**Advice to a Discarded Lover**

Think, now: if you have found a dead bird,  
not only dead, not only fallen,  
but full of maggots: what do you feel -  
more pity or more revulsion?  
  
Pity is for the moment of death,  
and the moments after. It changes  
when decay comes, with the creeping stench  
and the wriggling, munching scavengers.  
  
Returning later, though, you will see  
a shape of clean bone, a few feathers,  
an inoffensive symbol of what  
once lived. Nothing to make you shudder.  
  
It is clear then. But perhaps you find  
the analogy I have chosen  
for our dead affair rather gruesome -  
too unpleasant a comparison.  
  
It is not accidental. In you  
I see maggots close to the surface.  
You are eaten up by self-pity,  
crawling with unlovable pathos.  
  
If I were to touch you I should feel  
against my fingers fat, moist worm-skin.  
Do not ask me for charity now:  
go away until your bones are clean.

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