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To Rune Christiansen

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When things go badly in practice, one turns to theory, and also the best theory ends up by producing selfcensorship. In poetry, things can't go but badly. As I wrote many years ago, the poet feels poetry like an amputee feels the 'phantom limb'.

In *Words of Discord*, the notebook from which I'll read a number of fragments, there aren't 'convincing' assertions. On the other hand, no poet can answer the questions of another poet.

I wouldn't like to reduce myself to merely one thing. But in this case I should say that I am a poet, one who will not completely test himself if not within poetry, the only inconsolable activity, not in need of correspondence and which cannot ask for any kind of orientation. One who will pass by way of the diverse consistency of an essay with the perplexity of a foreigner, convinced of lying since he finds himself having to judge, to sustain, and prefers this rather than that and who in his doubt is more greedy.

Shadows mirrored in other shadows, without the greater breath, or words come from waking and already tired. Too much light, too many declarations, which in a world settle discord and which will not find peace. [1993]

One hears people say: 'It's a perfect work'. After all, this is an oxymoron, and is the source of many mishaps, one of which being devotion. The perfect work is nothing other than the fulfilment of an institution, the success of a lengthy literary evangelization and the

consequent persuasiveness of the canon. It demands a shared idolatry, whereas it is our physiological conviction that presumed perfection is something similar to an asymptomatic illness. If one really has to, then one writes. But defectively. [2006]

The contemporary arts have an origin of a contractual kind: the avant-garde and the academy are united by an implicit pact, and given—as we know—that the controller always ends up by prevailing over the transgressor, the will to transgress will have to be acknowledged as a simulation of a ‘crime’. Avant-garde and academy are ingenuously complementary terms, and yet one prefers to place the former within cultural adolescence, an age through which one is still not accepted in brothels. In this way, the academy is idealized and becomes the gift of adult life. Consider that in the second Act one remembers nothing of the first. Rather, it is completely inconsequential: who made his debut by studying Anton Webern or György Sándor Ligeti, dies leaving an uncompleted decisive essay on the alcoholic songs of the Trolls. [1998]

To interpret is merely to answer. And in order to answer, it’s not necessary to have understood: it will suffice to give back what the work has done to us. The answer, understood as ἀπόδοσις, as restitution, comes afterwards although it doesn’t arrive late (to think of it in different terms, it would be the equivalent of saying that within the complementary nature of the concave and convex one had the ‘lateness’ of one of the two). [1998]

Emphasis for us is an exaggeration—excessive intonation, lack of proportion, ostentation—whereas it once was ἐπινοεῖν, *subintelligere*, *subaudire*: that is, to mean by way of implication, indirectly expressing oneself and trying out the comprehension of the unsaid, which is always greater than what is said. On the other hand, superfluity has a surprising effect: it invites to look for something else,

something that's lacking. It will consequently not be strange that emphasis ends up by confessing to be an ellipsis. The tension between the said and the unsaid, which really presses upon what is said and is missing to it, the tie that unites the explicit and the implicit, finish by proposing before us both the reluctance of sense and the rejection of its innocence. Emphasis, this apparent ornament of the explicit, is an abundance which inaugurates an indigence.

Besides being a rhetorical figure, emphasis is an anthropological modality (emphasis of agony, of lament, of the cry, of climax and amnesia), is a technique of the immobility of time, a symbolic action in relation to panic and obsession. Panic is miniaturized in the implicit, where it appears as a secret. And obsession, this absolute of the sensible, this normalized fury that knows how to return, hides itself in profusion.

Emphasis is magic that aims at an opposite effect: it doesn't want to alter the thing but render it irrevocable and yet not dangerous, since one fears the enthusiasm of taking hold of the object and has to save oneself from its evidence, or nearness.

Emphasis, this euphemistic undertaking (there is an effect of attenuation in emphasis), defers everything we believe we see and touch. Beating around the bush, omitting, moving aslant in order not to fully receive, it adapts itself to the impossibility of the real, it prepares the extreme lethargy of sense. The euphoric aspect of emphasis resembles the euphoria of one who doesn't sleep to defend himself from the desire of being devoured by sleep.

And we set the origin of the text in an occasion of time in which a sudden turbulence, and something appears as opening, in its non-subjected virtuality, an object that impedes seeing all the others, nevertheless hidden in the fatigue of the background, something like the sound of a single wave in the undertow, not isolable not distinguishable unheard, meanable place not to be left, hoping to find an adequate word for its impossibility.

