

**bees**

**of the**

**invisible world**

**vol 1**

**POEMS FOR WORK**

We are the bees of the invisible world....  
We perpetually gather the honey of the visible  
world in order to store it in the great golden  
hive of the invisible one.

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1.

## **WE ARE MANY**

Of the many men whom I am, whom we are,  
I cannot settle on a single one.  
They are lost to me under the cover of clothing  
They have departed for another city.

When everything seems to be set  
to show me off as a man of intelligence,  
the fool I keep concealed on my person  
takes over my talk and occupies my mouth.

On other occasions, I am dozing in the midst  
of people of some distinction,  
and when I summon my courageous self,  
a coward completely unknown to me  
swaddles my poor skeleton  
in a thousand tiny reservations.

When a stately home bursts into flames,  
instead of the fireman I summon,  
an arsonist bursts on the scene,  
and he is I. There is nothing I can do.  
What must I do to distinguish myself?  
How can I put myself together?

All the books I read  
lionize dazzling hero figures,  
brimming with self-assurance.  
I die with envy of them;  
and, in films where bullets fly on the wind,  
I am left in envy of the cowboys,  
left admiring even the horses.

But when I call upon my DASHING BEING,  
out comes the same OLD LAZY SELF,  
and so I never know just WHO I AM,  
nor how many I am, nor WHO WE WILL BE BEING.  
I would like to be able to touch a bell  
and call up my real self, the truly me,  
because if I really need my proper self,  
I must not allow myself to disappear.

While I am writing, I am far away;  
and when I come back, I have already left.  
I should like to see if the same thing happens  
to other people as it does to me,  
to see if as many people are as I am,  
and if they seem the same way to themselves.  
When this problem has been thoroughly explored,  
I am going to school myself so well in things  
that, when I try to explain my problems,  
I shall speak, not of self, but of geography.

**Pablo Neruda**

**2.**

## **TURKESTAN**

Thinking only of their vow that they would crush the Tartars- -  
On the desert, clad in sable and silk, five thousand of them fell....  
But arisen from their crumbling bones on the banks of the river at the border,  
Dreams of them enter, like men alive, into rooms where their loves lie sleeping.

**Chen Tao**

3.

### 33

When it was day they came into my house and said, "We shall only take the smallest room here."

They said, "We shall help you in the worship of your god and humbly accept only our own share of his grace"; and they took their seat in a corner and they sat quiet and meek.

But in the darkness of night I find they break into my sacred shrine, strong and turbulent, and snatch with unholy greed the offerings from God's altar.

**Rabidranath Tagore**

4.

### **ODE 1397, "I" and "We"**

Of these two thousand "I" and "We" people,  
which am I?

Don't try to keep me from asking!  
Listen, when I'm this out of control!  
But don't put anything breakable in my way!

There is an Original inside me.  
What's here is a mirror for that, for You.

If You are joyful, I am.  
If You grieve, or if You're bitter, or graceful,  
I take on those qualities.

Like the shadow of a cypress tree in the meadow,  
like the *shadow* of a rose, I live  
close to the Rose.

If I separated my self from You,  
I would turn entirely thorn.

Every second, I drink another cup of my own blood-wine.  
Every instant, I break an empty cup against your door.

I reach out, wanting You to tear me open.

Saladin's generosity lights a candle in my chest.  
Who *am* I then?

**Jalaludin Rumi**



5.

## **Between Your Eye And This Page**

Between  
Your eye and this page  
I am standing.

Between  
Your ear and sound  
The Friend has pitched a golden tent  
Your spirit walks through a thousand times  
A day.

Each time you pass the Kaaba  
The Sun unwinds a silk thread from your body.  
Each time you pass any object  
From within it  
I bow.

If you are still having doubts  
About His nearness

Once in a while debate with God.

Between  
Your eye and this page Hafiz  
Is standing.

Bump  
Into me  
More.

**Hafiz**

6.

## **A Cicada**

Pure of heart and therefore hungry,  
All night long you have sung in vain --  
Oh, this final broken indrawn breath  
Among the green indifferent trees!  
Yes, I have gone like a piece of driftwood,  
I have let my garden fill with weeds....  
I bless you for your true advice  
To live as pure a life as yours.

**Sun Zhu**

7.

