

**Photoweeek Northwest**  
**CALENDAR 2019/20—**  
*RILKE In the ALPS,*  
*26 masterpieces*  
translations & photos  
by *Cliff Crego*

*Kehlen Glacier, fall aspect,*  
*URNERLAND, the Alps*

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*(Image: Mountain Chapel, returning sunlight—the Alps)*

## Title Page [from *The Voices*]

It's easy for the rich and fortunate to remain silent,  
nobody wants to know who they are.

That is why the destitute must show themselves,  
must say: I am blind,

or: that is what I'm about to become,

or: it's not going very well with me here on Earth,

or: I have a sick child,

or: this is where I'm kind of all stuck together . . .

And perhaps even that is not enough.

Despite everything, as if they were things,  
people walk right by, and so they must sing.

And one hears good music there.

Truly, people are strange; They'd  
rather hear castrati in boys' choirs.

But God himself comes and remains a long time  
when these disfigured ones begin to disturb him.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*(tr. Cliff Crego)*

# J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 9

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*(Image: Small Frozen Tarn, looking East, High Summer—the Alps)*

## [ I live my life . . . ]

I live my life in growing rings  
which move out over the things around me.  
Perhaps I'll never complete the last,  
but that's what I mean to try.

I'm circling around God, around the ancient tower,  
and I've been circling for thousands of years;  
and I still don't know: am I a falcon, a storm  
or a great song.

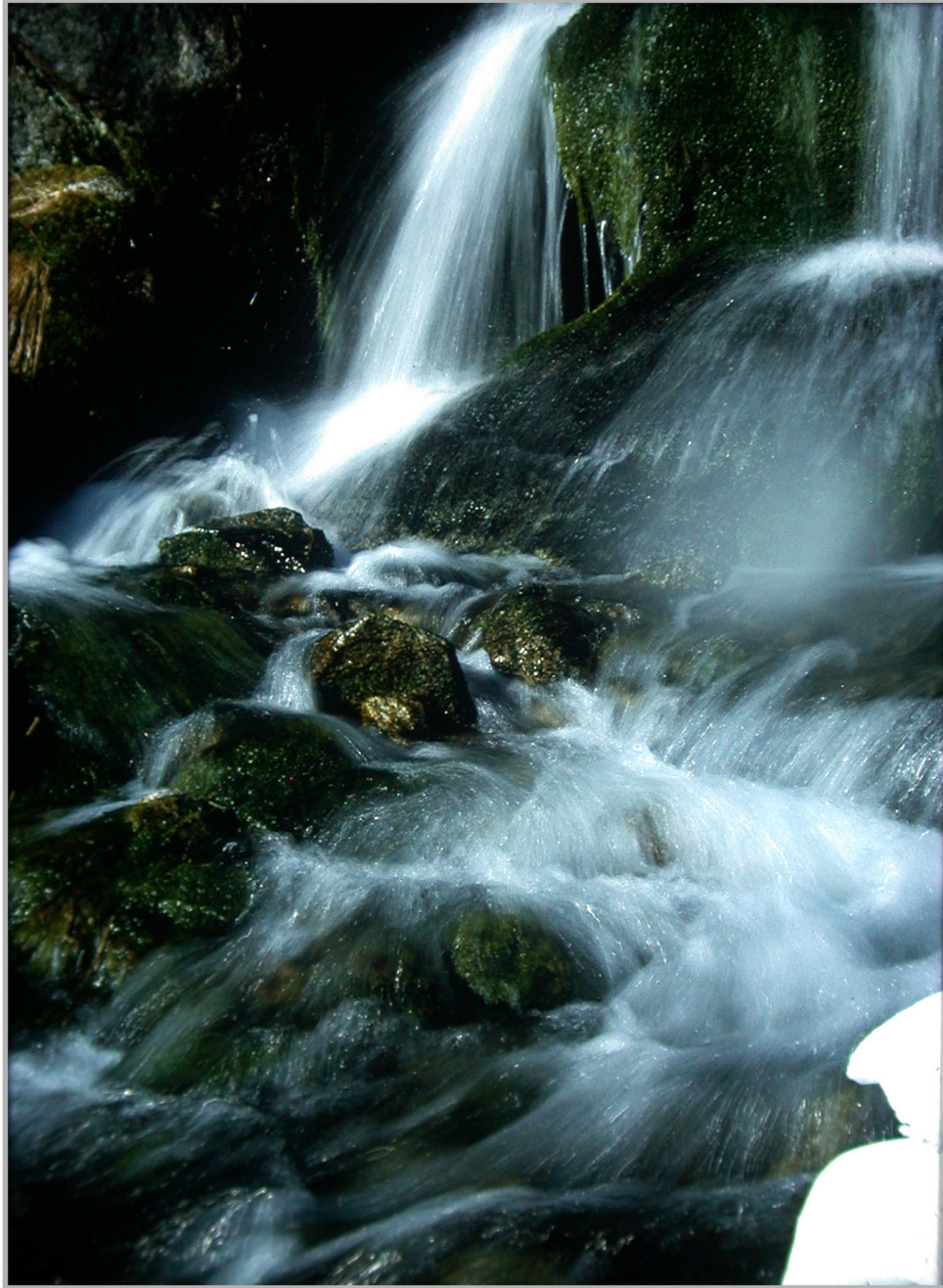
*Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Cregg)*



