

RAINER MARIA RILKE

SONNETS

SONNETS TO ORPHEUS

ORPHEUS

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OPEN LETTER
LITERARY TRANSLATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Dedicated to my large, wonderful, supportive family and circle of friends, but especially to the memory of my grandfather, Hermann Starke, who gave me my first Rilke volumes so many years ago, and to the memory of my father, Hans Buchinger, who read poetry aloud beautifully in several languages. And dedicated above all to my son, Noah Heringman, who first suggested that I translate these sonnets, and encouraged me every step of the way. *Dies ist unser Buch!*

FOREWORD

“All of my poems are about time,” the Nobel Laureate Joseph Brodsky once noted, “about what time does to man.” Inspired by the immortal god of song, Orpheus, as well as the all-too-mortal young ballerina, Wera Ouckama Knoop, Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Sonnets to Orpheus* are also preoccupied with time—what expires in it as well as what endures beyond it:

We are the driving ones.
Yet, the way time goes by—
see that as trivial,
next to what stays.

All that is rushing by,
will be long over soon;
only what then remains
consecrates us. (1:22, ll. 1-8)

Christiane Marks’s pellucid translations themselves are also about time—about how poems are absorbed and felt and

understood over time. Encountering them, I was reminded of George Steiner's important apperception that literary translation is, among other things, the most sophisticated act of reading possible. These translations are the product of a life's attention to Rilke's masterwork. They embody and enact one of reading's greatest pleasures—that of returning to a text over time. Reading itself is also always an experience that occurs in time.

Poetic meter, of course, is also a kind of measuring of time, and one of the distinctions of Marks's translations is her palpable although light-handed attention to meter, aiming in particular to convey the predominantly dactylic verse of this sonnet sequence. Marks succeeds not only in capturing Rilke's music—often sacrificed in translation—but also in rendering his singular and indelible imagery, imagery obsessed with meditating about time, song, and listening, imagery that is always aiming to perceive things that are overlooked or hard to see:

Mirrors: There's never been true description
of what, in your innermost nature, you are.
You, who seem made of the holes of sieves
filled with the in-between spaces of time. (2:3, ll. 1-4)

Having spent considerable time now with these translations myself, I feel about them the way Rilke describes the rose: “to us you are the filled, the numberless blossom, / the object that's inexhaustible” (2:6, ll. 3-4). In a synesthetic moment of

inspiration, Rilke likens its scent to sound. “For centuries now, your fragrance has called / over to us the sweetest of names,” he writes (ll. 9-10). Christiane Marks's translations likewise call out and convey Rilke's poetry to a new generation, and “It suddenly fills the air like fame” (l.11).

—Jennifer Grotz

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Rainer Maria Rilke's fifty-five *Sonnets to Orpheus*, written down over a few days in an astonishing burst of inspiration, came to him in spoken form, as "an interior dictation, completely spontaneous."¹ And what student of modern poetry does not recall that the beginning of the first Duino Elegy was uttered by a voice calling out of the storm as the poet walked the ramparts of Duino Castle: "Who, if I cried out, would hear me from out of the ranks / of the angels?" (*Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel / Ordnungen?*). The mysterious words even suggest the dactylic meter used in most of the elegies. The bulk of the Sixth and Ninth Elegies was imparted to Rilke by an inner voice as he walked home from the post office one day. Both the *Duino Elegies* and the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, composed simultaneously and considered by Rilke to be "of one birth," and "filled with the same essence," had their beginning in a very few weeks in February of 1922, in spoken form—as sound.²

When the Elegies were completed, Rilke made a point of not sending them to his dear friend and benefactor, Princess

Marie of Thurn and Taxis Hohenlohe, to whom they are dedicated, because he wanted her to *hear* them first, from his lips. Later, he wrote her that he did not recognize the full depth of his own sonnets until he had *read* them to her—again, experienced as sound.³ He often walked up and down, away from his stand-up desk and back, in composing his poetry, which would have encouraged rhythmic composition.⁴

Since the sound and rhythm of his poetry were of such importance to Rilke, one of my first steps in translating them was to learn them by heart, so I would have them constantly accessible orally, even while ruminating on them away from my desk. Over the years, I spoke them to myself and occasionally to others in many different settings, open always to the mysterious message of sound and rhythm behind the “meaning,” grateful to have been familiar with those particular sounds and rhythms since childhood, since I share Rilke’s mother tongue. I tried to render the original not only accurately, but also in words chosen for sound, and metrically, since it is the meter which moves the poems along so beautifully. I did not have to render over-regular or mechanical-sounding meter, because Rilke uses it quite flexibly, often breaking the metric pattern to draw attention to special words and passages. However, he never wrote in free verse.

