**September 21, 2010.**

I have always been fascinated by Buddhism. The simple morals, the marvelous reincarnation, the intoxicating scents of incense and wooden beads all pull me in, sedate me, enthrall me. While I’ve been looking into Buddhism for a while, I never really dedicated myself enough to take the plunge, although I have dipped my feet in a little. Maybe I am too fickle. But the mantras and the lessons are really sticking with me, which is why I begin this next project. This project stems from a journey. No, not towards the enlightened path, nirvana, but it will mark the beginning of my college career. Tomorrow I start classes. The first day of the rest of my life? Not so much. But it has got me thinking, which is where the Buddha comes in. That fat, jolly guy, who, to me, has always mirrored Santa Claus, which might explain why I have always been drawn to him, even though I am Jewish. To be more specific, this is where “Buddha’s Little Instruction Book,” by Jack Kornfield, comes in. Starting with page 1, which hosts the first quote of the book, I will title each entry with the mantra written and reflect upon it. So I guess that’s as far as explaining goes!

**September 25, 2010.**

“Live every act fully, as if it were your last.” (1)

I completely agree with this statement. I believe that every person has to bring meaning to their life. However, it begs the question—what about mundane acts that are necessary? Should I wash the dishes as if it were my last act? I just started college—should I do my chemistry homework as if it were the last thing I will every do on this earth? Or should I follow the phrase “carpe diem!” and drop these boring activities altogether and go do something more worthwhile? The answer is no. because all of these small, insignificant acts all lead to a bigger event or outcome. And cutting out the middleman doesn’t work in life.

**September 26, 2010.**

“Love in the past is only a memory. Love in the future is a fantasy. Only here and now can we truly love.” (2)

I have already succeeded in letting go of my past, high school love, which took me a while to do. It involved a lot of tears, heartache, and depression. I have had a lot of hopes about love in my future, but I have accepted the fact that it will only come when I least expect it, so I have to let the notion of future love go, too, in the sense that I shouldn’t keep waiting around for it. I can only love now, and that love needs to be spread to my family and friends who are important to me, not reserved for a future lover. I need to accept that romantic love may not be in the cards for me right now, and that’s okay, because I can still spread other kinds of love to the people I care about.

**October 8, 2010.**

“Most of the sorrows on earth humans cause for themselves.” (3)

I view this quote as the most succinct and truthful argument against pessimism. We tend to view the bad as overshadowing the good too often and I admit that I am guilty of this as well. Instead of pondering over things that go wrong, I should pay more attention to the good and try to make the bad things better instead of wallowing. Thinking about your own misery and feeling sorry for yourself is a totally static action (if you can call it an action) and will not change any bad situation. The only way to overcome bad things and sorrow is not only to see a silver lining but also take advantage of it as well. In addition, human beings rarely rejoice in the little things in life that bring us happiness and warmth, which is something we, as representatives of the human race, need to work on.

**October 31, 2010.**

“Even loss and betrayal can bring us awakening.” (4)

This is a pretty decent quote for Halloween, in my opinion. Also in my opinion, this quote is 100% accurate. From my own experience in the past year, I can safely say that I have been awakened in a sense. I know now never to let my guard down again as a result what I have been through. I was betrayed by who I thought was the love of my life. He said he loved me but all he did was take advantage. Typical heartbreak story, right? Anyway, it’s funny, because last year at this time we passed out candy together to trick- or- treaters. I was so in love at the time and at the same time I was so blind. After all the tears and depression, I picked my self up (ok, with a lot of help), and I am definitely “awakened.” I am so much stronger now, plus I have a much cooler Halloween costume (witch vs ketchup bottle). He was a vampire, drawing blood, but I am finally red again.

