

## San Damiano Spring 2024 Retreat Poems

Willing to experience aloneness,  
I discover connection everywhere; Turning to face my fear,  
I meet the warrior who lives within; Opening to my loss,  
I gain the embrace of the universe; Surrendering into emptiness,  
I find fullness without end.

Each condition I flee from pursues me, Each condition I welcome transforms me And becomes itself transformed  
into its radiant jewel-like essence.

### The Summer Day By Mary Oliver

Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
this grasshopper, I mean—  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down— who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes. Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

### Unconditional

by Jennifer Paine Welwood

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all  
day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?

### THE WORLD I LIVE IN By Mary Oliver

I have refused to live  
locked in the orderly house of reasons and proofs.  
The world I live in and believe in is wider than that. And anyway, what's wrong with *Maybe*?

You wouldn't believe what once or  
twice I have seen. I'll just  
tell you this:  
only if there are angels in your head will you ever, possibly, see one.

## ON MEDITATING, SORT OF By Mary Oliver

Meditation, so I've heard, is best accomplished if you entertain a certain strict posture. Frankly, I prefer just to lounge under a tree. So why should I think I could ever be successful?

Some days I fall asleep, or land in that even better place — half-asleep — where the world, spring, summer, autumn, winter — flies through my mind in its hardy ascent and its uncompromising descent.

So I just lie like that, while distance and time reveal their true attitudes: they never heard of me, and never will, or ever need to.

Of course, I wake up finally thinking, how wonderful to be who I am, made out of earth and water, my own thoughts, my own fingerprints — all that glorious, temporary stuff.

## STORAGE By Mary Oliver

When I moved from one house to another there were many things I had no room for. What does one do? I rented a storage space. And filled it. Years passed. Occasionally I went there and looked in, but nothing happened, not a single twinge of the heart.

As I grew older the things I cared about grew fewer, but were more important. So one day I undid the lock and called the trash man. He took everything.

I felt like the little donkey when his burden is finally lifted. Things!

Burn them, burn them! Make a beautiful fire! More room in your heart for love, for the trees! For the birds who own nothing—the reason they can fly.

## Garbage

Thich Nhat Hahn

"Let us not run away from our garbage; we should learn the art of making compost. Using that compost we will grow a lot of flowers. Don't think that without compost you can have flowers. That is an illusion. You can have flowers only with compost.

Whatever you are looking for, freedom, joy, and stability,

you know that suffering plays a very important role in it. So be aware that we cannot just run away from our problems. In fact, we have to go back to our problems. The practice of calming, of concentrating, of embracing, of looking deeply into the nature of our pain, is absolutely necessary for us to get the transformation, the healing that we need so much."

## I DON'T WANT TO BE DEMURE OR RESPECTABLE By Mary Oliver

I don't want to be demure or respectable.

I was that way, asleep, for years.

That way, you forget too many important things.

How the little stones, even if you can't hear them,  
are singing.

How the river can't wait to get to the ocean  
and the sky, it's been there before.

What traveling is that!

It is a joy to imagine such distances.

I could skip sleep for the next hundred years.

There is a fire in the lashes of my eyes.

It doesn't matter where I am, it could be a small room. The glimmer of gold Böhme saw on the kitchen pot  
was missed by everyone else in the house.

Maybe the fire in my lashes is a reflection of that. Why do I have so many thoughts, they are driving me  
crazy.

Why am I always going anywhere, instead of somewhere?

Listen to me or not, it hardly matters.

I'm not trying to be wise, that would be foolish.

I'm just chattering.

## Quotes by Saint Francis de Sales

If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back to the point gently and replace it tenderly. Even  
if you did nothing during the whole hour but bring your heart back, though it went away every  
time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed.

When you encounter difficulties and contradictions, do not try to break them, but bend them with  
gentleness and time.

## May Your Practice - by Gary Gach

May your practice nourish and sustain you during dark and light times, may you be surprised by  
what is going on underground.

May you trust in your wholeness,  
and may you appreciate the flowers of your own good heart.

Each breath, only this breath.

Each step, only this step.

Your presence is your message.

Your life is all of life, to be lived to the fullest. All the rest is commentary.

## Hope - by Victoria Safford

Our mission is to plant ourselves at the gates of Hope— Not the prudent gates of Optimism,  
Which are somewhat narrower.

Not the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense;

Nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness,

Which creak on shrill and angry hinges

(People cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through) Nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of  
“Everything is gonna’ be all right.”

But a different, sometimes lonely place,

The place of truth-telling,

About your own soul first of all and its condition. The place of resistance and defiance,

The piece of ground from which you see the world Both as it is and as it could be

As it will be;

The place from which you glimpse not only struggle, But the joy of the struggle.

And we stand there, beckoning and calling,

Telling people what we are seeing

Asking people what they see.

