

“VOICES IN THE WILD, FOR THE WILD”

**UNTAMED  
VOICES**

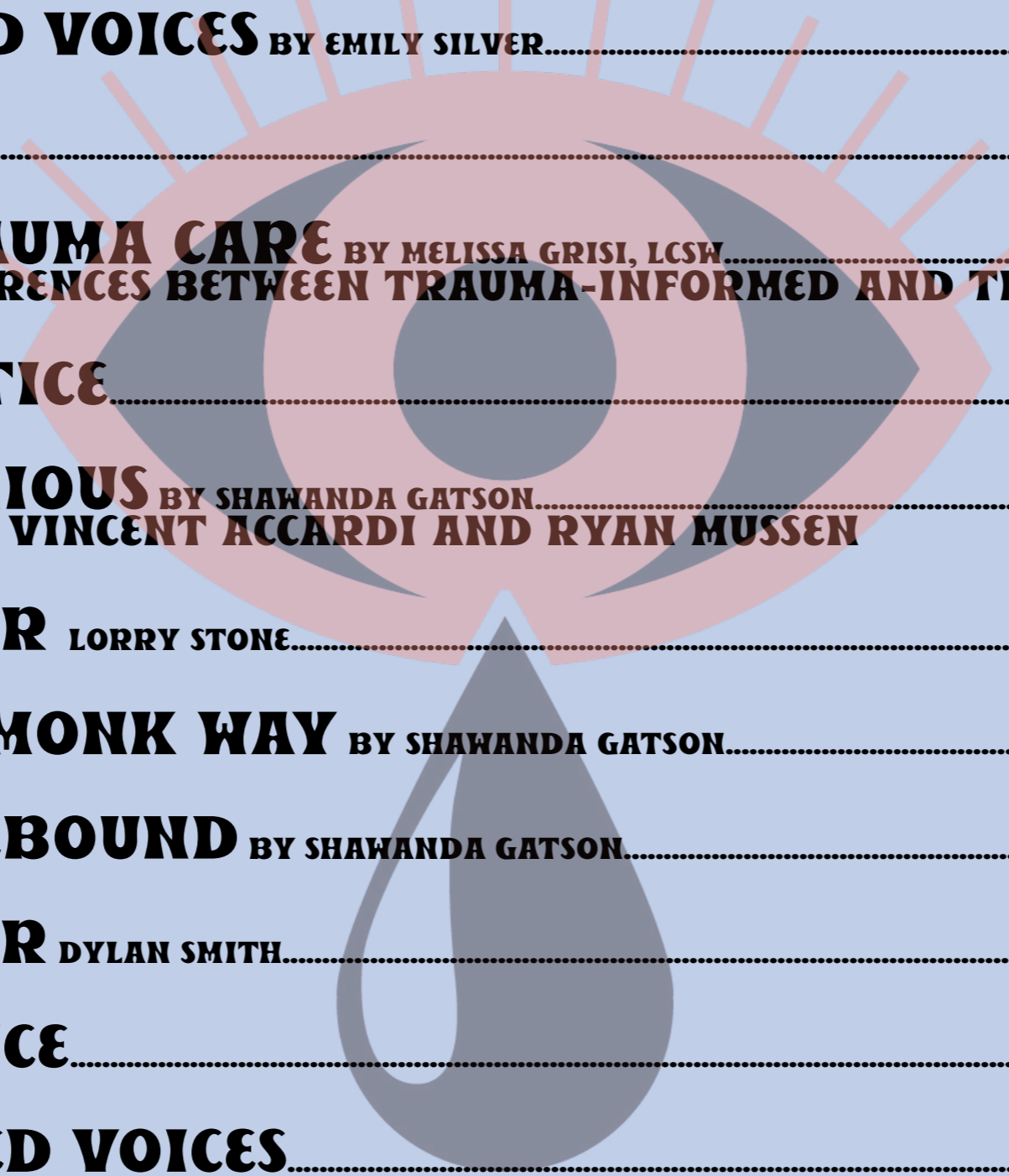
*Joshua Tree, Ca*

NOVEMBER 2020



---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



<b>ABOUT UNTAMED VOICES</b> BY EMILY SILVER.....	<b>3</b>
<b>108 SECONDS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>KNOW YOUR TRAUMA CARE</b> BY MELISSA GRISI, LCSW..... THE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRAUMA-INFORMED AND TRAUMA-TRAINED	<b>5</b>
<b>UNTAMED PRACTICE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>BE OPEN, BE CURIOUS</b> BY SHAWANDA GATSON..... SOUND JOURNEYS WITH VINCENT ACCARDI AND RYAN MUSSEN	<b>10</b>
<b>CREATIVE CORNER</b> LORRY STONE.....	<b>18</b>
<b>TRYING IT THE MONK WAY</b> BY SHAWANDA GATSON.....	<b>19</b>
<b>EMBRACE THE REBOUND</b> BY SHAWANDA GATSON.....	<b>21</b>
<b>CREATIVE CORNER</b> DYLAN SMITH.....	<b>22</b>
<b>SHARE YOUR VOICE</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>BEHIND UNTAMED VOICES</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS</b> .....	<b>26</b>

---

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

# ABOUT UNTAMED VOICES

BY EMILY SILVER



Often people need permission, opportunity, and a platform. Welcome to *Untamed Voices*. A space/publication dedicated to hearing, uncovering, and discovering voices and stories in and around the Mojave Desert and beyond.

Through *Untamed Voices*, we have an opportunity to build community around

shared narratives, art, dance, music and spoken word.

As an artist, educator, and yoga student/teacher it has been at the root of all I do—that your voices are heard, and that people feel seen. *Untamed Voices* will be just that, a collaborative publication.

It is with great honor that you all out there take this from here, that you speak up and share with the community what you have to say.

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” — Maya Angelou





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## 108 SECONDS



“In yoga, the number 108 has significance as the number representing spiritual completion. Sun salutations are often performed in nine rounds of the 12 postures which totals 108 poses. A yoga mala consists of 108 sun salutations. Pranayama is also often completed in cycles of 108. A mala is traditionally a string of 108 prayer beads with a guru bead. As you pray, you move along the beads, reciting your chosen mantra 108 times.”

([www.yogamatters.com](http://www.yogamatters.com))



**Our collective voices can bring a tiny bit of light to a dark world.**

Untamed Voices is more than a blog, it is an online community of people from all over the world. And as such we want to hold space for one another. We believe that our collective Untamed Voices can be harnessed for good. We can use our voices to bring a bit more beauty, creativity, humanity and decency to a world that feels very dark right now. We can be a tiny bit of light.

### **Question for November 2020**

#### **How has your yoga practice changed in 2020?**

Lend your voice by emailing a video clip answering the Question of the Month. But here's the catch, it has to be 108 seconds long.  
Email to [untatmedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com](mailto:untatmedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com) with the subject line 108 Seconds: November 2020

Source: Yogamatters. “The Meaning Behind 108 in the Universe, the Divine, the Body, the Tradition and the Practice.” Yogamatters Blog, 11 June 2019,

[blog.yogamatters.com/the-meaning-behind-108/](http://blog.yogamatters.com/the-meaning-behind-108/).

 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## KNOW YOUR TRAUMA CARE

### THE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRAUMA-INFORMED AND TRAUMA-TRAINED CARE

BY MELISSA GRISI, LCSW

Let's be real; trauma is a buzzword right now. Social media is full of self-proclaimed "healers" broadcasting their knowledge of how to work with trauma and heal you. These "experts" make all or nothing, black and white declarations about trauma and guarantee their way is THE way. However, there is a notable difference between trauma-informed care and trauma-trained care. Trauma-informed care is an approach; not a treatment. It provides a framework that incorporates an awareness of the impact of trauma and the prevalence of trauma. One can be trauma-informed, but not formally trained to provide interventions to support effective trauma healing.

