

THE IMMORTAL FRIEND

BY

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EERDE OMMEN HOLLAND

I

Wherever I look, Thou art there
I am full of Thy glory
I am burning with Thy Happiness
I weep for all men
That do not behold Thee
In what manner
Shall I show them
Thy glory?

As the Eastern breeze,
That suddenly springs into being,
And calms the weary world,
There in front of me
Seated, cross-legged, as the world knows Him,
In His yellow robes, simple and magnificent,
Was the Teacher of Teachers

Looking at me,
Motionless the Mighty Being sat
I looked and bowed my head,
My body bent forward of itself

That one look
Showed the progress of the world,
Showed the immense distance between the world
And the greatest of its Teachers
How little it understood,
And how much He gave
How joyously He soared,
Escaping from birth and death,
From its tyranny and entangling wheel

Enlightenment attained
He gave to the world, as the flower gives
Its scent
The Truth

As I looked
At the sacred feet that once trod the happy
Dust of India
My heart poured forth its devotion,
Limitless and unfathomable
Without restraint and without effort.
I lost myself in that happiness
My mind so easily and strangely
Understood the Truth
He longed for and attained.
I lost myself in that happiness
My soul grasped the infinite simplicity
Of Truth
I lost myself in that happiness

Thou art the Truth,
Thou art the Law,
Thou art the Refuge,
Thou art the Guide,
The Companion and the Beloved
Thou hast ravished my heart,
Thou hast conquered my soul,
In Thee have I found my comfort,
In Thee is my Truth established

Where Thou hast trodden,
Do I follow
Where Thou hast suffered and conquered,
Do I gather strength
Where Thou hast renounced,
Do I grow,
Dispassionate, detached

Like the stars
Have I become
Happy is he that knoweth Thee
Eternally

Like the sea unfathomable
Is my love
The Truth have I attained,
And calm grows my spirit

But yesterday
I longed to withdraw
From the aching world
Into some secluded mountain spot,
Untrammeled,
Free,
Away from all things,
In search of Thee
And now Thou hast appeared
Unto me

I carry Thee in my heart
Look where I may, Thou art there,
Calm, happy,
Filling my world —
The embodiment of Truth

My heart is strong,
My mind is concentrated,
I am full of Thee
As the Eastern breeze,
That suddenly springs into being,
And calms the weary world,
So have I realized

I am the Truth,
I am the Law,
I am the Refuge,
I am the Guide,
The Companion and the Beloved

II

Look where I may, Thou art there,
Calm, happy,
Filling my world —
The embodiment of Truth

As one beholds a light
In the dark
At a distance,
I saw Thee

I have walked towards Thee
Through many lives —
In sorrow, in joy,
In doubt, in suspicion,
Over thorns, over fair fields,
On the pavements of crowded cities

I have known
From the very foundation of the earth
Of Thy glory,
Of Thine existence,
Of Thy beauty, that thrilled my soul
Never was I certain,
Never was I allowed to be at peace
With myself,
With man,
Or with the fair heavens
Out of the great uncertainty,
Certainty was born

Like the Eastern breeze,
That suddenly springs into being,
And calms the weary world,
So have I realized
I walk henceforth in Thy shadow

Because Thou art my eternal Companion,
I am strong —
Strong as the stream
That rushes down the mountain side
Because Thou art my counsellor,
I am unshakable,
Because of Thee,
I am full of wisdom,
Because Thou hast sent me out,
I am as nothing, as the passing wind,
But because Thou hast shown Thyself to me,
I am as the rivers
That dance down to the sea
Because of Thy bidding,
What I do is for Thee
My heart is aflame,
For I am come near unto Thee
Everlastingly

Each breath is transforming me
Into Thine image

Because Thou hast given me,
I am full,
Full as the ocean,
Though all the rivers
Do flow into it

Thy majesty has awakened
The power in me
To shout from the mountain-tops
Thy Truth

