AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART
A Path of Love, Surrender, and Remembrance

These words will only touch your Soul
If your Heart is already Pregnant.

How will you know?
The baby will Kick.

یک مرد ساده
A Simple Man
From Hafez:

The great religions are ships;
Poets are lifeboats.
Every sane person I know has jumped overboard.

From Ibn Arabi:

I profess the religion of Love,
Wherever its caravan turns along the way,
That is the belief, the faith I keep.

From Farid ud-Din Attar:

I know Nothing,
I understand Nothing,
I am unaware of Myself,
I am in Love,
But with whom I do not know.

From Rumi:

I do not know who I am.
I am in astounded, lucid confusion.
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In the Way of Introduction

I've created this book for the few Friends who have asked for a hardcopy of my writing, who love the feel of a “real” book, with pages turned slowly by hand. This book will only ever be offered freely as a Gift, and only to those who ask.

My Journey

The poetic expressions in this book reflect my spiritual journey and ongoing experience. Although the experiences described may sound lofty and exalted, I eschew the finality of notions such as "enlightenment" or "awakening", my Experience having shown that it's unwise at best, and delusional at worst, to ever plant a flag and declare the summit. While there have been profound, transmuting milestones along The Way, in my experience there is no finality to Endless Enlightening on a Journey without end.

In putting this book together, I struggled to write a biographical introduction. Certain Friends thought such an introduction irrelevant, but my feeling was that it would provide a valuable context for all that is written here, describing the milestones of my Journey and the nature of the ongoing Experience that has come about. I wrote so many pages, again and again, only to discard them as being too much, too little, or simply not conveying adequately. Then one day the following poem came to me, and I realized that it said all that I had struggled unsuccessfully to convey in prose, at least at the highest level, leaving nothing essential missing. And so, rather than a lengthy prose biography, I offer the following poem as capturing all that was essential in my Journey and is now essential in my ongoing Experience.
What If

What if you knew little of the walled villages,  
Of religion, of belief, of faith, and philosophy,  
And then experienced, one day,  
What seemed, when considered after the fact,  
A loss of consciousness,  
The vanishing of Everything from Awareness,  
Including yourself as the one aware, and yet…

Awareness continued.

And what if the nature of that Awareness,  
Pure and unsullied by space, time, and objects,  
In which even you, the experiencer, had vanished,  
Was so Ineffably Sublime that words did not exist,  
To express its Ecstasy, its Rapture, its Perfection,  
The Fulfillment of your Heart's Desire,  
Fullness, Completion, Bliss…

Heaven.

And what if you found yourself, thereafter,  
Imbued always with the touch of that Heaven,  
Felt as a Radiance in the Locus of your Heart,  
Sometimes the ambient background of experience,  
Sometimes flooding the foreground, acutely,  
Ever available to the mind's Attention,  
Ever available to the Heart's Remembrance…

A Wellspring of Grace.
And what if you then entered the spiritual marketplace,
In search of someone, anyone, to explain the Mystery,
Wandering the rows of stalls, past the shouting hawkers,
Each declaring the “Truth”, and decrying the others,
Until your eyes and ears could bear it no longer,
And your Heart, bruised, pleaded with you to leave,
The pedantry, the arguments, the profaning of Love…

And return to the Simple Experience.
The simple Experience, not yet debased by the mind,
Beyond knowledge and understanding,
Not poured into the mold of another's interpretation,
Not bound by prescription, proscription, and dogma,
Not requiring you do this, or refrain from that,
Without cause, without condition, ever present,
A touch of Heaven ever Shining…

Grace, Unimaginable.

And what if, in time, that Presence in your Heart,
Like a Wellspring of Transmutation,
Diminished the terrible pain of yourself,
Leaving intact all that you had taken yourself to be,
But stealing from your experience, the felt sense of “you”,
That very felt sense that had vanished that fateful day,
So long ago, in time, when time and all things Vanished…

And only The Mystery remained.
And what if, now free of the need for knowledge,
You returned to the spiritual marketplace,
Moved now only by Curiosity, Wonder, and Love,
And found yourself Dancing past the stalls,
Stealing this jewel from here, that jewel from there,
Until, your satchel full to overflowing,
You Blessed them all, and returned again…

To the Simple Experience.

And what if you were then moved by Delight,
To declare in poetic verse,
Ah… this Most Beautiful Presence,
This Shining Radiance within,
This Exquisite Rapture,
This Fulfillment of all desire,
The Divine Thief that has stolen “me”…

I will call it God,
I will call it Brahman,
I will call it The Beloved,
I will call it The Holy Spirit,
I will call it Emptiness,
I will call it The Inner Light,
I will call it The Unnamable…

I will call it Love.
And what if you were told,
To your surprise and amazement,
By some among the Friends you had made,
That the ember in their Hearts,
Ignited, to their Delight and Inspiration,
In moments of Relationship,
Shining ever more Brightly, over time...

Until they found themselves, in time,
Imbued with the touch of that Heaven,
Felt as a Radiance in the Locus of their Heart,
Sometimes the ambient background of experience,
Sometimes flooding the foreground, acutely,
Ever available to their mind's Attention,
Ever available to their Heart's Remembrance.

I will call that... a reason to live.

And what if these Illumined Friends were told,
To their surprise and amazement,
By some among the Friends they made,
That the ember in their Hearts,
Ignited, to their Delight and Inspiration,
In moments of Relationship,
Shining ever more Brightly, over time...

Until they found themselves, in time,
Imbued always with the touch of that Heaven,
Felt as a Radiance in the Locus of their Heart,
Sometimes the ambient background of experience,
Sometimes flooding the foreground, acutely,
Ever available to their mind's Attention,
Ever available to their Heart's Remembrance?

I will call that... the Transmission of The Flame.
And what if you found, in the course of your life, 
No finality in the milestones come to along The Way, 
No flag to be planted, or summit to be declared, 
And that however Profound each milestone, 
More should not be made of them, 
Than should be made, 
Each being merely a tavern arrived at…

On a Journey of… Endless Enlightening.

All of these words I have written about Liberation and Illumination 
May have given you the illusion that I have my bearings 
And an understanding of all that's happened 
And all that is to unfold in time, 
When I am simply adrift 
Without compass, 
Rudderless, 
Here…

In this Great Mystery.
The Essentials

I write only of my direct experience, unwrapped in interpretation, in concept, theory, or conjecture, to the extent that’s possible when writing or speaking of that which can never be communicated adequately in words.

There are four aspects to my experience:

- Union
- Illumination
- Liberation
- Endless Enlightening

I won’t include, in this book, the biography leading to these milestones. That, perhaps, is another book.

Union

In November of 1981, I experienced what I refer to in my writings as Union. Various faiths use various words, from Hindu samadhi to the Mystical Union of Christianity, to Sufism’s Direct Realization. I’ve found my experience described in each tradition, and interpreted after-the-fact in their unique ways. But all of those words sound so dry, so clinical, so lacking in the Essence of what the Experience is.

First, I’ll do my best to explain from a somewhat technical perspective, the unexplainable; existence as Awareness without object… or subject. All duality vanished, leaving only Pure, Unalloyed Awareness; the Essential Self; what we are before “we” are, as an object-perceiver-experiencer self; before time, space, and the world of objects appear. Even to say, as some do, that Awareness remains aware only of itself is inaccurate in my experience, in which there was no subject-Awareness aware of itself as an object. In my experience of Union there was no duality whatsoever. Upon the return of
dualistic experience, I recalled the words of Jesus, “The Kingdom of Heaven is within.” Not a place, in my experience, but an Experience of Pure Awareness, unalloyed by even the subtlest trace of duality; no space, no time, no objects, and most importantly, no sense of one’s self as the subject-perceiver-experiencer-person.

But those “technical” details are far, far secondary to the Quality of the Experience, which is beyond words to express. Hindu scriptures use the term “Unalloyed Ecstasy”, while others use words such as “rapture” or “sublimity”. All fall immeasurably short, for there is no analogous experience in our dualistic existence. Due to my nature, perhaps, I feel that the word “Heaven” comes closest to describing the Absolute Fulfillment of the Heart’s Desire.

The vanishing of… everything.
And yet, impossibly,
Awareness remains,
Without space, without time,
Without objects,
Including the subject-perceiver-experiencer.

And the nature of this Experience,
Without an experiencer?

No words can be spoken,
Sufficient to convey,
The Absolute Fulfillment,
Of The Heart’s Desire,
Though I use the word “Heaven”,
To speak of that which cannot be spoken.

Illumination

It is possible to experience the touch, the Fragrance, of Union’s Absolute Dissolution and Ecstasy here in the Dream of space, time, and objects. I say this because it has been my experience. No longer Absolute, due to its arising
in manifest experience, it is none the less unmistakable in its origin. I use the term Bliss to differentiate this manifest, *alloyed* Ecstasy from the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Union. When this Presence Shines in The Heart of Being, the Whole Being is Illumined with its Grace, its Healing, its Benediction.

The experience of Dissolution and Bliss within manifestation is, I suspect, the Intoxication written of by the Sufis, the Fragrance or Perfume of The Beloved; the Ananda of Hinduism; the Divine Presence of Christianity.

There was a time when I assumed Illumination was only possible as a consequence of Union, for that was my experience. But incredibly, wonderfully, I have since seen friends become Illumined, having never experienced Union.

The moment-to-moment Experience of existing, Imbued with the Ecstasy of Pure Awareness, Timeless, spaceless, objectless... selfless, Diminished in its arising in Form, But unmistakably “of” its Source, Water from that Ocean, Light from that Sun.

To the Hindus... The Ananda of Satchitananda. To the Christians... The Presence of the Holy Spirit. To the Sufis... The Perfume of The Beloved.

A river of Formless Pure Being, Flowing effortlessly into form, Into the Wellspring of the Heart, Overflowing... flooding even the physical form, With Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.
Not simply peace, happiness, and joy,
On the level of psychology and emotion,
Not simply a profound understanding,
An apperception born of knowledge,
But the Orgasmic Ecstasy of the Soul.

Not constrained to eyes shut “meditation”,
But with eyes open,
Here…
In this Dream of manifest existence,
Formlessness Being, Shining into and as Form.

The Beloved, ever within us,
Her Heart beating in ours, as ours.
The Embrace of Shiva and Shakti,
The Ecstasy of their Union.
For others… the touch of God.

Untouched, unmoved, impenetrable,
By the ever-changing circumstances,
Of conditionality,
Even as storms rage,
In the realms of psychology and emotion.

Ever-present, as Unimaginable Grace,
Even in moments,
Of deepest Sorrow,
Deepest Despair,
Deepest Fear.

This Ineffably Sublime Presence,
Shining as the true Sat Guru,
The True Murshid,
The True Teacher,
In the Cave of The Heart.
Liberation

It is possible to lose the felt sense of existence as an object-perceiver-experiencer-person. I say this because it has been my experience. Liberation is not simply an intellectual understanding, however profound, that there is no object-perceiver-experiencer-person within. That is a rather easy insight, gained through empirical investigation. Rather, Liberation is the vanishing, at the somatic level, of the felt sense of the object-perceiver-experiencer-person.

Union and Illumination took place in 1981. Liberation followed 22 years later, in 2003. After that day in 2003 when I sat up in bed and could no longer feel “myself”, there followed two years in which the Dissolution and Bliss of Illumination seemed to disperse from the locus of my Heart into everything perceivable in the Field of Perception. It ceased being an acutely felt, locatable “inner” Presence, to a soft, ambient Field. With the vanishing of the palpable, visceral intercessor self, the sense of within and without vanished, as well. I referred to the initial experience as Serene Emptiness. For two years, thereafter, this Emptiness deepened. I know that’s a difficult thing to comprehend, as it’s an equally difficult thing to convey. After two years, the Experience of Dissolution-Bliss flooded back into the Emptiness, restored to its residence in The Heart, and yet… no longer felt to be “within”, remaining as an ambient Presence, but returned to its previous intensity. Now I understood Emptiness-Fullness, experientially.

It appears that Liberation can occur before Illumination, after, or without Illumination ever having occurred. It can happen gradually, in fits and starts, or dramatically, all at once.
The cessation of the felt sense of “I”,
The vanishing, across the whole of Being,
Of the contraction of “me”.

The Ancient Memory of “myself”, vanished,
Even as memories remain,
Of a life lived only by... Life Itself.

Where that Ancient Feeling of “I” was felt,
Now...
Only Serene Emptiness.

No one, no thing,
Where I had been.
Emptiness... Fullness.

Concern for Stature, vanquished,
With the vanishing of the one
Who would be made great, or brought low.

Concern for enlightenment, vanquished,
With the vanishing of the one
Who would become so.

The cessation of identity with anything,
Even with “That”,
Even with... “Consciousness”.

And with that vanishing...
The end of all grasping, all seeking,
Resting, at last, as... Unlocatable Aliveness.

All movement to or from, ceased,
In the Deepest Subjective Experience,
Untouched, Unmoving, Impenetrable.
An Important Note on Liberation

It’s so vitally important to note that although, subjectively, the felt sense of the object-perceiver-experiencer-person may vanish, those qualities, attributes, and characteristics that formerly defined and qualified that “person” continue. The result of Liberation is not a “perfected” Being, free from preferences, propensities, proclivities, inclinations, conditionings, reflexive tendencies, and characteristics of persona. It is simply the vanishing, within, subjectively, of the felt sense of the object-perceiver-experiencer-person. As one friend said so wisely, referring to her own experience of Liberation, “It seems that this experience of Liberation is, in a certain sense at least, simply a ‘subjective grace’. For although I no longer feel myself, that does not mean that others are not impacted, sometimes negatively, by the continued functioning of my psycho-emotional conditionings.”

After Liberation, the habituated, reflexive functioning of deeply-ingrained conditionings, reflexive tendencies, inclinations, and impulses must still be paid attention to, and refined. Liberation is not carte blanche to behave without concern for the impact of our thoughts, speech, and actions on the welfare of others and the world.

The list of “enlightened” teachers who have been profoundly eloquent of speech, beautiful of countenance, imbued with spiritual power, or otherwise gifted, who went on to display human frailties and even pathologies, is simply staggering.

It's not enough to have arrived at a place of effortlessly arising Bliss.
It's not enough to be imbued with powers, however dazzling.

It's not enough to feel yourself expanded as all that is.
It's not enough to feel yourself as That within which all arises.

It's not enough that others feel spiritual power emanating from you.
It's not enough that they swoon, declare pain gone, and great blessings arrived.
It's not enough to have a brilliant mind, and a tongue to match. It's not enough that thousands follow you.

It's not enough for the binding sense of self-identity to have vanished. It's not enough to exist as the Emptiness that remains.

None of these things, and other wondrous things as well, are enough, If, bound by lingering residues of selfhood, you harm others.

Grasping after love, adoration, power, and treasure. Wanting, needing, taking.

The Greatness of a teacher is not in their spiritual power, In their beauty, eloquence, or charisma.

The Greatness of a teacher, or anyone for that matter... Is the extent to which the vessel has been subsumed by Love,

No longer moving from lack, seeking to take, But from Love, Giving Freely from the Heart’s Wellspring...

Of Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.

I’m old, and weary of “selves” cloaked in spiritual glory. But am thankful each day for the Simple Ones I find.

What’s this? My puppy has appeared, ball in mouth, Her whole body wagging.

May those who seek Love find a Guide who greets them, In Humility, Honesty, Innocence, Simplicity and Love...

The Whole Being wagging.

Endless Enlightening

I don't care for the word “enlightenment”. So exalted, so elevated, So... final.
A word encrusted with eons of debris,
Mired in cultural mythologies,
Reduced by pundits to exhausted concept.

And in these times, as in all ages,
A word defiled,
By those who wrap themselves in its glory.

Awakening,
Realization,
Enlightenment.

I cringe.

How would I use this word,
This dirtied finger,
Pointing at the moon?

I would change it from noun to verb,
To…
“Enlightening”.

Endless Enlightening.

It would include Illumination's Beatitude*,
And the Inexpressible Freedom of Liberation,
But more… so much more…

What more… I cannot say.
For this Experience of Being,
Is ever and always, A Great Mystery.

But of a certainty,
No finality, no summit attained,
No “perfection” achieved.

I would call it a Way of Being,
In Honesty, Humility, Compassion,
Simplicity.
* **Beatitude:** supreme blessedness, benediction, grace, bliss, ecstasy, exaltation, divine joy, divine rapture.
The Nature of My Spiritual Relationships

When I asked my Baba (my guru or murshid) about our lineage, he paused thoughtfully, then replied, “Let’s just say that ours is the Lineage of India; neither Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, nor Jain, but of the Essence in all.”

In my Friendships, as has been the case with all of my teachers, the Transmission of The Flame from Heart to Heart occurs primarily through the emanation of Grace, and only secondarily through teaching in words, concepts, and metaphor.

The true nature of this Way is best expressed by paraphrasing my Baba:

“While God is in all, and found through sincere abidance in every path, this particular Way is not for all. You will never enter the spiritual marketplace, but will remain where you are, as you are, leading a simple life and remaining always, always, a simple man. You will not push yourself out; but must be pulled. Only when a Friend has noticed the Presence Alive within your Heart, has felt it enlivening the ember in their own, and has asked you of it… only then can you engage in relationship as a Spiritual Friend. The reason this Way is not for all is because only some will notice”

“And Friendship will always be the nature of that relationship; two fellow Lovers of The Beloved; two Friends taking tea and chatting of their mutual Love, or sitting silently together, bathing in Dissolution and Bliss, Dissolving like salt dolls in the Ocean of Grace. I emphasize again, throughout these Relationships you will remain always, always, a simple man, a simple Friend, never sitting elevated in front of a group, but only always a Friend sitting across from a Friend; a fellow Lover of God.”
“You needn’t concern yourself with what to say or do; you need not speak at all. All that is required is your Presence; Her* Presence Illumining your Heart. And in time, through this simple, Loving Relationship of Spiritual Intimacy… your Friends will become like you.”

*She* is simply a metaphor for the Exquisite, Ineffable Sublimity of Unalloyed Awareness.
Lexicon

I often use terms from various traditions; terms with which some of my Friends are unfamiliar. And so I offer this Lexicon. The terms listed here are described as I use them, and do not necessarily align wholly with their usage in the religions or philosophies from which they’re derived.

Union/Nirvikalpa Samadhi – Nirvikalpa Samadhi is a Hindu term for an experience that other religions sometimes call Union; an experience in which all duality vanishes – awareness of space, time, objects, senses, and self – leaving an “experience without an experiencer”, of Pure, Unalloyed Awareness, the nature of which is referred to in scriptures as Unalloyed Ecstasy, Rapture, or Heaven.

Ecstasy – The nature of the Experience of Union. Not to be confused with an intensely pleasurable experience enjoyed by an enjoyer, an experience experienced by an experiencer. Not to be confused with a transient energetic experience of shakti or kundalini (spiritual energy). Rather, it is the nature of Pure Awareness when the enjoyer-experiencer vanishes utterly, along with space, time, and objects; the vanishing of all duality.

It is not to be confused with the “peace, happiness, and joy” so often touted by contemporary teachers of nonduality, resulting from profound intellectual understanding or a conclusion reached. It is, as Swami Lakshmanjoo, the Kashmir Shaivite described it, “super sexual”, but transcendent of, and not to be confused with the lesser experience. As an orgasm is not a peaceful, happy, joyful experience, but one of Exquisite Rapture, just so, the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Union is Spiritually Orgasmic. But this analogy, like all analogies, is hobbled, for there are no analogous experiences in dualistic existence. All fall immeasurably short.
Dissolution-Bliss – The experience, not while in Unmanifest Union/nirvikalpa samadhi, but in manifestation, of Union’s Ecstatic Dissolution of dualistic experience, but “alloyed” due to its arising in the Dream of manifestation.

- Dissolution – Union’s Dissolution of dualistic experience, only “alloyed” due to its being experienced in manifestation.
- Bliss – Union’s Unalloyed Ecstasy, only “alloyed” due to its being experienced in manifestation.

Ineffable Sublimity – A term for both the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Union and the alloyed Dissolution-Bliss experienced in manifest existence (the Fragrance of The Beloved).

- Ineffable: too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words.
- Sublimity: of such excellence, grandeur, or beauty as to inspire great admiration or awe.

Illumination – The advent of Dissolution-Bliss as an ever available aspect of our ongoing moment-to-moment experience.

When Attention turns inward, relaxing into its Source, the experience of Dissolution-Bliss wells up from the Wellspring of The Heart, flooding Awareness as our dualistic experience begins to dissolve. When Attention is focused outwardly, Dissolution-Bliss remains, as a soft, ambient Presence.

One can be Illumined but not yet Liberated from the felt sense of separate selfhood, or vice versa.

Liberation – The vanishing of the felt sense of the object-perceiver-experiencer-person at the somatic level of being. Not simply intellectual understanding, through which we come to “know” that we are not an object-perceiver-experiencer-person, but the vanishing of the felt sense in the Field of Perception.

One can be Liberated without being Illumined, and Liberation can occur with or without the experience of Union. There are many levels or depths of Liberation, ranging from the impact of profound intellectual insight, to the far
more significant vanishing of the felt sense of the object-perceiver-experiencer-self at the somatic level.

Liberation does not, for a moment, imply a “perfected” Being.

**Duality** – The experience of one’s self as the subject perceiver-experiencer of the objects of perception that the senses present; the experience of existing as an object in space and time.

Even in the highest meditations, if there is the slightest trace of the experiencer, there is duality. Only when the experiencer and the experienced vanish, utterly, in Union, is there Absolute Nonduality and Unalloyed Ecstasy. When one emerges from Union, with the first, ever-so-slight trace of subjectivity, of the experiencer, it is seen that duality itself is suffering.

**Attention** – The focal point of Awareness. Attention may be focused on external objects, or focused internally, moving with thoughts, emotions, or physical or energetic sensations. It is, for most, in continuous movement, most often with thought, bound in the felt sense of being the “thinker”. But Attention continues to move even after the vanishing of the felt sense of the object-perceiver-experiencer-self.

**The Heart** – The Spiritual Heart of our Being; the placeless place within, where the Beloved dwells, and eventually shines into our manifest experience.

**The Inner Sanctum** – Union.

**The Kingdom of Heaven** – In the ultimate sense, a metaphor for Union. But also a metaphor for the entire experiential journey of the inward turning of Attention, in which we move from intellectual consideration and conceptual understanding of our formless Essential Self, through the ever-deepening direct experience of Dissolution and Bliss, arriving at last at Union; a journey from the far frontiers of Heaven to the Inner Sanctum.

**Field of Perception** – All that the senses present to Awareness, both in the so-called outer world, and the so-called inner world.
**Lover** – One who longs for the direct experience of The Beloved.

**The Beloved** – A metaphor for the Experience of Dissolution-Bliss, whether Absolutely, in Union, or “alloyed” in manifest experience.

**The Fragrance/Perfume of The Beloved** – Another metaphor for the Experience of Dissolution-Bliss which eventually becomes inherent in the inward turning of Attention.

**She** – A poetic expression of The Beloved.

**Friend** – In my writing, when initial capitalized, it means a spiritual Friend, a fellow Lover of The Beloved, not to be confused with Sufism’s use of the term for the Divine Presence or for a murshid (teacher).

**Tavern or Garden of The Beloved** – A metaphor for the spiritual Heart, through which The Beloved Shines into our manifest experience. Sometimes referred to in my poetry as The Wellspring. When Attention turns inward, we are knocking at the door of the Tavern, the Gate of the Garden. As our dualistic experience Dissolves more and more, the Tavern/Garden becomes the ever-available Presence of Ineffable Sublimity.

**Satsang** – A Hindu term meaning a gathering of seekers, usually around a teacher.

**Sadhana** – A Hindu term for our Spiritual Journey.

**Shakti or Kundalini** – In Hinduism and certain strands of Buddhism, the spiritual energy of Creation, inherent in all of manifest reality, and specifically within each of us.
Writings
Feeling Enquiry

In my experience, there are two aspects to Self-Enquiry. Initially, intellect reveals to us, through empirical investigation, knowledge of what we are not. Then, at the fateful juncture where the mind reaches the end of its capabilities, we fall, if we are Wise or simply Fortunate, “into the Heart”, into Feeling Enquiry, into Experience. We reach a point where we cannot find our self as an object, within, but can Feel our self as an Unlocatable Aliveness.

Without that falling, we are left simply “knowing” what we are not – not merely an object-perceiver-experiencer-person, as we'd mistakenly taken our self to be.

But falling (into the Heart, into Feeling) at that juncture where intellect, knowledge, and understanding fail, we come, in time, to the vanishing of time, to the Experience (not the conceptualization) of Existence as What we Are – Formless Pure Awareness, in which all duality has vanished; all duality… including any felt sense whatsoever of our self as the experiencer; all sense of our self… period.

And yet… Awareness remains. Pure. Unalloyed. And the nature of that Experience without an experiencer is… Unimaginable, Inexpressible, the Heart's Desire Fulfilled. Heaven.

Hinduism calls it nirvikalpa samadhi; the experience of the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Pure Being. Others call it Union with God. Others, the Embrace of The Beloved. Others, The Self. Still others… Emptiness. It is not necessary to pour your Experience into the “interpretation” or description of another, however revered or worshipped that description may be by millions. What matters is coming to the Experience yourself, after which, if you wish to do the world and yourself a great favor, you will not wrap that experience in concept, theory, and conjecture.

However important Union may be, it's so vitally important to note that it is not necessary to Vanish in Union, in Absolute Dissolution as Pure Awareness,
to become both Liberated from the felt sense of embodied selfhood, or Illumined with the Bliss that is inherent in that Dissolution, here… in the Dream of manifest existence in space, time, and creation. In my own experience, Dissolution and Bliss were subsequent to Union, and for years I assumed, incorrectly, that one must have experienced Union for these aspects of ongoing experience to be present. For both the Dissolution of acute dualistic experience and the Ineffable Sublimity that was inherent in that Dissolution were both recognized as being “from” the Experience of Pure Awareness; Water from that Ocean, Heat from that Fire. But I have since seen Friends come to Dissolution and Bliss without having experienced Union.

For even as you enter the frontiers of Heaven through the inward turning of Attention, the Perfume, the Fragrance of The Beloved will greet you, surround you, embrace you, and you will begin – slowly perhaps, but ever more so – to experience the Dissolution of the felt sense of identity as an embodied object-perceiver-experiencer-person, and the advent of the Ineffable Sublimity of Bliss, which – not to be mistaken for any other pleasure – only arises inherently in the Dissolution of the Experiencer.

The moment you fall into The Heart, you have entered the Tavern of The Beloved, and the Beautiful One will pour the Wine you long for, and offer the Rose of Love, Causeless and Unconditional.

The mind will lead you to Heaven’s Gate. But there, in Humility, will stop and say…

“I have given you all I can,
And have brought you as far as I am able.
At this juncture, I become blind,
At this juncture, my voice grows weak.”

“I have shown you what you are not,
And revealed the falsity,
Empirically… rationally… irrefutably,
Of what you had mistaken yourself to be.”
“Knowing, now, what you are not,  
I have left you Wondering,  
Here, at the Gate of Heaven,  
‘What is this formless Knower that I Am?’”

“What is this formless Knower,  
That you cannot locate as an object, within,  
That, being formless, you cannot describe,  
But, although formless and Unlocatable…”

“You can Feel the very Aliveness of Being,  
Within which space and time appear,  
Within which the world of objects appears,  
Within which… the felt sense ‘I Am’ arises.”

This is the juncture where Feeling Enquiry begins. We cannot find where we are; cannot describe what we are; and yet, we Feel the Aliveness that we Are. Feeling Enquiry is, at this juncture, all we are left with. We find our self at the Gate of Pure Awareness, of Heaven.

The mind turns, and continues its dialog:

“I cannot enter here,  
Into the Inner Sanctum…”

“Where Knower and known vanish,  
In the Experience of Pure Awareness.”

“Nor can ‘you’ enter,  
As long as you cling to me.”

“For I will keep ‘you’ alive,  
Thinking endlessly ‘about’.”

“To enter Here, you must fall,  
Heartlong into Feeling…”

“And Experience, what You Are,  
Before ‘you’ and Creation ever were.”
“Only when you enter, and return, Illumined, 
Will I be able to join You There.”

“And together, you and I, Mind and Heart, 
Will dance in Timeless Eternity,”

“Vanishing as two… 
Into the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Pure Being.”

“Union… 
The Embrace of The Beloved…”

“Where Lover and Beloved Vanish, 
Leaving Love Beyond All Duality.”

“Now… at this juncture… 
Abandon all ‘thinking about’.”

“Abandon investigation and Rest, Alertly, 
In the Unlocatable Aliveness you've come to…”

“Until “you” Vanish, 
Leaving the Unlocatable Aliveness that You Are.”

“Don't float shallowly Here, 
Fall ever more Deeply into Feeling…”

“Sinking… falling… into the Feeling, 
Of Pure Awareness…”

“Until the last ever-so-subtle vestiges, 
Of yourself as the enquirer, the experiencer…”

“Vanish!”

“Poof!”
Knowledge and Experience

Intellectual understanding, however diamond-like, will only push “you” shallowly beneath the waves. And that pushing, born of the mind having reached a “conclusion”, will need to be continued; remembering, reminding one's self, and re-concluding, again and again, of the “idea”, the concept, that “All there is, is Consciousness.” So many have planted a flag here, just beneath the waves, on the far frontiers of Heaven.

There “you” will drift, having seen through, intellectually, the falsity of identification with the wave you had taken yourself to be, identification, still present, now having simply shifted, in intellectual understanding alone, to the Ocean. You will have completed the “physics class” of contemporary nonduality.

You will have thought yourself, reasoned yourself, and come to a conclusion that you are not an object-perceiver-experiencer-person, but will continue to feel as if you are, in ways vast, varied, and supremely subtle. Initially the psycho-intellectual shift will give cause for celebration, for it is not inconsequential. But in time... you will wonder why that which you had taken to be Wine, tastes like tepid water. The thirst of the mind will have been satisfied, but the Heart's longing for the Drunkenness of Fullness, Completion, and Bliss will remain unsatisfied.

You will not know the Taste, the Fragrance, the Experience of Absolute Nonduality; the Embrace of The Beloved; the vanishing, in experience, not concept, of space, time, objects, and yourself. Nor will you know, in open-eyed existence in the Dream of space and time, the Experience of Dissolution and Bliss that only comes when not only the mind is Liberated, but the Heart, and the somatic aspect of the manifest Being is Illumined.

The Kingdom of Heaven is Within. And you cannot read, hear, watch, or think your way to the Experience of it. However powerfully evocative, these will only bring you to the frontiers. You cannot come to the Experience by locating it on a map, reading a description, however profound and articulate, or looking at photos, however beautiful.
You must dive deep... behind... before all that appears, including the felt sense of yourself as the investigator, the enquirer, the one seeking to experience Pure Awareness. For Heaven, Pure Awareness, is only experienced when all that appears ceases, including the experiencer-perceiver, leaving only That to which, from which, within which, and most confoundingly as which, all appears.

Back... back...
Before... before...
Before thinking,
And the felt sense of yourself as the thinker.
Before language, words, and mental images,
And the meanings and emotions they carry.
Before perceptions and sensations,
And the felt sense of the perceiver-experciener,
Back... back...
Before... before...

The outward wandering Wave of Attention must be fiercely committed to discovering its Source, The Ocean within, from which it arises and to which it returns; Fierce enough not to stop at intellectual understanding; Fierce enough to go beyond, behind, before knowing and understanding; Fierce enough to move in Feeling Enquiry to the point of its own Vanishing in The Great Mystery that lays before, beyond, behind all duality, Absolutely.

The Kingdom of Heaven is Within.
Journey there.
And don't stop on the far frontiers,
At intellectual understanding.
Don't stop until you Vanish,
And only Heaven remains.
My Experience with Jean Klein

I’ve had several teachers in my Journey, and for each I hold immense gratitude. Jean Klein was my advaita (nonduality) teacher.

Contemporary Nonduality, as I encountered it during my spiritual Journey in America, only rarely mentions Bliss; often only in precautionary terms in the context of sadhana, and usually only fleetingly, if at all, when describing the Liberated experience of being. I am familiar with the advaitic pedagogical model, and understand that advaita teachers don't want their students to become attached to transient “states” or “objects” of perception, but rather to feel themselves as That within which all objects, sensations, perceptions, and states arise and vanish. Thus, for advaita students, “Bliss” is often portrayed as a dangerous trap, something to be dismissed (neti neti) as transient, ephemeral, “unreal”, and not to be confused with the unmoving, changeless Absolute, the experience of which is generally described with words like Peace, Happiness, and Joy.

The lack of descriptions of Bliss in the post-Liberation experience of advaitic realization is probably due to the notion that once one is Free, one will know for one's self the nature of that condition, and therefore there's no need to elevate what they see as dangerous and alluring “distractions” for those still seeking. Thus, there is rarely a fleeting mention of Bliss; and generally… Ecstasy is right out.

All of that being the case, my experience when I saw my advaita teacher, Jean Klein, was filled with Bliss; a palpable, visceral, extremely pleasurable yet Unlocatable Ecstasy that both permeated and was inseparable from the entire Experience of Being. It was, for lack of any better term in relativity, a feeling of Orgasmic Ecstasy that, being “everywhere, yet nowhere”, transcended physicality or any of the other vast and varied aspects of manifest form, and yet… everything existed both “in” and “as” it. For me, the impact of residing in and as the Silence that Jean spoke of was the flooding of the Experience of Being with this Blissfulness I'm struggling to describe. But any mention of this would have been blasphemous, such things being “not spoken of.”
More than all of his words, more than my own clarity of understanding… something about being in proximity to Jean's physical-energetic locus had this profound effect on me. Many advaitans go off the deep end if you mention such “phenomenality”. But this was my experience. The most “profound” teaching I received, the Transmission of the Flame, was wordless, and had everything to do with my Mystical relationship to this man, and yes… to association and even proximity; though merely the thought of him would give rise to the welling up of Bliss.

Bliss was, for me, unmistakably, a touch of Union (the experience is described below), of formless Pure Being, Shining into manifest experience; water from that Ocean, warmth from that Sun, the Fragrance of what the Sufis call The Beloved, the Ananda of Sat·chit·ananda. How can formlessness possibly Shine into form? Volumes of words would fail to communicate what can only be known in Experience. As Jean would often say, “Now we will talk about that which cannot be talked about.” We talked… but it was not the words which conveyed That which was being spoken of, the Flame in his Heart igniting the ember in mine. Sounds quite dualistic, doesn't it? However dualistic it may sound, I assure you it was not. This is the Ineffable nature of “true” Guru Yoga.

I already knew not to grasp after this Bliss, seeking to sustain and hold it as a “pleasurable experience”. I had been given this Great Teaching, paradoxically, by Bliss itself. For Bliss only arose when the acute “outer” focus of Attention relaxed “inward”, dissolving into its Oceanic nature as Unlocatable Aliveness. Then Attention, in that instant of inward-turning, was greeted by effortlessly-arising Bliss. Shakti (manifestation) fell into the arms of Shiva (formless Pure Being), and the Ecstasy of their embrace became an inherent aspect of the Experience of Being, like wetness to water, or heat to fire. I did not see the inward turning and the upwelling of Bliss as cause and effect – a stance that put me somewhat at odds with Jean's pedagogical stance – but rather as inherent aspects of Dissolution. For if Dissolution became Absolute, this “alloyed” Bliss would become the Unalloyed Ecstasy of nirvikalpa; the direct experience of formless Pure Being. If Attention grasped after the somatic “experience” of Blissfulness, as it reflexively did, early on… the movement into Dissolution ceased, and Bliss vanished.
My experience is that Bliss is the very fragrance of Pure Being (Consciousness, Awareness, whatever one calls the Unlocatable Aliveness that we are, prior to manifestation). Prior to Liberation, it was the fragrance that drew me to The Beloved, that taught me the “secret” of non-grasping, and abiding as Unlocatable Aliveness. It is the embrace of Shiva and Shakti in union as Shiva-Shakti, a union in which both vanish, all duality vanishes, even, quite impossibly, in the midst of duality.

Here's the story of my first meeting with Jean Klein.

In November of ‘81, using feeling inquiry (before I knew what advaitic inquiry was), “I” died in Union.

No space in which objects could arise
(including the “object” of myself as the perceiver).

No time allowing objects to be perceived or cognized.

The vanishing of… everything.

Everything.

Gone.

And yet…

The Unalloyed Ecstasy of Pure Being.

Even to say that Consciousness was aware of Itsself is not wholly accurate, for there was no “perceiver/subject” Consciousness aware of a “perceived/object” Consciousness. Perhaps you could say there was Perceiving without a perceiver, Being without a Be'er… but let's not wander any further into the jungle of words, concepts, and pointers.

Alas, when space, time, and manifestation arose again from Pure Being, when Shiva moved as Shakti, “I” (self-identity, person-I) arose with it, a contraction, and the suffering of identification with the body-mind and all that that entails. In the end, Union proved only informative. It informed me of my nature prior to the arising of… everything, including “me”. For although “I” as a separate object did not exist in Pure Being… I was what remained when everything
vanished. In Union, “I” was not “that which is alive”, but rather, “Life itself.” I remember seeing, as manifestation eventually returned within Emptiness, that it was the most obvious thing in the world that I was neither this nor that, but that I simply… Was. I was Not an object or a thing, not the aggregates of thought, feeling, and emotion that I had always taken myself to be. The last words uttered by the mind before all things vanished was a startled recognition and exclamation - not merely mental, but with the Whole Being — “I… just… Am!” Poof!

As an inevitable consequence of person-“I” returning, the experience of Pure Being almost instantly became a memory, a concept. Except… now I Knew that self-identified person existed both in and as Pure Being in Manifestation. This was now irrefutable. But as life-changing as this trans-intellectual understanding was, it did not stop the contraction and suffering of self-identity. I had emerged from Pure Being only more “informed” than I had been prior.

Except for one thing…

The next day, while driving, I “remembered” what had happened. And before the mind could utter a word as part of this remembering, before mental constructs arose, in a timeless instant, my Heart exploded in Ecstasy. This Bliss was immediately recognizable as the taste, the fragrance of Pure Being, and gave rise to a sense of the same Fullness and Completion I had become in Union, only now modified by its arising in space, time, and form. This Bliss was somehow both in form, and beyond. For while the physical and energetic bodies were washed over in Bliss, the mind, cognition, and the world, all began to dissolve back, back into Ecstasy. It was as if Union was pulling on my attention, trying to dissolve me once again into itself. The Radiance of Pure Being was shining through into manifestation. The boundary had been destroyed. But... because of the contraction of self-identity, this experience became just that, an “experience”, with an experiencer, immediately qualified and conditioned by the mind, by person-I. But the fragrance was undeniable, arising from a bodily location near my physical Heart. The rapture was so overwhelming and my mind so dissolute and intoxicated that I nearly pulled the car over.
From that day forward, although my mind might be focused on a task at work, “behind” all movement, all activity, this Blissfulness was ever present, always ebbing and flowing to some extent, always moving like the waters of a deep Ocean; sometimes a soft ambience, other times a powerful flood, swallowing all mentation and sense of externality, pulling attention out of space and time, back, back, into the Ocean of Being. When I paused outer activity, and “fell back in relaxed alertness”, so to speak... I would be overwhelmed with breathtaking Bliss, and the acuity of perception and cognition would dissolve into Stillness. Although I never again experienced Union, I was thereafter “wet” with the water of that Ocean, always fragrant with the perfume of the Timeless, always warmed by that “apparently” distant Fire. But still, in the midst of all of this, self-identity persisted.

It would also happen that I might be sitting, watching television — often the silliest show you could imagine — and suddenly the entire Field of perception would dissolve in the most exquisitely beautiful translucent light, as if everything had become molten. All objects dissolved into each other, and then the mind would follow, and my sense of being a locatable object in space and time, and I would feel a dissolving, a pulling, back, back into Timeless Presence.

Always, enjoying the Perfume of the Beloved,
Even with eyes open, here, in the world of form.
Even with Attention moving, here and there,
In “mundane” activity.

The Ordinary, Extraordinary.
The Extraordinary... Ordinary.

We are always, ever, Touching,
And I am always intoxicated by the unseen allure
Of the Absolute Death into Ecstasy that She is.

When Attention rests, She is there,
Tugging at my Heart,
Always whispering,
Always touching,
Turning my face to Hers.
Here in the world of form,
She exists in me, as me.
Here in Pure Being,
Neither She, I, nor “we”
Have ever existed.

I did not take this Radiance, ever, to be “shakti”, or “kundalini”, or any such thing. Such terms seemed profane to me. For this Beautiful Radiance was not a “thing”, not an object of enjoyment. I Knew from Union that it was simply the Radiance of Pure Awareness, somehow, magically, wonderfully, impossibly, shining into this world of form, into and as myself; always present, always available to be remembered or be remembered by, in a timeless instant. As Jean said, we begin soliciting that which we long for, but soon find ourselves being solicited, as well. It was a dance of the Unmanifest in Manifestation, Shiva dancing with, and as, this Radiance.

But again, all of that lofty verbiage aside, all Bliss aside, all Ecstasy aside, all Pure Being aside, aspects of my manifest form, within the Aliveness that I am, remained in the horrible contraction and suffering of self-identity.

I had read Jean's book, *Neither This Nor That, I Am!*, and found in it a mirror of the enquiry that had led me to Union; a “feeling” enquiry, not a thinking enquiry. One day in 1983, two years after Union, a friend told me that Jean would be giving a satsang in LA, and I was very much inspired to see him. It would be my first time seeing an advaita teacher. My friend, widely read and much more experienced than I in the nature of the various spiritual paths, stressed that there would be none of this gold light business, no discussion of phenomenon or experience, almost certainly no talk of Bliss, and forget Union (which advaita often deemed “a mere sweet”, and a dangerous one at that). He warned that with these things so much a part of my experience of being, I might find advaita somewhat cerebral and dry.

I found a seat at Jean's satsang and, waiting for him to arrive, noted that the Radiance of my Heart was welling up with uncommon intensity, even before he arrived. Jean arrived; a small, older, somewhat frail man. He sat in silence for quite some time. And as I sat there, I was taken by a veritable tsunami of Ecstasy. I couldn't think, I couldn't move; I was in rapture. I felt my Heart...
would explode in Ecstasy. And because I kept my eyes open as we sat there, everything in my field of vision vanished completely in that exquisite, translucent illumination that I’d become so familiar with. Mind and cognition dissolved into Ecstasy, too intoxicated to function. I could see only one thing in this field of light in which everything else had dissolved: Jean, sitting in Silence. But all around him, nothing but blinding luminous Radiance.

Eventually, Jean spoke briefly about advaita, then asked for questions. After listening to a few questions and answers, I could no longer hold the frustration that had become the heart of my sadhana. I raised my hand and was recognized by Jean. Expressing frustration and despair, not intending to sound rude or hostile, but unable to help myself, I said, “So, we're just supposed to inquire in this manner, and keep inquiring, and keep inquiring, and keep inquiring, and keep inquiring, and keep inquiring, until one day, maybe, maybe — but don't count on it, because only a handful ever attain the goal — maybe, one day, Grace will fall on us?!” He sat for a moment... and then, turning to face me more directly, leaned quite forward in his chair, and held his right arm out, low by his knees. He then brought his arm up quickly, in a shot, saying as he did so, “It's in the instant before (emphasized) the upsurge!” He held his arm in that higher position for some time, looking directly at me, and then, very slowly, sat back, saying, “In time, the Lover and the Beloved will become one.” And then, leaning forward again and pointing emphatically, he said, assertively, “Count on it!”

The upsurge? The upsurge?! How did he know?! This was an advaitan, not some siddhi-imbued mystic dealing with phenomenality. How could he know?! We'd never met before. And advaitans didn't talk about “the upsurge”, or so I’d been told. But Jean knew, having never met me before in this life!

In the years that followed, he clarified further that according to the advaitic view that he held and taught, this Bliss that had become an inherent aspect of my experience of being was an “effect”, not the cause. And I, too, held that view for quite some time, for it was true that Bliss arose in the instant of remembering, the instant before its explosion in my Heart, when Attention ceased all “outer” focus, and relaxed back, fell back into Itself, so to speak.
As time passed, however, even while still seeing Jean, I found myself uneasy with the advaitic stance. For in my experience, over time, I came to see the arising of Bliss not simply as an “effect” of inward turning, but rather as inherent in, and inseparable from, the inward turning of Attention, just as Unalloyed Ecstasy is inherent in Union, in which there are no causes and effects. In my experience – which, granted, is not akin to that of most of my advaitan friends – Bliss was to inward turning as heat is to fire, wetness to water, or glistening to gold. The 13th Century saint, Jnaneshwar, speaks to this stance so beautifully (see The Advaitic Trap). This seemingly subtle difference in relationship to formlessness (Shiva) and form (Shakti), the unmanifest and manifest, is far more profound than meets the eye. It points to the differing stances of advaita and Kashmir Shaivism, with which my Heart came to more fully resonate.

In any case, it didn't matter. I simply Loved Jean, and went to see him whenever I could, for the most blasphemously unadvaitic reasons.

Jean's teachings were not purely advaitic, and his stature is diminished in the eyes of certain orthodox advaitans. He had been influenced at some point by Kashmir Shaivism, and aspects of that tradition were mixed into his stance and teachings; a stew that also included certain aspects of orthodox advaita. For example, Jean's saying that gathering together and all that it entailed – all of the questions, answers, and dialog – was merely a pretext for sitting together in Silence – my God… this was seen as blasphemous guru yoga by many staunch advaitans. But as I've stated, this was at the very Heart of our relationship; all else was indeed a pretext. Jean also expressed the Kashmir Shaivite stance somewhat in his unique style of yoga which, again, more orthodox advaitans no doubt considered blasphemous.

