

THOUGHTAUDIO



THE PROPHET

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THE PROPHET

ALMUSTAFA, the chosen and the beloved, who was a dawn to his own day, had waited twelve years in the city of Orphalese for his ship that was to return and bear him back to the isle of his birth. In the twelfth year, on the seventh day of I-el-ool, the month of reaping, he climbed the hill outside the city walls and looked seaward, and beheld his ship coming with the mist. Then the gates of his heart flung open, and his joy flew far over the sea. He closed his eyes and prayed in the silences of his soul.

As he descended the hill, a sadness came upon him, and he thought in his heart. “How will I go in peace and without sorrow? Nay, not without a wound in the spirit will I leave this city. Long were the days of pain I have spent within its walls, and long were the nights of aloneness; and who can depart from his pain and his aloneness without regret? Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets, and too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills, and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache. It is not a garment I cast off this day, but a skin that I tear with my own hands. Nor is it a thought I leave behind me, but a heart made sweet with hunger and with thirst.

Yet I cannot linger any longer. The sea that calls all things to her calls me, and I must embark. For to stay, though the hours burn in the night, is to freeze and crystallize and be bound in a mold. Willingly I would take with me all that is here. Yet, how can I? A voice cannot carry the tongue and the lips that gave it wings. Alone it seeks the ether. Alone and without his nest will the eagle fly across the sun.”

When he reached the foot of the hill, he turned again towards the sea, and he saw his ship approaching the harbor, and upon her bow the mariners, the men of his own land. His soul cried out to them, and the prophet said, “Sons of my ancient mother, you riders of the tides, how often have you sailed in my dreams. Now you come in my awakening,

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which is my deeper dream. I am ready to go, and my eagerness with sails fully set awaits the wind. Only another breath will I breathe in this still air, only another loving look cast backward, and then I will stand among you, a seafarer among seafarers. And you, vast sea, sleeping mother, who alone are peace and freedom to the river and the stream, only another winding will this stream make, only another murmur in this glade, and then I will come to you, a boundless drop to a boundless ocean.”

THE PEOPLE GATHERING

As the prophet walked, he saw from afar men and women leaving their fields and their vineyards and hastening towards the city gates. He heard their voices calling his name, and shouting from field to field telling one another of the coming of his ship.

Then the prophet said to himself, “Will the day of parting also be the day of gathering? Can it be said that my eve was in truth my dawn? What will I give to those who has left their fields in mid-furrow, or to him who has stopped the wheel of his winepress? Will my heart become a tree laden heavy with fruit so I may gather and give to them? Will my desires flow like a fountain that I may fill their cups? Am I a harp that the hand of the mighty may touch me, or a flute that His breath may pass through me? I am a seeker of silences, and what treasure have I found in silences that I may dispense with confidence? If this is my day of harvest, in what fields have I sowed the seed, and in what unremembered seasons? If this is the hour I lift up my lantern, it is not my flame that burns therein. Empty and dark will I raise my lantern, and the guardian of the night will fill it with oil and he will light it also.”

These things he said in words. Much in his heart remained unsaid, for he could not speak his deepest secrets.

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THE ELDERS

When he entered into the city, all the people came to meet him, and they were crying out to him as with one voice. Then the elders of the city stood forth and said, “Do not yet go away from us. A noontide have you been in our twilight, and your youth has given us dreams to dream. You are no stranger among us, nor a guest, but our son and our dearly beloved. Suffer not yet our eyes to hunger for your face.”

THE PRIESTS

The priests and the priestesses said to him, “Do not let the waves of the sea separate us now, or allow the years you have spent in our midst become a memory. You have walked among us a spirit, and your shadow has been a light upon our faces. We have loved you very much, but speechless was our love, and with veils was it veiled. Yet now it cries aloud to you, and would stand revealed before you. It has always been that love does not know its own depth until the hour of separation.

Then others also came and entreated him, yet he did not answer them, but only bent his head. Those who stood near him saw his tears falling upon his breast. The prophet and the people proceeded towards the great square before the temple. There came out of the sanctuary a woman whose name was Almitra, a seeress. He looked upon her with exceeding tenderness, for she was the one who first sought and believed in him when he had been in their city for only one day.

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THE SEERESS

The seeress hailed him, saying, "Prophet of God, in quest of the uttermost, long have you searched the distances for your ship. Now your ship has come, and out of necessity, you must go back to your home. Deep is your longing for the land of your memories and the dwelling-place of your greater desires; and our love cannot bind you nor our needs hold you. Yet this we ask of you before you leave us that you speak to us and give us of your truth. We will pass your words to our children, and they to their children, and your words will not perish. In your aloneness, you have watched us during our days, and in your wakefulness, you have listened to the weeping and the laughter of our sleep. Therefore disclose us to ourselves, and tell us all that has been shown to you of that which is between birth and death."

The prophet answered, "People of Orphalese, of what can I speak except of that which is even now moving within your souls?"

CONCERNING LOVE

Then Almitra, the seeress said, "Speak to us of Love."

The prophet raised his head and looked upon the people, and a silent stillness came upon them. With a great voice the prophet said, "When love beckons you, follow it even though its ways are hard and steep. When love's wings enfold you, yield to it, even though the sword hidden among its pinions may wound you. When love speaks to you, believe in it, even though its voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden. For even as love crowns you so will it crucify you. Even as it is for your growth so is it for your pruning. Even as it ascends to your height and caresses your most tender branches that quiver in the sun, so will it descend to your roots and shake them from clinging to the earth. Like sheaves of corn, love gathers you to itself. Love threshes

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you to make you naked. Love sifts you to free you from your husks. It grinds you to whiteness. It kneads you until you are pliant. Finally, love assigns you to its sacred fire, so that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast. All these things does love do to you so you may know the secrets of your heart and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.

