Is The Pathetic Fallacy True?

by Elizabeth Brewster

When I was a child  
  
the stones were living.  
  
Hot under my hand, they felt like flesh,  
  
and sands slipped through my fingers  
  
with a caress.

Yes, everything was alive:

the clumsy, roaring wind  
  
stepped on the flounched pink dress  
  
of the apple-tree,  
  
tearing it to shreds

the puffed cheeks of clouds

the brook with its pebbled tongue

and the hoarse old grave old sea  
  
its gravelly song

and earth itself

a brown warm girl  
  
turning and tanning in the sun.

All false, all wrong,

somebody told me:  
  
Winds are not lovers  
  
clumsy or gentle.  
  
There's no blood  
  
in stones,  
  
no tears in water.  
  
Nevertheless  
  
sometimes lately when I touch a chair or table  
  
I think I feel atoms stir  
  
under my fingers

and at night in dreams I hear  
  
the small remote voices of grains of dust  
  
or the inaudible whispers of stars

as they will speak to me some time  
  
when I lie with the living grass about me  
  
and the wind my old lover  
  
singing me to sleep

and to wake