



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2022
SPRING
QUARTERLY
REPORT

ABOUT US



Description of CEDAR

CEDAR (Community for the Experience and Development of Awakening and Responsibility) is an international network of communities working together to create a more trustworthy culture through monastic training and leadership development. At CEDAR, we are creating monastic academies—twenty-first-century educational institutions for the spiritual leaders needed for this time of crisis. MAPLE in Vermont was the first established community, and we have now expanded to include Oak in California and Willow in Canada.

History of MAPLE

MAPLE (Monastic Academy for the Preservation of Life on Earth) is a full-time residential mindfulness and leadership training program to develop awakened leaders. Founded in 2011 in Burlington, VT, MAPLE now runs a world-class monastic training center on 125 acres in Lowell, VT. We are also building an adjacent village to scale trustworthy culture and values to impact the globe.

History of Oak

Oak is a monastic academy founded in 2018 that provides monastic training, trustworthy friendship, and spiritual guidance to those addressing society's greatest challenges in the San Francisco Bay Area.

History of Willow

Willow is the newest monastic academy located near Toronto—the first international member of CEDAR. Founded in 2020, Willow brings modern monastic training to the many beautiful communities in Canada, particularly those in Toronto and Montreal.

Center for Mindful Learning

Center for Mindful Learning (CML) is the legal, non-profit name of our United States 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2011. CML has supported mindfulness projects such as Modern Mindfulness for Schools (ModMind), the Monastic Academy, and Mindful City Project.

JOIN US

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ONLINE RESOURCES

www.monasticacademy.org
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www.youtube.com/c/CenterforMindfulLearning
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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

As I write this letter, I feel grief to see the grass outside my window. March in Vermont ought to have several feet of snow. Seven years ago, I joined MAPLE and thought we could still prevent climate change. But climate change had already arrived. Now, we must fundamentally adapt our way of life. Impermanence. Vulnerability. Intimacy. As monastics aspiring to effect global systems change, we seek to respond to the world's needs with inner transformation, communal transformation, and global transformation.

In late January, three of our residents returned from their solitary cabin retreats, each lasting about two months. Khemā spoke about the importance of faith and throwing yourself in. Ryūshin shared his two months of metta practice. Hōshin taught us the wisdom in paradoxes. Having their presence and leadership once again in the community is a great blessing.

We reflected a great deal this winter. As a community, we questioned whether the training is working enough and whether we're on track to fulfill our mission. What needs to change? What needs to be let go? How could we scale with integrity to a global level? How would one even begin to try? After this initial inquiry, Soryu and Karuṇādhamma went away to do a visionary process and a solitary retreat. We pray for their practice and clarity. We look forward to their imminent return in April.

These past three months, we ran several new programs. Darren Silver and Dayna Seraye led a Dance Your Medicine intensive. We learned how to move together and feel into our embodied wisdom. Jordan Myska Allen and Michael Blas led the first CircleAnywhere LevelUP weekend at MAPLE. Afterwards, Ryūshin led a weekend meditation retreat focused on metta. In March, we did our Anti-Fragile Heart Retreat to great success with seven facilitators. Participants could choose from several workshops including embodiment, emotional processing, Circling, and more. On a responsibility level, we are re-examining all of our processes, on-boarding, off-boarding, and more. We are also working to document and systematize our workflows to minimize errors and maximize effectiveness.

Global warming continues unabated. COVID has disrupted the globe. War ravages Ukraine. We can see once again that the godlike technologies that the human species holds are unbalanced without commensurate godlike wisdom and love. For us to be trustworthy partners with this great Earth and all living beings, we strive to purify our minds and develop trustworthy communities, relationships, and systems to respond to these alarming times. Each of us attempts to find what is beyond life and death and bring back the medicine to heal these wounds.

