

The Way of Kintsugi Writing®

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Abstract

Conceived by Dome Bulfaro in 2017, kintsugi writing is understood by the author not only as a poetry therapy practice but also as healing process. The article explains what kintsugi writing is, how it originated, what literary, artistic and therapeutic forms it was inspired by, how many types exist, how it is composed and with what users it is employed. Two types in particular are explored: the kintsugi short story and the classic kintsugi quatrain.

The entire article, except for the introductory part, is a restitution of what was theoretically expounded by the author in the first part of the kintsugi writing workshop he conducted at the 1st European Biblio/Poetry Therapy Conference held in Budapest (Hungary, 2024) and at the 2nd European Biblio/Poetry Therapy Conference held in Jyväskylä (Finland, 2025).

Kintsugi writing is widely used by Dome Bulfaro and the facilitators in poetry therapy and poet therapists who are trained in his School of Poetry Therapy (PoesiaPresente). The fifteen types devised have enabled this form of therapeutic writing to be very effective with groups of very different ages and characteristics. The author, who has been practicing poetry therapy professionally in Italy and abroad since 2009, after eight years of massive direct experimentation in the field (2017–2025), calls it the most powerful therapeutic writing technique he has used.

Keywords: kintsugi writing; poetry therapy; therapeutic writing; haiku; poem; short story; quatrain

Introduction

Transmuting by means of kintsugi writing all the experiences we consider to be negative, including the most ferocious and nefarious, into what is most precious to us and what we are... practicing daily the transmutation into gold of all that we consider to be the bearers of evil, cracks, lacerations, cannot be considered only a practice of poetry therapy. It represents much more: kintsugi writing, at least as I experience and practice it, represents a *spiritual way of remarkable growth and healing for the human being*. To apply every day this therapeutic writing technique and the philosophy of life that supports it, to every bad thought, in every painful situation, is to acquire a therapeutic *modus vivendi* that leads to an increasingly grounded, stable and empowered state of well-being.

Over the years, I have used many types and forms of therapeutic writing – from the ones suggested by James Pennebaker, Juhani Ihanus, Kathleen Adams, Kate Thompson, Gillie Bolton, Victoria Field, Judit Béres, Marco Dalla Valle and Duccio Demetrio, to the ones recurrently employed in Nicholas Mazza's RES model – but no poetry therapy technique I have adopted to date is as effective on its own in terms of growth and healing as kintsugi writing, none of them can embody on its own a philosophy of life that has an existential impact, that is, in ev-

eryday life, like kintsugi writing, because this therapeutic writing not only allows small and large inner wounds to be healed in the best possible way and as soon as possible, but its practice, if adopted daily, allows you to gradually acquire a mental posture that leads to transforming every little chip, crack and major fracture in your life into your “gold”, all the way up to enabling automatic ways of primary prevention and natural forms of self-healing.

The poetic form of haiku, inspired by harmony, is also based on a zen philosophy of life that underlies the treatment of pain, however, unlike haiku and most literary forms used in therapeutic paths, kintsugi writing was not created with the aim of raising awareness and aiding healing: these are the two main purposes that kintsugi writing can best fulfil. I applied the first types of kintsugi writing in 2017 in Italy, then other Italians adopted them too (Nucci, Bortini, Trenta, Margaglio...), notably the “*Facilitatrici della Poesiaterapia*” group (Poetry Therapy Facilitators) is specializing in this, Giulia Tosolini, Viviana Russo and Simonetta De Donatis, the latter in my research team since 2013. Since 2024, kintsugi writing has also been used outside Italy, both personally in the context of the “1st and 2nd European Conference of Biblio/Poetry Therapy” (Budapest, October 4th 2024; Jyväskylä, October 4th 2025), by Dimitra Dindangelou, online, for her ‘Expressing Myself Institute’ (January 18th 2025) and by Barbara Sangiovanni (India, 2025).

