the keeper of sheep by alberto caeiro

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I

I never kept flocks,
But it's like I did keep them.
My soul is like a Shepard,
It knows the wind and the sun
And walks hand in hand with the Seasons
Following and looking.
All the peace of man less Nature
Comes to seat down by my side.
But I'm sad like a sunset
Befalling our imagination,
When the end of the plane grows cold
And you feel the entrance of the night
Like a butterfly through the window.
But my sadness is quiet
Because it's natural and just
It is what must be in the soul
When it thinks it exists
And the hands harvest flowers unbeknownst to her.
Like the sound of rattles
Beyond the curve of the road,
My thoughts are happy.
I'm only sorry I know they're happy,
Because, if I didn't know,
Instead of being happy and sad,
They'd be joyful and happy.
Thinking bothers like walking in the rain
When the wind grows and it looks like it rains more.
I don't have any ambitions or desires
Being a poet is not an ambition of mine
It's just my way of being alone.
And if I desire sometimes
Imagining, to be a little lamb
(Or the entire flock
So I can be spread across the slope
Being a lot of a happy thing at once),
It's only because I feel what I write at sunset,
Or when a cloud hovers its hand over the light
Or a silence runs away through the grass.
When I seat down writing verses
Or, strolling through the roads and shortcuts,
I write verses in the paper only in my mind,
I feel a staff in my hands
And see an outline of myself
High on a hill,
Looking down at my flock and seeing my ideas,
Or looking at my ideas and seeing my flock,
And vaguely smiling, not understanding what is said
Just pretending to understand.
I salute all those that read me,
Taking of my broad hat
When they see me at the door
The moment the stagecoach rises over the hill.
I salute them and wish them sun,
And rain, when rain is needed,
And may their houses have
By an open window
A favorite chair
Were they seat, reading my verses.

And by reading them they think
That I am something natural
For example, the ancient tree
In whish shadow as children
They seated with a thump, tired of playing,
And cleaned the sweat from the hot forehead
With the sleeve of the striped pinafore.

II

My look is as clear as a sunflower.
I usually wander the roads
Looking to the right and to the left,
And once in a while looking back...
And what I see at each moment
Is what I've never seen before,
And I know it very well...
I know how to have the initial awe
Which a child would have if, being born,
Would notice truly it was born...
I feel born at every moment
To the eternal novelty of the world...
I believe in the world as I do in a sunflower,
Because I see it. But I don't think about it
Because thinking is not understanding...
The World was not made for us to think about it
(Thinking is being eye sick)
But for us to look at him and agree...
I don't have a philosophy: I have senses...
If I speak about Nature it's not because I know what it is,
But because I love it, and I love it because of this,
Because the one who loves never knows what he loves
Neither does he know why he loves, or what loving is...
Loving is the eternal innocence,
And the only innocence is not thinking...

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III

By dawn, leaning over the window,
And knowing sideways that there are fields ahead,
I read, until my eyes burn,
Cesário Verde's Book
I feel so sorry for him! He was a countryman
That wandered a prisoner, free in the city.
But the way he looked at the houses,
And the way he noticed the streets,
Or would see things,
Was like someone looking at trees.
Like someone lowering their eyes by the road he walks by
And is busy seeing the flowers in the fields...
That's why he had that big sadness about him
That he never quite acknowledged,
But he roamed the city as he roamed the fields
And sad like crushing flowers in books
And putting plants in jars...

IV

This afternoon the thunderstorm fell
Down the sky's hills down
Like a huge rock...
As if someone, from a window up high
Shakes a table cloth,
And the crumbs, falling all together,
Make some noise as they fall,
The rain fell from the sky
And blackened the paths...
When the lightnings shook the air
And shacked space
Like a big head saying no,
I don't know why – I wasn't afraid –
I started praying to Saint Bárbara
Like I was someone's old aunt...
Ah! praying to Saint Bárbara
I felt even simpler
Then I think I am...
When the lightnings shook the air
I felt familiar and homely
And having spent life
In peace, like the backyards wall;
Having ideas and feelings for having them
Like a flower has perfume and color...
I felt like someone that could believe in Saint Bárbara...
Ah, to be able to believe in Saint Bárbara!
(Whoever believes that there is a Saint Bárbara,
Thinks that she is like us and visible
Or if not, what do they think she is?)
(What an artifice! What do
The flowers, the trees, the flocks,
Know of Saint Bárbara?... A tree branch,
If it could think, would never be able
To construct saints and or angels...
It might think that the sun
Is God, and that the thunderstorm
Is a quantity of people
Mad above us...
There, how the most simple of men
Are sick and confused and stupid
Next to the clear simplicity
And the health of existing
Of the trees and plants!)
And me, thinking about all this,
Again am less happy...
I became somber and sickening and grim
Like a day that threatens with a storm all day long
And nothing ever comes not even at night...

