



# Elementary Ebook

Selected Poems from the Book

You can get your own copy of the full book here:

<http://pennyhayes.com.au>

And follow “Journeying through the Elements” on Facebook.

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## About the Author

Penny Hayes started her career as a Pharmacist, returning to University to become a Social Worker and then worked professionally in a number of roles in the community sector until she sustained a severe back injury. This was the catalyst for a healing journey and Penny studied a number of interesting modalities, becoming a private practitioner working as a Process-orientated Counsellor, Body-centred Psychotherapist and Feldenkrais Practitioner.

Penny is endlessly curious, questioning and passionate about how and why things and people work. Throughout her journey, she has developed a keen eye, enquiring mind and open heart and in this book shares her observations for others' growth, healing or plain entertainment! Her poetry will make you laugh, cry, touch your heart and compassion, inspire and motivate you - and an entire range of feelings in between.

Penny is married with two sons and lives in Brisbane, Australia, and is passionate about facilitating women's groups and circles and working with the Women's Wellbeing Association. She is also an active member of the Brisbane Playback Theatre Troupe, loving its spontaneity, fun and lateral thinking. She has spent the last ten years working on this book and is very excited about finally sharing the fruits of her passion with the world.

“It is not in the stars to hold our destiny, but in ourselves.” ~ *William Shakespeare*

# Introduction

*This is my body of poems  
where the elements are the bones  
of the skeleton in my closet.  
My watery feelings are my ink's rich blood  
My airy thoughts are the turning of my pages.  
that inflate, deflate or steady and carry me on.  
But it's my inner fire that sparks m writing  
with creativity and zest for life,  
and moves me to show and tell.*

## **What Exactly is this Book?**

You might ask what exactly is this book about. For this book is more than a set of poems. I see it as a personal growth guide, a healing spiritual journey, an exploration of the five elements and how you can use them in your life.

## **Why Poetry?**

Why Poetry? Poetry came to me as a miraculous gift one night and ever since then I have written poems. They help me transcend my worrying mind, crystallise my thoughts, and take me straight to my heart and feelings. I would like these poems to convey similar magic for you.

## **Why a Book?**

For years I have been giving my friends poetry on slips of paper. Often the poem I have just written turns out to be just what they need and is very healing. I want to pass this healing on to more people. I chose a book because it's physical and can be held. The printed word has powerful energy. Seeing it in the flesh to fully feel and breathe in the words can be transformative. *This digital Ebook version is a selection from the physical book of one poem from each chapter, to give you a taste of the full experience.*

## **Why Personal Growth and Alternative Health?**

After a severe back injury I embarked on a healing journey, investigating and becoming fascinated with quite a number of different personal growth and alternative health modalities. They had a profound and positive impact on my whole being. Many of these I now share in this book through my poems.

## **Why a Feminine Flavour?**

Because I am a woman and have that lens. Because I believe that we all need more awareness of our body and nature (Earth) and of our feelings (Water); the attributes of the Feminine in us all. This is to balance our Masculine being too busy (Fire) and too over-thinking (Air). I have tried to redress this imbalance between the Masculine and Feminine by this book, hoping for more equality, both inside and out, to unite us and move us ever closer to our true Spirit.

## **Why the Elements?**

The five elements have been here since time began. They have great powers and healing properties that we can all use. With Earth, we can ground more and experience our solidity and realness. With Water we can find our natural flow, our flow of life and of our feelings. With Air we can find clarity and our space of love. With Fire we can burn away the old to move and enact the new with passion. With Spirit we become aware of our multidimensionality, oneness and true being and therefore steer our life from the centre of ourselves. Often we use substances to tinker with our moods. Maybe it's time to use the elements, tuning into what elements we need, and coming back to balance that way.

## **Structure of the Book and How You Can Use It**

The book is a series of five books. Each book investigates one element, where you can journey first through the suffering of that element, then into its transformation to experience different ways of healing.

Its purpose is for you, the reader, to go through and experience your own journey as you become affected by mine. Allow my poetry to take you to a deeper level beyond thinking, where you can feel the poems in your body and heart and change something inside yourself. Let yourself experience all the human angst, realising we are all in the same boat, letting go of any judgement of your journey or others. Dive into the joy of discovery and of moving through and on.

Follow my journey poem by poem, element by element, immerse yourself in and journey deeply through each element to fully experience its flavours, learnings and transformations.

Or let yourself be drawn to a particular element or section of an element for its special wisdom for that moment.

Alternatively, open the book anywhere for a poem, because you feel like it or to receive guidance, inspire you, remind you that you are not alone and show you there is always a way through. Enjoy the thrills and spills of life, regain perspective and even have a good laugh!

Think of yourself as a work of art with a unique combination of elements. You may like to try out different combinations. Taste my different poems. Let the elements colour and transform you, as it suits. Most of all enjoy the feast and come back for more.

*Again, this digital version has a selection of one poem from each chapter, whereas the full book has about 500 poems.*

**You can get your own copy of the full book here:**

**<http://pennyhayes.com.au>**



# EARTH INTRO

I see Earth as being about solidity and gravity, and reality, our relationship to our body, Mother Earth and the ground we walk on. Without earth to support us, our Water and feelings can't be contained, our Airy thoughts scatter, our Fire can't manifest its passion, and our Spirit can't incarnate. How often do we have our feet firmly on the ground? How much can we trust our mother and Earth to support us? How present and kind are we to our body and life? Can we appreciate and take care of our body and all its needs; food, drink, sleep, sex, rest, exercise, warm or cool it, move it with the pace and pressure that suits it best? How can we take care of the planet?

