

*The
Stillness
Before
Time*

Reflections from a Fellow Sojourner

M. J. HOLSHOUSER

The Stillness Before Time
Reflections from a Fellow Sojourner

© Michael J. Holshouser 1992
© Revised Edition 2001
© Revised Edition 2008
World Rights Reserved

Of the Human Journey

© Michael J. Holshouser 1996
© Revised Edition 2007
World Rights Reserved

Got God?

© Michael J. Holshouser 1996
© Revised Edition 2007
World Rights Reserved

Ten Reflections

© Michael J. Holshouser 1998
© Revised Edition 2007
World Rights Reserved

The Stillness Before Time
Reflections from a Fellow Sojourner
<http://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com>

© Michael J. Holshouser 2001
© Revised Edition 2008
World Rights Reserved

The Return to Wonder

<http://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com/>

© Michael J. Holshouser 2005
World Rights Reserved

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim

<http://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com/>

© Michael J. Holshouser 2010
World Rights Reserved

Michael Holshouser
1112-4 Cedar Creek Drive
Modesto, California 95355-5213
The United States of America
mjhholshouser@gmail.com
(Pronunciation: Holtzhowzer)

*All have the express written encouragement
To distribute this creation freely to any and all
Who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear
The mystery in which each and every one
Equally participates in so many ways.*

What is written here
Has been spoken, written and lived
By many in many times and places in human history.
Ever disguised by innumerable masks, costumes, concepts and technologies,
Its mysterious nature has timelessly confused and frightened
Those unable to discern beneath the surface.

This aphoristic vision is simply another attempt
Using contemporary masks, costumes, concepts and technologies
To illustrate in thought something as old as old is,
That which has ever yet never been.

It is for those who desire nothing from this manifest dream
But that it be a journey into freedom.

Best wishes.

**There is really only one Way.
It is without division or boundary.
It is without name or theology.
Awareness is its scripture,
Here now its venue,
You its witness,
Your life the journey.**

**You are perfect.
Pure gold.
Brighter than the sun.**

-- Dean Evans --

I

Before all experience,
Before all thought of identity,
Before all mirrors and photographs,
Before all vanity, gratification and delusion,
Before all vexation of desire and fear,
Before all suffering of existence,
Who are you . . . really?

* * * *

Move beyond concept, beyond known.
Return to the untainted awareness of the child,
The uncarved freedom of the empty tablet,
Prior to all said, done and imagined.

* * * *

You are the source,
The divine ocean,
The absolute supreme,
The eternal unity of isness.

* * * *

Discovering your true birthright
Requires the persistence
Of an aloof scientist,
Gradually scraping away
At the layers of conditioning
Until one day there is nothing left,
And what you really are is quite apparent.

* * * *

There is really no death,
Only the departure of the senses
And the dissolution of imagined identity.

* * * *

When in every moment
You see without a trace of doubt
That there is no master other than you,
That those many pedestaled images of great souls
Were projections of the intuitive longing
To awaken to your birthright,
Then you are free of artificial limits.
You have at last triumphed over illusion.
You have discovered the most indelible truth,
That you are, indeed, sovereign, eternally absolute.

II

Everything that appears real,
Everything that you have been told,
Everything that you have come to believe,
Is all the fabrication of your mind.

* * * *

There is no path.
There is no dogma.
There is only the absolute,
And a universe of appearances
Disguising the way home.

* * * *

There has ever been now,
Will ever be now,
Is ever now.
Never has there been any time
Other than now.

* * * *

When you are satiated of identity,
Weary of meaningless experiences,
When you would even die to be free,
You will do whatever needs to be done
To spin no more on the web of suffering.

* * * *

Love can only be total, unconditional.
Other uses of the word are of self-absorption,
Incomplete, limited, conditional, manipulative, painful.

* * * *

Give it what proper name you will:
God, Allah, Brahman, Tao, Buddha, Krishna,
Christ, Great Spirit, Way, Absolute, Supreme, Totality,
Or any of the many other labels it is given throughout the world,
It is ever oneness cloaked by the same diverse mystery.

* * * *

It is natural to want to know who you are,
But the thoughts of self, the attachment to persona,
The encasements of identity: labels, definitions, conclusions,
Are not the vehicles that will truly get you home.
All concoctions, all speculations of mind,
Are only obstacles to the journey.

III

The manifest dance is timeless, momentary, eternal.
A reverie without beginning, without end,
Without cause, purpose or meaning,
Neither definable or explicable,
For it is beyond all rational appearances.
It can never be known, comprehended or understood
Except in the most roundabout, circumspect, fluid, abstract ways.
And in that which is intuited there is no gain or reward,
One simply wanders spontaneously free,
Whatever the course.

* * * *

Taste the tasteless,
Hear the soundless,
Touch the untouchable,
Smell that which has no scent,
And you will see the unseen.

* * * *

All identity is make-believe,
A collusion of human scale.

* * * *

The many teachers of suffering:
Illness, injury, aging, dying and death,
Would you, could you, awaken without them?

* * * *

You, the seeker, are already that which is sought.
You are the source, the mystery, pure and simple.

* * * *

There can be no serenity
In the restlessness of desire,
The dread of fear, the isolation of anger,
Or the arrogance of pride.

* * * *

Occasionally, quietly, reflect within . . . "I am."
That simple awareness is all you can really know.
Contemplate the thought closely, add nothing to it.
See its subtle movement to the source within.
Those persistent and discerning enough
Will surrender to the mystery within.

IV

This fleeting mystery is a whimsical kaleidoscope
An eternal, immortal weaving without beginning, without end.
A boundless, indivisible ocean of light and shadow in which all forms dance.
All one can observe of the mystery are the countless manifestations,
Never the dispassionate, unwavering witness beneath.

* * * *

What you call real
Is merely a reflection,
A temporal, dreamy illusion,
An enticing, ever-changing lightshow.
Your true nature is none of it.

* * * *

So many words
You cleave yourself into.

* * * *

All mythos, all sense of time and history,
Is the make-believe of adults.

* * * *

The infinite source of manifestation
Is tasteless and untouchable,
Without sight, sound or smell.
What one perceives is but the mind's reverie.
The vague, obtuse, ephemeral quality of awareness called intuition
Is as near to understanding as any one can ever come.

* * * *

Be serene, content, cheerfully at ease.
It is your original state, your birthright.
It requires no choice, effort or contention.
No outward manifestation or proof is required.
It is a natural state of awareness, of simple beingness.
A swimmingness in the unconditional, timeless aloneness.

* * * *

Worship martyrs, crosses, statues, crystals, photographs,
Nature, wealth, words and ideas, or whatever your own will manufactures.
Or simply attend nothing but your own momentary absoluteness.
But for the sorrow of continuity in all but the latter,
All dreams pass in the same manner.

V

Put aside all hope, all gain and loss, all dreams of glory,
All yearning, hate, anger, fear, envy and jealousy,
All dread of sickness, injury, aging and dying.
Your mind-body is but a temporal dream,
You are eternal, sovereign, absolute.

* * * *

There appear to be many paths
In the return to isness.
All are equal in the quest home
Because, like Dorothy's adventure in Oz,
No one ever really left Kansas.

* * * *

Understand the subtlety between
Claiming you are god
And knowing you are godness.
One cannot be, and the other never was not.

* * * *

You are a window to the eternal,
But must part the curtains
And wipe away the smudge to see it.

* * * *

There are the ignorant who think they know,
And the ignorant who know they do not.

* * * *

Whether you were born spontaneously
Or chose your parents through karmic design,
Whether you live just once, or well past a trillion times
With identities stretching throughout eternity,
In the most real sense, it is all the same.

* * * *

You may sit quietly and breathe with your eyes wide open or tightly shut,
Chant spiritual songs or hum mantras until your mind is three shades of blue,
Practice every sort of rigid, dogmatic, death-defying diet or prescribed exercise,
Submit to ancient beliefs, rituals and traditions, wear costumes and deify symbols,
Practice any discipline, worship any form your mind or another's might conjure,
Real meditation is the serene awareness of every moment's birth and death,
And no system is required to discern and freely perceive your birthright.

VI

You are the ground,
The splintered I Am of isness,
Witness to a mysterious, imagined theater,
A dreamer dreaming the kaleidoscoping light show real,
The eternal nature masked by endless variations of laughter and sorrow.
Why? No one can know. That you are is surely enough.

* * * *

Surrender your identity:
Your names and cravings,
Your fears, angers and doubts,
Your knowledge, opinions and habits,
Your ambitions to achieve one glory or another.
Surrender everything you believe you are,
That you have never really been.

