

## ODE TO BROKEN THINGS BY PABLO NERUDA

Things get broken  
at home  
like they were pushed  
by an invisible, deliberate smasher.  
It's not my hands  
or yours  
It wasn't the girls  
with their hard fingernails  
or the motion of the planet.  
It wasn't anything or anybody  
It wasn't the wind  
It wasn't the orange-colored noontime  
Or night over the earth  
It wasn't even the nose or the elbow  
Or the hips getting bigger  
or the ankle  
or the air.  
The plate broke, the lamp fell  
All the flower pots tumbled over  
one by one. That pot  
which overflowed with scarlet  
in the middle of October,  
it got tired from all the violets  
and another empty one  
rolled round and round and round  
all through winter  
until it was only the powder  
of a flowerpot,  
a broken memory, shining dust.

And that clock  
whose sound  
was  
the voice of our lives,  
the secret  
thread of our weeks,  
which released  
one by one, so many hours  
for honey and silence  
for so many births and jobs,  
that clock also  
fell  
and its delicate blue guts  
vibrated  
among the broken glass

its wide heart  
unsprung.

Life goes on grinding up  
glass, wearing out clothes  
making fragments  
breaking down  
forms  
and what lasts through time  
is like an island on a ship in the sea,  
perishable  
surrounded by dangerous fragility  
by merciless waters and threats.

Let's put all our treasures together  
-- the clocks, plates, cups cracked by the cold --  
into a sack and carry them  
to the sea  
and let our possessions sink  
into one alarming breaker  
that sounds like a river.  
May whatever breaks  
be reconstructed by the sea  
with the long labor of its tides.  
So many useless things  
which nobody broke  
but which got broken anyway