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Note

These translations of poems by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Else Lasker-Schüler, Nelly Sachs and Ulla Hahn are published here for the first time. Due to copyright and reasons of space the German originals could not be printed alongside with their English versions. The titles of the German texts are listed at the beginning of each section in order of their appearance in English.

The editor wishes to thank Dr. Silke Beinssen-Hesse for her permission to make her translations accessible to a wider reading public. It is to be hoped that these beautiful versions of poems by four major German women poets do not escape the attention of compilers of collections of German poetry in English translation.

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ANNETTE VON DROSTE-HÜLSHOFF (1797 - 1848)

Die deutschen Titel der übersetzten Gedichte lauten:

Die Taxuswand

Der Knabe im Moor

Die Nadel im Baum

Mondesaufgang

Das Spiegelbild

Am Turme

Im Grase

Der Weiher

Annette von Droste-Hülshoff

The Yewtree Wall

I like to stand before
 You, surface black and rough,
 You, visor scratched and torn
 That shields the face I love,
 I like to look on you
 As on an old damask,
 And palely gliding view
 The coronation masque.

When I was passed the crown
 By hands that now are cold,
 When I was sung renown,
 In ditties now are old,
 Curtain to sanctuary,
 My paradisaal door,
 Behind, all flower for me,
 And only thorn before.

Beyond, I know, there's yet
 The old green garden bench,
 Where lips aglow and wet
 Once thought life's thirst to quench,
 When hair still streamed about me
 A gleaming golden trail,
 When my call was a shout, free,
 A horn cry through the vale.

The ivy I let grow,
 It was love gave it care,
 Six steps but and I know,
 Know it's no longer there.
 So I will ever creep
 By your dark cloth, ne'er look,
 And eighteen years thus keep
 Deleted from life's book.

In years gone by you stared
 As darkly true as now,
 A guardian who cared,
 Throne to our lover's vow:
 They say an evil sleep
 Smokes from your needles, yew,
 Ne'er so awake from sleep
 As when your breath I drew.

But now a weary me
 Would drop down by your side,
 Blown from the nearby tree,
 A leaf, that falls aglide:
 You tempt me like a harbour,
 That will all storms allay:
 To sleep within your arbour
 Till my time's passed away!

The Lad on the Moor

O, eery it is to walk on the moor
 When the heather smoke mills and flees,
 When the mists like phantom spirits lure
 And the creeper hooks at the trees,
 Under every step a streamlet springs,
 When out of the fissures it hisses and sings,
 O, eery it is to walk on moor,
 When the rushes crack in the breeze.

Clutching his reader the trembling boy
 Runs as though he were chased:
 Across the hollows the winds annoy,
 What's rustling there in the waste?
 That is the ghostly peat-digger's serf,
 Who drinks away the master's best turf:
 Hoo, hoo, a mad bullock out to destroy!
 Down ducks the child in haste.

From the waterside jagged branches creak,
 Uncanny the fir-tree nods,
 The small boy runs, his ears aprick,
 Through giant reed-spears like rods:
 And how it rustles and prickles within!
 That is the maiden cursed to spin,
 That is Lenora, cast out from the quick,
 Who turns her reel in the reeds.

Ahead, ahead! and keep on the run,
 Ahead or they'll catch him whole!
 Under his foot it bubbles up scum,
 It whistles up under his sole
 Just like a ghostly tune at play:
 That is the fiddler who went astray,
 That is the thieving fiddler bum,
 Who the wedding penny stole.

Then the moor erupts and a sigh goes out
 Deep from the cavernous hole,
 Woe, woe, that's Margaret crying aloud,
 "Ho, ho, for my poor damned soul!"
 The lad leaps up like a wounded deer,
 Had not his guardian angel been near,
 His bleaching bones might have lain about
 Till a turf-digger set them aroll.

Then slowly the ground grows firm once more,
 And over next to the willow
 The lamp has a homely warmth in store,
 The lad has reached the meadow.
 Now safe from the moor he heaves a breath,
 Still glancing back with the terror of death,
 Yes, in the reeds afraid I was sore,
 O fearful it was in the hollow.

