

# *The First Sermon*



*By: Ajahn Kalyāno*

# Part I

Singing by the fire  
Exiled by desire  
Telling no lie  
Getting by  
Pale yellow  
Humble and mellow

The monk entered  
Sure footed, centred

Senses composed  
Yet never closed

Limbs controlled  
Glowing like gold

Sitting as still as stone  
Balancing bone upon bone

Gathering royal purple  
Into a sacred circle  
Of friends

His view was heard  
Not holding to the word  
But delighting in the spirit of his eyes  
Noble and wise.

**Birth, death and liberation**



Born to a shadow  
Cast from the first step

Quickly we must learn  
Or we will be worn to a shadow  
By words of concern  
In response to our frights  
Demanding our rights  
When we have none

Instead let us chant our holy rites  
All along, until the last,  
If they are wise  
As our prize  
No shadow will be cast

Nor need we mourn for the shadow  
When it passes away  
But may greet the light of day.

## Taking responsibility



When we are born  
Our feet do not even know they are feet  
We teach their impassive meat  
With the hard, unforgiving street.

They meet the test  
With calluses and all the rest  
They never complain  
For the pain  
Is not theirs.  
We alone suffer for we give ourselves airs  
In our dreams of flight  
There in the craving of conceited sight  
That fights with the pain  
Again and again.

And we never learn  
While the passions burn.  
For when pain turns to pleasure  
In a moment of leisure  
We descend from our dreams above  
To fall back in love.

Surely the callus isn't that of a bird  
Yet our dreams are so absurd  
As the toenails of eligible young girls  
Turn into exquisite pearls.

So is the heart's rise and fall  
As it tries to run free and hits the wall  
Until lastly when the feet are to die  
We whimper and cry.

Even when they die  
The feet will not cry  
Not knowing they are feet no more.  
Yet even beyond death's door  
We may mourn and cry  
Until our dreams again find our feet  
In another new prison of meat.

If we would only accept our plight  
It would be no prison to wisdom's sight  
Detached from the fleshly lair  
The spirit will be as light as air  
Peaceful and tame, no longer wild  
Finding the dream of the milder child  
The spirit is free  
Free just to be.

Perhaps then the foot may speak to the child, so mild  
Perhaps then it will ask why  
It cannot fly  
"Patience my friend", says the child  
"The answer lies  
Just around the bend.  
Feet turn to maggots and maggots to flies  
In their own sweet time."

So shed not a tear  
Do not fear  
Yet take this truth, not just as an idea  
But as an unyielding purpose  
To find a way out of the circus  
Or we will be trampled by our own desire  
Burned over and over in its funereal fire...

## **Humility's discipline**

So don't scratch that feeling  
However appealing.  
You'll only make it worse  
Until it becomes a curse.

*Down there excitement, swirling vibration  
Down there feeling's memories moving fast  
Down there making stories  
Voices from the past  
Down there desire unwary  
So far down, so scary*

*Don't look down  
No need  
They will rise up to meet us  
In their own time to greet us*

*Looking on ahead, awake  
Will dispel the bouncy ghosts of habits  
Harmless as fluffy little rabbits*

*Then down there will be the body, pure and simple  
Imperfect with its pimples  
Smiling with its dimples  
Chasing goodness to be gained  
Loving to be tamed and trained*

Only hollowness gropes  
In the twilight of feeling  
The shadow that falls  
Between hope and touch  
That falls so much.

Blind touch that follows desire  
Is like smoke after fire  
The emotion chocking  
And only for lack of response.

Listen to and watch feeling's craving cries  
Without getting caught in its lies  
(Or you'll buzz black and trapped  
Like indoor flies).

The passions are out

Dark and poisonous  
But at least they are out  
Not hiding in the heart  
Like a languorous leopard

The heart is also out  
Bright and luminous  
The battle can rage in full view of the sage  
He will fight to the death  
Armed with the softest breath  
To win a calm space

Then he will look beyond, through the window  
There where truth is growing  
Where light permeates shadow  
The light of knowing.

However far away it seems  
From feeling's turbulent dreams  
This knowing is never apart  
From the peace of the heart.

If the marks of our kith and kin  
Are known as merely hair, nails, teeth and skin  
Then with a simple smile and dimples  
With sympathy for pimples  
It is so easy to cure this human condition.

Without the fire of desire,  
Without jostling for position,  
All it needs is simple care  
Of skin, teeth, nails and hair  
Humbly bumbling through  
Doing our time in the human zoo.

Forget your humble little toes  
And delusion will get up your nose  
The devil's mind  
Black and unkind  
Will make you blind.

Remember your feet  
Meet the ground, so sound  
The demons cannot arise  
And trick you with their lies.

These shifting dreams are much tougher.  
They can really make us suffer.

