MIND MOON CIRCLE

Summer 2020
Journal of the SZC Sangha

Dear friends,

Here is the Summer 2020 MMC Edition. As always it is a real joy and privilege to compile the contributions and offer them to Sangha.

This edition comes out of the Summer that has shaken us all. The fire, the wind and rain and the 10000 things are all urging us to wake up! Let's share our voices in response. Let's share our experiences with hope the fires will not get worse and all beings can come together and share wisdom and compassion.

With Gratitude, Ameli

Next edition of Mind Moon Circle, Autumn 2020 will be co-edited by Zoe Thurner and Ameli Tanchitsa. The theme: Transitions

Please email you contributions to Zoe (zoethurner2015@gmail.com) by the end of April 2020. Thank you.

From: Taiju Geri Wilimek <geriwilimek@gmail.com>

Message Body:

My Zen home base is Ryumonji zen Monastery, in Rural Iowa, near the town of Decorah, USA. I lead a sangha here in Bemidji, Minnesota, a rural community near the canadian border. I have stumbled upon your wonderful journal, Mind Moon Circle. A happy stumble! Our sangha, Sokuji Zendo, goes by the nickname "Frozen Lotus Sangha" we practice with kindness and laughter so we can keep warm; we remember the tender lotus even as it lies deep in the mud, beneath the frozen lake, surfacing year after year! We grieve along with you as your country suffers the fires beyond comprehension.

Blessings.....Taiju

This e-mail was sent from a contact form on (http://szc.org.au)

CONTENT

ON A COLD WINTER'S EVENING

Sally Hopkins

On a cold Winter's evening
we huddle by the fire
watching the flames,
sparks flying upwards-
the family comfortably together-
telling stories, singing songs.

Under a starry starry sky
we cook our meal
on a little fire-
the wilderness surrounds us-
all friends together,
laughter, songs.

By the fire at my old Dad's-
each bit of wood scrounged
from the neighbourhood,
each log known.
Warmth and comfort, silent pleasure,
shared songs, poems.

Brother Fire
so much pleasure
you have given.
So much grief.

LIVING AND DYING WITH FIRE

Gillian Coote

One billion creatures burnt alive, not including the insects, bats, fish and frogs, though including 33 humans. Over seventeen million hectares of bush and pasture with one billion trees and shrubs and grasses - or maybe two billion - burnt alive. Black skies, scarlet suns, smokey air, thick with the particles of life/death.

Rosalie Chapple wrote Requiem for Nature in the Blue Mountains on Christmas Day. *"What are these PM 2.5 particles, really?"* she asks.

....

"They are the koalas caught in the burning tree canopies, too slow to escape. The few remaining native animal species that have been able to survive in our colonial-transformed environment.

The smell of the smoke is the one hundred species of eucalyptus trees awarded World Heritage for their outstanding diversity. Along with the living laboratory of Blue Mountains ecosystems formed across millennia. Maybe too the Wollemi pines that avoided extinction for 100 million years.

Our smoke-induced headaches are the 20,000-year-old rock art destroyed in the flames. The Aboriginal sacred sites and songlines of the Dharug, Darkinjung, Gundungurra, Tharawal, Wanaruah and Wiradjuri people.

The pink-red glow of the sunset is the burning peat of the upland swamps that formed over thousands of years, serving as sponges that hold precious water on top of the escarpments. It is the endangered wildlife that live in the swamps, the Blue Mountains water skink and the giant dragonfly.

The sick feeling in our stomachs is the burning of the few remaining pure-bred dingoes. It is the bower that the satin bowerbird built so he could dance for his females, surrounded by painstakingly curated blue objects.

The sting in our eyes is the eastern spinebill, tiny birds too vulnerable to survive the heat. The echidnas engulfed in flames with nowhere to hide.

Our tears are the moisture from the wings of the newly hatched cicadas that just emerged from their seven-year hibernation.

All of them burning, rising, floating, and settling in our lungs. Their lives have become part of ours more than ever before – we denied our connection and we can deny it no longer."

....

Our tears, our grief and our despair embody our interconnection with all beings, along with our understanding that while humans, particularly in the West, have been greatly enriched as a result of the Industrial Revolution, we are now paying an extreme price - massive extinctions, floods, fires, the gradual death of our world.

There is nobody to blame. We are all complicit. But now we know what can be done to limit the suffering, let us choose harmony over dissonance, change our actions and reduce our own carbon emissions. Let us think twice about long-haul flights, our use of cars, our consumer habits. Let us choose to live by our Bodhisattva Vows.

The many beings are numberless,
I vow to save them.

Greed, hatred and ignorance rise endlessly,
I vow to abandon them.

Dharma gates are countless,
I vow to wake to them

The Buddha's Way is beyond attainment,
I vow to embody it fully.

BLACK SUMMER

Jillian Ball

Dust storms, red moon
Pyrocumlunimbus plumes
Black summer.

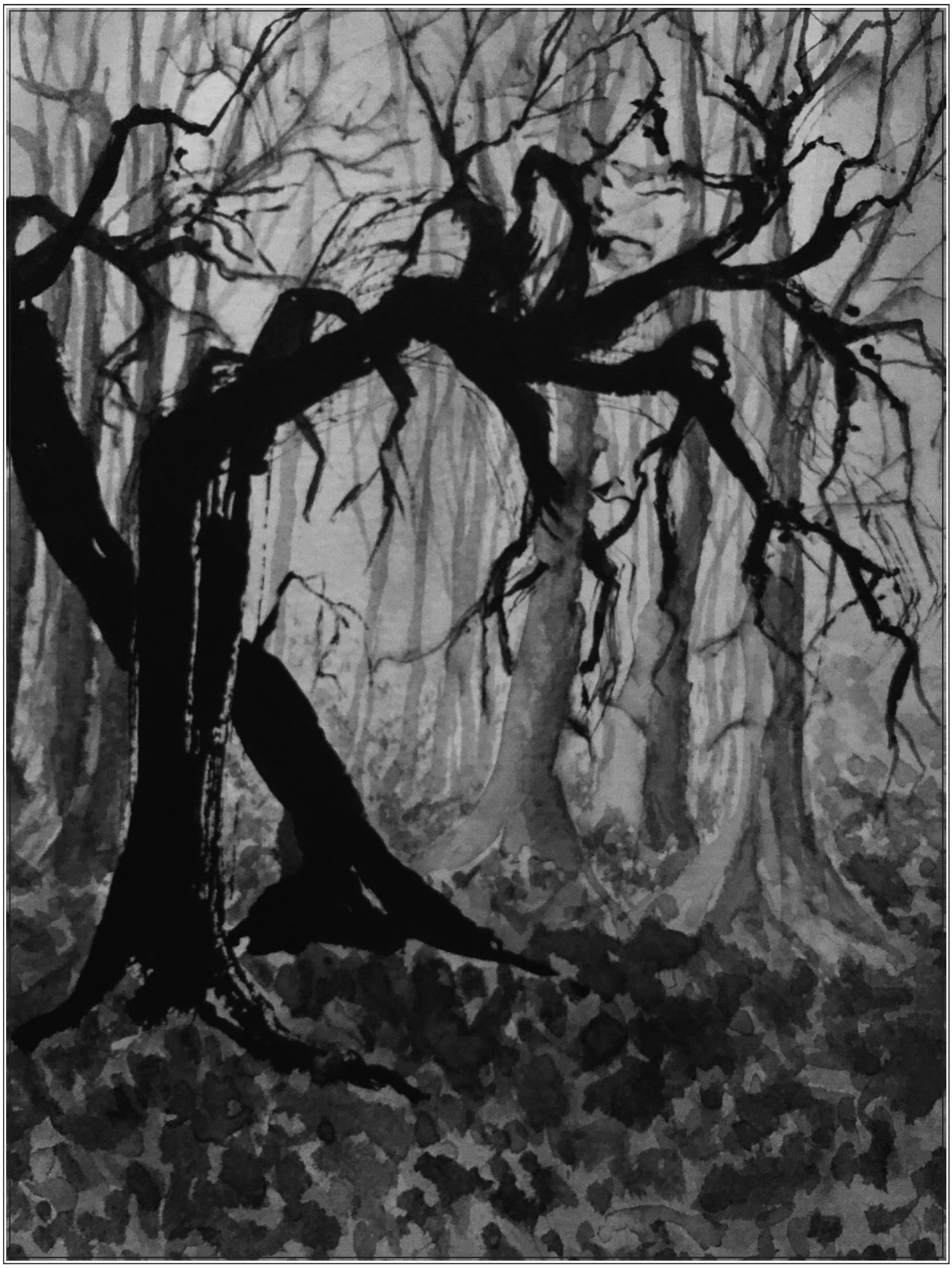
Ash particles of koala,
quokka and wallaby
Blackened skies.

Charred trees
A bleak graveyard
Green shoots sprout.

Little creatures
Rest in deep Samadhi
Black summer.

FOREST FIRE

Glenys Jackson



2020, ink on paper

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES TO WEATHER THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Subhana Barzaghi

As a drenching rain descends on our parched landscape, gutters now overflow from a deluge of water as violent storms hit Sydney and the eastern seaboard. First drought, then raging fires followed by floods, it's a cyclic affair. The rains are a welcome relief after the devastating fires and blistering heat that spread across four states. It seemed like the gum trees in the gully, the shriveled and dried tree ferns that now spring back to life and the frogs along with everything else gasped a sigh of relief and gulped in the nourishment. I found myself relaxing for the first time over the last three months. It has been the fieriest summer on record with a prolonged spring drought and soaring temperatures that whipped up turbulent winds that arced up fires that burnt 12 million acres of land, 6,000 homes and an estimated billion species died along with the loss of human life.

