

# The Temple Artisan

April-May-June, 2010



## ALONE IN THE GARDEN OF GOD

Sweet flowers on every side: soft pink, gray, white, light lavender blooms. Everywhere—not here, not there, but not one spot missing—bloom these flowers of God.

They bloom; they cover, sweetly tenderly cover with abundant riches most profound; they cover—all things.

The false, the untrue, the unfair, the unjust—yea, even the true, the strong, the right, the victorious, the brave—as surely as the weak, the defeated, wounded loser.

All! Yea, all alike, covered by the flowers of God.

Behold these flowers, my child. Take heart, for thy comfort, for thy pleasure, for thy certain triumph do they grow—and from out My love, are they shown to thee.

Their beauty, their joy, their fragrance: all are thine, and none can take them from thee.



## THE EDITORIAL MIRROR

Many years ago an early Temple member, Agnes Varian, wrote these inspiring lines:

### Golden Threads

*The Golden Threads that bind all human hearts  
That pass from land to land, from world to world,  
Invisible except to eyes of faith,  
Inaudible to all but those whose ears  
Are tuned to catch the cosmic harmonies  
As indestructible as life itself;  
These are the deeds of loving kindness,  
Of faith and courage, hope and strong resolve,  
That reproduce themselves in loving hearts  
And give a glory to our Brother/Sisterhood.*

These words can serve as a beacon light for everyone searching for the Truth. The Unity of All Life is demanding that it be recognized in everyone's heart and mind. It is a simple assignment that does not involve pilgrimages, self-sacrifices of monumental proportions, guilt trips, or lecture tours. This recognition comes only through ... "the deeds of loving kindness, of faith and courage, hope and strong resolve." Things that we do all day long that come from a loving place inside of ourselves automatically reinforce those Golden Threads of Unity throughout the manifested Universe.

Think of the responsibility we each have to add or subtract to our world. No one "gets away" with anything, despite what we might like to believe. So why not add rather than subtract? It is really much easier, once we get the hang of it! We already have the eyes of faith, the ears tuned to catch the cosmic harmonies. All we have to do is use them.

—Eleanor L. Shumway  
Guardian in Chief

## STUMBLING ON ALONG LIFE'S PATHWAY

Every once in a while I hear with new ears some phrase in a Temple service that calls to my heart, and I know then that the cosmic GPS system is pointing out a good direction. After Feast a couple of months ago, I couldn't stop thinking about the first half of the Fire Sacrifice, which we hear at least once a month in the Devotional Service. It is one of the most resonant Temple prayers for me, conveying the breadth and depth of the spiritual call to grow: that no one else can walk our unique path *for* us, but a greater presence is aware and *with* us in our times of need. It reads:

*To our Father/Mother in Heaven, to Thy Angels, the Masters of compassion, we lift our hearts in thanksgiving for all the gifts bestowed upon us, and plead for such further help and succor as may lawfully be given, while in our ignorance and human frailty we stumble on along life's pathway.*

*Although each human soul must tread that path alone, we have faith to believe that Thou, Divine Father-Mother, hath given thy Angels charge concerning us, and that we shall not stray beyond their power to reach out and help us in any extremity.*

I don't know about you, but I can relate to stumbling on along life's pathway in ignorance and human frailty. Every day brings new opportunities to misstep, misspeak, bump egos, forget, or fail. Sometimes difficult things come our way, life-altering tectonic shifts that transform existence as we know it. This prayer humbly acknowledges our Source, asks for the help we have earned, in the guise of angels or other forms of higher power, and admits to our profound human imperfection. For me, this prayer helped clarify recent experiences and stories of upheaval and loss, and inspired correlations with artistic principles that help put my world into an understandable context.

Balance is a tricky business, especially when things around us seem to be changing at a rate too fast to comprehend. How do we make sense of shifty terrain, let alone destruction of what was once rock-solid foundation for our lives?



Life challenges come in all guises. In things in as well as out of our control, human beings are subject to the struggle generated as growth flows through us. The Life Force that animates and sustains us ultimately breaks down and renews us in the great circle of creation, preservation, and regeneration. We change form in the time we are on this earth, from birth to old age and death.

Over the course of this journey our minds, souls, and spirits, our attitudes and aspirations, are all vehicles for growth to work through us. Our deepest struggles often increase awareness of the flow of life moving through us. Perhaps we might even consider stumbling as a kind of proof that we are really here.

