All things of this world
Spawned from themselves
Exist forever, deathless and imperishable.
Life itself is eternal.

But all our lives from nothing start and cease.
And this mortal life
Stands alone beneath the heavens
By its birth into decay, and dawn
That slices through the cycle of biological life.

This is mortality:
To be born unto death
Walking a straight path of doom
In a universe that rises
And falls, only to rise again.

And all creatures of creation
All cities and altars, all speech
Shall fail –
Unless mortality may endow these creations
With some permanence
By making them live forever, in memory.

For then these crumbling things
May enter the world of the everlasting
And mortal men and women, hence
May find their place at last in the cosmos.
Such is the riddle of time –
The human heartbeat’s rhythm of memory,
Its capacity to echo through time, and death,
Into eternity.

All things fleshly vanish.
Everything is swept away
Except the echo
That beats red with remembering
And caught between canyon walls
Keeps coming back to unsettle.

And so it is
That our breathing hearts, and nothing more
Speak in judgment
On what it is
To be human.