

Denis CLARINVAL

THE UNFORGIVEN



Bernard PICARD, « Le tourment de Tantale », 1731



Children in GAZA

MISERY OF MAN

The clock strikes five before the sun —
A dark dread seizes solitary beings,
In the evening garden, bare trees whistle.
The dead man's face stirs at the window.

Perhaps this hour is coming to a halt.
Before sad eyes, blue images waver
To the rhythm of boats swaying on the river.
A procession of sisters passes along the quay.

In the hazels play blind and pallid girls,
Like lovers entwined in sleep.
Perhaps flies sing around a carcass,
Perhaps, too, a child weeps in the mother's womb.

Hands fall from blue and red asters,
The adolescent's mouth recoils, foreign and wise;
And eyelids flutter, frightened and silent;
A scent of bread crosses the black fevers.

There seem to be hideous cries as well;
Bones gleam through ruined walls.
An evil heart laughs aloud in beautiful rooms;
A dog runs past a dreamer.

An empty coffin is lost in the darkness.
For the assassin, a room is about to light up, pale,
While lanterns, at night, explode in the storm.
Laurel crowns the white temple of the noble being.
(Georg TRAKL)

DAYS OF ASHES

The children have eyes of a dawnless sand,
Their silence weighs like a thousand tanks.

They sleep beneath skies devoured by a bell,
Bread is lacking for the living as for the lambs' bones.
Mothers have nothing left but a scrap of prayer,
A gasping breath in the faceless night,
They cradle the dead deep in the dust,
And their empty arms reach to the end of carnage.
The stones have learned the language of howling,
Concrete split like a heart beneath the axe.
Rafah is nothing but a sigh frozen in time,
And hunger is a dog that gnaws and clings.

There is no hospital left, no more light,
The ambulance wobbles amid the rubble.
A sparrow shaken by spasms on the earth
Writes its final, weary *shalom* into the void.
Ashen faces wander without tomorrow,
And the rivers of blood return to nothing.
Hands raised to the sky no longer await manna,
But only that a feigned peace may hasten their fate.

The walls have kept the screams from before the flame,
A child's breath clings to the broken stones.

Each destroyed home bleeds a soul,
And we dig the earth like scratching at a wound.
The wells yield only echoes of suffering,
Thirst rises to the eyes like a final farewell.
Even the dogs no longer howl in the silence,
They sleep between bombs, bellies hollow.
A faceless man passes through the ruins,
His shadow tattooed on windows that are no more.
He speaks to his memory like one cries in the drizzle,
And searches for a name among the crushed debris.

Dates no longer matter, nor days, nor hours,
Time leaves only broken stones behind.
An old notebook opens in the scent of weeping,
And ink has fled like erased dreams.
Nails claw the air in search of a body,
Outstretched arms grasp only absence.
Each gaze carries an abyss and remorse,
And the moon veils itself before such indecency.
From the dust rises a song without origin,
A psalm without believers, torn by red shards.

The dead children dream of secret schools,
And of alphabets carved into moving bullets.
The sky, torn with steel, has no clear stars,
Its veins are fire, its heart made of satellites.
Morning no longer comes in the bitter silence,
And dawn is a murmur of illicit horror.

They no longer know how to pray, gestures are broken,
The word "God" slips away like friable ground.

We learn to count without ever adding
Anything but graves and cries, and lives made erasable.

Flags burn in the children's eyes,
A butterfly strays and burns at high noon.
A body still stands, but it trembles,
Beneath the burst laughter of a cursed sky.
A kiss lingers in the rubble, suspended,
Just on the lips of a skinless boy.
He wanted to say "forgive me", or maybe "don't blame me",
But the breath fled before it could form a word.
The olive trees no longer know how to yield peace,
They rise like crosses in the split gardens.

The wind flows through them with unreflected laments,
And the doves have fallen, bare-eyed.
From so much burying, there are no names left,
Names fade, worn like dust.
We speak of the dead we never knew
And we weep on our knees for imaginary brothers.

There was a girl there, who sang yesterday,
Her eyes carried the sea, her voice an apricot.
They found her laughter nailed to the light
And her ghost runs loudly beneath the bombs.
History is written in the ink of scorched denial,
The world turns away, the gods are silent as one.
The word "justice" weighs less than a soaked pebble,
And man has sealed the heart of his era.
The days of ash open like mouths,
And the dead look at us from their full sockets.
They ask only that we speak, that we touch —
And that we never say: *we did not know*.

THE UNFORGIVEN

(adapted from Metallica)

A new blood sees the light of day
It is swiftly muzzled,
Afflicted by a life of ceaseless shame
The young boy discovers their laws.
Over time, he falls into line,
That scapegoat who has sinned,
Stripped of his every thought.

The young man fights, again and again,
He swore to himself
That from this day forward,
His will would never be stolen again.

What I have felt,
What I have understood,
Never showed in my behavior.
I have never lived,
Nor seen —
And I shall never see what might have been.

What I have felt,
What I have understood,
Never showed in my behavior.
I have never been free,
Nor myself —
That is why I name you “The Unforgiven.”

They devoted their lives
To ruling over his.
He tries to please them all.
This bitterness that drives him
Haunted him all his life.

He fought without rest,
A battle lost before it began.

This weary man no longer cares.
The old man now prepares
To leave, full of regrets.
That old man is none other than me.

What I have felt,
What I have understood,
Never showed in my behavior.
I have never lived,
Nor seen —
And I shall never see what might have been.

What I have felt,
What I have understood,
Never showed in my behavior.
I have never been free,
Nor myself —
That is why I name you “The Unforgiven.”

You labeled me —
I shall label you.
That is why I name you “The Unforgiven.”

(Metallica, “The Unforgiven”)

THE UNFORGIVEN (original poem)

He was born without light, a cry in the dust,
His mouth covered before he could breathe,
His hands full of ashes, raised in prayer,
But no voice from the sky came to bless him.

They told him “obey,” they told him “be upright,”
They bent his thoughts into iron,

Each gesture measured, each dream postponed,
Each word watched by eyes without light.

He learned to walk in the shadow of others,
To carry their chains without a clink,
To make of his sorrow a fire without voice or blame,
To live in a body interpreted by another.

The child became the wall where blows rebounded,
A silence hardened, rooted in memory,
With each humiliation, he endured to the end
With an ocean of hopelessness behind his eyelids.

He used to say: "One day, I'll be the silence
That erases your laws like rain erases ash.
I'll give back the void, the loss, the violence—
Nothing of me will bow to your gentleness."

But the years gnawed at him like water on stone,
And the stares of others were slow knives;
He lived without anger, but a fire without blame
Devoured his sleep with every heartbeat.

He bent his back to feed their expectations,
Carried the dead hours on his shattered spine,
He saw in the eyes of the disappointing beloved
The reflection of a past that would not let go.

He did not scream. He did not flee. He
Inhaled each day's docile bitterness,
Without homeland, without reason, without face or step,
Like an uprooted tree that quietly endures.

He knew, since childhood, there would be nothing—
No justice, no forgiveness, no promised tenderness.

That he was the matter of your uncertain days,
The dead man who, standing, still wears his shirt.

The man became rock, became shattered glass,
He looked at God and saw only a reflection;
And in that blind mirroring where all is disguise,
He whispered: "Me, I am merely the forgotten."

They gave him a thousand names, never his own,
They assigned him guilt, reason, fault, and weakness;
But he never said what lived inside:
A voiceless room, a narrow harshness.

He saw children become statues,
Women sewing absence into their long dresses,
Old men begging to be stripped by the end,
And laughter too bright turning into contempt.

His heart was not hard—only extinguished,
And in the shadows, sometimes, trembled still the desire
To brush a hand, to be an uncertain body
In the simple light of a morning without challenge.

But no remission was ever offered,
No shoulder, no dawn, no threshold to cross;
Only that word planted in his desert throat:
"I shall never know what it is to heal."

He did not forgive. He did not forget.
He raised absence into a solitary altar.
He let rot what he had once dreamed
And wove his nothingness like one seals the earth.

He is the erased, the dreamer in ashes,
The one who could never break the bars,

Who dies without memory, without language, without December—
A man made and unmade without a word.

The Unforgiven is the cold order that binds you,
The eye that watches and teaches you to bend,
The hand on your neck, the step in the gutter,
The law that makes of life a debt to pay.

He saw the executioners, he saw the passersby,
The well-meaning hearts, the gods divested,
He cursed no one, nor howled to the wind—
But he sealed what could never pass.

Label in hand, they called him by a false name.
He returned his own like a shattered mirror:
You condemned him to be only your wounds,
He reflects back to you what you most dread.

For the one who was never looked at straight,
The one named fault, distance, accident—
That one, one day, rises without emotion
And lays at your feet his incandescent breath.

Not to be believed, nor even to exist,
But so you might finally know what you erase:
A being at odds with your truths,
A man who stands and does not beg for place.

They judged him faultless, punished him without understanding,
His name never spoke what he might have been.
And in the mute wind, a voice seems to return:
These are the unforgiven.

THE UNFORGIVEN

Dialogue inspired by "The Unforgiven" (Metallica)

The Narrator

Let me tell you about a meeting that no accident should've allowed.

Two battered souls, shipwrecked in a place no one ever seeks,

A place with no name. Not really. Just a tunnel.

No doors. No windows. Nothing but stones, silence,

And that sensation that even light has given up coming through.

This is where the old man withdrew.

He told no one.

He simply walked away.

Far from people, from memories,

From everything that had worn him down.

He expects nothing now. He digs.

Every day, a little more.

Not because he really believes he'll find anything—

But because it gives him a rhythm.

A gesture to repeat.

An excuse to remain standing.

The old man... he was someone, once.

Maybe.

But what he once was doesn't really matter anymore.

Nothing remains—

...nothing more than a body moving through stone, and a breath fading away.

He does not seek the light. He seeks to be done.

And then, one day, he arrived.

The other. The Unforgiven.

The one who no longer knows if he is young or old.

He carries the past like a burn whose origin he's forgotten.

He does not flee—

Not really.

He wanders. He moves forward because he cannot do otherwise.

Something led him here. A voice, perhaps. A memory.
Or simply the sound of a tool striking stone.
He doesn't know.
But now that he is here, he can no longer turn back.
He thinks he's looking for a key. A truth. A pardon.
But deep down, he's simply trying to stay standing without collapsing.

They are nothing alike.
One wants to vanish. The other wants to understand.
And yet, here they are.
In the same space.
The same dust.
The same walls.

They are alone. But together.

The Old Man

(He freezes mid-gesture, his chisel suspended in the air.
His gaze cuts through the Unforgiven, as though piercing the dust of time.)

You came from this tunnel too, didn't you?
But your breath... it isn't that of a man who flees.
It's light, almost absent.
As if you weren't trying to escape—
but to disappear.
You've walked through the same mist,
Tread the same endless path.
So why this presence?
Why are you here,
in a place where even the air seems to weep?

(He straightens up, his powdery hands sliding across the wall he's been gnawing at for years.)

Who are you,
you who have no age, no shape, no aim?

What fate brought your silhouette back to me
In this room without door or window,
in this world where I no longer know
whether I am still alive... or already dead?

The Unforgiven

(He steps forward slowly.
His voice trembles with an almost unbearable sincerity,
like a confession torn from oblivion.)

I am the one you didn't want to see.
The one you abandoned in your shattered dreams,
The one you erased when you closed your eyes to the world.
I am the one who defiled
what was once pure in the land you now deem lost.
I took life, hope, beauty—
and replaced it with the chill of profit,
the silence of control.

I wore the face of a man,
but my acts dehumanized earth and sky.
Perhaps I am no longer human.
I have no age,
for even death has refused me.

I am a forgotten being,
wandering through a world that no longer recognizes me.
I am the Unforgiven—
the one time itself has cast out,
condemned to wander the ruins of his own wrongs.

And if I've come to you, old man,
it is because perhaps...
you still hold something I do not know,
but desperately seek.

Maybe you can point to a glimmer—
a path,
an escape
from the whirlpool of memory that consumes me.

The Old Man

(He lowers his eyes. A heavy silence.
His voice, when it returns, is deeper, almost weary.)

A path...
All I ever found was this wall.
I've been digging it for years,
not knowing why.
To escape?
To hold onto some scrap of light?
I don't know.

The light...
maybe that's what you seek.
But it's not hiding behind stone.
It doesn't sleep in a crack.
Light isn't found by digging blindly.
Perhaps it exists only in mirages now.
Like the life you led.

Why should I help you?
You, who wants to flee even what you've done?
You think redemption is won with a glance?
A prayer?
A word?

(He studies the Unforgiven, like a lost beast caught in a burning forest.)

You want the light...
But what have you done for it?

You crushed it,
Soiled it,
Sold it.
You took all that glimmered
and bent it under your yoke.

Why should it return to you?

Me, I dig.
And each stone reminds me of what I've lost.
Each blow takes me further from what I hoped to recover.

So tell me—
why should I offer you
what I no longer have?

The Unforgiven

(A shiver runs through him. But his voice persists,
weaker now, barer.)

I don't know what I deserve.
I no longer know what I did,
or what I thought I was doing.

I took,
I destroyed,
I forced the world to bend to my will.
I tried to shape reality to my desire—
a desire now emptied of meaning.

And here I am.

Nameless,
Bodiless,
Endless.

Wandering through this tunnel
like through the meanders of my own guilt.

Perhaps the light I seek
is not forgiveness,
but simply truth.
Or an end.
Silence.

For if I disfigured the world,
it's myself I erased.

And maybe I'm not seeking to be saved...
only to disappear.

So yes, old brother...
I come to you.
Because you know.
You too, know what it means—
to be unforgivable.

