

Guidebook for the Dying

A compilation of poetry
and writings to
read to the dying
or to read for yourself

Silver Bough: Scottish Folklore and Folk Beliefs

By George MacDonald

On either hand we behold a birth
Of which, as of the moon, we see but half.
We are outside the one,
Waiting for a life from the unknown.
We are inside the other,
Watching the departure of a spirit
From the womb of the world
Into the unknown.

To the region wither he goes,
The man enters newly-born.
We forget that it is a birth,
And call it death.
The body he leaves behind is but the placenta
By which he drew his nourishment from his Mother Earth.

And as the child-bed is watched on earth with expectance,
So the couch of the dying, as we call them,
May be surrounded by the birth watchers of the other world,
Waiting like anxious servants
To open the door
To which this world
Is but the wind-blown porch.

I Did Not Die

Author Unknown

Do not stand at my grave and forever weep.
I am not there; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and forever cry.
I am not there. I did not die.

Death is nothing at all

Canon Henry Scott Holland

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room.
I am I, and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, we are still.
Call me by my old familiar name,
speak to me in the easy way which you have always used.
Put no difference in your tone, wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Pray, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was,
let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of shadow on it.
Life means all that it ever meant, it is the same as it ever was;
there is absolutely unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am but waiting for you, for an interval somewhere very near,
just around the corner.
All is well.

Though I am Dead

Anonymous

Though I am dead grieve not for me with tears
think not of death with sorrowing and tears;
I am so near that every tear you shed
touches and tortures me though you think me dead.
But when you laugh and sing in glad delight,
my soul is lifted upward to the light.
Laugh and be glad for all that life is giving
and I, though dead, will share your joy in living.

The Prophet

Kahlil Gibran

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?
And what is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides,
that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?
Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.
And when you have reached the mountaintop, then you shall begin to climb.
And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

Live A Life That Matters

Author Unknown

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.
There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours, days.
All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.
Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.
It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.
Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.
So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire.
The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.
It won't matter where you came from,
or on what side of the tracks you lived.
At the end, whether you were beautiful or brilliant, male or female,
even your skin color won't matter.
So what will matter?
How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built;
not what you got, but what you gave.
What will matter is not your success, but your significance.
What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.
What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched,
empowered or encouraged others.
What will matter is not your competence, but your character.
What will matter is not how many people you knew,
but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.
What will matter is not your memories,
but the memories that live in those who loved you.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.
Choose to live a life that matters.

For Everything There Is A Season

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season,
and time for every matter under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and time for peace

Untitled

Anonymous

The tragedy of life is not death, but what we let die inside us while we live.

Decide to be happy

Render others happy

Proclaim your joy

Love passionately your miraculous life

Do not wait for a better world

Be grateful for every moment of life

Switch on and keep on the positive buttons marked:

Optimism

Serenity

Confidence

Positive thinking

Love

Pray and thank God every day

Meditate

Smile

Laugh

Whistle

Dance

Sing

Look with fascination at everything. Fill your heart and lungs with liberty.

Be yourself fully and immensely.

Feel God in your body, mind, heart and soul and be convinced of eternal life.

From The Book of the Dead

Ancient Egyptian (c. 4500 BC)

As each day ends may I have lived,
That I may truly say:
I did no harm to human kind,
From truth I did not stray;
I did no wrong with knowing mind,
From evil I did keep;
I turned no hungry person away,
I caused no one to weep.

When Death Knocks

Rabindranath Tagore

On the day when death will knock at thy door,
What wilt thou offer to him?
I will set before my guest the full vessel of my life.
I will never let him go with empty hands.
All the sweet vintage of all my autumn days and summer nights,
All the earnings and gleanings of my busy life
Will I place before him, at the close of my day.

