



from: O LIVRO DA IGNORÂNCIA
[The book of ignorance]

A vocation that comes from want and from an excess
throbbing like a nest opening up to the outside
Ignorance relishes the dark substances
born into brightness from out of their own depths
They take their place in height and density
like a grove of trees in the breeze of a white science
And so all work is the startled shade
where the present center of a past age insists
This is being in the light of living things
and through a mineral blackness the liquid eyes
almost red or yellow trembling appear
Astonished by such soft motion
now we are no more than an ageless freshness
that gives us the height and shadow and perfect suggestion
of animals in the brush when the dawn of fresh peace



At times we grasp something
between shadow and shadow
And it's as if a nuptial gesture deep within
had unfurled like yet another shadow
this one upright And then our breathing
is a flowing in oblivion and in the quiet that calms
as if the other in us were the same that began
And without figures we come into contact
with the ardent emptiness
that wraps all contraries in a silent affirmation
and consummates within us the magic obscurity
in which to be is as not being and not being to be



I know of kisses more nocturnal than earth
Animals submerged among violent trees
rise shaking and oily to the tops of mouths
I know of the waving and electric flashing splendor
of ravenous mouths and blood risen from the depths
like a fire that flowers on foamy lips
I know of a strange softness and of a pensive ardor
that modulates the kiss in a lingering rapture
Who could express the fluid and fiery glory
of these liquid muscles emptying into estuaries of foam?
I know of kisses like bees of sun and like an agony
of a long glory I know the salty and bittersweet
substances clay sap wine
and the sandstone of armpits the black moon of the pubis
I know the thick and ardent flavor of unbroken being
that suddenly surrenders in the silent violence



Knowing no secrets having no visions
I enter an immediate and sinuous realm
I write in the shade of wood with an animal impulse
I brim with a unanimous light I am yours
May all that I write be the ignorant summit
of well-being May my arms and knees
tell of the tranquillity that roundly glows
May the clear atmosphere flicker and condense
into waves of slumber and the splendor of sentences
And may words have the murmur of groves
and of living waters and of still shadows
And may the fragrant breeze that frees and enralls
revive the bliss of being an illumined lover





from: NO CALCANHAR DO VENTO
[In the Wind's Heel]

Nothingness seems to be
its having opened
or gleamed
with the breeze in the blackness
And it is not a dome
or furrows
of night
But there is a vision
almost
like a tense stem
that barely gleams
and it is all a burst
that disseminates
inside itself
And thus with the shadow
it transmutes the shadow
and thus for us it breathes



To grasp with words the most nocturnal substance
is the same as to fill the desert
with the desert's very substance
We must go back and live in the shade
as long as the word does not exist
or as long as it is a well or a clot of time
or a pitcher turned in on its own thirst
Perhaps in opacity we will find the initial vertebra
enabling us to coincide with a movement of the universe
and to be the culmination of density
Only in this way will words be fruit of the shade
and no longer of mirrors or of towers of smoke
and like fiery antennae in the rifts of oblivion
they will initially be matter faithful to matter

Trees

What trees try to say
in their slow silence, their vague murmuring,
the sense they have, there where they are,
the reverence, the resonance, the transparency
and the bright and shadowy accents of an airy phrase.
And the shade and the leaves are the innocence of an idea
that between water and space turned itself to lithe integrity.
Beneath the magic breath of the light they are transparent boats.
I don't know if it's air or blood budding from their boughs.
I hear the finest foam of their green throats.
I am not, never will be, far from that pure water
and those ancient lamps of hidden isles.
What pure serenity of memory, what horizons
surrounding the silent well! It is a song in sleep
and the wind and light are the breath of a child
who upon a bough of a tree embraces the world.





from: VIAGEM ATRAVÉS DE UMA NEBULOSA
[Journey through a Nebula]

I can't put love off for another century
I can't
although the cry is strangled in my throat
although hatred bursts, crackles, burns
beneath grizzled mountains
and grizzled mountains

I can't put off this embrace
this two-edged sword
of love and hate

I can't put off
although the night weighs centuries on my back
and indecisive daybreak still delays
I can't put off my life for another century
nor my love
nor my cry of liberation

I can't keep putting off my heart



translated from the Portuguese by Richard Zenith

Syllables

Syllables.

The alcohol of December is cold and hoarse.
The cigarette bitter. It's a clinical cigarette.

Syllables.

Syllables are used to make verses.

The tabletop is smooth.

A spoon is a familiar and delicious
complex form.

A glass is as clear-cut
as an unobsequious servant.

A woman takes shape
in the eyes of the poet.

A body. Two syllables.

Just enough money. The coat collar
to cover his nape

and ears.

Syllables.



from: O NÃO E O SIM
[The no and the yes]

A God Asleep in a Garden

I saw his smile in the shadows of the leaves
and watched him go to sleep. I felt a plunging
into placid waters. A treasure
glittered among the stones and flowing weeds.
How tranquil that passion, all silence and light!
Like a large green boat, the foliage was under sail.
The heart of summer throbbing in the cicadas.
The smile of the god an infinite beginning.
In sleep desire opened out completely
in a corolla of water, fire, and air.
Symbols dissipated into instant certainty.
We were at reality's blazing heart.