

Classic Poetry Series

Paul Eluard
- poems -

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Paul Eluard(14 December 1895 – 18 November 1952)

Paul Éluard, pseudonym of Eugène Grindel (born Dec. 14, 1895, Saint-Denis, Paris, Fr.—died Nov. 18, 1952, Charenton-le-Pont), French poet, one of the founders of the Surrealist movement with Louis Aragon and André Breton among others and one of the important lyrical poets of the 20th century.

Éluard rejected later Surrealism and joined the French Communist Party. Many of his works reflect the major events of the century, such as the World Wars, the Resistance against the Nazis, and the political and social ideals of the 20th-century.

I was born to know you

To give you your name

Freedom.

(in *Poésie et Vérité*, 1942)

Paul Éluard came from a lower-middle-class background. He was born Eugène Émile Paul Grindel in Saint-Denis, Paris, the son of a bookkeeper, whose wife helped out with the household bills by dressmaking. Éluard became interested in poetry in his youth in Clavadel, a Swiss sanatorium, where he was sent for treatment of tuberculosis. When he returned to France, he joined the army and was badly injured by gas. His first noteworthy volume of poetry was *Le Devoir et l'Inquiétude* (1917).

During a leave from the service in 1917, Éluard married a Russian woman, Helena Diakonova, known as Gala, whom he had met in Clavadel. Gala inspired several of Éluard's poems published in *Capitale de la douleur* (1926, *Capital of Pain*), which established his reputation as a poet. It includes some of his most famous love poems, such as 'L'Amoureuse' (Woman in Love) and 'La Courbe de tes yeux' (The Curve of Your Eyes). Later its poems punctuated Jean-Luc Godard's film *Alphaville* (1965), in which the existential secret agent, Lemmy Caution, battles with a copy of this "codebook" against a totalitarian regime run by a computer Alpha 60. Poetry is the key to love and freedom. Éluard had compiled the book during the period, when Gala had a liaison with the artist Max Ernst. Godard chose the work partly because its title stood for the technocratic *Alphaville* itself.

Like André Breton, Aragon, Péret, Soupault and other intellectuals, Éluard emerged from the war disgusted with commonly accepted values of the bourgeois society. He was briefly involved with the Dada movement, which declined in the 1920s as many of its proponents joined the Surrealists. Éluard's early statement in verse of surrealist theories was *Les Nécessités de la vie et les conséquences des rêves* (1921). With the painter Max Ernst, who had moved to Paris in 1922, Éluard worked on a cycle entitled *Les Malheurs des Immortels*, a series of pictures made of scraps of illustrations cut out from old books.

In 1924 Éluard disappeared mysteriously. Rumours of his death were widely circulated and finally accepted as true. After seven months he surfaced and explained that he had been on a journey from Marseilles to Tahiti, Indonesia, and Ceylon. This absence from the Parisian scene was later connected with the loss of his wife Gala to the surrealist artist Salvador Dali, although their relationship started much later. Between 1921 and 1924 Gala had an affair with Max Ernst. He painted several portraits of her. Louise Straus, whom Ernst had married in 1918, described Gala as "that Russian female... that slithering, glittering creature with dark falling hair, vaguely oriental and luminant black eyes and small delicate bones, who had to remind one of a panther." Legally Éluard and Gala were divorced in 1932. They had one daughter, Cécile.

Freud's theory of the unconscious influenced deeply avant-garde writers; especially the technique of automatic writing was experimented as a method to liberate subconscious from the straitjacket of reason. However, Éluard practiced automatic writing very little, but it was one of Breton's favorite subjects. From 1924 to 1938 Éluard was a central member of the surrealist group. In 1933 he was expelled from the Communist Party partly due to an article published in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, in which Ferdinand Alquié denounced "the wind of cretinization blowing from the U S S R".

Éluard cooperated in 1930 with Breton in *L'Immaculate conception*, a series of poems in prose, in which they entered into communication with the vegetative life of the foetus and simulated demented states. "Of all the ways the sunflower has of loving the light, regret is the loveliest on the sundial. Crossbones, crosswords, volumes and volumes of ignorance and knowledge. The doe, between bounds, likes to look at me. I keep her company in the glade. I fall slowly from the heights, as yet I weigh only what minus a hundred thousand yards will weigh..."

