

# STAND UP

## ROOTS

No is a word I have found exceptionally hard to say. I used to prefer to endure all manner of indignities rather than ever reject or abandon anyone else. Why? Because I know it can feel like your whole world is shattered in an instant.

I was taken from my mother at birth and for two months I was in a room with other relinquished babies. We cried to be held. No one came, apart from to attend to our basic needs. I learnt to give up on life and suffer in silence.

When I was three my adoptive parents separated. She felt it was best to cut off all contact with him. She told me he hadn't loved me and the only man I should trust was my new step father. This set the scene for decades of disastrous and painful relating as I unravelled the lie.

At four I was an exuberant child, desperate for affection and easy prey. My step father had no inner no, so I had to say no to who I was. He felt ashamed and so shamed me. I was blamed and so I blamed myself. I was punished and beaten until I was in my early twenties. I had no control over what happened to my body, so I escaped into my mind. My adoptive mother was envious of the attention he was giving me and let it all happen. She was scared of him too. Alcohol played a big part in our lives and was the plaster on our wounds. I wasn't allowed to have feelings. I hated my body and no longer wanted to be alive but something wouldn't let me go. I shut down and shut up. I collapsed and played dead. I turned off the colour and muted the volume. Saying no felt life threatening and I had to do what I was told or I would be harmed or killed, especially sexually, and I couldn't shine creatively as I would be humiliated. This led to numbing addictions, the tension of resistance, isolation and the avoidance of humans and intimacy. I was chronically anxious, lost in analysis paralysis, and terrified of getting it wrong. [Silence is not consent.](#)

At age eight I was officially adopted by my step father. I said I didn't want it as I was being hurt. I wanted to live with my grandmother, with whom I felt safe and nurtured. I was told not to make a fuss and that I had an overactive imagination. I learnt my no had no power, I was helpless over what happened

to me and my words wouldn't be believed. I was confused. I knew what had happened. They told me it hadn't. I stopped trusting my own perception, in order to survive. My mother modelled that I needed a man to support me financially, however violent he was, and there was no escape. They stayed together until he died. She died a few months later. They'd done the best they thought they could. I was twenty eight. I felt guilty to still be alive, worthless and unlovable. I used to give myself away. I used to abandon myself and what I valued.

It may come as no surprise that I have struggled to move, to shine and share what I love. Now, after twenty years of repairing the damage, I have finally received the update that I can trust my body's felt sense, the simple truth of my heart and I don't need to trust others to survive. If something feels off, it probably is. I listen to my animal nature, my inner deer, to sense if I'm safe. If I'm not, I'm now free to move and escape. I can choose who and what I allow in. I am totally responsible for myself. I am learning to say a clear yes and a clear no. I can flow with the current or against it, and let go of grief. I can now feel gratitude for my whole life and compassion for all. I'm alive in a body. I can relax naturally. It's enough. Now I give myself generously, from abundance and self respect.

# GROW UP

## UNSHAKEABLE SISTERHOOD

For several years, during my apprenticeship, I was a practical assistant for Rosie Perk's fortnightly class. I learnt the value and discipline of turning up, no matter what. When I was a teaching assistant for the first time and writing my reflections, Rosie pointed out I had completely missed the medio space. My attention was either right in or right out. There was no in between or balance.

Having a stable home has supported consistent practice. I moved here soon after completing the Journey of Empowerment and Initiation. I have the Movement Medicine mandala set up around me. I've been living it in every moment, benefiting from the liberating structure of devotion, while learning to feel safe in my body. Only by being present, here and now, am I free to move on, softening and safe in my own semi permeable bubble.

I assisted Caroline Carey with Passion Unlimited in Bristol. I appreciated her work with inner conflict using the magic of mandorla. I wanted to learn how to collaborate without competing, to surrender without collapsing and to shine without showing off. Feeling betrayed by women was a deep wound that has been gradually healing through the ongoing connections I treasure, with my peers in the Movement Medicine, Resonance Repatterning and TreeSisters communities. I also cherish my birth sister, Shahdzar, who I was reunited with when I was thirty, and I am still in touch with my two closest childhood friends.

