



meet in the mountain mist:  
still looking for shams

poetry by  
nashid fareed-ma'at (ashi)

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## Introduction

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.

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against love.

quotes from Mevlana Jalaludin Muhammad Balkhi, also known as Rumi

The present popularity of Rumi, is quite interesting, one that welds him as a great, passionate mystic who spews poetic on love's ecstasy with a creative -- sometimes bombastic -- wit. The bold courage of his words and his unyielding dive into the inner depths (of the heart, of reality) are qualities that draw many modern readers to him. Yet the filters of this modern popularity censor, perhaps unintentionally, certain very important aspects of Rumi; aspects that flesh out the fuller context of what he conveys. Often lost in the praise of Rumi is the deeper story of his immense personal transformation after encountering, communing with, and then suffering the unexplained

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disappearance of his spiritual master, Shams of Tabriz. Rumi's time with Shams was essential to his later destiny of outpouring a vastness of rich mystical poetry, stories, and teachings. And in particular, the period of facing Shams' absence became the transforming cocoon of despair that opened to the precious harvest of enlightening poetry Rumi is known for today.

Some might be surprised to learn that the path of Rumi's poetic witnessing of love begins with the loss of his spiritual master. Rumi's immersion into love became so deep some might not be able to see how his arrival to the valleys of mystical bliss, freedom, and uninhibited expression of love treaded through the hard road of extreme sadness, intense suffering, and immense pain. This stripping of all barriers to love, including the annihilation of Rumi's ego, lays in the hands of his submission to Shams: a transformation began in the presence of Shams that evolved to great maturation in suffering his absence.

Many oral traditions give varying versions of the story of Shams and Rumi, which occurred in the mid-1200s (AD). And given the mysterious unfolding of human history, a mystery that becomes even more obscure when dealing with things mystical, few elements of the various versions can be declared definitive. But I will share aspects of these versions that drew me to embrace the task of sharing the following collection of poems that explore Rumi's painful transformation in face of the disappearance of his master, Shams.

Firstly, it should be stated that Rumi and Shams were Muslims. Their embrace of Islam is essential to

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understanding the fullness of their story. Islam means “submission to Allah (the Absolute)” and remains the essence of the religion. As Muslims, ones who submit to Allah, the path of their destinies treads the continuing example of Muhammad (peace be upon him). As the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad remains a perfect example of a human’s complete surrender to Allah, which is no different than Truth, which is no different than Love. Muhammad’s ways continue to serve as guides for how to live this most intimate surrender as a daily way of life. This forms the basis of Islam, as well as the invitation to go deeper into the mysticism of such complete surrender.

The modern embrace of Rumi’s poetry, at times, emphasizes his mysticism over his living the religion of Islam. But as Muhammad’s life displays, Rumi and Shams’ immersion into mysticism is the religion, an immersion that went beyond the social practices that stopped short of going deeper into complete surrender to Allah. Yet, we remain fortunate that Rumi and Shams lived in a society that was open to and receptive to their mystical immersion. This allowed the story of Rumi and Shams, and the poetry that spins out of such, to be spread throughout the world even centuries later.

As with most things mystic, the beginning actually begins before the beginning. It is told that Shams of Tabriz was a wandering Sufi (Islamic mystic) for most of his life. His name, Shams, can be translated as “sun,” and there is certainly a deeper symbolism to this name, particularly for those who become part of the discipleship line that flowed through him. As a person of immense wisdom and

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knowing (beyond knowledge), Shams lived his surrender to Allah as a path of union in the heart: by surrendering all aspects of his individual self, the inherent love (which dwells in each of our hearts) emerged to bring him (or his dissolved self) closer to Allah. Such an approach clearly falls within the living example of Muhammad, who continued to embrace the mystical aspects of his surrender to Allah throughout his life. Thus, he continued to engage in practices essential to the mystic path even as he served his duties in building the Ummah (the Muslim community): he took periods to be alone in meditative retreat, looked beyond the letter of Allah’s guidance to the spirit of it, and sought to purify his mind and humble his ego to be servants to the throne of the heart where Love sits as the sovereign. Shams, continuing this tradition, sat as a disciple of Sufi masters to learn and apply these practices. And when he became a master himself and took on disciples, he taught them in ways that emphasized the path of the mystic over the widespread conventional approaches to Islam that minimized the path of the heart.

Shams’ surrender to the path of the heart was such that he gave up his claims to a “worldly life” to accept the destiny of a wandering mystic. He gave up the home life to fulfill his destiny of ever deepening intimate surrender to Allah. This put many aspects of his life and learning in a realm beyond words and logic. And these became even less accessible to many given Shams’ rebellious, rambunctious, and sometimes antisocial demeanor. Yet he wanted to share this ecstasy with others and saw it as a duty to do so, just as Muhammad had a duty to share the

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revelations which became the Qur'an even when he had fears about doing so. Thus, came the need for a master disciple for Shams: one who could be a bridge of the realized heart to a world that minimized the relevancy of the heart, even in religion.

Some traditions relate that Shams, cognizant of the need for a master disciple, was asked by "a voice" what would he be willing to give for such an one? Shams replied, saying, "I would give my head" -- and some accounts hold that was the price he later paid. This price might seem high to some but Shams understood how a rare person he needed: one who would have the enduring courage to bear the annihilation of one's ego and not run away from this intensely painful process. Shams lacked the education, the demeanor, and social status to do what Rumi would later do. Think about it: how many of us today would pay attention to a wandering bum on the street declaring that the heart full of love is more important than anything else? That such is essential to fulfilling the purpose of life and drawing us closer to Allah. Most of us ignore bums even when they speak of things that affirm our present approach to life; and most people, including Rumi before submitting to his master, dismissed Shams and his message as irrelevant.

But Shams' need for a master disciple would require patience. Some accounts tell of how he saw Rumi fifteen years before their first encounter. And upon seeing him, Shams knew Rumi was "that one." He knew even then that Rumi was destined to become a great spiritual teacher and master who would leave an undeniable

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impression upon the sea of humanity. Yet Shams did not approach Rumi because he was not yet ready to receive what Shams would bring. Praise be to the wise spiritual master who knows not to pick the fruit of a disciple not yet ripe. Shams displayed great restraint even as he saw that Rumi would be drawn further away from the path of the heart, nurtured to be a scholar and upholder of the more conventional approach to Islam. That he would walk the path of fame, wealth, and intellectualism, building upon the social status and reputation of his wealthy father. And that Rumi would even become a disciple of other Sufi masters who would approach but not immerse themselves in the endless path of the heart.

By the time Shams and Rumi met, Rumi had become an internationally known scholar, teacher, and judge of Shariah (Islamic law). He taught at an university and held an influential position there. He was also a Sufi master who attracted disciples from throughout the world. He was known not only for his wealth and fame, but also for his impeccable ethics and morality. He lived a prosperous life with his wife and children, and was deemed an extremely success person in the prime of his life (his late 30s). So when he was approached by this lesser known, seemingly arrogant, old bum from out of town, we can imagine the reaction Rumi had toward Shams.

There are two main versions of Shams' first encounter with Rumi. One version involves Shams approaching Rumi and some of his disciples on the street to pose a question: who was greater, Bayazid Bastami (a Sufi and Islamic saint) or Muhammad the Messenger? On the

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surface this seemed like an idiotic question posed by a stupid, old bum because clearly Muhammad is the greatest of all humans in the Islamic tradition. But Shams revealed a deeper meaning in the question, a path to go further in what seemed obvious. Bayazid is known for saying “I have achieved knowing Allah,” whereas Muhammad said, “I am incapable of knowing You (Allah) the way You deserve.” (It should be understood that “knowing” in this sense goes beyond all knowledge and logic to a deeper, more intimate realization which is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to put into words.) So who “knew” more: Bayazid or Muhammad? Shams, in the wisdom of the knowing mystic, revealed that Bayazid only drank a glass of “knowing Allah” whereas Muhammad, in his complete surrender to Allah, was immersed in an unending flow of the river of knowing Allah. The metaphor was profound for Rumi: for he had, in many ways, followed the example of Bayazid in drinking the fullness of finite cups of knowing Allah. He was a great teacher, scholar, judge, and spiritual master but these roles had become finite glasses, not the unending river Muhammad submerged himself within. In truth, Allah is without end; therefore, there can be no ending to knowing Allah. Shams’ question, empowered with the master’s transmission of power, revealed to Rumi that he was only drinking limited glasses while the endless river of knowing Allah is at hand.

The other main version of their first encounter involves Islamic books. In this version, Shams approaches Rumi and his disciples on the street. Rumi was carrying Islamic books. There are varying accounts about what was

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said but one account relates that Shams asked Rumi what he was carrying. Rumi looked at Shams, an apparent illiterate, and said the books contained things he could not understand. Shams immediately grabbed the books and tossed them into a nearby fountain. Books in those days were written by hand with ink and, unlike many press-printed books of today, submerging them in water would ruin them, the ink smearing into indecipherable markings. The replacing of such books may have proved timely since it could take months to recopy one by hand. But there is also an additional affront to Shams throwing the books in the water: any books addressing Islamic matters, especially if containing portions of the Qur’an or Hadiths (sayings of Muhammad) would have been treated with extreme care. In some traditions, one would wash one’s hands and mouth before picking up these books and reading them. (In those days, many readings of books would have been done aloud for the benefit of those who did not read, since learning to read was an opportunity usually reserved to few). So any mishandling, let alone acts that could destroy the books would have been viewed as a great offense. But the stakes were even higher since this destructive act was being committed by an old, wandering bum to someone of very high social status and fame.

Suffice it to say, Rumi was furious but sought to reclaim the books from the fountain before having Shams beaten severely by his disciples. Yet to Rumi’s great surprise, when the wet books were recovered and opened, he saw that not a single ink mark was smudged or smeared. (There is also another version of Shams setting these books

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on fire and Rumi recovering the books from the ashes completely unblemished.) Thus, Rumi comes to realize Shams is a great spiritual master. But there is also a very serious message in this course of introduction: that it is time for Rumi to go beyond the letter and intellectualism of his surrender, to embrace a path that is beyond words, thoughts, and scholarly logic. And certainly someone with powers such as Shams displayed is capable of guiding him there.

