



in the shadow of zaid's garden

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1.
o zaid, zaid
the birds are chirping and singing in vibrant ecstasy
did you climb the trees to put catnip in their nests
again

the fortune of tellers can be told
in the obscurity of the lies they behold
linking ambiguities to a set of specific facts
is not necessarily a testament of skill
at least not the skills that lead to mystic liberation

i've ascended to the tops of totem poles
without my bottom leaving the ground
many wondrous abilities can be found
in sitting meditation

and when i twirl
and zaid twirls
and sometimes others twirl with us
the axis of the universe is bent into indescribable shapes
or sometimes breaks
or sometimes disappears completely
to leave the whole of the universe malleable to any
possibility
that doesn't require us to leave the present moment

i'm walking barefoot in zaid's garden
on the gate he carved a sign
"let even your every step

within this sacred place
be made with care and grace
lest the grass blades cut you"
and many a knick or a bruise have i earned
with a step made in forgetfulness
i have at times forgotten that i was walking
as i became lost in the immaculate beauty of the garden
separate forms devoured into oneness
effortlessly
as the adorer and the adored
existed to exist no more
to become reality
the all of all reality
even if for just a moment
a taste of eternity for even just one moment

and toward the end of this fulfilling goal
zaid took on the role of the sacred gardener
that every single act of care
for every living being in the garden
(including those without form)
be performed as a sacred prayer
that nought but love, peacefulness, humility
dutiful service, wisdom, beneficence
faith, purity, sincerity, discipline
all encompassed in the search for truth
become manna from heaven
descending through the acts of zaid
to fulfill the responsibility
of cultivating the beauty of beauty

in its most beautiful forms
that adorers such as myself
may be drawn into a submission of soul-depth admiration
so captured by the beautiful forms
that beauty is sacrificed for the union of oneness
an union that is endless even if it ends
that cultivated beauty may have its place again
in a world of separate forms, adorers, and the adored
that those who love may be loved
with and by the beloved



2.
there is a spirit who sits in the middle of the garden
no matter from which way you approach
he always makes himself seen and faces you
he welcomes all without greetings
but is moved to great offense if you seek to greet him
“do not greet me, only strangers greet each other
and my meditation is to only see you and me as one”
you can walk right by him
and he will look right through you
without saying a word or offering any form of
acknowledgment
but if you sit by him, he will meditate with you
if you sing, he will play his flute as accompaniment
if you lay down, he will offer his soft feet as a pillow
and if you start to dance, he will move with you as your
shadow
if you cry, he will dry your tears and paint your face
if you come to release your pains, he will chant words of
healing
if you seek the greater silence, he will use his merit to help
you attain it
and if you seek to die, he will offer his life as a sacrifice
whether one comes to know of the spirit’s willingness to
serve
is dependent upon how one approaches
if you approach him with doubt
you may think the spirit to be rude
if you approach him with ego
you may think him arrogant to not acknowledge you

if you approach him holding on to pain
you may think him mean and cruel
if you approach him in delusion
you may think him a fool
but if you approach him with the certainty of love
the purity of heart
the contentedness of being
in your openness
you will feel the spirit's loveforce
embrace you in complete unity
and perhaps come to understand
why he has abandoned the convention of greetings
for a deeper reality of oneness being

the sincerity of humility
illuminates a simple truth
that only the foolish make hard to accept
none of us are special beings
although we can embody special purposes
and
the assistance to fulfill these purposes
may sometimes exist in ways beyond our perceptions
and preferences
but why surrender the potential of such assistance
for the smallness of "i" and its smaller eyes
release the ego and its imprint
open your eyes to the reality of reality
that not one aspect of abundance be overlooked
by the blindness of how "i" want or supposedly need things
to be

the spirit in the middle of the garden
will never greet you
nor allow you to greet it
but rare is a greater friend to be found
than this spirit
who will serve you and others
with the fullness of the beneficence he receives
just come
to serve and be served
in the heart of the garden



3.
a caterpillar
climbed upon a sunflower at dawn
and sat upon it the whole day
as the sunflower
rose, turned, and prostrated itself again
in its daylong meditation of following the sun

and where the sunflower laid its head
the caterpillar resumed its journey to pause
where the next sunflower
would lean east to begin tomorrow's journey west
in due time the caterpillar will reach the sycamore tree
where it plans to spin its cocoon
to one day emerge as a butterfly
a journey made in the beauty of patience



4.
you cannot tell
by looking at the surface of the still pond
how deep its depths go
and if you judge it by the stillness of its waters
you would think there is no motion there
but if you become that pond
and sit in such perfect stillness
you may realize the depths of eternity
in a motion that moves beyond time
that there is a substance
that exists beyond the fodder we put up as life
seek this substance
and realize
the utter insignificance of everything else



5.