V

There's metaphysics enough in not thinking about anything.
What do I think about the world?
I don't know what I think about the world!
If I became sick I would think about it.
What do I make of things?

What is my opinion of causes and effects?
What have I meditated in regards to God and the soul
And about the creation of the world?
I don't know. For me, thinking about it is closing my eyes
And not think. Drawing the shades
Of my window (that has no shades).
The mystery of things? I don't know what a mystery is!
The only mystery is having people who think about it.
Whoever is in the sun and closes his eyes,
Begins ignoring what the sun is
And thinking many things filled with heat.
But opens his eyes and sees the sun,
And cannot think about anything,
Because the sunlight is worth more than the thoughts
Of all philosophers and poets.
The sunlight doesn't know what it does
And because of that it doesn't make mistakes and is common and good.
Metaphysics? What metaphysics do those trees have?
The one that makes them green and bodied with branches
Giving fruit when its time, which doesn't makes us think,
Us, that don't know they're there.
But what better metaphysics that the one they have,
Which is not knowing for what they live
Nor knowing that they do not know it?
"Intimate constitution of things"...
"Intimate meaning of the Universe"...
All this is false, all of this doesn't mean anything.
It's incredible that we can think about these things.
It's like thinking about reasons and ends
When the morning rises, and on the side of the trees
A vague and lustrous gold loses itself to the darkness.
Thinking about the intimate meaning of things
Is added, like thinking about health
Or taking a glass to the water of springs.
The only intimate meaning of things
Is that they don't have any intimate meaning.
I don't believe in God because I never saw him.
If he wanted me to believe in him,
I have no doubt he would come talk to me
And would walk through my door
Telling me, Here I am!
(This is maybe ridiculous to the ears
Of someone, for not knowing what it is looking at things,
Does not understand one who talks about them
With the way of talking that noticing them teaches.)
But if God is the flowers and the trees
And the hills and the sun and the moonlight,
Then I believe in him,
Then I believe him all the time,
And my life is all of it but a prayer and a mass,
And a communion with the eyes and by the ears.
But if God is the trees and the flowers
And the hills and the moonlight and the sun,
Why do I call it God?
I call it flowers and trees and hills and sun and moonlight;
Because, if he made himself, for me to see him
Sun and moonlight and flowers and hills,
If he appears to me as being trees and hills
And moonlight and sun and flowers,
It's because he wants me to know him

As trees and hills and flowers and moonlight and sun.
And for that I obey him,
(What do I know more about God than God itself?),
I obey him by living, spontaneously,
Like someone who opens its eyes and sees,
And I call it moonlight and sun and flowers and trees and hills,
And I love him without thinking about him,
And think about him by seeing him and hearing him,
And I walk with him all the time.

VI

Thinking about God is disobeying God,
Because God wanted us not to know him,
And for that has not shown itself...
Let us be simples and calm,
Like the streams and the trees,
And Good will love us making us
Beautiful like the trees and the streams,
And give us greenness in its spring,
And a river to end our lives at when we're done!...

VII

From my village I can see how much is possible to see of the Universe from earth...
Because of this my village is as big as any other land
Because I am the same size of what I see
And not the size of my height...
In cities life is smaller
Than here in my house up on this hill.
In the city big houses lock in our view,
Hiding the horizon, pushing our look far away from all that is sky,
Making us small because they take away what our eyes can give us,
And making us poorer because our only richness is seeing.

VIII

At a noon of an ending spring
I had a dream like a photograph.
I saw Jesus Christ coming down to earth.
He came by the hillside of a mountain
Again becoming a child,
Running and rolling in the grass
And tearing flowers only to throw them away
And laughing so he could be heard from afar.
He had escaped from heaven.
He was too much our own to pretend
He was the second person of the Trinity.
In heaven everything was fake, all in disaccord
With flowers and trees and stones.
In the sky he had to be serious all the time
And once in a while become man again
And climb up to the cross, and die over and over again
With a crown of thorns all around
And the feet pierced by a mail with a head,
And even with a rag across his waist
Like the drawing of blacks.