On this occasion, our effort will be to keep the present calm, even

if holding oneself still to the present means coming out of the procession, making oneself distant. On this occasion, when something arrives for someone who remains struck, something that you can't understand (sudden gathering or interruption of density), one cuts out from the whole a thing whose contour one doesn't see, to keep before it disappears in its change, before it doesn't let itself be said — thing of a moment, inconstant dismayed body, while the proportions no longer stay still and everything allows the glimpsing of the opaque.

The enlargement, the disappearance: the figure of emphasis, amplified thing and elliptical thing, gives to undecided value of the apparition a conviction, a necessity. And the implicit that survives emphasis, the implicit that delays the sense and avoids spending words, becomes the reluctant guardian of sense.

In Seneca's *Oedipus* Creon says: 'Let me be silent. Could one ask a king any less freedom?'. But Oedipus replies: 'Often, even more than speech, it harms a king, a kingdom, a silent freedom'. [1979]

We are in the world, but the world is not here for something. Knowledge is only similitude, and the language of the world non-concordant — magnificent reflection, donor beyond its forms and its gifts.

Poetry is this interval between us and things, this lost object in the home of desire, this interrupted sentiment for which one sees by not seeing any object, says without saying *that*, talks without protection, writes what he cannot think. [1976]

Plotinus: «Καὶ λέγομεν περὶ οὐ ὄητοῦ» (And let us speak regarding the ineffable). He who is wanting to reunite with things by nominating them, returns to separating himself from them. Language, passing among things, takes upon itself the fortune of the manifold and in its 'comprehension' loses it. And the infinite abandoned form, this living being with its great clamour towards which one endeavours, this lacking profusion and weakness of profusion, will be with-

out rest for us. The *exitus* of the real makes the vacuity, the vanity of language. It does not have confidence in fire, painted fire. Therefore, all we have to do is the adequation of language to language. [1980]

The reader lies in an other sleep, and imagines that somewhere there is—there has been, there is about to be—what is said in the text. He imagines that the poet has bound and gathered elsewhere to say here, in accordance with the adventures of the verb λέγειν. Curious about the origin of the text, the reader supposes it comes from an experience, handed down like a temple by dust, looked after by its own ruin. The reader needs so-called reality. The poet owes it nothing. [1980]

The poet doesn't linger in holy rooms. Reciting, he supersedes the mourning of absence, looks without perspective at that latent background, for ever ὑποκείμενον, dissolves that shadow in darkness. From this solitude, he knows that language does not generate: it is born. In the words of Marsilius Ficinus: 'Aliud visus est, aliud lumen. Et lumini nihil est opus visu, cum ipsi lumini nihil sit luminis capiendum' (One thing is sight, another thing is light. Light has no need of sight, since it does not have a light to acquire). [1980]

I continue to mistrust a theory that precedes poetry, and I'm tired of 'backward' theories—I'm not interested in making theory to protect my poetry. For me, on this level, the labour of the question is finished, and the passion for understanding is transmuted into the simpler tendency of admitting what happens.

If I think about poetry, about what I do, I must at least presuppose two conditions: a weakness of consciousness and an intermittent revelation of sense. While there is absolutely no need to comfort unconsciousness, one might be able to explain the deluding testimony of language through the propositional attitudes and refer-

ential opaqueness, and the need to find a thought in poetry instead of putting a prior thought into verse, something that one already knew.

Every theory should be the result of the research of necessary thoughts. But I can't decide (at least on the 'affective' plane)—lost as I am amidst interior perceptions and sensorial impressions—whether things derive for us from words, or are the presupposition of words (and words an obstacle for things). Analogously, in practice, I ignore whether the signifier is not at the end merely the 'name' of the signified, or whether the latter is only an illusion of the 'body' of a word.

Everything considered, I really don't care at all. We have lost things, and in their place we use words. I think of language as being the author of a grand number of false descriptions and incomplete dreams. The impossibility of being *into* things is the desperation and the necessity of language. Neither experience of the world nor experience of language preexist their relation. And yet—however subtle and complex may be the system of diplomatic agreements we have elaborated—if the ancient affinity of words and things (the *signatura rerum*) is by now a daydreamed object, experts as we are in the solitary art of representation that represents itself, between world and language one guesses a reciprocal abandonment.

