

THE LUMINOUS SEAM : POETRY AS A STITCH BETWEEN WORLDS

Mary Ellen Lough, Haden, April 2026

We will turn our madness into flowers ~ Alice Walker

The Fish

~ Jane Hirshfield

There is a fish
that stitches
the inner water
and the outer water together.

Bastes them
with its gold body's flowing.

A heavy thread
follows that transparent river,
secures it—
the broad world we make daily,
daily give ourselves to.

Neither imagined
nor unimagined,
neither winged nor finned,
we walk the luminous seam.
Knot it.
Flow back into the open gills.

A mysterious quickening inhabits the depths of any good poem—protean, elusive, alive in its own right. The word “creative” shares its etymology with the word “creature,” and carries a similar sense of breathing aliveness, of an active, fine-grained, and multicellular making. What is creative is rooted in growth and rising, in the bringing into existence of new and autonomous being. We feel something stir, shiver, swim its way into the world when a good poem opens its eyes.

- Jane Hirshfield, *from 10 Windows*

I think that we're beginning to remember that the first poets didn't come out of a classroom, that poetry began when somebody walked off of a savanna or out of a cave and looked up at the sky with wonder and said, "Ahhh." That was the first poem.

- Lucille Clifton

Did you not see that when your creative force turned to the world, how the dead things moved under it and through it, how they grew and prospered, and how your thoughts flowed in rich rivers? If your creative force now turns to the place of the soul, you will see how your soul becomes green and how its field bears wonderful fruit.

- Carl Jung

When I write, I feel much larger than the limits of my body. There is a mystery you tap into that is much bigger. And the poem becomes just a glimpse into what you reveal to yourself.

- Ocean Vuong

When the inner and the outer are wedded, revelation occurs.

- Hildegard of Bingen

...the actual task is to integrate the two threads of one's life...the within and the without.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy, and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experience you are released from the curse of pathology. Even the very disease takes on a numinous character.

- Carl Jung

A threshold is a place or moment where transformational work, learning or integration occurs. A gate is a place of initiation or entryway; it is the protecting and testing that must occur before entry is permitted.

- Angeles Arrian

The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds – and at the same time, is the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible.

- Mircea Eliade

Sometimes you hear a voice through
the door calling you, as fish out of
water hear the waves or a hunting
falcon hears the drum's come back.

- Rumi

From : Threshold, by Maggie Smith

any open

space may be
a threshold, an arch
of entering and leaving.

Crossing a field, wading
through nothing
but timothy grass,
imagine yourself passing from
and into. Passing through
doorway after
doorway after doorway.

from : The Body Is a Doorway

- Sophie Strand

I have not been
inside a love story
I have been a love story
my very body, a clamorous,
complicated interplay of
beings disagreeing, singing,
swooning, and melting
together. I don't know
where the love goes. But
I know that every time I

Hidden Self

- Rumi

You are sitting here with us,
but you are also out walking in a field at dawn.

You are yourself the animal we hunt
when you come with us on the hunt.

You are in your body
like a plant is solid in the ground,
yet you are wind.

You are the diver's clothes
lying empty on the beach.
You are the fish.

In the ocean are many bright strands
and many dark strands like veins that are seen
when a wing is lifted up.

Your hidden self is blood in those,
those veins that are lute strings
that make ocean music,
not the sad edge of surf,
but the sound of no shore.

Break My Heart

- Joy Harjo

There are always flowers,
Love cries, or blood.

Someone is always leaving
By exile, death or heartbreak

The heart is a fist.
It pockets prayer or holds rage.

It's a timekeeper.
Music maker, or backstreet truth teller.

Baby, baby, baby
You can't say what's been said

Before, though even words
Are creatures of habit.

You cannot force poetry
With a ruler, or jail it at a desk.

Mystery is blind, but wills you
To untie the cloth, in eternity.

Police with their guns
Cannot enter here to move us off our lands.

History will always find you, and wrap you
In its thousand arms.

Someone will lift from the earth
Without wings.

Another will fall from the sky
Through the knots of a tree.

Chaos is primordial.
All words have roots here.

You will never sleep again
Though you will never stop dreaming.

The end can only follow the beginning.
And it will zig zag through time, governments, and lovers.

Be who you are, even if it kills you.

It will. Over and over again.
Even as you live.

Break my heart, why don't you?