However, if in your fear you would seek only love's peace and love's pleasure, then it is better for you to cover your nakedness and pass out of love's threshing-floor. Then go into a world with no seasons where you will laugh, but not all of your laughter, and weep, but not all of your tears. Love gives nothing but itself and takes nothing but from itself. Love possesses not nor can it be possessed, for love is sufficient unto love.

When you love you should not say, 'God is in my heart,' but rather, 'I am in the heart of God.' Do not think you can direct the course of love, for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.

Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself. However, if you love and still need to have desires, let these be your desires:

To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.

To know the pain of too much tenderness.

To be wounded by your own understanding of love, and

To bleed willingly and joyfully.

To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving.

To rest at the noon hour and meditate on love's ecstasy.

To return home at eventide with gratitude.

And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips."

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CONCERNING MARRIAGE

Then Almitra spoke again and said, “What of Marriage, master?”

The prophet answered saying, “You were born together, and together you will be for evermore. You will be together when the white wings of death scatter your days. Aye, you will be together even in the silent memory of God. Let there be spaces in your togetherness, and let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another, but do not make a bond of love. Rather, let marriage be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other’s cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but do not eat from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other’s keeping, for only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. Stand together yet not too near, for the pillars of the temple stand apart, and the oak tree and the cypress do not grow in each other’s shadow.”

CONCERNING CHILDREN

Then a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, “Speak to us of Children.”

The prophet answered saying, “Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself. They come through you but not from you, and though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, a place, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams. You may strive to be like them, but do not seek to make them like you, for life does not go backward nor lingers with yesterday.

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You are the bows from which your children are sent forth as living arrows. The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might so that His arrows may go swift and far. Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness, for even as He loves the arrow that flies, so does He also love the bow that is stable."

CONCERNING GIVING

Then a rich man said, "Speak to us of Giving."

The prophet answered, "You give only a little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. For what are your possessions but things you keep and guard from the fear that you may need them tomorrow? What will tomorrow bring to the over-prudent dog burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city?

What is fear of need but need itself? Is not the dread of thirst when your well is full the thirst that is unquenchable? There are those who give little of their abundance and only give it for recognition they will receive. Their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.

Then there are those who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and in the bounty of life. Their coffer is never empty. There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward. There are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism. There are those who give and experience no pain in giving. Nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of the virtue they would receive. They give as the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space in yonder valley. Through the hands of these, God speaks, and from behind their eyes, He smiles upon the earth.

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It is good to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding. To the open-handed, the search for one who will receive is a greater joy than giving. Is there anything you would withhold? All you have will someday be given away. Therefore, give it away now, so that the season of giving may be yours and not your inheritors.

You often say, 'I would give, but only to the deserving.' The trees in your orchard nor the flocks in your pasture say this is not so. They give so they may live, for to withhold is to perish. Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights is worthy of everything else from you. He who deserves to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream. What greater desert will there be, than that which lies in the courage and the confidence, nay, the charity, of receiving?

Who are you that men should tear open their bosom and unveil their pride, so that you may see their worth naked and their pride unabashed? First, see that you yourself deserve to be a giver and an instrument of giving. For in truth, it is life that gives to life — while you, who deem yourself a giver, are only a witness.

You receivers – and you are all receivers – assume no weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives. Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings. For to be over-mindful of your debt is to doubt his generosity of those who have the free-hearted earth for their mother, and God for their father.”

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CONCERNING EATING AND DRINKING

Then an old man, a keeper of an inn, said, “Speak to us of Eating and Drinking.”

The prophet answered saying, “If only you could live on the fragrance of the earth, and like a plant be sustained by the light. However, since you must kill to eat, and rob the newly born of its mother’s milk to quench your thirst, then let it be an act of worship. Let your cutting board be an altar on which the pure, the plain, and the innocent of the forest are sacrificed for that which is purer and still more innocent in man.

When you kill a beast, say to him in your heart, ‘By the same power that slays you, I too am slain, and I too will be consumed. For the law that delivered you into my hand will deliver me into a mightier hand. Your blood and my blood is nothing but the sap that feeds the tree of heaven.’

When you crush an apple with your teeth, say to it in your heart, ‘Your seeds will live in my body, the buds of your tomorrow will blossom in my heart, your fragrance will be my breath, and together we will rejoice through all the seasons.’

In the autumn, when you gather the grapes of your vineyards for the winepress, say in your heart, ‘I too am a vineyard, and my fruit will be gathered for the winepress, and like new wine I will be kept in eternal vessels.’

In winter, when you draw the wine, let there be a song for each cup in your heart. Let there be in the song a remembrance for the autumn days, for the vineyard, as well as for the winepress.’

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CONCERNING WORK

THEN a ploughman said, "Speak to us of Work."

The prophet answered, saying, "You work so that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth. For to be idle is to become a stranger to the seasons, and to step outside of life's procession that marches in majesty and proud submission towards the infinite. When you work, you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music. Which of you would be a reed, dumb and silent, when all else sings together in unison?"

You have always been told that work is a curse and labor a misfortune. Nevertheless, I say to you that when you work you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born. In keeping yourself with labor, you are in truth loving life, and to love life through labor is to be intimate with life's innermost secret.

However, if in your pain you call birth an affliction and the support of the flesh a curse written upon your brow, then I answer that nothing but the sweat of your brow will wash away that which is written.

You have also been told that life is darkness, and in your weariness, you echo what is said by the weary. I say that life is indeed darkness except when there is urge, and all urge is blind except where there is knowledge. All knowledge is vain except when there is work, and all work is empty except when there is love. When you work with love, you bind yourself to yourself, to one another, and to God.

What is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart as if your beloved were wearing that cloth. Work is to build a house with affection, as if your beloved were to dwell in that house. It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the

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harvest with joy, as if your beloved were to eat the fruit. It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit, and to know that all the blessed dead are standing about you and watching.

I have often heard you say, as if speaking in sleep, ‘He who works in marble, and finds the shape of his own soul in the stone, is nobler than he who ploughs the soil. He who seizes the rainbow to lay it on a cloth in the likeness of man, is worthier than he who makes the sandals for our feet.’

