

Denis CLARINVAL

SONGS FROM THE ABYSS

TO MY LOVED ONES

To you, Minoux, passion that forever consumes me,
Wife as much as Muse of all my inner torment :
A fate was sealed in these twin golden rings,
And time itself gave in to our faithful love's intent.

I recall the yesterdays when our *We* made its nest,
Drunk on kisses beneath the shadow of a steeple ;
From our entwined bodies, infinity was pressed—
A twosome becoming One, beneath skies of purple.

Love finds its own face in the children we bore :
Jérôme and Amélie, Mathilde, Antoine, Marie—
Born of our love, they are flesh, and even more :
A daring tomorrow, in what we share endlessly.

Caro, Cédric, Olivier, you're not far from heart,
For you are the eighth branch of this family tree ;
Loves of our children and this song's every part,
You are reeds in the harmony of our melody.

Time moves ever on and weighs down our years :
The children are grown, walking paths of their own ;
From our seven, a legion, and hope that appears—
An offering to the steeple where all this was sown.

Simon, Romain, Léa, Juliette, and then Théo :

A five to say *"I love you"*, the names of tomorrow,

Who'll know of darkness only to tell it, *"Be gone !"*—

For love is far stronger than the thorns on the road.

APOSTROPHE

A philosopher ? Not in the least ! He's a rhymester, a troubadour, an entertainer if you prefer ! Sometimes he writes lovely things, pleasant to listen to — enough to make one pause for a moment, because we all need a bit of lightness. Poets are street singers declaiming for a few coins, but poetry is fleeting, like butterflies, like our joys and like our sorrows. Believe me, poets have nothing to say ! How could they ? They scoff at grammar, at proper usage, and above all at logic. Poets string words together the way children string beads — it's a game, really. Is that pathetic ? Quite the opposite ! We need to unwind, to let the mind rest — thought is so laborious it surely deserves a little distraction.

The poet, who had been standing at the back of the room, could take no more : he rose and slowly walked up to the speaker. He looked him straight in the eye and, without anger, said :
"I truly find your pitifulness entertaining."

The speaker, clearly caught off guard, stammered a few “buts,” to which the poet added :

"I had no idea philosophers could bleat like that !"

A wave of applause followed immediately. The embarrassed speaker slipped behind the curtains. The poet, lifting his head, spotted his Muse at the back of the room — he cut through the crowd and vanished.

What both amuses and saddens me, I confess, are philosophers themselves : who are these scavengers of ideas ? They glean along the roadside a few forgotten grains and, as they go, some dandelion leaves — but rumor has it that what they love best are frog eggs. They care little for the refinement of cuisine, but much for that of language : they feast on concepts, make them their daily bread, their dish of resistance. After all, gastronomy is a minor art, a distraction : aren't chefs, in their own way, poets too ?

Curtain ! Philosophers no longer amuse me : does that mean they already sadden me, that the comedy has turned to nightmare — to drama, perhaps ? Why not a tragedy ? Impossible, say you : Euripides and his advisor Plato turned it into something singular, a subject of reflection, a castaway in the torrent of Ideas. Tragic ? What's tragic is that tragedy is no

longer a play, a performance — because life itself *is* tragic, quite simply.

But it seems that, once again, I've gone astray, that I've understood nothing : the gangs of Deleuze, of Foucault, of Badiou or BHL — not to mention those who, too shy, struggle to make themselves known — were nothing more than a game carried by the spirit of the age, the age of protests and contradictions, of police beatings and outraged cries. After all, the *Boat People* managed to reconcile Sartre and Aron : not bad already ! Were all those guardians of Reason clear-headed ? Their passions were too intimate to be spoken of. The myth of Socrates has dissolved into time — poor chimera !

And so, here I am summoned before the tribunal of Reason. Who will defend me there ? Who might offer the meager support of a testimony ? Deleuze, all sarcasm and delight, has taken on the role of public prosecutor, while Derrida — adorned with a Leibnizian wig — presides over the session. Deleuze, true to his style, spins out his concepts in rapid succession, while I, stripped of any line of escape, am thrown without mercy into the ruthless game of deconstruction. A thinking subject ? It doesn't exist : we are always another, at the mercy of our thoughts — in other words, no one.

"Who are you, then ?" asks Derrida.

"Someone else," I reply.

"Be more precise ! Tell us who you are !" —

"Another," I insist, "I've told you already."

*"Surely you must have a name ?" the President presses.
"It doesn't matter," I say. "Let's just say my name is 'no one,' an
empty cell, if you prefer. That's how the schizoanalysts describe
me — ask Deleuze !"*

Derrida finds me rather insolent. I glance briefly over my shoulder and spot Foucault, yawning with boredom among the crowd — when words are hollow, they bloat the belly. Bouveresse has fallen asleep on the meager pillow of his fame : all these people, who speak without saying anything, have so little to teach him. I am guilty : the virtual shall judge me in time. My guilt is empirical, its object transcendental — that is to say, very real, though not yet consummated. In short : I am guilty *in advance*. I have nothing to add. The crime of which I stand accused is indefensible — a wrong that can neither be justified nor even mitigated — an aborted deconstruction of Reason,

which knows and judges. I am guilty of the crime of lèse-Reason, and I must now atone.

In the dungeons of Reason, many dreams have broken — but what do I care for these stone walls and iron bars ? My thought passes through them like rags. How can one imprison what is not even there ? Reason is a decoy : of all that one finds within it, so little is true — a parody of what can only be found elsewhere.

Reader, you have reached the threshold of my house : it is up to you to cross it. Remain here as long as you please and be at ease — there are no traps, no ghosts, no locked doors to keep your eyes from what cannot be seen. I leave these wise words in your ear : in this place, of all that can be seen, little is truly there — and of what is truly there, little allows itself to be seen. In this darkness, light is of no use : all things blur together, and it is up to you to discern what must be distinguished. Time has fallen asleep in the folds of the curtains and the cracks of the furniture ; you are now *Igitur*, lost in the staircase where every certainty gives way — everything seems as it was this morning, and yet nothing is the same. It is the things that come to us — be patient, and they will find their way to you in their own time. Let the world overtake you, rather than seizing it and grasping only

its shadows. Leave your reason at the door : it will wait patiently for your return, ready for you to use as you wish.

One last thing : what differs is identical, for nothing is ever quite the same...

"*Why do we exist ?*" Heidegger asks — given that we might never have existed at all.

That we exist is undeniable.

"*Too much for eternity,*" Sartre tells us, adding : "*Man is a useless passion.*"

Might he not be right in being wrong ?

If we are, what value is there in the hypothesis that we might not have been ?

Is it not the question itself that becomes pointless ? Perhaps the true question is not *why* we exist, but *what* we can do with this existence we did not choose, yet have been given.

Does a single throw of the dice suffice to abolish all chance ? Mallarmé was convinced otherwise, and as he said, "*of what has taken place, only the place remains.*" Tragic Mallarmé ! The place becomes a constellation when we consecrate the number

shown by the die — to consecrate the number is to accept it, and in accepting it, abolish all contingency. Whether the reason for our existence is necessary or merely sufficient, as Leibniz claimed, matters very little : our existence — even if purely contingent — becomes a necessity when, by embracing it, we give it purpose.

*« I am Zarathustra, the impious :
I boil in my pot all that is chance.
And it is only when it is properly cooked
that I welcome it as my nourishment.*

*And truly, many a chance came to me as a master :
but my will spoke to it with even greater mastery —
and straightaway it would kneel before me in supplication —*

*— begging me for refuge and a warm welcome,
and flattering me with words :
'See, Zarathustra, it is only a friend
who comes to a friend in this way !''*

(Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," Book III)

First Encounter

We know nothing of the world but its portrayed face !
One paradigm follows another, theories all in place :
The trap of dark tarantulas has at last been sprung !
Victory of Reason—or the death of thinking begun ?

But when words fall silent, retreat to their ink,
Only the trace of what once was remains to link ;
Beneath the tall oak, on the long-deserted seat,
An enigma awaits us, by the gods left discreet.

What does speech conceal, when sight is blind ?
If words are liars, then eyes too fall behind.
What hides in appearances cast upon cold stone ?
Nothing ! It is in the surface that all is shown.

INCIPIT

This is not a book. How could I write a book, I who am a child of torment ? What may resemble a book here, I shall call a *territory*. A territory is not just some arbitrary space, a named spot one could locate on a map. A territory is shifting, indefinable, unbounded — because the being who inhabits it is

himself in flux, always becoming, uniquely so, and always in the mode of immanence.

That is precisely the nature of torment : torment is unpredictable, always appearing as the elusive other. It is a wild beast — not the kind that amuse us with their trained tricks in circuses, but a beast of the savannah, untamed and untamable. Torment is the lion — the final figure in Nietzsche's three metamorphoses, Zarathustra's lion — the one who smashes the tablets, strips us of every comfort, and sends us back into the world as questioning beings, beings without substance, beings fated to become what we do not yet know.

Torment does not make us ill from existence itself, as it did for Socrates, but from *not* existing — except through another that we ourselves are not.

Am I then merely a disciple of Schopenhauer, a pessimist soaked in the despair of the "in vain" ? Or a disciple of Nietzsche, in search of power, a being beyond values, destined for the rapture of the Overman ? In the vast field of philosophy, Nietzsche is lightning — and we are still waiting for the thunder to follow, as if he had left to his critics the burden of resonance. But no. Schopenhauer is a lighthouse extinguished. Nietzsche, a

beacon that illuminates nothing, because he left nothing behind for the light to reach.

This is not a book : it is the territory of my torment. The space within which torment, in trying to express itself, crashes again and again into the lie of language — for words always say something else. They escape every attempt to anchor them in meaning, to squeeze out of them what they might *contain*. Words act sly, follow escape lines, deconstruct what we believed we had built, and reconstruct new meaning structures that always present new challenges.

Words maintain a secretive, ambiguous relationship with truth. Truth, as soon as it begins to show itself, is already being carried elsewhere by language. Truth has no territory — it is always *elsewhere*. Is our existence stitched together from error ? And our thinking — is it, irreversibly, a thinking of the false ?

Concepts are, by nature, fragmentary — and the truths they carry, no less so. *Truth* is a canvas, white as snow, hung on the walls of our reason — a symbolic memory of a comforting illusion, pinned to the sky of Ideas by a disillusioned Socrates.

Socrates, a “bag of vices,” sick from existing, entrusts his life to a sort of ringing in his ears — an imaginary daemon whispering Reason to him. The opium of youth becomes martyrdom,

becomes the hero of the City, the sublime figure of self-mastery, the genius of dialectic — the only path, supposedly, to truth.

The myth of Socrates becomes the birthplace of a new civilization, one that can survive only by sustaining a terrible confusion : Christ or Socrates ? The two become indistinguishable. The truth of one becomes the truth of the other.

Until the day comes when the storm breaks and lightning strikes — one bolt more powerful than all the rest — shaking our thoughts at their core, exposing their lies and illusions : the illusion of Truth, the illusion of Good, the illusion of Beauty.

The tragic, long buried by Plato in the shadow of the Ideas, resurfaces.

A tidal wave crashes through our most secure thoughts. Nietzsche's fire devastates all. From the old world, nothing remains but ashes. Even God has fled. God is dead — not God *himself*, but everything we had made of Him, everything that gave Him the appearance of necessity.

This is the *Gay Science* — the joyful knowledge of a world in flames, deserted by the gods. The knowledge of a man without

consolation, denied salvation, who submits his own life to the law of the “in vain.”

Is this decadence then the true object of my torment ?

Nothing could be further from the truth. Again and again, I sift through the ashes — telling myself there must be some trace left, some mark, if only a mere possibility.

And again the torment returns — that demon who haunts all my journeys, that shadow whispering in my ear that my search is futile, that I will find nothing, that all has been consumed.

Vade retro, Satanas !

I am not looking for what *you* think — not those empty illusions with which you once clothed our reason. I am not seeking the Good, nor the True, nor even the Beautiful. Nietzsche set fire to those chimeras. What could remain of what never truly existed, other than the end of our belief in it ?

Only *Science* still believes in such ghosts.

Has the tribunal of Reason — that guardian of “eternal truths” — truly been defeated ? Definitively ? I would like to convince myself of it, so I might begin thinking anew. But these are myths, and myths are phoenixes : they always rise again, adopting new

forms. My torment is the return of idols, of those reasons we believe to be sound — yet are not.

Zarathustra shattered the tablets of the Law : but did he break the Law itself, or merely the tablets ? When “eternal truths,” clothed in myth, return with force — what new truths could we invent that might stand against them ?

What I seek are fragments, crumbs of truth. Philosophy is a singular act, an agitation : it shakes words, assigns them new charges — that is, new intensities — and pursues them relentlessly across their most unexpected associations and lines of flight. Philosophy creates concepts, animating them on a plane of immanence until they yield some glimmer of truth — not Truth with a capital “T,” but partial and always provisional truths.

To seek these truths for their own sake would be madness : they are always referred, always tied to the weight and usage of concepts, always anchored in the *why* of that usage. These referred truths are not relative, however. They always hold an indisputable force of relevance the moment they appear. But they are not eternal ; they are not ideal objects hovering outside the world to tell us what the world is — or what it should be. The world does not arise from truth ; rather, truth arises from

the world. And truths are like the world they are torn from : always becoming.

That is why this book is not a book, but rather a *territory* of truths seeking themselves — above all, truths being *created* within the fields of possibility opened up by hollow bodies. This semblance of a book is a hollow body ! Hollow bodies are countless, as numerous as the lines of flight taken by concepts.

The most crucial question, then, is that of the *possibles* — outside of which no being can become. It is being-as-possibility that we must interrogate, and we must do so starting from the singular being who becomes within immanence.

Nietzsche's Will to Power and the emergence of the Overman always presuppose these possibles, which Nietzsche interprets as struggles of forces. Just as the Marxists made humanity a product of history, Nietzsche made humanity the product of power struggles. In this system of constitution through a third term, *freedom* is dismissed — for it is bound to values and rendered useless, if not harmful.

Against such reductionisms, it is essential to affirm that freedom is not, in the face of values, a source of guilt — but quite the opposite : freedom is *ontological*, the primary expression of human existence. We exist *freely* ! It is freely that human beings

choose their possibles, as the necessary conditions of their own becoming.

This is why the Will to Power will here be interpreted as the Will-to-Be of the Self.

The *Self* ! There's a concept no one expected to see appear in this strange affair. The Self returns us to presence-to-self and the circuit of *ipseity*. The Self is the great absence in Sartrean ontology. The Self is the *Other* of the "I" — the unfolding of "I is an Other," that famous line from Rimbaud's *Letter of the Seer*. But to get there, we must pass through the *Ego*, and we must settle accounts with Sartre — because the Ego is not the Other of the "I," but merely its intra-worldly singularization.

This is not a book. It is a *territory*, a virtual space — a *tatami* of ideas : the ideas of some with and against the ideas of others. A game of concepts that deterritorialize, only to reterritorialize anew.

If there were, behind all this agitation, some form of unity — that unity would be the *rhizome* : a conceptual character, or a singular being in immanent becoming ? It hardly matters.

The rhizome is multiple, as multiple as the concepts that shape ideas. This multiplicity is that of *auto-distancing*. The rhizome, in

its unfolding, becomes other while remaining itself — through the very act of self-distancing that *A Thousand Plateaus* speaks of. The plateaus belong to the rhizome in the form of a singular disappropriation : each plateau is a site for the emergence of new meaning, for an unfinished being.

And yet, the rhizome retains its unity — a unity generated by the internal flow within the rhizome, which is both principle and motor of its unfolding. Is this flow continuous or discontinuous ? It is diachronic. But its continuity, being genealogical, does not break — it is continuous *by capillarity*.

The discontinuity of the flow appears as *folds*, and belongs to the realm of the rough. As the flow unfolds the folds, new meanings are released — meanings that redirect the rhizome's self-unfolding. Hence the necessity of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

The folds are not points of rupture, but singularities — and as they are unfolded, they generate constant decentralizations within the rhizome, which cannot have a center. The unfolding of the fold diverts the flow, but never interrupts it. The flow carves its bed into the valley of folds, and it is the folds that determine the shape of its course — just as the topography of a place determines the course of a river.

The Self, in its own way, is the “Grail” of philosophy — its ultimate aim, the unquestionable truth of our humanity. But the Self cannot be grasped like one catches flies : the Self demands everything of a being. One is not Self — one *becomes* Self. The Self is the *tomorrow* of the “I,” that which offers itself to thought as being-to-come.

The Self is an opening at the heart of being — an uninhabited void as the ground of possibility, a call to exist as singularity. The Self is not an ontological category, not a synthetic and unstable blend of being and nothingness. The Self is the *to-be-realized*, being in its most intimate suffering, being in its most radical lack.

Such is the Self — and such is my torment : to bring into being what too many philosophers have left in nothingness ; to shatter the (Hegelian) negativity of not-being. If the Self persists as a mode of non-being, it is because no concept has yet been able to rupture the ontological contradiction — to bring forth the impossible synthesis of being and non-being.

At the heart of this impossibility lies all the weight — the *extreme* weight — of a tradition more than two thousand years old. That weight is the weight of the syllogism and the dialectic — in short, of logic, which, as the sole law of Reason, has

rendered the imagined unthinkable, the forbidden realm of all concepts.

This book is not a book because nothing said within it pretends to anything — except to give words to a torment. I know of the skeptics, those who, in such matters, will see nothing worth being tormented over. But philosophy is not a calm river, not a raft that finds in tranquil waters the reason for each of its moves. Under threat, thought becomes turmoil — a storm ripe for error and missteps.

Is the goal to think correctly ? No. Only to think — *at all* — when everything tells us not to. To evoke, to suggest truths — these small truths that make up life, *our* life, here and now — truths that make scholars laugh, those spiritual ascetics who have no interest in life itself.

David against Goliath ? Perhaps. But one has everything to gain when one has nothing left to lose.

Cynicism — that's the weapon of all the pretentious. Didn't Maupassant write that Schopenhauer's cynicism lay entirely in his false teeth ? Are these cynics even worth responding to ? Isn't it enough to toss them a few bones ? Cynicism is an artifice — a false form of argumentation that evades the common mind.

Cynicism never convinced anyone ; its sole function is to break those who dare to think better. It is an admission of defeat — cynicism wounds only those who wield it. That is reason enough to dig deeper, to go to the root of things.

In the end, who really cares to be told the truth ? He who clings to what he knows is false ? Or the one who cannot yet tell truth from falsehood ?

This book is not a book. One can be convinced of that, provided one accepts that it speaks to those who will never read it. What could they possibly learn ? That a tormented mind casts a shadow over Reason ? That would be to see the surface of the text only — to reduce it to words and the meanings one assigns them, refusing to grasp the essential : the anxious intimacy spilling from these words.

This “book” is only a fragment of an existential plot — the telling of an event that shatters its own boundaries. A text inhabited by something that escapes it — yet is also its key — cannot be a book. A literary curiosity ? A “temptation of the impossible” ? A piece of evidence in a crime against Reason ?

I would call it rather a *failed act* — the sign of a thinking that, incapable of expressing itself, pretends to be another, borrowing its language with an awkwardness that betrays it.

The text borrows from many genres : poetry, dialogue, essay, staged scene, aphorism. There are so many ways to say things.

“The Philosopher and the Spider,” the final chapter, is the broken sequel to the prologue. What lies between is a philosophical essay, its main lines picked up and commented in the dialogue with Argiope, my philosopher-spider.

The whole might be mistaken for a game of the mind — a common reproach toward the artisans of philosophy. It is not. I intend it as a cross-reading, a “posthumous” debate offered in the greatest respect due to the great figures of philosophy.

I said it from the beginning : I am the child of torment, and it would be in vain to seek for me any other lineage. If I owe anything, it is to Sartre, who, for far too long, was my master. If my words today pull away from him, the attachment I hold remains as real as it was on the very first day.

CHAPTER I

METAPHYSICS OF THE SOUL

“Religion is the metaphysics of the people,” said Schopenhauer, with all the arrogance and contempt we’ve come to expect from him. God, the soul, and freedom are the three antinomies of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, and as such, they become the

three postulates of *Practical Reason* — in other words, the basis, through assent, of the categorical imperative, the famous “Thou shalt.”

Truth be told, and despite his claims, Schopenhauer was far less Kantian than he was anti-Hegelian. His loyalty to Kant extended only to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, untouched — in his view — by religious contamination, which he believed he saw creeping into the antinomies.

But if God, the soul, and freedom are antinomies, it is precisely because they lend themselves to contradiction : to affirm or deny the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, or human freedom — either choice is equally justifiable within rational bounds.

For Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Representation*), the world appears in two ways : on one hand, as a blind will to live, and on the other, as representation — in the Kantian sense. The result, Nietzsche tells us, is an ascetic ideal : a retreat from the world as will into the world as representation. But Nietzsche calls this retreat a *will to nothingness* — for it is an escape from reality, from life itself, into a hollow ideal.

If religion belongs to the people and metaphysics — that is, philosophy — to enlightened minds, this does not mean that

God has a place within metaphysics. Metaphysics is necessarily atheistic. I won't dwell here on that position, which Schopenhauer was not alone in defending.

If the soul is postulated by Kant's practical reason, it nevertheless does not belong to metaphysics — which Heidegger showed, convincingly, to have collapsed at its foundations. To speak of a "metaphysics of the soul," then, is as anti-Kantian as Nietzsche's critique of nihilism ever was.

"Kantianism has clean hands," said Valéry, "but no hands at all." Meaning that Kantian morality, grounded in Reason and expressed through universal maxims, may stem from a pious intention, but it is incapable of grounding any real praxis. Like Kant's architectonics of knowledge, it remains an abstraction.

In the context of a philosophical movement that seeks to deconstruct and transcend metaphysics (from Nietzsche to Heidegger), is it still appropriate to pair "soul" and "metaphysics" in a single expression ? Is this not lending legitimacy to the very errors Nietzsche and Heidegger sought to discredit ?

The term "metaphysics," as I use it here, does not refer to the metaphysics of the Scholastics or the Moderns. It refers, more simply, to a view of philosophy as a descent into depth — a

probing of interiority that, without dismissing psychological insights, seeks to reach the abyss, the bottomless distress of existence.

This distress, seemingly born of modernity — and so vividly described by Hölderlin and Heidegger — is, despite its formlessness, the core symptom of a failed existence, an inauthentic present, a collapse of our free will, a surrender to worldly time, and a slow suicide of our most proper being.

Modernity has shattered the becoming of the Self. More than ever, man has become the reflection of an artificial, deceptive world he himself created — and over which he has lost control. Modernity, more through its discourse than its deeds, has turned man into a “has-been,” an idealized construct (recall Plato’s “man,” mocked by Diogenes in the marketplace), a desire imprisoned within a system, stripped of all agency — as Deleuze might say.

The modern man, globalized and uprooted, has lost the sense of the *natal*, and with it, any authentic connection to nature — which he now seeks, with ever greater refinement, to dominate. But in dominating nature, he also seeks to dominate himself, since he is part of it.

Human destiny is existentially tied to nature. Without it, man is doomed to disappear — leaving behind only the damage he caused. And if there is a god for man, that god too is essentially — ontologically — bound to nature. Any other god is merely a hypostasis, a mystification meant to convince us that we lack what is already given — but which we fail to see, because what we consider our true nature is, in fact, a failed act.

This is what every religion tries to make us believe. And we concede to it only because we hold a contemptible view of ourselves. We dream of “more” when we lack for nothing. Man is already in his place, without flaw — but he doesn’t know it, trapped in remnants of belief that sustain his alienation. Man’s contingency is only the one he assigns himself in his own perception. He is an absolute — feigning resignation — conjugated into the relative.

In *Les Charbonneuses*, one finds this call to life delivered by a squirrel — guardian of the oak’s fertility, its enduring host. This life, endlessly deferred by religious belief, becomes a growing burden — the steep price for divine indulgence. To deny what we already possess, in the name of a far-off promise — this is the core of eschatological messianism, whether Christian or Marxist.

To dream of a better world than the one we ourselves have defaced ; to imagine that, once time is fulfilled, we will become the nightingales of a god who somehow cannot delight in the melodious songs of blackbirds and larks — what self-deception !

It is *death* that makes us the debtors of the gods — *unknown to our anxiety*, as Heidegger says. How can we know where life ends, when we don't even know where it begins ? With death, life becomes merely the space between two dates carved into a headstone.

Death — the one we fear — is only the last of all our deaths. At every moment, we die to the authentic being that life demands of us. And yet, as Péguy said, each of our moments is a fragment of eternity.

Who better than Nietzsche — the prophet of Eternal Return — has spoken of eternity in the instant ?

“The first question is not whether we are satisfied with ourselves,
but whether there is *anything* we are satisfied with.
If we say *yes* to a single moment,

We have thereby said *yes* not only to ourselves but to all of existence.

For nothing is isolated — neither in ourselves nor in things —
and if our soul has ever once trembled with joy

And resonated like the strings of a lyre,

Then all of eternity was necessary to bring forth that one event.
And in that single moment of affirmation,

All eternity was affirmed, justified, redeemed.”

(Nietzsche, The Will to Power)

BEWARE...

Dear reader, beware of the words you're about to read :

They are but passion, or stifled sobbing breath.

You'll see me curse the stupid laws men heed,

And weep upon their hearts of stone — and death.

Poor reader, now condemned to bear my sentence,

Do you recall that gentle lie once told,

That dressed this fallen world in false transcendence ?

Sisyphus has slipped again below his hold.

The poet is free, and laughs at rules of grammar,

At curious accords and tidy, binding links ;

He lays his words as shifting marks and manners,
And scorns syntax — its false, dividing inks.

They ask the poet to describe what's bright,
An ode to light that bursts in blooms of spring,
To cloak the world, its ugliness, in white,
In morning roses — timed and blossoming.

Rhymers ! Singers of dawn who shine false gold
Upon the ruins of a world diseased,
Vile Parnassians — who your wonders mold
To veil life's ugliness with poisoned ease.

I've ridden Pegasus to impossible skies,
That wept for what a pitiful man forgets ;
I've mocked foul chimeras in haunted rites
And mistook mud paths for mystic quests.

I was never of this world nor its cruelty,
Dreaming wide awake like a foolish child ;
O tears of remorse that fall and humble me,
Whisper hell's truth in silence, soft and wild.

Regret ! I clouded reason with dreams too sweet,
Thinking heaven was full of promises to be ;

I drank mad speech like wine, complete —
Unaware of life's deep poverty in me.

Nonsense ! The world is not what I had dreamed,
Crushed beneath a sky that pours its plague,
A present overflowing — frayed and unredeemed,
A sponge worn dry by grief too vague.

Starving for my blood, wolves bare their fangs
On the corpse of my life, rhyme laid to rest ;
In a deathly absence, forgotten by language,
Silence settles deep within my chest.

So here I vow, upon this path ahead,
To erase the colors I once painted on my soul ;
Reason shall dress my verse in darkest thread,
Flawless — to preserve my self-control.

I weep upon this desert that scours my knees,
No well to quench the thirst of my desires ;
I've spat out dreams and their jeweled gleam —
Extinguished, my soul breathes only in sighs.

Is there, anywhere, the *elsewhere* of an impossible *here* ?
The soul's very void is to flee from itself,

A useless redemption, a reprieve never clear,
From its tragic present, devoured by the flame's stealth.

The soul is an inner realm, washed of reason,
A tilt toward what-is, as things only seem ;
A gaze torn apart by private delusions —
An aftertaste bitter with the echo of dreams.

The soul feeds on all, a fickle omnivore,
Drinking misfortune, tasting every wound,
Submitting unjustly to dark designs once more —
Grief builds its nest where blackest thoughts are found.

The lost one gathers pale light from decay,
A fall from being-less to a saving forget ;
Spilling odd warmth on a lake carved from grey,
Where boredom hides in surprises unmet.

Only the hollow remains beyond the weeping,
The soul surrenders to insomnia's tide,
Twilight steeped in indigent sleeping,
A dance of banished demons at morning's side.

Metaphysics of the soul, knotted in contrition,
A stench of thought, like burning sulfurous breath ;

The spirit turns to matter in failed ascension,
Earthbound immanence sentenced to death.

It longs for elsewhere, this soul all consumed,
Burned on the pyre of its own thin despair ;
And daring the futility of a being unglued,
It paints its wound with a flicker of care.

From the *in vain* of being it betrays its curse,
And offers to every god its servile fate :
Of the soul, its *nowhere* becomes the here dispersed,
A pathetic return from life left too late.

Heaven is charged with answering the wrecks
Of a shipwreck foaming with unspeakable cause ;
Fides sive Ratio — which our minds deflect :
“I believe” is but the echo of our flaws.

And what man has lost, God now becomes :
A self betrayed by common abjection,
For what makes of man the illusion of the undone —
The feared serpent of dark benedictions.

Bitter is the crusade that turns from its gods,
An abyssal depression of returning to self ;

A guilty vanity cloaks us in its fraud :
The corpse of the divine brings unbearable death.

Insane ! You become the hue of our soul,
Desolation of tears in the heart of defeat ;
An empty sky spills on a world grown cold —
Of the hollowed-out being, only crusts repeat.

All is now but semblance, a nameless being-there,
Anonymous persistence of one who never was.
What more could we invent, more worthy and bare,
A denial of God — to make man's fate just cause ?

Do we not commune in this divine decease ?
God's burial makes of us a homeland reborn.
We greet the soul's death with weeping and release —
An unspoken suicide, by existence torn.

Despair ! God is dead, and so too is the soul,
A swamp of deicide stripping thought of ground,
In the reeking marshmouth where no meaning holds —
A vanishing bog where reason is unbound.

The soul dries out in tears for its failed design,
A coffin of existence forced to decay ;

The shattered bones of God take revenge, in kind,
For being forgotten in lives led astray.

The fool falls silent with so few regrets :
What could he say to our heedless confusion ?
Of Prometheus — son of Titan — what's left
But a dim memory, a willed illusion ?

Humans are greedy for having come in vain,
A shameful indolence turned into noble fight —
To lead the being to Self, step by step in pain,
Each pace crushed by sorrow, far from the light.

Why mourn God's murder with such meager grief ?
Who cries "fraud" when a hunter takes his aim
And feeds on lifeless prey in cold relief ?
The slain is not, for man, a cause for shame.

God is not banished but through values denied —
Shackles of the being-there, craving to be free.
"Doing good" breaks the pace of those once tied
To the rhythmic myths of a forged history.

Herr Nietzsche would be wrong to overlook
That fallen values must be born anew ;

It is for man to retune the world's true book —
Without recalling God as reason's cue.

There's no attempt turned success in the end,
And no heir to values we've left behind.
The world is unadorned, a corpse we pretend —
Man is to himself but dust, scattered, blind.

Can he rise again from the depths of his void,
Other than what he was before God's death ?
The soul is drunk with sorrow to speak of its *before* :
Can one be born with no past — no envious breath ?

If man is to come from his will alone,
Then let it be without God or mirrored peer.
The soul is a mystery dark and unknown —
God but its echo, lost in shadowed frontier.

No vain passion can make a *here* into *elsewhere* :
Man is, says Heidegger, "a being of distances."
He is only his possibles — clashing with the In-itself,
A nothingness from need, the overflow of absence.

Will he become, without God, the will to be himself —
An ego as property that owes nothing to another ?

An ontic refraction of a possible enthymeme,
The folding of an audacity from which being discovers.

Men are their own question, posed in solitude :
To ask the whole is to interrogate the self.
The world, for man, is but his conscious view —
An object outside himself, in which being resolves.

This is no hollow speech, no play of clever words,
Except to bad faith that refuses its own being.
Only reason, admitting it is not confined,
Can become freely the Self this poem names.

It's by a false syllogism that God's death
Is followed by man's, trapped in "in vain."
From this "logic," there flows a hollow breath,
Puffed up by the claim that without Him, there's no gain.

If we are mere emanations of divine being,
To whom does birth belong — to what does all arise ?
We sidestep the soul's unease by convenient dreaming :
From holy fantasies, the Christian feeds his lies.

Yet our souls unravel from their falsity ;
The stain spreads like a plague that silently kills.

No priest's contrition can still be heard clearly,
To wash away sins with his divine goodwill.

Only plague remains, turning us into rats,
An inward transmutation of a worthless breed.
From the rodent's thought, our soul borrows its maps —
A secular assumption, a probable deceit.

From such broken souls seeps a dubious pus,
An abscess bursting, emptied of all belief ;
An inner rot from a Christianity gone vicious —
The soul becomes the drain of a sordid grief.

Antichrist is the name of a makeshift vaccine,
Early medicine for those Christian sores ;
There is no more Christendom to taste its decline —
Souls have washed away all they once adored.

From our rinsed-out souls remains only a void,
A craving to be filled with some other feeling ;
But the soul, thus emptied of its Christian feed,
Deprived of matter, reveals its slow drying.

And the soul contracts, until it no longer is :
Only the *Idea* of return seems to remain.

But the soul returns not, nor makes itself seen
As animated by ecstatic life again.

Having no more desire to add itself to being,
Vanity closes our eyelids like soft stones ;
In this absurd being-there that reason keeps fleeing,
Dasein weds misery as if it were its own.

No perdition is final, if one chooses anew —
But will alone is not enough to carry us on,
Not beyond appearances, to what is true,
To where the Self lies — the gate not yet drawn.

What else must be added to reach one's own soul ?
What lacks in our minds that the soul might still keep ?
It is this lack of being that thought cannot hold,
And moods make destiny from questions too deep.

What lacks in our willing is simply to name its aim :
What we need is a will — not *to be*, but *to power*.
What else could it mean, but to stake our claim
To become *being-for-Self* — man's destined flower.

FORGETFULNESS

Happiness ! Forgetting is its principle and condition :
The flood of memory drags too many wrecks along.

Painful recollections — an infection of the soul —
Time moves forward, and our lives go wrong.

It's a cursed rosary that haunts our reason :
Our wounded hearts are never truly repaired ;
Hope is shattered in dreadful depression,
And our lives burn out, with no one to care.

The images of the past rise back to the surface,
Buried deep within our human abyss ;
They return as twisted, sordid grimaces,
Poisoning our lives with malice we miss.

What good are memories that break our will ?
He who clings to them lets in the dark,
And his story halts, his soul turns still —
False prayers shape his fate, cold and stark.

Each step aches on these dry, punishing tracks,
Leading elsewhere, toward bitter ends ;
Our demons feast on what the past still lacks,
And mire our journey in paths that bend.

Let us leave memories to a possible death ;
Memory betrays when the past reappears —

The death of a life that slips into rest,
And we become its prisoners of years.

The present fades beneath these tales,
Feeding tomorrow with empty lines ;
Soaked in memory that quietly prevails,
Our lives stretch long like useless twine.

No heart in joy renounces forgetting ;
Unaware its life is built on lies,
One must pay the price of healing,
A smile that absorbs what silence denies.

Yet sometimes forgetting must be withheld,
For it hides, in sickly ways, what matters ;
One denies that morals hold any wealth,
That actions might mean more than scattered tatters.