F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 9

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*(Image: 1000 Diamond Spring, Urnerland—the Alps)*

## Love Song

How shall I hold on to my soul, so that  
it does not touch yours? How shall I lift  
it gently up over you on to other things?  
I would so very much like to tuck it away  
among long lost objects in the dark,  
in some quiet, unknown place, somewhere  
which remains motionless when your depths resound.  
And yet everything which touches us, you and me,  
takes us together like a single bow,  
drawing out from two strings but one voice.  
On which instrument are we strung?  
And which violinist holds us in his hand?  
O sweetest of songs.

*Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Crego)*



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*(Image: New Snow, Fall Prospect—the Alps)*

# A Walk

Already my gaze is upon the hill, the sunny one,  
at the end of the path which I've only just begun.  
So we are grasped, by that which we could not grasp,  
at such great distance, so fully manifest—  
and it changes us, even when we do not reach it,  
into something that, hardly sensing it, we already are;  
a sign appears, echoing our own sign . . .  
But what we sense is the falling winds.

*Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Crego)*



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*(Image: Winter Storm, clearing . . .—the Alps)*

# The Mountain

Six and thirty times and hundred times  
the painter tried to capture the mountain,  
tore it up, then pushed on again  
(six and thirty times and hundred times)

to the incomprehensible volcanoes,  
blissful, full of temptation, without counsel,—  
while the outlines of his glory  
went on without coming to an end:

Fading a thousand times out of all the days,  
nights without comparison from which  
dropped, as if they were all too small;  
each image at the moment it was needed,  
increasing from figure to figure,  
not partaking and far and without viewpoint—,  
then suddenly knowing, as in a vision,  
lifting itself up from behind every crevice.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
(tr. Cliff Crego)



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*(Image: Avalanche Alder, male/female flowers—the Alps)*

# The Gazelle

*Grazella Dorcas*

Enchanted being: how can the harmony of two  
chosen words ever achieve the rhyme,  
as with a sign, that comes and goes in you.  
Out of your brow rise leaf and lyre,

and everything yours already runs as metaphor  
through love songs, the words of which, soft  
as rose petals, for the one who no longer reads,  
laid upon the eyes, which he closes

so that he may see you: carried about as if  
each slender leg were charged with leaps,  
not to be fired as long as the neck

holds the head high in listening: as when, while  
bathing in a dark forest, the bather interrupts herself:  
the forest pool still reflected in her turning face.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*(tr. Cliff Crego)*



# J U N E 2 0 1 9

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# Spanish Dancer

As a wooden match held in the hand, white,  
on all its sides shoots flickering tongues  
before it flashes into flame—: within the inner  
circle of onlookers, hurried, hot, bright,  
her dance in rounds begins to flicker and spread.

And suddenly, everything is completely fire.

One glance and she ignites her hair,  
turning all at once with daring art  
her entire dress into a passion of flame,  
from which, like startled snakes,  
the naked arms awake and reach out, clapping.

And then: as if the fire were growing too tight,  
she takes it together and throws it off,  
masterfully, with proud, imperious gestures,  
and watches: it lies there raging on the ground,  
still flaring up, refusing to give in—.

