

Poems that Speak to My Heart

Rilke, The Unicorn

This is the animal that never was.
Not knowing that, they loved it anyway;
its bearing, its stride, its high, clear whinny,
right down to the still light of its gaze.
It never was. And yet such was their love
the beast arose, where they had cleared the space;
and in the stable of its nothingness
it shook its white mane out and stamped its hoof.
And so they fed it, not with hay or corn
but with the chance that it might come to pass.
All this gave the creature such a power
its brow put out a horn; one single horn.
It grew inside a young girl's looking glass,
then one day walked out and passed into her.

H.P. Blavatsky, The Golden Stairs

A clean life, an open mind,
A pure heart, an eager intellect,
An unveiled spiritual perception,
A brotherliness for all,
A readiness to give and receive advice and instruction,
A loyal sense of duty to the Teacher,
A willing obedience to the behests of TRUTH,
Once we have placed our confidence in,
And believe that Teacher to be in possession of it;
A courageous endurance of personal injustice,
A brave declaration of principles,
A valiant defense of those who are unjustly attacked,
And a constant eye to the ideal of human progression,
And perfection which the secret science depicts—
These are the golden stairs
Up the steps of which the learner may climb
To the Temple of Divine Wisdom.

Tom Hirons, Sometimes a Wild God

Sometimes a wild god comes to the table.
He is awkward and does not know the ways
Of porcelain, of fork and mustard and silver.
His voice makes vinegar from wine.

When the wild god arrives at the door,
You will probably fear him.
He reminds you of something dark
That you might have dreamt,
Or the secret you do not wish to be shared.

He will not ring the doorbell;
Instead he scrapes with his fingers
Leaving blood on the paintwork,
Though primroses grow
In circles round his feet.

You do not want to let him in.
You are very busy.
It is late, or early, and besides...
You cannot look at him straight
Because he makes you want to cry.

The dog barks.
The wild god smiles,
Holds out his hand.
The dog licks his wounds
And leads him inside.

The wild god stands in your kitchen.
Ivy is taking over your sideboard;
Mistletoe has moved into the lampshades
And wrens have begun to sing
An old song in the mouth of your kettle.

'I haven't much,' you say
And give him the worst of your food.
He sits at the table, bleeding.
He coughs up foxes.
There are otters in his eyes.

When your wife calls down,
You close the door and
Tell her it's fine.
You will not let her see
The strange guest at your table.

The wild god asks for whiskey
And you pour a glass for him,

Then a glass for yourself.
Three snakes are beginning to nest
In your voice box. You cough.

Oh, limitless space.
Oh, eternal mystery.
Oh, endless cycles of death and birth.
Oh, miracle of life.
Oh, the wondrous dance of it all.

You cough again,
Expectorate the snakes and
Water down the whiskey,
Wondering how you got so old
And where your passion went.

The wild god reaches into a bag
Made of moles and nightingale-skin.
He pulls out a two-reeded pipe,
Raises an eyebrow
And all the birds begin to sing.

The fox leaps into your eyes.
Otters rush from the darkness.
The snakes pour through your body.
Your dog howls and upstairs
Your wife both exults and weeps at once.

The wild god dances with your dog.
You dance with the sparrows.
A white stag pulls up a stool
And bellows hymns to enchantments.
A pelican leaps from chair to chair.

In the distance, warriors pour from their tombs.
Ancient gold grows like grass in the fields.
Everyone dreams the words to long-forgotten songs.
The hills echo and the grey stones ring
With laughter and madness and pain.

In the middle of the dance,
The house takes off from the ground.
Clouds climb through the windows;

Lightning pounds its fists on the table.
The moon leans in through the window.

The wild god points to your side.
You are bleeding heavily.
You have been bleeding for a long time,
Possibly since you were born.
There is a bear in the wound.

'Why did you leave me to die?'
Asks the wild god and you say:
'I was busy surviving.
The shops were all closed;
I didn't know how. I'm sorry.'

Listen to them:

The fox in your neck and
The snakes in your arms and
The wren and the sparrow and the deer...
The great un-nameable beasts
In your liver and your kidneys and your heart...

There is a symphony of howling.
A cacophony of dissent.
The wild god nods his head and
You wake on the floor holding a knife,
A bottle and a handful of black fur.

Your dog is asleep on the table.
Your wife is stirring, far above.
Your cheeks are wet with tears;
Your mouth aches from laughter or shouting.
A black bear is sitting by the fire.

Sometimes a wild god comes to the table.
He is awkward and does not know the ways
Of porcelain, of fork and mustard and silver.
His voice makes vinegar from wine
And brings the dead to life.

Ellen Bass, The Thing Is
to love life, to love it even
when you have no stomach for it

and everything you've held dear
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,
your throat filled with the silt of it.
When grief sits with you, its tropical heat
thickening the air, heavy as water
more fit for gills than lungs;
when grief weights you like your own flesh
only more of it, an obesity of grief,
you think, How can a body withstand this?
Then you hold life like a face
between your palms, a plain face,
no charming smile, no violet eyes,
and you say, yes, I will take you
I will love you, again.