**November 6, 2010.**

“Words have the power to destroy or heal. When words are both true and kind, they can change our world.” (5)

I like to think my words can be as powerful as this quote claims that words can be. The phrase “sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me” is a myth. Words can hurt a lot, although actions may hurt more, depending on the circumstance. The act of speaking is, in fact, an action, and whether or not somebody speaks in a situation can be more powerful than what they say. The thing about words that “destroy” is that they are rarely as powerful as words that “heal.” We might be more likely to remember when a person says something nasty or harsh, but a kind word stays in our hearts more so than in our memory. I view writing as a great way to express myself, so, hopefully, my words move other people as well, because good writing should be read and shared, not hidden and hoarded. Words are some of the most powerful tools that humans possess. They set us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom, so we should always use them to our advantage.

**November 7, 2010.**

“Every wakeful step, every mindful act is the direct path to awakening. Wherever you go, there you are.” (6)

This quote ties into the mindset that even the little things matter immensely—every small act of kindness, no matter how tiny, can and will amount to something great. Every small step I will try to make to align myself with the Buddha’s teachings will bring me another step closer to enlightenment and inner peace.

**November 21, 2010.**

“Our worst enemy cannot harm us as much as our unwise thoughts. No one can help us as much as our own compassionate thoughts.” (7)

No matter how many times someone may call you ugly, the only way you can shake the thought is by knowing otherwise. No matter how many times someone may call you beautiful, it wont affect you profoundly unless you believe it, as well.

**November 25, 2010.**

“In one’s family, respect and listening are the source of harmony.” (8)

Although this is appropriate for the day, I can’t really fully comment on this because listening doesn’t always happen in my house, and I am partly to blame for this as well. However, we definitely respect and love each other very much. On that note, Happy Thanksgiving!

**December 9, 2010.**

“To give your cow or sheep a large, spacious meadow is the best way to control him.” (9)

This is obviously a metaphor, and it definitely applies to my own life. If my parents didn’t give me so much independence, I wouldn’t be the smart, responsible, reliable person I am today. My parents taught me to make wise decisions but my own mistakes I have made, as a result of my independence, have helped me learn so much more. My parents never explicitly told me not to party and drink like most students my age do, but I made that decision on my own, based on my own experiences in my “large meadow” of life.

**December 17, 2010.**

“To open our own heart like a Buddha, we must embrace the ten thousand joys and the ten thousand sorrows.” (10)

The only way anyone can fully be enlightened is by experiencing life, all aspects of it, and reflecting upon those experiences. If the experiences are all good, we have not fully lived because we cannot contrast the good with bad things that will inevitably come our way. It’s like the seasons—a year cannot be complete without all of them, and in order to appreciate the warmth of summer, we must first experience the cold chill of the wintertime. You cannot be safe walking in the snow and ice unless you have fallen once or twice. Through such scary experiences is how we learn to be safe. Only then can you claim to have lived a full life and only then can you be awakened.

**December 27, 2010.**

“The heart is like a garden. It can grow compassion or fear, resentment or love. What seeds will you plant there?” (11)

A seed can represent an initial thought, or an initial judgment. When you meet a new person or try something new, the first thing you think can resonate with you deeply, affecting your judgment on that person or subject forever. That is why it is always important to have an open mind and an open heart, allowing your self to try new things without unnecessary resentment or fear.

