

ALONE IN TOO MUCH BEAUTY

I began writing love poems twenty-five years ago. From the beginning, I saw that the source of love was not in the other, but in the deepest part of myself. I continued to pursue the other, as if the expression of love itself was dependent on a relationship. Finally, I was able to let go of the desire for the other as the essential part of the expression of love. Dropping into the source of passion is the natural condition of writing poetry. That's always been true, but I kept desire as if it were essential. As much as I knew the source of love was not in the other, I thought that desire for the other was still necessary for my life and for my poetry. I thought I could keep desire for my own good, regardless of the other.

Before I began writing **Alone in Too Much Beauty**, I met someone who seemed to be the embodiment of my sense of another who could live in the same awareness of no relationship, inside a passionate reality - the subtle but powerful reversal of its more common male form; passion with no relationship. My desired other remained in a state of love, without passion, but she didn't dismiss the passionate love I expressed toward her. Consequently, my attachment to desire was exposed. I continued to express love with someone who intellectually agreed with me, but who was not passionate, in return. I let go of that non-relationship and found myself alone, in a familiar way and a new way.

These poems were written in sequence, over a year's time and more. During that time, I was able to let go of desire as a supporting reality, in life and poetry. I had felt the presence of passion in love with others. I felt it in the desire for others. Then, in the absence of the other, I felt it in the substance of my being and in being itself. Once I accepted the presence of passion, without any relationship to any other, I was free of the hold of desire. My passion no longer had an occupation. Passion also no longer had any limitation. I began to see how I'd been tied to its limitations. I thought desire was a facilitator of love, but now I see desire as a container of love. Freed from the limitations of desire, I began to feel free, in ways I hadn't felt before. I began to feel the freedom I experienced in the core of my being, in every part of my being, in the wonder at being in a universe of overwhelming beauty.

The acceptance of myself, as being alone, is half of this freedom. The other half is the recognition of what remains, beyond desire. What remains is not less than the life of desire. It is, in the freedom from the attachment to

desire, a fuller reality. I've led a life of many passionate attachments, not the least of which was my poetic attachment to desire itself, as if it were the horse, cart, and cargo of my poems. I've long known that my passionate existence preceded desire. Now, it's clear that my passionate existence supersedes desire. I am alone, without relationship, and being alone is the paradox of these poems. What remains, in the absence of desire, is more than desire can imagine, it is being alone in the presence of overwhelming beauty. It can feel like being alone in too much beauty. I have never been less alone.

When my habitual mind is ignored, in favor of the awareness it only moderately imitates, the apprehension of life is released to an acceptance, and the underlying reality, wonder, becomes the consistent reality. The blank paper of an unwritten poem represents my self at peace. It could just as easily represent unspoken torment, lust, fear, or anger, but my self at peace is a more trustworthy guardian of anything I might say or feel, no matter how difficult or dangerous that might be, on the page, in thought, or in feeling.

Being alone in too much beauty is the central paradox of these poems. Beneath everything is the sense of being alone in a universe of nearly overwhelming reality. It is the human condition; it is the state of awareness in a conscious being.

The I of these poems is the I that disappears in self-recognition. These poems are also the chronicle of the way the I changes, when I lets go of its attachments to the world and lives in wonder, without name or form.

As for sounding abstract, these poems are anything but abstract in my experience. Composers function in an abstracted reality, but few complain of their abstraction, moving from grunts and groans, to meter and melody, to pure sound. Because I am a poet, using language as my conveyance, I sound the way the reader hears it. I've tried to make the seemingly abstract reality of my experience accessible, by being as articulate as I'm able, but this is not a common journey, even though it is the journey of any human being who wants to take it.

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