Kintsugi writing: birth, types, and purposes of healing

The three forms used in the workshop were the following

- 1- Kintsugi short story
- 2- Kintsugi poem
- 3- Classic kintsugi quatrain

When kintsugi writing came into being

Kintsugi writing consists of poetry, aphorism, short story, diary and kintsugi letter 金継ぎ. It translates into verse and poetic prose the ancient art of kintsugi, which originated in Japan to repair broken ceramic cups. The story (legend) and many different types of kintsugi poetry were devised by me on January 13, 2017, and were first published in the book *Così va molto meglio* (Bulfaro, 2018).

Why kintsugi writing was born

I came up with kintsugi writing because I realized that canonical literary forms did not allow me to be as effective in caring for people as I wanted and needed to be. To practice poetry therapy more accurately I needed therapeutic writing and not a literary form employed as a tool to do poetry therapy.

The kintsugi short story. The classic kintsugi quatrain

Currently I have devised and practiced fifteen different types of kintsugi writings. Among them, the main forms are:

- Kintsugi diary
- Kintsugi story
- Kintsugi letter
- Kintsugi free verse poem
- Kintsugi aphorism
- Kintsugi quatrain

Among these the main forms is the kintsugi quatrain, which in turn I developed in numerous forms including:

- Classic kintsugi quatrain (the first and by me most used)
- Simulated mirror kintsugi quatrain
- Real mirror kintsugi quatrain
- Chain kintsugi quatrain in group
- Chain kintsugi quatrain in pairs
- Simulated constellation kintsugi quatrain
- Real constellation kintsugi quatrain
- Royal kintsugi quatrain
- (...) and several other types.

The three most commonly used basic forms are:

- 1- The kintsugi short story
- 2- Kintsugi poem
- 3- The classic kintsugi quatrain

Main two purposes of kintsugi writing

All kintsugi literary forms are designed for the purpose of:

- 1- Helping to heal from the outside what is broken inside
- 2- Helping to transmute our deepest and most painful fractures into the most beautiful roses in our *inner garden*.

The kintsugi writing: the four sources of inspiration

The kintsugi writing to elaborate this technique within poetry therapy, I was inspired by:

- 1- Kintsugi ceramic restoration
- 2- Therapeutic writing
- 3- Western and Middle Eastern poetic quatrain
- 4- Haiku

I called this writing “kintsugi” because it incorporates in writing the same principles of the Japanese ceramic art of kintsugi. The inner scars that are created in the rejoining of the shattered pieces, create new veins of gold, become repositories of wisdom.

Kintsugi from kin “gold” and tsugi “reconnection”

“In the West when a precious bowl, teapot or vase falls and shatters, we get angry and with enormous sorrow throw away the shards. The art of kintsugi teaches, on the contrary, to highlight the fractures, embellish and add value to the broken object.” (Bulfaro, 2024)

The principles and steps of the ancient Japanese pottery restoration technique known as kintsugi from *kin* (gold) and *tsugi* (reconnection) can be reconceived in the form of therapeutic writing, namely kintsugi writing.

Wound and fracture, in the philosophy behind such a technique, are not only turned into resources, which in itself is to be considered an invaluable attitudinal achievement, but become beauty itself, the privileged place where the most infinite quality and quantity of gold can be.

What literary forms inspired the birth of kintsugi writing

Kintsugi poems arise from the union of kintsugi art with haiku and with Western poetry in quatrains (particularly Latin and Italian epigrams), the most common metrical form of European poetry; just as it is also widespread in the Middle East: Middle Eastern poetry in quatrains.

Kintsugi writing is therapeutic writing

Kintsugi writing and all its forms originated as therapeutic, non-literary writings. Only one kintsugi form fulfills the dual aesthetic and therapeutic function: the royal kintsugi quatrain.

Therapeutic writing in general differs from creative writing (which albeit to a lesser and different extent can bring well-being and thus be therapeutic) in its intentional use, aimed at growth, self-awareness, and the healing of those small and large traumas and griefs that we carry within us and that need to be transformed into resources rather than remain burdens.

