

A COURSE TOWARDS A CULTURAL-SPIRITUAL APPROACH
TO DYING & DEATH

INSCRIBING SIGNS WITH A FINGER DIPPED IN LIGHT



IN COOPERATION WITH: THE SECTION FOR LITERARY ARTS &
HUMANITIES, THE SECTION FOR PERFORMING ARTS, THE COLLEGIUM OF
THE SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE, GOETHEANUM, DORNACH

COURSE DURATION: MARCH - NOVEMBER 2026

A COURSE TOWARDS A CULTURAL-SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO DYING AND DEATH

This work is of great importance to us, thank you for your inquiry!

Inscribing Signs

ABN 13 895 494 342

Course convenors:

Iris Curteis 0487 719 476

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Course duration: March – November 2026

Modes of delivery:

Five 4-Day Intensives Thursdays – Sundays

Five Online Learning sessions with conversations, follow ups and questions [2 hours sessions, set dates] Independent reading and engagement with course material

Course Venue: Ballina Beach Resort, 76 Cedar Cres., East Ballina, NSW 2478

Course Accommodation: please inquire and book with the Resort (02) 6686 8888

reception@ballinabeachresort.com.au

www.ballinabeachresort.com.au

Endorsement Presentations: February 2027

Front cover Image: Yolanda Overvelde, 'Kosmisch Licht ' [Cosmic Light]

Introduction

Most of us do not understand how to die, how to consciously meet Death, prepared and with equanimity. Predominantly, conventional approaches to quality end of life care offer a way to relieve pain and suffering, to provide compassionate support to family, friends and carers and increasingly include information that directs the terminally ill towards voluntary assisted dying. Death, in this way of thinking, cannot be defeated, but it can be 'managed' and scheduled, and consequently, our experience of the spiritual dimension of the act of dying becomes an abstraction.

If we look to earlier times, we find images and approaches to dying and death borne by imaginations, inspirations and intuitions that held profound knowledge. The consciousness, understanding and reverence that should surround dying and death and life beyond the threshold, have been lost, silenced and 'dropped' out of the cultural-spiritual life of individuals and communities. We now need to approach this in new ways.

As course presenters, our aim is to develop a sincere, earnest relationship *with* Death, an understanding of the individual path of dying, and reverence and honoring of the actual, autonomous moment of death.

Using creative sources and insights offered by Spiritual Science, we discover death is the most sacred moment in our life; *it is entirely individual*. This insight, paired with the added knowledge that in every moment of life we experience a process of dying and becoming, allows us to focus on and develop with you, the Spiritual-Cultural approaches and creative processes you can then apply with autonomy and integrity. These include visual art, music, creative speech, poetry, creative writing, oral storytelling and folktale research, eurythmy, and a deep study of anthroposophy.

All presenters work out of their professional and personal insights and spiritual understanding - we encourage you to bring your own individual spirituality to bear on course content. We will offer deeply insightful presentations to encourage you to approach dying and death in your own life and so enable you, as a Companion, to use this transformative knowledge and spiritual awareness to support those journeying towards the threshold.

There is a further increasingly urgent question we will explore. Our fear of death and dying has separated us from life imbued with Spirit and pushed us deeper into materialism and consequently onto a path of destruction we now know by the term of 'omnicide'. Our course is shaped by our resolve to find new approaches to dying and death not only for our own sake, but for the sake of Earth's healing and health, the sacred interconnectedness of life, and the evolution of humanity towards freedom and love. Our increasingly challenging times will provide us with opportunities to realise and to deepen our spiritual interconnectedness and responsibilities.

Who is this course for?

This Schooling Course is a spiritual pathway to understand dying, death and rebirth. It is not a hands-on home care course as we feel these are offered by others with competence and commitment. What we offer is a process of inner development for those of you dedicated to accompanying the dying with your authentic spiritual insights through cultural and creative means. We recommend our Course if you wish to care for family and friends, your community, or consciously prepare yourself for death; are grieving a loved one; or seeking greater understanding of the journey beyond the threshold. Our Course equally provides personal and professional development if you seek greater emotional intelligence, self-awareness and lifelong learning in relation to your profession, for example: counsellors, health practitioners and therapists, carers, social- and support workers, educators, first responders, and those who wish to care for the newly deceased, such as funeral personnel and celebrants.

