

by way of introduction to: A Jiva's Longing

In Hinduism, jiva is an individual soul. For me, a poem will frequently evolve from imagery which comes from within, say as I awaken. The imagery conveys more than I know, and so I am not certain of the authenticity of what I have just written. This is especially true of A Jiva's Longing. The poem came from contemplating Kali. Mother brought me to Shiva.

In response to reading this poem, Swami Sarvadevananda wrote:
...and the poem A Jiva's Longing hints so beautifully at the sublime mystery of the play of Shiva and Shakti, which Sri Ramakrishna emphasized in his teachings. Everything is a play of Shakti—and yet, Shiva and Shakti are not two.

A JIVA'S LONGING

Om

Siva

How can I worship You

To You what can I sing

Who dances the world into existence

And swallows again the world in its wholeness back into oblivion

Who is the very stillness of that power out which the world roars

You hold in deep meditation That Which Is

Om

You who I worship

Coming to You

Reaching up through the roar of snow hurtling down from the cliffs of your abode

To pray to your name

To bow to your form

Again and again

I pray to you

I bow to you

But how can I know You

Emptied of name and form

How can I reach you through the roar of snow

hurtling down from the cliffs of your abode

The roar is Mother

The roar is Shakti

We who are born We are born of that roar

The roar is Mother

The roar is Siva's power

The roar is Kali's laughter

The roar is the Ganga river

O Mother

Singing into existence all that is
All that we worship
All that we know
Name and form
Your names Mother
Mother of God Mother of illusion Mother of ignorance

I will be born in illusion to know illusion
I will be born in ignorance to know ignorance
I will be born in God to know God
I will be born to know I am

She who creates us and tramples us
O Siva
She Dances on You

Painting three lines across my forehead
I will mark me as yours
I will come to You
I will live among the rivers of your braided hair
I will bow and build a shrine

In You I am

A grain of sand beneath your feet

Sing and hold dear the transparent skies of these dreams