

## Quick and Slow

There were many cracks over many years

Today, you see those which were repaired  
after the earth shook, and itself cracked  
after those deep hidden forces  
collided, pushed, broke through.

They broke so much of what was yours:  
highways, houses, homes, hearts.

And both quickly and slowly,  
They were repaired.

I had very little that was quick.  
Time stretched out for me, years went slowly.  
Narrow cracks widened, a few cracks became many.

But Patricius was quick!  
Quick to judge, quick to anger, quick to leave.  
His forces were deep, but not hidden, not unseen.  
Which left me alone, quick to grieve.

Augustine was both quick and slow.

Quick to think, quick to speak, quick to argue - and quick to leave.  
Only eleven when he left for school in Madaurus,  
where quickly he learned to steal  
And seventeen when he left for Carthage  
where he was quick to drink, quick to carouse,  
quick to love in that love which isn't love.  
He was like Patricius . . . he was his father's son.  
He did himself all he had seen done.

And Augustine was slow:  
Slow to listen, slow to hear, slow to change, slow to come near.  
Slow, so slow.

I understood a little about them, about their ways, their cracked days.  
I'd had some, when I was young.  
I was the one to fetch the wine, and soon, as I gazed into its ruby richness,  
its depths drew me, its scent quickened me: and I drank.  
Slowly, at first; just small sips.  
Again; and again.  
Soon I was eager for evening, when the call for wine would come:  
I descended to the cool hidden place, deep unseen forces drawing,  
where I drank. Drank quickly now, drank quickly.  
Again; and again.

So I understood cracks, I understood division, I understood fragments.  
I knew the deep hidden powers within and without,  
which broke the surface, which caused the cracks,  
which made life no longer whole.

In the end - slow, slow, not quick - our family was saved.  
Years of wear and tear, years of sorrow, years of prayer, years of tears,  
We all three - Patricius, Augustine, I – were put back together  
by the world's most unique Creator, its most skilled curator.

Today  
You see on my face  
Those fragments which have been restored.  
And that is the glory, that is the grace  
Despite those many cracks over many years  
I have been made whole.