I see human suffering in the Earth element coming from not being solid enough or too solid; that is having too little or too much earth. Trying too hard for safety and structure we can cling to the solid ground and get seduced and stuck in habit and familiarity's comfort.

Alternatively when we don't have enough Earth (and too much Air), we suffer in a different way. Our Airy fear, pain, fantasy or wishful thinking make us ungrounded and less solid. In this world dominated by Air and the mind, to be grounded is ever a challenge. We sit at computers for hours and become a head with no sense of our body to get stiff, sore and sorry. We can forget to eat or drink. We hold our breath when we are in pain, fear, worry or have an idea and pull out of our body. Unfortunately from "up here" we can't manifest or heal "down there".

[from Earth Chapter 1: Disembodiment]

## **GROUND CONTROL TO MAKE BELIEVE**

A hippy, he dressed in light flowing robes,  
and walked as if he were floating on air.  
His eyes were vacant, staring and lost.  
He was into love and light and peace at any cost.  
He smoked his pot and lived on his dreams,  
but wasn't quite there when I wanted to speak to him.

Ground Control to Make Believe, come back to me, I cry.

But the music in my head is making magnificent colours,  
such smells, shapes and spaces, he explains in delight.  
The world down there is too boring for me.  
Here in the Air I fly high and free.

But it's not reality is it? I reply,  
and when you do come down you crash.  
I miss you so much, my friend.  
I so want you back.

[from Earth Chapter 2: Fear]

## **FEAR'S ILLUSION**

F.E.A.R. False evidence appearing real,  
frozen images recycled through time,  
eyes spinning wildly, scanning for danger,  
wounds long gone still dripping old blood,  
breath stuck in full exclamation,  
worries marching endlessly into the future,  
dread cast in the shadow of the unknown,  
panic attacks scattering me to the winds,  
fear's delusion stretching beyond imagination,  
its elastic noose capturing me, tightening and strangling me,  
its dragon claws dragging me into grim myth,  
as I disappear down its mouth of negativity.

Fear has been there since time began,  
but I needn't buy into its illusion.  
It is I who am in command.  
It is I who must defuse its time bomb.  
I who am light must shine on the shadows,  
to face my fear and see it for what it is;  
a little part from the past,  
that got startled and stuck.  
I hold it with such adoration,  
that fear's illusion melts away  
leaving only love; the one true substance,  
that makes up the universe and saves us.

Heart within heart, there's no end to love.  
It takes me beyond emotion and mind's fears,  
to be ever held safe and solid in earth mother's arms,  
smiling in the dazzling dark, fully alive and here.

[from Earth Chapter 3: Physical Pain]

## **BREAKING OUT**

Inside my sore stiff skeleton of caged bone,  
sits a blood-red pain demon with pitchfork  
stabbing and ripping my pelvis apart.  
as Icicles of fear solidify down my back,  
locking me in a pain trap.  
I'm only saved when healing hands,  
so soft and soothing,  
teach me new ways of moving,  
unlocking my cage, setting my body free.  
Frozen fears melt into healing tears  
which wash away the pain,  
to become blue ink blobs of words;  
flowing poetry expanding my mind,  
freedom glimmering on the horizon, rising up.  
Pain, now a tiny blue ink imp  
climbs out of my dried up bones,  
holding out his hand  
to my child, wild and true.  
Together we break out,  
writing, singing, dancing free.  
Pain, once bloody enemy,  
now my true blue friend.  
And my body once so denigrated,  
now my vehicle of joy and creativity.

[from Earth Chapter 5: Reality]

## **REALITY'S RICH MANURE**

Ashamed to air my old dirty laundry,  
I'm trying to keep a safe low profile.  
But what if instead it could be a deep profile,  
where I burrow right down into my rich earth,  
to experience every delicious turn and cranny,  
open to every sensation, feeling and character,  
really get to know my every body symptom and facet.  
My keen radiant light may seem too bright  
for these shadowy worm-like creatures sheltering inside,  
but there's no way I'm going to give up on any one of them.  
I'll keep digging while looking at them with eyes of love,  
till they realize how much I want to know and be with them,  
how truly, deeply I value the richness of their undergrowth,  
till they snuggle into my arms of tender infinite care,  
their treasured dirt seeding new life under my fingernails,  
until body and soul, we are one, yet even more whole,  
more able to embody love than ever before.

[from Earth Chapter 6: Unfolding Body Symptoms]

## **STICKING OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB**

Can't type or write.  
Can't cut veggies or drive  
Forced and confined.  
Life narrowed down  
to a pencil thin line,  
but with plenty of time to think  
What is my sore thumb telling me?  
To not hide away in shame and anger,  
but stick my thumb out and ride life.

Yes I'll be a granny in a motorbike gang,  
a growl amongst smiling flowers,  
I'll stick out like a sore thumb,  
be the odd one out, the weird one,  
the question mark on your opinion,  
the black sheep in the family and proud of it.  
I'll stick out my tits to the wind,  
give myself the thumbs up and fly.