Many of these sonnets address the reader directly, personally—as did that spontaneous, inner dictation addressed to the poet. Quite a few of them begin with a familiar *du, dir* or *ih*

(“you,” “to you,” “you” plural) or commands: *horch, siehe, wolle* (“listen,” “look,” “wish for”). This immediacy accounts for much of the poems’ appeal, as do the occasional colloquialisms like *und ob!, dass ihrs begriff!, wie aber, sag’ mir, soll, and wer weiss?* (“and how!”; “if only you could understand!”; “but how, tell me, can,”; and “who knows?”) (I:3, I:5, I:16, II:20).

Occasional particularly important words and phrases are italicized, receiving the emphasis they might in conversation, which adds to the spoken, spontaneous feel. Italicized words and phrases occur in no fewer than 18 of the sonnets. Important examples include I:8: Jubel *weiss* (“Jubilation knows”); I:12: Die Erde *schenkt* (“they are earth’s gift”); I:14: *Sind sie die Herrn* (“Are they the masters”); II:2: *den wirklichen Strich* (“the true line”); and II:2: *Zwar war es nicht* (“True, it did not exist.”) In some cases, English syntax or meter has required a slight shift of the emphasis. Sonnet II:5, a particularly intense one, contains three italicized words: *so von Fülle übermannter* (“so completely”); *wieviel Welten* (“countless worlds”); and *aber wann* (“ah, but when”). This poem was inspired by a little anemone the poet had actually seen in a garden in Rome in 1914, and strongly identified with, as J. B. Leishman relates in his valuable notes on the Sonnets.⁵ In Sonnet II:11 Rilke italicizes the whole line that sums up what he is saying about the human need to kill: *Töten ist eine Gestalt unseres wandernden Trauerns* (“Killing is just one form of our nomadic mourning”). It is simply a part of our often troubled, sometimes tragic,

process of becoming. The reader/listener immediately feels involved; the poems, though cast in the traditional sonnet form, seem quite contemporary.

Preserving this fresh, spoken, quality became another important goal for me, particularly since it helps to reflect the poems' completely unanticipated, surprise arrival. Incidentally, Rilke had always depended on inspiration; he could not "force" creation. "The utmost" that he could do, he explained to a friend, was to prepare, and then wait.⁶ This preparation included absolute solitude and inner openness, with perhaps some translation work and letter writing on the side.

In some of these sonnets there is a strange, one-time shift from the second to the third person, and these particular sonnets all begin in a similar way. For example, three begin with the direct-address form before making this shift: *Du aber, Herr* (I:20); *Du aber, Göttlicher* (II:7); *Tänzerin, o du Verlegung* (II:18). (The parallel is less obvious in translation: "What can I consecrate"; "But you, divine one"; "Dancer, how you have transmuted.") In each case, third-person pronoun phrases—"his evening," "when he was attacked," and "above her"—subsequently appear. Then, Rilke returns to the second person. Translators have generally circumvented or "corrected" these shifts by substituting the expectable second-person form. Yet these irregularities are surely not oversights, and so I have tried to preserve them. Rilke is showing the reader that in the world

of these sonnets, it is possible to talk *to* someone and *about* someone to others at the same time, making the point that he has a large and diverse audience in mind, and an expanded definition of speech. Though more readily dismissed as mistakes, these switches from the second to the third person are no more accidental than coinages like *singender* and *preisender* (literally "more singingly" and "praisingly") which I render as "with stronger song" and "with more powerful praise" (II:13). The literally translated words seemed too odd for the poem, and the sound was not pleasing, so I have used alliteration to approximate the original emphasis. *Ins thorig offene Herz*, a phrase in which the noun "gate" (*das Thor*) has been boldly turned into an adjective, I render as "the gate-open heart" (II:9). Such idiosyncratic uses of German, of which there are quite a few in the sonnets, present a special challenge to the translator: while they should not be entirely smoothed over, their oddness must sometimes be tempered so it does not overwhelm the whole poem.