Nevertheless, I say, not in sleep, but in the overwakefulness of noontide, that the wind does not speak more sweetly to the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass. He alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter by his own loving. Work is love made visible. If you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work, sit at the gate of the temple, and take alms of those who work with joy.

For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half a person’s hunger. If you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distills a poison in the wine. If you sing as the angels, and love not the singing, you muffle the ears of others to the voices of the day and the voices of the night.”

CONCERNING JOY AND SORROW

THEN a woman said, “Speak to us of Joy and Sorrow.”

The prophet answered, “Your joy is your sorrow unmasked, and the same well from which your laughter rises is oftentimes filled with your tears. How else can it be?

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The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain. Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven? Is not the lute that soothes your spirit the very wood that was hollowed with knives? When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you will find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is also giving you joy. When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you will see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow," and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater." But I say to you, they are inseparable. Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed. Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy. Only when you are empty are you at a standstill and balanced. When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh his gold and his silver, so must your joy or your sorrow rise or fall."

CONCERNING HOUSES

THEN a mason came forth and said, "Speak to us of Houses."

And the prophet answered and said, "Build of your imaginings a retreat in the wilderness before you build a house within the city walls. For even as you have homecomings in your twilight, so too is the wanderer in you, the ever distant and alone.

Your house is your larger body. It grows in the sun and sleeps in the stillness of the night. Your house is not dreamless. Does your house not dream, and dreaming, leave the city for grove or hilltop? If I could gather your houses into my hand, and like a sower I would scatter them in forest and meadow. If the valleys were your streets, and the green paths your alleys, then you might seek one another through vineyards, and come home with the

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fragrance of the earth in your garments.

However, these things are not yet to be. In their fear, your forefathers gathered you too near together. That fear will endure a little longer. A little longer will your city walls separate your hearths from your fields.

Tell me, people of Orphalese, what do you have in these houses? What is it you guard with fastened doors? Have you peace, the quiet urge that reveals your power? Have you remembrances, the glimmering arches that span the summits of the mind? Have you beauty that leads the heart from things fashioned of wood and stone to the holy mountain? Tell me; have you these in your houses?

Or have you only comfort, and the lust for comfort, that stealthy thing that enters the house a guest, and then becomes a host, and then a master? Ay, and it becomes a tamer, and with hook and scourge makes puppets of your larger desires. Though its hands are silken, its heart is made of iron. It lulls you to sleep only to stand by your bed and jeer at the dignity of the flesh. It makes a mockery of your sound senses, and lays them in prickly thistledown like fragile vessels.

Verily the lust for comfort murders the passion of the soul, and then walks grinning in the funeral. However, you, children of space, you restless in rest, you will not be trapped nor tamed. Your house will be not an anchor but a mast. It will not be a glistening film that covers a wound, but an eyelid that guards the eye. You will not fold your wings so you may pass through doors, nor bend your heads so they do not strike against the ceiling, nor fear to breathe for fear that walls should crack and fall down.

You will not dwell in tombs made by the dead for the living. Though of magnificence and splendor, your house will not hold your secret nor shelter your longing. For that

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which is boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky, whose door is the morning mist, and whose windows are the songs and the silences of night.”

CONCERNING CLOTHES

Then the weaver said, “Speak to us of Clothes.”

The prophet answered, “Your clothes conceal much of your beauty, yet they do not hide the unbeautiful. Though you seek in garments the freedom of privacy, you may find in them a harness and a chain. If only you could meet the sun and the wind with more of your skin and less of your raiment.

For the breath of life is in the sunlight and the hand of life is in the wind. Some of you say, ‘It is the north wind who has woven the clothes we wear.’ And I say, Aye, it was the north wind, but shame was his loom, and the softening of the sinews was his thread. When his work was done he laughed in the forest.

Forget not that modesty acts as a shield against the eye of the unclean. When the unclean will be no more, what were modesty but a fetter and a fouling of the mind? Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.”

CONCERNING BUYING AND SELLING

A merchant then said, “Speak to us of Buying and Selling.”

The answered and said,” To you the earth yields her fruit, and you will not want if you know how to fill your hands. It is in exchanging the gifts of the earth that you will find abundance and be satisfied.

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Yet unless the exchange is made in love and kindly justice, it will lead some to greed and others to hunger. When in the marketplace you toilers of the sea and fields and vineyards meet the weavers and the potters and the gatherers of spices, invoke the master spirit of the earth to come into your midst and sanctify the scales and the reckoning that weighs value against value.

Suffer not the barren-handed to take part in your transactions, who would sell their words for your labor. To such men you should say, ‘Come with us to the field, or go with our brothers to the sea and cast your net, for the land and the sea will be bountiful to you as it is to us.’

If there come the singers, the dancers, and the flute players, also buy of their gifts. They too are gatherers of fruit and frankincense, and that which they bring, though fashioned of dreams, is raiment and food for your soul.

Before you leave the marketplace, see that no one has gone his way with empty hands. For the master spirit of the earth will not sleep peacefully upon the wind until the needs of the least of you are satisfied.”

CONCERNING CRIME

Then one of the judges of the city stood forth and said, “Speak to us of Crime and Punishment.”

The prophet answered, saying, “It is when your spirit goes wandering upon the wind, that you, alone and unguarded, commit a wrong to others and therefore to yourself. For that wrong committed, you must knock and wait unheeded at the gate of the blessed.

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Like the ocean is your god-self. It remains forever undefiled. Like the ether, it lifts only the winged. Even when the sun is like your god-self, it does not know the ways of the mole nor seeks it the holes of the serpent. Your god-self dwells not alone in your being. Much in you is still man, and much in you is not yet man, a shapeless pigmy that walks asleep in the mist searching for its own awakening. It is of the man in you that I now speak. For it is he and not your god-self nor the pigmy in the mist that knows crime and the punishment of crime.