Look to ancient peoples who, to organize,
Carved laws in stone for the common ground ;
No one, within their home, could escape their ties —
Singular wills were what those laws drowned.

Social utility — here lies the core :
No private soul ever made it its creed.

Must this shared rule be our guiding shore,
To prevent society from slipping in greed ?

Society is not the sum of all souls :
In the human anthill, not one path is the same.
Each man walks alone, no evil goal
Can justify calling death in his name.

So old morality sought to create
A foundation for collective consent ;
Scholars and sages tried to relate,
Probing the source of grim laws long spent.

What foolish lie would they finally choose
To found a new morality fit for all ?
One the enlightened could easily use —
To claim cohesion for mankind's sprawl ?

Nothing more grand than a God in retreat,
Grasping this thing and cloaking it in sense ;
For those who seek salvation, the rule is sweet :
There is no other excuse for obedience.

The rule is woven deep in our minds,
Telling what should be done, come what may ;

Without shame, it seizes secret designs,
And dictates to servants what's fit to obey.

And each convinces himself of divine decree ;
The servile are content with scholastic fate,
Which promises reward for acts obediently —
No mystic seems too human to emulate.

Let us not forget the reason for these things :
They serve the utility of life in society.
Are there grander ways, nobler imaginings,
Than to crush our lives in pure servility ?

TORMENTS

Torments of my madness — you drown my reason
In rivers with no return, that carry my despair ;
To all this hopelessness, stripped of horizon,
Is there even one stop that offers rest somewhere ?

There are so many things one ought to forget :
Insults, betrayals, and all that was vile.
But time has passed and kept these wounds fresh —
And my thoughts go astray, drunk on their bile.

Sorrows push and shove through the story I wear,
My sleep is made of boredom that never gives peace.

In my days, too brief, it's the night I most fear —
A dance of ghosts whose verses never cease.

Do you remember yesterday, the gallows of innocence,
Your childhood stolen by that painted facade ?
Time is a murderer, stitched in malevolence,
And your laughter fell silent, omen grim and flawed...

Here the child lies, covered beneath a stone,
But the earth is stained with an overflow of tears ;
No prayers remember him, he grieves all alone,
Only a faded photo recalls what once was dear.

How many cruelties crushed all your hopes ?
What curse has claimed your life as prey ?
Time has vanished — I see only the dark,
Cursing those demons that stole joy away.

My days are sadness, draining my pain ;
I am the wanderer of fog, sick with being.
Stripped by life, begging with my gaze —
Who could see me, and pull me from nothing ?

So I went away, leaving only my shadow,
And from that near-nothing, still misery is made.

I've worn so many faces I no longer know —
That I could be so many is a mystery I evade.

Cast into the void, I am but a "has-been,"
A no-longer dressed in impossible tales ;
Object of a thousand looks that shape what they mean —
What do lies matter, when one is just a name that fails ?

Nothing holds them back, those who savor evil,
Feeding their thrill with visions of my fall.
To have hurt me is, for them, a joy most civil —
They rise so high, no truth dares them at all.

There is no greed a crime could ever repay :
Conscience slips away from such twisted minds.
To crush the weak, what cost must one outlay
But scorn poured deep upon their pained confines ?

What matter my torments, so long as they're not theirs ?
The beast is full and digests my despair.
And having claimed the righteous cause as theirs,
They pose as saints — liars clothed in prayer.

Enough of these monsters ! I must return to self,
Escape from this void, be reborn into light.

But life — what is Life ? This shape I've become ?

A monstrous parody, alone in the night ?

I know all of hell, even what still awaits ;

Is Satan my only companion in grief ?

I'd wish to walk with God to set my gait —

If He is salvation, then spare me His relief !

I carry too much pain for any god to cure :

There is no life but the life of my torment.

It is already too late, no smile can endure

All these false hopes dressed in other garments.

Everything's been played — I know despair by name.

My children watch me through their gentle care,

Hoping some morning I'll walk out of this shame —

And I know you're so near, daring all I bear.

What is allowed to you that even God cannot ?

Oceans of fire have made my tale so deep,

An abyss where no brave soul could ever allot

Even a shard of hope for me to keep.

Life is thus : mine was a tale betrayed.

No more tears should fall upon my fate.

Let me walk away into forgetfulness made —
I seek only rest, while others celebrate.

From the ruin that I am, they build their pride.
I hear them sing of the triumph they won —
Over one whose weakness they knew to bide :
What matters the season ? In my heart, it has rained on.

My candle was snuffed by the breath of these thieves ;
Night is my companion — I no longer know the day.
I live among shadows and echo what grieves ;
Night repents, each time the dawn finds its way.

You, my most faithful — witnesses to my pain —
Weep not so loudly that demons might hear,
And forge from your tears a final cruel chain :
Is there any evil that doesn't spring from will here ?

These wolves, so many, know only how to lurk,
Watching in silence for each of our steps ;
They find joy in harm, as if it were their work —
To cast what doesn't fit into the ruts they've kept.

Let them be cursed, sowers of bitterness !
Let their sins be hung from the gallows of oak !

May they drown without mercy when the fog is thickest,
And be ash — nothing more — from the fire's final stroke.

Sadness and despair ! My life drags on in vain ;
The apothecary's vials ease nothing of my grief.
My mind is soaked with this fatal poison strain —
My thoughts now drip with useless, bitter belief.

My life is absence — a season cast in hell.
Rimbaud, what did you see in your burning delirium ?
Did the ugly grow beautiful, by some prayer's spell ?
Do you feel no remorse for naming yourself *seer* to them ?

Was Rousseau a fool to believe in man's grace ?
Was it no more than a dream of his solitary walk ?
So many wicked ones hide in the human race —
Can you silence them, Rousseau, as they stalk ?

He was a poor fool to deny the plain truth :
Everywhere, misery, and men breaking down.
Is there a blessed place untouched by brute
Suffering ? If not a dream, tell me where it's found !

I've known too well the mirage ! No such *elsewhere*
Escapes the cruelty that ruins all peace.

I see only turmoil — tears split and flared —
And wounds stacked high, their worst never ceased.

Is my God so cowardly to hand me to Satan ?
What does this blasphemy earn, but another lie ?
The priest's claw poisoned the act of living —
Did he think burning his mattress would make him cry ?

There is no vile subject that escapes its curse ;
Evil, to spread, wears the face of men.
Immanent justice weighs sorrow's full purse :
The wise once said, from each wrong, a greater good is born
again.

Erase the memory — no regret, no stir ;
Perhaps to exist too much is to renounce disdain.
Could tomorrow dissolve all that I suffer ?
Might a ray of light break through my hidden pain ?

Let one last tear fall — bid farewell to yesterdays ;
Look to the sky, drunk on the stars' delight.
Forget the ugliness, be rocked by the rays ;
Betray betrayal, tear its web from sight.

THE CROW

*"If you seek the light, go where it is born :
From darkness alone bursts forth the bright flare.
The day does not rise from the break of morn—
Wait for dusk, and search its layered lairs."
— D. Clarinval, *The Banquet**

He is cloaked in black, as are all his thoughts,
And slanders in silence, cloaked in anonymity ;
Thus goes the crow, whose fabric evil wrought—
No petty spy quite matches his duplicity !

He records our acts with a notary's flair,
Perched high on his branch, observer of all ;
He drafts his report on the ways that we fare,
Judging our lives from his shadowed hall.

But from his low nest, he cannot see whole ;
The pieces he lacks, he crafts from thin air.
What matters the truth to his vulture's role ?
He's author of all that escapes his stare.

He pens twisted tales, where we play the parts,
And stories stitched from unspoken lies.
But no echo of song flows from his heart—
This crow, a sponge for what truth denies.

Brooding on his eggs, he hatches our woe,
He scripts our lives through passions obscene.
Of the just around him, like some Inquisitor crow,
He stains every good with the blackest ink seen.

This bird of misfortune, hatched in despair,
Is no rustic fowl sowing seeds in our fields ;
His name, plucked from hearses, rises from air—
He serves cruel death, and to it, he yields.

What informant weeps for the ruin he sows,
Tormented by guilt for the grief he births ?
Does such a demon ever hold one close,
Not turning them prey in his vengeful thirst ?

I once was ensnared by such demon's aim—
Crushed by words born of malice and spite,
Without signature, veiled, defiling my name,
Until before the police, I faced my plight.

And of these slanders, some still remain :
Even now I carry the wound they made.
A year has passed since that ruthless pain—
Life's sweetest tastes have slowly decayed.

I die in slow steps, invaded by this ill,
Knowing only night and its deepest shroud ;
Banished from the light by a cursed word's chill,
I've made the Prince of Darkness my friend aloud.

I know the solitude of being unheard :
My den is a prison, its key long thrown ;
In the writings of the dead and their ghostly words,
I lose the present, and fill my mind alone.

I'm a living corpse, the shadow of my past ;
Misery ! I'd turn time's current from its flow.
What care have I for men, if none shall last ?
A spider's quiet kinship brings less woe.

For spiders deceive not, nor veil their threads :
Fall into their web, it is but by mistake.
But crows—cunning crows—conceal all their dreads ;
How dodge what they hide, no matter what's at stake ?

Would you know the name behind my torment's tale ?
She masked her trace so no one might discern,
But I've torn through the veil of her sweet betrayal—
I know who shaped the fate for which I burn.

To Satan I entrust this justice I crave :
Is he not my friend, as much as his twin ?
We think they're enemies—how foolish, how grave !
One brews the wine of life, the other grinds its grain.

I know well : crows are a feast for the fiend,
And the Devil dines best on their deceit.
The nameless who wound—their fate is to descend ;
Their only hope is death's slow, final beat.

And did not Nietzsche, philosopher fierce,
Write *Dawn* as mirror to our downfall's stain ?
Are not those pages filled with frauds and smears
And lies crafted with elegant disdain ?

Nietzsche—I pity him, that I must write his name,
Yet was he not my guide, sharing his lore,
His secrets whispered through reason's flame ?
Did he not sign as sages ever did before ?

There is but one name he gave to a book—
Was it an omen, in both our lives entwined ?
Did he place there the grief from which I shook ?
Did he name the sorrow that shattered my mind ?

Dweller of the night, I await dusk's veil
And curse the dawns that give the day its birth ;
To all his bright favors, Helios is too frail—
He cannot grasp what hides beneath the earth...

MY FRIEND WITH THE HAT

I no longer hear your voice, my friend with the hat :
Now reduced to a whisper—what have you done with your soul
?

You were never stingy with the most honest chat,
So why, turned to dust, does your silence take its toll ?

The yesterdays return with words sharp as flame :
Hasn't the world been reshaped time and again ?
We struck down injustice, gave it no name,
Dreaming of futures, never thinking of the end.

Will we one day speak of our shattered designs,
Of those wandering nights by the shore's idle sway ?
Now an abyss is etched in the depths of my mind—
Our story undone, hope's shadow washed away.

I recall some faint noon of uncertain speech :
A candle consumed, as time wept its flame,

A bitter goodbye, just out of reach,
Suspended forever in an unspoken name.

Did you sip the dew from the tears I once shed,
In your prison of wood, beneath dirt and regret ?
Incomplete sighs stretched where the boatmen tread,
To unreachable shores the fog helped forget.

I saw you shipwrecked on a bed of bare stones,
Indecent grave of too little dust ;
A draining lie, an existence disowned,
A murderer's trick clothed in pitiless crust.

Pathetic display of a bitter old hag,
Pouring out stench in perfume's disguise ;
Funereal arrogance in a worn-out rag—
The hidden revenge behind grief's thin guise.

No donkey complains of its meager meal,
Though choked with sobs and fed by sorrow ;
I know no misery crueler or more real
Than a friend departing with no more tomorrows.

I've furnished my cave with fragments of you :
Some innocent laughter we barely rehearsed,

Whispers of trust, or a moment's truth—
A friendship cut short, now closed in a thirst.

But don't see an elegy in this hat I wear :
Scratched by memory and photos now grey,
I wear on my head this object of despair,
Bringing the past to life in a present that won't decay.

I laugh at death and its vain deprivations :
Time erases nothing we might forget ;
Yesterdays are tomorrow—strange consolations
For lives stitched from what has already been set.

I scorn time, that tyrant who longs to conceal
The past like a letter locked in a drawer ;
Closets fall silent once the door they seal—
What once was lies dormant, stared at no more.

But still the mind endures, forging what's to come ;
We are not bones meant only for the ground.
Who dares to say where the silent are from ?
Christian prayers too often spin mysteries profound.

Death is no void to devour what could be :
It's the altered shape of a being in stride,

Joining the flow of an unstoppable decree—
A life that insists, and won't be denied.

André walks with us toward the rising light ;
He's in all our battles and victories small.
His dreams drive us onward, lifting our fight—
He stokes the warm flame that flickers in all.

He dwells in my reason, sets my thoughts aflame,
Challenging the age's dull rhetoric and gaze ;
To lies and pretenses, he brings burning shame—
A blaze of conviction his legacy conveys.

It's no cheap remark to speak of unity :
Our minds are alike in striving for more ;
No word felt truer in shared sincerity,
Challenging toxic ideas we abhor.

The present is tomorrow where your name is writ,
An invisible signature haunting each line,
My cautious pen shaped by emotion and wit—
No secret of soul escapes written design.

Let me now fall silent and, in friendship's name,
Confess only what won't betray what was true ;

I'll not cheapen the tale with silence or shame—
There's no offense in withholding a view.

I've given my soul a sliver of its flame,
A homage, modest, to a faithful friend ;
The rest I keep guarded, too sacred to name—
André ! Beneath your hat, your Passion found its end.

METAMORPHOSIS

You're dressed in black and dream of another form,
To bid farewell to the girl you no longer are ;
No matter what you flee or still seek to transform,
Life runs deeper than glances that judge from afar.

I met with crows along my stony trail,
Mocking my stride, scorning my fate ;
Stumbling on jagged reefs, I lost the sail—
My *I* was an *Other*, absent from that state.

Often, words overflow with a venom so grim,
Murderers of hope, unraveling fate's design ;
The *Other* reveals what the *They* keep dim,
Confusing our *Is* with borrowed end lines.

And man made woman from a god's hollow bone,
Not truly his image, a crude washer instead,

Draped in dreams and a sigh not her own :
The Eternal Feminine—a romance misread !

Thus came the wife with a maternal role :
Her stretched belly deemed enough to exist !
Gender—a lie that defaces the whole,
Claiming same origins from man's possessive twist.

If two are too many to preserve their breath,
Passion makes them one, in shared unity ;
Beings merge in a selfless depth,
Each becoming the other, freed from identity.

Those called “genders” see but slight division—
A detail suffices for their petty discernment !
Yet humanity lies not in this derision :
Like the ancients, we wore the same garment.

A habit makes not a monk, nor nun in kind—
Yet cloth still divides in subtle decree ;
The pheasant's feathers speak not to the mind
Of the cock that struts with a simpler esprit.

“I hold no lesser vanities than women,” he said,
A brute with a voice trembling in doubt.

What's this quiver lodged in your throat, friend,
That makes your stale words falter, devout ?

You curse in women the surface they reveal—
But it's your own mis-acting, your secret betrayed,
A slip of the tongue, and a truth made real :
That *Other* in you seeks light, not shade.

You long to be faithless to the gender assigned,
To be, for a moment, the woman inside,
To renounce Reason's deliberate blind—
The *They* is a school where mediocrity hides.

And if, in woman, a man is revealed,
They swear before gods it's heresy plain—
An affront to nature, by order repealed,
Though "order" is but conscience in error and strain.

For all that divides us is modern deceit,
The fall of a harmony once whole and revered ;
What life now defies, we break and repeat,
Declining in genders what once we held clear.

We are prisoners caught in the system's design,
Assigned by a flux to compulsory roles ;

Our organless bodies are no longer mine—
Desire's invention by machine controls.

In the monster's skin, there's no coarse grain,
Only folds in thought where poison flows in ;
If man has dreams, then let him dream again,
In accord with the rhizome, he once did begin.

We know but a shred of the truth of this world—
So we build it anew to our whim and will.
But the world we create, in illusion unfurled,
Erases the rest, and keeps only the still.

When Margaux becomes Chris, the system breaks—
A grain of sand may unravel the whole ;
A gnat on the pine may be all that it takes
To shatter—or save—a tumbling soul.

Become who you are ! The wise have all said it :
If anything's worse than life in cities so foul,
With gossip and venom so tightly knit,
It's conforming to proverbs empty and dull.

Beyond Good and Evil—that's where we live,
In the Open Realm of forgotten speech,

Words of old, which once could give
Shelter to what we feared to reach.

Only the decadent claim those words anew—
An ascetic ideal now broken and spent.
So become the Chris you've always been true,
And forget those friends who voice their lament.

CHAPTER II

I IS ANOTHER

Who am I ? The question is difficult, perhaps insoluble, since "I is another." And yet, this I—I could retrace its history, the whole history—but to what end ? You don't make a loaf with crumbs. Kind souls keep repeating : "You must think about it, think for instance about where you came from, since you're not from here." But how can I know ? The dust, carried by the wind, has erased my footprints : nothing exists between here and there but the path I've walked, something like a failed act behind which hides another, never fulfilled. And you know it well : "I do not think, I am thought." I exist only in the head of a "they" I do not even know. I am a being thought into existence—at best a few words scattered on a blank page, perhaps a sentence. A text. A book that tells my story as it was imagined. Is this "they" the Other that I is ? Impossible ! If I is another, how could it

think me without thinking itself ? You keep asking, “Who are you ?” but how could I answer ? “I is another,” and is thought by a “they” : in other words, I is two—an I thought by others, but which I is not, since “I is another,” an Other that hides behind me and whom, like all of you, I am not. He chases me like a shadow, always behind me—what use is turning around if he will always be behind ?

Facing the mirror, I appear as others see me : could it be that the Other that I is looks just like me, so that in seeing me, one also sees the Other ? It follows then that I is now three : an I thought by “they,” the Other that I is, and this I that you see, who shows himself as identical to the Other. It also means that this I, although thought by “they,” exists in flesh and bone as you see him. But this I does not belong to himself, since he is thought by others.

You must think I’m mad—and perhaps you’re right, if that’s how you think of me. But if, like this “they,” you think I’m mad, then what difference is there between you and them ? This “they” who thinks me is all of you, who look at me with hidden hunger. This “they” who thinks me is you—all of you, observing me with greedy eyes, telling my story, inventing me, accusing me, making me into a vulgar news item. Day after day, with the patience of predators on the savannah, you imagined me, shaped me,

crafted me, tailored me to your whims. And now here I am—your object, your thing, your pastime, your pleasure perhaps, or even your necessity. You adopted me, made me yours, only to crush me, shred me, and spread me across the world like a sticky, vile paste—a being worthy of all your suspicions. Even now your gazes petrify me, because I can imagine myself only through your darkest thoughts.

“Who are you ?” you ask me ? But I am what you made of me. I am your creation, your success or your failure—it’s up to you to judge. To my own eyes, I am nothing, only your idea, in other words : nothingness. I am a hole in Being, the waste-bin of your arrogance and your cruelty. Where you left me, I now stand alone. The cockroaches and rats have fled my company. I am alone—do you understand ? Even God has left, for you thought me without him, just like yourselves. And yet, deep within my misery, in the abyss of my nothingness, his breath returns to me, like a spark of hope.

I am sick of your schemes, and I long to sleep, to forget you for a moment, to be nothing—not even a dream, not even the under-side of nothingness that knows no men. It is useless ! I am the child of torment, and rest is forbidden to me : hell is all I am owed !

I leave you what I am—you will make your meal of it ! But why are you silent now ? Have you nothing more to say, to accuse, to denounce ? Is my death enough for you ? Are you afraid to curse me, to spit on my grave ? Could it be that you fear your crime ? Perhaps you've thought me too much ? Have you, without meaning to, set me free—released me from the chains of your endless chatter ?

Nonsense ! I is useless. You have so many others to think. And thus I becomes an unthought, retreating into the hope of a chrysalis, a presage, or a sign of a possible metamorphosis. Will the camel become the lion, friend of Zarathustra, feasting on higher men ?

In the folds of his seventh solitude, high among the eagles and serpents, I becomes drunk on light at each new dawn—ever less I. Far from all the “theys,” I begins to think—and in doing so, becomes, forged by his own words. In this deadly silence, the Other emerges. Timidly he takes his first steps, and stumbles only when I remembers. And I, dazzled by the Other advancing, strives to forget : the more I fades, the more the Other unfolds his power. The Other wants only that power which I was stripped of by the “they” who, thinking him, made of him a decadent.

And the Other grows stronger as the I diminishes.

In the valley, when life-bearing water delays its return, the “theys” fester—like toads—eager for a new prey, a new I to think into being. And so the toads swell, their bumpy skins taut with foul thoughts, but toads lack clarity : they mistake malice for power. Then they deflate—or burst—and spread around them the poison of their own hideousness. Malice is contagious. Its opposite, far less so.

From the toads in conversation come our opinions—philosophy of the unlearned masses, the doxa of the herd-mind. The tribal “I” becomes the same, a carbon copy, transparent, unnoticed, an invisible unthought. When the herd grows bored, it seizes one of its own, renders it falsely visible, makes it into an “I,” and casts it out into the desert : the scapegoat is merely a thought-I, a non-conforming I, unfit for herd life. The deserts are filled with such goats—unwelcome emissaries of the herd’s boredom.

“I is another”—another of this I thought by “they,” lost in the desert, addressed to someone who wasn’t expecting it, a Godot without even the certainty of arriving. But now the Other announces himself, and he comes to meet me : and yes, he looks just like me. “I am you,” he says, “you and only you.” I take some comfort in that, but still, we are two : he who is me, and

I—I who am, let's say it, merely a bottomless hole in the depths of my own skull. However little I may be, I am not *nothing*. So how can I become him, without being this leftover I anymore ?

"I understand your surprise," the Other admits to me, and adds : "I understand it all the better because I *am* you. More precisely, I am what your thought lacks in order to truly become yours, so that at last you might say : *I think, I build myself through my own thought*. But thought alone is not enough—I mean, thought is not just what gets written in words. In your soul dwell forces you don't suspect : affects, drives—call them what you will—but they are yours, and perhaps more precious to you than thought itself."

Hearing all this, I begin to see myself, to feel myself being born to myself—beyond suspicion, in a freedom I had never known. The Other, who is me, has perceived everything in my mood, this joy that lifts me like a rapture : to open up my poor head and chase out all the demons, those dark creatures who turned my life into a long night. I feel like a wild, untiring horse galloping toward the horizon's edge, from where the light bursts forth.

"Don't get carried away," the Other cuts in, and continues : "It's not so simple to be oneself—it takes great strength and

conviction to resist the constant pressure of the herd. To be oneself is, most often, to be alone ; for to be oneself is to think for oneself, at the risk of crossing the fence of thought's enclosure, of veering away from the herd. To be oneself is to expose oneself, to become visible, surely different—and thus to pose a threat to the whole herd, should others, in imitation, leave the sheepfold in turn.”

Hearing the Other speak this way, a doubt creeps into me : what will I gain by being myself ? Will I even have the strength ? It isn't solitude I fear—I've grown used to it, even fond of it. My refuge is a cemetery : strangely, I feel at ease among the dead. What I fear is being another Faust, bargaining with the devil—for I care little for knowledge ! If I love the company of the dead, it is for the unspeakable, for what lies hidden in books—for what, between the lines, strains to be said in absent words, the un-written written in ink, and which nonetheless *speaks*.

The Other smiles at me strangely—a deeply complicit smile—and resumes :

“How could I not know all this ? I am what you say. So why are you afraid ? The truth of the dead is worth as much as that of the living—and I am certain, more. Become what you are, become the always-more : to will power means nothing else.

One must have a tragic sense—love oneself in suffering as much as in joyful health—become a destiny. *Amor fati* ! I know your torment, these four letters that must one day change everything : God or nothing !”

I shouldn’t be surprised he knows me so well—he *is* me. Still, I find it strange that someone facing me should know these things I’ve never spoken aloud—indeed, it seems he knows them better than I do, that he knows far more deeply all that haunts me : the object of my torment, perhaps even my purpose.

“In the end,” he says with quiet satisfaction, “I have little to teach you about yourself. A revelation has been given to you, and still you doubt your ability to understand it. Yet you know how to prepare for it : when you finally do understand, you will recognize the part that belongs to you—your mission, if you will. And for that, you must take the hardest path—and you will climb it alone. You need no one ! Aim for the summit—never look back. Sweat and tears will erase every trace of your steps. Do not let yourself be distracted—there are so many who call themselves philosophers, yet are only chatterers. You know well how people have twisted the words of the masters—everyone complains about it, not least the slanderers themselves. After a century—and more—of wandering and babble, the time has

come, it seems to me, to reveal the prophecy. Time is beginning to press upon us.”

If I understand him correctly, it is up to me to take it on, to claim my part. I’ve often thought about it, I admit—but to go from thinking to wearing the mantle is another story. “Don’t be defeatist !” he urges. And then continues : “How many have thought you to be someone else ? How many selves have you been, up to this very day ? As many selves as encounters ! And you—the true, the only—you built yourself in silence, in solitude, often in forgetfulness. You are fire—destructive and healing : the fire that purifies by consuming the chaff. It has smoldered within you always—do not let it die. Become fire—that is your fate, your painful mission, the apocalypse of cursed souls, for all the weak must perish at the foot of their idols. Zarathustra was merely the Baptist of a new era—he broke history.”

What do you see around you ? A growing pessimism—deeper than ever. Humanity has damned itself ! Have you nothing to tell it that is more than a false promise ?

Heaven has flooded the earth—but who noticed ?

“The real life is absent,” he once confided to us : are we not strangers, the lost, beings without stories, prisoners of time ?

Time ! Are we not *igiturs*—drinkers of poison, shipwrecked in the book of curses ? Sleepers on the cold ground, the shroud of what once was, which feeds our false torments ?

Igitur wants to kill himself—it's pointless, for he is already dead, slain by the very chance he hopes to undo. To gamble one's life—and the world with it—on a throw of the dice : life would be nothing more than a mistake, an error of judgment, a bad draw. Not knowing how to think it—perhaps that is what we *believe* ?

Fides sive Ratio ! Faith is everywhere : in Hume's *belief*, in Kant's critique, in Jaspers' philosophical faith... Faith is a thorn in the heel of reason—a rupture impossible to seal, or a necessary aporia of theoretical Reason, stinking of finitude. Or a flight beyond the plane of immanence, which made of the opposite nothing more than the hypostasis of the merely different ?

Might Deleuze and his theatre-thinking mark the threshold of resistance in my own destiny ? Is that not, precisely, what occupies me now ? To restore the world to its rightful depth—is it not an abyss, a bottomless depth where Being and Thought intertwine ? That one can no longer think me—so that I may think myself, may make mine and me this Other still distant and yet already myself : would this I-become-Other be nothing more

than a thinking *it*, or rather a *Self* like no other—the subject discarded by so many myopias ?

My Other, with a doubtful air, replies :

“They made the subject into the concern of another age, a relic, a yesteryear of thought. Thus the Master, deeming it too moral, pretended to ignore it ; deep within the Black Forest, a dissident cast it into parentheses, finding it equivocal and insufficiently immanent. They declared this cumbersome thing dead ; in place of good subjects loyal to their monarch remain only individuals—blindly subjected to shadowy powers. Dissolved into the schemata of an externalized thought, the subject becomes a war machine—‘cannon fodder,’ as they once said. And when it suckles at the breast of power, the subject becomes merely a desiring machine : clearly, the world has become off-topic.

Here we are, then—*Igitur*—children of chance : in us lives the force of all life that seeks only power. Through this will to power, is it not man’s greatness that attempts to affirm itself—as creator of ever-new forms, that is, as unique—just when the Eternal Return of the Same threatens ?

More than a century of error, which took the subject as a point of origin—an unnecessary starting point—failed to see that the

subject was in fact a goal, the object of a becoming, an arrival. Thus, my dear self, you must become subject—despite the gravediggers and the headsmen.

The subject as the source of knowledge : that is the entire stake of Hume's *sklepsis*—to doubt, he preferred faith. That the death of the subject stems from a misreading—that is something to ponder. But don't forget : many so-called truths are still lies mistaken for errors. Subject you've always been—but more importantly, you become it : that is the final secret of power."

How enlightening it is to speak with oneself : doubts dissipate, shadows retreat, and one sees that many roads lead nowhere. Listening to my Other, so many things become simpler, obvious even : too many detours draw us away from what is just and true.

Again, the Other returns to me :

"If 'true life is absent,' the poet concludes that 'we are not in the world.' Thus speaks the Mad Virgin, 'confession of a companion of hell.' Understand this : the world to which we belong is nothing genuine. From what is seen of it, from what is said—none of it pertains to the world. The world is doubly absent : it is nothing of what is said, and of what it truly is, we cannot say a thing. We live in error, for lack of knowing what is true.

Is the world, as we are, the plot of an enchanter, the script of a bad drama, the daydream of a misanthropic demon ? And yet our gaze crashes against the visible—is this nothing but a deceptive veil, something less than an appearance hiding some noumenon ?

Could it be that the world consists only in what cannot be seen of it ?

If the true world is hidden thus—how does one pass through this sealed gate of the invisible, how does one enter the mystery of this unknown world ?

The world, in which we all believe, would therefore not exist—merely an image, an Apollonian sketch laid upon a void ? The world, like true life, would be elsewhere—sheltered from view, from every utterance, the hidden face of the moon that forever eludes us.

A Janus ! The two faces of a coin that never turns : not a veil thrown over a forbidden sight—but the *Other* of the world, just as I am your Other.

Like you, and like all the others—like God too—the world is an *I thought by another*, estranged from itself.

We see and speak the world as we *think* it ; we build it with words too weak, the way we *wish* it for all those I's we are not.

If 'I is an Other', then the world must be as well—since there is no world except for those who dwell in it.

We are in the world—that is our condition—but being nothing of ourselves, how could it be any different regarding the world ?

"We are not in the world" : how can what is false ever present itself as true ?

The world will reveal its truth—its *Otherness*—only to the *I* who has become his own *Other* : to the absent *I*, the *outside-self*, corresponds an absent world, an *outside-world*, a dwelling fit for the *I* whose *Other* is always missing.

I IS AN OTHER

Reason ! Doubt cast upon a useless world
Reveals a hope within the hollow of this void :
The *Cogito* asserts itself through futile fates,
Restoring to mankind a possible present.

Syntactic imposture—the word splits in two :
"I think !"—mad irony of a possible existence,

For / is suspended on the summit of the skies,
Which grants to doubted things some fleeting sense.

For God is not a deceiver—He speaks within our reason
What our senses hid of that divine knowing ;
The *Cogito* soars in servile devotion,
Reflected by beings like dull, witless mirrors.

What care have I for the world, so long as I can think it,
And strip from it its unbearable ugliness ?
Lies ! Things die away in the pit of consciousness,
And the world dissolves without the least substance.

And then it withdraws, like a futile tide ;
Over Being's abyss, the / leans at last ;
Gorged by its feast, it collapses in nausea
Then vomits the world that had once eased its hunger.

And now he is alone, this / fed on doubt ;
Hunger takes hold of his hollowed-out gut ;
From the empty and sorrowful sky, he caresses the vault,
And weeps for his fate and his vain greed.

Yesterday still, greedy, / devoured the world ;
Now it moans beside the edge of its own void,

Begging the burst and vacant sky to flood
Its infinite desert with some flicker of present.

"Cogito ergo sum," the Cartesian cried :
Once more the ancient phrase is split in two :
"I am"—a grammarian's logical deduction,
/ rewrites its name in this strange design.

But the sky has emptied and hears no more his pleas ;
Without the least substance, foreign to all things,
The / at last discovers the object of its fears :
It is but the mirror of an unfinished world.

Salute ! "I is an Other," the Seer once confessed ;
And now the / dares again to dream ;
Lacking a self, this Other stands manifest—
The / dons in vain a borrowed face unseen.

This Other that I am is hurled into existence,
A hidden, unknown double, strange and obscure,
Who, by being in the world, robs me of subsistence—
For /, though divine, cannot be two for sure.

And the / fades away in its tragic fate,
Thus depriving the verb of its cherished subject ;

For it is the Other who now dares to create
The very thoughts I claimed—I becomes his object.

The Other takes his seat in the skies of thought,
Commanding a thousand things with covetous plans ;
But soon his royal crown begins to totter—
And tumbles down into more cunning hands.

And I returns, grammar's phoenix restored ;
Back again, it revels—this ruthless I ;
Banishing the Other, it reigns once more,
Reinventing the earth with astonishing lies.

This I drags its paunch wherever it pleases,
And gulps down the world without even a glance ;
It swallows its feed without shame or grievance,
Growing fat on things in a brute circumstance.

Shock ! Gorging on the world like a slothful glutton,
Every devoured thing fades beneath this hunger ;
The greedy I swells like a bag, unbuttoned,
Leaving behind a memory cursed and somber.

No rope, no gallows can hang this beast of need ;
Sated, the I collapses on its final bed ;

At last ! The *I*'s eyes scarcely closed in sleep—
When the world escapes like a fly overhead.

And the *I* thins out as the freed world expands ;
The Body without Organs, lifeless and hollow,
Releases its fibers into being's vast lands—
The day rises anew, and the Other feels aglow.

Carefully, Nietzsche twitches his mustache and hand :
From the *Cogito*, the *I* is now unfastened,
Making room for something—or perhaps for nothing ;
What matters who thinks the world—if only it is fashioned.

But the Other returns, demanding his own place ;
Who is this useless one, with barely a thought ?
From *I* to Other, the vain questions shift space :
These two are knotted in friendship overwrought.

The *I* is the Other of the Other—pure appearance,
A flicker of height, a transcendent facade ;
Other of the Other, formed in the mind's clearance—
Should it try to escape, the *I* proves a fraud.

It cracks open the mind with a sidelong stare,
Declaring aloud : “The gaze veils the eye !”

This I, Other of that Other it cannot bear—
Becomes a prisoner beneath a fickle sky.

But the Other, in his mind, is merely a mirror ;
And to be so fixed in this silent reflection,
The I measures its despair in terror :
It is but a toy of the Other's direction.

Prey to the Other in this overpowering gaze,
Beheld, a frozen image within a scheme,
Of the Other who strips and sends it astray
Down a purposeless path, haunted by dream.

It builds itself—and undoes—all at the whim
Of that foul observer who points with disdain,
Shattering horizons into futures dim—
“Yes, hell is the Others,” it concludes without pain.

The I forms in layers from the Other's design,
A base, servile image in sordid pursuits ;
Foul cannibalism that feeds on mankind,
Swallowing aims without moral repute.

Void ! The I is nothing but others' debris ;
A puppet, a marionette, its path predefined

By strangers' hands on routes never free,
Through muddy ruts that our sorrows refined.

Cast from the void into foreign command,
Frozen by a gaze that claimed reason as throne,
From the Other you are, whom no one can stand,
Shall your salvation and your true path be known.

