



ROOKHOW
Quaker Meeting House and Bunkbarn

ZOOM EPILOGUE

POEMS & READINGS

Sea Fever

BY JOHN MASEFIELD

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted
knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

Compline prayer

**Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.**

Kathleen O'Meara's poem, 'And People Stayed Home,' written in 1869.

And people stayed home
and read books and listened
and rested and exercised
and made art and played
and learned new ways of being
and stopped
and listened deeper
someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their shadow
and people began to think differently
and people healed
and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways,
dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
**even the earth began to heal
and when the danger ended
and people found each other
grieved for the dead people
and they made new choices
and dreamed of new visions
and created new ways of life
and healed the earth completely
just as they were healed themselves.**

If ten lamps are present in one place,
each differs in form from another;
yet you can't distinguish whose radiance is whose
when you focus on the light.

In the field of spirit there is no division;
no individuals exist.
Sweet is the oneness of the Friend with His friends.
Catch hold of spirit.
Help this headstrong self disintegrate;
that beneath it you may discover unity,
like a buried treasure.

Rumi

When I Was the Forest

When I was the stream, when I was the
forest, when I was still the field,
when I was every hoof, foot,
fin and wing, when I
was the sky
itself,

no one ever asked me did I have a purpose, no one ever
wondered was there anything I might need,
for there was nothing
I could not
love.

It was when I left all we once were that
the agony began, the fear and questions came,
and I wept, I wept. And tears
I had never known
before.

So I returned to the river, I returned to
the mountains. I asked for their hand in marriage again,
I begged—I begged to wed every object
and creature,

and when they accepted,
God was ever present in my arms.
And He did not say,
“Where have you
been?”

For then I knew my soul—every soul—
has always held
Him.

-Meister Eckhart (1260 - 1328)

Kindness

Naomi Shihab Nye - 1952-

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

'Rain' by Simon Armitage

*Be glad
of these freshwater tears,
each pearled droplet
some salty old sea-bullet
air-lifted out of the waves,
then laundred and sieved,
recast as a soft bead
and returned.
And no matter how much
it strafes or sheets,
it is no mean feat
to catch one raindrop
clean in the mouth,
to take one drop
on the tongue, tasting
cloud-pollen,
grain of the heavens,
raw sky.
Let it teem, up here
where the front of the mind
distils
the brunt of the world.*

"How do you do it?" said night

"How do you wake and shine?"

"I keep it simple." said light

"One day at a time"

By Lemn Sissay

On Joy and Sorrow

Kahlil Gibran - 1883-1931

Then a woman said, Speak to us of Joy and Sorrow.

And he answered:

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.

And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.

And how else can it be?

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.

Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?

And is not the lute that soothes your spirit, the very wood that was hollowed with knives?

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow," and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater."

But I say unto you, they are inseparable.

Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.

Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.

Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced.

When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh his gold and his silver, needs must your joy or your sorrow rise or fall.

'Think it possible that you may be mistaken'.

(Advices & Queries 17)

The Summer Day

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean-

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

—*Mary Oliver*

THE STARFISH STORY

Early one morning, an old man was walking along a beach after a big storm. He found the shore line littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small girl approaching. As the girl walked, she paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that the girl was gently throwing things into the sea. The girl came closer still and the man called out, "May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young girl paused, looked up, and replied "I'm throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can't return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water."

The old man replied, "But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference."



The girl bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she turned, smiled and said,

"I made a difference to that one!"

From my Secret Friend...

In Friendship I would give you...

- The deep shadow of bluebells
- The bright stars of wood anemone
- The gold of celadine and dandelion
- The soft velvet of violets
- The grace of the silver birch
- The softness of pussy willow
- The endurance of oak
- The majesty of beech
- The wisdom of yew
- The foam of hickthorn and the score of hawthorn
- The abundance of wild garlic and the silver of sunlight on water

These and more I would give you but they are not mine to give.

