

Plant Your DREAM SEEDS!

Writing to Grow Hope in Your Life



Created by Bill Zimmerman

With Seed Tales from Storyteller Laura Simms

Art by Tom Bloom

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Writing to Grow Hope in Your Life



by **Bill Zimmerman**

Creator, MakeBeliefsComix.com
and Somethingtowriteabout.com

With Seed Tales from Storyteller **Laura Simms**

Art by **Tom Bloom**

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Please write to: William Zimmerman, Guarionex Press Ltd.
201 West 77 Street, New York, NY 10024
Or email billz@makebeliefcomix.com
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Dedications



*For my daughter Carlota,
who has so many big dreams.*

*And for my cousin Judy
who dreams for her children.*
—BZ

*And for my dearest Tidi
who planted seeds of love
wherever she went.*
—BB



What are Dream Seeds?

I first began planting my “dream seeds” as a boy growing up in Brooklyn. These were real flower seeds that I planted each spring in cheese boxes on my fire escape. But looking back now, so many years later, **I see that they really were seeds of hope for the dreams I wanted to see grow and blossom in my life.**

Living in a home filled with much turmoil and unhappiness, **I planted each seed as a way to find some hope and peace of mind.** I remember the joy I felt looking at the pictures of flowers on the covers of seed packets, wondering whether I, too, could grow such beautiful flowers. Then, watching the early sprouts emerge during the cold, sunny days of early spring gave me hope that things might get better for my family where my parents argued constantly. The seedlings made me believe that in the weeks ahead, as they became flowers, beauty would somehow enter our sad lives.

This simple act of planting seeds helped ease some of the powerlessness I felt as a child. It gave me a sense of control over at least one thing—that I could play a part in helping bring forth life into the world. **Planting seeds reinforced my faith in the future. Dreams represent hope.**

As the years passed, I began to plant other “dream seeds” that I wanted to see grow in my life’s garden. These dreams were to do well in school, to get a college education, to find good work which would make me proud, to bring forth my ideas into the world through my writings, and to find some personal happiness. A very big dream was to find someone to love and raise a family with, and then to see our child grow into a good human being.

Now, it’s your turn to plant your own dream seeds with help from this journaling book. On the pages which follow you will find writing prompts to help you think about the important things that you want to see happen in your life. By filling in the pages you will be able to express the many hopes and expectations you have for yourself, for those whom you love, and for our world. **Just remember: each time you write a response to a prompt that asks you what kind of dream seed of hope you want to plant, you are actually taking the very**



first step to making your deepest dreams comes true. First come the words, then follows the hard work to realize your hopes. You will need to nurture your dreams with loving care and attention so they can thrive. Be patient as they grow. In creating this book I also asked international storyteller Laura Simms to share with us stories she has culled from different peoples throughout the world about the power of seeds. All her tales are mysterious and beautiful, and convey the sacredness of seeds, the kernels of life. Her stories will lift your spirit and inspire you. I hope you will enjoy one of my tales, too.

I urge you to keep your heart open as you use this book to plant and cultivate your garden of dreams. While it may be difficult to make all of your dreams come true, you will have a better chance of succeeding if you write about them as honestly and as fully as you can. After all, what would life be without hope?

Good dreaming, good planting, good writing to you!

Yours sincerely,

Bill Zimmerman

Bill Zimmerman

P.S. Seed Tales from around the world by Laura Simms begins on page 52.



Before You Begin...

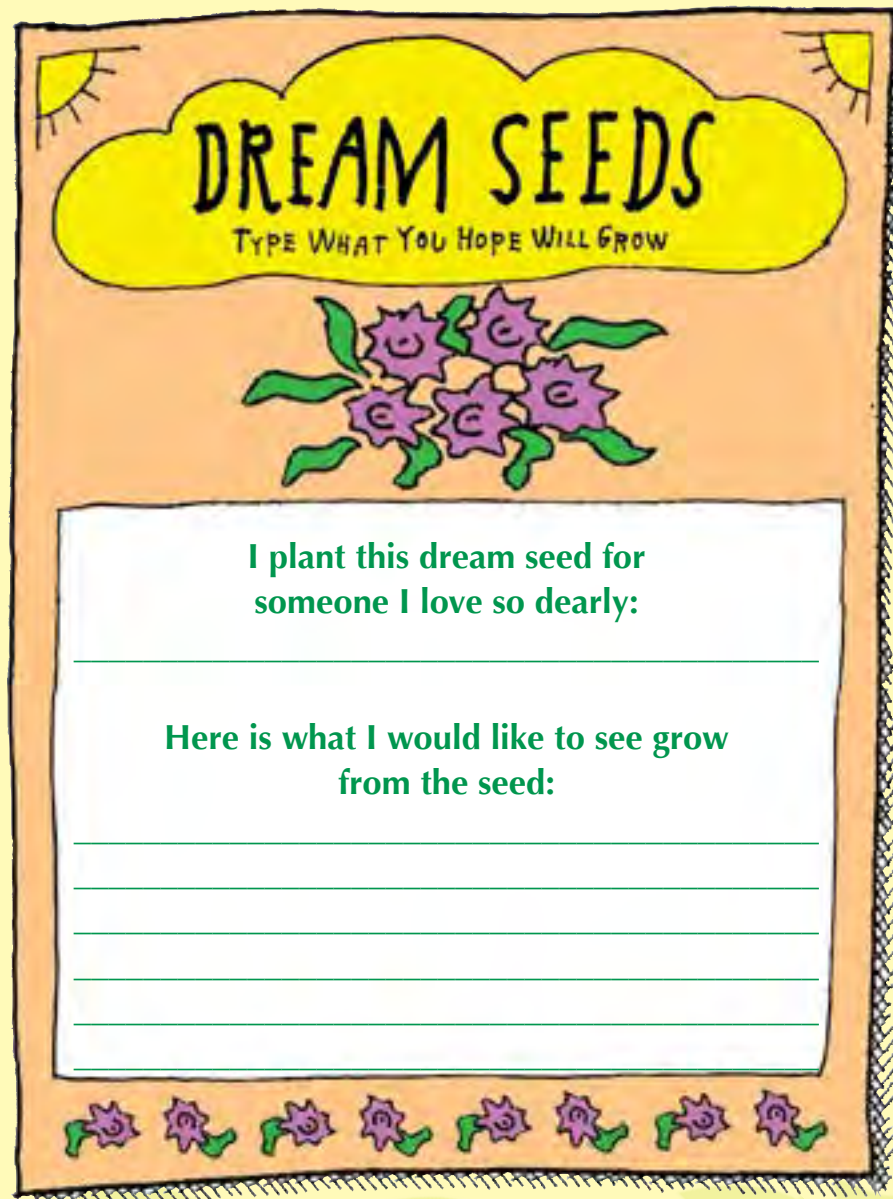
QUESTION:

How do you grow a dream?

ANSWER:

- Always keep hope alive in your heart.
- Never lose your focus on what you seek.
- Hone in with all your powers of constancy.
- Dreams need to be nurtured and cultivated the way you would grow a seedling.
- Take pleasure in the dreaming you do.
- Take comfort in the plans you make.
- Do the hard work you need to do.
- Enjoy the moments, baby step by baby step, as your dream builds and you make progress in your goals.
- Remember to develop great patience as you work to achieve your dream.
- Take a long view; it takes time for many dreams to come true.

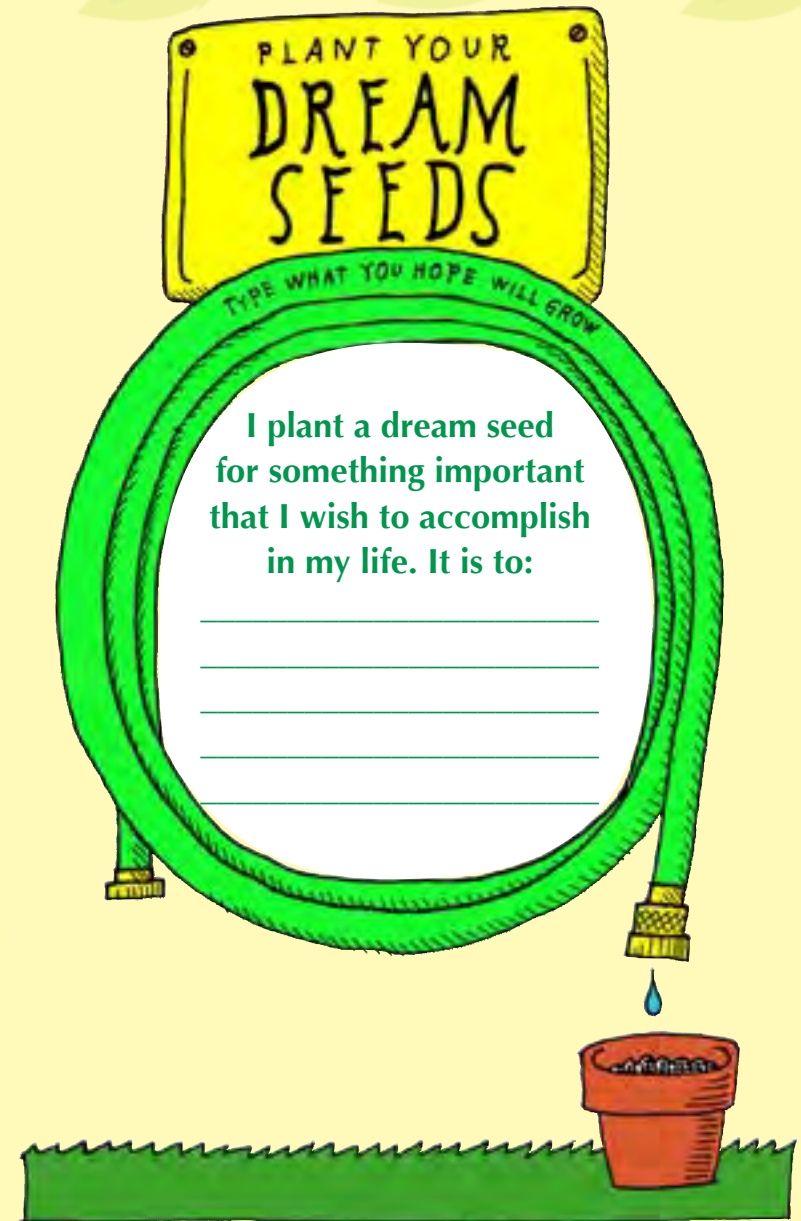




DREAM SEEDS
TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

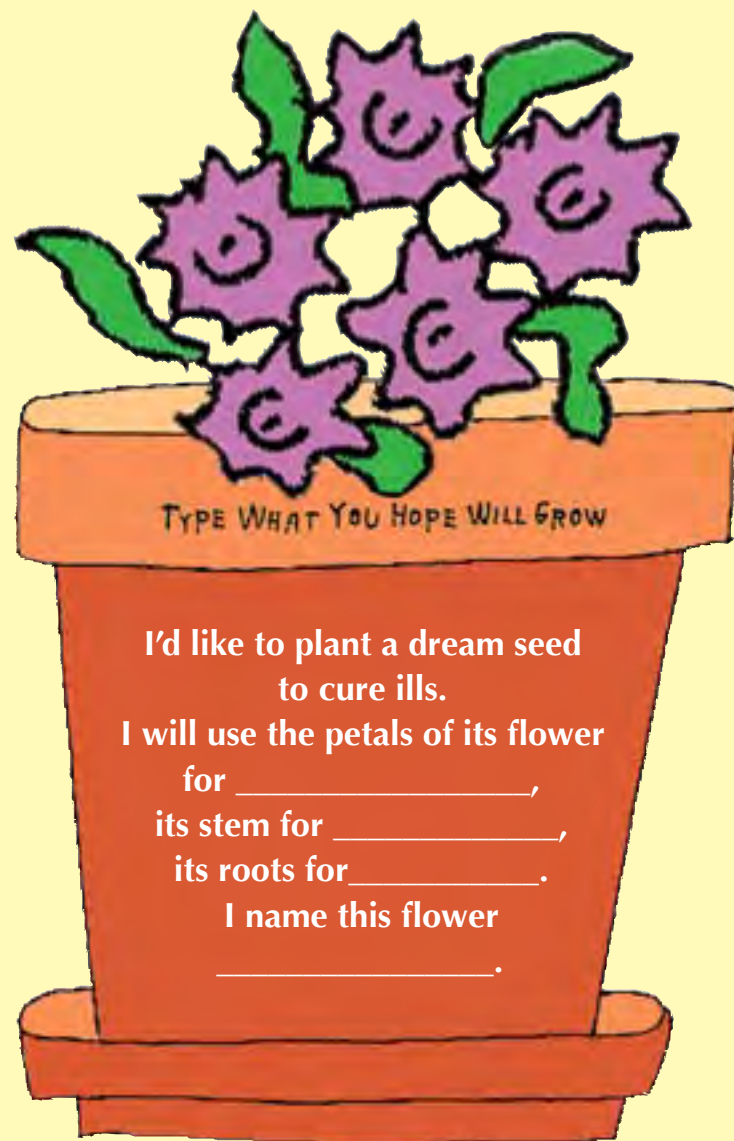
I plant this dream seed for
someone I love so dearly:

Here is what I would like to see grow
from the seed:



**PLANT YOUR
DREAM
SEEDS**
TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

I plant a dream seed
for something important
that I wish to accomplish
in my life. It is to:



DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

A powerful person gives you three magical seeds to plant. With them you can make three wishes that will come true in time. What do you wish for?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

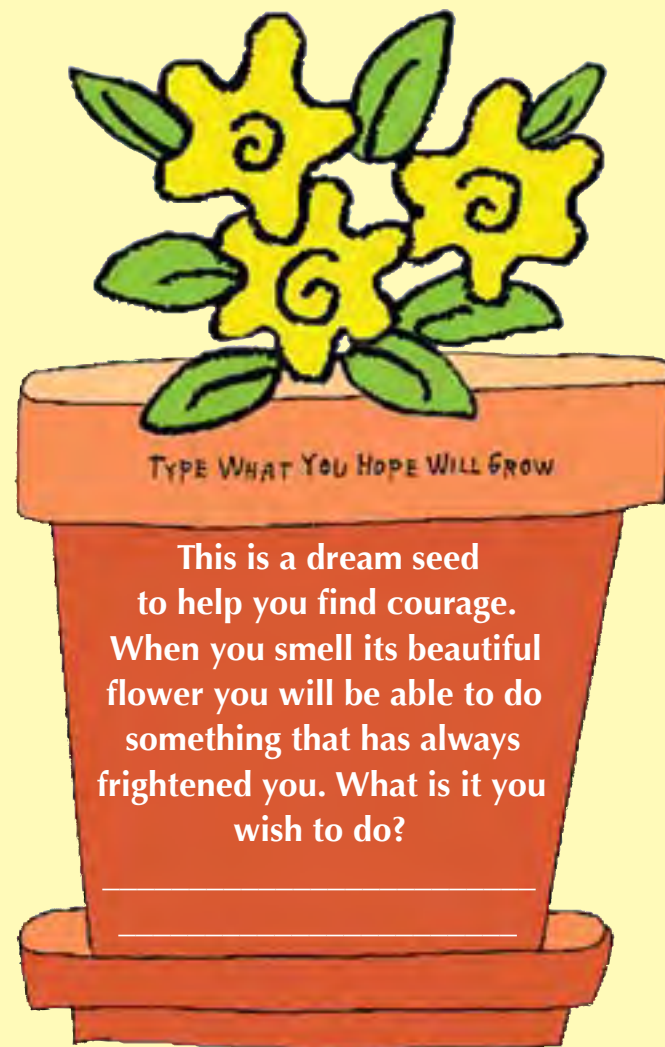
DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

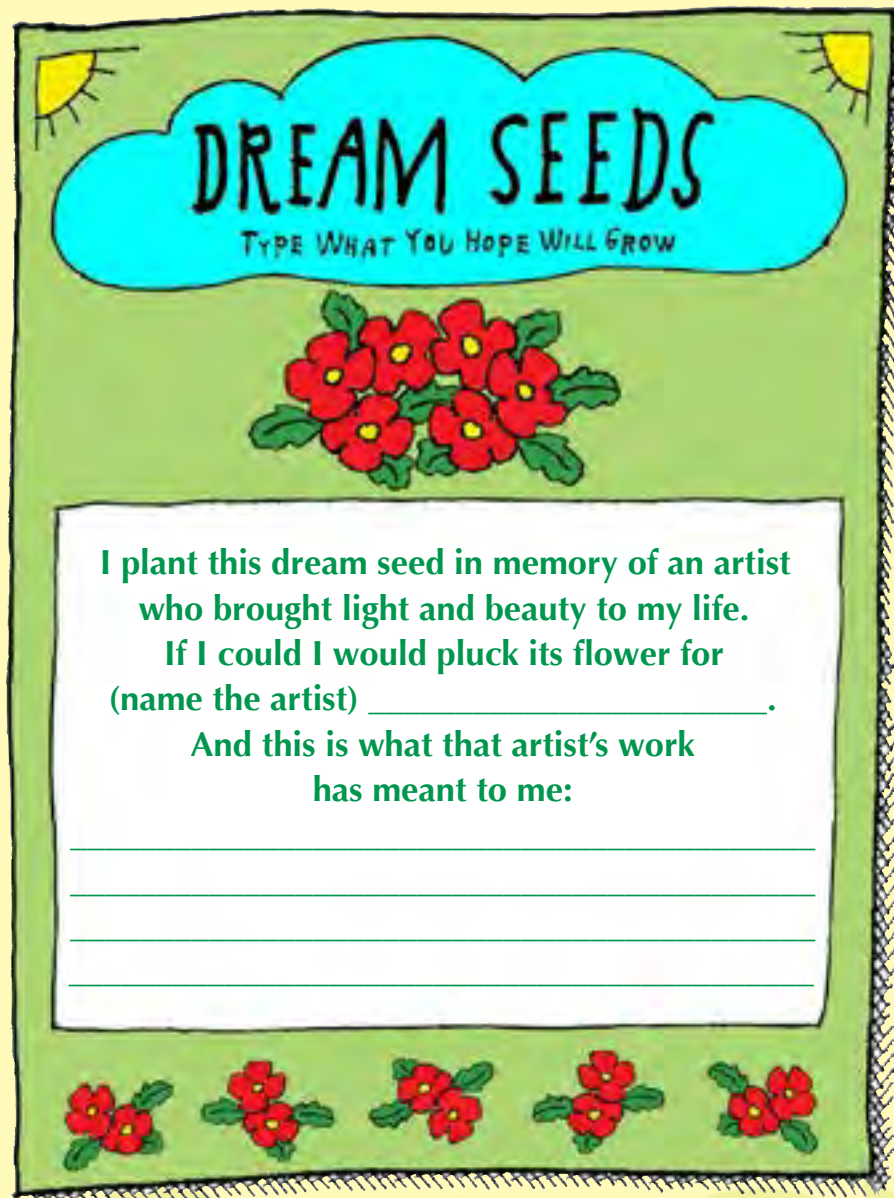
This is a seed of hope I plant for the new year. Here is what I would like to see grow in the months ahead:



This is a seed to end sorrow.
I will give its blossom to:



This is a dream seed
to help you find courage.
When you smell its beautiful
flower you will be able to do
something that has always
frightened you. What is it you
wish to do?

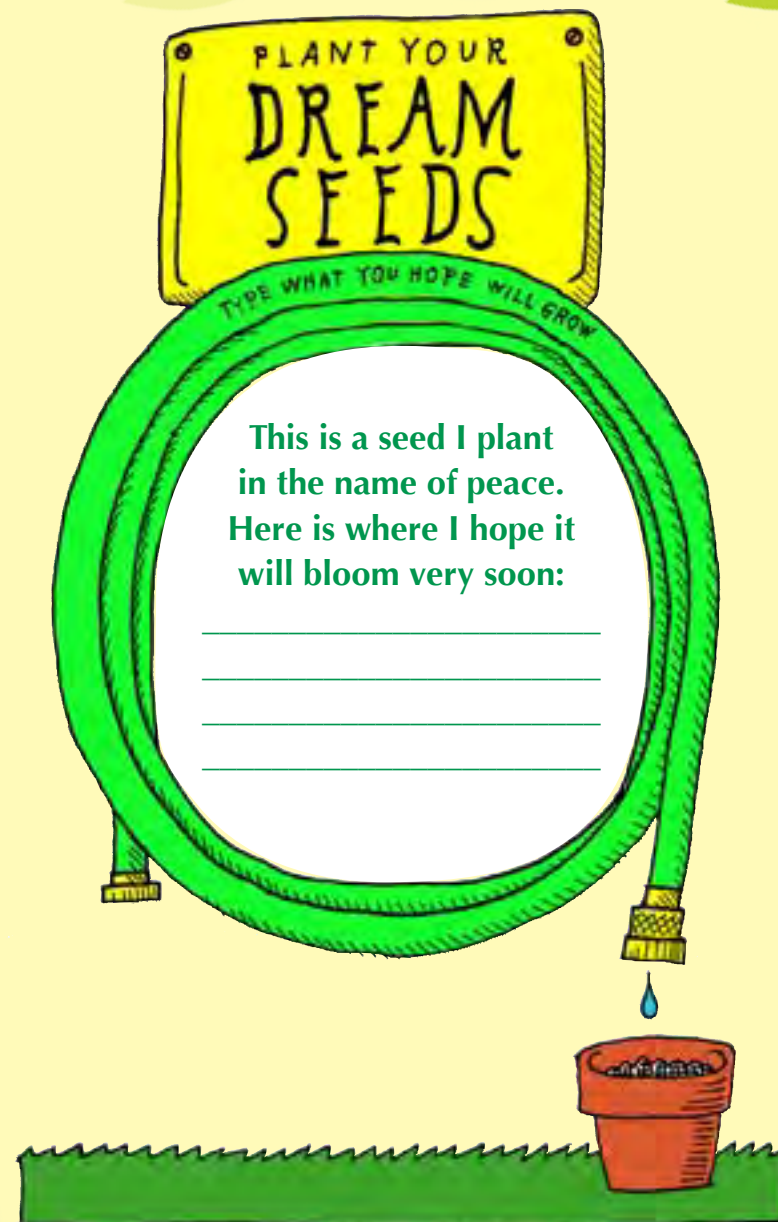


DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

I plant this dream seed in memory of an artist
who brought light and beauty to my life.
If I could I would pluck its flower for
(name the artist) _____.