* * * *

There is no Eastern or Western thought,
Only an awareness manifesting consciousness,
Blanketed by an innumerable array of mythologies.

* * * *

If you arrogantly believe yourself more spiritually significant
Than a cockroach, grain of sand, or pile of dung,
Then you are missing the real point.
There is great wonder in realizing you are one
With worms, snails, lice, flies, toads, salamanders and snakes.

* * * *

Are you able to examine your existence
Without any attachment, craving or trepidation?
Dispassionately, objectively, reserving all arrogant judgments,
Seeing forthrightly, clearly, without ulterior motive,
Observing closely the many joys and sorrows,
The likes and dislikes, the loves and hates,
The thoughts, beliefs, opinions, conclusions,
The endless flow of people, places, things, ideas,
The seemingly countless array of passing experiences,
And come to the realization that it was really all your creation,
An inexplicable, intangible, ungraspable, timelessly wondrous journey,
Imagined by a dreamer whose infinitely choiceless nature is prior to all imagination.

VII

How will you be psychologically free?
There is no method.
It happens when you will abide
No further infringement from any portion of the illusion,
When you are at last sovereign enough to journey alone, whatever the course.

* * * *

To identify with thoughts
Is akin to the ocean believing
It is the sound of waves crashing.

* * * *

Too big to see how small it is,
Too small to see how big it is,
You are, nonetheless, all of it.

* * * *

No word touches it.
No language explains it.
No mythos contains it.

You are it.
You have always been it.
You will ever be it.

* * * *

Polish that mirror
Until all you see is you.

* * * *

There is really no religion, no Way,
Just keen observing of a passing mystery
Beyond comprehension or conclusion.

* * * *

Symbols, mantras, postures, diets, practices of any sort
Are not really necessary, just absorbing distractions
Until you sharpen your concentration and discernment,
And finally realize it can only be puzzled out very much alone.

* * * *

Any given mythos is essentially an unspoken agreement, a set of rules,
With language, rituals and symbology to assure its continuity in the unborn.
When you see the collusion of tradition for what it really is, all become relative.

VIII

Polish mirrors that never reflected,
Clean stains never spilled,
Mend tears never torn,
Perfect that never flawed,
Illuminate shadows never cast,
Give purpose that requiring none.
You are ever unfathomable and unknown,
A timelessly whimsical mystery dancing in stillness.

* * * *

Your vain existence is as secure as that
Of a clay figurine created by a child playing,
And then delightfully shattered with a laugh of glee.

* * * *

There will never be political, economic
Or social resolution to the human condition.
Consciousness itself must make the paradigm shift.

* * * *

You will never be free
Until you can say no to your parents,
Your ancestors, your mythos and, finally, yourself.

* * * *

Take a lump of clay, divide it in two,
Sculpt them into any forms that come to mind,
Call one evil, the other good, one black, the other white,
Or any other fabrications of the dualistic mind,
Both ever remain the same clayness.

* * * *

Study anything and everything
But neither follow nor imitate anyone.
What is the point of listening to any teachers
If you do not intend to someday grasp the teaching?

* * * *

Geographic isolation has spawned a broad diversity of mythoi,
Each grappling to protect ancient beliefs, customs and histories.
Humanity's clinging to what was is becoming less and less viable
As the stew of a shrinking world continues to simmer in dreamtime.

IX

Enlightenment is simply awakening
Into the awareness of the timeless birthright.
Liberation is abiding freely in that knowing ignorance.

* * * *

Identity is like cotton candy bought at a carnival,
A lot of puff concocted from practically nothing.

* * * *

Though no one really knows anything,
More than a few spout what the masses follow.

* * * *

When you awaken after sleeping,
There is a moment when the awareness
Resumes remembering the patterning it plays.
You could be anywhere, anything, anybody,
And what form and identity do you choose
But that which you are least able to resist.

* * * *

You are the nexus through which the mystery
Manifests a personal view of time and space.

* * * *

Desire for gratification of the senses and thought,
Despite its ceaseless tangle of suffering,
Is what binds you in time.

* * * *

Duality is the outcome of ignorance,
And ignorance of the false nature of opposites
Is the vain prison that identification ceaselessly fortifies.

* * * *

Why cater to something an individual or group
Said or did tens or hundreds or thousands of years ago?
History, whether personal, tribal, national or world,
Is perhaps the greatest bane of consciousness.

* * * *

Groups of any spiritual persuasion are social crock-pots
For those agreeing to collude to the dogma of one mythos or another.
To regard any as exclusive bastions of wisdom and harmony
Has repeatedly proven to be hollow self-deception.

X

Since the dawn of consciousness, mind has grappled
With the mystery of birth and death, creation and destruction.
It has used every device to explain that which can never be explained.
Only in complete surrender to the vastness beyond thought's linear comprehension
Can there be any insight into the choiceless stillness of the unmanifest.

* * * *

Unconditioned, immutable, changeless, untamed, timeless, formless,
Eternal, unburdened, nameless, imperishable, amoral,
Lawless, sovereign, total, absolute, supreme.
Apt descriptions of those who discern
And reside in the immortal origin.

* * * *

There are teachers at every turn.
Be watchful, they take every form.

* * * *

In the struggle with divine nature,
You must lose to win.

* * * *

The frailties of all life forms are within you.
Your empathy and compassion are warranted.

* * * *

Everyone has a mindset, a filtering that interprets
The reality appearing to appear about them.
The challenge is seeing the relativity of all experience,
That everything is an ephemeral illusion, none more or less real,
That, from beginning to end, every moment is the fleeting dream of godness.

* * * *

No one can tell you what truth really is.
You must explore and discover it yourself.
You must also grasp that it is somewhat akin
To fine dry sand in loose fingers on a windy day.

* * * *

Words, concepts, similes, metaphors, analogies, parables,
Are teaching tools, study guides, not ends in themselves.

XI

Mythoi across this shrinking planet
Migrate in every possible direction without respite.
The geographic isolation that created this remarkable manifest diversity
Is less important than seeing the thread of divinity
With which they are sewn together.

* * * *

If . . . you only had better health;
A stronger, younger, more vibrant body;
A highly capable, nimble mind;
Wealth, power, status;
Lived in a different place or time . . .
If . . .
Would make no difference.
All destinies are only variations
Of the same unfolding dream.

* * * *

Before light and dark,
Right and wrong,
Birth and death,
Yes and no,
Good and evil,
Have and have not,
Compassion and cruelty,
Knowledge and ignorance,
Order and confusion,
Sage and fool,
Before duality in any form,
You are.

* * * *

Your real parent was a now long before time.
All are immaculately conceived.

* * * *

Claims of religious persecution are absurd, fictional paths to glory.
Countless peoples of every persuasion have suffered throughout history.
Many, perhaps most, have claimed themselves chosen by the divine.
The arrogance of collusion has always been an enticing delusion.

XII

Thought is a reflection of an illusory past
And the projector of imagined futures.
Awareness is the tentative, ungraspable now.
It is boundless, eternal, neither identity nor persona.
It is the mysterious origin, the vapor of insight and intuition.
From its unknowable nature thought springs into being,
But without it, none of this would ever have been.
It is the parent of manifest consciousness,
The source prior to all perception.

* * * *

Fear of time yet to come,
Of the unknown yet to manifest,
Overwhelms those who have not realized
That it is their own imagination that cripples them.

* * * *

The meek will inherit the earth
Because it requires great courage
To discern and surrender to heaven.

* * * *

The sovereign witness you truly are
Is neither the body nor the mind.
It is untouched by action or result.
It is unburdened by pain or pleasure.
It is unconcerned with right and wrong.
No matter the circumstances in which it abides,
It timelessly remains undefined, unfettered, unattached.

* * * *

The sciences have in every manner
Scrutinized the unitary movement of this illusion.
They have stretched the conceptual mind in innumerable ways,
Yet none will ever succeed in determining its origin.
All they can ever do is dance with Maya
On the floor of manifestation.

* * * *

At some point, books and their many concepts must be set aside.
Scholars journey the dead-end path of dualistic intellect.
Reclaiming your birthright is direct perception,
Not the cataloging of manuscripts.
The truth you seek will not be found in them.

XIII

The divisive world we have created
Is an outcome of separation from the whole.
Dualistic solutions to all this ignorance and confusion
Pose upon the same conflict-ridden paradigm, and resolve nothing.

