

1997

Dialogue in a Cellar

Eugenius Ališanka

H. L. Hix

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ališanka, Eugenius and H. L. Hix. "Dialogue in a Cellar." *The Iowa Review* 27.2 (1997): 90-91. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4901>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

III

by lips of frost
I create your image:
in the hollow of vowels
air trembles,

limitless
blue january,
starless moonlit night
but feeling in the light

like burnished copper,
along the outline of the body
the clock's hand
stencils

the monogram of being

DIALOGUE IN A CELLAR

the river's mouth swells and floods cellars,
gravel, herbs smelling of iodine—
the bed of the sleeping traveler
wrapped in his sunny dream,

who cares about him, who cares about an amphora
recovered from the holds of a foundered ship
near dardanelle's straits,
a closed form in itself, not taking root
in the squares of rooms and the frames
of pictures? there are many aesthetics,
says the professor, and the strangest one
is under care of powers
that abhor us

I accept your challenge, replies the poet,
I am not handsome, my voice
is monotonous and colorless,
I am no troubadour
with a codpiece, a sword at my side,
but nevertheless I am loved

other times, the traveler says, taking leave,
we descend deep into underground vaults,
we write on damp walls words
we don't want to see
let's drink again and godspeed

TWO THOUSAND YEARS

surrounded by woods a burning city:
open gates through which
for two thousand years gray legions pass
every time I returned carrying you
every time spears of jealousy
would pierce the prey: the young Kshatriya warrior
with no right to eternal life

and indeed I would die before dawn
on the day of the funeral you would disappear
or change your voice: you would turn into Martha
or Mary or the pregnant suburban queen
only my ashes fertilizing the roots of your hair
tell of our bond