From that first meeting with Jean, until his death, I saw him whenever I could. Our relationship, outwardly, adhered to the advaitic protocol; but inwardly, existed more as one would expect of Kashmir Shaivism. I never mentioned Bliss, or the translucent Radiance that filled the room when we were together. Mentioning such things would have gotten me a chiding from Jean. And so, I was both in disagreement with aspects of his advaitic stance, and in absolute agreement and affinity with the nature of our Mystical inner relationship. I continued seeing him not because of his advaitic teaching, but because of the
Experience that arose Mystically in his presence; the direct experience of “That” which was being discussed in words; an experience in which the experiencer vanished, and the Unalloyed Ecstasy of nirvikalpa shone, alloyed, into the experience of manifest Being.

He never once, in all those years, directly answered a question I would ask — a question that had arisen in the immediate context of the satsang. Never once in all those years. He always, instead, answered the more secret, private questions that had been arising in my Heart and mind in the days or weeks prior to seeing him; questions around the relationship of Heart-Bliss to Pure Being, and around why, why, why, I remained self-identified. And while my advaitan friends will poo-poo my mentioning it... every time I saw Jean, there was the phenomenon of that radiant, translucent light, and dissolution in Bliss. Proximity to his physical form always gave rise to an intensification of Dissolution.

I'm a sad excuse for an advaitan.

The entire time I saw my teacher, Jean,
I went not to gain “understanding”,
Or to follow, yet again, the tired "advaitic thread".

I went to bathe in the Radiance
That emanated from that form.
Yes... from that form.

A shameless dualist?
Not so.

For somehow, impossibly,
Formlessness shone from that form,
And dissolved all that it touched, back into Itself,

Including “me”.

Before he even entered the room,
The world dissolved... “I” dissolved,
And all questions vanished.
A shameless “experience” junkie?
Not so.

For the experience,
Was of the experiencer vanishing,
Into That which was being discussed.

Not in concepts,
Thoughts,
Words.

The words were a pretext.
The questions a pretext.
The answers a pretext,
For our simply sitting together, bathing in...

Seeing Jean caused the Sun of my Heart to shine more brightly.
And dipped the salt doll of my “self” once again into the Ocean.
From which emerged, eventually...
Only a handful of Ocean.

It did not happen through knowledge,
Or understanding,
Or seeing clearly,
Or grasping anything.

It happened through Grace.
The emanation of Shiva in and as Shakti.
Dissolving the contraction of self-identity,
In The Beloved, in Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Only then, looking back,
Did I Understand all that I had heard,
In word, concept, and metaphor,
And knowledge became Knowledge.

But make no mistake...
I went for the translucent Light that filled the room,
And my Entire Being.
Shameless, I know.

I went for the dissipation of endless mentation,
Into Serenity and Peace.
Shameful, I know.

I went for the dissolution of acute Attention,
Into Unlocatable Aliveness.
How could I?!

I went for the Bliss of Pure Being,
Pouring into manifestation,
Overflowing the Wellspring of my Heart,
From that gentle, frail form... Myself.

Ponder this great mystery, my nondual friends.
For this benediction happened in physical proximity to,
In thoughtful remembrance of,
In heartfelt relationship with,
That gentle, frail form... Myself.

That's right... form.

For truly... truly,
Form is Formlessness,
Formlessness is Form.
Shiva is Shakti,
Nirvana and samsara are One.

Those are not empty platitudes,
But the Living Teaching I received,
From Formlessness,
In and as that gentle, frail Form...

Myself.

I'm a sad excuse for an advaitan.
Throughout all those years of satsang and reading and inquiry, however, no amount of bliss, no amount of mental clarity, no amount of remembering the source of Bliss, no amount of feeling myself as That within which all arises, no amount of feeling myself “behind”, no amount of resting in relaxed alertness brought about the cessation of the contraction of self-identity, of person-I. Until… twenty years after meeting Jean, and some time after his passing, I sat up in bed one day and realized, in the most uneventful way, as if recognizing “after the fact” something that had already been the case but had somehow gone unnoticed, that I could not feel “myself” anymore.

The Ancient Contraction was gone. The Great Suffering was gone. “I” was gone. I did not feel myself expanded as all that existed, nor did I feel myself as “That” within which all arose, I did not feel myself… at all. There was simply… This; the Experience of Being. I was no longer That which was alive, but rather, Life Itself, but now with eyes open, not vanished in Union. There was no longer any sense of interior or exterior; no inner subject perceiver perceiving exterior objects. Space and time became purely notional, for everything was simply Present, All At Once, with no felt sense of distance or proximity in relation to That within which and as which it all arose. For “i” had ceased to exist, and only Unlocatable Aliveness remained. I did not even sense a “Now” in which Existence Was. There was simply… This. Only in mentation do such additional “concepts” as space, time, and objects arise.

After this “Liberation” from the Great Suffering, and for nearly two years following, the Bliss that had been an effortless aspect of the Experience of Being since Union, lost its sense of locatability in the Locus of The Heart and seemingly dispersed everywhere, into everything; a soft, gentle, ever-present ambience. I lived those years in Serene Emptiness; an Emptiness which, although it sounds impossible, grew deeper and deeper, in time becoming almost too much to bear.

At the end of the second year, Dissolution and Bliss rolled like a tide back into the locus of the Heart, overflowed, and… to my bewilderment and delight, was noticed by certain friends, who began telling me that in simple conversation, and especially while meditating together, they felt themselves dissolving into Silence; Dissolution, Peace, and yes, Blissfulness washing over them. And in time, unexpectedly and to my great delight, through simple
Friendship, contemplation, and meditation, certain of them came to the effortlessly ever-present experience of Dissolution and Bliss.

I share, in words, all that I have learned in direct experience. For I know that intellectual clarity is important as we wander from the village of the “known” until one day… upon a path grown pathless, Heart and Mind, Heaven and Earth, vanish like a mist into and as the Great Mystery.

But make no mistake… as Jean said, it is the Radiance of Formlessness Illumining Form, overflowing from the Wellspring of The Heart, that “magically” Heals, Blesses, Illumines, and Liberates, from the so-called inside, out. All else is a pretext.

Far from the village,
Road vanished into path,
Path vanished into hillside,
Hillside vanished into Vastness,
The Known vanished into Wonder.

I don't consider myself “enlightened” or “awakened”. I leave those lofty terms, and the implied finality and unfortunate elevation of stature that they inevitably invoke, to those who feel themselves worthy of their use. My Experience has shown me that it's unwise at best, and delusional at worst, to ever plant a flag and declare the summit. While there have been profound milestones along The Way, in my experience there is no finality whatsoever to...

Endless Enlightening
Poems
Today I wandered into the spiritual marketplace,
And heard 10,000 hawkers hawking,
10,000 children teaching,
And 20 held forth as 100.

So many voices,
So full of authority,
Young and old,
Certain and assertive.

Each having planted a flag,
Declaring the summit attained.
Each teaching their own “conclusions”
As “Truth”.

I brought my Beloved with me,
But She could not bear the din,
And ran from that place,
Staring back from my Heart, tearfully.

I could not hear,
Amidst the clamor,
Her sobbing whisper,
“My Own, My Love, leave this place…
And follow Me… Home.”
A Beautiful Sorrow

There is a Beautiful Sorrow.
How can I ever explain?

So Beautiful…
I would never dream to “transcend”.

A Sorrow Illumined by that Love,
Which is beyond Joy and Sorrow.

So Beautiful…
I would never dream to “transcend”.

Born of the BitterSweet Transience,
Of our existence in this ephemeral Dream.

So Beautiful… so terrible…
I would never dream to transcend.

Lovers of the Absolute would leave this world,
And vanish in formless transcendence.

I have been to that Heaven,
And returned… not transcendent, but…

Illumined with Love’s Immanence.

Love for this Wondrous World,
Of Heaven and Hell.

So Beautiful… so Terrible…
I would never dream to transcend.

I have drowned in Her Formless Embrace,
And awakened again on the shores of Duality…

Drenched in the Wine of Her Presence,
Here, in the land of Joy and Sorrow.
Her Presence Intoxicates every Heartbeat,  
Here, in The Tavern of The Beloved,  

Her Fragrance Blesses every breath,  
Here, in Her Secret Garden,  

So Beautiful… so Terrible…  
I would never dream to transcend.  

BitterSweet tears of Ecstasy and Agony,  
For this Beautiful… Terrible World…  

I would never dream to transcend.  

A DANCE OF APPARITIONS  

When She and I were in the dance of flirtation,  
Before Her Embrace, and Lingering Perfume…  

Even then I found, to my Great Delight,  
That I could do no wrong,  
In the stance I held in Loving Relationship,  
Whatever that stance might be.  

And now that She is the Gardener of my Soul,  
Having taken up Residence in the Heart,  
I find, still, to my Great Delight,  
That I can do no wrong.  

For She neither increases, nor diminishes,  
Whichever stance I might take in Loving Her,  
Each Way proving Beautiful and Fruitful,  
However varied in their natures.  

Standing here, I am Her Lover,  
And She, my Beloved.
Standing here, I am Her Child,  
And She, my Loving Mother.  

Standing here, I am Her Friend,  
And She, my Wise Counsel.  

Standing here, I Vanish,  
Into Her... as Her...  

And standing here,  
Both She and I Disappear,  
Leaving only that which Shines,  
Before ever “we” existed.  

And although some decry the possibility,  
I find it to be so, again and again,  
That in whatever state I find myself,  
Deemed “good” or “bad” by the scriptures...  

She is there.  

What Love is this,  
What Grace,  
Unconditional,  
Unimaginable.  

Oh, wearying debaters of “truth”,  
Let all be Free to Celebrate their Love,  
All stances being “true”, in their way,  
All... merely... a Dance of Apparitions.  

The Illumination of the Heart,  
Is not born of the Way in which we Love,  
But through the Mystical Alchemy,  
Of Love, Itself.
A Different “Place”

This Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
Does not exist in the realm,
Of ever-changing conditionality,
In the ever-changing weather of manifestation.

This Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
Has nothing whatsoever to do,
With “becoming” this or that,
With “doing” or “not doing”,

Nothing to do with “changing”,
With “perfecting”,
With starting or stopping,
With “when” or “if”.

This Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
Exists in a… “different place”.
Within which, from which, as which,
Both Lover and Beloved arise.

Although Joy and Sorrow may ebb and flow,
Laughter and tears may come and go,
Faith and belief stand strong or collapse…
This Presence remains, in a… “different place”…

The Wellspring of The Heart.

And although Unmoved and Impenetrable,
Untouched by the ever-changing nature,
Of this Dream of Heaven and Hell,
This Fullness, Completion, and Bliss…

Illumines the Dream…

From a Different Place.
A Divine Puddle

When I and the world vanished, utterly,
And Ecstasy remained, as Nonexistent Existence,
I was not then a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist,
I was “undecided”, living in Not Knowing, and yet…

With Unquenchable Longing.

It was after that Experience,
And the subsequent Presence in The Heart,
Of The Beloved’s Perfume lingering,
That I began looking here and there…

Wondering if I was alone in this Affair of The Heart.

I sought throughout the various religions,
Some reference to this Dissolution and Bliss,
To Union, and Her Sweet Perfume lingering,
And found in each some Fragrance…

More so here, less so there.

But I also found, always, inevitably,
The dogma and orthodoxy of each,
The varied descriptions of “reality”,
Their firm pronouncements of “truth”…

And found myself unable to linger.

I wondered, in heartfelt consideration,
If I must pour this Molten Mystery, unformed,
Into a framework of belief, a template of faith,
Forged by other Lovers, long ago…

And now held to by millions.

And I determined, in heartfelt consideration,
To leave my Experience Molten, unformed,
A Divine Puddle, without center or periphery,
Undefined, unexplained, remaining…
A Most Beautiful Mystery, a Puddle of Grace.

Now I dance through the villages of belief,
Like a madman, unfettered, a reveling child,
Splashing through the fountains of their Beauty,
Sidestepping, deftly, the muddy pools.

I cherish those aspects of every faith,
In which this Puddle finds Reflected,
In the Water of Love and Surrender,
The Beautiful Face of The Beloved.

I am now, in the sense that matters most to me,
A Christian, a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Buddhist,
“I am in Love,” as Hafez declared,
“But with whom I do not know.”

A Fairy Tale

Through all my wanderings in this world,
Through the lustfulness of youth,
And the ambition of middle age,
I held, among my other desires,
The desire for...

A fairy tale.

A Dream of Heaven, of Love unconditioned,
A Dream of Ecstasy, not of the body,
A Dream of Peace, beyond imagining,
A Dream in which inherent suffering,
Was no longer...

A fairy tale.
Born empirically minded, yet full of Longing,
I would have none of faith or belief,
In things unprovable, and likely imagined,
Of impossible dreams born of the suffering,
Of simply being incarnate…

Fairy tales.

And so, one day, seeking an end to Suffering,
I turned within, to the Unbearable Longing,
For what I knew I must have been,
Before ever I learned a word,
Before ever I knew what “i” was…

A fairy tale.

So many words I had read,
So many teachings of so many paths,
So disheartening, all, in the course of time.
Of the “Truth” they held forth, and the Ways to it,
My weary Heart would have no more…

Of fairy tales.

Within… Within… Within…
Past words, concepts, and images,
Of myself and the world,
And all that the senses presented,
Presented to… what?

A fairy tale.

There, beyond within and without,
Through Unimaginable Grace,
“i” Vanished, and all creation with me,
And that which Is before all that arises,
Was what I was, without myself…

The fairy tale…True.
The Love, Ecstasy, and Peace I sought… I was.
That dream of Sufferings end… I was.
My Heart's Desire… I was.
All of this… I was...
When I was not.

Heaven… True.

This is not my tale of Grace alone,
But each of ours, who ache with Longing,
Along this Path of Love and Surrender,
Loving that… for which no words exist,
And which disheartening experience deems...

A fairy tale.

Within...
Within...
Within, Dear Heart...
To the Feeling of yourself,
Before the Feeling of your self...

The Heart's Desire... Fulfilled.

And when the world reappears,
The Light of Heaven, your Own Pure Light,
Will Shine as it Shines already,
Within your Longing Heart,
Into this world of ever-changing Duality...

This... fairy tale.

You will exist in Fullness,
In the world of Fullness and Emptiness,
You will exist in Bliss,
In the world of Ecstasy and Agony,
You will exist, a Sublime Formless Radiance...

A fairy tale come true.
A Gesture of Love

It was a Gesture of Love,
Not a skill "learned",
This turning to face The Beloved.

I could not grasp, or She would flee,
I could not seek to hold and sustain,
Or The Friend would vanish.

She taught me this, Herself.

It was a gentle turning of Attention,
A movement of Affection, within,
Until "I" could no longer be found…

And yet… Aliveness Shone.

It was not enough to come to this place,
Where, unable to find myself,
"I" became Vast and Limitless.

For this "I", as well,
However subtle the feeling,
Had to Vanish.

There, at that Juncture,
I moved from thoughtful investigation,
To Feeling enquiry…

Where no "I" was found…
I Felt what Was,
And Rested there, ever more deeply.

The mind's capabilities exhausted,
I Felt for that which was there,
Before ever I learned…

"Who" I was,
"What" I was,
"How" I was.
Before ever I knew,
What “I” meant,
And “I” and “thou” arose.

The Beloved awaited there,
To Vanish with me,
Into the Great Mystery…

My own Shining Aliveness,
Before this twinkling Dream ever sparkled…
From the Infinitely faceted diamond of…

Stop now… Shhhhhhh… and Feel.

A Little Trickle

When “I” drowned in The Ocean,
From which all that appears, appears,
There was no duality whatsoever,
And yet “I” Remember Existence as Nonexistence.

How can “I” Remember, when “I” was not?

It can only be that “I Am”, even when “I” am not,
Though “what” I Am remains a Mystery.
For in that Heaven of Nonexistent Existence,
Who, what, when, where, why, and how did not exist.

Are not all words that follow the unfollowable, folly?

In any case, such questions hold no allure.
I leave them to jurists and theologians,
Who delight in describing “reality”, and law,
Creating “believers”, and endless strife.
The only matter of consequence to “me”,
Is that even as “I” exist in this Dream of form,
“I Am” Shines Formless, still, in the Heart,
A little trickle, a Stream from Heaven Flowing…

From “I Am” into, and as “I”.

And the mind rushes in…
How can “into” and “as” both be true?
How can the Soul be “of” God, yet distinct?
How many angels fit on the head of a pin?

I can only struggle to convey,
That which can never be conveyed,
That where The Kingdom of Heaven ends,
And “I” begin, I can no longer discern.

A Little Trickle flowing, each drop, The Ocean.

When you weary of dogma and belief,
The Great Question, “What am I?” will drive you,
Within, past all that mind and senses present,
Past even the questioning “I”…

To the Kingdom of Heaven, “I Am”.

And upon your Return to this Dream of existence,
I pray you, too, will have poked a hole in Heaven,
And the Light of “I Am” will Shine, Illuminating “I”,
Brightening the Hearts of all you meet upon The Way.

A little Light, a little Beam Shining, all colors in One.
A Most Exquisite “Possession”

Early on, soon after his realization,
Before pundits, years later, taught him the scriptures,
Before he learned that metaphysical language,
Ramana Maharshi referred to his condition,
Using a Tamil word, “avesam”, meaning…

“Possession”.

“Something” had become an aspect,
Of his ongoing experience,
“Something” not previously present,
Within… felt… visceral… palpable,
And the young lad felt himself…

“Possessed”.

Call it what you will;
The Self,
God,
Consciousness,
It was, Experientially…

A most Divine “Possession”.

He spoke, in those days, not in abstractions,
Not using nondual terminologies,
Of a conceptual framework of “reality”,
But pointed to Direct Experience,
To a “Felt Sense”, Within…

A most Extraordinary “Possession”.

Something effortlessly ever present,
A formless Heart, somehow near the heart,
Emanating Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
Uncaused, untouched, unmoved,
By circumstance or conditionality.
A most Sublime “Possession”.

I have vanished in The Beloved,
Before the duality of She and I,
Before the birth of all duality,
And returning… found Her here, as well,
A Living Presence, Shining in the Heart…

A most Illuminating “Possession”.

The Beloved, there, pulling my sleeve,
“Come… Embrace Me…
And vanishing from existence,
As a thing alive,
Exist as… Life Itself.”

A most Exquisite “Possession”.

A Simple Man

“You must always remain a simple man,
A simple man, leading a simple life.” my Baba said.

“You will not push yourself out.
Writing a book, printing flyers, renting a hall,
And throwing the doors open,
For all who pass by.

Those who Love will be… pulled,
And will come to take tea and chat.

You will not sit ‘in front’ of a group,
But only, always, ‘across’ from a Friend,
Fellow Lovers on the Way of the Heart…
Bathed in the Perfume of The Beloved.
You will not express, assertively,  
The Grace you have received…

They will tell you,  
When they feel its Radiance.

Only then… you may speak.

But you needn't speak,  
To inform or instruct.

You needn't speak at all.

Only The Beloved's Presence is required…  
To Invoke what words can never convey.

And in time, through Grace,  
As you have received…

They will become… like you!

And in all of this, all of this  
You will remain, always…

Always…

A simple man.”

And so should we all remain.

A Strand of Her Hair

So few believe it possible,  
That one's Heart can become Illumined,  
With an Exquisite Presence,  
Unlike any other in manifest existence.
That which the Sufis call The Beloved,
The Hindus, Ananda,
Christians, the Holy Spirit,
And nondualists, the Self.

I cannot fault their disbelief,
In a world in which the mystical,
Is so often proven charlatanry,
And dismissed as religious hysteria.

I cannot fault their disbelief,
For I, too, was a cynic,
A rational, empirical man,
Who, being without mystical experience...

Dismissed it all as delusion or madness.

Oh... what a shock to the mind,
When the impossible occurred,
And through inward turning,
I found myself in Heaven...

Vanished, yet Alive.

Oh... what a shock to the mind,
When the impossible occurred,
And upon returning from Heaven,
I found my Heart imbued thereafter...

Intoxicated with Heaven's Ecstasy.

But none should believe me,
If it is not their experience,
For lunatics abound,
In this madhouse of the spirit.

None should believe me,
Until, driven within,
They discover, empirically,
That they are a strand...
Of Her Beautiful Hair.

A Teacher, A Friend

May you find a Teacher, a Friend, a Murshid,
Who has died into Formless Pure Being,
Emerged, Illumined with the Fragrance of The Beloved,
And through Surrender, Liberated
From the terrible bondage of self-identity.

Union,
Benediction,
Surrender.

But above all else, a Friend Liberated,
From the felt sense of embodied form,
The felt sense of embodied selfhood.
This, above all else.

Otherwise,
You are dealing with a “person”,
Moved by desire and fear.
With agenda, taking rather than Giving.

Take no one's word,
That they are Liberated,
But watch their words and actions,
In moments when they are being “themselves”.

Above all, look for Humility,
Selflessness,
Compassion,
And Loving Kindness.
For these are born,
Of effortless abidance,
In and as,
Fullness and Completion.

Existence·Consciousness·Bliss.

If your Friend is Illumined, but not Liberated,
Take care.
For the world is full of powerful, eloquent,
Beautifully embodied Selves,
Imbued with spiritual energy.

If your Friend is Liberated, but not Illumined,
Learn what you can from their words,
For words can, in the right Heart,
Point the way to your Heart's Desire.

But better still,
May you find a Teacher, a Friend,
Liberated, Illumined,
And moving Humbly in Endless Enlightening.

So rare.

Not one elevated, who sits “in front of”,
Seen distantly, through a crowd,
But a Friend who sits “across from”.

A fellow Lover of The Beloved, with whom,
Through intimate spiritual relationship,
The ember in your Heart ignites.

For this is the Ancient Way.
Not simply one who “talks”,
Who tells you in words and concepts,
That everything is now,
Has always been,
And will forever be
Perfect.

Who tells you in words and concepts,
That you are now,
Have always been,
And will forever be,
“Enlightened”.

But a Friend Liberated from self-identity,
Through whose Form,
The bliss of The Beloved,
Shines spontaneously and effortlessly,
And can be Felt, through a Mystical Alchemy,
Beyond all “understanding”...

In your own direct Experience.

Who emanates, wordlessly,
That which cannot be spoken of,
Which is “Heard” in your Heart,
In your Direct Experience,
Through Love.

Whose words are saturated with Blessing,
Flowing like a river from the Ocean of Bliss,
Through a Liberated form,
Seeking nothing from you,
Only offering,
Love.
A Mystical Love,
Not a fruitless glamour,
Which emanates even from those,
Bound, still, in self-identity,
Moving through desire and fear.

But rather, the Blissful Radiance,
Of Union, of Sat-Chit-Ananda,
The Fragrance of The Beloved,
The Ecstasy of the Self within yourself,
The Rapture of your own Pure Being.

Not energetic titillation,
That dazzles briefly,
Watering your mouth,
Then leaving you starving.

But the Presence of The Beloved, Shining,
Which Blesses your Heart,
And Transmutes you,
Immediately, and Forever,
Dissolving “you” in the Ocean of Bliss.

Not one who tells you there is nothing to be done.
For there is so much to be done,
In the way of Longing,
In Attention's inward turning,
And Heartfelt relationship,
With a form through which,
Formlessness shines.

Such “doing” arises effortlessly,
Through Love,
Not of the Teacher's form,
Though gratitude flows.
But rather...
Love of Love's Own Innate Shimmering,
Here... in your own Heart,
The true Teacher,
The true Guru,
The true Murshid.

Adrift

All of these words I have written about Liberation, and Illumination
May have given you the illusion that I have my bearings
And an understanding of all that's happened
And all that is to unfold in time,
When I am simply adrift
Without compass,
Rudderless,
Here...
In this Great Mystery.
After The Beloved Filled my Heart…

I read that tears would never again fall,
But they did, for the suffering of this world,
And still… She remained, Compassionate, Merciful.

I read that frustration would never come,
But it did, in ways both petty and great,
And still… She remained, Serene, Unmoved.

I read that the movement of desire would subside,
But it arose, even in the midst of Fullness,
And still… She remained, Ecstatic, Rapturous.

I read that thinking would cease at last,
But it did not, only the “thinker” vanished,
And still… She remained, Silent, Still.

I read that fear would never again well up,
But it did, the “weather” of emotion continuing,
And still… She remained, Untouched, Unmoved.

All that I had taken myself to be, remained,
After The Divine Thief stole my self,
And still… I remained, no longer me.

So many things written in scripture,
Proved so terribly misconstrued,
After The Beloved Filled my Heart.

For all that had been before,
Though forever changed by Her Presence,
Remained thereafter…

Except for me.
Ah... My Love

I could call this Beautiful, Sweet Presence the “Self”,
For it is the Shining into form, of Formless Pure Being...

But I choose to say, “Ah… my Love.”

I could call this Beautiful, Sweet Presence the “Holy Spirit”,
For it is truly The Comforter and The Teacher…

But I choose to say, “Ah… my Own.”

I could call this Beautiful, Sweet Presence “Divine Communion”,
For it is Beatitude beyond all reckoning…

But I choose to say, “Ah… my Nearest.”

I could call this Beautiful, Sweet Presence “God”,
For it is Unfathomable, Incomprehensible…

But I choose to say, “Ah… my Dearest.”

I could call this Beautiful, Sweet Presence “Divine Mother”,
For it is the longed for Tender Embrace…

But I choose to say, “Ah… Love.”

Only words… for that which cannot be spoken,
For the Shining into form of Formless Pure Being,
For The Comforter, The Teacher,
For Love, Causeless and Unconditional,
For the Fulfillment of the Heart’s Desire…

For The Unfathomable Mystery.

Ah… Love.
Gautama experienced a profound shift,  
In the nature of his Experience of Being,  
And, responding to questions about it…  

Gave birth to Buddhism.  

But when Gautama died, in no time at all,  
There arose debate and disagreement,  
About this, that, and the other…  

About “true” Buddhism…  

And there arose, from one View, many.  

So it seems, with all great teachings,  
The Master's passing, and in no time at all,  
Disagreement and debate…  

And the arising, from one View, of many.  

How vast and varied, expressions of “truth”,  
Each indicative of the utter futility,  
Of describing the Indescribable…  

Of capturing The Great Mystery in a jar.  

All in the nature of things, it appears,  
But oh, so very wearying,  
Wearying enough to drive one…  

Within.  

Within… where long ago in distant lands,  
In the experiences of those long dead,  
All of this nonsense began…  

Within.  

Perhaps we, too, should venture There,
And enjoining both Heart and Mind,
In that Inward Journey…

Find out what all this nonsense is about.

**Alone In This Fullness**

I sometimes feel so alone in This,
For there are neither words to express,
Nor ears to “hear” of this Wonder,
This Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.

Even those closest to me, knowing me best,
Seem to hear only words, and imagine concepts.
But I see no spark of recognition in their Hearts,
No Flashing of This Ancient Flame.

Only those with an ember,
Already alight within,
Ignite in a Flame of Recognition,
To their own astonishment… and mine.

These words will only touch their Heart,
If it is already pregnant.
And they will they know,
The baby will kick.

You cannot choose who will turn to you,
Often the last friend you would expect,
Often the least “spiritual”,
And ask, in Wonder, “What is this?!?”
Alone Out Here

Why some Illumine, and others don't,
Is a mystery beyond reckoning,
As is the Bliss of our Own Aliveness.
We're all Idiots in this Play.

And therein lays our Wisdom.

Alone Out Here

I thought I was alone out here,
Out in the Wild.

How sweet to find you in this Vastness.
Are you mad, as well?

If not, you will be.
Free at last from “sanity”.

So few leave the village of the Great Teachings,
And wander Here, Alone.

The few I’ve met have been driven by Life,
To push open the village gates, and abandon all knowledge.

What drove you to such desperation,
Taking those fearful steps into the Inconceivable?

There are no concepts here for one seeking knowledge.
Your teacher, The Unknowable, will remove all certitude.

And have no concern of arrogance and price,
For those are not possible here, in the face of... This.

You will never understand this Vastness,
Write a book, and offer guided tours.

Such a din in the spiritual marketplace.
While here, butterfly wings are raucous.
I walked the Path of the Idiot to get here,
Burning scriptures for warmth, along the way.

And dying, at last,
Became All That I Sought.

Even while remaining, a simple man,
Imperfect, wounded, and broken as any.

Always Touching

Always,
Enjoying,
The Perfume of the Beloved.

Even with eyes open,
Here,
In the world of form.

Even with Attention moving,
Here and there,
In “mundane” activity.

The Extraordinary… Ordinary.
The Ordinary… Extraordinary.

Always, ever,
Intoxicated,
By the Ecstasy that She is.

When Attention rests,
She is there,
Pulling at my Heart.

Always whispering,
Always touching,
Turning my face to Hers.
She exists in me,  
As me,  
And I in Her…  

And… neither.  
For “we” do not exist  
At all.  

There is only…  
This!

**Am I Not Here**

When I would sit to “meditate”,  
When I would strive to do,  
Or refrain from doing,  
The Beloved would whisper…  

What are you doing?  
Am I not here?  
Where would you go to find me,  
My Beloved, My own?  

What would you do to gain my Love,  
Which is now, has ever been,  
And will ever be yours,  
My Beloved, My own?  

Why do you hurt me so,  
As if My Love was conditioned,  
On renunciation, and discipline,  
On accomplishment, and merit?  

Do you not Know me,  
My Beloved, My own?  
Have I not shown you,  
Again, and again…
I am here for you... Always,
Without cause, beyond conditionality,
In the Wellspring of your Heart,
Ever Present... Here...

Shining in you... As You,
And... Beyond we two,
In the Formless Ecstasy of Heaven,
My Beloved, My own.

Be Still... and Know that I Am Love.

---

**An Old Couple**

It would seem I am no longer “spiritual”,
No longer reading endless volumes,
No longer hearing again and again,
No longer chatting ceaselessly about,
No longer running here and there.

What has become of me?

It would seem I've quit the whole affair,
For like my breath, my heartbeat,
I no longer see Her as “spiritual”,
For She has become, in these many years,
Inherent in the Experience of Existing...

Like wetness to water, heat to fire.

The mind seldom moves, anymore,
To the Tavern of The Beloved,
To watch, starry-eyed, as She pours,
Vanishing as The Wine,
Remaining as The Wine...
An Old Couple

For the Tavern is Here.

The heart seldom journeys, anymore,
To the Garden of The Beloved,
To breathe Her Fragrance,
Vanishing as The Flower,
Remaining as The Flower...

For the Garden is Here.

The mind journeys to the Tavern,
The Heart to The Garden,
Only when sitting with a friend,
In the Loving Hope,
That Flame will ignite Ember...

Or… in Celebration and Gratitude,
Of the Flame already Shining there,
In a Heart Radiant, Illumined,
With the Light of Heaven's Grace,
The Fulfillment of the Heart's Desire.

All fear long since vanished,
Of Her coming and going,
All movement long since ceased,
To grasp and hold Her,
For She has proven Herself...

Ever… Here.

In the world of space,
No distance separates us,
For She Is,
Before here and there ever were.

In the world of time,
No duration separates us,
For She Is,
Before now and then ever were.
In the world of objects,
No duality separates us,
For She Is,
Before this and that ever were.

These days, like an old couple,
We seldom speak,
Words long since abandoned,
To express what cannot be spoken,
Fullness... Completion... Bliss...

In breath... in heartbeat... in existence.

Only occasionally,
For the sheer Joy of Expression,
As a Delight in duality's Dance,
Will I utter the words,
So Beautifully Futile...

I Love You.

Are We Not Intimate?

No “appointment” can be made,
No formality engaged,
In turning to The Beautiful One,
Nearer than near...

For are we not Intimate?

Such propriety is taken by Her,
As an insult to the Intimacy of our Love,
An affront to its Unconditionality,
And I am left standing, counting beads...

For are we not Intimate?
Wondering what, why and how,
How to do “right”, and not do “wrong”,
How to approach again, “correctly”,
I break Her Heart.

Whereas…

If I approach Her door staggering,
Drunk on the Remembrance of Love,
And stand there, forgetting to knock,
She opens… and rushes to me…

For are we not Intimate?

For us, there can be no preparation,
No “proper” setting of the stage,
In expectation, anticipation,
Of arriving, touching, holding.

For are we not Intimate?

She responds only and Always,
To Tender, Gentle Longing,
An affectionate turning Within,
In which instant She stands…

Not in a distant Heaven, but… Here.

Whether She is God,
Whether She is what “I Am”,
Whether Transcendent or Immanent,
She remains an Unfathomable Mystery…

But oh… so Intimately so.
Art

When the Heart Shines with Grace,
Life itself becomes Music.

The heart, a drummer;
The breath, rhythm;

Every shape and color,
Notes of melody;

Every play of light,
A nuance of tonality.

Life becomes Art,
Blossoming through infinite mediums,

A Fruition of the Ineffable Sublimity,
That Shines as Love…

In the Heart of Being.

Astounded Lucid Confusion

When Shyams* stole Rumi’s Heart,
The Wilderness of The Unknowable,
Encroached upon the temple of Rumi’s mind,
Entwining, around, within, and through,
Until the knowledge that had accrued there,
Became tinder for The Fire of Experience…

And a Brilliant Scholar became a Brilliant Sufi.
Through the brightening of Love's ember,
Was the framework of the known,
Made ever more brittle and dry,
And ignited, at last,
Through an encounter,
With The Flame of Love...

Alight in the Heart of The Beloved.

Then roof and walls collapsed,
Words, pages, chapters, books consumed,
Revealing, in their ashes,
The Love in knowledge hidden,
Veiled in words, concealed in concepts,
And Rumi lived thereafter, as he wrote, himself...

“In astounded, lucid confusion.”

* Rumi’s guru, or murshid

At Last I’ve Given Up

At last I’ve given up seeking a “description”,
Of that Unimaginable Death unto Life,
And the Heart's Radiant Presence, thereafter.

The mind will simply have to make peace,
With living in Wonder,
Free of concepts.

Many, if asked, have descriptions,
Born of their “beliefs”, their faith,
Their religion.

They can expound for hours,
With passionate eloquence,
The “truth” of concepts they hold dear.
And thus...
I have discovered,
They “Know” nothing of This, at all.

They are assertive of their “beliefs”,
Fierce debaters,
Skillful logicians.

Arguing that this is surely so,
And that is surely “truth”,
And if this, then surely that.

And I can only sigh,
And continue living,
In Wonder and Surrender.

In Not Knowing.

I offer no “concepts” at all,
About this Unfathomable Mystery,
No theories concerning the nature of “reality”.

I have nothing to advise in the way of doing,
Or refraining from doing,
Except, perhaps…

To Remember,
With the Whole of your Being,
That which you Love.

Beyond that, I offer,
Only this Mysterious Experience,
As one possessed by Benediction,

Come to through Longing,
And inward turning,
And Grace.
At the Crossroads of Heart and Mind

If you have not yet met The Beloved,  
And wonder where She might be found…

Look within.

Let your Attention journey to The Tavern,  
At the Crossroads of Heart and Mind.

And look for Her there,  
With the eyes of your Soul.

If you wander off down the road of Mind,  
You'll only reach a “conclusion”.

If you wander off down the road of Heart,  
You'll lose yourself in the imagined.

Journey to the Tavern of The Beloved,  
At the Crossroads of Heart and Mind.

And look for Her there,  
With the eyes of your Soul.

For She is your Essence,  
Dancing in the Heart of your Being.

It is Her Great Joy to pour Grace,  
Into a Cup held forth Empty.

But you must hold forth your Cup.

If you lose yourself in chatter there,  
You will miss Her Silent arrival.

If you seek stature among those gathered,  
You will see only yourself.

If you must have fellowship,  
Commune with your empty Cup.
An Affair of The Heart

If you must yammer,
Speak to Her as if She is already found.

If you must think, reminisce,
Of that which was known, then forgotten.

If you must daydream, imagine,
The vanishing of all duality.

Wait there, at the Tavern of The Beloved,
The Mind starved, the Heart Drowned in Longing.

For if you have not yet met Her,
It is There that you will surely find Her.

Or rather, I should say,
It is there that She will surely find you…

At the crossroads of Heart and Mind.

Attention

Attention is the focal point of Awareness,
Generally focused on this or that;
On objects, thoughts, sensations-perceptions.

Many “things” arise in the Field of Perception,
But Attention generally focuses here or there,
On this or that.

Right now it’s on these words as you read them,
But in an instant you might hear a bird singing,
And Attention will turn to that.

Abiding as “I Am” is fruitful,
If the Totality of Attention rests there,
And not simply the mind.
Then, self-identity, moving as Attention,
Turns from acute “outer” focus,
Back, into ambient “inner” unlocatability.

Until one day… Attention does not return.
Seeking enlightenment…
It Vanishes, instead.

Then, though the eyes may look here or there,
The body may move here or there,
The mind may consider this or that,
In the apparition of space and time…

Attention remains at that placeless Place
Where Lover and Beloved embrace,
Free at last of the intercessor “self”.

There…
Formlessness shines, unobscured,
Into, and as, Form.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy… so essential,
Almost…
Almost above all else.

For even if we have great longing,
Without which, we are spiritual beggars,
But lack autonomy…

Our longing can be poured into the mold,
Of another’s experience,
And more dangerously, still…
Their interpretation of that experience.
Buddha, Jesus, Ramana,
Any historical or contemporary teacher…
Their experience was theirs,
And their interpretation, as well.

Ancient lineages assert,
With fierce certitude,
Their unquestionable authority.
But these, too… are interpretations.

We can revere and honor,
The teachings of others,
And the many blessings they hold,
Without becoming subservient to them.

We can take what resonates,
And leave what does not, respectfully,
However revered the teacher,
However ancient the lineage.

We can take and leave, as well,
Our own interpretations
Of the experience we have come to,
And what it all means.

Head and Heart, ever-open, ever-free,
We need not seek to grasp or hold,
Or plant a flag along the way,
Declaring the summit attained.

In each new experience,
In each new revelation,
We dawdle for a time,
In all that is revealed.

At each new milestone,
Each new vista come upon,
We celebrate for a time,
The gifts discovered.
Until... if we are blessed,  
The Unknown calls to us,  
And we wander, again...  
Into the Great Mystery.

We are moved,  
Without intention or volition,  
To walk, in Wonder and Awe,  
At the glories of each ever-new step.

Autonomous and free,  
Unbound by stances and views  
Held by others, and...  
By our self.

You can sit for countless ages,  
Listening to beautiful words,  
About formless “You”,  
Within which “you” appear.

But if “you”, in Solitude,  
Do not turn attention within,  
There is no hope that “you”,  
Will ever Know “You”…

As anything more than a concept.

It's not glamorous, sitting thus,  
Alone... abandoning all that appears,  
Abandoning the felt sense of “you”,  
And Feeling your way Back, Behind, Before...

To “You”.
Back, Behind, Before...
To the Unlocatable Aliveness “You” are,
Before ever “you” or the world appeared,
And attention was drawn outward, fascinated.

There is no teacher, guru, murshid,
On the Journey to the Aliveness that “You” are,
Save the teacher, guru, murshid that “You” are,
Pulling “you” Back, Behind, Before...

Within.

You won’t be rid of “you”,
By hearing endlessly about “You”,
By reading endlessly about “You”,
Or talking endlessly about “You”.

All of those must be abandoned,
Like baggage upon The Way,
Helpful in their way, early on,
But now heavy, burdensome, dragging.

“you”, and the world must be let go,
As “you” Journey from the far frontiers,
Through ever-increasing Dissolution,
To “You”, the Kingdom of Heaven...

Back, Behind, Before.

No sangha, tariqa, or community,
Can travel with “you”, Pilgrim,
On this most Solitary of Journeys,
From “you” to “You”...

Back, Behind, Before.

But take heart, weary soul,
For if you persevere with earnestness,
“you” will Vanish, into the Ineffable Sublimity,
That arises as “you” dissolve…
In the Ocean that “You” are.

Have no fear, and be of Good Cheer,
For although “you” will cease,
“You” will remain…
Shining, Ecstatic…

Before even “You” ever were.

Band Of Minstrels

Faintly, at the edge of memory,
I still myself, and turn to hear.

What is this music, drawing near?
A song from ancient memory plucked.

A harmony of Space and Time,
A melody of Form, entwined.

A gossamer Dream in song,
Of Ecstasy, and Longing.

Slowly coming into view,
A band of minstrels dancing through,

Through this precious Dream of Life,
This Timeless Dance, in Time.

Woven…
Their many lives in mine.

Though countless players form the troupe,
I see but One Love drawing near.

It is Her eyes in theirs that Shine,
And Hers reflecting here, as mine.
She in Shiva's dance embraced…
Spinning Dream, and Dreamer.

Her Heart in theirs,
And theirs in Hers.

And together, sweet players,
We dance away the years,

And all too soon…
To Her return…

Vanishing… whence we came.

---

**Be Love**

You long to Love,
And to be Loved?

*Become* Love.

And this longing will vanish,
In its Own Fulfillment.

---

**Because**

We begin, so sadly,
Seeking unconditional Love,
In the world of conditionality,
Here, there, everywhere,

Again… and again… and again.
Here, there, everywhere,
From this one, desired,
From that one, admired,
Seeking, but never finding…

Again… and again… and again.

On and on we struggle,
To become and remain desirable,
To gain and sustain stature,
In the eyes of those who love…

Because.

To receive affection,
To garner respect,
To gain power,
From those who love and admire…

Because.

Because they find us attractive,
Because they think us gifted,
Because of romantic mystique,
Countless reasons…

Because.

But through Grace we may find, within,
A Love not born of desire,
Shining unconditionally,
Even as we love…

Because.

And we may be Blessed to see,
This same Light Shining,
In the Hearts of those we love,
Through the movement of desire…

Because.
A Light, a Love uncaused,
Shining for no one, or anything,
Yet touching everyone and everything,
Illumining even that love born...

Because.

And at last we may come, through Grace,
To a most Blessed collapse,
Of seeking to create and sustain,
Of struggling to grasp and hold...

Because.

Falling headlong into The Heart,
The one who loved through desire,
And desired to be loved,
Becomes, at last...

Love Itself.

Illumining even that love which arises...

Because.

Because I Loved Her

There are those who are refined,
In thought, speech, and action.
I studied the lives of these great saints,
Perfected in virtue and “spiritual” qualities...

And found that I was not one of them.
There are those who set their mind,
And move in fierce determination.
I admired those with will and discipline,
Who struggle and strive so admirably…

But alas, neither was I one of those.

There are those of diamond-like intellect,
Able to discern and articulate profoundly.
I listened to countless discourses,
From those blessed with eloquence of mind…

And found that I was not one of them.

There are those who persevere,
Against the powerful tides of doubt.
I have known many in whose Hearts,
Faith and Hope are alive and shining…

But alas, I am not one of those.

And so, when She showered Grace,
Upon this least of Her lovers,
Drenching my Heart,
I assumed it was because…

I Loved Her.

When Her Love Overflowed,
In the Wellspring of my Heart,
Flooding the Whole of my Being,
I assumed it was because…

I Loved Her.

When Mercy Shone like a Sun,
Upon one so wounded and broken,
So lacking in the great virtues,
I assumed it was because…

I Loved Her.
When I was showered in Grace,
Drowned in the Ocean of Love,
And Blossomed in Mercy's Light,
I assumed it was because…

I Loved Her.

Only after these Benedictions did I find,
That the Love and Longing I had known,
Were never for a moment my own,
But Gifts from The Beloved.

The Beautiful One, who,
Before the world was birthed,
And the Light of our souls first glimmered,
Before ever we Loved Her…

Loved us.

And if it had not been so,
If Grace had not proven to be,
Without cause or condition,
Then surely, surely…

I would have cried myself to death.

Because Of

If I was a Perfected Being,
This Grace would make sense
To those who say it arises
From virtue and merit…
“Because of”.

---

An Affair of The Heart
Even my Beloved Baba
Said it was due to past lives
Lived in renunciation
And spiritual disciplines,
Hearing which…

I cried.

For it would not then be Grace,
Would it,
But merely a worthless trinket,
Born of conditionality,
“Because of”.

That being so…
It would not be possible,
Even to discard it in the sewer,
For the sewage there,
Would hurl it back… insulted.
Because and Not Because

There is love,
And there is...
Love.

One arises from a subject,
And is given to an object,
In response to conditionality.

The other, being subjectless,
Knows no object,
And yet... Blesses all.

One is bundled,
With a thousand desires,
And arises "because of".

The other, Full and Complete,
Shines simply because...
It is Its nature.

The Lover, full of Longing,
Desires to hold The Beloved,
For all Eternity.

Only to find,
In the instant of touching...
That both Lover and Beloved Vanish...

And only Love remains.
Beyond Peace and Happiness

Beyond Peace and Happiness
There is a Great Ocean.

Peace and Happiness are only qualities
Of standing at the shore,
Feet in the water.

Beyond what most call awakening, is Illumination,
The infusion of the Experience of Being
With Bliss.

Bliss

Not merely Peace and Happiness.
Not merely Stillness or Silence.
Not merely formless Shiva.

Not an intellectual, psychological,
Emotional, or energetic experience
Had by an “experiencer”.

Bliss.

The Ananda of Sat·chit·ananda.
Shiva (Formless Aliveness)
Revealed as Shakti (manifestation).

When formless Shiva turns
To behold Himself as the Beloved, Shakti,
And the intercessor “self”
No longer stands between,
There are no words for the Ecstasy of that Union.

But whatever words might be used,
They are certainly not simply
“Peace” and “Happiness”.
An Orgasm is not a “peaceful” experience,
Or “happy”. 
Such is the Union of Shiva and Shakti. And it is Experienced, not “known”. Experienced… Without an intercessor experiencer.

Beyond “knowledge” is Feeling. Beyond knowing is Being. Beyond concept is Experience. Beyond Stillness and Silence is….

The Shining, Radiant, Unlocatable Aliveness of Being Experienced as Ineffable Sublimity.

