

# *Islands of Sanity and Spiritual Leadership in a Time of Crisis: A Dialogue*

Paul Freedman with Meg Wheatley

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## **Abstract**

HER Editor, Paul Freedman and esteemed author and thought leader, Margaret “Meg” Wheatley discuss Wheatley's work and its impact in the field of holistic education. They explore Wheatley's most recent thoughts on leadership, activism and why education continues to be a critical space for cultivating right action despite Wheatley's assertions that “we cannot move this needle” and “we are not planting seeds.” Schools are still, right now, a place where we can “see what's possible in the current reality. And that is truly meaningful work.”

*Post-Production Edit: To hear the full recorded audio of this dialogue, [click here to access it on YouTube](#).*

**Keywords:** *islands of sanity, leadership, holistic education, restoring sanity*

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## **Paul**

My first question is about your earlier work. So, as I said, the program I teach in TIES uses *Leadership and the New Science* as one of its central texts. And that book continues to, I mean, it comes up again, and again. I was just in Sao Paulo, actually, doing my dissertation research, one phase of it. And the Head of School at this small school in Sao Paulo had just ordered the book in Portuguese. That's amazing.

## **Meg**

My early books are all in Portuguese. We had a great publisher there.

## **Paul**

So I'm curious, now looking back 30 years over that space of time. If you have a perspective on what made that title sing for you, you know, what was coming up in your study and your development, and then also what was happening in the context of the readers, the society that was primed to receive these messages?

## **Meg**

That's a lovely way of framing it. Well, that book, *Leadership and the New Science* began with a friend saying, if you're interested in systems thinking, you need to read chaos theory. That was

my first awakening to that whole field, which was quite new. Living systems theory was really just getting started. But it was definitely my right work to go into it, and I got completely excited by these new maps that were possible, these new visions and this whole new paradigm. Now, I was very innocent; I was in my late 40s, but I was very innocent, because I then believed that all you had to do to change people's minds and their work, was to offer a new way of seeing that was filled with possibility, and that also had so much evidence to support it in the workplace, which we already had. By that time, I had a good 25 years of working in organizations. So I knew leadership, I knew organizational dynamics. And when this new paradigm of how life organizes with order for free, order without control, it just lit up the sky for me. And when I wrote the book, with good science--I had originally planned to be a scientist, hoped to be a scientist, aspired to be a scientist but then I became a student of history and literature, because I couldn't do advanced chemistry. But I had enough comprehension of the scientific mind that I could be a good translator for people. And that's something I can still do. And yet, I have to admit that a good part of the science that's in *Leadership and the New Science* I didn't fully understand, but I captured it correctly. So that was a blessing. I went back, it's like, phew! I really did get that right, even though I didn't understand it completely.

So I describe this as naivete and innocence, because that's *not* how people change their minds. They don't just get offered a new intellectual framework, a worldview, this is Four Arrows' work as well. They just don't see it and say, "Oh, thank you." [laughs] I did have several people, though... I had a lot of women write me and say "thank you, this is exactly how I'm viewing things. But I didn't have the authority or the

grounding in science to say, relationships are all there is, nothing comes into visible form until it's in relationship." You know, that was a primary learning from the book. And also that you *can* get order for free, that self-organization is the way life organizes itself in complete opposition to command and control. But you get greater creativity, you get greater productivity, you get meaning-making among people, you get everything you say you want as a leader. But that's not really what leaders wanted, they wanted control.

And now as chaos and complexity have increased exponentially. I see leaders seeking to control their staff in new ways. And destroying creativity, meaning-making, and any sense of interest in the work. You know? That's why people are withdrawing. We've just clamped down on them and using Taylor-like means, Taylorism is alive and well. People can track your hours using your computer. I mean, it's just pushing people away and destroying the very capacity we need, which I will come back to because that's my newest book coming out in March. But a few good things happened as a woman consultant. First of all, luckily, there was no social media, no internet. But in the journals, one Washington journal just made fun of me because I used the word love. Love is the essential power in organizations. I only used it once. So there was a whole thing in the Washington review. And I say this especially to women because I had to find my way as a woman expert and gain respect. I was just getting labeled as a New Age author sitting in her California hot tub eating too many avocados. I don't live in California. I live in Utah. And the title of one that was just excoriating said, "all we need is love. So touts John Lennon and a guru living in the mountains of Utah." And then he interviewed me about St. Augustine, and original sin.

