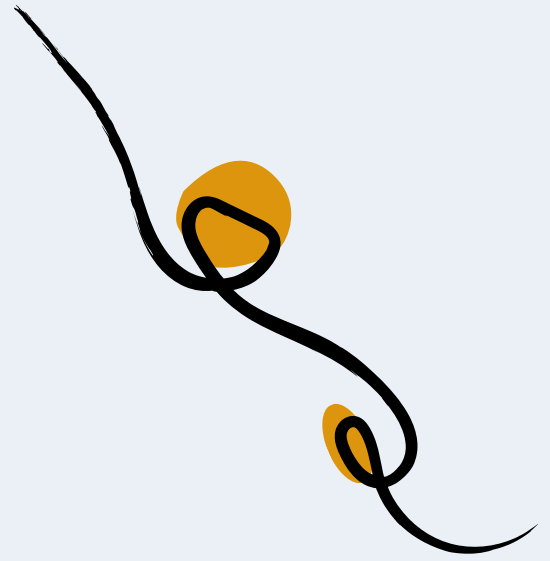


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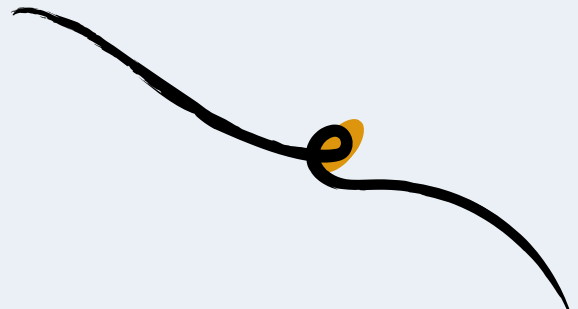
LETTING GO


WINTER 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*





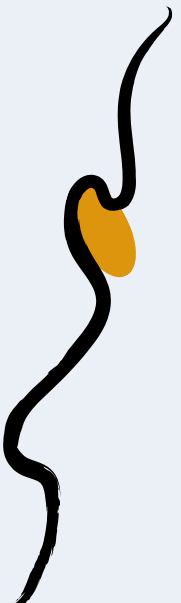
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WINTER 2021  
LETTING GO

## what's inside?

Cover art by Gabriel Ryerson

- 2 Letter from Erin
- 5 Turning the Lens  
*writing prompts for reflection*
- 7 More from Erin  
*additional writing, blog articles,  
playlist & recorded meditation*
- 9 From the Community  
*poem from guest writer Jax Walter*
- 11 Conversation Starters  
*sources for inspiration and information*
- 13 What's going on?  
*upcoming offerings*



*To continue the exploration, consider subscribing to my [Patreon](#) for access to my live workshop on Zoom to dive into this season's theme in more depth through conversation, yoga and writing.*

*Held on Thursday, March 4 at 5:30pm ET (recording posted after event on [Patreon](#) for convenience)*



# Letter from Erin

Over the past month, thoughts on 'letting go' have seeped into my conversations with friends, reading and personal reflection. It seemed seamlessly fitting as we were leaving a year that forced us all to let go of so much. We've had to let go of jobs, travel plans, classes, celebrations and for many of us, people that we love.

The heaviness that hangs in the air feels full of stories, distance and sadness unspoken. Even when I wake in the mornings there seems to be a lull that pulls me towards a place I've already been (the past), yet I am reminded to step onto the floor, feel the soles of my feet and give what I've got-- which some days might not be a whole lot.

Letting go is a phrase that used to make me cringe. I would hear it in a yoga class or in a podcast about Buddhism and wonder how the heck people are so chill about this concept. Hearing a yoga teacher use it in class as a mantra paired with breathing made my skin crawl, inhale "let, exhale "go". This used to land with me in a way that made me want to walk out of class. So much of that had to do with the false sense of simplicity in the sentiment.

Letting go is complex, a practice that is sometimes down right scary. Over the years of studying more yoga philosophy and practicing mindfulness meditation, my definition of (and attitude towards) *letting go* slowly started moving in a different direction.



## Letter from Erin (continued)

Letting go became, Easing into presence, as Tara Brach would say, which felt like a much gentler approach compared to the dramatic forcing or pushing to release something that I've got a death grip on that I had felt before.

