

Fernando Pessoa

I. — Take me up in thine arms, oh some mother.

[I.]

Take me up in thine arms, oh some mother.
Take me up in thine arms, make me a child.
An endless lack of joy every joy doth smother
That rises in me, sudden or great or mild.

Take me up in thine arms, rock me to sleep.
Rock me to sleep in a great meaningless way.
And may I hear, like one who sleeps in a house by a bay,
A great loud wind rise like a life from the deep
And cease as I fall asleep like a life that passes away.

II.

All I have wished to do, mother, I have not done.
Even what I wish to feel makes mistakes within me.
I grow tired, dimly tired, of the calm and constant sun,
And restless beside the happier restlessness of the sea.

Oh for a boat to believe I might sail in it and go,
Beyond the walls of my sensations' world and become
A floating absence from my worn self, a discarded woe
Trailing behind me like a ship's trail, shining through
My consciousness of having dropt my life like a lamp in a home.

III.

Mother, my cheeks grow thin with cares I forget to know.
With things I forget to feel, nor know how to think, I pine.
Mine envy, mother, is with the figure of the sturdy man at the wheel,
That does his duty in storms and is salt at soul with good brine.

My heart is lost to a perillous life full of achievement and breath.

My thoughts are given like gifts to a life I could never live.
Teach me how to myself my own life I can forgive.
Teach me how to love life, at least how not to fear death,
And be all that you teach in the sense of a mute kiss you give.

IV.

Rock me to and fro in your arms, mother. It is night.
There is something of endless motion, of final ceasing of care,
In your rocking of me now from now into the light
That the cottage lamp sheds on your rocking fire with the same yellow flare.

Let me sleep, let me sleep, outsleep the ages and Time.
Drift far away from space like a hulk away from shore.
Be your arms around me like a land or a day or a clime,
Be your casual lips on my brow like forgiveness of crime.
Rock me till I lose being, mother, rock me still more.

V.

My pain outgrows my power to feel pain. I am numb. I am faint.
I sicken from having lived no life, but all dreams, dreams, dreams,
My soul is poisoned, mother, with an old and mysterious tai[nt]
And now that you have stopped rocking full on my brow the lamp gleams.

Hide me, mother, from the light for it seems that it sees.
Hide me, make me be blurred against your breast and the night.
Lo! outside the great swell of the dim and eternal seas!
Mother, whom do we wait, to return from beyond the seas?
Is it for anyone at sea that the joy of our lamp we light.

VI.

The wind hath risen, the wind hath risen. Something is colder and truer.
Something of life and its mystery creeps into the room.
Mother, stop the window chinks, make the door fast and sure.
We never know what horror it is that out of the Night may come.

We know not whom we await. It may be worse than the dark.

It may be shapeless unto our thought and dread as God if he be. . .
Mother, new sounds are creeping like snakes through the darkness. Hark!
Is it the wind you fear? Is it the sea you remark?
Mother, make me to sleep at once, ere I may hear or see.

VII.

When will it born. Mother, this fear and this smart,
This ache as of something lost or something near to be found,
Coils like a viscous impossible manner of snake round the heart
And the night, mother, the night without being nor bound! . . .
Put your arms so much around me, so much, so close so fast
That they cover the eyes of my fancy and cling round my thought's quick ear.
Mother, let us not see if the night will pass or last.
Let us not think nor be. . . Let life be as if past.
Let our total and infinite death be the day and the ceasing of fear.

s. d.

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