



# SOUL REFLECTION

A MINDFUL COMPILATION OF VERSE



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# TODAY I ASKED MY BODY

BY HOLLIE HOLDEN

Today I asked my body what she needed,  
Which is a big deal  
Considering my journey of  
Not Really Asking That Much.

I thought she might need more water.  
Or protein.  
Or greens.  
Or yoga.  
Or supplements.  
Or movement.

But as I stood in the shower  
Reflecting on her stretch marks,  
Her roundness where I would like flatness,  
Her softness where I would like firmness,

All those conditioned wishes  
That form a bundle of  
Never-Quite-Right-Ness,  
She whispered very gently:

Could you just love me like this?



# IF YOU WOULD GROW - SHINE THE LIGHT OF LOVING SELF-CARE ON YOURSELF

BY DANIEL F. MEAD

If you would grow to your best self

Be patient, not demanding

Accepting, not condemning

Nurturing, not withholding

Self-marvelling, not belittling

Gently guiding, not pushing and punishing

For you are more sensitive than you know

Mankind is as tough as war yet delicate as flowers

We can endure agonies but we open fully only to warmth and light

And our need to grow is as fragile as a fragrance dispersed by storms of will

To return only when those storms are still

So, accept, respect, and attend your sensitivity

A flower cannot be opened with a hammer.



# BEANNACHT

BY JOHN O'DONOHUE

On the day when  
The weight deadens  
On your shoulders  
And you stumble,  
May the clay dance  
To balance you.  
And when your eyes  
Freeze behind  
The grey window  
And the ghost of loss  
Gets into you,  
May a flock of colours,  
Indigo, red, green  
And azure blue,  
Come to awaken in you  
A meadow of delight.  
When the canvas frays  
In the currach of thought  
And a stain of ocean  
Blackens beneath you,  
May there come across the waters  
A path of yellow moonlight  
To bring you safely home.  
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,  
May the clarity of light be yours,  
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,  
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.  
And so may a slow  
Wind work these words  
Of love around you,  
An invisible cloak  
To mind your life.





# ALWAYS WE HOPE

BY LAO TZU

Always we hope  
Someone else has the answer  
Some other place will be better,  
Some other time it will all turn out.

This is it.  
No one else has the answer  
No other place will be better,  
And it has already turned out.

At the center of your being  
You have the answer,  
You know who you are  
And you know what you want.

There is no need  
To run outside  
For better seeing.  
Nor to peer from a window.  
Rather abide at the center of your being;  
For the more you leave it, the less you learn.

Search your heart  
And see  
The way to do  
Is to be.



# WALK SLOWLY

BY DANNA FAULDS

It only takes a reminder to breathe, a moment to be still, and just like that, something in me settles, softens, makes space for imperfection. The harsh voice of judgment drops to a whisper and I remember again that life isn't a relay race; that we will all cross the finish line; that waking up to life is what we were born for. As many times as I forget, catch myself charging forward without even knowing where I'm going, that many times I can make the choice to stop, to breathe, and be, and walk slowly into the mystery.



# WHAT IF THERE IS NO NEED TO CHANGE

BY ORIAH MOUNTAIN DREAMER

What if there is no need to change?

No need to try to transform yourself

Into someone who is more compassionate, more present, more loving, or wise?

How would that affect all the places in your life where you are endlessly trying to be better?

What if the task is simply to unfold,

To become who you already are in your essential nature:

Gentle, compassionate, and capable of living fully and passionately present?

What if the question is not

'Why am I so infrequently the person who I really want to be?'

But 'Why do I infrequently want to be the person I really am?'

How would this change what you think you have to learn?

What if becoming who and what we truly are happens not through striving and trying

But by recognising and receiving the people and places and practices

That are for us the warmth of encouragement we need to unfold?

How would this shape the choices you make about how to spend today?

What if you knew that the impulse to move in a way that creates beauty in the world

