

Enlivenment

Poems



Lynne Sedgmore

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Enlivenment

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Lynne Sedgmore

Chrysalis Poetry

2013

Dedication

To my mother and late father, who loved always, even beyond all understanding; and to Keri, John, Caitlin, Sian, Susan, Andrew and Terry, who have taught me unconditional love and the deepest lessons of true spirituality.

To Miranda, Nicola and the UK One Spirit Interfaith Foundation, I love you all, and all that we do for awakening in the world.

To Jay Ramsay, thank you for fostering my belief in my poetic identity and for giving me the courage to reveal this to the world. Your poems, empathy, understanding and technical skills have been a revelation and source of inspiration.

To Almaas, the Ridhwan spiritual school, my UK3 teachers and all Ridhwan soul companions for your impeccable wisdom, care and guidance.

Love, blessings and gratitude to you all.

“What I find extraordinary about Lynne’s poetry is the way in which her profound spiritual awareness joins forces with her beautiful and very distinctive use of language. Her poems are a real gift.”

Peter Ashby, Consultant

“Your poem, written for me, is so beautiful it made me cry, you have captured what my brother means to me perfectly.”

Christine

“I love ‘Mother Love’, as it encapsulates all the love my mum has given me since I was born in one profound, pure and mystical poem.”

Keri Brennan

“Your poem honouring us and our Holy Meeting brought tears; I was really moved by your words and sentiment.”

Lynne Foote, Artist, Colorado, USA

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“Only someone who is ready for everything,
who excludes nothing, not even the most enigmatical,
will live the relation to another as something alive and
will draw exhaustively from his own existence.”

Letters to a Young Poet – Rilke

“Poetry is a river; many voices travel in it; ... none is
timeless; ... the desire to make a poem, and the world’s
willingness to receive it – indeed the world’s need of it –
these never pass.”

A Poetry Handbook – Mary Oliver

“All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful
feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected
in tranquillity.”

William Wordsworth

“I write poetry in order to live more fully.”

Judith Rodriguez

Preface

As Joanna Prentis and Stuart Wilson ask in a poem in their book, *The Madgalene Version*

*Where are the poets of the New World?
Where are those that sing
the reconnection with the soul,*

the pioneers ...

I've been asking myself this same question over 25 years now of working with bringing spiritual consciousness into Contemporary British Poetry, and gathering everyone I've found along the way who manifestly feels the same in the various anthologies and live events I've been part of organising, through Angels of Fire in London in the 80s, with its emphasis on community and inclusion, and my poetry correspondence course *Chrysalis – the poet in you* (since 1990), which gave rise to ongoing groups there and in Stroud, where I live.

The Chrysalis poetry pamphlets grew out of this impulse to encourage poets of this 'new wave', which has been slowly making its way in.

*Who now explores what happens
when the Spirit blends
with the awakened heart?*

Lynne Sedgmore is a woman who understands this awakening, which has been her personal journey for many years since being a sensitive teenager. It is fascinating, poignant and beautiful to me that the poet in her emerges at this point in her life, after all her amazing ongoing work as a chief executive (and a CBE) bringing spirituality into the workplace in her leadership role, creating a permissiveness around feelings that has allowed so many people to experience work in a different and much more meaningful way.

This has been paralleled by her own extensive inner work of self-inquiry, which has given her particular access as well as support into what she describes as the “nuances of feeling”. The quality of her leadership has also been embodied through this. It is a rare and new combination from a being of exceptional energy and commitment.

For me, this is quintessentially poetry (as well as love) in action and what poetry represents as authentic being and utterance, to which this first collection of poems that I have edited with her abundantly testifies: the essence of our lives, and the bringing alive that inner life that holds the key both to our ‘enlivenment’ and our deeper fulfilment of being; of purpose, meaning and value.

This may be therapeutic, it is certainly healing, and it is something more: a different emphasis and understanding of poetry not for the sake of an elite few, or for driven egoic literary ambition, but instead – in this symbolic year of change – for an honouring of life itself and all that makes life meaningful when we find (in Marie Cardinal’s phrase) “the words to say it”.

