

No one ever told me how close to infinity
one must come to know that perfection
whose name eludes even the clearest heart
or how near impossible it would be to find
the one bright light that would illuminate
the hardened darkness that mine had become
Nor had I thought, nor had my intuition
suggested, how hungry for the food of life
my soul could be before my fast was over
Instead, I dreamed that dreams were the illusion—
that somehow waking hours were more than dreams
and being so, more fit for my attentions.
In much the same way, a faceless castaway
scratches urgent pleas on shreds of foolscap,
seals it in a bottle, and hurls it into the sea.
The bottle floats through calm and storm
thinking of what path it plans to follow
and how it will select the hour of its discovery.
In much the same way, the archaeologist
unearths the sealed ancient sarcophagus
to find the youthful ruler of a dead empire
surrounded by desiccated cattle and slaves—
coins of extinct lumber, intended long ago to pay
the rich young lord's way through the next life.

But tide and time, as one poet almost said.
turn like dogs to devour their erstwhile masters.
No more could I have hidden my heart from you
than a clear night sky could hide the stars.
Fierce deserts are consumed by gentle rain,
what they were, erased by what they become.