Our understanding of trauma has changed over the years. Until recently, the long held societal belief concluded that only soldiers who experienced combat manifest the characteristics of trauma and/or PTSD. Therefore, trauma was viewed as solely dependent on an event (such as combat or a natural disaster); however, we now know one can experience trauma as an event and/or as a response in our nervous system. Yet



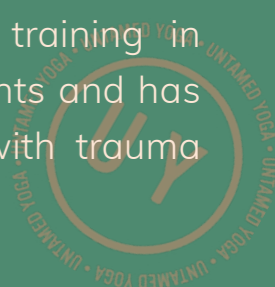
**Trauma-informed care can be complementary to working with a trauma-trained therapist, but not a substitution.**

even today, we still minimize our own trauma by saying things like "it's not like I was ever in combat." According to the National Center for PTSD, about six of every ten men (or 60%) and five of every ten women (or 50%) experience at least one trauma in their lives. 90% of those receiving behavioral health treatment report experiencing a traumatic event (SAMHSA, 2018). We are now finally recognizing how common trauma is.

The more we learn about trauma, the wider our definition becomes. The traditional definition of trauma is the exposure to actual death or the threat of death, the threat of serious injury

or sexual violence. "Trauma can be a response to anything that is experienced too much, too soon or too fast; and can also be experienced as a body response to a long sequence of smaller wounds," says Resmaa Menakem, LICSW, SEP. Trauma can be experienced as an event or a response; where we lack safety, control and/or choice. With trauma, our system is overwhelmed. According to Peter Levine, PhD, the basic formula of trauma is "immobility + anxiety/fear/trauma."

Working with trauma is a highly specialized area of clinical practice, and it is important to seek therapy from a trained and experienced trauma psychologist or therapist. "Trauma really should be a specialty, like being a cardiologist, because it doesn't respond to the traditional approaches and [psychological] therapies that most of us are trained in," says Janinia Fisher, PhD and internationally known trauma expert. A trauma therapist is a licensed mental health professional who has specific training in evidence-based trauma treatments and has extensive experience working with trauma survivors.



 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Being trauma-informed can be very helpful in many lines of work where you deal directly with people. However, an important key element of trauma-informed care is avoiding, what therapists call, “retraumatization”. Retraumatization is harmful and is more likely to happen during sessions with an unskilled, untrained provider. Retraumatization can intensify triggers and trauma responses; can destabilize an individual and can increase the risk of self-harm, depression, anxiety and other mental health symptoms and behaviors. Therefore, trauma-trained therapists use titration as a necessary tool in their practice.

Titration is a process when small amounts of traumatic experiences and/or responses are processed; this is to avoid overwhelming the body with distressing sensations, emotions or thoughts. This approach is crucial in trauma work. When healing trauma one must be careful in not addressing “too much, too fast.” I liken it to dipping your toe in cold water; first the big toe, then all of the toes as you’re ready, then the foot and so on. Diving in and immersing oneself in the frigid water can be a shock to the system. With the support of a trauma-trained therapist a more measured approach can be taken. A client can be given

**It is important to note that exposure to trauma does not automatically equal a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis.**

**Only 7-8% of the US population will have PTSD at some point in their lives.**  
**(National Center for PTSD)**

the opportunity to take their time, listen to their body, and allow themselves to be guided by sensations. Titration is guided by the client’s response, not the therapist’s agenda.

According to Dr. Patrick Carnes, traumatic and painful life experiences “are like a collector’s ball of string - years of accumulation tightly tied to one another...an unraveling needs to occur and we unravel the tangled mess slowly, one string at a time.” Working with a trauma-trained therapist can help to ensure that the unraveling of the ball of string is done safely and with containment utilizing a variety of tools and interventions to support the healing process.

Trauma-informed care can be complementary to working with a trauma-trained therapist, but not a substitution.

Source: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), 2018





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Ask questions, clarify training, education and experience, interview your providers and healers to find the very best fit for you; you are worth it.

Consider these questions when interviewing a potential therapist:

- What kind of educational and professional training do you have?
- Have you trained in a dedicated trauma setting?
- What is your experience with treating trauma?
- What is your experience in working with trauma survivors?
- Approximately how many trauma survivors have you worked with from start to finish?
- What evidence-based trauma therapies are you trained in?
- How long have you been practicing these modalities?
- Do you engage in continuing education?
- How do you keep yourself informed about trauma treatment and new discoveries and research in the field of trauma?
- Are you trained and/or certified in any evidence-based trauma therapies (such as EMDR, SE, Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT))?
- What is your approach in working with trauma survivors?

It is important that a trauma therapist includes stabilization/preparation/resourcing as part of their approach and provides education on trauma and the trauma response before moving into processing work. It is also CRUCIAL the therapist honors your goals; it is totally okay if you don't want to process (or talk!) about your trauma.

This is not an exhaustive list, but can be used as a starting point.



 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Where to find trauma-trained providers:

**EMDR International Association (EMDRIA):** EMDRIA members are trained in EMDR therapy and seek the highest standards for the clinical use of EMDR. EMDRIA is organized to promote, foster, and preserve the highest standard of excellence and integrity in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) practice.

<https://www.emdria.org/find-a-therapist/>

**The Somatic Experiencing® (SE)** method is a body-oriented approach to the healing of trauma and other stress disorders. The SE™ approach releases traumatic shock, which is key to transforming PTSD and the wounds of emotional and early developmental attachment trauma. SE™ offers a 3 year training program to become a practitioner.

<https://www.directory.traumahealing.org>

**The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies** is dedicated to sharing information about the effects of trauma and is an international interdisciplinary professional organization that promotes advancement and exchange of knowledge about traumatic stress. Members of ISTSS include psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, counselors, researchers, administrators, advocates, journalists, clergy, and others with an interest in the study and treatment of traumatic stress.

<https://istss.org/public-resources/find-a-clinician.aspx>

**The Breathe Network** offers resources regarding holistic healing arts practitioners and organizations who provide support for survivors of sexual violence. Each practitioner/organization works autonomously and has full, separate, legal, therapeutic responsibility for their clients. \*Not all providers listed on The Breathe Network are trauma-trained but are trauma-informed. Do your own research.\*

<http://www.thebreathenetwork.org/providers>

Disclosure & Disclaimer: This is not an exhaustive list of trauma-trained providers, organizations or directories. These directories listed above may help you locate a therapist. Melissa Grisi, LCSW and/or Untamed Yoga cannot endorse nor recommend the specific individuals at each site and cannot make assurances any individual would be suitable for the needs of a particular individual. If you use these directories you understand and agree that Melissa Grisi, LCSW and/or Untamed Yoga is neither liable nor responsible for any actions of those using or choosing to list in this directory or in linked directories.