Existence… Consciousness… Bliss.

Bliss

When I speak of Bliss, I point to an Experience of Being in which…
The Ecstasy of Pure Being shines into conscious awareness; Transcendence is shining into and as immanence; The duality of Formless and Form, vanished; Not simply “peace”, or “happiness”; Lover and Beloved Embraced; The Heart's Desire; Heaven; Love
Blowing On The Ember

I only write of this Unfathomable Mystery,
This Radiant, Sublime Inner Presence,
To bring it to Remembrance in the hearts
Of weary souls who have somehow Forgotten.

To blow upon that ember glimmering,
In the darkness of despair,
And pray, with all of my Heart,
That words, imbued, will ignite that ember.

If that ember is already alight and Shining,
Then I write to rouse the Wild Dancer within,
In Celebration of Love's Intoxicating Delight,
From words soaked in that Wine.

Oh, and here is the secret of Love I have found…
That Loving more, more Love arises,
And Blessing more, more Blessing's flow,
In an Endless River of Benediction…

Flowing not to, but from the Ocean of Grace.

Behind, within, these many words,
An Ache both Sorrowful and Beautiful,
For the Liberation from Suffering of weary Hearts,
And their Benediction, their Illumination with…

What word could I possibly use?

I'll use the word that always gets me in trouble,
The one so horribly taunted and abused,
But Understood by those in whom it Shines,
Even if only as a faint glimmer…

Love.
I don't know what this is, truly...
This Warmth in the Heart,
This Bliss bubbling up from the wellspring of Being,
This Radiance that Heals and Blesses,
And intoxicates myself... and others.

Confused by the chaos of “spirituality”,
The vast and varied descriptions of “Reality” and “Truth”,
The stories of who, what, when, where, why, and how,
The do's and don'ts, all stated with such certitude and authority,
I find the mind simply... Stopped.

I sit, breathing Bliss, unable to feel “myself” anymore.
But have no “knowledge” about the nature of this Experience,
No description born of this tradition or that,
No cosmology or theology at all, to wrap it in,
I have only...

This Experience.

And so, at one point, I said to a Friend,
“I really shouldn't be meditating with you.
Or in any way behaving as a ‘Murshid’ or Guide.
For unlike all who speak with certitude and authority,
I have no ‘idea’ what any of this is, or what it means.”

“No concepts, theories, or conjecture,
To describe the indescribable.
No constructs of logic or reason,
To create a village of understanding, belief, or faith,
In this Wilderness of the Great Mystery.

I have only... this Experience of Being.”

My Friend replied...
“And that is the Treasure you can't help sharing. Don't cringe at the word ‘teacher’, Or the ways in which others teach; Even those ways born of ancient lineage, Held in respect and reverence.”

“For when the glories of spanda, The dance of Shiva and Shakti, Stream out of your sparkling eyes, Your delighted face, your every gesture, The word ‘teacher’ loses all meaning…”

“And teaching gushes forth to nourish everything in its path.”

“An Experience whose Beauty is beyond expression, Like standing in a shower of Blessings, Like soaking in a pool of Grace, Like sunbathing in Healing Light, Beyond all imagination… a ‘Good’ thing.

“So come now… let's be simple-minded, you and I, And allow the realization of the Heart's Desire, And the enjoyment of Ineffable Sublimity, Inherent in the Vanishing of the enjoyer, As reason enough to Dissolve together in Bliss.”

“Why do you trouble yourself,” he said, “With why and wherefore, With thoughts of what should be said or done… Or not said or done, When only this Presence is required?”

“Put 'knowledge' aside, And all that cosmic hoo-hah that troubles you so.”
“If this Grace is real,
It will Bless us,
Even if we call it... Bob,
And haven't a clue what it is,
Or what it means.”

“Is it not more important,
To have this Experience,
Than to understand anything at all,
Or be able to speak in any way,
‘About’ it?”

My Friend was right,
And we continued in our Enjoyment,
And in time he became,
Effortlessly, always...
As he put it, so irreverently...

“Bobbed out”.

Certainty

I know with certainty
Only that I exist.

But what I am...
I've no “idea”.

Some say “Consciousness”.
Some say “Emptiness”.

Some say This,
Some say That.

Concept... theory... conjecture.
This mind, too, desires certainty,  
But the Heart is having none of it.

What remained when “i” vanished?  
This… Unlocatable Aliveness?

I’ve no “idea”.

What is this Ineffable Sublimity,  
That Shines Radiant in the Heart?

I’ve no “idea”.

It matters not what you call it,  
Or how you describe it.

What matters…  
Is that you come to the Experience…

And Dissolve in your Tea.

Cream, Two Sugars, Please

Within… Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,  
Without… She prefers milk chocolate to dark.

Within… nothing can be added, nothing taken away,  
Without… everything comes to Her, and goes.

Within… Unmoving, Ineffable Sublimity,  
Without… She experiences ever changing manifestation.

Within… joy and sorrow have never been,  
Without… She Shines, even in the midst of tears.

Within… time and space have never existed,  
Without… She is born, grows old, and dies.
Within... within and without never were,
Without... within and without ever are.

Within... no preferences, propensities, proclivities,
Without... cream, two sugars, please.

Within... The Sun Shines,
Without... All is Illumined.

Cry Out!

I was not a good little boy.

If there is a Divine Mother,
Her ankles are scarred,
With innumerable bite marks.

Not the brightest of Her children,
But full of Sincerity and Longing,
I alternated between sorrow and rage.

I confess, my path was strange;
Kicking, screaming, biting,
And holding my breath...

In the faint hope of gaining Her attention.

I wandered for many long years,
Through the confusion of “beliefs”, and paths,
With each, falling ever more deeply into Despair.

I read of Heaven’s Glory,
Of Nirvana’s Inexpressible Sublimity,
Of “Enlightenment”, and “awakening”...

But Longed only for Love.
I read of doing this and not doing that,
And the use of will and discipline,
In practice and renunciation.

All of which broke my Heart,
And none of which I ever pursued.
For I knew, somehow, that what I sought…

Was Causeless Grace.

Neither created in conditionality,
Nor sustained through effort,
Nor dependent…

On anything whatsoever.

Do not deride, you who struggle and strive,
Saying I make excuses for laziness,
And hide in a delusional dream…

For you simply do not understand.

How Unimaginable it was,
Given all I had read, heard, and seen,
That crying out one day in the Fullness of Heart…

"How could You be so cruel?!"…

She gave me… Everything.

Not a perfected personality,
Not a life free of suffering,
But Her Presence Always…

In my Heart… the Garden of The Beloved.

Be incorrigible!
Cry out! Scream and Bite!
Then fall Helpless at Her feet…

And never rise.
If you are like this Prisoner of Love,
There will be no choice in the matter,
For even when Hope and Faith turn to dust…

Longing… will… endure.

This is the path I travelled,
And the Destination, Unlocatable,
In which I rest.

Unbearable Longing…

Unbearable Fulfillment.

**Dissolving**

So many voices.
So many words.
So many teachings.
So many lineages.
So many orthodoxies.
All… emphatic in their assertions.

So many pundits.
So many gurus.
So many sat gurus.
So many avatars.

Shakti empowered psychopaths.
Blissless advaitans.
Scripture-bound dogmatists.
Merit-based attainers.

So wearying.
So much to be done,
And me, without discipline.

So much to be refrained from,
And me, so enjoying it all.

So much to read,
And me, with the attention span of a gnat.

So much to be understood,
And me, never grasping.

So much merit to be accrued,
And me, holding attainment in disdain.

One day, through Grace,
It finally happened...

I drowned in the din of voices,
Teachings, teachers,
Paths, lineages,
Prescriptions and proscriptions,
Attainment of “knowledge”,
Accrual of merit.

The mind floating, lifeless,
Adrift without words....
The Heart fallen down,
In Absolute Surrender.

Dissolving,
In the Ocean of the Great Mystery,
The Unknowable, the Unattainable.
Abandoning both Liberation and Bondage,
Abandoning “my” self, “my” Life...
An Affair of The Heart

No longer able to discern,
Word from word,
Concept from concept,
Theory from theory,
Conjecture from conjecture.

Hope long vanished, collapsed in despair,
Deafened by the cacophony of voices,
Blinded by the carnival of glamour’s,
Straining to remember the Taste of my Heart's Desire,
The Fragrance of the Beloved,
Her Ecstatic Touch…

Through the Unimagined Grace
Of Utter, Absolute Failure,
“|” quit.
Or should I say…
“|” was quit.

In Absolute Hopelessness,
In Absolute Despair,
With an exhausted last breath…

Absolute Surrender.

No enlightenment,
No realization,
No awakening,
No goal achieved,
Nothing understood,
No perfection attained.

Surrender.
And somehow,
Mysteriously,
Impossibly,
In that Quitting,
In that Surrender,
In that Giving Up...

Liberation, at last,
At last,
At last...
Not only from my self,
But from “Liberation”.

Everything abandoned,
Everything...
For this Sublime Idiocy

**Don’t Stop**

When I enquired with the intellect,
And discovered myself undiscoverable,
I did not stop in the knowledge,
Of what I was not.

For what I am not, is not what I am.

However Serene that Emptiness,
However Peaceful that Vast Unlocatability,
It did not fulfill my Heart's Desire,
Being still on the far frontiers...

Of the Kingdom of Heaven.
There… at that fateful juncture,
I did not plant a flag and declare the summit,
Or give name and form to the Ineffable,
But abandoning words, concepts, and imaginings…

Fell headlong into the Heart…

Where the Serene Emptiness of Liberation,
Was Illumined with Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
And my mind, myself, and the world lost…
I found Heaven…

In the Arms of The Beloved.

Drowning in the Depths of Her Eyes,
Knowledge… which had served so well,
In bringing me to that Far Shore,
Vanished, like so many grains of salt…

In the Ocean of Fathomless Wonder.

Doubts

During my Journey,
As I chased the dream of “enlightenment”,
Wandering the desert of “myself” in search of Water,
I ate, drank, and breathed doubts.

Doubts about enlightenment,
That this felt sense of “I” would ever vanish,
Could ever vanish.

Doubts about the “enlightened”;
The majority of whom still seem to me a Ship of Fools,
Wounded, broken, shameless, even pathological.
Doubts about the Great Teachings,
As I encountered each along the Way,
So rife with doing and not doing.

Doubts about my ability to do and not do,
To embrace practice and technique,
To exert will and discipline.

Doubts that it was all simply a grand fairytale,
The emotional delusions of devotional types,
Or the conceptualizing of intellectuals, full of hubris.

All so very certain in faith or knowledge,
About that which I could only…
Doubt.

Now… looking back, I see…

Doubts were not the harbingers of despair,
Not demons which hindered and harmed.

They were the shining weapons of my sadhana,
Born of fierce discernment, discrimination,
And an empiricism* that would simply… not… die.

Any view, any Dharma Expression,
That could not withstand their onslaught,
Fell in defeat, no matter how revered by others.

They led me, ultimately, to The Great Mystery,
Where nothing is known,
Nothing is resolved.

They led me, after such a long Odyssey,
To where Absolute Doubt,
Turned to Absolute Surrender.
An Affair of The Heart

Where the last breath of hope was whispered,
Where all grasping ceased, and my hands opened,
Where in despair's fruition, I collapsed where I stood.

I could not run back to the verdant forest,
To take refuge in teachers, teachings, and friends,
In the village of the known.

I could not return to the struggle
To know the unknowable,
And resolve all doubts.

There... in the Desert... I fell down,
All strength, all hope, exhausted,
All movement... ceased.

And, dead, at last...
In that most unlikely place...
Blossomed as Life Itself.

Full and Complete,
There is nothing to believe,
And nothing to doubt.

It matters not,
What is true or false,
Here, in this Verdant Desert.

Drooling Mind

It's most upsetting.
My roommate, the mind, was quite happy.
All was understood,
And could be explained
With such diamond-like clarity,
To anyone who asked.

Oh… and how he loved reading,
Learning more, and more,
Gaining greater and greater “knowledge”,
Deeper and deeper “understanding”,
Articulating ever more clearly,
Respected and admired.

And then… She came,
Plying him with The Wine,
Of Dissolution and Bliss.
And watched, helplessly,
As my friend became a Fool.
Neglecting everything…
Dreamy-eyed,
For Her.

I actually found him one day,
Intoxicated,
Head on the curb,
Drooling concepts, theories, and conjecture.

Just pathetic.

As I gathered him up,
To hide his shame from passersby,
He could only mutter, “my Love”, “my Love”.
Until he swooned, again… lost.
And Everything poured out of him, instead of in.

He'll never live this down.
He still lives with me,
But we seldom talk anymore.
He wants only to speak of Her,
But the mindless fool…

Can find no words.

Drunk

Nothing special happened here.
No great enlightenment.
No awakening.

I simply became Drunk
On The Beloved… Myself,
And forgot… “myself”.

Intoxicated…
I can't remember
A “thing”.

No sage here,
Or wise counsel to be had,
From this mouth breather.

But…
I will share this Wine… this Love,
With those who hold out their Hearts.
In my youth, starry-eyed, I wandered,
With countless others, starry-eyed,
The many stalls of the spiritual marketplace.

I found the cacophony more than I could bear,
So many voices proclaiming “truth”,
That I could no longer decipher the meaning.

Too many arguments there, among “believers”,
Too many assertions of right and wrong,
Too much contention among the orthodox.

And so it was that leaving the din and clamor,
The Way I found led away from those who “know”,
Into the trackless wilderness of Unknowing,

How could I have imagined that it would be there,
In the Dark Night of Hopeless Despair,
That The Beautiful One would find me, and question.

“What treasure is left to you, now that all hope is lost,
Now that the Vultures have picked clean the bones,
Of logic and reason, faith, belief, and dogma?”

Searching to answer The Beloved, in the desolation within,
I found only the desiccated bones, crumbling to dust,
Of the many beliefs I had held to.

“Further, My Love, much further within” She urged,
“Back, behind, before… abandoning everything,
Even your cherished duality of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’.”

And so it was, with the wind of Her Love at my back,
I found, at last, in the deepest interiority of Being,
A Pool of Love, lost in ancient memory.

It was the taste of these Waters, I remembered,
That had first moved me to wander afar,
Away from my Soul, in search of The Ocean.
“Drown Here,” She pointed, ushering,
“For the Water of your Soul is of the Ocean you seek,
In every drop, the Whole of the Ocean, Complete.”

“In your very Essence, the Heart’s Desire Fulfilled.”

Endless Enlightening

Is one “enlightened”
If one has experienced the end of space, time, objects, and self, And yet continued to exist as formless Pure Being?

Is one “enlightened”
If, upon returning from Heaven, one is Illumined with Bliss?

Is one “enlightened”
With the cessation of identification with the manifest form – Body, mind, and the felt sense of personal identity?

Is one “enlightened”
When one feels one's self expanded as all that is?

Is one “enlightened”
When one feels one's Self to be that Great Mystery within which, from which, as which, all that is, arises?

Is one “enlightened”
With the cessation of identification even as that Great Mystery within which, from which, as which, all that is, arises?

Is one “enlightened”
When one feels one's self to be neither all that is, Nor that Great Mystery within which, from which, as which, all that is, arises?

Is one “enlightened”
With the advent of Fullness, Completion, and the cessation of grasping?
Is one “enlightened”
When one's manifest form emanates Grace?

I would never use a word implying such lofty finality,
Or allow others to use it on my behalf.

For it seems folly at the least, and delusion at the worst,
To ever plant a flag, and declare the summit attained.

My experience in relationship to The Great Mystery,
Is one of...

Endless Enlightening.

**Entering The Winter Years**

Entering the “Winter” years, as I am,
Ever more aware of the lowering sun,
I have increasing affection and gratitude,
For the simple fact of existing.

What a mystery, and proof of Grace...
That although I remain, now, as I was in youth...
Wounded, broken, and far from perfection,
She remains ever-near in the Heart...

The Tavern of The Beloved.

There, the weary Vagabond, Attention
Finds Rest and Nourishment,
Healing and Blessing,
And languishes... Besotted by Her eyes.

I hope to die there, when my time comes,
Asleep in an upper room,
Oblivious in Surrender,
Bottle still in hand.
Or perhaps I may drop like a stone,
Here, on the dance floor,
Surrounded by Friends of the Heart,
While spinning in Wonder and Ecstasy.

Or it may be that sitting at the bar…
I will simply rest my head one day,
Unable to hold it up any longer,
Having gazed, Lovingly, so very, very long…

At the Beautiful Innkeeper.

Eternal, Infinite, Countless

I do not use the word “eternal” when speaking of Union,
For eternal is endless time, here in the Dream of existence,
And in the Nonexistent Existence of Her Face,
There is no time.

What word to use for Timeless Existence?

I do not use the word “infinite”, when speaking of Union,
For infinite is endless space, here in the Dream of existence,
And in the Nonexistent Existence of Her Embrace,
There is no space.

What word to use for Spaceless Existence?

If I use the word “Beloved”, when speaking of Union,
I do not mean an “object” of Love, in the Dream of existence.
For in the Nonexistent Existence of Vanishing in Her Eyes,
There are no objects.

What word to use for Formless Existence?
Birth, growth, maturation, decay, and death, 
Here, there, near, far, to and from, 
This and that, I and thou, 
All are of this Dream…

Where words describe the describable.

Are but a Drunken man's finger, lifted, shaking,
Pointing to Nowhere, to Never, to Nothing,
To Nonexistent Existence…

To Heaven, beyond all dualities.

---

**Ever New**

There are so many wonders, 
In becoming an Idiot for Love. 
   Not least among them, 
That everything is Ever New.

There is no “getting used to” this… 
   Bliss, 
This unlocatability, 
   This sublimity.

The River is ever moving. 
He who dreamed himself unmoving upon the bank, 
   Has fallen in. 

   Flowing… 
Into The Ocean, 
Where Old and New, 
Have never existed!
Experience

When wandering Attention,
Vanishes into its Source,
\textit{Feeling} remains,
\textit{Experience} remains…

The Experience of Existence.

This experience has no experiencer.
It simply Is.

What is the nature of this Experience?
It is of no longer being a thing alive…
But Life Itself?

Expressing The Inexpressible

We struggle, through Love,
To express in words, concepts, and metaphor,
That which cannot be expressed.

For this Grace can only be communicated
Through wordless Benediction,
Heart to Heart,

If you can fall, for just one moment,
From head to Heart,
From concept to Experience…

And allow yourself to be “Meditated”.
Eyes Open, Here in This World

There are moments when the last thing I want,
Is to close my eyes and journey within,
For in these moments of Grace,
Within and without have lost all meaning,
And this Vehicle of Perception, and all Perceived,
Are Illumined by the Light of The Soul…

The Light of The Beloved,
Eyes open, here in this world.

In these moments I do not Long for Heaven,
I care nothing for the nonexistence of Union,
Concerning myself with self perfecting,
For in these moments of Grace…

All is Fulfilled,
Eyes open, here in this world.

In these moments of Grace,
Heaven is Here, Now, Everywhere,
In the Dream of existence in space and time,
And the Ecstasy of Union's nonduality,
Shines like a Sun in the Heart of Being…

Illumining the duality of manifest Creation,
Eyes open, here in this world.

In these moments of Grace,
All notions of Holiness and unholiness,
Thoughts of worthiness and unworthiness,
Of The Merciful One's Love being conditional,
All such hellish dualities, Vanished…

And Love's True Meaning, Revealed,
Eyes open, here in this world.
What prayer is there to utter wordlessly,  
Whispered with every breath,  
Moving as every heartbeat?  
“Let each moment be a moment of Grace,  
For Everyone, Everywhere, Now…  
And Forever,  
Eyes open, here in this world.”

Falling Awake

It’s like falling asleep, but remaining awake.  
Like dying, but remaining alive,  
This Falling into our Self…

Letting go of Everything… Everything.  
As in falling sleep,  
This abandoning is a pleasure,  
Anticipation of Sublime Oblivion…  
Of Death Unto…Life.

Even so is our inward turning,  
As we cease our outward wandering,  
And Fall, Heartlong…  
Into our Source.

Not a practice mastered,  
A discipline perfected,  
But a movement of Attention…

From known, to Knower, to… Knowing.  
Surrendering… Everything,  
Including “enlightenment”,  
“Bondage”…
And all such hellish dualities.

Vanished, the Lover, yet... Alive,
As the Formless Mystery from which,
Lover and Beloved arise...

Both Dancing for a time,
Through this Play of Form,
Then Turning, at Heaven's behest...

To Embrace... and Vanish, yet again.

Fellowship Of The Heart

It matters not if you follow the cross,
Or the crescent moon,
The Buddha,
Or Zoroaster,
Whether a nondualist,
Or a Lover of the deities,
One of deep, abiding faith,
Or... one who simply does not know.

The only attribute of consequence,
In those to whom I am drawn, these days,
Is the Quality of the Heart.
Whether...
When you can,
You seek to Bless,
And when you cannot...
You strive, at least, to do no harm.
All else is dross, to this one, at least.
For I value the Fellowship of the Heart,
Above the community of belief and knowledge,
Esteeming not the outer peripheral,
But Cherishing the Inner Essential,
Eschewing “spiritual” stature,
And holding fast to those in whom I find…

Honesty, Humility, and the Simplicity of Love.

Fire On The Savannah

For some, it takes a fire on the savannah,
To drive the lion of Attention within,
Returning in fearful flight…

To the Cave of the Heart.

For some, without those Flames,
Attention wanders creation endlessly,
Moved by outward fascination.

There are those requiring no such fire,
But such is not my nature,
Driven, as I was, by a Blaze of Despair.

Fleeing that most Ancient of Pains,
I returned to that Place, within,
Where I rested in Fullness…

And drank from Living Waters.

I thank that Fiery Blessing,
That chased me like a Fierce Friend,
Until, at last, it saw me safely sheltered…

In The Arms of The Beloved.
First

Forget about “Consciousness” being everywhere,
Here in the world of space, time, and objects.
Such “concepts” of Relative Nonduality,
Will only keep you from first turning inward…

And Vanishing into and as Absolute Nonduality.

Without first Experiencing the Absolute,
Or at least… wandering into the frontiers of Heaven,
Knowledge of the Relative Absolute is a glass of tepid water,
Not to be confused with the Wine of Experience…

The “Experience” of Dissolution and Bliss.
Each inherent in the other,
Like wetness to water,
Or heat to fire…

Dissolution, in Direct Experience,
Of space, time, objects, and self,
In the Unalloyed Ecstasy,
Of Pure Being…

In which all “knowledge” vanishes,
In the Absolute Dissolution of Duality,
Along with the one who would “know”,
And only Experience remains…

The Experience of Heaven.

Platitudes, however true, are barren seeds,
When understood only in the mind,
By those in whom the Wellspring of Love,
Has not yet bubbled up in the Heart.
“You are already always enlightened.”
“There is nothing to be done.”
“All there is, is Consciousness.”
“Understanding that is all that is required.”
“It's all an illusion.”
“Everything is perfect as it is.”

How tragic that so many eat this air for nourishment.

Yes, “they” will speak,
All of these platitudes, and more,
But these words can only be understood,
After the salt doll has Dissolved in the Ocean...

In your actual Experience of Being.

Until then... they are merely concepts,
Doses of intellectual and emotional heroine,
That will leave you thirsting,
On the shore of the Ocean of Pure Being...

That will keep you from Drowning.

Who are “they”?
Those whose nature would not allow them to rest,
With a mind Intoxicated, Dissolute, and Fulfilled,
Who, after the fact, interpreted the uninterpretable...

In concepts, theories, and conjecture.

Leave all of that to them,
And to those who dwell in the mind,
Who struggle and strive in the countless “isms”,
Including so-called “nonduality”,

In quest of their Heart's Desire.
First... come to, or at least come close,  
To the Experience of Pure, Unalloyed Nonduality,  
Before planting a flag in the conceptual nonduality,  
Of space, time, and objects.

Forget about a formless “something”  
Being limitless, spacious and vast,  
Everywhere, in all things,  
The same self in all...

Abandon all concepts,  
All acquired “knowledge” of,  
And Fall... Fall... Fall...  
Into the Oblivion of these Dualities, these partialities...

In Existence as Absolute Nonduality.

All of it... concept, theory, and conjecture,  
However beautiful it may sound,  
However comforting in various ways,  
However sound within a certain semantic logic.

All of it... a half-empty glass of lukewarm water.

As Ramakrishna said,  
“First Know God, then do as you please.“  
Not a cerebral “knowing”,  
However profound and impactful...

But... a “Knowing” in Experience.

It... is... not... complex.  
Requiring no “fixing” of the psychological self,  
No “perfecting” of “imperfection”,  
But only the inward... turning... of... Attention.

Find the “I” Feeling, and Rest there.
Turn your wandering Attention within,
And find the Self within your self, as Rumi said;
The Self to which, in which, as which “you” appear,
Within which... all that appears, appears...

And Disappear.

Find it not by “thinking about” it,
But by Feeling with the Whole of your Being,
What You are, Where you are,
Before the feeling of the you, the person, ever arose.

Words like “limitless”, “Boundless”, “Infinite”,
Have no meaning here!
They cannot be understood properly,
Until you Feel the “I” Feeling so deeply...

That “you” Vanish into and as It.

For “Infinite”, in Absolute Nonduality,
Has nothing to do with space,
And “Eternal”, in Absolute Nonduality,
Has nothing to do with time.

You will know you are wandering,
Into the frontiers of Heaven,
As you, the experiencer, begin to Vanish,
And an inexpressible Bliss arises.

Do not dismiss this Bliss,
As a mere phenomenal arising, like all others,
A dangerous sweet to be ignored.
For unlike all other experience...

This Bliss is inherent in the Dissolution of “you”...
As heat is to fire,
Or wetness to water.
Not merely an “effect” of inward turning.
This is the first soft Fragrance,
Here in the Dream of manifestation,
Of the Unalloyed Ecstasy
Of Formless Pure Being…

Your Heart's Desire.

Dissolution will increase,
If you persevere, dear friend,
As will the Bliss of Pure Being,
Until “you” drown in that Ocean…

Vanishing altogether.

The Wellspring of Bliss in your Heart,
Will become the Ocean of Unalloyed Ecstasy,
Experienced by no one,
For it is the Nature of “you” Vanished…

Along with space, time, and all of Creation.

You are the formless, unmanifest Mystery,
And… you are all that appears,
From, within, and as that Mystery,
As it moves into Creation.

Once you have poked a hole in Heaven,
It will Shine into your manifest Experience,
Of space, time, and objects,
Here… in this Dream of duality.

And in time, that Wellspring in your Heart,
Will Dissolve the residues,
Of the salt doll “self”,
In those Living Waters.

Knowledge… is… insufficient.
Many “know” intellectually,
That they are formless Pure Being,
But continue to “feel” themselves bound…
For such “knowledge” is nothing more than “belief”.

To cut The Knot…
“Find the ‘I’ Feeling, and rest there.”
As Ramana said.
Not by looking at a conceptual “picture”…
But by diving deep, in Feeling, in Experience.

Throughout the day, as you can Remember,
Turn Attention within, turn Feeling within,
And forgetting all concept, theory, and conjecture,
Investigate the nature of Where and What you are…

And Resting there…
Moved by that Ancient Longing…
Dissolve in and as The Unknowable Mystery…
That You Are.

You will find, along the Way,
That even as you enter the frontiers of The Kingdom,
Your Deepest Interiority will become Filled,
With Fullness, Completion, and Bliss…

Enveloped in the Fragrance of The Beloved.

If you are simply too disturbed,
At the level of psychology and emotion,
Simply too frenetic within yourself,
To find that “I” Feeling, within…

Using *Fierce Discernment*, following your Heart,
Seek out one in whom that Flame is Alight,
And in relationship with whom,
The ember within your own Heart ignites…

And Rest in that Gift…
Forgetting… Remembering

Until such time as you are able,
To turn Attention Within,
And alone… within yourself,
Be Greeted…

By Your Self.
By The Beloved.
By…

The Great Mystery.

Only then,
Will you be able to truly understand,
The incomprehensible Paradox,
Of Relative Nonduality…

As Absolute Nonduality.

Forgetting… Remembering

I don't sit in a certain posture, hands held thus.
I forget the body, and the one who would inhabitant it.

I don't breathe in a certain way.
I forget breath, and the one who would breathe.

I don't hear a certain sound,
I forget hearing, and the one who would hear.

I don't speak certain words,
I forget language, and the one who would speak.

I don't focus here or there, or imagine certain things.
I forget sight, and the one who would see.

I don't think certain thoughts.
I forget thinking, and the one who would think.
I don’t believe certain beliefs.
I forget beliefs, and the one who would believe.

I forget all that is experienced,
And the one who would experience it.

And when, at last, the one who would Remember is Forgotten,
Remembrance remains, of what remains.

And what Remains…
What remains... is…

Heaven.

Frightening At First

It was frightening at first,
Not seeing eye-to-eye,
With the Great Traditions.

Agreeing with the essential experiential,
But “interpreting” differently,
In that…

I interpreted not at all.

Not interpreting one's experience,
What is left to us,
But Experience alone.

Before the voice within utters a word,
Or the inner eye imagines a form,
For the Formless and Ineffable.

While the Great Traditions “know”,
What, why, and how,
I know nothing of anything...
Except this Experience of Being.

What I call Bliss is there.
But is it what is meant by Ananda?
Everyone speaks differently of it.

There is no longer the felt sense of “i”.
But is that what is meant by moksha?
Everyone speaks differently of it.

This teaching says this,
That teaching says that,
And I am left wondering…

Not that it really matters.

For I do not need “knowledge”,
Or “understanding”,
To live in the Embrace…
Of this Unfathomable Mystery.

No matter what befalls me,
Whatever weather rages through the Sky,
Of conditionality and circumstance…

I am Held, Always.

The Beloved dwells in my Heart,
And holds me… from Within,
And I rest in Fullness and Completion…

Whatever one might call that.
Fruit

The measure of a fruit tree
Is not simply the fragrance of its blossoming,
Or the beauty of its foliage.

Far more important,
Is the number and quality,
Of the Fruit it bears.

Many are fragrant,
Beautiful, and grand to behold,
But bear little fruit.

Likewise with a teacher.

The measure of a teacher is not
Beauty of countenance.

Many appear the archetype of “the guru”,
And are not gifted with that Grace.

The measure of a teacher is not
Diamond-like intellect.

Many speak brilliantly “about”,
Knowing little “of”.

The measure of a teacher is not
Soul-stirring eloquence.

Some express the Dharma beautifully,
But leave Longing unfulfilled.
And least of all…

The measure of a teacher is not 
Spiritual power* or dazzling miracles*.

There are those who are imbued with both, 
While bound as … a “self”.

The measure of a teacher 
Is the extent to which the “teacher” 
Has vanished.

This, at least, is my view, 
Not to be confused with “truth”, 
Of which I know nothing.

The extent to which the “person” 
Has been subsumed by Love; 
And emanates Unimaginable Grace.

But singularly most important… 
Is the extent to which teacher and teachings 
Bear… Rich… Fruit.

Fruit…

Not the fruition of the teacher, 
Their beauty, 
Their diamond-like intellect, 
Their stirring eloquence, 
Or the glory of their powers.

The Fruit is… 
You. 
Your Ripening, 
Your Blossoming, 
Your coming to Fruition.
Otherwise...
The teacher’s attributes,
However glorious and profound,
Count for naught.

All dazzling, but fruitless glamour’s.

---

**Gimme A Buck**

I can't imagine a broken-hearted soul,
Coming to me for Love,
And my saying, "Sure. Give me a buck."

I can't imagine one sick and suffering,
Coming to me for Healing,
And my saying, "Sure. Give me a buck."

I can't imagine one wide-eyed with Wonder,
Asking to explore Awe together,
And my saying, "Sure. Give me a buck."

Becoming a “pro”,
In matters of The Heart,
Is the beginning of corruption.

---

**Go Where The Water Is**

Go where the Water is!
Enough of gazing, parched,
At pictures of The Oasis,
At words describing Wetness.
Where is this Living Water? Within!
Journey to The Kingdom!
Enough of studying maps,
Moving your finger to follow routes,
Printed on a page, going nowhere.

Where is this Kingdom of Heaven? Within!
Find The Treasure of Love!
Enough pawning your Heart,
For the trinket of conditional love.
Become the Love that Shines causeless.

Where is this Causeless Love? Within!
And yet... no admonitions will move,
One infatuated with the outer,
Still reveling in words, concepts, images,
"About" the Face of The Beloved.

No fiery encouragements will rouse,
One besotted with "knowledge",
Mistaking the water of understanding,
For the Wine of Experience.

Should you find yourself thus abstracted,
Unable to awaken from your reverie,
Do not make an anguish of it,
Only rest, sweet Dreamer.

Slumber, untroubled, until such time,
As The Troubler of Hearts shakes you,
And Guides your drowsy steps,
To the Fulfillment of your Heart's Desire...

Where the Water is.
God By Any Name

It's not necessary to believe
That anything called “God” remains,
When space, time, manifestation,
And the felt sense of “i” vanishes.

It's simply not necessary to believe…
Anything at all.

Tao,
God,
Buddha Nature,
Consciousness,
“That”,

Or even… Emptiness.

What matters – or so it seems to this one,
Is that in Direct Experience, not belief,
You are Liberated from the felt sense of “i”,
And your Experience of Being… Illumined with Bliss.

Not simply intellectual clarity or conclusive logic,
However diamond-like, profound, and transmuting,
But Liberation…
Across the Whole of Being.

Then… existing in Fullness and Completion,
Breathing Ineffable Sublimity,
You won't give a whit,
About “what”, “why”, and “how”.

Oh… if it's your nature,
You can “think about” it all you like,
Interpreting, formulating, articulating,
And yammer to anyone who'll listen.
God Has No Name But Love

Perhaps you'll even think,
Of yet another name for,
Yet another description of,
The Great Mystery.

But in doing so,
Moving in concept, theory, and conjecture,
And thereafter declaring “the truth”
With certitude and authority...

You won't be doing anyone any favors.

God Has No Name But Love

I cherish the company of the troubled,
Those who yearn, Heartbroken,
For One beyond envisioning.

The lunatic fringe, to the orthodox,
No longer sane, perhaps never so,
Distracted in the Madness of Love.

The clergy protested burying Hafez,
In the depths of hallowed ground,
Finding his poetry... profane.

No matter that they relented, in time,
For my Friend is buried now,
In the Hallowed Ground of My Heart.

So few there are, thus lunatic,
So few for whom She moves,
In every breath and heartbeat.

Only those Mad with Love,
Will abandon “belief”,
And wander this Vast Unknowing,
Where Wisdom is Surrender,
And Treasure is of the Heart,
And Hafez, met upon the Way, sings…

“God has no name but Love.”

Grace

Grace does not hold an abacus in one hand,
Tallying worthiness and merit,
Or a Rubik's cube in the other,
Challenging us to “Figure it out”.

Grace knows nothing of such cruelties.

Grace is the power that comes alive
When Attention, wandering without,
Turns within, Journeying inward,
In quest of The Heart’s Desire.

Divine Remembrance… a movement of Grace.

From the first awakening of Longing,
To the first turning within,
Through the long, inward trek,
And our vanishing into Pure Being…

Every step… a movement of Grace.

Grace is the power of “Fruitioning”,
Of Seed to Blossom,
Of Ember to Flame,
Of Longing to Fulfillment.

The Seasons of Love… a movement of Grace.
Grace is the gravity of Formless Pure Being,
Pulling our sense of separate existence,
To its Ultimate Oblivion…
And Unimaginable Benediction.

The Beloved's tug on our Heart… a movement of Grace.

The Heart's Unbearable Longing,
And its Absolute Fulfillment,
The mind's Endless Wonder,
And its Surrender to Unknowing.

Longing and Wonder… movements of Grace.

Grace is not a “consequence”,
Of worthiness or merit,
Of conditionality,
Of causality.

Causeless Love… a movement of Grace.

Do we choose to have a Heart
Drunk with Longing?
Do we choose to have a mind
Held captive by Wonder?

Surrender… a movement of Grace.

It is Grace that calls us,
Grace that moves us,
And Grace that sustains us,
Until we Vanish…

In its welcoming arms.
**Grasping**

Sitting quietly one day,  
Relaxed,  
Not thinking at all of “spiritual” things,  
Resting, simply breathing,  
Feeling myself Alive,  
Out of nowhere it arose…

**Bliss!**

What’s this?! Sublimity Itself!  
I grasped with All My Being…  
It vanished.

Watching leaves sway in a breeze one day,  
Puppy at my feet,  
Warm sunlight,  
Cool, fragrant breeze,  
Simply watching,  
Swaying within, dancing with the leaves,  
Feeling myself Alive,  
Out of nowhere it arose…

**Bliss!**

What’s this?! My Heart’s Desire!  
I grasped with All My Heart…  
It vanished.
Lying in bed one day, gazing out the open window,
Green trees, blue sky,
Magnolia blossoms in the warm air,
Surrendered at last, to being forever unenlightened,
Just... as I am,
Puppy at my feet,
Simply watching,
Swooning within, drowning in Magnolia,
Feeling myself Alive,
Out of nowhere it arose...

Bliss

What's this?!
My Heart,
My Own,
Myself.

I rest, simply breathing...

Bliss

Greatness

The Greatness of a teacher,
Or any being, for that matter,
Is not in their shakti,
Or powers of any kind.

Not in eloquence,
In intellect,
Or charisma,
Or the numbers of their following.

Not in “credentials”,
Or stature of any kind.
The Greatness of a teacher,  
Or any being, for that matter,  
Is the extent to which the vessel  
Has been subsumed by Love.


**Head To Heart**

It's the job of the Guru, the Guide,  
To move enquiry  
From the head to the Heart…

Not leave it spinning  
Year after year,  
Decade after decade…

In the side pools  
Of concept, theory,  
And conjecture…

Or the transient glamour’s  
Of “spiritual” experience,  
However wondrous.

If you are spinning thus…


**Heart And Mind**

Some seek Liberation from the pain of being “someone”,  
Some, Illumination with Divine Presence,  
The most fortunate among us, ache for both…

Liberation… and Illumination.
Those who seek Liberation from “I”,
Arrive, if they are Blessed,
At Serene Emptiness.

Those who long for Illumination,
Come, if they are Blessed,
To Divine Presence ever available…

How tragic, though,
For “i” to have vanished,
And Divine Presence to remain elusive.

Or tragic, as well,
For Divine Presence, ever available,
To arise to a suffering “I”.

And so, when using the mind,
To seek Liberation from “I”,
Take with you the Heart's Longing.

And when moving in Longing,
In search of your Heart's Desire,
Take with you the discerning mind.

And if, through Grace, “i” should vanish…
May the Serene Emptiness that ensues,
Be Filled with Divine Presence.

And if, through Grace, Divine Presence Shines…
May it Shine within Serene Emptiness,
Free of the suffering “I”.

For the Heart's Desire,
Is not simply Liberation,
But to Dance that Freedom, Illumined…

In Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.
Heaven And Hell

It's doesn't matter to me
If there are angels in Heaven
Or demons in Hell.

The only ones I know of each
Walk this earth,
And Bless and Curse.

And I...
I am just a simple man,
A bit of both.

Hell for me, was judging myself,
Good, bad, or “qualified”
In innumerable ways.

One day, through Grace,
I simply stopped,
And Surrendered to being imperfect.

Then… what Love arose,
Not just for myself,
But for all who are imperfect.

I still seek Wisdom and Illumination,
But I am not qualified
By my ignorance and darkness.

A little bit of both, here.
A little bit of Heaven,
A little bit of Hell.

But the Love that shone,
When I forgave myself, and all others,
Sees neither.
It does not shine “because”.
“I am here for you Always.”,
Divine Mother said,
“Whether you’re a good boy, or bad.”

That is the Love we all Long for,
That is Heaven,
Beyond Heaven and Hell.

That is Bliss,
Shining in the Heart,
Even as we wander…

Through Heaven and Hell.

**Heaven’s Light**

If I was only able to speak
Of The Great Matter,
I would remain silent.

There is enough Talking “about” in the world.
And knowledge acquired through words alone,
Is like money in the bank,
Without the pin code of the Heart's magic.

Far more than words…
The emanation of Grace,
And the miracle of its fire
Igniting the ember in the Hearts of others…

Demands the giving of Love, Time, and Attention
To those Blessed to notice its Warmth,
And unable to live one moment longer
In a world unlit by Heaven's Light.
Hoist The Sail

Hoist the sail of Longing, even in the doldrums,
On the chance the Winds of Grace might come,
And carry you away to Heaven.

No sail… no sailing.

Go to The River and touch the Waters,
In the chance The Current might sweep you away,
And drown you in your Heart's Desire.

No walk to the river… no drowning.

Rest, and fool the frenetic mind,
Into falling headlong into Dissolution,
While The Heart falls Heartlong into Bliss.

No Rest… no Dissolution and Bliss.

Surrender, quit struggling, quit fighting,
And Collapse into the Aliveness you are,
Like a wave resolving into the Ocean.

No Surrender… no Resolution.

Cease your endless wandering, out there,
And Rest, Attentively, in Here,
Until the wanderer Vanishes into its Source.
No inward turning... no Heaven.

Relax the contracted focus of Attention,  
On this, that, and the other,  
And take in Everything... All At Once.

No Inclusion... no Wholeness.

Feel yourself as the Field of Perception,  
Within which, from which, as which,  
All appears and vanishes.

No screen... no Movie.

Find a place, thing, or Friend,  
In whose Presence you are effortlessly Taken,  
And allow yourself to be Taken.

No allowing... no being Taken.

Cry out with your Whole Being...  
To Life... to God... to the Great Mystery,  
For Union, Benediction, and Liberation.

No Longing... sand for dinner.

---

**Her One Response**

No matter the question I ask of Her,  
Spoken within, in the language of words,  
She has only one response...
Dissolution and Bliss.

Dissolution of cognition,
Dissolution of the language of words,
The Vanishing of duality,
In a Rapture beyond expression.

When, longing for relationship, I ask,
“Oh, but that I could speak with you?”
She has only one response…

Dissolution and Bliss.

Dissolution of the one who would speak,
Dissolution of the one who would listen,
The Vanishing of duality,
In a wordless Rapture beyond expression.

When I ponder how exquisite it would be,
To see Her in form, and touch my Beloved,
She has only one response…

Dissolution and Bliss.

Dissolution of the one who would touch,
Dissolution of the one who would be touched,
The Vanishing of duality,
In objectless Rapture beyond expression.

When the mind pleads for knowledge,
Of The Mystery Incomprehensible,
She has only one response…

Dissolution and Bliss.
Dissolution of knowledge,
Dissolution of ignorance,
The Vanishing of duality,
In a mindless Rapture beyond expression.

When the Heart seeks to Love,
And longs to be Loved,
She has only one response…

Dissolution and Bliss.

Dissolution of the Lover,
Dissolution of The Beloved,
The Vanishing of duality,
In a Rapturous Love without object.

And still… each day… I sit,
And seek to know and love,
Until, in Her one response I Vanish…

In Dissolution and Bliss.

How Can This Be?

If the scriptures are true,
And one must purify one's being.
To become “worthy” of the “Divine”,
And have any hope, whatsoever,
Of entering the Kingdom of Heaven…
How was it, then, that this one,
Crude and impure in the eyes of scripture,
Found his way to the Gates of Heaven,
And pushing them open,
Through the Power of Love and Longing…

Fell Heartlong into Her Arms?

And if the scriptures are true,
And one must purify one's being,
To become a “fit” vessel for the “Divine”,
For that Holiness to inhabit the temple,
Of one's manifest being…

How was it, then, that this one,
When Creation and I returned from Heaven,
Found that The Beloved had followed me,
And dwelt thereafter as Unimaginable Grace,
In this crude, impure Heart?

How is that?

Could it be, that for each of us, my friend,
Love, Longing, and a Surrendered Heart,
Transcend the cruel prerequisites of the “Law”,
And make, through Love's “Mystical Alchemy”
The Absolutely Impossible…

Absolutely possible.
How Do You Know?

How do you Know
When all grasping has ceased
At the very Heart of your Being;
When Fullness and Completion
Shine from that Unlocatable Aliveness?

It becomes your ever-present,
Effortlessly-arising

Experience of Being.
Not a concept or mental construct,
Understood with pristine clarity.

When Experience
Informs the Mind,
When the somatic
Informs the cerebral,
When Feeling informs Thinking…

Then… then you’ll Know.
It will simply be a Fact.
Something Known across the Whole of Being,
And not simply within the mind.

Then, however others may describe their Experience,
However the “scriptures” may qualify and quantify yours,
However incapable you are of describing it, even to yourself,
It will be
So.
Humility

Love is enlightenment.
Kind-Heartedness is enlightenment.
Compassion is enlightenment.
Selflessness is enlightenment.
Honesty is enlightenment.

Humility is enlightenment.

Without these…
Deepest knowledge,
Profound understanding,
Highest experience,
    Exalted states,
Ancient lineage,
    Great stature,
Vast following…

Are the conceits of children.

“I Am” Before “I” Am

The Quest, as I knew it, was not “religious”,
But outside of those walled confines.
In fact, I railed against The Great Traditions,
For telling us of Heaven and “enlightenment”,
And then denying them to those of us,
Lacking in the requisite virtues.

For only the meritorious “attain”,
Only the disciplined “transcend”,
Only the “worthy” may enter,
Only those who “understand” will see,
Only those who “believe” are Blessed.
Rather, it was turning within, with all my Heart,
In search of Formless, Unmanifest “I”,
Before manifest “I” and the world arose,
That took me to Heaven;
An inward turning which resulted,
In the Absolute Vanishing of all duality…

Revealing I Am, without “I”.

It was, in a sense, what I Am,
Before “I” and the world appear,
But again, not rightly “I Am”, at all,
For there was no sense, at all,
Of a formless “something”,
Aware only of ItSelf.

