

## **Homework**

### **Reflections Initiations by Earth, Class 1: Relationship to Nature**

Realize that Mother Nature is the force, the consistent energy that is present in the cycles of Nature: the rhythms of the tides, the orbits of the planets, the changing of seasons, the cycle of life from pregnancy to death, all the cycles that fill our time on earth. Mother Nature is the ever present now of life. Her primary law is balance and she keeps her own timetable. Returning to balance may take a day, a month, even a lifetime. Understanding how to feel the Earth's rhythms helps us find and maintain balance in our lives.

#### **Opening prayer:**

I am made of Earth. I am a tree with limbs. My blood flows like the rivers. My moods erupt like storms and then return to calm seas. I delight in the beauty of this earth and I fear its explosive, uncontrollable power. I fear my own explosive force at times. I, too, have an animal nature that arises when I am cornered and fearful. I know how to attack, how to be irrational, how to shut down my rational mind and think only of surviving. I am no different than any other creature sharing this planet. That truth makes me want to kick off my shoes and walk on the grass. That realization makes me want to dig my hands deep into the soil and feel the substance that will contain my body when I am dead. My time here is so brief. "Lord, I am done asking questions about why things are as they are in my life. No other creature in nature questions you. Nature works in its perfection just as you created it, a perfect system that thrives on balance. That is the lesson for me: seek balance in all things. That is how you have structured the whole of life. Hover over me Lord. When I look upon Nature now, I see your message, your wisdom at work in all living creatures."

#### **Your practice for the week**

As you become more aware of your relationship to the Earth, ask yourself this week: How much do I connect to my senses?

- What does my life sound like?
- What fragrances are in my life?
- What sights surround me?
- What does my living space feel like to me?

Make a list of the things that throw you off balance. For example:

- Cravings or addictions
- Procrastination
- Daydreaming
- Envy
- Regret

Remember a time when you experienced balance in your life.

## **Meditation**

Every thought, every word and every value that you invest your physical energy in contributes to or depletes your inner balance. Nothing is inconsequential.

- God, help me focus on what contributes to my inner balance.

## **Closing prayer**

Life is not that complicated. Follow the rules of Nature. Nature does not lie. Nature does not deceive. Nature's not greedy or careless or cruel. Nature is the constant practice of balance and harmony. Sometimes fires are necessary and floods and earthquakes, tornadoes and storms. They are not unfortunate events. They are a natural part of the temperament of Nature balancing the whole. That is true of every life, including my life. I have had storms and I will no doubt have more. But I will strive not to let the natural storms and earthquakes that happen in my life turned me into someone bitter or angry. I will not let myself think that I'm the only human being who has ever experienced an extreme cycle of Nature. And I will count on the divine threads woven into Nature's patterns to return my life to balance, to bring calm after the storms in life after loss. "Hover over me, Lord. Again and again, I learned that you were hidden in the smallest detail of the whole creation. You are everywhere though it seems at times you are nowhere to be seen. That is perhaps the greatest illusion of all, for once my soul knew how to see you, everywhere I look, I come upon only you. Amen."