i lay fallen rose petals at the altar
as a tribute of my remembrance
of the beloved

once the union of pure ecstasy
revealed to me the beloved
there was no possible point of retrogression
never again could we be strangers
or acquaintances budding into friends
no,
only the lover and the beloved
so encompassing is such relationship
and the reality of love within such
that it could never be lesser than what it is
anything less than that could not exist
and grace be to the beloved
that it will never forsake me
as long as i do not forsake love and virtue
that i may be honored by honoring what should be honored
that i may be loved by loving and living love

zaid twirls with reckless abandon
by the thorny rosebush
unafraid
as he stretches forth his hands
to pluck petals from the buds in bloom
he spins ferociously
without regard to the thorns on the stems
eager to cut him

each time he is cut
he sings the name of a saint
and wails his hands
as blood flies into the air
to greet the earth
such has been the fate
of many noble souls who came before us
that in their efforts
to pluck beauty from our human hearts
to show us indisputable proof of our true life's purpose
seekers and servants of truth
acting in love
were cut down by the thorns we humans carry on our stems
their blood and lives spilt in innocence
because we sought to keep the beauty in our hearts
unrealized
hidden behind thorns that cut
and covered with the pollution
of human destruction, drama, and suffering

at times the pure-hearted and beneficent
will suffer for reasons not their own
but if they are pure-hearted and beneficent
they will not let suffering deter them from the realization of
beauty
be the flame that even burns under water
and in outerspace where there is no air to burn
be the rosebud that blooms even in the heart of winter
and won't wither away underneath an endless desert sun
be love, be beauty

be the lover who never tires of loving the beloved
even if the path of such love takes you through great
 suffering
stay on the road
for in the fulfillment of love
is a sacred celebration of beneficence
that i know no words to describe



6.
the wounded will always find ways
to explain why they're in pain
how much they've been wronged
how horrible is their suffering
they may even be blinded by their hurt
into a comforting-seeking helplessness
ignoring the wisdom of countless sages
who taught of the many ways
to end and be free from suffering

not by my will
my will may be too small
to honor the greater beneficence
of serving the will of truth
instead i bend my head in humble devotion
to seek the silence that guides the sincere to their guides
that the seekers of truth may be guided
to honor the providence of truth
in all that i've learned and not learned
i've realized i must remove any concept of "i"
from deciding the course of my life
even if i am allowed to enjoy the treasures of such
or must bear hardship for the sake of a greater good

the ant will travel the expanse of the earth
to search for food in the gathering season
preparing for days when there will be nothing to gather
intent to collect enough provisions to suffice
until the next season of gathering

i've grown to model my life after the ant
for a day of gathering may be just that:
one day
and how many wondrous lessons abound to be found
(and lived)
within a day's travel within the season of gathering
that my providence of wisdom and spiritual teachings
may be well stocked
and i prepared for whatever life may bring
to embrace it all within the virtues of beneficence
to be blessed and emanate blessings
even in the face of severe hardship
that even with the most intense pains
i will not succumb to a state of being wounded
that abandons or forsakes
the harvest of wisdom and spiritual teachings
for virtues are sufficient
as means to address the whole expanse of life
i will not compromise my virtues
let the roots of love's majesty
be rooted deeply in the good soil of my being
that the flowers, plants, and trees of love
not be uprooted by life's powerful storms
abounding in beauty without selfishness
serving the will of truth
that the pursuit of truth may bring me to
reality



7.
don't sacrifice the moon
in order for the sun to shine
or vice versa
they can both share the sky
in fact, they have done so many times
each has a beneficence to share
that the other concedes to
so beneficent entities may complement each other
to extend the reach of beneficence

in a corner of the garden
zaid has placed two benches
as part of a circle of flowers
one bench he has named
remind me to seek truth
the other he has named
remind me to be open to love
these two benches he placed along the circle
to proclaim
that in seeking truth
and
being a vessel of love
one has all one needs
to attain and obtain
all one needs
the clarity of truth
the providence of love
will suffice to carry one
purposefully

through the journey of life
in a way that honors
the sacredness
of life and the journey
that we may fulfill
the journey and life
in wholeness

zaid loves to meditate within the circle
twirling
to see
remind me to seek truth
and
remind me to be open to love
and he twirls and he twirls
enraptured by these beautiful reminders
and has even claimed at times
to see the presence of prophets and sages of old
sitting on the benches
conversing
as zaid continued twirling
to get a glimpse of the reality of reality
this is a dance of truth
a dance of freedom
aspiring to see the reality of reality
with the eyes of love
do not seek this as a way to escape the world
there are greater purposes within these dances
that make escapism

a meaningless word
within a magnificent song of beauty

and zaid twirls and twirls
chanting
may i be set free from bondage
may all the barriers of ignorance be removed from me
he seeks truth
knowing
he has not the eyes to see it
but instead the humility
that draws the mercy of truth
to reveal itself to him
a humble seeker
and zaid twirls and twirls
continuing to chant
may i be set free from bondage
may all the barriers of ignorance be removed from me
as he opens his entire being
without hesitation or reservation
to be completely open to love
knowing
he has not the power to be a source of love
but instead
the purity and complete openness of being
that allows love to choose
to flow through and within him
that he may become (one with) love
an indescribable blessing

with the humility to receive the revelations of truth
and with the openness to receive, give, and become love
whatever is lacking from life
can be attained and obtained
by these beautiful means



