

Longing



by Daniel LionHeart

The Bard of Steward Wood

Dedication

I dedicate this book to you, my friend, celebrating you as a unique manifestation of the Divine.

I thank my many human and non-human teachers and spirit allies who have helped me to grow, to build connections, and to find my place in the world. And lastly I acknowledge with gratitude and love the Bardic tradition in Britain, my ancestors and those who will come after me.

May all beings be happy, be at peace, be filled with love and shine their light into the world.

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A Bard is a person who weaves the past, present and future of their people, land and gods through story, song, music and poetry; Bards can also represent all peoples, all stories, all emotions; a Bard raises the Awen ('flowing spirit', inspiration), and is a practitioner of Gramarye (magical language and the magic of language); a Bard is a seer and shape-shifter; finally a Bard promotes peace, reconciliation, understanding and healing. Traditionally, a Bard was of 12 years experience and training and was the winner of a Bardic chair.

The Bard

Call forth bardic words
Uttered fragments of marvel
Divinely inspired musings
Poetry, splendid poetry
Spoken by a true Bard.

An audience is essential -
Ears tilted toward the wordsmith
(As now satellite dish to Sky -
What profanity, Mr Murdock.)

Back round the fire
There is a merry meeting;
Libations are paid
And words come forth -
Nectar for the soul:
The mythic, the brave, the inspiring, the comedic -
From Parzival through Taliesin to the Fool,
An old woman in a shoe to a princess in a high turret,
From Robin Hood adventures in the forest,
To gypsy tales and animal ways -
All enthralling
All enriching and nourishing.

The audience are left with a golden cache of images -
Their lives uplifted, their souls fed, their muses sparked;
Meanwhile, the fire blazes on.

13th May 2012

***You that come to birth and bring the mysteries,
your voice-thunder makes us very happy.
Roar, lion of the heart, and tear me open.
- Rumi (13th century)***

Fragile Moments

Modern life, the modern way of being, is a frantic running
from silence.

Find the bliss of no mind, no thought

Drop into that place

That deep, deep place.

It's so easy – really, it is!

Breathe, relax, let go, expand,

Enjoy!

Feel the vulnerability

And the joy, the connection;

The heart is strong *and* fragile

Beauty is tender *and* powerful

Love is all encompassing.

January 2011

Unconditional

Willing to experience aloneness,

I discover connection everywhere;

Turning to face my fear,

I meet the warrior who lives within;

Opening to my loss,

I gain the embrace of the universe;

Surrendering into emptiness,

I find fullness without end.

Each condition I flee from pursues me,

Each condition I welcome transforms me

And becomes itself transformed

Into its radiant jewel-like essence.

I bow to the one who has made it so,

Who has crafted this Master Game;

To play it is purest delight,

To honour its form - true devotion.

– Jennifer Welwood

Wolves in Britain

Wolves

Come back to Britain

We need you.

The land is calling you back.

This land that has been so much tamed

From the last wolf killed in 1743

To the enclosures and clearances,

The motorways and shopping malls,

The urban sprawl, the theme parks.

Bring back the wolves,

Bring back the wildness,

Bring back the danger.

For life is too sedentary,

Senses are dulled,

Lifestyle diseases rife.

The deer need a predator

To stay healthy and strong

Benefitting plants & trees

Rippling through the web

To all God's creatures.

We need an intelligence to challenge our own,

And a new but ancient totem for this land

We call Britain.

14th April 2012

***“In the countryside, it is as if every tree says to me, 'Holy! Holy!'
Who can ever express the ecstasy of the woods?”***

– Ludwig van Beethoven

The Last Bender on the Left

This is my TV screen:

Through the oblong window

To the draping ivy with

Live action -

A male blackbird flying across screen,

clinging to leafy, bouncing twig,

pecking at the gorgeous, purple, pendulous berries

before flitting away,

only to return once more.

Then enter from below

a blue tit

hunting caterpillars and the like

but soon makes an exit.

Now through the square window I spy

the distant larch,

newly robed in resplendent green,

whose tops are off home to flocks of finch

and flighty migrants of all kinds.

Now a lithe squirrel joins the fun.

In the foreground:

illuminated raindrops and oak buds.

My heart sings in pain

For this connection -

A sense of fullness

And of lack -

Rather strange,

Absurd,

Intense.