## **THE DREAM CALLED LIFE**

A dream it was in which I found myself.  
And you that hail me now, then hailed me king,  
In a brave palace that was all my own,  
Within, and all without it, mine; until,  
Drunk with excess of majesty and pride,  
Methought I towered so big and swelled so wide  
That of myself I burst the glittering bubble  
Which my ambition had about me blown  
And all again was darkness. Such a dream  
As this, in which I may be walking now,  
Dispensing solemn justice to you shadows,  
Who make believe to listen; but anon  
Kings, princes, captains, warriors, plume and steel  
Ay, even with all your airy theater,  
May flit into the air you seem to rend  
With acclamations, leaving me to wake  
In the dark tower; or dreaming that I wake  
From this that waking is; or this and that,  
Both waking and both dreaming; such a doubt  
Confounds and clouds our mortal life about.  
But whether wake or dreaming, this I know  
How dreamwise human glories come and go;  
Whose momentary tenure not to break,  
Walking as one who knows he soon may wake,  
So fairly carry the full cup, so well  
Disordered insolence and passion quell,  
That there be nothing after to upbraid  
Dreamer or doer in the part he played;  
Whether to-morrow's dawn shall break the spell,  
Or the last trumpet of the Eternal Day,  
When dreaming, with the night, shall pass away.

**Pedro Caleron de la Barca**

**8.**

**“Sometimes I go about ...”**

Sometimes I go about pitying myself  
and all the time  
I am being carried on great winds across the sky.

**Ojibway**

9.

### **As Much As You Can**

Even if you can't shape your life the way you want,  
at least try as much as you can  
not to degrade it  
by too much contact with the world,  
by too much activity and talk.

Do not degrade it by dragging it along,  
taking it around and exposing it so often  
to the daily silliness  
of social relations and parties,  
until it comes to seem a boring hanger-on.

**C. P. Cavafy**

10.

## COME INTO ANIMAL PRESENCE

Come into animal presence  
No man is so guileless as  
the serpent. The lonely white  
rabbit on the roof is a star  
twitching its ears at the rain.  
The llama intricately  
folding its hind legs to be seated  
not disdains but mildly  
disregards human approval.  
What joy when the insouciant  
armadillo glances at us and doesn't  
quicken his trotting  
across the track into the palm brush.

What is this joy? That no animal  
falters, but knows what it must do?  
That the snake has no blemish,  
that the rabbit inspects his strange surroundings  
in white star-silence? The llama  
rests in dignity, the armadillo  
has some intention to pursue in the palm-forest.  
Those who were sacred have remained so,  
holiness does not dissolve, it is a presence  
of bronze, only the sight that saw it  
faltered and turned from it.  
An old joy returns in holy presence.

**Denise Levertov**

**11.**

## **The Waterwheel**

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

Our friendship is made  
of being awake.

**Jalaludin Rumi**

12.

## **Shantideva**

Whatever joy there is in this world  
All comes from desiring others to be happy,  
And whatever suffering there is in this world  
All comes from desiring myself to be happy.

If all the injury,  
Fear and pain in this world  
Arise from grasping at a self,  
Then what use is that great ghost to me?

Therefore, in order to allay all harms  
    Inflicted on me  
And in order to pacify the sufferings of  
    others,  
I shall give up myself to others  
And cherish them as I do my very self.

**Shantideva**



13.

## **SONG OF A MAN WHO HAS COME THROUGH**

Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!  
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time.  
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!  
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!  
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed  
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course through the chaos of the  
world

Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted;  
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge  
Driven by invisible blows,  
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder, we shall find the  
Hesperides.

Oh, for the wonder that bubbles in my soul,  
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,  
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.

What is the knocking?  
What is the knocking at the door in the night?  
It is somebody wants to do us harm.

No, no, it is the three strange angels,  
Admit them, admit them.

**D. H. Lawrence**

**14.**

**“To wake up to ...”**

To wake up to  
who we are  
what we are here for.

To make all life  
more poetical, more sane  
more livin, lovin.

To experience  
the true of all things  
this moment...  
this moment...  
this moment.

**William Segal**

**15.**

**IF ALL THE HURT**

If all the hurt  
Of all the years  
Were on the scale  
It would not balance  
Now  
this moment of  
Indifference

**Delia Blythe**

16.