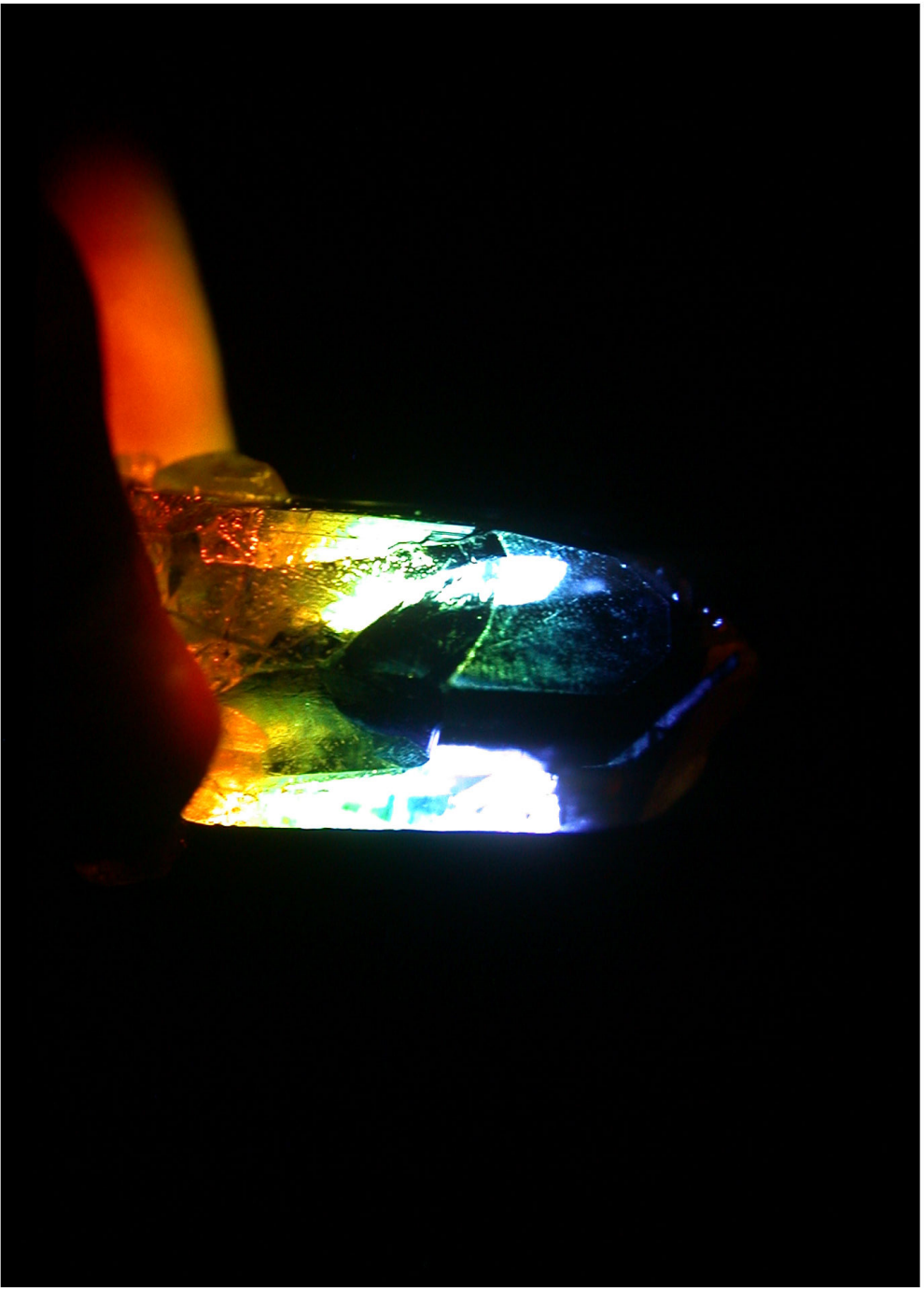
Till triumphantly, self-assured and with a sweet  
welcoming smile, she raises her face,  
then stamps it out with small, powerful feet.

*Rainer Maria Rilke (tr. Cliff Cregg)*



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*(Image: Spring Prism, Clear Mountain Quartz—the Alps)*

# A Woman Going Blind

She sat there like the others with their tea.  
It seemed to me, as if she held her cup  
slightly differently than the others.  
She laughed once. It was almost painful.

And when they finally stood up and spoke  
and slowly walked as Chance would have it  
through the many rooms (one spoke and laughed),  
there I saw her. She went behind the others

in the manner of one who must shortly  
sing and that for a large group of people;  
upon her bright eyes, full of happiness,  
fell light from outside as if on a pool.