8.
a daisy
is a daisy
but how you see it
and how i see it
may differ drastically
although we are looking at
the same daisy
and call it the same thing

that is part of the beauty
of the distinction of oneness
the separate paths that lead to oneness
yet are connected
and potentially unified
if our approach is made in sacred virtues
that honor reality's pervading beneficence
call it what you want
describe it however you see fit
that matters not to me
as long as you *live* it
for it is in the living
that complete strangers are made
the best of friends
the truest family in spirit
that pure and open hearts may bond
to demonstrate the truth of love
and love truth



9.
a crying child entered the garden
and zaid chased it out
yelling
“this is no place to dump your problems
pollute the universe somewhere else”
i asked zaid
why he was taking such an extreme action
he replied
“it is more extreme
to use nature as an escape
a place sought to flee from your problems
instead of facing them
to resolve them
in the places where they were created”

nature is not a place to hide within
but a place to be revealed within
nature is not a place to escape to
but a place to approach with the purity of maturity
the resolution of growth
challenges faced and overcome
why should we arrogant humans
(even if our arrogance is blinded by pain)
bring our human-created problems
beyond our human-created spaces
disrupting the rhythms of nature
repelling its peace within its abode
such that those beings who can flee do so
and those beings that can't flee, recede their lifeforce

that they may not be tainted
(or be less tainted)
by the imprint of destruction so many humans carry
go pray
go meditate
go resonate in silence and reflect
go beyond the limited perception of blinded egos
to see the smallness of human problems
in a larger universe beholding beneficence
beholding truth
beholding love
beholding beauty
so that you may behold forgiveness
and behold courage
and heal yourself
and help others heal
to be free from problems
to be free from harm
and all that is contrary or resistant to beneficence
this is a call for celebration
and in the liberation of (true) celebration
nature welcomes you
nature embraces you
nature opens up to you
to be beheld by you
from its essence to its boundless manifestations
that you may receive and be part of
the beauty of nature

but to come to nature with anything less than beauty
is to be a toxic poison in pure water
and many things with a genuine sensibility of life
will seek to avoid you
unless a vow of mercy
bids them to bear your toxicity
this is one of the reasons why
the boundless magnificent beauty of nature
has receded in this age of human destruction
but shift the tides of these times
even if just within yourself
and the fullness of nature's beauty
will unfold to you
will unfold within you
even if drop by drop
into an expanding ocean of peace
and beauty

an elder entered the garden
distraught
saying
"i need to get away"
and zaid came without hesitation
and chased the elder away
proclaiming
"this garden is a sacred place
to realize the boundless magnificence of beauty
nothing else"

may zaid's vision for the garden be fulfilled
and may we who honor this vision
uphold this vision when we enter the sacredness of nature



10.
life is a sacred opportunity
not every seed will sprout to roots
not all roots will spread to stem
not all stems will ascend and extend to give forth branches
 or buds
not all buds will bloom
not all blooms will give forth nectar or fruits
to contribute to the continuing cycles
that culminate into the cycle of life
and even if these things are fulfilled
there is little to stop misfortune
from waging tragedy and hardship upon these things
(although the wise are wise
to seek providence, beneficence, and protection
within the little
but that is another poem)

life is a sacred opportunity
composed of smaller opportunities
coalescing into a greater sacredness
do not waste this sacred opportunity
do not let it pass unfulfilled
even in the countless smaller opportunities
we encounter moment by moment
attain your place among the wise
now
for the next moment may not come
the next moment may be too late
and why risk having your life end in ruin

or be destined to ruin
in want of opportunities you let pass
that may never come again
ignore not
waste not
the opportunities in this moment
now
the sacred possibilities
of living wisdom
now



11.
if you are willing to live
through the pleasant days
be willing to live
through the torrential rains
and violent storms
the eyes of my experiential body
may be too small
to realize what is the best of beneficence
for me
sometimes pleasant enjoyment is what is best
and sometimes suffering is what is best
(usually after we've embraced roots and causes
of suffering by our own means)
but both enjoyment and suffering
in this life
come in periods that begin to end
the purposes of such periods
are as precious jewels
that far outvalue
the beginning, existence, and termination of such periods
so seek the purpose
to fulfill the purpose
so that the purpose has no need
to seek you again
in the form of another experiential period

if i do not run from joy
i will not run from pain
just as i don't attach to the bliss of joy

i will release the pangs of pain
if i have the strength to enjoy joy
i have the means to bear pain and suffering
look to the purpose
not the blinding preferences of the ego
for selfishness will destroy even the most perfect paradise
so you tell me if it's worth living
look to the purpose
to fulfill the purpose
that with the purpose of the experience fulfilled
the experience may pass away
for there is something greater than
the experiences of joy and pain
if you have the (spiritual) courage
to be open to such
(along with faith
humility
and other beneficent virtues)



12.
in one moment of true remembrance
we can be free forever
if we would attach to anything
why not attach to this

but therein lays an obvious secret
if one moment of true remembrance
makes you free forever
there is no need to attach to it
you are already free
forever

seek that one moment of true and complete remembrance
fulfill its purpose
and be free
(just don't forget that you are free)



