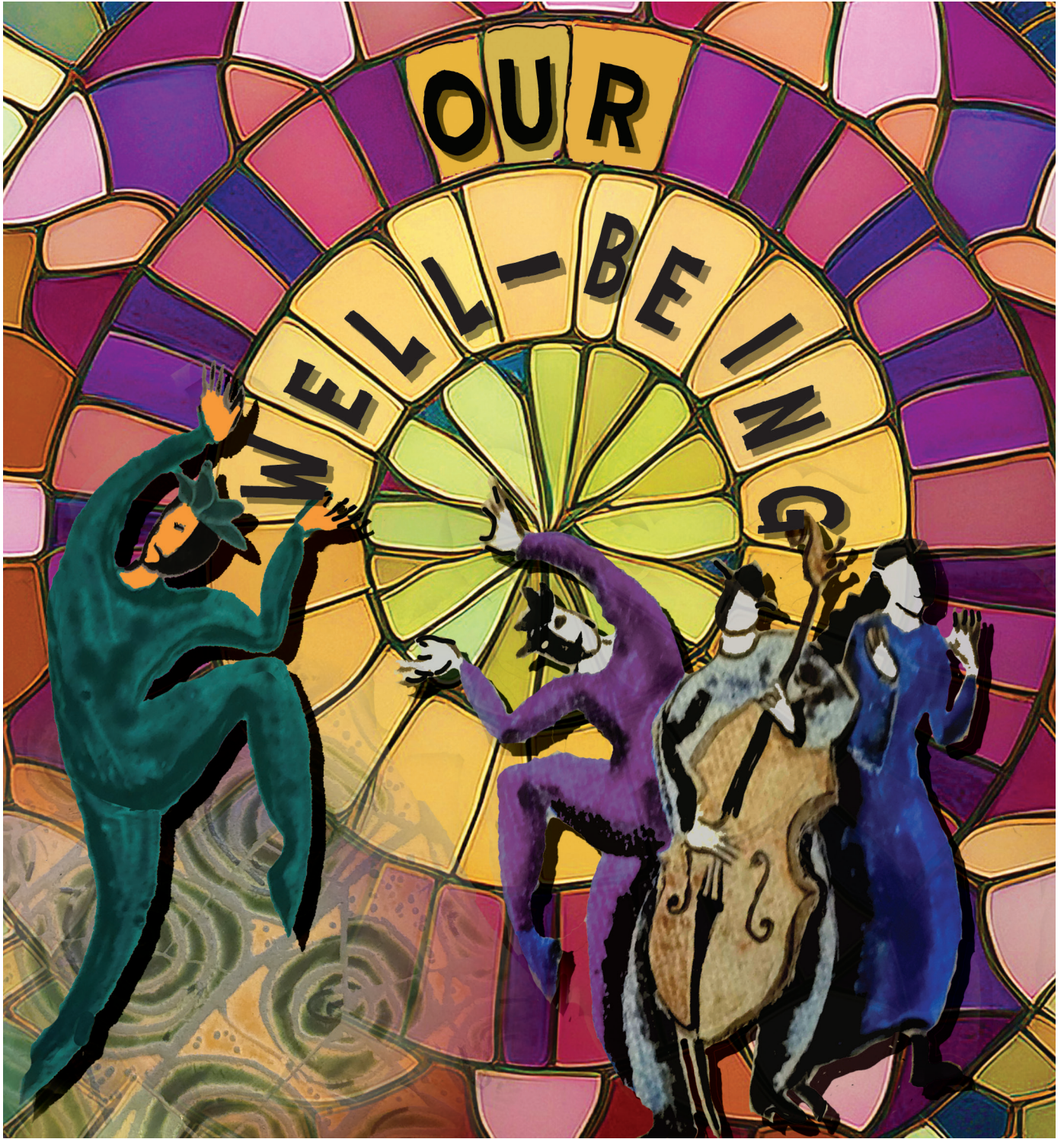


FOOLS FABLES



2025

One....

that's where it begins,
One single spark
BA\M! A universe spins
into being
and here we are now,

Peter James Webster
Poet

tryin' to make it through
the present spin somehow.
But. I know,
I know we'll make it through,
together
'cos. that's what we're here to do
come whatever
we can weather any storm,
our love for one another
overcomes and keeps us warm.



Poetry is Life



Law of light
and seeing parts that are reflected back to see color.
The same way we see difference.
I take in how me looks like you
and I can accept and climb
or bow down to trip you
only laying in dust
neither of us the better.
Let's fly and teach me your wind.
I got lessons to share as well.

