



*When Siddhartha almost died from the harsh austerities he'd been practicing, a memory floated into his mind of a moment in his childhood: He was placed under a rose-apple tree and forgotten for awhile. He's a little boy, scarcely more than a baby. He looks around and senses how pleasant the air is, and the hills, the shade, the grass, the branches. There is nothing else on his mind. Nobody is looking at him. The world pays no attention. The boy's eyes slowly scan the whole scene. There is no resistance, there is no tension, there is no desire. Everything is completed, self-sufficient. There is nothing to add, nothing to subtract. Cautiously, [his adult] mind penetrates itself, then, almost playing, formulates these words: Perhaps this is the way that leads to awakening. And a question forms: Are you afraid of this happiness?*

from Roberto Calasso, *Ka*



Even in Kyôto—  
hearing the cuckoo's cry—  
I long for Kyôto

Bashô



Zhaozhou said, "It's as though you come across a secret word and you don't know the meaning, but you recognize the handwriting."

At the evening gathering, Linji said, "Sometimes I take away the person but not the environment. Sometimes I take away the environment but not the person. Sometimes I take away both person and environment. Sometimes I take away neither person nor environment."

A monastic asked, "What does it mean to take away the person but not the environment?"

Linji said, "The spring sun emerges, covering the earth with brocade. A little child's hair hangs down, white as silken strands."

"What does it mean to take away the environment but not the person?"

"The sovereign's rule spreads throughout the land. Generals beyond the border no longer taste the smoke and dust of battle."

"What does it mean to take away both person and environment?"

"No news from the borderlands—they stand alone, a region apart."

"What does it mean to take away neither person nor environment?"

"The sovereign enters the jeweled palace; old farmers sing their songs."



Love yourself. Then forget it. Then, love the world.

Mary Oliver