

## *These are a few of the heartbreaking things*

By HeatherAsh Amara from *Out of the Fire*

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*\*Sung softly to the tune of "These are a few of my favorite things..."*

Gaza, abortion bans, school shootings, book bans, trans violence.

Palestine, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Sudan.

Human trafficking, teen suicide, domestic violence, rape, the opioid epidemic.

## *These are a few of the heartbreaking things*

Climate emergency, wildfires, animal extinction.

Plastics in the ocean, cults, destruction of the Amazon.

Systemic racism, poverty, white supremacy, patriarchy.

Hatred. Fear. Anti-Semitism. Islamophobia.

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**What do we do when:**

*When the dog bites* is genocide

*when the bee stings* is a wildfire that devastates your community

*when I'm feeling sad* is your friend's (or your own) depression and suicide attempts

Is it okay to *simply remember my favorite things* so you *don't feel so bad*?

And the converse: is it okay to shame and judge yourself to take action, or others so you feel more righteous?

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War. Poverty. Repression.

Shaming. Judgment. Divisiveness.

Fear of doing it wrong. Frozen overwhelm. Spiritual bypass.

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### **What breaks your heart?**

Stop and feel it. Don't think about it, avoid it, expect everyone else to fix it.

Feel. Breathe. Be with your discomfort, your pain. Turn towards.

If it feels too big, go slow. Set a timer. Call a friend. Wrap yourself in a blanket. Talk lovingly to yourself:

*Hi sweetheart, I know this is hard. I know your heart hurts. Stay with it.*

*Breathe. Let the tears come. Let the hopelessness, the fear, the rage come. It is okay to feel. Honor your emotions, and then let yourself get empty. Make space inside.*

Dear ones, the world is painful. Humans are cruel in so many ways.

And humans are also creative mavens of love and wild, wise wonders.

Don't side with the cruelty. But also don't deny it. Choose to

acknowledge **both** aspects: we have all been cruel at some point to

ourselves or others. And we have all been heroes, cheerleaders, and way

show-ers at some point to ourselves and others.

Slow down. Feel the heartbreak. Feel the brilliance.

Tune into what is yours to do.

Put one hand on your heart, and one hand on your belly.

Take a breath.

Say to yourself:

*Hi dear one. What creative way can I take action today? Where can I offer a hand, a dollar, a heart to someone in my neighborhood?*

*Where can we make a phone call, educate myself, boycott, donate to a larger cause that tugs at my heart?*

*And what do I need to keep spaciousness in my own life so I am sustainable, connected to my intuition, and continue to embrace the joys even in the midst of the sorrows?*

Sweet ones, we can't do it all.

And we can create great change, a little bit at a time.

Don't turn away.

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**For a very, very long time we humans have been killing, hurting, and demeaning each other.**

We have been stealing land, stealing children, stealing from the earth.

We consider ourselves so evolved, yet we destroy so much.

It's heartbreaking.

One ongoing horror is what is happening in Gaza. Israel, with arms from the United States, has steadily been bombing civilians, refugee camps, children. The long-term friction between Palestine and Israel has turned from conflict to humanitarian crisis to genocide.

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A reminder:

Shame will not motivate you to act in sustainable, creative, and effective ways.

Blame does not create healing and repair ruptures.

Guilting ourselves and others does not stop wars.

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So how do we do it differently?

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First, let's not diminish the importance of increasing our connection and care in the areas closest to us. Lovingly tend to your sick child. Get to work on time so you can pay your mortgage. Bring soup to your neighbor who has cancer. Talk on the phone with a friend who is suicidal.

**Do your art. Walk in nature. Laugh at silly movies.**

Take action, BOTH in your neighborhood and beyond your borders.

Donate. March. Write letters. Educate yourself. Hug those you love.

Dance wildly.

**It is not either, or. It is both, and.**

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**Here is a suggestion to stay engaged without burnout or avoidance:**

**Three actions every week, one local, one global, one self-care**

Volunteer. Donate. Pick up groceries for a neighbor. Call your representatives. Make art. Replenish your inner battery. Reduce your use of the precious, and limited, resources of water, electricity, etc. Support a local business. Help send someone to school. Google "how can I help..." Lean into organizations that are on the ground in the areas you want to support.

**Set aside time each week/day/month to take action in your local community and your global community, AND to replenish yourself.**

Drink lots of water, rest, and resource yourself. Find joy where you can.  
Don't guilt, shame, or blame yourself or others. Let's use creativity,  
intuition, compassion, fierce love, and tenderness as our guides.

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**My actions this week:**

**Local:** Calling a friend of mine whose husband died suddenly last month  
to see how I can best support her. Helping to set up an online wake?

**Global:** My morning prayers this week are for those negotiating for  
peace.... that the talks initiated by Qatar lead to a ceasefire and influx of  
humanitarian aid to Gaza. That there is creative repair and long-term  
peace between Palestine and Israel.

**Self-Care:** Long walks and tea with friends in upstate New York.

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Remember, beloveds. Both, and. We can't hide from the hurt and harm  
happening around us. And we also can't allow ourselves to drown in our /  
others anger, fear, or struggles. We need to foster creativity and  
sustainable, willing action. We want to learn how to hold the long view  
AND take action in the short term.

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May our hearts break open to more fierce love, more wild compassion,  
and more willing action towards the local, and global, vision of equality,  
freedom, and happiness for ALL beings.

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Other HeatherAsh articles for further reading:

**How to Make Lemonade from the Ashes:** But first squeeze the juice of  
your tears, rage, and despair

**The White Deer:** Thoughts on possession, war, horrors, and blessings