Many small towns and communities, Government and non-government departments and local organisations are reeling with grief, some just numb, and some continue to give endlessly. There are exhausted fire fighters returning home, locals traumatized and in shock, bent over gathering up the pieces, while three major cities chocked on toxic smoke. Like many Australians who love the bush, their grief runs deep from the loss of their farms, the loss of species and biodiversity and the destruction of ecosystems that have been burnt to cinders. Ecologists are still piecing together what has been lost. The estimation is shocking; such mind boggling indigestible figures. We must not forget this tragedy once the rain has washed away the smoke. We must not go back to business as usual.

In early January, I left a smoke filled Sydney to teach the annual 7 day Insight retreat at Camp Stavely located 1.5hrs out of Christchurch in the South Island of N.Z. The camp sits next to a reserve of protected old beech forest bordered by a cold mountain stream fed by snowmelt from Mt Summer. I found myself drawn into the womb of the forest, an instinctual need to bathe in the verdant green nourishment. It as if I had forgotten green, that vibrant life giving electric green. It was only then, having stepped away from the scorching heat, having been glued to my phone and T.V. hearing and witnessing the unfolding tragedy of the fires back home that, I realised that the dense constriction and sensations in my chest was grief and horror. Horror is not a feeling that I am familiar with but by naming this I was able to process and release it.

Zazen is a powerful crucible for bearing witness to our own and the world's pain. While anxiety, grief, overwhelm, anger, horror and despair are indeed valid authentic feelings for a blackened devastated much loved landscape and an inept government response, we cannot afford individually and collectively to be paralyzed or stuck in a well of despair or overwhelmed by grief and anxiety. Without mindfulness these feelings simply immobilizes us. Again and again I am immensely grateful for zazen as a healing balm, a deep inner resource for building steadiness, resilience and the capacity to bear witness. It is the wise medicine to transform these feelings into compassionate action.

The fires have been a catalyst; they have woken up large sections of the community to the reality of mega fires driven by climate change. I am a member of the Climate Well-being Network, which is a talented group of people that consists of; therapists, academics, writers and retired scientists all dedicated to addressing the ecological crisis. Since the fires we have had an avalanche of requests from government departments,

universities and non-government organisations requesting support and guidance for their staff, lecturers and employees in how to manage eco-grief, loss, eco-anxiety and despair. They want skills in how to respond to their students and staff.

Dear friend and environmental scientist Dr., Rosalie Chapple and her colleagues in the Conversation section of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are grieving. For Rosalie and her colleagues their life's work in protecting the World Heritage area in the Blue Mountains has just gone up in smoke. As the repair and regenerative work begins, it is heartening to be able to offer workshops and seminars to help people find safe ways to express their grief and despair about the fires and its aftermath in order to build resilience.

The practice of bearing witness gives us a way of feeling into and encountering what is missing without being overwhelmed, for it is hard to name and know what is missing. It's like falling into a black hole, there is no ground. I have heard some refer to it as a holocaust of the animals and creatures.

I was gifted two beautiful black cockatoo, red-tail feathers as dana from a recent retreat. As I held them in my hands the death of these beautiful birds moved me to tears. I placed them in the incense pot on my altar. Each morning as I sit, I remember and pay homage to what was lost, a lament, a eulogy of sorts while I recite my Eco-sattva vows.

That black winged loud screeching cockatoo
that tears through the forest, stripping bark from tree trunks
in a mad frenzy at the crack of dawn has disappeared.
The curvature of wingspan of deep flapping beats is silent.
His strident orange, red-tipped tail feathers,
her sharp distinguishing beak curved at the tip
that slices the pod to prize open the seed, is missing in action.
Their migration pattern along the eastern seaboard
to the dry interior is bereft of this winged raucous shadow.
Silence is deadening.

So many of our feathered friends of the skies,
were consumed by bludgeoning firestorms
that they could not outrun or fly. Colonies of bees,
beetles, grasshopper, preying mantis, fruit bats,
and the evening drone of the cicadas
have left a gapping hole of silence.
The air remains vacant without its chorus
of twirling and dashing dance partners.
There are now several more tombs in the hall of extinction,
each feather a tombstone lying on the doorstep of the heart.
Absence becomes presence.

Justin McManus photographer for the Age, watched the devilish light of the fires burning down the south coast in early January noticed, "I walked along the beach for half an hour and there were just dead birds, entombed in the tide of black debris. They'd been blown out to sea during the firestorm and washed back up on this beach, as far as you could see. All these amazing, beautiful Australian birds: Rainbow lorikeets. Black cockatoos. Honeyeaters. Whip birds. King parrots and crimson rosellas. That was heart-breaking. It was kind of traumatic. The familiar plumage of the skies washed up in this tide of ash. It felt like an extinction event."

Joanna Macy a dharma teacher, wise elder, writer and renowned social and environmental activist, has laid a path in how to work with despair and transform it into empowerment and wise action.
Fear transformed turns to courage; it's a willingness to make a difference.
Anger transformed turns into determination to stand up to injustice, a fierce compassion. Despair is transformed by wise compassionate action. Every non-violent step you take, lifts you out of a paralyzing hopelessness and despair. Grief tells us what we really care about and value; grief's deeper vein is love.

Vicki Robin a writer and climate activist said, "That grief had picked the lock of her heart and a sense of great love arose along with great honor to just have a human heart that can feel love. I act in love, not in order to love. I do what I do in love, with all my talents, skills and connections. This love is in service to 'us' as we emerge from the cocoon and our 500 year story of endless economic growth into these stories of loss, disruption, danger and reorientation". (Climate change from the Inside out: Shock. Grief)

There are burning questions
Equally fierce political debates wrangle in the aftermath of how to manage fire in the Australian landscape. Experts agree that there is a need for a better understanding of fire and its management of our fire prone semi-arid landscape. Back in Earth's antiquity, since the formation of ancient Gondwana land, fire has shaped this land since time immemorial. Australia is a unique continent in the world where adaptation has done a grand juggling act of creation and destruction. Our flammable vegetation and biodiversity has adapted through the burning of the bush but the current fires that we are experiencing are unprecedented in their intensity, frequency and coverage, leaving little time for the bush to recover and regenerate.

We are only now beginning to appreciate and understand the first nation people's understanding of fire. Professor of History, Tom Griffiths, author of 'Living with Fire' and Professor Steven Pine, author of 'Burning Bush', gave an interesting history of Fire on RN's Rear Vision program. They pointed out that, indigenous people for thousands of years had a 'fire stick' culture; they cooked with fire, hunted with fire, fought with fire, controlled fire and had distinct fire management practices of 'cool burns' for different types of forests and ecologies. Upon the arrival of the early colonially European settlers, indigenous care and management of the land was displaced. Both Tom Griffiths and Steven Pine advocate that solutions must include three things; they must be local and/or regional, ecological including biodiversity knowledge and historical drawing on traditional knowledge. This requires a very different kind of thinking than national, geo-political, colonial European ideas about managing fire in this landscape that has very little relationship to the unique bio-diversity needs of the Australian bush. Due to the damming mismanagement of our forests and the impact of climate change we now have fire that is so crackling hot that it creates its own turbulent lightening storms igniting more fires, which is both awesome and terrifying. Climate scientists are predicting that we will see an increase of these types of fires due to global warming. (RN -Rear Vision)

It astounds me that anything survives that wall of flames and yet the ingenuity and instinct of ground creatures like the wombat and echidna that bury themselves in the earth to survive is remarkable. Conservationists reported observing a wombat even herding other creatures down their hole to survive the advent of the fire. The muddle-headed Bodhisattva leads the way. Conservationists found endangered quolls and potoroos had lodged themselves in the cracks of boulders to survive the inferno. If we as a civilization can learn the lessons from these disasters we too as a species may survive.

Suzuki Roshi said that, "life is like stepping into a boat, which is about to sail out to sea and then sink." We are all in the same boat, there is only one planet, one ocean, one

global atmosphere. We need mindfulness to expand outside the bubble of our 'I' 'me' 'my' individualistic world to the 'we', the collective consciousness. As Aitken Roshi reminded us, we are all in this together.

Active Hope and Wise Action

When we get caught in the dynamics of conventional hope we are often filled with desire, expectations and wanting certain outcomes. If these expectations are not met or there is a different outcome than we expected then we become disheartened. With conventional hope there is the shadow of fear in the background that our wishes will not be fulfilled. If our actions don't meet our goals then we can swing into hopelessness. Hope and hopelessness are tandem mind-states, if one is in the foreground the other in the background. The negative mind states of; despair, defeatism, cynicism, skepticism and apathy are feed by the conventional effects of this swing from hope into hopelessness.

So wise realistic hope is the middle way teachings between conventional hope and hopelessness.

Joan Hallifax Roshi is the dharma heir of Bernie Glassman Roshi and inspiring abbot of Upaya Zen Centre. Joan leads the hospice training programs and has sat with the dying as part of her spiritual practice. In her book, standing at the Edge: Finding freedom where fear and courage meet, Joan portrays her understanding of wise hope. "It's when we discern courageously, and at the same time realise we don't know what will happen that wise hope comes alive. In the midst of improbability and possibility is where the imperative to act rises up. Wise hope is not seeing things unrealistically but rather seeing things as they are, including the truth of impermanence."

Czech statesman Vaclav Havel said, "Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well but the certainty that taking action makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." (Hallifax, p.63)

The peacemaker, Daniel Berrigan once remarked, "One cannot level one's moral lance at every evil in the universe. There are just too many of them. But you can do something; and the difference between doing something and doing nothing is everything." (Halifax, p. 63)

Active hope and wise action is a healthy expression of our belonging to the interconnected wider web of life, rooted in a deeper ecological sense of who we are. We can experience this expansion of consciousness as oneness or unity consciousness. To see with new eyes, we can draw from that spacious well inside of us and from the ancient spiritual wisdom traditions as well as from our creative imaginations. Active hope breeds resilience and resilience breeds wise action. Wise action breeds active hope and so it is a positive re-enforcing circular loop.

Dr. Jem Bendell is a Professor of the Institute for Leadership and Sustainability at the University of Cumbria (UK). He focuses on approaches that can help humanity face climate-induced disruption. His latest work is on 'Deep Adaptation' and strengthening resilience. He asks four questions that help to give some strategies about building resilient individuals and communities.

