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Two Poems, Pablo Neruda

Rachel Loughridge

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TWO POEMS

POEM 10

We have lost even this twilight.
No one saw us this evening with hands joined
while the blue night was falling on the world.

I have seen from my window
the fiesta of the setting sun on the distant hills.

At times it was like a coin,
the piece of sun glowing between my hands.

I recalled you with my soul held tight
in that sadness which you know in me.

Where were you then?
With what people?
Saying what words?
Why must all my love come like a blow
when I feel myself sad and you far away?

The book always picked up in the twilight has fallen
and like a wounded dog my coat lay about my feet.

Always, always you go away in the evenings
toward the twilight as it comes effacing statues.

POEM 15

I am glad when you are silent. It is as if you were absent.
You hear me from a distance and my voice does not touch you.
It is as if your sight had flown away from you
and as if a kiss were sealing your lips.

As all things are filled with this soul of mine,
filled with my soul you emerge from all things.
Butterfly of sleep, you resemble my soul
as you resemble the sound of melancholy.

I am glad when you are silent. It is as if you were far away,
as if you were complaining in a butterfly's lullaby.
From a distance you hear me and my voice does not reach you.
Let me be silent with the silence which is yours.

Let me also speak to you with your silence,
clear as a lamp, uncomplicated as a ring.
You are the night, silent and star-splashed.
Your silence is a star's silence, simple and distant.

I am glad when you are silent, as if you were absent,
distant and mournful, as if you had died.
Then only one word, one smile is enough,
and I am happy, happy, that it is not true.

P A B L O N E R U D A

Translated by Rachel Loughridge

C O N S C I E N C E

My devil will in water suck the tide
To cast the sleepy and indignant whale
Up wiggling on my beach until he dies,
That I may sweat and curse and so obey:
Stern and unjust, he holds me in his sway,
And if I rebel, and will not listen,
He changes shape to creep into my ear;
Small as a bug, he stalks the tender floor:

He lurks in air, or deep beneath the ground
To thrust up like a flower in my face
The twin, my evil self, nestling in the green,
The clump of fern lodged in the bubbling swamp:
My devil greases cliffs for climbing feet,
That I may hang an instant in pure space,
Suspended as a gull, sprawled on my face
Over the needles of the rocks below: