



# the poetry of YOGA

*A Contemporary Anthology  
Volume I*



**Edited By HawaH  
Invocation By Shiva Rea**



# **The Poetry of Yoga**

**A Contemporary Anthology  
Volume I**

**Edited By HawaH  
Invocation By Shiva Rea**



First Edition

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*Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.*

*-Leonard Cohen*



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# *Compassion*

Your shoes  
Are on my feet  
I know now  
Why your socks are ripped  
The draft moves my heart.

-HawaH



## Prasad

That sound you hear?  
It's my frozen heart melting.

Bringing each drop to my lips,  
I cover my body freely,

wet with your name.  
My lips become your lips,

my body your body.  
When I take you into me,

the world goes on forever.  
I will find peace

in these fragments.  
This pain will be the cure.

Prasad: Sanskrit, literally, "A precious gift." An offering, usually a sweet or some other food, blessed by an enlightened being and given to her/ his followers.



## **In a Corner of the Body, a Thief Sits Waiting**

In a corner of the body,  
a thief sits waiting  
to steal your affection.  
Like a pickpocket in the black market,  
he hides in the dark alleys of the body,  
but your virtues are a lantern  
rooting him out.

Catch a glimpse  
as he rounds the corner  
hoping to hide in the hip joint.  
Watch him fly  
as he darts between the shoulder blades,  
wedges himself therein.  
Marvel as he ducks  
under the sacrum, sticks there  
like a thumbtack.  
Rejoice to see him tumble  
headfirst into the pelvic bowl,  
jeering as he peers around its rim.

Don't let his alacrity fool you.  
He's as slow as what limits you,  
holding you back just as much.  
Once you catch him with your awareness,  
don't throw him into prison.  
Don't bind him up in rope.  
Rather, hang him out in the light,  
and praise him effusively.

For when the chase is over,  
he will have taught you  
the many secrets of the maze,  
and you can start to polish  
all those precious gems  
he's been guarding.



## **In Me**

Once, I was looking for fireflies in the night,  
Now, I find all the stars are shining in me.

Once, I was getting lost on the way,  
Now, I find all roads joining in me.

Once, long seasons passed in waiting,  
Now, all meetings are happening in me.

Once, even the rivers were running dry,  
Now, all the oceans are dancing in me.

Once, the leaves of autumn were floating,  
Now, a million springs are blooming in me.

Once, each moment seemed full of clamour,  
Now, even time has fallen silent in me.

Once, even sparks were missing in life,  
Now, a thousand lamps are alight in me.

Once, hands were joined in prayer,  
Now, infinite blessings reside in me.

Once, the soil of the heart was parched,  
Now, bountiful showers are pouring in me.

Once, the earth was just like a prison,  
Now, the boundless sky lives in me.



## **Gratitude for the Mat**

I lay you down to greet the sun,  
a firm base for my tadasana.  
You grab my hands as I bow down,  
securing my pose in your grip,  
never the first to let go.

As breath stretches limbs,  
heavy memories trapped in  
cells shed from my skin.  
You fold them up in your tight lips,  
never to speak of them again.

You are my rock, my roots,  
my cradle in Savasana.  
You transform from solid to soft,  
echoing the process of practice.  
Only you witness those sweet divine moments  
when tears slip from my face to yours.

A closing OM benediction  
soaks into your fibers,  
ending our union for now.  
I say goodbye with a curl of my fingers  
and fasten you up,  
hoping to soon meet again.

And so, my loyal friend,  
rolled in the corner  
like a fresh cut log,  
waiting in your quiver to be  
unwrapped for worship,  
I thank you.



## **Love Is**

Love is an illusion until you can love yourself  
in your disappointment,  
in your uncertainty,  
in a vacuum of nothingness.

Love is moving out of fear of your body, your mind,  
your self into the quest of acceptance.

Love is feeling wretched, and knowing it's okay.  
love is listening to beads pour;  
love is the burble of brooks,  
the beat of your heart.

Love is letting yourself be in love,  
out of love, tired of love.

Love is all of it because  
you and only you,  
know the courage it takes  
to be in love  
with you,

when your body screams,  
No.



## **A Daily Practice**

Weight on my hands, knees bent,  
arms like metal brackets, elbows pointed,  
making 90-degree angles of my arms.  
If I were stronger I'd lift one knee and balance it  
on the table I've made between forearm  
and elbow, but with a body not yet  
fit after carrying and birthing a third  
child, I'd rather assume child's pose—

Arms flung forward, kneeling in surrender.  
The teacher says: Fear limits us.  
I've been fearful all my life: of elevators, escalators,  
flash mobs, planned mobs, on New Year's Eve,  
Times Square on a spring day,  
streets littered with too many souls,  
vultures circling skyscrapers, alligators.

The teacher says: Can you play with fear?  
What he means is can you make a space  
within your fear for the grace of one breath?  
Can you breathe in it, can you breathe through it?  
Can you balance it with peace, with hope?  
When I taught second graders how  
to write poems, I asked them think about hope  
and fear. To them, hope was anything  
from "hugging my mother" to "having dinner  
with my whole family." Fear was more than once  
"hearing gun shots on my street when I go  
to sleep" and "not passing into the third grade."