The Old Man

(He lifts his eyes.
Something has changed.
His face is lit—not by light, no...
but by doubt, or memory.
He looks at the Unforgiven at length,
then speaks, more softly than before.)

You seek redemption...
You, who've only known your own memory.
The weight it places on each step.

But paths open only to those
who know where they wish to go.

And you—
you don't want to go,

you want to flee.

You want to escape what you've done.

You think the light waits at the end,

but you don't see

that it comes only to those

who dare to look into their night.

(He inhales, turns toward the wall.)

Are you ready?

Ready to see what's left of you in the dark?

What is never spoken—

but remains there, beneath the skin?

(He straightens slowly. The chisel slips from his hand, falls with a sharp sound.

He doesn't pick it up.)

Me... I dug.

Not to escape.

Not really.

To understand why I stayed.

What you seek—

you're searching for it outside,

but it's there, inside you.

In the gaze you still refuse to cast upon yourself.

You want the light?

You must first accept the shadow.

Your own.

Your fall.

And maybe then—maybe—

you'll see what you've carried all along.

A crack.

A breach in your own heart.

And maybe that's where... we get free.

If you still know what that means: to be free.

(His gaze drifts to the wall. His hands barely tremble.

He no longer moves them.

The silence thickens.)

You say redemption must be earned.

But... can it really be earned?

After all this?

After so much destruction?

We search for chances, for exits, but...

we don't even know what that means anymore.

I believed in it too.

I believed this wall would take me somewhere.

But it kept me here.

Each stone—something I refused to see.

Each crack—a fault I left behind.

And you, tell me...

what do you expect

from this light you still chase?

Do you think you can see it

after all you left behind?

The Unforgiven

(He steps forward. Slowly.

He wants to reach out to the old man—

but doesn't dare.

He stops, between two breaths.)

I... I no longer know if I can see anything.

Everything is blurred.

Everything is... entangled.

The light I seek—

I don't even know if it exists.

Here,

out there,

within me.

Maybe it was never there.

Maybe I was the shadow, all along.

(He lowers his head.)

I'm nothing more than a sound,

a leftover.

I move forward—

but toward what?

An end?

Or just another detour?

I tell myself redemption is a mirage.

Maybe.

But even a mirage... is better than nothing.

Maybe that's what keeps me going.

Or keeps me from falling.

(He hesitates.)

Yes, I am a wanderer.

A survivor of my own actions.

And yet... I still hear.

I still feel.

The voices.

The traces.

And if I stop searching,

if I truly stop...

I think I'll be lost.

But how to move forward...
when everything is broken?

The Old Man

(His eyelids close for a moment—
as if he too wishes to flee,
just for a second.
When he opens them again, he is calm.)

You speak of shadow.
But... we *are* the shadows.
And sometimes,
they try to rise.
Even shattered.
Even halfway.

(He looks at the Unforgiven.)

Light does not come because we want it.
It comes when we have nothing else.
It cannot be seized.
It comes... in the hollow.
Where it hurts.
When we stop fighting.
When we accept.
Even the worst.

(He leans forward, just slightly.)

If you want to see it—
stand up.
Look.
Not outward.
Inward.

Face what you're still hiding.
What you fear.
Because that—
that's what you're really searching for.
What you refuse.
What you are.

(He pauses. His eyes are moist.)

You cannot run.
Nor can I.
But maybe...
we can transform what's left.

Maybe that's where the light is born.
Not in what we change.
In what we accept.

The Unforgiven

(He doesn't move.
His eyes float,
fixed on a point he cannot see.
But in his face, something trembles.)

Reconciliation...
That word, I once thought it beautiful.
Now... I think it frightens me.

(He speaks more softly.)

I thought fleeing, forgetting, was enough.
But maybe...
maybe it was just betrayal—
of myself.

Maybe acceptance—
that's the first step.
Accepting what I've done.
What I am.
Not running.
Not disguising.

(He lowers his eyes.
A flicker passes through his gaze—
not yet light,
but the thought that light could exist.)

I don't know if I'm capable of it.
But maybe...
it starts here.
Being here.
With all I carry.

Maybe that's where redemption begins.

The Old Man

(He closes his eyes.
A faint smile—almost erased—
forms on his dry lips,
as if a tiny peace
had found its place
in the turmoil of his heart.
He speaks softly,
in a voice less grave, more intimate.)

Yes...
yes, I believe that's where it begins.
Redemption, I mean.
Not in some grand upheaval.
Not in a scream...

But in that small thing.

Acceptance.

To accept what we are.

What we've done.

And not try to dress it up.

Just... face it.

In our cracks,

in our fall,

in what we'd never dare to admit.

That's where the light can come.

Not from outside.

No.

Maybe it was there all along,

somewhere... deep down.

In your heart.

(He gently lays his hands back on the wall,
almost with tenderness.)

We're all shadows.

But even in that—

in that night—

there is a chance.

A possibility.

To be born again, maybe.

You and me.

That's what we're looking for, isn't it?

Not the light itself,

but simply...

a chance to return.

To a world we damaged.
But which we can still see.

(He resumes his gesture, tracing slowly on the wall.
The marks are invisible, but the sound of the chisel against stone
rises like a steady breath in the silence.)

You see... I'm no longer afraid of death.
She's been here, close, for a long time.
I know her.
She accepts me.
Because I am already... already halfway gone.
A specter, yes.
But not empty.
Just... tired.
She doesn't frighten me.
It's as if she recognizes me.
As if she knows I've understood something, deep down.
Even through my faults.
Even in remorse.

(He pauses briefly, then continues, almost to himself.)

She waits.
She knows my body is worn,
that I have little left to offer.
This wall—
it's my last task.
A final breath before the silence.

But you...
she doesn't want you yet.
You're not ready.

The Unforgiven

(A shiver runs through him, but he doesn't move.

He stares at the old man,
his eyes filled with a fragile glint—
not anger, not even fear.

Something else.

A doubt seeking an answer.)

You speak of her like a friend.

A faithful companion.

You say she waits for you... that she understands you.

And you...

you think one can be ready?

Just because we've accepted?

Because we've confessed our faults?

(He lowers his head.)

Me, I...

I'm a remnant.

A fragment that never managed to stand.

I've walked without knowing where to place my steps.

And she... death...

she avoids me.

Refuses me,

as if I weren't... worthy of her.

Because I haven't made amends.

Because I didn't know how.

(He murmurs, almost to himself.)

I'm stuck.

I keep repeating.

Again and again.

I see my mistakes—

but I can't get through them.

So then...

how could death take me,
if I'm still full of all I've failed to understand?

(His voice breaks, weak.)

Tell me...

can one truly be forgiven?
Or are we just... condemned?
To circle endlessly.
To hope for a forgiveness that never comes.

The Old Man

(He lifts his head.
His eyes meet the Unforgiven's.
They no longer seek to judge,
but to understand.
And when he speaks,
his voice is soft, worn, but clear.)

Forgiveness...
It's not what you think.
It's not a hand extended.
It's not a word you receive.
It's not a reward.

(He pauses.)

It's a pain.
It's a burden.
It's not what sets you free—
it's what you carry.
What you learn not to reject.

You think it's enough to regret.
But no.

Forgiveness...

it comes when you accept what you've become.

Not what you wanted to be.

What you are, here.

Now.

And that—

that hurts.

It's not the end of faults.

It's living with them.

Sitting beside them.

(He speaks lower.)

Death...

she comes.

But not to those who flee.

Not to those who still hide

behind the image of dreamed forgiveness.

She comes when you no longer need to run.

When you've seen everything.

When you've looked into your own heart—

and endured.

Then...

she can welcome you.

But not before.

(He stands. Slowly.

His body bends,

but something in him holds firm.

He approaches the Unforgiven,

and in his gaze,

a very faint light—

but sincere.)

I know you didn't want to hear this.

You hoped for something else.

A shortcut.

But redemption—

it's not death.

It's not forgetting.

It's... you.

It's what you're going to do,

now.

And death—

she won't welcome you

until you've learned

to recognize yourself.

The Unforgiven

(He lowers his eyes.

A slow sigh escapes him,

like a burden too old.

In his gaze,

there is no more defiance,

no more anger.

Only immense fatigue.)

Then I'm stuck.

She avoids me,

like a bird too swift to land.

I'm condemned to remain here, still.

To walk endlessly

in my own footsteps.

(He hesitates.)

But...

will I even be able to carry it,
this pain?

Will I be able to face it,
one day?

The Old Man

(He places a hand on his shoulder.

Not like a master.

Like a brother.)

It's not a matter of being able.

It's a matter of beginning.

Of accepting that it will hurt.

That it will last.

But that this path—

it's yours.

And that it leads somewhere.

Maybe, one day...

to her.

(He pauses.)

She'll come.

But not to punish you.

She'll come

if you manage

to make peace with yourself.

The Unforgiven

(He doesn't respond right away.

He stands there, motionless,

his eyes fixed on an empty point.

Something passes across his face—
a flicker,
like a memory he wants to hold
but that slips away.)

I am...
a prisoner of the fog.
Nothing stays clear.

The memories...
I feel them.
But they slide away.
As soon as I touch them,
they vanish.

I'm sure of nothing.
Of what I did,
of what I destroyed.
I hear the cries, sometimes.
But I no longer know
where they come from.

(He murmurs.)

The Unforgiven

And how... how can I ask for forgiveness for something
whose shape I no longer even recognize?
How can I be forgiven for what I cannot even name?

(He falls silent for a moment, then continues, more quietly.)

Is it even possible... to be forgiven
for wrongs I don't fully understand?

The Old Man

(He looks at the Unforgiven without flinching,
his expression grave, but without harshness.

He walks slowly,
his steps echoing through the empty room,
a reminder that silence is never complete.)

You know...
forgiveness doesn't wait for everything to be clear.
It's not about perfect memory.
Or precise measurement of guilt.

You're right to say you're lost.
That what you did floats somewhere in a fog.
But that doesn't change one essential thing.

(He pauses, searching for the words.)

You can't apologize for what you don't understand.
That's true.
But... you can still recognize that harm was done.
Even if you don't see the full extent.
Even if it's blurry—
you know it's real.
That it happened.
That it still exists.
And you have to carry it.
Look at it.

(He kneels slowly, at the other's eye level,
meeting his gaze without pressing.)

Forgiveness...
it's not erasing.
It's not forgetting.
It's accepting.

Accepting that what you did...
it left traces.

And even if you don't remember everything,
even if you don't fully understand—
you are still responsible.

Not guilty of all, no.

But... present.

Involved.

And that—

that's already a beginning.

That's where you can start.

Not in certainty.

In confusion.

(He lowers his voice.)

You don't need all the light.

But you must be willing to walk in the dark.

Not run.

Not dodge.

Go in.

Maybe not alone—

but upright.

The Unforgiven

(A long silence. Then a sentence, more thought than spoken.)

But... if I don't see it all?

If I don't understand it all?

If...

if I don't feel all the pain I caused...

...how can I...

how can I forgive myself?

And how can I hope anyone else might?

The Old Man

(His features soften,

as if the question had touched something ancient within him.

He places a hand on his chest, without emphasis.)

Forgiveness...

it's not a medal.

It's not a door that suddenly opens.

(He inhales.)

Sometimes, it begins...

when you accept that there was pain you didn't see.

That you didn't know how to see.

And yet,

you choose to carry part of it.

Because it's just.

(He looks down a moment, then back up.)

You can't fix everything.

You can't understand it all right away.

But...

if you open even a little space in yourself—

that place willing to not know—

then you move forward.

A step.

It's slow.

It's blurry.

But it's a step toward the light.

(He barely smiles.)

It may come.

But not on its own.

It's up to you to move toward it.

Even blindly.

The Unforgiven

(He clenches his fists without realizing it,
a slow agitation in his gestures.)

I am... I'm trapped in what I was.

Everything I've done—

I no longer see it clearly.

It's like a veil.

Every time I approach a memory, it slips away.

I barely touch it and it vanishes.

(He pauses, throat tight.)

I'm tired of this.

If I could just... escape.

Leave all this behind.

Maybe forgiveness would free me.

Maybe that's the way out.

If I could just... breathe.

Once.

(He lowers his head.)

But that shadow...

it's everywhere.

It suffocates me.

The Old Man

(He lifts his eyes slowly.

His hand rests on the wall's stone,
as if to anchor himself to something tangible.)

You want to flee.

You think that's your way out.

But... you can't flee from yourself.

Where would you go?

(He exhales, barely audible.)

Me, I never fled.

Even when I could have.

What I did.

What was done to me.

All of it—

I kept it.

I carried it.

It's there,

in my skin,

in my bones.

It hollowed me from the inside.

And every breath...

I take it with that.

(He turns to the wall,

his eyes on the stone.)

I didn't want this role.

But I was the one who filled it.

Word by word.

Gesture by gesture.

And now I dig.

Not to escape...

but to see.

To understand.

To let in a little light

before everything goes dark.

(He turns back to the Unforgiven,

fixes him with a calm intensity.)

You...
you're still running.
But it's yourself you're running from.
Your shadow—
it's there.
It follows you.
And you want to avoid it.
But it's the one that holds your truth.

(He steps closer.)

The Old Man

Forgiveness won't be born of what you flee.
It will be born when you look. Truly.
When you understand that you are the origin.
Not of everything...
but of yourself.

You are the one who acted.
Not only the one who was hurt.

And if you want to move forward,
that's where you must start.
Look.
Even if it's blurry.
Even if it burns.

The Unforgiven

(His lips tremble. He fumbles, gropes.
The words come with difficulty,
as if they slipped through his fingers
before he could grasp them.
A deep confusion weighs on him.
He no longer knows if he must cast off what haunts him—
or face it head-on.)