Thy look has burnt away
The dross
I am pure
I am holy

As the rose is to the rose petal,
So art Thou to me
As the mountain-top
That disappears into the clouds,
So my love for Thee
Disappears
Into space

As on the sunlit sea the waters dance,
Joyous in their ecstasy,
So is my heart
Dancing for love of Thee
As the small raindrop
Mingles in the vast ocean,
So have I lost myself in Thee

As the shadows
Grow of an evening,
So has my soul
Grown immense
In Thy Light

My love for Thee
Has awakened the love
For all
I must bring the world
To Thee
I must make Thee
Their eternal Companion
They must know Thee
As I know Thee —
The perfect,
The simple,
The glorified,
The Fountain of Truth

Knowing Thee,
They will set aside their toys,
Their small worlds, their playthings,
Their pomp,
The entanglements
Of their religions,
Their rites,
Their ceremonies

What is religion?
What is worship?
What are the temples
And altars
Of the world?

Thou art the end
Of all sorrow,
Of all joy,
Of all knowledge,
Of all search

Thou art the goal of all things
In Thee alone lies
Enlightenment —
The Happiness of the world

Look where I may, Thou art there,
Calm, happy,
Filling my world —
The embodiment of Truth

I am the Truth,
I am the Law,
I am the Refuge,
I am the Guide, the Companion and
the Beloved

III

Through the austere dignity of the yellow robe

Thou wert born unto me

Through the certainty of knowledge

Thou hast appeared unto me

Through the immensity of happiness

Thou hast shown Thyself unto me

Through the great silence of the morning

Thou hast created the universe unto me

Through the sunlight of the world

Thou hast carried me to the mountain-top

And unto me Thou wert born

Over Thy head was the flame
That burns away all sorrow,
All pain, all anxiety
Thy face was like unto the rose petal,
Perfect, soft, lovely,
Youthful with the age of many centuries
In Thy face I beheld my own face
In Thine eyes was the laughter of Youth,
The delight of the Spring,
The joyous merriment of the world

The music of Thy flute
Hath ravished my heart
There is born in me
A new tender merriment
The sea of many waters
Has entered into my heart
The bubbling brook,
The boisterous storm,
The angry waters,
The pleasant breeze

I smell the flowers at Thy feet,
I behold the lane
Where walks the world,
The dust, the cow,
And the cow-herd

The scent of the sacred flower fills the air,
I hear the temple bells,
And the laughter of the world

The jewels of the world
Are in Thine eyes

The world weeps for Thee
In their wild and merry dancing

O Love, with the flute,
Thou art myself

O Beloved,
Thou art the ecstasy of my soul

I have found Thee
Through the happiness of many lives

O world,
In thee I behold the face of my Beloved

IV

He walked towards me and I stood still
My heart and soul gathered strength
The trees and birds listened with unexpected silence
There was thunder in the skies —
Then, utter peace

I saw Him look at me
And my vision became vast
My eyes saw and my mind understood
My heart embraced all things
For a new love was born unto me

A new glory thrilled my being,
For He walked before me, and I followed,
 my head high
The tall trees I saw through Him,
Gently waving in welcome,
The dead leaf, the mud,
The sparkling water and the withered branches

He is before me foiever
Look where I may, He is there
I see all things through Him
His glory has filled me and awakened a glory that
I have never known

An eternal peace is my vision,
Glorifying all things
He is ever before me

V

The sun was setting,
As I stood on a hill-top,
Watching it disappear
Behind the mountains

In the midst of that radiance,
Clad in the cloud of yellow,
Thou wert seated

The whole vast heaven
Paused in adoration
The sky, the clouds,
In robes of yellow,
Were Thy worshippers,
Thy disciples

The mortal world
Joined in Thine adoration,
Shouting with joy —
The birds,
The distant valley,
The passing vehicles
Far away,
The cricket,
The grasshopper,
The wind,
And the trees

