

The Running Child Meditation

From the foyer of the meditation hall
the sound of a small child running
back and forth, feet plopping and rising
and pausing and turning again.

Inside the sitting room a meditator
feels irritation rising up within her.
“What could that parent be thinking?
Why don’t they take that child outside?”

Another meditator is drawn into a memory
of her own children, now grown,
and the sweetness of the footfalls in the foyer.

Another notes the boundless energy
of youth and feels her own lethargy.
“I am old,” she sighs.

Yet another is caught in the aching emptiness
of an old dream of the child she never had.
She hadn’t expected it to find her here
and feels a victim of its intrusion.

Another doesn’t notice the sound very much,
so loud are her own thoughts, review, rehash, plan.

Another doesn’t hear the sound at all.
In a fog and nodding,
she catches her head each time it drops.

Another hears the sound as simple sound,
unattached to any image –
a rhythmic cadence, soft and round.

Another composes a poem in her head, titled
The Running Child Meditation.

And all of these meditators are me.

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