1. Resilience: what do we most value that we want to keep and how?
2. Relinquishment: what do we need to let go of so as not to make matters worse?
3. Restoration: what could we bring back to help us with these difficult times?
4. Reconciliation: with what and whom shall we make peace as we awaken to our mutual mortality?

Jem highlights, "how deep adaptation will involve more than 'resilience.' It brings us to a second area of this agenda, which I have named 'relinquishment.' It involves people and communities letting go of certain

assets, behaviors and beliefs where retaining them could make matters worse. Examples include withdrawing from coastlines, shutting down vulnerable industrial facilities, or giving up expectations for certain types of consumption. The third area can be called 'restoration.' It involves people and communities rediscovering attitudes and approaches to a sustainable life and organisations."

We are called to see with new eyes to re-imagine ourselves and our world.
Joanna Macy also calls this the great turning. We need to draw from spiritual practices that keep supporting clarity of mind, wise discernment and a new vision. As we quiet our transactional and judgmental mind and tune into that deep silent well, wise discernment naturally emerges. In the still quiet space of our being there is an incredible tenderness, if not love that flows outwards for all of life.

In the renowned Fire Sermon known as Ādittapariyāya Sutta the Buddha describes how our whole body and mind, its 6 sense bases and resultant mental phenomena is 'burning' up. The discourse reveals that 'all' the six senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind and the 5 aggregates of; form, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness are burning. 'Burning' refers to: the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion, as well the manifestations of suffering: birth, aging death, sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses and despair.

When I first heard this sermon, I thought it was a rather dramatic rendition of the teachings. But we do burn with energy, like a light bulb until we lie cold and prone on the couch. With the burning of these passions we expend our life force and live in an alienated and disconnected way with each other. The fire sermon seems particularly apt in relation to the root causal factors of a more social, political systemic way of seeing how we got into this over-heated global mess.

In the discourse the Buddha, instructs a noble disciple to see and experience this burning and thus become disenchanted with the cyclic passions of craving and aversion and their mental squeal. The text then uses a formula found in dozens of discourses to describe the manner in which such disenchantment leads to liberation from suffering:
"Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate.
Through dispassion, one is fully released.
With full release, there is wisdom and liberation.
One discerns that birth and becoming is ended,
the holy life fulfilled, the task is done.
There is nothing further for this world."

The Zen way of maintaining holy disenchantment and compassionate action is to live by our Bodhisattva vows. Our aspirational vows are a powerful expression of wise and radical hope beyond all odds. How do we save the many beings? On the literal level this is impossible. But when we find our universal common ground, that duality between self/other falls away, we awakening our selfless non-dual wisdom mind then all beings are saved in that moment through our tender, merciful embrace. Holy disenchantment is an act of seeing the folly of greed, hatred and delusion, how it arises endlessly, how we vow to abandon it.
How there are infinite dharma doors and opportunities for compassionate action and embodying the awakened heart-mind.

Antoinette a dear friend and Diamond Sangha Zen teacher had recently returned from the States to renovate her house on the south coast. She had freshly renovated and painted it and was intending to turn it into a dharma centre. Just as the paint dried, the fires came through and burnt it down. Her enduring spirit and deep acceptance of impermanence shines through. She said, "One of the positives of accepting the magnitude of the climate emergency is that everything reveals itself as beautiful and precious. It is not dependent on conditions of good or bad. It is all a manifestation of our essential nature, the pure fluidity of the present. May we draw from the heroic

practices of generosity, ethics, vigor, attention, mindfulness wisdom and compassionate action. Antoinette lives by her vows.

Living by vows is a powerful expression of insight, integrity and respect for all of life; it gives us the courage to stand in principles of goodness, harmony and non-harming. As an embodied prayer based on our love for the world and understanding of deep interdependence of all things:

I vow to myself and to each of you:

> To commit myself daily to the healing of our world, and the welfare of all beings.
> To live on earth more lightly and less violently
> in the food, products and energy I consume.
> To draw strength and guidance from the living Earth, the ancestors, the future generations,
> and my brothers and sisters of all species.
> To support others in our work for the world
> and to ask for help when I feel the need,
> to pursue a daily spiritual practice
> that clarifies my mind, strengthens my heart
> and supports me in observing these urgent and joyful vows.
>
> (EcoSattva vows by Joanna Macy)

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FIRE FRAGMENTS

Helen Sanderson

Earth, Air, Fire, Water. Air breathes fire, water douses fire, they all affect earth.

One of my earliest memories... we are in the car, down the south coast. It's hot, hard to breathe. The road is a track, a sandy track. It was called the horror track. "Shut the windows" Dad yells and with windows wound up he drives like a bat out of hell with flames leaping up on either side of the car. The forest is burning.

And another memory. We arrive back home to the village Verona where Dad was teaching.It's the end of the Xmas holidays. The fences have burnt down and the weather shed. But the school and school house remains, naked unprotected in its fenceless state surrounded by burnt grass. And curled up on the back doorstep there is a black snake. Dad gets a spade and deals with it. A brutal homecoming.

And another. It's midwinter. I've been in the Blue Mountains, bushwalking. I take off my heavy pack so I can climb over large log. I throw it over the log then clamber over. The pack rolls down into the river where it floats down stream before stopping at a bend. Some other walkers whoop down the hill and grab the sodden thing. I pull out wet garments and a wet sleeping bag. A fire is built. People help holding the sleeping bag in front of the fire till the wet patches shrink. We all stand around the fire, turning ourselves like sausages on a bbq. Warming up before bed. Smoke stings our eyes. Gradually the leaping flames become glowing coals. Our talk dies down as we contemplate the campfire. In the morning there are still some live coals. They are blown into life and fed with sticks and branches so breakfast can be cooked. Then the fire is carefully extinguished by raking it out, tipping water on it and covering it with river sand. The bushwalkers know about fire.

My husband has died. His funeral is in the city church where I go and where he went sometimes. I have been to see him in the funeral parlour before the church service. He looked alive, happy even. At the service in the church, the minister says the words, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. She places her hands on the coffin in an act of benediction. The coffin is carried out of the church placed in the hearse in which it will travel to the crematorium. I am not going with it as the church is full of friends and family. They are our

guests. I worry he is going into the fire alone, but I have seen him and said goodbye and let him go.

A year after his death a group of friends gather. They arrive in torrential rain at our cottage at Hardys Bay. I have planned to scatter his ashes at sunset into the water from the wharf below the house. It is his wish. The rain stops just in time. We take handfuls of the grey gritty ashes and throw them into the water along with flowers. The ashes and flowers swirl around and set course on the outgoing tide on their way to the sea. We watch till the flowers and ash disappear before going up the hill for dinner.

I am in the train with my refugee friend, travelling past Rookwood to Parramatta to see a lawyer. Naseer sees the cemetery from the train. 'What's that? " he asks. I explain about Rookwood, and tell him my grandmother was cremated there. He tells me, 'Me and Ayesha,(his wife) we don't want you to be burned. We want you to be buried so we can go and see you.' I am taken aback. I am not wanting to contemplate my death and cremation or burial on the train to Parramatta. I tell him in my family we are all cremated. I don't attach who I am to my dead body. Still I find it confronting to think about my death so specifically.

Poor fella my country. Drought and fire. This summer the firegrounds are huge. They are a crematorium for the bush. The animals in their billions we are told have died. It is too huge and too terrible to contemplate, yet firefighters have gone in there day after day. Before the fires I went into the bush at Kodoji. It was alive with birdsong. Will they still be there? The songbirds? The fires were all around.
We have had some rain. If we have fire let us have rain. Before the fires a man from the hostel where people with various mental disabilities live, came out and said to me, 'we need rain. Pray, pray, pray for rain.'
'Yes,' I said 'I will' I don't know that I believe in prayer. I don't know what is true in terms of God, but this summer of fire, has led to an impulse to weep and pray, for rain, for an end to the cataclysm. A requiem for the bush.
And a prayer for people to wake up, to tend the earth, to repair our country.

LOSS

Jill Steverson

I am in a hole
Peeping out
Too much shock and fear
Too much grief and terror
Witnessing the waves in my heart
Noticing the turmoil in my mind
Ah - this one breath
The lorry in the street
Back again

I know fire
Agony of
fire in
body,
on feet...
Age 8,
stepping
backwards
Into white, red
hot wood
fire
on beach
where
I cavorted,
playful,
with my
buddies...
Driftwood
in piles
set alight
by council
workers
to clear the

harbour cove
beach...
Little Manly...
I blunder
backwards
blindly
into
centre
of that fire
heap...
driftwood
burning.
A moment...
scorching...
searing --
intensity
on flesh,
mashing,
dissolving
toes --
Running,
screaming,
into harbour

sea water...
gesture of
survival
instinct --
ferocious
pain...
shrieking,
screaming --
not knowing --
what to do,
where to turn...
Shock!

I know fire...
now, seventy
years later –
Heart
sears again,
for young
fire-fighters
burned to
death --
in fury of
fire-storms.
Heart
burns
again--
for homes,
for pregnant
women,
for mothers,
fathers,
dogs, cats,
kangaroos,
wallabies,
koalas...
plants,
trees...
for Mother
Earth --
incendiary...

I know fire.
Yes, I know fire....
In those early 50s
fires were
lit on purpose
on harbour
sands --
to clear
unwanted
driftwood.

I know fire...
Laughing
with my
friends,
blundering
backwards,
unseeing
into centre,
driftwood
pile,
red, white
hot heat.

I know fire...
In hospital
emergency
falling in
love with
doctor --
one
injection,
took away
ferocious
pain.
Two months
in my bed...
Foot dressings
each second
day – by
visiting doc --
So gentle,
I loved
him.
I know fire...

