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Hyperion,
or the Hermit in Greece

Friedrich Hölderlin
Translated by Howard Gaskill

HYPERION,
OR
THE HERMIT IN GREECE

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By Friedrich Hölderlin

Translated and with an Afterword by Howard Gaskill

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Contents

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Volume One

Non coerceri maximo, contineri minimo, divinum est.

[Not to be constrained by the greatest, to be contained by the smallest, is divine.]

Foreword

I'd happily promise this book the love of the Germans. But I fear some will read it like a compendium and be overly concerned with the *fabula docet*,[1] whilst others will take it too lightly, and neither party will understand it.

Those who merely sniff my flower mistake its nature, and so do those who pluck it merely for instruction.

The resolution of the dissonances in a particular character is neither for mere reflection nor empty pleasure.

The setting for what follows is not new, and I confess that I was once childish enough to try changing the book in this respect. But I became convinced that this setting was the only appropriate one for Hyperion's elegiac character, and was ashamed at my weakness in having been unduly swayed by the probable verdict of the public.

I regret that for now it is not yet possible for everyone to judge the design of the work. But the second volume is to follow as soon as possible.

1 [Translator's note] what the fable teaches, the moral of the story.

Book One

Hyperion to Bellarmin [I]

The beloved soil of my fatherland gives me joy and grief once more.

I'm up now every morning on the heights of the Isthmus of Corinth, and often, like the bee from flower to flower, my spirit flits back and forth between the seas to right and left that cool the feet of my glowing mountains.

One of those two gulfs would specially have delighted me, had I stood here some thousand years ago.

Then, like a conquering demi-god between the glorious wilderness of Helicon and Parnassus, where the rosy light of dawn plays on a hundred snow-covered peaks, and the paradisal plain of Sicyon, the shining gulf surged in towards the city of joy, youthful Corinth, pouring forth before its favourite the accumulated bounty from all corners of the earth.

But what is that to me? The howl of the jackal, singing its wild dirge amidst the rubble of antiquity, jolts me from my dreams.

Happy the man for whom a flourishing fatherland gladdens and fortifies the heart! Being reminded of mine is like being pitched into the mire, like having the coffin lid slammed shut over me, and whenever anyone calls me Greek, I always feel I'm being throttled with a dog collar.

And see, my Bellarmin! whenever I'd burst out with such remarks, as often as not with tears of anger in my eyes, along came the wise gentlemen who so delight in gibbering among you Germans, those wretches for whom a grieving disposition is such a welcome opportunity to unload

their maxims; they were in their element, and made so bold to tell me: 'Don't moan, act!'

Oh, that I had never acted! how many hopes I'd now be richer by! —

Yes, just forget that men exist, starving, vexed and deeply harassed heart! and return whence you came, into the arms of nature, never-changing, beautiful and tranquil.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [II]

I have nothing I might truly call my own.

Far away and dead are those I loved, and through no voice I hear from them, nothing ever more.

My business on earth is done. I set about my work with a will, bled over it, and made the world not a penny richer.

I return alone and unrenowned and wander through my fatherland, stretching about me like a vast graveyard, and it may be that what awaits me is the knife of the hunter who keeps us Greeks for sport like forest game.

But you still shine, sun of heaven! You still green, holy earth! Still the rivers rush into the sea, and shady trees whisper in the height of day. Spring's blissful song sings my mortal thoughts to sleep. The plenitude of the all-living world nourishes and fills with drunkenness my starving spirit.

O blissful nature! I can't tell what comes over me when I lift up my eyes before your beauty, but all the joy of heaven is in the tears I weep before you, the lover before the beloved.

My whole being stills and listens when the gentle ripple of the breeze plays about my breast. Often, lost in the immensity of blue, I look up into the aether and out into the hallowed sea, and it's as if a kindred spirit opened its arms to me, as if the pain of isolation were dissolved in the life of the godhead.

To be one with everything, that is the life of the godhead, that is the heaven of man.

To be one with everything that lives, to return in blissful self-oblivion into the all of nature, that is the summit of thoughts and joys, that is the holy mountain pinnacle, the place of eternal peace where noon loses its sultriness and the thunder its voice and the boiling sea becomes like a waving corn-field.

To be one with everything that lives! At these words virtue lays aside its wrathful harness, the mind of man its sceptre, and all thoughts melt away before the vision of the world's eternal oneness like the toiling artist's rules before his heavenly Urania, and iron fate renounces its dominion, and from the covenant of beings death disappears, and indivisibility and eternal youth blesses, makes beautiful the world.

On this height I often stand, my Bellarmin! But a moment of reflection casts me down. I begin to think, and find myself as I was before, alone, with all the pains of mortality, and my heart's sanctuary, the world's eternal oneness, is no more; nature's arms are closed, and I stand before her like a stranger and cannot comprehend her.

Oh! had I never gone into your schools. It's learning that lured me down into the pit, in my youthful folly I thought to find in it the proof of my pure joy, and it has ruined everything for me.

Amongst you I became so very rational, learnt to distinguish myself perfectly from what is around me, and now I'm set apart in the beautiful world, expelled from the garden of nature in which I grew and bloomed, and shrivel under the noonday sun.

Oh, man is a god when he dreams, a beggar when he thinks, and when inspiration's gone he's left standing there like a delinquent son, cast out of the house by his father, staring at the pitiful pennies given as alms to help him on his way.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [III]

I thank you for asking me to tell you about myself, for making me remember former times.

That's what really drove me back to Greece, wanting to live nearer to the playground of my youth.

As into quickening sleep the labourer, so my beleaguered being often sinks into the arms of the innocent past.

Peace of childhood! heavenly peace! how often do I stilly stand before you in loving contemplation, and think to grasp you! Yet we can only conceive of that which once was bad and has been made good again; of childhood, innocence we can have no conception.

When I was still a tranquil child, knowing nought of all that is around us, was I not then more than I am now, after all the heart's travail and all the mind's toiling and striving?

Yes! a divine being is the child as long as it's not been dipped in the chameleon colours of men.

It's wholly what it is and that's why it's so beautiful.

The force of law and fate can't touch it; in the child alone is freedom.

In the child is peace; it's not yet at variance with itself. Richness is in the child; it's still to know its heart, the penury of life. It is immortal, for it knows nothing of death.

But this men cannot bear. That which is divine must become like one of them, must learn that they too are there, and before nature expels the child from its paradise, men cajole and drag it out onto the ground of the curse, that it may, like them, grind away its life in the sweat of its face.

But the time of awakening is beautiful too, if only we're not woken out of season.

Oh, they are hallowed days in which our heart first tests its wings, when full of quick and fervent growth we stand there in the glorious world, like the young plant when it unfolds to the morning sun and stretches up its slender arms towards the endless heaven.

How I felt impelled to roam amongst the mountains and along the shore! oh, how I often sat with throbbing heart upon the heights of Tinos, and gazed after the falcons and the cranes, and the doughty sprightly ships as they shrank below the horizon! 'Down there!' I thought, 'down there you too one day will wander,' and I felt like one who, parched with heat, plunges into the cooling pool and splashes the spumy waters on his brow.

Sighing I'd then turn back towards my home. 'If only my school years were over,' I often thought.

Dear boy! They're far from over yet.

That in man's youth he thinks the goal so near! That is the most beautiful of all illusions with which nature helps our weakness.

And often when I lay amongst the flowers and basked in the soft spring sunlight, and looked up into the bright blue that embraced the warm earth, when I sat under the elms and willows, in the womb of the mountain, after a quickening shower, when the branches still quivered from the caresses of heaven and golden clouds moved above the dripping woods, or when full of peaceful spirit the evening star rose with those ancient youths, the other heroes of the heavens, and I watched as the life within them propelled itself through the aether

in eternal effortless order, and the peace of the world enfolded and elated me, so that I roused and listened, not knowing what came over me — 'do you love me, good father in heaven!' I'd then silently ask, and felt so blissful and sure his answer in my heart.

O you whom I'd invoke as if you were above the stars, whom I called creator of heaven and earth, amiable idol of my childhood, you won't be angry I've forgotten you! — Why is the world not so wanting as to make one seek an entity outside it?[2]

Oh, if she's the daughter of a father, glorious nature, is the daughter's heart not his heart? her inmost self, is it not He? But do I possess it then? do I know it then?

It's as if I saw, but then again I take fright, as if it were my own image I'd seen, it's as if I felt him, the spirit of the world, like the warm hand of a friend, but I awake and think it's my own fingers I've been holding.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [IV]

Do you know how Plato and his Stella loved each other?

That's how I loved, how I was loved. Oh, I was a lucky lad!

It's a joy when like and like are joined, but when a great man raises lesser to his level, it's divine.

A kindly word from a brave man's heart, a smile that conceals the consuming glory of the spirit, is little and much, like a magical password hiding life and death in its innocent syllable, like living water welling up from deep inside the mountains and conveying to us in each crystal drop the secret energy of the earth.

But how I hate all the barbarians who think themselves wise because they no longer have a heart, all the vulgar brutes who find a thousand different ways to kill and destroy youth's beauty with their stupid petty principles of manhood!

Good God! This is the owl wanting to drive from the nest the young eagles, wanting to show them the way to the sun!

Forgive me, spirit of my Adamas! for recalling these people before you. That's what we gain from experience that we can imagine nothing excellent without its malformed opposite.

2 [Hölderlin's note] It should go without saying that such utterances, as mere manifestations of the human mind, ought properly to give no grounds for offence.

Oh, would that you were ever present to me, with all that is akin to you, grieving demi-god I cherish! Those you enfold with your tranquillity and strength, conqueror and warrior, those you confront with your love and wisdom, let them flee or become like you! What's ignoble and weak stands no chance beside you.

How often you were near to me when you were long since far away from me, you glorified me with your light, warmed me that my frigid heart began to stir again, like a frozen stream when it's touched by the ray of heaven! Then I felt like fleeing to the stars with my bliss, so that it not be debased by the world around me.

I'd grown up like an unpropped vine, and the wild tendrils spread aimlessly across the ground. As you well know, there's many a noble energy that perishes with us because it isn't used. I flitted about like a will-o'-the-wisp, grasped at everything, was gripped by everything, but then only for the moment, and my clumsy energies exhausted themselves to no purpose. Everywhere I felt wanting, and still couldn't find my goal. So he found me.

For long enough he'd practised patience and art on his material, the so-called cultivated world, but his material had been and stayed stone and wood; it might, when occasion demanded, outwardly assume the noble human form, but that's not what my Adamas was about; he wanted human beings, and to create them he'd found his art too poor. That those he sought had once existed, those his art was too poor to create, this he clearly saw. Where they'd existed, he also knew. That's where he wished to go, to probe beneath the rubble for their genius and with it while away his lonely days. He came to Greece. So I found him.

I still see him approaching me in smiling contemplation, I still hear his greeting and his questions.

Like a plant when its peace soothes the striving spirit and simple contentment returns to the soul — so he stood before me.

And I, was I not the echo of his quiet inspiration? did the melodies of his being not reverberate in me? What I saw I became, and it was divine what I saw.

How feeble is even the most honest human industry compared with the sheer power of unbroken inspiration.

This doesn't linger on the surface, doesn't merely touch us here or there, has no need of time or means; nor does it need command,

compulsion and conviction; it takes hold of us in one moment on all sides and on all levels, low and high, and before we know it's there, before we can wonder what is coming over us, it turns us through and through into its blissfulness and beauty.

Happy the man whose path has thus been crossed in early youth by a noble spirit!

Oh, these are golden unforgettable days, full of the joys of love and sweet activity!

Adamas led me now into the world of Plutarch's heroes, now into the magical land of the Greek gods, now he used number and measure to bring to my youthful impetuousness order and composure, now he took me up into the mountains: by day to see the flowers of field and forest and the wild mosses of the rocks, by night to see the holy stars above us, and understand them after the manner of men.

There is a luscious feeling of well-being within us when our inner self can thus draw strength from its material, separating from it to bond with it more faithfully, and step by step the spirit becomes empowered.

But with threefold force I felt him and myself when, like shades from the past, in pride and joy, in anger and grief, we journeyed up as far as Athos and from there shipped eastwards to the Hellespont, then down to the shores of Rhodes and Taenarum's mountain chasms, through the silent islands all; when longing drove us inland from the coasts, into the sombre heart of ancient Peloponnese, to the lonely banks of the Eurotas, oh! the desolate valleys of Elis and Nemea and Olympia; when leaning against a pillar of one of forgotten Jupiter's temples, hugged by laurel roses and evergreens, we gazed into the wild riverbed, and the vibrance of spring and the ever youthful sun reminded us that man too had once been there and now is gone, that the glorious nature of humanity is barely there any more, like the fragment of a temple, or in memory as the image of one dead — then I sat playing sadly beside him, plucking the moss from a demi-god's pedestal, digging some hero's marble shoulder out of the rubble, and cutting away the brambles and the heather from the half-buried architraves, whilst my Adamas sketched the landscape that fondly held the ruins in its comforting embrace, the corn-covered hill, the olives, the herd of goats clinging to the mountain crag, the forest of elms sweeping down from the peaks to the valley; and the lizard frisked at our feet, and the flies buzzed about us in the stillness of noon — Dear

Bellarmin! I'd love to give a point-by-point account in Nestor's manner; I range through the past like a gleaner through a field of stubble, when the lord of the land has reaped; one picks up every piece of straw. And the time I stood beside him on the heights of Delos, what a day it was that dawned for me as I climbed with him the ancient marble steps up Cynthus' granite face. Here once dwelt the sun-god, amidst the heavenly festivals where, like golden clouds, assembled Greece glowed all around him. It's here the youths of Greece immersed themselves in floods of joy and inspiration, like Achilles in the Styx, and like the demi-god emerged invincible. In the groves, in the temples their souls awoke, each sounding in the other, and all faithfully preserving the rapturous chords.

But why am I speaking of this? As if we still had an inkling of those days! Oh! not even a beautiful dream can thrive under the curse that weighs upon us. Like a howling north wind the present blasts the blossoms of our spirit and sears them in their bloom. And yet it was a golden day that enfolded me on Cynthus! We reached the summit with dawn still breaking. Now he rose in his eternal youth, the ancient sun-god; serene and effortless as ever, the immortal titan with a thousand joys of his own soared upward, smiling down on his wasted land, on his temples, his pillars that fate had tossed before him like withered rose petals, mindlessly ripped from the bush by a passing child and scattered over the earth.

'Be like him!' Adamas cried out to me, grasped my hand and held it out towards the god, and I felt as if the morning winds were carrying us away, bringing us into the train of the holy being that now rose up to the summit of heaven, kindly and grand, and wonderfully infused the world and us with his spirit and his power.

Still my inmost self grieves and rejoices over every word Adamas spoke to me then, and I can't understand my privation when often I feel as he must have then. What is loss when man thus finds himself in a world which is his own? In us is everything. If a hair should fall from his head, what is it to him? Why does man so strive for bondage when he could be a god! 'You will be lonely, my dearest!' Adamas also said to me then, 'you will be like a crane, left behind by his kin in the harsh season whilst they seek out the spring in distant lands.'

And there you have it, dear friend! That's what makes us poor for all our wealth, that we cannot be alone, that as long as we live the love

within us will not die. Give me back my Adamas, and come with all my kindred that amongst us may renew itself the ancient world of beauty, that together we may gather and commingle in the arms of our godhead, nature, and you will see, then I'll know nothing of need.

But let no one say it's fate that parts us! It's we, we ourselves who do it! we take our delight in plunging into the night of the unknown, into the cold alien terrain of some other world, and were it possible, we would quit the sun's realm and storm beyond the bounds of our wandering star. Alas! for man's wild breast there can be no home; and as the sun's ray sears the plants of earth it first unfolded, so man murders the sweet flowers that flourished at his breast, the joys of kinship and of love.

I might seem to bear a grudge against my Adamas for leaving me, but I bear him no grudge. Oh, he was going to return!

Hidden in the depths of Asia there's said to be a people of rare virtue; it's thither he was driven by his hopes.

I kept him company as far as Nios. Those were bitter days. I've learnt to suffer pain, but have no strength in me for such a parting.

With every moment that brought us closer to the final hour emerged more clearly how this man was woven into my being. As a dying man to his fleeing breath, so clove my soul to him.

At Homer's grave we passed a few more days, and Nios became for me the most hallowed of the islands.

Finally we tore ourselves away. My heart had worn itself weary. By the last moment I was calmer. I lay on my knees before him, clasped him for the last time in these arms: 'Give me a blessing, my father!' I softly cried up to him, and he smiled grandly, and his brow widened before the stars of morning, and his eye pierced the spaces of heaven — 'Preserve him for me,' he cried, 'you spirits of a better time! and raise him to your immortality, and all you friendly powers of heaven and earth, be with him!'

'There is a god in us,' he added more calmly, 'who steers our fate like rivers of water, and all things are his element. Be this god with you above all!'

So we parted. Farewell, my Bellarmin!

Hyperion to Bellarmin [V]

Whither could I flee from myself, had I not the dear days of my youth?

Like a spirit that finds no rest by Acheron, I revisit the deserted scenes of my life. All things age and renew themselves. Why are we excluded from nature's beautiful cycle? Or does it hold for us too?

I'd gladly believe it, but for one thing in us that boils up from the depths of our being like the titan in Etna, the monstrous striving to be everything.

And yet who'd not rather feel it in himself like seething oil than own that he was born for the yoke and the whip? Which is nobler: a rampant battle-steed or a droopy-eared nag?

Dear friend! there was a time when my breast too basked in great hopes, when for me too the joy of immortality throbbed in every pulse, when I would wander amid grand designs as if in some vast sylvan night, when, like the fish of the ocean, I'd happily press on and ever onwards in my shoreless future.

How boldly, blissful nature! did the youth leap from your cradle! how he rejoiced in his untested arms! His bow was ready strung and his arrows rustled in the quiver, and the immortals, the sublime spirits of antiquity, were his leaders, and his Adamas was in their midst.

Wherever I was or went, these glorious forms kept me company; like flames heroic deeds from all the ages mingled in my mind, and just as those gigantic shapes, the clouds of heaven, merge together into one exultant storm, so merged in me the hundredfold triumphs of the Olympiads, became one single endless triumph.

Who can withstand it, who is not floored by the terrible glory of antiquity, like young woods flattened by a hurricane, when it seizes him as I was seized, and when, like me, he lacks the element in which to gain a firming sense of self?

Oh, like a storm the greatness of the ancients surely bowed my head, it blasted the bloom from my cheek, and often I would lie where no eye could see me, under a thousand tears, like a fallen fir when it lies by the stream and hides its withered crown beneath the waters. How gladly I'd have bought with blood a moment from a great man's life!

But what help to me was that? The fact is, no one wanted me.

Oh, it's pitiful to see oneself so crushed; and let him who finds this hard to understand not trouble himself further, and give his thanks to nature for having like the butterflies created him for joy, and go and in his life speak nevermore of misery and pain.

I loved my heroes as a fly loves the light; I'd seek their dangerous nearness and flee from it and seek it out again.

Like a bleeding hart into the stream, I would often plunge headlong into the whirlpool of joy, to cool my burning breast and wash away the glorious raving dreams of fame and greatness, but what help was that?

And often when at midnight my heated heart drove me down into the garden beneath the dewy trees, and the burn's lullaby and the balmy breeze and the moonlight soothed my senses, and so tranquil and free the silver clouds above me stirred, and the ebbing voice of the surging sea sounded faintly from afar, how fondly all its love's great phantoms played then with my heart!

'Farewell, you heavenly ones!' I often spoke in spirit, when over me the softly sounding melody of morning's light began, 'you glorious dead, farewell! Could I only follow you, shake off all this age has given me and set forth into the freer realm of the shades!'

But I languish parched in my chains and snatch with bitter joy the beggarly bowl that's offered for my thirst.

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Hyperion to Bellarmin [VI]

My island had grown too strait for me since Adamas's leaving. I'd been bored in Tinos for years. I wanted to get out into the world.

'Go first to Smyrna,' said my father, 'learn there the arts of seamanship and war, learn the speech of polished peoples, learn about their constitutions and opinions and manners and customs, prove all things and hold fast the best! — Then for my part go on as you will.'

'Learn a little patience too,' my mother added, and I accepted the advice and thanked her for it.

It's rapturous to take the first step beyond the bounds of youth, and when I look back to my parting from Tinos, it's like thinking of the day

of my birth. There was a new sun above me, and I relished land and sea and air as if for the first time.

The living activity with which I now pursued my education in Smyrna, and my rapid progress, did much to soothe my heart. And from this time I can recall many a blissful evening, my labours done. How often would I stroll beneath the evergreen trees on the banks of the Meles, by the birthplace of my Homer, and pick sacrificial flowers and cast them into the hallowed stream! Then in my peaceful dreams I trod the path to the nearby grotto where, they say, the venerable poet sang his Iliad. I found him. Every sound in me stilled before his presence. I opened his divine poem and it was as if I'd never known it, so wholly new the way it came alive in me now.

I also have fond memories of roaming through the country around Smyrna. It's a glorious land, and a thousand times I've wished for wings to fly just once a year to Asia Minor.

From the plain of Sardis I made my way up through the crags of Tmolus.

I'd spent the night in a friendly hut at the mountain's foot, amid myrtles, amidst the fragrance of the rockrose bush, with the swans playing beside me in the golden waters of the Pactolus, and an ancient temple of Cybele, like a bashful ghost, glancing out from between the elms into the bright moonlight. Five lovely pillars stood mourning over the rubble, and a regal portal lay toppled at their feet.

Now through a thousand blooming bushes my path grew upwards. From the craggy slope whispering trees bowed, showering their gossamer flakes on my head. I'd set out in the morning. By noon I'd reached the crest of the range. I stood there, gladly gazing, relishing the purer airs of heaven. Those were blissful hours.

The land from which I'd climbed lay before me like a sea, youthful, full of living joy; it was with a heavenly unending play of colours that spring greeted my heart, and as the sun of heaven found itself again in the thousandfold changes of light given back to it by the earth, so my spirit knew itself in the fullness of life embracing it, besieging it from every side.

To the left the torrent, exulting like a giant, plunged down into the woods from the marble cliff that beetled above me, where the eagle played with its young and the snowy peaks glistened up into the blue

aether; to the right storm clouds came rolling over the forests of Mount Sipylus; I didn't feel the gale that carried them, only the breath of a breeze in my hair, but I heard their thunder, as one hears the voice of the future, and I saw their flames like the distant light of dimly sensed divinity. I turned to the south and wandered on. There it lay open before me, the whole paradisal landscape through which the Cayster flows with many a charming wimple, as if it couldn't linger long enough amidst all the affluence and loveliness surrounding it. Like the zephyrs my spirit fluttered blissfully from beauty to beauty, from the nameless peaceful hamlet, huddled deep below at the foot of the mountain, out to where the range of Messogis looms.

I returned to Smyrna like a drunk man from a banquet. My heart was too full of delights for me not to endow mortality with something of its surplus. I'd too happily absorbed as bounty nature's beauty for me not to fill with it the gaps in human life. My shabby Smyrna was clothed in the colours of my inspiration and stood there like a bride. I found myself attracted by the sociable city-dwellers. The absurdity in their manners amused me like a child's buffoonery, and since I was by nature beyond all their established forms and customs, I toyed with them all, donning and doffing them like carnival costumes.

But what really added spice for me to the vapid fare of everyday communion were those good faces and figures that merciful nature here and there still sends like stars into our darkness.

What hearty joy I took in them! how full of faith I read those friendly hieroglyphics! But it was much like my erstwhile experience with the birches in spring. I'd heard about the sap of these trees and had extravagant expectations of the delicious drink their lovely stems must yield. But it lacked both strength and spirit.

Alas! and how utterly hopeless was everything else I heard and saw.

Sometimes, when I went about among these polished people, it really seemed to me that human nature had broken down into so many species of beast. Here, as everywhere, it was the men who were especially degenerate and corrupt.

There are animals that howl when they hear music. But when talk turned to beauty of the spirit and youthfulness of heart, my more mannerly humans laughed. Wolves slink off when someone strikes a light. When these people saw a spark of reason they'd turn their backs like thieves.

When I spoke the odd warm word of ancient Greece, they yawned and opined, it was this day and age we had to live in; and another added weightily, good taste was still alive and well.

And sure enough, this was soon in evidence. One of them japed like a deckhand, the other puffed out his cheeks and spouted gobbets of wisdom.

Or there'd be one who'd act enlightened, snap his fingers at heaven and proclaim: he'd never worried about the birds in the bush, give him the bird in the hand anytime! Yet mention death to him and he would at once clasp his hands, and in the course of conversation observe that it's a dangerous thing our priests now count for nothing.

The only ones I sometimes had a use for were the tellers of tales, the walking roll calls of foreign cities and countries, the talking peep boxes in which one can see spires and market places and potentates on chargers.

I finally grew weary of throwing myself away, looking for grapes in a desert and flowers on a field of ice.

I now lived more determinedly alone, and the gentle spirit of my youth had almost wholly vanished from my soul. The incurableness of the age had become plain to me from so much I tell and leave untold, and the beautiful consolation of finding my world in a single soul, embracing my kind in but one friendly figure, this too was denied me.

Dear friend! what were life without hope? A spark that leaps from the coal and perishes, and like a gust of wind heard in the dreary season, it soughs for a moment and then it's gone — should we think that's the way it is with us?

Even the swallow seeks friendlier climes in winter, the hart runs around in the heat of the day and its eyes seek streams of water. Who tells the infant its mother won't withhold her breast? And look! it seeks it still.

Nothing could live if it had not hope. My heart now locked its treasures away, but only to keep them safe for better times, for the one, the holy, the true that at some period of existence should surely meet my thirsting soul.

How blissfully I'd often cling to it in hours of forefeeling when it gently played like moonlight around my soothed brow? Already then I knew you, already then you looked upon me like a spirit from the

clouds, you who'd one day rise for me, in the peacefulness of beauty, out of the dismal wave of the world! Now this heart would never more battle and burn.

As a lily sways in a silent breeze, so stirred my being in its element, in rapturous dreams of her.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [VII]

Smyrna was soured for me now. My heart had grown altogether weary over time. Now and then the wish might rear in me to wander round the world, or find some war to fight in, or else seek out my Adamas and burn away my rancour in his fire; but wish was all it stayed, and my futile sapless life refused to be refreshed.

Summer was now coming to an end; already I could sense the dreich dank days and the whistling of the winds and the brawling of the rain-swollen streams; and nature, which like a foaming fountain had swelled up in every flower and tree, stood already now before my darkened mind, dwindling and closed down and turned in upon itself, like me.

I wanted to take with me what I could of all this fleeting life; all I'd grown to love without I wanted to make safe within, for well I knew that the returning year would find me no longer amidst these trees and mountains; and so now, more than before, I walked and rode about throughout the region.

But what mainly drove me abroad was the secret longing to catch sight of one I'd encountered daily for some time, passing beneath the trees before the city gates.

Like a young titan the glorious stranger strode amongst this race of pygmies who with timid joy drank in his beauty, sizing up his strength and stature, feasting with furtive glance upon the glowing bronzed Roman face, as if upon forbidden fruit; and it was a glorious moment each time this man's eye, for whose gaze the vastness of the aether seemed too small a bound, so laid aside all pride and searched and strove until it felt itself in mine, and blushingly we passed each other by, looking all the while.

One day I'd ridden deep into the forests of Mount Mimas, and didn't turn home till late evening. I'd dismounted and was leading my horse

down a steep, broken path, over tree-roots and stones, and as I wound my way down through the scrub into the hollow that now opened before me, I was suddenly set upon by Karaburun robbers, and at first I struggled to fend off their two drawn sabres, but they were already weary from other work, and in the end I coped. I calmly got back on my horse and rode on down.

At the foot of the mountain, amidst the woods and the piled-up crags, a small glade opened up before me. It grew light. The moon had just risen over the gloomy trees. From a distance I saw horses stretched out on the ground and men beside them in the grass.

'Who are you?' I called out.

'That's Hyperion!' cried a hero's voice, joyfully surprised. 'You know me,' the voice went on; 'I see you every day under the trees by the city gates.'

My horse flew to him like an arrow. The moonlight shone bright in his face. I knew him; I jumped down.

'Good evening!' cried the gentle strapping fellow, giving me a look both wild and tender, and his brawny fist squeezed mine and made me feel his meaning through and through.

Oh, now my bootless life was at an end!

Alabanda — this was the stranger's name — now told me that he and his servant had been set upon by robbers and the two that I'd encountered had been sent packing by him, that he'd lost his way out of the forest and hence had been forced to stay put till I came by. 'This has cost me a friend,' he added, pointing to his dead horse.

I gave mine to his servant and we proceeded on foot.

'It serves us right,' I began, as we made our way out of the forest arm in arm; 'why did we have to hold back for so long and pass each other by, so that it took this misadventure to bring us both together.'

'But I must tell you,' replied Alabanda, 'that you were more to blame, you were the colder one. I rode after you today.'

'My glorious friend!' I cried, 'just you wait and see! you shall never surpass me in love.'

Each moment brought us closer, more joyfully together.

As we approached the city we passed a well-built caravansary, resting amid murmuring fountains and fruit trees and sweet-scented meadows.

We decided to spend the night there. We sat up late together, with the windows open. A sublime spirit of stillness enfolded us. Earth and sea were sunk in blissful silence, like the stars that hung above us. Barely a breeze floated into the room from the sea and gently played with our light, and perhaps the more plangent tones of distant music drifted to us, while the thundercloud lay cradled in the aether's bed and sounded fitfully through the stillness from afar, like a slumbering giant when he sighs more deeply in his dreadful dreams.

Our souls were bound to be all the more powerfully drawn together, because they'd been unwillingly closed off from one another. We met like two streams that come rolling down the mountain and hurl aside the ballast of earth and stones and rotten wood and all the sluggish mess that holds them back, clearing their way to each other and bursting through to where, embracing and embraced with equal force, they mingle into one majestic river and begin their wandering course into the vastness of the sea.

He, by fate and men's barbarism driven from hearth and home and hunted hither and thither amongst strangers, from early youth made savage and embittered, and yet also with an inner heart full of love, full of longing to break out of the coarse husk and into a congenial element; I, so inwardly detached from everything already, so wholly alien and lonely amongst men, in the dearest melodies of my heart accompanied so grotesquely by the world's clanging cymbals; I, for whom the blind and lame were hated of my soul, yet myself too blind and lame, so utterly encumbered by all I had in common, be it ever so remotely, with the sophisticates and pedants, the barbarians and the wiseacres — and so full of hope, so full of single-hearted expectation of a more beautiful life —

How could these two youths not rush to embrace each other in temptestuous joy?

O you, my friend and brother-in-arms, my Alabanda, where are you? I could believe you've gone across into the unknown land, to peace, and have become again what once we were as children.

Sometimes, when a thunderstorm passes overhead, dispensing its divine energies on forests and seeded fields, or when the waves of the surging sea disport themselves, or a chorus of eagles soars around the mountain peaks where I wander, my heart can stir as if my Alabanda

were not far away; but more visibly, more vividly, more palpably he lives within me, just as once he stood before me, a fierily stern and terrible accuser when he rehearsed the sins of the age. How then my spirit awakened in its depths, how the thundering words of remorseless justice rolled over my tongue! Like harbingers of Nemesis, our thoughts scoured the earth and cleansed it till not a trace of any curse remained.

We also summoned the past before our tribunal; proud Rome didn't daunt us with its glory, nor Athens seduce us with its youthful bloom.

Like storms when they, exulting and relentless, blast their way through woods and over mountains, so our souls forged ever onwards in their colossal projects; not that we, like milksops, brought forth our world as if by incantation, callowly expecting to encounter no resistance — Alabanda was too astute and too manful for that. But often even effortless enthusiasm can be soldierly and shrewd.

One day I recall with particular vividness.

We'd gone together out into the countryside, sat in intimate embrace in the dusky shade of the evergreen laurel, looking together in our Plato where he speaks so wonderfully sublimely of ageing and renewal, and now and then resting our eyes upon the muted leafless landscape where heaven, more beautifully than ever, with cloud and sunlight played about the trees in their autumnal sleep.

Then we spoke much of present-day Greece, both with bleeding hearts, for this same dishonoured soil was fatherland to Alabanda too.

And he was indeed uncommonly moved.

'When I see a child,' he cried, 'and consider how demeaning and corrupting is the yoke that it will bear, and that it will languish, as we do, that it will search for human beings, as we do, and ask, as we do, after the beautiful and the true, that it will fruitlessly waste away because it will be alone, as we are, that it — O Greeks, just take your sons from their cradles and cast them into the river, so that at least they'll be spared your shame!'

'Surely, Alabanda, things will surely change!' I said.

'How?' he retorted; 'our heroes have lost their fame, our sages their disciples. Great deeds, without a noble people to heed them, are no more than a hefty blow to a numb skull, and lofty words that find no lofty hearts in which to echo are like a dying leaf rustling down into the dung. What will you do about it?'

'I will,' I said, 'take my shovel and fling the dung into a pit. A people in whom greatness of thought and deed no longer inspires greatness of thought and deed has nothing more in common with others that still are human beings, it has forfeited all rights, and it's an empty farce, a superstition, to go on reverencing such will-less corpses as if there beat a Roman heart within them. Away with them! It shall not stand where it stands, the rotten withered tree, for it steals light and air from the young life ripening for a new world.'

Alabanda flew to me and hugged me, and his kisses pierced my soul. 'Comrade!' he cried, 'dear comrade! Oh, now I've got one hundred arms with which to fight!

'I hear my melody at last,' he went on, in a voice that stirred my heart like a battle cry, 'and that's enough for me! They're glorious words you've spoken, Hyperion! What? the god shall depend on the worm? The god in us, for whom the path to infinity beckons, shall stand and wait till the worm gets out of his way? No! no! We don't ask whether you're willing! You never are, you slaves and barbarians! Nor will we try to change you for the better, for that's a waste of effort! we just want to see to it you make way for the triumphant march of man. Oh! let someone light the torch for me that I may sear the weed from the heath! let the mine be made for me that I may blast the sluggish clods from the earth!'

'Where possible we'll push them gently aside,' I interjected.

Alabanda was silent for a while.

'I take my joy in the future,' he spoke again at last, ardently clasping both my hands. 'Thank God! I'll meet no common end. To be happy is to be torpid in the mouths of the slaves. To be happy! when I hear you slaves speak to me of being happy, it's like having pap and lukewarm water on the tongue. So fatuous and futile is everything for which you sacrifice your laurel crowns, your immortality.

'O holy light that wanders restlessly above us, working throughout its vast realm, and transmits its soul to me too in the rays that I drink, may your happiness be mine!

'The sons of the sun feed on their deeds; it's by victory they live; with their own spirit they rouse themselves, and their strength is their joy.' —

The spirit of this man would often seize you so, you might almost have been ashamed, feeling yourself so carried away light as a feather.

'O heaven and earth!' I cried, 'that's what I call joy! — Those are other times, that's not a voice from my childish age, that's not the soil where men's hearts heave under the slave driver's whip. — Yes! yes! by your glorious soul, man! You will save the fatherland with me.'

'That I will,' he cried, 'or perish.'

From this day on we grew ever holier and dearer to one another. There was now a deep and ineffable earnestness between us. But we were only the more blissfully together. Each of us lived only in the eternal ground tones of his being, and onward we strode without frills from one great harmony to another. Our common life was full of glorious rigour and boldness.

'How is it you've become so still?' Alabanda once asked me smilingly. 'In the torrid zones,' said I, 'nearer the sun, even the birds don't sing.'

But in this world all things rise and fall, and man with all his giant strength holds nothing fast. Once I saw a child stretch out its hand to catch the moonlight; but the light went calmly on its way. So too are we left standing there, wrestling to hold back wandering fate.

Oh, could we only ponder it as calmly as we watch the stars in their course!

The happier you are, the less it takes to bring you down, and such blissful days as Alabanda and I were living are like the peak of a sheer crag where it needs the merest touch from your companion to send you abruptly tumbling over the lacerating edges, down into the endless glooming depths.

We'd taken a glorious trip to Chios, and found a thousand joys in one another. Like breezes over the surface of the sea, the friendly enchantments of nature swayed over us. In joyful surprise we looked at one another without speaking a word, but our eyes were saying, 'I've never seen you like this before!' So glorified were we by the powers of earth and heaven.

During the trip we'd argued with bright ardour about a good few things; this time, as before, my heart had taken its joy in watching this spirit on his bold erratic course, as he so heedless of all rules, with such cheerful abandon and yet mostly so sure-footedly pursued his path.

As soon as we were back on land we made haste to be alone.

'You can't really convince anyone,' I now said most lovingly, 'you win people over, you beguile them before you begin; when you speak it's impossible to doubt, and he who doesn't doubt isn't convinced.'

'Proud flatterer,' he responded, 'you lie! but it's as well that you remind me! only too often you've robbed me of my reason! I wouldn't wish to be free from you, not for all the crowns in the world, but yet I often find it troubling that you should be so indispensable to me, that I'm so fettered to you; and look,' he went on, 'so that you may have me all, you shall know all about me too! up till now, for all the joy and glory, we've never thought to delve into the past.'

Then he told me of his fate; it was like watching a young Hercules struggle with Megaera.

'Will you now forgive me,' he concluded the tale of his adversities, 'will you now have more patience if often I'm coarse and rancid and hard to stomach!'

'Oh stop, stop!' I cried, deeply moved; 'but to think that you're still here, that you preserved yourself for me!'