And this is what that artist's work
has meant to me:



PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

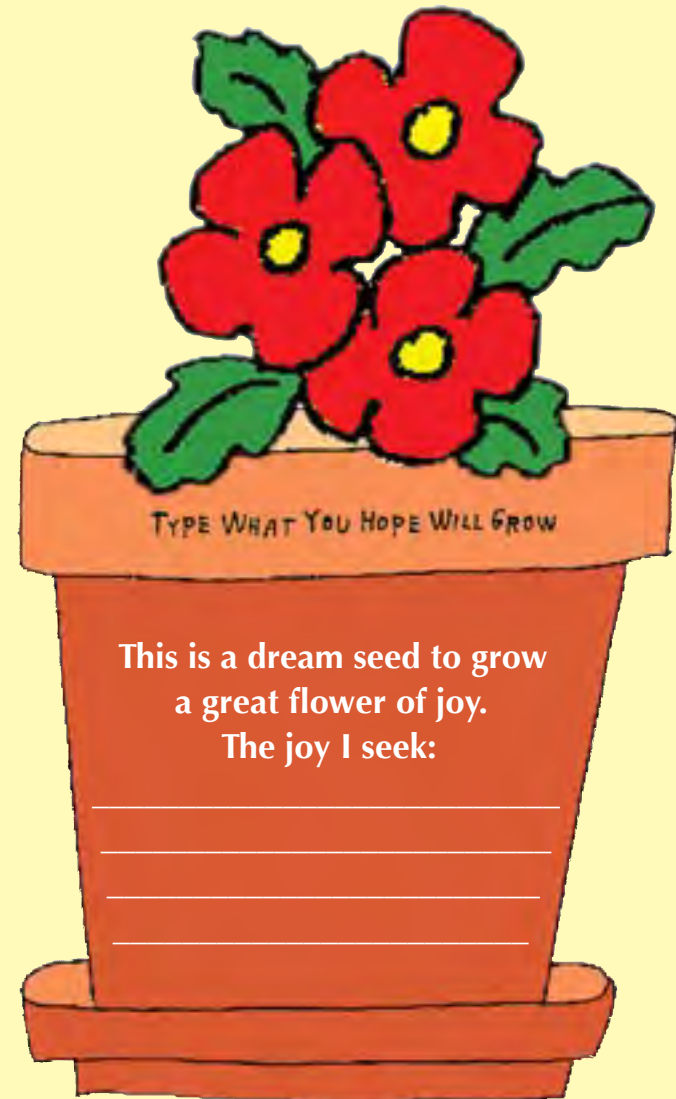
TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

This is a seed I plant
in the name of peace.
Here is where I hope it
will bloom very soon:



TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

I plant this seed to heal a great
hurt. Here is what I hope to
overcome:



TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

This is a dream seed to grow
a great flower of joy.
The joy I seek:

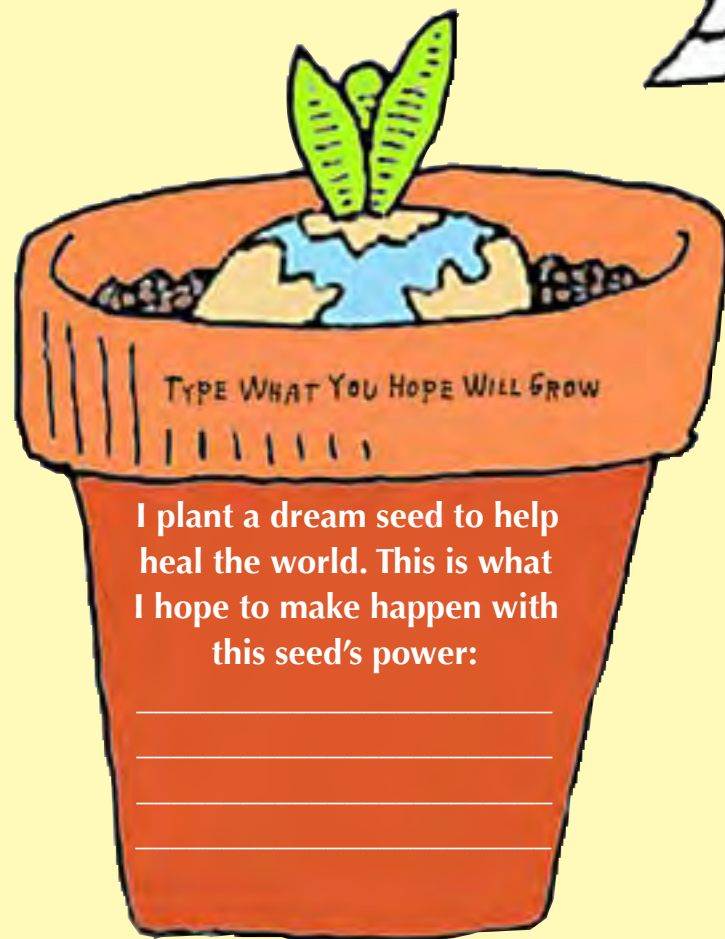
DREAM SEEDS
TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

Here is a dream seed you can plant
for future happiness.
What is the hope you have in your heart?

What is the first step you will take
to make this happiness happen?

**PLANT YOUR
DREAM
SEEDS**
TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

Imagine that someone
sends you seeds that grow
blessings. What do their
words say?



I plant a dream seed to help
heal the world. This is what
I hope to make happen with
this seed's power:



This is a dream seed to make
beautiful music. Here are some
words to go with this music
that will emerge:

DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW



I plant a seed in memory of those who
lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

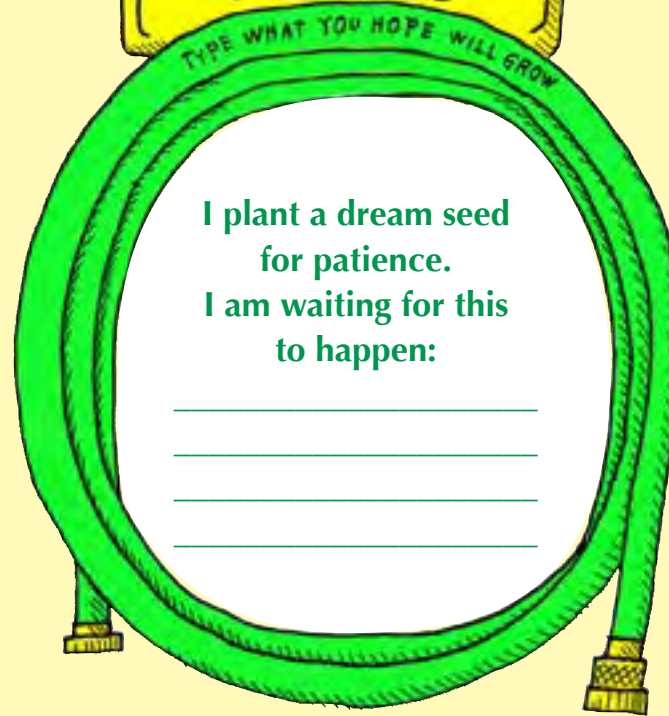
This seed can be an action, a hope,
a thought or deed you will perform;
write what it is:

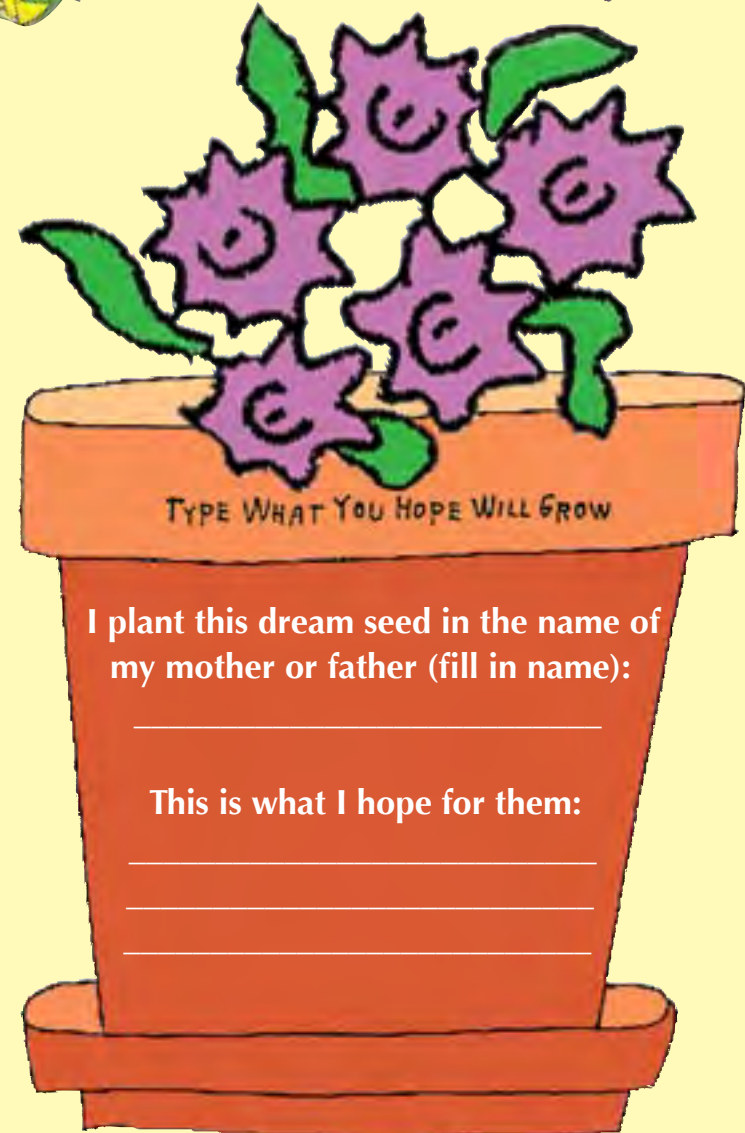


PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

I plant a dream seed
for patience.
I am waiting for this
to happen:





DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

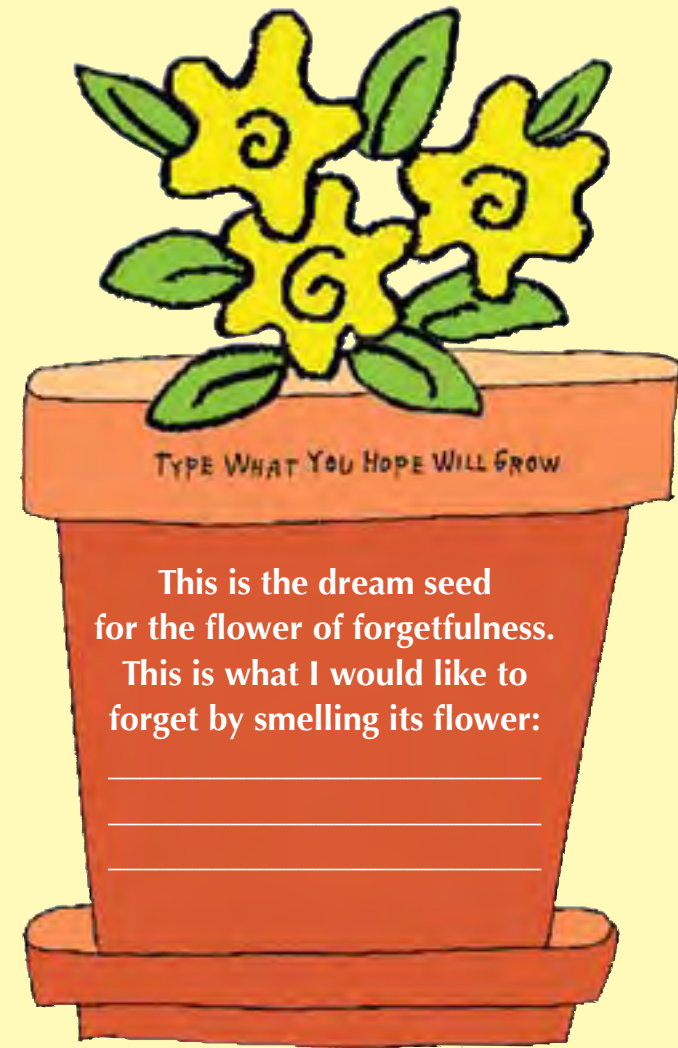
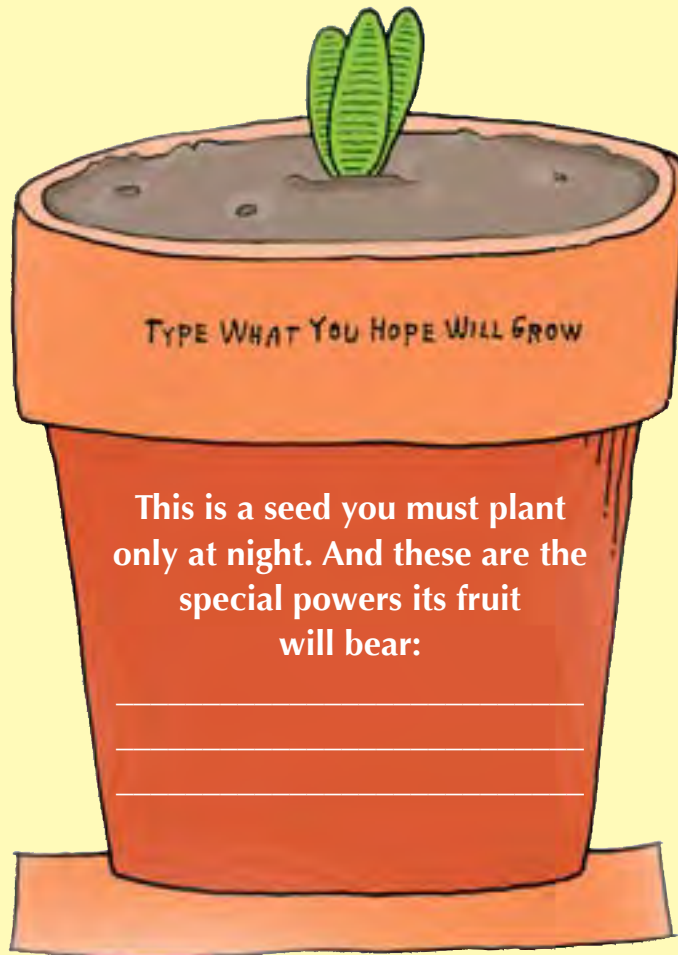
A wise woman gives you a packet of butterfly seeds. She tells you to plant them with care at turning points in your life to celebrate these very important occasions. These are the times when you will place the seeds in rich earth:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

This is the dream seed of sweetness.
I will present it to
(name the person)



DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW



This is a dream seed of compassion
to help people better understand others
and put themselves in someone else's shoes.

I hope its fruit will be eaten by:

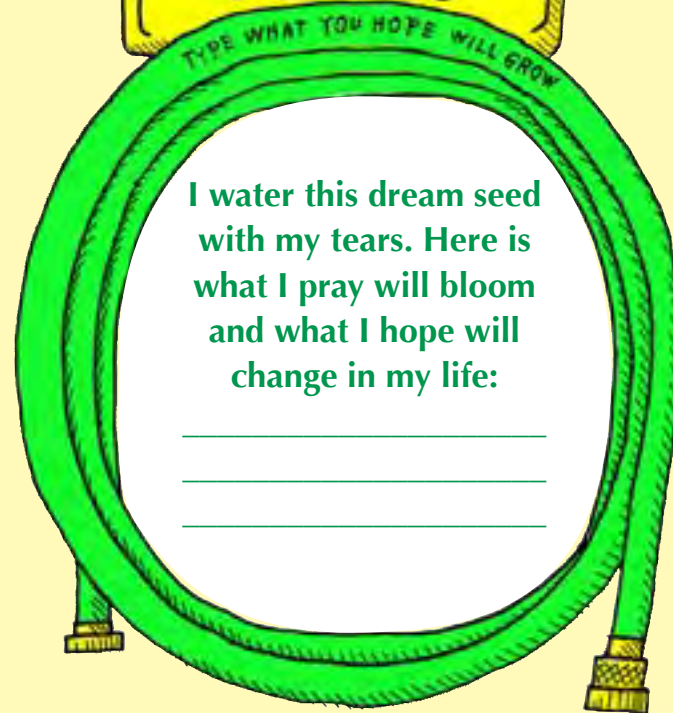
Here is how I hope the world will change:

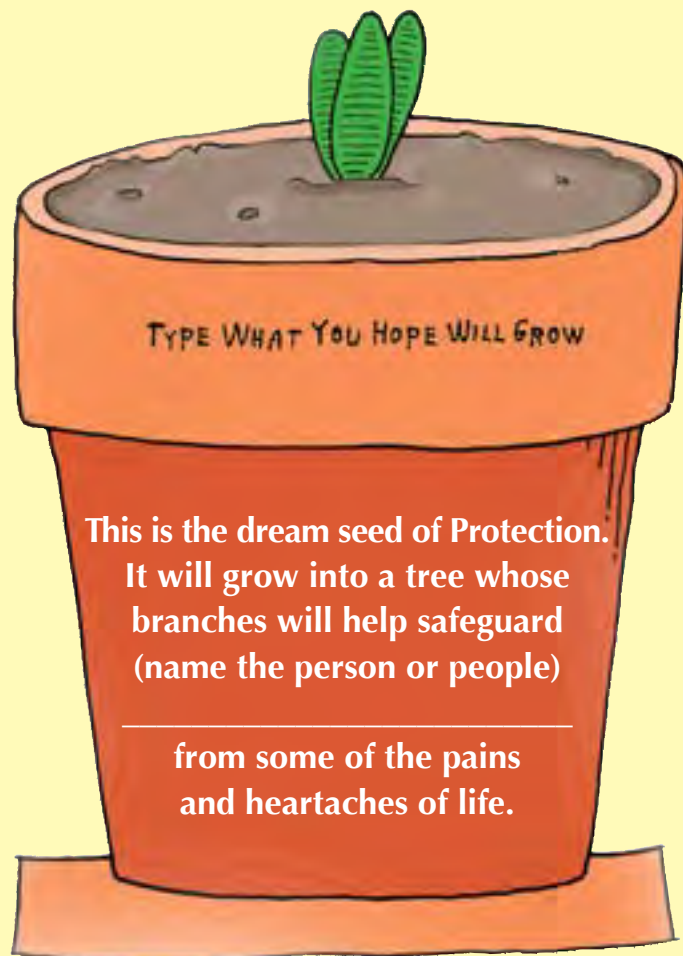


PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

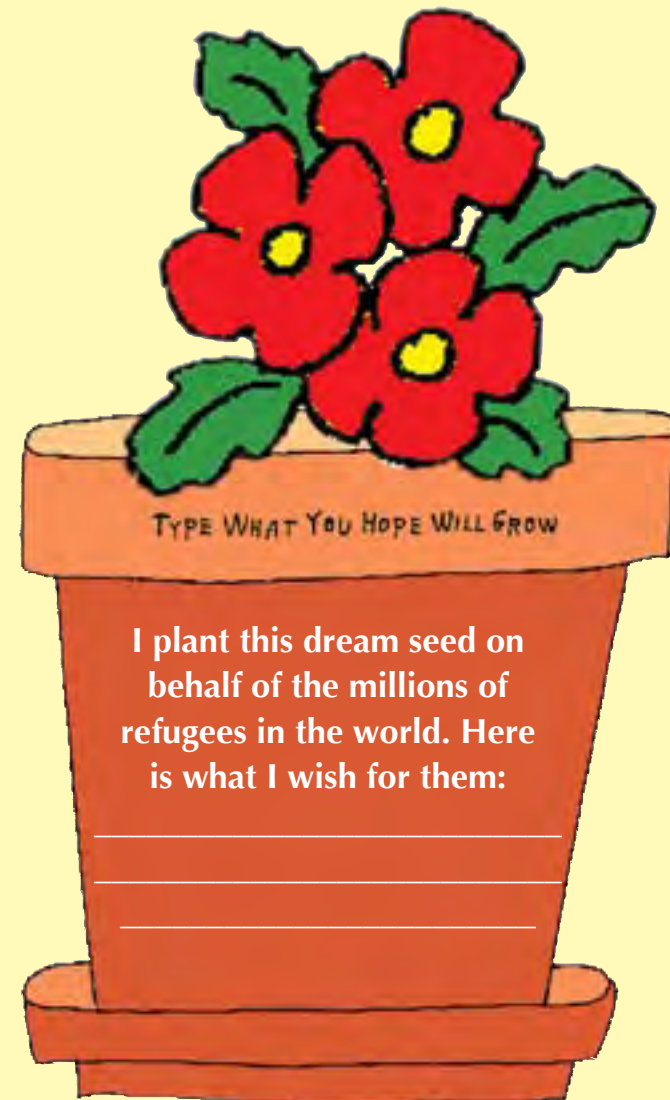
I water this dream seed
with my tears. Here is
what I pray will bloom
and what I hope will
change in my life:








This is the dream seed of Protection.
It will grow into a tree whose
branches will help safeguard
(name the person or people)

from some of the pains
and heartaches of life.




I plant this dream seed on
behalf of the millions of
refugees in the world. Here
is what I wish for them:









DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW



These are two dream seeds to plant in memory of the great civil rights leaders, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks. These seeds can be an action or thought or deed you will perform in their name.




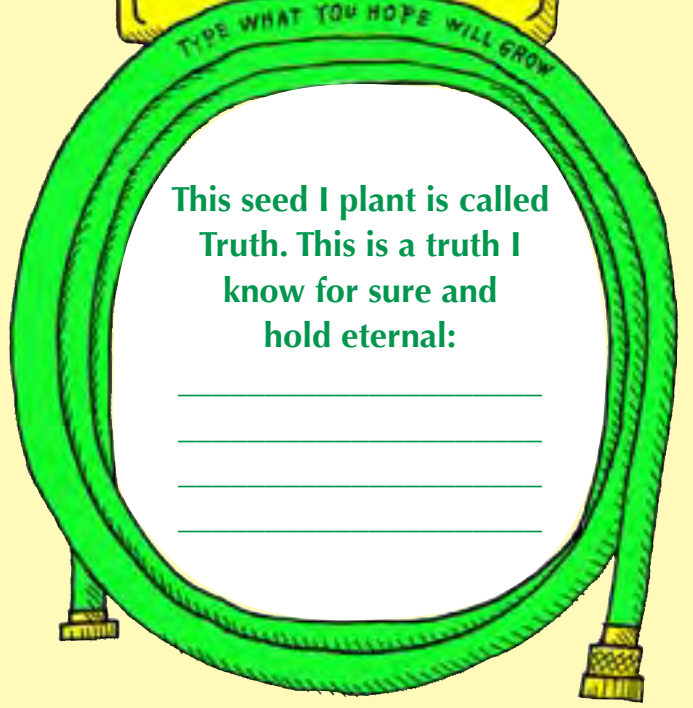
And here is what you hope will flourish:

