

flow

IMAGINATION

SUMMER 2021



*Cause this is it for all we know.
So say goodnight to me.
And lose no more time, no time.
Resisting the flow.*

-Ohm, Yo La Tengo



flow

SPRING 2021
SPACE

what's inside?

Cover art by Gabriel Ryerson

- 3 Letter from Erin
- 7 Turning the Lens
writing prompts for reflection
- 8 More from Erin
poem Future Realities
Fata Morgana; a collaboration with Courtney Kessel
curated playlist and recorded meditation + writing prompts
- 17 From the Community
collage from guest artist Mary Popa
a poem about grief from Jax Walter
- 20 *What's going on?*
upcoming classes, events and workshops
- 21 Items of Interest
what I've been reading, watching and listening to
- 22 *For the Community*
organizations to support the people in Haiti, Afghanistan
and New Orleans during these humanitarian crises



a zine called, FLOW is a free, seasonal, digital zine made to inspire reflection, connection and imagination

if you want to support this work and have access to to my live workshop on Zoom where we dive into this season's theme in more depth through conversation, yoga and writing, become a [paid subscriber](#)

Workshop held on Thursday, September 23 at 5:30pm ET



Letter from Erin



What does imagination mean to you?

When I was younger, imagination was pretending to be someone I wasn't; dressing up, singing into a microphone or building a structure to live in. Sometimes I would put a mustache on or make "soup" out of dirt, rocks, grass and weeds.

Imagination was a kind of escape, where new parts of myself evolved and came out. I would talk in different voices or pretend to be a different age. What was so great about this imaginative time, was that the circumstances could change at any time. When things started to get "really bad", I could shift gears and get away from the situation or sometimes *magic* was involved to escape into a new reality; with a wave of a wand I'd get to be somewhere else.



*This body is made of earth and gold,
Sky and stars, rivers and oceans,
Masquerading as muscle and bone.
Every substance in here:
Diamonds and silver, magical elixirs,
Ambrosia that gives vision,
Herbs that nourish and heal.
The foundation of the planet,
Immortal magnetic iron,
Circulating in the blood.*

*Every element in you love the others;
Earth loves rain, sky loves sun,
Sun loves the space it shines through,
Space loves everyone equally.*

*In meditation, luxuriate in knowing this deep
and simple truth.
Every cell is an organ of sense
Infused with majesty.*

-Lorin Roche, *The Radiance Sutras*



Letter from Erin (continued)

This was also true in my dreams at night, where imaginative thinking happens unconsciously. If a dream got too scary or I didn't like how things were headed, I would move into a corner, curl into a ball and wiggle my body until I woke up.

It was my escape route, something like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, closing her eyes, clicking her heels and whispering "there's no place like home."

At some point, as we age, this imaginative self loses momentum. Time for engaging that part of us isn't prioritized or currently it might be down right impossible to think imaginatively because of the collective trauma we are living through. With the pandemic, natural disasters, humanitarian crises across the globe and general exhaustion to name some, it may even seem ridiculous to some to think of imagination as something of importance.

I could argue that while imagination may not look like it used to, it can evolve to something else; something more "useful". We can use our imaginations to think up solutions, to make life worth living, to shift our perspectives, to have fun, to grow, to envision future realities that align with our values and more.

These days, there is a range of imaginative mentalities. There are people who dabble in acting in their local theater, people who work incessantly and make no time to play, people who commit their lives to helping people uncover their imagination (or creativity) and people who just naturally live at a pace or work in a space where imagination is a possibility or necessity for them day to day; I'm thinking artists, parents and teachers.

This summer I have had the opportunity and privilege to share in discussion, offer classes, read books and write about imagination more than ever in my adult life. In reflecting on my own imaginative evolution, I caught two repetitive thoughts; 1.) that I don't have time to be imaginative AND 2.) there is too much sorrow to be imaginative.



Letter from Erin (continued)

Embracing imagination through the summer, *a summer of imagination*, as I have been calling it, has opened doors and sprouted hope in my heart. Imagination has been like a life line to moving forward. Literally giving my mind and being space to breathe and think about realities outside of what feels really scary right now; pandemic uncertainty, climate crisis and general anxieties about life.

