

Fill the vase with water at room temperature. Put the flower in the vase. Place the vase on the spot you chose.

Each day, pause to enjoy looking at the flower.

Every two days, change the water. To help your friend absorb the water, occasionally again cut the stem. Some flowers live longer than others. When your flower has faded, replace it with another. If convenient, throw the faded flower where it will fertilize the ground when it disintegrates.

Play this game as long as you like. Maybe you will never stop. Always having a flower at home may subtly change your self-definition.

Trungpa, Rinpoche drove into the mountains near Boulder, Colorado to pick flowers and branches for his flower shows. At the show as he carefully arranged the flowers, the quality of his attention was remarkable. After placing each stem, he paused to observe the effect.

When I am carrying a bunch of flowers, invariably someone moved at seeing them remarks, “Oh, what beautiful flowers.”

I always stifle my smartass reply, “Yeah, well, I left the ugly ones behind.”

Perhaps the person admiring my flowers really meant to say, “Your flowers make me feel beautiful.” English grammar constrains us to dividing sentences into subject, predicate, and object, as in “I see the flowers” or “The flowers see me.” But is it so ironclad who is object, who is subject? Couldn’t the flowers be seeing me as I see the flowers? We in the Eurocentric-inspired West believe that something is true if it can be proved. In the East, on the other hand, it is common to think that the more you believe in something, the more you go toward it, the more real it becomes.



*Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche arranges flowers at Dharma Flower Show in Boulder, Colorado, 1978*

*Won't you come into my garden? I would like my roses to see you.*

—Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Here's a startling practice.

## **Game** *letting the flowers look at you*

Find a bed or bunch of vibrantly colored flowers that attract you. Best if the flowers are all of one kind.

Stand for a couple of minutes looking at the flowers. Simply look at them. Take your time.

Then let the flowers look at you. Drop your defenses against the flowers' gaze. Be vulnerable and open to the flowers seeing you. As your "I am seeing" idea drops away, the vibrancy of the flowers' color increases. Eventually there is just seeing—a two-way street.

As you become adept at this, you can do it with ferns, a tree, any natural or beautiful object, or any object at all.



*summertime pear blossoms*



*a profusion of dianthus*