

Complaint and Rejoinder

There's a kind of despair, when your friends
are scattered across the world; you see
how therefore never is there a way
each can envision truly
the others of whom you speak.

Oceans divide your life,
you want to place all of it—
people, places, their tones, atmospheres,
everything shared uniquely with each—
into a single bowl, like petals, like sand
in a pail. No one can ever hear or tell
the whole story.

(And do you really think
this would not be so if you lived
all of your life on an island,
in a village too small to contain
a single stranger?)

Denise Levertov

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