

DELTA



Eugenio Montale

translated by Samuel Beckett

To thee
I have willed the life drained
in secret transfusions, the life chained
in a coil of restlessness, unaware, self-angry.

When time leans on his dykes
then thine
be his allconsciousness
and memory flower forth in a flame
from the dark sanctuary, and shine
more brightly, as now, the rain over, the dragon's-blood
on the walls and the green against the branches.

Of thee
I know nothing, only
the tidings sustaining my going,
and shall I find
thee shape or the fumes of a dream
drawing life
from the river's fever boiling darkly
against the tide

Of thee nothing in the grey hours and the hours
torn by a flame of sulphur,
only
the whistle of the tug
whose prow has ridden forth into the bright gulf.

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