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Java Talk
(for April 3 to April 9, 2008)

Every Age Is The Best Age

What Gives with My Garden

“One of the most important ways that I measure success of a garden is how it changes the way you feel,” says Holly Shimuzu, in her on-line article, *Thoughts on Creating Spiritual Gardens*. Thinking about this reminded me how Mary Baker Eddy, a 19th century writer, once said, in so many words, that you can tell the significance of something by the struggle it demands.

Now that I am getting ready to work in my yard, after many years of doing other things, I cannot help but think about the vicissitudes (a variation in circumstances or fortune at different times in a life or in the development of something) of gardening, especially over 30 years, in one place that has been shared with so many who have come and gone—including dear cats.... Issa, an ancient Japanese haiku poet, who also loved nature, once wrote, “Goes out, / comes back— / the loves of a cat.” (From *The Essential Haiku* edited by Robert Hass).

One of my first gardening tasks is to screen the rich mixture from two very seasoned wooden compost boxes, approximately three feet high and six feet long, that I built way back in the early 1980's. The last time they were emptied and the contents distributed was sometime before Tasha, my old white cat, died, which was not too long after my mother died in August 1988. Even though I have added raked oak leaves; lawn clippings; kitchen scraps; ashes from the incinerator and fireplace; and more recently, non-recyclable paper; somehow, there continues to be room for more—although, in 2004, I did stop mowing my lawn and raking the leaves, in order to help restore the natural Garry Oak ecosystem here, which is more aesthetically pleasing to me.

Realizing how this perfectly and abundantly designed garden continues to give me an ever-evolving natural setting and rich mixture for growing in so many ways makes me feel happy and grateful.

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