The Pin in the Tree

In times gone by, I was almost grown,
 Had left off my childhood play,
 I was not yet big, but about, I must own,
 To good Saint Andrew to pray,
 I used to wander, day in, day out,
 Along the fields with Kati,
 Did something loving lie there about?
 Tempi passati - passati!

And in the heathland there stood a tree,
 But a slender alder bush,
 There we often would sit in reverie
 And hark to the song of the thrush:
 It had built its ragged nest up high
 In the frail and swaying crown,
 And with such impertinence would spy
 From its baronet's castle down.

We caressed so much and walked so wide,
 That the summer had passed away:
 And we had to part: "Oh, woe betide!"
 The tears that flowed that day:
 Each others' hands we held all dumb,
 Then I drew from my bow fluttering free
 A shiny pin and with my thumb
 Pressed it into the sapling tree.

And beneath it I noted the day and the hour,
 Then we went each one our way
 With such heart-rending sobs that from his bower
 The thrush flew crying away:
 O youthful souls are like to kings,
 They can waste a Peru on a morrow,
 In the tawney heath, beneath thrush's wings,
 A Peru in love and sorrow.

Years had glid away with a sneaking gait,
 Dispersed like a misty cloud,
 And again I walked by the fields of late
 With a young and frolicking crowd:
 They were hurling sticks and crying "Hullo"
 With jokes that made them bellow,
 My heart grew chirpy and merry so,
 Light-hearted as I were their fellow.

Then a sudden rush in the dense of the dale,
 And "A thrush", they cried, "O a thrush!"
 I started up - did I chance to grow pale?
 I stood by the old alder bush:
 And from backward my veil was drawn from my hair,
 O God, I blushed like a flame,
 When I saw it was the old pin stuck there,
 My rusty old pin in the stem!

And then I quietly took in view
 The inscription, and understood,
 And suddenly felt the rising dew
 Was unlikely to do me much good;
 I won't complain, a treasure I store,
 That weather or waves have not worn,
 But yet, for ever, for evermore
 The veil from my eye has been torn.

Moonrise

Upon the railing of the balcony
 I leaned, and waited, gentle light, for thee.
 High over me, the icy crystal pall
 All melted, swam the firmament's great hall;
 The shimmering lake stretched out in gentle swirls,
 Tears from the clouds or but dissolving pearls?
 A trickling in the dusk surrounding me,
 I waited, o thou mild pure light, for thee.

High did I stand, beside the linden's crown,
 Beneath me twigs, stem, branches deep deep down;
 The foliage humming with the small gnats' dance,
 The firefly glimmering as it rose in trance,
 And blossoms giddy as though half asleep:
 Heart seemed to drift to haven for its keep,
 A heart replete with joyousness and pain
 And blessed visions of the past again.

The darkness rose, the shadows thronged in now -
 O my mild light, where lingerest, lingerest thou? -
 They thronged upon me like to thoughts sin-rent,
 The firmament's high wave seemed almost spent,
 The glowing flies had shivered out their ray,
 The gnats had long since sunk down and away,
 Only dark mountain-tops stood hard and near,
 Like awesome judges rousing some dark fear.

And branches whispering about my feet,
 Like warning rumours, or as death would greet:
 From the wide watery valley rose a hum,
 Like murmuring people that to court have come:
 I felt I must account in all this strife,
 As though a frightened soul with wasted life,
 As though a crippled heart with nought to gain
 Stood lonesome in its guilt and in its pain.

Then sank upon the waves that silver stream,
 And slowly thou didst rise, thou pious gleam:
 The alp's dark forest didst thou softly touch,
 And gentle sages turned, who were my judge:
 The twitching of the waves a beckoning smile,
 On every twig a dew-drop blinked awhile,
 And every drop a chamber seemed to be,
 Wherein a homely lamp awaited me.

