

# Rumi: Selected Poems



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## Rumi

This eBook was produced by C. Rainfield

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## You Worry Too Much

Oh soul,  
you worry too much.  
You say,  
I make you feel dizzy.  
Of a little headache then,  
why do you worry?  
You say, I am your antelope.  
Of seeing a lion here and there  
why do you worry?

Oh soul,  
you worry too much.  
You say, I am your moon-faced beauty.  
Of the cycles of the moon and  
passing of the years,  
why do you worry?  
You say, I am your source of passion,  
I excite you.  
Of playing into the Devils hand,  
why do you worry?

Oh soul,  
you worry too much.  
Look at yourself,  
what you have become.  
You are now a field of sugar canes,  
why show that sour face to me?  
You have tamed the  
winged horse of Love.  
Of a death of a donkey,  
why do you worry?  
You say that I keep you warm inside.  
Then why this cold sigh?  
You have gone to the roof of heavens.  
Of this world of dust, why do you worry?

Oh soul,  
you worry too much.  
Since you met me,  
you have become a master singer,  
and are now a skilled wrangler,

you can untangle any knot.  
Of life's little leash  
why do you worry?  
Your arms are heavy  
with treasures of all kinds.  
About poverty,  
why do you worry?  
You are Joseph,  
beautiful, strong,  
steadfast in your belief,  
all of Egypt has become drunk  
because of you.  
Of those who are blind to your beauty,  
and deaf to your songs,  
why do you worry?

Oh soul,  
you worry too much.  
You say that your housemate is the  
Heart of Love,  
she is your best friend.  
You say that you are the heat of  
the oven of every Lover.  
You say that you are the servant of  
Ali's magical sword, Zolfaghar.  
Of any little dagger  
why do you still worry?

Oh soul,  
you worry too much.  
You have seen your own strength.  
You have seen your own beauty.  
You have seen your golden wings.  
Of anything less,  
why do you worry?

You are in truth  
the soul, of the soul, of the soul.  
You are the security,  
the shelter of the spirit of Lovers.  
Oh the sultan of sultans,  
of any other king,  
why do you worry?

Be silent, like a fish,  
and go into that pleasant sea.  
You are in deep waters now,  
of life's blazing fire.  
Why do you worry?

From: *Hush Don't Say Anything to God: Passionate Poems of Rumi*  
Translated by Sharam Shiva

## Cradle My Heart

Last night,  
I was lying on the rooftop,  
thinking of you.  
I saw a special Star,  
and summoned her to take you a message.  
I prostrated myself to the Star  
and asked her to take my prostration  
to that Sun of Tabriz.  
So that with his light, he can turn  
my dark stones into gold.  
I opened my chest and showed her my scars,  
I told her to bring me news  
of my bloodthirsty Lover.  
As I waited,  
I paced back and forth,  
until the child of my heart became quiet.  
The child slept, as if I were rocking his cradle.  
Oh Beloved, give milk to the infant of the heart,  
and don't hold us from our turning.  
You have cared for hundreds,  
don't let it stop with me now.  
At the end, the town of unity is the place for the heart.  
Why do you keep this bewildered heart  
in the town of dissolution?  
I have gone speechless, but to rid myself  
of this dry mood,  
oh Saaqhi, pass the narcissus of the wine.

From: *Hush Don't Say Anything to God: Passionate Poems of Rumi*  
Translated by Sharam Shiva

## There is a candle in your heart...

There is a candle in your heart,  
    ready to be kindled.  
There is a void in your soul,  
    ready to be filled.  
You feel it, don't you?  
You feel the separation  
    from the Beloved.  
Invite Him to fill you up,  
    embrace the fire.  
Remind those who tell you otherwise that  
    Love  
    comes to you of its own accord,  
    and the yearning for it  
    cannot be learned in any school.

From: *Hush Don't Say Anything to God: Passionate Poems of Rumi*  
Translated by Sharam Shiva

## Art as Flirtation and Surrender

In your light I learn how to love.

In your beauty, how to make poems.

You dance inside my chest,

where no one sees you,

but sometimes I do,

and that sight becomes this art.

From: *The Essential Rumi*  
Translated by Coleman Barks

## Spring Giddiness

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 breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.  
Don't go back to sleep.  
You must ask for what you really want.  
Don't go back to sleep.  
People are going back and forth across the doorsill  
where the two worlds touch.  
The door is round and open.  
Don't go back to sleep.

I would love to kiss you.  
The price of kissing is your life.  
Now my loving is running toward my life shouting,  
What a bargain, let's buy it.

Daylight, full of small dancing particles  
and the one great turning, our souls  
are dancing with you, without feet, they dance.  
Can you see them when I whisper in your ear?

All day and night, music,  
a quiet, bright  
reedsong. If it  
fades, we fade.

From: *The Essential Rumi*  
Translated by Coleman Barks

## Untitled

Don't try to hold onto this  
...you'll lose it

Don't pull the curtain  
...it will end

This moment with all of us here  
...is paradise,

But don't try to leave this way.  
...you'll ruin it.

From: *The Hand of Poetry: Five Mystic Poets of Persia*  
Translated by Coleman Barks

## This World Which Is Made of Our Love for Emptiness

Praise to the emptiness that blanks out existence. Existence:  
This place made from our love for that emptiness!