Oftentimes have I heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as though he were not one of you, but a stranger to you and an intruder upon your world. However, I say that even as the holy and the righteous cannot rise beyond the highest which is in each one of you, so the wicked and the weak cannot fall lower than the lowest, which is in you also. As a single leaf cannot turn yellow except with the silent knowledge of the whole tree, so the wrongdoer cannot do wrong without the hidden will of all of you. Like a procession, you walk together towards your god-self. You are the way and the wayfarers. When one of you falls down, he falls for those behind him, a caution against the stumbling stone. Aye, and he falls for those ahead of him, who, though faster and surer of foot, yet did not remove the stumbling stone.

Also, remember this, though the words lie heavy upon your hearts. The murdered is not unaccountable for his own murder, and the robbed is not blameless in being robbed. The righteous is not innocent of the deeds of the wicked, and the white-handed is not clean in the doings of the felon. Yea, the guilty is oftentimes the victim of the injured, and still more often the condemned is the burden bearer for the guiltless and un-blamed. You cannot separate the just from the unjust and the good from the wicked, for they stand together before the face of the sun even as the black thread and the white are woven

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together. When the black thread breaks, the weaver will look into the whole cloth, and he will also examine the loom.

If any of you bring to judgment the unfaithful wife, let him also weigh the heart of her husband in scales, and measure his soul with measurements. Let him who would lash the offender look to the spirit of the offended. If any of you would punish in the name of righteousness and lay the axe to the evil tree, let him see to its roots. Verily he will find the roots of the good and the bad, the fruitful and the fruitless, all entwined together in the silent heart of the earth.

You judges who are just. What judgment do you pronounce upon him who though honest in the flesh yet is a thief in spirit? What penalty do you lay upon him who slays in the flesh yet is himself slain in the spirit? How do you prosecute him who in action is a deceiver and an oppressor? Yet who is also aggrieved and outraged? How will you punish those whose remorse is already greater than their misdeeds? Is not remorse the justice that is administered by that very law which you are obligated to serve? Yet you cannot lay remorse upon the innocent nor lift it from the heart of the guilty. Unbidden will it call in the night, that men may wake and gaze upon themselves. You who would understand justice, how will you unless you look upon all deeds in the fullness of light? Only then will you know that the erect and the fallen are but one man standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-self and the day of his god self, and that the cornerstone of the temple is not higher than the lowest stone in its foundation.”

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CONCERNING LAWS

THEN a lawyer said, “But what of our Laws, master?”

The prophet answered, “You delight in laying down laws, yet you delight more in breaking them. Like children playing by the ocean who build sandcastles with constancy and then destroy them with laughter. While you build your sandcastles, the ocean brings more sand to the shore, and when you destroy them, the ocean laughs with you. Verily the ocean always laughs with the innocent. Yet what of those for whom life is not an ocean and manmade laws are not sandcastles, but for whom life is a rock, and the law a chisel with which they would carve it in their own likeness?

What of the cripple who hates dancers? What of the ox who loves his yoke and deems the elk and deer of the forest stray and vagrant things? What of the old serpent who cannot shed his skin, and calls all others naked and shameless? What of him who comes early to the wedding feast, and when over-fed and tired goes his way saying that all feasts are violation and all feasters lawbreakers?

What can I say of these except that they too stand in the sunlight, but with their backs to the sun? They see only their shadows, and their shadows are their laws. What is the sun to them but a caster of shadows? What is it to acknowledge the laws but to stoop down and trace their shadows upon the earth? However, you who walk facing the sun, what images drawn on the earth can hold you? You who travel with the wind, what weather vane will direct your course? What man’s law will bind you if you break your yoke but upon no man’s prison door? What laws will you fear if you dance but stumble against no man’s iron chains? Who is he that will bring you to judgment if you tear off your garment yet leave it in no man’s path? People of Orphalese, you can muffle the drum, and you can loosen the strings of the lyre, but who will command the skylark not to sing?”

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CONCERNING FREEDOM

An orator said, "Speak to us of Freedom."

The prophet answered, "At the city gate and by your fireside I have seen you prostrate yourself and worship your own freedom, just as slaves humble themselves before a tyrant and praise him even though he slays them. Aye, in the grove of the temple and in the shadow of the citadel I have seen the freest among you wear their freedom as a yoke and a handcuff. My heart bled within me, for you can only be free when even the desire of seeking freedom becomes a harness to you, and when you cease to speak of freedom as a goal and a fulfillment. You will be free indeed, when your days are without a care or your nights without a want or grief, but rather when these things girdle your life and yet you rise above them naked and unbound. How will you rise beyond your days and nights unless you break the chains which you at the dawn of your understanding have fastened around your noon hour?"

In truth, that which you call freedom is the strongest of these chains, though its links glitter in the sun and dazzle your eyes. What is it but fragments of your own self you discard so that you may become free? If it is an unjust law you would abolish, that law was written with your own hand upon your own forehead. You cannot erase it by burning your law books nor by washing the foreheads of your judges, though you pour the sea upon them. If it were a despot you would dethrone, see first that his throne erected within you is destroyed. For how can a tyrant rule the free and the proud, but for a tyranny in their own freedom and a shame in their own pride?

If it is a care you would cast off, that care has been chosen by you rather than imposed upon you. If it is a fear you would dispel, the seat of that fear is in your heart and not in the hand of the feared. Verily all things move within your being in constant half embrace, the desired and the dreaded, the repugnant, the cherished, and the pursued and that which

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you would escape. These things move within you as lights and shadows in pairs that cling. When the shadow fades and is no more, the light that lingers becomes a shadow to another light. Thus, when your freedom loses its fetters it becomes itself the fetter of a greater freedom.”

CONCERNING REASON AND PASSION

The priestess spoke again and said, “Speak to us of Reason and Passion.”

The prophet answered, saying, “Your soul is oftentimes a battlefield, upon which your reason and your judgment wage war against your passion and your appetite.

If only I could be the peacemaker in your soul, so that I could turn the discord and the rivalry of your elements into oneness and melody. How will I, unless you yourselves are also the peacemakers, nay, but also the lovers of all your elements?

