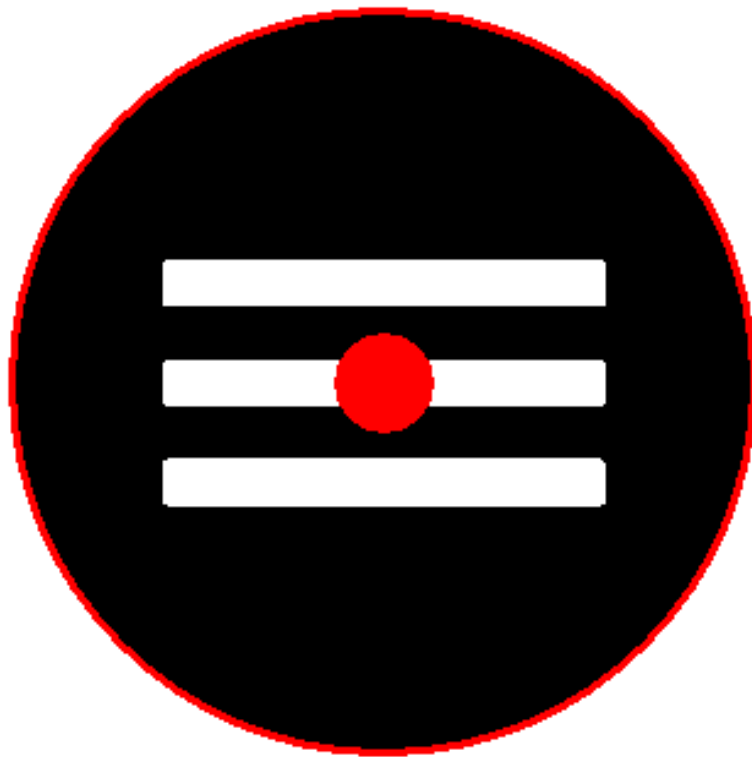


# MANUAL OF THE NEW YOGA



LESSON 7:

THE NEW YOGA OF THE FACE

(Mukha Yoga)

**Consciousness in another's face. Look into someone else's face, and see the consciousness in it, and a particular *shade* of consciousness.**

*Ludwig Wittgenstein*

**It [the face] speaks, [and] it is in this that it renders possible and begins all discourse....**

**[The face of the other] is the way in which the other presents himself, exceeding the idea of the other in me.**

*Emmanuel Levinas*

**What does the baby see when he or she looks at the mother's face. I am suggesting that, ordinarily, what the baby sees is himself or herself. In other words, the mother is looking at the baby and *what she looks like is related to what she sees there.***

*Donald Winnicott*

**Without ... willingness to read the secret expression and to nurse it into life, any therapeutic encounter is gravely weakened.**

**Facing is concerned with recognition, with how we see people, with the qualities of lamination that develop when people really face each other and with the forms of illumination that flash out of such contact. Insight develops in step with outlook. If a person can let his inner self be seen by another, he begins to become recognisable to himself and can then look within, not in the sense of any sterile introspection, but in the sense of learning to love and accept who he is, and so recognise himself.**

*David Boadella*

**The Sumari word "shambalina" connotes the changing faces that the inner self adopts through its various experiences. Now this is a word that hints of relationships for which you have no word.**

*Seth*

**Every individual is a unique and ever-changing *human face of the divine*. Each of us can also allow the divine awareness to shine through our face - revealing the *divine face of our humanity*.**

*Peter Wilberg*

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In 1975 I had a profound experience of the countless different *faces* of my own soul. In the course of a spontaneous but prolonged meditation lasting over an hour, I experienced wave after wave of powerful but distinct and unique coloured feeling tones welling up within my soul. I allowed each of these feeling tones in turn to fully permeate my body, transform my sense of self - and to form itself into a distinct *face*. Following and giving form to each feeling tone through my facial expression, allowed me to feel it more intensely. This in turn led each feeling tone to slowly but surely transform into another. As one feeling tone transformed into another I allowed the features of my facial expression too, to alter incrementally - thus slowly but surely allowing one face of the self I was revealing I to transform, metamorphose or “morph” into another. I became aware that not only individual faces but whole sequences of faces, had their own distinct underlying feeling tone. Following the transformation of these underlying feeling tones allowed whole new families of faces to surface, each with their own unique and distinct feeling tone but all united by underlying tonal “chords” of feeling. As I became aware of deeper and deeper chords, I became aware of ever-deeper levels of my awareness, experiencing its ultimate depths as a ‘fundamental tone’ or ‘ground-tone’ underlying all others and each of its faces or families of faces. An ‘aspect’ is both an ‘objective’ side, face or facet of something or someone – and an subjective ‘angle’ through which that thing or person is viewed and seen, felt and perceived. Every face of the self gives form to a particular tonality or tone-colour of awareness, one which, by newly toning and colouring our entire experience of the world and other people brings different faces of ‘aspects’ of them. When two people meet each other through the mutual gaze, they literally can look into each other’s souls and perceive its different faces. At the same time they can learn to feel new tones, and reveal new faces of their own soul. The New Yoga of the Face teaches us to reveal new inner faces of the self by giving facial expression to all the different feeling tones or tonalities of awareness we can sense within us. It also teaches us how search the face and eyes of the other for feeling tones which *resonates* in our own soul, and to precisely mirror these in our own facial expression. By doing we enter into resonance with new aspects of *both* self and other – revealing and discovering new faces of both.

## THE NEW YOGA OF THE FACE

The soul has inner countless ‘facets’ - inner *faces*. We can only truly come to know those faces by having the courage and ability to show and reveal them. The Yoga of the Face is the psychic art of feeling for and outwardly revealing those inner faces - and also feeling for and seeing the inner faces of others. It is the art of searching within our own soul for what finds expression in the face of the other - and searching the face of the other for that which resonates within our own soul. The Yoga of the Face is also about *facing up* to the fundamental nature of the soul - not only inwardly but through the *outer face* we show to the world, not only within ourselves but through the inner depths of soul that can reveal themselves through *face-to-face* encounter. The questions that The New Yoga of the Face challenges us with are:

Can I *face* the ultimate truth that the entire universe is itself but one ‘objective’ face of subjective awareness as such – that ultimate, multifaceted reality we call ‘soul’?

To what degree can I allow myself to not only *feel* the inner depths of my own soul but reveal its many inner *faces* to others?

