

## ***Texts***

Sung texts are **bolded**, all other texts are projected

When the poet Attar woke up  
one morning after an uneasy dream,  
he realized that he was a hoopoe bird...

**Part I** in which all the birds of the world get together  
for a conference and are addressed by the hoopoe bird.

Hoopoe: **Birds!**

**Look at the troubles happening in our world!**

**Anarchy—discontent—upheaval!**

**Desperate fights over territory, water, and food!**

**Poisoned air! Air and water contaminated! Unhappiness!**

**I fear we are lost. We must do something!**

**I have seen the world. I know many secrets.**

**Listen to me: I know of a king, a king who has all the answers.**

**We must go, we must go and find him.**

There's proof he exists. Look!  
Here's a drawing of one of his feathers.  
It fell to the ground in China in the middle of the night.

**This king is real!**

**He is as close to us as we are far from him.**

**His name is Simorgh**

**and he lives on the mountain of Kaf.**

**Let us go and find him.**

**Simorgh is hidden behind the veil of clouds.**

Birds: What veil? What clouds?

Hoopoe: **Your heart is behind the veil.**

**Part II** in which the birds realize that this will be a difficult journey  
and are reluctant to give up their comforts.

Some birds have doubts  
and some birds have fears

**The journey scared the birds.**

**They made excuses**

**The duck said I'm happy in water,  
the source of everything.**

Hoopoe: There's plenty of water where we're going.

**The falcon said he already  
had a master!**

Hoopoe: You like following orders? Follow me!

**The owl loves searching  
for shiny treasure  
among the ruins!**

Hoopoe: Come with us and search new places.

**And the parrot said I like it here.  
I feel safe.  
They bring me food  
and water every day.**

Hoopoe: And tell you what to think?

**The Peacock said I am special,  
not like anybody else.**

Hoopoe: Come and show everyone your colors. Let's go!  
**Stop these excuses! Follow me!**

At last the birds take off.

**Part III** in which the birds fill all the corners of the world.

Hoopoe: **Brave birds  
glide, fly, let's soar.  
Love loves difficult things.**

**The endless deserts are crystals of sand.  
The mountain ranges are a string of beads.**

Hoopoe: Quiet and easy, birds—the wind is on our side. We have a long way to go.

Birds: What if he's not there?  
How much farther do we have to go?  
I wonder what this Simorgh looks like.  
Is he going to feed us?—that's what I want to know.

**The seven planets are freckles...**  
**The seven oceans are drops of rain...**

**Part IV** in which the birds have to cross seven valleys.

The Valley of the Quest  
The Valley of Love  
The Valley of Understanding  
The Valley of Detachment  
The Valley of Unity  
The Valley of Amazement  
The Valley of Death

The Valley of the Quest  
P peaceful  
A auspicious  
T truthful  
I intense  
E enduring  
N numbing  
C calming  
E eternal

**Patience...**  
**Patience...**  
**Eternal...**  
**Intense...**  
**Auspicious...**  
**Eternal...**

**The Hoopoe said,**  
**When you feel empty open up your heart**  
**let the wind sweep through your heart.**

Jettison your obsessions, your power, and everything you hold dear.

The birds travel through the seven valleys:

The Valley of the Quest  
The Valley of Love  
The Valley of Understanding  
The Valley of Detachment  
The Valley of Unity  
The Valley of Amazement  
The Valley of Death

Hundreds of thousands of birds had set off on the journey  
and they filled all the corners of the world.

But many didn't make it. Some, distressed and discouraged,  
snuck away in fear. Others kept on going but were overcome.  
They lost direction, reason, died of thirst, hunger, from the  
heat of the sun, from the vastness of the oceans...

They were ravaged by beasts and scared out of their minds  
by what they saw along the way.  
Finally, the remaining ragged birds came to the end  
of the seventh valley.

Birds: Are we alive or dead?  
Where is that king  
with all the answers?  
We've come all this way.  
Let us see him!  
We made it through  
all those valleys!

Hoopoe: Valleys?  
They were only  
an illusion, birds, a dream.  
We've been through nothing.  
We are just now  
at the beginning  
of our journey.

Some birds could not believe it.  
On the spot, they lost all hope.  
They dropped dead and fell from the sky.  
Some kept flying.

**Part V** in which the mountain of Kaf appears in the distance.

A band of thirty  
battered, beaten, beleaguered companions  
trying hard not to try and hardly able to fly...

**Flowers, not flowers**  
**Fog not fog**  
**it comes at midnight**  
**it goes at dawn**

**Arriving like a spring dream**  
**leaving like the morning clouds.**  
**No way to hold it.** (Zen poem, by anonymous)

**Birds:** Mountain of Kaf!  
We are looking for Simorgh, our king.

The curtains parted.  
The birds entered.

***And they saw Simorgh the king and Simorgh the king was them.***

At the end thirty birds,  
unified by their quest,  
reach their king at last.

And they see that  
they are Simorgh the king...  
and that Simorgh the king  
is each of them...  
and all of them.