

Blue Cliff Record, Case 42 (adapted)

The Case:

When Layman Pang left Yao Shan's monastery, the Abbot ordered ten of his senior monks to accompany him to the temple gate. As they approached the gate, snow started falling. Layman Pang said, "These are good snowflakes. They only fall here."

One of the monks asked him, "Where do they fall?"

Layman Pang replied, "Even though you are a zen monk, the King of Death won't let you go"

Commentary:

In Suchness, it is not that we disappear. Rather, boundaries disappear. Separation disappears. Without erasing difference, all things participate in the wholeness of this moment.

The King of Death appears in many forms. If it were just one form, we could see him easily. In this case, the monk takes Layman Pang's simple statement of wonder and gratitude - the snowflakes do not fall on the monastery, they do not fall on the temple gate, they fall here - and misunderstands it, as a game, as an invitation to dharma combat, or something similar.

It is not just the snowflakes, obviously. Everything is falling and rising here, and the mind which places this here within a greater everywhere does so from a dream.