



Book of the Year Award Finalist

ForeWord Magazine – Travel Essays

Yes! to the Journey of a Lifetime

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Reflection Topics by Story

followed by a brief description of each story

The Journey

Sometimes it takes a “big trip” to inspire us to change our everyday routine, and choose growth. As we open our awareness, we notice you and I are also “we,” inherently part of the Mystery of Life. How might this awareness change our life experience, our process of personal transformation?

Enjoy the brief outline of a nineteen day pleasure and spiritual journey to Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca through the Sacred Valley of the Incas.

In the Beginning

What goes into building a new experience, a stronger sense of purpose, happier relationship or more satisfying career?

Join three friends who say *Yes* to a journey to Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca, then discover the next right person, and together begin weaving the physical and energetic bridge that joins old and new worlds in the ancient mystery of Love.

The Invitation

Personal and professional transformation can be awkward for both us and the people around us. Whether life urgently calls us to change, or we choose discovery for its own sake, reinventing ourselves can be both thrilling and uncomfortable. What is your life experience of reinventing yourself? What worked? What didn't? Clearly stated, who or what kind of person are you currently choosing to become? What do you need to leave, let go of, pick up and contribute to become that person?

When one woman says *Yes* to the journey of her life, she understands that to have it work, she will need to do something she has never done. There is something she must leave, let go of, pick up and contribute. And she's invited to enjoy the journey.

Arriving

Nature knows when it's time for new life to be born. We plant the seeds; they gestate. And no matter how fast or slow we'd like it, when we're ready, we're ready.

Arriving exhausted and bleary-eyed in a haven of beauty, eight friends rest, allowing their bodies to realign to being 3350 meters above sea level in Cuzco, Peru, often considered the "navel of the world". And then quite naturally, they step together into the world around them, where old and new meet again in a whole new way.

Walking in Wonder

Laying it on the line, what will you do to discover and live what you truly intend? How far will you go to live in a way that's wildly you – not just what's in your head, but that gut-level curiosity that pumps you with fire every now and then when you dare even flick your attention there? How far will **you** go to live an honest, passionate life? Maybe you fight these words. Maybe you wonder with a quiver, a thrill.

Join us for a walk on the wild side, where Love is as intimate as the chance we take to experience it.

Gold and Silver

Are leadership and love inherent in one another? Is it possible to lead without love? Or love without vision, focus, and the willingness and ability to meet the unknown? What effect does the union of love and leadership have on physical results? How are you currently experiencing love and leadership in your life? And when faced with fear or greed, how do you respond? When responding to fear or greed with love and leadership, what's included? What does it feel and look like? What action do you take?

The ancient Incas knew themselves as born of and returning to the stars. King and astronomers worked together in the same palace, Nature guiding their ways. Through abundance and celebration, greed and destruction, Nature still shined on. Only now, they would have to look a little harder, and act from greater faith, about what they knew was still true.

Astronomy of the Heart

Before we do or become anything more, in the instant we are alive, just because, as ourselves, we are loved. Beyond reason. For no purpose. Nothing to prove.

No culture, race, creed or life situation can dampen the wonder a child lights in our world.

What might we learn from them as their joy awakens our joy?

What might we receive as we share our joy – beyond reason, for no purpose, with nothing to prove?

Two astronomers, with two different native tongues, speak the same language of the stars. Their joy creates our joy, silencing us to ear-stretching smiles of love.

On Angels

In a single month over two million people searched the keyword “angels+”. And while about 2 million more people searched the word “religion+”, it’s still a big number.

Are angels real? Imagined? Physical? Non-physical? Who are they? How do we know? What's our experience of them? Do angels and people need each other? How so? Might your friend, grandmother or a stranger be an angel? What would you describe as a healthy relationship with an angel?

One woman has a heart to heart chat with her lifetime friends, the angels, and notices how whether in physical or energetic form, we’re all here learning to be together in love.

The Market and the Mass

How might diversity be cause for celebration? Are money and prayer harmonious? Does our investment in communities of prayer and celebration enrich our lives? Do we reinvest our return in the workplace? How? And with what result?

In Pisac, Peru the Sunday market and house of prayer live side by side, each glorious and intense. Churchgoers interchange as shopkeepers. And it is here, in the market, where yet another person is inspired that she, too, can learn to make beautiful music with the simple instruments at hand.

Teamwork

When creating a happy, productive team, what’s the recipe for success? Is it *who* we choose? What gifts they bring? Or that we choose together? And with focus, clarity and excellence as given essentials, what effect might love, respect and trust have on success? What do courage and desire to succeed contribute to success? How does sharing our joy affect our results and continued synergy?

Imagine yourself in our story as one of the family of friends and cousins who together with a woman of vision from another continent make a place of synergy pulsing with harmony, bounty and love . . . a place that sumptuously nourishes all who enter.

A Promise Kept

He walked four days from his mountain home to be with us. He didn’t know the ceremony. The chief who was to come with him was tending a sick girl in the village. He simply came, as he was, to keep a promise. Nothing we had planned today was going to happen. How would we respond?

In what ways do you simply "show up" in your life, knowing you are enough, as you are, while you are also learning? When you trust yourself to be yourself, what happens?

Discover the power of presence and curiosity when a Q’ero leader meets eight travelers, one guide and a passing local musician in the Sacred Valley of the Incas.

The Way of Time

Ever feel like life's moving so fast, and you with it, that soon you'll be a blur of motion self-destructing into a mesmerized glaze as the world whirs by you? Ever notice how one simple choice can change everything past, present and your future?

