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Choices

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CHOICES

When it comes to choosing
from more than one pain,
tears emerge from secret places,
the belief in oneself is eroded
by the smallest differences.
They all seem to come from
the same place, carrying similar
lonelinesses. The mind and heart
suffer attacks of an elaborate grief
that is beyond all choosing,
all available rules of choice
and exclusion. The tears
come forth again, against
your wish, even as you feel
weak and alone, while the world
moves on its ancient road
of forgetting all that is close
to you, including those
much-diffused tears of a while ago.
Alien eyes suspect the story behind
your residual tears, even as you
turn away, remember—
more than ever before—your
own stories of loss and insult,
how you were excluded in story
after story by someone else's
grief over choices
and the consequent pain of loss.

-Bibhu Padhi
Odisha, India