'That's right! for you!' he cried, 'and I'm delighted you yet find me palatable fare. And though sometimes I might taste to you like a crab, just keep on pressing me until I'm fit to drink.'

'Leave me be! leave me be!' I cried; I resisted in vain; the man made a child of me; nor did I conceal it from him; he saw my tears, and woe to him if he shouldn't have seen them!

'We're carousing,' Alabanda now resumed, 'we're killing time in drunkenness.'

'We're having our bridegroom days together,' I blithely cried, 'so why shouldn't it still sound as if we were in Arcadia. — But to return to what we were discussing earlier!

'Say what you will, you grant too much power to the state. It may not demand what it cannot enforce. Yet what love gives, and the spirit, cannot be enforced. Let it leave that untouched, or we should take its precious law and nail it to the pillory! By heaven! he little knows how much he sins who would turn the state into a school of morals. It's this that's always made the state into a hell, that man has tried to make of it his heaven.

'The state is the coarse husk round life's kernel and nothing more. It's the wall around the garden of human fruits and flowers.

'But what help is the wall around the garden when the soil lies parched? Then all that helps is rainfall from heaven.

'O rainfall from heaven! O inspiration! You will bring again to us the springtime of the peoples. The state cannot command you hither. But let it not hinder you, then you will come, come you will, with your almighty joys, wreathe us in golden clouds and lift us high above mortality, and we shall marvel and wonder whether we're still who we were, we, the needy who'd ask the stars if a blossoming spring awaited us there — do you ask me when this shall come to pass? Then when the darling of time, the youngest, most beautiful daughter of time, the new church arises from these soiled and worn-out forms, when the wakened feeling for the divine brings back to man his divinity and beautiful youth to his breast, when — I can't proclaim it, for I barely sense it, but it shall surely, surely come. Death is a herald of life, and that we're now slumbering in our sickhouses, that's a sure sign there'll soon be a healthy awakening. Then, only then shall we truly be, then is the spirits' element found!'

Alabanda was silent, and looked at me astonished for a while. I was rapt with endless hopes; divine energies carried me away like a wisp of cloud —

'Come!' I cried, grasping Alabanda by his garment, 'come, who can stand it any longer in the benighted dungeon that surrounds us?'

'Whither, my drunken dreamer?' answered Alabanda dryly, and a shade of derision seemed to pass across his face.

I felt that I'd been flung down from the clouds. 'Go!' I said, 'you're a little man!'

At that moment several strangers entered the room, striking figures, mostly gaunt and pale, as far as I could tell in the moonlight, and calm, but there was something in their mien that pierced the soul like a sword, and it was like standing in the presence of omniscience; one might have doubted whether these were the aspects of needy natures, had not murdered feeling left behind its traces here and there.

One I found particularly striking. The stillness of his features was the stillness of a battlefield. Within this man wrath and love had raged, and intelligence beamed out above the wreckage of his heart like the eye of a hawk, perched on palace ruins. Deep contempt lay on his lips. One sensed it was no trivial purpose that engaged this man.

Another more likely owed his calm to natural hardness of heart. He displayed barely any trace of violence, either freely willed or inflicted by fate.

A third could rather have wrung from life his coldness by force of conviction, and often be at war still with himself, for there was a lurking contradiction in his being; to me he seemed to feel the need to keep himself in check. He had the least to say.

As soon as they came in Alabanda leapt up like sprung steel.

'We've been looking for you,' one of them cried.

'You'd find me,' he said laughingly, 'if I hid myself in the centre of the earth. They're my friends,' he added, turning towards me.

They seemed to eye me rather sharply.

'Here's another keen to see the world a better place,' cried Alabanda in a while, pointing to me.

'Are you serious about that?' asked one of the three.

'Bettering the world is no joking matter,' I said.

'You've said a great deal in few words!' cried one of them in his turn. 'You're our man!' another.

'You think that way too?' I asked.

'Ask us what we do!' was the response.

'And if I asked?'

'Then we'd tell you we're here to clean up the earth, that we clear the stones from the field, and break the hard clods with the mattock, and dig furrows with the plough, and seize the tares by the roots, cut them through at the roots, rip them out with the roots, that they may wither away in the searing sun.'

'Not that we expect to reap,' another interjected, 'for us the reward will come too late; we shall not live to see the harvest ripen.

'We're in the evening of our days. We erred often, hoped much and achieved little. We liked to take more risks than time to think. We were eager to be quickly done and trusted to good fortune. We spoke much of joy and pain, and loved and hated both. We played with fate and it did the same with us. From beggar's staff to crown it tossed us up and down. It swung us as one swings a glowing censer, and we glowed till the coals turned to ash. We've ceased to speak of fortune good or ill. We've grown beyond life's middle where all is green and warm. But that which outlives youth is not the worst. It's from hot metal the cold sword is forged. And they say that burnt-out dead volcanoes yield no mean young wine.'

'It's not for our sakes we say this,' cried another now more urgently, 'it's for your sakes we say it! We don't go begging for men's hearts. We don't need their hearts, their wills. For there's no way they can be against us, for everything is for us, and the foolish and the prudent and the simple and the wise and all vices and all virtues of crudity and culture are in our service without hire, and help us blindly on towards our goal — only we would wish that there be some to savour what we do, and so, from amongst the thousand blind helpers, we select the best that we may turn them into seeing helpers — but if no one wants to dwell where we have built, it's not our fault and not our loss. We did our part. If no one wants to gather where we ploughed, who will blame us for that? Who will curse the tree when its apple falls into the mire? I've often told myself, "you're offering to corruption," and still went on to finish my day's work.'

'These are impostors!' all the walls cried out to my quickened sense. I felt like one about to suffocate in smoke, who smashes doors and windows to get out, so did I thirst for air and freedom.

And soon they saw how ill at ease I was and broke off. Day was already dawning when I stepped out of the caravansary where we'd been together. I felt the breath of the morning breeze like balsam on a burning wound.

I was already too riled by Alabanda's derision for his mysterious connections not to make me lose all faith in him now.

'He's bad,' I cried, 'yes, he's bad. He feigns unbounded openness and consorts with men like these — and conceals it from you.'

I felt like a bride when she learns her beloved is secretly living with a whore.

Oh, this was not the kind of pain one likes to nurse, holding it to one's heart like a child, singing it to slumber with the tones of the nightingale!

Like a wrathful serpent when it climbs remorselessly up knees and loins, enwinding every limb, and sinks its venomed fangs now into breast, now into nape, so was my pain, so did it grip me in its terrible embrace. I summoned my highest heart for help and strove for noble thoughts so as to still hold back, and for a few moments too it worked, but now I'd also found the strength for rage, and now, like a malicious blaze, I killed each spark of love within me.

'He must,' I thought, ' — these are his people after all — he must be conspiring with them against you! What did he want with you anyway? What could he have looked for in you, the dreamer? Oh, had he but gone his way! But then they get their peculiar pleasure in taking on their opposite! having such a strange beast in their stable suits them just fine!' —

And yet I'd been ineffably happy with him, had so often sunk in his embrace and emerged with heart invincible, so often like steel been tempered and purged in his fire!

When once on a serene midnight I pointed out to him the Dioscuri, and Alabanda laid his hand on my heart and said: 'Those are mere stars, Hyperion, mere letters with which the names of the heroic brothers are written in the heavens; it's in us they are! living and true, with their courage and their divine love, and you, you are the son of the god and share your immortality with your mortal Castor!' —

When I roamed with him through the forests of Ida, and we descended down into the valley to ask the silent burial mounds about their dead, and I said to Alabanda that amongst the mounds one perhaps belonged to the spirit of Achilles and his beloved friend, and Alabanda confessed to me that he was often a child and imagined our one day falling in a single vale of battle and resting together beneath a single tree — who would have thought then that it would come to this?

I turned it over and over with all the strength of mind that I had left, I accused him, I defended him, and accused him the more bitterly again; I struggled against my mood and tried to cheer myself, only for all my efforts to end in utter gloom.

Alas! my eye had been left red and raw from many a hefty blow and was hardly even beginning to heal, how should it now see more soundly?

Alabanda visited me next day. My heart seethed when he came in, but I restrained myself, however much I was nettled and angered by his pride and his composure.

'The air is glorious,' he finally said, 'and it will be a very beautiful evening, let's walk up to the acropolis together.'

I agreed. For a long time no word was spoken. 'What is it you want?' I asked at last.

'You can ask me that?' replied this savage spirit with a sorrow that pierced my soul. I was taken aback, confounded.

'What am I to think of you?' I began again at last.

'Think me what I am!' he answered calmly.

'You need to make apology,' I said in a changed voice, looking at him proudly, 'absolve yourself! cleanse yourself!'

That was too much for him.

'How can it be,' he cried indignantly, 'that this fellow should bend me to his every whim? — It's true, they'd let me out of school too early, I'd dragged all the chains and torn them all asunder, there was just one I'd missed, only one still left to smash, I hadn't yet been chastised by a fantast — go on, murmur all you like! I've kept silent long enough!'

'O Alabanda! Alabanda!' I cried.

'Be still,' he replied, 'and don't use my name against me like a dagger!'

Now my own resentment exploded in its turn. We didn't let it rest till there was hardly any going back. We violently destroyed the garden of our love. We often stopped and stood there saying nothing, and would so gladly have fallen on each other's necks with thousand joys, but wretched pride stifled every sound of love that rose up from the heart.

'Farewell!' I cried at last and rushed away. Despite myself I had to look back, despite himself Alabanda had come after me.

'That's a strange beggar, isn't it, Alabanda?' I called out to him, 'his last farthing and he flings it in the mire!'

'And if that's the case may starve for all I care,' he cried and went his way.

Stunned I staggered on and presently was standing by the sea, gazing onto the waves — oh! down strove my heart, down into the deep, and my arms flew out towards the free flowing surge; but soon, as if from heaven, a gentler spirit came over me and with its peaceful wand brought order to the turmoil of my sorrowing soul; more tranquilly I pondered my fate, my faith in the world, my dismal experiences, I reflected on my fellow men, as from early youth I'd come to know and apprehend them, brought up in their multifarious ways, and everywhere found dull or strident discord; only in simple childlike limitation did I still find pure melodies — 'it's better,' I told myself, 'to become a bee and build one's house in innocence than to rule with the rulers of the world and howl

with them as with wolves, than to lord it over whole peoples and sully one's hands on such polluted material.' I wanted to return to Tinos and live for my gardens and fields.

Smile all you like! I was very much in earnest. For the life of the world consists in alternate unfolding and closing, issuing forth and returning to self, why not too the heart of man?

It's true this new lesson was hard for me to accept, it's true I was loath to leave behind the proud errancy of my youth — for who gladly tears off his wings? — but it had to be!

I went through with it. I was now really embarked. A fresh mountain breeze carried me out of Smyrna's harbour. In wonderful tranquillity, just like a child knowing nothing of the next moment, I lay there on my ship and gazed on the trees and mosques of the city, my green walks along the shore, my footpath up to the acropolis, all this I gazed upon, and let it draw away, further and further away; but now, as I came out onto the high sea and everything was slowly sinking lower, like a coffin into the grave, suddenly then it was as if my heart were broken — 'O heaven!' I cried, and all the life in me awoke and struggled to hold back the fleeing present, but it was gone, gone!

Like a mist it lay before me, that heavenly land where, like a hind let loose on open pasture, far and wide I'd roamed over vales and heights and brought the echo of my heart to springs and streams, to breadths and depths of the earth.

Yonder onto Tmolus I'd walked in lonely innocence; down there to where Ephesus once stood in happy youth and Teos and Miletus, up there into the holy grieving Troad I'd wandered with Alabanda — with Alabanda — and like a god I'd ruled over him, and like a child, tender and trusting, I'd done his eye's bidding with joy in my soul, full of jubilant delight in his being, always happy, whether holding his horse's bridle for him, or when, exalted above myself, in glorious resolve, in daring thoughts, in fiery eloquence, I matched his soul!

And now it had come to this, now I was nothing, I'd been so hopelessly despoiled of everything, become the poorest among men and didn't even know how.

'O endless erring!' I thought to myself, 'when will man tear himself free from your chains?

'We speak of our hearts, our plans, as if they were ours, and yet it's a power outside ourselves that tosses us about and lays us in the grave just as it pleases, and we know neither whence it comes nor whither it goes.

'We'd like to grow high up here and spread our boughs and branches out there, and yet it's soil and weather that decide the way it goes with us, and if the lightning falls upon your crown and splits you down to the roots, poor tree! what has it to do with you?'

That's what I thought. Does it anger you, my Bellarmin? Just wait to hear what's still to come.

You see, the sad thing, my dear friend! is that the mind so readily takes on the errant heart's complexion, so readily holds fast to fleeting sorrow, that thought, which ought to heal the pains, becomes itself sick, that the gardener whose task it is to plant the rosebushes so often lacerates his hand on them, oh! it's this that's made many a man a fool before those whom, like another Orpheus, he'd otherwise have ruled, it's this that's so often made the noblest nature an object of derision before such men as can be found in any street, this is the rock on which heaven's favourites founder, that their love is powerful and tender as their mind, that often their heart's waves move more strongly and more swiftly than the trident with which the sea-god rules them, and therefore, my dear friend, let no man get above himself!

Hyperion to Bellarmin [VIII]

Can you bear to hear it, will you be able to grasp it when I tell you of my long sick sorrow?

Take me as I give myself and consider that it's better to die because one lived than to live because one never lived! Don't envy the griefless, the idols of wood who lack nothing because they're so poor in soul, who care nothing whether it's rain or shine because they've nothing that needs nurturing.

Yes! yes! it's oh so easy to be happy and at peace when you've a shallow heart and a narrow spirit. You're welcome to it; for who is bothered that the wooden target doesn't moan when the arrow strikes it, and that the empty pot makes so hollow a sound when flung against the wall?

Only you ought to learn your limits, dear people, ought to wonder in all silence if you cannot grasp that others aren't so happy, so self-contented, ought to be wary of making your wisdom law, for if you were obeyed that would be the end of the world.

I was living now a very still and simple life on Tinos. And I really did let the world's appearances pass by like autumn mists, sometimes laughing moist-eyed at my heart when it flew out for a morsel, like a bird to painted grapes, and I stayed still and friendly all the while.

I now happily left every man his opinions, his foibles. I was converted, I no longer wanted to convert others, only it saddened me to see that people thought I left their farce unchallenged because I set such great store by it as they. It's not so much that I wished to submit to their silliness, but I tried to spare their feelings where I could. 'It gives them joy after all,' I'd think, 'it's what keeps them going!'

Often I even suffered myself to join in, and no matter how spiritless and impassive my presence, nobody noticed, nothing whatever was found wanting, and had I begged forgiveness for my demeanour, they'd have stood there in wonder and asked: 'What have you done to offend us then?' How very tolerant!

Often when I stood by my window of a morning and the bustling day approached me, I too could forget myself a moment, could look about me as if eager to engage in some activity in which my being still found its pleasure as before, but then I would chide myself, then I'd bethink myself, like a man who lets slip sounds from his mother tongue in a land where no one understands it — 'whither, my heart?' I'd sensibly tell myself and obey.

'What does it mean that man desires so much?' I often asked, 'why this infinity in his breast? infinity? where is it then? who has perceived it then? He wants more than he can have! that's surely true! Oh! that's something you've experienced often enough. And that's the way it must be too. That's what imparts the sweet intoxicating sense of energy that it doesn't flow forth as it will, that's what makes the beautiful dreams of immortality and all the lovely and colossal phantoms that enrapture man a thousandfold, that's what creates for man his Elysium and his gods that his life's line doesn't run straight, that his path isn't true as an arrow's and an alien force impedes him in his flight.

'The heart's wave wouldn't foam up so beautifully, becoming spirit, if fate, that ancient silent rock, didn't stand in its way.

'But yet the impulse dies within our breast, and with it our gods and their heaven.

'The fire leaps up in joyous shapes from out of the dark cradle where it slept, and its flame rises and falls and breaks apart and wraps around itself again in joy, until its fuel is spent, then it smokes and writhes and expires; what's left behind is ash.

'So it is with us. That's the essence of everything the sages tell us in mysteries both awful and alluring.

'And you? why ask yourself? That there are times when something rears up within you, and your heart, like the mouth of the dying man, in a single moment opens and closes so violently, that's the truly fatal sign.

'Just be still and let things take their course! no more futile industry! don't childishly try to add a cubit to your stature! — It's like wanting to create another sun, and spawn for it new satellites, an earth and a moon.'

So I dreamed on. Patiently, little by little I took my leave of everything. — O you who share with me this age! don't turn to your doctors, don't turn to the priests, when you find yourselves inwardly dwindling!

You've lost faith in all that is great; so you're bound, you're bound to waste away, unless this faith return like a comet from alien heavens.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [IX]

There's a forgetting of all existence, a silencing of our being, when we feel we've found everything.

There's a silencing, a forgetting of all existence, when we feel we've lost everything, a night of the soul, when no shimmer of a star, when not even a rotting log can give us light.

I'd now become calm. Now nothing roused me any more at midnight. Now I no longer singed myself in my own flame.

Lone and still I now looked straight before me, no roving with my eye in past and future. Now things far and near no longer jostled in my mind; unless men forced me to, I didn't see them.

Once this age would often lie before my mind like the eternally empty vessel of the Danaids, and with prodigal love my soul poured itself out to fill up the holes; now I saw no more holes, now life's tedium bore down on me no more.

Now never more did I say to the flower, 'you're my sister!' nor to the springs, 'we're of a kind!' Now, like an echo, I faithfully gave to every thing its name.

Like a stream past arid banks, where no willow-leaf mirrors in the water, the world untouched by beauty passed me by.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [X]

Nothing can flourish and nothing so deeply dwindle as man. To the night of the abyss he often likens his suffering and to the aether his bliss, and how little does that tell us?

Yet there is nothing lovelier than when it begins to dawn in him once more, after a long death, and pain goes forth like a brother to meet distantly dawning joy.

Oh, it was with heavenly anticipation I now greeted the coming spring! As from afar on a silent breeze the sounds of the loved one's lyre when all are sleeping, so spring's soft melodies wafted round my breast, as if from Elysium I sensed its coming when the dead branches stirred and a gentle breath caressed my cheek.

Lovely heaven of Ionia! never had I so cleaved to you, but then never in its blithe and tender play had my heart been so akin to you as now. —

Who doesn't yearn for the joys of love and great deeds when in the eye of heaven and the bosom of the earth the spring returns?

I rose as from my sickbed, softly and slowly, but my breast trembled so blissfully with secret hopes that I forgot to ask myself what this might signify.

Now in sleep more beautiful dreams enfolded me, and when I woke they were in my heart like the trace of a kiss on the cheek of the beloved. Oh, the morning light and I, we now approached each other like friends freshly reconciled, when they still affect aloofness and yet already hold within their soul the nearing endless moment of embrace.

And indeed my eye opened once again, though no longer as before, steeled and full of its own power; it had become more beseeching, it begged for life, but deep within I still felt things could again be with me as before, and better.

I beheld again my fellow men, as if I too looked to play my part and find my joy amongst them. I truly joined in everywhere with a whole heart.

Heavens! what gloating glee there was that the proud maverick had ended up as one of them! what a joke: the stag of the forest driven by hunger to come running into their barnyard! —

Oh! it's my Adamas I was searching for, my Alabanda, but there appeared to me none.

Finally I wrote to Smyrna, and as I wrote, it was as if all the tenderness and might of man were compressed into a single moment; three times so I wrote, but no reply, I begged, threatened, minded him of all the hours of love and boldness, but no reply from him, the unforgettable, loved unto death — 'Alabanda!' I cried, 'O my Alabanda! you've broken the staff over me. You kept me upright, you were the last hope of my youth! There's now nothing left for me! that's now holy and certain!'

We pity the dead as if they felt death, and yet the dead have peace. But this, this is the pain beyond all pain, this is relentless feeling of total annihilation when our life so loses all meaning, when the heart says to itself, 'down you must go and nothing will remain of you; no flower have you planted, no hut have you built, only to be able to say: I leave behind a trace on earth.' Oh! and yet the soul can still be so full of yearning, for all its despondency!

I was always searching for something, but I didn't dare look up in human company. I had hours I could be frightened by the laughter of a child.

Yet mostly I was very still and patient, and often had a wondrous foolish faith in the healing powers of certain things; from a dove that I bought, from a trip in a boat, from a valley the mountains concealed from me, I could promise myself solace.

Enough! enough! had I grown up with Themistocles, had I lived amongst the Scipios, believe me, never would my soul have come to know itself from this side.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XI]

Still there were times when mind and spirit stirred in me. But all to only ravaging effect!

'What is man?' I could begin; 'how can it be that such a thing is in the world that ferments like a chaos or moulders like a rotting tree, and never grows to ripeness. How can nature suffer this sour grape amid her sweet clusters?

'To the plants he says, "I too was once like you!" and to the pure stars, "I will become like you, in another world!" Meanwhile he breaks asunder and keeps practising his arts upon himself, as if he could, once it's come apart, put a living thing together again like a wall of bricks; but it doesn't even trouble him when nothing is improved by all his efforts; what he works will always stay mere artifice.

'Oh, you poor wights who feel this, you who too are loath to talk of man's vocation, who too are gripped so through and through by the Nothing that sways over us, so clearly see that we are born for Nothing, what we love is Nothing, what we believe in is Nothing, that we grind ourselves down for Nothing, only to slowly pass over into Nothing — can I help it that your knees give way when you take it all in? For more than once I too have been brought low in such thoughts and have cried out, "why do you lay the axe to my root, cruel spirit?", and still I'm here.

'Oh once, you dismal brethren! it was different. Then everything above us was so beautiful, so beautiful and blithe was all before us; these hearts too welled over before the distant blissful phantoms, and in bold exuberance our spirits too forged upwards and broke through the bounds, and when they looked around, oh woe, all was endless void.

'Oh! I can fling myself on my knees and wring my hands and beseech I don't know whom? for other thoughts. But I can't overcome it, the screaming truth. Have I not convinced myself twice over? When I look into life, what's at the end of it all? Nothing. When I soar in the spirit, what's at the summit of all? Nothing.

'But be still, my heart! It's your last strength you're wasting! your last strength? and you, you would storm heaven? where then are your hundred arms, Titan, where your Pelion and Ossa, your stairway to the fortress of the father of the gods, so that you may climb up and cast down the god and his table and all the immortal peaks of Olympus, and preach to mortal men: "Stay below, children of the moment! don't strive to scale these heights, for there's nothing up here."

'And you yourself can leave off trying to see what sways the lives of others. For you your new lesson applies. Above you and before you all is waste and void, and that's because within you all is waste and void.

'And indeed if you others are richer than I, you could at least help just a little.

'If your garden's so full of flowers, why does their breath not rejoice me too? — If you're so full of divinity, give me to drink of it. For no one starves at a feast, not even the poorest of men. But there's only one who holds his feasts amongst you; and that is death.

'Need and fear and night are your masters. They sunder you, they drive you together with blows. Hunger you call love, and where you can see nothing more, there dwell your gods. Gods and love?

'Oh, the poets are right, there's nought so small and trifling that it can't be made the stuff of inspiration.'

That's what I thought. How it came to be in me I still can't comprehend.

Book Two

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XII]

I'm living now on the island of Ajax, beloved Salamis.

I love this Greece all over. It bears the colour of my heart. Wherever you look a joy lies buried.

And yet around you is so much loveliness and grandeur too.

On the headland I've built me a hut of mastic twigs, and round about it planted moss and trees and thyme and all manner of shrubs.

There I spend my sweetest hours, there I sit whole evenings and gaze across to Attica, until at last my heart begins to race; then I take my tackle, go down to the bay and catch some fish.

Or up there on my promontory I read about the glorious ancient sea battle that once in wild and wisely managed turmoil spent its rage at Salamis, and take my pleasure in the spirit that could steer and tame the furious chaos of friend and foe, like a rider his steed, and feel deep shame at my own career as warrior.

Or I look out upon the sea and ponder my life, its rising and sinking, its bliss and its grief, and my past often sounds to me like a lyre when the master runs through all the tones, throwing together discord and harmony in hidden order.

It's thrice beautiful up here today. Two gentle days of rain have cooled the air and the life-weary earth.

The ground has grown greener, the field has unfolded. Endless stands the golden wheat, mingled with joyful cornflowers, and light and bright a thousand hopeful crowns rise from the depths of the grove. Gently and grandly each line in the distance weaves through the space; like

steps the mountains climb up to the sun, one after another in ceaseless procession. All heaven is limpid. The white light only softly suffuses the aether, and like a silver cloudlet the bashful moon goes floating by in the brightness of day.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XIII]

It's been a long time since I felt as I do now.

Like Jupiter's eagle to the song of the muses I hark to the wonderful endless harmony in me. Untroubled in mind and soul, strong and blithe, in smiling earnest I sport in spirit with fate and the three sisters, the holy Parcae. Full of godly youth my whole being exults in itself, in all things. Like the starry heavens I'm both still and moved.

I've waited long for such a festal spell as this to write to you once more. Now I'm strong enough; now let me tell you.

In the midst of my dark days an acquaintance from Calauria invited me across. I should come into his mountains, he wrote: life there was lived more freely than elsewhere, and besides, amongst the pinewoods and rushing waters, there bloomed lemon groves and palms and sweet herbs and myrtles and the holy vine. High in the mountains he'd built a garden and a house, shaded by lush trees at the rear, and in the searing summer days cooling breezes softly played about it; like a bird from the top of the cedar you could look down into the depths, to the villages and green hills and contented flocks of the island that lay all around the magnificent mountain like children and nourished themselves from its foaming streams.

This at least roused me a little. It was a bright blue April day when I sailed across. The sea was unusually beautiful and limpid, and light the air as in higher regions. In the gliding craft you left the earth behind you, like a luscious dish when holy wine is offered.

A gloomy mood is no match for the influence of sea and air. I gave myself up, fretted no more about myself and others, sought for nothing, pondered nothing, let myself be rocked into half-slumber by the boat, imagining I lay in Charon's bark. Oh, it's sweet to drink like this from the chalice of oblivion.

My cheerful boatman would have liked to chat with me, but I kept very taciturn.

He pointed with his finger to show me right and left this or that blue island, but I didn't look for long and next moment was back in my own dear dreams.

But when he pointed out to me the tranquil peaks in the distance and said that we should soon be in Calauria, I paid at last more heed, and my whole being opened itself to the wonderful power that all of a sudden sweetly and peacefully and inexplicably played with me. Wide-eyed, marvelling and full of joy I gazed out into the mysteries of the distance, my heart trembled lightly and a hand escaped and clutched my boatman in friendly haste — 'Really?' I cried, 'that's Calauria?' And when he gave me an odd look, I didn't know what to make of myself either. I greeted my friend with wonderful tenderness. My whole being was full of sweet unrest.

That very same afternoon I wanted to roam through part of the island. The woods and secret valleys attracted me ineffably, and the clement day lured all out into the open.

It was so plain to see how everything that lives craves more than its daily bread, how even the birds and the beasts have their feast days.

It was a rapturous sight! As when the mother teasingly asks wherever her dearest might be, and all of the children rush into her lap, and even the smallest stretches its arms from the cradle, so flew and leapt and strove all life into the heavenly air, and beetles and swallows and doves and storks cavorted together in the heights and the depths in joyous confusion, and what the earth held fast found its steps turning to flight, the horse went hurtling over the ditches and over the hedges the deer, and from the ground of the sea the fishes rose up and hopped above the surface. The motherly air infused the hearts of all, uplifted them and drew them to itself.

And the people came out of their doors and felt wonderfully the spiritual breath as gently it stirred the wisps of hair on their brows, as it cooled the streaming sunlight, and benignly they loosened their clothing to take it to their bosom, breathed more sweetly, touched more tenderly the light and lucent soothing sea in which they lived and moved.

O sister of the spirit which lives and sways in us with fiery power, O holy air! how beautiful it is that, all-pervasive and immortal, you're there with me wherever I may wander!

It's with the children that the sublime element played most beautifully.

This one hummed happily to himself, a tuneless ditty slipped from the lips of that one, and from another came full-throated cries of joy; this one stretched, that one leapt high; another strolled round, lost in thought.

And all this was the language of one single sense of well-being, all one single response to the caresses of the rapturous breezes.

I was filled with ineffable longing and peace. A strange power swayed me. 'Friendly spirit,' I said to myself, 'whither do you call me? to Elysium or where?'

I went walking in a wood, up by rippling water where it trickled over rocks, where it glided harmless over pebbles, and step by step the valley narrowed, becoming an archway, and lonely the noonday light played in the silent gloom —

Here — would that I could speak, my Bellarmin! that I could write to you calmly!

Speak? oh, I'm a layman in joy, I will speak!

For stillness dwells in the land of the blissful, and above the stars the heart forgets its anguish and its language.

I've kept it sacred! like a palladium I've carried it within me, the divine that was revealed to me! and if fate henceforth should seize and plunge me down from abyss to abyss and drown in me all energy and all reason, yet shall this one and only outlive myself in me and shine in me and reign in eternal, indestructible glory! —

So you lay there lissomely, sweet life, so you looked up, rose and stood in slender fullness, divinely calm, your heavenly face still filled with the serene rapture I'd disturbed!

Oh, he who's gazed into the stillness of these eyes, he for whom these sweet lips have opened, of what more shall he speak?

Peace of beauty! divine peace! he who's once soothed in you his seething life and doubting spirit, how can ought else help him?

I cannot speak of her, but there are hours when the best and the most beautiful appears as in clouds, and the heaven of perfection opens before the intuition of love, then, Bellarmin! then think of her being, then go down on your knees with me, and think of my bliss! but don't forget that I possessed what you can only sense, that with these eyes I saw what only as in clouds appears to you.

That men will sometimes say that they feel joyful! Oh, believe you me, you've never had even an inkling of joy! Not the shadow of its shadow has appeared to you! Oh, go, you blindlings, and speak no more of the blue aether!

That we can become as children, that still the golden time of innocence returns, the time of peace and freedom, that there's yet one joy, one resting place on earth!

Is man not grown old and withered, is he not like a fallen leaf that can't find back to its stem and is whirled around with the winds until it's buried by the sand?

And yet his spring will come again!

Do not weep when the best decays! soon it will renew itself! Do not grieve when your heart's melody falls silent! soon there'll come a hand to make it sound again!

How then was it with me? was I not like a shattered lyre? I sounded still a little, but they were death tones. I'd sung myself a sombre swansong! I'd gladly have woven myself a funeral wreath, but I had only winter flowers.

And where then was it now, the deathly silence, the night and desolation of my life? all the beggarly mortality?

It's true that life's a poor and lonely thing. We dwell here in the deep like the diamond in the mine. We ask in vain how we came down so that we may find the way back up again.

We're like fire that slumbers in the tinder-dry branch or the flint; and all the while we writhe and seek the end of close confinement. But they come, they make up for eons of struggle, those moments of liberation, when the divine bursts open the dungeon, when the flame frees itself from the wood and surges victorious over the ash, ha! when we feel as if the unbound spirit, forgotten its suffering, its servile form, were returning in triumph to the halls of the sun.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XIV]

Once I was happy, Bellarmin! Am I not still? Would I not be even if that hallowed moment when I first saw her had been the last?

I have seen it once, the one and only that my soul was seeking, and the consummation we project beyond the stars, that we defer until the

end of time, I've felt it in the here and now. It was here, the most high, in this cycle of human nature and of things, it was here!

I no longer ask where it is; it was in the world, it can return in the world, it's in the world now, only more hidden. I no longer ask what it is; I've seen it, I've known it.

O you who seek the highest and the best, be it in the depths of knowledge, in the turmoil of action, in the darkness of the past, in the labyrinth of the future, in the graves or above the stars! do you know its name? the name of what is one and all?

Its name is beauty.

Did you know what you were seeking? I don't yet know it, but I can sense it, the new kingdom of the new godhead, and rushing towards it lay hold of the others and carry them with me, like the river the rivers into the ocean.

And it was you, my love, who showed me the way! With you I began. They're not worthy of words, the days when I didn't yet know you —

O Diotima, Diotima, heavenly being!

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XV]

Let's forget that time exists and not count life's days!

What are centuries to the moment when two beings so sense and near one another?

I still see the evening when Notara took me for the first time to her house.

She lived only a few hundred steps from us at the foot of the mountain.

Her mother was a thoughtful tender being, a simple cheerful lad the brother, and both conceded happily in all their doings that Diotima was the household's queen.

Oh! everything was hallowed, made beautiful by her presence. Wherever I looked, whatever I touched, her carpet, her cushion, her little table, everything was in secret unison with her. And when she called me by name for the first time, when she even came so close to me that her innocent breath touched my listening being! —

We spoke very little together. You're ashamed of your language. You'd like to become pure tone and blend with the other in one celestial song.

And what was there to speak of? It's only each other we saw. To speak of ourselves we were shy.

We spoke at last of the life of the earth.

So fiery and childlike a hymn has never been sung to her.

It did us good to strew our hearts' abundance in the good mother's lap. We felt ourselves lightened like the trees when the summer wind shakes their fruitful branches and pours their sweet apples into the grass.

We called the earth one of the flowers of heaven, and heaven we called the infinite garden of life. As the roses gladden each other with golden dust, we said, so the heroic sunlight gladdens the earth with its rays; she is a glorious living being, we said, equally divine whether raging fire or mild clear water spring from her heart, ever happy whether she nourish herself on dew drops or storm clouds, prepared for her pleasure with heaven's help, she, the ever more truly loving half of the sun-god, in the beginning more inly one with him perhaps, but then sundered from him by an almighty fate, so that she might seek him, come close, draw away, and in joy and grief ripen to supreme beauty.

So we spoke. I give you the substance, the spirit of it. But what's that without the life?

It was growing dark and we had to leave. 'Good night, you angel eyes!' I thought in my heart, 'and do soon appear to me again, lovely divine spirit, with your peace and fullness!'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XVI]

Some days later they came up to visit us. We walked around together in the garden. Diotima and I strayed ahead, immersed, and tears of joy would come to my eyes over the hallowed being who walked so unassumingly beside me.

Now we stood close by the edge of the mountain's summit and gazed out into the endless east.

Diotima's eye opened wide and softly as a bud unfolds, her lovely little face unfolded before the breezes of heaven, became pure speech and soul, and as if about to fly into the clouds, her whole figure stood there stretching lightly up in airy majesty and her feet barely touched the earth.

Oh, I could have clasped her under the arms, like the eagle his Ganymede, and with her flown away above the sea and its islands.

Now she stepped further forward and gazed down the sheer cliff face. She took her delight in plumbing the awesome depth and losing herself in the night of the forests that stretched up their bright crowns from broken rocks and foaming rain-swollen streams below.

The rail on which she leaned was rather low. And so she let me hold her a little, the delightful creature, as she bent forward. Oh! hot trembling bliss swept through my being and sent all my senses reeling and raging, and my hands burned like coals when I touched her.

And then my heart's joy at standing beside her in such closeness, and my gentle childish fear that she might fall, and my delight in the inspiration of the glorious maiden!

What is all that men have done and thought in whole millennia compared to a single moment of love? For is it not of all the things in nature the most consummate, the most divinely beautiful! it's thither all steps lead on the threshold of life. Thence we come and thither we go.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XVII]

Only her song should I forget, only these sounds from the soul should never more return in my ceaseless dreams.

One doesn't know the proudly-sailing swan when it sits slumbering on the bank.

Only when she sang did one truly know this loving silent being who was so loath to speak.

Then, only then, did she, heavenly reticent, come forth in all her majesty and loveliness; then it breathed out from her tender blossoming lips, often so coaxingly and so caressingly, often like the commandment of a god. And how the heart stirred in that divine voice, how all greatness and humility, all the joy and all the grief of life seemed graced in the nobility of those tones!

As the swallow snatches bees in flight, so she always seized us all.

It wasn't pleasure, it wasn't admiration, it was the peace of heaven that came among us.

A thousand times I've told her and myself: the most beautiful is also the most hallowed. And so was everything about her. As her song, so too her life.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XVIII]

Amongst the flowers her heart was at home, as if it were one of them.

She called them all by name, made them new and more beautiful names out of love and unerringly knew the happiest season of each.

Like a sister when from every nook a loved one comes clamouring, each wanting to be greeted first, so this still being was busy with hand and eye, blissfully distracted, whenever we walked through wood or meadow.

And this wasn't at all learned or assumed, in her it had naturally grown.

For it's a truth eternally valid and everywhere manifest: the more innocent and beautiful a soul, the closer the bond with those other happy lives that we call soulless.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XIX]

A thousand times I've laughed in the joy of my heart at those who imagine a sublime spirit cannot possibly know how to prepare a vegetable. If the occasion arose Diotima was quite capable of speaking with real passion of the hearth, and there's surely nothing nobler than a noble maiden who tends the wholesome flame and, akin to nature herself, prepares the food that gladdens the heart.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XX]

What's all the artful knowledge in the world, what's the whole proud perfection of human thought, compared to the unstudied tones of this spirit that knew neither what it knew nor what it was?

Who wouldn't rather have their grape in a cluster, full and fresh, just as it sprang from the root, than the dried plucked berries that the merchant crams into the crate and sends out into the world? What's the wisdom of a book compared to the wisdom of an angel?

She seemed always to say so little, and said so much.

Once I walked her home in the gloaming; like dreams wisps of dewy mist came stealing over the meadow, like eavesdropping genii the blissful stars peeped through the boughs.

You seldom heard a 'how beautiful!' from her lips, even though this pious heart left no lisping leaf, no murmur of a burn unheeded.

But this time she did indeed speak it out to me — 'how beautiful!'

'Well, that will be for our sake!' I said, rather in the way that children say things, neither in jest nor in earnest.

'I can imagine what you mean,' she responded, 'I best like to picture the world to myself as the life of a couthie household where everyone fits in with the others without even having to think about it, and we live for the pleasure and joy of each other because that's how it comes from the heart.'

'Happy, sublime faith!' I cried.

She was silent a while.

'So we too are children of the house,' I finally resumed, 'we are and we shall be.'

'Shall for ever be,' she responded.

'Shall we?' I asked.

'In this I put my trust in nature,' she continued, 'as I do every day.'

Oh, to have been Diotima when she said this! But you don't know what she said, my Bellarmin! You didn't see it and didn't hear it.

'You're right,' I cried to her; 'eternal beauty, nature suffers no loss in herself, just as she suffers no addition. Her costume will be tomorrow different from today; but our best, us, us she cannot do without and you least of all. We believe we're eternal, for our soul feels the beauty of nature. She'll be mere patchwork, no longer divine, no longer complete, if ever you're missing in her. She doesn't deserve your heart if she has to blush before your hopes.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXI]

I've never known anything so free from wants, so divinely self-sufficient.

As the wave of the ocean round the shores of blissful islands, so my restless heart swirled round the peace of the heavenly maiden.

I had nothing to give her but a spirit full of wild contradictions, full of bleeding memories, nothing to give but my unbounded love with its thousand cares, its thousand tumultuous hopes; but there she stood before me in changeless beauty, effortlessly, in smiling perfection, and

all the yearning, all the dreaming of mortality, oh! everything that in golden hours of morning the genius foretells of higher spheres, was all fulfilled in this single tranquil soul.

They say the struggle abates above the stars, and it's only in the future, so they promise us, once our yeast has sunk, that fermenting life will turn into the noble wine of joy; otherwise the blessed's peace of heart is now nowhere to be sought upon this earth. I know different. I've come the shorter way. I stood before her and heard and saw the peace of heaven, and in the midst of groaning chaos there appeared to me Urania.

How often have I stilled my sorrowing before this image! how often have overweening life and striving spirit been assuaged when, sunk in blissful contemplation, I looked into her heart, as one looks into the source when it softly trembles from the touches of heaven, trickling down on it in silver droplets!

She was my Lethe, this soul, my holy Lethe, from which I drank oblivion of existence, so that I stood before her like an immortal, and joyfully scolded myself, and as after heavy dreams could not but smile at all the chains that had borne me down.

Oh, with her I should have become a happy man, a great man!

With her! but that has gone awry, and now I err around in what's before and in me and beyond, and don't know what to make of myself and other things.

My soul is like a fish cast out of its element upon the sand of the shore, and writhing and thrashing about till it shrivels up in the heat of the day.

Oh! if only there were still something in the world for me to do! if there were some work, a war for me, that should quicken me!

Babes torn from their mother's breasts and cast into the desert were once, so they say, suckled by a wolf.

My heart is not so lucky.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXII]

All that I can speak of her is scattered words. I must forget what she is whole if I'm to speak of her. I must make believe she lived in times of old, that I knew of her through tales, if her living image isn't so to seize me that I perish in rapture and pain, if I'm not to die of my joy in her and my grief for her.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXIII]

It's no use; I can't conceal it from myself. Whither I flee with my thoughts, up to the heavens and into the abyss, to the beginning and end of time, even to him who was my last refuge, who'd once consume every last care in me, who'd once sear all life's pleasure and all its pain in me with the flame of fire in which he revealed himself, even if I throw myself into his arms, the glorious secret spirit of the world, dive down into his depths as into the bottomless ocean, even there, even there shall the sweet dread find me out, the sweet bewildering lethal dread, that Diotima's grave is near.

Do you hear? do you hear? Diotima's grave!

Yet my heart had grown so still, and my love lay buried with the dead one I loved.

You know, my Bellarmin! for long I didn't write to you of her, and when I wrote, I wrote to you calmly, I think.

And now what?

I go down to the shore and gaze out towards Calauria where she rests, that's what.

Oh, let no one lend his boat to me, let no one take pity and offer me his oar and help me across to her!

Let the goodly waters not stay calm, lest I hew myself a piece of timber and swim across to her!

But I will fling myself into the raging sea and beg its wave to cast me up on Diotima's shore! —

Dear brother! I comfort my heart with all kinds of fancies, I grant myself many a sleeping draught; and it would no doubt be nobler to free oneself forever than to make do with palliatives; but isn't that the way it is with all of us? So I'm content it should be so.

Content? oh, that would be a fine thing! that would be help indeed where never a god can help.

Now! now! I've done what I could! I demand from fate my soul.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXIV]

Was she not mine, you sisters of fate, was she not mine? The pure springs I call to witness and the innocent trees that overheard us, and

the daylight and the aether! was she not mine? not one with me in all the chords of life?

Where is the being that knew her like mine? in what mirror were gathered the rays of that light as in me? was she not joyfully startled at her own glory when first she became aware of herself in my joy? Oh! where is the heart that, like mine, was everywhere close to her, that, like mine, filled her and was filled by her, that was there solely to embrace hers, as the eyelid is there for the eye.

We were but a single flower, and our souls lived in one another like the flower when it loves and conceals its tender joys in its closed chalice.

And yet, and yet was she not torn from me like a crown usurped, and laid into the dust?

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXV]

Before either of us knew it we belonged to one another.

When, with all the homage of my heart, blissfully overcome, I stood before her saying nothing, and my whole life gave itself up in the beams of the eye that saw only her, embraced only her, and she gazed at me in turn, tenderly doubting, not knowing where my thoughts were taking me, and when, buried in beauty and delight, I often discreetly watched her at some charming occupation, and my soul flitted and flew about her slightest movement as the bee about the swaying twigs, and when then in peaceful thought she turned towards me and, startled by my joy, had to conceal my joy from herself, and sought and found tranquillity again in her beloved task —

When, wondrously all-knowing, she revealed to me every harmony, every discord in the depths of my being at the moment it began, before I even noticed it myself, when she saw every shadow of a cloudlet on my brow, every shadow of sadness, of pride on my lips, every spark in my eye, when she caught the ebb and flow of my heart, and caringly sensed gloomy hours approaching as my spirit too intemperately and prodigally consumed itself in tumid talk, when the dear being, more faithfully than a mirror, betrayed to me every change in my cheek, and often reproved me in loving concern at my unstable being, and chided me like a cherished child —

Oh! when once, you innocent, you counted on your fingers the steps from our mountain down to your house, when you showed me your walks, the places where you used to sit and told me how the time had passed for you there, and finally said that now you felt as if I'd always been there too —

Had we not then long since belonged to one another?

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXVI]

I'm building a grave for my heart, that it may rest; I spin a cocoon around myself, because everywhere it's winter, in blissful memories I wrap myself against the storm.

Once we sat in Diotima's garden under blossoming almond trees, together with Notara — that's the friend with whom I was staying — and some others who also, like us, belonged to the mavericks in Calauria, and we spoke amongst other things of friendship.

I'd contributed little; for some time now I'd grown chary of making many words about things that first concern the heart, my Diotima had made me so taciturn —

'When Harmodius and Aristogeiton lived,' someone cried at last, 'there was still friendship in the world.' That delighted me too much for me to keep my peace.

'They should weave you a crown for those words!' I cried to him; 'do you really have an inkling, do you have a likeness for the friendship of Aristogeiton and Harmodius? Forgive me! But by the Aether! you'd have to be Aristogeiton to feel how Aristogeiton loved, and it didn't do to be afraid of lightning if a man would be loved with the love of Harmodius, for unless I'm much mistaken the terrible youth loved with the rigour of Minos. Few could withstand such a test, and it's no easier to be the friend of a demi-god than, like Tantalus, to sit at the table of the gods. But there's also nothing more glorious on earth than when as proud a pair as these are so in thrall to one another.

'And this is my hope, my joy in lonely hours, that in the symphony of the world's course tones as great and greater still must one day come again. Love brought forth millennia full of living men; friendship will bring them forth again. From childhood harmony the peoples once set out; with the harmony of spirits a new world history will begin.

From the happiness of plants men began and grew up, grew until they ripened; from then on they fermented forth unceasingly, both inwardly and outwardly, till now the human race, in infinite dissolution, lies there like a chaos, and all those who still feel and see are gripped by dizziness; but beauty takes flight from the life of men, up into the spirit; what was nature becomes the ideal, and though the tree may be withered and weathered from below, a fresh crown has still sprung from it and greens in the sun's glory, as the stem once did in the days of youth; what was nature is the ideal. And it's by this ideal, this rejuvenated godhead, that the few shall know each other and they are one, for the oneness is in them, and from them, these few, shall begin the second age of the world — I've said enough to make clear what I think.'

You should have seen Diotima then as she leapt up and held out both her hands to me and cried: 'I've understood it, dearest, wholly understood, though it says so much.

'Love brought forth the world, friendship will bring it forth again.

'Oh then, you who are to come, you new dioscuri, then linger a little when you pass the place where Hyperion sleeps, linger mindfully over the ashes of the forgotten man, and say: "He'd be one of us were he here now."'

This I have heard, my Bellarmin! this I have known, and won't go willingly to my death?

Yes! yes! I've had my dues already, I have lived. More joy a god could bear, but not me.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXVII]

Do you ask how I felt at this time? Like someone who's lost everything to gain everything.

It's true I often came from Diotima's trees like one drunk with triumph, often I'd have to rush away from her lest I betray any of my thoughts; so raged the joy in me, and the pride, the all-inspiring faith of being loved by Diotima.

Then I'd search out the highest mountains and their winds, and like an eagle whose bleeding wing has healed, my spirit stirred in the boundless air and spread itself out over the visible world as if this were its own; oh, wonder! I often felt as if the things of the earth were purified

and fused together in my fire like gold, and a thing divine became of them and me, so raged in me the joy; and how I lifted up the children and pressed them to my throbbing heart, how I greeted the plants and the trees! I could have wished for a magic charm to gather the timid deer and all the wild birds of the forest like a family of little folk around my liberal hands, in such blissful folly did I love all things!

But not for long, then that was all extinguished in me like a light, and I'd sit there mute and mournful as a shade and sought my vanished life. I had no use for lamentation, nor did I want consolation. Hope I cast away, like a cripple whose crutch is hateful to him; I was ashamed to weep; I felt ashamed for existing at all. Yet in the end my pride broke out in tears, the pain I'd gladly have denied became dear to me, and I laid it like a child to my breast.

'No,' cried my heart, 'no, my Diotima! it doesn't hurt. Preserve your peace for yourself and let me go my way. Don't let your tranquillity be disturbed, you lovely star! when below you there's ferment and turbidness.

'Oh, don't let your rose fade, you blissful youth of the gods! Don't let your beauty age in the troubles of the earth. For this is my joy, sweet life! that you bear within you carefree heaven. You shall not suffer want, no, no! you shall not see within yourself the penury of love.'

And when I then went down to her again — I'd have liked to ask the breeze and read in the drift of the clouds how it would be with me in an hour! and how delighted I was when some friendly face met me on the way and, so long as it wasn't too dryly, called out to me his 'Good day!'

When a little girl came out of the woods and held out a bunch of strawberries for me to buy, with a look as though she'd rather make a gift of them, or when a peasant, sitting picking cherries in his tree, called down from the branches as I passed and asked if I'd not care to try a handful: these were good omens for my superstitious heart!

To top it all, if facing the path down which I came, one of Diotima's windows was standing open, how good that could make me feel!

Perhaps she'd looked out not long before.

And now I stood before her, breathless and unsteady, pressing my crossed arms against my heart so as not to feel its trembling, and like the swimmer from rushing waters, my spirit struggled and strove not to go under in endless love.

'What are we talking about just now?' I could cry, 'it's often so hard, you can't find the matter to hold fast your thoughts.'

'Are they taking off into the air again?' replied my Diotima. 'You'll have to bind lead to their wings, or I'll tie them to a string, like the boy his flying dragon, so they can't get away from us.'

The dear girl was trying with a jest to help herself and me, but it was to little avail.

'Yes, yes!' I cried, 'as you like, as you think best — shall I read to you? Your lute will still be tuned from yesterday — I don't have anything to read to you right now —'

'You've promised more than once,' she said, 'to tell me how you lived before we met, won't you tell me now?'

'That's true,' I replied; my heart gladly pounced on this, and so then I told her, as I've told you, of Adamas and my lonely days in Smyrna, of Alabanda and how I was parted from him, and of the baffling sickness of my being before I came over to Calauria — 'now you know it all,' I told her calmly when I'd finished, 'now you will find in me less cause for offence; now you will say,' I added with a smile, 'don't mock this Vulcan if he limps, for twice he's been hurled from heaven to earth by the gods.'

'Hush,' she cried in a choking voice and hid her tears in her handkerchief, 'oh hush, and don't make fun of your fate, of your heart! for I understand it, and better than you.

'Dear — dear Hyperion! there's no helping you, I fear.

'Do you really know,' she continued with heightened voice, 'do you really know what it is you're starving for, the one thing that you lack, what you're searching for like Alpheus his Arethusa, what you've been grieving for in all your grief? It didn't depart just years ago, one can't say precisely when it was there, when it went away, but it was, it is, in you it is! It's a better age you're seeking, a more beautiful world. It was only that world you embraced in your friends, with them you were that world.

'In Adamas it had dawned for you; it had also departed with him. In Alabanda its light appeared to you a second time, only more fierce and fervid, and that's why it was like midnight for your soul when he left your life.

'And do you see now why the smallest doubt about Alabanda was bound to become despair in you? why you only cast him off because he wasn't quite a god?

'You didn't want human beings, believe me, you wanted a world. The loss of all the golden centuries, as you felt them, compressed into a single happy moment, the spirit of all the spirits of better times, the energy of all the energies of the heroes, all this was to be made good for you by a single mere man! — Do you see now how poor, how rich you are? why you should be so proud and also so cast down? why for you joy and grief alternate so terribly?

'It's because you have everything and nothing, because the phantom of the golden days which are to come is yours and yet isn't there, because you're a citizen in the regions of justice and beauty, a god amongst gods in the beautiful dreams that steal upon you by day, and awake to find yourself standing on modern Greek soil.

'Twice, you said? oh, you're hurled from heaven to earth seventy times in a single day. Shall I say it? I fear for you, you'll scarce be able to bear the fate of these times. There are diverse things you'll still try, you'll —

'Oh God! and your final refuge will be a grave.'

'No, Diotima,' I cried, 'no, by heaven, no! As long as one melody still sounds for me, I'll not fear the deathly stillness of the wilderness beneath the stars; as long as the sun only shines and Diotima, there is for me no night.

'Let the death knell toll for all the virtues! it's you I hear, you, your heart's song, my love! and find immortal life while all else burns out and withers.'

'O Hyperion,' she cried, 'what are you saying?'

'I speak as I must. I can't, I can't any longer hide all the bliss and fear and care — Diotima! — Yes, you know it, must know it, have long since seen it, that I shall go under unless you give me your hand.'

She was taken aback, confounded.

'And to me,' she cried, 'to me Hyperion would cling? well then I wish, for the first time now I wish to be more than a mere mortal maiden. But I'll be for you what I can.'

'Oh then you're everything for me!' I cried.

'Everything? you wicked hypocrite! and what of mankind that's in the end your only love?'

'Mankind?' I said. 'I would that mankind made its watchword Diotima and painted your image on its banners, and proclaimed: "Today the divine shall triumph!" Angel of heaven! what a day that would be!'

'Go,' she cried, 'go and show your glory to heaven! it must not be so close to me.

'You will go, won't you, dear Hyperion?'

I obeyed. Who would not have done? I went. Never had I gone from her like this before. O Bellarmin! that was joy, stillness of life, peace of the gods, heavenly, wonderful, unknowable joy.

Words are useless here, and whoever seeks a likeness for it has never felt it. The only thing that could express such joy was Diotima's song, floating in golden mean between high and low.

O you willow banks of Lethe! you sunset paths in forests of Elysium! you lilies by the valley's streams! you rose-wreaths of the hill! I believe in you, in this friendly hour, and speak to my heart: 'there you shall find her again, and all the joy you have lost.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXVIII]

I will tell you ever more of my bliss.

I will prove my breast on the joys of the past until it becomes like steel, I will practise on them until I'm invincible.

Ha! they may often fall like the stroke of a sword on my soul, but I'll play with the sword until I'm inured to it, I'll hold my hand in the fire until I can bear it like water.

I will not flinch; yes! I will be strong! I will conceal nothing from myself, I will conjure the most blissful of all my blisses from the grave.

It's beyond belief that man should fear what is most beautiful; yet it is so.

Oh, have I not fled a hundred times before these moments, this deadly delight of my memories, and averted my eyes like a child from lightning! and yet in the lush garden of the world there grows nothing lovelier than my joys, yet in heaven and on earth there flourishes nothing nobler than my joys.

But only to you, my Bellarmin, only to a pure free soul such as yours do I tell it. I will not be as prodigal as the sun with its rays, I will not cast my pearls before the foolish mob.

After that last soulful converse I knew myself less with each passing day. I felt there was a holy secret between me and Diotima.

I marvelled, dreamed. As if some blissful ghost had appeared to me at midnight and chosen me to walk with him, such was my state of mind.

Oh, it's a strange mixture of blissfulness and melancholy when it's thus revealed to us that we're forever removed from ordinary existence.

Since then I'd never managed to see Diotima alone. There'd always have to be a third person to disturb us, keeping us apart, and the world lay between her and me like an endless void. Six days of dread passed in this way without my knowing anything of Diotima. It was as if the others around us lamed my senses, as if they killed all my outer life, so that there was no way my locked-in soul could reach across to her.

If I would seek her with my eye, all went black before me, if I would address a word to her, it was throttled in my throat.

Oh! the holy nameless longing often almost tore my breast asunder, and mighty love often raged in me like a fettered titan. So deeply, so wholly implacably my spirit had never strained against the chains forged for it by fate, against the iron, inexorable law of being divided, not being a single soul with its desirable other half.

The star-bright night had now become my element. Then when all was still, as in the depths of the earth where gold in secret grows, it was then the more beautiful life of my love began.

Now my heart indulged its right to play the poet. It told me how Hyperion's spirit, before coming down to earth, had sported in pre-Elysium with his lovely Diotima, in divine childhood to the harmonies of the source, and beneath boughs such as we see the boughs of the earth when gilded they sparkle from golden streams.

And, like the past, the gates of the future opened in me.

Then we flew, Diotima and I, then we wandered like swallows from one springtime of the world to the next, through the vast realm of the sun and beyond to the other islands of heaven, to Sirius' golden shores, into the ghostly vales of Arcturus —

Oh, this is truly a thing to be desired, drinking the joy of the world from a single cup with the beloved!

Drunk from the blissful lullaby I sang myself, I fell asleep amidst the glorious phantoms.

But when the life of the earth took fire again from the ray of the morning light, I looked up and sought the dreams of the night. Like the beautiful stars they had vanished, and only the joy of grief bore witness to them in my soul.

I sorrowed; but I believe that amongst the blissful there's such sorrowing too. It was the harbinger of joy, this grief, it was the greying dawn from which would burgeon the countless roses of the blushing day. —

The glowing summer's day had now driven everything into dark shade. Around Diotima's house, too, all was still and empty, and at every window the envious curtains stood in my way.

I lived in thoughts of her. 'Where are you,' I thought, 'where shall my lonely spirit find you, sweet maiden? Do you gaze into space and muse? Have you put your work to one side, are you resting your elbow on your knee and your head on your little hand, yielding yourself to lovely thoughts?

'Let nothing disturb my tranquil one when she refreshes her heart with sweet fancies, let nothing handle this cluster of grapes and graze the quickening dew from its tender berries!'

So I dreamed. But whilst my thoughts sought her out between the walls of the house, my feet searched for her elsewhere, and before I was aware of it I was walking under the archways of the sacred wood behind Diotima's garden, where I'd seen her for the first time. What was this? Since then I'd so often mingled with these trees, become more intimate with them, more at peace beneath them; now a force seized me, as if I were stepping into Diana's shadows to die before the present deity.

Still I carried on. With every step I felt more wonderfully strange. I could have taken flight, so strongly did my heart propel me forwards; but it was as if there were lead in my shoes. My soul had hurried ahead, leaving my earthly limbs behind. I could no longer hear, and all shapes dimmed and shimmered before my eyes. My spirit was already with Diotima; the tree top played in the morning light, while the lower boughs still felt the chill of dawn.

'Ah! my Hyperion!' a voice now called out to me; I rushed towards it; 'my Diotima! O my Diotima!' beyond that I had no word and no breath, no consciousness.

Fade, fade, mortal life, beggarly business where the lonely spirit keeps inspecting the pennies it's gathered and counting them over! we are all called to the joy of the godhead!

Here there's a gap in my existence. I died, and awoke to find myself pressed to the heart of the heavenly maiden.

O life of love! how you had burst forth in her in full lovely bloom! as if sung into gentle slumber by blissful genii, the charming little head lay on my shoulder, smiled sweet peace, and opened up its aethereal eyes to me in joyful naive wonder, as if just now for the first time gazing out into the world.

Long we stood like this in lovely self-forgetful contemplation and neither knew what came over us, till at last too much joy heaped up in me, and amidst tears and sounds of rapture my lost speech began again, and roused my silently entranced Diotima fully back to life.

Then at last we looked again about us.

'O my old familiar trees!' cried Diotima, as if she hadn't seen them for a long time, and the remembrance of her former lonely days played about her joys, lovingly, like shadows about the virgin snow when it blushes and glows in the joyous glory of evening.

'Angel of heaven!' I cried, 'who can grasp you? who can say that he has fully comprehended you?'

'Do you wonder,' she replied, 'that I'm so very fond of you. Dear man! proud and modest man! Do you think I too am one of those who can't believe in you, have I not fathomed you, have I not found out the genius in his clouds? Veil yourself all you like and don't see yourself; I will conjure you forth, I will —

'But he's already here, he's burst forth like a star; he's broken through the husk and stands there like the spring; like a crystal stream from the gloomy grotto he's burst forth; this is not the dismal Hyperion, this is not the wild grief any more — O my own, my glorious boy!'

All this was like a dream to me. Could I believe in this miracle of love? could I? the joy would have killed me.

'Divine Diotima!' I cried, 'are your words meant for me? can you so deny yourself, you so blissfully self-sufficient! how can you take such joy in me? Oh, I see it now, I know now what I've often sensed, man is a garment that often a god wraps round himself, a chalice into which heaven pours its nectar so that its children may taste of the best.' —

'Yes, yes!' she broke in with an enthused smile, 'your namesake, the glorious Hyperion of heaven is in you.'

'Let me,' I cried, 'let me be yours, let me forget myself, let all life in me and all spirit fly only to you; to you alone, in blissful endless contemplation! O Diotima! so too I once stood before the shadowy divine effigy that my love fashioned for itself, before the idol of my lonely dreams; I nourished it lovingly; with my life I quickened it, with the hopes of my heart I refreshed it, warmed it, but it gave me nothing save what I'd given, and when I grew poor it left me poor, and now! now I have you in my arms and feel the breath of your breast, and feel your eyes in my eyes, this beautiful presence seeps into all of my senses, and I can sustain it, I hold what's most glorious and tremble no more — yes! I'm truly not who I used to be, Diotima! I'm become like you, and divine now plays with divine, as children play among themselves. —'

'But still you must grow a little calmer,' she said.

'You're right, you lovable creature!' I joyfully cried, 'else the graces won't appear to me; else I'll not see in the sea of beauty its gentle lovely ripples. Oh, I will yet learn to overlook nothing about you. Just give me time!'

'Flatterer!' she cried, 'but we're finished for today, dear flatterer! the golden cloud of evening is my reminder. Oh, don't be sad! Preserve for you and me the pure joy! Let it echo in you till the morrow, and don't kill it with ill humour! — the flowers of the heart want loving care. Their roots are everywhere, but they themselves only flourish in cheerful weather. Farewell, Hyperion!'

She tore herself loose. My whole being flamed up in me as she faded from view in her glowing beauty.

'O you!' — I cried and rushed headlong after her and gave my soul into her hand in endless kisses.

'God!' she cried, 'what will become of this!'

That hit me. 'Forgive me, heavenly one!' I said; 'I'm going. Good night, Diotima! think of me a little!'

'I will,' she cried, 'good night!'

And now not a word more, Bellarmin! It would be too much for my long-suffering heart. I'm shaken, I feel. But I will go out amongst the plants and trees and lay me down amongst them, and pray that nature bring me to such tranquillity.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXIX]

Our souls now lived ever more freely and beautifully together, and everything in and around us commingled into golden peace. It seemed as if the old world had died and a new one were beginning with us, so spiritual and strong and loving and light had everything become, and we and all beings floated in blissful union, like a chorus of a thousand inseparable tones, through the boundless aether.

Our converse glided away like a cerulean stream whence the gold-sand now and then glitters, and our silence was like the silence of mountain-peaks where in glorious lonely height, far above the realm of the storms, only the divine breeze whispers still in the locks of the bold wanderer.

And the wonderful holy sorrow when the hour of parting rang into our rapture, when often I cried: 'now we are mortal again, Diotima!' and she said to me: 'Mortality is illusion, it's like the colours that quiver before our eye when it looks long into the sun!'

Oh! and all the sweet games of love! the pretty speeches, the petty worries, the touchiness, the strictness and indulgence.

And the omniscience with which we saw through one another, and the infinite faith with which we glorified one another!

Yes! man is a sun, all-seeing, all-illuming when he loves, and if he doesn't he's a dark dwelling in which there burns a reekie little lamp.

I ought to keep silent, ought to forget and keep silent.

But the alluring flame will tempt me till I plunge into it whole and perish like the fly.

In the midst of all this blissful wholehearted giving and taking, I felt one day that Diotima was becoming stiller and ever stiller.

I asked and I begged; but this only seemed to distance her the more; finally she begged that I no longer ask, that I should go, and speak of something else when I returned. This brought about a painful dumbness in me too, which I myself couldn't come to grips with.

I felt as if an unfathomable sudden fate had sworn death to our love, and all life was gone, from me and everything.

It's true I was ashamed of this; I knew for sure that Diotima's heart was not ruled by caprice. But always she remained a mystery to me, and my spoiled despondent disposition demanded that love be always

palpable and present; locked-up treasures were treasures lost for me. Oh! in my happiness I'd unlearned hope, I was then still like impatient children who cry over the apple on the tree as though it weren't there at all unless it's kissing their mouths. I had no peace, again I begged, violently and meekly, tenderly and angrily, love armed me with all of its all-overpowering humble eloquence and now — O my Diotima! now I had it, the delightful confession, now I have and will hold it till the tide of love carries me too, with all that I am, back to the ancient home, into the womb of nature.

The innocent! she'd yet to know the powerful abundance of her heart, and sweetly dismayed at the wealth within her, she buried it deep in her breast — and when she now confessed, holy simplicity, when she confessed with tears that she loved too much, and when she took leave from all she'd cradled till then to her heart, oh, when she cried: 'I've fallen away from May and summer and autumn, and don't heed the day and the night as once I did, don't belong any longer to heaven and earth, belong just to one, only to one, but the blossom of May and the flame of summer and the ripeness of autumn, the lightness of day and the gravity of night, and earth and heaven, all is fused for me into this one! so do I love!' — and when she now looked at me, in the fullness of her heart's content, when she, in bold and holy joy, took me into her beautiful arms and kissed me on brow and mouth, oh! when that divine head, dying in bliss, slipped down my open neck, and those lovely lips rested on my beating breast and the sweet breath touched my soul — O Bellarmin! my senses fail and my mind runs adrift.

I see, I see how this must end. The rudder has fallen into the surge and the ship will be seized like a child by the feet and hurled against the rocks.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXX]

There are in life great hours. We look up to them like colossal figures of the future and antiquity, we fight a glorious fight with them, and should we hold our own against them, they then become like sisters and never leave us.

Once we sat together on our mountain, on a stone of the ancient city of this island, and spoke of how here the lion Demosthenes had found his

end, how he'd here with holy self-elected death helped himself to freedom from the Macedonian chains and daggers — 'That glorious spirit went from this world with a jest,' one of us cried. 'And why not?' I said, 'there was nothing more for him here; Athens had become Alexander's whore and the world, like a hart, hounded to death by the great huntsman.'

'O Athens!' cried Diotima; 'there's many a time I've grieved when I gazed across and out of the blue twilight the phantom of the Olympieion rose before me!'

'How far is it to get there?' I asked

'A day's journey, perhaps,' Diotima replied.

'A day's journey,' I cried, 'and I haven't been there yet? We must go across together straightaway.'

'Right then!' cried Diotima; 'we shall have a fair sea tomorrow, and all's now still greenness and ripeness.

'One needs the eternal sun and the life of the immortal earth for such a pilgrimage.'

'Tomorrow then!' I said, and our friends agreed.

Early, to the rooster's song, we set out from the roadstead. We and the world were shining in fresh brilliance. Golden peaceful youth was in our hearts. The life in us was like a newborn isle of the ocean in which the first spring is beginning.

For some time now, under Diotima's influence, more stability had come into my soul; today I felt it with threefold purity, and the scattered swarming energies were all gathered in one single golden mean.

We spoke together about the excellence of the ancient Athenians, how it arose, in what it consisted.

One said it was the climate that made it; another: art and philosophy; a third: religion and polity.

'Athenian art and religion, and philosophy and polity,' I said, 'are flowers and fruits of the tree, not the soil and the roots. You take the effects for the cause.

'And anyone who tells me that this was all shaped by the climate should consider that we too still live in it.

'Less disturbed in every respect, freer from violent influence than any other people on earth, so grew the people of the Athenians. No conqueror weakens them, no military fortune inebriates them, no alien cult dulls them, no hasty wisdom drives them to untimely ripeness.

Left to itself, like the growing diamond, such is their childhood. Almost nothing is heard of them up to the times of Pisistratus and Hipparchus. They took but little part in the Trojan War which, as in a hothouse, prematurely kindled and quickened most of the Greek peoples. — It's not extraordinary fate that brings forth man. Great and colossal are the sons of such a mother, but beautiful beings, or, what is the same thing, men they never become, or not until late when the contrasts war with each other too harshly for them not to make peace in the end.

'In exuberant vigour Lacedaemon rushes ahead of the Athenians and for this very reason would also have scattered and dissolved sooner, had not Lycurgus come and with his discipline contained its intemperate nature. And so from then on everything about the Spartan was acquired, all excellence achieved and bought through labour and self-conscious effort, and in as much as one can, in a certain sense, speak of the simplicity of the Spartans, yet it follows naturally that true childlike simplicity was wholly lacking amongst them. The Lacedaemonians breached too soon the order of instinct, they grew out of kind too soon, and so then, with them, discipline too had to begin too soon; for all discipline and art begins too soon where man's nature hasn't yet come to ripeness. Perfected nature must dwell in the human child before it enters school, so that the image of childhood may show it the way back from school to perfected nature.

'The Spartans remained eternally a fragment; for whoever was never a finished child can hardly become a finished man. —

'True, heaven and earth also did their part for the Athenians, as for all the Greeks, dispensing neither dearth nor abundance. The rays of heaven didn't fall upon them like a rain of fire. The earth didn't pamper and ravish them with caresses and lavish gifts as here and there the foolish mother otherwise may do.

'And then there was the prodigious gesture of Theseus, the voluntary curtailment of his own monarchic power.

'Oh! such a seed, thrown into the hearts of the people, must beget an ocean of golden grains, and visibly continues even late to burgeon and bear fruit amongst the Athenians.

'Once again then! that the Athenians grew up so free from violent influence of any kind, on such moderate fare, this is what made them so excellent, and this alone could!

'Leave man undisturbed from the cradle on! don't drive him from the enclosing oneness of his being's bud, out of his childhood's tabernacle! don't do too little lest he manage without you and so distinguish you from himself, don't do too much lest he feel your power or his own and so distinguish you from himself, in short, don't let man know until late that there are men, that there is something outside himself, for only in this way will he become man. But man is a god as soon as he's man. And once he's a god, then he's beautiful.'

'Strange!' cried one of the friends.

'You've never yet spoken so deeply from my soul,' cried Diotima.

'I owe it to you,' I answered.

'That's how the Athenian was man,' I continued, 'that's how he had to become man. Beautiful he came from the hands of nature, beautiful in body and soul, as the saying goes.

'The first child of human, of divine beauty is art. In art divine man renews and repeats himself. He wants to feel himself, and so he confronts himself with his own beauty. Thus man gave himself his gods. For in the beginning man and his gods were one, when, unknown to itself, eternal beauty was. — I'm speaking mysteries, but they are. —

'The first child of divine beauty is art. So it was with the Athenians.

'Beauty's second daughter is religion. Religion is love of beauty. The wise man loves beauty itself, infinite and all-embracing; the people love its children, the gods, who appear to them in multifarious forms. So it was too with the Athenians. And without such love of beauty, without such religion any state is a shrivelled skeleton without life and spirit, and all thought and deed a tree without a top, a column whose crown has been lopped off.

'But that it was really the case with the Greeks, and especially the Athenians, that their art and their religion are the true children of eternal beauty — of perfected human nature — and could issue only from perfected human nature, that is clearly evident if one is only willing to consider with an unbiased eye the objects of their holy art and the religion with which they loved and honoured those objects.

'There are blunders and blemishes everywhere, and so here too. But one thing is certain withal: what one finds in the objects of their art is mostly ripened man. Here there's not the pettiness, not the monstrousness of the Egyptians and Goths, here there's human sense

and human form. They sheer off less than others into the extremes of the supersensual and the sensual. Their gods stay more than others within the beautiful mean of man.

'And as the object, so also the love. Not too servile and not all too familiar! —

'From the Athenians' beauty of spirit there followed too the necessary feeling for freedom.

'The Egyptian bears without pain the despotism of arbitrary power, the son of the North without resentment the despotism of the law, legally enshrined injustice; for the Egyptian possesses from the womb an instinct for servility and idolatry; in the North they have too little faith in the pure free life of nature not to be superstitiously thralled to legality.

'The Athenian can't abide arbitrary power because his divine nature brooks no disturbance, he can't abide legality everywhere because he has no need of it everywhere. Draco isn't for him. He expects to be treated gently, and has every right to do so too.'

'Fair enough!' someone interjected, 'that I understand, but how this poetic religious people should also come to be a philosophical one, that I don't see.'

'Without poetry,' I said, 'they would never even have been a philosophical people!'

'What has philosophy,' he responded, 'what has the cold sublimity of that science to do with poetry?'

'Poetry,' I said, sure of my case, 'is the beginning and end of that science. Like Minerva from Jupiter's head it springs from the poetry of infinite divine being. And so too what is irreconcilable in it will finally flow together again in the mysterious wellspring of poetry.'

'He's a paradoxical fellow,' cried Diotima, 'yet I sense his meaning. You're both digressing though. It's Athens we're talking about.'

'The man,' I began again, 'who has not at least once in his life felt in himself full unsullied beauty, when the powers of his being played into one another like the colours of the rainbow, who has never come to know that only in hours of inspiration all is inmost concord, this man will not even become a philosophical sceptic, his spirit is not even fitted for tearing down, let alone for building up. For believe you me, the sceptic finds flaws and contradiction in all that is thought only because

he knows the harmony of flawless beauty that never is thought. He disdains the dry crust that human reason proffers him well-meaningly only because he's secretly feasting at the table of the gods.'

'Dreamer!' cried Diotima, 'that's why you too were a sceptic. But the Athenians!'

'I was just coming to them,' I said. 'The mighty phrase of Heraclitus, εν διαφερον εαυτω (the One differentiated in itself), could have been arrived at only by a Greek, for it is the essence of beauty and before that was found, there was no philosophy.

'Now one could define, the whole was there. The flower had ripened, one could now dissect.

'The moment of beauty had now been made known among men, it was there in life and spirit, infinite oneness was.

'One could take it apart, divide it in the mind, think the divided together afresh, could so come more and more to know the essence of the highest and the best and turn that knowledge into laws for the manifold realms of the mind.

'Do you see now why the Athenians in particular had also to be a philosophical people?

'The Egyptian couldn't. He who doesn't live loving, and loved by, heaven and earth in equal measure, who doesn't in this sense live at one with the element in which he moves, is by nature also not so at one with himself and cannot know eternal beauty, at least not so readily as a Greek.

'Like a sumptuous despot the oriental clime prostrates its inhabitants with its power and its splendour, and before man has even learned to walk he must kneel, before he has learned to talk he must pray; before his heart has found its balance it must bow, and before the spirit is strong enough to bear flower and fruit, fate and nature sap from it all strength with searing heat. The Egyptian's surrendered before he's a whole, and so he knows nothing of the whole, nothing of beauty, and what he calls the highest is a veiled power, a ghastly enigma; the dumb dismal Isis is his alpha and omega, an empty infinity, and nought meaningful ever came out of that. Even the sublimest nothing begets nothing.

'The North, by contrast, drives its nurslings into themselves too soon, and if the spirit of the fiery Egyptian, too wanderlusting, rushes

out into the world, in the North the spirit prepares to return into itself before it's even ready to fare forth.

'In the North man must already have sense before even there's any ripe feeling within him, he imputes to himself the guilt of all things before innocence even has come to its beautiful end; he must become rational, a self-conscious spirit, before he's a man, a worldly-wise man before he's a child; the harmony of whole human being, beauty, may not blossom and ripen in him before he's developed and cultured. Mere understanding, mere reason are ever the kings of the North.

