

# The Restoration

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I roll an unremarkable pain down a hill till it extinguishes itself into  
the shape of its morbidity. I look at it as if it's speaking back to me.

But I do this to get out of that state and allow myself the present moment  
where you and I are strolling the street in Claremont, with its gleaming butter

and red-wine houses. In my grumbling, I shuffle and want  
a solution to all the estrangement you have nothing to do with—

and have saved me from. I garble into my sleeve: I need to talk about the past.  
You say to stay in the present. Why do I lurch into structures of emotional hand-me-downs

and collections of joyless encounters? I had sufficient courage to let its shending past go and the toxic  
parental lust I tried on, genial attempts which turned to beaten-up tracks of

pleas. There's nothing left of me in that world, you said, and that brought me to you.  
Then, I was in a sub-tenancy of sorts: a non-family, blank in its ardent vices: mimicry,

silence, secrets, pills, and thin ego-strength. There was a thrill in forging ahead with them until it became  
a power play, or I was a maternal beard for which they had unconscious

contempt. I don't know. I was inside just one layer of myself, and couldn't see how  
to grow into a tenant of my own singular existence. But I did, becoming an olive tree—

twice removed—supplanted and toughened in heavenly and bequeathing California. I was struck with its  
beseeching rightly plains and cordial, musty constituents of mountains,

ones that built me back to a central purpose, one no longer entangled in the shut-in trappings of the less perfectly organized past because, as Dryden says,

the deep despair was lost, but I say, mine was a different kind of restoration.