Loosening the grip, rather than abruptly dropping the rope felt doable. In real time, when I can ease into the simplicity of the present moment, my grip softens. My awareness widens. I feel expansion, I feel more like me.

I feel like I am letting go.


In the most recent yoga and writing class series I offered a dear friend shared the brilliant insight that letting go is a process. She said it isn't let go right now. It is *letting go*-- PRAISE BE! After class that night I looked up what adding -ing to the end of a word means and came across this: *denoting material used for or associated with a process etc.*

Yes, I like that; a process, a slow release.

A second piece of wisdom from another friend, brought me full circle to the beauty of how letting go creates space to let in, like the breath; taking a breath is my constant reminder of this. Breathing out, I release; letting go, letting go. And as I breathe in, I am able to receive. Explorations of letting go could go on and on. Simplicity feels nice these days.

What is letting go looking like for you?

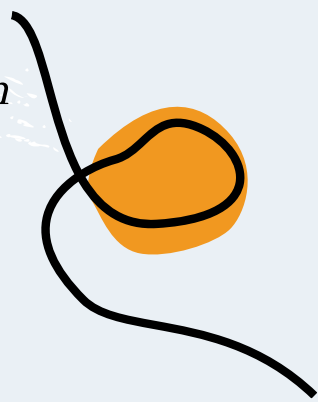
Love,  
Erin

A woman is captured in a winter landscape, performing a yoga pose. She is wearing a grey jacket, a patterned knit hat with a fur trim, and dark pants. Her right arm is raised high, and her left leg is lifted and bent, with her foot touching her right knee. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow, and the background features snow-covered trees and a building on the left.

Erin makes the yoga shape,  
Natarajasana (Dancer)  
on a snowy winter day 2019.  
Photo by Ethan Bartman

# Turning the lens

*writing prompts for reflection, intention and action*



- Think back on the past couple of months.
- What were you forced to let go of?
- What did this letting go look like?
- What have you purposefully left behind?
- Think about what's ahead.
- What are 3 attitudes or beliefs of your own that feel outdated to you?
- What does purposefully letting go look like to you?
- What is something you'd like to release?
- Why would you not let go of something?
- What are you afraid of?
- Revisit your responses periodically and remember letting go is your process.
- Be kind to yourself.



# More from Erin

## Home

by Erin Pfahler

*I keep wanting to go back, I think to myself as I sludge through a mushy, muddy part of the trail. When I started the run there was ice underfoot and little bits of crunchy snow here and there which made each stride a little harder with my feet slipping out from underneath me. Each stride something new to take in through the bottoms of my feet.*

*Ice...I feel it all the way into my tight hips, snow... my thighs burn and my toes grip making my feet sweat in my already soggy socks, mud...I slip and my stomach drops as I sink, now clumps stick to my foot weighing my left shoe down making each leap a little harder, a little heavier.*

*I keep wanting to go back. One last time to say goodbye, again. I guess this is how it is when you have to let something go, when you have to let someone go, when you have to let yourself go, even if it is just a part of you, a part of who you once were.*

My parents are moving to Wisconsin. They are moving from the house that I grew up in, in northwest Ohio. They have been talking about this move for years. My brother moved to Madison 10 years ago or so. His family and him have built their life there. Teddy, Franky and Lucy are the little ones who've embraced the cold winters with hockey, ice-skating, snow people and cheese. My sister recently followed with her little family too. Little Annie built a snow fort the other day. I saw pictures in the aftermath of her lounging in the snow bundled up and later with a hot chocolate mustache and smile from ear to ear. I don't think I need to say more about why my parents have gravitated to this scene of grandkids and memories to be made.



## Home (continued)

The house that I grew up in is brick. A sturdy ranch structure with dark red shutters on the sides of the windows. In the fall there are two maples out front that flourish and match the color of the bricks and shutters as they change. From burgundy, to burnt orange to golden yellow and eventually crispy brown dusting the ground. My dad is meticulously tidy. Growing up, he'd rake the leaves the day after they fell and green summer grass would shine through until the first cover of snow in winter.

