

Things Past

by Angie

Catherine enjoyed looking at Vincent as he napped in his favourite armchair by their fire. She knew he wasn't really asleep – she could feel it – but he was floating, relaxed, something they both enjoyed still, after so many years.

Now in their 70s, they knew that the world was unlikely to present anything dangerous or particularly unusual. Their love had survived many challenges in the early days, but that was all over. Their children were Above leading lives that made their parent's proud.

Their own memories were reduced to snapshots, anecdotes at best – as they should be.

Once it had been different, she reflected. Their lives had once seem very complicated and dangerous – because they were – and every meeting they had was wrenched from a day with too little time and too many needs and responsibilities, Above and Below.

Catherine opened up the little book she had in her hand and turned to Sonnet XXX.

... and read silently to herself:

*When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,*

Yes, inevitably they had both changed through the years. Some things had stood in their way once – of necessity – but now they had all they wanted or needed. Those other things ... whatever they were, were no longer seemed important.

*And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:*

She gave a sigh for friends now gone and the weight of years which had wrought changes, even on their beloved Park.

*Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.*

Truly, it was best not to dwell on the past, she mused. She looked over at Vincent and softly recited the final couplet ..

*But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.*

Vincent opened his eyes then, and smiled at her. He spoke softly in that voice whose magic had not diminished over the decades,

*Then happy I, that love and am belov'd,
Where I may not remove nor be remov'd.*

Which sonnet is that?" Catherine asked, sure that it was one, and the final couplet too.

"Twenty-Five," he replied, and she turned to that. It was a comment on wins and losses, much like the one she had been reading.

Vincent recited earlier lines as Catherine scanned it:

*Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.*

"Shakespeare knew everything!" they said together, and laughed.

END