Oh moon, thou art like a belated friend,
 That will his youth to the impoverished lend,
 Ere time his dying memories efface
 Life's soft reflection comes with thy embrace;
 Thou art no sun that will entrance and blind,
 A life of fire that blood-red death must find -
 Art, what to ailing singers is their song
 A strange but mild light, leading them along.

The Mirror Image

When you regard me from the glass
 Your eyeballs like two nebulas,
 Like comets, soon to be extinct:
 With features wherein wonderously
 Two souls like spies continuously
 Creep round, I answer whisperingly;
 Phantom, we two are quite distinct.

You've just escaped dream's custody,
 To freeze the warming blood in me,
 To turn my locks from dark to hoar:
 And yet and yet, you dusky face,
 Where strange duplicity still plays,
 If you stepped out from your safe case,
 Would I then hate or love you more?

Up to your forehead's regal seat,
 There, where the subject thoughts you treat
 Like serfs, I'd shyly lift my gaze:
 But from the cold gleam of the eyes,
 Filled with dead light, as broken-wise,
 Ghostlike, I would in scared surprise
 Far, far withdrawn my footstool place.

What moves about the mouth so mild,
 Gentle and helpless as a child,
 I'd shelter faithfully from harm:
 But when the lips play mockingly,
 Bows tensed and aimed provokingly,
 Through features twitching quietly,
 Then I would fly in full alarm.

I know for sure, you are not I,
 A being strange, and I a shy
 Approacher, barefoot, as was Moses,
 With powers quite unknown to me,
 With joys and sorrows strange to me,
 God help me, were my breast to be
 The place your slumbering soul reposes.

And yet I feel, I am your part,
 And share with you your shuddering heart,
 And love and fear make but one whole.
 Yes, if you left the crystal round,
 Phantom, and living stepped aground,
 I'd softly tremble, and confound
 Myself - by weeping for your soul.

On the Tower

I stand on a balcony high at the tower,
 In the crying starling's air,
 And Maenad-like let the storm with its power
 Churn in my fluttering hair:
 O ruffian fellow, mad to the brim,
 I want to embrace you tight,
 And, sinue on sinue, two steps from the rim
 For death and for life then fight!

And far below on the beach I can hark
 The waves like frolicking hound,
 Wrestling each other ahiss and abark
 As the gleaming foam flies around.
 O, to leap down into the thick of the frey,
 Right into the storming rout,
 And chase through coral forests for prey
 The merry great walruss about!

And out there I can see a pennant blow
 Like a standard borne apace,
 Can watch the keel turn up and go low
 From my airy vantage place:
 O sit I would in the fighting skiff,
 Grasp the rudder myself through the spray
 And hiss right over the surf-splashed reef
 Like a sea-gull streaking the bay.

Were I a hunter chasing his beast,
 Just a bit of a soldier at war,
 Were I a man at the very least,
 Then heaven had opened its door:
 Now must I sit all nice and demure,
 Like a good and patient child,
 And secretly only my hair unsecure
 And let it flutter out wild.

In the Grass

Sweet peace in the grass, sweet swoon,
 With the hush of the heather scent,
 Deep flood, deep drunken at noon,
 When the clouds in the azure are spent,
 When upon the tired swimming head
 Drops laughter's sweet rippling wave,
 Dear voice, dripping whisperings down
 As the linden flower on a grave.

In the heart, the departed then,
 Every corpse astretch and astir,
 Softly, softly its breath draws again,
 Its shut eyelid quivering to stir,
 Dead love, dead joy, dead time,
 All those treasures buried in doubt,
 Will touch with a shy ringing sound,
 Like bells that the winds play about.

Hours, more fleeting than kisses are,
 Of a ray on the mournful lake,
 Than the sound of a roaming bird
 That drops like pearls in its wake,
 Than the gleaming beetle's flash
 When it hastes through the path of the sun,
 Than the pressure of a warm hand,
 When the last farewell is done.

And yet Heaven, ever to me
 Give this only to me: for the song
 Of each roaming bird in the blue
 A soul, that will travel along,
 Only for each flickering ray
 My brightly gleaming seam,
 Each warm hand my handshake tight,
 And for every joy, my dream.

