

A Broken Stone of Ozymandius

Marcus Aurelius says, in effect, every man's life is dust in the wind, a broken stone of Ozymandius.

I feel like a sodden lump in a bog, but my feelings are evanescent, raising my thoughts to a warm mist, I feel kin to all I see and free from my age.

I wake up every day, not knowing who I am, not knowing how to do anything, and once begun, I remember as I go.

I embrace this awareness, as it comes, already embraced. There is rich innocence in the not knowing that knowing confirms. I waste my dust, when I try to believe I am stone.

The Reality of This World

This world is a practical reality, I am unnourished by it.
Its physical abundance keeps me from starvation, but the drained
visage of so many others barely reminds me of any greater vitality.

This practical reality is a hospital of strength, a factory of breathing,
an emporium of beauty, a contest of integrities, a struggle of love.

Raised in this reality, I believe in it and trust the innate to rise, the unfed
to laugh and sing, the numb to show delight, and the literate to be wise.

My own country gives me no peace, no great joy, I think of expatriating,
but I'd only trade one complacent sleep for another, one violent
sleep for another, or both for both, never both for neither.

This is a call to let my dreams subside into their own ground,
no dream can fulfill my sleep, when awakening is the better gift.

A Good Chair in a Warm Café

I imagine a good chair in a warm café, and I have it,
in the light that bathes me, in the light I pull within.

The Muse is unconcerned about the stations of life,
she comes, by her own will and fills me with quiet joy.

I want other words for quiet joy, like ambitious peace,
fertile peace, volatile peace, I am overcome by peace,
I breathe in peace, like an opening bellows.

I am roused by peace, how can I be lonely, or alone, in this
orgiastic peace? I am beyond society, in my unsanctioned joy.
Peace transforms me, and joy prevails, this peace has me in love.

Who is this person I occasionally inhabit? I think of him
whenever I am to him contained. He arranges himself for
happiness, he looks in the world for what I bring him.

I am nameless peace, come to populate the earth, I am the visitor
in the heart, whenever the heart dissolves its imaginary boundaries,
I need some place to put this paint my wet fingers have dipped into,
have made love to, have become.

How Can I Paint You?

If I don't make love to you, how can I paint you, when I stand apart,
with all my senses leaping to close the gaps and overwhelm the separation.

What is painting if it isn't lovemaking, who are you I love, and what is my desire?

I imagine your softness, your invested heat, and I paint you, paintless, brushless,
this canvas is my bed where I am alone, yet I am somehow not alone in this love.

The Sleep That Dreams

I imagine to tell you that you are wise to be so busy in your education, pulling the wisdom of the centuries into the reckoning of your eyes, you pull back the corner of your hair, you run your hand across your shoulder to the back of your neck, and down your back, like a warmblooded snake to its nest, I imagine to see you lift your thoughts to expose their underside. I imagine to push my lips into the soft skin of your cheek, like a cat pushes its head into another cat's belly, to satisfy the sleep that dreams itself awake.

Absent Fire

I have another role to play besides being a lover in my nature,
I am also familiar as one who expects no greater love from others,
I am one who walks alone, yet I burn from an inner fire in a cold world.

I walked into a bar, one night, and for once, I didn't light the place up
with my own energy. I noticed, in my absent fire, how dark it was in there.

I am not miserable, so no rescuer comes to warm me, I am intent in my heart,
so I am content in my soul, we do not come together without needing to,
when only our need defines our complicity, we deny ourselves communion,
I look for communion, where both my roles are allowed to become extinct.

Another Beauty in My Eyes

If I love you for my pleasure, I'm satisfied by the desire alone.
If I love you in the eternity of my capability, my satisfactions
are like photographs of the wind.

You move out of my sight and alongside me, and I can no longer
see you to want you. I go on embracing you without desire.

Rendezvous

Those things
that signal my complicity in the world,
appear on my way to falling in love.

I can tell the destination by the path.

Whatever or whoever I fall in love with,
it is the world, as it appears in my eyes,
that is my love.

This Thing I Call My Love

This thing I call my love
roils around inside me,
like the earth's molten core.

It breaks the surface,
like a volcano bursting.

Occasionally, it forms islands.
Rarely, it becomes a continent.

This thing I call my love does no such thing.

If I call myself a maker of lands from white lava,
it's as if I brag about my skin and the limbs it covers.

You, on the other hand, are not my creation,
but this thing I call my love names you so.

You're not here, tonight, but you seem to be here,
moving from face to face, showing yourself at random.

You're being here, is apparent in your absence.
This thing I call my love for you is absent, too.

In my own absence, I invent what I am,
here in these transparent words.

