

## A Buddhist's Guide to Dealing with Malicious Critics

The silent room is clamorous  
with his animosity. Breathe deep.

His spiteful voice echoes in your head  
because you allow it. Breathe, now be  
the first to forgive him. Even his snide eye  
is at times a dewdrop reflecting the moon  
and sky, though later he twists in feverish,  
cackling dreams. So what if he thinks  
your forbearance is cowardice; he might not  
know courage. Light a stick of incense  
and bow to buddha, chant a vow  
to save all sentient beings, including him,  
now offer thanks to this poor benefactor,  
whose ill brilliance perpetuates his own suffering.

See what his harsh words really say. Let them go,  
let vain anguish collapse into ash, drift  
away like fragrance or poignance or praise.

*Kevin MacNeil*