

Stanley Kunitz in his poem **THE LAYERS** echoes how there are poignant stages and points in our pilgrimage through life we do well to notice.

**'I have walked through many lives,  
Some of them my own,  
And I am not who I was,  
Though some principle of being  
Abides, from which I struggle  
Not to stray.'**

**[...]**

**'How shall the heart be reconciled  
To its feast of losses?  
In a rising wind  
The manic dust of my friends,  
Those who fell along the way,  
Bitterly stings my face.  
Yet I turn ...  
With my Will intact to go  
Wherever I need to go  
And every stone on the road  
Precious to me.**

**In my darkest night**

**[...]**

**A nimbus clouded voice**

**Directed me:**

**'Live in the layers,**

**Not on the litter.' ...**

**Though I lack the art**

**to decipher it,**

**no doubt the next chapter**

**in my book of transformations**

**is already written.**

**I am not done with my changes.**

**Because this is so I shall take you along  
the road to the most important ones**

*[--A Journey Through Planes and Places--]*

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**In the beginning was the desert:**

**Forsaken and bare**

**Stones cried to my hunger**

**“Eat me! Eat me!”**

**Hunger gnawed, and yet I**

**Could not tempt**

**The Source of All Being.**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**Then came the temple wall:**

**Lightheaded**

**I stood there**

**A voice whispered**

**“Call his angels. They will steady you.”**

**But no,**

**I will not tempt**

**The Source of All Being.**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**Then Came the  
Illusions, whispering  
That I could be  
Rich and powerful  
And live without the  
One Who Gives  
Eternal Life.**

**No, I shall not worship  
Any other than  
The Source of All Being**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**Then came a wedding with  
Not enough wine!  
So, I gave the best wine  
When the guests  
Were already woozy  
to show the  
The generosity  
Of the Source of all Being.**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**Then came  
Crowds of hungry people  
craving food for body and soul  
And I showed them  
With five loaves and two fish  
How to share  
That none will starve,  
and all could be one  
with the Source of all Being**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**Many signs and wonders I did  
Returning bright eyes to the blind,  
Creating new life for lame and lepers  
revealing the Creator,  
The Source of All Being –  
All to no avail.**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**So, today I meet the desert stones  
again:**

**Small and sharp  
They hit and tore my skin  
And reminded me  
Of hunger in body and soul.  
But now, on the road  
Kindness covers them  
with the crowd's cloaks  
and yet -  
I can feel every one of them  
And know  
I will soon join them -  
Hard, cold, unyielding;  
causing pain  
to the ones I love most.**

**United with the source of all being:**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**Then came the wood.  
It reminds me of my early years  
Watching Joseph saw and shape  
What were trees, oaks, pines, cedars  
For making houses and doors.  
Carrying the tree  
reminded me, too,  
that I also am the door  
where all can become  
the people of the source of all being.**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**Then came the nails.  
They are huge, and strong and sharp.  
Good for holding heavy forms together,  
Roofs up, and beams down.  
Now they will hold me up  
By my wrists.  
The Spirit of the Creator  
Will slowly, painfully, leave my body,  
And I shall return to the source of all being.**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

**And so I shall end where I began:  
Alone and at one with my father in heaven  
Who is the source of all being.**

**And, according to Mary Oliver, When Death Comes:  
When it's over, I want to say: all my life  
I was a bride married to amazement.  
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.**

**When it's over, I don't want to wonder  
if I have made of my life something particular and real.  
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,  
or full of argument.**

**What do we say then?  
What do we wonder then?**