

Brackets¹

Bracketed pages, times of memories stand
Amidst many pristine chapters, never seeing a second glance²
All pages standing in time, while through time we move
Addendums of moments, becoming pages themselves³
Happy thoughts dulled with time, while with time the painful are soothed⁴

Time mercilessly accosts us with its benevolence
For it does so much more than cause us pain to forget
It also strips to the bone both pleasures and joys⁵
And as both sink deeper into the sands
It leaves us with more room to enjoy⁶

But if all that were before us was barren and sparse
Creative minds could abound, but what of our hearts?
If all of time and its treasures were lost to the deep
If all life that had been lived was from earth expunged
Why should we go on, only to lose everything?⁷

But memories now made were once moments we lived
Moments in which now all life may have ended
But thought, unlike time, has the power to transcend
It finds moments trapped in the intangible mind
It breathes life into that which was dead⁸

So here in the darkness, traveling through the dullness of days⁹
I've access to life larger than what's now displayed
For moments now slump into a form plain and glib
They humbly bow, as right there before them
Stand memories of times, pages bracketed¹⁰

¹ The poem ends with the same phrase, but reversed. Since the first and last lines are exactly the same, the rest of the poem is basically bracketed in between this main idea. So while the poem speaks of the concept, it also displays it. The poem is also composed of 5 stanzas with 5 lines each. This numbering is meant to symbolize 5 years, as it is written as a 5 year anniversary poem. At the moment, our marriage is bracketed from the beginning on December 19, to now. But the addendums of our pages will continue to grow with time, and I look forward to that.

² Memories are the oft viewed pages amidst the chapters of our lives – a book whose pages are bracketed between life and death. Most of the pages in our lives go unreviewed, but certain chapters and pages get worn with use as we continue to come back to them.

³ Every memory we make is a moment we experience in time. But that experience immediately moves out of existing time (the present), and into what was once time. It becomes a page – a memory – describing what existed in time at a particular moment.

⁴ Unfortunately, the passage of time and the limited review of our memories means that the wonderful experiences and their intensity are dulled. However, the flip side to this is that the very painful moments are dulled as well, as time soothes old wounds.

⁵ This expounds on the final thought of the last stanza. As moments move into static pages of our lives, both joy and pain are stripped to the bare bones. While that is somewhat comforting when applied to pain, it is depressing and painful when applied to the joys – reminders of moments that were intense and will never be experienced again.

⁶ However, time is more benevolent than that. While it's a wash as far as stripping away both joy and pain, the passage of time means that we will get to experience new joys. Were time to fail in its progression, we would never have a future to move towards – nothing to which we could look forward. No hope, no goals, no improvement. So as the sands of time absorb our moments, they make way for new and full experiences.

⁷ But if time were to just move on and swallow up all moments for good without producing memories, that would be a desolate thought. While it would make way for new experiences and hope, what would the possibility of new experiences hold for us if we had no recollection of our past, who we are, our successes, lessons learned from failure, etc? For all we could hope to build and look forward to would certainly be destroyed and made barren. What, then, would be the point?

⁸ Even though our moments get swallowed by time, and even though our memories are moments we will never again experience, our minds are able to breathe life back into those moments as we dwell on them. This is part of being human. While no life exists, as moments no longer exist but in our minds, our souls and minds bring them to life. While time cannot transcend itself and only brings death, decay, and entropy – our minds can bring life, sustenance, and order.

⁹ This is a nod to Shakespeare's "Sonnet 44," my favorite of his sonnets. In it, he bemoans the spatial separation between he and his lover. He is frustrated at the "dull substance of [his] flesh" in its prevention of him from being with his lover, as he was spatially located and unable to be omnipresent. Shakespeare's desire, then, is that he could be thought. He says, "But ah! Thought kills me that I am not thought, To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone, But that so much of earth and water wrought, I must attend time's leisure with my moan." Our dull flesh and our bondage to time mean that our days are heavily restricted, and therefore ultimate dullness, monotony, or hopelessness. Our "dull substance of flesh" restricts us in our experiences and abilities.

¹⁰ But the depressing thought of experienced moments dissipating into nothing with time is not that with which we are left. Instead of mere moments of experience, we have something that takes us beyond a moment, into eternity. We are beings who have thought, and that thought and the preservation of memories allow us to live not only in the moment, but through all of our experiences. And while in one sense this can still be

depressing, as we think of the brackets as being physical life and physical death – which are temporal – we could also consider the brackets physical life and eternity, as we believe we are eternal beings who will live on forever. While I don't know what memories we will or will not take with us, the thought that thought and memory allow me to transcend time and space to always be with you is comforting. Unlike Shakespeare, I don't bemoan distance from you as adamantly as him, as these moments are opportunities for me to solidify memories, which will last forever. And I know that regardless of how much time we are parted, the true end bracket of our story will never arrive.