

## *Gardens*

*after Rainer Maria Rilke*  
(*Sonnets to Orpheus* II, xxi)

My heart, sing of the gardens you'll never know,  
in the oceanic mind's bottles, safe from dangerous rocks—  
Isfahan, where fountains bloom, Shiraz, where roses flow.  
Sing of them with joy, in love with their life of paradox.

Prove, heart, that they reciprocate, that their figs swell  
for you, that you're intimate with every scented breeze  
that petitions from the east, across the farmyard's pigswill  
visibly carrying its promise of manure, its aim to please.

Play the tombak and the tar to tell us you don't believe  
you're missing something, choosing, like this, to *be*.  
Follow the silk thread of yourself in the glorious weave

of flesh, world, moon and star (even if your Book of Hours  
feels sometimes like a moment in pain's hagiography).  
Beneath each cloudless heaven grows the labyrinth of flowers.

## *La Peine Forte et Dure*

It's Christmas dawn.

Your golem, aglow like a poker,  
resolute, clanking, caped,

knows little of love,  
only enough to have stolen  
to your room while you slept

and slid into your shelves  
his diary in which  
a snowflake's pressed, and kept.

## *The Age of Salmon*

*for Peggy*

Your daughter, at four, forages along the Rhine  
in a dress pinched out like the corners of an apron,  
a bellied sail heavy with hazel nuts and rain.

Your son, at six, swims at the peak of the Thames,  
harkening to its tides, its tempers—shaman's drums.  
He feasts on salmon mash, with salmon-tasting thumbs.

Red squirrels gather nuts, raiding the dress's folds.  
In our golden days of glorious salmon yields  
the farmboys muckspread salmon in the fields.

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