

OPENING WORDS "A Community of the Spirit" (excerpt, trans Coleman Barks, 2) Rumi

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

Drink *all* your passion...  
Close both eyes  
to see with the other eye.

Open your hands,  
if you want to be held.

Sit down in this circle.

Quit acting like a wolf, and feel  
The shepherds love filling you...

Be empty of worrying  
Think of who created thought

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

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

Flow down and down in always  
Widening rings of being.

OPENING HYMN #188 Come, Come Whoever You Are Rumi

Come, come whoever you are.  
Wanderer. Worshipper. Lover of leaving.  
Ours is no caravan of despair.  
Come, yet again, come.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT Mevlana as told by Sura Gail Tala

Along time ago I heard some poetry and some writings and it sounded like the person who had written these words was sitting right on my shoulder, like he knew my heart and my mind. I wanted to know all about this person who wrote about dancing and being in Love with everything and cooking and dancing and rearranging the furniture and being in love with everything.

I found out he lived 800 years ago across the sea in a place we now call Turkey. I even went there and went to where he worked and lived and the farmers market where he shopped.  
In this country we call him "Rumi" because he has a very long name but I call him Mevlana just as many people did which means great teacher.

Now Mevlana was born in Afganistan but there was a war going on, there still is, same war, different people! When he was a teenager his family moved to Konya, Anatolia which is now in Turkey. By age 25 he became head of the University and a great professor and he wrote many volumes of very boring text books. He was the smartest man in town and he knew it.

One day he met a man on the street named Shams of Tabriz who was like a merchant or maybe a beggar. Now no one knows what really happened but Shams asked Mevlana a question something like this "Mevlana, who do you love more, your father or the being who created the universe?" Well this interested Mevlana and he asked the man to come home and went into the study and told his wife to bring them food when they needed it. After about a month, his one son and some other students knocked on the door "Father come out, you must come teach us! Then the other son knocked on the door, "Father, stay in there as long as you like, we do not mind missing school".

After 2 months, Mevlana came out and burned all the text books he had written and showed everyone pages and pages of beautiful poetry that he then taught. Like the hymn we sang "Come Come whoever you are" but the next verse is come come even if you have made a hundred mistakes you can still come here, and another one, if you are tired and bored, don't go to the library and get a book, take down a musical instrument and play, and one that parents hate, don't go back to sleep, the breeze at dawn has something to tell you, don't go back to sleep!

After some time Mevlana was at the Farmers Market and like ours, they had a crafts fair and his friend the goldsmith was hammering the gold jewelry and said "Mevlana you look like you are in Love and like you are walking on air, what is this..??" And Mevlana grabbed a street post and started turning and turning for a very long time "like this" he said and the goldsmith thought he looked like he was flying!

Now from that time on people who are his students are called Dervishes and they study for about 3 years and do this turn as a prayer or meditation, it has many parts and meanings. In this country people call them whirling Dervishes, but we say Dervishes who do the Turn. Now when I am with about 100 friends and 12 musicians I do this, I am a Whirling Dervish and there is one more in Bloomington but I am not allowed to tell you but I can tell you where she works, at the UU Church, she is Director of Religious Education, but do not tell and if you want to know more about this you can ask me later or ask her!

#### MEDITATION and COMMON PRAYER

(includes the following poem by Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks, 2)

Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu  
Buddhist, sufi, or zen. Not any religion

or cultural system. I am not from the East  
or the West, not out of the ocean or up

from the ground, not natural or ethereal, not  
composed of elements at all. I do not exist,

am not an entity in this world or the next,  
did not descend from Adam or Eve or any

origin story. My place is placeless, a trace  
of the traceless. Neither body or soul.

I belong to the beloved, have seen the two  
worlds as one and that one call to and know,

first, last, outer, inner, only that  
breath breathing human being.

## MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS

Plenty of Rumi

Reverend Mary Ann Macklin

a poem is pure energy (says Nikki Giovanni)  
horizontally contained  
between the mind  
of the poet and the ear of the reader  
if it does not sing discard the ear  
for poetry is song  
if it does not delight discard  
the heart for poetry is joy  
if it does not inform then close  
off the brain for it is dead  
if it cannot heed the insistent message  
that life is precious

which is all we poets  
wrapped in our loneliness  
are trying to say  
life is precious (1)