My lessons
brought
by my class-
mates
each day
from school.
Miss Arnold
(I still
Recall her)
kind woman –
been
our boarder,
a former
principal...
brought me
boxes
of books.
I loved
my 'library',
stamping,
loaning,
to my friends
visiting--
me in bed,
each day,
after
school.
I know fire.
Miss Arnold,
taught me
to make
paper
flowers.

I recovered,
with
few scars,
no skin
grafts.
"Amazing",
our doc said,
"Such a
healthy
child",

Now I know
how it is
to be
burned
alive.
I know fire.

Destroying
homes,
lives turning
to ash --
memories,
work,
gardens,
lovingly
created
scorching,
killing
animals.
Now, we grieve
for losses.
I know fire.

Twenty years or
or so, later...
after my beach
burning,
A palm-reader...
who knew
nothing
of my life --
reading
my hand,
declares,
"You were
burned...
at the
stake...
as a
witch,
in a former
life"...
She saw...
fire...

I know fire.

Sometimes
now
I am visited
by Ancestral
Spirits of
Indigenous
Gamaragal
women
sitting
in a circle
around
a fire in
the cove --
'Little Manly'
Beach,
eating
fish,
laughing...
chatting

as we did...
as kids,
that day.

Gone now –
their Presence
taken
in smallpox
epidemic of
1789...Gone!
I yearn
to know
them,
how the
power
of fire
infused their
lives.
I would
know then
transforming.

Addendum: from David Brazier,
Zen Therapy: Transcending [sic?] Sorrows of the Human Mind, 1995. p.238.

"In this universe nothing is ever lost, but everything changes. Loss is really transformation. Things seem to disappear, like the sticks in the fire but 'sticks' is actually just a concept in our minds for a particular stage in the evolution of earth becoming plant becoming branches becoming firewood becoming ash becoming earth. …what really confronts us is a world of processes – flow. 'Loss' brings us back to this reality."

Postscript: Let me add, I don't believe in 'transcending' as a kind of separation - but only by deep reflection and experiencing, into body-mind-spirit, manifesting as sorrow -- can we emerge, transformed.

Caroline Josephs
February, 2020.

THE FIRE

Jennifer Gentle

A lightning strike occurred on my neighbours property late last week. The fire came across my neighbours property onto mine early Monday morning. I got two hours sleep that night watching the fire slowly crawl down the mountain face. At 4am I decided to climb the mountain to see the fire up close, it was devastatingly beautiful. It slowly consumed the forest and everything in its path and seemed to pose no threat to me or my house. In fact I was quite annoyed that
RFS had deemed it necessary to bulldoze two fire containment lines through virgin bush "just in case"

We had spent the past three days after the lightning strike trying to clear as much leaf litter away from the house and shed, had good fire pumps, hoses and water supply to protect our assets. We had multiple fire plans in place to try and cover every possible senario.

By midday the fire reached the bottom of the mountain and started its approach to the shed and house. I called 000 to let them know our property was being threatened. We watched calmly feeling confident in our containment lines and plans and started spraying down our buildings while we waited for assistance to arrive from RFS who were busy containing the fire at the other end of the ridge. A small rig with one guy arrived to assist and slow the path of the fire. All was good and containment lines forced the fire to another path into the bush along the right side of the house. Another large truck arrived to defend us and the buildings. All seemed fine, all working perfectly to plan with the fire trucks protecting the shed which was now the most threatened building while Matthew and I continued spraying our house with water.

That all changed in one moment when the fire reached the valley floor and airstreams reversed the direction of the wind. The fire exploded from a 1m undergrowth burn to a 30m firewall as the treetops in the forest ignited and enclosed the house on all sides. Matthew and I were about 50m from the fire face without being able to communicate to the fire crew who were defending the other side of the property. I called 000 again telling them our lives were at risk. They relayed the message immediately to fire crew who swung the truck around putting themselves and the truck between us as they fought the fire. Wind gusts the the fire over the truck. Now I felt our lives were really being threatened, possibly this was it I was about to die. I remembered reading in the Lotus Sutra the chapter on the merits of Avalokitesvara, one of the many merits is that anyone who thinks of this Bodhisattva will not be harmed by fire. Whether that is true or not is hard to say but it did make me feel calm and able to think clearly. I continued wetting down the house preparing to take shelter inside and started filling the sinks to soak woollen blankets as cover from the fire should it enter the house. From nowhere the fire truck appeared at the front of the house driven by a 76yr old local with 50 yrs experience screaming at us "Get out" "Get out". He and his crew held the fire back so we could run to our cars and leave..

I drove away seeing a wall of flame engulfing my property and was expecting to lose everything. I was grateful to be alive, the house and shed faded into insignificance at that time.

Water bombers arrived just in time to hold the fire back from the house while neighbours risked their own properties to save ours.

It was my neighbours, local volunteers and the incredible RFS coordination team that saved our lives and our lifestyle. I cannot adequately put into words the feeling driving back in later to see everything still standing. It was surreal, like I was in another dream.

Here are some tips I'd like to share with anyone who may be choosing to staying to defend their property.

1. Buy a UHF radio.
You can keep in direct contact with the fire crew in your area and other locals, know their movements and ask for help directly. 000 is often overloaded and can take 10 mins to pass on information to RFS. If you must use 000 and your life is at risk let them know immediately and you will get priority.

2. Have multiple plans in place. The situation can change very quickly, possibly fire pumps can fail, water supplies finish. Know how to use fire equipment, pumps, hoses before the front arrives. Think through everything in small detail because seconds matter when fire is close. Keep wool blankets and metal buckets inside the house in worst case scenario. Car needs to be packed including wallets, phones, computer. Running to get them at the last minute could be the difference between escaping or not.
Pets, dog leads/collars etc need to be easily accessible and tight so pets can't wiggle out. They will be scared because there are unknown people, trucks, helicopters, sounds and fire near them and they may try to flee.

3. Download Scanner Radio app. It will give you access to RFS information via your mobile and you can keep track of the real time operations of RFS.

4. https://hotspots.dea.ga.gov.au/ will give more accurate location and movement of fire locations. I found Fires near me was too general and not updated regularly enough to be useful when you are under threat from a fire.

5. Protective gear. The more you look after yourself, the more effectively you can fight fire.Buy a decent comfortable respirator with cartridges made to filter organic vapours. It will be invaluable when smoke and ash are in the air. You will be using it for days after the fire has passed putting out hot spots and spot fires.Buy safety glasses to keep heat and smoke out of your eyes.

6. Hydration. Lots and lots of water always on hand.

7. Food. Needs to be quick to prepare and sustaining, plus easy to eat snacks while you are out putting out or watching fires.

8. Mental health. Be aware of the effects of trauma after going through a major event. Personally I couldn't speak to anyone about what had happened for 48hrs and didn't want to communicate with anyone. My experience was on replay in my head processing what had happened. Also, be aware that other people will also be going through their own traumas and grief so be tolerant of any tempers flaring.

Even though the natural bush on my property has been devastated, it is still extraordinarily beautiful, I now see amazing rock formations I never knew existed before. It will not recover to what it was, it will become something new. I try to focus on what has survived, not what has been lost.

Stay safe everyone.

Jenny.

Buck and Buddha, photo by Lili McMillan

FOR THE ANIMALS

Maggie Gluek

In March 2019, in the wake of the mass fish deaths in the Murray-Darling Basin and with some kind of terrible prescience, Gilly and I held a different kind of memorial ceremony, one for the animals. Now, with the scarcely conceivable loss of a billion or more creatures in the infernos, the remarks from that day feel heartbreakingly to the point. And perhaps this kind of gathering could happen again, could be a skillful means for containing the grief so many of us feel.

We're here to collectively honor and mourn non-human beings, our fellow animals, whose deaths have eventuated, whether directly or indirectly, as a result of human behavior. Through our proliferation as a species and colonization of the planet. Through our delusion and greed, the wanton removal of habitat and the poisoning of the environment. And now, through human-induced climate change which creates warmer and wetter conditions, fires and floods, where animals are "collateral damage." This is not to mention those animals we routinely slaughter, with a knife, or on roads with a car. All truly innocent victims. They have no complicity at all in these actions, in these changes, and no voice. And their disappearance is the planet's loss.

From Robert Aitken's book Zen Master Raven:

Owl spoke up the next evening and said, "I've been brooding about your remark to Mallard that the foresters are closing in. I think we aren't facing things. It's always been hard to find food and raise a family, but now the forest is shrinking and folks like Wolverine can't even find a mate."
Raven said, "Yes."
Owl said, "I feel despair about those foresters."
Woodpecker interrupted and said, "The problem is that they aren't really foresters."
Raven said "Yes."
Owl asked, "What can be done?"
Raven did not respond and the group was silent.
Finally Porcupine said, "Their children will remember us."
Owl said, "Small comfort."
Raven said, "Brontosaur lives." [1]

1 Robert Aitken, Zen Master Raven (Boston: Tuttle, 2002), p. 199.

The purpose today is not to offer solutions but to share. The members of Robert Aitken's Assembly Oak sangha do just this. Raven Roshi listens. The Bodhisattva hears the cries of the world. This circle too offers an opportunity to acknowledge what is happening and to listen to one another. You might represent and speak on behalf of a particular species. Or not. The circle is in any case a container for sorrow, despair, anger, whatever thoughts and feelings you might be carrying. For many of us the ongoing sense of cumulative loss is nothing new but perhaps something we don't find a way to speak about.

I'd like to offer two contexts for today, here in our 21st-century Zen Buddhist community.

One is that of the East Asian and Buddhist traditions which evince a deep, or you might say "horizontal," respect for non-humans, in contrast to the anthropocentric myths of those religions which assign man dominion over all creation.[2] If you had the chance to gaze into some of the Chinese scroll paintings at the AGNSW exhibition from Taipei, you would have worked hard to find a human being in the vast landscape. Indeed, it was easier to locate geese or a donkey. Every being is significant in this world-view. Each corner of the universe contains the whole.