They wouldn't even let him have a father and mother
Like the other children.
His father was two people...
And old man called Joseph, which was a carpenter,
And not his real father;
And the pother father a dumb dove,
The only ugly dove in the world
Because it was not of the world and not even a dove.
And his mother had not loved anyone before having him.
She wasn't a woman: just a suitcase
In which he had come from the sky.
And they wanted him, that only had a mother,
And never had a father to love and respect,
To preach kindness and justice!
One day that God was sleeping
And the Holy Ghost was flying around,
He went to the box of miracles and stole three.
With the first he made it so no one knew he had escaped.
With the second he made himself eternally human and a boy.
With the third one he created a Christ eternally on the cross
And left him hanging in the cross there is in heaven
And is used as a template for all the others.
Then he ran away to the sun
And came down using the first ray of light that he caught.
Today he lives in my village with me.
He's a pretty smiling and natural child.
He cleans his nose to the right arm,
Jumps on water puddles,
Picks up flowers and likes them and forgets them.
He throws rocks to donkeys,
Steals fruit from orchards
And runs away crying and screaming at the dogs.
And, because he know that they don't like it
And that everyone finds it funny,
He runs after the girls
That go in tandem by the roads
With water jars on their heads
Lifting their skirts.
He taught me everything.
He taught me how to look at things.
He points at all the things in the flowers.
Shows me how the rocks are funny
When you hold them in your hand
And look very slowly at them.
He talks very badly about God.
Says he's an old stupid and sick man,
Always spitting on the ground
And cursing.
The virgin mary spends her afternoons knitting.
And the holy ghost scracthes himself with his beak
Getting on chairs and and soiling them.
Everyting in heaven is stupid just like the Catholic Church.
He tells me that God doesn't know anything
About the things he created –
«If indeed he created them, which I doubt» -
«He says, for instance, that being sing his glory
But beings don't sing anything.
If they did they'd be singers.
Beings are, nothing else,
And that's why they're called beings.»

And then, tired of badmouthing God,
The Baby Jesus falls asleep in my arms
And I carry him home.
He lives with me in my house in the middle of the hill.
He's the Eternal Child, the missing god.
He's the natural human,
The divine that smiles and plays.
And that is why I know with all certainty
That he is the true Baby Jesus.
And the child so humane that is divine.
This is my everyday life as a poet,
And because he always follows me around I am forever a poet,
And my slightest glimpse
Fills me with sensation,
And the smallest sound, whatever it is,
Seems like it is talking to me.
The New Child that inhabits where I live
Gifts me a hand
And the other to all that exists
And so we go, the three of us, by whichever road,
Jumping and singing and laughing
And enjoying our common secret
Which is to know that all over
There is no mystery in the world
And that all is worth it.
The Eternal Child is always with me.
The way he looks is my finger pointing.
My earing joyfully aware to all the sounds
Are the tickles he gives me, playing, in my ears.
We get along so well with one another
In the company of one another
That we never think of each other,
But live together as two
With an intimate accord
Like the right hand with the left.
By nightfall we play five rocks
In the doorstep of our house,
Serious as it bestows a god and a poet,
As if each pebble
Was an entire universe
And a great danger would come to it
If it dropped to the ground.
Then I tell him stories of men's things
And he smiles, because everything is incredible.
He laughs at kings and those who are not kings,
And feels sorry hearing about wars,
Of trade, and ships,
That were nothing more than smoke in the high seas air.
Because he knows that all this lacks that truth
Found in a blossoming flower
That wanders with the sunlight
Changing from hills to valleys
And making the eyes hurt at the walls painted bright white.
Then he falls asleep and I lay him down.
I carry him inside the house
And lay him down, undressing him slowly
As if following a most clean ritual
And all maternal until he's naked.
He sleeps inside my soul
And sometimes wakes up at night

And plays in my dreams.
He turns some upside down,
Puts ones on top of others
And claps alone
Smiling into my slumber.
When I die, my little son,
Let me be the child, the smallest one.
Take me in
And bring me inside your house.
Undress my tired and human being
And lay me down in your bed.
And tell me stories, if I wake up,
So I can fall asleep again.
And give me dreams of yours for me to play with
Until some day is born
One that you know of.
This is the story of my Baby Jesus.
Is there any valid reason
Why this shouldn't be truer
Than anything thought up by philosophers
And all the teachings of religions?