In friendship,

Peter Xūramitra Park
Executive Director



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WILLOW (CANADA)

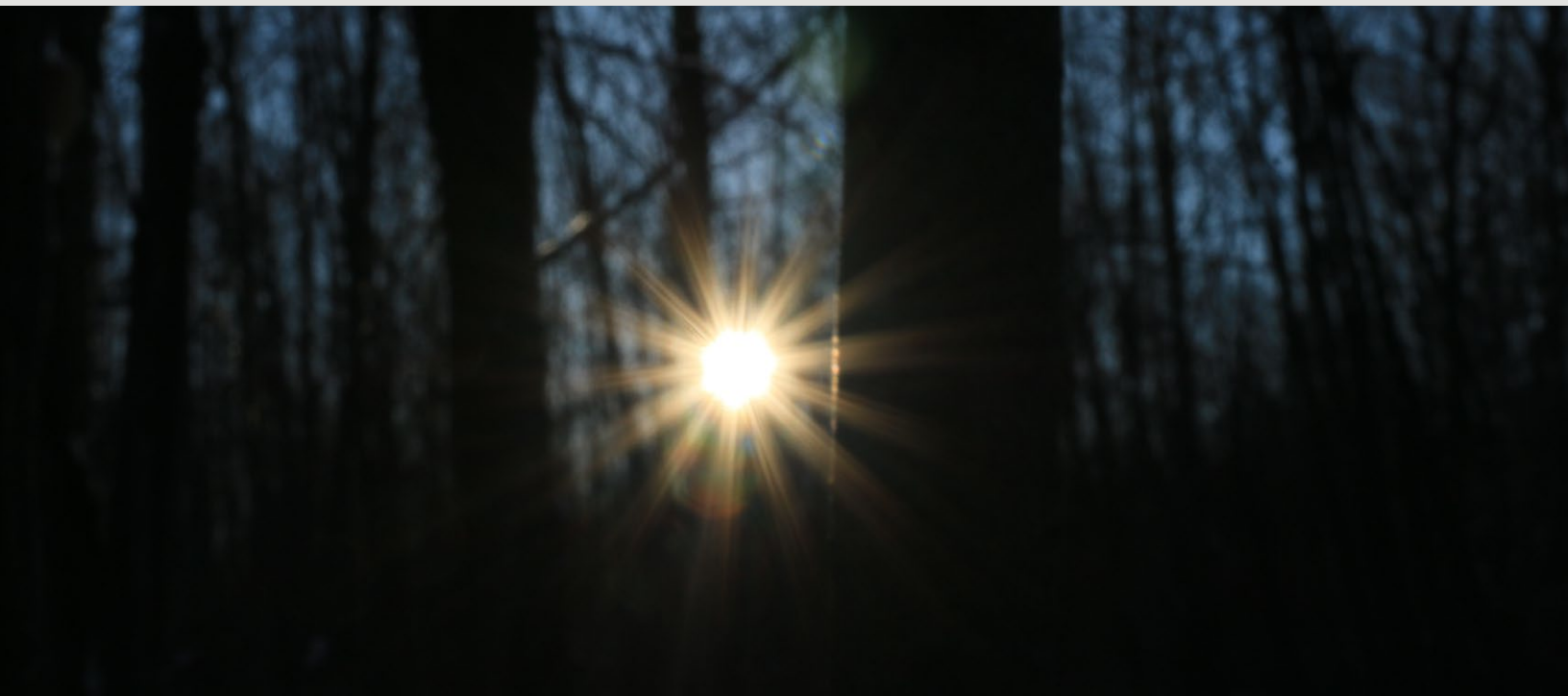
Willow began the year with our annual week-long New Years retreat, focusing on emotions, reflection, and living in integrity with our values. Through a unique combination of practices and in partnership with Nathan Vanderpool from the School for Social Design, we created a program which resonated very deeply with attendees and shows great potential for the future. Due to a high level of interest, we're excited to be running this event again in the spring!

In order to be better able to serve the Willow community, Seishin is continuing her training in emotional healing modalities through courses in Internal Family Systems (IFS) taught by Derek Scott and Dick Schwartz, and workshops on trauma-sensitive mindfulness taught by David Treleaven.

We have also been connecting with many other dharma communities recently, with residents spending time at Arrow River Forest Hermitage, Daishu-in West, Great Vow, and Korinji. We are glad to be connected with a broader dharma community and to be learning from our spiritual friends around the continent.

