Meeting without Masks

Let’s meet without masks
without imaginary hierarchies of status
or artificial shows of respect
knowing that we don’t need to try to impress one another
with charm or humor or intelligence.

Let’s meet without fear
of exposing our vulnerabilities
without being embarrassed by our need for love
and pretending to be autonomous
since we’re not really separate or self-sufficient
but parts of a greater whole
who are drawn towards each other.

Let’s meet without the past
without letting our urge to connect and merge
be obstructed by old resentments
without letting our natural flow of empathy
be blocked by hard, fixed prejudice.

Let’s meet without insecurity
knowing that we don’t need to prove
that we’re worthy of each other’s affection
but simply let love flow between us.

Let’s meet without intention
knowing that we don’t need to try
to understand or relate to each other
because we’re already related
knowing that all we need to do
is allow ourselves to be.

Let’s meet purely in presence
without any conditions or concepts
knowing that in essence we are the same
and that in being we are one.

**Empathy**

Without empathy we see enemies everywhere.
We feel threatened by strangers when they come close.
We strengthen our defenses and protect our resources
in case they try to steal what’s rightfully ours.

But with empathy we see brothers and sisters.
When strangers come close we sense kinship.
We embrace them and open up our lives to them
knowing they’re entitled to share what’s ours.

Without empathy we feel incomplete
and the goal of our life is to accumulate -
to build an empire, to claim ownership of the world
so that one day we might feel whole.

But with empathy we feel no sense of lack
and the goal of our life is to contribute -
to alleviate suffering, to help heal the world
and strengthen our connection to the whole.

Without empathy the world seems full of separateness.
The closer we look, the more separateness we see.
And the essence of reality appears to be
just tiny, solid building blocks of matter.
But with empathy the world is full of connection. The closer we look, the more connection we see. And the essence of reality reveals itself as a vast space of formless oneness.

Without empathy other human beings are objects, machines made up of inert materials that we can use for our own devices and discard once they have no more use.

But with empathy every person is a universe a mysterious spiritual space full of unknown forces and energies and deep with hidden potential.

Without empathy the ego has a solid boundary. We live as prisoners, trapped inside ourselves. And the torment of our isolation is redirected at the world as hatred.

But with empathy the self is soft and fluid. We’re part of the world, as the world is part of us. And through our openness, like a river through a channel we feel an endless flow of love.
We Are Each Other

We’re not ghostly entities
marooned inside our mental space
with our personal pain and suffering
that can never be shared or understood.

We’re not machines full of selfish genes
who are always scheming to outdo each other
and only ever show kindness
if there’s some benefit to ourselves.

We are each other.
Every human being’s feelings flow
like currents of air through the atmosphere
of our communal being -
brushing each other’s souls
touching each other’s hearts
stirring mutual compassion.

We can feel compassion
because our true nature is connection.
We can help and heal each other
because we can sense each other’s suffering.
And love is the experience
of our shared identity.