

LUMINOUS ROOTS

VOLUME 5 of *Primal Mediation*
the complete oeuvre of the poetry of Châtillon Coque

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STARK STEEL



Dedicated

to

Madame Gina Bachauer

For 'tis in the music notes
that the nought turns to
meaning, that death is only
a cloud's shadow, that
beauty is impregnated
and
they (who carry this crown)
are the deities to a God!

1959

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Professor R.G. Howarth, I owe an enormous debt. He is as it were, my 'poetic father'. I also owe a vast debt to both Professor Barbara Mackenzie and Eugenie Klink – the former for her influence on my mind, and the latter for encouragement and guidance to realising more clearly my own concept of art (thus poetry and music, if I am to bring art in relationship to my own life). Then to Miss Diana Wilson, for the endless task of spelling correction, and to Miss R. Geissler, for the tedious task of typing out the manuscript, I am also in considerable debt.

AN EXPLANATION AS A DEFENCE

Each poem is the narrative of a certain ‘dream’ – a moment when I traverse the physical boundaries of my senses and enter new worlds. And in this moment I (through a multitude of senses entirely dormant in this ‘conscious, physical world’) perceive the pattern of creation from eternity to eternity – from its never-beginning beginning to its never-ending end. It is only these ‘experiences’ I wish to record as faithfully as possible. This I do through the medium of imagery (those symbols I retain from the ‘emotional experiences’ in the ‘other worlds’). These images consequently form the pattern of each poem. They are drawn as closely from daily life as is possible, since the ‘great emotions’ are as much there as in the rare, ephemeral objects. Indeed the wider the range of the imagery, the greater the poet’s ability to convey the ‘other reality’. Imagery cannot suffer for the sake of sound, rhythm, or form, for that would be like a composer who, for the sake of harmony and bar lines, forsakes a powerful melodic line, rather than invent new structures to contain his work. Form, rhythm, and sound (dissonance, assonance, alliteration etc.) can never be totally removed, but must rather stretch out to new territories in order to ‘house’ the imagery without in any way harming it.

- e.g. You’ll never yield, no rather stay
 till all is redded with blood,
 the very trees and then-drenched grass
 (from *Ripening* – a verse drama)

Note how the sounds of the repeated ('rebounding') d's in redded are closely related to a stun-gun's repeated bullets. The last World War is one of the main rivets of this play.

It is in these 'other worlds' that the constitution of every object (every abstraction, every 'everything' ever possible to conceive by any senses in this or any other world) is purely absolute, 'mystical' emotions of considerable dimensions, existing between the two extreme forces of Life and Death. The vast majority of these emotions can only be known in the 'greater freedom of outer-outer-space'(attainable only through the sub- or super-conscious) where the fourth dimension (which is time) is shattered, and eternity is forever present. Hence the possibility of experiencing all time future, past and present in one moment. Furthermore, no emotion can be rationalised with the logic required for mathematics, but that does not make it 'unreal' – indeed it can be painfully 'real' after it has risen out of the subconscious mind or come from the super-conscious mind.

The result of this is that a poem may contain a 'sense' to which (in this 'normal' life) I, as a 'normal' being, am 'foreign', but this 'sense' I can neither condemn nor criticise, nor shall I ever do so, since it is this 'sense' that is a reality in a moment when I pass (through the sub- or super-conscious) the boundaries of life here both in spirit and mind, and enlarge my vision to the 'other limitless side' of creation, which itself is the life-core of all things here and elsewhere. Then, too, the emotional content (that this 'sense' helps the poem to convey) is far greater than anything I would in this 'normal, physical world' ever be able to 'experience' or 'know', for I believe the conscious mind would grow insane before it could effectively grasp these forces (that have powers beyond our minds) of the spirit's realm. It is therefore clear that

whatsoever philosophy and 'sense' may be found in these poems can only be universal, and never a set of dogmatic rules (which I have contrived) or criticism of any object or issue whatsoever. It is rather an essential element of all life, physical and spiritual, of which (in the case of the former) everything on this orb and in this 'normal, physical world' has possession, and of which (in the case of the latter) each human being (if not all things) is essentially a part.

Accept this thesis or reject it, but should you search in these poems (through 'intelligent reasoning') for beautiful sentiments, illusions of all things pleasant (so as not to be disturbed) you are to be gravely disappointed, for if it is the 'reasoning, conscious mind' that controls you entirely and stifles all imagination (so as to avoid the loss of a snug shelter, but at the same time, so as also to suffocate the spirit) you are barred from ever knowing the 'other sense' that makes beauty and ugliness absolute and not relative (and therefore good and bad are also absolute and not relative to each other) and fuses all things into one whole, fitting each element into the pattern; you are also barred from having all the hundreds of inexplicable things of our daily lives made clear; you are barred too from accepting them with the graciousness that the visit to these 'other spheres' ensures as your innermost possession.

Should this appear smug, may I add that even an imbecile can fly through the sky of his imagination to these 'other spheres', but since our conscious minds argue 'logically' and then impose (through civilisations and conventions which we create) many tough barriers (such as the worry to save enough money for a new car or a new dress until it becomes an obsession), we consequently must suffer pain, and often humiliation by being

called 'dreamers', 'unpractical', 'mad' to free our imaginations and give them their rightful powers. Instead we commonly 'relax' (as does a bankrupt man in being drunk) in the vices hidden within our civilisation, and against which our sense would convulse in revolt, if they were not already smothered. Thus as a result of the suppression of the imagination there is the misfortune of artists who become perverts, or scholars (e.g. scientists, etc.) who grow bitter on the emptiness of their life-long search, or even the clergymen who fail to communicate their 'message' to their people because their imaginations are too dead to allow them to imagine 'realistically' their peoples' needs so as to be able to give the people such measures of sympathy and understanding as they require. Impractical though this man seems, the road-worker (who has had his imagination stimulated) can see that his toiling is for a monumental work, and not necessarily because some people are poor and others are wealthy, merely as a result of an unjust world. The conflict found in these poems is exclusively centred around this continual murdering of that which is essentially us – the spiritual and even physical (in the sense of highly developed senses) part of us. It is the lack of this element of unexplorable powers, which we do possess, that brought about the 'twentieth century sterility and futility', since science and the machine advanced at tremendous speeds and the dormant Victorian mind could form no perspective, but rather sunk into the thick mire of a pitch-like pessimism. The new age demanded lives lived at a feverish speed and tension to ensure both the production of quantity and also the existence of an extraordinary high efficiency – this assisted the spiritual chaos grossly; there was (and is even now) no time for anything that would not bring material gain.

To allow oneself 'to feel' (as a result of an emotion, which has been conceived in the imagination, and consequently which has been projected to the senses as completely and realistically as could ever be desired, and often more realistically than could be wished) is 'to live'. The power of the imagination is such as to allow the sense to experience a range of emotions, which would be impossible to have ever known through mere physical reactions to actual incidents and provocations. The more freedom the imagination has, the intenser life becomes, the broader becomes the vision, the greater becomes the want to sympathetically understand all things, and the more real becomes the vast conquest of being at one with the infinite. Any form of art can, therefore, hardly be solely the production of the reasoning powers of man, but that does not mean that these reasoning powers are to be disregarded – indeed they are the strong spices in the rich dish. The imagination creates, the reason selects, sorts out, and presents the material in a form that makes it understandable.

To my mind poetry has five dimensions, which I shall present in order of importance.

- i) some form of emotion (ecstasy, elation, even illusion, as well as horror, pain)
- ii) imagery (to contain the emotion)
- iii) music (symphonic *and* cacophonous)
- iv) structure (without which a poem will collapse, since it would then be frozen in the thick jelly of being dis-jointed and static)
- v) sense (this is the foundation of structure)

This is, of course, by no means all that contributes to the strange phenomenon of poetry, but it is as far as my mind can penetrate its constitution, and it seems to me that when a poem contains these five dimensions, it also has those ‘inexplicable’ things that make poetry – in lacking any of these, verse seems to fail in creating the moving but ‘unknown’ (rather ‘indefinable’)¹ force within a pattern of images, contained in a musical (cacophonous or harmonious) combination of words.

Finally to quote from Dame Edith Sitwell’s notes to her ‘Collected Poems’ (1957):

B u t

the greatest of all rhythmic patterns, those not made by the hand of Man, have been misapprehended. The otherwise great mind of Bishop Burnet, who died in 1715, was so seriously disturbed by the unsymmetrical arrangement of the stars that he rebuked the Creator for His lack of technique. ‘What a beautiful hemisphere they would have made,’ he exclaimed, ‘if they had been placed in rank and order; if they had all been disposed in regular figures... all finish and made up into one fair piece, or great composition, according to the rules of art and symmetry.’

We must not complain, therefore, if the patterns in the humble works of Man are not perceived immediately by the unobservant.

19:ii:1958

1 There is no doubt that ‘poetry’ can be instinctively and instantly recognised without knowing exactly why it exists in that particular form, in that particular phrase, that particular half line, or in those particular lines, in which it is to be found. And even though ‘possible’ reasons could be presented, not even a combination of these would bring about a ‘scientific’ explanation, since it is of the emotional, even of the primitive, in man.

STARK STEEL

My soul is like steel in the night
at zero where the dew is sister to ice;
I have grown white like a bleached
floral frock whose life has outlived
the marriage of many winters,
yet out of this glare of lights
against a white wall, out
of the marble in solid chunks
red sparks of slow dying coals
cunningly conceal their dying lives
in pains numbing them to frost-bitten
toes or gums after a dentist-needle
injection;
 what heat of electric heaters
or water bottles (filled from the tropical
waters boiled in a tropical sun
of a hundred degrees at midday) shall
save me on this ice-icinged
sea before I burst against the
iceberg to flame the last life
in black flames epilogued slowly
by my white (cold white) death?

21.x:1957
Stark Steel I

A prophetic thunderbolt to a new globed world
(like a tympani roll to a tender symphony)
Sputnik (a continent now discovered – as great
as Christ’s Calvary or the tablets of Moses)
glides graciously in the grandeur of the new
popish cloak my age has designed – yes,
even made for the sour old men called
human masses and their white bitter tongues,
their gutless bellies full of watery indulgent
gin – that smugness that ferments as rotted
manures in silage; it is a blood-redemption
from that pyramid-age superstition and these
skull-rotting narrow mental passage walls!

24:x:1957
Stark Steel II

My eyes were ripped from their natural
home and two raw red-with-blood
hollows faced horror-filled out to where
death stood and yet I saw and yet
I lived, like a body slowly refrigerated
my limbs were
for my soul was
electrocuted and shrivelled like the dead
skin in the thousandth year of preservation,
my mind grew as dim as twilight where
the sun never rises and became like a
body sucked twenty feet down into the
marsh's black-hell-clinging, sucking
mud; death was there in yellow and it
turned black with anger at my life
tearing out my tongue of love mercilessly
in jury-judgment of my campaign for
life, where time gorges with his tusks our
lives and every friend an atomic bomb
whó explodes leaving you an ashed-mess
but intact without the collapsing of the
body's iron doors to free the sun-loving
soul, even parents turn to be blood-seas
of angry fury lashing in their love a
hell;
must I live with the barbed wire
six inches deep in every inch of flesh
that is my body, must I breathe the

chlorine, must I taste the dying soot,
must I hear the continual exploding fall
of every breath?

25:x:1957
Stark Steel III

I have suffered the nails through the
flesh into wood, I am suffering vast yawning
radium burns now, in the million pains of
poisoned splinters (in the soft, personal hand),
I pay for the grandly unique gifts – so starkly
lofty my eyes are, watered by the life of the
sun, before I see the summit of their infinitely
sculptured heads; I am isolated – one minute germ
away from all vibrating cells, an island of murmuring
rock in an ice ocean; my thread does not
weave into the rich red velvets of all my
friends and my enemies – united into a
circle in the arsenic they pour daily down my
throat and the caustic soda which burns to
liquid drops my quivering windpipe; to salvage my
twilight life-breath I have to cut the inspiredly
deified bonds of golden-imaged afternoons, leisurely
mornings sun-bathing in frivolity, all interwoven
with those long frost-nights where the unity of
sheep wool from their spirits warm my shivering
limbs in the empty rounded steel room of
loneliness and calm my rumbling depression-talk;
I have to use a thirteen-bladed butcher-knife
to fréé my mind from the sadistic razor blades
they delight in plunging till they are
buried in my soft-white pudding (and
yét pastry-warm) delicate face
bruised at birth!

1:xi:1957
Stark Steel IV

Much rather the lemon juice slightly bittered
after many days' death (devoid of even a ripple
in the glass) than all the waters of
hot springs in their friendship or the cool
streams and their ice acquaintances;
rather the hours like a stick-in-sand
region of a thousand miles without green
or the r6ck in the oceanic territories of
navy blue – for now my pain is
only the draught of bitter beers not tinted
by sweet regrets letting reminiscences make
drunk and inane my tensely carved
limbs and veil off with thin sheets of
iron the vision of rainbows

and the vision of
burning cigarettes near an alcoholic tank;
now objectivity is as clear as algebraic
figures on the geometrical design whose
solution is the infinite judgment on me
falling
to my soft (but iron-nailed) fingers in
gracious movements of the calm sea
who hides in her depth coffin-black
experiences of hard hammer blows onto toe nails!

8:xi:1957
Stark Steel V

The heart is child to the head,
fondled like a child's teddy bear
its freedom flies unbounded like
the swift swallows and its will
is allowed by the strict order
of mental nuns when impossibility
does not imprison it in cold cloister
walls – each stone a reality of
human living, its whims are
cultivated like orchids for
a queen, cherished by the mother
as the widow her isolated
marriage day and guarded as
the lioness her cubs, jealously
possessed as a state its rich
gold fields or vast diamond pipes
and cared for as the patient dying
in the boxing match of light and dark;
yet when she has run into flooded
rivers of foreign possessiveness or volcanic
regions of another's merciless teasing
and scratching of her soft skin
with agitation the heart is taken
(against her will) into the nursery
and the head maternally lifts her
rifle to ward off the reptiles advancing
on her child till they fall apart like
fencing poles in soggy earth!
tomorrow
she wakes red-eyed tired, a young

girl ripped from her first love to find
a silk sympathetic mother but whose
firm sinew-tough hand guides away
from needle pricks and particles
thrown at the eyes intentionally;
saved (not free from sabre cuts) the heart's
pattern (plaited with experience) fills her
growing knowledge of breath with stones
whose gem-like quality sparkles beyond
the ultimate dim territories of understanding.

15:xi:1957

Stark Steel VI

As odd as orange with purple
spots for an evening frock so
are their presentations of themselves,
like dirtily dressed men (lounging
late in dark and smelling streets)
shakedly but loudly telling of
the vulgar sexy gurglings of the
drinking bar's invention to amuse
the hazy world of the brain (whose
stomach is stretched down low by
liquor) they display their tales at
dinner like smelly dirty washing
distributed in a lady's boudoir;
uncouthed (like leather from where the
hair is not removed) they become
a red robot to all human vegetation
around them

for their fumes are filled
with spirits and a spark of criticism
makes them psychopathic – irresponsible
for the slaughter they will do diligently;
these are they (whose bull-strong and
sculptor-envied torsos – so well wrought
in the sun – hide uncaged lusts as
a dark barn the flea-beridden rats)
and whose uncertain lives lend them
the drive (given a rugby ball to
score a try) to do what sadists

revel in as the Romans at their
midday meals!

20:xi:1957
Stark Steel VII

As there are both right tracks and left
tracks to railroads (valueless
one without the other) so I live
both spiritual and physical
lives (an eye without a cornea
is the one from the other);
physically I live like a
sensitive, spirited horse awake to
every sound or move like a
surgeon in the operation theatre,
yet that's the first crust – the outer
veil; underneath the spiritual world
is greatly throbbing where Death is the
lover and Life the good husband –
the one excites, the other protects;
in book shops shaded from the
sun or in lonely alleys after the
turn of day Death meets me and
then my blood rushes with
thrills like a pointer's at the far-
off sight of a buck, and in wild
drives in black expensive motor
cars we race through vast
countries along roads ever-changing
in their vegetation and topography –
from dense tropical forests to temperate
plains, from mountains to flat deserts,
and at high tension we live like
Elizabethan pirates – as restless as
beautiful sables in a zoo enclosure,

we fight and idealise like lovers
continually – both hurting and
satisfying greatly in tense poetic
experiences; and then there
is Life – he fondles me tenderly
as a spinster her pup or
a father his year-old son,
he guards the palace of my
life and gently argues about
my extravagance in consuming
so much energy, with such a
blazing flame when less heat
would last till the century
turns bald and grey without
emergency calls for his healing
ointment to soothe my over-vibrating
body before it snaps like an over-
tense violin string; I listen
only until Death incenses me
with his mad whirling dance
and I grow berserk with emotion
while I turn in a crushing
fast hurricane till I collapse
as floppy as a soaked black
suit, and then Life comes and
consoles me with sweet peas
of love and the draught of an
intoxicating sleep to regain former
inner storage of tin-preserved
energy;

so I live – each day a
century minutely packed full of
ever-increasing duality, together as
intense and impenetrable as all
the ice of both poles together
floating in the mass of one continent!

18:xi:1957
Stark Steel VIII

Oh how I long for the city of
true human greatness where the
white marble columns of the
brain's security rise up against the
evening sky of visual delights;
where men and women of
marvellously carved physiques
carry graciously camel-burdening
responsibilities knowing themselves
to be the many seeds that are the God –
they swim in the magnificently set
blue swimming pools of peace;
where the very imperfect is petted
like a glossy cat and yoked
like oxen to a plough furrowing
up the hard surface of ignorance
allowing vines of understanding to
grow in the richness of the newly
revealed soil of knowledge yielding
grapes of vast achievements, the place
whose very shores are the barriers to
the dark gloomy mountain-faces and ravines
of sharp-edge horrors and distorted-face
acts – all converging in an erupting island
out at sea; where the Mediterranean sun
burns bronze the backs of men
with love for the great creations from
flowers to the mountains, from
a stone to a majestic cathedral,
from a portrait to mathematics; and

where black and white (man and woman) are different only to the rays galloping to the eye – so much one as the water in the clouds and pure water on earth; the city where the opera of human unity is sung in the ancient Greek moonlit theatre of civilisation to people who know to love like lovers and hate with the discretion of a true connoisseur in the wines at the select dinner – so giving love her right adornments; oh I long for this city where beauty is as usual as clouds and peace as frequent as rain, where graciousness spreads out her desirous limbs daily and the intricate colours in the crystal of living is fully within our perception, where human senses are bred as well as racing horses and the intellects practise so that they have the muscles of a javelin thrower and the great swiftness of a sprinter, where age is the honours given for the life-time's devotion to living completely (as totally as materials can be worked into exquisite garments) and death the passage to a greater city where all bonds are in the gold of delights and eternity is the very air;

oh how I long (madly as primitives
for rain in dry seasons after they've had
magic sessions of night-like superstitions) for
this city wrapped up in prophetic mists
and dreams (where the ground does not
exist and all things are not corporeal)
till longing grows on me like delicate wings
to fly my imagination there!

21:xi:1957
Stark Steel IX

Golden, exquisitely the drops of moments
(when the heart swells out like balloons
with the grey tinted gas of emotion)
lingered suspendedly from the bough of
my healing-scabbed mind and now
I breathe a new air in a quieter
light of a year rocking less
exertingly and gradually the smile of
composed peace (as aesthetic as
fingers and fingernails of hourly care,
as mighty as marble) fully understanding-
filled in the aged oaken wine barrel
of the mind (dimmed away by the
facial veil) is; and now I understand
the long novel through whose many
penned pages I have lived and I
dimly perceive why its cover was
designed in suffering while new
voices choir out to me gently within
my music and out of my calm,
superbly calm world (not corporeal
but real – more concrete than any
mountain-kopje) unfolds thoughts
whose boundaries are on new gardens
but who know hell as an electrician
the fascinating lights that flicker in
cities nightly; now my burning flamed-
lily soul is cooling to a soft
unpretentious mauve-pink and the
spray of living waters me with the

sublime – sea-fresh and (like a
good perfume) long and constantly
selectedly expensive.

22:xii:1957
Stark Steel X

The fiery grudge (fattening vastly
in my soul with each new scratch)
shé hacks out on my body already
calcified in the second year of
suspended living between heaven
and earth giving slowly my aged
convulsing heart a twist as a
washing machine the linen – white
an hour before, and yet I exist
while the restraint of the grudge
enfolds flea-beridden bat wings
around my body and their old
stifling filth dries up my nostrils –
so slowly blocking my sickly windpipe!
and shé the saint (whose head
and heart are cast iron, whose mind
is chained to Bible and church,
whose righteousness gives her satanic
power over those dying beneath her)
prostitutes her mind to luring promises
of spite and hís compatriots and
lies surround her as a python an
animal – she that is a saint and
feeds fat my ever-fattening grudge!