[from Earth Chapter 7: Body Awareness]

### **THE ‘NOS’ IN HER BODY**

.  
As she reached out to life,  
she asked herself  
which parts of her body  
were saying no to it.  
Was it her heart and chest  
that refused to open enough  
for fear of taking the plunge  
and getting rejected?  
Was it her backbone  
that didn't have enough attitude  
to stand for what she wanted?  
Was it her neck or her ribs  
that tightened against her  
saying that she wasn't worthy  
to take that much space in the world  
Was it her pelvis  
that wouldn't rotate fully,  
saying it's dangerous  
to look too sexy or powerful;  
Or was it her toes  
that grasped the earth  
unwilling to dance and twirl,  
in her fear of falling.  
It was all these and more.  
But each time she unraveled,  
one of those “no” patterns in her body,  
she moved closer to her true being,  
and the life she came here to live.

[from Earth Chapter 8: Mother]

## **LOVE IS ALL WE NEED**

I wanted a soft cloth mother  
who I could snuggle into.  
But all I got was a wire mother.  
Hard and cold with sharp edges,  
she couldn't hold or caress me  
with the full cream love I needed.  
It wasn't her fault she hadn't been taught,  
for touch, even hugging, was deemed unnecessary,  
in her appearance-driven moneyed family.  
And my body never feeling love in its skin,  
how could I love my body and fully come into it?  
Yet come in I must, for it so deserves my embodied love,  
and I truly want to be fully on this planet earth.  
Yes it's time, really time, with all the planets aligned,  
to stop listening to old cold messages distaining my body,  
and to love me and my body more and more with every day.  
For isn't that what my body problems have been telling me?  
My body needs tender loving touch, not fixing or ignoring.  
It wants that love from me, right now,  
and I, experienced mother that I am, can give it to little me.  
who has grieved alone for long enough,  
I give it to mum and her ancestors who were deprived too.  
Yes like the song, love, love, love; love is all we need.

[from Earth Chapter 9: Mother Earth]

## **FIELDS OF GREEN**

In snows of white,  
fields of green,  
skies of blue,  
I will worship thee.

In suns of yellow,  
pools of purple,  
deserts of orange,  
I'll worship you.

In clouds of grey,  
blood sap of red,  
caves of black aubergine,  
I will believe in you.

I'll let your seas of aquamarine,  
breezes of rose-pink love,  
sunsets of hot crimson fire,  
sands of soft tangerine, heal me.

Mother Earth, whatever your hue,  
I honour and adore you.  
As your daughter, I'll love myself too,  
in all colours, phases and moods.

[from Earth Chapter 10: Earth and Soul]

## **YOUR TASK; TO EMBODY YOU**

You volunteered to come  
onto this earth plane.  
You chose your lessons,  
your parents, the games you'd play.  
Why then do you protest  
and not always want to stay?

It's harder, I say, than I thought,  
being in a body that won't work as it ought,  
being in relationships with all their fights and faults,  
being in work that's not quite as I envisaged it,  
being on a planet full of violence and poverty.

But that's the task, you answer,  
to stay when it's dreary or hard,  
to daily work through your stuff,  
uncover and integrate every facet and lost part.  
to rub shoulders and polish  
everyone's hidden diamonds.  
So come into your body,  
allow yourself to fully incarnate.  
There is no other way, but through.  
Experience the beautiful resonance,  
and heartbeat of mother earth right now,  
feel your solid presence and rich blood,  
your strong bones supported by Earth,  
and the wonder of being grounded.  
Nowhere to go. Nothing to do.  
You only need embody you!

# WATER INTRO

Water is about feelings and moods, movement and flow, rhythms and cycles, our lifeblood and cellular fluid. Water is essential to life. It cleanses us, quenches our thirst, moistens and cools us. It's the ebb and flow of our cycles, our rhythmic rocking, our froth and stillness. Free and fluid, it can flow anywhere and bring change. It's also our deep inner well of restful yin energy.

In this book of Water we examine the different aspects of our flow, what impedes it and how we can learn to surrender to our inner tide to flow true, up and down, in and out, passionately and quietly, with all our feelings.

How our feelings flow influences our 'joir de vivre'. Buying into a world of reason (Air) and progress (Fire) we often devalue feelings and sensitivity. When we judge and try to push away all our feeling children that make us uncomfortable, we suffer for it. Our life lacks the vitality, joy and lightness that only children can bring, each time we numb our feelings. Becoming aware of how we are missing out on life, we may choose to open our hearts and experience the joy of expressing our true feelings and passion.

We also suffer when our feeling children, are not allowed to speak, get out of hand, and our feelings become too turbulent and intense. Then we need to find ways to manage our feelings, including giving space for the different feeling

children to speak, say what they need to, and be heard, supported, loved and settled.

Water is connected with polarities, the ups and downs of life's waves. Likewise, our watery feelings ebb and flow up and down. However, our mind (Air) prefers the "good" feelings, the highs, so we try to stay up in them, and when we can't we crash back into the down. We need to learn to ride in the centre of our wave

Our flow needs to be balanced not only in the direction of up and down, but also in and out. How our feelings flow in and out of us influences both our relationship with ourselves, inside and with others, outside.