She followed slowly and she took a long time  
as if something were still left to transcend;  
and yet: as if, after the transition,  
she would no longer walk, but fly.

*Rainer Maria Rilke (tr. Cliff Cregoe)*



# AUGUST 2019

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*(Image: July Mountain Ash, morning Mist—the Alps)*

## A Woman in Love

That is my window. I  
just awoke so gently.  
I thought, I'm floating.  
How far does my life reach,  
and where does the night begin?

I could think that everything  
around me is me;  
like the transparent depth of a crystal,  
darkened and mute.

I think I could bring the stars  
inside of me, so large  
does my heart seem; so very much  
does it want to let go of him

whom I have perhaps begun  
to love, perhaps to hold.  
So strange, so uncharted  
does my fate appear.

Who am I who lies here  
under this endless sky,  
as the sweet scent of a meadow,  
moving back and forth,

*Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Crego)*

at once calling out and anxious,  
that someone might hear my call,  
destined to vanish  
in another.



# S E P T E M B E R 2 0 1 9

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*(Image: Water-shaped Granite, High Glacier Stream—the Alps)*

# Archaic Torso of Apollo

We do not know his unheard of head,  
in which the seeing of his eyes ripened. But  
his trunk still glows like a thousand candles,  
in which his looking, only turned down slightly,  
continues to shine. Otherwise the thrust of the  
breast wouldn't blind you, and from the light twist  
of the loins a smile wouldn't flow into  
that center where the generative power thrived.

Otherwise this stone would stand half disfigured  
under the transparent fall of the shoulders,  
and wouldn't shimmer like the skin of a wild animal;  
it wouldn't be breaking out, like a star, on  
all its sides: for there is no place on this stone,  
that does not see you. You must change your life.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

*(tr. Cliff Crego)*





# The Panther

*In the Jardin des Plantes, Paris*

His gaze is from the passing of bars  
so exhausted, that it doesn't hold a thing anymore.  
For him, it's as if there were thousands of bars  
and behind the thousands of bars no world.

The sure stride of lithe, powerful steps,  
that around the smallest of circles turns,  
is like a dance of pure energy about a center,  
in which a great will stands numbed.

Only occasionally, without a sound, do the covers  
of the eyes slide open —. An image rushes in,  
goes through the tensed silence of the frame—  
only to vanish, forever, in the heart.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

*(tr. Cliff Crego)*

# N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 9

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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*(Image: Last Light, End of Mountain Summer, looking East—the Alps)*

## At the Edge of Night

My room and these distances,  
awake over the darkening land,—  
are one. I am a string,  
stretched over rushing  
wide resonances.

All things are the bodies of violins,  
full of murmuring darkness;

inside dreams the weeping of women,  
inside stirs in sleep the resentment  
of whole generations . . .

I shall

tremble silver: then everything  
under me shall come to life,  
and that which errs in things  
shall strive towards the light

that from my dancing tone,  
welling up into the heavens,  
through narrow, /  
languishing crevasses  
in the old  
Abysses falls  
without end . . .

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*(tr. Cliff Cregoe)*

# D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 9

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*(Image: Last Light, Fall Sunset—the Alps)*

# Entrance

Whoever you are: step out in to the evening  
out of your living room, where everything is so known;  
your house stands as the last thing before great space:  
Whoever you are.

With your eyes, which in their fatigue can just barely  
free themselves from the worn-out thresholds,  
very slowly, lift a single black tree  
and place it against the sky, slender and alone.  
With this you have made the world. And it is large  
and like a word that is still ripening in silence.  
And, just as your will grasps their meaning,  
they in turn will let go, delicately, of your eyes . . .

*Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Crego)*



# J A N U A R Y 2 0 2 0

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*(Image: Glacier Stream on Lichen covered Granite—the Alps)*

## [I'm too alone in the world . . . ]

I'm too alone in the world, and yet not alone enough  
to make every hour holy.

I am too small in the world, and yet not tiny enough  
just to stand before you like a thing,  
dark and shrewd.

I want my will, and I want to be with my will  
as it moves towards deed;  
and in those quiet, somehow hesitating times,  
when something is approaching,  
I want to be with those who are wise  
or else alone.

I want always to be a mirror that reflects your whole being,  
and never to be too blind or too old  
to hold your heavy, swaying image.

I want to unfold.

Nowhere do I want to remain folded,  
because where I am bent and folded, there I am lie.

