

THE BECOMING OF SPIRIT

A Tribute to Hölderlin by Denis Clarinval

TO THE NEAR ONE

Precious star in the vast obscurity

"From a blue mirror emerged the slender shape of the sister,
and he threw himself like dead into the dark.
At night, her mouth would burst like a red fruit,
and the stars would light up her mute distress.
Her dreams filled the old house of the fathers."
(Georg Trakl, "Dream and Madness")

TO YOU...

From the mountain peaks, lost among the rocks,
It is a star's light I would long to touch,
And soar far away, beyond the drifting clouds,
To the realm of gods, to bathe in the Sacred.

Below lies my defeat, swept off by torrents,
The object of a torment that clings to thought;
Though a sea of clouds has snatched it from me,
It touched only the frailty of my soul.

If I may drink of the sun's rays,
Make an eagle and a serpent my companions,
The lowland's distress, shown me by a seer,
Is but suffering to me — a sigh of vanity.

Yet a gleam breaks through my obscurity:
Though thought is dark, within my soul a clarity
Fights off the enchanters' deceptive nearness:
Within me, Spirit alone is granted.

And it is from you, my Muse, that comes this thought:
That, if a man, skirting the abyss, begins to dance,
It is that he is a poet — and wise in his dreaming:
The abyss is only an echo of our wept tears.

THE INKWELL

"A philosopher? Not at all: he's a rhymer, a troubadour,
an entertainer, if you like! Sometimes he writes pretty pieces,

pleasant to the ear — we pause for a moment to listen,
for we all need a bit of lightness now and then.
Poets are street singers, declaiming for a coin or two,
but poetry is fleeting — like butterflies, like joys, like sorrows.
I assure you: poets have nothing to say!
How could they? They scorn grammar, good usage, and above all, logic.
They string words together like children string beads — it's a game, really.
Pitiful? On the contrary!
We need to unwind, let the mind rest:
thought is so laborious it deserves some amusement."

The poet, who had been standing at the back of the room,
could bear no more. He rose, walked slowly toward the speaker,
looked him in the eye, and said without anger:
"I truly find it amusing to hear you so pathetic."

The orator, taken aback, stammered a few "buts,"
to which the poet added: "I hadn't realized philosophers could bleat too!"

A wave of applause followed.
The orator, confused, slipped away behind the curtains.

The poet, raising his head, saw his Muse at the far end —
he parted the crowd and disappeared.
(Excerpt from "Tragiques," in "Apostrophe")

If, as Deleuze and Guattari claim in *What Is Philosophy?*,
philosophy creates concepts,
may God spare me from ever becoming a philosopher:
"Madman only! Poet only!"
(Nietzsche, "Song of Melancholy," in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Book IV)

We are firmly convinced that we are the source of our thoughts.
Cogito ergo sum — I think, therefore I am.
But when doubt falls even upon thought itself,
Let us entrust Heidegger with the task of re-educating Descartes.

THE KISS OF THE MUSE

(Le Baiser de la Muse)

"When, in a torn rain sky, a ray of sunlight suddenly falls
upon the dark meadows...

We never arrive at thoughts. They come to us.

That is the hour marked for dialogue.

It soothes and prepares for shared meditation—
One that neither indicts oppositions
nor tolerates complacent agreement.
Thought remains exposed to the wind of the thing.”*
(Martin Heidegger, “The Experience of Thought,” in Questions III & IV)

But where do they come from, these thoughts
spilling from the inkwell, drawn by a pencil across a white page?
Was the speaker not right in saying the poet strings words
like children string beads?
And who is this Muse, standing at the back of the room,
whom no one saw—no one but the poet?

Let us look at “The Kiss of the Muse” by Cézanne.
Perhaps weary—perhaps despairing—of not finding the words,
the unfailing words (Stefan George’s),
the poet laid down his pen and fell asleep.
Then came his Muse,
and pressed a kiss to his brow.
Did he dream it?
We’d all like to believe it—since Angels don’t exist,
or so Reason tells us.
And yet, in the early morning,
the words pour from the inkwell again,
more quickly than the hand can follow across the page—
fraud of a rhymester,
or vocation of the poet
to name the unspoken,
to speak what falls silent in speech?

“Why poets?”
ask Hölderlin, and later Heidegger.
Who better to answer than Hölderlin himself?

"Much have I heard of the Father supreme,
And long kept silence of Him
who refreshes time’s wandering
High in the summits,
and rules the ranges,
Who soon shall grant the heavenly gifts
and call for a clearer song,
and send forth many benevolent spirits.
O delay no more!
Come, you who uphold!
Angels of the year! and you,

Angels of the hearth, come!
Let the celestial be shared
among all life's arteries,
all in joy at once.
Let it ennoble! Let it rejuvenate!
Lest human happiness, lest
one hour of the day without the Blessed,
and likewise
this joy—as in the moment
when lovers meet again—
as he understands it,
not be rightly sanctified.”
(Hölderlin, “Return”, stanzas 5–6, trans. Patrick Guillot)

And again:

*“From the grape-laden mountains
where the Dordogne flows,
where river and royal Garonne
open like the sea, their waters joined.
The sea erases and restores memory,
Her eyes, never weary, gaze and contemplate—

But poets alone found what endures.”*
(Hölderlin, “Remembrance”, excerpt)

The poet's task is to name the Sacred,
and thus to found what endures.
Yet the sacred names often elude them,
and the poet, wordless, drifts into sleep—
and then returns the Muse,
her lips pressed to his brow:
a kiss that restores the breath
and the inspiration that had abandoned him,
robbing him of the word that never fails.

THE KISS OF THE MUSE (poem)

While I slept, by my soul forsaken,
She laid her lips upon my brow:
It was the breath of speech I lacked
As my consumed candle flickered out.

The poet dreamed of the Muse's kiss
When the thread of his words lingered in the inkwell,

The page still virginal, his pen run dry,
For his hand refused to glide upon the sheet.

His eyes closed upon the unsayable,
Bound to his chair, he began to dream
Of some improbable meeting with his beloved,
An Angel, he thought, of Spirit and Beauty.

He felt alone with his inkwell
Where even the ink slept, unsanctified,
Unstretched in verse, unshed in sonnets,
Unable to trace a poem on the blank of the page.

So patient is the paper to receive a word—
Yet it may sleep for want of being crumpled;
When the candle is out and nothing is lit,
Each being in slumber drifts silently away.

And in all that sleeps, a shared dream persists:
That words might flee the inkwell,
And rain from the quill by a hand guided
Onto the white of the page where they'd take root.

But deprived of light, they see but dimly—
The ink-drawn words have nowhere to spill:
So dark is the paper it blends into the desk
Where it was first laid.

The dream gropes; the words are astray.
If the inkwell empties by too careless a quill,
What's traced on the page
Are echoes of words—meaningless, inexpressive.

In his dream, the poet grows tormented:
Sweat pearls across his anxious brow.
A few words reach his mouth, unutterable,
Dying on his lips—too distant from the inkwell.

Then his hand stirs, as if to seize
His dormant quill near the paper's edge.
But the ink, asleep, yields nothing—
No verse to compose, no sonnet to shape.

He longs to wake and invent a poem
But lacks a vein—above all, the clarity

That sustains the word drawn from the inkwell.
And behold—suddenly, the author is illumined.

His brow and face, and even the page
Lying on the table, await his offering:
A few verses, from a poet enchanted—
By Her, who now floods his soul with light.

The Muse
With a kiss of tenderness I touched your brow:
You dreamt for lack of words to say—
What trembled on your lips
Extinguished itself in the depth of the inkwell.

You lacked the light? I've come to bring it!
My dear and lovely love, how I must have been missed:
Your gaze tells all, your heart seems shattered,
As though a storm had crushed it to the ground.

THE RETURN OF THE MUSE

(Le Retour de la Muse)

The Muse

You thought I was lost, drawn to another?
If that is your thought, you must let it go:
It was for the sake of joy I had to part,
To leave you to the words you could not find.

So long was my return, I wept too much—
Tears ceased to fall upon my cheeks
The moment I placed a kiss upon your brow
And heard your heart and soul begin to breathe.

The Poet

My Muse, you are here again! I was in despair,
Inclined to doubt the fate that binds us,
Jealous and tormented, so alone, abandoned,
A sparrow for the hawks, summoned by death.

The words in the inkwell could not escape,
And on the white page, my quill stood still:
Falling silent at the edge of thought,
I had burned my candle down in grief.

But now you are here, and my heart takes flight,
Words can once more fall upon the page—
For it is to our love that a sentence is conjugated:
Its words have no tense—they are of eternity.

I greet your return with my Serenity,
That mischievous Wisdom you once bestowed.
O Muse, still your wings and stay here with me:
Every one of your departures is a death to me.

The Muse

I shall stay by your side, for we must love:
Already grows the child of our sacred union!
A poem? It is life that must thus be told,
Not mere words that conceal its nakedness.

Life, do you understand, cannot be dressed
In a few epigrams, the inkwell's surplus—
Words the quill resists to let fall on the page,
Words a trembling hand rejects into the basket.

Love grows in the other when one knows how to love
Without needing a verb to sanctify the bond—
It comes from the Celestials who carry Light
And stir hearts to beat within the hearth's flame.

The Angels of the house watch over the sacred fire
That feeds our soul and enlightens our thoughts;
Angelic is the Muse, borne on her wing
Into the deepest sky, dwelling-place of gods.

For it is from their Word that the poet is shepherd:
The Celestials are but messengers of the divine!
Do you understand this absence and my tears shed?
It was from the gods your words had to be entrusted to me.

The Poet

My Angel, my Bride—you were sorely missed
When silence from the gods wept into my inkwell.
I longed for words to come near to you—
But when they fail, the poet is disarmed.

Prisoner in my tower, I endured my thoughts
Of dear Hölderlin, and the tears he shed

When the wings of his tender Muse broke
And Diotima returned to the heavens.

I wept too, deprived of your love—
Where I should have written, the page stayed blank.
When the eye runs dry of tears, it must close
And trust its dreams to forget the pain.

And what shall one dream of, when tormented,
When words refuse to rise from the inkwell?
The page becomes a panic when nothing can be marked,
The hand falls, the quill stops.

The few words that are born remain stuck in the throat,
As if to write them were some kind of sin.
The poet gives up, head thrown back,
Surrendering to the wait for a kiss to descend.

CONVERSATION IN THE FOREST

(La Conversation du soir)

The Muse

Evening conversation in a devastated world:
From that immense forest from which peace returns,
On the path that leads to the prisoners' camp—
Who knows its moth, its mystery, has thought it?

From the heart of the forest, a Sign is given to us:
There is no remoteness greater than nearness.
What in that forest remains withdrawn
Is already granted to our innermost being.

We believe the gods so far, we let them go—
As in that forest, one prefers to ignore
What is thought to be its heart, yet cannot be named:
At the edge of the path, this place is given.

We carry it with us so as not to forget,
And when we recall it, no word will suffice;
We must learn to wait, to open ourselves to the Near—
When the word does not fail, Being is given.

They will say you are a worker of chimeras,
That there is nothing in that wood to sanctify—

What matter the speech of a falsified mind?
The vastness of that forest is named with a single word!

The Poet

For it is not to "say" that the poet is entrusted—
And that is why his Muse is bound to the Celestials.
He knows the names of the gods, through his Angel's insight,
And those of many beings of whom he cannot speak.

The poem is not for saying, for telling stories,
But for naming all that remains silent.
Thus the forest—what one believes hidden within it—
Is that which cannot be said, yet still may be named.

What may be named, without needing to be spoken,
Is the place of a rendezvous with truth:
It is the poet's Opening to what is given—
And which no word can fully manifest.

"Nonsense," said the enchanter, "the whole of truth
Lies in what's at hand and in its usefulness:
Speech serves only to produce, to domesticate all things,
To enslave them to our joys, and so forget our sorrows."

I believe none of it, my Muse: the Celestials have spoken!
What this Word keeps silent—you have brought back to me.
It is for the poet alone to found it—
All the others? No. They can only speak about it...

It is poetically that the world offers itself to us (Nietzsche),
and it is as poets that we dwell in it. (Hölderlin)

THE ANGELS OF THE YEAR

After "Return" ...

Friedrich Hölderlin

(pastel by Franz Karl Hiemer, 1792, in the Schiller-Nationalmuseum, Marbach)

The Angels of the Year are guardians of the seasons,
Celestial bearers of light, withdrawn to the depths of the sky.
When spring comes to us, they descend from the azure
Into our cottages, to offer their support
To the Angels of the Hearth.
These are the watchers of the fireside,

Which warms—by its clarity—the patience of men
When winter, like a shroud, has hidden the earth from them.

And it is from the riverbanks that they greet, together,
The return of the poet—who, in his boat,
Comes back to them from his distant voyages.
Thus are they celebrated by Hölderlin in his elegy “Return.”

“And those who offer the greeting of the Bright—
they are the messengers, the ‘Angels.’
That is why, in answering the greeting of the joyful one
who meets him in his native land,
the poet calls upon the ‘Angels of the House’
and the ‘Angels of the Year.’”
(Martin Heidegger, “Return,” in Approach to Hölderlin)

SPRING SAP

(Sèves de printemps)

They carry beneath their wings—those messenger birds—
A dying winter, melting into snow,
The hopes of spring, of awakening nature
That gives life to earth beneath a clearing sky.

Cleared of clouds and the last frosts
That had frozen the stream’s singing in the plain—
A hymn to life running through furrowed veins
That tomorrow will return what we choose to sow.

To sow is hope speaking in human terms,
Between the earth that yields what it hid
And the clarity of sky he longs to caress—
Which always retreats just when he thinks it touched.

On High is nothing but a turned-over abyss:
He who would near it must rise from the lowest!
Lower even than the ground of his blinded soul,
Down to the bottomless depth of Being and existence.

For man is bottomless—cause and end:
He is his origin, his own beginning,
And his rising—by will of power—
A path toward Spirit, his true belonging.

And there he climbs, drawn by the summits,
Yet his foot will not part from the earth;

So he stretches, to the point of tearing:
One half for misery, the other for piety.

Heaven is a counter for the desperate:
They drink in silence their bitter vanity!
What have they to say that would grant pardon?
A cry in distress is no confession of guilt.

And those who pray are bent, crushed by the sky:
Who would lift their gaze to such a towering god?
Immense is the void of our bleak thoughts:
In these prayers, no hidden salvation.

That kneeling man must look upon the earth:
Does he see the heavens mirrored in his steps?
Hat in hand, his face wiped away,
He murmurs the Angelus while staring at his feet.

Beside him his wife must also pray,
Blessing the Celestials for the gathered bread,
For her basket overflows with divine bounty—
To such a giving god, there is no richer compost!

THE EARTH

Because it drank your sweat, the seed has sprouted—
And I nourish it with my long-held secrets;
From heaven it holds only a few drops of rain—
Do you think a little water is enough for it to ripen?

What do I care for the riches I shepherd,
Or all the alchemy by which plants are raised?
It is through your labor that wheat blossoms,
And turns gold beneath the sun's caress.

You'd like to explain this resurgence by mystery,
As if your hardship were a stranger to it—
That you had to suffer the weight of your sin,
Forever pay the price of that stolen apple.

But it was to the Daughters of the West the apple was given—
A gift of the earth, entrusted to them by Hera;
Heracles stole it, Athena returned it:
The apple is in its place—who dares to taste it?

If knowledge is of gold—what of your thoughts,
And your hopes too, that bread might grow?

I know only the flail that separates grain
From chaff, where the lamb lays its newborn.

But it is a cruel god who demands all:
To dig the earth with bare hands until buried in it.
Do you believe man must rest in my womb
To expiate the fault he is accused of?

The apple trees bloom—their fruit is foretold:
One bee is all they need to be fertilized!
What can the Sovereign do if he cannot gather nectar—
Forbid the tasting, lest he be matched?

Garden of the Hesperides—its fate was entrusted!
Yet it was the son of a god who stole from it:
Driven by envy for knowledge, or bound by oath?
The gods spin stories from your slightest impieties.

Think again of the unfaithful one—called Prometheus!
For what offense did the gods condemn him?
His love for Athena, or some stolen embers?
A god cannot bear that we grow too familiar.

These gods are relics of a distant past,
And though they once left steps upon this earth,
I have lost their trail and forgotten their signs—
If once I housed them, they no longer remain.

THE MAN

I know of the gods only what I've been told:
Lies or truths—what do they offer me?
If I have tilled the earth to entrust it with my life,
It is because, like the oak, I believe in rising.

To brush the stars, sweep aside the clouds,
And dance to the flute atop the peaks,
To sing of new wine as summer fades,
As winter knocks again upon my door.

It is the time of a promise the hailstorms announce—
A message the wind hurries to carry back,
And the valiant season prepares to resist
The final blasphemies of a condemned winter.

Follows the time of sowers, when the earth is swept
By their arms distributing, in rhythmic gesture,

The promise of a harvest soon gathered
Into granaries fed by a stream's joyful motion.

The secret of the grinding, of the hidden leaven,
Is confessed in the scent of wholesome prosperity;
Of bread as it rises, the wisdom of the miller
Knows only the flour the baker stirs.

The Earth

So it's not bread you fear to lack!
I am not stingy with what was entrusted to me,
And you know the earth has never learned to count—
Can you say the same of your meager piety?

You wager on heaven like others on a die;
Yet God is no gambler, I assure you!
If one falls outside the divine table,
It is man who chooses to make its number sacred.

They say chance is a deity,
That it governs the world and binds its fate;
Do you think the gods so foolish
As to surrender all to such empty games?

A god was burdened with sufficient reason,
For he is contingent, said misguided thinking;
But what suffices for us becomes necessity
When we choose to make it destiny.

Old Zarathustra made a friend
Of that providence once named chance:
When a dish compels us—by choice to consume—
Chance withdraws from what has been sanctified.

You say a bird nested at your window,
That the chick's cry brought your day to life:
By what happy accident did it settle there,
Found its nest, and perpetuate its kind?

What king eats at the table where fate has fallen,
Unaware that a bird will consecrate him?
There is no god greater than a chosen fate,
Only the bird's will to dwell in such a place.

Men search far for what lies at their feet:
Nose in the stars, they begin to dream

Of sublime providence and a forged destiny,
To raise to the gods their hopes for mercy.

Look beneath your soles—you may find
What you vainly seek to forget:
It is earth, my friend, hidden from your eyes,
A maternal providence you cannot deny.

And still you long to flee, to lose yourself in heaven:
The futile passion of always having been!
Now here you are—void, leaning over fate,
An idiosyncrasy of your own dwelling.

The Man

When I hear the chick cry, I think again
That beneath the earth, Spirit must awaken,
To break through the folds at the surface
And blossom into Life, its divine majesty.

I looked so high, my sight was blurred:
What good are the Celestials if they blind us?
The fire of the household angels has been spent—
And yet the light has not disappeared.

From the depths of the sky, beyond all brightness,
Return the Angels of the Year to rekindle the flame
And flood with light the furrowed fields:
Heaven becomes earth, once winter is gone.

At the hour of the Angelus, when the gaze is lowered,
Through the one who murmurs, the earth is sanctified—
For we must bless what we cannot pray,
Salute from the earth what it wishes to give.

What matters the name of the gods if they are strangers—
Impossible stars in our darkness;
The night weeps its absence in tears of dew,
Which a morning sun offers to dry.

The Earth

This morning dew the night has wept
Is the earth's sweat, which veiled alchemy
Transfigures into nectar for the bees to consume—
Tears of an elixir of fertility.

And if honey's offering is its destiny,
It grants the orchard its prodigal yield;
The hive is your life's wisest ally,
Yet the most fragile too, and the most exposed.

Listen to these praises sung by a bird:
It is a hymn to earth, a humble thanks,
The poet's salute speaking the Sacred,
A whisper to the ears of Serenity.

For it is our Wisdom that longs to love the earth,
Even as a touch of Mischief mocks the time
Spent gleaning mysteries and truths
From a sky as empty as a forgotten tale.

Do you understand the lesson to be drawn?
Seek not elsewhere what is already given here.
You want a Lord so high above
That his gaze finds nothing in this world worth seeing.

Your soul is vast enough to be inhabited,
And so deep still—a god might hide within it!
Descend into yourself, into that immensity:
You will feel the breath that alone can carry you.

It is the hour of renewal, of gathering the Self again,
To mend what autumn had only torn apart:
Winter is but a shroud thrown over fragments—
The weeping of a great oak, scattered across the ground.

Attrition of Hell!

Persephone has departed
The abode of death to return and fertilize the earth;
Demeter smiles—her basket adorned
With eternal seeds she must now scatter.

The woman has lifted her long peplos over her belly:
It is Gaia, our mother, offering herself in union
To all the sown grain man has entrusted to her—
And her womb swells with all that seeks to grow.

Of these hidden mysteries, the rites imitate
A life that spreads across the soiled earth,
Overflowing with hopes, ripening into harvest:
From the womb of the earth, granaries are filled.

The Man

And yet the earth, who had birthed him,
Was smothered by her own womb, overwhelmed by heaven;
The children of Uranus imprisoned within her—
And once he was castrated, the sky was forgotten.

The Titans, freed from their fate by Cronos,
Reigned over earth, bringing generous blessings;
But a god, blinded by the throne,
Banished that bounty to Tartarus in exile.

Then heaven seized hold of man,
And offered our hopes to the underworld,
To gamble on earth and her fertility:
From Demeter's tears, the grain did not sprout.

Through this suffering mother, men starved—
And so the gods of heaven reconsidered:
In the underworld, the fertile goddess endured only winter!
Thus a god came to be obliged by humankind.

To mother and daughter we may add others,
So long as they remain bound to earth:
Wise Dionysus, Athena, Prometheus,
And surely heroes who gave so much.

The Earth

These are ancient figures, long forgotten by history:
Why seek yesterday what is given today?
First close your eyes—then look again:
Our soul is the mirror of a world abandoned.

Will you see there that god you cannot find?
If the soul is a poem, then let it trace a place
In the outline of words laid upon a page—
The place is a clearing where the Sacred appears.

It is a Free Expanse of a familiar Spirit,
From which the earth feeds, and where seeds are sown;
When even stones have a soul, nothing is excluded:
The Spirit of all things is Being shared.

There is nothing on earth deprived of Spirit;
Remember the Phoenix rising from the ash:

A bird of fire that nothing can burn!
The Spirit is that bird, slipped into each being.

The Spirit needs no Reason—save to be ignored—
For it is a “something other” that defies all thought;
“It’s not a mystery,” claim the afflicted,
“But the stroke of a poet upon our vanity.”

Sarcasm or mockery! It is a self-deceived soul
That lends to its claims the guise of truth—
Or a noise-maker, silenced by silence,
Braying in the fields what it refuses to know.

An ass, I grant you—poorly blessed by Spirit—
Even an Enchanter, farmer of demons,
Who believes no grain can sprout from earth
Without the aid of heaven and its divine pity.

From the path of Spirit, fools are excused—
Believers in chimeras who swim in holy water;
Yet gargoyles imagine their waters are sacred:
The Spirit of God, they say, has fallen into a well.

Nonsense and drivel! Nothing can fall from above
But what has first risen from earth to sky;
There is no source of life but clarified Spirit—
The natural Spirit preserved in my furrows.

That a divine suits me—I cannot doubt—
So long as he makes his dwelling on earth:
A god among us, steeped in Spirit,
Drawing his fate from the brooks’ flow.

The Man

But I hear them fighting, these three gods of the past,
Rejoicing in war and the spilling of blood;
I think of Jana, a child sacrificed—
And those mountains of shrouds: has one seen a god weep?

If ancient olive trees are the only survivors,
What of the olives, stained with their blood?
These gods are the hardest part of life to carry:
What care I for faith, that burden we bear?

I wish they would fall silent, those famished divinities!
Though I care little for atheist thinkers,

I admit I feel no piety for these gods—
They are burdens crushing us underfoot!