Flowing in, we bury ourselves too deep inside to avoid being overly affected by others and the outside world. We then can suffer from having shallow relationships and being lonely. Alternatively, flowing too far out of ourselves, we let people and the outside influence us too much, and become caught up in their stuff, lose our centre. I have found that the answer to both of these one-way flows is to be aware of and stay with your feelings, while at the same time allowing others to have theirs.

In the end it does get back to balance; balance between all our different feeling children, balance between numbing out and drowning in feelings, balance between the uppers and the downers, balance between the outer and inner, balance between peace and passion. How we flow between all our polarities and feelings will determine how we feel about our lives. Having compassion helps too.

[from Water Chapter 2: Transformation]

## **NATURAL BREAKING**

Always that resistance  
to my brokenness and pain.  
Yet it is this brokenness  
that cracks me open,  
impels me out of ego,  
out of my hard shell  
of habit and complacency,  
to tackle life in a new way,  
and bring me to the next level  
of universe's never-ending evolvement.  
Oh I can kick, scream and suffer all I want,  
or I can surrender to the flow  
of life's natural ups and downs.  
Whatever I decide, eventually,  
spirit's boat carries me to her,  
but it's a lot easier and lighter,  
when I'm not fighting the tide.

[from Water Chapter 3: Feeling Children]

## **THE REAL LOVE STORY**

Though our wounds can look so different,  
the cause and result are the same; separation.  
It's time to take back all our parts,  
whether projected in or out,  
and place them in our love hearts,  
where they long for and belong.

So love every one of your feeling children.  
Love your confidence. It makes you strong.  
Love your doubts. They make you humble.  
Love your confusion. It keeps you curious.  
Love your clarity. It takes you to truth.  
Love your fears. They make you careful.  
Love your joy. It brings you vitality.  
Love your jealousy. It tells you what you want.  
Love your anger. It can change things.  
Love your dreams. They give you vision.  
Love your flow. It takes you in and deep.  
Love each death. For then you can begin again.

[from Water Chapter 3: Feeling Children]

### **CHILD OF ENVY**

I've been to that place  
so many times before,  
smelt its blood,  
tasted its corruption,  
felt its pain,  
as envy eats goodness away.  
And, impelled into shame,  
pushed it down and away, yet again,  
leaving my deprived envious child  
in a dark tunnel of emptiness.  
But all she really wants is more;  
more love, attention, success, satisfaction,  
all that she sees others have,  
all that it seemed her sisters had.  
It's a chasm I understand and can fill,  
as no one else can or will.  
So I must stop berating her  
for feeling the want, the lack and then the envy,  
Instead I will fill her up with never-ending love,  
until she knows through her every cell  
that she truly is enough, and all is well.

[from Water Chapter 4: Turbulence]

## **GROUNDING MY EMOTIONS**

I used to believe that feeling so much,  
I really felt and knew myself deeply:  
Being a feeling woman was my identity,  
my heart's calling, my reason to be,  
But it was all a bit intense and tiring.  
One day when experiencing strong feelings I discovered,  
that while I might be living in my aura's emotional level,  
I wasn't present in my body or my aura's physical level.  
Shock. Horror. I wasn't connected at all;  
neither to the ground, or my centre and essence.  
My feelings, enjoying hanging out in the held breath  
of anticipation and over-excitement,  
were not actually feeding me  
but leaving me high and dry.  
When I did ground my feelings  
in reality, in my body, in the physical,  
I found their voice deepened and thickened,  
becoming fuller, more embodied and resonant;  
so much less whiney, hysterical or long-winded,  
for now I could breathe fully from my belly and womb,  
let my feelings speak their truth and enjoy the real me.

[from Water Chapter 5: Numbing]

## **DIVINE SAILING**

Batten down the hatches.

Don't breathe or open too much;  
that course is far too dangerous,  
for what feelings might you touch.

But living in an enclosed steely submarine  
following the navy's strict regulations,  
feels as if my poor body's encased  
in a combo of raincoat condom and straightjacket.

What I really want is to experience  
water's element directly on my skin,  
to breathe in all her sea breezes,  
to let the truth of all my feelings,  
flow in and right through me.

Then I become a sailboat skipping through life,  
the sun at my back working my rudder,  
the water my playground slide,  
the wind lifting up my material wings,  
spirit's oneness my sea, my sky, my being.

[from Water Chapter 6: Ups and Downs]

## **FEELING DA LOVE**

How silly of me to try to stay on top  
and stop the sea crashing on my shore,  
to try to diligently iron out the frowns,  
dry all the tears, calm every fear,  
soothe every mood, ache and pain  
when life is full of waves' highs and lows,  
dancing, rolling, then dissipating,  
full of an ocean of emotions,  
simply seeking to be expressed.  
If I let them spill out and have their say,  
while not getting stuck in any one of them,  
they flow on and through so beautifully.  
So welcome tears, blues and frowns.  
You won't bring me down,  
but rise my humanity up,  
so that with every wave,  
I ride deeper into myself,  
truly allowing all life's feelings  
to upwell and roll over me,  
wash me free of judgment and rigidity,  
soften me into ever more love and ease.