They belong to the Earth and she offers them in her generosity. They are yours for the taking. ^{With} the Joy of Nature.

From your Secret Friend

For Equilibrium, a Blessing

Like the joy of the sea coming home to shore,
May the relief of laughter rinse through your soul.

As the wind loves to call things to dance,
May your gravity be lightened by grace.

Like the dignity of moonlight restoring the earth,
May your thoughts incline with reverence and respect.

As water takes whatever shape it is in,
So free may you be about who you become.

As silence smiles on the other side of what's said,
May your sense of irony bring perspective.

As time remains free of all that it frames,
May your mind stay clear of all its names.

May your prayer of listening deepen enough
to hear in the depths the laughter of god.”

– John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings*

‘WINTER APPLE’ *by David Whyte*

Let the apple ripen

on the branch

beyond your need

to take it down.

Let the coolness of autumn

and the breathing,

blowing wind

test its adherence

to endurance,
let the others fall.
Wait longer
than you would,
go against yourself,
find the pale nobility
of quiet that ripening
demands;
watch with patience
as the silhouette emerges
and the leaves fall;
see it become
a solitary roundness
against a greying sky,
let winter come
and the first
frost threaten,
and then wake
one morning
to see the breath
of winter
has haloed
its redness
with light.
So that a full
two months
after you
should have
taken the apple
down
you hold it in

your closed hand
at last and bite
into the cool
sweetness
spread evenly
through every
single atom
of a pale
and yielding
structure.

So that you taste
on that cold,
grey day,
not only
the after reward
of a patience
remembered,
not only
the summer
sunlight
of a postponed
perfection,
but the sweet
inward stillness
of the wait itself.