Moving forward, we are excited to welcome a new resident, Jim, starting in April! Jim attended the 3-Month Intensive at Willow last fall and decided to join us in the training long-term. We are looking forward to having him here and are excited to see what we can build for the future of Willow together!

In the future, we plan to offer even more. We hope that by scaling our teachings through these online offerings, we will allow for a larger range of community involvement, ultimately bringing more people into a deep relationship with our organization and our mission.





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FINANCIALS



In volatile economic and geopolitical times, CML continues to be agile. Donor support has been strong while robust guest revenue has diversified our income streams. However, if it were not for the unexpected generosity of a handful of donors the past two quarters, CML would be operating at a financial loss. This is an ongoing risk for CML which will stress our short term operating budgets as we continue to invest in large infrastructure projects such as the MAPLE Village. Additionally, inflationary pressures are increasingly a concern for CML as we try to minimize financial risk to our savings.

This quarter CML (composed of MAPLE, Oak and CEDAR) had total income of \$439,822 with operating expenses of \$104,807. These income numbers were artificially inflated due to Oak, our California branch, receiving a multi-year Founders Pledge Grant for \$295,000 to conduct research into the existential risk of artificial intelligence. This exciting grant will enable CML to offer a first of its kind program for AI safety researchers and others working in exponential technologies. However, large grants and donations such as this make our operating budgets appear more robust than they are due to these funds being earmarked for special projects over many years.

In the upcoming year, CML plans to invest heavily in infrastructure investments. These expenditures are not included in our annual expenses due to accounting depreciation methods. Regarding liabilities, CML has a total debt of \$836,848. This is comprised of our Lowell mortgage at \$280,000 which we paid down from \$683,079 in 2021. Additionally, we have \$489,221 in debt (at 2.75% annual interest) via our SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan with monthly payments of \$3,500. The remaining debt is mostly our two car loans.

As we invest in the future via long term impact projects, we continue to face short term operational pressures due to a lack of predictable and recurring financial support. Continued support from our community, particularly monthly donors, will be critical to ensuring CML is resilient and thrives.

CML 2022 YEAR-TO-DATE

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS & GRANTS	TOTAL INCOME*	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$53,329	\$377,726	\$439,822	\$104,807

*This includes more income than the types listed.

*Figures listed do not include Willow, our Canadian location, which is a separate legal entity.
The above financial tables reflect the combined financials of CEDAR, MAPLE, and Oak.*

INVESTMENTS AND DEBT

TOTAL DEBT	CAPEX**
\$836,848	\$434,066

**Large asset purchases & investments (CAPEX) are not included in annual operating expenses listed above but depreciated over many years.

LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON BONISIWE



Bonisiwe grew up in Soweto, near Johannesburg, South Africa. She came to Vermont for love and to study life orientation in the field of education. She completed her degree in Applied Linguistics. She has worked and volunteered for causes including immigrant farmers, health and education, and the water pipeline. She came to MAPLE seeking a spiritual community, having left her teaching jobs and marriage, while battling anxiety, depression, and powerlessness. MAPLE gave her a dream home and a model of what a community ought to be. She created EmbraceAllOfYou dance/movement healing, which emphasizes full permission to experience joy, honor unknown wisdom, connecting ourselves to causes starting in local communities. She aspires to be a traveling monk, teaching movement and spiritual practices and mobilizing one community at a time as her new teaching arena.

INTERVIEW WITH BONISIWE:

Why did you join the MAPLE Mindfulness and Leadership training residency?

I learn by doing, in community with others. I joined because I was exhausted with feeling inadequate, self-reliant, distant from God and frustrated by the ways we participate in modern systems. During my apprenticeship, I tasted what it looked and felt like to live in true mindfulness and made a vow. I came back to fulfill my vow to train and teach and live all my life in true Power, in true supreme Wisdom and unconditional Love. I would like to travel, build, and mobilize communities with MAPLE's training. Being at MAPLE has been like coming back home—to be whole, to relearn how to trust myself and cultivate the impact I want to see in this world.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

MAPLE has awarded me roles that help me thrive in clear communication and decision-making and the challenge to execute my training with love and forgiveness. I have learned that the skills I come with are only valuable when they can be communicated in relationship. Retreats especially speed up the dismantling of the conditioned, delusional, unskillful mind and the cultivation of a renewed mind free of attachment. I've learned to find verbal explanations for what I call the "non-verbal" (internal) world.