While curling into a ball in the corner and wiggling will do nothing for the really bad of reality, which sometimes feels like a dream-- rather, nightmare-- right now, I can still learn from my younger self in other ways.

Like making time in my days to play, letting my imagination come up with solutions, experiencing uninhibited joy, collaborating with the people around me, learning together and sharing together so we can all keep dreaming and imagining future realities suffused with equity, humility, love and compassion across the globe.

This matters to me. It feels important or even dire to take imagination seriously; just as seriously as paying bills, making food for myself and taking care of people.

What does imagination mean to me?

It means thinking outside the box; outside the way things have always been. It means listening to my heart, my intuition and trusting myself. It means space, connection, reflection and birth.

It means the cycles of life; letting things die and come back new over time. It means giving into joy and hope when it arises so I can remember that feeling to get me through the heartache of life because I know it'll come again and again.

It means trying something new; making changes when a cycle has run its course. And reminding myself that I may be a small piece of the puzzle, but a moving, breathing piece that "*is made of earth and gold, sky and stars, rivers and oceans, masquerading as muscles and bone.*"



Love,
Erin



Erin faces the night sky on a Summer night wearing a monarch butterfly wing cape and rabbit ears made of chicken wire; from installation *Fata Morgana* (see page 9)
Photo by Courtney Kessel

Turning the lens

writing prompts for reflection, intention and action



What does imagination mean to you?

What images and associations come to mind when you think of the word 'imagination'?

What about the word, "play"?

As a child, what were your favorite ways to to play?

How does this /could this show up in your adult life?

What are your deep dreams? (try to let go of any censors and just write!)

Write about all the different versions of yourself (may include your not-so-favorite versions, too!), describe them, give them names, get creative!

What do you already have that you are not using?

More from Erin

Future Realities a poem by Erin Pfahler

To imagine something different
leisure must exist
Amidst the hustle,
there must be play
or you'll forget who you were when you were a kid.

There's usually a moment that breaks you.
That's when you must decide,
what it is that you need to survive.

Is it money or things you set in your home?
or is it that whole new wardrobe?

Or is it a break in the day
where you can just exist
and lay
on the bed that you made
.that same morning?

To imagine something different
leisure must exist
Amidst the hustle
There must be play
There must be space in your day;

time to dance, to swim, to run,
to laugh
at what's right in front of you.



Fata Morgana
a collaboration between
Courtney Kessel and Erin Pfahler
Majestic Galleries
Nelsonville, OH
August 27-Septmeber 18





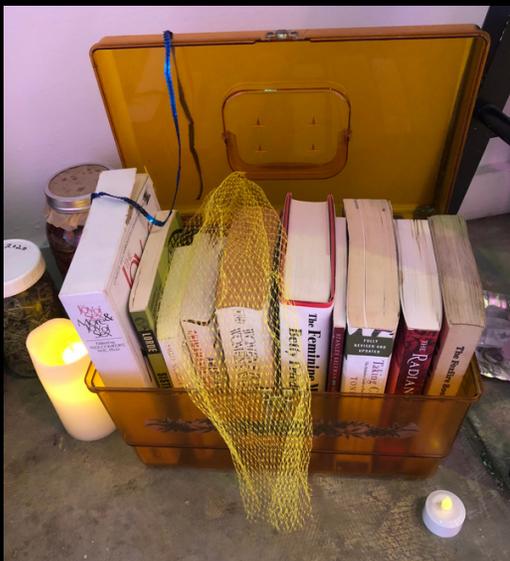
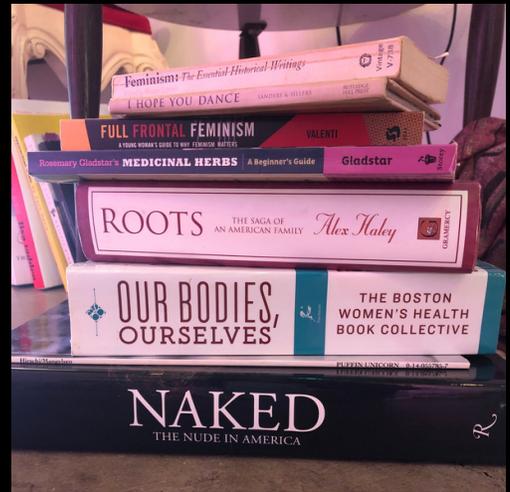
Like all good collaborations, we work together and love each other even when we are hungry, tired, or having a bad day. *Fata Morgana* is the first installation from an ongoing collaboration between Courtney Kessel and Erin Pfahler about the stories we hold and carry in our bodies and how they unfold through connection, collaboration, and imagination.