This observation is part of the reason why, each summer, I take time to focus on the creative voices of poets as part of a summer worship service experience. Life is precious. We gather for worship, I believe, to remember who we are. Every poet gives voice to the sacredness of life in unique ways. Over the years, this annual poetry service has reminded us about that simple but profound observation, Life is precious. Over the past eight years, I have offered reflections upon the poetry of Pulitzer Prize winner Alice Walker, past Poet Laureate of the United States, Billy Collins, Award winning Chinese American Li-Young Lee, Polish Nobel Prize winner Wislawa Zymborska, Belgium born May Sarton, Chilean activist Pablo Neruda; Zen influenced Jane Hirshfield... Kentucky farmer and essayist Wendell Berry, Pulitzer Prize winner and America's best selling poet, Mary Oliver, Palestinian American Naomi Shihab Nye, and the early Haiku masters: 17<sup>th</sup> century ascetic and seeker Matsuo Basho, 18<sup>th</sup> century artist, Yosa Buson, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century the witty humanist, Kobayashi Issa. What a wonderful journey we have shared...

It was in 1973, following a bloody military coup in Chile (led by General Pinochet) that Pinochet's forces arrived at Pablo Neruda's home Isla Negra and violently searched his grounds. At that time Neruda made his famous remark, "Look around, there is only one thing of danger for you here---poetry!" Poetry is dangerous because, even in times of bloody military coups, it will continue to say life is precious. All life, whether one is rich or poor, whatever the color of one's skin, ethnic background, or the religious expression of one's spirit, whether one is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, whatever our abilities, disabilities or political persuasions, whatever our sorrows and joys, confusions or clarities, all life is precious.

This morning we hear from the 13<sup>th</sup> century poet and Islamic mystic, Mevalana Jelalludin Rumi. In the book, The Essential Rumi, by Coleman Barks with John Moyne, it is said that "If one actually selected an *essential* Rumi, it would be the *zikr*, the remembering that everything is God." (2). Everything is sacred. All life is precious, Nikki Giovanni tells us. All life, not just human life, all life is sacred.

In a prelude to his fourth book of poems Rumi wrote,

*This is the fourth journey toward home, toward where the great advantages are waiting for us. Reading it, mystics will feel very happy, as a meadow feels when it hears thunder, the good news of rain coming...Here is the way to renew connection with your soul, and rest from difficulties. As the Andalusian poet, Adi Al Riga says,*

*I was sleeping, and being comforted  
By a cool breeze, when suddenly a gray dove  
From a thicket sang and sobbed with longing,  
And reminded me of my own passion.*

*I had been away from my own soul so long,  
So late-sleeping, but that dove's crying  
Woke me and made me cry. Praise  
To all early-waking grievers. (2)*

In a moment we will have a recitation of selected poems from Rumi, a few will include commentary. The first and last poem will include a recitation in the poem's initial language, Persian. Also, the first three poems and last three poems will offer a flute musical response as well as a short pause for silent reflection. Rumi wrote of the flute:

*We are as the flute, and the music in us is from thee;  
we are as the mountain and the echo in us is from thee*

In The Essential Rumi Coleman Barks and John Moyne observe:

*In Persian poetry the poet often refers to himself or herself by name at the end of the poem as sort of a signature. Rumi's variation on this is to refer instead to his friend Shams or to silence. He gives the poetry to its true authorship, including the emptiness after a part of the poem....Rumi asks, "Who's making this music?" He sometimes gives the wording over to the invisible flute player. "Let that musician finish the poem" he says. Words are not important themselves but as resonators for a center. (2, pg 17)*

Lastly, Rumi says in one of his poems...

*There is a way between voice and presence  
where information flows.  
In disciplined silence it opens.  
With wandering talk it closes.*

So! Enough of this wandering talk, let us listen to the voice and presence of Mevlana Jelalludin Rumi.

## **POETICAL RECITATIONS**

### **QUIETNESS** (read by Patricia Coleman)

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 color.  
Do it now.  
You're covered with thick cloud.  
Slide out the side. Die,  
and be quiet. 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. (flute response)

### **SPECIAL PLATES** (read by Paul Losensky)

Notice how each particle moves.  
Notice how everyone has just arrived here  
from a journey.  
Notice how each wants a different food.

Notice how the stars vanish as the sun comes up,  
and how all the streams stream toward the ocean.