But...

how do I accept what I did...

if I don't even understand what it was?

(He shakes his head,

as if trying to break through the fog.)

I feel like I walked through a dream...

or a lie.

Acted without knowing.

But every step, every choice

still led me here.

So how do I do it?

How do you live with that—

that kind of weight—

when

everything is blurred?

When you don't even know

where the fault begins,

or where it ends?

(He turns,

as if expecting an answer from a silent wall.)

If I can't truly grasp my actions...

how can I accept them?

The Old Man

(A long silence.

Then a low voice, but steady.

It carries not an answer—

but the presence of experience.)

You don't need to see everything at once.

No one can.

(He takes a few slow steps.)

What we do leaves traces.

Even if we don't remember everything.

Even if the image is incomplete.

You know there were things.

Gestures.

Absences, perhaps.

And you know they left a mark.

(He stops.)

That's enough to start.

Not to repair.

Not yet.

But to face it.

And that—

that's the first thing.

To look.

Even if it's blurry.

Even if it hurts.

(He lowers his eyes, almost to himself.)

You want to flee the fog,

but only by walking through it

will you see what it hides.

The Unforgiven

(He closes his eyes.

A shadow passes over his face.

When he speaks, it's nearly a breath.)

I want to erase it all.

Everything.

What led me here,

what I was,

what I still am.

(He opens his eyes again.)

If I could...

cover it all.

With a veil.

With silence.

Bury that past.

Silence it.

(He shakes his head, without anger.)

But it comes back.

Always.

Every time.

Like a voice.

A rumor that clings to me,

that won't let go.

(He sighs.)

I only wanted to get away...

But it follows me.

It holds me.

The Old Man

(He slowly sets his chisel on the stone,

the gesture almost ceremonial.

Then he lifts his eyes.)

You want a veil.

A light one.

To hide.

(He lets a silence settle,
as if weighing the word “hide.”)

But a veil...

it doesn't make things disappear.

It just covers.

That's all.

And underneath...

it keeps living.

(He brushes the wall with his fingertips.)

This wall, for me...

it's my life.

Not the one I chose.

The one I received.

And I didn't try to repaint it.

I looked at it.

I dug into it.

(He straightens.)

You want oblivion.

I wanted understanding.

Because even pain,
when you understand it,
it gives you a bit more freedom.

But fleeing...

that traps you.

Again and again.

(He steps forward.)

A veil doesn't protect.

It delays.

And the more you cover,
the more it grows.

The Unforgiven

(He looks at the stones.

He trembles,
as if the old man's words had inscribed themselves
into his flesh.)

But what can I do?

I don't have the strength.

Or the clarity.

I try to look—
and everything slips away.
Everything...

(He pauses.

His voice drops.)

I'm tired of doubting.

Myself.

Everything.

(His tone breaks, nearly inaudible.)

I want forgiveness.

The real kind.

Not the kind people say.

The kind you feel.

But I can't find it.

It's always... elsewhere.

The Old Man

(He looks at the wall in silence.

Then he speaks,
without turning.)

Forgiveness...

(He repeats softly,
as if preparing himself.)

The Old Man

It begins when you stop trying to erase everything.

You want forgiveness to come without pain.

It won't.

It comes with it.

It is inside it.

(He touches the stone.)

You can't change what you did.

But you can change what you do with it.

Not to erase it.

To understand it.

To welcome it.

And then—maybe, just maybe—

you'll finally be able to breathe.

But not before.

The Unforgiven

(He picks up a watch lying on the ground.

Turns it between his fingers.

Speaks softly, not really to the old man.)

This watch... it no longer serves any purpose.

(He looks up.)

Time doesn't exist here.

It has no weight.

And yet... we go on.

You—digging.

Me—waiting.

(He hesitates.)

I feel like I'm frozen in place.

Not dead. Not alive.

And I'm searching for a single moment...

just one...

when everything could stop.

It's not about fleeing.

Just... resting.

The Old Man

(He lifts his eyes from the wall.

When he sees the watch offered by the Unforgiven,
a hesitation passes through him.

He takes it slowly,
as if it carried an invisible weight.

Then, without a word,
he gently sets it aside.)

You know...

for me, this time you're trying to flee—
it's still here.

But it no longer promises anything.

It's just a fading breath,
a remnant.

Every second I spend digging this wall,
I feel it slipping.

And I dig because I want to see,
maybe one last time,
a glimmer of light.

Not to escape the end, no—
but to live what's left of it.

(He sighs, barely.)

Time... it's all I have left.
And as long as I hold this tool,
as long as my hands touch the stone,
I know I'm still alive.

You say time is an illusion.
But I see it slipping.

And that...
that pushes me not to let it slip away in silence.

(He leans down, picks up a shard of stone,
and gently tosses it against the wall.
The sound echoes.)

I don't have the luxury of forgetting time.
It slips through my fingers, yes—
but you...
you have all the time in the world.

And that's why you go in circles.
Because you have no before,
no after.
Just this blur,
this frozen waiting.

You're not moving forward.
You're floating.

And believe me...
that's not better.

The Unforgiven

(He lowers his eyes to the watch.
His hands tremble slightly.
He murmurs,
as if speaking to himself.)

Everything I did...
everything I was...
I can't see it clearly anymore.

It's like a shattered dream.
Blurred.

I feel empty.
Suspended in a time that doesn't move.

And at every instant,
something reminds me that I'm guilty—
but I no longer even know...
what for.

(He stops.
His voice softens even more.)

I wonder...
if I'll ever be able to leave this wandering.
Or if I'm doomed to keep walking like this.
For nothing.

The Old Man

(His gaze softens,
but his voice remains steady.)

You want to be free?

Then stop believing that freedom means forgetting.

It's not silence.

It's not the stopping of time.

It's facing things.

Owning them.

You're waiting for a moment when everything disappears.

But that moment doesn't exist.

True peace comes

when you stop running.

When you accept the shadow

and begin to speak to it.

(He resumes his work.

His hand is slow but firm.

A glimmer passes through his eyes.)

I dig

so I don't leave without seeing

what remained for me.

It's not an escape.

It's a trace.

The Old Man

(After long effort,

a piece of the wall finally breaks free.

He freezes for a moment,

the block in his hands.

His body wavers.

He leans against the wall,

his eyes shining with an almost invisible emotion.

He slowly collapses to his knees,
still holding the stone.)

I found it...

I found it...

The Unforgiven

(He rushes toward him, alarmed.

He reaches out instinctively.)

Wait...

let me help you.

You can't carry this alone.

It's too much...

The Old Man

(He lifts his eyes,

his gaze heavy, but clear.

He gently pushes the other's hands away.)

No.

It's mine.

This piece—

it's my whole life.

Everything I lived,

or failed to live.

Everything that was stolen from me.

(He holds the block close to him.)

It's my burden.

My final act.

And I must carry it

to the very end.

(He closes his eyes for a moment,

then continues in a calm voice.)

We all carry something.

But you...

you still refuse to see

what you must carry.

As long as you keep trying to avoid it,

you will never know.

And you will remain here.

In this night.

The Unforgiven

(He lowers his head.

Long silence.

Then a voice—uncertain.)

I... I don't even know what this burden is.

I can feel it.

I drag it behind me.

It crushes me.

But I can't give it a name.

That's the worst part.

It haunts me...

but I don't recognize it.

(He remains still for a moment.

His voice grows more fragile.)

How do you carry something you don't understand?

Something you can't see?

The Old Man

(His features harden slightly, but without hostility.

He lifts the block of stone to the Unforgiven's height.

His gesture is solemn.)

You think you have to understand before you can carry.

But no.

You already carry it.

You think you're running...

but it's too late.

The cross is already there, on your shoulders.

You're just still refusing to look at it.

(He rises slowly, placing his hand on the wall.)

Me—

I wanted to understand what had been imposed on me.

I dug.

Perhaps without hope.

But not to flee.

Now... it's your turn.

Look at what you keep refusing.

Look at what you fear.

And maybe you'll see that in the depths of that shadow,
there is a light.

Not to absolve you.

But to awaken you.

(After one final effort,

he fits the piece of stone into the wall's opening.

He ties a rope slowly,

with almost ritual precision.

Then he takes out a small key, forged by his own hands,
inserts it into the stone, turns.

A dry click.

He remains still,
gazing at what he has just sealed.
Then exhales, long.)

It's done...
That was the only ending possible.
I dragged this for too long.
Now I leave it here,
behind this stone.

(He turns his head toward the Unforgiven,
his eyes sunken.)

It's no longer for me to leave.
Maybe for you.
If you choose it.
But not while I'm still here.

The Unforgiven

(Frozen before the door,
eyes wide.
He turns around, nearly breathless.)

Why are you doing this?
Why are you locking everything?
We could have left!
Together!

You just shut it all—
as if we never had a chance.

We already lived in the dark.
And now you've made it even thicker.

The Old Man

(He removes the key, slowly.
Like a sacred gesture.)

I didn't lock it for you.
I locked it for me.
What lies behind—
it's finished.
I can't carry it anymore.

If I had left it open,
I'd have fallen back in.
Again.

(He pauses.
His eyes lost somewhere in the stone.)

You can flee, if you want.
Climb, run,
chase the light outside.

But deep down...
you know it won't change anything.

The key is here.
You'll take it—
when I'm no longer here.

The Unforgiven

(His voice rises, nearly breaking.)

You want me to wait for you to die?
To stay here, alone,
staring at this wall?

You think you've found peace
by sealing yourself alive?

But that's not peace.
That's just... giving up.

The Old Man

(His gaze stays calm,
but empty.)

No.

It's not peace.

It's just...

the end.

The end of the road.

I'm not chasing anything anymore.

You—

you still want to understand.

But you refuse to look.

You think the light is out there,
outside?

No.

It's here.

Here—

in what you refuse to see.

The Unforgiven

(He approaches the door,
places his hand on the stone,
as if wanting to pass through it.)

And if I don't want that kind of peace?

And if I can't?

You tell me to accept—

but I don't even know what I did.

I'm blurry.

I'm a fading memory.

I'm lost.

The Old Man

(He sits slowly against the wall,
closes his eyes for a moment.)

We don't need to understand everything all at once.
I never understood it all.

But I learned to endure.

To carry.

And that...
that doesn't come with answers.
It comes by stopping the flight.

Your pain—
it's there.
It won't go away.

Your forgetting—
it forgets nothing.

You're looking for a way out.
But what you want
is not an escape.

It's to be forgiven.

And that...
that won't come from a tunnel.

The Unforgiven

(Clenched fists.
Tight jaw.)

Easy for you to say.
You decided to be done with it.
But me...

I'm still here.

Picking up pieces.

You tell me to accept—
but I don't even know what.

The Old Man

(He reopens his eyes.

His voice is low.)

Then start with that.
With not knowing.
Carry what you don't understand.

You don't need to name pain
for it to exist.

And forgiveness...
sometimes it begins
without a name.

You don't want the end?
Very well.
Then do something
with what's left.

The Unforgiven

(He looks at the key,
as if discovering it for the first time.
He holds it—
but doesn't move it.)

And what if I can't?
What if I'm doomed to keep turning here,
forever, without ever understanding...
without ever healing?

The Old Man

(A discreet smile, almost imperceptible.

He slowly inclines his head.)

Then you turn.

But you turn a little slower.

And one day... you stop.

And there—maybe... you'll see.

The Unforgiven

(The old man's words hit him like a blow to the gut.

He doesn't react at first. His head drops, eyes vacant.

He clenches the key, fingers tight.

When he speaks, it's barely audible.)

And what if I can't?

(He lifts his eyes, searching for something in the other—
support, an answer.)

What if it's too late for me?

If I'm... lost?

If I'm doomed to keep turning inside this... this blur...
without ever seeing anything clearly?

(He looks at the key,
as if it might answer for him.)

The Old Man

(His gaze remains fixed on him. Calm. Harsh. Tired.

He waits before speaking.

When he does, his voice is simple, almost dry.)

You want an answer,

but you haven't asked the right question.

You think it's the key that's holding you?

This wall?

No.

It's you.

(He runs his hand gently along the stone.)

You're the one locking yourself in.

You're spinning in your own night.

And you refuse to see what you're running from.

You haven't yet understood

that this fog doesn't come from outside.

It comes from you.

The Unforgiven

(He barely shakes his head.)

But if I don't understand what I'm running from...

If I'm just here, moving forward without seeing, without knowing...

How do I do it?

How do you find the light

if you don't even know what you're looking for?

The Old Man

(He looks at him. Long.

His voice is slow.)

You're waiting for a way out.

But there is none.

Not like that.

You want to escape the fog?

Start by accepting that it's yours.

That it's part of you.

You can't run from what you carry.

You have to look at it.

Even if it burns.

And maybe then,

a way will begin to appear.

But not before.

The Unforgiven

(He stays frozen, the key in his hand.

He murmurs, barely—
as if speaking to himself.)

And what if I find nothing?

What if there's nothing at the end?

The Old Man

(He slowly approaches,
places the key on the stone.
He says nothing right away.
Then he whispers.)

Then you'll keep turning.

Again.

But slower.

And maybe... one day... you'll stop.

And then, you'll see.

(He collapses suddenly. Slowly.
As if the weight of all he carried
had finally fallen away.)

The Unforgiven

(He throws himself toward him, grabs him, panicked.)

No!

No... not now!

You can't just... leave like this!

You can't leave me like this, with nothing!

Tell me what to do!

Help me!

(He shakes him slightly, desperate.

The old man lifts his eyes, barely.

A trembling hand.

He holds out the key.)

The Old Man

(With a weak, rasping voice.)

It's yours.

But it opens nothing

if you don't first accept what you carry.

It's not a door key.

It's a key for yourself.

