

# ONE ART<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Bishop

*The art of losing isn't hard to master;  
so many things seem filled with the intent  
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.*

*Lose something every day. Accept the fluster  
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.*

*Then practice losing farther, losing faster:  
places, and names, and where it was you meant  
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.*

*I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or  
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.*

*I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,  
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.  
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.*

*– Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture  
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident  
the art of losing's not too hard to master  
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.*

1 Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" from *The Complete Poems 1926-1979*.  
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