

Please Call Me by My True Names

Thich Nhat Hanh

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow—even today I am still arriving.

Look deeply: every second I am arriving to be a bud on a Spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry, to fear and to hope.

The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive.

I am a mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river.

And I am the bird that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily in the clear water of a pond.

And I am the grass-snake that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin as bamboo sticks.

And I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat, who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate.

And I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands.

And I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to, my people, dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.

My pain is like a river of tears, so vast it
fills the four oceans.
Please call me by my true names, so I can
hear all my cries and laughter at once, so I
can see that my joy and pain are one.
Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up and the door of
my heart could be let open, the
door of compassion

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