

SELECTED POEMS WITH METAPHYSICAL DIMENSION

Lucian BLAGA

I Do Not Crush the World's Corolla of Wonders

I do not crush the world's corolla made of wonders
and never slay
– through reason – mysteries I meet
along my way
in flowers, eyes –, on lips or graves.
The light of others
does smother spells of the impenetrable hidden
in depths of darkness,
but I,
I and my light, increase the world's own miystery:
much as the moon with its white beams –
far from diminishing –, quiveringly
enhances even more the mystery of night,
so do I too enrich the darkening horizon
with ample thrills of sacred mystery
and what is hard to grasp
before my eyes will change
to even harder puzzling senses
because I am in love
with flowers and with eyes, with lips and graves alike.

(translated by Andrei Bantaş)

The Stalactite

Silence is my spirit –
and as I stand petrified and calm
like a hermit of stone
it seems to me
I am a stalactite in a huge grotto where the vault is the sky.

Gently,
gently,
gently – drops of light
and drops of peace – trickle down incessantly
from the sky
and petrify – in me.

(from *Poems of Light*, 1919)
(translation by Don Eulert)

In the Great Passage

The sun on high hold up the scales of day.
The sky hands itself over selflessly to the waters below.
Meek-eyed beasts in passing
fearlessly gaze at their shadows in the river beds.
Deep foliage arches over the entire tale.

Nothing wants to be other than it is.
Not so my blood that goes crying through the woods
after its long lost youth like the aged
hind after its hart lost to death.

It may have perished under mountain rocks.
It may have sunk under ground.
I have been waiting for a word in vain,
the caves alone reverberate,
and the streams are being dragged to their depths.

The blood hears no response.
Oh, if it were only truly quiet,
how clearly the heart would have been heard picking
its way through death.

I trudge farther and farther away –
and like the killer gagging
a defeated mouth,
I stop up the welling sources with my fists
that they be silent forever,
silent.

(translation by Ioana Deligiorgis)

The Holy Bird

Molded in gold by sculptor C. Brâncuși

In the wind nobody started
Orion blesses you hieratically,
weeping above you
his high and holy geometry.

You lived once on sea bottoms
and circled close to the solar fire.
Over floating forests you shouted
long, over the first waters.

Are you a bird? Or a bell carried through the world?
We could call you a being, an earless grail,
a golden song circling
above our fright of dead mysteries.

Lingering in darkness as in fairy-tales
with a would-be wind-flute
you play to those who drink their sleep
from dark subterranean poppies.

The light in your green eyes seems to us
phosphorous peeled from old bones.
Listening to wordless revelations
under heaven's grass you lose flight.

From the air of your arched noons
you can guess all the mysteries in the depths.
Rise up endlessly,
but never disclose to us what you see.

(translation by Ștefan Avădanei)

Metaphysical Sorrows*For Nichifor Crainic*

In harbors open towards the mystery of great waters
I sang with fishermen, tall shadows on shores
dreaming of ships laden
with the foreign miracle.
With the journeymen girl in black mail
I raised bridges of steel
over white rivers, over the flight of the pure bird,
over deep forests,
and every bridge arched
taking us with it, as it were, to a legendary land.

I lingered long among rocks
among saints as old as the country's riddles,
and I waited for a window
to open an escape
through powerful spaces of evening.
I have writhed on roads and on shores
with every man and every woman
among machines and in churches.
By bottomless wells
I opened my eye of knowledge.
I prayed with the ragged laborers,
I dreamed with shepherds beside their sheep
and I waited with the saints in abysses.
Now I stop in the light
and weep in the last remnants
of the star we walk on.

With all creation
I lifted my wounds to the winds
and waited: oh, miracles never happen.
Miracles never happen, never!
And yet with words simple as ours
were built the world, the elements, day and fire.
With feet like ours
Jesus walked on the waters.

(from *In Praise of Sleep*, 1929)
(translation by Mihail Bogdan)

Self-Portrait

Like a swan, Lucian Blaga is mute.
In his homeland
the snow of one's being replaces words.
His soul has gone on a pursuit –
a century-old quest, mute,
since all times
to the utmost confines.

He seeks the spring from which the rainbow drinks.
He seeks the water
from which the rainbow
sips both beauty and non-being.

(from *Unsuspected Steps*, 1943)
(translation by Mihail Bogdan)
