



We spend so much of our lives indoors, some of us in front of screens for work, that it can be easy to forget another world waits just beyond these four walls and our own door.

Once we cross that threshold, however, if we stay available and open, we find an unnamed galaxy even in our own backyard, or in some bit of green space on the street corner.

We just have to remember to look more closely, letting go of the mind's pull and the constant grind of work, to notice other lives, other worlds right in front of us.

As a culture, we've become more aware of this, especially with the explosion of interest in the Japanese practice of *shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing. I love the

intense body-and-soul relief of walking among trees, but we don't need a whole forest to immerse ourselves in nature. I'm fond of the quote by French surrealist poet, Paul Éluard: "There is another world, but it is in this one."

I think of what he said when I have been living in one world—of suffering, distraction, fear, or disappointment—and through the slightest shift in my attention, I begin to inhabit another. Just this morning, while watering all the trees, shrubs, and perennials in the yard, I was delighted to see grasshoppers and leopard frogs leaping out of my way, and ants traveling the long road of the hose.

I found myself stepping more softly after that, scanning each patch of grass and ground, suddenly aware of their world inside my own.



Another World

After spending all day in the house,

I stepped out toward evening

and entered another world

as soon as the sun hit my skin.

That's all it took, the light turning

like a key in the lock of me,

and the cells in my body swinging

open as I noticed bees at work

in the helianthus, every blossom

yellow-tipped, orange at the center,

like a child's drawing of the sun—

hundreds of blazing stars staring

up at me from the unnamed galaxy

of my own front yard.

Invitation for Writing & Reflection: Begin with the phrase, "I entered another world when..." and see what arises for you. Or you might call forth a time in your life when you entered some world of greater mystery and wonder without having to go anywhere at all.

James Crews