This project was ignited through hours of conversation on our front and back neighboring porches. Our mini collaborations of dinners, dance parties, tincture making, sharing recipes (and ingredients) and pet sitting has brought us to this point of expression through the media of installation, performative photography and video, loops and edits, sparkles and glitter, herbs, books, books and more books.

Fata Morgana shares a temporary, regionally-specific library sourced by women we know. We asked our friends to loan books that are near and dear to their hearts and minds. Feel free to sit and browse this amazing collection or listen to the audio as we read to you.

With love,
C & E





Click to
download
book list



Dear Courtney,

When we met on a cold night in March a few years ago, when I walked through your yard to get uptown, I remember you telling me about how you had recently returned from taking your 12 year old daughter to the women's rally in Washington D.C. I had wanted to go, but felt blocked in some capacity to make the journey so far to stand in a crowd; something I wasn't comfortable with at the time. Hearing your experience and talking about that as an introductory conversation to getting to know you was memorable. This seems like some kind of connection to what we are doing today.

Chloe, your daughter, is older, and so am I and so are you. And now we are neighbors who have lived through a pandemic together and have spent time talking, playing, making, dreaming, creating and envisioning together between our two porches.

I am looking at a post-it note that says "SISter" and "Soccer?" on it while sitting at your desk as I write this. We are collaborating. Sister being our cat's name, I see and know you have reminded yourself to take good care of her while we have been away on vacation and I know you have. This is one of the ways we have collaborated in our time living next door to each other. One of the ways we have had each other's backs.

What has worked for me in this collaboration has been play. Your bringing a dress-up box and a camera and the energy to just make something ignited a spark in me that I haven't felt in a while. I have loved the ability to just be me and do something fun, something different and not take it all too seriously.

In a world that is crumbling in so many ways, I wonder what will be left when we are gone. To think our times shared will survive in frozen moments of photos, videos and in other people's minds, brings me some sort of joy or peace or sense of being alive. It might not feel like much but it's a real takeaway from this collaboration. A reminder to play and to be open to connecting with people in other ways. Like we have over the past 2 years of living next door. To dress up, to dance, to wear wigs and be friendly, to listen and care about each other's lives.

I may have gone on a tangent here, but I see our meeting, our location, or place in this space we call Earth or life or whatever has made something happen out of nothing and that's what matters to me.

Bigger questions I've been pondering that you may have a thought on:

what story does this all tell?

has this story been told again and again?

does it matter?

who's listening? who else cares?

I love you. I love being your neighbor.

Lots of love,

Erin





Dear Erin,

Thank you for reminding me of that cold night in March. How wild that neighbors in Athens can pass through one's backyard as a shortcut and be welcomed in for a cocktail...I was so fortunate to have had the means to travel and a place to stay in D.C. and to have been able to take Chloe with me. I hope she remembers it forever as not only something we did together, but something important for women.

You had short hair then and have been growing it out since. I've cut your hair a couple of times during the new moon and we will do it again tonight. I love how the curl lends itself to recovery and hides any imperfections! I had never met you but had seen you around and always thought you were so beautiful, so self-possessed, aware... Now, you have lived next door for more than two years and we call each other a friend, dear friend, cherished friend. We have shared our stories, past, present, future. We have shared our clothes, our houses, our food, our recipes, our pets, our families, our time, our ideas. It's hard for me to think of a time when you may not be right there as you prepare a portfolio for pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing...but I do know that we will always have each other wherever we may be in the world.

As I reflect on Collaboration with a capital 'C,' and we have identified collaboration and even, mini-collaborations with a little 'c,' I am reminded of what makes it happen in the first place: space and time mixed with willingness and creativity. Actually, I think the main ingredient would be trust. Trust is the bond that sutures respect and the ability to venture out, forward, into other areas. I think I trust you above all else. You said in your letter that we've 'had each others' backs.' Yes, I've taken care of Sister but you have also taken care of Chloe in so many ways that don't necessarily involve me leaving town (though that has happened too ~ and we know all about that...). Trust to try something new is not easy to find in a partner. I can trace certain parts of our collaboration together to other work of mine, but it is very much it's own thing. It has taken on it's own trajectory and voice that is completely due to our proximity and trust in one another.

