

All these translations come care of Coleman Barks' Rumi the Book of Love: poems of ecstasy and longing published in 2003 by HarperCollins.

--Five Things--

[1]

I have five things to say,
five fingers to give into your grace

First, when I was apart from you,
this world did not exist, nor any other.

Second, whatever I was looking for
was always you.

Third, why did I ever learn to count to three?

Fourth, my cornfield is burning!

Fifth, this finger stands for Rabia,
and this for someone else.
is there a difference?

Are these words or tears?
Is weeping speech?
What shall I do my love?

So the lover speaks, and everyone around
begins to cry with him, laughing crazily,
moaning in the spreading union
of lover and beloved.

This is the true religion. All others
are thrown-away bandages beside it.

This is the *sema* of slavery and mastery
dancing together. This is not-being.

I know these dancers.
Day and night I sing their songs
in this phenomenal cage.

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[2]

If you want what visible reality can give,  
you're an employee.

If you want the unseen world,  
you're not living your truth.

Both wishes are foolish,  
but you'll be forgiven for forgetting  
that what you really want is love's confusing joy.

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A thousand half-loves
must be forsaken to take
one whole heart home.

[3]

--QUIETNESS--

[4]

Inside this new love, die.
Your way begins on the other side.
Become the sky.
Take an ax to the prison wall.
Escape. Walk out
like someone suddenly born into color.
Do it now.
You're covered with a thick cloud.
Slide out the side. Die
and be quiet. Quietness is the surest
sign that you've died.
Your old life was a frantic running
from silence.

The speechless full moon comes out now.

--SOME KISS WE WANT--

[5]

There is some kiss we want
with our whole lives, the touch

of spirit on the body. Seawater
begs the pearl to break its shell.

And the lily, how passionately
it needs some wild darling!

At night, I open the window and ask
the moon to come and press its
face against mine.

Breathe into me. Close
the language-door and open the love-window.
The moon won't use the door,
only the window.

--THE ALLURE OF LOVE--

[6]

Someone who does not run
toward the allure of love walks
a road where nothing lives.

But this dove here senses
the love-hawk floating above
and waits and will not be driven
or scared to safety.

--FRINGE--

[7]

You wreck my shop and my house and now my heart,
but how can I run from what gives me life?

I'm weary of personal worrying, in love
with the art of madness! Tear open my shame

and show the mystery. How much longer
do I have to fret with self-restraint and fear?

Friends, this is how it is: we are fringe
sewn inside the lining of a robe. Soon

we'll be loosened, the binding threads torn
out. The beloved is a lion. We're

the lame deer in his paws. Consider
what choices we have!

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Let the lover be disgraceful, crazy,  
absentminded. Someone sober  
will worry about things going badly.  
Let the lover be.

[8]



If you want to learn theory,  
talk with theoreticians. That way is oral.

When you learn a craft, *practice* it.  
That learning comes through the hands.

If you want dervishhood, spiritual poverty  
and emptiness, you must be friends with a teacher.

Talking about it, reading books, and doing practices  
don't help. Soul received from soul that knowing.

The mystery of absence  
may be living in your pilgrim heart,  
and yet the knowing of it may not yet be yours.

Wait for the illuminated openness,  
as though your chest were filling with light,  
as when God said,

*Did we not expand you?* (Qur'an 57:4)

Don't look for it outside yourself.  
You are the source of milk. Don't milk others!

There is a fountain inside you.  
Don't walk around with an empty bucket.

You have a channel into the ocean,  
yet you ask for water from a little pool.

Beg for the love expansion. Meditate only  
on THAT. The Qur'an says,  
*And he is with you.* (57:4)

There is a basket of fresh bread on your head,  
yet you go door to door asking for crusts.

Knock on the inner door, no other.  
Sloshing knee-deep in fresh riverwater,  
yet you keep asking for other people's waterbags.

Water is everywhere around you, but you see  
only barriers that keep you from water.

The horse is beneath the rider's thighs,

and still you ask, "Where's my horse?"

*Right there*

*under you!*

Yes, this is a horse, but where's the horse?

*Can't you see?*

"Yes I can see, but whoever *saw*

such a horse?"

Mad with thirst you can't drink from the stream  
running close by your face. You are like a pearl  
on the deep bottom wondering inside the shell,  
*Where's the ocean?*

Those mental questionings  
form the barrier.

Stay bewildered inside God,  
and only that.

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[10]

If everyone could see what love is,
each would setup a tentpole in the ocean.

The world's population pitched and living
easily within the sea! What if inside

every lover's tear you saw the face
of the Friend: Muhammad, Jesus, Buddha,

the impossible-possible philosopher,
the glass diamond one, Shams Tabriz?

--WHAT DRAWS YOU?--

[11]

There are two types on the path, those
who come against their will, the blindingly religious,
and those who obey out of love.

The former have ulterior motives.
They want the midwife near because she gives them milk.
The others love the beauty of the nurse.

The former memorize the prooftexts of conformity
and repeat them. The latter disappear
into whatever draws them to God.

Both are drawn from the source.
Any motion is from the mover.
Any love from the beloved.

--THE POLISHER--

[12]

As everything changes overnight, I praise
the breaking of promises.

 Whatever love wants,
it gets, not next year, *now*!

I swear by the one who never says *tomorrow*,
as the circle of the moon refuses to sell
installments of light. It gives all it has.

How do fables conclude, and who will explain them?
Every story is us. That's who we are,
from beginning to no-matter-how-it-ends.

Shall I use the pronoun *we*? The Friend
walks by, and bricks in the wall feel
conscious. Infertile women give birth.
So beauty embodies itself.

Those who know the taste of a meal
are those who sit at the table and eat.

Lover and Friend are one being,
and separate beings too,

as the polisher melts
in the mirror's face.

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[13]

If the beloved is everywhere,  
the lover is a veil,

but when living itself becomes the Friend,  
lovers disappear.

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[14]

Reason has no way to say
its love. Only love opens
that secret.

 If you want
to be more alive, love
is the truest health.

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[15]

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty  
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study  
and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument.

Let the beauty we love be what we do.  
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.



--THE STUPID THINGS I'VE DONE--

[16]

Let your sunlight shine on this piece of dung,  
and dry it out, so I can be used  
for fuel to warm a bathhouse.

Look on the terrible things I've done,  
and cause herbs and eglantine to grow out of them.

The sun does this with the ground.  
Think what glories God can make  
from the fertilizer of sinning!

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All I know of spirit
is this love.

[17]

The rule that covers everything is:

How you are with others, expect that back.

If you want to know God, enjoy the company
of lovers. If you want to be thought a great

person, learn some subtle point and say it
with many variations as the answer

to every question. If you want to
live your soul, find a friend
like Shams and stay near.

--MORE RANGE--

[19]

We're friends with one who kills us,
who gives us to the ocean waves.

We love this death. Only ignorance
says, *Put it off awhile, day after*

tomorrow. Don't avoid the knife.
This friend only seems fierce, bringing

your soul more range, perching your
falcon on a cliff of the wind. Jesus

on his cross, Hallaj on his. Those
absurd executions hold a secret.

Cautious cynics claim they *know* what
they're doing every moment and why.

Submit to love without thinking, as
the sun rose this morning recklessly

extinguishing our star-candle minds.

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[20]

The minute I heard my first love story  
I started looking for you, not knowing  
how blind that was.

Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.  
They're in each other all along.