As already mentioned, Rilke uses meter flexibly. Here he begins an otherwise dactylic poem with three stresses together in a command: *In Schon, horch, hörst du die ersten Harken* (II:25) ("Come! Listen! Already you're hearing the first of the rakes"). Sonnet II:11 uses both metrical variation and enjambement for emphasis: *Leise liess man dich ein, als wärest du ein Zeichen / Frieden zu feiern. Doch dann: rang dich am Rande der Knecht*. ("Gently they lowered you; you seemed a signal to

celebrate / peace. But then the hired man shook your edge.”) Rilke emphasizes *Frieden* (peace) by beginning a new line with the word. *Doch dann* (“but then”), two jolting stresses together in mid-line, introduce the pivotal statement that not peace, but killing is intended.

The sonnets in this much-loved cycle stand out in sonnet history for their formal variety, and might for this reason seem unaccustomed to those expecting only iambic pentameter, the standard English sonnet meter since before Shakespeare. Only eight of the *Sonnets to Orpheus* use this meter, including, however, four of the first five, which introduce the cycle—I:1,2,3, and 5—as well as I:14, II:4, II:14, and II:27. Though all the sonnets consist of two quatrains and two tercets, Sonnets I:9, 17, 18, 22, and 23 have only two or three beats per line, following the short-line sonnet form popular in France at the time, which Rilke admired in the work of Gide, Valéry, and others. A few sonnets like II:10, 17, and 19, on the other hand, are written in hexameter lines; occasionally there will even be a seven or eight-beat line, usually used to build up tension or suspense. Irregular dactylic meter predominates throughout. Trochaic meter is less used, though still eight times—in Sonnets I:8, 11, 12, and 13, and in II:5, 16, 23, 29. The important final sonnet uses this somewhat solemn meter. Two particularly exuberant sonnets—I:20 and II:12, about a runaway horse and the power of transformation—are lifted and carried by dactylic meter.

In II:11 and 19, Rilke shortens the final lines of two poems in hexameter by half, to bring them to a close gradually and add additional weight to the final words. These are just a few examples of the ways in which Rilke puts meter to work for him, given because, at a time when some readers have become less conscious of the possibilities of meter, or consider it dated, I have chosen to duplicate the original meter. The meter is integral to these thoroughly modern poems—a part of their “message”—and Rilke’s natural way of composing.

My enthusiasm for the vision behind these sonnets helped me decisively in trying to render the life and beauty of the originals. Rilke’s visions simply ring true to me. As he explained to his Polish translator, he wrote both the Sonnets and the Elegies out of a growing belief in a great, unified wider world or “circulation,” a belief that had finally enabled him to re-affirm his life, envision a future, and begin composing anew after the devastating years of World War I. That breakthrough, which came along with the unexpected sonnets, was real and vivid to me. Rilke became convinced that

We who are alive here today are not satisfied with the temporal world—not for one moment. We are continually merging with those who came before us and those who appear to be coming after us. . . . In that greatest, that “open” world, all exist—we cannot say “at the same

time,” since it’s just because there is no time that they may all be there together. . . . The temporal, the transitory, plunges everywhere into deep being.⁷

In the Second Duino Elegy, Rilke writes that in this timeless realm angels do not even distinguish between the living and the dead: “Angels (they say) often don’t know if they’re walking / with the living or dead. The eternal current / sweeps through both realms all ages / ever along with it, its song drowning out theirs.” (*Engel (sagt man) wüssten oft nicht, ob sie unter / Lebenden gehn oder Toten. Die ewige Strömung / reißt durch beide Bereiche alle Alter / immer mit sich und übertönt sie in beiden.*) Rilke’s response to the slaughter of the war was to begin to see death not as the opposite of life, or complete annihilation, but simply as “the side of life that’s turned away from and un-illuminated by us.”⁸ We must try our hardest to illuminate it with our consciousness, he stressed, which will remove our fear of it and help us to see that we are constantly nourished by both life and death together. Even in his twenties, Rilke had already held a positive view of death: “For we are only rind and leaf. / The great death which each life contains—/ that death’s the fruit, around which all else turns.” (*Denn wir sind nur die Schale und das Blatt. / Der grosse Tod, den jeder in sich hat, / das ist die Frucht, um die sich alles dreht.*)⁹

