

The Journey

The morning sea of silence broke into ripples of bird songs;
and the flowers were all merry by the roadside;
and the wealth of gold was scattered through the rift of the clouds
while we busily went on our way and paid no heed.

We sang no glad songs nor played;
we went not to the village for barter;
we spoke not a word nor smiled;
we lingered not on the way.
We quickened our pace more and more as the time sped by.

The sun rose to the mid sky and doves cooed in the shade.
Withered leaves danced and whirled in the hot air of noon.
The shepherd boy drowsed and dreamed in the shadow of the banyan tree,
and I laid myself down by the water
and stretched my tired limbs on the grass.

My companions laughed at me in scorn;
they held their heads high and hurried on;
they never looked back nor rested;
they vanished in the distant blue haze.

They crossed many meadows and hills,
and passed through strange, far-away countries.
All honor to you, heroic host of the interminable path!
Mockery and reproach pricked me to rise,
but found no response in me.

I gave myself up for lost
in the depth of a glad humiliation
---in the shadow of a dim delight.

The repose of the sun-embroidered green gloom
slowly spread over my heart.
I forgot for what I had traveled,
and I surrendered my mind without struggle
to the maze of shadows and songs.

At last, when I woke from my slumber and opened my eyes,
I saw thee standing by me, flooding my sleep with thy smile.
How I had feared that the path was long and wearisome,
and the struggle to reach thee was hard!

Endless Times

Time is endless in thy hands, my lord.
There is none to count thy minutes.

Days and nights pass and ages bloom and fade like flowers.
Thou knowest how to wait.

Thy centuries follow each other perfecting a small wild flower.

We have no time to lose,
and having no time we must scramble for a chance.
We are too poor to be late.

And thus it is that time goes by
while I give it to every querulous man who claims it,
and thine altar is empty of all offerings to the last.

At the end of the day I hasten in fear lest thy gate be shut;
but I find that yet there is time.

Beggarly Heart

When the heart is hard and parched up,
come upon me with a shower of mercy.

When grace is lost from life,
come with a burst of song.

When tumultuous work raises its din on all sides shutting me out from
beyond, come to me, my lord of silence, with thy peace and rest.

When my beggarly heart sits crouched, shut up in a corner,
break open the door, my king, and come with the ceremony of a king.

When desire blinds the mind with delusion and dust, O thou holy one,
thou wakeful, come with thy light and thy thunder.

False Religion

Those who in the name of faith embrace illusion,
kill and are killed
Even the atheist gets God's blessings-
Does not boast of his religion;
With reverence he lights the lamp of reason
And pays his homage not to scriptures,
But to the good in man.

The bigot insults his own religion
When he slays a man of another faith
Conduct he judges not in the light of reason;
In the temple he raises the blood-stained banner
And worships the devil in the name of God.

All that is shameful and barbarous through the ages,
Has found a shelter in their temples-
Those they turn into prison;
O, I hear the trumpet call of destruction !
Time comes with her great broom
Sweeping all refuse away.

That which should make man free,
They turn into fetters;
That which should unite,
They turn into sword;
That which should bring love
From the fountain of the Eternal,
They turn into prison

And with its waves they flood the world
They try to cross the river
In a bark riddled with holes,
And yet, in their anguish, whom do they blame?

O Lord, breaking false religion,
Save the blind!
Break! O break
The alter that is drowned in blood.

Let your thunder strike.
into the prison of false religion,
And bring to this unhappy land
The light of knowledge”