

Irresponsible Truth

By Reginald Alceus
(Spring Hill Writing Group – Poetry)

An idle stone that had never bothered to see
itself

Was looked upon by another who could see
it for what it was.

He offered his honest portrayal,
Calling the stone “hard, jagged, and rough.”

The idle stone took exception to this
And said the fellow was wrong.

“I’m nothing like how you describe me. Of
that much, I am sure!”

A lone blade of grass that had never tried to
steady itself

Was supported by another who had no
trouble grasping what it was.

She offered an objective description,
Noting the blade was “wispy, bent under
pressure, and easily trampled.”

The lone blade took umbrage to this
And said the observer was wrong.

“I’m nothing like how you describe me. Of that much, I am sure!”

A vast and mighty ocean that had never attempted to taste itself

Was bathed in by another who could appreciate its flavor for what it was.

He offered his unbiased construal,
Claiming the sea’s waters were “bitter, salty, and unpleasant.”

The vast sea took offense to this
And said the critic was wrong.

“I am nothing like how you describe me. Of that much, I am sure!”

The stone had eyes with which to see,

The grass had muscle with which to stand,

The sea had a tongue with which to taste,

And yet they all insisted

They were not what others said they were.

Despite their reason,

Their witnesses failed to convince the deniers

Each and every time.

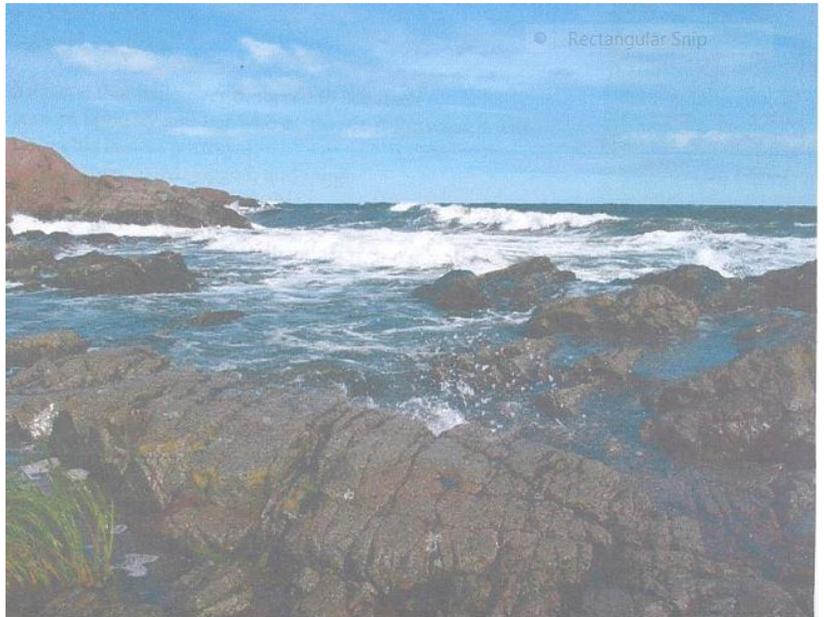
The witnesses noticed what they recognized as irrefutable,

What the entire world would agree was irrefutable,

Was not the truth the stone, the grass, or the sea

Had defined themselves by

Or needed.



They had already decided what was true, what was false,
And what determined the difference.
Whenever questioned, all three would offer the same response:

“I know what I am and what I am not. You cannot tell me otherwise.”

It did not matter what they were told
Or whether they could observe the reality for themselves.
No other truth existed to them but their own.
It was important for the idle stone to believe
That it too could be smooth, malleable, and delicate to the touch.
It was important for the lone blade of grass to believe
That it too could be strong, unyielding, and adamant against all things.
It was important for the vast and mighty sea to believe
That it too could be as sweet and luscious and soothing to the tongue as honey.
It did not matter if any of what they wished for was impossible
Or that the rest of the world needed them to see themselves
For what they really were
So long as they believed hard enough
In what they wished for to be true.

Had the idle stone used its eyes to see,
It would have noticed the value of its solidity and steadiness;
That it could be carved and polished into any shape of the imagination.
Had the lone blade of grass used its muscles to flex,
It would have known the worth of its flexibility and aloofness;
That it could weather the fiercest of forces and spring back to shape.
Had the vast and mighty sea used its tongue to taste,
It would have appreciated the merit of its pungency and richness;
That it was flavored by the eons of history and life which seeped into its waters.

Instead, they will never know their own simple dignity
So long as they hold allegiance
To their irresponsible truth.