This Other you are, who slips through each glance,
Defies their missions, shatters their view—
Find again that friend, and in silence give chance
To cloak him from sight, for their gaze is the true poison of you.

"I is another," a vision of your salvation,
You are nothing but that other—reach out your arms !
In his gentle presence, your heart no longer bleeds ;
You'll only be yourself by walking in his steps.

That other through whom, at last, you become you,
That mysterious other clinging close to your skin,
From all the others he shields you, breaking their rule,
Their sinister designs and their malicious din.

The I finally smiles, sheltered beneath that other ;
His steps are steady, opening the horizon

From which his joy draws, like an apostle's fervor
Feeding on mad hope that clothes his mission.

Joy ! Other than I is—you at last unfold,
Making my heart beat with an unspeakable voice ;
Can you hear it, carried by winds to the edge untold
Of a deep sky it fills with precious rejoice ?

The I dies out by becoming the other he is,
Emptying the mind of the other he is not ;
And he, now deprived of his loathsome guise,
Turns away and retraces the steps he forgot.

What does he do then, this other chasing some train ?
He fills his mind with that foolish pursuit,
Then stops : the train flees far across the plain.
Of his own self-awareness, his I bears the fruit.

A wandering stranger jostles him, and leans in :
“What were you doing, friend, looking so lost ?”
“I chased after a train vanishing to the brim...”
The trap of self-awareness has closed at great cost.

And the brave runner locks himself in his mind,
Prisoner of himself, judged by his own eye ;

The train he clutched in the hollow of his bind
Assumes the skin of an I, without a sigh.

The runner's thought chews over its own prey :
The train turned into I becomes a failed quest ;
His journey cut short leaves his soul in dismay,
All the worse, since the bill he must digest.

The end of this tale mocks me, nose up in the air,
Claiming that if I was saved by the other's embrace,
It's but a moral tale, dressed in virtuous flair,
Proving that good triumphed in evil's place.

But that lifted nose drowns in stupid defiance ;
Of I and its other, morality does not care ;
A misjudgment that too often clouds our existence
With foolish maxims best left in the air.

THE STRANGER

He has no origin, no place from which one grows,
And wears a cloak of silence like mortal ennui ;
He is but a faded shape, divorced from what he knows,
A stranger to himself, erased by memory.

Did he emerge from shadows that border the void,
From some ancient dusk of which he is the night ?

Does he gift us his presence from darkness devoid,
Shipwrecked from the murk where fled the light ?

Does he bear any substance we might try to weigh,
A whisper of matter exposed to our gaze ?
Nothing can land on him without drifting away—
To any who ask, he is only the haze.

When the earth evaporates at the break of day,
He rises from elsewhere, a relic of time ;
Fragrance of morning dew in mist's fine spray,
He vanishes in vain, hiding torment behind mime.

He returns already in dust-laden tears,
Parched by the wind that died at his side ;
A whisper reborn, light-fed through the years,
He presents himself as doubt to calm minds denied.

Beneath skies torn open by storm-swollen streams,
Rain veils his steps in impossible absence ;
What remains of the other is a face split by seams—
The stranger pours out in defiant presence.

Only the same is known, not suffering nor strain :
All else is but rupture where feelings leak through,

A careless break washed clean of all blame—
What care for our soul, and what it must rue ?

The stranger is home only where he is not :
Must he repent for being always away ?
Here becomes dearer when he is the "somewhere else" spot—
Each one at home, with no other debt to pay.

Irony ! The Self is ever still to come :
The "I" is only the Other, homeless and withdrawn,
And is that stranger he cannot curse or shun—
For the "I" is lost when the Self is not born.

The I is not in the world, exiled in disguise,
A mirror of all he is utterly not ;
Waves of nothingness crash where thought lies,
On a shore unmoved, in tangled fens caught.

Sponges of thought and words under reprieve,
The rot of being in time's vast abyss ;
Pathetic digestion of what life might conceive :
The marsh of our souls makes that all there is.

And being dissolves, light-starved and hollow,
In the gut of things unworthy of the world ;

Inspid pleasure of existence laid low,
Tribute of filth where slavery is unfurled.

Trapped in the muck, our minds become toads,
Warts of thought leaking poisonous sighs ;
The others dissolve in the depth of the flows :
Only the same survives—a fate that denies.

Beneath a brazen sun the marsh wears thin,
And from sameness the Other returns, gripped by fear ;
Hope ! Is he of this world, or just what has been ?
Did he live as “I” if that “I” was unclear ?

Beneath raining sun, our souls parch dry—
A merciless desert overcomes the mind ;
All words crumple on a crusted lie,
Thought leads us astray in this place maligned.

The world has vanished, lost to our dreams :
From those night-fueled frenzies remain only tears ;
A flood of regrets from fleeting gleams,
Insults to demons without shame or fear.

The vanity of forgetting recycles our souls :
Memory is cruel in its endless return ;

Wounds revisit us in vile perfumes cold,
Unyielding gashes in fates we learn.

What Other remembers not being from here ?
Is he of the world, the one I am not ?
Impossible light, life's shadows unclear—
Broken by misfortune of being forgot.

I see only copyists stretching worn lines,
Lonely drifters deep in habitual grooves ;
Reinvent !—whispers of a god who pines,
The vain feeds only on what never moves.

Elsewhere ! Ultimate grief of not being the Self,
Becoming unlikely beyond seeming and form ;
The sky holds no reason, no faith to be dealt—
To not know who we are spares us being born.

CHAPTER III

THE TRAGIC SENSE

INTRODUCTION

Philosophical reflection shares with dreaming a somewhat magical power : the ability to transcend time. Just as the ideas of the wise and the visions of the sleeping poet both have in common the capacity to immerse us—beyond any singular history—into the most intimate spaces of human reality, so too do they lead us to the place of questioning, which often overwhelms us, and of passions, which always intoxicate us. Think only of courage, which by its nature easily aligns itself with each of our pursuits, and we will have captured—at least in words—each of the faculties of the soul that Plato sought to assign to us : Reason, Desire, and Courage.

This tripartition is far from arbitrary. It allows Plato to support his refutation of the theory of natural inclination (*pleonexia*) as defended by Glaucon. Glaucon's theory, much like that of Thrasymachus, presumes a division of humanity into the weak and the strong. However, unlike Thrasymachus, Glaucon holds that it is not the strong who create the Law, but rather the weak, driven by fear, who invent it as a form of protection. The

behavior of the strong—covetousness—is, in his view, justified as natural. Ultimately, Glaucon interprets human nature (*anthropeia physis*) in line with ancient medicine and with Thucydides, as something fixed and immutable. The core question that Plato addresses in *The Republic* is whether human nature is, as Glaucon claims, *physis*, or whether it is, as Plato argues, *psyche*.

Plato likens the *psyche* to a fantastical composite being, integrating the Desire of the chimera, the Courage of the lion, and the Reason of man. In Plato's view, Glaucon's position amounts to feeding the lion and the chimera while starving and tearing apart the man within. Plato proposes instead to strengthen the man by allying him with the lion. Whether man pursues his self-interest, as Glaucon would argue, or the Good, as Plato insists, this pursuit shows in either case that man is a being who must strive toward fulfillment. According to Plato, this perfection culminates in man's assimilation to God—and it is precisely Reason, referred to by Socrates as “the divine within man,” that grants access to this assimilation.

In all that exists, Plato distinguishes between Being, Non-Being, and the world of particular things (*genesis*). Each of these aspects of reality corresponds to a (non-)faculty of human knowledge : to Being corresponds *gnosis* (true knowledge) ; to

Non-Being, *agnoia* (ignorance or appearance) ; to the world of genesis, *doxa* (opinion). The philosopher—the one who "loves knowledge"—knows perfect Being, while the *philo-doxos*—the one who "loves opinion"—knows only the manifold and the particular. In other words, among all those dreamers that are *philo-doxoi*, only the philosopher, because he is awake, leads us to true Being. And what is philosophy, if not the exercise of Reason ?

Since Plato, philosophers have said little else. The history of philosophy is, in a sense, the story of the many attempts to define the principles of Reason—and above all, to determine the proper limits of its use. Reason has at times been restricted (as in Kant), and at others expanded (as in phenomenology) ; yet no one, unlike poets, artists, or romantics of all kinds, has dared to denounce it as illusion—no one, that is, except Nietzsche.

What makes the confrontation between Plato and Nietzsche especially compelling is that it is not a clash between two systems expressed within the same *Discourse*, but rather a confrontation between *Discourse itself* and its *Other*. The words—those of Plato and those of Nietzsche—do not alter the world ; they burst like soap bubbles against the thickness of things, and the world remains unchanged. Yet words do affect our existence, for we receive our existence from the world, and

this reception always happens through a saying. Since the truth of man, always yet to come, is intimately tied to the truth of the world, and since the world compels us to speak, it seems necessary to question the meaning of this speech—its relevance, and its dangers as well.

DISCOURSE AND ITS OTHER

The first steps of Nietzsche's approach lead us back to the very origins of philosophy—to the mythical and poetic ground upon which Reason built the foundations of its empire. Nietzsche's first words take us back to the time of wounded man, betrayed even by uncertain gods ; to the time of man who, turning away from the myths born of his own hope, gave birth—through suffering and distress—to philosophy. Nietzsche's thought is born with tragedy.

The world endures ; only the words we use to speak or name it change. Nietzsche's world is shaped by blind will, by a universal passion. To Parmenides' immutable Being, Nietzsche opposes a will to live (as seen in *The Birth of Tragedy*, written while Nietzsche was still under the influence of Schopenhauer). It is a world in perpetual flux, in constant transformation, much like Heraclitus' ever-flowing cosmos—a world that continually unravels in order to rebuild itself, a world consumed by passion,

a world on fire. It is also the world of Dionysus, the world from which Nietzsche comes and to which he returns. An abyssal world, the belly of the earth, the soil of appearances. The world of Will is a dark world dressed like Narcissus ; it is a world knotted with powers—like that of Hades ; it is also a tragic world—the one that seizes Kore ; and finally, it is a world of promise—a world that gives back what it once took.

And because it is woven with promise, this world contains a tomorrow : the meadow, the birth of gods, the struggles of men, the dance of the narcissi. This manifold world—this overflow of appearances, fleeting perhaps (but what does that matter, since they will return tomorrow ?)—this blossoming world, this painted masterpiece, is precisely the world of art. It is also the world of Apollo : a world that astonishes, a world that contemplates itself in the silence of reverence. Art is not a whim of the mind, nor a parade of aesthetic rules : art is the world's language. Art merges with tragedy when it reveals to us the truth of our existence—its ultimate meaning, its destiny. And it is precisely tragedy that is the target of Nietzsche's accusation against Platonism : by diverting the meaning of art, Plato diverted the meaning of the world ; by diverting the meaning of tragedy, he diverted the meaning of man. This tragic question touches upon the most religious aspect of Platonism ; yet it

remains one of the most revealing facets of the broader debate about *Discourse*, its possibility, and the emergence of its *Other*.

If we leave Courage to its role as servant, then the human soul appears to us—following the purest Platonic tradition—as the stage for the conflict between two opposing principles : Reason and Desire. They share at least this in common—they each lead us somewhere, even if neither harbors a true being. They are more or less potent forces depending on whether Courage sides with one or the other. Desire is supposed to guide us toward all that might satisfy us : pleasure, happiness, even suffering. The value (or truth) of what is acquired is measured by the degree of satisfaction it brings. But because satisfaction is by nature neither perfect (there is always something else to desire) nor final (Desire is reborn from satisfaction), the truths it teaches are always relative. Indeed, the sophists—who grounded their thought in *pleonexia*—could admit no other form of universal than that of their own relativism. At best, such truths will remain mere opinions, and he who lives among them, the *philo-doxos*, may pretend not to be ignorant, but can never hide the fact that he is moved by dream and illusion.

The Other of Desire—Reason—delivers to us, in the various forms of Discourse, the key to Being : its meaning, its raw and indisputable truth. To question knowledge is not to question the

truth of what is said, but to question the very *possibility* of saying what is true. That, in my view, is the sense one should attribute to Nietzsche's critique. For it matters little (in this context) what any given theory—such as that of the Ideas—might uniquely contain : it is simply one more theory among the many in the marketplace of Discourse, perhaps the first, but merely a rival among others. It is unlikely that any two theories of the same Discourse could ever be reconciled to the point of fusion—not even through the words from which they are built ; and yet all of them, absolutely all, rest on the same assumption : the power of Reason.

Some have believed it worthwhile to define the most exact, or at least the most secure, limits of that power. But the question of its foundation remains without a true answer—perhaps because it was never truly asked. Reason is no longer doubted, for it defines us ; it proves itself through the works it produces. But the undeniable existence of the faculty of thought does not determine the value of what is thought—meaning the adequacy of thought to the reality it claims to represent. Certainly, Reason exists—pregnant with its ambition to reveal the Being of the world—but is that ambition sufficient to validate what is revealed ?

The solution proposed by Plato is radical (though not necessarily convincing) : Reason's power is justified because Reason partakes in the divine. This generous principle assumes the foundation of a system of Ideas, in which Reason will one day occupy its rightful place. But this system itself is a product of Reason (which says nothing of its (non-)truth), and so it is the *value of the producer* that must ultimately validate whatever the producer produces.

REASON IS DIVINE

To this article of faith—*Reason is divine*—Western civilization after the Renaissance added a second, borrowed without much originality from Christianity itself : this god is *One*. Were our contemporaries disappointed, or perhaps simply weary ? One thing is certain : the cult of Reason, defeated in some uncertain battle, now gives way to the cult of the irrational—to those decayed doctrines that retain from Science, as a final talisman, only an empty title. Plato's philosophy, religious though it may be, shares nothing with such disillusioned cults. And yet Reason—be it Plato's or the moderns'—is supposed to lead us to the truth. Whether it is a shared divinity or an exclusive one, can the god within us truly assure us—based solely on the principles by which it operates—that it leads us to Being in its truth ?

If so, Nietzsche has surely wasted his time—and, more happily, humanity has been well advised to follow the right path ever since Plato, even if today's world is straying by placing its hopes in the irrational.

I set aside the divine nature of Reason, which concerns itself more with man's destiny. Instead, I focus on its workings—its mechanisms—for if Reason, as Nietzsche seems to suggest, can be challenged, it must be by revealing the flaws in its machinery. The question of the *status of art* must also be raised. For if Nietzsche denounces Reason's inability to reveal the Being of the world, he also—and perhaps above all—denounces the *enslavement* of art : its sequestration within the labyrinths of thought, and the resulting impossibility for the human spirit ever to access truth, since it is, according to Nietzsche, *art itself* that unveils it.

It is frustrating to observe how Reason continually evades our attempts to define it. At best, we can only intuit it or sketch its outlines. We know Reason through the testimony offered by *Discourse*. From a minimalist standpoint, Discourse may be defined as a set of propositions that share the quality of being rational—that is, of conforming to the rules of Reason. Any proposition can only be considered rational if it satisfies at least two criteria : a formal one—demonstrability—and a semantic

one—non-contradiction with other propositions in the Discourse (this second criterion determines the *coherence* of the system).

Thus, the first truth criterion of any proposition is *mathematical* : a proposition is true if it can be demonstrated. This criterion is purely formal, since it proceeds from universally accepted rules of deduction : one links propositions accepted as true (axioms or already demonstrated propositions) via predetermined rules. The actual truth of these propositions does not affect the demonstrative nature of the reasoning ; the propositions are formally accepted as true—possibly assigned a truth value—regardless of their content. The rules of deduction change little over time, but the corpus of axioms and proven propositions evolves : it expands as new demonstrations are added according to necessity.

However, scientific reasoning (which claims to lead us to the *truth of things*) diverges from mathematical logic at least in one crucial respect : in mathematical logic, a demonstrable proposition is a tautology—yet this does not prevent the individual propositions within it from being false. For example, the proposition

$$((p \neq q) = q)$$

is always true, even if both p and q are false. This is because if p is a proposition, then $\text{not-}p$ is also a valid proposition.

In scientific reasoning, however, each proposition used is *assumed to be true*. It becomes a matter of *occurrence* : in logic, a proposition can be recognized as tautological even if it contains both p and $\text{not-}p$; in science, once a proposition p has been validated as true, its negation is excluded from the scientific discourse. For instance, the scientifically validated proposition “*Water freezes at 0°C*” excludes the appearance of a contradictory statement such as “*Water freezes at 10°C*” in any legitimate scientific reasoning.

THE DISCOURSE OF REASON AND THE PLACE OF ART

The first criterion—demonstrability—is absent from Platonic science, since the Ideas, according to the theory of recollection (*anamnēsis*), are accessed through *a-hypothetical intellection*. Nonetheless, the propositions concerning the Ideas are still subject to the second, semantic criterion : non-contradiction, for only this can guarantee the system’s coherence. Moreover, mathematical objects—akin to the Ideas insofar as they share the intelligible world—are the object of reasoning (*dianoia*).

Thus, Discourse presents itself as a *corpus*—a body of propositions one might theoretically inventory, and which each

person retains, at least partially, in the space of memory. It is an ordered whole, a vision or model of the world : its propositions are not merely juxtaposed in the order of their demonstration (or intellection), but are interdependent, like the elements of a master painting. Some of these propositions are, within the context of current science, verifiable—with varying degrees of precision (since the model is ideal, the correspondence cannot be perfect) ; others are unverifiable for now ; and some will never be verifiable (because the facts they refer to occurred too long ago, and time is irreversible).

Likewise, some propositions accepted by Reason are demonstrable ; others are not—for now (such was the case, for a long time, with Fermat's Last Theorem) ; and others will never be demonstrable (this is obviously the case with axioms). These two aspects—verifiability and demonstrability—have historically shaped two very different compartmentalizations of Reason.

Kant, for instance, reserves *pure Reason* for phenomena accessible to the forms of human sensibility. *Noumena*, by definition unobservable, belong to *dialectical Reason*—a conceptual kinship which reveals the proximity of Platonic Ideas to Kantian noumena. Kant grants mathematical objects a special status : though unobservable, they still belong to pure Reason. Plato, by contrast, divides the faculty of thinking into *epistēmē*

(the science of non-demonstrable Ideas) and *dianoia*, whose proper objects are mathematical propositions. Sensible data, for Plato (contrary to Kant), are only fit for opinion (*doxa*)—never for Reason.

If we take Reason in its broadest sense (pure + dialectical Reason for Kant ; *epistēmē* + *dianoia* for Plato), we see that it includes propositions that are sometimes verifiable, sometimes not ; sometimes demonstrable, sometimes not. But *never*—and this is essential to the coherence of the system—are these propositions contradictory. In other words, what legitimizes a proposition within the Discourse—what grants it status as part of Discourse—is its *compatibility* with the other propositions. Ultimately, the only true criterion of rationality is *non-contradiction*.

There is, then, the real world—whose existence we accept, but which remains unknown (or poorly known) to us prior to the intervention of Reason, since only *opinion* presents it to us. Then there is, once Reason has done its work, a representation of that world—*perfect*, according to Plato ; *imperfect*, according to science (for the representation is always in progress). This representation is coherent and continuous. Whether, as modern science holds, it is a precise and detailed replica of the real world—or whether, as Plato insists, it *is* the only real world (the

so-called “real” world of science being nothing but shadows and appearances)—in both cases, it is the space wherein *Being reveals itself in its truth*. Moreover, this representation is *exclusively* the product of Reason.

Given the claims it makes, the cult of Reason must be *exclusive* of any other form of language (here I use “language” provisionally, to distinguish it from the *Discourse* produced by Reason). Indeed, the sovereignty of Discourse raises the question—so essential to Nietzsche—of the status of *art*, assuming, of course, that art still holds a status as an alternative to Discourse. Plato’s position could only lead to art’s sequestration and, consequently, to its denial as a legitimate mode of expression. Concretely, the Platonic stance splits art into two : one kind of art, which adopts the forms of Reason, and thus tells us nothing more than what Reason already says ; and another kind of art, which—because it does *not* adopt the forms of Reason—is held to have *nothing* to teach us.

It is this *second* form of art that Nietzsche seeks to rehabilitate—and it is this form that I will, for simplicity’s sake, refer to as *art*. Moreover, I will consider this art in its particular mode of expression : *poetry*. (And as will become increasingly clear, art is, in essence, *poetic*.)

POETRY, SCIENCE, AND THE ILLUSION OF REPRESENTATION

Poetry and science, though formulated differently, both rely on the use of the same language, the same set of signs. What distinguishes them in form are the literary techniques they employ. They differ further in their *intent to signify*—or more precisely, in the sphere of our mind to which they appeal. Poetic language does not, as such, address *Reason*, since it does not seek to make us *understand*. Poetry addresses a form of *sensitivity* : it invites *intuition* to grasp what it intends to indicate or suggest.

Poetry is offered for immediate and total apprehension, not for the reflexive detours of Reason. It does not decompose itself, for it aims to be meaningful in its entirety—as a *whole work*. Nothing in it stands in opposition to scientific Discourse : they share no ground, for the cognitive faculties each calls upon differ radically. To reject the poetic approach on the grounds of its lack of rationality is to misunderstand its fundamentally *aesthetic* and *intuitive* scope—and to overlook our own capacity, as sensitive beings, to receive it. There is nothing preventing a scientist from also being a poet ; nothing forbids him from also having a soul ; nothing keeps him from simply being *a human*.

Poetry is the *art of non-representation* : each poem, like a painting by Magritte, is an *absolute event*, a *non-referential work*. In light of this non-representative stance taken by poetic expression, science may appear as, by contrast, the *art of representation par excellence*—for science seeks to build an ideal model intended to mirror reality. In this case, *likeness* becomes the main criterion : we expect science to provide us with the most faithful possible image of the real. We expect science to be “photographic.”

But it is precisely *likeness* that becomes problematic in the artistic principles underlying Magritte’s painting. Some surrealist paintings may astonish by the reality they appear to depict (even through symbols), yet the *perfect likeness* of a painting like “*The Telescope*” leaves no apparent doubt : the painting represents a window. However, this immediate certainty born from the visual impression is disrupted by minute details that undermine it : the painting cannot represent a window—despite the fact that what is painted looks exactly like one.

No matter how deeply the viewer searches—even within the folds of irrational interpretation—he must eventually admit that this painting represents *nothing*. It is an *absolute event*, a raw manifestation of mystery in all its density. Some paintings may *evoke* mystery (consider the smile of the Mona Lisa) ; but

Magritte's painting *is* mystery. Thus Magritte teaches us that *resemblance alone* is not sufficient to justify any mental construction we claim as representative of reality.

A step further is taken in "*The Key of the Fields*" : here, the perfect resemblance gives us certainty that the painting represents a *shattered pane of glass*. But a detail—the paint on the shards—draws our attention to the glass itself, independently of its being broken. This detail reveals that the pane was painted as a *trompe-l'œil*. Before breaking, it was only the *support* for an image, presented to us—and also a *mask*, hiding what the transparency of real glass *should* have revealed about the world. The thrown stone removes the mask and reveals a world identical to the image. In short : whether our vision rests on the painted image or, conversely, the transparency of the glass puts us in direct contact with reality (whether there *is* representation or not), we apprehend the facing reality *in the same way*. And yet, that reality differs in its very *nature*, depending on whether we are looking through painted glass or real transparency.

To "apprehend reality in the same way" means : to have a single *image* of two fundamentally different realities, to gather two distinct realities into a *single representation*. While the observer believed they were perceiving transparent reality, they were in

fact confronted with a representation—which, by chance, appeared to be an exact replica of what a transparent window would have shown.

A final step is taken in “*The Human Condition*”. Here, the viewer is informed that part of the visible landscape through a window is masked by a painting (as determined by perspective). What is depicted on the canvas aligns *perfectly* with the real scene beyond. But this *does not guarantee* that what lies hidden behind the canvas is in fact what is depicted on it. Still, the memory of the canvas’s location should enable us, even if facing the scene directly, to distinguish between what is real and what is not. Yet anyone seeing the scene head-on—unaware of the canvas—would believe they are seeing, through a supposedly transparent window, the real landscape. In truth, part of the landscape is *obscured* by a canvas.

Suppose they are told that part of the landscape is hidden by a painting—but not which part. In that case, they will be unable to hold *any certainty* about what is real.

REPRESENTATION AND THE LIMITS OF DISCOURSE

Analogously, science proceeds by constructing a scientific theory—a *model*—which may eventually be illustrated schematically in accordance with the laws of geometry.

Whether theory or illustration, both are assumed to provide us with a representative image of reality. Science also applies a *double verification* :

- Internal verification, aimed primarily at ensuring the non-contradiction of the system (Plato's system of Ideas is subject to this first verification, as are all theories within the Discourse to which it belongs, since they must all conform to the principle of non-contradiction), and at ensuring proper use of rules of deduction (though Plato's *intellection* of the Ideas is *a-hypothetical*, and thus escapes this second type of verification) ;
- External verification, which involves comparing the theory with what is assumed to be real in order to establish the degree of resemblance (and hence representativeness) of the theory.

However, this second verification is not always feasible—sometimes because the phenomena in question cannot be observed. This is precisely the case with the Platonic Ideas, which can only be maintained within the broader Discourse due to their *compatibility* with all other propositions in that Discourse.

Let us suppose, following the logic of Magritte's *The Human Condition*, that a scientific model can be schematically illustrated by a rectangle ABCD. Within this rectangle, a second rectangle A'B'C'D' indicates a zone of uncertainty—a theory not subject to external verification, but fully integrated within the model (the rest of which *has* been externally verified). Now suppose that what is *hidden* behind rectangle A'B'C'D' does not correspond at all to what is depicted. In that case, either reality itself is incoherent, *or* reality is perfectly coherent and it is the model ABCD—coherent in itself—that fails to correspond to reality, despite the verifications it underwent. In other words, the model would *not* be a representation in the expected sense of the term.

We have assigned to science the task of delivering a *coherent image* of reality—a *representation*. But it turns out that, due to the effects of representation itself, it is impossible to assess the actual representativeness of the scientific model. This raises a profound question : is it truly possible to escape the world of representation ? Have we trapped the world inside representation ?

Is there, for modern humans, another possible world ? Might the *human world* be precisely *the world of representation* ?

The very idea of representation implies distance—a possible comparison between what is represented and the content of the representation, which itself presupposes a position *outside* the realm of representation. But is such an escape even possible ? Does an *Other* to Discourse exist ? Is there a world accessible to “touch,” beyond the schemas of representation ?

If representation denies us access to the world, might the world break into the sphere of representation and *present itself to us*—with all the density of its mystery ?

It is striking that, if Discourse has irremediably separated us from the world, the world nonetheless *returns* to us—as an *absolute event*—in the form of a work of art (in which language is not always absent). If it is impossible to leave Discourse in order to confront the world directly, then the world must come to us *within* Discourse, as a kind of *Other*, that is, *outside* the modalities of Discourse itself.

The *Other* of Discourse is not a new form of speech, not a new domain in which the world would manifest differently. *Poetry is the world's advent.*

There is a *myth of Reason* : by making Reason the author of Discourse, we assign ourselves—because Reason belongs to us—the privileged position of an artist standing before his work.

But our inability to escape the frameworks of representation makes us, in the end, not the authors we believed ourselves to be, but merely the *functionaries* of a Discourse that defines our entire horizon.

THE TRAGIC SENSE

The art that best expresses the *being* of human existence, according to Nietzsche, is tragedy. By confining art within the labyrinth of Reason, Plato simply *suffocated* the tragic sense. All reality—and our existence is no exception—is a Janus-faced blend : the mingling of *Dionysian will* and *Apollonian appearances*. Will, by its very essence, seeks to break free from its latent forms ; but these forms, once cast into the spectacle of appearances, are already—by the same essence of Will—reabsorbed, digested, and returned again : identical, immutable.

To this eternal rumination, this childlike game echoing ancient pronouncements (“Time is a child playing a game of dice : the kingdom of a child,” said Heraclitus, fragment 52)—which might seem irritating were it not precisely *our own existence*—Nietzsche gave a name that resonates both as promise and as drama : the Eternal Return of the Same. The *promise* arises from the forms Will generously pours forth ; the *tragedy* comes from

those same forms, swallowed again by Will in its deepest abjection.

In suffocating the tragic sense of existence, Plato destroys the very promise tied to it (in a paradoxical way, Plato *revives* tragedy by denying it, for such denial is in itself *tragic*). This rejection of the *will to live*—from which the emergence of forms must be understood—is what Nietzsche calls nihilism.

Science, religion, morality, philosophy—even art (as exemplified in Wagner’s music)—are all, in Nietzsche’s view, implicated in this same nihilism : the negation of the world’s inherent Will. But do these various forms of nihilism mark distinct stages of a historical process ? Or do they rather reveal humanity’s refusal to face the wounding truth unveiled by tragedy ?

At worst, can man only lament the uselessness of the passions that dwell within him ? At best, might he console himself with the prospect of the Eternal Return of the Same ?

Were the gods, as Critias suggests, invented by men to establish their authority ? Or, more simply, were they imagined by the same men in order to *reassure themselves* in the face of their inescapable fate—that fate which Heidegger recognized as the source of our existential anxiety : death ?

The tragic sense of existence is *essentially human* because it arises from a knowledge we share with no other form of life : the knowledge that the summit sought by Sisyphus will forever elude him ; that, inevitably, his burden will drag him back to the plain, back to the latent state of pure Will ; that, perhaps (because all he has is his courage, and that is his destiny), he will once more ascend the long path of existence—and that with him, Will shall once again don a new appearance.

Should we imagine, as Camus suggests—within a perspective that is frankly Platonic—that *Sisyphus is happy*, and that his happiness comes from the knowledge he gains while descending to the plain, even if this knowledge is a defiance of the gods, even if it affirms that man is now the master of his own fate ?

All that Sisyphus can truly know as he descends is that he has failed once more. That his existence is not merely *absurd* (in the way that Sartre's absurdity invites a kind of tidy suicide—intellectual, that is), but that it is *tragic*.

Of course, the salvation offered by Plato is far more uplifting : to Camus' bitter happiness, he opposes *contemplative, eternal beatitude*. Yet in both cases, it is a happiness rooted in Reason, a purely intellectual felicity—one that struggles to match the *undeniable tragedy* of existence.

While Hesiod's vision of salvation still allowed for a glimmer of the tragic to rise within the human heart (his myth of the races promises immortality to those who live with justice, leaving some doubt as to whether that promise will be fulfilled), the Platonic soul is by nature *meant to be saved*. This renders any awareness of the tragic not only unnecessary but *false*.

Hesiod's Discourse bore the mark of *hope* ; Plato's demands only *faith*.

Sisyphus, for his part, has nothing to hope for. He does not believe in tomorrow's songs. His only future is the one from which he comes : down at the foot of the mountain.

Thus, his life consists solely of *presents*—presents that repeat, endlessly. And yet, each moment—though it may tear the skin from his hands, though it may draw a cry of pain or tears of despair—is a moment of *victory* : every effort attests to a Will that bursts forth from reserve and that, even if it must retreat again into the shadow of the plain near each summit, will always resurge with equal force.

For if death is inescapable, then so is life.

CONCLUSION

The critique is severe—cruel, even—for it strikes at the heart of the most humanly significant aspect of religious Platonism : our destiny. And yet, as radical as Nietzsche's project claims to be (Nietzsche, according to Heidegger, announces nothing less than the end of philosophy), we must acknowledge that the questions which prompted and sustained it are ultimately the same as those that led Plato to construct his system of Ideas. Thus, Nietzsche's project could only bring him back to an attitude which, in its pre-rational character, takes on the mystical form of religion.

To begin with, Nietzsche's critique achieves a true Copernican revolution, in the Kantian sense : where Plato had placed Reason at the center—Reason as the producer of the world in representation—Nietzsche substitutes a concept of art as worldly advent, relative to which human sensitivity takes on the role of passivity. If representation (and the system of Ideas is precisely that) offers us a coherent world, the *totality* of the world is challenged by the reserve (the mystery) inherent in Nietzsche's redefinition of art. It is this very reserve that tragedy conveys—for if the advent of the world is *promise*, its withdrawal, when it becomes our only horizon, grounds the tragic nature of our existence.

In this tragic vision, any prospect of salvation—such as the immortality of the soul in Plato—is definitively denied. And yet, a similar promise of eternity haunts Nietzsche's idea of the Eternal Return of the Same, as if Nietzsche's quest could not be satisfied with the mere inevitability of the tragic. To Plato's mysticism of knowledge, Nietzsche opposes Amor Fati—a love of fate that is not the proud and stoic resignation of the ancient sage, but rather the joyful affirmation that, despite the tragic weight of existence, Will—that is to say, life itself—is stronger.

Where Plato's salvation takes the form of a dialectical ascent toward the world of Ideas, Nietzsche's perspective offers the will to power as a singular resumption, by each individual, of Will's project. But this *will to power*, in the absence of effective realization, remains a pure *potentiality*. One might say, in Hegelian terms, that the liberation it determines is purely abstract.

This will to power finds its effectuation in the murder of the Last Man ; this rejection of nihilism—this concrete dismissal of life-negating values—is the very act through which *liberation becomes real*, the act by which the birth of the Overman (*Surhomme*) is accomplished.

And where Plato's philosopher-king reigns because he is steeped in the intimacy of truth, Nietzsche offers us the Overman, who, *through living*, affirms the value of life.

Still, the word *substitution* seems inadequate here. Nietzsche's desire to do away with *philosophy*—that is, *all philosophy*—is not a simple replacement, but a more radical rejection of everything born of Reason : of history, and culture itself. What Nietzsche proclaims is the birth of a new man, for whom nothing that has been thought for the *old man* can be replaced, even by something better suited. In this sense, Nietzsche speaks of transvaluation.

The man Nietzsche envisions is new, and his relationship to the world is new. His emergence signals the end of History and, with it, the end of man.

One has the strange feeling that, with a single stroke, Nietzsche created what Plato only longed for : a new god.

RUPTURE

"(...) Existence itself seems sacred enough to justify even a monster of suffering. The tragic man says 'yes' in the face of the hardest suffering : he is strong enough, rich enough, divine enough for that."

Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Book 4

“Dionysus torn to pieces is a feat of life—he will be reborn eternally and return from destruction.”

Nietzsche, *ibid.*

Before the vast abyss that opens beneath my feet,
My soul is made of silence, and my thought bleeds ;
Words fall away—rain has just been released :
A rain made of dust, the fragments of having been.

I am no longer in the world—the ground has disappeared !
A cursed torrent sweeps away my past,
And my future too, all hope sacrificed—
Tomorrow is the tomb of a present torn apart.

And here I hang, drained of every tear,
On a rocky outcrop, like a tree stripped bare.
The bird of prey emerges, hungry for my remains,
Feasting on the scraps of my failed existence.

I am the solitary, kin to the familiar demon,
A Phoenix fulfilled, its ashes scattered wide ;
In the boundless sky, beyond even the azure,
Does that god we damned still remember my cry ?

Am I allowed to believe when all has been torn,
And the world is a well of forgotten grace ?
It is the end of the tale—Zarathustra knows :
The last man's choice—an absence of existence.