Reality is secure  
Until the final cure  
Of its natural end, my friend.  
When we are mature  
We will see that we only borrowed form.  
With a life that's warm  
And (inconveniently) wet  
We have paid our debt  
And may move on.

Taking the spirit we gather into reality  
(With which we overcome the elements)  
Beyond death's stark finality  
To find, right in this very place  
The everlasting, holy space  
Of grace.

For patience is near at hand  
No nearer  
As quick as sand  
Quicker than the tricks of the swiftest palm  
Though its whispered prayers pass  
Helpless until, in caverns of calm  
As still as glass  
Hewn within  
No further within  
Deep as bone  
Its echo rings vast.



Then light comes full at last  
As the final silence  
The final word  
Where no shadow is cast  
Either before or after.

For the eye of the wise  
Is as wide and white as the moon  
Over the silent sermon that awakens.

In this valley of goodness  
The path is the world.  
The eyes of the saints, like stars  
Shall find the path  
Out of the blindest chasm  
In a response fuller and sooner  
Than the empty spasm.

When their work is finally done  
We will be at One.  
Knowing will come back home, right here  
As our wisest listening ear.



There the heart is waiting, full  
Where there is no pain  
Ever again.

For we have not risen above ourselves.

Our spirit is then as warm as a baby  
Our birth and death together, my dear  
In the same moment as crisp and clear  
As frost on the temple bell.

The bell that saves us  
With its disciplined knell  
From the heavy desire  
In dozy misplaced trust.

Then we can shed the body's weight  
By being straight  
And saying,  
(Yet who dares)  
"Who cares!  
The body is as foul as a rubbish tip  
Let's really let rip  
And tear ourselves free  
Free just to be."

Yet so often it's not so simple  
For we have loved every pimple

For so long.

To be lastingly free  
We will again have to endure  
And gather further the cure  
With patience.

So finally let's gently mull over a skull  
Over bones upon bones  
Empty shells shattered  
Nature's hard truths scattered.

Then like pure white sand  
Truth will settle on the safe land  
Of the far shore  
By the Holy law  
Of tides of goodness.

We will remember and be remembered  
In the everlasting light and peace of kingdoms within  
Sacred, secret gardens safe from hatred and greed  
Blossoming not in need  
Nor withering  
For the flower is also the seed.

Then we are not human beings  
Trying to be spiritual  
But spiritual beings  
Trying to be human  
Until in the grisly end  
Only the gristle and the grist  
The pulsing in the wrist  
Beat the drum of fear:  
'Perhaps a man with a gun  
Will come and kill me for fun

Before breakfast.  
Perhaps it will happen so quickly  
With a sickening thud  
It will only be bandaged with blood  
And covered with flies and rats  
By desperation as blind as bats  
And hidden in the cellar.'

But sober as a judge  
The angel will not budge  
From the remaining sludge  
Of this murdered house mouse

For he must wait for its innocence  
To rise into his sylvan palms  
Then the sacrament will be ready.  
An offering to our Dear Lord...

Such suffering seen that day  
Such helpless suffering...  
But giving up on sights  
Yet hearing their alarm  
The swirling passions fell calm.

Suddenly and with no little surprise  
Like never before  
I both saw and felt my eyes  
Feeling their lids and lashes  
First of all in little flashes  
Just like clay.

I could not play  
With the image it seemed  
It just passively lay  
Bathed in the light of the mind  
A picture so complete  
For the power of imagination  
It would have been no mean feat.  
But this was not imagined  
It was merely present  
And strangely pleasant.

So seeing the eye  
With no tear to cry  
As though crystalline  
Light, subtle, fine  
Was a rest so sublime  
As though beyond time.

The feeling eye  
And the eye that saw the eye  
Coming together  
By nothing clever  
But through dispassion  
In such a natural fashion  
Thought was halted  
Dissolved perhaps in fluid slightly salted  
Like the warm sea.

For floating in this magic potion

Feeling was also appeased  
Like by the warm ocean  
By the body that was pleasing  
But not itself pleased  
Or displeased.

Not displeased even in the face of death  
Seen in the presence of the living breath  
In this face like a mask of flesh and skin  
Covering the skull within.  
This face with its little nose  
That knows the blessed air  
And is without a single care.

For a moment such was sight  
When the mind came right.

I could not do it  
If I would try  
I know, I would, just cry  
With the pain  
All over again.

Instead I must look out and learn  
Until the heart shall again turn...  
Until the heart turns away...

Yet it is not from you that it turns,  
And not toward another,  
Dear sister and brother.  
Freedom is right here  
Yet the direction is still so clear  
A path to follow  
Away from all sorrow.

