

Poems from Ibn 'Arabī's *Dīwān*

I have a love who has the name of all who have a name.  
That is what I allude to in [both] clear and obscure [speech].  
By [referring to] Rubab, to Hind and to Salma, I mean  
Only Him – so consider Him, for He is the name that is named.  
And the one who does not know what I am saying  
is blind to the way of the Real God

I wandered in my love, while my beloved is I  
and my heart was in pain from being apart.  
In myself, I became lost from myself  
I cried out in longing, 'Oh I, where is I?'  
I watched myself, and did not let myself  
for a single day be contented with I.  
My eye has seen nothing more beautiful than I;  
happiness for me is being close to me through me.  
I am nothing to the owner of being,  
when he draws us apart, and everything is I.  
You who are listening, you know  
what I have said, by God, but I do not.

By the mighty power of love! Love made me witness  
the essence of the beloved whom I love in my mind.  
Had his form appeared in the sensory realm  
to the eye of my senses, I would neither take away nor add.  
For the state of his presence is like the state of his absence,  
that is a quality not known in anyone [else].  
I [alone] am favoured with it: no-one disputes with me  
about it, and the people of spontaneous love go wrong about it.  
That is why those who have not experienced it deny it,  
and everyone denies it if they cannot find [it].  
The mystery of that is that in the world of subtle beauty  
people are only infatuated with the world of form.  
Were they like me in love, they would be satisfied  
and they would witness his essence in every form of belief,  
because they would be in what my gaze determines  
if they were in love from the world of true observation.

For one who experiences love's passion, there's no serenity  
without coming face to face with the one you love  
When you see the beloved, peace and tranquillity  
comes with that very same idea that caused such agitation  
The beloved is a [single] meaning with a diverse property  
in the eyes of one who truly knows what sets him free

The one whom I love visited my place while  
I was out – if only I were aware whether she would come again!  
This is not equity on the part of my gazelle –  
no, equity would be for her to come back

In the form of created things I saw my Master  
that is why my beloved has many names in my poetry.  
For if I recite a poem about a particular person,  
that person is only the one my breast contains.  
He is the Real, yet the realities delimit Him,  
by which to be appraised by mind, sense or understanding...

What is it with the lover, possessed by his passion  
complaining of distance and separation?  
Whilst I do the opposite, since my beloved  
appears in my imagination and I continue in nearness.  
For my beloved is from me and in me and through me,  
so why should I cry: what afflicts me, what afflicts me?

Oh, how my heart and liver [suffer]  
because of what I have hidden away between my ribs.  
My gazelle, you have raided [me],  
and the one who is murdered in love can have no revenge.  
By the life of love, my eye  
has not looked, after you, at anyone [else].

If you are a reviving joy and sweetness,  
    then you are amongst people a true human being.  
For He has bestowed upon you His Image,  
    that you may be compassionate towards all His creation.  
The one who attains His Image  
    has gained what is to come and what has been,  
And the marvel that lies in the unseen,  
    and that which He brings forth now,  
and that to which his Creator invites –  
    indeed He summons him to pure beneficence.

Everyone is a story  
    so be the best tale that anyone could hear.  
If a thorn pierces you from them  
    be the strongest shield that repels.  
When you can be like that with them  
    you are, by God, a leader who benefits.  
The candle hurts itself  
    yet to the onlooker it is a light that shines.  
The criticism which we acknowledge  
    is a blessing in the hands of someone who holds back.

Make roads towards the Protector. Maybe one day you will travel up them.  
    The glories of man have been humbled.  
        The hosts of states have disbanded.  
            The crescents of secrets have risen aloft.  
I brought my heart to Him as a sunrise, and my ribs as a horizon for her full moon...

Evidences of your essential being become manifest to you not by your self-consciousness, but by  
your self-effacement

Real light affords illumination, while your light brings darkness rather than illumination

The lights of the spirit radiate from the saint as brocade glistens on a brocaded garment

I wed myself to myself, and was thus both my own bride and groom