

THE GREAT RELIGIONS

By Hafiz

The great religions are the ships,
Poets the life boats.
Every sane person I know
Has jumped overboard.
That is good for business,
Isn't it, Hafiz?

ELEPHANT IN THE DARK

by Rumi

Some Hindus have an elephant to show.
No one here has ever seen an elephant.
They bring it at night to a dark room.
One by one, we go in the dark and come out
saying how we experience the animal.
One of us happens to touch the trunk.
“A water-pipe kind of creature.”
Another, the ear. “A very strong, always moving
back and forth, fan-animal.”
Another the leg. “I find it still,
like a column on a temple.”
Another touches the curved back.
“A leathery throne.”
Another, the cleverest, feels the tusk.
“A rounded sword made of porcelain.”
He's proud of his description.
Each of touches one place
and understands the whole in that way.
The palm and the fingers feeling in the dark are
how the senses explore the reality of the elephant.
It each of us held a candle there,
and if we went in together,
we could see it.