You also mention care which has been an ongoing topic of research for me and the maternal. Care, or carriage as Braccha Ettinger calls it, refers to the idea of having been carried. We have all been carried by someone before and we continue to carry (the load, the responsibility, the task, or the ask of someone else) and care for each other if there is trust.

Trust also pictures heavily into play. How can we play as two adults if we didn't feel safe to do so? Cullen has said before that a lot of my work has childhood playthings but made better; a seesaw, a fort, dancing (as performance and drawing), and now dressing up. It's performative or performance-based but for who? Who cares? Who's listening? You ask these questions, some of which have been answered by our friends and loved ones. They have said our work has offered a certain validation and affirmation for them. Of what? Two women sharing words, time, ideas, But you also ask, "what is this all about?" which is what we are working toward. The short of it is that I don't know!... But as we tease out these ideas, I keep coming back to mentorship and mutuality. I think the iconography of the loop portraits serve as a discussion about different stages in life, repetition and ghostly, they also take on an uncanny other-worldly feeling. A suitcase or eggs contain different meanings but could also hold or rather house others. Packing, going, preparing, leaving, coming, Pandora's box...what's inside? Don't we all want to know?!? The eggs can hold similar meaning but when placed next to me with a pregnant 'artifact,' what is produced? By virtue of proximity, connections to fertility are easily made. But what of the idea of an older woman with a younger woman and the potential for mutuality and mentorship? It's definitely not to suggest that all women are meant to produce children or need to have some sort of interest in babies...

I could go on and on here because I am now thinking about objects and how they, too, become actors or actants in this play or performance. But that can be in the next letter!

You are dear to me. You are cherished and I am grateful for our time together.

I love you! I love being your neighbor!

Love,

Courtney



Fata Morgana continues...



Join us for a live streamed performance on
Thursday September 16 from 8-9pm

on Zoom

Meeting ID: 871 4194 5155

Passcode: 1111

or

Instagram Live

@erinchristine11.11

@courtneykesselart

playlist and recorded meditation



Playlist

songs that have inspired this summer of imagination.

Highlights to look forward to:

- danceable pop tunes
- emotional ballads about life, love and the state of the world
- many different languages to stimulate the mind!



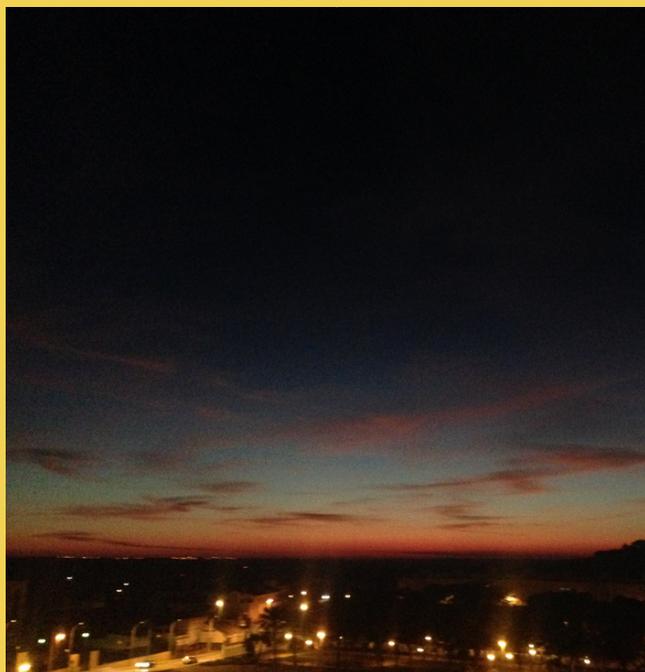
Recorded Meditation with Erin

Conflict (29 minutes)

In this recording, I will guide a brief meditation, followed by an excerpt from the book *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown. I'll then offer a few writing prompts to close out the practice.

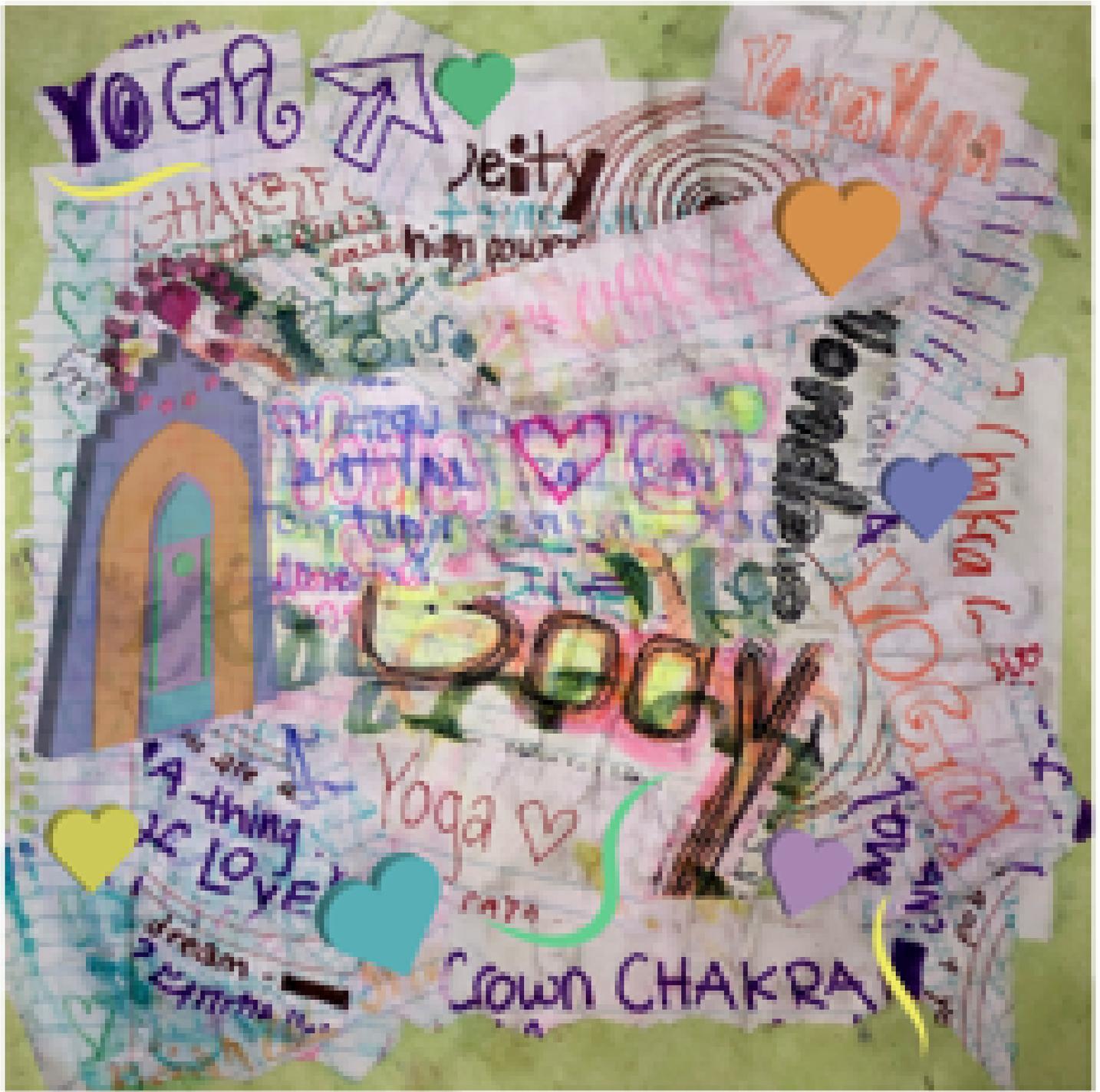
This recording is titled, Conflict and will explore diving into discomfort and/or challenge as an opportunity for growth and getting out of your own way through the practices of reflection, connection and awareness.

You'll want a little bit of space to move, a notebook and writing utensil or your computer if you will be typing to write today. The practice in its entirety can be done seated in a chair. Hope you enjoy!



Featuring *music from a basement:1*
by Ethan Bartman.

