

Prologue

Certain thoughts I have had at various points along my life's journey I have put into writing. These thoughts, or reflections, are the result of a strong need to clarify for myself some aspect of life that I was feeling or absorbing or being moved by at a particular moment but could not at the time find words to express. Men of my era were not provided tools for inner discernment. Encouraged little to feel were we and even less to name it.

On one level these writings regard the development of inner spaces and offer my inner sanctum a deeper understanding of where it comes from and where it is going.

On another level it has occurred to me relatively late in life that these reflections are also introductions to a soul. To my soul and to much of what matters most to me.

Introductions.

Introductions of me to me. Introductions of me to you. And where if not there, I wonder, does life offer more meaning?

The long labyrinth-like process involved for me in gathering a reflection into words has in several cases taken many years. What exactly serves to bring a reflection to the conscious part of my being I do not know. But I have learned that, despite the paradox, the clarity required for self-understanding can have its origins in the vaguest and most mysterious of places. Buried deep within various reflections are parts of myself from eons future and past, I am sure.

However long a reflection takes in the coming, its arrival is always a surprise—a part of me I knew nothing of stands quietly before me. And its greeting is always the same: Here I am, I've come back.

Then I am whole again.

And that tiny moment of sublime peace is one which no other moment in life can replace.

Today

We insist on the past
and the future too
while patiently nudging us there in between
lives that old master catalyst of time: Today

Today. How unwittingly we use it as time for some other time. We keep so busy planning tomorrow, then carefully we embalm it for yesterday's archives, all during the interlude of today.

We ravage the earth today in the name of our children's tomorrow, insensitive to the life we bruised somewhere between the gift-wrap and the gift of their inheritance.

We surrender the present for a past and future that would give up everything to stir just once in the arms of today.

Today. The great adjournment. Time's middle child dreaming again in the antechamber: When does it come my time? How long to play second fiddle to yesterday and tomorrow? When will they comprehend my worth? Is my fate to be only an emerging sunrise which, like so many loves, descends mysteriously upon the ascent?

Yet only in today are the forces of polarization given opportunity again to meet somewhere in the middle, where wisdom conceives love. And only in Today—corpus callosum of human existence, bridge upon which Past and Future meet, Either meets Or, and Life Death—only in today can we make the fundamental connection among all things considered:

And in that moment of moments, time
like the soaring eagle,
spreads its wings to the vastness.

Flight of the human spirit redeemed.

O Today!

Futility of Words

If only we would listen

God how we would hear the heart
struggling to soar beyond the shackles
of the mind,

and otherwise-bound-for-infinity thoughts
running bewildered
in a cage
of twenty-six symbols,

and the bittersweet madness of silence
chanting songs of penetration
to the lonely wisdom
of the word.

If only we would listen.

Concurrence

And I wondered if yesterday, today, and tomorrow ever concur.

Goodbyes

There must be more to months
or years of converging
than a split-second handshake
at the moment of departure,
with all its confusing emptiness,
could ever dare to admit.

Holding Back

Pray for me.
In no small way pray for me.
And if you pause for a moment to think of me
pray for me.

And pray for a prophet.
And pray for that world.
That silent world of things.
That world of things that each of us carries within.
Deep within.
In the silent crannies of the heart.
A world restrained from without
by some intangible faceless fear,
yet clinging from within
to the distant hope for freedom's flight.

Yes, and pray we don't wait till the end of our days
to see we all had the very same fears,
the very same needs.
The same arms stretched out in silent plea
for the drawing near
that didn't come
because we never quite understood
that what we held back from the others
for dread of being so shockingly different
was what made us so incredibly alike
all along.

Trust

Trust which is not founded on a willingness to assume the burdens of risk and vulnerability is not trust at all but merely calculation.

Parable of the Seed

"A farmer went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

Other seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep. Then when the sun rose, it was scorched and it withered for lack of roots.

Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it produced no grain.

And some seed, finally, fell on rich soil and produced fruit. It came up and grew and yielded thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted.'

Having spoken this parable, he added: 'Let whoever has ears to hear this, hear!'"

Mark 4:3–9

A trip to Lloyd Center in Portland is not complete without spending a few minutes on the upper mall leaning over the rail to observe the ice rink and skaters below. No matter how many times I stand there looking, the thought that comes to me is always the same: "Spirituality, God, religion, church. Each of us experiences these differently."

