

“What is it in particular that frightens you about Death?”

(Irvin D. Yalom, *Staring at the Sun*)

I have known pain,
and I fear knowing worse pain
right as I pass.
That I will die in agony
before ceasing to exist forever.

I fear the lack of being.
That my brain will no longer carry messages
throughout my body or generate thoughts,
and my nerves will no longer register touch.

I fear that the marks I have left on this world
will have been too small
to pick out from a crowd
of lives lived louder than mine.

I fear my name will be lost to time,
as my body will be lost to grubs in the dirt,
or my ashes to the wind and waves.

In this moment,
I do not fear leaving those I love.
I know they will remember me
because I will have loved them deeply enough
and made it impossible
for them to forget.

But what about the rest?
I do not crave fame,
or a star set in concrete.

I know it sounds egotistical to say,
but I would like strangers to know my name,
for my words to have touched them
in some small way.
I fear my footprints upon this Earth
will have been too faint
to last.

