

Poetry and Readings from Gentle Yoga

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 to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

My Brilliant Image

One day the sun admitted,
I am just a shadow.
I wish I could show you
The Infinite Incandescence
That has cast my brilliant image!
I wish I could show you,
When you are lonely or in darkness,
The astonishing Light
Of your own Being!
Hafez: by Daniel Ladinsky

Guest House--Rumi

“This being human is a guest house. Every morning is a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor...Welcome and entertain them all. Treat each guest honorably. The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.”

UTE Prayer

Earth teach me stillness
as the grasses are stilled with light.
Earth teach me suffering
as the old stones suffer with memory.
Earth teach me humility
as blossoms are humble with beginning.
Earth teach me caring
as the mother who succors her young.
Earth teach me courage
as the tree which stands all alone.
Earth teach me limitation
as the ant which crawls on the ground.
Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars in the sky.
Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves which die in the fall.
Earth teach me generation
as the seed which rises in the spring.
Earth teach me to forget myself
as melted snow forgets its life.
Earth teach me to remember kindness
as dry fields weep with rain.

Mindful Poem--by Mary Oliver

Every day
I see or hear
something
that more or less
kills me
with delight,
that leaves me
like a needle
in the haystack
of light.

It was what I was born for -
to look, to listen,
to lose myself
inside this soft world -
to instruct myself
over and over
in joy,
and acclamation.

Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,
the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant -
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,
the daily presentations.

Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself,
how can you help
but grow wise
with such teachings
as these -
the untrimmable light
of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made
out of grass?