* * * *

A gourmet craves taste, a musician sound,
A perfumer scent, a masseuse touch,
A painter color, a scholar thought.
How enticing the play of senses and mind,
That to become a connoisseur of one or more,
So many dedicate their existence to endless pursuit.

* * * *

Virtual reality is not just a computer fantasy.
The senses have created the universe with such precision
That you have yet to truly fathom
That none of it is real.
It is software born of divine programming.

* * * *

All paths to glory find the same grave.

* * * *

Science dissects and names with great finesse,
But of what use is a universe torn to pieces?

* * * *

All life in the unfolding present
Has survived since the immaculate genesis.
The unyielding capacity for domination of this manifest realm
Will be humankind's inevitable unraveling
If it does not instead collectively
Attain a unified sense of guardianship.

* * * *

We are all spontaneously making up the rules as we go.
Playing so everyone wins is not a game easily learned.

* * * *

Right living is not a statement of morality.
It is a moment-to-moment feeling of intuitive rightness.
It is playing out this illusive dreamy theater as effortlessly as possible.

XIV

To know you are one with oneness
Seems so simple, so freeing, so real,
Yet so many cling to this belief or that,
As if their clutching complexity and strife
Is so much more important than simply being.

* * * *

To own your birthright, you become less and less
Entwined in the confusing narrowness of self-absorption.
You naturally discern expansiveness in every moment possible.
It is the end of paradigms emerging from any mythos.
It is the ever-unfolding realization of unity.

* * * *

There is nothing to become, nothing to prove.
There is no description accurate enough
To describe what you really are.

* * * *

The colluding mythos of humanity
Conditions each of us to pretend something
No other manifest life form would require of its kind.
It is very arduous to be free of all claims.

* * * *

Essential nature is not divisible.
There is only totality, oneness, isness.
Nothing greater, nothing lesser, nothing but.
We are all simply that which is dancing
In every way, every form imaginable.

* * * *

All the laws and theories of the sciences
Explore, measure and explain only illusion.
The ultimate teaching offered by the rational mind
Is insight into the limits of dualistic sensory perception.
Scientists must at some point bridge the gap as irrational mystics
If they truly seek to comprehend this manifest theater for what it really is.

* * * *

Endless debate over which religion or doctrine speaks for god and truth
Is sophomoric and only obscures the possibility of real awakening.
It is the time-bound pastime of priests, scholars and undiscerning followers
Who have little interest in anything but the false security of one collusion or another.

XV

The ancients passed on their wisdom
Through parables and analogies.
A neat trick, but one the literal-minded
Have historically taken to one extreme after another.
All the philosophical inventions contrived since the beginning of time
Have never for a moment encapsulated the ultimate nature.

* * * *

Imagine a nearly imperceptible bubble of foam
Riding the flowing crest of a small wave
On just one of an infinity of shores
Of an ocean beyond measure.
That all but insignificant fragment of illusory reflection
Is analogous to the entire human reverie
Across this spinning orb.

* * * *

The tenuous belief that science will be the cure-all
For humanity's plight is self-deception on a grand scale.
Any conceptual tool is only as beneficial as those who wield it.

* * * *

More than enough, probably far too much,
Has been said of the spiritual quest through the ages.
The delusional, divisive conceit surrounding and permeating it,
The dogmas, temples, money-changers and Pharisees,
Are burdens that each must in time shrug off
To discern and wander freely in Eden.

* * * *

The irony of spending so much of your life
Trying to solve the questions
Who, what, where, when, why and how,
Is finally realizing they have no answer words can grasp.

* * * *

No other creature on this planet
Has taken naming to the extreme we have.
They do not separate themselves from their experiencing.
They have never believed themselves or others to be what words imply.
They do not slaughter or maim one another for the myriad reasons we endlessly concoct.
They wait passively, helplessly for us to regain some sanity,
And perhaps one day return to the garden in which they have ever resided.

XVI

Stars, planets and moons traveling from horizon to horizon,
Cycling springs, summers, autumns and winters,
Clocks you watch, watches you wear,
Calendars whose pages turn and turn again,
Are tricksters in this three-dimensional illusory weaving.
Time has never truly passed as you have been conditioned to believe.

* * * *

Suffering is the outcome of attachment to the fictitious mind-body identity.
All endeavors to ease the sorrow of consciousness are ineffectual
Without the realization of your true indestructibility.

* * * *

Clothing, jewelry, make-up and hair
Cloak the stark reality of the human body,
The various orifices of its physical functioning.
What is romantic, beautiful and essential to the deluded
Takes on another appearance when the veil
Of genetic gratification unravels.

* * * *

The tombs in which you wrap your vanity
Cannot lock out the dust of eternity.

* * * *

Being born into illusion
Does not mean you must reside there.
You have never been bound by your original separation
But through your narcissistic collaboration.

* * * *

Humanity must accept total responsibility
For its impact on this garden world.
Do not put the burden on god.
There will be no messiah,
Nor hordes of angels to save us.
Each alone must make the paradigm shift.

* * * *

You spend your life believing the part you play,
But contrary to what the senses fool you into knowing,
All your thoughts, concepts, theories, images, hopes and dreams,
All the kaleidoscoping reflections of those many mirrors passing before you,
All the vain paths to glory you or anyone else have ever concocted,
Have no ultimate reality or lasting importance whatsoever.

XVII

There is really only one Way.
It is without division or boundary.
It is without name or theology.
Awareness is its scripture,
Here now its venue,
You its witness,
Your life the journey.

* * * *

Neither hard nor soft, sharp nor dull,
Wise nor foolish, humble nor vain,
Sweet nor bitter, long nor short,
Strong nor weak, large nor small,
Good nor bad, intelligent nor stupid,
Truth nor lie, far nor close,
Violent nor still, love nor hate,
Light nor dark, perfect nor imperfect,
Nor duality ad infinitum,
You are.

* * * *

Sculpt a vast number of clay figurines,
All different shapes, sizes and colors,
Give them every sort of name and belief,
They are ever of the original lump of clayness.

* * * *

Your dream is an outcome
Of the mirrors streaming alongside you.
Transcending all manifest reflections is the challenge.

* * * *

Any life is like a sailboat
Journeying to and fro upon the surface,
Creating ripple after ripple ever merging with other ripples,
All eventually fading, while the ocean remains.

* * * *

Serenity is the outcome of integration, not an ideal.
Ideals are merely abstractions of unresolved duality
Ceaselessly playing hide-and-seek with themselves.

* * * *

Psychologists, with their countless labels and gimmicks,
Have yet to discern what the mind really is, and is not.

XVIII

To invoke a name of god
In any conflict is unutterable vanity.
There has never really been a spiritual conflict,
Only the countless petty squabbles
Of self-serving dogmas.

* * * *

Do not allow suffering deprive you
Of a golden heart, joyful eyes,
A genuine smile, dancing feet,
Real friends, and a child's laughter.

* * * *

There appears to be a path, but in reality
There has never been a footprint to make one.

* * * *

As large or small as you may take it,
What you must really discern
Is your own eye.

* * * *

True science would not disregard common sense.

* * * *

Philosophy not culminating in the serenity of timeless harmony
Is merely desolate wordplay pandering to the desire for continuity.

* * * *

Whatever path you may be inclined to wander,
Whether good works, devotion, intellect or meditation,
In any combination, weighted in any manner,
All meander the same vast mystery.

* * * *

Without the eyes, you would not observe.
The ears gone, you would not hear.
The nose, you would not smell.
The touch, you would not feel.
The tongue, you would not taste.
The mind, you would not examine.
Remove them all, and you would be,
What in reality, you have been all along.

XIX

The countless temples and monuments humanity has built
Pointlessly clutch at that which cannot be possessed.
All temples, all forms are as dust to the eternal.
Mankind's organizing the spiritual quest
Arises from the mind's ceaselessly futile attempts
To fabricate an order upon that which can never be tamed.

* * * *

Do more, be more, get more.
More, more, more, more, more.
Will you ever have enough?
Will you ever be content
With what you have
Or what you are?

* * * *

You are free to do whatever you will,
Live whatever dream you are inclined to entertain,
Play out the endless fantasies your restless narcissism creates,
Until its shallow nature sustains you no longer.

* * * *

No matter how many words you use,
It is not they that hold all this together.

* * * *

Who would not like to meet and hear
What was actually expressed by many great teachers
Before the propaganda mills of time usurped them to their own ends?
Histories have always been written, edited and rewritten
By those who won, survived or passed by later.

