

THE QUALITY

nature of things. So long as there is not wholehearted acceptance of the nature of things, people will distort nature, by exaggerating differences, or by exaggerating similarities. They do this, ultimately, in order to stave off the thought and fact of death.

So finally the fact is, that to come to this, to make a thing which has the character of nature, and to be true to all the forces in it, to remove yourself, to let it be, without interference from your image-making self—all this requires that we become aware that all of it is transitory; that all of it is going to pass.

Of course nature itself is also always transitory. The trees, the river, the humming insects—they are all short-lived; they will all pass. Yet we never feel sad in the presence of these things. No matter how transitory they are, they make us feel happy, joyful.

But when we make our own attempt to create nature in the world around us, and succeed, we cannot escape the fact that we are going to die. This quality, when it is reached, in human things, is always sad; it makes us sad; and we can even say that any place where a man tries to make the quality, and be like nature, cannot be true, unless we can feel the slight presence of this haunting sadness there, because we know at the same time we enjoy it, that it is going to pass.