Not In Vain

Emily Dickinson

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain:
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

Death Comes

by Mary Oliver

When death comes like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox;
when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,
I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?
And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,
and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,
and each name a comfortable music in the mouth
tending as all music does, toward silence,
and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.
When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.
When it is over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Contemporary Blessing

Mark Frydenberg

May your eyes see the best in all people,
May your mouth speak wisely,
May your hands reach out to others,
May your feet walk the path of your heart's desire.
May you have the patience to learn, and the spirit to be playful.
May you have the will to imagine, and the freedom to dream.
May your life be long and happy,
May your good name shine,
May Tradition show you The Way,
May you find your place in the world.
May there be love in your heart, and a smile on your face.
May your days be filled with promise and wonder.
May God grant you peace.

Next time

by Mary Oliver

Next time what I'd do is look at the earth before saying anything. I'd stop just before going into a house and be an emperor for a minute and listen better to the wind or to the air being still.

When anyone talked to me, whether blame or praise or just passing time, I'd watch the face, how the mouth has to work, and see any strain, any sign of what lifted the voice.

And for all, I'd know more -- the earth bracing itself and soaring, the air finding every leaf and feather over forest and water, and for every person the body glowing inside the clothes like a light.

A Song of Living

Amelia Josephine Burr

Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

I have sent up my gladness on wings,
to be lost in the blue of the sky. I have run and leaped with the rain,
I have taken the wind to my breast.

My cheek like a drowsy child to the face of the earth I have pressed.

Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

I have kissed young love on the lips, I have heard her song to the end.

I have struck my hand like a seal in the loyal hand of a friend. I have known the peace of heaven,

the comfort of work done well.

I have longed for death in the darkness and risen alive out of hell.

Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

I give a share of my soul to the world where my course is run.

I know that another shall finish the task I must leave undone.

I know that no flower, nor flint was in vain on the path I trod.

As one looks on a face through a window, through life I have looked on God.

Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

A Blessing for All Beings

Metta Sutta translated by Thich Nhat Hahn

May everyone be happy and safe,

and may their hearts be filled with joy.

May all living beings live in security and in peace

beings who are frail or strong,

tall or short, big or small,

visible or not visible, near or far away,

already born or yet to be born.

May all of them dwell in perfect tranquility.

Let no one do harm to anyone.

Let no one put the life of anyone in danger.

Let no one, out of anger or ill will,

wish anyone any harm.

An Invisible Cloak

Irish poem

On the day when the weight deadens on your shoulders and your stumble,
may the clay dance to balance you.
And when your eyes freeze behind the grey window
and the ghost of loss gets in your,
may a flock of clors, indigo, red, green and azure blue
come to awaken in you a meadow of delight.
When the canvas frays on the ship of thought
and a stain of ocean blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of moonlight to bring you safely home.
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of your ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow wind work these words of love around you,
an invisible cloak to mind your life.

Comforting Blessing

Kirsti A. Dyer

May you see the light in the darkness during these challenging times.
May you feel the loving presence of those who hold you in their thoughts and prayers.
May your spirit find what it needs to sustain you on this journey.
May you discover your inner strength & face all difficulties with dignity & grace.
May you be filled with comfort, love, strength, grace & a lasting sense of peace.

Psalm 139

King James Bible

Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit,
Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?
If I shall ascend up into heaven, Thou art there,
If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed

Walt Whitman

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death . . .

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come,
Come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou has taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Bathed in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

Untitled

Apollonius of Tyana

There is no death of any one but only in appearance, even as there is no birth of any save only in seeming. The change from being to becoming seems to be birth, and the change from becoming to being seems to be death, but in reality no one is ever born, nor does one ever die. --

To One Shortly To Die

Walt Whitman

From all the rest I single out you, having a message for you,
You are to die--let others tell you what they please, I cannot prevaricate,
I am exact and merciless, but I love you--there is no escape for you.

Softly I lay my right hand upon you -- you just feel it,
I do not argue -- I bend my head close and half envelop it,
I sit quietly by -- I remain faithful,
I am more than nurse, more than parent or neighbor,
I absolve you from all except yourself --spiritual, bodily, -- that is eternal -- you yourself will surely escape,
The corpse you will leave will be but excrementitious.