13.
it's a peculiar thing
that we have allowed forgetfulness
to dominate and sometimes destroy
remembrance
even the remembrance of truth

zaid proclaimed
“if i did not make it a daily habit
to tend to the garden
not even its immaculate beauty
would be enough to prevent me
from forgetting to care for it
at times”

the importance of daily practice
the importance of commitment
the importance of discipline
the importance of taking time to be reminded
and remember
for forgetfulness yields destruction
but remembrance
(zaid smiles broadly)
o, remembrance is a sacred protector
an alchemical art that turns even worthless things
into genuine, precious treasures
a transforming force that removes from virtues
that which is contrary to them
that the beauty of such virtues fulfilled
may shine unhindered

o remembrance
(zaid sang smiling)
o sweet remembrance
wear it as empowering jewels placed over the heart
that they may warm the heart
and be warmed by the open heart
protect these jewels and protect your heart
that not even a sliver of forgetfulness
may threaten them

do not surrender remembrance to forgetfulness



14.
seek those who never turn pure hearts away
and if your heart is not pure
better to seek its purity before seeking others
and may you have the honesty
to truly see
if your heart is pure
the fruits of the trees are revealing
even if some salespersons will sell you bad fruit as good

if the eyes cannot see the face
without a reflecting body
how can one see one's face
without something to reflect it
but even this question can be made irrelevant
if one sincerely walks a path of virtue
that makes one, transforms one
into a being of virtue
who can wisely walk by faith and not by sight

what one sincerely embodies
one needs not a reflection
to see (realize) its reality

if ignorance makes one blind to one's soul
how can one proceed
if one cannot see (perceive) one's own soul
all true movement happens within
the landscape of the soul
one that moves without the movement of the soul

has performed
an illusion of motion
within a state of stagnancy

i am content to live
within what is indefinable
does the flower define everything
that surrounds it
or does it not seek to deepen its roots
in that which holds it
and seek the sun
even if it means
opening up
expanding
branching out
to receive more of the sun's light
simply because it's abundant doesn't mean we should not
 seek
more and more of it
to embody and grow more beautiful
in every moment of (our) existence
that we may enjoy the sun's light
enjoy the clouds
enjoy the rain
and even enjoy our separation from the sun
in the passages of night
that we may enjoy our reunion with the sun
in each reunion
whether we define it as union or not
i am content to live

within what is indefinable
the beauty of all life may not be contained in each life
just as the beauty of all nature
is not contained in zaid's garden
but what we do see
(which we often seek to define)
can serve as reminders and inspirations
to be open to the all of beauty
we do not see
(which we often leave as indefinable)
and even if we come to see such beauty
we need not define it
merely honor and adore it
and if so moved
study it to live it and embody it
this is a treasure all beauty contains
the unburied heart is willing
it is our other components
that may seek to resist
by burying the heart
in the drama of our human-created pollution

may i live a life
that never buries my heart again
even if that means my entire life
becomes indefinable



15.
i take no credit for these words
i merely receive them
just as zaid takes no credit for his garden
he proclaims
“i am a humble caretaker
who pretends to be a gardener
i cannot make a single flower
and of those presented to me
i cannot make a single one beautiful
i cannot make them grow
i cannot make them live
but if they live
by whatever means sustain their lives
i can look to care for them
in the humble ways life grants me”

zaid and his garden
me and these words
there is nothing in who i am
(as little as i strive to be)
that creates these words
and these messages
and the lessons they behold
i am but a humble receiver and student
of these words
and these messages
and the lessons they behold
i seek to be
perfect in relaying these

perfect in living these
by being more humble
more observant
and more devoted to truth
that not even the slightest scent of me
imprints upon the fragrance of these words
that the purity of these words
reflect and embody
the purity of their source
and in deep appreciation and gratitude
i serve to care for these words
these messages
and the lessons they behold
just as zaid cares for the garden
neither of us take credit
for the beauty of what we care for
even if we allow in common conversation
others to associate these beautiful things with us



16.
seek not to serve humanity
unless you are willing to bear
the burdens of great pains
instead
seek to serve love and truth
with a pure and open heart
to let truth and love guide you
as to who you should serve
even if that ends up being humanity

in the morning mist of the garden
zaid sits to meditate
after completing his morning prayers
to meet the clarity of the rising sun
with the clarity of an open mind and heart
so that when done meditating
he may care for the garden
with the clarity of devotion
as if giving his whole being to the garden
by caring for it

zaid's care of the garden is as a vow
no, it is an unspoken vow
performed with the grace of solemn prayers
and the depth of dedication
he will allow nothing to keep him away
from the service of this duty
in part, made sacred
by his complete loyalty to it

whether it be hot or cold
or it rains or snows or storms
whether it be humid or with brisk winds
in the morning, zaid is there to tend to the garden
or when the trees give him allergies
or the rain wets the ground to muddy his toes
or the thorns cut him
or he cuts himself on the thorns
or certain plants give him rashes
or the bees sting him
or the ants crawl up his pants
or the birds drop poop on his head
or he is sick
or he is fatigued from an all-night session of remembrance
or unwanted desires arise in him
that make him not want to tend to the garden
or even when the miraculous beauty of the garden in full
bloom
causes others to freeze and adore in amazement
zaid may take a moment to be a spectator
but then returns to his duty of caring for the garden
yet even that may be an inaccurate or incomplete
description
since what others see as caring for the garden
zaid describes as something else
“i am not serving the garden
i am serving love and truth
which guide me to care for the garden”

the world is full of potential caretakers
so many that nothing in the universe need be neglected
but this potential is so much neglected
because so very few seek
to serve love and truth
but we need not convert the world
to seek the reality of this possibility
let us instead
fulfill the fullness of this possibility
within ourselves
me within me
you within you
completely serving love and truth