The legend of how kintsugi was born

Legend has it that the kintsugi restoration technique originated in the 15th century A.D. from a painful emotional breakup. Of course, like all legends, whether its plot can be faithfully reported depends very much on its narrator (here yours truly), who in this case, while being careful to preserve the salient features of the legend, was freely inspired by the original, rewriting events to highlight the powerful metaphorical-therapeutic kintsugi role of the story itself.

Ashikaga Yoshimasa, the eighth shogun of the Ashikaga family, an extraordinary collector of vases and cups, due to a clumsy movement on his part accidentally broke his favorite cup, the

one he used during the tea ceremony, a ritual that already at that time played a very important role in Japanese culture. Yoshimasa was in despair about what had happened because of his own carelessness, which he himself deemed reprehensible, and he was so fond of the cup that, in order to restore it, he ordered it to be sent immediately to China, to the same craftsmen who had long ago shaped and decorated it. Yoshimasa wanted to have his cup back at any cost exactly as it was before the breakage. Who better than its makers could accomplish this?

After many months of anxious waiting, the much-loved cup returned, repaired, to Yoshimasa's hands. But the result was disappointing to say the least. The metal wires used to join the different pieces of the broken cup, in the same way as when suturing a deep wound, not only disfigured its formal and chromatic beauty, but also did not even restore its functionality necessary for reuse in the tea ceremony: in fact, the delicious beverage leaked out of the poorly sealed holes and cracks.

The disfigured object now seemed irretrievable and lost forever, but its owner wanted to make one last attempt: he entrusted its restoration to the best Japanese ceramic artisans in his shogunate. These, surprised by the shogun's tenacity in getting the beloved cup back intact, decided to try to turn it into a jewel, jointing and splicing the pieces in such a way that the cracks were filled in flush, with lacquer and gold dust.

Shogun Yoshimasa wanted the handover and proof of the good work of his workers to take place during a tea ceremony, to which he invited the same potters who had participated in the restoration.

Yoshimasa, for the second time, clutched his restored cup in his hands. He observed, carefully, from every angle, every nuance of the repair. The gold in the cracks had transformed the fractures that previously separated the pieces, into the most precious and luminous parts.

The protracted silence in which General Ashikaga Yoshimasa's examination was consumed had put a little tension in the spirits of the master potters. "What if the result of our restoration displeases him, what will become of us?" already some among them wondered, intimidated.

Yoshimasa watched and, to himself, reflected. He was not certain that what was in front of him was the same cup as before, but what now stood before his eyes was undoubtedly a magnificent, one-of-a-kind masterpiece.

The innovative restoration of the cup turned out to be sublime, not only because of the real and symbolic value that the gold conferred on it, nor even because of its newfound functionality, which also carried no small weight; what impressed Yoshimasa most lay in the uniqueness that his cup already possessed before, but which, thanks to this new technique, was so embellished that it was elevated to illuminating beauty, whose glow reverberated off and on to the body of the one who held it in his hands.

Yoshimasa looked at the ceramic artisans with eyes brimming with gratitude and then said, "I sought the solution to my damage outside my home, not seeing that inside my home I had so much wealth.

Thanks to you master potters, who so thoughtfully took to heart the restoration of my beloved cup, I have learned that anything, once broken, cannot return to exactly the same as before, but it can still find a renewed and richer form of existence.

Without that break that was so painful for me, we could never have come to such a beautiful cup. It was your unwavering willingness to turn shards into a jewel that made it so precious.”

After singing the praises of the master potters, he drank the first tea in his new, never-so-beloved cup. And the tea, too, it seemed to him, had never tasted so good.

This version is freely inspired by the original legend. I wrote it this way to best enhance the therapeutic virtues of this tale. In particular, I have also developed in a metaphorical sense the part in which the protagonist, thanks to his own inexcusable breaking of his favorite cup and thanks to his unfortunate reliance on “outsiders” for its repair, discovers extraordinary “internal” resources that otherwise would have remained undiscovered.