**December 26, 2010: First Meditation**

I didn’t think that my first meditation experience would be as challenging as it turned out to be. I have tried meditating on my own in the past, but I could never master it. I thought that maybe a truly silent, group setting would be a simpler way to ease my way into the world of Buddhism. I felt that the support of a group would make meditating easier, make the energy flow better, and I turned out to be right, even though I hit a few bumps along the way. As if it wasn’t enough to attend a group meditation, I dragged two of my unsuspecting friends, Shirley and Justine, with me, because I didn’t want to go alone my first time, plus I get nervous about finding my way and parking and whatnot. As I opened the door to the Zen Center I was immediately swept up by the intoxicating smell of it all. I wasn’t sure if it was the worn- in meditation pillows or incense or what it was, but it made me feel peaceful and at home. But the smell wasn’t enough to move our feet away from the doorway. We just stood there awkwardly, not sure of what to do. We were soon greeted by a large, bald man (the complete opposite of my version of a tiny, wrinkled, Asian guru) and a small, smiling woman exclaiming, “well you must be newcomers!” I blushed—a nervous habit of mine—and squirmed a little, embarrassed that I was just outed as a newbie, even though I obviously was. We were instructed to remove our coats and shoes, and find a place on an empty cushion. As I walked in to the main meditation room, I was surprised by how small and quaint the center was. For some reason I had envisioned statues of the Buddha and incense all over the place, but all I saw was a small, carpeted room with a handful of pillows which traced the shape of a rectangle on the floor. As I searched for a spot, I was suddenly transported back to a middle school classroom, a small pocket of nervous air forming in my throat. I nervously scrambled to sit down in the corner spot, far away from the men who were already seated in a meditation position. There were no three cushions in a row—strangers dotted the outline of the rectangle—and my friends and I had to sit in totally different places. We shifted in our seats and made slight eye contact with each other, waiting for a signal to tell us what to do. The woman who greeted us instructed on how to sit properly, my two friends cross legged, and me on my knees (I couldn’t touch my knees to the floor when sitting cross- legged…my body is completely inflexible). She sat next to me, and the tall man who also greeted us to my other side—I was incredibly nervous sitting between both these gurus! The first thing we did was chant is Korean, which was definitely a different experience for me (my friends and I had weird looks on our faces the entire time), and then we began our 30-minute meditation sit. I looked at the floor, as instructed, and tried to lose my self and wipe away my thoughts. But I couldn’t. I wasn’t able too. First, I had the worst dry- mouth. I kept swallowing and was worried everyone could hear me! Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw Shirley itch her nose…that certainly wasn’t in the directions. No! Focus! I continued to stare at the carpet, and all these faces stared appearing, taunting me, talking to me. I couldn’t seem to focus at all, and this voice in my head kept saying, “Just walk out and don’t come back, it doesn’t matter.” But I was determined to find my center. “Come, on, you’re not cut out for sitting here and being quiet!” it shouted. But I managed to push it away, and, just as I was trying to get into it and destroy that tiny, pessimistic voice forever, a tiny bell chimed, causing all the thoughts to whoosh! back into my head, and the first sit was over. For the walking meditation, my friends and I trekked outside in the cold, winter snow. The tall man instructed us to walk slowly, in a straight line, with tiny steps, but, he said, “Since you’re going outside in public you can just walk,” and started out ahead of us. We tried to follow his long, tall strides, but he was just too fast, so we resorted to following his giant footprints in the snow. I wasn’t wearing boots and my coat was not warm enough— I wasn’t prepared for an arctic adventure!—but I continued on nonetheless. Shirley and I giggled about the strange Korean chants and her itchy nose. But, all jokes aside, we both agreed that the meditation was a peaceful experience. I didn’t think I could last through another sit, though, and neither did she. All the while, Justine followed the instructions very well, speaking little and really getting the feel of walking meditation, clearing her mind. I wished I had maintained her perseverance and didn’t break my stride to laugh about an experience that I greatly appreciated. Once we made our way back to the center and kicked the snow off our boots, we finished up walking meditation indoors and positioned ourselves for the second sit. The woman sitting next to me gave a little spiel for the newcomers present, telling to focus in the “this…this…this…” Before I knew it, the bell had been rung again and it was over. I had done it—I successfully meditated. Sure, I heard cars beeping outside and managed to get a little distracted. And my stomach started growling pretty intensely and I was paranoid everyone could hear it, but hey, I did it! It wasn’t perfect, but I didn’t give up and I ended up really enjoying the entire experience. I will go back soon, but first I must prepare myself for acupuncture tomorrow!