The sun burst through in unlooked for directions!
Strong thoughts fill you, and confidence -- you smile!
You forget you are sick, as I forget you are sick,
You do not see the medicines -- you do not mind the weeping friends -- I am with you,
I exclude others from you -- there is nothing to be commiserated,
I do not commiserate -- I congratulate you.

Green Mist Relaxation

Whenever you journey find the energy place in time and space you are comfortable with. When you have found it position yourself so you are not constricting your breathing or the blood flow through your form. If you have on belts or collars that are too tight, or if you have on stockings that are binding, these please remove. And situating yourself comfortably, we will begin this journey.

And in the center of this space as you breathe very deeply and comfortably and begin to relax the green mist begins to form. First as a tiny dot in this space and then you can begin to see it swirl round and round as it begins to grow larger and larger. It seems to be filling the space and you watch the sparkling essence of the green mist as it swirls and moves round and round. Soon you can tell it is at the bottoms of your feet. And you enjoy the embrace of the green mist. As it massages and relaxes the bottoms of your feet, all tiredness is gone. The peace of the green mist begins to settle into your feet forming the foundation of who you are.

And up into the ankles the green mist travels and as it travels you can feel all the tiredness of the day, all the burdens of these times passing away. And the green mist continues to travel up your legs, massaging your calves. Relaxing, relaxing, relaxing. Into your knees the green mist travels. Providing healing, and support and renewed energy. Vigor. Up, up the green mist continues to flow gently swirling round your upper legs and up into your hips. Your legs are covered and totally relaxed at this point.

And now it's time for your back, your torso as the green mist begins to cover you like a warm, wonderful blanket, relaxing as it moves up your back. You can feel each vertebrae relaxing. And you continue to breathe deeply as the green mist leaves it relaxing, taking all tension away.

And up into your shoulder-area the green mist travels. And your shoulders relax. And your upper arms are covered now with the green mist. Your elbows and your forearms. All relaxing. The fingers, you can feel each one as the green mist begins to cover, like a beautiful glove, both your hands. And they relax.

And the green mist now moves into your neck, relaxing your neck and up into your head, covering your jaw. And your jaw relaxes. The corners of your mouth relax. You can feel your eyelids relax. All tension is gone. The green mist completely covers you now. You are safe, you are secure, you are comfortable and relaxed.

And now as you take one deep, deep breath in the green mist enters inside your form and like a beautiful river of healing energy it flows through your whole body, caressing all of the insides of you just as it has the outside. And all the cells and the organs and the systems begin to relax. And as you breathe again, you can feel the relaxing of them all.

Feeling relaxed, you know that your form is safe.

PAUSE

And finding yourself back in this place and noticing the green mist beginning to recede. With each exhale you can see it leaving your form, leaving behind great healing and peace. Your head is relaxed, your neck. Down it shimmers across your shoulders and your back, your hands and arms. Down your torso past your hips, your legs and knees. Your calves, into your ankles. Lingering for a moment at your feet. And then forming once more a tiny dot in this space.

And as you come fully back here in this place at this time, knowing that you have accomplished that which you wanted. And feeling refreshed and renewed, we say to you, we wish you well.

Creating Sanctuary (with Green Mist)

Sanctuary is a part of mind's relaxing, body's relaxing, world relaxing, energies relaxing all of that occurring. So, remove any constrictive clothing if you have thus around your throat and around your waist. If you have tight shoes on or constricting footwear, loosen or remove that.

It is the desire that the body be relaxed and comfortable and not cut off circulation to one part or another. In the course of the journey it may be that you may want to shift positions, and that is fine. It is not about becoming rigid and steadfast, but rather it is a beginning point for relaxing the form.

So beginning always with breathing, and taking some deep breaths, and allowing your breath to relax you as you begin. And lower your eyes so that they are comfortably closed and lying or sitting, even standing if you wish—comfortably.