This story can serve as a good introduction to the first kintsugi writing session with a group of adults or teenagers, even though usually the metaphorisation of healing through writing about one's wounds is accomplished by breaking and repairing a cup using the kintsugi ceramic technique or by tearing and recomposing one's own drawing or photograph, again following the steps of the kintsugi ceramic technique.

Western and Middle Eastern poetic quatrain examples

Western poetic quatrain

Although they are
by Sappho

Although they are
only breath, words
which I command
are immortal

Epigram 50
by Callimachus

Escra, la balia di Frigia dal buon latte,
Micco assisté con ogni cura, mentre visse.
Defunta, ne pose qui l'effigie: che si veda
come rese alla vecchia grazie del suo seno.

(Translated by Alceste Angelini, 1990, 103)

Epigram 51
by Callimachus

On Phrygian Aeschra, his good nurse, did Miccus while she lived bestow every comfort
that soothes old age, and when she died he created her statue,
that future generations may see how he rewarded the old woman for her milk.

(Translated by W. R. Paton, 1916, 249)

Epigrams. Book III. XXVII. To Gallus.
by Martial

I often you, you me do never bid,
Which I could pardon if none else you did;
But others you invite: – we're both to blame,
– Myself for want of wit, and you of shame.

(Old MS. 16th Cent. (1897))

Epigrams. Book III. XXVII.
by Martial

Numquam me revocas, venias cum saepe vocatus:
ignosco, nullum si modo, Galle, vocas.
Invitas alios: vitium est utriusque. «Quod?» inquis.
Et mihi cor non est et tibi, Galle, pudor.

Solitude
by Giovanni Pascoli

I.
From this lonely crag I sight
A black flock pass, a golden swarm;
While on the head at the breath of a sigh
the quivering threads of copper hum.

On my head is a long echo of thought,
I know not if joy or if martyrdom;
and passes the shadow of the black flock,
and passes the shadow of the golden swarm.

(Translated by Dome Bulfaro)

Solitudine

by Giovanni Pascoli

I.

Da questo greppo solitario io miro
passare un nero stormo, un aureo sciame;
mentre sul capo al soffio d'un sospiro
ronzano i fili tremuli di rame.

È sul mio capo un'eco di pensiero
lunga, nè so se gioia o se martoro;
e passa l'ombra dello stormo nero,
e passa l'ombra dello sciame d'oro.

Often the evil of living I have encountered
by Eugenio Montale

Often the evil of living I have encountered:
it was the strangled rivulet that gurgles,
it was the crumpling of the leaf
dried up, it was the horse that collapsed.

Well I knew not, outside the prodigy
that opens up the divine Indifference:
it was the statue in the indolence
of the noon, and the cloud, and the high hawk raised.

(Translated by Dome Bulfaro)

Spesso il male di vivere ho incontrato

Spesso il male di vivere ho incontrato:
era il rivo strozzato che gorgoglia,
era l'incartocciarsi della foglia
riarsa, era il cavallo stramazato.

Bene non seppi, fuori del prodigio
che schiude la divina Indifferenza:
era la statua nella sonnolenza
del meriggio, e la nuvola, e il falco alto levato.

Middle Eastern poetic quatrain

The greatest exponent of the Middle East is Omar Khayyam (Nishapur, 1048 – Nishapur, 1131)

From The Rubáiyát
by Omar Khayyam

The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it

(Translated by Edward Fitzgerald, 1900, 71)

Are you depressed? Then take of bhang one grain,
Of rosy grape-juice take one pint or twain;
Sufis, you say, must not take this or that,
Then go and eat the pebbles off the plain!

(Translated by E. H. Whinfield, 1900, 251)

Haiku 俳句 *Examples*

Haiku is a poetic form born in Japan in the 17th century. The greatest exponent is considered Matsuo Basho (Ueno 1644 – Ōsaka 1694).