Your reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul. If either your sails or your rudder is broken, you will only toss and drift, or else halt at a standstill in mid-seas. For reason, ruling alone is a confining force; and passion, unattended, is a flame that burns to its own destruction. Therefore, let your soul exalt your reason to the height of passion so that it may sing. Let it direct your passion with reason so that your passion may live through its own daily resurrection, and like the Phoenix rise above its own ashes.

Consider your judgment and your appetite as you would two loved guests in your house. Surely, you would not honor one guest above the other, for he who is more mindful of one loses the love and the faith of both. When you sit in the cool shade of the white poplars among the hills, sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows – then let your heart say in silence, ‘God rests in reason.’ When the storm comes, and when

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the mighty wind shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky – then let your heart say in awe, ‘God moves in passion.’ Since you are a breath in God’s sphere, and a leaf in God’s forest, you too should rest in reason and move in passion.”

CONCERNING PAIN

A woman spoke, saying, “Tell us of Pain.”

The prophet answered saying, “Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding. As the stone of the fruit must break so that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain. If you could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy, and you would accept the seasons of your heart, as you have always accepted the seasons that pass over your fields. You would watch with serenity through the winters of your grief.

Much of your pain is self-chosen. It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self. Therefore, trust the physician, and drink his remedy in silence and tranquility. For his hand, though heavy and hard, is guided by the tender hand of the Unseen, and the cup he brings, though it burn your lips, has been fashioned of the clay which the Potter has moistened with His own sacred tears.”

CONCERNING SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Then a man said, “Speak to us of Self-Knowledge.”

The prophet answered, saying, “Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and the nights, but your ears thirst for the sound of your heart’s knowledge. You know in words that which you have always known in thought. You would touch with your fingers

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the naked body of your dreams. It is well you should.

The hidden wellspring of your soul must rise and run murmuring to the sea. The treasure of your infinite depths would be revealed to your eyes. However, let there be no scales to weigh your unknown treasure, and do not seek the depths of your knowledge with staff or sounding line. For self is a sea boundless and measureless.

Say not, 'I have found the truth,' but rather, 'I have found a truth.' Say not, 'I have found the path of the soul.' Say rather, 'I have met the soul walking upon my path.' The soul walks upon all paths. The soul does not walk upon a line; neither does it grow like a reed. The soul unfolds itself like a lotus of countless petals."

CONCERNING TEACHING

Then a teacher said, "Speak to us of Teaching."

The prophet answered saying, "No man can reveal to you anything but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge. The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple among his followers does not give his wisdom but rather of his faith and lovingness.

If he is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind. The astronomer may speak to you of his understanding of space, but he cannot give you his understanding. The musician may sing to you of the rhythm, which is in all space, but he cannot give you the ear, which arrests the rhythm, nor the voice that echoes it. He who is versed in the science of numbers can tell you of the regions of weight and measure, but he cannot conduct you there, for the vision of one man cannot lend its wings to another man. As each one of you stands alone

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in God's knowledge, so must each one of you be alone in his knowledge of God and in his understanding of the earth."

CONCERNING FRIENDSHIP

A youth said, "Speak to us of Friendship."

The prophet answered, saying, "Your friend is your needs answered. He is your field, which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving. He is your board and your fireside, for you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace. When your friend speaks his mind you do not fear not the 'nay' in your own mind, nor do you withhold the 'aye.' When he is silent, your heart does not cease to listen to his heart. For without words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires, all expectations are born and shared with unclaimed joy. When you part from your friend, you do not grieve. For that which you love most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain.

Let there be no purpose in friendship except the deepening of the spirit. For love that seeks anything but the disclosure of its own mystery is not love but a net cast forth, and only the unprofitable is caught. Let best in you be for your friend. If he must know the ebb of your tide, let him know its flood also.

What is your friend that you only seek him with hours to kill? Seek him always with hours to live. It is his to fill your need, but not your emptiness. In the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter and sharing of pleasures. In the dew of little things, the heart finds its morning and is refreshed."

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CONCERNING TALKING

Then a scholar said, “Speak of Talking.”

The prophet answered saying, “You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts. When you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart, you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime. In most of your talking, thinking is half murdered. Thought is a bird of space, so trapped in a cage of words thought may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly.

There are those among you who seek the talkative through fear of being alone. The silence of aloneness reveals to their eyes their naked selves and is a means of escape. There are those who talk, and without knowledge or forethought reveal a truth which they themselves do not understand. There are those who have the truth within them, but they do not tell it in words. In the bosom of these, the spirit dwells in rhythmic silence.

When you meet your friend on the roadside or in the marketplace, let the spirit in you move your lips and direct your tongue. Let the voice within your voice speak to the ear of his ear. His soul will keep the truth of your heart as the taste of the wine is remembered when its color is forgotten and the vessel is no more.”

CONCERNING TIME

An astronomer said, “Master, what of Time?”

The prophet answered, “You measure time — the measureless and the immeasurable. You adjust your conduct and direct the course of your spirit according to hours and seasons. Of time, you would make a stream upon whose bank you would sit and watch its flowing.

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Yet the timeless in you is aware of life's timelessness, and knows that yesterday is but today's memory and tomorrow is today's dream. That spirit which sings and contemplates in you is still dwelling within the bounds of that first moment that scattered the stars into space. Who among you does not feel that his power to love is boundless? Yet, who does not feel that love, though boundless, and encompassed within the center of his being, does not move not from love thought to love thought or from love deeds to other love deeds? Is time not the same as love — undivided and paceless?

If in your thought you must measure time into seasons, let each season encircle all the other seasons. Let today embrace the past with remembrance and the future with longing.”

CONCERNING GOOD AND EVIL

One of the elders of the city said, “Speak to us of Good and Evil.”

