

Fernando Pessoa

Was it the lyrical nightingale

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Forgot this music or told this tale?
A murmur of sorrow within me moves
Among the ghosts of unfound loves,
A breath of loss; like a lily faded,
By nought but the spell of that music aided.

I dream, and the sadness of being alive
Is like a mist round the things that strive
For an uttered word or a sense of being.
What sickness of having no seeing but seeing
Haunts with a murmur, thrills with a fear
The unnatural sense of my being here?

Nothing: the moonlight. Nothing: the breeze.
For sure there are, on remoter seas
Than mere containing of thoughts and dreams,
More earthless sorrows, less lucid gleams.
Care, and the fret of not having aught
If there, yet weigh not on life and thought.

Was it the music that came or ended?
Was it that it lost me or that it blended
With that of me that was born to hear it?
A voiceless sighing incarnate spirit,
A murmur of waters that somewhere shine,
A moonlight of dreaming it, a curious wine,

A splendour of opening vision to stars
No separateness from seeing them mars,
A clarion of moon-morn issuing from

The earliest place before love and home —
This, and the music I scarce can hear . . .
Lie still, my heart! be a dream, my fear!

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Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1993: 84.