

THE LUMINOUS SEAM : THE POETICS OF BRIDGING IMAGES

Mary Ellen Lough, Haden, March 2026

After tragedies, one has to invent a new world, knit it or embroider, make it up. It's not gonna be given to you because you deserve it; it doesn't work that way. You have to imagine something that doesn't exist and dig a cave into the future and demand space. It's a territorial hope affair. At the time, that digging is utopian, but in the future, it will become your reality.

~ Björk

Did you not see that when your creative force turned to the world, how the dead things moved under it and through it, how they grew and prospered, and how your thoughts flowed in rich rivers? If your creative force now turns to the place of the soul, you will see how your soul becomes green and how its field bears wonderful fruit.

- Carl Jung

When I write, I feel much larger than the limits of my body. There is a mystery you tap into that is much bigger. And the poem becomes just a glimpse into what you reveal to yourself.

- Ocean Vuong

But why can't the language for creativity be the language of regeneration? You killed that poem, we say. You're a killer. You came into that novel guns blazing. I am hammering this paragraph, I am banging them out, we say. I owned that workshop. I shut it down. I crushed them. We smashed the competition. I'm wrestling with the muse. The state, where people live, is a battleground state. The audience is a target audience. "Good for you, man" a man once said to me at a party, "you're making a killing with poetry. You're knockin' em dead."

- Ocean Vuong

This moment is real, this moment is what we have, this moment in which we face each other... Whatever has happened, whatever is going to happen in the world, it is the living moment that contains the sum of the excitement, this moment in which we touch life and all the energy of the past and future. Here is all the developing greatness of the dream of the world, the pure flash of momentary imagination, the vision of life lived outside of triumph or defeat, in continual triumph and defeat, in the present, alive. All the crafts of subtlety, all the effort, all the loneliness and death, the thin and blazing threads of reason, the spill of blessing, the passion behind these silences — all the invention turns to one end: the fertilizing of the moment, so that there may be more life.

- Muriel Ruckeyser

from HOW TO CONTINUE

- Matthew Zapruder

I'm a dream the bomb had,
unspeakably resting in a field

of yellow flowers,
parts of me covered in blood

parts reflecting clouds.

from : The Body Is a Doorway

- Sophie Strand

I have not been
inside a love story
I have been a love story
my very body, a clamorous,
complicated interplay of
beings disagreeing, singing,
swooning, and melting
together. I don't know
where the love goes. But
I know that every time I
breathe out, it overflows.

A Little Stone in the Middle of the Road, In Florida

- Muriel Ruckeyser

My son as child saying
God
is anything, even a little stone in the middle of the road,
in Florida.
Yesterday
Nancy, my friend, after long illness:
You know what can lift me up, take me right out of despair?
No, what?
Anything.

from Threshold

- Maggie Smith

any open

space may be
a threshold, an arch
of entering and leaving.
Crossing a field, wading
through nothing
but timothy grass,
imagine yourself passing from
and into. Passing through
doorway after
doorway after doorway.

A threshold is a place or moment where transformational work, learning or integration occurs. A gate is a place of initiation or entryway; it is the protecting and testing that must occur before entry is permitted.

- Angeles Arrian

The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds – and at the same time, is the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible.

- Mircea Eliade

The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy, and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experience you are released from the curse of pathology. Even the very disease takes on a numinous character.

- Carl Jung

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.

- Carl Jung

When the inner and the outer are wedded, revelation occurs.

- Hildegard of Bingen

...the actual task is to integrate the two threads of one's life...the within and the without.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

I think that we're beginning to remember that the first poets didn't come out of a classroom, that poetry began when somebody walked off of a savanna or out of a cave and looked up at the sky with wonder and said, "Ahhh." That was the first poem.

- Lucille Clifton

The ritual chants and incantations of shamanism, the healing songs and magic of indigenous people with their rich core of poetry, illustrate the vital role of art in ancient medicine. Poetry is indeed a force, an act of human magic, that alters the way we see our lives and so changes us.

- Morris R. Morrison, Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin

FROM : FINDING WHAT YOU DIDN'T LOSE

- John Fox (Institute for Poetic Medicine)

Plato said that beautiful language could induce *sophrosyne*, a condition of stability and integration in psychic life. Beautiful language was given names by the ancient Greeks of *epode* and *theklerian*—or charms and spells. The contemporary Greek poet Odysseus Elytis tells of this healing power of poetry and the part these “charms and spells” play in his culture, even within recent memory:

*“ . . .until a few years ago our island nurses,
with utter seriousness, chased evil spirits from
above our cradles by uttering words without
meaning, holding a tiny leaf of a modest herb
which received God knows what strange powers
exclusively from the innocence of its own
nature.
Poetry is precisely this tiny leaf with the
unknown powers of innocence and the
strange words which accompany it.”*

India's ancient language of Sanskrit resonates with the essence of Spirit and nature. Just as the ancient Greeks believed their language capable of inducing psychic integration and stability, the seers and poets of India's Vedic times knew that Sanskrit promoted equanimity and wholeness. The core of this “language of the gods” is AUM, the creative sound of God. Sanskrit is intrinsically

poetic. That is, creative and generative. Sanskrit does not divide reality up into static definitions. It does not have a rigid division between nouns and adjectives. The word *man* originally meant intelligent. In Sanskrit, this adjectival character of nouns reflects metaphoric and symbolic perceptions that make this language fluid and spiritual. Mantras and other phrases penetrate deeply into the body and mind and are used for healing and the raising of consciousness.

