

Of Cascadia

I came here nearly forty years ago,
broke and half broken, having chosen
the mud, the dirt road, alder pollen and
a hundred avenues of gray across the sky
to be my teachers and my muses.
I chose a temple made of words and made a vow.

I scratched a life in hardpan. If I cried
for mercy or cried out in delight,
it was because I was a man choosing
carefully his way and his words, growing
as slowly as the trunks of cedars
in the sunlit garden.

Let the ferns and the moss remember
all that I have lost or loved, for I carry
no regrets, no ambition to live it
all again. I can't make it better
than it's been or will be again
as the seasons turn and an old man's heart

turns nostalgic as he drinks alone.
I have lived in Cascadia, no paradise
nor any hell, but both at once and made,
as Elytis said, of the same material.
A poor poet, I studied war and love.
But Cascadia is what I'm *of*.