* * * *

Do you not grow weary of tyrannical forces?
The tyranny of politicians, priests and educators,
Of the bureaucrats and self-interests in every realm,
Of the endless disparity between the haves and have-nots,
Of this concept or that, of the corruption however it may flow?
Seek out your real community, your tribe, your brothers and sisters.
Your family is out there: intelligent, simple, honest, virtuous, just like you.

* * * *

Just as you have looked down at an arm and hand, or a leg and foot,
So has every other human who has ever been, or will ever be.
Your uniqueness is pervaded by an eternal commonality.

XX

The differences inherent in mythoi
Throughout the world are to be transcended.
Emphasizing ancient traditions is increasingly dysfunctional,
And only inhibits the potential for the unmanifest
To blossom into manifest sovereignty.

* * * *

The introspective mind must often face
Countless painful obstacles of its own creation
Until the clarity of the sharpened blade of discrimination
No longer cuts with such uncoordinated ferocity
That which never existed in the first place.

* * * *

This world is a birthing ground of consciousness,
Away from which the only real heading is absoluteness.
When your vision tacks this direction there may or may not be
Acceptance from the relatives and friends you value.
Unresolvable conflicts may be unavoidable,
But whatever course inevitably results,
Your revelation must carry the day.
Neither seek nor expect the sanction of those
Lacking the insight to comprehend your voyage home.

* * * *

When communities are no longer functional,
New adaptations form to iron the disarrayed fabric.
Human civilization is navigating through a teetering apex.
A cooperative paradigm, one crossing all boundaries,
Awaits shaping into common consciousness,
The potential toward which all humanity
May or may not choose to journey.
The epic is already complete,
And though none present
Will ever see its end,
Your presence contributes
To the future this time is shaping.

* * * *

We paint ourselves into corners with our habits and traditions.
Nothing need stay the same, nothing can stay the same,
But the rigidity of the linear mind is ever an obstacle.
Futile attempts to achieve security make us even more insecure
In ways threatening our kind and every other life form on this tiny sphere.

XXI

What so many believe religion to be,
Is acted out as arrogant, improbable propaganda.
It is a secondhand act of memory, of recollection and regurgitation.
Real revelation comes spontaneously from union within.

* * * *

To believe godness is only that which is out of the ordinary
Is an error humanity succumbs to again and again.
All manifest forms carry on in the same field.
A bit of dust is as much a divine mystery
As the greatest miracle ever rendered.
There is truly nothing ordinary about anything.

* * * *

Many operate thinking
That something outside themselves
Will foster everlasting happiness and contentment.
Only because they are not paying attention
To that from which all things flow.

* * * *

We are fast-approaching the reckoning point
In the dynamic movement of human consciousness
When we as a tentative life form have no choice
But to reconcile the countless differences
And see the unmanifest universality,
The absolute unity of awareness.
Our many differences are imagined,
But the results of this continued delusion
Are potentially devastating to all life on this planet.
To continue this paradigm as it has evolved is unutterable madness.

* * * *

You have the advantage of history
To thoroughly witness the enduring confusion
Wrought by the delusional rigidity of organized religions.
When will you wrest your sovereign nature from those who would tame it?

* * * *

Your desire, your fear, your suffering,
Your mistaken hope that someone else will save you
Has been wielded against you since the seeds of consciousness took root.
It is time to clearly discern that you know as much as anyone,
That it is you alone who must choose to be free.

XXII

Jesus is rumored to have said, "I Am The Way."
Was he saying, as many believe, that he alone was "The Way"?
Or was he perhaps suggesting that we are all "The Way"?
Perhaps he meant "I Am" . . . is . . . The Way."
Or simply plain old "I Am, The Way."
Or maybe, if paradox was at play,
As is often the case with seers,
Any and all of the above.

* * * *

One man's law too easily becomes another's dogma.

* * * *

You are a part of the whole,
Not a part distinct from the whole.

* * * *

Nowness, practically done as it happens,
Requires memory to pattern out
What it believes occurred.

* * * *

Do not equate groupthink, no matter
How convincingly obstinate and persuasive,
With truth.

* * * *

To state simply, "I am the Way."
Means you no longer identify with the theater
Or the partial role your body once fooled you into believing.

* * * *

When languages are made an end in themselves,
We forget their original purpose was communication.
No word, no concept has ever, or will ever, capture reality.

* * * *

Disentangle your consciousness
From all the compromises organized religions
Have made with ignorance, superstition and myriad other delusions
Born of the illusory craving to know fostered by time.

* * * *

In any theater production, there are many parts, many characters.
The road to tranquility is spending less time envying roles others play,
And at some point finding contentment with the hand you have been dealt.

XXIII

The immutable requires neither approval nor sanction.
The manifest resolve of the skittish herd is the synergy of delusion.
Reality ever stands alone, aloof, free, without concern.
There is no other between you and the source.

* * * *

Do not make the mistake of fashioning
Prophets, mystics, saints, seers and sages into gods.
They may well have been awakened mortals, models of realization,
But they all began with the same primal awareness,
The same timeless potential as you.

* * * *

Those lost to materialism seem to think
That through endlessly gorging their senses
With sights, tastes, smells, sounds and sensations
That they are somehow living more fully.

* * * *

Humanity as a whole has not yet fully comprehended
That its continued existence in manifest time
Is entirely based on its many choices.
The clayness of essential nature is not concerned
What forms it manifests, what dramas it plays, or for how long.

* * * *

The mind's endless quest for some formula
Or capsulated conclusion is doomed to failure.
The river captured by a snapshot is not the river.
The pacifier is no replacement for a mother's breast.
Concepts, equations or symbols can never touch reality.

* * * *

The stillpoint of awareness you are is the keystone to reality.
It is the point from which all manifestation is created,
And the point of oblivion to which all returns.

* * * *

As consciousness stabilizes in awareness,
As you clearly realize illusion is not reality,
As you discern duality is the root of all suffering,
As the birthright of beingness resumes its rightful function,
There is nothing left to do but whatever needs doing.

XXIV

Since the origin of manifest consciousness, humans
Have been raised and patterned in accordance
With the varied responses to geography.
They have played, fought and mated,
Sought power, fortune and fame,
Worshipped innumerable idols,
Lived desperately, nobly and vainly,
Suffered sickness, injury, aging and death.
To what end the speculations are beyond number,
But ever the source has been the same divine essence,
Inexplicable, unknowable, mysterious, timeless, sovereign.

* * * *

The way you perceive existence is the way
The winds of time have molded you to perceive it.
It is all subjective projection based on countless circumstances
Which have conditioned the manifest spirit-mind-body identity in time.
Whatever your belief on the matter, no projection is really more true than any other.

* * * *

This brief time has offered every decadence
On a scale never before experienced
By as many in one era of history.
What have you seen and learned
But that sensory-level experience
Leaves you desolate, angry, weary,
As full of rancor and discontent as ever?
That flame of angst within, if not too deadening,
Can be a catalyst to the discernment of the unconditional.

* * * *

Despite attempts by sages of every era and geography,
The human psyche remains dominated and shaped
By primal instincts and urges bred into the mind long ago.
The many masks of fear have diversified into innumerable forms,
And are as paralyzing, blinding and destructive as they have ever been.
Transforming consciousness into its fullest potential is not for the meek of spirit.

* * * *

To discern serenity, you may well know the calamity and horror of battle.
To discern integrity, you may, indeed, be a great liar, cheat or thief.
To discern compassion, you may have caused much suffering.
To discern discipline, you may have partaken thoroughly every excess.
To discern the unity of all creation, you may have lived in ravaging separation.
Sometimes those most divided without are nearest to discovering eternal nature within.

XXV

You wander through cities, down paths, along rivers,
But who was it wandered where and when?
In all those walks, those thoughts,
Those many acts and deeds,
Woven into each and every one
Was the unwavering, choiceless awareness,
The witness you have always been, are, and will ever be.

* * * *

Your appearance in this manifest world is unimportant.
Whatever your attributes, whether you run barefoot or wear shoes,
Are clean or unclean, crippled or healthy, intelligent or simple, female or male,
Poor or wealthy, strong or weak, ugly or comely, named or unnamed,
Each and every one is born of the same essential nature.

* * * *

Do more, do more, do more,
So many always crying out do more.
Yet if more would live simply, with less effort,
If more would subside their desire-filled, fearful frenzy,
This drama might manifest something more compatible with reality.

* * * *

The divine nature can be challenging to ascertain
Because you only see the shortcomings of this dualistic world.
Seek within, discern the Soul, unify with the totality,
Affirm the perfection you have ever been.

