

Stone's Throw

Beyond even last labor's obligation
is the final gesture of hope
for that which could not be possessed
now, forever framed
receding into stone.

Yet, in that fearful brightness
comes the realization of this stone
a coagulation denser than matter
that sears the hide from faith.

And what does this stone mean?
this self-imposed absence, compulsory collar
cauterized by its dreadful familiarity –
then, worn like a martyr's mantle.

Ponder:

 this greeting may be nothing more than a turning of a spade
 of merely traveling down,
 lifting up through sediment
 the humble owning of what has been deeply etched,
 buried rock.

What wisdom must be imprisoned, locked there?
What wound, despair or loss
 could turn a face down, forever away?

What granite gnarl could not be unraveled?
 length of hallway never traversed –
 thoughts too fearful to connect?

As father holds out his hand,
 only to halt us from advancing towards the gate –
As mother chides from the kitchen
 and the intuition of dinner fails,
 or is parceled to the plate
 under contradictions of nurturing.

Yet, the child is often stronger than presumed
 and forces the deception
The parent's judgment
 engenders the chameleon's disconnect
Adults are cold,
 but can cover only the question.

So learned,
our lover turns against the shape of the night
and there forms the face of a stranger.

Clutch this severed bouquet of years –
Lay wreath's woven of unconsciousness
held afloat by phantom limbs.

These are precious contracts –
wrapped in granite sweat,
ironed and laid away

And at the end of all these little dramas,
the body exposes the concealment.

Pity its heaviness, such compressed weight
in the sadness of folded things –
life guided by this atlas of stone.

And whose could this inheritance – now be?
with hands flung up against the present tense –
fending this moment from caress.

Why – only a *stone's throw*
Already, a stone thrown has so much weight
for to wait in stillness for a stone thrown to water
with hope –
to be totally received.

Only a dense closed stone, sunken
has so much weight in silence
a stone, waiting for the stillness
to be complete.

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in memory of Donald G. Sturgeon 1917–2001