[from Water Chapter 7: Flow In]

## **UNDOING MYSELF**

When I see your eyes looking into me,  
asking me for realness and truth.  
I feel so raw, so undone,  
that I can't speak or move.  
The impulse is so huge to hide,  
and put on another layer,  
the pain so excruciating  
as I keep choosing separation.  
Well, I won't hide my tears anymore,  
for they are yours too;  
glistening dew of humanness,  
they enrich the whole world.  
As I feel everything deeply, truly,  
I reflect that place in you,  
that sweet tender bud,  
so that moved by each other,  
we softly open and bloom.

[from Water Chapter 8: Flow Out]

## **SWEET STING**

Love's golden threads bind me to you,  
twining me in their sticky sucking web.  
My mind feels thick and woolly,  
filled with your tendrils of worry.  
busy with all your thoughts and fears.  
as I try to help you and lose myself in it  
For our sake, I must sting you a bit.  
So at last I say to you, I've had enough  
of agonizing over your every problem,  
getting caught up in every detail and feeling.  
It's doing neither of us any good.  
Time for us both to hand it over to spirit,  
and enjoy the sweetness of just being sisters.

# AIR INTRO

I see Air as the element of breathing and thinking, the medium of vision, sound, music and words. Our mind, its thoughts and preferences, the way we see, hear and say things, have a huge bearing on our choices and enjoyment of life. ‘Good’ air is clarity, purpose, direction, discernment, equanimity, surrender and freedom ‘Bad’ air is criticism (toxic fumes), control (boxed in, stale), worry, push or rush (all windy) dreamy thoughts (cloudy) and contraction (narrow in vision). Not enough air can be due to holding on or in to then not breathe properly and can make us tired. Too much air in our head, we can become unfocused and dizzy as we float away into day dreams.

I see space as the medium for Air. There’s empty space between us and every object. Our happiness is influenced by taking up the space and shape that’s right for us. There’s space in and between our every breath. It’s in the space of our throat that we sound our words and song. It’s in the space of our mind that we produce our thoughts, and decide whether to come from love or fear. Windbag Air with its plethora of clever opinions is here right now wanting to take up too much space in this book. It challenges me to stay clear and focused, and to write as simply and meaningfully as I can. But in truth it does have a lot of interesting and valuable things to say, so Air is my longest book.

So it can be seen how invisible Air is so powerful, taking up so much space, affecting our lives and all the elements. Air is the breath of life (Spirit). Its thoughts influence what we feel (Water), how grounded we are (Earth), how or whether we decide to take action (Fire).

I see the suffering of Air particularly when a voice inside our head keeps telling us what to do. This can be the Perfectionist, where we must do everything rigidly and perfectly and not make mistakes. Or it can be the Critic which is even crueler, yells at us for being inadequate, and points out all our faults. It's then we need to clear our mind and bring in our discriminating observer part to show us the truth and our loving observer to give us compassion and kindness.

Yes Air can help us heal. Its breath can fill and ease the tight spaces in our body. Using breath as meditation (aware slow deep breathing) is a way to let go of the future (of anxiety of what will happen or fail to happen) and the past (regret, bitterness, anger, grief), and to focus on the NOW and the deeper rhythm of your being and breath. Focusing on breathing can also control pain. Reciting a mantra, and observing thoughts and letting them go by, enhances our ability to sit in our deep centre. As we allow our diaphragm and third chakra to fully and effortlessly breathe in all directions, we rise above our limited thinking and stubborn will to receive the full breath of love in our fourth chakra and heart. Here we reach compassion and equanimity.

[from Air Chapter 1: Thoughts]

## **INTO REALITY**

Weapons of mass destruction,  
stockpile in our minds,  
invisible ideas, words, and lies that distract  
and take us away from ourselves  
Fragments of thought  
obliterating blue sky;  
old worn out weathered pebbles,  
clogging up my life,  
weighing me down,  
worry bullets continually fired.  
With spirit's sweet breath,  
I blow them away,  
then with clear head,  
step out into reality.

[from Air Chapter 2: Words]

## **REVERSING HER WORD SPELL**

It's said words can't hurt like sticks and stones.  
You thought you were preparing me for the world,  
but, Mum, the harsh words you used to correct me,  
are still entangled in my tissues and bones;  
rusted pieces of twisted barbwire piercing me  
whenever I move too far, too much or too soon.  
For years and years your words, in bullet form,  
produced a barrage I couldn't withstand.  
Your words were fetters, your sentences condemning me,  
spelling out who I was supposed to be, yet wasn't.  
But your words, ideas and judgments are not mine.  
So I send them back through space and time,  
to un-knit the nots and reverse your out-dated word spell.  
Now the only words and thoughts that'll come from me,  
will be wholly mine and filled with love's encouragement.

[from Air Chapter 3: Perfectionist]

## **OUT OF HELL**

Dread coats my tongue,  
grimaces my mouth,  
curdles my breath,  
greys and freezes my skin,  
to bury me in a nightmare  
of endless scenarios of failure.  
Even naming this state of dread  
enables me to open a doorway in my brain,  
through which I can climb out  
into a field of endless possibility,  
where mistakes aren't seen as tragedies;  
just natural parts of discovery  
in a world of wonder.