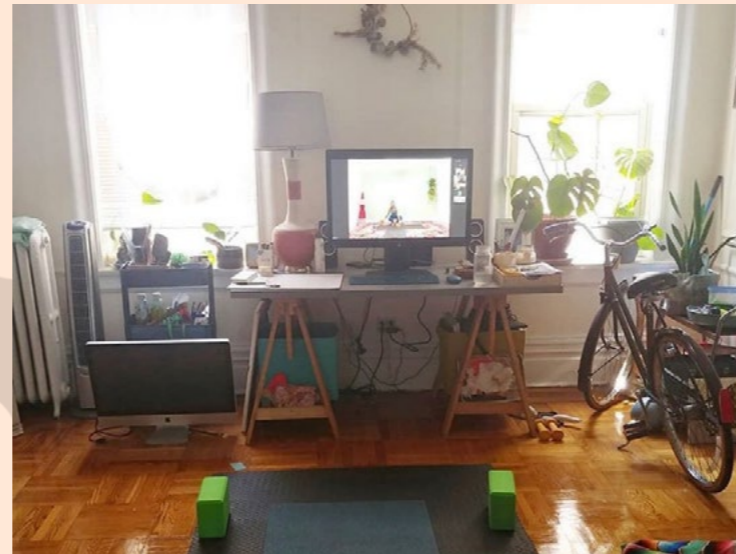


[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

# UNTAMED PRACTICE FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Bonnie in Wisconsin

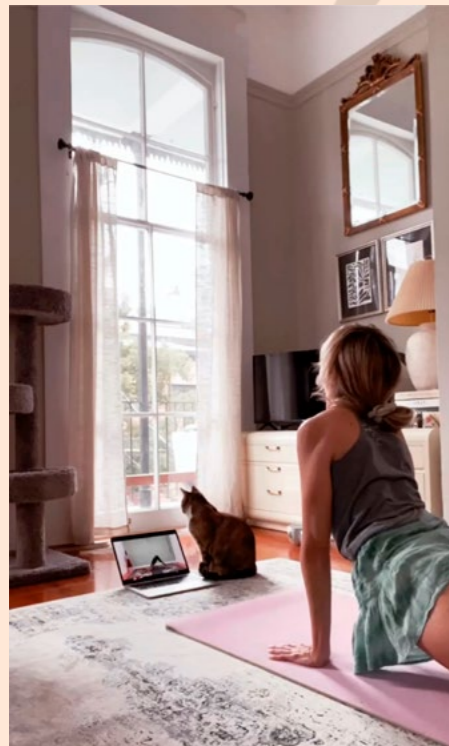


Gina in NYC



Lindsay in New Mexico

Untamed Yoga Members from around the map sharing views from their mats.



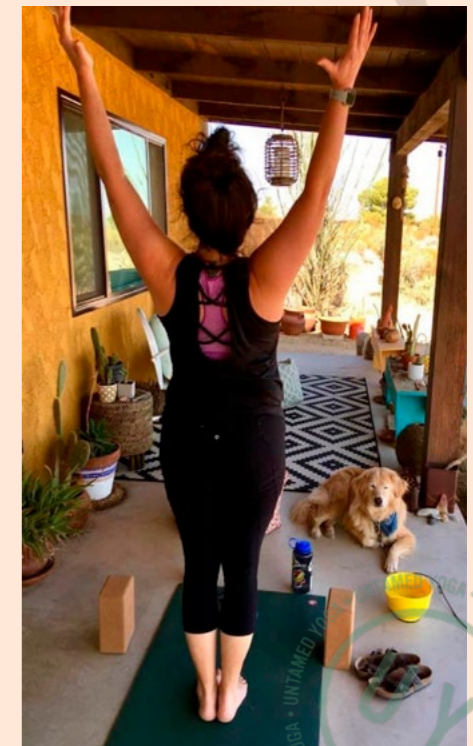
Andi in New Orleans



Dana in 29 Palms, CA



Mirona in Yucca Valley, CA



Melissa in 29 Palms, CA





[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

# BE OPEN, BE CURIOUS

## SOUND JOURNEYS WITH VINCENT ACCARDI AND RYAN MUSSEN

BY SHAWANDA GATSON

*The earth supports my body as I lie motionless on my mat. The fingers of my left hand lie in the sand. My right hand rests lightly on my chest. I feel the cool, gentle breeze kiss my face—the rest of me cocooned under my blanket. I am grounded and rooted in this moment. The mesmerizing voice of the sound healer makes a whoosh sound, like a rush of wind escaping through the minute crevices of a cave. With each melodic vibration, a bit of me becomes lighter. A bit of my heaviness carried away into the ebony shadows under the harvest moon.*  
(October 3, Hatha/Full Moon Sound Experience)

The first time I heard the term sound bath, I was confused. I wasn't sure what to wear. Is a sound bath like a baptism? Will there be water? In general, a sound bath is a meditative experience where those in attendance are "bathed" in sound waves. So, no on the water. Sound healers, Vincent Accardi and Ryan Mussen, use a variety of instruments to create this effect, including: planetary gongs, frosted quartz crystal bowls, Native North and South American flutes, Koshi chimes, bells, free note xylophones, tuning forks, charangos, Shruti boxes, Himalayan bowls, various percussion instruments and even the human voice itself.

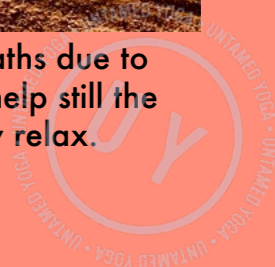
Each sound bath experience is different, no two are alike. The best way to experience a sound bath is to approach it with openness and curiosity.

Today, I am sitting with the two sound healers that have partnered with Emily Silver, the owner of Untamed Yoga, to offer a healing practice that combines yoga, sound and astrology. Under the open desert sky, in a socially distanced outdoor space, our little tribe meets twice-a-month for a sound experience journey. Accardi, 37, and Mussen, 36, both have a lengthy history with music and the healing arts, separately and together. They began sharing their gifts and talents in the Morongo Basin almost three years ago. Mussen recounts the pair's first meeting.

"I was just working at the yoga studio, doing a class every week. And then he came in one day and sat for meditation, and then we just started chatting and connecting right away," he explains.



Gongs are often used during sound baths due to their vibrational energy and ability to help still the mind and allow the body to deeply relax.





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

It took a few months before the duo began working together. They took the time necessary to throw around some ideas and determine if their energies were in alignment. As with any collaboration, it's paramount that the approaches, philosophies, techniques and thought processes of the various team members mesh together harmoniously. Prior to living in the desert, Accardi was living in upstate New York in the community of Beacon, which is about an hour south of Woodstock. While there, he began studying at the Sage Academy of Sound and Center for the Healing Arts.

"When I first was introduced to sound healing, I had no idea that you could do it in a group," he remarks. "I actually was doing one-on-one sessions with my teachers. So, when I was introduced to the group setting, it was a totally new world, just a different energy, a different way to experience the whole thing."

After concluding his studies, Accardi was excited to move to the desert to work with other like minded people, sound healers and those doing energy work locally. And although, the two men sensed a budding partnership; it would take some time for

things to grow and solitify.

"I just remember feeling that immediate resonance and, you know, I kind of started to court him a little bit. He was like, what are you talking about? I'm like, no, no, no. We were going to do this together, come to my house," Accardi says.

It took some time for them to find a steady rhythm and venues, but eventually they began meeting at least monthly. They held their first gathering in December of 2017.

"I still have the fliers," says Mussen with a smile and a laugh.



## Musical Beginnings

*I'm on my mat again. It's cold tonight. I've just come out of a supported bridge pose and I am achy. I'm restless tonight. Is that a dirt bike? Focus. One breath in, one breath out. Okay, I'm back in moment. Is that a puppy yelping? And there's that dirtbike again. Focus. One breath in, one breath out. What song is that? Focus.*

*All right! Stop whatcha doin', 'cause I'm about to ruin*

*The image and the style that ya used to I look funny—but yo I'm making money, see*

*Is that the Humpty Dance?*

*The Humpty Dance is your chance to do the hump  
Do the Humpty Hump, come on and do the Humpty Hump*

*Do the Humpty Hump, just watch me do the Humpty Hump*

*I giggle under my breath. I guess someone is having a house party. I miss going out dancing. Focus ShaWanda. Take a deep breath and tune it out. This time is for me.*

*(October 17, Yin/New Moon Sound Experience)*





[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Both Mussen and Accardi come from a musical background, and oddly enough, both began honing their musical skills starting at the age of ten. From a developmental perspective, age ten is a period of transition and rapid cognitive growth. Learning accelerates and kids are able to tackle more complex problems and abstract ideas. This is the age when kids typically begin to seek out where their interests and talents lie.

