

Nuria: THE LONG STRING

Gemma: The mouse asks the beloved frog,

Rahimah: "Do you know what you are to me?
During the day,
you're my energy for working.
At night, you're my deepest sleep.
But could we be together
outside of time as well as inside?
Physically, we meet only at breakfast.
Your absence during the rest of the day
enters all my cravings!

I drink...five hundred times too much.
I eat...like a bulimic trying to die.
Help me!

I know I'm not worth it,
but your generosity is so vast!

Let your sunlight shine on this piece of dung,
and dry it out, so I can be used for fuel
to warm and light up a bathhouse.

Look on the terrible and stupid things I've done,
and cause herbs and eglantine to grow out of them.

Gemma: The sun does this with the ground.
Think what glories God can make
from the fertilizer of sinning!

The mouse continues to beg...

Rahimah: "My friend,
I know I'm ugly to you.
I'm ugly to me!
I'm perfectly ugly!

But look, you'll be sad
when I die, won't you? You'll sit by my grave
and weep a little?

All I'm asking is,
be with me that little bit of time
while I'm still alive!
Now. I want you NOW!"

Gemma: A certain rich man was accustomed to honor a sufi
by giving him pieces of silver.

"Would you like one piece of silver now,
o Lord of my Spirit, or three at breakfast
tomorrow morning?"

The sufi answered,
"I love the half a coin
that I have already in my hand from yesterday
more than the promise of a whole one today,
or the promise of a hundred tomorrow.
A sufi is the child of *this* moment."

Back to the mouse, who says...

Rahimah: "The slap of Now
has cash in its hand.
Give me slaps, on the neck,
anywhere!"

Gemma: Soul of my soul of the soul or a hundred universes,
be water in this now-river, so jasmine flowers
will lift on the brim, and someone far off
can notice the flower-colors and know
there's water here.

"The sign is in the face."
You can look at an orchard
and tell if it rained last night. That freshness
is the sign.

Again, the mouse...

Rahimah: "Friend, I'm made from the ground,
and for the ground.
You're of the water.

I'm always standing on the bank calling to you.
Have mercy. I can't follow you into the water.
Isn't there some way we can be in touch?
A messenger? Some reminder?"

Yasmin: The two friends decided that the answer was a long, a longing! string, with one end tied to the mouse's foot and the other to the frog's, so that by pulling on it their secret connection might be remembered and the two could meet, as the soul does with the body.

The froglike soul often escapes from the body and soars in the happy water. Then the mouse body pulls on the string, and the soul thinks,

Nuria: *Damn.
I have to go back on the riverbank and talk
with that scatterbrained mouse!*

Yasmin: You'll hear more about this when you really wake up, on Resurrection Day!

So the mouse and the frog tied the string, even though the frog had a hunch some tangling was to come.

Never ignore those intuitions.

When you feel some slight repugnance about doing something, listen to it. These premonitions come from God.

Remember the story of the military elephant who would not move toward the Kaaba. Paralyzed in that direction, yet swift if pointed toward Yemen. It had some in-knowing from the unseen.

So the prophet Jacob, when his other sons wanted to take Joseph out in the country for two days, had a heart-sickness about their going, and it was true, though divine destiny prevailed, despite his foreboding, as it will.

It's not always a blind man who falls in a pit. Sometimes it's one who can see.

A holy one does sometimes fall, but by that tribulation, he or she ascends, escapes many illusions, escapes conventional religion, escapes being so bound to phenomena.

Yasmin: Think of how PHENOMENA come trooping
out of the desert of non-existence
into this materiality.

Morning and night,
they arrive in a long line and take over
from each other...

A son comes of age, and the father packs up.
This place of phenomena is a wide exchange
of highways, with everything going all sorts
of different ways.

We seem to be sitting still,
but we're actually moving, and the fantasies
of phenomena are sliding through us
like ideas through curtains.

They go to the well
of deep love inside each of us
They fill their jars there, and they leave.

Gemma: There is a source they come from,
and a fountain inside here.
Be generous.
Be grateful. Confess when you're not.

We can't know
what the divine intelligence
has in mind!

Nuria: Who am I,
standing in the midst of this
thought-traffic?