

# Explorations: Meditations on Beauty

## Sensory Reflection

by Rev. Claudene (Deane) Oliva (excerpt)

Let us touch our eyes, happy to have the beauty of colors, line and shapes. Let us imagine the beauty of the world, the flowers, the trees, the babies, the puppies, all of the things in which we delight.

Let us touch our ears. Through them we hear glorious sounds, happy ones and sad ones, beautiful songs and lonely cries. Let us listen well so that we may live fully.

Let us touch our lips, for through these lips we receive the food and drink that nourishes us and helps us grow and we speak the words that express our thoughts and feelings.

Let us touch our hearts for it is our hearts that we know and share love.

Let us feel the world around us; In our imagination, let us experience the wind that cools us, the sun that warms us, and the rain that nourishes the earth and cleanses us all.

The beauty of life is all around us. Let us softly say, each in our own way, thank you. Thank you god, thank you nature, thank you world—and may we smile in delight.

Source: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/sensory-reflection>

## The Chalice of Our Being

by Rev. Richard Gilbert

"Each morning we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and give back." —Dag Hammarskjold

Each morning we hold out our chalice of being  
To be filled with the graces of life that abound—  
Air to breathe, food to eat, companions to love,  
Beauty to behold, art to cherish, causes to serve.

They come in ritual procession, these gifts of life.  
Whether we deserve them we cannot know or say,  
For they are poured out for us.  
Our task is to hold steady the chalice of our being.  
We carry the chalice with us as we go,  
Either meandering aimlessly,  
Or with destination in our eye.

We share its abundance if we have any sense,  
Reminding others as we remind ourselves  
Of the contents of the chalice we don't deserve.  
Water from living streams fills it  
If only we hold it out faithfully.

We give back, if we can, something of ourselves—  
Some love, some beauty, some grace, some gift.  
We give back in gratitude if we can  
Something like what is poured into our chalice of being—  
For those who abide with us and will follow.

Each morning we hold out the chalice of our being,  
To receive, to carry, to give back.



## Video Meditations

*Ferde Grofé - Grand Canyon Suite (complet)* This video features Leonard Bernstein conducting Ferde Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite* with the New York Philharmonic. The video combines music with beautiful photographs of the Grand Canyon. Five movements: I. Sunrise, II. The Painted Desert, III. On the Trail, IV. Sunset, and V. Cloudburst (Length 33:08)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVGOUHcdXy4>

*Contemplative Photography* by Lynne Guimond Sabean  
Photographs inspired by the Shambhala Buddhist concept of Miksang ("good eye") and the principles of photography as a contemplative/meditative practice. (Length 4:45)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpbroUMeSdw>

*Seeing: The Magic of Everyday Beauty*

from Miksang Contemplative Fotografie (Length: 8:46)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCZCAJzOcus>

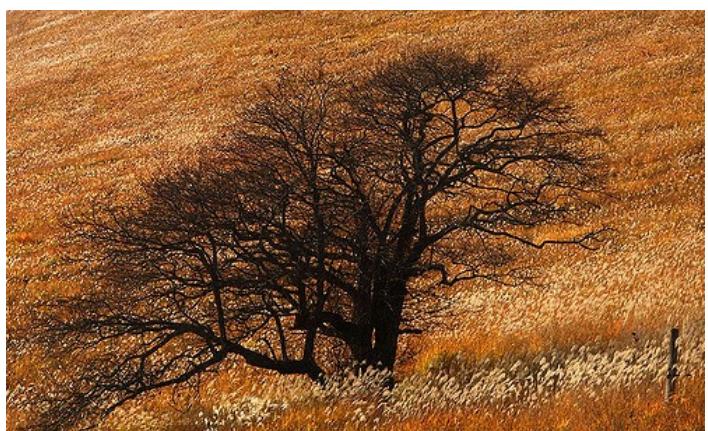
*Meditation on Beauty* by Ted Nottingham (Length 2:09)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlslZsGnWyA>

*ZEN - The Art of Photography\_0001.wmv* by Susanne Van Hulst (Length 4:32)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smwxCXH7ZMc>

*Wabi-Sabi* by Cristóbal Vila (Length 4:08) This video explores beauty in Japan. Link: <https://vimeo.com/184212106>



## Photo Credits

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Late Autumn, photo by Christoph Rupprecht, October 18, 2009, (CC BY-SA 2.0), <https://www.flickr.com/photos/focx/4057561953>