Jay Ramsay
Stroud
November 2012

Author's Introduction



At last I am finding clarity and confidence in expressing my inner voice as a poet. I have scribbled from the sidelines for many years, hiding away my words and not taking them seriously, my busy job taking priority and my poet identity submerged.

Since reading Jay Ramsay's *The Poet in You*, and being coached and inspired by him, so much has shifted and emerged. Thanks to him, I have felt able to reveal myself as a poet in print for the first time.

My "poetic voice" is part of a new sense of freedom in my soul, arising from my heart and nourishing me deeply. It is enabling me to articulate the mystical yearning, experiences and spiritual awakenings, so central in my life since I was a child.

At 57, I am entering the third stage of life according to ancient Indian spiritual philosophy – the Vanaprasta Ashrama, the stage of the "elder adviser" or "sage". As I transition from my busy life as a chief executive in further education, to a more soulful contemplative way of being, I will have the writing of poetry as my companion, my meditation, my inspiration and a new path of creativity.

As a leader in educational organisations, I have expressed my creativity primarily through working with and serving others to co-create high-performing, high-spirited, high-energy places of work that nourish and nurture the soul. Now perhaps the alchemy of poetic expression will be my primary vessel for serving others through generating poetic conversations, and through articulating the searching for, finding of, manifestations of, and magnifications of soul and spirit.

I hope my poems will become accessible sources of healing, comfort, self-understanding and inspiration to many. I hope they encourage others to find and articulate their own creative voice – a voice unique to them.

The world is crying out for healing and new ways of being nourished. The voice of the poet, calling us all back to our true selves, to a collective spirituality reflective of our time and to a new level of collective, altruistic consciousness has, I believe, never been more urgent.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynne Sedgmore". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Lynne" and "Sedgmore" being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the letters.

Lynne Sedgmore CBE

For further contact, discussions and readings, Lynne can be contacted at lynnesedgmore@o2email.co.uk

Yearnings and Awakenings

Second Half

Knowing I am sacred
in my second half of life,
my new life can begin

aligning words, behaviours
with my heart's desire.
“*Clarity is action*” Krisnamurti once revealed –
his wisdom piercing deep.

Beyond the chatter of my busy world,
creating in the silence,
calling forth the presence of true words

to speak poetic clarity
of sacredness and soul.

Our Time Has Come

I've sang and danced in sheer delight,
my life alight with gongs
and shining tokens of success,
littering my life like leaves in autumn winds,
colours flaming green, red, brown and gold,
nurturing my mind but slowing my soul.

I birthed my child who fills
my life with meaning and with love.
Her daughters sing and dance and skip –
princesses freed to live a life just as they choose –
courageous, fresh and bold.
Nurturing my heart but slowing my soul.

Now my soul shouts loud –
My time has come.

Time to let hidden words
ripple and roar,
cascade, or softly sing
allowing forth a birthing into form
of shape and pace of words
that have to come,
cannot be stifled –
must be uttered forth
contraction-like to thrust their way
into my world,
stuttering and struggling
to stand and walk
on calf-like legs.

Now the world shouts
loud for running fast
beyond all holding back through fear,
uncertainty and care
for soul stirred words to take their place
in living, breathing service for the world
through modern bards and poets of the heart.

Spirits resonating true
in verses from within the
cosmic rhythms and
poetic healing flow.

Our time has come.

Sunrise Awakening

The dawn sky glow sits gentle on my eyes
In dancing spread of rosy soft hued light –
But not for long. A burning glare, red hot,
Awaits its moment bursting through the cloud.

Kaleidoscopic molten lava flows
And hangs in clouds of fiery cauldron sky.
I hold my breath – stunned still in unity –
Time suspended in this interglow.

And now the sun-sphere fire bursts into view
Unfettered, rising from the sea. It lifts
My heart to witness our creation's gift
Of fading night's release to morning's light.

