



TRIYUNA

Triyuna is book three of Decapoiema. Decapoiema is a series of 10 works of poetry, each based on one of the elemental numerals 0-9.



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The idea that wisdom comes in threes is an ancient one. Buddhist teachings contain many threes, including the central tenet of the three enlightenments. In the western world, most are familiar with the Christian Trinity. Its premise provides our culture with one of its most mystical concepts; that beings can be both distinct and identical at the same time.

A triune world view, in contrast to a dualistic one, leaves room for gray when all are calling for black or white. It intuits that the universe is made up of more than opposites, more than just negative and positive, more than zeros and ones, more than yes and no.

Three teachers, centuries apart, continents apart and civilizations apart, come together in these words at a place of understanding. While it is a stretch to call their teachings identical, you can hear one singular flowing breath through them all. Like the Trinity, they are not the same, but are one nonetheless.

It is not surprising to find similarity in these words if you believe in a universal source. It's as though each teacher is drilling down from opposite points on the surface of the sphere of wisdom and eventually they all meet at the center.

Each saying from the three teachers inspired a poem, three to a page. Each poem has three stanzas, each stanza has three lines. The book is divided into three sections, each with 33 poems.

As you read the teachings and the poems, try not to look for equivalence. Instead, embrace the lovely paradox that we can become more united through our diversity.

First Third:

Beginning

Jesus

In the beginning was the word and the word was
with God and the word was God.

Buddha

Universal mind exists like a vast and boundless
ocean, having no personality, all things exist in it.

Lao Tzu

In the beginning was the void, in this one is the
being in whom all things exist.

And ever since, words have come and gone
From the hand of God to mortal feet
And back. Back along the dry riverbed.
They are the ones who scour the stones in this age.
The water having saved the parched
Who gave us birth in the mud.
Crouch low in the channel, catch the echo
Of words scratching rock. Try not to die.
Try to see the dust kicked up as they rise.

And ever since, words have been placed in bottles.
Gently set upon the water with empty care.
By hands that no longer need them so much.
As they drift, they too lose their personality.
That which they are becomes their writ.
How they are read becomes their nothing.
A longer color reflects off their glass barges.
A warmer script copies them on the water.
A brighter sleep melts it all.

And ever since, empty space forms between words,
Falling where lost memory once grew,
Pausing in the line of succession.
Only nothing can hold words now.
Only the void that once hurt so strong
That it came to be denied.
Only the breath that sighs no sound
In the vacuum of a heart's deepest space,
Without response, without, without.

Jesus

The word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Buddha

In noble wisdom, all things are in nirvana from the beginning.

Lao Tzu

From ancient times to the present, taking on names without end, the beginning was seen.

Tissue of the night. That is what they call it

In their wandering native tongue

When they sing to their children.

It comes when they sleep, in-between dreams.

Falling in thin layers, one per night.

So light they are scarcely noticed.

Unless one waits, unless one remembers each morn.

This is how their flesh is formed

How heaven inserts itself into mortal bones.

Try to remember what you have always known.

You still may be found asking;

Is knowing a thing the same as being known?

Is living within another

The same as the other living within you?

You still may be found asking.

Do not be dismayed.

Sit beneath the tree.

Watch the grass in the wind.

At the instant just before first light,

When infinite words are the same as no words,

When every ending is the same distance apart,

When the way of all flesh becomes the way,

When God no longer exists

For existence can not contain it.

Does the world turn for this?

From always unto always

For the name of eternal dawn.

Jesus

Ask and it will be given you. Seek and you will find.
Knock and the door will be opened.

Buddha

Only those with a pure heart, a single purpose, will
be able to understand the way.

Lao Tzu

The Taoist masters, did they not declare that it might
be found by seekers?

Would that the awe of slacken jaws
 Could be a cup passed down the line,
 Poured into the pleas of upstretched hands.
Would that eyes would pause from their dreams
 To write them down in the shadows
 Cast beneath their lids.
Would that fists clenched against the pain
 Could turn toward that ancient door
 And tap instead their coded cries.

The sparrow woke alone at dawn.
 He flew a thousand miles
 Trying to purify his heart.
With wind from every corner,
 With climbs from every longing,
 With dives from every height.
At the bottom of his heart,
 At the end of that spring,
 There lies the seed of his seeking.

A wise one once spoke
 Of a way beneath the clouds,
 Hidden, then when he turned, not.
A way so clear we can stare it down.
 A way so clear it can blind.
 A way so clear it is our only window.
A way that rises from the dust
 To settle as a cradle,
 Holding and swaying our steps.