13:i:1958

Stark Steel XI

In us your water is blood,
in us your soil grows to flesh,
from your womb comes our gold,
in death you give our
bodies rest and we yield back
those limbs you gave us awhile.

Then rises our anthem like smoke
to sing of our blistered hands,
then rises our love like fire
to sing of your dust that is us!

And your agéd kopjes give life
to our weary eyes and hearts,
the sight of mealies growing tall
tells us of your throbbing
love distilling in us
the mind's mystery that makes
each pebble a king's throne.

Then rises our anthem like smoke
to sing of our blistered hands,
then rises our love like fire
to sing of your dust that is us!

16:i:1958
Stark Steel XII

What is this, this thorn that
 pains with a pale pain my
heart long since horn-dry,
long since dead with longing?

What is this, this face in
gold surrounded, with a girdle
of red and gold on this gown
that drapes over princely shoulders?

What is this thing that dims
my eyes and shows me a
new world of protective hedges
locked closely in strong arms?

What is this hand that holds
my hand and flows to me
a strength murdering horror,
making Death wriggle in pain?

What is this that makes me fear
the strong loving mountains in blue eyes
and yét be brave in flames that
fume in the fat body of brown eyes?

17:i:1958

Stark Steel XIII

Like a pillar rising to
a temple from out the smoke
of calmness (the illness that
this germ, this pain of all
disillusion, this crushing of
the love-mill brings as a dowry)
is that now hall of time's design.

And are not we the fire?
and are not we the ring –
the dirty ring of blood and sulphur?
and are we not the wood
for the flame of killing (in fresh
slaughters) the soul's many
stages that are pregnant with beauty?

Yes! yes we áre, and did
God keep his promise of his
artistic mercy as our birthday
right burning through every fragment?
no, never in the moment's territories,
then the nipple of life is torn
from our deeply cracked lips then stone!

Only in the soft arms – so white –
of time does Hé remember the
lover's promise rashly given in

passionate nights of a billion years,
only shé can caress our lusty scabs
to soft white skin (then scarred)
only to fertilise that bitch – memory!

29:i:1958
Stark Steel XIV

Tears and vision intermingle like
the crowd at the horse races
and I am tired, worn like
the black horse (already old) drawing
the terrible cart of money, more money;
and as bitter as the old poet
disillusioned and dead a century
before his death.

And where are they who gave
me garlands of praise and guarded
me from the tumbling débris of
our civilisation? forgotten, forgotten –
oh God, forgotten am I as the
old car who carried us so
faithfully so long and now long
muck, only twisted.

Oh Death, come and save me
from this poisoning, come and free
my mind from its polio so early
before the twentieth year of my
term of office, come and slash
with your sickles the fine thread
twisted around me one million
times more often than I can
endure!

My soul, rest like a boulder
on the mountain, rest in this
heavy weather, rest and rest –
for there it comes the convoy
of trucks loaded with grown
emotions matured in the mellow
weed of pain, there are the
beautiful aircrafts flying high
to take you into the spheres'
pools where endless minerals are
the strength that builds conquests!

10:ii:1958
Stark Steel XV

The belly yellow with festering,
the black hand coaled in flames,
the eye hard and dried on cement,
the abortion mess in the kitchen –
are these the Christmas decorations
of our fineness as floppy as jam?

The suicide's body, the rotting weed,
the tumbling building, the cancered face,
the leukaemia blood, the human mince in
the train accident, the terror of blood –
are these the fruits packed tightly in
the hovel called 'civilised world'?

Not in this circle (spinning lopsided)
shall I ever know but the passing and
the beginning are in the same jar,
in the samé liquid and we are
drinking like desert walkers; what mists
arise
for the blacker fogs and
the sun (poor old soul) died yesterday
suddenly in the pip of the night;
desolation has since been impregnating
óur universe with despairs – his twelve-
eyed cobras;
then a little drop

(neglected by the scourge of humidity)
suspends a moment, attracts my dull
eye rays into its centre where a
rainbow is, and there is hope
locked in other drawers!

15:ii:1958
Stark Steel XVI

On the Loud Reading:*

The first two parts would need a passionate outcry, as it were. Between them and the third part, there is a distinct break to denote time passing. Then comes the same voice but unmistakably calmed, mellowed (and aged) during the time that has elapsed.

*Editorial note:

The poet has made suggestions at the end of some poems as to how the should be read

No criticism is intended: on finding it, the essence of the poem must be sacrificed. Then too the emotion (which I hope the images convey) of the vision created within me, must be totally smothered.

A return to the God that is in us
(as ill bodies return to the
mineralled waters they drink for
a health black in the murky
smoke of obscurity) is embryoning in
the egg shell of our minds once
rotten with wars, with twentieth
century diseases – that thick leprosy
known as freedom, but now a
new breath issues from life's nostrils
and its ingredient is a fresher life to
awake a greater freedom in our
hearts and to impregnate our minds
with a greater child – that responsibility
that the deadening dull dirge of face-deep
morals murdered in its mad misanthropy
while the church chuckled in the choice
of years spreading their yards on the
life highway of low-ebbed humanity
till the tumbling terror of the thick tide
encroached around the easy ambling
dictators of the soul dulling our senses
but now their buttery arguments are

bad

for the obscure crevices (that obliterate
any question endangering the almond in the
cake of safety) have crumbled for the clergy!

That return to the God that is in us
I saw in the white glare of a
newer vision but the church is
not the God nor the archbishopric
draped in the sweet honey of respect
nor the statesman with his money'd
paunch – no, not anything, yet
everything and church and state are only
jutting cliff-like chunks of the jig-saw
existence that circles all the soils of all things!

18:ii:1958

Stark Steel XVII

On the Loud Reading:

It must be taken at a swing in order to use the longest breaths possible. But above everything else the whole poem must be greatly sustained and it must always flow so as never to become harassing, for it is no criticism, but rather a 'vision'. Between the commas of lines 7 and 9, the voice must sink to a lower register. After the comma in line 9 a short pause would be well placed so as to denote what the new 'breath' is to bring to us. With accumulating force (but not by rushing) the exclamation mark of line 26 ought to be reached. From line 27 is the ultimate triumph and with a deliberate quality of finality and fatality the poem states to where the 'return' is. Thus the final lines must leave the impression of the very end of the issue emotionally and (if you so choose) intellectually.

The £80,000 bridge at Kariba had fallen, and the turbulent Zambesi had taken it as a hostage. An old Pongo headsman said, 'The white man shall never tame the great Zambesi.'

Eastern Province Herald – 22:ii:1958.

'Not I, not my maddening rush
shall you surround in engineering battles!
and in a gull-like sweep the river
lashed down (as a blade on an
animal neck) over the bridge once thick in
its steel power now thinning to a flour.
'There is no wire-netting man can
cultivate to cage me into a dam!
and life after life it handcuffed –
that river that charged into the earth
by its descent as planes storm into
battle after their ascent.

And howling endlessly (like a tractor
cutting the soil) it surged around
the coffer dam as vultures around
a carcass and at last the lion
gained his prey, at least the elephant
crushed the tree and (sinking like the Titanic)
this queen lazily turned over to
the enticing promises of a frustrated
lover;

'The bridge! the bridge!' they yelled
and tears stung like tsetse flies,
it was the quaking of the heart's soils

that made those blue and brown globes
glitter so thickly, it was admiration
and rage (high temperatured anger) that
mixed together for the shaking of taut
limbs;

and the triumphant army
parade of the grand old man swelled
further to slowly reflect the praise of
an approving sun in a spite at his
enemies;

poor old bearded monarch of many
rivers! now you've signed the ugly
card of your captivity and that youth-like
freedom (that made you flow for
all the centuries of Africa's age)
will in months of not many years
be a myth moulded in a mouldy
past of a pagan's reign and a river's worship!

22:ii:1958

Stark Steel XVIII

On the Loud Reading:

The poem should be taken at a steady but rhythmical pace. The darker, lower middle register would be ideal, save for the direct speech (which should be done at a sharper pitch). The fourth portion, to convey conflict, must, however, come into the full middle register or even in the upper middle register, and the last two lines of the fifth portion (which for the first few lines should be in the lower middle register for a marching effect) must rise into the upper middle register to give 'in spite' an extra string. Only in the last portion would the very deep and subdued shades of the true lower register be effective.

The wind's beautiful fingers
are in my hair!
How odd is the cool spray
she throws to my face lightly
as her love!
How wide the area now given
my eyes to wander over in
their search for the gems in those
hot places of the brain where
my soul's gold melts and runs
lost forever into the little earth
funnels leading to the caves of
forgotten moments, forgotten days.
And she the wind (that blows
as regularly as sunlight and
night come and then passionately
races away) she knew me in
other times when the soft horn of my
dreams gave tonic to my senses,
she knew me while I travelled
in the sleek black limousine of
conquests!

And now she holds my
hand silently in sympathy and we
stand before the open grave where
the coffin of my soul is already
placed and the first handful of
dust is already thrown down.

4:iii:1958
Stark Steel XIX

On the Loud Reading: [*Stark Steel XIX*]

If the approach is intimate and very direct, while the voice remains subdued, the 'quiet' turbulence will be best projected. The exclamation marks indicate the need of some force, whereas the full stop shows the need for greater flowing qualities. Each capital letter shows a new phase, and this must be indicated, even by a slight pause if need be.

The nun lifting her eyes
(shaded too long by the walls of
devotion, devoid too long from
the flow of electric lights' many
neon shades) glides on.

And her robe, her robe that
was crested before a twentieth
century, that had in it the
chemicals flowing in the umbilical
cord of a new life that is
bodying in a body tender with
thought.

But it is the life she
gives that is substantiated by the
spirit and giving she also pays
for the medical attention with a
dehydrating of her womanhood
and with a long bitterness rolling out as
an endless tarred highway walks
bowedly on endlessly to the front and to the
back it seems of no starting point.

She grows to be an empty house –
perhaps a hovel that is too cold
for us,

but she has done the other
great academic course at the
university of life.

5:iii:1958
Stark Steel XX

On the Loud Reading:

The approach must be very direct, creating a sense of starkness –
it is ‘the narrative of a serious event that has been observed by the
reader himself.’

Forever soaring with thin strong steel
wings of an aircraft aimed at
the gorgeous gaiety of that gale-sweeping
moment when the murmurings of
happiness heave like excited
lungs breathing in the beautiful air
of flushed cheeks at the flowing
crystallisation of a dream cut out
of that woollen soft wood deeply
rooted in the soul's centre of
the physical palace!

And I
feel within the feathered body whose
wings dare the howling winds in
their ghoulish attempts at my slow
ambling enlightenment.

In this time
the spirit pulls together the powerful
forces (deeply embellished in tragic
dusk and the dawn-expectation of a
greater Vatican city's glory) throwing
my normal jellied life into new spaces
of light, throwing my soul to
infinity's plains green in the grass
whose growth springs from our creations.

How great then this spirit filled with
the sun and draped in the moon's
fashion, how great this spirit that

is the spiral tower into the skies, how
great is this spirit that grows the
fruit we eat, the wheat we mow, that
fertilises for the milk we drink and the honey
our lips suck softly into our minds,
how great its power of more
than ten hundred million awe-spinning
machines to guard love and the
visions of love in the moments of triumph
and elevated heights!

14:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXII

On the Loud Reading:

A sweeping lyrical approach would best bring out the 'swinging' movement in this poem. A sense of elation is quite essential, needless to say that it must therefore not be 'breathy', but that a steady flow of sounds (quite clear and beautiful) is to the best advantage.

I am bilious at their vocal sounds
filled with the scholarly enunciation
acting as the burnt portion to the cake!

And
they (poor scaleless fishes) they fuse
their scholarship (as large and as eruptive
as cylinders of gas near a flame and as valueless
as the punctured valve in a bicycle tube) into
the phenomena of two plus three equals
three plus two!

Then strutting (breasts
pumped out into a balloonish swell)
they display their grandeur as the vain
dove in the awe of the eagle golden
in his grace and blood against the other's duller
grey tincture!

And blessed be all if théy
would but be splashed out like a
small road puddle by a heavy truck's
wheels – but no!

they jump around like
a squib on Guy Fawkes night and
let free the foolish fumes of their inner
dilemma to infect the world with the
scabless sores of that disease!

When these
combine with those overgrown monstrosities
(whose brain power is converted (as water
into electricity) to the horrible mass of flesh
seeming as disproportioned as the dwarf (whom they

fear in form) and as ill placed as
London's St. Paul's in an African village)
then please explain:

 why do we exist
other than to be the rats that
carry the hideous black plague to life?

16:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXIII

On the Loud Reading:

Needless to say it must be forceful, passionate,
dramatic, painfully clear and bitingly cynical!

POEMS OF DEDICATION

To Professor Barbara

She enters in the glow that shines
through two ages and slowly (with
the composure spun into her face
by time) her hand opens the book.

And from the book her
mind penetrates the atom centres
of each ray that each being
projects out like a spray.

Then

her voice (in the flowering of
its autumnal flower) quivers slightly
in the already cold wind of a
lengthened year between the winters
of birth and death.

And she gives
the transparent crystal fruits that make
our souls kindle a fire into our cheeks.

She is the new ointment that
gives the touch of healing better than the
herbs we used – yet its oils
have come from wells existing before

time passages already covered in the black
cloth of yesterday, of historians' wildest
calculations.

That woman is at one
with a hundred forces of a strength whose
hands save us from sinking into the
pitch, from dying of hunger!

And she has
circled her life into the million years
contained in the plants of a billion
eternal-broad ages!

15:iii:1958
Stark Steel XXIV

On the Loud Reading:

The approach must be deliberate and if lyrical in its flow,
then certainly also dramatic in its quality. Again the
sense of finality must be projected – the poem must seem
complete to the very last detail.

To Professor Howarth

In the guiding lights glittering
in the garden in their thousand
heaven-shades of blue and the blood
shades of red I found my
recess of ideas in the basket
knotted in the reeds of understanding
by his fingers who was to pull
from my mind's back the cold
thick grey mantle of severe living
freeing my soul in the stars regions
of symphonies and richly velvete
robes flowing away with the golden
braid of friendship adorned so
well that the muscle-rider on the
galloping pen sucked his life-blood
from this jet-collar spraying out a
dark drink that soothes the soul's
throat and feeds its hungry stomach
till strength trickles in every sphere
and every muscle – such is
his legacy to me in the mellowing
summer winds of time and in the
hundreds of master paintings from
which he drew the oval-gold grapes (leaving
those that were sour) to let us know
the nut within the shell and not
mistake the oak's acorn as our
food and such is he that his

wings (embroidered richly) transverse
the many skies and his eyes see
many things in the loveliness of
the year!

19:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXV

On the Loud Reading:

The poem must be 'exotic' and elevated passing through the 'richness' of the imagery with a gracious, beautifully moving (like a dancing ballerina) lyricism contained in the sensuously-stimulating mellowness of a rich voice, which clearly projects the continuously flowing rhythm and its breath-sustained sweep!

To Mevrou Bax-Botha

Kindliness came from her as
the olives come at their time to feed
with oils of love and such
was her grace that it hovered
over the long table of a thousand
sweet-odouring incense-offerings from
the golden dishes filled with foods of
humanity that make beggars of them
who had refused life (their host's)
many requests to eat in the
summer garden and fill with
juices of understanding so to aid
the soul's growth and maturity in
the schools of time till ultimately
they march and the car of grandeur
(chauffeured by grace) can carry them (as
it can her spirit) to the fields where the
long green ovals and the game of
laughing-cricket throw exploding
bombs in the face of austere cynicism
and bitterness growing from self-greatness
in the self-visions of self-magnificence –
such is she!

19:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXVI

On the Loud Reading:
The same as for *Stark Steel XXIV*

To Tant Euske

(Eugénie Klink-van Ketwich Verschuur)

Heaving up like a magnificent
breaker she crashes down into
the vast heavens of sound and
emotion is as turbulent as
the roaring winds moving and
carrying this very orb in their speed
so lifting the golden ball of the
soul into the highest skies of
the sun's regions beyond smothering
clouds making it glisten brilliantly –
and almost in the same instant
they plunge the same spirit's gold
into the thickest mire (deepest pitch,
hottest lava) making it convulse
and shiver in the dying of depression!

So she lives graciously moving
in the hurricane; austerely beautiful
in the regal moments of her
silence she penetrated that thing, that
emotion to its deepest, most obscure
caves richly filled with the gem-like
treasures and beauty (even painful
beauty) that are washed by the dancing
enticing sea of music and rising
up (like the great rock-faced mountain)

she rules them to subservience and
remains a queen!

And I am
her heir in the spirit-blood and the
spirit-body!

23:iii:1958
Stark Steel XXVII

On the Loud Reading:

It must be passionate, but subtly so, and if the pitch is
high, it must also be controlled with the greatest clarity.

To Tercia

In the glow of the electric
lamp given to me in my
seventeenth home of living I
always linger to be warmed
and loved as the tiny
buck an hour after his birth
and shé raises in me
the long string of painted oils
that hang so magnificently in
the art gallery of great reminiscences
for her chicken-fur softness has
in it the strong steelish wires
that bind us (her slaves) and
what an autocratic duchess she
is!

Time is her domain, love
her psychiatric treatment to trim
our souls and words her great
poetic creations which possess us
as totally as the earth possesses
the air encircling around it in
great flattery for she was born a
Royal Highness and selfishness may
be her castle but giving is her
country!

24:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXVIII

On the Loud Reading: [To Tercia]

The 'Brahmsian' sweep must carry the whole poem – almost as if it were done in one breath. The illusion must be created of the whole poem being no more than one remarkably long lyrical phrase in a song, and the tempo is no more than an allegretto. There is also a grandeur and touch of austerity that must be projected and preserved throughout the vocal presentation. Then too, there is the element that seems as if the reader (the loud reader) has a slight smile, though quite subdued, on his lips – this ought also to create an intimacy.

To Estelle

She is as fickle and as
constant as any weather-changing
day and compels us to ride her
horses of playing cars or satirical
mimicry, yet the bulldozer of
her annoyance I fear quite sensibly
and to oppose her is to be
bombed by her sound-breaking
aircraft-mind which sees the journey's
end in view twenty-seven hours
before her opposing pole that melts
in her arguments throwing off
their sparks like an engineer's
welding process!

And so beautiful too in her
laughing jewellery and gorgeous
designed robes of wit that
Queen Bess's spirit disintegrates in
thick envy for she makes her suitors
go squint-eyed and stupid
at her very entrance!

She has all entangled in her
sellotape!

24:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXIX

On the Loud Reading: [To Estelle]

This poem is a very intricate and fast dance; there is also a fiery element that must come through. Vitality and energy must be projected in abundance, but a great clarity (almost with a diamond sparkle) must dominate. If it were a song, a very forceful coloratura soprano would sing it, and her voice would have the mezzo-soprano mellow dramatic quality, rather than the more lyrical elements. It could also be greatly suited to a tenor with a baritone texture. If this singer had to have an orchestral accompaniment, she/he would 'ride' on it as it were! The tempo is rather a *molto allegro* than a *presto*. Owing to the nature of the poem, care must be taken that each sound has its full value and that the images come through without having been 'damaged'.

To Monica

In the quieter moments at the
tea of subtle relations she is always
the hostess and her graciousness is
the sweetest milk I ever knew, her
smile the state's honours for great
deeds since she is in seventeen
years seventy years – a Jane Austen
she is also in another sphere –
where firmness is the hedge to
a home of understanding's Greek-aged
vine-pillars and handling the well-shaped
gables, where life never dares to
throw out any dangerous radio-active
substance not to disobey by howling
like a whining motorcycle engine!

She wears the shoes of another dignity
and opens the show of precious
moments better than any other lady
I know!

24:iii:1958
Stark Steel XXX

On the Loud Reading:

This poem has an austerity that must make it seem quite grand. It is also serious. Elegance and grace are the

dominating elements, while the Brahmsian lyricism and long phrases must also be sustained and projected by a clear delivery. A well-developed middle register would be ideal. The seriousness and dignity need to be well sustained throughout the vocal delivery and the poem tends to be subdued.

In the murky oilish-black
air of youth and its horrid uncertainty
my eyes torch-danced their rays
in one greater instant and
what I saw was a wonder of
beauty unsuspectedly engraved in
the centre-most man!