I just said, casually, “well, that's the most ridiculous doctrine I've ever heard.” So he then made fun of that, ‘don't listen to 14 centuries of Catholic thought, theology, just listen to Wheatley.” So I had to deal with that. And it was very trying for me. I mean, I wasn't prepared for that level of ridicule, which now seems so mild compared to what everyone experiences on social media.

**Paul**

Can I just interrupt you to say, there's a remarkable parallel, I would say, as I understand it, I wasn't there. But the emergence and coalescence of the field of holistic education, out of a very similar both naivety and, you know, the attempt to integrate quantum mechanics and good science with what we know to be humane values of compassion, and Buddhist and Eastern philosophies, wisdom, and indigenous wisdom, like all of this was coming together. So in my question about what was happening in society at that point? I don't know the answer. But I do know that, you know, we were...

**Meg**

And this is fate. Now, I'm good. I mean, I've had a wonderful career and I've been widely loved and accepted. But what you went through is what any pioneer goes through who challenges the power basis in the culture? I mean, we're all, we're just in a long line of heretics and martyrs and revolutionaries, they try and kill us. Yes, they do. So it requires a very strong level of confidence that this is important. I know this to be true. I know the value of holistic education, I know the value of self-organizing. As a basic way to run organizations, we have to have superior confidence in order to not be blown away by the criticism. And I have to say, now with social media,

it's *terrible*. You know, it wasn't like that for us. You just get killed for anything you say, at this time. So I don't even know what it's like to be a pioneer now, but I do know my level of certainty that this has to be spoken. We have to try and implement it. And I'm speaking collectively with you, Paul. This is the role of the pioneers, the pioneers of new thinking, that brings more possibility. But they always try and kill us.

So one of the great benefits I had... enormous, I think the greatest benefit I had was when the head of the US Army, General Gordon Sullivan, asked to see the army through my eyes. So instant credibility. Nobody, no plant manager, no police officer, no authority could discount me in the same way. And I played a good role with the army. I mean, I was just given the feedback by someone who was writing his dissertation on general Sullivan, and he said, Everyone I talked to said you have to talk to Margaret Wheatley. And this is in the early 90s; '93 to '95 with him and then I stayed involved with Army leadership training for several years. That was just a great gift to me. I really did have an impact there. I don't even remember what I did. But I had an impact that people remembered. And for me as a woman that was an enormous, *enormous* step upward in people's... they could not refute me so easily, you know? Yeah,

**Paul**

It's interesting because you bring up the military. Recently I've been... so my own research these days is in the area of leadership, school leadership specifically, and school leadership within holistic pedagogies, more specifically. And what I sometimes tell people is like, in my opinion, the leadership model we adopt, or pursue, or envision should ideally align with the core values of the pedagogy in the case of schools, or the mission in

the case of organizations, and I will flippantly say, “leadership for the military, leadership in the army can be hierarchical, and you know, objective-based and reward-and-punishment...”

**Meg**

But it's not like that.

**Paul**

But I say, “because if what you're going for, if the outcome you want is efficiency and compliance and, you know, following directions.” But it's so...

**Meg**

I need to correct your assumptions about the military. There are two forms of leadership in the military. One is the Pentagon. One is the hierarchy and rank. But the side of the military that I've written about a lot, Peter Senge has written about it a lot in the 90s, is self-organization. When you're in battle, you have to trust the individual soldiers to make the right decisions. And after every battle or training battle, you do an After Action Review, which is the most vibrant, comprehensive review of what just happened, and you hear from everyone engaged. So I was astonished at the amount of learning. They had called me in, because they had young gunners in tanks who were for the first time able to see on a screen what was going on. And one of them just came out of the tank and said, I need to be involved here. And they worked with that. So they created a self-organizing system of the greatest capacity because it's most necessary. After one After Action Review, and I've written about this in *Who Do We Choose To Be?* I was sitting with a colonel after watching a huge mock battle, and I said, “this is the first learning organization I've ever been in.” And he said, ‘Well, Meg, we got that one, it was obvious to us a while ago, it's better to learn than be dead.’ So it's not about setting objectives or

having a strategy or a plan. When you're in battle, every soldier has to be fully engaged with full intelligence. And then you review the whole thing when it's over for learning, because you don't want to risk death.

**Paul**

That makes so much sense. So this is very out of order with the way I thought our [conversation] might unfold. But since we're, we're talking about leadership therefore just by implication, do you think... it seems like you're saying the kind of leadership that is needed, that is effective? is so in any context, in any organization? It doesn't matter if it's the military or a yoga studio?