The Unforgiven

(He takes the key.

It feels heavy.

He stares at it,

then at the old man,

eyes wide.)

You can't just tell me that...

Not that, not now.

I don't know what to do.

I don't know where to go.

I don't understand anything. I...

(The old man closes his eyes.

His hand falls.

His breath fades.)

The Old Man

(A final smile—sad, heavy with resignation—

touches his lips.

He closes his eyes, releasing a last, barely audible breath.

His body relaxes,
as if, at that moment,
everything ceased to belong to him.
Silence settles—
heavy and absolute.
The key in the Unforgiven's hand
shines faintly in the dim light of the room.)

Farewell...

(These last words—barely a whisper—
are the final link between them.
Then, the old man gives in
to the quiet of nothingness,
his body now stilled in the peace
he had sought for so long.)

The Unforgiven

(He remains there, unmoving,
the key in his hand.
His fingers grip the object tightly,
as if trying to force it to reveal its secret—
to make this little metallic thing
accomplish what his thoughts,
his desires,
could never touch.

He looks at the key,
then at the old man,
his gaze drifting over the now still face.
There is no more breath,
no more life.
A shiver of dread runs through him

as he whispers softly,
almost to himself.)

What am I supposed to do with this key?

(He stares at it, as if it were the last thread tying him to
some idea of freedom—yet a freedom he cannot comprehend.
His voice breaks, full of doubt and confusion.)

Will it set me free? Will it finally lead me out
of this fog where I'm lost? Will it open something?
Somewhere...?

(He lets out a bitter laugh, almost silent, more a twitch of the lips—
a mockery with no target.)

No...

(He shakes his head, as if to banish the illusion.
The key, though solid and real, already seems like a mirage.
He turns it in his hand, examines it from every angle,
but it tells him nothing. Nothing that could release him
from the burden he's carried for... how long?
Memory slips away, like everything he once was
before this endless wandering.)

It can't save me.

I'm already too far gone, too broken
for a key to open anything for me...

(His words are heavy, soaked in despair.
He lifts his eyes toward the old man's body,
which lies there, still and peaceful—definitively so.
It seems to him that time has stopped in this room,
that everything around him is slowly collapsing.)

What if I left with him?

(His voice becomes fragile,
like the murmur of a man about to vanish.)

What if I left everything behind,
closed my eyes and... disappeared as well?
But I can't...

(He frowns, tormented,
as if caught in a mental and spiritual impasse.)

I am... I am unforgivable.
Death doesn't want me,
because none of my actions can be erased.
I'm the shadow of myself.
And even if I throw myself into the abyss,
even if I try to extinguish myself,
I'll still be here...
wandering,
wandering in the same torment.
Always... always searching
for an answer I will never find.

(He drops to his knees,
his face overwhelmed by anguish.
The key rests in his hands like a dead thing,
like a promise that will never be fulfilled.
He looks around,
searching for something,
but everything feels empty, meaningless.)

Why?

Why did I do it?

Why couldn't I stop before everything slipped through my fingers?

(He gently hits his forehead with his palm,
trying to expel the pain tearing through his mind—
but it returns endlessly, the same pain,
the same absence of answer.
He lifts his eyes to the key,
his fingers trembling,
his mind paralyzed by defeat.
He turns the key in his hand,
almost caressing it with a kind of desperate tenderness.)

You think you're a solution for me,
but you're just a lie.

(He grits his teeth,
a heartbreaking sigh escaping his lips.)

You won't open a door to another world,
to another future.
Everything is already sealed.
The truth is there...
in the suffering, in the error.
I am the man I can no longer change,
the man I fled from...

(He closes his eyes a moment,
his thoughts drowning in a swirl of despair.
Then, in a sudden gesture,
he throws the

key to the floor, letting it fall with a metallic clang.
He lets out a weak, broken cry—
a final sigh of resignation.)

The key can do nothing for me...

(He slowly collapses to the ground,
sitting with an empty, exhausted expression.
His hands cover his face, hiding his eyes,
as if to flee the reflection of his own desolation.)

Everything I did, everything I was...
all of it remains within me.
And nothing—nothing—can free me from this pain.
I'm stuck in what I was,
in what I did,
in what I cannot forget...

(He stays there, crouched, alone in the room,
eyes hidden beneath his hands,
his body drained by the weight
of a life he no longer understands.
The key lies beside him,
useless—like everything else.
He lets himself be swallowed
by an absolute silence,
in which he slowly drowns,
engulfed by the incomprehension
of his own curse.)

Maybe...
maybe I'm already dead.

(He whispers this phrase as a statement,
a final breath before everything freezes
in a cold, unmoving stillness.)

Maybe everything I see,
everything I feel—
it's already the end.

And the key...

it changed nothing...

(His words fade in a final sigh,

and he remains there,

in a state of total resignation,

lost in his own torment,

unable to flee.)

THOSE WHO DIG INTO STONE

He walked in the dark, without shape or memory,

A breath from long ago lost in his chest.

The wall before his steps, the ash beneath his fingers,

And no name on his skin to remind him of his path.

He no longer knew anything — not the hour, not the place,

Time was shattered like a bottomless mirror.

He wore a fault in place of a face,

And searched for a forgiveness no voice could offer.

In the shadows, another man shaped his own exile,

Carving stone by stone a tunnel without rest.

His age had fallen silent, only the labor remained,

As if in the rock he might flee from his own name.

They met in this colorless place,

Two shoreless souls at the edge of the same abyss.

One awaited the end, the other fled from his own,

But both pursued an absent light.

The old man spoke, his voice grave and calm,

Like fire beneath ash or water beneath pain.

"You want to flee, but you know: there is no true way out

Except by facing the weight of what you've become."

The Unforgiven trembled. He held a key,
But it revealed neither way out nor meaning.
"I no longer know my steps, nor why I failed.
Can you tell me, you — what it takes to heal?"

"You must stop running," the old man answered,
"And look within at what you seek to bury.

What you want to forget, you must embrace,
For shadow only recedes when it is welcomed."

"But I don't remember..." murmured the younger one.
"I am lost in myself like a sound with no echo.
Every thought lies to me, every reflection flees,
I am nothing but a dream without body or voice."

The old man stood, his brow heavy with horizons,
And sealed his tunnel with a slow, precise gesture.
"The door is closed. It is no longer my story.
But you, if you will it, you may leave this place."

"Wait!" cried the other. "You're locking me in with you!
You condemn my night to turn within your ruins!
Why not leave together, beyond the shadow?
Why leave me alone in your closed silence?"

"Because I do not hold your lock.
I close only for myself. You can still choose.
But that choice depends on neither walls nor keys.
It lies in your heart, in the living ash."

"Then what remains for me?" asked the other, weary.
"I was born to fall, to wander unforgiven.

I seek a light I cannot name,
And everything I touch turns to nothing."

"Then touch your emptiness, look upon your error.

Do not turn your eyes away. Carry it in your blood.

Only by embracing what you flee

Can you begin to walk — not to flee, but to live."

The old man lay down, his hands against the stone,

His breath slower than silence.

And in his final word — a breath, a faint thread —

He extended the old key, without force or expectation.

The Unforgiven remained frozen, like a remnant,

His fingers around the steel now left by death.

In that gaze, he saw the reflection of his own

Long-ago surrender, the one he never voiced.

"Is this the end, then? A key with no lock?

A farewell that saves neither the other nor oneself?"

He knelt there, in the mute dust,

And wept without tears for what he hadn't said.

"I'm already too far gone," he said to the absence.

"I am the shadow I fled, the cry without memory.

Even death avoids me — I have no refuge left.

I am the man I broke from within."

He threw the key down, onto the stone floor,

And sat beside the body now returned to earth.

The light did not come. The silence remained.

But within him, something no longer fled entirely.

He no longer spoke. He stopped searching.

And in that fatigue, there was something else:

Not an answer, but a direction.

Not salvation, but the beginning of listening.

And perhaps one day, he will open the door.

Perhaps a glimmer will pass through him.

But for now, he is there, calm, without path,

Still holding the key... but holding it differently.

The silence grows, but it is no longer the same.

It has the weight of a body, the echo of a final word.

It is no longer nothingness, but an inhabited void,

A waiting without fear, a hollow that makes space.

The Unforgiven rises, barely, without brilliance,

As if his own body refused to follow him.

His gestures are trembling,

but they no longer flee.

He looks at the stone as one looks at a threshold.

He no longer asks to be forgiven,

No longer seeks God, nor light, nor escape.

He knows he is on borrowed time — but that reprieve, at last,

Has become a time he may, perhaps, claim.

The tunnel is sealed,

but the world remains vast.

Inside him, a world still unspoken.

He begins to understand that digging into stone

Is sometimes to admit we are made of rock.

The old man is gone — but not absent.

He lives in the key, in that heavy silence.
And even his departure, so discreet a fall,
Planted him like a tree in the heart of memory.

The Unforgiven no longer speaks aloud,
But he speaks to himself, softly, like to a brother.

Each inner word is a brick he lays,
Not to flee,
But to stand — even if unsteady.

He leans down for a moment,
Picks up the cold key,
And holds it in his palms like an extinguished ember.

He does not yet know if he will ever use it,
But he knows it exists — and that is already much.

Days have no name in this place without sky,
Yet he feels, somewhere, a rhythm, a pulse.

It is not hope, nor truly courage,
But a thin breath: he is still alive.

And now, to live is no longer to seek escape.

It is to walk without knowing,
To carry without answer.

To sit near a wall,
And sometimes lean against it—
Not to dig,
But just... not to collapse.

He thinks of the old man,
Of his hand on the stone,
Of his extinguished gaze that burned everything.

He thinks:

“He sealed the wall not to flee,
But maybe I—
I will open it someday,
To remain.”

For fleeing is a lie,
A rimless circle,
And the shadow only fades
When it is answered.

He feels it in his bones:
The way out is near—
But it is reached
Only by ceasing to run.

He speaks to the sealed wall,
Without expecting an echo:
“I am the one who stays.
I am the one who seeks.”

“And even without light,
I will not turn away
My face or my hands
From what I have been.”

“I have sinned. Yes, no doubt.
But I am still here.

And I will hold the key,
Even without a clear lock.

Because it is the memory
Of a man who saw me,
And reached out to me...
Even in silence.”

Perhaps one morning, this place will collapse,
And beneath the rubble, there will be nothing.

But as long as he stands —
Even sometimes on his knees —
The Unforgiven will live.
And that is enough.

He has no faith now
But the faith of return.
Not toward paradise,
But toward a presence.

He no longer seeks God.
He seeks to become
The one he never had time to be — in peace.

One day may come —
He will pass through the door.
He will place the key he was given
Into the lock.

But it will not be to flee the old sorrow.
It will be to walk
Toward the sorrow yet to come.

For there will always be another wall,
Another weight —
But now he knows
One can move forward.

Not despite the fault,
Not against time —
But with. Just with.
And that changes everything.

And if one day he must die,
Alone within this stone,
It will no longer be wandering —
But chosen rest.

He will have known the fall.
He will have known the shadow.
But he will also have learned
How not to flee.

The old man is silence.
The Unforgiven, presence.

And the space between the two
Is now nothing but a threshold.

One life has sealed.
The other still holds the key.

And the story begins again,
In calm and in stone.

And you who read these words —
Perhaps you are among them:
Those who carry without seeing,
Those who seek without a name.

Know this, reader,
Or passing brother:
The wall is not the end
As long as there is a key.

A faceless glint dances on the wall.
It is not the sun —
Sunlight never enters here.

But perhaps a reflection,
Fallen from a memory.
Or the eye of an ancient fire,
That watches in silence.

The Unforgiven sees it,
Dares not approach.
He fears to break it
With a single heartbeat.

For every light born in darkness
Feels like a fragile breath
That one word might dissolve.

Still he advances,
Forehead against the stone.
Beneath his fingers,
The dampness turns almost warm.

He thinks he feels, deep in the night,
Something that pulses —
That still breathes.

It is not a path.
It is not a voice.

But a quiver,
A faint tremble —

As if the shadow itself
Were opening an eyelid,
And saying:
“Look. I am your mirror.”

He closes his eyes for a moment —
And it becomes clearer.

He feels the glimmer within him,
Deep, minuscule.

Not like a star —
But like a wound
From which flows a light
No one can extinguish.

Where all broke,
The light begins.

Not to erase —
But to reveal more truly.

Each fault reveals a shape of the human.
Each fall reveals what still stands.

He does not yet know
What to call this clarity.

It is not forgiveness.
It is not salvation.

But a simple shiver, a crumb of sky
Fell into the bottom of the well he had believed endless.

He remembers then the gaze of the old man,
When the stone was sealed, when everything closed.
It wasn't the end. It was a torch,
Held out by a weary hand, but still open.

He picks up the key again, as one would take a flame.
It does not shine. But it warms a little.
And in this thick darkness, he learns that light
Is not for seeing, but for no longer fleeing.

Around him, the shadow does not recede.
Sometimes it thickens, to the point of engulfing him.

But it is no longer poison. It becomes silence,
And in that silence, something holds him.

Each step he takes is a step that opens.
Not outward, but into a vast within.

He discovers forgotten chambers inside himself,
Where childhood reflections sleep in the dust.

Once, he thinks he sees a brief silhouette
Pass in the distance, like a dead flame.

He doesn't call to it. Nor does he follow.
But he greets it, with a gesture, without bitterness.

For all that was dark has left fragments,
Traces of warmth in the mute stones.

And even pain, in its slow tide,
Carries a few stars thought extinguished.

He gradually understands that darkness speaks.
That it is not absence, but dense memory.
And that shadow is sometimes the hidden shape
Of a fire too ancient to blaze outward.

