

BUOYANCY

Love has taken away my practices
and filled me with poetry.
I tried to keep quietly repeating,
"No strength but yours,"
but I couldn't.
I had to clap and sing.
I used to be respectable and chaste and stable,
but who can stand in this strong wind
and remember those things?
A mountain keeps an echo deep inside itself.
That's how I hold your voice.
I am scrap wood thrown in your fire,
and quickly reduced to smoke.
I saw you and became empty.
This emptiness, more beautiful than existence,
it obliterates existence, and yet when it comes,
existence thrives and creates more existence!
The sky is blue. The world is a blind man
squatting on the road.
But whoever sees your emptiness
sees beyond blue and beyond the blind man.
A great soul hides like Muhammad, or Jesus,
moving through a crowd in a city
where no one knows him.
To praise is to praise
how one surrenders
to the emptiness.
To praise the sun is to praise your own eyes.
Praise, the ocean. What we say, a little ship.
So the sea-journey goes on, and who knows where!
Just to be held by the ocean is the best luck
we could have. It's a total waking up!
Why should we grieve that we've been sleeping?
It doesn't matter how long we've been unconscious.
We're groggy, but let the guilt go.
Feel the motions of tenderness
around you, the buoyancy.

--Rumi, 13th Century Persian mystic

The Essential Rumi, p. 104, Translated by Coleman Barks,
HarperSanFrancisco, 1995.