The black mountains
Stood amazed
In their dance,
Fearing their own
Mighty sight

Then utter silence —
All things perceiving Thee
As Thou art

In that great silence,
An immense desire
Was born in me
To bring the world to Thee,
To Thy perfection
And to Thy happiness

Thou art the only altar,
Though men worship
At the altars
Of many temples
Thine is the only
Imperishable Truth,
Though men clothe it
By many names

I love the world,
And all the things thereof
I will bring the world
To adore Thee,
To worship Thee,
For Thy Beauty
Is Truth

Immense happiness
Fills my being,
For I have found
Thee

Thou shalt not disappear
Though a thousand suns
Shall set over the mountain

As the sunset
Grows more splendid
From moment to moment,
Changing constantly,
So my desire
For Thee,
Grows
More glorious,
More perfect
It shall fill
The heart of all men,
Till Thy perfection
Be perceived

In Thine eye
Is the whirlwind,
The soft breeze,
The sacred Himavat,
The low plain,
The happy valley,
And the blue skies —
All things are in Thee

Thou art the happiness
Of the world
The Path of Happiness
Is the Path of Truth

VI

Oh! Listen,

I will sing to thee the song of my Beloved

Where the soft green slopes of the still mountains
Meet the blue shimmering waters of the noisy sea,
Where the bubbling brook shouts in ecstasy,
Where the still pools reflect the calm heavens,
There thou wilt meet with my Beloved

In the vale where the cloud hangs in loneliness
Searching the mountain for rest,
In the still smoke climbing heavenwards,
In the hamlet toward the setting sun,
In the thin wreaths of the fast disappearing clouds,
There thou wilt meet with my Beloved

In the still blue skies,
Where heaven and earth meet

In the breathless air,
In the morn burdened with incense,
Among the rich shadows of a noon-day,
Among the long shadows of an evening,
Amidst the gay and radiant clouds of the setting sun,
On the path on the waters at the close of the day,
There thou wilt meet with my Beloved

In the shadows of the stars,
In the deep tranquillity of dark nights,
In the reflection of the moon on still waters,
In the great silence before the dawn,
Among the whispering of waking trees,
In the cry of the bird at morn,
Amidst the wakening of shadows,
Amidst the sunlit tops of the far mountains,
In the sleepy face of the world,
There thou wilt meet with my Beloved

Keep still, O dancing waters,
And listen to the voice of my Beloved

In the happy laughter of children
Thou canst hear Him
The music of the flute
Is His voice
The startled cry of a lonely bird
Moves thy heart to tears,
For thou hearest His voice
The roar of the age-old sea
Awakens the memories
That have been lulled to sleep
By His voice
The soft breeze that stirs
The tree-tops lazily
Brings to thee the sound
Of His voice

The thunder among the mountains
Fills thy soul
With the strength
Of His voice
In the roar of a vast city,
Through the shrill moan of swift-passing vehicles,
In the throb of a distant engine,
Through the voices of the night,
The cry of sorrow,
The shout of joy,
Through the ugliness of anger,
Comes the voice of my Beloved

In the distant blue isles,
On the soft dewdrop,
On the breaking wave,
On the sheen of waters,
On the wing of the flying bird,
On the tender leaf of the spring,
Thou wilt see the face of my Beloved

In the sacred temple,
In the halls of dancing,
On the holy face of the sannyasi,
In the lurches of the drunkard,
With the harlot and with the chaste,
Thou wilt meet with my Beloved

On the fields of flowers,
In the towns of squalor and dirt,
With the pure and the unholy,
In the flower that hides divinity,
There is my well-Beloved

Oh! the sea
Has entered my heart
In a day,
I am living an hundred summers
O, friend,
I behold my face in thee,
The face of my well-Beloved

This is the song of my love

VII

As the rain cleanses
The tree by the roadside,
So the dust of ages
Has been washed away in me