Will arise from deep within

And guide you every time you simply pay attention

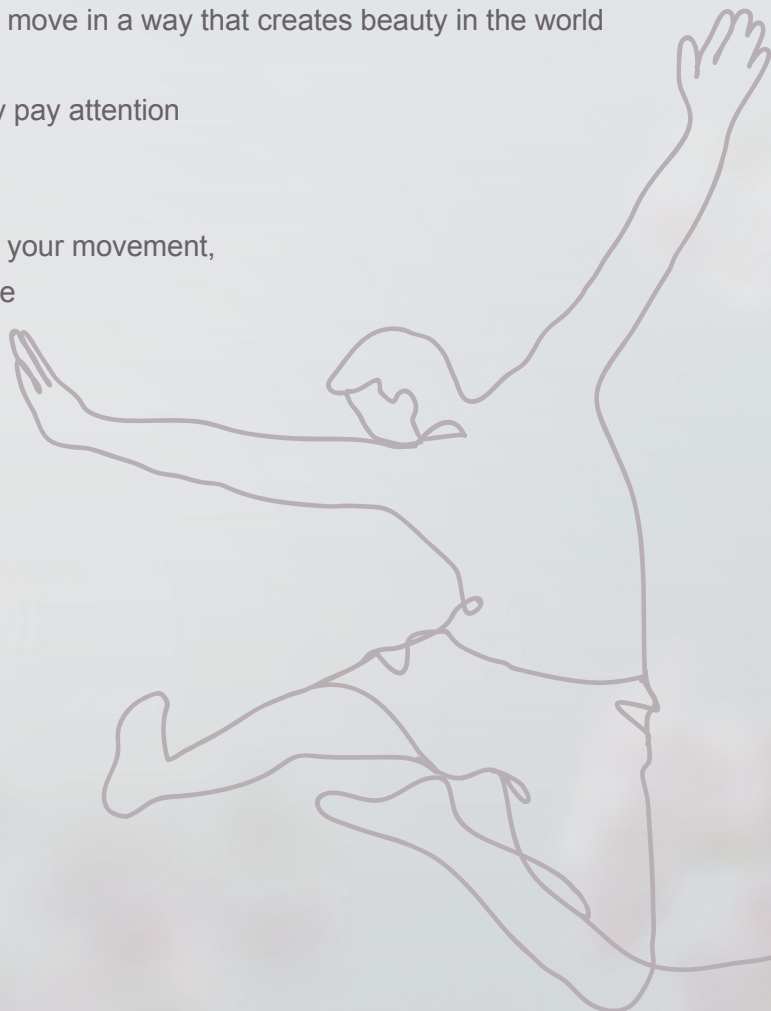
And wait.

How would this shape your stillness, your movement,

Your willingness to follow this impulse

To just let go

And dance?





# PEACE IS THIS MOMENT WITHOUT JUDGMENT

BY DOROTHY HUNT

Do you think peace requires an end to war?

Or tigers eating only vegetables?

Does peace require an absence from  
your boss, your spouse, yourself?...

Do you think peace will come some other place than here?

Some other time than Now?

In some other heart than yours?

Peace is this moment without judgment.

That is all. This moment in the Heart-space  
where everything that is is welcome.

Peace is this moment without thinking  
that it should be some other way,  
that you should feel some other thing,  
that your life should unfold  
according to your plans.

Peace is this moment without judgment,  
this moment in the Heart-space where  
everything that is is welcome.





# CLEARING

BY MARTHA POSTLETHWAITE

Do not try to save  
the whole world  
or do anything grandiose.  
Instead, create  
a clearing  
in the dense forest  
of your life  
and wait there  
patiently,  
until the song  
that is your life  
falls into your own cupped hands  
and you recognize and greet it.  
Only then will you know  
how to give yourself to this world  
so worthy of rescue.



# USE YOUR UMBRELLA

ADAPTED FROM CHRISTINA FELDMAN &  
JACK KORNFIELD: (STORES OF THE SPIRIT,  
STORIES OF THE HEART)

A young woman, studying in India, undertook to develop love, kindness and goodwill through her meditation practice. Sitting in her small room, she would fill her heart with loving-kindness for all beings. Yet each day, as she went to the bazaar to gather her food, she would find her loving-kindness tested sorely by one shopkeeper who would daily subject her to unwelcome caresses.

One day she could stand no more and began to chase the shopkeeper down the road with her upraised umbrella. To her mortification she passed her teacher standing on the side of the road observing this spectacle. Shame-faced she went to stand before him, expecting to be rebuked for her anger.

*“What you should do”, her teacher kindly advised her, “is to fill your heart with loving kindness, and with as much mindfulness as you can muster, hit this unruly fellow over the head with your umbrella.”*

Sometimes that is what we need to do! It would be easy enough to hit the man over the head with the umbrella. The difficult part is to do it with all the loving kindness in our heart.