Joel Yates
Poet



***We are called to a life of presence
that acknowledges each human's incredible worth.***

***Aware of our judgments, we seek to meet people where they are through the
Arts, Education, Advocacy, and Accompaniment.***

***We participate in shattering myths about those living in poverty, seeing the
Light, Courage, Intelligence, Strength, and Creativity of the people we encounter.***

***We discover on the streets our common humanity through which
celebration, community, and healing occur.***

Faithful Fools is A Way of Life

Some people call it a mission statement, we call it a way of life. Our well-being is bound up with the well-being of the people around us and the people around them and the people around them. It's a life of presence and a way of being in the world. It's poetry. It's ubuntu. It's namaste. It's paz y bien. It's one of many ways to say that we are bound up together in the struggles and joys of life.

Well-being is a dance that accomodates rough edges when we disagree and nods knowingly in the delight of shared experiences. Well-being integrates sorrow and loss into our daily lives when we lose someone to death or ruptured relationship. Well-being is never perfect but it matters because it makes anguish bearable. Well-being is a call to our better selves.

Our mission statement is a kind of how-to manual for living in a world that is fractured and off kilter, or just plain puzzling. It's a recipe for encountering the strangers we fear and the kin we have history with. Most of all it's a road map for finding a path that hasn't been laid out yet.

There are no rules or regulations for entering this way of life. All you have to do is begin your day with being present to whatever and whoever comes your way. Pay attention to what the world is asking of you. Delight in the people you encounter (as best you can) and consider what myths about them (and you) need a little shattering.

Well-being, like poetry, is a work of art. Never easy in the making, but we can't live without it.

Notes on why we do what we do
by Sam Dennison



*I AM BECAUSE
WE ARE*

UBUNTU

"YOU CAN'T BE HUMAN ALL BY YOURSELF
AND WHEN YOU HAVE THIS QUALITY
-UBUNTU- YOU ARE KNOWN FOR YOUR
GENEROSITY."
- DESMOND TUTU

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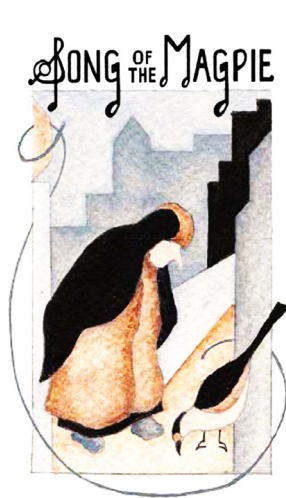
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Paint! Write! Dance!

From
Carmen Barsody



Till the land!

Plant some seeds! Act! Whatever you love to do, do it with, and in the service of others. Sing! Cook! Sketch! Sew! Stilt walk! Don't stop! Do it as if your life depends up on it. Do it to brighten a day or resist oppressors and oppression. Our lives do depend upon it and our lives do depend on one another.

When Kay and I moved into the Fool's Court on Hyde Street we gathered artists to conspire with us as we set out to live our mission embodied in full color and visceral in its strength. Martha Boesing wrote and directed powerful plays. Richard Kamler invited students from his "Artist as Citizen" class to imagine what peace and a just society looked like, and then make art. Ed Bowers wrote poetry and rAmu Aki put on Strong Medicine Shows. Kay Jorgensen and her alter ego, Oscar, mobilized clowns and stilt walkers and joined in marches to protest war and punitive policies by our city government. Rob Nilsson held acting workshops that led people inward to their primal emotions and produced his 9@Night films. Chris Duke painted on windows, drummed on the drums and made the piano keyboard sing, while Meg Whittaker Green took powerful photos and Andrea Jorgensen painted the stairway in brilliant colors illuminating our determined footsteps as we ascend and descend countless times a day.

Artists and their art laid the foundation of our work, of our way of life as Faithful Fools, and they are here still, like glue that holds our shattered hearts together. Without our creative life force intact, individually and communally, we cannot imagine our way through even the simplest of tasks, let alone the complexities of these times.

Richard Kamler had a vision that every world leader would bring an artist to the meetings at the United Nations. He believed in the ability of artists to help us find our way to world peace. I understand Richard's vision and that longing. It's a call for us all to be artists. To do whatever is required to get our creative juices going to save lives, including our own. Don't stop, for as we know in the most beautiful or tragic opera, "It ain't over 'til the fat lady sings!"



Clockwise from the top:

Richard Kamler, Song of the Magpie by Martha Boesing, A Cosmic Birthday celebration, Meg Whittaker-Green births a clown in Nicaragua, a painting on glass by Chris Duke, Robert-Harry Roven & Kay Jorgensen, Kim Mays, Shikiri with Lauren Swiger, Nazelah Namison & Mikayla Brown, Lord Frederick, and Ade Kroll with Silena Layne.