Out there in the middle, far away from the side rail, are the strong ones. Effortlessly they flow through arabesques of mind and heart. They understand the transparent interconnections through which they pass. The gift and the dance are theirs. Their hope is real; it lives. Only rarely do they fall.

Then there are those who are rather like them, who are also out there in the middle but who fall much more often. Their resiliency is their strength. Quickly they are up on their feet again, and quickly their journey resumes.

Others move along at a much slower pace. Cautious and with little deviation in their patterns, they lack full participation. Their resistance in learning new steps and their subtle but erosive fear of life leave them stagnant for the most part and somewhat bored and boring. They are the most numerous of the skaters.

Next are those who fall because they look only behind or at their feet and not toward what lies ahead. They can make it up on their feet again, but only with help and complaining, and always slowly.

Then come the ones who, after an unpleasant incident or two, leave the rink altogether. Dissatisfied with the quality of the ice or with the teachers, with the management of the rink or with the rules, discouraged by the falls, and tired of waiting for distant promises, they depart.

And over there along the fringes, almost unnoticed, are those who skate the sides. Slow step by slow step they cling to the railing at every point. Forced at times to take the ever so smallest step on their own, many of them slide right out one of the many exits that now and then break up the rail.

Finally the spectators come into view—the ones who look on. Of these, only some are actually curious and ponder the meaning of the journey they are watching others take. Though they look, most do not see; pondering, most do not grasp. They may or may not move beyond the doubts or distractions, fears or pride or hurt that keep them from joining in, that keep them motionless and leave them vulnerable to the chill of the ice that threatens tirelessly to come over them.

Choices

I saw an old man on skid row sitting on the steps of his palace
holding the achievements of all his years in the palm of his hand.

As I passed before him I felt his eyes at the very core of my being

scanning . . . searching . . .
 scattering . . .

And I wondered what he saw there.
Had I locked it all up so loosely?
Could this brief chance-moment
reach through all those years of hiding?

And I wondered what dreams we had shared
and why on awaking he was there

and I was just passing.

Then I turned around to venture one last glance
at one man's future
 past . . .

And I wondered how often any of us really chooses.

Labyrinth of Unfamiliar Ways

For years I had heard of pâté: French, fancy, expensive. For people of discriminating taste I guessed. Out of my class I supposed.

Then one day I tasted some and realized it was liver spread. Liver spread! Just some chopped liver with a lot of help added.

And I wondered why we don't just call things what they are.

Pâté.

That's what far too often the world has been for me.

We come into this world as chopped liver, so to speak, and then find ourselves one day or another being cajoled or pushed down the road to pâté-land. We start out what we are, as we are—simple, good, beautiful—then strive to become someone else instead because somebody told us to. Somehow, somewhere along the way, somebody in their own way said we weren't good enough the way we were. And though rarely can we recall who said it, or when or how we came to feel this way, we spend half our lives trying to become someone we are not and the other half searching for what we were before we got lost.

And I forget how impressionable I am. I stand back in awe before "the pâté bunch" and their pâté lifestyle and all the fancy pâté words and glitter and bubbly chatter-jabber they use to describe people and life and all their various moments—as though all those many and fancy descriptions could really separate their experiences from mine. And I lose heart. I put those folks and their ways and their words on a pedestal, not to be touched, while throughout, something much greater than all of this manages not to make its way onto the stage:

***The realization that, despite how things might be presented,
we are all hopelessly the same, believe it or not.
Changelessly equal, like it or not.***

The one who does manual labor, the artist, the office worker, the politician, the garbage hauler, the professional, the beggar, the religious leader, the repair person alike, whatever the category, whoever the individual. Rich, powerful, famous, this truth does not move; poor, powerless, forgotten, it does not change.

Pâté.

How in the world did something as simple and natural as just being who we are, remaining as we were made, take the long dark detour into the labyrinth of unfamiliar ways?

What has led so many of us to abandon ourselves to that which is less meaningful, to that which contributes less dignity to the human person, to that which in the end almost always fails to satisfy?

What has led so many to stop exploring the meaning of their journey? To stop exploring the wisdom and truth that mystery can often supply where reality cannot? To stop exploring how words can fall short and silence itself can be the wildest place on earth, screaming out understandings of which words have not even dreamt?