IX

I am a keeper of sheep.
The flock are my thoughts
And all of my thoughts are sensations.
I think with the eyes and with the ears
And with the hands and the feet
And with the nose and the mouth.
To think of a flower is to see it and smell it
And to eat a fruit is to know what it means.
For this, when in a hot day
I feel sad of enjoying it so,
And I lay down stretching in the grass,
And I close my warm eyes,
I feel all my body laying down in reality,
I know the truth and I'm happy.

X

«Hello, keeper of sheep,
There at the side of the road,
What does the passing wind say to you? »
«That it is wind, and that it passes,
And that it has already passed before
And that it will pass after.
And to you what does it say? »
«Much more than that.
It tells me of many other things.
Of memories and being homesick
And of things that never were.»
«You never heard the wind pass by.
The wind only talks about wind.
What you heard from him was a lie,
And the lie is within you. »

XI

That woman has a piano
That is pleasant but not the course of streams
Nor the gentle rumble that trees make...
What do you need a piano for?
The best thing is to have ears
And love Nature.

XII

Virgil's shepherds played pastoral songs and other things
And sang literally about love.
(Then – I never read Virgil.
Why should I have read him?)
But Virgil's shepherds, poor souls, are Virgil,
And Nature is beautiful and old.

XIII

Light, light, very light,
A wind lightly passes,
And goes, ever light.
And I don't know what I think
Nor do I want to.

XIV

I don't care about rhymes. Few times
Two trees are alike, one beside the other,
I think and I write like the flowers have color
But less perfectly as I express myself
Because I lack the divine simplicity
Of being whole with my exterior.
I look and I am moved,
Moved as the water runs when the ground is tilted,
And my poetry is natural as when the wind rises...

XV

The four songs that follow
Are apart from all I think about,
They lie to all I feel,
Are of the opposite of who I am...
I wrote them being sick
And for that they are natural
And agree with what I feel,
They agree with which they do not...
Being hill I must think in reverse
Of what I think of being well.
(Otherwise I wouldn't be sick)
I must feel the opposite of what I feel
When I am myself in health,
I must lie to my nature
Of a creature that feels a certain way...
I must be all sick – ideas and all.

When I'm sick, I'm not sick for something else.
So those songs that betray me
Cannot truly betray me
And are but scenery of my soul at night,
The same in reverse...

XVI

I wish my life was an oxcart
Squeaking along, early morning, down the road,
Coming from where he'll go back to
Almost at night by the same road.
I wouldn't need hopes – only wheels...
My old age wouldn't have wrinkles or white hair...
When I was no longer useful, my wheels would be taken off
And I would remain turned on my side and broken in a bottom of a trench.

XVII

What a mixture of Nature on my plate!
My sisters the plants,
My fountain companions, the saints
To whom nobody prays to...
And they cut them and they come to our table
And in the hotels the loud guests,
That arrive with strapped blankets
Carelessly ask for «Salad»...
Without thinking that they demand of Mother-Earth,
Her freshness and her first born sons,
The first green words she has,
The first living and bright
Things seen by Noah
When the waters receded and the top of the hills
Green and drenched surged
And in the air where the dove appeared
The rainbow did begin to fain...

XVIII

I wish I was but road dirt
And that the feet of the poor trampled upon me...
I wish I was the rivers running
And that women washing clothes were by me...
I wish I were poplars by the riverside
And only had the sky above and the water bellow...
I wish I was a miller's donkey
And that he hit me and care for me...
Rather than going through life
Looking back and feeling sorrow...

XIX

When the moonlight hits the grass
I don't know what it reminds me of...
The memory of the old maid's voice
Telling me fairy tales.

And how Our Lady dressed in rags
Would walk the roads at night
Helping mistreated children…
If I can't believe that's true anymore,
Why does the moonlight still hit the grass?

