

Naomi Buck Palagi

prayer

Let me not be driven by fear. Yay though I walk through the valley of darkness, let me use my eyes to see the glint of water-swept rocks. Let me use my cheek to feel the whip of animated wind. In my hand I clutch a stick of smooth-carved wood, and should I lose this stick let me not forget the knife in my pocket, to cut another.

Let me not be driven by fear. Though the path meander through tallest trees, let me look upon the panther with awe and care, and let me not panic, and give it fright. Though I be alone, let me not abandon the voices in my head, who speak to me, and give me comfort, the living and the dead, those who speak in the world and those who have never been.

When I tire, let me sit, and rest. Let me drink from my skein, and let me eat from my pack. Let me not be driven by fear of famine, for if I have never hunted, I can learn. If I have never cultivated, I can stay, and cultivate, and fill my pack. If I am unpleasant to myself, I can bathe in cold streams and be refreshed.

Let me not be driven by fear. If I take fright, let me run, and build my energy and strengthen my muscles. Let me take a side path, to find a vista. Let me gasp. Let me notice the difference between near and far, between cliff and sky, between an oak leaf, and a pokeberry. Let me smash a pokeberry onto my skin, to see the bloom of purple. Let me rub bare feet on moss, then re-lace my shoes and send breath to the legs that that will carry me forward.

Yay though I walk through the valley of darkness, let me not be driven by fear. Let me consider myself, and the many lives that have made me.

If I am harmed, let me wash the wound. Let me tend it, with care and curiosity, so I do not fear it. Let me raise it, like a child, til it grow and leave me, or til it learn community within me. Let me know the world. Let me know myself, and let me remember the space between my molecules, between all molecules.

There is much mystery here. Let me be alive and wonder.