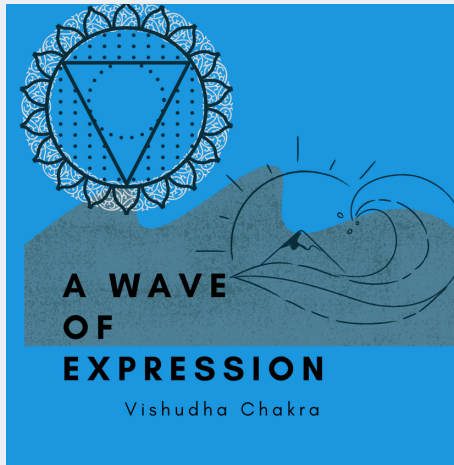
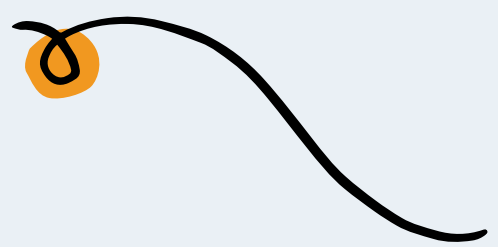
I keep wanting to go back, but it's just a house. What's done is done and memories will live on. No new memories need to be made there. It's just a house that helped raise me. It covered my head, it gave me a space to grow, it reminded me I'm lucky. It's where I grew up and made memories. It's the place I learned, the place I hurt, the place I loved, the place I knew, the place that I once called home.

My parents used to let me choose the color to paint the walls of my room. I chose sherbet orange one year and put a beaded curtain in place of my closet doors. My room was my sanctuary, my place to read magazines, my place to cry over love, my place to talk on the phone or listen to Hanson for hours, my place to play mini records and explore who I was. I woke up in that same room the last night I slept there. The sound of a shovel scraping cement woke me up to the quietness I'd remembered about the house in winter. I stayed in bed and peered outside to a blanket of snow perfectly spread down Kennedy Street. My bundled up dad shoveling the path home, the path I know will always be cleared for me.

I keep wanting to go back, but I've got a new home. Home in each step, home in each breath, home in all the different terrains under my feet and the sound of my very own heart beat.

# More From Erin (continued)

*Blog Posts, recorded meditation and playlist*



Blog Post / A Wave of Expression: Vishudha Chakra  
a personal look into the throat chakra

"At 29 years old I thought I'd be better at voicing my opinion. I used to think one day it would switch like magic and I'd be confidently bursting with clarity. Working with the fifth chakra has helped me shift my focus to supporting this discomfort and ask myself questions..."

.....



Blog Post / Letting Go is Easing into Presence  
a closer look & perspective of my journey of letting go

"Letting go doesn't have to mean ignoring or covering up. It doesn't have to mean switching to a butterflies and rainbows mind-set. In fact it can mean quite the opposite."

.....



Recorded Meditation with Erin

Letting Go is Easing into Presence / 10 minute meditation  
The pathway back to presence is strengthened through practice. In this guided meditation we'll explore and practice easing into presence through finding an anchor in the breath and our connection to the Earth.

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

.....



Playlist

some songs I've had on repeat this winter with highlights like an incredible cover of Cher's *Believe* by Okay Kaya, powerful lyrics in songs from both Ron Gallo and Amanda Palmer and my favorite version of *Aude Lange Syne* by Mairi Cambell and David Francis