Copperhead came by one evening unannounced. Mole made himself scarce, and Owl, Woodpecker, and Grouse set up a clatter. Copperhead said, "Excuse me, everybody. I came for the Great Law, not for my dinner." The birds quieted down but Mole did not return.
Raven asked, "Do you have a question?"
"Yes," said Copperhead, "I'm really interested in the Way, but I don't seem to have the right livelihood for it."
Raven said, "The Way does not depend on your livelihood."
Copperhead asked, "What is the Way?"
Raven said, "We'd be totally lost without you." [3]

From the Pali canon and other sources in classical Buddhism come the Jataka tales, stories of the Buddha's previous lives in many of which he was an animal—once a quail, a deer, a parrot, an ox calf. In each of these tales, the animal illustrates wisdom and embodies the virtue of compassion. One of the most memorable, for me, is that of the hare's sacrifice.

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2 Mind you, this anthropomorphic position has been and is being widely challenged, by ordinary folks, scholars of religion, social justice groups, and by the present pope, Francis himself, who has written an encyclical calling for the protection of animals and of our common home.

3 Aitken, p. 180

A hare lived in the forest with her friends – a monkey, a jackal, and an otter. One day the lord of the gods disguised himself as a starving beggar and asked the animals for some food. The monkey, jackal, and otter gave the beggar the food they had found for their own meals – mangoes, a lizard, fish. But the hare, a grass-eater, had nothing, to offer. So she built a fire. "I have nothing to give you to eat but myself!" she exclaimed, and threw herself into the flames. With this, the god rescued her and in recognition of the hare's selflessness, painted her figure on the moon, where you may see her still. [4]

Talk about utter whole-heartedness, the mind of nothing to protect and everything to serve.

Robert Aitken's Zen Master Raven picks up on this tradition of presenting animals who speak, expound, and explore the deepest truths.[5] We are all children in the dream of Buddha Shakyamuni says that wise corvid as he addresses those assembled in a circle in the little meadow under the tall spruce.[6] Gradually through stories we are introduced to Porcupine, Woodpecker, Badger, Grouse, Gray Wolf, and many others. They are not just ciphers but nuanced personalities, each contributing in his or her way to turning the wheel of the Dharma. Raven's dialogues with these individuals are koans for our time.

Animals are likewise a vivid presence in the traditional koans of Chan Buddhism where one shares the world variously with the mind of a dog, a fox, a cat, a duck, a cow, a rhinoceros, a snake, to name only some of the many non-human beings one encounters. Though in the society of Tang China some of these animals may have been considered "lesser", reviled or ill-omened, and though in Buddhist cosmology the animal world falls "below" the human (in which one can meet the Dharma), nevertheless in these stories the essential nature of non-human and human is discovered finally to be one and the same. Indeed, essential nature itself is often imagined in metaphor as an ox.

A second context for today is an eloquent essay, "Fellow Passengers," by Mark Rowlands, which appeared in The Hedgehog Review, a journal that comes out of the Institute for Critical Reflection on Contemporary Culture, University of Virginia.[7] Rowlands begins by hypothesizing a situation where you are on a bus that is overcrowded, hot, and smelly. You don't know where the bus is headed, nor do you know anyone else on the bus. The roads are terrible, bumpy. Toilets are blocked, kids are screaming.

4 Barbara O'Brien, Jataka Tales, @learnreligions.com.

5 Nelson Foster, Introduction in Aitken, ibid. p. 7

6 Aitken, p. 23.

7 Mark Rowlands, "Fellow Passengers," The Hedgehog Review (Charlottesville, Va.), Spring 2019.

He writes:

This situation might give rise to feelings of difference and superiority: I am not like these others; I am better. *But suppose, out of the corner of your eye, you caught one of your fellow passengers looking at you, and you looked back. In that person's eyes, you would see the same anguish, the same recognition of hopelessness and futility, the same disgust, the same fear. At that moment, you would realize that you were both in this together—indeed, that everyone on the bus was in this together. This was the kind of realization articulated by the German idealist philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer: "From this point of view, we might well consider the proper form of address to be not* Monsieur, Sir, Mein Herr, *but* my fellow sufferer, Soci Malorum, compagnons de misère. *This … reminds us of that which is after all the most necessary thing in life – the tolerance, patience, regard, and love of neighbor of which everyone stands in need and which, therefore, every man owes his fellow."*

With regard to those of our fellow travelers who were not human-born, our attitude has almost always been of the first variety. Indeed, an anthropologist from Mars might regard us humans as singularly insecure animals, curiously obsessed with identifying some quality that decisively distinguishes us from the rest of animal creation. If we were more reflective creatures, we might realize that the answer has been staring us in the face all along: We are the animals curiously obsessed with distinguishing ourselves from the rest of animal creation.

And the author proceeds to review many examples of research regarding what are usually thought of as "measures of humanity", such as consciousness, intelligence, self-awareness, morality. Research that finds various animal species clearly fulfilling the criteria for these measures.

The Quaternary extinction event, he continues, our hitherto most concerted foray into faunal annihilation, was largely driven by two facts. We like to eat animals. And we like to kill animals that like to eat animals that we like to eat. Killing animals of both sorts was entirely deliberate. Today, however, mass population reductions are largely the result of collateral damage. Animals die in such numbers because we are changing their habitat faster than they can adapt. I assure you, killing polar bears is the last thing on my mind as I race up and down the major arterial highways of South Florida every weekend, ferrying my children to one soccer game after another. Yet dead polar bears are a foreseeable result of the miles I have put on my middle-sized sedan doing just this. We live, as the environmentalist Bill McKibben once put it, in a "post-natural world." What we have done to the world is in the air and in the water, and once it is there it is everywhere.

Animals are our fellow passengers on this bus to who knows where. Fellow sufferers, compagnons de misère – *but, if the circumstances are right,* compagnons de bonheur also. *"Mankind's true moral test," Milan Kundera wrote in* The Unbearable Lightness of Being, *"consists of its attitude towards those who are at its mercy: animals. And in this respect, mankind has suffered a fundamental debacle, a debacle so fundamental that all others stem from it." When the animal on the bus looks at us, we must, with all our heart and sinew, try to look back, and see her for what she really is: a fellow passenger who is really not that different from us.*

I had the privilege once of meeting a female diamond python. On a bushwalk we ran into a ranger who had rescued her from a backyard and was relocating her. He let me hold her, in all her two-metre length. We gazed at one another and to my surprise, it was like looking in to the eyes of my cat or any other mammal, eyes that were not "other" or "reptilian" but infinitely deep and sentient. I wanted to weep.

What have we taken for granted and failed to protect? My parents loved the natural world. They'd regularly walk up and down the road that led to our house, observing the trees changing with the season, alert to birds and animals. There were so many, such bright variety. We thought they'd always be there. Now one third of the birds in and over North American have disappeared. On a backyard scale in Mt Colah, accounting over forty years, many small bird species have disappeared. This is termed "local extinction." A local ornithologist gave a talk on hugely diminishing populations in our area. He apologized for being depressing and honest.[8]

What can be said? May all beings be free from suffering.

8 I recommend George Saunders' Fox 8 as a contemporary animal fable, at once funny and finally tragic, about people despoiling animal homes and natural beauty

THE VIEW BEYOND

Kerry Stewart

A congress of dragons
snake in valleys,
licking fire tongues
puffing their essence
recalling the past,
recounting the future
burning the dry land.

The view beyond
the metal wing of
this climate aggravating bird,
flying crow-like on a direct route
from city to city,
is all haze.

High above the land
the true scale of disaster
is clear:
Mythical gathering of creatures
A legion, a tribe, a thunder of dragons
sinking claws deeply
into the earth
far and wide.

Intimate, close to seaside home,
threatening my mother -
ti-tree, banksia and cabbage palm
blackened.

Friends defend
beloved ancient cool rainforest -
tree fern, waratah and sassafras
scorched.
Distant hills and valleys alight,
screeching.

Once heaven and earth
were balanced by dragons.
Dwelling in lakes and clouds
they oversaw
the cycle of nourishment.

But they are angry now
upsetting cosmic order
because of me,
my tribe, my legion.

No water is left
to spring and soften,
encourage and connect.
The scales have tipped.

Dragon backs,
burnished by the setting sun,
reflect through the window
as the pilot navigates
through their smoky tails,
until we finally land
at their feet.

CHILDREN AT PLAY IN A BURNING HOUSE

Nelson Foster

It was a metaphor originally. Lotus Sutra, chapter three. A wealthy old man living with his many sons (and presumably many daughters, too) in a vast compound. Counting his retainers, he sheltered perhaps as many as five hundred people there, within a wall that had just one narrow gate. The building was old, too, and when fire suddenly broke out, it burned hot and fast.

The old man immediately saw the danger and the need to escape, but the children, caught up in their games, didn't notice anything. He thought first of carrying them out, but with so many of them and the gate so narrow.… He shouted for their attention, hoping to explain the situation, but—you know, kids—"They merely raced about this way and that in play and looked at their father without heeding him." Sigh.

Then he hit on a stratagem, the "expedient means" of promising them what they wanted: cool toys! In particular, carts drawn by goats or deer or oxen, their very own. Roughly equivalent to a fast, new smartphone. That did it! The kids swarmed out the gate, all safe and sound, and the old gent rewarded each with a cart even better than he'd promised: a giant carriage arrayed with jewels and flowers, canopied, made comfortable with an abundance of cushions, and yoked to—yes!—a swift, powerful, pure-white ox.

I wish it had remained a metaphor. But this summer, as the children continued playing, it shifted category. Here we dwell. The grand old house has gone up in flames, no question, and the wise are screaming for the kids' attention. Do the kids hear? Not much, it seems.

It surely isn't accurate or fair to depict them—make that "us"—as completely consumed in games, oblivious to everything except the lure of cool stuff. Obviously, some of us are awake to the inferno raging on all sides, and not everyone is a sucker for the next fancy goat-cart. Yet a great many of us do seem disastrously preoccupied, if not with games then with social media or with what a young German journalist identified as perhaps the essential element in the Nazi rise to power: the "automatic continuation of ordinary life." Doing the laundry. Shopping. Getting to work. Watching the Big Game. Keeping on keeping on.

