

22.           **The Merging of Outer and Inner Landscapes**

Write a poem in which the poet becomes the landscape or the landscape becomes the poet.

Arches

When you come here, if you can,  
See yourself in these rocks full of sky.  
They are no more weathered than  
Your mind. In you as well a high  
Desert cliff extrudes a span.  
In you as well a constant dry  
Wind proceeds without a plan.  
In you as well there petrify  
Spaces you were going to expand,  
Springs you were about to start from  
Into an expanse of sand,  
Gestures you can never part from.

Stephen Lefebure  
in *Wild Song: Poems of the Natural World*  
edited by John Daniel

Empty mind  
is a mirror  
gazing out, the old  
masters say. It  
seems easy

enough. But all  
night long, stars shimmer  
light-years  
deep in my gaze. Who

could be that

vast? And at dawn  
I'm sure  
it's not me

mirroring  
desert, but wide-

open desert  
mirroring whatever  
it is  
I am.

David Hinton  
in *Desert Poems*

When I  
watch streamwater  
cascading through this  
canyon of granite  
walls and talus  
slopes, it somehow

cascades through

me the same  
way. Am I  
myself then

this ancient  
canyon, its glacier-  
scoured distances? All

day long I follow  
the stream  
up toward its  
snowfield

source, looking and  
looking for a difference.

David Hinton  
in *Desert Poems*

### Part of the Landscape

An old wooden bench, aging gray, colonized  
by moss, liverworts, and lichens that drape  
the surface, where I rest along my woodland  
walks, wear clothes to match the earthy landscape—

grays and greens and browns, a mottled muddle  
so I don't stand out. After two weeks, crows  
don't scream to warn the neighborhood, but huddle  
with their kind to chat. As still as possible,  
I am a rock, a tree. Nothing flees from me.  
Near my head, a golden crowned kinglet, smaller  
than a chickadee or chipping sparrow.  
I hold still, photograph this world with just  
my eyes, forget the news. My heart is here,  
filled with gratitude as I fade and disappear.

Joan Mazza  
anthologized in *How to Love the World:  
Poems of Gratitude and Hope*  
Edited by James Crews

I would describe myself  
as a landscape I've studied  
at length, in detail;  
like a word I'm coming to understand;  
like a pitcher I pour from at mealtime;  
like my mother's face;  
like a ship that carried me  
when the waters raged.

I.13  
In *Rilke's Book of Hours:  
Love Poems to God*  
Translated by Anita Barrows and  
Joanna Macy