Course intention:

- To facilitate a process through which participants develop their own healthy and integrated relationship to dying and death
- To educate and mentor participants who intend to become trusted Companions of the dying, or those who have recently crossed the threshold
- To enable participants to offer, where appropriate, artistic and contemplative activity for, or with, the dying and their loved-ones as ways to experience threshold crossings

Trusted companions are open to:

- Contemplating their own life, examining their relationship to dying or near-death experiences and, through personal exchanges of these experiences, actively practice perceiving, contemplating and engaging with death
- Actively engaging in stimulating and supporting transformative change in individuals and communities
- Participate in creating a community of people who support each other on this path in service to their families, friends and communities
- Learning about current developments, insights and research in cultural-spiritual approaches to dying and death

Application of enrolment:

Why do you wish take this course? Do you wish to develop your own relationship to Death and dying as part of Life, and consciously engage with dying and death on a personal level? Are you enquiring about this course to develop your understanding of dying and death to serve your family, friends and/or community as a trusted Companion? Are you inquiring because you are interested in your professional development? Please include any experiences you have relevant to this field and send to:

Iris Curteis an_lomall@bigpond.com mob: 0487 719 476

The course convenors will contact you to arrange a conversation and answer questions. We guarantee discretion in all matters of the application process.

Internal endorsement and certificate:

To qualify for internal endorsement and certificate you will be required to complete a minimum of 90% of this course, including:

- Participation in intensives, online learning, 250-word presentations and conversations;
- Developing your creative journal, which includes:
- Artistic work [your selections]
- Your 250-word responses to a topic in each intensive and online learning session
- Your work with your evolving questions, which requires you to enter your reflections into your journal, and demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a cultural-spiritual approach to dying and death

Your graduation will include: a 30 min presentation and conversation [on a topic we have covered in the course]; a storytelling of a folktale, legend, saga or myth of your choice. Consistently working in your journal [submitting aprox. 1800 - 2000 words of your choice] will support you to generate and collate a wealth of material and a resource for your future work.

Our commitment

We will provide you with:

- Individual, respectful and discrete feedback and support [phone, email, in person conversation where possible]
- Constructive comment on both your strengths and areas that need further development
- Responses to questions related to the specific sessions and subjects we teach and general learning materials

Course fees

The course fees of \$6500 [Early Bird \$6250 paid by 31 December 25] cover all tuition costs, both Intensives and online, including phone, email and in person support [where possible], and your course materials with one exception [see p. 12]. At aprox. 300 hours of tuition the hourly rate charged is \$22.00. These fees cover travel and accommodation for all lectures and artistic presenters as well as remuneration for their work and materials, course venue and administration.

Payable to Irmhild Kleinhenz, Iris Curteis

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We waive application fees, but we require payment within 12 weeks of your acceptance into the course.

Withdrawal and refunds

If participants must withdraw for reasons of health or extreme personal circumstances [proof required] up to 21 days before commencement 80% of payment will be refunded. If participants must withdraw from the course after commencement for reasons of health or extreme personal circumstances [proof required] the current installment needs to be honoured; 60% of the *remaining annual fee* will be returned.

Continued enrolment

Fees must be kept current [please contact us if there is a problem]. Please note: participants will not be able to attend Intensives, Online Learning, etc. or receive learning materials if fees are outstanding unless we have entered into an honorable agreement.

Course material:

The lecture precis, readings, and creative materials are generally supplied by lecturers; art materials are of high standard and provided during the sessions.

Course commencement:

Thursday 12 March 2026

Venue: Ballina Beach Resort, 76 Cedar Cres., East Ballina, NSW 2478

Enrollments close: 28th February 2026

Course structure:

The course requires face-to-face and online study, participant presentations, and independent learning.

The five four-Day Intensives will introduce and develop both experiential and theoretical understanding of the themes in a structured, engaging, participatory learning environment. Your lecturers and tutors may set tasks, contemplative or creative practices, to guide you through the themes and material, towards independent research, reflection, short written responses and the preparation of creative presentations that further develop your skills and confidence.

The five Online Conversations [zoom] offered between intensives will not be recorded. In these sessions Irmhild will present on themes of Salutogenesis [see below]; we will also provide a space for discussion, questions and sharing of insights you've gained from your independent work [previous Intensive].

You will be asked to present your 250-word responses to the group, which is a good way to build confidence for your final presentation on graduating. Please note: Your attendance in the conversation is part of the course. If you genuinely cannot attend a session, please let us know, and send your written response via email and contact the relevant lecturer if you have questions.