No thing at all alive, but only… Aliveness… Life.

After the fact, I pondered,
As it seems all who have Vanished do,
About “what” it was that had remained,
At the End of all Creation,
And “what” it was that lingered here;
This touch of Heaven's Rapture…

In the Heart of “I”, this Manifest Being.

But in all these years, I have found no words,
To describe the Indescribable Unmanifest,
The I Am, when “I” am not,
Or to this Gift of Unimaginable Grace,
Here, in the Dream of manifestation,
My Companion, my Beloved… Myself?
It all remains, as do “I”, a Great Mystery…
Experienced, but beyond grasping,
To Which I pray ceaselessly,
In a Voice without sound,
The Shining Heart,
Speaking to Itself.

I And Thou

Beloved, am I simply making you up?
Are you just an “imaginary friend”,
Born of immature emotionality…

Mocked by the “empirically-minded”?

After all, is it not true,
That I found You in all Your Glory,
When I turned within, and found Myself…

Before I and Thou ever were?

Am I not That Unfathomable Mystery,
Existing before manifestation ever was,
Before the world and “I” arose…

Before I and Thou?

Are You not simply That which I Am,
As formless Pure Awareness,
Existence, prior to anything existing…

Before I and Thou?

What is this desire, this yearning,
To be in Relationship with You,
As if You are other than I Am…
As if I am other than You?

Why must I make a “Thou”,
Out of the Incomprehensible,
Out of the Unfathomable…

That is what I Am?

It is because, Beloved,
Here, in this Dream of manifestation,
I am Lonely without You…

You are Lonely without You…

Even as Our heart beats Fullness,
Even as We breathe Completion,
Even as We swim in Bliss.

It is because, Beloved,
Here, in this Dream of Duality,
Relative I misses Absolute Thou…

Even as my heart beats Fullness,
Even as I breathe Completion,
Even as I swim in Bliss…

Even as Lover and Beloved are One.

It is because, Beloved,
I have made a choice to taste Your Wine,
And savor Your Perfume…

Even as I Am Thou.

It is because, my Love,
When You Dance with Yourself,
As I and Thou…

You need someone to Hold You.
I have fled the walled villages of belief

I have run from those who “know”,
Who assert aggressively,
Speaking with certitude and authority,
The experience and interpretation,
Of those now long dead,
Regarding “Truth”.

These Knowers have every right to speak,
And others, every right to listen,
And I, every right to turn away,
From the contempt and disdain,
In which they hold,
Those who do not share their belief.

There are many tribes in this Dream,
Taking refuge in walled villages of belief,
Of right and wrong, true and false,
Decrying in their temples,
The Untruth of others…
Marching forth to vanquish the infidel.

I have fled the violence of ideology,
Of belief, faith, and dogma,
To wander the Wilderness of Unknowing,
Traversing its Immeasurable Vastness,
Having burned for warmth along the way,
All notions of “Truth”.

I have fled to the mountains of Mystery,
And there, watch from lonely heights,
The movements of their armies;
Brandishing concepts, beliefs, and faith,
Like swords and spears held aloft,
To impose the “Truth” on others.
Here... in this Infinite Solitude,
This Boundless Immensity,
Like my Friend Attar, I find myself,
Knowing nothing, understanding nothing,
No longer aware of myself,
In Love, but with whom, I do not know.

With whom I do not know, and yet...
At the risk of building the smallest lean to,
Which, in time, might become a house,
And in time, become a walled village,
I cannot keep myself from whispering,
So tenuously, the word for my “God”...

Love.

I Pray

I pray, even though I don't believe in “God”, as the religious do.

Praying just arose, over time, and took up residence in each breath and heartbeat.

Who do I pray to?

To no one, for I expect no answer. Nor do I pray for a result. And yet... I pray with Affection.

Why then do I pray?

Because I Love, and Prayer is simply its expression, like the Fragrance of a Flower, or the Warmth of the Sun.

My Baba spoke of “Divine Mother”, though he said She was not, of course, a She, not an Indian woman in a sari; nor a woman at all.
I lack the dear man's faith, and pray instead to The Great Mystery. Though thinking of it now... perhaps that is simply my name for Her, for my Beloved.

So now you know, when I speak of “Her”, it is metaphor.

Metaphor, outwardly, for the Incomprehensible Mystery of Existence.

But lest that sound despairing, know that She is metaphor, inwardly, for a Presence of such Exquisite, Ineffable Sublimity, such Fullness, Completion, and Bliss, that any expression in words is folly.

It is this Presence that moves my Being in prayer, in every instant.

I pray for all of us; Healing, and Benediction.

For I have learned that it is not enough simply to be Healed, to be no longer be “sick”, in bondage to all that we took our self to be. That Healing, that Liberation, leaves a Serene Emptiness where “I” was formerly felt.

But this is not the Heart's Desire, to simply no longer be ill, however great a Blessing that may be.

No... we long for Benediction, for Fullness, Completion, and Bliss to pour into that Emptiness where we had suffered our self.

We long for the Sun of Bliss to Shine, not only within us, but to all, within all, in Blessing.

We long for the Wellspring of Grace to flood not only our Being, but to drown all who suffer its lack.

We long for Love, causeless and unconditional, to pour from the Cup we have received, into the Hearts of all.

We long for the Ecstasy of Formless Pure Being to Shine, impossibly, into manifest creation, drawing all... like a Divine Gravity... within... within...

Home.

There are no words in my prayer, and yet all the words in creation are there, Silently, in every breath and heartbeat.
Let all suffering cease, now... everywhere... and forever.

And if that prayer cannot be answered, if there is no Listener to answer, if it simply runs contrary to the “nature of things”...

I pray, none the less, that the Benediction I have received, from whence I do not know, will Shine in all, here in this Dream of Heaven and Hell, as they both suffer, inevitably... and Dance in Ecstasy.

God Bless everyone... everywhere.

I Saw You Walking

I saw you walking from the world of sorrows,
Into the far frontiers of the Kingdom of Heaven,
And my Heart lit, my Spirit Brightened,
As the pain of separation began to leave your face...

And the sunrise of Bliss dawned within your weary Heart.

I saw you walking, in tears of Longing,
Ever deeper within the Great Mystery of your Being,
The Fragrance of The Beloved surrounding you,
Ever more deeply, until... two walked, not one...

Thou... and The Beloved.

She danced ahead of you, Singing,
“Come! Come! Follow, my own!”
“Love! Love! Follow, my own!”
And the Ancient Sorrow vanished.

You came at last, to the Realm of Grace,
And imbued with the Strength of Love,
Pushed open the Gates of Heaven,
And finding your way to the Inner Sanctum...
Lover and Beloved vanished in Ecstasy.

No longer could you hear the taunts,
Of those shouting from the far frontiers,
Decrying your foolish naïveté,
Mocking what they could not understand;

That you had, by Love alone, found your way,
From Desolation, to the Inner Sanctum,
And, held there, in The Beloved's Embrace,
Died to yourself, returning as Life...

The Mind, Bathed in Wonder,
Your Heart Illumined with Bliss,
The Beloved, dwelling ever now Within...
Heaven, forever Shining...

In the Wellspring of your Heart.

I Speak To Her

She does not wear a sari or hijab,
Nor is She of any race or ethnicity,
Espousing “beliefs” of any kind,
Neither is She a “she”,
And yet...

I speak to Her.

The Beloved is metaphor,
For the Incomprehensible,
The Unnameable, beyond words,
And yet… resident in my Heart,
Here in this Dream of Existence.
An Unfathomable Presence,  
Palpable, visceral, embodied,  
Of Ineffable Sublimity,  
Intoxicating Dissolution,  
Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.

I speak to Her, as if She hears,  
With every breath and heartbeat,  
About the Great Mystery She is,  
While “rational” friends deride me,  
As a simple-minded “religionist”.

But I, too, am a rational, empirical man,  
Abnegating “belief” and faith,  
Concepts, theories, and conjecture,  
Wrapped around “spiritual” experience,  
With no verifiable basis in “fact”.

And yet… I speak to Her.

I suppose that makes me,  
A rational, empirically-minded Fool,  
For I've no “idea” to “what” I am speaking,  
And no “belief” in “who”,  
For She remains to me a Great Mystery.

And yet… I speak to Her.

I speak in a wordless language,  
For my very Existence is the Pray’er,  
As it is the prayer Spoken,  
And the Hearer, as well,  
All at once.

Just so… I speak to Her.
I ask the impossible of Her,
In the face of all that I see,
All that rationality and empiricism reveal,
In the way of Love and Hate,
In the way of Beauty and Ugliness,
In the way of Hope and Despair,
In the way of Tenderness and Brutality,
In the way of Ecstasy and Agony,
In the ever-changing face of duality,
In the world… and within myself…

My Heart asks,
That all suffering cease,
Everywhere… now… and forever,
While the mind, rational and empirical,
Knows full well, that Creation is as it is.

And still… still, I speak to Her.

**I Wish I Could Tell**

The mind would love to know what “I” am,
Now that the experience of myself has vanished.

The mind loves the comfort of “knowing”,
And others want to know “how”.

But this cannot be know, conceptually.

Consciousness, Emptiness, Brahman, God?
These are only words.

Concept, theory, and conjecture.
I'll let others blather on about them.
I know only that I Am,
But have no idea “what”.

I am, if the mind insists,
Simply this Experience of Being.

The Blissful vibration,
Of Existence… of Life.

To get here,
You must poke a hole in Heaven,
And let “I” drown and dissolve,
In the river of Blissful Dissolution that ensues,
Drown and dissolve,
Into the Experience of Being.

And when you are dissolved,
Only this Great Mystery will remain.

If you name it, you do no one a favor,
Making a thing of it, however thingless.

It’s sufficient not to know.
For in this Experience, all is Accomplished,

And Heaven will shine in your Ignorant Heart.
Fullness, Completion, Bliss.

Though I may sorrow and suffer,
The pains of manifest existence,
My Heart is Radiant,
With the Bliss of Heaven.

Though I may wince in pain,
Or sob uncontrollably,
Within… the Glory of The Beloved
Colors the Sky in which all appears and vanishes.
I am not a “perfected” Being,
Free of preferences and proclivities.

I know of no such Beings.

But Bliss, Shining in the Heart…
This Love… is Perfect.

And through its Unimaginable Grace,
Imperfection is made, somehow... Immaculate.

If There Is More

If there is more,
Here, where the Path has vanished,
She will have to carry me to it,
For She has crept into my Heart,
And stolen the lack, the emptiness,
That moved me along The Way.

In its place, the Beloved Thief,
Left a piece of Her Heart in mine,
And I cannot move, Intoxicated,
With the Beautiful Perfume,
Of Her Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.

I read the other day of great danger,
In becoming hobbled at any juncture,
Along the Way to Heaven,
And could only smile at my misfortune,
The Beautiful Thief’s most tragic Gift.
For what am I to do now?
How will I ever become "enlightened",
While I remain Drunk at Her Tavern,
Outside the door of which...
No Path is to be found?

How can I be Hungry,
When I am Full?
How can I be Thirsty,
When I Drown?
How can I care for attainment,
When I rest in the Arms,
Of Causeless Grace?

If there is more,
Here, where the Path has vanished
She will have to carry me to it,
Or bring it to me, through Grace,
For I am hobbled, faint,
Besotted in the Ecstasy,
Of Her Loving Embrace.

Pour me another, my Love,
Your Face is my Heaven.
And touching my Heart,
As you hand me the glass,
Let us toast the end of Suffering,
And the advent of that Love...
In which Lover and Beloved Vanish.

If there is more...
**If We Are Not Mad**

Delivering bread, our beloved Hafez,
Saw the Beautiful Shakh-e Nabat,
And his heart taken hostage,
Realized the Agony and Ecstasy,
Of worldly love.

Mad with Love and Longing,
In each delivery thereafter,
He sought whichever route,
However lengthy or out of the way,
Led him to the sight of her?

Mad with Love and Longing,
He did not hide away, pining,
But sought out every means,
Legitimate or contrived,
To glimpse her Blessed Face.

Fulfilling a vigil to win her heart,
He beheld a Vision of Divine Splendor,
And turning from her visage in form,
Sought Her, thereafter, as The Beloved,
In the Kingdom of Heaven, within.

If we are not Mad for Love,
We will not seek Her with such passion,
Finding ways, legitimate or contrived,
To turn wandering Attention inward,
Chasing Her Perfume on the breeze.

For She is the Blossom of our Soul.

If we are not Mad for Love,
If She does not hold our Heart hostage,
Each breath labored in Longing,
Each heartbeat imbued with Yearning,
How... how can we hope to find Her?
For Love is the Secret Compass.

Her Heart, our warp and woof,
Her Love, the Essence of Our Being,
And only when Mad for Love,
Holding Her so very close,
Holding Our self so very close…

Do Lover and Beloved Vanish in Ecstasy.

**If, When, After**

If the Love I sought had been outside of me,
There would have been no hope of finding it,
For I never had the legs of an outward seeker.

If it had been bound to the prerequisites of scripture,
All would have been lost from the start,
For I enjoy so much that they say one should not.

If renunciation and discipline had been required,
I would have wandered, forever, the land of the Lost,
For the need to do and not do, always broke my Heart.

If the perfecting of practice and technique were essential,
I would have been expelled in the first trimester,
For I was, from birth, a Delinquent of Requirement.

If the perfection of the "person" had been necessary,
This libertine would never have entered the Gates of Heaven,
For I felt, from birth, a Love beyond all conditions.

If Love had not proven the very Essence of What I Am,
This “I” that wanders the dream of space and time
Would never have found its way Home.
If, when, after...
These are the shackles that bind the Hearts,
Of those seeking the Conditionless within Conditionality.

What Grace it was, that drove me Within,
Where Vanishing, The Beloved was revealed,
As Home, as Heaven, as the Essence of...

I Am.

If You Come For Tea

If you come for tea and sweets, my Muslim friend,
Don't leave in a huff if you see upon my wall,
The picture of a Hindu Goddess smiling.

If you come to sit in fellowship, my Christian friend,
Don't curl your lip at the Moorish lanterns,
The books of Hafez, Sanai, and Attar strewn about.

If you come for the porch's soft breeze, my Buddhist friend,
Don't dismiss me as a deluded diest when tears well up,
As I gaze at the Christian monstrance.

My house, my Heart, my Life,
Is a Wine of many grapes, but One Love,
A Garden of many Roses, but One Love.

“I profess the religion of Love,” said Ibn Arabi,
“Wherever its caravan turns along the way,
That is the belief, the faith I keep.”

And so it will be with us,
My friends of many faiths,
If you come for tea.
If You Love

If you Love being Alive,
Being Alive will Love you back.
This, at least, is my Experience,
And all that I may speak of.

Not Loving, necessarily,
The ever-changing content of Life,
But Loving the unchanging Essential,
The fact of Being Alive.

Such Love will not put an end,
To the ebb and flow of sorrow and joy,
But will touch the experience of each,
Will touch the experience of Life.

Untouched by all that arises,
But Touching all that arises,
Love born of Loving...
And being Loved by...

The Mystery of Life that we are.

If You See The Beloved

If you see Her through the trees,
And run after, seeking to grasp and hold,
Making such a clamor...

She will vanish, fearful of "you".

But... if you see Her there,
And freeze... barely breathing...
Grateful simply for the sight of Her...

She will not see "you".
And if you persevere in Stillness,
Frozen... barely breathing...
Tearful simply at the sight of Her...

She may turn and see Your Heart.

And if you freeze... barely breathing...
Awash in Unbearable Love,
You will find... in time...

That She approaches, and touches your Heart.

Resting in Loving Stillness,
Dissolving in the Bliss of Her Touch,
You will find, in time...

That She walks beside You, ever near.

Surrendering your separate existence,
Dissolving ever more deeply...
Lover and Beloved will disappear...

Leaving only the wind in the trees,
Where once they danced,
In Sweet Flirtation...

The two having Vanished,
Beyond all duality,
In Heaven.
Illumination, Liberation, Enlightenment

**Illumination**

The moment-to-moment Experience of existing,
Imbued with the Ecstasy of the Soul,
Timeless, spaceless, objectless… selfless,
Diminished in its arising in Form,
But unmistakably “of” its Source,
Water from that Ocean, Light from that Sun.

To the Hindus…
The Ananda of Satchitananda.
To the Christians…
The Presence of the Holy Spirit.
To the Sufis…
The Perfume of The Beloved.

A river from Heaven’s Ocean,
Flowing effortlessly, into form,
From the Wellspring of the Heart,
Overflowing… flooding even the body,
With Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.

Not simply peace, happiness, and joy,
On the level of psychology and emotion,
Not simply a profound understanding,
An apperception born of knowledge,
But the Inexpressible Ecstasy of Union.

Not constrained to eyes shut in “meditation”,
But with eyes open,
Here…
In this Dream of manifest existence,
The Formless Soul, Shining into and as Form.
The Beloved, ever within us,
Her Heart beating in ours, as ours.
The Embrace of Lover and Beloved,
The Ecstasy of their Union.
For others... the touch of God.

Untouched, unmoved, impenetrable,
By the ever-changing circumstances,
Of conditionality,
Even as storms rage,
In the realms of psychology and emotion.

Ever-present, as Unimaginable Grace,
Even in moments,
Of deepest Sorrow,
Deepest Despair,
Deepest Fear.

This Ineffably Sublime Presence,
Shining as the true Sat Guru,
The True Murshid, the True Teacher,
In the Secret Garden of The Heart.

The Comforter,
The Teacher,
The Beloved.

Illumination is, quite clearly,
The single... most... important... thing.

Except, of course... for Liberation,
Which is, quite clearly,
The single... most... important... thing.

Except, of course, for Illumination,
Which is, quite clearly...
Liberation

The cessation of the felt sense of “I”,
The vanishing, across the whole of Being,
    Of the contraction of “me”.

The Ancient Memory of “myself”, vanished,
    Even as memories remain,
    Of a life lived only by… Life.

Where that Ancient Feeling of “I” was felt,
    Now…
    Only Serene Emptiness.

    No one, no thing,
    Where I had been.
    Emptiness… Fullness.

Concern for Stature, vanquished,
    With the vanishing of the one
    Who would be made great, or brought low.

Concern for enlightenment, vanquished,
    With the vanishing of the one
    Who would become so.

The cessation of identity with anything,
    Even with “That”,
    Even with… “Consciousness”.

And with that vanishing…
    The end of all grasping, all seeking,
    Resting, at last, as… Unlocatable Aliveness.

    All movement to or from, ceased,
    In the Deepest Subjective Experience,
    Untouched, Unmoving, Impenetrable.

    Liberation is, quite clearly,
    The single… most… important… thing.
Except, of course... for Illumination,
 Which is, quite clearly
 The single... most... important... thing.

Except, of course, for Liberation,
 Which is, quite clearly...

Enlightenment

I don't care for the word “enlightenment”.
 So exalted, so elevated,
 So... final.

A word encrusted with eons of debris,
 Mired in cultural mythologies,
 Reduced by pundits to exhausted concept.

And in these times, as in all ages,
 A word defiled,
 By those who wrap themselves in its glory.

Awakening,
Realization,
Enlightenment.

I cringe.

How would I use this word,
 This dirtied finger,
 Pointing at the moon?

I would change it from noun to verb,
 To...
 “Enlightening”.

Endless Enlightening.
It would include Illumination's Beatitude*,
And the Inexpressible Freedom of Liberation,
But more... so much more...

What more... I cannot say.
For this Experience of Being,
Is ever and always, A Great Mystery.

But of a certainty,
No finality, no summit attained,
No “perfection” achieved.

I would call it a Way of Being,
In Honesty, Humility, Compassion,
Simplicity.

Endless Enlightening is, quite clearly,
The single... most... important... thing.

* Beatitude: supreme blessedness, benediction, grace, bliss, ecstasy, exaltation, divine joy, divine rapture.

Immanence

I never sought knowledge or understanding,
Concepts to be remembered and contemplated,
Brought to bear in times of inner difficulty,
When such “ideas” are so easily forgotten,
Swept away in emotion or physicality.

I never sought to reach a “conclusion”,
Come to after consideration and contemplation,
Of propositions held forth by this path or that,
A “belief”, born of accepting this or that description,
Of the nature of “Reality” or “Truth”.

Immanence
I sought a change in the very Experience of Being,  
Simply… what it feels like to be Alive,  
Not in transient “spiritual” moments, however profound,  
But in continuous, moment-to-moment existence,  
In the midst of endeavors, sacred or secular.

I sought Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,  
A Benediction which did not come and go,  
Ever available, even as Attention wandered,  
Here and there in the world of “outer” experience,  
Or when seized by emotion or physicality.

I sought a Benediction not held hostage,  
By the vicissitudes of circumstance or conditionality,  
By the qualities and attributes of mind and body,  
Dependent neither on doing, nor refraining from doing,  
A Benediction of Grace without Cause.

Not a transcendence of manifest creation,  
But an Immanence, palpable and visceral,  
A Presence here, in the Field of Experience,  
Shining, untouched, unmoved, impenetrable,  
Both within, and as, this Dream of Duality.

I sought the Experience, not the concept,  
Of the timeless, spaceless, formless Sky,  
Within which the ever-changing weather,  
Of manifest experience appears and vanishes,  
Shining, Immanent… in this very Heart.

Among the countless Paths to be taken,  
Paths of doing this, and refraining from that,  
Paths of renunciation, will, and discipline,  
Mine was the Path of Love and Surrender,  
For I came to Her simply by Remembering…

What I Love.
When I called out to Her,
She did not come to me,
And I cried,
“How can you be so cruel?!”

Driven by despair,
I sought to stop my Heart from beating,
And found it did not listen,
Nor would my breath.

I had nothing to do, it seemed,
With the functioning of this body,
My “participation” not required.
This body lived, and I...

I was.

It hurt so deeply, alive as “me”,
An Ancient Pain, full of “what I was”,
Qualifications and judgments,
The Great Suffering of “I”.

There was a time, I thought,
When I existed before these things,
Qualifications, judgments, by others… and myself,
Had been heaped upon me.

And so I dove Within,
Back… behind… before, ever deeper,
Seeking the experience of Pure Being,
Before I knew anything of “myself”.

No longer naming the many sounds heard,
I heard one nameless sound.
No longer naming the many things seen,
I saw one nameless vision.
I realized... there was no moment,
When I paused to consider what to think next,
And found, with a shock,
That river flowed on... without me.

What, then, was I?

No longer the thinker,
What use in thoughtful consideration?
And so Attention moved from thought...
To Feeling.

To Feeling.

"I cannot know 'what' I am," I thought,
"Until I first find myself.
Until the...
I have only an idea."

What am I?
Where am I?
Where?
Where?

Attention, moving in Feeling,
Went in search Within,
For the location of "I",
And found... Nothing, Anywhere.

And yet... I was.

No "thing" was found,
No little man inside, locatable,
Perceiving, experiencing,
Living.

And yet... I was.
Resting there,
Unlocatable but Alive,
Suddenly it struck me,
And the gasping mind uttered...

“I… just… Am!”

And in that timeless instant… Poof!

Everything vanished.
Space and space vanished.
The world vanished.
I vanished.

No perceiver, only Perceiving,
But… nothing perceived!
No experiencer, only Experiencing,
But… only Experiencing experienced.

Not even “Consciousness”, aware only of itself.

No God,
No Brahman,
No Emptiness,
No Self...

All words and concepts… Vanished.

Impossibly, in that Vanishing of Everything,
Unalloyed Ecstasy remained, the enjoyer… Vanished.
The Kingdom of Heaven within.
Not a place, but… Formless, Unmanifest...

Aliveness.

A Rapture so Ineffable,
The Heart's Desire Fulfilled.
In the timeless, spaceless, objectless,
And most importantly, subjectless Ecstasy...

Of Pure Being.
And when the world and I reappeared,
That same Ecstasy Shone in my Heart.
Diminished by its arising in form,
But its source… unmistakable.

Some say Bliss comes and goes,
And is not to be confused with the Absolute.
This is not my experience,
For the Ananda of Satchitananda…

Is effortlessly ever-present,
And inherent in the Dissolution of Manifestation,
A Dissolution and Bliss that impossibly…
Shines here… in the Dream of manifestation.

And I wonder, though I can never know…
Is this the Beloved of the Sufis?
Is this the Kingdom of Heaven?
Is this what Ramana spoke of?

Within… in the Radiant Locus of The Heart,
Where formlessness and form exist… at once,
Impossibly, Impossibly.
Impossibly…

But So.

In Here

Everyone's running around “out there”.

Everyone wants to hear and “think about”,
Everyone wants to read and consider,
Everyone wants to watch and contemplate,
Everyone wants to gather and be inspired.
Who wants to actually turn attention within…

And Discover the Hearer,
Make Known the Seer,
Reveal the myth of the Thinker,
Where neither self nor other exist?

Come friends!

Pull attention from its outward wandering!
Rouse yourselves… within,
And discover the Mystery of “what” you are,
Before “who” ever came to be…

Before “you” and the world appeared.

It’s “in Here” dear heart… not “out there”,
Here, within, before here and there ever were,
Before space ever was.

It's “in Here” my friend… not “when” or “if”,
Now, within, before now and then ever were,
Before time ever was.

It's “in Here” oh vagabond… not “this or that”,
You, within, before you and other ever were,
Before duality ever was.

Out there you hear about,
Out there you read about,
Out there you watch about,
Out there you gather and talk about…

In Here... you Are.

The Peace that endures,
Even as “peace” comes and goes,
The Bliss that Shines,
Even as “happiness” ebbs and flows…

Is… in Here.
For years, for decades, for a lifetime,
So many wander here and there, “out there”,
Listening, seeing, talking,
Never stopping to turn within…

To the Kingdom of Heaven… in Here.

In Rains Of Wonder

There are those who wander,
Outside the walls of religion,

Belief, and descriptions of "Truth",
   No longer sufficing,

    Faith in a distant Heaven,
    Having lost its allure.

They do not condemn the walled,
Who hold to belief or faith,

But embrace those who dwell there,
Holding them dear as Friends.

Only… they cannot live therein,
   Having come, instead,
To a Love of the Wilderness,
And the Great Mystery… Undefined.

For it is there, in The Unknown,
That Her Silent Voice whispers.
Not in words “about”, or “descriptions of”,
But in the Intimacy of Direct Experience.
If one must speak of Truth,
It is, for them, Her Felt Presence,
Which stills the tongue of the mind,
Emptying in Fullness, both knower and known.

Love is there, in the Wilderness,
Where Lover and Beloved Vanish.

Fullness and Completion embrace you,
With nothing having been acquired.

Wisdom Shines like a Sun,
Everything having been forgotten.

And Benediction Showers, without cause,
Save... the simple fact of existing.

And yet, so few are moved to wander forth,
From the shelter of belief and “knowledge”,
And stand naked beneath The Infinite Mystery,
Drenched... in Rains of Wonder.

I've no doubt I will die in Wonder,
The mind having collapsed along The Way,
Under the weight of Not Knowing.

What I will most surely not do is die,
Covered by the soil of belief and dogma.

In sha' Allah.

I've no doubt I will die Loving,
No longer seeking to give and receive,
Having become Love Itself.
What I will most surely not do is die,
Wondering if I have “earned” Her Embrace.

In sha’ Allah.

I've no doubt I will die Surrendered,
Having released my grip on the rudder,
Adrift upon the Ocean of Grace.

What I will most surely not do,
Is die struggling to be the captain.

In sha’ Allah.

I've no doubt that when I die,
“I“ will have long since vanished,
In the arms of The Beautiful One.

What I will most surely not do,
Is die Alone, as myself.

In sha’ Allah.

May I Live, Here, Now,
Even as I will Die, There, Then,
Enfolded in Mercy, Compassion, and Grace.

In sha’ Allah.
In Temple, Church, and Mosque

I began a Christian,
And for many years dwelt,
In the village of that faith.

In time, becoming a Buddhist,
I stood with a different stance,
But remained, in the Essence, a Christian.

For I did not discard the treasure,
I had gathered there.

And when I became a Hindu,
I remained, in the Essence,
A Christian and a Buddhist.

For I did not discard the treasures,
I had gathered there.

Now, fancying myself a Sufi,
I remain, in the Essence,
A Christian, a Buddhist, a Hindu…

A Lover of The Beloved.

I wandered this life,
In search of the Divine Presence,
And drank in each faith the Wine,
That made this Presence Illumine…

The church, temple, and mosque of my Heart.

The Beloved Holy Spirit,
The Beloved Emptiness,
The Beloved Atman,
The Beloved Friend…

The Beloved, by any name.
Now that She possesses my Heart,
I find Her Dancing and Singing,
Wherever She recognizes Herself,
In the world... in others...

In temple, church, and mosque.

In The Deepest Heart Of Being

There is a Place,
In the Deepest Heart of Being,
Where mountains rise so high,
They look down upon Heaven.

The sky there...
Such a deep, rich blue,
Stars... Sparkling in daylight,
Light your Way.

Soft breezes, Fragrant,
With Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
Gentle your Soul,
And you breathe Wonder.

Living Waters quench your Heart,
Raindrops bathe you in Blessings,
And Flower petals shower,
Each... a tender Kiss from God.

In this Place within each of us,
In the Deepest Heart of Being,
Prayers are uttered wordlessly,
With each breath and heartbeat...
That all suffering cease…
Everywhere…
Now…
And Forever.

That Peace and Happiness reign, without,
And Benediction Shine, within,
And… in the Mystical Heart of each Being…
The Endless Blossoming of Love and Surrender.

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**In The Immediacy Of Experience**

In the immediacy of Mystical Experience,
There is no interpreting,
Or seeking to understand…

No utterance of words at all.

Only after the fact do some,
Driven by the mind's compulsion,
Give name and form to the nameless and formless.

They may do so with loving intent,
Allowing the mind to revel and celebrate,
In the only way it knows.

But in time, as others take their words,
And seek to emulate their Subjective Experience,
All manner of divergence and debate arises…

And the Fragrance of The Beloved is lost,
The Light of Heaven dims,
And Love diminishes.
They become soldiers of “belief”,
Having never known, themselves,
The Immediacy of Mystical Experience.

What to do?
For this seems simply in the nature of things,
Arising again and again, in every age.

Experience,
Interpretation,
Dogma.

I will leave off interpretation and dogma,
And rest in this Exquisite Experience of The Heart,
Emanating its Qualities and Attributes…

In a language spoken,
Before ever words were uttered,
And Heaven and Earth were torn asunder.

---

**In Wonder**

When I found myself without belief,
I Surrendered to knowing Nothing,
And learned to Love the Wilderness,
Though the mind continued to Wonder endlessly.

And when the mind could no longer bear,
The Crushing Immensity of Not Knowing,
I was moved by Compassion for it,
And sought a path of Wisdom.

But I found myself unable to live,
In villages laid out this way and that,
Walled about with “knowledge” of the Unknowable…
And walked again into the Wilderness.

When I found myself without faith,
I Surrendered to being Adrift,
In an Ocean of Solitude,
And learned to Love the Rudderless Way.

And when the Heart could not bear,
The Depth and Breadth of that Solitude,
I was moved by Compassion for it,
And sought a path with Heart.

But I found myself unable to live,
In villages laid out this way and that,
Walled about with “devotion” as each defined it…

And walked again into the Wilderness.

Heart and mind have Surrendered,
To this Wilderness Life,
To Not Knowing,
To Love Shining without object.

When the mind cannot bear,
The Crushing Immensity of Not Knowing,
It no longer twists and turns as one obsessed,
But gasps, Dissolute, in Wonder.

When the Heart cannot bear,
The Depth and Breadth of Solitude,
It no longer seeks another,
But falling into itself… gasps in Ecstasy.
Intimacy

There's no intimacy in talking “about” The Beloved, Moving away from Her into words and concepts, As if She is not Present.

How rude.

She exists in the Quiet Stillness of our Heart, When Attention returns from outward wandering, And falls into Her awaiting arms.

How Inexpressibly Beautiful.

Some have turned Her into a science, And argue Her existence, lawyerly. They know nothing of Her.

Arid minds.

She cannot be “proven” through argument, Or anyone “convinced” of Her reality, Short of direct Experience.

Direct... Experience.

Only Longing entices the Beloved, From Her Secret Garden... In the Cave of your Heart.

How Ineffably... Sublime.

Inward Turning

I did not find it in text on a page, However much the words evoked the inner shimmering. This is not to say that I did not read.
I did not find it in the eyes of my teachers,  
However much they emanated Benediction.  
This is not to say that I did not meditate with them.

I did not find it in the Beauty of outward objects,  
Although they gave rise to that Sweet Welling Up.  
This is not to say that I did not Love Beauty.

I did not find it…
In any object or experience “outside” myself.  
This is not to say that I did not Love this Dream of form.  

This is only to say  
That the Kingdom of Heaven was,  
For me…

Within.

So much in the Manifest World evoked the Love Within.  
But it was the turning inward of wandering Attention,  
That brought the Wanderer…

Home.

In a quest for Heaven,  
That included both Heart and Mind,  
The two entered the Inner Gate…

And Vanished.

How could I have known,  
That it was myself that I sought,  
My own nature as Formless Pure Being.

Before ever “i” existed.

And the Ecstasy of Heaven?
The Unalloyed Ecstasy,  
Of my own Pure Being.
Heaven...
Not a place,
But an Experience.

In which Inner and Outer,
Within and Without,
And the Wanderer himself...

Vanish.

I’ve No Idea Where She’s Taken Him

I did not Surrender,
I did not Quit struggling,
Rather, Surrender took me,
And the end of struggle simply... came.

She stole it!
And I've no idea where She has taken it.

When She entered my Heart, Fierce and Jealous,
She sensed, hidden somewhere within,
Another lover, as jealous as She,
Of long residence, who refused to leave...

The felt sense of “self” which had moved me...

To grasp, and seek to hold,
To create, and struggle to sustain,
To fix, and strive to maintain,
To move in sorrowful effort toward “worthiness”.

And so She began Her long, Fierce Search,
High and low, in hidden passages,
And secret compartments,
Until, at last one day…

She found it, and stole it!
And I've no idea where She has taken it.

How confounding…
And the poor mind reels,
For all that “he” was, remains…
But is no longer “his”.

The Thief left the belongings, and stole the owner!
And I've no idea where She has taken him.

After The Great Robbery,
The mind struggled irreconcilably, reduced…
From wizened "knower", to wide-eyed Child,
From diamond-like articulator, to mouth-breathing Idiot.

She stole knowledge, and left only Wonder!
And I've no idea where She has taken it.

Jasmine

One cannot approach Jasmine
Without being embraced by its Fragrance.
Likewise with Pure Being,
And its Fragrance… Bliss.

The Sweetness is “of” Jasmine,
And Bliss “of” Pure Being,
As wetness is to water,
Or glistening to gold.
The Fragrance of Jasmine
Arises only from Jasmine.
And Jasmine without Fragrance,
Is not Jasmine.

The two are One,
Fragrance not merely an “effect of”,
But inherent in…
The Jasmine of Pure Being.

The “two” are One.

We wander, moved by Unbearable Longing,
For the Fulfillment of our Heart's Desire,
And in a moment of Grace…
The Perfume of the Beloved wafts by.

Do we dismiss that Fragrance
As “not Jasmine”,
As merely a “transient, ‘unreal’ apparition”,
And arrive at a Flower without attributes?

Do we declare it “Maya”,
A Delusion,
A Deceit,
A “Dangerous Sweet”?

Only those who had merely heard “of” Jasmine,
Only those merely “thinking about”,
Would dismiss the Fragrance…
Never lifting their gaze to the Flower…

Never dropping
From head to Heart,
From concept to Experience,
From “knowledge” to Love.
To each their own.
But the Lovers I cherish,
Follow the Fragrance,
Dancing, flirtatious...

Drawing them ever nearer
To Death as a Jasmine Lover,
And Life...
As Jasmine, Itself.

**Jewels**

My Heart is a satchel of jewels,
Some from Hinduism
Some from Buddhism,
Some from Sufism,
Some from Christianity...

Some from Paths long forgotten.

In each of these Paths,
Mystics have arisen,
Who transcended the religiosity,
Inherent in each ‘ism,
And found, as the founders had...

The jewel which gave birth to each Path.

Not the description of “reality”,
The prescriptions and proscriptions,
The admonitions of thus and such,
Or culture and theology,
Accrued over ages, and codified.
The jewel which gave birth to each Path
   Was, before the arising of words...
      A Subjective Experience,
      Prior to interpretation and description,
         But clothed, eventually, in...

Concepts, theory, and conjecture.

My Heart is a satchel of jewels,
   Shining in wordless Glory,
Which, though found upon this Path or that,
   Are not “of” any Path,
      Or description of “Truth”.

How laughable, this notion of “Truth”,
The diverse descriptions of “reality”,
The many Paths held as Absolute,
      Above all others,
        And fought for, so viciously.

My Heart is a satchel of jewels,
Which, once fallen “Within”,
Lose the coloration of the Paths,
      Upon which I found them,
For where Formlessness Shines as Form...

All colors vanish into... White.

Just My Nature

Perhaps it's just my nature,
But...
When at first I no longer felt “myself”,
When “I” and the world Vanished,
No object was discovered where “I” had been,
Not even a formless “object”; Brahman, or “Consciousness”.

I simply rested Here…
In the Ecstasy of Unlocatable Aliveness,
As formless Shiva, unmanifest, unmoving,
Where Heaven has not yet birthed Earth.

Existing thus… not simply in “peace” and “happiness”…
Nor that euphoric sense of vastness and spaciousness,
Born of profound intellectual clarity, knowledge, or understanding,
Proclaimed by so many to be the summit.

Ecstasy, Bliss,
Embodied, across the Whole of Being,
Here… in the Locus of the Heart,
The Unalloyed Ecstasy of Formlessness in form.

Where formless Shiva first moves as Shakti, Where Heaven first moves as Earth, I did not continue on,
Thinking “about” what remained,
Giving name and form to the nameless and formless.

Perhaps it's just my nature.

I did not name it “Consciousness”,
Brahman, God, or “That”,
Or any name from this tradition or that.

I did not divide This into formlessness or form.
I did not wonder if it endured during deep sleep,
Or before or after the body's death.

“Knowing” such things were of no interest,
And wholly irrelevant.
For when “I” vanished,
All movement, all “grasping after” ceased.
Curiosity remained,  
             Full of Wonder, Awe, and Delight.  
But no desire to “know”, to “understand”.  

Such considerations gave rise  
             To unbridled laughter,  
And sadness… for those so bound.  

Whatever I knew or did not “know”,  
Whatever I did or did not “do”  
Did not bring about this Blossoming,  
But were, rather, brought about by this Blossoming.  

I remain baffled  
By those compelled to keep thinking  
“About”.  

To what end, these cosmologies,  
These descriptions of “reality”?  
Why?  

Perhaps it's just their nature.  

What is This,  
This… Unlocatable Aliveness?  
I've no “idea”.  

I've no “idea”.  

I will not “lawyer” with you,  
Arguing that if this is so, and that is so,  
Then clearly this is so,  
And you should be happy.  

Such certitude, such assurance, born of “knowledge”,  
Should you come to it,  
Is not Happiness.  
And may even keep you from Bliss.
I can only tell you of my Experience. 
And will not speak of concept, theory, and conjecture.

This experience is of Unlocatable Aliveness, 
   Everything simply… appearing, 
But the perceiver-experiencer to which it appears… Vanished.

   Not simply “Knowing” that “I” do not exist; 
   Not simply the vanishing of “I” from the mind. 
   But the vanishing of the “Feeling of ‘I’” 
   From the body, as well – across the Whole of Being.

   For one can “Know” in the mind 
   That one does not exist as an object-perceiver-experiencer, 
   And yet continue to “feel”, in the body, that one does.

   Liberation is of the Whole Being.

   And the nature of that Experience of Being? 
   Ecstasy, Bliss.

   Not simply a psycho-emotional experience 
   Of peace and happiness, however profound.

   Ecstasy, Bliss,

   Perhaps I simply have a strange 
   Psycho-physiological disorder.

   But such a delightful disorder, 
   In which existence as Unlocatable Aliveness 
   Is the Heart's Desire… Fulfilled.

   Fullness and Completion, 
   Ineffable Sublimity, 
   Shining like a sun in the Heart.

   What is it? 
   Why is it? 
   How is it?
Was it there before birth?
Will it remain after death?
Is it there in deep sleep?

I'm too drunk, too full of Amrita,
Here in the arms of The Beloved,
   To eat such sand.

Perhaps it's just my nature.

**Just One Mystical Power**

Beloved, the scriptures caution us,
To avoid the dangerous trap,
Of mystical powers.

But please, Bestower of Grace,
Grant me just one power,
One Gift not for myself…

To Ignite the Ember of Love,
In weary Hearts, drenched in despair,
Arriving at the door of this Tavern.

Take a piece of Your Heart,
A gentle whisper of Your Grace,
And place it in mine.

Though this vessel is deemed,
In the minds of the “religious”,
Unworthy, unfit, unclean…

Let Your Perfection Shining,
In the midst of imperfection,
Be Proof to others “unworthy”…

Of Loves Unconditionality.
But I warn you, my Love,
If you Imbue me thus,
I will most surely misbehave…

Pouring Your Wine,
Into every cup held forth,
By those who notice its Fragrance…

And ask if Grace is real.

If only I can Gift every drop,
Before you catch and chide me
For spurning the Laws of Good and Evil…

Filling every Heart,
Everywhere,
Now… and Forever.

The Kintsugi* Cup

At the juncture of Perfection and imperfection,
Lays Immaculate Imperfection.

There, even the wounded and broken,
Emanate Blessings to all.

There, even those crushed in sorrow,
Are breathless with Bliss.

There, even those moving in desire,
Breathe Fullness and Completion.

There, even those not yet perfected,
Live beyond the Hell of perfect and imperfect.

This can only be grasped if you stand,
Where Heaven and Earth Embrace…
And Perfect Love imbues Imperfection.

Like a Kintsugi cup shattered and broken Imperfections, not hidden…

But Illumined.

Ineffable Sublimity,
Immaculate Imperfection.

* Kintsugi: The Japanese art of fixing broken pottery with a lacquer resin sprinkled with powdered gold.

**Knowing**

What is this Exquisite Presence,
Shining Radiant in The Heart,
This Dissolution of duality,
This Wellspring of Ecstasy,
This Fullness and Completion,
In which time, space, and myself,
Dissolve in Formless Rapture?

I don't know.

Is it not “Consciousness”?

I don't know.

Is it not “God”?

I don't know.

Is it not the “Soul”?

I don't know.

Is it not the “Atman”? 
I don't know.

Is it not “Emptiness”? 

I don't know.

I have only the Experience, 
For which there are no words, 
Around which no concepts are wrapped, 
Of which there is no image, 
Within which the knower, 
Is rendered mindless.

Knowing Nothing

I could never explain to anyone, 
What it was that I Longed for. 
I could never explain, 
Even to myself.

It wasn't just an emotional thing, 
Or some object of mental curiosity, 
It was something of both, and far, far more, 
Across the Whole of Being.

It was there, always, 
The Ancient Ache of the heart, 
The relentless quest of the mind, 
The furrowed brow of Wonder.

Longing.

When Longing was Fulfilled, I could never explain, 
What it was that had happened, 
Or the nature of that which Shone thereafter, 
Effortlessly, always, in the Locus of the Heart.
Spiritual academics had many explanations,  
Of both Longing and Fulfillment.  
But those descriptions fell far short,  
Of the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Hearts Lingering Radiance.

And so I sat, and sit, in Experience,  
With no knowledge of “what” is Experienced,  
For all of the explanations I have heard,  
Seem to me so much concept, theory, and conjecture.

Authorities abound, emphatic, full of certitude,  
On “enlightenment”, “awakening”, more so, or less so.  
The unique expressions of those who have come before,  
And experienced… Something.

I keep to myself, and avoid the “spiritual marketplace”,  
That cacophony of screaming vendors,  
Screaming at each other, and all who pass by,  
The nature of “Truth”.

I sit on the porch with my puppy,  
And watch the branches sway,  
Dissolving in Golden Translucence.  
What is that Light?

I've no “idea”.

I sit and Vanish, along with the world,  
As Bliss wells up, flooding the Experience of Being,  
Dissolving manifest form, in the Ecstasy of Formless Being.  
What is this “Bliss”?

I've no "idea".

This is not enough for many of my friends,  
Who seek to understand that which is beyond understanding,  
Who seek to Know that which cannot be Known,  
Who seek to experience what is only experienced…

With the Vanishing of the Experiencer.
Knowledge

Knowledge will lead you to Heaven's Gate. But there, in Humility, will stop and say,

“\textquote{I have given you all I can,} 
\textquote{And have brought you as far as I am able.} 

I cannot enter here, nor can you, 
As long as you cling to me.

To enter Here, my Love, 
You must fall into the Heart... and Ache.

Only when you have entered, and return for me, 
Will I be able to join you There.

And together, you and I, Mind and Heart, 
Will dance in Timeless Eternity, 

Vanishing as two... 
Into the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Pure Being.

Lean-To

Here in the Wilderness, 
Lost in The Great Unknowable, 
I found myself unable to stop, 
Building lean-tos.
Lean-tos of understanding,
Even if that understanding,
Was that nothing, really,
Can ever be “understood”.

I could not seem to help myself,
From the innate human tendency,
To erect a shelter, however small,
From This Great Mystery.

In my life I have taken refuge,
In villages of many faiths,
Walled and well ordered,
Against the Unutterable.

So few there,
Dared come close,
To the foreboding gates,
Beyond which…

Beyond which…
All beliefs are questioned.
Beyond which…
Faith might be weakened.

Where…
In a Pathless Wilderness,
Devouring all certitude,
The “Monster” of the Unknowable roams.

I understand,
For my fear, too, was crippling.
And walking even near the gate,
I grew faint of heart, and turned away.