One day, around a breath's corner, he glimpses
Not a sky, but a more spacious expanse.
It is not the exit. It is not the light.
But the air there is clearer, the waiting less heavy.

He sits, simply. He no longer searches.
Not for exit, nor pardon, nor a path to follow.

He offers himself to the shadow, as one would extend their arms
To a lost brother found again within.

It is then that light, finally, comes without sound.
It does not burn. It does not reveal all.

But it embraces the shadow, caresses its brow,
And in their slow wedding, the man rises.

He will never know from where this clarity came.
Was it the echo of the old man? The mourning of a sealed wall?
Or the slow and painful acceptance
Of existing in the night... without wanting to deny it?

A word returns to him, long forgotten.
Not a name, nor a cry, but a simple note.

Perhaps peace is that, simply:
A grey light that no longer goes out.

And when he rises, the key in his palm,
He no longer knows whether he will open. He no longer needs to.

For he is there, standing, between shadow and fire.
And he is, for the first time, whole.

He now walks in a fire without flame,
An invisible blaze of endless cinders.

He feels the warm breath run beneath his skin,
But no burn comes to devour him.

This fire is the gaze he casts behind him,
The weight of moments he cannot change.

It is not punishment, nor damnation,
But the bare clarity of what was, without mask.

He lives in this furnace without light,
Where the glowing walls reflect nothing human.

It is a hell without gods, without cries, without revolt,
Just him, facing himself, without end, without forgiveness.

And yet, he moves forward, step by step,
As if the abyss no longer mattered.
As if walking through nameless flames
Could also heal what water cannot touch.

The light of day — he feels it, up there,
But it never quite reaches him.
It dances at the edge of the abyss, mocking, distant,
Too pale, too pure, to cut into his night.

One day, he approached the edge of the void.
The light sang, soft as hope.
He believed his body, with a single step,
Might melt into it, become something else.

But that step was one too far. He fell beneath it.
Not into light, but into its parody:

A false brilliance, cruel, a mask too white,
Where the shadow was deeper than in true night.

He then understood that hope can betray,
That sometimes light lies more than darkness.

And that to want escape at any cost, blindly,
Can cast us lower than the darkest fall.

So he lay down in the fire, without struggle.
He let pain slowly blossom.

He did not scream. He did not pray.
He simply listened to what the fire burns.

And it wasn't his sins that consumed,
But the idea he should ever be rid of them.

It wasn't his crimes, nor even his shame,
But his absurd desire to disappear.

The fire does not judge. Nor does it save.

It reveals. It shows. It strips the heart.

And beneath skin, beneath nerves, beneath fear,

He found a core nothing could reach.

A core of silence, ember, and void,

Where there was nothing left to expect or escape.

A place within oneself that no one visits,

Except at the edge of fire, when it is already too late.

It is there he saw, for one almost gentle instant,

A glimmer that came from neither above nor below.

A light born from the ashes of doubt,

A light without flame, but one that does not tremble.

He did not reach out. He grasped nothing.

He simply stood there, arms open,

Like a burned tree that still stands,

Because it has understood that to fall is to choose.

And to choose is to live — even within the fire,

Even without horizon, even without future.

To say: “I am here, even if I am ash,

Even if all fades away, I am still myself.”

He then remembers the old man’s voice:

“It is not the light that will save you,

But what you learn to do with your darkness.”

Now he understands — wordlessly, without detour.

For he has become fire, without being consumed.

He has become ash, and yet still stands.

And each step he takes within this intimate blaze
Carries him away from nothingness without denying its shape.

He no longer seeks anything. He no longer hopes.
But something within him refuses to be erased.

Perhaps a name, an image, a heartbeat,
Perhaps only the idea of not having fled.

So he continues, through this red darkness,
With the key in his pocket and fire in his veins.

He no longer knows if he walks toward an outside,
Or if he is simply digging into his own exile.

But he is standing. And perhaps that is enough.

Not to be saved, nor even comforted,
But to say to the fire, to the shadow, to the stone:
“I am here. I burn. And I no longer step back.”

This fire he walks through is no longer a flame,
But the living foundation of an abyss within him.

No longer the burn, nor even the fall —
But the bottom of the chasm, where return begins.

For at the bottom of emptiness, he has seen the root,
The primal rock where summits are born.

It is not forgetfulness, nor pure erasure,
But the inverted bedrock from which mountains rise.

He has felt himself stone, ash, blood, dust —
But also silence, breath, and beginning.

Something in him, fragile and stubborn,
Said: “Now, you may climb.”

So he clings to the flanks of the bare chasm,
His hands seeking grip on trembling stone.

He sees no peak, imagines nothing,
But he knows one step is better than the void.

Every movement is a wrenching.
He bears his weight, his name, his faults.

He climbs with his burden, without detour,
As one carries a cross that cannot be laid down.

The void speaks to him with each misstep.
“You have nothing to hope for,” it murmurs.

But he replies with sweat and breath,
With the slowness of a body that will not yield.

He climbs without hope — but not without will.
He climbs because he no longer wants to flee.

And the silence around him grows less heavy,
As if it recognized his mute struggle.

The fire remains below, far beneath,
But he no longer needs to fear it.

He still carries it, in the hollow of his fibers,
But he is no longer its prisoner.

Each stone he touches now feels alive,
Charged with everything he once was.

This past — he does not deny it. He bears it,
He climbs with it, stone by stone.

His shoulders bend, his breath breaks,
But still he climbs, within a time without name.

His step is no longer vain, even if uncertain —
It is the momentum of a man returning to himself.

It is not light he seeks at the summit,
But a place where he may stand.

A point of balance between shadow and clarity,
A place that might say: "Here, I still am."

He still hears the voices of long ago,
The judgments, the cries, the too-heavy silences.

But he lets them pass through him,
Without losing himself in them, without dissolving.

He is no longer the shadow fleeing its shape —
He becomes the one who sees it.

And in the very shadow of his own name,
He finds an echo, a substance to build with.

The chasm's walls drift away, little by little.
What he thought eternal is now only a memory.

The vertigo remains, but no longer commands —
The vertigo becomes the threshold of choice.

A stone breaks loose beneath his foot.
He slips, falls, scrapes himself, stumbles.

But he does not collapse. He waits. He breathes.
And begins again — without shouting, without praying.

He has no angel, no voice from above.
He has only his hands, his knees, his memory.

And sometimes, that is enough to go on —
For in the weight, he finds his answer.

He no longer hopes to become who he once was.

He no longer believes in total forgiveness.

But he wants to stand tall, even wounded,

And one day say: "I climbed the wall that I was."

He erases nothing. He asks for nothing.

He carries. He climbs. He begins again.

He is that man who was once unforgivable,

And yet he rises again, with no grace bestowed.

And perhaps at the top, there is nothing.

Perhaps the arrival is another abyss.

But he climbs anyway, just to be in motion,

To no longer be the one waiting for the end.

For the unforgiven is not the damned —

He is the one who refuses to die without a gesture.

And on the steep slope of a past he does not deny,

He becomes, step by step, the author of his own ascent.

He climbs still, knees torn,

Hands open, fingernails ripped.

Every stone beneath his steps is a threat,

But he moves forward, slowly, with no light ahead.

The slope is steep, the dust suffocates,

The stones roll beneath the weight of fatigue.

He has no more words, no clear thoughts —

Only the instinct of one step after the next.

The air grows thin, muscles scream,

Heavy eyelids barely open.

He wants to sleep, he wants to fall,
But his breath still drives him upward.

There is no clear goal to this climb,
Only the refusal to go back down.

But his body falters, his heart hesitates,
And soon he stops, knees buckling.

He stays there, panting, almost kneeling,
One hand clutching the rough rock wall.

And in the crackling silence of exhaustion,
He finally turns his head, looks behind.

The abyss is there, gaping, immense, silent,
A funnel of shadow where echoes fall mute.

And at the very bottom, indistinct, he thinks he sees
A hunched shape: himself.

There, in the black hollow, he sees his double,
His first shadow, his frozen cry.

It is the man from before, the one who didn't know,
The one who fled by digging his own void.

And in the murky air, like a cold breath,
A voice rises, deep, intangible:

"Why are you climbing? Why do you persist?
Nothing will cleanse you of what you carry."

He shudders. He knows this whisper.

It's not fatigue — it's deeper than that.

An old presence, curled inside him,
The spirit of heaviness, the thinking stone.

"You can climb, burn your breath,
But you already know: you will forget nothing.
Each step you take adds to the weight.
Each memory thickens on your back."

The voice does not shout; it whispers, it slides,
Like a gentle, venomous lament.

"Rest. Come back down.
Let yourself fall. It's easier, you know."

He closes his eyes. He feels the void calling.
He feels the weight on his shoulders double.

And his legs tremble, his breath falters.
He is on the edge of letting go.

But something within him, faint, silent,
Still refuses to surrender.

Not faith, not hope —
Just a flicker of pride or rage.

He rises again, swaying, broken,
His body torn by doubt.

He stares at the bottom, then stares at the summit —
And stays there, between two absolutes.

The voice murmurs again, sweet and cruel:
"What's the point? Who awaits your return?
What forgiveness do you expect to find up there?
You are alone. Alone with your fault."

He clenches his fists, shuts his eyes tighter,
Sweat on his brow like a bitter baptism.

He doesn't answer. He cannot answer.
But he does not back down. Not yet.

For backing down is starting it all over again.

To descend is to dig a grave.

And even if the light never comes,

He no longer wants to dig. Never again.

He stands there, still uncertain,

One step forward, a thousand behind.

But he stays, he resists, he remains upright —

And maybe that is the first forgiveness.

The wind has risen on the mute heights,

It brushes past him like a memory.

And behind him, the voice grows distant,

Like a fear retreating, defeated without a scream.

He opens his eyes again. The slope is still there.

But something has changed in the silence.

He still sees no summit, no way out,

But he now knows he will not go back down.

Then, without a sound, from deep within,

Something crawls, cold and fluid.

A black serpent slips into his throat,

A viscous breath, a living fear.

He chokes, eyes bulging,

His hands at his neck like drowning.

The venom is not in his veins,

It is memory, recollection, regret.

He falls to his knees, screaming without voice,

His guts twisted by an ancient pain.

It is not a scream — it is an echo
Of all he tried to silence.

The serpent coils, spirals within him,
To the soul, to the withered heart.

It steals his air, robs his sight,
Drags him into an even blacker night.

He thrashes, strikes the ground,
Claws the rock like a cornered beast.

But who could save a man
From the regrets he dug with his own hands?

He searches for the key, his last hope,
His hand frantic in the dust.

But the cold metal slips away,
It slides, falls — and disappears.

A distant sound, a muffled thud,
And the key is lost in the depths.

He sees it fall, a fragile glimmer,
To the abyss, into nothingness.

He reaches out — too late, powerless.
This gesture, he's made it too many times.

Too many things have slipped through his grasp,
Always at the edge of what mattered.

And then he knows, without appeal,
That nothing will save him.

Not escape, not forgetfulness, not death —
Everything is already sealed.

A new cold spreads across his back,
Not a breeze: a certainty.

There will be no return,
No ascent, no awakening.

He had awaited death like a grace,
A threshold of ash where all would vanish.

But death does not erase the fault —
It kills the cry, not the echo.

And he has only the echo — immense,
Bouncing off every stone,

Repeating endlessly, mercilessly:
“You did. You let it happen.”

He thinks he’s collapsing, but even the fall
Is denied him. He remains there,

One knee to the ground,
Like a cracked statue still alive.

Everything in him screams for it to stop,
But nothing answers. Nothing fades.

It is an eternity of frozen moments,
And his consciousness burns within it, fireless.

He lifts his eyes toward the slope
He wanted to climb, thought he could climb.

But it’s a mirage — there is no summit,
No light, no way out.

Then he understands. No — he feels.
It is not a truth. It is a sentence.

He is not damned by others —

He is damned by himself, forever.

For the fault, his fault, is not past.

It is not memory: it is flesh.

It is carved into the stone,

Like a fossilized scream beneath his skin.

And that stone — he cannot break it.

It is the world. It is himself.

He could dig to the heart of fire,

It would remain.

He looks around, but sees no more.

All is blurred — not by tears, but exhaustion.

And the voice — serpent's or his own —

Still whispers, soft as hot iron:

"You will never find salvation.

There is no end to what you are.

Even death is too light

To weigh upon what you've carved."

Then he lets go — his body fights no more,

His fingers bleed on the stone, but he clings no longer.

He slips without a cry, without plea, without return,

Into the bare bottom of the world, swallowed without pause.

The slope becomes chasm, the sky becomes vertigo,

And he, docile to shadow, lets himself be trapped.

A single step has cast him out of the light,

Into a void purer than what he feared.

He falls, without speed, as if the air congealed,
He falls, without time, outside time, outside self.

Gravity hesitates, refuses his weight,
He floats in the abyss, stranger even to himself.

Around him, a mist takes hold without violence,
Neither warm nor cold — simply absence.

It envelops him entirely, erases his features,
Like a sea without shore, without light, without fact.

He tries to open his eyes, but the world is gone.
Even darkness, here, has escaped.

A black so absolute it becomes almost substance,
And gently embraces him, like a hand that dares.

He calls out a name — or perhaps a regret —
But his voice is stillborn, it falls in secret.

His tears are mute, without weight, without shine,
And nothing in this night answers his steps.

He walks, without direction, no line ahead,
Heavy steps from an age that was never his.

These years he never lived — he suffers them,
Like a dark debt to be paid in oblivion.

It is a barren garden, sown with his mistakes,
A frozen cemetery with stones full of horrors.

Each step strikes a name, each name is his trace,
And each trace bleeds a memory that breaks him.

