

Fernando Pessoa

DESOLATION

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Here where the rugged hills
Their gnarled loose bases grip into the earth,
And nothing save the sorrow of our birth
From seeing the seeing spirit fills,
Here where, among the grim, deserted stones,
No hope of green for desertness atones,
Or water's sound
Make sweet the solitude around,
Here may I lay
This day
My head
Upon the ground and say
No better bed
Can he who has but himself for life have,
Nor better grave.

The sterile part
Of love, feeling, was given me.
From the humanness even of a broken heart
God set me free.
Out of my destiny no flower was made
To grow.
All in me fated was not even to fade
Or e'en a vain and transient glory show.

The very need
For love or joy or the human part of thought,
Pride, and the abstract greed
For truth, that lifts the heart and doth allot

A value of self and world to consciousness —
Even this bliss
My empty heart has not.

O weary born,
Faded begun,
Gone from unseen shores to seen shores forlorn,
Sent out of sun-gone unto unborn sun!
The singer of his wish
To sing no song,
The poor spendthrift rich
With knowing not for what to long.

The Hyperion dispossessed
Ere birth
Of that sun-mansion set out beyond rest
Above the wide-lit stretches of the earth.

The uncrowned king
That never saw the land
Of which he oft doth sing,
And whose lost path he cannot understand
Nor know how to dream steps him there to bring.

The priest deferred
From the inner shrine.
The thought but never uttered word,
The fore-spilt wine,
The anxiousness for hope, the cold divine
Of anguish that no anguish human is,
The solitary pine
On the cold hill of consciousness.

The hour
The lord
Returns
Back to the polluted bower,

Home to the intransitable ford,
Again to the ice-padlocked burns.

The shadow
Fixedly thrown
On the green meadow
By a tree overgrown
With leaves, but fruitless, flowerless and lone.

The last
Sight of a shore
Which the unhalting ship doth pass
And where it never shall pass more;
But where the heart-dim sailor knows
Homes are happy because not his,
Lips warm because never his lips to kiss,
Gardens fair because therein grows
The unfound rose,
Hours soft, fate fresh, life a real fair elf
Because somewhere outside himself.

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