

## **Homework**

### **Reflections Initiations by the Elements, Part II**

#### **Class 1: Seeds and Spirits**

##### **Opening prayer:**

“There was once a time that I believed that I needed to return to Nature, to seek out a forest somewhere and walk among the trees, smelling the fragrant scent of moist earth mixed with crumbling leaves. What exactly was that supposed to do for me? Was I suddenly supposed to feel a wave of tranquility rush over me because I could no longer hear the sound of traffic, replaced now by the sound of wind, birds, and buzzing insects? Was I that simple-minded that a walk through the woods somehow qualified as a “back to Nature” transformation? What was I thinking – back then. I didn’t need to return to Nature. I needed to become a part of Nature again, no matter where I am. I am always standing on Mother Nature, on Mother Earth. My nature is one with Mother Nature. I breathe with this magnificent life force and she sustains me. And I must do everything in my power to sustain her and all her life system. I am a creature of nature, no different from any other. I have not returned to Nature; I have awakened to my own nature. I am an animal, and a vegetable, and a mineral. I am earth, wind, fire, water, mineral. I am no different from all other creatures. I require what all animals do - I seek a mate, I hide when I am frightened, I protect my young, I become violent when attacked, I approach strangers cautiously, I bond when loved, I mourn the loss of tribal companions. Lord, it is a deception that we are different. You made us different in a clever way, Lord, designed our nature to be hyper-attuned to ourselves and to others. We are the only creatures who have the ability to make choices to develop more of ourselves and not just evolve. We can choose to become a lesser version of ourselves, a cruel and dishonest creature. We can seek to harm and hunt our own kind for greed, for instance. We can feel shame about what we look like or what we have done. And yet you have put no limits on our capacity to love or to serve others or to release the wonders of our imagination. And You have given us the sensitivity to sense You, Lord – the source of all creation. You’ve given us a sense of wonder and awe and a craving for the sacred. For all the splendor that exists on this planet, still it is not enough to satisfy the one part of ourselves that makes us so different from all other creatures. We cannot stop looking upwards ... we cannot stop ourselves from imagining other worlds hidden beyond the stars and planets. Maybe we simply cannot stop looking for You, Lord ... So, hover over us all, Lord, every creature who shares life on this planet. We are all breathing grace together.”

##### **Your practice for the week**

“The bioecological environment of my health is connected to everything and everything breathes together.” Can you allow yourself to have a deeper attunement to nature and its life system? You may have noticed in the last decade a growing sensitivity in your immune system: to the process of eating, digesting or eliminating food. Or perhaps you have developed allergies, rashes, disruptions of your sleep patterns? These sensitivities in our systems are often mysteries to doctors, and can defy conventional treatment. In fact it’s not clear yet how they need to be treated because sensitivities are not necessarily a sign of illness.

- Make a list of the sensitivities you have noticed in your body in the last ten years.

**Meditation**

The first great holy thought is that everything is in community with me. All life is filled with guardians. Nothing grows alone but rather in companionship. I cannot exist separately from Nature. I am never not in Nature. I am Nature.

**Closing prayer:**

"I am one with all life. All life is conscious. What does not have consciousness? Everything was created from something that was conscious or alive at one time. Is it unconscious because its form has changed? Will I become unconscious when my form changes, when I leave this aging body? I am supposed to become even more conscious when I shed this skin. What does that mean for all other life when I utilize it in its different form, when I eat something that once ran in a field or grew in my garden or swam in the ocean? I can tell myself that plant is dead or that the animal is partitioned and now being served to several people on many dinner tables; and yet, nutrients are alive. I rely on the sustenance I gain from meat, vegetables, grain, and other food creatures to keep me alive – I rely on their life for my life, even if their form has changed. The size of the Truth that all life breathes together overwhelms me. Somedays I cannot even go near that Truth. I cannot bear to feel the power of that Truth in my bones and blood, in my body – and taste it in my mouth. Truth is power. I can understand why we say "no more, I cannot take any more Light in my soul. Your Light is beginning to hurt the smallness of my consciousness." Lord, I can only proceed on my journey if I am given the grace of understanding, of a love I have yet to experience, to hold up my heart and soul. I want to keep breathing with all life, becoming even more loving along the way. Hover over me, Lord, and all Your magnificent conscious creation."