**Meg**

Or a school...

**Paul**

Or a school, if the leadership is to lead well, it's going to approach it from a systems perspective, would you say? Or-

**Meg**

No, it's a self-organizing perspective. And it's true empowerment. So the greatest example that I've also spent a lot of time on, is how special forces are trained. In every country, it's become clear that those are the most highly trained soldiers. They're physically trained beyond belief. They're trained in weaponry. And this third component is they're trained in history, context and values. They have to know what's going on where they are. They're parachuted in, they have to make decisions on their own, they're not in contact. And that's become the leading force now in the army and, I guess, in many branches. Let's apply this to school: You have to know how to teach, you have to have your skills, you have to know about learning, you have to know about children, but

you're going to make decisions based on your *values*, the values of the school, and everyone has to know them. And then, you can *trust* staff, you could trust teachers, you could trust administrators, to handle situations in a way that will represent and reflect your *values*. That's what self-organizing is. Everyone is clear at the core, the coherence of the core is we're all working from the same *values*. And then we're free to make decisions in the moment. And when we do something badly, or screw up, our colleagues can challenge us saying, "I don't understand why you chose that action." Or, "it doesn't seem to represent our values." So keeping the values alive and well, is the way you keep the system open, free, order without control.

**Paul**

Beautiful and so the role of the quote leader is to continue to clarify, disseminate, articulate those *values*.

**Meg**

Exactly. And only the leader can see the whole of any organization, and then calling people together to talk about the values, how we've used them, where we've gotten into trouble with them, what we need to do better, creates a very healthy, collegial, trusting environment.

**Paul**

Would you say... Is it a goal of the leader within an organization? Or might it be... would this be one way of framing it... to allow for the emergence of leadership from *other* sources than the leader?

**Meg**

Well, when you create this coherence at the very center, then people *will* take leadership for different things, and then you can spot that and

identify them and, you know, make their contribution visible, maybe promote them, whatever. But people will show their best selves if you are engaging them fully. And trusting them to make good decisions. And this does work. This does work.

**Paul**

Yep. And so if a number of individuals, and maybe, the goal is eventually, everyone within the organization feels thus empowered, to be making decisions with confidence, with a deep understanding of the values, such that a traditional idea of what leadership even is...

**Meg**

I don't actually believe in that distributed leadership anymore. Only because the environment is so chaotic, and so destructive, there needs to be one person who holds the anchor, who holds firm, and who keeps making sense for people. I was very big on that form of distributed, highly participative leadership. But what I'm finding now, in order to maneuver through this increasingly chaotic environment, where you can just be blindsided by policies, by political behaviors, by angry parents, by what happens on social media, you need someone that people can trust and look up to, to create sense. And to keep the vision clear, because people are getting lost, as they try individually to respond to this total insanity now.

**Paul**

Right, both people *within* the organization need that clarity from an individual who's interpreting or re-interpreting the values as they respond to context and emergence and so on, as well as *outside* the organization, they're looking to that individual.

### Meg

One would hope, but you know, now my work is focused on creating *schools* as islands of sanity. Because I don't expect anything good from the exterior, tsunami-like destructive environment. I mean, you can find a few allies outside, but I think the work of leadership now, and particularly in schools is where I'm focused, because I think they're the right conditions here. You have a diverse community, different roles. People focused on the same goals of serving that population of students, people dealing with the same level of issues from parents and community and mental health of children. So there's coherence there. And then to really understand, we're not going to make it if we're not, together as a strong community, we have to be there for each other. We have to stop this infighting. And then we can use collaborative processes from the past that really help us make sense and solve problems. But the reason I call it an island is not to be exclusive. It's to be protective so we can do good work. And that's where I'm focused now entirely with my work this next year; *Can schools be islands of sanity?* is my question.

### Paul

Fantastic! Let's go *there*, [laughs] a little deeper, because that's... in my cursory, to be honest, reading of your recent work and your use of the phrase 'islands of sanity' that resonated so much with me, because I'm, like all of us, we're always self-critical about the choices we've made. I *literally* live on an island. On the island, I've chosen to create an independent school, but it's a *private* school, everyone's paying tuition; it's not reaching the entire population. It's certainly not in a perceptible way moving the needle of academic discourse, or the, you know, really *tragic* kinds of settings that many, many young people are subjected to. And so, I feel guilt.

