

Last Life on Earth

What do you want these days?

To find out what I'm made to want so much.

I can feel anything and make it real
as anything else, but how can we take it seriously
when we've seen it disappear forever?

What does that mean when my childhood dreams mean more to me than
everything that's happened since? What does it mean that all my heroes
were unhappy? Years now living by the glow of their art
which wasn't worth it in the end.

When I was young and the world was anything
I believed the promise of becoming what I felt
in that recurring city of my childhood nights.
But things have changed in ways I can't remember—
the crueler years taught me to walk silently, I grew into
an inverted tree, and now I'm stranded
somehow
outside of everything.

And the ones you love?

More than their love, I feel their fear.

And what keeps you?

The Pass

Surrounded by mountains in a sky
near indigo, with the path rising
to where the clouds are forming.

Glance down—the whole way up is visible
at once, the path tracing
the icy turquoise river. And turning uphill,
crunching through the wind-frozen
sun-melt, each step feels as grateful
as difficult. The river's source is underfoot now.

Soon you find yourself in the high sanctuary,
with the silence
listening to itself, horizon on both sides.
And here, in these rarest and most visionary mountains,
who would have known the ones you love
would be the visions streaming up in you,
and the gladness of returning,
your favorite revelation.

Annapurna

I've grown quiet, washed
by listening weeks.
One by one I reclaim my senses
till I start feeling the personalities of trees
and recognize myself in them....Mountain transmissions,
and the touch of the wind is friendship.

I can't say where I lost my questions
or what healed the distance in my mind—the wind
in the trees seems to be saying
everything I've wanted to know....Listen...
Listen...

Sand Mandalas

Like the fall after the climax, we come down
from every peak experience
unchanged. The dark tan of the wilderness
fades back again, and we're left
with only remembered visions.

Only at the end are we really ready
to begin. So the finishing touch is always
to wipe the stage clean.

Cities Again

My Prayer: Let me begin. Tell me I've finally
come through the wildfires, not smelling of smoke.
Tell me I've outgrown aloneness
and my reasons are burnt clear enough for
cities again. But I'm willing to get lost and
scatter it all again, till I've torn out my pockets
and my name is Here—I'm willing!

Whichever way this life flies as I release it.