

## Gratitude for the Universe Story

Betty Kissilove

**M**y gratitude to you, Thomas Berry, for your articulation of the Universe Story and of the “...dream of a mutually enhancing human presence within an ever-renewing organic-based Earth community” knows no bounds.

In an attempt to express how your gifts have inspired me, I submit the following verses:

The Story provides a new context,  
New perspective that helps me to see  
I'm stardust! I'm connected to everything!  
I belong to the Earth Community!

My belonging and feeling connected  
Make me eager to do all I can  
To protect and to cherish our planet,  
Support Life—and to live by that plan.

These verses comprise the epilogue to an epic poem I've written telling the Story of the Universe. It's one way I'm passing on the great gifts that I've received from you—in other words, I'm “paying it forward.”

Betty Kissilove lives in San Francisco, California and teaches English as a Second Language at the City College of San Francisco. She first crossed paths with Thomas Berry at a peace conference in Costa Rica in 1989, and this encounter stoked the fires of her already-ignited fascination with the New Cosmology. That fascination later inspired her to write “Great Ball of Fire! A Poetic Telling of the 13.7-Billion-Year Story of the Universe” (publication forthcoming).

