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JOY LIVES IN EVERY MOMENT

Joy lives! It is not a rare artifact to be extracted from the arid earth of our days. It is not to be encased behind dulled glass in the cabinet, for us to take down and dust off in the finer moments. Joy is the heat cascading out from the flame of our faith that we can be joyful. We must tend to the fire of our faith; we must believe that joy lives in us without pause, even in loss and pain. Even under the foul breath of personal attack and in the wet tide pools of sorrow, joy is the very nature of our being. The spirit of life is joy, an eternal heat of wonder and expansion. When we disbelieve that we can be joyful, in any moment, we kill the flame that releases joy's thermal light. Joy can only be released through our self-permission to be joyful; through our courage to be joyful in the face of living.

Joy must be watered and sung to. It is a flower spirit, a purring persona that responds to our stroke. It is faithful though it needs us to give it birth, grant it space. Open all the windows we keep closed in our minds! Joy needs us to douse it in the poetry of laughter, to braise it in smiles freed without public reason.

This world teaches many lessons; vastly we have chosen the lesson that laments—the listing of all causes for shuttering joy inside the heart's pantry, sealing it from the light of choosing that would let its warmth come forth in ribbons. We have learned to witness life and yet not truly see its stream of reasons to be the joy that we are. We spend lifetimes enacting funeral processions in the mind, in each mundane moment proclaiming: Joy is dead! We practice sad soliloquies for joy, we enact its burial over and again, throwing cold dirt of misperception over a corpse that is not there. Joy can never expire inside a living soul, though it can well be brought to sleep at our neglect.

Behold the bird that rarely flies, and only when all conditions are suitable. That bird is us. Our flight is joy and for this we have been given immutable wings. What can be mutated is our understanding that we possess wings for flight. What is Divine within us waits to be celebrated even at the crack of wounding. For even clouds say something about the sun: its presence, absence, or many moods. Only by the sun can we discern clouds as they traipse their forms and shadings across sky stage. Only by joy do we know the texture of our sorrow and thus find our way back home to peace.

Joy is that sun ready for us to let it illuminate our melancholy, to burn it away, or let it fall as healing rain. Joy is not a condition of our outer life. We need not scheme or search for it. The awesome breath of our conception made us joy, then we were born and quickly wrapped in many blankets of notion. We learned to gather those blankets for ourselves. Now we are swaddled too deeply in ideas of conditional joy. We have smothered the fire of perpetual joy. It can be resuscitated.

All that is left before us in this recovery is to burn these many blankets, to relearn nakedness of being and all the roads of awareness leading back to the clearing where the burial stops and joy lives.

Joy Lives!

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