



Ball of Quicksilver, by Albert Camus

If I try to taste and understand this delicate flavor that contains the secret of the world, it is again myself that I find at the heart of the universe. Myself, that is to say this intense emotion which frees me from my surroundings. [...] Life is short, and it is a sin to waste one's time. I waste my time all day long, while other people say that I do a great deal. Today is a resting place, and my heart goes out to meet itself. If I still feel a grain of anxiety, it is at the thought of this unseizable moment slipping through my fingers like a ball of quicksilver. Let those who want to, stand aside from the world. I no longer feel sorry for myself, for now I see myself being born. I am happy in this world for my kingdom is of this world. A cloud passes and a moment grows pale. I die to myself. The book opens at a well-loved page—how tasteless it is when compared to the book of the world. Is it true that I have suffered, is it not true that I am suffering? And that I am drunk with this suffering because it is made up of that sun and these shadows, of this warmth and that coldness which can be felt afar off, at the very heart of the air? What cause to wonder if something dies or men suffer, when everything is written on this window where the sun pours forth its fullness? I can say, and in a moment I shall say, that what counts is to be true, and then everything fits in, both humanity and simplicity. And when am I truer and more transparent than when I am the world? Moment of adorable silence. But the song of the world rises and I, a prisoner chained deep in the cave, am filled with delight before I have time to desire. Eternity is here while I was waiting for it. Now I can speak. I do not know what I could wish for rather than this continued presence of self with self. What I want now is not happiness but awareness. One thinks one has cut oneself off from the world, but it is enough to see an olive tree upright in the golden dust, or beaches glistening in the morning sun, to feel this separation melt away. Thus with me. I became aware of the possibilities for which I am responsible. Every minute of life carries with it its miraculous value, and its face of eternal youth. --Albert Camus