And I want my meaning  
true for you. In want to describe myself  
like a painting that I studied  
closely for a long, long time,  
like a word I finally understood,  
like the pitcher of water I use every day ,  
like the face of my mother,  
like a ship  
that carried me  
through the deadliest storm of all.

*Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Crego)*

# F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 0

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*(Image: Fall Glacier Crossing—the Alps)*

# Complaint

To whom shall you complain, heart? Ever more shunned  
your way wrestles through the impenetrable  
people. The more to no avail perherps,  
because it holds to the direction,  
holds to the direction of the future,  
to what has been lost.

In the past. You complained? What was it? A fallen  
berry of Joy, unripe.  
But now my whole Tree of Joy is breaking,  
in the storm my slowly grown Tree of Joy  
is breaking.

Most beautiful thing in my invisible  
landscape, you who made me more knowable  
to angels, invisible ones.

*Rainer Maria Rilke* (Paris, 1914)

*(tr. Cliff Crego)*

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I

## Handinneres

Immer der Hand. Sollte, die nicht mehr geht  
all auf Gefühl. Die sich nach oben fällt  
und in Spiegel  
jüngliche Straßen empfängt, die selber  
wandeln.  
die gelernt hat, auf Wasser zu gehen,  
wenn sie schöpft,  
die auf den Brünnen geht,  
aller Dinge Ursprung.  
die auftritt in anderen Händen,  
die Spiegelbild  
zur Landschaft macht:  
wandert und kommt in ihnen,  
sie erfüllt mit Ankunft.

H.B.

Rilke's Original  
Handwritten, especially the lines "auf Wasser zu gehen" (after the first line), and  
"die auftritt in anderen Händen" (after the second line).

## Palm of the Hand

Palm of the hand. Sole, that no longer walks  
but on feeling. That holds itself upward  
and in its mirror  
receives heavenly roads, that themselves  
have journeyed far.  
That has learned to walk on water  
when it scoops,  
that walks upon springs,  
transformer of all ways.  
That steps into other hands,  
turning into landscape  
those that are its double:  
wanders and arrives in them,  
and fills them with arrival.

Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Crego)

(Image: Rilke's Manuscript of Handinneres / Palm of the Hand—  
Switzerland, 1924.)

© 2003 picture-poems.com



# A P R I L 2 0 2 0

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*(Image: Mountain Summer—the Alps)*

## **[I believe in everything not yet said . . . ]**

I believe in everything not yet said.  
I want to liberate my most devout feelings.  
What no one has ever dared to desire,  
will become in time for me necessity.  
If that is unreachable, my Lord, then /  
forgive me.  
But I want to say to you only this:  
The best of my energies shall be /  
like a drive,  
without anger and without timidity;  
like the way that children love you.

With this overflowing, with this emptying  
into the wide arms of the open sea,  
with this ever-growing return,  
I want to confess, I want to proclaim to you  
as no other before me.  
And if this is arrogance, then let me /  
be arrogant  
for the sake of my prayer,  
that in such seriousness and aloneness  
before your clouded brow stands.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*(tr. Cliff Cregoe)*

# M A Y 2 0 2 0

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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*(Image: Timberline, Fall Cascade—the Alps)*

## Solemn Hour

Whoever cries now somewhere in the world,  
without reason cries in the world,  
cries about me.

Whoever laughs now somewhere in the night,  
without reason laughs in the night,  
laughs at me.

Whoever goes now somewhere in the world,  
without reason goes in the world,  
comes to me.

Whoever dies now somewhere in the world,  
without reason dies in the world:  
looks at me.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*(tr. Cliff Crego)*

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# Departure

How I've come to sense this thing called departure.

How I still know: a dark unscathed  
cruel something, holding up a delicate braid,  
showing it to us again, only to tear it apart.

How defenseless I was, looking upon  
that which, calling to me as it left me,  
remained behind, as if it were all women  
and yet small and white and not quite that:

A waving, already no longer meant for me,  
followed by lightly echoing waves --, all  
but inexplicable: a plum tree perhaps  
out of which a cuckoo, hastily, flew away.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

*(tr. Cliff Crego)*



# J U L Y 2 0 2 0

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*(Image: Last Light, Looking West—the Alps)*

# Evening

Slowly the evening changes into the clothes  
held for it by a row of ancient trees;  
you look: and two worlds grow separate from you,  
one ascending to heaven, another, that falls;

and leave you, belonging not wholly to either one,  
not quite as dark as the house that remains silent,  
not quite as certainly sworn to eternity  
as that which becomes star each night and rises—

and leave you (unsayably to disentangle) your life  
with all its immensity and fear and great ripening,  
so that, all but bounded, all but understood,  
it is by turns stone in you and star.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

*(tr. Cliff Cregoe)*

# AUGUST 2020

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*(Image: Mountain Fall—the Alps)*

# Autumn

The leaves are falling, falling as if from afar,  
as if withered in the distant gardens of heaven;  
with nay-saying gestures they fall.

