



Sanctuary


Connecting Mind, Heart and Spirit through Nature

Christina Leimer



Solitude ∞ Beauty ∞ Delight

The natural world inspires me. It's where I feel connected to all life, to the grand scheme, the vibrant web that holds us all. Being in nature moves me. It dissolves my daily concerns and worries, opens me to the mystery and enchantment in life, and teaches me, offering insight, illumination and wisdom. Whether in grand vistas like Yosemite and Yellowstone, a city park or a neighborhood walk, the wild sparks appreciation, gratitude and joy in me. I hope you too experience solitude, beauty and delight in the wild spaces.



Solitude



The hustling world is never far away, but when I drop into the natural world my mind relaxes and settles into my heart and I gain both distance and intimacy. Distance from the external demands, the distractions and the noise, and intimacy with my deepest being, one with the rhythms and flow of the natural order, connected to all life.

Rocks bring solidity, the comfort of the ages. Sitting on or leaning against a boulder, especially by the ocean, grounds me. It brings the energy of the tides, of nature's cycles, of the higher spheres, into my body and fastens me to the earth, and I become a conduit. This energy flows out into the world, calming and opening, unafraid, even joyous.



Watching the water, on the ocean's edge, the current moves out into the distance, changing form and color as it goes. We can see the horizon until fog rolls in, casting its veil. Then, we look closer to home, feet on the earth, at the boundary, the edge of land and sea. It's easy to cross over, immersed in the waves, yet close to shore, never lost, the shoreline is a guidepost. We're free to dive and play, to see what can be discovered in the shallows, drawing comfort for the deep, the place of strength, of solitude, of wisdom.

Standing on the hilltop, a stillness comes, and I feel congruence between my inner and outer world. Gazing at the valley, the trail I see is wide enough for one, a single seeker, a knower, a wanderer, a passerby, alone but in companionship with the wild and all that is. I see, I sense, I know, I am. All that is, exists in me.

And you.



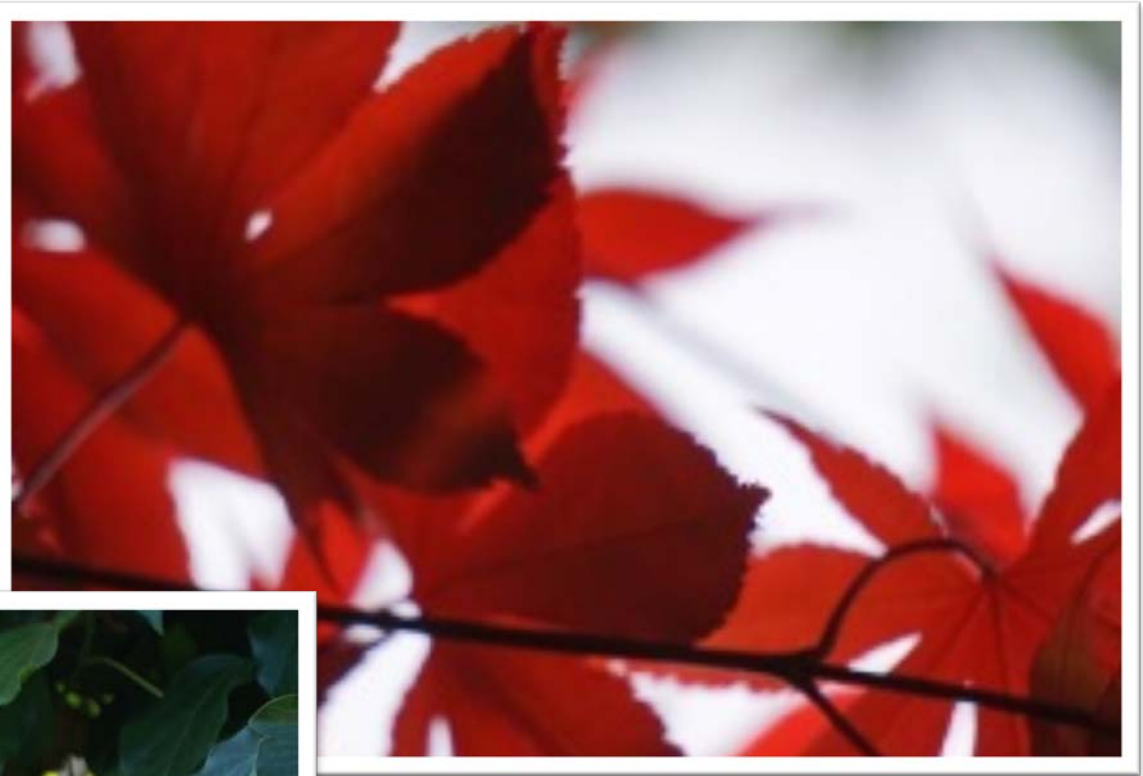
Beauty

The instant before cognition kicks in, what I perceive in that first moment is often impressionistic. Lines, colors, shapes, textures, contrasts, complements, shadows and light, a world always available, but unnoticed until I linger, and look, and let my senses open without filters. Then it fills me, satisfies and overwhelms, satiates with joy and wonder and awe.