## The path of the warrior



*because I hope not,  
though not without hope,  
I turn away  
turn to myself though not to myself  
for it is not I that turns  
not I yet not another*

*so sorry, I turn  
yet I turn without blame  
from search to found I turn  
on the same ground sea and sky*

*not the same  
to the small voice  
for wind and tide  
transforms the ocean wide  
not the same to the voice made small  
the inner mouse running along the wall*

*yet I would cry out as a man  
as a warrior roar the final roar*

*gold as a lion, gold as honour  
gold as the sun behind the storm cloud  
gold as the key  
the key to the door  
our family door  
that leads us out  
to our awakening  
we know, for the door of truth had opened  
but now the key was stuck  
stuck by the thinking that always sinks  
yet shares the truth wide on the tide*

*now we have to bear with the bitter replies  
of craving's lies  
weighing on the eyes  
burying the heart*

*one day the reply will come again  
to end the pain  
out of the silence, like before  
holy law  
like the innocent victims of life  
for whom violence seems the cruellest strife  
justice is slow but deadly fair  
the wreaths of the conquerors  
in rain that falls like pain  
rotten, have not conquered  
the tomb of the defender is empty  
the womb of his next mother is full and plenty.*

*looking back the hearse was the first family  
on the long, long road  
we did not carry the dead  
but followed their path to fresh pasture  
cleared with toil and the death of our people  
yet we must surrender it  
for this land would bury us all*

*turn we must  
yet it is not us that shall turn  
the eye that sees death shall turn  
yet turning it is no eye that turns  
still and brighter  
wide as the moon  
light returns to light  
light without to light within  
bone without to bone within  
still standing*

*held alert, rock on rock  
cairn of the high peak  
lifted spirit, tip of cloud  
snow white water stopped to turn  
to turn as light  
white dove with wing unbroken  
marked by the ring of beyond  
turned perfectly on itself  
symbol for the hand  
for the working hand  
that toiled for us all  
toil that won time  
time that won wisdom  
wisdom of the people  
planted first with the ploughs of my brother  
oh, my dear brother  
yet we must not be buried with the seed  
by the grip of greed  
but open the fist of the warrior, for good*

*oh world of greed  
wisdom calls you to your knees  
wisdom calls you to give  
we catch the world first in the willing fist of work  
and then in the word  
word from the work of sitting so still  
as the storms of will  
histories of greed  
are borne for us all  
for still we must sit  
to still the eye that turns*

*the breeze may turn the sail to harbour  
so too the flow of the breath  
may turn still  
may turn within  
and the light of the saviour may shine  
taken and given  
mine and thine*

His and hers...  
Oh yes, her...  
When we finally came to part  
She finally broke my heart  
She said I did not love her  
I just loved an idea  
She was right, it was clear  
But wasn't that down to her?

She had had an affair  
I think more than one  
I had been faithful  
Now my faith was all done.

Yet my fault  
Or your fault  
Is the worst somersault  
It spins off the wire  
The most dangerous of desire.  
Better was just to accept  
That Summer love  
Was Winter anger.

Yet in my dream  
Memory of nowhere  
She was still an idea.

In my dream  
Never quite here  
Never quite anywhere  
I was never quite here  
I was never quite anywhere.

In my dream  
Always nearly there  
Always nearly somewhere  
I was always nearly there  
I was always nearly somewhere.

In my dream  
My waking dream.

First, I can wish I had never loved like that.  
I can wish I will never love like that again.  
Right there I can wish  
Where I can still feel the pain.

Second, I must be bold  
Before I get too old  
To defeat the dreams...

If I hit them first  
All of them the same  
Not as a curse  
But with their real name  
Or names

**'Uncertain',**  
(approaching the final curtain)

**'Suffering',**  
(if I hold on it's a sure thing)

**'Not me'**  
(thankfully)

Then the dreams cannot harm  
The heart will be calm  
And will awake,  
Gradually awake  
Like it was growing up...

When I was little I kept having to come back  
Just to sitting, standing, walking and lying down.  
Like a baby put back to bed over and over.  
Sometimes after soap and water.

I used to bounce the ball  
Again and again against the wall.

I was frustrated  
But didn't know why  
I was too tired to find out  
I was tired from making more out of it  
Tired of my own dreams and dramas.

Greed that hurries up  
Hatred that rushes on  
On and up it all comes  
Like never ending sums  
From down below  
The rough stuff.

Patience, not slow  
And genuinely tough  
Must be applied fully  
To tame the bully.

When I was small  
I wished myself bigger  
Now I am bigger  
I wish myself small,  
Smaller and smaller  
Until I disappear.

I will keep coming back  
Just to sitting, standing, walking and lying down.  
Like putting a baby back to bed over and over.  
Sometimes after soap and water.  
Until the heart finds its rest from desire  
And desire is cast beyond.