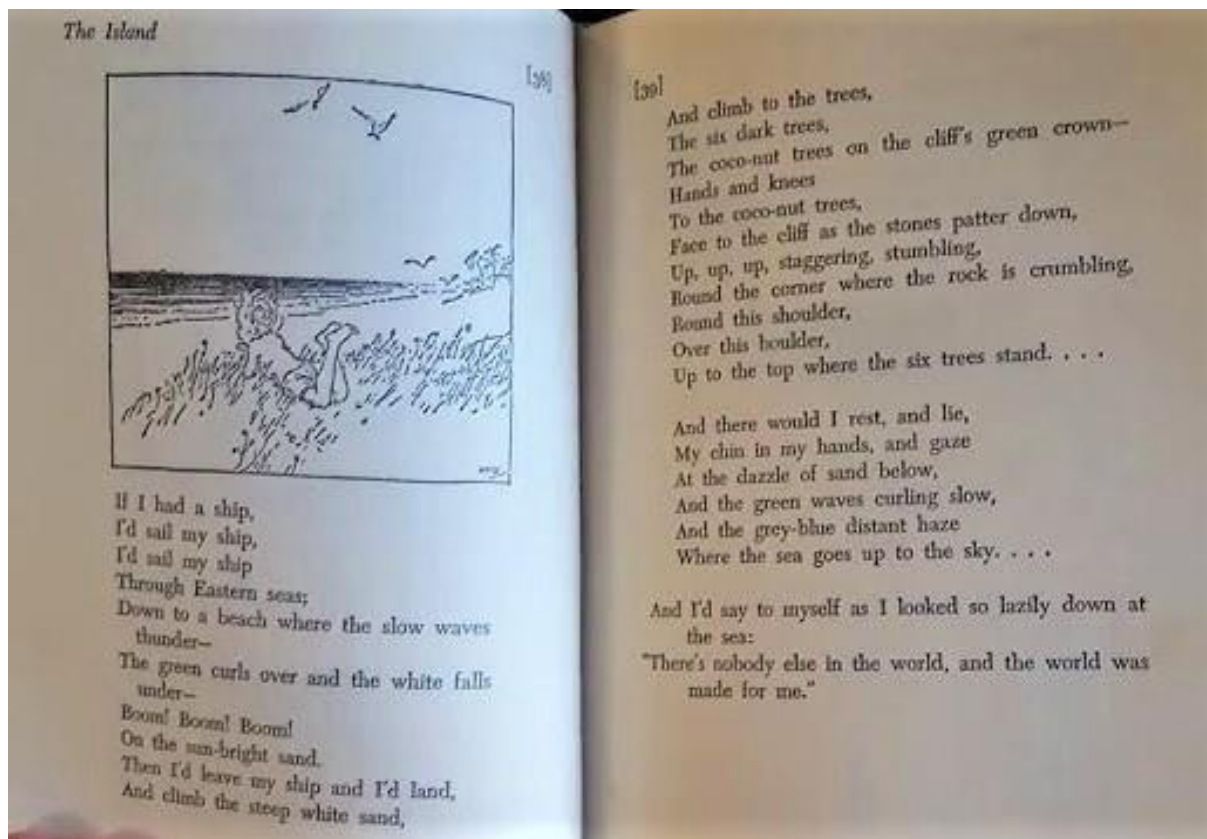
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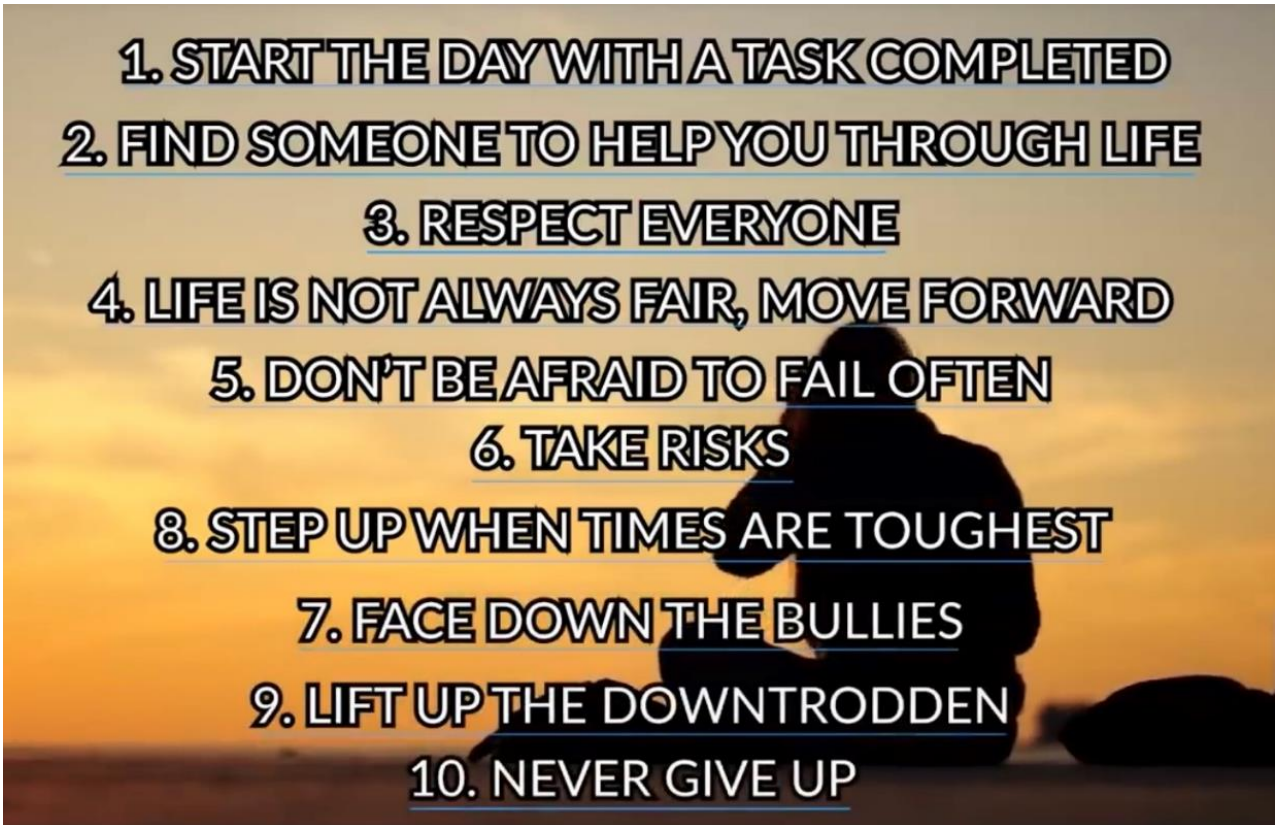
The Peace of Wild Things

By Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

'The Island' by A.A. Milne





By Admiral McRaven See Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBuIGBCF9jc>



We are lonely and lost in our hungry transparency.

We desperately need a new and gentle light where the soul can shelter and reveal its ancient belonging.

We need a light which has retained its kinship with the darkness.

For we are sons and daughters of the darkness and of the light.

From Anam Cara by John O'Donohue

If I had my life over ...

If I had my life over, I'd try to make more mistakes next time.

I would relax. I would limber up.

I would be sillier than I have been on this trip.

I know of very few things I'd take seriously.

I would be crazier. I would be less hygienic.

I would take more chances. I would take more trips.

I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers and watch more sunsets.

I would eat more ice-creams and fewer beans.

I would have more actual troubles and less imaginary ones.

You see, I'm one of those people who live prophylactically, and sensibly and sanely, hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I have my moments, and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them.

In fact, I'd have nothing else – just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I have been one of those people who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a raincoat and a parachute.

If I had to do it over, I would start barefooted earlier in the spring, and stay that way late in the fall.

I would play hooky more. I wouldn't get such good grades, except by accident.

I would ride more merry-go-rounds.

I would pick more daisies.

(Anon)

Your grief for what you've lost lifts a mirror up
to where you're bravely working.
Expecting the worst, you look and instead,
here's the joyful face you've been wanting to see.
Your hand opens and closes and opens and closes.
If it were always a fist or always stretched open,
you would be paralyzed.
Your deepest presence is in every small contracting and expanding,
the two as beautifully balanced and coordinated
as birds wings.

(Mathnawi III,3769-3766)

From a collection of Rumi poems called "We Are Three"

This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.

John O'Donohue, Irish poet and philosopher

Psalm 139 New International Version

- ¹You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
- ²You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
- ⁵You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- ⁷Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- ⁹If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
¹⁰even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
¹²even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

'Saturday morning, making chocolate clusters,
And you with chocolate
All smeared around your rosy mouth,
Looking very comical
Turned to me and said,

'Will your body
Come back again, Grannie,
After you are dead?'

'No, not this body,' I reply,
Putting a cluster
Neatly shaped,
Upon the baking tin between us.

'But I'll be around all right,
Hovering somewhere, laughing with you,
Feeling quite near
As Grandpa does with me.'

Your thoughts had very nearly
Moved elsewhere but, satisfied,
'That's OK' you said.

'Death' by Ruth Fawell, 1976 Quaker Faith & Practice 21.53

Verses from the hymn by John Whittier

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways:
re clothe us in our rightful mind;
in purer lives your service find,
in deeper reverence praise,
in deeper reverence praise.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of your peace,
the beauty of your peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
your coolness and your balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire,
speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,
O still small voice of calm,
O still small voice of calm.

In the Oneness of the Whole
From the birth we can't remember
To the death we cannot know,
There's a gift of life to celebrate;
There's a path through which we go.
We meet there other travelers
In the web of other roads,
And we sing with them a ballad
Or share with them the glow.
We gain the gift of knowledge
Like layers clinging to the soul.
And we dance our own experience
In the oneness of the whole.

Silent waiting

[The early Friends] made the discovery that silence is one of the best preparations for communion [with God] and for the reception of inspiration and guidance. Silence itself, of course, has no magic. It may be just sheer emptiness, absence of words or noise or music. It may be an occasion for slumber, or it may be a dead form. But it may be an intensified pause, a vitalised hush, a creative quiet, an actual moment of mutual and reciprocal correspondence with God.

