

# *A Poem for Peacemakers*

*by John Snyder*

August 4th, 2016

Dear Lynne,

I'm happy to hear of the accelerating progress of ESF and its work!

I am so very sorry that I never got to participate in an Assembly. It was always my plan, because I do so very strongly believe in ESF's mission.

I have attached a poem I have written in honor of the ESF Assembly in Hyderabad. Please have a look at it and, if you think it appropriate, share it with the assembly.

I'm with you in spirit and wish you and all the others a transformative, refreshing, inspiring time together.

In gratitude,  
John

## **A Poem for Peacemakers**

in honor of the Fifth Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières,  
Hyderabad, India, August 2016

I.

In the tear-watered soil of this suffering world,  
quietly grow the roots of peace.  
Their tiny tips travel out inch by inch  
around and even through  
the rocks, the rubble of war,  
the boneyards of famine,  
the thickest walls of apathy and fear.  
They reach out to each other  
searching patiently, incessantly  
for the clear stream and its source.  
Like a great grove of aspens  
lifting up silvery leaves,  
a million tiny prayer flags  
fluttering in the breeze,  
what can be seen of peace is beautiful.  
When it is swept away by drought  
or fire or flood, the wise do not despair,  
but turn again to tend the soil  
wherein the roots grow deep  
and deep and strong for the next rebirth.  
The whole earth groans  
and pushes again toward joy.

II.

Every being in this mad time  
lives with an arrow in its heart,  
so said Gautama Buddha.  
Learn to take the arrow out,  
he said, then help others  
do the same. Hate, fear, and anger  
he said, are like a second arrow  
beside the first. Take them out!  
There is no time to argue  
the fine points of archery.  
Move out into the world  
as wounded healers.  
The world needs this medicine:

III.

When this warring world was full of kings,  
the longed-for land was called  
the Kingdom of God,  
then the Peaceable Kingdom.  
In this time of race against race  
in fragile republics, we look  
for the Beloved Community.  
It is our native land, and memories  
of its pleasant hills and streams,  
our young feet in its sun-dappled  
meadows call us home.  
The wise set aside everything  
to pass again through its gates:  
the wound in the chest,  
the listening ear,  
the bright eyes of a child.

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