Great praise be that Rumi was open to receiving Shams. As the two began to discourse, it became clear to Rumi that Shams is his spiritual master. Rumi basically retired from public life, abandoning his duties as teacher, scholar, judge, and spiritual master to spend the whole of his days and nights in communion with Shams. This included spending days upon days alone with Shams, Rumi neglecting even his family and disciples -- duties held in very high esteem in those days. Very little is said of what occurred between the two during their times of isolated communion, and tradition holds that even those who know what was shared would not speak such publicly. But it most likely involved a lot of praying, chanting, ecstatic singing and dancing, meditation, fasting, and personal instruction. Shams catered his approach to the specific needs of Rumi to have him annihilate his ego and mind to surrender completely to the call of Love in the heart. Shams was clear in his objective, to nurture Rumi to be able to have direct experience of Allah. As a great spiritual master, he could impart tastes of this experience through direct transmission from the heart of the knowing master to

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the heart of the submissive disciple. But even this was done only to clear the way for Rumi to engage the path of the heart, so he could embrace and receive the continuous, unending river of such direct experience himself. In this way, Rumi would be able to convey what Shams could share but would be rejected by others -- who's going to listen to an old, wandering bum? Rumi, on the other hand, would be received for the sake of his social status, wealth, achievements, reputation, and fame.

There are accounts of Rumi saying about Shams: 'I have seen Allah which I have been worshiping all my life in human form.' Rumi was completely devoted to Shams, a genuine disciple humbled to his spiritual master. And Shams too was completely devoted to Rumi, stating that he never approached Rumi to be his spiritual master: that there was not one on earth who could be Rumi's master because he was more than human. Shams referred to Rumi as his "friend," a great compliment given the nature of their relationship as master and disciple. There is also a mystical connotation to the use of the word friend: many Sufis hold that the only one who can be a true friend is Allah, who never fails, abandons, or betrays us. But in a world where most friends (and relatives and loved ones) will do more to keep you from Allah by validating and appeasing your ego, the wise cherish those friends of the Friend who spare nothing in reminding us to remain devoted in our surrender to Allah. A friend of The Friend will not appease your ego, but work toward its annihilation that it no longer be a barrier to directly experiencing Allah, which is no different than Truth, no different than Love. As such friends, the

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bond between Shams and Rumi was such that it revealed the oneness that always existed between them. And Rumi was pulled beyond the soberness of his previous approach to Islam into an intimate intoxication of love between master and student that brought them both closer to Allah.

Rumi's complete devotion to Shams did not come without costs: namely the intense jealousy Rumi's family and disciples developed for Shams. Some accounts hold that the tension and hostility increased to a point where Shams left or was driven away by Rumi's family and disciples. This put Rumi into a great depression and his family and disciples, out of concern for his well-being, brought Shams back. In an attempt to ease tensions, as well as create a socially justifiable reason for Shams to stay, Rumi arranged for Shams to marry his niece; a proposal Shams accepted since he fell in love with the young woman. But Shams' return also meant the return of Rumi's neglect of his family and disciples. Their jealousy and dislike of Shams only increased. And these were exacerbated by the death of Shams' young wife, which some attributed, in part, to her grief about being married to a strange old man.

The jealousy of Rumi's relatives and disciples was not completely without cause: his neglect of them meant the loss of a pious family member and great teacher -- precious pearls in the sea of humanity tormented by the storms of ignorance and immorality. His seclusion also meant the society's loss of a great scholar and judge, spurring others in the community to despise Shams. Do not neglect that most of these persons were not given audience

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to the mystical power of Shams. Even in instances when they were granted audience to Shams' teaching, he was selective about what he taught because they did not meet the measure of being master disciples. So most of Rumi's family, disciples, and community members did not see Shams' magical cultivation of Rumi's transformation. To most, Shams remained a crazy old bum who somehow cornered the attention of Rumi, a danger many prayed would end.

One night, Shams was called to the back door; he exited to never be seen again. Various traditions hold Shams was murdered by either one of Rumi's relatives or disciples, or by a community member come to end the spell Shams held over Rumi so he could return to his former roles. Other traditions hold that Shams left voluntarily, seeing his work done: that his master disciple was ripe and now had to be released from the tree of the master; and since Rumi would not release Shams of his own accord, Shams had to leave to allow the rest of Rumi's destiny to unfold. Either way, Rumi became extremely depressed and held Shams responsible for his departure; that even if he was murdered, such could only occur to Shams if he allowed it to be, given the great mystical powers he had. Rumi was thrown into a despair indescribable: only devout disciples who have "lost" their spiritual masters can understand. For Rumi, Shams' disappearance was more than just the loss of a teacher and friend since their bond was one of pure love.

Rumi did not give up on being reunited with Shams and, thus, embarked on a "search" for him. This search

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wasn't limited to just conventional means of visiting physical locations, it was also a search of calling and seeking to draw Shams back to his heart. The periods of separation from his spiritual master unleashed an unending river of poetry that became a trademark of his life. Rumi is reported as citing spontaneous revelations of poetry aloud during Shams' first temporary departure, something Rumi had not done previously in his life. But the final disappearance of Shams led Rumi to wander in the streets like a drunk ecstatic, sometimes mourning, other times dancing and praising in verse his devotion to his master. These poetic outbursts went beyond the previous reserve of his life. One may infer this ecstatic outpouring was probably learned from his master Shams, and that Rumi's displays were another way of "searching" for Shams by mystically calling for him through such expression.

The following collection of poetry, written in the voice of Rumi, is an exploration of him struggling with the final disappearance of Shams. As much as the words seek to capture Rumi's despair, there is much more to his suffering than words can convey. There is an apparent cruelty in Shams' disappearance, something he most likely knew needed to occur to allow for Rumi's full maturation into the path of the heart. But in Shams' presence, Rumi was brought by grace beyond the finite cups of knowing Allah he had become accustomed to. His unending gratitude to Shams for bringing him, via the master's transmission, to the unending river of knowing Allah cannot be fully expressed in words. And thousands upon thousands of Rumi's verses praising Shams or reflecting

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what he learned from Shams are testament to this -- including a vast amount of poetry Rumi signed with Shams' name. But in Shams' presence, Rumi was immersed in the unending river of knowing Allah and having direct experience of Allah, which is no different than Truth, no different than Love. But such was only a taste to remind Rumi of his innate, unending appetite for this bliss: a taste to reveal the always-present remembrance of dwelling in the heart, where this river flows. The final task of the spiritual master, after seeing the master disciple has been adequately prepared, is to withdraw one's transmission to allow the disciple to realize the unending river within. In a world immersed in suffering and sadness, most master disciples move toward such realization through great pain and despair. The spiritual master cannot interfere with such, for the sake of the master disciple the spiritual master must relinquish all attachments to the disciple. It is up to the disciple to endure whatever avails to honor the teachings of the master and arrive at this most sacred realization.

This is the seed of Rumi's poetry, what made a man who previously did not write poems open to an vast flow of deep, intuitive, free, sometimes provocative poetry. It wasn't poetry written for the sake of creativity or to display his genius: it was the despairing call of a disciple deeply longing for his spiritual master so he could bask again in the unending river of knowing Allah. Rumi's early poems were part of his search for his master, which he later realized was a search for something deeper. This search moved Rumi from one who became discontent with finite

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cups of knowing Allah to being immersed in the unending river of knowing Allah. This journey became the bridge that fulfilled the spiritual master's wish and destiny: to have a master disciple who could convey to the world the path of the realized heart, a surrender to Allah (and Truth and Love) which goes beyond words and logic.

The story of Shams and Rumi is a story of a spiritual master finding a friend of The Friend in one's master disciple. And such a story, regardless of who the specific persons may be, is a story of Love. But not love in the modern context, which usually reduces this pure blessing to egotistical expressions dancing in the desires of selfishness to give us joy or pain or both. The path of the heart, which Shams and Rumi embraced, calls for the annihilation of the ego and its selfish tendencies because these can prove to be the greatest barriers to love. Allah is no different than Truth, no different than Love; so in this sense, Love (its sharing, expression, cultivation, etc.) is a direct experience of Allah. So much of the vastness of Love goes beyond the reach of words and ideas, and some masters will only use these as ways to move beyond the finite glasses of Love to approach the endless ocean of Love.

The Love shared between Shams and Rumi encompassed their minds and bodies on the relative plane, but only as a meeting point to dive into the deeper vastness of Love shared between their surrendered hearts. And Shams, as a spiritual master, would have used his powers of transmission to assist his master disciple in realizing the unending river of knowing Allah. Again, this goes beyond

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words and ideas of Allah to a direct knowing that transcends knowledge: to feel Allah beyond a feeling and, thus, be brought to the timeless remembrance of who and what we truly are. Even these words fail, but hopefully they convey the depth and purity of Love Shams and Rumi shared in their two years together. Such a relationship of Love has become exceedingly rare in human relationships, for it sheds all desires and barriers to completely surrendering to Allah (Love) that we may find ourselves in direct experience with The Absolute.

But enough words and explanations. Let those who are ripe enough to receive the transmission within this story be open to realizing the path of the heart and immerse themselves within the unending ocean of Love. The following poems are shared as little rays of light to honor the example Rumi's search for Shams. Although it is a search made in sadness, don't be bound to the sadness; for if faced with sincerity, as Rumi did, it only becomes a passing road to a greater valley of bliss. Perhaps then we may see the call within the words that lead beyond the realm of words, into the vast wordless, thoughtless, selfless abode of directly experiencing Love...