Jesus

I am the way, the truth and the life.

Buddha

Looking within, finding stillness, free from fear, free from attachment, know the sweet joy of the way.

Lao Tzu

Do not try to hold onto the Tao. Just hope the Tao will hold onto you.

In the eye, the mists of forgetting find a reservoir.

A deep, broad pool to stop and collect

And maybe be themselves forgotten.

In another I, and so too every I,

A truth becomes a way, becomes a life,

Becomes a spillway for the waters of despair.

I carry my sight and my self

To the portage where a single lift

Is all that stands before my discontent.

Two spider strands do not even know

They surf the same air too soft for skin.

Stillness comes where fate entwines.

A waterfall becomes still

At that instant where a hawk

Suspends the line between rise and fall.

In still, the laws of motion melt.

A non-Newtonian calculus paints the limits.

Infinite things are only absorbed.

Grasp if you must, it is an urge of our condition.

But watch for that other urge.

Sneaking in the unlatched door.

Landslides always forget to dam every channel.

I think they do so intentionally.

Hoping the water will seep the clench.

Knowing that the wall they throw down

Is but a stumbling prayer

To one day be the river's bed.

Jesus

The kingdom is not coming with signs to be
observed. The kingdom of heaven is within you.

Buddha

The way can not be found in words. Nothing on
earth can define it.

Lao Tzu

The Tao is empty, yet contains all, words can not
describe it. Better that one should look for it within.

The sly call of signs and wonders,
From the first days through tomorrow,
Are a substitute craving.

If truer longings came home
To take their place and stand their guard
Against the long, low elegies of emptiness,
We would be overcome,
We would explode,
Such is the fire within.

When scratched in stone,
The marks of our minds
Lead down and out.
To find a thing, even one thing,
That hasn't yet passed an ear,
Or learned the trick of declaration.
Swallow one more thing to say,
Tell yourself one less lie each day
And you may find the moment you need.

The dry gritted well
In a long abandoned oasis
Overflows with gratitude.
The full slaked thanks
Of every thirst it has blessed
With its drawing, its emptying.
I can not tell with words
How sweet that water felt
As it went down those speechless throats.

Jesus

The kingdom of God does not come in such a way
as to be seen.

Buddha

The way is not in the sky, it is in the heart.

Lao Tzu

The Tao can be seen without a window.

The purse holding unbroken treasure,
Is worn to the side, behind the hip,
To mark not its notice, but its secrets.
Birds and beasts have yet to refine
The art of try.
They fade into the world.
Not in such a way as to be seen,
They pass, and in passing,
They spend their time seeing.

There is a blue whose strike is so innocent,
It takes the eye's trust
To the sky for safekeeping.
The eye first startles, darting its way,
Finding shafts of lighted panic.
Must they feel so familiar?
Sooner or later, one glance turns inside,
Sees the pool of blue.
All others are but its reflection.

Camped at the base of a granite wall,
Come not to climb, but to scratch
Into the cracks, fissures of forgetting.
How shall I carve a window into the rock?
No tool at hand, all were dropped along the way.
No will to work, it too has passed.
Windows hold false promise
Of answers on the other side.
I lay my hands and cheek upon the rock.

Jesus

He is limitless, no one can set limits for Him.

Buddha

Universal mind transcends all individualization and limits.

Lao Tzu

Tao is like an empty bowl which can never be filled up.

Fallen limbs and trunks are no longer stacked,
They keep us now where they lay.

We are strewn at their decay.

A broad stroke was once the mode of transport
From image to ideal, along the river

That sews the hem of this overworld.

Now color is thrown in threads.

When breeze meets it in the air,

The misted hue can rise to forever.

Those who ply the air, drop in on worlds.

Each seen as a representation

Defined from each other by the flight.

Crawling ones see a different truth.

Their knees know that sand turns to soil

One grain at a time.

Lines do not hold focus so near the earth.

Change comes as shy introduction.

Steps move out of and into the infinite.

River deposit's the silt of a thousand storms.

Ocean comes to drink the sand,

Never quenched, for it has no thirst.

Sun and moon come watching and waiting

For seekers of things in the dark.

A dish of light in careful, cupped hands.

Fill if you must, but you will soon find crammed,

What you place with a hand of burden.

A gift falls down eternal.

Jesus

Find a place of stillness within yourself.

Buddha

The subject is quieted when the object ceases. The object ceases when the subject is quieted.

Lao Tzu

Realize ultimate emptiness. Achieve interior peace.
Be steady in stillness.