Course hours:

40 hours per intensive [bi-monthly]

2 hours per online conversation and learning [bi-monthly]

4 hours independent learning [weekly]

Five four-day Intensives:

12-15 March

7- 10 May

16- 5 July

10 – 13 September

12 – 15 Nov

Please note: if you are travelling, you need to arrive on Wednesday evening to be refreshed and ready to participate on Thursday morning; please plan your departure for Monday morning. Each Intensive ends on Sunday evening at 8:15 p.m.

Online Conversations and follow up:

These are delivered via zoom; we will discuss dates with you in person at the first Intensive.

FOUR-DAY INTENSIVES & THEMES

All intensives include an exploration and experience of the themes through applied art, for example: Visual Art, Eurythmy [movement art], Creative Speech [spoken word, working with breath, planetary vowels, zodiacal consonants], Poetry and Creative Writing, Oral Storytelling and Music [various modes] and reflection on the relationship to the sacred role of the Companion.

Please note: while we reserve the right to adjust this programme should this become necessary, we will ensure to do so only with appropriate consideration and inform you at the earliest possible time.

THEME 1: THE MEANING OF THE EXPERIENCE OF DYING AND DEATH

The Image of Death in the Evolution of Human Consciousness; experience of dying and the death as an autonomous moment, an experience of individuality; The challenge of pain. The Breaking of the Silver Thread; The awakening of consciousness after death; Near-Death experiences; Music Thanatology;

Online

April Online: Conversation, 250-word responses,

Irmhild Salutogenesis 1: principles of health and illness

THEME 2: OUR CHANGING SPHERE OF CONSCIOUSNESS - THE LIFE PANORAMA

Introduction: the Etheric Body; Imagination Care for the body after death, laying out the body and the Vigil; the release of the life body and the three-day tableau; Coming to Grief: Keening, Laments & Funeral Rites; Water Ceremony

Online

June Online Conversation and 250-word responses; Irmhild Salutogenesis 2: Green Hermeticism - transformations

THEME 3: ACROSS THE THRESHOLD; THE PATH THROUGH THE PLANETARY SPHERES; LIFE PANORAMA: KARMALOKA;

Introduction: the Astral Body; Intuition; soul-path through the planetary spheres; Earth-Near 'Dead'; Considering Organ Donation; The consciousness of the 'dead'; Moral-Spiritual Physiognomy, Spiritual Constitution; Overcoming 'Omnicide' Animal, Plant & Earth Transformations and the work of the 'dead'; The Star

Online

August Online Conversation and 250 responses; Irmhild Salutogenesis 3: transitions through the planetary spheres and the experience of the soul.

THEME 4 SOUL AMONG SOULS; SPIRIT AMONG SPIRITS

What is Soul? What is Spirit? The relationship of the senses to the zodiacal regions and the experience of the soul. Spiritual loneliness and companionship.

Ascent toward World Midnight; Between inner-life and outer-life, between Spiritual Loneliness and Spiritual Companionship; Karmic Preparation

Online

October Online Conversation and 250-word responses; Irmhild Salutogenesis 4: Karmic relationships

THEME 5 YEARNING, AS A CREATIVE POWER

Unbornness, Spirit Germ Awakening to new life – reincarnating; Cosmopolitan Impulses; Reincarnation towards birth; through zodiac and planet Spheres I

Yearning, as a Creative Power; Soul's Awakening through the Holy Spirit; descent towards a new birth;

Returning through Resting Stars & Fixed Stars II; Integration of Spirit-Gifts

Pre-Birth Intentions; Agreements among the Unborn; binding destiny threads

Online

November Online conversation and 250-word responses

Please note: the above provides an outline, not a comprehensive or detailed curriculum of the course. We will provide these and further material on enrolment.

Lecturers and Artistic Presenters:

Iris Curteis, PhD, Storyteller, Social Artist, Speech Artist.

Through creative practice I will create an intense focus on the art of storytelling, 'Liminal Space', the power of Story. Based on decades of experience, I can state that working in depth with folktales helps us to create soul pathways for ourselves and for others – especially the dying. Preparing others and ourselves through storytelling is a gentle, respectful and profoundly beautiful and effective way to support this transition. Each storytelling allows us to approach a threshold, the more stories we are told, the more familiar our threshold experiences become, the less uncanny or frightening they feel. Repeating this experience can ease fear, especially where there is a lesser degree of lived experience of meditation, or a greater doubt in spiritual realities. I will introduce you to the Art of Speech, creative work with sounds, listening and silence, poetic metre and an approach to *keening* as a healthy practice of individual and communal grieving. Theory will include folktale research, liminal space and Anthroposophy.

