

What Have You Lost?

For today's poem, catalogue your losses in a poetic fashion as in the well-known Elizabeth Bishop villanelle below. Or you might make it slightly humorous and less personal in the manner of the Szyborska poem.

One Art

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seemed fill with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (write it!) like disaster.

Elizabeth Bishop / in *The Complete Poems 1927-1979*

A Speech At The Lost And Found

I lost a few goddesses while moving south to north,
and also some gods while moving east to West.
I let several stars go out for good, they can't be traced.
An island or two sank on me, they're lost at sea.
I'm not even sure exactly where I left my claws,
who's got my fur coat, who's living in my shell.
My siblings died the day I left for dry land
and only one small bone recalls that anniversary in me.
I've shed my skin, squandered vertebrae and legs,
taken leave of my senses time and again.
I've long since closed my third eye to all that,
washed my fins of it and shrugged my branches.

Gone, lost, scattered to the four winds. It still surprises me
how little now remains, one first person sing, temporarily
declined in human form, just now making such a fuss
about a blue umbrella left yesterday on a bus.

Wisława Szymborska
In *Poems New and Collected 1957–1997*
translated from the Polish by
Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh

Kind

I hadn't noticed
till a death took me outside
and left me there
that grass lifts so quietly
to catch everything
we drop and we drop
everything.

Leonard Nathan
Anthologized in *what have you lost?*
Poems selected by Naomi Shihab Nye