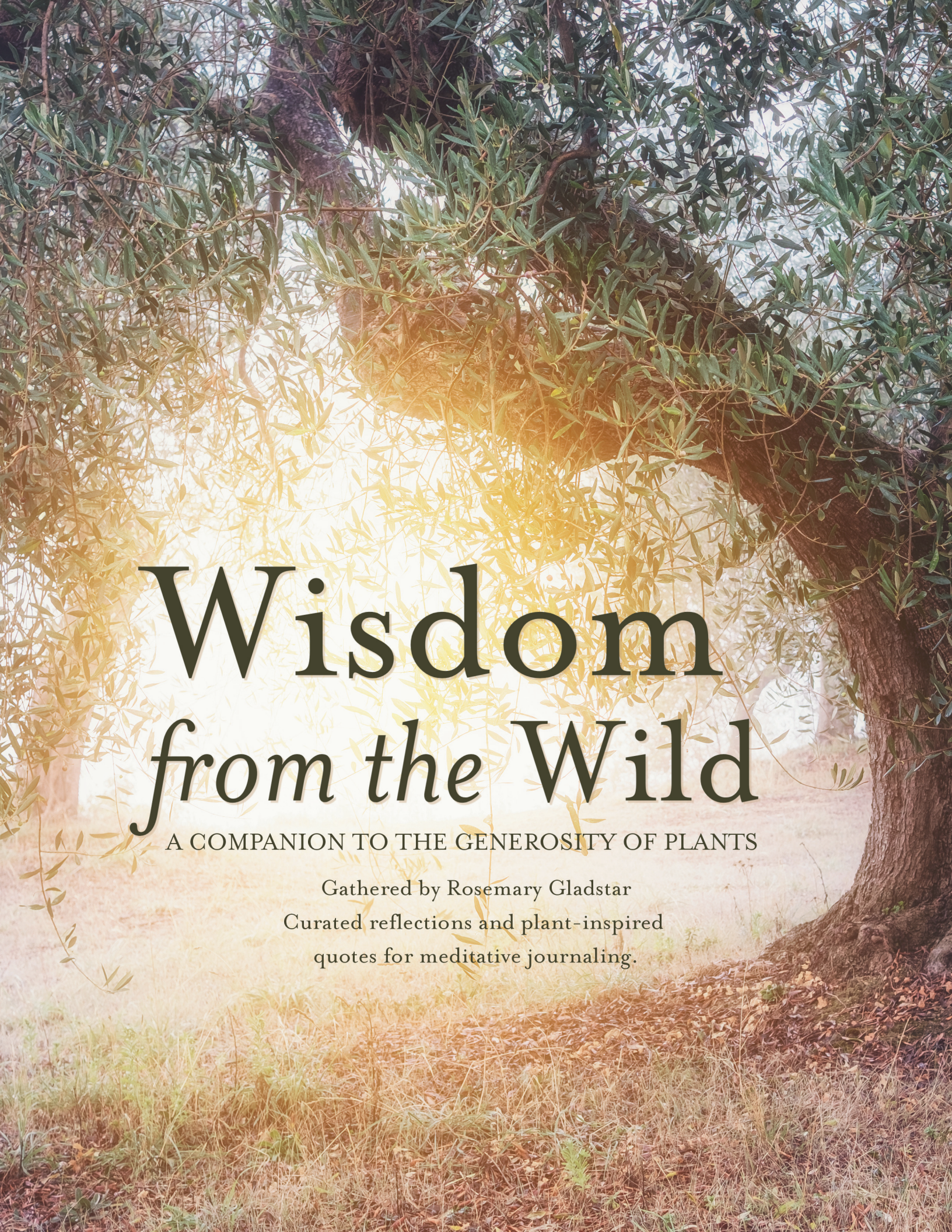


Wisdom *from the* Wild

A COMPANION TO THE GENEROSITY OF PLANTS

Gathered by Rosemary Gladstar

Curated reflections and plant-inspired quotes for meditative journaling.

A NOTE FROM ROSEMARY

Over the years, I've gathered quotes the way some people gather wildflowers—tucking them gently into my journals, my teachings, and the corners of my heart. I've always found deep comfort and inspiration in the words of poets, plant lovers, philosophers, and fellow wanderers of the wild world. They've served as kindling for my spirit and reminders of the deep truths that live beneath the surface of things.

