

Garden Meditation

Let us give thanks for a bounty of people.

For children who are our second planting,
and though they grow like weeds
and the wind too soon blows them away,
may they forgive us our cultivation
and fondly remember where their roots are.

Let us give thanks;

For generous friends, with hearts as big as hubbards and smiles as
bright as their blossoms;

For feisty friends, as tart as apples;

For continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers,
keep reminding us that we've had them;

For crotchety friends, sour as rhubarb and as indestructible;

For handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants
and as elegant as a row of corn,
and the others, as plain as potatoes and so good for you;

For funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels sprouts
and as amusing as Jerusalem artichokes;

And serious friends as unpretentious as cabbages,
as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley,
as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini
and who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you through the winter;

For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time,
and young friends coming on as fast as radishes;

For loving friends, who wind around us
like tendrils and hold us,
despite our blights, wilts and witherings;

And finally, for those friends now gone,
like gardens past that have been harvested,
but who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter.

For all these we give thanks.

—by Reverend Max Coot

When Giving Is All We Have

*One river gives
Its journey to the next.*

We give because someone gave to us.
We give because nobody gave to us.

We give because giving has changed us.
We give because giving could have changed us.

We have been better for it,
We have been wounded by it—

Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,
Big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.

Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,
But we read this book, anyway, over and again:

Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,
Mine to yours, yours to mine.

You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.
Together we are simple green. You gave me

What you did not have, and I gave you
What I had to give—together, we made

Something greater from the difference.
—by Alberto Rios, 1952

A Prayer

Give us a heart for simple things:
Love and laughter
Bread and wine
Tales and dreams

Fill our lives with
Green and growing hope
Make us a people of justice
Whose song is Allelujah
And whose name
Breathes Love.

Amen

—by Walter Wink

For Dragonflies

For dragonflies, butterflies,
Caterpillars on leaves,
Lizards, wild turkeys, and tigers and deer,
We give thanks!
For sunset and seashells
And starfish and sand,
Octopus, jellyfish, and hammerhead shark,
We give thanks!
For horses and kitties,
Small bunnies and dogs,
For babies and dogs,
And knowing we're loved,
We give thanks!

—Gail Forsyth-Vail & children from the North Parish of North Andover, MA

A Prayer for the World

Let the rain come and wash away
the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds
held and nurtured over generations.
Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.
Then let the sun come out and
fill the sky with rainbows.
Let the warmth of the sun heal us
wherever we are broken.
Let it burn away the fog so that
we can see each other clearly.
So that we can see beyond labels,
beyond accents, gender or skin color.
Let the warmth and brightness
of the sun melt our selfishness.
So that we can share the joys and
feel the sorrow of our neighbors.
And let the light of the sun
be so strong that we will see all
people as our neighbors.
Let the earth, nourished by rain,
bring forth flowers
to surround us with beauty.
And let the mountains teach our hearts
to reach upward to heaven.

Amen.

—Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

Prayer

Let us pray to the One who holds us in the hollow of His hands, to the One who holds us in the curve of Her arms,

To the One whose flesh is the flesh of hills and hummingbirds and angleworms,
Whose skin is the color of an old Black woman and a young white man; and the color of the
leopard and the grizzly bear and the green grass snake,
Whose hair is like the aurora borealis, rainbows, nebulae, waterfalls, and a spider's web,
Whose eyes sometime shine like the Evening Star, and then like fireflies, and then again like
an open wound,
Whose touch is both the touch of life and the touch of death,
And whose name is everyone's, but mostly mine.

And what shall we pray?

Let us say, "thank you."

—by Reverend Max Coots

Thanksgiving Prayer to the Earth

We return thanks to our mother, the earth, which sustains us.
We return thanks to the rivers and streams
which supply us with water.
We return thanks to all herbs, which furnish medicines
for the cure of our diseases.
We return thanks to the corn, and to her sisters,
the beans and squashes, which give us life.
We return thanks to the bushes and trees,
which provide us with fruit.
We return thanks to the wind,
which, moving the air, has banished diseases.
We return thanks to the moon and the stars,
which have given us their light when the sun was gone.
We return thanks to our grandfather He-no,
that he has protected his grandchildren from witches and reptiles,
and has given us his rain.
We return thanks to the sun,
that he has looked upon the earth with a beneficent eye.
Lastly, we return thanks to the Great Spirit,
in whom is embodied all goodness,
and who directs all things for the good of all.

—Traditional Iroquois