As the tree sparkles
In the sun
After the soft rain,
So my soul delighteth
In Thee

As the tree
Looketh to the roots
For its immense strength,
So do I look to Thee
Who art the root of my strength

As the smoke
Mounteth heavenwards
In a straight column
Of a still evening,
So have I grown
Towards Thee

As the little pool
On the road
Reflecteth the face of heaven,
So my heart
Reflecteth Thy happiness

As the solitary cloud
That hangs over the mountain,
The envy of the valley,
So have I hung
For generation after generation
In a lonely place

As the great cloud
That hasteneth
Before the mighty wind,
So descend I
Into the valley
Into the valley
Where there is sorrow
And transient happiness,
Where there is birth and death,
Where there is shadow and light,
Where there is strife and a passing peace,
Where there is comfort of stagnation, \ ,
Where to think is to grieve,
Where to feel is to create sorrow

Into that valley
I shall descend,
For I have conquered
For in me
Thou art born

As the light pierces through darkness,
So Thy Truth
Shall pierce the world
As the rain purifieth the earth
And cleanseth all things thereof,
So shall I cleanse the world
With Thy Truth
For many ages,
Through many lives,
Have I prepared,
But now,
Behold, the cup is full

The world shall drink of it
Man shall grow
Into Thy divinity
Thy happiness shall shine
On his face
For Thy messenger
Shall go forth

I am he
That openeth the heart of man,
That giveth comfort

I am the Truth,
I am the Law,
I am the Refuge,
I am the Guide, the Companion
and the Beloved

VIII

O friend,

Tell me of God

Where is He, by what manner do I find Him?

Among what climes, in what abodes?

Tell me, I am weary

Read the Vedas,

Do tapas, meditate,

Perform rites and ceremonies,

Practise austerities and renounce,

Pray at His temple, among flowers and incense,

Bathe in the sacred rivers,

Visit the holy places,

Be a devotee and pure of intelligence,

In Kailas is His abode —

There you will find Him, cried many

Obey the Law,
Take refuge in the Order,
Kill not, steal not and commit no sin,
Go to the shrine,
Enter Nirvana —
There you will find Him, cried many

Read the Holy Book,
Pray at His church — there be many —
This church will lead you to Him but beware of that,
Serve, sacrifice,
Do not judge, be merciful,
In Heaven is His throne —
There you will find Him, cried many

Read the only Book
Of the only God,
Visit His abode on earth,
Pray at the mosque,
At the setting of the sun worship Him,
Bahisht is His abode —
There you will find Him, cried many

✓
Work, work for humanity,
Serve, serve your fellow-creatures,
Follow this but beware of that Path,
Do the will of God,
Follow blindly for I hold the key to His abode,
Grasp this opportunity that He offers you,
Sorrow and happiness lead to Him,
If you do this, your search will end —
Then you will find Him, shouted many

Thou art the lame and mangy creature
That comes to my door, with a haunted look, hungry,
That men abhor
Thou art the mighty elephant
That is gaily robed,
Carrying the nobles of the land

Thou art the naked beggar
That wanders from house to house,
Wearily crying for alms
Thou art the great of the land
That are rich in possessions and books,
That are well-fed and satisfied
Thou art the priests of all temples
That are learned, proud and certain

Thou art the harlot, the sinner, the saint and the heretic

My search is at an end
In Thee I behold all things
I myself, am God

Search for thy happiness in passing things,
Pursue thy passionate trivialities,
Drink deep for thy oblivion,
Chase the butterfly from flower to flower
Thinkest thou, O friend, to juggle with Me?
As the lotus abides with the waters,
So do I live with thee, eternally

Rich is the shadow of a summer's day

Our journey ends, O friend,
When thou and I meet

X

As the delicate spire climbs eagerly into the blue skies
O my Beloved, so my heart soars into space in search
of Thee