17.
the rambling elder
likes to sit upon a rock in the garden
and share the message of the day
with whoever passes by

today
the elder said
i have three things to tell you

one
let the lost go astray
if they are determined
to “find” their lost way
but do not help them
lest they twist your kindness
into a reason to blame you

two
i told zaid
i will not nurture the illusion of a flower

three
don't decorate the prison walls
of your ego
move beyond them
or knock them down
if you do
you may find yourself
sitting in the midst of a beautiful garden

with that
the rambling elder
smiled broadly with extended arms
and returned to silence
a silence not to be broken
by explanations or responses to questions
take what you understand
the rest let be
that is the way of ramblers



18.
i saw zaid sitting outside the garden
crying in great distress
he said
“i have been abandoned and betrayed again”
he refused to enter the garden
because he refused to carry his pain
into the presence of beauty

the faithless make such poor companions
for when they break
(and they will)
they often run
not knowing that when they are broken
there is nothing to run from
for after breaking, there are opportunities for healing
and after healing, there are opportunities for rebuilding
and in rebuilding, there are opportunities to become whole
and in wholeness, there is no breaking
but instead they run, and deny, and destroy
the faithless make such poor companions
and zaid
sometimes he overextends his compassion and concern
by seeking to care for those
who don't truly care for themselves

i deeply admire the honesty of flowers
for a carnation doesn't present itself
as anything other than a carnation
in the forthrightness of being what it is

there is no hypocrisy, no veiled facades
it is what it is
and doesn't pretend to seek to be
anything other than what it is
and in fulfilling the reality of what it is
it comes to behold beauty
there is something within all of this
for humans to learn
if we are humble enough to learn from flowers

but back to zaid
i sat with him and we talked
nothing was said that we did not already know
but knowledge will not always suffice as a protector
if we lack spiritual discernment
and fail to apply wisdom
but yes, he already knew
the false ego is a barrier to love
if love dwells not within you
you cannot share it with others -- say what you will
and yes, he already knew
if someone doesn't love you
there is no limit to the destruction
they may inflict upon you
even if in delusion they mistake their destruction
as something other than destruction
and yes, zaid already knew
the faithless usually walk in ignorance
and the ignorant have very few ways to see their souls
measuring foolishness as wisdom

flawed perceptions as clarity
making what they deem as spiritual
nothing more than their foolish, flawed imaginings
and yes, zaid already knew
very rarely will truth reveal itself to such imaginings
truth seeks humble and open hearts
neither will love approach the doors
of the polluted temples of such persons
to dwell within them
love seeks purity and faith
and if truth and love
exercise such discretion
would not the seekers of truth and love
the students of truth and love
the adorers of truth and love
be wise
to follow the example
of truth and love
and exercise such discretion
in choosing our companions
in choosing who we extend compassion and concern to
this will save us from a lot of unnecessary pain...

truth and love
share not their beneficence with everyone
although such beneficence is available to all
who genuinely seek truth and love

but where mystics encounter pain
we face it to release it

that we may be free from it and free from its stains
for in such freedom there is an abundance of truth and love
and with truth and love
we can form or find
a beloved community



19.
if the wind blows a petal off a flower
does the flower consider itself wounded

how you answer that question
says more about you
than it does about flowers
and if you ponder
why
you answered the way you did
and if you really mean it
you may discover even more



20.
seek not refuge among the wounded
seek not refuge among the foolish
seek not refuge among the ignorant
seek not refuge among the destructive
seek not refuge among hypocrites
seek not refuge among cowards
seek not refuge among the arrogant
seek not refuge among the immoral
seek not refuge among the faithless
seek not refuge among those whose hearts have been
 hardened
and on and on can go this list of descriptions
of those who do not honor truth and love

instead
let the truthful and the lovers
be as a beautiful garden
a communal space reserved
for the cultivation of beauty
accepting the graceful hands
that tend to their care
so that the truthful and the lovers
may offer their benefits
like an open flower in bloom
a tree bearing fruit
so that those who come with respect
may receive of the gifts to be shared
and hopefully share gifts of their own
to continue the cycles of beneficence

let the truthful and the lovers
form beautiful communities
sacred communities
communities that thrive in the sustenance of beneficence
so the truthful and the lovers
and those sincerely seeking truth and love
may have places to take refuge
places to grow and learn
in a human world that has still not matured
to honor truth and love