And when desire is beyond  
and when she is beyond our desire  
then desire is beyond  
wrapped in light  
the light that she unfolds

ended then is the time of ghosts and the ghost of time  
that were always the same dreams  
the same wind and tide



### **The triumphal cry**

*Dreams, you are no father of man.  
The light of fire, bestowing light  
Yet consumes its source.  
Dream time is no time but borrowed  
A debt repaid by darkest sleep.*

*Dreams, you are no son of man  
Your broken images break the mirror and the man  
The mirror of burning eyes  
Lost in hope's vanity and vain hope.  
Vanity of dolls, porcelain faces  
Fragile smiles, pursued and dragged from dreams  
Dropped and smashed.  
Then locked away in the bottom drawer  
By the guilt of children, made worse.  
What was lost and forgotten to be found  
Seen like a voodoo curse.  
Yet the dream was never the son of man  
Nor the son's dream.*

*Even so the dreams gather again  
In the family tomb,  
In the next womb.  
The worse again for wealth  
The hope held by the grandchild  
Drunk with youth and health.  
Fragments of dreams, sparkling jewels of glass  
Set in the gilded thrones  
Of mere bones.*

*And the rats that pick the bones  
Are not the whispers of funereal fire  
That was too final for desire  
Too real a fire.  
The rats do not wear silk slippers  
Or regal attire  
They are the filthy rats  
Of scurry and worry.*

*The only hope is the despair  
Of fools gold, fools light  
That held in fear's fist, fear of loss  
Turns to darkest dust.  
For dust is the father of man, ash the son*

*Fire is the toy of ash.  
Ash of the air, not the ash of death  
It is as light as the breath  
As light as the hand that throws sweets to children  
Sweets like jewels in their eyes.  
Given light not taken  
Light that will awaken  
For coming to our aid  
Are children's eyes that sparkle like lemonade  
Young and old  
His and hers  
The same  
And love is real  
Beckoning us to kneel...*

Dear Lord you are not up above  
Dear Lord you are just love  
Dear Lord

Dear spirit you need no longer roam  
For our Lord is here at home  
Our dearest Lord.

To be with Him at last  
Just let go of the future and the past  
For He is here and now...

*Here and now  
May I bow  
Dear Lord.*

*Whether I have a little or a lot  
Whether I have or have not  
Dear Lord I just don't care  
As long as You are there.*

*Whether pleasure or pain  
Sun or rain, loss or gain  
Dear Lord as long as You are there  
Dear Lord I just don't care.*

*Happy or sad  
If You are there  
May I still be glad  
Dear Lord.*

*Then when what is good is done  
We are at one, dear Lord.*

*If with our desires we turn away  
In our hearts we play  
In a world of virtue  
Where You are us and we are You  
Dear Lord.*

*Dear Lord may my heart  
Never again be apart  
From Yours  
Your grace opens the doors  
To release, to peace  
Dear Lord.*

*You are the One who Knows  
For your heart will never close  
If I can see  
As you see  
I can be free,  
Dear Lord  
To walk Your talk...*

# Part II

## The Simplest Sage



Neatly black and leather bound  
Conceit can just talk  
Lonely, low, testimony of crow  
It can't walk.

The walking side of pork  
Is not so neat, the filthy putrid body.  
Yet there is the enormous wealth here of humility  
Ripening in the ageing body of the sage.

He is listening for death.  
Death does not come.  
Still, death does not come.  
Yet while death is expected, within sight of him  
It seems feelings cannot frighten him  
Life's burdens are lost  
Revealed their full, hidden cost.

*This death is my friend  
Though I love life so  
It is the death of the here and now  
Not the death of the future  
This death that comes of seeing death.*

*This death is my friend  
I cannot share with those  
Whose friend is life  
They cannot understand  
That I am not sad but glad  
Because I can see  
That that which dies is not me*

Limbs all over the place  
As they float through space  
Kids don't know how their body works  
They only learn when it hurts

Can't we see  
The body ain't me?

Can we tell our toes  
To each grow as pretty as a rose?

Can't we see  
The body ain't me?

There is nothing to gain  
From any of the pain  
But it can come more and more  
Until we are squirming on the floor

Can't we see  
The body ain't me?

Do we wipe our pooh on paper to express ourself?  
Would that be mental health?

Can't we see  
The body ain't me?

Perhaps if I wrote in blood  
Whilst floundering in the mud  
I could make my point  
With every creaky joint

Please, please see  
The body ain't me

We must look again and again  
Right through the pain  
Not in a way that's life denying  
But with a wish to be death defying

For then the heart may escape  
This body of an ape  
Looking on yet un-removed  
The truth will be proved  
With a bliss  
Like a cosmic kiss

When we truly see  
The body ain't me

"Don't tell me I shall die"  
He had whispered over bones.  
But the bones could not lie.  
Still with hope he had prayed over bones.  
But the bones could not hear his prayer.  
Then in silence he had listened over the bones  
The bones did not speak  
But the silence had broken the spell  
All was well  
They are not me  
He saw with glee  
Singing and dancing over bones.