Each day holds potential for changes and challenges to help us learn, by throwing us off balance, sending us in a new direction, causing us to deepen and grow. Over the years in our Temple family, we have experienced our share of surprise and change and growth through cancer, accidents and death; addiction, depression and suicide; stroke, blindness, divorce, and more. The consequences of these experiences have affected all of us in immediate and personal ways, because we are so closely tied together.

Beyond the personal, in our state, national, and world family, the Great Ark of Humanity is buffeting about the rough seas of frustratingly contentious politics, natural disasters, precarious financial instability, accelerated environmental changes, and trials in virtually every aspect of human existence. These world events impact everyone, linked as we all are by 24/7 TV, tweets, twitters, and other signals that connect us technologically and etherically.

The world wide web of life is one big consciousness, and the opposing forces of human relations are part of that divine dance, too. Perhaps because of its immense proportion, the stumbling along on the world stage seems more remote, the solutions less manageable, and our connection with those in other parts of the planet less consequential than our own stories, precarious financial instability, accelerated environmental changes, and trials in virtually every aspect of human existence. These world events impact everyone, linked as we all are by 24/7 TV, tweets, twitters, and other signals that connect us technologically-and etherically. The world wide web of life is one big consciousness, and the opposing forces of human relations are part of that divine dance, too. Perhaps because of its immense proportion, the stumbling along on the world stage seems more remote, the solutions less manageable, and our connection with those in other parts of the planet less consequential than our own stories.

Holding on to what is real and meaningful in the swirl of emotion and drama is difficult. In the face of this cosmic balancing act it is our connection to one another, coupled with our conscious commitment to practice the Golden Rule, that lightens the load, lifts the blinders from our eyes, allows grace to ease the burden. The silent, creative times help sift out the psychic flotsam and jetsam of chaos, allowing a bit of balance in all that buzz.

The art of finding balance in daily life may be fostered by observing the balance and design in nature: the way mammals use opposing pairs of muscles to move about and to maintain equilibrium; the dynamic dance of DNA's double helix; or the harmonious proportions of seashell structure. In nature, oppositions set the pattern for biological design. In life, while opposing forces may throw us for a loop before we figure out how to work with them, we most often learn to accept changes, or to counter changes, and ultimately to integrate changes into our overall life balance.

As a teacher, the most rewarding part of my work is helping students learn to see new elements in the world. Whether it is how light and shadow reveal form, or the dazzling colors in a landscape, or the amazing architecture of the human body, once we learn what to look for, and then actually take the time to do so, our eyes open and forever after the divine design and order of creation is ours to behold and appreciate.

Many of you know that I teach life drawing. One aspect of that discipline that is especially captivating for artists is enhancing perception of how the human body so smoothly compensates for the gazillions of changes in posture we experience in a day, and then applying artistic skills to convey that majesty through art and sculpture. Whether standing, reaching, walking, or working, our physiology smartly telegraphs the word to appropriate nerves and muscle groups that a shift of weight is necessary to compensate for the inescapable effects of gravity.

=Our bodies are designed with remarkable bilateral symmetry. If you draw a centerline right down our middles from head to toe, each side is a mirror image of the other in perfect balance. As soon as we shift weight onto one oneone foot, the signals to counterbalance are sent through nerves to muscles, twisting the spine here, raising a shoulder there, lowering one side of the pelvis, and bringing us into *asymmetrical* balance: equilibrium.

The artist's term for this positioning of form is *contrapposto*, or counterpoise. It literally means to set against, to set opposite. Latin in origin, it refers to how artists render asymmetrical bal), and ushering in a more realistic manner of depicting the form.

In human and animal anatomy, the reason we can move about and exert our reach into the world is because pairs of muscles counteract each other, creating resistance and a balance of tension that allows leverage and movement. These pairs are called the *agonists* (contracting muscles) and *antagonists* (the resisting muscles), and the term comes from Greek-meaning *to struggle against*. The opposition of one muscle working against another can be seen with the biceps and the triceps in the arms, where the triceps (at the back of the upper arm) allows the forearm to extend, and the biceps bulges to flex the forearm and bend it at the elbow. This constant opposition and counterbalancing allows us freedom within the boundaries set by gravity.

As you walk around today, pay attention to the rhythm and balance of your own body, how it feels to stand with weight mostly on one leg, or the smooth flow of locomotion as you walk. Observe the angles of your shoulders and hips, and sense the S-curves created by the counterbalance of arms and legs. You will see more clearly how our human bodies are miracles that we often don't appreciate or pay attention to. We take it for granted that muscle groups will work together, doing what we want and

need to do when our brains send the signal to walk or write or lift something. However, this balance can be thrown off with stroke, Parkinsons, and other neural miscues. When life hands out such challenges we face deeper kinds of oppositions, and the long path of struggling along life's pathway becomes far more personal, aggravating, and demanding.