If faith is insufferable, still I love to hope
That a more fraternal god was once hidden from us;
I'll grant you—yes—the earth is our nourisher,
Whose life, body and soul, we alone inherit.

It is far more than a homeland, more than mere dwelling—
A shared crossing toward a heaven earned;
For the earth is natal ground, a common home,
The furrow of Spirit—where only it may grow.

BIRTHS AND REBIRTHS

Spring smiles upon us—a blackbird has sung!
The Star makes its leap between two squalls,
Cautiously, the slowworm wakes beneath a hidden stone,
Which returns to it the warmth the sun laid down.

The rooster rises early, eager to greet
A new day arriving to caress his companions;
Another replies with a hoarse voice:
The two understand one another and love to converse.

From the soil, the hens keep only the worms
And some small stone to chamber their eggs;
“Kot kot,” clucks the hen to her found treasure,
Which she buries with her beak deep in her gullet.

Already, the snails have broken the small opus
Of their stone homes, dragging them along;
At dusk, drawn by their trail of slime,
A hedgehog parades its sharpened spines.

The amorous titmouse busies itself building a nest:
There it must lay down its promises!
On a bed of twigs, the eggs are to be brooded,
And once broken—they will soon cry with hunger.

Light has scarcely dawned when the fledgling bird
Sketches strange circles around the tree;
On the linden branch where it now rests,
It savors in silence the pearls of morning dew.

Effortlessly, the sun has drawn near from above:
Hung at the treetop, it strikes noon,

The time to sit at table and swallow the soup,
Once a prayer has sanctified the bread.

In the stable straw, a calf has just landed,
To the joy of its mother, who begins to lick it;
The peasant's coin remains upon the table:
He lends his hands to ease the cow's pain.

The children, now full, return to school,
The mother offers her husband her courage;
Together they savor the gift of the newborn calf,
Covering the relieved mother with caresses.

But already, the calf has stood on its feet:
It seeks out the udder to draw forth the milk;
And the mother, with good hay placed before her,
Forgets the pain she endured for the child.

"Let's leave this family," the spouses agree:
"There's much to tend in the garden today—
To offer shelter and friendship to nightingales,
And some walnuts to the squirrels with empty stores."

Already, the daffodils are poking through,
And tulips rush to join their neighbors;
The gladioli wait patiently, hoping for summer
To debate with the dahlias the price of beauty.

Dangling catkins foretell the walnut tree
A harvest of shells—delights to be shared
With the rust-colored squirrels,
Some to the earth, where they'll be allowed to sprout.

The plum trees bloom, their petals scattered by wind:
Green grass hides beneath their white veil—
One might think snow refuses to leave!

Hurry, bees, before all falls!
The wind loves not honey—he bars your foraging.
And you, small currants still dressed in green,
Ripen quickly—you're missing from the cellar!

The jam jars have already been scrubbed—
Blush now with sugar and pectin!
In a cool cellar you'll find your place,
Where sunlight never dared to enter.

A GALLEON OF PAPER

The Other is not what spins in the mind—
A refrain, a rumination—
But what seizes and shatters thought:
A flash, a storm, a sudden shower.

The blackbird's song takes us by surprise,
Tears us away from our thoughts—
A butterfly on the windowpane, a flower that disarms us:
What once was thought is suddenly contemplated,
It ruins the obvious,
Unmoors our certainties,
Imposes a truth no longer shaped by thought—
For thought itself is seized and stripped away.

In April, the soil vanishes beneath the daffodils,
In May, beneath the lilies-of-the-valley:
The forest floor speaks with flowers
And forbids trampling—
The wanderer halts his step
And entrusts it to his gaze,
Which never tires of the unbelievable—
This sudden divination of a land
He had trodden with indifference and resignation
Until the forest grew steep
And, beneath rolling stones,
Unpassable.

Sun, source of light pouring onto the meadows!
Your rain of rays, until nightfall,
Warms the lambs and the grass they relish,
Which the ewes gorge upon—
To make their milk.

Do you see, O my companion, this wool
From which we'll knit sweaters and mittens,
Fitted to our bodies—
Which, next winter, will comfort our cold,
Offer shelter to our frozen skin.

The lambs are guardians of our fragile health—
All we need are two needles on the loom!
Knit, O my sorrow, something to protect us

From December's anguish,
Which dies in February.

But the lamb has drained its mother's udder:
Now it must graze for its own future!
From breast to green grass, it must resign itself
To glean from earth what it can draw.

Pick up the thread of the stream and let it carry you
Beyond the wool they wear like a skin;
Through a deep forest, the bold brook has slipped,
Its flow a serpent swallowed by shade.

At its bank upstream, an old willow has wept:
"Don't go, friend—stay by my side!
Solitude weighs on me—I've shed so many tears:
I will give you shade, O enchanting murmur."

A STREAM'S PATH

Nomadic is the stream—it only passes through,
Carrying away what we entrust to it.
What remains are the stones it caressed in its bed,
And a few crayfish, chained to its banks.

The stream is fleeting, destined by the source
To wind through plains, to spread and to nourish
Both men and beasts at the sacred fountain,
Which preserves freshness—and Serenity.

It brings comfort to the thirsty,
Who draw there the measure of their labor's sweat.
A stop at the washhouse: bodies bend over,
Scrubbing with vigor the soiled garments.

From the overflow escape the foam and dirt,
Hands twist in cold on the washboards;
Along the basin's edge, gossip is exchanged—
It piles up in buckets, mixed with the clean.

The laundry, gathered and creased by all these words,
Will be hung on the line, dried in the sun;
And already on the stove the iron is heating,
Awaiting the fabric, guided by a ready hand.

Children love to play by the stream's edge:
They entrust it with galleons made of paper,

Watching them drift away, tossed toward the sea,
Until they disappear at the edge of thought.

At the foot of the horizon, as her ship is swallowed,
The child realizes—it didn't run aground.
She imagines its voyage, crossing the ocean,
And mysterious islands where anchor is dropped.

And at night in her bed, prayer completed,
She dreams again of the boat, docked
On an islet in the sea, inhabited by strange folk,
And lets sleep cradle it gently in her dreams.

Childhood has slept too long—it's time to wake
And forget the mischief games overflowing;
Though grown now—yes, as tall as the tares—
Still runs on distant water a galleon made of paper.

SPRING PROMISES

The tears of winter's end have dried,
And spring already brings back that brightness
Which cherry blossoms make radiant;
From a plum tree's branch, aflame with melody,
A bird sings his courtship for one who'll wed—
Ah, sweetheart, the season's at our door!

The green of the irises has vanished into soil,
Promising blooms of unspeakable beauty;
The garden is gold with daffodils' hue,
In one corner, tulips rise in pride;
A titmouse builds its nest in a tight boxwood—
Brave is the mate who's off fetching dinner.

Buds of the lovely apricot have opened:
Summer will be ripe for tasting their fruit!
Already it's six o'clock—the rooster has crowed,
Though night's darkness still lingers—
The blue sky will soon sweep it away.
Yes, sweetheart, we must greet the good season!

Where are those forty years swept back by time?
Do you remember, my life, the foot of that bell tower—
The 1980s, the woman finally freed
From all the chains of old prejudice?

Now forty years on, May will be honored—
A history whose blossoms have never faded.

The vine's grape has soaked in sun—
Come autumn, we'll draw sweet white wine!
Among the herbs, tarragon has risen,
Perfuming the dish with its béarnaise zest.
May arrives with strawberries picked fresh,
To dress our desserts in their rosy taste.

You recall the sea, its briny breeze,
That dog, nipping hens with its muzzle,
And those salads—so crisp in summer;
I see you nostalgic for those days gone—
When Pixel, tail wagging,
Greeted our tired bodies at the door.

Yet each year forgotten joys return,
Under a coat of snow knitted by winter;
Births and rebirths, wishes of prosperity,
As earth reawakens, and from furrows drawn,
The grain sown brings bread to rise—
A new time, sweetheart, has knocked at the door!

GREY CAT IN THE GARDEN

Weary of wandering, he's made his home here—
A grey-coated cat with elegant whiskers;
He watches over the garden, drives strangers out,
And loves to hide in the corner of the greenhouse.
Upon a dusty bench he's made his bed,
And invites bold rodents to be his meal.

Whence came this animal that brushed against me
And became our vegetables' clever protector?
One cannot know—he wears no collar!
Deprived of address, and adopted by us,
He has made this his dwelling, his resting place,
Where food and water are always within reach.

But the beast is wary and flees at my approach—
With one bound, he vanishes to hide anew.
I long to stroke his grey fur with affection,
To become his ally, a familiar friend.
From another, abandoned, does he now savor
The freedom of having no master to confine him?

They say cats are cuddly—was mine ever so?
Or was he, as a kitten, deprived of love?
I wish I could hear his story from his own mouth,
But he's not much of a talker—he prefers to slip away.

Silence is confession for a soul withdrawn,
Wrapped around wounds that still insist on bleeding.

Here I am again, dear Tomcat, with a gift to bring—
A gesture of the neighborly bond we must share.
This dish is tailored to your nature,
A blend of meat and sun-dried vegetables.
I hope it suits your taste, and bends to your hunger;
I step back now, so as not to startle you.

At night, I sometimes hear others venturing close,
Drawn by desire to share this roof—
And I learn, from their cries, that you've fought
To protect this garden you alone would rule.
I find comfort in knowing it's well guarded:
But how, then, could I thank you?

You ask nothing of me but shelter from the wind,
And a bench in the sun where you may warm yourself.
In return, you grant me vigilance over this space,
Chasing off intruders who'd dare to settle in.

Will you promise me not to be frightened
Every time my steps draw near?

I want nothing more than a quiet familiarity,
Since in this garden, sharing the same home,
We'll often have to cross paths.
And if one day you feel like venturing closer,
I'll know how to welcome you, place my hand upon you,
And gently stroke the grey of your fur.

THE RIVERS (2024)

From peaks that get lost in a night of ashen sky,
Crossing the alpine meadows,
Comes into the valley a lazy river, hidden by reeds,
Rocking our peace with its whispered flow.

In its waters return to us celestial brightness—
They've broken through from above the shroud of clouds;

They herald the return of springtime hymns,
Which sweep away the shadows of stormy days.

Already, the first flowers have pierced the soil:
Snowdrops and crocuses carpet the valley,
Announcing the daffodils that charm the month of April,
As bees rush toward cherry blossoms.

Blackbirds greet us with enchanted song,
While titmice fuss over their nests;
Walnut and linden trees are robed in green,
And the wind is perfumed with the year's first lilacs.

In the window's corner, the swallow has nested:
Soon, from hatched eggs, hungry chicks
Will make the sky dance with their impatient parents
Bringing food in dizzying rounds to feed their gullets.

On the riverbank, a heron has landed—
It watches the waters hungrily for fish.
And there—a bold crayfish, daring to defy—
Finds itself caught in the beak of that zealous fisherman.

And the river flows on, never exhausted,
Winding humbly through the pastures;
It feeds the fountain where man can drink,
And the herd, returning from the field.

From oak bark entrusted by children,
It carries little galleons to distant lands—
The mischief of early age,
Now folded into the Wisdom of a hidden elder.

The river is serene in its simplicity,
For it is always the Same that its waters carry—
Delighting a wise child who dares entrust to it
Her dreams, wrapped in a shared smile.

In that strip of oak bark—a scrap of paper,
Slipped in by an innocent hand:
A bottle to the river, tossed in its waves—
And maybe, tomorrow, it will enlighten elsewhere.

SINGER OF THE MORNING

When night gives way to day, he begins to sing:
“Wake up, sleepers—it's time to peck,

To stir the earth, scratch at the gravel,
And gather straw where the egg will be laid.”

One by one the hens take turns at the nest,
Redoubling their effort with proud cries—
Still fertile and still desired by the male.
The rooster watches the laying with satisfied gaze.

They call him “poppyhead,” his crest bright red—
Chanter of the coop, devoted to his hens,
Whom he defends with a sharp and piercing spur.
When the new girls ruffle the old ones bare,
He drops his wing like a shield,
Separating the young from the elder’s temper.
There’s no quarrel in the henhouse
Without him stepping in as judge and arbiter.

He counts the grain to distribute with care:
Each one, by her rank, comes to the granary—
And what little is left, he eats last.

Reckless, the grey cat dares to pass:
The rooster swells his chest, displays his strengths,
And cries out in alarm to gather his hens—
From his valiant beauty he draws his pride,
And his concern for the flock, of which he is shepherd.

Under the noonday sun, rays now merciless,
Each seeks a place of coolness and shade.
In folds of earth, scratched by their feet,
The hen lies down and stirs her wings,
Throwing up dust she believes will fan her.
It settles upon her sister beside her,
Who flutters and shifts to a new spot—
Mischievous dances in the rooster’s amused eye.

NIGHT RAID

Already in the sky the star begins to sink,
And at the horizon it finally dies away.
Upon a few prey of dusk the hens pounce,
A nighttime snack they tuck into their gullets
Before returning to the coop’s resting bed.
As they lie still, stripped now of all light,
An egg in their lower belly nears completion—
The rooster’s eye closes over his brood.

He knows that night is danger's accomplice:
Beneath a favoring moon, the fox has hastened,
Hungering for what he aims to snatch away.
Among his kin, the rooster only half-sleeps—
And spotting the fox, he begins to crow!
The thief fears not the rooster's beauty and pride,
But chaos erupts as the coop seeks to hide,
The night pierced by cries of panic and dread.

The peasant leaps from bed at once!
With lantern in hand and a staff for defense,
He rushes to the pen to chase the fox away—
The thief flees to seek his hunger elsewhere.
The man invites his flock back to their roost:
The hens have nothing more to fear—
The enclosure is strong, no fox shall enter here.

Blessed be the watchman who stirred the man to rise.
Night regains its calm, all may now rest;
In a few short hours, the day will break—
And the rooster will greet it with his familiar cry.
At the edge of the forest, a fox has lain down,
But the emptiness in his belly keeps sleep away;
And it's the rooster's song that fills his mind again:
"Too good a guardian, that one, of all his flock—
Why waste my hunger chasing such a court?"

OAK'S WORD

"I am not a table," a tree once confided,
"Men know oaks only by their use:
To build their beams, coffins, or furniture,
Or burn what remains in the hearth for fire.

Birds love to perch upon my branches,
Jays and squirrels snatch up my acorns,
Drop them elsewhere, forget their prizes—
And in time, those losses announce new oaks.

I am no crafted piece for your care—
For what you call oak is deadwood, severed;
How can one say 'of oak' the joined lattice
From pieces cut apart, scattered from my body?

I know only what the soil allows,
Through roots I sink deep, reaching skyward—

To draw light where plows do not go,
And give it back to earth—my pledge of friendship.

But now the fury of blades and biting steel,
Borne in some hand, are thrown upon my trunk;
The saw has robbed the cork from my bark—
And already my life is falling to the ground.

My sap becomes the tears of a wrongly condemned—
To make of another's death a final dwelling;
From the scraps of my sorrow a man is clothed,
Buried in a soil I once called my pride."

Upon oak become table the soup pot now rests:
Of the little it touches, the tree cannot taste—
So far from its roots, long forgotten in soil;
It receives only heat... and the slurps of the meal.

One day the wood crumbles, having borne too much!
Through its cracks, it sees its fate sealed:
The table was only the oak's delayed death,
A placemat worn down before being cast away.

It will end in the hearth, warming the group
When winter is harsh and the oak slow to burn:
It blushes in ember, embarrassed to last so—
Too long an agony, until it turns to ash.

On the morning ground the ashes are placed,
Offered to northern winds, they're carried away—
To the forest's edge where its wood was felled:
And the ash smiles to find its roots again.

Then the oak returns, by a forgotten flight—
Was it a squirrel? a jay in haste?
Near its roots, the tree is reborn,
But already the saw's teeth are being honed...

Will they have patience for this newborn oak?
Beneath the plank, a man has stirred awake—
Here he comes, bones rattling in protest:
"Touch it not, my friends—this oak is sacred!

It became my dwelling before I was buried,
Long ago I was clad in wood—

Enfolded in the earth, I knew no other kin
Than the one stripped of bark by a biting tooth.

If the scythe seized me at its appointed hour,
It was a man's voice that made this tree fall;
Understand—so high, lost in the canopy,
He returns as messenger from Celestial light.

So do not rob life of its shade and brightness,
Of the future blooming at its feet;
Think of the jay's hunger, the mushroom's rise,
Perfuming the soup pot with its tender scent.

A magpie told me she'd once built her nest
At the very top of that oak, before it was cut—
And it became the tomb of her tender brood.
Word of the advocate! No trial was ever held.

Instead of sacrifice hidden beneath the ash,
A few roots sigh, unable to rise
To heaven's gate to fetch the Clarity—
Betrothal of the Most High and its nurturing soil."

On a forest's edge, night has just fallen,
And man becomes the darkness of his own dwelling;
He was once a tree where I loved to lean,
To merge with the Spirit, all life in communion.

From him who is no more—stolen by use—
Nature, ever kind, has kept the Spirit;
One must learn, humans, to listen to these dead
Who know the Name and the Sacred of the Eternal.

At the forest's threshold, abandon your thoughts
And hear what the silence wishes to entrust:
The Spirit opens itself to the secret, well guarded here,
Of gods who give signs to your obscurity.

At the foot of another oak, the day will rise
Bringing the light we were deprived of;
They return, the Celestials, to these forgotten woods:
From the soil bursts forth the source of Serenity.

And so all is well, the Spirits in accord;
An oak has returned and the ash-grey flees:

On its highest branch a jay has landed,
And to storm the sky, a squirrel has leapt.

"I am not a table," he told me proudly,
He who once was exiled from the Natal place;
Is he not a poet returned to his own land,
Wiser now than when he was taken?

And over the abyss, did he not take flight,
Freed by the flames that had once consumed him?
He returns to us in rain to caress the forest
With beams of light in a rediscovered spring.

The chalices of daffodils mixed with bear's garlic
Welcome the Coming One, attuned to the lyre
Of birds in chorus and the bellow of deer:
Nature is offering to the Celestial arrivals.

I greet you, great oak, adorned in green:
In the shade of your wings I long to meditate,
To receive from the silence that Sacred Word
Which the god sends to those who know how to hear.

I know you are not the one who is Sacred—
But in your arms the Open has taken shape for me,
And here it comes, from the height of your crown,
That, embracing the sky, loves to present it.

The ivy, in wedding you, has crowned your soul:
Are you not the King here, Majesty of Trees?
I am but a wanderer from a dead obscurity
Whom a country path has led to you.

Here reigns the Simple of Serenity,
A childlike Wisdom inhabited by Mischief;
One sees only the Same who can gather all
Without ever erasing what is singular.

I know I must renounce many words,
That in the you resides Being in its truth;
Thus I return my quill to the blood of the inkwell:
Only the oak's word speaks the name of the Sacred...

SUMMER'S SCORCH

(Brûlures d'Été)

I dragged my boredom down dead-end roads,
Crushed by a sun that scorched my awareness;
My step was broken by an unforeseen wound,
And from the blood spilled, a horsefly feasted.

A wretched crow mourned my departure,
Shaking a feather like a handkerchief farewell;
I scraped my shoes on these proud places,
Paved in misery and impossible hope.

I combed the embankments for the slightest fortune,
From the shadow of a bush, I gathered coolness;
I cursed the sun for not being the moon,
And my burning body poured out in sweat.

The sky lay resting on my frail carcass,
Crushing my gait beneath its blinding light;
I went on, like a vile toad, bearing my cracks,
Lamenting that no ruts lined my way.

I scorned the wind for its insolent fatigue,
Its absent air turned my lips to salt;
My spirit was steeped in opulent rivers—
An odd vision of a mindless being.

I raged at being duped by these hollow appearances,
Cruelties of a season that made the ether dance;
A feather had fallen at the foot of my wandering,
Drinking my attention with its fragile mystery.

Leaning back on the slope that rested my feet,
I was startled by an Angel watching my wound:
Resembling that crow I saw stricken earlier,
His robe was dark—yet bore not the slightest stain.

THE ANGEL

I knew you would come to the gates of nothingness,
Glad you defied the crow's final goodbye;
I'm no stranger to the boredom you drag,
And I see the weight of your broken step.

You know nothing of the world but its miseries:
The wound you flee comes from within;

It's upon your wounded soul you've closed your eyes,
Renouncing the sun and its gentle warmth.

You feed on the shadows you steal from the slopes,
Accusing phantoms of licking up your hope;
On these stone-paved roads your salvation broke,
Scarring the shoes that dressed you in black.

What can your shoes do for a lost soul,
Sewn from transparency that now binds nothing?
It is night only within you, deep in your thoughts,
Where past sorrows echo in your present.

Your conscience is gluttoned with buried murmurs,
Clogged with a past you drag into the now;
An unfathomable bog where your spirit is stuck—
You are but a ruminant of your own tale.

There is no swamp that traps the soul
Except the one you choose to linger in;
You curse the sky for having abandoned you
To this sick present where you think you dwell.

Would you, in clear conscience, avenge yourself on wolves
Who made you their prey—and your own torment?
Is there in your mire a ripple, a hint
Of cure for your sleepless, festering nights?

THE WANDERER

I've pondered these things I cannot release,
Clung to the torments that have stitched my life;
Is there a way out I may yet hope for—
A side path that would welcome my arrival?

It is the blood of my soul that stains my fate,
And my spirit, rinsed by the tears of time,
Knows only the folds of some sinister design:
Here I am, like cattle, out of sync with time.

These bitter words have exiled me from elsewhere:
I dwell only in a present dressed in yesterdays;
What curse made me redeemer of its weight?
I know nothing of the world but its misery!

Can there be salvation—and would you hold the key,
A hopeful fall into sweet oblivion?

A new Igitur who from his death returns?
I smile at the thought of escaping this deadly boredom!

Words grow heavy recounting my drift,
Like a bankless stream spilling all it holds;
Must they inscribe on my earthen prison
That a child of the dark has found his rest?

I am no conscience rinsed in holy water,
And believe of priests only what they don't believe;
I feel no contrition to confess my sins,
These minor blots that are never forgiven.

I scorn the cult of those gaunt idols
That nourish the flock of the exiled with hope;
In church choirs are uttered, through parables,
Impossible vows that God himself betrays.

THE ANGEL

I am taken by your words—I won't turn aside:
From funereal sermons that parade their faith,
No tribute shall ease what they suffer,
And they'll learn to savor their own misfortune.

I ask no reward for tending to your case:
Though clothed in black, I am no demon;
I only wish to teach you why—
Why you shattered your dreams on that poison you drank.

If others cursed you, staining your name,
Do you think them worthy of haunting your mind?
Do you seek in their vile words some reason?
You'll never erase that wrong through Science.

Your life of wounds draws now to dusk:
Must you die to discover peace?
Of all that haunts you, omit not a comma—
But grant no favor to those who unmade you.

Do not turn from the sun, nor from the flames,
Except when they consume you and leave you ash;
But tend the fire that nourishes your soul,
So it never descends into the depths below.

The soul's arsonists are vile assassins:
The fire that burns you comes from their weakness;

There's no remorse for such thievery—
The crime merely delayed, cloaked in finesse.

Your strength lies in the fire that ignites your soul
And hurls you toward some unimagined place;
In weighing the cost of that infamous tale,
What you have lost has been doubly regained!

THE WANDERER

I see many reasons to set my spirit ablaze,
Since what haunts me is not what wounds me;
A wound gapes not for the rebellious soul
Who takes nothing for granted—not even promise.

Such irony of fate that brings us back to Self!
There's but a splinter now lodged in my heel,
Which rightly shields me from the fury of others—
Whose Horror I know as well as their name.

Beware my wrath, swift to carve a path,
And to enslave those humbler than you;
I will turn sarcasm into venom sharp
That will make your arrogance your despair.

No master is just who won't stoop to serve,
Or join the cause of a righteous feeling.
Cursed be the rhetors claiming martyrdom
From some improbable law none dares to name.