Time sneers in its beads of unraveling hours,
The time of a man torn by carrion crows,
By summer's burns erased by winter's frost,
The Angels of the hearth the fire has devoured.

The hanged man dissolves in the valley's mire,
Swept away by the mercyless flood ;
And frogs sing in jubilant marshes,
Swelled by the wind that softly caresses them.

But the amphibian bursts from too much delight,
And from its taut skin, the entrails spill ;
The crows delight in these split-open bellies :
The sky, beating its wings, has crashed to earth.

“Men are frogs,” the madman told me,
Who prefer to dwell on the banks of poisoned streams ;
They feed on flies, by which they're hunted still,
Swollen with remorse they let themselves consume.

From the marsh's edge they drink from pity,
Lacking the clear water that might reflect them ;
They have slain their gods—who now shall forgive
Their absent conscience, that abyss of being ?

No man possesses the gift of self-pity,
For all forgiveness comes from a Beyond ;
Was it truly necessary that God be granted
The right to judge our acts as strangers to evil ?

Every fault, once confessed, is already relieved—
Of half its weight ; and those who seek to cleanse all
Add to their prayer the price of two "Ave"s :
Thus are all our guilty consciences washed away !

But the divine is no more—we have abandoned it !
It rests in the inn of forsaken beings,
And when the devil dares to stir it from sleep,
He casts upon the world a terrified gaze.

What comes to its window that we cannot see ?
"Look at your children," the devil says with glee,
"Who drink the foul waters of their broken selves :
Their god is poison when he goes missing !"

It is from ignorance that man is torn apart,
Blind to the truth that he is a murderer !
He falls to the futility of his chanced existence,
Appearing only as the shadow of sudden vanity.

And now—at his door—*oblivion* knocks !
“It’s just a mistake,” murmurs his kin,
“Some stranger perhaps, maybe a hungry one—
Who would remember us, once crossed in passing ?”

If there is no outside to this locked door,
If all our existence is gathered here within,
Then nothing can be added to what is still in the shell,
For from within, it must someday burst.

Whence comes this warmth when the hearth is consumed,
And this faint glimmer we think we see ?
If to live is the inside of this closed shell,
Then to die is its shattering—its being scattered.

Who is this contemptuous, folded-up man,
Curled in the hollow where his vanity teaches pain ?
Did he lay this egg in which we’re now confined—
The spawn of a basilisk by the devil beguiled ?

It is through his rupture that man is cast out,
Spilled on the ground like soot and ash,
Swept by southern winds to frozen lands :
To earth's coldest place a man has just fallen.

This egg is a Monad ! How did I come inside ?
Could it be this door has another side ?
Is there an outside to this sealed domain—
An Other of myself, a forgotten plane ?

This "I" is what is missing from a torn-up being—
An impossible elsewhere from a life absented ?
This Other is distant, clinging to dreams :
A call that rebounds from my walled-in remains.

"You are, he says, but part of half a whole,
Scraps lost here from what was once cleft ;
Not one piece of the All can you weigh,
Nor name the sufficiency of your meager breath.

Your world is a carpet of scattered dust,
A notebook sullied by the time of your death ;
Time is a shroud spread over your bones,
And this egg the ossuary of what once was whole.

The dead are the living, parched with thirst for being—
Is there a sky-born water to reunite them ?
If rain can rinse a few bones clean,
Only sunlight can bleach them white again.

Life is an outside from which man has torn himself :
It is life that now knocks upon your door !
Remain in the dust of your own decay
If you fear the beyond that seeks to gather you.

The door, in its whisper, teaches your poverty :
It is the melancholy of a fragmented soul,
Deprived of that portion of Being once meant for him—
By a root of malice and Wisdom entwined.

How could the one who was ever save you ?
That god is dead, they say—disfleshed like you !
We long to breathe new life into the Ancient :
Such is the despair of a disenchanted age.”

There is in the divine the possibility
Of countless faces, too many to tally ;
But what no longer belongs to its age—why preserve it ?
Our lives were burned upon those gods of dust.

If gods are but the reverse of humankind's lost half,
There is no blasphemy in daring to conceive
New forms through which the human might finally be found—
For no god exists when man is thus torn apart.

What god could gather a man from his own ash ?
Not to restore life once the breath is gone,
But to lift from the cinders what crumbled away—
What we once vowed to be, but never became.

In this "forgetting of Being," man has missed himself ;
And what does he speak of, left out by history ?
He speaks of a man chained to his beliefs,
A camel once led docilely through the desert.

But now a lion has leapt upon the beast,
And tears apart the "Thou Shalts" etched in his fate ;
Man dissolves—The Tablets overturned,
And from the new Law, every god seems banished.

Men are unfaithful to the oaths they swore ;
Asceticism is the ideal of a world in despair !
Old Schopenhauer had already taught it all :
To swallow up existence in its own representing.

A child on the riverbank begins to cry :
The river, flowing away, has taken all with it.
Yet from the child's tears, the stream begins to swell—
Now it floods—erasing every trace.

Drinking in his sorrow, the weeping child drowned ;
So too depart the men of a tale now concluded.
A boat is their fate, carried off by the stream
Toward the edges of forgetting, where imposed deeds vanish.

Time now turns to Knowing what was once hidden
In the funeral prayer of a ravenous Church,
Hungry for the blackness of souls and their smallest sins :
If truth is a lie, then falsehood is truth.

The Angels of the house have abandoned us,
Carrying off the embers of our devastated hearts.
The sky overflows with clouds of grief,
Which burst and pour down upon a hollowed-out world.

For the world is bled dry of all prosperity :
In the streaming mud that reaches the lowest quarters,
The old and the children—sharing their stories—
See them torn, crumbled, and finally lost beneath the waves.

Yet still it knocks—on the closed door, relentlessly—
That “elsewhere” of the present, with frayed seams unraveling,
While from each man, something loosens and spills :
In place of a dwelling, man is but a spilling-out.

And upon the door of Self the other half knocks !
Is it too a scattering, much like this side ?
I long to know—and yet must resign myself
To the whims of this door that has no handle.

Then into my mind comes the grace of a thought :
To invite the unknown, placed in tidy portions.
“Come in, I pray, come right to where I am !
It’s warmer inside—the fire is burning bright !

I cannot open to you, for I am busy
Tending the logs with a twist of the poker.
Welcome nonetheless—I’m brewing some coffee
That we’ll drink together beside the hearth’s glow.”

And still he knocks—just as he did before !
Is he of another tongue ? Is he hard of hearing ?
I step toward the door, firmer in voice :
“Listen, my friend—I’ve already bid you enter !”

And still he knocks—just as he did before !

“I understand you,” says the other, “but I cannot come in—

On this side, the door has lost its handle !

So please—open it yourself, as you have invited me !”

Has anyone seen a door one cannot move ?

“I cannot open it—there’s no handle here either !

What is this mystery we must both share ?

Tell me, I beg you—what is it that you know ?”

Do not seek escape from this locked door,

For it speaks to you of a tear—nothing more !

I am your present, shattered and dispersed,

But also a call—to gather and reverse.

For from a sack of marbles torn by time,

Scattered wide before being emptied out,

Human existence came closest to itself—

And indifference rolls through this desert-drought.

When Being is an abyss strewn with wreckage,

And torrents roar from summit-split ledge,

For the god on high now drifts in the past—

Man turns to dust, crumbs of a thing surpassed.

The Other becomes kin when shared in kind—
But it is not the Simple, nor pure Sameness aligned.
The Same is exchange, a communal embrace,
A communion of Spirit born in Light's grace.

When God at last died, we thought ourselves freed—
And we were, indeed—freed from the need to be.
What now remains of what men used to mean ?
Not even the memory of once having been...

Dionysus

That god who repaints all—we unmasked him, you see :
A counterfeit Apollo of our realities !
Tragic is the wound of a torn human soul—
No surface gloss can make that being whole.

When from lifeless rock sacred water flows,
And to flute-song, dust of man dancing goes,
Swept by the wind, those lost specks unite—
And a scorched bird rediscovers its delight.

Remember Ariadne, torn by god apart—
The blood of her wounds, the tears from her heart.
Do you hear her cry, that sobbed refrain ?
A single word was enough to make her aware again.

It's in *her* labyrinth that we danced as one,
Despite the monster who had torn her undone.
We must choose the path of the gods as friends :
Athena the Wise, Prometheus' loving end.

I will walk the path toward that place of Light,
And drink the pure water flowing from the rock ;
There I shall be my dust, and make it dance
To every melody of your enchanted flute.

For I long for the taste of finally gathering myself,
To paint the portrait of my fractured being,
To weave from me the only one I had forgotten,
And commune in Spirit in shared Simplicity.

The torn one scorns the comforts of pity—
What care has his soul for attempts to console ?
It is the Being of Self we have failed to attain :
That Self is mere mirage if not fully claimed !

And behold—the door has at last vanished
Into a well of light that touches all it sees.
The Angels of the house emerge from shadow,
And in the singing hearth, the wood becomes flame.

CRUMBS

When the bread is sliced, only the crumbs remain :

The food of the poor across the earth's domain.

No banquet is so grand that beneath the table

No scraps fall—a whisper of meals barely stable.

They say all things, in time, will crumble down,

That nothing escapes this fate so profound.

What becomes of these remnants, untouched by hand ?

Do insects gather for a feast so planned ?

Yet doubting the thing, I see only dust—

Carried by winds, wherever they thrust.

What once was here is now elsewhere found :

To grasp such measure can make the head spin round.

Nothing in this world claims permanence or stay :

Time is the gravedigger, turning all to clay.

To dream of escape is but vanity's chase,

And God gives no aid, though He watches from space.

Our thoughts follow the path of things that decay :

They say memories fray and peel away.

Yet much is lost beyond visible trace,

Where the weak show through like pores on the face.

Through the eye of a needle, God says we must pass :
Never did He speak truer—through such narrow glass,
Countless things vanish from the world's embrace.
But is a hole what time leaves in its place ?

Time is said to be seamless, says Science's voice—
As though its course holds never a void nor choice.
We feel time escaping, we're conscious of flight :
Is that just illusion, unfounded in light ?

If Lamartine begged time to pause its stream,
Was that mere romance—or rational dream ?
Tick-tock, time halts—can it resume the strain ?
Tick-tock, time resumes the harvest once again.

No rolling stone climbs back uphill again :
That only occurs if someone drives its strain.
Once at the summit, the stone may descend—
But not if its pusher grows weak in the end.

To reverse time's flow changes none of this tale,
For the stone rolls downward as slopes prevail.
Yet if time were to crack through some hidden flaw,
The stone might shift course without breaking the law.

If it seems unreasonable that time might slip,
Through some subtle fracture or temporal rip,
Still, from the breach a new time could be born—
A moment apart, yet equal, newly sworn.

So it happens one may fall inside an egg,
And the time of that egg with ours does not beg.
This is as true as three times three is nine—
There's no need to find in it the arcane or divine.

No greater sage has ever invoked time's name
Without finding it fractured, never the same.
Einstein himself, though a learned one, said :
There are many times in the world we tread.

Thus I dwell in my egg, and its time is my own.
I do not feel confined ; in fact, I'm alone—
Free to think beyond good and evil's chain ;
Here, no thread binds thought's domain.

Inside my egg I am two : I and my thoughts' face,
Like Zarathustra dwelling in his cave's embrace.
What else should I do but ruminate and wait ?
I suffer no burden in this thoughtful state.

Like a cow, I chew slowly on crumbs of my mind—
The fragments of thoughts that my spirit designed.
From dust I construct with reason a cart,
Though no fixed order instructs this art.

I float with no aim in this viscous domain :
Am I the yolk of this egg—or the chick yet to gain ?
Is this some womb whose hollow I fill ?
Does rebirth await, or silence and still ?

My ideas are fragments, mere scattered sparks—
How to assemble them into meaningful arcs ?
Atoms of thought, adrift and unsure,
Like wayward aphorisms evading a cure.

No wisdom was ever so wholly complete
That human adventure became obsolete ;
In the cycle of Ideas, there are mundane plains—
Hegel made of the concept just moments in chains.

He traced, through our minds, a Phenomenology,
A dialectic bound in slave's apology :
By some strange magic, the servant arose,
Took up the master's cause, and wore his clothes.

If reason proceeds thus, no totality
Spare its own parts from cruel vanity.
If I am a fragment of such a great whole,
Perhaps it's my right to forget that role.

So from these poor crumbs I must gather anew,
And shape from them some phrasing true.
With fragments of speech I still can recall,
I'll write out some lines—phases, that's all.

Phases are markers that guide the mind's thread,
A tapestry sewn with meanings widespread ;
Even flipped upside down, this word-woven art
Holds fast to the sense stitched deep in its heart.

Thought is a rhizome winding its track—
And the shell of our egg holds that line back.
Our lives lean forward, peering at fate,
While the shell hides the horizon we contemplate.

Is there an outside to this oval domain ?
To know it, the shell must be shattered again.
But who from within can crack it apart ?
From the inside, I know only my fractured heart.

This egg welcomed me when time itself broke—
Must it shatter once more, in one final stroke,
For a possible outside to finally show ?
To fall into this place—how strange to know...

That a fracture of time let us into this shell
Cannot be reason to hope we might dwell
In the dream of escape—pure vanity's game ;
Once in the egg, leaving is much the same.

The world feels so narrow to those who seek skies—
We stretch it to fit where our longing lies.
To unite earth and heaven seems noble and grand—
But longing for union may misunderstand.

For we are in the middle : neither one nor the other.
Though the sky hangs so low we think we might touch it,
Neither sky nor earth truly claims us as brother—
Such is the law of the egg : between both, we flit.

Whether on earth or in heaven we seek our domain,
It is a costume we sew to cloak our condition.
If by rupture of time, even God broke his chain,
Remaining in the egg would be his obligation.

SOLITUDE

"Life offers no gifts

And by God, Orly is sad on Sundays

With or without Bécaud..."

Jacques Brel, *Orly* (excerpt)

"They say it doesn't exist !" — was once sung to our face !

Bécaud knew nothing of it : the night has now fallen.

And I wander the shadows, stripped of daylight's grace,

Clutching the little I kept from sparse companions.

Faithful, Solitude would offer me comfort :

"What does the world matter, if from it you're torn ?

More alone than all gods, abandoned by your own,

In the desert of shadows, to your weeping sworn !"

"But it doesn't exist !" still hollers the fool,

Who believes that a candle, cheap and dim-lit,

Might redeem his doubts and bitterness full

With the wax of a hope the crowd did not admit.

How many solitudes must yet be endured

Before one may think that Man *is* a being-with ?

By the "they" estranged, by the crowd made obscure,

A nameless follower, drowned in the myth.

He has no name, the one who's been broken,
To the depths of non-being by forgetfulness thrown.
No light in his path, no more words to be spoken :
What can one await when the self has been burned ?

His eyes, now open, beg for a friend,
But see only himself, in his soul reflected—
And there, at the bottom, where sorrows descend,
A river of fragments, his past, unsuspected.

He recalls the men, a place long forsaken,
Where hope collapsed at the rope's own step ;
And now he lies dying, before himself taken—
Just a promise, lingering, near a body bereft.

He carries with him his last form of trust,
With a corpse for a friend, in a chill without end.
He'll keep his vow, bury it if he must,
When wolves and men both cease to offend.

At the foot of the empty tree, he swears he will keep
Vigil through the night — but his grief crushes him deep ;
On the moss he collapses, and drifts into sleep,
Midday sun wakes him gently from the shadows so steep.

He greets his dead friend, bound to timber now still,
Then resumes his lone path, past the bend in the hill.
An eagle and serpent his only allies remain —
To beasts, not to men, he entrusts all his pain.

He yearns to depart, but desire holds him chained,
Desire to dissolve in the Pied Cow's domain.
He meets on the road a young man grown worn,
Who envies a tree — for how high it is born.

But what gains the tree, in such lofty ascent ?
Surpassing the divine, can it ever relent ?
The end serves no purpose, for gods too have died,
Hung by a rope stretched between mountains wide.

For human was the rope by which his friend fell,
Undone by a jester, with no tale to tell.
The Enchanter's triumph, the lambs torn apart —
Madness crowned holy, death crowned as art.

Yes, it is through our death that wars find their way :
On fields left behind, the corpses decay ;
The sound of the guns drowns the sorrowful cry —
Whom do you seek, my son, in this land where hopes die ?

Do you not know men are conjugated in past tense ?
Once, in these scorched lands, there was presence intense :
A scent of old Mischief and Wisdom aligned —
An old man and a child by one rope were entwined.

And if in your mountain I linger in thought,
Perhaps it's your solitude that weighs as it ought.
You must cast off that spirit — heaviness, regret,
And that bitter reflection your soul can't forget.

One day you'll return to the plains down below
To plant a new man whom the trees will outgrow ;
He'll rise so high, he may well learn to speak
With the Celestials, in a light sacred and meek.

You must count to seven the solitudes passed,
But what use is the number, if its meaning won't last ?
Is it the Apocalypse, sealed sevenfold tight,
Or the seven sacred flames of an ancient rite ?

Turn your tongue seven times before you speak :
So many times must you weigh what you seek—
For in each solitude, thought comes undone,
And to knowledge is added another sun.

"Does one become richer ?" then asked the one
Who knows not poverty, blind in his run :
What's the use of knowing, if carried alone ?
A shared burden weighs just as much when it's known.

The vigil of solitude forces you to dwell
On what on the plain cannot help but dispel—
It spreads, it dissolves in disjointed decay,
Of hours that unfold in torn threads of the day.

It speaks of worldly time, which once was intact,
Now ripped and broken, with no path back.
To the eternal instant, it's foreign, erased :
In the Return of the Same, this time is displaced.

The time of the lone is a ceaseless begin,
And seven's no end, but a symbol within—
A number divine, of the infinite sign,
Time ends only where eternity aligns.

The seventh solitude teaches the vast
Struggle the Overman must hold fast—
For man is a rope to his Other bound tight,
And that end is never fully in sight.

"Will to Power"—no more than a word,
To name the strength with which Spirit is stirred :
To conquer oneself, to climb and transcend,
On paths toward Clarity, without end.

Each solitude bears its wounded tale,
A stream of hesitation, a retreat frail :
What is man in his fate that I must reflect ?
To what fragile hope can my soul connect ?

An eagle and serpent are my only kin :
Of one I lack wings to rise from within,
Of the other no scales to slither away—
I have only my mind, a burden gone astray.

Then sorrow befalls me, poorly adorned,
With nothing but hands to catch tears I've mourned.
Yet here, apart from the crowd and its cry,
Is the dwelling where right thinking may lie.

The sun blesses me with its nearness bright,
And birdsong sweetens the stillness of light.
Stones are my comfort—I sit upon grace,
To drink from the spring that goodness lets trace.

From my great solitude, I cherish the vow—
It frees my soul from each binding bow.
And gifts my mind the wind of liberty
That defies the giants' hate and vanity.

CHAPTER V

SILENCES

The human being is a sound-catcher : like rabbits and donkeys, their large ears allow them to pick up every noise, every clamor, every murmur. Our ears are anvils, endlessly struck by the hammer of sound—so they gather, and most often blend into one. Today more than ever, we hear so much that it would be futile to claim we truly listen : of all we hear, we truly listen to so little. We even confuse the two—hearing becomes listening, if we accept that listening means simply opening our ears to let everything in.

But silence cannot be heard. And if it cannot be heard, how can it be listened to ?

Listening to silence ! Must we be fools to even imagine it ? And yet, many things are said in silence—things for which no words exist. What is said without words cannot be heard, since

saying implies forging words with sounds. If there is nothing to hear, might there still be something in silence to *listen* to ?

What might that be ?

Everything that is said without recourse to words. Do we not say that silence speaks louder than words ? Silence, then, concerns what is said beyond all speech, and which, for that very reason, cannot be heard. So how can we attune ourselves to what, in silence, speaks in its own way yet refuses to be heard ?

People say silence is heavy, oppressive—sometimes unbearable, so much so that we feel the urge to break it. Silence is not an absence within speech : on the contrary, it weighs upon it with everything that is being said and yet cannot be heard. Hence Heidegger's idea of a "path to speech"—a speech that, of course, is not heard but that still speaks, and invites us to listen to silence.

But what is this path—this "way to speech" ? Paradoxically, the path toward what speaks yet cannot be expressed travels through the words themselves. To approach the unspoken within speech is to follow a trail of words—a spoken trail Heidegger calls *die Sage* ("the Dite"). It is as though speech, walking this path of the *Dite*, leads to the unveiling of what is not said, beyond language—as though the poverty of

words themselves, by tracing this path, demanded the presence of the unsaid.

The *Dite* is not a road from one place to another, from the unheard to listening. The path opens within each word that makes up the *Dite*, as if every word, one after the other, contributed to an awakening.

To awaken to the presence of Being in its absence. To awaken to silent Being, to walk within the placeless, to give voice to the unspeakable, form to the formless.

Being, when given this way, appears as mystery—not because it is mystical, but because the path it opens is disentangled from Reason, which had once fed upon its forgetting. Being withdraws into the cracks inherent in what is—into beings in all their varied appearances. The unveiling of Being is also the most certain site of its silent retreat, its absence.

There is no mysticism on this path toward manifest Being—only the trace of Reason's failure.

What is a clearing, if not a sky of blue—a sky cleared of the perilous clouds that once cloaked it and dimmed its light ?

In this land of ours, Brel once sang, “there is a sky so low it makes for humility” : in this “so low,” the sky reveals itself as intimately near, almost one with the earth.

But that same low sky, when at its closest, becomes a stormy sky—one where lightning crashes upon mountaintops and shows itself only through the thunder’s roar.

From that sky that rumbles and frightens children, what is listened to is not its fury, but the pauses between—the silent rhythms foretelling the return of calm clarity.

To the thunder and its tumult follow the drops of rain that nourish the soil with the sky’s excess :

What is heard in the sky’s downpour drains it of all substance and returns it to the void of its infinitude.

What remains, when the sky clears and offers itself to light, is like a blank page—a space of beginning, of something not yet written. A clearing, a nothingness, where what gives itself to be seen can never be fully seen :

In the illuminated, light is only presumed.

Light opens us to a space that, by being empty and open, allows Being to appear.

From the sky emptied by the storm, only *the place* remains.

ODE TO THE NIGHT

To quench my thirst I drank the dew,
Those tears of the nocturnal sky that feed the forest's hue ;
Truth, I sought it endlessly, in every distant land—
But life returned to me naught but her illusions grand.

I wore down my shoes roaming across the world :
Only sorrow remains from that long odyssey unfurled.
I met with thieves, saw souls debased and grim,
Pressed forward without pause—my path was never dim.

I bent my back beneath a burning sun,
Crossing endless deserts where horizons never run ;
Sweat and blood combined dried out my eyes—
I cursed the day and prayed for night to rise.

From my ulcered skin death seemed to seep,
I bled from wandering through lands so barren, so deep.
The mocking sun laughed at my wretched fate—
I sank into the abyss that borders the world's gate.

And I sought the truth through countries made of stone,
But it slipped through shadows, mocking me alone.

A crawling bug I was, dragging my despair,
Feeding on a dream, my only daily fare.

Tragic ! My life was stitched from this cruel strain :
Among all humankind, I was the outcast's name.
I followed fate through suffering and mistake—
Detesting virtue, which sin alone could make !

I begged the snakes to take me as their kin,
Drinking their venom as if it were no sin ;
I knew of things only their vanity—
Sharing the fate of orphans endlessly.

Life is a misery with no promised end :
“Why do we exist ?” Rimbaud dared to contend.
A Season in Hell—yes, that was your cursed path,
And Hell, in Charleville, carved your tomb at last.

You dreamed of the sublime to dress your weary soul :
That cursed hope became your aching toll.
From the infernal depths you never quite escaped—
Do you hold now a gift to soothe a heart once raped ?

It is the devil who holds the keys to our reason :
Did you know how he delights in seeing us lost in treason ?

The truth we crave bears the name of the demiurge—
There is no truth but that which emerges from the verge.

To suffer and to love—is that not contradiction ?
Do you recall Phèdre, dead from love's affliction ?
Hippolytus denied, by Theseus betrayed—
In the tangle of lies, even truth was mislaid.

O Truth ! Is there any place where you still abide ?
Must we believe in you, lest all meaning subside ?
Will you make our sorrow your rightful domain,
Or deny that absurd pain is never in vain ?

And we, the wounded—who dares show us pity ?
The sky we implore offers no equity.
What aid could descend from an unpeopled heaven ?
To tear through our lives, virtue is the weapon.

From twilight at last I ask but one gift :
The night's gentle tears grant my soul a lift.
They ease the weight of pain too heavy to bear—
Even fate cannot add to what's already there.

That life is tragic—this I know, and nothing more :
Shall we cling to some meaning to quiet the uproar ?

Only appearances dare speak such repose :
What semblance of hope in a whisper so morose ?

I know of hours too dark to dare to count—
Our thoughts corrupted by morning's harsh mount.
They betray us and vanish with the dew at dawn—
And parched tongues find no words once night is gone.

The sun burdens us with his gift of light :
In all that appears, nothing is right.
His rays bring not truth but a searing lie,
That burns our flesh beneath a mocking sky.

Helios is no friend to the wounded mass—
He displays their torment as the mournful night must pass.
Soars like a vulture in insolent delight,
Casting his javelins of blinding light.

Damnation and Hell—both are my fate :
I know the first well, the second I await.
Hell is a long river where my life finds its stream,
But whose apostle flows in that fatal gleam ?

Beyond even death, must suffering persist ?
Which is more cruel : time or the abyss ?

If time is our own, should it not be enough ?
To answer such things, we must be cunning—and tough.

SILENCE

If words are deceivers, we must then concede
That speaking is futile, for it only misleads ;
Speech is a crime masked in concepts well-dressed,
Breaking the silence, it hinders thought's rest.

From the listening of silence, Serenity grows—
That sly kind of wisdom simplicity shows :
Beings surrender in strange sameness and grace,
As Being overflows yet leaves not a trace.

Silence is required when too much has been said,
When chatter has wasted what thought could have led ;
Then the Hermit escapes from the furnace of noise
And retreats to the hush where mystery employs.

To our prayers, said a haunted Nietzsche once,
We owe a blessing before what we confront—
But man with his metaphors betrays all truth
When he forces his words on the beings' pure proof.

Knowledge is a bouquet of flowers neglected,
A basket of fruit whose taste we've rejected ;

It is desire that compels us to misalign
What belongs in one place from another's design.

It's in our nature to separate all things—
To cast out what differs from what habit brings ;
Rhubarb and strawberries, they say, mustn't blend,
Though their mingled flavors could joyfully transcend.

And knowledge strips from the everyday
Those things that time cannot sweep away.
It is not tradition to cherish, indeed,
What has long brought us pleasure and answered our need.

Tradition is woven from forbiddance and fear :
"Do not eat the lamb once its death draws near !"
Which was it—man or beast—that invented this rite ?
The creature that suffers or the man in delight ?

It is a cruel god who could impose such laws,
If indeed in the Scriptures we find His cause !
But who—God or man—first carved in word
That what once was must forever be heard ?

It is the power of words that thus binds us tight,
To repeat what was held as eternal and right ;

Those truths deemed solid, engraved in stone—
As everlasting as the god who made them known.

Yet God is but silence addressed to our soul :
What could we grasp if He suddenly spoke ?
To blame Him for silence is to refuse to hear,
For in silence alone His Word draws near.

“He who says nothing has clean teeth,” they say—
Words have no smell, unlike the usurer’s pay !
So why choose them, if they count for naught ?
If speech is silver, then silence is gold, well-wrought.

Thus I am a Hermit, in my cave withdrawn
From idle chatter that makes the head swell on ;
And in the deep silence of faithful embrace
I surrender to the world, unveiled in its grace.

This world, when quiet, holds truth in its frame :
Beings return to us as truly they came—
Inhabited by Being, which seeks to be named
Through the correspondences Baudelaire once claimed.

Many words are sorrowful, the moment they’re said,
Chains on the wrists, binding the dread ;

And words lead us round in a prisoners' parade—
Like the artist once painted, his ear self-flayed.

There is no ear shorter than one cut away :
Did he long for the silence to keep words at bay ?
One word alone, if chosen with care,
Can guide us like Ariadne's thread through despair.

When all dogs bark, what do they proclaim ?
That a caravan is passing, bearing no name ?
There are proverbs we love to recite and parade,
But what truth do they hold that isn't mislaid ?

I hear that across the world, words are sown—
But what future blooms from such sterile groan ?
Words serve only to keep others apprised
Of the scraps and shadows one has surmised.

What I seek to allow myself through writing
Is what Hölderlin could only begin sighting—
Then Heidegger followed, taking up the plea :
To make of poetry a way to philosophize freely.

Not to make poems serve the logic of thought,
But to speak otherwise, as true seeking ought—

Toward the unspeakable, the never-yet-seen,
Where all things refuse to appear as they seem.

It is from within that sensibility spies
What Kant tried to bind to Reason's guise ;
A strange carousel, spinning imagined forms
Whose memory fades as the silence storms.

What is imagination, faced with ignored voids,
That slip between words on paper employed—
Words framed by what one can read or portray :
There is no lesser wisdom than to settle that way.

"He speaks in veiled words," the poet mutters—
An oracle hiding in metaphor's clutter.
Yet a seer is merely a scholar resigned
To stain truth with speech he cannot define.

For knowledge is stitched with paradigms bold—
Beliefs that claim to fill every hole :
So Walras built his economic mold,
And how many more sciences have kept us controlled ?

It is the death of man that Foucault declared,
Inviting a path few others have dared—

Toward a rebirth in a new kind of seeing,
Where language is thread only for pointing.

If history has spoken of Being in scarce lines,
I concede that too much leads to decline—
In a tangle of names, meaning slips away :
Too many words become silence, dismayed.

Heidegger's paths have trampled through much speech,
But let's not cast stones at one who reached
Toward Being's secrets, though never quite caught—
Forgetful that time is where eternity's sought.

Let us return to silence, hidden in what we say—
To what it reveals in the space we betray
By the words that encircle it, hint and delay—
Telling us, always, what they cannot convey.

It is modern thought that claims to name it all—
From the vast to the infinite and all things small.
To dress all beings in a single word's guise
Is to grasp almost nothing, to mislead with disguise.

Silence is a gift to those who seek to dwell
On Being itself, where the existent swells.

Yet what is this mystery, told in words so wide,
None of which suffice—none truly coincide ?

Though Free Extent may host where Being stays,
It speaks not of the place where it unveils its ways.
Where Being shows itself, a calmness may arise—
A wisdom both cunning and Simple in disguise.

Yet the Simple resists our every reflection :
We are drawn to the complex, to tangled connection.
The Simple holds no word we might rightly convey,
For, as Leibniz once taught, it escapes all display.

There is no Reason one might clearly invoke
To measure that silence the Simple evoked.
If none can explain it and it evades the known,
Still it *must* be—Being's foundational stone.

Thus did Heidegger, unable to name,
Entrust to a footpath the echo of the Same.
What does such a path tell of things we pass by ?
That beneath all appearance, a unity may lie.

That Same is the Simple to which we must return :
If stones have a soul, as I firmly discern,

Then soul is no longer the man's private flame,
But a place of kinship—our origin the same.

What inhabits each one is what marks us apart :
For this soul is a place all things freely take part.
It alone remains when all else fades away—
A stage where each being enacts its own play.

But what is this theatre ? I hear the query rise.
Where every being may express and improvise ?
What is this soul, shared by all in silent equity,
That makes of a shared place the heart of its nudity ?

Once again returns the mystery no word can unlock :
So how can we think what no language can stock ?
If one word eludes us, perhaps another may serve—
So long as it points, but does not disturb.

I know but one word that seems rightly chosen :
It names only the space, leaves the rest unspoken.
Each being, in essence, is fit to abide
There—where its story and freedom reside.

That word is "Spirit"—I thus name the Open,
And from "Knowledge" it must be distinctly broken.

For Spirit is a place, by beings occupied,
Where what unfolds within is never pre-defined.

THE OPEN (OF THE SILENCE OF BEING)

Each makes their secret of the Being they host :
Is there nothing to say but discarded caskets
Thrown to the scornful glance of a nosy scholar ?
Of what gives things their form—do we ever speak truth ?

The sky becomes void by weeping for the world—
Was it not already, long before the storm ?
Who knows the ground of that gaping abyss
And, with one rightful word, could evoke its image ?

Silence is burdened with the words it does not say—
A reserve of remoteness within proximity.
The unspoken lies beyond the path of the *Dite*,
For words cannot guard what is unthinkably said.

And so into obscurity falls what is ever spoken,
Mistaken for mystery or a god's insolence.
The dark becomes fate at the threshold of forgetting,
Where the words that return fail to grasp what's missing.

Speech is silence that leads us toward the gods—
Does it carry an intimacy that might be their voice ?

Words hold no meaning save for what is unsaid :
Of all we may hear, who knows the true weight ?

There is nothing heavier, forever returning,
In its identical being where anguish entangles :
To fall short of oneself—what a tragic fate,
When the shepherd of Being falters in his vow.

Who may glimpse the opening of the clearing—
Of what it offers to see, the light is withdrawn.
Being, just as it reveals, equally retreats :
The abyss, in its unsaid, appears within the Open.

The Shekhinah of Being is the voice of its void,
A space opened by two angels upon the Sacred Word.
Toward this unsaid of Being, where the gods are but seeds,
There is no other path we are able to walk.

Return to this non-place that gives the “there” a dwelling,
Sheltering of Being in the shadow of the existent.
In being-toward-death, time itself becomes care :
If the future lies in the “there,” the “being-there” is now.

What may we hope for, if not what is given ?
Our yesterdays are tomorrow in time’s alchemy.

In this divine silence, the Self alone resounds :
Past and to-come dissolve within the present.

And Being returns to us in an eternal dance,
Plunging into the gaze the gift of its power.
From the folds beyond-Self unfolds the intent
To safeguard its keeping and root our essence.

Tragic is the fate of the one who walks
To the edge of absence and the gods' offering :
In our confused thoughts, which ruminate on the not-being,
Through Speech arises the sustenance of self-being.

And Being spends itself as much as it withdraws,
A secret of a fleeting *there* destined through the *Dite*,
Whose unspoken, once written, confesses in its un-saying,
And hollows within thought the folds where it hides.

The false, in unfolding, is the coming of the true :
The "there" has made its dwelling in the folds of the existent !
Things have presence only when fed by Being,
And fall back to chaos at the smallest of fractures.

The one who dwells as a poet is shepherd of Being :
He knows the names of gods, as well as their silence.

There is no peril for humankind he does not hold the key to—
For in the void of the Open, he makes his dwelling.