How did we find ourselves on the bridge to obscurity and indistinct shadows though we started out such clear and unmistakable wonders to everyone?

And how have so many been led to forget that that which matters most we were designed in the guts of our genes to pursue relentlessly and passionately all the days of our lives?

Pâté.

It's only chopped liver with a lot of help added.
After all.

Chiaroscuro

Such heavy reading did I find Hughes' *A Popular History of the Catholic Church* that only with sheer discipline and determination have I managed to finish it. Aside from its complicated endless treasury of names, dates, and events which left me quite overwhelmed, I think the impression that struck me the most consistently throughout was how the forces of good and the forces of evil can work side by side within the same entity, whether the Church, an individual, or a moment in history—

The Chiaroscuro Of Human Existence:

The Church vomiting forth the Inquisition while in the same breath giving us Thomas and Dominic and Francis; the intertwining good and evil, sound judgment and disastrous folly in an individual like Leo X; France, 1789-1799, struggling fiercely to overcome political and social injustice and at the same time mercilessly slaughtering the French Church.

Now I see much more clearly how all of life seems to be caught up in the same contradiction that somehow I had come to think was peculiar to me alone.

Truth

One of the most personally meaningful
and supportive thoughts I have ever had
is that truth is truth.

In all of life one truth endures.

Whole, complete, forever.

Through good times, bad times,

joy, regret,

all proof and failure,

truth remains.

Ever present, always there, constant.

Bedrock and base of all that is good.

Start point and end point of freedom's flight.

Not Meant to Be

I
fly
toward
you
as
the
bird
that does not yet understand
flies toward the sun.

It Doesn't Take Much

Truth requires
neither gongs
nor flashing lights
nor fixes quick
nor speed
nor fluff
nor really even you.

Its naked self alone suffices.

Remember

Remember
—he said to me—

We all are one

The waters of the womb are one.

Remember this,
and all the rest will come back to you.

Too!

I too, not just the people around me, am of flesh and blood.
And I am of flesh and blood, too, not just spirit.
The times were heavy
with deserts of affection
voids of loneliness
chasms between me
and every love I had ever dared to imagine.

And no one saw
and no one knew
and no one came
and nothing was.

The need for physical affection and intimate love is a most amazing need that must be satisfied in one way or another if we are to remain emotionally normal. All sorts of crazy behaviors are born in the death that results from not responding to that need freely, honestly, reverently. We are made too simply to have it otherwise.

Rivers of feeling flowing.
Arms of affection reaching,
waiting,
weeping,
and in the silence,
from within the heart of pain
a prayer:
Lord Jesus Christ
son of the living God
remember to the Father
that I am of flesh and blood
TOO!

Autumn

Then autumn comes
— **That Sweet Autumn**

and the great haze of peace
alights once more within my universe
electrifying interconnections
among all things created.

On Relationships

Two people stand heart to heart
Spirit to spirit
Alive with truth to give
Unafraid to touch what is vulnerable within them
and offer it in trust.

That is how they share their inner sanctum:
that smallest place at the core of each;
that still-point where all things of meaning to them converge.

Where incoming wave pushes
as outgoing wave beneath it pulls
until both
in the find of common ground,
superimposed,
for an instant,
stop.

There united they stand
and brave,
like the smallest flickering flame which,
tiny even so,
lifts its gaze
to meet the stars
light to light.

And all that is sacred bursts forth again
like life in the time of spring,
because there inside the two
is the one
the God,
stirring.

No One Is Unreachable

No heart is sewn so tight
that it can outdo our ability
to undo its any stitch,
its every thread.

Heart Over Mind

Mind bows with grace to heart so loved
while courage to tremble
abides inexorable within me.

Then deep inside heart's ember,
past the smoldering camouflage,
a cosmic wind invades

— *and inner light aroused erupts in arabesque* —

And universe,
breathing,
propels primordial heart-fire
through ocean depths immeasurable
of currents
flowing
endlessly
homeward.

On Restraint

In the wind
the power of creation
restlessly verging on bursting point
restrains itself instead in whispers.

— *the feel of wisdom on the rise*

Uniquely Alone

When faith traditions speak of promises to come . . .

When religions wait for the coming of the Messiah
or for the Second Coming . . .

When from the past our future destiny is proclaimed . . .

the one link
upon which this all depends
and through which it all must pass is Today.