The Pond

It lies so still in morning's glow,
 A pious conscience, all at peace;
 When west winds come its glass to kiss
 Flower of the banks will never know:
 Bright dragon flies above it skim,
 Blue-golden rods with scarlet gleam,
 And on the sun's reflected glance
 The water-spider spins its dance:
 Sword-lily wreaths the banks enclose
 To hear the reeds' soft slumber-song:
 A gentle whisper comes and goes,
 As peace, and peace, were passed along.

ELSE LASKER-SCHÜLER (1869 - 1945)

Die deutschen Titel der übersetzten Gedichte lauten:

Mein blaues Klavier

Versöhnung

Weltende

Giselheer dem Tiger

Ein alter Tibetteppich

Das Lied des Spielprinzen

Scheidung

Vollmond

Weltflucht

Dasein

Zebaoth

Dann

Meine Schamröte

Abend

An mein Kind

Gebet

Else Lasker-Schüler

My Blue Piano

I have a blue piano at home
And know not a note to play.

It stands in the dark of the cellar room
Since the world went its brutish way.

Four star hands once would play thereon
- Moon sing in the boat asway -
Now rats dance to the clatter and strum.

The cracked key-board has lost its tone ...
I lament the blue lady's decay.

Dear angels open, I have come
- I ate of the bitter bread -
To living me the heavenly home -
No matter what God said.

Reconciliation
(To my mother)

A great star will fall into my lap ...
Let us wake this night,

Pray in the languages,
That are indented like harps.

Let us make peace this night -
So much God streams over.

Our hearts are children,
Sweetly tired they would rest.

And our lips want to kiss,
Why do you hesitate?

Does not my heart border on yours -
Always your blood reddens my cheek.

Let us make peace this night,
If we caress we do not die.

A great star will fall into my lap.

The End of the World

There is a weeping in the world
As though the good Lord had passed away
And the leaden shadow upon us hurled
Weighs like grave-yard clay.

Come, let us hide us more closely from doom ...
Life lies in every heart
As in a tomb.

Let us deeply kiss, you and I -
There's a yearning beating at the world
From which we must die.

To Giseller the Tiger

Across your face jungles creep,
How alive you are!

Your tiger's eyes have become sweet
In the sun.

I am forever carrying you around
Between my teeth.

You my Red-Indian book.
Wild West
Siouxchieftain.

In the twilight I parch
Tied to the privet -

I can no longer be
Without the scalper's game.

Your knives draw red kisses
Upon my breast -

Till my hair flutters at your belt.

An Old Tibetan Rug

Your soul, loving mine since time we met,
Woven one in this rug from Tibet.

Ray on ray, with hues enamoured,
Stars, that heaven-long for each other clamoured.

Feet rest gently on the preciousness,
Stitch on stitches in their countlessness.

Sweet Lama's son on musk-plant throne,
How long with your mouth kissing mine
And cheek on cheek have brightly knotted eons flown?

Song of the Playing Prince

How can I love you still more?
I watch the beasts and flowers
When they love.

If two stars kiss
Or clouds form an image -
We played it more gently.

And your hard forehead,
It is good to lean on,
I sit on it as on a gable.

And in the groove of your chin
I build me a nest of prey -
Till - you have eaten me up.

One morning then
I'll find only my knees,
Two yellow scarabs for an emperor's ring.

Divorce

Once in a blazing star-flaming night
 I took the life of the man at my side.
 And when his cooing blood trickled toward dawn
 His destiny gazed at me, dark and forelorn.

Full Moon

(To my town of Thebes)

Softly the moon swims through my blood ...
 Slumbering tones are the eyes of the day
 wandering away - swooning back -

I cannot find your lips ...
 Where are you, distant city
 With the scent of blessing?

My eyelids are forever sinking
 Over the world - all's asleep.

Flight from the World

(Herwarth Walden, the sound-poet of the song)

I want to break out into the boundless
 Back to myself,
 Already autumn's meadow saffron
 Is blossoming for my soul,
 Perhaps it's too late to go back.
 O, I will die among you!
 Since you choke me with yourselves.
 I want to draw threads around me
 Ending tangles!
 Disconcerting,
 Confusing you,
 To flee
 Mine-wards.