Rufus Jones, 1937

'Blessing' by John O'Donohue

On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.

And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets into you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green
and azure blue,
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

THOMAS TRAHERNE 'CENTURIES OF MEDITATIONS'

"You never enjoy the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you.

Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and Kings in sceptres, you never enjoy the world."

**"All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.**

**From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king."**

— J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring

Water is fluid, soft and yielding. But water will wear away rock, which is rigid and cannot yield. As a rule whatever is fluid, soft and yielding will overcome whatever is rigid and hard. This is a paradox: what is soft is strong.

Do you have the patience to wait until the mud in your water settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving until the right action arises by itself?

Stop leaving and you will arrive
Stop searching and you will see
Stop running and you will be found.

Quotes from Lao Tzu

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

— Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles"*

Used in Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech, 1994

‘Little Flute’

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine.

Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.

From ‘Gitanjali’ by Rabindranath Tagore

The Old Poets of China

by **Mary Oliver**

Wherever I am, the world comes after me.
It offers me its busyness. It does not believe
that I do not want it. Now I understand
why the old poets of China went so far and high
into the mountains, then crept into the pale mist.

Where We Are Headed

BY ROSEMERRY WAHTOLA TROMMER

At first we just say flower. How
thrilling it is to name. Then it's
aster. Begonia. Chrysanthemum.

We spend our childhood learning
to separate one thing from another.
Daffodil. Edelweiss. Fern. We learn

which have five petals, which have six.
We say, "This is a gladiolus, this hyacinth."
And we fracture the world into separate

identities. Iris. Jasmine. Lavender.
Divorcing the world into singular bits.
And then, when we know how to tell

one thing from another, perhaps
at last we feel the tug to see not
what makes things different, but

what makes things the same. Perhaps
we feel the pleasure that comes
when we start to blur the lines—

and once again everything
is flower, and by everything,
I mean everything.

Snake

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

A snake came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough
before me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over
the edge of the stone trough
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,
Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,
And I, like a second-comer, waiting.

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,
And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused
a moment,
And stooped and drank a little more,
Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning bowels
of the earth
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.

The voice of my education said to me

He must be killed,
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold
are venomous.

And voices in me said, If you were a man
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But must I confess how I liked him,
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink
at my water-trough
And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,
Into the burning bowels of this earth?

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?
Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him?
Was it humility, to feel so honoured?
I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:
If you were not afraid, you would kill him!

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,
But even so, honoured still more
That he should seek my hospitality
From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,
And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,
Seeming to lick his lips,
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,
And slowly turned his head,
And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,

Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders,
 and entered farther,
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into
 that horrid black hole,
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing
 himself after,
Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,
I picked up a clumsy log
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed
 in an undignified haste,
Writhed like lightning, and was gone
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

And immediately I regretted it.
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education.

And I thought of the albatross,
And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords

Of life.

And I have something to expiate:

A pettiness.

Fern Hill Dylan Thomas - 1914-1953

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
 The night above the dingle starry,
 Time let me hail and climb
 Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
 Trail with daisies and barley
 Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
 In the sun that is young once only,
 Time let me play and be
 Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
 And the sabbath rang slowly
 In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
 And playing, lovely and watery
 And fire green as grass.
 And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
 Flying with the ricks, and the horses
 Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
 Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
 The sky gathered again
 And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm

Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

Creativity

'What's that on the shelf?' my artistic friend asked. 'A turbine blade. I designed it', I replied proudly.
'Oh', she said.

Visiting three weeks later she asked, 'Why is that still there?'
'Because I think it's beautiful.'

'Oh', she said.

My friend enthused over the beauty of a cathedral, a Rembrandt, a Turner, a sonnet. I find none in a cathedral, little in Rembrandt or poetry, a lot in a Turner.

