

EASE 1 – σχολή

Blessed sister, holy mother,  
spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden,  
Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood  
Teach us to care and not to care  
Teach us to sit still

T.S. Eliot, *Ash Wednesday*

Eliot's conversion poem, about someone else, somewhere else, sometime else, can speak elsewhere here, now, to me, to us. It's a poem for making changes.

Blessed sister, holy mother...

An appeal to the sacred, the divine, within, without, or all about  
In distress, alarm, fear, regret, remorse...  
Whatever we suffer, however we suffer  
Suffer us (allow us)  
Protection from folly and falsehood (within, not without)  
When we need to change how we love

Teach us to care

Teach us what matters  
Teach us whom and what to care for?  
Teach us whom and what to care about?  
Teach us how to care well, how to love

(I've heard say, make sure your fun is funny  
I've thought of variations –  
Make sure your help is helpful  
Make sure your care is caring  
Make sure your love is loving  
So teach us)

And not to care

How to care without the pinch, the squeeze, the choke of anxiety  
How to care without caring – without worrying, fearing, resisting  
How to care and let go, let be, detach  
And teach us what's not to care about at all, after all?

Teach us to sit still

To be still with the stillness, quiet with the quietness  
And so learn to care and not to care  
In a school of calm, a σχολή of calm

σχολή (scholé): Ancient Greek for leisure, rest, ease, stillness, *otium*  
The source of the word school  
Which now can mean problems  
Anxiety, humiliation, mental health, debt  
How did that word get from there to here?  
From ease to anxiety?

In Plato's Academy, a lecture was called a σχολή  
A time to sit still, find repose, free from tasks  
Ease dedicated to the god  
A feast for the mind  
Refreshment for the self (ψυχή – psyche)  
Recreation

Can my schooling now, this sitting still, become a σχολή?  
Can my teaching become a σχολή, a refreshment, a recreation?  
Will I learn to care and not to care?  
It would be a gift.