Like many sangha members, I see this as a time of political crisis in the United States and of dangerous trends in the politics of numerous other countries. But I've come to see the fire this time as much bigger than that, as a total cultural and ecological phenomenon that puts the Earth household as a whole in jeopardy. Of course, if our planet's sixth great extinction goes forward, taking our species with it, some stout forms of life will survive and eventually evolve into a new assembly of beings perhaps just as wondrous as the set that we've been privileged to know, a set itself the result, after all, of the fifth extinction. But I find that cold comfort.

If the world as we know it is going to hell in a handbasket, I feel obliged by my love for it, and by membership in it, to impede that process. This sense of obligation persists despite very reasonable doubts about the usefulness of such efforts as I can make; considering the magnitude of the destructive forces now in play, my capacity to affect the outcome seems puny indeed. But concern for effectiveness, at least my concern for effectiveness, pales next to the urgings I feel to protect what remains. Or to state the point in patently Buddhist terms, neither the vows

we make explicitly nor the values implicit in practice and realization have much to do with feasibility and "realism." How realistic or quantifiable is a bodhisattva's commitment to forgo final awakening until other beings have all awakened?

The question I'm asking myself now, and want to ask you, too, is whether we've reached a point where changing our ways—discontinuing the "automatic continuation of ordinary life"—has become imperative. You and I may have different perceptions of the conflagration licking at the foundations of the house, how far it's progressed, how swiftly it's growing, what chances our current countermeasures have of extinguishing it, and so forth. But do we agree that the time has come to accept full responsibility for it and to revise our behavior in correspondingly urgent and far-reaching ways?

If so, what might those ways be? A number of sangha members have felt moved to step up their activity in the political process, hoping that the mid-term elections will precipitate much-needed changes in Washington. I share that hope, of course. Yet even the best electoral outcome seems unlikely to produce change of the scope, the profundity, and rapidity that our predicament calls for. Our worst problems lie beyond the bounds of legislation: our ever-swelling population, our seemingly insatiable desires for convenience and comfort, our gross insensitivity to the needs of other beings, our willingness to destroy mountains and rivers and otherwise to exploit "natural resources" for human benefit, our callousness toward members of even our own species, and our continuing failure to cooperate in the common cause of life on Earth. Not to mention our age-old fondness for games and our apparently infinite distractibility. I understand all of these as cultural problems at root, not amenable to political solutions but certainly open to solution through other avenues—if, and only if, enough of us get serious about it. Soon.

As for the wondrous ox-cart of the Buddhadharma, what role might it play now? It's still ready to roll, I hope, but the old image needs an important correction: the cart isn't waiting for its takers "outside the gate." Unless you buy into the fantasy of escaping to Mars, our tradition, like everything else in our old home, stands to get crisped in the explosive, kalpa-ending firestorm we collectively have set and fueled. Finally, I think we'd better ask ourselves one more question: are the cushions of our fine cart too comfortable? I hope not.

Note: The quotations are from Burton Watson, trans., The Lotus Sutra (Columbia, 1993), p. 57, and Sebastian Haffner (Raimund Pretzel), Defying Hitler: A Memoir, Oliver Pretzel, trans. (New York: Picador, 2003), p. 157.

This article was written in late 2018, in response to fires in California, and it was first published in the Ring of Bone Zendo newsletter.

ONE MASSIVE CREMATION

Diana Levy

In the buff-tinted smoke
that obscures the trees across the valley,
obscures the towers beyond the Harbour Bridge -
Sydney becomes a new Delhi -
fine particles
of burnt-up koalas,
flying foxes, gliders,
and the fuel that set them alight -
plenty of others that I cannot name -
we inhale them
in the ash.

In his distress
a politician hurled the epithet
Arsonists!
at his opponents,
the "Things Should Stay As They Are" side,
the Concrete Party,
but what is the right way to grieve?

This is a long cremation
with summer still to come,
how shall we grieve our losses?

In the streets of Hobart
a long line of black-clad mourners
carried a coffin
for species going, going.... going extinct.

Would that this ash
that enters our lungs in homeopathic doses
cure our human sickness
of thinking we are separate
from Brother Bat, Sister Snake,
Cousin Koala, not connected
to all these myriad relatives...

In the valley the smell of bushfire lingers
and Second Cousin Raven
utters a long soulful lament
followed by sardonic laughter,
I am an Australian raven,
black, and surviving.

GREAT COMPASSION AND FORGIVENESS

Jane Andino

Case 89, Blue Cliff Record.

Yun Yen asked Tao Wu, 'What does the Bodhisattva Kanzeon use all those many hands and eyes for?'
Wu said, 'It's like a person in the middle of the night reaching behind his head for a pillow."
Yen said, 'I understand.'
Wu said, 'How do you understand it?'
Yen said, 'The whole body is hand and eye.'
Wu said, 'That is very well expressed, but it is only eight-tenths of the answer.'
Yen said, 'How would you say it, Elder Brother?'
Wu said, 'Throughout the body, the hand and eye.'

At this time of great desperation after the tragedy of the bushfires, followed by an outpouring of compassion from so many wishing to help those affected, I thought it would be useful to consider the quality of Great Compassion, and the confusing nexus of anger and compassion.

Many of you will have heard this beautiful koan before, and the easy to-and-fro of the dialogue between these two adepts. For those not familiar with it, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion is Kuan Yin or Kanzeon in Sino-Japanese. This morning we chanted the Kanzeon sutra (The 10-verse Kanzeon Sutra for Timeless Life), calling on this Kanzeon sitting here to live the timeless life in the morning Chonen, Kanzeon; and in the evening Bonen Kanzeon; that is, the timeless life is throughout and no-other-than each moment.

Kanzeon is also Avalokiteshvara who we find mentioned in the Heart Sutra. Avalokiteshvara means 'the one who hears the cries of the world' i.e. the suffering of the world.

In the koan, we see that the Bodhisattva of Compassion sees no helping and no one to help. Reaching back and groping for the pillow in the middle of the night is the effortless effort of non-doing. It's the miraculous interbeing of life.

I turned to this koan when I was considering the term Forgiveness, and why it is not generally used as a term, or discussed in Buddhist texts. Does Great Compassion replace Forgiveness in the situations where in English we would use such a word? Or is it that, in this freedom from the division of self and other, there is essentially no one to forgive and no one to be forgiven.

It's interesting that some virtues that once seemed eternal, now have a use-by date. For example, "the quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven." We might imagine, as we see a Shakespearean play or a Netflix historical movie, what it might be like to be an all-powerful but merciful king.

Fortunately, nowadays, only the president of the United States or other such princes get to exercise Mercy. Democracy has largely done away with it as a virtue.

Similarly some mortal sins, such as Sloth, are largely regarded as the effect of depression or physiological reasons, especially in our busy modern age where the slogan is "I do, therefore I am." But Forgiveness: that still seems to have some currency. Even though it is a term with origins and history in the Christian faith, I feel that it has become a common word used in our dealings with others after major wrongdoing, and so I started to consider its place in our Buddhist practice.

There is a story about Hakuin Zenji, whose Song of Zazen we recite.
One day an angry couple came to see him, claiming that he was the father of their daughter's unborn baby. 'Is that so? ' he said. When the baby was born, they brought it to him to look after, which he did very well. But then after a year, the girl confessed, and so the parents came to take the baby back. 'Is that so? said Hakuin. "I'm glad he now has parents."

But reaching such a state of acceptance and forbearance probably seems out of the reach of most of us, especially when the tinderbox of irritation and the bushfire of anger take over our mind.

Avalokiteshvara is the one who sees and hears the cries of the world. Zazen is the means we use to see and hear what is, and notice our emotions as they arise, rather than live in the dream of how we think the world is or should be. It's the dream of the Self, with its habitual beliefs and assumptions. Just shining that light of awareness on the emotion means that our relationship with those emotions change. We come to see more clearly the motive behind it and the possible effect of it.

Diane Eshin Rizzetto (p37 Waking Up To What You Do) writes: 'When we are in that place of not knowing, there is no safety net under us. Suspended action. Suspended thinking. Suspended knowing. No stories, no shoulds. Just This- awake and present. It's difficult to hang there for long, without grasping at whatever gives us a sense of security. But there's a lot to be learned even in just two or three seconds if we are willing." The important phrases here are 'not knowing' and 'be willing'.

There is the story from the Angulimala Sutta, beautifully told in Thich Nat Hahn's book "Old Path, White Clouds"p.353-4, about the Buddha and Angulimala. One day the Buddha was out walking, and the murderous bandit Angulimala called out to him to stop. The Buddha kept walking. Angulimala caught up to the Buddha and said 'Monk, I told you to stop. Why don't you stop?' The Buddha continued to walk and said 'Angulimala, I stopped a long time ago. It is you who have not stopped.' Angulimala was startled and said 'You say you have stopped, but you are still walking'.

The Buddha said: 'Angulimala, I stopped committing acts that cause suffering to other living beings a long time ago. I have learned to protect life, the lives of all beings, not just humans. Angulimala, all living beings

want to live. We must nurture a heart of compassion." Angulimala said 'Why should I love other people? Humans are cruel and deceptive." (A very good point!)

The Buddha replied that there may be cruel people in this world, but there are many kind people. He said 'Do not be blinded. My path can transform cruelty into kindness. You should stop. Choose the path of forgiveness, understanding and love instead.'

I chose this story because I think the Buddha's words can be applied to any of our actions, however seemingly great or small. In fact, there is no great or small. Each action is equally important. Just like Diane Rizzetto's comments, the message here is Stop and Choose.

Forgiveness comes in the giving side, and the receiving side. These should be together, but usually we hear of forgiveness in the situation where a person feels wronged but will never know if the wrongdoer feels sorry for their action. Or the wrongdoer refuses or is incapable of taking responsibility.