“Music is just one of those things man, it’s

just been a part of my life forever,” says Accardi. He came across the guitar in quite a serendipitous way.

“I discovered the guitar and the reason that I’m using the word discovered is because it was actually recalling how I met the guitar. My neighbor had one in the trash. They were throwing out an old acoustic and I walked over to it and it happened to be in tune. And the only reason I knew was because I think it was like a Metallica song or something like

that. I was like, oh, those are the same notes. Wait, I wanna learn how to play this,” he describes.

After this discovery, he immediately started taking lessons and played in different bands in high school. Eventually, he made a career as a touring and studio musician. Music became a way of life for Accardi and he took any opportunity given to try different instruments whether it be the bass, piano or violin.





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Mussen started his courtship with music at the age of ten as well, playing in various punk and metal bands throughout high school. In his early twenties, he started doing some touring, but wasn't able to find steady success in that. Perhaps, unbeknownst to him, he was destined to follow a different path. A more spiritual path. One that would ultimately lead him to meditation.

"It was a lot of jumping around, doing work and playing at the same time, but through that, being in a lot of uncomfortable places and having to deal with a lot of uncomfortable situations," he shares. "I was just like, okay, if I can not find the comforts that I need, how do I find the comfort with self?"

His first experience with mediation was profoundly transformative for Mussen.

"I had a really powerful vision. It was just like a vivid dream. I felt like I was really there and that imagery and symbolism stuck with me for a long time," he says.

After this encounter, he went on a search for meaning and symbols. He started reading about and studying different cultures,

mythologies, spiritual systems, the chakra system and Sufism.

"It was more research to me rather than anything else. But you know, you can't deny you have explainable experiences that you have. So, I never chose to really dive into any belief or anything like that, but just keep going at it with the idea of like, what am I going to experience?," he concludes.

The more he learned and practiced mediation, the more he began implementing the core tenants into his everyday life. He found himself wanting to live in the "kind of centered space" he had found through mediation, as much and as often as he could. Ultimately, he began to notice how sound and mediation could co-exist in the same space and time. Even whilst performing on stage in his earlier days, he could recall finding himself in a meditative state of pure energy.

He explains, "Sound for me, it was just so easy to connect to it [with] meditation. It would get me into very deep meditations, very quickly, where other times it would take me an hour and half or whatever, to just get to a quiet place in my mind. Sound will do it for me in 5

minutes."

Mussen concludes that we always have sound. And whether the sound is coming from you or emanating from the world around you, it's never really silent. Even in the remote jungle of the Caribbean, Mussen was able to find music. In a sacred moment under a tin roof, he was given a gift simply by listening.

"It started raining that night and all the animals are just going crazy. There's a storm going. There's thunder and everything. All the monkeys. And I'm sitting there listening," he narrates. "I'm like, this is African Jazz. The water is making beats and all like the animals are like the different horns and instruments being made. And I was just like, Oh my God, nature is music.

That's where we got music from. From nature. So it's like, anytime. I need to connect with it, just listen to the wind. To the birds."





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## Inspiration, Ideas and an Invitation

During our conversation on a windy afternoon in September, I shared a passage I had recently read with the guys.

In her book, *Big Magic: How to Live a Creative Life, and Let Go of Your Fear*, Elizabeth Gilbert says, “Ideas have no material body,...It is only through a human’s efforts that an idea can be escorted out of the ether and into the realm of the actual. Therefore, ideas spend eternity swirling around us, searching for available and willing human partners. (I’m talking about all ideas here—artistic, scientific, industrial, commercial, ethical, religious, political.) When an idea thinks it has found somebody—say, you—who might be able to bring it into the world, the idea will pay you a visit.”

Each sound journey experience is unique. Each person that shows up to practice, brings their own individual perspective. Some are regulars who show up open, ready to see where the evening will take them. Yet, for some all this talk of unconsciousness, planets in retrograde and sound vibrations is too much. The unknown is a bit outside their comfort zone. Too unfamiliar. These newcomers, who have

come at the invitation of a friend or loved one, have no idea what to expect.

Accardi finds it hard to put exactly into words what to expect during a sound bath. However, he was willing to share his own personal experience has a sound healing participant. He recalls alien sensations paired with color swells of emotion emanating throughout his body. He likens it to a feeling of synesthesia. “All of these things that are probably working unconsciously and all the time are now being put right to the forefront, you know, the screen of your mind and being pushed through your body in ways that were just not normally in relation to them...we get to experience ourselves in a very different and new way,” he adds.

Mussen went on to describe a conversation he had with a participant once. The man, who was a boxer, had an injury in the area around his ribs that had been hurting for months. During the sound bath, the man said he felt a vibration where the pain had been and he was able to move it energetically out of his body. For Mussen, allowing a person to learn and glean what they need from the experience, is the best way.



**The use of sound as a beneficial healing modality has undergone a period of rediscovery. Some of its benefits include: harmonization of the physical and psychic, physical and mental balance, relaxation, improve sleep, bring balance within the immune system, improved sense of hearing, stimulation of energy, decision support through clarity of the mind, mental preparation (exams, contests, competitions) and improved concentration and creativity.**

Source:  
<https://www.sageacademyofsound.com/science-of-sound-healing>





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

“You gotta be open. You just gotta let these experiences come to you...when it just happens, it’s self-affirming for them to know that it happened naturally. It wasn’t because they coaxed themselves into it or that anyone told them it was supposed to happen like that. They just found the way themselves. To me, that’s the most beautiful part of it,” he says.

The beauty of the sound bath experience is that is different for every person. How deep you go all depends on how open you are willing to be. And how open you are willing to be can be teeny tiny or it can be as large as the Grand Canyon; it’s up to you. We each will have the experience we are meant to have.

### **Timely Guidance from Above**

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the original purpose of astrology was to “to inform the individual of the course of his or her life on the basis of the positions of the planets and of the zodiac signs (the 12 astrological constellations) at the moment of his birth or conception.” Growing up in the Christian faith, astrology wasn’t something that was encouraged. Yet, I’ve always been curious and open to the different mysteries and

manifestations of consciousness available to help guide us.

Accardi begins each evening with an astrological reading, a task in which he does not take lightly. He understands the responsibility that he has when one finds themselves in a position where you are giving advice or offering guidance to others. In preparation for our gatherings, he takes the time to check in within himself. The same work of processing emotions that he leads us through, he does for himself. Not doing so, he feels would be “totally irresponsible.”

“Not that astrology can say, ‘hey this is supposed to happen and there’s a solution’ however the study of astrology in itself is significant and meaningful occurrences--as a above so below...Maybe it’s not enough of an explanation for people to sleep soundly at night, but for me it’s incredible to see it all play out,” he says.

It is his hope that by providing this additional layer of information to the practice, people will be able to find a bit more self-understanding by the end of the evening. Perhaps something that will help to validate their experiences

and allow them to walk away feeling a bit more fulfilled.

By timing these events to the new moon and full moon, it creates a cycle of self-reflection. Mussen sees this as a time for people to reflect on what themes came up for them in the last month. What challenges did they face? In which areas have they grown? What decisions need to be made going forward?

“I don’t really have an astrology background. My background is strictly meditation and sound...but, for me it’s about processing emotion...I think the future can be very scary,” he says. “I mean, especially right now, people thinking about the future, they don’t know what the plan. What these practices are telling us to do is to stay present, stay here... now. This right now. There’s nothing that you have to do later on, you just have to do this. And as long as you keep that mindset that I’m just doing this and that now. Then you can start to get away from that anxiety and fear.”