There are fools praised as profound minds
When from mere opinion they forge an "Idea."
One's no philosopher who hasn't been formed—
And from what we believe, little truth is born.

Fire! Iconoclast of those received ideas
And minds of fraud that decimate thought;
Insolent rhetoric of fallen reason,
Fateful chaining of mystified words.

Burn to the ground the logic of bygone values—
"Twilight of the idols" and bitter flavors:
Courtly chatter, senseless proclamations,
Lampshades for a knowledge stripped of light.

THE ANGEL

So, you've become arsonist of dusty thoughts,
Of hopes stillborn from cruel judgments?
You curse these thinkers who shut their eyes
And reduce humans to servile castaways.

Homo philosophus! Scornful, satiric:
A stage reversed where souls are banished,
The ultimate return of a broken timeline—
A boundless project your thought now inflames.

Rhizome of a thought that weaves with words,
Immanent becoming of a pulsing sense;
You defend the event of becoming-Self,
For Being feeds upon its own poverty.

It's fullness of mind that ruins the spirit,
Depriving it of the smallest opening;
Self-feeding, it turns cannibal—
A fetid abjection, a rotting of thought.

The Self is Elsewhere, mocking all time,
For only in duration may it become;
It reflects nothing in its nascent being
But the object born of its own desire.

Your words are madness to those without spirit,
Who see only offense in your opinions;
Make no misery of it, nor reason for contempt:
You owe no condition to slanderers' tongues.

There are many minds one dare not confront—
For to admit their error would break them;
They've taught lies, even by their own account,
Spoken as "initiate truths" or forgery.

THE WANDERER

We think for ourselves—but not once it's spoken:
Certainty alone will defile my speech.
There is no truth my mind possesses
Nor any sure thing I'd dare to foresee.

I have no calling to fly so high,
To grasp the fire from the garden of Ideas;
I leave to Plato that stirring scourge—
And stay in my cave, lit by its dim glow.

Light tells us what we wish to see in it:
Assuring illusions that fracture our gaze.
For what hides from view, what cannot be seen,
Only a wise soul will keep in its care.

Nothing escapes appearance but what's meant to hide—
And in what appears, we glimpse but little:
All that we perceive, we first sought to find—
Discernment alone sees something else there.

They'll say the noumena are God's gift—
But who gives a gift he forbids us to see?
It offers only the joy of a cruel delight:
Such a gesture cannot be imagined.

There are many places speech cannot touch:
Can we know what can't be said aloud?
Is it that words are lacking to describe them—
Or that some taboo has sealed them away?

I've but one incendiary thought on this:
Missing words can surely be invented—
And it's wrong to weave some mystery
From forbidden places we choose to obscure.

THE ANGEL

Dragon! Fire-breather upon deadened values,
Live coal of a thought with a blazing fate;
You fan the embers dying in the mind—
Insolent combustion of bitter memory.

Your reason is of flame—impolite subversion—
Breaking the deep indecency of certainty;
You consume the Ideas of Plato's sky
That clothe our days in futile appearances.

The tablets are broken that once choked our souls,
Weighed down by contempt for human passions;
The poison of God's servants was infamous,
Reaping a harvest from our agony.

From these days too full, accusing the void,
Your nocturnal word dictates the wisdom
To take the right measure of time's wanderings,
Which never tires of cradling our distress.

Time is a vagabond walking in a rut,
Along our roads marked by his step;
An arrogant obsession with repeating the same,
Avoiding the trouble of doing otherwise.

It's in eternity that time becomes fixed,
An absolute sameness where all other fades;
Irony, to dare believe in that divine oath—
A disembodied promise of an impossible end.

There is no morality in these damned beliefs,
Except to disguise the present's ugliness;
Do Christian servants feel guilt
In assigning salvation as the reason for our pain?

THE WANDERER

I hear what you say—and make it my own!
We've played with time, betrayed by hope;
Beguiling our spirit with venomous prayers,
The crosses serve only as deceptive mirrors.

Reflections of our drift, cleansed by a God—
A soul-laundering scented with innocence,
Mist of candied perfume on torn lives:
Human piety hides its own errings.

Is time unjust, deceitful or secretive?
It's elusive, countless in its escapes;
I see no redundancy but that of the pendulum,
And the chained hours it rhythmically repeats.

They say it kills by cutting short carefreeness,
Displaying without remorse its serious face;
It deserves the insult of lacking conscience,
When it seals our eyes with the weight of its hours.

Time is linear only for those who outrun it,
Adjusted to the present that is always yesterday;
From the forgotten past, tomorrow resurfaces:
Time is a rhizome unfolding its mystery.

We know it a pyromaniac consuming our chances,
Messenger of death and rebirth of sorrow;
There's no regard for time but unspeakable thought—
Supplication from a romantic dripping its pathos.

No fleeting time whose course we suspend,
A chimera-bird, corrupted in flight;
Time won't answer prayers to save us
From the regret of a "before" that's now no more.

THE ANGEL

I know only what time is not:
No order of things shaping history,
No chain of surprises, no precious purge
Of our excesses or false despairs.

I hate the ignorance that wounds my mind:
Time is despicable in its feigned candor—
An insolent clockmaker, poor in vision,
Pacing us with the rigor of his cold rule.

Time is diabolical for denying respite—
An insane carousel of our mortal prisons,
Impassive confinement of abyssal boredom,
A circular tragedy of our disillusionments.

Where is Dionysus and his mocking thyrsus?
Has he been repainted by somber Apollo?
Time is the prison of our meager joys,
An inconsolable pyre of our vain passions.

Who shall toll the bell for this fraud?
Is my call for time's gravedigger in vain?
Who will dig the grave of the accursed time?
Will a Superman come to break its momentum?

Your skin was burned by a scorching sun—
But time is not guilty for your staggered step;
The clock is to plague what the donkey is to the field:
Time is rejected only by shouting it isn't!

Time is but an abstract, reason's principle—
Why does it matter if it's only measure?
Devote your care to the virtues we assign it:
It's what we say of it that wears away Being.

HEATWAVE AND PARADOX

The sky cries onto our lives with incendiary tears:
The world is but a pyre, and torrents of flame
Flood the valleys with murderous waves—
From hell the sun has made us its souls!

When a sky too heavy cracks our very bones,
And our crushed steps sink in melting tar,
The putrid stench blooming from the graveyard
Sweats the fatal fate of our dimmest illusions.

The forest ignites—an infernal trap!
The child is now tears on his charred mother:
From the assassin sun—who shall judge?
Is it mankind's role only to witness?

The elders' shame reddens their last bones!
Eternal regrets carved onto some tomb
Of forgotten dead—what pride remains
In this evil we're left to bear?

For fire is alive—as much as we are:
Who knows if the cold dead suffer in the coals?
Devious and ravaging—can it be a friend,
This fire man once saved from clay?

Go now, sorrowful pagans—go steal from azure skies
What little of hell once served as our shield!
From eternal snows, reseed the world's decay,
And weep upon the stars for the light they once wielded!

Rain finally falls, and summer's fire dies;
What god is mad enough to descend into hell,
To cast a shred of pride into the blaze,
And rescue from the flame a bitter memory?

Nature, dry your tears in the fire that devours you!
Your fate is cruel—to burn beneath our hands;
All that remains is smoke from your deadwood:
Winter will be sorrow before the chimney's hearth.

In the garden of ashes, flowers of bitterness
Poison weary bees with perfumed death;
From the spring, only foam remains atop the stone—
We'll drink sun steeped in the tears we've shed!

Earth is cluttered with the culling of elders:
Who would pour holy water on these dried-out corpses?
Is there blasphemy fierce enough to enrage the gods?
Only fire from heaven now rains upon funerals...

Curtain for the anemone—her stage dress
Wrinkles, then fades in a final blaze;
Deeper than the apron's shadow in the hearth
Sleep the tritons buried beneath the ash.

"The storm is on my heels," claims a false passerby;
Waiting is vain—Godot will never come!
Shall we saddle the faithful tree with our two hanging forms?
The tree has burned—do you understand that?

In the land of the damned, there's nothing left to hang from:
An eternal trap, and we the willing prey!
No ignorance remains we'd dare pretend:
Hell is all-transparent in all that it displays!

Hell is of light, hiding nothing at all:
Our secrets lie elsewhere, veiled in bad faith!
Is a fire needed to seize our hidden rage,
To force us to live what we claim we believe?

"Only a god can save us," prophesies the philosopher—
But what god, if not a fraud?
From a story too human, is he but an apostrophe,
A cursed word, or a rumor at best?

All sowers of fire bathe in clear waters:
It's only through language that we fail each other!
They are possessors of a shared mystery:
Of the Same, the Different is an unspeakable apostle.

Is he also a liar who affirms he is of them?
Syntax has genders that Reason confounds—
No paradox is too much if born of contraries;
Shall only logicians answer that challenge?

They blame the Cretan for first having thought,
Denying that those who followed ever corrected it;
The Stagirite teaches we must be untied
From the smallest opposition to all we assert.

A word can bear a contrary without insult
To Reason's origin—whoever takes this as wisdom
Detaches from the thought itself—
As myth becomes our final reasoning.

There is no Prime Reason that's not a foundation:
All else is accident, in the language of old!
The unity of opposites is not a mistaken thought,
No more a chimera—it is a forest path!

TROUBLED WATERS

Must I go on living in this barren desert,
Shipwrecked by a life flooded with false hopes?
Intoxicated with torment, my thoughts turn bitter,
Perfume of abandonment, forgotten worth?

Cursed! What's left of this nameless life
Of the passerby once quenched at light's fountain?
There's no flame in the heart drained of passion
But a dubious echo of what it once held dear!

Past images, carried away by tears,
Fade in the fog of an unexpected dawn;
The morning dew blurs all its weight—
Promise to the flayed of a possible molt.

Yet the mist dissolves, devoured by the day,
And washes my absent-being of its rags;
A returning sun blinds all my sorrows,
Warming with light the prison of my pain.

The sky has vanished, swallowed by clouds,
A pond of vapor strokes our poor heads;
Streams of misery soak through hedgerows—
A whisper in valleys of discreet presence.

Crushed beneath the sky and its bloated belly,
The earth holds its breath in final hope;
Suddenly it tears open—rain pours down,
Overwhelming drains in a muddy spit.

The world is but wreckage swept away by flood,
Swell-fed arrogance in outdated brooks;
A merciless torrent chills our brittle bones,
Carrying off our smallest secrets downstream.

Hydrocalamity! It rains too much upon our lives,
Washed in muddy waters that repaint our wounds;
Filthy water dines on all it drags,
Stripping the world of even its last innocence.

The story lives in our heads, a photo-album
Of times gone by known only to the heart;
Men dress for time like drunken heroes,
Vain crowd soused in grand illusions.

The waters erase only anonymous lives—
And that is enough to stitch a tragedy:
Waters turn death into their sad synonym,
Tearing through existence in a cruel uproar.

Where do you flee, my sister, carried by the flood?
Toward what fatal fate do you let yourself be drawn?
Come back! It is not yet time to fight the water—
The hand of misfortune has struck straight at the heart!

A froth of fantasies, the voice of the faithless
Washes up on the coffin of my mournful thought:
Hearing only the murmur of a poor minstrel,
I insult the Erinyes with a hornet of impiety.

Dance now, you vile demons—ripe fruit for your gallows:
May a sinister crow, having crushed your bones,
Drag you to the lake's depths, beneath even regret,
And let your chants echo in useless speech.

I write this prayer to the gods of forgetting:
Enough false notes in this cursed score!
A deaf absolution, perfumed with contempt,
Will tear from my soul all its maledictions.

Et nunc vade retro! Merchant of miseries,
Take leave of the cursed one who rhymes his impatience:
What care have you for the torment of his burning nights?
Are you not weary of these rivers of insolence?

Far off now, my memories—milkmaid of my wandering:
I feed on shadows from an uncertain past.
What use is it to be fat with your impertinence?
Even the starving are sated on feasts of boredom!

What are you doing, my prayer, storming the void?
Do you not know that victory is never orphaned?
You nurture your defeat by forging your present
In a furnace without embers, with a mirror for flame.

Troubled water is a lying mirror of the face,
Blinding our gaze with its colorless glass;
And all that seems reflected in this mute witness
Is woven of appearances, an artist's des(s)ign...

THE SALAMANDERS

Absence is presence—an Angel once told me,
Emptiness does not exist: there's nothing to find there;
There is no time past we must forget,
But a will to become all we once were—to preserve tomorrow.

O messenger of gods, what is this Clarity
That pierces the clouds from the world's long night?
In the forest of beeches, filtered through the trees,
It grants to the earth a soft felicity.

And nature awakens, timid in its rising,
The slowworm leaves the crevice where it had hidden,
And to the murmuring brook, finally set free,
Returns the salamander, entrusting it with its life.

In the trickling clear water, the larvae are released,
Feeding on the little washed to the shore;
When the gust comes that makes the tree bend,
The river swells with the storm's tears from the sky.

The larvae, clinging to the bed of stone,
Are swept away by a sudden swirl;
On the uncertain shore, a mother has turned,
Leaning over the abyss of a broken promise.

She'll return tomorrow, once the waters have calmed,
To add her own tears to the disenchanted brook;
And the brook will carry them to the place of the drowned,
Into the monstrous fracture of a foul pond.

All life has vanished there, and on its gnawed banks—
Soiled by human stains, in soaked black mud—
Returns the poison once poured long ago:
Cemetery of salamanders, left to this desert.

The frogs have forsaken this land of death:
Only stones remain, swept by the ruinous flow.
A stubborn holly clings to hope on the shore,
Still guarding the brook's vague destiny.

It flees underground to be reborn at the edge
Of what once was a forest, before it was razed;
But the long-lost spring, barely rediscovered,
Is now caught by a sewer draining wastewater.

And thus life finally disappears—
The salamanders die, and web-footed newts;
From the broth of their culture they ferment away,
Swept into nothingness by our filthy tides.

THE CHARBONNEUSES

(Anthrax Flies)

It is the charbonneuses, bloodthirsty little ones,
Who strip even poor shepherds of their flock:
For they sting—their bodies loaded with disease—
And condemn the animal to pay with its life.

The stable's manure is steeped in poison:
A charcoal spreads through the bloodstream of dung!
Anthrax awaits its moment to seal the fate
Of innocent livestock trapped within its reach.

Upon the lime of the stall, death has painted
The brushstroke of sorrow, blackening all;
On straw still warm, a brave draft horse
Extinguishes the last breath of its faithfulness.

On the man's face, withered by his labor,
Now veiled in tears from too-long a friendship,
Appears the despair of being left alone
To mourn a friend stolen away by death.

Yet tragic is absence, absurd and unforgiven:
Death is an insult to one who wants to exist!
When autumn's tears have stripped the oak,
Snow becomes a shroud laid by winter's hand.

For the squirrel it tolls—the time to forget:
He falls asleep without regret, wrapped in hope

That buds will reopen with the sun's return;
But as his star declines, the earth lies barren.

Gone are the anthrax flies, banished by cold:
In the hearth of deadwood, the flames are stoked.
They'll return tomorrow, preserved by the humus,
To corrupt spring's most cheerful promises.

Tragedy returns to the disillusioned man:
He dreamt himself destined, but barely awakened
He hears only the omen of a dark fate—
At his bedside, he's conjugated to the past.

The rising sun, in its first pale gleam,
Reveals no path through ruts or ditches;
So we stumble, tear the soles from our shoes,
And sometimes fall, lost in the abyss.

Hell is not elsewhere, beyond the clouds,
Nor buried below, as we once were taught:
It dwells in the daily lives of inconsolable souls,
In deep sufferings and invisible wounds.

Dusk arrives! I long to lie down,
To forget myself in dream, to live without existing,
To lay down consciousness at the foot of the stair,
To fly into the sky, never looking back!

In a child's eyes, caught beneath misplaced bombs,
The fear I see forbids me to think—
For that fear is mine, and it raises my hair:
Those eyes mirror my very own being.

Amor Fati—we must love our fate!
But what is the worth of existence, when Being is fractured,
When the divine and its line have perished,
And voiceless statues are their only heirs?

I recall Electra and her stolen story,
Poor Iphigenia, whom they believed slain,
And their brother Orestes, killer of his mother:
What curse was it they were made to pay?

How many among men are children of the damned?
Noble Agamemnon was but the son of Atreus,

Himself son of Pelops, once cooked by his father
And served to the gods in a precious feast.

There are other Tantaluses hidden among humans,
Like the anthrax flies, without the least pity;
In the child's eyes who mourns his kin,
I recognize the tears I once shed at dawn.

If to die to life is to be disinherited,
There are many deaths we choose to ignore:
The death of the villager we barely met,
And those of all the ties history has torn apart.

The world is a web, woven by the living,
Where once the Spirit wandered, now made rational;
Carried through these veins, a wayward vessel
Guided the eyes of thought toward everything.

But now time has ripped through that weave:
No memory remains of that far-off past.
A cynical tarantula has shrouded the Spirit
In the veil of Reason and its anti-presence.

Shroud of intuition, of a Shared once claimed
By man and nature—foundation of their friendship.
But Reason, calculating and bent on dominion,
Has stripped both of their very identities.

When God says "I am," He confesses only to exist:
But what do I care, if His life is unfulfilled?
I prefer the god Pan, wild in his being,
Divine who made the sylvan his true dwelling!

Let a god on his cloud stay there forever:
What knows he of earth, never having walked it?
He is like the anthrax fly that would rather sting us
And drown us in sleep—has none ever dreamed of such?

"The country path" once led me
To the heart of a forest, enchanted by a thousand lives:
I dragged my sighs, my disbelief,
Tormented by the thorns that had torn my flesh.

There appeared in an oak, where he'd perched,
A strange squirrel who seemed to watch me;

His russet fur and plumed tail
Stopped my step and captivated my gaze.

I had no eyes but for his majesty—
Perhaps he understood, for he drew near;
At ease at the tree's foot, he began to speak,
And I listened as he shared his lived tale.

THE SQUIRREL

You flee the infected sting of the anthrax flies,
From the torments of Spirit that aim to lead you astray;
If absence is tragic, so too is losing ground
And sinking in an abyss no being can sound.

It is a path of thorns that leads to the clearing:
You know its pain—you've walked it before;
The bounding squirrel manages to avoid
Those pitfalls of life sown by a demon.

A tragic life has guided you to this place:
But if not life, what else might be found?
For those who dwell here, it is vain to hope
To probe the depths of things, to grasp their truth.

Truth is a concept humans invented
To crush the world beneath the weight of thought;
But what we call truth is only representation,
A mental construction misaligned with things.

And yet the Spirit cannot picture anything—
For life is movement that art cannot fix;
"But speak!" said He to Moses, whom He sculpted—
Is His body veiled by Aphrodite's veil?

THE TRAGIC MAN

His body, through the veil, is given to our eyes:
We embrace in statues but a worked stone!
What the artist tells us is not a report
Of some simple landscape and its nakedness.

Remember Baubô, when she lifted her skirt—
Demeter smiled through her afflicted sorrow:
There was in that gesture not the least vulgarity,
Though moralists strained to find some there.

There was nothing to see, and even less to touch:
Her belly is the symbol of fertility,
A sign of the earth, with Persephone captured,
Weeping among the dead where nothing can sprout.

Tragic is the exemption of our humanity,
Time that misleads us when it rushes along:
There's no Redemption but for fragmented beings,
Banished from the hope of one day reassembling.

For man is manifold, scattered by time,
Lacking an image to give him inspiration;
In forsaking the gods, man has renounced himself,
Condemned to wander through a life unfulfilled.

THE SQUIRREL

Science has made of man a game he cannot win:
Death is no defeat when the dice are rigged;
Yet it is always present, etched in each moment:
You have lived so little for having existed too much!

Death is but detail when life is rightly measured:
Look around—are any graves being dug?
The forest is only life, never mourned a day:
It is when man dwells there that death strikes.

Man is an anthrax fly, bent on destruction:
Thus was his path paved with thorns.
Life is a Phoenix one cannot consume:
If man buries his dead, it is to preserve them!

Tombs are not dwellings for the forgotten:
Why bring them flowers when we go to pray?
Is it an offering to gods to earn forgiveness—
The price of memory for a friend lamented?

We say the absent live on in our thoughts:
It would be sacrilege to doubt it!
Yet still their tombs draw humans near—
What lies beneath the stone we cannot forget?

THE TRAGIC MAN

The tragic is to die when we still wish to stay,
To suffer all ills when we desire health:
We must love in life all it has to give—
Joy and sorrow, winter as much as summer.

She curses all mankind, this rationality,
Tarantula in our skulls that seeks to rule all
And freeze in its web a world unrepresented:
In Plato's sky, only ideas live.

So many things we cannot fully think,
Fix in a concept that would tell the truth;
Unspoken truths rebel, cloaked by speech:
These words they serve us often conceal more.

They are metaphors of reality,
Bound in paradigms, thoughts of their time
Which History digests once they've worn out:
Of all we believe, none holds eternity.

Least of all the gods, whom we must replace
When they grow foreign to our existence:
The gods are unfaithful to paths they once traced
And often act against our will.

THE SQUIRREL

We acorn-eaters are dispensable to the oak,
Though we feed on its fruitful bounty;
Do you think my den holds a pantry?
Most of the acorns I bury, I forget!

That is how the oak multiplies its kind:
It counts on my forgetting the seeds I've sown.
A subtle harmony may then be woven
From threads which chance claimed as its trap.

Tragic is the existence of your humanity—
For nothing seems able to bring you harmony,
Neither with yourselves nor with your kin,
Nor with the nature to whom you are indebted.

What of mankind if we must erase it,
And entrust its fate to mere technique?
Can a tool imitate, without falsity,
The song of a lark composed of infinities?

Can it truly succeed, who is not full of life?
Your gods are but images sewn with sacred words,
For sacred are the texts where gods are told:
Man feeds on books made from the bones of piety.

THE TRAGIC MAN

It is to the gods we direct our prayers,
For we are wretched in the absence of mercy;
We invent forgiveness for what's called sin:
The gods are our excuse for all our fragilities.

Yet it is an anthrax fly that falsified us
With remorse for sins we forced upon ourselves:
There is no lesser evil in erasing another good
When we confess our faults out of contrition.

Men are sinners—so divine necessity claims:
Thus a god must be willing to forgive!
Men are mortals—condemned to oblivion:
Thus a god must be able to resurrect them.

The gods are counterweights to facticity,
Offering a reversed measure of relativity:
If we are poured into contingency by Being,
A Free Expanse is the promise of home.

We are nature's final guests,
And the forest's edge has closed behind mankind;
But he is a plunderer, skilled in upending
The roots of a harmony he cannot cherish.

THE SQUIRREL

Outside, factories spit thick smoke
That hovers over the forest before falling again,
Swallowed by waters poured down by the sky:
Nature is the wreckage of this racing torrent.

In contempt of clocks, time has run wild:
Cursed be the Celestials who kept the seasons still!
From the felled trees, the birds have vanished—
Clinging now to garbage, fed by human excess.

And when the time comes to return home,
To place their brood's nest upon a branch,
The birds despair, finding nothing remains
But the ruins of their dwelling strewn on the ground.

That is why the squirrel has sown so many acorns:
Nature is patient in her bliss;
For the bird who returns, a hollow was forgotten
In the clamorous saws and the fallen trees.

From blindness their cruelty is born:
Men see in things only a twisted use!
There is no Reason but that which deprives him
Of his very nature—and harmony with the world.

AUTUMN TEARS

It is the autumn winds that make the oaks weep
When summer takes flight to hide the light;
It is the time of crows that enchains us with cold,
A perfume of slowness rehearsing for winter.

The birds gather, murmuring a soft goodbye;
The flowers dress in mourning, final composition;
Already people hurry, seeing no one at all—
And the dead return to us in sinister prayers.

