

Erased by What They Have Become

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 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.