The miracle of each new day transformed
Before my eyes – renewed – reborn.
My spirit greets this burning, living light,
My kundalini heart uncoils in awe

To greet and bless this day.
I have become the sun –
Arising from a darkened heart of pain
And doubt, purified in fire – ignited
Soul – awakened into love and light.

I am the sun – awake, burning free.

Our Souls Yearn

to stop and stare –
see beauty manifesting everywhere.

Our souls yearn

to rest –
be no one going nowhere;
no desire to be the best.

We yearn to be

the peace eluded in our
busy lives,
be free.

All souls yearn

to unify –
dissolve dualities and differences
through

love;

defy the ego –

go beyond
to joyful essence sourced from spirit
every day.

To live a holy life,
be true
in every way

Awe in the City

Nature was our space until
today in London we collide,
walking into work: familiar scene transformed.

Swirling river Thames in speckled light
of streaming sun, bright yellow
dazzling in my eyes and soul –
a joyous shimmering scene.

Majestic Parliament building
splaying from the bridge,
its ancient architecture
spanning into present time.

I pause – stunned
at the start of my demanding day –
stopped still with awe.

Finding time to stand and stare
as tears come;
seeing spirit everywhere –
schisms healing –
falling away –
divisions dissolving.

Experiencing unity in everything –
not only in nature, temples
on the cushion – or alone.

But here in concrete city space,
in violence and the fear,
in dirty streets of grime and grey –
littered with faces, hungers – city greed
that objects and food will never feed.

Deep the paradox and perfumes of city life –
these too are Divine.

The Thames transformed like sacred river Ganga,
less exotic – just as true
healing water,
river of tears and grace.

In flow of life,
my London eye renews –
bowing from my heart I kneel
knowing deep my daily work as
holy work of worship –

and of love

Sacrament of Food

Sacred space arising –
loving God and loving self as one,

eating as worship,
food as tasting of love through all senses,

profound nourishing –
sacred sacrament of food

revering body, heart and soul –
spirit's unifying presence

of offering, surrender and gratitude
in mindful eating.

Heartache and Healing

Slipping Away

(woman to dead husband)

You slipped away unseen
like a shadow in the night –
such unexpected haste.

Shocked and locked in grief
I live in shadows now,
barely alive,
grieving and raging and waiting
to fade and slip away

to be with you again.

Unity Dancing

Let's meet together

in a space beyond

all black and white, of either or,

of right and wrong.

A space beyond both you and me.

Let's meet together

in that space

to dance as one

in unity.

Soul Mirroring

(meditation on walking the labyrinth with LF)

Sitting as the
early morning stills,
the silence sings her mind into
remembering.

A timeless walk,
a labyrinth meandering;
two women's unexpected meeting there
to step into a karmic journey of their souls.

Remembering
a sparkling luminescence
as they reflect the
flowering of trust in many years of pilgrimage
to origin and truth.

Holy ideas –
Holy laughter, crying and holding –
love releasing,
pain dissolving,
truth emerging,
spirits soaring.

Remembering
two souls returning to themselves and God,
quickened through first reflection
in that labyrinthine light.

Anniversary Vigil

*(in memory of Christine's beloved brother, John,
who died off Beachy Head)*

You sit in vigil – serenely still.
Travelling in the shadows of your broken heart –
mind-churning internal turmoil
of despair and disbelief.
Understanding eludes,
no answers emerge –
only what if's, and if only's.

All you have for comfort is
your own internal mystery play,
annually directed by your mind's distress –
constantly replayed – over and over –
every year –
this past decade.

Your sacred space
each dark October night,
the same anointed hours,
your ritual of love replays
familiar scene in constant loops.

Rationality has no place
upon this swirling stage,
your loss and pain are players in their own dramatic act.
Their rhythm chokes your breath –
stealing your joy.

You – the one still living –
the one he left behind –
bearing a legacy of guilt and love and pain.
You bear the weight of he who chose to die.
For you no note was left behind
to ease your path of insight and release.