Sometimes nature shouts—pay attention, notice!

Other times, it's so subtle, so soft, so easy to miss, like the wavery red leaves, stark against a white background.



Or the flashing beads of light that I initially didn't even see as leaves, but simply as light.

Sometimes nature's gifts are momentary, then gone. Serendipity comes into play.



Birds rising out of the fog over Angel Island, sublime.

Right place, right time, right attention to catch the sun shining beneath a tree bough and a solo bird in flight, floods me with gratitude and pleasure in the beauty of existence.



Nature dances in small, hidden places, but is always willing to reveal its treasures.

Like this plant's tears



And this one's sex

When I witness nature's grand sweeps,
I hope other people too experience the
vision and enfolding rapture...



Of a moon buoyed by cloud pillows or a chalky
sketch of sky and sea

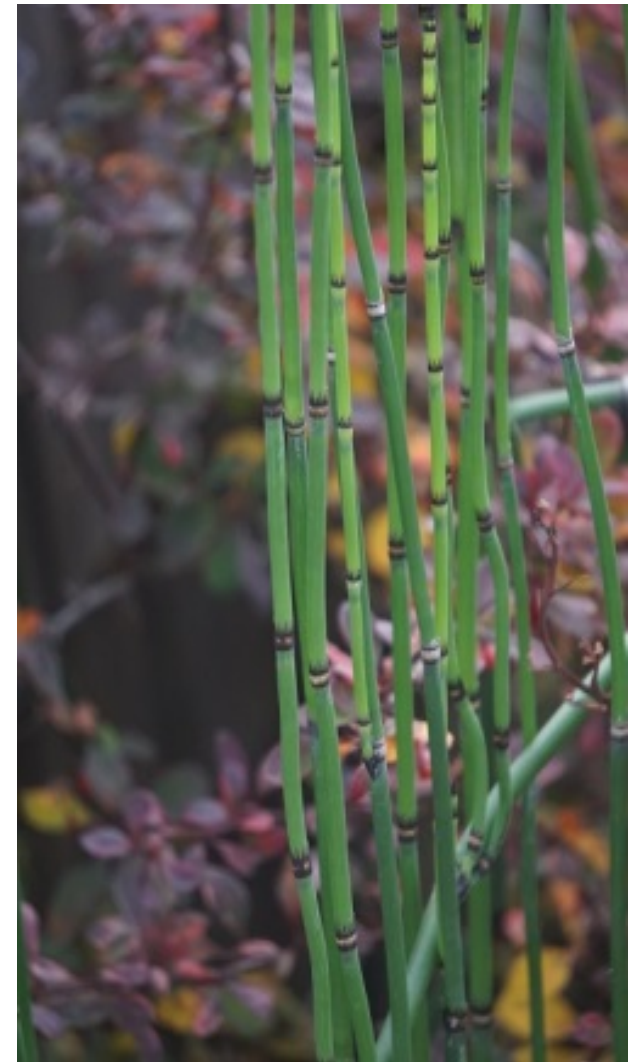


It's a fan dance, this patch of greens. Leaves narrow, wide, long, clipped, bent, straight, pointed, all overlapping, swaying in a light breeze.

Yellow drew me in, luring me to the purple light and shadows, and the rich textures and shapes of this plant collage.

Bees fascinate me. I could watch them for hours.

This one blends with the rose that nourishes it.



Contrasting color and form

Delight

Once my heart is engaged in the natural world, unexpected things emerge, sparking surprise and amusement in me, but also intimacy, insight at times, and a lightness that sets all things right. At peace, at ease, at one.



Balance

This gull nearly missed its landing. I can relate.

Mischief

This goose seemed to know it wasn't supposed to be in the flower bed. When it first saw me, it slunk down into the foliage, then repeatedly popped its head up to survey the scene, looking back at the house whose garden it was in and then at me. It repositioned itself several times, trying to decide what to do, apparently not wanting to leave its lair. Eventually it climbed out, flew to the water below and swam around eating seaweed, flipping up a piece that landed on its head.





Watching

These deer weren't too keen on giving up their roadside grazing, so they decided to snack and watch me, watching them.

Eventually, they headed on down the road, talking deer talk.



About the Author

Feathers are one of my favorite symbols. Finding this one resting in tree branches, above berries, felt like a gift, assuring me my spirit can fly free and will be nourished.



Christina Leimer

I'm an author, researcher and journalist exploring social, psychological and cultural issues, spirituality, end of life, and the human-natural world connection.

*If you enjoyed this trip through nature, you might like this chapter from my book, *Natural Urges*. It's called [Nature's Power](#).*

You can see it and more of my writing at my website christinaleimer.com