Éluard married in 1934 Maria Benz (1906-1946), known as Nusch; earlier she had been a hypnotist's stooge in a circus and a small-time actress and model. Nusch did not only inspire some of Éluard's most tender love poems, but she was

also a muse and model for the photographer Man Ray and Pablo Picasso, and for a time, she was the artist's mistress. Soon after the marriage, Éluard published with Man Ray a slim volume entitled *Facile* (1935). Nusch participated in the creation of the book, which included Éluard's love lyrics and eleven photographs of Nusch's body. When Nicole Boulestreau wrote an article on the book, she coined the term *photopoème*: "In the photopoem, meaning progresses in accordance with the reciprocity of writing and figures: reading becomes interwoven through alternating restitchings of the signifier into text and image." (*Le Photopoème Facile: Un Nouveau Livre dans les années 30, Le Livre surréaliste: Mélusine IV*, 1982)

In the late 1930s Éluard abandoned Surrealistic experimentations, partly as a result of his concern over the Spanish Civil War. After he renewed his affiliation with the Communist Party, Breton broke with him. During WW II, Éluard served in the French army and in the Communist Resistance. To avoid the Gestapo Éluard and Nusch constantly changed addresses. His poems Éluard published under such pseudonyms as Jean du Hault and Maurice Hervent.

Éluard's most famous works from these years, 'Liberté' and 'Rendez-vous Allemand', were spread throughout France. Nusch died unexpectedly in 1946, she suffered a stroke and collapsed in the street. Éluard's third wife was Dominique Laure, to whom he dedicated the collection *Le Phénix* (1951). Picasso, who once had portrayed Éluard as a transvestite, said that he is not going to honor him again by going to bed with his wife.

After the war Éluard was active in the international communist movement in the cultural field. He traveled in Britain, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, and Russia, but not the United States, because he was refused a visa as a Communist. Éluard's idealism, passion for peace, and inability to see the reality of the Soviet Union, led the poet to admire Stalin. With Picasso he took part in 1948 in the World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace in Wroclaw, Poland. Éluard saw poetry as an action capable of arousing awareness in his readers, and identified with the leftist struggle for political, social and sexual liberation. "So much confusion to stay so pure," wrote Salvador Dali on Éluard in his diary (*Diary of Genius*, 1966).

Éluard published over seventy books, including poetry, literary and political works, and poetic texts dedicated to such painters as Max Ernst and Pablo Picasso. Painting, like poetry, was for Éluard destined to disseminate truth belonging to both the real and the imaginary. The mission of poetry was to renew language in order to effect radical changes in all areas of human life, "poetry is a perpetual struggle, life's very principle, the queen of unrest." ('Poetry's

Evidence', This Quarter; Surrealist Number, September 1932.) In Éluard's love lyrics woman performs as a liberating force. Love, to Éluard, was a kind of revolution of the spirit. In 'L'amoureuse' Éluard exemplified the effects of love, which unites one soul to another. Samuel Beckett, who translated the work into English, did not actually feel close to the Surrealists, but Éluard and Breton were among his friends.

Among Éluard's best-known later works are *Poésie ininterrompue* (1946) and *Poèmes politiques* (1948). Éluard died of a heart condition on November 18, 1952 in Charenton-le-Pont. At his funeral, organized by the Party, Picasso was seated next to Dominique. "In fact," she said later, "it was Éluard who was a friend to Picasso, and the other way around only to the extent that Picasso was capable of friendship."

'she Looks Into Me...'

She looks into me
The unknowing heart
To see if I love
She has confidence she forgets
Under the clouds of her eyelids
Her head falls asleep in my hands
Where are we
Together inseparable
Alive alive
He alive she alive
And my head rolls through her dreams.

Paul Eluard

'you Rise The Water Unfolds'

You rise the water unfolds
You sleep the water flowers

You are water ploughed from its depths
You are earth that takes root
And in which all is grounded

You make bubbles of silence in the desert of sound
You sing nocturnal hymns on the arcs of the rainbow
You are everywhere you abolish the roads

You sacrifice time
To the eternal youth of an exact flame
That veils Nature to reproduce her

Woman you show the world a body forever the same
Yours

You are its likeness.

Paul Eluard

A Single Smile

A single smile disputes
Each star with the gathering night
A single smile for us both

And the blue of your joyful eyes
Against the mass of night
Finding its flame in my eyes

I have seen by needing to know
The deep night create the day
With no change in our appearance.

Paul Eluard

Absence

I speak to you over cities
I speak to you over plains
My mouth is against your ear
The two sides of the walls face
my voice which acknowledges you.
I speak to you of eternity.
O cities memories of cities
cities draped with our desires
cities early and late
cities strong cities intimate
stripped of all their makers
their thinkers their phantoms
Landscape ruled by emerald
live living ever-living
the wheat of the sky on our earth
nourishes my voice I dream and cry
I laugh and dream between the flames
between the clusters of sunlight
And over my body your body extends
the layer of its clear mirror.

Paul Eluard

Air Vif

I looked in front of me
In the crowd I saw you
Among the wheat I saw you
Beneath a tree I saw you

At the end of my journeys
In the depths of my torment
At the corner of every smile
Emerging from water and fire

Summer and winter I saw you
All through my house I saw you
In my arms I saw you
In my dreams I saw you

I will never leave you.