And the streamers of
sensitivity blew in the breeze
of vision across the sun's sky of
knowing other things and there were
marble statues in the vast cities of
achievement yet to come, yet to
be brought through the pain of
birth but broad was his ever-broadening back
and great his frame and the
sweep of his hand had the grandeur
of certainty!

And I shrunk back
in admiration into the obscurity of
blankest white sheets of paper.

25:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXXI

On the Loud Reading:

The approach must be almost starkly direct, and a certain sense of austerity must be projected. The middle (or second part) must have a 'Brahmsian' sweep of the most intense and flowing lyricism. The last part is dramatic but subdued.

To Dorothy Fairlie

Friendship is not bought by years
but given in moments
and the voice and the eye and the
interests are the several blossoms in
that posy, but who is to know
of it in the rush of racing cars and
the cacophony of road-making
machines?

She does! she knows and moving as
gently as a limousine in a
coronation procession she fills her
handbag with those ear-rings and
handkerchiefs that bind friendship
in their mixture and she forgets not
to give coffee to the sleeping relationships
or the dinner-party of well spiced thoughts
and so she slowly fills (drop after
drop) the glass of her life from which
her friends do drink.

And she walks
on another rich carpet of living in
the knowing maroon wool that is
in the drawing-room of another age's
greatness!

25:iii:1958
Stark Steel XXXII

On the Loud Reading:

The poem needs to project an elegance, and the 'Brahmsian' sweep must persist all the way through its vocal delivery. The whole poem must create the illusion of an endless flow of breath – there must be no feeling of strain and the audience must not feel the need for another breath.

To Esther

In another time when there
were the soft heater rays of knowing
things together I met her and in
the coldness of that year, in the
dirty rain of aimlessness she
became a nurse and that slight
ether relaxed my limbs for the foul
months of the operation-theatre's hell.

Her warmth radiates
into a million corners and never
in an ice-cube is her soul
that has the flush of the red poinsettia
with the tints of the fading
jacaranda and (as over endless
plains) she (in her soft breeze) glides
over and observes the many humans
that are at the game of losing or
winning to lose again!

And she too
has a vision that is of brick
but has the grand-domed observatory's
vast telescopic range!

26:iii:1958
Stark Steel XXXIII

On the Loud Reading:
The poem needs an intimacy contained in the subtle variations
of the voice, and it ought to be spoken 'with a smile', as it were,
even if it is somewhat subdued.

To Hannah Blacher

Let there be critics for they
have no meat in their pie!
but she (who is as gracious as
a luxury liner) gives freely her
encouragement like one feeding the
doves and squirrels in the park
and the perfume of their joy at
her gifts lingers around her continually
so that there are always the
smiles (sprouting from her surroundings) that are
created for the decorations of the wedding
ceremony in which she is the much
adored bride!

For such sculptured steel
pillars to the pining roof of our rusty
times are her joys and creations.

26:iii:1958

Stark Steel XXXIV

On the Loud Reading:

This poem has the 'Brahmsian' sweep too, and there is an 'energetic, dancelike' quality that must be preserved. A steady flow is essential, though the resolute element in the vocal presentation must be such as not to harm either the rhythm or the imagery.

In the grey smoke of the factory
the clouds clung together in a thick
sticking mass and in the grimness
of an oil-stained day, of light
submerged into mine shafts, we
move (numbed as in polar regions)
behind the black, the hell-containing
coffin and he was dead, dead with
a cough and nothing moved!

Then
slowly the grave opened and the
soil revolted in a smothering smell
that rose in wrath like a fire
and we were ill, puking out our
souls, breathing in the air dust-filled
with grief where tears are not but
blood drips from the eyes and
I,

I had grown to be a stone
and stood already rotten at the
hour of his death – who was there
who said good and God had vast
armies to defend us, who was there?
not then, not then – only the shriek
of the locomotive's brakes, only the
howl of the man killed by the speeding
car, only the cancerous old man,
only the woman murdered in the
sixth street of hell clogged the drainage!
and my body would still breathe

but why when the soil (the last of the
depressions) was to be thrown onto him
I never knew and I was not nor
would I disintegrate but existed like the
dead white cells in a pain-energetic
operation cut festering gradually daily.

And she (that life) who had torn and ripped
out the guts of my Christ-child, could
destroy him, what of her that slid down
the tin pans into the electrically heated
waving flames in the hell wind of
a factory furnace where the burning
and frying of satisfaction is spiced
with howling of deeds irrevocable, of
deeds infecting a black plague,
crocodiles feeding on human flesh,
mincing machines mincing human bodies,
what of her? I know not!
but she, poor Iscariot, poor Hitler,
poor woman that knew not the
acids and chemicals she used, how
much more tumbling her débris, how
far more frizzling, how much more buried
under concrete slabs, steel blocks
is her life than mine that must forever
be dry and barren – know no
rain.

And he was buried while the

last rites fell on him as the back
cover to a thick book on the monastery-created
inner pages and then at home they gave
me brandy but it was not necessary,
I knew no more – living with the dead!

27:iii:1958
Stark Steel XXXV

On the Loud Reading:

The poem is closely associated with a death march. The 'deadness', experienced immediately after the terrible shock, must weigh heavily on the audience, while at the same time a passionate element must break through at certain moments during this 'freezing' process. The poem is austere and grand and thus must be greatly sustained. Then too, the horrible element (the Othello-blackness) must penetrate right through the vocal presentation, while the overwhelming weight (that is emphasised in the thickly stressed lines) must also create a feeling of being slowly sucked down, and ultimately sinking totally into a thick mire.

She too knows kindness and the
value of kindness, she too has
it preserved in moments when
the visual message of the eye
tells the brain of a monastery
manuscript so moulded in beauty
it blocks the rushing waters of
the heaving breath and makes
the eyes glow their blue light like
a midsummer sun in Scandinavia,
she too knew piercing pangs for
pain is the canvas to these
colours patterning themselves like
children at their birthday-party game.
And the humanity (that is
the fruit pollinated by pain in the
spring blossom of kindliness)
fills many moments with molten
gold.

2:iv:1958

Stark Steel XXXVI

On the Loud Reading:

The poem has a delicate, intimate quality that needs to be well projected. Again the 'Brahmsian' lyricism must create the illusion of one sustained breath for each part. There is also a serious and sympathetic quality which needs to pattern its way through the vocal delivery, and the 'richness' of the imagery (aided by consonance and assonance) ought to make it something beautiful.

ENERGY



Like feet of a hundred million
running over corrugated
iron it comes down from the black
moving smoke of a field fire –
hissing and intertwining its
mists like a world of snakes in
small cavities!

Then there is water (more than
two days' sun rays) to fill the air
and (white as the gas from
a laboratory's test tube)
it swings itself (with the rising
water smell of the soil) over
a muddy orbbed surface as
sticky as chocolate in the
million, melted and melting in
the sun!

The wind hyena-howls so that
trumpets yell and it moves and
dashes like a maddened bull on
a fired hot-plate, or like a
ballet dancer (hypnotised by
jumping) it grows madder in its
speeding movements till it must drop
down to death but instead
breaks sound barriers further,
on and on like water at sea!

The waves of white diamonds
shattered yell in sweeping
concave mirror movements over
the earth and blow themselves
into every corner till
white and black are neither but grey
smoke fills up the air rapidly
even beyond mountain peaks!

Oh the noise! bassoons berserk, they
blow like mad snorting buffaloes
and choirs fortissimo their
voices so loud every gem
splits into a thousand particles
and sprays out with a gusto
rubatoing like a racing-car
river to the sea; symphonic
variations and crumbling
marble in violins' and flutes' notes
swelling like peaches in summer
to disappear as rapidly
as a master gourmand gobbles
the fruits' flesh; then to rise again
in the maddening sweep of a
red rocked Kopje bombed from below
reaching fortissimos to the
sun straight through the iron
barrier of a cloud fence
darkening as fast as a lift's
descent deep into a coal mine!

There's energy in a discord,
in the storm there's adventure
burning like a whip through iced air!

31:v:1957

Energy I

Oh endless feet! they tread me
nail-hard those endless feet, they
kill and they frighten my children,
my children? the snakes and the
scorpions, the ants and the things
that live in the earth, in my soil;
they tread me till cement is my
crust, they tread me till a glass
surface is rough next to mine, my
little stones they crush to yellow
sand atoms, my big stones they
hammer till they look like a hag
of a hundred and one's age-scratched
face; they tear away from me as
material is torn from a
roll, the purpose? to make roads
only to tread me yet further!
when shall you rest in sleep
you endless feet?

7:vi:1957
Energy II

This heavy railway-sleeper-weighed
head of mine!
it will, oh it will grow
so dull like red roofs filmed
by the foggy white-black engine's smoke;
tired of the mass of particles
minutely making up a world of
history facts to be selected for
an essay, tired of judging
their importance in the navy blue
light of responsible government in
black Canada, black with charcoal
smoke; I revolt like the blood
in cheeks after a rushed
run to an appointment –
the heat of writing the essay!
it must be built by such
a date for professor, the historian
impartially refusing to accept the belated
work while he grows scales of judgment
in my brain – a monster!
I must out to the sun,
to music to honey gold
running with a warm hand
on a summer's day, I must
away to Schubert or Brahms
or Spender or to the blue beyond
the jealous clouds;
I hate it, hate this but love
history like a room in the castle

of my imagination; it's the
heat of writing for tomorrow that
murders me, that restricts my
electricity till it bursts to flames!

16:vi:1957
Energy III

Woman of the shadows
deep in the night vault you live;
the ash of a thing once green,
the ash on a barren smooth
black and brown slate stone is your soul;
the night is your God,
the night that goes beyond
the fathomless space with its death
making life not life in
its black acid gas,
evaporating even the rotting
of the spring's growth;
dark as the blocks of coal
are your thoughts;
yet born out of you
(the limbs freed from death's
being) are the flaming orbs
with the lights of a million suns
rising each hour and ruling
with warmth and light,
shattering the very death night
to a billion fragile glass pieces; they live beyond life –
born from you
woman of the black shadows!

23:vi:1957

Energy IV

No factory machine can so suck
your limbs as the tri-fork tongue of
the material mouth sucks your blood –
you are purple!
your hell is worse than
a body in a boiling lava pit,
worse for your mind's senses are
wakening (fueled by a flaming
smoke) heaving against the hell
like a heart stabbed to the core
by the thin-bladed dagger;
the paternal continually leashed (by
her pagan goddess demand) to the altar
of her red desire sacrificing his
will in the blaze of her
ambition!
if ever you erupt through the
twenty million layers of granite
(she has placed on your soul)
may the blue heavens' freezed rain
relieve their sulphur-coloured bodies
in the consuming furnace of your
inter-planet flames!

24:vi:1957
Energy V

As from a fountain pen
the cold air splashes to spread over
my face and the electric-fired red of
my heated cheeks feel washed in
ice cubes; far away across the mountains'
blue foam (deeper blue than the outer
universes after the sun's farewell)
weaves its formless strings into each
other as the knitting needles pattern
the wool a score of times and then still
many more; the mist-roll spreads out
further and further as the sun unrolls
its raw red rays of steaks (growing to diamond
yellow) unceasingly in the birth
period of the light's day; but this
darkness grows like death's tumour on
the brain taking more and more till
all is empty-coloured water in shapeless
space; yet behind this kettle's turbulent
boiling steam (like the revelation of the
atomic theory) the daylight tumbles
down as it overflows the sunlight
bath and through the trees of a cell's
darkness the grass darts sharp green
sparks at me from out of the waterfall of
lemon light gold-tinted by the sun.

28:vi:1957

Energy VI

What fear of laughing death
they have these human buck-eyed
snakes, they strike with death's poison and
then they quake like mad seas
on days bursting their filthy grey
sacks with the rabies foam of a dog's
purple-blue tongued mouth when
death crackles like rust coloured century
old hinges on the mortuary door
and makes their lives the centre of his
wheel-shaped bladed eyes spinning
like high fever on tropical nights;
these rugby-muscled bodies (with stagnant
water for blood) they smother life with
the stenching blanket of illegitimate
children and knock female clay into burning
particles of coal-red hell, they cut life's
body in square chunks of flesh with their
drunken pukings, they scream hoarse-voiced
out of their black fume-filled atmosphere,
'It's healthy!' they who are
notches of cancer and rotting
with vast area'd sores – nothing but
shrinking diseases! once they have dug
deep their nail into life's fruits (bruising
them till they are maroon tinted by
death) they fear death and their
stomachs become a handful of granite-
hard black balls – juiceless,
a million stages beyond dying;

these are the firmly foundationed rocks
society leans onto and the manly who are
Greek-God heroed for their milk porridge
courage on a billion quarantined rugby
fields; to see, to hear them makes
my blood revolt to leukaemia!

9:vii:1957
Energy VII

As lazy as eggs on the rack
I am, dead and without the leaping
flame of movement's energy
growing quiet like water – shapeless
without the force of ambition's
bulldozer flattening all obstacles,
lacking the very wish to leave
the bed (like a motor car
shoots from the garage) or to do
all the minutely puzzling pieces of
living combining (as oddly (they say)
as walking in a ballroom way
to Beethoven's raucous ninth)
make me; medicine and relaxing
gorge my energy – the gourmands!
but in this period of mists in the sunlight
and vagueness in bright red the
energy's storage is piling higher and soon
it will burst to a ripe peach colour
from the greens as yellow peaches do,
and (in colours of a million shades of
brightness) Schubert, Brahms, Dohnanyi
will run through my subtle fingers for
the piano to yield hypnotising images
and my pen will dance maddening
improvisations to music of the brain's
mountaining orchestra while my voice
creates poetry like thin rays of

golden light in the early evening –
after being as dead as eggs on a rack!

18:vii:1957
Energy VIII

Endless, infinite as the mountainous
undulations of time, on life's meale fields
my soul lives through each phase like
the endless string of no beginning
circles through beads of colours –
red strawberries of love, blue veins
of pain to purple waters of disappointment and then the
brandy coloured
alcohol of elevation and Christmas cake
living; dying is the slamming
of iron doors, birth the sun slowly
crowding full an empty vault,
illness the jamming of soft fingers in
a motor car door, singing the
athlete letting his limbs freely move
on energetic pleasure's petrol and
so each particle of life a thread of
the countless billions together weaving
the mass of the garment into existence
flowing out magnificently as a master
architect's building rises up as
great as Mount Everest; the robe
adorns the God, the centre of the
geometrical circle – the infinite! we,
the Persian carpeted robe, the infinite
(the range of ultimate peaks) are one
as the moon's sky and the sun's
sky are yet the same sky!

20:vii:1957

Energy IX

The scorching blink of the sun
(reflected into my eyes through the refracting
mirror) comes out of that stare, at other times
so like hard iron balls and without the
mercury glitter or laughing gurgle of
lemonade in a glass, hiding beneath
their depths of dark brown softness (like
a baby's garments of woolen pinks and
blues) the world of loving arms as
comforting and secure as the seat in
a luxurious limousine, lacking the
spiritual union that would unite
ring and finger, or without breaking
away from the sandpaper coarseness of
living here obeying these animal laws
rotting like decayed teeth, or breaking from
the flaming red blaze in red lights of
a car's brakes applied by the erupting
electric stove of the material guardians'
mess of fear mangling to mince meat
your abstract body (yet as real as
Mathematics) through that glaring flame
blinding my eyes!

30: vii:1957
Energy X

As to the fire sparks of a tango's declining
melodious spurts (or a castanet's drug to
burning blood) I wriggled my body like
a reptile on a hot day in that giraffe neck
chair the dentist plunged me while his
arm (like the iron hoop of a barrel)
gripped my throbbing head (like a motor
car engine) and the drill trilled like
fingernails scratching the blackboard of
slate; the state of living crumbled (as
skyscrapers in lung heaving earthquakes)
in me and tooth nerves convulsed as a
stomach receiving the mouth's swallow of
powdered glass but suddenly it stopped like a
demi-semi quaver end to a long cacophony
and his eyes and his teeth danced a lively
flicker like gems of deepening brown and
white on their descent down a glass slab;
then memories flash through
advertisements at the cinema – this
smile I knew elsewhere as when I wake
I can see and live in a thousand
countries in one blink but this I knew on
the warm tinted sands of the ocean's
striped umbrella'd beaches in summer days
nearer the filament in the bulb of living.

4:viii:1957

Energy XI

This is like throbbing furnaced iron tongs in
flesh – this pain like a bladed assegai
piercing my rotting apple core, my mangled life;
the tiredness grows like a skin disease and
spreads its festering crust even to my music and
my history and I am losing the hold on the
rein of the horse of purply-black blood who
crushes (with his speeding hooves) the hours before
my death and the dream state descends on
me like granite boulders on villages pressing
them deep under ten thousand feet of grey
steel; now I need the crane to draw me
from the sea and all he does is sulk at me,
now I need the crutches and all they do
is rot in the rain of animosity!

7:viii:1957

Energy XII

The longing grows like coral reefs and before time has engraved its awful markings on my mind the coast of a golden sand's sublime light is locked (by the cliff-like barriers deeply hidden in the depth of oceanic worlds) from my soul evaporating in the heat of uncertainty, yet once (when I have been ripped open) on wings of an aged woman's wondrous cloth (spun in many hundreds of years) into the blue of the rain's freshness on a summer's hell day I'll dart with the lion's gracious movement of limb and with the perfection of shape (as in a young athlete's calves) to fill the clouded and thundering heavens with shapes drawn from my music so beautiful that eyes seeing them glitter endlessly like the distant lights of a village (lying clothed in miles of night) and the music will dissolve the atomic problem as sugar in tea for men hearing it shall see in men the God and the God is life as soil is the earth.

11:viii:1957
Energy XIII

Like whips whistling their lashes through
the air onto naked black backs of
slaves the wind-hurled sweeping hail storm
(moaning like a monotonous engine) is
bouldered down from the mountain of
steel-ironed migraine with a tense yell of
jarring brakes to rip the stomach to revolt
and on and on the gall pain rages
like two high powered rhinoceros-racing
friends rushing (with bull snortings) onto
each other till the shattering shriek of
pinned life pierces right to shivering hell;
over the shattered glass the soprano-shrill
caused, over the splashes of blood on the
altar of the sacrificed lamb the quiet
bitter rain drizzles as quinized as the
mouth after the high temperature vomitings!

15:viii:1957

Energy XIV

Like the glowing red of the broadcasting tower's light warning an aircraft's crew in the nugget black night so the oak's earliest bunch-cascades (hanging down like green grapes) warns of a voluptuously growing season and I (shocked like a hand on a live wire) wake up startled by the bright lamp (whose arc directs the brittle rays into my eyes) through the gaping window; then in a violent heave I realise that bodies in my blood are wakening (like large white lilies) to bloom out energy making my cheeks throb to a shining sheen surface in a shade of raspberries smeared on the skin by some impish agitator and the birth of billions of clay pots (formed by my ice-cream white hands from black soil) like apparitions appealing in the morning mists (weighing heavily onto the sweating grass) is the earthenware hardened into miraculous shapes so exquisitely that they are illusions of master designed observatories compelling the immediately rising power of granite to subservience by their dominating stand firmly rooted onto the peak, so too my limbs grow impatiently when pricked by the sharpening needle of the summer's parent and when its explosions of no destruction increase in volume and speed till the sleeping world is in mad

eruptions and everything speeding on
purest glucose like athletes stampeding in
miles per hour down a hundred yards of
racing track!

21:viii:1957

Energy XV

Like a pointed missile elegantly
tapering to the point of infinity it
pierced the hard iron layer of no
other collection than photographs seen
together in the straight lines of
friendship as plainly dressed as
nurses in ether-smelling hospitals but
now the creations of a million
artists (the criteria each of constellations
different but never burned by a
thousand feet of soil in earthy
birth nor the million yards of a
billion iron poles in death) array their
work in our vault of marble and
gold with the silver twine of
strength earthed on the other side of
both pain and dying's ghastly tin
walls, so in one movement of the
hand (like fingers on a switch to a
golden light) you gave and born of
the air we were in that moment –
the air without whose liberal
oxygen no man's health was fertilised!

24:viii:1957
Energy XVI

The leaping rays of violet
have touched my soul, like
matchwood in flames I burn,
my heart curls in pain and I
become a shrunken black remnant
of former times, exposed to
the devilish glare (splitting
world from world) am I,
and tragedy (the terrible witch)
grinds her aged rotten
teeth in a laugh at my
slow dying, defeated am I
as the fish on the hook,
in devastating winds my skin
is scorched till frizzling steak
is my body, no longer am I
yet I live awaiting the merciful
veil of black mist to disintegrate
my distorted structure – so freeing
my soul from the fork around my neck!