* * * *

You believe because you move your hand from side to side
That time has passed and movement in space transpired.
But what has created that reality but the timeless stillness,
That ephemeral essence in which you as witness truly reside.

* * * *

The essential purpose of the senses in this manifest play is survival.
Over time every human being evolves a personal mythos
Based on the mind's interpretation of the data.
Who is the director of the theater but the witness in all.

* * * *

We rationalize the spending of untold wealth
On weapons of destruction, temples of vain worship,
And countless other entertainments and self-absorbed exploits,
When peoples across the world strive merely for a few handfuls of food.
The suffering and horror of our synergistic expression
Is a dark legacy for those yet to come.

XXVI

Followers have all too often made the desolate mistake
Of paying homage or worshiping whoever said it,
Rather than understanding what was said.

* * * *

From genesis to now,
Life's origin to now,
Human evolution to now,
Geographical separation to now,
Technological advancement to now,
Your own mortal birth to now.
Timelines within timelines,
Linear, dualistic, divisive.
Unify them intuitively within.
Eternity is ever the timeless nowness.

* * * *

The challenge set before you
Is to wipe the full slate clean,
And not write anything new,
And only just less deceiving.

* * * *

The world economy is dominated
By vested interests, feudal corporate entities,
Whose spiritless, pagan idol is the ledger and its bottom line.
The web they spin is of destruction, pain and remorse
To which no mortal life form is immune.

* * * *

Premature judgment of anyone's past
May deny the wisdom they have gleaned,
Or be in the unfolding process of discerning.
Allow others the sovereignty you yourself request.

* * * *

No matter how insane the unfolding human drama appears,
Remember always that it is being played out in perfection.

* * * *

The mind incessantly projects purpose and meaning,
Fabricating one worry after another in the resulting process.
Perhaps the only real purpose or meaning is to discover there is none,
That living is enough, and no problem need be made of it.

XXVII

How many more concepts there are
With the passage of time.
In every realm there are vocabularies
Which did not even begin to exist in prior times.
The impetuous, harsh sharpness of our unsheathed scholarship
Is an undiscerning blade of creation and destruction
We are not even remotely close to mastering.

* * * *

What is there to be but what you already are?
How can fruit know what it is to ripen?
Caterpillars to fly? Buds to flower?
Any pattern to reach maturation,
But through faith in nowness
That isness will ever be so.

* * * *

Since civilization's beginning, the haves
Have controlled the have-nots to their own ends.
Conquests and revolutions are merely exchanges of power.
The masses whine and grumble, but ever accept the crumbs and carnivals.

* * * *

We have a brief window of opportunity
To peruse beyond our destructive attachments
To geography, culture, politics, economics and religion,
To distinguish, to grasp the broadest picture, the greatest whole.

* * * *

Real suffering is that of a physical nature,
Of sickness, injury, aging and dying,
And those only while they last.
All psychological pain is self-inflicted.

* * * *

All humanity seems to have really gleaned from history's passing
Are endless techniques and might to ravage the garden
And its little folk with savage efficiency.

* * * *

Coming to grips with the realization of your ultimate nature,
With the fact that you are the clayness of which everything is founded,
That you are one with the power, the light and the wonder,
Is a journey limited only by your inner vision.

XXVIII

Because isness is, you are.
Because you are, isness is.
Without isness, there would be no you.
Without you, there would be no witness to the mystery.

* * * *

Many would call it sacrilegious
To state, "I am that which is godness."
But it is far more so to deny it.

* * * *

Meditation is awareness of the unfolding moment.
It is the dredging of the accumulated silt of identification
That which inhibits the timeless discernment of what you truly are.

* * * *

Walk a few paces from where you stand.
Look back to where you think you started.
Time and space are the illusion of perception.
You will never wander through that one again.

* * * *

Who sees the wind tipping the trees in spring?
Hears the busy chatter of squirrels chasing?
Smells the mid-afternoon coffee brewing?
Feels the piercing of the kitten's playful claws?
Tastes the chilled chocolate melting?
Who has all those memories?
All that knowledge and capability?
All those assorted opinions and values?
Who desires, fears, angers, laughs, suffers?
You do.
You are the power, the light, a drop of all that is and is not.
You are creator, cosmic dancer, eternally, immortally absolute.

* * * *

You have always been a spiritual being.
There has never been one moment when you were not.
All you need do is discern it, and allow the witness to take wing within.

* * * *

A drug may help you find it, but cannot keep you there for long.
The challenge is to discern eternity in the everyday mundane.

XXIX

Death is never easy for any to face
It is the ending of identity, personality,
All that is known, possessed and held dear.
It is the end of attachment to this material plane.
From whence you came, you return again.

* * * *

All across the world at this very moment,
Diversity suffers and perishes in countless ways
Because of the juggernauting inertia of consciousness
Fashioned by geographic notions Gaia will not forever sustain.

* * * *

So many human beings
Spend a great deal of time
Rejecting their animal nature,
Yet evidence of our basic instincts
Underscore everything we have created.

* * * *

It may be fairly frightening, even irritating
For many to begin fathoming they are godness,
Because up to this point, their manifest consciousness
Has not even begun to open to that expansive an inner vision.

* * * *

Even the most beautiful men and women
Strain, sweat, smell and ache when they toil,
Blow their nostrils clean each morning,
Eat, urinate, defecate and pass gas
More than a few times each day.
Women bleed and swell with milk
For continuation of their genetic line.
Men ejaculate their seed for the same end.
What exactly does one love in another's body?
A vat of bones, organs, muscles, mucous and blood
Contained by nerve-ridden, porous, lifeless skin and hair
Shaped in ways we instinctively find appealing or revolting.
All of which, to the horror of many, must inevitably be recycled,
Perhaps even as a brief but tasty feast for one beast or another.

XXX

Contrast your entire existence with geological time
In which the longest stretch might at best equal
A mere fraction of a moderate layer of sediment.
We are each witness to a fleeting span of manifest time.
The relentless narcissism, fantasies of glory and empire-seeking
Are, from a comprehensive perspective, such trivial, meaningless pursuits.
The arrogant pinnacles humanity fabricates on this garden world
Are barren and desolate when seen for what they are.

* * * *

Reincarnation is the moment-to-moment fabrication
Of the identity you imagine you are.

* * * *

You came into this world
With no allegiance to anything.
What happened?

* * * *

Your life's destiny is founded
Upon everything you desire right now.
If you would choose to disregard life's opportunity
To merge into the awareness of the changeless,
What, exactly, is it that you crave so much,
That you would choose vain mortality
Over that which was never born?

* * * *

A problem many have in considering themselves godness manifest
Is that they believe it should entail having all sorts of innate supernatural powers.
The fact that they see, walk, talk, and create every sort of mischief
Does not register because everyone else can, too.
Well, of course they can.
They are also godness manifest.
It is the concept of god that needs changing.

* * * *

Look back closely at your life.
See how every moment was necessary
For you to arrive at this apparent point in time,
That it has all been completely, perfectly, effortlessly
Choreographed, costumed and rehearsed for the original run,
An epic, time-bound play produced and directed by you, starring you.
Be on good terms with your spontaneous, manifesting reverie.
Enjoy the myriad players appearing in your production.
All are teachers and students in your eternal journey.

Of the Human Journey

Mortal existence is not easy. It never has been, and never will be for any creature sown of this garden world. What follows are thoughts about the human journey, the fare existence offers, and the choices each must resolve alone in the sojourn through the veiled maze of space-time, of consciousness with all its dualistic notions. It is a journey of ecstasy and agony, courage and fear, love and hate. It is the mystery born of the passionate mind, and the flowing array of perceptions every human being faces in the movement through birth, sickness, injury, aging, dying and death.

These reflections are written to help promote a larger vision of where we as a species are heading; one that attempts to look beyond humanity's many seemingly unreconcilable divisions, one that values insight and wisdom, one that elevates rather than detracts, one that seeks to foster a sense of guardianship, rather than destruction and manipulation, of our little dust ball and the many life forms it has spawned.

We live in a time period similar, yet increasingly unique among the many cycles come and gone before. Excessive population, coupled with unprecedented, unrestrained technologies, are driving our petri dish experiment of free will toward a rather bleak outcome. All the insanities we have so carelessly, foolishly, needlessly wreaked upon the earth's magnificent diversity, are huge rebounding tsunamis awaiting our arrival in time. The rules of the manifest game are simple and uncompromising, and those who bend and break them must eventually pay the price that Mother Nature is only too willing to exact.

