

The Other Side of Eden
or What I Am Thinking Today
by Tom Blaske
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No fate is final.
No frustration forever.
No future unreachable.
Hope and imagination are all.
To our new friend who jumps at a wall,
From the first I looked and I knew you
It's as though we'd met in some other place.
This wisdom is what we keep
As we go on through.
The lyrical never changes,
And in the song's a strangeness
We know again and again
What we've known before.
The old ways that have brought us to this moment
Farther than remembered in our philosophies
Sink now out of sight and mind
As under the treading of many strangers
Ignorant of our lives' landmarks.
Only once in a while are they cast clear again
Upon the mind where, among the solemnity of some
And the gaiety of those who attend,
The notes of fanfare musicians can persist
Among the usages of the familiar neighborhood.
Friends, kinsmen, creators alike
Come together and stand and speak,
Knowing the extremity we all come to
When one of our own bears to the earth
With certain assurance that bronze lasts.
And though matter's all that matters to him,
We who gather this afternoon in this garden
Understand now that art dissolves the illusion
That you are separate from your soul,
Perceiving that no other matter which matters is separate either.
We are moved now by what seems more vibrant
More alive than even the sculptor's living hands.
We all, gathered here today, share a bond of hope
That in the last of this earth's light,
In darkness, we will find the sun's definitive mark.
There's not only no better possibility,
But we have lived long enough to know
That, in the terrible ground of the elemental,
Is found the only possible new start.

And so when the old die and the young depart
Where shall one go?
Who keeps memories of past present and future,
Except by going home again?
As one would go ever faithfully
To the fields and gardens and byways and highways
Of all matters which matter.
We may be indifferent to coins,
To tastes and comforts,
To Elizabethan plays,
To forms of collage,
To astrological and astronomical,
To medical and medicinal,
To laws that govern us,
And to power that corrupts us
We shall still swan the magic affinities
Of appetite and of our shared lore
And of distant twilighted horizons full of sunsets.
But we are never starved by that which enlarges us,
Nor indifferent to that which makes us hope
And which helps us feel triumph and joy and love.
We precious few, gathered together this day,
Must all resolve to jump into walls,
Even when - perhaps especially when -
As so very often
They are walls of our own creation.
Tonight we may discuss, after the nocturnes,
So many arts which prod and please.
We fear being bankrupt of fresh ideas
But we ought never really be so.
Our generous, grateful, gorgeous jumper
Reminds us what becomes possible
When bathed in optimism and hope.
Kings and Potentates and Presidents
Have leapt to know in the singular frame of art
How to understand that the mind itself is flux.
But bronze stops the splendor of a moment.
And we drink up its ambiance
And then feel inside ourselves
The brave beating transient human heart
Even so, overcoming every age
Whose business, it too often seems,
Is to build the walls and not,
It seems often enough,
To encourage us to jump through them.