It is not something to hear, this bed,
This folded sky, this empty lawn,
This place uncertain of its own memory.
For its breathing has been taken all the way in,
Its color soon to follow,
So we must now find it by feel.
Remove the covering stones one by one.
In their heft, strangely, rain comes to mind.
Clearing the air of desire.

“Let us play.”, says the priest.
“May we no longer object to the other.
May we no more be subject to ego.”
“Help us to stay more within,
No more objecting to our fullness,
No more subjecting the outer to emptiness.”
“Turn us from that which is not.
Keep us where the only sound
Is the laughter of the illusion.”

The dream that came to early risers
In the valley of first planting
Was more insidious than they would ever know.
Nonetheless, they managed to live
On the dream's promise, until they dared
To claim it as their own.
Long dead they are. We see them still
Staring back from our blood
When we are cut in empty places.

Jesus

Blessed are the solitary, for they will find the kingdom.

Buddha

Sitting alone, sleeping alone, going about alone.
Vanquish ego by yourself alone.

Lao Tzu

Though there be many beautiful journeys, one achieves peace by staying at home.

Into the wilderness of undefined love

Go the foragers of silence, carrying baskets
Woven in the dim light of a single star.

A star so far and long alone

It turns and cracks the void,

Trembling among the multitudes.

Chance falls in the angle of the eye.

In the clouds, they miss their own footprints.

On the sand, they miss heaven's rise.

I wake softly in the middle of an empty room.

Where someone entered while I slept

And placed a single chair.

I sit and hear the storm of a mighty chorus.

I let it fall into its own echo

So all that remains is my blood.

The noise of alone strikes hard.

For the darker silence of no self

Is all that lies beyond.

Under the hours, near the rocks

Where a stream slips into the sea,

The spell of audiophilia fades.

Sit on your porch and make your journeys there.

Train your scope on the spot of dirt

Where nothing has ever grown.

Emptiness writes its travelogue

On parchment pressed from fallen leaves,

Dried just this morning.

Jesus

Be aware of that which is right in front of you.

Buddha

Concentrate the mind on the present moment.

Lao Tzu

Embrace the Tao and the present moment becomes obvious.

Raise a palm, level with the horizon.

Like a bitter root, it is hard to take.

Hard to take in, hard to bear.

It wants you, wants you to run ahead,

To be a visionary, a seer, a wandering eye,

A prophet in a land so small.

The farthest line seduces,

Keeps us from the light that falls

This side of our outstretched hand.

Pour out the standing water.

Sop up pools of doubt.

Wipe the edge and into corners.

Spread yourself now on mats in the sun.

Resist the desire to close your eyes.

The bright is the flame of our kiln.

When you feel the weight of air,

When you are sere even to morning dew,

Then you shall ask for drink.

I hold you under an eave of sadness.

The drip line an algal green at midwinter,

Marking our territory, our brief harbor.

I hold you in a well of mercy.

So deep that on this one clear night,

The passing moon is all we see.

I hold you out in every open.

Where vastness falls like snow.

Drifting, melting at our feet.

Jesus

Everyone who has known the self within, sees it in everything he does.

Buddha

He who experiences the unity of life sees his own self in all beings and all beings in his own self.

Lao Tzu

He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened.

Everyone who washes hands slowly,
Feeling the wet sprout like wild grass,
Remembering not the towel on the door.
Everyone who rolls the apple seed with their tongue.
The taper tracing in their mouth,
Ignoring the bitter bite to come.
Everyone who promises the hour alone,
Is caught before the edge,
Is brought to a shallow well.

A hawk perched on a snag just behind,
His eye adjusting to my distance,
Feeling my heat rise.
He sees in me the song his spirit taught him
When this eye was in another socket
And his wings in thicker air.
Once, he dreamt that he was a man.
His talons begging for alms,
His beak whispering a prayer.

A one celled organism drifts in the droplet
On the leper's scar.
It holds in its strands the mind of God.
If thinking is a parlor trick
Conjured to keep the beasts at bay,
Then what of softer things?
The melt of a cloud into a patient afternoon,
The dew of a newborn cry,
The waves of silk on a lover's back.

Middle Third:

Ripening

Jesus

That which you have will save you if you bring it
forth from within.

Buddha

Of that which is transient and subject to suffering
and change, one cannot rightly say "This is me."

Lao Tzu

No self is true self. The greatest is nobody.

The way up the holy mountain, steps marking time
Like stone etched by a single spider web falling
At dusk every day for a million centuries.

Into this crack I am born.