**December 27, 2010: First Acupuncture**

I have to admit, I didn’t have the right mindset about acupuncture before I went in for my appointment. I try to be open- minded, but I just couldn’t see how sticking needles into a person can help them in any real way, other than the placebo effect. I know that is not a very Buddhist way of thinking, and I tried to push the doubtful thoughts out of my mind, but they kept reappearing, and they made me feel guilty. But, believe me, my experience was no placebo. I had my mom take me there, because I am horrible with directions (I never would have found the place without her), not because I was nervous about the needles, they don’t bother me much at all. The place was not how I had expected it to look. I thought it would be filled with incense with new- age-y music quietly playing in the background. Instead, it was a small office inside of a very large health center; at first my mom and I thought we were in the wrong place! Ironically enough, my acupuncturist was names Carol Paine. Yes, Paine. But, again, I am not afraid of needles, so I wasn’t worried. Besides, I heard that the needles are as thin as a hair. Also, lots of NFL players get acupuncture—Steelers players James Harrison, Hines Ward, and Troy Polamalu included. So if a 300- pound linebacker made of pure muscle can withstand upwards of 200 needles stuck into his body, I, a teeny- tiny little girl, should be able to handle just a few. Infallible logic, am I right? So the session started with an interview about my general health (well, after I had to fill out a considerable amount of paperwork). It all seemed pretty normal, until she asked me to stick my tongue out. That was a little weird, but I complied and, after having my tongue inspected, asked why it had to be done. She explained that the tongue is the only organ we can view without dissection, and that it really represents the heat of my body. Because the tip of my tongue was red, I have a lot of emotional and physical heat flowing in my body, which could lead to vivid dreams and perhaps a restless sleep—the former is definitely true. She went on to ask me some personal questions about my menstrual cycle and my bowel movements and if I could be pregnant—don’t worry, I won’t go into any of those. One of the most important things she asked me, though, that resonated with me the most, was related to my body temperature, going back to the color of my tongue. She wanted to know what my body temperature generally is like (high, low, warm, cold, whatever). I told her that I am usually hot and that my brother even jokingly calls me “heat flash” because I get warm so easily. And, during the acupuncture treatment, she asked me multiple times whether or not my temperature was okay. Basically, the theory of acupuncture is this—health is directly related to a free flow of chi, or a balance of energy. My acupuncture was specifically targeted to spread my liver qi, or chi. The needles are inserted into acupuncture points that communicate with the body—they signal that the chi is not balanced, and that the body needs to do something to fix that. So, I as I laid on the acupuncture table, she placed needles into my head, hands, legs, and feet, for a total of about 7 to 9 needles. I didn’t feel them at all, except in my hands which I flexed a few times. The purpose for my acupuncture was for stress, and I definitely felt a sense of calm after it was done. I literally cannot wait to go again because I felt amazing afterward—my spirit was definitely settled as my chi was set back into balance.

**January 14, 2011**

“True freedom comes when we follow our Buddha nature, the natural goodness of our heart.” (12)

I have come to notice that it is surprisingly easy to be kind. I have also noticed that there is always a nice way and a mean way to something, and it is so simple to just choose the kind path. We exert so much energy being mean and aggressive—on the road, waiting in line, explaining a problem—but it is much more rewarding to just take the nicer route. That way, people will respect you as long as you respect them, and good deeds will always come back to you in a good way. Many of us are bound by impatience and unkindness, and freedom can only come from ridding ourselves of our poor habits and replacing them with good ones. That way, your opportunities will grow and frustration will be replaced with contentment.

**January 15, 2011**

“Do not blindly believe what others say, even the Buddha. See for yourself what brings contentment, clarity, and peace. That is the path for you to follow.” (13)

This quote sums up what it means to be an individual. It is always best to follow your own heart, because not everyone wants the same things out of life, so if you follow the path of others it could lead to unhappiness. The way of the Buddha isn’t right for everyone, and in this process of exploring Buddhism for myself, I am attempting to determine whether it’s the right one for me. I definitely agree with many aspects of Buddhism, but I still have a lot to learn and cannot   
“blindly” call myself a Buddhist until I have learned as much as I can and experienced more. I cannot just follow the Buddha for the sake of it—I have to *feel* it and completely dedicate myself before I can make a true commitment.