Then do I want it any more  
When I see the blood and gore?  
Why not?  
I'll even keep the humblest snot  
Now the heart is calm  
There is no harm  
But compassion,  
Without ration.

*This death, my friend, is also the death  
Of the desire that was me.  
The little old me  
Dies in the open mystery  
That peace only implies  
Yet in which the heart flies*

*This death is my friend*

*This death that sees death  
Let's picture a little of what it finds  
Not one view of death but all kinds:*

**Death 1**

Sanguine, poised  
Stealthy, no noise  
Legal,  
Lethal,  
Universal.  
Only toys make it through  
With glue.

**Death 2**

Death dies  
From its own lies...  
In thinking and speaking  
Lying is dying.  
And dying is lying  
When it says it's the end.

**Death 3**

With a saving that ends in slaying  
Another tragedy is playing  
In the operating theatre.  
On its first and last night  
The curtain opens  
On the most gruesome sight  
Under the brightest light  
And never closes.  
For the scene, so obscene, so unclean  
Does not smell of roses  
And there was no answer  
To the question it poses.  
Yet, from behind a myriad of masks,  
It is only desire that asks.

We will not ask  
It is not our task  
We will listen to life patiently and taste  
Gleaning the meaning.  
There can be no haste.  
Our watch cannot wind itself forward or back  
Yet it will wind itself down  
Falling like sand, emptying the mind.  
While nature has its say  
There is no need for the pain of the mind

*Pain is not my friend, it can go  
I don't need it any more.  
Death can tell me more  
This death of living  
This death of giving.*

*It is not that I want an end  
From death, my friend  
From my friend death.  
I did not invite the peace that comes  
Nor even talk of death.  
It was the bones that told me  
Whispering their chalky white light of hope  
Until all other hope had gone  
Until, doubly, deeply silenced  
Thought was as nought  
And no longer cramped the heart  
This death is my friend, my art  
Bigger than thought  
And older than the body  
Death was before  
But will not be after*

This body is like death's young companion  
And a stranger to pain  
It is just made of the wind and the rain  
By earth contained  
And warmed  
By desire's fire.  
Death for the body is so complete  
Ashes borne by the greater wind  
So much greater  
The drops of rain lost in the ocean  
The bones buried so deep.

*This death is my friend  
I play dead  
Sitting so still  
Calming the will  
That is no longer mine  
But just a habit of time.*

Death will never come  
It's just a game.  
And called by the same name  
Birth will not come...

*No big deal  
No great appeal  
No washing machine  
No need to be so clean,  
Serene.*

*No sofas, no loafers  
No great comfort  
No wasted effort  
Not all to our taste  
No great haste, no waste.*

*No car, not going far  
No noise, no toys.*

*No melody, no tragedy, no dancing  
No preening, no prancing  
No make up, no glamour  
No shake up, no clamour.*

*No shows, no envy  
No blows, no frenzy.*

*No booze, no hangover  
Nothing to lose, no pushover.  
No drugs, no thugs  
No weapon, not leapt on.*

*No gambles, no shambles.*

*No shopping, no mad hopping  
No hoping, no sad moping.  
No comfy bed, not much said  
No need, no greed.*

*No guarantees, no lack of ease  
No pension, no tension  
No clinging, peace.*

*No singing, no party  
No TV  
Nothing just for me.*

*No supper, no sex  
Nothing next  
No ego inflation  
No masturbation  
No farting, no parting*

*No ties, nowhere to tumble  
No lies, so humble.*

*No black and white  
No fear or flight  
No loss and gain  
No avoiding pain  
No courage lost  
No hidden cost.*

*No theft, nothing left  
No money but still funny.*

*Not life denying but death defying  
For the spirit  
Is flying.*

Let the earth provide  
For all beings far and wide.  
Then let angels, from star spangled skies  
Shout out so loud  
It drowns all the petty little lies.  
Let the gods, so proud  
Overcome every jibe  
With celestial sherbet  
Let them personally bribe,  
Every scruffy little Herbert.  
Then in the humble truth  
That can save the day  
There will be little to say.

Little to say on that last visit, he thought...

I had come to see him,  
Perhaps for the last time,  
I said to myself.  
'It's only me,' I said to him as I arrived.

We could talk,  
Perhaps for the last time,  
I said to myself.  
'How are you?' I said.

Then we would have to part,  
Perhaps for the last time.  
I said to myself.  
'I hope you are well,' I said.

Actually, perhaps, deep down, we both knew  
that maybe we were meeting for the last time.  
I said to myself.