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*rumi points to shams  
shams points to muhammad  
muhammad points to allah (the absolute)  
allah points to you*

*who will you point to  
who will unfold you to  
the complete unfolding of your heart...*

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0.  
jalaludin muhammad  
i hear your whispers again  
to tell the never ending story  
of the master and the disciple  
what my ears may color  
forgive me as i relay this story of love  
the details as only fragrances pointing  
to the blossom of the pure rose  
whose roots and petals meet in the heart  
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1.  
i once had the courage to question  
why the sun rose in the morning  
but after meeting the sun of the sun  
i would welcome its appearance  
at any time of day or night  
the mere mention of the sun  
leaves me too dumbfounded to speak  
to think  
my heart now dwells in shadows of despair  
i being the object that creates these shadows  
in the absence of your light

oh light of my light  
why have you disappeared  
wading through the tears of my heart  
i seek the rays of your light  
of any sun  
that i may follow them beyond the horizons  
to where suns set  
in hopes of finding you  
in that place where suns rest

when you came  
i was a budding rose  
with a sweet and fragrant scent  
upon your arrival  
my petals were burst to the ground  
and scattered everywhere  
and my perfume turned into a skunk's stench

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when you came  
i was prized silk  
so soft to the touch  
but your spinning has spun me into mixed thread  
that always splits at the ends  
and i sit in a refuse bin because of my poor quality

when you came  
i was a warm and stable candle flame  
steady in my light  
but when you appeared  
the mere shadow of your light extinguished me  
and a cool breeze has hardened the wax  
that used to support my burning and consuming

when you came  
i was an enchanting lyrical poem  
tickled by the world's praise, basking in fame  
but just your whispers  
have reduced me to a nonsensical alphabet  
and your spoken prayers  
have diminished me to ashes of dust

when you came  
i was a decorated warrior  
who never took a single blow to my chest  
but your wisdom has exposed me  
to be a cowardly schoolboy fumbling to hold a stick  
afraid to fight my harmless shadow

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when you came  
i was a flowing stream  
savored and sweet to the taste  
but when you bowed to drink from me  
i turned to withering mist  
yet even in my vapors i tried to hold your reflection  
but was incapable

when you came  
i was an eloquent scholar of devotion  
revered for my moving sermons and profound teachings  
but hearing you read my books  
has left me a tongue-twisted illiterate  
unsure of my own language  
even unsure of my own name

when you came  
i was so much more than what i am now  
you have devalued me  
making me less and less  
to be almost nothing  
although most in this world would mourn losing  
what you took from me  
you have brought me to my greatest value:  
a priceless treasure wrapped in spiritual poverty  
i am a seed recovered from the soil of hypocrisy  
recovered by you in you  
i knew my surrender of all  
    was necessary to attain the best harvest  
yet i kept a little for myself while seeking cultivated fruits

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a venture doomed to failure  
but you recovered me from the soil of my hypocrisy  
and no seed is to be taken lightly  
in this age of famine  
laying in your light  
i broke myself open even upon the surface of the soil  
extending my roots into your sun rays  
and my stem into your love

but now  
my sustaining sun is gone  
although i wither in the departure of your light  
you have not left me to ruin  
i would wager my life that your absence  
is more painful than death  
more painful than torturous dying  
because at least in death  
there is an ending or new beginning  
i see neither in mourning your disappearance  
but prove me wrong and reappear  
give my roots a home again  
and my stem, a destination  
let the abyss of my despair  
be changed into the ecstasy of reunion  
with the sun of the sun  
the light of my light  
the love of my master

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oh shams  
where are you  
that i may live the fullness of life again



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2.  
oh shams  
where are you  
that i may live the fullness of life again  
how can i distinguish  
day from night from non-existence  
in the perpetual absence of your light  
after basking in the sun of the sun  
which made even midnight  
brighter than the most brilliant day  
every moment now is a dreary shade  
and every second bears the extinction of love  
or so it feels

it was you who taught me  
what love is  
without a single word  
looking deep in your eyes  
with innocence and sincerity  
you reflected my ignorance back to me  
with just your gaze  
yet your grace conveyed  
this is the beginning of my unfolding  
of enlightenment  
no one else had the courage to be so honest with me  
not even i had the courage to face my own ignorance  
i only sought to cover it up with knowledge  
and masquerade it with acts of piety  
yet your light was such  
that it offered no place to hide

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and love demands no less:  
that i hide nothing

despite the pain of such honesty  
having to face the lies i lived with yet ignored and  
concealed  
and with even the risk of me running from your exposing  
light  
you ceased not the slightest  
in shining your light upon me  
burning away my veils  
not compromising in any way  
what love demands  
you had faith that i would not run from love's crucible  
even as others violated such faith  
over and over again  
by abandoning you in the storm of love's purging  
am i much different from those who ran away  
although i did not run  
i must humbly confess  
many times did i consider abandoning you  
it is only by grace that i did not leave  
did this grace come from you

you left me not  
when i demonstrated the greatest risk of fleeing  
but now you disappear  
when i'm determined to never leave you  
how ironic  
yet the paint of my sadness contains not a drop of anger

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i remain indebted to you  
because  
it was you who taught me  
what love is  
an enfolding silence  
where even the suggestion of separation  
dissolves into complete union  
where you are you in me  
and i, me in you  
to become the truth of who we are in ourselves  
and beyond and beyond  
(internally and externally)  
an intimacy that bridges all separation  
yet now you challenge me with this greatest of separations  
your unexplained disappearance

if this is to teach me more about love  
i will swear, even falsely  
that i have learned so you may return  
or let my learning be incomplete  
for the sake of our reunion

oh shams  
where are you now  
that i may live the fullness of life again  
without you  
my life is in search of meaning



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3.  
what is it about us  
that makes us seek  
meaning in others  
even this tendency  
(which i dare call a fallacy)  
drew me closer to you  
but in our emerging union  
you reflected  
my sought meaning (in you) back to me  
declaring:  
“all i want from you  
is for you to see your (true) self  
then you won’t look to me  
or anything else  
to complete you”

i am amazed  
by my every memory  
of your love for me  
even as you constantly chastised me  
to stop living in the past  
be present  
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4.  
presently  
i can hear nothing  
but the wailing of my own heart  
a song of despair that ends not  
since you disappeared without a trace  
yet still i turn the earth upside down  
looking for any sign of you  
and have cursed the heavens  
since i have not wings to fly  
to search for you there

the whole world has gone mad  
insane  
yet i’m just crazy enough to seek truth  
the wisdom of life is within us  
but we sell it for (illusions of) certainty  
and then become mad when the world fails us  
yet again  
that’s why i took such solace in your love  
not that it has gone, but in your absence  
i am uncertain about how to live this love

in your presence  
to be audience to your love was enough  
but now i feel i am the show  
a tragedy in search of an audience  
but the watching eyes of a million friends will not suffice  
for the audience of the one  
i seek to place myself before

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oh shams  
i seek your light  
to escape this unwanted loneliness  
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5.  
oh sun of the sun  
i sought your light to escape my loneliness  
but instead your light reflected back to me  
my own solitude  
its inner depths revealed  
absent of the desires and concepts i held to  
the nakedness of my aloneness placed before my eyes  
by a light i could not run from

how many people run from themselves to their own  
detriment  
even if their running is reflected in running from others  
many are the inner canvases we project outward  
and rare is the courage to face the inner portraits  
of our inadequacies  
yes, i did run from myself by running from others  
painting blame upon exterior surfaces  
when the proper place for such blame was myself  
conflict with others chosen over introspection and  
responsibility  
abandoning the ruins of my destructiveness  
instead of correcting the harm i inflicted  
i was a coward, and maybe still am  
the absence of a powerful light made for easy hiding  
but now having faced what could not be hidden  
in your light  
i not only seek not to hide, but to expose all that i am  
that there be not the slightest shadow within (me)

---

not a single space to hide  
for awareness brings its own transformation

oh shams  
what a wonder that your light's purity  
has penetrated beyond my surface  
to reflect back to my awareness  
the landscape of (my) solitude  
an abode of beauty  
a haven of peace  
a state of wholeness  
only in my selfishness are these scattered  
or destroyed  
but your light has a way of erasing (my) selfishness  
even if only for a moment  
to dwell in your light is to dwell within  
the beauty of (my) solitude  
its peace and wholeness  
beckoning me to release all those things i held myself to be  
needless objects that only cast shadows of confusion  
but your light had a way of making even these disappear  
that i may see myself as myself  
no distortions or colorings  
no taints of the past, my desires, or others' opinions of me  
that in your light, your presence  
i was  
alone with you  
with you and alone

---

i long to be alone again  
but your absence has proven to be  
an unescapable companion  
that and my whispering tears



---

6.  
when whispers dance with silence  
sounds become insignificant  
yet what you conveyed to me  
is beyond words  
how to make the faithless understand  
that communion is communication  
even if nothing is expressed  
yet they have fallen in love  
with the imitation of words  
and other lesser indications  
of separation

you have shown me your soul  
and i mistook it for my corpse  
for how could i live after such revelation  
how small-minded i had become  
in my quest for understanding  
and being understood

the universe is as big as one indivisible song  
but in my quest to devour it all  
i have reduced it to only desirable notes  
i have brought my own confusion  
chasing distinctions  
when the oneness of the universe  
has it all  
why reduce the all of the universe

---

you have shown me your soul  
and i mistook it for happiness  
but the minute i turned from you  
sadness was upon me  
what i cherish, what i favor  
what i admonish, what i dislike  
what i am glad to avoid  
none of these are you  
only impressions of my perception of you  
if i truly want to see you  
i must drop all impressions  
and move beyond perception  
to just be  
with you

but how can the day  
be with the sun  
when the sun has disappeared  
and refuses to return



---

7.  
oh shams  
where does the sun go when it doesn't return  
does it burn out to nothingness  
if so, tell me where to find its ashes in the celestial ether  
that i may search for any glowing embers  
and cherish such light

or does such a sun change into a moon  
if so, i will reflect all my memories of you upon it  
in hopes that it will give me shades of your light  
i know the moon emits no light of its own  
but i will surrender my consciousness  
to this illusionary deception  
i'll honor it with holy ceremonies when it is full  
to dwell in vigils of remembrance and appreciation  
i'll curse the moon when it fades to an unseen orb  
and seek its forgiveness when it begins to appear anew  
i know i'll be forgiven  
because forgiveness lives in you

or does the sun that does not return  
scatter itself into countless stars  
if so, the night shall be my daily altar  
and the constellations, my book of prayers  
i'll fast for the sun's descent  
and wail in despair when the clouds obscure the night sky  
and savor every little glimpse of light that reaches me  
from the galaxies afar  
in many ways i feel you are farther away

