

Attachment and Loss

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

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A Poem and an Exchange

In Blackwater Woods (by Mary Oliver)

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars

of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,

the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is

nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it

against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

Sundari: It's beautiful. I love her style; the writing is simple and evocative. It's so true, if one is identified with being a person, life is loss.

It's a pity she doesn't know that the meaning of the "other side" is her self...

Luma: Wow, such a beautifully clear synopsis, particularly of that unfortunate *tamasic* turn of phrase ("whose meaning none of us will ever know").

What I appreciate about the poem is this message:

Letting go of the things we feel attached to can be painful. And it can be incredibly powerful too. It is such an integral part of the journey of discovering the fullness of that which always remains.

Sundari: Yes, again, so true; self-knowledge is the ultimate liberator but – not a magic pill for the ego. The *jiva* still experiences joy and sorrow; it just knows what they are.

All attachment has an inbuilt and unavoidable suffering factor for the ego. The only reprieve is self-knowledge, the only true power, salvation and reward there is.

Without it the mind is compelled to seek salvation in rewards of a different kind, leaving it mewling like the damned. All great art, literature and poetry is about this, really: man's inevitable fate, tied to the wheel of *samsara*. Gruesome!

We are so very blessed to know who we are, impervious to confusion.