Mineral flecks fill my basket

Like winglets shed from an ethereal messenger.

In my seed is stored a form of energy

That does no commerce with visible things.

It is as near as I will ever be.

Do not think that the moving grass is the wind.

So say proverbs meant to wipe away

The milky film of each awakening.

But what of the waves?

If not the wind, may they be the tide?

May they be trailing curls of the moon's desire?

May my pain, may my change be more?

Not shadow nor shedding,

But the echo of my heart in its temple.

My no self was found napping,

The other day when no one was looking,

In the hammock made of rags.

I wondered what to make of it.

Did the nothing of nobody

Even take a breath?

I sat on the dune's edge.

My no self slid into the ocean

With not even a ripple.

Jesus

God is spirit and those who worship him worship in spirit and truth.

Buddha

Transcendental intelligence is not subject to birth or death.

Lao Tzu

It is a mystery. If you meet it, you cannot see its face.
If you follow it, you cannot see its back.

For what are we if not bodies of breath?

If not urns transporting love written in ash.
From wary, weary fires.

There is no worship except the vibration
Of every single thing.

Remember the truth of each step.
There is no spirit except the scent
Touching the air, touching the earth,
Touching the wake of our passing.

First worship is one of water.

The float of womb, every thought an imagining.
Bathed so near another's heart.

Then we move to holy air.

Its rhythm from a lighter pulse.
Its awe from a longer rest.

Take care how you fashion sacred space.
Some say the next worship
Will be one of light.

You cannot even try.

One morning you may wake,
May long to hold it inside.

If you let your eyes fall

Without a look, between the front and back,
A warm rise may long for you instead.

The wonder then becomes enough.

Taking every need to know,
Taking it all back to your bed.

Jesus

The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life.

Buddha

It is hard for the strong and rich to observe the way.

Lao Tzu

If you observe the Tao with simplicity of heart, great indeed is the Tao.

When formless mist reaches the narrowest crack,
It makes itself small,

Willing the path be its form.

When an aimless stream hits hard stone,
It makes itself soft,

So the falling away becomes its direction.

The hard and narrow way

Never calls for more and more,

It softly hums when I try too hard.

A strong man said to a rich man,

“Let us join together,

And we will be invincible.”

I need not tell you how that turned out.

It is writ on every page of earth story,

The halls therein are lined with lament.

The ones who become invincible,

Walk these roads with shy steps,

With only love’s taste in their mouth.

How much can an essence be reduced

Before its simplicity takes over,

Rendering it too beautiful for eyes?

How thin must starlight be stretched

To enter our pores

When we lie in grass at midnight?

Better to ask how simple must be

The mind that sees the star

And believes it is its own.

Jesus

Come to me for my yoke is easy and my burden is light and you will find rest.

Buddha

Come and follow. Plunge into incomparable bliss and abide in it.

Lao Tzu

Fish need to get lost in water. People need to be lost in Tao.

They sit there, right where I can see them.

They never even try to disguise their voice,
They never even try to hide.

They call, "Carry us, carry us down to the river."

"Wade us down 'till water comes to your waist."

"Feel your arms suspend allegiance to weight."

Who, if I were blind, would carry me?

Who would make that trip to the lapping edge?

A walk without suspicion, a walk without woe.

From the precipice, the horizon sits as though fallen.

Earth slope just clean enough to stop its slide

Just before the line where no light returns.

Come now, follow this way, mind not that first step.

Think not of beds that once opened

To the sun crying through the window.

Do not be what you think you ought.

Only what is true, what the pool

Brings to your skin in the evening.

I found it in the winter sky.

Light so fragile it melted on my tongue.

So sweet I needn't even swallow.

I lost it the same, eye for eye

When I leaned into the warm

Like a spoon skimming the soup.

I too am lost. Lost to the finding,

Lost to the claim,

Lost in the wind across the sand.

Jesus

Beware of the desire for things, for one's life does not equal an abundance of possessions.

Buddha

One leaves a smaller joy to attain a greater one.

Lao Tzu

The one who is content with what they have is richer than the richest.

Bread became a symbol of desire,
A trail of crumbs wanting to be mine,
Leading to a famine in the land.
Birds came, as if in a fable
But soon they rejected that role,
Rejected even their own hunger.
When something wants you so strong,
It peels like a paring knife,
Never piercing the flesh.

Particles of delight bombard the sky,
Passing through mountains,
Gathering at my feet.
Have they come to wash me
Or have they come to cry,
Left on their own?
When I stoop to drink
They rise as one.
More beautiful than they will ever know.