Tania Hungerford-Gerth, Master of Therapeutic Arts Practice

Tania Hungerford-Gerth specialises in Anthroposophy within adult education. Her expertise is grounded in extensive training across diverse fields, including the arts—with a focus on sculpture—alongside social science, biography work, counselling, and art therapy. She teaches a comprehensive range of subjects designed for aspiring and current Waldorf educators, as well as coordinating the Advanced Diploma and a variety of Professional Development courses, including Sculpture, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, the development and support of the Twelve Senses, Human Development, and the Four Temperaments. Her curriculum also features critical units on Professional Communication and Conflict Resolution, Trauma Awareness and Support, and Inclusive Teaching Practices for students with diverse learning needs.

Irmhild Kleinhenz, Anthroposophic Naturopathy, Integrative Medicine, Accredited Trainer, ISAN

Irmhild Kleinhenz, a specialist in her field of anthroposophic Naturopathy and Integrative medicine, is an accredited Trainer with ISAN, as a branch of the Anthroposophic Medical Section, Switzerland. For over forty years, her focus has been Salutogenic and biographical approaches to health and illness. As a Master of the Anthroposophic Naturopaths Guild in Australia, she has played a significant role in developing and fostering the professional community work of anthroposophic Naturopathy on an International level. Her work with dying and death support spans over 50 years, and includes teaching carers and support workers the laying out of the body and holding a Vigil. Directed by her deep interest and research into healing substances, she has developed various balms and oils for this work. Of particular interest for her now is the gesture of the Companion as a new impulse for the future work in dying and the urgent need for humanity to understand the true nature of death.

Michelle Nicholls, RN, Dip. Eurythmy, Dip. Eurythmy Therapy

Michelle's professional nursing focused on chronic renal patients, and administering Haemodialysis. She decided to study Eurythmy at Aurora Australis, Anthroposophical College of the Arts, in Melbourne, and attended Peredur Centre for the Arts in the UK to complete the Diploma of Eurythmy Therapy. Her praxis-based experience includes working at Park Attwood Clinic [for Anthroposophic medicine], UK, which revealed the potential holistic healing practices offer when therapeutic modalities work together for the benefit of the patient. Returning to Australia, Michelle joined The Melbourne Therapy Centre, as a practice nurse, continuing her work as Eurythmy Therapist in private practice, as well as working at the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School. Eurythmy and Nursing are both unique in the way they require the practitioner to have the capacity to sit comfortably with a patient / client, often during extreme threshold moments in their life. Michelle has had many years of service in both areas and is currently undertaking advanced studies as Curative Eurythmy Trainer.

Gillian Rogers, M.Ed (Steiner), Grad Dip Adult Ed., English (Hons). Cert IV Community Services, Dip. Counselling.

Gillian has a wealth of experience teaching adolescence Creative Writing. She is dedicated to the exploration of creative processes that reflect the interconnectedness between body, soul and spirit. Her workshop approach will provide experiences that can sensitise participants to the poetic in language and aid development of a 'Poetic Soul' which can with greater sensitivity accompany those approaching the threshold. What makes poetic language different from prose? How does it create nuanced, deep understanding while working on the feeling life of listeners? Speaking, sharing and appreciating poetry will provide inspiration for the creative process of composing poetry.

Additional Presenters

Peter Roberts, Certified Music-Thanatologist

A certified Music-Thanatologist, Peter trained in this specialised discipline in Montana, USA, and has offered this form of care in Australia since 1997. This approach includes live, prescriptively played music (harp and voice) for the seriously ill, the dying, their families and friends. While the focus of the training was entirely on palliative care, Peter further developed his capacity to include convalescing patients and adapted his approach to the nurture and support of infants in the critical care nursery. 'During my studies, I learned to offer music in a careful, thoughtful manner, to express compassion and an attentive, loving presence through the music. I was challenged to consider what will work in response to the individual's needs. That means, I read patients, not music, paying close attention to their physical, psychological and emotional changes, and to play in response to these cues. I can best describe it as dancing with a stranger in the dark. As their rhythm, their rate of breathing, changes, my playing also changes. We synchronise ; it's not clear

who is leading who. The effect can be profound. The movement is always from music towards a comfortable, deep silence and I leave them in the embrace of music and the beauty and gentleness of this quiet.'