**January 20, 2011**

I have read many texts on the subject of Buddhism in order to further my knowledge on the subject. However, they all seemed, for lack of a better word, generic. Each of them seemed to tell me the same thing… “blah blah blah all beings suffer” or   
“nirvana” this and “meditation” that. And, sure, learning about all those things is all well and good. One might even say it is important to know about such things, myself included. But I struggled to apply the concepts to my life—I needed a little bit more guidance than I was getting in these texts. I needed to read something by someone like me or at least something that was written specifically *for* someone like me, if that makes any sense at all. And I am a “someone” who can grasp the basics but wants to know… “now what?” *Buddhism for Dummies* just isn’t going to cut it for me any more, although books such as this were incredibly helpful when I was just exploring Buddhism a little bit, just getting my feet wet. But now I need more. So I started investigating, trying to fins alternative books about Zen. The first book of this caliber I came across was *Intro to Buddha* by Jane Hope, which provided fun comics about the life of Buddha and illustrations about the Noble Truths and such. It was kind of like “Buddhism for Dummies: an Illustrated Companion,” which, sure, was sufficiently entertaining and appealed to my creative side (I played a game with my highlighting as I read through it), but, again, it just repeated the stuff I had already heard over and over again, just in a more creative and stimulating way. I still felt like I needed something more than the basics, but still less than the advanced, and I demanded it be presented in an original, interesting way. Needless to say, I was picky. I had almost given up on finding this ideal text, until one day, as I was perusing the Eastern Religion shelves (or, should I say, *shelf*) at Barnes and Noble, I picked up the book *Hardcore Zen*, and edgy memoir, modern memoir about Zen Buddhism written by a punk rock musician slash monster movie maker. Brad Warner, who announced right from the get- go (well, on the back cover), “This is not the same old crap you’ve seen in a thousand books you don’t want to read. This is Zen for people who don’t give a rat’s ass about Zen. This is the real deal.” This was *exactly* what I was looking for and more, and I was immediately intrigued. It seemed perfect. I was in love the second I finished reading the back cover and I knew right away that a simple library check- out wouldn’t do. I needed to underline my favorite lines and dog- ear pages—I needed to (lovingly) tear this book apart. So I immediately bought it and it ended up, sadly, getting lost amidst my giant pile of “to read” books. Finally, about a month after I bought it, I found it under “The Ones Who Hit the Hardest,” a book about Steeler Country in the 70s. After completing my adventure with Terry Bradshaw and “Mean” Joe Greene, I finally started reading *Hardcore Zen* (about 10 minutes ago, in fact). And I already adore every word of it. The author has already claimed that “everything is sacred…[and] everything is profane.” But, about a page later, he comments, “on the other hand, *nothing* is sacred and *nothing* is profane.” This is going to be an interesting read, for sure.

**January 25, 2011**

The author of *Hardcore Zen* seemed to have the same frustrations when he started out as I do now—“It’s a damned shame that so much so-called Buddhist writing seems intended to function like spiritual elevator music.” I am absolutely loving this book. I have only read through the first chapter, and it is already proving to be more helpful than everything else about Buddhism that I’ve read combined. I’d reflect more on what I’ve read but I can’t seem to put this book down long enough!

**February 1, 2011**

So far, *Hardcore Zen* has dealt a lot with the concept of “truth” and its connection to traditional religion. How is it that religion ultimately started as a way to explain the work around us and reveal the truth, yet, now, “religion is one of the last places you’ll look for truth.” It seems, to me, that religion is so corrupt now. So many people want to convert other and get themselves a “good word” in with some “god,” that may or may not exist, while the rest of us don’t even have time to think. Organized religion is the source of so many wars and deaths and an insurmountable pile of turmoil. That’s why Zen Buddhism is such a good choice for me, and perhaps for all of us (though I would never force it on anyone), because it’s not a religion. In fact, it’s the opposite, because it “doesn’t have a set system of beliefs for you to adopt,” which is definitely refreshing. Zen isn’t restrictive; it allows you to explore. It’s more a way of life than a religion, and I absolutely love giving this way of life a test run, just to see if it’s something I’d like to continue pursuing. Even if I never reach “enlightenment” (even Brad Warner admits he hasn’t and probably never will), it’s just nice to be a part of something that pushes me to question everything, even Zen itself.