The first potential student who inquired about my classes at Jellyfish Art Studio in Devon, sent me a painting of himself with an erection. I was able to practise saying no gently and without shaming him. I explained that it wouldn't be appropriate for him to attend my class. I was exploring the shadow feminine within me and why men often felt comfortable to expose themselves in front of me, why I felt responsible for their actions and put their needs first, why I felt compelled to please them and craved their validation. I transformed the smothering mother archetype and I'm now able to step back, let go and trust others can take care of themselves. Realising it's "not my shit" frees me to deal with my own shit. Being a compassionate witness is enough.

## **M.E.S.A MUSCLE**

M.E.S.A. practice (Movement Energetics of Spatial Awareness) is a simple and effective way to get in touch with who, how and where we are, inside and outside. The dances of micro, medio and macro are our foundation and launch pad into the magical realms of meta and mystica. Micro is our inner world, medio is the space around us, our second skin, macro is our relationship with the other, the group and the world beyond. By creating a strong container we can lift off into multi dimensional adventures, while staying real and rooted.

This has been one of the practices I've noticed most helps dancers. Many of us have challenges with boundaries and expressing anger. We can learn to dismantle our armour and strengthen our semi permeable second skins. It's not just about saying no to others. Sometimes we also need to say a firm no to our inner children and teens. We can be soothing, nurturing mothers to ourselves and encouraging, protective fathers. Standing on our own two feet and [stepping out into the world](#), we can ask ourselves, what do I need to feel safe enough to stay true and be in relationship?

By allowing my inner persecutor to transform into a dancing warrior who chooses compassion, I no longer need to defend myself with blame and hatred. During the Phoenix Retreat my body had the space and support to enact my liberation from harm. The rage was blocking all the love in my heart, the shame and terror was freezing my creative juice. I learnt to make eye contact while dancing and stay embodied, not to get lost in the other nor rebel and just do my own dance alone.

I loved playing with saying yes and no with my body and energy at Susannah's SOURCE in London. I embraced the possibility of silent, sensual, subtle seduction. I learnt to lead by example with groups. To show, inspire and allow rather than dictate or demand.

The practices of mirroring, see sawing, freedom and unity all support the development of this relational muscle. We can learn to listen and to pause. We can witness non coherent states in others as beautiful adaptations. We can learn to have "Strong backs, soft fronts and wild hearts.", as Brené Brown puts it. We can harness source energy, with our boundaries as

banks of a river, flowing powerfully, rather than splashing around, or being stagnant and stuck.

Listening within as a teacher, being at ease with the full range of energy, the peaks and valleys, finding and following my own natural rhythm in the moment and the wider seasons of my life, allows me to be fully present with dancers and accurately sense which music to play when, how loud and for how long, so our nervous systems can re-balance, be soothed and energised.

Addictions come in many forms and are not just to substances, as commonly believed, nor are they the result of any moral inadequacy, stupidity or weakness. They are a reprieve from inner torment and the pain of unmet essential needs. They are an attempt to feel better from something outside ourselves, rather than transforming our inner state. The eighties slogan “just say no”, failed to take into account that we simply don’t have a choice when our unconscious survival patterns are running us. We need the support and encouragement of others to model what might be possible for us and to gently hold our hand as we let go, stand up and move into liberation. Also, the alternative needs to be more fun, engaging, exciting and truly fulfilling or we just won’t choose it.

Tiny steps and tiny inputs of coherent energy have system wide effects. Simple tools like the wet noodle, where we alternate between tensing and relaxing our whole bodies and faces, so we can choose how we respond, greatly support us to feel safe. Resonance Repatterning has many such tools which support soothing our nervous systems and bringing us back into balance. Going for walks in Nature and really looking at what is around us can bring us present and help us focus more on the beauty of life.

