“Sit. Feast on your life.”

The great Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh has written beautifully about why learning to love others begins with learning to love ourselves — a sentiment that the reactive modern cynic might dismiss as the vacant fodder of self-help books, but one which more considered reflection reveals to be deeply truthful and deeply uncomfortable. What, after all, does loving oneself even mean — particularly if we’re aspiring to be unselfish and generous, and to outgrow the illusory ego-shell we call a self?


On an archival On Being episode titled “Opening to Our Lives,” mindfulness pioneer Jon Kabat-Zinn reads Walcott’s masterpiece — undoubtedly one of the greatest, most soul-stretching poems ever written. Please enjoy: