

Augustine: Letter to God

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I

Where praise is impossible

I will praise;

And sing where sound faces silence.

I carry death about in me

And inevitable

Cold;

Yet I will sing

Or, failing,

Burst asunder with love.

II

Man cannot evade You:

Every wary mouse,

The ant that builds and climbs,

Each small limpet on a rock,

The waters sucked noisily

Through stones on the shore,

The sleek and watery cormorant

Compel him

To shout You out.

He is the phosphorous sea

Stirred to consciousness,

The cold gravels of the under bed.

From the acids of first time,
From the tepid waters of creation

He draws his voice;

And all creation –

Hills rising out of him

Into sudden seas,

Black shoreline,

The ocean's grit –

Binds him inescapably to praise.

And nowhere but in praise

Can quark or atom

Or any fraction else of mass

Find peace.

III

Each flower

Requires knowledge

And the raindrops

On the curlew's wing

Fall

As questions

Her is a curiosity

In every piece of burnt wood.

IV

What am I

That You require me?
And what is my house
That You should come to it?
And what my love that
You demand my loving
And I am lost
Unless I reach and Love?

V

I call:
And You are already in my voice.
I stretch:
And You are trembling at my fingertips.
You are here and smiling
While I send invitations out.
I draw circles to contain You,
Make clay jars:
But You are
Circle and jar
And the space within
And the space without
And the spacelessness
Without the final space.
Place
Where place has no meaning,
Time
Where all is endless now.

I call

And I am my own answer;

I stretch

Only to where I have started.

Pádraig Daly OSA