

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 Coots

Minnesota Thanksgiving

For that free Grace bringing us past great risks
& thro' great griefs surviving to this feast
sober and still, with the children unborn and born,
among brave friends, Lord, we stand again in debt
and find ourselves in the glad position: Gratitude.

We praise our ancestors who delivered us here
within warm walls all safe, aware of music,
likely toward ample & attractive meat
with whatever accompaniment
Kate in her kind ingenuity has seen fit to devise,

and we hope - across the most strange year to come -
continually to do them and You not sufficient honour
but such as we become able to devise
out of decent or joyful conscience & thanksgiving.
Yippee!

Bless then, as Thou wilt, this wilderness board.

--by John Berryman, in *Collected Poems 1937 - 1971*.

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

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."

— Albert Einstein

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

Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude.

— A.A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh*

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

*My thoughts shimmer with these shimmering leaves and my heart sings
with the touch of this sunlight; my life is glad to be floating with all things
into the blue of space, into the dark of time.*

—Rabindranath Tagore, *Stray Birds*, #150

*“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another
person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who
have lighted the flame within us. —Albert Schweitzer*

THANKSGIVING

The year has turned its circle,
The seasons come and go.
The harvest all is gathered in
And chilly north winds blow.

Orchards have shared their treasures,
The fields, their yellow grain,
So open wide the doorway ---
Thanksgiving comes again!

Old Rhyme

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