But in each village,
Again and again,
I would eventually approach,
And push open those Fearful Gates.
I was moved to such heroism,  
Not only by the desolation of belief,  
Or the withering of faith,  
But by… Longing.

Longing for that,  
Which remained unfulfilled,  
In Heart and Mind,  
Across the Whole of Being.

Longing for that which,  
Unable to be articulated,  
Even within myself,  
Was Known, as the Heart's Desire.

An Ancient Longing,  
Ancient beyond time,  
For Fullness, Completion,  
And… Love.

I stepped out from village walls,  
And resumed, with lonely steps,  
The Great Journey I'd begun,  
When first… I Wondered.

I wandered forth into The Wild,  
Abandoning all and everything,  
With only the Fellowship…  
Of my Own Beloved Heart.

Far from the village,  
Road vanished into path…  
Path vanished into hillside…  
Hillside vanished into Vastness…

The Known vanished…  
Into Wonder.
And each time, in time,
    As I wandered forth,
Beneath the crushing Vastness,
    Of the Infinite Heavens…

I forgot where “I” ended, and Heaven began.

    And each time, in time,
    As I wandered forth,
Having become indecipherable,
    From the Earth upon which I sat…

I forgot where “I” ended, and Earth began.

    And then…

    Each time, in time…
The movement of Mind,
    Reaching slowly for a word,
    To begin building…

    A lean-to.

    A lean-to of understanding,
    Even if that understanding,
    Is that nothing, really,
    Can ever be “understood”.

How does one come to the Heart’s Desire,
When understanding and knowledge fail,
    And lost and alone, one wanders,
    From the village of the known?

    How does one survive,
    Much less come to Fruition,
    In a Pathless Wilderness
    Of Crushing Unknowability?
Learning To Play

Surrender.
Drop that stick.
Abandon all shelter.
And Die of Exposure…

To Love.

Learning To Play

We begin, learning “how” to play an instrument.
It's awkward.
The muscles don't cooperate.
The fingers don't know where or how to move,
And even as we learn,
We are unable to play without thinking “about”.

We “practice”.
Knowledge increases,
Skill improves.
Experience is gained.
Years pass.

One day…
Mind and body move together,
with only the slightest thought.
And we abandon musical notation,
And tenuously move in Improvisation,
Into The Unknown.

And one day…
We find our self playing from our Heart,
Without thought,
Liberated from the “Player”.
For most of us...
Dissolving into and as The Beloved is just so.
We begin by learning how to Feel.
It's awkward.
The contraction of self-identity does not cooperate.
And even as we learn,
Feeling is hobbled by “doing”.

One day...
We are taken,
With only the most subtle doing,
Only the most subtle remembering.
That Fragrance in the Wind…
And then… the touch of The Beloved.

And one day…
We find our self Vanished…
Dissolved in, and as, the Beloved.
Spontaneously, effortlessly,
Liberated at last,
From doing, becoming, perfecting.

All that was “learned”… forgotten.
All that was “gained”… lost.
Player and instrument… Vanished,
Into and as The Song.

Let All Be Free

Thank God we are all free,
Free to follow our Heart,
Even if, in the eyes of others…
We walk the path of the Fool.
Free, no matter the shouting zealots,
   Chasing us along our Way,
“Teaching”, with such certainty and authority,
   What is right and wrong with our view…

Right and wrong with our Experience...
   Based on… theirs,
   And their interpretation,
   And their subsequent descriptions of…

   “Truth”.

Or worse, still…
The interpretations and descriptions,
   Of those who came before,
And into whose old jars, new wine is poured.

Deafened by the crass cacophony,
   Of the "spiritual" marketplace,
I ran, as fast as my Heart would carry me,
   And wandered off… alone.

   Alone…
But with this Benediction Shining in my Heart,
The goal of their prescriptions and proscriptions,
   Their renunciations and disciplines.

   And yet…
   I did none of those.

   Alone…
With Fullness and Completion Shining,
   But no knowledge or understanding,
   Of this Great Mystery.

   For my enquiry,
   Was of the Heart.

Thank God we are all free,
   Free to follow our Heart.
Along the way,
I met Nowists.
“All there is, is Now.”
Yes… but Romans also built a bridge, then.

Along the way,
I met Thatists.
“Thou art ‘That’ alone.”
Truly? Where do “I” begin and end?

Along the Way,
I met Deists.
“May you come to know God.”
Yes… may all come to know The Beloved.

All are true.
All are partialities.
Mere stances taken,
In relationship to…

The Unknowable…
The Unfathomable…
The Ineffable Sublimity…
Of The Great Mystery.

Thank God we are all free,
Free to follow our Heart.
Even if, in the eyes of others,
We walk the Fools path.

Let all be free.
All is as God wills it.
Let Her Pour

If you're thinking of all you've read,
The many Paths to God,
Or realization of the Self,
All of those many fingers…

Pointing to Heaven…

Think until thinking does no good,
Until the tepid water of “knowledge”,
Fails to satisfy the Heart's Desire,
For Divine Intoxication…

And the Thirst for Wine consumes you.

Then Feel…
Feel what it is,
That cannot be found by thought,
Cannot, therefore, be described…

But can, none the less, be Felt.

And along this Path of Feeling,
Never stop and declare, “This is it!”
Opening a stall in the spiritual marketplace,
And speaking with certitude and authority…

The Way, the “truth”, and the Light.

Rather… wait…
Wait…
Until the one who would declare,
Vanishes, along with… Everything,

And only Heaven remains.

And when you and the world return,
Rest in the ever-available Presence,
Of that Formless Radiance,
Shining from the Sun of your Heart…
Into your Manifest Experience.

Then… if you would do the world a favor,
Resist the temptation,
To pour the Inexpressible,
Into an existing mold…

Or a new one of your creation.

If you must speak of it,
Do so in Love and Compassion,
And, from a Vessel empty of yourself…

Let… Her… pour.

**Liberation and Illumination**

It is one thing to be Liberated,
No longer sick with the virus “i”.
This is cause for great celebration.

It is another thing, altogether,
To be fully Healed,
And Illumined with the Ecstasy of Being.

Without Bliss,
Emptiness lacks Fullness,
And Heaven remains elusive.

Peace, held forth by some as the Absolute,
Exists on the far frontiers of Heaven.
The Inner Sanctum is…

Rapturous,
Ineffable,
Sublimity.
Liberation Of The Whole Being

Until the Whole Being is Liberated,
Until the head falls into the Heart,
We have, at the least, only a cerebral freedom,
And at best, existence merely as “That”.

It is one thing to understand,
Another to Know,
Another to Be.

It is one thing to be Shiva,
Another to be Shakti,
And another to vanish in their embrace.

We can “know” that we do not exist,
As an object in space and time,
And yet…
Feel as if we do.

The body must be released,
As well as the mind.
Every aspect of Form,
Dissolved in Formlessness,
Leaving Formless Form.

Some, imbued with powerful Shakti,
Enamored of experience,
Often refuse to give up the experiencer,
The “enlightened” one,
And remain a powerful “person”.

Blissless advaitans,
Conditioned by long sadhana,
Dismiss Bliss as mere “experience”,
And lead “awakened” lives
Of cerebral aridity.
Right Understanding is essential,
And Right Relationship to,
Formlessness and Form,
Shiva and Shakti,
The Fullness of the Experience of Being.

For Form is to Formlessness,
Shakti is to Shiva,
As wetness is to water,
As heat is to fire,
And the Lover to the Beloved.

Existence as the enjoyer,
However Blissful,
Is life in the hell world,
Of ten thousand pleasures.

And existence merely as “That”,
However liberating,
Has the stink of subtle duality,
The most insidious of delusions.

For neither This,
Nor That,
Have ever existed...
I Am.

**Life Itself**

I am not that which is alive,
But Life Itself.

And yet...
I live,
As that which is alive.
Living By Heart

You become what you Love,
What you're fascinated with.
This was true, I found, as a musician,
When, through the sheer intensity of Love,
I learned to play…

“By ear”.

And this proved to be true, I found,
In regard to The Beloved, where,
Through the sheer intensity of the Heart's Longing,
And the relentless focus of the mind's Fascination,
I came to my Heart's Desire, existing thereafter…

“By Heart”.

I did not learn “spiritual theory”,
Or practice long hours, or in fact at all,
Any science, technique, or methodology,
To come to what can only be described as,
Causeless, Conditionless Grace….

For which… even the word “Love” is inadequate.

Unlike the world in which knowledge and skill,
Enhance our ability to express more beautifully,
The depth and breadth of our Inner Vision,
In matters of The Beloved… there is little use,
in the accumulation of knowledge or skill.

This, at least, is my experience.
The knowledge I have gained over time,
Of the vast and varied Paths to God,
Have only been of benefit, perhaps,
In understanding how others have interpreted,
The Unfathomable Mystery that Shines…

Uninterpreted, in my Heart.

For although there were times,
When I took refuge in this path or that,
I never “believed”, much less had “faith” in,
The concepts, theories, and conjecture,
In which they all wrapped The Great Mystery…

The Great Unknowable.

I was drawn to each, for a time,
Not by their many doctrines or dogmas,
But by the Love I saw buried there,
Beneath all that demanded belief and faith,
Shining… still perceptible…

Through that dry, dead detritus.

But in the end, I returned, again and again,
To the Wilderness of Unknowing,
As a solitary Wanderer, but never alone,
In a Vastness so Great and Undefinable,
That the mind stops, and the Heart…

Shines.

For how do I describe, what do I call,
That Vanishing into Heaven that took me,
Into and as Incomprehensible Union?
And how do I describe, what do I call,
This Radiant Ecstasy that has shone, thereafter…

in the Wellspring of The Heart?
I use words from every tradition,  
For in each there is such Great Beauty,  
Though each, in their way, falls short,  
And fails to express the Inexpressible,  
This Unfathomable, Unknowable…  
Mystery.

Longing Remains

Hell was wandering this Dream of Life,  
Not Knowing the Touch of The Beloved.  
Heaven was dying in Her arms.

Who is this “She”  
Of whom I've written countless words?  
I… don’t… know.

She is the Ineffable Presence,  
Here in this very Heart,  
Of Love's Pure Shining.

What is this “Loves Pure Shining”  
Of which I've written countless words?  
I… don’t… know.

It is inherent in… Remembering Heaven,  
The Fulfillment of Unbearable Longing,  
A cry so plaintive as to break the hardest heart.

What is this Longing,  
And that which is Longed for,  
Of which I've written countless words?  
I… don’t… know.
Only Longing Itself knows,
But cannot speak in words,
Of Heaven, so far... yet here, in this very Heart.

And so it is,
Though Longing is Fulfilled...
Longing remains.

So it is,
Though Heaven's Light Shines within...
Longing remains.

So it is,
Though the Beloved's touch is upon me...
Longing remains.

So it is that even with Love Fulfilled...
With the Light of Heaven Shining in my Heart,
With Her touch always upon me...

My Heart bends like a rose,
In twilight's darkening,
Toward the Sunlight of Her Face.

And like a lost puppy,
I whimper and whine,
Even as I am Held.

---

**Love**

What is Love,
But the desire that all be Blessed,
That the Light of their Own Pure Being
Shine within them, Filling their Heart,
And flooding the Experience of Being.
That they, as formless Mystery,
Embrace themselves as manifest Mystery,
And in that Union, give rise to Pure...
Unalloyed...
Ecstasy.

That they breathe Peace that Transcends Understanding,
And, abiding as Fullness and Completion,
Remain unmoved and untouched,
Within,
By the vicissitudes of Life.

That wherever they are,
In whatever circumstance,
They are always and forever...
Home,
Having become Home Itself.

Then is the Only Desire of Love Fulfilled,
And Heaven and Earth
Lover and Beloved,
Are One.

And only Love remains.

Love, All Along

It was only near the end that I realized,
After so many years,
That all I ever wanted was...
Love.

For so long, I lusted for ecstasy,
Or a long lost Shangri La,
For Heaven,
Or “enlightenment”. 
But it was none of these.

When Love, Causeless and Conditionless,
Filled the Serene Emptiness
Left when “I” vanished,
All was Fulfilled.

All was Fulfilled.

I have no need of Samadhis,
Of Ecstasy,
Knowledge,
Or "enlightenment".

Nothing can be added,
Nothing taken away,
Here, in the Heart of Being.
Emptiness-Fullness-Completion.

The root of suffering vanished with “I”.
As did heaven and hell,
Enlightenment and bondage…
And the one who would enjoy or suffer.

Love And Surrender

These days, with more behind than ahead,
I do not yearn to solve the Mystery of Life,
Or come to “enlightenment” or “awakening”.

Those words long ago lost all meaning,
And the Great Mystery has proven,
Beyond all doubt, Unknowable.

These days, I Cherish two things:
The Sacred Presence in The Heart,  
That Ineffable Sublimity,  
Which Illumines the Experience of Being.

Love.

And the Enlivened Serenity of a mind,  
Though ever awash in Wonder,  
Surrendered to Not Knowing.

Love… and Surrender.

Having these,  
What care is there of attainment,  
Or “levels” of enlightenment?

Having these,  
What care is there for states of being,  
Created and sustained in conditionality?

Having these,  
How can one bear arid discourses,  
Seeking to prove this “Truth” or that?

Having these,  
What “spiritual desire” can arise,  
Save…

Love’s desire to Bless.

I’ve grown so very weary of all else “spiritual”.

These days, with more behind than ahead,  
This Mystery within a Mystery is content,  
To breathe in Love, and breath out Surrender.
Love Shines

Love Shines,
In the Wellspring of the Heart,
For no one or anything in particular.

And yet…

Everything and everyone
Is Lit by its Grace.

This is how the Flame in one Heart,
Ignites the Ember in another.

Love Turned The Tide

I understand what it's like,
To turn attention inward,
And not be Greeted…

To hear only the chattering mind,
And be bound to its movements,
As the thinker…

To feel only the contraction,
Of the body, gross and subtle,
That ancient felt sense; dense, and separate…

To feel the hollowness of spirit,
The absence of Communion,
The emptiness and despair…

To fall in terrible defeat,
In the war of self-perfecting,
Striving in vain to become “worthy”.
And I understand what it's like,
To turn attention inward,
And be Greeted by The Beloved…

For the chattering voice within,
To simply be unheard,
No longer the focus of Heart and Mind…

To feel the Body Unlocatable,
And in its place, formless Presence,
Alive, Radiant, Palpable, Visceral…

To know the end of struggling,
The end of attaining, grasping, holding,
And to Rest in the Arms of Grace…

For the Manifest Form, gross and subtle,
To sink like a salt doll into the Depths,
Of the Ocean of the Formless Unmanifest.

What was it, then,
That turned the tide of Despair,
And brought me, thus, to the Far Shore?

Love was the enticement,
That lured Her near,
To Embrace this Weary Heart.

Love was the Song of Grace,
That drowned out the chattering mind,
And liberated Soul from thinker.

Love was the Wine,
That Intoxicated the form, gross and subtle,
As She poured Her Heart into mine.

Love was the Matchmaker,
Who brought us together,
And brought me into Her Gaze.
Love was the Victor,
To Whom “I” Fell, Defeated,
In my struggle for perfection and “worthiness”.

Love’s Inward Turning

Turn Attention inward, my friend,
Not with the mind…
But with the Heart.

The mind may bestow “knowledge”,
Of what you are not.

But the Heart will bring you to the “Experience”…
Of what you Are.

For the Heart's Unbearable Longing,
Is “of” that which is Longed for.

Resting there, in the Heart's Desire,
The Beloved will inhabit you so fully,
That where She ends and you begin…
Will no longer be discernible,

And Lover and Beloved will Vanish,
In the Fathomless Ecstasy of their Embrace.
Make No Mistake

Oh, make no mistake,
There is no “enlightened” or “awakened” one here,
Only a fellow Vagabond, like you.

Any seeming assertions,
Stated with seeming certainty,
Are only questions in disguise, certainly.

For Here, though the Heart is Illumined through Grace,
There is no “Knowledge” or “understanding”,
Of this Great Mystery.

It’s not that the Mind has been denigrated,
Or relegated by the Heart as irrelevant.
The poor fellow is simply… irremediably… Stymied.

There are times when the Unknowing,
Is more than he can bear,
And he collapses into the Heart’s open arms.

Tears are shed, many sighs,
And ancient ages of frustration tearfully poured out,
To one sympathetic, but unable to see the problem.

In time, sobs diminish to whimpers,
A long sigh… a deep breath…
And the Mind's quest for knowledge is joined anew.

Ah, but he’s fooling no one,
For the Futility of “Knowing” is known.
Alas… the poor fellow simply is as he is.

Heart and Mind…
The Heart, drunk on The Beloved's Wine, Full and Complete.
The Mind, though intoxicated through proximity…

Always Wondering.
There is no problem in this,
As it’s all in the nature of things,
All as God Wills it.

Making Trouble

In the Vanishing that is Union,
There are no words,
No exclamations of “Rapture!”

No one is there to exclaim,
No other there to hear,
And thus… Rapture!

No words, no thought,
Not even the subtle presence,
Of wordless recognition.

For no one is there to recognize,
The “recognizer” having Vanished,
Leaving only… Experience.

Experience of what, by what,
When “what” no longer exists,
And only Heaven remains?

No longer Heaven, “within”,
For like All else that was,
Within and without have Vanished.

Ah, and then that Moment,
When the Vanished returns,
As space, time, world, and self.
When the thinker begins thinking,
About the Experience of not existing,
Somehow, impossibly, “Remembering”.

This is when the trouble begins!

The Indescribable, described,
In countless words and concepts,
By one who was... not there.

But, what is one to do,
Having found Water in the Desert,
But make trouble, pointing desperately...

Within!

---

**Masala**

What a Masala, this Experience of Life,
And Blissful Awareness the “Water”
Within which the ingredients of Experience
Become the unique Masala of each life,

All the ingredients,
Embraced by and permeated
With that Radiant Grace.

This is the Experience of Formlessness in Form,
When one can no longer distinguish
The Water from the “Masala”.
Meditation

Is it a “practice” to Remember The Beloved?
Is recalling Her Perfume a “method”?
Does Loving Her take “will and discipline”?

What would I do to win Her Love,
When She Shines Causelessly,
In the Wellspring of the Heart?

Where would I go to find Her,
When She is ever Within,
Waiting… in the Kingdom of Heaven?

So it is with “Meditation”, as I know it,
A gentle turning, in Love and Longing,
A falling Within, into Her arms.

Like one falling asleep,
All is given up in delightful Surrender,
And I am simply “taken”.

Unable to discern,
In that timeless Dissolution,
Where She or I begin and end.

Lover and Beloved Vanished…
Yet Alive in that Embrace…
As Life Itself.

Mercy

I cried out for Love,
But received, instead, my Heart's Desire

So much more, than the word Love,
Could ever hope to contain.
I would call it… Benediction,
Blessing, beyond measure, ever present.

Imagine… ever present.

Imagine.

The world broke my heart,
And You filled it with Grace.

I loved, and was loved, “because of”,
And You made me… Love itself.

I was exiled and alone,
And You embraced me…

Until I and the world vanished.

I was drowning in sorrow,
And You immersed that sorrow…

In the Ocean of Bliss.

It hurt to be alive as “me”,
And You made me no longer one alive…

But Life Itself.

Looking within, I found my Self,
And then, at my Heart's behest…

Found My Self, again, as You.

Middle Of Nowhere

There is no rudder here to guide,
No sail to catch the wind,
No stars by which to set a course,
No land toward which to dream.
I am adrift,
   Here…
In the middle of Nowhere,
In the middle of… Everywhere.

What am I?
Where am I?
Where have I come from?
Where am I going?
What is this… Life?

What can such a one,
Knowing nothing of anything,
Say to those drifting by,
In the way of “pointing”.

How is it possible,
That Bliss fills the Heart,
Of one so lost,
Drifting wide-eyed in Wonder,
A Drunkard… not a sage?

And more wondrous still…
How is it possible,
That some “Catch” this Bliss,
By merely drifting by,
Through wordless Grace alone?

What Mystical Alchemy is at play,
Beyond all reckoning of mind and reason,
To bring about “there”,
What Shines, Freely Gifted,
“Here”?

For Knowledge, not present here,
Cannot be imparted,
Nor any Way with certitude pointed,
By such a one.
“How can I help anyone,
When I, myself, am so utterly lost,
And have no knowledge to impart?”
I asked my Baba.

“I would have you no other way.” he replied.
“You needn't know anything,
Or say anything.
Love requires... only your Presence.”

And my Baba was right,
For the Bliss that inhabits this Heart,
Is born not of knowledge and certitude,
But from Unimaginable Grace.

Surrendered,
Fallen... Intoxicated,
Into the fathomless depths,
Of the Ocean of Bliss.

Drifting,
Here...
In the middle of Nowhere,
In the middle of... Everywhere.

Home.

**Mind And Heart**

We're older now, Mind and Heart,
With less ahead of us, than behind.
All our lives we have wondered,
At this Great Matter of... Existing.
This Great Matter of Being Alive.
In our wanderings, far and wide,
We have spent time in the walled villages,
Of many traditions, many teachings.
Villages laid out this way and that,
In their expressions of “truth”, “reality”…
And “enlightenment”.

In each village Mind has run,
Like a starving vagrant, malnourished,
To the temples of knowledge,
To sit at the feet of the “enlightened”,
Gorging voraciously…

On interpretations and descriptions,

While the Heart, having none of it,
Revealed in Bliss at the Tavern of The Beloved,
Sipping Grace, as She poured, again and again,
Until all was forgotten,
And only She and Heart remained…

Then… both Vanishing.

Each time, in the village of each tradition,
Mind would arrive, in time, at the Tavern door,
Bedraggled, forlorn, more ignorant than before.
And there, joining Heart at the bar,
Would sob to all who would listen, its tale of woe.

And in time, each time, again and again,
The two staggering drunkards, Mind and Heart,
Pushed open the village gates and wandered out;
The Heart… into Endless Wonder,
The mind…

Into the Incomprehensibility of This Great Mystery.
Minding What Happens

I read today…

“Don't mind what happens.
That is the essence of inner freedom.
Release attachment to outcomes,
And deep inside yourself,
You'll feel good, no matter what.”

This seems to me poorly worded,
Or perhaps taken from a broader context,
In which greater exposition was provided,
So the Absolute and Relative perspectives,
Were not confused and muddled.

This is a problem with snippets.

For I mind what happens… immensely,
I mind with the Whole of my Being,
Even as I understand that all that occurs is,
From the Absolute perspective,
In the nature of things…

And as it is.

I mind the suffering of the world, terribly,
With the Whole of my Being,
Even as I understand that all that occurs is,
From the Absolute perspective,
In the nature of things…

And as it is.
I strive with all my Heart for an outcome;
For the end of suffering, everywhere, now, and forever,
Even as I understand that all that occurs is,
From the Absolute perspective,
In the nature of things…

And what will be, will be.

This “minding”, this “caring”,
This Heartfelt “desire for an outcome”…
None of it diminishes the Inner Radiance,
That Shines in the Heart of my Being,
Full, Complete, Inexpressibly Ecstatic.

I mind what happens… a lot.

in Union, in The Absolute,
There is no space, time, or self,
To care what happens, or wish for outcomes,
But only Timeless, Spaceless, Objectless,
Unalloyed Pure Being…

And what Is… Is.

But here, in this Dream of manifestation,
I pray and act with all my Heart for suffering's end,
Even as I understand that all that occurs is,
From the Absolute perspective,
In the nature of things…

And what will be, will be.

It is not a matter of “not caring”,
But rather, a matter of accepting,
Of caring deeply, with all your Heart,
But having the Wisdom to understand,
That Heartfelt prayer and effort aside…

What will be… will be.
If I did not mind what happens,
And ache with all my Heart for suffering's end,
Then deep inside myself,
I would feel miserable,
No matter what.

In Love, I mind; in Wisdom, I accept.

**Mindless Blathering**

I have experience the vanishing of time, space and myself,
And found that even without being alive, I Lived.
Without space in which anything could appear,
Without time in which anything could be perceived,
Still... I existed, prior to the arising of... any thing,

In that Nothingness prior to any thing,
I am Fullness.
Not that which is alive,
But Life Itself.
I Am.

Neither the perceiver,
Nor that perceived.
For both exist in and as me.
Perceiver, perceived, and perceiving,
I Am.

And here, now, in this Dream of space, time, and infinite objects,
Pure Life exists as me, thinking, moving, speaking, writing.
The Radiance of that Pure Sun shines, even in the Dream of form.
The Water of Life pours like a river into this manifest form,
From that Ocean of Satchitananda.
Intoxicating, dissolving the sense of embodiment.
Flowing from the Heart like waves rolling ecstatically into manifestation.
Shining from the Heart like the Radiance of the sun,
Into space and time, as space and time,
Touching everything, being everything.

The Infinite that I Am does not refer to space.
The Eternal that I Am does not refer to time.
The Infinite and Eternal that I Am
Exist where space and time have never existed,
But from which, in which, as which, everything arises into existence.

The Joy that I Am has no Sorrow as its counterpoint.
This Joy exists where both joy and sorrow have never existed,
In timeless, spaceless, objectless Being,
The Pure Joy of Satchitananda.
Open-eyed Samadhi, here in manifestation.

Space and time arise within me, as me.
This dream of endless objects, this Lila,
This Dance, arises within me, as me.
This Radiance shines from me, into me, as me.
All that has been, all that is, all that will be, I Am.

This “I” that is written of does not refer to “me”.
But to all who Are, and all that Is.
The very Dance of Shiva and Shakti.
The Lover and the Beloved dancing as two,
Embracing as One.

Mother Of Sorrows

I despise Mother for creating this world of suffering.
If She is truly the architect of creation... I stand against Her.
But… with each curse I hurl at Her,  
She only claps her hands and falls over laughing.

I bite her ankle, this Mother of Sorrows, this Architect of Hell,  
And she pulls me to Herself, tickling.

Snarling, kicking, giggling, all at once,  
I struggle to get my hands around her throat.

““I hate you for creating this world of sorrows.”” I scream.

She stops tickling, stops laughing, and all of creation grows Silent.  
And in the sudden Stillness She whispers…

“That is why I Love you so.”

---

**My Heart Has Become Eden**

Oh Beloved, for this one, you broke the laws.  
You took the scriptures from their holy place,  
And hid them where I could not see,  
Knowing their strictures would break my Heart.

Never have you whispered, “You must. You should.”  
Never have You held Your Heart from mine,  
Until such time as I became “worthy” or accrued “merit”.  
You have Loved me, Always, simply because I Am.

I am your shattered cup, and yet…  
You pour Yourself into me, until I overflow,  
I am Your Lawless rebel, and yet…  
You Free me, with every Heartbeat.

There was for me but one Hell,  
That You would Love me “because,”  
That You Love me “if”,  
That You would Love me “when”.

---
There was for me but one Hell,
That You would require of me a ransom,
For the Fulfillment of my Heart’s Desire,
The Kingdom of Heaven held hostage.

There is for me but one Heaven,
That as I and all creation am a part of You,
You have become a part of me,
And Shining Here, Illumine my Heart.

There is for me but one Heaven,
That Your Reveling in the Tavern of my Soul,
Has turned the water of my existence, to Wine,
Sipping which... more simply appears.

There is for me but one Heaven,
That the Healing and Benediction,
Flowing from Your Presence in this body,
Has raised the Lazarus of my Soul to New Life.

There is for me but one Heaven,
That the Rains of Grace, Showering,
Have transformed the desert that I was,
Into the Secret Garden that You Are.

My Heart has become Eden.

**MySelf**

I do not feel myself expanded as all that is,
A part of everything, and everything a part of me.

Nor do I feel myself as “That” within which all appears,
The Absolute, everything arising within me.

I do not feel “myself” at all.
Unless, by “I” you mean…

This.

Not a thing alive,
But… Aliveness Itself.

Formless Aliveness in Union,
Or Aliveness in form…

Show me that place, where one ends,
And the other begins?

Show me that place,
Where “This” begins and ends?

One thought of “This and That”…
One thought of “I” and “other”…

And Heaven and Earth are divided!

---

Mystical Alchemy

When I struggled to express the Ecstasy of Union,
When space, time, and all manifestation vanishes,
And only Formless Pure Being remains;
The vanishing of Lover and Beloved in Divine Embrace,
Shiva* and Shakti*, dissolving in each other's arms,

My Friend told me, quite emphatically,
That she held no such desire,
Longing always to be Krishna's Lover,
To enjoy the Love that only the Lover enjoys,
To be forever His, and He forever hers.
As we spoke in days that followed,
    She dug in her feet,
Wanting to hear nothing of Dissolution.
For the vanishing of Lover and Beloved
    Seemed to her a loss beyond all measure.

Time passed, we spoke, we meditated together.
And words continued to fail in expressing Union…
Words continued to fail in expressing Ecstasy…
Words continued to fail in expressing…
Words… failed.

It was not through words,
But only at the end of a meditation,
    That she turned, slowly,
And after a brief silence, said quietly…

“\text{I understand.}”

\begin{verse}
Nothing is lost,
    When Lover and Beloved,
Vanish into and as Pure Being.
For when we return to this Dream,
    We Love the Beloved no longer as Lover…
But as Love Itself.
\end{verse}

Some feel that understanding will Free them.
That seeing clearly, deeply, profoundly,
    With diamond-like articulation,
Will break the shackles of Bondage.
But there are matters in this Great Mystery,
Matters of the Heart, not the mind,
Which cannot come to fruition through words,
Through “descriptions” of “reality”,
Through talking… “about”.

There are matters in this Great Mystery,
That in my experience, come to fruition,
Only through the touch of Grace in one's own Heart,
Or… the Emanation of Grace, through another's;
In either case… Mystical Alchemy.

Yes, yes, I know,
I know, that some of my advaitic friends,
Find me delusional, naive, and misguided
Concerning this “guru” nonsense,
Even if innocently so.

On this matter of “transmission”…
Of the emanation of Grace,
We, as friends,
Must simply
Disagree.

* Shiva: Timeless, spaceless, objectless… Aliveness, Life, Consciousness.
* Shakti: Shiva, moving into and as manifestation; the energy of creation

No Need To Know

I don't know what anything is.
“Enlightenment”, “awakening”? 

So many definitions, I get dizzy.
Much in common, much that's different.
Plenty of guided tours available,
With experts at the wheel.

Knowing nothing of anything,
I simply rest, in and as...

Ignorant of “what”, “how”, or “why”.
But not Ignorant of...

Love's Rapturous Ecstasy.
Satchitananda.

No need to “know”.
For it to be so.

No need to “understand”,
The Swoon of our Own Radiant Heart.

No need to describe.
No need to tell.

This writing,
Is simply Fragrance wafting.

Love's Innate Joy,
Shining.

A mirage of words,
Pointing Drunkenly...

---

**Nonduality**

Today I went to our nearby Hindu Temple.
There was a Ganesh puja,
Chanting, Gods, Goddesses, murtis and mantra.
Nonduality

How… dualistic?
Nonsense.
Only a dualist would say so.

Duality is real,
As is formless nonduality.
Both are true, false, and neither.

Nonduality is an Experience,
An Experience of Being,
Not an arid concept.

Stuck in either duality,
Or nonduality,
You are bound.

For “nonduality”
As often propounded these days,
Is anything but.

I love going to this temple.
I enjoy the shakti of the place.
That's right… shakti.

Ramana spoke of shakti,
But my nondual friends
Simply ignore those words.

The shakti at the temple is unique,
Yes... unique to a place,
A locale in space and time.

People throng to Tiruvannamalai.
Why do they not throng to Baltimore?
Shakti.

Yes, it's my own innate Shakti
Shining at temple.
For form and formlessness are one.
But today…
I enjoyed being Imperfection,
Receiving Grace from Perfection.

Sound crazy, my nondual friends?
So be it.

It was Sublime, so Beautiful.
I could barely breathe.

Wave after wave of Bliss,
Rolling into the locus of the Heart,
Dissolving Lover and Beloved.

The Ocean of Formless Bliss,
Flooding into form.

This is nonduality.

And so… I resign my membership
In the one-sided advaitic view,
So-called “nonduality“.

I know… I have no shame.

I'm falling back, going home,
Into the “truth” of my Own Heart,
Where dual and nondual never arise,
And I'm Free... Free to Play!

Where Lakshmi smiles
At me, in me, through me, as me,
And I enjoy my own innate Bliss,
As flowing from Her…

Until She and I both vanish in Love.

I can Play thus,
Where Lover and Beloved,
Though beyond duality,…
Enjoy dancing together.
For I may know nothing of nonduality,  
Or everything about it,  
But care not, either way.

**Notions**

I used to adhere to notions,  
Notions held forth by this teaching or that,  
As definitive descriptions of “reality” and “truth”,  
Presented with a particular form of “logic”,  
Argued, lawyerly, in often fierce debates,  
Or... asked simply to be accepted on faith.

I used to adhere to the notion,  
Of a “Ground of Being”, a substratum of Existence,  
Call it what you will; God, Jehovah, Allah,  
Or Consciousness, so popular these days,  
From which, within which, and as which,  
All that is, arose into existence, and vanished.

An Infinite Unmanifest Ocean, I imagined,  
From which we, as manifest waves, arose and fell,  
Waves of individuated Ocean, we were,  
Having become lost in our individuation,  
Forgetting our Essential Identity and Origin,  
Suffering in identity as a wave, isolated and alone.

This... formless something,  
This Ocean of Unmanifest Potentiality,  
Though formless and unmanifest, was... Alive,  
Not as a formless “thing” alive,  
But as unmanifest Aliveness, prior to all “things”,  
From which all manifest “things” arose.
This… formless something,  
Existed beyond the grasp of intellect,  
Beyond the imaginings of heart,  
And yet was Remembered in the Depths of Being,  
As the longed-for Heaven, Nirvana,  
The Fulfillment of our Heart's Desire.

This… formless something,  
Though beyond our grasp,  
Enlivened our very grasping,  
As if… as the manifest wave,  
The Unmanifest Ocean,  
Sought desperately to Remember itself.

I used to adhere to this notion.

But this notion, in time, was turned from,  
As I changed stances, over time,  
Taking refuge in notions born of other teachings,  
Each providing words, images, and concepts,  
That gave comfort to my heart's weary longing,  
And kept my mind from the lunacy of Unknowing.

Over the many years of my life,  
I have taken many stances, adhered to many notions,  
But these days, near the end of things,  
I hold the many notions mere… possibilities,  
Neither declaring as true, nor decrying as false,  
But seeing all as Villages of Refuge along The Way.

I used to adhere to a notion,  
Of “what” it was that remained,  
When I and the world vanished in Union,  
And “what” it is that has lingered since,  
Illumining the Experience of Being,  
In Dissolution and Bliss.

But these days… these days…
These days, I see the Light in all notions,
For although this one may be true, or that one,
Or, from a certain perspective, all,
I take my stance with Farid Ud-DinAttar,
“The sea will be the sea,
Whatever the drop's philosophy.”

These days, I see the difficulty in all notions,
For although this one may be true, or that one,
Or, from a certain perspective, all,
I take my stance with Hafez,
“The great religions are ships, and poets, the lifeboats.
Every sane person I know has jumped overboard.”

These days, in the Winter of my life,
I write from any stance, any notion,
Which presents itself most suitable,
In conveying, metaphorically,
That which has become, for me,
Beyond any stance or notion.

---

**Oh Mariner of Life**

It is the play of desire and fear,
That drives our weary Hearts Within;
Exhaustion, born of those dualities,
Endlessly pulling at our Soul.

Desire and fear, desire and fear,
Sailing desperately toward the one,
Struggling against the current of the other,
Losing strength with each breaking wave.
Perhaps you have heard the myths,
Of a Peace, imperturbable, impenetrable,
Where no currents move the weary Heart,
No waves disturb the troubled Mind.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is Within,” he said.

Fearful at the risk of drowning,
But moved by desire for an end to strife,
Let slip the sails, oh Mariner of Life,
And Surrender your fate to the maelstrom.

Grace will respond, the promise is made,
To the wordless cry of your Heart,
And you will arrive, the promise is made,
At the Ineffable Sublimity of the Far Shore.

You will come, through Love and Longing,
To the vanishing of wind, water, and sky,
To the vanishing of the weary sailor,
Finding yourself Adrift, Nowhere, without your self.

No words can describe that placeless Place,
The Ocean You Are, without Beginning or End,
Where nothing yet is, and yet, everything is,
Without yet being.

Drowned, in the Fathomless Depths Within,
Fullness… Completion…. Ecstasy,
In the arms of The Beloved you left behind,
When first moved by desire and fear.

Then return to manifest existence,
Finding yourself still Adrift,
Nowhere… Everywhere…
Without your self.
Only The Heart May Enter

I wandered in the “nondual” marketplace,  
Among the countless “awakened”,  
Who feel that all there is, is Consciousness,  
And simply understanding this,  
Is all that is required.

While there is something to it,  
On the face of things,  
I found, upon lifting the facade,  
An arid, cerebral affair,  
Seeming to me, tragically misguided.

For though the mind lead me, truly,  
To the Gates of Heaven,  
There, reaching the end of its utility,  
Having become blind, deaf, and mute,  
It stepped aside, in Humility…

For only the Heart could enter there.

I fell, at that fatal juncture,  
From Mind into Heart,  
From concept into Feeling,  
From understanding into Experience,  
And Became…

What the Mind can only “think about”.  

My “enquiry” was driven by Love,  
Not an academic investigation,  
Searching to reach a “conclusion”,  
Based on irrefutable logic,  
Presented with unarguable certainty.
For enquiry without longing,
Is a seed unwatered,
A seed unfertilized,
A seed blossoming colorless,
Without Fragrance or Flavor.

My desire was to Vanish… and Become.
To Vanish as the felt sense,
Of all I had come to feel myself as being,
And Become, in “my” Vanishing,
That which I had Loved and Longed for.

What was it I Loved and Longed for?

At the time, only a vague “remembrance”,
Of something… Wonderful,
But long forgotten in Ancient Memory,
A sense of myself, not as myself…
And yet… My Self.

A Feeling, not a concept,
A felt sense of Heaven, within…
The Absolute Fulfillment,
In the most Unimaginable sense,
Of the Heart's Desire.

I “Felt” my way to my Essential Self,
Before ever “I” and the world appeared.
I “Felt” my way to Heaven,
Before manifestation ever was,
And the Suffering inherent in duality.

I came, through Mind, to that place,
Where I could not find myself,
But turning there, to the Heart,
Could Feel my Self… Alive,
As… Aliveness.
The thinking mind brought understanding,
Of the fact of my Formless Unlocatability,
But the Feeling Heart Experienced,
Beyond Understanding and Feeling,
What both Heart and Mind become…

What Is, before ever they were.

The use of the word “Knowledge” in nonduality is, as is the case with so many translated words, unfortunate. For to most of us, knowledge implies, without being further elucidated, knowledge of the mind. You can see how the same misfortune has befallen the word “Understanding”.

“Knowledge”, in this case, as is true for “Understanding”, refers to Experiential Knowledge and Understanding, having nothing to do with conceptuality or mental abstractions, with concepts, theory, and conjecture; nothing to do with descriptions of “reality”.

Likewise in nonduality, there is a tragic misrepresentation of “Bliss” as simply another transient, ephemeral arising in manifestation, to be dismissed with all that appears as “unreal”. Certainly there are various experiences described as “bliss” which are born in manifestation, of conditionality and causality, which are not to be seen as indicative of The Absolute. But there is a Bliss, the Bliss of Satchitananda, of The Beloved, of Union, which is inherent in the Experience of Absolute Nonduality, as heat is to fire, or wetness to water, and which, rather than arising in manifestation, born of conditionality and causality, is inherent in the dissolution and eventual vanishing altogether of duality. Rather than entrapping the experiencer, this Bliss arises only with the vanishing of the experiencer.

This Bliss will arise as the experience of duality dissolves, more and more, and the experience of perceiver and perceived gives way to Pure Perceiving; the experience of being a “thing alive” gives way to the Experience of Life Itself, Pure, Formless, Unmanifest. Ultimately, in the Experience of Absolute Nonduality (nirvikalpa samadhi, as the Hindus call it, or Union as the Sufis or Christian Mystics would say), Bliss becomes the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Pure
Awareness, the experience, upon the vanishing of the experiencer and all duality, of Heaven.

This Bliss should also not be clung to as an experience, for doing so will give rise to the contraction of grasping, and reinforcement of the “experiencer”. But dismissing it outright is misguided, for it is inherent in the vanishing of the experiencer.

Rather, in the most subtle of learnings, through being keenly aware, one sees, again and again as the habituated reflex of grasping occurs, that this grasping, this contraction, causes Bliss to vanish. For this Bliss, unlike all other experiences, is born of, and is inherent in the cessation of grasping, in the dissolution and cessation of duality, and will only arise when grasping ceases and enquiry Surrenders to Death Unto Life as Pure Awareness.

This Bliss, unlike all other experience, is what is spoken of as “The Fragrance of The Beloved”, “Perfume”, and the “Wine” served at the Tavern of The Beloved. For it is an Intoxication like no other. Nondualists may call it the “Bliss of the Self”. To Hindus, it may be the ecstasy experienced as Shakti turns to Embrace Her Beloved Shiva. To Sufis, and in my own stance… it is The Beloved. To dismiss this Bliss is to refuse the Wine She offers, to push The Beautiful One away as She moves to embrace you – an Embrace in which She, you, and all duality vanishes.

**Outside The Walls**

Mystical Experience, Divine Communion,  
Is not confined to the many villages of religion,  
Or to philosophical systems, however profound,  
However revered their expounders.
For there are those who Wander,
Outside the walls of scripture and stricture,
In the Wilderness of Not Knowing,
Whose Hearts are, none the less…

Illumined with Grace.

Far from the village,
Road vanished into path,
Path vanished into hillside,
Hillside vanished into Vastness…

The Known vanished into Wonder.

For these Wilderness Wanderers,
There are no descriptions of reality,
No systems of belief or faith,
And the name of God is…

“Great Mystery”.

And yet, like a Wellspring, their Hearts overflow,
Whenever they find, wherever they find,
In sources so-called “sacred” or “profane”,
That which invokes Within…

The Presence of The Beloved.

Neither a She, nor a He,
Nor a concept of belief or faith,
Or in any way “Known” in word or image.
But Known, palpably, viscerally…

In the Heart's Direct Experience of Grace.

Here… within the Manifest Being,
Wherein Shines the Garden of The Beloved,
As the Ineffable, Intoxicating Sublimity,
The Inexpressible Ecstasy of…

The Great Mystery.
Overboard

I broke the rudder some years ago,
When I fought too hard to steer.
And the sail at some point after,
Was torn from the mast,
By the storms of circumstance,
And sank into the depths.

I do no recall the dark night,
When the stars above, guiding my way,
And the landed horizon toward which I sailed,
Both vanished, leaving me directionless,
Adrift in the Unknowable,
With only a Heart full of Longing.

I cannot remember when I tossed the oars,
Into the fathomless depths,
And abandoned at last, all effortful striving,
To come quickly, oh, quickly, please,
To Journey's end, to Longing's Fulfillment,
And found myself...

Adrift.

I cannot recall that time of struggle,
Of sail, rudder, and oar,
Of starry night's guidance,
Or landed horizon beckoning,
I only remember... Collapsing,
Surrendering... at last, Falling...

Overboard, into The Beloved's arms.

Sinking into the Depths of Her Grace,
Breathing in Her Living Waters,
The Infinitude before space,
The Eternality before time,
And Existence as Life, Itself…
Before ever I became a thing alive.

What can a Drowned man do,
In the way of pointing,
For those who drift by, enquiring,
Directions to the Kingdom of Heaven,
To Fulfillment of the Heart's Desire…
Except to point… overboard… into the Depths…

Within.

Perfection

The Great Teachings crumble in my hands,
Like ancient bones,
Dry, dead, brittle, lifeless.

Do this.
Don’t do that.
Be good.

They speak of something
For which I have no longing,
Attained through effort and merit.

Such achievement I leave to those more worthy,
Who struggle in the hell world
Of Qualification and Conditionality.

It is good to be good, and to act,
But to my astonishment and delight,
My Beloved cares nothing for such things.
I would wander this life,
Heartbroken for all Eternity,
If I believed that to be Loved by Her…

I must become perfect.

**Perhaps They Are Right**

When I chat with my “ism” friends,
Buddhism, Hinduism, this ism, that ism,
They are quick to place my experience,
In the context of their beliefs.

They explain what has happened,
What it all means, and why,
Where I am on the Path,
Where I have to go…

And what I must do to get there.

They’re certain and assured in all of this,
For the “truth” has been laid out,
And in their minds, unarguably,
By the founder of their ism…

And “enlightened” who followed after.

Buddhism in all its many forms,
The vast ocean of Hindu philosophy,
The Abrahamic, book-based isms,
And contemporary “nonduality”.

All certain and assertive,
Some speaking with the authority of “lineage”,
Ancient, held in great reverence,
And in their minds…
“Truth”, indisputable.

For Sankara said thus,  
Buddha said thus,  
Paul said thus,  
Someone or other said thus.

And... perhaps they are right.

Seldom speaking from experience,  
Most often my ism friends simply pour,  
My experience into the mold,  
Inherited from their ism.

Their intentions are kind,  
For they find me sadly misdirected,  
Bound in delusion and falsity,  
In desperate need of guidance.

And... perhaps they are right.

I've no “idea” what happened that day,  
When “I” and Creation Vanished,  
When all duality ceased, Absolutely,  
Leaving nothing whatsoever,  
Of knower and known,  
Experience and experiencer,  
Perceiver and perceived,  
Subject and object,  
But only...

Unalloyed Ecstasy,  
Experienced by no one,  
Before space,  
Before time.

And I've truly no “idea” what this Presence is,  
This ever-present Sublimity that remained,  
When the world and “I” reappeared,  
Shining thereafter, in the Locus of The Heart...
A touch of dualities Dissolution,
A touch of the Ecstasy,
Inherent in that Dissolution,
As heat is to fire.