Nature is in tears, dew of her departure,
Crossing time that leads toward slumber;
A shroud cloaking the earth in possible hope—
An unexpected spring of a thousand marvels.

But the blackbird is wounded, forced to swallow his song;
Only the storm growls when the sky is on fire!
He trembles on his branch, cursing the time,
A season of silence in capricious dress.

I do not belong to autumn, that sighing instant:
The devil lurks, hungry for his meager meal,
And evil masquerades with affable smiles;
Time becomes the echo of unspoken vengeance.

What is this dissonance that silences the blackbird?
I sense no mood that might excuse such forgetfulness!
Could autumn allow for such indecency?
To me it speaks only of tears and mortal ennui.

Is the devil cunning, dressed in promises,
Slandering his prey with perfidious allusions?
A mindless canker stripped of finesse
Pours out the bitterness of some ghastly poison.

Besieged by tyranny, my blackbird is doomed:
He flees his branch—and his illusions;
Into a thornbush, hiding his agony,
He yields to the earth, defeated and dying.

Autumn! The blackbirds depart and silence falls:
A lone tree dies wrapped in its hush,
Stripping bare the nest of our vanished singer—
It will be dashed tomorrow by the wind's insolence.

Autumn's tears are those of my sorrow,
Dew of despair that stretches out my shroud;
Indecent prayers from All Saints' wrath,
Oracles of the Sibyl striking down the elders.

Vanity of crows flaying some life:
Words drip with bile and make the soul bleed;
A thick fog drunk on sleeplessness—
Impossible rest broken by infamous dreams.

It rains in my reason with wounds of memory,
Unfinished injuries of infinite torment;
Darkness drowns me in delirious waves,
A kindly obscurity dressed in falsehoods.

Igitur wishes to be reborn in the face of time,
Carried by dreams spun of another fate;
Born in vain from the absurd of an eternal present,
Erasing all hope of a possible path.

Only the shackles match your steps;
A dust-born being invented by words
Carries his soles toward his demise,
Indecent sepulcher of such vile sayings.

Redemption of the tragic in an uninhabited void,
Wreck of a life no soul has truly lived:
Its bark torn by a single word,
A weeping innocence, nature lost.

The shedding season confuses my spirit;
A tree strips itself to offer to the earth,
Deceiving the pity of my wounded gaze:
Our sorrows merge at the foot of our miseries.

Verlaine! The long sobs of the lingering fall
Do not soothe my heart, though it yearns;
Murmurs of poverty spoken in sighs,
Carried by a gaze banished from the sky.

Where go the autumn rhymes, clad in black?
The poet's sobs set rivers to dancing,
Drunken torrents where banks have vanished:
The plain, soaked through, closes its eyelids.

It is the time of heathers laid on the dead,
Of a sky so low one might reach up and touch it;
No more buzzing flies of our last regrets,
Indecent contrition of cleansed consciences.

The rats have returned, hungering for dark,
Nocturnal gravediggers of lingering light;
And those last wanderers of abandoned gardens
Bury their futures under piles of soil.

We feed them crumbs from past feasts,
Silent ecology of our excess;
The rats take stock of our satiety,
Hollowing our conscience of its meager torment.

The spider paints her webs in attic shadows,
Forgetting the stories packed away in boxes,
Pictures of our yesterdays scented with past—
Discords of time forging their own reason.

Nature draws a circle for her path,
Lacking blind spots to hide her shame,
Spaces of the unseen with sinister turns,
The vault of murmurs where the indiscreet speak.

Words are assassins, all the more in what they omit,
Obscured by eloquence veined with insolence,
Factitious speech of impossible synthesis,
Alchemy of talk that dissolves all meaning.

Dry wood is chopped at winter's threshold:
Already chimneys reach toward the skies;
The wind is unsure, seeking its course,
Sweeping the valley with chilly ether.

Autumn's tears no longer fall
Upon the world's pyre, whose fire has died;
Fog-walkers, limping in broken steps,
Fade into the mist of uncertain paths.

Autumn is a criminal breaking fate—
Its shadow recalls it was but a dream,
A sketch of blue sky dulled by the season,
A washed-out painting of a road through misery.

The scents of autumn are laced with dung,
Alchemy of stables and illustrious cattle,
Athanor of bedding and emptied bowels—
Today's manure is tomorrow's pride.

Culture rejoices in this noble feast,
Fertile literature for sleeping minds,
Soil of a greedy wisdom of fate
That will carve from it a name and a ghost of spirit.

Autumn's tears dry up in forgetting,
Forgetting of a being elsewhere—beyond time;
What does it matter, the season that robs us
And binds us to the present with heavy chains?

IT RAINS

I

When the shy sun refuses to show,
When the peaks flee, devoured by clouds,
When under such a low sky we must bow,
Rain, the shameless one, declares it will fall.

And fall the first drops, crushed on the ground:
Rain that takes its time seems to count its flow;
Then come sureness, a tighter descent,
Heavier and colder—bending all things.

And when at last the rain ceases its beating,
And we crack the door to sip some clarity,
Mud, torn from summits by the floods,
Has hidden the streets flowing through our homes.

In a pond of earth the village drowned:
Seeping into the cellars of our guarded secrets,
What we once held dear is carried off by water—
Now just wreckage adrift on the tide.

When all dust is washed away by flood,
When the world's skin is stripped of every truth,

It's in a mass grave of our smallest filth
That life is undone by this ravaging rain.

Our secrets dissolve into sewage streams,
Serving up only the fruits of mingled fates;
For nothing belongs to anyone when all is stripped—
In the torrent, even the Self is taken.

We see only shadows bent over the drain:
Are men but rats, chased from their own history?
We are washed from memory, our stories erased—
Rain has muddled our past into muddy remains.

And the rain keeps falling, dragging the past
Into the chasm of what we once were;
The living are already dead, crushed by the sky—
For them, the grave is dug by these waters.

I think back to yesterdays torn apart,
A paper face erased by the rain,
Childhood memories hurled into an abyss,
And a beechwood buffet dismembered in the street.

Returns to me the banal I was once wrapped in:
The scraps of nothingness stolen from holidays,
A shred of her dress, torn at the seam,
A vase of too many flowers, withered from thirst.

Our lives are museums of what we loved—
But heaven's tears have swept all away:
On the yellowed photos where it once was etched
Only blank paper remains in faded place.

When nothing's the same, our brows bow low,
And the sky's grief streams down our cheeks;
Then we retreat, begging the past
To let us keep what little of it lingers.

In vain we search this ruined world
For scents of old, swept off in the tide—
To distant prisons from which nothing returns,
The key long lost in water's wrath.

Only the weeping of torn souls still resounds:
Rain has turned the world to a bloodied sea;

We wish this page had never turned,
That what arms us would never come to pour.

Yet still this plague sows in our streets
A bitter despair, dictated without appeal:
Men kneel—yet what god to pray to?
What salvation remains to console us?

II

(Political Lament – Sunday in June)

On this June Sunday, black is the tide:
Gone are our hopes of seeing seeds sprout.
In the ballot's secrecy, night has just fallen—
And it promises to be somber and ill-clad.

This is the recklessness of a fate worn thin,
Waiting at the fountain for water that won't rise;
Of springs reserved for the powerful,
We know only what leaks beyond our reach.

From their heights they navigate our scorned lives—
Have they heard, from below, the whisper of tears?
Existence becomes a tragedy with no future:
The child has found refuge in his mother's sobs.

Do you hear, rectors, these miseries pleading
In your greedy promises—begging for pity?
You count their number, often spoken aloud—
But of all their faces, which ones do you know?

None, I assure you—they've fallen too low!
Who among you has stepped into the abyss?
Who has rushed toward the dead in their path?
None, I assure you—they're strangers to you!

Which of you has looked at these children
Fed with hard bread and vinegared water,
And their tearful parents gently stroking them?
None, I assure you—they are your forgotten.

Who among you has walked an exile's path,
Offered friendship in a tent of misfortune,
Spared a minute for the beggars in stations?
None, I assure you—you are far too hurried!

And which of your brood, wandering at night,
Bent to the sidewalk to greet a homeless man,
Offered a crumb of compassion, a slice of buttered bread?
None, I assure you—they smell far too bad!

They say we're all condemned to work—
But who among you has dared shake the hand
Of the unemployed, or smiled to ease their pain?
None, I assure you—they have nothing to give!

This, gentlemen, I cannot forgive!
From your office windows, the world is erased;
Climbing so high, the plain is hidden—
Of all those who remain, only their voices are counted.

What care have you for the accords to be made?
Swamp-elected, you've turned your eyes away!
What little will be kept of your grand promises,
When already so many of our sorrows are denied?

You cherish power, and mock the people:
What honor is there in pitying others?
Men have forgotten their gods' dignity:
Loving only themselves, what use is society?

You are the slayers of what little humanity remains:
Only what serves your power is "human" to you.
When the vote tally flatters your ego,
You forget that hands once cast those ballots.

All your grand announcements—you know they're rigged,
Reduced to empty, overused words,
Circumstantial lies, sermons for the damned,
From a future real—the promise stillborn.

The child lives in your texts, but will never arrive—
A fresh illusion to forget old suffering;
In his mother's arms a boy is turned away:
At the hospital door, they found it closed.

On men this Sunday, night has come down:
Will sunlight return in a thousand years?
Already one dark age had long endured—
Must we bear such darkness once again?

Life resumes—Sunday is forgotten.
The blabber flows before His Majesty:
The funeral of fate has been orchestrated;
To the butcher, the mayor has already pledged himself.

If the Flemish tide has darkened its hue
And a madman in his tomb has loosened his tongue,
It's that the complicity of an ungrateful age
Has too easily been judged by history.

Those terrors we thought long forgotten will return—
All the vile acts we failed to condemn;
And from all these dark thoughts, crucified souls:
Who among us is truly Other enough to bear them?

Down covered roads flees the unforgiven,
Bearing the weight of his sin on his shoulders;
A veil over his face hides the skin beneath:
He does not wear the color a vote has crowned.

Already the footsteps echo on the cobbles:
Black-clad troops march in tight ranks.
The dead of the forties lie trampled once more—
War never granted humans any pity.

When crows nest atop the highest trees,
The tits and blackbirds—deprived of their crumbs—
Don't wait for their wings to falter:
They take flight early, seeking liberty.

There is no frontier that man can draw—
Each finds home in finally being freed
From the weight of conscience, long bent to tyrants:
A single name suffices to affirm one's being.

They say a world is perfected by its forms,
That a simple bark can dress an entire tree—
Forgetting the soul's breath, once poured out,
Is wind from a life that must surpass itself.

What never was might still come to be:
We need only will it together;
Its cost is fervor in mutual complicity,
That each may find their home within themselves.

III – MELANCHOLIA

There are rains that can't be stopped:
They fall from within like swallowed tears,
Pooling at the heart's edge, soaked through,
Tinting our moods with disenchantment.

Sometimes we do not know what wounds us—
An unknown sorrow takes hold of us;
We fall silent—our words imprisoned
By what oppresses us, unnamed.

A smile won't cling to the face,
Our eyes dart, impossible to hold;
A strange weariness numbs the body,
And with slack arms we recoil from all.

We walk slowly, burdened by this grief,
And the clock's tick—the passing of time—
No longer concerns us:
Life knows only hours in their harshest stretch.

"You've got the blues," a boatman said to me,
Yet this heaviness escapes even the tide;
My soul is as flat as a sheet of paper
Waiting for a pen to spill its ink.

That nothing is written disturbs the page—
Its whiteness mute with all we might inscribe;
No word stands out from the one beside it:
What we don't know, neither does the paper.

Of this melancholy that brushes the soul,
We know only its name—the rest escapes;
It is not knowing that clouds our thought—
We know so little of what wounds the soul.

Who knows what sorrow our eyes carry?
It is a quiet void that passes through us,
A melancholic breeze that chills the soul,
An inner murmur of creeping gloom.

A vague ennui lingers, forced to loiter,
Plucking nostalgia, grinding up the past:
It's a demon of the heart, a broken clock,
A crack in time—a splintering of becoming.

Thus creeps the blues, limping along,
Unsure of path or purpose;
You'll see it often in these wayward times
Marking stripped faces with its imprint.

IV – OTHER RAINS

There are clouds beyond those that fall—
What comes crashing down and won't relent
Is not only clear drops or frozen flakes:
It rains other sorrows more deadly than water.

It rains also blows we call "discipline,"
And worse still, too painful to name;
Though the one who strikes is often forgiven,
The one who suffers believes they deserve it.

"You do well to beat me—I'm nothing but a failure,
And so I forgive your raised hand.
I am your prisoner—do as you please:
How could I not deserve this thrashing?"

If blows fall like rain, then the phrasing wounds too!
"I'm good for nothing, unworthy of your pity,
Surely worth even less than your tired insults:
I don't deserve compassion—go ahead, degrade me!"

Upon her oak coffin, a few flowers were laid;
A single strike was enough to silence her forever.
Her child, watching her go, did not cry:
From prison, the father can hit them no more.

Of all the women broken, so few dare speak—
Too long it was thought such things had no meaning.
Love turns blinding when it's steeped in abuse:
We pretend to be better just to dodge the next blow.

Others make themselves small, less space to strike—
We become invisible, crumbs swept from the floor;
And the other crushes us with the weight of his boots—
We're no more than dust stuck beneath his heels.

To her torturer, the woman is nothing but shadow,
Dragging on the floor the image of her killer;
When his bottle runs dry and the hangover looms,
He spreads his vile cruelty upon their shared bed.

For a sliver of peace, the shadow gets dressed again;
She kisses her child, hopes to lie down in peace,
But the thirst for sleep has awakened her man:
To avoid more blows, she returns to the floor.

The executioner cannot reach the vanished wife—
The kid will do when it's time to hit.
So the shadow rises, steps in to protect:
The last blow falls—it kills her on the floor.

DAY OF THE DEAD

I

They all sleep in rows, just as they were laid:
Does the dead belong to himself, prisoner of that place?
When visitors return, the stones are scrubbed clean
And a feast of flowers laid upon their bellies.

Heavied with grey, the living lean close,
Whispering into ears of those who departed:
A moment of remembrance, dressed in piety,
Offered beneath the marble to the one now gone.

With a sprinkle of holy water, regrets are rinsed;
We speak in silence, so as not to awaken
From eternal rest these remnants of the past—
And our gazes vanish into the freezing fog.

When their groaning stomachs call them to dinner,
The living herd thins out toward the gates;
On that fragment of history the door closes shut—
Back in the present, speech resumes once more.

Life reclaims its due in exchanged updates,
Turning its back on the mute whose deaths are sealed.
We speak of those who return in forgotten memories,
And those not yet called to the cemetery's peace.

Suddenly the crowd stretches, heading home again:
Smoke at the chimneys signals food is near;
Words surrender to the pull of smells—
This annual duty now delayed once more.

In rhythm with the elders the table is set,
With trembling hands ladling the soup;

If they've declined the visit owed the dead,
It's their fragile legs that could no longer make the walk.

They will go tomorrow, carried by others,
With no hope of return to what has passed;
Already among the dead their place awaits—
The one who brings them will come each year anew.

Beneath a slab of marble they'll find rest,
Protected from life behind a closed door
And stone walls raised so high
That nothing from the present can ever climb over.

Death is virtuous to wait the whole year
Until the saints' day brings its hour at last;
Then the family returns, their hands full of flowers,
Hearts full of memories of those they've loved.

And then they leave again, their sorrow eased,
To face the present and what soon will be past—
When they return again, never to leave,
They'll see others arrive and close the gate behind them.

Life is a Ring that cannot be broken,
Returning to earth all that once sprang from it:
The graves are furrows where seeds must be sown,
So that tomorrow, without fail, a stalk may rise.

II

"What are you seeking here that cannot be found?":
Thus speaks death, haunting this place.
"Beneath the stones lie only hollowed bodies—
Bones of elders, scraped clean by time."

Long ago, villagers knew how to keep their dead:
They surrounded churches, visited at each Mass!
So why did men push them farther away?
Could it be they fear becoming them someday?

Seek not elsewhere what is found in the near!
If Spirit once dwelled in the body's care,
These carcasses are now just fruit to be shed—
Trees bear flavor only through what they give.

The body is humus that must be exhausted
So the Spirit may rise ever higher;

And when the flesh is at last consumed,
The Spirit, like a bird, thirsts to soar free.

The body is not Plato's imagined prison
But the nourishing clay where growth begins;
From the egg, the fledgling must affirm itself
So that one day it may break free from its nest.

The body gives Spirit the means to subsist
And even to flourish through sharpened senses;
Nothing suits the Spirit that it cannot behold,
Touch with its hand, or hear with its ear.

The senses, said Descartes, hunger to mislead us—
As if they must lie by not showing all;
It is Spirit's merit to unveil such things
As escape both our senses and our thoughts.

So must Spirit learn to find its way,
Overcoming the body's clinging hindrance;
Only then can it climb the ladder
That offers the world an unthought face.

"One must die in time," the prophet declared,
Die on the final stroke of an unfinished work;
When the hammer grows too heavy to bear,
Spirit becomes the promise of our spent flesh.

THE PRISONERS' ROUND

No horizon exists for one made a prisoner:
Only the steps of another who walked before him.
He turns upon himself, with no hope
But to match his motion to the one ahead.

It spins like a clock—the prisoners' round—
A cycle of shadows, a damned man's spinning top.
They are no longer many: the march has fused them,
Bound to the void that defines their being.

They circle nothing—the void of their minds:
They exist only in the present—time has frozen them.
No yesterday, no tomorrow—only eternity,
That fixed unity in which duration dresses.

Now one of them falls—the flow has broken:
Could he have died from never having been?

Yet already that one had once lain down
Beneath the scythe that brought him here.

He was a criminal with a deserving fate:
Words ring final—like morality!
In the prison yard you'll see them spin,
Chewing over crimes or some uncivil deed.

In schoolyards too the children spin,
And workers too, bowed by toil;
The world's a carousel for the idle and lost,
A barrel of thought chained to its own shadow.

And we too are prisoners of washing machines
That scrub our consciences of even the faintest stain;
We become nobody, scrubbed clean and empty—
Our tomorrows nest in pardoned yesterdays.

And the prisoners spin—heads erased,
Tucked into collars like decapitated men;
And the brains, torn out, whirl on themselves:
There's no guillotine that can spare a thought.

There is no "inside" left—the outside razed it:
Only mimics learning what must be copied;
Man is a bloated lump of injected imperatives,
Toy of a knowledge he does not know.

And the prisoners spin, with nothing left to think
But the savor of air granted for a moment:
It's the round of shopping carts, the week completed,
Filling the belly with what little was earned!

Sunday rest, the Mass complete,
At the altar's foot our dreams were laid:
Man is but a survivor of meager thought,
Consumed at the source of his stolen being.

Now naked lies the stone where she once stood—
And cursing time, his past erased,
A man buries his poverty in both his hands:
He weeps for the story that's been stolen from him.

But Monday returns, Sunday forgotten—
And the man resumes the round where it had stopped;

When the machines spin, Spirit is absent
From a mind too weak for it to inhabit.

What good is it to circle a deserted center,
To file along around this cold paving stone?
He is like all others who lie at his side:
A wall is never built of singular bricks.

And the prisoners spin, their hands hidden
Under sleeves stretched by winter's bite;
When hands have no fingers, and heads are cut off—
Who still rejoices at having two feet left?

We are all in prison—the jail of unthinking—
Where habits live, the identical repeated,
Days that mirror each other in empty sameness
That nothing can fill—an absence of being.

Time never flows—duration is the prison;
The ticking hands suggest motion,
But it's an illusion: in each instant reborn
Is the one before, which it forces us to forget.

Stranded in an egg where time has shattered,
Hoping from its fall that unity might return,
Man gathers himself in vain—feigning ignorance
Of the void that devours him for forgetting all.

Forgetting the world, where having bent toward it,
He became its prey—a husk swept away
By currents of lies toward his missed self:
To the abyss of nothingness his fate is cast.

And the prisoners spin, making life groan—
“It could use some oil,” mutters a fool.
“And why not some air?” I feel like shouting—
Or even a little joy that might un-spin it all!

A HAND ON THE SHOULDER

On that bright feast day, you were dearly missed—
But Wisdom is Mischief: from the hat once placed,
You're never far away—at heart and in thought.
It was a May day, bathed in soft sunlight—
Do you remember it, friend, keeper of images,
That dressed the tables with joyful memories?

One is present through absence—that's how we must think—
He who, just yesterday, in tender friendship,
Adjusted a good word to stray remarks,
Having emptied his bottle of wine.
If much was said of remaking the world,
It has only begun and struggles to end.

They'd like to place you up there—old priests' talk—
Perched on a cloud, watching over the gods;
But do they need such scrutiny, truly,
While here below too many tears are shed?
Staying here might offend the divine—

And yet, often, I feel your hand upon my shoulder.

If from Athena's breath we received life,
It is often courage we most sorely lack!
What did you hold, friend, though your hands let go,
If not that bravery so constantly displayed
While you still walked beside us?
I doubt such strength ever left your soul.

When my knees buckle beneath their burdens,
And my neck is brushed by a breeze,
I know your breath in it—that Spirit of friendship
Which no absence could ever erase.
What could bring to death what is Eternity?
What god would dare deprive us of life?

If our ashes must one day return to earth,
From what the body was the Spirit will turn away?
Time, my old friend, ought never to pass—
Or step so slowly we might forget its pace.
But never mind, André—it is Eternity

That every instant born of history comes to engrave.

That I am mad, of course—some have surely thought it:
What care I to be judged a lunatic by them?
I am not one of theirs—and I say what I know:
Never can death erase a single life!

It's not mere memory I wish to invoke—
But a presence hidden within an absent being.

"Madness," some will say, "this man is tormented,"
"Delirium," say others, "he's hallucinating!"
None of that, humans—just a truth instead:
Love is far stronger than all these vacuities,
It disarms the impossible, allows us to go on—
For from what vanishes, life must yet remain!

Should you greet those I now miss?
Friend, it's pointless—they're familiar to me:
At the "door," we often conversed.
And you, do you remember passing through it?

On your coffin's wood I carved its name,
For others, a glance sufficed to show the place.

It's no mystery, nor some naïve belief!
They'd rather I were mistaken about such things—
Easier that way, not to dare consider it,
Claiming the divine granted nothing at all.

How narrow the thought of the self-proclaimed atheist—
To whom gods are foreign in all that unfolds!

FALSE START

When the final night sounds, we begin to think:
That when life overflows, it must spill out.
Before lying down one last time on the earth,
We fill ourselves with images we long to carry.

"Useless baggage," declares the zealous scythe:
"When I mow the meadow, nothing remains."
Though our lives be cluttered with a thousand things,
Death clears away most with efficient hand.

Our memories are carved with many souvenirs—
But from some, even death cannot unbind us.
If dying is a wash of our worn old bones,
It cannot rob the Spirit of its breath.

If the scythe strips the meadow of its grass,
It keeps the roots to dress again tomorrow,
To cloak the wound in a borrowed green:
Death holds only the wealth we have entrusted it.

It is with great value we pay what was lent so little—
For death keeps only the trifles

We took for needs in our living days:
Of what truly matters, it wants nothing to do!

It holds, for a time, in the soil's deep cut,
Only what once could never exist;
And of all we were, nothing can be erased—
For what is eternal cannot come undone.

Surely she would want it, with her sharpened blade—
But the threads of our lives are too tough to sever.
The hour of parting has come, the casket drawn near:
Yet what others lay there is no discarded shell.

"A wreck," they agree—those who've been reformed,
The beach-strewn remains of a ship run aground.
One dies only in the present—no past, no future:
A dead one becomes not—nor has he ever been.

It is an infinitive none can conjugate:
Dying is not ceasing, but always abiding,
Frozen in an instant like eternity,
Not an accident, nor a vain necessity.

No one is touched by this death announced—
So no one ever dies, whatever we may think;
Dying makes us nothing but absented beings,
Those who are not here—for they are shown elsewhere.

