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Amo Ergo Sum

Because I love
The sun pours out its rays of living gold
Pours out its gold and silver on the sea.

Because I love
The earth upon her astral spindle winds
Her ecstasy-producing dance.

Because I love
Clouds travel on the winds through wide skies,
Skies wide and beautiful, blue and deep.

Because I love
Wind blows white sails,
The wind blows over flowers, the sweet wind blows.

Because I love
The ferns grow green, and green the grass, and green
The transparent sunlit trees.

Because I love
Larks rise up from the grass
And all the leaves are full of singing birds.

Because I love
The summer air quivers with a thousand wings,
Myriads of jewelled eyes burn in the light.

Because I love
The iridescent shells upon the sand
Takes forms as fine and intricate as thought.

Because I love
There is an invisible way across the sky,
Birds travel by that way, the sun and moon
And all the stars travel that path by night.

Because I love
There is a river flowing all night long.

Because I love
All night the river flows into my sleep,
Ten thousand living things are sleeping in my arms,
And sleeping wake, and flowing are at rest.

Kathleen Raine
Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

I
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost....I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

II
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But, It isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

III
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in. It's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault. I get out immediately.

IV
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V
I walk down another street.

Portia Nelson
Birdwings

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

Rumi
Breath

The morning wind spreads its fresh smell.
We must get up and take that in,
That wind that lets us live.
Breathe before it's gone.

Rumi

Translated by Coleman Barks, from ‘The Turn: Dance in Your Blood’, The Essential Rumi, Castle, 1998
**Breath Works**

I breathe……….the leaves breathe……….the forest breathes……….scattered seeds have become majestic trees
densely packed together, reaching up in harmony for sunlight

I breathe……….leaves breathe……….forests breathe……….golden green copper yellow leaves
cascade into the clearings space I see,
and pause….absorbing wonder

I breathe……….leaves breathe……….forests breathe……….in this complicated simplicity of trees…..
this simplicity of leaves…..this simplicity of me…..
and the rain comes to intervene
and dress the air in between the leaves…..
with diamonds…..that land and pause,
then drip from golden green and copper yellow trees

We breathe……….forests breathe……….the World breathes……….pathways pass between these treasured trees
where once just seeds were blessed with their own potential
to drink the sun and suck the moon from skies above
and time and time again to learn to breathe
in harmony with one another

We all breathe……….Worlds breathe……….Universes breathe……….The skies breath……….the rains breath……….the sunlight’s breath……….The seeds and the trees breath…..
Golden green copper yellow breath…..
The forests’ breath…..my breath…..
Our breath…..We breathe…..the Universal breath…..

Maybe this is how breath works!!

**David Oldham**
Brokenness

There is a brokenness
out of which comes the unbroken,
a shatteredness
out of which blooms the unshatterable.
There is a sorrow beyond all grief
which leads to joy
and a fragility
out of whose depth emerges strength.

There is a hollow space
too vast for words
through which we pass with each loss,
out of whose darkness we are sanctioned into being.

There is a cry
deeper than sound
whose serrated edges cut the heart
as we break open
to the place inside,
which is unbreakable and whole,
While we are learning to sing.

Rashani
Dennis Potter writing of the effect of ‘his heightened awareness of things, as he faced his imminent death

Below my window….the blossom is out in full now………I see it is the whitest, frothiest blossomiest blossom that there could be, and I can see it. Things are both more trivial than they ever were, and more important than they ever were, and the difference between the trivial and the important doesn’t seem to matter. But the nowness of everything is absolutely wondrous.

Dennis Potter 1935- 1994
Dennis Potter, Dictionary of quotations 2001, Oxford University Press p588, entry21
Enough

Enough. These few words are enough.
If not these words, this breath.
If not this breath, this sitting here.
This opening to the life
we have refused
again and again
until now.
Until now.

David Whyte
From ‘A Heart Overflowing With Love’

I said what about my eyes?
‘Keep them on the road.’
I said what about my passion?
‘Keep it burning.’
I said what about my heart?
‘Tell me what you hold inside it?’
I said pain and sorrow.
He said:
‘Stay with it.’

Rumi
Translated by Maryam Mafi & Azima Melita Kolin 2001
Habit

The shoes put on each time
left first, then right.

The morning potion’s teaspoon
of sweetness stirred always
for seven circlings - no fewer, no more -
into the cracked blue cup.

Touching the pocket for wallet,
for keys,
before closing the door.

How did we come
to believe these small rituals’ promise,
that we are today the selves we yesterday knew,
tomorrow will be?

How intimate and unthinking,
the way the toothbrush is shaken dry after use,
the part we wash first in the bath.

