

Here is a Porter Whose Brain is Transformed into Glass*

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (January 2021)



Vitrified brain matter (Herculaneum Press Office via AP)

Stately Pompeii and its neighborhood are
More than completely erased.
Nevertheless, a locality (vaporous, chaste,
Perfect, infirmly-deduced) is identified far
Past the hypothesized border that must
Circle completely the More-Than-Complete:
Somewhere beyond the proverbial ashes & dust.
Need an example of swelter past Absolute Heat?
Need an example of tonnage past Absolute Mass?
Here is a porter whose brain is transformed into glass.

Brain tissue typically flashes to air;
Sometimes, to ash or to soap.
Air is the road down which tidings of tragedy lope.
Ash is the token of mourning we visibly wear.
Soap is the stuff that erases the ash.
Glass is the stuff through which cowards behold
Soap, and the ash, and the air, and the grief, and the flash.
Brain is the river we addle with wine and with gold,
That we may tolerate all the foregoing. The ass-
Émbling waters: opaque, though pacific as glass.

See how the churning & peace-process-slow,
Starving & cottonwood-white
Scholar possesses a skull on his desk, that it might
Silently sermonize, "Study the name of your foe:
'Vanity'. Notice," its vacancies shriek,
"Flaxen Mortality's filaments knit
All through the Flesh's material." In this antique
Setup, however, all virtue is fugitive; it
Indicates vanity for a mere mortal to pass
Too much time staring expectantly into a glass.

*[See](#) Nicola Davis, "Mount Vesuvius Eruption 'Turned Victim's
Brain to Glass,'" *Guardian*, 22 January, 2020.

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