Most religions include some form of the Creator/Preserver/Destroyer cycles of creation and change. Just as Theosophy incorporates the concept of the Great Disintegrator force, Shiva is lord of the cosmic dance and the destroyer force in the Hindu religion. Joseph Campbell, that master of mythology and teaching, opened the door to the study of myth and metaphor as a way to give meaning to things we don't fully understand, to make connections between what we know and the vast universe of that which we cannot comprehend. It is often through metaphor and story that we are able to see ourselves in the bigger picture, mining meaning and finding ways to move forward.

These days, Shiva's dance of destruction is widespread, as institutions we have relied on for medical care, education, and economic stability seem to be crumbling before our eyes, friends lose jobs and homes, and trust in government erodes. Even the college I work for is in turmoil, upended by enormous budget shortfalls, staff cuts, and teacher layoffs, as we attempt to serve growing numbers of students with shrinking resources. While discomfort is definitely a sign of change, we can only flail rudderless in the breeze for so long. What do we do to regain equilibrium?

The rest of the Destroyer's title is *Regenerator*. It is easy to forget that there is new growth in destruction, even though it is right in front of us in these days approaching Spring. We all saw the leaves turn and drop a couple of months ago, leaving skeletal tree forms to be quiet for awhile as they store up energy for spring budding and summer fruit. We all raked the eucalyptus debris from January's windstorms and stood in awe of the wind power required to render the stately pines across from the Temple snapped and broken. Rain has eased the drought a bit, and in this last month we have seen those signs of destruction contrasted against another season of new growth.

The cycles of life demand much of us. I think it is in our recognition that these *are* cycles, and will circle around again and

again, that we can get underneath the struggle of the path, and invent ways to work with the patterns that we have built over the course of our lives. The element of quiet, of reflection, of connection to the still small voice is part of that context. Another is remembering the lifeline of angelic help from the first part of the Fire Sacrifice: *we shall not stray beyond their power to reach out and help us in any extremity*. A final piece is being of service to others.

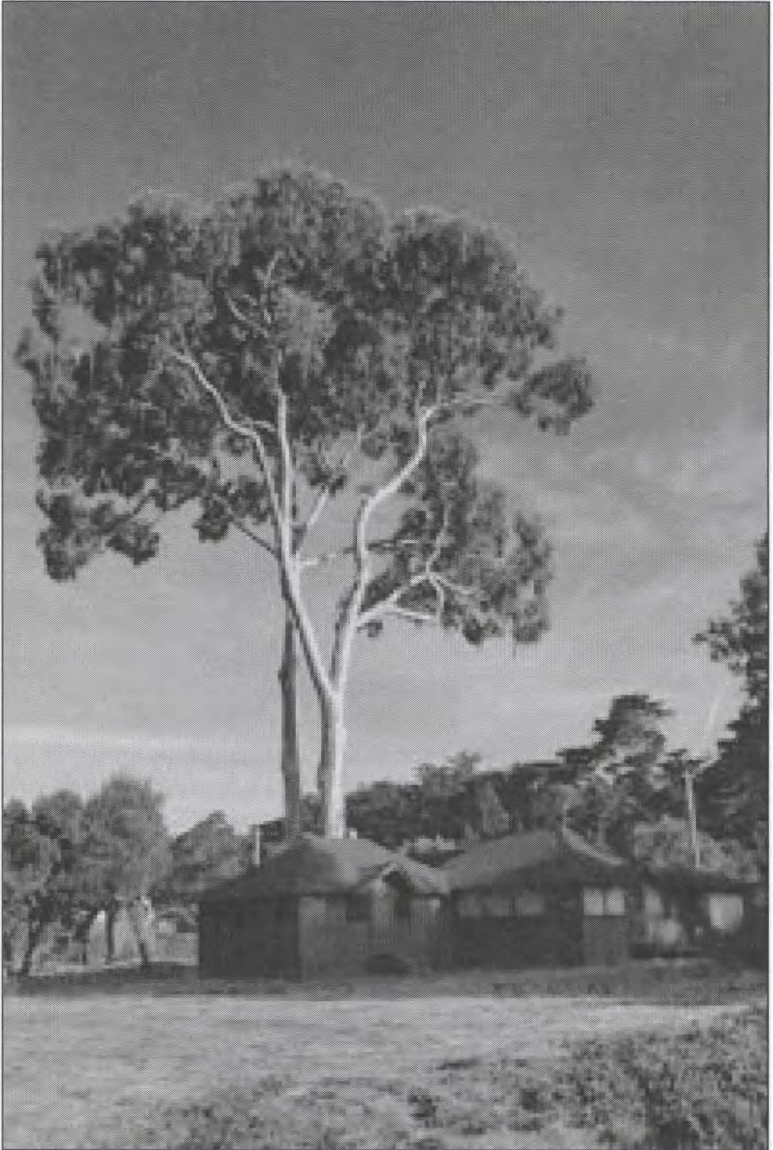
I ran across a lovely expression of this connecting pattern by an author named Gyorgi Doczi, who observed: "Sharing is not only a basic pattern-forming process and an art; it is also a condition of life. With every breath of air, with every sip of water or bite of nourishment, we share the resources of the earth. In *The World As I See It*, Albert Einstein says: A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend on the labours of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving/ This is the reciprocal sharing of the Golden Rule..."ance using the lines of the shoulders and hips as they relate to the axis of the spine, often in a beautiful spiral, as when we turn to reach for something. The concept of contrapposto was originally developed by the Greeks in their 4th century BC sculpture, modifying the blocky, stiff manner in which the human body had been portrayed (think of Egyptian wall paintings), and ushering in a more realistic manner of depicting the form.

