

On March 21st, 2009 in Toronto as part of the Extern Program we gathered to discuss and explore ways to circulate the alternate story and to explore the development and use of collective and community documents. As part of that day discussions were had about 'what sustains us through difficult times' in practice. Many diverse stories were shared and a theme emerged that seemed to speak to a shared commonality of 'care and connection to others'. Among these commonalities were also differences that could be appreciated. Below is a poem developed from the shared key phrases and ideas contributed by the group. We hope these ideas will assist others in connecting to sustenance in the face of difficult times.

Speaking to the silence
A sense of caring, valuing, connecting.
Faith, acceptance, serenity, a courage,
Sadness and hope co-existing.

Everyday small acts.
A focus on what you can do,
Watering what you want to grow,
Calmness telling us we will get through.

Responding
Stepping out of the river, seeing where it bends,
Storms passing inviting action,
In the bunku we learn to be gentle with the drawer.

Similarities, differences
All the things we share.
Safety with each other
Sustaining us through learning and despair

Being gentle with the drawer
Being gentle with ourselves
Creating shelters, focusing on what you can do
Shelters, expressions, actions- tools for hope to get through.

The Extern 2009