

Buddha's Tooth

Couplets for the Great Hero

On a beautiful day, the Buddha was born
He was a prince, a royal son

Bright as he was, he left his home
To find the answer to humans' woe

Six years he sat, all alone
Saw the star and he awoke

What is life? What is death?
How are we born to reap all that?

Think a little but do not know
Save yourself from all that woe

If you want to bite your karma's root
You've gotta have the Buddha's tooth!

—Chong An Sunim JDPS



North Crestone Lake

Those feet that have been here
before your feet
created this trail. Other lives
have followed this thread of dust and stones
switchbacking up through Douglas fir and aspen,
have crossed chattering streams on worn logs,
felt the alpine meadow expand
like a deep breath,
climbed scree slope and snowfield
to gaze down on this lake, held
like a chip of rainbow
in an upturned palm, with fingers of peaks
brushing the sky around.

For a moment your mind stops
while what is here before your mind
continues. Now the shape of this
lives within you, as it lives
in others who have been here.
They say there are ten thousand doors to freedom.
When you meet another being,
this place in you can bow
to this place in them.

—Chris Hoffman



Imagine

Sometimes we encounter prose written for one purpose or another. With some simple editing, and perhaps a word change here and there, it becomes a poem. Was this the writer's true meaning?

The following poem was derived from a descriptive naturewalk sign along the Swamp Walk, Lincoln Park, Lexington. It is slightly modified from the originals by the transcriber, Gary Kahn.

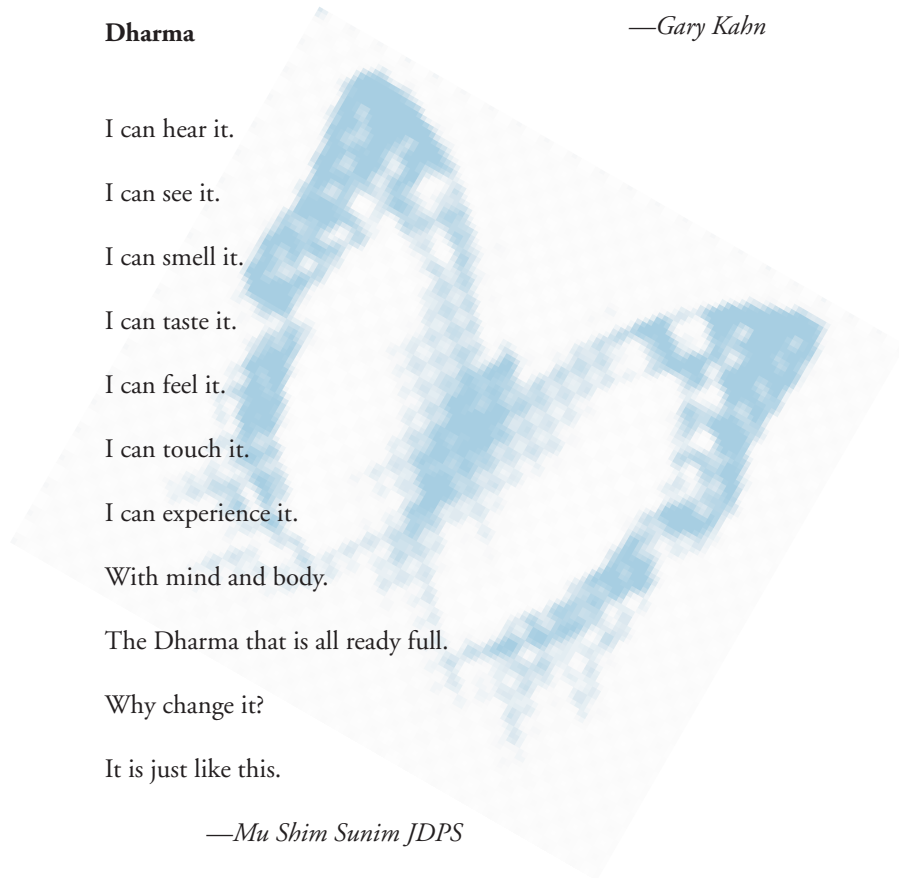
Imagine releasing a toy boat
And following it down the banks of Vine Brook
To the Shawsheen, then to the Concord.
Run the quick rapids into the Merrimack.
Meet the tidal waters at Newburyport.
Our toyboat has floated through a watershed.
One of three.
North to the Merrimack.
East to the Mystic.
South to Charles.
Next time, maybe, another direction.

—Gary Kahn

Dharma

I can hear it.
I can see it.
I can smell it.
I can taste it.
I can feel it.
I can touch it.
I can experience it.
With mind and body.
The Dharma that is all ready full.
Why change it?
It is just like this.

—Mu Shim Sunim JDPS



The Man and Woman in the
Floorboards of the Zendo

Had I not been here I never
would have seen them. Now
they show me my mind.

—Chris Hoffman