Earth Teacher

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON



JOURNALING PROMPTS

- **Wisdom**: What wisdom (caution or inspiration) does this Earth Teacher have to share with me? What do I need to do to be receptive?

- **Resilience**: What does this Earth Teacher have to offer to help me deepen my personal resilience? My community's collective resilience?

QUOTES

Like the sea, we humans are shrouded in mystery in many ways. We act and think and feel for reasons that are often as unknown as they are known. While some of us may like to believe we're rational creatures—and we certainly don't want to discount our ability to reason—the truth is that we are also irrational creatures, often acting out of pain and not even aware of it. ~ Jason Cook

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You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty. ~ Mahatma Gandhi

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i was learning about waves. what comes in must go out, and things get carried in both directions. like breath, the ocean can hold contradictory movement. if you move towards a wave, you can ride it out, without giving up much of your starting position or strength. if you try to stand still, or run away, it knocks you over.

this makes me think of conflict resolution, and action. moving towards our opposition allows us to be resilient and hold our truth. staying where we are, or running away, our opposition will knock us flat.

depth is relative. at the peak of the wave it can seem you are very deep, and then when it pulls back to the ocean you realize you are still on shallow ground. to go deep you have to actually swim away from the shore, and any perceived safety…when you can't feel the floor anymore, you begin to experience what depth is.

getting caught in an idea of change does not actually transform you – it can pass over you like a wave and you are still on shallow ground. the fear you feel when the floor drops out can be a good thing – even if you are floating, flying on the surface, you are still in deeper water, where a greater volume is moving. your insignificance can liberate you into feeling how to move, and how to be. ~ adrienne maree brown

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You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf. ~ Jon Kabat-Zinn

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Life's a vast sea that does its mighty errand without fail, painting in unchanged strength though waves are changing. ~ George Elliot

POETRY

Something is Broken by Karen G. Johnston

It is not bone.
Not my heart.
Not a beloved's body,
not even a stranger's.

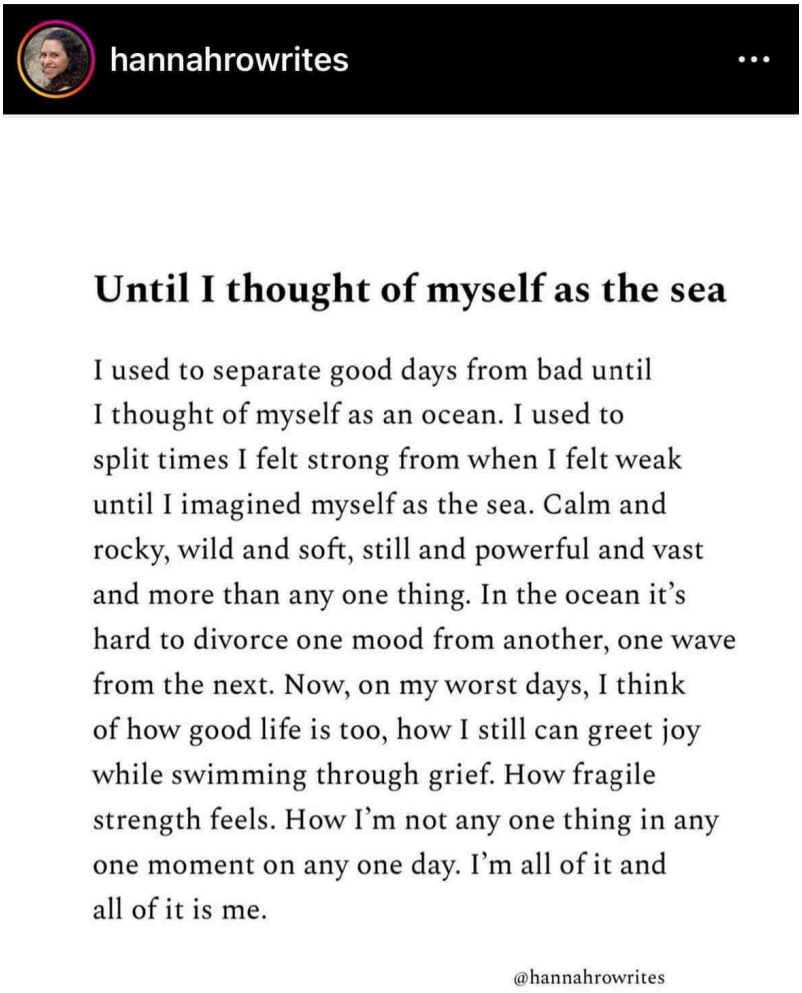
Unfamiliar peace below
as shards tumble
in this latest ocean:
now stormy,
eventually calm,
always and ever moving.

