

This anthology began as the softest whisper inside me, a nudge to create something that might bring us closer to peace, to ourselves, and to one another. I didn't know exactly what it would become, only that it arrived as an intuitive hit... a quiet "yes" I couldn't ignore.

When I invited poets from our community to share their work, I was overwhelmed by the response - not in volume, but in depth. Each poem arrived with a kind of honesty I could feel... a piece of someone's heart handed to me with trust, vulnerability, and courage. I don't take that kind of trust lightly.

Putting this collection together has been a sacred experience for me. I welcomed each poem as it came in, honored its voice, and placed it where it felt naturally called to be. Every piece was offered with sincerity and openness, shared for everyone here, and for the larger peace we hope to encourage beyond these pages. I tended to this collection with Reiki energy, quiet prayer, and steady presence, holding the whole process with as much love and care as I could.

These pages may stir memories, questions, or emotions you didn't expect. If they do, please honor what comes up. Pause. Breathe. Let yourself settle. Do what feels kind and supportive for your nervous system. There's no need to rush, let these offerings meet you exactly where you are, at the pace that feels right for you.

My hope is that you feel the presence of every heart who contributed, a sense of togetherness that reaches beyond the page, and the strength of this community reminding you that we're walking through all of this together.

Thank you again for being here. As steward of this anthology, it has been one of my greatest honors - and honestly - one of the most beautiful experiences of my life.

In Love and Peace,

ZenJen Brown xoxo

I Just Have to Say

by Gloria Heffernan

Or maybe I don't.
Maybe I just have to listen.

Maybe I can take a breath, take a walk
take the time to ask, *What can I do for you?*

Maybe being right isn't as important
as being kind.

Maybe the world will keep turning
even if I don't air my list of grievances.

Maybe the sun will shine, and the birds will sing,
and the flowers will bloom without benefit of my bluster.

Maybe the unsaid word is more eloquent
than the unnecessary declaration.

Maybe not always, but maybe right now,
I can make a quiet space for peace.



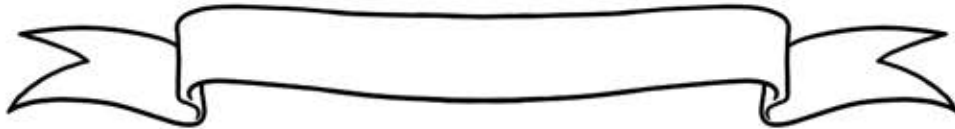
Between Calls

by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

I walk out the door and
lie on the ground and
let the earth hold me,
let the sun soak me,
let breath do
what breath does.

And if there is any
part of me that doesn't know
it is part of everything,
it is lost in the vast peace
that fills me when
everything warms
and the kingfisher flies
over my silence
with his *clackclackclack*
and the air smells of river
and greening grass.

It doesn't last,
but for this small eternity,
I am what a wind is,
only more, only less.



"I can get so focused on work, sitting at the table in my kitchen with my phone, computer and stack of books and papers, I can forget there is anything but that small measure of space and the eternal list of things to do. I am always so grateful when some inner voice tells me, "Walk away, sweetheart. Go outside." And every single time I follow that voice—every single time—I am amazed by how quickly my whole body softens when I offer the vaster world my whole attention, how much more spaciousness enters me then." - Rosemerry

Breathing Peace

by Cristina M. R. Norcross

If peace was something we could hold
in our hands,
we would mold it like clay.
We would shape it into a circle,
leaving our thumbprint on it,
then carefully pass it into
the knowing hands of the next person,
as if handling a newborn sparrow.
If peace was something we could breathe,
we would close our eyes and savor the precious air
flowing into our lungs—
passing through our lips.
That exhale would be a prayer.
It would be a song in three-part harmony.
If peace was something we could taste,
it would be figs drizzled with honey.
We would arrange it on a plate
with a silk-petaled sunflower
decorating the center.
We would pass the plate around
with reverence, ensuring that every single person
received nourishment.
If peace was something we could walk to,
it would be a sacred labyrinth of circles.
We would greet each other on the meditative path.
We would come together at the center
and admire our cohesive union—
arms raised to the sun,
rejoicing in what we could not see or touch,
but we could feel it.
We have been walking together
for such a long time.
We have always been at peace,
but we become lost in the forgetting.

This is What I Found

by Linda Meg Frith

At the center of chaos
And uncertainty,
underneath the fear,
a core belief of hope and possibility
a sense that something magical
lay just beyond my reach
unfathomable
ungraspable by human hands,
unless, a way appears
I've done it before
when I went to Albuquerque
all was fresh
and new
and possible
before the ruts were formed again
and homeostasis set it
when I was young
before the weariness set in.
I took the leap into the unknown
unwittingly expecting only good.
but if, just maybe, if
I could get still enough,
allow the flow to take me out of my own way
drift into the possible,
ever so gently
peace would come



Peace, Love and Bagels

by Jan Haag

Said the guy towing a small trailer
behind his bike on a Friday
garbage morning, after he stopped,
opened the blue bin in front
of my house, searching for cans.

And I thought, as I installed
a new little flag on my front yard
with two fingers waving a peace sign,
That's the flag I want, one that says,
Peace, Love and Bagels.

And make it an everything bagel
to reflect everyone,
especially those who come along
behind us and quietly clean up
what we so casually discard.

The Absence of Things

by Brooke Elias

"To have and to hold "
- we cling onto things.
But Peace is not a thing.
It is the absence of things:
the absence of pain and grief,
war and conflict,
meanness and hate,
worry, greed and anger.

When we dismiss things,
let go of their hold,
- even for a moment -
we provide haven for Peace:
grasp calm and grace,
transcend emotions,
face fear unfazed,
trust bliss in no-thing-ness.



"The Absence of Things" by Brooke Elias. Used with permission from the author.

Peace Makes Perfect Sense

by Suzanne S. Austin-Hill

Sight of a puppy, kitten or baby

Scents of sliced apples freckled with cinnamon frying in butter

Tongue assaulting a front-and-back spoonful of Breyer's All Natural Vanilla ice cream

Children's laughter demolishing fortified walls of sadness

Holding the hand of one you truly love unconditionally





Peace

by Cheryl Anderson

She's as fleeting as the dove

And not as faithful as the anguish discords in life.

That feeling of darkness has swept through my body with great efficiency.

It has left me weak, injured and tired.

Peace can sometimes appear without warning offering a bright calm serenity,

But when Fear and anxiety show their hand, she is quickly driven away.

I think I caught a glimpse of her a few times.

It was hard to tell since she can evolve and take on different forms over time.

Therefore, hope must be my anchor.

As I have reached the last chapter, my very life depends on it.

In desperation, I'll hold on tight when she returns.

I'll Keep her and safeguard her deep within my sole.

My wish is that her soft white feathers surround me

with whatever tranquil efficient power, her wings will allow.

Helping me to see a future while feeling protected, and relaxed.

Recent events have demonstrated that she is the primary source to aid towards my healing and quest for longevity.

It is Time

by Carol Alena Aronoff

It is time to kiss the peonies' bright petals,
inhale the fragrance of jasmine's sweet lure.
Instead of worry or despair, pause briefly
at the sounds of wind, the lullaby of yellow
warblers whistling– their messages of peace
and comfort are meant for you. When things
seem hopeless, bend to touch the earth and
gather up some dirt; let it run through your
fingers, remembering our common origins,
how seeds can even grow in hostile soil.





The Cup

by Annette Langlois Grunseth

Hold your hands
one inside the other
listen to steady rain
roll off the porch roof
smooth your anxious edges
hands cupped, sip
on songs of house finches
sleek music of cardinals
amid an afternoon shower.
Listen for guidance within
take shelter, weather-out feelings
lean a while
let peace reside
in the cup of your hand—
soak up the Spirit
who is steady
like the rain.



I Wish the Rain

by Marjorie Moorhead

How I wish the rain
Could wash us clean

Could assuage the pain
We cause each other

Our world is warring again
Innocents are suffering

The machinery of rage
Keeps killing

Our planet is under fire
This earth we live on

Tonight's moon is a claw in the sky
Harsh crescent scratching to survive

Each tree sheds many tears
The soil hardens beneath us

I wish the raindrops could teach us
a way to peace



Hard Morning Rain

by Lisa Breger

Jimmy Carter is dead
and what's to come comes as pouring rain.

But no matter our current cloud cover
the sun persists 91 million miles away

way further than Canada
or the next trump presidency.

Flags at half-staff remind us wherever we go, there's weather.
Just listen to it come down on rooftops he built with his own hands.

Jimmy Carter is gone and what's to come
no longer feels like a habitat

for humanity with all the rhetoric
of breakage, extreme storm patterns

that form and beat down
the spirits of tired, weary travelers,

in our unlikely homes that still have open doors, welcome signs and
pride flags.

That good farmer planted so many seeds, left us so much

what will we do now, what can we cultivate
now that Jimmy Carter is gone.

As Shadows Lengthen

by Laura Foley

As I go about my day,
making love to my wife in the morning,

drinking coffee in streaming sun,
sun drawing tree shadows on snow,

as I stand by a frozen stream,
as it begins melting—

widening portals of light through ice,
a bear invades a neighboring hive,

as Russia invades Ukraine,
rips its frames for delectable larvae,

munching as I watch from the other side
of a broken stone wall,

as I remember how Stefan escaped
the Russian bear, and Nazis predation,

stealing his parents, grandmother, sister—
his defecting to the West, when he married me.

As Russia invades Ukraine,
the bear coats its tongue with sweetness,

with no thought for the bees
made homeless in the honey-less air—

as I go about my day, as shadows lengthen,
two weeks short of spring.

Independence Day

by Lanette Sweeney

On this fourth, let us bring forth
our independence from fearful frothing.

Let us refuse to make our pursuit of happiness
happen in malls. Let us be willing to risk

our lives for liberty from the looters
posing as leaders. Let us burn on the funeral pyre

our idol worship of the rich and famous.
Let us not stand by idly while hope dies.

Let us pull the needles from our arms,
the screens from our eyes, the likes from our lexicons.

Let us remember our inalienable rights
apply also to aliens -- no one in cages,

no one immune from the right to life and liberty.
This fourth, though our energy is flagging,

let us wave no flags before reading the declaration's
demand that we stand up to abuses and injuries.

Our forebears charged us with a duty to abolish
a tyrant's reign, to throw off the Despot

before we become accustomed to evil.
This fourth, when you see fireworks,

remember they're meant to remind you
that sometimes we need to blow everything up.

Anticipating War's End

by Brenda Wildrick

You gather broken pieces of your heart, carry them with you to another new home, a crowded tent. Will the grass grow back? – you wonder. You hear the whispered answer – not this year. Digging your hands into dark soil, you plant seeds of peace. You feel the soil's eagerness to receive life, this same dirt that has received so much death.

no trembling fear –
in arms of smiling children
puppies wriggle, safe



What Peace Is

by Judith Valente

The charred shards of the houses
in Rafah move backward, reassemble,
stand erect again as in a movie rewinding

A tea kettle hisses on an iron stove,
steam curling from its spout, spreading mist.
There is milk in a porcelain pitcher, figs in a clay bowl

The open wound in the chest of a teenager
in Kharkiv closes over itself, its tender skin
healed again, replete with possibility.

His grandmother's scream returns to the throat,
her face relaxes into a smile,
clenched arms unfold into an embrace.

The Birkot Hashachar replaces a whispered Kaddish,
only cormorants pierce the sky,
and what flashes in the night are shooting stars

In quiet rooms, newborns feed on their mother's milk,
there are soft words, wool blankets,
IV lines become balloon strings

Stretchers lie empty as unmade beds,
olive groves grow tall in the desert,
streams run clear and cool

When we look into each other's eyes
we see our own reflection,
a tiny shrapnel of light, fragment of God

What Peace Is *continued*

by Judith Valente

Watching images of the brutal conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine and other war-shattered places cause us to feel powerless to help, to heal, to change a horrifying inhumane situation. Sometimes only a poem can speak about what is largely unspeakable. This poem imagines what it would be like to rewind the images that have become so sadly familiar. In this version of reality, the wounded are healed, babies are fed and cared for, and the dead come alive again. Perhaps it is an intimation of a hope-for future when the killing stops, buildings are reconstructed, and life returns to some semblance of sanity. The poem gives voice to the hope.



Los Vecinos

by Alison Luterman

Teresa, our Mexican neighbor,
climbs our porch steps on arthritic legs,
carrying a plate of fresh tamales,
still warm, wrapped in cloth,
because they're having a cook-out in their yard
with all the tias and grandbabies,
and we're included in the golden circle
of familia, through no virtue
of our own, yet here she is again at our door
with a plate of something delicious, or a big plastic bag
filled with nopales from the edible pads
of the giant cactus in their yard
which she has skinned and cubed and boiled
in salted water. They're slippery as okra
and tart as lemons and she swears they will cure
a long list of ailments, including
but not limited to cancer, high blood pressure,
diabetes...standing on our porch, leaning
against the railing, she enumerates
the benefits while I smile and nod, "*Si, si, gracias...*"
My friend who lives in a rich neighborhood
says she's seen ICE patrolling, looking for gardeners
and maids escaping over the back fences of Marin.
They're tearing apart families like clumps
of seedlings, uprooting whole delicate
ecosystems, but what they don't
understand is the mycelian nature
of kinship, how love is a weed
that travels across borders in a bird's belly
and pops up waving its arms, no matter the law.
Our block resounds with spangled mariachi tunes
all summer long, and I'd be lying if I said
I wasn't jealous some evenings,
lying awake while parties go on around us,
because this land is their land, and this devotion
is tough and joyous, and Teresa can't read
the red card that says Know Your Rights
in English and Spanish, nor understand
how I make a living, but she knows
what to do with the guava tree
growing along our driveway, whose leaves
are medicinal in dozens of ways--whose leaves,
as the Bible says, are given for the healing of the nations.

"Los Vecinos" by Alison Luterman. Previously published @Portside magazine, and @Robert Reich Substack. It is currently available online @The Sun and will appear in print in their magazine in March 2025. Used with permission from the author. <https://www.alisonluterman.net>

Dreaming of Peace

by Pat Leyko Connelly

"Dreaming with the clouds
Prayers released to the heavens...
United for peace."





Time for Tonglen

by Amrita Skye Blaine

When faced with havoc
like our country is in,
everyone shouting
nobody listening—for
the sake of wellbeing
and a quieter mind
I needed reminding
return to *tonglen*—
exhale peace to all,
sailing clear light out
inhale misery or despair
taking note of what is
repeat and repeat
until my body eases
no downside
to this ancient medicine



One Word Prayer

by Ellen Rowland

after Mary Katherine Creel

Because the world is in need of mercy,
I find myself before the sun has risen
whispering the word *help*
to what feels like a heaven stretched thin.

Help, I say again, small one word prayer
repeats itself, a makeshift mantra:
help, help, help
Who am I pleading with, I wonder,

in this house of silence? Who alone
can hold the weight of this frayed world?
and more and more and more gone.
Help, I offer to the cool morning air,

hands joined, head bent to the beast of it
and I stay there, gathering them all
into the space between my palms.
Light arrives so slowly these days.

Prayer for Peace

by Marisol Muñoz-Kiehne

May all beings be at peace.
May our inner peace not be displaced
by anger turned into hatred.
May our hearts not be closed, or numbed, or hardened.
May we not lose our innocence,
if with it we lose our optimism and our faith in humanity.
May we not be confused by so-called truths
and arbitrary distinctions between us.
May we not forget that we are all close neighbors,
that we are all kin.
May we keep turned on our shared light,
shining through the clouds, and the smoke, and the dogmas.
May it light the path for us,
the large, all-inclusive us.
May we learn our lessons,
so that we don't repeat the faults and failings of our history.
May our suffering be healed,
and may we be able to support each other in our grief.
May we be patient with ourselves and with each other
as we discover, uncover,
and manifest kindness,
which translates as fairness,
which leads to peace.
May we talk and walk and work
towards justice in our governments,
equity in our policies,
truth in our media,
restraint in our outrage,
clarity in our vision,
discernment in our choices,
wisdom in our judgment,
grace and good faith in our actions,
and good will in our deals and dealings.
May then there be peace
in our world and in our hearts.

Sound - Love

by Windy Collins

Sound began with Love -
He Loves ...
...And it is good!
He spoke and sound made a world -
He smiled ...
...It is good!
He created a world and gave it life -
He looked ...
...It was right!
He saw his world was happy -
He laughed ...
... Sounds of Love!
Man was created and it was good -
But man - Life -
- heard a sound!
It spoke - and sound created hate -
He cried ...
... it was wrong!
Man created evil and gave it to his world -
He saw ...
... and yet could not speak!
For some things man can not hear -
For all things come from sound -
A sound.
Sound - Love

In Praise of Peace

by Safire Rose

Peace is alive.
It lives inside.
It is a spiritual quality
that connects us to all life.

When we touch the presence of peace,
we can feel its warm embrace.
When we evoke the power of peace,
we are carried by its grace.

You don't have to go outside to feel its deep expanse.
You don't have to worship God to know that it exists.
Just take a conscious breath and relax into its flow.
When you are in the presence of peace it's easy to let go.

It is said that peace surpasses human understanding—
it is a frequency beyond the thinking mind.
You can feel its dynamic presence
moving in and out of time.

Peace is stillness in the midst of change.
It brings hope when we despair.
When we call on peace to be with us,
we can find it waiting there.

