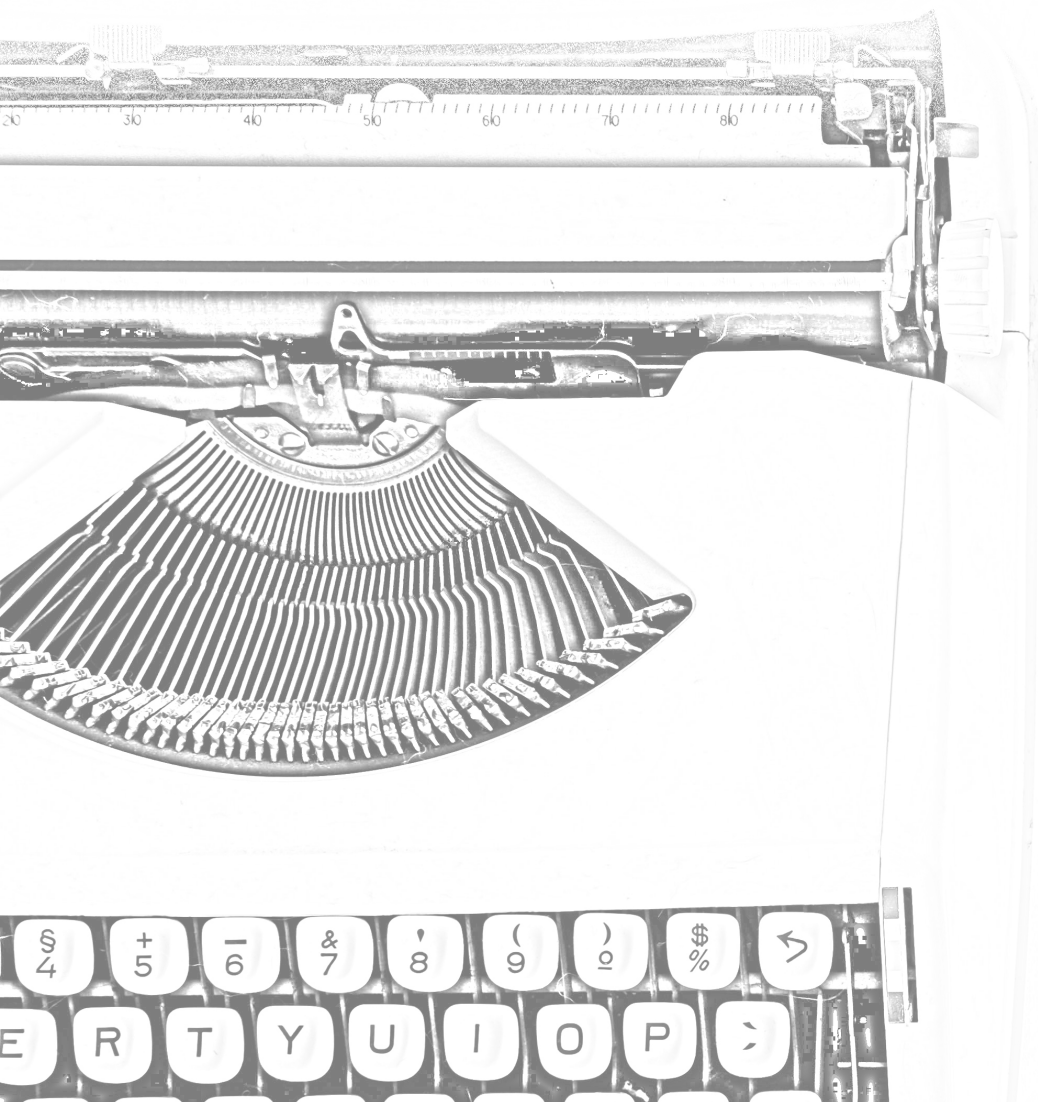


Poetic Engagement

7-day journal

By Ram Mahalingam



Instructions

This week, we will deepen our meditation practice and focus on writing a short poem every day to **engage**, **respond**, and **connect** to lives around us. Writing a poem every day as a meditative practice has positive health benefits, as well as heightening your creativity. After completing a meditation practice, using the prompts below, write a poem daily. Your poem should be a minimum length of three lines or 11-14 words. An option is to write Haikus.

Your poem does not have to be perfect. Rather, it is an exercise to cultivate self-compassion while learning to be present with an awareness of the interdependent nature of our lives. Your poem can be a narrative, reflection, a conversation with nature, an ancestor, or your favorite person. It can also be a collage of impressions, feelings, and thoughts. In short, it is a journey of poetic inquiry with your life. It is free-style compassionate writing. The prompts are only suggestions for writing your poem. If you decide to write a poem on some other topic, that is fine as long as you write a poem every day.

You have practiced three types of meditation so far (breath meditation, loving-kindness meditation, and sympathetic joy meditation). Choose any of these 15 minute meditations for your practice or any other meditation you choose.

After completing your meditation, journal about your practice and create your poem. Continue to notice what helps or hinders your **diligence to sit** (DS). Take notice of the distractions that undermine your **diligence while practicing** (DP). *After you complete your poem, read it aloud.*

Day 1:

DS/DP Observations.

Write a poem about how you felt after your practice. If you did not practice today, you could still write a poem about why you did not practice.

Day 2:

DS/DP Observations.

Think about one of the best dinners you had. Write a poem about the dinner and the person who cooked it for you.

Day 3:

DS/DP Observations.

Think of your favorite food. Pay attention to joy, happiness, and your sensual experiences while eating your favorite food. Write a poem about eating your favorite food.

Day 4:

DS/DP Observations:

Write a poem about an act of kindness you have witnessed.

Day 5:

DS/DP Observations:

After you meditate, take a moment to look around your place of meditation. Using any one of your sensory experiences, write a poem about you feel about your place of meditation.

Day 6:

DS/DP Observations.

Think about one of the best gifts you received. Write a poem about the gift and the person who gave it to you.

Day 7:

DS/DP Observations.

Think of one your favorite outdoor places. Write a poem about a calming/relaxing experience you had at that place.