So much collision
becomes sea glass.
It cannot help itself.

All broken things mend:
bones knit,
skin scabs over,
hearts love anew,
or they don't.

Even shattered glass
finds its way
into mosaic,
different from bottle
but still,

translucent.



Ocean by Mary Oliver

I am in love with Ocean
lifting her thousands of white hats
in the chop of the storm,
or lying smooth and blue, the
loveliest bed in the world.
In the personal life, there is
always grief more than enough,
a heart-load for each of us
on the dusty road. I suppose
there is a reason for this, so I will be
patient, acquiescent. But I will live
nowhere except here, by Ocean, trusting
equally in all the blast and welcome
of her sorrowless, salt self.

I Go Down To The Shore
by Mary Oliver

I go down to the shore in the morning
and depending on the hour the waves
are rolling in or moving out,
and I say, oh, I am miserable,
what shall—
what should I do? And the sea says
in its lovely voice:
Excuse me, I have work to do.

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Fear by Kahlil Gibran

It is said that before entering the sea
a river trembles with fear.

She looks back at the path she has
traveled,
from the peaks of the mountains,
the long winding road crossing forests
and villages.

And in front of her,
she sees an ocean so vast,
that to enter
there seems nothing more than to
disappear forever.

But there is no other way.
The river can not go back.

Nobody can go back.
To go back is impossible in existence.

The river needs to take the risk
of entering the ocean
because only then will fear disappear,
because that's where the river will know
it's not about disappearing into the
ocean,
but of becoming the ocean.

The Hunt by Laura Soloman

It's a mystery to me
(though I'm sure science knows)
why sometimes the beach is full of shells:
some full of life, some empty,
simple, ornate,
all sizes and colors, I
can barely walk three feet without finding
Miracles.

Today, I walked and found
no creature-full or creature-less shells, but
seaweed in piles of
brown, green, yellow, gray;
slimy water-filled sacs;
reeds, sponges;
and brain-looking cases that slosh.

The ocean gives all she has to offer.

It's up to me to find
the miracle.

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Trough by Judy Brown

There is a trough in waves,
A low spot
Where horizon disappears
And only sky
And water
Are our company.

And there we lose our way
Unless
We rest, knowing the wave will bring us
To its crest again.

There we may drown
If we let fear
Hold us within its grip and shake us
Side to side,
And leave us flailing, torn, disoriented.

But if we rest there
In the trough,
Are silent,
Being with
The low part of the wave,
Keeping
Our energy and
Noticing the shape of things,
The flow,
Then time alone
Will bring us to another
Place
Where we can see
Horizon, see the land again,
Regain our sense
Of where
We are,
And where we need to swim.

MUSIC

"Ever So Lonely" - Sheila Chandra

"Everybody's Got to Learn" by First Aid Kit

"A Safe Place to Land" by Sara Bareilles with John Legend

JOKES / PUNS

Why don't fish play piano? Because you can't tuna fish!

What did the ocean say to the beach? Nothing, it just waved!

MEDITATION

Contemplation on No-Coming and No-Going by Thich Nhat Hanh

This body is not me.
I am not limited by this body,
I am life without boundaries.
I have never been born,
and I have never died.

Look at the ocean and the sky filled with stars,
manifestations from my wondrous true mind.
Since before time, I have been free.
Birth and death are only doors through which we pass, sacred thresholds on our journey.
Birth and death are a game of hide-and-seek.

So laugh with me,
hold my hand,
let us say goodbye,
say goodbye to meet again soon.

We meet today.
We will meet again tomorrow.
We will meet at the source every moment.
We meet each other in all forms of life.

IMAGES FOR CONTEMPLATION