I rise up, with shoulders solid as pylons  
in the ocean. One knee balances on my forearm.  
I lean forward, lifting the other leg. My fear hollows  
in the wave of each breath. My fear  
like the cicada shells I'd find in springtime:  
hard, brown, brittle. I never saw one shed  
its shell, never witnessed the change from nymph to adult,  
from one way of being to another, but at night  
it happened again and again. Moon as witness,  
stars as witness. Nothing in this class  
is as scary as life. I unbind and emerge. Space  
in each breath, opening in the body, the mind,  
feet parallel, strong center, palms together. The world  
outside, outside. The teacher's voice within: Your  
practice begins when you leave this room.



## **God, Whispering**

Inside of  
one snowflake  
there is a  
waterfall  
where God is  
taking a bath.



## **Bloom**

Never forget that you longed for this.  
Even as you begin to complicate your contemplations,  
considering the many sub-standard sensations  
existence tends to thrust upon one  
in those withering, early hours of the morn'  
when even Marigolds,  
amidst the overwhelming fields  
of Springtime's fingerpaints,  
occasionally entertain the notion of "calling in sick",  
yet somehow  
still manage  
to rise to the occasion  
and bloom.



**Waterasana**

I am liquid  
hips pouring  
a fluid spine  
while shoulders  
cascade down  
a flowing waterfall  
this buoyant body's  
carving canyons  
etching out my history  
in supplicate sandstone  
mellifluous sounds resonate  
from this splashing  
two arms trickle  
towards the earth  
out of a pool of muscle, bone  
as my ocean of breath, dulcet  
laps at the shores of simple  
consciousness



## **Tell Me How**

I am not impressed  
With the type of car you drive  
Tell me how you...  
Roll on your own two feet

I am not impressed  
With how much money you have  
Tell me how you...  
Find riches in simplicity

I am not impressed  
With your popular friends and spouse  
Tell me how you...  
Have your own game too

I am not impressed  
With your cool—exclusive groups  
Tell me how you...  
Stand alone, as spirit of conviction

I am not impressed  
With your trophy, stuffed animals  
Tell me how you...  
Find strength in preservation of life

I am not impressed  
With your fancy commercial foods  
Tell me how you...  
Find heaven in a leaf of kale

I am not impressed  
With polished words and stylish clothes  
Tell me how you...  
See beauty in the heart and soul



I am not impressed  
With your political party  
Tell me how you...  
Resist team play and peer pressure

I am not impressed  
With your boxed religious speeches  
Tell me how you...  
See all ways, as different paths up the mountain

I am not impressed  
With your degrees and education  
Tell me how you...  
Learned from oceans and mountains

I am not impressed  
With what you think you know  
Tell me how you...  
Aspire to learn from others

I am not impressed  
With your number of lovers  
Tell me how you...  
Hug the homeless and love kindness

I am not impressed...  
With most of the usual things  
Tell me how you...  
Ride rainbows and water dreams

Tell me how you...  
Stay Human  
Please do.



## **Love in the Ocean**

I made love to the ocean today...  
Wrapped my legs around her waves  
Dug my fingers into her sandy back

I made love to the ocean...  
Dove head first into bubbles foaming at her mouth  
My hair was pulled out of its braids  
By her salty determined waters

Actually, I might be mistaken  
Maybe it was the ocean that made love to me?

She wrapped her kelp around my wrists  
Squeezed me into one of her shells

I think I made the hermit crabs jealous...  
and the dogs bark at her

For a minute I wondered what would happen  
If we married and had children?

Would the dolphins finally move out of the house...  
and the jellyfish grow brains?

I made love today,  
but it's probably nothing like those  
with them dirty minds think

You see, I didn't use any protection  
stripped down naked  
and dove right in.



## **Giant Earplugs**

The mountains this morning  
Are giant earplugs  
Deafening all sound  
In the canyon of my mind.  
The sky is thin  
But a sheet of glass  
Reflecting back to me  
The pitter-patter of my thoughts.  
Ozone.



## **Flying at Night**

From up here, I can see clearly.

Faint flickering lights hint at the path of a winding road  
That stretches out across the land.  
Dice thrown on the table of the night.

The light of a town glares in the distance,  
A burning ember held in the black palm of the night.  
People are drawn to this cold fire  
to live near others of their kind.

I can see their lives from here.

Another faint spark flickers  
in the dark distance.  
An outpost at the edge of what men know...

Let me live there,  
on that edge that swallows men  
and their electricity.  
Embracing all in silent wonder.

Fearless.

Gigantic.

Invisible.



## **Sunset Sandhya**

Solstice Canyon is the edge  
that has dissolved all my practices.

Sitting here at sunset,  
the peak of the day where breath hovers,

a presence permeates this valley

ancestors  
vivid colors,  
the scent of wild sage, fennel, rosemary,  
the brilliant fireball of the Sun  
the ocean becoming sky on the horizon  
a hawk soaring without effort  
making One song of this moment.

As the sky melts into orange, purple and blue,  
my eyes bathe in sublime beauty  
my practices wash down my cheeks

no-thing is left  
only the breath dancing  
in everything.



*The Poetry of Yoga* is a modern day collection of poetry compiled and edited by artist, poet, and yogi HawaH. This first volume is distilled from over 1,500 pages, submitted from 16 different countries, featuring writing from:

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