*In what way* will I face my personal reality today? What face will I adopt towards it, and what faces of my soul will I show to the other people that form part of it?

There is more - much more - to the phrase ‘I can’t face it’ than meets the eye. The phrase is no mere metaphor. In the terms of The New Yoga, the question ‘Can I face it?’ is taken at face value, meaning ‘Can I form a face that fully expresses my feelings towards whatever or whoever faces me in my reality?’ ‘Can I face those feelings in myself or others, not just inwardly, but in the immediacy of ‘face-to-face’ encounter – showing them in my face, revealing them through my eyes, and ‘meeting them in the eye’ through the face and eyes of the other? Many people wear a mask or adopt a ‘persona’ that conceals the way they are feeling. Under pressure of intense emotions the mask may crumble. But how can we ‘face’ our own feelings or face others with them - if we cannot *show* them in our faces? Indeed how can we fully feel our own feelings if we cannot give them form in our facial expression? Facial expressions such

as smiles or frowns not only give form to our feelings. They help us to *feel* those feelings more fully – to truly ‘face’ them – in the same way that giving them verbal expression does.

Both words and body language are ways of giving form (Greek *morphe*) to feelings in a way that puts us into greater *resonance* with them. This principle of ‘morphic resonance’ is also the principle of authentic acting. In the past, actors wore masks designed to symbolise and give a face to the figures, human or divine, that they portrayed. The word *persona* originally meant a dramatic ‘mask’. For a modern actor to authentically embody a part, that mask must be carved from his or her own facial flesh and muscle. The actor must have a face mobile enough to give form to every quality of feeling belonging to the part, from the most subtle to the most intense.

Many people see their only choice in life as a choice between adopting a social mask with others, or, if they dare, dropping that mask in therapy or with a trusted friend or partner. This shows that whilst people may be more or less emotionally literate - able to *say* what they feel in words, the majority are *physiognomically* illiterate – unable to *show* their feelings in their face and eyes. They identify showing their ‘true’ feelings with dropping their social mask and ‘losing face’ rather than using the language of the body to ‘morph’ their mask – to form and transform their facial expression and the look in their eyes in a way that is fully in resonance with the felt bodily tone and texture of their emotional life in all its *manifoldness and complexity*. They may consult with physicians, counsellors or psychotherapists in a desperate search to find out *what* they might *do* to help them feel better, but in doing so they forget that their principal medium of *action* is not a ‘what’ but a ‘how’ – the particular *way* in which they embody – or do not embody – different aspects of themselves. Lacking this *physiognomic* literacy - an adequate *bodily* alphabet and vocabulary to reveal the face of different felt aspects of themselves – they take recourse to ‘acting out’ or ‘somatising’ the mental-emotional states associated with them. The only alternative that seems available is to either *reflect* on these states or resort to ‘talking’ cures – forms of counselling, dialogue or therapy in which they are encouraged to *reflect on*, *express* and *say* what they feel, taught new psychological and emotional vocabularies, - but not *given a new bodily vocabulary* with which to *embody* and *show* what they feel through the languages of the body.

Again, every aspect of our identity or sense of self is not a ‘what’ or ‘who’ but a ‘how’ – a specific *way* of being a body and acting with our bodies – whether a way of sitting or moving, a way of breathing and speaking, a way of looking and listening or of expressing ourselves through facial expression and the look in our eyes. We do not merely act in accordance with the way we ‘are’ or how we feel. Instead, altering any aspect of the way we act with our body alters our bodily sense of who we are and how we feel. The same arts that enable an actor or actress to use their bodies to identify with or “incarnate” a part (Stanislavski) can also enable each and every one of us to feel and embody countless different aspects or ‘parts’ of our soul identity. These part identities are *patterns of bodily action* of which most people are unaware. It is through these habitual modes of bodily action that they maintain a fixed bodily identity – a habitual sense of self. Conversely however, it is through learning to adopt *different* modes of bodily action – extending and enriching the range of their ‘body language’ – that the actor embodies the part or ‘character’, and that we can each learn to ‘shapeshift’ our *bodily identity* in such a way as to incarnate whole new aspects or dimensions of our soul, whole new shapes, tones and qualities of awareness.

Forms of bodily action that are ‘defensive’ – designed to protect a person from feeling particular feelings – cannot simply be dropped or un-done. One cannot *stop* doing something – for example adopting a defensive body language - except by doing something else. Acquired modes of bodily action that are unhelpful or defensive can only be replaced by alternate actions – by new and different ways of actively bodying or ‘acting’ our state of being.

The yoga of the face is one way of learning to authentically *act* yourself using your body as a whole – rather than *either* putting on an act and false face for others or ‘acting out’ emotions in unaware ways – through involuntary and unaware ‘fight or flight’ responses. The alternative to fight and flight is facing what we feel in the most literal sense – giving our feelings a face. To do so it can be helpful to imagine that whatever feelings you are feeling at whatever time, you have been asked to go on stage and to *act* them in the most authentic and truthful way possible – not by expressing them in words but by silently *miming* them. This means using all the muscles of your face, mouth and eyes to quite literally *personify* the part of you that feels the way you do – to forge from your very flesh the exact facial mask that fits it.

A muscularly mobile and expressive-responsive face – one that can ‘morph’ in resonance with every nuance, intensity and metamorphosis of feeling – is quite different from a rigid or fixed facial mask. It is also quite different from a fixed *repertoire* of habitual facial expressions – one that can only give expression to a limited range of feelings, indeed only allows one to fully feel a limited range of feelings. Learning to find the true face of one’s feelings is the very opposite of attempting to hide one’s feelings in order to ‘save face’. Nor is it the same as ‘putting on a face’ that merely *represents* something one is feeling but does not truly and authentically *reveal* what one is feeling in all its depth, complexity, nuances and intensity.