XX

The Tagus is more beautiful than the river that runs by my village,
But the Tagus is not more beautiful than the river that runs by my village
Because the Tagus is not the river than runs by my village.
The Tagus has huge boats
And in it sails still,
For those who see in everything what's not there,
The memory of the ancient ships.
The Tagus runs down from Spain
And the Tagus enters the sea in Portugal.
All know this.
But few know what is the river in my village
And where he goes to
And where it comes from.
And for that, because it belongs to fewer people,
My village's river is freer and bigger
By the Tagus you go to the World.
Beyond the Tagus there's America
And the fortune of those who found it.
Nobody ever thought about what is beyond
My village's river.
The river in my village does not move thought.
Who's beside it is just beside it.

XXI

If I could bite the whole earth
And feel its flavor,
I would be happy for a moment….
But I don't want to be happy all the time.
You have to be unhappy once in a while
In order to be natural…
Not all are sunny days,
And the rain, when it lacks, is wished upon.
For this reason I take misery with happiness
Naturally, as someone that doesn't find it strange
That there are mountains and plains
Rocks and grass…
What is needed is to be natural and calm
In happiness or sorrow,
To feel as you watch,
To think as you walk,
And when you go to die, to remember that the day dies,
And that the sunset is beautiful as the night that remains…
So it is and so be it…

XXII

Like someone that in a summer day opens the front door
And looks out into the heat of the fields with all his face,

Sometimes, all of the sudden, Nature hits me head on
On my senses' face,
And I remain confused, disturbed, wanting to understand
Not sure what or why…
But who told me to try and understand?
Who told me I would?
When the summer goes by my face
The light and warm hand of its breeze,
I must only feel pleased that it is a breeze
Or feel displeased that it is warm,
And no matter the way I feel it,
Like this, because this is the way I feel it, is my duty to feel it…

XXIII

My gaze is blue as the sky
And calm as sun bathed water.
It is so, blue and calm,
Because it's never questioning or amazed…
If I wondered and amazed myself
No new flowers would spring in the meadows
Nor would I change anything in the sun to make it more beautiful.
(Even if new flowers did spring up in the meadow
And the sun changed to be more beautiful,
I would sense less flowers in the meadow
And find the sun less beautiful…
Because everything is as it is and how it should be,
And I accept it, and am not even thankful for it.
So it doesn't seem like I thing about it…)

XXIV

What we see of things are things themselves.
Why should we see one thing if another existed?
Why would seeing and hearing illusions
If seeing and listening are seeing and listening?
The essential thing is to be able to see,
To know how to see without thought,
To know how to see when we're seeing,
And not even think about it
Nor see when we think.
But that (poor us that display our clothed soul!),
That demands profound learning,
A learning of how to unlearn
And a sequestering of freedom from that convent
In which the poets say that the stars are eternal nuns
And the flowers convict one-day penitents,
But where, at the end, the stars are nothing but stars
And the flowers but flowers,
Being that the reason we call them stars and flowers.

XXV

The soap bubbles that this child
Entertains herself with dropping them from a straw
Are translucently a whole philosophy.
Clear, useless and fleeting like Nature,

Friends of the eyes like things,
They are what they are
With a round and aerial precision,
And no one, not even the child that leaves them,
Pretends they are more that they appear to be.
Some barely visible in the lucid air.
They are like the breeze that flows by and hardly touches the flowers
And from which we only know that it passes
Because something lightens in us
And accepts everything more distinctly.

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XXVI

Sometimes, in perfectly and exact lit days,
In which things have all the reality they can have,
I ask myself slowly
Why do I even attribute
Beauty to things.
Dows a flower by chance have beauty?
Does per chance beauty possess a fruit?
No: they have color and shape
And existence only.
Beauty is the name of something that does not exist
And that I give to things in exchange for how they please me.
It doesn't mean anything.
So, why do I say of things: are they beautiful?
Yes, even to me, living only of living
Invisible, to me they come, the lies of men
In the face of things,
On the face of things that simply are.
How difficult it is to be one self and not see beyond the visible!

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XXVII

Only Nature is divine, and she's not divine...
If I speak of her as a being
It is only because I need to use human language to speak of her
For it gives personality to things,
And puts names into things
But things don't have name or personality:
They exist, and the sky is big and the earth wide,
And our heart the size of a closed fist...
Blessed am I for all that I know.
I enjoy this as one who knows there is a sun.