Actually, perhaps, deeper down, we both knew  
that every time we had met it was maybe for the last time.  
I said to myself.

This is usual.  
I said to myself.

To say or do anything different this time  
would make it seem as though  
we had not realised this all along.  
I said to myself.

So I will do or say nothing different from usual.

Perhaps just a knowing look says it all, deep down.  
I said to myself as I said, 'goodbye.'

At least it seems it is all I really have to say, anyway.  
And this also perhaps for the last time.  
Oh, I must say it with all my heart,  
I said to myself.

So I keep on trying to reach out.  
To share.  
I keep reaching out  
Only to be pulled out.  
I don't want to go  
But stay where I am.  
I can reach out from here  
Not from there.

So I must fight.  
Fight for us all.  
Fight for all that is here  
All that may survive.  
For everything there will pass away.

I must just look and know  
And just say  
Just what I see.  
That must be enough, he thought.

Yet on the way home  
Damp with sweat

And damp with rain  
All of us  
Riding on the bus

The warm smells mingle  
The permed and the public  
Like the feelings,  
The private and public  
As we are compelled to meet,  
Skin to skin, meat to meat  
Heart to heart

Facing the embarrassment of bodies  
Helped by the honesty of children

To me such precious moments  
My desires are not there  
But waiting for me  
At my destination.

So precious  
That I would never willingly arrive  
Arrive, perhaps for the last time

Then he knew the truth was on the journey  
Not at the destination.

Just as it is the dog, the lowly dog, that catches the stick.  
It is the lion, the noble lion, that catches the thrower.  
I would be like that noble lion.  
I would catch desire.  
I would be its master.  
Rather than it be mine  
He thought.

Following nature's way  
Gains the worldly wealth  
Of harmony and health

Following the nature of the mind  
May lead us to be kind

We can relax and be pleased  
With the resultant ease

Then calming the will  
We can stop still  
And disappear

Without a tear  
Without much to say  
Going out to play  
With the same joy  
As with the nursery toy

When will the wanting ever end?  
Just around the bend?  
So hopes the worried brow.  
But it is the cutting edge of now  
That is the plough  
Dividing the moody wave  
With its magnificent prow

### **The little monk**

Next time...  
The special little boy  
Could taste and smell his own foolish words  
Like his own little turds  
Steady on  
Thought the little boy...  
I must warn my mind  
With something kind...  
Purity does not come by chewing soap...  
Just as it won't come by entertaining  
the false hope of a little magic...

"Never mind the little wishes  
Of potions and genies  
Surely the surest good, the lasting cause  
Pours from nature's natural laws  
Not from personal, little magic  
Whose transience is so tragic?"

He spoke strongly yet in haste  
For a magical truth he would taste...

The little boy was so special.  
They had given him every care.  
So much so  
He did not know the word 'no'.  
One day there was no cake  
The little boy said, 'then send no cake.'  
His mother sent an empty plate  
Out of love, not hate  
He would finally have to learn the word, 'no', she thought.  
Yet the devas saw the chance they had sought.  
They sent on that plate the brightest, most marvellous emptiness.  
They knew the special little boy would be ready  
to understand the real meaning of 'no cake'.

*Once harvest is through  
Autumn is as easy going as an old shoe  
Until mature winter light casts its cool shadow  
Slanting in through the window  
Calm chiaroscuro*

*Then fresh starts, dew drops  
Roll off spring green*

*And gather ready in the ground  
To refresh the smothering comfort  
Of summer...*

Little bird sing while you may  
Little bird sing today.

Little bird fly, high in the sky  
Little bird don't wonder how or why.

Little bird as your heart sings  
Give your spirit wings.

Give your spirit the voice  
Of freedom not of worldly choice.

