

*MORE POETRY TO  
LIGHT YOUR  
JOURNEY*



## *A SLEEP OF PRISONERS*

*The human heart can go the lengths of God  
Dark and cold we may be, but this  
Is no winter now. The frozen misery  
Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move.  
The thunder is the thunder of the floes,  
The thaw, the flood, the upstart spring.*

*Thank God our time is now, when wrong  
Comes up to face us everywhere,  
Never to leave us 'til we take  
The longest stride of soul people ever took  
Affairs are now soul-size;*

*The enterprise is exploration into God.  
Where are you making for? It takes  
So many thousand years to wake,  
But will you wake, for pity's sake?*

*Christopher Fry*

## *AWOKEN*

*I awoke, one morning from shades of sleep,  
to find my world had changed ...  
the ground on which I had always placed my feet,  
had subtly shifted with the darkness.  
the firm beliefs and solid suppositions  
that ordered my daily decisions  
had evaporated before my eyes ...  
the images of God which sketched my thoughts*



*and traced my days now seemed  
anachronistic to my mind.  
Comfortable pillows that held my head  
and spoke of warm security in familiar ways  
were slipping silently from my bed ...  
the props I used to keep me strong  
now seemed obsolete  
and strangely out of synchronization.  
submerged in pools of doubt  
lay the buoys I'd worn  
to hold me up in times of trial.*

*Caught and helpless,  
uprooted and airborne, I existed ...  
dangling in space between the old and the new ...  
one eye was fixed with longing to the past,  
the other with an urgent expectancy,  
to what might lay ahead ...  
one hand was clutching  
at what had been so easy and certain,  
the other grasped at what might fill  
the freshly-opened void.*

*I had a new space within myself  
which I had not discerned before ...  
it begged designs to form its cast.  
a voice emerged deep in my heart  
which called me to an alien land.  
it tugged and pulled and bade me come  
to risk and grow in tune with it.  
I felt the promise of a more profound love  
and communion with divinity ...*

*if I could only shirk my fear  
and put my trust in what beckoned me.*

*Ruth McLean*

## *COME THE TIME*

*There comes the time for each of us  
to break out of who we have become  
our life a chrysalis  
inside now cramped for meaning  
and restless for the more.  
dare we let go the known or cling on for dear life?  
Comes the time we pass a point of no return  
with memories erupting from our core  
life straining to open wide, its new wings in us  
our struggle to resist  
a betrayal of that deafening inner cry to fly.....  
Ahead – a way untried  
known deep inside with trust our only guide.*

*Noel Davis*

## *ENCOUNTER*

*I stirred in the small hours of the morning.  
Sensing a presence, I did not return to sleep,  
but ventured into the living room, apprehensively.  
There, by the window, sat a familiar figure,  
cross-legged and reading in the semi-dark  
with just the milky moonlight for company.  
I do not know how I knew, but I did.  
I recognized the intruder, at once,*

*with a mixture of dread and affection.  
"I'm sorry," were the only words to leave my lips.  
"I'm sorry, too," replied my longed-for-self,  
with a sigh of infinite kindness and pity.  
He did not rise to greet me and, somehow,  
spoke without words, transmitting what was needed.*

*Catching his glistening eye, the caring made me cry.  
"You've taken every detour to avoid me,"  
he gently reproached.  
"For every step I've taken towards you,  
you've taken back two".  
I did not know what to say in my defence  
(how could I protest against myself?)  
"I missed you," he said, "  
and feared you'd forgotten me."  
His admonishment was tender as a kiss.*

*"I visit from time to time,  
and hope you'll ask me to stay."  
I knew what he said was true, and felt that way too.  
"I worried," he continued, "if I postponed this visit,  
we might never meet, in this life...  
and so I came to sharpen your appetite."  
He rose and moved towards me.  
"There's no need to speak, return to sleep.  
But when you rise, try to remember me.  
And to keep awake.*

*Yahia Lababidi*

## *FOR A NEW BEGINNING*

*In out-of-the-way places of the heart,  
Where your thoughts never think to wander,  
This beginning has been quietly forming,  
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.*

*For a long time it has watched your desire,  
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,  
Noticing how you willed yourself on,  
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.*

*It watched you play with the seduction of safety  
And the grey promises that sameness whispered,  
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,  
Wondered would you always live like this.*

*Then the delight, when your courage kindled,  
And out you stepped onto new ground,  
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,  
A path of plenitude opening before you.*

*Though your destination is not yet clear  
You can trust the promise of this opening;  
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
That is at one with your life's desire.*

*Awaken your spirit to adventure;  
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;  
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,  
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.*