The lack of a real comparison between world and language and the uncertain proportion of presence and absence, incomprehension and oblivion, set in motion that extraneous work that is poetry. It demands a passive feeling, a receptive thought and desires learnt by answering. Poetry is not the act of collecting the world like a rescuer of sense or a flatterer of language, but the experience of a faithfulness that wants to hold back the unutterable. Poetry is acting beyond what one manages to think. [1988]

Deep inside me, I assert that as long as we don't think about language as an 'intermediate object', we shall not know how to say. In

other words, the *intention* of language will have to be superseded by an involuntariness, by a passion. Only in this way, less charmed and apparently without acting, shall we be able not to remain on this side of the thing, taken up in the conjecture of similarity, and not go on that side, into poor abstraction, avoiding that premature speaking that halted itself in the painful resemblance or—beyond all proportion—in solitude learnt the self-reflective fruit of language. [1982]

There is something puerile in the etymological passion of some contemporary philosophers. The ‘survivors’ of the *ontologischer Krieg* tend to extend the results of the etymological investigation (which, on its part, would intend documenting the formation-transformation of a language in obvious contact with others), legitimizing present-day claims of thought with the biography of the infancy of a word. It’s enough to think of the epidemic effects of the more or less likely etymon of ἀλήθεια.

In this way, the presumed initial sense of a word leaves that deep stratum of time, in which it ‘acted’, to claim its value nowadays. It is the victorious return of the previous history, the interpretation of genealogy as debt or necessary bond. And—implicitly—it would be difficult here not to see that claim of intimacy which is the authentic one. Posthumous obedience, migratory obedience—the utensil found in a Syrian archaeological site which becomes the briefing of an industrial designer of Frankfurt am Main. [2003]

Epicurus, in his *Letter to Herodotus*, says that «one must rely on everything that is present» whereas Lucretius asserts that the Muses say the visible and the invisible (making the ‘res obscurae’ into ‘tam lucidae’). Therefore, the presence is more ambiguous than foreseen. If human work is always that of seeing figures, then—by increasing language—the poet extends the visible. [2004]

Don't come and tell me that poetry has to be useful, that it has to 'do' or 'make'. In which folds of History does one think of finding poetry? Side by side with dance music, military marches, the adolescent oratory of Mayakovsky? There has always been, there will always be, an *other* century. [2003]

The language of poetry is every time diachronic. There are not archaisms in poetry, there are not neologisms, neither usual nor obsolete words. And the language of poetry does not completely belong to the history of language, in that it deals more with the *possibilities* than with the *state* of a language. In poetry, every individual language is nothing other than a practical dream. [2003]

I see something of what is visible, and yet, in spite of my *oculata fides*, I have a conviction of invisible things which is not resolved in the same difficulty of seeing. I imagine something that announces itself in the visible as an unknown possibility of it, presence without effect of presence, a thing that neither has the destiny of object nor an ontic mask, as imperceptible as a meaning may be. Hidden in this conviction—which supersedes, astounding it, every phenomenon—is the secretness of representation. On the visible and the invisible gathers the same cloud, and the *φαινόμενα*—the apparent objects—lack evidence (they are *ἄδηλα*). I remember the *φαινόμενον κρύπτεται* of Gregory of Nazianzus, and the harsh words of Johannes Scotus Eriugena: 'Dum silet clamat, et dum clamat silet, et dum videtur invisibilis est' (As it is silent shouts, as it shouts is silent, and as it is invisible it appears). [1982]

And I continue to think of Lucretius' hapax *vocamen*: an appellation for *vocare*—a call, and not a simple denotation. It induces in me the fear that no thing lets itself be said if I am not capable of invoking it. [2004]

Every perceptive relation—which precisely confuses us with the perceived—for us inaugurates a presence. The world day and night perceived is the protocol of our thoughts. Within the perception there appears a dialogical promise, a hope for correspondence which is lost in thinking. And yet, one can never say that ‘it is all here’. The apparition of something, the overwhelmingness of something, in the body generates a feeling of intense incompleteness, made more acute by the fact that perceiving something renders *particulars*: it separates from all the rest. Whenever we entrust ourselves to a word, or elect a sensible as our object, we immediately suffer an absence. This is the same emptying of the world from which those persons suffer whose amorous object tends to present itself as being exclusive. [2003]