XXVIII

I read to day almost two pages
Of the book from a mystic poet,
And I laughed like someone who has cried a lot.
Mystic poets are sick philosophers,
And philosophers are mad men.
Because mystic poets say that flowers feel things

And they say that rocks have a soul
And that rivers moonlight ecstasies.
But flowers, if they felt anything, wouldn't be flowers,
They would be people;
And if rocks had a soul, they would be living things, not rocks;
And if rivers had moonlight ecstasies,
River would be sick men.
Only if you don't know what flowers and rocks and rivers are
Can you talk about their feelings.
To talk about the soul of rocks, and flowers, and rivers,
Is to talk about ourselves and our fake thoughts.
Thank god rocks are only rocks,
And that rivers are but rivers,
And flower nothing more than flowers.
I, myself, write the prose of my verses
And I'm happy
Because I know I understand Nature from the outsider;
And don't understand it from the inside
Because Nature has no inside;
Or it would not be Nature.

XXIX

I'm not always the same in what I say and write.
I change, but not much.
The color of flowers is not the same bathed by sunlight
Or when a cloud passes by
Or when the night enters
And the flowers turn into the color of shade.
But whoever looks straight can see that the flowers are the same.
So when I don't seem to agree with myself,
Notice me straight on:
If I was turned right,
Now I turned left,
But I'm always myself, grounded in the same feet –
Always the same, thank the heaven and earth
And my watchful eyes and ears
And my clear simple soul...

XXX

If you want me to have a mysticism, alright, I have it.
I'm a mystic, but only with the body.
My soul is simple and doesn't think.
My mysticism is not wanting to know.
It is to live and not think about it.
I don't know what Nature is: I sing it.
I live atop a hill
In a alone white painted house,
And that is what I think of it.

XXXI

If I sometimes say that flowers smile
And if I say that rivers sing,
It's not because I think there's smiles in flowers
Or singing in rivers running...

It's because this way I can better make fake men feel
The truly real existence of flowers and rivers.
Because I write in order for them to read me I sometimes sacrifice myself
To their stupidity of senses…
I don't agree with myself but I absolve myself,
Because I am only that serious thing, an interpret of Nature,
Because there are men that do not understand its language,
For there is no language at all.

XXXII

Yesterday afternoon a city men
Talked at the Inn's doorstep.
He talked to me also.
Talked about justice and the fight for justice
And of suffering workmen,
And of constant work, also of those who are hungry
And of the wealthy, who turn their backs to it.
And, looking at me, he saw tears in my eyes
And smiled pleased, under the impression that I felt
The hatred that he felt inside, and the compassion
That he said he felt.
(But I was barely listening to him.
What do I care about men
And what they suffering is or is supposed to be?
Be like me – you will not suffer.
All the evil in the world comes from caring, for one another,
Whether to do good, or evil.
Our soul and sky and the earth if enough for us.
To want more is to lose this, and be unhappy.)
What I was thinking about
When the friend of people spoke
(And that moved me to tears),
Was on how the far away murmur of rattles
To that sunset
Didn't sound like the bells of a small chapel
Allowing that flowers and streams go to church
And simple souls such as mine.
(Praised be God that I am not good,
And that I have in me the natural selfishness of flowers
And of rivers that stay in their path
Worrided without knowing it
Only with the blossoming and running along.
That is the only mission in the World,
That one – to exist clearly,
And to know how to do it without thought.)
And the man had become silent, looking at the dying sun.
But what does the dying sun care about whoever hates or loves it?

XXXIII

Poor flowers in the flowerpots of proportionate gardens.
They look like they fear the police…
But ever good so they flourish all the same
And have the same ancient smile
That they had to the First look of the first man
That saw then risen up and touched them ever so slightly
To see if they would speak…

XXXIV

I feel it's so natural not to think
That I laugh sometimes, alone,
Not sure of what, but it's of something
That has to do with there being people thinking...
What does my wall think about my shadow?
I ask myself this until I end up watching myself
Asking things...
And then I displease myself, and get bothered
As if I suddenly gained a dormant foot...
What does this think of that?
Nothing thinks about anything.
Has the earth consciousness of the rocks and plants it possesses?
If it does, so be it...
What do I care about that?
If I was to think about those things,
I would no longer see the trees and the plants
And I would cease to see the Earth,
Left only with my thoughts...
I would grow sad and left in the dark.
And now, without thinking I have the Earth and the Sky.