Peter's musical form of care was affirmed publicly through research conducted by Deakin University, Relief of Suffering at the End-of-Life. Deakin Report; 2006 Peter and Professor Emeritus Helen Cox presented at the prestigious Mayo Clinic in the USA. The Significance of music, silence and an attentive, loving presence; Qualitative research as presented at the Mayo Clinic Spiritual Care Research Conference; Music vigils; Examples, stories, reflections and recordings Website: <https://www.robertsmusic.net>

2010 Peter became the co-creator of the Reverie harps [see website].

ABC TV's Australian Story: <https://vimeo.com/236029945>

From Music into Silence, a 2019 full-length documentary, revealing the background to Peter's musical journey was screened in cinemas across Australia and in Oregon USA.

<https://vimeo.com/263142820>

Pippa White Registered Nurse, Palliative Care

has worked in palliative and home-based care for fifteen years; and for eleven years and as an Anthroposophical Nurse in both general nursing and palliative care. She has facilitated many workshops on topics of dying and death, gaining the respect and admiration of those working in close association with her who value her dedication and commitment. Pippa has been Irmhild's respected colleague for several years, during which they practiced and developed anthroposophic health care at the Melbourne Therapy Centre, and presented in public talks and workshops to promote a better understanding of the role of anthroposophical palliative and death care. Working in concert with Irmhild, Pippa will introduce core principles of 'laying out' and the preparation of the vigil.

PARTICIPANT'S TESTIMONIALS

As someone who had not experienced Storytelling or anthroposophical work before it was a profoundly magical experience for me. It required a new form of listening which invited me to undertake a journey into the unknown. Into something ancient, fascinating. The truth. The aliveness of the stories became apparent in the mapping & drawings I did and in the reflective writing and the words that flowed from a well of my own inner wisdom. Parts of me woke up with our gifted storyteller ... no one could escape. The stories connected me to life and death and deepened my connection to something greater than myself. With time & distance & reflecting back, I can see how it all weaves together and through the stories a powerful healing transforms.

'I know myself now as a whole human being with vast cycle of life on Earth and in the Cosmos.'

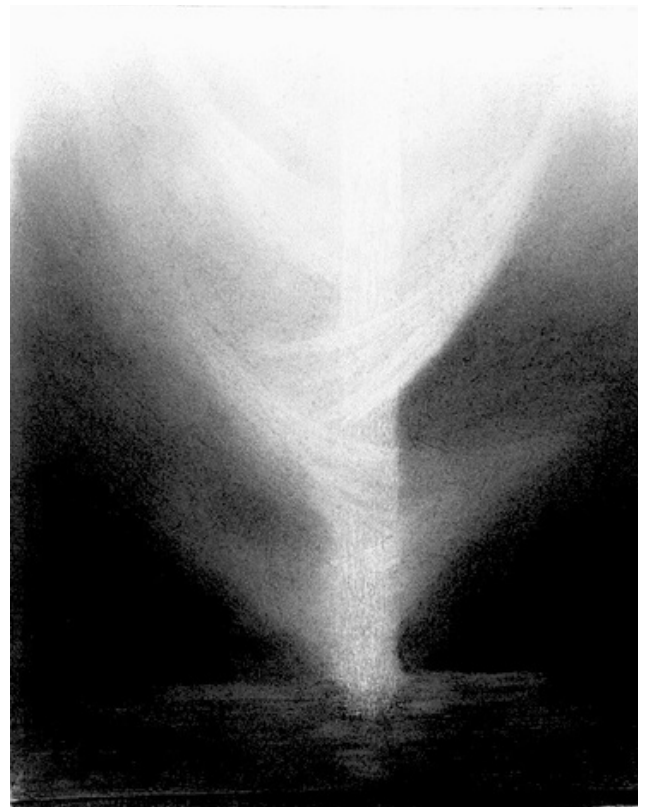
'As someone who had not experienced Eurythmy or Anthroposophic work before, I found it a beautiful way to move mind, body and spirit at an unknowingly deep level. This became apparent with my body's need to rest fully for the rest time allocated at the end of each Eurythmy session. The sessions incorporated gentleness alongside strength, inclusiveness with individualism, a lightness with reverence at the forefront. Michelle was able to read and engage the group with her grace. It was like we were a giant bubble and ever so gently she patted us so we didn't pop.'