As long as we human beings battle over pride-filled differences, we inevitably embrace a fate of our own synergistic, instinctual, self-absorbed design. The monopolistic win-lose divisiveness wrought since history's invention, since our egocentric, competitive, voluntary secession from the garden, spirals us down a path of annihilation. What we have done in all our arrogance has created a time already nightmarish for many, and will only exponentially accelerate for those to whom we are now ancestors. And we are nowhere close to discerning a common vision, a truly cooperative paradigm that might sidestep it.

We leave it to future generations to create solutions to problems we have all aided in forging. We vainly hope that political, economic and religious leaders will shepherd us to salvation, but they cannot because the collective vision is too full of limitation and division. Despite all our canny attributes, we as a species have not yet fully fathomed our interconnectedness, our inherent kinship to the totality. We have not grasped that time does not exist as any more than a play of consciousness, a collusion of imagination. Nowness is the only ephemeral, eternal reality, and the decisions each of us make in this moment-to-moment flowing create the dreamtime future.

So many of the leaders we have chosen to follow with all their insecure, parasitic ambitions for power, glory and wealth only wax the slide with empty promises and compromising, shortsighted decisions. Though many are highly intelligent in many clever ways, too few have the wisdom and integrity to truly serve those they pretend to lead. There is no political or economic solution to the human dilemma now unfolding. Our dysfunctional paradigm has placed us in a spiritual crisis well beyond all the vain pretensions so many call religion.

No one will ever see the world exactly the same as anyone else. We are like snowflakes and fingerprints, patterns woven of a mystery to which all creation is witness in one form or another.

Time and space are magical illusions, and each and every one of us is an equal participant in a vast theater of consciousness spontaneously playing itself out in seemingly every possible way. All our knowledge, all our histories, all our schools of thought, the countless frames of reference we imagine individually and collectively, dreamily overlap and merge like ripples crisscrossing to and fro upon the same sea of relativity.

Words, whatever the language, are conceptual icebergs each and every one of us envision differently. Thoughts of god, love, morality, money, tradition, politics, ad infinitum, inspire a myriad of responses, often conflicting because of rigid, dogmatic attachments to time. Yet, at the origin of all consciousness, that field from which this grand three-dimensional mirage has come to pass, is very much the same oneness, the same universal, timeless, eternal truth, despite our sophomoric arguments over the endless permutations of knowledge we ourselves have contrived.

All differences are fabrications, delusions, fantasy, make-believe. All polarizations, whether cultural, racial, sexual, geographic, economic, political, religious, mythological, and on and on, are illusive deceptions born of the play of light and shadow, and the musing it weaves. Each of us imagines a personal universe in which we travel very much alone, despite all the sensory evidence to the contrary. Until one can see past the attachments to an individual life, the many differences seem real, but, ultimately, they are not, never have been, and never will be.

We are passing through a holographic swirl of time in which the seemingly countless dramas of human existence are available for all to explore. What evolved of geographical isolation is now available for any to witness in whatever fashion predisposition allows. There is a tendency, due to the aberration of pride and the quest for false glory, to argue one mythology's supremacy over another, yet is any collusion more than a conceptual adaptation to time and circumstance? Is any one version, any one play of consciousness, in reality, ultimately superior to any other?

No one gets out of this manifest existence alive, and every human being ever born comes to grips with that truth in whatever way capacity and limitation allow. Some create hells for themselves, while others discern within a quality, a harmony that has been given countless names across the world. Most of us, of course, wander the purgatory between. In the journey of life, each of us swims the ebb and flow in which the individual mind plays out incalculable variations of passion born of desire and fear.

The life any of us creates, with all its perceptions and interpretations, is a blend of voluntary and involuntary choosing. Traditions are creations every cultural grouping, every societal mindset fabricates in order to maintain continuity in those the genetic lottery casts into its geographic realm. No one is bound to continue believing anything but through free will. Those who discern their own law see this manifest play far differently than those who, for whatever reason, cannot see past their attachments to the narrow propagandas of history, whatever the scale.

The gist of these reflections is to encourage those who see their immeasurable nature to become that to which they aspire; intuitively, spontaneously free to meet the moment as it unfolds, whether or not it fits the vision of any other individual or group. In the statistical bell curve of any rise and fall, of any creation and destruction, there are always the initiators, and those who tag along well after. Those who entertain the greatest vision are already among the many who do not. Whether the reader sees it as a fact or not, we are all that which is the same mystery of oneness. Eternity is very much present within every part and particle, every quantum of the drama to which all are witness. It is a vision so infinite as to include each and every one of us, along with all the other myriad life forms across the planet, as its source.

Is the human species, with all its competitive predispositions, capable of comprehending and responding to a larger vision of itself? With all that is facing us, do we have the luxury of time? Probably not. Though the transformation of consciousness is an instantaneous matter, we are caught in the juggernauting wave of collective delusional ignorance and countless attachments to choices made in times long before ours. We may agree the problems ahead are nearly insurmountable, but the paradigm shift into a cooperative, balanced, holistic, intuitive, realistic mindset is too much of a change for most to even begin to fathom, much less enact, at this point in time.

Despite the countless lessons offered by history, we are too attached to building mountains of false gold, practicing divisive religion, maintaining rigid traditions, following false leaders, promoting the idolatry of personality, supporting destructive institutions, fabricating egocentric class structures, producing adverse technologies, consuming insatiably in every way imaginable, destroying unreplaceable diversity, and killing one another because our ancestors could not get along any better than we, for all the same myopic, greedy, time-bound, evolutionary reasons.

Recognize it or not, the human species is fast-approaching a tailspin of its own design. It is inevitable that this garden planet, and all life that dwells on it, will someday return to its origin. That is the nature of the vast changing, the creation-destruction of each passing moment in which we all choicelessly, spontaneously participate; the indivisible, impersonal totality few truly discern.

The question is, will we go out with nobility, humility, integrity and discipline as true human beings, harmoniously realigned with the source of our origin, guardians of the garden that birthed us all? Or will we exit like fruit flies churning busily for the last bit of honey in the bell jar; like rats vying savagely for the last crumbs at the bottom of the cage?

Each of us makes that decision in every step, in every breath, in every deed, word and thought. We individually create our own unique version of the universe, and how we work it out together in the theater of consciousness, only time will tell. The ultimate reality is not about contrived differences. It is not about futile, conceited pursuits, meaningless paths to glory. Life is an opportunity to discern within a vision of an integrated relationship with that which is infinitely greater than its many parts.

It is the true discernment that each and every one of us, including every angel and every demon, including all creatures great and small, including every infinitesimal, absolute speck of dust swirling within, to the furthest indivisible reaches of the unknown, is equally That I Am to which mystics across the world throughout time point. There is no other.

Each and every one of us is the same eternal clayness, the same sovereign immeasurable oneness playing out the relativity of dreamtime. We are all connected, no matter the exterior, no matter the capacity or frame of reference. No stairways to heaven, no religious middlemen are necessary. It is free to all discerning enough to see that truth is the momentary, intangible, undeniable birthright within. This intuitive vision of the clarity beyond form, and the exploration of right living it brings about, is the only true revolution.

This mystery we call life is an opportunity to witness the vast unfathomable diversity of this manifest theater, this grand play of creation and destruction, of known and unknown in whatever way each imagines. It is the potential to see that every form born of space-time is merely one of an infinite array of masks veiling the same maker; nothing more, nothing less.

Godness is beyond the scope of the rational mind, beyond the concoctions of superstition or the measurements of science. It is beyond the wordplay of any belief system, beyond the egocentric weavings of individual persona and the countless delusions spawned of ignorance. We are all alone, together, and how we as a species finally choose to dance the dance, sing the song, walk the walk, and talk the talk, is ultimately, in this mind's eye, the true legacy of the human journey.

Best wishes.

Ten Reflections

I

Become a conscious, sovereign human being, awakened to the intuitive wisdom of Self, witness to the reality and unreality of this dualistic, eternal mystery of time and space.

II

Respect this diverse garden world and the inherent rights of all creatures great and small. They are all masks of the same creation. There is no other.

III

Treat others at least as well as you would prefer they treat you. Do not expect them to return the favor, or to learn from your example. No one will ever be you.

IV

Live and let live; live and let die; grasp and release; give and take; win and lose; forgive and forget; inhale and exhale; fly and land; swim and drift; rise and fall; open and close; lock and unlock; come and go; start and stop; begin and end; flow and resist; tense and relax; be and allow; create, preserve and destroy.

V

Moderation in all things. Gluttony, greed, sloth, envy, wrath, lust and pride are the roots of limitation, the source of suffering. Take delight in simplicity.

