

## II

### *Against the Meanwhile*

So then I found in all things good and evil, love and wrath, in creatures of reason as well as in wood, in stone, in earth, in the elements, in men and animals. Withal, I considered the little spark “man” and what it might be esteemed to be by God in comparison with this great work of heaven and earth.

In consequence I grew very melancholy, and what is written, though I knew it well, could not console me.

- Jakob Boehme

*Point Nine*

(Excerpt: 1<sup>st</sup> of 10 parts)

1

*Memory*—hardly through the dusk  
do the letters of that word break.  
A boy calls his brother.  
What the other boy walking home thinks  
tossing the white ball up from the mitt –  
then catching it,

the wandering present of the day's events  
that in twenty years  
will stray through the past  
the way twilight strays toward the end of a street  
then simply disappears  
like the aggregate of shadow through leaves,  
or the color of space beneath his bed.

I will never forget  
the first time I touched a leaf  
etched in stone. The faint stir  
like a wing through my spine. I  
pressed it hard against my cheek  
and hoped the mark would stay.  
In half an hour it had vanished.

Now, even the sand imprint  
blurs on that fossil.

Like history, we grow tired of things.  
And they grow tired of us.

Near Pompeii, at the foot of Mount Vesuvius,  
lies Herculaneum, the small village, now museum,  
once buried in lava. A man and wife were found  
embraced, caught in the soft stone.

(stanza break)

As though love were the fossil of desire.

2

I stare at the zero ocean,  
think of its vast decimated floor.  
How sun eases through the surface  
diffusing light with darkness  
in this mildly shuttered room  
where indistinguishable bands of blue  
fade to violet.

And as you descend further  
what you believe to be lack of color,  
what you believe to be black  
is only the depth

the perfection of violet  
until within the eye  
only the vague tint lingers  
within the breathing gills of the iris.

And whether you travel up,  
or whether you travel down into water  
you will learn  
about space through the same shades of color –  
blue both circle and center.

Mark Irwin

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