30:viii:1957
Energy XVII

To be enclosed into the throbbing
flesh of the arms (as strong as
a life-saver belt) I gently fall
and love descends like the blossoms'
petals freed from the stem by the
wind; in the golden sun of warmth
(the morning at ten before the lava-
hot day) the passions flourish like
pansies in the shade or freesias of
late August or early September while
ecstasy is wonderful as champagne
for the wedding of white hands
clasping their counterparts like pollen
to a bee; but (like a ray through
a window) it lingered but momentarily and
now cherished as the souvenir of happy
journeys – stimulating for a moment,
boring within the hour!

l:ix:1957
Energy XVIII

Quietly (like a bud shooting
to a bloom) he stood up and
then rose marvelously the slow
apparitions as unreal as the mirage
in the driest desert but (like
the hacksaw) he felled each rising
obstacle till the road of tar
wound beautifully around all
the mountains of impossibility
and a double-carriaged highway
bore me to the golden watered seas
of fulfillment on whose rocks stand
the tower of master brick and
patterns fascinating – all this
in a fruit basket of juiciest selections
for me!

3:ix:1957
Energy XIX

The speeding travel through trees
of greenest after wintry bareness
mounting the sky (exquisite as
jewels of emeralds in the subdued
light of the concert hall) filling
me with the bubbling elevation
of mineral waters; then the home
set firmly in the austere
guarding mother's protective watch –
the granite rock rising high into
a mountain; on entering
it was those paintings – the one
especially of subdued artistry but
with the strength of cranes, great
but never flashing in reds;
the afternoon ran on and my fingers
played from Beethoven to Brahms
with touches of Schubert like tints on
hydrangeas – my fingers dashed like
fireflies in the darkened evening;
the afternoon was wound into
structure of the artist's most inspired
moments by the trends of Vivaldi
of Mozart and Johannes Brahms'
continental-broad second piano concerto –
these filled minutes even at the tea
of delightful elegance from seventeenth
century rooms; all a memory
now (like vapour of water in thinnest
air) but a link of sheer gold

between dirty yellow depression and that
wine gurgling intoxicating happiness!

8:ix:1957
Energy XX

Like a bridge spanning over
time that harpsichord stood
and he who played – a
guide, a landmark to rush
me back to the Bachian
cathedral and there the master
sat and the B flat partita
flowed like his cascading
wig while his fingers ran on
(like shivers of delight in the flesh)
and his eyes shone out its
gaze penetrating a light through
two centuries to reach us with
healing rays in boiling days;
each quill-plucked string vibrated
into my body of flesh and blood
like a rainbow reveals itself
magnificently in the oil of water
and sunlight!

9:ix:1957
Energy XXI

To Ricci

We that are one with infinity
(the cable between ship and harbour)
no farewell of final curtain drops
can know, with the golden ringed
link that music gave we are sewn
to one another as parts of a garment,
nor can the nails of time tear us
apart; if never we meet again
(like the river parting to be rivers)
what care or pain of dying have
we? none, not even on the ash heap
of disappointment or gutter of unfulfilled
ambitions since the end there never
is as rain can never be where
no clouds are, and in infinity
we grow daily (like the grapes
of summer) but even when we are
the darkest coloured cherries we still
grow – there is no end and the
richness of our swelling spirits is incalculable!

15:ix:1957
Energy XXII

Like a hand grenade thrown out
at my face the gale crushes
my body like sprays of a maddened
sea on the awkward rocks and the nerves
wake in me like birth tenses
the mother's body while out of my
dark exploding regions (the unknown
Antarctic of the mind with its
strange bewitched light) gushes forth
a hell of memories in their heat
but supreme to Jehovah's heaven for the
intensely packed hours of
their flamed bursting even to
outside eternity – a universe
not of stupid stars but colossal
experiences deeply woven in death
and panging like a burst appendix
in birth – God I'm deathless for
my blood is the very hell
and the very heaven!

1:x:1957
Energy XXIII

AN ELEGY
EXTRAORDINARY



Nota Bene

The scene takes place some twelve years after the death of the great Prince Ragnar, the Saint George of the north's frozen regions, and it is in a dream, a mystical vision, as it were, where time stands still and the boundaries of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow are eternally erased.

In the last chorus the explanation of the following is:

Tant Euske My Ragnar / lives!

Our Ragnar / lives!

Our Ragnar lives!

The moment Mother says 'lives', at the same moment Soprano says, 'Our' and continues till she says 'lives', at which point Baritone simultaneously says 'Our' and then he continues to the end of the line.

Ragnar:

Ragnar is my name and
a St George am I who wanders
over iced plains of the North's frozen
regions, and the cold black fire from the
monster's nostrils I spray with the warm
water of my love, and from me
flows a stream of molten gold
that changes the grey Amsterdam day

into a beautiful Summer's morning
where the sun burns to a bronze glow
the lovely limbs that my soul
is given in the music of a
camp-fire where the intimate moments
flutter like moths round the
lamp that lightens the marble
steps near the wooden door into the
beautiful chords of greater symphonies!

Chorus together:

Oh great is this spirit born into
soft rich cloths from distant Flanders,
oh great this child whose
body is made from the bark of
wood patterned by the best artists
nature ever employed!

1st Voice (Alto):

The gaiety sparks
from him like the lighters to the sweet
scented cigar filling the many rooms
with the mild smoke of tripping
laughter ...

2nd Voice (tenor):

And he could entice
us, his many children, into the
great games that were even of
mimicry...

3rd Voice (soprano):

And fondness he gave, like
a congregation, the many fruits at
harvest Sunday ...

Chorus together:

Great is Ragnar,
the fighter of the icy plains,
the bringer of a warming fire on
a cold Amsterdam day!

Tant Euske (Mother's Lament):

Oh it was terrible that other day –
leukaemia – leukaemia – kaem...ia,
The sword had cut the silken
thread from distant China at
twenty minutes to four that
afternoon and oh my child (I
a Mary, he a Christ) had
to be crucified, made a martyr,
and the gold turned to tar
and the river of mother-love was
forced into stagnant pools for
it could no longer carry the
lovely yacht with the sails of
loving arms around my longing
neck – oh it was terrible!
and the music grew quiet
of the recorder-flute in the empty
concert-hall of our house while

our eyes saw another form from
his earlier violin-string vibrating vitality,
but he is a great knight and
fought valiantly in the vagueness
of weaker glows from the blue eyes
that shone together like candles
at the altar of the life that knows
no death but spans across
time-filled space like a net in
a circus arena, yet he still
wore the Pope's rich robes of
spiritual dominance and so built
his Vatican city that in us
he never dies but grows larger and
more beautiful in his limbs (as well
carved as old Athens' athletes' bodies)
in each year added to the rich
carpet of memory...

Astrid (Sister's Lament):

Oh my brother, my
Ragnar, my Prince, lost am I without
my thane and I feel thrown into the
darkest of night knowing no way,
having no light for before sleeping
I feel a drowning and in sleeping
a horrid humming of bees and
clashing cymbals throw their nightmare
dissonance into my sleeping highway –
now blocked with ninety-foot high

boulders and falling debris,
oh Ragnar (my brother-monarch)
lift me from this position crouching
over a broken leg, lead me
from these stone enclosures and their
vile ghostlike dwellers, free my
arms from this steelish spiderweb
that grows around me like
weeds in a neglected garden,
play a Mozartian act to soothe
my headache of paining longing,
where are you? Hold me, rise up
again to protect me – your aged castle!

Ragnar (Answering Aria):

Calm mother and sister –
rest now in the bower of my
arm and pull the curtaining eyelids
of your wearied-with-watering eyes,
there is no death, not this diving hollow
into nothingness that you see –
no substance of spirit or of
body is ever destroyed, only metamorphosis
comes (like new curtains to the
beautiful drawing room and its carpets
of life) to give newer fresher better
functions – rest and be at one with
the jarring shrieks for in recognising
them you destroy them, do not
cry for that is only water to the

weed, but rejoice for in the blackness
of death is the golden light of a
greater birth and birth is the knot
made in the needle's thread that is
to gallop its way through the richness
of silken velvet, birth is the manured
soil for the growth of the delicate
daffodils or the mineral waters for
the queen's orchid, birth is the excellent
paper used in the early manuscript –
death is only death and no more than
a delivering sleep from the thistles spread
in the way of the spirit's feet,
death is the death of one day and the
decorated dawn to the other for at
twelve in the night (when the tide of
darkness is at full light) the new day starts
and the cock's trumpeting at four
is the first howl of the new body
freed from the old body – death
(that stays death) is the optical illusion
found in tampered photographs that are
tapers to the flames of fooling deception!

Chorus together (Chorus Lament):

Grey was the gorging morning
that claimed our prince as its bait,
ugly the horrible nets that
drew him from the seas of our love!

Alto:

And
never did pain so pierce the
muscles of my crying heart!

Soprano:

Death came
and we (that are women) were forever
barren at our hero's death before the noon
of his life!

Tenor:

Never did the sweat of fear
and loneliness so clutch my paining
brow as when he went like the beautiful
night moth at the coming of day – never to
return!

Together:

Tears flooded the earth and
we had no ark to shelter us
for a while, and death was like a
disease that raced over the land
like locusts' attacks!

Tant Euske:

Who knows of the
bruises in the fall down the stone staircase
at his (my Ragnar's) death?

Astrid:

Who knows of
the needles that pierce my soft flesh
at his death?

Tant Euske:

Who heard my heart's
yelling at its murdering of that
day?

Astrid:

Who knew of the bleeding of
my eyes, the pains that grew like caged
monsters in me (his sister), who was his
beloved castle near the lake of childhood's
playing and other-worldly living?

Together:

Who knows?
Who knows the growing Mount Everest of
these things?

Ragnar (Answering Aria):

I know and know more – the
beauties of the shell-bed below the turbulent
seas of painful days and sickly
nights, I know the orbit of other-harmonied
symphonies, I know the beauty within the
stone of ordinary grey outer clothing!
There is a thick honey-yellow balsam

in time and the scratches of death are
erased from the white-velvet skin
by its purifying sweetness, giving a
complexion of transparent beauty in the
autumnal sunlight of greater beauty
that is like the fruit at its ripest
pitch or the moth in the first moments
of her womanly beauty!

tears and laughing
intermingle and that plaited necklace
adorns the swan neck of the white gliding
spirit of gracious dignity on the blue
lakes of great creations in their many
art forms flowing from the distant
lands of the past, flowing from ancient
Athens' ever-fountaining springs!

Tant Euske (Mother's Questioning Aria):

Then why
the horror of black, the cuttings into
soft wood, why a burial, why
the pains that fly on like clouds of
death-infecting mosquitoes, why were
you born into the maroon covers
of beauty's bed only to die in the cold
grey steel of an empty factory room,
why did your laugh come to fill
my body with matured sweet wines of
mother-love only to go sulphuric, and
at your flight from out of our garden,

why did the sun die that glittered
in your paradise-bird feathers, and
where are those tapestried eagle wings
that made you soar (like a dart)
through the heavens?

Ragnar (Answering Aria):

Because in death
starts the golden streams of another
life, because in time there is the
fan-wheel that must turn for in its standing
is another death and at a certain
point its angles spell the death we
know, but we know no death that
makes nil any substance – we only
know metamorphosis and understand it
as death, because in my dying
you are born for what did you know
of the printed notes on the score before?
Now you know twenty-million-billion
worlds within each creation, within one
note – even those within the chords of the
harmonies, because you were to give
more to that which you are – to music
but in living I was an iron barrier,
a vast barrel to receive your love –
now you pay tribute to me in the
juices, in the storms, in the soft rippling
of a greater music for in the pain of
my dying you grew and now your
beauty is a vision to others – so

towering is its strength and grandeur
normal mortals think it other-worldly!

Astrid (Sister's Questioning Aria):

Oh my brother, oh my thane
why will you no longer give water
for the peach blossoms of spring that
we caught together in the slight wind
of the fantasia performed by the
delicate Mozartian orchestra under the
baton of childhood, why will you
no longer fight the dragon that threatens
me in your own grand castle, why
do you no longer give me the toffees
of your playful laughter, why no
longer the infuriating sounds of your
teasing, when will you come to
free my foot from this trap of my
longing?

Ragnar (Answering Aria):

Because, my darling child,
you too must grow to bloom your
white blossoms in the spring of your
womanhood and yield the rich
fruits in the autumn of your life when
its fulfilment is a delicious
dinner at the table of that queen of all life –
composure in her unity with every
other unity so forming the complete
circle of the princely pearls, you too

must grow to lead in the paths
up to the mountain top, you too
must wear the heavy crown of a
queen, you too must pay vast homage
to music!

Chorus (Questioning):

Is there no other path
that leads not to death in a grey
Amsterdam day, is there no other
growth that leads not through the
tar of dying, is there no other
path that leads not through the
thorn-bush, is there no other circle
of light that leads not through
the cold shadows of pain, is there
no other solution for the judgment
that is not the jury's laid decisions?

Ragnar (Answering Aria):

We shall know no white in knowing
no black, we shall know no silken
velvets in knowing no marble, we
shall know no dishes of sweetest life
without knowing the bitter bark from
the forests of dying, and in the rain
of the burial is the very water that
makes the seeds of larger (more
magnificent) trees grow, seeds of blossoms never
seen before, and in dying's cacophony are
the birth pains of that symphony that will
sweep us up into ecstasy.

FINALE SECOND CHORUS OF EXULTATION

Baritone (Mezzo forte):

Now our prince is victorious and
many symphonic trumpets display his praises!
This is the Prince/Ragnar of the icy plains!

Alto and Tenor (Mezzoforte):

This is the Prince/Ragnar of the icy plains!

Soprano:

This is the Prince Ragnar of the icy plains!

Baritone (Forte):

And the sun glitters on his armour while
his robes flow out like the paths to
better districts where the air is fresh!

Tant Euske (Forte):

And no
longer are the thorns in my flesh!

Astrid (Forte):

My
visions are clear and I see him
forever more in the crystal of time!

Baritone (Forte):

He has brought/a new love!

Tenor and Soprano (Mezzo forte):

/He has brought/a new love!

Alto:

/He has brought a new love!

All together (Forte):

There is no end to the gardens and
their blossoms now!

Astrid:

Nor the painting created
in pain!

All together:

There is a sea that is
calm and the yacht of greatness glides there
continually!

Tant Euske (Forte):

And we have a new
warmth in our limbs that radiates a
new light patterned by the greater hand of
time!

Baritone (Forte):

He has come/like a fresh breeze!

Alto & Soprano (Mezzo forte):

/He has come/like a fresh breeze!

Tenor:

/He has come like a fresh breeze!

Together: The fugue is alight with a million
sounds of praises and the parts intertwine
like the thin threads in the soft silks
from distant China!

Baritone (Forte):

There is new harmony!
From distant Flanders come many/feathers of
praise!

Alto (Mezzo forte):

/From Distant Flanders come many/
feathers of Praise!

Soprano and Tenor:

/from
distant Flanders come many feathers of praise!

Astrid (Mezzo):

And again we dance with a glowing flame!
His flute
flows to my ears a melody that is
not heard normally by mortals!

All together (Forte):

Ragnar!
Ragnar, the St George of the icy plains,
you have floated on the clouds,
you have seen the spheres beyond,
you have sung songs of true greatness,

to you we bring sweet scents,
to you we sing a Bachian fugue,
to you we play a Brahmsian symphony!

Ragnar (Forte):

From you I receive treasures great, but
I have even more than is seen even by
the imagination's eyes, I live in a
world unconceived but greater than
any conceived in the mortal world
from which I came in a grey Amsterdam
day – here we are at one with the
fourth dimension of time, at one with
the fifth dimension of omnipotence, even at
one with the sixth dimension of eternity
and know the seventh dimension (that
is God) in whose presence we continually
are and from whom flows the waters that
make our vision stretch out to new
plains in every fractional portion of a
moment!

Astrid (Forte):

He is truly a prince!

Baritone (Forte):

He is our Golden link between that/world and this!

Soprano (Mezzo Forte):

/he is our golden link
between that/world and this!

Alto and Tenor:

/he is our golden link between that world and this!

Altogether (Mezzo Forte):

There is no death that is death, there
is no birth that is birth, in the
evening of the day starts the dewing of
the morning, in the falling debris of
one age are the growing pillars of
another age – our Ragnar died and lives!

Tant Euske: My Ragnar/lives!

Soprano: /Our Ragnar/lives!

Baritone: /Our Ragnar/lives!

Astrid: /My Ragnar/lives!

Tenor (Forte): /Our Ragnar/lives!

Alto (Fortissimo): /Our Ragnar /lives!

Together (Fortissimo):

We have crossed the bridges of pain,
Our Ragnar lives in the north's frozen
Region, our Ragnar is the rock of
Gibraltar, our Ragnar lives magnificently

in the music of mother and sister,
our Ragnar lives as a princely monarch,
in dying he
lives – the St George
of the northern region!

Finis

MORTÉ
E
RINASCITA



A Testimony to the Violent Tenor of Human Existence

Dedicated

to

Eugénie H Klink van Ketwisch-Verschuur

What a weed-filled mess we
are in that dare to defy the
robot directions of the dictatingly dull
poles belonging to dead (building-dead) iron
fettters!

am I now to live
alone and only on a cliff of
a twenty thousand feet precipice?
must I now be submitted to
the tick-bites of dissatisfaction and
the poisonous tea of growing
vaguer than the colour of the
sky at midday? what answer
is there to avoid the filthy
smoke from a coal-heated blazing
or to hide from the racing
mad-diseased automobile of my
same friends' logic? what freedom
can be found in the sealed
shell where I have to see the screen of
human likes and dislikes irritatingly zooming
around me like flies on a
mid-summer afternoon?

There is an
answer but the price of the property
is the price of the palace and the
monarchical home in
a kingly life is emptier and colder than the hog's bed,
than small talk biting like fleas,
than being friends with a bloated

bull-frog or a reasonlessly proud tom-cat;
the answer is clad in the lonely robes,
robes of isolation living on the island of the aloof
and there is no sleep but an
endless army manoeuvre to preserve
integrity in continual diplomatic renunciations to
endorse dignity!

Freedom is bought by
the radio-active burning of the soul, freedom
is obtained by atomic explosion's survivors
in their endless sterility!

22:iv:1958

Morté I

On the Loud Reading:

This poem needs a great deal of vigour. It is quite dramatic and it must be presented as such. The 'moment' of the whole poem needs to be well sustained.

Rebirth, reborn into music am I –
the second bloom flowering in the unending
soft blue of my music and they too
are unending, those petals that
are not seen by the sight of eyes!

In the manures of my first life
flourishes my second breathing
that is older than history and
newer than the moment of the present!

27:iv:1958
Rinascita I

On the Loud Reading:

Firstly the 'Brahmsian' sweep is very pronounced in this poem. Though it starts softly, it builds quite steadily to 'live within my soul!'. With '... Then in a / mist I enter to glow out each note', it drops back but again it builds steadily in volume to 'like constellations beyond / our understanding!'. With the beginning of the next part, 'And in me shines a sun', it does not drop back again, but builds steadily in volume and grandeur to the end where it broadens out into a triumphant climax, which ends with a decisive finality.

‘After all, I am an aristocrat!’
‘But Martin – think! the castle has
tumbled in the flood and it is no
use saying you can’t be middle class –
they are the ministers in parliament!’

‘It makes no difference! I will nót
wear pink shirts – no! nor will I be in
colours red, sea-green, or purple!
I will nót have the vulgarity
of heartiness lingering around me like a
cheap perfume!’

‘It’s foolish! times have changed,
you have not even the money to
foundation your blown-up stuffed-bird
processes; besides are you going
in for splendid isolation?’

‘Yes – oh yes, I am splendidly
isolated staring through the pine
trees at the motor-cars-and-omnibuses-
on-the-road cacophony, seeing through
the shutters of my drawing-room the
mad-house (in the form of a new block
of flats) going up, hearing the
death bell of the telephone, the death
march of loud saxophonish music
on the radio, reading the lunatic’s
magazine – the daily paper!’
‘Do you ever use a telephone!’

'Never, if it is possible!
nor do I drive my own motor car!
nor do I scrub floors (they may as
well stay in the rubbish-heap
mess they are in)!
nor do I put my voice over every
object in a room like newspaper-coverings
over furniture while the walls are being
repainted!'

'You are not practical! how can you
hide in a seventeenth-century room
when new airy buildings are going up?'
'Do you mean those matchboxes
in bricks
and mortar?'

'Now don't be a square!'

'Don't use hoi polloi words please –
it makes my ears hum with
another type of malaria! Besides, I
am probably quite circular!'