Paul Eluard

As Far As My Eye Can See In My Body's Senses

All the trees all their branches all of their leaves
The grass at the foot of the rocks and the houses en masse
Far off the sea that your eye bathes
These images of day after day
The vices the virtues so imperfect
The transparency of men passing among them by chance
And passing women breathed by your elegant obstinacies
Your obsessions in a heart of lead on virgin lips
The vices the virtues so imperfect
The likeness of looks of permission with eyes you conquer
The confusion of bodies wearinesses ardours
The imitation of words attitudes ideas
The vices the virtues so imperfect

Love is man incomplete

Paul Eluard

At The Window

I have not always had this certainty, this pessimism which reassures the best among us. There was a time when my friends laughed at me. I was not the master of my words. A certain indifference, I have not always known well what I wanted to say, but most often it was because I had nothing to say. The necessity of speaking and the desire not to be heard. My life hanging only by a thread.

There was a time when I seemed to understand nothing. My chains floated on the water.

All my desires are born of my dreams. And I have proven my love with words. To what fantastic creatures have I entrusted myself, in what dolorous and ravishing world has my imagination enclosed me? I am sure of having been loved in the most mysterious of domains, my own. The language of my love does not belong to human language, my human body does not touch the flesh of my love. My amorous imagination has always been constant and high enough so that nothing could attempt to convince me of error.

Paul Eluard

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Paul Eluard

Barely Disfigured

Adieu Tristesse

Bonjour Tristesse

Farewell Sadness

Hello Sadness

You are inscribed in the lines on the ceiling

You are inscribed in the eyes that I love

You are not poverty absolutely

Since the poorest of lips denounce you

Ah with a smile

Bonjour Tristesse

Love of kind bodies

Power of love

From which kindness rises

Like a bodiless monster

Unattached head

Sadness beautiful face.

Paul Eluard

Certitude

If I speak it's to hear you more clearly
If I hear you I'm sure to understand you

If you smile it's the better to enter me
If you smile I will see the world entire

If I embrace you it's to widen myself
If we live everything will turn to joy

If I leave you we'll remember each other
In leaving you we'll find each other again.

Paul Eluard

Curfew

What else could we do, for the doors were guarded,
What else could we do, for they had imprisoned us,
What else could we do, for the streets were forbidden us,
What else could we do, for the town was asleep?
What else could we do, for she hungered and thirsted,
What else could we do, for we were defenceless,
What else could we do, for night had descended,
What else could we do, for we were in love?

Paul Eluard

Easy

Easy and beautiful under
your eyelids
As the meeting of pleasure
Dance and the rest
I spoke the fever

The best reason for fire
That you might be pale and luminous
A thousand fruitful poses
A thousand ravaged embraces
Repeated move to erase themselves
You grow dark you unveil yourself
A mask you
control it
It deeply resembles you
And you seem nothing but lovelier naked
Naked in shadow and dazzlingly naked
Like a sky shivering with flashes of lightning
You reveal yourself to you
To reveal yourself to others

Paul Eluard

Ecstasy

I am in front of this feminine land
Like a child in front of the fire
Smiling vaguely with tears in my eyes
In front of this land where all moves in me
Where mirrors mist where mirrors clear
Reflecting two nude bodies season on season

I've so many reasons to lose myself
On this road-less earth under horizon-less skies
Good reasons I ignored yesterday
And I'll never ever forget
Good keys of gazes keys their own daughters
in front of this land where nature is mine

In front of the fire the first fire
Good mistress reason
Identified star
On earth under sky in and out of my heart
Second bud first green leaf
That the sea covers with sails
And the sun finally coming to us

I am in front of this feminine land
Like a branch in the fire.

Paul Eluard

Even When We Sleep

Even when we sleep we watch over each other
And this love heavier than a lake's ripe fruit
Without laughter or tears lasts forever
One day after another one night after us.

Paul Eluard

Fertile Eyes

Fertile Eyes

No one can know me more

More than you know me

Your eyes in which we sleep

The two of them

Have cast a spell on my male orbs

Greater than worldly nights

Your eyes where I voyage

Have given the road-signs

Directions detached from the earth

In your eyes those that show us

Our infinite solitude

Is no more than they think exists

No one can know me more

More than you know me.

Paul Eluard

Five Haiku

The wind
Undecided
Rolls a cigarette of air

The mute girl talks:
It is art's imperfection.
This impenetrable speech.

The motor car is truly launched:
Four martyrs' heads
Roll under the wheels.

Ah! a thousand flames, a fire,
The light, a shadow!
The sun is following me.

A feather gives to a hat
A touch of lightness:
The chimney smokes.