If, as Shakespeare suggested, the world itself can be likened to a dramatic stage, then ‘acting’ is not something for professional actors alone. Nor is it simply a way of giving fuller expression to feelings. Instead life *is* acting, and it is the *way* we act in our everyday lives that not only ‘expresses’ who we are and how we feel but actually shapes our self-experience. An actor portrays a part by a particular *way* of standing or sitting, moving and breathing, walking and talking, looking and sounding. The very identity of the part is not a ‘thing’ but an ‘-ing’, a particular way of *bodying* one’s being. But identity and action are no less intimately related on the stage of everyday life as they are on the dramatic stage. Every ‘part-self’ within our larger *soul-identity* or ‘whole self’ finds expression in a particular *bodily* way of doing things. “It is not what you do but the way that you do it.” Indeed it is the *way* that you act that defines both what you are essentially doing and the very ‘you’ that is acting that way. Doing even the simplest things in a *different way* (just breathing, speaking or moving in a different way for example) can immediately alter not just the way you feel but *who* you feel you are – your felt identity or sense of self. Our every action – above all our every bodily action – affects both how we feel and who we feel ourselves to be, our bodily *identity*. The less *aware* we are of our bodily actions, the less aspects of our being – our soul – can we embody and ‘incarnate’, feel and ‘act’ with our bodies. Conversely, the greater the range and subtlety of our bodily actions, the greater is the range of part-selves, of soul aspects and soul qualities, that we can embody through our *way* of acting with our bodies. Put in other terms, your ‘body language’ is not just a way of ‘expressing’ yourself. It *defines* the very ‘self’ you are expressing – for the smallest change in your body language *is* a change in your body identity, altering as it

will, your entire bodily sense of self. A language is a *way* of speaking – of *meaning* something. Similarly, ‘body language’ is a way of *being* someone, of *bodying* your soul and showing its faces.

In truth, the body does not ‘have’ a language. It *is* a language. Nor is the body and its language a property of a person or persons. Instead it is through the language that is our body that we first become persons – that we learn to *personify* our souls. Like each soul, each language is something *trans-finite* – being built up from a finite number of letters - but allowing for the formation of an *infinite* number of sentences and offering infinite potentialities for the expression of *meaning*. So too, does the language that *is* our body offer infinite potentialities for the embodiment of our *being* – infinite different ways of *bodying* and *personifying* our soul. A letter of the alphabet is the silent outer face of a sound. So too is every face we show a letter, the face of a silent inner sound. When someone looks as if they could laugh, scream, sigh or cry their face *is* already a silent expression of that laugh, scream, sigh or cry.

*Persona* – facial mask. *Per-sonare*: ‘to sound through’. A laugh, scream, sigh or cry *sounds through* the face even before it is uttered. And the face in turn – including not only the shape of a person’s mouth but the look in their eyes – is what gives meaningful shape and tone to the sound to be uttered.

**What is it about a face? ... The initial and continuing encounter of an infant with the mother’s face is a powerful force in human existence ... Her face is like the face of God for the baby. Looking into her face the infant comes to understand that the world outside the womb is a reliable and trustworthy place. Looking into a baby’s face makes parents and others marvel and wonder about the myriad possibilities in every newly-formed life.**

*Elder Lindahl*

Only a mother capable of *mirroring* her baby’s facial expressions and *echoing* its babbling sounds will begin to give that baby the sense of being seen and heard as a *person* – a soul in the process of *personifying* itself by forming faces (*personae*) through which it can sound its own feeling tones (*per-sonare*).



When a baby cries, chuckles or babbles using wordless sounds it is not indirectly representing or 'coding' meanings in these sounds. Its soul is literally and directly 'through sounding' – personifying itself in sound. Responding *personally* to the baby, the mother will not only attune to the feeling tones expressed by her baby's sounds but *give them a face*, using the look on her own face and eyes to give them expressive form, and shaping her own mouth to echo back the baby's babblings in the form of basic phonemic speech sounds such as 'Aaah' or 'Oooh'.

**What does the baby see when he or she looks at the mother's face. I am suggesting that, ordinarily, what the baby sees is himself or herself. In other words, the mother is looking at the baby and *what she looks like is related to what she sees there.***

*Donald Winnicott*

The looks on the mother's face and in her eyes express her way of looking at and *seeing* the baby. If she is in resonance with her baby they will also mirror back the feeling tones communicated by the baby's babblings and personified in its own facial expressions. Winnicott calls this perceptual interaction of mother and baby 'apperception' – to distinguish it from a way of looking at the baby that turns it's body into a mere soul-less object of *perception*. But what happens, Winnicott asks, if the mother is not attuned to her baby, if the mother's face and eyes merely reflects her own mood, or 'worse still, the rigidity of her own defences'?

**....the baby gets settled into the idea that when he or she looks, what is seen is the mother's face ... perception takes the place of apperception, of that which might have been the beginning of a significant exchange with the world, a two-way process in which self-enrichment alternates with the discovery of meaning in the world of seen things.**

**Some babies do not quite give up hope and they study the object and do all that is possible to see in the object some meaning that ought to be there if only it could be felt. (Others) study the maternal visage in an attempt to predict the mother's mood, just exactly as we all study the weather.**

This, in a nutshell, is the viewpoint of 'natural science', which perceives the face of nature like that of an unattuned and unresponsive mother - as an unpredictable face to be objectively studied, examined, tested, interpreted and predicted; a face that offers

no mirror of the soul of the perceiver, and is thus regarded as a mere perceptual surface, lacking any inwardness of soul itself.

The Greek word for ‘the flesh’ (*sarx*) did not mean body (*soma*) but simply ‘skin’. Our face is part of our fleshly skin *sur-face* as a whole. It is also the link between this *fleshly* surface and our *felt* body surface as a whole. Freud saw the ego as a “mental projection of the surface of the body” – by which he can only have meant its felt surface. The Kleinian psychoanalyst Esther Bick has proposed that a satisfactory infantile experience of touch and skin contact provides a necessary foundation for the feeling of ‘being comfortable in one’s own skin’ – in other words for the development of that ‘psychic envelope’ or ‘tissue capsule’ which analysts call the ‘ego skin’ or ‘skin ego’. This, in the terms of The New Yoga, is that psychic skin which constitutes our awareness body or soul body – both bounding and uniting the inner and outer spaces of our awareness. That is why when we speak of someone being ‘touchy’, ‘sensitive’, ‘irritable’, ‘thick-skinned’ or easily ‘flushed’ we are *neither* speaking of their physical skin, *nor* merely using the latter as a metaphor for psychological traits, but referring quite literally to their ‘soul skin’ or “psychic envelope” (Anzieu).