## **POLYAMOROUS ECOSEXUAL**

“Nice people don’t necessarily fall in love with nice people.” ~ Jonathan Franzen (author of Freedom)

My intention at the beginning of my professional training was for the learning of my craft to be slow, simple and spacious. I delayed completing my teaching hours as I felt I needed to have my own needs for healthy connection met first. Who we are in our personal lives needs to match who we are professionally, to be in integrity and congruent. I was transforming non coherence within myself, so I could stay in a relaxed body, be more serene and feel unshakeable, rooted on the earth and free to move. I was still terrified. I was discovering which needs are mine to meet and which can only be met by relating with others. I was unravelling confusion and co-dependence. I was finding a natural balance with the elements within. Freedom for me is no longer leaving my body, it’s staying and embracing the liberating structure of my physical form, the devotion to expanding fluid movement, and restoring flexibility in my spine. I was walking barefoot for miles every day and enjoying adventures in solitude.

Even though I was given permission to teach in the first module of Professional Training, I still felt I had many unconscious patterns to transform, and rather than discover them through teaching, I chose to deal with them privately, before fully stepping into the leadership role. I felt this was particularly important as I sense I’ll be of most benefit, serving children and young people, so it’s essential to be able to respond gently, kindly and compassionately to any testing behaviours and button pushing, and to whatever gets catalysed.

I’ve been learning to teach by example, by making sure my inner oasis stays fertile, by doing my own practice alongside, while encouraging others to do what matters most to them, regardless of age or past disappointments, and to never give up on our deepest dreams. It’s what we’re here to contribute, and far from being selfish, it’s our service to life.

What I previously saw as an obstacle to sharing MM, I now see as the essence of this project. The dance between codependency and narcissism. I see it as being about non coherent patterns. Rather than rejecting or abandoning people who exhibit challenging behaviours, we can choose to

engage in ways that keep us safe, although sometimes it is necessary to walk away.

These narcissistic patterns are reflecting unmet needs for love and nurturing. Rather than further exclude these younger aspects of ourselves, we can find ways to welcome them and assure them their needs can be met in healthy ways. There is enough love for us all. It's not a question of deserving, it's one of inclusion. We can transform our own inner critics, charlatans, persecutors, rescuers and victims, and this transforms the way we see the world.

Narcissism in teens is increasing at alarming rates. Along with addiction and suicide. I am developing a simple offering, to create safe, healthy boundaries, to learn to have mutual respect and trust, especially with our creative sexual energy, to find ways to express ourselves and communicate with each other so our needs can be met. We can explore the edgewalker and the shapeshifter, the two core archetypes of the teenager.

Our self love and respect needs to be strong so we can truly serve others. By letting go of my endless search for true love and romance, I have discovered that the gifts of balancing my own inner masculine and inner feminine are enduring love, regeneration, enjoying the holding of my daily practice and the fluid creativity possible within the holding. By being an oasis of revitalising flow, sparkling inner sunshine, spaciousness, appreciation and by flying freely with my feet on the earth, I can share the alchemy of phoenix, who lives at the heart of this practice.

I'm now free to choose to get to know someone for a few months before sex, no matter what anyone else wants me to do. I am now able to practise the art of saying no with compassion. I no longer feel compelled to hide my sexuality to protect men from their inability to control themselves. Staying in a relaxed body, standing serene at the centre of my circle, belonging on the earth, feeling innocent, beautiful, wild, sensual, safe to shine and play is true fulfilment and bliss.

## STAR

Sharing music has been my greatest love for as long as I can remember, along with dancing, singing and dressing up. When I was a young child, my adoptive parents would get me to dance for them, to Gloria Gaynor's I Will Survive. Here is a recent [video](#) of me dancing to it for my own pleasure, free of shame, blame or resentment, showing the alchemy of moving from a vicious circle into a medicine spiral, letting go of codependency and embracing interdependency. It is a work in progress. Here is a recording of the [star meditation](#), which can support us to feel centred and confident.

I absolutely love DJing as part of a ritual. It's when I feel most alive and aligned. I feel fully in my body, utterly present, entrained with the group, it feels like what I'm for. One of my dreams is to be able to DJ and sing at the same time, by creating and looping layers of sound live. I am starting with the basics and building a strong foundation. I love creating soundscapes within which dancers can weave their own new possibilities. While offering my first classes in a village hall on Dartmoor, I decided to enjoy the opportunity right in front of me, by giving my full attention to the one dancer in the room. I took great care with the mixes, often playing new releases. I remember feeling I should be playing to massive crowds in Ibiza or at festivals, in order to be successful. Paradoxically, so far, my audience has been largely feline and non corporeal.