Hafiz, Little by Little

translated by Dan Ladinsky

Light will someday split you open
Even if your life is now a cage.
Little by little, You will turn into stars.
Little by little, You will turn into
The whole sweet, amorous Universe.
Love will surely burst you wide open
Into an unfettered, booming new galaxy.
You will become so free
In a wonderful, secret, and pure Love
That flows from a conscious, One-pointed, infinite Light.
Even then, my dear, the Beloved
Will have fulfilled only a fraction, just a fraction!
Of a promise He wrote upon your heart.
For a divine seed, the crown of destiny,
Is hidden and sown on an ancient, fertile plain
You hold the title to.
O look again within yourself,
For I know you were once the elegant host
To all the marvels in creation.
When your soul begins
To ever bloom and laugh
And spin in Eternal Ecstasy—
O little by little, You will turn into God.

David Whyte

Above all, be alone with it all,
a hiving off, a corner of silence

amidst the noise, refuse to talk,
even to yourself, and stay in this place
until the current of the story
is strong enough to float you out.

Mary Oliver

Everything that was broken has
Forgotten its brokenness. I live
Now in a sky-house, through every
Window the sun. Also your presence.
Our touching, our stories. Earthy
and holy both. How can this be, but
it is. Every day has something in
it whose name is Forever.

David Whyte

Give up all the other worlds
except the one to which you belong.
Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet
confinement of your aloneness
to learn
anything or anyone
that does not bring you alive
is too small for you.

Rumi

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.

Robert Frost, The Road Not Taken

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.

Mooji on Consciousness

Our sense of being a 'person'
is an expression of consciousness,
but consciousness in a very limited role.
It tends to be selfish, self-centered and fearful in nature.
Because having identified itself with the body,
and witnessing that the body
is vulnerable to sickness and accidents,
and knowing that eventually the body will die and decay,
and become food for worms or fire
—fear enters into the being.

This is a time-body, but the timeless is also inside it.
It seems that the best use of this life
is to use the time-body to discover the timeless.
When the timeless is found all the fear is gone...

This discovery, this recognition is so simple and so pure.
It is not something that 'I' have to keep up
or 'I' have to maintain.
In the real discovery,
you recognize that all you have been searching for,
in its completeness, is already what you are.

That essential finding,
that essential discovery takes place in satsang.
Whoever is searching for the Truth is engaged in satsang,
for satsang means 'association with the highest Truth.'
Satsang is not a recent thing; Jesus was also having satsang
in Nazareth and Bethlehem and all these places.
The root of the word may be sanskrit,

but the implication is universal!

Jeff Foster, How I Became a Warrior

Once, I ran from fear
so fear controlled me.
Until I learned to hold fear like a newborn.
Listen to it, but not give in.
Honour it, but not worship it.
Fear could not stop me anymore.
I walked with courage into the storm.
I still have fear,
but it does not have me.

Once, I was ashamed of who I was.
I invited shame into my heart.
I let it burn.
It told me, "I am only trying
to protect your vulnerability".
I thanked shame dearly,
and stepped into life anyway,
unashamed, with shame as a lover.

Once, I had great sadness
buried deep inside.
I invited it to come out and play.
I wept oceans. My tear ducts ran dry.
And I found joy right there.
Right at the core of my sorrow.
It was heartbreak that taught me how to love.

Once, I had anxiety.
A mind that wouldn't stop.
Thoughts that wouldn't be silent.
So I stopped trying to silence them.
And I dropped out of the mind,
and into the Earth.
Into the mud.
Where I was held strong
like a tree, unshakeable, safe.

Once, anger burned in the depths.
I called anger into the light of myself.
I felt its shocking power.
I let my heart pound and my blood boil.

Listened to it, finally.
And it screamed, "Respect yourself fiercely now!".
"Speak your truth with passion!".
"Say no when you mean no!".
"Walk your path with courage!".
"Let no one speak for you!"
Anger became an honest friend.
A truthful guide.
A beautiful wild child.

Once, loneliness cut deep.
I tried to distract and numb myself.
Ran to people and places and things.
Even pretended I was "happy".
But soon I could not run anymore.
And I tumbled into the heart of loneliness.
And I died and was reborn
into an exquisite solitude and stillness.
That connected me to all things.
So I was not lonely, but alone with All Life.
My heart One with all other hearts.

Once, I ran from difficult feelings.
Now, they are my advisors, confidants, friends,
and they all have a home in me,
and they all belong and have dignity.
I am sensitive, soft, fragile,
my arms wrapped around all my inner children.
And in my sensitivity, power.
In my fragility, an unshakeable Presence.

In the depths of my wounds,
in what I had named "darkness",
I found a blazing Light
that guides me now in battle.

I became a warrior
when I turned towards myself.
And started listening.

Khalil Gibran

Love is a magic ray
emitted from the burning core
of the soul

and illuminating
the surrounding earth.

It enables us
to perceive life
as a beautiful dream
between one awakening
and another.

Kahlil Gibran

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you.
And though they are with you, they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite.
And He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hands be for happiness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
So He loves the bow that is stable.

Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

Say not, "I have found the truth," but rather, "I have found a truth."
Say not, "I have found the path of the soul." Say rather, "I have met the soul walking upon my path."
For the soul walks upon all paths.
The soul walks not upon a line, neither does it grow like a reed.
The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals.

Kahlil Gibran

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.
Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.