As the butterfly tastes the hidden honey of the
fast-fading flower,

O my Beloved, so have I played with Thee among the
manifested —

Changing, decaying

By offerings, by alms and by the building of many a temple,
Have I sought to establish Thee

As the sparkling dewdrop that hangs on the tree-tops,
Above the world,

To fade in the morning sun,

So have my great foundations in the kingdoms of the
manifest

Been destroyed

' As the stars of a night
About me are Thy creations.
By yoga, by austerities,
Life after life,
Have I chased Thee among the shadows of Thy
 manifestations
Ever eluding, ever enticing, ever disappointing,
Have been my glimpses of Thee

But, my Beloved, my eternal Love,
O Thou, the desire of my heart,
I have found Thee, in the unmanifest,
In the indestructible
As the rainbow vanishes near the green earth,
So has my search vanished among the flowers of Thy
 creation

In me Thou art established,
Imperishable, ineffable, everlasting
O Beloved,
Thou art established in the temple of my heart

/ I am the Beloved, the desire of all hearts
| I am the Playmate in the shadow of creation

XI

In the quiet evening
When the leaf is still,
When the flower is weary of the day,
And the bud is rejoicing for the morrow,
When the shadows are long,
And the smoke is mounting in a still column,
When the world is breathless,
Oh! with the lark I climbed
To the abode of my Beloved

I have wandered far into the realms of the unreal
In search of the real
Many births and many deaths have been my lot
With the setting of a single day
Have I known many joys, many sorrows,
But Thou hast eluded me,
O Thou, the embodiment of Truth

I have brought to Thee all my experience,
All my woes and my joys
I have worshipped with folded hands in many a temple,
But at my eager approach faded the image of Truth

I have loved and the glories of the earth have
delighted me

I was full of knowledge, enjoying the admiration of
the world.

I adorned myself with priestly robes,
But in silence the Gods of my adoration looked down.

As the mountain is to the valley — distant,

forbidding —

So hast Thou been to me

Thou hast ever remained with Thy face turned

Thou hast ever been as a star — far away, unreal

Thou wert ever the image, I ever the worshipper

Not a man knew of Thine abode,

Thou wert ever far away, fantastical, mysterious

Sometimes immense fear filled my heart, often

great hopes,

At times complete indifference and weariness

Without Thee, I was as an empty shell

'As the potter's wheel,
I went round and round,
Consumed by continual action
I brought to Thee the flower of my heart,
The great delight of my mind,
But as the dead leaf in autumn
I was torn and trodden down

As the tree on the mountain
Grows in solitude and strength,
Likewise, life after life,
I grew in loneliness and stature
I reached the mountain-top

Till in the long last,
O Guru of Gurus,
I tore the veil that separated Thee from myself,
That veil that set Thee apart

(Now, Beloved, Thou and I are one
As the lotus makes the waters beautiful,
So Thou and I complete the perfection of Life

O Guru,

Thy Play is my play

Thy Love is my love

Thy smile has filled my heart

My work is Thy creation

Thou hast bowed to me, O Love,

As I have bowed to Thee,

Through countless ages

The veil of separation is torn,

O Beloved, Thou and I are one

XII

As the aspen leaf is aquiver
With the breeze,
So my heart dances with Thy love
As two mountain streams meet
With a roar,
Joyous in their exultation,
So have I met Thee, O my Beloved

As the mountain-top is aglow
At the going down of the sun,
Giving to the valley an immense desire,
So hast Thou given glory to my being
As the valley is still at eventide,
So hast Thou calmed my soul

My heart is filled
With the love of a thousand years
Mine eyes
Behold Thy vision

As the stars make the night beautiful,
So hast Thou given beauty to my soul
As serene as the graven image
Have I become

As the seed grows into a wondrous tree,
The abode of many joyous birds,
Giving soft shadows
To the weary traveller,
So has my soul grown
In search of Thee