For what is hell,  
but to be driven by  
a controlling mean mind machine,  
that keeps turning on myself?  
When all I really need to move me,  
is the next impulse from my heart.

[from Air Chapter 4: Critic]

## **A NOSE BY ANY OTHER NAME**

The critic holds such clout,  
with his fat bulbous nose  
having to suss everything out.  
Nosy parker, he worms his way  
into any little exposed chink.  
His hairy nostrils bristle with delight,  
when he smells anything  
he thinks ain't quite right.  
He sticks his nose in the air  
to show me how pathetic I am

Well two can play at that.  
I'll nose around, getting a whiff  
of any little criticism or trick  
and expose your vindictive game.  
I'll keep sniffing you out,  
putting you back in your place,  
leaving you to smell your own assy face,  
where there's plenty of shit to keep you busy.  
Meanwhile I'm off to smell the roses.  
Maybe, in time, you can come too.

[from Air Chapter 5: Transformation]

## **PEELING AWAY**

Inexorably, I'm peeling the layers away.  
Sometimes I'm just too impatient,  
pushing too much, picking at scabs.  
Sometimes I'm convinced I'm going backwards,  
forgetting all the gains I've made, wanting to give up.  
Sometimes I think I'm going mad  
as I face all my fear and confusion.  
Sometimes I mistakenly believe I am the wound,  
and get stuck in all its pain-shame delusion.  
Sometimes I put myself on a rigid improvement program,  
that doesn't honour my rhythm and truth.  
Yet I keep on going, taking off layer after layer,  
of the illusions of my ego mind,  
for I know I'm getting lighter and higher,  
diving deeper and deeper into myself.  
And what a prize to keep transforming  
and claiming more of my beautiful self.

[from Air Chapter 6: Discriminating Observer]

### **WHO BREATHES ME?**

In the prison of my mind,  
I analyse and agonise,  
and reflect confusion.

In the prism of my mind,  
I reflect the lines of light  
and gain illumination.

Which shape my mind takes  
depends on who's breathing me.  
If it's my ego holding my breath ransom,  
then I'm in prison with its bars my tight ribs.  
If it's my clear observer, my breath's full and deep  
and my mind is a prism sparkling clean.

[from Air Chapter 7: Loving Observer]

## **COLOURING MY WORLD**

I yearn for love  
like a bird her song,  
the desert the rain,  
the night the dawn.  
I search for love  
in every movement, every meeting,  
every smile, touch, and greeting.  
Yet I am the gatekeeper  
to the very love I seek.  
It is I who choose  
to pull back in shyness,  
close down with suspicion,  
look for signs of disinterest,  
and disapproval in every grimace,  
so quick to feel the pain  
of every abandonment and betrayal.  
Yet I am the very love I seek,  
the heart so true and sweet,  
the smile so full and wide,  
the invitation so pure and innocent.  
The more I use my loving eyes,  
the more I open and deepen,  
and the more love floods in  
to color my world rose pink.

# FIRE INTRO

*If Air were a steady gentle breeze of love  
and Fire the inner flame ever flickering,  
time would be my friend and my present  
filled with passion, joy, peace and surrender.*

We now move from Air with its ideas and intentions, on to Fire where we spark our ideas into action. Air's consciousness in our fiery third chakra becomes will. We shift from victim to co-creator, worrier to warrior. It's our task in our third chakra to reclaim our right to act, confront without denial, start and finish projects, to risk and not be bound by fearful thinking.

The medium of Fire is time. Fire in the 'positive' balances time and our energy. It has the power to burn away outdated past, and change our future. Staying in our inner flame in the present, our fire burns naturally and steadily to ignite us into effective action.

I see Fire as being in the 'negative' and creating suffering, when it's out of kilter with time. It then either burns too fast, impatiently trying to get to the future, often creating burn out. Or it's too slow, becoming stuck in, and held back by, past patterning and fear. We may need help in breaking out and freeing our fire and activating our will and purpose. With the right amount of fire, action can be so satisfying and energising

[from Fire Chapter 1: Burning Out]

## **ECONOMIC RATIONALISM**

I rip out your heart with my greedy claws,  
lick out your brain with my tongue of poison,  
eat your flesh with my carnivore teeth,  
and dance on your grave with such glee.  
For I have sucked out your creativity,  
destroyed your passion and individuality,  
burnt your dreams to cinders,  
left you with an empty shell of a body,  
going through the motions of life,  
living off a credit card,  
communicating through machines,  
rushing around in a car,  
passively watching T.V.  
And I'm laughing all the way to the bank.  
I'm economic rationalism,  
masked as reasonable and practical,  
but devoid of life and passion,  
a disguised plasticised cannibal,  
a vampirish parasite of humanity,  
a chronic fatigue waste and tragedy.

[from Fire Chapter 2: Freeing the Fire]

### **SURPRISE PACKAGE**

You sat there, a square box,  
with sharp edges,  
a mysterious package,  
with such hidden treasures,  
wrapped in a satin red ribbon,  
secretly longing to be untied.  
I helped you undo the bow,  
bringing you out of your corner,  
so that over the edge you could go.  
We were both a bit scared  
of what we might come to know.  
It might be an ugly monster,  
which we couldn't contain,  
or a squelchy lump of snot,  
we must love anyway,  
or some awful truth  
that could cause such pain.  
Yet when we follow fate's flaming red thread,  
it's always more wonderful than it seems.  
It wakes us from the dead,  
enables us to follow our dreams.  
The part so long trapped inside  
is as enchanting as any child.  
It dances with such fiery glee,  
saying see I'm wild and free.  
Hey just look at me.  
Why I'm beautiful!