When I was creating *The Generosity of Plants*, I included many of my favorite quotes throughout the pages—but there were so many more I longed to share. This little collection, *Wisdom from the Wild*, is a companion to the book, an offering of extra petals, seeds, and whispers that didn't quite fit in the main bouquet.

These pages hold quotes I've jotted down in notebooks, scribbled on seed packets, and carried with me across seasons and travels. You'll find the voices of herbal elders, mystics, gardeners, revolutionaries, and the plants themselves. My hope is that these words will inspire reflection, spark a deeper connection with the green world, and remind you of the wild wisdom that lives both around you and within you.

With love and green blessings,

Rosemary

ROOTED IN WILDNESS

To root is to remember. In the chaos of the world, the wild reminds us who we are beneath the noise. These words are offerings from the forest floor, from the garden gone to seed, from the places where mystery still lingers. Let them lead you inward.

—Emma Groff





Of all the paths you take in life, ***make sure a few of them are dirt.***

—John Muir



Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the wind longs to play with your hair.

—Kahlil Gibran

There remains in every human soul the love of the wild and the wilderness, and this feeling is yet stronger in animals.

—Juliette de Baïracli Levy

What does your inner wilderness feel like?



"The Cycle of the Seasons"
by Hildegard of Bingen

Everywhere in creation, trees, plants, animals and gemstones, there are mysterious healing forces.

—Hildegard of Bingen

We are known and individuated by our faults and imperfections. Real perfection, perfect balance, is invisible. —*Michael Tierra*

How has the wild taught you to embrace your imperfections?

I don't trust a garden (or gardener) that has no weeds…some wildness and uncertainty is a condition that is an honest representation of life.

—Christopher Hobbs





CAROLINA PARAKEET

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, 1785-1851

CAROLINA PARAKEET

By David Winston

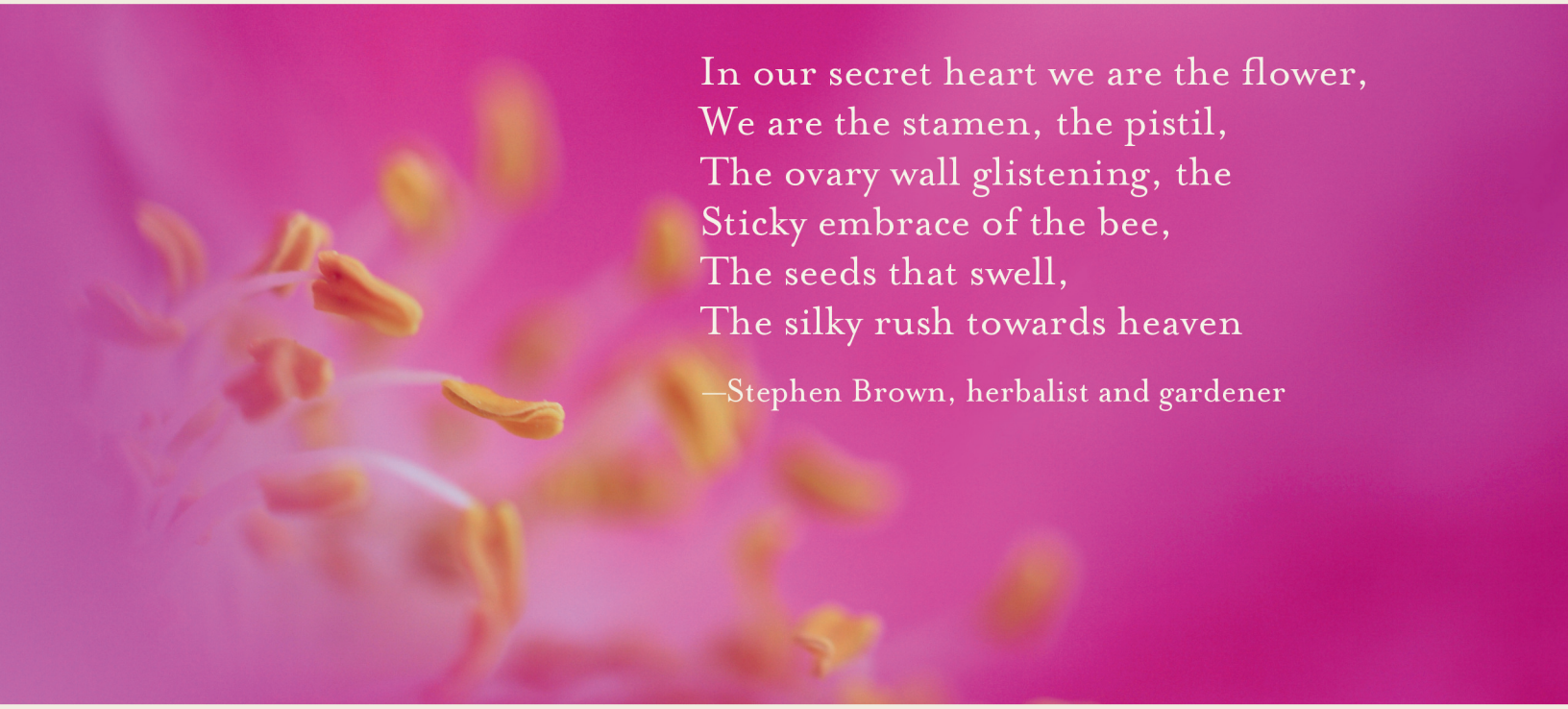
Barely within memory
a beautiful bird lived within our borders
autumn headed, a body of spring
extinct
destroyed by ignorance, by avarice, by mistake
a few specimens molder in museums
faded, barely resembling themselves
unknown to most
unknown to me
until I saw your canvas
color confidently displayed for all to see
bringing to life
a glimmer of possibilities
a rainbow of a bird
resurrecting faded feelings
barely resembling myself
can emotions displaced, disparaged and nearly forgotten
be born again
to live in flesh
hatched not of egg, but in sagging skin
kindling fire, needs and desire
a spark of yellow, green, and red
giving flight to ideas
not moldering, but new
giving flight to nesting instinct
to survival of the species
to the thrill of touch
discovering a bird, a need
thought to have vanished
but surviving on canvas
etched from pigments extracted from two hearts
not ready to be added
to the long list
of empty nests and stuffed specimens
preserved only as what once was
within our borders
prodded by memories of happy ever after
a bird of paradise has taken flight