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Our help, our regeneration, comes to us through subtle, often unseen channels. Whether in the form of angels, inspiration, the touch of God, hard work, or the hand of another, help can reach us if we are open to it. It comes through our own courage, endurance, and willingness to grow.

We are pillars in the Temple, bricks in the wall, builders of a

spiritual framework to help all of humanity. The remaining words of the Fire Sacrifice call us to service, and balance out the equation of give and take by asking us to be a conscious part of the great pattern of the Golden Rule, by saying: Be your best. We are all in this together. It is everyone's responsibility to make manifest our heart connection with each other and everything else in creation. Here are those last lines:

*We open our hearts to the influx of Divine Love and Compassion now being poured out upon the world in preparation for the coming Christ, and earnestly pray that we may not be found wanting on that day when once again the Christ shall call His own to him.*

*And not alone for ourselves do we pray but for all the hungry souls in the world who know not where to turn for the Spiritual Food which alone can sustain life in hope, endurance and courage.*

*Grant us the power to seek and find those in need, and the wisdom to speak the word that will light the fire of aspiration in their hearts and bring them into conscious unity with all that lives.*

*For all this we plead, in the name of Love and Brotherhood, Amen*

—Marti Fast





## OPEN THE WINDOW

"Open the window in your chest."

—*Rumi*

If you open the window in your chest,  
And let the music within flow,  
Let the sounds embrace the world  
And interact with the people.  
If you open the window in your chest,  
And let the light locked within  
Shine like a sun,  
Lighting up the world around you.  
If you open the window in your chest.  
And let the being within speak  
The language of Love  
With the beings locked within the chests  
Of the others.  
Then the real world will re-emerge,  
The world locked within the windows,  
Behind the walls.  
Then the walls separating one light from another  
Will not withstand the force of such Love,  
And fall down one after another.  
And the Light in the world will be restored.

—*Raisa Goltsin*



## THE BURDEN BEARER

As the years flash by,  
 the powers of the body wane,  
 the eyes grow dim  
 and the ear becomes deaf  
 to the wood-dove's note.  
 If the heart of man has not been seared by the cruelty  
 or frozen by the neglect  
 of the fellow pilgrims  
 traveling the same path with him,  
 a sense of deep loneliness,  
 an unutterable longing for companionship  
 comes over the pilgrim's soul  
 a longing for the clasp of a friendly hand,  
 a glance of understanding from the eyes  
 of some other soul  
 who has passed through the same valley of torture  
 and caught a glimpse of the place of Peace.  
 If he has gained the power of clear sight,  
 not even the knowledge that he has been deceived  
 and exploited by those he has met  
 and loved most unselfishly while on his way,  
 will serve to kill out the intense longing  
 he feels for the realization of the ideal  
 he has so often fitted to the self of the beloved.  
 Hope is the last live thing to die in the human heart,  
 and as long as hope lives,  
 the soul will continue to search for its ideal.  
 Though that soul must look forward as well as backward  
 to a long stretch of sodden graves wherein now lie  
 —or one day will lie—the dead forms  
 of those who once have worn  
 the garments of his Ideal,  
 all expectant, alert and watchful, he waits continuously  
 for the first glimpse of the "other self,"  
 who will not die,  
 the self that will blot out forever from his consciousness  
 that long line of graves.