The world and “I” vanished,
Heaven remained,
The world and “I” reappeared,
And thereafter, a River flowed,
From Heaven into my Heart…

Into the experience of... existing.

The secular became sacred,
Samsara and Nirvana,
Heaven and Earth,
Formlessness and Form…

Indistinguishable.

I’ve no “idea” at all “about” any of this,
No concepts, theories, or conjecture,
No assumptions made, or conclusions drawn,
Into which I can pour this Ineffable Sublimity.

And so, perhaps my ism friends are right.

For unlike me, they “know”,
And are breathless to tell me,
The what, why, and wherefore,
From the “truth” as they “know” it.

And… perhaps they are right.

They place this Dissolution of duality,
This Blissful Presence,
In a “hierarchy” of “spiritual evolution”,
From the “truth” as they “know” it.

And… perhaps they are right.
They explain, with certain authority,
How I am sadly in bondage,
Enamored of the “Bliss body”,
Addicted to ephemeral experience.

And… perhaps they are right.

I do not know the “Self”, they declare,
For there is no Ecstasy there,
No qualities or attributes of any kind,
In the “Absolute”.

And… perhaps they are right.

They point to the use of words,
Such as “Lover” and “Beloved”,
As sophomoric emotionality,
An immature desire for love and healing.

And… perhaps they are right.

It’s all just kundalini, they say,
Nothing more than energy,
So much yogic hoo-hah,
To be dismissed as “unreal”.

And… perhaps they are right.

They urge me to continue “further”,
Striving to attain the “Ultimate”,
Which they are happy to describe,
From the “truth” as they “know” it.

And… perhaps they are right.

In the words of each I find,
Varied teachings of “truth”,
Varied descriptions of “reality”,
Varied unarguable “absolutes”.

All there is, is Consciousness, one declares,
No, all there is, is Emptiness, cries another,
No, all there is, is God, say the Deists,
None of these are true, say the agnostics.

All so full of certainty,
So fierce when questioned,
So dogmatic, while claiming openness,
So righteous in seeking to help.

And… perhaps they are right.

But when Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
Filled moment-to-moment Experience,
And the felt sense of "self" vanished,
All movement stopped, to and from.

All seeking for "more" vanished,
All "grasping after" ceased,
And Bliss, Immovable, Impenetrable,
Filled, at last, this weary Heart.

In this Fullness, where am I to put "more",
In Completion, what is there to be added,
Intoxicated, the Heart's Desire Fulfilled…
Why would I seek a bottle.

But still… perhaps they are right.

When grasping has ceased and the Heart Rests in Fullness, Completion, and Bliss, the contraction of “lack” felt in the deepest interiority of our Being, of “wanting more”, vanishes. Then, what does it matter what name is given to our experience, or where it might be placed in the “hierarchy” of “enlightenment” within this path or that. If one's Heart is Full, Satisfied, Radiant, the appetite even for enlightenment vanishes!
“But... how will you ever become fully Self Realized, if you have no spiritual desire?!“ a friend asked, with sincere concern. “I guess... I won't." was the only answer I could give. If that happens (whatever “it” is, for there are countless definitions), then fine. If not... fine. You'll find this unenlightened Idiot at the Tavern of the Beloved, having found the end of pilgrimage in Her Sparkling Eyes.

Persevere, Dear Heart

Your Loving Attention,
Is the SunLight of your Being,
Shining outward in delight and enjoyment,
Of this Wonder of Manifest Existence.

But turned Within, in Loving Quest,
This Light will evaporate,
The clouds of obscuration,
That veil Wonder Beyond Imagining.

Persevere, Dear Heart...
Don't despair or lose heart,
When nothing but gray sky greets you,
The density of embodied selfhood.

Persevere, Dear Heart...
Not in will, but in Love and Longing,
Of your Heart's True Desire,
For which, long ago, all hope vanished.

Persevere, Dear Heart...
And the Impossible Dream will be revealed,
As the Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
Of your own Formless Being...

Your own Formless, Unlocatable... Aliveness.
Persevere, Dear Heart...
In Loving Surrender,
To the Feeling, not the thought,
Of the Vibration of Being that you are.

Persevere, Dear Heart...
And discover in your own experience,
That Heaven is no myth,
But the experience of your Innate Ecstasy.

Persevere, Dear Heart...
For your Formless Being Shines,
Awaiting only the Light of your Attention,
There... just beyond the clouds.

Persevere, Dear Heart...
Shining the Light of Loving Attention,
Then Vanishing into the Experience of Ecstasy,
That only arises...

With the Vanishing of the experiencer.

Persevere, Dear Heart...
Not grasping to hold and sustain,
But in Surrender, letting go of all attainment,
And you will cease being a thing alive...

And become Life Itself.

Poof!

I read the other day,
“All that need be done is to ‘notice’.”
My Life Experience does not agree.
I can only say that for me,
It was not a matter simply of “noticing”,
Of “Understanding”, or of intellectual clarity.

I saw clearly, upon first investigation,
And for thereafter, with Diamond-like Clarity,
That I do not exist as an object…

Although existing occurs… Existence… Is.

That “fact” was irrefutable.
I need only turn my wandering Attention,
Inward, in search of its Source.

There was no little man inside this head,
Seeing, hearing, touching, tasting…
Thinking… Living.

There was no object-perceiver-experiencer,
Anywhere to be found, within,
In the Formless Aliveness I found myself to be.

But this Apperception, this “noticing”,
Did not, for so very many years,
Remove the “Felt” sense of “I”…

Within the Somatic aspect of Being.

“Knowing” full well that I was not an object,
I continued to “Feel” that I was,
The somatic contraction of “I”, not yet released.

The remnants of the salt doll “I”, not yet dissolved.

While the Mind reveled in Liberation,
And the Heart, Illumined, Danced in Bliss,
“I” remained in the Body, like a virus.

Until one day… Poof!
Why did that ancient somatic contraction,
That Felt Sense, vanish that day,
After so many long years?

I will only say, with fair certainty…

It was not merely the ripening of knowledge.
Not simply the product of “noticing”,
For understanding alone had proven to be…

A debit card without a PIN.

And I will say, with fair certainty…

That in addition to the Fruition of Mind,
The PIN required, and was found,
In the concurrent Blossoming of the Heart…

In the Love that first moved…
My weary Heart, into to ever deepening Longing,
My weary Mind, into ever deepening Unknowing.

And in time, through the Fruition and Blossoming,
Of both Heart and Mind,
The somatic remnants of the Salt Doll “I”...

Dissolved in the Union of those two Rivers.

Prayer, Dissolution

Sometimes spontaneously,
Sometimes consciously turning within,
I am swept into Dissolution and Bliss,
And… pray.

To whom?
To what?
I've no idea.

But tears flow,
And my Heart breaks in Longing,
Even as, in that Divine Embrace,
All Longing is Fulfilled.

How shamelessly dualistic!

Sometimes spontaneously,
Sometimes in consciously turning within,
I am swept into Dissolution and Bliss,
And do not pray, but allow, instead,
The one who prays,
To Dissolve into Formless Pure Being.

What is that Formless Pure Being?
Where is this Formless Pure Being?

I've no idea.

But space, time, and objects Dissolve,
And I, the experiencer, with them,
Formless Pure Being remaining,
No longer a thing alive, but Life Itself.

How shamelessly nondual!

Dualistic relationship with The Beloved,
Or nondual Dissolution into Formless Pure Being,
Tasting Sugar,
Or Being Sugar…
Life is, in each instance…

Inexpressibly Sweet.
Preferences, Propensities, Proclivities

It's impossibly complex,
This dance of formlessness in form;
Full of contradictions that are simply impossible,
And yet... so.

The Beloved abides in my Heart,
Whether this body sits in a grey cubicle,
Or stands in awe on a glorious beach.

She neither increases nor diminishes
In either place,
For Her Radiance is beyond conditionality.

To speak dualistically,
She lives in the so-called "inner" world,
Concurrent with the so-called "outer".

How do both exist at once, seamlessly?
I've no idea,
No mind for such complexities.

While Fullness and Completion reign, “inwardly”,
Preferences, propensities, and proclivities continue
“Outwardly”.

I prefer lofty clouds, soft sand,
And the vastness of the beach,
To the drab, grey cubicle.

But the Beloved...
Effortlessly ever-present,
Knows nothing of these differences.

She rests, untouched, in my Heart,
In Her Secret Garden where Inner and outer,
Have never, ever existed.
Reflecting

In that Inner Realm, there is no need,
To move from here, to there,
To do this, or not do that.

I and the world arise…
Within and As
Her Formlessness.

That said…
Here in the world of space and time…
I prefer this to that.

Cream,
Two sugars,
Please.

Reflecting

One reflects by Feeling;
Feeling the vibration of Being
At the Heart of all Experience,
The Unlocatable Aliveness that we are.

Not moving in ideas “about”, or thoughts “of”,
But actually moving more… into the body.
And by “body”, I mean
The Field of Experience,
The totality of everything arising,
All at once.

Not moving in the dream-like flow
Of serial Thought,
One thought
Leading to another,
And another,
And another…
Our body isn’t simply the physical form,
But all that appears to us,
“Within”, and “without”.
For where do “we”
Begin and end?

Some say we are “Consciousness”,
The Ground of Being,
Brahman,
And everything arises from “That”,
Like waves arising from the Ocean
Of Formless Potentiality.

Other teachings say
There is no underlying Consciousness,
And everything is simply a flow of Causality;
Each cause giving rise to an effect,
In turn a cause to yet another effect.
On and on, like a river flowing.

My experience is that
It doesn’t matter what you believe.
Only dissolve the salt doll of self-identity.
What remains when “you” vanish is irrelevant.
Make of it what you like,
Or make nothing of it at all.

These two views,
Consciousness and Emptiness,
And every view expressed and codified,
Are simply interpretations
Of the “enlightenment” experience
By different “enlightened” ones.

A thousand views,
A thousand descriptions of enlightenment.
One concluded, after the fact,
Thinking “about” their experience,
That they were “That”,
Consciousness,
And declared it was so for all.

Another concluded, after the fact,
Thinking “about” their experience,
That everything is simply a flow
Of interdependent Causality,
And declared that it was so for all.

I hold neither to one nor the other,
Or any view, whatsoever.
I know only that the cessation of “I”
Resulted in Serene Emptiness,
And the Fullness of Bliss.

Dissolve the contraction of self-identity,
Of object-perceiver-experiencer-person,
In Unlocatable Aliveness,
And then...
Interpret what remains for yourself,
If... you're so moved.

Myself... I am not moved to “know”
Or “understand”, or in any way “describe”
That which cannot be known,
Or understood,
Or spoken of.

Find the “I” Feeling, and rest there.
Then... see what happens.
And when “you” vanish into “what happens”,
Do the world a favor, and don't plant a flag,
Declare the summit, and codify your experience.
Be Free of “I”,
And Illumined with Bliss,
And leave the descriptions of “reality”
To those compelled
To wrap the Great Mystery
In name and form.

But you…
Be Free.
Be Illumined.
Be Still.
Be Quiet.

Remembering
Remembering,
Being remembered,
And most wonderfully… eventually,
The vanishing of rememberer and remembered.

The clouds of obsuring “I” thin,
Lighter here, darker there,
And the Sun of our Heart’s Desire,
The Bliss of The Beloved Shines through.

And in that Shining,
The “I” who looks toward the dappled clouds,
With all the Longing of the Heart’s Desire,
Vanishes.

In that Vanishing,
The Ecstasy of Unobscured Heaven,
Shines into Experience, as Experience,
The Experiencer…nowhere to be found.
If “I” should grasp to hold as experience,
I am left, broken-hearted, as the experiencer.
Clouds roil in darker obscuration,
The Lesson not yet learned.

Such a subtle teaching,
Subtler than subtle,
This “knack”, really,
Of Surrender, and the end of grasping.

**Remembering What You Love**

What is there to do,
But Remember what you Love,
And ache with all your Heart,
However distant Heaven may seem,
However much a fairytale and a Dream.

What is there to do,
But rest, with each breath and heartbeat,
In that Unbearable Longing,
Which will not be consumed,
By the fires of doubt and despair.

For you did not choose to be stricken,
But simply found yourself afflicted,
With a Remembering beyond memory,
A Feeling beyond emotion.
A Knowing beyond knowledge…

As yet unKnown.
What else…
For when faith fails, Longing endures,
When belief crumbles, Longing endures.
When other's paths prove not our own,
Longing endures.

Longing… endures.

What…
But to Remember what you Love,
However She presents Herself,
Within the Secret Heart,
Of your own unique Longing.

You are not cursed, weary Friend!
For this Longing, Unbearable,
Is both Path and Guru,
For those of us so Blessed.
And Love…

The Key to the Gates of Heaven.

River Of Experience

Life seems a river of Experience;
A hidden current moving everything.
The first cause giving birth to endless further causes,
Each cause an effect of endless previous causes.
And so the River flows.

Some, Struggling for a word,
A name for the formless current,
The unlocatable cause,
Say, “Consciousness”,
And create an objectless object.
There is no success in words.

---

**Rumi’s Moment**

Rumi turned spontaneously,
In a movement of Love.
Dancing with The Beloved,
In the Tavern of The Heart.

Beautiful, the falling leaves.
Dancing in Love's Delight,
With their unseen Lover,
The Wind.

Take no care of hands held thus,
Or feet moved thus,
Or movements made just thus,
For this dance is not such.

And Rumi's moment will be lost.

Find Her within,
Let Love turn your Heart,
And your Heart turn the world,
All and everything turned, truly…

By The Beautiful Dancer.
**She Whispered**

A voice said…
“For you, of all people, there is no hope,
Of experiencing The Beloved's Embrace,
For scripture declares, She cannot touch the 'unclean'.”

And She whispered…
“Your tears have washed away clean and unclean.”"

A voice said…
“For you, of all people, there is no possibility,
Of surrender, of vanishing in Union beyond duality,
For you are shackled, bound in servitude to your self.”

And She whispered…
“The key of Unbearable Longing has freed you.”

A voice said…
“Of all Hearts, yours can never be,
The dwelling place of The Beautiful, The Radiant One,
For Her Perfection cannot abide in such corruption.”

And She whispered…
“Your Heart, Surrendered in Love, has made you Holy to me.”

So many voices have spoken…
So many words, with firm authority, citing scriptures,
Words that break the Heart, and wound the spirit,
“She will Love you only if, only when, only after.”

And She whispered…
“These lawyers know nothing of Love.”

Whispering again…
She made vanish the hearer of voices,
And left this Empty Vessel here in the world,
Filled with Her Perfume.
Shhh!

“I” was never Free.
“Bondage” was the simple fact,
Of “my” existence.

But… how can there ever have been an “I”,
If there existed no object,
To which that name applied?

What, then, was this “I”
That could not be found,
And now has vanished?

An experience.
A cloud appearing,
Roiling for a time,
And then vanishing,
Leaving the Sky revealed.

An experience,
Of being an experiencer.

But… if there was no object-experiencer,
Then what was having the experience,
Of being an experiencer?

Shhh!
Stop now.

Stop.

Don’t name it.
Don’t make an “objectless object” of it,
A “formless form”.

Not Consciousness,
Not Brahman,
Not Self,
Not God.
Shhh!

So Gently

How many ages I wandered,
   How many lifetimes,
   In search of the Beloved.

Following the Fragrance,
   I wandered for Eternities,
   Until I could wander no more.

And there... exhausted,
   Collapsed in despair, falling,
   Into the Cave of my Heart.

   Where, beyond all hope,
   My tear-stained face was lifted,
   So gently...

Sojourn

As my Experience of Being has unfolded
Over what is quickly becoming a long life,
The mind has dragged me into the “villages” of the Great Traditions
In search of those things it so desperately cherishes;
Knowledge, understanding, and guidance.
For it is utterly confounded by what happened
When I “died”, when I and the world vanished,
When subject and object vanished,
When absolutely everything vanished,
And only Unalloyed Ecstasy remained.

I frowned… troubled…
For the word “Ecstasy” can never hope to express,
The Experience, not the place,
Of Heaven.
There are no metaphors in manifest experience.

Poor mind is utterly confounded, as well,
By the Sun of Bliss that shone thereafter in the locus of the Heart,
Effortlessly ever-present, here in manifest form,
In this world of time, space, and all that appears;
A Wellspring from which the waters of that Ocean of Formless Ecstasy
Flows into manifest experience.

What do I call that death unto Life;
How can I interpret, understand, or explain,
To myself, much less anyone else?
And what is this Blissful Radiance of the Heart that remains;
Perfection shining within this wounded and broken vessel.

In the village of each Tradition,
The mind has run like a starving vagrant
To the temples of knowledge,
Has sat with the “enlightened” ones,
Gorging voraciously on interpretations and descriptions,
Grasping desperately at understanding…
While the Heart reveled in Bliss,
Sipping Amrita at the Tavern of the Beloved.
And in time, in the village of each tradition,
The mind has arrived at the Tavern door,
Exhausted, and ignorant as ever,
And, joining the Heart at the bar,
Has sobbed to all who would listen,
Its tale of woe.

And in time, again and again,
The two staggering drunkards push open the village gate,
And wander out;
The Heart into Ineffable Sublimity,
The mind…
Into the crushing immensity of The Great Mystery.

**Something Known, Then Forgotten**

Longing is the remembrance,
More ancient than ancient,
Of something Known… then forgotten.

Forgotten, but alive within us,
As the Heart's Wordless Cry,
For something Known… then forgotten.

However hopeless we may be,
However faithless we become,
This Longing endures.

We may despair of religion,
But Longing endures,
For That which gave birth to all religions.

Longing for That which cannot be spoken,
Not that we cannot speak it,
But because… there simply are no words.
But... you Know it... don't you,
Reader of these failing words,
You Know, in your Sighing Heart...

That which was Known... then forgotten.

Something So Beautiful

You start out not believing,
That anything so Beautiful could really exist.
She seems a fairy tale, imagined by the religious,
By the simple-minded, wounded and damaged,
In desperate need of emotional healing,
Willing to believe in anything...

If it only alleviates their pain.

It seems incomprehensible, implausible,
To one so rational and empirically-minded,
That the experience of Heaven, within,
Is anything more than a hypnotic trance,
Born of fanatical deprivation and fantastical imagination,
Simply a psycho-physiological anomaly.

And who can blame you, given the lunacy of religion?

Then one day, oddly enough, seeking to die,
Not through physical harm, but through will alone,
You come to the wholly unexpected Experience of yourself,
As the absence of space, time, objects, and... yourself,
And yet, Alive, as... what word could you possibly use...
Heaven; not a place, but...

The Unalloyed Ecstasy of Pure Unmanifest Existence.
And when space, time, objects, and you return,
You are left inextricably perplexed, for the rest of your life,
For in a sense, the absence of you, was You,
While in another, you were not, nor had you ever been,
For there was no time, past, future… or present,
And no space in which a you could exist or perceive.

And yet… You were.

“How can you remember an experience,
When ‘you’ were not present?” they ask.
You cannot explain.
And this troubles your mind,
For you are a rational, empirical man,
Having experienced, empirically, the rationally implausible.

And so you are ushered into the world of Divine Madness.

Ushered into madness even further by the fact,
Seen as lunacy by the mind, but Benediction by the Heart,
That you never completely return from… Heaven,
That within your Heart (why the Heart, you wonder),
Is an Ineffably Sublime Intoxication, a touch,
Not simply of peace, happiness, and joy…

But the Inexpressible Ecstasy you knew in Heaven.

She is ever there, awaiting the return of wandering Attention,
Waiting like The Beloved for your outer fascination to end,
And for Attention to return, at last, to Her Arms;
Her Perfume, always Intoxicating, both mind and Heart,
In moments both sacred, and “profane”,
Waiting to embrace you, into Dissolution and Bliss.
Your Heart has become the Gate, the Wellspring of Heaven,
Here in the Dream of space, time, and manifestation,
The Garden of The Beloved, Her Tavern, within.
To this Heart, no questions arise, no dilemma perturbs,
No desire arises to “know”, or “understand”, or articulate,
For All is Fulfilled…

All is Fulfilled.

In the mind… the temple of rationality and empiricism,
There the scholars, the academics within you debate,
What was that, that happened on the day of your Death?
What is this… this… Presence, as much a part of you, now,
As your breath, your heartbeat… alive now, within you,
As the very Aliveness that You Are?

But no answers come; no answers will ever come,
Only a chaos of concepts, theories, and conjecture,
As useless as pictures of Wine and Perfume,
And… this is just as well, for the mind, poor fellow,
Is far too Intoxicated, far too Dissolute,
To make any sense of anything at all.

You start out not believing,
That anything so Beautiful could really exist.
It seems incomprehensible, implausible.
To one so rational, so empirically-minded.
And then you die, yet Live,
Returning… Possessed by Love,
Still rational, and empirically-minded…

But still… still… “knowing” Nothing.
Something Wonderful

Deep beneath the foundation of his Home,
Mullah Nazrudin discovered a hidden cellar
Filled to overflowing with…

“Something wonderful”.

Amazed, he found
That upon “drinking”,
More simply appeared!

The intoxication was so deep, so sublime,
He feared friends would think him mad,
And mentioned nothing of the secret hoard.

Until one day a friend, a fellow Lover of “something wonderful”,
Became intoxicated, simply from Nazrudin's breath.
And asked what he'd been drinking.

Soon, other Friends became drunk on Nazrudin's breath,
And all were shown the secret cellar, and invited
To “drink” it all up.

But as soon as a drop was tasted,
More simply appeared!
And more… and more.

Some hoped for “benefit”.
Some imagined a lofty “purpose”,
Some sought to discern the why and wherefore.

But whether benefit was accrued,
Lofty purpose discerned,
Or why and wherefore ascertained,

All such things aside…

Whatever it was that was found,
Was simply…
“Something wonderful”. 
Song To The Divine Beloved

It is not Nazrudin's cellar alone, Dear One…

“What's that on your breath?”

Song To The Divine Beloved

I will always hold you inwardly, so tenderly,
So grateful for you, for every moment you are alive,
For your presence in this world.

And if our hands slip apart, as hands do in this Tenuous Dream,
And we lose sight of each other in this vast creation,
I will hold you still, in my Heart, Forever.

When time and space vanish, and the cycle of existence ends,
I will hold you still, in my Heart,
In a secret place not even Shiva can destroy.

This Love will survive the dissolution of Heaven and Earth,
And I will meet you again, when the world begins anew,
Still holding you in my Heart.

I will take your hand, once more.
Having never let go.

Speaking

The only benefit in speaking
About that which cannot be spoken of,
Is if the words spoken are Imbued,
With the Heart's Mystical Alchemy.
Words spoken thus, in Love,
Transmute the Experience of Being,
Enveloping speaker and spoken to,
In the Fragrance of The Beloved…

Which Fragrance, when followed in Longing,
Guides Lovers ever more deeply,
Within the Kingdom of Heaven, until,
At last, through Love's Grace they arrive…

At the Fulfillment of all Longing.

In which case…

Speak.

**Stances**

How many stances can be taken,
In the face of this Unfathomable Mystery?

Standing here, I am the Lover,
And She, The Beloved.

Standing here, I am Her Child,
And She, my Loving Mother.

Standing here, I am Her Friend,
And She, my Wise Counsel.

Standing here, I Vanish,
Into and as Her.

Standing here,
Both Lover and Beloved Vanish…
Leaving only that,
Which Shines before Manifestation.

All stances… Beautiful and Fruitful,
When taken in Love,
Taken in Compassion,
Taken in Tenderheartedness,
Taken in Honesty and Humility,

And when taken,
In the Fullness of their Fruition…

For the Benediction of All.

Wearying debaters of “truth”,
Gentle your Hearts.

For even if merely a Dance of Apparitions,
All Ways, taken in Love…

Are Beautiful and Fruitful.

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**Stature**

Stature is the beating heart of Self-Identity.
Certitude, the beating heart of Ignorance.
Grasping, the beating heart of Suffering.

And “I”, the beating heart of all three.

Abandon these,
And with hands open in Surrender,
Drop the salt doll “I”,
Into the Ocean of The Great Mystery….

The beating Heart
Of Ineffable Sublimity.
Still Waters

You'll never think your way out of thought,
But you can Feel, ever, ever more deeply,
That within which, to which, and as which, thought arises,
Until, Feeling ever... ever... ever more deeply
You Become that Formless... Unlocatable... Aliveness,
And thought, though ongoing, is simply... no longer... heard,
Attention having ceased its outward wandering,
Resting... at last... Dissolving... into... as...
The Still Waters of its Unmoving Source,
The Kingdom of Heaven...
Within.

Suffering

When I speak of Union with The Beloved,
Of Her Abidance in one's Heart,
I do not, for a moment, mean to imply,
That we no longer suffer,
The ecstasies and agonies,
Of manifest existence.

Attar was slain by the Mongols,
As The Beautiful One watched.

Ramakrishna’s throat deteriorated,
With The Beloved by his side.

Teresa of Avila gasped for breath,
Never abandoned by The Merciful One.
The disease in Ramana’s arm took his body,  
As he drowned in The Fountain of Grace.

St. Francis, as well, suffered greatly,  
Beneath Brother Sun and Sister Moon.

And on, and on, and on.

This notion that all suffering will cease,  
In the arms of The Beloved,  
Seems, in my experience, misguided,  
For body, mind, and emotions,  
Continue their inevitable play,  
In the ever changing “weather” of manifestation.

However “transcendent” in one sense,  
We are, in another, here, and embodied,  
Moving in the Dream of space and time,  
In duality, conditionality, and causality,  
In the ephemeral apparition,  
Of birth, growth, maturation, decay, and death.

It is The Heart, rather, that is Healed,  
The Soul, rather, that is Comforted,  
The Spirit, rather, that is Blessed,  
In our Deepest Interiority,  
In the Heart’s Secret Garden,  
Intoxicated, in the Tavern of The Beloved.

It is there that She resides,  
Through the tears of our outer sufferings,  
Within the laughter of our outer joys  
Through the vicissitudes of fate,  
In the shock of our birth,  
And the whisper of our last breath.
An Affair of The Heart

Though Joy and Sorrow ebb and flow,
Laughter and tears come and go,
Faith and belief stand strong or collapse,
It is Within that The Beloved Shines,
Within, that the Merciful One Comforts,
Within, that The Wellspring of Grace flows.

Even so… I breathe the prayer,
That if Her Presence in this Heart,
Grants but one wish,
It be that all Hearts Illumine, Within,
And, even against the Laws of Creation,
That none should suffer, without.

Surrender

Surrender was coming to know,
Beyond all doubt,
That I will never know.
Never…
Ever.

It was coming to see, beyond all doubt,
That unlike those with clarity of mind,
And the hopeful certitude of faith,
I would live out my life in and as…
A Great Mystery.

Although I found jewels in religions and philosophies,
That resonated with Heart and mind,
I was ultimately left wondering,
At the vast and varied differences debated,
Among the Great Traditions.
Who had decided that “truth” was thus?
Traditions within traditions.
Emphatic partialities, all, they seemed to me.
And… did it really matter to me, at all,
What “truth” was?

Was “truth” what I longed for,
Or “understanding” of the nature of “reality”,
Argued with dogmatic hubris,
By mind-bound academics,
Of the vast and varied schools?

It seemed that in all but the rarest instances,
The Heart had been “thought” out of the Great Matter,
By those cherishing “knowledge of”,
But lacking Direct Experience.

As the years passed, I lost clarity,
Even around what it was I sought,
Hobbled by the confusion of teachings,
Prescriptions and proscriptions…

And descriptions of “truth” and “reality”.

Decades passed further,
And I watched fall from my hands,
The few shards of clarity I had garnered here and there,
Which had seemed, in their time, so “True” to me.

Trinkets of Belief once held, white-knuckled,
Against the Great Unknown,
Abandoned now…
Collapsed lean-tos against the Incomprehensible.

Stripped naked of hope,
Faith, a tattered rag, long fallen away,
“Knowledge” burned to ash,
In the fierce Heat of The Great Mystery.
Turning from all outward searching,
Into the depths of formless Being,
I searched within to see,
If anything at all was left to me.

And there found…
To my gentle surprise…
The only thing that remained;
The last vestige of the first cause…

The Longing in my Heart.

Somehow,
Impossibly…
Inextinguishable.

The Longing that had moved me,
From the very first step,
Somehow, impossibly… remaining.

And falling headlong into that Pool,
Breathing those Living Waters,
I drowned, at last, in The Heart's Desire.

Longing having been the Wellspring,
All those long, weary years,
Of that which was longed for.

The Fragrance of that which was Longed for,
Having been, all along,
"Of" that which was Longed for.

Drowned, into and as Formless Aliveness,
I returned, Alive, as form,
But drenched, thereafter, in Bliss.

Bliss…
Not coming and going, as I had read,
But effortlessly ever-present.
Who were these “awakened” ones,
Who spoke with such certainty and authority,
Of that which was not in their experience?

Bliss…
The Peace that Transcends Understanding…
Imbued with the Ecstasy of Formless Pure Being.

Rapturous, the background of experience,
Not merely Peace, Happiness, and Joy,
Which flitted erratically in the realm of causality.

Bliss…
When Attention moved outward,
The background of all Experience.

Soft, subtle, ambient…
Everywhere and nowhere,
Impossibly, both at once.

Bliss…
When Attention relaxed inward,
The Ocean of Ecstasy within which all arose.

Inherent in the tsunami of Dissolution,
Flooding the Whole of Being,
Dissolving inward and outward.

The mind too dissolute to contemplate,
What remained when I and the world Vanished,
Or ponder the Bliss Shining thereafter in the Heart.

Unable to cognize or articulate,
The nature of “truth” or “reality”
Recoiling from concept, theory, and conjecture…

I leave such things to those who must know.

Illumined with ever-present Bliss,
The salt doll “i” Dissolved,
I remain, as ever, Surrendered to never knowing…
An Affair of The Heart

Ever.

Surrender Came

Surrender… came.

It was not something “done”,
Not a decision made,
Or a strategy employed,
To come to the Heart's Desire.

Not that I hadn't “tried” to Surrender,
And every other stratagem,
Finding them all, to my utter dismay…
Utterly useless.

Surrender just… came.

Not as a hallmark of Victory,
But rather… the fruition of Defeat,
A flowering, fierce and Absolute.
The death gasp of Hope and Faith.

Even a whisper of Hope remaining,
And I would have struggled on,
To create and sustain in Conditionality…
That which I longed to be without Condition.

There, in that Desert of Defeat,
I remained… and remained…
Until the last vestiges of Hope and Faith,
Fell from me like ashes.
What Wonder to discover there,
Where even demons will not go,
That… Faithless, and without Hope…
Longing remained.

Only now, no longer anywhere to go,
No longer anything to be done,
No longer anything to refrain from doing,
Exhausted, Fully and Completely.

And so… “i” fell…
Head and Heart…
Into the Wellspring of Longing,
Here… in the Cave of The Heart.

And only then, sinking ever more deeply,
Came to Longing's Source…
In the Ocean of Pure Being, where…
Through Surrender's Unimaginable Grace…

“i” drowned… in the arms of The Beloved.

Surrendered

Buddha experienced what he called “enlightenment”,
And at first, thought it impossible to convey.
But entreated by old friends,
Was convinced to speak.

Moved by Compassion, he struggled,
To describe his Subjective Experience,
To point the way for others,
So their suffering, too, might end.
And so with all great teachers,
And all great teachings,
Experience, Interpretation, description,
Followed by prescriptions and proscriptions.

Heaven, Nirvana, Enlightenment,
Is thus, they say.
To come to it,
Do thus, not thus.

And thus...
The many paths are born.
Many paths...
Many Ways.

First, the experience described,
It's value conveyed,
And then the Way explained,
The moon reflected in water.

If enlightenment was not described,
How would any know of it,
And why it should be sought,
Among the 10,000 allures.

If a Way is not shown,
A Way cannot be followed,
To the end of suffering,
And the advent of Satchitananda.

Buddha interpreted his experience thus,
Shankara thus, Mahavir thus,
Lao Tzu thus, Bodhidharma thus,
And on and on... and on.

Experience,
Interpretation,
Expression.
And in most instances,
So much more, heaped upon the essence;
Entire cosmologies formed,
Complex descriptions of “reality”.

So many teachers,
So many teachings,
All expressing The Way,
With certitude and authority.

And those who seek desperately,
A mirroring of clarity and context,
Search the words of those dead and living,
For some reflection…
Of their own unique Experience of Being.

They seek clarification of confusions,
Context, understanding… deepening,
Regarding the Great Mystery unfolding…
In their own unique Experience of Being.

Here and there they find affinity,
In the experiences of others,
The interpretations of others,
The expressions of others.

Wherever I searched,
In the teachings of others,
I found only pieces, more or less so…
Of my own unique Experience of Being.

Among friends, as well, met along the Way,
I saw the taking of this, and discard of that
As each piece fit, more or less so…
Their own unique Experience of Being.
Gods and Goddesses,
Masters, Gurus, Saints,
Each reflecting this facet or that,
Of this incomprehensible Diamond.

Each a beautiful reflection,
Each a useful teaching,
Each…
A partiality.

A partiality.

Finding no refuge whole and complete,
In this view or that,
I fell down where I stood, Homeless…
In the Infinitude of incomprehensibility.

Surrender…

Far from the Village of the Known,
Road vanished into path,
Path vanished into hillside,
Hillside vanished into Vastness,
Vastness vanished into…

My Sat Guru,
My Heart,
Could offer no guidance,
Except…

Surrender…

Complete,
Absolute,
Across… the… Whole… of… Being…

Surrender…
The mind having reached the end of its ability,
   Too intoxicated, too drunk with Amrita,
To understand or comprehend… anything at all.

   Surrender…

To a Heart Shining, beyond all understanding,
   With the Ecstasy of Heaven,
And Filled to overflowing, with Causeless Love.

   Surrender…

   To Grace… Unearned, Unmerited,
      Born of the simple fact,
   Of Existing…

   Surrendered.

* Swooning Heart and Breathless Mind *

Far from the walled villages,
Of religion and philosophy,
Of belief and dogma…

   Road vanished into path,
   All certainty diminishing,
   Ever less discernible…

   Path vanished into hillside,
   My satchel of words and concepts,
   Lost along the way…

   Hillside vanished into Vastness,
   “Where am I?!”
   The Heart swoons in Rapture…
The Known vanished into Wonder,
“What am I?!”
The Mind collapses, unable to breathe…

Here I choose to dwell;
A choice in which I must say,
I have had no say…

Carried, as I have been all along,
From the first step of this Journey,
In the arms of Swooning Heart and Breathless Mind.

**Tea In The Wilderness**

If you’ve abandoned the walled villages,
Of belief, faith, and dogma,
And Wander, alone, in The Wilderness,
You will not encounter many others there,
Where those requiring “knowledge” fear to go.

There, where even a lean-to or rocky ledge,
Is too much shelter against the Great Mystery,
Where a single word says far too much,
Where the mouth is shut, but the eyes…
Like a child’s, are wide open in Wonder.

There, when you chance upon a Wanderer,
Gazing within, Absorbed in their own Vastness,
Unaware of your awareness of them,
You do not intrude upon that Inner Temple,
But quietly set a trap for their Heart.
In a place close by, unseen,
You build a fire, and make Tea,
Waiting... ever so patiently to see,
If their Soul can sense the Aroma,
And turn to find, the Wilderness in you.

If they should turn, and come to Drink,
Nothing is spoken of belief, or faith,
For they, like you, have abandoned such,
And only the song of the birds is heard,
And the rustling of The Unknowable...

Through the leaves of your Souls.

Teaching

In an old Indian story, a man is floating down the Ganges,
And becomes ensnared in his shawl.

The struggle threatens to pull him under.
He fights and fights, gasping for air.

Laughing for such a long time, my Baba chuckles,
"Oh Charles, you don't want this shawl,
But Mother has other plans."

I can almost see him wiping the tears of laughter,
As he struggles to get those words out.
He finds my dilemma hysterical.

But a dear friend said today...
“You can't help sharing your Treasure.
For when the glories of spanda,
The dance of Shiva and Shakti,
Stream out of your sparkling eyes,
Your delighted face,
Your every gesture,
The word "teacher" loses all meaning...
And teaching gushes forth
To nourish everything in its path.”

What a teacher she is.
And what a beautiful teaching she offered,
For Teaching, Healing, and Blessing
Are inherent in Love.

* Spanda: a Sanskrit term for the subtle creative pulse of the universe as it manifests into the
dynamism of living form.

In The Ancient Way

A single letter is written...
More letters form a word...
Words form sentences...
And sentences, paragraphs...

Paragraphs fill a page...
Page after page fill a chapter...
Chapter after chapter, a book...
And many books fill volumes.

Just so, “knowledge” is conveyed,
Concepts, theories, conjecture,
“About” the Mystery that we are,
And the nature of “reality”...

By those who “know” such things.
But in the Ancient Way,
Of the guru, the murshid,
No words need ever be spoken,
Or pages of scripture turned.

For in the most Ancient of Ways,
“Experience” itself is Offered,
Wordlessly… Heart to Heart,
Through Love's Mystical Alchemy.

No instruction need be given,
No prescriptions asserted,
No frowning proscriptions made,
Only, rather…

The Loving Evocation of Grace,
Two Drunkards at the Bar,
Two friends, glasses empty,
As The Beloved pours…

And Hearts overflow.

Just so, the Bottle is opened,
And The Wine poured Freely,
From one Empty Cup,
To another…

By She who is both Wine and Drunkard.

The Beloved

When I ask The Beloved for understanding,
She only takes my hand and smiles.
What am I to do?
After I and the world vanished,
And only Heaven remained,
Not a place, but an Experience,
I and the world returned,
To exist in Wonder.

I did not return into exile,
For in my Heart Shone,
A touch of Heaven's Light,
The Holy Spirit, The Beloved,
The Comforter, the Teacher.

My one true Sat Guru.

Not someone or something
Other than I Am,
But my own Formless Being,
Alive, as Aliveness,
Here… right Here…

In the Locus of the Heart.

When I and the world returned,
The 10,000 traditions surrounded me,
Each speaking with certitude and authority,
Of what had happened, and why,
And how I must understand.

Each founder having planted a flag,
And declared the summit attained.
Each having interpreted and described,
Their own unique experience,
Not as theirs alone, but as “Truth”.

Qualification and quantification,
Being the Loveless doorways to Hell,
This Heart weeps at the Brutality,
Of 10,000 dogmatic assertions,
10,000 rights and wrongs.
Knowing nothing, 
I am an Idiot incapable 
Of instructing or convincing.

But this Mystical Benediction, 
By its very nature, 
Longs, Aches to... Invoke.

The mind swoons, 
Drunk on the Fragrance of Her Perfume, 
Reduced from knowing to Wonder.

The Heart, Surrendered, 
Held like a kitten, 
In the arms of Love.

Such, at least, is my own dogmatism.

The Beloved Thief

My broken heart has vanished! 
It was right here, with all of my suffering!

Ah... your Radiant eyes have stolen everything, 
My Beloved Bandit.

And where the pain was, where “I” was, only Bliss remains. 
A gift from the Smiling Thief.
The Brambles Of Experience

Rummaging through the brambles of Experience in Form,
In search of sweet berries,
I emerge, scratched and bleeding,
Over and over again.

Divine Mother struggles to hold me, feigning severity,
As I squirm and giggle.

Laughing away Her chiding, wincing in pain, I exclaim,
“Oh Ma! How I love those berries!”

She relents her fierceness, laughs, and holds my face,
Tenderly wiping the sorrow-stained tears of Joy.

“I know, My Love.
I made their delight, and their sorrow, just for you.

They bring you always…
Back to Me.”

* I am not separate and aloof from this Most Beautiful “Illusion” of arising manifestation. I am not simply “That”. I am… THIS! Like a child I rummage for enjoyment… and sorrow… and all that is existence in form; innocently, guilelessly, lovingly, sweetly, doing no harm.

The Compassionate Lie

“That” they say.
“That” within which all perceptions arise.
“Neti, neti.” they say.
Not this, not this… but only That.

Such a compassionate lie, a loving deceit.
For thou art not simply That, but This, as well.
Both, and neither, of course.
For where does “This”, that You Are, begin and end?
That which is revealed when identity with form vanishes,
When “you” dissolve like a salt doll into the Ocean of Being,
And Vanish into and as the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Heaven,
Is not simply the qualitiless, attributeless “That”, so often proffered.

Nor simply peace, love, truth, beauty, joy, or happiness. Nor simply psychological, emotional, or energetic quiescence,
Nor simply feeling yourself as "That" within which all arises,
Nor simply feeling yourself expanded as all that arises within “That”.

There are no words to express the Absolute, Unalloyed Ecstasy of Being.
It can only be spoken, Heart to Heart, where Silent, Unmoving Shiva,
Bursts, Singing, into the Dance of Creation,
Where one Hears Silence, and Moves in Stillness.

Formless Shiva is manifest Shakti,
Heaven Shines into, and as, Earth,
Lover and Beloved are One,
And formless Atman Shines, unobscured, into and as, Creation.

When “This” and “That” have Vanished,
And you can dance with the sirens,
Without wrecking upon the rocks of Maya,
Revel in Delight, in the Manifestation of Being.

Then... abandon the advaitic proscriptions,
Against Form, against Bliss,
And follow the Perfume, oh Shiva,
To your Beloved Shakti.

There... where She arises from You, as You,
Where Lover and Beloved become One...
Die there, unto Life, at the Beginning and End of all things,
And Live as the Absolute, Unalloyed, Ecstasy of Pure Being.
The Crossroads

When the mind's capabilities are spent,
Having come to the end of their utility,
So few, it seems, take the turn,
At the crossroads of thought and Feeling…

And Journey on, to The Kingdom of Heaven.

Having come, through reasoned investigation,
To the truth of what they are not,
They do not, at that fateful juncture, take the turn,
From mind to Heart, concept to Experience…

Of what they Are.

This Grace at the Heart of Being,
Is not a reasoned “conclusion” come to,
Through mindful consideration,
Of logic and reason.

That which words and concepts seek to evoke,
Will die in the arid sands of the intellect,
A ghostly apparition wandering,
The wasteland of conceptuality…

For there is no Water there.

“I cannot find myself anywhere within,”
I concluded, with a shock.
“But… I can Feel myself,
I can Feel my Self!”

And so I took the turn, Falling…

And, Vanishing into that Essential Feeling,
“I”, and all of Creation Vanished,
In the Incomprehensible Mystery that Exists,
Before the world and I appeared…

And Heaven Is.
At that Crossroads, I took the turn,
When thought could reason no longer,
And Fell, Heartlong, into the Feeling of That,
From which the thinker, and all Creation arises...

And like a salt doll, Dissolved in that Ocean.

Had I planted a flag at the mind’s conclusion,
And declared the summit attained,
I would have remained at the Crossroads,
Teaching “truth” as I knew it…

Selling water as Wine.

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**The Divine Breeze**

Stillness has a unique Beauty,
An unmoving Sublimity,
But my nature is such,
That I cherish, even more,
The rustling of leaves,
The gentle swaying of branches,
In the sudden arising of a Breeze…

The Unseen, moving the seen.

And so it is, in the world within,
Where, resting in the Serenity of Stillness,
My Heart leaps at the Unseen Touch,
Of Her movement through my Soul,
The senses Rustling in Ecstasy,
The Whole Being swaying in Delight,
For which there are no words.

Moved by the Unmoving,
The Unseen, moving the seen.
The Dust Of Her Feet

It is She who will render you Humble,
    For this is not a Gift,
    You can give yourself.

The stone of selfhood will be crushed
    Again, and again, and again,
    Until only dust remains.

But in that Sweet Deconstructing,
    There is no punishment exacted,
    But only, ever, Love and Blessing.

And the dust that you become,
    Fallen from Her Precious feet,
    Will become, in turn, Benediction…

    Taken upon the weary soles,
    Of those who walk through you,
    On their way to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Experience of Existing

It's all about the Experience of Existing, isn't it.
Simply… what it feels like to be Alive,
To Exist.

That's what all this “spiritual” hubbub is about.
The long and short of it.
What does it feel like to be Alive?

What is the Quality,
Of the Experience of Existing?
The Fall Of A Sparrow

There are times when I fear,
I will surely cry myself to death,
For the suffering of the world,
For the fall of a sparrow.

But Her Presence like a Sun,
Shining within the Heart,
Keeps the Harbinger at bay,
And Illumines even Sorrow…

Even the fallen sparrow.

Sorrow and Ecstasy, at once?
    Impossible.
Relative and Absolute, at once?
    Incomprehensible.

The Mind collapses,
The Heart surrenders,
Manifest existence is Illumined…
And The Beloved Smiles.

The Fathomless Depths of The Heart

What is revealed to the intellect,
Will never plumb the depths of Love,
For that Treasure lays beneath the waves,
Of cognition and “understanding”,
In the Fathomless Depths of The Heart.
Reaching the end of thought's utility,
Consider with your Heart's Intuition,
What has been presented in the waves,
Of concept, theory, and dogma,
To the mind's limited capabilities.

Then sink ever more deeply, fathom by fathom,
The desperate mind holding its breath,
“Knower”, “known”, and “knowledge”
Dissolving in The Mysterium Tremendum,
Fathom by fathomless fathom.

Until, the mind Surrenders,
Unable to hold its breath any longer,
And swallows The Great Mystery,
Dying, at last, to the fruitless struggling,
To know, to grasp, to understand.

For no concepts can convey,
No images display,
Or words express,
What is revealed in that Final Gasp,
At the end of all dualities…

In the Fathomless Depths of The Heart.
In the old days, my Baba said,
True teachers, gurus, murshids,
Did not sit “in front of” groups, elevated above,
But were simple people... simple...
Always sitting “across from” a simple friend.