Leo Babauta writes(Post: Zen Habits: How to let go and forgive) that forgiveness doesn't mean erasing the past, or forgetting. It doesn't mean the other person will change. It just means that you let go of the anger and pain, and move on to a better place; that your head isn't going round and round in pain. Then the anger is no longer running the show. It means taking responsibility for past actions, and making good intentions for the future.
The Here and Now heals and restores.

Jack Kornfield writes (The Practice of Forgiveness) that without forgiveness we continue to perpetuate the illusion that hate can heal our pain and the pain of others. "In forgiveness we let go and find relief in our heart." Forgiveness acknowledges the injustice, the suffering and the harm, and also resolves that it will never happen again. Our Purification Sutra, at the start of our sutras, expresses this acknowledgement.

Before the emotion of forgiveness happens, there is probably the emotion of anger.
One of our Precepts is: I take up the Way of Not Indulging in Anger.
The commentary says: 'In the realm of the selfless Dharma, not contriving reality for the self is called the Precept of Not Indulging in Anger."
It is saying that when we don't place our dream of a Self against a reality out there, then we won't indulge in anger. The Bodhisattva is busy arranging pillows in the realm of the selfless Dharma.

Diane Rizzetto writes(p.160-1): If we were always free of who we think we are, there would be no anger, no need for a precept. But in the real life of most of us, we yell at our kids, we shout back at our partner, and we get angry with our political leaders.
So the most helpful way of working with the precept is not to try to not become angry, but to watch what happens when anger arises." So, instead of insisting that life follows our agenda, we find Right View, a clear seeing into the matter i.e. as clearly as we can at that time and in that situation.

However, I'm not recommending a bland life. Every emotion, including anger, is no other than our life. The important thing is to see that we are not clinging to it or used by it.

I like Aitken Roshi's description (p92 Mind of Clover) of Yasutani Roshi in angry Fudoo Myoo-oo mode. Fudoo is the immovable Wisdom King, a temple guardian, sitting among flames with red face, bulging eyes and fierce expression. He and Kanzeon have the same function, to save all beings. We can see the difference between rage (emotion going round in circles) and outrage (emotion channelled for a harmonious outcome), the difference between true compassion and self-serving do-gooding.

And then, there's Shock.

Recently Subhana sent an blog article written by Vicki Robin: Climate change from the inside out.She speaks of being in shock that maybe we can't fix it, can't repair the damage to ecology done, that the 'can-do' methodology isn't always able to achieve solutions. After the shock came the grief. She wrote: 'It's impolite not to cheer up, to be the death of the party, the Eeyore of climate chaos, the depressive in the corner. But I could not go back into can-do solutionary mode." However, after a while of doom and gloom, she realised that she had to move on. She started to find ways to respond, to find others of similar mind, to work on mitigation and adaptation. She came to truly see that 'we are all in this together'.

Please forgive the rambling nature of this talk. I think all of us at the moment are trying to put our thoughts together and make sense of our collective life, faced with the enormity of loss and destruction after the fires. True compassion always finds upaya, a skilful means to action. It finds ways to not allow people to be manipulated by the politics of hate and fear, which are just a front for greed. At the end of the Metta Sutta, the Sutra on Loving-Kindness, it says 'Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child, so with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings, radiating kindness over the entire world."

I'll finish with another Kanzeon story, this time from the Transmission of the Lamp (Aitken p26 Morning Star) about Kuei-tsung, an heir of Ma-tsu (early 9th century):

Kuei-tsung entered the hall and addressed the monks saying, 'I want to speak about Ch'an. All of you, gather around.'
The monks gathered closely around Kuei-tsung. He then said, 'Look at Kuan-yin's practice, responding well in all the various circumstances.'
A monk asked, 'What is Kuan-yin's practice?'
The Master then snapped his fingers and said, 'Do all of you hear it?'
The monks said, 'We hear it.'
The Master said, 'What is this pack of fools looking for here?'
and he took his staff and drove them out with blows. Laughing loudly he returned to his quarters.

MATABALA
THE COLD SOUP

Robin

Rohatsu in December is hot, and I was sweating on my cushion. I was asked to make a soup, and I quailed at the thought of serving anything hot.

I remembered the Matabala, and coming home from school my mother would make things with yoghurt a lot during summer. I knew instantly it was a good idea (the things that pop into your head whilst doing Zazen!)

The Coconut and Lime Matabala is a Vegan version of a childhood food that has been passed down the family through generations—and is a staple in the hot dry Middle-Eastern deserts of my forebears.

My mother was not a particularly colourful cook, but she was wise, practical, intuitive and thrifty. Growing up we had a very traditional Lebanese diet, with all the food she cooked was passed down from my Grandmother Mouzaya. My mother told me that for her as she was growing up there were no supermarkets, and that much of the community grew and shared a lot of their food. My mothers family raised their own chickens, and made their own bread every morning to take down to the baker whom they paid for the use of the ovens. They had their own goats, and made their own yoghurts from scratch. Much of the food consumed by Middle Eastern folk is vegetarian, as meat was only consumed during high Muslim holidays, or if you were particularly wealthy.

I found the humble chickpea of my childhood absolutely essential to my well being and all the grains and pulses not normally used in Western Cuisine, I learnt from my mother at the kitchen table, comes in very handy as a Vegan. The following recipe is high in protein, and fibre and in this heat, refreshing and tasty.

So here is the recipe, you can make this vegetarian with Dairy, (but you may miss the coconut lime pairing goodness) and yes you can get coconut yogurt at the supermarket. But if you do use dairy substitute the oregano for fresh Mint. Serves four. I hope you like it.

INGREDIENTS:

1 can of organic Chickpeas
2 cups of Pearl Barley soaked overnight.
500g of Coconut Yoghurt
1 bay leaf
1 Vegetable Stock cube
1 Garlic clove
3 Limes
1 Tbs of Lime Zest.
1 Tbs of Fresh Oregano.

METHOD:

Cook the Pearl Barley in stock and bay leaf until tender. Leave it to cool and then put it in the refrigerator overnight to chill.

When you're ready take the pot of chilled but cooked Pearl barley and drain the can of chickpeas and add it to the pot and mix.

Crush the clove of garlic in a mortar and pestle and set that aside.

Rub the lime skin of the limes on a grater till you have a table spoon of zest, then juice the limes. Set it aside.

Chop the Oregano as finely as you can.

The Pearl Barley and the Chickpeas should be quite thick, simply add the Coconut Yogurt to the mixture, garlic, lime juice and oregano. Mix it together, and serve chilled.

OPTIONAL:

Serve with some toasted Lebanese bread, made with Zaatar and olive oil.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF LOSS LIES LOVE

Georgina Reid

The birds come when the she oak nuts are ripe and full of seed. I hear them muttering to each other high in the branches as I walk up the narrow track behind our house. The evidence of their banquet lies at my feet. Broken off branch tips and mauled nuts lie scattered across the pathway. They stay for a few months, a couple of them nesting in an old tree a few doors up. I hear them call to each other in the mornings as they set off for a day of feasting, and on their return home at twilight.

Until a few months ago I thought they were red tail black cockatoos. But they're not, they're glossy black cockatoos, a species listed as vulnerable in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, and endangered in South Australia. Glossy black cockatoos primarily eat allocasuarina species, she-oaks. As a result of land clearing for agriculture and development, and increasing fragmentation of bushland, the birds are losing their primary food source and their homes.

When I understood who the birds in the she-oaks were, I couldn't stop crying. I had blindly convinced myself that they were the ones who were OK, the un-fussy ones. I thought everything was fine. But they weren't and neither was I.

> *"Honouring our pain for the world is a way of valuing our awareness, first, that we have noticed, and second, that we care."*
>
> JOANNA MACY

I cried for the glossy blacks. Where will they go next, and when they get there will their trees be still standing? Will they come again next year? Will they starve, as their food source shrinks month on month, year on year. How long do they have left? How long do we have left? And who will remember their song when it is no longer sung? The birds became a symbol for the unfathomable losses occurring all around me. The losses I had subconsciously kept at a distance because I wasn't sure I wanted to feel them. My heart, then, broke.

This grief is not new. It's tidal – rising and falling over days, weeks, months. Some days it feels like a thick fog, hiding familiar landmarks and dulling the sun. Other days it recedes, and the light is glorious and the trees sprout new growth and the awe returns. But it remains, always, a constant backdrop to the smallness of everyday life, and the hugeness of being alive.

It's certainly not particular to me. It's an undercurrent beneath the surface of countless conversations, decisions and actions by countless humans across the world. In my own small circle, it's become a regular part of what we talk about.

And though we talk about it, it's hard to know what to do with it, this grief. Conversations end with, 'well that's a bit depressing, let's talk about something else.' I'm often left feeling sort-of empty, wondering how to go forward in a truthful way, beyond the sadness but somehow still holding it.

THE BIG PICTURE

Despite what many business-as-usual types might suggest, feeling angry, grief-stricken and anxious about the situation we're in is "a completely rational response to what's going on", says Dr Sally Gillespie, author of Climate Crisis and Consciousness: Re-imagining Our World and Ourselves (Routledge, 2019).

We're not just experiencing a few weird weather patterns; we're "living through the collapse of a cultural view and a civilisation". The foundations of our western world views are crumbling. I thought I knew where I was in the world, where I was going, and what kind of country and culture I lived in. I can't say I do anymore. I don't know what the world will look like in a decade, two, ten. To look into this is incredibly challenging. Deep existential questions arise, forcing us to question how we live and what we value, undermining the stories we've used to frame our lives thus far.