Paul Eluard

Head Against The Walls

There were only a few of them
In all the earth
Each one thought he was alone
They sang, they were right
To sing
But they sang the way you sack a city
The way you kill yourself.

Frayed moist night
Shall we endure you
Longer
Shall we not shake
Your cloacal evidence
We shall not wait for a morning
Made to measure
We wanted to see in other people's eyes
Their nights of love exhausted
They dream only of dying
Their lovely flesh forgotten
Bees caught in their honey
They are ignorant of life
And we suffer everywhere
Red roofs dissolve under the tongue
Dog days in the full beds
Come, empty your sacks of fresh blood
There is still a shadow here

A shred of imbecile there
In the wind their masks, their cast-offs
In lead their traps, their chains
And their prudent blind-men's gestures
There is fire under rocks
If you put out the fire
Be careful we have
Despite the night it breeds
More strength than the belly
Of your wives and sisters
And we will reproduce
Without them but by ax strokes

In your prisons

Torrents of stone labors of foam
Where eyes float without rancor
Just eyes without hope
That know you
And that you should have put out
Rather than ignore

With a safety pin quicker than your gibbets
We shall take our booty where we want it to be

Paul Eluard

Hunted

A few grains of dust more or less
On ancient shoulders
Locks of weakness on weary foreheads
This theatre of honey and faded roses
Where incalculable flies
Reply to the black signs that misery makes to them
Despairing girders of a bridge
Thrown across space
Thrown across every street and every house
Heavy wandering madnesses
That we shall end by knowing by heart
Mechanical appetites and uncontrolled dances
That lead to the regret of hatred

Nostalgia of justice

Paul Eluard

I Cannot Be Known

I cannot be known
Better than you know me

Your eyes in which we sleep
We together
Have made for my man's gleam
A better fate than for the common nights

Your eyes in which I travel
Have given to signs along the roads
A meaning alien to the earth

In your eyes who reveal to us
Our endless solitude

Are no longer what they thought themselves to be

You cannot be known
Better than I know you.

Paul Eluard

I Only Wish To Love You

I only wish to love you
A storm fills the valley
A fish the river

I have made you the size of my solitude
The whole world to hide in
Days and nights to understand

To see no more in your eyes
Than what I think of you
And a world in your image

And days and nights ruled by your eyelids.

Paul Eluard

I Said It To You

I said it to you for the clouds
I said it to you for the tree of the sea
For each wave for the birds in the leaves
For the pebbles of sound
For familiar hands

For the eye that becomes landscape or face
And sleep returns it the heaven of its colour
For all that night drank
For the network of roads
For the open window for a bare forehead
I said it to you for your thoughts for your words

Every caress every trust survives.

Paul Eluard

In A New Night

Woman I've lived with
Woman I live with
Woman I'll live with
Always the same
You need a red cloak
Red gloves a red mask
And dark stockings
The reasons the proofs
Of seeing you quite naked
Nudity pure O ready finery

Breasts O my heart

Paul Eluard

It's The Sweet Law Of Men

It's the sweet law of men
They make wine from grapes
They make fire from coal
They make men from kisses

It's the true law of men
Kept intact despite
the misery and war
despite danger of death

It's the warm law of men
To change water to light
Dream to reality
Enemies to friends

A law old and new
That perfects itself
From the child's heart's depths
To reason's heights.

Paul Eluard

La Courbe De Tes Yeux

La courbe de tes yeux fait le tour de mon coeur,
Un rond de danse et de douceur,
Auréole du temps, berceau nocturne et sûr,
Et si je ne sais plus tout ce que j'ai vécu
C'est que tes yeux ne m'ont pas toujours vu.
Feuilles de jour et mousse de rosée,
Roseaux du vent, sourires parfumés,
Ailes couvrant le monde de lumière,
Bateaux chargés du ciel et de la mer,
Chasseurs des bruits et sources de couleurs,
Parfums éclos d'une couvée d'aurores
Qui gît toujours sur la paille des astres,
Comme le jour dépend de l'innocence
Le monde entier dépend de tes yeux purs
Et tout mon sang coule dans leurs regards.

Paul Eluard

Lady Love

She is standing on my eyelids
And her hair is in my hair
She has the color of my eye
She has the body of my hand
In my shade she is engulfed
As a stone against the sky

She will never close her eyes
And she does not let me sleep
And her dreams in the bright day
Make the suns evaporate
And me laugh cry and laugh
Speak when I have nothing to say

Paul Eluard

L'Amoureuse

Elle est debout sur mes paupières
Et ses cheveux sont dans les miens,
Elle a la forme de mes mains,
Elle a la couleur de mes yeux,
Elle s'engloutit dans mon ombre
Comme une pierre sur le ciel.