[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## Lighten Your Load

*My mat feels like home. It's warm out this evening.*

*Six days ago I was in Colorado. It's hard to hear my breath. It's hard to not feel my pain. So much has happened in the last week. But tonight, I left all of it in my car. I'm ready to go wherever the night takes me—a journey outside of my pain.*

*(July 20, Yin/New Moon Sound Experience)*

Even if people don't subscribe to or are skeptical of alternative and holistic healing methods, it doesn't change the fact that it is helping people. There's this energy that flows through the world, both negative and positive, and however you call that it is there. Those of us who gather twice a month are finding healing and a respite from the chaos of the world. As sound healers, Accardi and Mussen, are happy to continue to share their gifts with the community as long as it is helping people and is useful.

"People are really drawn to this and it helps them in a way, even if I don't know exactly how that's happening. I need to honor that." says Mussen.

His hope is that people will perhaps be able

to gain a deeper connection with themselves so when they can go home, they are better equipped to handle their lives in a better way. And perhaps through the experience, a person will learn different ways of coping and dealing with everything that is going in the world. These experiences offer people a different perspective to consider as they navigate through their life and their environment.

"We are living in a very subjective world, so everyone, whether they realize it or not is



making meaning of their own experiences constantly," adds Accardi.

Sound is the great equalizer in his eyes. He enjoys working with sound because it is something that resonates with all people.

"It's so abstract. It's so universal. That, whatever language you speak. And I mean that on so many levels of abstraction, it is up to you find what you need," he shares. "So it has [far] less to do with my intention of figuring out what a group or one individual needs for the evening; but, knowing that I'm showing up to sort of evoke this universal language. To see if we can find each other and see if the third party inspiration, or magic, wants to show up and connect us."

There is a feeling of comfort that arises from knowing that each one of use, on our individual mat, adds to the shared experience of the collective community. By gathering together, we lift one another up...heart-to-heart. Which is something that is desperately needed right now. As we wade through the turbulent political landscape, while adjusting to a new normal as a result of the pandemic; we find ourselves more isolated at times.



 BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS

“They just want to be able to see other people and be around other people. I know people have said to me, like, it just feels good to be in public and practice and see these people. We don’t have to touch or anything, but it’s just nice to have this. So I think people feel less alone when we’re able to do stuff like this,” says Mussen.

However, for some, being vulnerable is not easy. It may not feel safe. Not everyone is able to run towards their emotions and dive in. Lying prostrate with a group of strangers may seem a bit to “touchy feely” or “mystical” for them. Yet, we all crave connection nonetheless. We are all wired for belonging. And as we watch our global society become more polarized with each passing day, it is even more vital to have safe spaces, like these sound journeys, where people can assemble and heal together.

As sound healers, Accardi and Mussen, are rooted and grounded in this notion of universal love. It’s not about ego for them, it’s about uplifting the community and helping to dissolve barriers and walls collectively and within oneself. These sound journey experiences have offered me a place to go

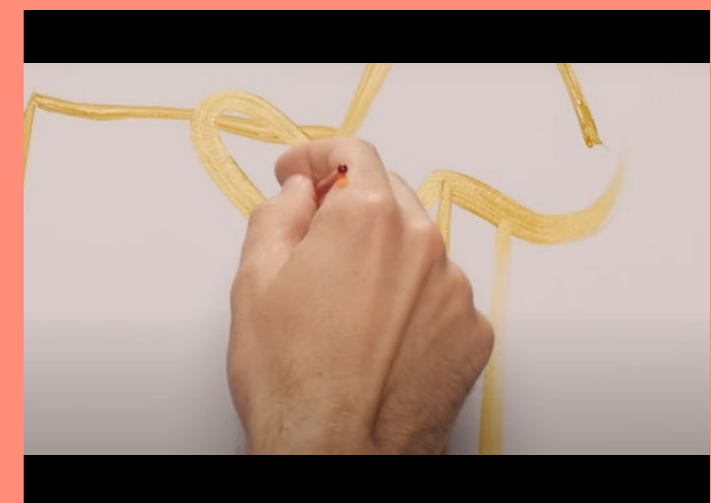
without judgment or expectation, to just be. All I have to do is show up and the rest will take care of itself.

“Ryan and I always have the unique perspective, literally at the end of the night when we’re finished and we get to look out and see a group of people, mostly who don’t know each other,” says Accardi. “Of course they’re familiar, they’re in the same community, but they’re all just laying down. So peaceful. So quiet. And what is there to worry about right now? You know, and to even just have a moment of that is so special, right now, especially.”

*I am safe. I can let go. This is a safe space. I am open. I am curious. There’s nowhere else I need to be. In this present moment, I am not afraid.*  
(October 7, Yin/Sound Bath)



**What color is Tuesday?**  
Exploring synesthesia - Richard E. Cytowic



**What’s It Like To Hear Colors?**  
A VR 360° Synesthesia Experience

Sources:  
Gilbert, E. (2016). *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. London: Bloomsbury.  
Pingree, D. E., & Gilbert, R. A. (2019, January 10). *Astrology*. Retrieved October 1, 2020, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/astrology>



[□ BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## CREATIVE CORNER

Lorry Stone is a self taught artist based out of Landers, California.

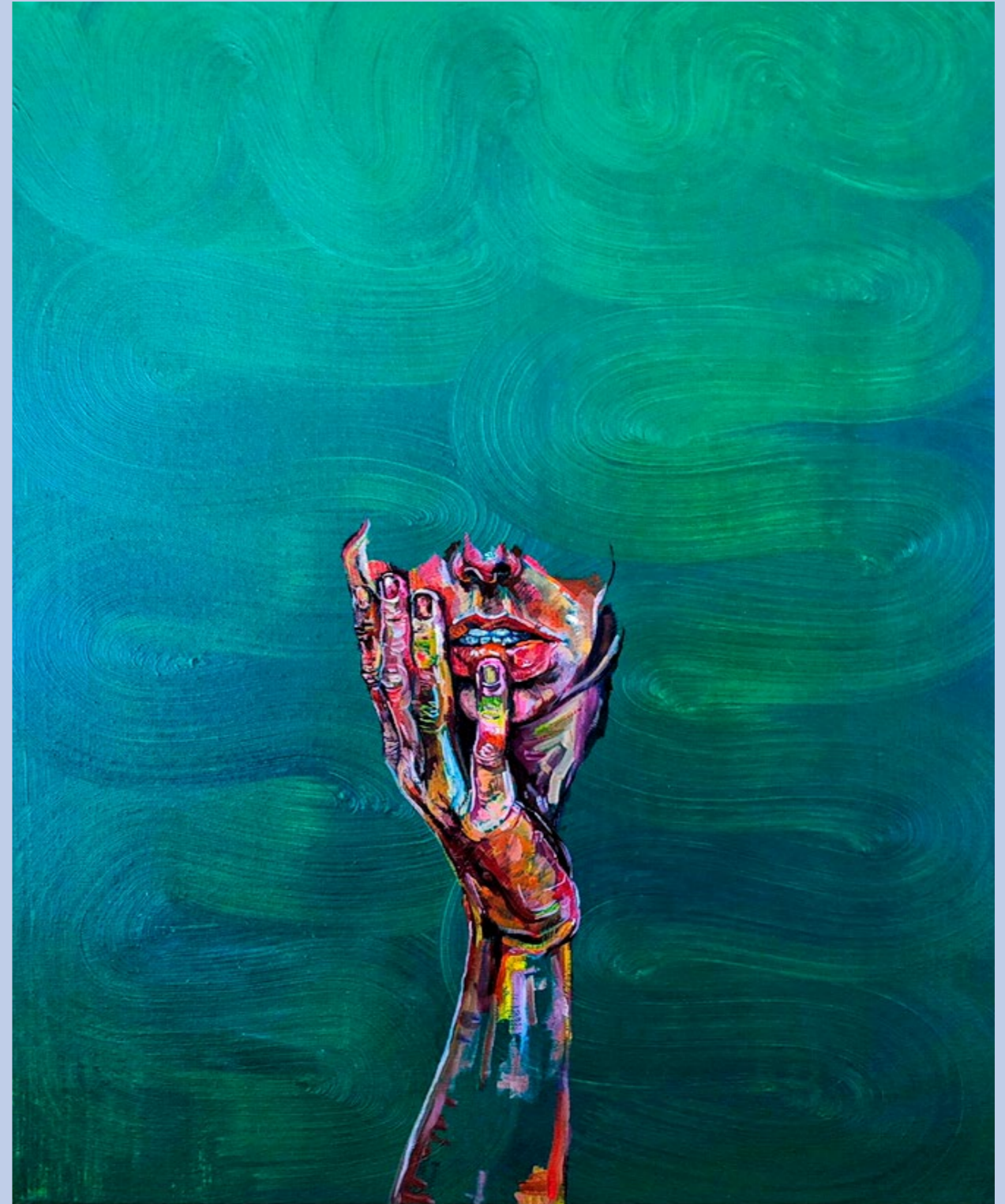
Her current works are primarily based upon reflections of trauma, the importance of honest self reflection, and reconnecting with nature in order to heal. She works within the realms of surrealism and folk surrealism.