## **The Fleas Interest Me So Much**

Fleas interest me so much  
that I let them bite me for hours.  
They are perfect, ancient, Sanskrit,  
machines that admit of no appeal.  
They do not bite to eat,  
they bite only to jump;  
they are the dancers of the celestial sphere,  
delicate acrobats  
in the softest and most profound circus;  
let them gallop on my skin,  
divulge their emotions,  
amuse themselves with my blood,  
but someone should introduce them to me.  
I want to know them closely,  
I want to know what to rely on.

**Pablo Neruda**

17.

## **Unsuspecting**

There is a natty kind of mind  
That slicks its thoughts,  
Culls its oughts,  
Trims its views, Prunes its trues,  
and never suspects it is a rind.

**Jean Toomer**

18.

## **The Delights of the Door**

Kings don't touch doors.

They don't know this joy: to push affectionately or fiercely before us one of those huge panels we know so well, then to turn back in order to replace it--holding a door in our arms.

The pleasure of grabbing one of those tall barriers to a room abdominally, by its porcelain knot; of this swift fighting, body-to-body, when, the forward motion for an instant halted, the eye opens and the whole body adjusts to its new surroundings.

But it still keeps one friendly hand on the door, holding it open, then decisively pushes it away, closing itself in--which the click of the powerful but well-oiled spring pleasantly confirms.

**Francis Ponge**

19.

## Little Gidding

III.

And all shall be well and  
All manner of thing shall be well  
By the purification of the motive  
In the ground of our beseeching.

Marty suggested that this poem had been truncated by accident in copying, and he has the full poem

**T. S. Elliot**

20.

## **Silence Clarity**

Just where you are  
searchingly, wholly  
go toward the moment  
this tremendous new moment  
no you, no not you  
the pure point  
everywhere, always.

Go further where  
there is nowhere,  
no-one,  
no coming, no going  
no place knowable  
the place where  
you are now.

In the nearness  
the Silence surrounds  
beckons the burden body  
soothing the errant mind  
freeing the heart.

Beyond body and mind  
transcending all the Silence,  
But can the silence know itself?  
Its undreamed necessities?

It is through the body that sits here  
that I go to my true nature.

**William Segal**



21.

## **The Guest House**

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're 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 whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

**Jalaludin Rumi**

**22.**

## **Sometimes**

Sometimes, when a bird cries out,  
Or the wind sweeps through a tree,  
Or a dog howls in a far off farm,  
I hold still and listen a long time.

My soul turns and goes back to the place  
Where, a thousand forgotten years ago,  
The bird and the blowing wind  
Were like me, and were my brothers.

My soul turns into a tree,  
And an animal, and a cloud bank.  
Then changed and odd it comes home  
And asks me questions. What should I reply?

**Hermann Hesse**

**23.**

## **Childhood Friends**

Whoever sees clearly what is diseased in himself  
begins to gallop on the way.

There is nothing worse than thinking  
you are well enough. More than anything,  
self-complacency blocks the workmanship....

Don't turn your head.  
Keep looking at the bandaged place.  
That is where the light enters you.

And don't believe for a moment  
that you're healing yourself.

**Jalaludin Rumi**

24.

## **TO-MORROW**

Lord, what am I, that, with unceasing care,  
Thou didst see after me, —that thou didst wait,  
Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,  
And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?  
O, strange delusion, that I did not greet  
Thy blest approach! and, O, to heaven how lost,  
If my ingratitude's unkindly frost  
Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon thy feet!  
How oft my guardian angel gently cried,  
“Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see  
How he persists to knock and wait for thee!”  
And, O, how often to that voice of sorrow,  
“To-morrow we will open,” I replied!  
And when the morrow came, I answered still,  
“To-morrow.”

**Lope de Vega**

25.

## **BABY TORTOISE**

You know what it is to be born alone,  
Baby tortoise!

The first day to heave your feet little by little from the shell,  
Not yet awake,  
And remain lapsed on earth,  
Not quite alive.

A tiny, fragile, half-animate bean.

To open your tiny beak-mouth, that looks as if it would never open,  
Like some iron door;  
To lift the upper hawk-beak from the lower base  
And reach your skinny little neck  
And take your first bite at some dim bit of herbage,  
Alone, small insect,  
Tiny bright-eye,  
Slow one.

