

A Center

By Ha Jin

You must hold your quiet center,
where you do what only you can do.

5 If others call you a maniac or a fool,
just let them wag their tongues.

If some praise your perseverance,
don't feel too happy about it—
only solitude is a lasting friend.

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You must hold your distant center.
Don't move even if earth and heaven quake.
If others think you are insignificant,
that's because you haven't held on long enough.

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As long as you stay put year after year,
eventually you will find a world
beginning to revolve around you.