I saw the woods where thick the dead leaves lie, and smelt the fresh earth's scent—the scent of memory.

—Edith Nesbit, *Leaves of Life*

What does your memory of earth smell like?



In our secret heart we are the flower,
We are the stamen, the pistil,
The ovary wall glistening, the
Sticky embrace of the bee,
The seeds that swell,
The silky rush towards heaven

—Stephen Brown, herbalist and gardener

May all of nature—the animals and plants, rocks and trees, the sound of the wind, the smell of the rain, the taste of snow on your tongue—remind you of the sweet, secret one who dwells inside your heart. —*Sage Blue*

How does the wild speak to the one inside your heart?

AN ISLAND OF NETTLE EATERS

Aigul, plucks them with her bare hands,
eats them raw.
Valeria fries bright green pancakes in olive oil,
serves them with very creative sauces.
Kathy feeds us all Oysters Nettlefeller,
we eat around the beachfire.



The Olesko sisters make Green Goddess soup,
serve it at the April coffee house;
and for the spring plant sale this year
Kirsty made Nettlekopita.

Jazmin brews nettle beer,
Domena presses steamed nettles into
firm round balls to dip in peanut sauce.
She brings them for book club.
I make Season Turning Soup:
the last of the winter-stored butternut squash,
the first tender nettle tips.

We make pesto for pasta,
sauce for the polenta,
nettle lasagna.
We tincture leaf, root, and seed for medicine.
We even compost them to nourish our soil.
And when the cycle is winding down we dry them
for tea to sip slowly through the dark days until next year.

It's spring and the kale is sweet and sprouting in the gardens but still
we go to the untamed places to gather the feisty weed.
Isn't that why we have all come here? To feast on what the wild offers;
to feel that slight sting.

(Sophia Rosenberg, 2018)

LISTENING TO THE LIVING WORLD

The mind can go in a thousand directions,
but on this beautiful path
I walk in peace.
With each step, a gentle wind blows.
With each step, a flower blooms.

—Thich Nhat Hanh





The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be...amidst the simple beauty of nature. —*Anne Frank*

Where do you go when you seek peace?

"If you listen, [the plants] will put you to work."

—Lynda LeMole,
former Executive Director of United Plant Savers

Without the recognition of the spiritual aspect of our ecology, we are like a tree without roots, a story without origin, a wave without motion, or a heart without soul that continually longs for that which gives life. —*Pam Montgomery*

What roots your listening?



If we listen closely enough, we will hear her song. Each plant, each being possesses a unique and infinitely complex melody of pulse, breath and murmur.

The same is true of our own bodies and spirits. We are songs dressed in skin.

