

Welcome to The Zest of the Lemon

The Zest is a collection of poems and prose answering the questions:

What is the essence of life?

What brings you joy?

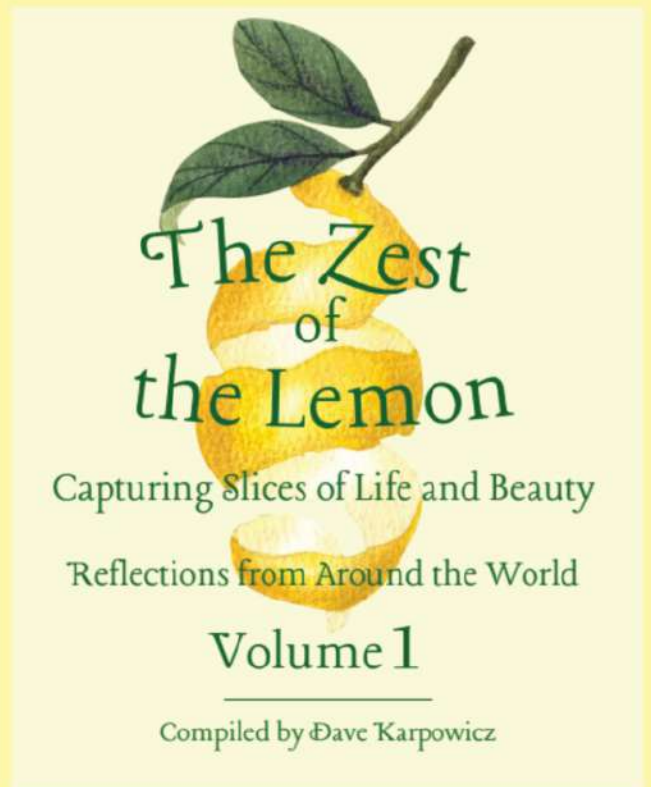
What have you learned?

The publication is created
with the hope of opening eyes and hearts to the joy of being alive.

It is an invitation to
slow down - see - reflect - connect.

65 Authors and Poets world-wide
Over 100 Reflections
90 Majestic Photos

Make up the stunning presentation called
The Zest of the Lemon



Introduction

The joy of living comes from connection.

Some find the source of that connection in nature. For others joy of the connection is in life itself and people they love. Still others find the greatest source of joy is in connecting with Spirit.

The work of our poets and writers has been sorted into these categories:

Nature

Life and People

Spirit

We begin with Nature.

In an effort to share the wonders of the world we live in, each issue of the Zest will include a photo essay of one magical place.

This premiere issue features the Pacific Northwest, a place where green forested mountains meet the sea - a place where vibrant fields radiate beauty.

The background of the entire slide is a photograph of a dense, green forest. In the lower-left corner, a waterfall is visible, cascading over rocks. The trees are tall and leafy, creating a thick canopy. The overall tone is natural and serene.

Nature

*In all things of nature
there is something of the
marvelous*

Aristotle



Mist Rising - Lea Millay

bright trillium there
amidst the fierce storm's wreckage
on the forest floor
delicate against all odds
gift of renewal and hope

ceaseless wind and rain
March is a long dark tunnel
heartless monochrome
then one day we wake to see
a world awash in color

morning mist rising
anxious birds flit to and fro
fragrant plum in bloom
in spring it is the evenings
when the wind blows gently through

obscured by hazy clouds
full moon in the dark spring sky
fills me with wonder
memories of the distant past
as though they just had happened

what is this feeling
warm soft glow in the midnight sky
Sakura in bloom?
a thin veil of fallen snow
covers the cypress-bark roofs

I am the Fern - Catherine Sipher

Pushing through the dirt,
the fern persistently
makes its way into the light.
Remaining tightly curled into itself
for protection, the fern gains
strength from the warmth of the sun.
With time, the fern grows stronger
and begins to unfurl -
putting on display the fullness
of its beauty and purpose.