Imagine that in the center of this space, a tiny dot of green mist is slowly beginning to form and as you watch, it begins to grow until it is the size of a tennis ball, and next a beach ball. And as it begins to expand, the green mist flows beautifully, circling round and round. And as you watch the shimmering green mist expand you notice that it touches the bottoms of your feet. And as it touches the bottoms of your feet, your feet begin to relax. The warmth of the green mist, the comfort begins to cover your feet. The toes and the tops of your feet and your ankles all relax. Any pain that has been in your ankles and feet, disappear. Any long trips and journeying you have done—walking with your feet, running with your feet—now is the time to relax.

The green mist surrounds your feet and begins to move slowly up your leg. The calves of your legs and your shins, are covered now in the green mist, and they relax. Into your knees flows the green mist, circling round and round. Relaxing, relaxing. All tension now is gone. Into your upper leg comes the green mist. Circling round ever higher, ever more, ever expanding until it comes into the area of your hips. And your whole bottom half is relaxed. Your legs and feet are relaxed. Even if you move them you can let them flop, they are relaxed. They will find their position.

And the green mist begins to surround your torso. And you can feel, as it ever so gently goes up your back, vertebrae by vertebrae—touches and relaxes— all tension now is gone from your lower back and it relaxes. Up your back, up your torso the green mist travels. Relaxing, relaxing, relaxing until it reaches the area of your shoulders, and they relax. All tension is gone.

The green mist surrounds each of your arms. First the upper arms, the elbows. Swirling, swirling. The wrist, the fingers surrounded in the green mist, and relaxed. Traveling on, the green mist surrounds your neck and your neck relaxes.

--pause--

The green mist moves into your jaw, around the back of your head. Your mouth relaxes. The area around your eyes relaxes. All tension is gone from your forehead. The top of your head, around your ears, all tension is gone and you are relaxed.

Now as you breathe deeply the green mist enters and begins to fill up your nasal passageways. The cavities, the sinus cavities, and your head begin to fill with the wonderful relaxing green mist. Even if there was stuffiness now there is open, clear breathing. Down into your lungs the green mist moves, spreading all inside your form, passing through all the systems, traveling along the bloodstream, moving into the bones, to the very, very tips of your toes, the very top of your head. Inside, each cell of your body is being bathed and relaxed by the green mist.

The form, the body, now is very comfortable and relaxed.

And taking a couple of deep breaths, allowing the mind now to become focused on its mission. Mind is going to create sanctuary. Sanctuary is a place of comfort, relaxation. There is no tension. There is no distress. Mind now is on an imaginary journey—a journey that takes it to many places. Mind now has a sense of moving as if it is moving.

And if you want to, you can imagine that mind is finding itself by a great ocean. You can feel the soft warmth of the sand under your feet as you move along the beach listening to the waves as they pound on the shore. The warmth of the sun, the sound of the gulls not far away. Perhaps the laughter of people, children giggling making sand castles. As you move closer to the shoreline, you can perhaps feel the moisture in the sand.

Or perhaps mind finds itself in a beautiful mountain village. And in this beautiful mountain village all around are high snow-capped peaks. And mind may find itself with great backpacks and warm clothing, smelling the fresh coolness of the air, feeling the warmth of the high sun, moving along a trail, reaching above the tree line even. Noticing some beautiful brown bears off in the distance, wondering what they are having for their lunch.

And taking some deep breaths, mind now may find itself in a more tropical setting, with ferns and beautifully colored birds singing, making strange sounds, wondering how could so many colors be on so few feathers, all at the same time. And mind is with the birds, as if sitting in a row on a beautiful banana tree limb, and picking a wonderful banana, and feeling the softness and yet firmness of it simultaneously. And peeling the beautiful banana, and tasting, savoring the richness. Filling all the senses, this marvelous banana. Filling up.

And noticing just off in the distance a honeycomb and hearing the bees inviting, inviting, inviting a visit. And walking over the softness of the ferns that have fallen on the floor, on the ground. And moving over to this wonderful hive and noticing how all the bees move back away. Reaching up and scooping a hand inside and allowing the honey—the richness of the honey—to drizzle through your fingers. And placing a drop or two on your tongue. Ah, the richness. The sweetness of the honey. And noticing just ahead a beautiful spring with water. And going over and dipping your hands in as if all the honey stickiness disappears. You can feel the coolness of the water going through your fingers as your hands scoop the water up. And tasting this water. It truly is the manna spoken of so heavenly.

