

Please Call Me by My True Names by Thich Nhat Hanh

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow—
even today I am still arriving.
Look deeply: every second I am arriving
to be a bud on a Spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry, to fear and to hope.
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive.
I am a mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river.
And I am the bird that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.
I am a frog swimming happily in the clear water of a pond.
And I am the grass-snake that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin a bamboo sticks.
And I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.
I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate.
And I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.
I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands.
And I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to,
my people, dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm. it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.
My pain is like a river of tears, so vast it fills the four oceans.
Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.
Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up
and the door of my heart, could be left open,
the door of compassion.

~*~

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