



Still Arriving, 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 as 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 my 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.

--Thich Nhat Hanh