And allowing your mind now to step back a few paces and realize that all of these energies are like a panoramic view. Mind can experience and be in all of them, or none of them. And realizing that sanctuary is a feeling mind has—or conjures—from experience. And allowing mind now to listen to the sounds of the word as it reverberates inside mind's self.

Sanctuary. Sanctuary. Sanctuary.

And allowing mind to open now and begin to identify where you are and what you are experiencing. Notice the vistas. What is it you see from your point of view? What is the texture under your feet? Or if you're lying down, under your whole body? What other sounds are you feeling? Let all of these fill your soul with the word sanctuary.

Notice the smells. What are the smells as you breathe deeply this word, sanctuary? And the tastes. What are the tastes that fill your mind's self when it hears the word, says the words, conjures the word sanctuary?

Whether or not you have now actually created a place, we can say to you, that you have. You have a way of knowing sanctuary. So let us begin with a trip to sanctuary. Imagine for a moment that mind is going to visit sanctuary. Imagine now that mind is at the threshold of sanctuary. It may be a threshold with a doorway. It may be a passageway of some other kind. It may be a tunnel. It may be a transporter. It may be a combination of all these things. But imagine, allow to come into your mind now, threshold of sanctuary.

Now allow mind to have some magical way of entering this threshold, entering into sanctuary. Allow mind now to take you across the threshold and into sanctuary. Have no fear. If it is a doorway, even with a combination lock, you will remember. It will be with you.

And as you step now into this wonderful place called sanctuary, take a look around at what you find. If you don't see a lot, what do you hear? What are the smells of sanctuary? The tastes of sanctuary? What does it feel like in sanctuary?

Take a good deep breath. And allow yourself to be in sanctuary.

And imagine now that you are in a beautiful garden of sanctuary. Personalize this garden. Any added touches you may especially want in this garden. Perhaps you love roses. Perhaps you love greenery. Perhaps you like beautiful statues. Fountains perhaps. Perhaps you need more trees, or fewer trees.

Imagine now that on a beautiful pathway—perhaps a pebbled pathway, or perhaps a concrete pathway, or perhaps a grassy pathway, whatever you want. Follow the pathway until you come to a beautiful garden bench. Notice your bench. What is it made of? What does it feel like? Go and sit down. Take a good deep breath from this beautiful bench in the garden of sanctuary.

And continue now to follow the path as it winds its way through, around and about sanctuary. What a beautiful garden. Your garden. You may change it in any way at any time. You may add things, or instantly find things that will go away. You have but to imagine.

And now imagine that you are at a structure of sanctuary. Perhaps it is a building. Perhaps it is a cathedral. Or perhaps it is a small tropical hut. Imagine that this is the building in sanctuary. Find the doorway and go in.

Notice what this beautiful building in sanctuary feels like. Smell the smells of this place. Is it alive with lots of growing things? Or perhaps it is smooth with marbled surfaces. Perhaps there is a fireplace, with a roaring, raging fire. Or perhaps it is a beautiful sunlit day and the sun is streaming in the windows dancing along the surface inside the room. As you make your way through the building notice there are many, many rooms. Many, many passageways. Hallways perhaps. Stairways perhaps, going up and going down if you wish. Perhaps it is a long, large building. Perhaps it is a small, tiny building. Perhaps it has round rooms. Perhaps it has octagonal rooms. Know that these building structures in sanctuary can change any way you want them to.

Notice how sanctuary feels. Perhaps you notice first the warmth. Or perhaps the freshness in the air. Notice how sanctuary sounds. Are you playing music in sanctuary? Are there animal friends in sanctuary? Is there the beautiful sound of the silence...of sanctuary?

Imagine now that you make your way to an entryway on the other side of this building. And as you open this structure ...let us pause for a moment.

