

Poems of Earth and Spirit: Locally Wildcrafted Poetry

Note: This file includes all the poems shared in the session, but not the introductions to the poems or the experiential nature connection practices.

When I Was a Creek

When I was
a tree,

I sang and danced
with the wind
and offered
food and refuge
to all who came.

When I was
a cloud,

I floated freely,
bringing
shade and rain
wherever they
were needed.

When I was
a creek,

I flowed effortlessly
around stones
and nourished life
everywhere
I went.

When I was
a seed,

I held
the story
of what
I would become
inside me

until the sun
and rain
let me know
it was time
to share it.

When I was
a flower,

I opened up
to reveal
my beauty
and invited the bees
to share
my sweetness.

Now I am
human

and can do so
many things,

yet I am
full of questions
about who I am
and why I'm here.

What if...?

What if the leaves,
stirred to singing
by the breeze,
sing with even more joy
when they notice
you are listening?

What if the small white flower
quivers with delight
when you notice
her tiny
yet honorable
contribution
to the beauty
of this world?

And what if
that brief moment
is all she needs
to know that her life
is worth living,
all her efforts
not in vain?

What if the trees
feel the depth
of your pain,
and are quietly
reaching toward you,
offering solace
with everything
they have to give?

What if the whales
diving into the deep blue
can feel your love
for them,
even across all that
open ocean?

What if the water,
weary from
her endless journey,
is replenished by
your gratitude,
which gives her
the strength
to keep going?

What if the Earth
herself
longs to feel

the caress
of your naked feet
on her warm, brown skin?

And what if
the granite mountain,
no matter how remote
and immovable
he may seem,
feels a quiet shiver of joy
when you are touched
by his majestic beauty?

What if...?

Rooting

It happens
so spontaneously
and effortlessly.

No decision
or deliberate action
is needed.

As soon as I
pause
for a few breaths

in the quiet
green forest,

by a clear
flowing stream,

or among
the tall grasses
of the meadow,

I can feel
my roots
sprouting,

saying
yes, this,
yes, here,

let's stay
a while,

sink into
the Earth,

and be
nourished.

The Gift of Rain

For the first time
in a long time
it rained today—

each tiny droplet
a gift
to a thirsty plant
or animal.

Seeds say "yes!"
Plants say "yes!"
Parched mosses
say "yes, yes, yes!"

From the tiniest
soil microbe
to the tallest redwood,
we rejoice.

Elemental

It's just
the juncos
and me
out here
today.

Every other animal
seems to be
sensibly sequestered
somewhere warmer,
drier, and safer.

But we
intrepid creatures
are out here
with the howling wind,
cold rain,
and even hail.

And we
don't mind
a bit—

truth be told,
we love it!

It awakens
our senses,

quickens
the pulse,

makes us
feel more
fully alive.

It reminds us
that we are part
of something
vast, wild,
and beautiful.

It's elemental.

And later,
when I return
to my cozy cabin,
turn up the heat,

peel off
my rain-soaked clothes,
and replace them

with dry ones,

I notice
what a precious gift
it is
simply to be
warm and dry.

Because of
the cold,
I understand warm
in a new way.

Becoming Spring

The nights
are still long
and dark,

but each day
there's a little
more light.

The mornings
are still chilly
with frost,

yet the sharp edge
of the cold
is softening.

The branches
are still stark
and bare,

yet their buds swell
with the promise
of vibrant leaves
and bright blossoms.

The bulbs
are still deep
in subterranean
slumber,

yet they are
gently stirring
with dreams
of spring.

The birds,
having flown south
to warmer climes,

are feeling
the familiar tug
to return home.

Yes, it is
still winter,

but it's
becoming spring.

Our Big Chance

This is it!

the plants
seem
to be saying,

Our big chance!

Who knows
when we'll have
rain like this
again?

So go ahead
and grow!

Go ahead
and bloom!

Give it all
you've got!

What if
we, too,
could
live
like that?

Calling in Well

Please forgive me.

Thank you
for understanding.

Due to
circumstances
far beyond
my control,
I will not
be coming
to work today.

Due to
an extended and
intimate encounter
with the wild splendor
of the Big Sur mountains,

I am still
under the influence
of redwoods
and wildflowers
and unable to perform
my regular duties.

After multiple
exhilarating plunges
into cold mountain streams,
my animal body
is much too
awake and alive

to tolerate
sitting still
on a chair
in front of a screen
inside a box
for any length of time.

And due to numerous
acts of God,
the Goddess,
and Nature,

I am too
acutely aware
of the profound beauty
and oneness
of all life
to pretend
that I am separate,

too aware of the
preciousness
of my own life
to throw it away.

My work here
is done.

I am seeking
a new assignment
more suitable
for my current skills
and experience.

Thank you
for understanding.

An Earthly Personal Ad

*Beautiful planet seeks compatible humans
for long-term, committed relationship*

Me:

4.5 billion years old (but look younger)
Strikingly beautiful and very well endowed
Highly evolved, intelligent, and
accomplished
Head of a large, extended family
Very generous and giving, but don't want to
be taken advantage of
Seeking a committed but not exclusive
relationship

You:

Enjoy forests, mountains, oceans, and
diverse plants and animals
Very willing to listen and learn (including
from "other" life forms)
More interested in the common good than
material wealth
Ready for a long-term, committed
partnership based on deep love and
mutual respect

Interested? Let's connect!

