

A photograph of a wooden dock floating on a body of water. The dock is made of several weathered wooden planks and has blue metal brackets at its ends. In the background, the water reflects the golden light of trees, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

# Crossing Thresholds

## *Island Reflections*

Poems, Inquiries, and Photos

—  
**Amba Gale**



In *Crossing Thresholds*, Amba Gale deeply touches upon themes that are relevant to living our lives with meaning, gratitude, and wonder. Through journaling, photographs, and poems, taken and written in the Isle Royale area of Lake Superior, she shares her own story of tapping into Silence, accepting change, opening new beginnings, encouraging her reader to engage their own journey across whatever thresholds are theirs to cross.



“Amba’s book is coming out exactly at the right moment. Photography and poetry like hers would have power to enchant eyes and hearts at any time. But now, our eyesight rinsed by tears and our hearts widened by silence, we are ready to be guided across inner thresholds we will have to cross before we can cross the outer ones awaiting us. Amba Gale’s work can provide much needed guidance. Blessings on its task!”

—**BROTHER DAVID STEINDL-RAST**, Benedictine monk and founder of Gratefulness.org

“I love Amba’s book, and I love her poetry. *Crossing Thresholds* provides a gift of healing for all of us—individually, collectively, and globally—as we cross this threshold time, between worlds, being taught lessons by Mother Earth, who herself has had difficulty breathing. Poet David Whyte says in his poem *Loaves and Fishes*, ‘People are hungry and one good word is bread for a thousand.’ This is a book that will feed and nourish.”

—**LYNNE TWIST**, author of *Soul and Money* and cofounder of Pachamama Alliance

“To live deliberately, that’s why Thoreau went to live in the woods. Amba Gale has provided an inspirational, and practical, guidebook to the rest of your life. It will help you, every day, to truly regard your life, your soul. Along the way, you may come to recognize the connectedness of all things, living and otherwise.”

—**ROLF O. PETERSON**, author of *The Wolves of Isle Royale: A Broken Balance*

“Franz Kafka, the Bohemian writer and regarded as one of the most important figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature wrote: ‘A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us.’ Now is the time, reader, to take up this literary cleaver, *Crossing Thresholds*, and begin cutting through to the fish hole of your soul.”

—**THE REV. NÓIRÍN NÍ RIAIN, PhD**, spiritual singer, author, teacher, and soul searcher

“This is an intimate book, at once both delicate and piercing. I relish its soulful truths and predict that, like me, you will find yourself returning to it again and again, discovering new joys in each visit.”

—**SANFORD (SANDY) ROBBINS**, Producing Artistic Director, Resident Ensemble



Amba Gale has been a coach and leader in people’s personal and professional leadership development for over forty years, in whose company people come into their own wisdom and sources of power, joy, and accomplishment. Discover more at [www.galeleadershipdevelopment.com](http://www.galeleadershipdevelopment.com).

ISBN: 978-1-7346941-1-6 | \$29.95



9 781734 694116

## Praise for *Crossing Thresholds*



“Whatever else future historians will have to say about the year 2020, it will be seen in retrospect as a year of crossing thresholds. This fact alone would make a book entitled *Crossing Thresholds* timely. But Amba Gale’s book is even more timely for another reason, at this hour: In quarantine on account of the coronavirus pandemic, countless people are learning again to be enchanted by picture books, the way they used to be as children. Thus, Amba’s book is coming out exactly at the right moment. Master photography and poetry like hers would have power to enchant eyes and hearts at any time. But now, our eyesight rinsed by tears and our hearts widened by silence, we are ready to be guided across inner thresholds we will have to cross before we can cross the outer ones awaiting us. Amba Gale’s work can provide much needed guidance. Blessings on its task!”

—**BROTHER DAVID STEINDL-RAST**, Benedictine monk and founder of Gratefulness.org

“I love Amba’s book, and I love her poetry. We are tuned into the same channel. I thank her for bringing such beauty and wisdom and truth into the world. *Crossing Thresholds* provides a gift of healing for all of us—individually, collectively, and globally—as we cross this threshold time, between worlds, being taught lessons by Mother Earth, who herself has had difficulty breathing. Poet David Whyte says in his poem *Loaves and Fishes*,

‘People are hungry and one good word is breath for a thousand.’ This is a book that will feed and nourish.”