VI

Share what you have to share. But not in such a manner that it is degrading or disempowering to those you serve. Giving to get is not sharing.

VII

Play win-win whenever practical. Unmitigated competition is ultimately a dysfunctional paradigm. Avoid unnecessary conflict. No one really wins a fight. There are plenty of cooperative opportunities for those seeking the inherent ground.

VIII

Bring children into this world only if you intend to truly care for them. There are far too many human beings already. Life is arduous enough without a harsh, imbalanced beginning.

IX

Do not put false wealth above real relationship. Learn to listen to the many voices of nature. Learn to see with its many eyes. Mountains of gold do not compare with a child's joy in a pile of sand, a bird's in the morning sun, or a dolphin's in the passing wave.

X

Creation and destruction are equal partners in this vast kaleidoscoping lightshow, in the infinite aloneness of this dreamtime theater. Deeply understanding this may lessen the suffering of your brief existence. Try not to take it all so seriously that you cannot laugh, at least occasionally, at this temporary identity, this brief ever-changing, three-dimensional illusion to which you are so attached.

Got God?

Do you believe in God? If so, describe what you mean by that?

Godness is the “I am That I Am” within each of us. It is the nothing and the everything. It is the smallest particle to the greatest whole. It is the isness, the nowness, the awareness, the timeless indivisible, unborn, undying source of this infinite, unknowable mystery. It is the creation, preservation and destruction of every part and particle playing out the grand theater, the eternal kaleidoscoping holograph of space-time. That spark of divinity, of the Self within all selves, is the witness acting out every drama imaginable.

Each and every life form is the immortal totality splintered into mortal fare. The source of life, of creation, is more than any measurement can ever explain or define. All attempts to grasp it, all the traditions, symbols, rituals and concepts, all the speculations ever devised in this garden world, or any other, are equally limited as anything but intuitive reflections. They are all merely a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

Time is a fabrication of consciousness. It is the virtual reality of the mind, the cotton candy of imagination. The ephemeral, momentary nowness is the only reality. Every life form, no matter who, what, where, when, why or how, is very much of the same evolving creation, the same source, the same light, the same dreamer, the same witness, the same amness, the same uniqueness, the same absolute oneness. No matter how you slice and label it, we are all holographs of the same essence.

If you were raised in a religious environment, has that had a positive or negative impact on your life?

Organized religions across the world clutch vainly to beliefs founded upon geographic assumptions whose foundations have all become brittle and stale in this shrinking world. Groups throughout time have again and again claimed to be the standard-bearers of truth, but have all too often created far more conflict than community in their egocentricity. The net result is that the many propaganda of history are weighing us down with clashing notions. Notions that no longer hold water when examined closely.

The fact is that we are all the Way, the Truth and the Life, and those blind to this most simple, obvious understanding, those attached to literal translations and dogmatic collusions, cannot help but perpetuate unnecessary confusion and disintegration.

Religious traditions, with all their customs, folklore, symbols, rituals and concepts are products of time and its inevitable limitations. Their value is that they remind us of our relationship with the mystery of our existence. But to vainly cling to any as more than temporal tools, to battle over them in any way, to use them as anything but maps home, presents a narrow vision of the eternal quest. The word is only sound, and no sound can more than echo though the expanses of eternity.

Organizing the spiritual quest tends to box godness into a concept. And in the journey beyond concepts, into that which is immeasurable, there are no boundaries, no assumptions that withstand that which creates, preserves and destroys all illusions. The maker of time is bound to no form, and inevitably harvests all.

Do you believe in heaven, hell and judgment day?

Heaven and hell are states of mind, plays of consciousness, that only seem real where the now of time meets the road. Heaven is a sense of intuitive unity, an understanding, a clear harmony, a serene contentment. Hell is its divisive counterpart filled with unending prejudice, complexity and contention. It is the passionate mind playing out the dualistic weavings of desire and fear, and the suffering they endlessly bring to fruition. Every day is judgment day for those confined by the illusory, dualistic play of the senses. In separation we are demons, in unity we are angels. Who has not tasted every potential to some degree?

Can prayer heal the sick?

If you really have faith, do you need to pray? Sickness, injury, aging and dying are inevitable in this mortal theater. Oblivion of personal identity is the undeniable fate of all forms. Yet that essence each of us truly is, is immortal, and this very simple realization creates a far different view of life than most seem destined to entertain at any given time. What each of us really is, is far greater than birth and death and the limitations of any manifest theater. And praying to imagination for mortal immortality is rooted deeply in the quicksand of ignorance.

Are your religious/spiritual beliefs separate from your political ones?

Every action ripples. Every cause creates effect, and every effect becomes cause to the next effect. Those aware of this tend to walk more attentively in their day-to-day actions. Separative choices lead to disintegration; holistic ones to integration. Through interactions with others we show what we value. Are religion and politics separate? All division is the play of the time-bound mind. As long as we as a species value power, fame and fortune more than we value right relationship, as long as we are in the grips of worldly attachment, as long as we worship mammon and idolize form, we journey toward an inevitable, synergistic fate of our own creation. The paradigm from which we spawned is no longer functional, and the bell is daily tolling louder.

Describe a spiritual experience you have had recently.

Is there any moment that is not spiritual, magical, mysterious? Whether sitting on the porcelain throne, or caught up in an inexplicable vision, every moment's unfolding is ultimately very much the same. We may or may not be tuned in, we may prefer some moments to others, but in reality the ungraspable is source to all creations of consciousness, wherever or however they unfold. Pay attention to the vastness within, or meander through every sensory, dualistic diversion the world offers, it is all the same ephemeral virtual reality. Life is an opportunity to reflect upon the oneness within and without, and to take it as any more than a three-dimensional, quickly passing mirage misses its greatest potential.

What is the soul?

What is not the That I Am? What is not the ground of all creation, preservation and destruction? What is not the indivisible, immortal, absolute reality that permeates all seen and unseen? What is not the same divine mystery residing in everything from the smallest particle of an atom to the farthest galaxies of creation? Godness, as seen through consciousness, is as expansive or limited as any given personal vision, yet cannot be confined by any. Ultimately, there is no other. The

ocean of godness is all, including the drop of awareness reading this. The proof of it is that no one, no creature ever birthed upon this spinning garden has ever, will ever, or can ever discern more than a reflection of its own face. All forms are splinters of the same witness, the same oneness, the same faceless unknown. All attributes, all measurements are born of the illusion of space-time, and to be bound by any reverie is the delusion of ignorance.

"Got God?" was a response to a seven-question survey of Chico News & Review readers published in April 1996.

Books

The Song of God: Bhagavad Gita How to Know God The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali Shankara's Crest Jewel of Discrimination	Swami Prabhavananda Christopher Isherwood
Bhagavad Gita	Barbara Stoler Miller
Bhagavad Gita	Juan Mascaro
Tao Te Ching (Lao Tsu)	Gia-Fu Feng Jane English
Tao Te Ching The Classic Book of Integrity and the Way	Victor Mair
Chuang Tsu, Inner Chapters	Gia-Fu Feng Jane English
Where Are You Going? The Perfect Relationship Secret of the Siddhas Does Death Really Exist? Mystery of the Mind Reflections of the Self Play of Consciousness	Swami Muktananda
I Am That Talks with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj	Maurice Frydman
Prior to Consciousness Talks with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj Seeds of Consciousness The Wisdom of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj	Jean Dunn
Pointers from Nisargadatta Maharaj	Ramesh Balsekar
Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal	Swami Prabhavananda Frederick Manchester
Think on These Things The First and Last Freedom Freedom from the Known The Ending of Time Commentaries on Living Series	Jiddu Krishnamurti
Sermon on the Mount According to Vedanta The Eternal Companion	Swami Prabhavananda

Spiritual Teachings of Ramana Maharishi	Ramana Maharishi
The Way of Siddhartha A Life of the Buddha	David Kalupahana Indriani Kalupahana
Autobiography of a Yogi	Paramahansa Yogananda
Taking the Path of Zen	Robert Aitken
Three Pillars of Zen Zen, Dawn in the West	Roshi Phillip Kapleau
Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind	Shunryu Suzuki
Zen Flesh, Zen Bones	Paul Reps
The Enlightened Mind	Stephen Mitchell
The Gospel According to Zen	Robert Sohl Audrey Carr
Zen Koans	Gyomay Kubose
The Sound of One Hand 281 Zen Koans with Answers	Yoel Hoffmann
Zen to Go Portable Curmudgeon Return of the Portable Curmudgeon	Jon Winokur
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance Lila	Robert Pirsig
Zen in the Art of Archery	Eugene Herrigel
Siddhartha Steppenwolf Narcissus and Goldmund The Glass Bead Game	Herman Hesse
The Religions of Man	Huston Smith
Tao of Physics	Fritjof Capra
The Dancing Wu Li Masters	Gary Zukav
Lazy Man's Guide to Enlightenment	Thaddeus Golas
The Essence of Alan Watts	Alan Watts
The Way of the Peaceful Warrior	Dan Millman