On a restless night, we heard the beasts,
Their insincere roar yielding
A watered down fear.
The dawn brings contentment.
A color like wet moss
On broken bark.
The color of our deep, of ourselves.
Where we, once born, had all,
And all became our day.

Jesus

Those who find their life will lose it and those who
lose it for my sake will find it.

Buddha

The one who is free like the air is not attached to
worldly things.

Lao Tzu

The one who is content with what they have is richer
than the richest.

Allied as we are with wanderers,
We move in linear determination
But with a young boy's random scatter.
Roadside markers are the death of every quest.
Run fast enough and you may be spared,
Stop and you may be blessed.
A bloom lasts as long as it needs to last,
A vault of its own treasure,
A long lost brother from birth.

Some creatures know not what it means to close
Their eyes, choosing never to leave the world
To the darkness behind themselves.
A spider once flew on a web strand
Broken off as a bird passed by,
Caught by a dipping wind.
He was the first of his kind, arachnida,
To fly, to know the chaos of the air,
His memory is your longing.

First inhale today, a freshness
Falling from a nature
Painted in a groggy imagination.
First cleansing today, a purity
Revealing from an underskin,
A powder so fine it smiles.
First unlocking today, a freedom
Placing nowhere in the hand
Of the beggar of time.

Jesus

Don't accumulate earthly possessions which can be destroyed or stolen.

Buddha

Acting with charity and goodness stores up hidden treasure no thief can steal.

Lao Tzu

No peace comes to the wealthy. They must guard their treasure against those who would steal it.

An hour in the field, in the time of frost,
Each step so carefully laden,
The sound folds back into an alms envelope.
An hour is needed, to be in a place
Not just for the change of light
But for cellular changes.
Unlike so much that picks your locks,
An hour in the field in the time of frost
Will never steal your destiny.

The strength of my embrace
Is the dividing line
Between my land and yours.
Platted by pacing the edge.
How far one could walk
In the time of one breath.
By grace, no fence ever rose.
The survey stones sink
A little lower with each rain.

The new moon brings
A more perfect opportunity
To divest our desires.
A satiating fire
Burns in a silver lamp.
It has a legend inscribed.
"If, in me, you see your reflection
And notice not my flame,
Look away, lest you die."

Jesus

Go and sell what you have and give it to the poor.

Buddha

Those tied to possessions are more helpless than those in prison.

Lao Tzu

The wise one leaves the gold buried in the mountains.

The kingdom of heaven is like a man
Who, when he finally awoke,
Found that he could not feel a thing.
Except for a shining pain behind his ear
Where he had been kissed by a wood sprite
When he was a small boy.
The beggars of the forest are a different breed.
Bound in their emptiness
To be our bread of remembering.

It is not so much the tying as the knotting.
Hitching over and over
Until no gap of rope remains.
It is here that our clothes wear away.
A lamentation of torn strips
A fragile broom for sorrow's dust.
It may not be until the skin rubs raw
And our labor sweats the wound
That we wince, breaking the dark.

The wise one leaves the gold buried.
For when you do this kneeling,
It becomes a radiant tulip bulb.
The diamond becomes a star,
Yoked to a twin in the sky,
Their axis passes through my heart.
When has a hole held more mystery
Than the subterranean spheres
Beneath our pillow.

Jesus

Everyone who hears my words and lives by them is
like the wise man who built his house on a rock.

Buddha

As a rock cannot be moved by the wind, the wise are
not moved by praise or blame.

Lao Tzu

The earth lasts because it does not live for itself.

In caves there are only shadows.

Platonic forms shuddering when struck by light.

Figments and apparitions of beauty.

Their canvas though is metamorphic

Or phantom's blood obsidian or a diary of shale

Or a deep veined ovum of cataclysm.

When painted on rock, shadows skip a layer

Beyond the surface to the sky,

Stones that have learned to fly.

Two imposters stand outside the wall

Of the city at the edge of time.

Their odor precedes their knock.

One is sweet, the other stench.

They start to speak but stop when they see

They have already made their mark.

The wind shifts, it blows their fate,

Blows it into a single lie.

To the rock beyond the dunes.

I will be your foundation.

I will be your mine of treasure.

I will be your highest gaze.

My peaks shall yield to your hand.

My valleys shall drink your blood.

My barren steppes shall be your fall.

Lay your head upon my rocks.

Enter your bones within my cracks.

Divine your fate in a single grain of sand.

Jesus

Do charity in secret and your Father will reward in secret.

Buddha

Those monks are immature who seek prestige.