And in the nights falls the heavy earth  
from all the stars into loneliness.

We all are falling. This hand there falls.  
And look at the other: it is in all of them.

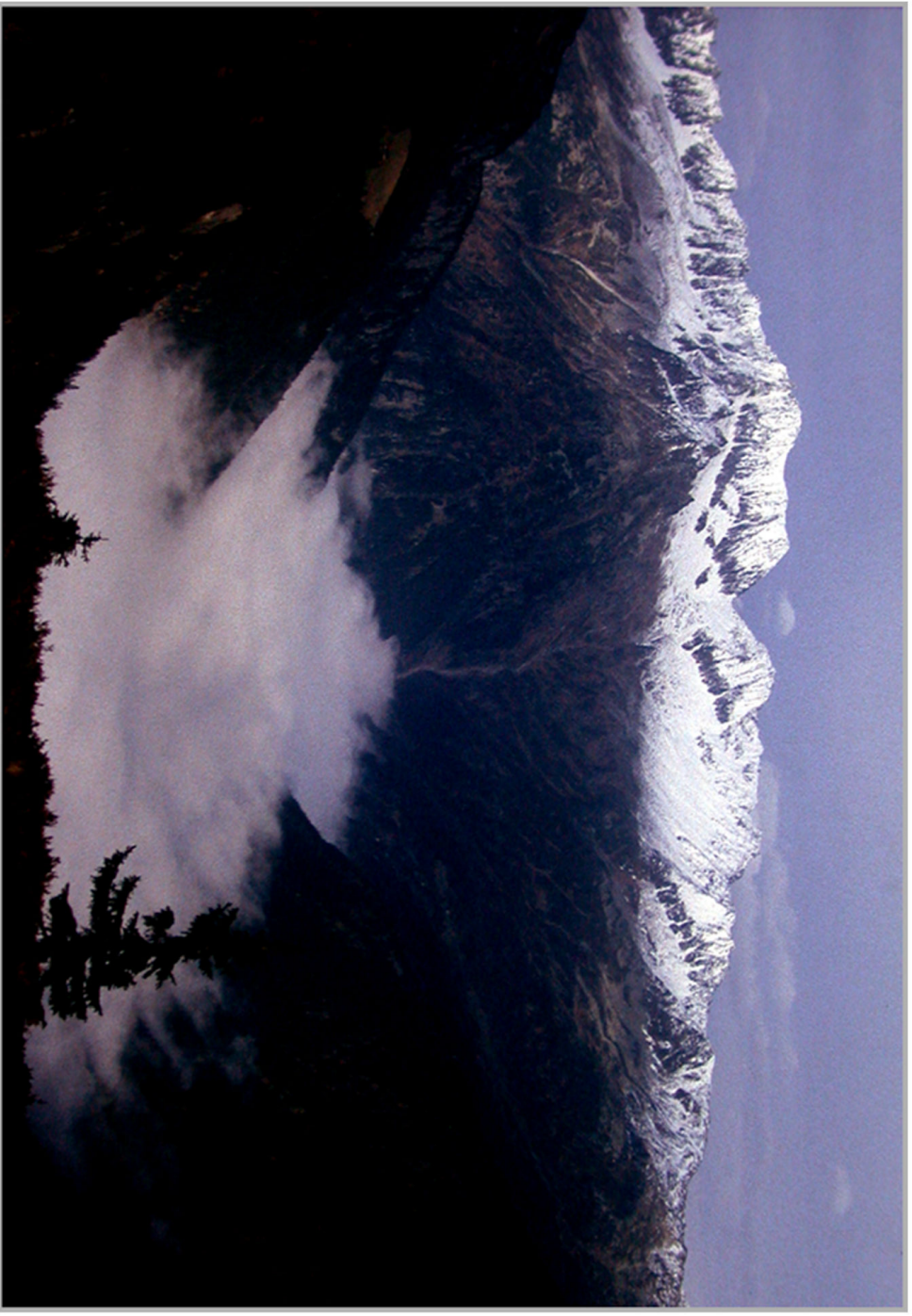
And yet there is one, who holds all this  
falling with infinite gentleness in his hands.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*(tr. Cliff Cregg)*

# S E P T E M B E R 2 0 2 0

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*(Image: Rising Mist, Falling Snow—the Alps)*

# Autumn Day

Lord: it is time. The summer was immense.  
Let thine shadows upon the sundials fall,  
and unleash the winds upon the open fields.

