

Untitled

*Inspired by Howard Nemerov's "Writing"*

Anonymous,  
                  It reads, simply  
anonymous  
What a beautiful gift, I think  
To lend a voice to a people,  
                                  a time,  
  a place  
forever belonging to everything that came before.

Maybe it was hard, is hard still  
(After all, all anyone wants is to be remembered)  
for him, to sacrifice immortality,  
So that we might keep,  
                                  not his symbols,  
but his meanings;  
                                  not his dialect,  
but his words.

“Could he not have created something,  
instead of always destroying?”  
I complain of the great tragedian.  
Surveying his desolate landscapes,  
I see only warnings against hope.

Perhaps he can do neither,  
perhaps is only the preservers,  
has sacrificed himself to eternity—  
the fears and failings of a generation  
forever his to bear,

the best only curators of something greater,  
Or even smaller than themselves.  
How then to choose  
What will live,  
                                  and what will die?  
What to keep,  
                                  and what to discard?

I want to know all their secrets,  
Before they are lost,  
Before they are gone forever.  
I want to bury their secrets,  
Know that I have no claim on them,  
Think they must deserve  
what was so important to protect,  
  especially at the end.

I want to know their secrets  
I want to bury their secrets  
How then to decide?