As part of our *fleshly* skin (*sarx*), the face has another most important function – that of linking our felt *psychic* skin or ‘skin ego’ with our ‘motoric ego’ – the musculature of our physical body as a whole (*soma*). For it is with the fine musculature of our face that we not only *shape or shape-shift* our felt body as a whole but also *tone* our entire *physical* body and its musculature. Imagine trying to make passionate love to someone, to scream or shout, sing a touching song, or simply say something to another person with a moving and resonant voice – whilst at the same time maintaining a ‘poker face’ that is totally flat and expressionless. Or else imagine a professional weightlifter deliberately putting a look of weakness or exhaustion on their face - and then attempting a heavy lift. Impossible – for the weakness given form in the fine muscles of their face would prevent them from feeling sufficient intensity of intent to imbue their lifting muscles with the necessary ‘tonus’.

The face is the finest and most important instrument we have for transforming *feeling tone* into *muscle tone* and thereby into bodily action – speech, gesture and movement. Our face as a whole (and not just our mouth, lips and tongue) is also our most

important instrument for shaping inner feeling tones and giving them the form of sounds - a necessary precondition for uttering the most elementary cries or sounds of speech. What shapes and tones the very muscles of our *outer fleshly face* however, is our *felt inner face*. That in turn is a face we first learn to feel and make mobile ‘through sound’ (*per-sonare*) and ‘morphic resonance’ – that is to say, by miming and impersonating the outer form (*morphe*) or ‘face’ of others (to begin with that of our mothers) thereby sensing and resonating with the *feeling tones* they give form to and learning to give form to them in like manner.

**Consciousness in another’s face. Look into someone else’s face, and see the consciousness in it, and a particular *shade* of consciousness.**

*Ludwig Wittgenstein*

If, in face-to-face encounters with others, our awareness is entirely concentrated on the face we show to others and how this is seen by others, we leave ourselves no room to *see the other*. The face of the other becomes a mere object to be studied for signs of how *we* are seen – rather than being seen as an expression of *their* consciousness in all its *shades*. The self that feels in constant danger of being ‘seen’ leaves the other feeling entirely *unseen*. For some people this is OK – for their sole interest is in superficial social contact in which both partners maintain a social mask. For others it is not OK, for they seek a deeper level of *inner* contact with both themselves and others, and yet they fear to show their own inwardness on the outside – *physiognomically*. Again, this is because they identify ‘showing’ with passive surrender to inner feelings and consequent ‘loss of face’ – rather than with actively feeling their feelings and giving an outer face to them. As a result, nor can they use their own face to mirror and feel those shades of consciousness that reveal themselves in the face of the other. Their own face becomes like that of the unseeing, unfeeling and unresponsive mother – a face that cannot reveal their feelings or expressively mirror the feelings of others but asks to be ignored or studied for the feelings it may conceal. Thus it is that in face-to-face encounter in adult life too, “perception takes the place ... of a two-way process in which self-enrichment alternates with the discovery of meaning in the world of seen things.” Dialogue is reduced to the *verbal face* that people show to one another, an intercourse of ‘talking heads’ in which neither is seen or felt – by themselves or by

the other – as *some-body*. Awareness is entirely focussed on what is said in words and not what is shown and communicated *physiognomically*. The world itself is not really *seen* as the living and mobile face of the Divine, with both nature and the human body as its physiognomy. Instead it is perceived in a paranoid, panicky or persecutory way, as the scrutinising eye of a parental ‘God’, peering out through the concealed but potentially piercing gaze of the human other. The other – human and divine – becomes a face that cannot be truly faced and is therefore never truly seen and felt.

**... if I were speaking to you in person, you could see my body moving in synchrony with the voicing of my utterances, my hands in synchrony with my intoning of my words, my eye movements with my pauses, and my facial expressions with certain of my linguistic emphases. I shall use the word ‘orchestration’ to denote the unfolding structuring of these intricately timed, creative intertwinings and interweavings of the many inter-related participant parts or ‘bodily strands’ of our responsive-expressions ... [the] organized expressive-responsiveness of our bodily movements.**

*John Shotton*

Beyond, behind or beneath these intertwined, interweaving and inter-related participant parts, ‘bodily strands’ or *languages* of our “expressive-responsiveness” is there any ‘master language’? If there is, it can only be described as what Seth called “the language of love”. By this he meant the capacity to lovingly *identify* with other ways of bodily expression and experiencing besides those that we take as our ‘own’ fixed *identity* - ways which we tend to see only in the form of *other identities* – a ‘what’ or a ‘who’ that is simply an external ‘it’ or ‘you’. Ways which we therefore think we cannot experience and give expression to as ‘me’. The myth of identity, the myth of a world made up of ‘whats’ and ‘whos’, is *given the lie* by the most important medium of all true *learning* – which is not an accumulation of knowledge but of ways of being acquired through bodily identification - imitation or *mimesis*. We could *learn* more about Picasso’s art by observing and *imitating* his actual bodily manner of painting – his postures, movements and faces - than by staring at any of his pictures and interpreting their ‘style’. For the ‘style’ of a painter’s paintings, like that of a composer’s compositions, is itself a ‘how’ and not a ‘what’, an individual language or ‘idiom’, not only of their expression but of their experiencing. It is only through direct *bodily imitation* of an individual’s unique language or ‘idiom’, mode or manner of

*bodily expression* that we can become aware of their whole mode of *bodily experiencing*. Through the New Yoga of facial and whole-bodily identification with others we can learn that art of “Becoming Other” (Deleuze) that Seth defined as the primordial “language of love”. For as Wittgenstein recognised “The human body is the best picture of the human soul.” The face must therefore play a central role in any form of psychotherapy in which the therapist takes the client seriously as ‘some-body’ – not just a ‘talking head’ – being capable of bodily imitation and identification with the outer and inner faces of the client. As David Boadella puts it:

**Without ... willingness to read the secret expression and to nurse it into life, any therapeutic encounter is gravely weakened.**

**Facing is concerned with recognition, with how we see people, with the qualities of lumination that develop when people really face each other and with the forms of illumination that flash out of such contact. Insight develops in step with outlook. If a person can let his inner self be seen by another, he begins to become recognisable to himself and can then look within, not in the sense of any sterile introspection, but in the sense of learning to love and accept who he is, and so recognise himself.**

In his book *Lifestreams*, Boadella quotes an account of Reich’s work with a patient who suddenly began “seeing the world with new eyes”, the fear and hate having gone out of them. As a result he also saw his therapist differently. The process began with Reich noticing a new gleam in the patient’s eyes, which...