CHAPTER VI

SCHOPENHAUER — THE DEMON PHILOSOPHER

“Let us listen, for instance, to one of the most expressive passages among many others that he wrote in praise of the aesthetic state (The World as Will and Representation, I, 231) ; let us hear the accent of pain, joy, and gratitude with which he pronounces such words : ‘This is the ataraxia Epicurus proclaimed as the supreme good and which he says belongs to the gods ; for the brief duration of this condition, we are delivered from the odious constraint of the will, we celebrate the Sabbath of the penal colony of the will, the wheel of Ixion comes to a halt’... What vehemence in these words ! What images of suffering and immense disgust !”

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, “What is the meaning of ascetic ideals ?”, §6

“Let us especially not forget that Schopenhauer, who treated sexuality as a personal enemy (sexuality, and also its instrument—woman, that instrumentum diaboli) needed enemies to stay in good spirits ; let us not forget that he had a

fondness for angry words, spiteful, hateful, and bilious words ; that he got angry for the sake of being angry, by passion ; that he would have fallen ill, become pessimistic (for he was not, even though that was his deepest wish) without his enemies, without Hegel, without women, without sensuality, without the will to live, to remain in this world. It's fair to wager that without all this, Schopenhauer would not have stayed—he would have fled. But his enemies held him fast ; his enemies constantly offered new enticements to remain alive. His anger, like that of the ancient Cynics, was balm, relief, his ransom and remedy against disgust—his happiness.”

Nietzsche, *ibid.*, §7

THE SHADOWS

I walk upon our earth and see only shadows—

Where are the men ? Have they disappeared,

Eaten by the rage of some false wanderer ?

Where does he hide, this man-eater who called himself a
passerby ?

I still hear his laughter—that *hideous* laugh, said Musset,

The cry of a beast that rends everything.

If he too is dead and laughs from his grave,

I will break his bones and reduce them to ashes.

Is he deaf, the one who claimed that, toothless, he no longer
laughs ?

I don't believe a word—

In the silence of the shadows, I hear him snickering.

Shadows are rabbits :

Their ears are too long, tuned to the silence he made his
laughter.

Rabbits !

Shadows are fleeting, lovers of darkness.

They hide from the light and walk in our steps,

Always behind us like a dog dragged along—

Without desire, without will.

A shadow follows, without pride, the one it trails :

I have traveled far, she says,

Even in the desert, I saw girls dance.

I have braved oceans, she says again,

And eaten clouds from mountaintops.

Shadows are the memory of men—

Of what they once were and now are no longer.

O shadows, keepers of all that was—

Where are the travelers whose baggage you stretch behind
them ?

Do you hear those hidden laughs within the silence ?
That laughter which consumes all, leaving only ash,
The laugh of the Destroyer,
Who leaves no trace in his wake ?

Your ears are not short enough—
You are deaf to this silence.
Nothing alerts you but loyalty
To whatever precedes you.

Of men, you know only the step,
The trace that was also yours—
But all is smooth now :
The world bears no more prints
From which you might forge a path.

Shadows are frozen in waiting, like those who one day, waited
for Godot—but he never came : Godot will not come !
Are your ears so large that no wise word can make its way
through ?
Only the Absent One may still arrive—all else is already here.
If Godot does not exist, it is because he is absent—far beyond
your gaze,
Far beyond the reach of that demon's laughter.
What is too far to truly exist cannot hear those who mock it

And wish it would never come : only those who hear the sneer
ever flee the sneerer.

That is why the men have disappeared :
They perished from laughter—
The laughter they heard, which shatters all hope,
Mocks the dreams that give meaning to life.
O shadows, remember who you once were :
Travelers in search of meaning and of yourselves,
Enemies of the in-vain, which forever shuts the eyelids.

His laughter—yes, *his* laughter—
Made you the greatest pessimists,
Depriving you of a purpose to live toward.
Do you still hear that mocking, malicious laughter
Calling you into nothingness ?
Its greatest triumph is that you no longer hear it.
And yet he laughs, I swear it to you—
He laughs at your inconsistency, your transparency,
The ghostly fruits of his own vaporous game.
Do we not say of the gravely ill that they are mere shadows,
Faint memories of what they once were,
Ghosts of what is no longer ?

Man is sick with forgetting,
And he fades like evening light,
Pushed from the cliff that edges the abyss,
He vanishes into the silence of his own nothingness.
The diabolical laughter made of the snuffer
The very instrument of his perverse delight—
And he wishes it eternal.

"I do not belong to time," he tells us,
"For every spirit to come is already mine."
"I am," says the laughter, "the Destroyer,
And I feed upon the ruins of all I lay low."
Nothing resists him—not even for a single day.
Nothing ?
Not even a more thunderous laugh ?
Not even a hammer forged by the gods ?

A hammer to sculpt a new man—
To draw from the stone-shadow what the laughter had buried.
That one will have short ears,
Ears to hear what is wise—
What the old could not hear
Lost in the racket of their overgrown ears.
He didn't hear it, I tell you,

Because the wise arrives in silence,
Unlike the laughter that flatters donkey ears.

A hammer to sculpt—
To free from stone the new being hidden within,
A hammer no shadow is strong enough to lift.
The laughter will end when the sculptor comes,
Who, with great skill, will fold back our ears.

When will this artist come ?
That is the question for the *who*—
Who is this sculptor, who holds this gift,
Who cares for the future of men ?

Who am I, still thinking among the shadows ?
Who am I, still deaf to the laughter of the Destroyer ?
I am no sculptor—
Only someone with reason to believe in the new man.

What does that reason matter—so long as I believe it ?
But belief is not enough :
Thought knocks at the door of what cannot be said,
Of an unspeakable that no word may name.
Words fail—they are unfit to dwell in what they veil by saying.
When thought grows mute, it calls upon its Other—

Its neighbor in the dwelling of speech,
The second trunk of the poetic act.

For in poetry, song and thought belong to one another.
It is through song that poetry designates
What thought cannot say.

The poem is a score written in words :
And if, in their arrangement, they provoke thought,
They overflow what they fail to say—
In the interlines of the uninscribed,
Where an uncanny melody unveils
What mere words withhold in the silence of the unthinkable.

Poetry is song—
For it elevates simple speech
With a sovereign utterance—
That strange melody which speaks to the Spirit,
And lets itself be grasped without needing to be spoken.

To the speech of suffering, poetry adds tears ;
To the speech of joy, it adds a smile.
A poem is read, is heard—never interpreted :
It is an absolute work,
Never duplicated,
For its speech cannot be represented.

Likewise, the man—
Still hidden in the raw stone that calls to the sculptor—
Shall be an absolute work,
The creation of a pure form,
Of a being whose essence,
However dense,
Always lies outside it.

In other words :
The sculptor who shapes the stone
Addresses us with a word that—paradoxically—
Escapes his sculpture,
For it is not representable,
Though it requires the sculpture as its one site of address.

With art—and more precisely, with poetry—
Metaphysics comes to its end.
For to the duality of matter and form,
Poetry adds a third dimension,
Which metaphysics can neither grasp nor name.

Thus, poetry is the reef
Upon which all philosophy runs aground,
For philosophy, by its very essence,

Cannot navigate the waters of the unspeakable and the
unfigurable.

It is the era, said Foucault,
That determines what is sayable and visible.
But we must add :
What is determined are the contingent limits
Of what can be said or seen—
Not the unspeakable or the unfigurable,
Which can only be addressed in the work of art,
Regardless of the age in which it is born.

As for the new man,
Only the question of *who* remains,
Since the *when* lies within the *who* as sufficient reason.

“Who is he ?” you ask.
He is a friend whose name I will not utter.
He is known by all—
Yet none truly know him.
It is too soon, don’t you see ?
Your suffering is useless—
Unless others are added to it.

One must suffer greatly
To love suffering as one does health.
Amor Fati !, says the thinker.

Miss none of the verses to follow—
And you shall understand why torment is little,
Measured against the tragic.

Was it not the laughter of the Destroyer
That made you into shadows ?
Whoever knows this
Understands the tragic sense—
For it is *tragic* to be swallowed by the *in vain*
Proclaimed by that laughter.

Yet he does not know this—
He is blind to the suffering he inflicts.
It is by scorning it that he feeds his pleasure,
Swearing that no harm can reach him,
That nothing can make him miserable.

It is through his chilling laughter
That he stuns the world :
Prometheus' fire—our last hope—
Extinguished in ice.

Nonsense !

What does he know of cold,

That demon of taverns ?

Has he ever crossed into the far North ?

Has he ever set foot

Upon the eternal glaciers

In the realm of the Hyperboreans ?

Would he fear the cold—

This drinker of lukewarm ales

Who tramples the earth

Knowing only the devil's taverns ?

Mocking all,

He casts over men the shroud of his frost.

Hell is not a furnace—

It is a simple refrigerator.

O shadows who remain—

Is it from the chill of his tongue that I feel you tremble ?

Do you not know ?

“Of what once occurred, only the place remains,”

Said a great poet, haunted by chance.

That place, the only thing that endures
When nothing remains to be understood in words—
It is the place of your rebirth.

When all has vanished—
When nothing remains etched upon the bench—
Only the page remains,
A call to another story.
A story never written,
The story of the new man
Soon to appear.

That story will be born
In the ultimate solitude—
The seventh, so they say—
The solitude of greatest suffering,
From which, one last time,
Shall return the friend
Who will silence
The laughter of the greatest Destroyer.

Perhaps tomorrow...

BY THE SIDE OF A DEAD MAN

"I took the book with reverence and gazed at those incomprehensible markings, which to me revealed the immortal thoughts of the greatest destroyer of dreams ever to walk the earth."

(Guy de Maupassant, "By the Side of a Dead Man")

Menton, January 1883.

In search of a benevolent sun, Guy de Maupassant has set his suitcase down at a seaside hotel.

The Mediterranean, calm in this season, returns from the infinite only to die a few steps away.

Each afternoon, beneath his window, Maupassant observes the same ritual :

A man emerges from the hotel and walks, slowly, toward a bench bathed in sunlight.

He sits down and, like a cat, stretches his frame to the rays of the sun,

Extending his long legs as if to touch the sea and dip his feet in it.

Then he begins to read, always the same book, its pages turned with reverence—

One might think it the Holy Bible.

One day, intrigued, Maupassant decides to join the figure—a German—

And, to appear occupied, brings *Rolla* by Musset.

He sits beside him and begins to read ; immediately the man speaks :

“—Do you read German, sir ?”

“—Not at all, sir.”

“—A pity. Since fate has placed us side by side, I would have shared something priceless with you : this book I hold.”

“—And what is it ?”

“—It is a copy of my master Schopenhauer, annotated in his own hand.

As you can see, the margins are filled with his writing.”

While Maupassant leafs through the book, two verses from Musset come to mind :

“Dost thou sleep in peace, Voltaire, and does thy hideous smile
Still flutter on thy bony lips ?”

As he turns the precious pages, he thinks to himself :

“Let them protest, grow angry, take offense or grow exalted—
Schopenhauer has branded humanity with the mark of his
disdain and disenchantment.

A disillusioned sensualist, he overturned belief, shattered hopes,
poetry, and illusion.

He destroyed aspiration, ravaged the soul's confidence, killed
love,

Demolished the ideal worship of woman, pierced the hearts'
illusions—

And accomplished the greatest labor of skepticism ever
undertaken.

He passed over everything with mockery—and emptied it.

And even today, those who despise him seem to carry,
unwillingly, fragments of his thought in their minds.”

Maupassant resumes the conversation.

“—So you knew Schopenhauer personally ?” he asks.

The German smiles sadly.

“—Until his death, sir.”

He spoke of his master, of the almost supernatural impression
he left on those who approached him.

He told Maupassant about the visit of a doctrinaire French
republican politician,

Who insisted on meeting this man—

And found him in a bustling tavern, surrounded by disciples,
Dry, wrinkled, laughing an unforgettable laugh,

Tearing into ideas and beliefs with a single word,
Like a dog shredding rags with its teeth.

The German repeated what the Frenchman said upon leaving,
shaken :

“I thought I had spent an hour with the devil.”

Then the German added,
“Indeed, sir, he had a terrifying smile—
A smile that frightened us even after his death.”

He shared a little-known anecdote.

After Schopenhauer died, it was agreed that his close friends
would take turns keeping vigil through the night, two at a time.
When his turn came, he entered the mortuary room with his
friend and they sat at the foot of the bed.

“The face had not changed.

It still smiled.

That same familiar crease curled at the corner of his lips.

It seemed as if he might open his eyes, stir, and speak.

His thought—or rather his thoughts—still surrounded us.

We felt ourselves more than ever within the atmosphere of his
genius,

Inhabited, possessed by him.

His influence felt even more sovereign now that he was dead.
A mystery merged with the power of that incomparable mind.
The bodies of such men may vanish—but they remain.
And in the night that follows the stopping of their heart,
I assure you, sir, they are frightening.”

Disturbed by the odor of decomposition, the two men withdrew
to the adjacent room.

From there, through a door left slightly ajar, they could keep
watch over their master’s rest.

Suddenly, a strange sound came from the death room—
They rushed in.

“I took our candle and entered first,
Scanning the vast, shadowed chamber with my eyes.
Nothing stirred.
I approached the bed—
And froze, gripped by shock and dread.
Schopenhauer no longer smiled.
He grimaced horribly—
His lips clenched, his cheeks sunken.”

He explained : the muscles of the face, loosened by decay,
Had expelled the philosopher’s dentures from his mouth,
Which had then skittered across the floor.

SCHOPENHAUER

Mister Schopenhauer, how well death suits your face :
You cannot smile, Maupassant told us once.
Do the dead wish to startle those who guard their place,
Slipping their dentures beneath the dresser—at once ?

Your laughter was fatal when speaking of all :
They said it was chilling, as cold as the grave.
A tavern-keeper swears you'd rise, proud and tall,
Hurling your jests, cruel, against each futile stave.

The world is but Will—it blinds all mankind,
And what we perceive, mere trick of the mind.
You sealed it all with a resounding *in vain* :
What gain is yours from our unwilling pain ?

Do you feel no remorse in tearing all asunder,
Feeding on the scraps of our smallest despair ?
You claim Kant as kin, yet with laughter you thunder
That nothing can fill this life laid bare.

What now, old demon ? Do you crave our praise ?
Have you not forged in man the depths of despair ?
From the one you destroyed, his grave only says :
All we know of you is what death laid bare.

What good is it to see what delights your core ?
The void of mankind—your singular care.
Demon of my thoughts, whose tears pour and pour,
Falling on a life you've turned to air.

My crying makes you smile, vile-hearted thing :
It's Satan, your father, whose truths you declare !
You've devoured the gods with a venomous sting—
Are you not the serpent, or the eagle's snare ?

You've emptied the sky of its sacred promise,
Of doves and eagles that once crowned a child !
Now from time's abyss returns only distress—
Does Helios mourn the sun growing mild ?

Only shadows remain of what has been torn—
Where are the wanderers they once followed along ?
High up in the mountains, the fire is gone,
Carried away by torrents, voiceless and strong.

The thinker has no words for such a fateful storm
That floods the fields with our open wounds.
Rejoice then, Schopenhauer, in counting each form
Of wreckage : you are what destruction has hewn.

The world is a darkness, robbed of tomorrow :
If Voltaire's laugh was vain and hideously sly,
Yours is the destroyer of our humble furrows—
Paths once traced to reach the sky.

"God is dead," said the madman—the God of our youth,
Slain by our own hands to birth a man anew.
But what will he be made of, this bearer of truth,
If stripped of hope, men break beneath your view ?

I know many kinds of laughter that bloom from joy :
The giggles of children and elders at play.
Some tears laugh aloud when words can't deploy,
Some surprise us in silence, when thought gives way.

I know the cruel laugh that makes the eyes fall,
That pours shame on the prey it soaks in scorn—
To those punished by laughter, who'd dare not recall
That the one who mocks is the most forlorn ?

But when this guilty laugh begins to swell,
And takes to the air, despising all below,
It robs each of their name—it casts its spell :
And when all eyes lower, shame forgets how to show.

Do you know, Schopenhauer, that Death's cold blade
Plays chess with kings ? A crusader told me this :
When two kings face off, the outcome is made—
No square between them... yet which one wins ?

What a fool's game this is—can you show me the lie ?
You've ceased to laugh—why the sudden hush ?
Could it be discomfort, or truth too near by ?
What reason, you rogue, has silenced your rush ?

"That cannot be," whispers Reason to your mind—
"It breaks the laws, insults our logic's grace !"
I've heard it from Aristotle's Organon, well-defined :
This snare is no trap—you seek to misplace !

Admit it, Schopenhauer—your path strays astray :
I've seen it myself when the crusader came back.
Death is a riddle when you take it at play—
And kings are another, perhaps bound in the act.

You'd laugh, surely, but your breath has gone cold.
Have you not solved things far stranger than this ?
Suppose I now laugh—will that break your hold ?
Or will you keep silent, wrapped in wrath's hiss ?

I leave you to ponder what steals your mirth,
Being friend to shadows of those long gone.
You know well my dwelling that borders your earth—
I reign there gently, where the fallen belong.

You'd rather I stay and watch your despair :
Don't you cherish a taste for the clever phrase ?
It concerns two kings, no space between there—
The riddle lies solely in what their bond betrays.

You offer me your teeth—the price of confession ?
I'll grind them to dust rather than bear their shame.
Though my cost be steep, it serves the greater question :
You, robbed of laughter—what's left of your name ?

Allow me to shatter them before I reply !
I said : your empire skirts my quiet domain.
The king you believed yourself—he meets his why
In the loss of the laughter that caused us such pain.

Why turn your back, when the other stands near ?
Seek not elsewhere what is placed in your hand.
A power greater than yours crowned me here—
Our realms are neighbors, our thoughts make them stand.

What I stand to win holds more weight than for you :
You hold the answer—but I own your silence.
What have you lost, when all's weighed through ?
Only your teeth, your last line of defiance.

I thought you sharper—a mind once so keen—
But some silent fool has now taken your place.
Poor Schopenhauer, toothless sage grown mean,
Freed by slyness from your old laughing grace.

To all former words, only stones now remain—
Can you cast them as far as your laughter once soared ?
You know what they weigh—do they match our pain ?
Words weigh far more than our starved, humble hoard.

Stay with your suspicions—I press on ahead,
Toward humankind's future, which you barely gave thought.
In your prayers I see, like a vulture misled,
The brooding schemes of envy, left to rot.

From my own dark I glimpse a soft light—
It descends the mountains, spreading over the plain.
With Dawn's arrival, fades the murder of night :
Schopenhauer falls silent to sovereign day's reign.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE MEANTIME

Would I still be someone if I were no one ? No one ! The forgotten in the crowd, the unknown soldier : died for his country without anyone ever knowing who he was. Irony ! Dying for others and having no grave : mass grave or ossuary, being without a face, without a name, the sacrificed one who cannot be thanked, whose bravery cannot be saluted, the invisible martyr of a war no less invisible. How many are they, these strangers to all ? Did they really exist ? Were they invented ? Invented to hush, to hide, to falsify, to deceive, to ease a guilty conscience, to redeem oneself, to draw attention, to unsay in order to say better, to confess some fault, to be noticed, to exist ! Exist for whom ? Exist for what ? Exist how ? So many questions arise when the heart is heavy, the mood somber, when history bounces back at us, tears away our faces and turns us into... no one.

It is the metaphysics of the heart, the metaphysics of the afflicted, those who don't have enough words, the refrain of a despair that slips, insidiously, into our thoughts ; it is the question we believe unanswerable and that, for that reason alone, keeps coming back again and again. It spins in our heads, a carousel of the absurd, confesses itself in our sighs, the

question of sleepless nights, inscribed everywhere and forever unreadable ; then we pull ourselves together, we say the thing in our own words, we'd like to silence it, forever, by speaking its name : why ?

The answer is obvious, or so we think, the cure for that strange ailment that is existence : for nothing ! We exist for nothing, not even for ourselves nor for others, neither for tomorrow nor for later : we exist *in vain* !

An insult to the greatest pessimism : Schopenhauer even smiles in death. But his rotting mouth lets his teeth fall, clattering on the floorboards. Schopenhauer smiles no more ! The cynic has at last gone silent and shall never smile again. Was it a real smile or was it false—false, like all his teeth. Vanity ! Vanity of a false prophet, a messiah of the void. What did he really know ? What did he truly know ? His useless knowledge—that's what he knew. Did he mock the ignorant ? They knew far more than he did.

The meticulous Kantian : “the *I think* must be able to accompany all my representations.” His *I* was far too big, so big it took up all the space : nothing to represent, nothing but that *I*. From Kant's understanding he had made his microscope, the obscene place of his own admiration. And before him : all the others, which is to say, nothing, condemned to pessimism, to despair, to the

will-to-nothing. Nothing, like nihilism, that of a thrown-being, like a Kleenex, into an absurd existence.

Schopenhauer broke all laws to keep only one : the law of despair, despair of one praying before a sky without God.

Nonsense ! Schopenhauer died sneering, perhaps delighted to have poisoned so many lives, but now his teeth betray his sarcasm : he never smiled—ever ! How could he have smiled, he who knew, and so often preached, that the world was “in vain,” not only the world of others but his own as well. Could he have imagined such a betrayal : to be betrayed by his own teeth ? The story is so comical that someone thought it worth recounting, even writing it down under Maupassant’s pen. But still, let someone give him back his teeth so he might smile again, deep down in the pit, where no one will see him, not even God—assuming Schopenhauer was right.

But isn’t it improper, even insolent, to speak thus of the Master ? After all, he was the only one—the *only* one—who managed to penetrate the innermost reaches of Kantian thought. All the others don’t count for much : Husserl, Heidegger, all those Neo-Kantians. Fine ! But given the price of butter, maybe they weren’t so worthless after all.

Still, for a few more lines, let's allow Schopenhauer's Ego to transcend time : after all, if he truly suffered from everything he claimed to, let's say it wasn't enough. Let's talk to him about Nietzsche, who was his disciple for such a brief time—barely long enough to realize the glimpse he got wasn't worth much. Who better than Nietzsche, behind his thick mustache, lashed out at the old cynic, partly responsible for European nihilism ? And what of Heidegger, who devoted his entire existence—taking the steepest and even most disavowed paths—to “twist the neck” of this passive nihilism ?

That life is contingent—well, dear Arthur, note that Leibniz, the very man you dismissed so cheaply, said it before you. Leibniz, whom you cared so little for, had thought up the divine alternative—but since you didn't want it, perhaps you ought to have tried something else.

Dear Arthur, I must confess : thinking of you too much bores me. So allow me to leave you to your own company. What's that—you feel alone ? But, Mr. Schopenhauer, you always were.

And now, let me tell you : nothing is more harmful to the health of our spirit than those icy words that plant in us the sense of the absurd. All those atheist thinkers have revealed to us the unfathomable misery of our contingency, our facticity : thus, no

one created us and, worse still, no one even *wanted* us. Some chance occurrence, which philosophers no longer seem to find very interesting, drew us out of the shadows, threw us into existence—and why ? For nothing ! We come from nothing, and we return to it.

What a comedian, that one—*now that's* a good joke, one I'd gladly play on others if I were the Void. Am I the Void ? Absolutely not : I come *from* it, and surely I'll return *to* it, but between those two very specific moments—I exist. I am a being who exists with others who also exist, and all together, we exist within a world that, in turn, exists.

That the being I am comes from nothing bothers me little, but one question burns on my lips : how can the little something that I am come from *nothing* ?

It's true that God was once very handy to answer that kind of question—but alas, God died at the hands of modernity, and so all those born before might have been created, but for us, today, it's impossible. I am contingent—and more than that, I am a being-toward-death : I, who thought I might escape it, find myself right back where I started.

What's more, with God having died in the way we know, I have nothing left to hope for beyond death : death is the Dead Line.

Forgive me, I suppose, the tautology. I had so looked forward to teasing Saint Peter—but too late ! I should have arrived two good millennia earlier. Let's admit that the chance by which we exist doesn't always do things well.

The complaint office ? Gone, vanished—modernity deemed it unnecessary.

Suddenly I think again of my father : that poor beast of burden who spent his whole life carrying loads far heavier than himself. In the evenings, when he came home, tired, worn down to the bone, he would smile—not with the vacant grin of donkeys, but with a serene smile that seemed to say : all day I toiled, but it had such meaning that I never even felt the fatigue. I might add that my late father was at least as much an atheist as Schopenhauer himself.

So, Mr. Philosopher, stop boring us with your “in vain.” Nothing is in vain—except perhaps *you*. Life, however short, is stitched with meaning, the meaning we must invent ourselves, day after day. We are never born for nothing—and if proof is needed, just look how we cling to life, how we push death away as far as we can.

We are beings-toward-death—and from that comes our anxiety. There it is, expressed as best I can : that's what Heidegger

claims.

But death doesn't make me anxious : it merely frightens me—like the dentist, for example, or that dog that bares its teeth at me.

Anguish—now there's a word from the medical lexicon that Heidegger mistakes for an existential : anguish is something treatable, a symptom of an underlying psychological disorder. If anguish overwhelms us, philosophy won't help—better to take an antidepressant.

What is this illness that drives Heidegger so irresistibly to ontologize everything that simply belongs to everyday life ? If I happen to have some concern, will I feel better by interrogating Being from the standpoint of the *Dasein*, the being for whom being is, in its being, a question of its being ?

Don't you think, dear Heidegger, that a toolbox might be more useful to me ?

I freely admit you are a philosopher, and a philosopher asks questions, lots of them. What bothers me about you isn't your questions—certainly not—it's your answers.

I admit I don't find *Being and Time* all that difficult to read, but I assure you : the day my neighbor knocks on my door seeking

some comfort, if I start reading from your book, I fear I'll never see him again.

I know all too well that your writings are aimed at the initiated (I refrain from saying they're encrypted), and I very much hope to count myself among them. But if you absolutely must give complicated answers, then please ask complicated questions—and stop talking about the everyday : everyday life is the realm of the banal, of the simplest things, the most practical questions.

Existential questions are not of the everyday—and thank goodness for that, or we'd be bald from tearing our hair out. That said, my dear Heidegger, please take my remarks with the seriousness they deserve—and above all, add a touch of self-mockery. This applies only to you, of course : as for Schopenhauer, I stand by every bit of ill I've spoken of him, and the little good.

No, dear reader : no commentary here on Nietzsche—I believe I've said enough about him already. But I *will*, on the other hand, speak to you of *Papou*, as Jean-Paul Sartre was affectionately nicknamed—unless it was the other way around. All this confusion is Heidegger's fault, with his Dasein and his whole clique muddling my thoughts.

Papou—that was Sartre among close friends : Simone de Beauvoir, for instance, but always in private.

Two great minds, who truly met ; I know some who can't fathom how such a beautiful woman became involved with such an unattractive man—come now, it's the communion of minds that counts more than appearances. Besides, Sartre wasn't so unattractive : he merely had a lazy eye. I wager it was a technique borrowed from Heidegger—while he looks at you, you think Sartre is looking elsewhere. But no : when he seems to look elsewhere, it is *you* he's watching—and vice versa. So, if you wish to make a face at him, wait until he looks at you, and then you can be sure he won't see you—since he's looking elsewhere.

What does Heidegger have to do with all this, you might ask ? Precisely that—it's the art of falsification.

I've always had an unwavering fondness for Sartre—something I can't quite explain. We call that a *philosophical thunderbolt*. Some ill-meaning minds will point out that I now diverge from him in my own thought. I do not diverge—I simply offer him my humble support. Sartre sometimes had a hard time understanding himself—that much becomes clear from a careful reading of *Being and Nothingness*.

And that's perfectly understandable, given his poor eyesight. Can we really blame him ? Should we, like Aron did, take advantage of his weaknesses to pile on more critique ? It would have been far more courteous to gently draw his attention to his slips, without causing offense. Sartre would have understood—without resentment—his reasoning being dialectical.

Just a few days before his death, Sartre was finishing *Hope Now*—what an improbable thing, to still hope so near death. A true show of trust in his spiritual heirs. The paradox in all this is that his closest companions sought to *suppress* the posthumous publication.

But it's not complicated : skip the introduction and all of Benny Lévy's responses, and what you're left with is Sartre at his finest.

The only fair complaint one might have about the book is that Lévy's pages cost the same as Sartre's.

I must admit : Sartre is my youth. And since I'm not old (except in the eyes of others), and just as young as ever, Sartre remains my present.

The years go by, my few friends tell me—I reply that one only has to stop counting them. Time is something we call relative, yet I find it poorly matched. Take an alarm clock—it only rings

when it's time to get up. Who sets it to ring when it's time to go to bed ?

That belongs to the everyday—Heidegger, take note : in daily life, time is clock time, the time of hands that always move in the same direction—from waking to sleeping.

When time becomes distant, it loses its meaning : what difference is there, really, between saying “it was forty years ago” and saying “it was forty-one” ?

Time chains events together in such a way that it erases them—for time refers only to the past : time is a killer ! Time is the graveyard of Being, the realm of *having-been*, the enemy of duration.

Duration ! We often misunderstand it, for duration is not permanence : duration is the unity of becoming.

We are what we once were—not in the form of some other self exiled to the distant reaches of time, but as a form of preservation in transformation.

To become is not to become the other of what one was—becoming is always reminiscence.

I carry within me, like a hidden memory, the child I once was : becoming is the opposite of forgetting.

Would I wish for a rupture from which my being might spring like a blank page, as though I were not what I once was ? The past does not disappear—never, not even in death. People sometimes say that one's past comes "back in one's face," as if it suddenly rose from the grave and etched itself on the face like an accusation.

They also say the past often resurfaces, as if it burst forth from oblivion.

That kind of past is reified—it rises up in a way that suspends time, that freezes events and breaks the flow of becoming. The *weight of the past* : once it resurges, it becomes so heavy that it halts our steps ; a returning past that pins us down in a permanent present.

But the past does not return, does not erupt from some elsewhere : the past is here—irrevocable, always present within duration as the condition of becoming.

Being and Time—time as the manifestation of Being, as an existential modality of the Dasein, the being-there as temporality ?

Time is the death of Being, the “place” of its ending, its fading away : a being is Being in deprivation.

Time is always the time of a *being-there*, and that *there* marks that it can no longer simply *be*.

Being-there, as temporality, is not the presence of Being : quite the contrary—being-there is the *absence* of Being, because Dasein is not.

Dasein *is not*, because its being-there locks it into another mode of Being : the “there” as temporality.

And then comes the Other—the one from “I is another.” This singular self that becomes, most often, beyond words, that *Self* which slips through concepts like an eel through text, a “slippery” being always swimming upstream—the antithesis of Heraclitus, whose river never returns.

The Self returns endlessly, because it dwells in duration : time has no hold over the Self.

Can the Self even be spoken of in any way other than by allusion—can one attempt to speak the Self without falling into the aporia of double speech, to speak it allusively, through the detour of concepts, without betrayal, without splitting the voice, without mystifying it, without delivering it over to mysticism ?

But philosophical speech is plural : it comes in all forms—yet philosophy is not, for all that, the art of storytelling, of expressing a vision in a language proper to it.

Philosophy is not reminiscence spoken through concepts, not the transcription of a perception buried in memory. Philosophy is not simply a relation to things through their telling : philosophy is, above all, *a gaze*—not a mere photographic glance, but a piercing one, a gaze that breaks through the armor of things, a path into the soul of things, into their unspoken dimension, into that which in them escapes the necessary Reason of Science.

Philosophy is act : the act of bringing forth what is silent, what resists both ordinary language and scientific language—of giving rise, in a speaking, to the signifying : to that which, at the heart of the thing, carries confessions, bears a truth to assert.

It is the task of philosophy to say what is hidden, what has never been said—because philosophy is a creative force, a creator of concepts. And the unsaid, the never-said, can only be spoken through a new concept.

Philosophy creates concepts to speak otherwise of things—or simply to reveal what has never before been said.

If philosophy is an eye that sees beyond, it is thanks to the power of the concept. And herein lies the paradox of philosophy as the creation of concepts : if the concept allows philosophy to extend its gaze to the most distant reaches, it is because the concept is fragmentary, unfinished, and unfinishable.

If the concept reveals its own poverty in this way, such poverty is no lack, no insufficiency betraying some gap, some inadequacy, some contingent impossibility of truly speaking. If the concept is, in a sense, “hollowed out,” it is precisely because within that hollow space, what the concept aims at finds room to be spoken.

If the concept were “full,” it would be incapable of signifying that which still remains to be said.

It is precisely because the concept can always increase its load—by resonating with other concepts, or by following lines of flight—that it can be enriched, indefinitely, with new components, and bring forth, from the very heart of things, new meanings.

It is for this reason too that, despite its resistance to being expressed, the Other that is the “I” will surely, though at the cost of much effort, find a concept adequate to it.

The concept *will* speak the Self, because—like the Self—it is becoming : a becoming whose singularity lies precisely in what it offers up to speech.

Any philosophy of singularity finds here its most radical objection to all critiques that, relying on the abstraction of the concept, would claim the concept is incapable of speaking the singular : the concept *is* singular, because what it speaks *is* singular—but this singularity of the concept appears only *within* the act of speech itself. Outside of that act—outside of this relation to the singular—the concept is, of course, an abstraction.

Take, for example, the concept of *weight*, which in the abstract refers to a measurable quantity, recorded with an appropriate instrument. And yet we use this same concept to describe so many things that are not quantifiable : we speak of the *weight* of an idea, the *weight* of effort, the *weight* of the world when it rests upon our shoulders, the *weight* of guilt—and, ultimately, the weight of so many other things.

This “*in the meantime*” is the time of an unfinished melody—a grating melody, still lacking all its harmony, and above all, one that still needs to be given words.

OFF-TIME

I know of off-times mistaken for true tales :

We long to be elsewhere, with other kin,
Shining through absences dimmed by betrayals,
Sat between two chairs, brooding on our sin.

Time flits by lightly, stitched with fine excuses :

“We’ll return tomorrow, to keep our vow.”

What care for sorrows, with all their ruses ?

No wrong is wrong when time drives us somehow.

Yesterdays return with wounds we well recall :

The tears of the past have dried out our griefs,
And our present wrecks on weariness’ shoal—
Time drags its weight on the loom of our briefs.

What will tomorrow be, cradled by today ?

Time is merciless—it buries us still.

Could there be an after pierced by faintest ray,
A god bold enough to shatter that chill ?

Time is ticking down, say death’s merchants grim,

Who already see earth as our final bed.

Could we simply go, no remorse within—

Having scarcely lived, chasing whispers instead ?

The dead slip away without the faintest cry,
Afraid we might keep them in faded days,
Where the void repeats in vague, mumbled lies—
No shame in leaving what bids us no stay.

There is only truth, the Scriptures confide :
Qoheleth of fate—so willed, but by whom ?
Time keeps working, in tombs it does abide,
And bores through our corpses to gnaw out their gloom.

Do you know the fate of Ronsard's fair bloom ?
Life is fleeting—granted but a breath—
And soon it wilts at the roadside of doom,
From birth bound for soil, the compost of death.

So much buried ugliness beauty dares to hide—
And beneath the skin, the guts : factory of the flesh.
Our faces' lines are masked in painted pride,
But is there any grace in Yorick's skull so fresh ?

