

The Chickpea & the Chef

Rhyming Rumi Adaptation by Maja Apolonia Rodé
Based on translations of Coleman Barks & Reynold A. Nicholson

A chickpea leaps almost over the rim
of the pot that it's being boiled within.
“Why are you doing this to me?” it cries.
The chef shoves it down with
the ladle and sighs.

“Don't try to jump out,
my sweet little pea.
This might seem like torture,
but it isn't really.
I'm giving you flavor.
You can mix with the cumin
and become the life energy of a human!

“Remember the garden,
the rain and the sun?
That was for this, my dear little one.
A boiling new life
will emerge from this heat
and The Friend will have
something delicious to eat.”

Someday, the pea will say to the chef:
“Boil me more! I can't do this myself!
I'm just a camel in your caravan.

You're my driver, my cook,
and my way to I AM.

I love your cooking!”

The chef will then say, “I once was like you,
fresh from the ground where I quietly grew.
Then I also boiled.
Not one time, but two.

“First I boiled in the world of time
Next in the pot of this body of mine.
The boilings were fierce
in the heat of that flame.
But now my senses and spirit
are one and the same.

“Now I teach this love,
this surrender, this bliss.
And I say:

Boil me once more,
beyond even this.”

The Blind Men & the Elephant

John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887) version of the famous story
With edits and additions by Maja Apolonia Rodé

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind.)
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant
And happening to fall
Against its broad and sturdy side
At once began to bawl:
“For goodness sake, the Elephant
Is very like a wall!”

The *Second*, feeling at the tusk,
Cried, “Oh what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me, ‘tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear.”

The *Third* approached the animal
And happening to take
Its squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
“I see,” said he, “the Elephant
Is very like a snake.”

The *Fourth* reached out his eager hands
And felt about the knee.
“What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain,” said he.
“‘Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree.”

The *Fifth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Then, seizing on its swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
“I see,” said he, “the Elephant
Is very like a rope!”

The *Sixth* who chanced to touch its ear said,
“Even the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most
Deny it, no one can.
This marvel of an elephant is very like a fan!”

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each with his opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong.
Though each was partly in the right,
All were mostly in the wrong!

The Moral:

So oft in theologic wars,
Disputants can be seen
To rail on in ignorance
Of what each other mean,
With claims about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

~

And furthermore, this story tells us,
Question your perceptions.
For one (or even many) views
Can only be deceptions
Of that which can be seen anew
From infinite directions.

The Paradox

by Maja Apolonia Rodé

Look inside your favorite box,
and there you'll find a paradox.
For what appears as love and light
contains within the dark of night
illuminated only by your sight.

Now look into your oldest pain,
and let the sorrow fall, like rain.
Then watch the rain begin to clear
away the dust of grief and fear
revealing only joy here.



Be aware of paradoxes.
Don't put the things you love in boxes.
For every time you set your mind,
you disallow another kind,
a universe is left behind.

Instead of tearing things apart,
put your eyes into your heart,
and from this core awareness rises
to see the truth in all its guises,
and discover what the big surprise is!

What you see is who you are,
and you don't need to travel far
for what you seek. It's always been
the substance that you're swimming in.
What you seek has always been
the substance that you're swimming in.

So jump into the widest sea,
and find the you that's also . . . me!
Then look into the clearest sky,
don't waste a second asking why
for in this moment you . . . die.



The breath returns a sense of day
as love begins to have its way
through the one left standing there.
The world is seen without the glare
of knowing who or why or where.

Freed from nothing, nothing attained.
Everything lost, and everything gained.
Beyond the realms of will and chance,
revealed in every circumstance,
Emptiness continues to dance.