



Spiritual Poetry Meetup

Poems to take home with you

May 18, 2025

I Traveled – Jalaluddin Rumi

Flirtation – Rita Dove

I Ask My Mother to Sing – Li-Young Lee

All the Words – Suniti Namjoshi and Gillian Hanscombe

Finding a Teacher – W.S. Merwin



To join the Spiritual Poetry Meetup Group, go to

<https://www.meetup.com/Spiritual-Poetry-Meetup-International/>

For more Take-Home Poetry Packs, assorted poems, and the Intrinsic Heart blog, go to

<https://intrinsicheart.com>

I Traveled

I traveled to every city
There was none like the city of Love.

The city of Love?
I didn't know what it was.
I didn't know what I was missing.

Young and callow,
I ran from one city to another.
All I knew was a searing loneliness

I didn't give Love a thought.
I walked straight out of its honeyed fields,
and like a beast,
grazed on whatever grass I could find.

I hungered for onions and leeks,
not quail, not honey, not manna.
How could I long for what I hadn't tasted?

Among souls, I was a song alone,
a restless heart with no wings.

A flower has no tongue yet it tastes the rain.
A flower has no throat yet it drinks the rain.
So I tasted and drank the wine of kindness and laughter.
Without my knowing, without my doing,
it seeped into me.

Love called out to my soul,
come in, come close, I've built a house for you.
It won't be free of sorrow or trial.
Come anyway.

No, I said. I won't enter!
I resisted time and again.
I ripped off my clothes,
wailing in defiance.

Come or go, Love told me,
I am here, closer to you than the vein in your neck.

Then came the enchantment, toying, sweet words—
the magic of the bounding world.
Who am I not to be lured?

And who am I when Love obliterates the I
I thought I was,
drawing me from one path, leading me on another?

I could tell you,
but every time I get to this point,
the tip of my pen breaks.

- Jalaluddin Rumi -
Ghazal 1509, from Rumi's *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*,
translated from the Persian by Haleh Liza Gafori.
From *Water*, Rumi translations by Haleh Liza Gafori





Flirtation

After all, there's no need
to say anything

at first. An orange, peeled
and quartered, flares

like a tulip on a Wedgewood plate
Anything can happen.

Outside the sun
has rolled up her rug

and night strewn salt
across the sky. My heart

is humming a tune
I haven't heard in years!

Quiet's cool flesh -
let's sniff and eat it.

There are ways
to make of the moment

a topiary
so the pleasure's in

walking through.

by Rita Dove

Photo by Lisa Romerein:

[Topiary Garden, Lotusland, Santa Barbara, CA](#)



I Ask My Mother to Sing

By Li-Young Lee

She begins, and my grandmother joins her.
Mother and daughter sing like young girls.
If my father were alive, he would play
his accordion and sway like a boat.

I've never been in Peking, or the Summer Palace,
nor stood on the great Stone Boat to watch
the rain begin on Kuen Ming Lake, the picnickers
running away in the grass.

But I love to hear it sung;
how the waterlilies fill with rain until
they overturn, spilling water into water,
then rock back, and fill with more.

Both women have begun to cry.
But neither stops her song.



Photos by Kiara Gallop, from her travel blog,
[Gallop Around the Globe](#)

All the Words

by Suniti Namjoshi and Gillian Hanscombe

All the words have leaped into air like the cards
in Alice, like birds flying, forming, re-
forming, swerving and rising, and each word
says it is love. The cat says it is love.
It says, 'I am and I love.' And the fawn
in the forest who lost his name, he eats
from your hand. He tells you, 'My name is love.'
And all the White Knight's baggage rattles, and cries
it is love. And even the tiger-lily, even the rose
say only that they are themselves. And they say
they are love. All the little words say
they are love, the space in between, the link
and logic of love. And I can make no headway
in this heady grammar, and suddenly
and here, you are, I am, and we love.



Photo: Seaman with cats, c 1910

[From the Australian National Maritime Museum's Samuel J. Hood Studio collection.](#)

FINDING A TEACHER

In the woods I came on an old friend fishing
and I asked him a question
and he said Wait

fish were rising in the deep stream
but his line was not stirring
but I waited
it was a question about the sun

about my two eyes
my ears my mouth
my heart the earth with its four seasons
my feet where I was standing
where I was going

it slipped through my hands
as though it were water
into the river
it flowed under the trees
it sank under hulls far away
and was gone without me
then where I stood night fell

I no longer knew what to ask
I could tell that his line had no hook
I understood that I was to stay and eat with him

- W.S. Merwin

From *Migration: New and Selected Poems* (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2005), pp. 206-207
<https://merwinconservancy.org/poems/finding-a-teacher-by-w-s-merwin/>