The prophet answered, “Of the good in you I can speak, but not of the evil. For what is evil but good tortured by its own hunger and thirst? Verily when good is hungry it seeks food even in dark caves, and when it thirsts it drinks even of dead waters.

You are good when you are one with yourself. Yet, when you are not one with yourself you are not evil. A divided house is not a den of thieves; it is only a divided house. A ship without a rudder may wander aimlessly among perilous isles yet not sink to the bottom. You are good when you strive to give of yourself. Yet, you are not evil when you seek gain for yourself. When you strive for gain, you are but a root that clings to the earth and sucks at her breast. Surely, the fruit cannot say to the root, ‘Be like me, ripe and full

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and ever giving of your abundance.’ To the fruit giving is a need, as receiving is a need to the root.

You are good when you are fully awake in your speech. Yet, you are not evil when you sleep while your tongue staggers without purpose. Even stumbling speech may strengthen a weak tongue. You are good when you walk to your goal firmly and with bold steps. Yet, you are not evil when you go forward limping. Even those who limp do not go backward. You, who are strong and swift, see that you do not limp before the lame deeming it kindness. You are good in countless ways, and you are not evil when you are not good. You are only loitering and a sluggard. It is a pity that the stag cannot teach swiftness to the turtle.

In your longing for your giant self, lays your goodness, and that longing is in all of you. However, in some of you that longing is a torrent rushing with might to the sea, carrying the secrets of the hillsides and the songs of the forest. In others, it is a flat stream that loses itself in angles and bends, and lingers before it reaches the shore. Do not let him who longs much say to him who longs little, ‘Why are you slow and halting?’ The truly good do not ask the naked, ‘Where is your garment?’ or the houseless, ‘What has befallen your house?’”

CONCERNING PRAYER

THEN a priestess said, “Speak to us of Prayer.”

The prophet answered saying, “You pray in your distress and in your need, if you can you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance. For what is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether? If it is for your comfort to pour your darkness into space, it is also for your delight to pour forth the dawning of your

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heart. If you cannot but weep when your soul summons you to prayer, she should spur you again and yet again though weeping, until you come to laughing. When you pray, you rise in the air to meet those who are praying at that very hour, and whom except in prayer you may not meet. Therefore, let your visit to that temple be invisible for nothing except ecstasy and sweet communion. If you should enter the temple for no other purpose than asking you will not receive, and if you enter into it to humble yourself you will not be lifted. Even if you enter into it to beg for the good of others you will not be heard. It is enough that you enter the temple invisible.

I cannot teach you how to pray in words. God does not listen to your words except when He Himself utters them through your lips. I cannot teach you the prayer of the seas and the forests and the mountains. You who are born of the mountains and the forests, and the seas can find their prayer in your heart. If you listen in the stillness of the night, you will hear them saying in silence:

Our God, who art our winged self, it is you will in us that wills.

It is your desire in us that desires.

It is your urge in us that turns our nights, which are yours, into days, which are also yours.

We cannot ask you for anything, for you know our needs before they are born in us.

You are our need, and in giving us more of yourself you give us all.”

CONCERNING PLEASURE

THEN a hermit, who visited the city once a year, came forth and said, “Speak to us of Pleasure.”

The prophet answered saying, “Pleasure is a freedom-song, but it is not freedom. It is the blossoming of your desires, but it is not their fruit. It is a depth calling to a height, but it

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is not the deep or the high. It is the caged taking wing, but it is not space encompassed. Aye, in very truth, pleasure is a freedom-song. I long to have you sing it with fullness of heart, yet I would not have you lose your hearts in the singing.

Some of your youth seek pleasure as if it was all, and they are judged and rebuked. I would not judge nor rebuke them. I would have them seek for they will find pleasure, but not her alone. Seven are her sisters, and the least of them is more beautiful than pleasure. Have you not heard of the man who was digging in the earth for roots and found a treasure?

Some of your elders remember pleasures with regret like wrongs committed in drunkenness, but regret is the beclouding of the mind and not its chastisement. They should remember their pleasures with gratitude, as they would the harvest of a summer. Yet if it comforts them to regret, let them be comforted.

There are those among you who are neither too young to seek nor too old to remember. In their fear of seeking and remembering they shun all pleasures, lest they neglect the spirit or offend against it. Even in their foregoing is their pleasure. Thus, they too find a treasure though they dig for roots with quivering hands.

Tell me, who is he that can offend the spirit? Will the nightingale offend the stillness of the night, or the firefly the stars? Will your flame or your smoke burden the wind? Do you think the spirit is a still pool which you can trouble with a staff? Oftentimes in denying yourself pleasure you store the desire in the recesses of your being. Who knows that which seems omitted today, waits for tomorrow?

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Even your body knows its heritage and its rightful need, and will not be deceived.
Your body is the harp of your soul, and it is yours to bring forth sweet music from it or
confused sounds.

Now you ask in your heart, ‘How will we distinguish that which is good in pleasure from
that which is not good?’

Go to your fields and your gardens, and you will learn that it is the pleasure of the bee to
gather honey of the flower. It is also the pleasure of the flower to yield its honey to the
bee. To the bee a flower is a fountain of life, and to the flower a bee is a messenger of
love. To both, bee and flower, the giving and the receiving of pleasure is a need and an
ecstasy. People of Orphalese, be in your pleasures like the flowers and the bees.”

CONCERNING BEAUTY

A poet said, “Speak to us of Beauty.”

The prophet answered, “Where will you seek beauty, and how will you find her unless
she herself be your way and your guide? How will you speak of her except she be the
weaver of your speech?

The aggrieved and the injured say, ‘Beauty is kind and gentle. Like a young mother half-
shy of her own glory she walks among us.’

The passionate say, ‘Nay, beauty is a thing of might and dread. Like the tempest she
shakes the earth beneath us and the sky above us.’

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The tired and the weary say, 'Beauty is of soft whisperings. She speaks in our spirit. Her voice yields to our silences like a faint light that quivers in fear of the shadow.'