Why must we hide, behind the latrine door,
Our darkest tasks ? Unless out of modesty—
Or false humility, not to be beasts once more—
Forgetting what once made a child's purity.

Let time be banished, with all its lies exposed :
Being its playthings—we find no reason why.
Let it quench its thirst on thoughts decomposed,
Then despair of being mere illusion's sigh.

Night murders us with sleep's oppressive weight,
Crushing the smallest sorrows of our day ;
But dawn returns and sorrows re-awake,
Breaking the brief peace that night gives away.

A new day rises, stamped from the old mold :
Time is lazy—it simply repeats.
And everywhere a vague humanity takes hold,
Busy redoing what it just did in deceit.

The gestures precise, confused with clock hands—
Each tic of the rhythm shapes our daily breath.
Chimeras forged the reason by which life stands :
If we lose ourselves, time only sneers at death !

They say time flies—but does it match the hare ?
What fear drives it ever to flee away ?
To be caught and pinned in the now laid bare—
Might it suffer anguish ? Might it fear to stay ?

“O Time, suspend your flight,” cried Lamartine—
But no romantic plea holds such command !
Time is indifferent, never looks behind—
It feels no rush to reach the final strand.

Its step is steady, like the ticking clocks,
Whose subtle gears ensure unfailing pace ;
Is there some mystery that time unlocks,
Some dread force from which it keeps its grace ?

There is no mind clever enough to deceive !
Time has no ears to hear, no eyes to see—
Being deaf and blind suits it, we believe,
Nor does it mourn its muteness silently.

We wind the clockwork with devoted hands,
So time can march along its stubborn track ;
It feeds on habit—our routine expands—
We give time life, and it shapes our path back !

Man is maker of time, who sings its refrain,
Yet curses it aloud—what strange irony,
To craft ourselves the source of all our pain,
To lend it speed, then dream of setting it free...

To go against time, to reverse its flow,
To walk backward, away from the end—
Is this the madness only fools bestow,
Or some cunning trick with truths to bend ?

To rewind time itself, not merely clocks,
Is to tempt the impossible, defy the sane—
I see in such talk only faith that mocks :
Whether it's sound or not is not the main.

To walk against the grain—that's what history does ;
We say the past is dead : but what disgrace
To let it rot in some oblivion's hush,
And not exhume it, dragging it from its place.

Time exists only for those who measure it ;
The seasons' return offends time's decree—
Why should summer come back, who can permit
Its value, save those lost in reverie ?

Time is a line, we say—it never bends—
And yet, from childhood, old age draws its face ;
Of moving hands we forget that each ends,
And every hour of day returns in place.

Of those who are, we say “they once have been,”
But not that they are not—nor that they *will* ;
Let’s weigh more wisely what duration means :
There lies far more than a convention still.

I am what I once was—and shall be once more :
No metronome can rid me of that thread !
The rhizome denies its yesterdays are no more,
And drags its past into the days ahead.

Let it rebel, accuse—what do I care ?
Of reason’s tribunal I know the decree !
I’ve seen senile judges with mocking stares,
And their tribal whims dressed as mastery.

Let them call me guilty—I’m used to their trial ;
I know their false logic, their rigged appeals ;
Keepers of wisdom’s shame and sly denial,
What they deem truth was never real.

I’m just a stray led on by my own folly,
A sheep gone mad in a meadow of minds ;
Of learned words, I know the grammar wholly—
Yet those I coin, they find ill-designed.

But let us return to time before it slips away :
No thief has climbed so high as time has dared !
Let it lift its shroud from our poor heads today,
And stop shouting hours into every air.

Let us shatter the clocks that birth the day !
They mimic the lord of the sunless deep—
Let him return to Tartarus, far away,
And may Hades seal that infernal keep.

We are the image of gods, and share their fate—
Death does not suit us ; Cronos made it so.
Let death weigh down time, crush its gait,
And taste the iron jaws of Hades below.

Aren't the greatest tragedies beyond time's scope ?
Orestes, Phaedra, Oedipus—where do they dwell ?
Are they of some age far outside our hope ?
Would such words offend time ? Who can tell ?

All humanity was, is, and ever shall be :
What do these faces and sorrows unfold ?
A time for suffering ? There's no such decree !
So many things are lived in the present's hold.

I know philosophers who'd have skinned me alive
For speaking of time down such strange tracks ;
Did they not know clocks as jagged reefs thrive ?
I'd have shown them—but belief they lacked.

Know this : *Off-time* is not mere inconvenience,
A missed appointment, an absence unplanned.
Heidegger made of time the ek-stasy of presence—
But who else dared to take such a stand ?

And so time goes, along its chosen road :
You might glimpse it, if you pause and see.
It walks its quiet pace, no sign it shows—
Time does not know who watches it silently.

Above all, take the time to see it stand alone—
For it has no friend, no ear to its sighs ;
Does it know itself unloved, though none have thrown
The gauntlet ? Tick Tock—I know not if it cries.

Would you like to see it trip ? I'll lend my foot :
Let it tumble down, and drag along the way ;
Don't think the gesture one the blind refute—
Were it more kind, I'd not mock it today.

Forget time, and all its cunning tricks :
Let it go on, as far as it must flee ;
To live fully, no hour does the fixing—
Who minds the clock will never be free.

ON WAITING

“But what are you waiting for ?” she asked, annoyed.
“What could ever come from the distance you scan ?
All your sighs seem sent to some silent envoy ;
I hear your heart weep—whose tears fill your span ?”

I wait for deliverance from this ravaged land,
The return of the poet who speaks sacred words :
Let the gods come back—only he can command
Their names, and bring Light through the world's dark blur.

I wait for the watcher, shepherd of our souls,
That in our desolations, the Spirit may dwell,
That what has left us again makes us whole,
And our lives may brim with joy ineffable.

It is Spirit we lack in this crumbled All,
The breath of our lives has vanished in death ;
Now only shadows cloud the mountain's call,
Even the rivers refuse to flow beneath.

What keeps them so high that none may drink ?
In yellowed fields, nothing dares to grow.
From their mothers' breasts, lambs are unlinked,
And only death knells from the belfry blow.

I wait for the rain to fall upon the world,
For rivers to return to their forsaken beds,
For joy to cling again to every face unfurled,
For the earth, by useless hands, to be blessed.

I wait for a smile to settle on your lips,
That with spring's return, our dry gaze may shed
A few tears—forgotten sorrows in their slips—
And feel the joy of rebirth from the seed once spread.

That is what I await, leaning toward the wide sky,
For I know that the distant gives itself to the near—
What the soul forgot may again draw nigh :
A quiet power, such as arms the oak with cheer.

We fear that time, from heights, seeks to deny
Us all return to earth—condemned by the clock,
Which counts out all things vain with its swinging sigh :
Time is death to the breath that keeps us aloft.

We think what we await is but a foretold end—
The fall of illusions by which mankind slept ;
Vade Retro, thought of a life one must defend—
Death is salvation only where joy is kept.

Time (speaks) :

But what do you hope for, friend, that I cannot bear ?
Do you believe some clock might stop in midair—
An hour, a minute, a second—half a beat ?
I never pause—I am always fleet.

Forever I flee, hounded by fantasy,
By dreams of the Romantics who wished all to last ;
Only dreamers chase the chimera in me—
Take what I give ; the rest is mere past.

“To take one’s time”—so say the weary,
Tired of living by stars and their decree.
Imagine the moon tired of spinning its round,
And the earth too still to mark season’s sound...

“That is impossible ! Who could make it cease ?”
The hands are made to move, never released—
Always turning the same way, shunning the past :
So time slips away, too swift to grasp.

And so you wait for the end of your yesterdays,
Chasing after me, hoping they'll stray ;
But each fleeting instant is already surpassed,
What you think lies ahead will soon be passed.

The Patient (replies) :

Only patience can unmake your pride—
Serene and calm, it never hastes to hide.
From each moment it draws eternity's thread,
Embracing its taste and its Simple stead.

For simple is the Eternal, which you seek to conceal,
To burden with void and reduce to what's real :
A stream of events trailing one another in line—
Thus is forged History, bound to their spine.

But when the sea grows weary of all its unrest,
Hurls its final waves against the jetty's crest,
And becomes but a curtain drawn on a sunken stage—
Then, in its deep sleep, time escapes the page.

So it is with men, tormented by time's weave,
For it may flow and stretch out its sleeve ;
Evening's dark veil comes to erase all trace,
And casts every hour of the day into space.

What do you know of dreams you cannot disturb,
Trapped in the clocks that our thoughts perturb ?
In the pleats of curtains, in cracked drawers' sleep,
You stay at a distance—an outsider, cold and deep.

Time (speaks) :

But when day returns—I am already awake !
Remember the apostle when the cock gave its cry,
And he, thrice denying his friend, did break—
One dawn was enough for his past to die.

Tomorrow waits for no one—yesterday's been cursed !
And you will always be what you were first.
You say patience alone can undo my reign ?
Wait if you like—I'll return again !

If I mock your fate, what harm can befall ?
To me, you are nothing but a stumbling soul,
Born of blind chance—a master I do not know ;
My only law is forward, as hours flow.

I turn on myself, like the miller's great wheel :
That the grain gets crushed—I never did will.
It is man who makes of me what suits his play,
And when it is too late, he weeps anyway.

What can I do for his sorrow ? I invented nothing !
It is he who must measure all things with my name.
I am but a standard, aligned with two suns—
It was man who made me measure, his to claim.

The Patient :

Time serves mankind only to master their sphere,
To govern what changes, and forecast what nears,
To foresee what will be, since it once came before—
This time that eludes them—they made it, and more.

At the church's dial, eleven now does chime—
The hour of the Angelus, time to end the toil,
To set down one's tool and gaze toward the divine :
To pray the God who counts time is to honor His soil.

And why not each evening, when labor is through,
When man in his dwelling lets his day unspool,
And from all his effort finds rest made anew ?
Time, too, ends our grief—our merciful tool.

If we must give up suspending time's thread,
Then let those who break free walk contrary instead :
So when it advances, dare to step back—
Perhaps even outrun it when it drags on the past.

Time will always be—you cannot ignore it !
When it blocks your path, you must outmaneuver it,
Push it aside from the road you shape,
Let it sink in the rut it dares to make.

Time (replies) :

You cling to deliverance, dream of salvation,
Long to flee from ruin's cruel destination—
But by what hands did the world fall and decay ?
Should we then cut off mankind's hands away ?

For I know too well how man forgot Nature—
Must he be armless to return to true stature ?
I see how the beasts have no question of time,
As does the forest where once he made his shrine.

Time (speaks) :

There is too much life that man has chased away—
By the roar of machines, by the trees laid low.
When the spring no longer pours from its blocked way,
Tritons and salamanders no longer can flow.

The children of the doe have fled their thirsting place,
Ashes where once lay green in soft embrace ;
Where frogs once leapt, now thorny brambles grew—
And birds sought comfort where branches still renew.

Do you believe your patience can summon back life,
That we must trust time alone to mend the strife ?
I am but a tool, bound in your hand's snare :
It's for you to use me—what you choose is laid bare.

The Patient :

I know men have sacrificed their lives to time,
And barred their kind from tomorrows they denied.
I admit—patience won't suffice to halt the climb,
If man clings to his pockets, with idle pride.

Patient is the sower who casts his grain away :
With the sky's favor, the oat shall rise someday.
But the soil must first be furrowed with care—
And every fallen tree needs one replanted there.

Patience is no excuse for arms idly folded—
That's but the vain stupidity of resignation.
Waiting is not a sleep with dreams golden-coated—
But a meditation forced by desolation.

To meditate—to reverse the fatal trend
That, scorning the world, drives it to its end.
This is how waiting gives weight to our fate :
By refusing yesterday the power to crush our gate.

There is no other earth we may call home ;
Those chasing a dream have already bowed low.
If all is not lost, then what little remains
Must stir our hands with concern, not disdain.

TEMPORALITY

From inner consciousness, time becomes an object :
Thus Husserl made it his enduring quest.
The disciple of the master, without disrespect,
Gave this phenomenon a reasoning more deft.

Temporality is an existential trait :
Dasein's very being is shaped by time's flow.
This time adds nothing as some mere estate—
The time of existence is what makes it so.

If at its origin existence is naught,
It feeds on time to gain consistency—
From all that is swept up and rendered as thought,
A heap of debris, a sheer overfrequency.

What is memory's gift—what we call remembrance—
Fills Dasein with weight, though unaware it may be.
For being-there exists only through its becoming :
This is what Heidegger claimed in his philosophy.

Just as *Being and Time* binds close to humankind,
Time makes of Dasein a being filled entire—
With all its lived moments, even the most slight :
No instant is omitted in being's own fire.

To say one *is* what one *is*—some fixed essence—
Is a foolish tradition, so deeply mistaken.
There is no being of Dasein in full presence
Unless time itself contests and reawakens.

We are what we were and what we become ;
The now dissolves as soon as it's known :
The present is yesterday and also what's to come—
No tangent exists to the time that is shown.

There is only the gift of Being as it recedes :
A Leibnizian wave, pure apperception's call.
The present escapes us—Lamartine concedes—
An unreachable limit, like the horizon for all.

Like a snowball rolling, Dasein swells and grows,
For all of life's events are flurries of the mind ;
And time arranges them—no unity it shows :
Dasein is a river with no reason to its grind.

It is the river of time that forever sweeps us on,
Filling the being-there with places passed through ;
This is Dasein's condition, though never as a bond—
Outside of time, our lives would cease to be true.

Death freezes time and halts all becoming :
The being-there deceased bears silent weight.
No longer there, and no longer forthcoming,
Its memories lie bare in shameless state.

Even our smallest echoes are exposed to the gaze
Of others, who form us from what they recall ;
We can no longer change it—no shift in the haze—
And no dead soul remembers their life at all.

Time turns to anguish when we think of its end :
What shall we be when death puts time away ?
We will be what we are when the path descends—
An eternal present—time's unyielding stay.

For only in the present are we truly we :
Carried by time, we become what we are.
But what can we become if time ceases to be ?
Anxiety dares answer—and finds no door ajar.

To beg time to freeze in some moment divine,
To make extasis eternal with no end in sight—
You must see : it is time that conducts our lives' line—
To break it for a second would shatter all right.

The pain of the Romantics—I've often shared their song :
There are moments we wish would never be done ;
Time, the assassin, drives our joys along,
But its flow alone lets our living be won.

This is time's paradox : though we'd have it still,
It cannot pause—its speed mocks all reason.
Two opposites repel—only one truth can fill :
To want both is an aporia, pure contradiction.

That our sense of time is but intimate self—
If time were to stop, what becomes of awareness ?
It is true that some minds freeze, void of all else,
But the mind must meet the world to grasp its presence.

Intentionality—consciousness is *ek-stasis*,
Directed toward phenomena through intuition's flight ;
This *pro-jection*, though brief as cell's anaphase passes,
If we suspend time—we suspend all insight.

Condition of Dasein—it is of mind as well :
From Husserl to Heidegger, no deeper debate ;
The master of logic made his thought a shell,
The other walked the path where Being lies in wait.

To say existence always precedes its essence—
Such void at the start demands something to fill ;
Only time could offer such humble sustenance :
The author made room—this was part of the deal.

Husserl cared not for the Being that persists :
It was knowledge's ground he sought to uphold.
The phenomenologist drew time from the mists :
Ek-static consciousness needs time to unfold.

I must place a parenthesis on these dialectics
That quarrel over commas with scholarly might ;
Such petty disputes seem at times so hermetic,
They forget to pursue what gives thought its light.

The academicians find noble reason there :
To flay the detail—is that not learned pride ?
Generalities—those lack scholarly care—
And so the people must carry the weight denied.

Thus I'm glad to see that some great names at least,
Forsaking minutiae, have forged worthy pages ;
From their deeper wisdom, clarity increased—
And those who read them grew truly as sages.

Let us close this tempest, lest it derail our thought ;
I find little gain in digging that sand.
We were speaking of time—what comes or is not—
And what it still leaves as mystery in our hands.

As for space, it is the enveloping frame,
A kind of outside through which we take measure ;
So all things—even when presence is but name—
May be measured at once, with no hidden treasure.

Unless it be for measure, what gain do we extract
But to make it the ground of understanding's play ?
From these two faculties—used in compact—
Only then can phenomena be judged and weighed.

If there lies some secret in this mighty fusion,
Then *sensitivity*, as Kant would declare,
Must join with *reason* in lucid conclusion,
That science may stand on foundations fair.

As sciences take turns, Kant's time finds a place
Quite different in scope—yet never in vain :
To give science a ground of such sovereign grace
Might silence at last the others' debate and strain.

BEING AND TIME

To philosophy belongs the work of undoing :
Nietzsche made it the aim of all his aphorisms.
Thus Zarathustra, beneath the lion's mooring,
Descended again to shatter nihilism.

Was it fated that he fail his noble mission ?
Did he not sound the end of all servile stance ?
Then came an impostor who found his ambition,
Swearing that nihilism was his circumstance.

For Zarathustra, metaphysics held no claim—
Was it wisdom he lacked, or just disdain ?
Books and their order assumed physics' frame :
This strange new science, as mistress, made plain.

Was it random that the two became one pair ?
Is there reason in this chosen fusion ?
And if such union stands, must we not beware—
Or grant to one its own elevated conclusion ?

Does he delight in forgetting that courtesies
Exist for no more than avoiding unrest
In matters social, and that once philosophies
Tried to break that order in a speech repressed ?

Stripped of their tribes, anonymous powers
Found in these customs new justifications ;
Only piety, of human root and flower,
Could have led us away from singular vocations.

This God is but guarantor of our routines ;
To sages who contest, metaphysics replies :
To a world held on pause, God—giver of beings—
Demands, in return, we act in his guise.

No metaphysics has failed to serve this Lord :
What we face here is nothing but fraud.
The world stands on its own, needing no reward
From heavens that cloud our thoughts in flawed odes.

Being is not the ground of the things that are—
Spreading wings like an eagle in majestic display,
Then retreating in silence, its name held afar :
This Being, in its ways, is zealous in play.

It imprisons the world in its overflowing tide ;
This Being is a "*there is*", both act and present sign ;
It toys with words, their meaning cast aside :
From ancient *actus essendi*, it draws its new line.

There is no consent that Being, in these beings,
Was a gift from heaven or some hidden lore.
Before the Being we behold—no higher meaning—
No sign of a gift, just silence at its core.

If Being was an act, then it has no reason :
An act is no gesture that grants it design ;
Being, in abundance, depletes by its season—
Leaving nothing behind, but our conscious line.

Thus tolls the knell for the Being that is not :
He who gave it birth deconstructed none.
He merely repeated—no new insight was sought—
Did he think himself Master for what he'd begun ?

Then Dasein emerged—that strange *being-there*,
Whose subtle gaze brushes the beings around.
It is not Being itself that lies beneath his care—
But he transcends things with which he is bound.

If things only *are*, it is he who exists :
Clad in *existentials*, he makes his way.
This curious figure—a mix of hidden twists—
Is marked by *being-in-the-world* as his stay.

He cultivates his anguish—thus does he live :
Not fear, but vertigo deep in the soul.
What unknown mystery made him receive
This anxious posture no being can console ?

It is Being, of course, that ever slips away,
And will one day decree the hour of death.
And Dasein, in shame beneath this fateful sway,
Knows no god but Being to cleanse his regret.

What strange homicide, this quiet sacrifice—
The Being of Dasein, handed then betrayed.
To thus be anguished is reason's own device :
A kind of infanticide—by Being left to fade.

For Being is capricious—it never declares ;
Lurking at the edge, it waits for its time,
Then springs from nowhere, issuing dark stares,
Fixing Dasein's misery in fate's cold rhyme.

So ends the path of men : cast into existence
At Being's whim—they dig their own tombs.
In that final instant, by blind subsistence,
No Being mourns them—not even He who bloomed.

From Dasein, the impostor must sketch out time—
For such is his fate, he cannot step aside.
Dasein is not a being trapped in the prime :
Within its being ticks a curious chime.

This is not the matter of inward sensation,
Nor that time within, drifting toward new shores ;
The impostor never mimed life's gestation :
He knew no passing time we forget and ignore.

For Being and Time in man are entwined—
Temporality is our sole condition.
Our awareness of time is so deeply designed,
There's no rebellion—no such volition.

If time is not a stream that leads us on,
Then what does it mean, to what is it akin ?
Time is not our chain, nor something withdrawn—
Nor is it water dragging us within.

Time is not what follows itself in line :
It is but the measure of how we unfold.
There's no hidden crack, no secret decline—
Time is entirely full, no rupture to hold.

Time is but mystery by which we are known ;
Must we let our paths be frozen in place—
And be slaves to a present cold as stone ?
So claims the false sage with cynical face.

Yet all our memories pull us back to the past,
And the past dies away when the present appears.
Though in memory stored, they do not truly last :
Things come once—and then vanish from our sphere.

Our memories never truly dwell within—
They keep their distance from current reflection.
They play on a stage, like myths grown thin,
Restricting our judgment to faint recollection.

The past puts us to sleep if we're not aware,
Weaving the present from threads half-seen ;
No present, in gazing backward, lays bare
Its memories as stars with shining sheen.

The past is far away, at the edge of thought—
A yellowed photo that sometimes makes us laugh,
And other times weep ; a frozen, flickering knot
That haunts our minds, yet we cannot cut in half.

It weighs down our steps and leans us forward still :
The past holds us back, pushing us from behind.
It never stops, unknowing of the will—
Being and time, a futile mismatch intertwined.

There are certain breaks that bring time to a close,
For time, in measuring being, knows its cracks.
It grants us the present when we cease all throes,
When weapons fall and no more attack.

If time ever touches being, it's in our minds :
Man's temporality is his deepest torment.
But no solid science on time one ever finds—
Time is illusion, a ferment impotent.

No chronology ties things in a chain—
Just piles of records endlessly amassed.
These tatters of memory fall like rose petals lain
On a floor with no purpose, forgotten, surpassed.

Who speaks of succession as logic ordained
To bind every detail from which history feeds ?
There's no true cause in history that reigned—
Archives are written as our will proceeds.

Time is a stranger, a bland, passing notion :
It feeds on things that begin to transform.
But of these changes, no reason nor motion—
Time slips into us, seeking to perform.

Let it remain outside being's pure thread,
An unfaithful ally best left behind.
There's no worse casing that reason has bred
Than to think time shapes the fates we find.

Outside our lives, O clock, I curse your reign :
There is no place in us you rightfully claim.
Return to the void, seek your shelter again,
And may no being call you back by name.

We need not time for being to proceed,
For time flows as the tears of the romantic's soul.
Who praised you more sweetly than Lamartine's creed ?
But time thus sung is not philosophical.

So ends my humble plea, with nothing to obscure :
Let Heidegger know—mockery is not my aim.
My passion alone compels me to demure
And unmask this imposture that makes time a shame.

TO FOUND WHAT ENDURES...

*"From mountains of grapes where the Dordogne flows,
Where it meets the Garonne, wide as the sea,
Their waters united, the sea takes and bestows
Memory, love, and fixes eternally
Her tireless gaze. But only poets, they declare,
Found what endures."
— Hölderlin, "Remembrance" (last verses)*

MAN IS A USELESS PASSION

SARTRIAN POETRY

"It is therefore by no means indifferent whether one prefers oysters to clams, snails to shrimp, provided that we are able to discern the existential significance of these foods. In general, there is no taste or inclination that is irreducible. All represent a certain appropriative choice of being. It is the task of existential psychoanalysis to compare and classify them. Ontology abandons us here : it has simply allowed us to determine the ultimate ends of human reality, its fundamental possibilities, and the value that haunts it. Every human reality is both a direct project to transform its own for-itself into an in-itself-for-itself, and a project to appropriate the world as a totality of in-itself, under the guise of a fundamental quality. Every human reality is a passion, in that it projects to lose itself in order to found being, and thereby to constitute the in-itself that escapes contingency by being its own foundation—the ens causa sui, which religions name God. Thus, man's passion is the inverse of Christ's, for man loses himself as man so that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory, and we lose ourselves in vain ; man is a useless passion."

(Sartre, Being and Nothingness, pp. 677–78)

THE DEVIL'S ALCHEMY

Behold me, alchemist ! Tempering each word
In rivers of blood—redness of time gone by.
Old idols rise again, their silence so absurd :
The tables are in shards ; my reason dares to die.

Madness of my torment ! The earth swallows my tread.
A prisoner of the Absurd—my god turns to stone.
No longer in the world, escaped from all that's said,
I flee the broken God who left us all alone.

There are only embers ! A universe of flame
Consuming mortal flesh like tinder thrown to fire.
To ashes we return, all faces lost to name,
Not even memory left to lift us from the mire.

Our eyes are filled with sand, scorched by glowing brands ;
No tears remain to fall, our grief has been erased.
Our blood has frozen stiff, our faces—lifeless, bland—
Tell nothing of ourselves, remorse too long embraced.

Who shall bring salvation to our flayed, burned souls ?
Woe when God is gone ! Here we stand, forsaken.
Is there some new god to make the shattered whole—
A name to cry aloud that might yet reawaken ?

Man lies in his demise, renouncing the divine ;
No comfort waits for him who dares to expiate.
The sky, by us made void, now casts its cruel design :
All that we ever were is sin impersonate.

What's left but what reflects us—some mirror of despair ?
Shall we kneel to this beast who haunts our weary dreams ?
Offer up our prayers and everything we bear
To a savage demon tearing through our seams ?

Behold us, come of age ! Camels of the sand,
Bearing worldly sorrow—we have no more children.
Only Satan remains, who dares to take our hand :
A "Father" in hell's name—our pact with what is fallen.

Hell, I make my vow : your poisons I shall taste,
And your devils I shall call my dear and cursed kin.
What care have I for saints or their holy waste ?
I pray to none but Satan, and let my blasphemy begin !

I praise this Demiurge who drew me from the clay.
Of you, my just creator, I know no other name.
They say your dwelling-place is but a flame's ballet—
So let me burn within it, and bear no shame !

Chanting blasphemies, I hurl stones at the sky,
And from the world's foul rot, I sing your foulest praise.
What greater poet lives, who with venom can cry
At the crucified god, left to rot in his malaise ?

God is dead ! Declared without grief or regret.
Who shall we thank for this grand and final feat ?
To those who mourn and weep, their eyes forever wet,
I say : don't be dismayed—this death is sweet !

Now free from the chains of ecclesiastic moan,
Let's pray to the devil, and beg God not return !
Let sacred chants decay into curses unknown,
And march ourselves to hell with eager steps that burn !

It is the devil's alchemy I speak in every breath !
May reason fail me if I ever make the vow
Of some reborn tomorrow that revokes this depth.
My god has fled at last—shall peace be granted now ?

NAUSEA

There is a kin of mine, whose tale is cloaked in shade—
A man who found dark secrets none could ever spy ;
No wiseman ever glimpsed the truths that he unmade,
And thus all life's designs he chose to cast aside.

He became my brother—not by blood but fate :
His name is Roquentin, unlike mine in sound.
None closer to my house, no friend so intimate,
A pyromaniac of truths once deemed profound.

Enough of pious lies ! It's time to tell at last
The strange, disarming moment that unraveled thought.
In a quiet public park, as if just walking past,
He sat upon a bench, unaware what it had brought.

He leaned, without intent, and there beheld a root
That, under his own feet, kept twisting through the soil.
No cause, no destination, no meaning absolute—
He froze in nameless dread, gripped by that coiling coil.

The garden's every form began to intertwine :
A shapeless mass revealed itself unto his gaze.
Pure indifference ruled—no reason, no design—
A viscous tide spread wide, drowning thought in haze.

No thoughts remained, no Reason came to guide
That grotesque world now stripped of signs or names ;
And as it all dissolved, horizons deified
An *être-là* that stood still—yet never quite the same.

Being was a flood, a sea that held no shore,
Where countless things would drift—but none we'd dare recall.
Before this flat, absurd, relentless evermore,
He tasted bitter truth : appearances are all.

And what stretched out ahead was just a dead terrain—
No creature stirred to break its solemn trance.
All clothing we had sewn was born of fevered brain :
There was no consciousness—just blank existence.

Stripped of its thin veneer, the world is only *being*—
No reason for its presence, mere brute contingency.
All certainty collapses, not worth even grieving :
Nausea is the truth of all existence we see.

This vulgar *being-there* has nothing left to say—
Our words dissolve inside that ghastly, clotted brew.
Not even a faint cry to curse or turn away
This rank and reeking *being* that disturbs us through and
through.

It stands before our minds, and makes them mute with dread,
Erasing all but self from every conscious spark.
No crumbs are even left, no trace on which to tread—
Our hollowed-out awareness gropes blindly in the dark.

Within this silent struggle, there is no prize to claim :
The game is rigged ; the odds forever stacked.
No referee exists to judge or rule the frame—
And fighting *merdre itself* leaves all our courage cracked.

Whence might aid arrive, when thought begins to fail ?
This is our torment : losing reason, losing grip.
Being wraps around us like a choking, formless veil—
And there's no hidden thread by which we might slip.

And though we call it fog, this thing we can't escape,
No metaphor suffices for the weight we undergo.
There is no bridge to cross, no cure for such a scrape—
No rescue from a wound no healer yet can know.

Do not call it cruelty, this terrible insight :
So few have borne the sting, or seen the full expanse.
Yet there—there lies the light, the unfiltered might,
That hands the truth of things to our weak-eyed stance.

Many are the sages who speak of things in vain,
Naming only surfaces, content with what they see.
But the true philosopher, alone upon a bench,
Gives name to *being itself*—and claims his clarity.

It's not within the cause that words may find their shape,
But through what we have lived—we know what it became.
To later circle back and try to give it weight :
Being is no longer nausea that shattered all our aims.

To that vulgar *being-there* where consciousness is tied,
We cannot give it name unless we first escape.
That formless grip below, which clutches at our stride,
Is also chain and fetter, the trap for reason's shape.

No deeper solitude than to be held in place,
Alone in this foul bog that no soul comes to haunt.
And yet this filthy thing—I claim it as my space,
Though no one lays a claim where such things only daunt.

If the place belongs to me, I cannot really say—
Nothing is truly ours when we are left alone.
That thing before my eyes sprawled plainly in the day,
Comes forth all by itself—not kin, nor flesh, nor bone.

Bent too long forward, his limbs now numb and sore,
Roquentin lifts himself, in search of simple ease.
He shifts his posture, nothing less, nothing more—
And there, upon a bench, another takes his seat.

But hardly is he seated than Being slips away :
It leaves my own awareness to go inhabit his.
Does my own experience now find in him its way ?
I'm startled to discover—Being is not mine, but his.

What care have I for ties where he has now collapsed ?
Between our two aware minds, it made a choice— not mine.
Already Being flees me, in him it now is trapped,
Leaving me behind with only shadows of a sign.

What is this *other* made of, who now stares into me ?
My world flees toward his face as it unbinds my own.
What is this strange freedom that Being makes me see ?
Is it but thin appearance I clothed in flesh and bone ?

Beneath my feet dissolves the source of all my woe :
The other feasts upon it—leaving me with none.
Yet this Being that flees brings me no joy or glow :
Though he may gorge on it, I am left undone.

Nothing meets my hunger, nothing I may taste—
Of Being I've been robbed ; my mind stands bare and void.
A slow, unfolding trial is all that's left in place,
To judge if aught remains I might still make employed.

This phantom of a Being—now void of any claim—
Has made the other prey, abandoning my mind.
Should I then escape this theft that left me shamed ?
Is there another form of pride that I might find ?

And so this near-to-nothing, my mind made into form—
But now that it escapes, I am mere vacancy.
Can reason form a project to endure the storm ?
Or does Being prove I'm not enough for me ?

If Being flees my mind, its ties to me released,
It's seeking out the other, ready to attach.
Could this other now relive what once in me had ceased ?
I see upon his bench, he too begins to watch.

The scene has changed anew by this uncanny fact :
We now are three—two watching Being from afar.
That Being once was mine ; now it prepares to act
In some new shape, depending on the other's star.

Is it the viscous sludge I knew from first descent ?
Or is it now a garden, a refuge full of peace ?
What's shown to him remains for me opaque, unmeant—
And from this unknowing, my musings will not cease.

I cannot read in him as in some open page :
His gaze now veils the path and blocks it from my sight.
His tree may still be root—or does he see the sage ?
I cannot make the cut between the dark and light.

What do I care what he sees—its access is denied.
But if I gaze at him, he surely must gaze too,
And whate'er his world holds, within it I reside :
To him I am the Other, yet to me unknown and new.

But am I truly Other, or merely more of Being ?
If Being absorbs me, I vanish from his view—
Yet if I do resist, another I am seeming :
Does he see me as Other, lost in visions untrue ?

I cannot know the truth, and so I must decide :
Only possibilities confront me with their weight.
Of these two stances, one grants me the strength to hide—
To flee from that dark Lent, I choose what frees my fate.

It is my own salvation that I am not that Being,
And perhaps in the Other I am made more complete.
Whatever he might see, he lacks the means of seeing
What I alone affirm—his judgment I defeat.

My freedom is this faith : from his gaze I now part,
The senseless mass of Being no longer chains my soul.
I hold it at arm's length, I rend its beastly heart :
He is the thing I see—he is the thing I hold.

With thought regained anew and clarity returned,
I make of him my object, shaped by my own aim.
Though the in-itself resists what cannot be unlearned,
It must obey its course, untouched by guilt or shame.

In the Other's own mind I reclaim liberty :
If once I was mere plaything, now I am the source.
I shape him in my mind with sovereign mastery—
Though not his thoughts, in mine, he must reflect their course.

With sudden eagerness I order all anew :
My gaze gives place to all, and all finds fitting form.
Upon this public bench, now empty of its hue,
No trace of that first scene, no ghost, no lasting storm.

I bathe my mind in joy from all that lies around,
The sun now strokes my brow in gentle recompense.
This place becomes my own, its silence is profound—
Its goodness flows through me in quiet opulence.

There's only sheer delight in tasting such bright wonders,
My being overflows, enraptured and complete.
In green abundance, sight and soul are torn asunder :
There's nothing left to lack in nature's full retreat.

Subtle scents arise to ravish all my sense,
In such indulgence, nothing halts my dream.
The flowers pour their oils with sacred eloquence,
And the merle's pure song sows joy in every gleam.

I tasted, unaware, impossible harmonies :
By so many mysteries, my soul was held in trance.
In that haven of peace, all was pure sorcery—
To leave such sacred ground would have been ignorance.

My gaze now sailed across that sea of light and form,
And nothing could escape its tender, raptured plea.
To wander o'er this world—no motion could transform
The harvest of delight my eyes had claimed from me.

Then suddenly it froze—my gaze met one anew,
That other now upright, whose eyes returned my stare.
My reason, lulled to sleep, awoke to something true :
Before this stranger's gaze, my joy turned pale with care.

For in beholding him, I saw myself observed—
Once sovereign of the space, I found myself the prey.
That gaze, like silent blade, my whole domain unnerved—
A breach in my own being leaked my self away.