**.... together with the shifting of the eyes and head, had brought up a new expression out of the depths of his eyes and being. It was a flirtatious, come-hither look, a sort of wink, with a raising of the eyelids, eyebrows and forehead and a moving of the eyeballs to one side, accompanied by a suggestive tilting of the head, in the same direction. As the therapist began to imitate this expression and the patient began to make better contact with it, the whole face participated in it, at first with a blushing shame-facedness, and then to the tune of a hearty laugh.**

Reich did not merely “face” the patient with a *verbal* account of what he had seen and felt in the face and eyes of the patient but used his own body to mirror it back thus helping the patient to feel it more fully. As a result a “miracle” happens:

**Suddenly the patient was startled and opened his eyes wide with astonishment. While he was looking at the therapist the latter’s face had suddenly become soft, and glowed with light...He saw the world differently, as a good and pleasurable place to be in and as a future place of ‘heaven’ and not the ‘hell’ it had been before.**

Bodily identification is involved even in the understanding of verbal and philosophical thinking itself. Wittgenstein again:

**I begin to understand a philosophy by feeling my way into its existential manner, by reproducing the tone and accent of the philosopher.**

The verbal face of an individual is part of their overall face. “Its not what you say but the way that you say it.” Every word a person utters is, like a face, not merely a symbol of something, but a way of *showing* something. Like a written text, it has a face and a physiognomy of its own.

**A theme, no less than a face, wears an expression ... Yet there is no paradigm apart from the theme itself. And yet again there is a paradigm apart from the theme: namely the rhythm of our language, of our thinking and feeling. And the theme, moreover, is a new part of our language; it becomes incorporated into it; we learn a new *gesture*.**

Conversely, *the face speaks*. “**It speaks, [and] it is in this that it renders possible and begins all discourse...**” (Emmanuel Levinas). Finally, the soul shows its inner faces and not just in this life but above all in the afterlife. Here the face of the human soul does not ‘speak’ words. It *is* a word:

**...at the first stage after death the human being moves among the spirit-physiognomies of those who are connected with him by destiny: he beholds these physiognomies ... But at this first stage it is a beholding only, a seeing; although it means that the souls come into intimate connection. Then begins ... the growth of mutual understanding. The one begins to understand the other; he gazes deeply upon him and looks into his inner nature ... And here we come to something that is more than understanding; the one human being is able to speak to the other his own warmth-filled creative word ... The human souls are themselves words, their symphony is the symphony of the spoken Cosmic Word in its very being – communion ... The word which is one human being merges into the word which is the other human being.**

*Rudolf Steiner*

# MICROMEDITATIONS

## FACIAL MICROMOTIONS (1) – ALTERING THE TILT OF YOUR HEAD

Tilt your head slightly backward whilst still looking at yourself. Feel how that backward tilt alters your whole facial expression and how it affects the entire way you feel yourself and feel your body.

Now tilt your head forward, bringing your jaw down close to your chest. Holding this new tilt of the head and the facial expression that goes with it, feel how it alters the entire way you feel yourself and feel your body.

Adjust the tilt of your head so that it now rests comfortably and weightlessly in upright alignment with your body. Form a look and facial expression that fits this feeling, and feel how it affects the entire way you feel your body and self.

## FACIAL MICROMOTIONS (2) – MUDRAS OF THE BROW AND SCALP

Use the muscles of your scalp and brow to *frown*. Be aware of how the frown makes you feel – how it affects your entire feeling of yourself and of your body. Feel this feeling in your eyes, let it show in your eyes and intend to communicate it with your eyes.

Now form a facial expression that is the very opposite of a frown, stretching the scalp backward with the muscles of your temple, ears and forehead, and in this way raising your eyebrows to the utmost without creasing your forehead. Sense how stretching your scalp backward and raising your brow in this way makes you feel, and communicate this feeling with your eyes.

Finally, keeping your mouth closed, just fully relax your scalp, brow and all the muscles of your eyes and head. Sense how this makes you feel, and communicate this feeling through your eyes.

## FACIAL MICROMOTIONS (3) – MUDRAS OF THE EYES

Feel yourself fully *in* your eyes and open them as wide as can – so wide that your eyelids are invisible. Sensing the entire ball of each eye, feel your awareness coming to the surface of both your eyes and your sensed body surface as a whole. Use your eyes to communicate a sense of vitality – as if your awareness was radiating from your eyes and expanding into the sensed space around your body like the light of the sun. Thus attain a felt sense of the light of awareness through this ‘sun’ *mudra* of the eyes.

Lower your eyelids until they cover half your eyes and maintain them in that half-lidded position. Feel how this allows you to simultaneously turn your gaze inwards and to sense the inner awareness space of your body whilst still looking outward. Now

actively communicate a warm sense of deep relaxation – like that which you might feel relaxing in a warm bath and feeling the boundary between the inside and outside of your body dissolve in the feeling of warmth. Feel the warmth of your own inwardly felt body as having its own fluid and mobile substantiality, moving freely between the felt space within and around your body. Thus attain and communicate a sense of *consciousness bliss* through the half-lidded or ‘half-moon’ *mudra* of the eyes.

Lower your eyelids as far as you can. As you do so, let your awareness descend down through your lower body to the ground and below, feeling both your body and self as firmly and deeply rooted in the dark depths of this underground awareness space. Do not look blankly, but communicate this sense of the deepest, darkest depths of your own soul, using this ‘new-moon’ *mudra* of the eyes.

#### FACIAL MICROMOTIONS (4) – MUDRAS OF THE MOUTH

Face yourself in a mirror with your lips *firmly* sealed. Feel how this gives you a sense of being more firmly bounded and contained by your body surface as a whole, and communicate this feeling through your eyes to your mirror images.

Now relax your entire face and lips and let your lower jaw drop and hang loose. Feel how this *mudra* of the mouth completely alters your sense of your body as a whole, reducing its muscle tonus throughout and enabling you to ‘let go’ - and communicate *this* feeling through your eyes to your mirror image.

Still facing yourself in the mirror, open your mouth as wide as you can, as if you had been asked by a throat doctor to ‘say Ah’. Even without making any audible sound, hear yourself *inwardly* sounding a *continuous* ‘Ah’ sound. Now imbue this continuously insounded ‘Ah’ with a feeling tone of wonder and delight and let this feeling tone shape your entire facial expression, show itself in your eyes and communicate to your mirror image. As you do so, notice how the *mudra* of the Ah sound also alters your sense of your body as a whole, allowing you to feel it brightening, lightening and enlarging in space – and use your eyes to show and communicate this feeling of expansion too.