Even if incapable of visions, we can intensely perceive to the point of a somatic exclamation, even if there is nothing for us that is visible-audible-tangible. And often the object of this *perception without perceived* has a claim to physicalness. On the other hand, we can commonly think of something about which we do not have experience, as is well-known by those few narrators who do not have the ambition to tell their own affairs. [1979-2003]

Psychoanalysis has undervalued dreams, making them a number of manuscripts whose totality constitutes a personal library. I am not doubting the interpretative value of psychoanalysis: I’m saying that we ought to put on the same level waking and sleeping. The symptomatic narration of sleepers cannot compromise the statute of the dream which first of all is a ‘fact’—even if apocryphal—and has the right to the same dignity and importance as the events when one is awake. Even if the history of sleep can appear even more controversial and incomplete than the *historia rerum gestarum*, each one of us has an oneiric tradition: the experience of innumerable dreams has produced a nocturnal culture made up of places, things and per-

sons to which/whom one returns with familiarity, of which/whom one remembers, inexistent while awake but presupposed by sleep, able to act as previous histories or prejudices, and capable of evolving. If I were looking for an *auctoritas*, I would turn to that small population which during waking respects the decisions of sleep (if you steal from me seven sheep in dream, you will return them to me when awake). Naïvety? Maybe, but not lacking in justice, if it is true that all of us can dream. [2002]

Poetry doesn't require devotion, but desperate pride. Not because the unnatural question of originality is decisive—after all, it's nothing other than the effect of an interrupted tradition and the equivalent of copyright, of the mercantile trademark—but because to manifest devotion, and from the beginning uphold one's own dependence, is for men of letters and not for poets (the former might be the amateur or white-collar version of the latter). Instead of writing, the admirers ought to limit themselves to sigh, sometimes be moved, and to arrange nostalgic high teas in tearooms, abstaining from the weak pride which always caresses fans whose privilege is to worship someone, having or not having made his acquaintance, probably having misunderstood him but knowing really quite a lot about him, even the name of the clinic in which he was born and the colour of his handkerchiefs that tried to check the emotion of those present. [2003]

The only task we have is to encounter our proper persecuting necessity, which for the Arab-Persian tradition is «the unknown guest of our soul». The imitators, the epigones, make use of qualities necessary to others and superfluous for them, therefore substitutable. This is their immorality. [1988]

Notwithstanding the deplorable rarity and superficiality of the studies regarding the subject, it seems—going by the testimonies of

persons who have become blind—that the painful full sight/partial sight/blindness progression, is respected in dream: things already completely seen still insist in dream as figures. Those seen only in part have shady qualities, while those never seen manifest their presence in a tactile, sound, olfactory and taste way. Strange mixes result from these (acoustic dreams with visual settings, visible persons who talk out loud, etc.). And it seems that the blind from birth, as well as those who became blind during their first two years of life, in dream don't even know colours and figures, whereas those who have lost their sight in later years still see figures which tend, however, to fade and dissolve.

There is something inexorable in being bodies, in having to admit that a lesion in a certain cortical area will exclude us from speaking, reading or writing, and that we can't substitute the body not even in dream. It is perception, night and day, that gives us the world. The work of the mind is nothing other than weaving. Honour to appearance. [2003]

The act of answering can reconcile itself to giving back the question without increase, or give access to something. In whatever case, one will admit that there has been a question: in other words, that an incompleteness has just manifested itself. [2003]

Since the revelation of the 'biographical fallacy' (that is, the elusiveness of biographical references in literature), with the optimism of theoreticians being addressed to the signifier, the idea of the neutrality of the poet—by now superseded by language—has become rooted in many of us. The subject of the writing has been emptied and the poet has once again become *pati et recipere*, to the joy of medieval ontology. But the diffused pronominal phobia certainly can't avoid a text belonging nevertheless to Someone.

The 'person' of the poet always has to wait for a decision regarding his fate, if he doesn't want poverty to assume a style—the mask

of a style. Only who regenerates himself, who transfigures himself and becomes a person, will arrive—extraneous and reluctant—at achieving style. A competence, an ability, a manner, can produce magnificent effects of style; and yet, if what takes action is a non-regenerated knowledge, then we shall be talking about ‘profane’ styles, the convincing dress of fortunate hypocrites, or the exaggerated extension of depressed poets, resigned megalomaniacs capable of vain affliction who are entitled to the literal datum of style and not to its metaphorical gift.