Peace belongs to everyone—it welcomes one and all.
When we let go of judgments, we heed its clarion call.
Peace invites authentic living and the courage to feel.
Peace dissolves the walls between us, revealing what is real.

We practice peace through mindful breathing, sitting still, or while we walk.
We find peace in forgiving and in our loving thoughts.
We seed peace with new dreams and possibilities.
We become peace by living compassionately.

Peace is in the beauty of each day and in the stillness of the night.
Peace grows stronger within us as we claim our inner light.
We cultivate peace by returning to its presence over time.
We praise peace by honoring the ordinary moments of our lives.



Seeking Peace

by Ruth Harper

In the grey veil of dawn,
I rise to build my simple breakfast:
yogurt, berries, muesli, coffee.
I greet my ancient cat with a bow,
echo his discernable “hellos”
across the small, brightening kitchen.
We perform our call-and-response daily ritual,
even when it is below zero,
even when our bones ache,
even when the newsfeed manifests gloom.

After coffee, meditation;
sudden tears as I read in Psalm 10:
 we think in our hearts, I do not deserve love . . .
 I am alone with my fears forever.
I weep and wonder how words written by a Jewish man
over 2500 years ago touch my spirit so deeply.
I breathe to quiet my hive-mind, to
disentangle webs of self-doubt I have woven,
still seeking peace in the chapel of my heart,
one quiet morning at a time.

Where is Peace

by PattiJoy Posan

I awaken to still silence
The sun, just below the horizon,
Casts a warming yellow/golden glow,
Gently Coloring the sky a deep blue.
Birds begin to sing,
Beckoning the arrival of dawn
As daybreak brightens the sky.

And each day
Opening the doors
Stepping out
A world of possibilities
Awaits me.
Breathe In - I awaken
Breathe out – To Wonder

And ask myself
Where is Peace

Peace is with me when I
Enjoy each moment
Listen to the laughter of children
Have a meal to eat
Find a rose blooming
Cuddle with Phoebe
Hear the voices of loved ones
As I pray for others
My prayer is that peace
fills every heart
brings light to darkness
recognizes the dignity of all
and replaces hate with love

Come walk the way of peace with me.

“Every door is another passage another boundary, we have to go beyond.”
-Rumi

Entrance into a Quiet and Peaceful Age

by Linda Ohlson Graham

The qualitative Mindfulness ...
wE ... -collectively aRe able to experience ...
as ... a -race of people- ...could ...

in FACT ... prOpel us into an Age of LIGHT and Beauty.

Has the time arrived when Humanity is able to digest the remarkable reality of just how simple it could be to shift the Earth's vibration?

The French philosopher Teilhard de Chardin created the word 'noosphere' to describe the layer of thought that hovers above nature and acts as a universal consciousness ...

a 'thinking envelope' that our thoughts go up to and then are reflected back.

... It's what people think of as the 'One Mind' or the 'Collective consciousness.'

My philosophy, immEdiately after I learned of Chardin's -Noosphere- in 1993 became: If Humanity ... consciously ... with intention, either individually or collectively ... could

1) quiet our thinking mind(s) for just a few minutes daily ...
i.e.: Just after after coffee in thE morning ... a person could say 'When I realize I'm thinking ... I'll intentionally let those thoughts go and I'll focus on a prayer or mantra or watch mY breath ... so that I contribute quiet thE Earth's atmosphere ...'

2) consciously effort at replacing judgmental thinking with positive Mindfulness that efforts at contributing to -thE good- on our Planet ...

then (I believe:) -calm + positive Mindfulness- would be reflected back to Earth, which would envelope our Planet in a peaceful and loving energy.

Incrementally I believe this is a 'Formula for WORLD PEACE' ... and a way (perhaps THE WAY) to calm our Earth's weather patterns.

Here ... now ... it's our choice ... how exactly life unfolds ...
The entire Planet could REALize ... WE create thE essence of our joy.

Because we've diverged from our center ... we are heading towards Hell.

Entrance into a Quiet and Peaceful Age

continued

by Linda Ohlson Graham

Nature is an open book to Enlightenment ... our process is to learn and read it.

Shifting erratic Global weather patterns are trying to make us REALize ... seeds for growth and change are planted in the future.

Crisis can bring about an evolutionary leap.

There are laws of manifestation ...
We -in fact- are co-creators and can more fully actualize our experience.

As Mankind calms his 'nature' ... Mother will be pleased.

Beginnings from creation
breathe peace and joy and balance.

They are what REAL-ity is made of.
Humanity chooses.

Breathing :
How conscious we are in each moment
(of our breath ...
as it enters and exits our body)
determines our experience.

Letting go of thinking ...gently
with very little effort
is an essential component.

We ... as a 'collected' race of people
could enter what's called 'Heaven'.

HERE ... NOW ...

We simply need to 'choose' it.

Heaven is a breath away

It's this close:
Look ... I'm breathing.

Entrance into a Quiet and Peaceful Age *continued*

by Linda Ohlson Graham

Consciousness can be multiplied
By Mankind watching breathing.
What a concept!

An even larger concept:
Breathe in thru the crown
(the top of one's head)
Out thru the navel.
Hence: HEAVEN.

Could it be that simple?

The Earth is flying now.
Time span meaning has new dimension.
Space before us beckons.
Higher REALms are ours.

READY ... JUMP. (my parachuting command 1978)

All the beings of all the Worlds are watching now
So desirous of our upliftment ...
Praying to Mankind to hear the calls.
They've been in a steady stream
Beaming to our Heart's desires
Caressing what we say we want.
We could see the end continuum as clearly as they do ...
Rising in the bluest skies ...
Fully in our Heart for LOVE ...
Being one with God.

Please hold the thought with me ... that Peace on Earth and calmer
weather patterns ...CAN >easily happen ... in a moment or two of
Silence ... in ENOUGH of the collective Mind.