Elle a toujours les yeux ouverts
Et ne me laisse pas dormir.
Ses rêves en pleine lumière
Font s'évaporer les soleils,
Me font rire, pleurer et rire,
Parler sans avoir rien à dire

(Samuel Beckett's translation)

She is standing on my lids
And her hair is in my hair
She has the colour of my eye
She has the body of my hand
In my shade she is engulfed
As a stone against the sky

She will never close her eyes
And she does not let me sleep
And her dreams in the bright day
Make the suns evaporate
And me laugh cry and laugh
Speak when I have nothing to say

Paul Eluard

Liberty

On my school notebooks
On my desk and on the trees
On the sands of snow
I write your name

On the pages I have read
On all the white pages
Stone, blood, paper or ash
I write your name

On the images of gold
On the weapons of the warriors
On the crown of the king
I write your name

On the jungle and the desert
On the nest and on the brier
On the echo of my childhood
I write your name

On all my scarves of blue
On the moist sunlit swamps
On the living lake of moonlight
I write your name

On the fields, on the horizon
On the birds' wings
And on the mill of shadows
I write your name

On each whiff of daybreak
On the sea, on the boats
On the demented mountaintop
I write your name

On the froth of the cloud
On the sweat of the storm
On the dense rain and the flat
I write your name

On the flickering figures
On the bells of colors
On the natural truth
I write your name

On the high paths
On the deployed routes
On the crowd-thronged square
I write your name

On the lamp which is lit
On the lamp which isn't
On my reunited thoughts
I write your name

On a fruit cut in two
Of my mirror and my chamber
On my bed, an empty shell
I write your name

On my dog, greathearted and greedy
On his pricked-up ears
On his blundering paws
I write your name

On the latch of my door
On those familiar objects
On the torrents of a good fire
I write your name

On the harmony of the flesh
On the faces of my friends
On each outstretched hand
I write your name

On the window of surprises
On a pair of expectant lips
In a state far deeper than silence
I write your name

On my crumbled hiding-places

On my sunken lighthouses
On my walls and my ennui
I write your name

On abstraction without desire
On naked solitude
On the marches of death
I write your name

And for the want of a word
I renew my life
For I was born to know you
To name you

Liberty.

Paul Eluard

Lovely And Lifelike

A face at the end of the day
A cradle in day's dead leaves
A bouquet of naked rain
Every ray of sun hidden
Every fount of founts in the depths of the water
Every mirror of mirrors broken
A face in the scales of silence
A pebble among other pebbles
For the leaves last glimmers of day
A face like all the forgotten faces.

Paul Eluard

Max Ernst

In one corner agile incest
Turns round the virginity of a little dress
In one corner sky released
leaves balls of white on the spines of storm.
In one corner bright with all the eyes
One awaits the fish of anguish.
In one corner the car of summer's greenery
gloriously motionless forever.

In the glow of youth
lamps lit too late.
The first one shows her breasts that kill the insects that are red

Paul Eluard

Nearer To Us

Run and run towards deliverance
And find and gather everything
Deliverance and riches
Run so quickly the thread breaks
With the sound a great bird makes
A flag always soared beyond

Paul Eluard

Nusch

The sentiments apparent
The lightness of approach
The tresses of caresses.

Without worry or suspicion
Your eyes confide in what they see
Seen by what they gaze at.

Confidence of crystal
Between two mirrors
At night your eyes are lost
To fuse waking to desire.

Paul Eluard

Obsession

After years of wisdom
During which the world was transparent as a needle
Was it cooing about something else?
After having vied with returned favours squandered treasure
More than a red lip with a red tip
And more than a white leg with a white foot
Where then do we think we are?

Paul Eluard

Open Door

Life is truly kind
Come to me, if I go to you it's a game,
The angels of bouquets grant the flowers a change of hue.

Paul Eluard

Other Children

"Little child of my five senses
and of my tenderness."
Let us cradle our loves,
We will have good children.
Well cared for,
We will fear nothing on earth,
Happiness, good fortune, prudence,
Our loves

And this leap from age to age,
From the order of a child to that of an old man,
Will not diminish us.
(Confidence).

Paul Eluard

Our Life

We'll not reach the goal one by one but in pairs
We know in pairs we will know all about us
We'll love everything our children will smile
At the dark history or mourn alone

Paul Eluard

Ring Of Peace

I have passed the doors of coldness
The doors of my bitterness
To come and kiss your lips

City reduced to a room
Where the absurd tide of evil
leaves a reassuring foam

Ring of peace I have only you
You teach me again what it is
To be human when I renounce

Knowing whether I have fellow creatures

Paul Eluard

Series

For the splendour of the day of happinesses in the air
To live the taste of colours easily
To enjoy loves so as to laugh
To open eyes at the final moment

She has every willingness.