He who rots in his grave has never lived at all:
He is but the impossible for thinking otherwise!
He who dies, they say, has ceased to exist—
But what means that word we pretend to master?

If death makes of us the once-lived,
Then to what was life ever truly devoted?
"God is a being," say priests from their pulpits—
"And how do you know?" replies the insolent.

If truly He exists and cannot perish,
Why make of others a different assumption—
That to die, one must have existed,
Without granting sense to that very word?

If simply being means to say "exist,"
Why then not the stones, whose being is sure

As much as existence—yet they cannot perish?
“Because a stone does not live!” they told me.

So if dying is not a lack of existing
But of being alive, then of God we must think
That though He may be, He is devoid of life—
Fashioned of fine marble, a dream turned to stone.

It’s a vicious circle where we remain trapped:
Whatever we say, death slips away again.
On this thing it seems useless to insist,
Since the door of knowledge has closed on it.

And yet we long to pierce its mystery,
To break the uncertainty that clings to it still,
For death awaits us—from the young to the old:
No matter the hour, we all must pass through!

When too early, it’s a life cut short;
When too late, it’s just wasted time—
Yet never is death’s hour preferred,
As if we’d rather forget its due.

He died this morning—his night was restless!
Why not yesterday, which might have spared him?
For she does not choose when to strike—
The Reaper is sly: she never announces herself.

No one is concerned, but all are involved:
And what then is the hidden meaning of this?
I hear your whisper: “This man’s lost his mind—
How be involved if one is not concerned?”

Death is a departure from which none return,
An eternal absence, a heart’s shattered cry;
It is an infamy, a false cross of fate:
Dying is not a debt, nor the ransom of life.

I know death is vile, and our fates deceived,
But still I choose to believe there’s hidden meaning—
That it’s a false departure, a being gone awry,
Another mode of Being veiled from our eyes.

How can he no longer be, who once truly was—
And how can the void arise from the heart of being?

Death is a lie I've often encountered,
And its blindness has torn my tears from me.

Death is a flash that blinds all eyes—
And it's in seeing nothing that we begin to think.
The faithful friend is gone—I cannot forget:
For absence is presence in my torn soul.

If death is tragic, so too is existence:
Never does a true form come to clothe us!
We die in each moment that slips through our grasp—
And yet each fleeting instant conceals eternity.

Dying is no sentence that cannot be altered,
No final shape resigned to the past:
Death is a horizon we cannot ignore,
From which we must seek to Be—otherwise.

From our lives the path leads toward Clarity—
Not some divine light where Being is fulfilled,
But the ceaseless struggle of being denied to Self,
For Self is the horizon—the vanishing point of existing.

Life is not the tale of a single marked trail,
Devoid of sidetracks one might take instead:
"The country road," where the cross was planted,
Veers from its voice to lead us elsewhere.

There grows an oak reaching to wed the sky,
Drinking in light beyond the gathered clouds;
In that Free Expanse where Celestials dwell,
Death has no place—defeated by the Sacred.

The Angels will tell you: nothing can defile it—
Dying was banished by the Simplicity of that realm!
It is no elsewhere granted by merit,
No divine reward for endured sorrows.

My body torments me—and I am devastated:
The blood in my veins seeks to cease its course,
My spine will not bend to the labor at hand,
And poison lingers in the pit of my belly.

My hands, corroded by acid, have seized up,
A thousand demons besiege my thoughts;

My nights are hell, my days, a slaughter—
Curled beneath the sheets, life has withdrawn.

Does departure now knock at my door?
It enters my dwelling—soon I will know.
I have no luggage—what would be the point,
If a hole in the earth must suffice for me?

Night descends in mist—I hear the rooster call:
From darkness, a dawn tears through the veil.
A new day rises to light my affliction,
Etching into the mirror a desolate image.

I long with fervor to forget my pains,
To taste the joy that health can bring;
When the body fails, Spirit stands idle:
Greater than torment is the weight of flesh.

With death returns a breeze of freedom
That pain and excess had long confined;
Not free to move what's been stripped away,
But free in future shaped by thought.

When the body is dust, smothered by stone,
And our flesh crumbles in a closed coffin,
Spirit wanders, tied to no place:
From our lives remains only what we've earned.

Thus are some places haunted by souls
Seeking to add more to their scant baggage—
Those who, while living, barely cultivated
The one thing that remains when the scythe has passed.

I think again of the green field whose grass was cut:
Retaining its roots, it can still grow anew.
So too with Spirit—it cannot be uprooted
And always returns from being forgotten in the earth.

They call me Cartesian, for splitting man in two—
But I know how the body imprisons the Spirit!
What Spirit lacks, caged within its cell,
Is that final “t” which time has locked away.

Some say life is like a thread to be cut,
Sliced clean by a well-sharpened blade.

If life is but one end—what lies on the other?
And what becomes of it once the thread is broken?

We are not puppets in some god's play:
From which hand hangs the string that death must sever?
They speak of fate, offer a likely guess—
But until now, no true answer has been given.

"Death is a mystery," piety confesses—
We mustn't covet the knowledge of the gods!
So the apple was plucked by a woman's hand,
Deeming that to dust we all must return.

Of that fault our conscience cannot be cleansed—
It took the death of one crucified for us.
But how many men had already fallen
Before a mythical sin was finally absolved?

Through our lives a weight has taken hold,
Dragging our Spirit down into the abyss—
The abyss of desire and secret addictions,
Of blindness and cravings held in check.

Yet like a balloon, once unburdened of weight,
Spirit may rise and surpass the peaks—
To drink of light in a sky of purest blue:
Dying is but the end of a night of torment.

The night of a human world suspended in the clouds,
Which hold back the light and weave the dark—
Spirit is on-the-way when man must yield,
For only divinities are pure Spirit.

This is what remains of our rotted flesh:
The Spirit alone survives once death has passed.
When suffering strikes, Spirit is distressed,
For through the sickened body, it is made alien.

What is left of the great poets?
Not their buried bodies, but what they thought,
Written with words to name the Other—
The gods and the Sacred, which cannot be entombed.

From god in his dwelling, death comes to speak—
Not the god who saves or washes our sins,

But the companion Spirit of this long odyssey:
The return to Self, in Serenity.

Men are Argonauts in search of the fleece,
Which the time of memory insists on erasing.
If the thread of our lives is never rewoven,
Then to Spirit all hope must be entrusted.

“But what do you say, old one, in thinking so little of us?
Are men no more than the drift of an unthinking Nature?
Who says Spirit must part from the body,
And find its way when the other is consumed?”

I tell you: the body has nothing to concede—
But the Spirit takes flight when the other is gone.
It's little, I grant you, to offer our flesh,
But what remains is foreign to the body.

What the poet finds alone can endure—
But what speaks he of, this messenger of gods?
He tells us that all things are inhabited by Spirit—
That they differ in kind, but not in Simplicity.

Of all that time wears down and lets sink away,
Only Spirit endures, unbound from its ties.
What repose may offer, Spirit never knows—
For it knows but one verb: to journey.

How does Spirit make of journeying its craft?
When it stops, it can only fall back again—
For the weight that clings to its feet
Labors to keep it locked in the closed past.

Resentment and regret are its conjugates,
And remorse, guilt, join their cursed weight:
So many hexes the human soul drags,
That keep it crawling close to the dust.

But when death cuts the balloon's final cords,
And our basket of vices is condemned to the ground,
If the flame of the burner revives one breath—
Freed from its tethers, Spirit may rise aloft.

And here it climbs, to wed the sky,
To taste the vastness, to bathe in its clarity,

To animate the images it dreamed to carry—
Weightless, caressing the being-below.

The end of May resounds—the friend must go!
From the furrows of earth, the grain begins to sprout,
Announcing the defeat of the granary's miseries:
A fertile hope has seized the hearts of men.

Spirit is but the will to turn one's gaze away
From the appearances that dress Being;
It feeds on the Simple, masked from our sight
By the paltry glimpse that tends to satisfy us.

"The true life is absent," when nothing is added
To all that appears and which man has accepted;
In the play of the canvas, a detail slipped in—
Failing to see it, we miss the whole...

THE DANCE OF WINE

When the gift of the vine turns golden and ripe,
The harvest begins—to capture the sun,
To gather its fullness and crush the grape,
Releasing its humor to sing in the throat.

The wine in the barrel will rest there awhile,
Weaving through night its robe and its pride;
It becomes a poem for the gleaming sommelier—
Before it is drunk, it must first speak.

It speaks in images, of fruits and mingled flavors,
Then tickles the nose with its oaken perfume;
At last it is tasted, caressing the palate—
With puckered lips, the tongue rolls it round.

And the nocturnal thyrsus, bewitched by the vine,
Leads young girls into frenzied dances;
The satyrs grow drunk watching them spin—
Their loosened tunics an offering to the evening wind.

Bare feet are freed, moved by sacred chant,
And the fire reflects in their unbound hair;
The bodies are serpents, beguiled by the flute—
A frenzied ecstasy of lovers unchained.

The wine mingles with the blood of those frantic women,
Who are now but one, detached from all bonds;

And the lost bodies dance when man is gone—
Dionysian reversal of long-buried sorrows.

At the men's table the wine flows uncut,
Drunk in delirium while slandering their wives;
Woman becomes whim deceived by the god—
Ravisher of maids too seldom rebuked.

Pentheus cannot bear that a god has stolen him:
From atop his tree he wants to miss nothing!
"This beast is a panther come to spy on them—
Let him fall from his height so we may devour him!"

Thus is it that only the man's head returns,
Hung from the belt of his exultant widow:
"A panther tried to pounce on our dancing—
Carried by ecstasy, we tore him to pieces!"

Many are the satyrs with tested wives
Who forbid them to join the dancing rounds;
Wine is men's affair—water must not dilute it,
Nor quench its madness at the rock's pure source.

Wise Dionysos struck with his thyrsus
The rock that lets its water lighten the wine;
He whose wine is cut surrenders to dancing—
To offer his sorrows to the circle, and forget.

It is women's affair to wash off defilement,
With that light potion that sets them spinning,
To the sound of the music from that cunning flute,
And to gift their bodies the simple joy of dance.

The husbands seek vengeance for these stolen slips,
Already the sentence falls from their lips:
"These shameless ones must be chained to their tasks,
And stripped of the wine that lures them to dance."

"And as for that cursed god—we must exile him,
Let him return to the underworld whence he escaped!
He steals our wives, murders our children,
And diverts them from their righteous path without remorse."

WINTER'S SECRETS

Beneath a coat of snow, the world has withdrawn:
One glimpses the cottages by the lines of smoke,
And life is crushed down into the ground
By the weight of shoes that struggle to advance.

Humans are but traces etched into snow:
By the hearth's flame, time seems to have stopped;
And it's with the same old tales, told by the elders,
That we dress the present with a touch of eternity.

Winter stretches the world to its vast immensity
Beneath a sky that, vengeful, seeks to seize it;
By white whirlwinds the paths go astray,
Carrying our solitude to forgotten lands.

The traveler's footsteps are erased by the sky,
Robbing him of return to what he once left;
They sink into the desert, snow-turned-sand,
On a journey lost upon a treacherous ground.

Winter is deception, where our paths are drawn,
Which, beneath thick snow, buries the dignity
Of all those familiar beings, their singular ways,
That once gave roads the memory of direction.

What have you done with those stones I loved
Where I'd rest the fatigue pressing in my soles?
Where now are the lizards basking in the sun,
That watched my gestures for signs of danger?

No more do I hear the larks' singing choirs—
They've fled my road, now ravaged by winter!
A silence has swallowed all others away,
And the leafless oak has nothing left to tell.

Over the bench it shelters, the oak has emptied
In a torrent of tears—winter shows no mercy!
From its nothingness it has obscured all things:
What is man in his dwelling, prisoner of such time?

He lives in hope of a season postponed,
Curled near the fire, before his chimney;
He mimics the hens in their fleeing daylight
And seeks in sleep the grace of forgetting.

And should he think he sleeps, he soon awakens,
Folded in the sheets, seized by a shiver;
He folds in tighter, in vain hope to escape
The cold that threatens to make him tremble.

Shaking from head to toe, his teeth begin to chatter,
And they steal from his dream the woman beside him;
At once they descend, seeking shelter by the fire
From the frost that numbs their shared insomnia.

They dare not ascend the frozen staircase,
And stoke some embers feigning to die;
Fed with oakwood, the fire leaps again—
And in the depth of night, all begins to dance.

The couple gives in, tossed in an old armchair,
To a sleep they'd sought in vain upstairs;
And the fire, crackling within the hearth,
Whispers to their ears: winter has passed.

Now the window hints that day has broken:
Timid sunrays still strain to slip through
The folds in the shutters where shadows cling;
The fire has dozed off on its bed of ashes.

And the man opens his door, drunk on his dream—
For the fire had murmured: "Winter is gone."
And if one must believe in dreams, rightly said,
Then his was one best quickly forgotten.

Winter, in truth, had knocked upon his threshold
And covered each singular thing with snow;
Over this field of whiteness the door closes,
And the fire in the hearth is at once rekindled.

And each one awakens, sipping their coffee
That warms, from within, the flow of thought;
Was it someone bold who came knocking—
Or one left by the storm upon the threshold?

Whoever it may be, what does it matter?
He must be let in, before he freezes to death!
The master of the house welcomes the stranger,
And helps him move toward the hearth.

Across the oak floor trails his long march,
Pearls of winter frozen in his beard;
The flames' comfort lays the man bare,
Revealing a gaze erased by snow.

A bowl of coffee is brought to warm him,
Which he sips slowly with cracked lips;
His eyes fix on the dancing flames—
His hands long to feel their warmth.

From his still gaze a tear begins to slip:
It confides to us the pain this man endured.
The master of the house hesitates to speak—
He waits for the fire to dry this silent weeping.

Numbed by the winter he's just crossed through,
The stranger cannot look away from the flame;
A wool blanket is laid over the man,
Which he pulls to his neck to hide his misery.

All would like to draw a word from the man,
To ease his grief with what he might share,
To break the silence protecting his spirit,
And crack the ice he still clutches within.

At last he turns his head, begins to observe—
First all around him, then he stops,
Fixing on something strange at the stair's foot,
Which he traces with his eye to the upper landing.

In the gaze of the hosts, a flicker of surprise—
A question unspoken, yet shared through their eyes:
What does this stranger want, who without looking at them
Spies up the stair what it may conceal?

Has he come from their dreams to strip them bare,
To violate the secrets wrapped in their sheets?
Will he climb the stairs, steal hidden truths
That lovers in shadow strive to preserve?

Shielded by shutters, one must protect
What to the world appears a foreigner's threat;
It is a quiet force that love must defend—
Love is the power to flee from the crowd.

The “we” is a promise to spare us the “they”;
When the Other is an escape from stagnant paths,
What’s no longer secret is for all to devour,
Amplified by rumor along twisted ways.

There’s always something of oneself to guard:
That which, from the soul’s depths, alone can light us.
The “I” that is an Other is Self gone astray,
Drawn into the chimeras of a shattered tale.

Would he listen in on the story we live,
Plucking with his eyes each step of the stair?
He must account for it, lest he estrange himself—
Or crossing the threshold, return to the cold.

The Stranger
I see in your gaze the weight of suspicion,
A question without answer still clings to your lips:
You fear I’ve come to rob you of secrets,
That my eyes offend your private sphere.

Do you think I long to ascend those steps,
Driven by some hollow curiosity?
I imagine that tonight, tortured by cold,
You left your bed without turning back.

I imagine the very stairs you think I would climb
Were the ones your feet descended in the dark,
Leading you to the hearth to stoke its fire,
Where, soothed by its flames, sleep came at last.

Your tale is mundane—if we feign to forget
Those unspoken truths left behind in your flight;
Do you believe the winter guards your secrets,
And that a coat of snow is enough to hide them?

Do you not know the snow must one day melt,
That spring’s rivers will carry all away,
Restoring to the fields what once was hidden,
And casting out the cold that had held them still?

The Man
I admit I don’t understand what you’ve just said!
You speak of secrets preserved by winter,
Which, asleep under snow, are poorly concealed—
You speak of the unsaid that I pretend to forget.

You claim there's suspicion lurking in my gaze,
That the stair might lead you to my secrets,
That each of its steps strips away my layers,
And at my bedside you'd find me exposed.

If you wish to slip for a moment into my bed,
Curled beneath the sheets, you might shiver with me;
The only thing winter chose to hide there
Was the brutal chill that makes our bodies quake.

You see, it was the cold that brought me to the fire,
Worn out under my roof, caressed by frost,
Sleep denied to me all night long—
Only in the fire's warmth did I find rest.

There's no mystery lodged in that story—
What matters where I lie, if I can sleep there?
No secret hides in this humble place,
Except that winter slips between the tiles.

The Stranger

I admit it—my words lacked clarity;
My thoughts, by the cold, were likely led astray.
You welcomed me well, and for that kindness
I'd like to share the tale that shaped me.

Before my knuckles rapped upon your door,
I had trodden the world's many winding paths!
I have lived in lands unknown to winter,
Where only sunlight rains through filtered winds.

I have seen the deep North gripped by winter,
Its sun chased away, all hidden by night;
I owe to the stars a thousandfold blazing
That in such darkness guided me along.

I walked through night, crossed a desert of snow,
Hung from the stars that wove my fate—
I wandered through lands stolen by winter,
Beneath a white coat crushed by my soles.

I measured my life, hounded by wolves—
"I'll not live long," I had to concede!
But at the foot of a tree, swept clear by the wind,
The starving beasts saw me slip from their grasp.

From the heights of that moment, I watched them retreat,
And quietly returned to earth, unseen.
Southward I carried my frozen memories,
Blessing the sun that still reigned there.

A land had been promised—I was certain of it—
Where snow would fall away from my steps.
And I went in hope of a winter forgotten,
Unknowing the North clung fast to my soles.

And so to your door I finally arrived,
Lamenting that the frost had come ahead of me.
We agree: winter, with its veiling snow,
Steals from our eyes what it hides beneath.

The world's every secret is masked by it then—
We yearn to know what might lie below
The folds of the cloak worn by all things:
Winter never ceases to question us so.

Winter lays its sheet upon a weary earth:
Hidden from all eyes, it must now rest.
The secrets of winter dwell in the unthought,
In the earth's sleep, when it begins to dream.

The Man
If we are to share in this slumber of earth,
Then what secrets fill the furnishings of my room?
Winter, which slips beneath the sheets,
Robbing me of sleep, forbids me to dream.

Winter is the maker of my aborted dreams:
Deprived of the secrets I cannot dream,
Only at the stair's foot do I find relief—
And so I descend to rekindle the fire.

It was climbing a tree that saved you from wolves,
While for me, salvation lies in going down;
One must descend to rediscover warmth—
It seems winter loves to invert all things.

And yet the Great North did not lead you astray!
Heading south, the stars guided you well;
And remember the wind that cleared the snowed-in tree:
Winter deceives less than we give it credit for.

It enters through the cracks, never hiding,
Unlike hornets or cunning weasels;
What does it matter where it enters, if it announces itself?
What can be done when the covers prove too thin?

The Stranger

You mean when the ground lies bare to frost,
The dreams of the earth are under threat,
Along with the rest it so well deserves:
Earth, when curled, cannot be made to shiver!

When you yourself retreat beneath the sheets,
You shield half your body from winter's bite—
Not the softest half, to be sure!
But the earth, when it folds, is sealed on all sides.

No fissures remain for winter to invade:
The earth's secrets are always well kept.
Do you understand this image of dreamed secrets?
Dreams dwell in darkness we cannot plumb.

They've tried to interpret the meaning of dreams:
What might they say, if they cannot name it?
If dreams are illusion, why do we worry?
Their truth lies only in their reality.

They say dreams vent what was missed—
But what's missing has no reality,
At best, what is not, though it might have been:
Dreams are but spaces opened to the unthought.

The Man

I wish to pause a moment and reflect on winter:
If the cold of my bed drove me from sleep,
I doubt it was reason that truly caused it—
Can one really perish from a mere shiver?

The earth's dormancy prepares its germination:
Winter is just the signal of all sap arrested.
But for men, confined by the cold,
Winter becomes a time to calculate all.

While the earth rests, swaddled in snow,
Men by the fire give themselves to thought—
A calculating thought, planning all things,
That seeks to steal dreams from the sleeping land.

And the man who, by cold, is robbed of dreams
Descends once more the stairs to earth;
Lit by the flames, he begins to think:
In the fire, winter's death is foretold.

The secrets of earth escape only the gaze,
While men's secrets, fiercely kept in silence,
Lie buried deep in the soul—unspoken schemes
To rob the earth of what she thought concealed.

The Stranger
Did you, in the fire's glow, plot such schemes,
Nurture that infamy—to strip the earth bare?
Do you think she can return what was not given?
Men are the earth's most sinister usurers!

It's greed that banished winter's reign—
From what sleeps, there's nothing more to wring!
We allow humans some time to rest,
For in sleep, strength is regained.

And so they dream of replacing us with machines
That plow the land day and night without end;
Never mind the surplus with which we'll be stuffed—
Wheat is just money dressed in disguise!

Remember the winters that can halt everything,
Imposing rest even on our thoughts:
While life beneath the soil struggles to rise,
Men, by the fire, must learn to wait.

These secrets of winter, now desecrated,
Were meant as communion, shared slumber—
In hope of rebirth delivered by spring:
Winter was only the shepherd of our dreams.

The Man
I swear, with honor, I plotted no such thing—
I only sought to shield my sleep from the cold;
I await the day I may cast my grain upon the earth,
And have enough to wait for the next winter.

I want to throw nothing of my harvest away,
To offer my cattle both shelter and feed—
So long as there's fresh grass to be found,
Nothing too much, but always enough.

As winter retreats, it fills with its waters
The aquifers that shield us in summer
From the scorching sun that dries all to dust—
Winter, deep in the well, forgets no one.

And when spring returns, heralded by melting,
The snow, in vanishing, leaves a salty trace
That grants our rivers the scent of tides,
Where iodine and salt are mingled by wind.

Winter is never far from where its grace dwells;
When the grain beneath the soil begins to stir,
It speaks to us of the dreams that rocked its night—
Of one day becoming an ear of sun-gilded wheat.

The Stranger
I must now flee north, to hide once again,
For I feel winter is nearing its end.
You know its secrets—see that you keep them well!
For they are the promise of a future assured.

To those who curse the snow, speech is in vain;
Smile—without scorn—at this frenzied world,
And if you must run, do so without haste:
We lose so much in our hurried strides.

Remember the upper floor you must shield
From creeping cold and hidden hornets:
If I recall the tree I climbed to survive,
Forget that a staircase may lead to the fire.

There is no oak too vast that we might burn—
What grows too slowly is swiftly consumed!
It's said the oak, slow to leap skyward,
Hides within itself all its vast immensity!

Among men there are so many doors to knock on,
So many cottages where Spirit has never entered;
When a man prefers to weave a life of chimeras,
He turns away from the secrets of winter.

WINTER'S MEAL

Beneath the soft thickness
Of a long coat of snow,
The world seemed asleep.
Over this desert of a thousand crystals,
A strange ballet
Is danced by the light—
A whirling of reflections,
With blinding bites.

Upon the frost-laced apple trees,
The bird searches for traces
Of what, just yesterday,
Made its wings beat—
Rain-leaves
Scattered by autumn:
From the cold that binds all,
The bark is prisoner.

On winter's windows
Bloom, upon the glass,
The shadows of spring—
Last flowers of the season
Erased by water pearls
From timid rays:
Still-sleeping dew
Struggles to awaken.

Beneath the white coverlet,
Life awaits its hour,
For the Celestials' return
And the warm Clarity
That will unveil the world's
Countless promises:
Winter is a patience
We clothe in projects.

In the hearth that gathers,
Over crackling fire,
Simmering with slowness
Is a bit of the harvest—
For in winter, there's nothing
That one must not await.