Death, to Rilke, was truly just life in another, non-physical state. One of two convictions, then, that decisively influenced

the creation of the Sonnets was that the barriers between the states of life and death should be removed. The other was that love must find new roles within this wider whole that no longer simply excludes death as “the other.”¹⁰ Love enters the Sonnets in the form of praise and joyful affirmation of everything they touch—gardens, dancers, flowers, flavors, unicorns, the sense of hearing—whatever it might be. Even Rilke’s machine sonnets (I:18, 22, 24 and II:10) are beautiful and show mechanization—of which he was deeply suspicious—as an opportunity for growth: we must remain the masters of the machines we have created. The most striking example of the power of love is found in Sonnet II:4, in which the mythical unicorn is “loved” into reality by those who believe in it.

The world of the sonnets is that of Orpheus himself, to whom they are addressed, in which song, beauty, and harmony reign eternally; his music charms even wild beasts. These are examples of a few of the many references to this ideal, ageless world in the Sonnets:

- Orpheus, the supreme poet and singer, dies many times, yet remains alive and present among us (I:5).
- We must keep in mind a lasting, crucial image—arguably the memory of this ideal world—even though it may be blurred from day to day (I:16).
- We are nourished by the lives of those who came before us (I:14).
- What is of lasting value comes from the elements of

our world not subject to time (I:22)

- Orpheus, the ultimate poet/singer, survives physical destruction (I:26).
- Love is the power that creates lasting reality (II:4).
- Flavor, fragrance, and music transcend everyday reality (I:15, II:6, II:10).
- Blissful, unblemished gardens exist in an ideal realm, but for us to claim as our own (II:17, 21).
- There is a place where even mute creatures, like fishes, have their language (II:20).

For Rilke, this ideal world is not isolated up above, but found all throughout our beautiful earth, which the Ninth Duino Elegy urges us to love with all our might just as it is—and thus lift up and transform. It is a unified world Rilke is envisioning, without the dualities of life and death, heaven and earth, good and evil, body and spirit; in fact, he moved away from traditional Christianity largely because it tends to emphasize these dualities. He tells us that the angels of the Elegies are not Christian angels, but more like Islamic ones, and of course Orpheus is a pre-Christian figure.¹¹

In order to unite dualities—to bring light and dark, earth and heaven, good and bad, body and soul together—the poet praises. He simply praises everything. That is his calling. A few months before the sonnets came to him, Rilke wrote a poetic dedication for a friend into the pages of his novel *Die Aufze-*

ichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge (The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge) which began, “Oh, tell me, poet, what you do. I praise” (*O sage, Dichter, was du tust. Ich rühme*). It was the inspired sonnets that restored to him the power to praise, and that made the completion of the Elegies possible. “Praise” (*das Rühmen, die Rühmung*) and “praiseworthy” (*rühmlich*) are key words in the Sonnets, especially in I:7, 8, 9. Here and there lament is mixed with the praise, as in the machine sonnets (I:18, 24 and II:10, 22, for example) and in at least one sonnet dealing with Wera’s illness and death (I:15). Entirely untempered praise would not be believable. Sonnet I:8 clearly sets forth, however, that praise must always go along with lament: *Nur im Raum der Rühmung darf die Klage / gebn* (“Only where there’s praise may lamentation / sound”)—a mixture of emotions reminiscent of the Old Testament Psalms.

Orpheus could well inspire a poet trying to see life and death as equally real, interpenetrating states, since he entered the realm of the dead in search of Eurydice, and then returned to the world of the living, albeit without her. Wera Ouckama Knoop, the young dancer, dead at 19, to whom the cycle is dedicated, had just made a one-time transition. But due to her youth and love of life, and the creative, joyous nature of even her last months, Rilke, who had read Wera’s mother’s loving account of her illness and death, had a strong sense of her continued presence and felt an “obligation” to celebrate her short life. The qualities of transformation, flexibility, and flow—the

ability to move among different states—are celebrated throughout the cycle, down to the last poem’s last lines: “And when earthly things forget you, / to the still earth say, ‘I’m flowing.’ / To the rushing water say, ‘I am’” (*und wenn dich das Irdische vergass / zu der stillen Erde sag: Ich rinne. / Zu dem raschen Wasser sprich: “ich bin.”*).