How can I live with the separation

And the oneness -

Lord only knows!

13th April 2012

“The happiness of the drop is to die in the river.” - Al-Ghazali

Redemption Song

In every moment, there's the possibility of redemption
Of healing
Of coming back to yourself;

Breathe, be, allow, soften
Breathe into the heart
Drop into the body -
Then bring focus, intention, will, action;

Feminine, masculine
Feminine, masculine

Calling on your allies -
Make use of their support
Know that you are alive
And live each moment as if it were your last.

In every moment, there's the possibility of redemption
Of healing
Of coming back to yourself.

8th April 2012

Gitanjali 38

That I want thee, only thee -- let my heart repeat without end. All desires that distract me, day and night, are false and empty to the core.

As the night keeps hidden in its gloom the petition for light, even thus in the depth of my unconsciousness rings the cry -- I want thee, only thee.

As the storm still seeks its end in peace when it strikes against peace with all its might, even thus my rebellion strikes against thy love and still its cry is -- I want thee, only thee.

- Rabindranath Tagore

I See My Beauty in You

I see my beauty in you. I become
a mirror that cannot close its eyes
to your longing. My eyes wet with
yours in the early light. My mind
every moment giving birth, always
conceiving, always in the ninth
month, always the come-point. How
do I stand this? We become these
words we say, a wailing sound moving
out into the air. These thousands of
worlds that rise from nowhere, how
does your face contain them? I'm
a fly in your honey, then closer, a
moth caught in flame's allure, then
empty sky stretched out in homage.

- Rumi

Be Your Note

God picks up the reed-flute world and blows.
Each note is a need coming through one of us,
a passion, a longing-pain.
Remember the lips
where the wind-breath originated,
and let your note be clear.
Don't try to end it.
Be your note.
I'll show you how it's enough.
Go up on the roof at night
in this city of the soul.
Let everyone climb on their roofs
and sing their notes!
Sing loud!

- Rumi

Love me when I least deserve it, cos that's when I really need it.

The Mother - 'I cherish your ears'

(adapted from a poem by Hafiz)

Dear pilgrim,
I love your shoes, your coat,
Your pants, your hat, your furry head,
Your cup, your bowl,
Your messy room,
And most of all – I cherish your cute ears.
Why?
Just because you are.
It's a gift you are here.

26th May 2012

Father Medicine (adapted from a poem by Hafiz)

If you wantonly eschew living your truth,
If you wilfully cast aside the present moment and sabotage your power,
How can I seriously listen
To all your heartaches
About life
or
God?

26th May 2012

Let Go, Let God

Someone or something's not going to fix it for you.
Until you take responsibility,
I'm not interested – come back only when you are ready.

26th May 2012

***By God, don't linger
in any spiritual benefit you have gained,
but yearn for more – like one suffering from illness
whose thirst for water is never quenched.***

- Rumi

from *Proverbs from Hell* – William Blake

* He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.

* Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires.

*When you become the one that you long for
What will happen to your longing?*

- Rumi

Longing

When Earth and Sky and Love meet
What potential is that!
A synergy of colours, forms, movements
Too holy to describe.

I know this well
And yet I am also a stranger to it -
Rumi knows such a state, as do all the prophets.

'One day I will experience it in this lifetime,'
I keep saying to myself;
My longings are long,
My yearnings are drawn out,
My desires unfulfilled and thus spilling over into pestilence.

Rumi longed for Shams;
I long for sacred woman, partner, lover, friend -
A divine companion on the road.
Only time will reveal
Only spirit can provide
Only woman can show herself.
And I must act.

Meantime, patience and beingness are my true companions,
Frustration and empty filling my false friends;
I have faith
I have strength and courage
I have trust
I have beauty
And I have poetry,
As the word turns,
As the Sun shines,
As colours merge,
As a new day begins.

13th May 2012

Fasting

There's hidden sweetness in the stomach's emptiness.
We are lutes, no more, no less. If the soundbox
is stuffed full of anything, no music comes.
But if brain and belly are burning clean
with fasting, every moment a new song
comes out of the fire.

The fog clears, and new energy
makes you run up the steps in front of you.
Be emptier, and cry like reed instruments cry.
Emptier, write secrets with the reed pen.

