

PABLO NERUDA

XXIII

Translated from Spanish by Karen Hilberg

I am this naked
mineral:
echo of underground:
I am glad
to have come so far
from so much earth:
I am last, barely
entrails, body, hands
that came apart from the mother rock
without knowing why
with no hope of permanence
decidedly a fleeting man
determined to live and be unmade.

Ah, this destiny,
of darkened perpetuity
of one's own self—granite without statue
pure matter, irreducible, cold
I was stone, dark stone
and the separation was violent
a wound in my foreign birth:
I want to go
to that certainty
to that central rest, to the womb
of that mother stone
from where, without knowing how or when,
I was ripped away to be ripped apart.