Listen in as the ancient wisdoms of an Andes mountain leader meet everyday life and a woman finding her courage to be here now, with Love.

On Healing

What is healing? What inherent wisdom within us naturally heals our wounds from the inside out and outside in? How do we meet our challenges, whether physical, emotional or relational, in a way that facilitates balance, health and happiness?

Look within. Find the part of you who can be present with yourself and others in any situation, personal or professional, with awareness, discovery and love to resolve any difficulty. Are you a Healer? What's your answer to the gift you've been given?

On Dreaming

Things are often more than they appear. One moment we look around and notice everyday life occurring, just as regular as it can be—work, play, food, rest—days and weeks on end. And the next moment, just as simply, we close our eyes or soften our focus, let go of all we typically see, knowing we can also return to it, and another entire world appears.

Sure-footed in daily life, Dream interweaves with Rational, as natural and inherent as breathing. And in one brief moment, Life invites us to more than we now know. How will we respond?

On Relationships

Surely relationship are the eternal Mystery of Love – the experience of being present with ourselves, inviting and meeting one another from a place of choice, the place where you and I are also “we”.

In four short stories of three girlfriends, one couple, five leaders and two people where the magic just ‘clicked’, see a glimpse into the delight of being present and available to ourselves, one another, and the Mystery of Love.

Conflict and Self Reflection

When faced with our own or others' upset, what do we do? Shout? Be silent? Disappear? Hold a grudge? Stop listening? Think it's all about them, and not about us, too? Pretend it's not here? Continue to hurt each other every chance we get?

In a story of eight travelers stuck in resentment and resistance, notice how their courage to have a conversation with honesty, self reflection and appreciation saved an important relationship and helped them grow as leaders and friends.

Climbing the Mountain

Love guides us to more than we may consciously imagine. The way can be steep, the journey challenging. Still, the heart knows its way, and we need only say *Yes*, focus, and take one step at a time, in our own time, to discover the beauty within and around us.

Enjoy the story of friends on a journey with Love, up a steep mountain of choice, open-heartedness and focus. Enjoy the pleasure of Love, too, arriving in Her own time and way, as She teaches the travelers the power of presence and invitation.

The Heart . . . and Machu Picchu

Ever notice how Nature knows exactly what to do when? Is she inviting us to learn from her rhythms, teaching us to trust her, and trust ourselves as part of her? Is she revealing the beauty within all of life, each in its own right timing?

In this true story, in the heart of Machu Picchu, by the dark of night, notice how Nature reveals herself yet again, in perfect timing for one man and the world, inviting us all to join her in discovering who we are and what we have come to share.

Fly Already

Rich with vision, passion and presence we grow skillful and strong, open to Life flowing through us, our willfulness laid down. With confidence and humility joined, we meet the future; hearts open, hands guided, fear refining to thrill.

In this magical adventure, Eagle and Condor join us in counsel, as we face the future, here at the precipice, following our dreams.

Your Heart's Desire

Source, Life, it seems you have invited us to live together, here, in paradise. Why have you done so? For the pleasure of it? So we can do dharma, erase karma? Or that we might grow wise and loving? Something else?

Here, on the Island of the Sun in Lake Titicaca, we ask:

"Source, Life, if you could have *your* heart's desire from our time together, what would it be?"

Island of the Moon

What have we come here to learn? And to share? Is Love some big 'ah-hah', a jazzy dramatic? Or is it simply being here, as ourselves, giving and receiving, lending a hand when requested?

Coming home, deep within, on the Island of the Moon in Lake Titicaca, we meet Love again and say *Yes* to being ourselves, sharing our gifts, giving and receiving. We say *Yes* to the simple pleasure of being together.

Instinct and G-knowing

Imagine you're in the flow of Life. Your projects are accomplished with ease; the next step or resource appears; your mind is alive, focused and restful; your actions flow from an inherent awareness of the next right step.

Trusting our instinct, our gut level knowing, suggests we're part of Life, working together with infinite resource. Enjoy this story of how Life invites our partnership, and meets us, quite literally, inviting us to say *Yes* to love.

Love in the Between

Maybe as life flows onward our hard edges soften, and some fears subside. We grow older, maybe a little wiser, with yet a few more chances to simply be with one another – no razzle dazzle, no drama – just happy in being together. Something shifts, here in the between, and love just as suddenly moves from "out there," to deep in our hearts, never disappearing.

Listen in as a daughter shares how she and her father found each other in their final years together, with love, at last, never slipping away unnoticed.

Coming Home

Whether as parents, daughters or sons, we all know the power of making a steady home for our children, a place of love, receptive and generous, where we can each become who we are, and all we can be, together. It's rarely easy, yet what we create for our children, is what we are creating for ourselves.

Traveling to his daughter's wedding, one man tells his story of making a new life and learning a whole new language of love.

Reflections of a Leader

When we're 'part of' the whole, present and in partnership with the people and projects we are guiding, we have greater power, more joy and better results. Trusting ourselves and one another, we lead with vision, focus and humility, respecting and calling upon the resources of all. Together, each making our contribution, we discover, create and succeed, in Peace.

Look to your own experience as our worldly leader reflects on the power of presence, awareness and learning, and on the importance of enjoying and including herself.

The Burning Buggy

In our inter-related world, who's driving? Is it Life, with its infinite exquisite harmony? Is it us, with our evolving awareness? Are we traveling together, and sometimes the big Life Force is driving, and sometimes we are? It's probably tiresome to drive solo for some 50+ years. So if God's havin' a nap, and it's our turn at the wheel, let's hope there's a map in the glove compartment!

Look inside. Ride the ride . . . one step following another.