

Welcome

to the first edition of *Wild Heart Journal: A Celebration of the Arts & Spirituality*, If you are receiving this, it means you either ordered my book at one time (*Wild Heart Dancing*) or else participated in a retreat I was leading. Or perhaps I borrowed your name from the Lama Foundation mailing list, or my own address book. Regardless, we are all connected in some way, and this is intended to be a family project, published by an artists' cooperative of which you can be a part simply by declaring yourself to be, and contributing art, ideas, writings and/or money. My friend Lesley Maclean, a former coordinator of Lama Foundation, has donated her graphic design skills to produce this first edition from New Zealand.

There will be no charge for *Wild Heart Journal*, in the ordinary sense. I am publishing it in the spirit of *dana*, the Buddhist principle of generosity, meaning that contributions from readers will be its only means of support. I personally paid approximately \$2000 for this first one, covering an initial print run and mailing to 500 people.

The Dana element also frees us from the pressure of meeting the expectations of subscribers and fulfilling a particular deadline. Each edition will take as long as it needs to put together, but I would certainly hope to publish 1-2 per year.

Ten percent of all profits after costs will go to the Lama Foundation as a tithe, to help them in their ongoing recovery process from the Great Fire several years ago, (which I wrote about in the November '96 *Yoga Journal*.) Any other profits after expenses will be divided proportionately among each contributor of any particular issue. Checks should be made out to Eliezer Sobel and sent to me at Box 146, Batesville, VA 22924.

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I chanced upon a book of poems recently by a Persian poet of the 14th Century named Hafiz. The title itself is intoxicating: *The Subject Tonight is Love: 60 Wild and Sweet Poems of Hafiz*. The title poem is...

*The subject tonight is love
And for tomorrow night as well.
As a matter of fact,
I know of no better topic
for us to discuss
Until we all
Die!*

Wild Heart Journal is a form of that same sacred conversation, going long into the night and beginning again at dawn. For the confluence of the two rivers of Art and Spirituality is Love, and it is in that pool that creative pilgrims come to immerse. I have found that when I create or encounter art that I would call truly spiritual, it is because love was present in the process of creating and presenting whatever it is, such that I feel it.

Based on this, then, I can fearlessly declare that many Beatles songs fit the criteria. This became even more evident to me in January of '97 at the conclusion of a twenty-day vipassana meditation retreat in Bodhi Gaya, India. Leader Christopher Titmuss invited everyone to a special, late-night gathering to meditate to, and eventually sing along with, *Here Comes The Sun, Something* ("in the way she moves"—an allusion, according to Christopher, to a female retreatant engaged in slow walking practice) and various other Beatles songs. I felt the power of the Beatles' loving, cheerful transmission with such joyful gratitude that that seems sufficient criteria to call what they do both art and spiritual. And who really cares what you call it, finally, for "the subject tonight is love," which, they would be quick to point out, is "all you need."

I especially felt their art-as-spiritual work when they released *Free As A Bird* and *Real Love* a few years ago, working from some Lennon demos that Yoko made available to the others, who then proceeded to electronically mix themselves in with John for an other-worldly Beatles' reunion. What better way to sum up the spiritual

All
You
Need
Is
Art

The road to authentic art is through the self, more specifically, it lies through the heart, not the head. Your loves, your hates, your scars, glories, fears, losses, triumphs—your heart is the heart of the matter. Heart is where the art is.

julia cameron

path than those two titles: to be Free As A Bird and to recognize the presence of Real Love. I listened to both songs continuously on a six-hour car trip in order to properly receive John's posthumous transmission.

But when any one of us goes deep enough into ourselves and life we bump into the rest of creation, and discover that we all share what paradoxically appears to be a unitary Self. Creative expressions that genuinely arise from that place of Being—where one is aware of mutual interdependence, connection and ultimately union with all Beings in One Divine Energy field—constitute spiritual art, at least as I'm defining it for this journal. Most children's creative output qualifies automatically. When we tap into our own spontaneous, childlike place of natural, Free-As-A-Bird expression, connected at the heart to Real Love and/or quiet mindfulness, then our work falls into the category of spiritual art as well.

WILD *heart* JOURNAL