---

even if you are standing directly behind me  
such is the bitterness of your disappearance  
which won't succumb the slightest to anything sweet



---

8.  
why this cup of forsaken bitterness  
was not my devotion devout, my sincerity sincere  
was not my purity pure and unblemished  
and my heart given in wholeness willingly  
did i unknowingly pollute the sacred temple of love  
or was my humility as a student lacking in any way  
did i not yield to austerity to be cleansed  
    by alchemical fires  
or did i withhold a single tear, or hide a single laugh  
did i not stop and wait for the ants to cross my path  
honoring the wisdom of solomon  
did i offer any resistance to the blowing of the wind  
or seek to change the direction of any stream i was floating  
    upon  
have i not done all demanded and heeded all that was  
necessary  
why then am i delivered this torturous burden  
i cannot even lift my soul which used to be as light as light  
and relief is now a dream far away in a land where my  
insomnia is barred

oh shams  
you taught me that love is eternal bliss  
but now your absence teaches me that love is pain  
please come and tell that i have misunderstood this lesson  
i am your willing student, correct me of this flaw

---

oh shams  
i have never feared your correction  
and i won't fear it now  
\*\*\*

---

9.  
they seek that which they are afraid to find  
but i'm not afraid to find (true) love  
that it may dissolve me completely  
especially my ego  
into the nothingness of reality's essence

many people when they find love  
run from it or destroy everything around it  
because they are afraid to pay love's cost  
the surrender of everything that brought them to love's door  
no desires, no needs, no things to be  
no displays or proclamations  
not even words or shams' light  
everything but love itself is worthless to love  
but after wearing clothes and costume jewelry for a lifetime  
few have the courage to walk naked through love's  
    threshold  
the light of love  
refuses to penetrate even the thinnest, most transparent  
    cloth  
and without the light of love covering your entire body  
you know not love  
even if it completely surrounds you

i am not afraid to seek  
i am not afraid to find  
i am not afraid to sustain and embrace  
to lose and search again  
to rest with, to reunite with

---

love  
the treasure of all treasures  
the light of all lights  
revealed to me by the light of my light  
that i may see to give and receive  
a bounty so huge it reduces me to insignificance  
but if i hold myself to be even the slightest measure  
the vastness of love dissipates  
or disappears

i wonder  
if i unknowingly held myself to be  
any measure in your presence  
and made the light of my light  
disappear

imagine  
if the sun disappeared  
how could anything be seen  
beyond the projections of blindness  
yet i know  
that what i see now i see not  
it is an imagining i have not the strength to subdue  
your disappearance has rendered me blind  
in the memory of sight  
yet even this is flawed  
for the past does not meet what exists now  
even if we imagine such an encounter  
what was, what is, and what will be  
never meet in reality

---

only what is is what is  
and you taught me to only deal with what is

oh shams  
why has your love brought me to this present circumstance  
and for how much longer must i be lost in the memory of  
    love  
while being blind to the present reality of love  
this confusion consumes me  
you told me the world is full of cowards  
am i one  
now that i wish to flee  
this painful episode of love  
\*\*\*

---

10.  
meet me in the mountain mist  
in the space between my tears and the cries of the heights  
where the clouds kiss the treetops with such a luscious  
    embrace  
it makes the mountains stream with flowing waters,  
    pure and rich  
even as the clouds surround me, i keep my feet planted  
firmly on the ground  
and seek the silence beyond nature's calls  
i know there is a beauty beyond this display of untouched  
    terrain  
the world is a veil and my mind its accompanying song

they say the mountains hold all the secrets of the universe  
that there are no secrets: only veils hidden in veils  
but love has nothing to hide, even as it stands fully exposed  
before ignoring eyes  
and lovers are called to follow the example of love

i looked for you in the nectar of colorful flowers  
and did not find you cuddling eggs in the nest of birds  
you were absent from the foxes' holes, no trace of you  
    in the caves of bears  
the valleys held not your footprints nor the rivers' shores  
everywhere i looked became a search in vain  
to seek but not find yet be impelled to seek further  
and after searching all the forms and places i knew  
    to search  
i turned to the mist in hope that i would find you there

---

it was you who taught me  
if i want love and want to love  
i must meet my beloved in truth  
if i wish to keep these desires pure  
but what desires can remain pure for long

it was you who taught me  
i will never see you with my eyes  
but if i watch carefully with these lying eyes  
the forms you are not, yet occupy  
i can observe how these paint the edges of who you are  
and after that must trust what is beyond the edges  
beyond observation  
but not beyond realization  
it is within such realization that i never doubt your love

it was you who taught me  
what love removes from me  
i should not seek to hold on to or pursue  
is it love that removed you from me  
and if so, will i be doomed by seeking you  
in the ether of my longing  
i still feel i belong with you

this world is crazy  
and within it many forms of insanity are deemed functional  
there must be a space within this world  
for me to be crazy enough  
to love you

---

or simply  
to love  
\*\*\*

---

11.  
this world is crazy  
and within it many forms of insanity are deemed functional  
the world is falling apart a person at a time  
so what's the point of trying to save the entire world  
the past embraces us with chains  
and we embrace such embrace while crying for freedom  
a slave to memories, others' opinions of us, others' values  
yet who we truly are remains entombed in a cocoon of  
    ignorance

if i was a fool i wouldn't care  
but your teaching and love  
has made me too wise to ignore where i stand  
the masquerades of sanity are more crazy than obvious  
    insanity  
and most intelligence is really stupid  
and most seeking is very selfish  
i can only be honest after facing the lies that were my life  
and with no lies there was nothing to hide  
then i was ready to love  
but prior to that  
i only had confused proclamations of love  
that i wore as adornment over lust  
selfishness, pain, and desires  
i was a fool dressed in reverent robes  
a mirage sustained by other fools  
looking for fool's love or someone to admire or adore  
but none of us were ready for love

---

oh shams  
it is a wonder that the light of your wisdom  
shined upon my ignorance and made it disappear  
that disappearance i embraced with tears  
that transformed into smiles of such bliss  
it is this bliss, produced by your love  
that broke open the cocoon of my ignorance  
that my (true) self, true being  
was able to emerge  
without the chains i wore when my life was false  
then fear struck  
and i was tempted to run back to the familiar sufferings  
    of ignorance  
to embrace again the cycles of cycles that render existence  
to the pains of illusion  
but your patience with me stayed the uncertainty  
your encouragement inspired my courage  
until i realized  
that if i could bear the hardships of bondage  
why not also bear the hardships of freedom  
and be free  
that in freedom, hardships dissolve to peace  
once all the embers of the false life  
have burned to fine ashes that blow away in the wind  
again nothingness  
again fulfillment  
again life remembered  
and life made complete

---

oh shams  
what wondrous grace  
that you have bestowed on me  
your light and love  
when i was a wretch not worthy of love  
but now being empty-handed and worthy  
may i never regress to the cycles of suffering  
to disown what lovers should always possess  
(love)  
but your disappearance tempts me strongly  
to be a pauper to spiritual poverty  
and seek again the distractions of insanity  
to suppress the pains of this sweet cup of love  
you are my reflection but my mirror has been lost  
and even still water doesn't show me the image of me  
because i walk without the light of my light  
\*\*\*

---

12.  
if all this before me  
is a reflection of my mind  
that externalizing beast  
what am i supposed to see  
in it

if all this before me  
is not my reflection  
why is it before me

i'm going to the toilet  
to see  
if i can throw up  
my perceptions and questions  
\*\*\*

---

13.  
is the question  
what is the purpose of my life  
oh wait,  
that question is already too selfish  
i'll start again

is the question  
what is the purpose of life  
still a relevant question

no answer  
this silence doesn't quell the confusion  
or at least it has yet to  
if such confusion is an entry point  
to understanding  
i hope to quickly progress  
to a point beyond all confusion  
and to never regress  
but it seems that is an achievement  
that has long been extinct  
in the school of human learning

they say we start in blindness  
to gain a glimpse of sight  
that we should quickly become blind to again  
that if we remain in the scope of sight too long  
our very own eyes will lead us astray  
into abominable pits of destruction and pain  
where even what is sacred can be abused and destroyed

---

but don't confuse the blindness of ignorance  
with the blind sight of wise indifference  
don't mistake indiscriminate acceptance  
with the settled reserve that is not moved by the world  
this world will hesitate not to put you in chains  
but i seek the freedom of love  
which paints its completion with virtuous restraint  
a restraint that leads to freedom



---

14.  
in the freedom of love  
and the unrestrained disclosure of honesty  
it was you who told me  
desire me not  
i do not want to be reduced  
to a figment of your imagination

the mind is a cunning device  
that will make you see while seeing not  
with how many people  
do i stand before their eyes  
yet am virtually invisible to them

it was you who told me  
wake up  
it is one thing to know  
that true life exists beyond the dreams  
but awakening lays oceans beyond knowing  
and oceans can seem to go on forever  
especially when everywhere you look  
you only see water and horizons of water  
but your light crossed the great beyonds  
with a velocity that surpassed the speed of sound  
and penetrated deeper than the meaning of all words  
you reached me  
the essence of my being  
when everyone else remained oceans away  
and now that i have been truly encountered

---

the imagined companionship and intimacy i once cherished  
with others  
has become so artificial and meaningless  
your love is my awakening  
and your light, the escort within my dream  
to bring me to the place of awakening  
that i may  
wake up  
it was you who pushed me  
beyond the edge of dreams  
to face my nightmares in my awakening  
that i may transcend this transition  
from sleep to wakefulness  
and  
wake up  
to be fully awake  
to be fully in life

but in your absence  
and the diminishing twilight of your light  
i tarry at the place  
where dreams end and wakefulness begins  
praying and fasting for your return  
that i may dwell in the light of my light  
and take repose again under the sun of the sun

oh shams  
i have discarded the imaginings of intimacy  
for true union with you  
i have left the dreams of love

---

for the reality of love's truth  
now i walk upon the waters of endless oceans  
searching for your light  
that it may lead me to you  
i will never reduce love to a dream again