'But from mere understanding there never came anything sensible, from mere reason never came anything rational.

'Understanding without beauty of spirit is like a ministering menial who fashions the fence from rough timber, according to plans he's been given, and nails together the posts that he's hewn for the garden his master wants to make. The understanding's whole business is work of necessity. By laying down rules it guards us from folly and wrongness; but being safe from folly and wrongness is not the pinnacle of human excellence.

'Reason without beauty of spirit, beauty of heart, is like a slave-driver whom the master of the house has set over the servants; he knows as little as the servants what good is served by all the endless toil, and only shouts: 'Get a move on,' and is almost loath to see it happen, for in the end he'd have no more driving to do and his part would be played out.

'From mere understanding comes no philosophy, for philosophy is more than only the limited perception of what is.

'From mere reason comes no philosophy, for philosophy is more than the blind demand for never-ending progress in the unification and differentiation of whatever it can be applied to.

'But when the divine εν διαφερον εαυτω, the ideal of beauty illumines striving reason, it doesn't demand blindly, it knows why it demands and for what.

'When, like a May morning into the artist's workshop, the sun of the beautiful shines for the understanding in its activity, it's true that it doesn't rush forth and abandon its work of necessity, yet still it thinks fondly forward to the festal day when it will wander in the quickening light of spring.'

This was as far as I'd got when we landed on the coast of Attica. Ancient Athens now was too much in our minds for us to feel much like orderly talk, and I wondered now myself at the nature of my utterances. 'How ever did I come,' I cried, 'to fetch up on those barren mountain peaks on which you saw me?'

'It's always like that,' replied Diotima, 'when we're feeling elated. Exuberant energy looks to find work. Young lambs butt their heads together when they've had their fill of mother's milk.'

We now made our way up Lycabettus, for all our haste stopping at times in thought and wonderful anticipation.

It's good that man finds it so hard to convince himself of the death of what he loves, and likely no one has ever gone to his friend's grave without some quiet hope of actually meeting the friend there. The beautiful phantom of ancient Athens seized me like the shape of a mother returning from the realm of dead.

'O Parthenon!' I cried, 'pride of the world! at your feet lies Neptune's realm like a vanquished lion, and like children the other temples are gathered around you, and the eloquent Agora and the grove of Academe — '

'Can you transport yourself so into the ancient times,' said Diotima.

'Don't remind me of those times!' I replied; 'there was divine life and man was the central point of nature. Spring, when it blossomed all around Athens, it was like a demure flower at the virgin's bosom; the sun rose red with shame over the glories of the earth.

'The marble rocks of Hymettus and Pentelikon leapt from their slumbering cradle like children from the mother's womb, and took on form and life under the delicate hands of the Athenians.

'Nature proffered honey, and the fairest violets and myrtles and olives.

'Nature was priestess and man her god, and all the life in her and every shape and every sound of hers but a single rapturous echo of the glorious being to whom she belonged.

'Him alone she celebrated, to him alone she sacrificed.

'And he was worthy of it, whether he sat lovingly in the holy workshop, embracing the knees of the divine image he'd made, or on the headland, on Sunium's green peak, ensconced amidst the listening disciples, whiling away the hours with lofty thoughts, or he might be

running in the Stadium, or from the speaker's tribune dispensing, like the storm god, rain and sun and lightning bolts and golden clouds —'

'Oh look!' Diotima now suddenly called out to me.

I looked, and could have died at the almighty spectacle.

Like a vast shipwreck when the storms are silenced and the sailors flown, and the body of the shattered fleet lies unrecognizable upon the sandbank, so lay before us Athens, and the orphaned pillars stood before us like the naked tree trunks of a forest which greened still in the evening and then went up in fire in the night.

'Here,' said Diotima, 'you learn to be still about your own fate, be it good or ill.'

'Here you learn to be still about everything,' I continued. 'Had the reapers who mowed this cornfield enriched their barns with its haulms, nothing would have been lost and I should be content to stand here as a gleaner; but who gained by it?'

'All of Europe,' replied one of the friends.

'Oh, yes!' I cried, 'they've hauled off the pillars and statues and sold them to each other, prizing the noble figures not a little on account of their rarity, the way one prizes parrots and monkeys.'

'Don't say that!' replied the same man; 'and should they really lack the spirit of all the beauty, it would be because that couldn't be carried away, couldn't be bought.'

'Quite!' I cried. 'For that spirit had perished even before the destroyers fell upon Attica. Only when the houses and temples are desolate do the wild beasts venture into the gates and streets.'

'For anyone who does have that spirit,' said Diotima consolingly, 'Athens still stands like a fruit tree in bloom. The artist can easily for himself restore the torso to wholeness.'

The next day we went out early, saw the ruins of the Parthenon, the site of the ancient theatre of Bacchus, the temple of Theseus, the sixteen columns that still remain standing of the divine Olympieion; but what most moved me was the ancient gate through which in former times one came out of the old town into the new, and where once a thousand beautiful people must have greeted each other in a single day. Now you come neither into the old nor into the new city through this gate, and mute and waste it stands there like a dried-up fountain from whose pipes the clear fresh water once sprang forth with a friendly plash.

'Alas!' I said, as we went walking round, 'it's a splendid game fate plays, is it not, toppling down the temples here and leaving the shattered stones for children to throw about, making the mutilated gods into benches before the peasant's hut and the tombs here a resting-place for the grazing bull, and such prodigality is more regal than the wantonness of Cleopatra when she drank the molten pearls; but even so, the pity of all that grandeur and beauty!'

'Dear Hyperion!' cried Diotima, 'it's time for you to leave; you're pale and your eyes are weary, and it's useless trying to help yourself with fancies. Come away! out into the green! in amongst the colours of life! that will do you good.'

We went out into the nearby gardens.

The others had fallen into conversation on the way with two British scholars reaping their harvest among the antiquities of Athens, and they were not to be budged. I was happy to leave them to it.

My whole being was uplifted when once again I saw myself alone with Diotima; in a glorious struggle with the sacred chaos of Athens she had prevailed. Like the lyre of the heavenly muse above the warring elements, so Diotima's still thoughts held sway above the wreckage. Like the moon from a tender cloud, so her spirit rose up from sweet sorrow; the heavenly maiden stood there in her sadness like the flower that breathes out its loveliest fragrance in the night.

On and on we walked, and in the end our walk was not in vain.

O you groves of Angele where the olive tree and the cypress, whispering round one another, cool themselves with friendly shade, where the golden fruit of the citron tree gleams through the dark green, where the swelling grape grows wantonly over the hedge, and the ripe orange, like a smiling foundling, lies on the way! you fragrant hidden paths! you tranquil seats where the image of the myrtle bush smiles from the spring! you I shall never forget.

Diotima and I walked about for a while beneath the glorious trees until a large cheerful glade opened up before us.

Here we sat down. There was a blissful stillness between us. My spirit floated about the divine form of the maiden like the butterfly about a flower, and all my being lightened and became one in the joy of inspiring contemplation.

'Are you so soon comforted again, you lighthead?' said Diotima.

'Yes! yes! I am,' I answered. 'What I thought was lost I have, what I languished for, as if it had vanished from the world, is now before me. No, Diotima! the wellspring of eternal beauty hasn't yet run dry.

'I've told you once before, I no longer need gods and men. I know that heaven is desolate and void, and the earth, which once overflowed with beautiful human life, has almost become like an anthill. But there is still a place where the old heaven and the old earth smile for me. For all gods of heaven and all godly humans of earth I forget in you.

'What's the shipwreck of the world to me, I know of nothing but my blissful isle.'

'There's a time for love,' said Diotima in gentle earnest, 'as there's a time to live in the happy cradle. But life itself drives us out.

'Hyperion!' — here she ardently seized my hand, and her voice was raised with grandeur — 'Hyperion! it seems to me that you are born for higher things. Do not misjudge yourself! it's the lack of material that's held you back. Things didn't move quickly enough. That cast you down. Like the young fencers you'd lunge too soon, before your aim was yet sure and your hand skilled, and since, as is only natural, you took more hits than you gave, you became chary and doubted yourself and all things; for you're as sensitive as you're hotheaded. But thereby nothing is lost. Had your mind and your actions matured so early, your spirit would not be what it is; you would not be the thinking man, had you not been the suffering one, the man in ferment. Believe me, you would never so clearly have come to know the equilibrium of beautiful humanity, had you not so utterly lost it. Your heart has found peace at last. I'll believe it. I understand it. But do you really think you've now reached your end? Will you lock yourself up in the heaven of your love and leave a world which has need of you to wither and grow cold beneath you? Down you must like the ray of light, like the all-refreshing rain you must descend into the land of mortality, you must illumine like Apollo, shake and quicken like Jupiter, or you are not worthy of your heaven. I beg you, go back into Athens once again, and this time look at the people there walking about amongst the ruins, the raw Albanians and the other good artless Greeks, who console themselves with a merry dance and a pious fable for the vile oppression that weighs down on them — can you say: "I'm ashamed of this material"? I think it could still prove malleable after all. Can

you turn away your heart from those in need? They're not evil, they've done you no harm!'

'What can I do for them?' I cried.

'Give them what you have within you,' Diotima replied, 'give — '

'Not a word, not a word more, great soul!' I cried, 'else you will sway me, else it will be as if you'd forced me to it —

'They won't be happier, but nobler, no! they'll be happier too. They must come forth, they must rise like young mountains from the surging sea, driven by their subterranean fire.

'It's true I stand alone and come unrenowned among them. Yet just one who is a man, can he not do more than hundreds who are only fragments of men?

'Holy nature! you are the same within me and without. It cannot be so hard to unite what is without with the divine that is within me. If the bee can build its thriving little realm, then why shouldn't I be able to plant and raise what's needed?

'What? the Arab merchant sowed his Koran and there grew up for him like an endless forest a people of disciples, and that field should not also flourish where the ancient truth shall come again in newly quickened youth?

'Let there be fundamental change! From humanity's roots let the new world spring! Let a new godhead rule over them, a new future brighten before them.

'In the workshop, in the home, in the assemblies, in the temples, everywhere let there be change!

'But first I must go forth to learn. I'm an artist, but I lack the craft. I can mould in my mind, but I haven't yet learned to direct my hand — '

'You shall go to Italy,' said Diotima, 'to Germany, France — how many years do you need? three — four — I should think three are enough; you're not of the slow sort, and will be seeking out only the greatest and most beautiful —'

'And then?'

'You will become the educator of our people, you'll be a great man, I hope. And when I then embrace you like this, then I'll dream as if I were a part of the glorious man, then I'll rejoice as if you had gifted me, like Pollux to Castor, half of your immortality, oh! I shall become a proud maiden, Hyperion!'

I fell silent for a while. I was filled with ineffable joy.

'Is there then contentment between the decision and the deed,' I finally resumed, 'is there a calm before the victory?'

'It's the calm of the hero,' said Diotima, 'there are decisions which, like the dicta of the gods, are command and fulfilment in one, and such is yours. —'

We walked back, as after our first embrace. Everything had become strange and new for us.

Now I stood over the ruins of Athens like the farmer on the fallow field. 'Just lie peaceful,' I thought, as we took ship again, 'just lie peaceful, slumbering land! Soon young life will green from you and wax towards the blessings of heaven. Soon the clouds will no more rain in vain, soon the sun will find again its ancient progeny.

'Do you ask after men, nature? Do you lament like a lyre which the brother of chance, the wind alone plays, since the artist who kept it in tune is dead? They will come, your men, nature! A rejuvenated people will rejuvenate you too, and you will become as its bride, and the ancient covenant of spirits will renew itself with you.

'There will be but one beauty; and humanity and nature will unite into one all-embracing godhead.'

Volume Two

μη φυναι, τον απαντα νιχα λογον. το δ'επει φανη, βηναι χειδεν, οδεν περ ηχει, πολν δεντερου ως ταχιστα.

Sophocles

[Not to be born is, past all prizing, best. But when a man has seen the light of day, this is the next best by far, that with the utmost speed he should go back whence he came.]

Book One

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXXI]

We were living the last lovely moments of the year, on our return from Attica.

A brother of spring was the autumn for us, full of mellow fire, a feast time for commemorating sorrows and past joys of love. The withering leaves wore the red hues of dusk, only the spruce and the laurel stood in eternal green. In the bright breezes wandering birds lingered, others swarmed in vineyard and garden, merrily reaping what people had left. And the heavenly light streamed pure from the open sky, through all the branches smiled the holy sun, the goodly, that never I name without joy and thanks, that often in deep grief has healed me with a glance and purged my soul of discontent and cares.

We revisited all our dearest paths, Diotima and I, vanished hours of bliss would meet us everywhere.

We remembered the past May, we'd never before seen the earth as then, we said, it had been transformed, a silver cloud of blossom, a joyful flame of life, freed of all coarser stuff.

'Oh! all was so full of joy and hope,' cried Diotima, 'so full of ceaseless growth and yet so effortless too, so blissfully at peace, like a child lost in play with not a thought in the world.'

'It's by this that I know it, the soul of nature,' I cried, 'by this still fire, by this lingering in its mighty haste.'

'And it's so dear to the happy, this lingering,' cried Diotima; 'you remember? we stood together on the bridge one evening, after a violent storm, and the red mountain torrent shot away like an arrow beneath

us, but beside it the woods were greening in peace and the bright beech leaves barely stirred. How it warmed our hearts that the soulful green did not fly away from us too like the stream, and the beautiful spring held still for us like a tame bird, but now just the same it's over the hills and long gone.'

We smiled at the phrase, although we felt more like grieving.

So too our own bliss would pass, and this we foresaw.

O Bellarmin! who then may say he stands fast when even the beautiful ripens so towards its fate, when even the divine must humble itself and share mortality with all that is mortal!

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXXII]

I'd lingered with the lovely maiden before her house until the lamp of the night shone into the tranquil twilight; now I came back to Notara's dwelling, thoughtful, full of overflowing heroic life, as always when I went from her embraces. A letter had come from Alabanda.

'Things are on the move, Hyperion,' he wrote, 'Russia has declared war on the Porte; they're coming with a fleet into the Archipelago;[3] the Greeks shall be free if they join the uprising to drive the Sultan to the Euphrates. The Greeks will do their part, the Greeks will be free and I'm heartily glad that there's finally something to do again. I couldn't face the light of day before we got as far as this.

'If you're still the old Hyperion, then come! You'll find me in the village before Coron when you come by way of Mistra. I'm staying on the hill, in the white villa by the woods.

'I've broken with the people whom you met with me in Smyrna. You were right, with your finer sense, not to step into their sphere.

'I long to see us both together again in the new life. Until now the world was too wretched for you to make yourself known to it. Since you wouldn't do bondsman's work you did nothing, and doing nothing made you dreamy and morose.

'You wouldn't swim in the swamp. Come now, come, and let us bathe in open sea!

'That shall do us good, my sole beloved!'

3 [Hölderlin's note] In the year 1770.

So he wrote. At first I was taken aback. My face burned with shame, my heart seethed like hot springs, and I couldn't keep still, so did it pain me to be outflown by Alabanda, bested once and for all. Yet all the more eagerly did I now embrace the work ahead. —

'I've grown too idle,' I cried, 'too fond of the quiet life, too fey, too sluggish! — Alabanda looks out into the world like a noble pilot, Alabanda is busy and searches the waves for booty; and your hands are asleep in your lap? and you would make do with words and conjure the world with magic formulas? But your words are feckless as snowflakes and merely make the air murkier, and your incantations are for the pious, but the unbelievers don't hear you. — Yes! to be gentle in season, that may be a beautiful thing, but to be gentle out of season, that's ugly, because it's cowardly! — But Harmodius! it's your myrtle I will be like, your myrtle in which the sword was concealed. I will not have walked in idleness for nothing, and my sleep shall become like oil when it's touched by the flame. I will not look on when it counts, will not go around asking for news when Alabanda takes the laurel.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXXIII]

Diotima's sudden pallor, when she read Alabanda's letter, pierced my soul. She then began, calmly and earnestly, to advise me against this step, and we spoke much back and forth. 'O you men of violence!' she cried at last, 'you who are so quick to go to the extreme, remember Nemesis!'

'For those who suffer extremes,' I said, 'for them extreme is right.'

'Even if it's right,' she said, 'it's not what you were born for.'

'So it would seem;' I said, 'I've loitered long enough. Oh, I'd like to load an Atlas on my shoulders to discharge the debts of my youth. Do I have a sense of myself? do I have inner stability? Oh, let me go, Diotima! It's here, in just such work as this, that I must gain it.'

'That's sheer hubris!' Diotima cried; 'you were lately more modest, lately when you said: "first I must go forth to learn".'

'Dear sophist!' I cried, 'our talk then was of something completely different. Leading my people to the Olympus of divine beauty, where from springs for ever young there flows the true with all things good, is something I'm not yet fit to do. But I've learnt to use a sword, and for now that's all that's needed. The new covenant of spirits can't live in the

air, the holy theocracy of the beautiful must have a free state to live in, and that demands space on earth and this space we shall surely conquer.'

'You will conquer,' cried Diotima, 'and forget what for? at best you'll force your free state into being and then say: "for what have I built?" Oh! it will have been consumed, all the beautiful life that was to stir there will have been spent, even in you! The savage struggle will tear you apart, beautiful soul, you will grow old, blissful spirit! and life-weary ask at the end, "where are you now, you ideals of my youth?"'

'That's cruel, Diotima,' I cried, 'grasping the heart in this way, holding me fast by my own fear of death, by my highest joy of life, but no! no! no! bondage kills, but a just war brings every soul alive. It's what gives to gold the colour of the sun, that it gets thrown into the fire! This and only this gives to man his whole youth, that he bursts his bonds asunder! It's this alone can save him, that he goes forth and crushes the viper underfoot, the crawling century that poisons in the bud all beautiful nature! — You say I'll grow old, Diotima! if I liberate Greece? grow old and wretched, a mean little man? Oh, then he must have been right sapless and empty and godforsaken, that Athenian youth, the victory messenger from Marathon, when he came over the peak of Pentelikon and looked down into the vales of Attica!'

'Dearest! dearest!' cried Diotima, 'be still! I won't say another word. You shall go, you shall go, proud man! Oh! when you're like this I have no power, no claim over you.'

She wept bitterly and I stood before her like a criminal. 'Forgive me, divine maiden!' I cried, sunk down before her, 'oh, forgive me that I must! I'm not making a choice, I'm not deliberating. There's a power within me and I cannot tell if it's my self that drives me to this step.' 'It's your full soul that commands you,' she answered. 'Not to follow it often leads to ruin, but then following it likely does too. It's best you go, for that is greater. You act; I will bear it.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXXIV]

Diotima was from now on marvellously changed.

With joy I'd seen how since our love began the muted life had opened out in glances and lovely words, and her genial tranquillity had often met me as sparkling inspiration.

But how alien to us grows the beautiful soul when after its first blossoming, after the morning of its course, it must rise toward high noon! One barely knew the blissful child any more, so sublime and so sorrowful had she become.

Oh, how many times I lay before that grieving image of divinity and thought to weep away my soul in pain for her, and stood up in wonderment and myself full of all-powerful energies! A flame had risen to her eyes from her oppressed breast. Her bosom had grown for her too crowded with wishes and sorrows; that's why the maiden's thoughts were so glorious and bold. A new greatness, a visible power over all that could feel, held sway within her. She was a higher being. She belonged no more to mortal man.

O my Diotima, could I have imagined then how it would end?

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXXV]

Even canny Notara was captivated by the new project, promised me strong backing, hoped soon to occupy the Corinthian Isthmus and grasp Greece here as by the helve. But fate willed otherwise and rendered his work futile before it reached its goal.

He advised me not to go to Tinos, but to head straight down the Peloponnese, and as unobtrusively as possible. I should write to my father on the way, he said; the cautious old man would more easily condone a step that had been taken than allow one that hadn't. I wasn't wholly at ease with that, but we so readily sacrifice our own feelings when a great goal stands before our eyes.

'I doubt,' continued Notara, 'whether you'll be able to count on your father's help in a case like this. So I shall give you what you're surely going to need along the way so as to live and do your work for a time, come what may. If you can someday, then pay it back; if not, then what was mine was also yours. Don't be ashamed to take the money,' he added with a smile; 'even the steeds of Phoebus don't live on air alone, so the poets tell us.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXXVI]

Now came the day of parting.

Throughout the morning I'd remained up in Notara's garden, in the fresh winter air, beneath the evergreen cypresses and cedars. I was composed. The great energies of youth sustained me, and the suffering I sensed bore me aloft like a cloud.

Diotima's mother had asked that Notara and the other friends and I should spend the last day together at her home. The good people all had taken their joy in me and Diotima, and what was godly in our love had not been lost on them. They were now to bless my leaving too.

I went down. I found the dear maiden at the hearth. It seemed for her a holy priestly office to tend to the house on this day. She had prepared everything, made everything in the house beautiful, and no one was allowed to help. She had gathered all the flowers that still remained in the garden, and managed to put together roses and fresh grapes even in this late season.

She knew my footfall when I approached, and came softly towards me; her pale cheeks glowed from the flame of the hearth and her earnest swollen eyes were glistening from tears. She saw how overcome I was. 'Go in, my dear,' she said, 'mother's inside and I shall follow shortly.'

I went in. There the noble woman sat and held out her lovely hand to me — 'are you come,' she cried, 'are you come, my son! I should be angry with you, you have taken my child from me, have talked all reason and sense out of me, and you do what you list and make off; but forgive him, you heavenly powers! if what he intends is wrong, and if it is right, oh, then do not hold back with your help for the dear youth!' I wanted to speak, but just then Notara came in with the other friends and behind them Diotima.

We were silent for a while. We honoured the grieving love that was in us all, we were fearful to make free with it in speeches and lofty thoughts. Finally, after a few fleeting words, Diotima asked me to tell of Agis and Cleomenes: I'd often mentioned those great souls with fiery reverence and claimed that they were demi-gods as surely as Prometheus, and their struggle with the fate of Sparta more heroic than any in the lustrous myths. The genius of these men, I'd said, was the golden sunset of the Greek day, just as Homer and Theseus had been its aurora.

I told their story and at the end we all felt stronger and uplifted.

'Happy the man,' cried one of the friends, 'whose life alternates between heartfelt joy and fresh battles.'

'Yes!' cried another, 'that is eternal youth when there are always ample energies at play and we can keep ourselves wholly in pleasure and toil.'

'Oh, that I could go with you!' Diotima cried to me.

'But it's good you stay behind, Diotima!' I said. 'The priestess may not leave the temple. You shall be the keeper of the holy flame, in quiet seclusion the keeper of the beautiful, that I may find it again in you.'

'Yes, you're right, my dear, that's best,' she said, and her voice trembled and her ethereal eyes were hidden behind her handkerchief, so their tears, their confusion shouldn't be seen.

O Bellarmin! it almost tore my breast asunder to have made her so blush with shame. 'Friends!' I cried, 'keep this angel safe for me. I can be sure of nothing more if I can't be sure of her. O heaven! I dread to think what I could do if I were to lose her.'

'Be calm, Hyperion!' Notara interjected.

'Calm?' I cried; 'O you good people! you're ready enough to worry how the garden's going to bloom or what the harvest will be like, you're capable of praying for your vines, and I'm supposed to part without wishes from the only thing my soul serves?'

'No, good Hyperion!' cried Notara, moved, 'no! you shall not part from her without wishes! no, by the godly innocence of your love! of my blessing you both may be sure.'

'You remind me,' I quickly cried. 'She shall bless us, this dear mother, with all of you she shall be our witness — come Diotima! your mother shall hallow our union until the beautiful community, which is our hope, join us in marriage.'

So I fell upon one knee; with a wide gaze, blushing and solemnly smiling, she too sank down by my side.

'Long since, O nature!' I cried, 'has our life been one with you, and heavenly-youthful, like you and all your gods, is our own world become through love.'

'In your groves we wandered,' Diotima continued, 'and were like you, by your springs we sat, and were like you; over yon mountains we went, with your children the stars, like you.'

'When we were far from one another,' I cried, 'when, like a harp's whispering, our coming rapture barely began to thrum for us, when we found one another, when there was no more sleep and all the tones within us woke into the full chords of life, divine nature! then we were always like you, and now too when we part and joy dies, we are, like you, full of sorrow and yet good, therefore a pure mouth shall witness for us that our love is hallowed and eternal, like you.'

'I witness to it,' said the mother.

'We witness to it,' cried the others.

Now no words remained for us to speak. I felt my heart at its highest; I felt myself ripe for parting. 'Now I will forth, dear friends!' I said, and the life drained from all their faces. Diotima stood like a marble image and I felt her hand die in mine. I had killed everything around me, I was alone and reeled before the boundless silence in which my overflowing life no longer found a hold.

'Oh!' I cried, 'my heart burns hot within me, and you all stand there so cold, dear friends! and only the house-gods bend their ears? — Diotima! — you are silent, you don't see! — oh, it's well for you that you don't see!'

'Go then,' she sighed, 'it has to be; go then, you dear heart!'

'O sweet sound from these blissful lips!' I cried, and stood as in adoration before the lovely statue — 'sweet sound! one more time breathe upon me, dawn one more time, dear light of these eyes!'

'Don't speak that way, dearest!' she cried, 'speak in more earnest, speak with more greatness of heart to me!'

I wanted to hold myself back, but I was as in a dream.

'Woe!' I cried, 'this is a parting without return.'

'You'll kill her,' cried Notara. 'See how gentle she is, and you so beside yourself.'

I looked at her and tears burst from my burning eyes.

'Farewell then, Diotima!' I cried, 'heaven of my love, farewell! — Let us be strong, dear friends! dear mother! I gave you joy and grief. Farewell! farewell!'

I staggered forth. Diotima followed me alone.

Evening had come and the stars rose in the heavens. Below the house we stood in stillness. Eternity was in us, above us. Soft as the aether Diotima enfolded me. 'Foolish man, what is separation?' she whispered to me mysteriously, with the smile of an immortal.

'I do feel different now,' I said, 'and I cannot tell which of the two is a dream, my sorrow or my joyfulness.'

'They both are,' she answered, 'and both are good.'

'Perfect one!' I cried, 'I'll speak like you. By the starry heaven shall we know each other. Let it be the token between me and you for so long as our lips are mute.'

'Let it be!' she said with a lingering tone I'd never heard before — it was her last. Her image vanished away from me in the twilight, and I cannot tell if it was really she when I turned for the last time and the fading figure quivered one more moment before my eyes and then died into the night.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [XXXVII]

Why am I telling you, repeating my pain and stirring up again my restless youth in me? Isn't it enough to have gone through mortality once? why do I not remain still, in the peace of my spirit?

This is why, my Bellarmin! because every breath in life remains dear to the heart, because all changes in pure nature belong equally to her beauty. Our soul, when it casts off its mortal experiences and only lives alone in holy peace, is it not like a leafless tree? like a head without locks? Dear Bellarmin! I have rested a while; like a child I've been living among the quiet hills of Salamis, mindless of fate and the striving of men. Much has since changed in my eyes, and now I have peace enough within me to stay calm at every glance into human life. O friend! in the end the spirit reconciles us with all things. You won't believe it, at least not of me. But I think you should even see from my letters how daily my soul grows stiller and stiller. And I will go on speaking of it till you do believe it.

Here are letters from Diotima and me that we wrote to each other after my parting from Calauria. They are the most precious thing I confide to you. They are the warmest image from those days of my life. Of the clamour of war they tell you little. So much the more of my very own life, and that of course is what you want. And, oh, you must also see how loved I was. That I could never tell you, that Diotima alone can tell.

Hyperion to Diotima [XXXVIII]

I've awoken from the death of parting, my Diotima! fortified, as if from sleep, my spirit lifts itself up.

I'm writing to you from an Epidaurian mountain peak. There in the depths your island shimmers distant, Diotima! and out there my stadium where I must triumph or fall. O Peloponnese! O you springs of the Eurotas and Alpheus! That's where it will be decided! Out of the Spartan forests the ancient genius of the land shall swoop down like an eagle with our army, as on rushing wings.

My soul is full of lust for deeds and full of love, Diotima, and my eye gazes out into the Greek valleys as if it might magically command: arise again, you cities of the gods!

A god must be in me, for I hardly even feel our separation. Like the blissful shades of Lethe my soul now lives with yours in heavenly freedom and fate sways over our love no more.

Hyperion to Diotima [XXXIX]

I'm now in the middle of the Peloponnese. I'm spending tonight in the same hut where once I stayed when, barely more than a boy, I roamed through these parts with Adamas. How happily I sat then on the bench before the house and listened to the tinkling bells of the caravan, coming from afar, and the plash of the nearby fountain, pouring its silvery waters into the basin beneath blossoming acacias.

Now I'm happy again. I wander through this land as through Dodona's grove, where the oaks resounded with oracles prophesying glory. I see nothing but deeds, past ones, future ones, even when I wander from morning till evening under the open sky. Believe me, anyone travelling through this land who still can thole a yoke upon his neck, who doesn't become another Pelopidas, that man is empty of heart or lacking in sense.

So long this land has slept — so long has time dragged by, like the river of hell, drumbly and dumb, in desolate idleness?

And yet everything lies ready. The mountain folk hereabout are full of vengeful energies, couched there like a silent thundercloud that waits only to be driven by the storm-wind. Diotima! let me breathe the

breath of God among them, let me speak to them a word from the heart, Diotima. Have no fear! They won't be so savage. I know raw nature. It scorns reason, but it's in league with inspiration. Whoever works with all his soul will never go astray. He has no need for overthought, for no force is against him.

Hyperion to Diotima [XL]

Tomorrow I shall be with Alabanda. It's a delight for me to ask the way to Coron, and I ask more often than is needed. I wish I could take the wings of the sun and fly to him, and yet I also like to linger so and ask myself: how will he be?

The kingly youth! why was I born later? why did I not spring with him from one cradle? I cannot suffer the difference that's between us. Oh, why did I live still like an idle shepherd-boy on Tinos and could only dream of the likes of him when already he was putting nature to the test in living labour, already battling sea and wind and all the elements? did I not also feel impelled towards the bliss of action?

But I will catch him up, I will be swift. By heaven! I'm overripe for work. My soul will only rage against itself if I don't soon free myself through living activity.

Noble maiden! how was I able to stand before you? How did you find it possible to love such a deedless being.

Hyperion to Diotima [XLI]

I have him, dearest Diotima!

Light is my breast and swift are my sinews, ha! and the future lures me, just as a clear watery deep lures us to leap in and cool our intemperate blood in the bracing bath. But that's just idle prattle. We're dearer to each other than ever, my Alabanda and I. We're freer together, and yet there's all fullness and deepness of life as before.

Oh, how right were those ancient tyrants to forbid friendships like ours! For then you're as strong as a demi-god and will thole no abuse in your sphere! —

It was evening when I entered his room. He had just put his work to one side, sat in a moonlit corner by the window, nursing his thoughts. I

stood in the dark, he didn't recognize me, glanced perfunctorily in my direction. Heaven knows who he could have thought I was. 'So how's it going then?' he cried. 'Not too bad!' I said. But my dissembling was in vain. My voice was full of suppressed rejoicing. 'What's this?' he started up, 'is it you?' 'Of course it is, you blindling!' I cried, and flew into his arms. 'Oh now!' cried Alabanda at last, 'now there shall be change, Hyperion!'

'I think so too,' I said, and joyfully shook his hand.

'Do you still know me then,' Alabanda continued presently, 'do you still have your old pious faith in Alabanda? Generous soul! things meanwhile haven't gone as well for me as when I felt myself in the light of your love.'

'What?' I cried, 'Alabanda asks this? That was not proudly spoken, Alabanda. But it's the sign of the times that the old heroic nature goes begging for honour, and the living human heart, like an orphan, frets for a droplet of love.'

'Dear boy!' he cried; 'I've aged, that's all. This flabby life everywhere and the business with the old men whose disciple I tried to make you in Smyrna —'

'Oh, that's bitter,' I cried; 'even this man she's dared to assail, the goddess of death, the nameless one that they call fate.'

Light was brought and we gazed at each other anew with gentle loving scrutiny. My dearest's aspect was much changed since the days of hope. Like the mid-day sun from a blanched sky, his great ever-living eye gleamed at me from a faded face.

'My good young friend!' Alabanda cried, in friendly irritation at the gaze I gave him, 'enough of the doleful looks, there's a good fellow! I know full well I've gone downhill. O my Hyperion! I long so much for something great and true, and I hope to find it with you. You've grown beyond me, you're freer and stronger than you were and, believe it not! that makes me heartily glad. I'm the parched land and you come like a timely tempest — oh, it's glorious that you're here!'

'Hush!' I said, 'you rob me of my senses, and we shouldn't speak of ourselves at all until we're in the thick of life, amidst the deeds.'

'Quite right!' cried Alabanda joyously, 'it's only when the hunting horn sounds that the hunters feel fully what they are.'

'Will it soon begin then?' I said.

'It will,' cried Alabanda, 'and I tell you, dear heart! it should be quite a fire. Ha! may it reach right up to the tip of the tower and melt its vane, and rage and swirl about until the tower bursts and tumbles! — and don't let yourself be put off by our allies. I know full well the good Russians would like to use us as their guns. But don't you worry! once our stout Spartans have had the chance to find out who they are and what they can do, and when we've then conquered the Peloponnese, we'll laugh the North Pole in the face and build us a life of our own.'

'A life of our own,' I cried, 'a new, an honourable life. Were we then born of the swamp, like a will-o'-the-wisp, or do we stem from the victors of Salamis? How is it then now? how have you become a maidservant, free nature of the Greeks? how have you sunk so low, race of my fathers, of whom the divine effigies of Jupiter and Apollo were once merely the copy? — But hear me, heaven of Ionia! hear me, earth of the fatherland, you that half-naked, like a beggar-woman, wrap yourself in the rags of your ancient glory, I will thole it no longer!'

'O sun that reared us!' cried Alabanda, 'you shall be witness when under the toil our mettle grows, when under the blows of fate, like iron under the hammer, our project takes shape.'

We each of us kindled the other.

'And let not a blot stick,' I cried, 'none of the grotesques the age smears us with, like the rabble on walls.'

'Oh,' cried Alabanda, 'that's why war is so good —'

'Right, Alabanda,' I cried, 'like all great work where human energy and spirit alone helps and no crutch and no waxen wing. Then we shall cast off the slaves' livery on which fate has stamped its brand for us —'

'Then we'll have no more use for anything affected and forced,' cried Alabanda, 'then, just as in the Nemean races, we'll go unadorned, unfettered, naked to our goal.'

'To our goal,' I cried, 'where the young free state dawns and from Greek earth the pantheon of all that's beautiful rises.'

Alabanda was silent for a while. A fresh redness rose in his face and his form grew high, like a plant refreshed.

'O youth! youth!' he cried, 'then will I drink from your fount, then will I live and love. I'm full of joy, heaven of the night,' he went on as if drunk, walking to the window, 'you arch over me like a bower of vine leaves, and your stars hang down like grapes.'

Hyperion to Diotima [XLII]

It's as well for me I'm wholly busy with my work. I'd surely tumble from one folly to another, so full is my soul, so fuddled am I by this man, wonderful and proud, who loves nothing but me and heaps on me alone all the humility that's in him. O Diotima! this Alabanda has wept before me, has begged me like a child to forgive him what he did to me in Smyrna.

Who am I then, you dear ones, that I call you mine, that I may say, 'they are mine own,' that I stand between you like a conqueror and embrace you as my booty.

O Diotima! O Alabanda! noble beings, grand, serene! how must I achieve if I'm not to flee before my happiness, before you?

Just as I was writing I received your letter, dearest.

Do not grieve, lovely being, do not grieve! Save yourself, unscathed by sorrow, for the future festivals of the fatherland! Diotima! for the glowing festal day of nature save yourself, and for all the blithe days in honour of the gods!

Can you not see Greece already?

Oh, can you not see how the eternal stars, glad of their new neighbours, smile above our towns and groves, how the ancient ocean, when it sees our people stroll along the shore, is minded again of the beautiful Athenians and again brings us fortune, just as then for its darlings, on joyful waves?

Soulful maiden! you're already so beautiful now! how shall you blossom then, in ravishing glory, when the right climate nourishes you!

Diotima to Hyperion [XLIII]

I'd mostly shut myself in since you went away, dear Hyperion! Today I was once again outdoors.

In the clement February air I've gathered life and bring you what I've gathered. It's still done me good too, the fresh warming of heaven, still I've been able to share in it, the new bliss of the plant world, pure and ever the same, where everything grieves and joys again in its season.

Hyperion! O my Hyperion! why don't we also tread the quiet paths of life? They are holy names, winter and spring and summer and

autumn! but we do not know them. Is it not sin to grieve in spring? why then do we do it?

Forgive me! the children of the earth live through the sun alone; I live through you, I have other joys, is it then wonder if I have other grief? and must I grieve? must I then?

Brave one! dear one! should I wither when you shine? should my heart wilt when the lust of victory wakes in all your sinews? Had I once heard that a Greek youth were setting forth to drag our good people from its shame, to return it to maternal beauty whence it sprang, how I should have roused from childhood's dream and thirsted for the image of the worthy one! and now that he's here, now that he's mine, can I still weep? O silly girl! is it not real? isn't he that glorious youth, and is he not mine? O you shades of blissful time, you my beloved memories!