#### FACIAL MICROMOTIONS (5) – HEAD, HEART AND HARA MUDRAS

Facing yourself in the mirror, feel your nostrils and take a few sharp intakes of breath through them. At the same time, sense the solidity of your *head* as a whole, and identify entirely with your inner ‘head space’, feeling it as a space of light-filled awareness that is intensified with each nasal in-breath. Now let a facial expression form that shows the face of your ‘head self’ alone - expressing your sense of its outer solidity and letting your sense of light-filled awareness that fills its inner space beam out through your eyes and communicate to the eyes of your mirror image.

Facing yourself in the mirror, feel your ribcage and expand it with awareness as you breathe. Sense the surface of your chest as a porous or entirely open surface and identify this openness with a feeling of open-heartedness – having a fully open heart.



Identifying entirely with your chest self or ‘heart self’, feel yourself quite literally taking the ‘you’ you see in the mirror ‘into your heart’ - breathing your awareness of them into the open inner heart space of your chest. Let the feeling of open-heartedness – of loving openness and receptivity – find exact expression in your face and communicate itself through your eyes to those of your mirror image. Without opening your mouth, feeling each in-breath as an inhaled ‘Ah’ sound of openness and delight.

Facing yourself in the mirror, feel the surface of your abdomen and breathe using only your abdominal muscles. Without closing your eyes, let your gaze turn inwards towards the sensed inner space of your abdomen and let your awareness sink down completely into inwardness. Identify fully with your abdominal or ‘hara self’ and with your entire lower body below the waist – feeling your legs and the contact of your feet with the ground. Let a face form that expresses a sense of groundedness and of centeredness in ‘hara’. Form a look in your eyes through which you can feel yourself looking out from a core of awareness in the dark, warm and womb-like interiority of your abdomen, and feel the eye-contact you establish with your mirror image as a contact that comes from your core.

#### PRACTICING FACIAL MUDRAS IN PAIRS (1)

Stand or sit side-by-side with a meditational partner in front of a mirror, if possible using stools or cushions to ensure that your heads are roughly level.

Go through each stage of the facial micromeditations above, facing your own mirror images and then facing and gazing directly at the mirror image of your partner, feeling the resonance that is established when you both adopt a similar face and look.

Take it in turns to go through each stage of the micromeditations above, this time with one partner forming a particular expression and look with their own face and eyes and the other using their own eyes and face only to precisely observe and exactly mirror the face and look of their partner in every individual detail.

#### PRACTICING FACIAL MUDRAS IN PAIRS (2)

Stand or sit in such a way as to be directly facing your meditational partner, if possible using stools or cushions to ensure that your heads are roughly level.

Take it in turns to practice the micromotions of the face in direct eye-contact with one another, using your eyes to not only show but communicate the different senses of self evoked by each micromotion.

Go through the head, heart and hara *mudras* individually – but this making direct eye-contact with your partner as you do so, both showing each other the face and eyes of your ‘head self’, ‘heart self’ and ‘hara self’ respectively.

Practice the head, heart and hara *mudras* again, but this time doing so together and at the same time – making contact with each other from your head self, heart self and *hara* self in turn.

Practice the following exercises in different way – without facing yourself in the mirror, facing yourself in the mirror, facing a partner in the mirror, mirroring your partner’s face in the mirror, mirroring your partner face directly, or both showing the same type of face to each other – either directly or in the mirror.

1. Use the muscles of your face and eyes *soften* your facial expression and the look in your eyes.
2. Now use the muscles of your face and eyes to *harden* your expression and look.
3. Relax your face and eyes.

1. Facing the mirror, form a *cold and detached* look in your face and eyes.
2. Now form a *warm* expression in your face and eyes.
3. Relax your face and eyes.

1. Facing the mirror, radically *darken* the look in your face and eyes.
2. Now brighten the look in your face and eyes, so that they shine with radiance.
3. Relax your face and eyes.

1. Sense every physical feature of the current look in your face and eyes.
2. Use the muscles of your face and eyes to *firm* this look - giving firmer definition to every feature of it.
3. Sense how firming the look in your face and eyes allows you to feel and affirm the feeling(s) and way of looking at things that it expresses

#### ADOPTING THE FACE OF THE OTHER:

1. Look closely at every feature of another person’s ‘look’ – the look on their face, the look in their eyes, and the way of looking out at the world it expresses.
  1. Seek to mirror as many features of their look with your own face and eyes.
  2. Sense how this mirroring helps you to *feel* with your own face and eyes what you *see* in theirs.

2. Look closely at every feature of another person’s ‘look’ – the look on their face, the look in their eyes, and the way of looking out at the world it expresses.
  3. Use mirroring to *feel* in your own body what you *see* in the look of the other.
  4. Intend what you feel in the other person’s ‘look’ to show itself in your own face and communicate through your own eyes.

1. Turn to glance or look at another person.
  2. Observe in as much detail as possible the look on their face and in their eyes.
  3. Turn away and, keep your own eyes open, hold an exact after-image or ‘snapshot’ of the other person’s look in your ‘mind’s eye’.

1. Glance at another person and take a mental ‘snapshot’ of their face and eyes.
  2. Turning away, hold this ‘snapshot’ of their look in your mind’s eye.
  3. Holding the ‘snapshot’ image of the other in your mind’s eye, give yourself time to feel with your own face and eyes what you see in their face and eyes.

1. Glancing at any person, in any situation, at any time - take a mental snapshot of the exact expression in their face and eyes at that exact moment in time,

2. Looking away and keeping your eyes open, hold the mental snapshot and continue to *see* the exact look in their face and eyes with your mind's eye.
3. *Feeling* in yourself what you *see* in the other person's face and eyes, use this feeling to sense with your whole body the way in which the other person is *feeling themselves* at that moment in time.

## EYE AND FACE READING

For this meditation you will need a reasonably large photograph of an adult individual (portrait photographs in which the subject faces the camera directly are ideal).

Alternatively, study the face and eyes of a partner seeking an inner 'reading' of their face and eyes – or else, look in a mirror.

1. Take as much time as you need to closely observe and meditate the face and eyes, write down *every* word that comes to mind in describing the psychological characteristics and emotions you can see in the eyes. Do not worry if some of the words and emotions appear to be quite contradictory – for the eyes can reveal countless emotions and psychological characteristics at the same time, even seemingly opposite ones. If two or more people are studying the same face, then compare and contrast your lists, and describe to one another exactly what features of the individual's eyes led you to identify a particular emotional quality in it. If there are differences in your lists you might find that you are just using slightly different words to describe the same emotional quality or feature of the eyes, or else that one person is seeing an opposite emotional quality in the very same feature of a particular eye. Alternatively, each person's list might complement the other's – with further emotional and psychological qualities and their expression in different features of the eyes.