And as you find your way to this entryway in back, open or pass through this entryway and notice where you are. Are you entering another structure? Is it outside? Is it a sunroom perhaps? Perhaps there is a pool. Are there places to sit down? Structure these however you want. If you want grass, make the grass whatever texture you want. Paint it with your mind's eye the color you want. Yes, of course you can have purple grass.

Notice if there are any rocks. Perhaps large rocks, small rocks. Sentinel rocks. Guardian rocks. Notice how these feel to you. Allow yourself to connect to everything here in this space as it too is a part of you.

As you continue now to walk further away from the building and look around, notice many passageways, many pathways. One is off to the side with a beautiful arbor and a gate. Surround your arbor with whatever growing thing you want, or have no growing thing if you want. The arbor could be metal, crystal, rock, natural, carved. Whatever your mind desires. And notice as you go through this entry arbor way, there are animals. All kinds of animals. This is the space where animals come to play. And as they all stop and they notice you, they all turn to look. And they say to you, "Welcome, to animal part of sanctuary." And if you want to, you may go sit down and be with them for a bit. Allow them to come and be with you. They are telling you they are here for you if you want them to accompany you on some journeys. Animal friends sometimes make great companions on some journeys. And thank them from your heart for being so much a part of sanctuary for you.

--pause--

And allow them to pour their feelings of love out for you. Filling you up and surrounding you.

And coming back through the arbor way, knowing that you can return to experience more of that area and the animal friends at any time.

And returning once more to this building of sanctuary, and making any changes you want to this external side of sanctuary. Adding a few things. Perhaps covering a picnic area. Perhaps adding some speakers for sounds and announcements if you want.

And noticing off to another side in this outside area, there is a pathway into the garden. And moving over that way you notice it is another path meeting up with the path you earlier traveled in the garden. And as you move through this path again, you come to a beautiful tree. And this beautiful tree is round and strong and yet rather soft to the touch. And it is a beautiful warm afternoon and you snuggle yourself under this tree. The roots coming out of the ground are large enough to make a wonderful place to sit, as if arms on a great chair are there for you. And as you lean your head back the tree seems to sway into just the right angle.

And in this comfortable place, nestled up against the tree of sanctuary, you notice straight ahead of you and walking toward you, a beautiful person. All you can see at first are the beautiful flowing robes of this one. But as the person draws nearer, you can make out facial features. And you notice the hands, how beautiful and soft the hands are. And as the person moves closer, you can notice on their countenance a beautiful smile. The smile extending from ear to ear. And as you watch this one come closer and closer, and sit down just at your feet with a great thud! ...to which both of you have a great laugh.

This one begins to tell you of three special gifts for your sanctuary, like sanctuary-warming gifts, like house-warming gifts. And from under these beautiful flowing robes, first comes a beautiful vase. And into your hands is placed this beautiful vase, and the ornate lid on top has carvings, magnificent carvings. Perhaps there are jewels embedded around this vase, or perhaps a painting on it. And the robed one begins to tell you, "This is filled with Love. The love energy you will take inside sanctuary. And the wonderful thing about this Vase of Love is, each time you pour it over yourself, or drink of it, the vase refills itself." And you go, "Oh. This is wonderful." And you say, "thank you."

And at that point this one pulls from under the flowing robes yet another vase! Holding it in the hands and says to you, "This is another vase for you." And you set the Love Vase down and grab this one. And you notice the lid on it also has beautiful carvings, beautiful painted pictures, jewels embedded, perhaps. And the robed one says to you, "This vase is filled with Hope. It is a second gift for your sanctuary. In it you will find hope. Whenever you pour over yourself or drink of it, the vase refills. It never runs out." And you are saying, "Thank you. Thank you for this beautiful gift."

