

Let Me Be Sad

Now let me feel sad. Impulse, trained in gladness,
Do not try to whisk me away from grief
Like a child caught sulking in a corner
Immobilized by imagined hurt.

Instead, let me grow rich with my sadness.
Let it mellow and strengthen my joy,
Take bold hold of my will,
Give tears permission to water the parch of loss.

Let its music ripple my spine.
Let me give ardent ear
To what was, to what never will be.
Grief, be my companion in joy.

In the numberless calls acquainting me with the Night
Bring me to my senses, numberless too
In abandoning numbness and the faint iridescence
Of busyness, crowds, brief entertainments.

Like walking into a sea, only in depth can I float.
Depth, too often feared for its power
To raise me footloose and struggling
Is all that can gentle me back to shore:

Safe, breathing in the cosmos of the sweet unknown
Full of the Light of having been sad.

—Emma Lou Thayne