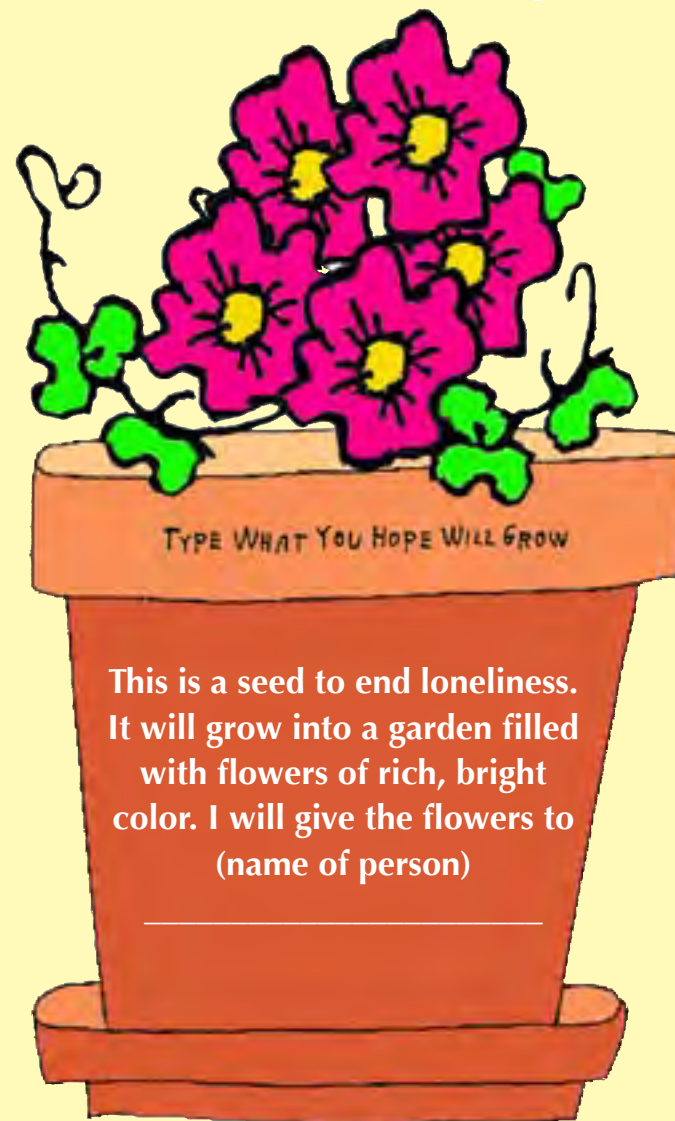
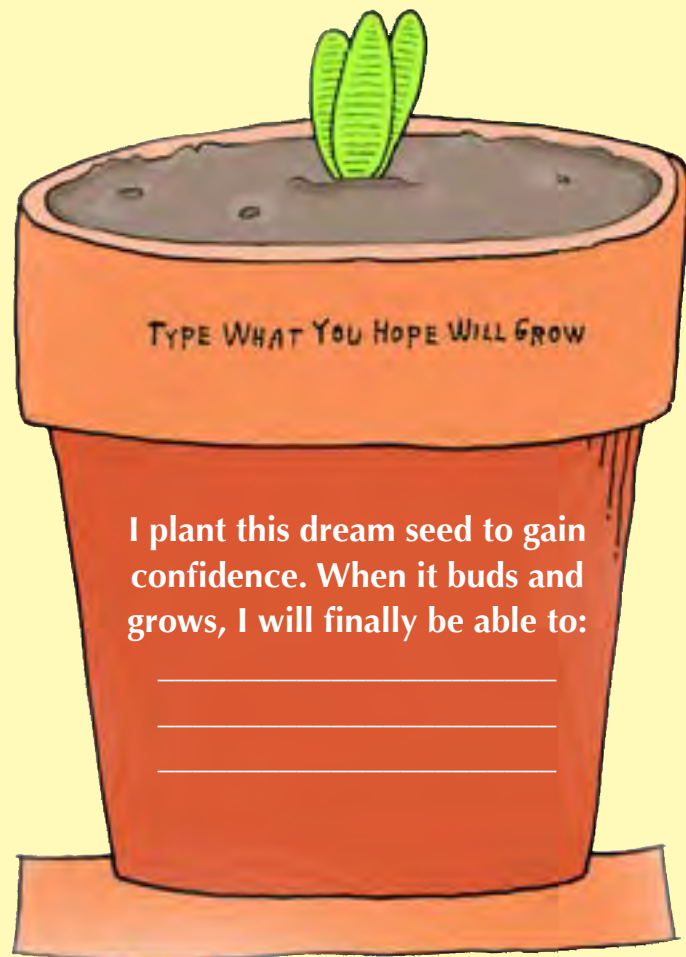


PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

This seed I plant is called Truth. This is a truth I know for sure and hold eternal:





DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW



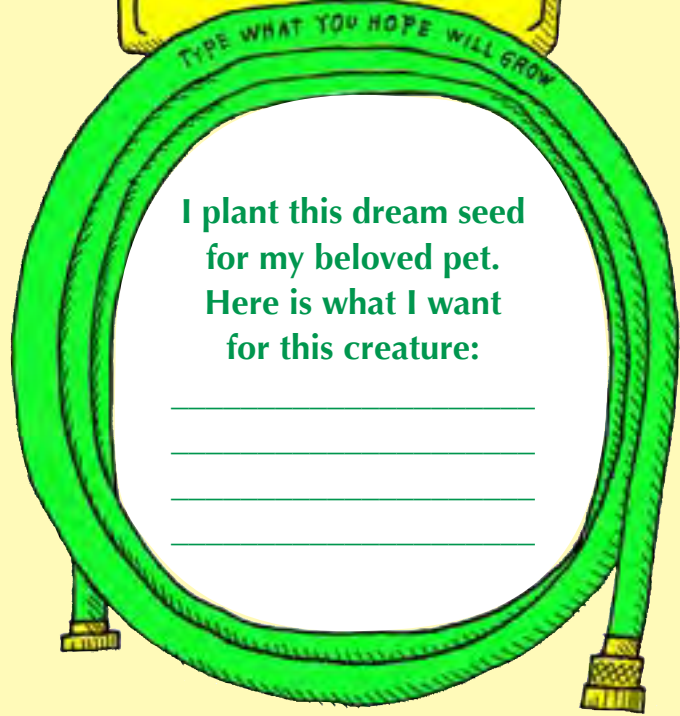
I plant this dream seed to help me persevere
as I work to improve my life. I know my goal
is difficult, but here is what I hope
to achieve one day:



PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

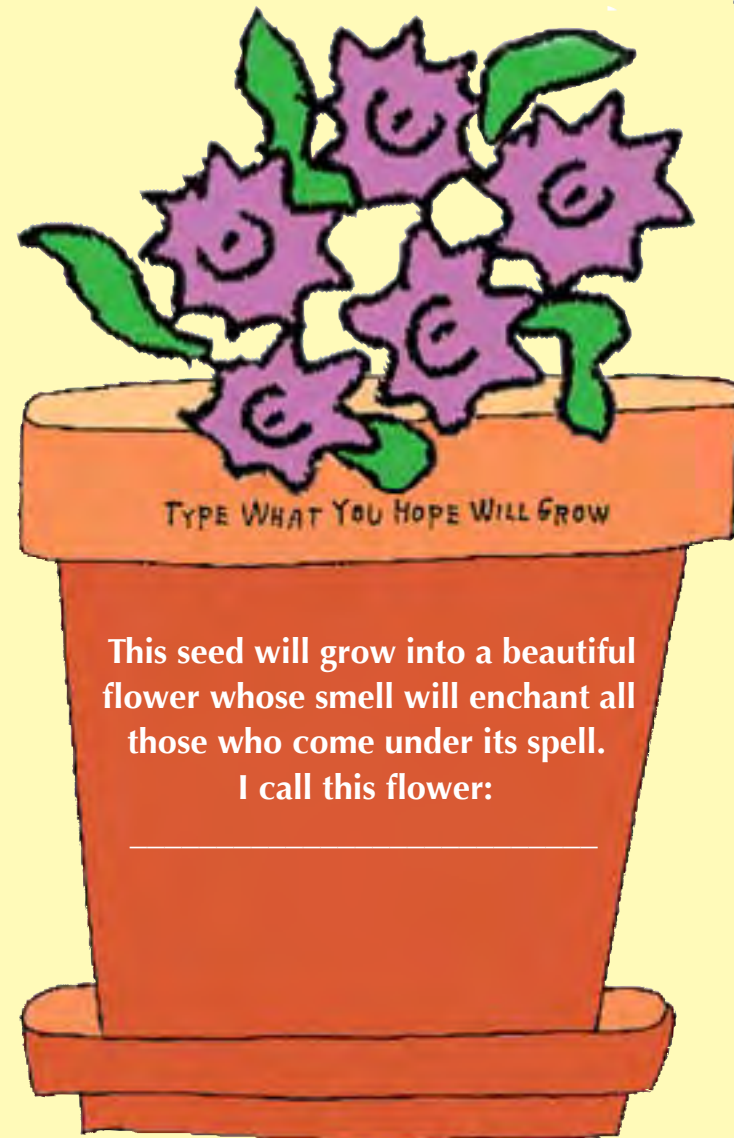
TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

I plant this dream seed
for my beloved pet.
Here is what I want
for this creature:





This dream seed is planted
to help me in my old age.
Here is what I hope
will have blossomed
from this seed when I am old:



This seed will grow into a beautiful
flower whose smell will enchant all
those who come under its spell.
I call this flower:

DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW



This is a seed of kindness which
I will plant for (name of person)

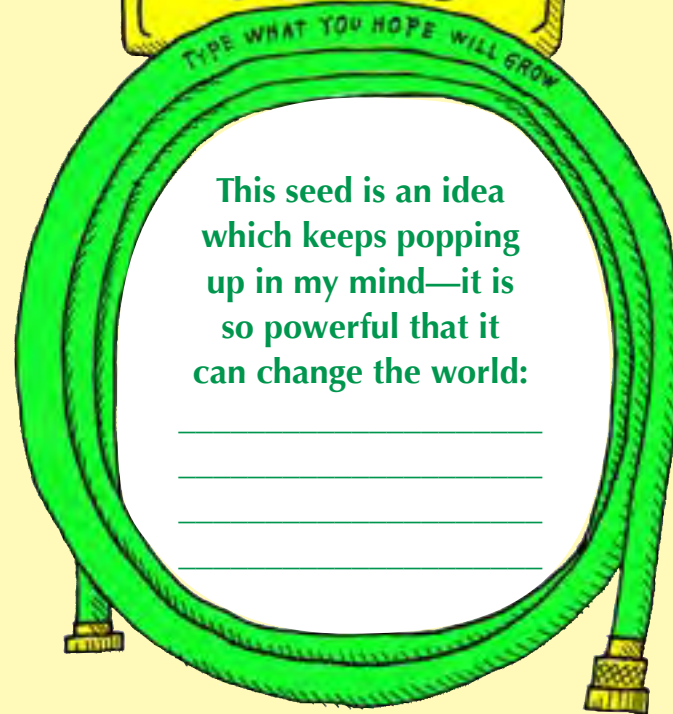
This is the kindness the person did for me
and the kindness which I hope
to return in kind:

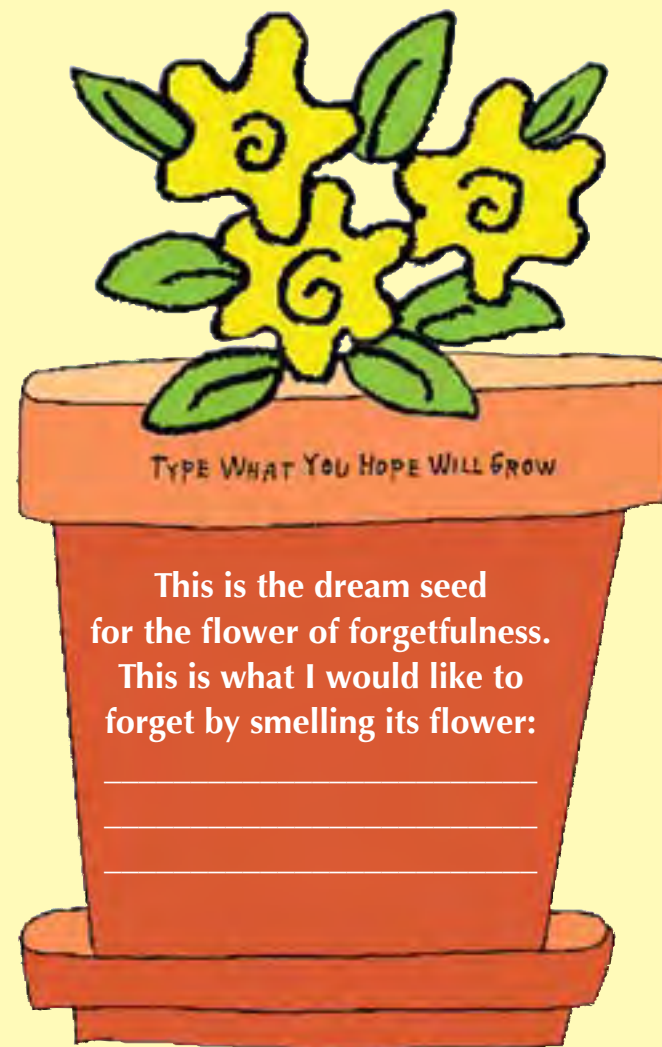
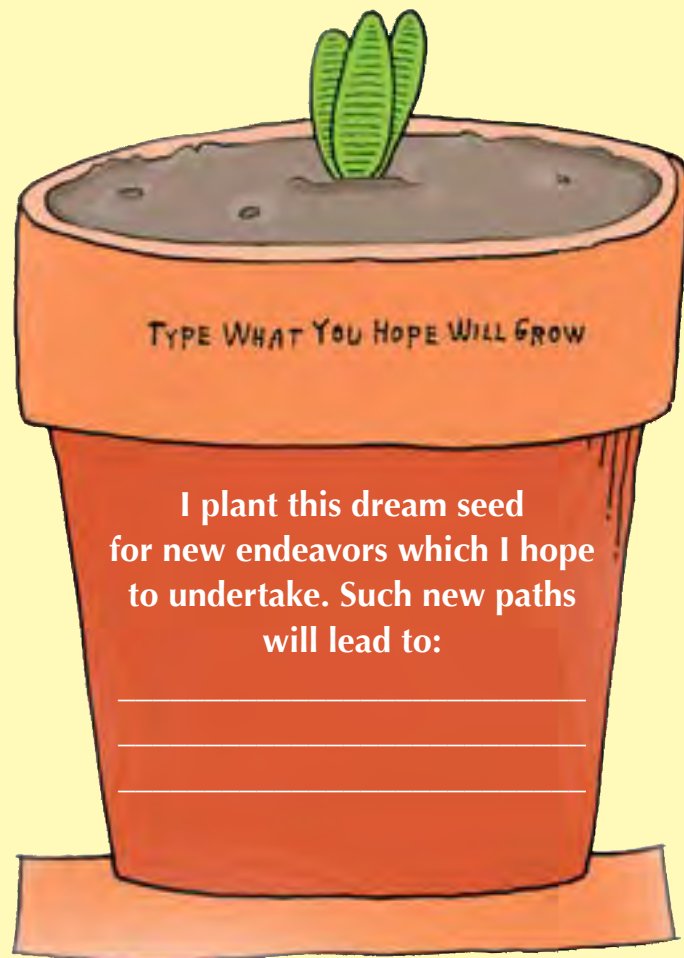





PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

This seed is an idea
which keeps popping
up in my mind—it is
so powerful that it
can change the world:








DREAM SEEDS





TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW



This seed is dedicated to a writer who gave me so much pleasure and knowledge.
If I could, I would give its flower to
(name of the writer)

_____.


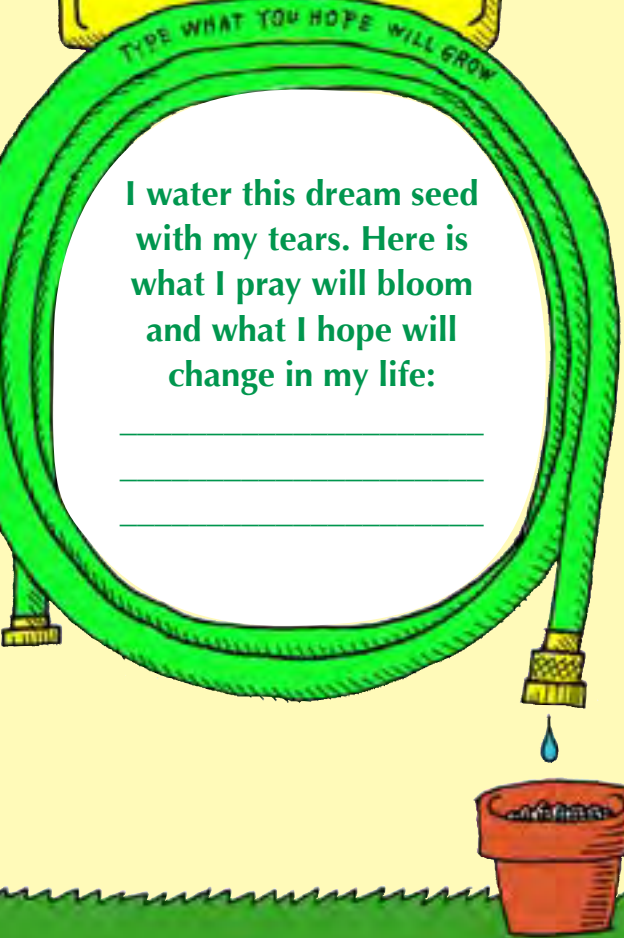
This is what I learned from this writer:

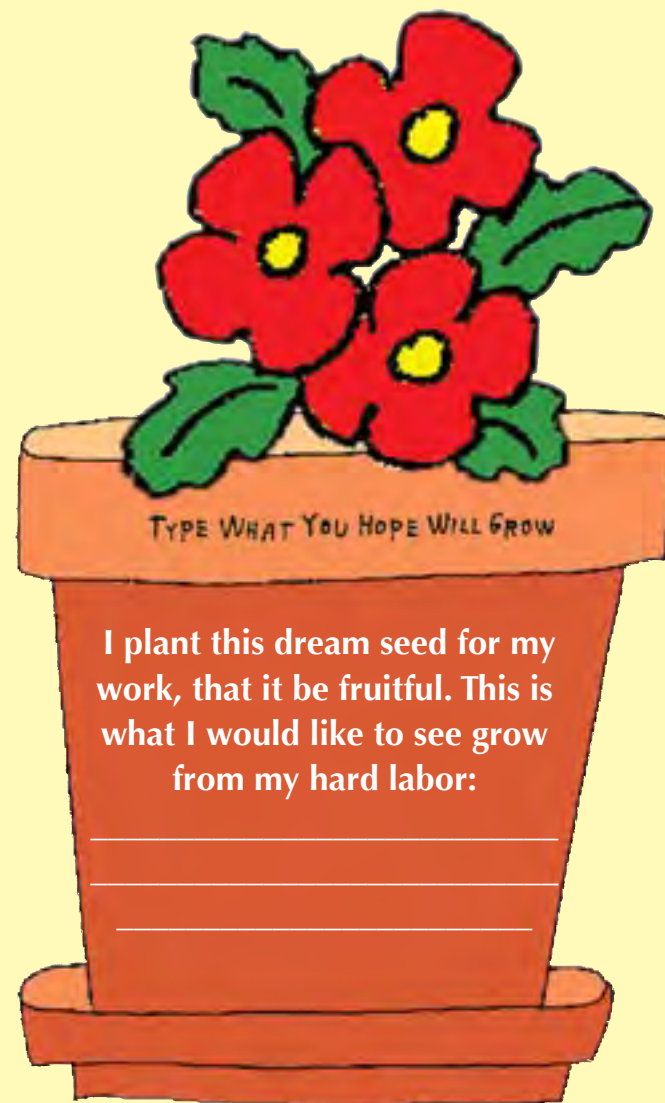


PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

I water this dream seed with my tears. Here is what I pray will bloom and what I hope will change in my life:





DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW



What if you found a packet of miracle seeds?
What miracles would you like to see happen?



PLANT YOUR DREAM SEEDS

TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

There is a tree of life with
apples representing your
accomplishments.

List them:





TYPE WHAT YOU HOPE WILL GROW

Imagine you were to grow
a garden of good thoughts.
What would grow there?

A large green rectangular area with a scalloped border, containing text and writing lines. At the bottom of this area is a small illustration of a garden bench with a sign on it.

These dream seeds will grow
an enchanted garden.

In my garden
I will find:

I will be able to:

I will see:

I will discover:

A GARDEN SPOT FOR
YOU TO PLANT WITH
BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS.

A Place for You to Plant Your Own Dream Seeds

(TYPE HERE)



A Place for You to Plant Your Own Dream Seeds

(TYPE HERE)



**A Place for You
to Plant Your Own
Dream Seeds**

(TYPE HERE)



SEED TALES

from around the world



A Seed tale from **AN AFRICAN BUSHMAN**



In the earliest times there was no night or day. The earth was covered by a grey mist. At that time people built fires between villages for warmth and light and food.

One day a little girl saw that the fire had died. The ashes were mixed with seeds still burning softly. She picked up the ash and seed in her small hands and threw them into the sky. They became the first stars.

That dawn there was sunlight for the first time, but you could not see the stars because the sky was red. Day followed for the first time, but the sky was white and you could not see the stars. But when the sun set the sky turned black. There was night and the stars she had made were seen for the first time.

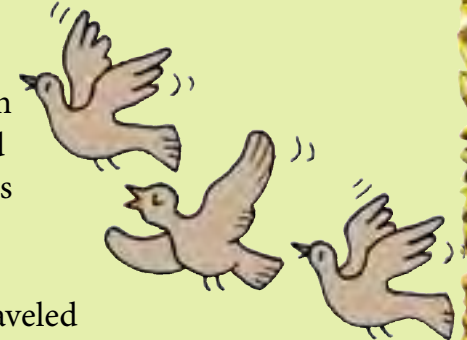


A Seed tale from **KOREA**



One winter a kind boy became friends with a simple beggar, and gave him food every day. The smile of the beggar made the boy happy. When the beggar died, the boy was surprised that a famous magician conducted the funeral.

The magician said, "You recognized something special but you did not see his true face." Taking three seeds out of a pouch, the magician tossed them into the air and the boy watched as the seeds turned into three birds.



Years later, when the boy became a magistrate and traveled from place to place, he lost his way one day. He found himself in a beautiful mountain valley and became the guest of a noble prince.

The prince explained that he had brought the magistrate into a sacred world. "I was the poor beggar whom you fed. I had been reborn in your world to learn humility. You showed me great kindness and this is my gift." The magistrate spent three days in the other world and saw beauty that few human beings rarely see.

A Seed tale from **INDIA**

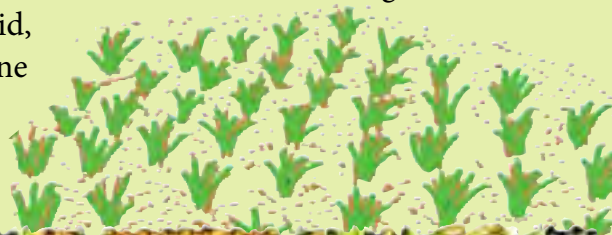
A king who had four daughters left his kingdom in their hands and went out to seek the meaning of life. Before leaving, he gave each of his daughters a single grain of rice and said, "Take this seed. Do with this the best you can and give the grain of rice to me when I return."