May my 'I have a vision for Humanity that could lead to WORLD PEACE
and calmer weather patterns'* be heard thE same way 'I have a dream'
was.

*May billions be touched by these words.

Follow the Dove

by Matthew Burgio

The white dove flies above us all
Encircling the earth.
It hopes to land and comfort all
By giving peace its birth.

If all would join and spread this peace
Without their gripe and groan,
Then in a better place to live and grow
Society'd be thrown.

Problems would just fizzle out,
Like countries fighting wars.
People would just get along
And open up their doors.

The stress of life would be reduced
From worries to pure joy.
With peace on earth there'd be no race
By every girl and boy.

It would be great to rid the world
Of hate and fear and crime,
But many have to work this out
And dedicate their time.

Create, as one, a peace-bound world,
And greet the flying dove.
Share its symbol of joyful peace,
And show the world your love.





Once I Prayed

by Tammy Iralu

Once I prayed for snow on the mountains,
blossoms on the branch,
and fruit ripening in the sun.
Now I pray for my four-chambered heart,
pocked, bruised, beaten, broken open, like a fruit...

Oh, let it rise again after the frost
like the blood red Mexican hats dotting the open spaces.

Once I prayed for peace in the world.
Once I prayed for the valleys to fill with flowers,
for the rains to wash the mountains and fill the brooks.

Now I pray for the landscape of my heart,
that mercy and love and forgiveness
will wash over it all, that the well-worn ruts
will heal,
that I clear it of stones
like your clearing
the rice paddy field
of stones. See—
you stooped
and planted
and the grain of rice
multiplied.



An Economy of Love

by Judy Bousquin

Everything is alive
dancing with breath
and interwoven with each other.
Shimmering with Light,
all things are infused with Love
and Beingness.

Deep within us,
is the knowingness
of our true nature
to give, receive, allow
and be Bright Lights
in full expression.

We are designed
to take care of each other
to honor each other
and learn from each other;
and to tenderly guard
our caring, honoring and learning.

Let us each reflect
individually and collectively,
An Economy of Love
within our lives,
and allow our Luminosity
to expand into the world.

Infinite
and ever expanding,
An Economy of Love
will sustain us with Truth,
through all our challenges,
through all our joys.

Peace Before

by Wanda Wilson

Before the sun opens wide across the dry valley
before I add honey and stir my cuppa side to side
(so I don't create a whirlpool cascading over the lip)
before I pet the cats and feed their noisy faces
before the meds that keep me alive arrive in my throat
before the shutters allow the outside world
to separate me from me
before the front patio rocking chair tips back and forth
before the meditations in my book of daily awakenings
before the hearing aids let the world in loud
before the morning splits into pieces of the day before
my first awake breath stretches in the dim quiet
and softens these rounded shoulders
that yesterday carried the world
before



Shadows Lift

by Linda Mundell

Shadows lift, morning again.
Air light, alive, soft, smooth as silk.
Unfolding softly
Easy to breathe.
The slow change to daylight meanders across a gray, cloudy sky.
All too soon, the pace will quicken as a new day demands its dues.
But for now, quiet the inner storm.
Sit in the softness while it is still here.
Draw in the easy gift of a peaceful morning.
A breath of fresh air!
Release the anxiety.
Release all the fears.
Release sadness, and
For a moment:
Be like the morning air
Light, alive, soft, smooth as silk.
Unfolding softly
Easy to Breathe.

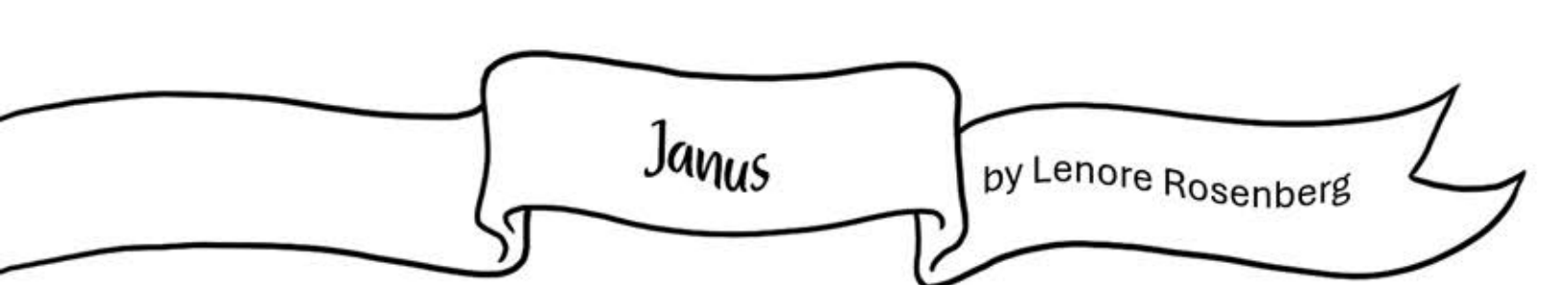


Foraging Love

by Stacy Strawn

Blackberries held my hand
Their warm full flesh pressing against mine
Their ripeness ready to burst through skin
The weight of them
I could feel the sun that grew them on my back
It hugged my hollow body
Its rays finding all my bare skin
Its noon fullness hanging high overhead
Hot on my exposed neck
Hair clipped
Up
Somewhere across the globe
On the eastern edge
And down the path
The water
Caribbean blue
And clear
Like a shallow tidal bay
It looks like paradise as you dive in
See-through waters
Lapping
Gently
The pebbled shore
Moved by wind
Shimmering
Tiny reflections of fusion
Fragmented by wave
Sunlight displaced
Broken mirror
Dancing
Its border lined with willow
Eucalyptus
Pine and cedar
Mountains encircling
Brown, green, and grey
The peaks meet the sky
In jagged irregular shapes
Hard definite edges
Cutting into the vastness that's forever

"Foraging Love" by Stacy Strawn. Used with permission from the author.



