

SUMMER JOURNEY

To live is to give

The summer journey revolves around kindness and beautiful memories. I remember seeing an elderly woman give a poor man a heap of clothes. When I praised the woman for her generosity and said she must be rich, she replied: "I give because I am poor." This woman knew how to give with her heart, as it was called in my childhood. She was at peace with her lot.

The moment creeps

Sometimes it seems as though love is like longing — one longs for what has yet to happen. Much like worshipping gods that have not yet been created. Time gives and takes. Love allows us to fear the unknown; we long to hold on but do not wish to let go. But above all, love teaches us not to fear.

The gentle birch tree

The first day of summer once marked the beginning of the year here. The birch is called "baðmur" (the tree). I found this a beautiful word already as a young man. The shelter — the protective embrace and leafy crown of the birch — echoes the warmth of love and the scent of summer. When the birch gives off its fragrance, the fear of the night's cold grip is lost. An unforgettable moment in a soft hollow is the gentle birch.

Dance of the butterflies

The dance of the butterflies is a path we choose to see, the summer journey we hold in memory or glimpse in a mirage. We choose each step because we cannot do otherwise. What we choose is always a footprint in the direction we are heading.

One tone

My mother said there is one tone in the heart that we should listen for above all others — the tone of kindness. Paying heed to this tone is much simpler than most people think. Intuition often asks which choice is better. The answer is simple if we know how to hear the tone of kindness.

Solitude opens gateways

To find the soul a place in the shimmering haze that trembles over the ocean of love — that is the path we take when longing intensifies. Solitude becomes an open sea of hope if the heart is at peace with a wait that will end. Waiting to travel with summer and sun shows us that one who waits for something beautiful will never wait too long.

Footprints on the road of time

As a young man I heard talk of eternal life. That idea always seemed to me sheer madness and rather absurd. Something that has always existed, exists, and will always exist. Eternity

is a concept human understanding cannot grasp. In my mind, the whole world revolved around life here and now, the summer journey of youth, one's reputation — the footprints in the soil that turn to dust.

Garden of goodness

I find it natural to speak of the material world and the world of spirit. I do not connect spirit to anything divine or supernatural. I see the spiritual as a way to view reality from the outside, to find optimism in adversity, to keep watch over ideals, and to always have hope. I want to see life as a journey through a beautiful garden.

Harp of the heart

The goal of life is to let gratitude find shelter in weary bones, to let the harp of the heart resound, so that kindness proves stronger than all else, to find one's strength in honest work, to enjoy the fruits of kindness, and to be at peace within oneself.

The harp of the heart has an amusing connection to the summer journey. "Harpa" was once the name of the first month of summer.

The heart

When I was learning piano as a young boy, my teacher said: "You think with your heart — that is necessary for an artist." Later in life I wrote a philosophical essay on the spiritual, and there I wanted to note that the heart produces a magnetic field 5,000 times stronger than the brain's. My advisor did not think that appropriate.

Song of the heart

When a cousin of mine was said to have a particularly beautiful nature, I said: "Yes, and it can be heard from far away." That cousin was always warm, kind, and generous. I feel as though I hear the echo of a beautiful theme when I think of this wonderful woman. Then there is sunshine in the mind.

Silent prayers

I learned young to hold prayers. It became clear to me early on that prayers are a conversation with the self. They are a conversation that holds an image of summer when winter winds howl. A conversation in which hope keeps watch while expectations sleep, a conversation in which beautiful thoughts move like butterflies between flowers. Silent prayers hold the voice of the heart, where harmony and concord dwell.

The glacier

Perhaps it is nothing remarkable that a majestic mountain follows a person at all times. My glacier has grown and shrunk at the farthest horizon, displayed every color of the rainbow, been clearly visible on a sunny summer day, been barely discernible in gloom and fog. But if I close my eyes, it always appears in all its glory.

The rewards of life

It is a privilege to work with Thorvaldur. He takes untrodden paths, even when he takes trodden ones. Here the melody is built on a well-known passage from *Der Rosenkavalier* by Richard Strauss. He also added an extra verse to the poem.

The theme of the poem is drawn from ancient ideas about loving one's fate. Nietzsche wrote of this under the Latin name "amor fati," and I myself have called this "the philosophy of acceptance." I am content with the outcome of the song and poem, since that is the only viable path.