For him
strange call to move beyond;
a fall into oblivion,
leaving it all behind –
a fall of rest,
a fall to peace.

Each night of nights dissolves your grief,
bringing you closer to his peace –
beyond all knowing and despair.

I pray the peace he found in death
will fill your soul,
renew your breath,
refresh your life
as you release the hurt
and let him go.

Your peace –
his peace –
held within your heart
always.

Not Yet Admitted

(on reading Emily Dickinson's Infinity poem)

A life lived for learning
and for loving God,
work as loving service for the world,
yet no love left for you –

A soul not yet admitted to itself.

Endless seeking,
restless yearning,
constant failing to feed your soul.
Addiction excess
despite worldly success.

A soul not yet admitted to itself.

My prayer for you:
rest in God,
learn to let go,
time to heal,
acceptance and ease,
forgive yourself,
find peace;

A soul at last admitted to herself.

14th Century Thai Buddha Statue

(a birthday gift)

Beautiful birthday, ancient surprise,
emerging out of pretty pastel bubble wrap,
unburied again, seven centuries on.

Volcano of peace blooming into modern light,
gifted for the world today.

Exquisite elegance, divine face, mesmerising compassion
from ages of wisdom and depths of soul.

Open hand, golden palm held high, offering prayers –

May peace prevail
All beings be free
All beings be well
May everyone live in holy truth
May unity emerge again

like you.

Placing you gently, you stand here,
accompanying the spiritually statued greats,
Gandhi, Nuns, Shiva, Buddha and Priestesses of Avalon,
gracing my home.

Symphonic secreting mingles and flows,
unifying blessings,
all traditions healing

my heart
my home
the world
our time

absorbing your silent prayers from long ago.

Distancing

They sit amongst their fond accumulation
of possessions, cozily content.
Practical and precious carefully side by side,
all furnishings in designated place,
classic books on ordered shelves,
subtle landscapes neatly brushed and placed.
Relaxed retreat where life is given form –
abundant and controlled.

Every night technology in chic
veneered disguise presents its ware,
but this night, midst the tele-stupor calm
for half an hour
a violent other world intrudes.

Depiction of a savage war
created from the strife it now perpetuates.
Tortured lives with fated flesh
black bruised and torn with screaming wounds
exposed – chaotic landscape –
bloody abstract smeared on human canvas.
Nightmare world, raw and untamed –
disorder, death.

They stare stunned and silent –
discomfort creeping in,
no one speaks, then one gets up
to cross the room.

Heartache seems to end with just one switch –

Blank empty screen.

Questioning Lost Bones

Suddenly I find this bag of bones,
unexpected bundle buried on my land.
Placed lovingly or stealthily ... I cannot tell.
Human or otherwise ... I do not know.
And so I start to wondering.

What stories do they tell?
What adventures have they seen?
What garments once adorned their flesh?
What values did they hold?
Did these dear bones live life well?
Care too much, face tragedy and loss?
Laugh and sing?

These white bones dry and cold
turning to ashes in my earth.

And further more –
Who put them there?
And why?
What ritual was made?
What blessings were bestowed?
Who will ever know?
Who really cares?

No fashion statement here,
bare bones bundled away,
completely unadorned.

Whoever they were, whatever they did
all bones deserve more
than secret, squalid abandonment.
All of us coming to this –
warm, vibrant bodies decayed to bone,
naked and alone –
soul fled and gone to pastures new?

Companioned only by coffin, soil or urn
in which we lie?

The Path of Essence

*Poems written on Ridhwan retreats
2009 to 2012*

The Diamond Heart approach, created by AH Almaas and transmitted within the Ridhwan School, is one of deep inquiry and of the allowing and relaxation of the ego defences; such that the true essences of our souls will spontaneously arise and be experienced throughout body, heart, spirit, soul and mind.

These poems portray my awakening experiences on retreats and in my peer inquiry with fellow spiritual companions.

