

Martin Robertson

Prayer to Time

O Time, whose hand about our childhood's hand
led us delighted through the opening day,
the light stretched long across the dewy land
and you unheeded, to whom now we pray;

Time, whose converse imparts, then sometimes heals
(not always) the to-be-or-not-to-be
Weltschmerz, virginity, and all the ills
that youth is heir to and bears awkwardly;

you, Time, who heal the wounds of violence
but leave their scar, who work on brain and heart
to fuse our sensibility and sense
into one whole which will not crack apart;

you brought us to the promised land of love
(garden more sweet than childhood's happy valley)
and having crowned us king and queen thereof
sold us to separate benches in war's galley.

Redeem us soon. But while you may not so,
lay on our fever patience's cool rime.
Let us learn wisdom at the oar, and grow
kinder by your unkindness, cruel Time.

Let not our flesh and spirit, longing-torn,
grow bitter with the burden of the years.
Make viable our hopes and truths, stillborn
the bastard misconcepts, falsehoods and fears.

And though with age's oncoming you harden
the channels of our thought as of our blood,
yet raise each spring new flowers in the garden,
draw green afresh out of the creaking wood.

Yet not, deaf Time, before your doubtful ruth
in the last instance do we lay our plea:
our judges of appeal are Love and Truth
whose jurisdiction is eternity.