From Rumi’s *Mathnawi*: The Garden of the Heart

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Once in a garden, as the Sufis do,
A Sufi laid his head upon his knee,
And seeking spiritual expansion, delved
So deep in meditation, he seemed asleep.
A busybody by his lethargic form
Was bored and cried, ‘What’s all this somnolence?
Look up and see these leafy vines and trees,
This vernal sward, these signs of God’s designs!
Hear God’s command to “contemplate and gaze”¹
– So look upon these signs of divine mercy!

The Sufi said: ‘You say they’re “signs”? Those “signs”
Are in the heart. This is your gluttony!
What’s outside merely are the “signs of signs”.
This garden and this greenery you see
Reside within soul’s deepest essence, yet
Outside, like water in a flowing brook
The garden’s likeness is reflected there.
It’s but a garden’s phantom that you see
Cascading by grace of the water there.
There’re gardens in the heart and orchards there
All full of fruit. Their images are what’s
Reflected on this water, earth, and air.’²

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¹ ‘Gaze upon the signs of God’s mercy in creation (and contemplate) how He quickens the earth after her death’ – Qur’ān, xxx: 50.