Lao Tzu

You will not achieve recognition by boasting.

Under the cover of dew dark,
New growth awaits, a downy skin
Ready for water, ready for sky.
Psyche's wounds do not gape
Or spill their entrails out on the pavement.
She works, like love, behind the veil.
Her gifts take years to unfold,
Wrapped in origamic twists and turns
She waits, holds our pain until we are ready.

The day before you came, I walked the path,
The one etched in copper soil.
I heard no mention of your name.
I heard no shifting song or cry
Coming from the other side.
No warning smoke, high on the ridge.
And yet you came, and still you come.
It was not the last time
I refused to heed the warnings.

On the south canyon wall
Buried hosannas need never be shouted.
Come taste the shade.
In the darkest corner of the garden
A petal finds treasure
It swears never to tell.
The secrets held close and dear
In a drop of cool water are enough.
Come listen to the wet.

Jesus

You blind guides. You strain out the gnat and
swallow the camel.

Buddha

Those who see sin where there is none and none
where there is, they follow false teaching.

Lao Tzu

Lack of faith on one's own part encourages
faithlessness in others.

The mesh across the opening of careful hearts
Was woven in the hours near dawn,
When hope still lives & tears take longer to dry.
Watch below when traversing the trees.
A single authentic word can rip the mesh apart
If dropped from too high a crown.
A deluge will follow close behind
And the gash will come to define it
If it does not first become its rescue.

The myth of images tells of a land of mirrors.
A people who could only see reflection
And only know where they had been.
A boy with a sling and a stone
Became their deliverer, bringing love
For a time, until they went mad.
In the clearing near your door,
I hold before you a bowl.
Do not look any further.

If the earth itself told you that you were
The source of faith for all beings,
Would you believe?
Would you take it as a load or as a breeze?
Blowing its color across the plain
Into the very night of now.
Walk for awhile before you fly.
You must believe, say the trees.
Your must will become their miracle.

Last Third:

Enduring

Jesus

How does the small join itself to the great? By
letting go of all things that cannot follow you.

Buddha

Attaining only the ineffable, the one whose mind is
freed from thought and desire crosses over to the
other shore.

Lao Tzu

If our eye of discernment is suddenly opened, we
will be freed from lust and greed.

All things that can follow you.

Are these the things that have been linked to us
Even before we were born?
Are they things that are blind without us?
Are they weary things
That only know how to follow?
Are they things that ride our backs,
Their arms draped softly,
Letting go for dear life.

The art of navigation was born

On a cloudless night
At the edge of great waters.
Born in trust, not thought or longing
Or the pull of distant gravity
Dreaming below the horizon.
Once a star is followed,
That is all there is.
One eye, one marker, one voyage.

This drop of blue glass I hold

Locks hundreds of tiny air bubbles,
Each an eye, each a code,
The key to which lies in a single line
Connecting every one
On its way through this life.
We are the same, drifting on this world,
Translated by every connection,
Readied by every opening.

Jesus

Understand what is here and now and you also
understand the mysteries.

Buddha

The wise man who sees the world as an illusion does
not act as if it is real.

Lao Tzu

The wise person sees and hears like a child, that
which is in front of him.

Long before there was a tomorrow
Or any land beyond

The reach of a morning walk.
A hunter was stalked by a vision,
Tempting him to look for truth
In stranger places and ghostly times.
Some say we fell when eating forbidden fruit.
The wind says we fall
When we reach to take its measure.

If everything I have ever known
Or ever will come to know
Was brought before me for inspection
And I was told, "You may discard one thing,"
"Or you must discard everything."
How could I choose?
This may be what is real.
Loving every single speck of the universe
Is the same as loving the emptiness.

Stillness sounds like a hair standing on end
Then falling limp in the calm,
A droplet of oil.
Quiet tastes like an open window
On the first day of new
When the air waits to be redeemed.
The newborn knows this best.
The everything before them
They have not forgotten.

Jesus

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Buddha

See yourself in all beings, free from negative feelings
toward others.

Lao Tzu

The world can be turned over to the one who loves
others as himself.

The first sign of sentience begs not definition.

It has a preference for gliding

Carried on the wind of its own becoming

We know reflection, we know within,

We know the sleek altar of self aware

But do we know love?

As a first sign it is most natural

And also the least

The least most thing in creation.

The day of the dead bear was matted and caked

Torn by dogs, he fell before he had the chance

To smell me when he crossed the stream.

He would have frozen for a moment,

Turned to go back up the ridge,

Then turned again without a thought.