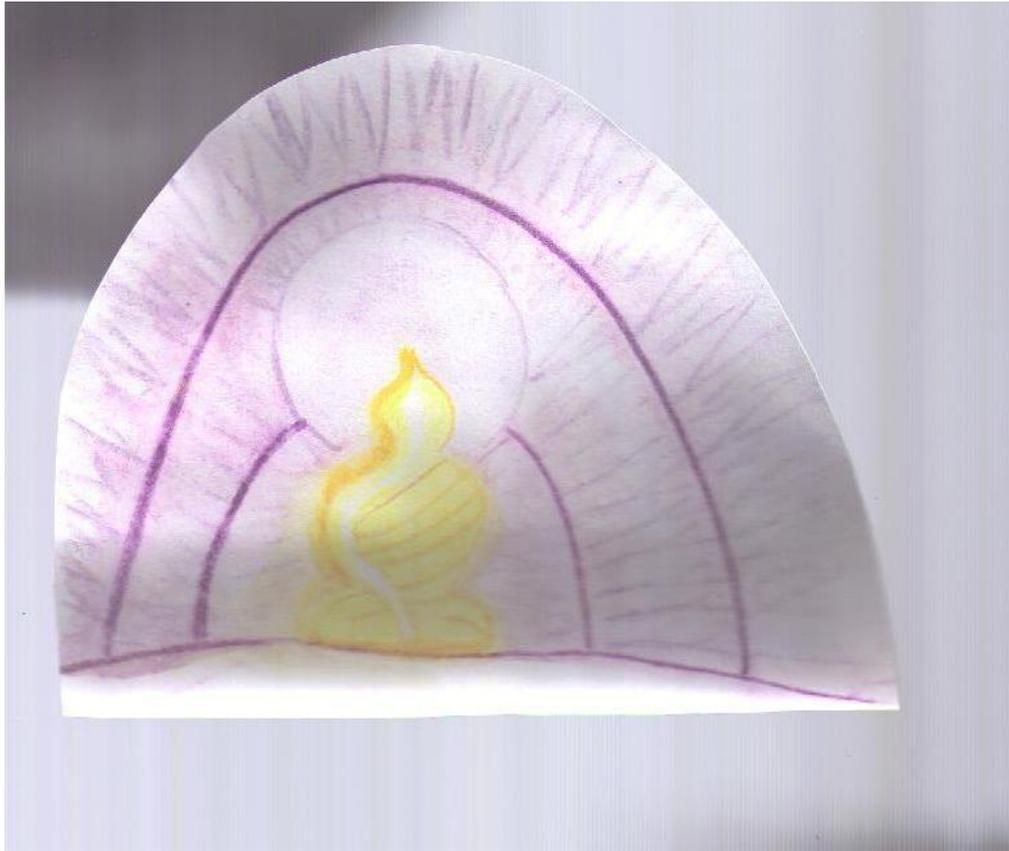
Little bird as your heart flies  
Look on the earth with heavenly eyes.

Dearest little bird  
Look on at the absurd  
And sing a prayer, a higher call  
For us all.

Then when your little body dies  
To heaven your spirit flies  
To sing on as you may  
The highest call you may say.

Calling from the vastest cage  
Of the longest age  
Until, from a place outside the cage  
Comes the answer of the sage.

Telling of a truth beyond any song  
A truth that will last so very long  
A silence of gold  
Never young or old  
Never born, never to die  
Just to fly.



Little bird, let us be,  
Here and now, you and me  
In the magical glade.  
Here and now, under the shade  
Of the Bodhi tree.  
Here and now, let us bow.  
Here, where wondrous light,  
Cool yet so bright,  
Light that soars,  
Light that roars,  
Thunders with wisdom,  
Heralding his kingdom.  
Uprooting the darkness,  
Virtue is harnessed,  
To take us to freedom.

### Saving the world

Beneath the thickest hide  
The dark world inside  
Ghoul of the wanking fool  
Ruts and grunts.  
Together it is a glut  
That consumes the blameless slut  
Of the helpless little world.  
While turning not turned  
The whole world is no whore.  
It will be master.  
It seemed there would be disaster.

*In a parallel hell  
So obsessed was the king  
With his lady-in-waiting  
His highness' lowness  
Engulfed in darkness.  
Yet the monk, his friend  
Brought the darkness to an end,  
Not too soon,  
Lighting a lantern at noon.*

The king offered alms  
All in the one bowl  
Food for body and soul  
Curry and custard  
Jelly and mustard  
Received with unconditional love  
It was ambrosia from up above

*Nothing needed to be said  
For even the dead  
Were watching the king  
In this world obsessed by power...*

The flooding power of crowns floundered and drowned  
In its own dictates, letter by letter.  
To find falling from power was so much better,  
Blessed the mud that thuds,  
It wakes us up and washes off with simple suds.  
'Clean and clear we need not stop there', said the monk  
We can make the mud as light as air  
With the breath, as deft as death.  
And so they found a way out of the desperate, spiralling stair

Of clinging to helpless huts  
To meaningless, spinning gruts,  
Gruts?

They saw that the kings and queens  
Fighting over things  
Were far apart  
From the heart  
So unhappy

*It had all begun  
With ariel desires  
Radio thoughts  
Overland tyres  
Shoulds and oughts  
Life on automatic  
Fraught with static  
In ear station or eye  
In touch or tongue  
Passions boil or fry,  
Such were the demons when they were young.  
Goblins and devils  
Dark and blind.  
Like the selves  
We cannot find  
In a night of fright.*

Now was it a thought or a feeling  
Or ghosts from the past, desperately appealing?  
It did not matter to the peaceful dove  
Either way the answer was love...

