

## ANGER

By David Whyte

at its heart, is the deepest form of compassion, for another, for the world, for the self, for a life, for the body, for a family and for all our ideals, all vulnerable and all, possibly about to be hurt. Stripped of physical imprisonment and violent reaction, anger is the purest form of care, the internal living flame of anger always illuminates what we belong to, what we wish to protect and what we are willing to hazard ourselves for. What we usually call anger is only what is left of its essence when it reaches the lost surface of our mind or our body's incapacity to hold it, or the limits of our understanding. What we name as anger is actually only the incoherent physical incapacity to sustain this deep form of care in our outer daily life; the unwillingness to be large enough and generous enough to hold what we love helplessly in our bodies or our mind with the clarity and breadth of our whole being.

What we have named as anger on the surface is the violent outer response to our own inner powerlessness, a powerlessness connected to such a profound sense of rawness and care that it can find no proper outer body or identity or voice, or way of life to hold it. What we call anger is often simply the unwillingness to live the full measure of our fears or of our not knowing, in the face of our love for a wife, in the depth of our caring for a son, in our wanting the best, in the face of simply being alive and loving those with whom we live.

Our anger breaks to the surface most often through our feeling there is something profoundly wrong with this powerlessness and vulnerability; anger too often finds its voice strangely, through our incoherence and through our inability to speak, but anger in its pure state is the measure of the way we are implicated in the world and made vulnerable through love in all its specifics: a daughter, a house, a family, an enterprise, a land or a colleague. Anger turns to violence and violent speech when the mind refuses to countenance the vulnerability of the body in its love for all these outer things - we are often abused or have been abused by those who love us but have no vehicle to carry its understanding, who have no outer emblems of their inner care or even their own wanting to be wanted. Lacking any outer vehicle for the expression of this inner rawness they are simply overwhelmed by the elemental nature of love's vulnerability. In their helplessness they turn their violence on the very people who are the outer representation of this inner lack of control.

But anger truly felt at its center is the essential living flame of being fully alive and fully here, it is a quality to be followed to its source, to be prized, to be tended, and an invitation to finding a way to bring that source fully into the world through making the mind clearer and

more generous, the heart more compassionate and the body larger and strong enough to hold it. What we call anger on the surface only serves to define its true underlying quality by being a complete and absolute mirror-opposite of its true internal essence.