Think of Others

- Mahmoud Darwish

As you prepare your breakfast, think of others
(do not forget the pigeon's food).

As you conduct your wars, think of others
(do not forget those who seek peace).

As you pay your water bill, think of others
(those who are nursed by clouds).

As you return home, to your home, think of others
(do not forget the people of the camps).

As you sleep and count the stars, think of others
(those who have nowhere to sleep).

As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others
(those who have lost the right to speak).

As you think of others far away, think of yourself
(say: "If only I were a candle in the dark").

V'ahavta

- Aurora Levins Morales (*from the author : Aurora Levins Morales is a disabled and chronically ill, community supported writer, historian, artist and activist*)

Say these words when you lie down and when you rise up,
when you go out and when you return. In times of mourning
and in times of joy. Inscribe them on your doorposts,
embroider them on your garments, tattoo them on your shoulders,
teach them to your children, your neighbors, your enemies,
recite them in your sleep, here in the cruel shadow of empire:
Another world is possible.

Thus spoke the prophet Roque Dalton:
All together they have more death than we,
but all together, we have more life than they.
There is more bloody death in their hands
than we could ever wield, unless
we lay down our souls to become them,
and then we will lose everything. So instead,

imagine winning. This is your sacred task.
This is your power. Imagine
every detail of winning, the exact smell of the summer streets
in which no one has been shot, the muscles you have never

unclenched from worry, gone soft as newborn skin,
the sparkling taste of food when we know
that no one on earth is hungry, that the beggars are fed,
that the old man under the bridge and the woman
wrapping herself in thin sheets in the back seat of a car,
and the children who suck on stones,
nest under a flock of roofs that keep multiplying their shelter.
Lean with all your being towards that day
when the poor of the world shake down a rain of good fortune
out of the heavy clouds, and justice rolls down like waters.

Defend the world in which we win as if it were your child.
It is your child.
Defend it as if it were your lover.
It is your lover.

When you inhale and when you exhale
breathe the possibility of another world
into the 37.2 trillion cells of your body
until it shines with hope.
Then imagine more.

Imagine rape is unimaginable. Imagine war is a scarcely credible rumor
That the crimes of our age, the grotesque inhumanities of greed,
the sheer and astounding shamelessness of it, the vast fortunes
made by stealing lives, the horrible normalcy it came to have,
is unimaginable to our heirs, the generations of the free.

Don't waver. Don't let despair sink its sharp teeth
Into the throat with which you sing. Escalate your dreams.
Make them burn so fiercely that you can follow them down
any dark alleyway of history and not lose your way.
Make them burn clear as a starry drinking gourd
Over the grim fog of exhaustion, and keep walking.

Hold hands. Share water. Keep imagining.
So that we, and the children of our children's children
may live

Rant

- Diane di Prima

You cannot write a single line w/out a cosmology
a cosmogony laid out, before all eyes

there is no part of yourself you can separate out
saying, this is memory, this is sensation
this is the work I care about, this is how I
make a living

it is whole, it is a whole, it always was whole
you do not "make" it so
there is nothing to integrate, you are a presence
you are an appendage of the work, the work stems from
hangs from the heaven you create

every man / every woman carries a firmament inside
& the stars in it are not the stars in the sky

w/out imagination there is no memory
w/out imagination there is no sensation
w/out imagination there is no will, desire

history is a living weapon in yr hand
& you have imagined it, it is thus that you
"find out for yourself"
history is the dream of what can be, it is
the relation between things in a continuum

of imagination

what you find out for yourself is what you select
out of an infinite sea of possibility
no one can inhabit yr world

yet it is not lonely,
the ground of imagination is fearlessness
discourse is video tape of a movie of a shadow play
but the puppets are in yr hand
your counters in a multidimensional chess
which is divination
& strategy

the war that matters is the war against the imagination
all other wars are subsumed in it.

the ultimate famine is the starvation
of the imagination

it is death to be sure, but the undead
seek to inhabit someone else's world

the ultimate claustrophobia is the syllogism
the ultimate claustrophobia is "it all adds up"
nothing adds up & nothing stands in for
anything else

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There is no way out of a spiritual battle
There is no way you can avoid taking sides
There is no way you can not have a poetics
no matter what you do: plumber, baker, teacher

you do it in the consciousness of making
or not making yr world

you have a poetics: you step into the world
like a suit of readymade clothes

or you etch in light
your firmament spills into the shape of your room
the shape of the poem, of yr body, of yr loves

A woman's life / a man's life is an allegory

Dig it

There is no way out of the spiritual battle

the war is the war against the imagination
you can't sign up as a conscientious objector

the war of the worlds hangs here, right now, in the balance
it is a war for this world, to keep it
a vale of soul-making

the taste in all our mouths is the taste of power
and it is bitter as death

bring yr self home to yrself, enter the garden
the guy at the gate w/ the flaming sword is yrself

the war is the war for the human imagination
and no one can fight it but you/ & no one can fight it for you

The imagination is not only holy, it is precise
it is not only fierce, it is practical
men die everyday for the lack of it,
it is vast & elegant

intellectus means "light of the mind"
it is not discourse it is not even language
the inner sun

the polis is constellated around the sun
the fire is central"