FALLING TO PIECES

Having gained some distance from youth's intoxication,
As a man grows old he should contemplate the body.

As each sense fails, we bid it fond farewell:
Eyesight grows dim as night grows longer,
Sounds become rumbles,
Prosthetic aids remind us of what is lost
How beautiful they were, still are, might be.

And the wired network of nerves and action,
We know now that it fails, grows faint, grows still,
Moving us from excess to stasis
Or dwindling to nothing nearer.

And all of the body's assaults amaze us,
Innumerable assassins
Lurk
in every cell,
In every system, organ, space
Besides the inexorable winding down
Betrays us
Till death's obscenity might almost mercy seem.

How else can wisdom come?
How else can we know ourselves
And others
Did not merciless subtraction tear holes in the human veil?

Why then do we love the broken beside us?
Is there inner virtue in this formal beauty
Or is compassion itself God's planted garden?
Go ask the dust of philosopher and poet
If even these endure.
That deeper love, however,
The love of Jesus for all our sins and failings,
Not as arbitrary miracles,
Raising corpses,
Or sundry cure's that serve to show god's power
But perfect grace bending to love to what's broken.
The perfect man exceeding all perfection
By caring for our ruins
By taking the salt unsavored
What should be burned in fire
Sold off for scrap, returned to chemical dust
By taking the skeletons that sin has made us
And making us through love and love alone entire.

But why does he have regard for worthless us
And we still for each another
Why fix us broken when new ones can be made?

Oh it is just too heart-breaking to think that we and he see that beauty
That beauty that befell us at the earth's creation
In our first body
Oh how the angels, their eyes aflame, adored us,
Oh how we burned then and outshone the stars.