—Today Is Tradition's Only Link to the Promise—

The Waters of the Womb

"What can the outer edges of the garment say to the part that covers the breast?"

For one year this question came back to me again and again. It would return with always the same exact wording, which at the time seemed no more than a mysterious combination of parts of speech. I never wrote out the words so as not to forget them, and I never forgot them. I had no idea where they came from or what they might mean. Their persistent recurrence convinced me that if I stayed long enough with the challenge of what they might mean I might discover an answer to the question.

At the time, 1988, I was living in the bondage of what I will call a deep personal secret: I am gay. A secret that to many today would not be considered worth guarding. But to me, in those times, it was a secret to guard at all costs. For me, dealing with that bondage had for most of my life (and sometimes even now) resulted in strong feelings of marginality. Feelings that I did not belong and might not even be a part of life. It had caused me often to feel I was living on the *fringes* of life, not in the *heart* of life. While I was definitely *existing* in the mainstream, I was, by contrast, *living* on its fringes.

"What can the outer edges of the garment say to the part that covers the breast?"

The question, it turns out, had to do with what I, who was living on the fringes, might have to say to those who were living in freedom, to those who did not have to live in the isolated, silent world that I had lived in up to that point but who could instead express their full personhood in the open.

To put this another way, the question had to do with what the least choice part of societal living (the "outer edges of the garment" in the question) might have to say to the most choice part (the part of the garment that covers the breast or central or choice portion).

The question ultimately had to do with what the less fortunate people in society might have to say about their relationship to the *more* fortunate people in it. No matter if those less fortunate are gay or poor or with handicap or uneducated or of a different race or religion or have been culturally rejected, or other.

The first realization I had in answering the question was that no one is the value they are *because of* what they have or do or say (i.e. where their place is on the garment of life). Rather, their full value lies in and is derived from their very existence alone and nothing more under the sun. Existence alone — even more than the tenor of an individual's character and beliefs — is the primary and primeval foundation upon which their value rests. This means, of course, that each person's worth is equal to the worth of every other person. Not similar worth, but equal worth. And not just intellectual assent to that worth, but active support of it in every phase of human activity.

The second realization I had was that we do not live in isolation from each other but live instead in a cooperative struggle on the great venture called life. Any thread at my edge of the garment of life, if pulled, will most certainly have an effect one way or another, sooner or later, on the remaining parts of the garment. That is to say, on YOU.

We all are one, in sum. The Waters of the Womb are one. We are all hopelessly inter-connected and inter-dependent, like it or not, desire it or not, nurture it or not, curse it or not. And perhaps the most essential key to our salvation – any way you care to define salvation, in religious terms or not, and whether referring to an individual or a society or the human species – perhaps the most essential key to our salvation lies in remembering and living only this.

We all are one. The waters of the womb are one.

That which you cover is not what you are, for there among the threads that lead to you lies the path that comes from me.

Rejoice Indeed!

How could I not rejoice
to have lived even has only
infinitesimal speck inside your
immensity.

Though briefly,
yet deeply and forever
embedded within the embrace
of your Star-filled Womb.

This is enough the gift,
O Cosmos:
to know that I am
always
in all and with all
One.

On Affirmation

You cannot feel included
or feel there is a specialness that
you alone bring to this life,
or feel needed for who you are,
not what you can do,
or feel forgiven
or feel someone's arms around you
in a moment of honesty and need that are mutual . . .

You cannot feel
— *really feel*
a single one of these and
— *at the very same time*
hate
abuse
deceive
fear the truth about yourself
or wish you were dead or had never been born.

For it is as inevitable as night follows day
that affirmation in any form
destroys every manner of death-wish
that ever escaped from
the prisons of the human psyche.

Quintessence

What grief to think
we waste so much of our lives
searching desperately for you while
continually running away from you:

*cosmos, you are
the quintessence of fairy tale*

The Strange Thing About Lent

Fasting and sackcloth and surplus charity
are not much good when serving as little more
than ritualistic externals
the mind comes to need
the more faint the heart begins to grow.

The Authentic Fairy Tale

Why do we abandon with such haunting frequency this fairytale reality we call Cosmos, and in particular the Earth, which rests cradled in its embrace? Why so often do we reject it, fail to notice it, or abuse it?

