

Preface

History lies within the images in this book you hold in your hands. Not only do the images embody the passion and spirit that went into them, they also mark a ten year point in the history of my own photographic journey. These images are formed from my own personal growth and space; they come from my personal experiences and from various places of inspiration over the years.

The starting point for combining friend and co-author Jeanne Ripley's words with my images was my 2001 photographic exhibit "In Quiet Places." Initially, I submitted images to Jeanne, and she responded with a poem. This creative collaboration has lasted for four years, during the course of which, we started playing with reversing the creative process for several of the images and poems, culminating in *Wings to Fly*.

Making images is an act of integration in which boundaries and rules become questionable. I call this creative process "Loose Grip and Disciplined Eye." Connection, stillness, and an appreciation of the world around me make up the foundation of my photography. While each of our experiences and connections with the world around us is unique, it is my wish that you will respond to *Wings to Fly* with an opened eye and heart.

Joanne Chilton

The poetry for this book started as a playful experience. I wrote what Joanne's images evoked. The words came from deep places of pain and frustration, from family and friends, poets, counselors, books, travel and workshops.

Change began inside and was slow in arriving. I started to see my life as a process of becoming me. I hope that *Wings to Fly* will inspire you to reflect: to go within and to find your own light.

We have divided the book into various themes. The first section, Don't Find Me, reflects the darkness and fear often present at the beginning of a spiritual journey. The second group, Seeing Differently, expresses the awakening of possibilities. Celebration of Life, the third section, holds a lightness of spirit and an increasing awareness of the reasons to be grateful. And finally, the closing section, Finding Your Wings, leads you to explore your own potential and the possibilities we all find when we uncover our wings.

Jeanne Ripley