In English (and in Italy) a traditional haiku usually has three lines arranged in a 5-7-5 pattern. “Haiku: A poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived, in which nature is linked to human nature. Usually a haiku in English is written in three unrhymed lines of seventeen or fewer syllables.” (Haiku Society of America, 2020)

Haiku

we take
the marshy path
to get to the clouds.

Matsuo Basho

the light of a candle
is transferred to another candle —
spring twilight

Yosa Buson

a world of dew,
and within every dewdrop
a world of struggle.

Kobayashi Issa

The 4 main characteristics of haiku are:

- 1- Simplicity
- 2- 5-7-5 metrics
- 3- KIGO word of the season
- 4- KIREJI cutting word, semantic cut, perspective cut

Kireji

Kireji was very important for the development of kintsugi writing.

Haiku verses are generally structured in such a way as to present at least one kireji 切れ字 ('word that cuts'), namely a caesura, a reversal that may or may not be indicated at the end of a verse as an interruption or pause. In Japanese, kireji corresponds to a word used as punctuation. It often determines a question or an emotional subtext. In English (and in Italian), cutting words are generally replaced by punctuation such as exclamation marks, question marks and hyphens or, less often, by commas or ellipses, depending on the sharp 'cut' the author wants to achieve. One can see this haiku by the painter and poet Yosa Buson:

what a moon:
the thief
halts to sing

che luna:
il ladro
si arresta per cantare

(Translated by Dome Bulfaro)

Other features of haiku significant to the development of Kintsugi were:

- Haiku has no title
- Simplicity of language
- Everyday imagery
- Crystallization of the present
- The richly suggestive void, a void that the reader and listener can fill with their own imagination, feeling and experience.

The kintsugi writing: main formes and base structure

Kintsugi writing was born to transmute lead into gold

Change is the first significant step in trans-forming a negative experience into a positive one. However, change does not mean transformation. One can change an outfit, a point of view, a mental posture, and that certainly helps. But transforming is something else: transforming means changing one's form from within, it means I was a seed and now that seed has turned into a rose, I was a caterpillar and now that caterpillar is a butterfly. kintsugi writing was born to transmute lead into gold.

To be a seed or a caterpillar is good. It's only a different form from a rose or a butterfly. The Kintsugi writing isn't considerable only as a transformation but is a transmutation: it transmute in gold a bad situation or perceived as such.

The kintsugi writing allows you to go beyond resilience, educating you to practise kintsura every day of your life, making this practice a *modus vivendi* of well-being.

The base structure of kintsugi writing

The 4 structural stages of kintsugi writing are:

- 1- *Issue*: exposure of the problem (effect of pain)
- 2- *Fracture*: identification of the break or injury (cause of pain)
- 3- *Tsugi*: the repair (integration of pain)
- 4- *Kintsura*: the praise of discovered gold (transmutation of pain into gold)

Kintsura

Kintsura, that is, the final praise, finds its full fulfillment when the practitioner succeeds in both turning the initial pain into gold and when he or she succeeds in sprinkling the entire therapeutic path of awareness, accomplished through the 4 stages of kintsugi writing the order of which must be adhered to rather rigorously.

The fourth stage represents not only overcoming the problem, but also the positive opportunity that the crisis may have unexpectedly produced.

We suggest you to answer the following questions

- Part 1: What/how/when/where/why did the event happen?
- Part 2: What is broken in you/among you/the other?
- Part 3: How have you/have you repaired it or can/can you repair it?
- Part 4: What is the "gold" to sing/value in the repaired fractures?

Principles of well-being activated by kintsugi writing

- Listening/self-listening
- Awareness/self-awareness
- Enhancement/ self-enhancement
- Esteem/self-esteem

- Transformation/self-transformation
- Connection/interconnection
- Empathy and Compassion
- Emotional Education
- Resilience and Empowerment
- Hope
- Harmonization/Peacefulness

What age can practice kintsugi writing

Yes +8 years old, No -8 years old. Because it requires a basic ability for introspective analysis that human beings mature from age 8 onward.

