**Sinking Into What Sustains Us**

By [Rudri Bhatt Patel](https://www.thesunlightpress.com/author/rpatel/" \t "Posts by Rudri Bhatt Patel)

***On a morning walk last week,*** the glimmer of the sun peeked through the green branches. The brilliance urged me to pay attention – to look up and down and to breathe with the pulse of nature. My inclination in this current moment wasn’t to align myself with the universe. I wanted to focus on the pieces of my life that didn’t settle well, reflecting on a scrambled list of the ways I failed to meet the “enough” barometer. It’s easy to drop into this water well of self-defeating thought – the tendency is to vocalize all the places I harbor some regret –  the missed opportunity to mother with tenderness, the untouched piece of writing which requires revision, unresolved tension lingering in relationships, as well as the to-do list, the same tasks appearing from one day to the next. Another reminder how much progress hasn’t been made, despite my intention to meet a goal.

In midlife, it’s overwhelming to think about what languishes. Yesterday I heard a friend utter the words, “Life is short. You don’t know what will happen.” As cliched as it may sound, this is true. The crux of time’s movements means this – one moment, joy. The next, unexpected sadness. I’ve witnessed this seismic shift in my life, boredom twisting into crisis and ultimately, the hope is for a lesson learned, even if it’s a bitter one. In my early forties, I’ve accepted it’s dangerous to not value time as the ultimate currency; it means I don’t possess the luxury of losing myself in a maze. There is an urgency to walk the pathway with my eyes open, identifying potholes, instead of white knuckling and punching my way out of the abyss.

The sun’s heat intrudes on the ends of my hair, transforming my black hair into wisps of brunette. I breathe the air and look down at my tennis shoes and the reminders of life which line the sidewalk – the baby rabbit scurrying ahead, the smell of laundry detergent as I pass by a set of homes and cars racing forward. Everywhere, I witness subtle visible and invisible beginnings. This single thought shifts my thinking into a different direction.

It starts with the search for what glimmers. In my youth, those moments centered on milestone events, like birthdays, special occasion parties or celebrating some accolade. Now, I realize these glimmers are in front of me. Every single day. On particularly hard weeks, it’s difficult to find what glimmers. Those places of goodness are there, but it requires effort to pay attention and identify these flickers.

I know in a given day much will be undone. I won’t complete a task. Sometimes irritation will sideline my interactions with my daughter or my husband. There will be days I give in and will eat poorly or fail to exercise. My writing may suffer and the momentum on a project will dead end into nowhere. The crux of these perceived failed moments are places where I am faltering, but I’ve realized disappointment will always remain a companion.

This underlying “not enough” feeling is one I am learning to accept with greater ease. It pushes me to consider what glimmers, even when I am resisting. I listen for the woodpecker in the morning, carving out his place on a tree. I relish the sound of the coffee dripping into my favorite mug. When I have a chance to embrace my daughter, I shower her with a million kisses. The evenings on the couch watching Sherlock with my husband are unbeatable. In my solitude, I learn to acknowledge my flaws, vowing to try to make a change, knowing I might fail, but understanding my gaze must search for what glimmers. I ease into these places, the reminders of what it means to live. The push and pull of realizing I may not reach my goals always exists, but I attempt to sink into glorious moments where I am comforted, only if it is for a brief second, an afternoon or a morning.

Searching for these glimmers is what sustains me.