THE WANDERING TEACHER

Once upon a time there was a Teacher who was known far and wide as one who had mastered all the great disciplines of a spiritual seeker. She wandered the country, and whenever people heard she was near, they traveled to seek her wisdom and her guidance.

“Great Teacher,” one would say, “I wish to get closer to God.” “By what path do you travel now?” she would ask. “I study the scriptures, diligently applying myself day and night to unlocking their mysteries,” came the reply. “Then you should put down your books and walk in the woods—thinking nothing, but listening deeply.”

Another would say, “I do good to every person I meet, doing all that I can to serve their needs.” “Then for a time,” the Teacher would reply, “consider yourself well met and strive to serve your own needs as you have so well served others.”

One day the Teacher noticed someone in the back of the crowd, someone not pushing his way to her as most of the others did. She went to him. “What is it I can do for you?” she asked.

“I do not know,” he replied. “I feel in need of something, but I do not believe in God and have nothing you could call a ‘practice.’” “When do you feel most alive?” the Teacher asked. “When I am playing with my children,” the man said without hesitation. “Then play with your children,” said the Teacher. “And you will find what you seek.”