I think abandonment of the cosmos might have more to do with our struggles regarding self-worth, relationship, and courage than with just about anything else.

<<<Struggles with Self-Worth and Relationship>>>

On the Origin and Nature of Self-Worth

On a purely natural level, our worth as human beings comes from nothing more and nothing less than the fact that we exist. On a purely natural level, existence alone establishes our worth and is the bedrock on which it rests.

And that worth is inestimable; its value is great beyond measure.

For one cannot be integral part of a cosmos which is manifestly of supreme grandeur and at the same time be worth anything less than it is — much the same as the tiniest speck of new life can be of no less value than the mother in whose sanctuary it dwells.

*Yet we **are** integral part of the cosmos! And this supreme grandeur can be verified by anyone and is made manifest to anyone who takes the time to observe — and ponder — our planet and the expanse of creation that lies in the endless vastness around it.*

*Considering ourselves specifically in the context of the whole of creation,
the entire universe*

— all planets and distant-most galaxies and all created matter —

in this context,

*surrounded by the stupefying magnificence of this reality,
our very existence is the single most undeniable testimony to our worth.*

*No further justification or explanation need be given, either to verify or authenticate our
worth.*

We neither can nor need do anything to obtain such a prize, and it cannot be earned.

We need do nothing to hold on to it, for it cannot be lost.

And no one and nothing can take it away, not in life, not in death.

The gift is ours by birthright and is forever.

Now while this being of worth beyond measure is not something that can be earned, many among us cannot comprehend or do not believe in the possibility of possessing a worth which we did not and can not earn. And while neither can this worth of ours be controlled, others of us are unwilling to surrender to or tolerate a self-worth that we cannot control.

We try in various ways to compensate for this frustrating state of affairs by striving for control or power or even oblivion (yes, even oblivion) in numberless, varied, and complex ways—

- interminable efforts to accumulate money and goods;
- abuse of others, including of their self-esteem;
- ceaseless searching for notice and praise from others;
- obsession with sex and matters sexual;
- pursuit of distractions and other activities that cause time to pass and move us beyond the present discomfort without having to deal with it, for the moment;
- abuse of alcohol and drugs;
- consciously or unconsciously allowing the development of personal problems (even health problems sometimes) that has the effect of drawing our attention away from the other problems of our lives (namely, those we are trying to avoid dealing with);
- amassment of titles and achievement lists which, in and of themselves, offer no proof whatsoever of worth.

Persisting in these and other types of misdirected efforts, and influenced profoundly by the negative impact they have on us, we unwittingly catapult any thought of genuine relationship into the darkest depth of inner abyss.

<<<Struggles with Courage>>>

And even though, as we face each new challenge in life, we could be drawing great courage from the gift of inestimableness that has been given us, most of us succumb instead to various forms of fear regarding it—

- fear of not knowing how to receive such a gift;
- fear of the cosmos itself and that it will swallow us up and abandon us to the darkness of the void;
- fear to trust the relationships to which feelings of worth inevitably lead;
- fear that our relationships or the gift of our worth might be only temporary;
- fear of the gnawing feeling of guilt or of uneven accounts that often accompanies a gift received but not earned;
- fear of the lifestyle changes that for most of us would be necessary in order to develop and sustain any credible friendship with the cosmos.

And so,
because we remain in the grip of our fear
or refuse to give up control
or insist on trying to earn our worth,

we become the source itself of our own frustrations and, in effect, end up both (1) deserting that of which we are most a part — the ever-awesome fusion of reality and fairy tale that we call Cosmos, and (2) turning away from our very selves and each other.

This desertion of the cosmos, ourselves, and each other leads day after day to tragedy; one need only take in but a very small sampling of the daily news to learn of these unfortunate situations. Murder, fraud, deception, lies, intimidation, wars, embezzlement, domestic violence, money laundering, tax evasion, child abuse, self abuse, cyber warfare, slander, oppressive authoritarian regimes, prejudice against those who are not like us. You get the point. Without much notice or resistance from us, an insidious web-work of darkness lowers its stranglehold upon the human heart.

Fleeing the cosmos and each other, we jump frantically into the arms of dream-filled nirvana lands of our own invention.

Toward the great enticers of our time we turn.
Into the open arms of self-destructive behavior we quicken our fall.
On flights of fancy we embark.
To new amusements we run, the latest trend, a fresh addiction, another partner.

