

April 14, 2020

Rumi is a 13th century Persian poet who is often discovered by young people when they graduate from high school and/or go away to college, leaving the pre-adolescent bubble of their parent's home and Rumi is often stumbled upon by people like me when we reached our mid-life crisis at about 45 or 50 when we leave our pre-old age bubble and begin to notice that we cannot hear or see as well as we used to and we start finding hairs growing in our ears and out of our noses and we think seriously about where we have been and where we are going.

In both instances of leaving the bubbles of a former time and finding ourselves on the thresholds of something new, I think, at least in my case, we find new appetites and desires in our lives that we had not known to be as urgent before and so able to be indulged.

In either case the experience opens up, or can open up, serious questions that we want to find answers for because being on thresholds is not where we want to be, we want to be, as much as we might protest the opposite when we are 19 or 20, we want to be where we feel at home because home gives our desires and appetites a context from which to interpret and understand all the rest that is going on in our lives.

We are all on thresholds now, together, we have these new desires and appetites, most of them complicated or troubling, not exciting and promising, we have appetites for being able to be safe without complications and distances, we want to be able to work and not from home, we want to hold and hug and kiss the people we care about, we want to be able to be unself-conscious about life, we want to not be sad.

Quite honestly, I am afraid that being on this threshold I will not live long enough to see what normal will be for the young people that I love and that I care about. I worry that I will not see them happy in careers, married, have babies, that I can share stories with about when their mom or dad was young and silly and reckless but loved with unquestioned affection by me.

Please consider checking out the poetry of Rumi, you might find it helpful and it might help you to cross your new threshold for a few minutes. Rumi was not a Christian or Jew, he was a Muslim, a Sufi Mystic, so his idea of who the guide

is who is sending from beyond should not be specified with Catholic notions of God, just leave it be and spend time with “what” is arriving and has arrived in your life, these sad days being just threads and knots in whole grand tapestry.

Here is one of the favorite Rumi poems, **The Guest House**:

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.*

Welcome and entertain them all!

*Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.*

*He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*