To take your first solitary bite  
And move on your slow, solitary hunt.  
Your bright, dark little eye,  
Your eye of a dark disturbed night,  
Under its slow lid, tiny baby tortoise,  
So indomitable.

No one ever hear you complain.

You draw your head forward, slowly, from your little wimple  
And set forward, slow-dragging, on your four-pinned toes,  
Rowing slowly forward.  
Whither away, small bird?

Rather like a baby working its limbs,  
Except that you make slow, ageless progress  
And a baby makes none.

The touch of sun excites you,  
And the long ages, and the lingering chill  
Make you pause to yawn,  
Opening your impervious mouth,  
Suddenly beak-shaped, and very wide, like some suddenly gaping  
pincers;  
Soft red tongue, and thin hard gums,  
Then close the wedge of your little mountain front,  
Your face, baby tortoise.

Do you wonder at the world, as slowly you turn your head in its wimple  
And look with laconic, black eyes?  
Or is sleep coming over you again,  
The non-life?

You are so hard to wake.

Are you able to wonder?  
Or is it just your indomitable will and pride of the first life  
Looking round  
And slowly pitching itself against the inertia  
Which has seemed invincible?

The vast inanimate,  
And the fine brilliance of your so tiny eye,  
Challenger.

Nay, tiny shell-bird,  
What a huge vast inanimate it is, that you must row against,  
What an incalculable inertia.

Challenger,  
Little Ulysses, fore-runner,  
No bigger than my thumb-nail,  
Buon viaggio.

All animate creation on your shoulder,  
Set forth, little Titan, under your battle-shield.

The ponderous, preponderate,  
Inanimate universe;  
And you are slowly moving, pioneer, you alone.

How vivid your travelling seems now, in the troubled sunshine,  
Stoic, Ulyssean atom;  
Suddenly hasty, reckless, on high toes.

Voiceless little bird,  
Resting your head half out of your wimple  
In the slow dignity of your eternal pause.  
Alone, with no sense of being alone,  
And hence six times more solitary;  
Fulfilled of the slow passion of pitching through immemorial ages  
Your little round house in the midst of chaos.

Over the garden earth,  
Small bird,  
Over the edge of all things.

Traveler,  
With your tail tucked a little on one side  
Like a gentleman in a long-skirted coat.

All life carried on your shoulder,  
Invincible fore-runner.

**D. H. Lawrence**

26.

## **After Forty Years**

After forty years  
A few quietly spoken words  
Have led me irrefutably to know  
That hidden in the constellation I call  
Mind, or  
Heart  
There truly is  
The home  
I never dared believe  
Could be.

**Jack Cain**



27.

### **The Crystal Gazer**

I shall gather myself into my self again,  
I shall take my scattered selves and make them one.  
I shall fuse them into a polished crystal ball  
Where I can see the moon and the flashing sun.  
I shall sit like a sibyl, hour after hour intent.  
Watching the future come and the present go -  
And the little shifting pictures of people rushing  
In tiny self-importance to and fro.

**Sarah Teasdale**

28.

## **AGAINST MEANING**

Everything I do is against meaning.  
This is partly deliberate, mostly spontaneous.  
Wherever I am think I'm somewhere else.  
This is partly to confuse the police, mostly to  
avoid myself es-  
specially when I have to confirm  
the obvious which always  
sits on a little table and draws a lot  
of attention to itself.  
So much so that no one sees the chairs  
and the girl sitting on one of them.  
With the obvious one is always at the movies.  
The other obvious which the loud obvious  
conceals  
is not obvious enough to merit a  
surrender of the will.  
But though a little hole in the boring report  
God watches us faking it.

**Andrei Codrescu**

29.

## **“Gratitude”**

If the angel at your table suddenly  
makes up his mind, Be quiet;  
gently smooth the few wrinkles  
in the cloth beneath your bread.

Then offer him your crude food  
Let him taste it in his turn  
And raise to his pure lips  
A simple everyday glass.

**Rainer Maria Rilke**

**30.**

## **The Tent**

Outside, the freezing desert night.  
This other night inside grows warm, kindling.  
Let the landscape be covered with thorny crust.  
We have a soft garden in here.  
The continents blasted,  
cities and little towns, everything  
become a scorched, blackened ball.  
The news we hear is full of grief for that future,  
but the real news inside here  
is there's no news at all.

**Jalaludin Rumi**

31.