They were fellow Lovers of The Beloved,
In whose Hearts Her Flame was alight,
And in relationship with whom,
The ember in one's own Heart would ignite,
And one would become, in time... “like them”.

This is, after all, the point, is it not?

This was an intimate spiritual relationship,
Not seeing from a distance, seldom,
Over the heads of a crowd,
Not being “taught” in words and concepts,
But a Mystical Illumining of Grace...

Heart to Heart.
The guru, the murshid, the teacher,
Took tea with a friend, and chatted,
And together they bathed in the Presence,
That Illumined both their Hearts,
One aflame, the other igniting.

Things were said, questions asked, in this simplicity,
That would not be uttered in a crowd of strangers,
Revelations of the Heart's deepest Longing,
Questions utterable only in the Intimacy of Friendship,
And answers…

Born of an Illumined Heart.

It did not matter, my Baba said,
Whether the teacher, the guru, the murshid,
Was brilliant, of diamond-like mind,
Eloquent, and inspiring of speech,
Beautiful for the eyes to behold…

Or a drooling idiot.

All that was required, he said,
Was their Presence,
Which had become, over time,
Through Love, Longing, and inward turning,
Indistinguishable, inseparable from…

Her Timeless Presence.

Two simple Friends,
Two simple ones,
Two Lovers of The Beautiful Mystery,
Taking Tea, chatting, as only Friends can do;
Sipping… Sipping…

Vanishing in The Tea.
In this way, this Ancient Way, my Baba said,  
The Flame in one, ignited the ember in the other,  
And in time, when that ember burst into Flame,  
Another teacher, guru, murshid was born,  
A Simple friend, a Fellow Lover…

Of That for which “Love“ is a wholly inadequate word.

Two things he oft’ repeated:  
“Slowly, slowly; She is doing everything.”  
And, more often even than that,  
“Remain always, a simple man.”

For the old days are now.

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**The Furtive Glance**

This “remembering” of the Beloved…  
It's a Gentle affair…

Soft and tender.

Not a grasping after, a groping,  
Seeking to hold and keep…

For She cannot be “found”.

Not something “done”,  
But rather, being "taken"…

Through Love and Surrender.

A movement, through Remembrance,  
From the Beauty of the outer…

To the Sublimity of the Inner.
Not abrupt,
But a furtive, sidelong glance...

“My Love… are you Here?”

A movement of Affectionate Longing,
But without expectation...

For She dwells not in the future.

Less a “moving toward”,
Than a “waiting for”...

Here... Now... Still... Quiet... Longing.

Perhaps, at first,
The subtle wafting of Her Perfume...

The Fragrance of Heaven.

Then... the Warmth of Her Presence,
As the Heart Illumines.

And then...
The Embrace...

In which Lover and Beloved
Vanish...

And the Heart's Desire is Fulfilled.

The Gates Of Heaven

When we enter the Gates of Heaven,
Both “limited” and “limitless” vanish.
This is what is meant by “Infinite”;
Not endless space,
But the vanishing of space, altogether.

When we enter the Gates of Heaven,
Past, future, and “now” vanish.

This is what is meant by “Eternal”;
Not endless existence in time,
But the vanishing of time, altogether.

When we enter the Gates of Heaven,
The Enjoyer of Enjoyment vanishes.

This is what is meant by “Unalloyed Ecstasy”;
Not endless pleasure had by an “experiencer”,
But the vanishing of the experiencer, altogether.

When we enter the Gates of Heaven,
We vanish.

This is what is meant by “Liberation”;
Not the Benediction of “I”,
But the vanishing of “I”, altogether.

No space
In which objects can arise.

No time
In which objects can be perceived.

No objects
To be perceived.
No subject-perceiver-experiencer
To perceive, experience, cognize.

The vanishing of...
Everything.

Everything...
Gone.

Emptiness.

And yet...

Absolute, Unimaginable, Inexpressible,
Fullness and Completion.

The Unalloyed Ecstasy of Pure Being.

And when “we” return from Heaven
To this Dream of space, time, and form,
Formlessness moving as Form,
Into and as this Locus of Experience...

It is this Light that shines in our Heart,
This Water from The Ocean of Grace,
This Warmth from The Sun of Liberation,
This Fragrance from The Blossom of Pure Being...

The Embrace of The Beloved,
With us, within us, Always...
Always...
In the Wellspring of the Heart.

Not merely Peace, Happiness, and Joy,
As those who wander the frontiers say.
This Bliss, this Ananda...
Is... Rapturous.
R a p t u r o u s

And oh... the Greatest Blessing,
Most Unimaginable Grace,
Most Inexpressible Beatitude,
Is that we needn't enter the Gates of Heaven...

For this Light to Shine within...
For this Fire to warm our Hearts...
For this Living Water to quench our Thirst...
For The Beloved to Embrace us...

For Heaven to Illuminate,
Every aspect of our Being,
Gross and subtle,
Spirit to flesh.

And oh... the Greatest Miracle of all
Most Unimaginable Grace,
Most Inexpressible Beatitude,
Is that this Love, once Shining...

From the Wellspring of our Heart,
Is a wordless Blessing,
To the Hearts of all Beings,
To the Heart of all Creation.
The Great Mystery

It's a Mystery.
I don't know anything,
About anything,
Whatsoever.
Is that OK?

Must I know,
The what, when, and how,
The why and wherefore?
Need I be confident, assured,
And speak with authority?

Do you really want to hear,
More words about...
More descriptions of...
Or is it enough to sit in this Radiance,
And Breathe Bliss.

Knowing nothing,
I have nothing to say.
I can only Share this Mystery,
This Great Unknowing,
This Unbearable Beauty.

At the risk of knowing just one thing,
I will say this much...
This Ecstasy...
It's...
You.

What you are,
Before the world arises, and after,
Before “you” arise, and after,
Your Nature,
Bliss.
How uncomfortable,
To speak even that.
As if I know anything,
About anything,
Whatsoever.

Maybe, if I whisper…
Without speaking….

It's…
You.

The Happiness Of Another

Fullness, Completion, and Joy,
Are to Bliss as wetness is to water,
Or heat to fire.

The Beloved Shines like a sun,
In the locus of the Heart,
And one rests in Sublimity.

But the Sweetest Joy,
Beyond that of our “Subjective Grace”,
Is when Bliss Floods the Heart…

Of another.
At first the Great Teacher thought not to speak,  
For the nature of their Experience,  
Was ineffable and inexpressible.  
This was Great Wisdom.

But compelled by their Friends to speak,  
They uttered words, against their better judgment,  
Words and concepts to point beyond both.  
This was Great Compassion.

How much clarity was conveyed?  
How much confusion?  
Their mind may have considered the odds,  
But their Heart considered only the suffering of others.

Thankfully, or not, the Heart won the day.

And we, who came after,  
And read the countless words,  
The countless interpretations,  
The countless additions and modifications…

We, like the Great Teacher,  
Have only our Hearts to follow,  
Traversing a breadcrumb trail,  
That leads in 10,000 directions.

Heart and Mind,  
And Intuition born of both,  
Guide us on our Journey,  
Not to a final “enlightenment”…

But along a path of Endless Enlightening.
The Heart’s Desire

It’s so easy to forget,
With all this talk of “spirituality”,
Of all the many ways,
All the many paths,
All the many teachers…

All this talk of the Ground of Being,
Of Consciousness,
Of Brahman,
Of Emptiness,
Of Shiva and Shakti,
Of ParamAtman…

Of God.

All this talk of,
Liberation and Bondage,
Knowledge and Ignorance,
Awakening and Enlightenment…

Of the best path,
The greatest guru,
And the heartbreaking notion,
Of doing this,
And not doing that,
So that…

Of purification,
And perfecting,
And karma…

So easy to forget, in all of this...
To lose our way…
In words, thoughts, and concepts,
And to forget…
That our Heart's Desire,
Since the beginning of beginningless Time,
Has ever and always been…
To become Causeless, Conditionless Love,
And for that Love to Shine, always,
In the locus of our Heart.

To die as an object among objects,
In the Dream of space and time,
And reside, free… at last… of “our self”,
As the Unalloyed Ecstasy of Heaven.

The Highest Teacher

One person will go to a teacher,
And the baby will kick in the womb.
Another will find only fault.

One person's mind will be illumined by a teacher's erudition,
Their diamond-like articulation.
Another will receive only empty words.

One person will sense great Bliss pouring from a teacher,
Revealing in themselves, the same Splendor.
Another will feel the teacher dry, brittle, and wooden.

One may emerge unscathed by a teacher's imperfections,
And their own naiveté,
While another crashes and burns.

Each may go on to tell others of their experience,
That this is such and so,
As if it is Truth.
We simply cannot “know”
The Fullness of “Truth”,
From the words or injunctions of another.

Only our Heart, the Highest Teacher,
Can tell us when to Love, for how long,
And when to come and go.

The Highway Of Grace

All those years in auto shop,
Under the hood, covered in grease,
Working on that candyapple red beauty,
That one day… one day I would drive.

One day,
After I learned “about”,
And learned “how to”,
Then… maybe.

All those years of furrowed brow,
Studying the manuals.
Learning the “truth”
About driver and machine.

I cursed as I rapped my knuckles,
Struggling to understand,
What, why, and how,
How to think, how to act.

But neither Thought nor Action,
Ever prepared me for the open road.
The Way of the Heart, El Camino del Corazon.
Where one Feels one's way.
One day, sick of manuals and tools,
Of reading “about” and dreaming “of”,
I threw the top down, petulant, fired Her up,
And headed off, down the Coast Highway.

I never graduated auto shop.
I have no license.
I don't know a goddamn thing…
But man…
I'm driving.

Engine humming,
Wind in my hair,
Sky above,
Road below…
And a smile that says way…

...Way more than just happy.

There are those well read, and gifted,
With explaining the unexplainable.
They will help you “understand”,
If that is what you seek.

Myself… I am simply a madman behind the wheel.

For some it's time to leave the manuals,
You'll never “understand”.
Time to drop the tools,
She'll never be “ready”.

If you're such a delinquent,
Hop in!
There's something about that seat.
This is the Highway of Grace.
The Inner Sanctum

How I love to visit temples, mosques, and churches,
   But only because when I see or enter them,
The Temple of my own Heart Illumines in recognition.

   Not a recognition of beliefs or dogmas,
   But of the Effulgent Mystery that each enshrines,
   So often obscured by the detritus of "religion".

My “nondual” friends think me naive and foolish,
In need of emotional healing, or simply delusional,
Or I would surely not enter these monuments to duality.

But having Experienced formless, unmanifest Heaven,
   And returned, my Heart thereafter Illumined,
I no longer discern where nonduality begins and ends…

For Formless, Unmanifest Heaven now Shines… Here.

The Radiant Presence within the Heart,
   Is none other than the Light of Heaven, Immanent,
And it is This Great Mystery which Dances in recognition…

   Recognition of temple, mosque, church, or cathedral,
   Of the Light in the eyes of fellow Lovers,
   Of the infinite manifestation of the unmanifest…

   And my own… Sweet… Existence.

   “Love is my Religion,” as a Sufi poet declared,
   And where it Shines, my Heart Illumines in recognition,
   Recognition of Love here… Shining there.

   All of Creation is surely a Temple,
   As are edifices built with hands, sweat, and devotion,
   But my own Heart, the Great Recognizer of these…

   Is the Inner Sanctum.
The Jasmine Lover

How Deliciously Devious,
Of our Heart,
Our true Sat Guru...
What a Loving Deceit,

To lure a Jasmine Lover,
With the Fragrance of the Beloved,
Only to deny,
Through the most Compassionate Duplicity,
The dream of Love's Fulfillment,
That hobbled imagination had envisioned.

Luring us instead, Within...
To our Own Jasmine-Heart,
Our Own Jasmine-Being,
Our Own Jasmine-Bliss.

Where, after having longed for Embrace,
Through countless ages,
With all of our Heart,
We discover,
Instead...

Ourself, the Lover,
Vanished,
Beloved Jasmine,
Vanished,
And only Love remaining.

There was a period of time when I meditated several times each week with a spiritual Friend. She was very devotional by nature, and enjoyed the inner stance of the Lover. That's not to say that she didn't also possess a brilliant mind. But her Heart was so full of longing for the Beloved that at one point in her spiritual journey, when she would begin her spiritual practices, she would
find herself unable to proceed, falling over onto the floor, sobbing uncontrollably for long periods.

Over a particular two-weeks, we had an interesting dialog about the nature of the Absolute, Unalloyed Bliss of Sat-Chit-Ananda, in which Lover and Beloved vanish in the Absolute Fulfillment of Love’s Longing.

She was having none of it.

Initially, she was dismissive, stating that she simply had no desire to become anything other than the Lover. Everyone must be Free to follow their Heart. But I continued to express, simply in the context of two friends chatting, the nature of nondual Bliss.

Over the course of our time meditating together, I’d seen that whatever aspect of the Great Matter we were discussing outwardly would also, through a mystical alchemy, come to fruition inwardly. The aspect would not simply be clarified and understood by the mind, or simply felt by the Heart, but would be “apperceived” across the Whole of the Being. Words spoke to the mind, but the wordless emanation of that which was being spoken of transformed from the inside out.

If such statements, pointing toward “mystical alchemy, transmission, or emanation”, raise the hackles of my advaitic friends… so be it. There are many paths to God. Let all be Free.

During the second week, her protestations continued. She quoted Ramakrishna, stating that she would, “Rather taste sugar than be sugar.” I understood completely. But I also knew the Absolute, Unalloyed Ecstasy of timeless, spaceless, objectless Pure Being, in which the Absolute Fulfillment of Love’s Longing can only be spoken of as… Heaven.

During the second week the dialog continued, in words and in meditation. She was unyielding in her stance and, perhaps tiring of a discussion in which she was losing interest, even became somewhat obstinate. Seeing this, and understanding that Absolute Love can only be experienced directly, I felt it was perhaps time to move on from this subject.
But toward the end of that second week, we opened our eyes after a 
meditation, and she turned very calmly and, after a brief pause, said softly, “I 
understand.” That was all she said, and I remained quiet, for I knew that she 
had, indeed experienced the Union of Shiva and Shakti, the Lover, and the 
Beloved, and that there was no further need of words.

Our longing and our search begin in the dream of duality, with thoughts and 
feelings about The Beloved. But as my teacher, Jean Klein, once told me, “In 
time, the Lover and the Beloved become One. Count on it!”

Was it the words that were spoken over the course of those two weeks? Had my beautiful Friend become “convinced”? Or, was it the wordless, formless 
transmission of that which was being spoken of; the words (Shakti) arising 
from, and imbued with, wordless, formless Love (Shiva)?

The Jewel Within

Peace…
Not born of peaceful conditions,
Not born of peaceful circumstance, 
But Inherent in the Essence of our Being.

Happiness…
Not born of happy circumstance,
Not born of happy conditions, 
But in Inherent in the Depths of our Soul.

Joy…
Not born of joyful conditions, 
Not born of joyful circumstance, 
But Inherent in our Deepest Interiority.
Dissolution…
Of the suffering self,
A Gift not born of merit or worthiness,
But the Love Child of Longing, Grace…

And the Quest for Heaven, within.

Ecstasy…
Not born of bodily sensation,
Not born of emotional elation,
But Inherent in the Presence of The Beloved.

All facets of The Jewel within,
Buried in The Depths of our Being,
But discoverable, oh Miner of Love,
When head and heart, Discernment and Longing…

Dig together.

The Journey To Heaven

We begin simply hearing of it, and disbelieving.
How could something so Wonderful be true,
When all we've ever known…
This body, this world,
And ever-changing conditionality…
Point to its impossibility?

Notions of Liberation from the suffering of “i”,
And even more so the advent
Of Unalloyed Ecstasy…
Are thought, by the Mind,
To be delusions.
But deep within,
In The Realm of The Heart,
We cannot escape the strange Longing
That will not be extinguished,
For that… which cannot be put into words.

At some point, if we are Blessed...

We turn to seek Ourself,
Feeling our way back… back…
Behind all that appears to us…
Struggling to locate our Source.

What am I?
Where am I?
Where?
Where?

Where is the seer,
The perceiver,
The knower,
The experiencer?

At some point, if we are Blessed...

The Fragrance of Heaven
Wafts across our path,
Here… in the realm of Experience.
And is recognized,
In the very instant of its appearing,
Though never before known to us,
As our Heart's Desire.

This is the Fragrance…
Of our own Pure Being,
And a sign that we have traveled, at last,
From the far frontiers…
Into the borderlands of Heaven.
Now our course is moved, at every turn,
In pursuit of this fleeting Fragrance,
Back, back, behind all that appears to us,
And we are guided, in the truest sense…
By our Sat Guru.

We “remember” the Feeling of It,
Not with our mind,
But with our Whole Being.
We Feel our way to Heaven,
Back… back…
Behind all that appears to us.

At some point, if we are Blessed…

The Fragrance begins to arise
Not only in conscious moments of inward turning,
But spontaneously, and we are taken unawares.
Having begun in soliciting, we are solicited.

At some point, if we are Blessed…

All that appears to us becomes apparitional,
And we… as well,
And we see… far off…
The City on The Hill,
Wherein lays the Temple.

At some point, if we are Blessed…

The Fragrance of the Temple's Incense, Ananda,
Surrounds us always, breathed in, and out,
Inherent in, and inseparable from,
The turning inward of Attention.

At some point, if we are Blessed…
The Fragrance of Ananda
Takes up residence, paradoxically, in our Heart;
Here… in this Locus of Experience
That is our Manifest Being.

Now, so close to Formless dissolution…

An impossible mystical alchemy
That transcends the laws of duality,
Brings about the Experience,
Of Formlessness in Form.

Only the smallest distance remaining…

Only a thought,
Between “i” and Utter Dissolution,
The continued inward turning,
And ever-increasing Ecstasy,
Brings us to the door of the Holy of Holies.

And then…
if we are Blessed…
Poof!

The Kiss of Grace

I read one day…
That if I did not do thus,
And refrain from doing thus,
There would be no hope for me.

When I asked The Beloved of this,
She bound my hands, and Kissed my Heart.
I saw, the world over…
Brokenhearted souls struggling,
To perfect their imperfections,
Feeling it necessary to win Her Love.

When I asked The Beautiful One of this,
She covered my eyes, and Kissed my Heart.

I heard one day…
That from the multitudes of humanity,
Only a very few begin The Journey,
And that of these very few,
Only the most virtuous come to Her.

When I asked my Love of this,
She covered my ears, and Kissed my Heart.

In time, I fell into confusion and despair,
Having read, heard, and seen,
So many conflicting descriptions of “reality”,
So many conflicting assertions of “truth”.

When I asked The Bestower of Grace of this,
She stole my mind, and Kissed my Heart.

When I told the orthodox of this Kiss,
They mocked my madness and delusion,
Chided my arrogance and conceit,
And forbade me burial in holy ground.

When I asked The Merciful One of this,
She buried me in Her Heart.
The Merchant

A merchant came to the Tavern of the Beloved,
Selling reasons, causes, conditions;
Ways in which we Drunken Fools,
Intoxicated on the Beautiful Bartender's Wine,
Could become worthy of Her Love.

We at the bar could not hear him clearly,
Against the music, dance, and laughter,
Nor could we see him through the Smoke of Love
That filled the Tavern to the rafters,
And, inhaled, flowed through our Hearts.

But feeling mischievous, we cried “Fabulous!”,
And hoisted our cups in toast, “Huzzah!”
Then standing, stumbling, brought him to the bar
Where… to our utter astonishment,
He refused the Wine She poured…

And began…

Listing conditions, circumstances, causes,
Logic to be followed, conclusions to be reached,
All of these and much more, prerequisites,
Requirements for “attainment”…
And… for each, the price to be paid.

As a Kindness… we bought every book he sold.
Then, embracing the poor fellow, sent him forth,
Into the Loveless night of worthy and unworthy,
With a Prayer and a Blessing,
That Grace might Shower upon him.

And through the course of the night's revelry,
Drowning ever more deeply in Her Eyes,
Ever more Intoxicated on the Perfume of Her Presence,
We burned the pages, book by book…
To light the Dance floor.

The Middle of Nowhere

There is no rudder here to guide,
No sail to catch the wind,
No stars by which to set a course,
No land toward which to dream.

I am adrift,
Here...
In the middle of Nowhere,
In the middle of... Everywhere.

What am I?
Where am I?
Where have I come from?
Where am I going?
What is this... Life?

What can such a one,
Knowing nothing of anything,
Say to those drifting by,
In the way of “pointing”.

How is it possible,
That Bliss fills the Heart,
Of one so lost,
Drifting wide-eyed in Wonder,
A Drunkard... not a sage?
And more wondrous still…
How is it possible,
That some “Catch” this Bliss,
By merely drifting by,
Through wordless Grace alone?

What Mystical Alchemy is at play,
Beyond all reckoning of mind and reason,
To bring about “there”,
What Shines, Freely Gifted,
“Here”?

For Knowledge, not present here,
Cannot be imparted,
Nor any Way with certitude pointed,
By such a one.

“How can I help anyone,
When I, myself, am so utterly lost,
And have no knowledge to impart?”
I asked my Baba.

“I would have you no other way.” he replied.
“You needn't know anything,
Or say anything.
Love requires… only your Presence.”

And my Baba was right,
For the Bliss that inhabits this Heart,
Is born not of knowledge and certitude,
But from Unimaginable Grace.

Surrendered,
Fallen… Intoxicated,
Into the fathomless depths,
Of the Ocean of Bliss.
Drifting,
Here…
In the middle of Nowhere,
In the middle of… Everywhere.

Home.

The Mystery That She Is

Whatever words you can speak of Her,
Are no more than sounds,
Echoing through The Mystery that She is.

Whatever image you may hold of Her,
Is mere imagination,
Appearing within The Mystery that She is.

Whatever concepts the mind births,
Are mere apparitions,
Conceived within The Mystery that She is.

But... the Longing in your Heart,
That ache, more ancient than time,
That, my friend, is Real.

For it does not arise from you,
Being a Gift of Love, immeasurable,
Placed there by The Beloved Herself.

Unspoken.
Unseen.
Beyond conception.

A Perfume, lingering, of Unutterable Beauty,
A heartbreaking memory of Love known,
And then, tragically Forgotten.
A Longing that will, in time,
Carry you beyond time,
Where word, image, and concept, cannot go.

A Longing that will Blossom within you,
Until The Mystery that She is,
Becomes inseparable from, Shining within...

The Mystery that you are.

The Oasis

In the desert of separation,
So many journey in desperate thirst,
Drinking only concepts, dogmas, and “belief”,
Never Falling from the arid Mind…

Into the Ocean of The Heart.

Desiccated by drought born of “religion”,
Having wandered so long, so far from Living Waters,
They are no longer able to smell Moisture in the air,
And, journeying past the Wellspring of Grace…

Dismiss the Oasis as mirage.

Come! Come!
Drink! Drink!
Turn the water of knowledge,
Into the Wine of Love.
The Path Of The Idiot

I want nothing to do with “spirituality”,
With sitting around talking endlessly about it.

I would never say that others should not do so.
Everyone must follow their Heart.

All is as God wills it.

I, alas, am simply not interested.
And so I stay Here.

If someone comes,
They are welcomed.

If they leave,
They are followed by Love.

The Heart is untouched, unmoved,
By comings and goings.

But touches and moves,
Through the power of its Love.

There's no sign on the door,
Announcing anything.

One must simply wander by,
And… notice.

Then, two friends take tea and chat,
But not about “spirituality”.

Any friend capable of “noticing”,
Dissolves effortlessly in their tea.

There is no need to talk “about”,
No need to “know” or “understand”,

To make a “thing” of This,
Seems to me, profane.
This is the Ancient Way,
The Pathless Path.

Not better or worse,
But just as it is.

One “catches” it,
Or doesn’t.

The Pathless Path

How can I not be a Sufi,
How could they turn me away,
When the Beloved walks the pathways,
In the Secret Garden of my Heart?

How can I not be a Hindu,
How could they turn me away,
When the Atman Shines Radiant,
In the locus of my Being?

How can I not be a Christian,
How could they turn me away,
When the Holy Spirit,
Comforts and Teaches with every breath?

How can I not be a Buddhist,
How could they turn me away,
When free of independent arising,
This Dream of Endless Causality flows?

Who would refuse this Drunken Vagabond,
Dancing at every temple,
Crying at every altar,
Beseeching every Lord…

Yet thankful in every breath,
For Grace already received…
And Benediction already given,
Before ever the World was born.

Wandering the Great Mystery…
Mindless, Intoxicated,
Along the Pathless Path,
Through which all Paths Wander.

How can I care,
Who embraces or shuns,
When All is Fulfilled,
All is Fulfilled…

All is Fulfilled.

The Perfecting Schools

To those who believe we are here to become perfect,
I offer sincere, respectful condolences
For a lifetime spent in
“Imperfection”.
The Perfume of The Beloved

If the Perfume of The Beloved,
Were not sweet, seductive, and enticing,
Why would we care, for a moment,
To turn wandering Attention inward?

If She was without qualities,
If She was without attributes,
Why would we be drawn,
Why would a Lover care?

Why would we bother to venture within,
When the enticing enjoyments, without,
Are so readily available and alluring,
To our ever-wandering Attention?

It is because She is So Very Beautiful,
Her Perfume so Irresistibly Intoxicating,
That we Journey into the depths of our Being,
To find Her there, as the Light of our Soul.

For when, arriving at the Heart of Being,
We Vanish into our Formless Essence,
It is Rapturous Ecstasy, beyond expression,
That is experienced in Pure Awareness…

At the end of all duality.
The Problem

The problem is…
Identification with the felt sense of “I”,
With the felt sense of an object-self
With self-qualifications,
Self-quantifications,
And self-judgments.
The felt sense of it all.

Make no mistake, dear Hearts,
That's the only “spiritual” problem.

There is no inherent problem with enjoyment.
No problem with your human nature.
No problem inherent in sex.
No problem inherent in tequila.
No problem inherent in marijuana.
No problem inherent in watching tv.
No problem inherent in anything…
Anything…
Whatever...
But… the felt sense of “You”.

There is only one “problem”…
With “good” and “bad”.
“Right” and “wrong”,
“Better” or “worse”
“Enlightened” or “unenlightened”
And that is how they define…
You.

For God’s sake, make no mistake,
The very fact of your existence
Is cause enough,
Is reason enough,
For Love.
The very fact of your existence
Gives rise to the Ecstasy of Being.
Simply the very fact,
That you Are.

Not that you have “become” this or that,
Not that you have “done” this, or “stopped doing” that,
Have “Attained” this, or “merited” that.
Have “seen” this, or “realized” that,
Have “experienced” this or that…

Dear God… not that you have become “worthy”.

Simply the very fact
That you Are
Is cause enough,
Is reason enough,
For Love.

The Rains Of Heaven

When I wandered in search of Heaven,
I encountered villages along the way,
And inquired of each, the path to follow.

In each, a different way was pointed,
And the “correct” manner in which to walk.
And in each, a different description of Heaven.

Each description was of… something else,
Something other than my Heart's Desire,
An Ancient Memory of a Love forgotten.

When I spoke of this Love's guiding Mercy,
Surely bringing me one day to its Fulfillment,
They mocked my naiveté, saying…
Not until…

Not until I stopped doing this, and began doing that.
Not until I renounced, and led a chaste life.
Not until I purified my impure nature.

Not until I meditated perfectly.
Not until I accrued sufficient merit.
Not until I transcended.

Not until…

Not until I saw as they saw,
Not until I understood as they understood,
Not until I experienced as they experienced.

Poor villagers,
Huddled behind the walls of the known,
Fearing the Wilderness more than hell itself.

I did naught of what I was told I must,
And reveled in those things I was told I must not,
Stoned along the way by the righteous.

My Heart, Surrendered, a Captive of Love,
My Mind a Dreamer of Unimaginable Grace,
My Spirit, a Sobbing Lover in Exile.

Wherever I found myself,
However “sinful” my thoughts, speech, or actions,
I felt always and everywhere… Unbearable Longing.

In each step, each breath, every heartbeat,
I walked, always, with a Heart in tears,
For Love as yet unknown, but Known.

And living thus, a Wilderness Wanderer,
With Longing, alone, the substance of my sadhana,
“I“ found Her… at last…and died in Her arms.
It is not what you do, or do not do,  
But the Quality of your Love.  
That brings the Rains of Heaven.

Drenched, Soaking, Enraptured... I swear it.

I swear it.

**The Salt Doll “I”**

At first, everything simply... was.  
There was seeing, hearing,  
Touching, tasting, smelling.  

No felt sense, at all,  
Of seer, hearer,  
Toucher, taster, smeller.

Then... the advent of words,  
Naming and describing,  
All that was.

And suddenly there were countless,  
Where not even one,  
Had existed.

Where space had never been,  
“Here and there”  
Suddenly appeared,

And “i”, the one,  
Sitting here, not there,  
Appeared.

Where time had never been,  
“Now and then”  
Suddenly appeared,
And “i”, remembering past,
And imagining future,
Appeared.

Where “i” and “other” had not been known,
A world of infinite other
Suddenly appeared,

And “i”, utterly alone,
Among all of these...
Appeared.

When space, time, and objects appeared,
From timeless, spaceless, objectless Aliveness,
“i” became a “thing” alive.

A subtle sense at first,
Never noticed in its arising,
Came “i”.

“i”, the seer, hearer,
Toucher, taster, smeller,
Perceiver, experiencer.

“i”... the person.

And all too soon forgotten...
The Innocence,
Before “i” was born.

“i” learned ever more “about”,
The world, out there,
And “i”, in here.

Good and bad,
The world...
And “i”.

Qualified, quantified,
The world...
And “i”.

The Salt Doll “I”
A grain of salt here... “Good boy!”
A grain of salt there... “Bad boy!”
And the salt doll “i” took form.

Stature, fame.
Guilt, and shame,
defined “me”.

And over time,
Each tiny grain of salt forgotten...
The salt doll as a “thing” became real to itself.

“i”… not only a thought,
“Imagined” and believed,
But a Feeling, across the Whole of Being.

Dukkha, Buddha called it.
The inherent unease and dissatisfaction
Of existing as... “i”.

An unhappiness,
In the Heart of Being,
Ever present... inescapable.

How much I have written,
About the salt doll’s journey
Home.

How very long it took for “i” to sense,
Its very existence to be
The Wellspring of Sorrow.

How “i” turned, thirsting near death,
Toward the Fragrance of Living Water,
And began the long walk from desert to Shore.

And how, arriving there,
Unable to bear existence
One moment longer...
“i” walked into the Waves of Dissolution,
To Death…
Unto Life,
As the Ocean of Pure Being.

“i” now vanished, “I” remain,
Not a “thing” alive,
But Life Itself.

Returned,
Having never moved,
From whence the salt doll came.

The Salt Doll’s Journey

You’ve heard, salt doll "self",
Of the Ocean of Pure Being,
Of Heaven,
And you begin walking,
From the Desert of duality,
In the direction your Friend has pointed.

As you draw nearer,
Even before seeing It,
You begin to feel Moisture in the air.
And it is so… very… Intoxicating,
Especially to one so… very… parched,
From a life lived as a “person”,
As... “someone”.

If you stop walking now,
You will continue to enjoy the fleeting mist,
Ebbing and flowing, as mists do,
But will remain a person, an enjoyer.
And, suffering that pain of separation,
Will grasp desperately to hold,
What cannot be held;
The Fragrant mist,
Sweet with the taste of your Heart’s Desire.
And will live out your life still thirsting.

Keep walking, Dear Heart.

In time, you will come to the shore,
And standing there, become so Saturated,
With the Mist of Heaven,
That Sublimity drips from your hair.

But even there, drenched in Beauty.
“You” will remain,
And suffering, will grasp, white-knuckled,
To fill the Hole in your Heart.

Keep walking, Dear Heart.

The Mist you feel is "of" the Ocean,
Wetness to that Water,
But should not be mistaken,
For Immersion in The Depths.

However Sublime "your" experience,
It will never satisfy "you",
Will never dissolve "you",
Will never quench the Ancient Longing
As long as “you” remain.

Keep walking, Dear Heart.

Walk on, salt doll,
Until the ideas you hold of yourself,
Until the ideas you hold of The Beloved,
Until all concepts, theories, and imaginings,
Sink into the Depths beyond all dualities.

Keep walking, Dear Heart.
Walk on, salt doll,
Into those Living Waters,
Where, drowning in Grace, Mercy, and Love,
Breathing in Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
"you" die, at last, unto Life...

And only the Ocean, The Beautiful One, Abides.

**The Sky and I**

The word “I”
Is like the word “sky”.
Both point to things which
Cannot be located as “things” in themselves.

Sky, the Infinite Vastness,
Within which the Heavens appear... and vanish.
Empty, itself, as a thing,
Yet... holding everything.

I, the Formless Aliveness,
Within which, as which...
All manifestation, even the Beloved Sky, appears.
Empty of form, myself, yet Full of all that is.

And Full, as well, before form ever arises,
Of the Unalloyed Ecstasy,
Of Unmanifest Pure Being...
Heaven.

Not a thing, alive...
But Life, Itself.
The “Spiritual” Life

How unnatural,
It seems, at least to me,
This striving to lead a “spiritual” life.
To think all the time of “spiritual” things,
To speak all the time of “spiritual” things,
To read all the time of “spiritual” things.
Associating only with the “spiritual”.
I quit before graduating,
It all having become,
Tiresome.

In the simplicity,
Of a very “normal” life,
I found all that I had sought so long,
In the extraordinary world of the “spiritual”.
Here, in the Horror and Ecstasy of embodiment,
In the dream of apparent objects and form.
Here, living as a blind drunkard,
Embracing Experience,
Loving Existence.

The Stew

There is our direct Experience,
And our interpretation of it.
And therein lays all manner of trouble.

And the venerable traditions,
With centuries of accrued interpretation?
Not without benefit… but not without trouble.
All is as God wills it.
To each his own.
Let everyone be free.

Speaking only for myself…
I will not put the Great Mystery,
In a box.

And interpret,
And qualify,
And quantify.

There seems no doubt, to me, that teachers pour their unique propensities,
 proclivities, and preferences into the stew of their teachings. And these, in turn, are taken by students as expressions of “enlightenment”, as “Truth”.

And the longer and more venerable the tradition, lineage, or religion, the more detritus – concept, theory, and conjecture – accrues into the “scriptures” and teachings.

The Terrible Problem
What if being “unenlightened” was a terrible problem…
And you no longer cared,
Having discovered that the “problem”,
Not unenlightenment,
Was the problem.
The Tribes of Knowing

There are many “tribes”,
Scattered far and wide,
In the Infinite Vastness,
Of This Incomprehensible Mystery,
Without center or periphery.

Each tribe holds fast,
To their own unique traditions,
Their own unique interpretations,
Their own unique descriptions,
Of “reality” and “Truth”.

Their Elders point to the Mystery,
Beyond the edge of their encampment,
And teach, with certainty and authority,
That it is thus, and thus, and thus,
And one should do thus, and thus, not thus.

We are born in and from The Wilderness,
In and from the Boundless Unknowable,
But unable to bear that Crushing Immensity,
Seek shelter and safe haven in “knowledge”,
In encampments of “belief” and “faith”.

And so the tribes of knowing are born.

I, too, have sheltered thus,
While Journeying this life,
Finding comfort and commiseration,
In interpretations and descriptions,
Of an Infinitude beyond word or concept.

The intellect took refuge for a time,
Until, in time, each time,
Knowledge and understanding,
However much a solace to the mind,
Proved unable to Fulfill the Heart’s Desire.
At which time, in time, each time,
I took leave of this tribe or that,
And, offering gratitude and Blessing,
Walked naked, again, into the Wilderness,
Of astounded, lucid confusion.

And in that Wilderness without end,
Knowing nothing, understanding nothing,
Walking in Awe, breathing Wonder,
I Died of exposure…

To Love.

**The Ultimate Hottie**

Sometimes spiritual seekers seem like alcoholics,
And gurus like bartenders,
And sanghas like nightclubs,
And “God”… the Ultimate Hottie.

Alas… when satsang ends,
And the “high” wears off after a few days,
And the Ultimate Hottie stops returning our calls,
She seems nothing more than the Ultimate Tease.

Beside yourself with Grief and Longing,
You drink our way into oblivion,
And awaken, dawn after dawn,
In the arms of Maya.

Until… one morning,
Turning to gaze upon the face of Maya,
We see, instead,
Our long-lost Beloved.
It was Her all along,
Wearing Maya’s makeup!
We were simply too drunk,
On the teacher’s words.

**The Ultimate Teacher**

Having several teachers in my long life,
I knew but one Ultimate Teacher,
My own Heart,
And the Unbearable Longing that Shone there,
Unrelentingly.

It was into and as that Sat Guru
That “I” eventually Vanished.
And in that Vanishing,
Both teacher and student Disappeared,
Leaving only Causeless, Unconditional Love.

**The Verdant Heart**

Sooner or later, someone asks, “How?”
“How to come to all that you speak of?”
And the Friend answers…

“Love. How else?”

Not simply a salve, as some say,
For the emotionally wounded,
In need of healing.
Not a compassion born,  
Of self-serving,  
Perfection of virtue.

Not a strategy taken,  
A stance deployed,  
In search of Benediction.

But Defeat, Absolute and Certain,  
From which ashes arise,  
Victory…

In the Vanquishing of the Victor.

Understanding will not bring you here,  
However diamond-like its clarity,  
However impactful the seeing.

You begin where you are,  
Loving, and desiring to be Loved,  
But become, in the end…

Love Itself.

Be prepared to have your Heart Broken,  
Not by anyone or anything,  
But by Love Itself,  
And for that Broken Vessel,  
To be made Whole and Complete,  
By the Breaker of Hearts…

And made Radiant with Grace.

But if you will not dare to Love,  
Then Truly…
You will never “Suffer” this Rapture,

But will remain on the Frontiers of Heaven,  
Wandering the desert of “knowledge”,  
In search of Water which can only be found…
In the Oasis of the Verdant Heart.

The Village Gate

The author apologizes for using words;
For speaking dualistically one moment,
And absolutely the next;
For taking the transcendent view breathing in;
And the immanent view breathing out.

The mind is uneasy in confusion,
But the Heart reads chaos as poetry.

The mind lives within the walled village,
Of knowledge and ordered reason.
The Heart wanders far from “civilization”,
In the Wilderness of the Great Mystery.

Reasoning can bring one to the village gates,
But only the Heart will open them,
And push one out, out…
Into the Unknowable, the Inexpressible.

There, a mind not yet ready, shudders,
And quickly builds a new village.
But a mind Blessed by Grace stands naked,
Illumined by its own dissolution.

There, an unfortunate heart succumbs to fear,
And falls down quaking,
But a Heart Blessed by Grace surrenders,
To Unbearable Wonder.
Longing is Grace,
Love is Grace,
Beauty is Grace,
Richness of Heart is Grace.

Push open the village gate.

Until, upon a path grown pathless,
Heart and Mind, Heaven and Earth,
Vanish like a mist,
Into and as,

**The Way Of Love**

No rudder need be held,
Nor oars brought to bear,
No sails through effort raised aloft.

No charts laid out to view,
Nor compassed stars divined,
To guide along your Way.

No strategies employed,
Nor practiced skills perfected,
No disciplines willfully engaged.

Adrift upon The Mystery,
All direction lost in Wonder,
To The Far Shore you will come...

By Remembering what you Love.
The Way Of The Heart

You have been Graced into the Secret Way, The Way of the Heart.

“Understanding”,
However diamond-like,
However impactful on the Experience of Being,
Will never again satisfy you.

The bee has done its job,
And the pollen of knowledge
Has been transmuted by Mystical Alchemy
Into Bliss.

Now... the bee dies,
Understanding and knowledge,
Turn from soft parchment to dust,
And you Live wide-eyed, in Awe and Wonder,

In The Great Mystery,
As The Great Mystery.

You drink from Living Waters now,
Flowing from the Wellspring of the Heart.

All is changed. All is changed.
Oh mind, oh mind, I leave you here.

Only words Wet,
Will find resonance,
In one already dampened.

The Emanation of Love,
Will only touch your Heart,
If you are already pregnant with Longing.

How will you know?
The baby will kick.
You are now… Alone,
And never again Alone.

While you may long to find
Fellow Idiots, thus imbued,
Finding none, you remain Full and Complete.

Now Your Heart
Will look Lovingly for itself
In all that is experienced,
And in all who are met.

The Whole Being Wagging

It's not enough to have arrived at a place of effortlessly arising Bliss.
It's not enough to be imbued with powers, however dazzling.

It's not enough to feel yourself expanded as all that is.
It's not enough to feel yourself as That within which all arises.

It's not enough that others feel spiritual power emanating from you.
It's not enough that they swoon, declare pain gone, and great blessings arrived.

It's not enough to have a brilliant mind, and a tongue to match.
It's not enough that thousands follow you.

It's not enough for the binding sense of self-identity to have vanished.
It's not enough to exist as the Emptiness that remains.

None of these things, and many other wondrous things as well, are enough,
If, bound by lingering residues of selfhood, you harm others.

Grasping after love, adoration, power, and treasure.
Wanting, needing, taking.
The Greatness of a teacher is not in their spiritual power,
Or powers of any kind, or eloquence, or charisma.

Greatness is the extent to which the vessel has been subsumed by Love,
Has become transparent, has ceased Grasping, and seeks only to Give.

I'm old, and weary of "selves" cloaked in spiritual glory.
But I am thankful each day for the Simple Ones I find.

What's this? My puppy has appeared, ball in mouth,
Her whole body wagging.

May those who seek Love find a human Guide,
Who greets them in Humility, Honesty, and Simplicity,
Free of the grasping "self"…

The Whole Being wagging.

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**The Wine Of Her Presence**

I know nothing of an afterlife,
But am not concerned,
For I am so Intoxicated, Here, Now,
On the Wine of Her Presence,
That time has become,
Tomorrow has become,
A ghostly apparition.

The mind cannot move,
Its gazed fixed,
On the Lovely One.
I know nothing of God,
But am not concerned,
For I am so Intoxicated, Here, Now,
On the Wine of Her Presence,
That the hierarchy of flesh and spirit, 
Human and God, profane and holy, 
Has lost all meaning.

The Heart is breathless,
Still... but Shaking with the Ecstasy, 
Of the Lovely One.

I know nothing of Heaven,
But am not concerned,
For I am so Intoxicated, Here, Now,
On the Wine of Her Presence, 
That the mind is tongue-tied, 
Muted in such considerations, 
By the Beauty of Her Eyes.

If Heaven is Fullness, 
Completion, and Bliss, 
Then it is Here, Now.

I am not “perfected”, 
But am not concerned, 
For I am so Intoxicated, Here, Now, 
On the Wine of Her Presence, 
Wounded and broken as I am, 
That I can no longer wonder, 
That Love is Causeless.

Before the terrible dualities, 
Of perfection and imperfection, 
She Is... I Am.
I know nothing of “enlightenment”,
But I am not concerned,
For I am so Intoxicated, Here, Now,
On the Wine of Her Presence,
That the desire for “more” has vanished,
All movement “to and from” ceased,
As I Rest, Vanishing, in… and as…

The Wine of Her Presence.

There Comes A Time

There comes a time,
When we become quite mad,
No longer able to function in the “secular”,
Without it becoming, magically, “sacred”,
Without our perception of everything… changing.

There comes a time, after the secular becomes sacred,
When the Great Mystery is no longer a mere curiosity,
Wondered about on Holy days,
In occasional discussions with friends,
Or engaged in during moments of “religious” observance.

There comes a time, after curiosity Blossoms,
When the Great Question impinges on awareness,
Upon each moment, each breath, each heartbeat,
Even while occupied in so-called “worldly” endeavors,
And demands our Heartfelt Consideration.

There comes a time, after Heartfelt Consideration,
When we are “taken”, with no choice in the matter,
And Awareness, as we’ve known it all our life,
Becomes ever more Dissolute, ever more Intoxicated,
As this Great Consideration has its way with us.
There comes a time, after we are “taken”,
When we come to peace with this Loving Intruder,
This Possession by Grace, by Dissolution and Bliss,
And somehow, though at first it seemed unlikely,
The mundane work of day-to-day is accomplished.

There comes a time, after day-to-day becomes Illumined,
That we no longer remember a time in our life,
When She was not Radiant within our Heart,
The soft, ambient background of all Experience,
Welling up in Greeting at the return of wandering Attention.

There comes a time, in time,
When we diminish, and She increases,
As we, like a salt doll immersed, again and again,
In the Ocean of Her Presence, the Waters of Her Grace,
Dissolve ever more, ever more deeply.

There comes a time, as we Diminish,
That Her Increase ignites the embers of Longing,
In the Hearts of those we meet along the way,
Wandering, as we do, in this Dream of manifestation,
Here, on the Frontiers of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And when that time comes, in time,
Our friends cannot mistake the vessel for the Presence within.
For while they may hold us in Affection and Gratitude,
Reverence and Adoration is for Her Alone…

As She dwells in each of us, and all of Creation.
Thinking “About”

The more we become Liberated from self-identity,
And Illumined with the Bliss of Pure Awareness,
The more concepts, theories, and thoughts “about”
Vanish from our consideration.

We become ever more present in Experience,
Which, when imbued with Bliss,
Becomes simply too intoxicating
To allow the minds shenanigans.

We Become the effortlessly ever-present
Living Experience
Of That which, formerly,
Was only “thought about”.

Full and Complete,
Radiant with Ananda at the Heart of Being,
The mind's obsession is reduced to…
The Most Delightful Curiosity.

Now, become a Drunken Fool,
Besotted with the Heart's Desire,
“Beliefs” and articles of “Faith”,
Are simply… forgotten!

Incapable of moving any longer
In the realm of Aboutism,
We walk, in Extraordinary Ordinariness,
The Path of The Idiot.

But I should not speak so emphatically,
For such is only the experience of this Idiot,
And in this Dream's infinite diversity,
Everyone's Blossoming is unique.

