

Orpheus Watches His Daughter Blow Out Candles

Divorce means walking out of many lives,
not just the one. The single flames go out
like candles on a cake, and only doubt,
not wishes, climbs the air. But love connives
to have its cake and eat it, too. Or so
some claim—they say love's just a piece of cake.
Run that one by the lovers, whose worlds shake
at each phone call, each misread look. We show
them their nerve fails—they can't take that. And ours?
We haven't any nerve, just nerves. We rue
this feeling that love makes the past untrue;
we aren't gloating as we steal the hours.
All lovers understand betrayal well:
it's love itself that leads them up from hell.

Orpheus Fixes Himself a Cup of Tea

It's not so wise to fall asleep too early;
nerve and bone, muscle and tendon, knit
in sleep; the clock of ligament is set
to wake us when the nourishment is barely
at the full: when limb and eye and brain
have walked and drunk and sung their fill below
the moon within; and, sated, rise to go,
as lovers rise to go before the dawn.
It's not so wise to lie awake alone,
before the light; it's not so wise to hear
the one or two sounds that the night can bear
to make, the sound of life becoming stone,
or vanishing. The story's lived in dream;
and if it wake too soon, is lived again.