Paul Eluard

Talking Of Power And Love

Between all my torments between death and self
Between my despair and the reason for living
There is injustice and this evil of men
That I cannot accept there is my anger

There are the blood-coloured fighters of Spain
There are the sky-coloured fighters of Greece
The bread the blood the sky and the right to hope
For all the innocents who hate evil

The light is always close to dying
Life always ready to become earth
But spring is reborn that is never done with
A bud lifts from dark and the warmth settles

And the warmth will have the right of the selfish
Their atrophied senses will not resist
I hear the fire talk lightly of coolness
I hear a man speak what he has not known

You who were my flesh's sensitive conscience
You I love forever you who made me
You will not tolerate oppression or injury
You'll sing in dream of earthly happiness
You'll dream of freedom and I'll continue you

Paul Eluard

The Absence

I speak to you across cities
I speak to you across plains

My mouth is upon your pillow

Both faces of the walls come meeting
My voice discovering you

I speak to you of eternity

O cities memories of cities
Cities wrapped in our desires
Cities come early cities come lately
Cities strong and cities secret
Plundered of their master's builders
All their thinkers all their ghosts

Fields pattern of emerald
Bright living surviving
The harvest of the sky over our earth
Feeds my voice I dream and weep
I laugh and dream among the flames
Among the clusters of the sun

And over my body your body spreads
The sheet of it's bright mirror.

Paul Eluard

The Beloved

She is standing on my eyelids
And her hair is wound in mine,
She has the form of my hands,
She has the colour of my eyes,
She is swallowed by my shadow
Like a stone against the sky

Her eyes are always open
And will not let me sleep.
Her dreams in broad daylight
Make the suns evaporate
Make me laugh, cry and laugh,
Speak with nothing to say

Paul Eluard

The Curve Of Your Eyes

The curve of your eyes embraces my heart
A ring of sweetness and dance
halo of time, sure nocturnal cradle,
And if I no longer know all I have lived through
It's that your eyes have not always been mine.

Leaves of day and moss of dew,
Reeds of breeze, smiles perfumed,
Wings covering the world of light,
Boats charged with sky and sea,
Hunters of sound and sources of colour

Perfume enclosed by a covey of dawns
that beds forever on the straw of stars,
As the day depends on innocence
The whole world depends on your pure eyes
And all my blood flows under their sight.

Paul Eluard

The Deaf And Blind

Do we reach the sea with clocks
In our pockets, with the noise of the sea
In the sea, or are we the carriers
Of a purer and more silent water?

The water rubbing against our hands sharpens knives.
The warriors have found their weapons in the waves
And the sound of their blows is like
The rocks that smash the boats at night.

It is the storm and the thunder. Why not the silence
Of the flood, for we have dreamt within us
Space for the greatest silence and we breathe
Like the wind over terrible seas, like the wind

That creeps slowly over every horizon.

Paul Eluard

The Human Face

I. Soon

Of all the springtimes of the world
This one is the ugliest
Of all of my ways of being
To be trusting is the best

Grass pushes up snow
Like the stone of a tomb
But I sleep within the storm
And awoken eyes bright

Slowness, brief time ends
Where all streets must pass
Through my innermost recesses
So that I would meet someone

I don't listen to monsters
I know them and all that they say
I see only beautiful faces
Good faces, sure of themselves
Certain soon to ruin their masters

II. The women's role

As they sing, the maids dash forward
To tidy up the killing fields
Well-powdered girls, quickly to their knees

Their hands -- reaching for the fresh air --
Are blue like never before
What a glorious day!

Look at their hands, the dead
Look at their liquid eyes

This is the toilet of transience
The final toilet of life
Stones sink and disappear

In the vast, primal waters
The final toilet of time

Hardly a memory remains
the dried-up well of virtue
In the long, oppressive absences
One surrenders to tender flesh
Under the spell of weakness

III. As deep as the silence

As deep as the silence
Of a corpse under ground
With nothing but darkness in mind

As dull and deaf
As autumn by the pond
Covered with stale shame

Poison, deprived of its flower
And of its golden beasts
out its night onto man

IV. Patience

You, my patient one
My patience
My parent
Head held high and proudly
Organ of the sluggish night
Bow down
Concealing all of heaven
And its favor
Prepare for vengeance
A bed where I'll be born

V. First march, the voice of another

Laughing at sky and planets
Drunk with their confidence
The wise men wish for sons
And for sons from their sons

Until they all perish in vain
Time burdens only fools
While Hell alone prospers
And the wise men are absurd

VI. A wolf

Day surprises me and night scares me
haunts me and winter follows me
An animal walking on the snow has placed
Its paws in the sand or in the mud

Its paws have traveled
From further afar than my own steps
On a path where death
Has the imprints of life

VII. A flawless fire

The threat under the red sky
Came from below -- jaws
And scales and links
Of a slippery, heavy chain