Individual or dyadic pair kintsugi quatrain

This type has proven particularly effective, in couple conflicts, and in prisons where restorative justice is practiced between perpetrator and victim.

Examples of Classic kintsugi quatrain

Senza titolo / Untitled

by Giacomo Nucci

I don't understand why you don't come down
I have prepared everything for you, in vain
come on, I can warm everything up again
now that you're sitting let's tell the day.

Non capisco perché tu non scenda
ho preparato tutto per te, inutilmente
dai, riesco a scaldare tutto di nuovo
ora che sei seduta raccontiamoci la giornata.

Ri-accordare / Re-tune

by Eleonora

Shattered illusions
lethargy of feelings.
A burning caress
is a new awakening.

Illusioni infrante
letargo dei sentimenti.
Una carezza bruciante
è un nuovo risveglio.

Fiducia amica / Trust friend
by Anonymous

Your envy stabbed me
and my trust disappeared.
With the love of my friends
a trust with many faces has resurfaced.

La tua invidia mi ha pugnalato
e la mia fiducia è sparita.
Con l'amore dei miei amici è riaffiorata
una fiducia con più volti.

Senza titolo/Untitled
by Giulia

Sun, like massive wind
Between caresses and slaps I fall
In the darkness I wake up
It's spring

Sole, come vento massiccio
Tra carezze e schiaffi cado
Nel buio mi sveglio
È primavera

(Translated by Dome Bulfaro)

How to easily get to the kintsugi quatrain

- Step 1: Write a kintsugi short story or free verse kintsugi poem, divided into 4 parts.
- Step 2: Underline of each part the most important sentences, those that best summarize the part.
- Step 3: Create your kintsugi quatrain by reducing each of the four parts into one verse. Each verse should not be too long; it can also correspond to a single word (e.g., Sccc, no, blue, all...).

General guidelines

The client is invited to put into prose or verse an everyday life story that has irritated them, disturbed them, ... but not too much. They're asked to describe a minor problem.

Everyone is free to decide the length of each part of the four parts of prose and free verse poetry. Each of the four parts may consist of many lines, a few lines, one line, one word, ...

To promote clarity of mental vision, it is important to always leave a blank line between each part (except in the quatrain and aphorism).

The writing style and narrative register preferred by the client should be used: descriptive, metaphorical, symbolic... keeping their own real name, or using an alter ego name other than their own, or not stating any name...

This will help when writing the text and when sharing it (assuming they want to share it).

It is not important that others understand what a person means to say with their poetry, whereas it is very important that the poetry composed brings well-being to those who compose it.

It's not important to use rhyme, but if you want to use it welcome the rhyme.

If you reduce the four parts of a free verse story/poem/letter into a kintsugi quatrain, it's important to make a quatrain with four verses of the of the desired length, without being too long however. Each part must correspond to one verse, no more. In the four verses they should insert the words or concepts that are indispensable, even if said things did not emerge during the writing of the kintsugi story or the letter.

At the end of writing the kintsugi text, the client should feel free to share it with the biblio/poetry therapy group and facilitator or not.

Example of a kintsugi story to repair a small inner wound

Kintsugi story by R., an adult bibliotherapist trainee. First, the draft is written, and then, before writing the kintsugi quatrain inspired by the story, the synthesis process is facilitated by asking the client to highlight words or phrases that are meaningful to them.

1- Issue: presentation of the problem (effect of pain)

A trivial question, somewhere between a *joke* and a challenge, *thrown out* during dinner, really annoyed me; I reacted with a lot of *anger* and *exaggerated* tones.

2- Fracture: identification of the break or injury (cause of pain)

First of all, the pleasant atmosphere that had been created at dinner *was shattered*, and *inside me*, my *confidence* in certain abilities (including my ability to react to provocation) was broken.

3- Tsugi: repair (integration of pain)

Once my anger had cooled off, I tried to *calmly explain* how certain words bothered me and, at the same time, *to accept* my insecurities and *limitations*.

