“Time does not bring relief; you all have lied”

By Edna St. Vincent Millay

Time does not bring relief; you all have lied
Who told me time would ease me of my pain!
I miss him in the weeping of the rain;
I want him at the shrinking of the tide;
The old snows melt from every mountain-side,
And last year’s leaves are smoke in every lane;
But last year’s bitter loving must remain
Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide.

There are a hundred places where I fear
To go,—so with his memory they brim.
And entering with relief some quiet place
Where never fell his foot or shone his face
I say, “There is no memory of him here!”
And so stand stricken, so remembering him.


Born in Rockland, Maine, Edna St. Vincent Millay as a teenager entered a national poetry contest sponsored by The Lyric Year magazine; her poem “Renascence” won fourth place and led to a scholarship at Vassar College. Millay was as famous during her lifetime for her red-haired beauty, unconventional lifestyle, and outspoken politics as for her poetry. Yet her passionate, formal lyrics are cherished by many readers today, years after her death.

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