



Spiritual Poetry Meetup

Poems to take home with you

November 16, 2025

The Clearing – Mark Nepo

An Abyss of Light – G.K. Chesterton

How to Regain Your Soul – William Stafford

Let Your Love Flow Outward – Buddha, from the Sutta-Nipāta

Goodbye to the Black and White Ball – Joan Baez

Roots – Lucille Clifton



To join the Spiritual Poetry Meetup Group, go to

<https://www.meetup.com/Spiritual-Poetry-Meetup-International/>

For more Take-Home Poetry Packs, assorted poems, and the Intrinsic Heart blog, go to

<https://intrinsicheart.com>



THE CLEARING

I had climbed beyond what
I knew, in search of something
lasting, and far away from the
crowd, I found this clearing
from which I glimpsed life
outside of my own story.

And life was never more
revealing, though I couldn't
stay there, any more than a
bird can nest in the sun.

So, I came back into the
world, though I'm never far
from that clearing. I carry it
within like a candle lit from
the great unending fire.

And when exhausted of my
thoughts, I find the clearing in
your quiet breathing as you sleep,
in the song that parts everyone's
trouble, in the moment the old
painter lifts his brush from the
canvas.

Even in these words I leave
on the page like ripples
in the water.

an abyss of light



There is at the back of all our lives an abyss of light,
more blinding and unfathomable than any abyss of darkness;
and it is the abyss of actuality, of existence, of the fact that things truly are,
and that we ourselves are incredibly and sometimes almost incredulously real.

It is the fundamental fact of being, as against not being; it is unthinkable,
yet we cannot unthink it, though we may sometimes be unthinking about it;
unthinking and especially unthanking.

For he who has realized this reality knows that it does outweigh, literally to infinity, all lesser
regrets or arguments for negation, and that under all our grumblings there is a subconscious
substance of gratitude.

– G. K. Chesterton

From: <https://thisunlitlight.com/2020/02/16/an-abyss-of-light/>
Artwork by Sandra Bowden: *One Hundred Percent*, from the series, *Reflections of Glory*.
<https://www.sandrabowden.com/reflecting-the-glory>

“Artists do not merely put on canvas what can be seen. They try to uncover something beyond the range of the eyes. I believe that art is a means to illuminate both the interior life and the exterior world, both seen and unseen. I hope Reflections of Glory will lead those who see the exhibition beyond the edge of their consciousness into a place of splendor, wonder and transcendence.”

- Sandra Bowden



*How To Regain Your Soul
- William Stafford -*

*Come down Canyon Creek trail on a summer afternoon
that one place where the valley floor opens out. You will see
the white butterflies. Because of the way shadows
come off those vertical rocks in the west, there are
shafts of sunlight hitting the river and a deep
long purple gorge straight ahead. Put down your pack.*

*Above, air sighs the pines. It was this way
when Rome was clanging, when Troy was being built,
when campfires lighted caves. The white butterflies dance
by the thousands in the still sunshine. Suddenly, anything
could happen to you. Your soul pulls toward the canyon
and then shines back through the white wings to be you again.*



Let your love flow outward through the universe,
To its height, its depth, its broad extent,
A limitless love, without hatred or enmity.

Then as you stand or walk,
Sit or lie down,
As long as you are awake,
Strive for this with a one-pointed mind;
Your life will bring heaven to earth.

—The Sutta-Nipāta



Goodbye to the Black and White Ball

by Joan Baez

I used to think the alternative to black and white
must be gray. To avoid living a dull life,
I dressed in black and white,
I thought in black and white—
not just *good* or *bad*, mind you,
but *perfect* or *damned*
gifted or *worthless*
ethereal or *demonic*
emblazoned or *cast out*.

I scoffed at anything average
and avoided middle ground—
you know, The Gray Area.
As a result, I let slip most of my life.

I was chronically anxious, insomniac,
promiscuous, multiphobic, depressed,
hypervigilant, and, luckily, immensely talented.

I had antennae that could turn corners ahead of me,
protect me from the mortal danger of, say,
eating dinner in a restaurant
or making a new friend—
you know, The Gray Area.

When I was half a century old,
I tore off the antennae
and turned my life over
to a power greater than myself—
which by that point could have been
a toothpick.

I pitched myself into a sea of memories
and headed blindly like a hoodwinked shark
for the marrow of the inner core me;
I pictured pustules of venom but
my therapist suggested it might be diamonds.

For months, I thrashed about,
recording dreams, grasping for clues,
fighting for my life and the life of my son.
When I came up for air from my flailing,
I began to see shards of color.

Slowly, I began to see my life was
sanctified, matchless,
and I would trade it for no other.
I should not have been shocked to find that
a diamond was in fact the core of me.

I continued to scrape off tenacious parasites.
I discovered that sorrow is an ocean,
fury is blue, pain is my companion,
but love had not been smashed to bits
so badly as to not be mendable,
like a gypsy violin
crushed beneath a Nazi boot.

I needed patience and an artisan.
My therapists became my artisans.

People around me
unearthed the gems I had been promised
and held my heart
in their cradling hands
as I split up into a hundred pieces,
a hundred bright souls
sorting out their places in a dazzling necklace
taking in and reflecting sunlight,
working to mend me,
to help me survive my deliverance
and transcend my survival.



Roots

by Lucille Clifton

call it our craziness even,
call it anything.
it is the life thing in us
that will not let us die.
even in death's hand
we fold the fingers up
and call them greens and
grow on them,
we hum them and make music.
call it our wildness then,
we are lost from the field
of flowers, we become
a field of flowers.
call it our craziness
our wildness
call it our roots,
it is the light in us
it is the light of us
it is the light, call it
whatever you have to,
call it anything.