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The Abyss of Sound

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The Abyss of Sound

I

I peel the skin of sound,
Time not long. Love-filled sound
Knows the ear, steals it away,
Then shapes an ear for itself.

It listens to its own voice,
Shaking my whole body becomes an ear.
Death coils in the heart of sound;
Sound longs for its own ear.

II

Why is my temper so bright?
Do you see how the sun walks
Until day gathers its tail, sun-colored,
And hides in the night? O, me—
How bright-tempered, dizzily bright.

To choke the throat of high noon,
I walk to the sea of meals,
I walk to the sea of soup,
Carefully keeping daily bread,
Yet nothing else. Even then
Daily pleasure tempts me, nailing my wings down
With the hammer of feet
 the hammer of laughter
 the hammer of tears.
O, bright, bright-tempered me,
Dizzily bright.

Without fail they go up and down—
The steps of the clear air of noon.
All sound is lonely, as you well know.
Say that the blue eye of the sad wind
Watches the sound of the wind;

I am holding it in my hands,
Not knowing what to do with what I hold.

III

The form of a man goes away,
Leaving a body-shaped hole.
The form of a woman fades away
And a body-shaped hole remains
In the air cut by her body.
The air keeps these holes.
My senses are closed to the outside world.
The hole tempts me where sound made it
In the air—form fixed by sound,
The lonely mode of its being.

One walks down the steps, the darker
The better, as we must not forget.
Sound and its hole feel more sharp-edged
In the dark; hurt more than the sound
Of air unstained by this darkness.
(Where are they, the sound-owners;
Are they wrapped in love and tears?)

IV

I see a pile of stillness
Lying blood-smeared.
This stillness was once light itself,
Comrade of the sound.

I see a pile of stillness,
Still lying blood-smeared.
Words bite the tail of silence,
And it bites the tail of words,
Each an enemy, waiting its chance.

Translated by the author with F. R. Pitts