# From the community

*guest writing and bio*



## Explosive Birth

By Jax Walter

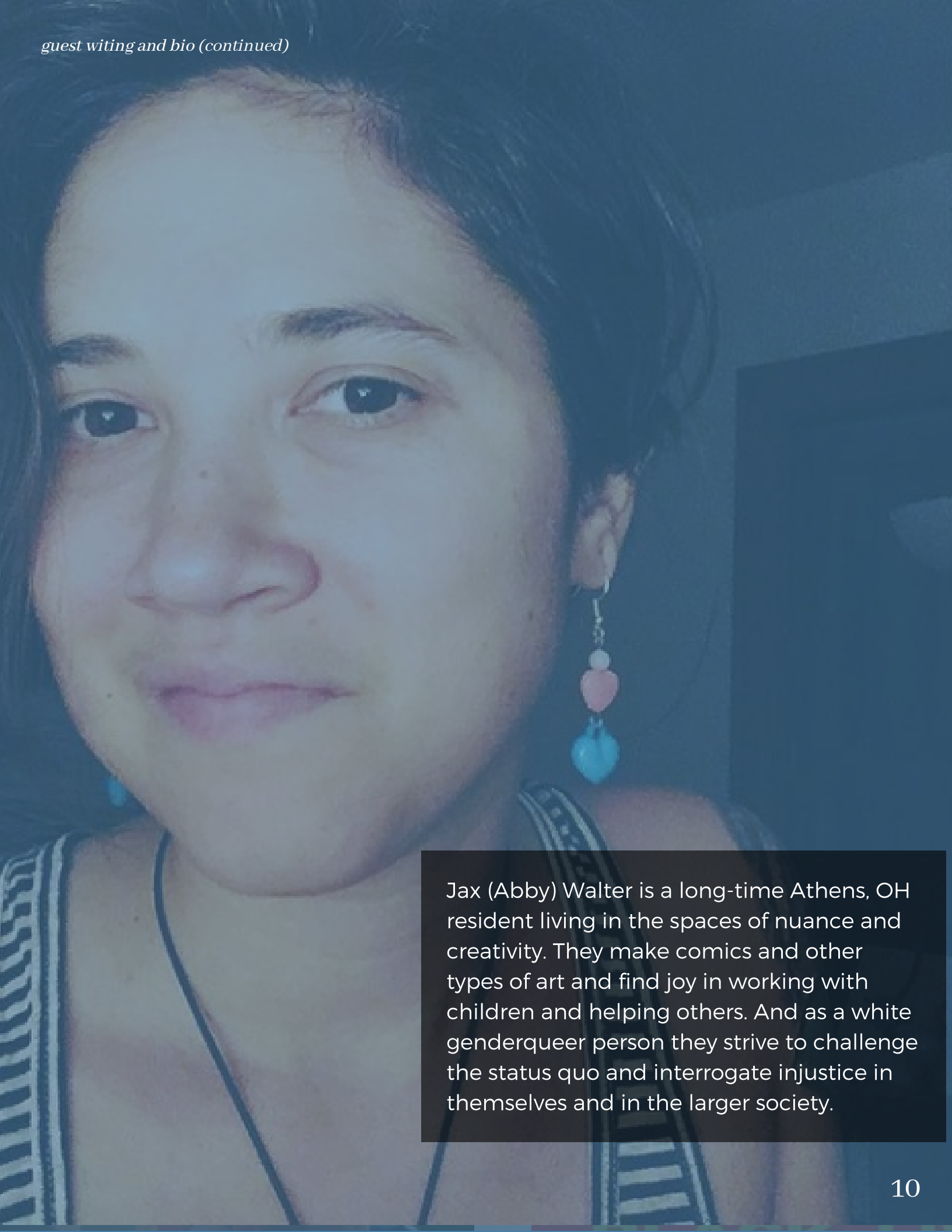
Are endings just new beginnings  
wrapped in foil  
and *crumbling* hot?

The Big Bang an explosion  
of a great ending turned new beginning.  
Dying giving way to life  
Disappointments and decay  
becoming building blocks for new  
hopes and new ways...

The dying, a dark turning  
away  
With unknown feelings and longings too  
Eras end and become something new  
Phases and turning  
Like the spots on the moon

I've felt cold shoulders too many to choose  
They send a shiver through the empty core  
In hopes that a newness is found once more  
Where life is sparked with love and growth  
I'm holding on to more than hope...

That from the ruins of these times  
New ways of relating we will surely find  
Is it possible to say goodbye  
To things I thought I loved and felt entwined?  
Hearts are tricky if you must  
So bless the ashes,  
bless the dust,  
bless this explosion of each dying day  
For life is blossoming and on its way



Jax (Abby) Walter is a long-time Athens, OH 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.



# conversation starters

*a collection of highly recommended sources for  
inspiration and information*

## I'm reading

- *The Prophets* by Robert Jones, Jr. novel
- *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott book on writing & life
- *The Wisdom of No Escape: Pema Chödrön on gentleness, the art of letting go and how to befriend your inner life* article by Maria Popova
- *In Defense of Doing Nothing* article by Apoorva Tadepalli about giving idleness a try over the hustle bustle cultural norm

## I'm watching

- *Star Wars Episode IV, V and VI* film trilogy. a flashback to when I was a kid and a good reminder on the vastness of the Universe...space!
- *Rumble: The Indians who Rocked the World*, a documentary about the Native Americans role on popular music history
- *Soul* / the newest Pixar film about a jazz pianist who gets stuck between Earth and afterlife; reminded me to enjoy the simple moments of life and let go

