

## HOW I BECAME A WARRIOR

Jeff Foster

Once, I ran from fear  
so fear controlled me.  
Until I learned to hold fear like a newborn.  
Listen to it, but not give in.  
Honour it, but not worship it.  
Fear could not stop me anymore.  
I walked with courage into the storm.  
I still have fear,  
but it does not have me.

Once, I was ashamed of who I was.  
I invited shame into my heart.  
I let it burn.  
It told me, "I am only trying  
to protect your vulnerability".  
I thanked shame dearly,  
and stepped into life anyway,  
unashamed, with shame as a lover.

Once, I had great sadness  
buried deep inside.  
I invited it to come out and play.  
I wept oceans. My tear ducts ran dry.  
And I found joy right there.  
Right at the core of my sorrow.  
It was heartbreak that taught me how to love.

Once, I had anxiety.  
A mind that wouldn't stop.  
Thoughts that wouldn't be silent.  
So I stopped trying to silence them.  
And I dropped out of the mind,  
and into the Earth.  
Into the mud.  
Where I was held strong  
like a tree, unshakeable, safe.

Once, anger burned in the depths.  
I called anger into the light of myself.  
I felt its shocking power.  
I let my heart pound and my blood boil.  
Listened to it, finally.  
And it screamed, "Respect yourself fiercely now!".  
"Speak your truth with passion!".  
"Say no when you mean no!".  
"Walk your path with courage!".

"Let no one speak for you!"  
Anger became an honest friend.  
A truthful guide.  
A beautiful wild child.

Once, loneliness cut deep.  
I tried to distract and numb myself.  
Ran to people and places and things.  
Even pretended I was "happy".  
But soon I could not run anymore.  
And I tumbled into the heart of loneliness.  
And I died and was reborn  
into an exquisite solitude and stillness.  
That connected me to all things.  
So I was not lonely, but alone with All Life.  
My heart One with all other hearts.

Once, I ran from difficult feelings.  
Now, they are my advisors, confidants, friends,  
and they all have a home in me,  
and they all belong and have dignity.  
I am sensitive, soft, fragile,  
my arms wrapped around all my inner children.  
And in my sensitivity, power.  
In my fragility, an unshakeable Presence.  
In the depths of my wounds,  
in what I had named "darkness",  
I found a blazing Light  
that guides me now in battle.

I became a warrior  
when I turned towards myself.

And started listening.