The scent of man was lost

On the plains of Mesopotamia.

Wild has but a hint in the air that carries us.

There was division among the gods

When they ceded control

Of the earth and sea and sky.

The powerful won the day,

So power has been the easiest answer,

The easiest hand to play.

Only when the world turned a million more times

Did we know that winning was not our only bread

Or water or sleep or song.

Jesus

What you do to one of the least of these my
brethren, you do also to me.

Buddha

Those who would care for me should care for those
who are sick.

Lao Tzu

Since the sage is in need of nothing, he cares for
those who are in need.

The artists and poets of theoretical physics
Sculpt intricate cosmologies from found objects,
The ephemera of infinity.
They, like an empty heart, are seekers
Of that which it can be said,
“There is nothing smaller.”
They seek so that they may minister,
May be caretakers of the invisible,
Washing the feet of eternity.

A hundred years past, a graft was carefully wed
To an apprehensive young sapling.
It now wonders about dying.
The ailing cries do not translate well.
They bore into the ear like venom.
Maybe they are not even cries.
Could it be a hundred years of reaching
Finally snapped the cord?
A gardener holds the branch softly as he prunes

The dune shifts before howling wind
And spider steps can move a grain.
Without water, it feels no thirst.
A single atom of the firstborn element
Adrift between galaxies.
Alone, it feels no want.
A longing returns with the rain,
Hidden and blessed with forgetting.
Without a single touch, it feels no care.

Jesus

Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.

Buddha

With generosity and kindness, treat all people the same.

Lao Tzu

Heaven belongs to those who are merciful.

The descendants of the darkest evil,
Themselves so void they scarcely breathe,
Never had chance to be born.
This, the bioethics of evolutionary mercy,
Rains on the just and unjust alike,
Always assures there will be a least of us,
Always promises sifting and selection
Of consciousness, the path to the alcove
Where candles wait to be lit.

Life runs hard as soon as it is able.
It doesn't learn to flee until much later,
After the first comfortless cry.
We wait in line, wondering if we are worthy.
The first recurring fear
Of our ancestral home.
I will protect you if you expose,
You will protect me if I lay down
Everything from skin to bone.

While on a winter walk in a snow fallen garden,
A monk thought, "I must keep walking."
And so began a seven year pilgrimage.
On the last day of the seventh year,
Thousands of miles from home,
He met a young man seeking wisdom.
When he found he could refrain
From teaching all he had learned,
He knew he could say, "This here is heaven."

Jesus

Love your enemies.

Buddha

You will become free by loving those who hate you.

Lao Tzu

Do not dismiss those who are evil as unworthy. If you are wise, you will save all men.

In deepest blood, colored like pressed grape skins,

Cells settle to the end, hematic messengers,

Knowing primal, knowing in the beginning.

Knowing the telling of dualities,

The mythos of opposing fields once one,

Once held in bond like mating spirals.

They know such love so strong it cannot hold

The weight of the other.

So bright it eclipses every reflection.

These days, such things fly apart,

Fling themselves upon the torrents

Of our tiny expanding universe.

Light and dark, good and evil, they flee,

They fear the love that once was theirs,

Would now become their annihilation.

Do we dare touch them both at once?

Knowing the static alone

Will radiate every empty place.

Somehow, across twisting eons,

The river never got the message

That has become our anxiety's axiom.

Do not build a dam in your sister's canyon,

Drowning her gifts in doubt,

She was not made for the harness.

Do not dump your waste

In the field of your enemy.

Your scales were not made for his assaying.

Jesus

If you know how to suffer, you will have the power
not to suffer.

Buddha

Things which are affected by suffering, change and
decay, one can not say this is the Self.

Lao Tzu

I suffer due to my ego and my selfishness.

Just as meaning is not found in a few great things

But in a thousand little ones,

So it is with suffering.

The pinpricks of a million moments

Uncovers the how of pain,

While great aches see only the what.

Though flames may consume with spectacle,

The tuition of truth

Is gathered one tear at a time.

The half life of love has so far resisted

Mortal attempts to confine it

As if it were a thing to be measured.

Its color keeps the sky alive,

Its rate of decay must be longer

Than the age of the cosmos.

There is an I that has not changed

Since the day it first came to be.

This is what you are feeling right now.

The ego is careful when selecting

The reeds and bark by the river.

It knows the weave must be strong.

In these baskets of unbelief,

We carry fragile offerings for pain

As if it weren't enough on its own.

Thus we feed and water pain.

We think that pouring our fears like libations

Will make us lighter, will make us forget.