To the murmuring embers,
Humankind is but silence.

The soup in its pot
Gathers all gazes—
Or else the dying flame
That one just revived.
The wind knocks at the door,
Wishing to invite itself
To blow on the coals
And quicken the broth.

But patient are the people
Who, in the dark,
Wait only for the light
Of day when it returns,
To erase from the nights
Their too-long duration.
No matter! It will come again
With the year's first days.

"The hour has come,"
Say the bellies,
To ladle out the soup—

As soon as the prayer
Is recited by all:
The Angels of the dwelling
Have each preserved
Us from vain melancholy.

It is the elder's task
To share the bread,
Kneaded from the seed
Cast into the furrow,
And ripened in the sharp sun
Of a generous summer—
Chrysopoeia of sowing,
Turning fields to gold.

Outside, the winter wind—
Has it grasped the futility
Of knocking at the door?
At last, it has moved on,
And we barely hear it

Racing to the horizon
Over the snow-carpeted land:
Has it grown tired of waiting?

Soon the favorable day
When snow becomes tears
Sliding down the cheeks
Of a world rising again
From the deep slumber
Where winter had cast it.
A few bold flowers
Already pierce the snow.

Night loses time
Stolen by day,
The rooster grows more punctual
And with it the hens;
On trees, buds
Emerge from bark,
The meadows have lost their whiteness
And await the return of cattle.

AN ANGEL PASSES

Under the weight of silence all have withdrawn
Into the thickness of "one" when an Angel has passed;
There is no longer I nor Other but the same unity
Of a being that murders all singulars.

With words collapses all that once appeared:
Silence has turned all into forgotten instances.
When the I dissolves, its Other is stranded
In the silent abyss of a stopped clock.

It is the sweep of the dial that makes us exist:
We are and become what nothing can freeze;
Beneath the veil of words a life is bestowed,
Nourished by false hopes of a cheated existence.

To cheat by speaking without being able to affirm:
Each is the appearance of a self ignored.
Of the Angel, when he departs, the Same is forgotten:
The I resurfaces and the Other retreats.

For an instant all is frozen, crushed by silence
Which one breaks by saying "An Angel just passed":

Thus is the phrase built to salute his departure
And forbid Angels ever to pause.

THE ANGEL

These silences untied by saying I have passed
Are the Eternal Return of a feared sameness,
The Same of an origin whose simplicity
Erases all care lent to the singular.

Silence is a veil cast upon every being,
A dissolution of I into a drawn mist:
Each thing, from what it seemed, suddenly undone,
Marks an Angel passing, having lightened it.

What can one do, he who passes without rest:
What would such a draft deprive you of?
Silence is the abyss of a self run aground,
A self that knows Being only by distant thought.

Lost in silence is all we gave ourselves,
Garments of occasion, semblance in the singular,
Pathetic utterance of all the false facades:
Each is in the unspoken but an ignored instance.

All delights in the lie of what it wants to seem
Until the sudden silence of a shared hush:
If the true already is not, the false has slipped away;
When its mask has fallen, man is questioned.

The Old Man

You think beneath my beard another hides,
That what I offer your eyes is an erring image;
In the folds of my skin carved by labor,
More than by time—what's been concealed?

You say lying has become my destiny;
Death stands at my threshold, its blade advanced:
Do you think it suits me now to deceive myself
And make of what's given a lie of my own?

I have known all the ages of a forgotten childhood:
If silence soothes me, it's from too much talk;
From idle chatter I wished to keep nothing:
Such time once lost cannot be regained.

I live the twilight of a worn-out existence
Fleeing all the demons of a sacrificed morning;
My only story is that I regretted
That Malice of youth, mingled with Wisdom.

With age returns what had been forgotten
In the shadows of business and hurried living;
I do not fear the scythe now near my door:
Time now counted is... fragments of eternity.

The Angel
Wisdom speaks the Simple sheltered in all things,
The places one leaves to draw nearer again
And the Eternal Return of what once was—
For in truth, nothing changes that was not already.

The scholars mistake fate's necessity:
Amor Fati is no word of despair,
Still less a maxim of some thrown-there being:
It is to love from life what it has to give.

"It is a millstone that turns," the miller tells us,
"And all it crushes is destined for bread."
I think of Hölderlin and the trampled grape,
Of bread which, without wine, is but half a life.

When the fruit is harvested, by golden sun,
Then, in a dancing step, the juice may flow,
And at last, drawn from the barrel, the wine is poured—
Bread feels less alone, its friend now foretold.

From this mortal silence, as soon as an Angel passes,
Life resumes the course of its eternity:
On the face of the clock, as moments unfold,
Existence—revolving—becomes their kinship.

MELANCHOLY

The blue soul closed itself, mute,
Through the open window descends the brown forest,
The calm of dark beasts; in the hollow grinds
The mill, near the footbridge lie spilled clouds,

The strangers of gold. A herd of horses
Appears crimson in the village. Brown and cold in the garden.
The aster trembles, against the fence delicately painted
The gold of the sunflower has already nearly drained.

The voices of girls; the dew has poured
Into the hard grass, and white and cold the stars.
In the beloved shadow see death painted,
Your face full of tears, and closed.

(Georg Trakl, "Melancholy," May 1914)

MELANCHOLY

I

The sky will not cease pouring out its tears:
Sharing my sorrow, the rain falling on me
Mingles with the weeping it tries to erase
With a ray of sunlight of which it is the messenger.

A vain melancholy has taken hold of me,
Borne by regrets that feed on my past;
Who are you—family, faithful friends—
Now only memories held prisoner in my soul?

I relive yesterdays full of joyous presence,
Hands stretched out to me, the taste of a kiss,
The mischief of a child with hair I once stroked,
And smiles my soul never grew tired of.

Where are you now, my joys? Only sorrow remains,
Pouring upon my days that banished gaze,
Through the windowpane watered by rain
That folds my consciousness into a trapped within.

Trapped by that yesterday it cannot forget,
Which deprives it of future, of hoping for sun—
A dryer for its pain and today's shattering
Beneath the weight of a "before" that crushes it.

Will they return one day to intoxicate me with scent—
The fragrances of life from which I've been estranged?
They say yesterdays return in the summer
When the Celestials bring us their Clarity.

They say winter is erased by light,
That a touch of blue is enough to close our wounds
And keep the blood of our ills from spilling—
But is the sun truly a pledge of found joy?

When the eye grows dim, we begin to tremble,
Hands long to join, to address the heavens,
But sorrow keeps them apart, too afraid to reach:
When God is deaf, what hope can remain?

So one turns back and weeps over the past,
When hands, with assurance, once met in trust;
One recalls the prayers once made for joy—
That the spring of our lives would never run dry.

And the river of time—so murderous—flows,
Carrying away what little we've gathered,
Those flowers plucked from the riverbank
That, deep in the heart's thirst, have withered.

The days we picked must return to the ground,
To dig our grave and leave all things behind:
Let our sorrow rot there if joy may remain
Elsewhere than in memories washed from our eyes.

Already the balance is fixed on the wall:
It is death that watches us from within the hourglass!
Its taut wire will soon set the bell ringing,
To chime out death—that the hour is late.

When the stone of our lives is smoothly carved,
When the inkwell is dry and the ladder laid down,
When weapons lie scattered and the book is shut,
Then the horizon offers the gaze no more.

The flame of life's blaze has been extinguished,
The purse unfastened from the belt's last link;
We leave the keys behind, surrendered to the dog,
And, laying down our wings, it is time to go.

If our stone is light, death will weigh heavily—
The demon watches over the seed never sown:
In the game of the scales, what weight bears the chaff?
If our stone is lighter, then death is to be damned!

II

Men are heirs to the beast's humors,
All that is wild and often murderous:
There are poets who speak of devouring lambs—
Fools mastered by urges they cannot restrain.

It's a dark image that infects the soul,
An overflow of hatred poured upon the other;
At the abyss's depths, over the lamb's peace,
Swollen with envy, an eagle casts down its claws.

Man is a defaced beast among the animals,
The cursed unfolding of sheer cruelty;
Yet still, humankind is a braided cord
Between the more-than-man and the brute.

The human is a passage we are called to cross,
Forgetting our furies, moving toward Spirit;
And if, beneath the rope, an abyss yawns open,
It is because the path to the goal is always a risk.

It takes such courage to cling to the thread
That men are content with their indolence;
Anger of an Enchanter sung to false friends,
Whose horror Zarathustra comes to expose.

Yet the Enchanter cares not to be loved—
And by cunning, manages to turn his host
Away from the scorn his words have drawn:
A single day suffices to reconcile them.

Do you recall, liar cast down to the floor,
How with one kick he shattered your bones?
Now you hope your master might pity you—
Yet it's through this weakness that God was condemned.

You call yourself poet, yet flee from danger,
And envy the panther its sharpened jaw;
You'd tear apart the lamb's final hopes—
Murderer of the child foretold by the master.

You will return, time and again, to sow
In our minds the doubt and madness you embody;
But one eye of the sleeping lion has shut,
While the other keeps watch to ward off your harm.

If men have forsaken the favor of gods,
I know they return, bearers of that Clarity
That, in the world's night, alone can enlighten us—
What could you do, deceiver? You'd turn me from it?

III

The night is ending, day is soon to rise:
Across green pastures dew has spread itself—
A sweat of the earth addressed to the Celestials,
An answer to our prayers for a fulfilled future.

I see the Celestials nearing our hearts:
They bring back the light we had forgotten,
Erase the darkness in which man enclosed himself,
And restore to the blossoms the shine of their beauty.

Along the lake's shore the people have gathered,
Waving their arms to welcome the coming
Of the land's own child, raised upon his raft,
Who once departed to drink in the Elsewhere.

And the child smiles at them, his gaze serene—
He returns to his own, messenger of the gods;
The earth's many sorrows rise in his thoughts:
He says to himself, spring can erase the winter.

And now his raft has touched the sanded bank:
His old friends smother him with kisses—
He offers only kind words, and with tearful eyes
Looks upon them with joy, his sadness forgotten.

For his tears are of joy, returning to his land,
And holding in his arms what he once left behind;
The children have grown, the elders have waited:
His departure had stilled death's ticking clock.

To wait through devastation is a measured act,
And thus must man be understood;
When the poet returns, who knows the sacred names,
A god rests his gaze upon our destinies.

Young girls have crowned their hair with flowers,
Their betrothed invite them gently to dance;
To these shared joys, the flute lends its song,
And cheerful mothers lay out the feast.

From the barrel the wine is drawn by man—
Filling the jugs the elders now carry;
And when cheeks turn rosy with delight,
The shared grape flows into each cup.

But then the returning child's eye falls still—
Every dancer's step is suddenly stilled;
Looking skyward, his gaze has turned:
The Celestials arrive to share the moment.

IV

How many have been damned by this child's tears?
They say the flames consumed every place
That had once, for a single day, housed that scene:
Strange curse borne from a sorrowful gaze!

Will you tell us this grief that wets your cheeks,
The deep sadness from which your soul flows?
No! You'll say nothing—your throat is too tight;
You speak through your tears, and none takes offense!

Are a child's tears always signs of health,
Or of some deep pain too great to express?
What secret anguish gnaws at your heart,
What sudden torment brings it all to a halt?

What ears, truly listening, could hear this pain,
And patiently work to dry your tears?
Who would hang a child's weeping on the wall,
And dress their home in such a shame?

I confess I don't understand such fools:
It's children's laughter we long to hear!
So why hang weeping upon their home—
As if sorrow were truth finely embroidered?

Perhaps the question has gone unasked too long:
The child, for a small mistake, punished by his father!
We invent these tales to feel reassured,
To craft a portrait of threat aimed at mischief.

Suddenly, I'm sick from such evocations:
To make a duty from children's tears!
Let the walls be ashes where such rules are carved—
No child's tears are ever deserved!

It's not tears that make the eyes speak:
They're only the signs of suffering held in.
Tears are a murmur, a silence inhabited
By what can't be said—too worn are the words.

There are sorrows that cannot be told,
Assassin pains that torment the soul,
Wounds within where tears are blood shed:
In the eyes resides what words can't name.

For pain has risen right to the brim,
And in tears it finds its only form;
But what is this pain that clouds the gaze—
What intimate nature might one suspect?

Tears are a river in which we are swept,
The visible trace of a wrecked interior;
But our eyes stop at cheeks stained—
What flows beyond, we are deprived from seeing.

The child watches us with troubled eyes,
Sees in his sorrow that no one truly cares:
For nothing grasps his muffled sobs,
Just a moaning murmur he can no longer bear.

Misunderstood, the child hides away
Within the hollow of a pain he won't show;
With the back of his hand he dries the hurt,
And retreats into himself, hiding from all.

The adults settle for quickly forgotten pain:
"It's only fatigue, or joy denied," they claim—
So many good reasons, the worst of all motives.

If he refused to eat at dinner tonight,
It's that his fragile body needed rest;
They bid his departure with a careless smile—
Sleep will wash away the ache, they think.

The child seems asleep, no need to check—
And our clear conscience stretches with the night;
Our scruples, in slumber, are wiped by dreams—
But beneath his covers, the child weeps again.

Night has passed, time to rise again!
The child awoke on a pillow soaked—
To hide all trace, he flips it over,
And feigns a smile for his hurried parents.

On the school bench, the child withdraws,
Sees only the book lying on his desk;

When the teacher wonders, he says he's tired—
He couldn't sleep, his night was too short.

From lack of sleep the child is excused,
And kindly the teacher lets him drift off;
But what does the child dream of, eyes wide?
Only the unease that wounds his soul.

When the final sum rings the recess bell,
He slips to a corner of the yard, alone;
He hears none of the laughter all around—
He is entirely lost in his thoughts.

The ride home is in a merciless bus:
All he knows is the window, nothing else;
Already the door opens, his parents return—
But all that awaits is bread for his snack.

On the table's edge he prepares his dictation,
Murmurs shaped to match his mother's tone—
She wouldn't hear him anyway, too absorbed in dinner;
His father's silence is drowned by the TV.

Three around the table, silenced by food—
Each spicing their meal with unsaid words;
Once the plates are empty, they head to the sink—
Without a word, the child climbs upstairs.

Why would he stay? He's ignored by all:
The sound of dishes, the noise of the TV;
The dog on the rug seems like a toy—
A soulless doll whose battery's run dry.

From the portrait on the wall the eyes have closed—
No more flows from that greyed face;
From the painting hanging there, only death remains:
A child has hanged himself—you can take him down.

THE BECOMING IN SPIRIT

"The becoming of Spirit is not hidden from men,
And just as life is what men have found,
It is the day of life, the morning of life,
Just as Spirit is the treasure of high hours.

When Nature, moreover, shows herself as splendid,
Then man contemplates with equal joy,
As he trusts the day and trusts in life,
As he binds himself to himself by the bond of Spirit."

(Hölderlin, "Des Geistes Werden..." – personal translation)

THE ENIGMA

The enigma has power only to torment the mind:
It holds no worth in the world save what it conceals;
To decipher it, one must be fed by patience,
And hope that a bit of chance will grace the way.

"I am your labyrinth," it whispers in your ear—
Whisper a clever word! Ariadne grew uneasy:
What is this word? There is no soul unmoved
When it gains through pain such counsel received.

If the god rejoices to be thus tamed,
He remains an enigma Ariadne must decode:
What hides in this god, who having shattered,
Rejoins all fragments into his own unity?

Who, armed with his thyrsus, makes water flow from stone,
And sends ladies waltzing to frenzied tunes?
What to say of this riddle that seems so absurd—
Has it, in its turn, displaced its own answer?

It is not a question, warns the Enchanter:
No need to answer, best to forget!
Might the riddle itself be confessing him a liar—
A demon, no less, and hungering for lambs?

Zarathustra believes so, but cannot say more,
Except that it's grim to have heard him speak;
Poorly stitched reason, known to contradict,
The Enchanter profits from misplaced words.

The question returns to us, with suspicions cleared:
What hides in this riddle we've been offered?
No misunderstanding we can call upon,
No unknown cause we're bound to suspect.

Is it affliction that drives us to doubt
That a solution exists to what has been posed?
Descartes, in his torment, already thought so—
Yet surely God is not foolish enough to deceive.

And how might Kant respond, with a reasoned judgment:
Must we align the deduction of both our senses?
Is the enigma woven of space and of time,
Or does it seek something beyond imagining?

In this enigma, nothing is plainly told,
Save that to speak of it suffices to birth it:
The words that here unfold conceal nothing but
The very thread they form on the whiteness of paper.

IGITUR...
What makes an enigma is the words themselves—
Not as they assemble to form our phrases,
But in how they're chosen to bear a meaning
That is not their own, and always unforeseen.

THE COMING (L'AVÈNEMENT)

How many pencils have worn down unveiling this term:
Some dare say the "Ereignis" of the thinker is the key!
Is "avenance" a secret locked in the concept—
When weighing all discord, I'm prone to doubt it!

Since the "Beitrag," the word has had to follow
The winding paths of a capricious thought;
It's said the thinker reversed himself twice,
And owes his shadowed fortune to that "turn."

What matters in all this is only what remains—
So long as we see beyond what's merely looked at.
It's the white between lines that reveals certainty:
Words have no other place than the page that holds them.

All becomes synonym when we mistrust words:
Yet they are but mimics of where we cast them!

Speech cannot deceive meaning forever—
Words are to bread what crumbs are to meal.

Speaking is a sowing among thistles and flowers:
Its fruits are harvested in the hour of mistake;
Friends of culture, tending to haying seasons,
Find in speech a yield of indecisive temper.

ON THE WORD AND EVENT

Is there a fit for the undecidable word?
History stocks only what we grant to it.
I see no other place but that of “avènement” —
The coming of a Selfhood that spills over the present.

The event is royal in its primary sense,
It suits the reign that takes rightful place;
In Being’s own dwelling it covers the gap,
And names it the Proper of all that it embraces.

By the fact of “there is,” it breaks contingency:
To what is seen but never explained,
It grants a singular forging its own essence—
No Self-opened Being can be replicated.

Thus arrives this power we’re meant to honor,
For what is only germ is vowed to growth;
To be near to the Self, it tells us our task,
As Being becomes ours through its gift of presence.

The event isn’t time but time’s own claiming—
Carrying in its flow all it deems outgrown;
It is not memory where what was perishes—
In what grows is mingled the faintest compound.

SELFHOOD AND OPENING

The Selfhood comes only to the one who calls it:
We are predisposed to receive its voice,
Provided we shed what keeps us harnessed
To feeding Reason with fleeting glimpses.

To renounce the Ratio is only the beginning:
It requires a will to the power of Self!
To exist is a path toward that far country
Which, in “Unclosure,” reveals us the way.

It befits the free spirit to court such daring,
Surpassing the Saying that veils it in words;
Ereignis is no site of fleeting clearance—
It is Being becoming in its very departure.

The event lays us down in our own becoming,
For the proper Selfhood makes us its promise;
Its essence is always in the still-to-come,
And it cancels from the world a measure of sorrow.

“You are!” says the Ereignis—it's up to us to write
The rest: from “there is” to a “I am” to become!
Is this a story by which life is constructed,
Or a unique instant stitched with eternity?

MIDNIGHT

Midnight! Time fades, hidden under dust—
Each second a thousand years as clocks stand still.
Night breaks what light of day still lingers:
From evening's confusion—is a singular born?

It's from the bottomless Being, where nothing divides,
That the mystery springs which makes each Self;
Between earth and sky, whose gaze is lifted
As far from the near as nothing can retain?

It is he who thinks alone and trusts in words
Frozen by Reason in a stone reliquary;
But words are liars, saying only in pretense
What they are lent—and this blocks our way.

From evening arises the silence that keeps speech,
The ineffable of Being, gifted at dawn
To Selves who rise and receive the obol
To sink into the abyss where awakening evades.

“Am I,” must think the one offered to light—
Then, putting on his boots, he rushes down the stair,
And lets his gaze fall, caught on the stone,
Upon the eagle clasping him in its wings spread wide.

Down toward the plain he walks, by the Sign assured
That the time has come to greet the gods again:
Zarathustra dreads these men, torn apart
By the fate of this message—he walks on in silence.

The lion has a nose for all that ruminates:
He bids the prophet not to dwell on it.
What could you know of what drives their hearts—
Whether a god sustains them, or a sorcerer deceives?

Go down and proclaim what's been entrusted to you:
The gods have returned and break the fate
Of a man distressed by his forgotten Being!
The lion of doves has followed the path...

This is the transformation fulfilled in the child
Who pours upon the earth a rain of carefree wonder;
Has he not made of care the being-there of his Self,
This thinker who longed for the sense of Being?

Yet it is from fierce torment that he thus is burdened:
What matters the wide sea to the fountain's waters?
The far is in the near for a discerning gaze—
Upon the Open Infinite that is human grandeur.

I hear that man's clearing is a mirror:
To he who crosses the Said, it offers reflection.
Does he glimpse his own in the infancy of the proper?
Nietzsche might have untied the secret of the human.

For greater than the greatest of men
Is the child who dares to turn the wind aside
And with his new breath gives life to the Overman:
No man is truly "there" who is not that child.

Have I truly been understood—or is it pretense?
I tell the human race that in sprouting from the soil,
It grows to chaff when it clings to the years:
The elders in their wisdom always look backward.

Of the thinker of Freiburg I recall the path
Crossing the countryside to the base of the great oak,
And I remember the bench carved with a thousand fates:
Friend of solitude, your thought brings me peace.

The visible and the sayable are but figures of an age—
But what of the Other, whom none can see or name?
Once thought as manifold, then measured as One,
Erased with a doubt—what tomorrow might it foretell?

Is "I am" but a word etched on an old bench?
Of all that was engraved, it alone remains;
What does the Mystery say—evoked by Heidegger—
Of care turned torment, questioned without end?

"I am" is the name of the bench that invites to rest,
Ultimate Serenity for he who became torment
In unveiling from Being its impossible speech:
"I am" speaks the site of the final beginning!

To the Spirit's repose in this time of distress,
The divine offers its gift when Being becomes Self;
Of this advent the Ereignis is promise,
Entrusting the poet to reveal its place.

Nearer to the plain, Zarathustra hesitates:
Men are prisoners of a dark night of soul!
Is the Sign a lie if the elite among men
Had the lion stripped of life within the cave?

When gods and masters alike have disappeared,
When only vain thinkers haunt this world,
What hope remains for the whisper of salvation:
Doesn't a fallen breath still need heaven?

Of the vanity that devours you, the Sign gives me duty
To drive out the demon and counterfeiters all;
I am Zarathustra—and from Above I am willed
To recount the light that is Being's favor.

I've known the distress when god has withdrawn,
The human solitudes and the tears poured out,
The nonsense and absurdity afflicting your minds,
And the little hope from which you've been stripped.

I must now share that an Other is to come!
From the highest mountains his name reached me;
Of the "I am" to come—do you still recall it?
Do not forget: it warns of nothing good.

REVERSAL

Return to the origin, where once I was born:
Nothing is the same, all erased by time!
From the hearth and the waiting, only walls remain:
Home of my childhood—where has your soul gone?

I was a stranger, fleeing the enmity
Of Being and its Time, walled in things;
I knew nothing of the world, blind to its speech:
What mattered the stream, or the unburied dead?

I went on fleeing, to forget the secrets—
When one day, by an Angel, the key was given:
Hidden in the folds of his outspread wing
Was the source of light I had once forsaken.

Can it be that men have never truly thought,
That their eyes were caught in a thickening fog,
That a nearness too close only brushed their nose?
Our sight stands far from proximity!

In the Angel's gaze, my soul stood ek-statically still:
I saw myself there, unafraid, in that stolen I,
Another in its place—and my Me stripped bare
Was nothing but having-been, a void of selfhood.

The Angel
Return upon your path, toward your broken fate,
And seek within discord what might bring it peace;
I entrust to you the key of a well-kept secret,
A Word every thing keeps hidden in its retreat.