---

15.  
all the beauty of the dream worlds  
amount not to the smallest sliver of the beauty of love  
those who chase the animation of this world's illusions  
they think this is life but it's not  
if they only realized  
love is one of the rare few keys  
that open the doorway to life  
there are other keys  
but shams has swore me to a vow of silence regarding them  
and that's a vow i will keep  
until silence breaks its vow and sings over the cosmic  
sound

you will always be loved by me  
because love is eternal  
and also because  
your love has brought me into love's domain  
my awareness has been changed forever  
by your luminous radiance  
when i looked into your eyes  
and saw my reflection in your pupils  
you revealed to me  
your reflection in my pupils  
and even deeper  
that i exist in you  
and you exist in me  
because we exist in we  
true unions are eternal  
it is only we who are late to discover what always is

---

because we chase illusions of time  
true unions are eternal  
because they always breathe anew in the present  
that eternal one moment that is changeless in its apparent  
    changes  
that is indivisible in its illusive distinctions  
that is whole even if we imagine experiencing it in  
    separate fractions  
true unions are eternal  
and in realizing my union with you  
i have been introduced to eternity again  
a remembrance recovered  
reality realized

oh shams  
you will always be loved by me  
because you are  
my beloved  
\*\*\*

---

16.  
oh shams  
you will always be loved by me  
because you are  
my beloved  
i cry your name  
and cry for your light  
amidst the wind howling through the summits of the  
    mountains  
but just as most of the world hears not the wind  
only sometimes its howling  
my cries go unheard  
perhaps that is just as well  
because the world is full of cowards  
who are too afraid to be brave  
but not afraid to be scared

love demands courage  
a quality not understood by most  
therefore they will not understand my cries for you

having realized the eternity of love through you  
i realize how few people  
attempted to genuinely love me  
and of those few  
none achieved except you  
but i too  
in my ignorance  
rarely sought to genuinely love others  
and loved no one

---

not even myself  
until i surrendered to you

to claim to love and then not love someone  
is a lie  
is, was, and will always be a lie  
because love is eternal  
it has no beginning or end  
even if our realization, embrace, and surrender to love  
has a beginning or ending in our selfish imagining of life  
but i have shed my selfishness to realize  
that which always is, was, and will be  
which is love  
you came into my life already loving me  
intent on showing me our eternity  
and even in your absence  
i know you still love me  
it is only i  
who struggle with accepting this expression of love



---

17.  
your absence is an expression of love  
since it is eternal  
love must be even now  
in this pain  
in this longing

it was you who taught me  
that union is an indispensable reality of love  
that the more the light of love shines on the illusion of  
the self  
the more this illusion disappears  
along with its imagined separations and distinctions  
to reveal the pervading reality of oneness  
which wise ones embrace as intimate union  
the expression of such union informed  
by measures of virtue and wise restraint  
love needs to destroy the illusion to be expressed  
within the space the illusion appears to occupy  
love refuses to be bound by the illusion  
and in releasing the illusion  
the fullness of love can be realized  
love has little to do with forms, concepts, and  
self-imaginings  
even if these become means to be introduced  
to the expansive wonder of love

but the ecstasy of love diverts me again  
as i was saying  
it was you who taught me

---

that union is an indispensable reality of love  
but where is this union in your absence  
i feel more separate from you now  
than when we were strangers  
and this is after experiencing the bliss  
that we are one  
shams and i, one  
master and disciple, one  
but these are feelings  
i love you therefore i cannot be separate from you  
because we have never been separate  
will never be separate  
are not separate now  
even in your absence our union lives  
it is my imagining that we are apart  
even as we seem apart in this illusion

some will say i am crazy to say  
that we are in union even in your absence  
what love has bonded the world cannot separate  
even as the world seeks to convince me that i'm crazy  
to live love's reality over the world's ignorance  
it is the world that is crazy  
i will not reduce myself to the world's insanity  
you are here  
even in your absence  
we remain in union although i feel so separate from you

oh shams  
i must embrace your love more deeply

---

even in your absence  
so that my feelings not overcome  
my awareness of love's reality



---

18.  
oh shams  
i return to remembrance of you  
to strengthen my fading awareness  
of love's reality  
you  
who taught me  
not to fear or avoid  
that which may at first be painful  
but comes to dwell in peace  
such is often the path  
of being born into love from the womb of ignorance  
and if after birth there are still pains  
it is because i am seeking the apparent comforts of  
    the womb  
instead of living as a child of love

oh shams  
what a horrible realization  
in a moment of complete despair regarding your absence  
i wiped my eyes to dry my tears  
and found pieces of old placenta still on my hands  
but i do not want to wash my hands  
because the placenta reminds me  
that although the womb was a place of bondage  
my painful birth into your love  
was joyous, beautiful, and liberating  
and i seek to hold on to these in your absence  
even if they are no longer real  
they are figments of the past

---

and the past no longer exists  
even if i seek to impose my imagination of it  
upon the present  
if you were here you would chastise me  
for thinking this way

you  
who taught me  
just because a thought enters my mind  
doesn't mean i need to embrace and claim it  
especially since i am not yet able  
to control what thoughts enter my mind  
but a virtuous mind embraces virtuous thoughts  
and allows unvirtuous thoughts to pass unclaimed  
but even beyond a virtuous mind  
is a more complete virtue  
which doesn't need thoughts to be  
this is the playground of love  
even the most pure and open mind  
is too small  
to play with the big kids who play there

the wise shed their minds  
when being born from the womb of ignorance  
or have it cut off  
when the umbilical cord is severed  
hopefully in a way that leaves a very small belly button

oh shams  
you would still be ashamed of me

---

i washed my hands  
but i did not use any soap  
so the stench of old placenta is still upon me  
a chosen reminder of  
joy, beauty, and liberation  
as if these need reminders  
i have forgotten you  
and forgotten my true being  
i have made myself weak in forgetfulness  
and it's convenient to blame your absence as the reason

you  
who spoke little of joy and beauty  
because joy is the twin brother of sadness  
and these two are never far apart  
you said  
since you do not wish for me to be sad  
you would not speak of joy  
but there is a peace of contentedness  
that exists beyond both  
and of beauty  
what is there to say of beauty  
that will not be discovered  
by surrendering to love  
and living love  
but you did speak of liberation  
when in bondage i lay  
giving the perception of my reality  
power over reality  
giving my fixation with what is finite

---

power over the infinite eternity  
i was so confused  
and regressed in part back to such confusion

you  
who taught me  
that the mind is a barrier to love  
but the unresolved mind is very difficult to release  
and is the root of so much bondage  
therefore to resolve the mind  
liberation is necessary -- in the mind  
but once free from bondage  
there is no need for liberation  
so be free from liberation too  
because it too is in the mind  
just as an illusion persists  
only as long as we succumb to it  
the mind we attach to only exists  
as long as there are conflicts and dilemmas before it  
but none of these are real  
even if we treat them as real  
the fullness of reality is  
beyond all illusions and minds  
and love expands beyond all comprehension  
into the infinite eternity of reality  
yet by naming it  
i have already reduced it  
to a sign pointing to the fullness it is  
but if i did not name it  
would you have the openness of being

---

to realize it without being named  
is your being such  
that it is with that which is  
and needs not  
words nor observations or explanations  
to be  
and be realized without being called

oh shams  
within your presence  
within those moments of silence  
i was that which is  
and had no needs  
i was able to be without being called  
but now, oh shams  
my thoughts leave me no space for silence  
and at times i must even speak aloud  
to calm  
this tempest of unending thoughts  
that my feelings may be acknowledged  
by calling out my despair  
i call to you  
because i have forgotten who i am  
your presence was my reminder  
but with your absence has returned my amnesia

oh shams  
please return, i beg you  
even your silent presence will restore my remembrance  
you remain more who i am than i being who you are

---

oh shams  
i know i should not be so dependent upon you  
will you forgive me if i claim to still be a student  
not the teacher of love you have groomed me to be  
\*\*\*

---

19.  
the sun of the sun taught me  
as my beginning steps upon the path of love  
to search for love  
with the deepest and fullest  
sincerity, commitment, and perseverance  
and to search for love until its depth  
fully dissolves me  
that who i am  
who i was  
who i seek to be  
no longer exist  
only the infinite eternity of love

i have tasted the eternity of love  
oh shams  
in your love for me  
but i have not surrendered completely to its infinity  
because when i look at myself  
or who i hold myself to be  
it is not all love  
is my calling for you  
my hunger for you in your absence  
part of this search for love i must continue  
or is it a residue of my selfishness  
that i have yet to resolve and release

if you were here  
i know you would answer me  
with a sustaining certainty

---

yet even this observation reveals  
that i have regressed to an imagined separation  
in place of the truth of our union  
why am i making illusions more real than truth again

before this absence overtook me  
in the presence of your love  
i was love  
i am love because love can only be in the present  
many admonishments you delivered me  
for allowing the past to interfere with the eternal present  
of love

the eternal presence of love  
but within your presence  
being only love  
you told me  
to search for love no more  
the search is only necessary  
when love is not realized  
but once realized, drop the search  
for in any search is craving  
and love needs not desires  
the infinite eternity of love is sufficient to itself  
dwell in this infinite eternity  
and be peacefully content in its grace

oh shams  
now that in your absence i am not peacefully content  
is this an indication that i should resume the search for love  
which to me means search for you

---

or is this reduction of the search  
another residue of my selfishness  
the infinite eternity of love  
which you deemed universal  
i only found in you  
so is it wise or selfish  
to seek you in order to find it again  
even you said  
rare are those who live the language of love  
a language that is not boastful  
that is eloquent in its reserve  
even if the beauty of such language is not seen  
by those who receive but don't speak it  
(this world is sustained, in part, by love)  
even you said  
those who live this language  
honor and cherish them  
never abandon them even if their ways be hard  
the roots of such hardship lay in the fact  
that we are not attuned to love  
but those who live this sacred language  
greater companions than these will be so very hard to find  
they are treasures irreplaceable  
abandon the whole world if need be  
to dwell in the love of such an one

remembering these teachings within your absence  
i can surely state: truer words have yet to be spoken  
for i have found no greater companion than you  
i abandoned the world to be with you