Life was spread about generously
So that death took seriously
The debt it was paid without a thought

Death was the God of love
And the conquerors in a kiss
Swooned upon their victims
Corruption gained courage

And yet, beneath the red sky
Under the appetites for blood
Under the dismal starvation
The cavern closed

The kind earth filled
The graves dug in advance
Children were no longer afraid

Of maternal depths

And madness and stupidity
And vulgarity make way
For humankind and brotherhood
No longer fighting against life --
For an everlasting humankind

VIII. Liberty

On my school notebooks
On my desk, on the trees
On the sand, on the snow
I write your name
On all the read pages
On all the empty pages
Stone, blood, paper or ash
I write your name

On the golden images
On the weapons of warriors
On the crown of kings
I write your name

On the jungle and the desert
On the nests, on the broom
On the echo of my childhood
I write your name

On the wonders of nights
On the white bread of days
On the seasons betrothed
I write your name

d'azur On all my blue rags
On the sun-molded pond
On the moon-enlivened lake
I write your name

On the fields, on the horizon
On the wings of birds
And on the mill of shadows

I write your name

On every burst of dawn
On the sea, on the boats
On the insane mountain
I write your name

On the foam of clouds
On the sweat of the storm
On the rain, thick and insipid
I write your name

On the shimmering shapes
On the colorful bells
On the physical truth
I write your name

On the alert pathways
On the wide-spread roads
On the overflowing places
I write your name

On the lamp that is ignited
On the lamp that is dimmed
On my reunited houses
I write your name

On the fruit cut in two
Of the mirror and of my room
On my bed, an empty shell
I write your name

On my dog, young and greedy
On his pricked-up ears
On his clumsy paw
I write your name

On the springboard of my door
On the familiar objects
On the wave of blessed fire
I write your name

On all harmonious flesh
On the face of my friends
On every out-stretched hand
I write your name

On the window-pane of surprises
On the careful lips
Well-above silence
I write your name

On my destroyed shelter
On my collapsed beacon
On the walls of my weariness
I write your name

On absence without want
On naked solitude
On the steps of death
I write your name

On regained health
On vanished risk
On hope free from memory
I write your name

And by the power of one word
I begin my life again
I am born to know you

To call you by name: Liberty!

Paul Eluard

The Immediate Life

What's become of you why this white hair and pink
Why this forehead these eyes rent apart heart-rending
The great misunderstanding of the marriage of radium
Solitude chases me with its rancour.

Paul Eluard

The Nakedness Of Truth (I Know It Well)

Despair has no wings,
Nor has love,
No countenance:
They do not speak.
I do not stir,
I do not behold them,
I do not speak to them,
But I am as real as my love and my despair.

Paul Eluard

The River

The river I have under my tongue,
Unimaginable water, my little boat,
And curtains lowered, let's speak.

Paul Eluard

The Season Of Loves

By the road of ways
In the three-part shadow of troubled sleep
I come to you the double the multiple
as like you as the era of deltas.

Your head is as tiny as mine
The nearby sea reigns with spring
Over the summers of your fragile form
And here one burns bundles of ermine.

In the wandering transparency
of your noble face
these floating animals are wonderful
I envy their candour their inexperience

Your inexperience on the bed of waters
Finds the road of love without bowing
By the road of ways
and without the talisman that reveals
your laughter at the crowd of women
and your tears no one wants

Paul Eluard

The Word

I have an easy beauty one that is happy.
I glide on the surface of winds.
I glide on the surface of seas
I have grown sentimental
I no longer know the guide
I no longer move silk over ice
I am diseased flowers and stones
I love the most chinese of nudes
I love the most naked lapses of wings
I am old but here I am beautiful
And the shadow that flows from the deep windows
Each evening spares the dark heart of my stare.

Paul Eluard

The World Is Blue As An Orange

The world is blue as an orange
No error the words do not lie
They no longer allow you to sing
In the tower of kisses agreement
The madness the love
She her mouth of alliance
All the secrets all the smiles
Or what dress of indulgence
To believe in quite naked.
The wasps flourish greenly
Dawn goes by round her neck
A necklace of windows
You are all the solar joys
All the sun of this earth
On the roads of your beauty.