For it seems to me barely yesterday, that magical evening when the holy stranger met me for the first time, when like a grieving genius he glanced into the sylvan shades where the carefree maiden sat in the dream of youth — in the breath of May he came, Ionia's magical breath of May, and this made him blossom the more for me, it waved his locks, it unfolded his lips like flowers, it dissolved into smiles his sorrow, and O you beams of heaven! how you did shine on me out of those eyes, those inspiriting springs where in the shade of sheltering arches eternal life shimmers and wells! —

Benevolent gods! how beautiful he became with his gaze upon me! how the whole youth, grown taller by a span, stood there in easy vigour, save that he let his loving arms hang humbly down as if they were nothing! and how he then looked up in rapture, as if I'd soared into heaven and were no longer there, oh! how he now smiled and blushed in all the grace of his heart when he became aware of me again and between the clouding tears his Phoebus eye shone through, to ask 'is it you? is it really you?'

And why did he meet me with such reverence, so full of loving superstitious awe? why had he first bowed his head, why was the divine youth so full of longing and sorrow? His genius was too blissful to remain alone, and too poor the world to comprehend it. Oh, that made for such a lovely image, woven of greatness and grief! But now it's different! the grief is gone! He's found his work to do, he's the sick man no more! —

I was full of sighing when I began to write to you, my love! Now I'm nought but joy. So does to speak of you make happy. And see! that's how it shall stay. Farewell!

Hyperion to Diotima [XLIV]

We've still found time to celebrate your feast day, lovely life! before the tumult begins. It was a heavenly day. Sweet springtime wafted and shone from the orient, it drew forth from us your name, just as it drew forth the blossoms from the trees, and all the blissful secrets of love poured out of me. A love like ours my friend had never known, and it was delightful how the proud man became all ear, how his eye and spirit glowed to grasp your image, your being.

'Oh,' he cried at last, 'then it's worth the effort fighting for our Greece if it still bears plants like these!'

'That's right, my Alabanda,' I said; 'then we'll go cheerful into battle, then heavenly fire will drive us on to deeds when our spirit is made young again by the image of such natures, and then we won't be chasing after petty goals, then we won't be bothering with this and that, tinkering with externals and ignoring the spirit, drinking the wine for the cup's sake; and we will not rest, Alabanda, till genial bliss is mystery no more, till all eyes are turned into triumphal arches from which the human spirit, so long absent, shines forth out of the erring and the suffering, and joyful in victory greets the paternal aether. — Ha! by the flag alone shall no one know our future people; all must be made new, there must be fundamental change; pleasure full of earnest and all labour full of cheer! nothing, not even the most paltry and commonplace, without the spirit and the gods! Love and hate and every sound from us must dumbfound the more vulgar world and never a single moment shall remind us of the humdrum past!'

Hyperion to Diotima [XLV]

The volcano's erupting. In Coron and Modon the Turks are under siege and we're pushing onwards with our mountain folk up the Peloponnese.

Now all melancholy's at an end, Diotima, and my spirit is firmer and quicker since I've been engaged in living labour, and see! I now even have a daily schedule.

I begin with the sun. Then I go out to where my warrior-folk lie in the forest shade, and greet the thousand bright eyes that now open up before me with wild affection. An awakening army! I know nothing like it, and all life in towns and villages is a swarm of bees by comparison.

Man cannot deny that once he was happy, like the deer of the forest, and after untold years there still glimmers in us a yearning for the days of the primal world when each roamed the earth like a god, before who knows what? made man tame, and instead of walls and dead wood the soul of the world, the all-pervasive holy air enveloped him still.

Diotima! I'm often filled with wonder when I walk amongst my carefree folk and, as if sprung from the earth, one after another rises and stretches towards the morning light, and among the troops of men the crackling flame leaps up where the mother sits with the shivering babe, where the quickening food cooks, whilst the horses, scenting the day, snort and whinny, and the forest resounds with all-shaking war music, and all around shimmers and rustles with weapons — but these are words, and the special delight of such a life is beyond telling.

Then my company gathers eagerly round me, and it's wonderful how even the oldest and thrawnest honour me in all my youth. We've come to confide in each other, and there's many a man will tell how he's been treated by life, and my heart often swells at this fate or that. Then I begin to talk of better days, and their eyes open wide and light up when they think of the covenant that shall join us and the proud image of the budding free state looms before them.

'All for each and each for all!' There's a joyful spirit in the words, and it always grips my men like a commandment from the gods. O Diotima! thus to see then how with hopes the hardened nature mellows and all its pulses beat higher and the grand designs smooth and clear the darkened brow, to stand thus in a sphere of human beings, surrounded by faith and joy, that's more than beholding earth and heaven and sea in all their glory.

Then I drill them in weapons and marching until noon. Their good cheer makes them willing pupils, and me it makes a master. Now they stand close-ranked in Macedonian phalanx and only move their arms,

now they fly apart like rays of light to bolder strife in separate squads where supple force varies in every position and each man is his own commander, and then they assemble again at a point of safety — and always, wherever they move or stand in such a dance of weapons, there floats before their eyes and mine the image of the slaves of tyranny and the real battlefield.

Afterwards, when the sun shines hotter, council is held in the inner forest, and it's a joy to sway with quiet mind over our great future. We'll take away from chance its power, we shall master fate. We'll let resistance come on our terms, we'll goad the enemy into action for which we're well prepared. Or we'll look on, seemingly daunted, and let him come nearer till he offers his neck for the blow, we'll also confound him with our speed and that's my panacea. But more seasoned physicians think nothing of such cure-alls.

How good I then feel in the evenings with my Alabanda when for pleasure we roam the sun-red hills on sprightly steeds, and on the peaks where we linger the breeze plays in the manes of our mounts, and its friendly whispering mingles with our talk whilst we gaze out into the distances of Sparta that are to be our battle prize! and when we're returned and sit together in the lovely coolness of the night, and the wine cup wafts its fragrance, and the moonlight shines on our frugal meal, and in the midst of our smiling stillness the history of the ancients rises like a cloud from the sacred soil that bears us, how blissful is it then to grasp each other's hands in such a moment!

Then it may be that Alabanda speaks of many another tormented by the tedium of the age, of many a crooked path forged by life since its direct course has been blocked, and then my Adamas also comes to mind, with his journeyings, that longing of his which lured him into the depths of Asia — 'those are mere makeshifts, dear old man!' I'd like to call to him then, 'come! and build your world! with us! for our world is also yours.'

And your world too, Diotima, for it is a copy of you. O you, with your Elysian stillness, could we only create what you are!

Hyperion to Diotima [XLVI]

We've now had three successive victories in small skirmishes, but where the fighting men crisscrossed each other like lightning and

everything was one consuming flame. Navarin is ours and now we stand before the fortress of Mistra, the remains of ancient Sparta. The flag I snatched from an Albanian horde I've planted on a ruin that lies before the city, I've flung for joy my Turkish turban into the Eurotas and have been wearing the Greek helmet ever since.

And now I'd like to see you, O maiden! I'd like to see you and take your hands and press them to my heart, for which the joy perhaps may soon be too great! soon! in a week perhaps it will be freed, the ancient, noble, holy Peloponnese.

O then, my dearest! teach me piety! then teach my overflowing heart a prayer! I should stay silent, for what have I done? and even had I done anything to speak of, yet how much still remains to do? But how can I help it if my thought is swifter than time? I'd much rather have it the other way round, with time and deed outflying thought, and winged victory overtaking hope itself.

My Alabanda blossoms like a bridegroom. From his every glance the coming world smiles out at me, and with that I can as yet just about still my impatience.

Diotima! I wouldn't swap this budding bliss for the finest heyday of ancient Greece, and the smallest of our victories means more to me than Marathon and Thermopylae and Plataea. Is it not true? Is not the convalescing life dearer to the heart than the untouched one that is yet to know sickness? Only when youth is gone do we love it, and only when lost youth comes again does it then gladden all the depths of the soul.

My tent stands by the Eurotas, and when I wake after midnight the ancient river-god murmurs reproachfully past me, and smiling I take the flowers of the bank and strew them on his glancing waves and say to him: 'Take this as a sign, you lonely one! Soon the life of old will blossom around you again.'

Diotima to Hyperion [XLVII]

I've received the letters, my Hyperion, that you wrote to me along the way. You seize me powerfully with all that you tell me, and amidst my love I often shudder to see the gentle youth who wept at my feet transformed into this warlike being.

Won't you then forget how to love?

But change as you will! I shall follow you. I think that if you could hate me I'd even then feel like you, I'd do my best to hate you too, and so our souls would remain akin and that's no idle vaunt, Hyperion.

I too am wholly changed from what I used to be. I'm missing my serene outlook on the world and my free delight in everything that lives. It's only the field of the stars that still attracts my eye. For that, I dwell the more fondly on the great spirits of ancient days and how they ended on earth, and those noble Spartan women have won my heart. Yet I don't forget the new warriors withal, the lusty ones whose hour is come; often I hear their triumphal clamour, nearer and nearer to me, roaring up through the Peloponnese, often I see them surging there like a cataract down through the Epidaurian woods, and their weapons glancing from afar in the sunlight that escorts them like a herald, O my Hyperion! and you hasten across to Calauria and greet the tranquil woods of our love, greet me and then fly back to your work; — and do you think I fear the outcome? Dearest! there are times I'm on the point of being overwhelmed, but my larger thoughts, like flames, hold the frost at bay. —

Farewell! carry it through as the spirit commands you! and don't let the war last too long, for the sake of the peace, Hyperion, for the sake of the beautiful, new, golden peace when, as you said, in our book of statutes will one day be inscribed the laws of nature, and when life itself, when divine nature, that can't be written into any book, will be in the heart of the community. Farewell.

Hyperion to Diotima [XLVIII]

You should have soothed me, my Diotima! should have told me not to rush, told me to wrest from fate the victory bit by bit, as one does from tight debtors their dues. O maiden! standing still is worst of all. My blood dries up in my veins, so do I thirst to advance, and have to stand here idle, have to besiege and besiege day in and day out. Our people want to storm, but that would inflame their restive spirits beyond all temperance, and then woe to our hopes if the savage being seethes up and bursts the bonds of discipline and love.

I don't know, it can only be a matter of days before Mistra must surrender, but I wish we were further forward. Here in the camp it's

like being in storm-laden air. I'm impatient, and I'm not happy with my men. There's a frightening wantonness amongst them.

But I'm silly to make so much of my mood. And it's surely worth enduring a worry or two for ancient Lacedaemon before it's won.

Hyperion to Diotima [XLIX]

It's over, Diotima! our people have plundered, murdered without distinction, even our brothers are slain, the Greeks in Mistra, the innocent, or they wander about helpless and the lifeless anguish on their faces cries out to heaven and earth for vengeance against the barbarians at whose head I stood.

Now I can go forth and preach my good cause. Oh, now all hearts will fly to me!

But I went about it cleverly, didn't I? I knew my people. Indeed! it was an extraordinary undertaking, to plant my Elysium with a band of brigands.

No! by holy Nemesis! I got what I deserved and I will bear it too, bear it till the pain tears my final consciousness asunder.

Do you think I'm raving? I have an honourable wound, dealt me by one of my faithful followers whilst I tried to avert the atrocity. If I were raving I'd rip the bandage from it, and then my blood would flow whither it belongs, into this grieving earth.

This grieving earth! this naked earth! that I sought to clothe with sacred groves, that I sought to adorn with all the flowers of Greek life!

Oh, it would have been beautiful, my Diotima.

Do you call me disheartened? Dear maiden! there's too much calamity. Demented hordes burst in on all sides; rapine rages in Morea like a plague and anyone who doesn't himself seize the sword is put to flight, butchered, and yet the maniacs claim they're fighting for our freedom. Others from amongst the raw people are in the pay of the Sultan and they behave just the same.

I've just heard that our inglorious army is now scattered. At Tripolitsa the cowards met an Albanian troop that numbered half as many. But since there was nothing to plunder, the wretches all ran away. The Russians who'd ventured on the campaign with us, forty brave men, were the only ones to stand their ground, and all found their deaths.

And so now I'm alone again with my Alabanda, as before. Since he saw me fall and bleed in Mistra this faithful friend has forgotten all else, his hopes, his lust of victory, his despair. The man of wrath who plunged amongst the plunderers like an avenging god, he now so gently guided me out of the turmoil and my clothing was wet with his tears. He's stayed with me too in the hut where I've since lain, and I'm now the more pleased about that. For had he gone on with the others, he'd now be lying in the dust at Tripolitsa.

How things will go from now on, I don't know. Fate thrusts me out into confusion and that's what I deserve; I'm banished from you by my own shame, and who knows for how long?

Oh! I promised you a Greece and now you get a dirge instead. Be your own comfort!

Hyperion to Diotima [L]

I can barely bring myself to speak.

We delight in speech, to be sure, we chatter away like the birds so long as the world wafts over us like a May breeze; but between noon and evening things can change, and what is lost in the end?

Believe me, and mind that I say this to you from my deepest soul: language is a great superfluity. The best is ever for itself and rests in its depths like the pearl at the bottom of the sea. — But what I really wanted to write to you, since the painting must have its frame and man his daily task, I intend to take service for a while with the Russian fleet; for I want nothing more to do with the Greeks.

O dear girl! it's grown very dark around me!

Hyperion to Diotima [LI]

I've lingered, I've struggled. But finally it has to be.

I see what needs to happen, and because I see it, it shall come to pass. Do not mistake my meaning! do not condemn me! I must advise you to leave me, my Diotima.

I can be for you nothing more, you lovely being! This heart has run dry, and my eyes see living life no more. Oh, my lips are withered; the sweet breath of love wells up in my bosom no more.

A single day has robbed me of all youth; by the Eurotas my life has wept itself weary, oh! by the Eurotas that in irredeemable shame wails with all its waves past Lacedaemon's rubble. It's there, there I was mown down by fate. — Am I to possess your love like alms? — I'm so utterly nothing, as unrenowned as the meanest menial. I'm shunned, cursed like a common rebel, and many a Greek in Morea will henceforth recount our heroic deeds to his children's children as a tale of thieves.

Oh! and one thing I've long kept from you. My father solemnly disowned me, banished me beyond recall from the house of my youth, never wants to see me again, either in this life or the next, as he puts it. This was his response to the letter in which I told him of my undertaking.

But don't ever let yourself be led astray by pity. Believe me, there's a joy that still remains for us throughout. True pain inspires. Whoever mounts his misery stands higher. And what's glorious is that only in suffering do we fully feel the freedom of the soul. Freedom! understand the word who can — it's a profound word, Diotima. I'm so deeply beleaguered, so incredibly hurt, I'm without hope, without a goal, I'm utterly bereft of honour, and yet there's a power within me, an indomitable something that sends sweet shudders through my bones whenever it stirs in me.

And I still have my Alabanda. He has as little to gain as I do. Him I can keep for myself without harm! Oh! the kingly youth would have deserved a better lot. He's become so gentle and so still. That often nearly rends my heart. But each of us sustains the other. We say nothing to each other; what should we say? But for all that there's a blessing in many a little labour of love we perform for one another.

There he sleeps and smiles contentedly, in the midst of our misfortune. The good soul! he doesn't know what I'm doing. He wouldn't suffer it. 'You must write to Diotima,' he charged me, 'and must tell her to make ready soon to flee with you to a more liveable land.' But he doesn't know that a heart that's learned despair, such as his and mine, can be nothing more for the beloved. No! no! you could never ever find peace with Hyperion, you would have to become unfaithful, and that I will spare you.

And so farewell then, you sweet girl! farewell! I'd like to tell you, 'go hither, go thither; there the springs of life purl forth.' I'd like to point you to a freer land, a land full of beauty and full of soul, and say: 'Escape

thither!' But oh heaven! if I could do that, then I'd also be another and so there'd be no need for me to part from you — part? Alas! I know not what I do. I weened myself so calm, so cool. Now my head reels and my heart flings itself about like a restless patient. Woe on me! I destroy my last joy. But it has to be and nature's 'Alas!' avails nothing here. I owe this to you, and besides I was born to be homeless and have no resting place. O earth! O you stars! shall I find nowhere to dwell in the end?

Just one more time I should like to return to your bosom, no matter where! Aether eyes! one more time in you to meet myself! to hang upon your lips, you lovely! you ineffable one! to drink in your rapturous, holy-sweet life — but don't listen to that! I beseech you, pay no heed to that! I'd say I was a seducer, if you were to listen to it. You know me, you understand me. You know how deeply you heed me by not pitying me, by not listening to me.

I can, I may no more — how can the priest go on living if his god is no more? O genius of my people! O soul of Greece! down I must go, in the realm of the dead I must seek you.

Hyperion to Diotima [LII]

I've waited long, I'll confess to you, I've been hoping longingly for a word of farewell from your heart, but you remain silent. That too is the language of your beautiful soul, Diotima.

Yet it's true, is it not, this doesn't mean the holier chords must cease? it's true, is it not, Diotima, though the gentle moonlight of love may sink, the higher stars in its heaven still continue to shine? Oh, this is my final joy, that we remain inseparable, though no sound more return from you to me, no shadow of our lovely days of youth!

I look out into the sunset sea, I stretch out my arms towards the airt where you live, far away, and my soul warms once more with all the joys of love and youth.

O earth! my cradle! all bliss and all pain is in the leave we take of you.

You dear Ionian islands! and you, my Calauria, and you my Tinos, you're all before my eye, distant as you are, and my spirit flits with the breezes over the lively waters; and you that there shimmer dimly to one side, you shores of Teos and Ephesus where once I walked with

Alabanda in the days of hope, you shine again for me as then, and I'd like to sail across to the land and kiss the soil and warm the soil at my bosom, and stammer all the sweet words of parting to the silent earth before I fly up into freedom.

Pity, pity, that things don't go better now amongst men, else I'd gladly remain on this good star. But I can do without this earthly orb, and that's worth more than all that it can give.

'Let us, O child! suffer slavery in the sunlight,' said the mother to Polyxena, and her love of life could not have spoken more beautifully. But the sunlight it is that deters me from slavery, it won't let me stay on this degraded earth and, like paths leading home, the hallowed rays draw me on.

For long the majesty of the fateless soul has been more present to me than all else; I've often lived within myself in glorious solitude; I've grown used to shaking off all outward things like flakes of snow; how should I then be feared to seek out so-called death? have I not freed myself a thousand times in thought, how should I then hold back from really doing it for once? Are we then like serfs, fettered to the soil we plough? are we like tame fowl that durstn't run out of the farmyard because that's where they're fed?

We're like the young eagles the father drives from the nest, that they may search for their prey in the high aether.

Tomorrow our fleet goes into combat and this one will be hot enough. I look on the battle as a bath to wash the dust off me; and I expect to find what I wish for; wishes like mine are readily granted on the spot. And so I would end after all by achieving something through my campaign, and see that amongst men no effort goes to waste.

'Pious soul!' I'd like to say, 'think of me when you come to my grave.' But they'll probably cast me into the surging sea, and I'm happy to see my remains sink down where the sources all and the streams that I loved gather together, and where the storm-cloud rises up and waters the hills and the valleys that I loved. And we? O Diotima! Diotima! when shall we see one another again?

It's impossible, and my innermost life rebels at the thought that we could lose each other. I would wander the stars for millennia, clothe myself in all forms, in all of life's languages just to meet you once more. But I believe that like will soon find like.

Great soul! you'll be able to accept this parting, and so let me wander! Greet your mother! Greet Notara and the other friends!

Also greet the trees where I first met you, and the merry rivulets where we walked, and the lovely gardens of Angele, and let my image meet you when you do, my love! Farewell.

Book Two

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LIII]

I was in a lovely dream when I copied out for you the letters that I once exchanged. Now I write to you again, my Bellarmin! and take you further down, down to the deepest depths of my sorrows, and then, last of my loved ones! come forth with me to the place where a new day shines upon us.

The battle I'd written about to Diotima began. The ships of the Turks had taken refuge in the channel between the island of Chios and the Asian coast, and stood along the mainland off Chesma. My admiral left the line with his ship, the one I was on, and began the prelude with the first ship of the Turks. At the very first attack the raging pair were heated to a frenzy, it was a terrible revenge-sodden turmoil. The ships were soon bound fast together with their cordage; the furious fighting grew ever tighter and tighter.

A deep feeling of life coursed through me once more. I felt warm and well in every limb. Like one tenderly departing, my spirit felt itself for the last time in all its senses. And now, full of hot resentment that I knew no better way than to let myself be slaughtered among a throng of barbarians, and with tears of rage in my eyes, I stormed to where my death was certain.

I found the foe close enough to hand and, of the Russians who fought at my side, in a matter of moments not even one remained. I stood there alone, full of pride, and cast my life like a beggar's penny before the barbarians, but they didn't want me. They looked on me as someone whom one fears to sin against, and fate seemed to reverence me in my despair.

In sheer self-defence one of them at last laid into me and struck me so that I fell. From then on I was aware of nothing more until I came to again on Paros, whither I'd been shipped.

From the servant who carried me out of the battle I afterwards heard that the two ships that began the combat had blown up only moments after he'd taken me off in a skiff with the surgeon. The Russians had hurled fire into the Turkish ship, and because their own was entangled with it, both went up together.

How this terrible battle ended you will know. 'So does one poison purge the other,' I cried, when I heard that the Russians had burned the entire Turkish fleet — 'so do tyrants wipe each other out.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LIV]

For six days after the battle I lay in a tortured death-like sleep. My life was like a night, punctuated by pain as by lancing lightning. The first thing I recognized was Alabanda. He had, as I heard, not left my side for an instant, he'd cared for me almost alone, with unbelievable solicitude, with a thousand tender homely attentions that would never in his life have occurred to him otherwise, and he'd been heard on his knees before my bed, crying: 'O live, dear friend! that I may live!'

It was a happy awakening, Bellarmin! when my eye now opened again to the light, and with tears of reunion this glorious man stood before me.

I reached out my hand to him and, proud as he was, he kissed it with all the rapture of love. 'He lives,' he cried, 'O nature! you kindly all-healing saviour! you at least don't forsake your wretched pair, these errants without a fatherland! Oh, I'll never forget, Hyperion! how your ship went up in fire before my eyes and thundering swept up the sailors with it into the raging flames, and amongst those few to be saved there was no Hyperion. I was out of my senses, and the furious clamour of battle did nothing to calm me. Yet I soon got word of you, and flew after you as soon as we were altogether finished with the foe.' —

And how he now watched over me! how with loving care he held me captive in the magic circle of his favours! how without a word he taught me through his great calmness to understand without rancour and like a man the free course of the world!

O you sons of the sun! you freer souls! much has been lost in this Alabanda. I've sought, and besought life in vain since he went away; such a truly Roman nature I never found again. Carefree, deeply wise, courageous, noble! Where is there a man if he was not one? And when he was mild and meek, it was as when the evening light plays in the gloom of the majestic oak and its leaves drip from the storm of the day.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LV]

It was in the beautiful days of autumn when, half-recovered from my wound, I went to the window again for the first time. I returned to life with calmer senses and my soul had become more attentive. With its gentlest magic heaven breathed upon me, and mild as a rain of blossom the bright sunbeams streamed down. There was a great, still, tender spirit in the season, and the peace of fulfilment, the bliss of ripeness in the murmuring boughs, enfolded me like the renewed youth the ancients hoped for in their Elysium.

I'd long not enjoyed it with pure soul, this childlike life of the world; now my eyes opened up with all the joy of seeing anew, and blissful nature had remained changeless in her beauty. My tears flowed before her as an offering of atonement, and a fresh heart rose shuddering from my former discontent. 'O sacred plant world!' I cried, 'we strive and we scheme, and yet we have you! we struggle with our mortal powers to build the beautiful, and yet it grows up effortless beside us! it's true, is it not, Alabanda? man is made to care for bare necessity, everything else looks after itself. And yet — I cannot forget how much more I wanted.'

'Be happy, dear friend! that you are,' cried Alabanda, 'and no longer let your quiet working be hampered by grief.'

'And I will rest too,' I said. 'Oh, all the designs, all the demands I will rip up like letters of debt. I will keep myself pure as an artist does; you will I love, innocent life, life of the groves and the springs! you will I honour, O sunlight! on you will I still myself, beautiful aether, you that inspirit the stars and here too breathe around these trees and here stir us deep within our breast! O wilfulness of men! like a beggar I bowed my neck and the silent gods of nature gazed at me with all their gifts! — You're smiling, Alabanda? Oh, how often in our early days

together did you smile that way when your boy prattled away before you in the drunken exuberance of youth, whilst you stood there like a silent temple pillar, amid the rubble of the world, and had to suffer the wild tendrils of my love to wind around you — look! it's like a blindfold falling from my eyes and the golden days of old come to life again.'

'Ah!' he cried, 'this earnestness in which we lived and this lust for life!'

'When we hunted in the forest,' I cried, 'when we bathed in the surging sea, when we sang and we drank where the sun and the wine and eyes and lips sparkled through the shade of the laurel — it was a life beyond compare, and our spirit illumed like a shining heaven our youthful happiness.' 'And that is why neither can forsake the other,' said Alabanda.

'Oh, I have a grave confession to make to you,' I said. 'Will you believe me when I say I wanted away? from you! that I violently sought my death! was that not heartless? madness? ah, and my Diotima! she should leave me, I wrote to her, and then another letter, on the eve of the battle —' 'and there you wrote to her,' he cried, 'that in the battle you hoped to find your end? O Hyperion! But she may well not yet have received your last letter. You just have to make haste and write to her that you're alive.'

'Dearest Alabanda!' I cried, 'that is solace! I'll write at once and dispatch my servant with the letter. Oh, I will offer him all I have to rush and reach Calauria in time. —'

'And the other letter, in which you spoke of renouncing her, the good soul will understand and readily forgive,' he added.

'She'll forgive?' I cried; 'O all you hopes! yes! if I could still be happy with the angel!'

'You will still be happy,' cried Alabanda; 'you still have left the most beautiful of life's seasons. The youth is a hero, the man a god if he can live to see it.'

There was a wondrous dawning in my soul as he spoke.

The tree tops softly shuddered; like flowers from the dark earth, stars sprang forth from the womb of the night and heaven's spring sparkled on me in holy joy.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LVI]

A few moments later, just as I was about to write to Diotima, Alabanda came back gleefully into the room. 'A letter, Hyperion,' he cried; I startled and flew across.

'How long,' wrote Diotima, 'had I to live without a sign from you! You wrote to me about the fateful day at Mistra and I responded swiftly; yet it seems you never received my letter. Soon afterwards you wrote to me again, briefly and gloomily, and told me you were minded to join the Russian fleet; again I replied; but you didn't receive that letter either; then it was my turn to wait in vain, from May till now, the end of summer, until a few days ago the letter came, telling me I should renounce you, my love!

'You counted on me, had faith enough in me to know this letter couldn't offend me. That gave me heartfelt joy in the midst of my grief.

'Unhappy sublime spirit! I've understood you only too well. Oh, it's so wholly natural that you no longer want to love, since your greater wishes languish. For must you not spurn food when you're dying of thirst?

'I soon came to know that I couldn't be everything to you. Could I loosen the bonds of mortality for you? could I still the flame in your breast for which no fountain flows and no vine grows? could I hand you the joys of a world in a chalice?

'That's what you want. That's what you need, and you can do no other. The boundless impotence of your fellow-men has robbed you of your life.

'He who, like you, has suffered hurt in his whole soul can no longer rest in solitary joy, he who, like you, has suffered shallow nothingness quickens only in the highest spirit, he who has suffered death, like you, heals among the gods alone.

'Happy all those who do not understand you! He who understands you must share your greatness and your despair.

'I found you as you are. Life's first curiosity drove me to that wondrous being. Ineffably the tender soul drew me on, and childishly fearless I played about your dangerous flame. — The beautiful joys of our love appeased you; but only, wicked man! to make you more savage. They soothed, they solaced me too, they made me forget you were fundamentally beyond solace, and that I wasn't far from becoming so myself, ever since I'd looked into your beloved heart.

'In Athens, among the ruins of the Olympieion, it seized me anew. I might well still have thought in a carefree hour that the grief of the youth could not really be so earnest and unrelenting. It's so rare that with his first step into life a man has felt so all at once, so minutely, so quickly, so deeply the whole fate of his age, and that it inheres indelibly within him, this feeling, because he isn't rough enough to drive it out and not weak enough to weep it away; that, my dearest! is so rare that we deem it almost unnatural.

'Now, amidst the rubble of bright Athens, now it came home to me all too painfully how the tables are turned, that now it's the dead who walk above the earth and the quick, the divine men, who are below, now I also saw it too plainly and palpably written on your face, now once and for all I conceded you were right. But at the same time you appeared greater to me too. A being full of hidden power, full of deep, undeveloped meaning, a youth uniquely promising, so you seemed to me. He to whom fate speaks so loud is entitled to speak still louder back to fate, I told myself; the more unfathomably he suffers, the more unfathomably powerful he is. From you, from you alone I hoped for all healing. I saw you travelling. I saw you working. Oh, what a transformation! Founded by you, the grove of Academe greened again above the listening pupils, and the plane tree of Ilissus again heard holy discourse as of old.

'In your school the genius of our youth soon gained the earnestness of the ancients and its ephemeral games grew more immortal, for it became ashamed, holding butterfly flight to be imprisonment. —

'This one might have been content to steer a steed; now he's general. His whole pleasure another might have found in warbling an idle ditty; now he's an artist. For you'd laid bare before them in open combat the energies of the heroes, the energies of the world; you'd given them the riddles of your heart to solve; and so the youths learned to bring together what is great, learned to understand nature's play, full of soul, and put aside frivolity. — Hyperion! Hyperion! have you not made me, the mute maiden, into a muse? So it went with the others too.

'Oh! now these congenial men didn't leave one another so lightly; no longer did they drift aimlessly amongst one another like sand in the storm of the desert, nor did youth and age scorn each other, nor the stranger want a welcoming host, and fellow countrymen never more

hived themselves off and lovers never more wearied of each other; from your springs, nature, they refreshed themselves, oh! with the holy joys that well up mysteriously from your depths and renew the spirit; and the gods quickened again the withering souls of men; every bond of friendship amongst them was guarded by the heart-sustaining gods. For you, Hyperion! had healed the eyes of your Greeks, that they could see living life; and the inspiration sleeping amongst them like fire in wood had been kindled by you, that they could feel the still and steady inspiration of nature and its pure children. Oh! now men no longer took the beautiful world like laymen the artist's poem when they praise the words and note the utility. A magical model you became for the Greeks, living nature! and kindled by the bliss of the ever-youthful gods, all man's doings were a festival as of old; and to their deeds the young heroes were escorted by Helios' light, more beautiful than any martial music.

'Hush! hush! It was my most beautiful dream, my first and my last. You're too proud to busy yourself further with this knavish race. And you're quite right in that. You led them to freedom and they thought of pillage. You lead them victorious into their ancient Lacedaemon and these monsters plunder, and by your own father you're cursed, great son! and no wilderness, no cave is safe enough for you on this Greek soil that you've reverenced like holy ground, that you've loved more than me.

'O my Hyperion! I'm the gentle maid no more since I've known all this. Outrage drives me upwards, that I can barely look to earth and my hurt heart won't stop trembling.

'We must part. You're right. Besides, I don't want any children; for I grudge them to the world of slaves, and in this drouth the poor plants would wither away before my eyes.

'Farewell! you dear youth! go where it seems to you worth the effort to offer up your soul. The world must have one battlefield, one place of sacrifice where you can find release. It would be a pity if so the good energies all passed away like a dream. But however you find your end, you'll return to the gods, return to the holy, free, youthful life of nature whence you came, and that is all you long for and I too.'

So she wrote to me. I was shaken to the marrow, full of fear and joy, yet I sought to compose myself and find words for a reply.

'You consent, Diotima?' I wrote, 'you think my renunciation right? you could comprehend it? — Faithful soul! you could reconcile yourself to that? Even to my darkest erring you could reconcile yourself, heavenly patience! and surrendered yourself, gloomed yourself for love, happy child of nature! and became like me and sanctified by sharing it my grief? Beautiful heroine! what crown have you not earned?

'But let there now be an end to grieving, my love! You've followed me into my night, now come! and let me follow you into your light, to your grace let us return, beautiful heart! oh, your tranquillity let me see again, blissful nature! and for ever let my hubris pass away before the image of your peace.

'It's true, isn't it, dearest! that it's not yet too late for my return, and you'll take me back and can love me again as before? it's true, isn't it, that the happiness of past days is not yet lost to us?

'I've taken it all to extremes. I've acted the ingrate towards my motherly earth, flinging away like a serf's pittance my blood and all the loving gifts she gave me, and oh! a thousand times more of an ingrate towards you, holy maiden! who once received me into her peace, me, a feral, fractured being, from whose deeply oppressed breast stole hardly a glimmer of youth, like the odd blade of grass on bare-trodden paths. Had you not called me into life? was I not yours? how could I then — oh, you don't yet know, I hope, haven't yet in your hands the unhappy letter I wrote to you before the last battle? I wanted to die then, Diotima, and imagined I was doing holy work. But how can that be holy which pulls lovers apart? how can that be holy which ruptures our life's pious happiness? — Diotima! life born of beauty! for that I've now become the more similar to you in what is uniquely yours, I've finally learned to reverence, I've learned to preserve what's good and essential on earth. Oh, even if I could land up there in the radiant islands of heaven, would I find more than I do with Diotima?

'Hear me now, beloved!

'In Greece I can remain no longer. That you know. When he cast me off my father sent me from his surplus funds enough for us to flee into some holy vale of the Alps or Pyrenees, and there to buy a couthie cottage and enough green earth to meet the needs of life's golden mean.

'If you're willing, then I'll come at once and lead you and your mother on my faithful arm, and we'll kiss Calauria's shores and dry away our

tears, and hasten across the Isthmus to the Adriatic Sea whence a safe ship shall carry us onwards.

'Oh, come! in the depths of the mountain world the secret of our hearts shall rest like the precious stone in the mine, in the womb of the heaven-soaring forests we'll feel ourselves as amidst the pillars of the innermost temple where the godless dare not near, and we'll sit by the source, contemplating our world in its mirror, heaven and house and garden and us. Often on bright nights we'll stroll in the shade of our fruit trees and listen for the god in us, the loving one, while the plant from midday slumber raises its sunken head and the gentle life of your flowers quickens when they bathe their tender arms in the dew and the night breeze breathes coolingly around them, infusing them, and over us blossoms the meadow of heaven with all its sparkling flowers, and to the side behind westering clouds, as if out of love, shyly the moonlight mimics the sun-youth's setting — and then in the mornings when, like a river-bed, our valley fills with warm light and the golden flood runs tranquilly through our trees and flows around our house, enhancing the loveliness of the rooms, your creation, and you walk in the sunlit radiance and in your grace you sanctify the day for me, my love! when then, as we thus celebrate the bliss of morning, the bustling life of the earth kindles before our eyes like a sacrificial fire, and we go forth on our daily tasks to cast them too, as a part of us too, into the rising flame, will you not then say that we're happy, that we're become again like the ancient priests of nature, holy and joyful, those who were pious ere ever a temple stood.

'Have I said enough? decide now my fate, dear maiden, and soon! — It's as well that I'm still half an invalid from the last battle, and that I've yet to be released from service; else I couldn't stay here, I'd need to be off to ask you in person, and that wouldn't be good, that would be to besiege you. —

'O Diotima! foolish qualms strike me at the heart, and yet — I can't thole the thought that this hope too shall founder.

'Are you not grown too great to return to the happiness of earth? The fierce flame of the spirit, kindled by your sorrow, will it not consume everything mortal in you?

'I know full well that he who lightly falls out with the world more lightly makes peace with it too. But you, with your childlike stillness,

you so happy once in your high humility, Diotima! who will appease you when fate arouses you?

'Dear life! is there no more healing power for you in me? of all the sounds from the heart is there none to call you back again to human life where you once so lovingly lingered in low flight? oh come, oh remain in this twilight! This shadowland is the element of love, and only here does the still dew of sadness run from the heaven of your eyes.

'And do you mind our golden days no more? those lovely, divinely melodious days? do they not whisper to you from all the groves of Calauria?

'And look! there's so much has perished in me, and I no longer have many hopes. Your image with its heavenly disposition I managed still to rescue like a house-god from the flames. Our life, ours, is still intact in me. Should I now go and bury this too? Shall I go forth, restless and without a goal, from one alien land to another? Is it for this I learned to love?

'Oh no! you first and you last! Mine you were and mine you will stay.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LVII]

I was sitting with Alabanda on a nearby hill, in pleasantly warming sun, and around us played the wind with the fallen leaves. The land lay still; only here and there from the forest there came the sound of a toppling tree, felled by the landman, and beside us the ephemeral rain-stream murmuring down to the tranquil sea.

I was as good as free of worry; I hoped now soon to see my Diotima, soon to live with her in quiet happiness. Alabanda had talked me out of all my doubts; so sure was he himself about it. He too was blithe; but in another sense. The future had no power over him any more. Oh, I didn't know it; he was at the end of his joys; with all his claims on the world, with all his conquering nature, he saw himself useless, ineffectual and isolated, and took it just as if he'd played some trivial game and lost.

A messenger now approached us. He brought us the discharge from war service that we'd both requested from the Russian fleet, since for us there was nothing more to do that seemed worth the effort. I could now

leave Paros when I pleased. And I was now fit enough to travel. I didn't want to wait for Diotima's answer, I wanted away, to her; it was as if a god propelled me to Calauria. When Alabanda heard this his colour changed, and he looked at me in sadness. 'Is it so easy for my Hyperion,' he cried, 'to leave his Alabanda?'

'Leave,' I said, 'how so?'

'Oh, you dreamers!' he cried, 'can't you see that we must part?'

'How should I see it?' I replied; 'you never speak of it; and if now and then I noticed anything about you that might have hinted at a parting, I took it readily for whimsy, abundance of the heart —'

'Oh, I know it well,' he cried, 'this divine game of affluent love that creates want for itself so as to unburden itself of its own fullness, and I would it were so with me, good Hyperion! but this is meant in earnest!'

'In earnest?' I cried, 'and why then?'

'Because, my Hyperion,' he said gently, 'I wouldn't wish to disturb your future happiness, that's why; because I must fear Diotima's nearness. Believe me, it's a parlous thing to live around lovers, and a deedless heart, such as mine now is, will hardly be able to bear it.'

'O good Alabanda!' I said with a smile, 'how you mistake yourself! You're not made of wax, and your steadfast soul won't so lightly leap beyond its bounds. For the first time in your life you're being capricious. You played the sick-nurse here for me, and one sees how little you're made for the part. Sitting still has made you skittish —'

'You see,' he said, 'that's just the point. Shall I be any more active living with the two of you? and if it were any other woman! but this Diotima! can I do otherwise? can I feel her with half my soul? she who's through and through so wholly one, one single divinely undivided life? Believe me, it's childish folly to seek to see this being without love. You're staring at me as if you didn't know me? Well, I've become alien to myself these past few days, ever since her being came so alive in me.'

'Oh, why can't I give her to you?' I cried.

'Stop it!' he said. 'Don't try to comfort me, for here there can be no comfort. I'm alone, alone, and my life's running out like an hourglass.'

'Great soul!' I cried, 'must it come to this with you?'

'Put your mind at rest!' he said. 'I was already beginning to wither when we found each other in Smyrna. Yes! when I was still a ship's boy, and my spirit and all my limbs became quick and strong on rude

fare and brave toil! when in the clear air after a stormy night I'd cling to the top of the mast, beneath the fluttering flag, and gaze out after the seabirds across the shining deep, when in battle our wrathful ships often churned up the sea like the boar's tusk the earth, and I'd stand bright-eyed by my captain's side — then I was alive, oh, then I was alive! And long afterwards, when the young Tiniot crossed my path on the Smyrna shore, with his earnestness, his love, and my hardened soul thawed again under the glances of the youth and learned to love and hold holy all that's too good to be governed, when with him I began a new life, and there burgeoned within me new and more soulful energies for enjoying and battling the world, then I hoped again — oh! and all that I hoped and had was chained to you; I pulled you to me, tried to drag you forcibly into my fate, lost you, found you again, our friendship alone was my world, my worth, my fame; now that too is over, for ever, and my whole existence is in vain.'

'Is that really true?' I replied with a sigh.

'True as the sun,' he cried, 'but never you mind! it's all taken care of.'

'How so, my Alabanda?' I said.

'Let me tell you,' he said. 'There's something I've never fully spoken to you about. And then — it will calm you and me a little too, if we speak about the past.

'I was once walking helpless by the harbour of Trieste. The privateer I used to serve on had foundered some years before, and together with a few others I'd barely been able to save myself, washing ashore at Seville. My captain had drowned, and my life and my sopping clothes were all I had left. I undressed and rested in the sun, drying my clothes on the bushes. Then I walked on along the road towards the town. Before I'd reached the gates I saw a merry company in the gardens, went in and sang a cheerful Greek ditty. I didn't know a sad one. It made me burn with shame and pain, displaying my misfortune in this way. I was an eighteen-year-old lad, wild and proud, and hated like death to be the object of people's attention. "Forgive me," I said, when I was done with my song; "I've just been shipwrecked and for the moment can't think of anything better to do for the world than sing." I'd said this in Spanish as best I could. A man with a distinguished face came up to me, gave me money, and said in our tongue with a smile: "Here! use that to buy yourself a whetstone and learn to sharpen knives, and make your wandering way on solid earth." The advice pleased me. "Sir! that's indeed what I'll do," I replied. Having

also been generously rewarded by the others, I went and did as the man had advised, and for some time roved about Spain and France.

'What I experienced during this time, how on the thousandfold forms of bondage my love of liberty honed itself, and how from the many hardships my mettle and my shrewdness grew, I've often relished telling you.

'I pursued my innocent wandering work with pleasure, but in the end it became soured for me.

'People took it for a mask, because I can't have looked suitably vulgar; they imagined I was covertly engaged in some dangerous activity, and I was in fact arrested twice. That induced me then to give it up, and with what little money I'd earned I set out on the journey back to the home from which I'd once run away. I'd got as far as Trieste, and was about to move on, down through Dalmatia. Then the rigours of travel caused a sickness that laid me low, and with that my little wealth was all used up. And so, half recovered, I came to be walking sadly by the harbour of Trieste. Suddenly there stood before me the man who'd once helped me out when I was cast ashore at Seville. He was peculiarly glad to see me again, told me he often thought of me and asked me how I'd fared the while. I told him everything. "I see," he cried, "that it wasn't in vain to send you for a little to the school of fate. You've learned to endure, now if you wish you shall act."

'The words, his tone, the clasp of his hand, his mien, his glance — with the force of a god all this struck my being, made now more flammable than ever by much suffering, and I gave myself up to it.

'The man I'm speaking about, Hyperion, was one of those you saw with me in Smyrna. The very next night he inducted me into a solemn society. A shudder ran through me when I stepped into the hall and, as I entered, my companion pointed to the grave men and said: "this is the League of Nemesis." Drunk with the grand sphere of action that opened up before me, I solemnly made over my blood and my soul to these men. Soon afterwards the gathering was adjourned, to be resumed years later elsewhere, and each of us set out on the allotted path he was to take through the world. I was assigned to those you found with me in Smyrna some years after.

'The constraint under which I lived often tormented me, I saw precious little of the grand actions of the League, and my lust for deeds found scant nourishment. Yet none of this sufficed to make me fall away.

It was my passion for you that finally seduced me. I've often told you, I was as if without air and sun when you were gone; and I had no other choice; I had to give up either you or my League. What I chose you see.

'But all of the works of men have in the end their punishment, and it's only gods and children whom Nemesis doesn't strike.

'I preferred the divine right of the heart. For the sake of my darling I broke my oath. Was that not right? must not the noblest longing be the freest? — My heart has taken me at my word; I gave it freedom and, as you see, it's putting it to use.

'Pay homage to the genius but once, and he'll heed no mortal hindrance any more and tear in two all life's bonds for you.

'Obligation I broke for the sake of the friend, friendship I would break for the sake of love. For Diotima's sake I would betray you, and in the end murder myself and Diotima because we should still not be one. But that's not the way it's going to be; if I'm to atone for what I did, then I will do it with freedom; I shall choose my own judges; those whom I've failed shall have me.'

'You mean your brothers of the League?' I cried; 'O my Alabanda! don't!'

'What can they take from me but my blood?' he replied. Then he gently grasped my hand. 'Hyperion!' he cried, 'my time is up, and all that's left for me is a noble end. Leave me be! Don't belittle me, put faith in my word! I know as well as you do that I could still fabricate an existence for myself, could, since the banquet of life is all consumed, still play with the crumbs, but that's not my way; nor is it yours. Need I say more? Do I not speak from your soul? I thirst for air, for a cooling breeze, Hyperion! My soul wells over of itself and will no longer be held in the old circle. Soon the beautiful winter days will come when the dark earth is nothing more than the foil to shining heaven; then would be a good time, then the islands of light more liberally sparkle besides! — you wonder at my words? Dearest! those taking leave of life all speak like drunken men and like to put on a festive manner. When the tree begins to wither, don't its leaves all wear the red hues of dawn?'

'Great soul,' I cried, 'must I bear pity for you?'

By his exaltation I could feel the depth of his suffering. Never in my life had I known such woe. And yet, O Bellarmin! yet I also felt the greatness of all joys, having such an image of divinity in my eyes and

arms. 'Yes! die then,' I cried, 'die! your heart is glorious enough, your life is ripe as grapes on an autumn day. Go, you consummate one! I would go with you, were there no Diotima.'

'Do I have you now?' replied Alabanda, 'do you speak this way? How deep, how soulful all becomes, once my Hyperion grasps it!'

'He's flattering me,' I cried, 'trying to coax from me a second time my ill-considered word! good gods! and gain my permission for the trip to the blood-tribunal!'

'I'm not flattering you,' he replied in earnest, 'I've a right to do what you would hinder, and it's no mean one! honour that!'

There was a fire in his eyes that struck me down like a god's command, and I felt ashamed to say another word against him.

'They won't,' I kept telling myself, 'they can't. It's too senseless putting such a glorious life to the slaughter like some sacrificial beast,' and this conviction served to calm me.

It was a special bonus to hear him still the following night, after each of us had prepared for his own journey and we'd gone out again before daybreak to be alone together once more.

'Do you know,' he said, amongst other things, 'why I've never been awed by death? I feel in me a life that no god has created and no mortal man begotten. I believe we owe our being to ourselves and it's only of our own free desire that we're so closely bound into the all.'

'I've never heard you talk like this before,' I answered.

'And what,' he continued, 'what would this world be, were it not a unison of free beings? did not of their own joyous impulse the living join together from the very beginning in one full-voiced life, how wooden would it be, how cold? what a heartless piece of work would it be?'

'So here in the highest sense it were true,' I replied, 'without freedom everything is dead.'

'Yes indeed,' he cried, 'there's not a blade of grass grows up unless it has its own germ of life within! how much the more in me! and therefore, my dear friend! because I feel myself free in the highest sense, because I feel myself beginningless, therefore I believe that I'm endless, that I'm indestructible. If a potter's hand has made me, then let him smash his vessel as he pleases. But that which lives within must be unbegotten, must be divine of nature in its germ, sublime beyond all might and all art, and therefore invulnerable, eternal.

'We each have our mysteries, dear Hyperion! our more secret thoughts; these have been mine; ever since I could think.

'What lives is indestructible, stays free in its most deeply servile form, stays intact and though you split it to the ground, stays unscathed and though you shatter it to the marrow, and its essence flies away in triumph through your fingers. — But the morning wind stirs; our ships are awake. O my Hyperion! I have overcome; I've been able to bring myself to speak my heart's death sentence and separate you and me, darling of my life! be gentle with me now! spare me the parting pains! let's be quick! come!' —

A chill shot through all my bones as he uttered these words.

'Oh, by your troth, Alabanda!' I cried, prostrate before him, 'must it be, must it really be? You fuddled me unfairly, you carried me away and left me reeling. Brother! you took from me even the presence of mind to ask, "where are you going?"'

'I may not name the place, dear heart!' he replied; 'yet perhaps we shall meet again one day.'

'Meet again?' I replied; 'so that's one faith I'm the richer by! and so I'll become ever richer in faith and in the end there'll be nothing but faith for me.'

'Dearest!' he cried, 'where words are no help, let us be still! let us make a manful end! You ruin the last moments for yourself.'

Meanwhile we'd come closer to the harbour.

'One more thing!' he said, when we were at his ship. 'Greet your Diotima! Love each other! be happy, you beautiful souls!'

'O my Alabanda!' I cried, 'why can't I go in your stead?'

'Your calling is more beautiful,' he replied; 'stay with it! you belong to her, that lovely being is from now on your world — Oh! since there is no happiness without sacrifice, take me as sacrifice, O fate, and leave the loving their joy!' —

His heart began to overwhelm him, and he tore himself from me and leapt into the ship to shorten the parting for himself and me. I felt this moment like a thunderbolt that's followed by night and deathly stillness, but in the midst of the desolation my soul reared up to hold him, the dear departing, and my arms darted towards him of their own accord. 'Woe! Alabanda! Alabanda!' I cried, and heard from the ship a muffled 'Farewell'.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LVIII]

It chanced that the vessel due to take me to Calauria delayed until the evening, Alabanda having already gone his way that morning.

I stayed on the shore, weary with the pains of parting, stilly gazing into the sea from one hour to another. My spirit told over the sorrowful days of slowly dwindling youth, and adrift like the beautiful dove, it hovered over the future. I wished to give myself strength, I took out my long-forgotten lute to sing myself a song of fate that I'd once, in blithely innocent youth, repeated after my Adamas.

You wander high in the light
On gentle ground, you blissful genii!
Heavenly radiant airs
Touching you soft,
As the hand of the harpist her
Hallowing strings.

Fatelessly, like the slumbering
Suckling, breathe the celestials;
Chaste preserved
In the modest bud,
Blossoms ever
For them the spirit,
And the blissful eyes
Gaze in eternal
Tranquil glory.

But to us it is given
In no place to rest,
They dwindle, they fall,
The suffering mortals
Blindling from one
Hour to another,
Like water from rock
To rock hurled down,
Year long into confusion below.

So I sang to the strings. I'd hardly finished when a boat came in and I immediately recognized my servant who brought me a letter from Diotima.

'So you're still on earth?' she wrote, 'and see the daylight still? I'd thought to find you elsewhere, my love! The letter you wrote before the battle of Chesma I received earlier than you afterwards wished, and so for a week I lived in the belief you'd thrown yourself into the arms of death, until your servant arrived with the joyful news that you're still alive. Besides, I'd heard a few days after the battle that the ship on which I knew you to be had blown up with all hands lost.

'But O sweet voice! once again I heard you, the language of the beloved touched me once more like a May breeze, and for a moment your beautiful hopeful joy, the lovely phantom of our future happiness deluded me too.

'Dear dreamer, why must I wake you? why can't I say, "come and make true the beautiful days you promised me!" But it's too late, Hyperion, it's too late. Your maiden has withered since you went away, a fire within has gently consumed me and there's only a small rest remaining. Don't be dismayed! All that is natural purges itself, and everywhere life's blossom winds itself freer and freer of coarser stuff.

'Dearest Hyperion! little did you think to hear this year my swansong.

Continued

'It began soon after you'd left, and even in the days before our parting. A force of spirit before which I took fright, an inner life before which the life of the earth paled and dwindled like lamps of the night in the glow of morning — shall I say it? I could have gone to Delphi and built the god of inspiration a temple beneath the cliffs of ancient Parnassus, and, a modern Pythia, kindled the flagging peoples with divine utterance, and my soul knows that my maidenly mouth would have opened the eyes of all the godforsaken and smoothed their dulled brows, so powerful was the spirit of life in me! Yet ever more weary grew my mortal limbs and dread weight pulled me relentlessly down. Oh! often in the stillness of my bower I have wept for the roses of youth! they withered and withered, and only from tears did your maiden's cheek redden. They were still the trees of old, it was the bower of old — there once stood your Diotima, your child, Hyperion, before your joyful eyes, a flower

among flowers, and the powers of earth and heaven came peacefully together in her; now she walked a stranger among the buds of May, and her familiars, the lovely plants, nodded to her amiably, but she could only grieve; yet I passed none by, yet one after another I bade farewell to all the playmates of my youth, the groves and springs and whispering hills.

'Oh! as long as I still was able I would often make my sweet and weary way up to the heights where you'd stayed with Notara, and speak about you with our friend, as lightsomely as possible, so that he shouldn't write to you about me; but soon, when her heart grew too loud, the hypocrite stole out into the garden, and then there I was at the rail above the cliff where I once gazed down with you and out into open nature, oh! where I stood, held by your hands, caressed by your watchful eyes, in the first shuddering warming of love and wished to pour out my overflowing soul like sacrificial wine into life's abyss; there I now lurched around and cried my sorrow to the wind, and like a timid bird my glance flitted about and barely dared look at the beautiful earth from which I was to part.

Continued

'That's the way it's gone with your maiden, Hyperion. Don't ask how? don't explain this death to yourself! Whoever thinks to fathom such a fate will end by cursing himself and the world, and yet there's not a soul to blame.

'Shall I say it's grief for you that's killed me? oh no! oh no! it was welcome to me, this grief, it gave the death I bore within me form and grace; it's in honour of your darling that you're dying, I could now tell myself. —

'Or did my soul become too ripe for me in all the raptures of our love, and is that why, like a headstrong youth, it will be held no more in its humble home? tell me! was it my heart's luxuriance that estranged me from mortal life? is nature in me become through you, you glorious man! too proud to put up with it any longer on this mediocre star? But if you taught my soul to fly, why won't you also teach it to return to you? If you kindled the aether-loving fire, why wouldn't you tend it for me? — Hear me, my love! for the sake of your beautiful soul! don't you blame yourself for my death!

'Could you hold me back when your fate pointed you on the selfsame path? and if you had, in your heart's heroic struggle, preached to me — "be content, my child! and come to terms with the times" — would you not have been the vainest of all the vain?

Continued

'I will tell you plainly what I think. Your fire was alive in me, your spirit had passed into me; but that would scarce have harmed, and only your fate has made my new life deadly to me. Too mighty for me had my soul become through you, it would through you have also stilled again. You drew my life away from earth, you would have also had the power to fetter me to earth, you would have bound my soul as in a magic circle into your embracing arms; oh! just one of your heartfelt glances would have held me fast, just one love speech of yours would have turned me back into a happy wholesome child; yet when your own fate drove you into spiritual solitude, like floodwater onto a mountain peak, oh, only when I fully believed the storm of battle had burst open the dungeon and my Hyperion had flown up into ancient freedom, that was the turning point for me and soon it will be over.

'I've made many words, and yet the great Roman perished silently when her Brutus and the fatherland were writhing in their death throes. But what better could I do in the best of my last days of life? — And there are many things I still feel driven to say. Mute was my life; my death is eloquent. Enough!

Continued

'There's just one thing more I must say to you.

'You would have to go under, you'd have to despair, yet the spirit will save you. No laurel will comfort you, and no wreath of myrtle; Olympus will, the living and present, that eternally youthful blossoms around all your senses. The beautiful world is my Olympus; in this you will live, and with the holy beings of the world, the gods of nature, with them you will be joyful.

'Oh, be welcome, you good, you faithful! you deeply missed and misjudged! children and elders! sun and earth and aether with all the living souls that play about you, as you play about them, in eternal

love! Oh, take all-venturing men, take back the fugitives into the family of gods, take them up into the home of nature from which they absconded! —

'You know this word, Hyperion! You began it in me. You will fulfil it in yourself, and only then rest.

'That's enough for me to die in joy as a Greek maiden.

'Those poor souls who know nothing but their own sorry handiwork, who are merely slaves of need and scorn genius, and who do not honour you, childlike life of nature! let them fear death. Their yoke is become their world; they know nothing better than their bondage; dread the freedom of the gods that death gives us?

'But I don't! I have gone beyond the patchwork made by hand of man, I have felt the life of nature that passes all thought — even if I became a plant, would the harm be so great? — I shall be. How should I be lost from the sphere of life where the love eternal, that is common to all, holds all natures together? How should I depart from the covenant that binds all beings? This is not so easily broken as the loose bonds of our age. It's not like a market day when folk flock together and make a great bustle and then disperse. No! by the spirit that unites us, by the god's spirit that is proper to each and common to all! no! no! in nature's covenant troth is no dream. We part to be only more inwardly one, more divinely at peace with all, with ourselves. We die in order to live.

'I shall be; I do not ask what I shall become. To be, to live, that is enough, that is the glory of the gods; and that is why all that is life is equal in the divine world, and there are there no masters and menials. Natures live together like lovers; they have all in common, spirit, joy and eternal youth.

'Permanence is the choice of the stars, in silent fullness of life they constantly wheel, knowing no age. We embody perfection in change, splitting the great chords of joy into wandering melodies. Like harpers around the thrones of the elders, we live, ourselves divine, around the silent gods of the world, with life's fleeting song we soften the blissful earnest of the sun-god and the others.

'Look up into the world! is it not like a wandering triumphal pageant where nature celebrates its eternal victory over all corruption? and does not life for its greater glory take with it death in golden chains, as once the general would take with him captive kings? and we, we're like the

virgins and youths who with dance and song, in shifting shapes and sounds, accompany the majestic procession.

'Now let me be still. To say more would be too much. We shall likely meet again. —

'Grieving youth! soon, soon you will be happier. Your laurel failed to ripen and your myrtles faded, for priest you shall be of divine nature, and your poetic days burgeon already. Oh, could I only see you in your future beauty! Farewell.'

At the same time I received a letter from Notara in which he wrote:

'The day after she'd written to you for the last time she grew quite still, spoke only a few more words, and then said that she would rather part in fire from the earth than be buried, and we should gather her ashes in an urn and set it in the woods at the spot where you, my dear friend! had first met her. Soon after, when it began to grow dark, she said goodnight to us as if she wished to sleep, and wrapped her arms around her lovely head; until toward morning we heard her breathing. As it then became wholly still and I heard nothing more, I went over to her and listened.

'O Hyperion! what more shall I say? It was finished and our plaints awakened her no more.

'It is a terrible mystery that such a life should die, and I have to confess to you that I myself have neither sense nor faith since I witnessed this.

'Yet better always a beautiful death, Hyperion! than such a torpid life as ours now is.

'Warding off flies, that's our work in the future, and gnawing on the things of the world like children on dried orris root, that's our joy in the end. Growing old amongst youthful peoples seems to me a delight, but growing old where all is old seems to me worse than anything. —

'I'm tempted to advise you, my Hyperion! not to come here. I know you. It would rob you of your senses. Besides, you're not safe here. My dear friend! think of Diotima's mother, think of me and spare yourself!

'I have to confess, I shudder when I ponder your fate. But then I also believe, it's not the deeper springs that searing summer dries up, only the shallow rain-stream. I've seen you at moments, Hyperion! when you seemed to me a higher being. Now you're put to the test, and that's going to show who you are. Farewell.'

So Notara wrote; and you ask, my Bellarmin! how I feel now, telling you this?

My dearest friend! I'm at peace, for I want no better than the gods. Must not everything suffer? And the nobler it is, the more deeply. Does not holy nature suffer? O my godhead! that you could grieve as you are blissful is something I long failed to grasp. But the bliss that does not suffer is sleep, and without death there is no life. Should you be, like a child, eternal and slumber as nothingness? forego the victory? not pass through all the perfections? Yes! yes! worthy is pain to lie at men's hearts and be your familiar, O nature! For it alone leads from one bliss to the next, and there can be no other companion. —

Once I'd begun to revive again, I wrote to Notara from Sicily where I'd first been brought by ship from Paros:

'I've obeyed you, dear friend! I'm already far away from you all, and want to give you my news now; but words come hard to me; you won't mind my confessing that. The blessed, among whom Diotima is now, do not speak much; in my night, in the depths of the grieving, speech too is at an end.

'My Diotima died a beautiful death; you're right; and it's this that rouses me and gives me back my soul.

'But it's no longer the same world I return to. I'm a stranger, like the unburied when they come up from Acheron, and were I even on my home island, in the gardens of my youth that are barred to me by my father, oh! still, still I should be a stranger in the earth and no god can any longer link me to the past.

'Yes! it's all over. I just must tell myself that time and again, have the thought bind my soul so that it stay calm and not become inflamed through senseless childish efforts.

'It's all over; and even could I weep, beautiful divinity, as once you wept for Adonis, my Diotima will still not return to me and my heart's word has lost its power, for the winds alone hear me.

'Oh, God! and that I myself am nothing, and the meanest workman can say he's achieved more than I! that they may comfort themselves, the poor in spirit, and smile and chide me as a dreamer because my deeds failed to ripen, because my arms are not free, because my times are like the raging Procrustes who cast the men he captured into a child's cradle and, so that they'd fit into the little bed, would hack off their limbs.

'If only it weren't too utterly dreary to fling oneself into the foolish mob and be torn to pieces by it! or if only noble blood could feel no shame at mingling with the blood of slaves! oh, if there were a banner, gods! that my Alabanda might serve under, a Thermopylae where I could bleed it out with honour, all the lonely love I'll never more need! To be sure it would be better if I could live, live, and in the new temples, in the newly assembled agora of our people, still the great grief with great joy; but on that I shall be silent, for I'll merely weep my strength wholly away if I think upon it all.

'Oh, Notara! with me too it's over; my own soul has grown hateful to me because I must blame it for Diotima's being dead, and the ideas of my youth I deemed so grand mean nothing to me any more. They poisoned my Diotima, didn't they!

'And now tell me, where is there still a refuge? — Yesterday I was up on Etna. There came to my mind the great Sicilian who once, wearied with counting the hours and intimate with the soul of the world, plunged himself down in his bold lust for life, into the glorious flames; for the frigid poet had needed the fire to warm himself by, as someone mockingly said of him.

'Oh, how gladly would I have drawn such mockery upon myself! but one must think more highly of oneself than I do to fly thus uncalled into the heart of nature, or whatever else you like to call it, for truly! the way I am now, I have no name for things and all is confusion.

'Notara! and now tell me, where is there still a refuge?

'In the woods of Calauria? — Yes! in the verdant darkness there, where stand our trees, confidants of our love, where like the red glow of sunset their dying leaves fall upon Diotima's urn, and their lovely heads bend above Diotima's urn, gently growing old until they too sink down over the beloved ashes, — there, there I might dwell as I would wish!

'But you counsel me to stay away, think I'm not safe in Calauria, and it may be so.

'I know full well you'll point me to Alabanda. But just hear this! he's destroyed! even that firm and limber stem is blasted, and the boys will pick up the splinters to make themselves a jolly fire. He's gone; he's got certain good friends who will ease things for him, who have quite special skills in relieving anyone on whom life lies somewhat heavy; he's paying them a visit, and why? because there's nothing else for him

to do, or, if you would know it all, because there's a passion gnawing at his heart, and do you know for whom? for Diotima; he thinks she's still alive, wedded to me and happy — poor Alabanda! and now she belongs to you and me both!

'He headed out to the east, and as for me, I'm taking ship northwestward, since chance will have it so. —

'And now farewell to you all! all you dear ones who've lain close to my heart, friends of my youth and you parents and all you dear Greeks, you who suffer!

'You winds that nourished me in tender childhood, and you dark laurel woods and you cliffs of the coast and you majestic waters that taught my spirit to sense great things — and oh! you monuments of mourning, where my melancholy began, you holy walls that girdled heroes' cities, and you ancient gates that many a beautiful wanderer passed through, you temple pillars and you rubble of the gods! and you, O Diotima! and you valleys of my love, and you streams that once witnessed the blissful figure, you trees where she would gladden, you springtimes where she the lovely lived, together with her flowers, don't, don't part from me! yet if it must be, you sweet memories! then you too fade away and leave me, for man can change nothing and the light of life comes and goes as it will.'

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LIX]

So I came among the Germans. I didn't ask for much and was prepared to find even less. Humbly I came like homeless blind Oedipus to the gates of Athens, where the grove of the gods welcomed him and he was met by beautiful souls —

How differently I fared!

Barbarians of old, made yet more barbarous by industry and learning and even religion, deeply incapable of any godly feeling, spoiled to the core for the joys of the holy graces, in every degree of profligacy and pettiness an offence to every decent soul, dull and full of discord like the shards of a discarded vessel — these, my Bellarmin! were my comforters.

They're harsh words, but I'll say them nonetheless, because it's the truth: I can imagine no people more fragmented than the Germans.

You see craftsmen, but no human beings, philosophers, but no human beings, priests, but no human beings, masters and menials, youths and elders, but no human beings — is this not like a battlefield where hands and arms and all the limbs lie about in pieces while the spilled life-blood seeps away into the sand?

To each his own trade, you will say, and so do I. Only he must pursue it with his whole soul, must not choke every energy within him that doesn't quite befit his title, must not with such niggardly timidity pretend to be to the letter only what he's called; with earnest, with love he must be what he is, then there lives a spirit in all he does, and if he's boxed into a specialism in which the spirit cannot thrive, then let him thrust it from him with contempt and learn to use a plough! But your Germans like to stick with what's most needful, and that's why there's so much bungled work amongst them, so little that is free and genuinely pleasing. But this one could put up with if only such beings didn't have to be feelingless for all beautiful life, if only the curse of godforsaken unnature didn't everywhere rest upon such a people. —

The virtues of the ancients were but glittering vices, some wicked tongue — I can't tell you which — once said; and yet even their vices are virtues, for then still lived a childlike, a beautiful spirit, and nothing they did was done without soul. But the virtues of the Germans are a glittering evil and nothing more; for they are only works of necessity, in craven fear wrung from the wasted heart with slavish effort, and leave without solace any pure soul that would nourish itself on the beautiful, oh! that, spoiled by the holy harmony in nobler natures, cannot thole the discord screeching in all the dead orderliness of such beings.

I tell you: there's nothing sacred that's not profaned, that's not debased to miserable makeshift with these people, and what is even amongst savages mostly kept divinely pure, these all-calculating barbarians approach as one might go about a trade, and they can do no other, for once a human being has been drilled, it serves its ends, it seeks its profit, it dreams no more, God forbid! it remains staid, and when it celebrates and when it loves and when it prays and even when the lovely festival of spring, when the world's season of reconciliation dissolves all care and conjures innocence into a guilty heart, when drunk with the sun's warm rays the slave joyfully forgets his chains, and softened by the god-inspired breath the foes of man are full of

peace, like children — when even the caterpillar takes wing and the tipsy bee swarms, still will the German stick inside his box and not be bothered much about the weather!

But you shall judge, holy nature! For if only they were modest, these people, didn't make themselves the measure for the better amongst them! if only they'd not belittle what they're not, and yet, if belittle they must, if only they didn't mock the divine! —

Or isn't divine what you mock and call soulless? Isn't better than your babble the air that you drink? the rays of the sun, aren't they nobler than all of you in your cleverness? the earth's springs and the morning dew refresh your groves; can you do that? Oh! you can kill, but you can't bring to life if love doesn't do it, and that's not from you, you didn't invent it. You fret and you brood about how to flee fate, and are flummoxed when your childish arts prove bootless; meanwhile the stars wander blithely above. You debase it, you tear it apart, where it puts up with you, tolerant nature, and yet it endures in unending youth, its autumn and spring you can't drive away, its aether is something you won't defile.

Oh, it must be divine because you're suffered to destroy and yet it doesn't age and in your spite the beautiful stays beautiful! —

And it's heart-rending to see your poets, your artists, and all who still honour the genius, who love the beautiful and nurture it. The good souls! They live in the world like strangers in their own house, they are just like long-suffering Ulysses when he sat at his door in beggar's garb while the shameless suitors roistered in the hall and asked: 'Who has brought us this vagabond?'

Full of love and spirit and hope its youthful sons of the muses grow towards maturity among the German people; you see them seven years later, and they wander like shades, silent and cold, they're like soil the enemy has sown with salt so that it shall never more bring forth a blade of grass; and when they speak, woe unto him that understands them! who can see in the storming titanic energy, as in their protean skills, the despairing battle their troubled beautiful spirit must fight against the barbarians with which it has to deal.

'All things on earth are imperfect,' that's the eternal refrain of the Germans. If only someone would tell these godforsaken people that with them all things are only so imperfect because they leave nothing

pure unsullied, nothing sacred unfumbled by their clumsy hands, that with them nothing thrives because they will not honour the root of all thriving, divine nature, that with them life is precisely so vapid and fretful and brimming with cold dumb discord because they scorn the genius that brings energy and nobility to human activity, serenity to suffering, and love and brotherhood to cities and homes.

And that too is the reason why they're so afraid of death, and for the sake of their oyster-like existence suffer all the shame, because they know of nothing higher than the handiwork they've cobbled for themselves.

O Bellarmin! where a people loves the beautiful, where it honours the genius in its artists, there blows like breath of life a universal spirit, the bashful mind unfolds, self-conceit melts away, and all hearts are pious and great, and inspiration brings forth heroes. The homeland of all men is with such a people and there the stranger loves to linger. But where divine nature and its artists are so abused, oh! there life's greatest joy is gone, and any other star is better than the earth. There men, though born beautiful, become ever more wild and wasted; a servile disposition grows and with it rude courage; intemperance grows with cares, and with opulence hunger and fear of famine; each year's blessing becomes a curse and all the gods take flight.

And woe to the stranger who wanders out of love and comes to such a people, and thrice woe to him who, driven like me by great pain, a beggar of my kind, comes to such a people! —

Enough! you know me, you won't take it amiss, Bellarmin! I spoke in your name too, I spoke for all who live in this land and suffer as I suffered there.

Hyperion to Bellarmin [LX]

I wanted to get away from Germany now. I looked for nothing more amongst these people, I'd been hurt enough by merciless affronts, and didn't want my soul to wholly bleed to death amongst such men. But the heavenly spring held me back; it was the only joy that remained to me, it was my last love, how could I still think of other things and leave the land where spring was too?

Bellarmin! I'd never so fully felt the old and firm and fateful saying that for the heart a new bliss rises when it holds out and endures through

the midnight of grief, and that, like nightingale's singing in darkness, it's in deep suffering that first divinely sounds for us the lifesong of the world. For now I lived with the blossoming trees as with genii, and the limpid streams flowing beneath them whispered, like voices of gods, the sorrow from my breast. And so it fared with me everywhere, dear friend! — when I rested in the grass and tender life greened all about me, when I climbed the warm hill where the rose grew wild around the stony path, and when I boated along the breezy banks of the river and round all the islands it tenderly hugs.

And when on many a morning, like the sick to the healing spring, I'd climb to the mountain's summit through sleeping flowers, whilst to my side, sated with sweet slumber, the dear birds flew from the bush, in the half-light reeling and greedy for day, and the quickening breeze bore up already the prayers of the valleys, the voices of the herd, and the tones of the morning bells, and now the lofty light, divinely serene, came along its habitual path, enchanting the earth with immortal life, so that her heart warmed and all her children felt themselves once more — oh, like the moon, that still lingered in heaven to share in the joy of the day, I too then stood lonely above the plains, weeping tears of love down to the shores and the glancing waters, and long couldn't turn away my gaze.

Or of an evening when I'd wander far into the valley, to the cradle of the spring where around me rushed the dark crowns of the oaks, and nature entombed me in her peace like a dying saint; when the earth was now a shadow and viewless life whispered through the branches, through the treetops, and above the treetops the evening cloud stood still, a shining mountain range from which the rays of heaven flowed down to me like streams to quench the wanderer's thirst —

'O sun, O you breezes,' I'd then call out, 'with you alone my heart still lives, as amongst brothers!'

Thus I gave myself up more and more to blissful nature, and almost too endlessly. How gladly I'd have become a child to be closer to her! how gladly I'd have known less and become like the pure ray of light to be closer to her! Oh, to feel myself for a moment in her peace, her beauty, how much more that meant to me than years full of thinking, than all the ventures of all-venturing men! What I'd learned, what I'd done in my life melted away like ice, and all youth's designs died away in me; and O you dear ones, who are distant, you dead and you living, how wholly one we were!

Once I sat far away in a field, by a burn, in the shade of ivy-green rocks and overhanging flowering bushes. It was the most beautiful noon I've known. Sweet breezes wafted and in morning freshness the land still shone and serene in its native aether smiled the light. The people had gone away to rest at the homely table from their toil; my love was alone with the spring, and there was an unfathomable longing in me. 'Diotima,' I cried, 'where are you? oh, where are you?' And it seemed to me I heard Diotima's voice, the voice that used to gladden me in the days of joy —

'I'm with my kindred,' she called, 'with your kindred, those the erring human spirit does not know!'

A gentle terror seized me and all thought passed away in me.

'O dear words from holy mouth,' I cried, once again aroused, 'dear riddle, can I grasp you?'

And one last time I looked back into the cold night of men and shuddered and wept for joy that I was so blissful, and words I spoke, it seems to me, but they were like the fire's rush when up it flares and leaves behind the ashes —

"O you," so I thought, "with your gods, nature! I've dreamed it out, the dream of human things, and say that only you live, and all that peaceless men have wrought and thought, it melts away like pearls of wax before your flames!

"How long have they done without you? oh, how long have their rabble abused you, called you vulgar, you and your gods, the quick, the blissfully serene!

"Men fall from you like rotting fruit, oh, let them perish, for then they return to your root, and I, O tree of life, may I green again with you and breathe around your crown with all your budding branches! peacefully and deeply, for we've all of us grown high from that seed of golden grain!

"You springs of the earth! you flowers! and you forests and you eagles and you fraternal light! how old and new is our love! — We are free, we don't anxiously strive to be outwardly equal; how should not vary the modes of life? but we all love the aether, and deep in our innermost being we are all of us like.

"We too, we too are not parted, Diotima! and the tears for you haven't grasped it. We are living tones, we sound together in your harmony, nature! who can split that asunder? who will part lovers? —

"O soul! soul! beauty of the world! indestructible! rapturing! with your eternal youth! you are; what then is death and all the woe of men? — Oh! many empty words have been made by these strange brethren. Yet all things proceed from pleasure, and everything ends in peace.

"The dissonances of the world are like lovers' tiffs. There's reconciliation in the middle of strife, and all that's apart comes together again.

"The arteries part and return in the heart and one eternal glowing life is All."

So I thought. More anon.

Afterword

On 3 August 1942, W. H. Auden wrote to Norman Holmes Pearson: 'My hostess [Caroline Newton] is translating Hölderlin's Hyperion, on which I hope one day to write an essay. It is the most perfect exposition of romanticism I have ever read.'[1] It seems unlikely that Newton's translation itself came to much, the only surviving evidence being a gathering of some twenty-four leaves in a box in Princeton University Library.[2] Nor does Auden's essay ever seem to have materialized. But the fact that he wanted to write it at all, together with his judgment of the novel, may be considered noteworthy, particularly given the relatively early date of the letter. For even in Germany it was not until the opening years of the twentieth century, and particularly with the publication of Hellingrath's edition on the eve of the First World War, that Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) suddenly emerged from virtual obscurity as a poet of the first rank, at least amongst writers and intellectuals. But Auden's generation was not slow to pick up on the excitement of the discovery. It was the Orcadian Edwin Muir, himself a fine poet, who was really the first to mediate Hölderlin to the anglophone literary world in a series of brilliant essays in the 1920s and 1930s.[3] Another significant figure who was reading the Swabian poet intensively in the late 1930s is Samuel Beckett, and indeed it is in *Hyperion* that most of the marginalia in his Hölderlin edition are to be found.[4] However, it would

1 *The Complete Works of W.H. Auden*: *Prose*: *Volume II*, *1939–1948*, ed. Edward Mendelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 506.

