

In a hundred thousand million kalpas

How did I get here?

The Talking Heads

I

two pebbles, worn smooth
by ten thousand years of tides,
casually tossed up on to a rocky shore,
shot through with blood-red iron
from the same vein

II

in a dusty marketplace, our only encounter
your robe brushed my foot
as you passed; for a moment I was distracted
and then continued my conversation

III

tramping over the brittle countryside
foot soldiers in some nameless war
we shared warm water from a goatskin

IV

once we were lovers filled with passion and despair
on the hushed stage of a rundown opera house

V

drawn by the scent of incense
we stood barefoot and mute
before the golden statues and silk banners,
not reverent but drunk
with wonder

VI

two sisters sat in the grass twisting wildflowers
into diamond rings and necklaces

VII

you begged me to return the letters
but I refused

VIII

because I heard you snoring in the next apartment
I was filled with sudden tenderness, and yet
I did not recognize you in the stairwell

IX

You held my hand as I lay dying
numb with grief and longing
and relief



Andrew Goldworthy

X

in the dim cavern of an ancient church
I heard your confession,
a boy's sins, laughably small
and met yearning with penance

XI

twice, we were married
without ever knowing
the first thing about each other

XII

yawning, elegant and relaxed, we
housecats ruled the world,
affectionate and purring

XIII

you grabbed me by the arm and said Please
don't leave now please
but it was late, and they were waiting

XIV

I remember a swordfight, lean and masterful,
our backs to each other;
who were those those demon attackers?

all that we ever fought over, longed for, held back, and dreamed,
our triumphs and sorrows, the backbreaking work,
over a hundred thousand million kalpas,
samsara, all samsara

before we were roses we were nettles—remember?
what shall we be next,
after being human?

neither recall nor projection,
this is the collapse of the ungraspable past
and the unknowable future into just this,
now

we have cartwheeled across galaxies
twin electrons with the same spin, beginningless
vibration throughout ten plus dimensions,
pure resonance

music

color

dance

light

Peg Syverson
June 2, 2006