Nothing grows down here but the shadow of remorse,
Not a breath of wind, not a star beyond.

All is blurred, all is leftover, all half-formed,
Gestures never made, words never spoken.

He thinks a murmur brushes his ear,
But it's only his heart, whose beat still keeps watch.

Or what's left of it — a broken beat,
A rhythm without measure, a breath rejected.

No one hunts him anymore — he is the pursuit,
No need for a torturer: his fault pulls him down.

He is no longer guilty: he is guilt itself,
No longer a man, but what he never erased.

The walls narrow, then open in silence,
With neither design, nor hatred, nor mercy.

The abyss has no edge, no law, no measure,
An absurd space where nothing lasts.

There is no up, no down to choose from,
Only empty turns, corners made to die in.

Here, there is no path, no passage,
Only ever-new ground, nameless, faceless.

He would scream, crack the thick shadow,
But he has no throat, no strength, no address.

His screams are thoughts, his thoughts are silence,
And his silences dig out their own presence.

He searched for forgiveness — but forgiveness exists
Only for those who look, without fleeing, at what they betray.

And this world forgives nothing — not even tears,
Least of all from the one who walks in unarmed.

He would reach out — but to whom? To what?

Nothing answers here, not even faith.

He is alone — he knows it, finally, fully.

And that solitude becomes his destiny.

Sometimes a light floats in his memory,

But it's only a reflection, an illusory pain.

A glint of a morning he might have chosen,

And consumed in a single breath by betrayal.

He no longer sleeps, no longer wakes — he only exists

In this slow wandering no one sees.

And this word: "to wander" says it all —

For he moves without aim, without end, without desire.

There is no bottom — but he is at the lowest,

And even there, the weight of his faults clings to him.

For he feels, in his flesh, in the blood of his veins,

All he has done, all that returns him.

And that is where he dwells, frozen in his ruin,

The unforgiven, without prayer, without doctrine.

In the night he carved with his bare hands,

A night without end, where nothing ever ignites.

In thick fog where no footstep echoes,

Something rises — a form that trembles.

A face approaches, slowly, without clarity,

And the unforgiven shudders — he thinks he recognizes it.

It is the old man, the digger, the one from the early days,

The one who sealed the wall speaking of a detour.

He is there without being there, fixed like a reflection,
A ghost without hatred, a gaze without secret.

His features bear a peace that's unreachable,
Not serene — no — just simply impossible.

A calm without hope, a forewarned silence,
The gaze of a man who knows what has been said.

And the voice finally comes, slow, broken, distant,
Like water murmuring over ancient stone.

It does not judge, it condemns nothing,
But pierces the heart like an ancient blade.

"You saw me close the stone and keep the key.
You thought it opened something real.

But that key was just a rusted mirror,
A circle closed around what you are."

"You hoped to cross a threshold, find a horizon,
But what you fled was your own prison.

And that key, lost in the depths of the abyss,
Could do nothing for you — except bring you back there."

"The only passage you left behind,
In the fissure I dug as a final marker.

It was there the light of the living filtered through —
But you stepped back, trembling, refusing."

"You could have drunk from it, bathed your gaze in it,
Felt in that glow the sting of a beginning.

Not toward forgiveness — for that does not exist —
But toward a path that was never yours to own."

“You preferred the labyrinth of your faults,
For it was more familiar than the faintest dawn.

You drowned in your memory, thinking you’d find there
The key to a salvation you never dared name.”

The face fades in the opaque mist,
But the unforgiven still feels the blow.

Not in the words — no — but in their absence,
In what he did not do, in his own violence.

He understands the old man does not return,
That he is only an echo, a form, a trace.

A cruel reminder of what he could have tried —
And let slip away, as one closes their eyes.

So he remains there, knees deep in the mire,
Beneath a sky that does not exist, without ecstasy.

He feels more alone than ever before,
For even regret no longer lights the moment.

There will be no forgiveness — he knows this now.
It wasn’t a door he should have crossed,

But a glance, a ray, a fragile light
Which he refused, preferring exile.

Now the world is sealed, closed like a tomb,
And he is the living one who bears its burden.

No death for him, no end, no peace —
Just the nameless night, the step without ever.

The old man’s face has returned to the limbo,
But his words still circle, like a faint lament.

And the Unforgiven repeats them each day,
Like a dead prayer, a silent debt.

He lost the key — but that's not what
Condemned him to shadow and no return.

What destroyed him was having seen
The light... and doing nothing.

He could have touched that crack in the stone,
Breathed into it, laid down his misery.

But he chose to remain in the dark,
And it is that choice that made him impure.

He is the man who knows, but cannot return,
The witness of a moment he failed to keep.

And what he still seeks, deep in his wandering,
Is a forgetting no night can deliver.

For the fault is not what he committed —
But what he lacked the courage to seize.

What he might have done — reached a hand into the air —
But instead he fled, and closed the earth back up.

So he walks still, in the belly of the world,
One step after the next, without flame, without time.

He is not punished — no, he is the punisher:
The one who chose to flee the light.

There are men one never meets,
Because they walk within us, hidden in our folds.

They are those who tried to understand too early,
And could no longer remember how simply to exist.

The Unforgiven is not alone — he is legion.

He lives in the eyes of those who doubt their own lives.

In hands clenched too tightly, in shriveled hearts,

In the pride of believing that to think is to be free.

He was once a man, yes — but more than that, he was a fold,

A fold in the world, a refusal of trembling.

For one must learn to tremble to touch the Open,

And he stood against the breath, against the dawn.

He thought his fall came from a misstep,

But the slope was within him, carved by refusals.

The light was given to him — thin, fragile, alive —

But he turned his back, preferring the closed form.

Those who seek keys often forge their own prisons.

They invent locks so they can break them.

But the Open, the true one, can only be reached by forgetting oneself —

And he never learned how to be absent from himself.

He carved his fault into the stone of his days,

But the true crime was trying to name it.

For there are pains one cannot possess,

Silences that exist only if left whole.

He saw the old man, but never truly saw him.

He believed in a scene, a riddle, a meaning.

But the man before him offered only presence,

And he wanted signs, laws, judgments.

He should have drunk the light like water,

Let it flow in, without measure, without fear.

But he judged its clarity too thin, too uncertain,
So he preferred the shadow where nothing is hoped for.

Now, he haunts. Not like a wailing ghost,
But like a cold memory in the walls.

He is there when you turn away from the morning,
When you close your hand around what you cannot hold.

For the Open does not force — it brushes. It waits.
It is the window one never dares to open.

It is that child's gaze turned away too fast,
For fear of not living up to a simple light.

The Unforgiven wanted to be saved without surrendering,
To receive without offering, to understand without silence.

He wanted to weigh the light with words —
And found only the dust of his own breath.

He is the fire that does not burn, but consumes all.
The fire that remains cold, for lack of welcome.

He is what men become without vertigo,
Those who walk beside the sky but never raise their heads.

Do not mourn him. He does not ask for it.
But listen within yourself to that mute cry that betrayed him.

Each time you doubt life without living it,
He walks again, in your shadow, on your voice.

The Unforgiven is not a finished story.
He is the beginning of all closures.

He is what is written when the soul refuses the open,
When thought becomes cage, and memory, desert.

The hole in the wall — he saw it, like you.
That little sliver of clarity, that breath, that chance.
But he said: “later,” or “that’s not for me” —
And that later became a never. That never, an eternity.
One gesture would have sufficed, one shiver, one breath.
Not a great cry, nor a long struggle.
Just an acceptance, a boundless faith —
But he preferred known chains to uncertain light.
That is what he leaves you — not a testament,
But a black reflection, a crack in your heart.
Every day, you can choose: dig, or breathe.
To sink deeper, or to open — even if nothing is certain.
The Unforgiven is he who believed himself too grave
To savor the moment without dissecting it.
He is the one who, faced with the fruit, stared at the skin,
And forgot to bite, to live, to be there.
We are all on the path toward a breach.
Each carrying a wall, a stone, a doubt.
But nothing binds you, unless you refuse
To trust in the glimmer of the first morning.
So remember: the Unforgiven is the brother
Of those who shut the door before crossing it.
And the Open — that silent, shapeless miracle —
Offers itself only to those who finally cease to think themselves.

DEVASTATION

“But the path speaks to us only as long as men,
born in the air that surrounds it, have the power to hear it.
They are the servants of their origin, but not
the slaves of artifice. It is in vain that man by his plans
tries to impose order on the earth, if he is not himself
attuned to the call of the path. The danger threatens,
that modern men may no longer have ears for it.
Only the clamor of machines still reaches them,
which they are not far from mistaking for the voice of God himself.
Thus man disperses, and has no more path.
To one who disperses, the Simple appears monotonous.
Monotony repels. The repelled, in turn,
see only uniformity. The Simple has vanished.
Its silent power is exhausted.”
— Martin Heidegger, *ibid.*

In the dark night of an apocalypse
that would keep of mankind only ashes,
two figures meet on *The Country Path*:
a child and the shadow of death.

A third character, Sum — the most mysterious —
is only alluded to.

The Enchanter wishes to seal off the path,
but he cannot:
how could he close access to a path
he only knows through contempt?

This path is that of the Simple and of Serenity:
from all that surrounds it, Being has made its dwelling.

The path leads those who take it
to the foot of the great oak —
nuptial ring of earth and sky.

At the foot of this union,
a bench invites us to a meeting in meditative thought,
a thought that, like the oak
that shades and shelters it
from the mockery of Helios' sun,
grows only slowly,
without haste,
in an eternity of which time
holds only scattered fragments.

The Country Path hides nothing,
and could never lie
to one who looks with an attuned eye:

a gaze that, assuming nothing,
lets itself be overtaken
by everything that surrounds it in truth,
and against which it does not resist.

In all that then appears,
nothing is held in reserve:

the path gives all that it opens up —
and to seek anything more would be
as vain as it would be sacrilegious.

The path demands our prudent vigilance,
for the Beast is not dead.

It sleeps in each of us,
and a single murmur is enough
for it to awaken again
and pour out on the world
its deepest contempt for men,
for nature,

for the gods,
and for life.

A steam engine, dragging a few cars,
fades into the horizon of a forgotten childhood;

Has the Spirit no more memory,
as it tortures itself and dozes
in the sunrise of such a morning?

He would like to greet
what addresses him —
that unknown passerby heading somewhere:

He no longer knows the name,
devoured by forgetfulness,

And to the waving hands,
he gives only his gaze.

Leaning against the door,
on the threshold of his house,

He seems to see nothing
of all he looks at.

Knowing only the emptiness
dug into his reason,

He awaits his companion —
the darkness of evening.

And it is into the dark hands
of the advancing night
that he lays his weariness
of no longer knowing anything.

He gives attention only to this gentleness
that finally relieves him
of all appearances.

The stone on which he sits
returns him his solitude,

His bitterness too,
worn smooth by the wind,

Soaked in an acid rain
that wounds every latitude,

And gnaws at the mind
of this poor servant.

Enough! What remains
of what once was?

A shameful memory
of having entrusted

The care of our earth
to Technique —

And so crucified
our sacred Mother.

Nothing will be the same
as what once was:

All has been lost
in the infernal abyss

Of what can now only be
this forgotten world.

Stranded in the abyssal gulf of nothingness.

Nothing will ever be what we once lived:
Only ashes remain — and perhaps a few bones;
Everything has been erased, wiped out, suspended:
Time has chosen... to side with the traitors.

From the collapsed houses, one no longer sees the stones
Blackened by the smoke of a cruel blaze;
All things have been consumed by murderous madness,
The harmony of scorched lands now fades away.

The All-in-One confounds all things into sameness,
No sound returns from what has perished;
The world is a graveyard, the silent void

Of all that fell, struck by a wounded lightning.

Of what little still burns, the future is sealed,
Its tomb laid open, amnesia of the earth,
An unexpected gaping that a wind must seal.
Of all, there remains only nothing — a shadow of misery.

A child left alone begs for his mother
To rise from the void and offer her tenderness:
He cries with all his body the bitter memory
Of the one who, being no more, deepens his weakness.

The sun has hidden behind a pond of dust,
Sinister particles of a death suspended
That waits only for a rainfall to spread across the land
And the tears of the child break every horizon.

And the shadow approaches, brandishing its scythe:
Impassive and secret — it is Death that walks;
Pain! The child is lost in the jaws of a vice
That crushes his limbs and numbs his face.

The shadow moves closer still, toward the child,
Who suddenly smiles at it, as if to his own mother;
The shadow lifts its scythe, ready to sever life,
Grasping misfortune — but cannot take pleasure in it.

The Shadow

I have laid down my scythe, for it is not your time:
When a child smiles, death is disarmed!

You search for your own, and that is your misfortune,
For your family is no more — I have reaped them.

Death is my work: I erase all pasts;
I have visited the world and counted the living:
Very few have survived, and the shattered fate
Of this unworthy war overwhelms me with torment.

If death has its hour and I must obey it,
Do you believe yours has come — decree of generals
Careless of life and what may come of it,
Serving only the folds of a flag.

They opened the floodgates of a river of blood
That carries the wreckage of abolished hope
And swells with the gazes dashed on the reef,
That pitiless rock of betrayed tomorrows.

On deceitful paths a few humans flee,
Envious of a light that could guide them
Through the world's fog that clutches and embraces,
Smothering it in the arms of its darkness.

The Child

She will not return, I already understand:
There is no one left — nothing but memories!

I have only my memory, that of a being in reprieve,
Worth no more than a story, deprived of a future.

What could one await, who is now nothing,
When the world is but ruins, and life is absent;
And yet I smile at the future that denies me:

It is a gentle bitterness that now consoles me.

A melancholy plays with this tale:

A sadness with no regard for the vile tyrant,
A sower of discord and hideous death-camps,
Infesting the impossible present of humankind.