I only write to bring Delight,
To the like-Hearted.
This Great Mystery

This Great Mystery of Life,
At some point becomes,
The Great Matter of consideration.

We start seeking,
And upon entering the spiritual marketplace…
Are rolled over by a tsunami of chaos,
Spinning us, submerged, in a flood of teachings.

No wonder people take refuge
In the walled villages of this teaching or that;
They fear madness, if they continue to wander,
In the Wilderness of The Great Mystery.

So many teachings, so many teachers.
So many diverse views and paths,
Expressed in so many different ways,
Even within a given tradition!

If you don’t hold to your own Heart as the Sat Guru,
If you don’t have a sense of spiritual autonomy,
Even as one still seeking humbly,
All manner of dangers arise at every turn.

You read volumes, describing this view or that,
Expressions born of an originator’s experience,
Interpreted through their own unique nature,
Their own unique place and time…

Expounded as “Truth”, “enlightenment” or “awakening”.

Who to believe…
When all assert with such certitude and authority,
The view they hold, the stance they take,
In the face of The Great Mystery?!
After all too many years
I left the din and clamor of the spiritual marketplace,
And kicked the dust of it from my feet.
Wandering into the Wilderness of Not Knowing.

And in the end, I Surrendered,
To being forever… unenlightened.
Leaving it to those who knew what the word meant.
For after all those many years… I hadn't a clue.

It was enough…
To be Liberated from "i",
And for the locus of the Heart,
To be Illumined with Bliss…

Whatever… one… calls… that.

Broken, wounded, imperfect,
As is the nature of manifestation.
Perfect, flawless, Immaculate,
As is the nature of formless Pure Being,

From one stance we are one,
From another, the other.
We are both, of course,
And neither.

Immaculate Imperfection,
Through Unimaginable Grace,
Like an evanescent cloud Illumined by the Sun,
The Bliss of formless Atman, Illumining manifestation.

Illumination, Liberation, Endless Enlightening…
I've no idea how to qualify or quantify
This Experience of… Being.
Such considerations are, for me, the doorway to hell.
A Wilderness dweller,
On the Path of The Idiot,
It all remains, for me…
A Great Mystery.

I would have it no other way.

This Lover Cannot Be “Convinced”

This Lover cannot be convinced, lawyerly,
That “Consciousness is all there is”,
Or any such thing…

Nor do I care.

A physics “debate” on the nature of “reality”,
However diamond-like the exposition,
However seemingly irrefutable…

Is a spoonful of dirt in my mouth.

This Lover desires the Wine of Longing,
The Intoxication of Dissolution,
The Rapture of Union…

Not a dissertation that seeks to “prove”.

I do not seek knowledge… “about”,
From the mind of another,
But the Direct Experience “of”…

In the immediacy of Existence, Now.

The knowledge of those who came before,
Debated among 10,000 schools,
Is valued only to the extent that it serves…

The Blossoming of the Heart, Now.
This Lover longs for wordless Benediction, 
Not a “convincing” construct of logic and reason, 
Leading to a “conclusion” of the mind…

A half-empty glass of tepid water.

The mind-bound declare this a childish emotionalism, 
The stance of those unable to comprehend, 
Born of a wounded need for psychological healing…

A dualistic View for the simple-minded.

But this Lover, too, used discernment and discrimination, 
Only discarding them when their purpose was served, 
Words, concepts, and logical constructs…

Having reached the end of their utility.

There, I revel, instead, 
In Wordless Wonder of the Unknowable, 
And speak of that which cannot be spoken of…

The Ineffable Sublimity of the Great Mystery.

A Love not by Lover given, 
Or from Beloved received, 
But rather…

The end of Lover and Beloved.

In which the “meaning” of the word “Love” Vanishes, 
And only Experience remains, 
An Experience had, but by no one, of…

…
This Notion of Endless Happiness

This notion of unbroken “happiness”,
Seems to me a terrible misguidance.
This, of course, is simply my view,
Not to be confused with “Truth”.
Perhaps I’ve simply not yet come,
To that place of endlessly unbroken,
Peace, happiness, and joy.

But for me, “happiness” seems the wrong word,
And never the real intention, I suspect,
Of the many faiths, the many beliefs
The many philosophical systems.
I suspect, instead, that what is meant,
Is a Fullness and Richness of Heart,
In all circumstances and conditions.

My experience of the Divine Presence,
Is not a “happy” affair, or peaceful, or joyful,
But, rather, Ecstatic and Rapturous,
Containing "everything all at once",
And yet, from a different stance,
Containing nothing whatsoever,
Of the opposites of agony and ecstasy.

It is not of this world of joy and sorrow,
Peace and travail,
Happiness and sadness,
Or any of the myriad aspects,
That arise in our dualistic experience,
Pleasurable or unpleasant,
Here in this Dream of Heaven and Hell.
When an old Friend passed away,
I sat on my porch, sobbing inconsolably,
While with each breath, each heartbeat,
Breathing sorrow, beating sorrow,
My Heart, like an Ocean of Grace,
Rolled forth wave upon wave upon wave,
Of Her Rapturous Ecstasy.

Confounding? Yes.

When I see sorrow and weariness,
In the eyes of a stranger,
Or witness the suffering of this world,
I am not peaceful, happy, or joyful.
What word to use for this Presence that endures,
There, in the heartbreak of witnessing,
And the actions taken through Compassion.

Sublimity... in the midst of happiness or despair.

Her Presence is Rich and Warm,
As if I am being Loved, by no one I can see,
As if I am being Held, by no one I can see,
As if I am in Rapturous Union,
With a Lover, formless and unlocatable,
Whether I laugh, whether I cry,
No matter the "weather", inner or outer.

She is like the Blissful Sky,
From which, within which, as which,
The ever-changing weather of manifestation,
Moves in serenity or turbulence,
Like clouds appearing from nowhere,
Roiling for a time in delight or sorrow,
Then vanishing whence they came.
So when I hear teachers speak,
Of endless “peace, happiness, and joy”,
My head tilts like a confused puppy,
And my brow crinkles, bemused.
How nice for them, if it is so.
For me… there is Bliss when I hold Her hand,
And Ecstasy, Unimaginable, Inexpressible…

When we Embrace.

These accompany me,
Through the ebb and flow of peace,
The coming and going of happiness,
The transient movements of joy,
Through the ever-changing weather,
Of existence as a manifest Being.

**This Sankalpa**

My desire is for your Happiness,
Whatever your state,
Whatever your understanding,
Whatever the view du jour.

This desire, this… Sankalpa,
Transcends conditionality,
All else being simply…
Dream Chatter.

There have forever been,
And will forever be,
A thousand voices,
Saying a thousand things.
A thousand teachers,
Teaching a thousand paths,
Gaining attention, for a time,
As you meander the marketplace.

A thousand views expressed,
A thousand descriptions offered,
A thousand ways pointed,
With certitude and authority.

Listen, don't listen,
Follow, don't follow,
I care not.
This Sankalpa remains.

Agree, disagree,
Hold this view, hold that,
Come or go,
This Sankalpa endures.

Wander far,
Taking warmth in counsel fires,
Of a thousand tribes,
This sankalpa follows.

My words,
My View,
My Way,
Have nothing to do with “Truth”.

Take them only,
As a Drunken Friend’s slurring,
With one intention only…

This Sankalpa.
This Temple

When embodiment grows wearying,
As it sometimes does,
I fall into the Temple of my Heart,
Where You reside, my Beloved.

Not simply “within” nor invisible, this Temple.
For You have, in Your Magical way,
Made this Temple all that is, or ever was,
Timelessly Now, in this Spaceless Space.

Each day I walk in Your Loving Kindness,
Each day surrounded by You.
Each day held in tender Affection.
Ever with You, in You, as You, never apart.

Everywhere, like a Dream within a Dream,
My feet walk upon You, my eyes fill with You.
In rapture and sorrow, I breathe You.
For where, in Creation, are You not?

When embodiment grows wearying,
As it sometimes does,
I fall into the Temple of my Heart,
Where You reside, my Beloved…

As my own Pure Being.

This World

I could never choose,
Even if it were possible,
A moment in which to leave this world.
For there will forever be,
Wonder upon wonder,
Beauty upon beauty.

And yes...
Sorrow upon sorrow,
Suffering upon suffering.

Inexpressible Beauty
Unimaginable Suffering,
All arising and vanishing...

In Ananda's Ineffable Sublimity.

This stew of all possibilities.
Flowing like a river into form,
From the Ocean of...

Those Radiant Eyes
If Divine Mother was a beautiful woman.
Yearning Hearts would not come to see Her beauty,
Those Radiant eyes, that Loving smile.

She could be a withered grandmother, bent and twisted with age,
Like an old oak, and they would come.
Why?

It is not Her form that draws them.
It is Love,
Shining through those Radiant eyes, that Loving smile.

Who cares for concepts, theories, or conjecture?
The Heart is weary of such things.
It is Her Radiance, their own Radiance they Long for, and nothing more.
How then, can this one speak,
Unless She pours Love into his Heart, and song into his mouth,
And flows from him like a river into the Hearts of those who “Hear”.

Oh, Beloved, be with me, become me, and I you.
For without Your Grace, your Wordless Radiance Blessing all who Hear,
I am nothing more than a cackling crow.

**Tossing The Oars**

There are so many Ways.
As many ways as there are Lovers of God.

Some say to hoist the sail
    And wait patiently
For the winds of Grace,
Making yourself “available”.

Sometimes, it seems, there is little else one can do.

Others say that when the winds do come,
We must use the rudder to guide our way,
    Following the tried and true charts
Of those who have gone before.

Traditions can hold precious jewels,
    Amidst the mold, detritus, and dogma.

Still others say that when the winds of Grace arrive,
    We must row like madmen,
As if our very life depended on it,
Using our feet, if need be, to steer a course.

Effort has its place… for some, for a time.

All good Ways, these,
    For those suited to each by their natures.
I came by a different Way, not by choice,
Finding Home and Heart
Not in a destination, a knowing, a state,
But rather, drifting without course, into The Great Mystery.

Realizing, after ancient eons, that what I sought
Could never be “found”, known or understood,
Could never be earned, or accrued through merit,
I quit sailing, and Drifted… Helpless… Surrendered.

I took down sail, unlatched rudder and oars,
And threw all into the Vastness.
Then, beyond despair,
I simply… Quit.

The last breath of hope whispered.

Loving myself, unenlightened.
Loving Life, as it is.
Liberated, at last, from Liberation and Bondage.
Defeated in my quest for enlightenment…

By Love.

“How can I help anyone?” I asked my Baba,
“When I don't know where I am,
How I got here,
Or where I'm heading?”

“Everyone seeks knowledge, teachings,
Certitude, and authority,
Not the teary, wide-eyed gaze of an Idiot,
Lost in Wonder.”

“You've made me very happy,” he laughed.
“For I would have you no other way.
If you ‘knew’ anything,
It would break my Heart.”
“Don't worry. 
You'll Drift into others 
Lost in the Vastness, 
Who, like yourself, knowing Nothing… 

Have Surrendered to Love.”

Touched, Moved, Illumined

So much for “enlightenment”,
Or “awakening”,
Or any state of Being, whatever one may call it,
In which one is untouched and unmoved,
By the vicissitudes of life.

Of such things, I know nothing,
For I am touched now, more deeply than ever,
With an intensity often unbearable,
By all that appears, then vanishes,
In this Dream of Existence.

I cry, when the lion takes down the antelope,
I rage, when I see cruelty and brutality,
I crumble, at the suffering of others,
I shudder, at the Immensity of this Great Mystery,
I pray… though I wonder at the existence of a Listener.

It's only this…
That my Heart is ever Radiant with a Presence,
Fullness, Completion, and Bliss,
That words can never adequately convey,
And which I call… The Beloved.
She is ever here,  
In the Locus of the Heart,  
No matter the ever-changing weather,  
Of circumstance and conditionality,  
In the sky of peripheral experience.

Ever Present, ever Shining,  
In the midst of Joy and Sorrow,  
Laughter and tears,  
Pleasure and pain,  
Somehow... Impossibly...

In this wounded, broken, Surrendered Heart.

Thus Illumined, Full, and Complete,  
This Besotted Fool,  
Has no yearning for “more”,  
And carries on, a Simple man,  
Laughing and crying.

---

**Touching The Hem Of Her Sari**

There are those who say,  
The body should be viewed,  
As merely a sack of blood and bones,  
And that one aspiring to “enlightenment”  
Should not touch even the hem of a woman's sari.

I can only say that  
Throughout my life...

In the eyes of the Beloved,  
Even in moments lost in passion's ecstasy,  
I never saw simply the beauty of the woman,  
I both Loved, and desired.
I saw the Mystery that she was, before her birth;
The shock in the eyes of the newborn;
The twinkling, innocent eyes of the little girl;
The eyes of the adolescent, so longing for love and approval;
The eyes of the mother, caring, gentle, compassionate;
All… awash in Love.

I saw the wrinkled face of my mother…
Heard her last breath,
And saw those beautiful eyes closing…
After Dancing, so long, in the Dream of Form.

All of these, I saw,
In the timeless moment of Love's embrace,
In the eyes of the Beloved,
Who I both Loved, and desired.

Throughout this life,
The Beloved staring back at me.
My Mother, sister, daughter, lover,
Myself.

How could I,
Why would I, ever,
“Renounce”,
The Shining Light of Satchitananda,
There… in the Eyes of God.

Transmission Of The Flame

All that ensues in our meeting,
The meditation, the talk,
The questions, the answers,
Is merely a pretext for sitting together
In the Emanation of Dissolution and Bliss.
Dissolution and Bliss... the true Teacher.

In that Mystical Communion
Of Formlessness and Form,
The Flame in one apparent form
Ignites the ember in another.

The same fire in each.

That igniting,
And all of the Wonder that ensues,
Is no one's doing,
But the incomprehensible movement
Of Unimaginable Grace.

Troubled

There are only a few lunatics,
For whom this “Great Matter”,
Is more than a delightful fascination,
A reason to enjoy community,
A thrill born of occasional insight.

This is not an indictment,
As it's simply in the nature of things,
That most are satisfied just enough,
To have made peace with dissatisfaction,
Living and loving as best they can.

God Bless us all.

There are only a few lunatics,
Who, through no choice of their own,
Have minds consumed in Wonder,
Heart's Aching with Longing,
Who are, in a unique way...
Troubled.

It's a Blessing, not a curse,
To be thus consumed, thus distracted,
So that even amidst life's joys and sorrows,
One cannot escape the ever-present Question,
Spoken wordlessly, in the Heart of Being?

What is this...
All of this...
This... being alive...
This experience of existing...
And... what am I?

A kind of Madness,
There in each breath and heartbeat,
Filling us, in the same instant,
With Unbearable Longing,
And Longing's Fulfillment.

A Longing born of that which is Longed for,
Containing, like a seed nurtured in The Heart,
The Fulfillment of the Heart's Desire,
Longing and Fulfillment, impossibly...
Present, both at once.

I find these fellow lunatics, occasionally,
And over tea we chat of The Great Mystery,
Of Her Inexpressible Beauty,
Words spoken in Love and Wonder,
Of that which cannot be spoken.

What a Blessing, that even now,
Through Grace, Unimaginable,
As Her Presence Fills my Heart,
I Ache with all my Being,
And Long for Her...

Troubled... Exquisitely.
Turning

There was a time when I was certain,
In the absolute knowledge that “I am That”,
That all form was illusory, and “not me”.

There,
At that realization,
I Planted a flag,
And declared the summit.

But through unimaginable Grace,
Attention, so long turned inward,
Turned with Delight and Enjoyment,
To the ever-new, ever-changing,
Dream of Form.

And in that turning was revealed,
The Great Lie,
The Compassionate Deceit,
Of “Thou Art That”.

For “That” and “This”,
Never,
Ever,
Existed.

Two Hearts

Trees sway in the Santa Ana wind,
Dappled sunlight dances across the room.

Warm puppy in the cave beneath my desk,
Curled against my bare feet.
Coolness against my face,
The silent fan turning.

Distant cars,
Like ocean sounds.

And here, in this Locus of Form,
Right... Here...

Two hearts.

One the drummer I've known since birth,
Beating in my breast.

The other...

A shining sun,
A fluttering breeze,
A fragrant blossoming,
An overflowing wellspring,
A breathing in and out of Bliss,
Flooding the Experience of Being.

Form and formlessness,
Both... at once.

Tell me, where does one end,
And the other begin?

Two Loves

I have two Loves.
Sisters.
One is Immanence,
The other, Transcendence.
Loving each more than words can say,
I fear I cannot Live
Without either of them,
Even as one slowly... slips... away.

Growing older, I'm as a man on a train,
My Love on the platform, gazing wistfully.
Our certain parting,
Making Her more Beautiful than I can bear.

For some time now, I've seen Her everywhere,
Breathed Her, Heard Her voice in every sound,
Felt Her beneath my feet as I walk,
And Her warmth as sunlight upon my face.

This Knowing, that I'll not long be with Her,
A Poignancy, near unbearable,
Rather than diminishing our time, Enriches
Every... precious... moment.

As Life lurches forward, I hold Her closely.
But Vanishing Time, ever more so,
Allows only our Hearts to touch.
All that has ever... really... mattered.

I see Her still, our touch endures,
For how long, I do not know.
Her Perfume still surrounds me,
For how long, I do not know.

And yet... even as I leave one Love,
Arriving at another, in a time not known,
There is no place, within or without,
Where one ends... and the other begins.

No place where She ends,
And She begins.
No place where I end,
And I begin.
I leave, without moving,
From my Love,
To my Love,
As my Love.

Beloved Immanence,
Appearing within,
And as,
My Beloved Transcendence.

Vanished

Something happened,
Across the whole of the Being...
*The Whole of the Being.*

In the mind...
No “understanding”,
No "realization".

The “thinker”,
The “understander”,
The “realizer”…

Vanished.

Thoughts became ownerless,
Like clouds arising in Infinite Vastness,
Roiling for a time, and then...

Vanished.

The felt sense of the thinker,
And all that it entailed…
That Ancient Suffering…

Vanished.
Where the “mover” once existed,
Formlessness now moves this form,
As it moves all that appears…

Drifting clouds, flowing waters,
Hummingbird wings buzzing,
The opening of Jasmine blossoms.

Now a Brother to all of these,
My Father, Formlessness,
My Mother, Form.

And this son…
Simply the Experience of Being.
The experiencer now…

Vanished.

In the body…
The Ancient Contraction of “i”,
The felt sense of boundaried locatability…

Vanished.

And in its place…
Unlocatable Aliveness, Serene Emptiness,
Sublime Fullness, The Great… Mystery.

Fullness, Completion, and Bliss
No longer come and go,
As some declare.

Bliss, inherent in Dissolution,
Untouched, unmoved by the ever changing
Vicissitudes of form.

Not a realization or understanding,
However profound…
That left the thinker intact.
Not an experience,
However profound...
That left the experiencer intact.

Not an energetic arising,
However Rapturous or Ecstatic…
That left the enjoyer intact.

Something happened,
Across the whole of the Being.
*The Whole of Being.*

That which was alive,
Vanished,
Leaving…

Life Itself.

---

**Waiting**

How do the poems come?

I leave the door open,
Keep the kettle of Love and Surrender on the boil…

And wait.

And so it was with the Beloved.

---

**Walled Villages Of Belief**

My Heart will not let me stay,
In the walled villages of belief,
And so the villagers shout,
As I push open the village gates:
“Without lineage, your own ignorance will guide you!”
“Without guidance, you will wander astray!”
“Without renunciation, Maya will swallow you!”
“Without a village... you will die in the Wilderness!”

For good or ill, my tribe are Wanderers,
Beneath the Infinite Vastness of the Great Mystery,
Heart and Mind journeying into the Unknown.
Our shelter against the Crushing Immensity...

Surrender.

There was a time when I cried,
“Teach me! I cannot bear the incomprehensibility!
Help me build a shelter of knowledge!”
But in response, Lightning struck...

And my ashes scattered to the Wind.

Far from the village...
Road vanished into path...
Path vanished into hillside...
Hillside vanished into Vastness...

The Known vanished into... Wonder.

**Water to Wine**

The magic ingredient,
To turn the tepid water,
Of intellectual “knowledge”,
Of cerebral “understanding”,
And logical “conclusion”,
Into the Intoxicating Wine,
Of Direct Experience...
Is Love.

If you don't yet have it,
In the pantry of your Being,
Leave the mind, locking it behind you,
And bringing with you an empty cup,
Go to the Market of Wonder,
To the Stall of Surrender,
And tell the Vendor of Humility…

That Unbearable Longing has sent you.

Weather

When the felt sense of existence as an object-person in space and time has vanished across the Whole of Being – body and mind, subtle and gross – the Innumerable states of Being arise and fall as they ever did.

Weather moves always through the Sky, the Timeless Spacelessness in which time, space, and objects arise and vanish like apparitions.

But no storm or sunlit clarity defines the Sky, qualifies the Sky, or quantifies the Sky; the Unmoving, the Untouched, within which, and as which, all Appearance arises; like clouds suddenly appearing, roiling for a time, and then vanishing into…

To stand in any state of Being, any scope of knowledge, any view or stance, and declare it the Fullness of Freedom, seems simple immaturity; planting a flag and declaring the summit, even though, in plain view for any fool to see, the path winds ever onward into the mists of the Great Mystery.
What Am I?

I never enquired, “Who am I?”,
For I was quite familiar with “who”,
The name, the image of the “person”,
That… “felt sense”, and all that it entailed.

In my enquiry, it was not the “who”,
But the “what” that intrigued me,
As I wondered what I was,
Before ever I’d been told, or came to know…

All that I had come to take the “who” to be.

“What” was I, before ever I knew I was human,
Man or woman, fat or thin, stupid or smart,
Desirable or not, in any of countless ways,
Before the long history of “person building”…

And the relentless concern for stature.

And so I turned Attention Within,
No longer thinking “about”,
No longer moving in concepts “of”,
But enquiring with all my Heart, through Feeling…

In search of “what”, before “who” ever was…

Unable to turn my eyes upon myself,
To see the seer Within,
I saw, instead, that “what” I was,
Could never be found by sight…

Or by any sense revealed.

Except…
Except…
Except…
Except…

I could… Feel… myself.
I could Feel myself…
Not a thing alive, but simply,
Formless… Unlocatable…
Aliveness.

And so I Rested in this Feeling of “I”,
And as Resting deepened ever more,
The Fragrance of Bliss began to arise,
Barely perceptible at first, so soft…

Like Jasmine on a gentle breeze.

And in time, “I” vanished… and yet remained,
As the Pure Essence of Myself,
Before space, before time, before objects ever were,
Before ever I was, as the subject-perceiver…

Before all sensations and perceptions, save one…

For Experience remained… without an experiencer.
And for this there are no words adequate,
No concepts or metaphors sufficient,
No images or forms analogous…

Though the scriptures speak of it as…

Unalloyed Ecstasy.
The Kingdom of Heaven.
Divine Union.
The Self…

The Great Mystery.

When manifestation returned,
The Heart was Blessed thereafter,
With the answer to my quest,
The Bliss of Heaven Shining…

Into the Garden of The Beloved.
The mind, desperate to “know”,
Remained then, and remains to this day,
Unable to comprehend or understand,
“What” it was that Is…

Before Creation appears.

“What” am I?
Formless… and Manifest,
Nothing… and Everything,
Nowhere… and Everywhere…

Lover… and Beloved.

“What” am I?
In my Journey,
Into the Kingdom of Heaven,
I have yet to discover…

Where do I begin and end.

What Is It You Want

What is it that you want?
Is it “knowledge” that you are “That”?
Or “knowledge” that there is only Emptiness,
As the Buddhists say?

Or do you long for Experience,
Direct Experience,
Not just in transient “spiritual” moments,
But always, with every breath, every heartbeat?
Knowledge is of use  
Only if it evokes Experience.  
The Experience of Being.  
Like wood stored against the winter's cold,  
Unburned, it will not warm you.

Filling the Experience of Being  
With Warmth and Richness,  
Fullness, Completion…  
And Bliss.

Only the Heart will ignite that fire.  
That consumes, across the Whole of Being,  
The contraction, the felt sense,  
Of “i”.

Whether Consciousness is the Formless Ground of Being,  
Or an endless flow of Causality arising in Emptiness  
Is of no consequence, whatsoever,  
Unless such knowledge evokes Experience.

You can hear all the words in the world,  
And the ember of your Heart will not ignite.  
You can see every “teacher du jour”,  
And the wellspring of your Heart will not overflow.

You can do 10,000 prostrations,  
One million “Om Mane Padme Hums,”  
And receive countless empowerments,  
And the Sun of your Heart will not Shine.

Without Love's Unbearable Longing,  
Teachings are the sound of dry bones crumbling,  
The most powerful teachers, no more than mannequins,  
And the highest “highs” become only memories.
Only Longing, deep and vast,
Will illumine the mind’s understanding,
And reap Holiness
From the arid fields of knowledge.

This is a matter of The Heart,
Not an academic endeavor to be figured out, “gotten”.
One does not “learn” the meaning of the word… Bliss.

What Is This?

Perhaps what happened that day,
When space, time, and “i” vanished,
Was just a psycho-physiological anomaly?

Perhaps this Exquisite Bliss,
That was felt thereafter, Shining in the Heart,
Is also simply a psycho-physiological anomaly?

I’ve no idea, truly.

Does it shock you,
That living as this Experience,
Day to day,
Moment to moment,
Breath to breath…

I “know” nothing “about” it?

It makes my mind shudder, as well,
Though my Heart dances like a Fool, in Ignorance.

My advaitic friends interpret it one way,
Describing with great certainty and clarity,
Citing this authority or that.
Is it simply an “effect” of residing as “That”?

My Devotee friends speak of it otherwise,
Describing with great certainty and clarity,
Citing this authority or that.

Is this Bliss the Presence of God?

I heard a voice,
When the world and “i” returned that day,
Saying, “I am here for you, Always!”
And felt, through the Whole of my Being,
That Absolute Assurance.

Who uttered those words?

So many questions,
So many answers,
From so many quarters…

And everyone… so certain and assured.

I know only this…
That Formless Pure Being,
Is worthy of the name “Heaven”,
And this Bliss, Shining ever-available in the Heart,
Is worthy of being called the “Divine Presence”.

But interpreting and describing…
These are wholly unnecessary,
And best left to those mind-bound souls,
Who care of such things,
Move by a desperate need to “know”.

I know only that this Presence… Is,
That although it Shines in the Heart,
It has no center or periphery,
And that it is a touch, alloyed,
Of Heaven's Unalloyed Ecstasy.
Does it shock you,
That living as this Experience,
Day to day,
Moment to moment,
Breath to breath…

I “know” nothing “about” it?

It makes my mind shudder, as well,
Though my Heart dances like a Fool, in Ignorance.

But now… now I will stop writing,
Of Heaven, and Bliss,
And fall headlong…
Heartlong…
Into…

**What Matters Name and Form**

I dare not speak of this Inner Presence,
This Radiant, Rapturous Sublimity,
This Warmth, this Richness,
This Fullness, Completion, and Bliss.

Oh, and I dare not say that She Resides,
In the Secret Garden of my Heart,
The Mystical Tavern of The Beloved,
In the Deepest Interiority of my Being.

For in Temple, Church, or Mosque,
The orthodox will assail me with “beliefs”,
Of this Mystery that defies conceptualization,
Shining within the Inner Sanctum.
With fingers pointing, I am “taught”,
Prescribed what I must do,
Proscribed what I must not do,
“Reality” described, “Truth” asserted.

One will say, with certitude,
“This is the Holy Spirit!”

Another will declare, knowingly,
“This is Mother Shakti!”

Nondualists will curl their lips,
“This is mere phenomenality!”

Others will insist,
“This is the Touch of God.”

And others will dismiss,
“You are simply delusional.”

All that they hold forth is, to me,
Mere concept and conjecture,
Each possibly true, possibly,
Each possibly false possibly.

I have no idea “what” She is,
This Beloved that inhabits my Heart,
This Exquisite Rapture,
Without center or periphery.

Perhaps She is the Holy Spirit,
For She both comforts the Heart,
And teaches the mind and spirit,
Illumining the Whole of Being.

Perhaps She is Mother Shakti,
For although formless,
She moves within and as this form,
The Mover of this river's waters.
Perhaps She is the “Self”,
The Ground of Being,
What I Am, before the World and I,
Before all of Creation arose.

Perhaps She is the Touch of God,
For Union was nothing short of Heaven,
And Her lingering Presence, here,
Healing and Benediction immeasurable.

And perhaps… perhaps…
I am simply delusional,
“Possessed”, as Ramana felt, early on,
By a most Beneficent Demon.

What matters the name,
What matters the imagined form,
And dare I speak blasphemy…
What matters “Truth” or “Reality”.

As our Beloved Attar has said,
Risking the wrath of the orthodox,
“The sea will be the sea,
Whatever the drop's philosophy.”

What To Do?

What is there to be done?
If I grasp after Her, She flees.

If I do thus, and refrain from thus,
Her Love, Conditionless, is offended.

If I make a Goddess of Her,
She cries at the loss of our Intimacy.
If I move in concept of Her,
She wonders why I am eating dust.

I am Her brother, and She my sister.
If I do not tease Her, She feels unloved.

I am Her son, and She my mother.
To offer recompense for Her Love,
Would break Her Heart.

I am Her Lover, and She my Beloved.
She fills my Heart with a Rapture,
Born of Heaven's Ecstasy.

Where would I go to find Her,
When She Shines... Here?

What would I do to win her Love,
Which is without cause?

I cried one day,
With the Whole of my Being...

And She Came...

Both of us Vanishing in Heaven.
Which, thereafter, Shone in this Heart.

What to do?

Ache with the Whole of your Being,
Cry from the Depths of your Heart.

These, alas, are not “techniques”,
Not “strategies” employed to an end.

These must be native to our Heart,
And carry us away, helpless...

As Prisoners of Love.
Among the infinite paths,  
Mine was of Love and Surrender.  

This is the only Way I know,  
And all that I can speak of.  

Sadly, I am not much use.

What Was That, And What Is This?

I am but an old beggar, bent and weary,  
Sitting at the gate of the spiritual marketplace,  
Asking of all who enter,  
“Sir, madam... please, can you tell me,  
What was that... and what is this?!”

A beggar at the gate,  
Not sitting “in front of”, teaching,  
Not asserting, like those in the stalls within,  
For I know less with each breath,  
Only always, with each heartbeat asking...  
“What was that, and what is this?”

What was that Death Unto Life,  
In which all things and I Vanished,  
And the Dream of Dreams,  
The Heart's Desire,  
Remained.

"What was that?"

Was it the Heaven, within, that Jesus spoke of?  
Was it the Paradise of The Beloved’s Sufis?  
Was it the Atman, unobscured, that the Hindus speak of?  
Was it God, as so many understand the word?  
Or was it simply... a psychosomatic anomaly?
A beggar at the gate,
Not sitting “in front of”, teaching,
Not asserting, like those in the stalls within,
For I know less with each heartbeat,
Only always, with each breath asking…

"What was that, and what is this?"

This… this touch of Ineffable Sublimity,
That remained after that Death Unto Life,
A Comforter, a Teacher, a Benediction,
A Wellspring of the Inexpressible,
Within this broken vessel.

"What is this?"

Is it the Holy Spirit, that Jesus spoke of?
Is it The Beloved, The Friend, of the Sufis?
Is it the Bliss of the Atman, that the Hindus speak of?
Is it the Divine Presence, of those who believe in God?
Or… is it simply, a psycho-somatic anomaly?

A beggar at the gate,
Not sitting “in front of”, teaching,
Not asserting, like those in the stalls within,
For I know less with each passing season,
Asking always, in each moment’s dissolution…

“What was that, and what is this?”

Long ago I ventured into the marketplace,
Only to be driven back by the terrible din,
Of ten thousand voices declaring,
Full of certitude and authority,
Ten thousand versions of “Truth”.

Now, at last, I am leaving my station at the Gate,
No longer able to see clearly those who pass by,
Or hear their ten thousand “guesses”,
My fingers calloused by touching,
Ten thousand feet in gratitude.
After a lifetime of questioning,
I have come to a certitude of my own,
That although ten thousand teach what they “know”,
Only a handful, “Know”,
That… and This.

Though I will die with these questions upon my lips,
I Live now Surrendered in Not Knowing,
Having discovered that, like myself,
Those I have met who “Know”,
That and This…

“know” nothing…

What Will They Say?

I’m in such trouble.
How can I be an advaitan,
When I remain ambivalent
To their basic premise.

Who among my advaitan friends
Will respect me when the truth comes out,
That I have no idea whether or not this Experience of Being
Is simply due to this vehicle of perception,
And stops when the body dies?!

Nor do I care.

What if they discover that
I find it a tenable possibility that all that appears,
Does not appear to anything whatsoever –
Not even a formless something one might call "Consciousness" –
But is simply a process, a happening.
Like clouds appearing in the Empty Heavens,
Roiling for a time, then vanishing.
Like a river flowing, endlessly,
Moved by…

Must I know?

So much is possible
Beyond the capabilities of our minds
To comprehend.
Must I accept door number one?

I’m not saying this is so.
I'm not saying that is so.
I'm saying I haven't a clue,
About any of it.

And I'm saying I don't…care
One way or the other.

I'm saying that a stand, a position
In any view, is wholly irrelevant
To Liberation from self-identity,
To Illumination with Bliss,
The effortlessly ever-present Bliss of Being.

I say this because I am standless, knowing nothing,
And yet… am rapt in Awe and Wonder,
Rapt in Beauty, in Love,
And awash in the Bliss of Satchitananda.

But… how can that be,
If I am so hobbled in intellect
Not to have arrived, irrefutably,
At the advaitic conclusion?

Oh… what will they say when I tell them
I haven't a clue what exists,
Or doesn't exist,
During deep sleep?!
Who will respect me when they find out
I'm simply an Idiot,
Not caring one way or the other
Of such things?

I'm finished.
Finished.

Now that the word's out,
No one will visit,
Knowing me to be simply a fool.

I wonder…
Is this a bad thing?

I'm so happy, at last, to have torched
Any notions that I am “enlightened”, a “sage”,
Or living in the “natural state”.
It's more a relief than Liberation ever was!

Thank God we've gotten that cleared up.
Now I am Truly Free!
Free of being the “Free” one!

---

What Words Are There?

I AM…
The only Fact I Know,
Though words, innumerable,
Fill the scriptures.

What words are there,
Except…
I AM.
WHAT... I do not know.
All that is, appears Within me...
From me...
As me...

This Formless,
Unlocatable,
Aliveness,
That IS.

What words are there,
Except...
I AM.

WHERE... I do not know.
Space appears Here,
And within it...
I cannot find myself.

Here... Within and As,
This Formless,
Unlocatable,
Aliveness,
That IS.

What words are there,
Except...
I AM.

WHEN... I do not know.
Time appears Now,
Where past, present, and future...
Have never existed.

Now... Within and As,
This Formless,
Unlocatable,
Aliveness,
That IS.
What words are there,
Except…
I AM.

**WHY** and **HOW**… I do not know.
For Here, Now…
In the Arms of The Beloved,
I cannot move in thought to consider,

Why or How
This Formless,
Unlocatable,
Aliveness,
IS.

What words are there,
Except…
I AM,
That never was,
And Ever Am.

Or perhaps…
Love IS.

There are no words,
The mind knows well.
But The Heart compels,
To express the inexpressible.

And now…
Shhhhhhh.
What’s In This Tea?

Strolling near The Secret Garden,
Your Perfume took my Heart,
And my Soul began sobbing.

I knocked in Wonder at The Gate
And cracking it ever so slightly,
Lest Heaven overwhelm me…

You held out this cup.

What's in this Tea,
That its Fragrance alone,
Gives rise to Unbearable Longing?

Why is my Heart suddenly troubled,
With an Ancient Ache,
So Sublime?

How is it this pain of Longing,
Contains the very Sweetness,
Of that which is Longed for?

Not yet even sipping,
But in Fragrance alone abiding,
I cannot speak… Intoxicated.

Tea to lip…

“I”, so full in knowledge,
Am become a Doe-Eyed Fool.

Beloved, can you not tell me,
For surely you must know…
What's in this Tea?

“Surrender,” She whispered,
“For this is the Tea of Forgetfulness,
And Remembrance.”

Drink!
**When...**

When the perceiver vanishes,
The perceived vanishes, as well,
And yet, perceiving remains.

But... of what, by what?

When the experiencer vanishes,
The experienced vanishes, as well,
And yet, Experiencing remains.

But... of what, by what?

When all Duality vanishes,
Lover and Beloved vanish, as well,
And yet, Love remains.

Words, tragically inept to describe,
The Nature of that which We are,
When "we" are not.

What Unfathomable Mystery is this,
To cease, yet remain,
As Heaven.

What greater Mystery still,
To discover Heaven,
The Vanishing of all things...

Shining in the Experience of all things.

To feel one's self both Lover and Beloved,
Alive in the Dream of space and time,
As... Life Itself.

Existing... as Existence.
Where Do I Begin And End

Friend: Shiao Dai, how are you, today?
Shiao Dai: Dear God, what a glorious day!
Friend: Yes, but I asked how you were.
Shiao Dai: Where do I begin and end?

Try to locate yourself within. You will not find yourself as an object in space and time, but rather… as Aliveness, Awareness itself. Where is the boundary where this felt sense of Aliveness-Awareness begins and ends?

Where Have You Been?

At the time, it seemed horrific,
But looking back now…

I cherish the day I failed,
Inadequate, Incapable,
The day I was Defeated,
Utterly, Completely,
The day I abandoned forever,
All hope of victory,
And Surrendered,
Falling where I stood,

Only to find…
In the ashes of Catastrophe,
The face of The Beloved,
And Her Beautiful Voice, sighing…

“Where have you been?
I’ve been waiting.”
**Where We Began**

Though we are often driven by sorrow,
To seek the end of sorrows,
It is the desire for Love, and Love Itself,
That in the end brings us to Freedom.

For when all Hope is lost,
And only Despair remains.
When all paths have failed,
And all efforts proven vain.

Then we sit alone, with nothing left.
Nothing, that is…
Except what moved us at the onset.
Our Own Shining Heart, our Own Inherent Love.

We wander for countless ages.
In the heartbreak of conditionality and causality,
Until, when grasping is exhausted,
We simply rest as the Love we Are.

The Kingdom of Heaven is Within.
Not in the world of perfecting or attainment,
Not in the world of doing and not doing.
Simply Here, where we began.

Coming to that Experience,
Is a Grace-driven Journey,
Of unknown duration,
But of direction, always…

Within.
Why Write?

Why write?
To evoke that which is written of.
There is no other reason.

It is not to increase the writer's stature.

For if the writer were concerned over stature,
The words would not be worth reading,
Having flowed from a fouled pool.

It is for you that I write, not myself.
Because I love to see the ember brighten,
In the Heart of my Friend.

I only share what we both possess,
As you so Beautifully share with me;
Both of us offering Love and Wonder,
One to the other.

We are two Lovers of the same Beloved,
Reveling in the Rich Delight,
Of the telling of our Life with Her,
And our ongoing Romance.

Not to vainly hear our voices speaking,
But to share Her Benediction in words,
Imbued, Mystically, with Her Presence.

Why write?

Love,
For Her,
And for you.
Wind, Palms, and Whispered Words

I sat on the porch this morning,
Sipping coffee, puppy laying at my feet,
And as a sudden wind rustled the palm branches,
I heard, as clearly as ever I have heard,
Their soft, gentle whisper…

“Hello Friend.”

Astonished, stilled in disbelief,
The mind pondering this dubious miracle,
Of wind, palms, and whispered greeting,
I spoke aloud, tenuously, embarrassed,
Feeling somewhat foolish…

“Hello?”

“No… not you,” they whispered back,
“We greet the Blind, Deaf, Mute within,
Who Saw, Heard, and Spoke to us,
Before words and images arose,
Of “wind”, “palms”, and whispered greeting…

“Hello Friend.”

And so I abandoned “myself”,
The seer, the listener, the speaker,
And resting before the sound of inner voice,
Before the appearance of inner sight,
Before I and the world were born, I Heard…

Within

So few who seek the end of Suffering,
And the Experience of Heaven,
Are moved inward by the Beautiful words,
“The Kingdom of Heaven is within.”

But sooner or later…
When "belief" and dogma prove fruitless,
When doing and not doing fails us,
We retreat within.

Sooner or later the self dies,
By drowning in the Ocean of Pure Awareness.
Sooner or later the Lover turns,
And dies in the arms of The Beloved.

When we've had enough of thinking “about”,
Enough of talking endlessly “about”,
Enough of concepts, theories, and conjecture;
When exhaustion finally overcomes us…

We fall… Within.

And there, all outer movement ceased,
We collapse into the Absolute Subjectivity,
The Unfathomable Mystery,
That we are.

Within…
Where the Unmoving Beloved first moves…
And we, the manifest Lover,
Come into being.

Within…
Where beginning and end,
Lover and Beloved…
Vanish… having never existed.
Within…
Where, in the course of time…
Time, space, the world, and “We”
All Vanish…

All vanishing…
Into and as,
What We Are,
Before ever “we” were.

No longer a thing alive, but Life Itself.

Not Limitless… this Heaven,
For space has vanished.

Not Eternal… this Heaven,
For there is no time.

Not, “The same Self in all,”…
For neither subject-self, nor object-other…
Has ever existed.

Without Expectation

You don’t have to know or understand,
What awaits you at the Tavern of The Beloved.
Such expectation will only keep you from tasting…

The Wine that you Are.

Whatever imaginings you may have,
Of that which is poured there,
Are merely concepts, theory, and conjecture…

Half-empty glasses of lukewarm water.
Abandon expectation, and simply… Drink.
Abandon the mind, and simply… Taste.
Abandon concept, theory, and conjecture…

And simply… Experience.

Go to The Tavern without expectation.
Where would that be?
Within!

Within?

Yes…
Where within and without never were,
And you Shine, before ever anything was.

Before?

Yes…
Where before and after never existed,
And you Shine, outside of time.

Outside?

Yes…
Where outside and inside have never been,
And you Shine, spaceless.

But… can I exist without space?
Can I exist without time?
Can I exist without being an object?

Yes… as You Are before ever “you” were.

Go to the Tavern of The Beloved,
And drink the wine of your own Pure Being,
Until “you” Vanish in your glass…

Until the seed of Longing becomes vine,
The vine births grape,
The grape is crushed into wine,
The wine poured into the Cup of the Heart…
An Affair of The Heart

And She drinks you all down.

When you are gone, all will be Clear,
For in the Absolute Vanishing,
Of the one who desired happiness…

So much more than Happiness will Shine.

Words

There are words…
And there are words.

Some words arise,
From the Wellspring of the Heart,
And speak in a thousand ways,
Of that which cannot be spoken.

Angels along the road to Heaven,
Lovingly pointing the way.

Through a Mystical Alchemy,
Beyond all reckoning,

They turn attention Within,
Guiding those who Listen with the Heart…

To the Fulfillment of all Longing.
**Words... Not Yet Words**

The Beloved awakened me last night,
Whispering in words... not yet words,
That which cannot be spoken.

Words like countless butterflies,
Eluding the mind's grasp...
Alighting in the Heart.

I've held them Here, for you,
In Love's gentle capture,
Words... not yet words,

So that when next we meet,
I might open my Heart,
And see them fluttering into yours.

Can you Hear?

---

**Yes... So?**

A friend concluded, “All there is, is Consciousness,”
And drew a flow chart to prove his assertion.

I said, “Yes... so?”

Another maintained, categorically, “There is one Self in all,”
And elucidated his reasoning with great eloquence.

I said, “Yes... so?”

Yet another declared unequivocally, “Thou are That.”
And propounded his logic with diamond-like clarity.

I said, “Yes... so?”
Still another pronounced, emphatically, “All is Emptiness, 
There is no independent existence.”

I sighed, “Yes… so?”

The Beloved whispered, “I Love you.”
And my Soul cried out, wordlessly…

“Yes!”

You’re Driving
You're driving, not me.
It's all up to you, my friend,
How long we travel together,
Along this ancient road.

I'm an Idiot,
And have long since forgotten,
Where I'm going,
Or why.

Pulling over, you asked,
“What's this I Feel?!”
And so I got in to explain,
That I haven't a clue.

As long as you're satisfied with that,
And don't mind simply… driving,
I will ride with you,
Cruisin', the Wind of Eternity in our hair.

I Loved when you turned and said,
With Happiness, not regret,
“Now I'm not getting anywhere!”
And we laughed for miles.
Two Idiots now, not one.
Both found at last,
And utterly Lost.
Road tripping into the Unknown.

It's up to you how far we travel,
Together down this road,
Ever appearing, ever vanishing.
You're driving, not me.

You can drop me off anytime,
And we will be friends as we were,
When you first pulled over and asked,
“What's this I Feel?!”

“What's this?!”
I haven't a clue.
What, where, why, how?
We're not getting anywhere.

What an Unimaginable Blessing.

Zen Dialog

Q: Is the mirror separate from the images reflected on it?
A: Only in the mind of the beholder

Q: Is the beholder separate from that which is beheld?
A: Only in the mind of the beholder.

Q: Is the mind of the beholder separate from the beholder.
A: Only in the mind of the beholder.

Q: Is the mind of the beholder real?
A: As real as the beholder.
An Affair of The Heart

Q: Is the beholder really the Beholder?
A: It is.

Q: Is it not also the beheld?
A: It is.

Q: And what is its nature?
A: It Is.

In Closing

All of these words I have written about Liberation, and Illumination,
May have given you the illusion that I have my bearings,
And an understanding of all that's happened,
And all that is to unfold in time,
When I am simply adrift,
Without compass,
Rudderless,
Here...

In this Great Mystery.