## KEEPING QUIET

Now we will count to twelve  
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth,  
let's not speak in any language,  
let's stop for a second,  
and not move our arms so much.

Fisherman in the cold sea  
would not harm whales  
and the man gathering salt  
would not look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,  
wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victory with no survivors,  
would put on clean clothes  
and walk about with their brothers  
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity.  
Life is what it is about,  
I want no truck with death.

It would be an exotic moment  
without rush, without engines;  
we would all be together  
in a sudden strangeness...

If we were not so single-minded  
about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing,  
perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness  
of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves  
with death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us  
as when everything seems dead in winter  
and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I will go.

**Pablo Neruda**

32.

## **Noah**

*The ark adrift:*

My prayer has long been this:  
To remember,  
Amidst my family quarrelling,  
Amidst the stench of husbandry,  
Amidst the sea-drift of my soul,  
My self.

*The ark aground:*

When land appears  
And the only recourse is to disembark  
I look towards a vacant earth  
And see a journey thus far filled with turmoil:  
And what will be  
And what has been  
Remind me of my heavy tread  
From ark to earth.  
I feel my feet  
upon the ground.

*The mountain-top:*

My prayer is this:  
May I descend from here  
Remembering,  
And promise  
To return.

**Daniel Racicot**

33.

## The Answer

Then what is the answer?— Not to be deluded by dreams.

To know that great civilizations have broken down into violence, and  
their tyrants come, many times before.

When open violence appears, to avoid it with honor or choose the least  
ugly faction; these evils are essential.

To keep one's own integrity, be merciful and uncorrupted and not wish for evil; and not  
be duped

By dreams of universal justice or happiness. These dreams will not be  
fulfilled.

To know this, and to know that however ugly the parts appear the  
whole remains beautiful. A severed hand

Is an ugly thing, and a man dissevered from the earth and stars and his  
history . . . for contemplation or in fact . . .

Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness, the greatest  
beauty is

Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty  
of the universe. Love, not man

Apart from that, or else you will share man's pitiful confusions, or drown in despair when  
his days darken.

**Robinson Jeffers**



## Morality

We cannot kindle when we will  
 The fire which in the heart resides;  
 The spirit bloweth and is still,  
 In mystery our soul abides.  
     But tasks in hours of insight will'd  
     Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet  
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;  
 We bear the burden and the heat  
 Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.  
     Not till the hours of light return,  
     All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,  
 When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,  
 Ask, how she view'd thy self-control,  
 Thy struggling, task'd morality--  
     Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,  
     Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,  
 Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,  
 See, on her face a glow is spread,  
 A strong emotion on her cheek!  
     "Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife divine,  
     Whence was it, for it is not mine?"

"There is no effort on my brow--  
 I do not strive, I do not weep;  
 I rush with the swift spheres and glow  
 In joy, and when I will, I sleep.  
     Yet that severe, that earnest air,  
     I saw, I felt it once--but where?"

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,  
Nor wore the manacles of space;  
I felt it in some other clime,  
I saw it in some other place.

'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,  
And lay upon the breast of God."

**Matthew Arnold**

35.

**“The props assist the house ...”**

The props assist the house  
Until the house is built,  
And then the props withdraw –  
And adequate, erect,  
The house supports itself;  
Ceasing to recollect  
The auger and the carpenter.  
Just such a retrospect  
Hath the perfected life,  
A past of plank and nail,  
And slowness, – then the scaffolds drop –  
Affirming it a soul.

**Emily Dickenson**

**36.**

**Kuan-tzu**

If you reverently clean its abode  
It will come of itself.  
You will recover your own true nature,  
It will be fixed in you once and for all.

**tr. Stephen Karcher**

37.

## **Lao-tzu**

Push far enough towards the Void,  
Hold fast enough to Quietness,  
And of the ten thousand things none can but be worked on by  
you.

I have beheld them wither they go back.  
See, all things howsoever they flourish  
Return to the root from which they grew.  
This return to the root is called Quietness;  
Quietness is called submission to Fate;  
What has submitted to Fate has become part of the always-so.  
To know the always-so is to be illumined....

**Lao-tse**

**38.**

## **I Am Not I**

I am not I.

I am this one  
walking beside me whom I do not see,  
whom at times I manage to visit,  
and whom at other times I forget;  
who remains calm and silent while I talk,  
and forgives gently, when I hate,  
who walks where I am not,  
who will remain standing when I die.