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a beach. In the foreground, there's a sandy area where waves are washing up. The water is a deep blue color, and white foam from the breaking waves is visible. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

**Ocean Shores -
Kristina Boratino**

white veiled
heads of Holy
seagulls harmonize
with the calming, endless roar of
eternity

twirling waves
tickle my nose
i listen as the
giggling of my babies
gets carried in the breeze

toasted sand snuggles close,
my thighs grazed with
his tender, deliberate touch
the ocean and i have
always been married
a union no one

not one

can come between
like trees and roots
butterflies and
 wings
life and death
Motherhood and love

he kisses his bride
once more vague, empty
spaces in myself are
filled up completely
covered,
protected
I'll forever
hold
my peace

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a beach scene. In the foreground, there's a sandy beach area. The middle ground shows several waves breaking, creating white foam. The ocean extends to the horizon under a clear sky. The colors are vibrant, with deep blues for the water and bright whites for the surf.

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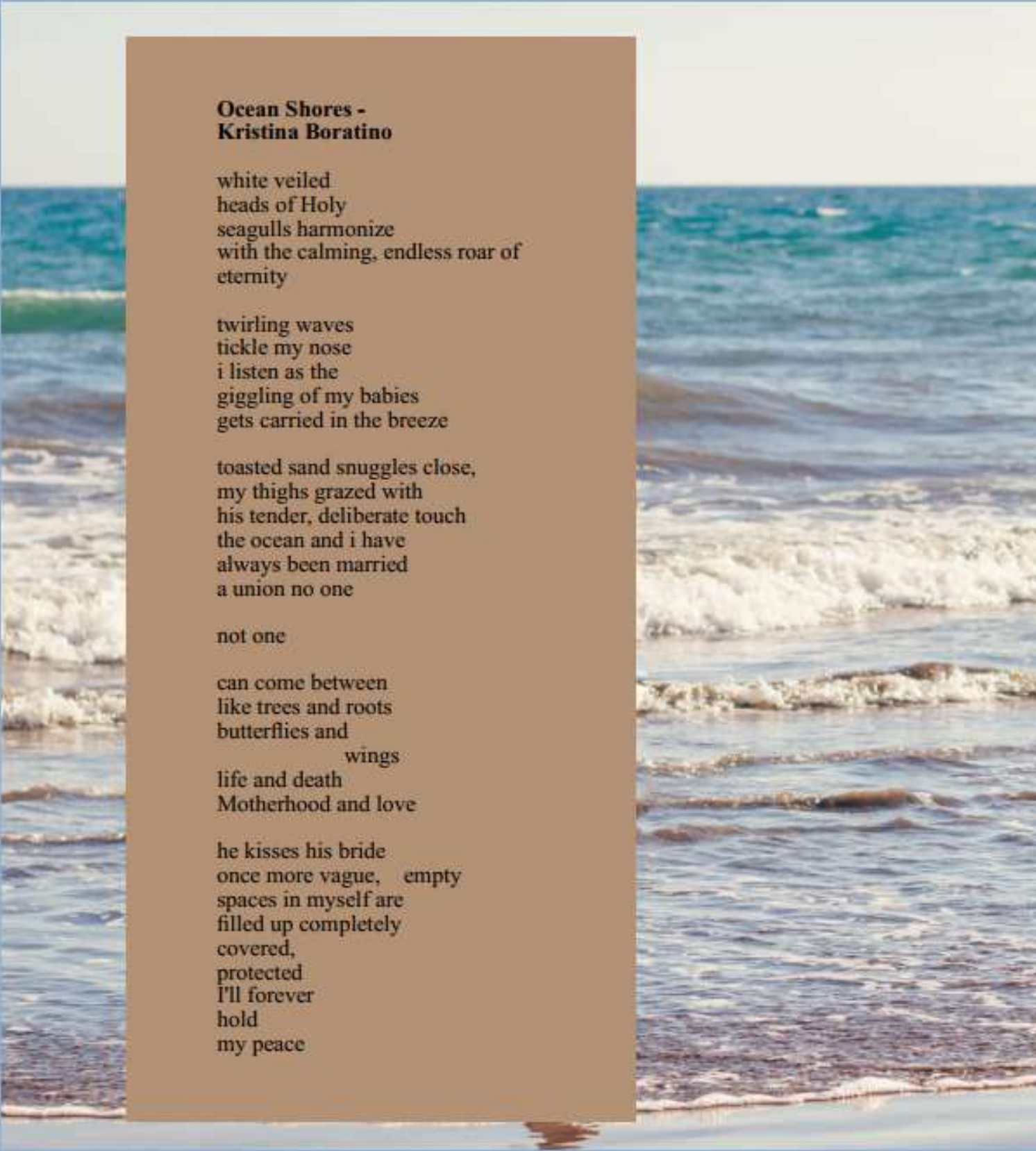
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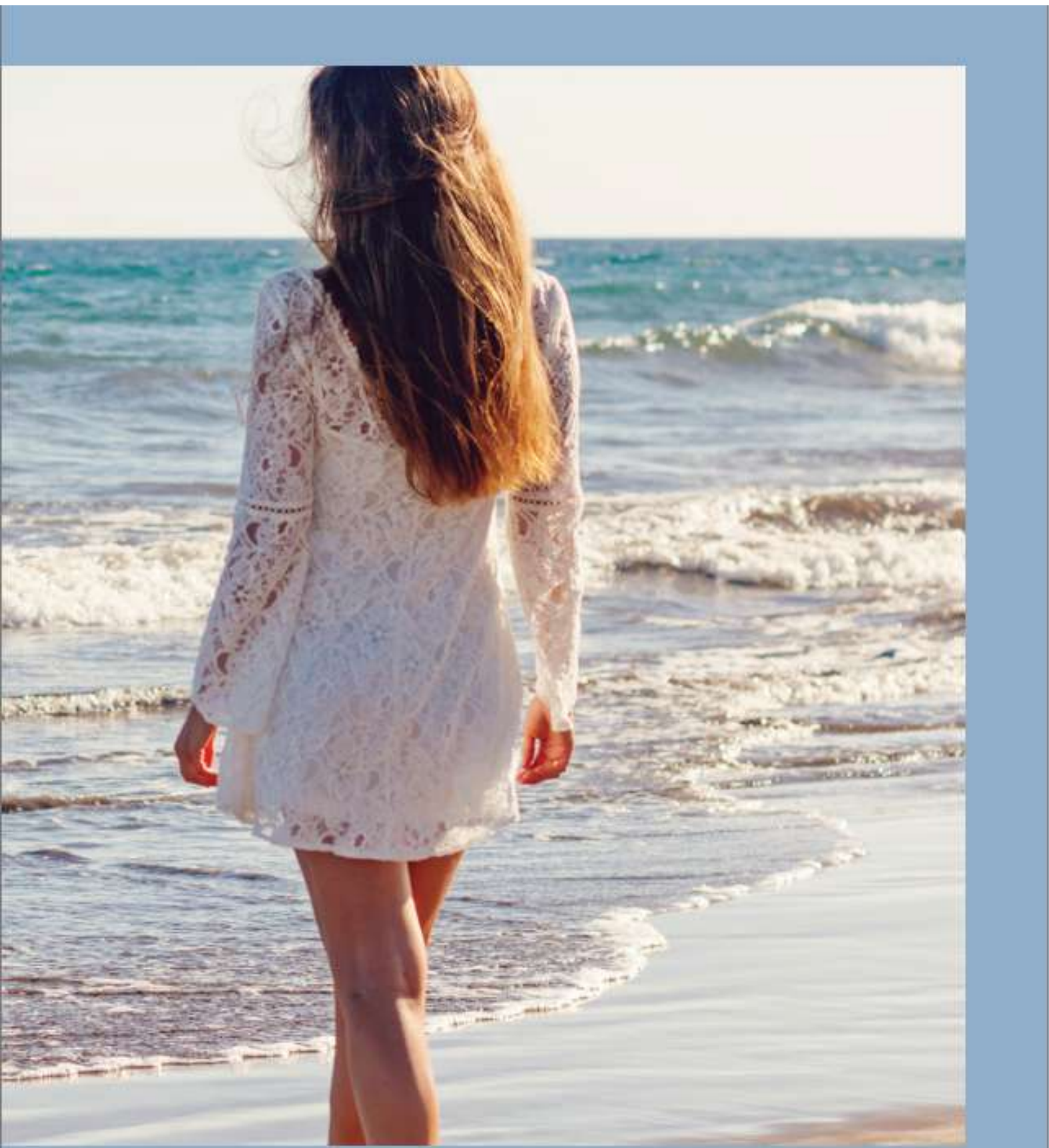
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**An Hour Outside Seattle
In November -
Kristin Roedell**

