



Hymns To The Night (I)

What mortal being
gifted with senses
does not love
above all marvels
in broadening space that rounds him

joyous, frolicking light
with its beams and waves
its colours,
and gentle immanence
by day?
As life's innermost soul
there breathes
the gigantic world of constellations
that knows no rest
swimming within the blue ocean flood
there breathes
the twinkling stone
quiet plants
and animals
wild, burning
of many figures.
And above all things
the glorious stranger
with eyes full of meaning
a swaying gait
and tender, closed lips, rich
in tones.
As a King
of earthly nature

it calls forth every power
into countless metamorphoses
binding and loosening
endless alliances
suspending his heavenly image
round each earthly being.
His presence alone
reveals the marvelous splendour
of earthly realms.
Downward I turn
to the sacred, ineffable
enigmatic night—
Far down there, lies the world
as sunk within a hollow.
How bleak and lonesome her place.
Throbbing pangs in the strings of my breast.
I want to sink down into a drop of dew
mingle with ashes
and distant memory
youthful wishes
and childhood dreams
the whole of lengthy life's
brief joys and hopes come to naught, arriving
in grey cloths

as mists of evening
when the sun is down.
In other expanses
light strikes the gay pavilions.
Will it never return
to its true-hearted children?
To the gardens
of its splendid house?
Still, what is it that wells forth
beneath our hearts,
cool and invigorating
swallowing pain's soft airs
full of intimation?
Do you too
have a human heart
dark night?
What do you have there
beneath your cloak
that, unseen and mighty,
stirs my soul?
A precious balm
trickles through your hand,
from a cluster of poppies.
In sweet intoxication

you unfurl the heavy wings of the heart
granting us joys
darkish ineffable,
home-like as you yourself are,
joys that let us sense
a heaven.

How childish and poor
the light seems to me
with its bright things.

How exuberant and blessed
this going of day.

And thus it is
purely because
the night makes its attendants turn away
that you may sow the glowing orbs
among roomy expanses of space
proclaim your omnipotence
your return
in the time
when you are still away.

More of heaven
than the flashing stars in those expanses
seem the endless eyes
that the night

opens up within us.

They see more far

than the palest

of the numberless host.

Needing no light

they see through the depths

of a loving heart

brimming a higher realm

with ineffable passion.

Praise be the Queen of the World,

The Great Proclaimer

of the Sacred World,

Protectress of Blesséd Love

who has sent you to me, gentle beloved,

dear Sun of Night.

I awoke then

for I am yours and mine.

You have proclaimed

the night alive to me,

and made me human.

Consume with spirit-ardour my body

that I may mingle with your subtle winds

and ever keep the Bridle Night.

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The translation is based on both the handwritten version
and the version as printed in Athenäum.