**Juan Ramón Jiménez**

39.

## Work station

As if mentally punching a time clock  
which rings with triggered, impersonal resolution,  
I crouch to some task, adhere to a list, and check  
items off, releasing the sudden out-thrown  
breath that says “Now, that’s done!”

With every ordering, each neatness—  
dust waxed from the surface, a long overdue letter  
written and faxed—snow accumulates,  
clocks tick. I scissor stems, put roots in a jar,  
advance pale rootlets into the future.

Then suddenly feathered, crest-risen, I peer down  
at my turtle’s inch from the blue sky’s vantage point,  
eavesdropping on the man at my work station  
as I check my messages or run a work count,  
evolved to the level of an ant.

Ever again, will jonquils or poetry break  
the crust of these well-scrubbed quotidian  
satisfactions? When will I read, unassigned, a book,  
again? Loft a dry fly, drift on breezes that quicken?  
Give up all effort—and awaken?

**Richard Tillinghast**

**40.**

**“When he sleeps ...”**

When he sleeps, he sleeps.

When he eats, he eats.

When he works, he works.

When he meditates, he meditates.

**Richard Tillinghast**



41.

## **WAXWINGS**

Four Tao philosophers as cedar waxwings  
chat on a February berry bush  
in sun, and I am one.

Such merriment and such sobriety--  
the small wild fruit on the tall stalk--  
was this not always my true style?

Above an elegance of snow, beneath  
a silk-blue sky a brotherhood of four  
birds. Can you mistake us?

To sun, to feast, and to converse  
and all together--for this I have abandoned  
all my other lives.

**Robert Francis**

42.

62

now does our world descend  
the path to nothingness  
(cruel now cancels kind;  
friends turn to enemies)  
therefore lament, my dream  
and don a doer's doom

create is now contrive;  
imagined, merely know  
(freedom: what makes a slave)  
there, my life, lie down  
and more by most endure  
all that you never were

hide, poor dishonoured mind  
who thought yourself so wise;  
and much could understand  
concerning no and yes:  
if they've become the same  
it's time you unbecame

where climbing was and bright  
is darkness and to fall  
(now wrong's the only right  
since brave are cowards all)  
therefore despair, my heart  
and die into the dirt

but from this endless end  
of briefer each our bliss—  
where seeing eyes go blind  
(where lips forget to kiss)  
where everything's nothing  
—arise, my soul; and sing

**e. e. cummings**

43.

## Summer Solstice

We gathered in the early dawn under  
the filbert trees and the eaves of the school,  
against the drizzling rain,  
that seemed at first an intruder,  
as if we knew what the day should be.

And waited, we did not know for what;  
watching the gray, amorphous sky,  
and in the distance-the distance we faced-  
a streak of pink appeared, turned orange  
and revealed a breath of light, far far away.

The singers sang to that and the light inside-  
ancient songs of praise to the sun and the season.  
And the light.

The piano in the schoolyard, covered with an  
Oriental rug against the rain, seemed  
to say something, we could not tell what-  
perhaps about a relationship that existed  
long ago between man and nature-  
when man knew what it was he wished  
to be related to, in ceremonies since lost  
and forgotten, that we, now, in our presence  
yearned to renew.

The music, scored for our search, accompanied  
the dancers in a Movement that seemed written  
for the sun. Or was it the wind. Or the rain that  
having abated, began again when the dancers  
moved into their places.

And when their arms took the first raised position  
we knew that all things join that are related,  
and all that is related is one and comes from one,  
and must be reblended again with the source.

And in the wish that was in the faces  
of the dancers, we found our own wish  
and in it our relationship to God.

44.

## **GOD SAYS YES TO ME**

I asked God if it was okay to be melodramatic  
and she said yes  
I asked her if it was okay to be short  
and she said it sure is  
I asked her if I could wear nail polish  
or not wear nail polish  
and she said honey  
she calls me that sometimes  
she said you can do just exactly  
what you want to  
Thanks God I said  
And is it even okay if I dont paragraph  
my letters  
Sweetcakes God said  
who knows where she picked that up  
what I'm telling you is  
Yes Yes Yes

**Kaylin Haught**

45.