4- Kintsura: praise for the discovered gold (transmutation of pain into gold)

Insecurities and limitations are part of me, they characterise me. When others *point them out*, *I can see them*, accept them or try to overcome them.

1- Questione: esposizione del problema (effetto del dolore)

Una domanda banale, tra la *battuta* e la sfida, *battuta* lì durante la cena, mi ha veramente *infastidito*; ho reagito con molta *rabbia* e con toni *esagerati*.

2- Frattura: identificazione della rottura o della lesione (causa del dolore)

Per prima cosa *si è spezzata* la bella atmosfera che si era creata a cena e, *dentro di me*, si è rotta *la sicurezza* in certe mie capacità (anche di reazione alle provocazioni).

3- Tsugi: la riparazione (integrazione del dolore)

Sbollita la rabbia, ho cercato di *spiegare* con *calma* il fastidio che mi viene da alcune frasi e, nello stesso tempo, di *accettare* le mie insicurezze e i miei *limiti*.

4- Kintsura: la lode dell'oro scoperto (trasmutazione del dolore in oro)

Insicurezze e limiti sono parte di me, mi caratterizzano, quando gli altri *li mettono in luce* *posso vederli*, accettarli o cercare di superarli.

Kintsugi quatrain by R., inspired by the story

Una frase scagliata
contro le mani alzate;
con un filo di luce
il limite è più chiaro.

A hurled sentence
against layed hands;
with a glimmer of light
the limit is clearer.

(Translated by Milo Bulfaro)

The transition from a four-part story to a corresponding kintsugi quatrain is not mandatory. One can stop at recounting and highlighting the key concepts, or can write the quatrain directly if desired.

After the kintsugi writing, the client may be asked to give verbal feedback to share with the group and the meeting leader, or they may write it down without sharing it, or may share it only afterwards with the leader, as R. did in this case:

It was an intense experience, which allowed me to look deeply into past fractures, some already repaired and others still to be fixed. I found it difficult to identify ‘small’, concrete, ‘everyday’ episodes... when I think about myself, I often tend to see the ‘big’ problems, the ‘big’ challenges; this experience has shown me how useful it is to dwell on even the smallest gestures, as they often reflect the most hidden and intimate emotions. The fourth step is valuable – I think I should give it more thought!

Conclusions

Kintsugi writing is a powerful tool for exploration and pacification, leading the person to awareness and compassion towards themselves and others, following a path that proceeds through the identification and recognition of the effect of suffering (1), its cause (2), its cure (3) and its golden song (4). In miniature, this therapeutic writing echoes the four noble truths indicated by Buddha: 1) Dukkha, life entails suffering; 2) Samudaya, all suffering arises from

a cause; 3) Nirodha, suffering can cease (it can be healed); 4) Marga, suffering leads to the path to enlightenment (Nirvana).

Kintsugi writing can be adopted by everyone to transmute even the smallest pain into the greatest and most valuable of lessons. This principle applies even more so when therapeutic writing addresses issues related to identity, major difficult changes, loss, grief, deep-rooted trauma and complexes. For this reason, it has proven to be very effective in helping people come to terms with the death of loved ones, in processes of restorative justice, with orphans or children who have suffered violence. For the client, despite being characterised by simple language like haiku, it remains a type of writing that requires a certain degree of listening to suffering and subsequent reflection. For this reason, I personally never wanted to apply it with children under the age of eight, although recently, in a very protected environment for the client, some have gone as low as six and achieved significant results.

Since kintsugi writing is a very powerful healing tool, it requires basic training for those who use it. For this reason, *PoesiaPresente*, the School of Poetry Therapy directed by Simona Cesana and myself, offers training courses and intensive workshops, currently held only in Italian, but which will soon be offered in English as well.

In conclusion, however powerful therapeutic writing may be, it would be worthless without a relationship of genuine and profound care between the facilitator/poetry therapist and the client, based on active listening, non-judgement, trust and compassion.

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