Razor's Edge	Somerset Maugham
The Education of Littletree	Forest Carter
The Mystique of Enlightenment	Rabbi Alvin Bobroff
The Unrational Ideas of a Man Called U.G.	
The Courage to Stand Alone	Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson
Conversations with U.G. Krishnamurti	
Emmanual	Pat Rodegast
Emmanual II, A Choice for Love	Judith Stanton
Life After Life	Raymond Moody
The Light Beyond	
The Tao of Pooh	Benjamin Hoff
The Te of Piglet	
Illusions	Richard Bach
The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah	
One	
Jonathan Livingston Seagull	
The Bridge Across Forever	
Mystics and Zen Masters	Thomas Merton
A Thomas Merton Reader	Thomas McDonnell
The Experience of No-Self	Bernadette Roberts
A Contemplative Journey	
What is Self?	
A Study of the Spiritual Journey in Terms of Consciousness	
The Spectrum of Consciousness	Ken Wilbur
No Boundary	
Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth	
Eye to Eye	
The Quest for the New Paradigm	
Sex, Ecology, Spirituality	
One Taste	
A Brief History of Everything	
The Eye of Spirit	
An Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad	
The Marriage of Sense and Soul	
Integrating Science and Religion	
The Path of the Masters	Julian Johnson
Mahamudra: Boundless Joy and Freedom	Ole Nydahl

The Interior Realization Zen and the Psychology of Transformation: The Supreme Doctrine	Hubert Benoit
Journey of the Enlightened Mind The Only Dance There Is Be Here Now Grist for the Mill The Journey of Awakening A Meditator's Guidebook	Ram Dass
Lust for Enlightenment, Buddhism and Sex Practical Vedanta	John Stevens Swami Vivekananda
The Everything and the Nothing God to Man and Man to God	Meher Baba
Mahamudra: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation	Takpo Tashi Namgyal Lobsang Lhalungpa
The Lottery	Shirley Jackson
The Fountainhead	Ayn Rand
Stranger in a Strange Land	Robert Heinlein
The Qur'an (Koran)	
The Bible	
Ken's Guide to the Bible	Ken Smith
The Thunder: Perfect Mind	
The Source	James Michner
The Urantia Book	Urantia Foundation
Course in Miracles	Foundation for Inner Peace
The Miracle of Mindfulness A Manual on Meditation	Thick Nhat Hanh
Being Peace A Guide to Walking Meditation The Sun My Heart Peace Is Every Step The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life	
Our Kind Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches	Marvin Harris

Cat's Cradle Slaughterhouse Five Breakfast of Champions Bluebeard Hocus Pocus	Kurt Vonnegut
Knee of Listening Method of Siddhas Dawn Horse Testament	Da Free John (Da Avabhasa)
Mutant Message Down Under	Marlow Morgan
The Celestine Prophecy	James Redfield
Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha	E.A. Burtt
Caretakers of Wonder The Art of Longing With Secret Friends Hugh's Hues Now is the Moon's Eyebrow The Star Cleaner Reunion If You're Afraid of the Dark, Remember the Night Rainbow	Cooper Eden
The Power of Myth	Joseph Campbell Bill Moyers
The Masks of God Series Primitive Mythology Oriental Mythology Occidental Mythology Creative Mythology	Joseph Campbell
The Road Less Traveled	M. Scott Peck
Catching the Light The Entwined History of Light and the Mind	Arthur Zajonc
Original Blessing	Matthew Fox
Beyond Culture	Edward T. Hall
When Society Becomes an Addict	Ann Wilson Schaef
The Naked Truth Matrix of Power Egypt, Light of the World Ancient Belief Systems	International Research & Educational Research
The Grand Inquisitor	Fyodor Dostoevsky

Candide Zarire Henriade	Voltaire
Titus Groan Gormenghast Titus Alone	Mervyn Peake
Animal Farm 1984	George Orwell
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley
Tom Jones	Henry Fielding
Gulliver's Travels	Jonathan Swift
Fahrenheit 451	Ray Bradbury
Hope For the Flowers	Trina Paulus
Earth Abides	George R. Stewart
The Stranger	Albert Camus
Power Tactics of Jesus Christ	Jay Haley
The Living Tao The Art of War Book of Five Rings The Shogun Scrolls	Stephen Kaufman
Spiritual Literacy	Frederic Brussat Mary Ann Brussat
Dune	Frank Herbert
The Holographic Universe	Michael Talbot
The Telling	Ursula K. Le Guin
The Chronicles of Tao 365 Tao Everyday Day Scholar Warrior	Deng Ming-Dao
Entering the Tao	Master Hua Ni
Religions of the World	Lewis M. Hopfe

We Are Three (Rumi) Unseen Rain Open Secret Delicious Laughter Feeling the Shoulder of the Lion	Coleman Barks
Tao Te Ching The Earthsea Quartet The Lathe of Heaven	Ursula K. Le Guin
Jesus and Buddha The Parallel Sayings	Marcus Borg
Choosing Civility The 25 Rules of Considerate Conduct	Dr. P.M. Forni
The Universe in a Single Atom	Dalai Lama
The Art of Peace Balance Over Conflict in Sun-Tzu's Art of War	Philip Dunn
The Sage's Tao Te Ching Ancient Advice for the Second Half of Life	William Martin
The End of Faith	Sam Harris
The Herald of the Coming Good All and Everything Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson Meetings with Remarkable Men Life is Real Only Then, When 'I Am' Views from the Real World (Olga de Hartmann)	G.I. Gurdjieff
The Four Agreements A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom The Four Agreements Companion Book Using the Four Agreements to Master the Dream of Your Life The Mastery of Love A Practical Guide to the Art of Relationship The Voice of Knowledge A Practical Guide to Inner Peace	Michael Ruiz
The Essence of Rumi	John Baldock
The Atheist's Bible An Illustrious Collection of Irreverent Thoughts	Joan Konner
Living and Dying in Zazen Five Zen Masters of Modern Japan	Arthur Braverman

Stillness Speaks	Eckhart Tolle
The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment	
Practicing the Power of Now	
Essential Teachings, Meditations, and Exercises	
A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose	
The Ends of Time, the Roots of Eternity	Michael Meade
Tales of Myth, Nature & Culture	
The Water of Life	
Initiation and the Tempering of the Soul	
Branches of Mentoring	
The World Behind the World	
Living at the Ends of Time	
The Heart of Awareness	Thomas Byrom
A Translation of the Ashtavakra Gita	
Duet of One: The Ashtavakra Gita Dialogue	Ramesh S. Balsekar
Bitten by the Black Snake	Manuel Schoch
The Ancient Wisdom of Ashtavakra	

Movies

1 Giant Leap	Natural Born Killers
2001, A Space Odyssey	Paths of Glory
A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash	Physics: The Elegant Universe and Beyond
An Inconvenient Truth	Planet in Peril
Baraka	Powaqatsi
Before the Rain	Powder
Black Robe	Powwow Highway
Born Rich	Ralph Nader: An Unreasonable Man
Contact	Razor's Edge
Conversations with God	Rumi, Poet of the Heart
Deliver Us from Evil	Sicko
Dogma	Star Wars
Dune	Taxi to the Dark Side
Faith and Reason	The 11 th Hour
Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control	The Believer
Gandhi	The Celestine Prophecy
Garbage Warrior	The Corporation
Gormenghast	The Creation of the Universe
Into Great Silence	The Day the Universe Changed Series
Jesus Camp	The Gods Must Be Crazy
Jesus of Montreal	The Journey of Man
Joseph Campbell and The Power of Myth	The Last Temptation of Christ
Koyaanasqatsi	The Matrix
Last Days on Earth	The Mission
Little Buddha	The One Percent
Merton: A Film Biography	The Peaceful Warrior
Microcosmos	The Secret
Mindwalk	The Thin Red Line
My Dinner With Andre	The U.S. vs. John Lennon
Nanking	The Waking Life
Naqoyqatsi	What the #\$*! Do We Know!?