### Meg

I want to tell you right now, we cannot move this needle. We are working with emergent systems that cannot be changed, that are hell-bent on destroying life, life-force, human spirit. And even the people within them who want to create change are powerless at this point. And one thing I encourage everyone, especially in my warrior for the human spirit training, because we all come up against it, "I'm not doing enough." Yes, we will never do enough. Period. So I use the maxim, from President Teddy Roosevelt, "Do what you can, where you are, with what you have. We cannot save this world, but we can create possibility and sanctuary for the people within our sphere of influence or within our school."

### Paul

Yes, 'Sanctuary,' is a phrase that Bayo Akamolafe uses as well. And I took great heart from seeing someone I respect, using that phrase 'island of sanity.' because I'm like, "that's what we *are*." That's what we are; we're a refuge, we're a sanctuary, we're an island, where we have created our own internal ontology that makes sense to us. We're able to articulate it. And we noticed children are thriving. They're unfolding in ways that inspire the adults around them...

### Meg

How wonderful, you could do that. And you know, there's a direct analog in living systems in that Mother Nature creates *refugia*, places of refuge, where life still goes on. In the midst of volcanic flows, forest fires, avalanches, where most of the surrounding land is devastated by whatever it is, natural calamity-- there are these little places where life is still going on.

**Paul**

Yeah, and they grow, right,

**Meg**

Perhaps. They can spread. But you know, what I'm interested in right now is, we need to preserve and protect the memory, the reality of what human beings are capable of. Because we're not seeing it in the general landscape or the general culture. People are locked in and fearful, and just acting with the worst, fear-based aggressive behaviors, self-protection. And we can create these places, who knows if we'll even be around for them to spread. I've given up on that myself. But this is good work. This is valuable work. This is a meaningful life. And one of the questions I'm speaking now all the time is what gives your life meaning? Now, and at the end of your life. And it's so hard to be in that question with us comfortable Western, globally privileged people. If we have privilege of any kind, which simply means for me, you have safety, security, food, clean water, your family is still with you or still alive. It's very hard to think about things disappearing on us, or this encroaching insanity that's so destructive. I know what gives meaning to my life. It's trying to summon as many people as possible to be the embodiment of the best of human beings-- I now use the phrase 'human beings being fully human.' Working with their consciousness, working with our frontal lobes not being locked into the reptilian brain behaviors. And we're always only a few people; historically, we're always only a few people.

**Paul**

I'm heartened and reassured to some extent that you say your focus now includes and I know your focuses, your foci are many, but the idea of schools. Because to me, and to I think our readers in the Holistic Ed Review, we've committed to

education partly because of the potential that education still holds, for us, at least theoretically, that we are not leading a good life in the sense of, I don't know, just all the trappings of...

**Meg**

Yes, materialism, consumerism...

**Paul**

Yes, we're investing in a way that we're not going to see the results of our efforts and dedication, possibly for decades in the future. But that's the beauty of education is we're planting seeds. You know, we're planting seeds for future unfoldment. And so, I don't know if that's a question. Maybe I answered it. But... like, why schools? Why...

**Meg**

No, that's lovely, the only thing I would say is I want to remove the future as a motivation. I mean, you asked me about hope. And the future appears to be *very, very* grim, whether you're looking at it scientifically, through climate lenses, or societally, with which behaviors now are overwhelmingly prevalent. And historically, we are in the last stages of this global civilization. So I don't need a future to find meaning in my work right now. And so the only definition of hope I use is from Václav Havel. That hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something is worth doing no matter how it turns out. That's my way of centering in this work. Let's do our damndest to see what's possible knowing that things are closing in; things are closing down. Aggression is rampant. War now is the choice of nations to defend themselves. And we have weaponized the world with our military might and with our production of weaponry in the US. This is a very grim, bleak future. It's historically described in the pattern of collapse, which is what I based *Who Do*

*We Choose To Be?* That's the basis for that book, just comparing where we are, stage by stage. I don't need to think I'm planting seeds; I need to know I'm doing the very best and I'm working my butt off here. To see what's possible in this current reality. And that is truly meaningful work. When you light up a child, when you see that the children in your school are blossoming, are not suffering from mental despair, mental challenges, when they have meaning and purpose. Feel it in themselves. That's enough. And then they'll be prepared for whatever's coming.

**Paul**

Yeah, I guess. Um, I have to think about that just a little bit...

**Meg**

It's a hard message.