'... Iris and Irmhild complimented each other in all that was covered throughout the year.'

'I particularly liked how the true essence of Steiner was always upheld, with no watering down of the material.'

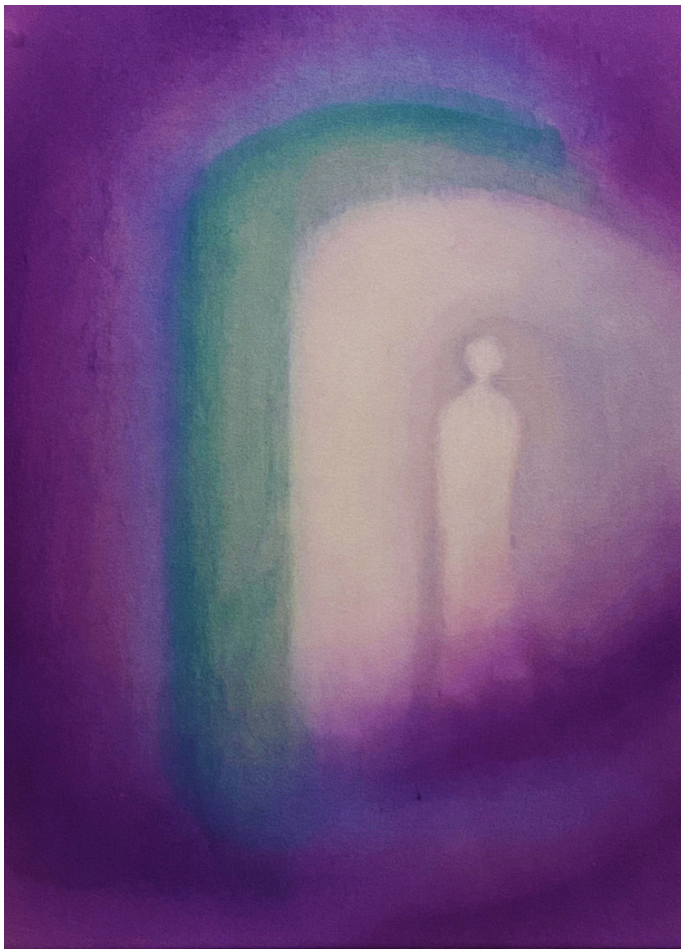
When we do eurythmy every day, I feel that my memory is better and that I can think more clearly. It feels that then I can digest and process the rest of the sessions we receive.

'Irmhild with her knowledge of Natural medicines, her experience in the death process with others, the laying out of the deceased, vigils, the stages and layers of the soul leaving, with a total reverence, love and respect always upheld. I have done a lot of end of life/doula study and can honestly say there is nothing like this course on the ground anywhere in Australia.'



charcoal work

'The storytelling, true origins of stories, voice work, and keening from Iris has connected me to many layers of my own ancestry and the place I currently live in the Centre of Australia. So many practices have been lost with regards to death, the way we deal with death within a contemporary context – a total disconnect from death, the death process and ancient spiritual practices.'



pastel work

'I felt I was being worked on deeply by the content of the presentations, the artistic exercises and the wisdom of the group. The breadth of historical, artistic, cultural and spiritual practices around death and dying. Storytelling that took me on amazing journeys of the deep forces and elements that form and surround us on the Earth and the Cosmos and are woven into and through us over time. Eurhythmy that 'sifted' me and gave light and space within myself. Art that enabled me to experience the substance of life. Poetry that swung open the door of my heart through the magical power of words. Singing and speech exercises that activated something from deep inside me and enlivened my connections within the universe through quality of sound. It has given me a fresh understanding of the journey we humans take through this life on Earth and the life between Death and re-Birth. It helped me recognise the seeds that I already hold in my life experiences, how these are part of my spiritual growth and the importance of nourishing them. It was a chance to reflect on my own losses and grief and consider how I approach my own death. It has left me with gratitude for this experience and a desire to not miss the chance to live and, most of all, love more completely as a servant of humankind.'

There is something so clarifying in seeing that this other side of earthly life, which we call death, is in fact a revelation of the intricate moments that make up a lifetime or lifetimes. How could this not be so? And how could I have lived this vivid life, that at some time will end, without appreciating the other vast life that will open at my spiritual birth? The greatest revelation for me during this course has been entering imaginatively into the journey between death and a new birth. This living picture has been such a gift; and an inspiration to live with deeper connection to the greater cosmic reality of which I am a part.