Yet somehow comes emptiness,  
this existence goes.

Praise to that happening, over and over!  
For years I pulled my own existence out of emptiness.

Then one swoop, one swing of the arm,  
that work is over.

Free of who I was, free of presence, free of dangerous fear, hope,  
free of mountainous wanting.

The here-and-now mountain is a tiny piece of a piece of straw  
blown off into emptiness.

These words I'm saying so much begin to lose meaning:  
Existence, emptiness, mountain, straw:

Words and what they try to say swept  
out the window, down the slant of the roof.

From: The Discourses of Rumi quoted from William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*

## I've said before that every craftsman

I've said before that every craftsman  
searches for what's not there  
to practice his craft.

A builder looks for the rotten hole  
where the roof caved in. A water-carrier  
picks the empty pot. A carpenter  
stops at the house with no door.

Workers rush toward some hint  
of emptiness, which they then  
start to fill. Their hope, though,  
is for emptiness, so don't think  
you must avoid it. It contains  
what you need!  
Dear soul, if you were not friends  
with the vast nothing inside,  
why would you always be casting you net  
into it, and waiting so patiently?

This invisible ocean has given you such abundance,  
but still you call it "death",  
that which provides you sustenance and work.

God has allowed some magical reversal to occur,  
so that you see the scorpion pit  
as an object of desire,  
and all the beautiful expanse around it,  
as dangerous and swarming with snakes.

This is how strange your fear of death  
and emptiness is, and how perverse  
the attachment to what you want.

Now that you've heard me  
on your misapprehensions, dear friend,  
listen to Attar's story on the same subject.

He strung the pearls of this  
about King Mahmud, how among the spoils  
of his Indian campaign there was a Hindu boy,  
whom he adopted as a son. He educated  
and provided royally for the boy  
and later made him vice-regent, seated  
on a gold throne beside himself.

One day he found the young man weeping..  
"Why are you crying? You're the companion  
of an emperor! The entire nation is ranged out  
before you like stars that you can command!"

The young man replied, "I am remembering  
my mother and father, and how they  
scared me as a child with threats of you!  
'Uh-oh, he's headed for King Mahmud's court!  
Nothing could be more hellish!' Where are they now  
when they should see me sitting here?"

This incident is about your fear of changing.  
You are the Hindu boy. Mahmud, which means  
Praise to the End, is the spirit's  
poverty or emptiness.

The mother and father are your attachment  
to beliefs and blood ties  
and desires and comforting habits.  
Don't listen to them!  
They seem to protect  
but they imprison.

They are your worst enemies.  
They make you afraid  
of living in emptiness.

Some day you'll weep tears of delight in that court,  
remembering your mistaken parents!

Know that your body nurtures the spirit,  
helps it grow, and gives it wrong advise.

The body becomes, eventually, like a vest

of chain mail in peaceful years,  
too hot in summer and too cold in winter.

But the body's desires, in another way, are like  
an unpredictable associate, whom you must be  
patient with. And that companion is helpful,  
because patience expands your capacity  
to love and feel peace.

The patience of a rose close to a thorn  
keeps it fragrant. It's patience that gives milk  
to the male camel still nursing in its third year,  
and patience is what the prophets show to us.

The beauty of careful sewing on a shirt  
is the patience it contains.

Friendship and loyalty have patience  
as the strength of their connection.

Feeling lonely and ignoble indicates  
that you haven't been patient.

Be with those who mix with God  
as honey blends with milk, and say,

"Anything that comes and goes,  
rises and sets, is not  
what I love." else you'll be like a caravan fire left  
to flare itself out alone beside the road.

From: Rumi : *One-Handed Basket Weaving*  
Translated by Coleman Barks

## The Gazals

if the door is shut  
right in your face  
keep waiting with patience  
don't leave right away

seeing your patience  
your love will soon  
summon you with grace  
raise you like a champion

and if all the roads  
end up in dead ends  
you'll be shown the secret paths  
no one will comprehend

.....

ah i better keep silence  
i know this endless love  
will surely arrive  
for you and you and you

from ghazal number 965

if your beloved  
has the life of a fire  
step in now and burn along

in a night full of  
suffering and darkness  
be a candle spreading light till dawn

.....

even if you feel  
torn to pieces  
sew yourself new clothes

your body and soul  
will surely feel the joy  
when you simply go along

.....

don't say what is the use  
of me alone being peaceful  
when everyone is fighting

you're not one  
you're a thousand  
just light your lantern

since one live flame  
is better than  
a thousand dead souls

from ghazal number 1197

find yourself a friend  
who is willing to  
tolerate you with patience

put to the test the essence  
of the best incense  
by putting it in fire

drink a cup of poison  
if handed to you by a friend  
when filled with love and grace

step into the fire  
like the chosen prophet  
the secret love will change  
hot flames to a garden  
covered with blossoms  
roses and hyacinths and willow

from ghazal number 994

go my friend  
bestow your love  
even on your enemies  
if you touch their hearts  
what do you think will happen

from ghazal number 838

From: *Fountain of Fire* (excerpted)  
Translated by Nader Elkhaili