It is already midnight—the hour to gather all—
When clock-time, just now stilled,
Withdraws into the cracks of what merely seemed:
Time, beating the world, is to it a stranger.

You must come back into proximity:
Your soul, lost in the remoteness of speaking, has strayed!
The world is so strange, it seems to elude you:
You believe you know it only as a well-hidden secret.

From Being in its withdrawal I've entrusted you the key,
But you still must be a skilled locksmith;
Find the portal destined for its use,
And distance yourself from the imprints history left behind.

There is no history of Being but elapsed time,
Preserving the traces of what has been missed:
Of Being we know only a gallery of portraits—
A brushstroke suffices to lay it at our feet.

The Man

I dared the wager to return home,
To seek the roots from which my parting cut me off:
In the Free Expanse of the Natal once regained,
All that was hostile becomes Serenity.

Of Being and its Time, that never truly were,
I measure the distance of this alterity
In which each made of the other its loyal opposite:
Who could allow to flow what ought to remain?

There are Being and Time, irreconcilable
Except in an origin forgotten by history;
The return that leads us to the first beginning
Is breath on the embers of a vain hostility.

Of what is the history of Being a forgetting
That only a return to Source may unveil?
If Being's homeland asserts itself to thought,
The time of the origin is an un-presented one.

Could one return to what once began?
The time that already is cannot be escaped!
Return is the path of a new beginning
That shatters the origins of our past errors.

The Angel

It's time you shatter by turning thus:
Phusis is the ill-conjugated time of Being.
Destiny is the grave of none sacrificed—
Time and Being must be thought as One.

There is necessity to reconcile the two—
But what can the Dasein do, pledged to time?
It is the question of Being residing in our soul:
Must one of the two be repudiated by man?

Of those whom the origin sets to quarreling,
Must one be exhausted when the other's mystified?
Time is but a clock cast upon beings,
Measure of what changes without forgetting.

Return to origin and its hostility—
Impossible encounter: temporality
Locks away in retreat what had been forgotten;
Of the time that enters the world, Being is an absentee.

The time of Dasein is a representation,
The a priori form of subjectivity,
The measure that separates all the distanced,
The convenient Reason of an intercepted being.

The Man

If Kant was a poor thinker, many others were worse:
What do appearances hide that we cannot dispel?
In all that may be seen, there is something unlooked at:
Time, revealing all, is our very blindness.

The near-to-origin tells of contradiction—
Of Being's clearing darkened by the cloud;
It's to the Angels of the Year that Clarity is due,
While the secret was entrusted to the hearth's fire.

Are you of the house, or an Angel of the year,
The keeper of the secret, or bearer of its key?
I hear that both are tasked alike
With lifting over the world a sliver of truth.

The earth is a prison of the slightest clarity;
Of all that it encloses, the fire—even if it spoke—
Would confess of the secret only this: it exists.
The flame shows only what it has burned.

Could it be that an Angel hides a demon within,
And that by his light, the poet, blinded,
Runs aground in darkness, a castaway from the abyss?
Are men, at the mountain's foot, the last of all?

The Angel

The Angels of the house keep watch over the sacred fire:
They breathe on the embers when they turn to ash.
The mountain's Angels bring forth the Radiance
On New Year's Day when winter has passed.

The sky is a bottomless vault when filled with stars,
Yet upon the earth it seems to rest.
At times it hangs so low one could almost touch it—
But it is at the horizon that dreams are shattered.

The sky does not exist: it is sheer immensity,
The earth's own nothingness mirrored back at her;
From atop his mountain, the poet grown wise
Descends to the plain he never truly left.

And the earth rejoices for the prodigal returned:
Those who never return are the unforgiven!
Though they come bearing gifts to honor him,
Their kin keep in the earth a secret long concealed.

And the poet runs forth, shaking his key,
For he returns from the earth to unveil the treasure;
He longs to turn the night away from his homeland,
To dry up its abyss, to embrace his Natal land.

The Man
But buried in the earth, the well-kept secret
Resists the light whose key it holds.
He seeks, in his return, what once had begun—
The futile dwelling of his hesitant being.

The key, slipped in my pocket by an Angel of the Year,
Unlocks no door but that of my own thought;
To turn over the earth brings forth nothing
But what was entrusted to its fertility.

The treasure lies elsewhere—buried in the mind:
No single word can fully unveil it.
The riddle is so unruly it demands meditation,
A grasping, in silence, of what it hides from sight.

And if “not the others!” becomes the hidden concern
Of the poet despite himself—of Shadow and Radiance—
He senses tenderness in such hostility,
That from the very start made man a castaway.

I find in Hölderlin a surplus of divinity:
A Higher-than-the-High from which the Radiance springs,
Which Heidegger, in his name, called “Serenity,”
Farther than the sky when it lies unveiled.

The Angel
It is a non-place, beside the land beneath your feet—
For the Free Expanse cannot be measured.
This “beside” means: within proximity.
This distance of the Most-High invites us to approach.

It is the nearest that often feels farthest:
To return to the Natal means above all to renounce,
To say “no” to all those places where man is stranger,
To forsake all mirages and return to the Self.

You distrust the gods evoked by the Angels:
Yet it is in your house the Angel has taken up dwelling.
From the Year comes the light that cannot remain,
For among men it finds its true destination.

All captures of Being bear the mark of destiny,
But are poorly received when they've been forgotten:
If it once came to question through Being-thrown,
Then in the absence of reply, its fate was withdrawal.

Oblivion in a primal quarrel of thought:
Of One and of Many—lacking sacred union—
A fragment adrift from Ephesus, tossed by the waves,
Never found harbor on an Eleatic poem.

The Man

You entrust the poet of today with the task
Of consecrating the union of those thinkers set apart by time:
What does the poem say that thought cannot conceive?
What do its words conceal if they do not disclose?

Poets and philosophers share the same words,
And differ only in how they are entwined.
If man is a poet by the land he inhabits,
Then his Saying must name an opened space.

And this space is free of all predetermination—
A meeting place of all the unthought,
Where One and Many may learn to accord,
And return no longer means turning to the opposite.

The poet is thinker of all that is unthinkable,
Voices speaking through the silence of a destined Open;
The two trunks of Hölderlin are thus joined
In a meditation that is theirs alone.

Within this Free Expanse lies Serenity,
A mischievous Wisdom able to compose all things,
A shepherd's melancholy for the returning flock,
To the tranquil hearth of a home re-joyed.

The Angel

This melancholy is but a joy misled—
That says, "the others, no!"—they are spared
The weight of this Dict that opens into Radiance,
A silent Word nestled beneath the veil of speech.

It is within the time of the world that Being was forgotten,
And yet our history is its destined path—
A destiny plural, shaped by its epoché,
A tide of parentheses addressed to passing ages.

Admittedly, it is subtle to speak so:
Platonic Ideas one seeks to transcend
Are but imprints of a Being in withdrawal—
This parade of traces is a tale gone astray.

Time is patricidal in its disharmony,
And it is from its errancy that thought's story arises;
But now comes the time for Being to return to its Dwelling—
Not a simple coming, but a transfiguration.

"Return to the Natal!" confides in his joy
A poet moored upon the shores of his past;
He offers to his home, whose frame has crumbled,
A new Origin—a Natal never yet conceived.

The Man
The gods have been dressed in worn-out romanticism—
Between Goethe and Wagner, who has deceived us?
"I am a decadent," Nietzsche seemed to confess;
"At times, I too yield to that mood..."

Sentimentalism errs in mystifying
What in the world is often but the banal—
And "where she sat" becomes transcendent
By a sickly memory that time cannot appease.

"O Time, suspend thy flight," cries the tormented—
But where lies your malaise, disenchanted supplicant?
Have you not understood that time cannot be halted,
And above our heads it holds the tip of its blade?

Time is faithless to those who seek to count it:
One must take time, which is alien to us,
Before it takes us and leads us astray.
Time is a lie, murderer of Spirit.

Is there another time, never yet conceived,
A time that flows only through halted clocks?
Is it this time of Being, bound by history,
Sealed in the secret of the world whose key you hand me?

The Angel

There are so many mysteries we long to fathom—
The Same reveals the Simple within complexity.
It is the hardest thing, which blind we try to grasp:
He who would seize all must devote himself entirely.

Yet he who seizes all knows only the half
If in his cave he has not broken down each thing.
And what remains to him but scattered crumbs—
A Same that renders all Good as Simplicity.

We know! The time of the world is a fatality.
“Truly?” says the bold one who challenges time misthought,
Making it the object of quest and pugnacity:
Death is not the moment of a life now past.

Thus returns the fault—Being and Time assigned
To render our death a story consumed.
The mortal’s concern becomes anxious dread
Before the uncertainty of his approaching end.

When a being-there dies, does he become the past,
A shadow clinging to the feet of a survivor?
Mourning places us before an absent friend—
This melancholic joy is what remains.

The Man

It is the question of time thus laid bare,
A time deformed by re-temporalization:
Time opposes Being when it is measured—
The stream’s discharge across a meadow’s bend.

If the river’s present—where Being once bathed—
Is swept toward a sea by the pace of its course,
It is at its own source it draws destiny,
And keeps, wherever it flows, the soil of its birth.

Along the water’s trail, time is propelled:
Tomorrow becomes yesterday, torn from its source,
And its present is always a thread unbroken—
Time cannot isolate a single instant from the circle.

They believe heaven’s light is simply given,
That the earth’s womb is mere obscurity;
But it is from the deepest soil a lily bursts forth
And offers to light its own destined blooming.

Light appears only in that which it illumines—
To follow it blindly, one must forget all else.
Radiance comes from the Year, through seasons set:
Winter is always followed by the spring.

The Angel

But it is man's time of which you now speak to me,
The time of succession, of summer's scorching burns:
Yet the time that suits Being is not enchained
To the links of sowing and the harvest's reward.

The season of promises is but hollowed-out time:
Winter by the hearth recalls the warmth of summer.
Time has done its work, the stopped clock now sighs,
Bored from having lost its precious pendulum.

There is another time—that of Dwellness—
Which scorns the storms and tempests that fall:
This time is a secret, hidden within your home,
The secret of the Natal that longs to bring peace.

It is the time of rivers and of flowing springs,
For water that moves can only stretch itself:
What seems to pass is a form of eternity—
It is Being at rest, conjugated with its Time.

This is what Hölderlin sought to return to—
To approach the Origin and its double edge.
Why do we not see this time said to pass?
You may seize it only by use of your key.

The Man

Then this is the key you have entrusted to me!
Landing on the shore, the poet stands shaken—
For what comes to greet him is reserved only
For those who have never deserted the Origin.

Of these two who oppose, we are told the unity:
The Simple that affirms the Same in all things!
It is the thought of the people, claimed with pride
By old Schopenhauer, devilishly inspired.

He spoke of gods whose Wisdom was sacrificed
By a vulgar common unfit for thinking;
He wanted of the world only its representation—
A counterfeit Kantian, life's silent killer.

And it is the time of Being, destined for humans,
That he shattered with teeth sharpened by Evil;
But among the simple folk it was left unsaid,
Thus the Origin from him remained preserved.

The poet offers what cannot yet be thought,
But which cannot be ignored by his own kind:
It is the counting mind that loves opposition
And draws from difference a calculated gain.

The Angel
I am of the house—you now know this well!
The pines have partaken of the highest Radiance;
The fallen fire of heaven has naught left to illumine,
For thunder is but the roar of a wayward light.

When the star that brings day begins to decline,
And night overtakes an earth left abandoned,
A timid light glows in the cottages' hearth—
The Spirit's comfort drawn into meditation.

He dwells as a poet who, in this dancing light,
Surrenders to the joy of having stolen from time
What is, in the instant, a shard of eternity—
And opens to the time of Being of which he is lord.

This is not a return, but a manifesting
Of what the Natal has forever preserved;
It was by accident it became rooted
In the land of mist that hides the valley below.

For it is not a place that is named here,
But a sacred word, protected by silence,
Which the breath of time comes to whisper to souls:
"I keep watch in your Natal over our kinship."

THE SEER (2024)

You dreamt of clairvoyance, of unveiling the beauty
That a veil upon this world had long kept hidden.
Genius! Spirit of the Whole, serene fertility,
Who names the world in joy and all its vastness.

You defy time's flow with a thrill of eternity:
From summer's murmurs winter stocks its granary!

If you are redemption for our most minor sins,
It is through loving grace we are pierced and healed.

You flee from the din of our noisy affairs,
Dreaming of a music that calls us to dance;
With one breath you banish the tears of the past,
And with a singing tomorrow, the sails are unfurled.

The intoxication of your boat may carry us far,
Toward isles of light with snowcapped summits;
In golden ink you write what must be loved
From the sufferings of old that cannot be erased.

Tell us the joyful words by which the past forgets itself
And life is invented again, though we were once erased;
Make us a gift of the Other, through our ignored I,
To those absent from the world—grant them the right to dream.

I know that tomorrow will be woven of misfortunes,
That always too many tears will return to be shed;
Then let us, if we cannot flee, at least learn to love it,
Bear its weight, and never once yield beneath it.

Every grace delights to be mingled with blood,
And suffering is the due we must someday repay
So that a little joy may descend upon men—
All that comes must go; only the place remains.

Your pockets are torn; you can no longer hide
Anything but a few words, the blaze of genius
That, even from afar, consumes all in its path—
Phoenix reborn, lost again in its own ash.

And life, now returning, is colored by rhyme:
Eyes have opened to unknown brightness,
Second sight shattering the blind gaze
Steeped in resentment's poisoned spice.

When foreheads lift again to contemplate the sky
Where a mountain-born genius once dared engrave,
Faces are suddenly lit with a radiant smile,
And at the edge of hearts, a grace breaks like a wave.

The wind from your soles has caressed our souls,
A word that reveals the Sacred in our lives;

Genius is Spirit, through which all things are seeded,
Rising to the Celestials, beyond every cloud.

Within speech lie treasures, veiled by words;
Genius is the gift of letting us taste them,
Releasing their flavor and that strange bliss
Which the wise poet sows in the soul's core.

REDEMPTION

And I leap, in vain, not knowing where to go—
An oak's rough bark swept along the river,
Drifting through the wreckage of an unfinished dream:
Thus was my fate woven into the tragic.

Who am I in this tale, with no present from the past,
Not even a horizon left to draw me near?
How to come into the world once the world has gone?
Nothing remains—not even a forgotten thing.

I am only the abyss of a soul run aground,
A darkness too deep for light to be born within;
Am I the survivor of a ship gone down,
Or the final wreckage of a murderous flood?

Who calls me false believer, miserable fool?
A disciple of Plato, steeped in deceit?
Or a servant of demons with enchanted speech,
Hiding within their robes the densest of shadows?

The world becomes silence we wish to dress up
In clever words and demonstrable truths,
In a skin's sheer sheen that conceals nothing
And dazzles the gaze of the seeing made blind.

"You are mere appearance," says a bold-faced man,
"Stretched over the void of your supposed being.
That which has no reverse—why bother to tear it?
There's nothing to find there, nothing worth telling."

"Nothing," he says again, "that one might imagine:
Only liars have dared to call it thought.
Tragic is the dwelling one cannot inhabit—
Do you need a palace to hide your empty soul?"

We feed upon a Self we long to make real,
To grant ourselves reason for having been thrown

So naked onto this earth we call our own,
Left to the accident of an unarmed humanity.

Yet humankind is bound by impossibility—
Unable to assign itself even the slightest aim;
If man is a mistake that none can excuse,
Why bother imagining he ever had a source?

Thus for man, this random and throwaway being,
There's no higher reason than the power of dice;
They show a number that is never sacred—
And so we roll again, in hope of another fate.

One must, Amor Fati, love one's destiny,
And for this fleeting life, be willing to pay its price:
If joy and sorrow are always so poorly weighed,
Then fate is a miser, and chance a wicked lender.

"I'm not rich," says the crippled man,
"I've paid only in pain to clear my debts."
"Can you still suffer?" replies his banker,
"For dragging your foot, your debt's unpaid."

Let those who understand make their claim:
There's no shadow but the one we've dreamed!
Dreaming, the great bargain! And why not praying?
It's the same coin for the truly desperate.

What a strange idiosyncrasy! Life is a sin—
So one must die, burning slowly at the stake.
Hell leads to salvation, so the saints have told us:
In comedy alone can a drama be forgotten!

The Devil smiles when God is crucified—
For at the foot of the Cross all sin is forgiven.
Then why weep, if fault no longer exists?
Let fall the black veils of the grieving wives!

There is no redemption save for the torn apart.

When man is in rags, what good is it to summon
The chimerical Credo of a usage long outworn?
Hope is only to gather the shards of the human whole.

They claim that forms are the weaving of our history—
Yet as soon as we glimpse them, they vanish away.

For that which becomes form is mere will's expression,
Which reclaims them at once to rearrange anew.

We say we see the Same as a whole represented,
Yet this Same is only what will aims to grasp;
In this act of willing alone does form take shape—
It is by our creation that the form is bestowed.

If Heraclitus' river flows without end,
No one may bathe twice in the same water:
Though the stream resemble the one that passed,
It is always another, escaped from the same spring.

"Only place remains," Mallarmé once declared:
It is the source and the bed that cannot be changed!
If flowing water keeps an appearance of form,
It's because the eye deceives—the gaze misaligned.

For it is another form that flows down the stream—
Things of the same kind share no necessary kinship.
What matters in form is the need to distinguish:
Thus woman is not the consort of Man as a genus.

Let the tragic return, too little contemplated...
Tragic it is to be content with fragments,
When man yearns for oneness from all dismemberment,
From the scattered pieces to forge selfhood anew.

Yet what's scattered in the world is not separate—
From all that is, selfhood comes into being;
If man is not in the world, it's that he is its essence,
And in all that appears, he is at best its reflection.

We are lived by the world, though we fail to exist—
It's through the world that we are defined, outside ourselves.
Who feeds on the world is cut off from the Self:
A mirror has meaning only when it reveals.

"I am but an ear," a deficient one once told me;
"If I am to hear you, I cannot listen to you.
Lacking a brain, my desire to think
Finds its end on the anvil of all sounds struck."

If you are but an ear and of brain bereft,
Why the leg that led you to stand before me?

What can I offer your wretched headlessness,
When not one word can reach your mind?

And you who are but an eye that sees all things—
Of the things you see, you cannot speak at all;
For that you need words, and even more, thought.
I can do nothing for you—not even console.

If man is mere fragment, removed from the rest,
Who shall be obliged to make their reunion?
What redeemer could gather all things in one,
And retie the cord broken by some jester?

Only a Superman could restore us to unity,
Give purpose to the rope that we must follow,
Zarathustra confides, so we may turn away
From living only to live—that animal will.

We return again, from each obstacle evaded,
To new sufferings born from failed striving.
Poet is the Superman, guest of the gods:
It suffices that he wills to lift us from the stone.

ON THE SIMPLE

(after Heidegger, Meister Eckhart)

The Simple holds the secret of all permanence and greatness.
It comes among men without preparation, though it needs
much time to grow and ripen. The gifts it bestows
it hides in the unshowing of what is always the Same.
The things that abide along the way, in their breadth
and fullness, give the world. As old Master Eckhart says,
from whom we learn to read and live,
only in what their language does not say is God truly God.
(Heidegger, “The Way to Language”)

From all that surrounds it, the path gives offering—
Of the world in its greatness and plenitude entire;
It speaks the Simple that to the Same does ask
To bury in its retreat such reverent desire.

Yet nothing is Simple in what appears to us,
Not even the Same, in all its semblance:
What seems alike when it appears in sight
Demands of us a gaze of prudent vigilance.

For different is the identical we cannot discern:
The Same means two that belong to one another—
So both share in one single quality held in common,
Yet bear no likeness, neither one to the other.

The Same is identical, but has no face—
It belongs to Being, of which we know it is not.
That Being has essence is but arbitration:
It betrays these terms of their earlier thought.

This was true for the ancients, but also the moderns,
Who gave to that word the sense of quidditas,
A kind of substance, which Descartes embraced
To describe the soul as a thing that thinks.

To say that Being is not does not make it void—
For if it has no bottom, it has no origin either;
Nor is it an act fixed once in the present:
The tale of Being is written in all that seeks to become.

Being is bound to time, from which it takes its measure,
And it becomes only through what gives it hold:
For Being that becomes, time is no erosion
But the very achievement marked across our roads.

Things are but ways in which Being is revealed,
Not slices carved from some static whole;
The world is not a counter of salted meat—
But the showing of the Same in singular souls.

What is shared is nothing but sheer existence—
To arise unbidden in a breach of time,
And, without forethought, open oneself to the given,
For “there is” means: to accept the present.

This gift along the path is the threshold of being,
The dawn of a world unfolding its first day,
And offering to the light a rare hope of glory
That beings might be robed in precious harmony.

It is then the Simple challenges all composition,
That patchwork of fragments posing as one whole;
The One-All only seeks to veil its own strife,
A winding sheet that cloaks what it cannot resolve.

There is no One, nor Whole: Deleuze is mere chimera—
A voice of enchantment reaching to caress
What does not exist and despairs of itself,
Trying the impossible of a senseless structure.

The virtual would be the mirror of all that's lacking,
A reality certain—yet still never present—
Undoing all possible truths that might expose
The hidden lie of its future not-yet-being.

Must we seek intention in such delirium?
Let us not squander the time we are granted!
The path of the possible bears its own harvest
For those who behold the Simple with serenity.

We learn of things only through what they withhold—
As Meister Eckhart affirmed of the divine:
Whatever is said of God, we see but aliases—
We rob Him of freedom and betray our designs.

The gods we wield are gods we deserve,
Forged by our hands to ransom our miseries,
The price of redemption engraved, so they say,
At the foot of a cross on an unjust hill.

If we return to things and what may be said,
We must read between the lines their true weight:
Do they not tease us by letting themselves be written
Only to silence what we truly meant to speak?

Would you blame, Eckhart, your God,
For whom only the unsaid may yet be true—
A being so far off, unnamed and unsought,
So scarcely real he could be nothing at all?

Is He not the simple Nothing you yet believe in?
If He stands beyond Being, refusing all accord,
Then what heavens would the mystic, not mere orant,
Kneel upon stone to seek and mortify for?

You are of that race who gouge out their own eyes,
Medieval Oedipus who could not endure
That one glance alone—offense to the divine—
Might grant a man the right to mourn his own ruin.

You expect nothing of what cannot be named—
What would it speak, being barely a whisper?
What care I for faith from which hope has fled,
That honors in vain a god without presence?

Nonsense! To me God is another,
Who has crowned the Simple—never a Trinity—
A petty fabrication from the Nicene Council
That dared bind the unbounded to a triune absurdity.

How many gods might there be, if there must be one?
And if God has a dwelling, what matters who dwells?
He is as He wills, and shaped by His becoming:
A god unfree could never be gracious.

“The country path” refrains from speaking too much:
Of Serenity, which ever takes its time,
It offers the rule of Sages who, without prediction,
Confine themselves to what is simply present.

For nothing hides from those who know how to see:
Upon the tranquil path, and all that it holds,
It is the Simple of the world that is shared with us—
Unaware of the twisted turns of calculation.

The world holds no malice and does not deceive
But those whose ignorance breeds its suspicion;
To proclaim it Simple is mere prejudice—
A pious echo of an unending myth.

Of some impossible Eden with its foul serpent,
That once barred divine goodwill from man:
To bite into the apple, to become wise—
Was the first arithmetic of a petty ambition.

For nothing is simple, the reptile had claimed—
To believe so is to offend the wisdom of God!
Only fools think knowledge useless,
But the Reason of Being knows better.

Knowledge is a cunning that too often forgets
That in all it teaches, something vital is missing—
That which, though unseen, truly constitutes us,
And shuns the tallying of what little defines us.

Science measures only what brings it gain,
To feed the hunger of its self-importance;
For the soul's salvation it shows only disdain,
Becoming an abyss, a tomb of existence.