21.
there is a stillness in the garden
in the deep heart of the night
its silence is timeless
that in the collective rest of the garden
and the magic of the night visions and dreams
experienced here
is a sacred space for mystic revelation
soulful reflection
and
ascension

there are realms beyond this realm
that can be reached within this realm
keys to the great beyond
to be discovered within doorways deep within
realities that obliterate all concepts of reality
for reality has no real limits
but the poisons of destruction can destroy real opportunities
to fulfill the fullness of reality

under the midnight moon
whether it be full or new
i lay upon my back
humble
to surrender (my) awareness of (my) form
that the consciousness of (my) individuality
may dissolve into the darkness that surrounds (me)
and i be i no more
(even if temporarily)

to expand the realization of being
to be
to be beyond me
that i am yet am not i
that i am the most distant star
and yet it is so very, very far
but as close as my innermost heartbeat
that in being (oneness with) everything
between the most distant star and my innermost heartbeat
and beyond
(within and afar)
there is a diminishing identity with form
and a corresponding effortless embrace of essence
reducing form to nothing
so that the all of essence not be inhibited in any way
i am not all forms
i am the essence of all
that permeates or imprints upon all forms
in the realm of forms
there are necessary separations and distinctions
(some which can be overcome through union and sacred
community)
in the reality of essence
there is an union of oneness
which can be embodied by and expressed through form
but often is not
because we surrender to the limits of form
instead of surrendering such limits to reality

humble
i am not all forms
i am the essence of all
and in this embrace of freedom
surrender (my) form
harvesting the cultivation of living virtues
reaching the expansive expanse of beauty through sincerity
transcending the blinding mirages of illusion
beyond the reach of the chains of delusion
to bathe in the cleansing streams of forgiveness
to pour the libations of just amends with clean hands
to perform correcting acts to restore justice
(even if such acts are not realized by others)
that (my) form may be without
the pollution of wrongs committed
and pure to embrace essence
to bathe in the cleansing streams of forgiveness
to forgive others
regardless if they bathe within these sacred streams
that (my) form may be free
from the imprints of being wronged
and pure to embrace essence
for in the purity of form
is the ease of surrendering form to essence
the perfection of form
is complete surrender to essence
a perfection of essence
is the purity of form
a perfection that is very much attainable
in reality

in the perfection of form
is beauty
is truth
is love
and the beneficence of realizing
to be
essence
(the essence of all)
that essence may be
fulfilled in infinite abundance
within (my) form
and
form humbled to the will of essence
in this lays the wholeness of fulfillment
in this lays the holiness of fulfillment
and countless other blessings
that extend beyond what words can communicate
and need not be communicated
if we humbly seek reality
sincerely

there is a stillness in the garden
in the deep heart of the night
its silence is timeless
as i surrender form to be
selfless
within and beyond
this sacred space
for mystic revelation
soulful reflection

and
ascension



22.
(silence)



23.
a riddle

how can you tell a real rose
from a fake rose

an answer:
don't waste your time
with the question
seek what is genuine
by being genuine
then you will encounter
many real roses

just cherish them when you encounter them
otherwise you may want to pursue
another answer
(to the riddle)



24.
it is love that extends the reach of the garden
that the immensity of life
may be reflected in its many forms
therefore
never forsake love
nor the vessels through which it comes
although abundant, love is rare in this human world
a sacred gift to be cherished

zaid asked the singing sparrow
“how do you escape an illusion”
the sparrow turned its back to zaid
and continued to sing
zaid smiled and said
“you are right to ignore the question
it is a needless trap”

it is a needless trap
to try to escape illusion
to try to escape delusion
trying to escape these keeps you bound to them
merely seek and live truth
merely seek and embody love
and
all illusions and delusions will fade away
but
some are foolish enough
to try to escape illusion and delusion
(like trying to distinguish a fake rose from a real one)

irrelevant acts that accomplish nothing
of significance
even if illusion and delusion portray
the illusion and delusion of having escaped
that which continues to bind you
and
some are arrogant enough to think
they can do what truth and love do
arrogance and foolishness
(and egotistical blindness)
they deny the treasures of sincere humility
but many deceivers deceive themselves
and sometimes others
but not truth and love
which reserve their benefits
for the sincere walkers of humility

impurity will not last long in the presence of purity
hypocrisy cannot remain a companion of truth
a beautiful garden will not hold space for ugliness
a caring hand will uproot the weeds that seek to suck life
from the beautiful
even if the weeds wear facades of beauty
even if the time for separation calls for patience
but the responsibility of the beautiful
is to be beautiful
let the responsibilities of others be performed by others
including the deliverance of justice
and the dissolving of illusions and delusions
let the beautiful fulfill their calls to be beautiful

by sincerely humbling their beings
to truth and love

let the sincere
and the humble
be beautiful gardens
open to receive the care of the best gardeners
seek truth and love
walk the path of unending wonder
live the amazing
and be free in being



25.

