

A misty landscape with a vineyard in the foreground and rolling hills in the background. The vineyard is filled with rows of grapevines with brown, autumnal leaves. A large, leafy tree stands on the right side of the vineyard. The background shows rolling hills and mountains shrouded in a thick mist or fog, creating a soft, hazy atmosphere. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

GUSTAF SOBIN

TELEGRAMS

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Vignes dans le brouillard, Goult, Vaucluse, France
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TELEGRAMS

To R.C.

The poet: a metaphysician whose only chore is in the description of circles.

*

The poet: the pontifex, the builder of bridges. Depart from a known point, a material position. Light upon the mystical: the realm of the poet. Relate one to the other through an elliptic return.

*

The muses don't descend: they're omnipresent.

*

Obsession with the poetic process: an obsession no less relevant than, in other days, with magic, alchemy, divine revelation or the deciphering of a thunderbolt.

*

To begin anew: my note books filled with the anxiety of blank pages; my fingers, with the excitement of sea departures.

*

Awareness, not intellect: that is my concern; and to open the doors onto the star gardens of wonder: that is my relevance.

*

In the great ellipse that arcs our presence, I shall be the alchemist: my words shall be the precious metal of our dust: I shall catch you like a sand crab with a scavenger's phrase. You shall be, my love, not portrayed but existent; your golden knees shall move beneath the sheets of my pages.

*

The poet's alchemy: to translate emotion into reason, and reason into syllabic action.

*

Contact assured with a passing cod troller (festooned with nets) by means of the heliograph. I marvel at this communication: man speaking with the voice of the sun.

*

*To relocate oneself, resetting the wrist upon the arm, the word upon the tongue.
To reassemble: the moon trysting with the mollusk.*

*

The meteor: the poem. Conceived in primal flames and destined, by its own lucidity, toward the destruction of all but essence, traverses a quadrant no wider than the hips of the pomegranate. Praise to the meteor, the white message, and to the goddess of the Perseids.

*

I'm with you already, my love. We exist beneath the same wind, the same wheeling birds. The anchors in the roadstead have secured our equanimity.

*

I spin upon the equator of an elm tree axis with memory a root and promise a node of green ascendancy.

*

Each morning the poet, like the astronomer, must collect the powder of meteors from his rooftops.

*

Because your fingers are golden fronds, yielding me the produce of a breakfast serenity: almonds of prayer and lemons of innocence, I am more than myself. I am the morning sun, weaned upon the fruits of my solstice.

*

You shouldn't be surprised, in our conversations, if I speak my poems. I seek a commonplace mystique.

*

The woman shall inform you of the flower's specie. You, in turn, shall tell her of its meaning.

*

Between ignorance and knowledge: enlightenment. Between knowledge and revelation: poetry.

*

A kinship with Fra Angelico. Your frescoes lie still wet upon the friar's cell: their edge extending onto the ceiling, onto the sky. You bend the angel's wing. You prepare his ascension.

*

The wind, through the shutter doors, delivered me a green leaf: a gift, lying among my stale papers. I shall seek, forever, a fitting retribution.

*

You are my brother by bloodstream and more so by correlation: I watch the masonry of your design blooming each morning into an arbor, an arch: built to the measure of man's shoulders. I watch without discerning the stone from the shrub and the underpinnings of a scrambling lizard.

*

Man's preoccupation with magic numbers: Pythagorean music, Christian adoration of the Trinity, Cartesian mathematics. I abide by the mystery of one. My symbol: the infinite. My obsession: their inseparability.

*

The poem is a shard, produced from the soil: a fraction of a buried numeral.

*

I come across the plain, the wind within my satchel, the words in quest upon my fingernails, needing a druggist, an alchemist to translate the cryptic branches of my bones. I come seeking myself in calcium fruition.

*

Kinship of the poet and the peasant: both, intermediaries in capricious fruit.

*

The compass shall not forget your direction nor the sundial your shadow. Your work shall be a perpetual solace to the vagrant: the people of the valley. They shall delight forever in the veracity of your knuckles.

*

Progress is, in fact, regression: a return to the innocence of one's first orange and the wonder of its difference from the sun.

*

I seek a chapel less deserted than the last. Instead, I'm greeted by a billy goat, laughing from a belfry.

*

His presence in the village caused a great stir. The populace (gathered in the shade of their ramparts, picking herbs) wondered if he wasn't the holder of the mysterious deeds, or perhaps, the forerunner of another onslaught. He, on his part, was equally bewildered. He had forgotten the relevance of his own footfalls.

*

A poem: an aviary without cages.

*

*Iron man shall be forged by the hammer of the sky upon the anvil of the earth.
His incorruptible presence shall bear the marks of his blacksmith.*

*

*The poem assembles the past with the present; affirms the present with its
impossible future.*

*

*Bury your hopes in the shade of an umbrella pine: they shall sprout into a green
celebration of fulfilment.*

*

*My bamboo walking stick (a standard of the jungles) sets in motion the motion
of my steps, the metronome of my blood. It regulates my turgid pleasures, stark
beneath the camphors. My walking stick: it has a mace-head of stars and a stub of
crickets.*

*

*Hidden among the reeds are the gods (like women without blemish, like plums
without winter); concealed along the pathway of the poet, raising his scythe.*

*

The color of the earth is upon my skin; the wind, upon my breath. I shall not scrape, from my fingernails, the stars.

*

After four days on the plateau, I return. My satchel is filled with rocks, a puma's skull, and some mint leaves pressed in a notebook of new poems. I treat each with an equal delight.

*

To return to the wood table, stark with promise, to the lead stub and the stars for companionship. To indulge oneself in celibacy.

*

The sun is my clock. The owl, my nocturnal accomplice.

*

Your tresses are bound in a lofty triumph: let a goldfinch prepare them for your pillows.

*

As soon as the amphora assumes the shape of its bearer, the stars shall lie harmoniously in the soul's ephemeris.

*

Our work is done for the day. Our pencils lie in the toolshed; our papers, among the secrets of the flowering pear. We find solace tonight: two brothers in the commerce of words and bread. We share the lamb. We heed the woman: she brings to our table the wine of our sustenance. Together, we form a single triptych. Our incense burns on the hearth; our candles, a wish of smoke upon the chimney pots.