Which habits we learned from others
and which are ours alone we may never know.
Unbearable to acknowledge
how much they are themselves our fated life.

Open the traveling suitcase -

There the beloved red sweater,
Bright tangle of necklace, earrings of amber.
Each confirming: I chose these, I.
But habit is different: it chooses.
And we, it’s good horse,
opening our mouths at even the sight of the bit.

Jane Hirschfield

Given Sugar, Given Salt, Perennial HarperCollins, 2002
Have you ever tried to enter the long black branches?

Listen, are you breathing just a little: and calling it a life?
While the soul, after all, is only a window,
And the opening of the window no more difficult
Than the wakening from a little sleep

Mary Oliver poem excerpt Westwind 1997 Manner Books
How surely gravity’s law
How surely gravity’s law,
strong as an ocean current,
takes hold of even the strongest thing
and pulls it toward the heart of the world.

Each thing –
each stone, blossom, child –
is held in place.
Only we, in our arrogance,
push out beyond what we belong to
for some empty freedom.

If we surrendered
to earth’s intelligence
we could rise up rooted, like trees…

This is what the things can teach us:
to fall,
patiently to trust our heaviness.
Even a bird has to do that
before he can fly.

Rainer Maria Rilke   translated by Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy, Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God, Riverhead 2005
The human body, at peace with itself,
Is more precious than the rarest gem.
Cherish your body, it is yours this time only.
The human form is won with difficulty,
It is easy to lose.
All worldly things are brief,
Like lightning in the sky:
This life you must know as the tiny splash of a raindrop;
A thing of beauty that disappears
Even as it comes into being.
Therefore set your goal
Make use of every day and night
To achieve it.

Tsongkapa
I live my life

I live my life in widening circles
that reach out across the world.
I may not ever complete the last one,
but I give myself to it.

Rainer Maria Rilke
I want to ask you

I want to ask you:
In this world
-What is the most profound most wonderful thing?
Sit erect and meditate right to the end.
As you meditate, you will find a clue
And everything will naturally become clear.
Keep your concentration- don't miss your chance!
After a while, your mind will become pure.
Your wisdom will ripen.
Then you won't have to fool yourself anymore.

Ryokan
If you befriend the Beloved

If you befriend the Beloved
you will never be lonely.
If you learn to be flexible
you will never be helpless.
The moon shines because it
does not escape the night.
The rose is scented because it
has embraced the thorn.

Rumi
Kabir on God

If I told you the truth about God, you might think I was an idiot. If I lied to you about the Beautiful One you might parade me through the streets shouting, "This guy is a genius!"
This world has its pants on backwards. Most carry their values and knowledge in a jug that has a big hole in it. Thus having a clear grasp of the situation if I am asked anything these days I just laugh!

Kabir (1440-1518) the wild, holy man of India was brought to modern awareness by Rabindranath Tagore who won the Noble Prize for Literature in 1913. Kabir is a trackless wandered and a brilliant metaphysician. Like a Zen-master, he is ready to knock you square in the head.
Translated by Daniel Ladinski, Love Poems from God
Kindness

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

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

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

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

Hour after hour, day
After day we try
To grasp the Ungraspable, pinpoint
The Unpredictable. Flowers
Wither when touched, ice
Suddenly cracks beneath our feet. Vainly
We try to track birdflight through the sky trace
Dumb fish through deep water, try
To anticipate the earned smile the soft
Reward, even
Try to grasp our own lives. But Life
Slips through our fingers
Like snow. Life
Cannot belong to us. We
Belong to Life. Life
Is King.

Sangharakshita
Listen

To the fragile feelings
Not to the clashing fury…

To the quiet sounds
Not to the loud clamour

To the steady heartbeat
Not to the noisy confusion

To the hidden voices
Not to the obvious chatter

To the deep harmonies
Not to the surface discord.

*Found on the wall of a church in the Forest of Bowland*
Love

Love means to look at yourself
The way one looks at distant things
For you are only one thing among many.
And whoever sees that way heals his heart,
Without knowing it, from various ills –
A bird and a tree say to him: Friend.

Then he wants to use himself and things
So that they stand in the glow of ripeness.
It doesn’t matter whether he knows what he serves:
Who serves best doesn’t always understand.

Czeslaw Milosz
Love after love

The time will come
when, with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you
all your life, whom you have ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

Derek Walcott
Love is

“Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than oneself is real”

Iris Murdoch
Love Someone

Love someone –
In God’s name love someone –
For this is the bread of the inner life,
Without which a part of you will starve and die;
And though you feel you must be stern,
Even hard, in your life of affairs,
Make yourself at least a little corner,
Somewhere in the great world,
Where you may unbosom and be kind.

