

Emptiness

Consider the difference
in our actions and God's actions.

We often ask, "Why did you do that?"
or "Why did I act like that?"

We do act, and yet everything we do
is God's creative action.

We look back and analyze the events
of our lives, but there is another way
of seeing, a backward-and-forward-at-once
vision, that is not rationally understandable.

Only God can understand it.
Satan made the excuse, *You caused me to fall*,
whereas Adam said to God, *We did this
to ourselves*. After this repentance,
God asked Adam, *Since all is within
my foreknowledge, why didn't you
defend yourself with that reason?*

Adam answered, *I was afraid,
and I wanted to be reverent*.

Whoever acts with respect will get respect.
Whoever brings sweetness will be served almond cake.
Good women are drawn to be with good men.

Honor your friend.
Or treat him rudely,
and see what happens!

Love, tell an incident now
that will clarify this mystery
of how we act freely, and are yet
compelled. One hand shakes with palsy.
Another shakes because you slapped it away.

Both tremblings come from God,
but you feel guilty for the one,
and what about the other?

These are intellectual questions.
The spirit approaches the matter
differently. Omar once had a friend, a scientist,
Bu'l-Hakam, who was flawless at solving

empirical problems, but he could not follow Omar
into the area of illumination and wonder.

Now I return to the text, "And He is with you,
wherever you are," but when have I ever left it!

Ignorance is God's prison.
Knowing is God's palace.

We sleep in God's unconsciousness.
We wake in God's open hand.

We weep God's rain.
We laugh God's lightning.

Fighting and peacefulness
both take place within God.

Who are we then
in this complicated world-tangle,
that is really just the single, straight
line down at the beginning of *ALLAH?*

Nothing.
We are
emptiness.

Jelaluddin Rumi