

We Have Not Come to Take Prisoners

We have not come here to take prisoners
But to surrender ever more deeply
To freedom and joy.

We have not come into this exquisite world
to hold ourselves hostage from love.

Run my dear,
From anything
That may not strengthen
Your precious budding wings.

Run like hell, my dear,
From anyone likely
To put a sharp knife
Into the sacred, tender vision
Of your beautiful heart.

We have a duty to befriend
Those aspects of obedience
That stand outside of our house
And shout to our reason
"Oh please, oh please
come out and play."

By Hafiz

I Got Kin

Plant
So that your own heart
Will grow

Love
So God will think,

“Ahhhhh,
I got kin in that body!
I should start inviting that soul over
For coffee and
Rolls.”

Sing
Because this is a food
Our starving world
Needs.

Laugh
Because that is the purest
Sound.

By Hafiz

Becoming Human

Once a man came to me and spoke for hours about
"His great visions of God" he felt he was having.

He asked me for confirmation, saying,
"Are these wondrous dreams true?"

I replied, "How many goats do you have?"

He looked surprised and said,
"I am speaking of sublime visions
And you ask about goats!"

And I spoke again saying,
"Yes, brother - how many do you have?"

"Well, Hafiz, I have sixty-two."

"And how many wives?"
Again he looked surprised, then said,
"Four."

"How many rose bushes in your garden,
How many children,
Are your parents still alive,
Do you feed the birds in winter?"

And to all he answered.

Then I said,
"You asked me if I thought your visions were true,
I would say that they were if they make you become
More human,

More kind to every creature and plant
That you know."

By Hafiz

The Gift

Our
Union is like this:

You feel cold
So I reach for a blanket to cover
Our shivering feet.

A hunger comes into your body
So I run to my garden
And start digging potatoes.

You ask for a few words of comfort and guidance,
I quickly kneel at your side offering you
This whole book –
As a gift.

You ache with loneliness one night
So much you weep

And I say,

Here's a rope,
Tie it around me,

Hafiz
Will be your companion
For life.

God Would Kneel Down

I think God might be a little prejudiced.
For once He asked me to join Him on a walk
Through this world,

And we gazed into every heart on this earth,
And I noticed he lingered a little bit longer
Before any face that was
weeping,

and before any eyes that were
laughing,

and sometimes when we passed
a soul in worship

God too would kneel
down.

I have come to learn: God
Adores His
Creation.

St. Francis of Assisi
Trans. Daniel Ladinsky in
Love Poems from God

I live my life in widening circles
That reach out across the world.
I may not complete this last one
But I give myself to it.

I circle around God, around the primordial tower.
I've been circling for thousands of years
And I still don't know: am I a falcon,
A storm, or a great song?

By Rainer Maria Rilke

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
Then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
Go to the limits of your longing:
Embody me.

Flare up like flame
And make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.

Give me your hand.

By Rainer Maria Rilke

Only in our doing can we grasp you.
Only with our hands can we illumine you.
The mind is but a visitor:
It thinks us out of our world.

Each mind fabricates itself.
We sense its limits, for we have made them.
And just when we would flee them, you come
And make of yourself an offering.

I don't want to think a place for you.
Speak to me from everywhere.
Your Gospel can be comprehended
Without looking for its source.

When I go toward you
It is with my whole life.

By Ranier Maria Rilke

Out Beyond

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,
There is a field. I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,
The world is too full to talk about.

Ideas, language, even the phrase *each other*
Doesn't make any sense.

Half-Heartedness

Gamble everything for Love,
If you are a true human being.
If not, leave this gathering.

Half-heartedness does not reach
Into majesty. You set out
to find God, but then you keep
stopping for long periods
at mean-spirited roadhouses.

--Rumi
13th century Sufi mystic, poet and philosopher

Bewilderment

There are many guises for intelligence.
One part of you is gliding in a high Windstream,
While your more ordinary notions
Take little steps and peck at the ground.

Conventional knowledge is death to our souls,
and it not really ours. It is laid on.
Yet we keep saying we find "rest" in these "beliefs."

We must become ignorant of what we have been taught
And be instead bewildered.

Run from what is profitable and comfortable.
Distrust anyone who praises you.
Give your investment money, and the interest
On the capital, to those who are actually destitute.

Forget safety. Live where you fear to live.
Destroy your reputation. Be notorious.
I have tried prudent planning long enough.
From now on, I'll be mad.

--Rumi

13th century Sufi mystic, poet and philosopher

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

--Rumi
13th century Sufi mystic, poet and philosopher

To Begin With: The Sweet Grass

7.

What I loved in the beginning, I think, was mostly myself.
Never mind that I had to, since somebody had to.
That was many years ago.
Since then, I have gone out from my confinements,
 though with some difficulty.

I mean the ones that thought to rule my heart.
I cast them out, I put them in the mush pile.
They will be nourishment somehow (everything is nourishment somehow or
another).

And I have become the child of clouds and of hope.
I have become the friend of the enemy, whoever that is.
I have become older and, cherishing what I have learned,
I have become younger.

And what do I risk to tell you this, which is all I know?
Love yourself. Then forget it. Then love the world.

Mary Oliver
From *Evidence*

I Don't Want to be Demure or Respectable

I don't want to be demure or respectable.

I was that way, asleep, for years.

That way, you forget too many important things.

How the little stones, even if you can't hear them, are singing.

How the river can't wait to get to the ocean and the sky,

it's been there before.

What traveling is that?

It is a joy to imagine such distances.

I could skip sleep for the next hundred years.

There is a fire in the lashes of my eyes.

It doesn't matter where I am, it could be a small room.

The glimmer of gold Bohme saw on the kitchen pot

Was missed by everyone else in the house.

Maybe the fire in my lashes is a reflection of that.

Why do I have so many thoughts, they are driving me crazy.

Why am I always going anywhere, instead of somewhere?

Listen to me, or not, it hardly matters.

I'm not trying to be wise, that would be foolish.

I'm just chattering.

Mary Oliver

From *Blue Horses*

The Invitation (edited)
By Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me
what you do for a living.
I want to know
what you ache for
and if you dare to dream
of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me
how old you are.
I want to know
if you will risk
looking like a fool
for love
for your dream
for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me
what planets are
squaring your moon...
I want to know
if you have touched
the centre of your own sorrow
if have been opened
by life's betrayals
or have become shrivelled and closed
from fear of further pain.

I want to know
if you can sit with pain
mine or your own
without moving to hide it
or fade it
or fix it.

I want to know
if you can be with joy
mine or your own
if you can dance with wildness
and let the ecstasy fill you
to the tips of your fingers and toes
without cautioning us

to be careful
to be realistic
to remember the limitations
of being human.

....
I want to know if you can see Beauty
even when it is not pretty
every day.
And if you can source your own life
from its presence.

I want to know
if you can live with failure
yours and mine
and still stand at the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon,
"Yes."

....
It doesn't interest me
who you know
or how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand
in the centre of the fire
with me
and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me
where or what or with whom
you have studied.
I want to know
what sustains you
from the inside
when all else falls away.

I want to know
if you can be alone
with yourself
and if you truly like
the company you keep
in the empty moments.