I find great beauty in Concorde, a Norton, a modern suspension bridge, in calculus and a good computer program – especially if I have written it! She little or none. I thrill to the sound of a racing car, the sight and smell of a machine shop, the noise and balletic movement of men and machine shaping white hot steel in a forge – and in my turbine blade. She does not.

We could both be moved to tears by mountains, Beethoven, Britten, clouds ... and by friendship.

Graham Clarke, 1994 (Quaker Faith & Practice: Personal Journeys)

The Road Not Taken

BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Postscript

Seamus Heaney, 1939 - 2013

And some time make the time to drive out west
Into County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore,
In September or October, when the wind
And the light are working off each other
So that the ocean on one side is wild
With foam and glitter, and inland among stones
The surface of a slate-grey lake is lit
By the earthed lightning of a flock of swans,
Their feathers roughed and ruffling, white on white,
Their fully grown headstrong-looking heads
Tucked or cresting or busy underwater.
Useless to think you'll park and capture it
More thoroughly. You are neither here nor there,
A hurry through which known and strange things pass
As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways
And catch the heart off guard and blow it open.

'The Bright Field' by R. S. Thomas

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the
pearl of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realise now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

'Blessing' by John O'Donohue

On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.

And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets into you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green
and azure blue,
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.

'HARBOURS' by Sheenagh Pugh

There is the one you started out from,
and the one you were bound for, once,
but in between, there are so many,
mariner, that you stand a fine chance

of ending where you never had in mind.

You put in for repairs at some small port,
and the days go so gently, and the wind always
in the wrong quarter to make a fresh start.

Or there's a woman, or even a good inn,
something, anyway, that makes it seem
no great matter to get where you were going
when this will do as well.... All the same,

they stare out sometimes, your seaman's eyes,
over the glittering road you should have gone
to your true harbour. You shrug your shoulders
and settle for the less, like any man.

Blessings from 'Carmina Gaedelica' by Alexander Carmichael

The guarding of the God of life be on you,
The guarding of loving Christ be on you,
The guarding of Holy Spirit be on you
Every night of your lives,
To aid you and enfold you
Each day and night of your lives.

The love and affection of the angels be to you,
The love and affection of the saints be to you,
The love and affection of heaven be to you,
To guard you and to cherish you.
May Gold shield you on every steep,
May Christ aid you on every path,
May Spirit fill you on every slope,
On hill and plain.

May God's goodness be yours,
And well and seven times well
May you spend your lives.

Tao Te Ching - Lao Tzu - chapter 63

Practice non-action.
Work without doing.
Taste the tasteless.
Magnify the small, increase the few.

Reward the bitterness with care.

See simplicity in the complicated.
Achieve greatness in little things.

In the universe the difficult things are done as if they are easy.
In the universe great acts are made up of small deeds.
The sage does not attempt anything very big,
And thus achieves greatness.

'Let Evening Come' by Jane Kenyon

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through chinks in the barn, moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.
Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.

Gitanjali 35

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow
domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary
desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and
action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

'God Says Yes To Me'

I asked God if it was okay to be melodramatic
and she said yes
I asked her if it was okay to be short
and she said it sure is
I asked her if I could wear nail polish
or not wear nail polish
and she said honey

she calls me that sometimes
she said you can do just exactly
what you want to
Thanks God I said
And is it even okay if I don't paragraph
my letters
Sweetcakes God said
who knows where she picked that up
what I'm telling you is
Yes Yes Yes

—**Kaylin Haught**

Everything you see has its roots in the unseen world. The forms may change, yet the essence remains the same. Every wonderful sight will vanish, every sweet word will fade, But do not be disheartened, The source they come from is eternal, growing, Branching out, giving new life and new joy. Why do you weep? The source is within you And this whole world is springing up from it. **(Rumi)**

'Kneeling' by R S Thomas (1913-2000)

Moments of great calm,
Kneeling before an altar
Of wood in a stone church
In summer, waiting for the God
To speak; the air a staircase
For silence; the sun's light
Ringing me, as though I acted
A great rôle. And the audiences
Still; all that close throng

Of spirits waiting, as I,
For the message.