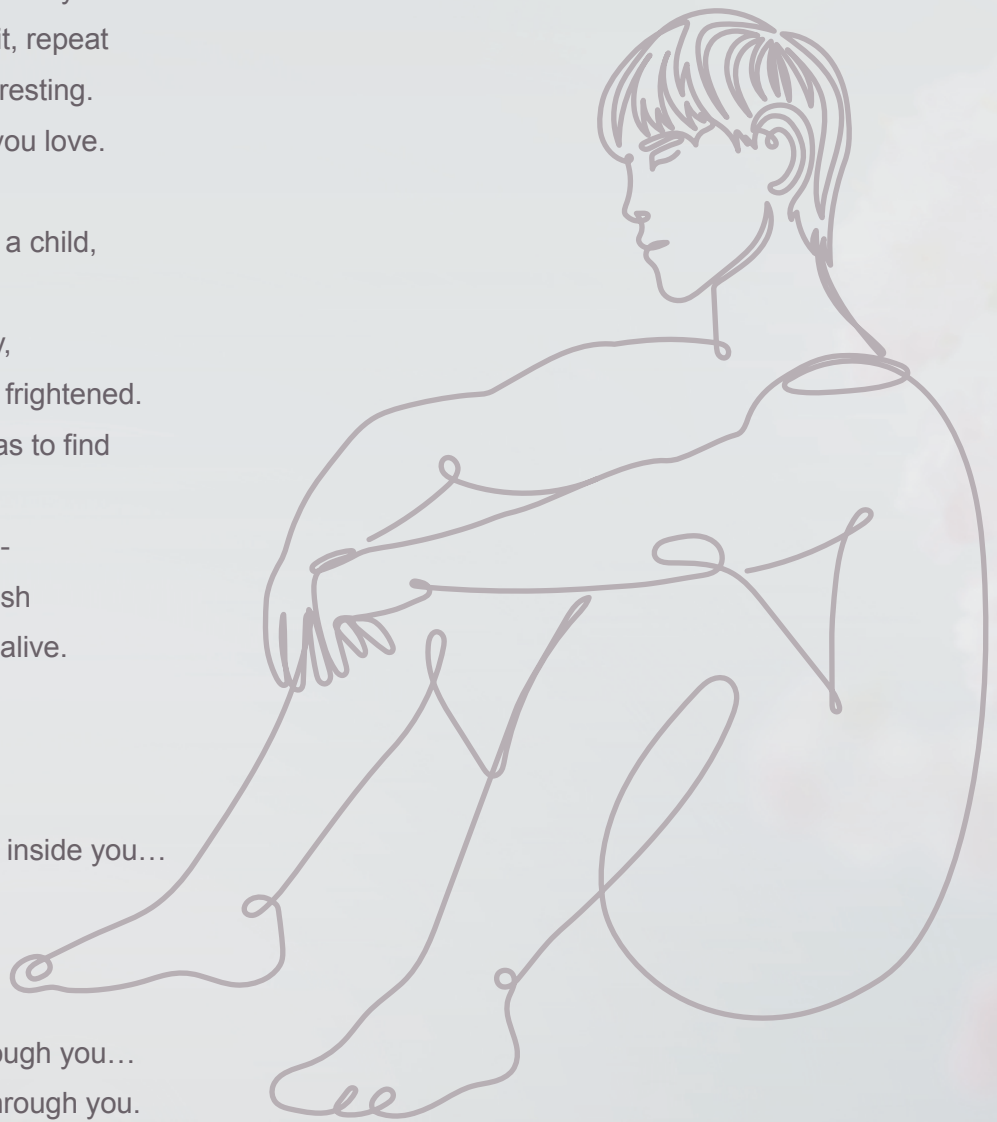
That is our real practise.



# HOKUSAI SAYS

BY ROGER KEYS

Hokusai says... look carefully.  
He says pay attention, notice  
He says keep looking, stay curious.  
He says there is no end to seeing...  
He says look forward to getting old.  
He says keep changing  
You just get more who you really are.  
He says get stuck, accept it, repeat  
Yourself as long as it's interesting.  
He says keep doing what you love.  
He says keep praying.  
He says every one of us is a child,  
every one of us is ancient,  
every one of us has a body,  
He says every one of us is frightened.  
He says every one of us has to find  
A way to live with Fear.  
He says everything is alive-  
Shells, buildings, people, fish  
Mountains, trees. Wood is alive.  
Water is alive.  
Everything has its own life.  
Everything lives inside us.  
He says live with the world inside you...  
It matters that you care.  
It matters that you feel.  
It matters that you notice.  
It matters that life lives through you...  
Contentment is life living through you.  
Joy is life living through you  
Satisfaction and strength  
Is life living through you.  
Peace is life living through you.  
He says don't be afraid.  
Don't be afraid.  
Look, feel, let life take you by the hand.  
Let life live through you.



*(Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) is one of the most influential and creative minds in the history of Japanese art. Roger Keyes, an art historian, and scholar of East Asian Studies sought to capture his appreciation for Hokusai's work in this poem, 'Hokusai Says' which has been described as a translation of visual art to the written word).*

**SOUL REFLECTION** is a compilation of poems, carefully selected by Denise Coleman, as an additional support to helping you cultivate mindfulness in your daily life. Whether you are new to mindfulness or a seasoned practitioner, this compilation can be used as a practical tool, helping you in gathering and focussing your attention, dropping out of conceptual mind and into the present moment. Poetry can give us food for reflection and contemplation and it can provide guidance to help us deepen understanding of ourselves and our lives.



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