I love mixcloud, as it's allowed me to live my dream of being a DJ. The music I play can be heard anywhere on the planet. I'm delighted I can share Movement Medicine inspired mixes right now, wherever I am. For fun, I recently entered the Beatport DJ competition. This was my [entry](#). It's never too late to learn. I have loved being a beginner, learning all the skills to be able to teach online, in person and in Nature.

Until I was in my early thirties, I was hiding in an energetic burka. My ancestors are from the Middle East and often dances have emerged from me I had no idea I knew. I once saw a simple, traditional male dance from my birth father's country and noticed I'd been moving that way. Through saying no to my inner critic I could say yes to making videos for online courses. I challenged myself to share first takes. I was practising saying yes to who I am. I'm currently making one for an audition in an arabic flamenco festival.

I recently watched an interview between Gabor Maté and Sia. I found it poignant that she honestly shared her struggle to form secure intimate relating, due to the neglect and isolation she had also experienced as a baby. She revealed that deep and fulfilling connection was what she treasured most, not the fame and artistic success. I imagine this is true for us all. We all share a core need to be seen, heard and understood. Simply making the effort to understand each other is a golden key and can support letting go of the pain of not being received or welcomed.

## **MY DRUM SCARES ME**

I have a beautiful drum hanging in my bedroom. It is made from the skin of a deer found dead on Dartmoor. It has an owl's feather inside and a patch of rabbit's fur where I hold it. It hung there for years, ignored, apart from a brief engagement when, thanks to my peer Livia Frischer's generous encouragement, I used it to accompany some recordings of my voice. One night it fell off the wall onto the floor, play me, it seemed to say. I blew off the cobwebs and began afresh. I'd felt so let down I didn't even want to rely on a drum to support me. I imagine, like so many of us, I was carrying generations of ancestral fear of persecution and torture; the terror of knowing what might happen if I dared to reveal who I am. I was still hiding.

When I was assisting on the elective, Your Voice Matters, Yasia Leiserach explained that performance simply means through form, through our bodies. I felt a deep sense of relief at hearing this and it helped me accept that whatever sound I made was perfect, even if it wasn't pretty. Now I love howling, stomping barefoot, shaking, crying, laughing, growling, singing, sometimes sweetly, sometimes fiercely, welcoming all that comes, and holding my drum feels natural, like an extension of my arm. I feel rooted and connected. My drum is my trusted friend.

I can feel the power of words, as incantations. I can take responsibility for my words and thoughts, rather than letting them control me and run wild. What I choose to think affects how I feel and act. I can choose to be silent. I can stay true to my ideal of honesty and I don't have to reveal everything to everyone. I can pause and listen to my body to sense if a person is someone I can trust.

# PLAY MY PART

## SHINE LIKE THE SUN

I had a simple intention at the beginning of my apprenticeship: To move to Spain and share Movement Medicine. I would love to offer simple ceremonies for young people to move into adulthood, including mini vision quests in the desert, with the support of their families. I see us building our own venue together and contributing to the restoration of a natural oasis. I still hold this as a guiding star, and I am determined to find a way to honour this beautiful vision. I am aware that as a community we have been in our puberty years of innocence, dreaming and initiation.

I have been changing the story of not enough. Through using MM practices and the [Resonance Repatterning process](#), on a daily basis, I have stripped down to the essential elements of life. I am now simply my natural self. By being a compassionate witness, I offer others the space and freedom to access this way of being for themselves. Rather than escape from a tormented past into fantasies of an ideal future, I have rooted my attention firmly in my body, realising that change can only happen here and now, and from accepting life as it is. I have extended the love I freely offer to others to include myself, so I can be the oasis I long to move to. I have learnt to be more patient. I've discovered that calling in the mesa and my circle, letting my inner shaman choose the music, while moving and breathing, is enough for a liberating and successful class. Less really can be more.