Just Breath  
Oil and Acrylic on canvas  
18" x 24"

In this piece Lorry reflects on the inner struggle of anxiety and trauma, and the slow piecing together of oneself. Even with an environment of fluid movement, the building of the form is a stream-of-consciousness heavily layered and intense technique.

"Just Breath" was finished two days before the first Covid-19 lockdown was announced.

The maskless face touching its mouth and struggling to catch it's breath in a solo environment takes on a whole new meaning to the artist now.





[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## TRYING IT THE MONK WAY

BY SHAWANDA GATSON

I first stumbled upon the wisdom of Jay Shetty on YouTube. Previously a vlogger for the Huffington Post, he has almost 400 videos on a number of topics ranging from relationships, finding your purpose and spirituality. He has a way of saying the most profound things, in the fewest amount of words. The thing that really resonated with me is the sincerity and passion in which he shares with his audience. I think the message in which he has to offer, is exactly what the world needs right now.

If you aren't familiar with Jay Shetty and his story, I'll give you the "crash course" version. At the age of 18, Shetty had a life-changing experience when he went with a friend to hear a monk speak. The experience was so profound that he began spending his summers, while in college, splitting his time between his life in London and life in an ashram.

"For the next four years, I juggled two worlds, going from bars and steakhouses to meditation and sleeping on the floor," Shetty writes in his book.

Upon graduation from Cass Business School



*In **Think Like a Monk**, Jay Shetty draws on his time as a monk in the Vedic tradition to share with us ways in which we can overcome negative thoughts and habits, and access the calm and purpose that lie within all of us.*

at the University of London, he made the choice to move to the ashram full-time and become a monk.

"I wanted to grow as a person. I didn't want to know humility or compassion and empathy only as abstract concepts, I wanted to live them. I didn't want discipline, character, and integrity to just be things I read about. I wanted to live them," he also shares.

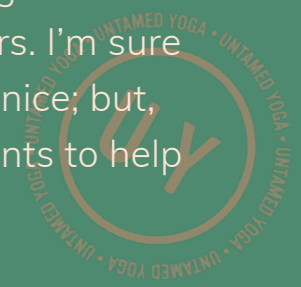
During this time, he studied the Vedas and

many other spiritual teachings and practices. After three years of living as a monk, Shetty's teacher, Gauranga Das told him that he believed Shetty would be of "greater value and service" if he "left the ashram and shared" what he had learned with the world. And that's exactly what he has been doing ever since.

His book, *Think Like a Monk*, was released on September 8, 2020 and it's already made the New York Times bestseller's list. I'm not one to jump on a trend and fad right out the gate. I take the time to research and try something out before I shout it's praises from the rooftops. But...

*Think Like a Monk is AMAZING!!*

Although, Shetty lived as a monk; he is not trying to get you or I to leave our lives and become a monk. He's not even asking us to subscribe to a particular religion or any religion at all. I honestly feel that he is simply trying to share the things he has learned in hopes of helping others. I'm sure the success, fame and money is nice; but, ultimately I really do think he wants to help people.





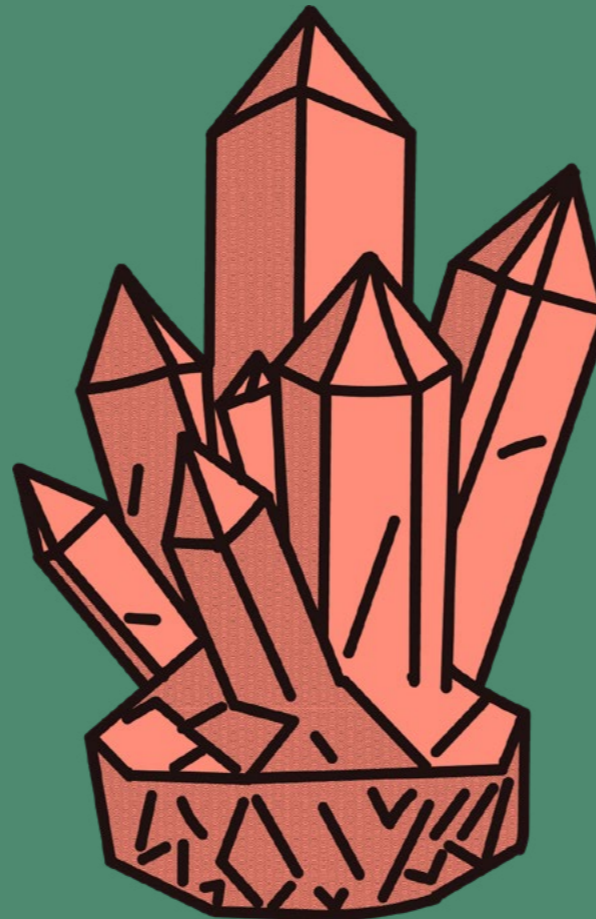
 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

We have a long road ahead of us in the rebuilding of our country. We're facing some really dark times ahead. However, before we can rebuild; we as individuals will need to turn inward to evaluate our values, who we are and what we stand for. Fighting for justice and equality is hard work. Whether you are on the frontlines protesting and canvassing for voter-related issues or you are having tough conversations with your friends and family--we each have a role to play. Moms, dads and other caregivers that are at home raising kids have an important role to play as well. Because those kiddos will one day grow up and the morals and values taught in the home will be the building blocks for that child's adult life.

I have been on a transformation journey for the past 2-3 years. And through that journey, I have had to face myself. Just me. I have had to dig deep to examine whether my values and actions were in alignment. I work best when I am passionate about something. And I am most passionate about things that I care about deeply and are aligned with my values.

In *Think Like a Monk*, Shetty walks readers through a process of exploring and defining our values; which is a critical first step that has a tremendous impact on navigating through life.

"What I hope to do in this book is to show you the monk way--we go to the root of things, go deep into self-examination. It is only through this curiosity, thought, effort, and revelation that we find our way to peace, calm, and purpose," Shetty writes.



I'd like you to join our online book club, Purposeful Pages, to discuss *Think Like a Monk*. In the upcoming weeks, I'm going to be sharing my favorite quotes and exercises from the book and how the lessons from the book are transforming my life.

But I want this to be a two-way conversation. So I invite you to take this journey with me as we read this book together and share our insights as a community.

