POEMS OF HOPE & BECOMING

# Rise Anyway

*Ten poems for the road back to yourself*



AK

*For anyone in the middle of the story - not at the end of it*

DEDICATION

*For the one who got up*
*on the morning they were sure they could not.*

*And for the one still sitting*
*on the edge of the bed -*

*this book is also, especially,*
*for you.*

Rise Anyway: Ten Poems of Hope and Becoming
Poems by AK

First edition, 2026
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced
without permission, except for brief quotations in reviews.

# Ten poems, one journey


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I | The Morning Belongs to You | *for anyone who has woken already tired* |
| II | Rise Anyway | *the title poem* |
| III | What the Seed Knows | *on growing unseen* |
| IV | The River Does Not Apologise | *on going around, not giving up* |
| V | Letters to the Person I Am Becoming | *a letter, left open* |
| VI | When the Night Is Long | *for 3 a.m.* |
| VII | Carry Your Light Gently | *against harshness, including your own* |
| VIII | The Mountain in Ordinary Shoes | *on the work no one applauds* |
| IX | Begin Again, Beautifully | *after the failure* |
| X | You Are Not Behind | *the closing poem* |




*Read them in order, or open the book where you need it most.*

# For the reader in the middle

Most motivational words are written from the summit - by people looking back, tidily, at a climb that is already finished. These poems were written for the middle: for the Tuesday that looks like every other Tuesday, for the 3 a.m. hour, for the attempt that failed and the one that has not been tried yet.

Hope, here, is not cheerfulness. It is not pretending the night is not dark. Hope is a practice - as ordinary as making tea, as stubborn as a seed, as unglamorous as putting on your shoes and walking anyway. That is why these poems keep returning to small things: a minute in the morning, a single step, a glass of water, a letter you write to a self you have not met yet.

If one line stays with you, let it be enough. Carry it for a day. Say it at the sink, on the stairs, at the edge of the bed. Poems are not meant only to be read. At their best, they are meant to be used - like a handrail, like a lantern, like a friend who will not let you lie to yourself kindly.

You do not need to feel hopeful to begin. Begin, and let hope catch up.

*- AK*

I

# The Morning Belongs to You

*for anyone who has woken already tired*

Before the phone, before the news,
before the world has asked for proof -
there is a minute that is only yours,
quiet as snow on a sleeping roof.

In that minute, nothing is owed.
No debt is due, no verdict read.
The light comes in without conditions
and lays its hand upon your bed.

So rise the way a garden rises -
not all at once, and not in haste.
A stem does not apologise
for taking time, for taking space.

Make tea. Make light. Make one true thing.
Let small be holy, let slow be strong.
The morning does not need your triumph -
it only asks you to belong.

And if today should ask for more
than you believe you have to give,
remember: mornings keep returning
to teach the tired heart to live.

II

# Rise Anyway

*the title poem*

Rise anyway - not when you are ready,
for readiness is a shy guest;
it rarely knocks on doors of sorrow,
it seldom comes to hearts distressed.

Rise with the trembling in your hands.
Rise with the question in your chest.
Rise with the story unfinished,
the prayer unspoken, the soul unrested.

The mountain does not move for climbers;
the climbers learn to move instead.
The road is made by feet that travel,
not by the maps inside the head.

So take the step the light allows you -
one honest step, and then one more.
Courage was never the absence of fear;
it was fear, walking through the door.

And years from now you will not recall
how perfectly you played your part.
You will remember that you rose -
with shaking hands and a willing heart.

III

# What the Seed Knows

*on growing unseen*

The seed does not panic in darkness.
It does not beg the soil for light.
It trusts the work it cannot witness,
and breaks, in secret, toward the bright.

Consider how much of your becoming
has happened where no eye could see -
the grief you carried without witness,
the quiet roots of who you will be.

Nothing in nature blooms all year,
and nothing true is built in a day.
The oak was once a held breath in earth,
a small, stubborn promise of May.

So do not dig yourself up daily
to check if you have grown enough.
Water. Wait. Keep faith with the seasons.
Tenderness, too, is tough.

What the seed knows, the heart remembers
when winter tells it to give in:
that darkness is not the end of the story -
it is where every story begins.

IV

# The River Does Not Apologise

*on going around, not giving up*

The river does not apologise
for changing course, for bending low.
It meets the rock, it does not argue -
it finds another way to flow.

It does not mourn the straight, clean line
it might have taken, had life been kind.
It gathers rain, it gathers tributaries,
and leaves its sorrows far behind.

Be river-like in your refusals:
refuse to harden, refuse to stay
where you have stopped becoming yourself
for fear of losing the familiar way.

What blocks you now may bless you later -
the bend is where the valley is made,
where slower water learns its depth,
where willows lean and children wade.

Go on, then. Softer is not weaker.
Around is also a way through.
The sea is patient, and it is waiting,
and it has saved a place for you.

V

# Letters to the Person I Am Becoming

*a letter, left open*

Dear future self - I am writing badly,
in ink that smudges, on a tired night,
to tell you: we are on our way.
It is slow. It is not always bright.

