

## **The Kingdom**

(reprinted from *Wellsprings* by Anthony De Mello)

I imagine that I enter a deep dark cave  
where I am totally alone.  
I sit down in a corner  
to meditate on life.

Today I choose to see life in its brokenness  
and uselessness  
and waste.

I imagine flowers growing by a roadside  
and I see the seeds  
that never made it to the surface of the ground,  
the tender shoots  
that sprouted only to be trampled on by people,  
devoured by cattle, scorched by the heat of the sun.  
At every stage of growth  
thousands must perish  
for one flower that will bloom.

I see trillions of wasted eggs  
and fetuses destroyed  
and babies born to perish  
for every human that survives.

I get the wasted struggles of millions  
who aspire to be actors,  
writers,  
political leaders,  
saints,  
and end in failure...  
for the handful that arrives.

I have myself arrived at where I am today  
through countless wasted hours of boredom,  
useless conversations,  
pastimes,  
incapacitating sickness,  
or sufferings I was fool enough to bring upon myself.  
Through energy I squandered  
or unproductive planning,  
stillborn projects,  
fruitless undertakings.

I contemplate the myriad opportunities I threw away,  
the talents I neglected,  
the challenges I dared not face,  
the promises that never were  
and, worse still, never will be kept.

I contemplate this not with sadness,  
not with guilt,  
but with patient understanding,  
for I wish to love life as much in its failure  
as in its success.

And I recall the parable the Lord gave us  
as a symbol of the Kingdom:

The sower goes out to sow his seed;  
some of it falls on rocky soil,  
some among thorns and thistles,  
some on the road where it is trampled on  
or eaten by the birds,  
and some of it bears a hundredfold  
or maybe less, just thirtyfold or sixty.

And I love the whole of that field.  
I love the rock  
and the fertile soil,  
the pathway  
and the thorns and thistles,  
for all of it is part of life.  
I love the seed that is sensationally fruitful  
and the seed that has just average success.  
Today I especially love  
the seed that is sown only to perish  
so that before it goes into oblivion  
it will be blessed and redeemed by my love.

Finally, I look at the Savior on the cross,  
symbolizing in his broken body  
and his unsuccessful mission  
the drama of life in general  
and my life in particular.  
I love him too,  
and as I press him to my heart  
I understand that somewhere, somehow,  
all of it has a meaning,  
all of it is redeemed  
and made beautiful  
and resurrected.