

Reflections of Light In a Drop of Time

By Alinya

*Who can say
where the road goes
where the day flows
-only time*

Enya

The Time of A Child

The only thing to ... really learn

living in the evernow

To only know the single moment

living in the evernow

Donovan

His eyes were dark and big, and all the colourful images of the world around him were reflected in the round lakes of his pupils. Everything was exciting to him, and he wanted to grab everything and laugh at everything. If he experienced something hurtful he would cry. He knew no guile, no guises for emotions.

Wristwatches were toys to him, like everything else. He did not know of the restricting ticking of the seconds, he did not know the agony of waiting yet, nor the pressure of time running short. His uncounted hours were as empty and exciting to him as hollow chocolate eggs, each sure to offer him a pleasant and unexpected surprise. His days were not split up into working time and resting hours. His days just consisted of time, time that would stretch like strings of chewing gum, or else condense into a little round ball of it that could be glued under chairs. Time was at his playful command, in whichever way he pleased.

Did he know then that before too long the nasty Auntie Time would start to teach him her more dire lessons, of mother not coming when he wanted to, of being too short while he was playing, with bed-time coming too soon? Could he imagine in his infant-dreamworld how mercilessly it would speed up, how he would soon grow hair, grow bigger, learn to walk, learn to talk, learn to reason ...

Would he not grow afraid then, of time running faster, and faster? And inevitably he would soon receive his first colourful rubber wristwatch, and then he would go to kindergarten, and to school, and then receive his first proper watch, and then ...

Then one day he would wish that he could turn it off, so time would come to a standstill, and he would not have to grow up, but would be able to return to the eternal evernow of childhood. He would never-ever have to become one of those boring grey-faced adults, one more loser in that crazy rat-race against time. Yes, he would wish that he could turn off this cruelly ticking monster, but would it work?

The Time of A Lover

For I had rather owner bee

Of thee one houre, than all else ever.

John Donne

He was looking at his wristwatch. It seemed to have stopped moving. Someone must have turned it off. Soon the bell would ring, and all the girls in the final year of grammar school would come out. Hopefully she would be among them. Oh, just to see her once was heaven! She did not know who he was. She had never looked into his direction. Five more minutes. They seemed to stretch endlessly.

Oh, just to spend an hour with her, looking into her eyes, listening to her voice while talking to her about some kind of nonsensical thing, sharing a joke or a drink, dreaming of one time even holding her hand ... He would give everything just for this one hour ...

There she was, wearing a pastel-coloured dress. How splendid she looked. Suddenly time started speeding up. He wanted it to stop. Just freeze this moment forever, just eternally look at this fairy-like girl that was haunting him in all his dreams of a future of love and fulfilment. She was walking over to the street where her father's black BMW was usually waiting to pick her up. Oh, please, walk more slowly, he thought. Soon she would be gone, and the endlessly-stretching hours of longing for her would start again, torturing him with mere fact that they were lacking her presence. "Which part of ourselves is it that we love so desperately when we see it in others", he wondered by himself.

Actually her father's car was not there. She walked over to a little red Fiat. There was a stranger inside, a muscular young man with short hair. He could see her step into the car and quickly give him a greeting kiss. Time came to a standstill. A whole bright future of love and joy and oneness collapsed and shrivelled up into one single stabbing second of despair, exploding somewhere in between of his head and his heart.

The Time of A Gardener

...time held me green and dying ...

Dylan Thomas

It was usually in the end of July that the garden would explode in an exuberance of colour and ripeness. Oh, the tomatoes were as red as cherries this year, the cucumbers and the courgettes were almost too big to be good, and the pumpkins were coming on well, burying everything else underneath their staunch stems and giant, healthy leaves. The poppies and calendulas were competing with each other in colourfulness, and the borages and different varieties of sage were already covered all over with little blossoms, teeming with busily humming wasps and flies and bumble-bees.

"This is just the time, the best time of the year", he thought. "You had better enjoy it, not miss a single moment of happiness, pluck the day like a ripe fruit and savour every morsel of it." It had taken a long time to get there, long meagre weeks of waiting for seeds to sprout, seedlings to grow, leaves and blossoms to appear and finally transform themselves into fruit. And he had better be quick, before fruits would be eaten by cheeky birds, shaken down by relentless winds, deceived into decaying by the solid promise of seeds.

Life had given him everything he had ever dreamed of, a beautiful wife and a big house and a good job and a face and a suit to match, and even a garden with fruit rewarding the work of his hands, and yet somehow it did not seem enough. Known only to him, there were also some sour fruits growing in his garden, and sometimes he would taste one unexpectedly. Those fruits were whispering to him: "Will the good times last?", "What will be tomorrow?" and "Your biological clock is ticking, ticking, better spawn some offspring and ... decay."

"Life is nothing but renewal and decay", he thought. The first green grass in spring and the last yellowish one just before the first snow, the beautiful promising cherry blossom and the overripe bursting cherry eaten by worms and wasps ... The play goes on and on, starting all over again and again. The happy prologue of birth, the sad epilogue of death, and a long stretch of indifference in between ...

