

Fernando Pessoa

**SECOND SIGHT**

## SECOND SIGHT

Whene'er thou dost undo  
Thy dark, strange hair before the wind  
And the wind takes it up and makes it woo  
Tumult and violence in the way it sweeps  
Along the air, mingling, unmingling, undefined  
In the snake-like madness it keeps.

Then I do know  
That somewhere whence dreams come  
And passions go,  
Somewhere in that world contrary to this,  
Yet landscaped, peopled as this is,  
In a great southern sea  
There is a storm and a hurled wreck  
On rising rocks that cannot reck  
For human misery.

The two things are but one.  
Thy floating hair is that great ship undone  
In a tossed, turbulent, dashed ocean.  
Neither precedeth nor doth cause the other  
Nor are the two as brother and brother,  
But absolutely one, samely the same,  
They have somehow an equal name  
Where speech is of the essence of what is.

A real sight, like God's, should see the kiss  
Of the wind through thy hair and the far storm  
One thing, — yet two things because we see two

When we conceive them one, the double form  
Coming to oneness in what we construe.

Therefore I grieve when thou letst thy hair take  
The wind upon its long, thin, changing fingers,  
For that sight of me that translates that to  
The sterner meaning in what world I know  
Only through what in me is not here awake, —  
That sight of that mad wreck visibly lingers  
And does in my imagination ache.

Alas! all things are linked, and we know not  
Half the contents of our each casual thought.  
We never see save one little dreamed bit  
Of each feeling we have; we pass through it  
Like rapid travellers that scarce can see  
What they pass by and what they see see erringly.

What is the meaning of my writing this?  
Nothing, save that this is,  
I know not why, something I know and must  
Utter, the purpose of it being with  
That secret Being that made my body of dust  
Bear my soul's ignored presence, and that breath  
Of life that survives my each moment's death.

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1<sup>a</sup> Publ. in «Oito Poemas Ingleses Inéditos». Georg Rudolf Lind. in **Estudos sobre Fernando Pessoa.** Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1981.