## IN A HARD INTELLECTUAL LIGHT

In a hard intellectual light  
I will kill all delight,  
And I will build a citadel  
Too beautiful to tell

O too austere to tell  
And far too beautiful to see,  
Whose evident distance  
I will call the best of me.

And this light of intellect  
Will shine on all my desires,  
It will my flesh protect  
And flare my bold constant fires,

For the hard intellectual light  
Will lay the flesh with nails.  
And it will keep the world bright  
And closed the body's soft jails.

And from this fair edifice  
I shall see, as my eyes blaze,  
The moral grandeur of man  
Animating all his days.

And peace will marry purpose,  
And purity married to grace  
Will make the human absolute  
As sweet as the human face.

Until my hard vision blears,  
And Poverty and Death return  
In organ music like the years,  
Making the spirit leap, and burn

For the hard intellectual light  
That kills all delight  
And brings the solemn, inward pain  
Of truth into the heart again.

**Richard Eberhart**

**46.**

## **Lost**

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you  
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,  
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,  
Must ask permission to know it and be known.  
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers  
I have made this place around you.  
If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.

**David Wagoner**

47.

### **“Taittireeya-Upanishad”**

I am the food, I am the food, I am the food; I am the eater, I am the eater, I am the eater; I am the link between, I am the link between, I am the link between....  
I am this world and I eat this world. Who knows this, knows.

**tr. Swami and Yeats**

48.

## **A Bit of Poetry**

Everything beckons to us to perceive it,  
murmurs at every turn, "Remember me!"  
A day we passed, too busy to receive it,  
will yet unlock us all its treasury.

Who shall compute our harvest? Who shall bar  
us from the former years, the long-departed?  
What have we learnt from living since we started,  
except to find in others what we are?

Except to re-enkindle commonplace?  
O house, O sloping field, O setting sun!  
Your features form into a face, you run,  
you cling to us, returning our embrace!

One space spreads through all creatures equally -  
inner-world-space. Birds quietly flying go  
flying through us. O, I that want to grow!  
the tree I look outside it's growing in me!

I have a house within when I need care.  
I have a guard within when I need rest.  
The love that I have had! - Upon my breast  
the beauty of the world clings, to weep there.

**Rainer Maria Rilke**



49.

### **A Green-Water Stream**

To reach the Yellow-Flowered River  
Go by the Green-Water Stream.  
A thousand twists and turns of mountain  
But the way there can't be many miles.  
The sound of water falling over rocks  
And deep colour among pines.  
Gently green floating water-plants.  
Bright the mirrored reeds and rushes.  
I am a lover of true quietness.  
Watching the flow of clear water  
I dream of sitting on the uncarved rock  
casting a line on the endless stream.

**Wang Wei**

50.

**when mortals are alive**

When mortals are alive, they worry about death.  
When they're full, they worry about hunger.  
Theirs is the Great Uncertainty.

But sages don't consider the past.  
And they don't worry about the future.  
Nor do they cling to the present.  
And from moment to moment they follow the Way.

**Bodhidharma**

**51.**

**“The egoist’s trick...”**

The egoist's trick for everlasting service  
Well-rendered unto one of quenchless need  
Lies in the art of chilling by degrees  
And leeching out the fire-blooded column  
Into its bulb earth-sunken, numb and nerveless  
And slowly entering the calming freeze  
Before the dervish appetites can kick  
And batter all life's trophies in their greed.  
With ashen face, impassive as a golem  
Full mindful of the smallest jot and tittle  
The egoist tames his hands to serve, his quick  
Crusted in rime as sharp as shale, and brittle.  
But if that gelid mantle were to crack:

Then one might draw within  
The lungs wind, and wail  
Such a wailing  
As the world could not begin  
To will away,  
Although so keen and frail  
A word as this,  
Weird-woven for a day  
Of final failing,  
Seems scarcely to exist  
And scarce to kiss  
The heart and hollow ears  
Before it disappears  
Into the wayward and the wind-strewn mist.

Yet none would hear if one should cry, Alack!  
And ever, ever I am at your service,  
For it is meet, God-willed, and all my purpose.