**February 2, 2011**

“Wherever you live is your temple if you treat it like one.”(14)

Like Brad Warner explains in his book *Hardcore Zen*, utopia is not real, and we can never live there. The world is as good as it gets, which means we are essentially living in paradise, right here, right now. However, we are so consumed with wanting to live in an ideal world, which doesn’t even exist, that we cannot seem to appreciate where we are living now. Once we begin to see the great attributes of our own homes, we will begin to realize that where we’re living really is perfect.

“Though we often live unconsciously on ‘automatic pilot,’ every one of us can learn to be awake. It just takes practice.” (15)

Living on ‘automatic pilot,’ to me, corresponds with wasting time. So, basically, you should never allow yourself to waste your time, and in order to do that you need to fully commit yourself to everything you do, whether it be brushing your teeth, sitting in a chemistry lecture, or reading a novel. Always be aware of your surroundings and pay attention to what you’re doing *at the moment*, no matter what you may be doing. Which, trust me, especially with a Blackberry, is hard, but it’s worth it if you try.

“The mind contains all possibilities.” (16)

Sometimes it just amazes me what the human mind is capable of doing, and the irony of the situation is that we have to use our minds to study our minds. I am not sure how true this is, but we have all heard the line that a given human only uses about 10% of his brain power. Whether that’s true or not, the mind is still simply fascinating. Whether solving calculus problems, tricking us with optical illusions, or helping us perform basic bodily functions, our minds are always working. Even when we are asleep, our minds are awake through our dreams. It is definitely important to always keep our minds exercising by keeping them open to new ideas and concepts, as well as constantly asking questions and probing what we think we know. Because it is important to keep our minds as healthy as possible.

“If you cant find the truth right where you are, where else do you think you will find it?” (17)

The only way to find the truth is by asking questions, wherever you are. Plain and simple.

**March 17, 2011**

For the past few months I have been exploring my independent meditation practices. While group meditation has been fulfilling, it is more difficult for me to get in the groove and feel at peace as compared to when I meditate on my own. I feel that when I am meditating, I experience a calm that enables me to manage my stress and escape from the everyday annoyances of life in a way I have never been able to before. In addition to meditating, my exploration of Buddhist readings has inspired several paintings and poems. These art forms are meant to capture the essence of what I have learned as well as my struggle to grasp exactly what it means to be a Buddhist. The poems and photos of the paintings are shown in the below attachment, “Buddhism Poetry.”

**Anyone Out There?**

dramatic radio-astronomy

engulfed sky

sending radio signals

intelligent sphere

wants to convey

interstellar messages

planets

stars

galaxy

listen for infinity

you and me

alone

in this

experimental

universe

**Cheers Minus the Beers: Let’s Drink to Small Talk**

Yoda barkeep

refreshing new breed

conversational ringleader

contrasting mixture

(vaguely anonymous)

consumed mellow riff (small talk)

flourished infused syrup

eschewing exclusive cocktails

(tequila antiquity)

not so secretive

[a vivid empty glass]

**Going With the Glow: A Fall-Foliage Bike Ride**

green leaf-peeping

“turning” colors

yellow leaf- peeping

color transformation

red leaf- peeping

red green yellow

red

yellow green

deep green

mostly green

predominant green

element

picture-perfect small town

random clichéd rendezvous

fascinating irregularity

**In Russia, a Schoolhouse Home**

wandering goats

inherited the stream

pear

history

apple

history

wooden silhouettes

ramshackle village

schoolhouse invitation

cabbage patch retreat

**A Modern Spin on Spirituality**

charcoal flame

enormous energy

unusual Buddhas

unique

rotund concept

stylized

whimsical

monumental

nature

reflecting evolution

explore bliss

silvery clouds

allude tradition

rejuvenate spirituality

stylization

strength

profound life force

**The Old-Fashioned Pleasures of a Quiet Place in Amish Indiana**

modest allure

increasing

deeper appreciation

fertile satisfaction

rejected rich comfort

clip-clopping deconstructed

alternative principles

rapidly revealing gaze

complicated

contrasted

pleasant

ultimate luck

“It’s peaceful.”