Paul Eluard

Thus, Woman, Principle Of Life, Speaker Of The Ideal

Would you see
The dark form of the sun
The contours of life
Or be truly dazzled
By the fire that fuses all
The flame conveyer of modesties
In flesh in gold that fine gesture

Error is as unknown
As the limits of spring
The temptation prodigious
All touches all travels you
At first it was only a thunder of incense
Which you love the more
The fine praise at four
Lovely motionless nude
Violin mute but palpable
I speak to you of seeing

I will speak to you of your eyes
Be faceless if you wish
Of their unwilling colour
Of luminous stones
Colourless
Before the man you conquer
His blind enthusiasm
Reigns naively like a spring
In the desert

Between the sands of night and the waves of day
Between earth and water
No ripple to erase
No road possible

Between your eyes and the images I see there
Is all of which I think
Myself inderacinable
Like a plant which masses itself
Which simulates rock among other rocks

That I carry for certain
You all entire
All that you gaze at
All

This is a boat
That sails a sweet river
It carries playful women
And patient grain
This is a horse descending the hill
Or perhaps a flame rising
A great barefooted laugh in a wretched heart
An autumn height of soothing verdure
A bird that persists in folding its wings in its nest
A morning that scatters the reddened light
To waken the fields
This is a parasol
And this the dress
Of a lace-maker more seductive than a bouquet
Of the bell-sounds of the rainbow

This thwarts immensity
This has never enough space
Welcome is always elsewhere
With the lightning and the flood
That accompany it
Of medusas and fires
Marvellously obliging
They destroy the scaffolding
Topped by a sad coloured flag
A bounded star
Whose fingers are paralysed

I speak of seeing you
I know you living
All exists all is visible
There is no fleck of night in your eyes

I see by a light exclusively yours.

Paul Eluard

To Live

We both have our hands to give
Take mine I shall lead you afar

I have lived several times my face hasw changed
With every threshold I have crossed and every hand clasped Familial springtime
was reborn
Keeping for itself and for me its perishable snow
Death and the betrothed
The future with five fingers clenched and letting go

My age always gave me
New reasons for living through others
For having the blood of man other's heart in mine

Oh the lucid fellow I was and that I am
Before the pallor of frail blind girls
Lovelier than the delicate worn moon so fair
By the reflection of life's ways
A trail of moss anf trees
Of mist and morning dew
Of the young body which does not rise alone
To its place on earth
Wind cold and rain cradle it
Summer makes a man of it

Presesence is my virtue in each visible hand
Only death is solitude
From delight to fury from fury to clarity
I make myself whole through all beings
Through all weather on the earth and in the clouds
Through the passing seasons I am young
And strong for having lived
I am young my blood rises over my ruins

We have our hands to entwine Nothing can ever seduce better
Tahn our bonding to each other a forest
Returning earth to sky and the sky to night

To the night which prepares an unending day.

Paul Eluard

To Marc Chagall

Donkey or cow, cockerel or horse
On to the skin of a violin
A singing man a single bird
An agile dancer with his wife

A couple drenched in their youth

The gold of the grass lead of the sky
Separated by azure flames
Of the health-giving dew
The blood glitters the heart rings

A couple the first reflection

And in a cellar of snow
The opulent vine draws
A face with lunar lips
That never slept at night.

Paul Eluard

Uninterrupted Poetry

From the sea to the source
From mountain to plain
Runs the phantom of life
The foul shadow of death
But between us
A dawn of ardent flesh is born
And exact good
that sets the earth in order
We advance with calm step
And nature salutes us
The day embodies our colours
Fire our eyes the sea our union
And all living resemble us
All the living we love
Imaginary the others
Wrong and defined by their birth
But we must struggle against them
They live by dagger blows
They speak like a broken chair
Their lips tremble with joy
At the echo of leaden bells
At the muteness of dark gold
A lone heart not a heart
A lone heart all the hearts
And the bodies every star
In a sky filled with stars
In a career in movement
Of light and of glances
Our weight shines on the earth
Glaze of desire
To sing of human shores
For you the living I love
And for all those that we love
That have no desire but to love
I'll end truly by barring the road
Afloat with enforced dreams
I'll end truly by finding myself
We'll take possession of earth

We Have Created The Night

We have created the night I hold your hand I watch
I sustain you with all my powers
I engrave in rock the star of your powers
Deep furrows where your body's goodness fruits
I recall your hidden voice your public voice
I smile still at the proud woman
You treat like a beggar
The madness you respect the simplicity you bathe in
And in my head which gently blends with yours with the night
I wonder at the stranger you become
A stranger resembling you resembling everything I love
One that is always new.

Paul Eluard

We Two

We two take each other by the hand
We believe everywhere in our house
Under the soft tree under the black sky
Beneath the roofs at the edge of the fire
In the empty street in broad daylight
In the wandering eyes of the crowd
By the side of the foolish and wise
Among the grown-ups and children
Love's not mysterious at all
We are the evidence ourselves
In our house lovers believe.

Paul Eluard

Your Orange Hair In The Void Of The World

Your orange hair in the void of the world
In the void of these heavy panes of silence
Shade where my bare hands seek your image.

The shape of your heart is chimerical
And your love resembles my lost desire.
O sighs of amber, dreams, glances.

But you were not always here. My memory
Is still obscured by seeing your coming
And going. Time consumes words, like love.

Paul Eluard