

This poem describes when fidelity to the heart required breaking with tradition and a beloved teacher.

I Had a Guru

I had a guru.

He saw in a moment
the deepest thread,
the blissful peace,
the quiet truth of my practice;
my voice — suddenly
clear,
resonant,
mine but not mine;
my head nodding,
despite willing: *'don't respond'*,
the body responded
to Truth named.

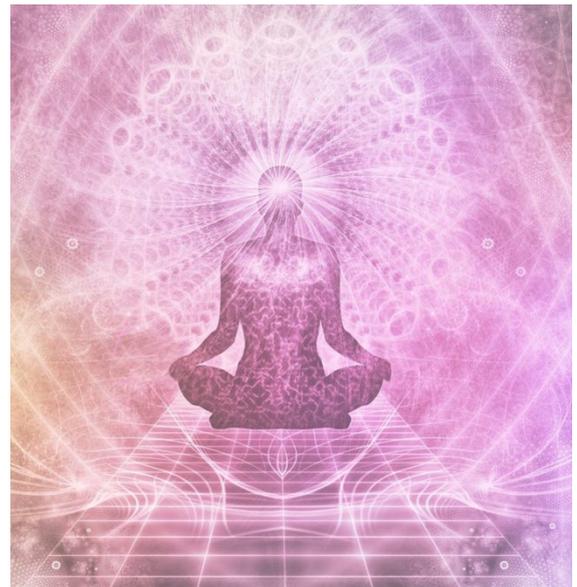
I had a guru.

He taught the techniques:
the chants,
the kriyas,
the resting in *'doing nothing'*;
my practice — suddenly
alive, afire,
growing, rooting,
mine but not mine;
my body
shaking, clearing,
aligning, resonating,
a 'yes' in every fiber of my being.

I had a guru.

He catalyzed
the *ājñā* fire,
the *manipūra* melting,
the very thinning of the Veil;
'my' Presence — suddenly
profoundly still,
profoundly vibrant,
mine but not mine;
my subtle body
clear,
energized,
in Flow.

I had a guru.



I had a guru.

He read the texts:

women at men's feet,
climbing the funeral pyre,
reduced to body parts and silent symbols.

My shock — suddenly

blindsided...

disbelief...

mine but not mine;

my gross and subtle bodies

purging,

choking,

the soul-cry of women through the ages.

I had a guru.

He defended His tradition,

named *'poison in the air'*

added *'special herbs'* to the ceremonial fire,

silencing women. Silencing me.

My heart — suddenly

anguished,

contracted,

mine but not mine;

my very being

bewildered,

the fabric of being riven and raw,

alongside women through the ages.

I had a guru.

He offered crumbs:

a touch on the shoulder,

his Guru Gaze,

praise of my chanting.

My seeing — suddenly

clear,

unclouded:

His silencing of women will not stop.

My gross and subtle bodies

transforming,

disentangling,

becoming free.

I had a guru.

And now?

Free.

— *Claralynn Rose Nunamaker*
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