

Home is what you can keep alive

Norwin Tharayil

Everything you were told proves to be true:

Home is what you can keep alive.

And despite the many inevitabilities, the last chants delivered from the chest will sing of a chest.

Everything you were told proves to be true.

The recent obsession with the body
resembles a eulogy, a song to send it off,
the flesh. A murmur that speaks to our knowing:

Yes, we see it wane.

Yes, we see it wane.

Yes, we see it wane.

(Take it away.)

Everything you were told proves to be true:

Home is what you can keep alive.

The breathing seems void. We find mementos.

They retell the story of a body, and, at quick glance, rescale the pain of its absence.

They hold us captive in a moment of the past, protect us against the harbingers of a perilous future.

(Take it away.)

Everything you were told proves to be true:

Home is what you can keep alive.

And despite the many inevitabilities, the last chants delivered from the chest will sing of a chest,
the last syllables formed by the tongue will honour nothing but a tongue.

Will you find a keepsake? Will the memory of the body cast a shadow, from the future?
From the past? Point in the direction of the light, will you? It'll all too soon catch up to you, fall back onto you. Face the light, will you?

Another ritual under the trembling water.
The soil will henceforth speak of another time, of another struggle.
Will you find a keepsake?
Will you find a keepsake?
Will you find a keepsake?

(Take it away.)

Everything you were told proves to be true:

Home is what you can keep alive.

Washing the body,
painting the body,
whipping the body,
threatening it,
forcing it upright,
giving it what it deserves.
Transforming it
using hair, to paint,
the tongue to flick the strings,
the breath to leave a trace
of the body,
and seeing it off.