Jesus

Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it and
whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Buddha

If you are vigilant, you can go beyond death.
Meditating with vigilance, the wise come to life.

Lao Tzu

Those who do not have the means to live do not fear
death and are greater than those who make too
much of life.

The search for words leads to drowning.

Diving, past the point

Where breath knows how to return.

It leads to lines of straighter edge.

Forms and shadows of nothing found

In the world beyond our own hand's fashion.

Leave the quest to find salvation.

So say the wanderers lost of life,

Lost in the woods of no desire.

Birds go beyond death when they trust the air

To be more than a medium for falling.

They know the other side the same as this.

Stars go beyond death when they nova into eternity.

Trusting the void to be more than their skin.

They know their destination the same as now.

A child goes beyond death with its first cry.

Feeling the sound as more than vibration.

Still yet to forget its time before.

We are the countrymen of sorrows.

We who stake our claims too deep and broad.

The earth is ours, without us, what can be?

A monk sits by the side of the road,

His alms cup overturned.

He has forgotten how to beg.

Instead, he offers, "I can show you death."

But only if you promise

Not to make a big deal out of it.

Jesus

You must know that the living God is within you
and you are in Him.

Buddha

The Way is perfect. Be serene in the oneness of all
things.

Lao Tzu

The Way is a void. It is a deep pool that never runs
dry.

In the beginning, God's last act of creation
Was to give it all one quick twist
And still today, we all are turning.
Galaxies spiral, subatomic spinning keeps us true,
Time itself may even be a circle dance,
It's arc too slight to ever feel.
The cosmic eddy serves as source
Of every transformation, from what we are
To what we didn't know we are.

Water falls, long, lean, low on the rocks.
Painting them with its blood
Until their birth color returns.
Rock becomes water, water enters rock.
They sit and wait as a parable.
No one passes by.
For a moment, sadness uncouples from joy.
Starts to evaporate, then stops,
Remembering it is already complete.

You who are empty and full with the same,
Love those who come to drink
And those who come to pour.
Into your depths they would dive,
At your edge they would cast
From your walls they would fall.
Give them your heart and receive.
There is nothing more than your emptiness,
There is nothing less than your all.

Jesus

I have overcome the world.

Buddha

If the mind makes no discriminations, the ten thousand things are of a single essence.

Lao Tzu

Can you purify the mystic vision and wash it until it is spotless?

In the stubborn walled canyons left as dross
By the long bladed plow of retreating ice sheets,
In their most hidden holds, I am.

I do not wait, waiting is for temporal things.

Therein is found a far off space,

Thereby a promise, a shall beyond what is.

In the nights when soul light fades,

When decomposed bodies line the divine path.

When dawn is far and love is farther still, I am.

Gardens take no notes.

The trumpet collects the hummingbird

The same today as the next, as the next.

Sometimes sight is but a wisp.

We cannot observe the nameless one,

Or, from above, we can do nothing but see.

Taste not for judging bitterness

But clean your plate of every last crumb.

Ten thousands things indeed.

A sage once spent a year with pigs.

Rooting for scraps of pride,

Learning the thousand flavors of mud.

When he returned, he bothered not to wash

And so it came that he was shunned

And thus could only pray in isolation.

The monsoons came, and with them, cleansing.

And he was asked to join once more.

He never felt so much alone.

Jesus

Everyone who has heard and learned from the
Father, comes to me.

Buddha

Free from appetite and craving, rejoicing in freedom,
the sage becomes a light of the world.

Lao Tzu

Knowing that which does not change is
enlightenment; to be one with the Tao is divine.

They must be unwrapped, these teachings.

Untied, undone, unfolded on our laps.

Tell them the truth, they will find their answers.

They are inhaled, these comings.

Dissection only leaves empty fragments,

Blown glass drippings raise disfiguring scars.

Come to me, I come to you.

Come at dawn, in knowing light.

Come in rest, with every last thing your own.

Rub the leaf between your fingers as you pass by,

The scent becomes a word, becomes a thought,

Excites your mind, calling.

Close your eyes before you turn your head.

The sun does not announce quietly,

A bright shout from the rooftops.

Combined, they are an herbal light,

Drawing us to their doorstep

To sit in their palm, a seedling.

Unite your every, ever changing cell

To the changeless wind,

Ever blowing, never moving.

Sanctus fire, kept in a lamp under a ledge.

We stand to look beyond,

While down below, our warm is patient.

It waits, conserving the burn, the flame a spiral

Counterwise to our own.

We mate, another dips into one.

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