i saw zaid running through the garden
with a jar of water
toward a bed of lavenders
i walked toward him to see
him placing a couple of long stemmed flowers in the jar
he said
“i accidentally cut these from their roots
just a moment ago
i pray they will grow roots again
so i may replant them with their friends
otherwise, i will tend to their care
in this jar
that their last days in this form
may extend to its fullest length”

it dawned on me
how much more beauty there would be
if we tended to our mistakes
in such a manner



26.

if you only care for a flower
to the point
where its stem extends to hold a bud
and abandon the flower
you will not see that flower bloom
in the beauty of its openness

there is something to be said
for seeing spiritual processes to their own completion
because in the completion are blessings to be realized
that will never be realized in incompleteness
no matter how much that incompleteness is perceived
to be complete
selfish delusions confuse
to craft concepts of entitlement
for the blessings of completion
from a place of incompleteness
even completion doesn't deal in terms of entitlement
you complete the task
and thus earn the jewels of completion
even if the most precious of those jewels
are only given after completion has been fulfilled
for the most precious jewel
is not something you are given
but what and who you become
by completing and fulfilling a journey of the spirit
in such completion and fulfillment
you may come to realize

beneficent aspects of the process not previously perceived
as beneficial
such as
an unheard whisper
an unseen prayer
a firm chastisement
or even a painful tearing away of illusion
in the blindness of selfishness
in the partial sight of incompleteness
these may not be seen with the clarity of completion and
fulfillment
but don't take my word for it
instead
see every spiritual process to completion and fulfillment
that you may become complete and fulfilled
to realize (for yourself)
the beauty of openness of a flower in bloom
and all such reveals



27.
there are times
when words are not enough
thoughts will not suffice
prayers fall short
there are times that call for
the purity and power of
silence
and
stillness
and it becomes too late
to find faith not already found
or to cultivate virtues not already lived with depth

it is in such moments
that i seek refuge
in the shadow of zaid's garden
even the strong should be strong enough to know
when it is wise to seek refuge
when it is wise to revitalize strength with its source
humility
all genuine strength emanates from humility
to touch the tides of spheres of oceans that envelope
themselves
complete honesty is the gatekeeper
to these inner-found realms of power

the beauty of the garden
is more than what it seems to be

yet most lack the will and strength
to manifest and become such beauty

although the rain of truth falls on all
although the reign of truth extends to all
only the truthful will receive and retain
the benefits of truth
for even if the untruthful receive these benefits
their rejection of truth
their abandonment of truth
will cause these benefits to be lost
although truth extends its hand to all
it will not remain a companion of the untruthful
and the purity of truth is such
that it draws and attracts its benefits to follow it
a bird in the hand, an invitation
these benefits will fly away before the hand can grasp it
but the truthful never have to grasp their hands
an open hand to truth that embodies truth
is as a warm inviting nest from which there is no need to
depart
but do not confuse the benefits of truth
with the supposed benefits of this world's illusions

sit in the shadow
sometimes it is good to sit outside of the light
to observe again the magnificence of light
its power, its beauty
what it reveals
its warmth, its illumination

its sustaining energy
how much do you embody (the) light
how much do you embody the countless qualities of (the)
light
even if its qualities could be counted
the full impact of just one quality is measureless
and thus countless
observe the wisdom of zaid's garden
one cared for with the purity of care
to realize and humble itself
to the countless qualities of light
reposing
in silence and stillness
with humility
and purity of truthfulness
(for the garden is what it is: a garden)
reposing
to receive (the) light
and honorably utilize the beneficence of (the) light
to render benefits of its own
such as its immaculate beauty
may these observations be kept sacredly within my
remembrance
even when i retreat
to be baptized within
inner-found spheres of oceans
or sit in the shadows of beautiful gardens
may i everlastingly repose in reality



28.
beauty
as beautiful as it may be
is only beauty
i will not make the experience of beauty
more important than
the everlasting reality
of truth and love

as much of an adorer as i am
of beauty
i will willingly sacrifice
all opportunities to experience it
to seek
truth and love
for if i seek
truth and love
even through the most horrible of horrors
once i found by
truth and love
to embrace and be embraced by these
i too will become
beautiful

seek with sincerity
that you may be found
to then become
that which has found you

(and once you become something
you don't need to seek it in others
merely deepen your embrace of it
even if such embrace
draws the company of others
who also embrace it)



29.
what in this world can replace love
what in the universe can reveal what truth reveals

there come times
in the continuous miracle of zaid's garden
when
a flower, tree, or plant
departs
its purpose in form fulfilled
its beauty no longer warranted
its life force calling for formlessness
to simply be
essence

should it come as a surprise
under the abounding care of zaid's eye
and the wise humility and surrender
of the garden's beings to beneficent will
that in fulfillment of life's destiny
for them there is no death
only the honor of embracing afterlife
in the glory and beauty of this world's life

the ceremony
usually held with the approach of dusk
the departing one walks
(yes: flowers, trees, and plants can walk)
to the pond of departures
in the western corner of the garden

secluded in silence
giving view to the horizon
as the departed one moves slowly toward its destination
the beings of the garden sing songs of praise
in harmonious whispers softer than a gentle breeze
but what human ears may not hear
knowing hearts receive in appreciation
the fulfillment of a virtuous life is worthy to be honored
but there are no songs of sadness, no expressions of
 mourning
this is not a finite end, but a transition to a new beginning
embedded with the benefits of beneficent merit attained
if new life begins this way, contemplate what it can become