Being

Once had waving night-hair,
 Long lies buried somewhere.
 Once had eyes clear as streams,
 Till melancholy took over my dreams,
 Once had hands like shells red-white,
 But work has eaten up their white.
 And one day the final one will come,
 And lower his hollow gaze
 At my body's impermanence
 And cast from me all dying.
 And my soul will heave a breath
 And drink the eternal.

Jehovah

God, I love you in your robe of roses,
 When you step out of the gardens, Jehova.
 O, you god-youth,
 You poet,
 In solitude I drink of your perfumes.

The first blossoms of my blood yearn for you,
 Why won't you come,
 Sweet God,
 Playfellow God,
 The gold of your gates melts in my longing.

Then

...Then came the night with your dream
 In the still of stars burning.
 And smiling the day passed away
 The wild roses breathed not it would seem.

And now I yearn for dreamy May,
 To have your love for me made clear.
 Want to hang on your mouth burning
 For a thousandfold dream-time year.

My Red Shame

You, send me no longer the scent,
 The burning balsam
 Of your sweet gardens at night.

Shame bleeds on my cheek
 And about me the summer air trembles.

You ...blow cool upon my cheeks
 From scentless, unwishing grasses at night.

Only no longer the breath of your searching roses,
 It tortures my shame.

Evening

(Alexander von Burnus)

Breathe upon the frost of my heart
 And when you hear it chirping
 Fear not its black spring.

Always that strange cold spectre had me in mind
 And sowed under my feet - hemlock.

Now a weeping angel is fashioning
 An inscription of stars
 Upon the column of my body.

To My Child

Again and again you will die for me
In the fading year, my child,

When the foliage dissolves
And the branches grow narrow.

With the red roses
You tasted the bitterness of death,

Not a single wilting throb
Were you spared.

That is why I weep bitterly, eternally ...
In the night of my heart.

I still sigh out the slumber songs
That wept you into the sleep of death,

And my eyes no longer turn
Towards the world;

The green of foliage hurts them,
- But the Everlasting One dwells in me.

My love of you is the image
We are permitted to make for ourselves of God.

I saw the angels weep too,
In wind and in sleet.

They hovered
In heavenly air.

When the moon is in flower,
It resembles you, my child.

And I don't want to see
How the light-rendering moth floats by carelessly.

I never anticipated death
- Following your scent, my child.

And I love the walls of my room
Which I paint with your boyish face.

The stars - in this month
So many have fallen sparkling life -
Drip heavily onto my heart.

Prayer

(To my dear half-brother, the Blue Rider)

I'm searching for a city through all lands
Before whose entry gate an angel stands.
I wear his mighty wing , and feel
It dragging broken from my shoulder bands,
And on my brow his star sign for my seal.

And ever wander into night...
I brought love to the world -
That blue each heart could flower ...
And have a weary life-time watched,
My pulsing breath veiled darkly in God's power.

O God, your mantle close about me fast;
I know in life's round hour-glass I'm the last,
And when the final man pours out the world
From your allmight you'll let me not be cast,
There'll be another earth around me furled.

NELLY SACHS (1891 - 1970)

Die deutschen Titel der übersetzten Gedichte lauten:

In der Flucht

Hängend am Strauch der Verzweiflung

In der blauen Ferne

O der weinenden Kinder Nacht

In diesem Amethyst

Wer aber leerte den Sand aus euren Schuhen

Bereit sind alle Länder

Der versteinerte Engel

Diese Kette von Rätseln

Salzige Zungen

Haar, mein Haar

Chassidim tanzen

Schmetterling

Nelly Sachs (1891-1970)

In Fleeing

In fleeing
what a grand reception
en route -

Wrapt
in the cloth of winds
feet in the prayer of the sand
that can never say Amen
for it goes
from fin to wing
and on -

The ailing butterfly
will soon know of the sea again -
This stone
with the fly's inscription
has put itself my hand -

In place of home
I hold the metamorphoses of this world.