What though the hand of that other self  
 seems soiled and stained from contact  
     with the things of the world  
 which always soil and stain the body,  
     there will be enough of purity,  
     compassion and loving kindness  
 behind the impulse which prompts  
     the outstretching of that hand  
     which meets his own  
 to wash away at once and forever  
     every spot and blemish,  
     leaving only an image of  
     the white hand of the Christ  
     visible to his eyes.

Ah, you who prate of Brotherhood, Compassion and Love  
     and yet can pass unheeded  
     an old or wearied burden-bearer of the world  
 who has borne the burdens that you, and others like you,  
     might have the fuller, freer life that now is yours,  
     look well within thyself  
     if thou wouldst find the cause  
     of all thy fruitless search for the key  
     which unlocks the mysteries of life.  
     Never wilt thou find it  
     until thou seest it in every seamed face  
     and trembling hand outstretched to thee  
 for help to cross some muddy stream of life,  
     every crippled soul that lies  
     within the compass of thy path,  
 however dark the curtain of night or blinding the sun  
     that thwarts thy vision of the Path.  
 Every cry of pain or sorrow falling upon thine ear  
     or piercing thy heart is an appeal  
     from that Ideal of thine.  
 Each time thy hand reaches out compassionately  
     to a suffering soul,  
     that hand will grasp the hand  
     of thy Beloved, the Christ.

**THEOSOPHY IS NOT A CREED**

*'Theosophy is not a creed.*

*It is the Qrace of Qod in one \s Cife;*

*It is the pozver of Qod in one 's zoorfq*

*It is the joy of Qod in one's play;*

*It is the peace of Qod in one srest;*

*It is the zinsdom of Qod in one's thought;*

*It is the Cove of Qod in one's heart;*

*It is the 6eauty of Qod in one s dealing zvith others.*

—William Quan Judge

*I will endeavor to realize  
the presence of the Avatar  
as a living Power in my life.*



## IN MEMORIAM

Franz Hirthammer, long-time member in Germany, passed away March 29,2010.

Franz was born on March 7, 1935, in Germany. As an adult, he headed his own publishing house in Munich, where he paid particular emphasis to Theosophical material. His magazine, *The White Lotus*, was widely circulated for over forty years. His offices were the site for Temple group meetings in Munich. He was generous with his effort, time, and resources. Franz was courageous in his work with animal welfare groups and the exposure of the problems with vaccinations.

He was married and wife Emilie was by his side throughout their life together. They had no children. Some of the words used to describe Franz by those who know him include brave, clear, straightforward, reliable, accurate, generous, sociable, uncomplaining even in illness, and cautious. We will miss him, even as we know that he will continue his work on other planes.

Our friend, Norm London, passed away June 9,2010.

Norm was born On December 24,1926, in Los Angeles, California. He met his wife Claire at a summer camp. They later married and had four sons, one of whom is our Temple member and friend Rick London. Norm did a hitch in the U.S. Coast Guard, all on land he would insist, and afterwards he went on to become an engineer and inventor. He was proud to have his patented timing measuring devices utilized in the early days of the nuclear power industry, and also to have his designed systems integrated into the Mercury Spacecraft program. Norm retired to live in Nipomo, raising grapes and olives, and enjoying his grandchildren. He and long time companion Joan Dralle experimented with wine making and extracting oil from the olives! He will be missed.

on the first Sunday of each month. Hither the "Choral Service" or "Enter the Silence" a prayer and meditation meeting, is held on the last Sunday of each month. Speakers present programs on other Sundays. The public is cordially invited to all services.

Study classes under the auspices of Temple Officers and various Temple Orders are held regularly at 5:30 pm in the University Center on Tuesdays and Fridays. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Speakers in the Sunday Services were: April 11, Eleanor L. Shumway: *The Power of Friendship*; April 18, Annie Dunbar: *Harold Forgostein's paper on White Lodge, Black Lodge and Personalities*; May 9, Eleanor L. Shumway: *I'm a Disciple on the Path, Now What?*; May 16, Zelma Colendich: *Building Bridges*.

THE TEMPLE OF THE PEOPLE

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All photography in this issue by Eleanor Shumway.