My interest in knowledge depends on interest for the emotive reasons of knowledge (as Hegel wrote, thought always arrives too late), and style only concerns me in that it represents the position of the poet, his fundamental attitude, becoming the condition of the possibility for certain—and not other—thoughts of language.

I am therefore curious about the origin of the style in the poet’s person, and not in the poet *tout court*. [1981]

After all, there’s a phenomenon that is suited to describing the condition of a poet which isn’t entrusted to the criterion of verisimilitude: that of hypnagogic images, the chiaroscuro experience of those figures seen in that state between sleeping and waking, in the nocturnal kaleidoscope, projected onto the internal screen of the eyelids. In general one tends to diminish them, almost as if they were merely the annunciation of sleep, and the first signs of dreams. And yet, sometimes one can’t sleep after these apparitions, and at times it is not a question of simple figures: in rolling one’s eyes, one sees things that evolve, subject to time, things that in a disquieting way instead mature or come and go—make unmake themselves. They are incomplete dreams, dreams of those who know they are dreaming. They are dreams of presence and of the intensity of presence.

They resemble poetry. Also the poet—or better, the poet I like—in some way lies there, intensely immobile, and his condition is the same as the spectator: a concave condition. Naturally, what appears

may only be a strange wonder that comes from a well-known word. It may be a rhythm, a precise gait, or the sentiment of a posture of the body, or else the impression of finding oneself—without meaning to—at a certain distance from a certain object. This perception takes place within a relative darkness: one *feels* to see, perhaps with closed eyes, in this way finding oneself in a condition that is inseparable from that of the person who daydreams. One especially perceives a certain quality of something. Something places itself in the corner of the eye and appears in a specific light.

If he becomes aware of this apparition and notices that he is part of it, the poet will feel the impulse to obey it: that is, to find hidden harmony with what he sees. ‘Harmony’ is not a formal reconciliation but the fruit of the art of distance, and of the long, uncertain negotiation in which who perceives hopes to find a position, a distance and an attitude with respect to the thing perceived. Remembering that the subject is neither the poet nor the figure glimpsed, but is the relation between them, and that the objects in relation are elusive with respect to the quality of the relation. Remembering that one cannot make any sentiment prevail, and that the text one desires will—in the best of cases—be involuntary.

Now the poet relies on encountering words which can contain the secret of what appears to him. This makes him an heir, and also—far from judgement, preference and calculation—poses the obligation of fidelity. If poetry is precisely the experience of this fidelity, then one no longer has choice: we do not find ourselves deciding a lexicon, rhythm and intonation, but suffering the nearness of the perceived object until we have the same form for ourselves. And in saying ‘form’, I allude to the aspect of that empathic precomprehension which testifies to one’s affinity with the thing that appears.

But finally, after having tuned the body (or better, the ‘sentiment’ of the body), we shall have found only words. And the words could never fill the phenomenon that calls them. I am not talking about the delusion of language before the ineffable: if painting has had to

become abstract, is this not due to an insufficiency of the visible?

The poet suffers sensorial privation considerably more than the painter and musician. And to intensely perceive in order to only obtain words—that is, scarcity of material—will cause him to regret. And it will especially make him stop on his path, knowing that his wonder is opaque. As I wrote in an old poem, ‘Without understanding, in the way of the bright that follows the dark’.

So, poetry is born from inexperience. At the beginning, there’s a phenomenon. A phenomenon for him, that he—and not others—can observe once. Then the perceptive drama. And I say ‘drama’ because to look at length—and deeply—at something is considerably more painful than preparing to interpret it. Finally, the hope of finding an understanding with that phenomenon, and the subsequent certainty of having only ‘grazed’ it. As if—wanting to dwell in a place—one were forced to pass by every day without being able to stop there. To pass and pass again: no residence.

And yet one has to be faithful to this delusion. Intimate to poetry, there is a poverty which is not indigence of the word, neither insufficiency of the instruments, nor tiredness of the history of poetry. It’s that poetry places its claim in the most acute point of the relation with the object. If the reality of a thing is never able to fill its virtuality, if every sound gathers together all unuttered sounds, if every thing that wakes is forgetful, if the essence one looks for is also sentimental, if one wants the most arduous comprehension (that of the ‘particular’), and if comprehension does not accomplish—does not fulfill—the thing, then there is nothing to be done: the exercise of poetry is painful.

