

II Lay this body anywhere: Monica

I Stood by the Sea

I stood by the sea  
watching its waves  
wash past the guarding Pharos into the six-sided harbour.

I say 'stood'  
But really, my failing body and failed strength clung to Augustine.  
His mind, misled by falsehood for ages,  
His body, misused for decades,  
now were in his own possession – his and God's.

After so many years of travail  
    prayer, fasting, weeping, pleading  
    believing, hoping, withstanding, longing  
After so many years of travel  
    following, finding, staying, leaving  
After so many years of trouble  
    betrayal, infidelity, scorn, rejection  
    abuse, denial, withdrawal, neglect

After so many years of broken family, lost child, broken heart

Now, I stood by the sea  
Embraced by my son.

Travail and trouble paled in the light of his brightness  
and I knew joy.  
His songs now were psalms, glittering, gold, treasured words of old  
His words now, rhetoric's sharp reason dulled, were poetry and prose  
His heart now, no long hard, no longer closed, no longer blind,  
Was twin to mine.

I knew joy – my son.

We stood by the sea  
Ready - finally  
to return home.

But it was not to be.  
I knew that.  
After so many years, now there were no more  
All gone, all used.

But the joy of my son  
and his joy in God  
and his redemption  
his life bought back, his bondage severed, his mind restored  
were all to me: I wanted nothing more.

“Lay this body anywhere.  
Have no care, take no trouble.  
But when you remember our Lord Christ at his sacred table,  
when His body among His people is broken apart,  
remember me.

But lay this body anywhere,  
have no care, take no trouble.  
My hopes are accomplished, my joy is full.  
My son, my son has been given back to me,  
and now I enter my Master’s joy.”