Hanging on the Bush of Despair

Hanging on the bush of despair
and waiting nevertheless till the legend of flowering
turns into its prophesy -

Knowing magic
of a sudden the May-tree's beside itself
stumbled from death into life -

In the Blue Distance

In the blue distance
where the red apple-tree avenue wanders
with sky-ascending root-feet,
yearning is distilled
for all who live in the valley.

The sun, prone by the road-side
with magic wands,
calls the travellers to halt.

They stop
in a glassy nightmare,
while the cricket softly scrapes
at the invisible

and the dancing stone
turns its dust into music.

O the Night of the Crying Children

O the night of the crying children!
 The night of the children marked out for death!
 Sleep no longer has access.
 Terrible warden women
 Have taken the place of the mothers,
 Have tensed a false death into the muscles of their hands,
 Are sowing it into the walls and rafters -
 Everywhere it broods in the nests of terror.
 Fear suckles the young, not their mother's milk.

Only yesterday mother had drawn
 Sleep down, like a white moon,
 The doll with cheeks kissed pale
 Had its place in one arm,
 The stuffed toy grown live
 With love
 In the other, -
 Now blows the wind of dying,
 Blows the shirts away over the hair
 That no one will comb again.

In This Amethyst

In this amethyst
 the eons of night are deposited
 and a primordial apparition of light
 kindles melancholy
 that was liquid
 and weeping

Your dying still glows
 hard violet

But Who Poured the Sand from Your Shoes

But who poured the sand from your shoes
 When you had to rise up to die?
 The sand that Israel took home
 The sand of its wanderings?
 Burning Sinai sand,
 Mingled with the throats of nightingales,
 Mingled with the wings of the butterfly,
 Mingled with the yearning dust of snakes,
 Mingled with all that dropped from the wisdom of Solomon
 Mingled with the bitter mystery of wormwood -

O fingers
 That poured the sand from the shoes of the dead,
 Tomorrow you will be dust
 In the shoes of the coming!

All the Countries Are Ready

All the countries are ready to rise
 from their charts.
 Shake off their star-skin
 hitch the blue bundles of their oceans
 onto their backs
 and put the mountains with those roots of fire
 for caps on their smoking hair.

Ready to carry the last burden of sadness
 in their bags, those butterfly pupae,
 on whose wings one day
 they will end their journey.

The Petrified Angel

The petrified angel
 still dripping with memory
 of an earlier universe
 without time
 wandering through the women's ward
 in the amber light
 locked in with the visitation of a voice
 primordial before any apple-bite
 singing in the red of morning
 with truth -

And the others comb their hair for unhappiness
 and weep
 when the ravens outside
 unfurl their blackness at midnight.

This Chain of Riddles

This chain of riddles
 laid about the neck of night
 the king's word written far distant
 illegible
 perhaps in a comet's trail
 when the open wound of heaven
 aches

there
 in the beggar who has space
 and walking on his knees
 has measured all the highways
 with his body

for the legible
 must be fully suffered
 and we must learn to die
 in being patient -

Salty tongues

Salty tongues of the sea
 lick at the pearls of our illness -
 The rose on the horizon,
 not of dust,
 but of night,
 sinks into your birth -
 Here in the sand its black cipher
 wrapt about with time
 grows like hair
 still in death -

Hair, My Hair

Hair, my hair
 lashing out in crackling sparks -
 desert gorsebush
 kindled by memory.

Hair my hair
 what fire-ball of sun
 has been laid to rest
 in your night?

In your ends a world is dying!
 God has cushioned it gently,
 extinguishing
 in a tear-streaming body.

But also
 in a yearning child's
 raging desire
 for the ever-growing origins
 of its fire-balls.

Hassidim Dance

Night blows
 with flags torn from death

Black hats
 God's lightning conductors
 churn up the sea

they rock it
 rock it away

hurl it up on the strand
 there where light
 has cut out the black wounds.

The world is tasted
 sung off
 on the tongue
 it breathes with the lung of beyond.

