

A Child's Awakening

poetry in prose, to be read with feeling
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Notice how the **imagination** of children in a playpen or playing-field knows no bounds. A child can take any role he fancies, be with anyone he loves, be anywhere he dreams, and do anything he feels. But as adults encroach on our spacious childlike world, our child within loses more and more of its imagination to congeal into set roles to fit in with the crowd.

Our struggle is to return to our childlike state at every opportunity. We see this exuberance when we are making new friends or when we are in love or tasting pleasure. But then again, as we close in on our goals and see the other party as a sort of conquest, we dry up brittle like a leaf on a tree in winter, and fall dead on to the dirt of the new virtual reality.

What deprives us most of our childlike innocence often is **religion**, where the parent is God, or where God is the parent. We have no more will, but His, our Parent's. Our purpose is none but to fulfill His Will, Her Will, whatever that is. This means no more imaginative space, but a fix contained being, confined by rounds of rituals, blinded by the light of faith. That is why, clearly, we often see the tallest and strongest walls in those of churches and temples.

Yet, in the forgotten and neglected spaciousness of the tribal walls, we can, when we are truly still, hear the silence rising from the very ground we stand on, echoing from the walls around us, showering upon us from high above. We are no more in the confines of tribal space and holy dogmas.

The teachings of the greatest ancient masters like **the Buddha** were often given in natural spaces: under trees, along running streams, in leafy forests, away from the madding crowds. The sounds of their teachings are lost as soon as they are spoken. Only the right and ready heart absorbs their light and life like the warm sun, the world's heart, and gentle rain, the tears of heaven.

The Buddha's teachings are directly woven into the fabric of our body and breath as we sit still, untroubled by all that steal through the 5 doors of the world. Our still mind rises above and beyond the tremors of worldly frivolities. In such moments, we are touched by the Buddha's awakening. We cannot help but see the horizonless space before us, within us.

This is the space from which **truth and beauty** arise. These are the threads woven into tapestries by our vision, the kind that frees music from sound, beauty from stone and empty canvas. Joy from words well spoken. With this vision, we read and understand the cries of the world, of those still caught in the ravaging winds of the 4 quarters, rushing back and forth, dragging them helplessly along.

Only the ancient trees withstand these winds. Their waving branches and sighing leaves bid us enter amongst the roots of the earth, whose crest hug the heavens, kissing the sun, that gives life to all beings. Yet, this life is but a passing day: sunrise, sunset. Like the sun, the Buddha rises; like the sun, he sets. We must bathe in the light and life while the sun is high.

In time, we, too, become that light in the windless space that ends all worlds and frees us from life and death.

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