The poem of the road

In philosophy it is called "compatibilism" when free will and a determined course of events are seen to coincide. In the *Tao Te Ching*, written some 2,500 years ago, everything centers on goodness and harmony. And The Poem of the Way is about concord.

A new picture of you

The summer journey is "a rose-red cloud in the sky of a warm night." The image of love is the light in the night, the hope that dwells in the day, countless events that gradually become a mountain of memory. Every moment holds a fixed place amid the chaos.

Reputation

When my grandfather departed for the Summerland, a simple funeral was held, and I myself felt grief and longing. Then a friend of my grandfather's stood beside me and said: "There is only one thing to be done when a loved one dies. There is only one path open. One thing is necessary. One must accept what has come to pass, because there is nothing else on offer." Footprints turn into memories, and memories create peace.

Editor of the poetic will

"Ljóðviljinn" (the will of poetry) is the mouthpiece of the spirit, and Steinn Steinarr was long its editor. He opened the vision of young men, and he still opens people's eyes today. He gave poetry sense and wings. His ideals broke down the walls of fear and raised mountain ranges of freedom.

So now you know

Wellbeing, peace of mind, and good values call for acceptance — accepting the road traveled, being rather proud of one's mistakes than mourning them. Acceptance is of course the best provision for the journey. To set out on a long journey guided by optimism must surely be wise. A plan bound to good values is the right path.

Longing

Who says that longing must be realistic or attainable? To long is uniquely nourishing for self-awareness, since hope is the vitamin of the soul. If a child longs for life to be a summer

journey, that experience need never be subject to illusion, even as autumn comes and howling winds turn the shimmering haze into frosty fog. For the summer journey, after all, is undertaken in the mind.

Three questions

To ask, to doubt, to let critical thought stay alert, to let answers become new questions — that is the key to life's happiness. To seek harmony in the symphony of the world and let that harmony renew one's consciousness — that is what the game is played for. The summer journey of the soul does not end even when the heart stops beating.

SIXTEEN SONGS – AND TWO MORE

Low-pitched lines

The poems in this group hold muted lines that deal with the inner workings of the beauty that humanity is capable of creating. I was taught in my childhood that words can often have greater impact if they are whispered. A scream destroys the meaning of a word, just as a glare of light destroys the images of the world. With this poem I want to whisper to you a fearlessness that says life appears like a poem that the future composes for us.

The poem lives on

If we manage to approach the magical power of speech and tone, if language and melody deliver to us the truth that only our feelings and the depths of the soul can grasp, then we can attain an understanding that awakens in us a desire for good deeds. The poem is born and finds its home. The poem comes into being with the one who composes it but lives with those who read it.

In memory of a mother

When a mother passes away, it is as though the string connecting the soul to the world is severed. When one has enjoyed great fortune in one's parents, a piercing pain arises at their passing. But at the same time, it is as though the void does not directly call forth grief, since gratitude outweighs everything else. But the longing is great, and it is such that when one drives around the city, one is always unconsciously on the way to see one's mother.

By the window at night

The longing that the grief of love calls forth is as though it concerns something that breaks and can never be glued back together. The one grieving for love cannot see the gratitude at first, because he is blinded by what never came to be. But little by little the grief fades, and it becomes clear to the mourner that it is better to love and lose than to miss out by never loving.

Nothing to fear

Ancient wisdom tells us that there is so little in the world that we can truly influence, and for that obvious reason it is generally unnecessary to work oneself up over phenomena such as weather, natural disasters, or the like. It is the same with fear — it is usually groundless, especially when we fear the unknown. It is certainly good to be cautious. But gnawing fear should, in most cases, give way to hope, which is the vitamin of the soul.

My eternal dream

I read in ancient teachings that reconciling oneself with longing is like gaining a new friend. This is doubtless good wisdom. But we all long to love and be loved, and love is like the life-force itself — it lives as long as it exists. It can fade, but the spark seems to endure. To miss someone is at once painful and sweet: painful because of loss and lost opportunities, sweet because of beautiful memories and gratitude.

Flower of life

In the memorial poem for my mother, above, I spoke of a seed watered with tears. Seeds are present in everything we do. We sow and reap in all our triumphs and all our trials. Every word, every thought, every step, every smile, and every tear — all of these are seeds that we sow. Often in fertile soil, sometimes in stony wasteland. And if we take pride even in our mistakes, then we fill our pockets with ideas that we sow wherever we go.