*John O'Donohue*

## *LIVING LIFE*

*I will not die an unlived life.  
I will not live in fear  
of falling or catching fire.  
I choose to inhabit my days  
to allow my living to open me,  
to make me less afraid,  
more accessible, to loosen my heart  
until it becomes a wing, a torch, a promise.  
I choose to risk my significance,  
to live so that that  
which came to me as a seed  
goes to the next as a blossom;  
and that which came to  
me as a blossom, goes on as fruit.*

*Dawna Markova*

## *LIVING THE QUESTIONS*

*Be patient with all that is unsolved in your heart...  
Try to love the questions themselves...  
Do not now seek the answers  
which cannot be given  
because you would not be able to live them  
And the point is to live everything.  
Live the questions now.  
Perhaps you will then gradually without noticing it  
live along some distant day into the answers.*

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

POETRY

## *LIVE SLOWLY*

*Live slowly, think slowly, for life is a mystery.*

*Never forget that love*

*Requires always that you be*

*The greatest person you are capable of being,*

*Self-regenerating and strong and gentle...*

*Love demands the best in us*

*To always and in time overcome the worst*

*And lowest in our souls.*

*Love the world wisely*

*It is love alone that is the greatest weapon*

*And the deepest and hardest secret.*

*So fear not, my friend.*

*The darkness is gentler than you think.*

*Be grateful for the manifold*

*Dreams of creation*

*And the many ways of the unnumbered peoples.*

*Be grateful for life as you live it.*

*And may a wonderful light*

*Always guide you on the unfolding road.*

*Ben Okri*

## *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.  
No two trees are the same to Raven.  
No two branches are the same to Wren.  
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,  
You are surely lost. Stand still.  
The forest knows where you are.  
You must let it find you.  
David Wagoner*

### *MAKING ALL THINGS NEW*

*We would as soon you were stable and reliable,  
We would as soon you were predictable  
And always the same toward us.  
We would like to take the hammer of doctrine  
And take the nails of piety  
And nail your feet to the floor  
And have you stay in one place.  
And then we find you moving, always surprising us,  
Always coming at us from new directions.  
Always planting us, and uprooting us  
And tearing all things down  
And making all things new.  
You are not the God we would have chosen  
Had we done the choosing,  
But we are your people  
And you have chosen us in freedom.  
We pray for the great gift of freedom*

*That we may be free toward you  
As you are in your world.  
Give us that gift of freedom  
That we may move in new places  
In obedience and gratitude.  
Thank you for Jesus  
Who embodied your freedom for us all. Amen.  
Walter Brueggemann*

## ***MOVING INTO THE UNKNOWN FUTURE***

*Fear not the unknown,  
but move swiftly and confidently into it,  
knowing that only the very best will come from it,  
that all those secrets which have been hidden are there  
waiting to be revealed  
and that now is the time for these revelations.*

*You must be prepared for the most wonderful  
and yet unexpected things to come about,  
for all old moulds to be broken,  
all old conventions, all those old links with the past  
which have held you bound and fettered.  
You must be completely free to move into the new,  
having no ties with the past to pull you back.*

*Before you is the most wonderful and glorious future.  
You are living by the ways of the Spirit  
and it is the Spirit that leads you  
into the realms of the unknown, into the glorious new.*

*Only those who are strong and of good courage  
can move with complete freedom,  
only those who have real faith and belief,  
whose security is Me.*

*Be not a doubter nor a waverer.  
Let nothing throw you off balance.  
Your foundations are built on rock, they are built on me.*

*You know that I am with you always  
that I am within you.  
You know that when you have eyes to see  
you can indeed see Me in everything and in everyone,  
that I am the Allness of All.*

*Be consciously aware of all this.  
Let your mind dwell on the wonder of it.  
Absorb it, let it sink into you,  
become part of you,  
so that you live it and breathe it.*

Eileen Caddy

### *RISK THE SACRED JOURNEY*

*Each of us stands at the gate of tomorrow,  
facing the future.  
At times, we have walked in wonder and awe;  
at other times, we have moved along in the flood of fear.  
Looking back, we may recognize  
that amid the joys and struggles of this journey  
we have been companioned by a graceful Presence*

*that has held us together and led us on.  
This is not simply a journey  
through a string of days and years.  
Rather, this is a sacred journey,  
one that is revered and surrounded by Mystery.  
Although we long for someone  
to translate the risks of this journey  
into logical explanations,  
we often find ourselves in the foreign land of faith.  
We stand on the edge of our hopes and dreams  
and ask in trust to be led and supported  
by a Love and Energy much larger than we can imagine.  
We ask to walk here in courage and integrity,  
as we attempt to discern the voice of God  
amid the cacophony of our doubt and fear.  
To risk the journey and face the future  
is simply to walk in faith,  
for there are no linear words that capture the  
massive Mystery of God.*

