

# Creative

For some of us,

sometimes, our innate creative fire is not so much a roaring blaze as it is a smoldering ember. Yet I would guess that most of us reading this magazine have at least had moments of passionate intensity and raw aliveness, often in conjunction with creative expression. Perhaps we “entered the stream” of our spontaneous, original nature while writing deep into the night, or dancing wild and free, painting with childlike abandon, or singing from a place of utter longing and heart-wrenching love.

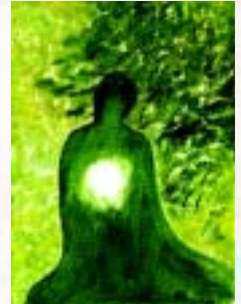
Or else such moments of freedom occurred while focused with great concentration on some activity: carpentry, gardening, mopping, running, serving tea, making love, breathing. The possibilities are actually as numerous as the moments of a lifetime, for ultimately the spiritual artist’s goal is to become an “Artist of Being,” for whom any and every moment can be the cause and occasion for both the quiet, wakeful recognition of an unnamable Presence as well as the fiery, creative expression of one’s mysterious, impersonal consciousness.

But sometimes we need to fan the flame. There is an aching in us to be true to the fundamental power and integrity of our inner selves, and we are not ultimately sustained by mere passing moments of inspiration. And so in this issue Natalie Goldberg offers “writing practice” to help us write through and beyond the banality of habitual mind; Stewart Cubley asks that we paint our way past frustration and emptiness to a point of completion; and when all else fails, Jai Uttal suggests we sing our hearts out to God.

The message, in each case, is simple: in the great choir of our shared existence, each of us must gather the courage to bypass the self-critical, inhibiting, interior judge, and allow our unique, original voice to flow freely, with spontaneity and joy. Short of that, our lives are only more noise on the surface of a dissonant, jangled world. We need the music.

“What people subconsciously are interested in is the expression of beauty, something that helps them through the humdrum day, something that shocks them out of themselves and something that makes them believe in the beauty and the glory of human existence.

— CHARLES W. HAWTHORNE, ARTIST 1872-1930





# & spontaneous expression



**Natalie Goldberg paints...**  
(interview page 6)

...but then I realized nothing I have ever created held the light the way a leaf did or caught the shadow in a white room. No painting I've done matched the peace I've felt at twilight or the feeling of loss I've experienced at bleached high noon in New Mexico. But I wasn't going to let that stop me. I was crazy about the wrong color sky and the heart-sinking beckoning of headlights on old cars. I painted for that terrible overused word that a writer should never utter: love.

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