If all were truly simple, why bite so greedily
At the bait of some secret design in all things—
To unveil in each being some hidden machinery,
Except to enslave it to our vilest cravings?

The Simple has no place in the belly of the world:
Whoever doubts it has never learned a thing!
The Simple is a caress that, round the path's curve,
Embraces what it meets and blesses with a touch.

When one aligns with beings, the Simple shines forth:
The lark's song needs no questioning—
But simply the time to listen, the grace of attunement:
A lone melody played with no sheet nor measure.

Extractive Reason retains but a shard
Of all it shatters by fracturing the whole;
What it lays bare, it conceives as machinery—
While the living harmony is already torn apart.

It invokes complexity to justify its rule,
Claiming alone to depict the world's truth.
To describe mechanics is not to think
Nor to glimpse the harmony shaping what will come.

This world, as we say it, is a human stage—
A theater of our affairs and confusions.
Spirit finds itself constrained in what binds it,
Unable to caress Being's ineffable presence.

"Things are made thus," declares the fencing mind,
Thrusting its foil into the heart of matter:
By perfect agreement everything functions,
Each in its kind, each in its manner.

Consider digestion—how many organs
Guide it faithfully to the toilet's edge!
And when a flower wilts from bloom to fade,
It becomes humus—its final recipe.

Is there a gallant science that can speak of flowers,
Admire their beauty, and inhale their perfume?
“Poetic nonsense,” sneers the slayer of joy,
“Only gears and pulleys deserve your esteem!”

Yet let it please you, my Love, to accept from this fool
A bouquet of these blooms as a gesture of heart:
They told me instead to offer the stalks
As seasoning plucked from the simmering pot.

Mischievous Wisdom

“In the air, shifting with the seasons, of the country path
thrives a cheerfulness that knows—and whose face seems often grim.
This cheerful knowing is a mischievous wisdom.
No one gains it who did not already have it.
Those who possess it received it from the country path.
Upon it, the winter’s storm and the harvest day cross paths,
the vital spring’s tumult and autumn’s peaceful fading meet,
the playful mood of youth and the wisdom of age exchange glances.”
—Martin Heidegger, *The Country Path Conversations*

To the Newcomers

Children are promises of light to come.
When man has aged enough
To turn and gaze behind him,
His eyes softened with tears,
At the child he once was—

Then to Wisdom,
Which arrives with age,
Is added the Mischief of early days:
Together they become Serenity.

Wisdom is serene when,
Of all that it has known,
It keeps only the Simple—
That Same which gathers all
Without ever confusing a thing.

Mischievous Wisdom

From the impish child to the wisdom of the father,
As time meanders, the Sage grows joyful—

It is a Gay Science that thrives in each of us,
In the melancholy of sacred remembrance.

When the aged release what once deceived them,
They rediscover the child who feared no storms,
And wore a sly smile that life had since stolen—
A joy unburdened by the weights of survival.

It is the time of secrets from a cunning childhood,
Where princesses and brave knights are bound;
From what appears a game, the child makes a mystery,
A consoling tale to which only he holds the key.

Clad in heroism, he defies all Reason,
Alive with dreams of far-off lands—
From an oak's bark he fashions a galleon
To sail the seas of a laundry basin.

The child holds his mischief in secret delight,
Beyond the gaze of mocking adults:
He is keeper of our forgettings, which age regrets—
He knows the depth in things we think shallow.

They call him a dreamer, schooled in delusion,
Riding the unicorns of infantile lands.
Ashamed of these "lies," adults now forget,
And with Reason in hand, must count every breath.

Farewell to the mischiefs that filled his young days;
No secret remains that one dares smile at.
His are now calculated, burdens on conscience,
Dressed in false words to avoid self-betrayal.

Thought, when counting, grows drunk on despair—
For much of what we do defies measurement.
To quantify is a demon unknown to children,
A way of grown-ups who seek full control.

Who knows the soul's weight, or Spirit's mass?
What weigh the smiles, tears, and feelings
Of a child in his mother's embracing arms?
What are such moments worth—moments cursed by forgetting?

It is in old age, with a backward glance,
That tears of regret streak down our cheeks—

For a carefree grace crushed by torrents of pain,
The simple semblance of a life once lived.

The old no longer speak—what would they say to us
But old mistakes masked as forgetfulness,
Of a mischievous wisdom one dares not refute
Except in the false glow of a joy long gone.

“The country path” leads back to Wisdom,
That, in elder years, reunites with childhood—
A time of mischief and endearing clumsiness,
Laughter echoing from deep unconcern.

Whether dream or a fleeting vision it was,
A riddle perhaps on the winding ascent
To the threshold of choice, as Nietzsche reveals
In Zarathustra’s tale of a serpent’s black fang.

There lies a symbol we must now illuminate:
Was the Eternal Return ever truly understood?
Is it the heaviest weight we must learn to bear—
Or wisdom found in one eternal instant glimpsed?

The elder and the child both share a knowing
Of what once vanished and suddenly returns:
It is Being, in joy, that grants such power,
And by its own Mischief, made them its keepers.

Is the child a vagabond carried by the wind
Toward distant lands closed by the horizon,
A bold cartographer of unknown continents
That laughter dismisses without much thought?

The child has no faith but in the unthought:
Dream is his burden, his only need—
To cross endless seas on an oak’s bark
Following the veins traced on ancient trunks.

He sails fountains, without asking permission—
For none can give it—he flees all shores,
Escaping the tortured Spirit of cautious Reason,
Rejecting all calculation and possible wreckage.

The child makes a game of riding glory’s crest—
Knights and pirates, fearless and roving,

Dragon-slayers Kant once dressed up in "You must!"
Swearing solemn oaths empty of all fire.

Could it be he was never a child at all,
If duty chained him to Reason's command?
If his hands stayed clean, it was from doing nothing—
Or perhaps he had no hands, as Valéry once guessed.

A breeze of freedom cannot move a soul
That ticks out life on a numbered dial,
Accepting to live only as one ought,
Doubting a child's dream could ever dazzle him.

Reason is unjust toward all children
And to the aged it has worn down to husks;
What matters the ways in which man turns away,
If Reason keeps silent her impossible truth?

For Reason lies when it claims to know all:
What it sees is missing what lies beneath—
That which defies logic's narrow reach
And slips free of the chains of principle.

"You have no argument!" cry the offended,
"You babble and repeat, a worn-out fool!"
If Reason crushes all, what gives it weight?
How is it heavier—where lies its worth?

What is just is what fits our essence—
But what do you truly know of Man that fits?
To bend Nature to our taste and pleasure,
To needs we invent but never understand?

THE BECOMING IN SPIRIT

"The Becoming of Spirit is not hidden from men."

The day that dawns on the world has twisted all things,
So that nothing appears as it is,
And what is hidden is now said to be—
But what face can escape a blinded gaze?

Living is a painting hung from a thread of fate:
What does a figure hide in a folded hand?
The absence of color holds a reserved secret—
Something unseen behind a face unmasked.

A jewel box of illusion—only a clenched fist,
A cry held in the silence of a shattered tale,
The capture of one instant, fixed in that canvas,
Where each detail affirms eternity.

So many trifles beg to be spoken—
Only to be erased by a single gleam;
“Nonsense,” says the Enchanter, “is never false light—
No such thing as too much brightness for this world!”

Upon what divine message did they close,
Our heavy eyelids, content in knowing?
Lying is the face that suits the Will’s desire
To subject the world to its image and mirror.

Stranger to our brushes is what resists form—
It escapes the canvas we scrape to deepen,
Pulling light from shadow with trembling hands,
To seize what flickers in the fabric’s wound.

What burst forth was never hidden
But from the eyes too eager not to see.
Who cares for Spirit when thought itself
Drinks disdain from a turned-away face?

And from canvas to canvas the gazes flee,
Harvesting seconds to escape their own tale—
What could Reason salvage there
To weave yet another web of the sinister spider?

A passerby of paintings once told me so:
A cry in the silence of a closed-up face,
The pale waxy skin of a child who succumbed—
A hand clenched over tears already spilled.

And Reason flees these devastated lands
Where it wraps the ruins in an absurd shroud.
“The Becoming of Spirit is not hidden from men,”
Unless their gaze is blinded by presence itself.

So it goes—the life humans chose for themselves:
The flaw of a Morning, the unthinkable Origin—
Not a simple return to forgotten roots,
But the turning-back of a forsaken Being.

They make a destiny out of absence alone.
And what, then? Is there nothing else to gain?
Must the sky be masked by drifting clouds,
The day haunted by stones and shade?

A stringer of pearls and rhymes well-tuned—
That is what poets are often thought to be.
Yet I don't thread agates, I scatter fragments—
Words that collapse where meaning once stood.

"So be it," Wisdom tells me, "you must think elsewhere,
Probe what is not, a flaw of existing.
There is only the voyage through Nothing
In the quest for the Absolute, always missed."

Where are you, Word, of a dissociated divine
From the absurd existence Man has chosen?
Must he remember that once he was
The promise of divinity given to this world?

Night becomes the blotter of thoughts grown thin,
Dodging light to avoid the abyss's edge.
A step falters at the escarpment's rim,
Near the well of our wanderings over stone-laden roads.

Come to twilight, Man has turned around,
Seeing only his footprints mired in clay.
He kept not the secret of his Mischief—
Words weaved in wisdom are not Serenity.

And then he falls silent, and with a single tear
He returns to childhood, the one he fled,
To the home of fathers, made dreamlike again,
To the stars that once bordered his sleep.

From the edge of his window a sky draws near—
An Angel steps forth from the deepening blue.
And from the ascending path, lit by night,
Returns the whisper of a forgotten Word.

If memory has cracks large enough to erase the vast,
Believing itself closest to its truest being,
Its gaze grows lost in what lies beyond—
Nothing is vaster than our torn souls.

It is the day of life, the morning of life—
Even when night is life, and our hearts emptied.
Who keeps watch in this darkened desert?
Pity the poet who dreams of a Clarity

Where all things yield their fate to the void.
And here he weeps for disarmed mankind,
Sailing on illusions of enchanted tomorrows—
He gives Eternity to the briefest instant,
Yet Time's abyss swallows the whole world.

No peril is greater than the night that has fallen—
It erases the gaze beneath its closed lids.
Light itself becomes a prison of blazing lives,
Over shadowed lands drifts only summer's dust.

Already the autumn wind has shut our doors
And stripped the oak of its withered tears.
In the hearth, on a hook, a pierced kettle rests—
Its deadwood fuel unable to catch fire.

None is hungry for light, no belly aches for it,
Fed on darkness, it believes itself weighty.
A toad lodges in the black water of the pond—
Its crystal gaze has consumed the sky.

A fog from the plain has erased its soul,
The false masks hold against the heavy dawn.
No sun can pierce this wall of gloom—
Helios has dimmed from wounded pride.

Clouds swell and the valley is drowned in shadow.
The sky, low and burdened, crushes all things.
Roses weep, their petals scattered—
A death that slips through the shattered Whole.

And joy gives way to sorrow—our beings torn apart,
Burning with a nocturnal flame beneath stars cast off,
Sinking in the muck of a pond, that shifting deep
Where the abyss beneath our feet begins to breathe.

A morning of another day—a breath unleashed,
Striking from the horizon its burden of cloud.
Thunder splits the sky with flashing wounds,
And the world cries out, seeking shelter from the storm.

But the wrath of the gods has only grown fiercer,
It rains nothing but light from the torn obscurity.
At the windows of the void, a brightness seeps in—
And an enchanted blackbird greets this dawning...

Such are the sacred hours, treasures of Spirit.

A flicker of light touched my dreaming soul,
And the walls of the house of fathers trembled.
History was swallowed by an abyss and vanished—
A secret was cast upon the world.

In time suspended on halted clocks,
Upon that sovereign hour, a treasure was placed
In the hollow of absence—it severed the thread
By which the moments of Becoming were tied.

What was missing from that place where it was given—
This treasure of gleam, this reflected star?
Is it Pandora of the gods, a herald of hell?
What lies hidden in a light we've never thought?

Of what became place, it alone remained:
Was it an Opening for the Celestials to advance?
So faint is its glow within our obscurity—
Is it a demon who can deceive us with light?

The Becoming of Spirit is only the beginning
Of a furrow of misfortune down a shadowed trail.
The step ascends, cruel and torn—
A burden along the slope to an absent peak.

It is the way of brambles with sharpened thorns,
A tear in the silence of crushed pain.
Is there a cry, a word that could name it?
To suffer is the Word, for sacred names are missing.

Tragic is the ascent, but not of absurdity:
Man walks a tightrope lit by a single gleam,
Escaped from a pale and distant star—
And beneath his feet, the abyss of eternal night.

The wire sways and each step is perilous,
For the arms of nothingness rise to pull him in.
And the human tears apart as he moves forward—
His fate recedes, an end never to be reached.

Yet the Spirit is a treasure that carries the Light,
A candle's grace kept alive by breath,
When the rope becomes visible across the void—
A torment of joy for each new step attempted.

And drifting on the dark while clinging to this thread,
He loosens from time and its hand-me-down tales,
Which conceal from him the Origin of his lack—
If time is absence, let its forgotten one arise!

How sumptuous, then, is Nature in her beyond.

The forest paths are calm and still,
And the Spirit walks without fear beneath the trees.
From a branch, a bird sings of our journey,
And eyes smile at the edges of all things.

A little wooden bridge spans the stream,
And beneath the buttercups the water struggles to flow.
Our thoughts are held in this suspended moment,
An ecstasy, a bounty of blissful abundance.

On the bank, a deer sets down its careful step,
Savoring the water as its lips touch the clear.
Frogs, in chorus, greet this noble stranger—
A dragonfly rests, for a breath, on its mane.

The brook murmurs with a borrowed breath,
Defying the stone-lined banks with its course.
Far beyond the horizon, its waters will journey—
Carrying the ships children entrusted to it.

And source is the life's unthinkable Origin,
Savored by the poet, sung with sacred names.
The trees are draped in ivy's graceful favor,
Responding to silence with the cries of nests.

Here, all is joy and assured happiness—
The Spirit has made its dwelling in enchanted Nature.
The Celestials dwell there, devoted to our fate,
In the overabundance of a caressing gleam.

And divine is the path through this sacred Nature,
Tread in silence by feet attuned to reverence.
A clear and deep joy besieges our soul—
And piety surges across our uncovered faces.

But the forest trail falls upon a thicket—
And our hands are scraped by thorned bushes.
We would turn our stride back toward yesterday,
But the path fades, captured by the night.

This traced path leads nowhere—
Its course lost in the jaws of darkness.
And clinging to us, the forest's leaning phantoms
Bend beneath the weight of night, starless and vast.

A wanderer remembers the images once crossed:
In the clear water, the deer's gaze was drowned,
And silence is the stone forsaken by the toads.
On the night path, one hears the friend weeping...

Then man beholds with the same deep joy—
Joy of Spirit becoming as he sinks into the vast—
Nature is the reflection of our secret lives
In the openness of a no-place where the divine appears.
Silence is ecstasy for our bedazzled souls.

The Word has no language that can be reported—
The Unspoken is vast in its proximity.
To the joys of the unsayable, a lyre is tuned,
First signs of the coming god—worry is soothed.

And the larks sing their heavenly chants—
Nature, a labyrinth where Ariadne is swept away
In the arms of her beloved, in an enchanted waltz:
Yesterday no longer fragments the Will, but unites it.

The Minotaur cries out in chains to his Evil:
The Beast must be slain, its darkness burned
By that fragile gleam turned away by our eyes—
From the void of absence, a faker has taken hold.

And Malice is Ariadne, guided by her god,
Wisdom steeped in a sweet melancholy.
Spirit is a secret known through Serenity—
She dances on her wounds, and unravels the absurd.

For Nature is a temple and dwelling of the Sacred,
And in the smallest detail, in all its infinity,
The gaze expands to what is closest—
The far-off is only the near, reflected in illusion.

He would like to bless this Return with prayers,
To match the moment with words rightly formed—
But the mystery is silent on his sealed lips:
There is no place that can be truly spoken.

From worry flows joy in his opened veins,
As long as the poem lacks the echo of sacred names.
And speech meets its own boundary, stolen of words:
It is in silence that Nature opens itself to thought.

Reason keeps guard over the trampled world—
There is nothing left to see but utility,
Bitter nourishment for lives now satisfied,
Artificial handling of a ravaged One.

Beneath joy, worry is a well-kept secret
That the poet alone must preserve in his soul.
Whether in tune or not, he was attuned—
He alone, not others. Is he not kin to the Sacred?

As he entrusts himself to the day, entrusts himself to life,
Spirit's Becoming is the letting go of grip—
Abandon to mystery, to a luminous dawn,
A green veil of light across the frozen firmament:
For Spirit is dance, charmed by a whisper.

Trust binds their fates in a single destiny,
In the infinite circle of a winding ring,
Each being a reflection of the Same shared—
The Simple that weaves kinship in the world.

They trust in the sunrise of an unthought history,
The origin of existence on the trail of the Sacred.
Life becomes a song attuned to the Celestials,
And in the hearth, a flame erases the ashes.

Tears of light fall from the morning dew
Upon the soft meadows grazed by lambs.
In a bramble's hollow, the Beast has withdrawn,
And the path stretches, defying the horizon.

On the bench of enigmas beneath a shaded oak,
Secrets loosen under meditative gaze—
Spirit is of silence, words stay withdrawn:
There is only this place where the remainder unfolds.

The riddle is the light the path has preserved—
A flash in the night of a history torn open,
The morning return of a forgotten birth:
At evening's mist, the human has dissolved.

Dark is the light spilled at dusk,
When stars run aground in our shuttered eyes.
And trust becomes doubt from too much hope—
The night stitches together our missed encounters.

If it were enough to believe and lift our eyelids,
Awakening would be sorrow for forgotten dreams.
Reason is not faith—it is a disbelief
Outwitted by a path taken through trust.

Yet faith, when locked, robs its believers
Of the taste of the grass from the other side.
It is also a prison that locks up its gods
In a stream of virtues, in a baseless Credo.

Wary of his destiny, Man turned back,
Seeing in the path only his step ensnared.
Strange is the path, hungering for the sublime—
Spirit's Becoming is a stranger to this world.

How he binds to himself through the bond of Spirit.

The soul is a stranger to this calculated world,
Its link to Self undone in darkness.
Man is an illusion of once having found himself,
A wandering through the night of a deep vacancy.

Alienation of speech, afflicted with mastery's conceit,
The concept reflects the mirror of our frailty.
Mute grows the word from having been too worn—
Only letters remain, etched by reason's hand.

The Self fades away in captured deliriums,
Chained to the servile obsessions of knowledge.
There is nothing avowed in these broken utterances—
The word fails when its being is withdrawn.

The Self is of limit, at the edge of all thought,
An unspeakable horizon of our meditative lives.
Thus runs the path through an unveiled night—
There is no link of Spirit that may be arrested.

For it is a lie, this time that claims to draw near,
To brush the skin and probe the abyss—
The Self is but nothingness, entombed in a vault,
When Reason desires to confine all knowledge.

It chases its shadow that pretends to enclose it—
For the Self is an elsewhere found in nearness.
What is distant is folded within the soul—
The Self is an absence, the I masked by another.

The path unfolds, bound to that Spirit,
A thread through labyrinths shattered by the unknown—
A Self that eludes us, hidden in fissures,
At the edge of a non-place where speech breaks.

The thread of Spirit moves in the darkened clarity
Of a nocturnal rising toward a murmured chant.
The shadows of life have guarded its secret—
Memory is the Self's preserved destiny.

Would one try to cast its message in light?
It is by the shards of moon and fallen stars
In the eyes of the Beast, thorns concealed,
That one must unbind the glimmer of the obscure.

And by blood must will tear through stone—
And tears are our steps as we walk in the night.
If from the summit the Self is sung to us,
Upon the sleeping plain silence has fallen.

NIETZSCHE — Letter to a Friend
(A personal homage to Hölderlin, written at age 17)
[Translated from Nietzsche's original German (via French)]

My dear friend,

Some remarks in your last letter regarding Hölderlin greatly surprised me,
and I feel compelled to defend the poet I hold so dear against your words.
Allow me to place before your eyes your rather harsh—perhaps unjust—judgment.
Perhaps, I hope, you have already changed your mind.

“How can Hölderlin be your favorite poet?” you asked.
“I cannot comprehend it. For me, those hazy, nearly mad tones
Of a broken heart, a torn soul,
Made only a sad and at times repulsive impression.
They are blurry utterances, perhaps the thoughts of a madman—

Violent outbursts against Germany, idolatries of the pagan world—
At times naturalistic, pantheistic, polytheistic—
All in a confused mixture.”

That, you say, is what you found in his poems—
Even those written in “well-executed Greek meters.”

“Well-executed Greek meters!” My God—
Is that your entire praise?

Those verses (and I speak only of their outer form)
Emerge from the purest, most delicate heart.
In their nature and origin,
They outshine Plato’s formal mastery.

Whether in sublime movement worthy of an ode,
Or fading into the softest melancholy,
They deserve more than the banal praise
Of being “well executed.”

Your judgment, that they are confused or the words of a madman—
Tells me your prejudice against Hölderlin persists.
Worse, you seem to have never read him.

You appear to think he wrote only poetry.
You don’t know Empedocles,
That fragmentary drama where the poet’s pain and long delirium
Find form in the purest language—
Worthy of Sophocles.

Nor do you know Hyperion,
Which, in its musical prose, its noble figures,
Is like the surge of an agitated sea.
Its melodies—melting, sorrowful—
End in solemn, funereal chants.

These thoughts concern mostly form.
Let me now speak of Hölderlin’s thought,
Which you judge as confused or unclear.

Even if some poems emerge from his madness,
And their meaning wrestles with encroaching night—
Many others remain,
Pearls of our poetic heritage.

Read Return to the Homeland,
The Captive River, Sunset, The Blind Singer—
And those final strophes from Evening Illusion:

The evening sky blooms like spring;
Countless roses are in flower, and the golden world is still.
Oh, carry me there, crimson clouds!
And above, in light and air, may love and pain dissolve!

But—driven away by a foolish prayer—
The charm flees. Darkness comes, and I am alone,
As always, beneath the sky.
Come now, gentle sleep!
Too much has been demanded of this heart—
At last, youth, you burn out,
You dreamer, insatiable!
Peaceful and joyous will my old age be.

In poems like Remembrance and The Journey,
The poet rises to a pure ideality,
His original element.

He denounced truths to the Germans—
Often harsh but deeply grounded.
Even in Hyperion,
He casts judgment against German “barbarism”—
Not out of hatred, but love of country.

He despised the philistine in the German man.

In Empedocles,
We find the poet in full—
A death of divine pride, of scorn for man,
Of fullness on Earth and pantheism.

In Hyperion, though bathed in glorious light,
All remains unsatisfied and unfinished.
The visions are sounds,
Haunting and thirsting.

Nowhere is the nostalgia for Greece purer,
Nowhere clearer the spiritual kinship
Between Hölderlin, Schiller, and Hegel.

I could say more,
But I leave to you, dear friend,

The task of judging this unfortunate poet
From these few sketches.

That I do not refute your critique
Of his inconsistent religious views—
You may attribute to my own limited grasp of philosophy,
Which would demand a deeper inquiry...

A more in-depth examination of this question.
Perhaps one day you will take it upon yourself
To reflect seriously on this subject—
And in so doing, you may succeed
In shedding light on the causes of his mental breakdown,
Even if, I believe, they are surely not to be found
Exclusively in that domain.

You will forgive me, I am sure,
If my enthusiasms led me to use words too harsh against you.
What I truly wish—and what you must see
As the real purpose of my letter—
Is that, through it,
You might arrive at an objective and unbiased understanding
Of this poet, whom the majority of his own people
Barely even know by name.

Your friend,
F. W. Nietzsche