At that point from under the flowing robes, the robed one brings yet a third vase. And says to you, "This is your third gift for sanctuary." You gently set the Hope Vase down and take this one in your hands. Notice it too is beautifully carved, painted scenes perhaps, embedded jewels perhaps. And the robed one says to you, "And this one is filled with Faith. And whenever you pour the faith over you, or drink of it, the vase refills. It has a never-ending supply. This is your third gift." And you say, "Thank you. Thank you so much for these beautiful gifts for sanctuary."

And the robed one helps you to your feet and helps you place these beautiful vases in your arms. And like a delicate child with three beautiful delicate children, you make your way back up to the building of sanctuary. And as you enter sanctuary's building again, you notice just the special room. And as you enter the room you see just the special spot for the three special vases of energy. One just for the Hope, one just for the Faith, and one just for the Love. And adjusting the lighting in the room, the temperature if you want, and adding anything into the room you would like. Know that this is a place in sanctuary where you can come and find Faith and Hope and Love. Replenishing yourself, renewing yourself with the energies used to create.

And leaving this room and feeling great thankfulness and gratitude in your heart for these wonderful gifts. And hearing, as if being spoken to you aloud, a voice saying, "There are many more gifts to fill sanctuary." Knowing that each time you come there will be new things to find, new things to place, new things to use in sanctuary.

And thanking all the sounds and the beauty of this place. And noticing some of the rooms that you perhaps hadn't noticed before. Noticing the walls and the floors and the ceilings, and making any changes you want. And looking out the window if you want, noticing what is just beyond the wall. Listening at an open window to the sounds of the oceans, and the mountains, and the animals. And smelling the fragrance of the flowers, and the plants, and the earth itself. And recognizing the richness of the thunderstorm off in the distance. Smelling the fragrance of the fresh rain as it makes its way to this part of sanctuary.

And finding a musical instrument just at this open window and picking it up and beginning to strum it and play it, or blow in it, or move it back and forth. Listening to the sound of the music of sanctuary as your instrument blends with all of the sounds and instruments and music of sanctuary. And knowing this place is truly home. It is as if you can hear the music coming home. You have truly come home.

--pause--

And knowing that this instrument and all others, and all the outside vistas, are yet to be explored many times in dreams, both at night and in the daytime. You will have plenty of time to explore sanctuary and add to the dimension of your experience.

Sanctuary is all that is. And the more you explore of it, the more of all that is you bring into your awareness.

And adjusting the window if you want, up or down. And fixing the lights and moving to the entryway—the front entryway of this building of sanctuary. And making your way across this threshold. And turning to look back at what a wonderful job you've done. And knowing that you can always visit sanctuary. It is where you live. If you ever think you are lost, you will find yourself here.

And making your way now to the threshold of sanctuary, and recognizing that this is your special place, your special entryway. And crossing back across the threshold of sanctuary, knowing that it is an unending, never-ending pathway always open to you. Without barricades

or barriers. And knowing that only those whom you invite in to sanctuary will be there with you.

And taking a deep, deep breath, and becoming aware once more of the green mist surrounding you in this place. And noticing now that the green mist's job is complete. And it begins slowly, slowly to make its way back down across your head and face. Rolling up like thousands of tiny fingers relaxing and healing as they move. And one big, deep exhale, and all the green mists from inside you meet up with the rolling mist as it goes down to your neck area. And down it continues to go into your shoulder area. Your hands and arms are exposed once more, the green mist enveloping itself as it moves down your torso leaving behind all relaxation and healing. Moving down past your hips. Down, down, your upper legs. Pausing for a moment at the knees. Feeling great healing strength in your legs. Down, down the green mist travels into your ankles, your feet and toes. Pausing for a moment at the bottom of your feet. Leaving great feelings of relaxation, good health and happiness. And great, great comfort.

And you notice the green mist is becoming a tiny, tiny speck in this space. And then—poof! Knowing that the green mist returns any time you think of it. Whenever you need healing or relaxing, you have but to imagine the speck of green mist and being immersed in it. You have but to think of sanctuary—the word—even sounding the word with your voice, you are instantly in that wonderful place. Any of your waking or sleeping hours you want, you can be and experience through sanctuary.

