

When We Take Our Loved Ones

union of form and emptiness
- Mark Epstein

When we take our loved ones into our egos
(thinking mind or obsessing self) with the expectation
or hope of having them forever we delude ourselves he said

in the tendency of the psyche toward premature closure
(imposing a definition of things then mistaking
the definition for the actual experience)

we postpone the grief that is part of affection.
When we cling to loved ones or remove ourselves
from them rather than loving them in all their

vulnerabilities we distance ourselves from the grief,
we avoid the window into impermanence
that intimate connection provides, though the very

tendency to protect ourselves against mourning
is the cause of some of our greatest dissatisfaction.
When we distance ourselves in recoil from time's passing

we are creating an artificial duality:
our being and time are not separate but one,
they are after all he said all we have.

2

Those least secure in their aloneness have the most
trouble with intimacy he said, as if the goal
of relationship were elimination of separateness:

that he said is a recipe for disaster. Though
the peculiar convergence of awe and appreciation
with pleasure and release configure the best experiences —

together and separate ceasing to be mutually
exclusive, becoming instead mutually informing,
reciprocally enhancing, both partners cultivating

the subtleties of passionate intimacy — no matter
how we may clamor for attunement that is not
he said what we want but the freedom to be alone

in the midst of intimacy at home with our curious selves,
continuing unknowability nurturing
the otherwise disenchanting relationship.

3

We alternate he said between aching despondency
and rebellion against the facts, hoping for safety
in the setting of boundaries, in walling ourselves off.

Empowering of the obsessing mind in its refusal
to adhere to either attachment or aversion is
the universal link between the two (a practice

that permits a method of being in harmony
with the transience of the world without succumbing
to its massive prehistoric oppressiveness);

from isolation and distancing to connection
and intimacy characterizes the path: the ego
is quieted releasing us into profound connection.