---

only you  
i honor and cherish you even in your absence  
but you have abandoned me  
or so it seems  
does this mean you have dishonored me and cherish me not  
or is it because i do not yet live this language in full  
that i am not afforded the same standard  
even if you have denied me what should be granted  
i will search for you and forgive you these wrongs  
just as you forgave my immense ignorance  
it was you who taught me  
forgiveness has a permanent home in love

oh shams  
in you i have found all that you taught me to search for  
and in your presence  
i dropped the search for love  
to peacefully dwell in its infinite eternity  
that your love may attune me to love  
and transform me to live the language of love completely  
and eventually join the ranks of the great companions  
but oh  
how much has diminished in your absence  
to be replaced by pains which make me regard  
the grave as a place of possible comfort  
one way or another  
this suffering must come to an end  
and i know you know  
that i prefer to be in your presence again  
❁ ❁ ❁

---

20.  
oh shams  
where are you  
why do you abandon me  
in the midst of these cowards  
and confused and ignorant beings  
with you i was content in our aloneness  
but your absence has diminished me to loneliness  
even in the midst of all i once held to be friends and family  
there is no comfort  
i cry and their words bring more tears  
i hurt and their embrace intensifies my pain  
i tell them to leave me to my loneliness  
but the compassion i extended to them in the past  
makes them ignore my pleas  
they are concerned for me  
but know no remedy to my suffering  
because only love can replace the loss of love  
and they, like most people, are ignorant of love

the room in darkness  
cannot replace the light of my light  
oh shams  
i would rather close my eyes  
than have them be open and not able to see  
yet this the world calls life

the world is grand portrait  
if you could see behind the canvas  
you would know it is not real

---

but these people are consumed  
with imagining this painting as real  
and adding their lifeforce to the colors of the canvas  
i would dare not disturb their imagining  
lest they turn their insanity on me  
but your light was so pure  
it not only cut through the canvas  
it made all the colors invisible  
my eyes have been forever changed  
baptized in your light  
i am colorblind to the imaginings of the world  
absolutely nothing appeals to me  
except love  
which i seek to dwell within again  
i will seek you until eternity ends  
even if i never find you

oh shams  
why have you left me in a world groomed to delusion  
after transforming me to seek only love  
the world was already falling apart when i was in your  
presence  
but in your absence, the torturous madness has increased  
in your presence i had patience with the world  
but in your absence  
i pray daily for the world's complete destruction  
or my peaceful removal from this world

i know this world, caught up in delusion  
is a cauldron of misery and pain

---

after being found by your love, this world is no place  
for me  
my home is where my heart is  
and my heart lives in the bliss of love

yet in your absence  
my heart has disowned its place within me  
and left me lonely among this collage of humans  
most who have never even encountered the scent of love  
let alone held its sweetness on their tongues  
or with the openness of their hearts  
they have been groomed in the spiritual disease of  
ignorance  
passed on from generation to generation to generation  
in the name of love  
what a lie  
because love never puts people in bondage  
although the road from ignorance to love  
may progress through difficult trails

oh you humans  
who were born to sing a verse in the song of love  
but have instead betrayed your purpose  
to make your lives moanings of destruction  
if you knew love  
you would not seek to comfort me into accepting its  
absence  
but instead tear your robes  
and toss your riches into blazing fires  
to cry and wail with me

---

for the disappearance of the sun of the sun  
instead you try to comfort me  
with futile efforts that only seek to distract me  
from the light of my light  
i don't even see the colors of your illusionary light  
i am blind to you  
yet you insist on disturbing my loneliness





---

i would rather cry in sobriety  
than take part in a nauseous stupor  
with people who imitate true intoxication  
simply to relate to other strangers  
who masquerade as something else  
it was you, oh shams  
who made me realize  
i have lost nothing of (true) worth  
by not pursuing the companionship of illusion  
such pretenders are caught in a web of ignorance  
that masquerades their loneliness even as it destroys  
and those who carry destruction carry death  
but love has brought me to the abode of life

oh shams  
i can't stop crying  
in my own misery i have made myself  
a prisoner to finite illusions  
if i continue to mourn your absence  
i will cause myself to fall  
into the fold of the self-destructive  
if i have not already done so  
perhaps that is why they surround me  
and now bring flutes to mock me  
with sounds that imitate calmness  
yet even in the midst of this external chaos  
my own heart chastises me  
for remaining in this pitiful state

---

oh shams  
was it not you who told me  
if not to be an instrument of love  
for what purpose does the heart exist  
was it not you who told me  
make the human heart a temple  
and this life an altar of love



---

22.  
i prostrate myself before the altar of love  
for with my head bowed to the ground  
i rediscovered my purest beauty  
in the depth of humility  
the emergence of emptiness emerged in me  
a gift received  
that i could not manifest as i am  
the more of this beauty i sought to possess  
the more i denied myself  
the truth of who i am  
is  
forgetfulness, initiative, and exertion are my faults  
if my life is an altar of love  
everything i need to do or be  
will be revealed  
everything i need to see  
will be shown  
for love always provides for those who love  
even if in the last of appropriate moments

i close my eyes  
for what benefit have i found  
in coloring the sky with my shades of grey  
my sight being colorblind  
to the passions and actions of this world  
or even if i imposed a shade of blue  
upon the blue hue of the sky  
it is all illusions  
even if a subtle illusion

---

and illusions only appear alive  
in the realm of the mind

what have i to see  
in an illusion that only deceives me  
what have i to find  
in an universe that places its nakedness right before  
my eyes  
in my ignorance i have only sought  
my desires, my ideas, my beliefs  
and others' influences and opinions of me  
i have made the smallness of me larger than the universe  
knowing this me exists more in the universe  
than the universe exists in me  
and i have made illusions  
larger and more appealing than both  
a mirage in a facade of ignorance  
that i empower to hide reality

oh shams  
i hope i did not disappoint you  
by becoming a fool again  
you have taught me better  
and even your lessons won't let me remain a fool  
instead i will remain in this prostration  
to face this little me  
that interferes with (my) absolute reality



---

23.  
my life has been diminished again  
to a state of me  
when in your presence  
the light of my light diminished me  
to turn my life over to eternity  
the universal has regressed to the personal  
the smallness of me resurrected from the death of my  
    identity  
or so it seems in this personal tragedy  
i blame the world for falling apart  
but i am the one who is falling apart  
and know no way to escape this gravity  
i am consumed again in pain

escape  
who needs to escape  
only fools  
and usually things they've done  
or attracted to themselves  
or ourselves  
since i have returned to the domain of fools  
and now include myself in my own criticism

the path of love  
the path of what  
i am on the path of forgetfulness  
even as i know what is worthy of remembrance  
i once had love but now it seems lost  
and everything in my life feels worthless

---

even life itself  
there is no escape from this despair  
there is no escape from this suffering  
why have i embraced again these unnecessary burdens

i still suffer  
for the ignorant  
our suffering is the reward of our stupidity  
on the path of love  
suffering is a means of purification  
in my confusion  
can i fulfill both sufferings simultaneously  
and be purified of my ignorance  
to return to the path of love

in our ignorance  
we choose what is less than best constantly  
and in our constant choices  
we are the bringers of our own suffering  
we are the bringers of our own destruction  
we are the roots of the weeds  
that suck our lifeforce from our lifeforce  
and bring pain upon pain into our lives  
and the lives of others

you did forewarn me  
oh shams  
that the path of love is not an escape from suffering  
and may even bring new types of suffering to courageous  
    lovers

---

the root of all suffering is ignorance  
but this toxin cannot long be tolerated  
on the path of love  
love will wring the impure through many purifying fires  
burning the scabs of scabs without hesitation  
that the scum of impurity may be completely burned away  
with the chains of suffering  
that bind us to cycles of endless pain  
but the road to freedom from unending pain  
may be very painful  
but at least this road has a peaceful destination  
and purity is a beauty enlightening to itself

i did not run away before  
but this time i see the purifying fires  
and wish to flee  
even knowing this will return me to unending cycles of  
    pain  
and more suffering than i will face  
if i bear these present pains with courage

oh shams  
i know these truths you told me  
yet hesitate to live them now  
instead of being forgetful of truth  
i should be forgetful of (my) ignorance  
and forgetful of (my) fear



---

24.  
i was once evil  
even as i masqueraded it in righteousness  
because i submitted my being to selfishness  
i used to be a coward  
veiled in superficial bravery  
because i submitted to fear  
with just these two qualities alone  
i rendered so much destruction  
even if i made my deeds seem small  
in comparison to other destructiveness  
but this is an illusion that only assuages  
those who surrender to illusion  
destruction is destruction  
and is a poison to the soul  
a danger to be avoided for the quality of what it is  
not the measured quantity of its impact

if a drop of poison is enough to kill you  
why argue about who is drinking jars of it

selfishness and fear  
with these two qualities alone  
the world has been thrown into such suffering  
but with just two qualities  
my whole life was indescribably transformed  
i cannot say all the blessings that became of me  
and came through me  
by submitting my being to  
selflessness and courage

---

it was your light that showed me  
how these were sitting upon my fingertips  
even when i was a selfish coward

despite the apparent ease of being such  
few things are harder to live than selfishness and fear  
yet i rejected what was easier and beneficial  
for reasons that never made sense

in my despair  
i am face to face with my selfishness and fear again  
yet i do not turn away from the temptation of embracing  
these  
my despair has made me blind to wisdom  
and numb to better judgement  
i am unrecognizable to the person you showed me to be  
i wade in a cocoon of sadness  
and have lost all concern for my well-being  
in my eyes i am nothing  
not even worthless dust  
i regret the day i was born  
and only break my silence to make my prayers  
i have made my prayer rug a mausoleum  
where i reiterate sacred prayers that are now dead to me  
i no longer know what these holy words mean  
because life itself now has no meaning  
all there is is despair  
and these calling idols of selfishness and fear  
i could just run and run away  
and find something to want