Stay tuned for more information on:

- Signing up for the book club
- Chapter-by-Chapter vlogs
- Online book club events
- Podcast discussions

You can purchase a copy of the book at the link below:

<https://www.thinklikeamonkbook.com/>



 BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS

## EMBRACE THE REBOUND

BY SHAWANDA GATSON

I first started doing yoga almost two years ago in January of 2018. I had no real knowledge about the practice, but I was searching. I was looking for something in which I could find balance in my body, mind and soul. One of the first classes I attended was a candlelight yin practice. This was back before COVID, when we were practicing in a studio. From the very first class, I was hooked. I began craving the 60-90 minutes that I spent on my mat in yin. It became a time of profound physical and spiritual growth for me.

Yin is a slower practice, but slower is not synonymous with easy. The postures in yin are “primarily passive in nature and held anywhere from one minute to well over five minutes in order to target the body’s connective tissues, rather than muscle groups”(Harris, 2019). The target area in yin is the fascial tissue. Over time, the stressing of the tissue; results in the fascia becoming “more flexible” and the ligaments that support the joints “become stronger” (Harris, 2019).

The rebound comes into play after we release ourselves from the pose. Students

are instructed to lie in stillness of our backs or stomachs to allow our mind, body and soul to soak in the experience of the prior pose. Our bodies hold stress and tension in our joints and muscles. I often found myself sobbing quietly on my mat during candlelight yin as I allowed myself to completely surrender and let go. The balance between finding my edge during the pose and then rebounding in stillness is very cathartic.



In her book, *The Language of Yin*, Gabrielle Harris describes the rebound as a process that “raises our vibrational energy by removing what is stagnant and by absorbing fresher, cleaner energy.” Furthermore, students are encouraged to “...feel what they feel. The subtle vibrations, the achiness, temperature,

pressure, changes or qui flow add to the meditative quality [of the rebound].” It’s quite a unique feeling going from a pose to rebound.

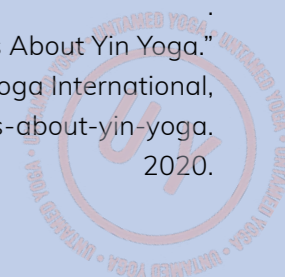
Rebound reminds me of that moment right after the curtain comes down on a theatre production. There is so much energy flowing in the moments leading up to the performance and then the performance itself. Once the curtain comes down and you wrap, you feel a release. I always like to find a quiet place to just surrender and reflect. It’s very similar to the feeling I experience on my mat during the rebound.

So the next time you find yourself in a yin practice, let yourself be present in the rebound. I have found great healing and clarity in those moments. If you allow yourself to surrender to the practice, you might find healing of your own


Sources:

Harris, Gabrielle. *The Language of Yin: Yoga Themes, Sequences & Inspiration to Bring Your Class to Life & Life to Your Class*. Luminary Press, 2019

Morris, Nishita. “5 Common Questions About Yin Yoga.” [Yogainternational.com](http://Yogainternational.com), Yoga International, [yogainternational.com/article/view/questions-about-yin-yoga](http://yogainternational.com/article/view/questions-about-yin-yoga), 2020.





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

# CREATIVE CORNER

## Coming Home

by Dylan Smith

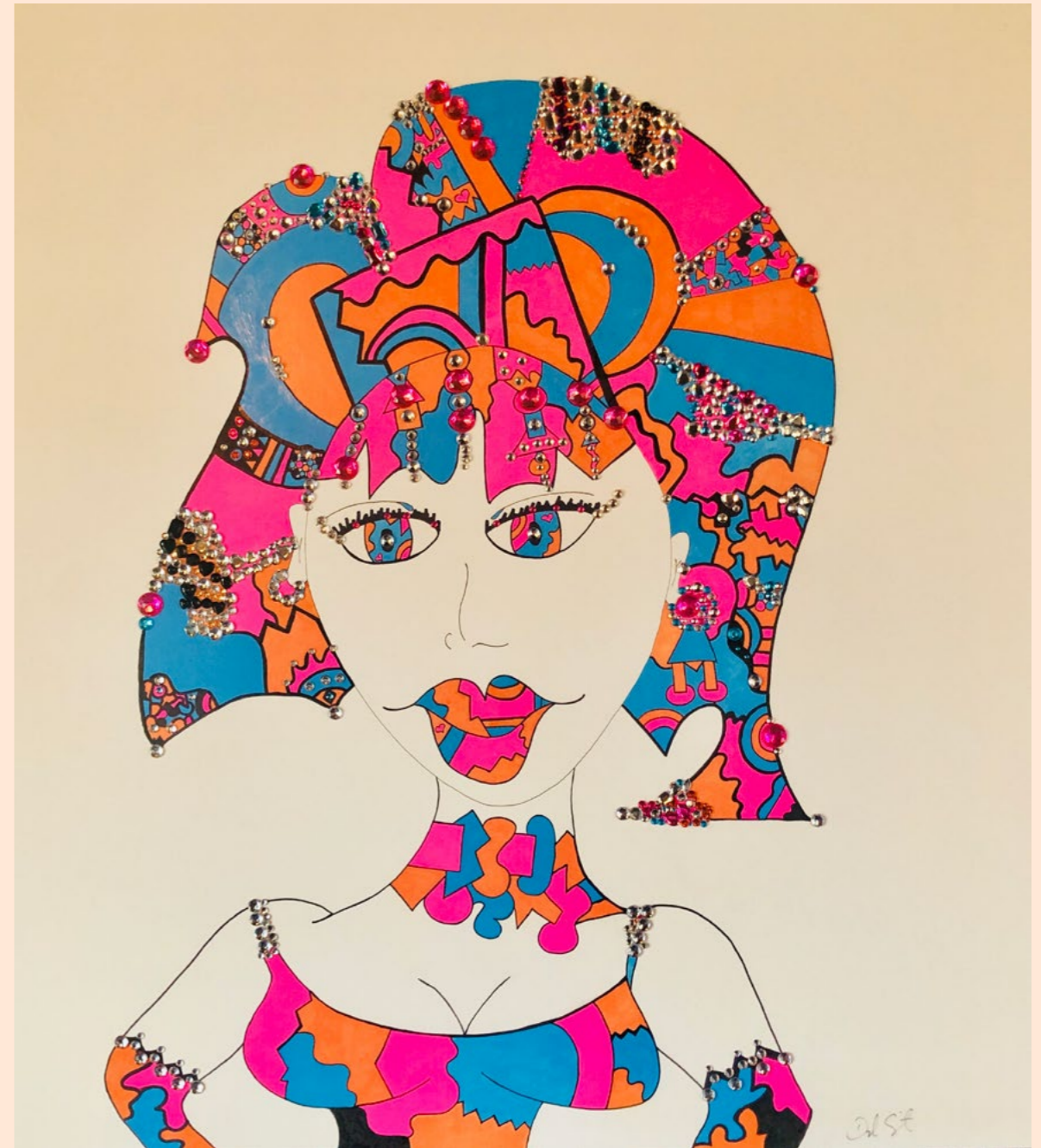
The Morning wakes and does her morning stretch,  
 Extending her white, satin shrouded arms towards me.  
 Her weathered hands are kind and approachable, so I accept the offer.

Our hands become one.  
 My soul recharges with soft electricity.  
 I am vibrant, capable, and thrilled.

I remember who I am.  
 I remember through the haze of months gone by,  
 that life IS in fact a magical, mysterious voyage.

It is filled with the most glorious peaks and the darkest of valleys.

There is hope after all.  
 I am starting to believe again.





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## SHARE YOUR VOICE

### **Do you have an UNTAMED voice? Want to join a team of other UNTAMED human beings?**

We are currently looking for feature writers, photographers, creative writers, poets and artists.

#### **Feature Writers**

Looking for writers with experience in narrative nonfiction and feature writing. As a feature writer, you would be asked to interview different local people who are contributing positively to our desert community in some way. You will also have the opportunities to pitch ideas that fit within the mission and vision of Untamed Voices. Some photography skills is a plus.

This is an unpaid experience, but you will get your own byline.