And taking a deep, deep breath and coming back fully to this place, wiggling your fingers and wiggling your toes and allowing your breath to return and ever so gently your eyes to open.

And knowing that the continuing growth of sanctuary, the continuing exploration of sanctuary is a wonderful, wonderful experience yet awaiting you. And returning fully to this place.

The Ah Breath Relaxation

Donna Belk

Please sit or lie down comfortably. If there is any tight clothing this is the time to loosen it. Take your time and just settle in to whatever feels comfortable to you. Allow the arms to be heavy. Allow the legs to be heavy. Soften and release the belly. Soften and release the jaw, the facial muscles. Just for these next few minutes relaxing.

And once you're settled, begin to notice your breath. How does your breath feel today? Does it feel full and relaxed? See if you can breathe a little more deeply. Ahhhhhh. Just let the breath deepen and relax. Gently, let it go.

Can you feel how the belly rises and falls in rhythm to the breath? Can you feel the air where it enters your nostrils? Can you feel the air cool against the back of your throat as you inhale, and warm against the back of your throat as you exhale?

We are looking for particular qualities of breath and that is that the breath is long, and deep, soft and easy, quiet and smooth. It's as if the breath were silk. Ahhhhhh.

And taking a moment to get a sense of your body. Relaxing the feet. Perhaps you can even feel sensation in your feet as you think about relaxing them. Allow a sense of relaxation to spread around the ankles. Swirling, covering your ankles with sparkles of relaxation and comfort. Ease and relaxation moves up into the shins and encircles the knees. Allow the relaxation to flow into the thighs - front of the thighs, inner thighs and backs of the thighs. If there is any last remnant of holding, gently let it go now. Ahhhhhh. It's as if the length of your legs are being massaged and soothed.

And for a moment focus on your belly. Can you follow the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe? Can you soften the belly so there is no holding? Just let it go. Now is the time for relaxation and ease. Now is the time for releasing any holding there might be. Gently, gently, let it soften, let it go.

The hips and buttocks and belly relax and sink back as if they are settling in even more. Just doing the best you can, right here and now. You're doing good work. Allow feelings of warm and softness to surround your belly and hips and move into the torso as if the whole of the inside of you is being stirred or gently rocked. Even relaxing the internal organs - the lungs, the heart, the kidneys, the liver (located on the right side tucked up underneath the ribs), and the spleen and pancreas (located on the left side tucked up underneath the ribs). Even your internal organs are relaxation and settling into their most comfortable position. They know how to do this. Gently letting go. Ahhhhhhhh.

Allow feelings of relaxation to swirl around the torso, the lower legs and feet, soothing anything that needs attention. Letting go. Releasing. Yes. Ahhhhhh.

Into the shoulders relaxation swirls allowing any holding to gently release. Down the arms, swirling, bringing feelings of great comfort and ease. Around the elbows relaxation swirls, into the forearms, the wrists. The backs of the hands, fingers and palms of the hands are

covered in soothing relaxation. Everything releases down and back. The entire arms are soothed and resting comfortably.

Into the neck relaxation pours - the front of the neck, sides of the neck, back of the neck. The entire neck is easy and comfortable. And the head is resting comfortably on top of the neck. The chin relaxed, the jaw loose - even the tongue resting in the floor of the mouth. All the tiny little muscles around the eyes and nose and mouth that give our face expression - all relax, release, let go. Ahhhhhh. The eyes sink back in their sockets. The brow is smooth. The mind relaxes. Even the scalp and hair relax and let go. Ahhhhh. Letting go. Relaxation swirls around each part of you, bringing comfort and ease. Ahhhhh. Yes.

And for the next few minutes allow yourself to float in feelings of comfort and ease.

--pause--

Gently, gently, coming back. Returning to the space of this room. With deep feelings of appreciation, thank your body for all the work it does on your behalf. And bringing great feelings of comfort to surround you, preparing to move the body again. You can wiggle fingers and toes if you wish, or turn in any direction your body would find enjoyable. There's no hurry. Slowly, at your own pace, reawakening.