But the restless say, 'We have heard her shouting among the mountains, and with her cries came the sound of hoofs, and the beating of wings and the roaring of lions.'

At night the watchmen of the city say, 'Beauty will rise with the dawn from the east.'

At noontide the toilers and the wayfarers say, 'We have seen her leaning over the earth from the windows of the sunset.'

In winter say the snow-bound, 'She will come with the spring leaping upon the hills.'

In the summer heat the reapers say, 'We have seen her dancing with the autumn leaves, and we saw a drift of snow in her hair.'

All these things have you said of beauty, yet in truth, you spoke not of her but of your needs unsatisfied. Beauty is not a need but an ecstasy. It is not a mouth thirsting nor an empty hand stretched forth, but rather a heart inflamed and a soul enchanted. It is not the image you would see nor the song you would hear, but rather an image you see though you close your eyes, and a song you hear though you shut your ears. It is not the sap within the furrowed bark, nor a wing attached to a claw, but rather a garden forever in bloom and a flock of angels forever in flight.

People of Orphalese, beauty is life when life unveils her holy face. You are life and you are the veil. Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror, but you are eternity and you are the mirror."

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CONCERNING RELIGION

An old priest said, "Speak to us of Religion."

The prophet answered saying, "Have I spoken this day of anything else? Is not religion all deeds and all reflection, and that which is neither deed nor reflection, but a wonder and a surprise ever springing in the soul, even while the hands hew the stone or tend the loom? Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations? Who can spread his hours before him, saying, 'This for God and this for myself. This for my soul and this other for my body?'"

All your hours are wings that beat through space from self to self. He who wears his morality as his best garment was better naked. The wind and the sun will tear no holes in his skin. He who defines his conduct by ethics imprisons his songbird in a cage. The freest song comes not through bars and wires. He to whom worshipping is a window to open but also to shut, has not yet visited the house of his soul whose windows are from dawn to dawn. Your daily life is your temple and your religion. Whenever you enter into it take with you your all. Take the slough and the forge and the mallet and the lute, the things you have fashioned in necessity or for delight. For in reverie you cannot rise above your achievements nor fall lower than your failures.

Take with you all people. For in adoration, you cannot fly higher than their hopes nor humble yourself lower than their despair. If you know God, do not therefore be a solver of riddles. Rather look about you and you will see Him playing with your children. Look into space. You will see Him walking in the cloud, outstretching His arms in the lightning and descending in rain. You will see Him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving His hands in trees."

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CONCERNING DEATH

Then Almitra spoke, saying, “We ask you now of Death.”

The prophet answered saying, “You want to know the secret of death, but how will you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life? The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind to the day cannot unveil the mystery of light. If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide to the body of life. Life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one. In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond. Like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your heart dreams of spring. Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.

Your fear of death is but the trembling of the shepherd when he stands before the king whose hand is to lay upon him in honor. Is the shepherd not joyful beneath his trembling, that he will wear the mark of the king? Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling? For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun? What is it to cease breathing but to free the breath from its restless tides, so that it may rise and expand, and seek God unencumbered? Only when you drink from the river of silence will you indeed sing. When you have reached the mountaintop, then you will begin to climb. When the earth claims your limbs, then will you truly dance.”

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THE EVENING

Now it was evening, and Almitra the seeress said, “Blessed be this day and this place and your spirit that has spoken.”

The prophet answered, “Was it I who spoke? Was I not also a listener?”

Then he descended the steps of the Temple and all the people followed him. He reached his ship and stood upon the deck. Facing the people again, he raised his voice and said, “People of Orphalese, the wind bids me to leave you. Less hasty am I than the wind, yet I must go. We wanderers, ever seeking the lonelier way, begin no day where we have ended another day, and no sunrise finds us where sunset left us.

Even while the earth sleeps we travel. We are the seeds of the tenacious plant, and it is in our ripeness and our fullness of heart that we are given to the wind and are scattered. Brief were my days among you, and briefer still the words I have spoken. Should my voice fade in your ears, and my love vanish in your memory, then I will come again and speak with a richer heart and lips more yielding to the spirit.

Yea, I will return with the tide. Though death may hide me, and the greater silence enfold me, yet again will I seek your understanding. Not in vain will I seek. If anything I have said is truth, that truth will reveal itself in a clearer voice and in words more kin to your thoughts. I go with the wind, people of Orphalese, but not down into emptiness. If this day is not a fulfillment of your needs and my love, then let it be a promise until another day. Humanity’s needs change, but not its love, nor its desire that his love should satisfy its needs. Know, therefore, that I will return from the greater silence.

The mist that drifts away at dawn, leaving but dew in the fields, will rise and gather into a cloud and then fall down in rain, and not unlike the mist have I been. In the stillness of

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the night, I have walked in your streets, and my spirit has entered your houses. Your heartbeats were in my heart, your breath was upon my face, and I knew you all. Aye, I knew your joy and your pain, and in your sleep, your dreams were my dreams.

Oftentimes I was among you a lake among the mountains.

I mirrored the summits in you and the bending slopes, and even the passing flocks of your thoughts and your desires. To my silence came the laughter of your children in streams, and the longing of your youths in rivers. When they reached my depth, the streams and the rivers did not cease not to sing, sweeter still than laughter and greater than longing came to me.

It was the boundless in you, the vast man in whom you are all but cells and sinews; he in whose chant all your singing is but a soundless throbbing. It is in the vast man that you are vast, and in beholding him that I beheld you and loved you. For what distances can love reach that are not in that vast sphere? What visions, what expectations, and what presumptions can outsoar that flight? Like a giant oak tree covered with apple blossoms is the vast man in you. His might binds you to the earth, his fragrance lifts you into space, and in his durability, you are deathless.

You have been told that, even like a chain, you are as weak as your weakest link.

This is only half the truth. You are also as strong as your strongest link. To measure you by your smallest deed is to reckon the power of ocean by the frailty of its foam. To judge you by your failures is to cast blame upon the seasons for their inconstancy.