Prompt me, God;

But not yet. When I speak,
Though it be you who speak
Through me, something is lost.
The meaning is in the waiting.

'The Fountain' by Denise Levertov

Don't say, don't say there is no water
to solace the dryness at our hearts.
I have seen
the fountain springing out of the rock wall
and you drinking there. And I too
before your eyes
found footholds and climbed
to drink the cool water.
The woman of that place, shading her eyes,
frowned as she watched — but not because
she grudged the water,
only because she was waiting
to see we drank our fill and were
refreshed.

Don't say, don't say there is no water.
That fountain is there among the scalloped
green and gray stones,
it is still there and always there
with its quiet song and strange power
to spring in us,
up and out through the rock.

'The Table' from the Turkish of Edip Cansever

A man filled with the gladness of living
Put his keys on the table,
Put flowers in a copper bowl there.
He put his eggs and milk on the table.
He put there the light that came in through the window,
Sounds of a bicycle, sound of a spinning wheel.
The softness of bread and weather he put there.
On the table the man put
Things that happened in his mind.
What he wanted to do in life,
He put that there.
Those he loved, those he didn't love,
The man put them on the table too.
Three times three make nine:
The man put nine on the table.
He was next to the window next to the sky;
He reached out and placed on the table endlessness.
So many days he had wanted to drink a beer!
He put on the table the pouring of that beer.
He placed there his sleep and his wakefulness;
His hunger and his fullness he placed there.

Now that's what I call a table!
It didn't complain at all about the load.
It wobbled once or twice, then stood firm.
The man kept piling things on.

Never doubt that a small group of
committed people can change the world.

It is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.
It turns what we have into enough, and more.
It turns desire into acceptance, chaos to order,
confusion into clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast,
a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.
Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace
for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melodie Beattie

Compassion is not religious business, it is
human business, it is not luxury, it is essential
For our own peace and mental stability,
it is essential for human survival.

Dalai Lama

Your body is a garden
Peace is a seed
It grows inside us
As big as we need
It spreads through our limbs
Letting us shine like the sun,
Peace is Divine.

*By Sara - the words carved in stone in the World Peace Garden
In Sacramento, where Martin Luther King is buried.*

Kindness

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

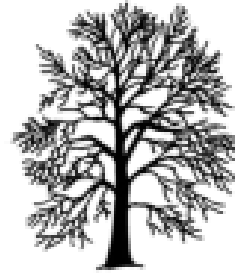
Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

Naomi Shihab Nye

ADVICE FROM A TREE

By Ilan Shamir



Dear Friend,
Stand Tall and Proud
Sink your roots deeply into the Earth
Reflect the light of your true nature
Think long term
Go out on a limb
Remember your place among all living beings
Embrace with joy the changing seasons
For each yields its own abundance
The Energy and Birth of Spring
The Growth and Contentment of Summer
The Wisdom to let go of leaves in the Fall
The Rest and Quiet Renewal of Winter

Feel the wind and the sun
And delight in their presence
Look up at the moon that shines down upon you
And the mystery of the stars at night.
Seek nourishment from the good things in life
Simple pleasures
Earth, fresh air, light
Be content with your natural beauty
Drink plenty of water
Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes
Be flexible
Remember your roots
Enjoy the view!

'A Community of the Spirit' *(excerpt)* by Rumi

There is a community of the spirit.
Join it, and feel the delight
of walking in the noisy street
and being the noise.

Drink all your passion,
and be a disgrace.

Close both eyes
to see with the other eye.

Open your hands,
if you want to be held.

Sit down in the circle.

Why do you stay in prison
when the door is so wide open?

Move outside the tangle of fear-thinking.
Live in silence.

Flow down and down in always
widening rings of being.

A poem by Laurence Housman

Light looked down and beheld Darkness.

"There will I go," said Light.

Peace looked down and beheld War.

"There will I go," said Peace.

