

Life's Demise

Embattled years dig deeper in their trenches
As time, once graced with my presence, now creases mine
And eyes that once could pierce the vastest expanse
Now struggle to focus, as also does my mind
Perfume of obscurity pervading my senses¹

While to this world, oblivious I've become
Eluded world eludes itself from me²
The more perfume applied for my near mistress,
The less interest my first love has for me
As she sees the taste of death upon my tongue³

But death's foul stench becomes masked by distance's scent
As the petals of life are now opened wide to wither
And the flower once held rigidly, in high esteem
In weakness and solace is left to the earth
As both life and dignity are bent⁴

When finally greeted by death, it's met with surprise
A helpless whimper, an imperceptible tremble
And the life slowly taken goes unnoticed by all
As they escaped with it, long, long before
Continuing to live, that which caused my demise⁵

¹ The first four lines bemoans the aging of self. The last line refers to obscurity pervading senses. This just means that sharpened senses are now dull. What once was easy to sense is now muddled and distant.

² This obscurity of senses has a double effect. First, it causes the individual to withdraw from the world. They are no longer able to perceive it and interact with it in a normal sense. At the same time, the world – meaning both sensual as well as social – pulls back from the individual. If I am unable to communicate with and understand someone because they have withdrawn from the world (though unwillingly or unintentionally), then the social reaction is naturally to withdraw from them (intentionally or not).

³ Here I refer back to the perfume of obscurity. The more the individual wears of this, the more withdrawn they are, and the more withdrawn everything becomes to them. Instead of attracting the first love (the world of senses and society), the perfume is that which attracts the mistress, death.

⁴ Ironically, the more obscurity comes and the more death is attracted, the less death is realized and acknowledged. The individual who is becoming oblivious to the world is not coherent enough to understand that death is closing in. At the same time, those who have withdrawn from the individual forget about death as they go on living their lives. Death gives no reminder at all, as the people have gone on living as though the withdrawn person is not a part of life. And in this, life slowly seeps away, as does our human dignity – both the individual withdrawing from reality, and those withdrawing from the individual.

⁵ When death finally comes to the withdrawn, it does so without much effect. Life has been sucked out all along the way to the actual day of physical death. And it isn't death that caused the demise of humanity and dignity, it is continuing to live. Had the individual gone out with a bang, with no time for the people around to show fallen humanity, it would have been a glorious departure. But rather, going out with an extended whimper gives everyone plenty of time to dehumanize ourselves and others. I also use the rhyme scheme to paint the picture, as it goes from ABCBA in the first two stanzas, changes to a near rhyme in the third, and no rhyme in the last. This mimics the aging bemoaned in the poem. However, the AA stays the same, showing that while the middle of life may come and go, the beginning (life) and end (death) are sure and consistent.