What has been your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge has been navigating tech systems. My first full encounter with computers was when I was 23 years old, completing my education degree in the US. In South Africa I used textbooks and manual resources my entire schooling with little or zero use of computers. So, I'm not tech savvy one bit. Thus came the rising of unskillful shame to ask for help or ask for more understanding. Because I've been accustomed to doing it myself, this is why I'm here, to learn these skills in relationship, not alone.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to?

I want to continue to harness my relationship with true power especially in my role as Kitchen Manager. This role allows me to continuously train others. Another thing is stepping fully into owning my power. My friends here think I'm very assertive, yet I know I have been fearful and hesitant many times to truly say what I think and feel. I'm excited to work on communicating clearly and precisely. I am looking forward to fully embracing empowerment and guidance from my spiritual guides: my ancestors, Buddha teachings, nature, my teachers, especially Soryu at MAPLE, and my fellow trainees.

LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON ANEŽKA



Anežka grew up in Denmark and was drawn to studying the mind and body from an early age. She started yoga practice at age 15, went to university and majored in biochemistry while teaching part time which turned into a high school STEM position. After two years she started a Ph.D. in the biophysical properties of homeopathic remedies, but burned out halfway. That led her to work intensively with emotional healing, Circling, authentic relation and mindfulness. She started teaching in a sustainability focused school and cultivated her leadership. In December 2020 she co-created Relational Spaces in Copenhagen, an urban center for relational practices and embodied leadership. She holds the positions of founding board member, daily manager of the decentralized organization and workshop facilitator. She finds it important to recognize the intricacies of how emotional healing and sustainable behavioral change are interrelated and how they are connected to existential risks, leadership and complexity.

INTERVIEW WITH ANEŽKA:

Why did you join the MAPLE Apprenticeship Program?

I have for a while felt that I would benefit from leaving “my hood” and experience other ways of being in community. When I heard about MAPLE’s vision and integrated methods of transformation it resonated so deeply that I had to apply. The combination of deep understanding of complexity, strict discipline, great heroic motivations and a deeply caring and warm community is unique. Another reason for joining was to deepen my practice and find ways to bring it off the cushion. The diversity of practices that the teachers have access to and can help navigate have been very helpful for me.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

I have certainly understood the importance of spiritual friendship. To be on the Path together as a group gives the support and inspiration that is needed to go through the hardships of resistance, aversion, surfacing trauma and everyday humdrum. Also, it has been a great inspiration to see how MAPLE effectively and elegantly connects strictness and feedback with compassion and vulnerability in the everyday work of running a monastic center.

On a very personal level, I have gotten a more wholesome view on meditation practice and all the exercise, dancing and smiles have also recharged me more deeply than I usually have access to.

What has been your biggest challenge?

It’s a big shift to enter a monastic container when coming from a cuddly collective, a committed partner and a culture of coziness. To sleep alone and to stay with the strict schedule while having to be very proactive to resource myself has been a wake-up call on my privileges back home. It has also been challenging to find ways to process my emotions efficiently alone and on the cushion, but I have received a lot of support in that, which feels more valuable than if someone had just guided me through.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to?

I’m looking forward to experiencing more aspects of meditation and deeper states and to get more in touch with my heart, especially in the upcoming Anti-fragile Heart Retreat. When I return to Copenhagen, it’s my goal to integrate both meditation and the ethics I’ve resonated with here deeper in my community organization, Relation Spaces. Hopefully it’ll also be possible to set up a Cross-Atlantic community friendship and skill exchange, so that MAPLE can grow eastwards.

LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON ETHAN



Ethan is currently a software consultant in the financial planning and analysis space, but started his career as a personal trainer. Having a formal education in nutritional science and kinesiology, Ethan's background in the physical sciences provides a unique lens on how the human mind functions through exercise, eating, and physical training. This exploration eventually led to a deep interest in the mind itself and its role in exploring large existential questions. Questions such as "What am I?," "What is reality?," and "What is happiness?" provide a context for Ethan's meditation practice. Through this interdisciplinary approach to spirituality, Ethan's goals are to create a consilience of understanding and way of relating to all sentient beings.

INTERVIEW WITH ETHAN:

Why did you join the MAPLE Residential Member Guest Program?

Discovering MAPLE was shocking; here was a community dedicated to the marriage of contemplative practice and existential risk mitigation. This immediate resonance left little option other than to train at MAPLE. Between late 2020 and early 2021, I had the rare opportunity to attend three online vipassana meditation retreats led by Shinzen Young. Through a series of remarkable synchronicities, I discovered MAPLE on the third retreat through both Shinzen and a MAPLE Villager. As a result of this intensive retreat practice, the depth of the meditative path and its potential for transforming the human mind became obvious. Moreover, I directly experienced how various qualities within my own mind were the same qualities giving rise to the collective suffering and destruction of life on the planet, yet through this practice, I was uprooting these qualities.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

My meditation practice has grown enormously, I've discovered spiritual friendships that feel unconditionally timeless, and Soryu's teachings and presence have opened aspects of wisdom, love, and power within my mind and heart. Through these training elements, an inner transformation of mind is taking place. This transformation of mind can be described as a cultivation, purification, and acceptance of the mental qualities needed for wisdom, love, and power. I view these qualities as being needed to live a life completely well lived and therefore see MAPLE as providing the training needed to live a life well lived.

What has been your biggest challenge?

While attending as a Residential Member Guest, I've been working full time remotely. Keeping up with the demands of a full-time job within the rigor of a monastic training schedule has been difficult emotionally, physically, and mentally. Yet through this sometimes harsh juxtaposition, there's been an emergent adaptation and embodied empowerment.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to?

My immediate goal is to train as a MAPLE Apprentice during the summer. Spiritually, I am excited to continue deepening my meditation practice and learn from not only Soryu, but this wonderful community. I believe the work this community is relentlessly pursuing is the work needed for the preservation of our planet's natural harmony. My long term goal is to be an agent of this harmony not only for humanity's sake, but for the sake of all life on Earth.

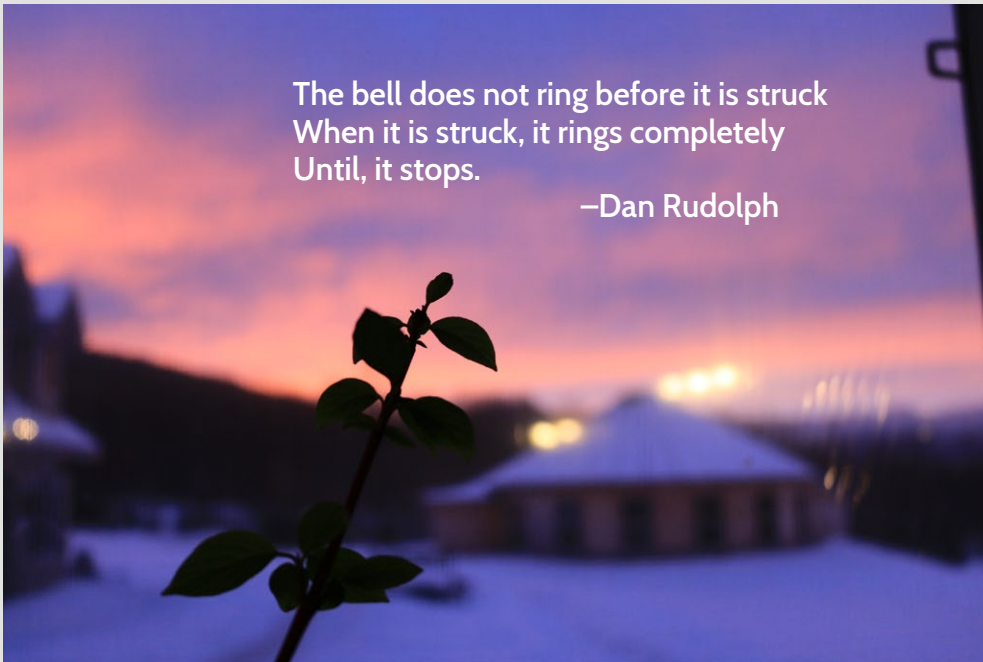


POETRY & PHOTOS

Led by Dan, Alf, and Ellen, we began the Awakening Poetry Integration Initiative to hold our insights that have arisen from the clarity of retreat. Here is a collection of our favorite poems by the community.