My Voluptuous Heart

There's nothing voluptuous about you,
except the voluptuous heart.

Your characteristics assume the character of my desire.
My desire assumes the character of my voluptuous heart.

Some obscure divinity lurks in you and draws me to your altar.
Some gesture of spirit catches my wide-flung heart
and calls it home in you, in me.

The Falling Away of Its Objections

I cannot fall in love with you. I know,
because I haven't already done it.

There is no falling in love, there is only being
in love and the falling away of its objections.

You're as lovely and attractive, as I am attracted
to writing in this loving state of mind.

But I cannot write any true love poems,
in this moment of imagined love. This moment
is the only time for any true poem to appear.

A World Within

White haired, spectacled, with beautiful skin,
you wear a volume of shirts and sweaters,
with your feet in boots and thick woolen socks.

A pretty woman, wrapped, until age has become
another layer, your eyes peek out through a novel,
to a world within.

The Passing Glory

The minute you come in the door,
my heart opens to the heart of itself.

Your presence gives presence
to the presence of love in my heart.

I smile, as if someone had whispered
a secret held in common.

You sit for your portrait by my hand,
as you stand for my painterly heart.

You are the image of my heart,
the passing glory of unheld love.

In the Hands of My Heart

You have the wide eyes of delight.
I want to hold your face in my hands.

What holds the light shines bright.
I cup your flame in the hands of my heart.

You Are My Blood

When I think of you, I see you.
When I see you, I think of nothing.
When I think of nothing, I become you.
You are my blood.

In these hands, you speak to me.
When you speak to my hands, I hear
myself speaking. You are my blood.
When you speak, I speak.

When you sing, I sing. We sing as one.
When we sing as one, I am still.
You are my blood.

Together

In place of thought, we smile at each other,
not knowing who the other is.

Even unknowingly, we know what we're being,
together, in this moment that holds us both.

We say thank you to each other, silently,
to no one, to the moment of our meeting,
to our being as one, as no one, as none.

In a Room in a House

In a room in a house above the street,
I'm among strangers I've never met before.

I read a book I've never read before,
I listen to a man I've never heard before,
I admire a woman I've never known before,
I look at paintings I've never seen before,
I breathe air I've never breathed before,
I am fed by light I've never felt before.

In a room in a house above the street,
I write words I've never written before,
and then I stop. I bring an end to what
I've never brought an end to, before,
and it ends as always, the same.

Maybe in Love

I drove over the mountains to attend the party
for the closing of my friend's art gallery.

After seven years of holding a torch up to the paintings
on the walls of our collective cave, his arms have grown tired
and his voice weary, calling the half-blind to stare into the dark.

He had built a fire around which the few and the young
were gathered, with a band playing, with wine and bread.

After a while there, he introduced me to a woman,
and we met the border walkers in each other, we spoke
together for hours, at a round table, paying little attention
to the celebratory throng, who have come to burn down
the house while praising the architecture, like diners
in a restaurant who say, *we didn't come to eat, but to
enjoy the ambience, the smells, to look at the food,
we'll tell all our friends.*

She was another artist, and we fell into the metaphorical arms
of our meeting. We would be talking still, if we weren't called away.
She said, *see you soon*, and I said, *see you soon*. I looked into
the water, and I saw her looking back, and there was no water.

We told each other our different paths, and we recognized
our common character. We listened to each other speaking.
We heard the silence between the sentences. We got to know
each other by seeing what things we know that are the same,
until nothing was left between us to make us feel separate.

We touched, we stood, we walked, we held each other,
and the night made the cold a part of the warmth we felt.

The ripe fruit of my heart fell to the ground.

Her absence was her presence, until I met her,
and now her presence is torn by her absence.

This is the field where the seed takes root or dies.
Either way, I am decomposed of my certain self.

Mediterranean Sea

I have nothing to do, but to go home,
and then I remember that I am a poet, so I find
a table in a well-lit part of the crowded café.

I know you are here in all these faces, bodies, and beings,
and I make a mistake if I confine you to any one, but I found
one in whom you have appeared, more distinctly, more clearly.

When I find myself in the shape of one who is becoming,
who is as slippery as water, as swift as light, incandescent
and fluid, I want to love you, too, if I can.

When my hand is in her hand, my heart is still in your heart.
I don't forget your oceanic width and breadth and depth
by falling in love with her Mediterranean Sea.

A Few Days in Time

I am at risk in the affection of my heart,
In the inflammation of my secular self.

When I set fire to the flesh of my eternity,
I risk burning to death, or, at least, until
the fire replaces itself from within.

The alternative is slow and ordinary.

I have begun to miss someone
who was no one to me, until I met her.