2 My thanks to Stephen Ferguson, Curator of Rare Books, for this information.

3 See Gaskill, 'Edwin Muir as a Critic of Hölderlin', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 14 (1978), 345–64.

4 Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Dixon, *Samuel Beckett's Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 91–93.

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generally be true to say that for most of those displaying an interest in Hölderlin — and he was rapidly becoming the poets' poet — it was the later 'hymns' and fragments, written in the years immediately preceding the collapse of his mind in 1806, and the fact of the madness itself, that proved to be the main source of fascination.[5] The novel, which alone had just about kept Hölderlin's name alive in the nineteenth century, tended now to be relegated to the background. In the English-speaking world, the absence of a complete translation certainly did nothing to help.[6]

Even in specialist scholarship *Hyperion* was relatively late in receiving due critical attention. It would be fair to say that it was not until 1965, with the publication of Lawrence Ryan's monograph, that the modern reassessment of the status of the novel really began, and its significance within Hölderlin's oeuvre came to be properly recognized.[7] Ryan's incisive examination of the narrative structure of *Hyperion* and the implications for interpretation proved to be an eye-opener for many, myself included. The voluminous secondary literature may since have variously modified, extensively revised, or even rejected his main argument, but, like it or not, we all remain in his debt.[8] The distinction between Hyperion as narrator and Hyperion as a figure in his own narrative, between the hermit and the would-be hero/lover, cannot be ignored, whatever one chooses to make of it. Whether the development of the narrator, if such it is, may be seen to lead to any kind of resolution of the dissonances in his character, even a fragile or provisional one, is what now tends to split the critics.[9] I freely admit that I belong to the

5 As instanced by Muir's own poem 'Hölderlin's Journey' (1937); also David Gascoyne's collection *Hölderlin's Madness* (London: Dent & Sons, 1938).

6 The first rendering of any part of *Hyperion* into English appears to have been made, possibly with help, by none other than Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is a translation of a substantial excerpt from the novel's penultimate letter (the scathing of the Germans) quoted in Theodor Mundt's *Geschichte der Literatur der Gegenwart* (1842), pp. 86–88 — see *The Dial*: *A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion*, 4, 1843, 'A Letter', 262–70, pp. 265–66. For this discovery and (slightly puzzled) speculation as to Emerson's intentions, see Cyrus Hamlin, 'Transplanting German Idealism to American Culture', in *Translating Literatures Translating Cultures*: *New Vistas and Approaches in Literary Studies*, ed. by Kurt Mueller-Vollmer and Michael Irmscher (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1998), 107–24, pp. 108–11.

7 Lawrence Ryan, *Hölderlins Hyperion*: *Exzentrische Bahn und Dichterberuf* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965).

8 For an excellent history of critical reception, see Marco Castellari, *Friedrich Hölderlin*: *Hyperion nello specchio della critica* (Milan: C.U.E.M., 2002).

9 For an emphatic rejection of any notion of a successfully embodied telos, see Hansjörg Bay, *Ohne Rückkehr*: *Utopische Intention und poetischer Prozess in Hölderlins Hyperion* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2003).

'harmonizing' tendency. Seeing the novel primarily in terms of aporias and unreconciled contradictions goes against my aesthetic experience of the text as a thing of great brilliance and beauty. It is this experience that I am attempting to mediate. I would like to think that an anglophone readership might learn to love *Hyperion*.

A Novel in Letters[10]

Hyperion was published in two volumes, the first appearing in spring 1797, the second in autumn 1799. It is unlikely that Hölderlin, rather than Cotta, his publisher, was responsible for the two-and-a-half year gap. As may be seen from the conclusion of the Preface, the author seems none too happy that readers of the first volume will, for the time being at least, not be in any position to judge the novel's design. Similar misgivings were expressed to Schiller, who had mediated publication, in a letter of 20 June 1797. And it seems that they were justified, in that Cotta found difficulty in shifting copies of the second volume when it eventually did appear.

Hölderlin's one and only novel was a long time in gestation, the initial idea going back as far as 1792. The final version adopts the epistolary form, as does the only other version available to Hölderlin's contemporaries, the 'Fragment von Hyperion' which appeared in Schiller's *Thalia* in 1794.[11] In the intervening period Hölderlin experimented with a variety of forms, including verse, as can be seen from the surviving manuscripts. Common to all versions, however, is that they confront us with a first-person narrator (or alternatively an 'I' within the narrative), telling the story of his past life and commenting on it in the process. This indicates that the retrospective review was regarded as the most important element by Hölderlin, and that it must therefore have been instrumental in determining his final choice of narrative form. That choice remains, nevertheless, an unusual one.[12]

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10 In the following I make liberal use of my short monograph on the novel, *Hölderlin's Hyperion* (Durham: Durham Modern Language Studies, 1984). I am grateful to Michael Thomson and Sam Bootle, editor and former editor of the DMLS series, for permission to do so.

11 *Neue Thalia*, 4 (1793), 181–221. The issue did not in fact appear until November 1794.

12 The most informed and informative study of *Hyperion* as an epistolary novel is Gideon Stiening's *Epistolare Subjektivität*: *Das Erzählsystem in Friedrich Hölderlins Briefroman Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechenland* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005).

There were of course many precedents for the adoption of the epistolary convention in prose fiction (as well as non-fictional discourse). In the second half of the eighteenth century most novels with any pretension to artistic merit (and many without it) tended to be either epistolary or self-consciously comic. Common to both forms is a degree of preoccupation with the act of writing itself. It is straight third-person narrative, without irony or authorial intrusion, that was the exception. Thus it is not Hölderlin's choice of the epistolary form as such that may seem surprising, but the particular use he makes of it. In the great majority of epistolary novels there is correspondence between a number of characters, a medley of voices. It is not all one way. There were, it is true, examples of one-sided correspondence in works of philosophy or literary criticism. But in fiction — at least after Samuel Richardson's successful exploitation of polyperspectivism in *Clarissa* (1748) — such limitation seemed to have little to commend it. Goethe's enormously successful novel of 1774, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*), in which we see only the protagonist's letters and can merely infer the content of any replies from his single correspondent, may thus be said to represent a departure from prevailing conventions. This also makes it an obvious point of reference for any German writer who subsequently adopts the epistolary form in an apparently similar manner. It seems pointless to deny that *Werther* exercised any significant influence on *Hyperion*. There are numerous verbal echoes and thematic correspondences, quite apart from the similarity of form. For *Hyperion*, too, consists of letters in one direction. (The letters from Diotima, Notara, and Alabanda are copied out by Hyperion and so form part of his correspondence with Bellarmin.) However, what certainly does distinguish the two novels from each other is that, whereas Werther's letters are written on a day-to-day basis, relating things largely from the immediacy of the present or near-present, Hyperion's are used to recount his past experiences, the related events all having taken place before the first letter is written.

Naturally, in neither case do the letters consist solely of narrative. What fascinates us in Goethe's novel is Werther's gradual disintegration, his slide towards mental and emotional catastrophe. His 'affliction' reveals itself in his reaction to events, but equally in his reflections on nature and the world around him. There are good grounds for seeing

the attempted articulation of his problems as an important contributory factor in the hero's downfall. Writing itself affects Werther's frame of mind and intensifies his difficulties, since it encourages him to finger his emotional wounds both old and new and wallow in his distress. It is not therapeutic or cathartic; it leads him further into the labyrinth, instead of enabling him to transcend and transmute his experiences by lending them — through articulation — mediated, reflected coherence. Whether it is because he lacks the necessary detachment or innate artistic ability, or both, the effect is to accelerate the fragmentation of Werther's world. It seems to me that, seen in this light, *Hyperion* does indeed have much in common with *Werther*. In Hölderlin's novel the past experience is further in the past, and this has a bearing on the narrator's ability to confront it and articulate it. But the experience itself is just as harrowing as Werther's (a good deal more so in fact), and in attempting to relive it, give it meaning, and commit it to paper, Hyperion is exposing himself to real danger. The narrator's present is one in which he experiences extreme oscillations of mood and undergoes a series of violent emotional shocks. At times he is very near to madness, and it is important to see this and take the possibility seriously. The narrator may know the outcome of the events within the narrative, but he is very far from knowing the outcome and consequences of the narrating activity itself, with all its associated inner turmoil. His anxiety is expressed clearly enough in various key passages which we have little excuse for overlooking or misinterpreting. For instance, when Hyperion finally summons up the courage to begin the account of his meeting and blossoming relationship with Diotima, he tells Bellarmin that he has hitherto kept the image of his love sacred and carried it within him like a holy relic: 'and if fate henceforth should seize and plunge me down from abyss to abyss and drown in me all energy and all reason, yet shall this one and only outlive myself in me and shine in me and reign in eternal, indestructible glory!' (p. 44).[13] (The language he uses here recalls and pre-echoes that of the 'Song of Fate'.) Before confronting this most crucial episode in his own past, the narrating Hyperion anticipates

13 Letter XIII: 'und wenn hinfort mich das Schiksaal ergreift und von einem Abgrund in den andern mich wirft, und alle Kräfte ertränkt in mir und alle Gedanken, so soll diß Einzige doch mich selber überleben in mir, und leuchten in mir und herrschen, in ewiger, unzerstörbarer Klarheit!' (StA [= *Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe*] III, 51).

what might happen to him if he persists. He is badly scarred from his experiences, and realizes that reopening the old wounds, by evoking both the ecstasies and agonies, could well destroy him for good. He has been holding them back, and when at last the pressure is released, they virtually erupt into his narrative and threaten to run completely out of his tenuous control. Already at this early stage the implication would seem to be that his evolving monument to the memory of Diotima could cost him his sanity. This emerges more clearly in a later passage, which demonstrates the extreme difficulty the narrator finds in sufficiently detaching himself from his experiences to be able to write coherently about them:

> All that I can speak of her is scattered words. I must forget what she is whole if I'm to speak of her. I must make believe she lived in times of old, that I knew of her through tales, if her living image isn't so to seize me that I perish in rapture and pain, if I'm not to die of my joy in her and my grief for her. (p. 51)[14]

Having once conjured up memories of such intensity, Hyperion must attain rational control of them, if they are not to overwhelm him. This is not idle hyperbole. To be able to write here, certainly as far as his mental and emotional stability is concerned, is a matter of life and death. But the effort almost breaks him. The letter that begins with Hyperion's proclaimed intention of proving his breast on the joys of the past till it becomes like steel, inuring himself to their 'deadly delights', the same letter that climaxes in the embrace, ends with the narrator so severely shaken that he cannot continue.[15] In the following letter an apparently calmer Hyperion resumes his account of the development of the relationship, but then any semblance of smooth narrative progression is suddenly fractured by a remark which demonstrates just how vulnerable and threatened he feels: 'I ought to keep silent, ought to forget and keep silent. // But the alluring flame will tempt me till I

14 Letter XXII: 'Ich kann nur hie und da ein Wörtchen von ihr sprechen. Ich muß vergessen, was sie ganz ist, wenn ich von ihr sprechen soll. Ich muß mich täuschen, als hätte sie vor alten Zeiten gelebt, als wüßt' ich durch Erzählung einiges von ihr, wenn ihr lebendig Bild mich nicht ergreiffen soll, daß ich vergehe im Entzüken und im Schmerz, wenn ich den Tod der Freude über sie und den Tod der Trauer um sie nicht sterben soll' (StA III, 59).

15 Letter XXVIII (pp. 59–63): StA III, 69–74.

plunge into it whole and perish like the fly' (p. 64).[16] This image of death and disaster is clearly and unambiguously related to the activity of Hyperion as narrator, and the fate that awaits him if he continues. But he does go on, as he must, and what follows is his narration of Diotima's confession, her admission of the way in which her love for Hyperion has fractured the harmony with herself and the world, and brought about a distressing detachment from her earthly environment, from nature. This is in fact the beginning of a process which will eventually kill her, and the narrating Hyperion knows this. It is small wonder, then, that when he evokes the image of Diotima, having made her confession, embracing him and resting her head on his breast, it should prove too much for him: 'O Bellarmin! my senses fail and my mind runs adrift. // I see, I see how this must end. The rudder has fallen into the surge and the ship will be seized like a child by the feet and hurled against the rocks' (p. 65).[17] What has happened here — and it strikes me as the only plausible interpretation — is that the *narrating* Hyperion feels he has gone too far. It is quite simply a crude (if not uncommon) misreading of the text to take him as referring in this passage to future events in his own past — as if he were momentarily projecting himself back into the perspective of his former self and expressing the presentiment that the love relationship is doomed and will end in tears. He has no need to tell himself this, or Bellarmin (or indeed the reader). Hyperion knows full well how it ended. All that he has been writing since making his home on Salamis — and since the twenty-third letter we know it too — has been written in the shadow of that 'sweet bewildering lethal dread' (p. 52), the knowledge that Diotima's grave is near.[18] It is knowledge he has tried in vain to repress, the (relative) proximity of the island where she lived and died exercising a powerful and potentially fatal attraction, in the same way as he has resisted giving way to the deadly bliss of his memories. All to no avail, as we see. And if we look at the drastic image

16 Letter XXIX: 'Ich sollte schweigen, sollte vergessen und schweigen. // Aber die reizende Flamme versucht mich, bis ich mich ganz in sie stürze, und, wie die Fliege, vergehe' (StA III, 75).

17 End of Letter XXIX: 'o Bellarmin! die Sinne vergehn mir und der Geist entflieht. // Ich seh', ich sehe, wie das enden muß. Das Steuer ist in die Wooge gefallen und das Schiff wird, wie an den Füßen ein Kind, ergriffen und an die Felsen geschleudert' (StA III, 76).

18 Letter XXIII: 'die süßen verwirrenden tödtenden Schreken, daß Diotima's Grab mir nah ist' (StA III, 60).

he employs at the end of letter XXIX, it is one of impending catastrophe brought about *by loss of control*: the vessel dashed against the rocks is surely Hyperion, the rudder his drowning reason. This passage marks the worst crisis in the narrator's development. He does eventually recover his control and finally, so it seems, come to terms with his experiences through the act of writing itself. But the issue is not, for the narrating Hyperion, predetermined, and he very nearly goes under in the process. We are meant to take this possibility seriously.

From the above it should be clear that we are dealing in *Hyperion* with a form of suspense that is by no means primarily tied to the events related in the narrative. Indeed, it is because the novel has too often been read as if it were the narrator's 'story' and nothing more, that it has been so badly underrated. However, once we have been alerted to the function and significance of the many comments and interpolations that punctuate the narrative, we begin to appreciate that any loss of conventional suspense — after all, Hyperion must have survived to be able to tell the tale of his (mis)adventures — is more than compensated for by the tension introduced between the narrator and his subject matter. It is a tension which in this degree would not be possible without the appreciable temporal distance between the narrated events and the narrator's present. Simplifying, one could say that in the first half of the novel we have a gloomy or even despairing narrator relating largely happy to blissful experiences from his own past; in the second half of the novel we have an increasingly calm, almost serene narrator telling of grief and disaster.

Contrary to the impression sometimes given by critics, the procedure adopted by Hölderlin in *Hyperion*, the use of the epistolary convention to narrate a life-story, is not unique to this novel. There are precedents, some of them respectable, others less so. Hölderlin could be seen here as resurrecting a form that was not in fact uncommon in the early stages of the development of the epistolary novel. Of these 'autobiographies' in letters perhaps one of the most celebrated is Marivaux' unfinished *La vie de Marianne, ou Les avantures de madame la comtesse de* *** (1731–42). The most notorious is probably Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* of 1748, popularly known as *Fanny Hill*. One might well ask what reasons a writer might have for cutting up a past story into letters, instead of telling it as continuous narrative in the first person. One answer would

be that the temporal detachment of the narrator from the main events of his or her narrative offers opportunity for subtle interplay between the perspectives of present and former self, accommodating side by side experience, reaction, feeling on two distinct time levels. And then there is the often extremely sensitive and intimate nature of the subject matter. It would tend to undermine the moral credibility of the narrator (one thinks here particularly of Fanny Hill) if he or she were seen to be voluntarily exposing all to a curious world. Even the built-in distancing comments and mature critical judgments might not be an adequate defence against the charge of shameless exhibitionism. Not only must the confessions ostensibly be mediated in a private manner, as secrets entrusted to one who is worthy to receive them; but also, the narrator's reluctance to speak at all must be credibly documented. This is a fiction which it would be difficult to maintain if the narrator were seen to have a vision of his or her life in hardback from the outset. It is the function of the correspondent (about whom we may know nothing except the name, and perhaps not even that) to press the central figure into writing about past experiences which may be painful and embarrassing. The narrator has good reason for being reluctant to rake over the coals, and will need to be coaxed.

We may know virtually nothing about Hyperion's Bellarmin except that he appears to be German, lives in Germany, and is presumably a youngish man of enlightened liberal persuasion, something that would put him very much in a minority amongst his compatriots. But the most important thing about him is that he is there at all, pestering his correspondent to tell of his past life: 'I thank you for asking me to tell you about myself, for making me remember former times' (p. 9).[19] It is important to remember that Hyperion the narrator begins his tale as a hermit (hence the subtitle of the novel), his self-imposed isolation largely the result of disgust with the poverty of spirit of his fellows. For that reason alone any ostensibly public form of communication (one in which, if anyone is addressed, it must be the general reader), can be excluded as a possibility, at least initially. The narrator starts as a self-confessed elitist who would address himself, if at all, only to the privileged few. He will have no desire to cast his pearls before

19 Letter III: 'Ich danke dir, daß du mich bittest, dir von mir zu erzählen, daß du die vorigen Zeiten mir in's Gedächtniß bringst' (StA III, 10).

swine: 'I will tell you ever more of my bliss … But only to you, my Bellarmin, only to a pure free soul such as yours do I tell it. I will not be as prodigal as the sun with its rays, I will not cast my pearls before the foolish mob' (p. 59).[20] The sun imagery in this passage is significant, given the mythological associations of Hyperion's name and his mentor Adamas' injunction in the fourth letter that he should live up to it. For this would certainly imply detachment ('You will be lonely', p. 14), but also an active role in the development of the things of this world. The narrator's reluctance to be as liberal with his communication as his illustrious heavenly namesake with its rays suggests that he is not yet equal to his mission. This immature, misanthropic elitism is one reason why he is inclined to keep his past to himself (and why even Bellarmin has been made to wait). The other is, as mentioned above, that he is anxious about stirring up painful memories (painful, either because in themselves distressing, or because they evoke vanished happiness). In the beginning he is highly selective about what he chooses to communicate. Even so, the repression is not entirely successful. We are meant to sense the tension in the narrator caused by the awareness of what he has yet to reveal. In the penultimate version of the novel we are explicitly, and perhaps somewhat unsubtly, told that the narrator can be writing of one thing and thinking of another: 'It's true that I managed to stay silent about it long enough, could often restrain myself when amongst the other memories this one would seize me; just you look! you'll find frenzied tears on many a trivial page; they belong here; I dried them and wrote of other things.'[21] Since it would be difficult for anyone but Bellarmin to verify this, it is perhaps just as well that the passage was omitted from the final version. But it does at least emphasize the strain that his narrating activity places on Hyperion. Given the threat it poses for his stability, he needs a convincing reason for attempting it at all. If the mastering of this threat constitutes a major theme of the novel,

20 Letter XXVIII: 'Ich will dir immer mehr von meiner Seeligkeit erzählen … Aber nur dir, mein Bellarmin, nur einer reinen freien Seele, wie die deine ist, erzähl' ich's. So freigebig, wie die Sonne mit ihren Strahlen, will ich nicht seyn; meine Perlen will ich vor die alberne Menge nicht werfen' (StA III, 69).

21 'Zwar konnt' ich doch lange genug davon schweigen, konnte oft mich halten, wenn unter den andern Erinnerungen diese mich ergriff; siehe nur hin! du wirst tobende Thränen finden auf mancher unbedeutenden Seite; sie gehören hieher; ich troknete sie und schrieb von andern Dingen' (StA III, 250–51).

as I would contend, it is difficult to see what other form could be chosen. Complaints about the perilous recalcitrance of one's subject matter and one's own inadequacy in grappling with it would appear hollow and silly, unless written with ironic intent, which is here obviously not the case. Hyperion's communications may grow into a book, an address to the public. They must on no account be seen to have been conceived as one from the outset by the narrator.

When Hölderlin temporarily abandoned the epistolary convention in the intermediate versions of *Hyperion*, in order to experiment with alternative forms, he still retained as the basic element a life-story with built-in commentary. We are presented in these versions with an already mature figure who looks back on the days of his youth, and comments and judges from a solid base of acquired insight. The higher perspective is already fixed, and is not seen to change or develop in the course of narration. How could it? In abandoning the letter form Hölderlin has deprived himself of that option. In returning to it he opens up the possibility of a double development: that of the narrator as a figure within his own narrative, and that of the narrator as he confronts his past life and attempts to come to terms with it in his writing. This would represent something more than the oscillation between different time levels of narration that one would expect to find in any epistolary novel. Such a balance of emphasis between past action and developing present, if this is indeed what we have in *Hyperion*, would seem to be Hölderlin's innovation.

It is the openness towards the future, in terms of the perspective of the individual narrator, that must have attracted Hölderlin to the epistolary form. Throughout the novel he is at pains to show that Hyperion, the writer of the letters, has a developing present and, for long stretches, an extremely uncertain future. He does this in various ways. One involves the repeated reference, already mentioned, to the narrating activity itself and the toll it is taking. Nor is it simply a matter of reflections or despairing interjections, indicating a changing mental state. The narrator's present is more than a featureless vantage point. It is given dimension in time and space. Whilst it is true that his letters have neither address nor dates, we know where he is when he writes them, and are given an impression of the passage of time through periodic references to the changing seasons. Thus, the correspondence

opens in spring, with Hyperion, having just returned from Germany, in the vicinity of Corinth. Late summer finds him on Salamis, directing his gaze towards Calauria, Diotima's island, and preparing to tell the story of his love, something he has delayed until he feels sufficient strength within himself to do so. There is a reference to winter at the beginning of the twenty-sixth letter, as the account of the relationship draws towards its climax and the narrator approaches his worst crisis.[22] It is in the second volume that Hyperion indicates recovery, after his protracted stay on Salamis, and it would be tempting to assume that both narrative and narration conclude in the spring. There is admittedly no direct evidence for this. But we know that Hyperion begins writing in the spring, and that his letters end with an account of that same spring as experienced in Germany, prior to his return to Greece. And since I will argue that there is a deliberate fusion of temporal perspectives at the end of the novel, the assumption seems to me to be a reasonable one. The writing of the letters would then have taken a complete year.[23]

Hölderlin's novel is subtitled 'the hermit in Greece', itself a sufficient indication that its subject is the writer of the letters and what happens to him in his isolation. One would not expect very much to happen to a hermit. The essence of his 'activity' here is the reflective and imaginative engagement with his own past, the inner processing of the events that drove him into his retreat in the first place, and this we witness in its entirety. If changes are to come about through this activity, it must be clearly seen to have extension in time, and Hölderlin does enough to

22 Letter XXVI: 'I'm building a grave for my heart, that it may rest; I spin a cocoon around myself, because everywhere it's winter, in blissful memories I wrap myself against the storm' (p. 54); 'Ich baue meinem Herzen ein Grab, damit es ruhen möge; ich spinne mich ein, weil überall es Winter ist; in seeligen Erinnerungen hüll' ich vor dem Sturme mich ein' (StA III, 62).

23 Knaupp illustrates the narrative structure of the novel with a useful diagram in the shape of an ammonite — see Michael Knaupp, *Friedrich Hölderlin*: *Hyperion* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997), p. 77. This would suggest that the narrated time goes from pre-1768 (the year Hyperion moves to Smyrna) to spring 1771, the narrating time from spring 1771 to (spring) 1772. Amongst the external reference points: the Greek uprising in the Peloponnese (Orlov revolt) began in February 1770; we know that Hyperion is injured in the battle of Chesma, 5–7 July 1770, and that, after a period of convalescence on Paros, he leaves for Germany (via Sicily) in the late autumn or winter of that year. For a detailed chronology and a map of Hyperion's journeys, see *Friedrich Hölderlin*: *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. by Michael Knaupp, III (Munich: Hanser, 1992), pp. 318–19, 324–25.

convey this. More would have been distracting and alien to his purpose. All we really need to know is that the writer of the letters is living alone on an island, and that months are passing whilst he writes them. Despite his naturally-motivated orientation towards the past, he must be seen to have a present within which any development may take place, and this present must be open-ended. The final words of the novel are 'So I thought. More anon.'[24] What might happen next is a question that will concern us later. For the moment it is sufficient to observe that the narrating Hyperion has his story which is both distinct from, and integrally related to, the story he is telling.

The Foreword

One thing emerges clearly from the note prefacing the first volume of *Hyperion*: Hölderlin is well aware of the likelihood that he will not be properly understood. As with his other famous preface, the one that introduces his great hymn 'Friedensfeier' ('Celebration of Peace', 1801), the tone here seems to be a mixture of apology and provocation.[25] He fears that we may not know what to make of his work, but then that may perhaps be our fault. One clearly legitimate reason for Hölderlin's misgivings is that his public will initially have only the one volume available to them. In a novel with two lines of development (the hero within, and also outside and above his narrative), both running parallel on the printed page but the one running into the other chronologically (the letter writing begins when the narrated events have ended), the separate publication of one half will present more than ordinary problems in this respect. But at least Hölderlin underlines the status of his novel as a structured work. It has a 'Plan', and he knows what it is, even if the reader is going to

24 Letter LX: 'So dacht' ich. Nächstens mehr' (StA III, 160).

25 'Ich bitte dieses Blatt nur gutmüthig zu lesen. So wird es sicher nicht unfaßlich, noch weniger anstößig seyn. Sollten aber dennoch einige eine solche Sprache zuwenig konventionell finden, so muß ich ihnen gestehen: ich kann nicht anders' (StA III, 532). In Michael Hamburger's translation: 'All that I ask is that the reader be kindly disposed towards these pages. In that case he will certainly not find them incomprehensible, far less objectionable. But if, nonetheless, some should think such a language too unconventional, I must confess to them: I cannot help it.' — See *Friedrich Hölderlin*: *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner (New York: Continuum, 1990), p. 229.

have to wait to judge. However, Hölderlin's apparently well-founded scepticism about the likely reception of his novel is really rooted in doubts about the qualities and capabilities of his potential readership. They will be Germans, those of his own day, the very same who are going to be unmercifully castigated in Hyperion's penultimate letter. 'I'd happily promise this book the love of the Germans,' the preface begins, and the conditional is used advisedly.[26] 'Love', communal awareness, the sense of belonging to the whole, openness to the spirit of life in all its manifestations, reverence for nature and beauty, sensitivity to its articulation in poetry — that is precisely what will not be found amongst the Germans, who are, according to Hyperion, not only politically, but also and above all spiritually fragmented.[27] It seems that the Germans represent, albeit in extreme form, the diseases of the modern world (similar criticisms are levelled by Hyperion at his own Greek contemporaries). In their fragmentation and division, their egoism and slavish disposition, the Germans are the direct antithesis of the ancient Greeks, as seen by Hyperion. (It should be noted that the praise of the latter and the attack on the former occupy corresponding positions, near the end of the first and second volumes respectively. It seems unlikely that this structural correspondence is fortuitous.) In view of the severity of Hyperion's censure of the Germans, one might think it naïve of Hölderlin even to entertain the possibility that they might learn to love his book. But then his anger is really a measure of his deep emotional commitment to them, or rather to what they could and should be, and might indeed even become, were his seed to take root. *Hyperion* is in no small degree an exploration of the ways in which change might be brought about, and the answer seems to be the novel itself (Hölderlin was not a modest man). It is intended to be educative, though not in a preaching, narrowly didactic sense. The lesson is aesthetic. Beauty is redemptive. Were the Germans to be such that they could respond to the novel in the proper manner, were they capable of 'loving' it, then they would indeed be changed.[28]

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26 'Ich verspräche gerne diesem Buche die Liebe der Deutschen' (StA III, 5).

27 See Letter LIX, p. 131: StA III, 155: 'ich kann kein Volk mir denken, das zerrißner wäre, wie die Deutschen …'

28 Cf. Diotima's (past) vision of her ideal community (Letter LVI): 'Oh! now men no longer took the beautiful world like laymen the artist's poem when they praise the words and note the utility' (p. 113); 'Ach! nun nahmen die Menschen die schöne

Hölderlin points to two ways in which he expects his novel to be misread:

> But I fear some will read it like a compendium and be overly concerned with the *fabula docet*, whilst others will take it too lightly, and neither party will understand it.
>
> Those who merely sniff my flower mistake its nature, and so do those who pluck it merely for instruction.
>
> The resolution of the dissonances in a particular character is neither for mere reflection nor empty pleasure. (p. 5)[29]

One is used to writers defending their fictions on the grounds that they both instruct and entertain, mixing the pleasant with the useful.[30] Here Hölderlin appears to be saying that neither of these things, in themselves, is his main concern. Or rather, that any arbitrary separation of the two functions will lead to a fundamental misreading. Plundering the novel for ideas, the philosophical message, is just as aberrant as taking it simply as a story to while away one's leisure hours. In one sense what Hölderlin is arguing here is the autonomy of the work of art, the rejection of its subservience to ends and purposes outside itself, whether these be enlightenment or entertainment. He was of course not alone in defending the integrity of art against external manipulation, the attribution of objective purposefulness to what of its nature must be free and self-determined. It is, however, necessary to tread carefully here, lest one ascribe to Hölderlin a form of poetic solipsism which was alien to him. His art is not hermetic. Like all properly creative forms of human activity, it is for him a service rendered to nature.[31] It is the

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Welt nicht mehr, wie Laien des Künstlers Gedicht, wenn sie die Worte loben und den Nuzen drin ersehn' (StA III, 131).

29 'Aber ich fürchte, die einen werden es lesen, wie ein Compendium, und um das *fabula docet* sich zu sehr bekümmern, indeß die andern gar zu leicht es nehmen, und beede Theile verstehen es nicht. // Wer blos.an meiner Pflanze riecht, der kennt sie nicht, und wer sie pflükt, blos, um daran zu lernen, kennt sie auch nicht. // Die Auflösung der Dissonanzen in einem gewissen Karakter ist weder für das bloße Nachdenken, noch für die leere Lust' (StA III, 5).

30 Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 343.

31 See the letter to his half-brother of 4 June 1799: 'Du siehest, Lieber, daß ich Dir das Paradoxon aufgestellt habe, daß der Kunst- und Bildungstrieb mit allen seinen Modifikationen und Abarten ein eigentlicher Dienst sei, den die Menschen der Natur erweisen.' In Charlie Louth's translation: 'You can see, dear Karl, that I have presented you with the paradox that the artistic and creative impulse with all its modifications and varieties is actually a service human beings render unto

unity of all life, 'einiges, ewiges, glühendes Leben', that is celebrated in the final letter of the novel, and it is Life that remains for Hölderlin the highest value.[32] It is in art, specifically in poetry, that it receives articulation, quintessential expression. The work of art is autonomous in the same way as a living organism. It is an indivisible whole, yet at the same time part of the greater whole, the most intense individual manifestation of the all-pervading spirit of Life itself. It is not gratuitous that Hölderlin refers to his novel as a plant.

But what, one may ask, is the correct response to a flower? In so far as the work of art is incarnate beauty, an articulated vision of wholeness, it requires that we respond as wholes, and its effect should be to make us whole. Any one-sided appropriation is deleterious, whether we use the ideas in the work to school our intellects or simply allow the 'plant's' fragrance to give our senses an intoxicating lift. In the case of *Hyperion* the warning is not idly given. For disregard of the novel's peculiar form and structure must lead to a severe misunderstanding of the content. In fact, it is difficult to think of many other novels where such neglect can lead so fundamentally astray as here. The embodied ideas seem to be relativized at every turn, either through the narrator's distancing comments, or by becoming stages in the evolving consciousness of the narrator himself. Even the beautiful hymn to nature at the end of the novel, where one might expect to find a definitive statement, seems (at least initially) to be accorded merely provisional status: it is placed in inverted commas and qualified by the concluding 'So I thought.' Context is everything. Yet if the novel defies us to extract the message or messages, it does in fact advance the solution to a problem which is usually stated in philosophical terms. That which is neither for intellectual instruction nor for superficial, undemanding enjoyment — 'neither for mere reflection nor empty pleasure' — is said to be the 'resolution of the dissonances in a particular character'. Hölderlin does not here spell out the precise nature

nature.' — in *Hölderlin*: *Essays and Letters*, edited and translated with an introduction by Jeremy Adler and Charlie Louth (London and New York: Penguin Classics, 2009), p. 136.

32 Cf. M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*: *Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (London: Norton, 1971), pp. 431 ff.: 'Life' is the 'ground-concept', 'the generator of the controlling categories of Romantic thought … Life is the premise and paradigm for what is most innovative and distinctive in Romantic thinkers. Hence their vitalism: the celebration of that which lives, moves and evolves by an internal energy, over whatever is lifeless, inert, and unchanging.'

of those dissonances, but in a sense he has already alluded to them. In so far as they are concerned with the fragmentation of human faculties, the division between thought and feeling, the discursive and the intuitive, detachment and involvement, reflection and spontaneity, it could be said that they are already adumbrated in the mutually contradictory approaches which Hölderlin imputes to his potential readers: *mere* reflection or *empty* pleasure. This implies no denigration of reflection ('Nachdenken'), or indeed pleasure ('Lust') — the adjectives suggest only that both are impoverished when detached from one another. We shall be able to understand the resolution of the dissonances only if, at least for the duration of our reading, we are able to resolve them in ourselves.

'Not to be constrained by the greatest …'

It might well be objected that the preface to the final version of *Hyperion* is too cryptic to be of much help to the bemused reader. The earlier prefaces are certainly more explicit.[33] They also have the considerable drawback of encouraging us to see the work in terms of a detachable scheme or programme, with a heavy philosophical bias. They concentrate in fact on the *fabula docet*, and whilst this might have been in some measure appropriate for the particular versions they preface, Hölderlin is now clearly anxious to avoid the impression that he is merely offering an exemplification of preconceived truths. Unlike the paradigmatic states of harmony and perfection on which he dwells in the earlier prefaces, the unspecified 'resolution of the dissonances' is something that must be realized or enacted in the work itself. What Hölderlin does, however, retain from the first preface is the quotation he now uses as a motto to introduce the first volume: 'Non coerceri maximo, contineri a minimo, divinum est.'[34] This time there is no attribution, no explanation given, and we are left to apply it as we may. It is in fact taken from the first section of an anonymous literary epitaph in praise of the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola, first published in 1640.[35] How Hölderlin came by it

33 See StA III, 163, 235–37.

34 'Not to be constrained (confined, enclosed) by the greatest, to be contained (enclosed) by the smallest, is divine.'

35 For details and a fuller context, see StA III, 437–38. In the original, and in the preface to the 'Fragment von Hyperion', it reads: 'contineri tamen a minimo'.

is not known for certain, but his most likely source would seem to be a virulently anti-Jesuit history of the order that began to appear in 1789.[36] One is perhaps surprised by the peripheral intrusion of Jesuits into Hölderlin's novel, for whatever else might have motivated the choice of name for Hyperion's correspondent, as a trained theologian Hölderlin must have been aware of Cardinal Robert(o) Bellarmin(o) (1542–1621), as were no doubt many of his readers. But whether the latter would have been able to recognize the unattributed quotation or connect it with Jesuits is quite another matter. One who nowadays could is Francis, the first Jesuit Pope, and he is apparently fond of citing it. It also seems to appeal to his predecessor who even refers to *Hyperion* in this context.[37]

When Hölderlin decided to omit any guiding interpretation of the Loyola epitaph from the final version of *Hyperion*, he almost certainly did so because he realized that it would be unnecessarily limiting. Quite apart from the general considerations that motivated the excision of explicit theorizing from the preface, he would have recognized in the epitaph a peculiar aptness to all his major concerns, whether religious, political, philosophical or aesthetic. Even the addition of Loyola's name might have seemed in some measure prescriptive. Interesting is the addition of the 'divinum est'. This is present in the original epitaph, but was omitted from the preface to the 'Fragment' where we are confronted with the contrary drives — glossed as man wanting at the same time to be *in* everything and *above* everything[38] — together with the implication that a notional reconciliation would represent the highest state achievable, but also that it is the very striving to achieve such balance which can be dangerous and lead to catastrophe: the attempt to reconcile the polar tensions could result in our being ripped apart by them.[39] In the preface to the penultimate version of the novel, which dispenses

36 Peter Philipp Wolf, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Jesuiten von dem Ursprunge ihres Ordens bis auf gegenw*ärtige *Zeiten*, 4 vols (Zurich: Orell, Geßner, Füssli, 1789–92). The epitaph is quoted in full in the first volume, pp. 214–17.

37 Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), pp. 146–47.

38 'Der Mensch möchte gerne *in* allem und *über* allem seyn' (StA III, 163).

