

WITH THAT MOON LANGUAGE¹

Admit something:

Everyone you see, you say to them,
"Love me."

Of course you do not do this out loud;
Otherwise,
Someone would call the cops.

Still though, think about this,
This great pull in us
To connect.

Why not become the one
Who lives with a full moon in each eye
That is always saying,

With that sweet moon
Language,

What every other eye in this world
Is dying to
Hear.

BRING THE MAN TO ME

A Perfect One was traveling through the desert.
He was stretched out around the fire one night
And said to one of his close ones,

"There is a slave loose not far from us.
He escaped today from a cruel master.
His hands are still bound behind his back,
His feet are also shackled.

I can see him right now praying for God's help.
Go to him.
Ride to that distant hill;
About a hundred feet up and to the right
You will find a small cave.
He is there.

Do not say a single word to him.
Bring the man to me.
God requests that I personally untie his body
And press my lips to his wounds"

The disciple mounts his horse and within two hours
Arrives at the small mountain cave.

The slave sees him coming, the slave looks frightened.
The disciple, or orders not to speak,
Gestures toward the sky, pantomiming:

God saw you in prayer,
Please come with me,

¹ Selections from *The Gift: Poems by Hafiz*, transl. Daniel Ladinsky.

A great *Murshid*² has used his heart's divine eye
To know your whereabouts.

The slave cannot believe this story,
And begins to shout at the man and tries to run

But trips from his binding.
The disciple becomes forced to subdue him.

Think of this picture as they now travel:

The million candles in the sky are lit and singing.
Every particle of existence is a dancing altar
That some mysterious force worships.

The earth is a church floor whereupon
In the middle of a glorious night
Walks a slave, weeping, tied to a rope behind a horse,
With a speechless rider
Taking him toward the unknown.

Several times with all of his might the slave
Tries to break free,
Feeling he is being returned to captivity.
The rider stops, dismounts—brings his eyes
Near the prisoner's eyes.
A deep kindness there communicates an unbelievable hope.
The rider motions—soon, soon you will be free.
Tears roll down from the rider's cheeks
In happiness for this man.

Anger, all this fighting and tormenting want,

² Persian: teacher.

Mashuq,³
God has seen you and sent a close one.

Mashuq,
God has seen your heart in prayer
And sent Hafiz.

³ Persian: sweetheart.

**WE HAVE NOT COME TO
TAKE PRISONERS**

We have not come here to take prisoners,
But to surrender ever more deeply
To freedom and joy.

We have not come into this exquisite world
To hold ourselves hostage from love.

Run my dear,
From anything
That may not strengthen
Your precious budding wings.

Run like hell my dear,
From anyone likely
To put a sharp knife
Into the sacred, tender vision
Of your beautiful heart.

We have a duty to befriend
Those aspects of obedience
That stand outside of our house
And shout to our reason
"O please, o please,
Come out and play."

For we have not come here to take prisoners
Or to confine our wondrous spirits,

But to experience ever and ever more deeply
Our divine courage, freedom, and
Light!

I HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH

I
Have
Learned
So much from God
That I can no longer
Call
Myself

A Christian, a Hindu, a Muslim,
A Buddhist, a Jew.

The Truth has shared so much of Itself
With me

That I can no longer call myself
A man, a woman, an angel,
Or even pure
Soul.

Love has
Befriended Hafiz so completely
It has turned to ash
And freed
Me

Of every concept and image
My mind has ever known.

TIRED OF SPEAKING SWEETLY

Love wants to reach out and manhandle us,
Break all our teacup talk of God.

If you had the courage and
Could give the Beloved his choice, some nights,
He would just drag you around the room
By your hair,
Ripping from your grip all those toys in the world
That bring you no joy.

Love sometimes gets tired of speaking sweetly
And wants to rip to shreds
All your erroneous notions of truth

That make you fight within yourself, dear one,
And with others,

Causing the world to weep
On too many fine days.

God wants to manhandle us,
Lock us inside of a tiny room with Himself
And practice His dropkick.

The Beloved sometimes wants
To do us a great favor:

Hold us upside down
And shake all the nonsense out.

But when we hear
He is in such a “playful drunken mood”

Most everyone I know
Quickly packs their bags and hightails it
Out of town.

THE SUBURBS

Complaint
Is only possible

While living in the suburbs
Of God.

**COVERS HER FACE
WITH BOTH HANDS**

What
We speak
Becomes the house we live in.

Who will want to sleep in your bed
If the roof leaks
Right above
It?

Look what happens when the tongue
Cannot say to kindness,

“I will be your slave.”

The moon
Covers her face with both hands

And can't bear
To look.

THE SEED CRACKED OPEN

It used to be
That when I would wake in the morning
I could with confidence say,
“What am ‘I’ going to
Do?”

That was before the seed
Cracked open.

Now Hafiz is certain:

There are two of us housed
In this body,

Doing the shopping together in the market and
Tickling each other
While fixing the evening's food.

Now when I awake
All the internal instruments play the same music:

“God, what love-mischief can ‘We’ do
For the world
Today?”

THE GREAT RELIGIONS

The
Great religions are the
Ships,

Poets the life
Boats.

Every sane person I know has jumped
Overboard.

That is good for business
Isn't it

Hafiz?

WHEN YOU CAN ENDURE

When
The words stop
And you can endure the silence

That reveals your heart's
Pain

Of emptiness
Or that great wrenching-sweet longing,

That is the time to try and listen
To what the Beloved's
Eyes

Most want
To

Say.