El Cuidado Mútuo tiene sus Raíces

Rooted in Mutual Care

By Verónica Rivadeneira

En muchas partes del mundo, el bienestar sigue siendo un anhelo profundo más que una realidad cotidiana. Las poblaciones enfrentan desafíos persistentes: corrupción, pobreza material, acceso limitado a la atención médica y a alimentos nutritivos, educación inadecuada, inseguridad y violencia. Y aún así, en medio de estas dificultades, siguen aflorando signos de esperanza, resiliencia y solidaridad.

Para algunos poblados ancestrales, la visión del bienestar está profundamente arraigada en la experiencia compartida. La oración diaria no se limita a pedir por uno misma, sino que con mucha fe se extiende hacia el bien de los demás, hacia la justicia para todos. Esta creencia —donde “los míos” no incluyen solo a mis parientes, sino también a mis vecinos— late en el corazón de las comunidades latinoamericanas. Lo que beneficia a mi vecino me beneficia a mí; lo que me afecta también afecta a todos. Lo que da vida a la tierra —la lluvia oportuna o la defensa contra la minería excesiva— da vida a quienes la transitamos hoy y a quienes la transitarán mañana.

La necesidad de sobrevivir, generosamente nos impulsa a construir redes de apoyo. Quienes están aislados, contra su voluntad, pueden ser devorados por la hostilidad del sistema capitalista. Esa presencia sin voz, necesita atención: debe ser escuchada, incluida y levantada para que el bienestar comunitario pueda continuar su camino hacia los horizontes desconocidos.

La sabiduría de las naciones indígenas de los Andes ha despertado en mí una profunda admiración. He aprendido algo esencial de su forma de ver la vida: el pasado está frente a nosotros, visible y lleno de enseñanzas; el presente es lo que encarnamos; el futuro, en cambio, está detrás de nosotros, invisible e incierto. Por eso, lo que recibimos del pasado es valioso para el paso que damos hoy y para los que podamos dar, si los damos, mañana.

En nuestra caminata —porque en esta vida no hay seres inmóviles— la verdadera alegría no depende de lo que poseemos, sino de cómo amemos hoy.



In so many parts of the world, well-being remains a deep longing rather than an everyday reality. Communities face persistent challenges: corruption, material poverty, limited access to healthcare and nutritious food, inadequate education, insecurity, and violence. Yet, amid these difficulties, signs of hope, resilience, and solidarity continue to bloom.

In many communities, the vision of well-being is deeply rooted in shared experience. Daily prayer is not limited to asking for oneself but extends with trust toward mutual care and shared justice. This belief—that “my people” are not only my relatives but also my neighbors—beats in the heart of Latin American communities. What benefits my neighbor benefits me; what affects me also affects everyone. What gives life to the earth—timely rain or the defense against excessive mining—gives life to those of us who walk it today and to those who will walk it tomorrow.

The need to survive generously pushes us to build support networks. Those who are isolated, not by choice, may be devoured by the hostility of the capitalist system. That voiceless presence needs attention: it must be heard, included, and lifted up so that communal well-being can continue its journey toward an unknown horizon.

The wisdom of the Indigenous nations of the Andes has awakened deep admiration in me. I’ve learned something essential from their way of seeing life: the past is in front of us, visible and full of teachings; the present is what we embody; the future, on the other hand, is behind us—unseen and uncertain. That is why what we receive from the past is valuable for the step we take today—and for those we may take, if we are able, tomorrow.

In our journey—because in this life there are no immobile beings—true joy does not depend on what we possess, but on how we love today.

*Verónica Rivadeneira of Ecuador
pictured above with Camillo Barrera of Columbia
Co-Ministers of Associates
Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minn.*

How do we know that our well-being is bound up with yours? And yours with ours?

Faithful Fools was founded to inquire into the deteriorating conditions of the streets and foster individual and collective responses to what is happening around us. More than 12,000 Fools, students, and friends have practiced seeking wisdom on the streets. It has been the opening act to all we do since our beginning in 1998. The streets are our retreat center where we pause to ask ourselves:

What holds us separate? What keeps us separated? As we walk the streets, what still connects us?

We invite you to reflect on the conditions surrounding you--your family, your neighborhood, your city and your state. What connects you to the people around you and what separates you? How is your well-being bound up with people you know and just as importantly, how is your well-being bound up with people you don't know?

For more information about Fools, reflection, and the streets as a retreat center:

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