

## For Album

With the very first light I started  
casting my lure for you (I called it your "allure").  
But I could see no wriggle of fins  
in the murky pools, no wind  
with your spoor came gusting down to me  
from the hills of Monferrato.  
I spent my whole day searching, peering  
for you—larva, tadpole,  
tendrils of creeping vine, francolin,  
gazelle, zebu, okapi,  
black cloud, hail  
before the harvest, between the dripping vine-rows  
I went gleaning, but couldn't find you.  
I tracked you until dark,  
unaware that three small boxes—  
SAND SODA SOAP, the dovecote  
kitchen from which your flight began—  
would open only for me.  
And so you vanished into the uncertain horizon.  
There's no idea that can lock the lightning up,  
but he who's seen the light can't live without it.  
I lay down at the foot of your cherry tree, I was  
already too rich to contain you, alive.

## Per album

Ho cominciato anzi giorno  
a buttar l'amo per te (lo chiamavo "il lamo").  
Ma nessun guizzo di coda  
scorgevo nei pozzi limosi,  
nessun vento veniva col tuo indizio  
dai colli monferrini.  
Ho continuato il mio giorno  
sempre spiando te, larva girino  
frangia di rampicante francolino  
gazzella zebù ocàpi  
nuvola nera grandine  
prima della vendemmia, ho spigolato  
tra i filari inzuppati senza trovarti.  
Ho proseguito fino a tardi  
senza sapere che tre cassetine  
—SABBIA SODA SAPONE, la piccionaia  
da cui partì il tuo volo: da una cucina—  
si sarebbero aperte per me solo.  
Così sparisti nell'orizzonte incerto.  
Non c'è pensiero che imprigioni il fulmine  
ma chi ha veduto la luce non se ne priva.  
Mi stesi al piede del tuo ciliegio, ero  
già troppo ricco per contenerti viva.

[see note to "On the Llobregat"]; she was alive in every pore of her skin. But I also received from her a feeling of freshness, above all the feeling of being alive."

### *For Album (1953)*

A brilliant little poem which contains—concentrated in the apparently simple tale of the hunter-poet's quest for his prey, the Vixen herself and her real home, the place where she can be found and *held*—a lifelong pursuit of the fatal, intermittently appearing "other"—the X that, recognized by its glints and "flashes," if only it could be captured and held, would mean personal fulfillment for man and poet alike. With the "very first light" of childhood, the quest begins. First comes the feeling of love (*amo*), indicated by an untranslatable pun on *l'amo* (I love) and *lamo* (fish-hook, in baby talk). The search continues all day long, from dawn till dusk: the "day" of a man's life. The quest seeks every living form, every creature, for the "she" who is glimpsed in everything, ubiquitous but elusive, an iridescent protean presence. Finally at dusk, he finds her where he least expected, in the prosaic *containers* (SAND SODA SOAP) of the kitchen, that domestic "dovecote" from which her flight began. Once found, she cannot be held; she is precisely uncontainable, *inafferrabile*; no sooner is she found than she disappears in breathtaking flight—herself a light moving toward the light of the "uncertain" horizon. But that momentary apparition in which the metaphysical blazes out of the prosaic everyday object, in which she finds incarnation, is what gives the elected lover his bliss and fulfillment it offers: "I lay down at the foot of your cherry tree, I was/already too rich to contain you, alive."

For more detailed exegesis, see Cambon (op. cit., p. 177 ff.) to which my *précis* is indebted.

### *From a Swiss Lake (1949)*

Ouchy, on Lake Lemman. The initial letter in each line of the Italian text is an acrostic identifying the Vixen as Maria Luisa Spaziani, a well-known poet whose published work shows unmistakable signs of M.'s influence.

To be noted: the familiar polarities of earth and heaven that characterize the Vixen: light shining in darkness, an animal paw shaped like a star, a black duck driving upward from the lake bottom to some transcendent conflagration in the sky (cf. the closing lines of "For a 'Homage to Rimbaud,'" etc.). But in general and particular the poem is too intensely private in its allusions, too intricately and intimately encoded, to make meaningful interpretation possible.

*poète assassiné*. An allusion to Guillaume Apollinaire who died in the First World War, and to whom M., himself a veteran on the Italian front in the Valmorba campaign, clearly links himself: the Vixen's fatal erotic