Please email the following to [untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com](mailto:untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com) with the subject line *FEATURE WRITER*:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- 3-5 five pieces of writing that highlights your writing skills

#### **Freelance Photographers**

Looking for local freelance photographers with experience in taking photos for social media and/or online publications. As a freelance photographer, you would be asked to photograph local people and places who are contributing positively to our desert community in some way. You will also have the opportunities to pitch ideas that fit within the mission and vision of Untamed Voices.

This is an unpaid experience, but you will receive photo credit for all images used.

Please email the following to [untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com](mailto:untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com) with the subject line *FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHY SUBMISSION*:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- A selection of photos that show your range and versatility (please provide a link to an online gallery)





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

## **Fiction and Poetry Submissions**

Looking for works of fiction and poetry no longer than 1,500 words. We cannot pay you, but we will promote you via the site and social media. And it's free to submit!

Please email the following to [untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com](mailto:untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com) with the subject line FICTION/POETRY SUBMISSION:

- ONE work of fiction or poem, no longer than 1500 words
- Please submit as a word document
- Resume

## **Artists**

Artists are welcome to submit works in any medium: painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, photography, textile, installation, mixed media, digital, performance and film (only jpg + link to video) etc. All visual art mediums are welcome. We cannot pay you, but we will promote you via the site and social media. And it's free to submit!

Please email the following to [untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com](mailto:untamedvoices@untamedyogastudio.com) with the subject line ARTIST SUBMISSION:

- A high resolution photo of your work
- A brief narrative (500 words or less) about the piece including: name, medium, year and inspiration behind the work

### Legal Disclaimer

Untamed Voices ask for first publication rights. You may publish your work featured on the site elsewhere following initial publication, but please credit Untamed Voices with first publication.





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

# BEHIND UNTAMED VOICES



**ShaWanda Gatson - Managing Editor**

ShaWanda is an educator, writer, storyteller, and yogi. She was born in Mississippi, but raised in 29 Palms and has lived in the Morongo Basin for over 20 years. ShaWanda has a bachelor's degree from Pepperdine University and an MFA in Creative Writing from Spalding University. She writes fiction for children, narrative non-fiction, and dabbles in poetry and short stories.

ShaWanda is currently working on her yoga certification and will begin teaching in 2021. Her areas of interest are yin and restorative yoga. It is her desire to help share this transformative and healing practice with children and women of color and other marginalized communities.

ShaWanda lives in Yucca Valley with her son, Mateo, and their miniature schnauzer, Duchess. When not writing or doing yoga, ShaWanda enjoys reading, traveling, dancing, cooking for family and friends, and binge-watching tv shows.

Follow her on Facebook  
@shawandagatsonwrites



**Emily Silver - Editor In Chief**

Emily Silver is an artist, yogi, educator, and art gallery owner located in Yucca Valley CA. Emily is originally from New York where she received her BFA from SVA in NYC, her MFA from Penn State University. She is on the faculty at Santa Monica College and Copper Mountain College, where she has been teaching in the art departments for over 10 years.

She has been practicing on her mat for over 17 years and teaching yoga in the hi-desert, Los Angeles, Seattle and Portland over the last few years.

**Yoga Trainings:**

- 500RYT Hatha training from Modo Yoga. Kelowna, BC
- 50hrs Yin Training, Joe Barnett, Encinitas CA
- 100hrs Vinyasa Flow, North Vancouver BC
- 40hrs Flow State Advanced Sequencing .
- 50hrs Yin Training, Bernie Clark
- Currently enrolled in IAYT 805 Yoga Therapy program

Follow her @emilysilverstudio,  
@untamedyoga

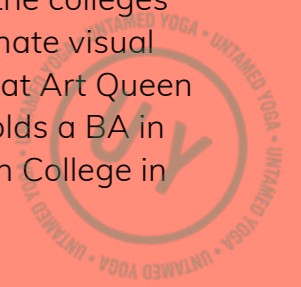


**Dylan Smith - Associate Editor**

Dylan Smith is a Southern California based dancer, choreographer, teaching and visual artist. He was the recipient of Broadway World San Francisco Best Choreography in 2015. Dylan is an accomplished teaching artist and choreographer that instructs all over the world at various colleges, universities and studios teaching master classes and setting original works including:

Broadway Dance Center, Alvin Ailey School of Dance, Rutgers University, Sonoma State University and Santa Rosa Junior College.

Behind the table, Mr. Smith has worked with the Emmy Award winning RWS Entertainment Group as an audition choreographer/coordinator and assistant to the casting director. Dylan trains college bound performers on their dance technique, audition material and has successfully gotten many of said hopefuls into the colleges of their choice. He is also a passionate visual artist with an upcoming solo exhibit at Art Queen in Joshua Tree, California. Dylan holds a BA in Dance from Marymount Manhattan College in New York City.





 [BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

# ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS



**Ryan Mussen—Licensed Massage Therapist**

The philosophy of Ryan’s practice is to provide practical solutions of massage and body work therapy for relaxation, assist in muscle tissue injury recovery, to achieve a degree of relief for people in chronic pain, improve range of motion and mobility for those with traumatic injury (with a doctor’s recommendation of course) and improve circulation of blood to allow the removal of toxins from the body.

Massage has been such an important part of Ryan’s life, not only as a therapist but as a client as well.

Before discovering massage Ryan experienced debilitating low back pain that kept him from working and enjoying life. He now receives massage regularly, as well as performs daily home stretches which have helped tremendously. His goal is to share the knowledge and skills he has acquired so that he may do the same for you.

Through sound meditation we continue to heal by aiding the mind and body to reach a deep relaxation, which is the optimal condition for the body to heal itself. By offering these two philosophies I feel I am giving my clients two helpful modalities of healing to incorporate into their own evolving personal lifestyles.

<http://www.mojavemassage.com>



**Melissa Grisi, LCSW**

Melissa Grisi is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW #85168), Certified Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CAADC), EMDR Certified Therapist and trauma-informed yoga teacher. Melissa uses a variety of therapy techniques and tools to help clients meet their goals. She is trained in the following: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Gottman Method Relationship Therapy, trauma-sensitive yoga, mindfulness, relapse prevention and expressive arts.

After working as a social worker for nearly two decades, Melissa founded Blue Sky Therapy in 2020. Her clinical practice is a reflection of her professional passions, incorporating psychotherapy, trauma-informed yoga and expressive art into her therapy work. In her spare time, Melissa enjoys hiking in Joshua Tree National Park, practicing yoga, gardening, creating pottery and spending time with family and friends.

Blue Sky Therapy  
 5735 Adobe Rd  
 Twentynine Palms, CA 92277  
 760-972-6458  
[www.bluesky29.com](http://www.bluesky29.com)  
[melissa@bluesky29.com](mailto:melissa@bluesky29.com)



**Vincent Accardi**

Vincent’s contact information is [va.frequency@gmail.com](mailto:va.frequency@gmail.com) for those who want to reach him



# JUSTICE FOR BLACK GIRLS

Central to our mission at Untamed Yoga and Untamed Voices is social justice.

We are dedicated to creating safe spaces, supporting those around us, and having critical dialogues around injustice. Our commitment extends into Karma classes, community classes, quarterly donations and in the near future a Yoga Therapy Clinic.

This quarter we are supporting Justice for Black Girls. All of our members have a dedicated amount of their membership donated to charity amongst our special karmic offerings at Untamed Yoga.



Justice For Black Girls Mission: The mission of Justice for Black Girls is to expand global knowledge of how US-based systems of power respond to and perpetuate the abuse of Black girls in schools, in prisons and in protest.

If you would like to donate to JBG please donate directly to them here:

[www.justiceforblackgirls.com](http://www.justiceforblackgirls.com)





# UNTAMED YOGA

*Joshua Tree, California*