And nirvana-fever's fraud infects the planet.

Then,
after awe only short lived (if it ever really knew life at all),
and deliverance only fleeting (if ever we felt indeed delivered),
that which seemed would be sweet relief betrays its promises.
And we come to graze beside the
Golden Calves of our own imaginings, only to find

NEVER QUITE OH GOD!

. . . the fairy tale authentic
 . . . the fairy tale authentic
 . . . the fairy tale authentic:

***sweet cosmos here and now,
and there within,
amidst the stars,
the who we are,
revealed.***

Hurdles

What else could get you to stop and think before you act?

And stay in focus through each move?

Keep you accountable for every folly and pleasure along the way?

Or provide a marker here and there to help you remember later
how you got where you are today and the price you paid?

What better defines the worth and meaning of the prize?

— Embrace the Hurdle

Ecstasy

When through my eyes' ten thousand doors
the sun steps deep inside my world,
its arms stretch on and on and on
throughout the dream-mist of my core,
weaving in and out among those lacy forests green
where to and from in shades of light
the dance of life in love with life
inebriates the calm.

It's then that shadows move on breeze-born wings,
and shimmerings fill the mirrored airways of my soul.

Illuminations breathe. And

O Sweet Ecstasy

in your still-point
stirs
the wildest place on earth.

We Don't Seem to Have Understood

The greatest tragedy of the world
through recent centuries
may well prove to have been
repeated failure
to grasp the very cosmos as
Quintessential Fairy Tale

It's Getting Late

It is anyone's guess
why we waste so much of our lives
resisting the thought
that no one is worth more than we are
and no one is worth less.

but that such resistance
unchecked
will destroy us all eventually
is a certitude which time
isn't going to wait around for us to ponder

T O M O R R O W

Dance of Light and Dark

To watch the sunlight
journey in among the leaves of a tree,
or in the breeze catch its flickerings
among the swaying of the branches
the turning of the leaves

and

the

touching

unencumbered . . .

To rest the eyes a while up high on a limb
in the warming light
when the air is still
as the sun arrives
through countless panes
of stained-glass windows green . . .

But most of all
to walk the ground beneath it all
through spotlight beams
and woven shadows cast
that take me by the hand
through kingdoms small
of light and dark
with boundaries vague
there deep inside

Creation's Finest Lace

that clothes the earth
in endless dreams
of life
at peace . . .

Mirrors

Maybe the real reason we linger before the mirror

is that it is the one place in the whole world

where we see ourselves through our eyes only.

No feeling of comparison with someone else,

with someone we are not.

No stranger's jagged gaze.

No camera's eye which does not live or breathe,

or painter's hand that fails to give caress.

No other focus for miles and miles around.

A time to feel we are beautiful,

to feel good about ourselves

just the way we are.

And in that moment of self-acceptance

to stand again

on the threshold of all belonging

before the feel of every refuge.

Freedom

Cascading downward
lifting upward
rightward
leftward
swirling
whirling
up again
down again
gotta keep moving.

Leaf kiss.
Wind brushed.

All the while below awaits the monster
ever ready to consume
the consummate life force:

*Freedom is a gust of wind
making love to a leaf
above an ever-brooding
never-ending sea.*

Irony of Ironies

With all the personal sacrifices, discipline,
and pain that men, women, and children
have endured for thousands of years and
that have been preserved in histories and
traditions and other lessons for the
benefit of future generations they
would never know —

With this tireless
massive
heroic
effort of regard for posterity,
and indomitable resilience of the human spirit
in affirming and sustaining people
everywhere and in every age
in their struggle to be well and whole —

With all of this: It is one of the most
poignant ironies and dead ends
of human existence
that you can still think you have to go through
most of the mistakes and the pains
and the fears of your life
alone and on your own,
in isolation from human social history,
with no way out,
as though each one were happening
to only you
and for the very first time.

Primavera

Life pulsing
rushing
restless
through the hills and valleys
of every time and place,
searching for what desires to live.

From ancient burial grounds
to that which will emerge,
the message passes
one more time,
and it is always the same:

Be what you are.
Again.
In the Spring.

The Spaces Inside the Space

In places of the mind
– beyond the reach of every limitation –
the meaning of the journey
sets itself free in me again.