Janus

by Lenore Rosenberg

Hydra-headed as well, sings the same siren song of hate from its various mouths. Doppelgangers echo accusations. Two sides: double-facing. The first side kills, chases the second side's shooters, who chase them back. Like reindeer running in "cyclones," Thinking they'll be harder to attack. Soldiers fire blind into babies, terrorists throw bombs at buses. Soldiers get called child killers. While toddlers too learn to slay.

burning desert dunes
hide fear - turn into quicksand
cactus spines buried

A third head speaks a softer language. An eatery in Akko, famous far and near. Serves only hummus, fresh each day, gallons of silken, pale gold mounds. Just that, with soft, steaming clouds of pita, floating from the oven. Always crowded. Israeli businessmen, veiled women, wigged women, Druze shoppers, Arab taxi drivers. Locals. All gathering at tables heavy with hummus, pickle-salted stories washed down with soda, or strong Turkish coffee that leaves a bitter aftertaste despite the spoons of sugar.

rounded table,
women's whispered prayers
ritual for a fragile peace

Peace is a sensation borne
of disturbance

by Juliana J Bruno

Peace is a sensation borne of disturbance

It is an ink

that gets under your skin as you bear the pain of the needle

It is the defining of the ear

after a riot in the streets

It is a momentary ceasefire

when all the bullets have been spent

It is a quieting of the pulse

once the chase is over

It is in the early morning hours

after a reckless night

Peace is an outbreath

when you realize you've stopped breathing

Peace is in the flow of a river

borne out of a frigid black lake

Peace is in the soft bloom of the flower,

placed lovingly upon a gravestone

Peace is found in between each breath,

in between each thought

Peace is

release

Peace is choosing ignorance over acknowledgment

Peace is turning away to deny rather than turning to see

Or Peace is a conscious effort

It is a brave act

It is a rare commodity

A defiance

It is a sign that love exists

Peace is a choice.

Peace is seeing the suffering and pledging,

"never again"

The mechanism can be

ignorance and denial,

or

it can be looking HELL straight in the eye as you stab it in the throat

and twist

Peace is a sensation borne
of disturbance *continued*

by Juliana J Bruno

True and lasting peace is only found when you are fearless
Even in denial, the peace will be fleeting; it will feel slightly sickening
Fear breeds denial
Fear starts wars, kills, scorns, denys, destroys, chastises, others, and
judges
Fear has no place in the utopia of peace

Peace is the sleeping baby in the arms of its mother
Peace is a lover's embrace
Peace is love
They are sisters joined at the hip.
There is no peace in hatred
Fear is the father of hatred
Peace is only found in acceptance
Acceptance is the daughter of love
Peace is love
 regardless
 radical
 love



The Lake in the Rain

by Celeste Boudreaux

In my summer childhood memory
I stand at the edge of the lake
Oblivious to the warm drizzle
A white quilt of mist hovers
two feet above the water
Its thick line dividing dark pines
On the far shore from the lake below
The blue-gray surface of the water
Is a never-ending pattern of musical notes
Circle upon circle, each ever widening
fading and being overwritten
by fresh rain plops

I look to my left towards the western horizon
framed by retreating sentry lines of trees
The sky is dazzlingly alive
A cacophony of vivid color and shape
The jagged leading edge of slate clouds
Is set ablaze by a sinking lava sphere
And streams of light radiate outwards
Like the incandescent aureole
of a saint ascending to heaven
I breathe in its beauty
And my soul expands

Then something taps my right shoulder
And turning, to my awe and delight
A rainbow reaches from shore to shore
It shimmers, delicate and ephemeral
gold, red, blue, and all hues between
In light of its imminent danger of extinction
My eyes swallow eager gulps
as though for my body's parched need
It is the only quenching there is

Such a feast, this three-course banquet
A sonnet for eyes and heart
Fleeting moment now surviving fifty years

Peace Please

by Kellie Ulyate

Do you remember when a poem was a list of words beginning with a letter running down the side of a page?

P is for please, let me
Ease
And
Console
Everyone

Words from a child, that begin and end at home.

Please let me be here, now
Amongst the trouble and discord
To find ease inside
A centre in the storm

Please let me
Expand this place
Beyond my own door
To provide shelter and show

Please let me find smiles in the rain
To feel the relief of being done

Please let me
Not block the passage
To flow and free

Please let me kneel and say I'm sorry

To learn easily and quickly
To ripen like a fruit, ready to share
Pieces, that quench a thirst

Please let me release frustration, like a leaf being dropped,
A fruit from the vine

Find the peace
The ease

What is another word for peace, that is not so calm and immobile?
Satisfaction fulfilled
Be easy

Please let me be easy

Peace Please

continued

by Kellie Ulyate

Please let my mind be emptied instead of full
Please let smooth
Words glide from my tongue

Please let the paper be soft
Not sand-paper

Please lend me a hand
Together

We hold each other
See each other
Hear each other

Please let peace come off the tongue, kindly
Like, I see you
I love you
You are welcome here

Please let us say
I hear you
And mean it

Please let us take a minute, or more
Without rushing to prove

Please let us be still enough to listen
To listen
To listen

Please let the words we hear be covered in silk
May we be surprised
Fight is not needed
Walls can come down

Please can we allow?
All that is inside
Out gently.



Wake Up to the Dawn of Hope

by Paula Rovinsky

Wake up.
Having slumbered in despair,
can we begin to dig out
from under the cloak of winter,
chasing away those last dreary,
terrible cold days?
We need no longer be resigned
to just hear the winded bluster hiss
that fiercely howled
and rattles our foundation
or huddle against its frosty breath
that lies everywhere on this hallow land.

Yet the dawning speaks.
For now, as the hours of daylight lengthen
we must exit our refuge. Welcome
spring's renewal and prepare the earth.
New perennial blossoms rise up like Stonewall
with its hinged gate swinging both ways. Aware
of the past message etched into the wall,
echos the need to stand with agency together,
yet alone, as Uncle Sam's backbone is bought
and severed from our reality.

