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| **One Art** |  |
| by [Elizabeth Bishop](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/7) | |
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| The art of losing isn't hard to master;  so many things seem filled 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. |  |

**The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,  
And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.  
I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

**Postmark: Newport, July 3, 1819**

*Shanklin, Isle of Wight, Thursday*

My dearest Lady — I am glad I had not an opportunity of sending off a Letter which I wrote for you on Tuesday night—'twas too much like one out of Rousseau's Heloise. I am more reasonable this morning. The morning is the only proper time for me to write to a beautiful Girl whom I love so much: for at night, when the lonely day has closed, and the lonely, silent, unmusical Chamber is waiting to receive me as into a Sepulchre, then believe me my passion gets entirely the sway, then I would not have you see those Rhapsodies which I once thought it impossible I should ever give way to, and which I have often laughed at in another, for fear you should [think me] either too unhappy or perhaps a little mad.

I am now at a very pleasant Cottage window, looking onto a beautiful hilly country, with a glimpse of the sea; the morning is very fine. I do not know how elastic my spirit might be, what pleasure I might have in living here and breathing and wandering as free as a stag about this beautiful Coast if the remembrance of you did not weigh so upon me I have never known any unalloy'd Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of someone has always spoilt my hours—and now when none such troubles oppress me, it is you must confess very hard that another sort of pain should haunt me.

Ask yourself my love whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom. Will you confess this in the Letter you must write immediately, and do all you can to console me in it—make it rich as a draught of poppies to intoxicate me—write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been. For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair. I almost wish we were butterflies and liv'd but three summer days—three such days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain. But however selfish I may feel, I am sure I could never act selfishly: as I told you a day or two before I left Hampstead, I will never return to London if my Fate does not turn up Pam or at least a Court-card. Though I could centre my Happiness in you, I cannot expect to engross your heart so entirely—indeed if I thought you felt as much for me as I do for you at this moment I do not think I could restrain myself from seeing you again tomorrow for the delight of one embrace.

But no—I must live upon hope and Chance. In case of the worst that can happen, I shall still love you—but what hatred shall I have for another!

Some lines I read the other day are continually ringing a peal in my ears:

To see those eyes I prize above mine own  
Dart favors on another—  
And those sweet lips (yielding immortal nectar)  
Be gently press'd by any but myself—  
Think, think Francesca, what a cursed thing  
It were beyond expression!  
  
J.

Do write immediately. There is no Post from this Place, so you must address Post Office, Newport, Isle of Wight. I know before night I shall curse myself for having sent you so cold a Letter; yet it is better to do it as much in my senses as possible. Be as kind as the distance will permit to your  
  
http://www.poets.org/images/keats_signature_150.gif