'Why then do you so often write
about modern times? it seems
to attract you as the posters do
the crowds going to the cinema!'

'Because it all horrifies me like
one electrified (and it fascinates too),

I accept this new life
but I am outside its space-ship-
sealed barriers, I merely observe
it from my delicate room of beautifully
carved furniture, my drawing-room of
elegance, my vast garden of refined
moments within the works of great
artists – I dó live in another era
but it is more golden!’

‘You will be destroyed (like a
butterfly’s wings) at the slightest
pressure!’

‘I am already being dismantled!’

‘I give up!’

‘Please! – don’t úse these yelling empty jam tins!’

30:iv:1958

Morté II

On the Loud Reading:

‘I’ is about fifty years plus or rather sixty. The other voice
is probably a young woman of twenty or twenty five years.
There needs to be a great subtle variation in the changes
of mood within the ‘I’ part. It all must seem to confuse
the young lady, and though it must be treated lightly, the
underlying seriousness must be brought out. The two
voices need to be done in different registers.

As delicate as the white inner feathers
of the cooing dove, as fragrant as
the night flower in the early evening
he is that has the beauty of a
Michelangelo body, that has the
throbbing black eyes intimately glowing
like some rare gem lacking a diamond's
hard sparkle and in his movements are
the lines drawn by the stroke of
a brush in a grand curve of
symmetry as dominating as a cardinal's
red robe while close to himself
he holds those hands that were
made in ancient Greece and they can
create beauty on manuscripts of
greater deeds in the great medieval
monastic schools of the various faculties
that are the elements in the university
of his brain while his voice dances
like a life-filled ballerina and is as soft
as goose feathers, as deep and
mysterious as a lake in its navy
blue night adornments!

Yet this is all decaying rot –
he has swallowed the radio-active
tablet that is frying his body to
a steak, that is gobbling up his mind
(in all its cathedral grandeur) and then

spewing it out in spite and
sadism; he cannot wear his robes
made five hundred years ago by
twenty Florentine artists, he cannot
enter his palace or his domain,
he cannot mount the black horse
(with white array) of his vast mind!
instead he is volcanic and dying
an atomic death in nuclear-powered
warfare with his sadistically envious enemy
whose soul is of cast iron.

And I (the observer), tied to the
pole, burn in the flames of seeing
him disintegrate into stagnant
sewage-filled water, the moaning of
my soul is worse than that of
Jewish mothers and Jewish children in
the hideous ghettos, worse is my
dying than Hitler's gas chambers
for
my skin is the cover to the lamp
that will lighten his way to the
room for the last stage of the
radio-active acid burning of his
steak-fried over-convulsing black-coaled soul!

30:iv:1958

Morté III

On the Loud Reading:

In the first part everything must be sensuously enjoyed, and the reader himself must be elevated, giving no suggestion of what is to come. It must be lyrical and flowing. Then, with a shattering crash, the second part must emerge in a brittle diamond vocal quality. It is incisive and must be, as it were, 'starkly to the point'. The whole poem rises to a colossal granitic monster, ominously hovering immediately over the audience in the third part, (the audience must seem in its thick, and intensely black shadow), and the various horrors must flash out like sharp, unnatural lights, each time binding the audience and shaking their sense until they (the senses) are numbed. The actor and the audience ought both to feel that they have come to the very end. There is nothing beyond this: they have seen, heard, and felt (even lived through) the most horrible of the horrible.

To Edna Burt

Like a firework-display her
laughter sparks off and the sky of
our enjoyment is filled with a
million colours intertwining like
the pattern of the well-designed
evening gown while her humour
trickles down the side of the honey
jar that is her store-hold of
pleasurable things found in life –
her life pathing its way through
afternoons of golf and many a
well-dressed joke

for the turkey at
the dinner of her graciousness; and
she knows when to pick the
fruit of living and enjoy its
juicy strawberries, she knows how
to act as champagne and make
us laugh!

But she too has seen things
that even the night cannot hide,
she too has felt the arrowheads
of pain in her soul, yet courage
has been the knight defending this
lady and she has the old
castle of laughing and the

music ensemble of wined living
continually at her command!

6:v:1958
Rinascita II

On the Loud Reading:

Again the 'Brahmsian' sweep must come into play, and a lyrical, rich voice must carry the poem as if each part is done in one breath. Above everything else, the reader must enjoy reading it as much as he hopes his audience will enjoy hearing it.

To Nikolai Eadeychev

The heroic still throbs with blood!
in a wild jump (as energy filled
as the flight of an aircraft) you
stretch your hand in its muscle-grasp
across two continents and pull me
on to the endless plain (as vast as twenty
thousand oceans, as strong as
the granite of a mountain) and
we dance like forms filled with
the blood and power of a God;
your legs shape into twenty
shapes in the sweep and to
music (that envelops us in
its glacier-descent) we form
moments as grand as a
shooting-star lashing its vitality
in a swerving curve across
the heavens of a billion universes!
we dance, and through the
greatness of every greatness we
pass our way into the grandeur
of a kingly procession to a
moment with a thousand ages as
its continent-basis!

In you is that thing
that has its blood-beating heart

from the innermost point of all creation –
God!

10:v:1958
Rinascita III

On the Loud Reading:

This poem has to have an overwhelming sweep, and such must be the force of it that the audience and reader 'hold their breath' at it, as it were. It must have drive, energy, and vocal power (the voice must use its richest register) to convey the skill and vitality of the dancing.

To Galina Ulanova

To you I feel yet those
bonds in the bracelet that
is on my arm and that is
chained to your feet and
body when you quiver (like
the feathers of the dying swan)
and when you die in loving as
plants in thick lava; you throw
to me the hand shaped in
the muscles that glitter gold and
we dance till all things spin
and life rises up like a
grand orb from where the
rays are that of the heroic –
then you make me breathe
in the air that gives my
cheeks the redness of your wine
lips in Giselle and shatters
the billion-layer thick-iron walls
of being human so that we
rise up forever into a
world of movements as magnificent
as an erupting volcano and as
great as the billion parts of creation!

Your blood has in it what
is not human and it is redder with

energy than that flaming orb –
the sun!

10:v:1958
Rinascita IV

On the Loud Reading:

In this poem the flow must persist all the way through its vocal delivery with a considerably resolute element. The wild and beautiful dancing must come out in subtle variations of the voice in its richest register. There must also be the sense of 'breath being held' in wonder and admiration by both reader and audience.

To the Bolshoi Ballet

To me you brought
a new pulse-throbbing world as a present!
To me you brought
the drink of a fire-filled
energy that makes all barriers
(even of steeliest steel) thin
paper netting!
To me you gave the sweep
of million movements – each
worth all timeless creation in
its moment!
The Bolshoi ballet has in it
the centre-core of the atom that
is that part of life from where
breathing starts!

10:v:1958
Rinascita V

On the Loud Reading:

A full, broad approach, widening out considerably in the course of the vocal delivery, is required. The voice must be full, rich and at a pleasant forte, while the whole poem must be greatly sustained.

'Het Lam Gods' of Van Eyck

One moment the eye clasped the red
blood of the lamb and in the rippings
running richly in my body and in the
rippings stretched over time I entered
and before me was the heavens in
the lemon glory-light of the Father and the Son
where all countries were in one country
within one moment and all beings of all
time (those in dark dungeon rooms
of the past and those wrapped in the soft
cloud of tomorrow and after tomorrow)
wandered in robes filling me
with the rising feeling of thin streams
of smoke climbing endlessly to heaven and
there were even poets older than
the earth-clayed body of Christ, there
was Virgil – one of Rome's golden
threads running his twine even to
me in a city of many a
hundred-years distance!
Oh and my soul was being
fed to breathe and I no longer knew that
death that makes me violently alive in
the paining of its piercing swords in my
sides and in its nails in my hands!
Then the light grew
and I even saw
the few I hate in

the robe of my own
new love
and I had
never shivered in the winds of a change
for I still felt hell and I knew I flamed
on its woods!
but Van Eyck
in his labouring sweat created
the Lamb in a form greater than
my decaying breathing body
and I could
shout 'Rinascita! Rinascita!'
into the ever-echoing mountainous
hills of eternity's everlasting
time!

13:v:1958
Rinascita VI

On the Loud Reading:

The sense of elevation must carry the reader himself into the heaven, and as his mind's eye sees the painting of Van Eyck, he is really singing a choral that may have even come from Bach's Mass in B minor. And such must be his exultation that both his audience and he himself feel 'as if they are rising towards heaven'.

Flowing in the air-streams
warmed over a heater I
float into the scent of the lady
whose love I need to surround
me in sparks of light in their
spectrum colours, and continuing
my journey I fall to soft
cushions that had their embroidery
done by the artist who was blind
and made poetic singings in colours
that he could see.

And so I
came to rest on the painting of
El Greco, on the muscles of
a manly-magnificent shape
while a peace grew around
me; I found it like leeches
sucking my breath and diluting
me – too dead and self-contented
in the sun of warming peace was I!

It is the marriage of peace and the
foam-sea of energy that is the worth
of living but peace
without her energy-mate
is but a yapping spinster!

18:v:1958
Morté IV

On the Loud Reading: [*Morté IV*]

Though the poem is light, lyrical, and it must flow, its essence is however a fight, a fight against being too much at peace, against being numb in an odd way. The sharp element of the attempt at fighting and the contrasting 'deadness' must be brought out.

It is one death
or another death –
the one is arsenic and
pain jiving through my
body when driven by
the gas that has nuclear
power,
 the other is
like ever-melting ice-cubes –
slow as an old hag's walk
but as deadly as the
cobra-fang speed
injecting death!

Why do I live –
hang-on to the
barbed wire piercing my
fingers, why do not
I decay and die
quickly like unborn
bodies?

What is there that is not
cyanide in the intoxicating
gin of disillusion?
 what is
all this living but an
attack of leukaemia or
tumours growing luxuriously
on the brain?

Where is my music?
I have the ashes
said to be the matured
form of that beautiful
wooden carving.

My poetry? only the
urine of the excellent
champagne of yesterday.

And even the hideous
blackness of the white
sonnet I once loved
no longer makes my
soul puke its guts.

I could not care
and in not caring the
satanic horrors with
orange tongues (flaming
sparks of over-heated fingers)
drip over what I once
was

and I am merely the
muck of a cat's guts
on the street after the
killing of the tank procession!

20:v:1958
Morté V

On the Loud Reading:

The approach must be completely direct and incisive. It cannot be lyrical and the bluntness does not allow for 'poetic' readings. There is a brittle edge to it, and the voice must be almost flat as if the reader is absolutely worn out.

'Oh [...]', he [Aziz] exclaimed, 'I wish I live here. See this beautiful room! [...] See those curves at the bottom of the arches. What delicacy! It is the architecture of question and answer. [...]'.

[...]

The room [...] had reminded Fielding of the Loggia de'Lanzi in Florence.

[...]

The college [...] grounds included an ancient garden and a garden-house...

A Passage to India, by E.M. Forster, (Chapter VII).

A beautiful hall in distant
India – through its question-
And-answering pillars, the morning
freshness (rising like the odour from
the earth being water-sprayed)
flows over me in the wealth
of my Indian materials of red and
even of blue and there are the
mango trees (green almost to
black) hiding the round sun-yellowing
fruit in the velvet-richness of their
leaves and here is the pink
blossom so very delicate and
radiating freshness too from the
interlocking limbs of its quivering petals.

And from the far is the
mass of green ferns hanging

To Averil Chait after observing a Rehearsal during her
Production of Ionesco's 'The Bald Prima Donna'

Thisser way – thatter way –
slipper – lipper –slipper –
báng! crash-báng!
and she pulls them
out like feathers from
a peacock's tail
 to form
the new creation
 from the
uncouthed and uncut material
that is to be the hard
concrete slabs on which

the mosaics
of the play
in productions of
sounds intertwine
like rays of light
from a thousand

corners – and she made
the colours from God alone
knows where to fill the
emotions that swell

like the cock's
pushed-out crop
and the newness
throws a freshness like
a cold shower in
zero temperatures

but under the other beauty
of this other play
 rests a courage
 that is the umbilical
 cord to a new
birth!

24:v:1958

Rinascita VIII

On the Loud Reading:

The poem is one forceful sweep – one ‘Brahmsian’ phrase. But for all that it is quite tersely incisive, and though sustained, the vocal presentation must give the impression of it all being over in a moment. The impact must cause an indrawn breath from the audience, as if one strange and vivid thing was called to mind which is so powerful as to ‘override’ everything else. If it were possible, the poem would be done in one extraordinary long breath. It also has a strangeness, since it is the ‘other reality’. This must overwhelm the audience.

It's lost in a month – a year –
a day and I wander
looking in rooms, in old
dirt-bin smelling streets for it
that was and now lingers in
phantom apparition (slightly distorted)
in myself who feels so airy,
so open to the drying winds
of a coming Mediterranean
summer and its awful-faced
heat.

When was it that
I saw him? In December of
'10? or perhaps in the small
hospital in the school grounds
at seventeen years of age?

Where was she
when I first
met her then in the
grey coat with red
collar and cuffs?
what, what's her name?
something ending in
'b' – oh it's slipped me

into the too many cases
in which I pack too many
memories –
we pass and

in passing collect
and in collecting
lose to pass on
further to collect
more to lose
another.

Endless streamers intertwine,
endless gloves of indigo blue to
warming maroon touch and
then let go their barrel-hoop
binding force, endless feet chatter,
endless faces come to change and
then go elsewhere to alter
some more,
endless growth and decay –
the fruit grows and then rots
for the pip to grow once more
into a tree, into another
fruit and another pip.

And sweeping across this
earthly universe of teeming
life swings the vastly groaning
wind of time's tornado!

28:v:1958
Rinascita IX

On the Loud Reading:

As with all the Rinascita poems, this one needs great continuity and a forceful flow. But here the reader also needs a hypo-sensitive feeling for the lie of the land as regards the structure. The region is continually changing, and the very movement of the words within the lines must also be preserved in the vocal delivery. There are also dominant elements of 'pondering' and 'intimate communication' of thoughts from one of two people to the other, his companion.

To Sibelius

In me you rise and
boulder forth emotions
rising up in the sweep
of muscled hawk-wings into
the heavens to crash
down in the ever-
rising disintegrating particles
that dislodge themselves
 in the explosion
 whose red-black
 heaven-light fills
 me with fear,
 fills
 me with the greatness
that swells in its
Persian-carpet thick texture
till I must myself
burst or rise like an
 aircraft way
 into the very
 heights of the
 sun's region
 where grandeur
hovers ominously cloud-thick
before the cloud-burst
over us –
 'Eternal – eternal,
 réal! eternal – réal!'

my vibrating spirit
sings in your
symphony that began
long before you and
sings eternally after you
on the fertile plains
and among the granite
mountains of time –
endless country
where hurricane-winds
lift us in violent curves
from one spot to another
at a million miles
in the hour!

29:v:1958
Rinascita X

On the Loud Reading:

Firstly listen to a Sibelius symphony and acquire the feeling of *maestoso* and also acquire the visual image of enormous mountain boulders. Then deliver the poem in one shattering sweep. It must be all over in a moment but such must be its impact that it lingers with the audience long afterwards, and while maturing in their minds, they ought really to 'experience' the poem, which would be impossible to do during the actual vocal presentation, since the impact ought to be so forceful that they suffer some 'shock', as it were, in absorbing the poem.

There is death in the air
again – thick and thickening
in the flickers it throws
out at our city of
existence!

I smell it –
smell it in the mire
of dying! I see it –
see it in the vision
of purply-blue blood flowing
in swelling rivers! I hear it –
hear it in the shrieking
of the slaughtered, in the puking
out of the quaking vocal chords!

Where will it
end us? where
will it stop? this
smoke that is
of teargas,
that is of chlorine?

Taste not you the coal
that burns the tongue to
coal? can you not
hear the coming of the
missiles of death shrieking
their path through the night
where time stands unbelievably

still?

cold – cold is the wind
that blows through my
hair, cold – ice-cube cold
the death fingers' slap on
my cheeks

and like
boiling lava
my body's blood
rises, rises to
fend off but yet
to die...

The night grows red –

(cres → ff)*

see – see – see!

(pp)

see the lighting of
blood, red thick-red
blood that has clotted
across the pitch sky!

Is there no redemption?

Is there only death...death?

Where is the circular
light of the Godly lighthouse
throwing out the
rays of grace, of
life?

Hear it! hear it! coming –

coming in vast

cacophony, coming
is death! Our Death!

(pp)

Is there no redemption – redemption – demption?

1:vi:1958

Morté VI

* Editor's note: *cres* = *crescendo*; *ff* = *fortissimo*; *pp* = *pianissimo*. These are musical terms to guide the loud reading and presentation of these lines of the poem to audiences, and should not be read aloud as part of the poem.

On the Loud Reading:

The drama here needs to be considerably controlled. The whole poem is based on a subdued voice – almost a whisper (the whisper of the coming Death). But within the whisper there is continuous turbulent movement – it is a stormy vocal sea that is most strangely quiet on the surface. With 'cold – cold is the wind', the voice must be at its lowest and quietest, and the coming horror must be anticipated. There is a little *crescendo*, but from

'and like
boiling lava
my body's blood'

the *crescendo* increases as well as the texture of the voice, and then the three 'sees' must come like one unbearable continuous wailing, reaching a *fortissimo* on the third of them. A stark, extremely short moment follows, and then suddenly it drops to a whispering *pianissimo*. The break must be deliberate and extremely sudden. The whisper remains now to 'Is there only death... / death?' where the second death is a mere hollow echo. Then from

'Where is the circular / light of the Godly lighthouse', there is again a crescendo to 'is death! Our Death!', but it is very much in the shadow of the former climax, which is the apex of the poem. A silence must follow, which in itself must mean something dramatically. Then comes the final line in a dying whisper, the 'redemption' fading away into the sinister effect of the thick, clogging night that must predominate greatly in the atmosphere of this poem.

There is no end to
the spirit of conquest –
oh and in the round
ball of beauty our
voices usher out a choir
of voices singing an
organ-anthem in praise
of living –
 soaring endlessly
 on the strong golden
 feathered wings
 we rise up and
 in the warmth
of a mid-summer's sun
(filling the heavenly blue
of space-skies) we have
energy and power to
dance elegance, to bow
graciousness, to smell the
warm ginger-bread scents of
intimate delicacy...
 and held in
 our hands are
 the beautifully shaped
 honey moments
 transparent with
 exotic growth, with
 rich light of vision
 as broad as
great Asia's vast territory!

And see how moments
dance in pinks and
blues, in brick and black,
in maroons and dove grey –

see how in shapes of
oblong and opal
circles, of topaz squares
and even angular
sapphires they project their
happy lights to us
in singing sounds

ringing through happiness
and, oh ,their limbs are
so well-shaped and roundly
smooth while their muscles are
so strong that we all
delight in running and reposing
within the pillar-portals
of grand ecstasy –

we breathe in the
taste of rich fruits
and feel the beautiful
cloths descend in
their thousand colours
while our hands caress

the shapes of laughing
joys and our limbs
bathe in the mild
warmth that throws
beauty (within non-deceptive
reality) onto our
faces of great artists'
delicate features!

1:vi:1958
Rinascita XI

On the Loud Reading:

There must be one sweep – the 'Brahmsian' sweep – with as much force and ecstasy as the reader can possibly muster. Again the illusion of one breath will enhance the poem, and generally the approach must be that of 'making poetry musically and emotionally'. The poem must give the sense of continually rising up further and further into a clear sky.

This tiredness grows without waiting!

There is so
much not knotted
together, there is
so much left
for tomorrow's
light to bring
into being...

For my own sake – rest!

No! no rest –
fight! no rest –
no rest – no rest
– no rest – rest...

'Is it leukaemia?'
'No sir.'
'What is this wet cancerous
ball in my soul's stomach,
then?'
'Your death, sir.'

What is it
that slaughters me,
why give
me so many
tools? I'm
confused, cannot

use any –
too panicky,
too traffic-heated.

Oh God

you are failing
the promise you gave at
my birth –
what? is it
to be a death
before the rays
have fully
set in fantastic
crystals?