Examples of emotional description words: *fear or vulnerability, sadness, disappointment or resignation, anger or rage, naughtiness, humour, shyness or reservedness, ambivalence or uncertainty, hope or despair etc.*

2. Do the same thing again as in stage 1, but this time observing and meditating *one eye at a time* and writing a *separate list* of emotion words for *each eye* respectively. Again compare and contrast your lists with that of another person.
3. Now meditate the eyes again but this time with an awareness of other features of the individual's face, such as expressive features of their mouth, brows and facial hair, and asymmetries in the face.
4. Now look at the face or facial image again, but this time imagining that you are not looking at the face and eyes of a mature adult, but rather *those of a child*. See what new emotional qualities reveal themselves in each eye of the face and write down words for them. Here it will help considerably if you imagine that the individual whose face you are studying is *looking at a parent figure* and is showing through the different features and emotional qualities of their eyes their own felt *relation* to that parent - which may have many different and ambivalent aspects (for example desire for love or affirmation, sadness or disappointment at

not receiving it, uncertainty at how the child will be seen and responded to or what the adult will do, anger or rebelliousness. Do not restrict yourself to single words but let a feeling awareness arise of what the child's eyes are essentially *saying* to the parent and let phrases or sentences come to mind that express this. Remember also that the outer 'look' in a person's eyes is nothing purely objective, but reveals their way of subjectively *looking out at* and seeing the world – or another person in particular.

5. Now choose just *one* particularly strong emotional quality that you see in just *one* eye of the individual, and again, find words to express both its emotional quality and/or what it is saying. If this quality reveals itself in the right-hand eye of the individual, use your own *left* eye to duplicate it (or your own *right* eye to mirror some emotional quality in the left eye of the individual). Begin by simply feeling your own eye, right or left, then feeling the emotional quality within it, and seeking to subtly shape your eye so that it mirrors and rays back this same quality – in the same way and through the same features that you see it doing in the eye you are mirroring. Initially you may wish to alternate between looking at that eye and then looking away from it – but holding its image in your mind's eye and seeking to feel and duplicate its emotional quality within and with your own eye. Pay particular attention to the degree of openness of the eye (for example whether wide open, slightly or half-lidded), the extent to which you feel it is outward looking or introspective, whether the surface of the cornea seems glazed or clear, and the corresponding degree to which the individual's *gaze* appears held back at the surface of the eye – or rays out through it towards the other. Take as much time as you need to feel and shape the look in your own eye in corresponding way – for example feeling and giving it a clear or glazed or look, or feeling and intending its 'gaze light' to stream out. At the same time, imbue both the outer look and inner gaze of your eye with whatever emotional quality you see and feel in the eye of the other – whether warmth or coldness, sadness or anger etc.

Summary: mirroring the look in a person's eye requires time to go through four stages: firstly, time to simply and fully feel your own eye, then time to fully feel the feeling you wish to imbue its look and gaze with, then feeling that feeling with and within your own eye – and finally finding a way to shape its features in such a way that it *shows* that feeling through both its outer look and the quality of its inner gaze.

6. Whether you are working with a photograph or a living face, now face it and actively mirror the look you have identified in one eye with your own corresponding eye (remember that this is the eye that directly faces the eye you seek to mirror).
7. If you are mirroring the eye of a person actually present before you, move from simply mirroring the emotional quality of the look in one of their eyes to affirming and transforming that quality. For example if you are mirroring a look of sadness or rage, intend, by doing so, to fully and unconditionally *affirm* the sadness or anger you see in the other's eye. If you are successful in your mirroring you will be aware that the other person knows that they have been fully seen and fully felt and you will feel a tangible sense of resonant eye-contact with them.

8. Begin to sense with and within your whole body the purely *sensual* rather than *emotional* aspect of what it is you are mirroring - feeling it as a purely sensual tone and quality of feeling that can't be reduced to any emotional labels such as 'sadness' or 'anger'.

Examples of trans-emotional qualities of the look in a person's face and eye and in the tone of their gaze: *liveliness or deadness, fieriness or iciness, warmth or coolness of feeling, radiant luminosity or darkness, lightness or heaviness, sharpness or dullness, translucency or glazed opaqueness.*

9. Now gradually move from mirroring an emotional feeling to mirroring it as such a purely sensual quality or 'tone' of feeling. Examples: mirroring an emotion of 'rage' as a purely sensual quality of burning (or icy) intensity, strength or power; mirroring an emotion of quivering anxiety as a quality of vibrating excitement; mirroring an emotion of 'sadness' purely as a felt sense of profound depth and inwardness of soul.

## FROM FACE AND EYE READING TO TRANSFORMATIVE RESONANCE

The capacity to precisely mirror and 'resonate' with, unconditionally affirm and then gradually *transform* an emotion seen in another person's eyes and face as a whole is central to 'The New Yoga of the Face and Eyes' – in particular its use of close-up, face-to-face pair meditation as a powerful medium of wordless therapy conducted through a process of 'transformative resonance' i.e. first mirroring, affirming and 'resonating' the emotions we see and feel in the face and eye(s) of another, and then gradually *transforming* the way we see and feel those emotions – no longer mirroring them back *as* nameable emotions but as pure tones and qualities of feeling. This difference is like the difference between hearing a tone, chord or phrase of music as the expression of a nameable emotion or emotional feeling – or sensing it as pure quality or 'tone' of feeling that transcends words, a 'feeling tone' rather than an emotion. 'Transformative resonance' then, begins with the mirroring and affirmation of *emotional feelings* and ends with mirroring them in a transformed way as purely sensual qualities of *feeling tone*.

## PRACTICING DEEP INNER EYE CONTACT AND TOUCH

The partners should be seated at eye-level with one another, straight-backed, but with one partner's legs wrapped around the knees of the other to ensure sufficient closeness and intensity of the bi-personal field. Partners should take it in turns to give each other and follow each of the instruction below, as summarised in the headings - but to be spoken *exactly* as written out in full in the sentences in quotation marks:

### **1. Neutral: look at my eyes and place one of your hands on mine**

"To begin with I'm simply going to ask you to look at my eyes, without blinking, and then place one of your hands on mine ... Fine, now you can take you hand away."