*Fairies and elves  
Made of light.  
Like ourselves  
Is what we find  
When kindness  
Ends the night.*

Love, a light inside  
A stillness, not a ride  
A light invisible to the eye  
Yet in the eye  
A light of the heart  
That reaches out as visions of ourselves  
Or as visions of playful elves  
Both are harmless and happy.

Kids that skid  
Pockets full of raisons  
Fluffy occasions  
Shared,  
We're happy.

Grownups too  
Fishing in the garbage  
The public loo  
The gas works do, crappy  
Together,  
We're happy.

Saved by the cry that never binds  
The glorious choruses of 'never mind':

Mum and dad said,  
'Do your best'  
But the body it seemed  
Was not what we'd dreamed  
Failing every test.

As hope gently crumbled  
The heart was gently humbled.

No longer wild  
The milder child.  
Said,  
'Never mind,  
Just be kind.'

Then in a life  
As simple as pimples  
As smiling as dimples  
The mind was free of care  
And as light as air.

Then one day  
Worried blind  
He could not find  
His, 'Never mind'.  
It's under granny's chair  
She hid it there  
Afraid he would no longer care  
If he found it.  
It was a fear unfounded.  
He needed his 'never mind'  
To be truly kind.

For nothing good will go  
As we may wish.  
As hard as we may wish  
Is as hard as we must let go.

Over and over...

No more sweet orange  
Just the bitter rind.  
Never mind.  
I shall not want.  
The holy font  
Offers water  
As cool and kind  
As a devoted daughter  
Tamed to be just as sweet.

Again and again...

Never mind  
The daily grind  
I shall not mind  
The busy clock  
If we are late  
Only greed will hate  
We know there is nothing to gain  
From haste except the pain.

And again...

Never mind  
The henchman stench  
Of the wanton wench.  
It is not me she wishes to lure  
That's for sure.  
Whatever she may flaunt  
Won't count for much  
For we may never touch.

When she has gone my dated grief  
Will turn quickly to relief.

Getting old...

By degrees  
The rocky old knees  
Pack it in.  
I can no longer chase

I'll lose the race

Never mind  
I'll stay behind  
And win peace  
The prize  
Of the wise.

Nearing the end...

Never mind the dead  
Their lives will be read  
By the powers that be  
Not by you or me.  
We need not judge  
With our craving or our grudge  
And whatever we may have to give  
Will be taken just as if they live.  
As it is granted...

Seeing the end, also disenchanting...

Never mind seeking pleasure  
I would rather desire were to find its leisure.  
So that never mind the future or the past  
The present moment will be our first and last.  
Then from age to age  
Will triumph the undying sage.

In the twinkling of an eye  
The desirous twinkle in the eye  
That spark of delight  
Will pass by  
But not out of sight

Trapped by greed,  
Foreign disease  
Of sleep and sleet,  
It must be freed...

Crosses woven  
Sanctity of rags  
Sacrifice is my happy sister.  
We shall not look with the eye  
Of fear and longing  
We shall look fear and longing in the eye  
And walk on  
With a courage clear and singing

Walk on  
For freedom blossoms within.



## Coming home

Staying at home  
Arriving unannounced  
Finding the door open...

Coming in,  
Extra to the ordinary,  
Nothing changes...

The cat relaxes  
Rolling on its back invitingly...

The books sit on the shelves  
It is impossible to tell  
That they have lost their meaning...

The living room just waits to need cleaning...

The truth is in the lavatory, gleaming,  
Ready to pounce,  
Unannounced.





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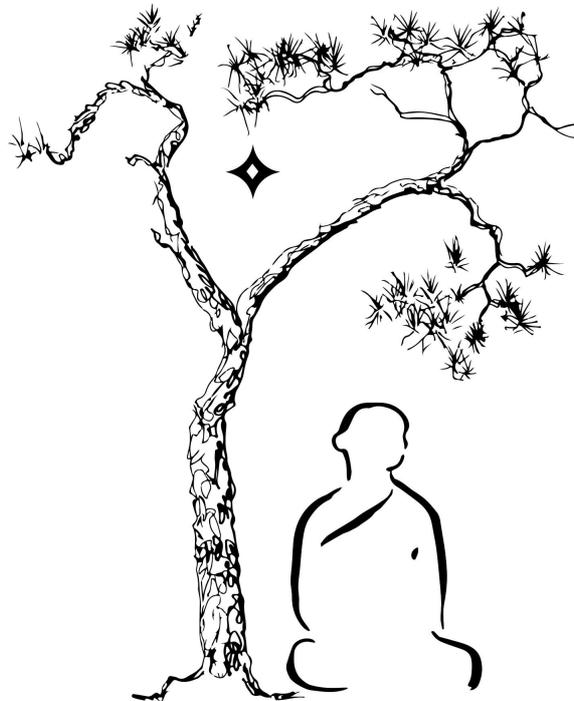
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