Translating in this momentous context, this wider, more open realm, or “circulation,” meant turning every German and especially every English word over twice. English was “the strangest, most remote language” to Rilke, and he was always most particular about how his poetry was presented, even in the original German. He wished it to be heard whenever possible and did not wish it to be set to music or illustrated. Rilke was a translator himself, and evidence from his letters shows that he was both a self-critical producer and a critical consumer of translations, because not only the sense, but also the sound of poetry mattered so much to him.¹² Yet Rilke’s cordial relationship with two of his translators is clearly reflected in his letters—those to Swedish translator Inga Junghanns, and those to Witold von Hulewicz, his Polish translator, to whom he wrote the deepest and most helpful explanations of the Sonnets and Elegies that we have.¹³

In a Christmas letter to an old friend, Rilke had this to say about reading the *Sonnets to Orpheus*: “It is in the nature of these poems, condensed and abbreviated as they are (in the way they frequently state lyrical sums rather than listing the steps

leading up to the solution), that they seem more amenable to being grasped intuitively by the like-minded reader than by what is called ‘understanding.’”¹⁴ The sonnets’ enduring popularity, even in English—yes, that “strangest and most remote of languages”—shows that English-language readers are responsive to truths so deep that they can be felt directly—intuitively—bypassing explanation and analytical thought, and that poems that both embody and celebrate flexibility, flow, and transformation—the essence of life—may serve as welcome antidotes to over-structured, mechanized lives. The growing desire to “illuminate” death and re-integrate it into everyday life (from where funeral homes and hospitals have tended to remove it) is even evident among the general public in the growing home-death care and green-funeral movements. Finally, recognizing death as the fruit, the culmination of life, rather than just a medical accident, simply adds meaning to all of existence. Uplifting and celebrating the seemingly commonplace—things as diverse as a weed-filled open grave (I:10), a runaway horse (I:20), the act of breathing (II:1), and the sound of rakes in a field (II:25)—has always been the province of poetry.

The English poet J. B. Leishman first made these sonnets available to English-language readers in 1936. He preserved not only the meter but also the rhyme, which led to some overly archaic word choices and some twisted syntax and meaning, but his translation is still, overall, an astonishing feat. Leishman’s lovingly detailed commentary on the sonnets is still

unsurpassed because of his close study of Rilke's entire work, including his many letters, his wide-ranging knowledge of languages and world literature, and his strong engagement with the times, vision, and inner state out of which Rilke wrote these sonnets, only 14 years earlier. In spite of the multitude of other translations of these sonnets, their first translator still occupies a unique position as a near-contemporary of Rilke's as well as an outstanding poet and scholar.

These sonnets have sometimes been called "a balm for wounded souls" and, indeed, they were written by a poet who characterized himself as "taking every creaking of the floorboards to heart."¹⁵ Rilke wrote a vast number of beautiful letters, which should be considered a part of his oeuvre; many do attest to his kindness and ability to comfort, but the sonnets reach far beyond that. They are "true song . . . carried by a different breath, / an aimless breath, blown in the god. A wind" (I:3). (*In Wahrheit singen, ist ein anderer Hauch / Ein Hauch um nichts. Ein Wehn im Gott. Ein Wind.*)

The *Sonnets to Orpheus* are still needed, and I am honored to have been able to open a new window on them, for old and new Rilke lovers alike.

—Christiane Marks

1. "Une dictée interieure toute spontanée." Letter to Jean Strohl, quoted in Donald Prater, *Ein klingendes Glas* (Hamburg: Rohwolt, 1989), 576.
2. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot* (Leipzig: Insel, 1937), 372; cf. Prater, *Ein klingendes Glas*, 577.
3. Prater, *Ein klingendes Glas*, 577; Hermann Mörchen, *Rilkes Sonette an Orpheus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1958), 8.
4. Prater, *Ein klingendes Glas*, 565.
5. J. B. Leishman, Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1947), 164.
6. Ulrich Fülleborn and Manfred Engel, eds., *Materialien zu Rainer Maria Rilke's Duineser Elegien* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980), 199.
7. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 373.
8. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 371.
9. Rilke, *Sämtliche Werke* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1955), 1: 246.
10. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 230.
11. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 373.
12. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 323, 312, 356.
13. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 371.
14. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 230.
15. Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot*, 168.