You've maneuvered well: look around you
At all these bodies strewn across the battlefield;
Men are now but one — that of despair,
Crushing indecency of a heap of entrails.

Soldiers or stones — who can tell the difference?
Strange composition: war is absurd!
The cannons collect themselves in the peace of silence,
And another day dawns on this cursed land.

The Shadow

I understand your rage and your despair!
I have finished my task and take no pride in it:
To reap what lives from another is a sentence,
And I have no will to brandish this blade.

The scythe is a rock I must eternally push:
Death is a damned soul, a Sisyphus descending again
To the site of his torment, which never grows dull,
Then leans against the stone of his own torment.

Who could take joy in having sown death?

Mercy! I am not that one: each is a regret,

A wound in my soul that can only bleed:

Before being cursed, elsewhere lay my intent.

But I cannot sever the thread that binds me!

I would like to — to fail in my duty,

To know what I give, to feel the weight of it,

To die for a whole day and be reborn at dusk.

That would be my joy, my reason to exist,

Satisfied to know death, even just once;

But it is forbidden to me: I can only imagine it,

For I must cut — at the price of my remorse.

The Child

Are you my friend, for having spared me?

Will you have to answer for it, and before what tyrant?

I have kept the Spirit of all these broken bodies:

It is not memory, but a present state.

From the lost bodies, the Spirit seeks another place,

A space of survival in the gashed earth;

To subsist, the Spirit needs no hollow corpse,

Only the gaping of being or an emptied skull.

It is a chess game with no winner or loser:

The demons are sated by these emaciated bodies;

In this desert of ashes remains only a child

Escaped from disaster, from which all crumbled.

Will I have enough tears to drown my sorrow?

My eyes of sand are extinguished — nothing left to shed!

I hear only the notes of a fateful refrain:

Requiem for life — death has triumphed.

And yet I smile at what might remain
Of a hint of will and imagination,
For not all is lost if we can still speak of it,
Arm ourselves with thought and volition.

The Shadow

False thinkers have told us what we cannot grasp,
Speaking of the tragic and of democracy;
They wield words that claim nothing
But to skim the surface of the world and its sad agony.

Silence, philosophers! Your words are sin:
You decrypt a world that no longer is!
In creating concepts that have nothing to think,

The Shadow

You claim to know what has never been known!

If the world is undone — is it a tragedy?
But what do you speak of that I do not know?
Human madness would be a comedy:
Why count the dead, why make a case of numbers?

What is tragic in wielding one's weapon,
Or brandishing a scythe as I have done?
Is there a mausoleum that could disarm the warrior,
A duty of remembrance to those sacrificed?

Camps are merely places, industry of death:
Behind Auschwitz hides a Birkenau;
And what are we speaking of, without being impious —
But of sealing once and for all a vault of our history!

The Child

"Death is useless," proclaim the survivors:
It serves no end from which one may grow.
What matters it to die for vile gold?
From its profit, massacre keeps no memory.

At Birkenau, women had no value
Beyond the hundred marks paid for their deaths
In laboratories run by a sinister Enchanter:
Death was only the prelude to fortune.

There are many manners of fuel to be found,
And History is ungrateful to keep just one:
Ashes disappear and become nothing but dust

When the crematory ovens finally gape open.

On film we see only those of one kind
Who ended in the earth, mingled with the others;
There are precious deaths and others of lesser kind:
Terror has its share of forgotten victims.

Tell me who remembers these pale faces,
Whitened by fear and hunger, insults and wounds:
I know nothing of numbers but I know the price —
The price of a commodity measured by weight.

The Shadow

I crossed paths with them all and know each one:
There is no thread of death I have not severed.

None of their faces is more or less precious to me:
What makes all these singular dead anonymous?

You said it, my child: death yields product!
They are the merchandise or cannon fodder

Of a fanaticism envious of its unworthy destiny:

A human machine prey to Reason!

In the silence of Being a voice is heard:

Starved of meaning, it howls into the night

Where Being and God are banished, and gives to understand

Only this: in the temple of Man, Reason suffices!

Who is this Reason, leech in our marshes,

Feeding on the blood of a possible future

Opening in the Clearing where Being appears:

The demon of Socrates has never died!

Do you understand, my child, man's true curse?

It is *Human, all too human* he strives to think!

He is but minuscule, once the gods have fled,

Yet wishes to appear as what he never was.

The Child

Mankind is decline, diverted from its path;

Absconded from becoming, from its own greatness,

It offers itself to homicide in unjust piety,

Reverence for Technology and its lying purpose!

What can we do, death, if not weep,

Exhaust our tears and sacrifice hope

For a saving tomorrow, a thinking otherwise?

When this moment of men is but a false mirror?

I would like to set Reason ablaze with light,

Drag it to the Being that shines in the Clearing,

On the margins of this world that is its abandonment,

The fateful renunciation of our destiny!

I would like, through words, to say what is silenced,
That the Being hidden within them unveil its truth:
Words are lies, and their saying misleads
All they pretend to speak of and wish to hear.

"The country path" of Being is its dwelling:
It leads to the Clearing and the source of time!
Not the clock-time turning within Reason —
But the time of humans, of which it is the counter-time!

The Shadow

I could not sever the threads of your innocence:
You must dry your tears and follow the path
That, crossing the meadows, leads to the dwelling
Of the Being you seek and which is your destiny.

That you may find it at last — I do not doubt!
I have laid down my scythe: you have conquered death;
The death of God foretold the death of men:
In the light of Being, God returns without remorse.

Child, you know this well: from evening comes the light
Which, hidden in the dark, outlines the firmament;
Light is seen only in what it illumines:

Would you try to observe it, you'd see only the void!

Yet Being is that light you cannot see
Except in what it shows you: the freedom of the Self!
This Self is the proper-Being you must receive
From He who gives it, while withholding Himself from you.

Thus does He efface Himself, offering you to become
He who, freely and among all beings,
Vowing harmony in a just becoming,
Appears as the worthy companion.

The Child

Of the three metamorphoses, I shall be the last:

First I was a camel, apt for servitude,

Then a lion, strong and violent;

At last, I am the child — preface to a multitude.

They call me carefree, dreamy, full of joy,

Inaccessible to the evil that many make their law;

From all their bitter brooding, I am exempted:

I am their innocence, the peace of their despair.

Thus have they conceived me: to the well of misery

I bring a veil, the Clarity of an Angel;

I am the day after contemptible yesterdays,

The scent of spring after winter has passed.

At the foot of the Crucified, the child is a promise:

Saint John, son of Mary, when the Master dies!

Here I am again a camel, burdened like an ass,

With the weight of the future — a promised fraternity.

Do you know, Death, the weight of this burden?

I am the survivor of a forgotten species!

"The true life is absent": I must invent it,

Trace its meaning, one no man has yet conceived.

The Shadow

Do you think I ignore this, having spared you:

Why else did my scythe not fall upon you?

Must a heavy stone adorn your skull

To keep you from reaching the Age of Reason?

Tell me, who dared to defy Reason

As it turned its native land into a cemetery?

One hand will suffice to list their names:

All believed in the chimera of the last of men.

It is at the foot of the great oak, by the bench of thought,

That leads the path to the opening of Being:

Of all that is spoken there, the secrets are kept —

It is for you to decipher what appearance conceals.

You need a child's soul to open to the mystery:

You alone hold the key, the solemn mission

To draw from the silence, veiled beneath its eyelids,

What the Masters once spoke in a strange manner.

Do not trouble yourself with those fools who rage

At a Knowledge held in reserve: they fear what they ignore!

Wisdom sleeps in those closed drawers —

You must awaken it without the least remorse.

The Child

Will they say I seek to withhold

A few scraps of fortune, in these miserable times,

That I am bound not to share a single piece,

Judging them too base to be worthy of knowing?

Yet you have the privilege of reconciling them!

Is dying to know what one has kept hidden:

Does death cure blindness,

Or, on the contrary, seal the eyes forever?

Tell me — does your blade cut open eyelids?

Do you give sight to those who saw nothing,

And offer those departing to see more clearly

In the night of beings, even the darkest?

It is you who bring closure to our story:

Of our events, you alone are the final seal;

Keeper of truths — do they endure within you,
If you alone hold the key to our memories?
And yet you spare me, and invite me to know
What you already do: is that not death itself?
I know many who speak to those who recognize
The one who comes without a sound to his step...

The Shadow

He who has only Reason to help him think
And believes he succeeds is like a ruminant
Who eats and regurgitates what has been swallowed:
Such thinkers need two stomachs at least.
He is a mere repeater of his own Knowledge,
Swearing it is forbidden to dare contradict;
Only alone does he slip, at evening's fall,
Into the thoughts of others, before falling asleep.
And how tiresome he who thinks otherwise:
They call him obscure, offensive to reading,
With cryptic remarks reserved for his peers,
While subtle writing retains only its phrasing.
Now this partisan of a doubtful symphony,
That concealer of unspoken things,
Speaking under the guise of a deceptive parody —
What use to judge him, if he's already guilty?
He says "poor Martin," adds "poor misery":
"You must dig the earth — and don't forget time!
'The country path' returns to the cottage
To lay down the bundle of its last traveler."

It is the bell tower that rings the time to return
As the path fades into the shadows of night;
Upon the hearth the soup begins to simmer:
At the laid table, Martin has fallen asleep!

Do his dreams invite him to dig the earth,
Or is it perhaps that time has just stopped?
What matter what you dream of, for the mass is said:

Hölderlin greets you with a few gleaned verses!

Already the earth reclaims what it has taken:
The heavy oak coffin is now but a memory.
In the corner of the memory of his last friends
And of the first, absence speaks repentance.

Do you understand, my child, what death means:
A prey for the living who delight in defiling,
Dragging through the mud or simply betraying
He who, now gone, cannot be venerated.

There is no tomb more vile than slander
When the one who is no more dies once again:
For he sees himself, indeed, lynched at the gallows
Of vulgar infamy dictating his fate.

The Child

Who takes pleasure in spitting on graves
If not a madman or sordid blasphemer?
Many are of that kind, always ready to wound
What troubles them and robs them of sleep.

Kirtov the pitiless, pathetic and frustrated —
To what humanity have you lent your voice?
In your distant country, how many forgotten dead:
Have you not a single regret in the name of the Shoah?

Money has no smell, not even that of death:
The press has made a fine profit from such gossip!
And when the papers are read, truth no longer matters

If torturers escape infamous trials.

I take other paths, envious of the light
That the world has forsaken, dimmed by fog;
"The country path" is no chimera:
It leads to Sum, and to Amor Fati!

It is the dialectic of Reason overfilled,
The voice of the Enchanter, in the shadow of Evil,
Who devours the lambs and tolls the harvest
Of all that was modern — and now fades.

The Shadow

You hold a tragic sense and one of fate,
But all is not lost: let's silence the vermin!

They swarm in filth, an indigestible feast,
And infest the world with impossible chance.

But Sum is on the move, crossing the countryside;
Beneath the great oak, he sits on the bench
And watches the plain at the foot of his mountain:
Man is a mistake that must be redone!

It's up to you, my child, to go and meet him,
To rebuild the world while forgetting its ruin:
What good is the memory of slumbering men,
That useless passion one being imagines?

What did they dream that lends them good conscience:
A donkey that nibbled a few blades of grass?
Did they sanctify the number, halt the sentence

To cast into oblivion what troubled them too much?

The task before you is not idle talk

Of which all these wrongdoers would make revenge:

Speak only in half-words of what's entrusted to you,

It matters little who understands and makes it theirs.

The Child

Tell me, Death — this key that unlocks secrets

That Sum has kept at the end of his sorrow:

Is it the path, you say, that hides in its groves

The rightful promise of humankind?

There are so many deaf to what suits them:

Did they not throw stones at great Zarathustra?

Their ears are so long that little ever stays in:

The noise of time muffles their prayers.

I, Death, remember Ariadne abandoned

On that deserted beach, cast back by the sea;

Theseus, had he seen her, turned away afar

When a Phoenix appeared in a flash of fire.

He was the god of the master, a singer of life!

Ariadne, short of ear, was quickly advised

To entrust to him her soul, her love, and her survival:

On the shores of Naxos, an arrow lies buried.

That is the secret, I think, of which you spoke so often,

That of hearts broken when made of stone;

Of wise Ariadne, Reason itself was shattered

By this false labyrinth devoid of mystery.

The Shadow

You could not better say what he expects of you:

That you must renounce the weary temples
Of our enchanted thoughts and scant emotions,
For it is the unspeakable you must now seize!

That which can be said only in the white of words:
To listen to silence and think the unthinkable,
What fire tells us when the bundle is spent,
To open to the song of an inexhaustible spring.

To listen to the lark, unwitting virtuoso,
Composing without score along the roadside;
To attune yourself to the blackbird, whose melody

Accompanies the bees in their bitter feast.

Path of harmony where each thing answers the other:
"The country path" of Being is symphony!
From all that surrounds it, it recalls the names
And of those who wander it, forgets no trace.

It is not in History that time is fulfilled
For it is singular in the very essence of Being;
It is an "I" becoming when the Other is present:
What turns on clocks is only appearance.

The Child

It is the time of machines, the one we've tamed
In the device of all mechanisms

And that we reimpose in spatiality:
Time is not flight, but arrangement.

The time of a machine strips it of all past
As much as of future: it acts only in the present.
Different is the time of men, destined by Being
To the Self of a becoming in every event.

What the child becomes, once accomplished
In his own decline, is the shadow of a camel,
More docile than the dead, enslaved to its master:
Childhood is but regret under the blows of the flail.