When you're full of food and drink, an ugly metal
statue sits where your spirit should. When you fast,
good habits gather like friends who want to help.
Fasting is Solomon's ring. Don't give it
to some illusion and lose your power, but even if you have,
if you have lost all will and control,
they come back when you fast, like soldiers appearing
out of the ground, pennants flying above them.

A table descends to your tents, Jesus' table.
Expect to see it when you fast, this table spread
with other food, better than the broth of cabbages.

- Rumi

***The crane is motionless,
Absorbed in perpetual dawn,
Snow is falling white on white,***

***His eye pierces the world with uproarious silence,
Not This nor That,***

***A passerby notices, in his world,
A crane by the waterside,
The crane sees no thing,
Only the Tao.***

The Guest is Inside You

The Guest is inside you, and also inside me;
you know the sprout is hidden inside the seed.
We are all struggling; none of us has gone far.
Let your arrogance go, and look around inside.

The blue sky opens out farther and farther,
the daily sense of failure goes away,
the damage I have done to myself fades,
a million suns come forward with light,
when I sit firmly in that world.

I hear bells ringing that no one has shaken;
inside 'love' there is more joy than we know of;
rain pours down, although the sky is clear of clouds;
there are whole rivers of light.
The universe is shot through in all parts by a single sort of love.
How hard it is to feel that joy in all our four bodies!

Those who hope to be reasonable about it fail.
The arrogance of reason has separated us from that love.
With the word "reason" you already feel miles away.

How lucky Kabir is, that surrounded by all this joy
he sings inside his own little boat.
His poems amount to one soul meeting another.
These songs are about forgetting dying and loss.
They rise above both coming in and going out.

- Kabir (15th century)

***We are called to awaken.
We are called.
Listen now, listen!
It is in the whisper on the wind.
There is a presence.
It is all around us.
Calling us.
To awaken.
- WindEagle***

The Call of the Wild

The river beckons
The sea invites
The wild man calls.....

My being yearns to follow
The roaring of the buck
The squeaking of the owlet
The mystery of the sparrowhawk nest;

My heart calls me to
Venture badger watching
To explore
To play and create
To sing, make music;

My body shouts to be free
As I watch children frolic,
Climb trees,
Run and chase with excitement;
As I observe the liveness of an animal
Or a person find their deeper being.

I'm leaving behind fears, attachments, ruts,
which hold me back;
I take back the wheel of command,
No longer let my neediness call the shots.

I follow
The Call of the Wild -
My salvation lies in that;
And all 'the stuff' drops away.

It is time to summon the courage to follow:
All of life is there.
Will you join me?

Feel the power of the Earth, stars, heavens
Flood through,
Yield to our deeper natures
And enjoy.

15th August 2012

Nature's Washing Machine

The Weir, River Teign – 26th July 2012

On a day of contemplating and being with my vulnerability and mortality, I cycled to the river to have a swim on the last day of a spell of scorching sunshine. I found myself at the weir alone, sitting on the jetty with my feet in the river, watching the waters of the pool moving languidly to the weir, the mating damselflies, the scanning dragonflies and myriad insects above the water. Then I dropped in, bathing in the cool waters, and swam down towards the weir where a wagtail beckoned.

I remembered a previous jacuzzi experience at the weir and decided to go for it once again. I came to the edge and perched on the lip of the weir with the waters cascading over into the top salmon pool. I realised I was in a tricky spot to clamber over and decided to head along to the other corner of the salmon pool where it would be easy to get down. I half walked half crawled on all fours across the lip. Then the waters took me.

My experience in the pool:

- feet swept from under me
- into the churning salmon pool
- underwater
- within nature's washing machine
- seeing
- my body struggling to regain control
- my mind calm
- Would I be contained within the top salmon pool or be swept down the tumbling weir?
- the possibility of injury on the rocks
- while my body did the work it needed to do, I was in a state of surrender to my fate
- footing regained
- breath
- I emerged back into the sun, dazed, unharmed, moved.

I've been churned by the river and I've become something else
on the other side.

Dizzy
Washed
Dazed
Cleansed
Absolved
Saved

The Agony and the Ecstasy

Samhain
The death time -
Old habits die hard...
Or do they?
Universe, please send me a superhero
To save me.
I know, I know – I'm the superhero
I've been looking for.
Goddamnit!

OK, where from here?
The only way is up, baby!
Time to shine
At the death time.
So back to basics:
Breath, compassion for myself,
Gratitude...

