

Late Equinox

It is summer still: I had thought winter
Covered like a girl from the mill
Stared through my windows last night
with news of disasters.
But now the sky is blue once more - yes
Preternaturally blue: this garden is paradise
No new disasters here: over the grass
Footfall of nymphs and murmur of waters
Arises from inwards: birds chirrup, breezes rustle:
Soon the naked form of love will step on to the veranda -
Arise and embrace her! Do not withdraw
From what is most needful: love
Is your first need: thereafter concern yourself
With what in the world is dark and must be
Confronted and wrestled with, and - Oh it is promised!
Overcome.

John Hands

Muscle of a flower which gradually unfurls
The anemone's pale meadow morning until the
Polyphonic light of the pure heavens
Pours into her lap.

Muscle of endless receiving tensed
In tranquil star-blossom, sometimes
So overflowing from fullness that the
Rest-inclining setting sun scarce

Enables you to recover the extreme
Edge of your petals - you!
Effort and resolution of how many worlds
We, the violent ones, we last longer:
But when, in which of our so many lives
Shall we be finally open and receptive?

Rainer-Maria Rilke
("Sonnets to Orpheus")
translated by John Hands