

HOMAGE TO GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

*"Listen sweet Dove to my song,
And spread your golden wings in me;
Hatching my tender heart so long,
Till it get wing and fly away with thee."*

-- George Herbert

1.

Over 400 years ago, your heart began beating in lines
shaped as stanzas
vibrating on pages,
now found in any home between covers of your book,
that I hold close at hand tonight . . . songs to the One

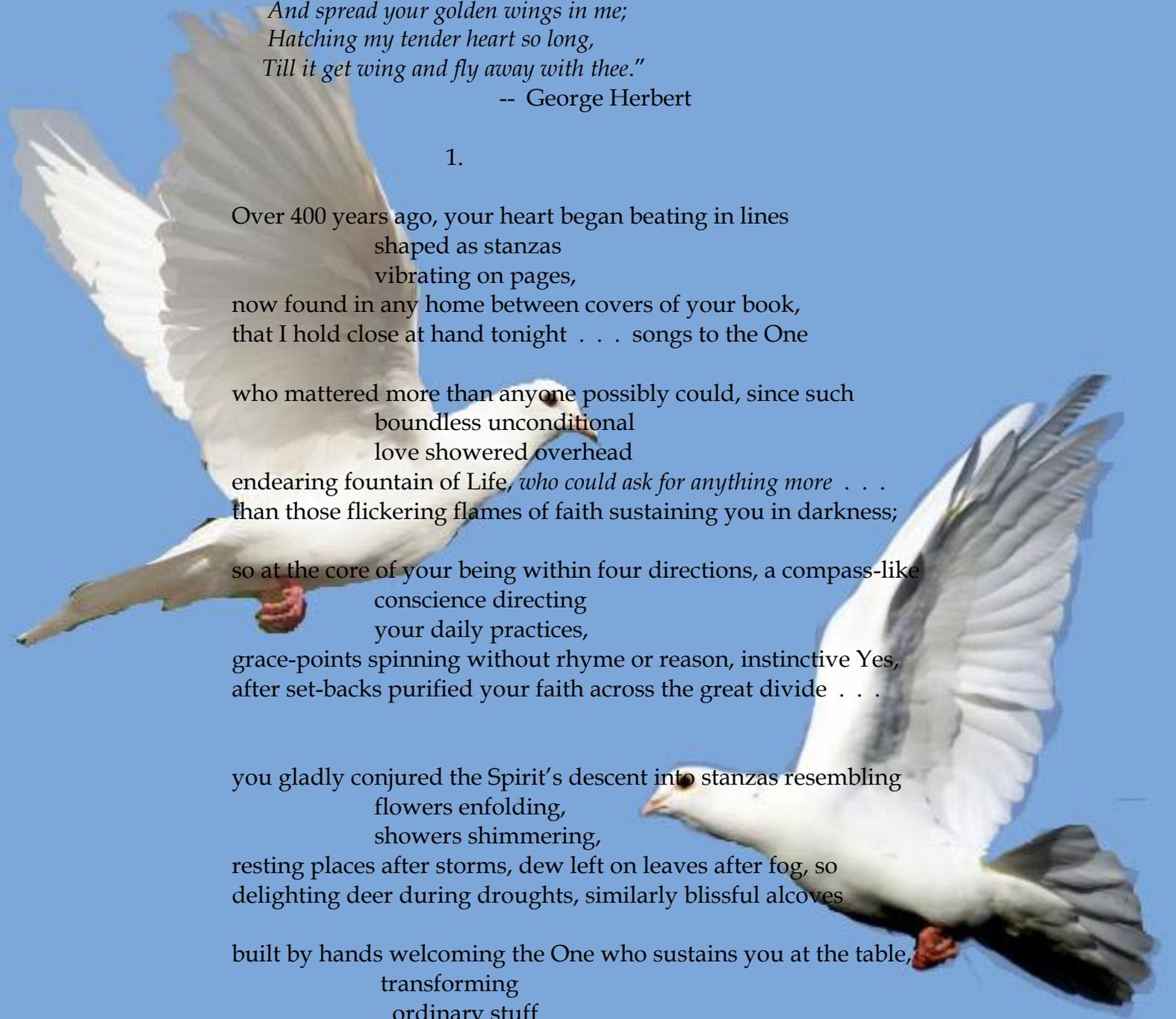
who mattered more than anyone possibly could, since such
boundless unconditional
love showered overhead
endearing fountain of Life, *who could ask for anything more* . . .
than those flickering flames of faith sustaining you in darkness;

