Everything is Waiting for You

Your great mistake is to act the drama as if you were alone. As if life were a progressive and cunning crime with no witness to the tiny hidden transgressions. To feel abandoned is to deny the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely, even you, at times, have felt the grand array; the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding out your solo voice. You must note the way the soap dish enables you, or the window latch grants you freedom. Alertness is the hidden discipline of familiarity. The stairs are your mentor of things to come, the doors have always been there to frighten you and invite you, and the tiny speaker in the phone is your dream-ladder to divinity.

Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the conversation. The kettle is singing even as it pours you a drink, the cooking pots have left their arrogant aloofness and seen the good in you at last. All the birds and creatures of the world are unutterably themselves. Everything is waiting for you.

Working Together

We shape our self to fit this world
and by the world are shaped again.
The visible and the invisible
working together in common cause,
to produce the miraculous.

I am thinking of the way
the intangible air
passed at speed round a shaped wing
easily holds our weight.

So may we, in this life trust
to those elements we have yet to see
or imagine, and look for the true shape of our own self, by forming it well to the great intangibles about us.

-- David Whyte
from The House of Belonging
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-- David Whyte
from Everything is Waiting for You
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The Lightest Touch

Good poetry begins with the lightest touch, a breeze arriving from nowhere, a whispered healing arrival, a word in your ear, a settling into things, then like a hand in the dark it arrests the whole body, steeling you for revelation.

In the silence that follows a great line you can feel Lazarus deep inside even the laziest, most deathly afraid part of you, lift up his hands and walk toward the light.

-- David Whyte
from *Everything is Waiting for You*
©2003 Many Rivers Press

The Opening of Eyes

That day I saw beneath dark clouds the passing light over the water and I heard the voice of the world speak out, I knew then, as I had before life is no passing memory of what has been nor the remaining pages in a great book waiting to be read. It is the opening of eyes long closed. It is the vision of far off things seen for the silence they hold. It is the heart after years of secret conversing speaking out loud in the clear air. It is Moses in the desert fallen to his knees before the lit bush. It is the man throwing away his shoes as if to enter heaven and finding himself astonished, opened at last, fallen in love with solid ground.

-- David Whyte
from *Songs for Coming Home*
©1984 Many Rivers Press

Self Portrait

It doesn't interest me if there is one God or many gods. I want to know if you belong or feel abandoned. If you know despair or can see it in others. I want to know if you are prepared to live in the world with its harsh need to change you. If you can look back with firm eyes saying this is where I stand. I want to know if you know how to melt into that fierce heat of living falling toward the center of your longing. I want to know if you are willing to live, day by day, with the consequence of love and the bitter unwanted passion of your sure defeat.

I have heard, in that fierce embrace, even the gods speak of God.

-- David Whyte
from *Fire in the Earth*
©1992 Many Rivers Press
Loaves and Fishes

This is not the age of information.

This is not the age of information.

Forget the news, and the radio, and the blurred screen.

This is the time of loaves and fishes.

People are hungry and one good word is bread for a thousand.

-- David Whyte
from The House of Belonging
©1996 Many Rivers Press

TEN YEARS LATER

When the mind is clear and the surface of the now still, now swaying water
slaps against the rolling kayak,
I find myself near darkness, paddling again to Yellow Island.

Every spring wildflowers cover the grey rocks.

Every year the sea breeze ruffles the cold and lovely pearls hidden in the center of the flowers
as if remembering them by touch alone.

A calm and lonely, trembling beauty that frightened me in youth.

Now their loneliness feels familiar, one small thing I've learned these years,
how to be alone, and at the edge of aloneness how to be found by the world.

Innocence is what we allow to be gifted back to us once we've given ourselves away.

There is one world only, the one to which we gave ourselves utterly, and to which one day we are blessed to return.

- David Whyte from The House of Belonging

This Poem Belongs to You

This poem belongs to you and is already finished,
it was begun years ago and I put it away
knowing it would come into the world in its own time.

In fact you have already read it, and closing the pages of the book,
you are now abandoning the projects of the day and putting on your shoes and coat to take a walk.

It has been long years since you felt like this.

You have remembered what I remembered, when I first began to write.

-- David Whyte
THE HOUSE OF BELONGING

I awoke
this morning
in the gold light
turning this way
and that

thinking for
a moment
it was one
day
like any other.

But
the veil had gone
from my
darkened heart
and
I thought

it must have been the quiet
candlelight
that filled my room,

it must have been
the first
easy rhythm
with which I breathed
myself to sleep,

it must have been
the prayer I said
speaking to the otherness
of the night.

And
I thought
this is the good day
you could
meet your love,

this is the black day
someone close
to you could die.

This is the day
you realize
how easily the thread
is broken
between this world
and the next

and I found myself
sitting up
in the quiet pathway
of light,

the tawny
close grained cedar
burning round
me like fire
and all the angels of this housely
heaven ascending
through the first
roof of light
the sun has made.

This is the bright home
in which I live,
this is where
I ask
my friends
to come,
this is where I want
to love all the things
it has taken me so long
to learn to love.

This is the temple
of my adult aloneness
and I belong
to that aloneness
as I belong to my life.

There is no house
like the house of belonging.