Look at the chefs preparing special plates for everyone,  
according to what they need.  
Look at this cup that can hold the ocean.  
Look at those who see the face.  
Look through a friend's eyes  
into the water that is  
entirely jewels. (flute response)

**BE MELTING SNOW** (read by Gladys DeVane)

Totally conscious, and apropos of nothing, you come to see me.  
Is someone here? I ask.  
*The moon. The full moon is inside your house.*

My friends and I go running out into the street.  
*I'm in here*, comes a voice from the house, but we aren't listening.  
We're looking up at the sky.  
My pet nightingale sobs like a drunk in the garden.  
Ringdoves scatter with small cries, *Where, Where*.  
It's midnight. The whole neighborhood is up and out  
in the street thinking, *The cat burglar has come back*.  
The actual thief is there too, saying out loud,  
*Yes, the cat burglar is somewhere in this crowd*.  
No one pays attention.

*Lo, I am with you always* means when you look for God,  
God is in the look of your eyes,  
in the thought of looking, nearer to you than your self,  
or things that have happened to you  
There's no need to go outside.

Be melting snow.  
Washing yourself of yourself.

A white flower grows in the quietness.  
Let your tongue become that flower. (flute response)

**DON'T GO BACK TO SLEEP** (read by Mary Ann Macklin)

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.  
Don't go back to sleep.  
You must ask for what you really want.  
Don't go back to sleep.  
People are going back and forth across the doorsill  
where the two worlds touch.  
The door is round and open.  
Don't go back to sleep.

**THE GUEST HOUSE** (read by Deborah Hutchison)

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

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

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

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

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

### **THE PICKAXE** (read by Patricia Coleman)

Some commentary on *I was a hidden treasure*,  
*And I desired to be known*: tear down  
this house. A hundred thousand new houses  
can be built from the transparent yellow carnelian

buried beneath it, and the only way to get to that  
is to do the work of demolishing and then  
digging under the foundations. With that value  
in hand all the new construction will be done

without effort. And anyway, sooner or later this house  
will fall on its own. The jewel treasure will be  
uncovered, but it won't be yours then. The buried  
wealth is your pay for doing the demolition,

the pick and shovel work. If you wait and just  
let it happen, you'd bite your hand and say,  
"I didn't do as I knew I should have." This  
is a rented house. You don't own the deed.

You have a lease, and you've set up a little shop,  
where you barely make a living sewing patches  
on torn clothing. Yet only a few feet underneath  
are two veins, pure red and bright gold carnelian.

Quick! Take the pickaxe and pry the foundation.  
You've got to quit this seamstress work.  
What does the patch-sewing *mean*, you ask. Eating  
and drinking. The heavy cloak of the body\

is always getting torn. You patch it with food,  
and other restless ego-satisfactions. Rip up  
one board from the shop floor and look into  
the basement. You'll see two glints in the dirt. (flute response)

**ON CHILDREN RUNNING THROUGH** (read by Paul Losensky)

*Commentary: In China they tell of three laughing Taoist masters, who taught by going into town and standing in the marketplace and laughing. One of them died. People curious as to how the remaining two would act gathered at the funeral pyre. The deceased man had given instructions for the other two masters. They were not to prepare the body in any way, not even to change the clothes the dead man was wearing. As it turns out he had crammed his pockets full of firecrackers. When his body was placed on the funeral pyre the teaching began again. Rumi's poems are like firecrackers on a funeral pyre. They won't allow much public posturing, and they point us away from misery. (2, adapted Barks and Moyne)*

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I used to be shy.  
You made me sing.

I used to refuse things at the table.  
Now I shout for more wine.

In somber dignity, I used to sit  
on my mat and pray.

Now children run through  
and make faces at me. (flute response)

**ON BEING WOVEN** (read by Gladys DeVane)

*Commentary: In December of 1273 when Rumi died, representatives of every major religion came to his funeral. In the midst of the crusades and violent sectarian conflict he said, "I go into the Muslim mosque and the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church and I see one altar." And he made it clear in other places that someone who considers religion or nation an important human category is in danger of severing the heart from its ability to act compassionately. This is a radical idea now, but Rumi held the conviction in the thirteenth century with such deep gentleness that its truth was recognized. (2, Barks and Moyne)*

**THE WATERWHEEL**

Stay together, friends.  
Don't scatter and sleep.

Our friendship is made  
of being awake.

The waterwheel accepts water  
and turns and gives it away,  
weeping.

That way it stays in the garden,  
whereas another roundness rolls  
through a dry riverbed looking  
for what it thinks it wants.

Stay here, quivering with each moment  
like a drop of mercury.

1) Giovanni, Nikki, *Bicycles: Love Poems* (Harper Collins, New York, NY), 2009.

(2) Barks, Coleman with John Moyne, *The Essential Rumi*, (Harper Collins, New York, NY) 1995.