---

something in the abundance of distracting destruction  
that would make me feel satisfied  
even as i know that is a lie

is it not you who told me  
wherever i go, i take my mind  
and has not this despair  
made a home for itself in my ailing mind

oh shams  
in this moment  
i am too weak to protect myself from my selfishness  
and i have become too afraid to address this despair  
if there is anything you can do  
to keep me from forsaking you  
and forsaking myself  
please help  
even in your absence  
i surrender myself to you  
right now, i am a great danger to myself  
\*\*\*

---

25.  
oh shams  
my great master  
please forgive me  
i have forsaken you  
and in my rebelliousness  
veiled as despair  
i have asked you to do for me  
that which i can do for myself  
how foolish  
a student shouldn't dishonor one's teacher in such a way  
for you would not have taught me  
if you felt i was incapable of living the lessons you gave  
why have i surrendered myself to your absence  
and not the continuing presence of your teachings  
why have i surrendered myself to despair  
and not the continuing flow of love  
that even now sustains me  
why have i settled before a well without water  
when nearby rivers call me with their currents  
poor men want to be rich  
but you taught me that i can never be a pauper  
as long as i continue to give love  
and give love  
and give love  
until there is no more of me left to give  
such is the precious wealth of love

it was you who taught me  
that even if my love is rejected

---

even if abused  
or abandoned  
i am the one with the treasure  
if i continue to love  
a wealth the world cannot take from me  
not even in death  
not even in deep despair  
and how you carried such prosperity  
even in owning no possessions  
even if you were destitute in dirty rags  
you would remain the wealthiest person i know  
because you love deeply  
i would give the whole world over and over  
to have what you have  
because you have love overflowing endlessly in love

but i instead  
have tortured myself with my own doubts  
and self-centered despair  
i have made myself a victim of the glory of your love  
rendering that which is eternal to the past  
to your apparent absence  
you taught me to be naked before truth  
why have i dressed myself in despair and fear  
i must cease living the illusion of despair  
in place of the reality of love  
i must disown the inheritance of fear  
for the providence of love before me

---

oh shams  
if i destroy myself by neglecting what you taught me  
i have no one to blame but myself  
if i bring myself to my own suffering  
by forgetting (your) love  
i have no one to blame but myself  
it is not your job to stop me  
from manifesting my own harm  
or to rescue me from my own ignorance  
the only thing you had to do  
you have done  
and that is to love me  
with a love that is always forever eternal  
\*\*\*

---

26.  
oh shams  
you have given me love eternal  
yet i have put you and this love in a box  
you never said that you would be with me always  
but you promised me love eternal  
a promise that continues fulfilled  
yet i have foolishly limited these  
to my preference for your presence  
but neither you nor love are limited to such  
i must accept you and love  
even in your absence

however you and love manifest in my life  
i must humbly accept  
it is not for me to put conditions on how this should be  
or to fall into despair because you and love fulfill not my  
                  preferences  
let me burn away all preferences  
let me be without wanting or expectations  
in this way  
i can always appreciate  
your light and your love

oh light of my light  
i have forsaken you long enough  
if i will continue to forsake you  
it would be better that i never knew you  
but having tasted your love  
i would be a fool to disown it

---

by surrendering the truth of love to my ignorance  
i must live what you taught me  
i must honor what you have given me  
otherwise i was a fool to ever study under you  
and to receive your love  
in my ignorance  
in my selfishness  
in my fear  
in my self-centered preferences and desires  
i have made myself the root of my hardships  
the root of my suffering



---

27.  
in my ignorance  
i thought love would bring more people into my life  
but instead  
i am without a friend in the world in the midst of your  
absence  
even those who come to see my present suffering  
or came to witness the wonder of our communion  
when i was in your presence  
remain so very far, far away  
because they are spectators of love  
not livers of love's eternal sweetness

i would rather have one second of love with you  
instead of centuries of love's imitation  
i would rather have one millisecond of being in love  
instead of an eternity of love's spectatorship

it is me who has removed myself from them  
because i sought your love  
and your love removed me from the world  
for my own benefit  
they are to me strangers  
asking for directions to a destination  
they unknowingly stand within  
love is everywhere  
and in every moment  
and beyond all places in timelessness  
but they insist on searching for it elsewhere

---

what exists beyond everywhere  
and beyond all time  
only that which is beyond  
all perception and conception

even in this diminishing suffering  
i have blamed on your absence  
they come to offer me comfort  
but i am beyond their words  
they utter the language of selfishness  
as if to make my pain so great  
that it warrants comfort  
but has not this world been cursed by hardship  
over and over again  
who am i to think i would be exempted  
especially if i perceive your absence as a hardship

but they speak and i do not hear them  
yet upon their every word  
i am on the verge of tears  
they have become the mirror of my despair  
and i have made a home for such despair by carrying  
    sadness  
at the expense of forgetting love  
but in awakening to the awareness of such ignorance  
i realize the necessity of beneficence  
for me to embrace the depths of my present pain  
not to be comforted nor suffer needlessly  
but to release the wounds

---

to be free from the wounds that will scar me as a child  
    of pain  
how can i be a child of love if i am a child of pain  
how can a broken vase hold the nectar of life  
and offer it to others without cutting them  
or polluting the nectar with the debris of my brokenness  
pain will reduce one's soul to many broken shards  
that cut even your eyesight  
and leave you bleeding for that which you sought to see  
and things can become worse  
if you seek to touch those broken shards with bleeding  
    blindness

it is by no fault of their own that they cannot be  
    my companions  
they flow with the oceans of the world  
i am a teardrop ascending to the heavenly realms  
to shine with the sun of the sun  
which means i must evaporate into mist  
and maybe even nothingness  
to travel free throughout the celestial ethers  
to arrive before the burning sphere of your light  
i live to surrender my form to love  
they live to retain their forms which cannot receive love  
nor bear to hold or be in its presence long  
on the basis of this fundamental contrast  
i cannot share who i am with them  
or receive of the portions they offer

---

oh shams  
it was you who told me  
rare is the genuine seeker of love  
and such rarity means much aloneness  
as most humans are  
they will run from the crucible of your light  
and if they do  
we remain as far apart as light and darkness  
that only sometimes meet in degrees  
but never share intimacy



---

28.  
you have proven closer to me  
than the chains of my ignorance  
why then do i stare at those rusted shackles  
in the shadow of your light

when i allow you to be my teacher  
even in your absence  
i become a student fulfilled  
a devoted lover on the path of love's bliss

when i live the remembrance of love  
i cannot do anything against love  
may i always live this blessed remembrance  
whether in your presence or absence  
the invitation to live the remembrance of love stands  
and in the fulfillment of the invitation  
is peace and beauty unending

just as a mirror does not reflect the bounties in my heart  
i know not to expect this world  
to reflect the glory and order of love  
what love would dissolve ignorance seeks to retain  
what love deems worthless, this world often regards as  
great  
the insight of love has shown me  
that gravestones, no matter how well sculpted  
often only adore dead things in decay  
the fullness of life is beyond cemeteries  
and a world that binds itself to death

---

even if glimmers of life can be found in this world  
like the sun of the sun shining its light here and beyond

what finite words can serve as metaphors  
for that which is infinite  
for that which is love  
even as i fall apart  
i must dwell in appreciation  
not dissatisfaction and wanting  
which are bondage

yes, i am falling apart  
seeking to retain the beauty of your love  
but the more i hold to it  
the more i seem to lose it  
how foolish am i  
to seek to hold to that which is everywhere  
if it is everywhere  
all i need to do is be with it wherever i am  
there is nowhere i can be where it is not  
therefore why should i not move freely  
through life  
or even this illusionary world  
yet the promise to always be in your love  
was not a promise to dwell forever in bliss  
the changes of this world will affect me  
as long as i continue to identify with this world  
but if i surrender completely to love  
i will never be separate from love's bliss  
never

---

if i surrender completely to your love  
i will never be separate from you

how peculiar  
that i seek to separate myself  
from my separation from you  
how insane this is  
when love demands union of lovers  
i may be surprised what i find  
if i embrace union within your absence



---

29.  
you have given me a gift eternal  
yet i have reduced it to longing  
in your absence  
although you never said it  
i realize now  
that although i am alone  
i am never alone  
that when i cease to be  
who i hold myself to be  
or what others think of me  
i dwell so easily  
effortlessly  
in the union of our love  
the union of love

there is nothing i can do to earn your love  
there is nothing i can do to love  
it calls for total surrender  
to receive it  
to be a vessel of its giving  
my whole orientation of life  
is completely transformed  
when i honor the humility  
that placed me before love's eternity

i am in you  
and you in me  
and we in we  
(in love)

---

what love bonds in union  
not even ignorance separates  
even if we humans separate ourselves  
from those we are bonded to in love  
(what does that say about us humans)  
but i will not betray myself  
by betraying you  
or betraying love  
the covenant that binds us in oneness  
is life  
all else is a wanting illusion

let the world betray itself thousands of times over  
let the world betray me thousands more  
i will remain true to us  
i will remain true to you  
i will remain true to myself

in my forgetfulness  
i brought such suffering upon myself  
by reducing myself to less than ignorance  
but in remembrance, any pain i encounter  
only purifies and expands and deepens  
my embrace of love  
my embrace of you  
my embrace of myself

i am who i am  
because after humbling myself  
before the sun of the sun

---

the light of my light has dawned on me  
an eternal dawn  
that forever calls me to rise  
and live the prayers of love  
☼☼☼

---

30.  
the light of my light has dawned on me  
how blind i have been  
the light of my light is my light  
that not only shines upon me  
but also emits from within me  
i have become so caught up in receiving your love  
i neglected the love that emanates from me  
love makes no such distinctions  
because those who honor and surrender to love  
effortlessly give and receive  
love  
and so much more  
they cannot refrain from giving and receiving  
what love places in their lives  
even if they are abused and betrayed  
lovers are lovers  
and will always love  
and surrender to love

i have been seeking you  
for the light you shine upon me  
when that very same light  
already shines within  
how else could you say  
that i am in you and you in me  
although you have said that countless times  
it is as if i have heard it now  
for the very first time  
you told me from the beginning