The first daughter wrapped the rice in a gold thread and kept it in a box, looking at it every day. The second daughter stored her grain of rice in a silk pouch and hid it beneath her bed. The third princess threw hers away thinking, "One seed looks like another and when my father returns I will simply show him another seed." The fourth daughter thought for a year about the grain of rice.

Years passed and the king returned. He asked his daughters to bring him the grains of rice he had given them years earlier. Each of the first three princesses brought a grain of rice in the palm of her hand and presented them to their father. To each daughter he said, "Thank you." But the last daughter came empty handed. She explained, "I thought about it for a year and realized that a grain of rice was a seed, so I planted it."

She led the king outside to a vast field of rice plants and said, "Father here is your grain of rice."

The king placed his crown on her head making her the ruler in his stead, and said, "You have truly done the best you can."



A Pawnee Seed tale from **WESTERN UNITED STATES**

Once a girl went out to gather plants and became lost. She was captured by a monster made of bones. Because she was brave and clever, she escaped and ran through the entire forest, stopping only when she came to a small house nestled among the brush in a clearing. She went inside to rest.

The next morning five brothers came to the house. They welcomed the girl and she remained there. The five brothers protected her and destroyed the monster. But every evening they vanished.

One night she discovered that they were stars who only came to earth during the day, she asked if she could travel with them and they agreed.

When she went to the sky, she received many precious gifts from the brothers' parents. Most precious were seeds of four colors. Because she loved the people of the world, she dropped the seeds onto the earth.

And that is how corn, squash, beans and precious wheat came to the world.



A Seed tale from **MOROCCO**

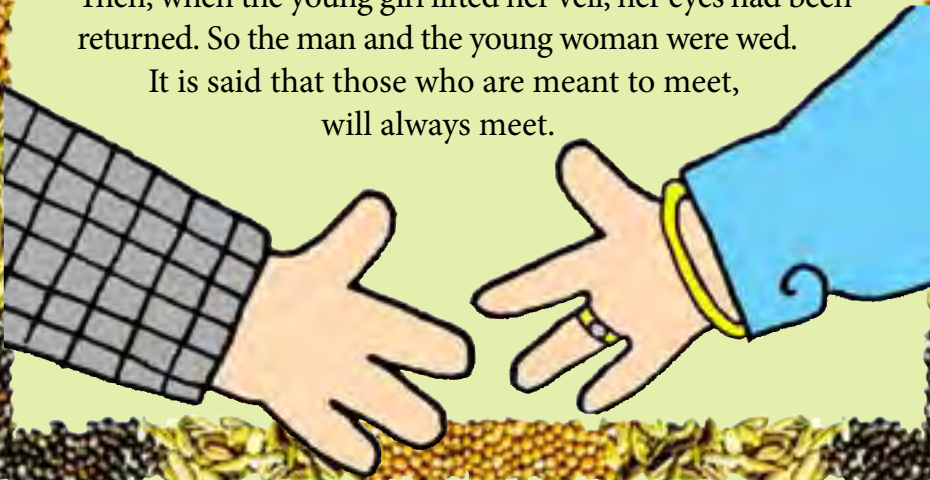
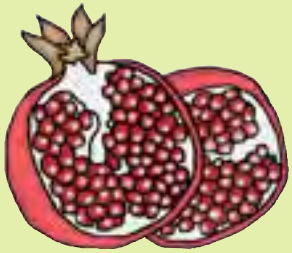


One morning a kind young man found a pomegranate in the river. He split it open and ate two seeds. Then he regretted his action. Thinking that someone had lost the fruit, he set out to return it.

He traveled for many years until at last, just as he was about to give up hope of finding the owner, he arrived at a house in a distant place. In the corner of the kitchen a young woman sat covered in white cloth, her face hidden from view. When he told the story of his quest, the girl's mother said it was her pomegranate. She had dropped it in the river unthinkingly on the day her daughter was born without eyes.

The man returned the fruit immediately and apologized. Then, when the young girl lifted her veil, her eyes had been returned. So the man and the young woman were wed.

It is said that those who are meant to meet,
will always meet.



A Seed tale from **THE INUIT OF ALASKA**



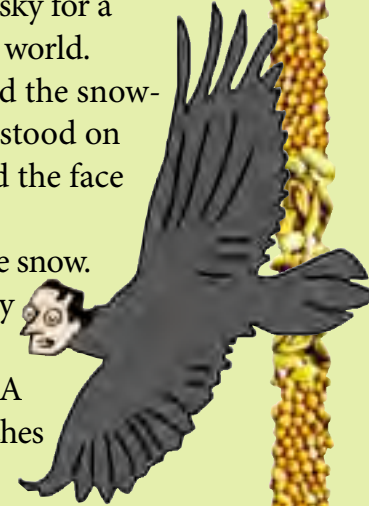
In the beginning was only sky and snow. Raven, the creator of all things, had been throwing gathered snow from wing to wing as he flew through the sky for a long time. A snowball formed as large as our world.

One day Raven stopped flying and watched the snowball turn slowly by itself in the sky. Then he stood on it throwing back his wings and beak. He had the face and the hands of a human being.

The creator was curious and dug beneath the snow. He found thick red brown earth. Making a tiny ball and holding it together with his saliva, Raven placed the dirt-like seed into the snow. A huge tree grew from the seed with thick branches and plump green pods. The pods shook and popped open.

Inside were the first people. Raven felt sorry for them because they were cold. So he took some of his feathers and made the first coats. But the first people were lonely. So Raven made more seeds that turned into four legged creatures and birds that fly.

Because it made the people happy, Raven made giant footsteps that melted the snow, making lakes and rivers and oceans. There he placed new seeds that turned into fish. And that is how the world began.



A Seed tale from **MEXICO**

One autumn, Chaac, Lord of Fields and Crops, called all the birds to a meeting. He asked them to gather the seeds from plants in a field before the Fire God arrived. The next day at noon Fire would burn away the old plants. And saving the seeds meant food for winter.

Only the Cuckoo arrived late. She flittered here and there with her bright yellow eyes and many colored wings, repeating, "I am sorry to be late. So sorry to be late." The other birds, jealous of her beauty, made fun of her. They laughed and accused her of being lazy. But there was much to do and each bird began to gather its favorite seeds. They piled them at the edge of the trees to keep them until the fire had passed and the fields were sowed. At night they rested.

However, tricky Fire did not wait for noon and began his flaming and burning at dawn before all the seeds were gathered.

It was Owl who noticed that one bird had not rested. She had flown through the flames, coming and going all night, her wings singed and turned the color of smoke. It was the Cuckoo. She had saved all the ungathered seeds so there would be food in the winter.

From that day on the birds honored Cuckoo and took care of her children. That is why the Cuckoo's wings are the color of flames and she places her eggs safely in the nests of other birds.



A Seed tale from **ROMANIA**

An old man and an old woman wished for a child. One day the old man set off into the world promising to never come home until he found a baby. He walked for weeks and at last came to a dark cave.

Inside he discovered a man even older than himself. The ancient one gave him an apple as red as a rose that was split in half. Inside were beautiful seeds arranged on two sides like a mirror with stars. He was told that he was to eat half and his wife the other half. But the old man grew hungry and thirsty on his way home and without thinking ate the entire fruit, seeds and all, and fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he saw a little baby girl in the grass beside him. But within moments an eagle swooped down and carried the baby away. The old man walked on and was never heard of again.

But, years later, a beautiful girl was discovered living in an eagle's nest in a high tree in the middle of a forest. It was the old woman who was able to bring her down from among the leaves. She named the girl Rose Red "as an apple star seed of my heart."



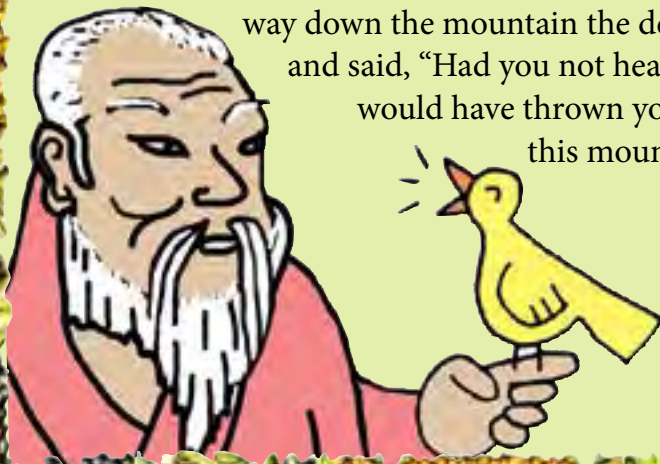
A Seed tale from **TIBET**

Two old men were friends. Each one owned a garden. One of them was kind, the other greedy. One day the man who was kind fed and cared for a bird that had fallen from its nest. The next day the bird returned with the gift of a seed. The old man planted it and within days a giant squash flowered.

Opening the squash, he discovered it was filled with gold. The old man shared it with his neighbors.

His greedy friend rushed home. Taking his bow and arrow, he wounded a bird that nested near his garden. Then he healed the bird and set it free. The next day that bird brought him the gift of a seed. A giant squash grew from the seed.

But when the old man pried it open there was a demon inside who chased the old man with a stick. Half way down the mountain the demon stopped and said, "Had you not healed that bird I would have thrown you off the side of this mountain."



A Jewish Seed tale from **CHINA**

A young apple tree grew among tall trees in a forest. Every night, stretching its branches toward the sky, it wished that it was special. When the stars shone, it called out, "If only I could have stars on my branches I would be important."

Night after night the little tree longed for the stars. The other trees often whispered, "Apple tree, next spring you will have fruit to offer where we have none." But the apple tree was dissatisfied. Even God looked down at the tree and said, "Be patient."

Autumn passed and winter changed into early spring and the apple tree became filled with lovely round apples. Still it sighed, "If only I had stars on my branches."

Then one spring day a wind blew an apple onto the ground where it split in half and lay open like two halves of a full moon. "Look down," cried the wind. "Can you not see that you have always had stars in your branches?" said God. And the apple tree nodded its head and looked at the inside of its fruit. There, on both sides, was the shape of a star adorned with tiny seeds.



*An Ancient **GREEK** Myth about Seeds*



The daughter of the Great Mother of the Earth was stolen away by the God of the Underworld who was very unhappy. Persephone lived in the dark and cold world below ours for a very long time. Her mother was so sad that she cried without end until the earth itself became bleak and dry. Grass and flowers, even waters disappeared and a long winter began.

Beneath the earth, Persephone went in search of a way back home. She found a garden of gray flowers. In the middle of this place was a single broken pomegranate with its seeds spread out on the ground. The Goddess' daughter was hungry and although she knew that those who eat in the land of the dead must always return there, she ate four ripe, red, moist seeds.



Above, the Gods realized that if the Great Mother would not stop her sorrow, there would be no growth again. So, they asked the Lord of the Underworld to return her daughter.

Persephone returned to the earth and immediately the brown earth turned green, the waters flowed. Even cows that had been barren gave milk. But because she had eaten four seeds, she had to return. That is how the seasons came to our world. There is spring and summer when Persephone dwells in our midst. But in the autumn, she departs for the underworld and the leaves turn brown. She remains for all of winter. Her return marks the beginning of spring.

*A Seed tale from **THAILAND***



A man who had many rice fields and orchards was grateful to the Goddess of Rice for his good fortune. At each harvest he invited the Goddess to his barn in order to perform ceremonies for her and make offerings as a way of thanking her. Every year the Goddess appeared. She brought him good luck and remained in his barn for many months.

Because the wealthy man spent so much time preparing the ceremonies and making prayers in his barn, his wife, his children and many of the people in his village thought he was selfishly keeping a secret from them. They did not believe that a Goddess would come and stay among human beings. At last she appeared before the husband and wife and announced that she would not come to our world any longer.

Without the protection of the Goddess, the man's rice fields withered and all the people of his village grew hungry. So the man traveled to the mountain where the Goddess lived to ask her to return. But the Goddess would not return. Instead, she gave the man nine rice seeds for the world.



She promised to protect their fields and asked only that people never forget her and always leave a small offering in thanks. That is how rice came back to the earth. All the farmers know it is best to remember and thank the Goddess of Rice.

THE GARDEN OF DREAMS:

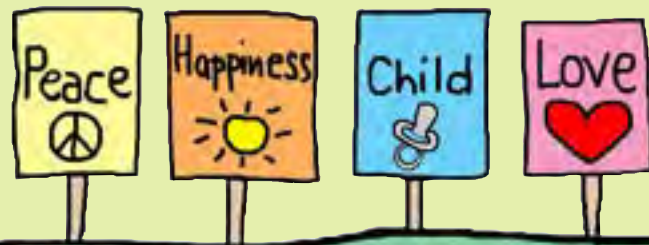
A Seed tale from MY HEART

By Bill Zimmerman

Once upon a time, long, long ago, a prince kissed a sleeping beauty, awaking her from a dreamless slumber. As soon as the two set eyes on each other they were happier than they had ever been.

The prince asked the beauty to be his princess. But before they were married he told her, "It is a custom in our family to begin a marriage by entering the Garden of Dreams. There we will plant dream seeds for our future life together."

Now, these seeds were for the dreams of what they hoped would grow in their new life—one seed for happiness, one seed for having a child, and another seed for building a safe kingdom free of war. They also planted a seed which was larger than all the others—it was the seed of love for one another that they hoped would bloom throughout their lives. The prince dug a large hole for this seed which the couple planted together, the princess covering the soil with her own hands. They were young and had so much hope in their hearts.



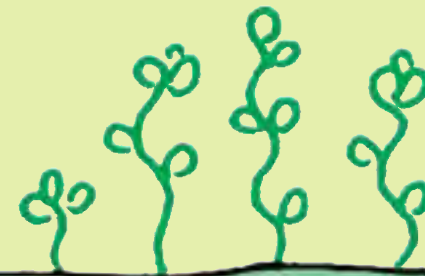
But before leaving the garden they spied another bag of seeds which was not labeled. For good luck, they took out a handful of these unknown seeds and sowed them in the soil. They hoped that beautiful flowers would grow from them, too.

The two then left the garden to attend their wedding party and celebrate their happy union. The prince thought that his new wife reminded him of a tropical flower he once had seen while traveling in the southern part of his kingdom. Her skin was a beautiful brown color. Her black eyes shone with life and joy. When she spoke, she gave voice in different musical tongues for she knew many languages. When he was with her, music and light filled his life. With her by his side, the prince felt complete and manly. He remembered how alone he had felt before he had met his princess and awoke her with his kiss. And each day his princess became more beautiful and dear to him.

Day followed day, night followed night. The early years of their marriage went by so quickly. And many of the seeds they had planted in the field of dreams grew and blossomed:

A child was born whom they named Esmeralda.

Their kingdom flourished and there was plenty of food for all.



The prince and princess were happy, their love kept growing.

But as more years passed the prince began to see that other things also had grown in his and his wife's lives, things which he had not foreseen.

Some of the seeds which had been in the unmarked bag had blossomed into nightmares. One was the bloom of illness. At different times in their lives together, as they grew older, the prince and his princess became ill. Their illnesses removed some of the light in their lives. More sadness came when their beautiful daughter, the joy of their lives whom they treasured and doted on, grew up and left them to make her life in another kingdom.

Then came the weeds of Terror and War. To protect his kingdom, the prince was forced to fight many evil people who wanted to take over his land and rule it themselves. The prince fought valiantly and slew those who threatened his kingdom. But in doing so he suffered many wounds and lost many soldiers. He began to see that men cannot live long in peace. There always is a flower of evil that will grow even in the best of places.

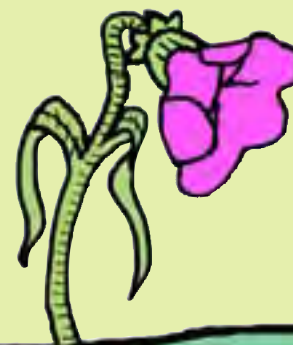


More years passed and the prince and princess went about their lives as best as they could. And the prince began to see his wife grow older and infirm. Her eyes dimmed a little. Her body grew weaker—she lost the quickness in her step. She needed many medicines and potions in order to live. She often seemed sad.

And the prince said, "I am losing my wife. She is no longer the way I remembered her." He grew sad and angry. He didn't want things to change or life to move on.

The prince decided to visit the Garden of Dreams again to see if he could find a seed to plant that would make his princess well again and restore her to the way she was. Entering the garden, he saw the old crone who guarded the seeds. Humbly, he asked her for a dream seed to restore his dream of love.

But the old woman said to him, "I can't give you any more seeds to plant because you were given your fair share many years ago. You only get one turn."



"But," cried the prince, "I would like once more to plant the seed of love, to bring back my wife's love and the love I felt for her. I want to make her the way she was."

Replied the old woman, "Recall, prince, the largest seed you planted many years ago was the seed of love. It was the largest," she said, "because love manifests itself in many ways."

"First, its earliest flowers are fresh and bright and they are pretty to look at, so lovely to smell. Then, with time, the flowers of love change, their colors become deeper and richer, their scent more subtle. You have to look more carefully to discover this richness. As time passes some of the flowers of love become tangled with vines and weeds. It is harder for love to survive. And you must work hard to fight off the vines of Defeat and Despair."

The crone stopped, but then added, "At this time in your life you must accept love for what it is. Your princess, while she has grown older and more frail, is still a beautiful flower. But you must learn to see her clearly in the present light, rather than in the light of the past. She is still what she was if you look carefully."

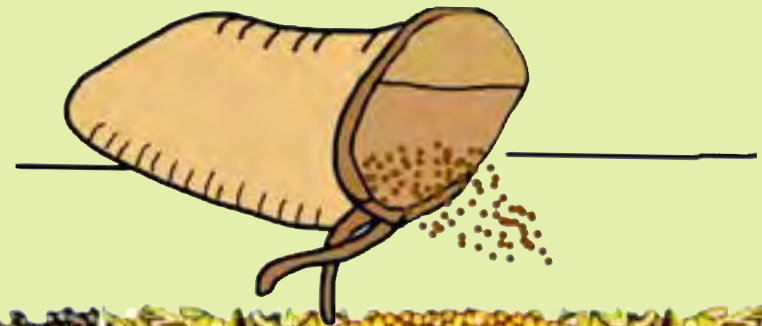


Listening carefully to her, the prince nodded his head in agreement. Slowly, he limped away and left the Garden of Dream Seeds. He knew he would not return again. He began thinking deeply about what the old woman had said.

After he departed, the old woman went to her hut to eat her dinner. As she sat down, she heard another knock on the door. "Come in," she said. This time, the visitor was the princess, now older and more delicate. She whispered to the crone, "I would like once more to plant a seed to bring back my husband's love. Can you give me another dream seed to help me?"

But the old woman answered, "I cannot give you any more seeds of love. You have had your fair share. Everyone gets the same amount, no more, no less."

When she heard this, the princess began to weep. Her tears moved the old crone and she said to the princess, "When we are young, it is big dreams that we plant for the future. But, when we are old, it is little dream seeds we must plant." She then reached into a bag of tiny seeds and gave a handful to the princess. "Take these," she said.



What are the little seeds for?" the princess asked.

The old woman answered:

"This one is for peace of mind.

"This one is to love others unselfishly.

"This one is to be giving.

"This one is to do no harm.

"This one is to gain understanding.

"This one is to create beauty.

"This one is to enjoy that which you have or are given.

"This one is to look for small moments of joy and pleasure.

"This one to seek fulfillment.

"This one is to lose rancor in our soul and not harbor bitterness.

"And this one," she said, "is to be kind and loving, above all, to be loving."

The princess listened carefully to the old woman's words. And for the first time in many, many years, a smile broke out on her sad, lined but still-beautiful face. She gratefully took the tiny seeds and began planting them, one by one, one by one, humming a song to herself as she worked. Hope once again was growing within her. After all, she had her dream seeds.



End Words from THE AUTHOR

All of life is a planting. I have tried to plant and grow my dreams since I was a boy, and with the passing of many years, I have begun to see some of the fruits that I have reaped. Some are wonderful things, some are not exactly what I had hoped for. Dreams are like seeds—some are strong, some dry up and die, and some just surprise you.

In planting, as in life, growth comes little by little, increment by increment. We must nurture the seedling, feeding it, watering it, protecting it from too much rain and sun, and weed around it. In that same way we grow our dreams and begin to realize them one by one. Sometimes it takes a whole lifetime to realize a dream. There is a plant, in fact, that blooms only once in its lifetime, taking decades to bloom. Dreams often are realized only with the passing of much time.

Remember, too, to take pleasure in what you harvest. You will have worked very hard to cultivate the seeds you have planted, and when you finally reap what you have sown, don't plunge right away into a new planting. Pause. Take time to rejoice. Make up a harvest song or a song of thanksgiving in your head. Hold a harvest festival. It is always important to celebrate those dreams which have come true.





About the Author

After all his many years, **Bill Zimmerman** says, “I still believe in magic seeds, that you can plant them and something wonderful will grow, even a new way of life. After all, look what happened to Jack after he planted his beans—adventures, mystery, brave deeds, rewards.”

A prize-winning editor and journalist, Bill was a senior editor at Newsday newspaper where he created a syndicated educational feature for young people that was twice nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

In his many books and work as a newspaper editor, Bill has pioneered innovative writing techniques to help people express all the important things within them. His books and web sites are used in literacy and English language learning programs around the world and to encourage creative thinking.

His web sites are: <http://www.billztreasurechest.com>, which features excerpts from all his books, <http://www.make-beliefscomix.com>, which enables visitors to create their own online comic strips, and <http://www.somethingtowriteabout.com>, his writing prompts blog for students. Please visit them.

Among his popular books are:

Pocket Doodles for Kids • Make Beliefs: A Gift for Your Imagination • Lunch Box Letters: Writing Notes of Love and Encouragement to Your Children • How to Tape Instant Oral Biographies

About the Storyteller

Laura Simms, who gathered the seed tales for this book, is an award-winning storyteller, recording artist, teacher and writer.

Her storytelling embraces ancient myth and fairy tales with personal narrative. She also has authored: *The Robe of Love: Secret Instructions for the Heart*; *Thinking Like a Storyteller*; *Becoming the World*; *Rotten Teeth*; *A Key to the Heart and Other Afghan Tales*; *Stories to Nourish the Hearts of Children in a Time of Crisis*; *An Ocean of Stories*; *The Bone Man*, and *Otter and Frog*. Involved in many humanitarian projects, Laura is now working to save a zoo as a community renewal initiative in Romania, and Girls Write Haiti. Her web site is: www.laurasimms.com.



About the Illustrator


Tom Bloom is an artist who has brought joy to the world with his cartoons and illustrations which have appeared in publications, such as The New York Times, The New Yorker, Fortune and Barron's. He has collaborated with Bill on many other books.

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WRITE TO:

Bill Zimmerman
Guarionex Press Ltd.
201 West 77th Street
New York, NY 10024
E-mail: wmz@aol.com



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