—Kiva Rose Hardin

The almost universal use of plants to affect the psyche and spirit of individuals and communities strongly suggests not a common superstition, but an underlying truth. —*David Winston*

How have plants spoken to your spirit?

To forage means to dance with the land. It means responding to and resonating with ecosystems: acknowledging the gifts that the earth offers us. I am grateful to take part in this dance and hoping you are too.

—Dina Falconi



Every land has its own special rhythm, and unless the traveler takes the time to learn the rhythm, he or she will remain an outsider there always.

—*Juliette de Baïracli Levy*

What rhythms have you learned from the land where you live?



Nature tells her secrets not to those who hurry by, but to those who walk with happy heart and seeing eye.

—Patience Harvey

What secret has the Earth shared with you?

Take a moment. Open a jar of herbs that perhaps you grew and dried yourself… draw in a long deep breath…and if you pause awhile with the plant, it can carry you forward into the future.



—Rosemary Gladstar

Try it now. Choose a jar of herbs from your shelf. Open it slowly. Inhale deeply. What memory stirs? Where does the plant want to take you?

"We should tread lightly on the earth, but we should tread on her often to receive her powerful messages, memories and magic through the soles of our feet."

—Stephanie Rose Bird



The wild doesn't shout—it whispers. In the hush between thoughts, beneath the soles of your feet, in the scent of a jar of herbs—this is where the world begins to speak. Listening is not passive; it is an act of belonging.

—Emma Groff

How does your relationship with listening shift when you consider it not as passive, but as an act of participation and reverence?

ACTS OF WILD COURAGE

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief.
Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now.
You are not obligated to complete the work.
But neither are you free to abandon it.

—Unknown (often attributed to the Talmud)





Help us to be ever faithful gardeners of the spirit, who know that without darkness nothing comes to birth, and without light nothing flowers. —*May Sarton*

What darkness in your life has nurtured something new?

"If people let the government decide what foods they eat and what medicines they take, their bodies will soon be in as sorry a state as are the souls of those who live under tyranny."

—Thomas Jefferson

Plant Kindness and Harvest Love.

—Sara Katz

What kind act has taken root in your life?



"Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors."

—Jonas Salk

When the universe starts compressing the self, in the end it always comes down to such simple things, one breath after the other as if each were the last…or the first. Most things that people think important just fall to the side then. Such direct encounter with death and with life strip nonessentials away. What never leaves though is the context in which that breath is taken. Breath is breath, yes, but if the atmosphere from which it comes is infused with love, well, that makes all the difference. Coming or going. —*Stephen Harrod Buhner*

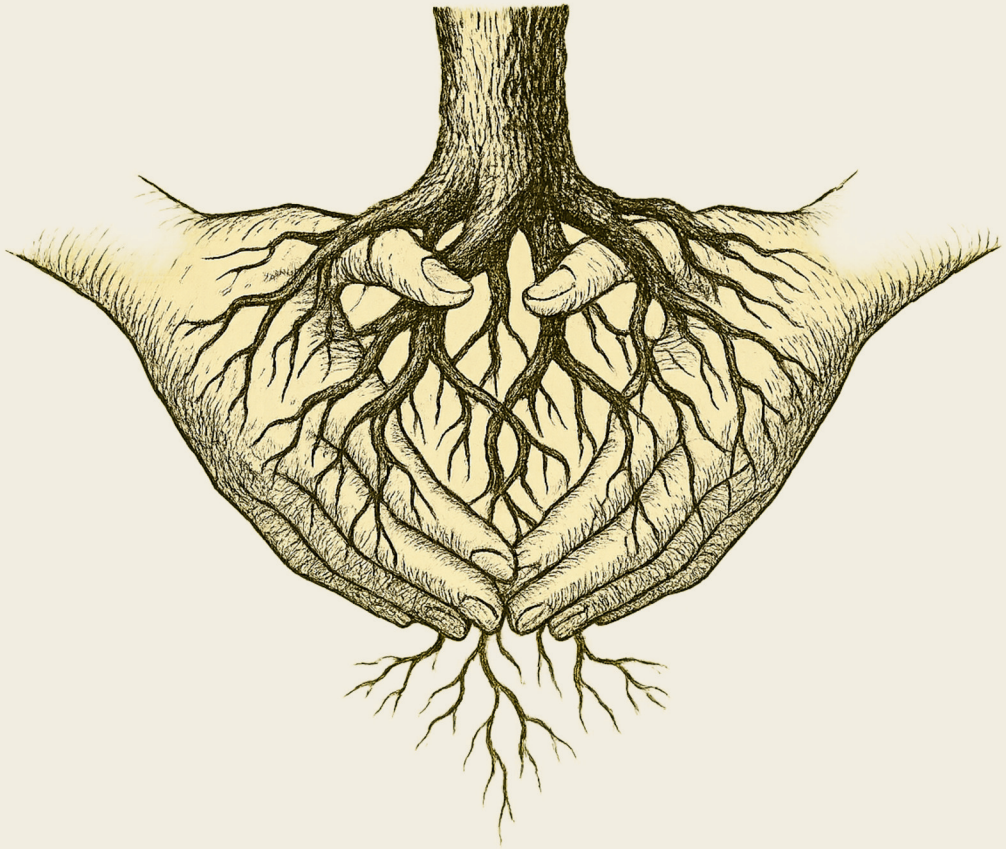
How can you breathe love into the space you're in right now?