I fought to stem the wound from which myself was poured,
But vain was every act to seal the psychic breach.
Like artery split wide, life's force can't be restored—
A body drained of blood becomes a lifeless reach.

This world I'd called my own began to slip and flee,
Its borders broke apart beneath the other's eye.
Where once all things were one, now torn in two they'd be—
This space that had been ours, I watched it fracture, die.

I felt myself drained dry of all I'd held as mine,
As if the other's gaze had stolen my domain.
Within his quiet mind, his plans began to twine—
To seize the world I'd shaped and make it live again.

Did he mean no offense ? Did he seek to divide,
To share the very space I'd ordered as my own ?
But this world I had tamed, with care and with pride—
Must I now renounce it and let my order be overthrown ?

Can two ever dwell here without some compromise ?

To barter proper place—will all remain intact ?

Yet who can guarantee the other will not lie,

If, once agreed, he shifts the order I had packed ?

But is there worth in conflict—what good would struggle yield ?

Why gamble all away when less may still suffice ?

Why not let two designs in harmony be sealed—

To lose it all for pride would be a sorry price.

No space remains so fixed it may not be reformed ;

All things adjust themselves to fit the place they share.

So in this garden where the other has now warmed,

Must either one of us grow jealous or beware ?

There's nothing in this park I lost by his arrival ;

All things I once made mine, down to the smallest trace,

Remain untouched—his presence not my rival,

For he has only added, not erased my place.

Why should it matter how the other might perceive ?

His gaze may shape me so I suit his inner frame.

Yet from my bench I look—do I not also weave

His form within my sight, regardless of his claim ?

A shared and silent pact, no treaty ever signed :
It's still the same old park that grants itself to each.
Though in his mind the order may be redefined,
To reason is to know—things lie within my reach.

Why search for discontent in useless speculation ?
The world is vast enough for many to belong.
If I arrived here first, need that bring aggravation
When later steps arrive with nothing done in wrong ?

The birds upon the boughs conceal no bitter tale :
Together in their songs, their chorus blends with grace.
No sparrow makes us proud if, fearing to prevail,
It shuns the harmony that others may embrace.

It isn't chance that brings me to this place,
Nor does the other come without a cause.
Together we rest, eyes lifted in shared grace,
Tickled by sunlight in generous applause.

THE SPIRIT OF SERIOUSNESS

"But the principal result of existential psychoanalysis must be to make us renounce the spirit of seriousness. The spirit of seriousness has two main characteristics : it considers values as transcendent givens, independent of human subjectivity, and it transfers the desirable nature of things from their ontological structure to their mere material constitution.

For the spirit of seriousness, for example, bread is desirable because one must live (a value inscribed in some intelligible heaven) and because it is nourishing. The effect of the spirit of seriousness—so dominant in the world—is to make the symbolic values of things seep into their empirical idiosyncrasies like ink into blotting paper ; it highlights the opacity of the desired object and posits it as inherently and irreducibly desirable.

Thus we are already on the plane of morality, but at the same time on that of bad faith, for this is a morality that is ashamed of itself and dares not speak its name ; it has clouded all its ends in order to free itself from anguish. Man blindly seeks Being while hiding from himself the free project that this search constitutes ; he shapes

himself to fit tasks laid out before him. Objects become mute demands, and there is nothing in them but the passive obedience to those demands."

(*Sartre, Being and Nothingness*, pp. 690–91)

BAD FAITH

There is no greater cowardice than sinking into being,
Refusing to be free, entrusting every act
To some dull mechanism to avoid the freeing sting
Of claiming for oneself a new and risky tact.

The waiter has rehearsed his role down to perfection :
Each motion finely tuned, each gesture in its place.
Were he an automaton, we'd grant him more affection—
At least a touch of grace might flicker on his face.

He drowns within the things with which he intertwines ;
A being among beings, he no longer stands apart.
A simple thing himself, who lost all signs, all lines—
His actions name him now, he bears no inner heart.

He points to nothing more ; he mirrors what he seems,
Swallowed in the shuffle of crisscrossing décor.
A fixture in the room, devoid of depth or dreams—
What other self might dwell behind that scripted lore ?

An object gliding softly, not a whisper in his trail,
As if a billiard ball just nudged across the board ;
He's present yet not here, steeped in his own detail,
A place that brines the self, where nothing is restored.

From this stack of objects, no scent of soul escapes ;
No fatigue, no anger breaks the sterile spell.
In this flatness where no breath or being shapes,
It seems that man himself has vanished from the shell.

Such is bad faith : it drapes itself in things,
Rejects the self to flee invention's strain.
Fearing that true freedom bitter sorrow brings,
It hides within the mundane to avoid the pain.

There is no being-there who lives in bad faith's bind—
It is the trait of those who flee their very core.
And he who is not, turns from what he might find,
From his own nothingness and what he was before.

For drowning in being does not suffice to flee ;
None can escape the self without a thread of lie.
To melt into the in-itself will never make one be—
We flee from who we are in dreams we live to deny.

By ceasing to be for-itself, one lives for nothing more—
Not for some fuller self, nor some presence in the scene.
No being-there for others can the lost restore ;
The one who's for-itself walks paths the rest don't glean.

The self that would dissolve in the being of mere things
Remains a self despite its vain renunciation.
The self is only nothingness that with being wrings—
And this unmask the frauds of proud equivocation.

A coward is he who claims to be what he is not ;
A trickster who, within, knows well the role he feigns.
He sees that in the other, a for-itself is sought,
Yet hides behind a silence that masks his own refrains.

There are such roles we play to dodge the other's eyes,
To shrink into a mask, to slip behind a part ;
Avoiding others' presence often makes us wise—
There's virtue, it would seem, in showing up too late for the start.

It is often pretense when the crowd rushes on ;
They run not toward a goal, but from being seen.
To turn ourselves to things—what have we really won ?
But the loss of the deep self in habits so routine.

Such conduct bars the soul from truly being self,
For it stems from falsehood in how one weighs his truth—
To be what one is, with no regret or stealth,
For no one else but him will suffer from this ruse.

It is no mortal sin to wear such a disguise ;
No shame falls on the one whom others have ignored.
For it is to himself alone he tells the lies,
When fleeing every gaze, he claims to be time-poured.

What might he think, confronted by the mirror's face,
If from the corner of his eye he dared to peer ?
That hiding in the dark is a senseless disgrace—
We are all beggars of friendship, drawing near.

Who could truly reach him, this fugitive of being,
When nothing born of things can truly be desired ?
All our gazes converge in the gaze that is seeing,
Seeking some small light in the eyes that are inspired.

Only fools would believe this hollow masquerade :
That things themselves hold love, or truth unspoken bear.
How many noble aims are by false aims betrayed,
Thinking friendship comes free, without burden to share.

And now we grasp more clear why some dissolve in things,
Fleeing from the gaze that might reveal their form—
For there's no fate more cruel than what the mirror brings :
To seem less than the lie we told to look more warm.

IMPOSSIBLE MEETING

Can it be that in one place, good and evil meet ?
They say, "of two evils, choose the lesser one."
Still, evil remains—who can its path defeat ?
Compelled to choose like this, who dares to come undone ?

Should we believe that choosing lesser pain
Is choosing good instead ? Do they thus intertwine ?
If both should meet, then good cannot be the same
As evil—can they merge without a shared design ?

One ought perhaps to stand beyond their span :
Thus spoke Nietzsche's wish, though not a solution.
What use to leap so far across this plan
If still, in doing so, survives the question ?

I do not claim it as a fault severe—
Indeed, I take his stance and make it mine.

But still the question echoes in my ear :
Are these two foes not shaped by one design ?

Between these two, might there exist a scale,
A measure fit to weigh their separate weight ?
And can these measured values, somehow frail,
Be gathered into one that can translate ?

Is there a thread stretched tightly in between,
A point upon the line from which they stem,
Where one could cross without the pain foreseen,
From evil into good, unscathed by them ?

Our maths would teach that on the line of reals,
No rupture breaks the span, nor sharp divide.
Their set is whole, Gödel himself reveals—
Though incompleteness still may not subside.

Within the field of reals, a border line appears
Which at first glance might seem to bring us peace :
It's at the point of zero that the break is clear,
A marker standing firm between the least and least.

But does that phantom number bring solution true ?
If zero shares the realm of minus and of plus,

In it they merge, distinctions fade from view—
If both become but one, what speaks for each of us ?

Take now the parable of curves placed side by side :
Two measures drawn apart without a single touch.
Is there a place where opposites might coincide,
Yet without rupture ? No—such point eludes our clutch.

To say it better still, we speak of tangency,
A fiction we accept to ease the troubled mind ;
A gentle lie we tell for mental clemency,
For real encounter, we must leave undefined.

It proves far more convenient to speak of limit,
A boundary, not fusion—held apart, not blurred.
Just as good and evil never truly mimic :
Their closeness nears, but they do not intercur.

There was a learned woman who called this moral truth :
That ambiguity is stitched through ethical design.
That evil may turn good depending on its route—
That context bends the path of every crooked line.

But let us not pretend that what is good for one
Could, reversed, be evil in another's light.

This trick of turning two things into one
Is not the sage's way—it muddles wrong and right.

Could there be a third who boldly would defend
The claim that one same cause might yield divergence ?
This “third” brings forth a meeting to contend—
But face to face, we find just two consciences.

It's not the setting that must hold the weight,
But rather the conscience, in its inner flight,
Which, through shifting fates and circumstance innate,
Must judge for itself and name what's wrong or right.

Immersed in tangled causes, calm conscience speaks :
At times it names the good, at others calls out harm.
No circumstance can grant the truth it seeks,
Nor cast a moral shape, nor lend it charm.

Only acts remain for us to scrutinize :
Good or bad is bound to what we choose to do.
Whatever else the stage may dramatize,
It cannot shift the essence shining through.

No context absolves the choices we commit :
If the act's place alone gave moral tone,

There'd be no freedom on which to firmly sit,
And ethics would not rise from us alone.

To the spirit belongs this power to transcend—
No "beyond" need be invoked in turn.
Human freedom, in this, it must defend :
No borrowed law can teach what hearts must learn.

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THE WALL

*"We don't need no education,
No thought control, no mental castration.
No dark sarcasm in the classroom air—
Hey, teachers, leave the kids alone out there !
Hey, teachers, leave them kids alone !
You're just another brick, one more in the wall—
Nothing more than a brick in the wall."*

(Pink Floyd, « The wall »)

Each brick in the wall was once a singular thing ;
Though shaped by our hands from the same lump of clay,

Pressed into form with a steady molding ring,
Each kept some flaw the kiln could not allay.

Their firing alone could not make them alike :
Even barely hardened, their faults would persist.
The fire, though wondrous in how it strikes,
Leaves no smooth trace that the eye might have missed.

Each brick, unique, still holds its defect tight—
But what good is it to praise such variance ?
There was a time, in fury and in fight,
We hurled them in revolt, to serve resistance.

That time is gone, yet the bricks remain ;
We stack them in heaps, confusing their shapes.
To think them the same is a simple refrain :
A pile never melts singular into escape.

Then came the architect, wise in his aim,
Who saw in these bricks a potential plan—
To stack and align them, one and the same :
A wall ! Thus began his noble span.

But once we make a wall, the bricks are no more ;
Each disappears into the ordered whole.

What's crafted in hand, in the fire's core,
Once walled, loses its singular soul.

Walls only exist through indifferent design :
No single brick ever rises alone.
And if they held thoughts in a secret mind,
Once sealed in the wall, they could never have flown.

All walls that rise, as far as eyes can scan,
If built into cities or made to divide,
Are prisons for bricks before tombs for man ;
These upright planes have no name to hide.

Walls are anonymous, in perfect array ;
They hide the ugliness of what lies behind.
For man in his dwelling, hidden away,
Feeds on his pleasure, or drowns in his mind.

THE SOCIAL WALL

Not only craftsmen raise the solid wall ;
The social wall too is built brick by brick.
Beneath the school's shadow, one truth stands tall :
We mold our children so they will neatly stick.

Their education holds a single aim—
To make them alike, fit tightly in line,

So each in the wall forgets their name :
The teachers mash them down without a sign.

Instruction becomes a brick-making machine :
From their porridge are paving stones made.
Civil society turns into routine,
With matching tiles laid in silent parade.

Let no head rise above the common height—
It must be lopped off, trimmed back to flat.
To stand out is but vain, a doomed little fight ;
For one who dreams of self, there is no habitat.

Who dares to rise, not shaped like the rest,
Matching not a single line of the herd ?
That is the fate this system deems best :
March straight in line, or be seen as absurd.

Call him a fool, too meek to resist ?
Some ancient sage would say just that.
But no prophet foresaw such cities exist,
Where only the path of fools stays flat.

BACK TO THE WALL

But there are other walls, more cruel, more stark—
The ones that stand between life and death.

In a courtyard, still and cold and dark,
The condemned awaits his final breath.

His back to the wall that marks his tomb,
He faces the rifles, silent and grim.
The air hangs heavy, thick with gloom ;
A stretcher waits to carry what was him.

FACING THE WALL

He stands before death, in the mist of morning's grey ;
It seems the sky has come down to kiss the ground.
Perhaps to greet him, it leans toward this place,
And the man stands alone—a deep, unsolved sound.

If justice decreed he be sentenced to die,
It now waits outside, with no role to play here.
There is no fairness in standing stiff and dry
Before an army holding back its breath in fear.

Whom should we pity—the one about to fall,
Or he whose finger will unleash that end ?
The shooters are but one, facing a cruel call—
To perform, without mercy, what command will send.

A sudden shout rings out, the rifles all ignite ;
The condemned collapses, relieved of all fear.

The soldiers rise, avoiding the awful sight—
No soldier must be seen shedding a tear.

Their steps are heavy as they leave for the shed,
While the stretcher bears away the lifeless man.
The scene is over—but who walks out with head
Held high, when one must kill as part of the plan ?

WALLS OF SHAME

And then there are the walls built for division—
To separate men by birth or by race.
When not driven by vile superstition,
They redraw borders with cruel, silent grace.

These are the walls of shame, so it's been said—
As when Berlin was split in two great halves.
Did the architects count the tears that were shed
By families torn apart by their graphs ?

The hunger for freedom brought the wall down—
Did the joy of reunion wipe all away ?
Many hold a fragment as treasure, renown—
To remember, some must let pieces stay.

But what of the people who lived on each side ?
Do they still hold a shard, hidden or displayed ?

Wasn't it enough that so many have cried—
That even fallen, the wall cannot fade ?

THE NEW WALLS

When we see new walls rising up from the land,
Built to fulfill the task of splitting humankind,
Can God be pleased to see His sacred strand
Fractured by war and borders so unkind ?

And what of that clown who made it his crusade
To raise a wall along his country's edge ?
Is he so blind as to fear the foreign shade,
As if strangers bore a plague he must allege ?

No scandal stands taller than these rising walls—
There are saner ways to lose one's reason.
This is not mere opinion that gently calls,
But the voice of wisdom refusing to be done.

I say : it is madness to keep dividing all
That on this lowly earth was meant to unite.
To pour strength into battles that enthrall—
Is to doom mankind to its final night.

HUIS CLOS

“Generals gathered in their masses

Just like witches at black masses” –

(Black Sabbath, “War Pigs”)

The generals gather in secret conclaves,
Like witches convening in shadowy waves.
They forge up their reasons for battles and glory—
These war pigs delight in the old, bloody story.

And likewise the judges hide their affairs,
No need for witness when no one declares.
What light could you shed where there is no crime ?
Their trials amuse apes, grotesque and sublime.

These senile officials, devoid of real tasks,
Still find some purpose in donning their masks.
On harmless souls they pour out their bile—
Kafka, of this, wrote with chilling style !

But there is a *huis clos* that many recall,
A room that by Sartre unsettled them all.
We must give words a fitting domain
And widen the courtroom’s constraining frame.

Imagine a place with no way to escape,
Bathed in harsh light, without a drape.
An eerie chamber where people remain,
No corners to hide in, no secret terrain.

We say of these souls that death is their fate ;
Though their bodies persist, it's sight that dictates.
They speak to each other, no touching allowed,
And the needs of the flesh are no longer avowed.

These people, they know each other enough,
They're held in this space to endure what is rough.
In life, by their own weak confession, it's shown,
They wounded with ease and guilt of none.

Hell or purgatory—both names would fit.
All those who dwell here have been justly hit.
No torture devices, no guards at the gate,
No whips, no chains—only mirrors of fate.

Thus is the setting of our modest tale,
Nothing more to add, no veil to unveil,
Except that this space never dims into night
And its dwellers remain forever in light.

What can be said when time no longer flows ?

Eternity lies in one of two shows :

Either an endless, present now—

Or a time without end, no when and no how.

Whatever the case, the truth must be faced :

It stretches forever, no hour erased.

Nothing on Earth lasts even half as long—

To spend such a span here is no light song.

Of course, first words are reunion's disguise,

Though dying, in truth, takes little time.

Now they have forever to cut all ties—

Might as well start with polite little lines.

If each is guilty of acts they deny,

Some say they're less stained than the others nearby.

That's how it begins—the hostilities rise :

The crime is shared, but each shifts the guise.

To heap blame elsewhere lightens our share,

And guilt feels thinner when you make it fair.

But there is no rule that evens the scale :

Each one holds a weight that makes justice pale.

Forced to stay where hiding's denied,
They scan each other for flaws to deride.
If they can find fault, accuse or condemn,
They hope their own sins may fade thanks to them.

It's no mere ruse to fall for this game,
Bound to your peers, all tarnished the same.
But with endless time, nothing stays veiled—
Soon enough someone sees through your tale.

It's a hall of mirrors that casts back the gaze :
Reflected, reflecting, in infinite phase.
No secrets endure, just endless display—
Each one a mirror, no shadow, no gray.

Time never dulls these images shown,
Each face repeating the faults it has known.
Pointing at others is no clever art,
For they fade away, and you are the last part.

This "one" belongs to each, who sees in the other
Nothing but himself, his true inner brother.
Reflected endlessly, the image won't fade—
To doubt such a mirror is self-betrayed.

“Hell is other people” —not for what they do,
But for the gaze that reflects back at you.
For the eyes of the other, though they seem unknown,
Show only the mask that you’ve outwardly shown.

Return to Earth

Yet behind closed doors the crime took shape,
Shielded from all eyes, with no room to escape.
Between these two scenes, the difference is slight—
Only the reasons diverge in their light.

When motives converge, forming one design,
The singular self is lost in the line.
Each has a role in what came to be done,
And every part burns out under the sun.

Of crimes conceived, no one thinks of the cost—
That justice may come is a thought quickly lost.
Each mind is drowned in a shared, fogged stream :
When all blend as one, there's no limit to dream.

But before the judge, if each must speak true,
The single act breaks into versions anew.
Each now claims just their narrow slice of the deed,
Pretending the rest are solely to plead.

Justice, then, becomes a weighted affair :
The crime split in pieces—how to judge fair ?
What scale can measure the share of the wrong
When some bear the silence, and others the song ?

If sentence were passed in a chamber tight,
With no one to witness and no oversight,
Would the judge, in silence, feel a sting of remorse
For giving equal guilt to a scattered force ?

Is the one most guilty who strikes the fatal blow ?
Is the crime's first mover seen as lighter, though ?
So runs our justice, claiming the final act
As heavier in guilt—how skewed the tact !

Is it law's true task to split guilt apart
When each gave their soul, each offered their heart ?
Does justice take pleasure in tearing apart
The victim's name, till there's none to impart ?

What justice is this, where no line is drawn,
If memory of the fallen is all but gone ?
For what is left is a spectacle, a play,
Where truth of the crime is swept away.

Enough of justice shaped by men's design—
Only the tears remain, pure and divine.
Of all the players, it's the ones who grieve
That carry the pain no verdict will relieve.

ENS CAUSA SUI (THE USELESS PASSION)

Who could claim himself to be his very cause ?
He is the *Ens causa sui*, to none indebted,
Shattering the nihil where being finds pause—
To owe nothingness is a flaw never abetted.

No being exists that's received from elsewhere :
Is there a castaway without any source ?
Though many a thinker holds that as fair,
It's folly to call being mere chance, of course.

I do not claim God authored every soul,
Without inventing Himself, by some decree ;
Must all things have a divine control,
A god who shaped us from clay to be ?

Why would He bother, knowing we bleed ?
Are men so vain they lend their design
To one who toys with them out of heed ?
No god is so grand as these fates of mine.

It's not justice to think the world thus made—
Are our hands so pure they must be denied ?
Of all laws, the moral law most proudly stayed,
Claiming we are heirs to some good, glorified.

Kant, bound to God, held hope's solemn vow,
If only from happiness we dared turn our eye.
Such contempt for nature ! I'll tell you now :
I'd rather death than live in such a lie.

To be the cause of oneself—that speaks some truth,
It restores to mankind what he once was denied.
What else is his task, from cradle to youth,
But to bestow on all things their value, their guide ?

We are the creators of what things become,
For things indeed exist, as far as we can see ;
To ask if they might not—such musings are dumb,
Fit only for minds lost in despair's sophistry.

Of all that is not, there is naught that must be :
Gazing into the void, nothing clings to the gaze ;
Under sincere eyes, all appears openly,
Awaiting the word to emerge from the haze.

Names are the birthplace of all things that exist ;
What matters their source when their form is revealed ?
They are as we say—through each trait we insist,
And the sense we bestow is what thought has unsealed.

Freedom is the cause, says Kant's antinomy,
Set against nature's mechanical bounds ;
No meaning is found but what we decree—
The sense lies in gesture, the stance it surrounds.

Being is nameless when not drawn to thought :
A useless *there-being*, unknown and bare,
An aimless machine by science half-caught,
Which names only function, with never a care.

Cause of itself, consciousness owes none a debt,
And deep in its void, it gives meaning its spark ;
For being without past, a future is set—
No longer absurd, being smiles in the dark !

"Contingent" or "vain"—thus we were told of things,
Empty expressions denied by the wise ;
Noumena are nothing no mind ever brings :
Things are only as seen by our open eyes.

Nothing is hidden from curious regard :
The world shows itself, and invites us to speak ;
And the names we bestow dig meaning's own yard :
The world feeds its form from the thoughts that we seek.

The old madman of Frankfurt hides behind his hush :
Have his teeth all fallen, to seem so grim and pale ?
Arthur, foul thinker, might carry some blush,
That Nietzsche, the faithless, did not share his tale.

And what of the Hermit hidden deep in his wood,
Heidegger, master, loyal to the State,
A response to our turmoil, if still he withstood—
Did he die convinced he had grasped our fate ?

Is there weaker reason than what they once wielded ?
It's Being that answers their poisoned refrain :
"I am not blameless," it sighs, half-yielded—
I know truths the fools ignore in disdain !

For Being, through our virtues, has gathered good sense :
Behold how it dares us to speak in return !
It would be pure vanity to test its essence,
To betray its design, or what insight might burn.

Beings are overflowing, and bring words to grief,
For speech is too meager to span such terrain ;
No sage is so wise, with one phrase all too brief,
To contain the whole world or its vast, deep domain.

FACTICITY

The Masks

In common parlance, when facticity is named,
It's said to be a mask—a crafted, staged pretense,
An artificial veil by which the self is framed,
A mark to set apart from others' difference.

Such facticity, when used to excess,
Leads only to ridicule—that is its fate.
Is it just a manner, or a cunning finesse,
To stray by pure artifice from the crowd's estate ?

Could it be mere play, a theatrical stance,
Or a deep conviction to appear as oneself ?
If it's not masquerade, not a festive dance,
Who dares to condemn it or place it on the shelf ?

Is it what's shown—or hidden—that should be called true,
To pass a judgment on how one appears ?

Which of the two speaks clearer of you—
The mask on your face, or what hides in your fears ?

Too easy it would be to call it deception,
To say it seeks only to fool another's gaze.
But in such matters, rare is the detection—
Few ever unveil what their mask betrays.

From skin to mask, there's hardly any gap,
And perhaps none at all, if truth must be told ;
For there's no human flesh without its trap,
No skin that doesn't some silent sorrow hold.

The masks we wear are often far from mute :
In subtle signs, they whisper what's repressed.
One does not choose a look at random or en route—
The nature of the self is in the face expressed.

Ill-judged is the frown cast upon the disguise,
When none can fully prove their own display pure.
Who among us lacks all fault beneath their guise,
And whose own truth would truly reassure ?

For life is a theater, and we all play parts :
Each role requires its fitting costume, worn.

To think we need always bare honest hearts
Is a hope too naïve, too easily torn.

Thus fall the masks, in moods that shift like air :
It takes but one to change and seem another face.
To multiply oneself brings no real despair—
By seeming not oneself, we rule the self's own space.

Yet our self is lost by playing out the scene :
By being all at once, we vanish into none.
To let each mask fall brings no end unforeseen,
Only echoes within us of how far we've run.

With the self flown away, we're merely façade,
Our hollowed shells betray no truth of worth.
All reigns on the skin, by consciousness awed—
What once clothed the soul now shows only earth.

Commedia dell'arte : Pierrot is all that remains !
His days filled with weeping, his heart lies undone.
A jilted fool who moans in sorrowed refrains
For dear Columbine, who has turned from his sun.

But do you believe those tears are truly sad ?
They're nothing but color, paint on his white face.

No heartbreak lies behind this grieving lad—
When the clown's mask falls, grief leaves no trace.

These feelings of ours, so loudly aggrieved,
Are drawn to the costume, not what lies beneath.
We mourn for a coffin where none ever lived—
To cry for an outfit is absurd, like a wreath.

What's the point of burying what's only disguise ?
When the curtain drops, Pierrot takes his leave,
To play another role, with new truth in his eyes :
He walks offstage and back, with more tales to weave.

And there he stands again, improvising his lines—
What matters what's said, if the words seem sincere ?
In life's rotating scenes, shifting frames and signs,
We must play each part, though none be too clear.

Each performance brings us a costume anew ;
We think we're multiplied by posture and stance.
But if we are many, where does that self dwell true ?
From mask to mask, is there even a glance ?

The outfits are many—but not the one within.
Whatever drapes the form, it hides just flesh and bone.

There is no inner self dressed beneath the skin—
The self is only that which the world has known.

The costumes are many, and yet they are but one !
It is through this oneness the self finds its ground.
Though stitched of a thousand garbs, the self is still one—
But this one is plural : therein lies its wound.

Contingency

Philosophers claim it : we are thrown, contingent—
And facticity is its perfect twin.

No longer about masks, no guise that's resplendent,
But a solitude that's not touched by the divine.

How soothing it feels to invoke some god's name,
Even if finitude is all we can be ;
From above might come rescue from sorrow or shame,
And meaning may blossom in minds set free.

How good it must be to believe in reward,
That our poor lives are fields to be someday reaped !
To await the harvest grants balm to what's hard—
No promise from God has been left unkept.

To all our despair, the heavens respond
That some god lies hidden from whom we are drawn.

The sacred books echo this path we abscond,
Lending sense to the misery we rest upon.

For what is foretold is a reward to come :
If we toil like mules, God will pay us back.
It's a fair transaction, as preached by some—
To sow without rest gives our lives their track.

To those who turn away, hellfire is sworn,
As real as the devil, who lurks up above.
To be warned of his pitchfork is somehow a charm :
Fear of the rider keeps me tame in his love.

And God, in his dwelling, shall call me his friend :
My labor is tribute to the divine plan.
Obedience earns me the joy at life's end,
Though many wise souls reject such a span.

It's high time I stop this delirious flight—
Unless I would gladly be deemed insane.
Say more, and I may just laugh myself to death,
And I'd hate to fall under such absurd pain.

Many wise minds have said it : the world is a farce !
And what can be meant, if not that it's causeless ?

Thrown into being, without anchor or start,
We must give it meaning, or face the abyss.

This being that we are is owed to pure chance :
No cause can be found by searching outside.
Its outside is nothingness, veiled in silence—
Beyond being, there is only our own death to bide.

And yet this being is here, though we know not why :
From where could it come, if not from random birth ?
Beside this being, only nothingness sits by,
And that nothing is not even shadow or earth.

If being has arrived, then it owes a debt to none :
Not born of another, it must be born of itself.
Promised to nothing, by nothing it is shunned—
Its end is within, but despair's not its wealth.

There is no explanation but this bold, blunt truth :
Its circularity is its one clear sign :
Its origin and end are a single, fused root—
Our worldly awareness makes this loop align.

Circular being—this is its condition :
In its presence there lies no absolute.

Its being feeds from its own repetition,
Yet does it lose all meaning once God is mute ?

This being-there cannot be source of its sense,
And if sense there is, it must come from elsewhere.
Outside of being is only consciousness—
A pure nothing, weightless, vanishing in air.

What meaning can being take from what is not ?
Yet nothing gives meaning the moment it's filled.
When the void is fed, it's not with being's plot,
But with its phenomenon, by which it is thrilled.

This caress of nothingness gives being its sense,
For it is in its void that being becomes other ;
Though from nothing, being-there gains no existence,
It draws all its meaning—there is no another.

In this strange operation, many mysteries dwell,
And metaphysics takes on its ancient task ;
But this is no place where such depths should swell—
Here we face the question, without a mask.

Let it suffice to say : being-there is mere fact,
Pure contingency, though bounded and confined ;

Yet this does not doom it or hold it back,
For it's being's own task to become self-defined.

And this consciousness of being, making it its own,
Not as essence fixed, but just as it appears,
Draws out its meaning in varied undertones :
To give sense to being—no god must interfere.

EXCIPIT RETURN TO SOLITUDE

As Zarathustra descends once again into the valley, the time has come for me to leave, once more, the company of men — to empty my poor head of its overfilled chatter, to liberate myself from these crimes of opinion, to return to my ears the smallness that suits them so well. The world is too grown-up ; it is no place for children. The time has come to return above, to my faithful Argiope, to nourish myself again on the silence of solitude, to regain the heights, to turn away from the talkative, to drink the murmur of all the dead who call me there, to savor once more the pleasure of inward speech. Humanity is too human to keep me near it : I am weary of weak spirits. Too many men behave like insects, ever in search of some convenient reason — that dubious word that clouds the mind — as if, tired of being one-eyed, they now sought salvation in blindness. To see in the

world only what one is looking for : the assurance of an answer — even if it is but an illusion — to an equally illusory existential doubt.

Truth is often useless, sometimes fatal, unbearable to ears that have grown too long. Humanity is a fisherman of reasons, casting back into muddy waters anything that seems too little. Nihilism has made man a glutton : he feeds on anything that calms his hunger. The death of God has made him a crumb-scavenger : beneath the table where God lies, he feasts on the leftover morsels of morality. Is it not strange that God's gravediggers flee their own void by becoming ascetics ? I have met such men in search of suffering — atonement for a crime from which all joy has been banished. Moral asceticism is the price of blood spilled — the blood of God, and of men as well. Life becomes a scourge when God falls silent : Schopenhauer forbade himself even to laugh ! Freed from this useless God, the slaves go astray in search of new chains : morality is God's burial shroud. The orphan's tears pour into needless suffering : man cloaks himself in pitiful indecency ; people pray in churches to a God who is no longer there. God's death has made men crawling insects, eaters of dust trampled under the heel of moralism.

The spectacle is pitiful, and justifies my return to the mountain : what else can I do with such decadence but reflect upon it still, make it the labor of solitary thought ? At the very hour when I flee from men, Zarathustra abandons solitude to return to the plain. The sleeping lion, lulled by doves, is the Sign : he must take up once again his pilgrim's staff, bring to idle humanity the good news — the fifth gospel — proclaim the coming of the Overhuman. Poor friend ! This is where your decline begins, you who on your path will shatter the bones of the enchanter. Should you not have returned to the peaks ? Was your burden so heavy that you had to share its weight ? Was it so urgent that you relieved yourself rather than truly give ? Crushed men will be what you leave behind : they are not yet ready to wear the robe of the Overhuman and his Eternal Return. One must know how to wait, to master one's own strength, and temper one's fervor : what use is it to open men's eyes if your flash of speech blinds them ?

Have you crossed the final threshold of the labyrinth ? Only solitude offers enough freedom from oneself to pass beyond what forbids forbidden thought. It takes the audacity of madness to enter this mystery, to lift the veil of that truth as old as the world and forever mute. What is this treasure from which we have always been deprived ? What does this mirror reflect, which no man has yet consulted ? What does it have to teach

us, about ourselves and the world ? What is this truth that no god has ever spoken ? Can the gods even know it ? This is what I must seek in the solitude to which I now abandon myself : I will need a gaze capable of glimpsing what cannot be seen, ears small enough to hear the inaudible. Is there an Ariadne's thread to guide me through this labyrinth hung with a thousand doors ? But this is not her labyrinth, and her thread was irreparably broken upon the shores of Naxos. No thread, no lantern : the madman shattered it before the jeering laughter.

But why such daring ? Could the truth of men not suffice ? Passion will never have sufficient reason — self-consuming, it has no account to render. Passion plays with ill fortune : no matter the place to which fate drives it. Passion is an unreserved yes, a yes without conditions, to every path that becomes its own : *Amor Fati* ! Its fate cannot be refused, for passion knows nothing of resentment and welcomes all that befalls it as its rightful due. In such adventures there lies a nobility of soul — even a kind of voluptuousness : if life has no more happiness to offer me, then let it offer me its pain. This hymn to life — that is what makes man great. The comfort of tranquility, peaceful and careless rest, is a source of boredom, of softness, of insubstantiality, which always ends up wearing the mask of futility — that is, of nihilism.

Rest is never deserved, for it is never owed : it is only necessary. If, as Nietzsche said, illness is the best indicator of health, then suffering allows us to measure and appreciate life's modest pleasures. But *Amor Fati* is not fatalism : Nietzsche, who throughout his life was so exposed to suffering and illness, undeniably preferred health — hence his many travels to milder climates and his constant search for remedies. To love life even in the sufferings it brings does not mean consenting to them : happiness, above all things, remains preferable.

This is no less what I hope for from this retreat into nature, this withdrawal from the world : solitude is already less burdensome when shared with a spider. At the threshold of my refuge, there are so many pleasures to gather — a little bit of paradise renewed at every dawn by the rising sun. And in the depth of night too, humble joys are hidden : the wind slipping under the door, or the rain that gives life to my roof.

In such retreats, nothing weighs heavier than useless reading — those books with promising titles but no substance, a wind blowing through the mind without making a sound. The most talkative men are often those with nothing to say, batterers of open doors, endless torrents carrying nothing but water, transparent panes that open only onto a wall. I would be

ungrateful to my solitude if I preserved from it only the time lost in useless tasks.

In these austere hours, I am granted the nourishment of thought through wondrous readings — unforgettable moments of intense flavor. There are so many authors one already knows, and others unknown who have so much to say and to teach. The former are reread with the same savor and a fresh attention ; the latter offer themselves up to a discovery that, more often than not, sparks intense delight. The book traveler is an adventurer carried by the waves of words to ever new and sometimes forbidden lands, a sailor tossed upon the fluidity of concepts.