Love looked down and beheld Hatred.

"There will I go," said Love.

So came Light and shone.

So came Peace and gave rest.

So came Love and brought Life.

'Birds of Heaven' by Ben Okri

"We began before words, and we will end beyond them.

It sometimes seems to me that our days are poisoned with too many words. The ages have been inundated with vast oceans of words. We have been virtually drowned in them. Words pour at us from every angle and corner. They have not brought understanding, or peace, or healing, or a sense of self-mastery, nor has the ocean of words given us the feeling that, at least in terms of tranquility, the human spirit is getting better.

At best our cry for meaning, for serenity, is answered by a greater silence, the silence that makes us seek higher reconciliation.

I think we need more of the wordless in our lives. We need more stillness, more of a sense of wonder, a feeling for the mystery of life. We need more love, more silence, more deep listening, more deep giving."

On Friendship

[Kahlil Gibran](#) - 1883-1931

And a youth said, Speak to us of Friendship.

And he answered, saying:

Your friend is your needs answered.

He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving.

And he is your board and your fireside.

For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace.

When your friend speaks his mind you fear not the "nay" in your own mind, nor do you withhold the "ay."

And when he is silent your heart ceases not to listen to his heart;

For without words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires, all expectations are born and shared, with joy that is unacclaimed.

When you part from your friend, you grieve not;
For that which you love most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the
mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain.
And let there be no purpose in friendship save the deepening of the spirit.
For love that seeks aught but the disclosure of its own mystery us not love but
a net cast forth: and only the unprofitable is caught.

And let your best be for your friend.
If he must know the ebb of your tide, let him know its flood also.
For what is your friend that you should seek him with hours to kill?
Seek him always with hours to live.
For it is his to fill your need but not your emptiness.
And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of
pleasures.
For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.

From *The Prophet* (1923)

Twice Blessed

Written by [David Whyte](#)

So that I stopped
there
and looked
into the waters
seeing not only
my reflected face
but the great sky
that framed
my lonely figure
and after a moment
I lifted my hands
and then my eyes
and I allowed myself
to be astonished
by the great

everywhere
calling to me
like an old
and unspoken
invitation,
made new
by the sun
and the spring,
and the cloud
and the light,
like something
both
calling to me
and radiating
from where I stood,
as if I could
understand
everything
I had been given
and everything ever
taken from me,
as if I could be
everything I have ever
learned
and everything
I could ever know,
as if I knew
both the way I had come
and, secretly,
the way
underneath
I was still
promised to go,
brought together,
like this, with the
unyielding ground
and the symmetry
of the moving sky,
caught in still waters.

Someone I have been,
and someone
I am just,
about to become,
something I am

and will be forever,
the sheer generosity
of being loved
through loving:
the miracle reflection
of a twice blessed life.

The Sense of a Goose by Cheryl Craig

People who share a common direction
and sense of community can get where
they are going more quickly and easily,
if they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

*if we have the sense of a goose,
we will stand by each other like that.*

When a goose falls out of formation,
it feels the resistance of trying to go it alone
and quickly gets back into line to take advantage
of the lifting power of the bird in front.

*If we have the sense of a goose,
we will stand by each other like that.*

If we have as much sense as a goose,
we will stay in formation with those people
who are headed the same way we are...
it makes our job so much easier.

Geese honk from behind to encourage
those up front to keep up their speed.
What messages do we give
when we honk from behind?

*If we have the sense of a goose,
we will stand by each other like that.*

Finally--and this is important--
when a goose gets sick or is wounded
two other geese fall out with that goose
and follow it down to lend help and protection.

They stay with the fallen goose until
it is able to fly or until it dies;
and only then do they launch out on their own,

join another formation, or catch up with their own group.

*I have the sense of a goose,
and I will stand by you like that.*

Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

...but take whatever comes, with great trust, and as long as it comes out of your will, out of some need of your innermost self, then take it upon yourself, and don't hate anything.

By Rainer Maria Rilke

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