



# PURIST

AN ADVENTURE IN WELLNESS

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MORTENSEN**  
IN *GREEN BOOK*

WINTER WELLNESS IN  
ASPEN + NY + LA + MIAMI + PALM BEACH

# WHERE FIRE BECOMES GRACE

Spiritual teacher **Deirdre Hade** reflects on the ongoing wildfires coursing through California, and finds comfort in connection and renewal.

“Dry Ocean” by Lily Longano

December of last year, the Thomas fire erupts in Ventura, California, storming its way through the hills of Montecito. My husband and I fleeing our home in a blizzard of gray white ash—270,000 acres burned. Then, torrential rain bringing 30-foot-high mudslides—27 of my neighbors died. It was a miracle we survived. *Déjà vu*. Now almost one year later, a second massive fire erupts in Ventura, the Woolsey Fire, ripping through Thousand Oaks, decimating Malibu all the way to Paradise Beach. In the north, the Butte wild fire destroys a town named Paradise. Our California paradise is burning up.

This was my experience living through disaster. When life is its hardest we do not have any answers. So we turn to the divine for comfort, mercy and understanding. We turn to each other. Stranger to stranger. Hardship breaks the wall between us. Loss breaks everything we used to be. We are in shock. Emotional shock is when every feeling, every thought, every gesture seems like an out-of-body experience. Reality becomes surreal.

And emotional shock is also what can bring us our greatest transformation. By surrendering your feelings of helplessness, by naming your feelings of being overwhelmed, by asking for help, you heal. When we surrender

into a greater reality than what we see, feel, taste or think is real, something mysterious happens: grace comes. Grace is renewal. Grace is the awe of gratitude and overreaching love. Grace is the fortitude to live through unimaginable grief and overcome unrelenting loss. Grace is the unquestionable resilience that comes as your psyche knits itself back together, bringing you into another kind of inner wholeness.

Spiritual fire is the fire of transformation. It is a refiner’s fire that tempers and refines our sense of who we are. This is where we mystically become the phoenix rising from the ashes, revealing the gifts we have hidden inside of ourselves. My gift has been a newfound gratitude for life.

We become our greatest selves when we hold each other. Nothing can bring back our communities or our lost loved ones. But there is something that can bring us hope. That is to attach to all the living. Look where hope lives and find each other’s heart. Put each other’s heart in our hands and carefully, tenderly, breathe life back into one another. This is where fire becomes grace.

*Deirdre Hade recently released The 6 Simple Keys to Living a Spiritually Connected and Purpose Filled Life.*  
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