The way home

I once came to a farm with a broken-down car. The farmer received me exceedingly well and saw to it that my car was repaired. Contentment shone from every face. When I spoke with the farmer, he said something to this effect: I haven't really travelled far and wide, but I have been beyond the edge of the home field, often wandered about the mountain and along the shore here west of the farm. And the road always leads home ... even if the journey is long.

A fair angel follows you

I once heard a composer speak about angels. What stood out was a notion to the effect that music and angels have in common that they belong to another world, while at the same time being a force that connects us to humanity within ourselves. And I remember that I found the music which followed exceptionally beautiful.

Once I spoke with children about angels. There was a girl who said: If angels don't exist, then I don't exist. Because children are angels — angel-children.

I will never try to doubt those words.

Beautiful picture

Certainly the mind admires bold eyes. We admire beauty, and we show our admiration in

deed. As we walk through the garden of life, it is as though most of our moments are set up like windmills, harnessing delight for the sole purpose of producing beautiful memories. I have so many beautiful memories that I cannot help but share them with my fellow travelers. If I speak of times past, I will always happen upon at least one beautiful memory.

Music of the heart

What is love but harmonious tones that fill the soul with bliss? I learned to understand the feelings of love by watching my mother and father. Their love was pure and clear. They knew how to bicker when father cheated at cards. But they were always at peace, and I believe their one goal in life was to do something good every day.

If I think of them, a song sounds in my soul that I can never describe in words. But the memory of this true love is so infinitely strong that I believe it can never vanish from my mind. (Toward the end of the poem, Thorvaldur's humor is allowed to shine through.)

Will of the wind

When two souls meet, when paths cross and two souls become one, it is as though the will of the wind has blown people into the right places. And we call it luck, when the wind and the calm take turns showing us the way. Then it is as though the seeds of hope take root. Sometimes it seems as if the footprints were written in the soil, the sand, and the snow before we even set out. Sometimes the gale tells us to stay home, and sometimes it is as though a warm breeze tells us where best to go.

By your grave

When my father died, it was as though the light of the world dimmed. I remember pondering for a long time how one bids farewell to someone who has accompanied one throughout one's whole life. How does one say farewell to a person? How does one say farewell to the one who is written into the genetic code that I then pass on? Grief and bitterness begin to rub salt into the wounds. But then comes the wind of memory and blows the sadness away. What remains is a person who is proud of what was given to him — all that was dear to him.

Ray of hope

Hope is the wingspan of the heart and the vitamin of the soul. The light we perceive when we are not looking, and the beauty that closed eyes see. There once stood a boy at our garden gate in Skerjafjörður. He gave his name and then added: There's no point scolding me. I have no hope. They all say I'm hopeless.

Equally memorable to me are the words of an elderly man who had long been a teacher. He phrased his thought to me thus: What is easier than to hope?

The story

Here a story has been told in speech and song. A story of love, a story of longing, a story of seeds, a story of hope, light, nights, days, people, memories, and beautiful thoughts.

The story we have told you has in common with other stories that no two are alike. And a story is never told twice in exactly the same way.

Sweet play

Our story is a gentle play, a journey we ought to enjoy. A play of good values, delightful thoughts, and above all, life is a game that is a contest on a personal level, in which we strive to create the most beautiful memories possible. The story of the wind, the seeds, the hope, the people, and everything that writes the poem of life should never be anything but a gentle play.

Stay with me

Stay with me, my friend, carries a particularly warm message: For the human spirit, the thought of a true friend is so precious. Gratitude nourishes the poor soul with energizing warmth. When darkness tightens its grip and winter's claw seems driven by cruelty, we wait for brighter days. Then it is the heart's sincere wish to have a friend by one's side — a friend who shortens the wait and gives it purpose.

Smile

We might ask: What is an enchanting world? What is effortless beauty? The answer might be: still frost and sunshine in the middle of winter, when the calm smiles and the silence is palpable, or summer sun smiling between the clouds, with sunbeams connecting sky and earth. The wondrously beautiful becomes priceless if we smile, for then it is as though the smile becomes the one, precise light that gives life its one, true color.