There’s a profusion of things, but things are lacking. The words we find to push ahead are no longer the same, still unsold words that we knew in the dictionary of the language. They insist on resembling those words, but they are overwhelmed by a furious intonation, and tormented by a debt which is greater than their meaning. They are silent more often than they speak, because they don’t

have the reward of describing, the consolation of referring, the ambition of touching: they drag the peevish quarrel of language into the chaotic and impassive realm of non-belonging, where we know useless our advices, and our knowledge is an exhausted defence. They are silent for us with the pride of sounds, not unlike crying. And they don't want to say, because they don't have an aim, don't fulfill an intention and don't remember the language of their dream.

The poet—as I intend the poet—moves like an always rejected lover through this difficulty, since he has accepted to be alive. He doesn't have either an historical or theoretical distrust of language, nor does he have an excess of faith in the fortunate places of the Freudian topic. In other words, he doesn't hope to be able to say, thanks to the preconscious virtue of *malgré soi*. Instead, he hopes to reach an agreement with what the mind has unveiled for him, an accord without healing, defective, but one that leaves him to keep the sentiment of the thing with him, like a glimmer in darkness. If the figure of a star presents itself to him, then he would like to say the name of the star and, with this word alone, admit what the star does to him. But he knows that this is not the language of things—unknown—and so he no longer trusts that name. He begins to write as soon as he asks himself 'what is there?', 'what does it do?', and not 'why is it there?', and not 'what do I feel-think-want to say?'.

He still doesn't have words, but only slow presages, therefore he barely moves, orients himself and looks for a position. In order to defend the delicate thing that appears to him from his interpretation of the thing, he will have to take great care of the surface: it will be the surface that gives him acknowledgement, and not the assumption of a sense. Instead, he will have to let himself be tormented by the sense of his relation with the thing—not the 'true' relation but a 'possible' one.

This is the sense to fully suffer, allowing words to come which one already knows distant and confused. Words that announce themselves as being the substitutes for other unknown and truer words,

and which are examples of something that still doesn't exist. In obeying the apparition, he moves words until feeling resemblance with the thing seen (resemblance that means non-contrariness, or gratitude). He allows the words that are already written to change their discontented ties, he allows some to be preferred, he puts up with losing some of them, and he accepts that they can lose importance or iridescence in the new tie. He continuously hears the echo of the canon, the affect of language and the throb of the cliché. But he doesn't mind. It's true, he is afraid that the formless will never again change into something, to take his glance from him. He will have to take his time and be patient, letting it happen, if it can.

So, the question is the *cult* of that figure which at the beginning appeared and gathered words for itself (and particular wishes of these words). A question of letting oneself be superseded by the vision, and not of consciously deciding. To arrive at this point, intelligence does not suffice, and rhetorical competence is of no use, because the question is not an aesthetic but an ethical one: we have to be 'just'. The paths of dexterity are the paths of betrayal, the resources of the mind are lacking and anyway elusive, and everything we believe we know, hides what appears to us with the not demonstrated authority of its evidence.

Let the seen thing persuade us, that non-understanding which leads to accepting, which requires fluid attention and which doesn't want an effort of any kind. [1992]

I can't forget that Byzantine mosaic of Sosus of Pergamum, whose minute polychrome tesserae designed a floor with the leftovers from a meal: bread, peels, nutshells, fish-bones... To assign the status of definitive to the provisional (as photographing an actress who has just woken up) or to appreciate the defective (the lady of the house would say 'excuse me for the untidiness') is the equivalent of saying: now, here, where I am, and the world as it is. The contrary to Arcadia, which is not realism at all. [2003]

I'm unable to appreciate the mania of intertextuality, the assiduous search for sources. You look backwards, and all is reduced to an obsessive anamnesis. And the sources of literature—who knows—are always literary ones: not even once, do you have the indication of a film director, a jazzman, a photographer or a painter.

