

# Art of losing in one art poem

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“ One Art” is an interesting poem by Elizabeth Bishop. From the poem, one can see to paradoxes of a breaking heart. The poet wants to tell herself anything to make the situation better but nothing will. She invites pretty, innocent little lies to tell herself so she will pretend to smile again.

Bishop starts the poem by introducing a motif which she will repeat several times. “ The art of losing is not hard to master.” The poet tells herself everyone loses things all of the time. It is not hard to lose track of things and forget about them. She started with small objects like keys to the door. The she introduces larger things: places, names, plans. Then Bishop talks about more important things like her mother’s watch. She lost houses, cities, realms, rivers, and entire continents. Finally she says even losing someone she loved was not hard or a disaster. In truth, this motif is a ridiculous lie because losing things is often a disaster and does matter yet a hurting person will believe anything if it will ease the hurt.

In the poem, I believe Bishop does not really believe what she says. She is very sarcastic or trying to convince herself everything will be okay. This poem is Bishop’s response to losing a loved one with a joking voice and a gesture she loved. Someone tried to comfort her by saying it was not a disaster. Bishop , hurting and angry, replied sarcastically saying yes, “ the art of losing is not hard to master”. I lose my keys all of the time and the world has not ended yet so losing other thing must not be a big deal. Losing names, places, my mother’s prized watch, even a beautiful house- these do not matter at all!!! Losing a whole city or even an entire continent would not bring disaster either so even losing this person is not a tragedy. From the hint of anger in this poem, I believe Bishop may be trying to show the

ludicrousness of “ the art of losing is not hard not master”, by taking the idea to its implications.

Bishop also may be trying to comfort herself by coming to believe “ the art of losing is not hard to master”. She repeats the phrase as if repetition will help her remember and be convinced of it. Also in the last line, Bishop writes “(Write it!)” as if she has to force herself to put the last words on paper because she is so filled with emotion and does not really believe what she writes but must write it because if she writes this lie enough it will become true and ease her pain.