There is death in the
footpath that leads to
my door, I have
seen the death-moth's
wings in the flutter around
the glowing globe of
my front door in the
cold night of ice-freezing
reality when red is blue
and black, yellow –

I have heard
the strange singing
at midday
that tells of
my end –

On the Loud Reading [*Morté VII*]:

There are a series of short crescendos leading up to the final climax. A short one starts at the beginning of the poem, and continues to 'into being'. The next portion must show the agitation, and the 'rests' must merge into the conversational quality, which needs to be very deliberate. This needs to be followed by a short pause, and then there is another crescendo to 'too traffic-heated'. A sudden and dramatic break must then be followed with a deep, quietly ominous tone, which continues to 'my birth – ', from where a crescendo starts which ends with the ending of that question-sentence at 'crystals?'. From 'There is death in the', the great climax must be anticipated, but the actual *molto* crescendo must only start with 'I have heard / the strange singing'. The great climax comes with 'my death...', which needs to be held at a *fortissimo*. A pause follows immediately. 'The bitter sea washes' must be done in a tired voice; only with 'No use to / put the fighting' is there a briskness, as if the reader wants to convince himself. It slowly trails off with 'more ash...'. A short, intense silence ensues, and then with piercing, ringing urgency the final line radiates a sharp search light into the dark heaven of the poem.

Nothing is real –
not a country,
not a parliament.

but lurking quietly
in the Bosch
painting, in
the even yellow
page of the
book dipped
in age

it lingers a quarter second
and then on
endlessly, on
as the night
in the space
of the sky's black

it runs, almost always
there in its
granite hardness
but always almost
there and never
in any place
to feel it
like the fist
of a former
friend decayed to
enemy,

the soft breasts of
the expectant
mother,
or even
the first night
of adult life
in its white forms
of flesh unity –

the first, the mother and the
child, the first
night of man and
wife
this is never
real – merely vacuum
within vacuum

for on and on it runs
and on and on
we follow
seeing it in a
Brahms symphony, a
Beethoven sonata,

sometimes hiding in
a sun ray on a
greyish bitterly meaning
afternoon of sordidly
black wintry rain,

sometimes in the
murder where
brain-matter is
cut from living
bodies –
even at
times in the masses
dying of atomic
radiation burns,

We Live
– yet we have
Died before Birth!

7:vi:1958
Morté VIII

On the Loud Reading:

This poem is 'quiet'; someone is commenting on something of import – he is almost reminiscent. Keep the voice subdued and very intimate. Don't build to a great climax; it is a mere up and down of the waves – a cover to the vicious storm below. The stark, brisk bitterness of the last lines must come with a diamond firmness that piercingly penetrates. In volume there need be no increase. The quality of the voice can be rather more 'full', but not more 'mellow', and, above all, it must be well paced.

‘It was in
December’ –
‘No November’ –
‘Forget September!’

‘When was
washing white?’ –
‘Yesterday yodelling
in the yard
made Maggie
wash washing white’ –

‘Oh, what fun!
But you
mustn’t mind me’ –
‘For nuts
I’m nuts,
for cakes
I’m baked’ –
‘What wishy washy fun!
But you
musn’t mind me’ –

‘The eccentric
ecclesiast
eclipsed the egg
in extraordinary
ego!’

'Nuts and eccentrics
are electric and nuts!

nuts!' –

'Who knew king
John?' –

'Wasn't he the nut
who said a
John was a
Johnning king?' –

'Oh, what jolly, jovial fun!

But you

mustn't mind me!' –

'Never mind
you, never
time you –
in the province
of Provence
is a pagan dance' –

'Is a roller skater
a round ruddy rough?' –

'Oh, what reddish, rollicking fun!

But you

mustn't mind me!' –

'Never mind you' –

'Eccentrics and nuts' –

'Cats and brats' –

'Oh, you mustn't mind' –
 'Never mind' –
'Wish wash' –
 'Yodelling yelling' –
'Maggie making'
 'Eggish ecclesiast' –
'Never nuts' –
 'Johannesburg John' –
'Provincial pride' –
 'Round roll' –
 'Never mind!'
 'Nuts!'
 'Eccentric ego!'
 'Nuts never mind!'
 'Ego never nuts!'
 'Eccentric nuts! Mind!'

8:vi:1958

Rinascita XII

On the Loud Reading:

Though it is *Rinascita* with a laugh, and needs to be made as pleasant and as light as possible (since it is an indulgence in the sounds of words, and it must be presented as such), it is nevertheless tinted with the sombre.

I heard it in a
dying whisper...

Only for a moment's
moment was the
flame almost a flame
and then the night
again...

Who would now
believe that I
was dressed in robes
of state, in royal
purple and costly
ermine only the other
age before his era?

And it is
gone forever...
I felt the
hand and
the warm
sherry-tinted
breath on that
cold autumn
evening when we
huddled closer together from

the thin-shrieking
wind and its demon-bat
wings

and passing
down the
street (washed now
in the storms
of devastation
and by the
seas of blackest-blue
pain) we came
to a parting, to
two roads and
suddenly machines
went wild dancing
in a hell-heaving
sound wave and
locomotives went
sound-spewing berserk,
human children wailed
'Mummy! Mummy!', bullets
pierced into bodies sprayed
with the blood that
 was mauve
 with vengeance!

And when rest
came again

he was not
there – the friend
of former times
or his body
or even parts of
his body...

The sun never gives
more than a
twilight now –
and I am blackening
in the increasing blinding of
my vision.

‘Is that form
him – that form
over there?’

Is this

face his – this
face at the entrance?’

– I’m dreaming – dying – dreaming

– again...

‘Is that his voice?’

– illusions – dreams – illusions –

‘That’s his walk, I’m sure!’

– illusions – dreams – and death –

Is there no pattern?
Is the raw maggot-writhing
pain that centre core
reality?
and pleasure
a stenchingly pus-filled lie?

13:vi:1958
Morté IX

On the Loud Reading:

The poem is mostly in a whisper; it is also slightly reminiscent. However, it suddenly builds up from 'to a parting, to' to a sudden and shattering climax at 'with vengeance'. Then comes a complete break and a flat, 'empty' voice is required for 'And when rest'. From 'The sun never gives' it is rather an old man speaking, and it must break considerably with what has gone before. The questions and then words trailing off must be done in contrast to each other. The last portion breaks almost entirely with the whole poem. The reader rises above the 'narrative', as it were, and asks the questions with overwhelming bluntness, tinted with a pungent bitterness.

Slowly the victim
grows concrete
into a truer
reality
and my hands
are enshrouded in
gold – my nails
catch the moments
in preservation
within their pearl textures
and burning
with a hot
light through all
night (like the
filament in
the bulb) is
the spirit given
to me by
music as a
sceptre to my
christening
that is
the entrance so
delicate into
ever-rising-pillared
great buildings
where I shall
forever sing unto
the altar of
mellowest moments

in the richest voices
of many piano tones.

The rareness
of this vast gift
is always
there in a dusk
and I (to be
its voices) must
always linger alone –
isolated in the
thickening night at
late evening
to glow like
some light of
another-sphère-régioned
heaven
where this spirit
of music guides
my hands like
a missile of
miraculous beauty
to a place
that is beyond
time and outside
eternity!

And each of
these moments shall

forever throw
their ember-glowings
out to the souls
of breathing men
 but I (the
 horse of the
 wild rider) must
 be an island in the
 cold oceans of
 loneliness
 angrily lashing
 my tired shores...

16:vi:1958
Rinascita XIII

On the Loud Reading:

Here the sense of something strange and 'other-worldly' must predominate. The voice is always in the 'darker parts' of its range and rather quiet. There is also a sense of bewilderment with a wistful, forlorn spark glowing steadily throughout the poem, and this must be well preserved. The general air of 'vagueness' is also tragic, but it is a beautiful tragedy, being rather something for which to feel deeply thankful than to mourn. The poem is a 'rare' moment when the imagination (through its stimulation of the senses) finds a reality very remote from the obvious.

To Madam Gina Bachauer

Her hands clasped my breath

and then tore
the heavens in
one aircraft-swooping

movement and there!

there
they were her children –
first ecstasy
dancing wildly
within movements of spanning
wings in uncharted spaces
piercing her penetrating
way to the innermost
circle in the sphere of
sublime light!

Then swaying in the
cold breeze was desolation
– the empty barren desert
in nightly desertion
with
the hollow cry of isolation
ringing coldly through the
black air moving on
in torrents of ever-widening,

ever-empty flat futile
spaces

and here was
the sublime
as
the light over the
soft face in
womanly expression
radiating the
other-worldly in
sleeping unknowing...

Then the murky depression
stalking on like
wild cat-animals,
like thin shrieking
sounds of terrible missiles
and growing he
engulfs all in his
tarish black fires of
thick horrors!

Yet bursting
through was the
grandeur of ten
million feet in solid
grey – stark and formidable
was his face of manly furrows,
of the granite expressions

to lead us to
tenderness that wisps
past momentarily in fragrance
like some rare being
and she lodges her
reddish lips deeply
on the soft white texture of
our greater souls
 and death too
 was there in
 black mourning
 and in coffin-
 bearing
 but
life graciously showed
her queenly face
 tired by
state matters and yelling
warfare for life but victorious!

Victorious – she
has conquered!
the territory is hers,
the very soil is hers,
she came (this strange
creature) – she came
and gave us twenty
years in two hours!

10:vi:1958
Rinascita XIV

On the Loud Reading:

The 'Brahmsian' sweep of this poem is quite considerable and the reader is 'singing in great volume', especially towards the end, where a broad climax is reached. The voice must have a mellow, resonant, singing tone, and it also needs to be very subtly varied in order to project the different feelings (depression, ecstasy etc.). It is, therefore, necessary to make use of its fullest range, and the greatest compass of the reader's technique must be brought into play. Naturally, judgment and shrewd sustaining is essential to keep the control of voice, images, sound, rhythm, pace, and the different moods simultaneously.

Homage to Gina Bachauer

Flowing out like
a million streams
(transparent in the
quiet ray of poetry)

her hands
pull out
the beautifully
embroidered ribbons
to fill the heaven
in great array
on the soft breeze
of other-worldly
rareness

quivering like the
feathers of a queenly
bird and we
who hear the
notes (filled with the
treasured gems of all the
earth)

soar with her
to palaces
where music
is the very

air, and water
the poetry of
sound, where
speech is the
vast choirs of
voices fitting
together like
pebbles into the
body of the
earth –

where silence is
the colossal symphonies
reaching out to
the very outer
regions of space

and the
beauty of
the nightly
heaven is
given in vast
adornment
to her, óúr
Quéén!

To Our Queen!
to her we come
in homage
at her coronation
that makes
her supreme in
all the many
empires of music

and but to
have heard
her has
made me
a Grand Duke,
has made me a
great Lord
in the spirit's
many countries!

Born from
the folds of
music she
is of music's
finest fibre!

15:vi:1958
Rinascita XV

On the Loud Reading:

The sweeping movement must make the poem seem one almost-endless phrase and, above all, the sense of 'drawn-in breath' must predominate right through it. The voice must be relaxed and at its mellowest pitch in order to give a powerful, sustained singing quality.

The half-empty brandy
bottle and the breath
(smelling dung-filled
with some high temperatured
rotting) blow heavily
onto my nostrils'
ever-vibrating tissues
now revolted by
this and the
bread-stale bodily odours
of unwashed
bodies in dirtier clothing
that is scorched with sweat –
yet all is not only
this

for amidst the
bulky beams (running
iron-sleeper determinedly
on to another cracked
wall) are also the
horrid worms
(born out of acid-active
urine where disintegration
is historically inevitable)
chewing their way
persistently into the
decayed teeth of human
relationships where
reign bubonic-plagued
rats in the glory of
gangrened limbs

and cancer-lipped
ideas all converging
into an army of
arsenic-arrowed dying!

And yet it
all continues as
steadfastly as
the sun comes in
the morning
and goes in
the evening –
never resting
fighting with this
six-hooked sickle
at twenty minutes
to one in the year
ten and then
with that death-dust-
filled pointed affair
in the dusk of
twenty minutes to
six in the month of
late August or early
September and
all we have for
it is perhaps
a war of two million
dead and twenty
million not alive

with living and not
dying with death.

My muscles won't
tense any longer –
no! no fight will
come from me!
this is and I am
sealed in the vessel
of this, this teeming lava
that is but blue-darkening
blood dying in
fighting heat and yet
never dead in its
ever-continuing violent
last kickings!

19:vi:1958

Morté X

On the Loud Reading:

The fact that the imagery is pungent and the sense is important, makes the reader's task a difficult one. Thus it is best to keep the whole poem at a mezzo forte in order to let images, sounds, and sense come through without being 'smudgy'. A rigid control is necessary to rein these 'violent horses' (the images and sounds, that is). The poem could just as well have been under Rinascita, because in its acceptance there is 'rebirth', but it essentially deals with decay, and thus I have placed it with the Morté group. The point of all this is that these two elements so opposite (decay

and rebirth) must be presented in the vocal delivery as well as the synthesis between them. The reader must develop a feeling for all this, and present these elements with considerable conviction, and distinctly sketch one against the other. At all events the movement (pace) of the poem must be firmly kept at an 'allegro'. It must not drag or be static – the 'Brahmsian' sweep is still present. Clarity is the key word in the vocal delivery, and the flow needs to be forceful.

To transcend it,
to believe the unbelievable
orbit of the sphere's reality
is the power of
those whose spirits were
cast (in the strange other worlds)
out of the finest marble
that is no marble but as intense
(in its other-powered essence)
as the light of the lamp
shining out the eternity in its gem-glittering
crystal that holds in its
other-mind-created shapes
many solar systems in many
universes with the ever-encompassing
endless space-territory that has
never been
for the earth-born senses
but always existed in the
creation of the minute atom
within a body whose travels
spreads its light within all
space and beyond all dimensions
being ever-present in every
centre of every converged existence
within every known dimension and far outside them
till the never-existing ultimate
thing (that is everything on every plane)
possesses it as the blood core
of its beyond-life living!

And from that face expression
(sculptured by an inner hand),
the husky voice
(vibrating by a stronger, longer breath) and
the body (standing in its full
length drawn from other space-worlds)
I drew this vision
whose breath is
without beginning, without changing
in the paining places of
a death,
whose blood was never
yet existed ever,
who is óf
and yet never óf!

20:vi:1958

Rinascita XVI

On the Loud Reading:

The 'symphony' must be intensely felt and at the same time the sounds must exist with glass-clear clarity. The 'Brahmsian' sweep is prominent, and it must make the whole poem seem like two phrases, in a musical sense – each part being a phrase. The voice must flow easily, but the breath-stream will need unusual control. It is best to think of the poem as the singing of a lyrical and rhythmical song.

I was born to be
in the East and here I
am in the West –
what strangeness
hangs in fragrance in
this hot midday
mid-summer air slightly
dusty with the rich
brownish red soil of
fertile growing in
imaginative living preserved
in the bowl of
cool water as
quietly darting, sun-reflecting
golden fishes whose
eyes are sleeping
and seeing in the
ever-revealing!
What ought is
less than what
is, but both are
only dried out (rather
too spiky) plants too
needle-y to be lovely –
the thing of attraction
(and peak of summit
living) is clothed in
that which is (never was,
never will be) nót
nor can be now only

but has existed
always and clothed
the minds of immortality
at the dinner party
of delight and the next
morning breakfast in
the cold ice-cubish rainings
of pain in thin
diamond-cut glass-sharp
crystallised icicles!

21.vi:1958

Rinascita XVII

On the Loud Reading:

The essential part of this poem is the music in the various sounds of the words, and to present this in a continuous flow is necessary. A feeling for the words and their sounds (as opposed to the 'sense') must be brought into play. That does not mean that the 'sense' is 'non-sense'. A mellow voice would best carry the poem. Except for a sharpening towards the end, the poem needs to unfold with a gracious movement symbolised in a beautiful (unaffected) gesture of a well-formed, well-kept hand.

It is death
in every substance.

When bodies burn
in radio-activity,
when light is black,
when time has hauled
out our teeth of
reason – that is only
the peak.

We are dying
but before dying
we are burning
and before burning
we are shrivelling,
shrivelling to that shattering
death.

Yet it is
time's design,
the way of this bitter
spitting death
is absolute –
no other alternative.

We accept and
in accepting have
already died –
this is time's design.

22:vi:1958

Morté XI

On the Loud Reading:

The presentation must be blunt, piercingly direct, and incisive. It is bitter with a heavy dose of defeatism. There must be a sense that everything has collapsed.

The Three Death Points in the Death Triangle
Morté XII Morté XIII Morté XIV

I looked around –
could not find him,
sat down and
started dying.

(shouting across a vast plain)
disintegration – disintegration –
disintegration...

Slap! his burning-tongued
fingers branded themselves
on my cheeks
and yet I am winter
cold, cold-oceans-of-
the-winter cold.

Who heard the mysterious
whistle at ten
minutes to five this
morning when
dew was drizzling
a dance on the
polar winds from
other places?

(shouting to another house down the street)

Are you there! are you there?

you there, are you there?

I never knew

blindness could look

so glaringly white; I

never thought the

deaf could hear

such cacophony; I

never imagined the

dumb could talk such

senseless philosophy.

Praying in the

cathedral used to be

a remedy, singing

in the choir used to be

a medicine but

now what does it matter?

It never mattered –

neither the B.A. degree

nor the diploma in

music-playing nor

even the doctor's

certificate and its

pompous lettering –

the red robe is
a terrible lie
and the physicists'
theory was proved
very false yesterday,
nor is the chemical
equation balanced
while mathematicians
have yet another
odd problem where
answer and assumed
answer are something
in nothing.

(shouting to the servant)

Where's my tea? my
tea please, no – this afternoon,
I'll be dead this evening.

Let us not
doubt the doctor's
latest diagnosis though
it proved imaginative
and not very clear
before.

I notice the flowers
are so stale –

what is wrong with
our opal-shaped garden?
oh yes! the death
frost has filled his
stomach there and
left it rather bare,
the scents have gone
and you have only
tears as pears.

Yes I understand,
the lawyer's training
has made you ill
and chewed your
soul to be but a
sieve dropping through
what most you would
keep and the money
has made those
oozing sores –
is there no remedy?
no – I understand,
it is the price
you pay for that prized
lettering and ointment
would only worsen
the gnawing gnattish cancers.

Sleeping in its
quiet veils or

dying in its dusk
or yet depression in
its night, not
even tiredness in
its endlessly coldly bitter
drizzling has helped
us not to fall.

I looked around –
could not find him,
sat down and
started dying.

23:vi:1958

Morté XII

On the Loud Reading:

The presentation must be very 'matter-of-fact' and blunt but the pitch of the poem is not far from hysteria. The words can almost come over as if they mean nothing. Seeing the poem as the bat of the on-coming death, the right wing is futility and the left one desolation.

The opening lines are so blunt that they must make the reader unwillingly wish to laugh with a 'galgenhumour', which exists even at the very beginning – laugh to relieve the tension. The following 'disintegrations' need to be 'far-off', and they need to trail off in the last one. From 'Slap! his burning-tongued', there is a sense of wide-eyed amazement, amazement at being 'cold, cold-oceans-of- / the-winter cold' after

'Slap! his burning-tongued

fingers branded themselves
on my cheeks’.

Again the mood changes with ‘Who heard the mysterious’; the voice is quietly ominously giving the suggestion of unnatural happenings and strangeness. With ‘Are you there? Are you there?’, there is an urgency which is almost like the hopeless fight for the last bit of breath. And then sinking away into the ever-sucking mud comes ‘I never knew / blindness could be’. The voice here must show horror, but it must also be tired, and amazement is very dominant, as is also desolation.

‘Praying in the / cathedral use to be’ is almost meditation, but it is stark, as if the reader is looking wide-eyed and vacantly to one spot which he never sees. The futility and the impact of realising it comes with ‘now what does it matter?’, though the voice remains quiet and almost trails off. From ‘It never mattered –’, the pensive and staring attitude returns, and yet, at the same time, the emotional pitch (though the voice tends to be more quiet and flat) is near hysteria. This continues to ‘answer is something / in nothing’. And then ‘Where’s my tea’ is like the last hope, the last shout for the never-coming help, and the ‘galgen-humour’ breaks through sharply with ‘I’ll be dead this evening’, as does the desolate futility. From ‘Let us not’ to ‘and not very clear / before’, the poem is pungently cynical: a bitter, sharp and hideously hollow reaction.

A new mood of insanity, of senseless chattering (that, at the same time, makes overwhelming sense), of ridiculousness that is ultimately, infinitely more truthful than the ‘sensible’, as seen by any set of values or standards, starts with ‘I notice the flowers’. This continues to ‘the gnawing gnattish cancers’, saying all the time that the horrible is vastly more real than is ever realised. The voice must adopt a ‘chatty’ tone, tinted with sympathy.

