THE ELDER   *(THE PEOPLE)*

I.
There used to be so many of us…

II: from *In Troubled Bed,* Lou Harrison:
Conscient Night
Who labors over day's defaults,
Give me rest!

From this day's faults
Not troubled
Search within,
Nor any shock of heart will win me right again.
Give me sleep,

o night!

                                    (Give me sleep, o night)

Weary but light of pack,
The mountaineer comes back
With air and light
and stars upon his face.

III:
(this is the movement when the orchestra starts chattering,
and at points calmly laughing)

Do you remember that you can speak
- do you remember your voice?
It's been a spring of smiling at the sky.
It's that kind of summer day that feels like a shower -
When your eyes slowly wander
when the ocean feels like it's in slow motion.

Do you remember that you can speak - do you remember
your voice?

                                    (My Voice…)

It's been a Spring of smiling at the sky.

                    (A Spring of smiling at the sky.)

It's that kind of Summer day that feels like a shower -
When your eyes slowly wander
when the ocean feels like it's in slow motion.

                    (Slow motion ocean Like Shower…

            Do I remember my voice? It's been a Spring of smiling at
            the sky, hasn't it? It's that kind of Summer day that feels
                like a shower - when your eyes slowly wander and the
            ocean feels like it's in slow motion. Hyacinths, marigolds,
                sunflowers and lotus flowers. There used to be so many of
                    us. A cloudlike constellation of flora.)

Partly adream I think,
he daily walks the world as in a flowercloud
of thought and sight.

Sundays,
from his long walk,
he always brings roses to our table,
gleaned from seaside gardens.

IV:
There used to be so many of us
Then this virus came and withered us

Which stopped all of the parties
And stopped all the art

So generations passed till we
replenished our gay heart

—
And now we see so many of us
Joyful on the screens and in the clubs

And yet it seems to be
We're still seen as obscene

I wonder when we'll be something more than perversion

Or contagion
Or a scourge on
Our families
And society.

When will my blood stop being toxic, and
When will my bed no longer be caustic (and political and)
When will we be worthy of humanity

To sit
On a bench
By the sea, with nobody attacking me.

To sit
On a bench
By the sea, with my flower clouded thoughts and dreams

To sit
On a bench
By the sea, reminded we're evergreen.

Lou Harrison said:
**"People have lived before,
and not been fools because of that.**
        (Your age doesn't excuse you from being foolish.)
**And people have lived in other places,
and not been fools because of that."**
        (Your state doesn't excuse you from being foolish.)
What's your excuse?   *(When I'm here, you say I'm not.)*
What's your excuse?   *(When I'm gone, you say I'm wrong.)*
What's the excuse? *(Don't we have real problems to solve?)*

       (Leave my trans siblings alone.)
       (Leave my gay brothers alone.)
       (Leave my lesbian sisters alone.)
       (Leave the queer folk alone.)
What's their excuse…
There used to be so many of us *(Stop attacking that which you
       don't understand.)*

Now will the world turn its back on us   *(It's been decades
       of too much:)*

Cause here it seems to be   *(Stop strangling us!)*
we're still seen as obscene
I wonder when we'll be   *(This is why we rioted)*
something more: *(- this is why we march -)*
    (There were so many of us - and you watched us die)
    (Queer is eternal - why do you fight infinity?)
    (To punch the ocean is to summon a tsunami.)

Sadness isn't a failure

      (I'm tired - aren't you?)

It's a call to action
    *(I'm tired, aren't you? I'm not fighting to prove.
    I'm fighting to remind. We are eternal.
    Put down your flowerless fist. Come - sit with me.
    Despite your attacks, there is refuge here.
    Come.)*

I Just want us

To sit on a bench by the sea   *(Sit with me.)*
Watching elder queers living.

To sit on a bench by the sea
Seeing queer youth out playing.

To sit on a bench by the sea
With nobody attacking.

To sit on a bench by the sea -
To sit on a bench by the sea -
In our flower clouded seaside dream.

**— Flowercloud, 2025. Darian Donovan Thomas, with
excerpts from Lou Harrison (Elder, in bold.)**