

Fernando Pessoa

40 — ELEVATION

ELEVATION

I

Before light was, light's bright idea lit
 God's thought of it,
And, because through God's thought light's thought did pass,
 Light ever was,
And from beyond eternity became
 The living flame
That trembles into life and reddens with
 Our life's soul-width.

Before light was, when yet the night was queen
 O'er what had been,
In God's realized prescience it could be
 Light from eternity,
For no time enters into God's thoughts or
 Their spaceless Hour.

Take thou therefore, my Song, from light the mood
 Of being, and brood,
Like the Dove unbegot, over the abyss
 Of consciousness,
Taking as thy true part that thought of God
 Whence light issued.

Let my words burst into that divine flame
 That lights its name
Of each thing from within with ultimate meaning.
 Though earth be screening

With fixed appearance the Sun in each Thing,
 Bear, on thy wing
High-lifted, rays from the unrisen Sun
 Whence life is spun.

Soar out, my Song, out of despair and night
 And catch that light
Ere it appear, from neath the horizon
 Of action,
Borne out of dreams by intuition bright
 Of endless light.

Though none believe nor any understand,
 Yet feel thee fanned
With those breeze-breaths that come up with the morn
 From the Unborn.
Soar like a lark into the coming day
 And bear thy way
Into the possibility of noon
 Hid in the dawn.

No matter that none know what thy words speak.
 A day shall break
Out of eternity as each day bright
 Out of each night.
Thy wings shall touch the slanting light of dawn
 And, upwards drawn
By being light-struck, shall to light be near
 When light's yet far.

Hope is thy ready and high-soaring flight
 Out of the night,
Joy is thy touching of the first high rays
 That day betrays,
Life is the course thy flight sequesters from
 Earth and its nightly doom,
And these three things are one in thy belief

That pain is brief.

II

Thou, unseen Bird, essence of spiritual light,
That yet art bright
With the epitome of the outer shine,
Thou that art mine
And yet not mine but general to the earth,
Wings of rebirth,
Whose song, though in me heard, participates
Of all that all elates,
Thou point of meeting of me with the wings
Hidden in all things,
Thou breath, thou vapour, seen and not seen, of
Some abstract love,
Thou exhalation of the prisoned flight
Of all things' weight,
Thou that in me art fear, mad splendour, all
To ache and enthrall,

Attract me, take me, o pure flight, and rise
With me in thine eyes,
Lost, cast, unpetalled and divine, up to
What thou dost woo!

O Spirit-Lark that wakest ere the morn
And art reborn
At each recoming of the sun, and art
The wiser part
Of all that message is to our low eyes
Of what shall rise!
Life-weightless Bird that no meads can attract,
But that must act
Its fate in air, above our marshes sad
And meads low-laid,
In free heights communing with the Great Horn

As yet unborn!
O sterile Bird that hast no nest nor home
But what shall come,
That hast no song save in the heights above
Nests, homes and love,
Nor any thought save for the coming day,
Though far away
It seem to those who measure yet thy flight
But by its height
And not by its intention, that is carried
From life and married
To those diviner hours that winged things
Find with their wings!
O Bird of ruthless song and untold wishes,
Whose high flight reaches
Heights not of earth, but of pure air, encumbered
With no joys weighed and numbered!
Take all my heart in thy purpose of going
And make the flowing
Down to earth of my song be like thy song,
Something strange, strong
With distance, eerily half-perishing
From farness! Sing,
And let my heart be what thou meanst with singings
My life with winging.
My hopes and fears with th'tone wherewith thy note
To me doth float
And the great purpose hidden in my fate
With thy mere height!

My heart shall thus be happy even if pained,
Free even if strained
To keep that height of joy whence tremble down
Thy songs to our own.
My soul may thus be happy, full and free.
Oh, happily
Raise me from me and lift my life unto

That thou dost woo —
The light, the sky, the distance and the morn,
Till I be unborn
Again to pure dispersion in the seas
Of the high breeze
That speaks to thee, ere light be born, of light,
Till the delight
Of without being being shall make me
Song and sky be!

s. d.

«The Mad Fiddler», in **Poesia Inglesa**. Fernando Pessoa. (Organização e tradução de Luísa Freire. Prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes.) Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1995: 398.