*Doris Klein*

## *STIRRINGS*

*There is a strange,  
Untouchable, unseeable  
Thing in me.  
It hungers,  
Grasps, strains  
For something  
I do not know,  
Far beyond –*



*It stirs, turns, disturbs.  
It brings with it  
Unknown things,  
Unidentified longings.  
It reveals a vision hazy,  
Far, far,  
Very far away.*

*Edwina Gateley*

### *The Journey*

*One day you finally knew  
what you had to do, and began,  
though the voices around you  
kept shouting their bad advice --  
though the whole house began to tremble  
and you felt the old tug at your ankles.  
"Mend my life!" each voice cried.  
But you didn't stop.  
You knew what you had to do,  
though the wind pried with its stiff fingers  
at the very foundations,  
though their melancholy was terrible.  
It was already late  
enough, and a wild night,  
and the road full of fallen  
branches and stones.  
But little by little,  
as you left their voices behind,  
the stars began to burn  
through the sheets of clouds,*

*and there was a new voice  
which you slowly recognized as your own,  
that kept you company  
as you strode deeper and deeper  
into the world, determined to do  
the only thing you could do –  
determined to save the only life you could save.*  
Mary Oliver

## ***THE MOMENT***

*The moment when, after many years  
of hard work and a long voyage  
you stand in the centre of your room,  
house, half-acre, square mile, island, country,  
knowing at last how you got there,  
and say, I own this,  
is the same moment when the trees unloose  
their soft arms from around you,  
the birds take back their language,  
the cliffs fissure and collapse,  
the air moves back from you like a wave  
and you can't breathe.*  
*No, they whisper. You own nothing.  
You were a visitor, time after time  
climbing the hill, planting the flag, proclaiming.  
We never belonged to you.  
You never found us.  
It was always the other way round.*  
Margaret Atwood

## *The Opening Of Eyes*

*That day I saw beneath dark clouds  
the passing light over the water  
and I heard the voice of the world speak out,  
I knew then, as I had before  
life is no passing memory of what has been  
nor the remaining pages in a great book  
waiting to be read.  
It is the opening of eyes long closed.  
It is the vision of far off things  
seen for the silence they hold.  
It is the heart after years  
of secret conversing  
speaking out loud in the clear air.*

*It is Moses in the desert  
fallen to his knees before the lit bush.  
It is the man throwing away his shoes  
as if to enter heaven  
and finding himself astonished,  
opened at last,  
fallen in love with solid ground.*

*David Whyte*

## *The Peace Of Wild Things*

*When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,*

*I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water,  
and the great heron feeds.*

*I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

Wendell Berry

## *THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE RIGHT*

*From the place where we are right  
Flowers will never grow  
In the spring.*

*The place where we are right  
Is hard and trampled like a yard.  
But doubts and loves dig up the world  
Like a mole, a plow.  
And a whisper will be heard in the place  
Where the ruined house once stood.*

Yehuda Amichai

## *THE STREAM OF LIFE*

*The same stream of life  
that runs through my veins night and day  
runs through the world*



*and dances in rhythmic measures.  
 It is the same life that shoots in joy  
 through the dust of the earth  
 in numberless blades of grass  
 and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.  
 It is the same life that is rocked  
 in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death  
 in ebb and in flow.  
 I feel my feet are made glorious  
 by the touch of this world of life  
 and my joy is from the life-throb of ages  
 dancing in my blood this moment.*

*Tagore*

### *THE SUMMER DAY*

*Who made the world?  
 Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
 Who made the grasshopper?  
 This grasshopper, I mean –  
 The one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
 The one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
 Who is moving her jaw back  
 and forth instead of up and down –  
 Who is gazing around with her enormous  
 and complicated eyes.  
 Now she lifts her pale forearms and  
 thoroughly washes her face.  
 Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
 I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
 I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down*

*Into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
How to be idle and blessed,  
how to stroll through the fields,  
Which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done ?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon ?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
With your one wild and precious life ?*

*Mary Oliver*

### *TO LOOK AT ANY THING*

*To look at any thing,  
If you would know that thing,  
You must look at it long:  
To look at this green and say,  
"I have seen spring in these woods,"  
will not do - you must be the thing you see:  
You must be the dark snakes of  
Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,  
You must enter in  
To the small silences between the leaves,  
You must take your time and touch the very peace  
They issue from.*

*John Moffitt*



*Glory be to God  
whose wisdom working  
around us and in us  
is infinitely more than we can  
ever imagine.*