

A Different Kind of Intimacy

Source: [Robert Augustus Masters](#)

by Robert Augustus Masters

Along a colorfully crowded sidewalk I walk, slowly. I feel both right here and all over the place. There's a very subtle pleasure suffusing each step, starting in the center of my soles, spreading through my feet and up through my torso.

I have a growing sense that there's nowhere in particular to go, no one in particular to be, no pull of any history. There's a motiveless easing into now and a deeper now, step by step...

Abruptly but softly, there arises a feeling of unveiled communion with everyone I see. My heart and belly energetically butterfly open and my back softens and widens between my shoulder blades, as if making multidirectional room for what I'm experiencing. My mind is speechlessly spacious, my walking embedded in fluid ease, my movements as complex as they are simple.

I move just fast enough to flow through the bustling crowds, enjoying the needed weaving, pausing, shifting. My body knows what to do. Each life is displayed in a few frames of poignantly vivid color, rippling with its own unique history. I don't register the details but grok them, almost like they are my own.

At the same time, I recollect many people from my past, all in just a few seconds, also experiencing them the same way. No evaluation. Each person, here now or here from another time, is lit up with a reality-unlocking clarity. No thinking, no reflection. And no way to preserve this.

Things intensify. I recognize that I am in good hands. I experience no tension or ambition, just an opening, a clearing in space that's immensely soft, vast, open, edgeless. My interior softly expands out, widening, blooming in all directions with no dilution of care or love. I've the uncanny feeling of being turned inside out.

I'm a sieve for the breeze and sunny warmth. My mind is not blown, I am not in rapture – I feel extraordinarily ordinary, centered not by my usual sense of self but by the indescribably raw presence of self-aware Mystery. The usual me is but more color and movement, uniquely and ever so briefly here, just like everyone else. Nothing special. The mysteries of the obvious have me by the heart.

Now the doors really come unhinged, and language falls into its pre-conceptual roots: I am, it appears, both everyone and no one in particular.

This is only paradoxical to what's left of my mind. All things, all appearances, are but brief blossomings of uniqueness, so soon to fade, to disappear, leaving only life, only Mystery, only unspeakable Presence. No ultimate arrival here, only endless discovery and revelation.

Now I am simultaneously sad and grateful. My sense of poignancy is the presenting surface of a vast grief, shared by all, a grief that coexists with the inherent joy of being, the absolutely non-conceptual wonder of simply existing in this impossibly thin personalized slice of forever.

In this I am me and I am you, and I am also more than I can imagine, more than me and you and them and it, not stranded or intoxicated in an endless ocean of oneness, but rather feeling an endlessly evolving intimacy with all of it, knowing that I don't get the full extent of it, and that what does get the full extent of it is ever present, offering not explanation or understanding, but revelation, the kind of revelation that

eludes all translation.

A moment ago I was not here, and a moment from now I will not be here. We are all in the same position, the same existential boat, members of a transitional species that is leaning into its own destruction, flirting with extinction.

We continue to war with each other on a watery heartbreakingly beautiful blue-green speck in one of innumerable galaxies, blind but not completely blind, all too many of our hearts not broken open but hardened and thickened, held in place by a collective myopia behind which coils a collective trauma that will not be healed until we are able to fully grieve together, grieve so deeply that we remember where we've been and what we truly are.

Each life I see is so different, so unique, so quickly gone, its history fading into tattering information and memory, and then nothing. This is a kind of hell when seen only through the eyes of our everyday individuality, but is far from hellish when seen through the eyes of what we truly are.

The sidewalk rises up to meet my feet, carrying tidings from the earth below. The sun's warmth is all over my face. A short time later, I am back to at least some semblance of my everyday sense of self, internally bowing in gratitude. It's enough that I am here, that I get to be here, that I am alive, that intimacy with the Mystery is less than a breath away.