Max Ehrmann 1872 – 1945
Ode to Enchanted Light

Under the trees light
has dropped from the top of the sky,
light
like a green
latticework of branches,
shining
on every leaf,
drifting down like clean
white sand.
A cicada sends
its sawing song
high into the empty air.
The world is
a glass overflowing
with water.

Pablo Neruda
Parting Word

As for me
I have no mind
to lose anymore, I am through
with all that -
the sky is my mind
today. (And
it always is
and always was
today.) Blue,
her color
sorrowing over us ... 
Does it flow out of or into us, seeing?
Unseen ray of perception the face beams
at things, or
face on which things shine!
I am so glad
that I no longer know,
no longer
care.
And one more thing:
the future?
Never
been there.

Franz Wright
Quietness

Inside this new love, die.
Your way begins on the other side.
Become the sky.
Take an axe to the prison wall.
Escape.
Walk out like someone suddenly born into colour.
Do it now.
You’re covered with thick cloud.
Slide out the side. Quietness is the surest sign
that you’ve died.
Your old life was a frantic running
from silence.

The speechless full moon
comes out now.

Rumi
from selected poems, Penguin classics
Snow

The room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was
Spawning snow and pink roses against it
Soundlessly collateral and incompatible:
World is suddener than we fancy it.
World is crazier and more of it than we think,
Incorrigibly plural. I peel and portion
A tangerine and spit the pips and feel
The drunkenness of things being various.
And the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world
Is more spiteful and gay than one supposes -
On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands -
There is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses.

Louis MacNeice
Stop
Stop moving to become still
And the stillness will move.

*from Lombardo’s translation of lines from* Xinxinming

Stop activity and return to stillness
And that stillness will be even more active.

*From Sheng-yen’s translation of lines from* Xinxinming
Sufi poem on pain

Free from pain are they who have attained
By the grace of a perfect wise man, spiritual wealth.
Sitting in a corner of the Wine-Shop,
He is engaged in a rapturous play.
The Light of the soul is one,
But the coverings of thought blot it out.
Still the thoughts, and see the Light.

Sarmad
translated by I. A. Ezekiel.
Sweet Darkness

When your eyes are tired
the world is tired also.

When your vision has gone
no part of the world can find you.

Time to go into the dark
where the night has eyes
to recognize its own.

There you can be sure
you are not beyond love.

The dark will be your womb
tonight.

The night will give you a horizon
further than you can see.

You must learn one thing:
the world was made to be free in.

Give up all the other worlds
except the one to which you belong.

Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet
confinement of your aloneness
to learn

anything or anyone
that does not bring you alive

is too small for you

David Whyte
The Bright Field

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

R. S. Thomas
The clear bead

The clear bead at the center changes everything.
There are no edges to my loving now.

I've heard it said there's a window that opens
from one mind to another,

but if there's no wall, there's no need
for fitting a window, or a latch.

_Open Secret - versions of Rumi, Moynes and Barks, Shambhala, 1984_
The doves that remained at home

The doves that remained at home, never exposed to loss,
Innocent and secure, cannot know tenderness;
Only the won-back heart can ever be satisfied: free,
through all it has given up, to rejoice in its mastery.

Rainer Maria Rilke
Ahead of all the Parting: The Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Stephen Mitchell, Modern Library Publications 1995
The New Philosophy

The windows need cleaning,
The sideboard's thick with dust,
The carpets are grimy,
But this morning I must

Hear some Bach or Mozart,
Sit cross-legged on the mat,
Watch the houseplants growing,
Play ping-pong with the cat.

The tea-things are still dirty,
Paint's flaking off the sill,
Food cupboards are empty,
But this morning I will

Look at a book of poems,
Call up some friends and talk,
Play with my box of paints,
Take me out for a walk.

The back lawn needs mowing,
The cooker is a sight,
We're knee deep in litter,
But this morning I might

Admire the blossom,
Hear blackbirds sing their song,
Stand barefoot in the stream,
Watch the clouds float along.

No buttons on my shirt,
The bath has spots of rust,
The washer needs mending,
But this morning I must

Look out of the window,
Sit down beneath a tree,
Consider a rainbow,
Do nothing, just BE.

Ann Copnell
The way of love

The way of love is not
a subtle argument.

The door there
is devastation.

Bird’s make great sky-circles
of their freedom.
How do they learn it?

They fall, and falling,
they’re given wings.

