

In Memoriam

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XXX

Man's mortal life, a year so short,
Sweeps all in its wake, repulsing the bold
Sword with its steel, the marble slab so cold
Which against time pits its strength to no purport.

The foot, before it knows how to sport,
Moves on the path to death, where my life so old
And dark I send, a river muddy and thick like mold,
Which the waves imbibe in their onslaught.

Each brief moment is a lengthy pace
Which on this march despite myself I take,
For I press on when at rest or when asleep.

A sigh so brief, so final, and so base
Is death whose legacy I cannot forsake;
But if it is not Nemesis but law, why do I weep? (32)

XXXI

Oh how between my hands you slide!
Oh how, my life, you squirm and slip!
What stealthy steps on cold death's trip
While trampling pomp, vanity, and pride!

Its ladders hand from my besieged side,
The coward that I am confirms its grip;
Each day ceded by Time's ghostly ship
Is a new life borne on its sail so wide.

Oh fragile state of man's earthly paradise
That I cannot want to see another day
Without fear of seeing my demise.

Each moment of this human fray
Is a new reason to emphasize
How weak it is, how useless, and how gray. (33)

Translations by C. Brian Morris
Quevedo, Francisco de. *Obras completas I. Poesía original*.
Ed. José Manuel Blecuá. Barcelona: Planeta, 1963.