[from Fire Chapter 3: Alchemy]

## **A NEW MAN**

From the continually dying of ego,  
from the dark cinders of sacrificed old ways,  
from shed tears that have evaporated,  
emerges the new man, naked in his truth.  
Soft and pink in his vulnerability,  
he now reaches out to connect  
for no other reason than he must  
follow the impulse of his new tender heart,  
and through his raw humour and courage,  
move us all ever closer to love.

[from Fire Chapter 4: Balanced Fire]

## **ENERGIZED BY ESSENCE**

I'm exhausted and tired,  
running around from A to B,  
as I keep reaching out  
without my ground or presence,  
overextending, fracturing myself.  
Luckily I've a powerful tool that I can call on.  
It's knowledge of how to manage my energy.  
I can go to a point at my centre,  
five centimeters above my belly button,  
where my individuated essence resides.  
Here I can tune in and really sense it;  
visualize, feel, and energize my inner fire.  
It is quintessential beautiful original me;  
my magical essence energy shining like a star,  
with the innocence and vulnerability of a baby,  
the enthusiasm and curiosity of a child,  
the sensuality and vitality of a maiden,  
the balance, depth and unconditional love of mother,  
the irreverence and ancient wisdom of the crone.  
Yes my golden essence is my natural energy pump:  
All I need do is remember to plug into it.  
So twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
now I know who I are.

[from Fire Chapter 6: Love's Fire]

## **WILL TO LOVE**

More powerful  
than the will to live  
is the will to love.  
Deeper, tenderer, truer,  
is love's arrow straight from the heart,  
ever claiming the prize, a life of love.  
Through pain and confusion,  
the will to love holds steadfast and true.  
For love is not just a pretty flower,  
sweetly opening and growing,  
but the strong root and straight stem  
that supports love's flow.  
So I will stay true to the will to love,  
no matter what life turns up.  
That is my purpose,  
my offering to the divine,  
to keep bringing more love fire  
into every facet of life,  
to have the audacity and will  
to love beyond my wildest dreams.

[from Fire Chapter 7: Woman's Passion]

## **WILD SPIRIT WOMAN**

Wild spirit woman  
She flies everywhere,  
incensed with the pretense  
and wanton destruction she witnesses.  
Can you not hear her  
hissing in the wind,  
spitting in the rain,  
growling in the concrete jungle,  
screaming in the asylum.  
She's ready to tear your flesh,  
give you dreadful body symptoms,  
accidents, explosive relationships,  
famines, floods and erupting volcanoes,  
if you don't heed her message.  
"Take care of the earth", she decrees,  
"honor spirit, follow the dreaming.  
Remember the ancient  
primeval part of you,  
that dances round the fire  
to the earth's beat,  
that wild tribal part in you  
connected to everything,  
that will fight on and on  
for all beloved beings;  
the wild spirit woman in you,  
embrace her, use her well,  
before she uses you."

[from Fire Chapter 8: Action]

## **PUBLISH YOU MUST**

Shy child in me, don't hide away.  
You're innocent and beautiful.  
Let me have all your pearls of wisdom  
and your spontaneous childlike spirit.  
You have so much to contribute  
and your human family sure needs you in it.  
They're grasping for a drink of the original,  
instead of artificially coloured sickly fizz.  
They want the light of your inspiration  
to lift them out of too many drab driven days.  
They want words of feeling and meaning,  
to counter heady information inflammation.  
They crave a new wide and funny lens,  
to see life from all ends, from mouth to ass.  
Don't give up, my friend. Publish you must.  
Withstand any arrows and slings that may come,  
for your words will open up many hearts  
and may just have the elements needed  
to colour and complete the picture,  
or to stand outside it and have a good laugh.

# SPIRIT INTRO

Many of us on our personal growth quest are searching for our true selves and for deep meaningful connections with others. We do our best to stay in our body (Earth), be genuine with our feelings (Water), be compassionate with our thoughts (Air) and live our true spark. (Fire) If, however, we don't have Spirit to complete us, we get lost in ego's games, deluded by limited three dimensional reality. I see Spirit as being the true original and eternal us.

It's out of Spirit's void the four elements of matter, are birthed. Through poetry, we have journeyed through each of these elements. It's time now to return to Spirit. The fifth element, Ether, is the medium of Spirit, the invisible space that holds all the elements. It's hard to get our head around the fact that who we really are is Spirit, for Spirit is so vast, deep and powerful. Its etheric 'place' of empty nothingness, oneness, infinity, multidimensionality, deep love and peace, seems inexplicable to mortal us. And yet it is so wonderful each time we find this place again.

My Spirit book explores our journey. first to value our humanness and its experiences and then to surrender to, embody and fully own our spirit. This allows us to become the bridge connecting human and spirit, masculine and feminine, and the different elements. We can then be the driver at the centre of our wheel, at the same time knowing and using the magic and oneness of Spirit.