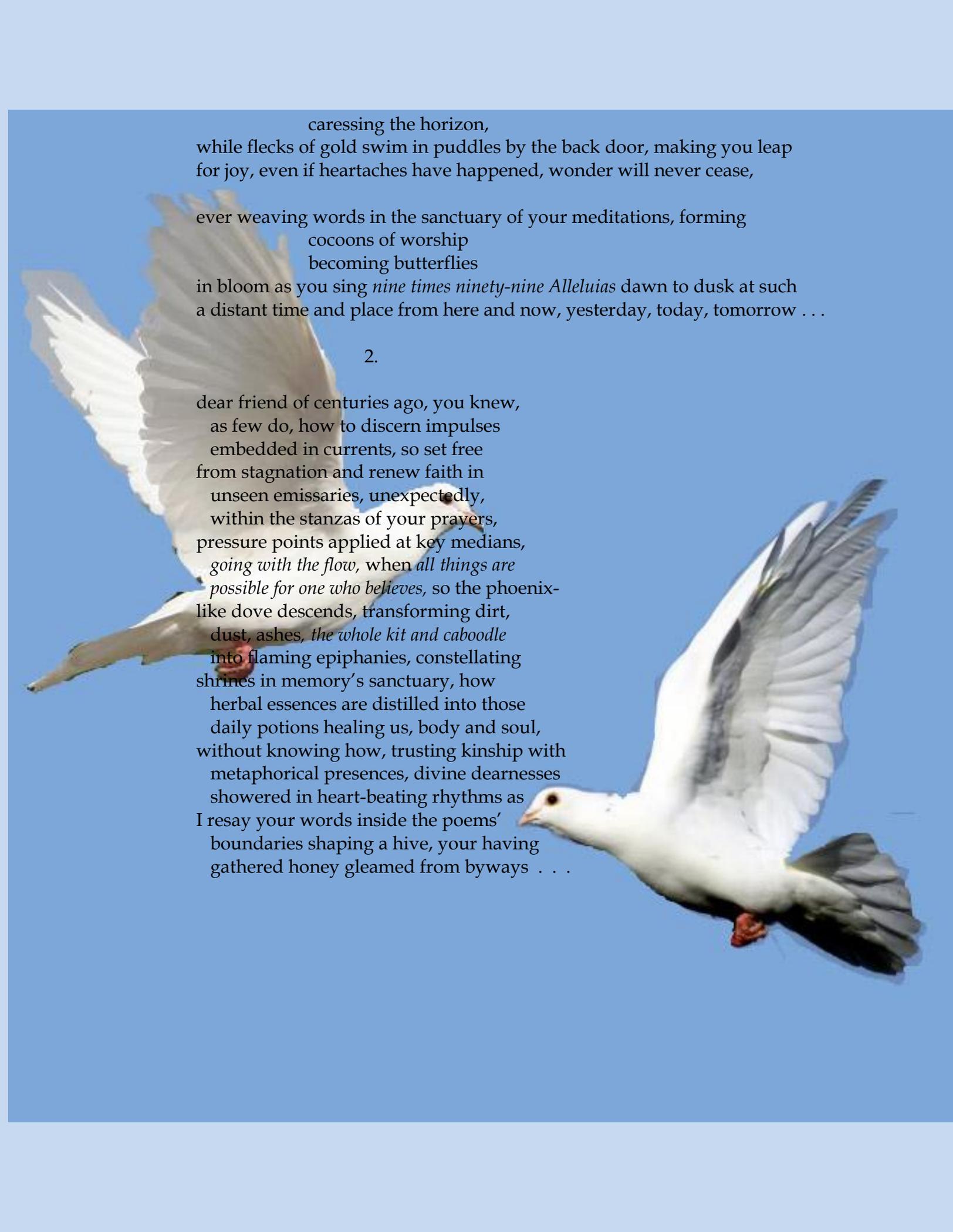
so at the core of your being within four directions, a compass-like
conscience directing
your daily practices,
grace-points spinning without rhyme or reason, instinctive Yes,
after set-backs purified your faith across the great divide . . .

you gladly conjured the Spirit's descent into stanzas resembling
flowers enfolding,
showers shimmering,
resting places after storms, dew left on leaves after fog, so
delighting deer during droughts, similarly blissful alcoves

built by hands welcoming the One who sustains you at the table,
transforming
ordinary stuff
as bread and wine into divine sustenance, so shall men and women
shine forth the way daffodils in the fields flame an English Spring,

so you believe *good will* oversees us the way clouds fading in the valley
create a rainbow





caressing the horizon,
while flecks of gold swim in puddles by the back door, making you leap
for joy, even if heartaches have happened, wonder will never cease,
ever weaving words in the sanctuary of your meditations, forming
cocoons of worship
becoming butterflies
in bloom as you sing *nine times ninety-nine Alleluias* dawn to dusk at such
a distant time and place from here and now, yesterday, today, tomorrow . . .

2.

dear friend of centuries ago, you knew,
as few do, how to discern impulses
embedded in currents, so set free
from stagnation and renew faith in
unseen emissaries, *unexpectedly*,
within the stanzas of your prayers,
pressure points applied at key medians,
going with the flow, when *all things are
possible for one who believes*, so the phoenix-
like dove descends, transforming dirt,
dust, ashes, *the whole kit and caboodle*
into flaming epiphanies, constellating
shrines in memory's sanctuary, how
herbal essences are distilled into those
daily potions healing us, body and soul,
without knowing how, trusting kinship with
metaphorical presences, divine dearnesses
showered in heart-beating rhythms as
I resay your words inside the poems'
boundaries shaping a hive, your having
gathered honey gleamed from byways . . .