**David De Boe**

## **ANIMAL TRANQUILITY AND DECAY**

The little hedgerow birds,  
That peck along the roads, regard him not.  
He travels on, and in his face, his step,  
His gait, is one expression: every limb,  
His look and bending figure, all bespeak  
A man who does not move with pain, but moves  
With thought.--He is insensibly subdued  
To settled quiet: he is one by whom  
All effort seems forgotten; one to whom  
Long patience hath such mild composure given,

That patience now doth seem a thing of which  
He hath no need. He is by nature led  
To peace so perfect that the young behold  
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.

**William Wordsworth**

53.

## Ode to Death

in the end  
we all bid  
farewell  
to ourselves  
in the cold  
the world a stage  
everybody has  
to play no,  
not Shakespeare's  
suggested single role  
but a double role  
master and slave

this physique  
that stoically  
bids us  
do its chores  
for all its needs  
physical, spiritual  
the most exacting partner  
one would ever get  
a quiet stoic bullier  
and after all the slavery tasks  
the master leaves  
the slave in the cold  
a cold that freezes  
in the finest of weather  
without the snow  
the blizzard  
deep into everybody's heart, soul

the master and slave  
a marriage made in heaven  
till death do us part

**John Tiong Chunghoo**

54.

## Octaves

I

We thrill too strangely at the master's touch;  
We shrink too sadly from the larger self  
Which for its own completeness agitates  
And undetermines us; we do not feel --  
We dare not feel it yet -- the splendid shame  
Of uncreated failure; we forget,  
The while we groan, that God's accomplishment  
Is always and unfailingly at hand.

II

Tumultuously void of a clean scheme  
Whereon to build, whereof to formulate,  
The legion life that riots in mankind  
Goes ever plunging upward, up and down,  
Most like some crazy regiment at arms,  
Undisciplined of aught but Ignorance,  
And ever led resourcelessly along  
To brainless carnage by drunk trumpeters.

III

To me the groaning of world-worshippers  
Rings like a lonely music played in hell  
By one with art enough to cleave the walls  
Of heaven with his cadence, but without  
The wisdom or the will to comprehend  
The strangeness of his own perversity,  
And all without the courage to deny  
The profit and the pride of his defeat.

#### IV

While we are drilled in error, we are lost  
Alike to truth and usefulness. We think  
We are great warriors now, and we can brag  
Like Titans; but the world is growing young,  
And we, the fools of time, are growing with it: --  
We do not fight to-day, we only die;  
We are too proud of death, and too ashamed  
Of God, to know enough to be alive.

#### XVIII

Like a white wall whereon forever breaks  
Unsatisfied the tumult of green seas,  
Man's unconjectured godliness rebukes  
With its imperial silence the lost waves  
Of insufficient grief. This mortal surge  
That beats against us now is nothing else  
Than plangent ignorance. Truth neither shakes  
Nor wavers; but the world shakes, and we shriek.

**Edward Arlington Robinson**

## THE TASK

To a Buffalo GURDJIEFF WORK Group,  
a task was given for the summer 2005:

“Locate poetry that expresses Work Ideas.”

accounts, making & keeping	group work	"real I"
accumulator (batteries)	habits	reciprocal feeding
aim	hanbledzoin	remorse
as above, so below	hasnamuss help	responsibility
associations	hopefulness	scale
attention	idée fixée	schools (super effort)
attitudes, right	identification	self-calming
automatism and intention	identification, non-	self-observation
Beginning, return to	imagination	self-pity
bodies	imagination, negative	self-remembering
buffers	impressions	self-study
carriage, horse, driver, master	influences	separation of myself from myself
center, instinctive	intention	sensation, thought, feelings
centered work, one-	in the moment	service
centers, wrong work	in the moment, work	serving the higher
conscience	Law of Seven	shocks
conscious love	Law of Three	silence
considering, external	like what it does not like	sincerity
considering, internal	lying	sitting
cosmoses	movements	sleep and awakening
crystallization	multiplicity of i's	small i's
desires and non-desires (likes and dislikes)	negative emotions	stopping thoughts
disease of tomorrow	obedience (allowing direction of another's will)	striving
efforts	personality	struggle
ego	preparation	two rivers
egoist, conscious	proportion, sense of	unnecessary talking
essence		valuation
		world maintenance



We would like to thank Mrs. Martha Heyneman.  
for her contribution and advice.

The title of this collection comes from an adaptation by  
Mrs. Heyneman of Rilke's *Letters on Life*, as quoted  
in *Parabola 30:3 – Body and Soul*



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