

## **Learning to Pause (Gunilla Norris)**

In almost all traditions of spiritual development  
There is the understanding that our wills  
Need to be trained. Without willingness  
We cannot enter into stability  
On behalf of our inner lives

Willingness is not willpower,  
The----“pull up your boot straps”---- kind  
Willingness is more like surrender  
To one’s deep longing.  
It orients us according to the heart’s desire  
Instead of the ego’s demands.

This requires recollection. A little space of time  
to remember. Thoreau called it living  
with a wide margin.  
We can start by giving ourselves  
Just a tiny, small margin.

Without it being any more than simply stopping  
We can pause all through the day to feel  
Ourselves in time and space.  
This allows us to be located.

These little stops bring something of ourselves  
Back to the whole  
The way a bee brings nectar to its hive.

When we learn to do this many times a day\_\_\_  
Before getting out o bed, before meals, before leaving for work, before  
turning on a light or shutting it—  
The pauses add up

We are expressing a little pressure of the will  
Over time the habit of recollection leads us back to the center,  
to stillness and listening

There we can begin to find  
A new center from which to live

## **About Gunilla Norris**

My parents were world travelers in the Swedish diplomatic corps and so I grew up essentially in three places — Argentina, Sweden and the United States. As a child I was given a rich exposure to different languages and cultures.

I received my B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College and my M.S. from Bridgeport University in the field of human development. I am a mother and a grandmother. I have been a psychotherapist in private practice for more than thirty years and have felt privileged to accompany many people on their journeys to growth and healing. My special love has been teaching meditation and leading contemplative workshops of many kinds.

As a writer I have published eleven children's books, one book of poetry and six books on spirituality. Five of these books are in print; I would be pleased to have you read about them by clicking on their individual titles.

When I published *Being Home* in 1991 I did not know that I had begun a series of books on what I now call household spirituality, or the practice of spiritual awareness in the most mundane and simple of circumstances. Together these books seem to me to be like a crystal with many facets. They are part of one thing and yet shed light from different perspectives on the humblest of our day-to-day tasks. It has always been my understanding that when we are really present in our daily activities, our lives become more luminous, filled with love and grace.