RECIPROCITY & RELATIONSHIP

Plants give us so much…food, clothing, shelter, medicine, heat, oxygen! The generous nature of plants is a gift—and lesson—within itself, a gift we can turn inward.

What are my gifts? What can I offer back to this beautiful and generous world?

—Rosalee de la Forêt





The perfume of Sandalwood,
the scent of Rosemary and Jasmine,
travel only as far as the wind.

But the fragrance of goodness
travels with us
through all the worlds.

Like garlands woven from a heap of flowers,
fashion your life
as a garland of beautiful deeds.

—Siddhartha Gautama, The Buddha



"A single rose can be my garden…a single friend, my world."

—Leo Buscaglia

Great herbalists treat people, not diseases. —*David Winston*

Who has treated you with that kind of presence—someone who saw your wholeness, not just your symptoms?

And how might you offer that same presence to others? In your work, your family, your friendships—where are you being called to see more clearly, and care more deeply?



The art of medicine consists in amusing the patient while nature cures the disease.

—Voltaire

Building cultures of gratitude is one of the most important things we can be doing…It's the same as building soil and building compost ~ it doesn't just happen overnight. There's a commitment, a dedicating, a devotion.

—Deb Soule

When one becomes conscious of the plant's pain, every harvest is undertaken with the focus on gratitude and prayer. Every bite becomes communion. And every forest or meadow endangered…becomes a personal call to respond.
—*Jesse Wolf Hardin*

How has your harvest changed through awareness?

The ecology brings gifts to the plants, the plants bring gifts to us, and hopefully we, as healthy humans, can bring the gifts of our own creativity and diversity back to the wide world.

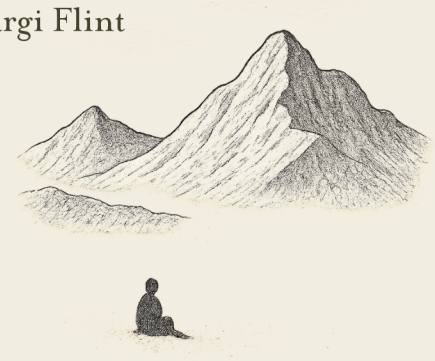
—Guido Masé

Practice well with an open heart
Be voracious and laugh
with your fellowmen.
Regularly think about
what you want,
what you need,
what you share
Experience joy ~

Learn to listen to
the bell of truth
and the gong of wrong.
Be willing to follow
your true path.
Be a part of it all.
The ALL is powerful.
The power is in us all.
We are all here together
on this earth.
Blessed be.

—Margi Flint

What does being a part of it all mean to you right now?



The only way I have found release from the almost unbearable weight of grief and fear is to take myself out into the wild places, where I can find the embrace of peace, where I can see that the world goes on as always…

Once again, I ask wild nature to brace up my depleted soul. And in gratitude, I renew my pledge to give something back.

—Richard Nelson

Magic or "good medicine" is sometimes simply a matter of the proper timing of events, while poor timing can be the source of "bad luck" or "bad medicine." Someone might say it is "the spirit" acting through our lives…plants can influence this element of timing. They participate in the life of the spirit just as we do. We should not be so chauvinistic as to believe that we are the only ones on this planet who enjoy that life. Whether we find the right healing remedy or not may be a matter of timing, or being open to the spirit, or believing in the possibility of healing from an unorthodox source, or believing that miracles can happen. Plants, just like any of us, would like to participate in the occurrence of a miracle. —*Matthew Wood, "The Book of Herbal Wisdom: Using Plants as Medicines"*

What would it mean to believe that plants want to participate in your healing? How might that change the way you gather, prepare, or sit with them?