Words are monads with shifting reflections ; a text is a play, and the words, its actors, improvise their own roles. The meaning of words is never where they stand, but in the relationships they maintain with other words — relationships that are never final, and which lend to those words, met in their provisional state, an unpredictable resonance. Words are always elusive, and it is absurd to think they are fixed by writing.

A literary work is always unfinished, and this incompleteness is its hollow body — a beingless void in which words become possible through the act of reading. It is the relation to the text — in

reading — that opens it to new possibilities. Only dogmatism, and dogmatism alone, would see this as a subjective and unfaithful interpretation, for the text, once offered to the reader, belongs to the reader alone and subsists as a mere accident for its author. One does not write for oneself, nor even to express oneself ; one writes to spark, to provoke inner states that belong only to others.

Writing is a gift — not a relief of the self, as Zarathustra understood it, but a present to the other, who may or may not make it their own nourishment. The gift is always corrupted when driven by any form of self-interest. The author of a book, even one renowned, will always remain a stranger ; and so, when Nietzsche complains to his mother about his *Zarathustra* not being understood, what he truly mourns is being that unknown man, ignored by the many, whose book gathers dust on the shelf. He laments a gift refused by those for whom it was intended.

Could this return to oneself be merely a precaution — a hygienic measure, a means of self-preservation from a world awash in the most diverse and invasive opinions ? Let us see it rather as a refusal of distractions that exhaust the gaze, a refusal of the mind's dispersion in superficiality — the hedgehog curling into a ball, the need to gather what was scattered. It is an existential,

but also spiritual, need to retreat into my shell, like a snail too easily disturbed. To reduce the outside world to only the strictest necessities, to remove every reason for our gaze to wander, to strip it of all useless interest and clear the clutter, for one sole purpose : to fix the gaze inward, to delve into the self, to sound the depths of the soul, to hide from the world within one's own skin. To strip the world of its necessity and surrender to the painful and tormented detour of a metaphysics of the soul. To slip away from the Apollonian illusions and plunge, without reserve, into the depths of the tragic — not only the one spoken of in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which captured mostly its aesthetic, where Dionysus is saved at the last by Apollo, as a final decadence — and certainly not the kind of tragic that moves the sensitive to tears (for that is far too little !) — but the tragic in its repulsive nakedness, in its unbearable abjection, the kind that cannot be healed, an inward affliction that adds to tears the blood of the soul. Tragic as self-shattering contradiction, whose redemption can only ever be immediate — and always temporary.

To undress suffering, to scrape off its Platonic varnish, to free it from false appearance — Apollo's handiwork — and return to it its unbearable truth. To break the illusion of meaning that turns the gaze away. It is in the face-to-face that the beast reveals itself to the beauty who learns to love it in its tragic ugliness.

Beauty teaches that what is ugly is worth no less than what is beautiful ; that greatness lies not in form but in the soul's capacity to say "yes" to life. *Amor Fati* ! It is not easy to speak of the tragic. First, because tragedy, its most proper expression, has become an obsolete genre, even abandoned after a brief revival by authors like Racine. Second, because the tragic genre, as Nietzsche notes in *The Birth of Tragedy*, has lost much of its power — even its essence — especially with Euripides : the marginalization of the chorus and the reflective focus on plot undermined the tragic sense. Finally, common sense has, over time, eroded our perception of the tragic, which today tends to be confused with drama. The tragic can only be restored by dissociating it from drama, with which it has too often been wrongly conflated.

Drama refers to singular events, inscribable in history : it is the nature of the event that categorizes it as dramatic. The singularity of facts does not mean drama must be personal — it may be shared. Another characteristic of drama is its irreversibility, and perhaps for this reason, drama is most often associated with death. People tend to think tragedy is simply large-scale drama, but their relation is not one of scale — in fact, I would argue they have no relation at all, as they refer to entirely different lived experiences. "Tragic," I believe, is too often misused ; it is wiser to retain "tragic" as an adjective and

adhere to the phrase “tragic sense,” which Nietzsche himself always favored. That phrase more clearly conveys its nature and scope, for unlike drama, the tragic does not refer to events but to an internal disposition — an inner gaze cast upon existence, a mode of being lived within the soul.

Thus, he who views the world and life through a lens that unmasks their hidden sufferings is “predestined” to the tragic sense. One may then infer that existence reveals its tragic dimension only to the one who is “predestined” for it. Here, “predestination” merely echoes Nietzsche’s formulations in the preface to *The Antichrist*. It would be more appropriate to speak of a *disposition*, as this can always be acquired. Nietzsche’s concept of “predestination,” as invoked here, should not be understood as an innate, natural inclination, but as a spiritual demand : the tragic sense is accessible only to those who, like Nietzsche himself, remain true to “matters of the spirit” — who have gained enough elevation not to be distracted by the noise of the world, who maintain total freedom toward themselves, and have given themselves the strength and audacity to access forbidden truths, of which the tragic is inseparable.

In light of such demands, it is not surprising that Nietzsche opposes the tragic sense to the Christian one — considering that Christianity shares in the nihilism inherent in philosophies of

futility (like Schopenhauer's), and that such nihilism precisely negates all tragic dimension of existence.

If *The Antichrist* did not have the impact Nietzsche had hoped for, it is undoubtedly because those who read it — and especially those it opposed — did not understand it. Let us be clear : they did not meet the conditions laid out in the preface. Moreover, the short time between its completion (September 1888) and Nietzsche's collapse (early January 1889) may have led the ill-intentioned to believe that *The Antichrist* already bore the marks of the madness that would overtake him months later. Many did not hesitate to draw that conclusion : in 1887, Paul Rée, once Nietzsche's friend, confessed he never understood his works — and understandably so : "Nietzsche didn't philosophize — he raved !" One must have a mind free enough not to wallow in such sordid remarks and to rise above them with the disposition needed to uncover the deeper (and most certainly hidden) meaning of this book — the book Nietzsche claimed was the essential culmination of all his work. This is what shall now nourish my renewed solitude : God will, at last, emerge from His chrysalis...

DELIVERANCE

My thoughts are so heavy they slow my ascent : it takes courage to escape mankind ! But suddenly, I see my refuge, nestled against the rock — deliverance is only a few steps away. I wish I could hurry, run like the ibex to this haven of peace, but my burden is too great. Cursed be mankind ! Let them swarm in the filthy waters — the valley is nothing but a sewer.

Faithful, the sun pours onto my den, and already my spirit warms to it : is it from shining so high that it shines so little below ? What do I care for the plain — it never returns what is lent to it. The mountain is not stingy with what it gives : it demands nothing, only admiration — a glance full of emotion. Here, I find more of myself than anywhere else, and it gives back to my soul all that was taken from it.

Here I am, Argiope ! I wish only to lose myself, to become ensnared in your web — but have you spun it yet ? You will do so in my presence ; you will weave the setting of my future thought : your threads are precious to me. Are you not my Ariadne, and thought my labyrinth ? Together we shall break those enigmas no one has ever suspected. Does salvation not come from above — from the mountain peaks ?

From the mountaintops, light returns to us,
Descending on the plains, nourished by torrents ;
I flee the lowlands for their bitter sorrow —
Men, more ignorant than their own beasts of burden.

In this solitude, I forget my grief,
Trapped in the web my friend has spun ;
Of the world I know but its empty striving,
A wounded present with no tomorrow.

ARGIOPE : My dear friend, I rejoiced so deeply at your return,
but when I see you in the light of the doorway, I am seized with
fear : your face is closed, and in your eyes I see only torment.
The Hermit, your companion in misfortune, came often during
your absence and left honey to soothe the pain that eats at you.
Do you not think you should go to him ? Why are you so dark ?

ME : Twice on my way here I met the Hermit, and we spoke at
length. He longs to live again. His last solitude — the seventh —
has lasted too long : abandoned by his Master, he has lost the
taste for mankind. And yet, I recognized him among the wolves :
Zarathustra. In the alpine pastures, I encountered the Enchanter
: his laughter, once glacial, is now murderous. While the wolves
are nothing but bones stretched in skin, the lambs feast on the
blood of the fawn. It is the laughter of that demon that deceives

them, turning them into predators. But we will share the honey, and with Zarathustra, we will recover the health that now eludes us. I promise you, my Argiope — the Final Sign is near !

ARGIOPE : The Final Sign ?

ME : Yes ! *The Return of Zarathustra* — the end of division and tearing, the Redemption...

ARGIOPE : And before that ?

ME : Much torment. For we must descend deeper still into the abysses of the soul, to touch more closely what, by its remoteness, still seems unreachable. It is the Free Expanse — the kingdom of Being and Spirit — where the deepest Serenity reigns, a mischievous Wisdom that defies time, for time deceives us by leading us. To the time of the world, there is another time : the time of Being, which, because it is Spirit, becomes eternal in each of its moments. That is what we must shatter — the grip of time ! We must take time before it takes us and leaves us shipwrecked : when, on the shores of Naxos, we are no more than wreckage, what god will come to save us ?

TRAGIC KISS

Love turns tragic in its very necessity,
Binding our fates through lips pressed tenderly—
A joyful melancholy, the taste of a kiss
That joins the lover and the one they miss.
Tragic was Helen's love for a burning city,
Guinevere's kiss that led her to the pyre's pity.

In Dante's hell, love is tossed by the gust
Of whirlwind passions—eternal, unjust.
Minos, in your judgment, was it not disguised,
That weight so distorted, unfairly revised ?
Love is a poem written with each kiss,
Words drawn from an inkwell of crimson bliss.

Is hell itself paved by Divine Comedy ?
What god is so devil as to burn love's ecstasy ?
Dreaming that inferno, Dante surely strayed,
Lost in the dark of an image betrayed.
Only gods can curse and disgrace a kiss,
Defiling its innocence with vengeful abyss.

It's true that the poet is loved by his Muse—
But how to express a bond so profuse ?
To unveil its depth with words grown old,

When clarity lacks and silence takes hold ?
Like a crescent moon that leaves things veiled,
A portion of love in shadow is jailed.

That part remains hidden, shielded from gaze,
Working beneath, stripped of all shape or phrase.
Tragic is the kiss, marked only by a trace—
A fleeting form from a secret place.
Love cannot be spoken, it withdraws unseen :
It is the secret leaven of a fate between.

So love will never reach its end defined,
Nor dwell upon heights one seeks to assign.
There is no place fit to shelter its stay,
It is the place where all else fades away.
Time deposits echoes that it then erases—
Love cannot be mapped ; it belongs to no places.

We wish that time would crash upon love's stone,
That the one who once lingered might remain alone—
But hours are fleeting, they carry all things,
And lock love away in remembering's wings.
Only what has passed does memory retain—
The before with no after, frozen like a frame.

Love is not a film of yesterdays bound,
That we rewind when hearts are unsound.
A kiss is fleeing, unable to hold,
What passes through it is already cold.
And only the future can conjure “to love” —
Tragic is the kiss : a tomorrow thereof,
With forms unforeseen, in the depths concealed,
A trail in the dust that our footsteps repealed.

ARIADNE’S KISS

A sailboat on the waters has brought you this far,
The sea has left you on Naxos’ sandy bar.
You are nothing but sorrow, the shore feels your despair—
Theseus flees with Phaedra, vanishing through Aegean air !

And you, poor Ariadne, on this island left alone,
A bitter god now aims his arrows at your bones.
You suffer and you sigh—what seeks this mad divine ?
Is he not satisfied, witness to your decline ?

In a heavy cloud the archer hides his face ;
You know him only by the wounds his arrows trace.
He nears in silence, your soul to ensnare,
But your tear-drowned eyes cannot hold his stare.

Already his breath caresses your neck,
The archer's arrows have lost their effect.
You think he wants your heart—then let him take it,
Let him pierce it deep, and make it ache yet.

Love has raged in tears across your face,
But what have you left but a life displaced,
Unraveled by another in a labyrinth's thread—
Let the Minotaur and Theseus' love lie dead.

Must you be cursed by a god so severe
For the thread you entrusted, now drawing you near
To a torturer god whose footsteps you hear—
And accept that your life is the price he makes clear ?

This god is a coward, lost in his cloud,
Why does he hide behind such a shroud ?
Is he afraid of you, of what he's done,
Of all the wounds that make your body shun ?

But smile, Ariadne : the mad god is gone !
Do you not see how heaven bursts into dawn ?
It descends to you, drawn by horses in flight—
And someone else bends over your plight.

Dry your tears, Ariadne : the sun has ascended,
And the chariot of love has just now descended.
You only need ears that can wisely hear,
For he speaks to your soul, drawing you near.

He invites you to dance in the maze of his heart,
A labyrinth meant for you alone from the start.
No thread is needed—love is the way—
If you must lose yourself, it's to find you one day.

To be who you are, once distorted and torn,
An eternal well of love from which he'll be reborn.
He returns to heal you, to soothe your pain,
To bring back the smile your face once contained.

So Dionysus comes to bind you in fate :
You'll be his Ariadne, his immortal mate,
The keeper of night, the clarity of day—
He lays down his passion at your feet today.

Each has their Ariadne, it's theirs to pursue !
If I found mine at the base of a church spire's view,
I would wish at our wedding a god to appear,
And his bride with him, that they may draw near.

For out of their tale, another was spun :
We are the echo of what they had begun,
A passion unmeasured that overturns all—
From the highest peaks to the deepest fall.

So speaks Ariadne of the path she chose,
Where she met a god who among mortals goes.
Of Dionysus they only recall the wine,
Forgetting the friendship born under moonlight's sign.

LAST KISS

When I pressed my lips to your frozen face,
Wishing to entrust you with all my love in parting,
Your skin was so pale, your eyelids sealed in place—
There was nothing but sorrow in that final kissing.

Now you are far, beyond the clouds and skies :
All I have left is a framed memory.
I stare long at the photo, hoping it will rise—
That it might come to life, and let me kiss you gently.

But within your wooden frame, you refuse to move,
While “forever” runs down my cheeks like rain.
For the image I hold speaks only in past proof :
What do you know of today that you won't explain ?

Will you return one hour, to cradle me in rest ?
Will you come back, in flesh I might caress ?
I wish you would, you know—a very last kiss—
But perhaps tomorrow. For now, I must make peace with this.

The days go by, and each resembles the last,
For you do not return—have you forgotten the past ?
I believed in your return, but must accept instead :
My kiss upon your death was the final one you'd get.

If a poet must summon courage, evoking that final kiss demands more than I possess : the tears erase the words before they are written. As Hölderlin once said, the absence of sacred names is a loss—but more cruel still is the absence of words that could speak the despair of love carried off by death. I can write no more : those who have truly loved will understand—and forgive me.

THE NIGHT OF THE WORLD

The world has had its time—it has just vanished :
Devoured by darkness, its play has come to an end.
Yesterday, they were four, dancing a chain of mirrors,
Each one the reflection of the others, twirling.

Between heaven and earth, in once fertile friendship,
Man broke the bond—and God has withdrawn.
It is the end of a dance, once enchanted by Spirit,
Which the Ring had set in motion through its maze.

But the Ring is shattered, diverted by futility,
And cast into the abyss, now haunted by the absurd.
Though the hands of time still continue to tick,
The human bound to the depths has perished.

The bridge that leads to the Self was torn apart by man,
And the last to cross it plunged into the void.
“He will stay down long,” prophesied with grief
Great Zarathustra, last of humankind.

Now he too has fallen, content with too little—
What his animal nature barely envied in him.
And though granted the power of thought,
Haunted by desire, he turned away from it.

To the tale of our deeds is missing the act of thinking—
Not the thinking that seeks to dominate through Reason,
But that which sees beyond power and knowledge,
Into what lies hidden beneath all appearances.

Indecent vandals have scraped away the statues,
Hoping beneath the veil to find bare skin.
But beneath what appears is only shaped stone—
The genius of the artist lies within the veil !

There is no treasure beneath flayed skin :
Only stone, or entrails, shaped into form—
An intimate ugliness concealed in its robe.
What do humans hope to gain in tearing it apart ?

There is nothing to see beyond what is revealed,
Yet even that we view through a distorted gaze,
Seeing only what we seek to find—
So much so, our eyes remain closed to the essential.

Truth lies only in what is hidden
From the gaze that serves its use alone.
Concerned only with function, so little is granted—
And only a short-sighted eye thinks that it is enough.

But to the one who rests their gaze on what is pleated,
And grants themselves time to unfold the fissures,
An enigma appears—and they begin to think
That hidden within those folds lie unknown truths.

The night covering the world did not fall from the sky :
For everything that fades does so through our closed eyes ;
It is by what we seek that we are blinded—
Who knows the weight of things they've never weighed ?

We wish to know everything, that nothing be hidden,
To dissect what is, leaving nothing behind.
Yet it is the simplest things the eye leaves unseen :
What moves our gaze is what necessity demands.

Only what is necessary, dictated by reason,
Satisfies the will that settles for so little.
We make so much noise, haunted by silence,
Just to drown out the softest murmurings.

If we turn cacophony into convenience,
It's because a life of silence is too heavy to bear.
The living is a cry to keep death at bay—
But do we still live, after so much shouting ?

The night upon our world is just a gaze turned away,
Averted from what questions us,
And the fragile answers we cloud over the unknown,
Which we push aside, away from our mapped paths.

And if the question returns, it is for others to think—
In other words, no one, for all have confessed
That nothing is worth anything unless it serves—
What care for appearance if we must grind it all down ?

Yet in the folds of the world a demon lies hidden,
The one who once hissed into Socrates' ear :
All things are rational, shaped by the mind—
We must fear the one who governs all.

Grasp its machinery, declare its laws,
For it is only law that makes all things function—
The law of nature we love to dominate,
And that of man we long to control.

But every law has its flaws, the otherwise proven
By the flick of a hand naming the exception.
As long as we master them, we may sleep in peace—
For all things foreign, chains are prepared.

And so our fears come to rule
What we once believed godless, a haven of freedom.
By all that is feared, men are made captive,
Stripped of their choices, unable to trace new paths.

Over what the world declares—our possibilities—
A veil has descended, condemning it to silence.
Yet from the thick night in which it lies imprisoned
Returns the murmur of a thought that might yet be.

It says to us : it is yours to chase these shadows,
To let light slip into its veins,
To see it and speak it according to its truth—
It takes only a keen eye to caress its surface.

For nothing is deeper than what is shown :
The world bears our fate etched into its skin !
Why seek elsewhere what cannot be found there ?
The world is in its rind—all is folded within !

So too must we gaze into its crevices
Without forcing open what appears to resist.
The world is a statue that no veil has covered—
Its folds reveal to us a profound nakedness.

Vandals, you destroy what you seek !
Upon the very skin, beauty's essence is given !
But this skin is deep, and so much hides within it :
From the darkness, we must offer it to the light.

The night that holds the world will one day pass !
With the return of the Celestials, enlightened by Wisdom,
The darkness may be pushed away from this world,
And the space between earth and sky redrawn.

Then shall they return, the forsaken divinities,
Bringing to humankind the key to its fate ;
And within the mirrors of which the Ring was made,
Each shall reflect the three others.

Who would deceive all my hopes with illusions
If not the Enchanter by whom all was broken ?
We trust too easily in false truths,
Claiming to be light, when they are darkness.

This night that laid its fraud upon the world—
A single ray, even the faintest light,
May shatter its spine and cast it elsewhere :
Only our gaze can reveal this to us.

NOCTURNAL SONG

I walk alone,
My steps out of tune
In the deep shadows of the night ;
On birch trees, phantoms of the nocturnal forest,

The whiteness of a cadaverous moon is reflected.

A star has drowned

In the dark water of a muddy pond ;

The night-bird on a tree

Has perched its melancholy song.

Silent witness to my wandering,

The beast has withdrawn into a bush,

Face of the angelic sister,

Bite of light in the green garden,

Innocence stranded in the abyss

Of the mirror of madness.

The path is frozen in stone,

From the sky descends the dark

Upon a land of dust ;

In the embankment, an ancient tree

Returns its tears to the earth,

Morning dew coming

To crush with light

The cursed soil

From which the fathers have fled.

Disoriented, the night

Hides in the cracks ;

The bell resounds from
The village summit.
Stones tremble and loosen,
With patience collapses
The old house of the fathers.

Cry in the waning night,
The child wakes from dream,
Opening his heart to madness.
Lovers come undone
Cursing the day
That whitens consciousness.

Gone is the star
That watched over the world ;
The child opens his eyes
To the dawn seeping in
Then closes them again,
Longing still for dream,
Refuge in the dark corner
Untouched by day.

From the doorway detaches
The mother's face,
With the waxen hue of the dead,

Eyes of frozen stone
Shattering with their gleam
What remains of the dark night.

The weeping bell has fallen silent,
Ablaze with light,
Quicken the steps of shadows
Buried in the stones
Of the lifeless wall
That lines the grey houses.
The song of the nocturnal brother
Is not heard in the plain,
Bent beneath the sun
Of a rotting summer.

The tears of autumn return
Under a cloud-laden sky,
The day loses its time
As night-time grows stronger ;
The trees are stripped
Of leaves taken by the earth,
And from humans, the mask
Is torn by the evening wind ;
From the gaze of toads
The stars return to us.

From the heights of the path,
Sheltered by night,
Resounds the brother's song,
And here the sister,
Devoured by the clearing,
Turns back upon her steps
And brushes with her gaze,
Flooded with light,
The rock of death—
And the serpent flees.

From the thorns of a bush
The beast has torn itself free,
And full of hate
It challenges the Angel's steps ;
The nocturnal song murmurs
Carried along the edge
Of the path's trees.
On the Angel's face
Shines the chiaroscuro,
The pale hue of blue night.

The beast, sprung from the thorns,
Would tear it open,
Blaze it with its raw fire,

But from the crystal eye
Of the toads in the pond
A thread of starlight breaks,
And from the bottomless night
A sudden lightning comes,
Blinding the beast's gaze
As it fades away—
While the sister's hair
Is bathed in radiance.

OBSCURE LIGHT

Is this sacred time the riddle for which I hold the key,
or is it something else, forever held in reserve ?
One would think madness the dream's murderous twin
when the child is only tears in his frozen home.

In the blue of night, famished destinies
reach the threshold of a forgotten light ;
is the dream a lie they must devour,
a crystal silence shattered by fury ?

Yet madness is but the name of an excess of thought,
when the sweat of the brow cannot dry a single stone.
If God resounds from afar through our infirmities,
is it not a demon alone who dares console us ?

If the dream is the child's waning star,
along the stone path he is bound to follow,
crossing thorns that line his restless bed,
his soul is estranged from the ravaged earth.

Now he descends, uncertain, the stair
into the half-light spread over rats,
and in the graveyard where his steps have led,
he seeks from death a taste of peace.

But the dead are discreet, forgotten by their kin.
It is madness to wrench open their tombs,
to shatter their coffins, tear through their shrouds,
and scatter their bones in the night across the earth.

He would turn from this curse,
but already his shadow has wandered away ;
wandering through decay, he is now alone,
treading soullessly over those scattered dead.

From the darkened chapel returns a strange light
which no moon's pale whiteness can conceal ;
crushed by the night, he moves toward it—
Is it hell or blue heaven that draws him in ?

If in this cursed place the flowers have withered,
the colitas of death return, perfuming the air.
When the evening's blue seals all things shut,
only the stones murmur the blood they've frozen.

Closer now is the chapel and its eerie light ;
a hand of brittle bone would keep him from it,
hold him back in shadow, close his heavy lids :
What is this light that breaks through darkness ?

He comes closer still, his finger reaching to touch,
when from hawthorn springs the hand of a stranger.
It strikes the child, who crumbles to the ground—
Whose voice speaks through this miserable envoy ?

At last he rises, meaning to turn away,
but the light insists, urging him to drink.
Yet the other, speechless, clings to pride
and bars the child's steps, who longs to flee.

The Child

Who are you, madness, that you bar my way—
keeping me from this place, aided by the dead ?
Are you a demon, a gatekeeper of hell ?
Or the reflected face of the world and its vanity ?

Your madness is the sly murderer of dreams,
your gaze betrays you, revealing its cruelty.
You see your own madness mirrored in the light—
Is there too much clarity in a child's face ?

Do you not fear the thorns that lodge in this tree ?
I know them well ; they've bloodied my steps.
Upon these ancient bones my dreams have shattered,
and my eye is now stone, petrified by this place.

I remember the father, and all those in mourning,
the silence into which death imprisoned us all,
a child sacrificed in a garden of summer,
and windows that opened on grief-stricken men.

I ask only a sliver of light to guide my path
through the night of this world, abandoned by hope ;
toward that dark chapel, with its feeble glow—
but your hand has plunged my momentum into the abyss.

The Stranger

Do you believe yourself dead, that your life has shattered ?
That robbed of the light, you can go no further ?
That your fate is tethered to that mournful chapel ?
What memories do you hold that have not wounded you ?

From one's life, not a minute can be erased.

You claim it was my hand that threw you into the void—
yet perhaps I set you free from it.

What do you truly know of this world, and what lies hidden
within it ?

If the days are cloaked in night, then in darkness lies light,
a light unseen—withdrawn into the blue
and veiled by brilliance. A glimmer is granted you
only when the eyes close beneath a star-lit dusk.

Upon your child's tears in that frozen room,
a star once settled, cradling your dreams
with the fragile hopes of a burst crimson fruit.
Was the house of your fathers not made radiant by it ?

Your face is shadowed now, for you have begun to doubt :
is it the madness in your dreams that is the stranger,
the river flowing while a song falls from the heights,
twilight of nothingness, a brother's kiss at dusk ?

The Child

Your speech is strange to me—how could I not doubt ?
When just moments ago, descending the stairs,
the steps seemed to vanish beneath my feet,
and every certainty within me shook and crumbled.

Riddle is your word, and I long for its key.
What is this mystery you seem to bear,
as you cast upon my soul that knowing gaze ?
Could you be the mirror to the depths of my own mind ?

The Child

What does that chapel hold, that you seek to bar me from it ?
And what is this glow, trapped in the prison of blue ?
This forbidden light, to which I am drawn—
is it but a mirage, a reflection of the world ?

You claim to spare me a fall into the abyss :
is this light merely hiding a bottomless depth ?
Would such a radiance mislead my soul,
and bind it to a world to which it does not belong ?

He once said, “I is another,” of that seasonal hell,
an alchemy of words laid upon life—
Apollo’s glaze cast over our hidden deformities.
But what lies beneath the veil that no light can reach ?

Or is it only surface, pointless to peel away,
so that light can show us nothing at all ?
What is there in this world that has escaped me—
for it is not simply mad, but rather base and vile ?

And yet, within the folds of that veil—what hides
that I did not perceive, blinded by the light ?
There is nothing unseen that hasn't already been shown :
detail or paradox in an order well composed.

Thus vision deceives when it lacks total embrace—
but what can light reveal, if the eye is not honed ?
Sight is of Spirit, folded into matter :
things appear only through the soul that sees them.

The Stranger

Are you on the verge of surrendering to madness—
abandoning the dream of transcending this world ?
Is what you see but misery to be erased,
a failed becoming, a shadow beneath Being ?

To dream is not so grave when one can still awaken
and shatter the absurd mirror of this world.
You must slay the beast, the one that leads you astray
into the obscene immediacy of a consumed present.

It is the “Springtime of the Soul” I come to proclaim—
that you may be born anew, and die to this dream
of dwelling in an elsewhere that devours the clouds,
bathing in the light of some enchanted blue sky.

There is no other side to this world,
no pond of light where silver fish shimmer.
I plunge into these waters where stars reflect—
and see no toad but this humanity itself.

Who dares to forget those stars in the muck,
and swear that light exists only in a summer sky ?
That one is the beast hidden in our souls,
illuminating its thoughts with the glitter of gold.

What is this monster that dwells within us,
seeking to be lit by some jewel's gleam ?
It is only in the brightness of day that blue begins to glow—
a vanity of lightning drawn from the cloud.

They say the clearing comes once the storm has passed—
but what follows is only shadow, image of our steps.
When evening falls upon the Spirit, it draws blood from the blue,
an infinite light filtering down in sacred rain.

In a glade, the sister hears the brother's singing—
a hymn of dusk, mingled with birdsong.
She turns again, shattering all the stone,
the stony gazes of men, and their petrified lives.

Wagner has fallen asleep, and mud is his Morpheus.
Then murmurs, from the poet in retreat,
the spiritual chant of a recovered light :
Night frees the day from a dark vanity.

The sister was nothing but tears glowing in clarity—
for with the turn of a song, the brother consoled her.
The swallow fell silent, messenger of storms,
and in this nocturnal blue, all things are at peace.

It is in vain, my child, to dream of an afterlife.
In the burning chapel, friends are gathered—
but upon the altar, where a dim light glows,
there is nothing but a white cloth stretched across the stone.

The Child

Your words are shadowed, and my thoughts recoil.
I think again of the castle, and in its frozen courtyard,
the gods of my past—stripped of all gaze—
where only the spring remains, and life is its clarity.

I dipped my lips into it, tasted its coolness,
before I was cast into a cave.
To what demons did fear wish to deliver me ?
I saw in the fountain a terrified face.

It was myself I was fleeing, that reflected madness
in the innocence of the water that had captured me.
And when the mother of ice appeared before me,
I stepped away, trampling serpents.

Upon my path I could not halt a horse,
and an angel came to me, who made me afraid.
I drew near to his nocturnal glow—
but at once he vanished into the thorny stone.

In the silent night, my enchanted step
wandered among trees, ghosts of a past
that dragged behind me a remnant of piety—
so black was the robe of that cursed priest.

The Stranger

You left your dreams at the foot of the stairs—
but what you bring back is stitched from appearances.
The castle in stone may seem abandoned,
but from its window, the brother was watching you.

The sorrow that chokes you is your own duplicity :
it is yourself you flee, your reflection in the spring.
If the mother is of ice, you must set her ablaze,
and seize the angel's face along your path.

The Stranger

The demon you flee in this darkness
was already waiting before you even arrived.
You would make yourself of stone, a walker in iron—
yet the angel who fled now dwells within you.

I told you the sister turned back to you,
that she shattered the rock in which you're imprisoned.
The trees are ghosts of your meagre past,
dragging behind you to slow your advance.

But the stone is broken, and the blue can bleed—
that infinite light the dream had denied you.
Your ears are too vast to hear whispered
the spiritual chant of this illumined brother.

Here there are only dead ones from whom you seek peace,
but each of these bones bears a shadowed mark.
Your shadow has fled—can you still retrieve it ?
There is no true light but that which casts a shadow.

All others are lightning that blinds the eye.
You must break the chains of every blindness,
and tear—without tears—the veil of sacred night :
in this world's withdrawal, it is God who has kept you !

Unfold the appearances of what men call founded,
and offer to the light your inconsolable soul.
Your gaze must be armed with a madness,
so your hands may open to what has been given you.

If the beast must be slain, let it be with light—
the glimmer you seek in forgotten childhood.
I invite you to be reborn, you who were born so wrongly,
to be reborn into innocence, erased by the world.

You search behind life for what may be hidden—
but there is no such thing, when all is entrusted to us !
It takes but one gaze to overturn all things,
and let the light escape from horrors held within.

The Child

You say a sister—mine—shattered the stones,
as if a single gaze could dissolve all bonds.
You call me blind, unable to see truly—
but hatred in this world has never deceived me.

I walked upon bones I could not shatter,
as if death itself could never retreat.
I do not ask for more than what's given—
just a little light to help me walk forward.

I was in the forest when the bells rang,
and saw in the clearing the sister turn again.
In the dark brook, no silver fish gleamed,
but on the weeping banks, shepherds stood unarmed.

From afar, I saw the dead, accompanied by kin,
a few myrtle flowers placed on his closed face.
The bells, with slowness, saluted this man—
when the death knell tolls, a soul departs.

The Child

You seek to confuse me, to blind me with light ;
yet nothing is stranger than the voice of a stranger !
You would have me seize an angel's face—
but what could I do with it if it sheds no light ?

I was touching the light when you made me fall ;
since then, all is shadow—where can I find myself ?
I saw in the fountain the face of a murderer :
must I kill, then, to be saved ?

Who swears to me your heart is not stitched with black ?
I hold on to the glow from which you turned me away,
for what comes from the dead is no worse than life—
a single tear is enough to claim we exist.

And you—on what sorrow have you shed a tear ?
I hear only words, enamelled crystal sounds,
but grasp nothing within that clarifies my thoughts :
Are you a juggler of worn-out words ?

I prefer the silence of my desolate soul :
there is no greater aid than a tormented mind,
an indecent madness defying all clarity,
hiding human filth in an outstretched shroud.

Spare me my path—on it, you are the stranger ;
to those who believe they live, give your light instead !
You are not of the night and its obscurity,
which grants, to those who know, what you are denied.

The Stranger

A moth hungering for light !
The child must be slain, for he was wrongly born ;
we must break the world's time, halt all clocks—
in its song to the night, death has struck !

Upon the brother's madness, the sister turned :
Do you believe she was not herself damned in the clearing ?
The mad have turned the world into a torn-off rind,
a shroud ripped from what is only filth.

That's why the dead were profaned—
to exhume from man what is nothing but rot !
You dream of a light to erase your night,
to banish the ghosts of your own obscurity.

You must slay the beast that slipped inside you :
nothing in this world is truly given by day,
it's all just a surface cast upon shadow—
all we see is false, the mirror of a deceived one.

You run after your shadow—think you'll catch it ?
Don't you feel how closely it clings to your soles ?
Your gaze is distant, flung out on the horizon,
seeking in stars a nearness that deceives.

You dream now of telling a story—
but it isn't yours, for everything in it is false ;
remember the roots of that strange cherry tree,
your soul stuck in the glue of this senseless world.

The Stranger

In that fleeing garden, did nausea not seize you ?
In the gaze of another, your life was erased :
There is no worse hell than to be emptied,
Stripped of will to dwell in your own presence.

And so here you are, captive of another's mind,
A thing among others, a paving stone in the street ;
You long to break free, to tear back your soul—
But you are only a fragment beneath a crushing gaze.

You dream of guarding your inner sanctuary :
“He cannot enter the depths of my soul !”
You cling to the hope of thus slipping away—
But far and tangled are the threads of proximity.

Trapped, you turn toward your meager past,
Weeping silently for having always been ;
In another's gaze your life has come to halt,
You are nothing now but the roots of a foolish cherry tree.

The Child

A single look suffices to turn back his gaze,
To close one's own eyelids, to reclaim the self :
Isn't the one who sees me now also my prisoner,
Feeding my misery with what he has stolen ?

And suddenly, I rise again by possessing him—
He becomes nothing but a bench that swallows him whole,
A thing among my things, a futile property
Lost in the tangled roots of that old cherry tree.

I abandon the garden to his wounded gaze :
He is alone now to redraw all its shapes !
But now my steps have crossed another's path—
One who seizes the bench that I just left behind.

Petrified on his own, the hostile one does not move :
Will he now play the same murderous game ?
There's no chance at random when the dice are loaded,
And in this cheating game, no debts are ever cleared !

So many gazes meet and so many souls are torn,
Yet fertile is the night with essential truths ;
The useless glances are lit by Spirit's flame :
It is an obscure light that silences all prejudice.