

## The Practice of Nested Meditations

From the work of Kevin Anderson, *Divinity in Disguise: Nested Meditations to Delight the Mind and Awaken the Soul* (2003)

Guidelines:

- There is no need for every stanza to connect logically to the one before or after.
- Each stanza is its own separate meditation, as it is apparent if you pause for a breath or two between stanzas.
- Each stanza begins with the words from the prior stanza in the exact order and with the same spellings and line breaks.

Example:

I honor you.

I honor you  
my soul.

I honor you  
my soul  
companion, as you are.

I honor you  
my soul  
companion, as you are  
Divinity in disguise.

It might seem easier to allow oneself to rearrange words or use homonyms (e.g., soul and sole), but part of the magical feeling the nested form evokes comes from seeing the exact words, in the same order, take us to such different places as a new line is added. The form brings delight in part because of its tight structure – which would seem to straightjacket the writer – cannot prevent the piece from escaping to surprising enlightenment.

The unexpected shifts characteristic of this form are achieved through changes in word meanings, punctuation, or inflection. The phrase in the example, “as you are” speaks its truth about unconditional acceptance in stanza three, then surprises us as it takes the honoring far beyond the acceptance in the final line.