‘Sleep in its’ comes in a quiet and controlled voice, giving the essence of it all. Then again with great bluntness comes ‘I look around –’, as if even the suffering in the poem

is of no consequence; we still continue to decay and will suffer all this again – the cycle is endless in its revolutions. The whole poem is hollow and its hollowness must echo endlessly like the singings in the head when feverish – it's this echo that brings the poem near the borders of insanity.

Why we are
alive is aflame
with not knowing
but we are awake
and breathing and
in breath is living –
no arguments! that's that!

I noticed in the
hot bus that
colder good and
reddish bad were
embracing passionately
again but
there is no saying
when one will
cut the other's gullet.

The sea is cold
but so is our
drawing-room fire –
oh yes, Van Riebeeck
stood at that
fireplace but when
the chronicler said he
saw him there
he had been dead
more than a year.
I suppose he was
alive? like most

things, I don't know,
except that the
professor at the
university says so
but of course
he was not even
a sperm when
Van Riebeeck was
said to have been
here.

What do you
think of Brahms?
I think one can
see the seams of
that symphony too
clearly, the piano
music can be
superbly played by the
pianist with the
name of a fish,
you know they
say he was a
Jew who travelled
from Abrahams
to Brahms.

Does it all
matter? I
wonder to whom

it ought to matter?
after all, we were
friends – oh no,
not with Brahms,
no, I mean
that creature with
the mob of black
hair, voice like
a flat trumpet and
black beard or
perhaps I mean
that Nordic type –
does it matter?

I wonder how
long this must
last? I'm only
talking to shorten
the car-journey
to the death-drop filling the
empty tin of time
with something –

It doesn't matter,
it's all nothing –
there's not a thing
that is anything!

23:vi:1958
Morté XIII

On the Loud Reading [*Morté XIII*]:

It is the chatterings of those who are about to be executed. It is indeed 'galgen-humour'. The first part is extremely direct, and with the abrupt quality must be coupled a well-controlled, rapid vocal delivery. It is the essence of the poem, and the most important line is 'no arguments! that's that!'. From 'I noticed in the / hot bus that' to 'cut the other's gullet' it is conversational, but an extraordinarily brisk, matter-of-fact narrative attitude is necessary to give it an air of great finality. With 'The sea is cold', the conversation starts to gain pace. The whole business of Van Riebeeck and the chronicler is 'galgen-humour' again and must be presented as such. In the part starting 'I suppose he was / alive? like most', the jumping from one subject to another needs to be subtly handled and the pace is still increasing until 'said to have been / here' is reached, while the 'galgen- humour' is still present.

The next portion starting 'What do you / think of Brahms?' breaks very abruptly with what has gone before, but the pacing, 'galgen-humor', and chatty tone are still there.

 'Does it all
 matter? I
 wonder to whom
 it ought to matter'

is pensive. It breaks with the rest of the poem entirely. It needs to be done quietly. Then from 'after all we were / friends – oh no', the conversational tone with its pacing and 'galgen-humour' continues to the end, right through 'I wonder how' to 'there's not a thing / that is anything'.

Oh sleep
(that comes softly,
purr-softly into
my head,
has brought
a peace
from distant places),
you are time's
elegance.

The calming night
drawn from the
paining day
is your glory-reign;
never dying,
always sighing
relief-breaths
on our foreheads.

The wife of
life,
the fruit of
life's strength,
the inner essence
of breathing
are your
epithets of
eternal degree.

This sleep
is the prelude
to the eternal
symphony,
the portals
entering time's
loving gestures
in his muscled arms
of peace,
in his lingering kiss
of yet another living.

24:vi:1958

Rinascita XVIII

On the Loud Reading:

The poem must be quiet and extraordinarily restful, but there is nothing far away or vague about it. Let it flow gently through beautiful vocal sounds, but with a deliberateness and a neatness. Each cadence must resolve well, yet at the same time suggest the continuation of the poem. With the last cadence the end must be well emphasised. The poem must not drag and, for the most part, it must be seen as vivid and neat, if quiet and subdued, rather than 'smudged' or vague, and certainly not as if it were painted in weak and running colours.

To the Late Mr Reginald Burt

A friend is
not a friend
that is only
a friend at the
well-wined dinner
in the warm
well-cigared
room of pleasure.

But a friend
is a friend
whose unwilling eye
the unwanted colours
of the other disintegrates
in the sun
of his addition,
who leaves preaching
to the time-grabbing
sermon-wright and
to the law-wright
leaves the sour-faced
displeasure of judgment
on the black and white of
wrong and right!

And a friend
it is

that steps over
centuries making
years pebbles
and embraces with
his heart
your heart!

25:vi:1958
Rinascita XIX

On the Loud Reading:

A quiet dignity must be dominant throughout the poem. In a steady flow the intimate quality needs to be projected with a slight smile of meditation on the face, as it were. In the last part there is an unmistakable ring of triumph, and without increasing the pace or heightening the pitch, this must come out. It is the climax and kernel of the whole poem.

I sometimes wonder
but why (when
eyes ache without end)
stays stilly mysterious
in the mourning greying
black of lately widowed
dying grey-heads.

We feel it,
I feel it,
in my joints, Death
creaks out the
minutes to the
arid world of my
fate,
 can you hear
the howl?

 the cold howl
 in the refrigerating
 shriek,
 can you
 hear the soft
 rattling call?
 is it Death?

We huddle closer –

grab hands –
pray – laugh hysterically –
pray again –
the storm bursts
from his territory

into pitch and red
flames – we
shriek, it's
all over

and yet again we
start in pain
for
we have not had
mercy's attention,
on again for
more puking pain in
the oxygen of our
decayed, crammed living!

Is there no mercy,
is there no sleep,
is there

Nó

Láw

that is ruler of

Thís
Láw
of continual dying
in ever-growing radium
burns in ever-filling
acid tanks?

Sháll
no crane
save us
from Thís Mársh Múd?
Is there
no
mercy left
in tíme's
tówn-of-life plánning?

29:vi:1958
Morté XIV

On the Loud Reading:
This poem starts with a great deal of bluntness, and the voice is quite loud with a distinctive argumentative quality about it all. It is, however, a soliloquy of the mind. It is that which we thought but never said, or dared to say. It has, therefore, the quality of meditation as well, and consequently the quiet tones start from 'We feel it, / I feel it!' and the mood changes to uncertainty and horror. The agitation must now come out in the crescendo and *agitato e molto rubato*, which reaches a climax at 'is it Death?'.
There is a sudden drop, and then the crescendo

continues (with a small drop at 'all over'), but from 'We huddle closer' the poem races on faster, and the whole atmosphere is that of the erratic, of hysteria. The whole movement converges to 'decayed, cramped living', and then suddenly (without warning) it breaks, as if the reader has fallen over a precipice. After a dramatic silence the poem continues in a slow, soft, but ominous whisper. It, however, builds rapidly with a new crescendo and with *agitato* rhythms, giving weighty stresses to 'Nó / Láv' and 'Thís / Láv'.

From 'Sháll / no crane', the whole atmosphere heaves up considerably, as if for a volcanic eruption, and it also broadens out. By 'in tíme's / tówn-of-life plánning?' the terrible question is uttered at a fortissimo and the great climax reached with the 'ing' of 'planning' ringing through the air like a snapped violin string.

To Beethoven

Sing (oh spirit)
over the wide areas
of centuries,
sing (oh soul)
into the very portals
of all life,
sing
 for in
your singing is
the umbilical chord
of yet another
birth, of yet another
blood redemption!

In your song
run thickly
the splinters of that
pain that
in its suffering
alights the heavens in
the million colours
of its ever-glowing
diamond-light transcending
time into the very
blood of eternal
existence!

Oh spirit
who has reigned
us, who has
given water from
your oasis-places
in desert-spaces,
you (who now
sing in the
barren desert
night to fill
this wintry air
with a triumphing
warming sun-wind)
enter you my inner
life to feed
it for the God-flight
to Olympic-places
to make me
glow a sun!

Oh (monarch
of music muscles)
boom your
ever-rising choral
symphonic organ
into the regions
of the very God,
sing to the
marriage of

life and eternity,
be the priest
at the communion
of timeless breathing –
endlessly you are the
father in the marriage-bed
of vast area'd emotions
in the triumphant
birth of greatness!

2:vii:1958
Rinascita XX

On the Loud Reading:

Here the reader must sing out the praise as if a symphony were playing in his spirit. And with the exquisite beauty of a nun who has now given her soul as the bride to God, with the same glowing radiance, the reader must create the sounds of this poem which has its root in the sublime opus 110 (piano sonata No. 31 in A flat major). The poem is always rising higher and with 'Oh monarch' there is an immense growth in the richness of the sound, the greatness of the volume, and the swelling of the spirit of triumph till the final line is reached which is the climax and end of the symphony.

To Elizabeth Eybers

Was it standing at
the shop window
in the five o'clock
of the late
afternoon I saw
your pale face
and noticed the
small light-speaking diamonds
on your tapering fingers?

Where did our
spirits meet? was
it at fifteen years
of age in
the cold passage
or in the darkness
tinted with a
fire-glow that evening
when tears
formed those strange
gems?

I noticed your
patient mood in
the dusk when that
friend and I

were both waiting
for something to
happen and what
happened was tied in
a different
ribbon than ever
expected.

I do know
that when
I huddle that
unusual child your
breath flitters
its delicate dance
on my face and
in my hair.

Have I seen you
in fleshy pink
or only in
spiritly smoke-grey
or retiring blue?

I never know,
but what I
know is the
impregnation of a

new life –
you transcend
death more graciously
than in the talent
of mortals who die
and immortality
is the soft eternal
scent of your words.

What breath is
your breath?

5:vii:1958
Rinascita XXI

On the Loud Reading:

There is a great deal of questioning in this poem, and it must suggest the direct speaking with the spirit of the poetess. The poem builds steadily to the second last portion and, whereas the former parts are mezzo forte, this portion (starting 'I never know, / but what I') grows to a forte, and there is a ring of triumph in it. It is the climax. The last two lines follow (after a pause heavily laden in dramatic meaning) in a dry manner similar to the final two chords in each variation of the turbulent thirty-two variations on an original theme in C minor by Beethoven. These last two lines come like a sharp light piercing through intense darkness.

To Music

My music –
my bride and
our child –
poetry hold
my cold
hands through the
scorching of flames
flaming furiously on
the unique carving
of great friendships
thrown to ash
by the jealous-shivering
cat-nailed serpent-woman.

You – my soft
feathered pillow –
in the iced winds
from the dominating
tower of parent
will against the
surging sea
of other searchings
in my silent heart.

You –
my medicine
in the heat
of a hot-glowing
head,

you –
the prima donna
of my life-opera.

My princess –
with your fingers
in my clasp
I am a
greater monarch
to reign sound
into music's
Rembrandt paintings.

In the symphony
of our love
poetry flows
endlessly into the
air of golden
light from eternal
glory and
eternal warm breathing.

In the singing
of our choral
is the rebirth
into the soft materials
from the God-lands
and in the
prelude of the

oratorio dance the
greater souls
of time's greatest
sonatas.

And while
you are there
the barrier to
insanity is of
no mean power
towering its division
without ending,
while you
are my soul's
lover I am
your slave to
the nails of my
fingers and the
ears of my head,
while you
are there even
time bows to
our joint reign
and the hate
colours in enemies
turn to the
poetic creation of
sun-ripening love,
while you
kiss my lips

I was never
born nor ever
shall die!

In the
monastery of music
my life is
mellowed to
transcend all timeless
territory in my
travels to those,
the total truths!

5:vii:1958

Rinascita XXII

On the Loud Reading:

It is the singing of a young bridegroom to his bride, in whose arms he will linger for the span of his life, and from 'And while / you are there' to the end of the poem there is a close relationship to the Brahms second piano concerto's (B flat major) first movement, but especially to its opening triumphant moments. Never lose the 'Brahmsian' sweep, and have the sense of continually building architecturally. There is an element of 'out of heaven hell is born', especially in the first two parts. Preserve the darker shades of this in order to throw the triumphant more completely (by contrast) into the crystalline clear lights of the end and climax.

**On the First Brahms Piano Concerto in D minor
(Opus 15)**

First Movement: Maestoso

Thundering like cymbals
of the night the
turbulent cloud-crammed
heavens heave up in
violent concordat with
granite faces that penetrate
the air as splinters the
flesh

and of a sudden
a thin
stream of celestially
created light
swerves over the
passages of endless
time and day
breaks through the
foggy black of
youth's night-searchings for
what things are
not known

and swelling up
is a hearth dance,
a swelling of
beauty (impregnated by

pain) waves
strangeness-filled
banners waving
well in the winds of
grandeur.

Then singing
of pain-filled
loveliness the piano
tones create poetic
images of
breath-thieving
portraits from the hands
of the artists

and so it
grows in its course
over many mountain
ranges and the
end is a
snow-garmented plain
reflecting grey
light of a weak
but trumpet-triumphant
sun!

Second Movement: Adagio

The cathedral –
and flowing out

(like many shaped kites)
the singing of
other things in the
other reality dominates
and with the swelling
orchestra of grandeur
comes the fullness of
creation's marvel and
the spirit rules
whose septre is the
transcending of
dust-made bodily living.

Its singing
(and in singing)
gives the
fertile soils to
the eternal heart
of endless life.

Third Movement: Allegro ma non Troppo

Oh and it
is a joy to
dance in the freshness
of water-spraying music
and breaking
chained bonds is
always the spirit dancing

neatly to Olympus or
Christian heavens!

Never tiring,
always swinging,
dancing neatly,
singing lightly

and moving
in and out the
vines-of-delight-
covered pillars to
portals of joy
are creator's mind,
orchestra's singing and
piano weaving

till in army-unity
the mounting
of the mountain
is in trumpet-array
(amidst soft trombones)
brought to life
in a statue of the
second breath-giving
reality!

9:vii:1958
Rinascita XXIII

On the Loud Reading:

The 'Brahmsian' sweep, in a subdued way, runs through this poem.

Maestoso:

The beginning, 'Thundering like cymbals', is the opening dramatic chords of this work – forbidding granitic faces they are, and, as in the concerto, a celestial melody breaks through, but always on the higher register coming in single piano notes in the piano score. This is the subject of the second part starting 'and of a sudden'. With 'and swelling up' comes the melody which always occurs in broken chords in the piano score, and the sweep becomes enormous. Then with 'Then singing', the moving piano entrance in sixths is singing in the mind and here the air of singing something unbelievably beautiful must have regal sway. 'and so it / grows in its course' brings to mind the last passages of octaves at the end of this movement. It is pure, undiluted triumph.

Adagio:

The tenderness of Brahms needs to be felt here, and the soft murmuring stays as a continuous undercurrent in this movement. It swells up into great waves which act as domes to the cathedral-like qualities. There is something tragic, but we continue our journey from this night-like tragedy and reach the dawn-sun of the snow-covered plain at the end. Though the light is dim, it is nevertheless a glimmering of triumph.

Allegro ma non Troppo:

Though still subdued, the dance is in progress and, contrary to some concepts, the tragedy has given way to triumph, which continues in its climb right to the end of the poem. The dawn at the end of adagio develops into a sun-filled day. Let the beautiful chord sequence and melodies of the composer be suggested in the rich tone and smooth flowing of the voice.

'Geheg aan die benede buik
waar blink haarrankies reeds ontluik,
deuraar, teer soos 'n ooglid, sag
soos murg, hang weeloos die geslag.'
Elizabeth Eybers on D.H. Lawrence's
'Why were we crucified into sex?
why were we not left rounded off,
and finished in ourselves?'

The sex manifestation
in its soft,
clay-soft texture intertwined
with blue-veined
tenderness is in
itself the death-giver
in its life-making.

The young boy
(once manned
in muscles murky
with this manhood)
is with the irrational inflicted
in attacks of fits
when they come
with the insanity
epidemic.

The boy coming
from the bath
rubbing his warm
body (slightly odorous)

in a sweat-cloud
and then with a towel
rubs against the skin
is never conscious on
the layer of life-giving
but insertion or
personal caressing is
driven by energy
from the want of
bodily unity in
thickish lust-light

and the lead
to the conclusion is
that aesthetics are
diplomatically quite
isolated and
the beauty of those
who discover it is
the dye they spread
over the strong
but dirtied calico-
roughness.

It is a
power creator,
it is also an
earthly-essential
process
but its ingredients

are not Godly
nor ever were!

Since the God's blood
is eternity, he needs
no replacing!
and the marrow-soft
sex organ is no
God nor is it
the heart of a God!

Its existence
is the neck-break
of the gallows
on our lives!

9:vii:1958
Morté XV

On the Loud Reading:

The attitude is that of 'thinking', not necessarily meditation. But again it is no sermon, and this poem must be presented as thoughts on the matter, which ought to have some bluntness and stark briskness in its presentation. From 'The sex manifestation' to the 'thickish lust-light' it is a statement of facts but with the attitude of 'that's that'! From 'and the lead', it needs to broaden out. It is the explanation, as it were. Then from 'It is a / power-creator', the attitude is that of an argument in which both sides of the matter are presented. The reader can afford to be quite passionately firm with 'Since the God's blood': it is the climax. The end ('Its existence') needs to be very dry and come with great finality.

To Margaret Ritchie on her Singing of Schubert's Song,
'Shepherd on the White Rock'

Singing!

 oh, my vocal
princess, when
you take our
 master's
statuettes
 into the light
of your glory-singing
trans-heaven vocal
 harmony
my soul is
forever embalmed
 in
the sweetest oils
that flow from
 time's
endlessly light-filled
caves in the
mountains of beauty's
 ever-reigning
territory
 and
 when the
clarinet sings its tale
I transcend the night

of this
life and in time's timeless
lap I lay my head!

11:vii:1958
Riniscita XXIV

On the Loud Reading:

The sound of the word 'Singing' at the beginning must run onto 'oh, my vocal'. What more can I illuminate of the reading of these lines but to advise the reader to listen to this remarkable recording and thus to try to recapture the superb artistry in the vocal presentation. It is indeed unmingled beauty.

To Frans Schubert on his Unfinished Symphony

Oh Frans,
oh our melody-maker
in this
 your Unfinished
I hear the
 choirs of the
heavens in the chantings
to beauty's golden light!

And over the
 planes
of time I feel your
hand holding
 my heart
in the finest light
in its flight
to the waters
 from where
I drink beauty's
 drops immortally!

Oh Frans,
sing on! Sing,
oh soul!
 sing
 me through

the corridors of this
earthly life,
 sing me
through the rooms of pain,
 through
the dusk of dying
and the night of death!

In your singing
we enter God's
beauty-paved places,
we live past
time's barriers into
the gold of creation!

11:vii:58
Rinascita XXV

On the Loud Reading:

This is triumphant ecstasy. Listen to the great work so that the soul resounds with the beauty of the master's lyrical creation, and then let the voice singing in exultation this hymn of praise (in clear, purely beautiful tones) to Frans Schubert.

On Sydney Carton of Charles Dickens' novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*.

The rare essence of
Rinascita is buried
into the heart-centre of
the noble
 and the noble
(in all its
 definite lines)
is flowing in
 Sydney Carton
 created in
the drawing-room of Charles Dickens's
swift tale-moulding mind.

 In the
civilisation (beginning never,
 ending never)
it is
 not the murderers
but the monarch,
 not the
drunken moments
 but the
dignity-draped;
 that muscled figure in the
unique arc-light of crown-jewelled courage
(creating in vintaged noble architecture
dominating softly on the wealth-lands

for as long
as the sun comes
and the moon follows)
that is truth's passionate lover.

And retouching these
old mellowed moments in their
sculptured ever-throbbing beauty
gained from their
creator's heart-sweat
and mind-drilling
I again travel over
many eras
in the
gliding golden-eagled flight
within aircraft swerves
of gracious bows
hovering near
these breathing Gods!
And they
who give
blood-transfusions
to these antique
visions add
immortality's cream
to their inner
(delicately quivering)
skins born from beauty's
caressing touch!

12:vii:1958
Rinascita XXVI

On the Loud Reading:

The poem must give the feeling of rising up and the emotion is that of exaltation for here indeed is rebirth. The reader must be conscious of discovering the 'other reality' as if he has seen it now for the first time with the ecstasy of a child suddenly seeing a rainbow and openly showing his wonder. The pitch is high and it is a full orchestra that must sing from out of the voice, which needs to be at its mellowest pitch. It is one vast sweep like the opening moments to that other-worldly first movement of the Brahms piano concerto number two in B flat major (op. 83). The full orchestra comes into play in the third part. The subsequent portion (which is also the fourth and last) is on a quieter level but it is triumphant, and my own vision was an old man smilingly saying these words which contain his eighty years of experience and wisdom in their harmony of singing sounds. The whole poem needs to be one sustained moment of intense emotion and beauty in the same way as a beautiful shell opens only momentarily to show the glory of its inner design in order to close up again forever, or in the same way as those rare moments occur when one enters a composer's or great writer's mind to the point of losing one's own identity, only to return to oneself again and be forever unable to recapture this experience that transcends time.

