**"The Song of the Reed" (Masnavi, Book 1: LInes 1-34)**

1. Hearken to the reed-flute, how it complains, \*\*\*
Lamenting its banishment from its home:--

2. "Ever since they tore me from my osier bed, \*\*\*
My plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears.

3. I burst my breast, striving to give vent to sighs, \*\*\*
And to express the pangs of my yearnings for my home.

4. He who abides far away from his home \*\*\*
Is ever longing for the day he shall return.

5. My wailing is heard in every throng, \*\*\*
In concert with them that rejoice and them that weep.

6. Each interprets my notes in harmony with his own feelings, \*\*\*
But not one fathoms the secrets of my heart.

7. My secrets are not alien from my plaintive notes, \*\*\*
Yet they are not manifest to the sensual eye and ear.

8. Body is not veiled from soul, neither soul from body, \*\*\*
Yet no man hath ever seen a soul."

9. This plaint of the flute is fire, not mere air. \*\*\*
Let him who lacks this fire be accounted dead!

10. 'Tis the fire of love that inspires the flute, \*\*\*
'Tis the ferment of love that possesses the wine.

11. The flute is the confidant of all unhappy lovers; \*\*\*
Yea, its strains lay bare my inmost secrets.

12. Who hath seen a poison and an antidote like the flute? \*\*\*
Who hath seen a sympathetic consoler like the flute?

13. The flute tells the tale of love's bloodstained path, \*\*\*
It recounts the story of Majnun's love toils.

14. None is privy to these feelings save one distracted, \*\*\*
As ear inclines to the whispers of the tongue.

15. Through grief my days are as labour and sorrow, \*\*\*
My days move on, hand in hand with anguish.

16. Yet, though my days vanish thus, 'tis no matter, \*\*\*
Do thou abide, 0 Incomparable Pure One!

17. But all who are not fishes are soon tired of water; \*\*\*
And they who lack daily bread find the day very long;

18. So the " Raw " comprehend not the state of the "Ripe;" \*\*\*
Therefore it behooves me to shorten my discourse.

19. Arise, O son! Burst thy bonds and be free! \*\*\*
How long wilt thou be captive to silver and gold?

20. Though thou pour the ocean into thy pitcher, \*\*\*
It can hold no more than one day's store.

21. The pitcher of the desire of the covetous never fills, \*\*\*
The oyster-shell fills not with pearls till it is content;

22. Only he whose garment is rent by the violence of love \*\*\*
Is wholly pure from covetousness and sin.

23. Hail to thee, then, O LOVE, sweet madness! \*\*\*
Thou who healest all our infirmities!

24. Who art the physician of our pride and self-conceit! \*\*\*
Who art our Plato and our Galen!

25. Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven, \*\*\*
And makes the very hills to dance with joy!

26. O lover, 'twas love that gave life to Mount Sinai, \*\*\*
When "it quaked, and Moses fell down in a swoon."

27. Did my Beloved only touch me with his lips, \*\*\*
I too, like the flute, would burst out in melody.

28. But he who is parted from them that speak his tongue, \*\*\*
Though he possess a hundred voices, is perforce dumb.

29. When the rose has faded and the garden is withered, \*\*\*
The song of the nightingale is no longer to be heard.

30. The BELOVED is all in all, the lover only veils Him; \*\*\*
The BELOVED is all that lives, the lover a dead thing.

31. When the lover feels no longer LOVE's quickening, \*\*\*
He becomes like a bird who has lost its wings. Alas!

32. How can I retain my senses about me, \*\*\*
When the BELOVED shows not the light of His countenance?

33. LOVE desires that this secret should be revealed, \*\*\*
For if a mirror reflects not, of what use is it?

34. Knowest thou why thy mirror reflects not? \*\*\*
Because the rust has not been scoured from its face.

A. If it were purified from all rust and defilement, \*\*\*
It would reflect the shining of the SUN of GOD.

35. O friends, ye have now heard this tale, \*\*\*
Which sets forth the very essence of my case.

--Translated by E. H. Whinfield. From "Masnavi-i Ma'navi, The
Spiritual Couplets of Maulána Jalálu-´d-dín Muhammad-i Rúmí."
(London, 1887). An abridged translation. Reprinted as "The
Teachings of Rumi" (Octagon Press, London, 1994). [Lines
indicated by a capital letter are invented and have no basis in the
Persian text.]