

Song of the Shattering Vessels

By Peter Cole

Either the world is coming together,
or else the world is falling apart —
 here — now — along these letters,
 against the walls of every heart.

Today, tomorrow, within its weather,
the end or beginning's about to start —
 the world impossibly coming together
 or very possibly falling apart.

Now the lovers' mouths are open —
maybe the miracle's about to start:
 the world within us coming together,
 because all around us it's falling apart.

Even as they speak, he wonders,
even as the fear departs:
 /Is that the world coming together?
 Can they keep it from falling apart?

The image, gradually, is growing sharper;
now the sound is like a dart:
 It seemed their world was coming together,
 but in fact it was falling apart.

That's the nightmare, that's the terror,
that's the Isaac of this art —
 which sees that the world might come together
 if only we're willing to take it apart.

The dream, the lure, is the prayer's answer,
which can't be plotted on any chart —
 as we know the world that's coming together
 without our knowing is falling apart.

Source: *Poetry* (May 2013)