

The day they told me Johnny was dead
I lit a candle and smoke reached up
I tried to recall the widow's name
Brought out my old deflated basketball
Loved my life a little tenderly
 as I squeezed it

The day they told me Johnny was dead
I remembered that moose we saw,
 the one of wide, kind eyes and sharp beard,
I wondered if we lived
old enough to enjoy our maturity,
If his ex felt a pang any like mine.

Rumi, it's You

They say,
Rumi, you're like a flame
Into my life you came...

They say,
Rumi, you're like a dream
Not always what you seem...
Parish & Roemheld

What is left, after 'not'?
Two hands I tangle together
not to give up saying
--a tangle of fear. We are
pain and what causes pain. Both.
We are a blind man squatting
on the road
in the dust.

Listen, my madness is absolute truth.
Lay your head under
the tree of awe
in God's open hand, Wake!
Gone inner and outer, moon, ground,
heaven, like
birdsong beginning inside the egg,
the sky blue just ambling-about tipsy
like the breeze up to
some new foolishness.

Incense must burn to be fragrant, only when,
only when I am a candle burning, melting,
only when I quit believing
do I come into this beauty this great
mutual embrace always happening.
Hundreds of ways are there
to kneel and kiss the ground.
Here, in an act of mercy toward lone blind fear
loosen your miracle, the scent of kindness that unites
-- Be the name of the other.

I know I ought to stand silent
but excitement of this keeps
opening my mouth, I split apart
- a sneeze, a yawn,
a pomegranate laughing.

MAY THE FORCE

Thunderbirds® came to our town.
Masters of discipline
magnificently precise,
thousands went to see them steer and
gun tight forms and moves seeming
a flock.

As is my habit, that day I ran
the prairies and coolies near the base.
I paused to free someone's
former breast feather tangled alone
in the sweet grass, gave it to the air
for one last flight in ever exploding winds.

Home to earth the fliers came, right
over my head
lowflying ripping screaming,
talons stretched below.
Show over, all of us hunger to
fly.

Quiet so immense
open wind could advance soundless
through the sage, wild
venom and rattle
casts no shadow. Ravens in
pair reclaim their element, silently
wooing the gusts and being taken.

