The Rotting Apple

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Abstract

A rotting apple seldom causes trouble, Yet when I saw this one in my path, Beside the stream that runs through my father’s orchard, I stopped, and listened—Though I don’t know why...
I have a thing to say
To you, to thee, to thou,
Not for some other day
But I must say it now.

You, thee, thou, I command—
Thou, made of blood and bone—
When I bid, you stand—
You, thee, and I, alone.

You, thee, thou, machine,
Immobile bag of hide,
Must die and rot unseen,
And I am cooped inside.

—Tom Olsen, Sci. Sr.

The Rotting Apple

A rotting apple seldom causes trouble,
Yet when I saw this one in my path,
Beside the stream that runs through my father's orchard,
I stopped, and listened—
Though I don’t know why.
As if the bacteria of its rot were speaking to each other,
And I bent closer to hear.
I heard one voice say, "Under here it’s dark, and cool,
And the moist droplets house us and the moss grows near,
And comfortable,
And the ambers of our rotwork
Give all the color one could wish.
Here is the finest place
In all this rotten apple."

"Oh no." It was another voice,
"Though it’s fine in dark and coolness,
Here we see the sky. We have the sun to warm us,
And make the apple's skin leathery and tough."
"But here in coolness I was born."

"And I was born in sun, and sun is best."

"If sun is best, then am I a fool,
To live in amber, ciderish environment,
While you enjoy the sun, and drying apple skin?
Then who's a fool?"

Thinking the frost would kill them both,
And stop their work inside the apple
I straightened up.
I heard one shout,
"Then you're a fool, to live upon this apple as you do."
The other answered, "Fool."

I stooped again, picked up the apple,
Threw it in the water,
And it sank.

—Tom Olsen, Sci. Sr.

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