**Paul**

It's alright. No, it's okay. And I've heard from colleagues who have been in your warrior training, the word that apparently you coined, of 'hopium,'

**Meg**

I didn't coin it, Michael Dowd did. But yes, we've spoken a lot about hopium.

**Paul**

Yeah, just the idea that, that if, if we're so attached to that, sort of, you know, 'stay hopeful!' you know, then that's...

**Meg**

Yes, I have been writing and speaking about giving up hope, which is also always companioned by fear. So when something doesn't work out, we go into fear, disappointment, cynicism, and ultimately breakdown. So it's just a dangerous source of motivation. And the way I make it clear is to take

that glass, is it half empty, or half full? We know there's only one right answer in the general culture, right, you have to be an optimist. If you're a pessimist, no one wants to be around you. We're called 'doomsayers,' we've been identified as living in the 'Doom Sphere.' No, we're living in reality, people... I want to go back to the glass, but I just recently picked up this great definition of reality: Reality is that which still exists even when you stop believing in it. You know, it's just there. I want more people to see more clearly, so they can act more wisely... But going back to the glass: is it half empty, or half full. If you're in this role of service, you look at the glass and you say, "oh, there's water? Who needs it? And how can I get it to them?" You know, you deal with the immediate needs, and the immediate resources. And then you figure out how to be helpful, how to be of service. And that is profoundly joyful work, no matter what's going on around us.

**Paul**

Yes, because whatever happens above the level of the water in the glass is irrelevant; no one's going to get quenched by that space. The only thing we need to think about is the liquid.

**Meg**

[Laughs] That's right. That's right, whatever amount there is. *What can I do to get that to the people who need it?* And the question I demand of everyone now who will work with me is, you shift from defining, pre-defining what you find is meaningful work. Instead you develop your capacity to look around in your immediate situation, in your school, in your community, in your family, and ask what's needed here. And you do that with increased perception. You see more, and you're able to discern more, "what's needed here?" and then you decide, the second question is very important. "Am I the person to contribute



to this need right now?" So that's also in the example of Is the glass half empty or half full? "Oh, my God, it has water in it!"

**Paul**

Yeah, yeah. I *love* the question of what is needed here. And that, I would say, in my school, *is* our guiding pedagogy, *that* is essentially it. In any given moment, educators make hundreds of decisions.

**Meg**

Yes.

**Paul**

And, and you're trying to filter, given the context, given what you know about the student, given your understanding of the values of the school, whatever, *what is needed right now from me?* And, yeah, and can I give it? is another... [Laughs]

**Meg**

"Do I have skills?" We have to add that because when you ask what's needed, you are overwhelmed with the needs that are out there. How do we find a way to contribute but *not* get overwhelmed? So that's where I think we need a lot more discernment. "Am I the right person to contribute at this time," also means I look at my interior health--whether I feel supported, whether I have allies. It's not just that I have the right skills, but really, am I in the right frame of mind and the right centeredness to actually contribute, because there are far too many people who bring their skills but they also bring all their neuroses to a situation. [Laughs] We all know that.

**Paul**

Absolutely. Yeah. And, I think those pedagogies that have evolved a spiritual component to the

practice of education often begin with an exploration of the interior.

**Meg**

Yes. So let's talk about this for a bit because, in my view, nobody can be a successful leader, if they don't have spiritual grounding; which, at the simplest level means, I know it's not all up to me. And I know I'm not the only source of energy. I know I'm not... I don't have to be the prime mover and shaker. I can feel companioned by my faith, by other energies, by other spirits, even. I know how to pray or I know how to contemplate. I think we all need meditation practice at this point to learn how our minds work. So we can catch ourselves more quickly, when we start to get crazier-- get triggered. But I don't know any leader anywhere who is surviving and contributing without a spiritual groundedness. The society is groundless at this point, so the ground has to be within us. It has to be. And it's not the ground of I can do it all or I'm professionally competent. So let me just go overwork myself and overwhelm myself. No, we need not only spiritual grounding, but we need to know this, I would say at this point on a daily basis. I certainly find it necessary, given the news, given my level of powerlessness and outrage and despair for what's going on in the world. I can't get grounded enough for *that* world, unless I spend time every morning meditating.

**Paul**

I think leadership, just extrapolating from those ideas, it includes the need for a certain level of humility, that it's not all in your control and a certain amount of surrender, like this situation is what it is, and...

