

HEEDING THE CALL

What does it mean to be called to be a spiritual director or companion?

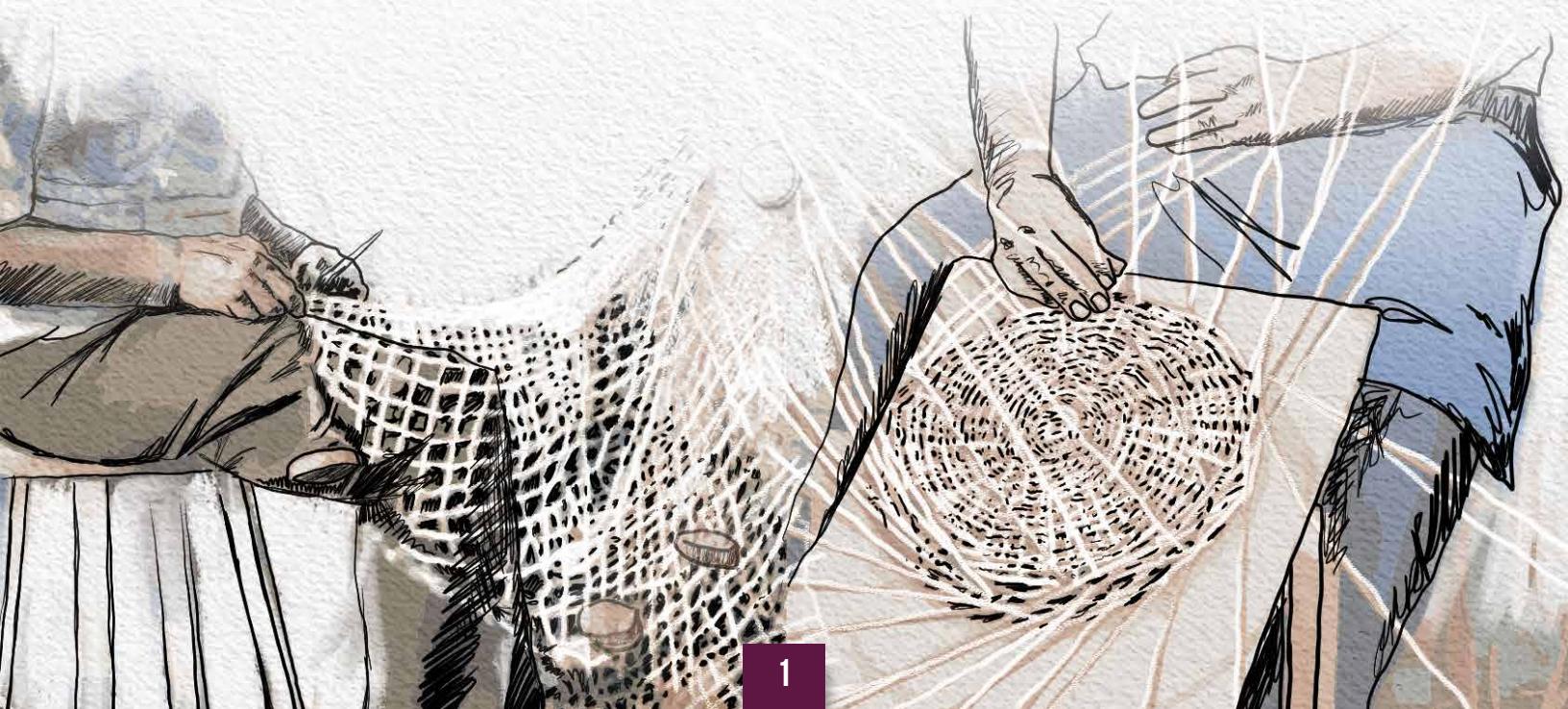
Rummaging through some old grad school essays in anticipation of a move, I came across the following, which although written over 30 years ago for my spiritual director at the time, a priest with the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, still resonates with me:

“The foundation or backdrop for feeling called is one of intense doubt, uncertainty and confusion. In fact, this doubt is so entrenched, the distress or the confusion that the world exhibits so deeply felt, and our own shortcomings and inadequacies so painfully obvious that only an extreme form

of redress can set things right—heeding the call. Responding to it can then finally begin to wear down our most obdurate qualms by replacing them with a deep sense of purpose and conviction, allowing us to rise to the highest pinnacle of our being: the effort to align with ultimate mystery, which we variously call God or the Universe.

