

Material Possession

Peter Hammill

Every loss a legacy
every gain ill-gotten,
the golden apples on the tree are all potentially rotten.
Pluck the fruit and bear no mind,
so the poison bloom advances -
the hand that clasps too tight will never grasp its chances.
All the things that you've got will not be worth a lot
if the owning becomes an obsession
meaning nothing more than mere material possession.

Broken, lost, the precious thing,
does that make your life so empty?
stars shine alike upon the ditch and on the land of Plenty.
the thing that's gone was always going to be gone,
what's left is some remembered pleasure -
only their loss confirms the things we ever learned to treasure
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And the things that you claim are only ever yours in name -
do you think that they'll leave an impression?
Only flesh and bone are the true material possessions.

Your lighter's worth a watch, your watch would buy a car,
your car is worth a house with rooms to rattle round in.
Try to make the house a home that's yours and yours alone:
you dredge a lake of dreams to fill with tears and drown in.
Now the flame will soon be dowsed and time is running out,
the wheel will turn full circle, then we'll all be foundlings.

And all the things that we own are never ours alone,
no, they just pass through our hands in succession -
shake the spirit, shake the blood, shake the flesh and shake the
bone
shake free from material possession.

Every loss is treasure trove, every gain is faded,
every taste and every touch will finally be jaded.
When in the end all life is spent,
what we bought was mere digression:
the price we pay shaking free from material possession.