For John

(breaking through in his Ridhwan inquiry)

1

Numerous times you leave
distracted in mid sentence,
gone beyond to a mind-space far away
feeling secure and free.
Locking up your jewels of wise and wounding words,
hoarding your emotions in your head,
refusing to stay or play
in our partnership dance.

2

Despite all this you persevere
through all the hurt, inquiring to
the loss of all you think is true,
and real –
is you.

3

Gone beyond ... to soul space deep within,
you share by searching for precision –
strong words edging clear:
From deep inside your heart
you speak through tears, bare feelings
running loose – and wild – sometimes.

4

Inquiring deep, together now,
we dance in tight embrace
entwining bodies, souls and minds –
engaging, loving, spirits growing –
flowing free.

Enlivenment

(holy truth)

The form in which I lived
that never was but seemed so real,
dissolving into truer form
of universal life force; rippling waves
pulsating in my body form
reminder of true nature –
I am This.

Every cell enlivened
inside out and outside in,
the two that never were apart
lived now as one.

Relaxing, unfolding, being here now
every moment fresh, alive and true.

Gone beyond –

all form as objects
all form as death
all form as concepts
all form as falsely seen

Into: alive to alive –
all form as one
all form as life
all form as presence
all form as true reality –

Absolute.

Personality Ode

There was a time I couldn't remember
when you were not here –
when I was not you.

To survive in this world
I created you,
I became you –
you became me.
As I grew – so did you,
my experiences
my thoughts, my deeds –
all yours.

My true self distorted into you –
shaping and shifting into
echoes of truth,
essence disconnection
driving me to be
constrained, small,
shackled in body, heart and mind,
trapped into the me
I never was but always thought myself to be.

You have served me well –
closest companion on my first half of life,
evoking worldly success –
acclaim and prestige,
impact and glamour,
loves and losses,
but joy there too in family, fame and friends.
And yet – in the deceivingly solid, successful and secure
lay undercurrents of pain and discontent,
growing knowing that you formed
from the disconnect of my soul from its source –
wearing the apparels of duality and strength,
adorned in false power,
bejewelled in guilt and blame.

I bow to you entering my second half of life,
giving thanks, but also
seeing you for what you really are
as disconnect dissolves,
moving beyond my false I am,
relaxing, re-forming as
Essence encompasses more of me.

Adieu begins to echo in my soul,
I feel the grace of spaciousness,
I rise above myself and looking down on you
I see the falsity I was.
No longer caught within –
no longer my fault,
no longer to blame,
no longer too much.
Resistances, reactions and defences fast fading.

Held in true strength – I experience choice.
To dress, or not, in various guise,
conscious stepping in and out,
conscious style with conscious flair.
The container that you are –
chosen not driven.
I admit your contribution –
surviving in my human growth,
no better or worse than all the others in the world –
just mine.

My complex disconnections are dissolving –
no longer trapped –
becoming free,
moving into Essence ease,
taking you with me in different form.
Adieu – but not goodbye.

I feel Essence now –
holding me,
loving me,
emptying me,
unravelling me
into who I truly am.

Being This –
no longer two,
nor two in one –
but one revealed as one.

Always the same –
And always there.
All is This, This is All –
And I can live as It.

Nothing is contained –
All is spaciousness expanding –
Turning my being inside out and outside in.

I leave retreat
released from your confines,
freer in all ways to act and be.
Respecting, expanding and transcending –
dancing Beyond the Beyond
as one, not two.

And now
I step within the world
as holy place and space.
Aliveness
sourced from Essence and true joy
instead of you.

Steeped in the depth of who I truly am.
Free at last,
innocent,
alive,
freshness and newness everywhere –
in everything and everyone.

You are This
We are This
I am This

All is One.

Suffusion

(yellow essence of joy)

Breathing and suffused in yellow light
formless form arises,
cradling me,
singing a lullaby of peace –
my spirit released.

Expanding spaciousness of soul,
ecstatic transcending
beyond all limits now –
soaring free.