## I'm listening

- *Surviving is the New Living*, album by Okay Kaya
- *Grounded*, album by Uno Lady
- Meditation: *The Art of Letting Go* with Tara Brach
- *Cultivating a Courageous Heart* Dharma Talk with Tara Brach
- *She's Alive!* podcast episode from Dolly Parton's America about Dolly's belief system and spirituality
- Interview with Rachel Ricketts: *Unplugging from the Matrix of White Supremacy* podcast episode from Tami Simon's podcast *Sounds True*

## conversation starters (continued)

"Sitting lets us just, first of all, recognize that we are this massive collection of thoughts and experiences and sensations that are moving at the speed of light and that we never get a chance to just be still and pause and look at them, just for what they are, and then slowly to sort out our own voice from the rest of the thoughts, emotions, the interpretations, the habits, the momentums that are just trying to overwhelm us at any given moment."

-Rev. angel Kyodo williams, esteemed Zen priest, shares insight on letting go on the episode, The World is Our Field of Practice from the podcast *On Being* with Krista Tippett



Image by Christine Alicino/Christine Alicino, © All Rights Reserved.



Image from Twitter @YAMASandNIYAMAS

"This week, look at ideas and beliefs that once served you and now have become archaic. You may unknowingly be holding on to things that you no longer need. Honor these beliefs because, like a vehicle, they brought you to your current place on your journey. As you let go of what no longer serves you, pay attention to where denial shows up and celebrate your movement toward a clearer, more authentic you! Watch how this exercise frees up your energy for the further emergence of your authentic realness."

-Deborah Adele, The Yamas & Niyamas

# What's going on?

## Weekly Group Classes

Monday 10 am Slow Flow

Tuesday 6pm Power Flow

Wednesday 4pm FREE Chair Yoga w/ The Gathering Place

Wednesday 6pm Gentle Yoga

Friday 4pm Slow Flow (through Bodhi Tree)

Sign up

## Workshops and Class Series

### *Finding Freedom in Structure*

a virtual gentle  
yoga & meditation  
workshop



*Pay what you can \$10-35*

NOTAFLOF

Thursday,  
Feb. 25th  
6-7:30pm

Join Erin Pfahler, RYT 200 and Hannah Simonetti, RCST for an evening of introspection and embodied exploration of how structure, boundaries, routine, whatever you want to call it can actually free up time, energy and space.

In this 90 minute workshop we'll explore what this looks and feels like for you through the practice of yoga including asana (postures), pranayama (breath work), mindfulness and meditation.

Erin will begin class with a 60 minute gentle yoga practice with an emphasis on structure and freedom. We'll move slowly and have plenty of time in and between poses to feel into this balance. Hannah will top off the class with a 30-minute body-centered guided meditation centered around the principles of craniosacral therapy & trauma resolution.

Sign up



Start planting your seeds and grow your roots through the practices of writing and yoga as a means of clearing space for creative thoughts and ideas to bloom alongside the world around you.

Spring is a time of renewal and growth. This 5-week self-exploration is interwoven with Spring themes of planting seeds, growing roots and being with what arises in the process.

Each class consists of time for sharing/ conversation, a gentle yoga practice and guided writing intended for reflection, creation and refreshment. This class is meant to be a unique experience for you with options, choice and encouragement of personalized inquiry.

[Sign up](#)



There's so much to celebrate about Spring!

We (Erin Pfahler and Hannah Simonetti) invite you to gather virtually with us on the morning of the Spring Equinox to welcome the changing of the seasons through yoga, writing and meditation.

This virtual workshop will be a great way to honor nature's rhythms and connect on this day of equal day and night. With the theme of balance, we'll bring awareness to our internal worlds (mind, body and spirit) and our relationship to the outer world.

We'll explore stirring up stagnant winter energy through the practice with some heat building postures, reflective writing prompts and introspective meditation.

[Sign up](#)



cover art by...



Gabe Ryerson is an artist who lives in Athens, OH 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 for \$5/month to my [Patreon](#). Thank you all who share, give and support this project and beyond!



Erin (she/her) is currently situated in southeastern Ohio. She teaches yoga classes mostly online through Zoom these days and has been enjoying learning more about embodiment practices, writing about existential stuff and spending time in the woods. You can learn about classes she offers and more of what she's all about on her [website](#).