Here we seek to replace our own perspectives with broader, bigger ones, infinite ones actually, those far beyond our rational understanding. And while we may struggle to define the experience with our words, we feel and intuitively apprehend Love as our ultimate purpose, with great certainty.”

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As I reflect on this a few decades later, I'm struck by "Love as the ultimate purpose." That's certainly something to align with, and to live into!

And it's really what all of us directors and companions do every day: work with others as they struggle to express and unfurl their own spiritual journeys, with the hope that they resolve into Love, for them and for us.

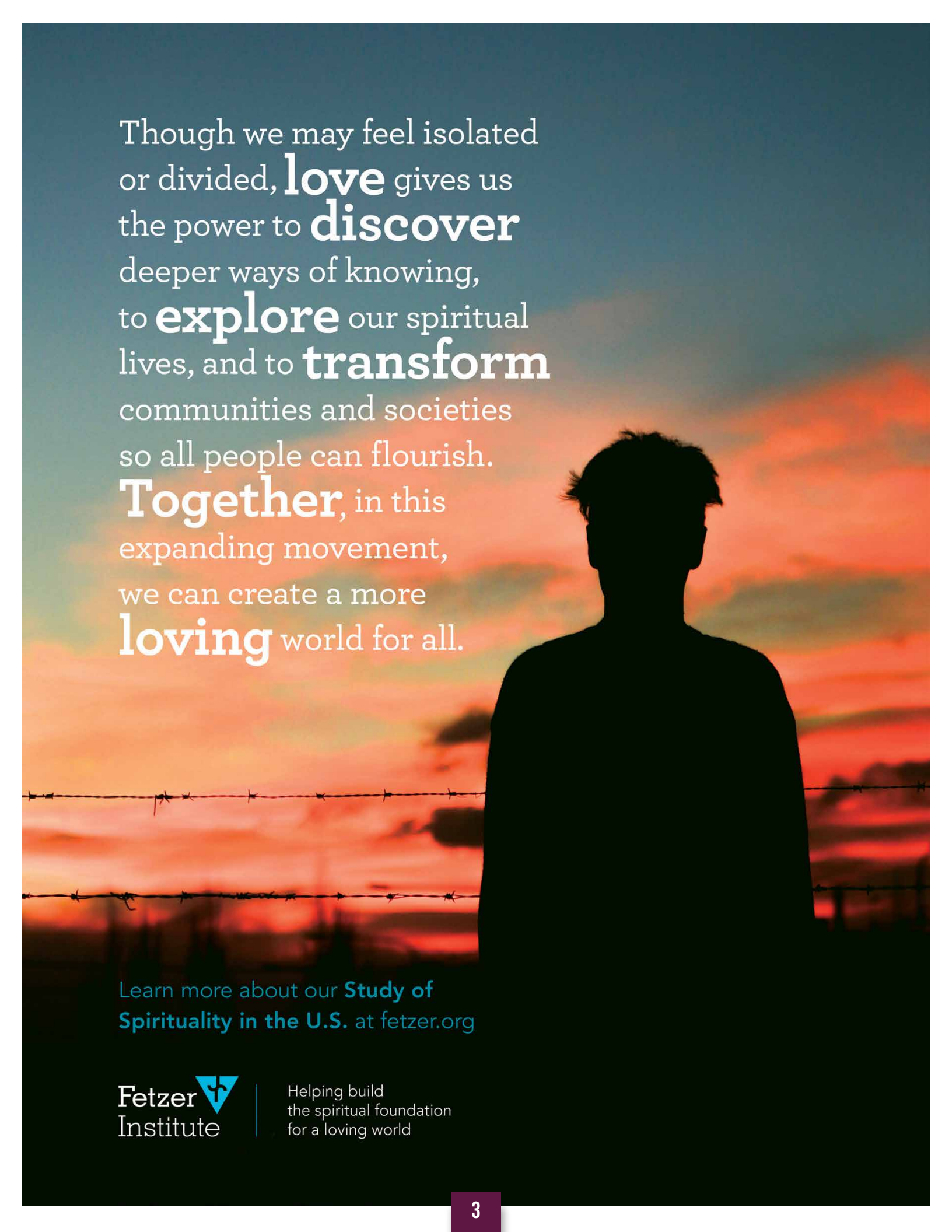
And as they wrestle with their dark nights of the soul, they echo our own, in the same way that their own doubts and uncertainties illuminate and help dissipate ours.