From the community



Collage from previous Yoga + Writing classes

Analog Collage + digital Collage, 12 x12"

by Mary Popa



Mary Popa is an artist in Athens, Ohio. She is an interdisciplinary artist that works primarily with found or previously used objects in order to promote sustainability. Mary has a passion for collaboration and education. [Follow Mary on instagram](#) to view more of her work!

Jax Walter is an Asheville, NC resident living in the spaces of nuance and creativity. They make comics and other types of art and find joy in working with children and helping others. And as a white genderqueer person they strive to challenge the status quo and interrogate injustice in themselves and in the larger society. Check out some of their other work at freakmirrorcomics.com.

They share a poem about grief below:



a poem about grief by Jax Walter

It was a Friday night, and I was scrolling through tik-tok in the mind-numbing habitual way we all find ourselves doing from time to time. I landed on a video on my For You Page that struck me enough that I had to check out the rest of their profile. It was a collaborative page between a 97-year-old Jewish woman and her grandson. She had survived living in a concentration camp during the Holocaust and was now making videos about what being held in the camps were like, the challenges in her life, and all the beauty she has experienced since then. So after a few videos, I'm all of a sudden I'm weeping. Seeing her joy amongst the horrific hate she went through made me feel so deeply the pain of the human experience. So I wrote this poem about the purpose of grief in our lives:

As I walk through the world,
little stones collect in my soul
like pebbles in my shoes.
Part of the inevitable experience
of walking through this life.

Yet after a while,
their weight builds
And I'm feeling the numb heaviness
of the trials of life.

Each time I grieve with tears in my throat
and ache in my heart
I wash out these stones from living.
Empty out the caverns of my heart
That need space to breathe and feel.

When I am touched by the pain
and loss of living,
a flood held back, seeps through the pebble wall

Leaving my soul
with the availability of life once more.

So while the pain of grief feels raw and hard,
letting it through me
Is the only way I can keep moving.



items of interest

a collection of what I've been...

reading:

This blog post about how Japanese seasons can inspire less of a need to be productive and look closer at the world around us.

The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel Van Der Kolk; a beautifully scientifically written book about the brain and mind in the healing of trauma.

The Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield is an adventure novel set in Peru that ties in Eastern philosophy and New Age spiritual teachings that tie strings together about life itself.

watching:

Anthony Bourdain's show, Parts Unknown, from the beginning! This show has taught me about places in the world that I have never thought about it. A show about history, politics, people and food across the globe.

listening to:

Afrofuturism is Now (ft. Sudan Archives, Jenna Wortham and Kimberly Drew) a podcast episode from Objects of Sound with Hanif Abdurraqib on music and how it shapes our culture.

Humility an episode of Tara Brach's podcast that touches on the common ground between all of us on planet Earth right now and through all of time.

Body Land - Metaphor Medicine a podcast with Liz Asch Greenhill that incorporates "guided visualizations that use the superpowers of your imagination to help you feel better." I specifically enjoyed the episodes, Fly Free and Settle the Spine.

What's going on?

Weekly Group Classes

In-person

Monday 10am Slow Flow
Wednesday 6:15pm Gentle Flow
Friday 10 am Adaptive Yoga @ Passion Works Studio
Friday 4pm Slow Flow

on Zoom

Monday 10am Slow Flow
Tuesday 6pm Flow
Wednesday 6:15pm Gentle Flow
Friday 4pm Slow Flow

Sign up

.....

Workshops and Class Series

**AUTUMN
OUTDOOR
SLOW FLOW**

.....