---

that i am in you and you in me  
but i did not fully understand  
enamored in receiving your love  
but now, dwelling in your absence  
challenged to embrace this seeming void  
i finally dropped all  
and surrendered completely to love  
no longer restraining the flow of love within me  
i gave forth my love to you  
even in your absence  
and this filled the void  
and in giving i see  
i am in you  
and you are in me  
the light of my light shining  
from within and beyond

i am in you  
and you in me  
oh how foolish of me  
to suffer the illusion of your absence  
when by and through love  
you are already in me  
forgetful of love  
i have been looking for myself in you  
when you have been within me all along  
when you have been me all along  
i already am what i have been searching for  
but in my ignorance  
i covered truth with deluding things

---

love annihilated us into each other long ago  
even before we met  
in fact, our so-called meeting  
was only a sign in illusion  
reality timelessly proclaims  
we are always one  
indivisible oneness

why have i been looking for myself  
even as i am myself  
the question is irrelevant  
in this eternal moment of love's redemption  
you are not separate from me  
nor i separate from you  
we are always one  
we are always love  
i am shams  
and shams is me  
forget the veils and their dance of illusive separation  
forget my identification with the distinctions of our oneness  
love washes over oceans of forms to be an ocean of love  
i am who i am  
who is you  
who is we  
there is no need to feel absent from (our) reality  
there is no need to search for you or for me  
only surrender to love and be  
the life of love's everlasting being

---

i will not long for you in your absence  
but instead  
dwell within the presence of you within me  
which is me  
i will sing praises of myself  
to sing praises to you  
i have become too forgetful  
of our eternal oneness  
which subsides not the slightest  
in these apparent passing moments of time  
love is the eternal one moment  
therein our union always is

no one can ever take you from me  
just as i can never be taken from myself  
but if i identify as just a wave  
and not the ocean of love  
we will seem to be eternities apart  
even if you are in me  
even if you are me  
will i forget the ocean you showed me to be  
and imagine the hardship of your absence  
while within the bliss of our eternal presence  
let me not be such a fool to myself  
and the wondrous beautiful grace of love  
☼☼☼

---

31.  
oh the beauty of love  
it is the same as we  
as i am the same as you  
and you, the same as me  
our essence speaks our oneness  
and i hear it now forever  
there is nothing for me to look for  
when i am who i am

it is you who taught me  
it is not enough to know truth  
but to live truth  
even if such living leads me to the grave  
if i surrender myself to love  
to the humble extent of your surrender  
in our surrender  
i too will realize  
i am the sun of the sun

these thoughts are not my thoughts  
i ascribe them to your surrender  
these words are not my words  
i refuse to sign my name to them  
i stumbled upon meeting you  
when we were in each other all along  
and in the humility of your awareness  
you laid the path for my living  
that from ignorance

---

i may return to the abode of life  
which radiates in the eternity of love

although there is nothing to prove in love  
let the student prove worthy of the master's grace  
let me not miss a single prayer  
let me not withhold a single prostration  
let me read the sacred books over and over again  
until i have finally heard all the words  
in everything i examine and engage and encounter  
to make the breath and breadth of my life  
a living testament  
of that which makes the sacred books sacred  
everything for me is a testimony  
of the eternal eternity of love  
and love for me is everything  
i have been baptized into the glory  
of only seeing love

although there is nothing to prove in love  
let me prove worthy of your grace  
and surrender my forms to the light of my light  
and then, when dwelling within such penetrating light  
even surrender my surrender  
to just be in love  
to just be love  
to just be  
not by my will, but by love's reality  
even if such breaks the hold of my apparent forms  
the vase that breaks holds not to its beauty

---

yet to reduce its beauty to its form is a mistake  
it was beautiful long before it occupied a form  
before it was a clump shaped in the sculptor's hands  
or blown into dust from nothingness  
or realized as a thought in creation's imagination  
and that same vase is still beautiful  
even if its beauty is not bound to its broken form  
let me be that vase that breaks  
and yet holds not to its beauty  
for if i come to love without beauty  
it will seek to fill me with all its endless beauty  
so that regardless if i walk with forms or not  
my beauty cannot be denied  
just as you are to me eternally beautiful  
whether you grace me with your presence  
or disappear to appear absent

it was you who taught me  
a mystic is born many times in one lifetime  
yet this doesn't reduce the pain  
of being expelled from another womb  
yet i should not hasten my impatience  
in wanting to be fully born into the eternity of love  
each birth is a treasure  
beholding its own order and purpose  
i would be wise to honor these in each birth  
and the path of life each birth points to



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32.  
oh shams  
how can i say that i have genuinely learned what you  
    taught me  
if i don't surrender myself completely, unendingly  
to the eternity of love  
let me be thrown into the fire  
let me be burned, let me be cooled  
let me be expelled from another womb  
let me be shaped as unresisting clay  
within the sculptor's hands  
let me be met, let me reside in union  
let me be abandoned and betrayed  
let me be lost that i may find and be found  
let me be called or thrust into apparent loneliness  
let me laugh, let me cry, let me smile  
let me pray or meet peace in silence  
let me be humble but not afraid  
let me be wise but without cowardice  
let me chant the names of love within the tombs of  
    uncertainty  
let me lose to gain what cannot be given  
let me be placed face to face with my selfishness  
let me suffer the fruits of my ignorance and hypocrisy  
let me be ashamed, let me be corrected  
let me be blind until i open my eyes to what is in plain sight  
let me be thrust between loss and abundance  
until i realize that which can never be gained or taken away  
let me taste the richness of life  
let me drink from the cup of tragedy

---

let me drown in the rivers of persecution  
let me suffer when i need to suffer  
and be healed when i will receive the blessings of healing  
let me be confused by illusion  
let me be tortured by my own passions  
let me be tormented by horror  
and dance in the winds between safety and danger  
let me be torched by hell's fires  
until i develop a heartfelt hunger for the heavens of love  
let me be beaten by despair until i bleed hope  
let me be condemned by my own guilt  
until i wash in the waters of innocence  
let me be whatever it is i need to be  
barring i do not destroy myself or unnecessarily harm  
    others  
but whether i meet fulfillment or mistakes  
let me be whatever it is i need to be  
that will bring me to realize  
without the slightest doubt  
that i must surrender myself completely, unendingly  
to the eternity of love  
  
all else fails to meet the true measure of life  
everything else is so small when love is certainty  
all else is inconsistent to love's consistency  
and leaves me open to the affliction of evil  
all that happens to me on the journey to love's full reality  
means nothing if i don't make a complete, unending  
    surrender  
even your love for me means nothing if i don't surrender

---

completely and unendingly  
to the eternity of love



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33.

in my complete, unending surrender to love  
i abandon my finite concepts of love  
for the reality of eternity  
i will no longer place myself  
in the captivity of ignorance  
and then plead for another hand  
to remove me from the hardship i placed myself within  
although the sacred is not bound to this world  
i will not let anything in this world part me from the sacred  
i will take refuge in the proximity of what is sacred  
until what is sacred has dissolved me into sacredness  
i will be persistent without doubt  
walk with everlasting faith without pride  
abide in complete humility without fear  
abound in resolute courage without inconsistency  
i will dwell in the home of love without hatred  
and settle my heart in its peace, to transcend all conflict  
i will be the word of that which is wordless  
and proclaim love's silence

there is a path which no follower knows  
yet when love is your home  
this path becomes your journey  
it is ever pure  
where one heart radiates the truth  
that i am nothing but love  
and even this humble proclamation  
fails to capture the reality these words infer  
but will never reach

---

the full expanse of love  
dwells within what can be understood  
and beyond all understanding

there is a path which no follower knows  
that exposed the truth of my heart to me  
i am ashamed to have ever thought i had a heart of my own  
there is only one heart  
which can only be realized in the eternity of love  
i have chased fairy tales of love  
which ventured far from love's maturity  
and the selfishness of my imagination went deeper than i  
realized  
until i released everything  
to completely, unendingly surrender to love  
that eternity may take its place in my finite forms

oh shams  
i now understand  
why you never said you loved me  
even to say such words  
which point to the reality of your love for me  
feels like uttering insufficient lies  
now that i have opened my eyes  
by surrendering completely, unendingly  
to love  
no words prove adequate  
to convey the fullness of love  
and  
partial perceptions of love's fullness

---

only confuse the deluded  
like having me seek to dwell in the receipt of your love  
but not give this same indwelling love back to you  
silence is better than such inadequate words  
because when one comes to realize the fullness of love  
such an one will be moved to an unrelenting silence  
that no words or expressions can ever convey  
yet this wordlessness or inexpression  
in no way hampers the reality of love

what can i say to say what will not be said  
yet is what it is in its fullness  
within the absolute abode of silence  
within the eternity of love



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34.  
i am you  
and you are me  
such distinctions don't even exist in love's eternity  
yet your teachings challenge me  
to live this reality  
in a world that is oblivious to love

everywhere i look  
i see people surrendering in selfishness  
to illusions of separation  
they live hatred even as they cry for love  
they are curses unto themselves  
when the blessings of love pervade the universe  
yet even as they attack me  
and abuse me  
and reject love  
i must not surrender the virtues of love  
by responding to ignorance with ignorance

love is my way  
there is no other way for me  
because love would have it no other way

i am a child of love  
there is no greater parent  
even if i remain an abandoned orphan to this world  
even if death claims me  
my parent is my life  
my devotion my breathless breath

---

truth is my guide  
and surrender to love my providence

oh shams  
i have only suffered my imaginings  
for when i released the confusion of your absence  
and separation  
and all the pains i derived from such  
when i released these to suffer no more  
i realized they were not real  
and why suffer things that are not real  
when the love of reality is bliss

oh shams  
what could i ever do  
to fulfill the sense of gratitude  
i have for you  
i know your answer  
just be love  
may my obedience to this precious lesson  
be everlasting  
with deepening sincerity  
and faith increasing

oh shams  
i will to see to it  
that the whole world comes to know your name  
because you have served as my portal  
to the eternity  
of love

---

i will sign these poems  
of love's rediscovered revelation  
as being written by  
the light of my light  
the sun of the sun  
shams of tabriz



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meet in the mountain mist: still looking for shams.  
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