

Invocation

©By *Vijaya Sundaram*

(Bespoke poem for the ACM event on Jan 20th, 2024)

O Muse,
I await you, every day,
Parched, hungry, roaming abroad.
I come to you, O Muse,
A supplicant before her God.

You arrive, often late,
Reeling drunk, keeling
With honeyed wines,
Concealing nothing of
Other poets, other rhymes,
Other stories, other times.

Blind and immured, I feel my way
In the dark of dreams,
And wheel around to my
Stumble-well of songs,
Looking for a spark
To light your way to me,
A swell of music
To herald your arrival.

And I kneel humbly
Before you, Capricious One,
I genuflect before you,
Who give to all, or none.
Knowing that all things
Come from you, I know
You can choose
To hold back, or bestow.

Laughing, indifferent, you place
Your hand upon my head.
Your careless benediction
Lights the way, and I rejoice.
As you continue onwards,
I hear your singing voice.

And I forgive you, as always,
Easily, joyously, for all the times
You held me up, all the rhymes
That you kept away,

All the times you strayed.

Now, laughing, rich with your grace,
I turn water into wine, stone into bread
Play upon the instrument you place
In my waiting hands, as if you read
My mind.

And as the music swells and grows,
A galaxy blossoms within.
A nebula, a cradle of stars,
Is born, cries, knows itself,
Rocks to and fro.

And I am reborn
In the heart
Of that nebula.
I come from afar.
A dart from a star.

So are we all, all reborn,
Over and over in art.

Long ago, we knew the source.
We walked the earth, denying,
Nothing, blind to nothing,
Pulsing newly, pulsing through
Earth and air, our eyes open to
People, animals, sun and sky
We knew no regret, nor remorse.
We knew no sorrow, nor despair.

With time, and dimming eyes,
We saw darkly, blinded by
Deferred dreams, each other's screams,
Lost hopes, earthly matters, daily chores,
We worked, we smiled, we struggled
Through daily rituals, paying bills,
We cooked, and gathered, brought up families,
Did our duty, fought off ills.

It was all good, yes, it is all good.
But if I could, I'd turn back time
To when we were new upon this earth
Ready from birth, to learn the signs
Whence beauty and art could arise.

Let's not forget that once,
All seemed new, all was bright
Every song, a river of silver
Filling us with a new delight, and
Every new notion we chanced upon
Thrilled us, shivered our spines.

We forget, or remember dimly.
Distracted by work, and things to do,
Wrapped in busy-ness, dizzy
With daily anticipations,
Worried about shirking our duty.
We forget our source, forget to be,
Forget how to see anew.

I say, 'resist this! It's not too late!
Look around! Winter trees, sleeping,
Burst into life in spring and summertime,
Keeping their date with the seasons,
New-made, with new leaves, spring rain
New birds and buds, new bees and butterflies.
So too, can we persist, keeping
Our appointment with you again.

We await you, O Muse. Speak!

Tell us how to seek
Our lost selves, our art and song;
Our stories and sculptures;
Waiting to be written, shaped;
Our lives, waiting to be spun anew.
Tell us to learn to live
In dreams and dance, in light and joy.

We can do this, O Muse,
We can do this, I say!
We call upon you to choose us.
Lay your hand upon our heads,
Remind us whence we came,
Help us remake our world
Help us find the childself,
With music, story, art, as we whirl
Through wild spaces, all our days.

Help us do this alone

In our separate lives,
For it is solitary work,
And help us find it with friends,
To make a community,
For it is communal work.

So, we summon you as one
O Muse of our spirit:
Come to us.
Come to us.
Come to us
And we will celebrate you.

~~~~~The End ~~~~~