1:1

Da stieg ein Baum. O reine Übersteigung!
O Orpheus singt! O hoher Baum im Ohr!
Und alles schwieg. Doch selbst in der Verschweigung
ging neuer Anfang, Wink und Wandlung vor.

Tiere aus Stille drangen aus dem klaren
gelösten Wald von Lager und Genist;
und da ergab sich, dass sie nicht aus List
und nicht aus Angst in sich so leise waren,

sondern aus Hören. Brüllen, Schrei, Geröhr
schien klein in ihrem Herzen. Und wo eben
kaum eine Hütte war, dies zu empfangen,

ein Unterschlupf aus dunkelstem Verlangen
mit einem Zugang, dessen Pfosten beben, –
da schufst du ihnen Tempel im Gehör.

1:1

There, see—a tree ascended. Pure transcendence!
Oh, Orpheus sings! Oh, tall tree in the ear!
And all was silent. Yet that silence yielded
beginnings, beckonings, and transformations.

Creatures of stillness issued from the clear,
wide-open forest filled with lairs and nests.
And it turned out that neither cunning
nor fear had caused this inner quiet,

but listening had. Bellow and shriek and roar
seemed small inside their hearts, and where just now
there'd scarcely been a hut to take this in—

a hidden refuge made of darkest longing,
the very doorposts of its entrance quaking—
you raised up temples for them in their ears.

1:2

Und fast ein Mädchen wars und ging hervor
aus diesem einigen Glück von Sang und Leier
und glänzte klar durch ihre Frühlingschleier
und machte sich ein Bett in meinem Ohr.

Und schlief in mir. Und alles war ihr Schlaf.
Die Bäume, die ich je bewundert, diese
fühlbare Ferne, die gefühlte Wiese
und jedes Staunen, das mich selbst betraf.

Sie schlief die Welt. Singender Gott, wie hast
du sie vollendet, dass sie nicht begehrte,
erst wach zu sein? Sieh, sie erstand und schlief.

Wo ist ihr Tod? O, wirst du dies Motiv
erfinden noch, eh sich dein Lied verzehrte? –
Wo sinkt sie hin aus mir? . . . Ein Mädchen fast . . .

1:2

It was a girl, almost, who was engendered
by this one blended joy of song and lyre,
and shone out radiantly through veils of springtime
and made herself a bed inside my ear.

And slept in me. And she slept everything.
All trees that ever I admired, the distance
that I could feel, this meadow that I felt,
and all of my amazement at myself.

She slept the world. Say, singing god, how did you
create her so she did not wish to be
awake at first? For see, she rose and slept.

Where is her death? Oh, will you still complete
this theme before your song consumes itself?
She's sinking out of me . . . to where? A girl, almost . . .

1:3

Ein Gott vermags. Wie aber, sag mir, soll
ein Mann ihm folgen durch die schmale Leier?
Sein Sinn ist Zwiespalt. An der Kreuzung zweier
Herzwege steht kein Tempel für Apoll.

Gesang, wie du ihn lehrst, ist nicht Begehrt,
nicht Werbung um ein endlich noch Erreichtes;
Gesang ist Dasein. Für den Gott ein Leichtes.
Wann aber *sind* wir? Und wann wendet er

an unser Sein die Erde und die Sterne?
Dies *ists* nicht, Jüngling, dass du liebst, wenn auch
die Stimme dann den Mund dir aufstösst, – lerne

vergessen, dass du aufsangst. Das verrinnt.
In Wahrheit singen, ist ein anderer Hauch.
Ein Hauch um nichts. Ein Wehn im Gott. Ein Wind.

1:3

A god can do it. But, how, tell me, can
a man pass through the slender lyre and follow?
His mind's in conflict, and where heart-ways cross
no one erects a temple for Apollo.

Song as it's taught by you is not desire,
does not court distant goals, barely achieved.
Singing is being. Easy for a god.
When will we truly *be*? And when does he

turn toward our being earth and stars?
Falling in love, young man, is *not* what matters, though
song then bursts from your lips. Learn to forget

such spasms of song. They have no permanence.
True song is carried by a different breath—
an aimless breath, blown in the god. A wind.