Rumi

Selected poems translated by Coleman Barks, Penguin books 1995
The Well of Grief

Those who will not slip beneath
   the still surface on the well of grief

turning downward through its black water
   to the place we cannot breathe

will never know the source from which we drink,
   the secret water, cold and clear,

nor find in the darkness glimmering
   the small round coins
      thrown by those who wished for something else.

David Whyte

*Where Many Rivers Meet, Many Rivers Press, 1990*
This Breathing Space

In this place of sunlit frosty mornings and big-sky-blue days
and velvet starlit nights of boundless space,
in this breathing space
we people from such different places
came along with kindly faces
to be touched by moments of humanities grace
in this breathing space

In and out.................in and out
that’s what this breathing stuff’s about
and the delicate pauses in between
just to be in...............just to be
me and you....and you and me
present in this place of space
with our ‘community of souls’
with our ‘union of beings’
with our ‘meditation of minds’
in this space to find knowledge shared,
experiences gained,
and drops of wisdom poured.........to be breathed as one
just in..........and out..........one breath

As we sit with one another now
breathing in.................and breathing out
pausing again in between.....just to be,
to feel to see,
all of us here, our transient community
where even love has sometimes shown its face,
its' kindly face
inside this.....................Our Breathing Space.

David Oldham
Too Many Names

Mondays are meshed with Tuesdays
and the week with the whole year.
Time cannot be cut
with your weary scissors,
and all the names of the day
are washed out by the waters of night.

No one can claim the name of Pedro,
nobody is Rosa or Maria,
all of us are dust or sand,
all of us are rain under rain.
They have spoken to me of Venezuelas,
of Chiles and of Paraguays;
I have no idea what they are saying.
I know only the skin of the earth
and I know it is without a name.

When I lived amongst the roots
they pleased me more than flowers did,
and when I spoke to a stone
it rang like a bell.

It is so long, the spring
which goes on all winter.
Time lost its shoes.
A year is four centuries.

When I sleep every night,
what am I called or not called?
And when I wake, who am I
if I was not while I slept?
This means to say that scarcely have we landed into life than we come as if new-born; let us not fill our mouths with so many faltering names, with so many sad formalities, with so many pompous letters, with so much of yours and mine, with so much of signing of papers.

I have a mind to confuse things, unite them, bring them to birth, mix them up, undress them, until the light of the world has the oneness of the ocean, a generous, vast wholeness, a crepitant fragrance.

**Pablo Neruda**

*1904 – 1973*
**Walking the Coast** (extract)

knowing now

that the life

at which I aim

is a circumference

continually expanding

through sympathy and

understanding

rather than an exclusive centre

of pure self-feeling

the whole I’m out for

is centre plus circumference

and now the struggle at the centre is over

the circumference

beckons from everywhere


XXVIII

Kenneth White
What if there is no need to change?

What if there is no need to change?
No need to try to transform yourself
Into someone who is more compassionate, more present, more loving, or wise?
How would this affect all the places in your life where you are endlessly trying to be better?

What if the task is simply to unfold,
To become who you already are in your essential nature:
Gentle, compassionate, and capable of living fully and passionately present?

What if the question is not
"Why am I so infrequently the person I really want to be?"
But "Why do I so infrequently want to be the person I really am?"
How would this change what you think you have to learn?

What if becoming who and what we truly are happens not through striving and trying
But by recognising and receiving the people and places and practices
That are for us the warmth of encouragement we need to unfold?
How would this shape the choices you make about how to spend today?

What if you knew that the impulse to move in a way that creates beauty in the world
Will arise from deep within
And guide you every time you simply pay attention
And wait.

How would this shape your stillness, your movement,
Your willingness to follow this impulse
To just let go
And dance?

Oriah Mountain Dreamer
from the Prelude to “The Dance”, 2001
Harper Collins. ISBN: 0007112998
Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
Love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
Are moving across the landscapes,
Over the prairies and the deep trees,
The mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
Are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
The world offers itself up to your imagination,
Calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
Over and over announcing your place
In the family of things.

Mary Oliver

Dreamword, Atlantic Monthly Press 1986
Wholeness

Ah, not to be cut off,
not through the slightest partition
shut out from the law of the stars.
The inner – what is it?
if not intensified sky,
hurled through with birds and deep
with the winds of homecoming.

Rainer Maria Rilke
Ahead of all the Parting: The Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Stephen Mitchell, Modern Library Publications 1995
With that Moon Language

Admit something

Everyone you see, you say to them,
“Love Me”

Of course you do not do this out loud;
Otherwise
Someone would call the cops.

Still though, think about this,
This great pull in us
To connect.

Why not become the one
Who lives with a full moon in
each eye
That is always saying,

With that sweet moon
Language,

What every other eye in this world
Is dying to
Hear.

Hafiz