



# Margaret J. Wheatley

## 2. Free from Safety

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The flags are flying at half-mast. Again.

This one drapes across the highway as I drive toward it.

It's over-sized, the type of flag that became popular  
when patriotism needed to be more visible.

It suffocates the road, limp, lifeless.

Wind attempts to lift its spirit but  
the flag refuses so  
laden with sorrow.

This flag is for Katrina.

I remember another massive flag that  
flared out defiantly in the fierce wind after 9/11.

The world I see will soon be lost in lifeless flags.

We are only at the beginning.

Last night I threw out a salt container that still had some salt in it.

I wanted to clear space in my crowded cabinet.

As I tossed it in the garbage, it came to me. There will  
come such scarcity that even those few grains will be treasure.

I still threw it out, but vowed to remember this night.

Now, how do I live whole-heartedly?

Every time a flag gets lowered, I tell myself:

This is what it feels like as a culture dies.

This is what it feels like in the age of destruction.

This is what groundless feels like.

Don't grasp for ground.

Don't grasp.

Groundlessness has to be learned.

I am teaching myself with these terrifying mantras.



**ABOUT MARGARET (MEG) WHEATLEY, Ed.D.**

*Margaret Wheatley writes, speaks, and teaches how we can accomplish our work, sustain our relationships, and willingly step forward to serve in this troubled time. She is co-founder and President emerita of The Berkana Institute, an organizational consultant since 1973, a global citizen since her youth, and a prolific writer. She has authored eight books. Her numerous articles may be downloaded free at her web site: [margaretwheatley.com](http://margaretwheatley.com). For more biographical information, see [margaretwheatley.com/bio](http://margaretwheatley.com/bio)*