Despite the unprecedented scale of the losses and change we're facing, it's likely my feelings of eco-grief will be dismissed as hysterical nonsense by those who say things like 'hey little lady don't you worry, the climate has always changed, and species have always died out and and what's important is a strong economy'. And even if my feelings aren't ignored, there's very few places or rituals for them within our society. We have agreed rituals for human loss – we hold funerals, we have periods of mourning, we light candles and plant trees in remembrance. But what of ecological loss? *"…deep sorrow is rarely expressed in public discussions about the climate crisis",* writes Sally Gillespie. *"Too often grief goes unnamed and unhonoured, although it is inseparable from our lives in this age of ecological destructions."*

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Though most people feel concern about how the climate crisis will affect them and their lives, it's not an easy thing to talk about and acknowledge. There are many reasons for this. Because climate change has become so contested and politicised, people's emotions around it are not only not universally recognised, they've been reduced to a statement on where a person stands on the issue. This can be very isolating, and conversations are often either avoided or shut down. *"To feel, together, the sadness of the loss, you have to agree that there even is a loss to begin with. If you're grieving, you don't want to get into a debate over whether what you're grieving exists or not!"*, says Sally.

> *"Grief can make us both very sad and very motivated to act."*
>
> DR SALLY GILLESPIE

And then there's our western obsession with being 'happy'. The search for happiness, often sold as a new product, a holiday, a buy-able buzz, is, recently, one of our individualistic and consumerist culture's primary goals. Darkness, melancholy and distress are to be avoided at

all costs. "The notion that we should steer clear of anything too negative sets up avoidance as a default strategy, writes Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone in Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy (New World Library, 2012). *"Yet the more we shy away from something we find difficult, the less confident we become that we can deal with it."*

When the avoidance of emotional distress becomes the habit of a culture, it "creates a barrier to publicly acknowledging upsetting information. This in turn leads to a selective screening out of aspects of reality that seem too painful to bear, to distressing to contemplate."

In short: we don't want to feel the truth of the situation our world is currently in.
Even shorter: we need to.

Looking into the pain of the world, holding it, feeling it, means we care. And not only this, it's a place to then act from. As Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone write:
"If our world is dying piece by piece without our publicly and collectively expressing our grief, we might easily assume that these losses aren't important. Honouring our pain for the world is a way of valuing our awareness, first, that we have noticed, and second, that we care. Intellectual awareness by itself is not enough. We need to digest the bad news. That is what rouses us to respond."

Dr Sally Gillespie's research findings, as illustrated in her book, echo this:

"When we grieve for what is lost, it clears the way towards a strengthening of love and commitment for what remains. In time this may build a desire to make good from the loss by repairing what damages we can and/or compensating for them. Grief can make us both very sad and very motivated to act."

I know I need to be with my pain and sadness, to talk about and honour it, but I'm not sure how. I'm scared of not being able to keep my head above water. I don't want to be stuck in a swamp of eco-grief for the rest of my life – I want to feel as though I can do something good for the world, and I'm certainly not ready to sink into the mud. The work of Sally Gillespie, Joanna Macy and many others offers wise guidance in understanding, honouring and acting on ecological grief.

CONNECTION

"Getting together and talking about what's going on" is the first step towards cultivating resilience, Sally tells me. Whilst it's important to feel for the world, it's equally as important that these emotions are not carried alone. We're dealing with big, heavy stuff. And like all big, heavy stuff, the load is much lighter when shared. This might mean creating rituals, sharing circles, and building strong local community bonds. Sally writes:

"Many traditional cultures have rituals of mourning that give full weight and time to the psychological work of grieving. Wailing, laments, poems, storytelling and periods of retreat all play a part in expressing and ritualising loss in the company of others. However, most people in contemporary cultures have lost these traditional mourning rituals and with them the ability to grieve well. Grief has become a taboo emotion which can leave those who are

mourning feeling isolated, without sufficient acknowledgement, support or containers for the intense and raw emotions they are experiencing. To grieve well we need to be able to share our sorrows and feel some sense of belonging with others. When we experience this, we can in turn hold and comfort others in their grief… Sharing grief affirms communal life. It fuels conversations about what matters most, making fertile ground for initiatives based on common values."
Thoughtful, respectful and truthful conversations are where *"we find out we are not alone in what we are thinking and feeling in response to climate disruption",* writes Sally. *"We are all in uncharted territory, looking for words to describe what we, as a species, have not experienced before."*

PERSPECTIVE

It's easy to get swept up in the bad news stories. When climate change is mentioned in the media it's rarely a tale of inspiration, and most often an alarming scientific report, a tale of government inaction and denial, or the story of yet another species extinction. Whilst it's important to know what's going on, to understand the situation as best we can, it's important, too to balance our intake by seeking out good news stories. There's incredible things happening in the world right now and immensely powerful solutions that already exist, like trees (I know, so retro!)

Sally Gillespie suggests that it's also a good idea to monitor exposure to climate related content. Most news articles and reports begin by listing a bunch of terrifying statistics, which if you don't already know about, might be good, but if you do, can be very traumatic. *"People who get involved in climate change can get very traumatised by reading statistic after statistic after statistic on the loss, the acceleration, the tipping points. It's not that it's not true, but it doesn't do anything for us psychologically to keep reading it over and over again. Once we know, we know."*

AWE AND WONDER

"Cherishing Earth's beauty is perhaps the greatest healing we can bring to our world and ourselves", writes Sally. "There is so much to marvel about as we learn more about the intricacies and elegance of our world's ecosystems, and so much to love; both with an instinctive awe that has long been a part of the human psyche, and with a conscious appreciation informed by the latest research."

Love is a salve for my grief for the world. It keeps my heart open. No matter how sad or anxious I am, I cannot help but be awed by layers of life around me. Love is also the foundation for my climate action, underpinning everything I do as an individual and as part of a wider collective of creative carers. It's not often spoken about in dialogue around environmental activism but perhaps it should be. Sally Gillespie writes:
"Developing knowledge about, and relationship with, the natural world through education, connection and observation transforms us and the world. Joy, grief, curiosity, tenderness and awe are easily stirred when we bring full attention to Earth's ways and her current plights. Making ourselves open and vulnerable to this most primal connection while

informing ourselves about what we are observing in today's world works the ground for new myths and imaginings. Ones that change visions, stir minds and hearts, transform values and motivate actions."

NARRATIVE

Our lives are framed not by a fixed reality but by the stories we tell ourselves. They're the cultural narratives we're born into, and the individual tales reinforced by ourselves and those around us. Something we don't often realise is that we have the power to choose the stories we tell about our relationship to the world and ourselves.

Narrative has a huge influence on how we see the current state of our planet. Joana Macy and Chris Johnston suggest there's three main stories that act as a frame for how we see things. In the first of these stories, Business as Usual, *"the defining assumption is that there is little need to change the way we live. Economic growth is regarded as essential for prosperity, and the central plot is about getting ahead."* The second, The Great Unravelling, draws attention to the disasters that we're moving towards, and those that have already happened, thanks to the first story, Business as Usual. *"It is an account, backed by evidence, of the collapse of ecological and social systems, the disturbance of climate, the depletion of resources, and the mass extinction of species."* Both of these narratives sound very familiar to me.

The third story is called The Great Turning. It's *"embodied by those who know the first story is leading us to catastrophe and who refuse to let the second story have the last word. Involving the emergence of new and creative human responses, it is about the epochal transition from an industrial society committed to economic growth to a life-sustaining society committed to the healing and recovery of our world."*

As the authors suggest, there's no point arguing about which story is correct – they're all happening at the same time. The question is this: which story do you want to put your energy behind?

I sometimes get stuck in apocalyptic visions of the end of the earth, humanity, everything, which makes my sadness feel pointless and disabling. I can't count the times I've heard and thought words to the effect of *"It's all going to shit, so why bother?"* But, changing the story, and seeing my grief as an important underpinning for transformation is validating and empowering. Putting energy behind the story of The Great Turning, for example, allows space to explore new ways of being, thinking and acting.

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I was supposed to finish writing this essay yesterday, but instead spent the day with our local volunteer Rural Fire Service, preparing to defend our tiny settlement against bushfire. We blocked our gutters, set up pumps and ran hoses up the hill behind our houses. Our bags were packed and ready to be thrown into the boat for a quick getaway, if needed. The Sydney region was warned of 'Catastrophic Fire Danger', the first time the highest level of fire danger has been signaled since new Australian fire danger ratings were introduced in 2009. Schools were closed, people living near bushland were told to leave. It was surreal

and yet painfully real, and bought a future shaped by climate crisis sharply into focus. Something that always seemed conceptual rather than a lived reality, appeared suddenly, scarily, on my doorstep.

We were spared, but the fires are still raging. The forests are still being cleared for farmland. Species are still disappearing. The glossy black cockatoos may, one day, not return to the she-oaks behind my house. Closing down to the grief of the world will not stop these things happening. It serves only to stifle creativity and smother our capacity to care. Fully feeling it, on the other hand, might well help us cultivate our ability to nurture and grow the changes we need to make to sustain our home planet and all its inhabitants.

Sharing and honouring our grief for the world is a pathway towards building resilience and strength. I've realised this now. I've realised too, that as a culture we need to develop rituals and ways of talking about it. We live in an extraordinary time. And whilst we're faced daily with stories and feelings of loss and sadness, fear and anxiety, collectively we can process and transform these emotions into action grounded in care, compassion and connection. We can become more mature individually, culturally, and politically. We can write, and live, our own good news story.
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Further Reading and Resources

Sally Gillespie, Climate Crisis and Consciousness: Reimagining our World and Ourselves, Routledge, 2019. (Use discount code FLR40 for 20% off)

Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy, New World Library, 2012.

Kathryn Heyhoe, The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: talk about it, TED talk, 2018

Psychology for a Safe Climate website

Australian Psychological Society on coping with climate distress

Climate Crisis Conversations Podcast

There is suffering	*Many beings are numberless* *I wow to save them*
There is cause of suffering	*Greed hatred and ignorance rise endlessly,* *I wow to abbonden them*
There is end to suffering	*Dharma gates are countless* *I wow to wake to them*
End to suffering is the eight fold path	*Budhas way is unsurpassed* *I wow to embody it fully*

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Right understanding

Right thought

Right speech

Right action

Right livelihood

Right effort

Right mindfulness

Right concentration

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