Essence of joy,
exquisite taste
sipping formless gratitude –
suffusing every cell.

All longing gone,
my heart's desire fulfilled
through Grace.

Healing Hills

(red essence of strength)

Seeking healing in these hills –
bare feet caress the land,
slowing meditation steps
of heel and toe,
even the grass feels gracious, blesses me,
majestic beauty here
refining, free.

Held within these hills –
an ancient lie reveals,
“I have NO right to be alive”
bracing with shock, engulfed in pain
tears falling, heart contracting,
breathing stilling –
I stop, sensing my feet and legs and soul.

Present in these hills –
the pain dissolving
birthing steady glowing flames in belly heat,
essential strength emerging fiery red,
burning through defences long believed.

Alive within these hills –
in spacious body, flowing mind, expanding heart
the truth returns in knowing clear with clarity,
“I have the right to be alive”

nothing to protect or prove
or fear or lose.

In healing hills reborn.

Spiritual Companions

Mirrors of my soul –
reflections and refractions of my life,
out – flowing luminosity,
divine lights –
pilgrimaging on your path of mastery of life.

Worldly accomplishment,
ease of material manifestation,
successes abounding.
Always you will rise
renouncing all your gains
in love and letting go.

For ultimately your mastery
is mastery of

All That Is
And Blessed Be.

Unconditional

Mother Love

(for baby Keri and all new mothers)

First sight of you absorbs me whole
dissolving into oceanic mother love.
My service to the world twice births –
through you and through the
fragrant flowering of my heart.

No magic potions here or fairy mother wand –
just me – alone – post-birth –
with open soul,
and you held tight in trembling arms.

On sacred ground I name my promises deep and true –

Know you are loved and your true self,
Know always I am here,
Nothing I will not do for you

Cooking

(daughter to mother)

What do I do with this raw rage
boiling and bridling to unleash?
Numbing of pain with folds of fat
and feasts of food.

Your cautious life is safely served
and shared on tiny plates,
meagre emotions portioned out
in deadly sifted deeds and words
to soothe and calm *your* pain.

My appetite unmet – erupts –
I pour out molten liturgy
of red hot lavic words that wound
and waste –
burning us both.

To no effect –
all you share is
petrifying frozen glare –
defences high – protecting *you*.

No skill to calm your ever angry, hungry child –
my constant rage
still waiting to be fed
with unconditional love.

All Souls Invasion

(for Michelle and all victims of sexual abuse)

Terrors of the night crowd in,
you shiver like Tibetan prayer flags in the wind –
but fear, not peace, pervades your room.

Your mind, cascading from control
sees sinister shadows everywhere
in scary puppet show repeating every year
on Halloween –
the night it all began.

All Souls' Night when your father's rapes began,
returning now to haunt, to taunt, to violate –
as once he did in life.

The memory alive –
pulsating through your wounds in searing pain –
daylight defences disappear as he –
unbidden and unwanted – still invades
your vulnerable virginity.

Piercing through your veils –
violated body – soul entrapped –
in unhealed wounds that terror resurrects –
re-lived until resolved and healed.

May all affected souls of women in the world
arise, unite and heal.

May all invasions of the night forever cease.

Shining My Soul

My grandmother shines my soul,
singing songs of love unique for me,
soothing hurts and doubt with
cornucopic rhythms, which rise and fall
in soft tempos and firm crescendos –
grown woman lullabies.

Until she comes
I feel bereft – hiding in shame,
alone, afraid, depressed.

Her calming voice, soft and strong –
beautifully clear with grace and care,
serenades my goodness –
embellishing my talents and my life.

Holding me close, she cradles negativity –
streaming it away like dust
from dirty tapestries
exorcised by women in ancient city streets,
powerful patterns of woven beauty emerging
to be seen once again.

Depression cleansed like newly wet, washed sheets –
hanging on lines, released and flapping in the wind,
warming in the sun.

Returning hope that one day soon
my soul will shine –

always and alone.