On Minotti's Opera, 'The Consul'

A hideous
 claw
to my face
 its
 death-blood
points,
 yet the
drama swells up
into the last
heave of the poisoned
heart!

And tragedy
hangs like black
drapings over the
decaying bodies'
 (of
death's domain)
 ebony
coffins –

There runs
thickly a
shriek of a murdered
mother enveloped
in the crying
of a dying
 child!

It grows like
a cliff-dominating
 wave
of death to
drown us –
 drown us –
drown us ...

But in high
tragedy is
the higher mass
of rebirth
and in it
we mourn and laugh,
we live
 and are dying,
yet die
 and are living!

16:vii:1958
Rinascita XXVII

On the Loud Reading:

There is a cacophonous rubato in the violins working rapidly in one large heave to 'heart'. From there it drops to build up again into piercing tones with 'of a dying / child'. Once more the tone drops and again a crescendo is attempted but it trails off with the repetitions of 'drown us'. The last section breaks entirely with the former section and is decidedly triumphant.

My six-dimensioned
vision revealed
the unrolling carpet
of no end
its murky enshrouded
(but wonder-intertwined)
pattern of
unborn ages
to my ever-opening
eyes

and before
me were mountains
whose snow-beauty
were created in
peace

and (before
the death-night
of my light
in this age has
clasped me
in passionate
embrace)

the era
born
from out of
the sun's
gold will (as
a queen
to her throne)
stride!

Had
 Prince Shakespeare
and the immortal
Elizabeth (Queen
 of England)
not walked from
 out
a winter night
to bring the
 summer of time?

Had Michelangelo
not given
the never-dying
 always-infusing
light of his
 creation
by drawing
it from charcoal
and coal
 of gloom-splashed
time before?

A prophecy?
no, only another
reality born
in the sphere's senses
where past
 present
in the future

emerge to
one painting,
one building,
even one singing
in one symphony!

Death,
Life,
 Dying and
 Living
are children
 from the
 same womb!

23:vii:1958
Rinascita XXVIII

The rubied ring
of the moment
and warmth of
 the
car's tail-light
 (in
its red splashings)
 are all
 the
 moments' fingers.

It passes
and passing
makes it
linger like
the theme-in-
the-head on
Monday morning
after Sunday
evening's
 music
party.

I wonder
when we will
know the number
to the cell sealing

the secret of
what matters in
the months of
our manoeuvres
between the gate
of birth and
the cave entrance
of death.

Is the
whisper
only a
whimper
of deceit?

31:vii:1958
Morté XVI

On the Loud Reading:

This poem is no more than a murmur and it is never above a piano in the first three parts, but it does work up towards the end which needs to come like a chordal progression, that is no more than a forte, but gives the whole atmosphere an intensely sombre greyness. There is a distinct pause before the last portion comes, and, whereas the preceding parts are essentially flowing, the end is more subdued and sustained, but it is so penetratingly direct as to leave a distinct numbness.

To Rusty Head

She has a
graciousness
 that is
the breast to
her very blood
 and
a delicacy
 that is
a dew-perfume
 in
the atmosphere of her
body.

And the
smile and the laugh
are wrought
 out of
concrete courage
though the
face
belies the
workmanship's
sweat in carving
 this
pleasure-infusing
 existence!

Delicate?

yes
but she knows
the cut of
broken
glass
and the
bleeding of the
hand.

From the cloth
of black mourning
came
this honey-gold
of her assurance-singing
mellowingly-pleasing
continually-giving
walk
on the
highway-hard
road
of a dedicated existence!

1:viii:1958
Rinascita XXIX

On the Loud Reading:

Be careful to preserve the form of the poem, and let it sing lyrically within the 'Brahmsian' sweep. It is never more than a forte and steadily winds its way to the end, which is also the climax and comes as a more subdued

forte. The tempo is more slow than fast, and the whole poem needs to be very well sustained within the element of something intimate. If it portrays delicate movement within the groups of words, it also has a firmness and sober elements, especially in lines such as

‘but she knows
the cut of
broken’

to ‘bleeding of the / hand’. This must be very well preserved and projected.

There was a time on the
earlier sea voyages of youth
when their ostrich-feathery flattery
of their too-perfumed-to-be-good
attention was oxygen-important but
now their ant-busy (and ant-small)
intrigues amuse slighter than the
almost-not-heard-engine-noise of small
(insect-small) wings
and their clothing of
avoiding is somewhat too
threadbare, somewhat
too flimsy and holeish
but really!
they do believe in its diplomatic-isolation
reality!
minute actors in atom theatres
are their endless battles against
walls which never were rock-built
nor clay-created – no never, not
even in the dusty shelters of ruins
in old houses whose demolition was an
act of grace –
they never rise
above *amo amas amat** and
that which follows until back we
are at the nineteen fourteen war
and they start irritatedly amo-amas-ing
once more to immediately build
tunnels into the sand dumps of
dumpish waste and (like

ears-waving-in-the-wind spaniel
hounds of flabbily fat women) these
pin-small petty-collectors follow to pin-prick
their irritation in better flesh for the
grabbing of attention to their bloatishly
ego-inflated faces.

5:viii:1958
Morté XVIII

* Editor's note: This is a Latin phrase meaning 'I love, you
love, he/she loves'.

Oh Death
(that lurks in
 dung-
droppings-filled
 crevices,
that is rattle-
snake poisonous)
 why
do you (you filthy
hyena) spread your
 lynx
smirk at me
 when I
have not yet
 emerged
quite from the split
egg shell?

 Not a
man yet, still a
boy and half-way
refrigerated with
 a death
cold, a death snow,
brittle
 by a death
screamingly quivering
 dying
shriek!
Let us murder
the brat!
no, we cannot

for murder is
the brat!

Oh hell...
 oh hell...
 oh hell...

I am impregnated
by death, feed
the birth pains
of death
 and all
it means is
 tomorrow
I am one street-block
closer to death
who is raping
 me
now and will
continue tomorrow
 and
the days (or is it months?
perhaps years?)
 after that –

so corroding me
into paining
blue-bruised
 flesh!

3:viii:1958
Morté XIX

On the Loud Reading [*Morté XIX*]:

The tormented spirit is calling out and distractions dominate. From the beginning the sense of crying out passionately is prominent, and the voice must carry an almost-hysterical urgency. From the beginning of the second part to the end the distraction, even insanity, grows. The end is the climax, which though it has a resounding finality, must come close to a shriek. The voice needs to stay in the higher register, though the words must remain distinct. The immediacy must suggest to the audience the last moments of sanity before the mind cracks under the burden of existence.

Dear

Dame Edith –
she effervesces the eggishly
round

rhythmical phrases
like foaming bubbling fluff
on granadilla
ice cream, floating
granita

to make us
enjoy the enchanting
hats
of her whim's dictation
in recitation of
prancing prattling prats
(or words) –

never have you
heard a bantam
more absurd
as when
Dame (Dearest) Edith
blames him
with fancies in tangerine
hue to hide his
gluttonish glitteringly
gleaming eye for his peacock-
poising on the seacock's
waving flank of
the motion ocean

or when she
tells the cook
the air is gingerbread –
red and
quite stupid.

Her delight it is
and it is a delight
indeed
for Dame Edith
has a singing
that's amusing
in a reality
of óther bead-words
in óther art-works!

9:viii:1958
Rinascita XXXI

three symbols
spell
out the minutes in
their reminder-calendar
process
– the
half white-wine glass
– the
song book already torn
– the
flute that sings only
momentarily!

In the left top
corner-area you
left the seal of your
design
(Van Beyeren)
and that seal is
the guillotine to them
who patronisingly
gave you the
more vulgar bread
for breathing.

Yet transcending
them and your first
life

you have dyed
immortality into your hands'
own children!

10:viii:1958
Rinascita XXXII

To Virginia Woolf

In the morning of my
life she is my bride
and in the afternoon
sun she glows her
intense spirit to pierce
my inner life till
it and she are one
unit in the one
time-wave that was and
is our pride to ride!

she

was and is a
queen, she is
my lady love

for never

is the moment
finished in its adornments

till a

Virginia Woolf

powder softly rests
its intense spirit on
the delicate white
shoulders of my
soul's heart and
mind!

never am I
happy till my
soft white hands

touch her soft
white hands!

13:viii:1958
Rinascita XXXIII

And they are no more
– no more...

But what warning,
what robot red
lights
is their end
(undefined, uncharted,
uncalculated end) to us
who live in the
thickly twining,
thickly growing
forest of death
and know not his natural
habits nor his slaughtering
processes!

15:viii:1958
Morté XX

On the Loud Reading:

The starkness of this poem must seem something brutal. The voice is not above a mezzo-forte, but it is vibrating with the horrible. Not the reader but the listener will feel the fear. Despite the nature of the poem it needs to flow and do let it trail off at 'and they are no more / – no more...'. This poem is, as it were, the one split moment when we fully understand the hold of death on our lives. This realisation cannot last longer than a moment, for should it do so, we would be destroyed – 'mankind cannot bear very much reality'*.

* Editor's note: From T.S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets'.

**On the Crash of the Viscount Central African Airways
'Zambesi' coach class, at Benghazi, Libya, at about 3:15 a.m.
on Saturday, August 9th, 1958.**

Unprepared, unexpected
death untied their lives
– unprepared, unexpected!

Mechanics are
solidly sound as steel
poles in silent earth,
aircrafts glide,
swan-glide the air –
masterpieces of master
creators – masters
but for one!

And of him
we know none!
none in the
volumes of scientific
knowledge, of learning
in philosophy... history...
mechanics or surgery,
we know the nought-
circle of him!

And on every level
of rock-living we

On the Loud Reading [*Morté XXI*]:

In essence this is the same as the previous poem but here the pitch is nearer 'volcanic eruptions'. The reader is fighting and the voice is often at a well sustained forte. It builds toward the climax in the last question, which must come like the whistling of a whip or a bomb. The hysterical is constantly within reach.

To

Friendship there is the supreme
art of toleration
mellowed by the constancy
that must steel-bridge
time in the flesh-and-mind passages!

Friendship is the heaven
and the vision of understanding
its ever-glowing sun!

In

the cool breeze of its
evening are the greatest paintings
revealed for our spirits' pleasure!

Supreme to all ambition,
the ever-pope to life,
here and in the dark
is friendship mellowed
by its continual heart beats!

20:viii:1958
Rinascita XXXIV

**Lament on the Death of an Old Cape Oak in Mowbray,
Cape Town, chopped down on 21st August, 1958**

The modern satan – progress
and his damned devils
(the telephone, the motor car
and the bloodless engineering
feats) to hell with them from
where they came!

In him who spread his
oakly array in spring, who
sheltered (house-sheltered) us in
the boilings of the summer heat-
winds or the spiteful teasing of
the wintry drizzle, hé who is five
times ten their (who now do
dare execute him) anaemic ages,
he must be French-revolutioned from
his Louis XVI throne to
make a poisonous snake-road
for life-gobbling American motor cars –
those silver-eyed monsters who water-gush
forward like Britain's savages during
the Julius Caesar visitation.

Poor old father that was
once nature's pride,

On Chapter XX of Book II (page 189-191) of André
Maurois's *Byron* (English Translation by Hamish Miles)

Byron!

 a poet might be
your title and lord
 suffixed
to your name

but

 you are no
casket with the oil of
human understanding!

About Mary Musters
you dagger-pierce your soul
but let Mary Musters
to you turn
and a mean bourgeois
spirit of spiritual money-
gain your thoughts
took to seduce.

 The hand for human
kindness is supreme,
the patient may have
bitten the fingers
but the fingers will
not deny him the

breath of love
 when
her parched throat howls
for its water.

 The poet
 and the man
 are not the
 same frame –
your man
 leaves my face shamed
flowing coal-red
 tinted with
the white
 of a scorn-curling
 lip!

24:viii:1958
Morté XXIII

The glowing diamond light
(enrobed in the many-coloured
rainbow light of the day)
travels in through the arch,
the window

and my delicate
marble skin quivers at the
sun-warm caressings that
lovingly let arms sink
around my body till I
bathe in the champagne-perfume
of sensuous music

and like
the falling of peach blossoms
in the west wind the small
rococo particles (in their delicate
dances) come to fall into my
hair and on my skin making
me the earth under the blossomed
tree –

thus I sit quietly to the
too-rough a human eye
but a million trills play
through my body and
the Brahmsian intermetto (coming
in piano-tones from the
green fields of other rooms)
make my heart dance
Spanish fire and my breath
horse-ride in wild ecstasy-movement

while my eyes the colour
of the blooms and trees collect
like rare antiques to guard
in the carpeted palace rooms
of the soul,
 then the kitchen
odours (running over the lawns
to form stomach-calling
crystals in the nose) and the
faint scents of freesias and
sun-drooping roses (sprinkling
salt and pepper over
the kitchen-delights) make
my senses tense in joy
fed by these drug-provoking
smell-garments' air-architecture!

In such passages
one moment becomes ten
and develops into ten years
within the minute!

26:viii:1958
Rinascita XXXV

Milord, we cannot
have that summer,
it's over and quite
forgotten – rotten as the
leaves it shed that autumn.

It was the heat
of too much youth-wine
that made us so
buck-excited and tiger-wild.

One summer and
we danced four
million measures since
you delighted in
the intimacy as priceless
and warm as the mink
fur that yóur love
dropped onto mý
shoulders!

We were in love ...
one
summer ...

Then all in a morning
the whole business

was crashed to the
floor and the lights
turned quite red –

you
were gone and changed
your soul for a husk

and now it is only
I and memories in the
house of living;
I hardly
see people since I stopped
observing quite abruptly
at four that afternoon
and since you will
never come to medieval-
knight me from the
spinsterhood monster (and the
friendless rain-wind) now
I am already dead and
buried!

27:viii:1958
Morté XXV

To Faith on being Disappointed

The metallic crust cracked,
split apart and
its shielding of thirty
life-cycles (and perhaps more)
was blown away with
the wind!

The eyes drew
to the side like
wounded seals
seeking shelter, the
being drew away
like the sea in
its introvertive
low tide, the
mouth shaped its
sad smile in gold –

the little girl (with
party dress and doll)
was disappointed
by a late-coming
daddy

and soldier-brave
would not show
it to the sun

but drew closer
the blinds of the
soul.

How strange that
the plant yields
the same blossoms
in the spring of
the first journey and
the spring of the
thirtieth life-cycle!

29:viii:1958

Rinascita XXXVI

On the Loud Reading:

Here the tone of the voice needs to be intimate, and if the atmosphere is sombre, it is also intensely peaceful. Perhaps it is the voice of an octogenarian gentleman or lady speaking of an observation in the peaceful, but sad, late afternoon, when the wintery sun is giving the last of his fading minutes.

I am proud!
indeed of pride
was my making-material
in the months
before birth!
I am indeed
proud!

Son of a Duchess,
grand-son
of a Grand Duchess,
great-
grand-son of a diademed
Empress
who will dare
spear-pin my hauteur,
who will dare
vulgarise my living-processes!

None – not these frightened little rabbits!
'tis not only the blood
but also the spirit's colouring
that enthrone my
flesh in other bodies
in other centuries!

They are forgetful –
these bloodless little men
with their twenty thousand

pounds and tin-clanging
university degrees,
 once
they did not dare form
words or close an eye
 at mý
command!

Then the decision
ran that the world
without us would
 be hell-changed-
to-heaven –
instead they have
the bómb now and if
we were merciless
tyrants, what are its epithets?

Little men dressed in
their vulgar sex-talk (hanging
around them like odorous
meat) sickening my very innermost
stomach
 while you are,
I will be of the aloof
and of pride's entourage!

6:ix:1958
Morté XXVI

To Maria Callas

To you, oh princess of
musical palaces – come
in the wild torrents of your
drama to fill my
strange soul with yet stranger
carved sculpture-works!

Sing your
Shakespearean drama
endlessly into the
the inner time-circles
of my mind and then
to the outermost regions
of existence!

In my many
nights of thickest
velvet sublimely
you build bridges to
stars that shine
in your voice like
sun!

How great is
your procession
of our souls,
you possess us,

you make bondsmen
of our minds –
young mother of
music!

From that worlds
have you come?
what strange creature
are you
that chains our spirits
to your notes?

9:ix:1958
Rinascita XXXVII

To Puccini

Oh form from distant
spheres, you to whom my
soul prays

 what
miracles you carpet out
in the patterns of the
voice's offerings, what
sublime element are you
that sprays itself across
time like a rainbow across
the heavens?

 Stay with me
 always like
 the indelible
 arias of your
 master-painted-
 in-music dramas,
 stay with my
 mind for all
 the hours I
 breathe and beyond!

Sing your spirit
till that singing is
the air we breathe!
sing

(oh Puccini)
sing
for all the hours that
must yet be!

9:ix:1958
Rinascita XXXVIII

one string of living-days in the
violent violet-faced act.

Death is genderless
but sex-lustful for death acts!

14:ix:1958
Morté XXVII

The death fog has descended on the
world again, the death fog has
obscured the houses of living
again
 and no longer is care
my companion, no longer do
I have the migraines of disintegration
when death has come for a
visitation.

But slowly (creeping like adders
near enemy-occupied houses) you
have brought your disease again!

I do not care!
 do not care?
why?
 because I've been dead
and rotting for every hour of my
existence-gobbling!

28:ix:1958
Morté XXVIII

Let us run, jump into a ditch
and make mash from roots that
have grown in dung, let us
walk down streets and smell the
fresh moist morning air, let us
motor-travel in the gluey warm
afternoon on arid dusty roads,
let's to Italy in the heat to
swim in the sea of blue's dyeing
and eat grapes in the evening,
let's railway-travel to cities
south, let's to London to die
of snow and listen to the grey
smelling operate for alto voice and
sharp tenor, let's to Russia to
visit the Tsar who died in 1917,
let's to Australia to the coarse-acting and
colonial, let's to Holland to smother
boredom, let's to the lavatory,
let's go and stay.

We have an eternal radio-series
of 'let's' – then suddenly die defacing
the value of their always-declining
currency!

28:ix:1958
Morté XXIX

THE THREE LAST
TRIUMPHANT ELEGIES

Yóu have killed me
with the last grenade I
gave yóu, yóu minced me,
yóu have slaughtered
me!

 from this hour I
die

 but echo only in
my fingers' architectural works
out of the piano

 and my
pen's highways in words!

Yet when these remnants (of
that which was I) raise into
the huge trees (whose grandeur
only the stars know) you must
smother in the beautiful flames
of my love burning on the
wood with the scent yóu
murdered before the umbilical cord
and it were parted!

30:viii:1958
Morté XXX

All Life is Morté,
All Human relations are Morté!

The Rinascita is not 'I',
it's the scorched soul
of 'I'!

I have now died
and the dead have no friends,
no relations,

I have now
entered the world from where I
cannot re-pass the same
pit of burning lava!

Tomorrow (even today)
you and yóu no
longer know me since
where I am no
mortal shall ever be
and I am no mortal!

30:viii:1958
Morté XXXI

Through the caves of death
I have come, through the
caves of Morté (where few enter
and fewer emerge) I have this
hour passed onto the shores
of Rinascita
 and having died
I now live the life that has
no opposite
 for
warmth and cold are pure
but yet no opposites on the
sand-limbs that stretch over
the billion centuries of existence's
wheel – the universe of my
other body in its muscles of grandeur,
its limbs of unapproachable movement.

You no longer know
me nor I you but
for the past with its
inscription
 'do you remember
him? poor boy he died before
his twenties in obscurity's
sanctuary.'

The rope of all bonds has
felt the operation-knife and

the spirit breathes a Rinascita
where mortality is marked 'unknown';
things exist in the complete whole and yóu
(to my wall of life-sheltering) no
longer are necessary as a pillar
to my breathing!

Dear human! while of
your entourage you
slaughtered me but your
mutilating gave mé what
yóu sought
and I have now
not to die your déath
nor hear your injecting knives
in the cycle of birth and death,
of beginning and end

for

I cannot conceive either
in this universe reached through the
violent skies of pain, reached
through the wrestling seas of
disappointment!

Now remains but this:

that I run

like a joy-energied child on the
shores of eternity

throwing open
my arms to Rinascita who
leads me to my new lover in
the mountainous castle built on
beauty's hill!

7:x:1958
Rinascita XXXIX

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