Around my soul
it wraps its arms.
The vision lives.

And I am strong again.
And I come back again.
To walk the road again.

For always in those places of the mind
life's meaning resurrects.

Best of All

God

I don't know if you exist
or if you don't exist.

But even if you don't exist
you're still the best idea
anyone ever offered me,
the best I ever pondered.

Just a Matter of Degree

As the tiniest speck of new life
is to the womb
so are we to the cosmos:

immeasurable worth
in the hold
of immeasurable worth

Reality vs. Mystery

Oh Paradox Divine!

. . . that such a Reality as the universe could be equally
Mystery!

Intertwined, the reality and the mystery of the universe dance across all space and time; into the arms of the other they give themselves forever. As the two embrace us deep within their awesome splendor, they bridge that which for us has always been the chasm separating Life and Death. As endless galaxies cradle us deep within their star-dappled arms light year upon light year, Death, the ultimate absurdity, grieves the human heart no more; for there center-stage to our death-deliberations comes the universal affirmation that Life and Death are one. In the context of such ineffable majesty as the universe, Life and Death are of equal meaning and value. And both are eternal — for dead or alive, flesh or dried bones, we are eternal because existence in any form is eternal (existence and eternity come to us hand in hand, as a pair, as single gift). Though our substance changes form yet it remains — and the spirit, through its indomitable permeation of the human experience, endures as well.

In this way do we give individual witness forever; thus does our presence abide. And all that was one remains one.

And just as the more we probe the reality of the universe the farther into its mystery we are led, so the more we probe the mystery of God the farther we journey inside the reality of God.

Oh Paradox Divine!

. . . that such a Mystery as God could be equally
Reality!

Now and Nothing but Now

Surrender not
the present
for either past
or future,
for both
would give up
everything
to stir just once
in the arms of
Today.

To the moment
you are in hold
fast. To this
moment that
nudges and tugs
— even now! —
at your shirt sleeve.
Yea, to this very
time and place
anchor the gift
given you.

For in just this
way wilt thou
ne'er need ask
how thy time did
fly
so fast
or thy life did
seem
so brief.

reflections are listed below by first words or keywords
and in the same order as they appear in the book

we insist on the past
if only we would listen
and I wondered
there must be more
pray for me
trust
parable of the seed
i saw an old man
labyrinth of unfamiliar ways
such heavy reading
truth is truth
i fly toward you
truth requires
remember, he said to me
i, too, not just the people around me
then autumn comes
two people stand heart to heart
no heart is sewn so tight
mind bows with grace
in the wind
today is tradition's only link
what can the outer edges of the garment say
how could i not rejoice
you cannot feel included
cosmos, you are
fasting and sackcloth
the authentic fairy tale
embrace the hurdle
oh sweet ecstasy
the greatest tragedy of the world
it is anyone's guess
to watch the sunlight
mirrors
freedom
with all the personal sacrifices
in the spring
in places of the mind
God
as the tiniest speck of new life
oh paradox divine!
surrender not the present

the end

About the Author

Ron Talarico is a writer based in Portland, Oregon.

Born and raised in Portland, and other than having lived in Italy on three occasions in my twenties and taught in Texas for two years, I have always been satisfied to remain rooted right where I am. Despite the excitement and importance of traveling to places far away and experiencing all manner of new things to learn and do, the journey I most prefer and to which I keep coming back is the one within myself. The endless places of mind and soul that there I find have long upstaged all other contenders for my attention and remained center-stage to my sense of the essential meaning of who I am.

Truth, Beauty, and Today are my greatest encouragements and favorite places to linger. As ideas, they turn me on something crazy. I wish getting to know them better did not require near-equal time trying to escape the barrage of human enticements that would lead me away from them. And though I could never possess these three wonders of inspiration or even be sure I am coming closer to them, yet there they are — Truth, Beauty, Today — omnipresent, indispensable, eternal, irresistible. And if all I ever achieve is knowing I have given my best to the journey to be closer to them, who says I'm not lucky?

Other books by the author available from the Apple Bookstore:

The Mouth Is for Talking

Fire in the Dark — Making a Difference in the World

God — And Barriers to Belief

Fourteen Essays on Various Aspects of the Human Experience in the Twenty-First Century

A Case of Mistaken Identity — Why You Can't Believe in a God Who Allows Bad Things to Happen to Good People

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