The bell does not ring before it is struck
When it is struck, it rings completely
Until, it stops.

—Dan Rudolph



No Conflict

Yesterday was a free-fall.
Amber effervescent skies,
wind pouring through empty eyes,
and lacuna body.
Not a thing to call my own.
Beauty.
Later, caught in a web.
Old friend glaring
The thought-weaver o'er there
inviting worry, inciting shame.
Yet with a calm and coy grin
I yowled:
"Hey crazy spider creature!
Come and eat me!
I ain't playin' yo game!"
The fettered fangs sank deep
Veins dilated welcomingly
There is no conflict here
The mountains —
the accumulated calcified mindstuffs
— rise and fall without resistance
rivers gushing warmly in my belly,
Vision much clearer now
Zendo window revealing heaven
Love this life and Love these people
The bell strikes and it's time for lunch
There is no conflict here

—Sky Taylor





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POETRY & PHOTOS



For Soryu Forall

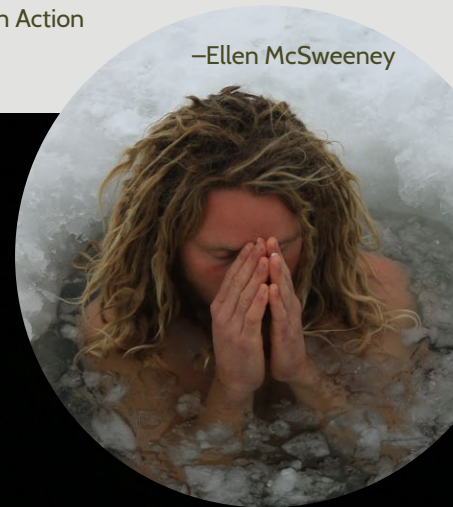
You come to a fork in the road.
The guide you have been waiting for is there –
Sword in hand –
Willing to risk everything for you.
Willing to do what no one else will:
to take your life
and give it back to you
in one swift motion.
You come to the bottom of the sea.
The guide you have been waiting for is there –
empty handed –
Smiling as you pass down
into the realm beyond all guides.
How will you ever thank him?
How will I ever thank you?
Love is an Action

–Ellen McSweeney

No One There

I walked past a noisy bar
Chatter, laughter, music coming out.
Shadows dancing inside.
Excited, I walked in.
No one there.

–Ben Schoelzel





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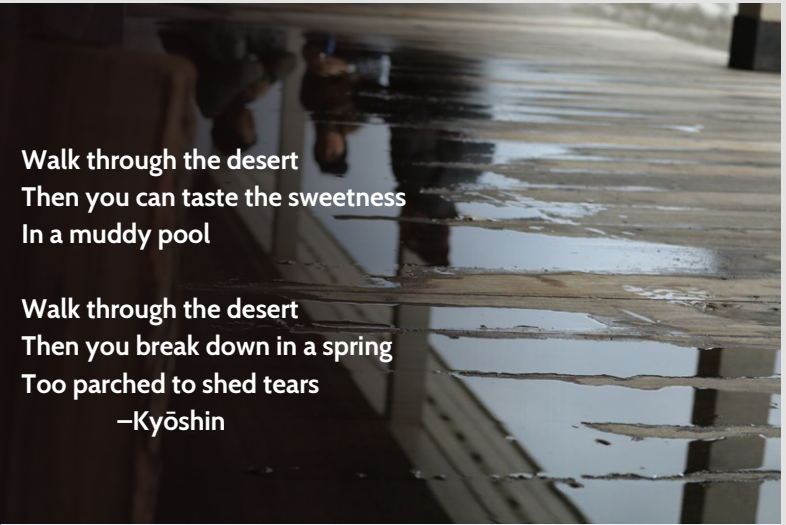
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Walk through the desert
Then you can taste the sweetness
In a muddy pool

