

Fernando Pessoa

The master said you must not heed

The Master said you must not heed
What others talk of at their need

Under the happy trees they sit
That talk of nothing and of wit.
Under the silent trees they stand
That talk of mirth and no man's land.
Under the sulky trees they lie
That wonder of the earth and sky.

This was the matter of the song
No one could sing or well or long.
This was the substance of the tale
No one could tell unless it fail.
This was the subject of the verse
The last one made, lest earth be worse.

So the collateral nightingale
Forgot its music and its tale.
So the lark rose and found but air
And false dominion everywhere.
So the dropt eagle, losing prey,
Swept by and owned but the void day.

Yet what the secret of all this
May be or was none now can guess.
Perhaps beyond what thought defines,
Like wine drawn from sleep-smothered vines,
There lies some chance that some one may
Make shade and sleep of yesterday.

But whether this be sense or nought,
Surely it was a careful thought
To have the lawn so nicely laid
Out and the critics all gainsaid.
It was the reason and the home.
The rest is why tis right to roam.

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