A Taste of the Wild

I wonder
what he or she
will think—

the field mouse,
wood rat,
or sparrow—

who,
while
foraging
for recognizable
and delectable
foods
like seeds
or insects,

stumbles upon
the lone
chocolate chip

I lost
in the tall grass
of their meadow.

Will they
respond with
the field mouse
equivalent of

“wow... this is
the most
incredible thing
I’ve ever tasted!”

or will it be
more like...
“ewww,
this is
disgusting!
Give me
a succulent grub
instead of this
vile substance
any day!”

Or will the
wayward
chocolate chip,
so far out of its
usual element,
perhaps not even
register
as food,

but rather
as some bizarre,
inedible
substance?

No human
taste bud
can know.

A Minor Player

“Did you
grow this?”
my friend asks,

biting into
a juicy, red tomato
from my garden.

“Yes,”
I reply
casually,

as though I had
single-handedly
orchestrated
the remarkable
series of events

that transformed
modest, mild-mannered seeds
into vibrant, voluptuous
vine-ripened tomatoes—

as though I were
director and star
of the vast production
that brought them to life,

rather than
a minor player
in a miraculous
drama of creation

in which
the plants
are the talented
stars,

the living Earth
the writer and
director,

the sun and water
key supporting players,

and soil microbes
the cast of thousands
that make it
all possible.

Humble and Exalted

In the
humble
and exalted
chapel
of my garden,

multitudes gather
to praise life
and celebrate
the miracle of creation.

The choir
starts up early,
even before
the sunrise service,

the birds
openly
confessing
their joys
for all to hear.

The sun
and rain
minister
to the plants;

bees
receive
holy communion
at the altar
of the flowers;

and trees
bestow
gentle benedictions
on all
who gather.

In this sanctuary,
all water is holy,
all ground is sacred,
and all beings
are chosen ones.

The Songs of Seeds

What if
seeds sang
when they
sprouted?

Imagine
the meadows
ringing
with the
joyous sound

of thousands
of tiny green voices
lifted together
in exultation.

No Matter What

No matter
how hard they try,
they can not
keep us apart.

They can pour concrete
over the rich, dark Earth,
put us in a plastic chair
inside a sheetrock box,
hook us up to electronic devices,
and tell us
we have to stay there all day...

and still we will be
breathing the breath
of towering pines
growing on rugged mountain slopes
and tiny green plankton
floating in distant seas.

And even though
the water we drink
travels through many miles of pipe,
is doused with chlorine
and may be contained in plastic bottles...

still we will be drinking water
that has tumbled over granite boulders,
hibernated in frozen lakes,
and reflected the morning sun
from a spider's web.

And even though the salad we eat
may be grown hundreds of miles away,
harvested and washed
by hands we will never see,
and packaged in a plastic box...

still we will be eating
leaves from plants
whose roots embraced the fertile earth
as their tender green bodies
reached toward the light.

And no matter how relentlessly
we have been trained
to sit still,
to hold our tongues,
to follow the rules
(even when they make no sense),

still we are animals

of flesh and blood,

kin to deer, bear, and whale,
with deep wisdom in our bones
and untamed passions in our hearts.

Still there is a wild one inside us,
running barefoot through the forest,
gathering sweet berries,
dancing around the fire,
singing to the moon.

In the Arms of My Beloved

Resting in the arms
of my beloved,
I breathe deep
and easy,

taking refuge
in the sweet peace
of our union.

His quiet, steady
presence
and gentle embrace
speak a language
older and deeper
than words,

penetrating the core
of my being
in a way
no human partner
ever has

with the
unmistakable
message that

I am safe,
I am loved,
all is well.

I was
so thirsty
for this way
of knowing.

I drink deeply.

I have entered into
the mind
of the tree,
and he
has entered me.

I will never
be alone
again.

What Are You Waiting For?

What powerful seeds
lie dormant
deep within you,

longing
to break through
the surface
and reach
their slender stems
toward the light?

What tender buds
are swelling
inside you,

yearning to unfurl
their radiant petals
and reveal their
hidden beauty?

What songs and stories
are swirling
deep within
your breast?

What wild
and magical dreams
are stirring your soul?

What are you
waiting for,
dear one?

The world is hungry
for your beauty,
calling you
to bring forth
your deepest gifts.

The seeds
have been patient
for so long—

waiting
for just a few drops of rain,
a few rays of sun,
a few kind words...

don't deny them that.

Don't wait
until it feels safe
to break open...
that day
may never come.

A Special Day

Today
is a very special day.

Today we celebrate
sun and rain,
light and dark,
the cycles of life,
the great turning
of the wheel.

Today we celebrate
every leaf
on every tree,
every feather
on every bird,
every drop of water
in every stream.

We celebrate
green growing ones
and winged ones,
two-leggeds
and four-leggeds,
all who walk, crawl,
swim, or fly.

We celebrate
each breath of air,
each morsel of food,
each beat of our hearts,
each healthy cell.

We celebrate
the profound miracle
of being alive
in this body
in this moment
on this planet.

Today,
like every other day,
is a very special day.