

*Becoming Undone: Unpacking Life's Weight*  
**Week One: Naming Things**

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**Please Call Me by My True Names**

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow –  
even today I am still arriving.

Look deeply: every second I am arriving  
to be a bud on a Spring branch,  
to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings,  
learning to sing in my new nest,  
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,  
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,  
to fear and to hope.  
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death  
of all that is alive.

I am a mayfly metamorphosing  
on the surface of the river.  
And I am the bird  
that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily  
in the clear water of a pond.  
And I am the grass-snake  
that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,  
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks.  
And I am the arms merchant,  
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.  
I am the twelve-year-old girl,  
refugee on a small boat,  
who throws herself into the ocean  
after being raped by a sea pirate.  
And I am the pirate,  
my heart not yet capable  
of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo,  
with plenty of power in my hands.  
And I am the man who has to pay  
his "debt of blood" to, my people,  
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm  
it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.  
My pain is like a river of tears,  
so vast it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,  
so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,  
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,  
so I can wake up  
and the door of my heart  
could be left open,  
the door of compassion.

Thich Nhat Hanh