When I compare her to the countless many
I am surrounded by, I become lonely
in a constant crowd.

In the center of my eternity,
I have made a pact with time.

In everyone, there's no one to single out,
but there's no loss to everyone, in loving just one.

If I never see her again, I'll miss
this chosen being in love's vastness.

This clumsy enactment of the divine
has come down to a few days in time.

Brokenhearted in Love

I've fallen from love's airy nest, to the imagined love of one, I feel the fabric of my fall as loss, like a tear in the canvas of the sky.

There is no loss of love, there is only the thought of separating love into the parts of love.

I've come down to love from being amidst love itself. This common fall from the profound to the mundane is no distance at all.

But when heaven smiles on one face, we can easily forget that each smile is still heaven's smile.

All of life is in love with itself, so am I when I lift my eyes to see.

Yet, I walk around with sadness, because I have begun to be in love.

When the heart has bitten off a piece of love, what once was the air, becomes an inhalation and its inevitable exhale. Can the collapse of my lungs be far behind?

Vivid Dreams

I count myself lucky when I'm in love,
I can see it working, even when I'm alone
in my sense of this love.

I remember this same feeling of despair,
mixed with expectation, and I remember
the significance that this being in love
grants my every passing moment.

In this awareness of being, I am nothing but love.
In this awareness, I live in nothing but the moment.

My silent self oversees my small self,
who lives in hurt, desire, and passion.

I carry my wilderness into the garden.

Season of Catastrophe

You come to see me in the attention of a waitress.
I look past you, to see you, in one who isn't here.

I miss you in the distraction of my emptied heart.
I sit at a table with you, and I think of you someplace else.

I walk through the same night as you, and I dream of another day.
It's easy and difficult to say these things, because they are true.

I have seen my peaceful self, broken into and ransacked,
like a welcome storm breaks into and ransacks the summer heat.

I want to call it catastrophe, but the season is no less ripe.
I want to call an end to it, but as soon as it ends, it begins.

I want to harvest what's only newly been planted.

None of these metaphors survive my fall from grace
into the greater grace of this endless uncertainty.

A Model for Inspiration

Here you are, back in front of me,
in the shape you were in, once before.

I show a dour face, saddened by remembered love.

We understood each other, and we kept our reasoned distance.
You were the one loved, and you were happy to be the one loved.

Here you are, back in front of me, in a different shape
than you were in, once upon a desire.

A desire that blooms cannot survive, except in surrender
to a fuller heart. I mourn for my lost desire, when I see
its intended path, again, in front of me. My body feels
the pain of desire's death, in its easy resurrection.

If I were a poet of the arrested heart,
I would mine this misery for gold,
but my shortness of breath
merely reminds me
to breathe more deeply.

You touch my arm, and I glimpse
the embrace of our reunion in love.

Do I want you, or do I want what I
promised myself in my desire?

You touch my arm, and I embrace
the presence of our farewell.

A Cup of Water

A great teacher went to the river with his disciples,
and as he arranged himself for meditation, one disciple
asked if there was anything he could bring his revered master.

A cup of water, the teacher said, and entered a state
of divine bliss, that continued for nineteen years.

When he came out of his elevated state of perfect peace,
he looked around and said, *Where's my water?*

You are my cup of water.
I saw you before I realized my thirst.

I have no more faith in this thirst.
It has never satisfied me or itself.

As much as I might drink from your cup,
my thirst will not lead me to it.

Less Than One Poem

Less than one poem is enough to discover
the way love becomes specific and loses its origin.

I love the muse of my heart,
but my love cannot entice her near.

I love the woman of my heart,
but my love does nothing to draw her near.

I love the song of my muse, and I love the song of my heart,
but love of my song can't claim to summon my love near.

I love the source of my love, but nothing I do can keep it away.
When I live in the source of love, how can I be unfaithful to anyone?

This is the hardest and the easiest way to love.
It lives wherever I live, it loves wherever I love.

O Brokenhearted Lovers and Tormented Poets,
you have nothing to lose but your tragic lovelessness.

If I hold onto my own version of your tender lovelessness,
I capture my heart with broken fingers.

The Door Ajar That Oceans Are

I'm relieved to be back in the love of no one.
With my heart in no focus on anyone,
everyone has reclaimed my love.

There is peace in this aimless love.
It settles for no one, it finds a home everywhere.

This uncertainty has no fear.
These lines of love are cast from shore.

Emily Dickenson was not a spiritual poet,
but a poet who wrote of life. She wrote only
what she knew, and she knew what was true for her.

I am the child of Whitman and Dickenson,
a gregarious homosexual and a reclusive spinster.

I sing my song in the world, and of myself I sing the soul.