

Masnavi, Ed. M. Este'lami 3.3903-8,
(equivalent in R.A. Nicholson III. 3901-3906)

This passage, in the last quarter of the long third book of the *Masnavi*, is not a self-standing poem but must be seen in the greater context of a vast long story, entitled 'The Wakīl of Bukhāra' in Nicholson's translation (Book III.3686 ff), that stretches over many hundreds of lines. The following verses occur in a speech by the Minister (Vakil) of the Prince, Šadr-e Jahān, of Bokhāra. The Minister had fled and gone into exile from his Prince when he had fallen under suspicion. Having roamed distractedly for ten years in the mountains and deserts, he recklessly returns to Bokhara, unable to endure any more separation from his beloved Prince. Friends warn him of the impending fate that awaits him if he returns to beg forgiveness. His reply is the speech in which these verses occur, where he declares that he is ready for his fate, and that life is all dying ... The story is not resolved for more than 800 more verses, almost to the end of the book, when the Prince is reconciled with him and Rumi celebrates the Love that is *the sea of Non-Being where the foot of the intellect is shattered* (v. 4726 = Nicholson 3.4723)...

I died as mineral and became a plant,
from plant I turned into a living creature.
I died as animal, became a human –
Why fear? – when *did* death ever make me less?
The next time, I shall die to being human,
and lift my head to soar among the angels.
I must escape from angel states as well:
for "*all things pass away except His Face.*"
Again, I'm sacrificed from angel states:
I shall become what mind cannot conceive.
Then I become non-being, which informs me
organically:¹ 'To Him shall we return.'

translated by Alan Williams

¹ Mowlana says 'like an organ' *chun arghanun* (from the Greek ὄργανον, *órganon*- 'implement; musical instrument; organ of the body') and therefore, considering the meaning of this passage, about our organic evolution towards higher states of being, the translation 'organically' is a fortunate play on words in English.