Sinking into the abyss is always an option
But, frankly Scarlet, I don't want to go there.
My life force keeps pulling me back.

Chocolate hearts fill my day.
Meanwhile, the band plays on.

31st October 2012

Learn the Alchemy

Learn the alchemy true human beings know.
The moment you accept
what troubles you've been given,
the door will open.

Welcome difficulty as a familiar comrade.
Joke with torment brought by the Friend.

Sorrows are the rags of old clothes
and jackets that serve to cover,
then are taken off.

That undressing and the beautiful naked body underneath
is the sweetness that comes after grief.

- Rumi

God's Lover

Soul, if you want to learn secrets,
your heart must forget about shame
and dignity.

You are God's lover,
yet you worry what people are saying.

Inside you are sweet beyond telling,
and the cathedral there,
so deeply tall.

There is a sun within every person...

- Rumi

“Whenever you defend yourself, it means you are afraid.”
- Osho

I am the One

I am the one I've been looking for:

“I have been knocking on a door trying to get in;
I have been living on the lip of insanity, knocking on a door trying to get
in;
The door opens – I have been knocking from the inside.” (Rumi)

The Master can't take us there,
No-one can take us there
To our innermost being.

I am the one I've been looking for.

31st October 2012

This Body My Temple

This Body My Temple -
What an amazing vehicle
For this life;
I value it more and more each day.

Thank you to my ancestors who
Created this body;
Thank you to those who will come after me
For continuing it on,
This body thing.

While we exist in dense matter,
Many a spirit would love to have a physical body -
To run, to jump, to breathe, to make love, make shapes, dance, sing,
create physical things....

Watch a cat move – what beauty!
Watch a dancer, athlete, old person in the street:
Every body is unique, has its particular characteristics,
its own expression -
Endless fascination.

Thank you, Great Spirit, for this life, for this opportunity, for this body.
Aho!

1st November 2012 – The Day of the Dead

***“Life is invigorating. Life rejuvenates. If you go in the garden
and work, you perspire but you are gaining more energy.
You go for a walk and you gain more energy,
because you are living in the moment.
If you go on thinking and thinking –
it is such a dead process, you will be tired.”***

- Osho

Praise This Day

Save your mentally manufactured tales of
enlightenment-to-come for someone else's ears.
The price to enter this love
is your hope for a better future.

We are not a crowd of beggars here.
You and I have been down that long, twisted road
all the way to its end.
Here we do not ask God for favours
but instead celebrate the light in each other's eyes.

So, if you are ready to stop denying yourself
your own beauty
you have come to the right place.
Wake up now and praise this day
when you realize that God's eyes
are the ones you are looking out of, and into.

Praise this day...
and with each breath you take
be filled with the golden arc of love
which announces the ending of
your argument with God.

Praise this day
simply because it exists
and sit down now in the warm skin
of your own lap;
for you are home
and it is time to rest
in the merciful light
of your own eyes...

- Adyashanti

Today I Awoke

Today I awoke, finally I see the Self has re-turned to the Self.
The Self is none other than the Self.
I am deathless. I am endless. I am free.
The birds outside sing...
The birds outside sing and there am I.
The seeing of leaves on the trees, that seeing am I.
The body breathes, breathing am I.
I am awake and I know that I am awake.

Seen from the old eyes, everything is asleep, a game, a delusion.
But now I am awake. I am the play. I am the game. I am the delusion.
I am the enlightenment I sought, looking everywhere.
Nothing is separate, nothing is alone.
I am all that I see. All that I smell, taste, touch, feel, think and know.
I am awake and this awakeness is the same as Shyakyamuni Buddha's.

Today the leaf has returned to the root.
I am all name and form and beyond all name and form.
I am Spirit, no longer trapped in a body.
I am free. I am free because I am awake.
So ordinary. Who would have thought? Who could have guessed?

I am home. I am really home. Ten thousand life times.
Ten thousand life times but today I am home.
Ten thousand life times but today I am home.
This is not an experience. This is me.
I am awake. Finally, I am awake.
Nothing has changed, but I am awake.
Before I tasted the root many times and felt, how delicious.
Today I became the root. How ordinary.

- Adyashanti

“Love is our true essence. Love has no limitations of caste, religion, race or nationality. We are all beads strung together on the same thread of love.”

- Amma

Gladness of April

Come and rejoice, for April is awake.