As a great river joins the sea,
So to Thee have I come,
Rich with my long journey,
Full with the experience of an age
O Beloved,
As the dewdrop
Mingles with the honey
Of the flower,
So Thou and I have become one

O my Beloved
Now there is no separation,
No loneliness
No sorrow no struggle
Where'er I go
I bring the glory of Thy presence
For O Beloved
Thou and I are one

XIII

As the small stream
Gathers strength on its long journey,
Feeding the lonely plains, the tall drooping trees,
Dancing its way to the open seas,
Attaining liberation —
So have I entered into Thee

Long has been the journey
On this trackless path of time,
Where every little snag ✕
Gives forth music and the sound of many waters,
Where every little pool
Reflects the glory of heavens, to stagnate,
Where every little peaceful spot
Is burdened with the scent of decay

A guest am I
In this world of transient things,
Unfettered by the entanglements thereof
I am of no country,
No boundaries hold me

O friend,
I weep for thee,
Thou layest deep thy foundation,
But thy house perisheth on the morrow

O friend,
Come with me,
Abide in the house of my Beloved
Though thou shalt wander the earth,
Possessing nothing,
Thou shalt be as welcome
As the lovely spring,
For thou bringest with thee
The Companion of all

O friend,

Live with me,

My Beloved and I are one

XV

It has been given to me,
O friend,
To see the face of my Beloved

His smile
Has filled my heart
As the rivers of water
Make constant music,
O friend,
So my being rejoices
In the splendour of His love

As one beholds the mountain-top
At the setting of the sun,
Radiant and serene,
Above the darkening world,
O friend,
So the vision of my Beloved
Has made me
Pure and at peace

As at the lifting of the dark cloud
From the happy face of the mountain,
O friend,
So the shadow of life
Has lifted
At the approach of my well-Beloved

As the mists of the morn
Are consumed by the warm rays,
O friend,
So my well-Beloved
Has gathered me in,
Dispelling the vision of emptiness

As the deep valley
Lies in the shadow of a great mountain,
O friend,
So I lie
In the shadow of the hand
Of my well-Beloved

As the rose
Amidst many thorns,
O friend,
So am I
Amidst passing things

As the day is made glorious
By the darkness of the night,
By the light of the day,
O friend,
So have I been made glorious

As the rivers are full
After the great rains,
O friend,
So has my well-Beloved,
Burdened me with His love

The ages have awaited this hour
I have met with my Beloved

XVI

O my Beloved,
Thou art Liberation,
The end of all desire,
The consummation of love

O my Beloved,
Thou art the unfading beauty of Truth,
Thou art the accomplishment of all thought, a
Thou art the flower of all devotion

O my Beloved,
O my Love,
The sun is beyond the purple hills,
And as a single star,
I have arisen
In Thine adoration

Thou and I,
We have well met
O my Beloved,
Art Thou not myself?
Art Thou not the perfume of my heart?

I am Thy Beloved,
My Beloved art Thou
Thou art my companion of ages,
I am Thy shadow,
In the garden of eternity

XVII

As divinity lies hidden in a flower,
So my Beloved dwells in me
As thunder is among the mountains,
So is my Beloved within my heart
As the cry of a bird in a still forest,
So has the voice of my Beloved filled me

As fair as the morning,
As serene as the moon,
As clear as the sun,
Is my love for my Beloved

As the sun goes down
Beyond the purple hills,
Amidst great clouds
And the whispering breeze among the trees,
So has my Beloved descended into me,
To the rejoicing of my heart,
To the glory of my mind

As of a dark night
Man guides himself
By the distant stars,
So my Beloved guides me
On the waters of life

Yea, I have sought my Beloved,
And discovered Him seated in my heart
My Beloved beholds through mine eyes,
For now my Beloved and I are one

I laugh with Him,
With Him I play

This shadow is not of mine,
It belongs to the heart of my Beloved,
For now my Beloved and I are One



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