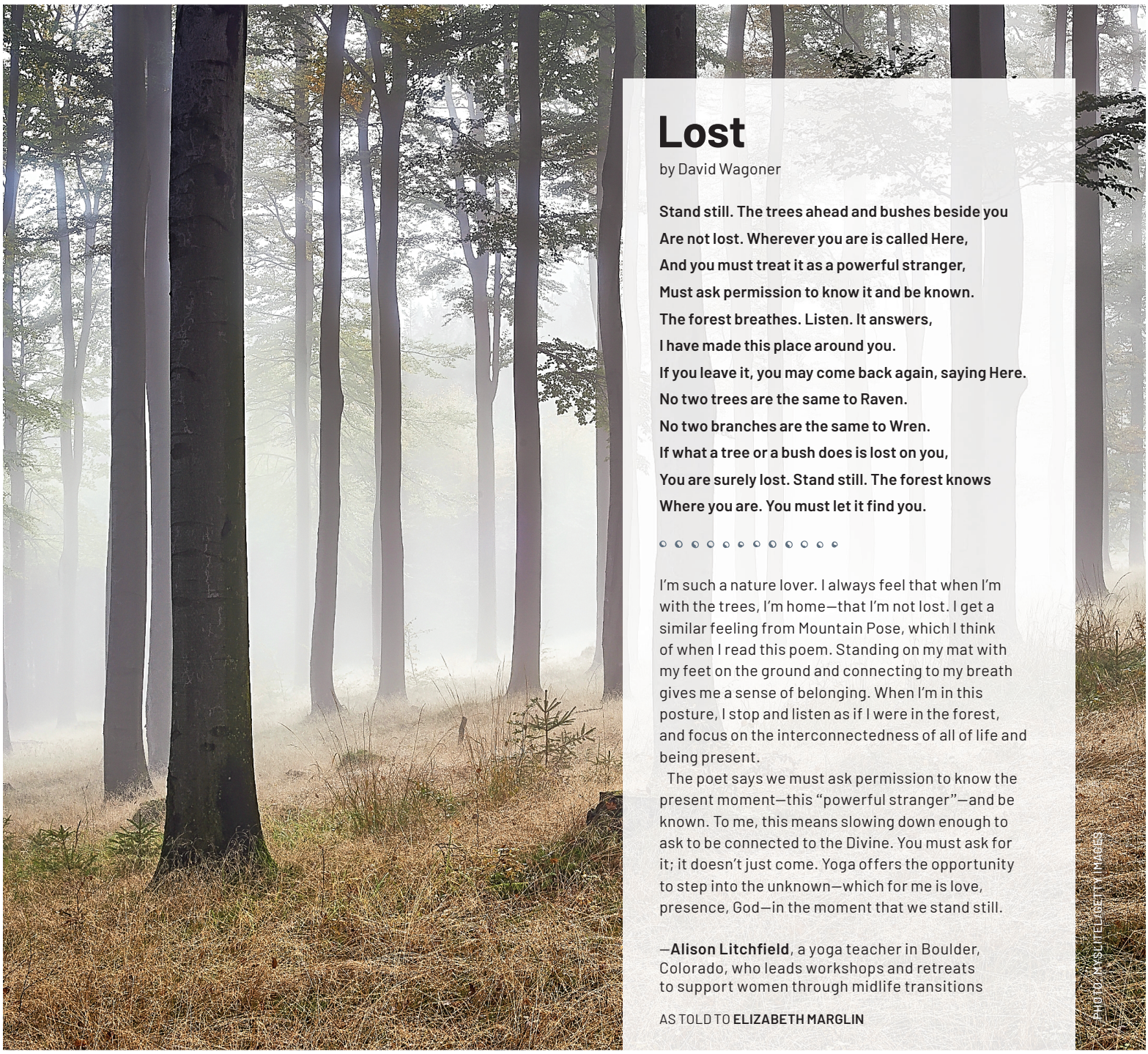
Teachers Share Works

They Read at the End of Class



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Lost

by David Wagoner

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you.
If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.

I'm such a nature lover. I always feel that when I'm with the trees, I'm home—that I'm not lost. I get a similar feeling from Mountain Pose, which I think of when I read this poem. Standing on my mat with my feet on the ground and connecting to my breath gives me a sense of belonging. When I'm in this posture, I stop and listen as if I were in the forest, and focus on the interconnectedness of all of life and being present.

The poet says we must ask permission to know the present moment—this "powerful stranger"—and be known. To me, this means slowing down enough to ask to be connected to the Divine. You must ask for it; it doesn't just come. Yoga offers the opportunity to step into the unknown—which for me is love, presence, God—in the moment that we stand still.

—**Alison Litchfield**, a yoga teacher in Boulder, Colorado, who leads workshops and retreats to support women through midlife transitions

AS TOLD TO **ELIZABETH MARGLIN**

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