The Time of A Father

This moment is the best the world can give:

The quiet blossom on the tortured stem.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

The two girls were playing with their kites. Patches of blue sky could be seen among the endlessly moving carpets of clouds. There was a waft of winter in the air. The youngest was playing with his football. He was kicking it onwards, onwards, down the slightly sloping meadow and up again. He looked most like him. The younger girl looked very much like her mother, while the features of the oldest were a mixture of those of both of them.

Suddenly he felt almost overpowered by a feeling of warmth and pride. They were so beautiful and clever. He felt a surge of tenderness in his breast, like wanting to give them a kiss, and yet he just stayed there, watching them from a distance.

The youngest one came up to him. "Daddy, I am bored." He had so little time for them, and yet when they were together it seemed that he could not give them the quality time that he felt they deserved. Would they ever know how much hard work it took him to be able provide for them all the things they took for granted?. A short look at his wristwatch. Soon he would have to go to his business meeting. October till December was usually the busiest time. The next chance to spend time with them would probably be in the Christmas Season.

Why is there always so little time, he thought while watching the wind playing with a shrivelled-up, brownish leaf. The wind was just pushing it onwards, onwards, not giving it a rest, and yet without a purpose. Where are you going, little leaf?

Sometimes he was worrying about them. This world was so crazy and so cruel. How could he protect them from all the bad influences out there, from drugs and crime and teenage pregnancy? And yet, all one could do was believe that everything would be alright. "There must be a purpose in this great enigma", he thought. "If only I could find the time to figure it out."

It was time to go.

The Time of An Old Man

*Suddenly I knew that you'd have to go
My world was not yours, your eyes told me so
Yet it was there I felt the crossroads of time
And I wondered why.*

Loreena McKennitt

The sun was rising. His eyes were so full of tears that he could hardly see the splendid spectacle of red and blue and crimson melting together in a glorious winter sky morning symphony accompanied by a fading moon and faint-growing stars. What did it all mean to him without her?

There she lay on her bed, in her night-gown of white lace, as she had lain so many nights for so many decades, and yet this night had been so very different. Oh, if he could erase this night from the big calendar of time, if he could tear it out, and trample on it, and annihilate it! Oh, if he could ever forget that last fading look of her eyes, that look of forgetful sorrow and hope of light, of someone who will soon go far away, to some other world he could not follow...

Oh time, what did you do to us? Was she not a young girl yesterday, so beautiful and bright and rosy, how could it be that she suddenly had grown so old? And his own face, how come it had become so wrinkled so quickly? Why is it that in summer-time we find it so hard to imagine the cold gusts of winter-days? Why can we never imagine their chill, believing that summer will last forever?

"Oh time, you betrayed me", he thought, "you did you not tell me that the price for the joys you granted me would be those bitter tears I am crying now, just the same measure of it. I am old now. My days are growing fuzzy and are losing their structure. The hours no longer make any pressing demands on me. All my life I wished I could enjoy them as freely again as in the time of my childhood. Now they are free at last, but I am too old, too lonely without her to enjoy them ... Time, if this is a joke you played on me, I find it very hard to laugh about it!"

The sun had come out in all its first glory. Where are you now, he cried. Are you in the sun, or in the wind, or in beating of a swallow's wing? Are you in the ashes of the dying embers or in the freshness of the morning dew? Where are you? Suddenly it was as if he heard her voice in his head. "I did not die", it said.

The Time of an Angel

And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind

How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.

Dylan Thomas

The agony of death was over. There was only light. "Where am I", he asked himself in his mind. Three beautiful beings of light appeared. They were so calm and gentle. "Follow us homewards", they said. "Your time has come."

He saw his body lie there like an old garment he had finally cast off. It seemed strange to him that he had ever been inside there. He felt so free and blissful now. "Follow us", the angels said. They were flying up, higher and higher. He saw the earth underneath him just the way an astronaut sees it, a little blue ball, getting smaller.

Then, with his inner view, he had a vision of the whole history of the earth, of times when it was not inhabited yet, just covered with water, of times of dinosaurs and savage ape-like humans, of great nations rising and falling, of floods and fires and ice-ages and atomic wars, of green sprouting anew among the rubble, of human beings becoming more and more numerous, like ants, of mobile phone nets stretching the whole globe, of future ages of an enlightened brotherhood of man, of a long, long history of mankind, of times of war and peace, of singular peaks of barbarism and civilisation in the big sea of evolution, and of the final destruction of the planet. All of this seemed to last a mere second.

And he saw his own life like a fast movie, the way he had been as a child, the way he had been waiting for his first love everyday after school, the way he had built himself a house and a garden and a life, the way he had somehow never had the time to do the things that were most important to him, ... the way she had died. "You will meet her again", said a soft voice in his head, "in heaven, in a new life ..."

And then he saw the lives of other human beings, similar to his, all speeding by in the flash of a second, from a toothless toddler to a toothless granny, with some short bloom in between ...

As they were flying higher, closer to the bright light, brighter than that of the sun, one of the angels said: "On earth, time is very fast. In heaven, time is eternally slow. One day in heaven equals ten thousand years on earth. For us, the life of a human just lasts a few seconds. Oh what a grand illusion it is! No more than a dream, the day-dream of a butterfly. And yet we pity human beings. Did you know that the rain falling down on earth sometimes consists of angel's tears? Poor pitiful earthbound human beings! They have forgotten all about heaven, and their illusionary joys and sorrows, they seem so very real to them ..."