



Express Yourself: Art as Healing

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“Some poems are good medicine.
They soothe our anxieties and
self-doubt, restore our balance,
boost our energy and strength,
help us cope with stress, or *even*
heal.”¹





What the research shows:

- Poetry, as therapy, is found to improve well-being and resilience in cancer patients – by decreasing both anxiety and suppression of emotions.²
- Creative writing helps patients in processing their experiences, enhances their ability to name and express difficulties, and provides a sense of fulfillment.³
- Expressive writing interventions positively impact cancer patients' quality of life and physical health – really proving beneficial when integrated beyond cancer treatment and into survivorship.^{4,5}

Winter Morning

by James Crews

When I can no longer say thank you
for this new day and the waking into it,
for the cold scrape of the kitchen chair
and the ticking of the space heater glowing
orange as it warms the floor near my feet,
I know it's because I've been fooled again
by the selfish, unruly man who lives in me
and believes he deserves only safety
and comfort. But if I pause as I do now,
and watch the streetlights outside flashing
off one by one like old men blinking their
cloudy eyes, if I listen to my tired neighbors
slamming car doors hard against the morning
and see the steaming coffee in their mugs

kissing chapped lips as they sip and
exhale each of their worries white into
the icy air around their faces—then I can
remember this one life is a gift each of us
was handed and told to open: Untie the
bow
and tear off the paper, look inside
and be grateful for whatever you find
even if it is only the scent of a tangerine
that lingers on the fingers long after
you've finished peeling it.⁶





Write your own version of such a morning.

What if, instead of bundling up and rushing out the door, you take a moment to pause, as the speaker does, and take in the quiet stillness of it? What do you observe around you?

How does this stillness invite you to gratitude?

Small,
Ordinary
Miracles

by Julie Ransdell

Morning light slips through the blinds,
soft as a promise kept.
Coffee hums, the world inhales,
and somehow - this is enough.

Day drifts by on quiet feet,
until shadows learn the room.
Outside, old man winter waits,
bare tree fingers combing the sky.

Night settles like a held breath,
stars stitched into darkened blue.
Old man winter lifts his hands,
his bare tree fingers wave goodnight.

Laughter sleeps in empty rooms,
love rests where it's always been.
And still we rise, then gently fall,
finding grace in letting go.



“...just pay attention, then patch
a few words together, and don’t
try
to make them elaborate, this isn’t
a contest but the doorway
into thanks...”

-Mary Oliver, “Praying” 7



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