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Dear Sun, Marie Luise Kaschnitz

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No Rot Shall Overtake Us

And in the hereafter, the tremendous past
Of grass and pebble and stone,
I will have lived, who live to last
Eternities of polished bone

And silence, who will have sung torrents
Of sound, who beat my brain
Against my leaden wing into winded instruments
Of rhythm, sigh, and tone,

Heartward and worldward, into and under
And over the weeds, that cannot
Ever hush this music, that bursts like thunder
Out of my loneliness. No rot

Shall overtake us after death, who defy
Vermin and grass to erase us
Out of divine love; for after that love we die
Into no emptiness.

—*Lora Dunetz*
(after Baudelaire)

Dear Sun

We believe in this
Our great
Freedom to die
Houses our houses
Let fall in ruin
Vineyards our vineyards
Let lie fallow—

We believe that nobody
Could force us later
To rise into the light
To the tremendous
Effort of eternal life.

We believe it is in our power
Not to love anymore
And to let drift at last—
Cold amid cold swarms—
This our star.

But the unabated
Daily evidence
Of kissing lips
Of dear sun
Fair earth
Forever and ever
Knows better.

—*Marie Luise Kaschnitz*
Neue Gedichte, Claasen Verlag GmbH.
Hamburg, 1957
translated by Gertrude C. Schwebell