

Ancient Thera, New Teacher

The wind working its
way through ancient
cracks and ill-fitting doors pestered
me all night.

Now it is morning and
nothing has settled down the
wind refuses to clear a space
for contemplation. This is stormy

country, lost to fire and sea, buried by meters and
meters of hard pumice rain and heavy boulders,
the volcano falling into its

fiery heart and sea blazing in to fill the steaming
crater that once was island.
Gorgeous culture ended here.

Island home to painters who knew
no restraint who took ceremonial rooms and
made them come alive with color and
form bound by no convention
strong joyful brush strokes bringing

life to barren walls on barren
land their homes painted still today
reminding us of times when

dolphins danced with fleets and
swallows swept the wild sea air
with song. Even now when

it all collapsed and 2500 years of
grief and dust had to be gently cleansed
to see their life even now Minoan joy

is here and even now their happy
life lifts my human heart above
my own ruined time and

reminds me that life can be
good even when lived in the shadow of
what must destroy it.

They knew what was coming.

Many times tremors and ash
warned them to take their
treasures and flee yet they
returned to clean and

rebuild and recreate the life they loved

and then the volcano would
have no more of them and
Earth erupted with the violence
only found deep inside
creation. All fire the

blast blew black obsidian boulders like dust,
mythic energy reminding humans
how tenderly to walk
the earth that goes from beloved
to fire when it tolerates us

no longer.

Thera, Greece. May 2004

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Margaret Wheatley and Geoff Crinean will lead a module at the 2005 Authentic Leadership Summer Program, on "Radical Leadership: Ancient Wisdom for Solving Problems and Transforming Aggression."