I have kept the promises I could.
I broke a few, and learned from breaking.
I hope you have forgiven us both
for all the time the healing is taking.

If you are kinder, thank the losses.
If you are braver, thank the fear.
If you are resting, thank the younger me
who would not rest, who brought us here.

I do not need you to be perfect -
only to be, at last, at ease:
a person who can hold good news
without rehearsing tragedies.

So live the life I am building blindly.
Spend it. Do not keep it on a shelf.
And sometimes, in the quiet, write back -
to this brave, unfinished self.

VI

# When the Night Is Long

*for 3 a.m.*

When the night is long, count differently.
Do not count sheep. Count mercies, small:
a door that locked, a coat that warmed you,
one voice that answered when you called.

The dark will tell you it is forever.
The dark is fluent, but it lies.
Every night you have ever survived
has ended, quietly, in sunrise.

You do not have to solve your life
in the blue hour before the dawn.
Some questions only soften by morning;
some weights are lighter once withdrawn.

So breathe the way the tide breathes -
in, and in its own time, out.
Let rest be work. Let stillness labour.
Let hope be quieter than doubt.

And if you wake before the light,
do not call that a failure of sleep.
Call it a vigil. Call it a promise
that there is something you still keep.

VII

# Carry Your Light Gently

*against harshness, including your own*

Carry your light gently -
a flame is not improved by shouting.
It does not need your cruelty
to prove it is worth counting.

You have been hard enough on yourself
for every soul you have ever met.
Has harshness ever healed a single wound?
Has shame made anyone ready yet?

Speak to yourself as you would to a child
who has carried something heavy too far:
Put it down now. Drink some water.
You are loved exactly as you are.

This is not softness instead of strength;
it is strength that can afford to be kind.
The tree that bends receives the storm
and keeps its roots and its peace of mind.

So carry it gently, and carry it far -
past every place you thought would end you.
A light held gently lasts the longest,
and warms the hands that tend it, too.

VIII

# The Mountain in Ordinary Shoes

*on the work no one applauds*

Nobody climbs a mountain in a moment.
They climb it in ordinary shoes,
on ordinary Tuesdays, carrying water,
with blistered heels and no excuse.

They climb it in the unphotographed hours,
when no one watches, no one claps -
just breath and switchbacks, breath and gravel,
and faith between the gaps in maps.

So honour the step that looks like nothing.
The email sent. The walk. The call.
The chapter read, the debt repaid,
the kindness done though it was small.

Summits are only punctuation;
the sentence is the steady climb.
A life is changed not in a lightning strike
but by returning, time after time.

One day you will look down in wonder
at valleys you once thought were home,
and know: you did not leap here. You walked -
in ordinary shoes, alone, then not alone.

IX

# Begin Again, Beautifully

*after the failure*

Begin again - not from the beginning,
for you are not who you were then.
You begin with scar and skill together,
with steadier hands and a sharper pen.

The broken bowl, repaired with gold,
does not pretend it never fell.
It makes the fracture part of the pattern -
and holds the water just as well.

So gather what the failure taught you.
Leave only what it shamed you into.
A lesson is a kind of luggage;
regret is just a weight within you.

Begin again, beautifully - slowly,
the way spring does, without a speech:
one leaf, then ten, then all the orchard,
each branch fulfilling what it can reach.

The world needs people who can return -
who lose, and learn, and still create.
It is never, ever too early.
It is rarely, truly, too late.

X

# You Are Not Behind

*the closing poem*

You are not behind. There is no behind.
There is only the road that is yours to take,
with its own weather, its own detours,
its own sweet time to heal and make.

The flower that blooms in late summer
is not late. It is simply in season.
It does not envy the early roses;
it does not owe the garden a reason.

Someone will always be further, faster -
let them be a lantern, not a measure.
Their arrival does not diminish yours;
the sky is wide, and joy is not treasure.

Measure instead by this: Are you truer?
Are you kinder than last year's pain?
Can you hold both grief and gratitude
and still plant something after rain?

Then you are not behind. You are becoming -
at the pace of rivers, roots and light.
Walk on. Your life is not a race to win.
It is a dawn. And you are its light.

# A Blessing for the Road

*May you rise - not perfectly,*
*not all at once, but truly.*

May the mornings find you willing. May the long nights find you held - by memory, by mercy, by the stubborn knowledge that every night you have ever known has ended.

May you measure your life by truth and kindness rather than by speed. May you repair what breaks and let the gold show. May you walk your mountain in ordinary shoes and discover, looking back, how far ordinary faithfulness can carry a person.

And when you cannot believe any of this yet, borrow the belief from these pages until your own returns. That is what books are for. That is what fellow travellers are for.

*Go gently. Go bravely. Rise anyway.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# AK

AK writes about hope as a practice rather than a mood - in small mornings, long nights, failed attempts and quiet returns. *Rise Anyway* is his first collection of poems.

*Thank you for reading.*
*If a poem helped, pass the book to someone in the middle of their story.*