I decided to complete my teaching practice hours online and offer a giveaway service during a time of collective isolation and loneliness. I was so scared of harsh criticism and rejection. What I actually experienced was a safe space we created together, warmth, appreciation and mutual acceptance. I have loved the liberating structure of simply showing up day after day, choosing music from the rich pallet I have available, with a listening circle to complete. The feedback from the dancers has been that they appreciate the balance of light holding and freedom. One dancer would paint while dancing, another managed to do the hoovering, which she hadn't felt able to do for weeks. One

said knowing the class was happening encouraged her to make it out of bed on days she felt no motivation. Another only came once, but I was subsequently told she had begun dancing every day with her daughter, as a ripple effect.

Dancers have reflected they enjoy the eclectic music and surprises, ranging from earthy tribal house beats, drum and bass, melodic techno and batucada through to PJ Harvey, Led Zeppelin, punk, glitch hop, trip hop, hip hop, disco, funk, dub, dancehall, classical, acoustic and jazz. They feel it gently shakes them out of fixed postures and loosens them up. I have organised my music into the elements and I share a balance within each MOVE! Sometimes we explore one element in particular, sometimes we move with the sounds of Nature, and sometimes, silence. I also experimented with playing a whole album, which dancers found quite potent.

SIREN by byjays. “‘Siren’ is a love story, not between two lovers but between one person wanting more for themselves. The story is about a siren named Sahara, and she takes you on an adventure to save herself from her darker side. The EP consists of 6 tracks taking you through this ethereal journey.” - Wodj Mag.

I love Movement Medicine’s simple invitation for us to stand up, grow up and play our part. I feel as a species we are learning to step into healthy adulthood. Our inner teens need encouragement, liberation and a clear initiation.

This project is the ongoing process of taking full responsibility for what I say no to and what I say yes to. I am daring to bring a dream into form. This dream is saying yes to the full spectrum of our hearts, fluidly moving bodies, inspired minds, free natural voices, ritual theatre performances, cymatics, trance dance ceremonies, with crystal singing bowls, wooden sounding bowls, koshi chimes, drums, rattles, earth pigment painting and tagging, celebrating being alive in bodies, here and now, our dancing prayers flowing out to the surrounding oasis and regenerating desert.

I’m now sharing my services on a reciprocity basis, with the invitation to make a contribution to the beginnings of a [non profit association](#). My next steps include offering a space to let go, for exploding doormats, called Tantrums

with Tabitha. You are welcome to join me or get in touch if you would like more in depth information or guidance.

## **RESOURCES**

[Mixcloud](#)

[Soundcloud](#)

[YouTube](#)

[tabithaoasis.org](http://tabithaoasis.org)

## **FOR A NEW BEGINNING**

“In out-of-the-way places of the heart,  
Where your thoughts never think to wander,  
This beginning has been quietly forming,  
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.  
For a long time it has watched your desire,  
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,  
Noticing how you willed yourself on,  
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.  
It watched you play with the seduction of safety  
And the grey promises that sameness whispered,  
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,  
Wondered would you always live like this.  
Then the delight, when your courage kindled,  
And out you stepped onto new ground,  
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,  
A path of plenitude opening before you.  
Though your destination is not yet clear  
You can trust the promise of this opening;  
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
That is at one with your life’s desire.  
Awaken your spirit to adventure;  
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;  
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,

For your soul senses the world that awaits you.” ~ John O’Donohue

“I believe in vulnerability,

In true connection.

I also believe in boundaries,

In withholding.

The opening and closing.

The pulling back and going forth.

The natural rhythm.

You do not have to express everything to everyone.

You do not have to give all details.

You do not have to be an open book.

Walk the tender line between raw sharing and mystery.

Master your intuition.

Build your containers.

