

## **The Fog Within by John Izzo**

As the fog lifts off the tree topped mountains  
A heaviness falls on my soul  
Why are you unhappy? I ask  
Why are you unhappy  
When the birds, trees and grass sing  
The only song they know how to sing  
Just on the horizon whales breach  
Breathing deeply out into the element  
They know to be theirs  
Maybe, maybe  
All this noise, constantly going on inside you  
Is merely drowning out the one voice  
That already knows who you are  
And why you are here  
Have you ever wondered  
What might happen if you  
Simply breathed into everything you already know  
Maybe, the conversation itself  
Is the source of your misery

## **The Inspiration**

I wrote this poem on a run up the side of a mountain in Maui, Hawaii. As I ran that morning, I found myself feeling unhappy even though I wasn't sure exactly why. It was a beautiful sunny day. I was on holiday surrounded by people I cared about, in a beautiful place doing something I loved but was still unhappy. Suddenly I became aware of all the nature around me that was just being. The poem began with the question: What am I unhappy?

## **What it means for me:**

One of the key themes for me is the awareness of the way nature is healing for many people. It occurs to me that what is most healing about the rest of nature is how NOT like us most of nature is. Most of nature simply is. Seems to me that the trees, the birds and even my dog don't seem to struggle with this incessant conversation about happiness. Of course, the rest of nature may not have the cognitive awareness to ask the question about happiness but nonetheless we envy the way the rest of nature seems to simply live without inner turmoil. This is likely why many of the spiritual traditions use nature as a metaphor for a life of joy. Jesus used this when he spoke of the "lillies of the field" and how they neither work nor toil.

Most poetry has the equivalent of a "punch line" though as the writer we are rarely aware of it when composing. Each of us may have a different punch line but for me it is this line:

*Maybe, the conversation itself*

*Is the source of your misery*

That day I entertained that the real barrier to happiness and inner contentment is the conversation itself. So, whenever I revisit this poem, I find myself asking this question: What would happen if I stopped entertaining the question of whether I am happy?

## **Reflection:**

So, if you want to sit with this one a bit. Notice in the next few every time you are evaluating your life rather than simply living it. Whenever you find yourself doing that find a tree or a piece of nature. Watch it carefully and emulate its simple presence. Imagine for a moment you are exactly where you should be right now