So, all of us keep working together, listening to the whispers and voices of the Beyond, and responding to their call by weaving our baskets of care and tenderness one strand at a time.



Rev. SeiFu Anil Singh-Molares
Executive Director, SDI



A silhouette of a person stands in the foreground, looking out over a landscape. In the background, there is a sunset or sunrise with a sky of orange, red, and blue. Two strands of barbed wire are visible in the foreground, one above and one below the person's shoulders.

Though we may feel isolated
or divided, **love** gives us
the power to **discover**
deeper ways of knowing,
to **explore** our spiritual
lives, and to **transform**
communities and societies
so all people can flourish.

Together, in this
expanding movement,
we can create a more
loving world for all.

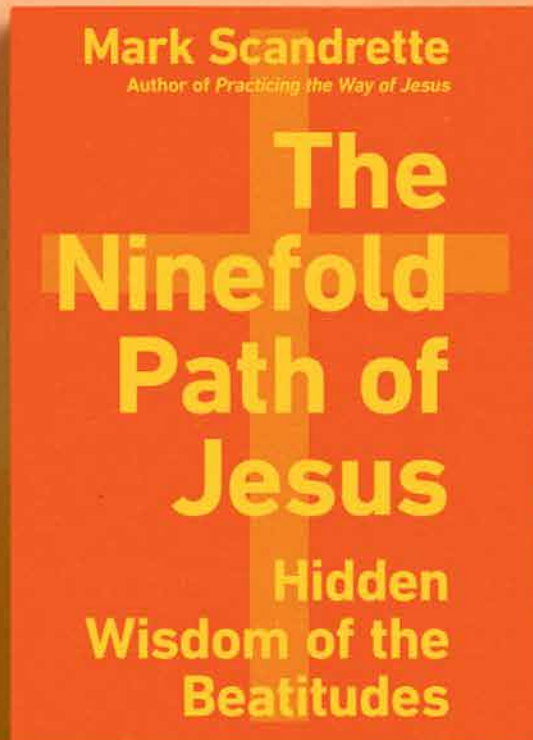
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9 NEW POSTURES FOR LIFE



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In the dark, middle of night,
in the deep middle
of the middle of life,
may you wake,
feeling the familiar fear,
and suddenly realize you are in the midst
of slowly, painfully,
giving birth,
and have, for years,
been in labor, losing, growing,

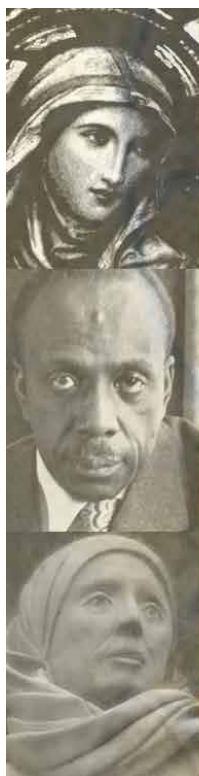
and may you mutter, "Midwife,"
in confusion turning to prayer,
begging the dark to help you,
and hear the poetry,
midwife, midlife,
midlife, midwife,

and be calmed by this,
letting Midlife do her work,

attending the birthing chamber
where who you were,
that too-tight, tight-skinned, tightly clothed,
tightly wound young woman,
has been opened out, spreading wide,
like a snake-skin, like a vulva,
from which is emerging
that wild, white haired,
loose and expansive,
grinning and playful old woman,
who must be your Soul.