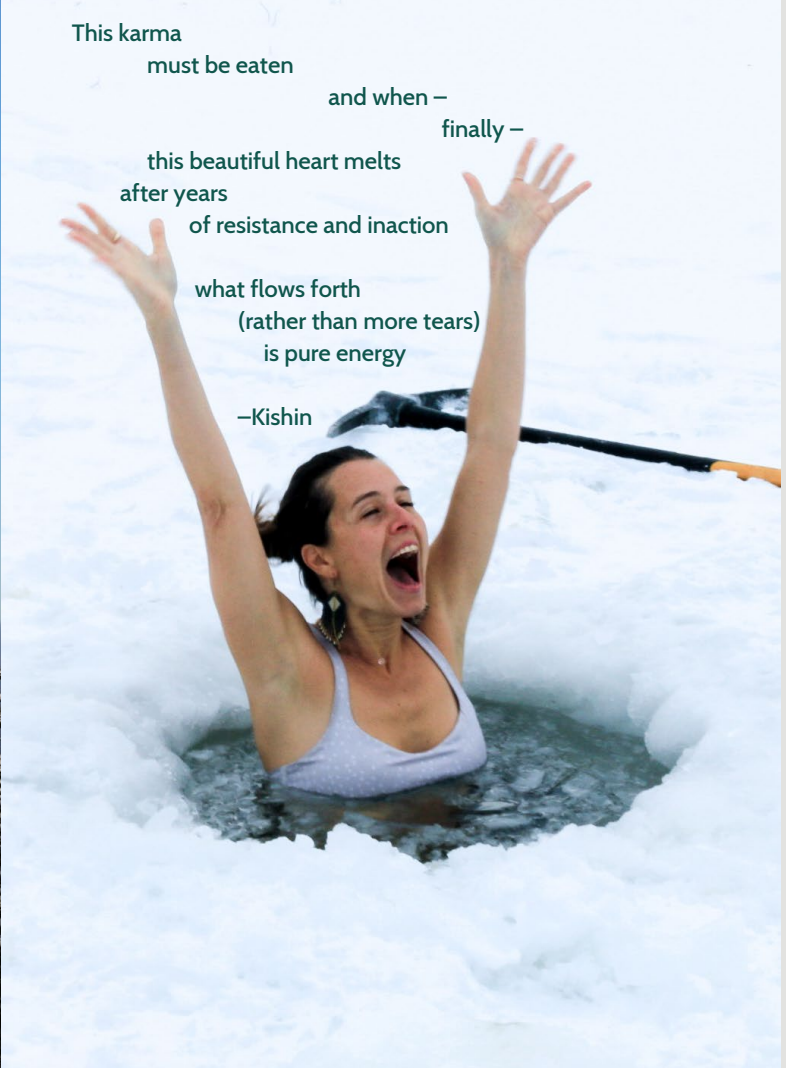
Walk through the desert
Then you break down in a spring
Too parched to shed tears
—Kyōshin



Let Love In

If I truly hold you tight,
I may never let you go,
Yet Anicca whispers,
Don't trust anyone nor
anything,
Yet love sings,
Trust loving and everything,
Just let love in,
Let love in,
Just love and let go,
Love and let go.

—Alf Alfieri



This karma
must be eaten
and when —
finally —
this beautiful heart melts
after years
of resistance and inaction
what flows forth
(rather than more tears)
is pure energy

—Kishin

FUTURE EVENTS

April 13 - 27 2022

Two-Week Awakening Period with Soryu Forall

May 20 - 27 2022

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

June 2 - December 4 2022

Circling Europe SAS

June 17 - 24 2022

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

July 7 - 10 2022

LevelUp Immersion with CircleAnywhere

July 12 - 17 2022

Circling Retreat

All events are subject to change or cancellation.

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