Fling yourselves into the flood of being, bursting the bondage of the past.

April is awake.

Life's shoreless sea is heaving in the sun before you.

All the losses are lost, and death is drowned in its waves.

Plunge into the deep without fear, with the gladness of April in your heart.

– Tagore

The May Tree

*Now the sun is half up and it tokens the hour
When the children arrive with their garlands of flowers.
So now let the music and the dancing begin,
And touch the good heart of young Jack in the Green.*

*Jack in the Green, Jack in the Green,
And we'll dance every springtime for Jack in the Green.*

Come dance with me round the May Tree -

Grab a ribbon of red, blue or gold;

Sing, dance, be merry

Dress in white and adorn yourself with flowers and greenery

For Beltane is here.

The exotic perfume of the Mayflower floats in the air,

And the fairy folk are in their revelry;

Come, come, come dance with me round the May Tree.

13th May 2012

DANCE

as though no-one is watching you

LOVE

as though you have never been hurt before

SING

as though no-one can hear you

LIVE

as though heaven is on earth

- Souza

The wind, one brilliant day

The wind, one brilliant day, called
to my soul with an odour of jasmine.

“In return for the odour of my jasmine,
I'd like all the odour of your roses.”

“I have no roses; all the flowers
in my garden are dead.”

“Well then, I'll take the withered petals
and the yellow leaves and the waters of the fountain.”

The wind left. And I wept. And I said to myself:
“What have I done with the garden that was entrusted to me?”

– Antonio Machado

The Garden

The garden lives
The garden thrives
It is called Earth.

Let us work with vibrant, abundant Nature
To recreate Paradise;
For it is in our hearts,
In our bodies,
And then shows in the body of the Earth -
Our home.

There's nowhere else in the universe
We're meant to be.

So let's celebrate our time on this planet:
Call forth the musicians, the bards, the jesters, the songsters;
Let's eat together,
The body of the Earth,
And wrap ourselves in her beauty, her love, her joy,
Her abundance, her majesty.

18th July 2012

The Great Turning

This is the time of the great turning
This is the time we've been waiting for
This is the time of the great turning
This is the time for which we were born.

This is the time of revolution
This is the time of broken hearts
This is the time of revolution
The time of turning with the stars.

This is the time of the great turning
This is the time of coming home
This is the time of the deep soul's yearning
To walk as one and not alone.

This is the time of the unravelling
We cannot know how long we have
So let this be the time of gathering
The only thing worth living for is love.

This is the time of turning
This is the time of choice
This is the time of learning
To trust our inner voice
This is the time of knowing
We do not walk alone
This is the time of going
Along a path unknown.

This is the time of the great turning
A time foretold in prophesy
This is the time of the emerging
The awakened heart of our humanity
This is the time.

- Margot Henderson

Check out:

The Art of Mentoring <artofmentoring.co.uk> - nature connection,
rediscovering our indigenous heart and creating true community.

The Way of the Village <wayofthevillage.co.uk> –
grief tending in community.

To be a Slave of Intensity

Friend, hope for the guest while you are alive.

Jump into experience while you are alive!

Think...and think...while you are alive.

What you call 'salvation' belongs to the time before death.

If you don't break your ropes while you're alive,
do you think ghosts will do it after?

The idea that the soul will join with the ecstatic

Just because the body is rotten -

that is all fantasy.

What is found now is found then.

If you find nothing now,

you will simply end up with an apartment in the City of Death.

If you make love with the divine now, in the next life you will have the
face of satisfied desire.

So plunge into the truth, find out who the Teacher is,

Believe in the Great Sound!

Kabir says this: When the guest is being searched for, it is the intensity of
the longing for the Guest that does all the work.

Look at me, and you will see a slave of that intensity.

- Kabir

***“Often people attempt to live their lives backwards:
they try to have more things, or more money, in order to do
more of what they want so that they will be happier.
The way it actually works is the reverse. You must first be
who you really are, then do what you need to do,
in order to have what you want.”***

- Margaret Young



**Daniel LionHeart – Poet, Storyteller,
Singer, Outdoor Leader – lives at
Steward Community Woodland, an
eco-community on the edge of
Dartmoor. This collection of poems
arises out of his longing for
connection with all things. These
poems will lift your heart and help
to connect you with your deeper
being.**

“What you seek is seeking you.”

— Rumi