



In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers.

There is no way of telling people
that they are all walking around shining like the sun.

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts,
the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes.

If only they could all see themselves as they really are.
If only we could see each other that way all the time.
There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed... I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.

Again, that expression, *le point vierge*, comes in here.
At the center of our being is a point of nothingness
which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth,
a point or spark which belongs entirely to God,
which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives,
which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind
or the brutalities of our own will.

This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty
is the pure glory of God in us. It is, so to speak,
God's name written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our dependence.

It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven.
It is in everybody, and if we could see it
we would see these billions of points of light coming together
in the face and blaze of a sun
that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely....

I have no program for this seeing. It is only given.
But the gate of heaven is everywhere.

Le Point Vierge by Thomas Merton

Here's a transformative practice for February - March, 2019

Each day take some time to dwell in communion with the divine spark within your own body/mind/heart. Be gentle and tender toward this radiant point of Light in yourself (and in others).

Coincide with this sacred presence of Light at the core of your being when you wake up in the morning, frequently during the day, and before going to bed at night.

Red Brocade

The Arabs used to say,
When a stranger appears at your door,
feed him for three days
before asking him who he is,
where he's come from,
where he's headed.

That way he'll have strength
enough to answer.
Or, by then you'll be
such good friends
you don't care.

Let's go back to that.
Rice? Pine nuts?
Here, take the red brocade pillow.
My child will serve water to your horse.

No, I was not busy when you came!
I was not preparing to be busy.
That's the armor everyone puts on
to pretend they had a purpose
in the world. I refuse to be claimed.

Your plate is waiting.
We will snip fresh mint
into your tea.

Naomi Shihab Nye, *19 Varieties of Gazelle*