LIZA HYATT is a poet whose books include *Once, There Was a Canal* (Chatter House Press, 2017), *The Mother Poems* (Chatter House Press, 2014), *Under My Skin*, (WordTech Editions, 2012). Liza is an art therapist in Indianapolis. She is currently a student in the Spiritual Guidance Training Institute. You can contact her at lizahyatt@gmail.com.



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Spiritual companions offer to connect clients to the divine in their everyday life

Article appears in the January 14, 2021 issue of

The New York Times

Featuring comments by SDI's Executive Director
Rev. Seifu Anil Singh-Molares



OUR IDEAL SESSION

If you tell me how happy you are sending shoeboxes of toys to Romanian Gypsy children and sharing the Good News of their savior Jesus...

I will listen with compassion.

If you tell me how happy you are observing a kosher kitchen and seeing Bibi save Israel from Palestinian hordes...

I will listen with compassion.

If you tell me how happy you are meditating toward Awareness and believing there is no personal god but salvation through awareness of suffering and compassion...

I will listen with compassion.


If you tell me how happy you are dancing naked under the Beltane moon and knowing your spirit animal ...

I will listen with compassion.

If you tell me how happy you are speaking in tongues and being slain in the Holy Spirit...

I will listen with compassion.

I will listen as a human who has offered herself to the hungry tigress. The tigress who will eat me and watch as I transform for a time into the listening wind.



CATHY CARLSON REYNOLDS, a Franciscan and Sufi who lives in Williamsburg VA, is an interspiritual companion and graduate of the Spiritual Guidance Training Program. You can contact her at cathleenreynolds@icloud.com.