Harold Bloom has dramatized 'the influence'—the vicissitude of a protracted adolescence, an example of rival and loving slavery—to the point of saying that we are also influenced by works that we have never read. And a good number of scholars agree, with their cult of the *déjà vu*. [1988]

In my naïvety, I believe that everything which is *now* called *here* is part of the present. Therefore, to want to resemble the evidence of the present is superfluous, and doesn't make us contemporary at all: it instead shifts us into the adulation of the verisimilar, into the commemorative condition of people who renew their passports without ever travelling. [2001]

The hopes which are from time to time placed in interpretative methods are almost always disappointed by the relationship with a particular text. Therefore, instead of saving the species and losing the individual, instead of hoping that the text can become an example of the good working of a model, let's trust experience. Let's keep a theoretical insomnia which may defend the object from its interpretation and the interpretation from every form of obedience. Isn't it perhaps evident that experience exceeds whatever concept? [1976]

Apparently I'm not disposed to lie. But I exaggerate in saying the truth (of course, I'm evoking false and true without worrying about their logical complications). My poetic work, instead, is addressed to figures of the implicit. What strange rivalry is this: the implicit against the too explicit?

But maybe the implicit is nothing other than the secret of saying,

the heavy preliminary shadow which is ironic about the pretension of signifying. And perhaps so-called poetry comes to visit me in order to diminish the ambitions of my existence (fortunately not that often to ruin my life). Perhaps poetry inherits the fears of language which arrived very late—after so much flint tools—with the same perplexed and victorious air as the substituted conductor.

So, and setting aside eventual ethical ambitions, I ask myself: am I—at least when awake—explicit in saying, in order to make up for the impotence of language? After all, the human species that poetizes tends to go to the next line before the line comes to an end, it squanders emptiness. There would be trouble if that emptiness didn't exist. We could put on airs, and—going with long strides in the studio—appear dignified, we more or less poets. Or else, taking a second-class ticket for Rhetoric, we could poetically become naïve orators. [1999]

Young Italian poets. It's easy to imagine many theoretical disagreements, the most acute one regarding autobiographical ruins: the lack of bowing with which I take my leave of the daily scene whereas they prefer to pass with the whole burden of their days between the lines. Obviously, every poetical text has its own occasion, which is an attenuated form of causality, but—in my opinion—it simply isn't the case to celebrate this. [2003]

We have always heard talk badly about 'common places'. We suspect that banality is a decadence of thought. And it's curious that, while we feel a sense of horror for the common place, we are not equally afraid of the banality of daily life (how many of us are afraid of toothbrushes?). On my part, I believe that aesthetic experience is not something special but is, rather, a torment of common experience, and I can't imagine another adventure than the profundity of the obvious. We mistrust what—in being frequent—seems to us too illuminated: this is our mistake, because the obvious is taken in the

great dim light where—making unmaking itself—sense becomes inconstant. What we believed to be true, becomes doubtful, and for a disdained common place we can suffer at length. [1995]

My celibate instinct prevents me from adapting within the brevity of rules (I can't forget that premises often change into principles and that conclusions are too respectful of their premises). Aesthetic pleasure can only occur in the 'meeting', passing from detail to detail, like an attentive body. [1998]

The dedication—perhaps—is a question, perhaps an invocation. In whatever case, it's the only line that can't avoid to advance into the outside world, with certainty going towards Someone—whose reciprocity is nevertheless insecure—and in the meantime making the existence of at least one reader deducible. A reader who ought to be obliged to read (in wanting to requite). Of course, there are not a few ungrateful in the world—let's even say rude people. [2001]

A contemporary poet has neither to remember the history of poetry nor forget it, neither advance nor draw back. If he's convinced that in some way it's necessary to return, then his hope might be that of 'returning elsewhere'. [1980]

Sometimes I long for a plain poetry. Instead, I find myself immediately saying the complexity, and I'm not satisfied with it. I would like to say without claiming, I would like 'to show'. Inside the showing there is everything. [2008]

We feel ourselves as being descendants, arrived too late when things were already done. We are therefore resigned to interpreting what preceded us. And yet—in a certain sense—every adult finds himself in this condition. As Henry Corbin said, only the heirs are wise, «hommes de savoir et hommes de désir». Don't devalue tradition:

it's for us what 'old strength' is for fields, the fertility resulting from previous cultivations. [2003]

A young poet should take more care of his character than of his writing. He shouldn't be enchanted by the appeal of language, but trust in its asymptotic quality. A young poet should look inside things for words not his own. He should think *in* the perceiving. He should be inconstant, and stay away from facts, in so far as these are not hard to please. [1981]

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY HOWARD RODGER MACLEAN