**Collider Meets Its Goal for Power**

a trillion profound moments

eclipsing

the night

the future

accelerated fireballs

invigorate inevitable energy

exotic collisions

vaporized

tiny blossoming dimensions

strange discoveries

hunt a trillion spitfires

fundamental wistfulness

subatomic symbolism

**The Circular Logic of the Universe**

straight curved

spiral

stable unstable

bubble

safe hostile

planet

dominant modest

tension

loud soft

language

soulful affair

illustrious

exuberant

radiant

arduous

misleading translucencies

**Visions of Sugar Plums**

pure energy

mesmerizing

a sleeping night

intricate dreams

whirling

beauty

and

eternal sweets

sublime innocence

enchants

splendid simplicity

sparkling charm

magic,

an untarnished snow

**Found Poetry from quotes in “Buddha’s Little Instruction Book.”**

**I.**

cloudy water

settles

upset mind

settles

a clear course

**II.**

past memory

future fantasy

we can

truly love

here

and

now.

**III.**

words=

power.

they

destroy.

they

heal.

they

change

worlds.

**IV.**

not

the Buddha.

*your*

self

brings

peace.

follow the path.

**Haikus**

Haikus are a Japanese form or poetry embraced as a form of expression in Zen Buddhism. Haikus typically follow a 5-7-5 syllabic pattern and are 3 lines long. Seasons are usually mentioned or implied, so this set of haikus represents the progression of the four seasons.

**I.**

jolly bells

a silent snow falls

roof tops sleep

**II.**

smell the dewey air

follow the muddy footprints

a budding moment

**III.**

a tiny cocoon

hear the swift, tinkling rustle

beauty emerges

**IV.**

the breeze catches leaves

swallow up the sweet, crisp air

taste autumn colors

**Ghazal**

Position: full lotus. Maintain the stance.

Sit, breathe, and remember the Buddha.

Breathing is timed. Follow the bell.

Open your mind, filled with thoughts of the Buddha.

The smell of incense wafts through the air.

Inhale, exhale, learn the path of the Buddha.

Repeat: *Om mani padme hum.*

Silently chant and follow the Buddha.

Suffering everywhere must come to an end.

Meditate, never forgetting the life of the Buddha.

The goal of Nirvana comes slowly into reach.

Grasp it, attain it, enlightened with the Buddha.

**Free Verse**

“Even loss and betrayal…”

Halloween, 1 year ago.

I dressed as a witch.

He, as a vampire.

All Hallow’s Eve. Present day.

I am a ketchup bottle.

My mother is mustard.

He was a vampire,

drawing blood,

but,

I’m finally

red again.

“…can bring us awakening”

**Meditation**

first

back away

just nervous

tiny

small

carpeted

sit

focus

kept walking

find thoughts

must sit

reason turned

try

forever center

**Acupunture**

blah texts

repeated Buddha

know everything

nothing hardcore

word basics

subject things

profane way

immediately

go

needed

Zen Buddhism

just

read

something

**Found Poetry from *Hardcore Zen***

**“Gimme Some Truth”**

**Haiku (prelude)**

Question everything

Become another nothing

This is paradise

**I.**

Everything is sacred.

Nothing is sacred.

Question everything.

Don’t give a rat’s ass.

You can’t live in paradise.

This world is paradise.

A mind of your own?

Ain’t no such thing.

Autobiographies suck.

The truth simply *is*.

**II.**

Truth

can't explain

Truth

must include

Truth

has to be

Truth

just *is*

…everything

**III.**

Question

explanations

Question

truth

Question

…everything

**V.**

God

is wrong

Your parents

are wrong

The Buddha

is wrong

…authority is a mistake

tear it down.

(pull up the roots)