XXXV

The moonlight through the high branches,
All the poets say that it is more
Than the moonlight through the high branches.
But for me, as I do not know what I think,
What the moonlight through the high branches
Is, beyond being
The moonlight through the high branches,
Is being nothing more than
The moonlight through the high branches.

XXXVI

And there are poets that are artists
That work in their verses
Like a carpenter works on boards!...
How sad not to know how to flourish!
Having to put verse on verse, as if building a wall
And see if it's ok, and take something of if it's not!...
When the only artistic house is the whole Earth
That varies and is always good and is always the same.
I think about this, not as someone who thinks, but as someone who breaths,
And I look at flowers and smile...
I don't know if they understand me
Or even if I understand them,
But I know that the truth is in them and in me
And in our common divinity
Of letting ourselves go and live by the Earth
And carry on our laps through the happy seasons
And letting the wind sing us to sleep
So we don't have dreams in our slumber.

XXXVII

Like a big blot of dark fire
The setting sun lingers in the clouds that remain.
A sliver comes from afar in the calm afternoon.
It must be from a faraway train.
Right now a subtle nostalgia comes to me
And a vague placid desire
That comes to and disappears.
Sometimes, by the margin of streams,
Bubbles are formed in the water
That are born and then disassembled
And they don't have any meaning at all
Other than being water bubbles
That are born and then disassembled.

XXXVIII

Blessed be the same sun of other lands
That makes my brothers all the men
Because all the men, at any given moment in the day, look at it as I do,
And in that pure moment
All clean and sensitive
Come back teary eyed.
And with a sigh that they barely feel
To the true and primitive man
That saw the Sun rising and did not worship it yet.
Because this is natural – more natural
Than worshiping gold and God
And art and morals...

XXXIX

The mystery of things, where is it?
Where is it that it doesn't show itself
At least showing us that it is mystery?
What does the river know of this and what does the tree?
And I, that are no more than them, what do I know of this?
Every time I look at things and think about what men think of them,
I laugh as a stream that sounds fresh in a rock.
Because the only hidden meaning of things
Is that they don't have any hidden meaning,
It is stranger than all that is strange
And all the dreams of all the poets
And the thoughts of all the philosophers,
That things are really what they appear to be
And that there is nothing to understand.
Yes, this is what my senses learned by themselves:
Things have no meaning: they exist.
Things are the only hidden meaning of things.

XL

A butterfly goes by me
And for the first time in the Universe I notice
That the butterflies have no color or motion,

Just like the flowers have no perfume or color.
Its color that has color in the butterflies' wings.
In the motion of the butterfly it is the motion that moves,
It's the perfume that has perfume in the flower's perfume.
The butterfly is just a butterfly
And the flower is just a flower.

07.05.1914

XLI

Sometimes, in the end of the summer days,
Even when there is no breeze, it seems like
It passes by, in a moment, a slight breeze…
But the trees remain still
In all the leafs of their leafs
And our senses had an illusion,
The illusion of what they would like…
Ah, the senses, the sick ones that see and listen!
If we were as we should be
There wouldn't be in us a need for illusion…
We would just feel with clarity and life
And wouldn't even notice what the senses are for…
But thank God there is imperfection in the World
Because imperfection is a thing,
And there being people that errs is original,
And being sick people makes the World fun.
If there was no imperfection, there would be one less thing,
And many things must exist
In order for us to see and listen…

07.05.1914

XLII

The stagecoach passed by the road, and is gone;
And the road didn't get more beautiful, or uglier.
So is the human action the world over.
We take nothing or putting anything back; we just pass and forget;
And the sun is on time every day.

07.05.1914

XLIII

Rather the flight of the bird, that passes without a trace,
That the passage of the animal, that stays remembered in the floor.
The bird passes and forgets, and so it should be.
The animal, where he is no more and for that of no use,
Shows that he has been, which is useless.
A memory is a betrayal to Nature,
Because yesterday's Nature is not Nature.
What has been is nothing, and remembering is not seeing.
Pass, bird, pass, and teach me to pass!

07.05.1914

XLIV

I wake up suddenly at night,
And my watch takes all the night.
I don't feel the Nature outside.
My room is a dark thing with vaguely white walls.
Outside there's a quietness like nothing exists.
Only the watch carries on with its noise.
And this little thing of gears which lays on my table
Muffles all the existence of the earth and the sky...
I almost lose myself thinking about what this means,
But I freeze, and feel myself smiling in the night with the corners of my mouth
Because the only thing my watch symbolizes or means
Filling with its tininess the enormous night
It's the curious sensation of feeling the enormous night
With its tininess...

