



Spiritual Poetry Meetup

Poems to take home with you

September 20, 2026

Romanesque Arches – Tomas Transtömer

*Temple Bell / Spirit of the Heart / Meditating at Midnight –
Matsuo Bashō / Kojijū / Zhou Xuanjing*

Listening – William Stafford

Climbing the Golden Mountain – Michael Kiesow Moore

That Hidden Ground – Thomas Merton

Fire - Judy Brown

Packing Up for Paradise - James Broughton



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>

Romanesque Arches



Inside the huge Romanesque church the tourists jostled in the half darkness.

vault gaped behind vault, no complete view.

A few candle flames flickered.

An angel with no face embraced me

and whispered through my whole body:

"Don't be ashamed of being human, be proud!

Inside you vault opens behind vault endlessly.

You will never be complete, that's how it's meant to be."

Blind with tears

I was pushed out on the sun-seething piazza

together with Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. Tanaka, and Signora Sabatini,

and inside each of them vault opened behind vault endlessly.

~ Tomas Tranströmer
from *The Half-Finished Heaven*
translated by Robert Bly

Photo by Steve Gardner on Flickr, Lisbon Cathedral



The Temple Bell

The temple bell stops
but the sound keeps coming
out of the flowers

–Matsuo Bashō –
(translated by Robert Bly)

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## **On the Spirit of the Heart as Moon-Disk**

Merely to know  
The Flawless Moon dwells pure  
In the human heart  
Is to find the Darkness of the night  
Vanished under clearing skies.

– Kojijū –  
(translated by Edwin A. Cranston)

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Meditating at Midnight

Meditating at midnight,
Meditating at noon,
A mind like autumn
Comes to the Way's deep heart.
Under motionless waves,
Fish and dragons freely leap.
In the sky without limits,
Only the moonlight stays.

– Zhou Xuanjing –
(translated by Jane Hirshfield)

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My father could hear a little animal step,  
or a moth in the dark against the screen,  
and every far sound called the listening out  
into places where the rest of us had never been.

More spoke to him from the soft wild night  
than came to our porch for us on the wind;  
we would watch him look up and his face go keen  
till the walls of the world flared, widened.

My father heard so much that we still stand  
inviting the quiet by turning the face,  
waiting for a time when something in the night  
will touch us too from that other place.

*William Stafford*

"Listening"

from *West of Your City*

Talisman Press, 1960



## Climbing the Golden Mountain

*Silence is the golden mountain.*

-Jack Kerouac

Listen. Turn  
everything  
off. When  
the noise  
of our lives  
drifts away,  
when the chatter of  
our minds  
sinks into  
that perfect  
lake of nothing,  
then, oh  
then we can  
apprehend  
that golden mountain,  
always there,  
waiting for  
us to be  
still enough  
to hear it.

- Michael Kiesow Moore -

from: *The Song Castle*

Photo, Golden Mountain Gaurishankar, Nepal

by [Heri Maharjan](#), [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons



The reality that is present to us and in us:

call it Being...Silence.

And the simple fact that by being attentive,

by learning to listen

(or recovering the natural capacity to listen),

we can find ourself engulfed in such happiness

that it cannot be explained:

the happiness of being at one with everything

in that hidden ground of Love

for which there can be no explanations...

May we all grow in grace and peace,

and not neglect the silence that is printed

in the center of our being.

It will not fail us.

Thomas Merton

(From a letter to Dr. Amiya Chakravarty April 13, 1967)

# *FIRE*



What makes a fire burn  
is space between the logs,  
a breathing space.  
Too much of a good thing,  
too many logs  
packed in too tight  
can douse the flames  
almost as surely  
as a pail of water would.

So building fires  
requires attention  
to the spaces in between,  
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build  
open spaces  
in the same way  
we have learned  
to pile on the logs,  
then we can come to see how  
it is fuel and absence of the fuel,  
together, that make fire possible.

We only need to lay a log  
lightly from time to time.

A fire  
grows  
simply because the space is there,  
with openings  
in which the flame,  
that knows just how it wants to burn,  
can find its way.

[Judy Brown](https://www.judysorumbrown.com/blog/breathing-space), from *The Sea Accepts All Rivers*  
<https://www.judysorumbrown.com/blog/breathing-space>  
<https://www.judysorumbrown.com/blog/keepers-of-the-flame>



### Packing Up for Paradise

Packing up for Paradise  
I shall take along no shoulds  
or mustnts or oughtas  
I shall go pretty much as I've come  
longwindy and snailfooted  
I won't be cooking up some perfection  
that can't be counted on  
I will carry my aberrations with me  
under personal effects.

Settling in to Paradise  
I will keep growing down and outward  
as much as up and at em  
I will try to be true to my natural undoing  
as of before and always  
I won't expect a tomorrow vastly niftier  
than today  
I intend just to bodhi-sit around and bask  
in my universal mind.

~ James Broughton ~

*(Packing Up For Paradise: New and Selected Poems 1946-1996)*

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