the departed one moves
through a passageway of trees and bushes
that opens to the sky
to see the sun making its daily departure beyond the
 horizon
every life in this world is no more than a day
in the universe's experience of time
and time is among its least important measures
thus, the departed one
moves to greet the sun
walking on the waters of the pond of departures
its form dissipating with each step
its presence in this world rippling away
into the stillness of the pond
until eventually
there is no form left to walk

and the sun completes its descent into departure
leaving an array of amazing colors
that eventually fade to the deep dark purple of night

life needs not death to end
life can complete its own fulfillment in life's terms
form dissolving into form to become formless
like a flower in the garden disappearing overnight
or a single flower in the bush
becoming a bunch over the course of a day
life is filled and fulfilled with countless possibilities
but whatever it may be, let life be fulfilled
because
what in this world can replace love
what in the universe can reveal what truth reveals



30.
what is the point
of growing a garden
if only to adore beauty
that is pointless

zaid mentions over and over again
how much he rejects
offers from others
to help him tend to the garden
he professes
they only want to surround themselves
with beauty
and be associated
with beauty
while remaining ugly within
even if they masquerade their ugliness
or try to hide it

the flower is not born from a flower
the flower is reborn from itself
the essence manifesting itself into existence
don't confuse the source with the seed
in each day
if not each moment
the flower reincarnates itself
within the form of its many forms
living and dying countless lifetimes
within that which we call a single life
but this dance upon life and death

is not a validating bond to life and death
it is a song to remind you, remind us
to be free
from life and death
do not forget essence in the mirages of form
each manifestation of essence
being an unique opportunity
to reaffirm essence
to honor essence
to live within and beyond
the cycles of life and death
to be infinite within and beyond
this world's preoccupation with the finite
to be eternal within and beyond
the measures of time
and the limitations
of our unenlightened understandings

it is foolishly amazing
how many humans hold themselves
to be more than flowers
yet drastically lack
the courage of flowers
reducing flowers to form
and their own human lives to form
and its limitations
made into bondage within ignorance
and sometimes even celebrated (as bondage)

as zaid often says
don't ever tell me what i cannot do
instead
tell me what i must release
to do anything amazing
and with perfection
for it is not enough
to waddle and stumble
in mediocrity or incompetence
when excellence is attainable
when essence is
and continues to be
the source of life
for those who have not succumbed
to the bondage of death

but don't take my word for it
go find a garden, any garden
with living flowers
and select one to focus your concentration upon
and meditate on that flower
humbly ask it to reveal (its) essence
as a mirror to (your) essence
and if you move beyond the blindness of selfishness
you will see
reality



31.
a bunch of children came
to visit zaid in the garden
and brought him as a gift
a bouquet of cut flowers
despite the kind intentions of the children
zaid rejected their gift
saying
“knowing what i know
about gardens
i cannot accept
these murdered friends”



32.
we should all be beautiful
but we are not
the source of our ugliness
lays in our selfishness
even among hypocrites
who place alluring veils
over their egotistical destructiveness
and in their blindness
make their ugliness sacred

ugliness is never sacred
and there are never genuine justifications
for ego-based destruction

if we were all beautiful
there would be no need for gardens
no need for spaces reserved
to behold beauty
in a world that is beautiful
the world would be a beautiful garden
one of its original purposes
even then
the flowers, plants, and trees
might walk again
not only to see the beauty of the world
but be part of the beauty that moves such a world
where every sight is amazing and wonderful
in infinite abundance

even in the midst of forms
and this world's ranging limitations

don't fall for the trick
of living this life for the sake of this life
it is the opportunity of a womb
to be born into eternity
but you are the mother
and you are the developing baby
even as neither are the source of living

and in this transparent and transforming womb
in a world polluted by our selfish destruction
it can be a great blessing
to encounter a beautiful garden
where the beautiful can take refuge
but dwell not in the garden too long
it has its beauty
we are challenged to develop and realize our own (beauty)
and make our welcomed contributions
to the living presence of beauty in this world
a passing gift
a fulfilling psalm
a cultivation in search of a greater birth
that sometimes, in purity, brings the presence of the
 afterlife
into this realm of death and life
so honor may abide in harmony
with the embodiment and continuous quest for
truth and love

these are the good soil, the sunlight, and the water
that nurture precious seeds
to grow to unfold by their own accord
to manifest
beauty

i follow the wisdom of zaid
that even in all its beauty
he makes not his garden a temple
there are things to be done in temples
that call for the solitude of solemn walls
for those who live in a world
filled with so much pain and destruction
and
despite the overflowing abundance
of zaid and how he honors his heart
after tending to the garden
he makes almost daily visits to the temple
to cleanse his mind
to strengthen his soul
to encourage his heart to continue to unfold
tasks that appreciate beauty
but go beyond the cultivation of beauty
go beyond the cultivation
go beyond
reality awaits...



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