—**LYNNE TWIST**, author of *The Soul of Money* and co-founder of Pachamama Alliance

“To live deliberately, that’s why Thoreau went to live in the woods. Amba Gale has provided an inspirational, and practical, guidebook to the rest of your life. It will help you, every day, to truly regard your life, your soul. Along the way, you may come to recognize the connectedness of all things, living and otherwise.”

—**ROLF O. PETERSON**, author of *The Wolves of Isle Royale: A Broken Balance*

“Through a marvellous cornucopia of poems, pictures, and practices, Amba Gale precisely defines the human being’s journey through life in all its manifest forms and expressions. Truly, this is the wonderful outcome and upshot of a life lived to the full. Here is an expression of the wisdom of one seeker and searcher—a DIY manual birthed from the author’s insight and good judgment. Amba has fashioned a work of great transformation and healing for our troubled earth at this time. This is surely a contemporary Scripture, where every verse, every image, and every contemplation is a prayer for the universe. Franz Kafka, the Bohemian writer regarded as one of the most important figures of twentieth-century





# Crossing Thresholds

## *Island Reflections*

Poems, Inquiries, and Photos

Amba Gale



Dearest Brother David  
with deep gratitude  
In the Blessing  
of your "ruach"  
your Spirit - Breeth,  
as we send this  
Teaching Out into  
the World.  
With love and a  
profound  
Thank you,  
Amba

Copyright © 2020 by Amba Gale  
Cover photo © Amba Gale  
Interior photos © Amba Gale and Don Gale  
Cover and interior design by Tabitha Lahr

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, digital scanning, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, please address [contactus@galeleadership.com](mailto:contactus@galeleadership.com).

Published 2020  
Printed in the United States of America  
Print ISBN: 978-1-7346941-1-6  
E-ISBN: 978-1-7346941-2-3  
Library of Congress Control Number: 2020906658

Use of the excerpt from “To Bless the Space Between Us,” by John O’Donohue, was granted by permissions of the publisher, Penguin Random House.

# Contents

Author's Note . . . . .	x
Introduction. . . . .	xii
Blessing for the Beginning of Our Journey Together . . . . .	xvii

## ♦ *Part I: Touching the Islands Within Us*

Reflective Journaling . . . . .	2
Island, Be Our Guide . . . . .	5
Food for the Soul . . . . .	7
Come to Me, My Island . . . . .	11
Where Lake Becomes Sky . . . . .	15
Beneath the Silence . . . . .	17
Isle Royale Teachings. . . . .	21
Where Sky Meets Lake . . . . .	27
Wake up Wind. . . . .	29
Heart Break . . . . .	33
In Gratitude for the Muse . . . . .	36

## ♦ *Part II: Accepting Endings, Creating Completion, Starting New Beginnings*

Breakaway. . . . .	41
Dock's Lament . . . . .	46
Bridge Speaks . . . . .	50
For Giving Endings . . . . .	53
Lessons from the Dock. . . . .	55
Deeper than You Think . . . . .	61

Dock's Healing . . . . .	63
For Butterfly Emerging . . . . .	67
Butterfly Morning . . . . .	69
Butterfly Spirit . . . . .	72
We Use the Dock! . . . . .	75
Peace . . . . .	78

### ♦ *Part III: Listening for Teachers Everywhere*

Seeing the Invisible . . . . .	83
Listen to the Island . . . . .	87
Listen for the Unexpected . . . . .	89
Upon Reading "Summer Teaching" . . . . .	92
For Keith . . . . .	95
For the Artist in Residence . . . . .	97
Buttered Toast . . . . .	99
Faith . . . . .	103
Barometer Teachings . . . . .	105
On Raspberry Island . . . . .	107
Twice Golden . . . . .	111
Wild Iris . . . . .	114
Superior Symphony Storm . . . . .	117
Tobin Harbor Haiku . . . . .	124
The Song of Belonging . . . . .	128
Nature: The Artist at Work . . . . .	137
Packing Day . . . . .	141
Watching in Wonderment . . . . .	147
Where Lake Meets Sky . . . . .	151
Build Your Home on an Island . . . . .	153