Ay, you are like an ocean, and though heavy-grounded ships await the tide upon your shores, yet, even like an ocean, you cannot hasten your tides. You are also like the seasons, Though in your winter you deny your spring, Yet spring, reposing within you,

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smiles in her drowsiness and is not offended.

Do not think I say these things in order that you may say the one to the other, 'He praised us well. He saw but the good in us.' I only speak to you in words which you yourselves know in thought. What is word knowledge but a shadow of wordless knowledge? Your thoughts and my words are waves from a sealed memory that keeps records of our yesterdays, and of the ancient days when the earth knew not us nor herself, and of nights when earth was wrought with confusion.

Wise men have come to you to give you their wisdom. I came to take of your wisdom. Behold I have found that which is greater than wisdom. It is a flame spirit in you ever gathering more of itself, while you, heedless of its expansion, bewail the withering of your days. It is life in quest of life, in bodies that fear the grave. There are no graves here. These mountains and plains are a cradle and a steppingstone.

Whenever you pass by the field where you have laid your ancestors look well thereupon, and you will see yourselves and your children dancing hand in hand. Verily you often make merry without knowing. Others have come to you with golden promises made to you. You did not give them faith but riches and power and glory. I have given less than a promise, and yet more generous have you been to me. You have given me my deeper thirsting after life. Surely, there is no greater gift to a man than that which turns all his aims into parching lips and all life into a fountain.

In this lies my honor and my reward, that whenever I come to the fountain to drink I find the living water itself thirsty, and it drinks me while I drink it. Some of you have deemed me proud and too shy to receive gifts. Too proud indeed am I to receive wages, but not gifts. Though I have eaten berries among the hills when you would have had me sit at your board, and slept in the portico of the temple when you would gladly have sheltered

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me. Yet it was not your loving mindfulness of my days and my nights that made food sweet to my mouth and girdled my sleep with visions?

For this, I bless you most. You give much and do not know that you give at all. Verily the kindness that gazes upon itself in a mirror turns to stone, and a good deed that calls itself by tender names becomes the parent to a curse.

Some of you have called me aloof, and drunk with my own aloneness. You have said, 'He holds council with the trees of the forest, but not with men. He sits alone on hilltops and looks down upon our city.'

It is true that I have climbed the hills and walked in remote places. How could I have seen you except from a great height or a great distance? How can one be near unless he be far?

Others among you called to me, not in words, and they said, 'Stranger, stranger, lover of unreachable heights, why do you dwell among the summits where eagles build their nests? Why seek you the unattainable? What storms do you trap in your net, and what vaporous birds do you hunt in the sky? Come and be one of us. Descend and appease your hunger with our bread and quench your thirst with our wine.'

In the solitude of their souls, they said these things. However, if their solitude were deeper they would have known that I sought only the secret of your joy and your pain, and I hunted only your larger selves that walk the sky.

The hunter was also the hunted. Many of my arrows left my bow only to seek my own breast. The flier was also the creeper. When my wings were spread in the sun their shadow upon the earth was a turtle.

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I the believer was also the doubter. I have often put my finger in my own wound so that I might have the greater belief in you and the greater knowledge of you. It is with this belief and knowledge that I say you are not enclosed within your bodies, nor confined to houses or fields. That which is you dwells above the mountain and roves with the wind. It is not a thing that crawls into the sun for warmth or digs holes into darkness for safety, but a free spirit that envelops the earth and moves in the ether.

If these are vague words, then do not seek to clear them. Vague and nebulous is the beginning of all things, but not their end. I hope you remember me as a beginning. Life, and all that lives, is conceived in the mist and not in the crystal. Who knows that a crystal is mist in decay?

I would have you remember in remembering me that which seems most feeble and bewildered in you is the strongest and most determined. Is it not your breath that has erected and hardened the structure of your bones? Is it not a dream which none of you remember having dreamt, that built your city and fashioned all there is in it? If you could see the tides of that breath, you would cease to see all else. If you could hear the whispering of the dream, you would hear no other sound. However, you do not see, nor do you hear, and it is well. The veil that clouds your eyes will be lifted by the hands that wove it, and the clay that fills your ears will be pierced by those fingers that kneaded it. Then you will see, and you will hear. Yet you will not deplore having known blindness, nor regret having been deaf. For in that day you will know the hidden purposes in all things, and you will bless darkness as you would bless light.”

After saying these things, he looked about him, and saw the pilot of his ship standing by the helm and gazing at the full sails and now at the distance.

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The prophet then said, "Patient, very patient, is the captain of my ship. The wind blows, and restless are the sails. Even the rudder begs direction. Yet quietly my captain awaits my silence. The mariners who have heard the choir of the greater sea, they too have heard me patiently. Now they will wait no longer. I am ready. The stream has reached the sea, and once more, the great mother holds her son against her breast."

THE FAREWELL

"Fare you well, people of Orphalese. This day has ended. It is closing upon us even as the water lily closes upon its own tomorrow.

We will keep what was given us here, and if it does not suffice, then again must we come together and together stretch our hands to the giver. Do not forget that I will come back to you. In a little while, and my longing will gather dust and foam for another body. In a little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman will bear me.

Farewell to you and the youth I have spent with you. It was only yesterday we met in a dream. You have sung to me in my aloneness, and I of your longings have built a tower in the sky. Now our sleep has fled and our dream is over, and it is no longer dawn.

The noontide is upon us and our half waking has turned to fuller day, and we must part. If in the twilight of memory we should meet once more, we will speak again together and you will sing to me a deeper song. If our hands should meet in another dream we will build another tower in the sky."

After saying this, he made a signal to the seamen, and promptly weighed anchor and cast the ship loose from its moorings, and they moved eastward. A cry came from the people as from a single heart, and it rose into the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great trumpeting. Only Almitra was silent, gazing after the ship until it had vanished into

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the mist.

When all the people dispersed, she still stood alone upon the sea wall, remembering in her heart his saying, “A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman will bear me.”

THE END

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