

the ONE wearing all the Masks

by Guru Mani H

I want to take off my mask
the one that wears a smile
the one I wear for you

But

*I'm scared
really scared
that if I do*

then you'll see my tear-stained cheeks
and the look in my eye that gives the game away
Then you'll know the truth
the reality
that I'm really not on the inside
what I show you on the outside

I want to take off my mask
just for a second
a brief moment
and let you see me the real me
To gaze beyond what I normally show you
get beneath the tough exterior
and let our spirits connect
To be vulnerable
real and true

But

*I stop and get a grip on myself
then keep the mask in place
Firmly in place*

I want to take off my mask
this one that I wear all day
and every day
It's so heavy
weighing me down
I used to wear it only on certain occasions
[then take it off and be myself]

But

*over time I wore the mask more and more
until in the end it got permanently stuck*

So now I wear it around
everywhere
with everyone
I walk through life
with this weight
this burden
I want to take off my mask
[oh why did I ever put it on?]
I used to see others
usually older
parading their masks
Pretenders I called them
hypocrites
I vowed I would never ever
become like them
Yet here I am
I've joined the mask-wearing club that I so despised
and now I despise myself
[only in private
never in public]

I want to take off my mask
and let you see what I'm really like
not the image or the act
just me

warts and all
I want you to know
the scared me
the vulnerable me
the unlovely me

But

still love me
still accept me

I'm afraid
terrified in fact
that you just love the mask
and if I were to take it off
if you were to see me unmasked
that you'd turn and run
never to return

The thought of that rejection
is more powerful
than the urge for reality
so the mask stays on
[and will probably always stay on]

I want to take off my mask
well actually its masks
plural
each one by now
perfectly made for every unique occasion
finely honed over the years

One for family
one for friends
one for work
[these I wear the most]
though there are others ready for occasional use
Sometimes I change masks several times in one day
at other times I wear the same one for a number of days
Always chopping and changing

But

sometimes nearly wearing
the wrong mask
with the wrong people
then realize just in time
[and make the change]
Problem is I wear so many and change so much
that I actually forget who I really am
what the unmasked me is really like

I want to take off my mask
NO
it's stronger than that
it's moved beyond that now
I NEED TO
I'M DESPERATE TO
I'm so tired of living a lie
If this is my life then what's the point?
I feel so false
like an actor playing a part
I just HAVE to take off my mask
take the risk
maybe the ridicule

[certainly the rejection]

But

it's worth it

to be free to be truly myself

Free to fly

I want to take off my mask

and let someone in

anyone

don't know who yet

Someone in my family?

possibly

Spouse?

not so sure

Colleague?

no way

Best friend?

probably

God?

Now there's a thought

might be good as I can't see him

so it would be a bit less embarrassing

[and the added advantage is he's not going to go and tell everyone]

Mmm

still not sure who with

though this one thing I know for certain

I need to take off my mask with someone

I know it's worth it

in fact

I'm sure it is

[well at least that's the thought in my head at the moment]

But

*whether that conviction
will take the long journey
from my head to my heart
from theory to action
I just don't know*

I want to
I'm excited
about the possibility
yet also
absolutely terrified

I want to take off my mask
Will I like what's underneath?
Will others like what's underneath?

No

I just can't
I JUST CAN'T

But

I HAVE TO OR I'LL EXPLODE
I can't go on another moment like this

I want to take off my mask

But

I'm just not sure that I can
Are you?