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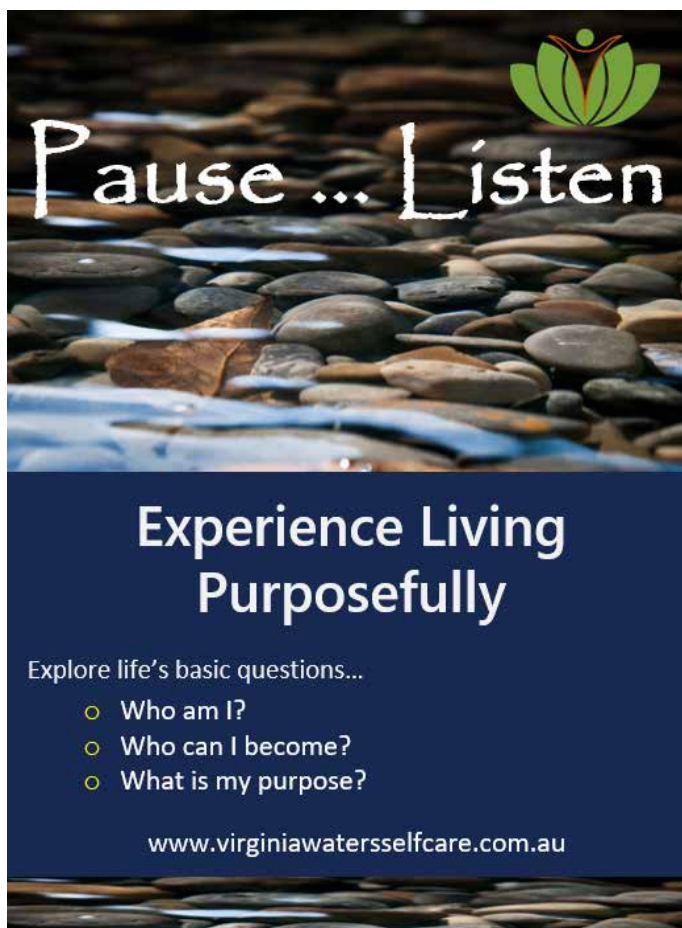
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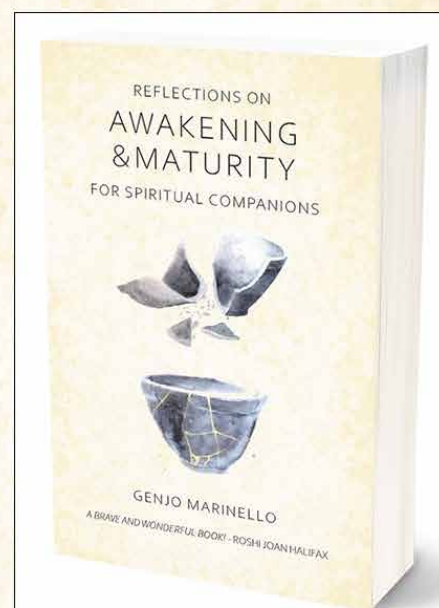
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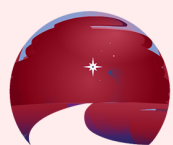
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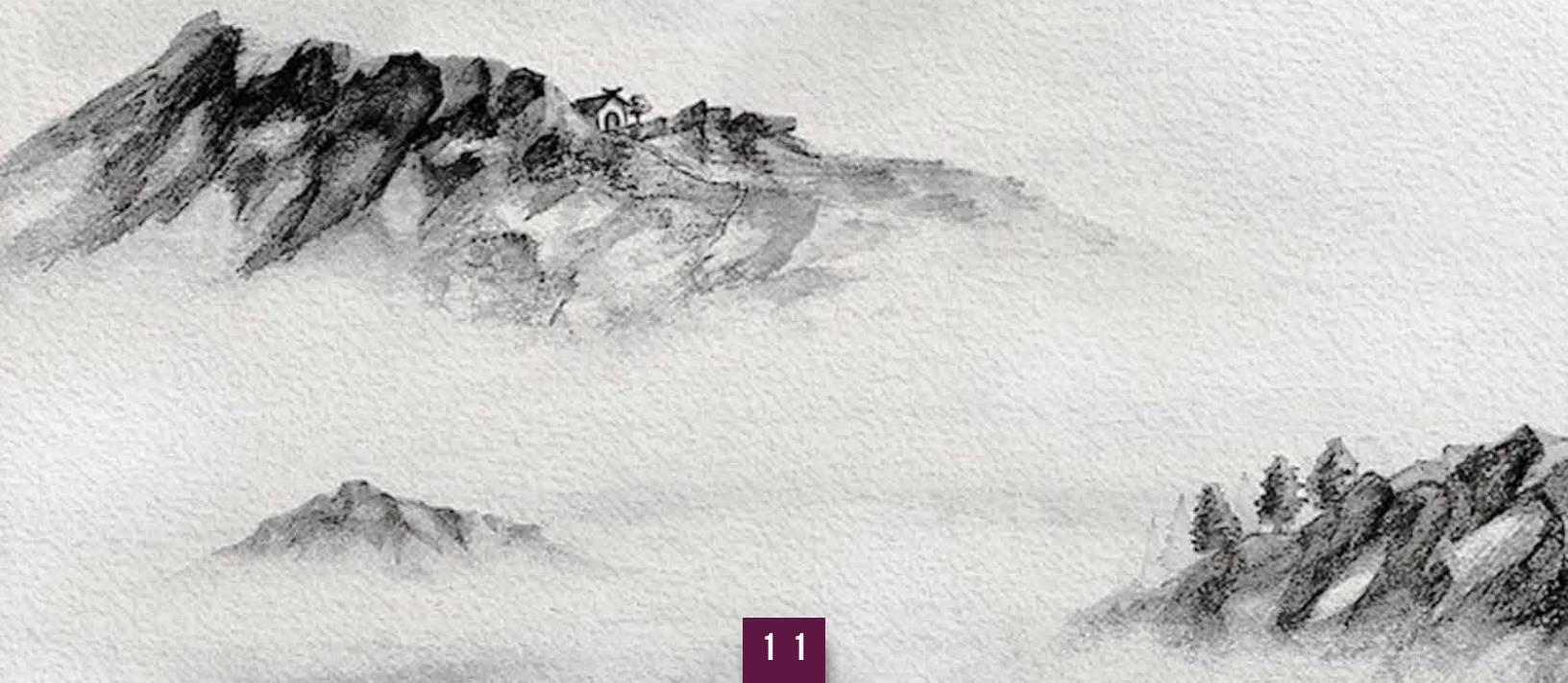
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“To bear and not to own; to act and not lay claim; to do the work
and let it go: for just letting it go is what makes it stay.”

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching





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