Abrir un camino cubierto de flores, en América, es propiciar la vida de los colibríes y acceder a la libertad y la salud de los seres humanos. América tierra de colibríes.

To open a path covered with flowers in America is to promote the life of hummingbirds and to access the freedom and health of human beings. America, land of hummingbirds.

—Rocio Alarcón

What flowers are you planting in your garden to open a pathway for birds?

SEASONS OF BECOMING

Each day, with each step, we plant seeds for the future. Seeds of collaboration, reciprocity, and kindness to nurture our shared humanity.

Upon rising, take a moment and consider the actions you will take to cultivate your relationships. Tend to the garden of beings that surround you; the plants which give us oxygen, the animals that share nature with us, the people who bless our lives, and our precious Mother Earth who sustains us all.

And we must remember, our attitude is one of our most valuable assets. We may not be able to control situations or other's behaviors, but we can control our responses. Be conscious of the energy you bring to each interaction, for it shapes not only you, but those around you.

Breathe deeply, share acts of kindness often, and love with your whole heart.

—Helen Ward



Life isn't long enough to do all you could accomplish. And what a privilege even to be alive. In spite of all the pollution and horrors, how beautiful this world is. Supposing you only saw the stars once every year. Think what you would think. The wonder of it!

—Tasha Tudor



Continually trying to look on the bright side interferes with our finding the wisdom that lies in the fruitful darkness. Continually striving upward toward the light means we never grow downward into our own feet, never become firmly rooted on the earth, never explore the darkness within and around us, a darkness without whose existence the light would have no meaning. —*Stephen Harrod Buhner*

What has the darkness taught you lately?

"Pain and suffering in our lives is much more transformative for softening our ego and growing a feeling of inner peace and loving kindness than meditation or other spiritual practices. However, with steady practice, pain and suffering will lessen."

—Christopher Hobbs

How has pain softened something in you?

WINTER BLESSING

May your journey into the dark of the year rekindle your inner fires of inspiration and gratitude.

May you celebrate the long winter nights with good food, good books, good friends, candlelight and good stories to share.

May you have the thyme to stand quietly in the cool, crisp shadows of the trees and breathe deeply the fresh, crisp winter air, stirring winter dreams, inspiration and rich creativity.

May the deep place in the Earth, where the roots of the trees hold strong through the winter storms and the flexibility of their branches remind you of your own strengths and flexibility and what feeds your own roots…

May you wrap yourself in your own inner wisdom and peace and go pleasurably into your winter.

And when Green life stirs and rises once again above the ground
May you burst forth and celebrate the spirit of your Spring-thyme.

Diana De Luca



It never fails that crocuses come
Every late February
Indifferent to snow and icy trauma of gloomy
Moods and deadening doubts
They always come with no bidding from me
Sweet saffron purple-tipped soul-surprising stars
Against a cacophony
Of gray-tipped snow goose song
Combining their masterpieces of joy
Brightening the entry
Way into my mind
Despite my wintry
Will
Inspiring my heart to
Thaw and bloom again…

—Kerry Smith

As one grows older one should grow more expert at finding beauty in unexpected places, in deserts and in towns, in ordinary human faces and among wild weeds.

—C.C. Vyvyan

What wild weed has become more beautiful to you with age?



We only become wise when we recognize that we need to emulate nature in our agricultural systems and in how we care for this planet. —*Michael Phillips*

Where are you being called to emulate nature?

May the earth continue to live
May the heavens above continue to live
May the rains continue to dampen the land
May the wet forests continue to grow
Then the flowers shall bloom
And we people shall live again

—Hawaiian Prayer

This companion booklet was created to accompany *The Generosity of Plants: Shared Wisdom from the Community of Herb Lovers*—a love letter to the green world and the healing ways it offers us.

Within these pages, Rosemary Gladstar shares some of the many reflections, quotes, and quiet invitations she's gathered through a lifetime of walking with the plants. If this collection stirs something in you—a curiosity, a remembering, a desire to deepen—her home study course, *The Science & Art of Herbalism*, offers an expansive journey into the heart of plant wisdom. Rooted in over four decades of teaching, it's an invitation to reconnect with the earth, the plants, and the healer within.

Learn more at scienceandartofherbalism.com.

Design by Emma Groff
With deep gratitude to the plants and the people who tend them.