

Chilon of Sparta

© *Renée Schattelman*

Chilon of Sparta added his dictum
to the precepts of the Seven Sages:
“Don’t desire that which is impossible.”

In the face of insurmountable odds—
your hesitation to commit to me
and my pressing want for a spouse and child—,

I decided to heed this wisdom of old
and bury my wishful love for you and
my stubborn hope for us deep within—

like the photo of a broken couple,
taken down from the bedroom wall and placed
under papers in a seldom-used drawer.

There, may time preserve the good that was us
and set the bit of you that is in me
into a memory of unspoiled joy,

or, at least, keep it from gathering dust
and losing all of its luster so that
years from now, when I’m rummaging around,

in search of one thing or another else,
I don’t come upon it on a back shelf
and wonder why I felt it worth keeping.