



Where Does the Dance Begin, Where Does It End? by Mary Oliver

Don't call this world adorable, or useful, that's not it.
It's frisky, and a theatre for more than fair winds.
The eyelash of lightning is neither good nor evil.
The struck tree burns like a pillar of gold.

But the blue rain sinks, straight to the white
feet of the trees
whose mouths open.
Doesn't the wind, turning in circles, invent the dance?
Haven't the flowers moved, slowly, across Asia, then Europe,
until at last, now, they shine
in your own yard?

Don't call this world an explanation, or even an education.

When the Sufi poet whirled, was he looking
outward, to the mountains so solidly there
in a white-capped ring, or was he looking

to the centre of everything: the seed, the egg, the idea
that was also there,
beautiful as a thumb
curved and touching the finger, tenderly,
little love-ring,

as he whirled,
oh jug of breath,
in the garden of dust?

The dance, 1910, Matisse



The Dancing Cry Of The Soul by Rumi

Love is the dancing cry of the soul, calling the body to worship
 Like a shining whirlpool, or a spinning mayfly
 So is love among the skies.
 I leap across the mountaintops, madly singing the song of all songs
 I float through the ether, intoxicated, thrilled
 I think only of your love, your calling to me
 And I dance the thousand dances of love, all returning to you.

It is not the play of children, nor the detached unity of wise sages
 Unreal! Unnecessary!
 Where is the beauty?

When I, like a glowing comet, may flash around your sun
 Laughing, singing, with the joy of loving you!

Wine makes drunk the mind and body
 But it is love which thrills the soul
 When I approach you, I feel the mad pounding of love
 The singing wonder
 The joy which opens blossoms on the trees of the world.

Come to me, and I shall dance with you
 In the temples, on the beaches, through the crowded streets
 Be you man or woman, plant or animal, slave or free
 I shall show you the brilliant crystal fires, shining within
 I shall show you the beauty deep within your soul
 I shall show the path beyond Heaven.

Only dance, and your illusions will blow in the wind
 Dance, and make joyous the love around you
 Dance, and your veils which hide the Light
 Shall swirl in a heap at your feet.



Play/playfulness

For the world and time are the dance of the Lord in emptiness. The silence of the spheres is the music of a wedding feast. The more we persist in misunderstanding the phenomena of life, the more we analyse them out into strange finalities and complex purposes of our own, the more we involve ourselves in sadness, absurdity and despair. But it does not matter very much because no despair of ours can alter the reality of things, or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there. Indeed we are in the midst of it and it is in the midst of us for it beats in our very blood whether we want it to or not. Yet the fact remains that we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance.

Thomas Merton

Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play.

Heraclitus

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

George Bernard Shaw

You must have been warned against letting the golden hours slip by. Yes, but some of them are golden only because we let them slip by.

J M Barrie

Let your life lightly dance on the edges of Time like dew on the tip of a leaf.

Rabindranath Tagore

There often seems to be a playfulness to wise people, as if either their equanimity has as its source this playfulness or the playfulness flows from the equanimity; and they can persuade other people who are in a state of agitation to calm down and manage a smile.

Edward Hoagland

‘Oh, children,’ said the Lion, ‘I feel my strength coming back to me. Oh, children, catch me if you can!’ He stood for a second, his eyes very bright, his limbs quivering, lashing himself with his tail. Then he made a leap high over their heads and landed on the other side of the Table. Laughing, though she didn’t know why, Lucy scrambled over it to reach him. Aslan leaped again. A mad chase began. Round and round the hilltop he led them, now hopelessly out of their reach, now letting them almost catch his tail, now diving between them, now tossing them in the air with his huge and beautifully velvety paws and catching them again, and now stopping unexpectedly so that all three of them rolled over together in a happy laughing heap of fur and arms and legs. It was such a romp as no one has ever had except in Narnia; and whether it was more like playing with a thunderstorm or playing with a kitten Lucy could never make up her mind. And the funny thing was that when all three finally lay together panting in the sun the girls no longer felt in the least tired or hungry or thirsty.

‘And now,’ said Aslan presently, ‘to business. I feel I am going to roar. You had better put your fingers in your ears.’

And they did. And Aslan stood up and when he opened his mouth to roar his face became so terrible that they did not dare look at it. And they saw all the trees in front of him bend before the blast of his roaring as grass bends in a meadow before the wind.

C. S. Lewis from ‘The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe’

