

“Ode to Joy”

Text by Tracy K. Smith

O friend, my heart has tired
Of such darkness.
Now it vies for joy.

Joy, bright God-spark born of Ever
Daughter of fresh paradise—
Where you walked once now walk rancor,
Greed, suspicion, anger, fright.
Joy, the breeze off all that’s holy,
Pure with terror, wild as flame.
Make us brothers, give us comfort,
Bid us past such fear and hate.

If you’ve loved another’s beauty
If you’ve craved the warmth of flesh,
If your spirit is invested
In another’s sense of worth,
Lift your voice to touch my voice now,
Let our song bring joy to earth.
Lift your voice to touch my voice now,
Let our song bring joy to earth.

Joy like water, milk of mothers.
Kind and wicked all deserve
Joy’s compassion freely given,
Joy which can’t be sold or earned.
In the depths of blackest soil
In the lightless atmosphere
In the atom and the ether,
Animating all that is.

Let us feel it, let us heed it,
Let us seek its deepest kiss.
Let us live our brief lives mining
That which joy alone can give.

Battered planet, home of billions,
Our long shadow stalks your face.
All we’ve fractured, all we’ve stolen,
All we’ve sought blind to your grace.

Earth, forgive us, claim us, let us
Live in humble thanks and joy.
Let our hearts wake from our stupor,
Let us praise you in one voice.



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