Others become lions, fiercer than winter,
Overturning tables, then wallowing in blood;
This is the Ratio speaking in two ways:

Each makes of Reason a reason to choose one or the other.

Yet another path remains, chosen by the lambs
Coveted by wolves as mere merchandise:
It is the affair of machines, with rational speech,
To reduce them to ashes, no longer divisible.

The Shadow

History is a lie, the hymn of an Enchanter
When Reason crumbles and feeds on children
It turns into soldiers with a gunman's fate
Aimed at the country path and its surroundings.

But the path endures, untouched by the Evil
Of enchanted Knowledge that works to divert it;
They swear the landscape could not be more banal

And time is lost in making it a dwelling place.

When thought exposes itself, breaking with convention,
It is quickly suspected of misleading its reader;
I know some, my child, devoid of conscience,
Who see only pig-words or vile defecators in it.

They see in Reason the measure of all things:
To speak otherwise is to stray from the ruts
And deserve to be hanged by the Good of censure!
I dare not say "mad," but perhaps... "chimera."

For Reason is extinguished by madness
When its decline is fulfilled in Technoscience,
An instrumental Reason, machine-fed,
Seizing all things, consumed as goods!

The Child

What irony, death, in all this malice:
The scent of failure chokes that of corpses!
Who then strayed, doubling down on Science
With a worn-out humanism that now grieves you?

The dead were counted — is it a sacred number
On which we halt after so many chance events?
“Only the place remains”: the dead are forgotten!
Strange synonyms that turn the gaze away...

Heidegger or Dachau: does one speak as much as the other?
More surely still: to speak breaks the silence!
For it is in silence that the guilty wallows:

What becomes of the Torment? A word — no conscience!

To speak is not to blame what was horror,
And it is in silence that the dead make themselves heard;
One takes on a clear conscience who speaks as detractor,
And pours filth on those who cannot receive it.

Tell me, Death, those who... bear this wound:
They are the forgotten of that infamous discourse!
Of all those counted dead remains but a murmur,
A voice in memory — an unworthy appeal.

The Shadow

There is no greater insult than that done to the dead,
And to make them a pretext is the vilest of all!

It is all the victims whose fate is forgotten —
But what matter cemeteries to the soulless!

Let those who wish, understand! The vile stands at the threshold
Of the country path it would divert,
Cluttering it with those who, in their meager coffins,
Cry out to be remembered with profound thought.

Pretext is merchandise — as it was already then —
For crime repeats when words are chosen!
I offer only my tears, still falling this evening:
To remain silent is a duty for the wounded.

I hear that Torment is not to be History,
A moment past, a page in a textbook:
This crime is in my flesh, etched in my story,
Whose unjust wound remains deeply personal!

When death is just a word — it insults the survivor:
To whom go the mockeries of these false thinkers?
For this is not thought, but betrayal in disguise:
To sell off the Spirit — shame on such narrators!

The Child

I sense the Enchanter holds hatred for the path,
Clothing it in sarcasm and cruel discourse;
Yet the great oak that guards it holds a Serene Spirit,
And cannot perish by the words of such a vulture.

Death, do me the honor of sitting on the bench!
It fears not your blade nor that you might sever it.
Listen to the heartbeat of this living wonder —
Who keeps the secrets of our destiny.

Listen to what the abyss tells us in its silence;
To hear silence! They make fools of us
For what is left unspoken lacks substance:
Is there no speech but that which words can form?

And yet, that is what they do — should we be surprised?
They seize words, forcing them to confess
Only what pleases them to hear, hidden therein,
An esoteric absence, unspoken thought.

Would we then be sorcerers, druids of some fanaticism
Clinging to myths or ulterior motives?
Have we, under cover, glorified the charisma
Of a malevolent being, cloaked in his crimes?

Are we seated here, Death, upon the bench of the accused?
Who will be the witness who unmasks us,
Guilty of pausing on this bench too long,
And what will the oak say if questioned?

Let me laugh at such absurdities,
At this country path they'd hang me for loving;
To open to larks, to the scent of the harvest
Is, without motive, a crime: who could mistake it?

Throw me then to the den of battle-hardened lions!
What could I suffer more — Death has spared me.
Who is this impostor who befriends dying:
Has he bewitched the reaper's blade?

If he delights in death, is he not an assassin,
A maker of victims like the one he reveres?
A neo-Nazi tyrant perhaps, a rotting madman,
Most likely expired, devoured by worms...

I am but a child — must I keep repeating it?
A survivor of wars others brought upon me:
I observe the world from the bench where I sit,
By the edge of a path that was destined for me.

The Shadow

He is but a simple child — I bear witness to this:
Of the three metamorphoses, he is the final figure;

It is the dead who speak of starting anew:
I have nothing to say — I am but a measure.

But the child who remains effaces every void,
The destruction of Being when it was forgotten,
Hidden beneath the dense skin of a parody of being:
To think was blasphemy, a denial of the Sacred.

In pious remembrance, death is but absence
Of what once was and now seems no more,
An elusive contrast nourished by silence;
Yet the Spirit remains, from whom all must depart.

The dead are faceless, as cold as winter:
Are they deprived of life, or something else again?
“The country path” keeps the mystery,

That of a journey whose fate it alone knows.

It is the Spirit who inhabits it and endlessly walks it:
The bench is but a bark for those who’ve been blinded!
Yet He reveals Himself in every turn
And speaks to us always with His deepest friendship.

The Child

I shall go upon this path where the Spirit dwells:
It shall be my dwelling — there I shall shatter time

Which ever drags us into the pits of forgetting;
I shall go to the great oak — there Sum awaits me!

There I shall break the chains of a disillusioned mankind,
Gnawed by guilt for having forsaken God —
Though he is but a victim of enchanted Knowledge.

He made of his desire a monstrous will.

It is from the last of men, who delays his leaving,
That comes his wandering on sinister paths:
To what was promised him, he refused to yield,
Betting that pleasure would erase his sorrow.

It is a lying discourse that silences despair
Which soon returns to him, calling him worthless,
A thrown-being in vain: the world is the deathbed
Of a bitter existence and a futile hope.

“The country path” says quite the opposite,
For man is a future, the fruit of a becoming:
Spirit has no flavor but at the end of matter,

When from the stones subsists what they were told to conceal.

The Shadow

It is wise, my child, to give the Spirit
Its rightful place, beyond our errors
In the meagerness of Being by which man is debased:
Have we not made of Being a deceitful word?

He who speaks thus knows not the weight of the question
And would keep from the human only a trait:
To assign utility to the void of Reason
And banish from beings what stands in withdrawal.

The Enchanter says that Being is but a mere word,
The mask of a thought that dares not admit itself,
The inhuman vision of a murderous chaos:

Devouring lambs like a zealous eagle?

Religion breeds sinister thoughts
When it becomes the Reason for what must be done;
The temple of Science has the same ambition
When we are made to submit to what it claims to know!

From *Fides aut Ratio*, who could deny
It shackles humans with shameful fanaticism?
There is another path that leads to openness
Toward what on earth was once mistaken for the heavens.

APOCALYPSE

Behind the closed windows of low houses,
Pale gray handkerchiefs wave slowly.
In the breathless street, a hasty shadow slips by
And already dissolves into a causeless morning:
It is God who departs, banished by the living.

The sky, still warm from His divine absence,
Suddenly tears open, cracking in a silence
Where filth and the stench of darkness stream.

Women moan, old men fall naked
Along roads blackened by blood and fever,
And their opened bellies offer to crazed eyes
The chaos of entrails, smoking and discarded.

Lost children rape absent mothers,
Their fathers in rags scream at an empty sky,
Cursing with full voice the void or the shame.

A slow, yellow death, like an infected breath,
Descends step by step into the folds of the world;
Then it seizes all — the throat and the cradles,
Leaves children's bodies hardened like plaster,
Their faces drowned in tears and blood.

And when all collapses, beauty along with structure,
When nothing remains but a field of bones and ruins,
Then Satan approaches, his brow high, unsmiling.

With the vacant calm of ancient powers,
He casts a distracted eye upon our grotesque end,

As once the ladies, behind their curtains,
Laughed at beggars dancing for a few crumbs.

And he, delighted, beholds the human grave.

But in the faded corner of a world of ash and night,
Someone has knelt, trembling beneath the dust.
An old man, nearly blurred, holds flowers in his hands,
And with head bowed, he weeps in a muted voice.

It is God who sobs over what man has done.

He is nothing but a fallen semblance of his destiny,
A stranger to himself, erased by forgetting.

Did he come from the shadow that borders the void,
From an ancient twilight of which he would be the night?
From anonymous darkness does he arrive as present,
Shipwrecked from the obscure where daylight has fled?

Does he have any substance that might be weighed,
A trace of consistency offered to our eyes?
Nothing settles on him without piercing through —
And for those who ask, he is only the mist.

When the earth evaporates at dawn's first breath,
He rises from elsewhere, deposited by time;
Scent of dew turned drizzle upon the ground,
He vanishes in vain to hide his torment.

He returns already in tears of dust,
Parched by the wind that died upon him;
A simple murmur, nourished by light,
He offers himself like a doubt to our serene minds.

Beneath a sky torn by storm torrents,
The downpour covers his steps in impossible absence,
And retains from the other only the affront of a face;
The stranger spreads in a flood of insolence.

We know only the same that is not affliction:
All else is but a fault spilling our moods,
An indolent rupture washed of contrition.
What care remains for the soul that conceives meaning?

The stranger belongs only where he is not:
Must he repent of always being elsewhere?
The here is more precious when he is a there:
Each finds home with no favor beyond it.

Irony! To be oneself is ever yet to come:
There is of the "I" only the Other without homeland,
He is this stranger he cannot curse:
Thus "I" is lost who is not in-being.

The "I" is not in the world, a refugee of appearances,
And is but the mirror of all it is not;
Waves of nothingness crash on its consciousness,
An impassive shore, tangled marshes entwined.

Blotters of thought and words on reprieve,
Putrefaction of being in the abysses of time;
Pathetic digestion of life's germination:
The swamp of our souls is its only presence.

And being dissolves, starved of light,
In the gut of things that are nothing of the world;
Insidious pleasure of a miserable being,
Inconsistent tribute to vile enslavement.

Prisoners of the muck, our minds are toads,
Warts of thought oozing its venom;
The others vanish into the density of waters:
Only the same survives, an impossible fate.

Under the brazen sun the swamp dries out,
And from the same returns the other, crushed by fear;
Hope! Is it of the world, or merely what it seems?
Has he lived the "I," or was it all just illusion?

Under the raining sun, our souls are arid:
A merciless desert invades our minds,
And all words wrinkle with a parched surface;
Thought misleads us in this cursed place.

The world has disappeared, swept away by our dreams:
Of these nocturnal deliriums remain only our tears;
A flood of regrets from a fleeting intuition,
Insults hurled at our demons without innocence.

Vanity of forgetting that recycles the soul:

Memory is cruel in never ceasing;

Wounds return in a scent of the vile,

Unyielding lacerations carved into our fate.

What Other remembers not being from here?

Is he in the world what I am not within it?

Impossible light, darkness of life

Shattered by the misfortune of not being there.

I see only copyists stretching the same words,

Wandering alone in the hollow of habit;

Reinvent! — whispers of a god in his sobs:

In vain feeds only on finitude.

Elsewhere! Ultimate suffering of not being Oneself,

Improbable becoming beyond all seeming;

The sky has no reason — whence would come faith?

Not knowing who we are spares us from being.

TO CONCLUDE?



Bruno Amadio, « L'enfant qui pleure » », 1950

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There are no more contents, only muffled cries,
Like ashes dying out deep in the throat.

Silence! As heavy as death, as the ruins,
As children's smiles erased by dust,
As motherly tears mingled with bloodied bodies,
The elders carry bags far too heavy,
Corpses of children replacing the absent flour.

There is no more substance, only souls lost in terror,
Extinguished gazes on faces without hope, without life,
A hand escapes from the rubble, and in its bloody palm,
A handful of earth — last word of one condemned

There is no more substance, only souls lost in terror,
Extinguished gazes on faces void of hope, void of life,
A hand escaped from the ruins, and in its bloody palm
A handful of earth — final word of the condemned
To hunger, tearless eyes, and incendiary rains.

And from this blinded world, gazes turn away,
Unbearable images, the paroxysm of horror and
Cynicism.

There is no more substance, only bones gnawed by salt,
Burned with phosphorus beneath showers of firebombs,
Hands outstretched that grasp only air — infected

By diplomatic words, by the lies of the powerful,
At the edge of a bottomless abyss, the tomb of a human
So barely human, too much human for this earth —
Stolen, stripped of all its gifts, forsaken by the gods.

There is no more substance, only shadows sketched
On ruined walls by murderous hands — the war-madness

Of faithless generals, darker than the grave-night
That has covered the world, shroud of our vile cowardice.

Stone is the bread offered by cynical killers; blood
Is the child fallen deep into his hunger — no cry, no tear,
No tomorrow left — only gestures
Unforgivable.

There is no more substance, the forgetting of unnamable faces
Torn apart by hatred, a history without actors, a fable

Of cemeteries in the shade of complicit silences and impunity,
A broken word at the threshold of unspeakable suffering — Evil!
In the murky waters of a weeping land, facing the wall,
The Beast has awakened, thirsty for childhood's promises,
And dissolves, in the depths of the void, what might have been.

There is no more substance, only scattered flesh beneath
Walls of dust that time will sweep away — cynicism of
Oblivion.

Nothing remains, I tell you, but these wounds of children
In the arms of mothers already frozen in a death
That approaches in thunderous roar.

The birds that once enchanted life have fled,
The olive trees rot whose peace was foretold
In the beak of the dove —
Gaza dies out of sight, in the absence of our prayers.