WEDNESDAYS IN
LATE SEPTEMBER + OCTOBER
(SEPT 22-OCT 27)
11AM-NOON
\$50 FOR ALL 6 CLASSES
\$10 SINGLE CLASS

BODHI TREE STUDIO, ATHENS OHIO
SIGN UP AT BODHITREEGUESTHOUSE.COM

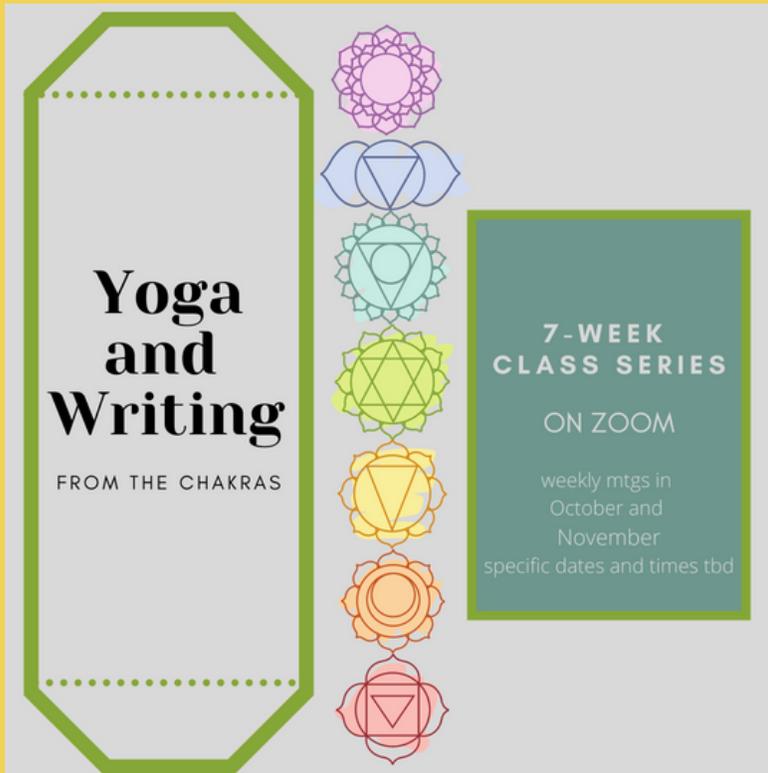
BODHI TREE

This class series is an opportunity to embrace the beauty of the fall season with outdoor yoga on Wednesday mornings in late September + October from 11am -noon at the beautiful, Bodhi Tree Studio, located at 8950 Lavelle Rd. Athens, Ohio.

This flow style yoga class will incorporate mindful movements through a thoughtful sequence to safely build flexibility, balance, strength and create a stronger mind-body connection.

The intention of this class is to connect to our bodies, nature and others as the season's change.

Sign up



A 7-week exploration of the chakras and the different energies held within each of these swirling centers in the body and how they work together to make up your wholeness. Each class will be centered around a different chakra and consist of a series of gentle yoga asanas, meditation, and guided writing prompts to seek balance. Each chakra holds a certain truth, piece of intuition and personal, yet universal story.

Much of the learning regarding the seven chakra energy system is felt; like tingling in the hands or the warm, soft feeling in the belly during deep relaxation. These aha! moments are often what make balance and presence seem possible (at least for me!). There is so much information regarding yoga and the chakra systems that has been carried over time, traditions, and cross-cultural pollination. This class series is approached through embodied study of this ancient wisdom within the subtle body through the practices of yoga and writing.

Fill out interest form



for the community

researched organizations to support the people of Haiti, Afghanistan and New Orleans during these humanitarian crises. Click the logos below to learn more, donate and see what we can do to participate in supporting our human community.



SOW A SEED



**HOPE
FOR
HAITI**

IRAP

International Refugee
Assistance Project

**SOUTHERN
SOLIDARITY**

- This is a new addition to the zine in hopes to spread awareness and aid in building bridges to our global community through financial aid, volunteer opportunities and finding our individual roles in our efforts for a more equitable world.

If you have any recommended organizations to include on future lists or better ways to share, support and give please feel free to reach out to me personally.

cover art by...



Gabe Ryerson is an artist who lives in Champaign, IL with a beautiful faerie queen and two young hobbits. When he's not working on illustrations, he enjoys hiking in the woods, thinking about chakras, and talking to rabbits. He's a big fan of children's book illustrators like Mercer Mayer, Arthur Rackham, and Maurice Sendak. He's not a fan of heights, old chewing gum, or sitcoms.

Instagram: @gabrielryerson

flow

is made possible by your support, which is greatly appreciated. You can give one time through

[Venmo](#) or subscribe on [Patreon](#).

Thank you all who share, give and support this project and beyond!



Erin is currently living in southeastern Ohio. She has been enjoying a good cup of coffee to start the mornings, collaborating with friends and swimming in different bodies of water throughout the summer.

You can learn about classes she offers and more of what she's all about on her [website](#).