**Meg**

That's right, and then seeking within that humility and surrender to what is. Yes. And then being able

to ask, “so how can I contribute here?” My plea every morning is just *use me*. May I be of value this day to others. Because our work, our leadership lives, our family lives, our teacher lives, can be offerings, you know? And that's how I want all of us to think. “What can I offer today? How can I serve this person, this place, this issue, this crisis?” But in order to ask that, I need to be grounded? Because otherwise, I'll just get bombarded and overwhelmed. And then I'll have a terrible day.

**Paul**

I was looking over my list of questions that we had started with. I think we've covered a lot of that ground.

**Meg**

I think we have too.

**Paul**

But as we come to the end, I just will hold space in case *you're* feeling like there's something that we haven't gotten to or that you hoped to offer...

**Meg**

I would just want to offer my compassion to all of us who are only beginning to understand what's going on in the world, that we are truly in the last stage of this civilization, which has become global. It's a checklist and we're just working down the pattern of collapse. This is something I've written about; you have to read my books for it. But this is not idle despair or doom-saying; it's a historically-based pattern. Most people will not face reality. They'll move into denial. This is also in the pattern of the last stage. They'll move into distraction entertainment, demands for entitlement, and they will not contribute. This just happens in every single complex civilization. Throughout human history. They come and they

go --this is a life cycle, right? It's a life cycle. If, or when you can face that reality, I mean, the subtitles of *Who Do We Choose To Be* the first subtitle is *Facing Reality*. The second subtitle is *Claiming Our Leadership* claiming leadership. And the third is *Restoring Sanity*. So I just want to encourage everyone reading this to understand how awful it is, how hard that is to accept. But that the other side of that acceptance of reality, befriending reality, is you do find a path of contribution. If you're in a school, you already have that, thank goodness, Hallelujah! And then the question is, how do you ground yourself? Personal inner work is absolutely necessary. But then the possibility of making this a very sane self-organized, great place to be for everyone, including the children, including faculty and staff. I know that's possible. And that's why I'm really focused this year on this experiment of how do you turn schools into islands of sanity?

**Paul**

Absolutely beautiful. Thank you so so much.

—

**Ancient Thera, Present Teacher (Poem)**

*by Meg Wheatley*

The wind working its  
way through ancient  
cracks and ill-fitting doors pestered  
me all night.

Now it is morning and  
nothing has settled down the  
wind refuses to clear a space  
for contemplation. This is stormy

country, lost to fire and sea, buried by meters and  
meters of hard pumice rain and heavy boulders,  
the volcano falling into its

fiery heart and sea blazing in to fill the steaming  
crater that once was island.

Gorgeous culture ended here.  
  
Island home to painters who knew  
no restraint who took ceremonial rooms and  
  
made them come alive with color and form  
bound by no convention strong  
joyful brush strokes bringing  
  
life to barren walls on barren  
land their homes painted  
still today reminding us of times when  
  
dolphins danced with fleets and  
swallows swept the wild sea air  
with song. Even now when  
  
it all collapsed and 3500 years of  
grief and dust had to be gently cleansed  
to see their life even now Theran joy  
  
is here and even now their happy  
life lifts my human heart above  
my own ruined time and  
reminds me that life can be  
good even when lived in the shadow of  
what must destroy it.  
  
They knew what was coming.  
  
Many times tremors and ash  
warned them to take their  
treasures and flee yet they  
returned to clean and  
  
rebuild and recreate the life they loved  
  
and then the volcano would  
have no more of them and  
Earth erupted with violence that  
only lives deep inside  
creation. All fire the  
  
blast blew black obsidian boulders  
like dust, mythic energy reminding  
  
humans how tenderly to walk

the earth that goes from beloved  
to fire when it tolerates us  
  
no longer.

### Acknowledgements

**Margaret Wheatley, Ed.D.** began caring about the world's peoples in 1966 as a Peace Corps volunteer in post-war Korea. As a consultant, senior-level advisor, teacher, speaker, and formal leader, she has worked on all continents (except Antarctica) with all levels, ages, and types of organizations, leaders, and activists. Her work now focuses on developing and supporting leaders globally as Warriors for the Human Spirit. These leaders put service over self, stand steadfast through crises and failures, and make a difference for the people and causes they care about. With compassion and insight, they know how to invoke people's inherent generosity, creativity, kindness, and community--no matter what's happening around them. Margaret has written ten books, including the classic *Leadership and the New Science*, and been honored for her pathfinding work by many professional associations, universities, and organizations.

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