

Classic Poetry Series

Rabia al Basri

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Dream Fable

I saw myself in a wide green garden, more beautiful than I could begin to understand. In this garden was a young girl. I said to her, "How wonderful this place is!"

"Would you like to see a place even more wonderful than this?" she asked.

"Oh yes," I answered. Then taking me by the hand, she led me on until we came to a magnificent palace, like nothing that was ever seen by human eyes. The young girl knocked on the door, and someone opened it. Immediately both of us were flooded with light.

Only Allah knows the inner meaning of the maidens we saw living there. Each one carried in her hand a serving-tray filled with light. The young girl asked the maidens where they were going, and they answered her, "We are looking for someone who was drowned in the sea, and so became a martyr. She never slept at night, not one wink! We are going to rub funeral spices on her body."

"Then rub some on my friend here," the young girl said.

"Once upon a time," said the maidens, "part of this spice and the fragrance of it clung to her body -- but then she shied away."

Quickly the young girl let go of my hand, turned, and said to me:

"Your prayers are your light;
Your devotion is your strength;
Sleep is the enemy of both.
Your life is the only opportunity that life can give you.
If you ignore it, if you waste it,
You will only turn to dust."

Then the young girl disappeared.

Rabia al Basri

My Beloved

My peace, O my brothers and sisters, is my solitude,
And my Beloved is with me always,
For His love I can find no substitute,
And His love is the test for me among mortal beings,
Whenever His Beauty I may contemplate,
He is my "mihrab", towards Him is my "qiblah"
If I die of love, before completing satisfaction,
Alas, for my anxiety in the world, alas for my distress,
O Healer (of souls) the heart feeds upon its desire,
The striving after union with Thee has healed my soul,
O my Joy and my Life abidingly,
You were the source of my life and from Thee also came my ecstasy.
I have separated myself from all created beings,
My hope is for union with Thee, for that is the goal of my desire

Rabia al Basri

My Greatest Need is You

Your hope in my heart is the rarest treasure
Your Name on my tongue is the sweetest word
My choicest hours
Are the hours I spend with You --
O Allah, I can't live in this world
Without remembering You--
How can I endure the next world
Without seeing Your face?
I am a stranger in Your country
And lonely among Your worshippers:
This is the substance of my complaint.

Rabia al Basri

Reality

In love, nothing exists between heart and heart.
Speech is born out of longing,
True description from the real taste.
The one who tastes, knows;
the one who explains, lies.
How can you describe the true form of Something
In whose presence you are blotted out?
And in whose being you still exist?
And who lives as a sign for your journey?

Rabia al Basri