## Walk Slowly

By Danna Faulds

It only takes a reminder to breathe,

a moment to be still, and just like that, something in me settles, softens, makes space for  
imperfection. The harsh voice

of judgment drops to a whisper and I remember again that life isn’t a relay race; that we will all  
cross the finish

line; that waking up to life is what we were born for. As many times as I forget, catch myself  
charging forward

without even knowing where I’m going, that many times I can make the choice to stop, to  
breathe, and be, and walk slowly into the mystery

It stole the Oak Tree's leaves away.  
Then snapped its boughs  
and pulled its bark  
until the Oak was tired and stark.  
But still the Oak Tree held its ground  
while other trees fell all around.  
The weary wind gave up and spoke,  
How can you still be standing Oak?"  
The Oak Tree said, I know that you  
can break each branch of mine in two,  
carry every leaf away,  
shake my limbs and make me sway.  
But I have roots stretched in the earth,  
growing stronger since my birth.  
You'll never touch them, for you see  
they are the deepest part of me.  
Until today, I wasn't sure  
of just how much I could endure.  
But now I've found with thanks to you,  
I'm stronger than I ever knew.

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Kindest Regards

Jessica Battersby

From: Jessica Battersby jessbattersby@gmail.com

Subject: Poems From Retreat

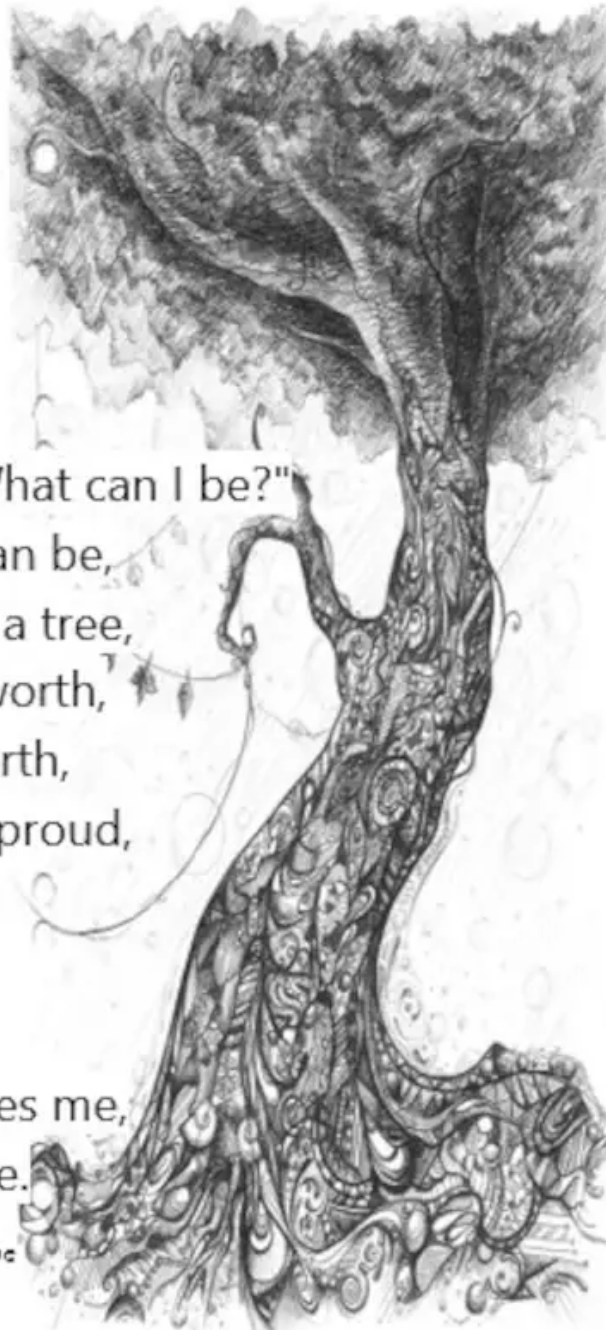
Date: May 11, 2024 at 4:33 PM

To: Jerry Cambra Jerry@imaginemindfulness.com, Tim Kurtz mbsr@imaginemindfulness.org



The tree stands so patiently,  
Not asking, "What can I be?, What can I be?"  
For a tree is as sure as a tree can be,  
That its purpose in life is to be a tree,  
Without a doubt, it knows its worth,  
Roots delving deep into the Earth,  
Branches standing strong and proud,  
Pointing at the passing clouds,  
All of nature loves the tree,  
In its beautiful simplicity,  
And without speaking, it teaches me,  
To be happy with just being me.

Kelly Jayne



## The Oak Tree

A mighty wind blew night and day.

## Walk, Don't Run - by Rob Bell

Walk, don't run.

That's it.

Walk, don't run.

Slow down, breathe deeply,  
and open your eyes because there's  
a whole world right here within this one. The bush doesn't suddenly catch on fire, it's  
been burning the whole time.

Moses is simply moving  
slowly enough to see it. And when he does,  
he takes off his sandals.

Not because  
the ground has suddenly become holy,  
but because he's just now becoming aware that  
the ground has been holy the whole time.  
Efficiency is not the highest goal for your life,  
neither is busyness,  
or how many things you can get done in one day,  
or speed, or even success.

But walking,  
which leads to seeing,  
now that's something.

That's the invitation for every one of us today,  
and every day, in every conversation, interaction,  
event, and moment: to walk, not run. And in doing so,  
to see a whole world right here within this one.

## Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face, The rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May Love hold you in the palm of her hand.

May Life be with you and bless you: May you see your children's children. May you be poor in misfortune,  
Rich in blessings.

May you know nothing but happiness From this day forward.

May the road rise up to meet you  
May the wind be always at your back  
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home And may the hand of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on, May blue be the skies above you,  
May pure be the joys that surround you, May true be the hearts that love you.