

## 2007 Essay Contest

For Joshua Tree 2007, we are delighted to announce the winner,

**Angela Buckley**

of Grass Valley, California

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Angela Buckley has entered the Joshua Tree essay contest every year since its inception – that is 7 times – and has been a finalist repeatedly, but she was frankly stunned to receive the call that she had actually won! She says that writing the essay has become just a part of her practice, something she does every year for herself.

In the past, she has tried many different techniques, studied past winners and tried to figure out what would please those choosing the winner. This year, she just sat down and wrote "like she was talking to her best friend." She didn't worry about pleasing anyone else; she says, "I have reached that point where I don't have time to be anyone other than who I am."

Angela grew up in the Deep South and lived in Texas for many years. Moving to California two years ago has been an experience that makes her appreciate her roots and her heritage. She understands what it means to be a Southerner, and she has healed family relationships where there was former estrangement. She sees with a lot more clarity the dreams that are truly hers, and the ones that belong to someone or something else.

A book editor for many years, Angela first encountered Lynn's work when someone put *Jaguar Woman* on her desk. She found that book so captivating and beautiful that she sought out Lynn's other books, eventually finding the website and enrolling in an online class in 2002. She was quite active on the public forum for awhile under the name "Golden Wings." Her new forum name is "dreaming in white."

Her spiritual path led her deeply into anthroposophy, and she flourished there for many years. She says of her past religious experiences that she has always found at some point people who try to solidify teachings into a structure that feels uncomfortably rigid to her. She is attracted to shamanism because it honors your inner life and your own truth.

A former pianist diverted from that path by injury, Angela's passion is song writing. As she hones this craft, she dreams of becoming a staff writer for a music publishing company someday. She lives with her husband and four-year-old son in Grass Valley, California.

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**For this years essay, the assignment was to write about "Soaring on the Wings of Intent "; whatever that means to you.**

**Here is Angela's winning essay.**

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## *I Am the Arrow*

*Two and a half years ago, I left a city I loved. There, I'd arranged the elements of my life just so: the right neighborhood, right friends, right job, right concepts. My creation entranced me. Yet I stepped right out of that lovely soft nest, not once anticipating I would hit the earth with a thud.*

*Now, isolated and in a harder place, experiencing loss, I've found a new lesson. Letting go of what I loved was a necessary action in being who I truly am. Everything I held so dear left me too heavy, hazy, and entangled for flight.*

*Soaring on the wings of intent is as much about not-doing as it is about doing. It means cutting away what holds me down and dropping my encumbrances, however alluring they seem. It means making room in myself for grace to move. It means suspending my small thoughts and emotional reactions long enough to heed something that cannot be controlled or analyzed: a dream that endures in me, waits to burst from its shell, then feed, then take wing. A dream that is always present, even when I feel bereft, and that remains whole, even when I believe I've been shattered. A dream that retains its sharp edge, its wildness, despite my domesticity or dull choices.*

*A dream whose rightful destiny is to be infused with intent.*

*Intent means being one with my destination. It's not quite the same as having a goal--it's not a matter of what I will achieve someday. It differs from longing for something I perceive I lack. Using intent means already being my someday, erasing the barriers of time, of cause and effect. Awakening from the dream of separation. With intent, I am the hunter who does not even need to aim. My arrow is already one with its prey, at the moment I perceive the prey. My arrow was always sunk in that tender flesh. I am the arrow; I am the flesh.*

*With intent, I do not soar toward anything, so much as I soar because to soar is my true nature. I soar because by becoming my destination, I hold a broader vision that reveals the topography of my life. I live framed by time and matter, yet I dwell in something greater, something vast.*

*Manifesting who I am is not an automatic outcome of following prescribed steps. Selfhood can't be purchased. Nor can it be bestowed on me. That kind of work and guidance will endow me with tools to build a leaping-off place and teach me to read the map, yet to soar means ultimately to leave all that behind.*

***There is no one right way. There's only his way, her way, your way, my way. My life is my dream, my responsibility. And as my dream quickens in me, grows clearer, more compelling, I no longer harbor a wish to be rescued from my life. I learn instead that freedom comes in making my unique dream stronger.***

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