But hope invites us.
Abandoned by our country stewards, brush off
the cost of complacency, perhaps taking pause
to dream of a more joyful time when freedom's bell
will ring out for all. Envision coming together
with others, to really listen as we table our differences
and drink to our shared human experience, hopeful
to arrive at a place that we might teethe
on the sweetness of future possibilities
and celebrate sharing all of creation,
that continues to bring forth the wonder
and enrichment thankfully of our diversity.

"Wake Up to the Dawn of Hope" by Paula Rovinsky. Used with permission from the author.

Choose Peace

by Grace Marie Chapman

In a world of chaos it can be challenging to find moments of peace. Close your eyes, take a breath, and choose to find it.

As I glance out my window, I can see a calming breeze rustling the leaves of a nearby tree.

I see a bird soaring across the sky enjoying the fresh air as the sun begins to set with shades of pink and purple.

Inside I sit with the comfort of my puppy's head resting on my leg and my daughter cuddling to my side.

In this moment, I have a choice. I can choose to worry about the violence in the world, the bills that are coming due, and the sadness I have in my heart.

On the other hand, I can choose peace. I can enjoy the gifts that life has given to me. I can choose to focus on the double rainbow that appears after a rainstorm.

Even on your darkest of days, I promise there is peace to be found within yourself if you allow it in.



Peace

by Kimberly Williams

Give peace a chance,
Walk in green grass and white sand,
Watch an orange sunset and hope for a pink sunrise,
Roll in blue ocean waves and roam a majestic mountain,
The Soul longs for world peace.
True freedom and safety,
Lingering in love and hope,
We piece meal peace.





Build Your Peace

by Lulu

Lose yourself under the canopy of trees,
recharge your vision and energy field,
nurture your soul and feed your needs,
all these things will build your peace.
Master the wisdom, harness the expertise,
protect your space and your right to be,
do not let others push you into the abyss,
all these things will build your peace.
Learn to say no, to withdraw, to release,
Detach without guilt, fly away like the geese,
Tell the universe to take the wheel and keys,
all these things will build your peace.



Making Peace

by Therese L. Broderick

Come follow me, dear heart,
through the cranky back door

out to our yellow breezeway.

Sit. Settle. Let these rocking chairs
mellow our tantrum heartbeats.

I'll bet by the time it takes
that pair of hissy sparrows

to whiplash from telephone wires
down to our magnolia tree

then slip-skid into the thickets
of berried junipers

(misjudging our intentions
as they always do),

you'll be ready again to reach out
for my hand, and my hand

willing once more to bare
its life lines and latest wrinkles.



Let Peace

by Kris Haig

Let peace descend
like a trusted rainfall
lifting up dried grasses
and parched spirits.
Let peace descend.

Let peace rain down,
pushing angry yellow jackets
back to their underground nests.
Let peace rain down.

Let peace encourage
our hopeful hands,
our shaking voices,
building community.
Let peace encourage.

Let peace surround us—
a chorus of confidence,
surging, a-shimmer, and strong.
Let peace surround us.

Let peace fall tender—
as nightfall, as Autumn,
releasing, receiving
a dreamless rest.
Let peace fall tender.

Inner Peace Means Outer Peace

by Grace Matson

When we are at peace with ourselves
Outer peace in the world will come
For what we say and do to others
Has a ripple effect, like pebbles
Skimmed across the water

That water can be a local swimming hole
A large lake, or even the ocean
Our actions speak like flood water
Eventually taking on everything
In its path

Throwing our words, like stones
That cannot be retracted
Think before you throw them
Create a peaceful surrounding
You will make a peaceful world.





Possibilities

by LynneAnne Forest

"I know that hope is the hardest love we carry."
Jane Hirshfield, "Hope and Love"

Reaching across to each other
Listening, sharing, learning, we grow softer
Feeling more known, understood
Something called hope grows stronger.

Hope helps us move ahead, bridge across to
Sorrow, regrets, apologies uttered
Hope becomes feasible through bravery
It can stir, awaken, however slowly, step by step.

Times will come when connection, hope seem lost
Long history of pain leaving us afraid
But our armor of fear can again be slipped off
Trust has the capacity to return again and again.

Having known tears of relief with our hands clasped
Our first step, then a step again, we grew closer
With possibilities for peace, a future for our children
With hopes lived, the peace we dream, a possibility.



Reaching for Peace

by Dianne Ochiltree

If you're reaching for peace,
remember:
peace can't be gripped too tightly,
for peace is a delicate thing.
No, peace requires a tender touch,
a loose, light grasp,
or better yet,
an open palm to rest upon
so it can breathe,
and grow,
and show its beauty to all
with open hearts
and open minds.
Reaching for peace
doesn't not require a long stretch
across mountains and oceans and deserts.
No, if you are reaching for peace,
it only takes reaching
for your neighbor's hand.



Ripples of Peace

by Darlene Dunn

What can we say about peace
that hasn't already been said?

Throughout history it has been
the most sought-after
state of being---
yet it is often misinterpreted,
bent to fit ambitions,
manipulated to serve someone's plan

True peace is personal.
There's nothing like seeing someone
at ease---
in their own skin,
in their own space.

We dream of peace for the whole world,
but sometimes I think
that is where the problem begins.
Maybe peace for the whole world
is simply too big a dream.

Peace has to start with each individual.
It spreads differently
for each person,
in every place.

Dreaming of peace for the world
Can sometimes brings no peace at all
for the one doing the dreaming.

If we start with ourselves---
seeking peace in our own spaces,
tending to our inner selves---
peace feels more attainable
and hope grows naturally.



Ripples of Peace

continued

by Darlene Dunn

When we feel at peace,
we feel hopeful.
That peace will spread
to those we meet,
but it will be different
for each of them.

Seek Peace for yourself.
Pray for the world.
Write poetry about your journey.
Share how you found peace.

Your example may spread,
but their experience of peace
will be different from your own.

Wait until someone asks
why you are the way you are.
Be ready to share.

This is how change can happen
how peaceful ways can spread----
but remember,
it will be different for everyone

Don't worry.
Peace will spread
and make a difference,
but that should not be
your main goal.

We have to get back
to caring for ourselves,
turning the light inward,
examining our own hearts.

Ripples of Peace continued

by Darlene Dunn

We cannot bring peace
to entire world---
or even to our neighbor next door.

We can only be examples
of what peace and goodness look like
in our own space.

Live in your space.
Take care of it.
Let peace move outward naturally,
without trying to control it.



Footprint

by Bethany Taulbee - Inspired by Spirit

What footprint will you leave on this life?

One of pain and strife?
Or one of joy and love?

Will you stick your head in the sand like an ostrich?
Or bring messages of peace like the dove?
Will you fly high like the grand eagle?
Or stay low and slither like the snake?

Are you still asleep?
Or maybe half awake?

Awareness comes with a sting
Acceptance brings the antiseptic
Self-love heals the marred
Enlightenment allows you to share your beautiful scars

We are a human family
We hold each other by the roots of the ancient tree
Deep into Mother Earth with its foundation
Intertwining our soul connection
Transparency are our branches that extend TALL

LOVE is the blooming beauty of it all!

The Most Important Thing

by Julia Fehrenbacher

I am making a home inside myself. A shelter
of kindness where everything
is forgiven, everything allowed—a quiet patch
of sunlight to stretch out without hurry,
where all that has been banished and buried
is welcomed, spoken, listened to—released.

A fiercely friendly place I can claim as my very own.

I am throwing arms open
to the whole of myself—especially the fearful,
fault-finding, falling apart, unfinished parts, knowing
every seed and weed, every drop
of rain, has made the soil richer.

I will light a candle, pour a hot cup of tea, gather
around the warmth of my own blazing fire. I will howl
if I want to, knowing this flame can burn through
any perceived problem, any prescribed perfectionism,
any lying limitation, every heavy thing.

I am making a home inside myself
where grace blooms in grand and glorious
abundance, a shelter of kindness that grows
all the truest things.

I whisper *hallelujah* to the friendly
sky. Watch now as I burst into blossom.

Becoming Peace

by James Crews

Sometimes, when the house breathes
on its own, and I stare out the window
without purpose, in love with loneliness,
all of my moments—past, present,
and future—merge into one. And I see
among hummingbirds, moths and bees
a pair of goldfinches, each of which
rests on the bobbing head of a zinnia,
tiny feet clinging as they peck away petals
to get at the center of the flower, where
they must sense some sweetness
waits just for them.





Becoming Peace

continued

by James Crews

Sweetness waits for each of us when we agree to be right where we are, no matter the outer circumstances, no matter our worry, stress, or elation. So often, in those seemingly rare moments when we can pause and drop fully into our experience, we feel all the moments of our life converging into one. But how do we do this? This poem was born out of the simple act of standing at one of my favorite windows in the house that overlooks the backyard. Everything is in bloom here right now—bee balm, mint, black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, and so much more. The whole garden is a riotous neighborhood of pollinators whose flights I love to trace, feeling the pleasure of helping to create a safe space for them. But on this evening, after days and weeks of following “breaking news,” I found the news that most drew me in was this pair of goldfinches, male and female, balanced on the bobbing head of a zinnia, and pecking away the petals to reach the seeds inside. This seemed the way of our lives and spiritual practice, too. It takes a delicate balance to recognize and appreciate an instant of beauty when it comes. Then we stay there on the swaying stem of the moment, breathing in and out, going deeper into ourselves, until we find the seeds of peace that are always waiting for us beneath the surface of daily life. The more we practice, we see that the same seeds wait at the center of difficult times as well, and not just when things feel easy or pleasant. It takes a wild patience, and deep trust to keep harvesting such sweetness, to make our own breaking news right here at home.

Return Home

by ZenJen Brown

And now, we return home
to the body,
to the breath,
to the heart, the quiet truth within.

A moment to pause.
To breathe.
To notice what's here.

Feel the space inside you
that has been stirred,
seen,
touched,
expressed.

There is nothing you need to do.
Simply be here.
That's enough.
Just breathe.

Let the words shared in these pages
settle softly within you.
Let them land wherever they're meant to.
There's nothing to fix,
nothing to figure out.

There is nothing you need to do.
Simply be here.
That's enough.
Just breathe.

Inhale love.
Exhale peace.

Take a quiet moment
to thank yourself
for being present,
for being honest,
for being here.
For reading with an open heart,
for letting these voices touch your own.

A soft bow to ourselves,
and to one another.
May peace begin here.



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Portfolio: <https://clearwillowdesigns.com>

Shop: <https://clearwillowdesigns.etsy.com>

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In addition to her beloved Zenful Conversations community and podcast, ZenJen Brown is an Internationally Certified C-IAYT Yoga Therapist, Certified Meditation Instructor, Reiki Master, and Teacher of Presence. She loves poetry, and anyone who puts their heart on the page. She creates warm, accessible spaces for healing, writing, and reflection. Her work is rooted in love, simplicity, and the belief that we walk each other home.



"How beautiful that you are putting together a "Peace" collection...
we could not need this more right now."
- Julia Fehrenbacher

"I'm grateful that you are assembling this necessary project right now, ZenJen.
It's amazing how things often coalesce around positive intention!"
Happy to support this.
- James Crews

Thanks for doing this - can't wait to see your finished product!
- Brooke Elias

Just wanted to send a quick note to let you know how amazing all
your offerings are, ZenJen. Many thanks for putting this
beautiful project together.
- Ellen Rowland

Thank you for all you do to create and expand the poetry community.
- Lisa Breger

"Thank you so much ZenJen for allowing me to be a small part of the
expansive work you are doing to add to "the soul of the world."
Continued blessings on your work"
- Judith Valente