Command the last fruits into fullness;  
give them just two more ripe, southern days,  
urge them into completion and press  
the last bit of sweetness into the heavy wine.

He who has no house now, will no longer build.  
He who is alone now, will remain alone,  
will awake in the night, read, write long letters,  
and will wander restlessly along the avenues,  
back and forth, as the leaves begin to blow.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

*(tr. Cliff Grego)*



# O C T O B E R 2 0 2 0

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## [I shudder with fear for the human word]

I shudder with fear for the human word.  
Everything they proclaim is so precise.  
This is called Dog and that is called House,  
and here is the Beginning and there is the End.

I worry about their senses, their play with mockery,  
they know everything that's been and shall be;  
no mountain is still to them wonderful;  
their gardens and goods border directly on God.

I want always to warn and resist: Stay away.  
To hear things sing is what pleases me most.  
You touch them: they are stiff and mute.  
You mow to the ground everything that is dear.

*Rainer Maria Rilke* (1898: Berlin-Wilmersdorf)  
(tr. *Cliff Crego*)

*(Image: Mount Contradiction—the Alps)*

# N O V E M B E R 2 0 2 0

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*(Image: Spring Homestead, May—the Alps)*

## Sonnets to Orpheus XIII [SECOND PART]

Be ahead of all departure, as if it were already  
behind you, like the winter which is almost over.

For among winters there is one so endlessly winter,  
that, wintering through it, may your heart survive.

Be forever dead in Eurydice—, singing ascent,  
praising ascent, returning to pure relation.

Here, among the disappearing, be, in the realm of decline,  
be the ringing glass that shatters even as it sounds.

Be—and yet know Not-being's condition,  
the infinite ground of your innermost movement,  
that you may bring it to completion but this one time.

To that which is used-up, as to nature's abundant  
dumb and mute supply, the unsayable sums,  
joyfully add yourself and the result destroy.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*(tr. Cliff Crego)*

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*(Image: Fall Spring, evening Mist—the Alps)*

## [You, beloved . . . ]

You, beloved, who were lost  
before the very beginning, who never came,  
I do not know which sounds might be precious to you.  
No longer do I try to recognize you, when, as a surging wave,  
something new is about to manifest. All the huge  
images in me, the deeply-sensed far-away landscapes,  
cities and towers and bridges and un-  
suspected turns of the path,  
the powerful life of lands  
once filled with the presence of gods:  
all rise with you to find clear meaning in me,  
your, forever, elusive one.

You, who are all  
the gardens I've ever looked upon,  
full of promise. An open window  
in a country house—, and you almost stepped  
towards me, thoughtfully. Sidestreets I happened upon,—  
you had just passed through them,  
and sometimes, in the small shops, the mirrors  
were still dizzy with your image and gave back, frightened,  
my too sudden form.—Who is to say if the same  
bird did not resound through us both  
yesterday, separate, in the evening?

*Rainer Maria Rilke* (Paris, winter 1913 - 14)  
(tr. *Cliff Crego*)



# J A N U A R Y 2 0 2 1

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<small>December</small> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	<small>February</small> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	29	30	31	1	2
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(Image: Orpheus drawing by Cima da Conelignano (around 1459-1518).  
Baladine Klossowska placed it above Rilke's writing table at Muzot,..)

## To Music

Music. The breathing of statues. Perhaps:  
The silence of pictures. You, language where all  
languages end. You, time  
standing straight up out of the direction  
of hearts passing on.

Feeling, for whom? O the transformation  
of feeling into what?— into audible landscape.  
Music: you stranger. Passion which  
has outgrown us. Our inner most being,  
transcending, driven out of us,—  
holiest of departures:  
inner worlds now  
the most practiced of distances, as  
the other side of thin air:  
pure,  
immense  
no longer habitable.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
(tr. Cliff Crego)

# F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 1

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