All night in the city
Jazz drifts out to the sidewalks
Neon lights buzz above the bars

A car slips its clutch and grinds uphill

But here in the stillness
The rain blows by like a drawn curtain, mice
disturb the fallen leaves

My husband whistles for the border collie and
shuts the back door.

This is Northwest farm quiet:
a lone, far train rounding a bend its headlights
tracing the barn roof, an owl ruffling its feathers,
the falling dark
touching the fields.



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a brown cowboy hat with a black and white beaded band and a blue and white plaid shirt, is sitting in a green field. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile, her hand resting near her chin. A yellow text box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

Life & People

***Seize the moments of
happiness
Love and be loved***

***That is the only reality in this
world All else is folly***

Leo Tolstoy

**2002 Wedding Card From My Mom -
Miriam Manglani**

It's a simple card—
an embossed bouquet of pastel flowers.

A short note in my mom's
pre-stroke handwriting.

*We wish you a life full of happiness and health.
We wish all your special dreams come alive,
even the quiet ones you keep to yourself.*

With all of our love,

Mom + Dad

Reading it years later,
knowing my father
was slowly dying
in her care at the time,
those words expressed
what she wanted for herself too,
what was taken from her,
and what she didn't know
would be taken from her in the future.

I kept it as a reminder
to let my dreams out
kicking and screaming into the world
like a newborn.





Dancing With The Family - Melissa Poulton

Dancing with the family with games that are fun.
The music playing is up loud and out of this world.
Enjoyment all over the family's bright shiny faces.
The youngest in the room, a little girl with silver teeth braces.

The music is pumping to the sound of the dances on the telly.
Alcohol flows from the bottle and into the family's mouth.
Giving a false illusion that the family are really happy.
Except the young little girl, she is just really crabby.

The mother prepared the food for everyone in the house
The adults were doing other stuff to make the night go well.
Setting up games and listen to each other trying not to sing.
The young on her own pretending not to do a single thing.

Dancing feet were all over the shop, gliding across the floor.
Shaking their bodies towards the sound of beat coming through.
Laughter was rife through all four walls of the big house.
Before the twelve o'clock bell, they were quiet as a mouse.

The bells at the big tower rang out across the country.
The new year has arrived and brought in new material
The display of fireworks lit up the London sky at night
Smoke covered the area but we knew things will be alright



Challah - Wilda Morris

I made all five of my children happy
on those days they came home
to the scent of fresh-baked challah
which I sliced and served with honey butter
or peanut butter-honey spread.
The recipe that made four loaves
was worth the price of the cookbook.
Twice a week, I made eight loaves,
four white, and four whole wheat.
My children are grown and gone
but those eight glass bread pans
still sit in my cupboard,
no longer all used at the same time.

Generations - Wilda Morris

My daughter creeps into our bedroom,
whimpering that she's scared.
I toss the extra blanket on the floor,
and give her a pillow so she can lie down.
I turn so I can put an arm down
and hold her hand the way
my grandmother held mine
when I woke from dreams
of fires, I could not escape.