07.05.1914

XLV

A tier of trees far away, beyond the slope.
But what's a tier of trees? There are only trees.
Tier and the plural trees are not things, they are names.
Poor human souls, that put everything in order,
That draw lines from thing to thing,
That put absolutely real signs with names in trees,
And draw parallels of latitude and longitude
Above the earth itself more innocent and green and flourished than this!

07.05.1914

XLVI

This way or that way,
Whatever is the case,
Sometimes saying what I think,
And other times saying it badly and mixed,
I write my verses without knowing it,
As if writing was not a thing made of gestures,
As if writing was a thing that happens to me
Like being it from the sun outside.
I try to say what I think
Without thinking that I feel it.
I try to lean the words to the idea
And not need a corridor
From thought to words.
I can't always feel what I know I should feel.
Only very slowly does my thought cross the river swimming
Because the suit that men made him wear weights him down.
I try to undress myself from what I learned,
I try to forget myself from the way of remembering I was taught,
And scrape the paint with which my senses were painted,
To unbox my true emotions,
Unbox myself and be me, not Alberto Caeiro,
But a human animal produced by Nature.
And so I write, wanting to feel Nature, not even as a man.

But as someone who feels Nature, and nothing else.
And so I write, good, bad,
Sometimes getting it right with what I want to say, sometimes wrong,
Falling down here, getting up over there,
But always traveling my path like a stubborn blind man.
Even after all of this, I am someone.
I am the Discoverer of Nature.
I am the Argonaut of true sensations.
I bring a new Universe to the Universe.
Because I bring the Universe to itself.
I feel this and I write this
Knowing perfectly and without not knowing that I don't see
That it is five o'clock in the morning
And that the sun that has yet to show is head
Over the wall of the horizon,
Although the tip of its fingers are already visible
Grabbing the top of the wall
From the horizon filled with low hills.

10.05.1914

XLVII

Num dia excessivamente nítido,
Dia em que dava a vontade de ter trabalhado muito
Para nele não trabalhar nada,
Entrevi, como uma estrada por entre as árvores,
O que talvez seja o Grande Segredo,
Aquele Grande Mistério de que os poetas falsos falam.
Vi que não há Natureza,
Que Natureza não existe,
Que há montes, vales, planícies,
Que há árvores, flores, ervas,
Que há rios e pedras,
Mas que não há um todo a que isso pertença,
Que um conjunto real e verdadeiro
É uma doença das nossas ideias.
A Natureza é partes sem um todo.
Isto é talvez o tal mistério de que falam.
Foi isto o que sem pensar nem parar,
Acertei que devia ser a verdade
Que todos andam a achar e que não acham,
E que só eu, porque a não fui achar, achei.

XLVIII

From the highest window of my house
With a white handkerchief I wave goodbye
To my verses that go depart to humanity.
And I'm not joyful or sad.
That is the destiny of verses.
I wrote them and should show them to all
Because I can't do the opposite
Like the flower cannot hide its color,
Nor the river hide that it runs,
Nor the tree hide that it bears fruit.
There they are riding far in the stagecoach
And I, unwittingly, feel pitty

Like a pain in the body.
Who knows who will read them?
Who knows which hands they will find?
Flower, my destiny reaped me to the eyes.
Tree, the fruits tore me to the mouths.
River, the destiny of my water was to not be in me.
I submit myself and feel almost joyous,
Almost glad as someone who is tired of being sad.
Go, go from me!
The tree passes by and stays dispersed in Nature.
The flower dwindles and their dust lasts forever.
The river runs and enters the sea and its water was always his.
I pass and stay, like the Universe.

XLIX

I go inside, and close the window.
The lamp is brought with the good nights,
And my happy voice gives good nights.
I wish my life will always be this:
The sun filled day, or soft from rain,
Or stormy as if the World would end,
The soft afternoon and the ranches that go by
Looked upon with interested from the window,
The last friendly look given to the quietness of trees,
And then, having closed the window, the light lamp,
Without reading anything, or thinking about anything, or sleeping,
Feeling the life run by me like a river in its bed,
And outside a great silence like a god that sleeps.