

AWAKENING

You awaken to another darkness,
the older one that rivers travel,
quiet and uncrowded,
knowing at once
your failures have abandoned you.
They'd always been there, loyal,
sleepless by your side at night.

You don't ask why
or why now after so long,
for all at once life without them
simply is—
is love
sharing its loaf of bread, its bowl of rice,
making its table anywhere,
a cloth unfolded on the ground.

And it happens just that way:
you and your friends, hands open
as much to give as to receive,
feed and be fed delightfully,
and through you God tastes.

And when the stranger comes,
his hunger a silent call,
you have no fear.
Your hands don't close
but turn instead to the warmth in him
hidden in the chill of bodily need;
they turn, instinctive,
to his real life,
a life maybe no one knew before
and you widen the circle to include him.

Along with bread,
you offer something of your own
like fragrant branches
added to a fire already burning;
you lay it at the threshold of his heart,

and through you God feasts.

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Awake in the night,
you listen to the river, a sound
that never began and never ends,
elusive, yet you reach for it—
you try to press a song from wordless peace
and you can not,
you try and cannot at all
and still no failure wants you.