

THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS
by Stephen Mitchell

We tend to think of Sisyphus as a tragic hero, condemned by the gods to shoulder his rock sweatily up the mountain, and again up the mountain, forever.

The truth is that Sisyphus is in love with the rock. He cherishes every roughness and every ounce of it. He talks to it, sings to it. It has become the Mysterious Other. He even dreams of it as he sleepwalks upward. Life is unimaginable without it, looming always above him like a huge gray moon.

He doesn't realize that at any moment he is permitted to step aside, let the rock hurtle to the bottom, and go home.

Tragedy is the inertial force of the mind.