On the sevenfold candelabra
 the Pleiads pray -

Butterfly

What lovely beyond
is drawn in your dust.
Through earth's fiery kernel
through her rocky shell
you were passed,
web of farewell plotted in insubstantialities.

Butterfly
good night of all beings!
With your wings
the weights of life and death
sink down upon the rose
that wilts as the light ripens homeward.

What lovely beyond
is drawn in your dust.
What royal cipher
in the secret of the air.

ULLA HAHN (1946)

Die deutschen Titel der übersetzten Gedichte lauten:

Das wär ein Leben

Im Rahmen

Mit Haut und Haar

Tote Liebe

Und mich

Der Himmel

Angeschaut

Diese Mörderin

Fundevogel

Meine Trauer

Ohne Schnee

Tränen

That Were a Life

I will build me a nest in the armpit
of the man with the golden helmet. He walks
so I walk along motionless. He bends
his body so I upright do likewise.
If he eats his bread in the sweat of his brow
I lie dazed by his scents
under his virile arm.
His words Yes No are doubtless always
my words. Reap not and sow not: He
feeds me and clothes me. Nought
he asks for this but his daily due of
roses thornless I wind him his wreath
twittering around his godhead.

In a Frame

A woman at her window alone
standing arms crossed
before her breast in delicate
pastel muslin
waiting for someone to hold her
in his gilded frame
is beautiful only on paintings.
When she lurks at the telephone scanning
the dial tone polishing up
the receiver that
doesn't bear viewing.

Head over Heels

I drew you from the pit of all your years
and dipped you deep into my summer time
I licked your hand your skin your hair and ears
and swore to be forever mine and thine.

You turned me round. You burnt in me your sign
with gentle fire into my thin hide.
So I left off myself, and very soon
began retreating back from me and mine

and from my oath. First still a memory
a lovely remnant called me back to me.
But I already was concealed and kept
in you from my own self. You'd hidden me.

Till I was quite submerged in your appeal:
And then you spewed me up head over heel.

Dead Love

Dead love wall
 flower split in two
 never forget forget
 love in the country
 in spring all cats are
 grey at night when
 love awakens under
 the sheet drawn up
 over the brow.

And Myself

If you wish
 I take back everything
 my tears
 flow back into my eyes
 my laughter flees
 behind my lips
 draw back from yours
 have you taken back
 everything
 what do I want
 more than have it all
 back.

All the hasty trains to you
 I drive back through
 the flat meadows barely
 May. Each arrival
 to you a farewell more.
 Each word I knock
 back
 into my throat
 I take back everything
 that you don't want
 and myself.

My Heaven

My heaven lies as from tonight
 within an elbow groove
 - in it resteth smooth
 my chin and this my cheek
 a long long while -

My heaven is one eighty tall
 with blue eyes wide awake
 for breakfast time
 no doubt its stomach too
 is of this world.

Looked at

You looked at me now
I suddenly have two eyes at least
a mouth the finest nose
right in my face.

You touched me now
angel's fur grows
where you weighed upon me.

You kissed me now
the roast pigeons fly
capons and partridges
simply fly from my mouth
and you had your fill.

You have forgotten me now
I stand there
asking what
good is all this
stuff to me now I'm alone?

This Murderess

This murderess
won't let me be
I think I am safe
she sends you to me

and chases you off
I am alone
and time beats
in my scull

Nevermore

If you don't leave me thus
I will leave you
nevermore
will you find one
like me quickly
afterwards
you will weep I
weep so
we share the tears too.

My Grief

My grief my bright
little copper kettle brightly
polished
Come we'll put on
tears for ourselves
but with
grace mild as
vanilla we
do want to
please him
when he
never comes again.

Without Snow

How could I live without
this snow this winter.
It locks me out
to within. Bends my
hair into my head. My
lips withdraw
my tongue to behind
my teeth. And there falls
this snow this snow and the ice
does not melt further.

Tears

Passing without tears
you go in
silk and satin
feel how I
weep I weep
but your coat
is not wet.