As my arm begins to ache,
I realize for the first time
how much sacrifice Zam made.
I hold on until my daughter sleeps,
releasing my hand, and I know
these are sacred moments,
that someday she will do the same
for my grandchild when she
is frightened in the night.



Spirit

*The only true wisdom is in
knowing you know
nothing.*

Socrates

**A Time to Breathe -
Jane Claire Jackson**

Cross-legged on a blue mat. Blue to calm the soul. Blue skies. Blue seas. Blue lobelia, cornflowers, hydrangeas, grape hyacinths, bluebells, forget-me-nots.

Sunlight filters through the window panes, bringing a longed-for warmth.

Exhale slowly. Shoulders sag. Eyelids close. Extract all thoughts. Compress. Squeeze.

Inhale. Sit tall, Spine stretched. Feel the warmth of rays embracing cheeks, chin, and forehead.

Exhale. Let the air ebb from the body taking anxiety and concerns away. Casting them out into the world from whence they came. There's no place for them here.

Inhale. Stretch taller. Reach for the skies. Float alone. Hover. Find that inner tranquility.

Exhale. Let out the aches, the stress, the phone calls that interrupted the morning, the burnt toast, the never-ending cleaning, the bills to pay, the shopping to buy, the car to refuel.

Inhale. Fresh air flows through the esophagus, deep down to the lungs' furthest recesses, cleansing, purifying, and bringing hope.

Exhale. Wave goodbye to the nagging, the family demands. Cast out the sound of children shouting in the school playground next door. Throw out all noise except the air gently moving through nostrils, throat, and chest.

Inhale. Dreams of tropical islands. Warm sunshine. Sand between toes. Waves lapping along the shoreline.

Find that unique sweet spot. Body is totally relaxed. Drifting. Mind calm. Ready for this session.

Leave an hour later. Battery fully recharged. Stronger. Optimistic. Grateful.





Erosion -
Sydney Michalski

Slowly melting from a golden hour,
Quiet wings on quiet breezes fly,
Blurring lines from gentleness and power,
Cutting soft against a heedless sky.

Still reflections break in rising scatters,
Salty droplets offered up to light,
Merging views confusing all that matters,
Winding back down past-worn tracks despite.

Footsteps tell a story softly dimming,
Busy shadows chasing busy dreams,
Lost to notice, background noises skimming,
Distant waves erasing all that seems.

At the edge of all of our tomorrows,
Contemplating all our yesterdays,
Moments of eternities we've borrowed
Tumble towards a horizontal haze.

Who can grasp the day as it's descending?
Who can set the sunrise rushing free?
Driven one direction never-ending,
Watching time smooth over legacy.

Predetermined paths are rushing rivers.
Either way we turn we're back again.
No escape velocity delivers
Past the line defining now and then.

**Luna Love -
Suzanne Austin-Hill**

Nowhere,
a collaboration like that
of the sun and moon.

Monthly
she decreases, illuminating his increases.
Biannually
he attempts to hide her every flaw.

Their relationship a secret when
her between-nights presence overwhelms him and
clear nights' solitary stillness reveals his fullness.

Typically in the light of day,
they hold hands
in near-perfect love
demonstrating unquestionable faithfulness.



**Words -
Adriana C Rocha**

Words are not just words,
Some come
With love,
Others come
To leave marks
On the hearts and souls,
Some come to express
What reason
I cannot explain,
Some come to heal
What life wanted to destroy,
Some come to hold
The hands of those we love,
Some come to bless
The path on which we walk.

And now we bid adieu.

I hope you enjoyed The Zest. It has been a labor of love. Talented writers - amazing images - slices of life and beauty; who could ask for more.

Volume II will be out mid July 2025. I hope you will be there.

I leave you with words penned by George David Weiss / Robert Thiele and made famous by Louis Armstrong:

And I think to myself

What a wonderful world

Ooh, Yeah

Dave