## **2. Intending to really see and touch the other ('I see and touch you)**

“Now I’m going to ask you to do the same thing again - to look at my eyes and place one of your hands on mine - but this time with the intent to really see ME, and not just my eyes, and to really touch ME and not just my hand.”

## **3. Intending to really see and touch from the self (I see and touch you)**

“Now I’m going to ask you to do the same thing again, but this time with the intent to make me feel that it is really YOU looking at me and not just your eyes, really YOU touching me and not just your hand.”

## **4. Making ‘core contact’**

“I’m going to ask you to do the same thing again. But this time, before you look at me and touch me, close your eyes and take time to feel and identify with your entire lower body below the waist. To begin with, be aware of the contact of your feet with the ground, be aware of both your lower and upper legs, your seat and hips, and then begin to feel a hollow, warm and womb-like space of awareness in your abdomen. Breathing only with your abdominal muscles begin to centre both your awareness and your breathing awareness in your abdomen. When you are ready, open your eyes and look at me from that centre or core self in your abdomen, and, in your own time, touch me from that same core.”

## **4. Seeing and touching from whole-body and whole-self awareness**

“I’m going to do the same thing again now, but this time, before you look at my eyes and place your hand on mine, close your eyes, and take all the time you need to feel your whole body from within and, with it, your whole self. When you feel ready, open your eyes with the intent to simply SHOW me that sense of your whole self and body through your eyes, and then, when you feel ready, touch me with and from your whole body and self.”

## **5. Intensifying contact from your core and whole self**

“Once again take time until you feel able to make contact with me with your whole-body self and from its innermost core. As you feel the contact you are making between us intensifying, intensify the pressure of your hand on mine to the same degree.”

## **6. Sustaining inner contact**

“Repeat exercise 5, but at the end gradually relax the pressure of your hand, and, when you are ready, remove your hand entirely and gradually turn your gaze away from me - whilst still sustaining a feeling of inner contact between us.”

## **Variations:**

### **7. Making contact from the head self alone ('Feel your head, be 'all head' and no body, and look at me solely from you head self')**

“Without either looking at me or closing your eyes, take time to feel the entire surface of your head, feeling all the muscles of your face, mouth and eyes, feeling the surface of your scalp, feeling the sides and back of your head. Sensing your head as a whole, begin to feel it as a hollow vessel filled with light. Take a few sharp in-breaths through your nose and feel that light intensifying, entering your eyes and radiating from them. When you are ready, turn to me, and - without blinking - look at me entirely from your head self, letting the light that fills it stream out through your gaze.”

### **8. Making contact from the chest and heart self**

“Feel your chest as a hollow vessel, be all chest, and not head or lower body, and look out at me from your heart.”

### **9. Making contact from the 'hara'**

“Feel your womb/abdomen, be all lower body, headless and chestless, and look out at me from a centre in your lower abdomen or 'hara'.”

### **10. Sequence of stand up exercises with partners facing one another:**

Note: give time for each stage in the sequence of exercises and for an adequate interval of time between them.

- a) “Feel your head, chest and upper body as a whole.”
- b) “Feel your feet, legs and entire lower body below the waist.”
- c) “Now centre both your breathing and awareness entirely in your abdomen.”
- d) “Now turn to me and look out at me from a centre of awareness in your abdomen.”
- e) “Now bring your awareness to your body surface as a whole, feeling the front and back surfaces of your head and chest in particular.”
- f) “From your body surface, now intensify your awareness of the entire space around your body. Feel that space around your body as a larger, more spacious field of awareness that extends beyond the boundaries of your own body.”
- g) “Now be aware of an object in that space and sense how the empty space that surrounds and embraces it is the very field or space of awareness that makes it visible.”
- h) “Finally, turn to face me and feel yourself embracing my whole body in the same spacious awareness field that surrounds your body.”

# TANTRIC PAIR MEDITATION

The instructions to be given by one partner to the other or followed by both:

## **Preliminary meditations:**

“Feel your body from within. Feel it as if it were a completely hollow vessel, filled with nothing but space.”

“Feel your body from without, sensing the space surrounding it.”

“Feel the spaces within and around your body surface as a single space.”

“Feel how that same space surrounds my body and sense its inner space as hollow too.”

“Feel the spaces within, around and between your body and mine.”

## **Before commencing pair meditation:**

“When we begin our pair meditation, freely alternate between:

1. *Observing and mirroring* the exact look in my face and eyes.
2. *Sensing and feeling* what they are showing inside your body.
2. *Sensing* how you yourself are feeling from inside your body.
4. *Showing* this to me through the look in your face and eyes.”



# FACES AT BRAGA

by David Whyte

In monastery darkness  
by the light of one flashlight  
the old shrine room waits in silence.

While above the door  
we see the terrible figure  
fierce eyes demanding: Will you step through?

And the old monk leads us,  
bent back nudging blackness  
prayer beads in the hand that beckons.

We light the butter lamps  
and bow, eyes blinking in the  
pungent smoke, look up without a word,

see faces in meditation,  
a hundred faces carved above,  
eye lines wrinkled in the hand held light.

Such depth in solid wood!  
Taken from the hillsides and carved in silence  
they have the vibrant stillness  
of those who made them.

Engulfed by past  
they have been neglected, but through  
smoke and darkness they are like the flowers

we have seen growing  
through the dust of eroded slopes,  
their slowly opening faces turned toward the mountain.

Carved in devotion  
their eyes have softened through age  
and their mouths curve through delight  
of the carvers hand.

If only our own faces  
would allow the invisible carver's hand  
to bring the deep grain of love to the surface

if only we knew  
as the carver knew, how the flaws  
in the wood led his searching chisel to the very core

we would smile too  
and not need faces immobilized  
by fear and the weight of things undone.

When we fight with our failing  
we ignore the entrance to the shrine itself  
and wrestle with the guardian, fierce figure  
on the side of good

and as we fight  
our eyes are hooded with grief  
and our mouths are dry with pain.

If only we could give ourselves  
to the blows of the carvers hands,  
the lines in our faces would be the trace lines of rivers

feeding the sea  
where voices meet, praising the features  
of the mountain the cloud and sky.

Our faces would fall away  
until we, growing younger toward death  
every day, would gather all our flaws in celebration

to merge with them perfectly,  
impossibly, wedded to our essence,  
full of silence from the carver's hands.