Practice graceful discernment.” ~ Victoria Erickson

“With her beguiling beauty, Eros will possess you. She is a singer and a dreamer, whose elements are mystery, magic, and earth. Her voice isn’t pretty, nor is it sweet, but rather scorched with honesty. And when she sings, the ache of being alive rattles and resonates deep in your bones. It’s with her raw passion that she pushes blood into an idea, and makes it dance. Her home is in the wild, and she speaks the language of all untamed beings. She is the animal body, both fierce and graceful, who moves with the rhythm and sway of the soul.” ~ Excerpt from “Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home” by Toko-pa Turner

“The human voice needs no training; it is already there, finished and perfect as an entity sounding in the ideal world. What it is waiting for is liberation.” ~ Valborg Werbeck-Svardstrom

“Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time?” That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past nor the shadow of the future.” ~ Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha

“Between the head and feet of any given person is a billion miles of unexplored wilderness. When we dance, we wake up, we get down and juicy with ourselves, we have fun and forget all the heavy shit we carry around. In the dance we get real, get free, get over ourselves. Movement kicks ass. When you truly surrender to your own rhythm, you look so cool, so mysterious, so seductive— the way you deep down really want to look but don’t trust that you do. The fastest, cleanest, most joyful way to break out of your own box is by dancing. I’m not talking about doing the stand-and-sway. I’m talking about dancing so deep, so hard, so full of the beat that you are nothing but the dance and the beat and the sweat and the heat.” ~ Gabrielle Roth

" It is so natural to long for deep relationship with another, a fellow traveler to explore the great secrets of union. Someone to accompany us as we enter the mystery, explore the uncharted lands of the heart and wild terrain of the body, unsure where the journey will lead but pulled by the aliveness of intimacy and its fruits.

“I want to share the burning,” we cry out! The tenderness, the joy, and the aliveness of what it means to enter into partnership with the holy other. To no longer hold back, to give everything, to remove the remaining shreds of separation, to lead with vulnerability and courage, to give and to receive fully and no longer postpone entry into the temple of the beloved. This yearning is pure, valid, and can be honoured for its authenticity and power.

Alas, the prayer is heard. In response to this primordial call, the “other” appears. Sadness rushes onto the scene: “But when will you practise intimacy with me?” Loneliness is next, pleading for a moment of our undistracted attention. Anger, despair, grief, self-loathing, jealousy, fear, and shame: “Us

too! Please do not abandon us and turn away for some other lover! We are here and long to share our essence. Your yearning for true intimacy has been answered! We have come.”

Out of the earth, the mud, and the stars, the ancient companions will always respond to this longing, spinning and shifting the forms of the phenomenal world, arranging meetings and encounters with the other in all of his or her glory.

As the lost soul pieces and displaced aspects of psyche, the beloved appears not as an enemy to disrupt, but as the most true, faithful lover, never willing to truly abandon you. Come not to harm, but for just one moment of your attention and the light of your holding. While there may be a memory of being rejected in the past, they come nonetheless, never losing hope in connection.

In that encounter, we are reminded that we will never be able to be more intimate with another than we are with the unwanted lovers within. If we do not provide shelter for the unmet within us, how will we ever truly live, dance, and play with the beloved? " ~ Matt Licata

“You can feel abandoned, yes.

You can feel lonely, far from love and life and warmth.

Others can trigger powerful feelings in you, yes.

But strip away the word, the concept, the story,  
and return to the actuality of the living body.

What does it feel like, this abandonment?

How do you know you've been abandoned?

Attend to the sensations surging now in your belly, chest, throat.

Feel the fluttering, pulsating, stinging sensations.

Let them grow in intensity, or dissipate, and move.

Drench them with curious, loving attention.

Give them space; soften around them.

You've got to breathe into yourself now, friend,

for nobody is here to breathe into you,  
and they cannot do that anyway.  
The dream of love has died;  
you are waking up to the reality of love.  
Love does not come from without. It never did.  
It was always within you. It was your power.  
It was always your job, you see, to love yourself,  
to not beg for love, or seek it externally,  
or wait for it, or try to hold onto it,  
but to drench yourself with it, moment by precious moment.  
Do not abandon yourself when you feel abandoned,  
for there is a pain worse than abandonment:  
the abandonment of self, the flight from presence.  
Blame doesn't work here.  
Focus on 'the one who abandoned you', and you are powerless.  
Break the cycle of abandonment, then.  
Focus on 'the abandoned one', this precious child within.  
Invite loving attention deep within the belly, heart, head.  
Breathe into the ground. Feel your own aliveness.  
You have not been abandoned. Life is here.  
Love is here. You are here.  
And from here, a new life grows.  
And as you learn to not abandon yourself,  
you will, in time, attract others  
who are not abandoning themselves either;  
others who will not abandon you.  
For now you cannot be abandoned:

You refuse to abandon yourself.  
Abandonment is an old word for you now.  
Too dramatic for your body.  
Nobody can abandon you:  
they can only move  
to another place,  
with their pain.  
Abandonment is the story of lost love,  
an old story, for love cannot be lost,  
only rediscovered deep within.  
You are courageous enough to be present now.  
You have broken the addiction of a lifetime:  
You have discovered the deep joy  
of being alone.

Once, I ran from fear  
so fear controlled me.  
Until I learned to hold fear like a newborn.  
Listen to it, but not give in.  
Honour it, but not worship it.  
Fear could not stop me anymore.  
I walked with courage into the storm.  
I still have fear,  
but it does not have me.

Once, I was ashamed of who I was.  
I invited shame into my heart.

I let it burn.

It told me, "I am only trying  
to protect your vulnerability".

I thanked shame dearly,  
and stepped into life anyway,  
unashamed, with shame as a lover.

Once, I had great sadness  
buried deep inside.

I invited it to come out and play.

I wept oceans. My tear ducts ran dry.

And I found joy right there.

Right at the core of my sorrow.

It was heartbreak that taught me how to love.

Once, I had anxiety.

A mind that wouldn't stop.

Thoughts that wouldn't be silent.

So I stopped trying to silence them.

And I dropped out of the mind,  
and into the Earth.

Into the mud.

Where I was held strong

like a tree, unshakeable, safe.

Once, anger burned in the depths.

I called anger into the light of myself.

I felt its shocking power.  
I let my heart pound and my blood boil.  
Listened to it, finally.  
And it screamed, "Respect yourself fiercely now!".  
"Speak your truth with passion!".  
"Say no when you mean no!".  
"Walk your path with courage!".  
"Let no one speak for you!"  
Anger became an honest friend.  
A truthful guide.  
A beautiful wild child.

Once, loneliness cut deep.  
I tried to distract and numb myself.  
Ran to people and places and things.  
Even pretended I was "happy".  
But soon I could not run anymore.  
And I tumbled into the heart of loneliness.  
And I died and was reborn  
into an exquisite solitude and stillness.  
That connected me to all things.  
So I was not lonely, but alone with All Life.  
My heart One with all other hearts.

Once, I ran from difficult feelings.  
Now, they are my advisors, confidants, friends,  
and they all have a home in me,

and they all belong and have dignity.  
I am sensitive, soft, fragile,  
my arms wrapped around all my inner children.  
And in my sensitivity, power.  
In my fragility, an unshakeable Presence.

In the depths of my wounds,  
in what I had named "darkness",  
I found a blazing Light  
that guides me now in battle.

I became a warrior  
when I turned towards myself.

And started listening.

And when you stop trying to save others, when you stop trying to be the mother or father they never had, you can finally love them, instead. You can be present, unshakeable. You can love them enough to let go. For love has the fragrance of freedom."

- Jeff Foster

"One day when you wake up, you will find that you have become a forest. You have grown roots and found strength in them that no one thought you had. You have become stronger and more beautiful, full of life giving qualities. You have learned to take all the negativity around you and turn it into oxygen for easy breathing. A host of wild creatures live inside you and you call them stories. A variety of beautiful birds rest inside your mind and you call them memories. You have become an incredible self sustaining thing of epic

proportions. And you should be so proud of yourself, of how far you have come from the seeds of who you used to be." ~ Nikita Gill

"When you are inspired by great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds. Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great, and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties, and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be." ~ Patanjali

"We must be silent before we can listen. We must listen before we can learn. We must learn before we can prepare. We must prepare before we can serve. We must serve before we can lead." ~ William Arthur Ward