Spiritual Limericks

by Pace Smith

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In union, you cannot be drained.
You speak, and the sea, unrestrained,
moves through you as planned.
You hush on command;
your roots drink the sea that has rained.

inspired by Rumi, Mathnawi V:3195-3219, tr. Coleman Barks

The status quo is to be numb.
Resist it and do not succumb!
You must be awake
to both joy and ache
to be what you're meant to become.

Compassion for others is sweet,
but please, do remember to eat.
If your care for your crew
relieves all except you,
your compassion is still incomplete.

inspired by Jack Kornfeld

The bad news: you're falling through air.
No chute, just a wing and a prayer.
You fall uncontrolled
with nothing to hold.
The good news: the ground is not there.

inspired by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche

Our deepest fear's not that we suck,
it's that we are mighty as fuck.
We ask, "Who am I
to be brilliant and fly?"
You asked yourself this 'till it stuck.

But actually, who are you not to be?
A child of God - that's who you ought to be.
Quit playing small
so others feel tall.
Shine like the child you forgot to be.

A small fry with self-inhibition
is not what the world requisitioned.
You're hella divine,
so let your light shine,
and that will give others permission.

inspired by Marianne Williamson

If you would like invincibility
from fear, shame, and irritability,
the only way you
can achieve this is through
compassion and vulnerability.

The thinker, if anxious, will flee.
The lover craves no guarantee.
Love isn't precise.
Stop giving advice
to a lover; come drown in the sea!

inspired by Rumi, The Intellectual, tr. Kabir Helminski

Surrender has two different senses.
One: to collapse your defenses.
Two: to be serving,
aligned and unswerving,
releasing your ego's pretenses.

When you feel like your heart is pierced through,
and grieving is all you can do,
This breaking apart
can open your heart.
A wound is an opening, too.

The Moon receives always, and yet
The Sun never calls in its debt.
What does such love bring?
A song that can sing
the heavens ablaze in duet.

inspired by Hafiz, The Gift, tr. Daniel Ladinsky

Step 1: I affirm what I know.
Step 2: I reject and say, "NO!"
My firm comma-dammit
constrains me like granite.
Step 3: No more me, only flow.

Whatever you yearn to pursue
in equal part yearns for you too.
For water you thirst?
It's also reversed:
the water is thirsting for you.

Your soul longs to seek the Divine;
God's longing is equal to thine.
It's not just one-way!
To long is to pray;
desire and Desire intertwine.

God fixes your passion with force,
disappoints you, then sets a new course.
A hundred goals wrecked!
Let go and connect
to your Rider, you beautiful horse.

Sometimes you succeed! Well, perhaps
that's so you won't quit and collapse.
Defeat realigns you
as well as reminds you
there's never just one hand that claps.

The kingdom within has a key:
it's failure. If you're to be free,
you've got to embrace it -
no, run out and chase it!
So here's what your prayer should be:

"Demolish my plans with a drill.
Debase all my passions, until
I've nowhere to cling.
For now it is spring,
and finally, I have no will."

inspired by Rumi, Desire and the Importance of Failing, tr. Coleman Barks

How did the rose open its heart
and to the world beauty impart?
The call of the light
felt stronger than fright.
Without that, we're too scared to start.

inspired by Hafiz, It Felt Love

Love is the Water of Life.
Everything else is just strife.
Your thirsty soul's crying!
Don't walk on toward dying
without the One Water of Life.

inspired by Rumi, Mathnawi I:3686-3687

Do you feel too crushed to be whole?
Too much out of touch with your soul?
You still deserve peace.
Let go and release;
let loose what you cannot control.

Life purpose is all well and good,
but often gets misunderstood.
This isn't a race;
you've got Divine grace!
It's more like "you are", not "you should".

A jewel in your heart, placed at birth:
The source of your infinite worth.
Explore, sift for gold,
your path will unfold;
you'll find your true mission on earth.

Passion dissolves prohibitions;
love overrides all traditions.
Compassion arrives!
Restart your lives.
Forgiveness for all - no conditions.

inspired by Rumi, The Wandering Elephant

We're climbing because of great need.
We're holding hands; up we proceed.
Not loving, you know,
is, in truth, letting go,
and that would be risky indeed.

inspired by Hafiz, A Great Need

When tragedy happens so near,
when reason and sense disappear,
a place you can start
is to ask in your heart,
"Can I perceive Love even here?"

inspired by Mark Silver

Sometimes you feel like you're sinking.
"I'll pray, then feel better," you're thinking.
But that's not the end;
what you should intend
is to thirst so you never stop drinking.

inspired by Shams e-Tabrizi

When you're trying to do the right stuff,
it can be so exhausting and tough.
Breathe deep. Let go.
Remember and know
that just as you are, you're enough.

Don't pray away dissatisfaction
like earthly life's merely distraction.
Remember: your soul
is perfect and whole.
From there, make a plan to take action.

inspired by Mark Silver

To polish your heart, become clearer,
like the smooth, polished face of a mirror.
Relinquish acclaim,
view you without shame,
and to the heart's secrets draw nearer.

inspired by Rumi, The Divani Shamsi Tabriz XIII

Two skin cells called Chandra and Jean.
"Chan, do you believe in The Queen?
A being that guides
all cells, but She hides.
She's loving, but won't intervene."

"A loving Queen? That'd be sweet.
But Jean, I need something concrete
I can touch with my cilia.
Blind faith is silly;
I just want to chill and secrete."

But then Chandra bursts, and is slain!
Jean bellows, "Queen, care to explain
why Chandra got killed,
their goals unfulfilled,
and now all their friends are in pain?"

Zoom out to a mom, Marguerite.
Her kid's playing ball in the street.
A semi draws near!
With love and with fear,
she shouts out and leaps to her feet.

She dives! Will her effort suffice?
Thank God, they're both safe! They hug twice.
A scraped knee's the cost;
Some skin cells were lost,
but saving a life's worth the price.

To Marguerite's knee turn your gaze.
The grieving cell Jean softly prays:
"O Queen, tell me why
my friend had to die?
And don't say 'mysterious ways'!"

We seek the Divine far abroad,
but searching outside us is flawed.
Stop passively waiting
and start co-creating!
We're cells in the body of God.

Go pick up a torch and a bucket.
Burn Heaven, quench Hell, raze Nantucket.
Seduction and fear
are so insincere.
If it's not the One Love, then fuck it!

inspired by Rabia al-Basra

Religions all sing the same song,
just backed up by flute, lute, or gong.
The sun's light may fall
reshaped on each wall,
But it's been one light all along.

inspired by Rumi, One Song

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Goodbye!

Pace Smith is a bridger, a 3,
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