

The Confession

Richard Jackson

Why all those years, those words, falling through the holes
of my pockets like the money the heart's careless traitors
waste trying to bribe this or that love with some worn phrase
that means she was more than she could be, more than mortal.
Now I must repair this tattered, empty basket of a soul,
this quartz heart that killed a love or friend with every phrase,
this scattered self whose glossy center was a prism ablaze
with false light, false hope, false love, a soul that crawls,
so that, just as the rotting glazier melts into the tree line,
just as the nightingale tries to repair the sins of our days,
perhaps my end will be some lesson for all of you to follow.
Whatever remains, know this: I loved poorly, a strangling vine
was my own heart and soul, a flower buried in the heart's cave,
yet still I hope, desire, love, and search for light like the blind mole.

Inspiration

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If I thought anyone would touch the skin of these lines, hold dear
her voice that falls like an autumn mist through these rhymes,
I would have started writing when my heart scattered that first time
into the far corners of impossible words, and written more, and better.
Now she's gone, and midnight owls sweep through the forest like fear.
There are no high motives, no lofty thoughts left to climb.
There's no way now I can ever file down these rough rhymes
or forge the poor ore of my story in a manner that's sweet and clear.
All I ever wanted was to climb some ladder into her heart,
and when music and art fell, I tried to climb these scattered rhymes
to keep my mind from stumbling,—not to rise to any fame.
The only good these poems have done is to show how far apart
we are, and if I were willing to write for fame it would be love's crime
for now I hear her call from above, in a voice that puts mine to shame.