[from Spirit Chapter 1: Longing]

## **JOURNEYING IN**

I want to journey out  
across the mountains,  
rubbing shoulders  
with diverse and interesting people,  
climbing the mounds and peaks.  
But something bigger than me  
is making me journey inwards,  
where the steps are littler  
and more invisible,  
where I row my boat  
on my inner ocean  
and truly live.  
Learning to follow my dreaming  
and make it my way of being  
may be my greatest,  
yet hardest contribution  
to me and the world,  
but journey to Spirit I must.

[from Spirit Chapter 4: Valuing Human]

## **PERFECT IMPERFECT LOVE**

Through all imperfections and tests  
of body, mind and soul,  
when will I learn  
to truly hold myself?  
Long ago my soul forged ahead  
and laid down the gates and thresholds  
I must enter to fully realize myself.  
She furnished me with a road map,  
my own natal astrological chart,  
my unique soul blueprint from the stars,  
with all its obstacles and blessings,  
for me to understand and walk my path.  
So instead of railing against  
parts in me and life I don't like,  
I bow down to them  
for the awesome teachers they are.  
I will love and honor them  
for signaling what needs healing,  
for teaching me to soften and open,  
to accept the full human condition,  
and become ever deeper and more real.  
It's in the midst of darkness I learn  
to truly give and receive love,  
to be the very substance of love;  
perfect in all my imperfections.

[from Spirit Chapter 5:Transforming Human]

## **THE GIFT OF SHATTERING**

Don't take offense my little self,  
when I have to point something out.  
I'm doing it to raise you up,  
not to shout at or shut you down.  
For I so want you to join me  
in living a life profound.  
Indeed you're innocent little self.  
It is I who've created you,  
so I must take the responsibility  
to straighten you up with love,  
and fill your life with meaning.  
I'll assist you to open to and kiss whatever it is,  
no matter how much the screaming.  
For to be able to shatter old patterns lovingly,  
is one of the greatest gifts you can receive.  
And what a dynamic duo we'll be;  
you with your experience and humanity  
and I with my inspiration and enlightened being.

[from Spirit Chapter 6: Surrender to Spirit]

## **SAFE AND FREE**

I want a map, a plan,  
a perfect guarantee,  
that where I'm going,  
I'll be safe and free.  
But the only way to go  
into the unknown and be safe,  
is to go there wholeheartedly  
with my full presence and being.

Then I fully dissolve into Spirit,  
to experience the flutters in my stomach  
turning into gentle waves of peace.  
My tight jaw becomes an open mouth  
swallowing the whole river of love.  
Eyes that looked suspiciously,  
now sparkle deliciously.  
Even the air around and in me  
is clear, light and free.  
And where is my mind?  
It's gone out to sea.

[from Spirit Chapter 7: Embodying Spirit]

## **SACRED UNION**

I, as the true eternal authentic self, have crafted  
such an amazing vehicle to embody me;  
your heart to beat for me,  
your arms to be my wings and fly,  
your legs to walk my sacred path,  
your feet to root me in the ground,  
your eyes to be my twinkling stars  
and hold the vision of my vast sky,  
your mouth to form my pearls of wisdom  
and blow kisses to all of life,  
your spine to be the straight arrow  
of my clarity and direction,  
your blood to be my river,  
ever carrying you to spirit,  
your ears to be my antenna,  
picking up every love whisper,  
until you know you're never alone,  
that I am you, bringing you home,  
in the breath of every moment.  
So be my sweet instrument  
of the revolution to transcend the human condition,  
embody spirit, make sacred union, and be free.

[from Spirit Chapter 9: Oneness]

## **ONE BIG BUSH**

A plant all alone  
sits in the desert.  
No rain, no love,  
It should be dead  
but strangely isn't.  
It hangs on and on,  
resiliently surviving.  
It waits for what?

This plant I know is me,  
my loneliness calling out  
through the vast desert of time  
to all the other lonelinesses.  
Soon there are plants in rows,  
being there with each other,  
each understanding loneliness,  
feeling no shame, only love,  
nestling into each other,  
sending out tendrils of softness,  
to become one big bush,  
each leaf a sister or brother,  
hung on the bush, thickening it,  
as loneliness' separation shape-shifts  
into oneness' companionship and bigness.

[from Spirit Chapter 10: You at the Wheel]

## **THE RIDE OF MY LIFE**

The 'and' is in my hands.  
It's not either or,  
not a solo versus a chorus,  
not a quiet soliloquy  
versus a stirring discourse,  
not a still stream or rough storm.  
It's all choices, all ways of being.  
Whether it's spirit in heavenly ether  
or spirit as human ego on earth,  
the reality is, it's still me, her agent,  
steering and driving my energy vehicle,  
bringing in the elements as needed  
to experiment and manifest with,  
and express spirit in her many forms,  
as I learn to know myself more and more  
and enjoy the ride of my life.  
I see how every one of us is the creator,  
the true one who sits in our heart,  
gently moving our hands up and down,  
bringing spirit down into form  
or human form up into spirit,  
to meet and fall in love again and again.



**Journeying through the Elements** is a transformative healing journey through the magic of poetry and the alchemy of the elements.

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**Penny Hayes, Author and Poet**

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