39 Similar tensions give Goethe's Werther cause for reflection in his letter of 21 June: 'I've had all manner of thoughts about the desire [*Begier*] human beings have to extend themselves … to rove far and wide; and then about the impulse [*Trieb*] in them willingly to accept constraints'; translated by David Constantine, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 24.

with Loyola and epitaph altogether, we — and Hyperion — are seen as torn between extremes of massive, solipsistic expansion on the one hand, and contraction to the point of obliteration on the other. Both are dangerous, because they are literally self-destructive. This dialectical tension between self and world is an inescapable part of human experience, and yet it is the drives that create it which also charge us to overcome it.[40]

The restoration of 'divinum est' suggests a religious dimension, if not in any narrow confessional sense. In its original context the statement is naturally closely associated with death, the narrow grave confining the mortal remains of one whose indomitable spirit knew no bounds:

Cuius Animus
Vastissimo coerceri non potuit unius orbis ambitu,
Ejus Corpus
Humili hoc angustoque tumulo continetur.
Qui magnum aut *Pompeium* aut *Caesarem* aut *Alexandrum* cogitas,
Aperi oculos veritati,
Majorem his omnibus leges
Ignatium.
Non coerceri maximo, contineri tamen a minimo, divinum est.[41]

The contrast is familiar to us from Shakespeare. One thinks here particularly of Prince Henry's lines on the death of Hotspur: 'When that this body did contain a spirit, / A kingdom for it was too small a bound, / But now two paces of the vilest earth / Is room enough.'[42] These lines are echoed in a text that was of great, if still largely unacknowledged significance for Hölderlin, namely Macpherson's *Ossian* (1762–65): 'Narrow is thy dwelling now; dark the place of thine abode. With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before!'[43] Mention

40 See StA III, 236.

41 Wolf, I, pp. 214–15. 'He whose spirit could not be contained by a whole globe's bounds, his body is enclosed in this low and narrow tumulus. You who deem great Pompey or Caesar or Alexander, open your eyes to the truth: as the greater than all these you will choose Ignatius …'

42 *Henry IV* (Part I), Act V, Scene 4.

43 James Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. by Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 24, 168. The passage is included in the 'Songs of Selma', translated by Goethe's Werther.

of Caesar and Alexander might also remind us of the Yorick scene in *Hamlet*:

> Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer barrel?
>
> Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
> Oh, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw![44]

But then Hamlet can express the great/small contrast in terms of a familiar paradox without any reference to death: were it not for bad dreams, 'I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space.'[45]

By omitting any specific reference to Loyola or to the motto's being an epitaph, Hölderlin ensures that any primary association with death is absent, and thus widens the scope of the statement considerably without in any way falsifying it. In fact, it does not seem to me that it was the anonymous author's intention to restrict his meaning either; quite the reverse. He is not simply saying that it is divine to have a great spirit and a dead body, but rather seeing in Loyola's situation the illustration of a glorious universal truth, by associating his hero with Christ himself. For this gnomic statement ought to be recognized as an allusion to the miracle of Incarnation. It is a variation of a commonplace in medieval hymnology. Sometimes, admittedly, it can be used to refer to the death of Christ: 'Brevo sepulcro clauditur, qui caelo non capitur' ('He is enclosed in the narrow tomb, he whom the heavens cannot contain').[46] But often the enclosing space is not the tomb but the Virgin's womb: 'Quem nequit totus cohibere mundus / Claudis in alvo' ('He whom the whole world cannot contain, / You enclose in your womb').[47] Or: 'Intra te clauditur, / Qui claudit omnia' ('In you is enclosed / he who encloses everything').[48] It is the paradox of incarnate divinity.

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44 *Hamlet*, Act V, Scene 1.

45 *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2.

46 Peter Damian, 'Pascalis rhythmus ad procedendum', in *Poésie latine chrétienne du Moyen âge*: *IIIe–XVe siècle*, Textes recueillis, traduits et commentés par Henry Spitzmuller (Paris: Desclée, De Brouwer, 1971), p. 404.

47 Peter Damian, 'In assumptione hymnus', in Spitzmuller, p. 408; cf. also 'De virgine hymnus', pp. 408 ff.

48 Alexander Neckham [?], 'De virgine cantio', in Spitzmuller, p. 747.

Hyperion was, for the most part, written at a time when Hölderlin was furthest removed from any kind of Christian orthodoxy. The sudden irruption of Christ into his poetry comes after 1800, although there are obvious intimations of his later concerns, notably in the shape of the martyr and redeemer Empedokles, the subject of Hölderlin's unfinished drama (1797–1800). In November 1798 he can ask his half-brother: 'when will people recognize that the highest power is in its expression also the most modest and that the divine, when it makes itself manifest, can never be without a certain sadness and humility?'[49] It seems to me that the notion of suffering incarnate divinity is already clearly implied here. It is this generalized insight that will open the way for the (attempted) reintegration of Christ into Hölderlin's world, albeit on the poet's own terms. And it is in the novel that the process really begins. For the mature insight which Hölderlin offers to his brother is one which is worked out in *Hyperion*, and by Hyperion. The absolute is available to us through beauty, embodied perfection, the individual manifestations of which, whether in the glories of ancient Greece or the figure of Diotima herself, are temporal and therefore transient. It takes Hyperion a long time to come to terms with this: 'O Bellarmin! who then may say he stands fast when even the beautiful ripens so towards its fate, when even the divine must humble itself and share mortality with all that is mortal!' (p. 82).[50] If this represents the narrator's gradual and reluctant recognition of a necessary truth, marking already a measurable advance in understanding, it is transformed near the end into joyful affirmation:

> … and you ask, my Bellarmin! how I feel now, telling you this?
>
> My dearest friend! I'm at peace, for I want no better than the gods. Must not everything suffer? And the nobler it is, the more deeply. Does not holy nature suffer? O my godhead! that you could grieve as you are blissful is something I long failed to grasp. But the bliss that does not suffer is sleep, and without death there is no life. Should you be, like a child, eternal and slumber as nothingness? forego the victory? not pass

49 28 November 1798: 'O, Lieber! wann wird man unter uns erkennen, daß die höchste Kraft in ihrer Äußerung zugleich auch die bescheidenste ist, und daß das Göttliche, wenn es hervorgeht, niemals ohne eine gewisse Trauer und Demuth seyn kann?' Translation by Charlie Louth, in *Hölderlin*: *Essays and Letters*, p. 111.

50 Letter XXXI: 'O Bellarmin! wer darf denn sagen, er stehe vest, wenn auch das Schöne seinem Schiksaal so entgegenreift, wenn auch das Göttliche sich demüthigen muß, und die Sterblichkeit mit allem Sterblichen theilen!' (StA III, 94).

> through all the perfections? Yes! yes! worthy is pain to lie at men's hearts and be your familiar, O nature! For it alone leads from one bliss to the next, and there can be no other companion. (p. 129)[51]

The radical dualism posited in the chronologically much earlier 'Song of Fate' (p. 123), between oblivious gods and suffering humanity, is here overcome. Hyperion finds his 'peace' (if not his resting place) in the revelation that it is the very essence of the gods' divinity to be, not only above everything, but also in everything, and as such, in their temporal aspect, subject to the same limitations as all living things, the same laws of change and decay. Without this they are nothing. For to be both is divine. The bliss of what is most intensely alive is inseparable from pain, and the featureless limbo of comatose non-feeling is no alternative. The 'condescension' of the gods, their submission to the shackles of time and space, is indeed redemptive, since through it man and all creation is raised, becoming a fitting and necessary element in the divine pageant. Everything that lives is holy.

The preface speaks of the 'resolution of the dissonances'. The Latin motto, as it stands, implies that it is divine to combine two apparently mutually contradictory qualities or modes of being. How then is this related to the conflicts sustained by Hyperion, and their eventual outcome? Each mode is in fact individually represented by a central character in the novel, and both exist in a state of initially unresolved tension in Hyperion himself. For all his nobility, Alabanda can be seen to represent the hubristic dangers inherent in idealistic radicalism. Not being willing to be constrained is allied with the impulse to dominate, to do violence to the freedom of others. It is an expression of the titanic 'monstrous striving to be everything' (p. 16) that, left unchecked,

51 Letter LVIII: 'und du fragst, mein Bellarmin! wie jezt mir ist, indem ich diß erzähle? Bester! ich bin ruhig, denn ich will nichts bessers haben, als die Götter. Muß nicht alles leiden? Und je treflicher es ist, je tiefer! Leidet nicht die heilige Natur ? O meine Gottheit! daß du trauern könntest, wie du seelig bist, das konnt' ich lange nicht fassen. Aber die Wonne, die nicht leidet, ist Schlaf, und ohne Tod ist kein Leben. Solltest du ewig seyn, wie ein Kind und schlummern, dem Nichts gleich? den Sieg entbehren? nicht die Vollendungen alle durchlaufen? Ja! ja! werth ist der Schmerz, am Herzen der Menschen zu liegen, und dein Vertrauter zu seyn, o Natur! Denn er nur führt von einer Wonne zur andern, und es ist kein andrer Gefährte, denn er. — ' (StA III, 150). Beissner in his annotation of this passage (StA III, 486) insists that 'ewig' in 'ewig seyn' is used adverbially, so that the question would mean: 'should you be eternally like a child …?' This strikes me as a grotesque (if common) misreading.

inevitably leads to tyranny, alienation, and catastrophe.[52] Alabanda will not suffer constraint and roams far and wide in a world he despises, eager to put a new one in its place, and violently if necessary. When his efforts are frustrated, he remains defiant and unrepentant, his fiery spirit undiminished, his awareness of a pure core of indestructible selfhood his only faith:

> 'So … without freedom everything is dead.'
>
> 'Yes indeed,' he cried, 'there's not a blade of grass grows up unless it has its own germ of life within! how much the more in me! and therefore, my dear friend! because I feel myself free in the highest sense, because I feel myself beginningless, therefore I believe that I'm endless, that I'm indestructible. If a potter's hand has made me, then let him smash his vessel as he pleases. But that which lives within must be unbegotten, must be divine of nature in its germ, sublime beyond all might and all art, and therefore invulnerable, eternal.' (p. 121)[53]

It is a vision that presupposes dissonance and conflict. Here freedom is expressed in an image of violence, as it has to be, since liberty is understood as the assertion of self against the constraints of inhibiting forces which are experienced as external and alien to the self. It is a vision based on division, no doubt valid in its context, as the expression of an explosive phase in the life of individuals or communities periodically necessary and justified, but no more fitted to represent the norm than are floods, volcanoes, or earthquakes within the economy of nature. For Diotima by contrast, the model is one of unity and harmony. Within a narrowly circumscribed environment she lives an idyll of naïve, unreflecting fulfilment, like a beautiful flower embedded in a protected garden. She does not feel constricted, since all she knows is part of her and she of it. She can express herself only by expressing the world around her; she is a living hymn to nature, and her proper medium is not speech but song.

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52 Letter V: 'das ungeheure Streben, Alles zu seyn' (StA III, 18).

53 Letter LVII: 'So [wär' es hier im höchsten Sinne wahr, erwiedert' ich, daß] ohne Freiheit alles todt ist. // Ja wohl, rief er, wächst doch kein Grashalm auf, wenn nicht ein eigner Lebenskeim in ihm ist! wie viel mehr in mir! und darum, Lieber! weil ich frei im höchsten Sinne, weil ich anfangslos mich fühle, darum glaub' ich, daß ich endlos, daß ich unzerstörbar bin. Hat mich eines Töpfers Hand gemacht, so mag er sein Gefäß zerschlagen, wie es ihm gefällt. Doch was da lebt, muß unerzeugt, muß göttlicher Natur in seinem Keime seyn, erhaben über alle Macht, und alle Kunst, und darum unverlezlich, ewig' (StA III, 141). The 'potter's hand' alludes to Jeremiah, chapters 18 and 19; also Isaiah, 29:16, underlining the willed impiety of Alabanda's words.

It is the disruptive influence of Hyperion that wrenches her from her idyll and makes her articulate. The vicarious experience of an out-of-joint world through the man she loves uproots and ultimately destroys her (as an individual), since it makes impossible a return to her haven of innocence. It is, however, the shocking knowledge of dissonance that also enables her to give voice and differentiated expression to what she has known and lived, that peace and harmony which pass all human understanding. Her conception of freedom, the cornerstone of her faith, is the experienced oneness with the life of nature. It is something that is available to her now only through death, the final shedding of all that makes her distinct and different, painfully detached from that life. Her eloquent and lovely swansong displays a form of egalitarian radicalism that puts to shame Alabanda's elitist and egocentric liberalism:

> Those poor souls who know nothing but their own sorry handiwork, who are merely slaves of need and scorn genius, and who do not honour you, childlike life of nature! let them fear death. Their yoke is become their world; they know nothing better than their bondage; dread the freedom of the gods that death gives us?
>
> But I don't! I have gone beyond the patchwork made by hand of man, I have felt the life of nature that passes all thought — even if I became a plant, would the harm be so great? — I shall be. How should I be lost from the sphere of life where the love eternal, that is common to all, holds all natures together? How should I depart from the covenant that binds all beings? This is not so easily broken as the loose bonds of our age. It's not like a market day when folk flock together and make a great bustle and then disperse. No! by the spirit that unites us, by the god's spirit that is proper to each and common to all! no! no! in nature's covenant troth is no dream. We part to be only more inwardly one, more divinely at peace with all, with ourselves. We die in order to live.
>
> I shall be; I do not ask what I shall become. To be, to live, that is enough, that is the glory of the gods; and that is why all that is life is equal in the divine world, and there are there no masters and menials. Natures live together like lovers; they have all in common, spirit, joy and eternal youth. (p. 127)[54]

54 Letter LVIII: 'Die Armen, die nichts kennen, als ihr dürftig Machwerk, die der Noth nur dienen und den Genius verschmähn, und dich nicht ehren, kindlich Leben der Natur! die mögen vor dem Tod sich fürchten. Ihr Joch ist ihre Welt geworden; Besseres, als ihren Knechtsdienst, kennen sie nicht; scheun die Götterfreiheit, die der Tod uns giebt? // Ich aber nicht! ich habe mich des Stükwerks überhoben, das die Menschenhände gemacht, ich hab' es gefühlt, das Leben der Natur, das höher

The stress is on equality, but here, as in Hyperion's own equivalent concluding statement, it is a non- or even anti-Jacobin conception of equality that is voiced. Diotima delights in the diversity of all genuine manifestations of Life, insisting only that they are all equal in value and fundamentally related, emphatically not that they should be forced to conform to one another. In this celebration of Life, from which all hierarchical notions are absent, Diotima wishes for nothing better than to be 'in everything'. She would be content to be 'contained by the smallest': 'even if I became a plant, would the harm be so great?' Whatever Hölderlin may have meant in the preface to the 'Fragment', it is clear that this carries no negative connotations here. There is a definite rightness about everything Diotima is meant to say throughout the novel, and her statements are never relativized in any way. It is only that their ultimate truth is not immediately grasped by Hyperion himself. Given the undoubted authority of Diotima's words, it is thus all the more significant that she stresses that her way should not be his; not because the ultimate goal of unity with the life of nature is wrong, but because he is to realize it in a less private, self-effacing manner. It is Diotima who assigns Hyperion his mission. After addressing her trinity of sun, earth, and aether, and praying that errant man will return from his exile into the divine fold, into the home of nature, she continues: 'You know this word, Hyperion! You began it in me. You will fulfil it in yourself, and only then rest.'[55] In what sense he is to realize the promise of her words arguably becomes finally clear to Hyperion only when he copies out for Bellarmin the letter in which they occur. To the reader

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ist, denn alle Gedanken — wenn ich auch zur Pflanze würde, wäre denn der Schade so groß? — Ich werde seyn. Wie sollt' ich mich verlieren aus der Sphäre des Lebens, worinn die ewige Liebe, die allen gemein ist, die Naturen alle zusammenhält? Wie sollt' ich scheiden aus dem Bunde, der die Wesen alle verknüpft? Der bricht so leicht nicht, wie die losen Bande dieser Zeit. Der ist nicht, wie ein Markttag, wo das Volk zusammenläuft und lärmt und auseinandergeht. Nein! bei dem Geiste, der uns einiget, bei dem Gottesgeiste, der jedem eigen ist und allen gemein! nein! nein! im Bunde der Natur ist Treue kein Traum. Wir trennen uns nur, um inniger einig zu seyn, göttlicherfriedlich mit allem, mit uns. Wir sterben, um zu leben. // Ich werde seyn; ich frage nicht, was ich werde. Zu seyn, zu leben, das ist genug, das ist die Ehre der Götter; und darum ist sich alles gleich, was nur ein Leben ist, in der göttlichen Welt, und es giebt in ihr nicht Herren und Knechte. Es leben umeinander die Naturen, wie Liebende; sie haben alles gemein, Geist, Freude und ewige Jugend' (StA III, 147–48).

55 'Du kennst diß Wort, Hyperion! Du hast es angefangen in mir. Du wirsts vollenden in dir, und dann erst ruhn' (StA III, 147).

it should be obvious that she envisages for him a social and public function which, for the time being at least, would deny him the luxury of dying into nature. This function is unambiguously related to the bringing back of his fellow-men out of their lamentable alienated state to the harmony that is their birthright. It is not enough for Hyperion to experience unity; he must himself unify. Taking the three watchwords of the French Revolution, it could be said that Alabanda's 'liberty' and Diotima's 'equality' find their resolution in the 'fraternity' which Hyperion must strive to realize.

Hyperion actually uses the adjective 'brüderlich' (fraternal) in the vision of unity celebrated in the final letter of the novel:

> "You springs of the earth! you flowers! and you forests and you eagles and you fraternal light! how old and new is our love! — We are free, we don't anxiously strive to be outwardly equal; how should not vary the modes of life? but we all love the aether, and deep in our innermost being we are all of us like." (p. 136)[56]

Here the word is applied to the light and any political meaning might seem oblique. But since it is immediately followed by a sentence featuring the adjective 'frei' (free) and the verb 'gleichen' (to be equal, like), it is difficult to believe that this is fortuitous and the language innocent of any revolutionary associations. On reading and being impressed by a substantial early fragment of the novel Hölderlin's mentor, Friedrich Stäudlin, told him to make sure to insert into the finished product 'cryptic passages about the spirit of the age'.[57] That spirit was of course one of revolutionary turmoil and upheaval, and it is indeed reflected in the novel in a number of telling ways (though perhaps not so telling that any political import is immediately obvious). Like many of his generation — one might think here of Wordsworth, also born in 1770 — he was enthused by the promise of the French Revolution. Again, like many, he became appalled by the excesses of a revolutionary fanaticism which embodied the negation of the very ideals it purported to uphold. But unlike some, he continued to hold firm his faith in

56 Letter LX: 'Ihr Quellen der Erd'! ihr Blumen! und ihr Wälder und ihr Adler und du brüderliches Licht! wie alt und neu ist unsere Liebe! — Frei sind wir, gleichen uns nicht ängstig von außen; wie sollte nicht wechseln die Weise des Lebens? wir lieben den Aether doch all' und innigst im Innersten gleichen wir uns' (StA III, 159).

57 'Unterlassen Sie doch nicht … versteckte Stellen über den Geist der Zeit in dieses Werk einzuschalten!!!' (4 September, 1793; StA III, 299).

the validity of the ideals themselves.[58] Hölderlin situates his novel in Greece, the classical cradle of democracy; significantly, though, not in ancient Greece but in that of the near-present, the historical background being the unsuccessful Russian-backed insurrection against the occupying Turkish power, which took place in 1770.[59] Hyperion, as one 'keen to see the world a better place' (p. 29), finds himself suddenly confronted, as he sees it, with the practical opportunity of making his dreams a reality. Disaster and disillusionment quickly follow. But we misinterpret Hyperion's failure as guerrilla and military leader, and indeed the failure of the insurrection itself (historical fact), if we take it to imply that revolutionary activism is wrong in any absolute sense. Surely Hölderlin would not be wishing to argue that the Greeks should not try to rid themselves of the Turkish yoke. The point is that Hyperion must not expect his ideal community to be brought into being by such methods. Diotima's misgivings about Hyperion's active participation in the revolt are well founded. Ideologically motivated violence has an inevitable tendency to lose touch with its original inspiration, and become an end in itself: 'You will conquer … and forget what for' (p. 84).[60] And crucially, Hyperion himself is not destined to serve the cause in this way, though others may be: 'Even if it's right … it's not what you were born for' (p. 83).[61]

What then is Hyperion's true vocation? According to Diotima's vision for him at the end of the first volume, he is to become the educator of his people.[62] It is difficult to see how he can do so by remaining a hermit. The subtitle of the novel is justified because what is documented is Hyperion's journey into isolation and his gradual emergence from it. The figure of the recluse thus stands in the middle of Hyperion's development, and yet at the same time at the beginning and end of the novel. It is the incipient hermit who writes the first letter, and it is the

58 See my essays 'Hölderlin and Revolution', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 12 (1976), 118–36; and '"Diß ist die Zeit der Könige nicht mehr": Hölderlin and Republicanism', *Strathclyde Modern Language Studies, Special Issue*: *The French Revolution*: *German Responses*, 11 (1991), 39–56.

59 For the so-called Orlov revolt, the nature of Hölderlin's sources, and the use he makes of them, see David Constantine, 'The Insurrection of 1770', in *In the Footsteps of the Gods*: *Travellers to Greece and the Quest for the Hellenic Ideal* (London: Taurus Parke Paperbacks, 2011), pp. 168–87.

60 Letter XXXIII: 'Du wirst erobern … und vergessen, wofür' (StA III, 96).

61 Letter XXXIII: 'Wenns auch recht ist … du bist dazu nicht geboren' (StA III, 96).

62 Letter XXX: 'Du wirst Erzieher unsers Volks' (StA III, 89).

last of the letters that relates how he came to turn his back on humanity and throw himself into the arms of nature. But the Hyperion who writes at the end is no longer a hermit. He may still be detached from the world of men, but at least he is now looking towards and not away from it. For he is communicating with it, and in his last major direct statement, the scathing censure of the Germans, he is making himself the spokesman of those who suffer in it and would presumably wish to change it.[63] There is of course a nice paradox in the last two letters of the novel, the Hebrew-prophet-like berating of the Germans being followed by the ecstatic hymn to nature. For it is the hermit, in his misanthropic isolation, who experiences the ineffable bliss of all-unity. And it is the mature Hyperion, no longer at odds with himself, and alive to his social responsibilities, who paints a most devastating picture of fragmentation and division. Implicit in both situations is a combination of involvement and detachment. But true synthesis is achieved only on the level of the narrator, for it is he who juxtaposes his philippic with the vision of all-unity which, though the product of the hermit's experience, is here articulated for the first time.

The precise status of the hymn to nature in the last letter has been the subject of much discussion. Formerly it could be widely assumed that the disillusioned and battle-scarred Hyperion retires to commune with nature, and that was that. If there were to have been anything more, it would have had to come in a third volume, which is indeed what some of Hölderlin's contemporaries seem to have expected. In the absence of that we are left with an uncompromising statement of radical pantheism, representing the sum of Hyperion's wisdom after his disasters in love and war. Recognition of the novel's sophisticated narrative structure, with the distinction between narrated and narrating time, has naturally led to a reappraisal, and even a devaluation of the significance of the last letter. For if one is going to argue that Hyperion develops in the course of his narrating, it seems difficult to admit the conclusive validity of an experience he has before he starts writing. And indeed, in so far as the vision of unity embodies coherent thoughts, Hyperion seems expressly to distance himself from them in the novel's final words: 'So I thought,'

63 Letter LIX: 'I spoke in your name too, I spoke for all who live in this land and suffer as I suffered there' (p. 134); 'Ich sprach in deinem Namen auch, ich sprach für alle, die in diesem Lande sind und leiden, wie ich dort gelitten' (StA III, 156).

the implication being that he has moved on since then, though he has yet to tell us where. Yet by its very position at the end of the novel the hymn to nature is given authority. It is what is left ringing in our ears when we finish our reading. Moreover, attempts to differentiate the narrator's painfully acquired insights — 'My dearest friend! I'm at peace …' (p. 129) — from those expressed in the vision experienced in the German spring are forced to resort to casuistry. Though the accents might be different, it all seems to be there already: the acceptance of suffering (as another word for joy), its function within the dynamic harmony of nature, appreciation of essential unity in the midst of apparent chaos, the identification of life and love. It seems that we have come full circle and that the end result of the narrator's deliberations is to discover what he already knew. And in a sense this is true.

Perhaps the most important point to make about the vision of unity at the end of the novel is that it is not sustained. It is not simply that the ecstatic mood ebbs away, for it would not be humanly possible to prolong it beyond a certain point, but that the experience itself does not lead to lasting insight. Or rather the insights associated with it appear to have no sustaining power. That this is so is shown by the narrator's sorry plight in the opening letters, which of course postdate the beatific vision with which the novel closes. That vision, nevertheless, represents a turning-point in Hyperion's development and the axis of the novel itself. Though it apparently quickly fades, together with the confidence it inspires, it is — while it lasts — an experience of unique intensity and cosmic vastness, which takes him far beyond anything he has known before. His thoughts and feelings suffuse the whole of nature, no longer focused on the solitary mediatory figure of the loved one. It is the shock of reawakening and finding himself finite again that causes Hyperion most distress, and it is this jarring contrast which is treated at length in the second letter of the novel and constitutes perhaps the most obvious 'dissonance' of all. The experience of all-unity may be transient, but it is repeatable. Once Hyperion has broken through the barriers and succeeded in universalizing his love for Diotima, extending it to the whole of nature, he is able to do so again and again. The first such experience, precisely because it represents a breakthrough, is the most important, and this in itself justifies its prominent position at the end of the novel. It marks the end of a phase

in Hyperion's life, and also the beginning of a new one with a new set of problems. In the second letter we find Hyperion struggling to come to terms with the provisional and fragile nature of a synthesis which had seemed decisive and absolute:

> My whole being stills and listens when the gentle ripple of the breeze plays about my breast. Often, lost in the immensity of blue, I look up into the aether and out into the hallowed sea, and it's as if a kindred spirit opened its arms to me, as if the pain of isolation were dissolved in the life of the godhead.
>
> To be one with everything, that is the life of the godhead, that is the heaven of man.
>
> To be one with everything that lives, to return in blissful self-oblivion into the all of nature, that is the summit of thoughts and joys, that is the holy mountain pinnacle, the place of eternal peace where noon loses its sultriness and the thunder its voice and the boiling sea becomes like a waving corn-field.
>
> To be one with everything that lives! At these words virtue lays aside its wrathful harness, the mind of man its sceptre, and all thoughts melt away before the vision of the world's eternal oneness like the toiling artist's rules before his heavenly Urania, and iron fate renounces its dominion, and from the covenant of beings death disappears, and indivisibility and eternal youth blesses, makes beautiful the world. (p. 8)[64]

Then, however, comes the inevitable fall:

> On this height I often stand, my Bellarmin! But a moment of reflection casts me down. I begin to think, and find myself as I was before, alone, with all the pains of mortality, and my heart's sanctuary, the world's

64 Letter II: 'Mein ganzes Wesen verstummt und lauscht, wenn die zarte Welle der Luft mir um die Brust spielt. Verloren in's weite Blau, blik' ich oft hinauf an den Aether und hinein in's heilige Meer, und mir ist, als öffnet' ein verwandter Geist mir die Arme, als löste der Schmerz der Einsamkeit sich auf in's Leben der Gottheit. // Eines zu seyn mit Allem, das ist Leben der Gottheit, das ist der Himmel des Menschen. // Eines zu seyn mit Allem, was lebt, in seeliger Selbstvergessenheit wiederzukehren in's All der Natur, das ist der Gipfel der Gedanken und Freuden, das ist die heilige Bergeshöhe, der Ort der ewigen Ruhe, wo der Mittag seine Schwüle und der Donner seine Stimme verliert und das kochende Meer der Wooge des Kornfelds gleicht. // Eines zu seyn mit Allem, was lebt! Mit diesem Worte legt die Tugend den zürnenden Harnisch, der Geist des Menschen den Zepter weg, und alle Gedanken schwinden vor dem Bilde der ewigeinigen Welt, wie die Regeln des ringenden Künstlers vor seiner Urania, und das eherne Schiksaal entsagt der Herrschaft, und aus dem Bunde der Wesen schwindet der Tod, und Unzertrennlichkeit und ewige Jugend beseeliget, verschönert die Welt' (StA III, 8–9).

> eternal oneness, is no more; nature's arms are closed, and I stand before her like a stranger and cannot comprehend her. (p. 9)[65]

'On this height I often stand …' The feeling of unity with all that lives, first experienced with overwhelming intensity in the German spring, has since recurred and can be reproduced by Hyperion (in short bursts), as it seems, almost at will: 'just forget that men exist, starving, vexed and deeply harassed heart! and return whence you came, into the arms of nature, never-changing, beautiful and tranquil' (p. 8).[66] Yet it appears that Hyperion has lost as much as he has gained. In the first place, the experience is achieved at the cost of isolation from the rest of humanity. The 'world's eternal oneness' provides a refuge, his 'heart's sanctuary', into which the hermit escapes, effectively denying his brotherhood with those he should be helping: 'And one last time I looked back into the cold night of men and shuddered and wept for joy that I was so blissful' (p. 136).[67] And secondly, having once achieved this bliss, he has to face the fact that it too is ephemeral and cannot be held, but at best recaptured in isolated moments. Moreover, the very intensity of this periodical, and paradoxically exclusive experience of unity makes its loss or absence, which constitutes Hyperion's normal state, all the more bitter and difficult to bear. Thus what had seemed to offer an ultimate resolution of Hyperion's conflicts proves in fact to have exacerbated them by unbearably intensifying the contrast, in terms of his own experience, between unity and separation, fulfilment and despair. To have only one foot in Eden, as opposed to both or neither, proves to be the worst fate of all.

This is Hyperion's situation at the beginning of the novel, that is to say, when he begins to write. His writing proceeds from the experience in extreme form of both unity and alienation, and the dominant tone at the beginning is one of despair at the periodicity and ultimate

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65 'Auf dieser Höhe steh' ich oft, mein Bellarmin! Aber ein Moment des Besinnens wirft mich herab. Ich denke nach und finde mich, wie ich zuvor war, allein, mit allen Schmerzen der Sterblichkeit, und meines Herzens Asyl, die ewigeinige Welt, ist hin; die Natur verschließt die Arme, und ich stehe, wie ein Fremdling, vor ihr, und verstehe sie nicht' (StA III, 9).

66 Letter I: 'vergiß nur, daß es Menschen giebt, darbendes, angefochtenes, tausendfach geärgertes Herz! und kehre wieder dahin, wo du ausgiengst, in die Arme der Natur, der wandellosen, stillen und schönen' (StA III, 8).

67 Letter LX: 'Und Einmal sah' ich noch in die kalte Nacht der Menschen zurük und schauert' und weinte vor Freuden, daß ich so seelig war' (StA III, 159).

ineffectualness of the moments of harmony. They cannot be preserved, carried over into his normal waking life and made fruitful there. They presuppose abandonment of self, the temporary eclipse of consciousness and individuation. As soon as Hyperion attempts to grasp what it is he is experiencing, the experience itself dissolves into nothing. And this is as it must be. For thinking is a divisive activity that presupposes a conscious, and therefore distinct, finite, and transient subject reflecting on, and therefore detached from a world which it can only know as an object, something external and alien to the self. And this reflective, analytical tendency is something which has been intensified beyond the ordinary in Hyperion by his stay in Germany and his introduction to the desert of philosophical speculation, divorced from its primal sources: 'Amongst you I became so very rational, learnt to distinguish myself perfectly from what is around me, and now I'm set apart in the beautiful world, expelled from the garden of nature in which I grew and bloomed, and shrivel under the noonday sun' (p. 9).[68] Here we see again how crucial the German experience is for Hyperion. For it brings into sharp focus both the tendencies which he shares with, and also inherits from Alabanda and Diotima. Germany gives him nature in all its glorious beauty and vitality, inviting ecstatic communion and total immersion. It also aggravates his propensity towards elitist detachment, both by providing him with a soulless and horribly fragmented society to despise, and by schooling that faculty within him which automatically destroys feelings of oneness and unity, since it is dependent for its operation on the antithetical opposition of subject and object. The dilemma, which is implied at the end of the novel by the juxtaposition of the attack on the Germans and the hymn to nature, is here, at the beginning of the novel stated in explicit terms, and there would appear to be no way out. To be in everything and above everything at the same time, consciously to grasp the ineffable joys of self-abandonment; to retain and preserve them beyond the moment of the experience itself, so that they could inform and enhance our everyday lives, this would indeed seem to be a task beyond mere mortals. And yet it is the statement of the dilemma which itself incorporates the promise of its own solution.

68 Letter II: 'Ich bin bei euch so recht vernünftig geworden, habe gründlich mich unterscheiden gelernt von dem, was mich umgiebt, bin nun vereinzelt in der schönen Welt, bin so ausgeworfen aus dem Garten der Natur, wo ich wuchs und blühte, und vertrokne an der Mittagssonne' (StA III, 9).

'… return whence he came'

It should again be stressed that the task undertaken by the narrator is both hazardous and necessary. It is Hyperion's self which is to be rescued, since it cannot survive in a state of constant oscillation between extremes of dissolution and alienation. Madness threatens, either through loss of rational control, or through autistic isolation. These states are characterized, in their extreme form, by the absence of relationship, since relationship presupposes both cohesion and distinction, and cannot exist where identity or division are absolute. The integrity of the self can be achieved and maintained, only if it can comprehend itself in relation to the whole of which it is part, in a state of distinction without division. For Hyperion this requires a mode of reflection which must be more than merely an articulation of the dilemma (although this is certainly a start). If the problem is that the ecstatic union with nature occurs outside the limits of consciousness and is not amenable to rational analysis, then the only way in which it can be comprehended, integrated into the temporal experience of the individual self, is as something absent, something lost. It must be supplied with a framework, a context in time. It must be given a history.

It is a characteristic feature of some of Hölderlin's greatest hymns that the glorious and overpowering epiphany of an unspecified deity is followed by a gesture of withdrawal on the part of the poet.[69] The unmediated presence of the deity cannot be sustained, nor can his nature be grasped, except by means of a distancing procedure that can involve a survey of the god's mediated presence (incarnation) and subsequent absence in human history. What is experienced as immediately near cannot be grasped, and yet it must be grasped if its intensity is not to overwhelm. Undifferentiated divinity is consuming fire. For the narrating Hyperion, as we have seen, the 'living image' of Diotima assumes the same threatening quality as these numinous presences. And the reaction is similar. The detachment required if the mind is not to break would ideally be effected by transposition into temporal distance: 'I must make believe she lived in times of old, that I knew

69 See my essay, 'Meaning in History: "Chiliasm" in Hölderlin's "Patmos"', *Colloquia Germanica*, 11 (1978), 19–52, pp. 41–42.

of her through tales' (p. 51).[70] Whether he is confronting the 'terrible glory of antiquity' (p. 16),[71] Diotima, or his own beatific experiences of all-unity, the necessary combination of involvement and detachment, being 'in' and 'above', can be realized only by the development of an integrating historical consciousness. Memories must be both evoked and interpreted as meaningful. The constant oscillations must be seen to form part of a progression. It is only in memory that the contradictions can be accommodated and reconciled. And Mnemosyne is, of course, the mother of the Muses.

Innocence is never known to itself, and awareness of it can only ever be as something lost, in the recollection of the consciousness that destroys it. Golden ages are always in the past, and this is true both of the individual and the race. Hölderlin's Christ departs in order that he should be preserved and understood in man's memory, and it is 'remembrance' of him that is celebrated in the Eucharist. The perfect mystic vision of Plato's divinely-possessed philosopher is a product of anamnesis, the sacred recollection of the Ideas: his soul regains its wings because it is 'always dwelling in memory as best it may upon those things which a god owes his divinity to dwelling upon.'[72] It is in the contemplation of beauty that the recollection is awakened. For the Hölderlin who wrote 'Menons Klagen um Diotima' ('Menon's Lament for Diotima'), 'Andenken' ('Remembrance'), and 'Mnemosyne', it is certainly true that 'recollection had come to symbolize … the poet's link with the Absolute.'[73] That Hölderlin is indeed a writer of elegiac temper is not to be denied, and it is clearly significant that he confers upon the protagonist of his novel a pronounced 'elegischer Karakter'. But it ought also to be clear that there is much more to this than mere wistful nostalgia for a vanished fantasy. The source of the sadness is intoxicating joy, grief and sorrow the medium through which this joy is articulated: 'Many have tried, but in vain, with joy to express the most joyful; / Here at last, in grave sadness, wholly I find it expressed.'[74] Harmony requires

70 See above, n. 14.

71 Letter V: 'die schrökende Herrlichkeit des Altertums' (StA III, 18).

72 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 249c (translation by Walter Hamilton).

73 David H. Miles, 'The Past as Future: "Pfad" and "Bahn" as Images of Temporal Conflict in Hölderlin', *Germanic Review*, 46 (1971), 95–118, p. 115.

74 'Sophokles' (c. 1799) ('Viele versuchten umsonst, das Freudigste freudig zu sagen / Hier spricht endlich es mir, hier in der Trauer sich aus' (StA I, 305). Translation by Michael Hamburger, in *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, ed. Santner, p. 139. Note that

dissonance and discord in order that it may be expressed at all. In the letter to his half-brother, quoted above (p. 159, n. 49), Hölderlin writes 'that the highest power is in its expression also the most modest and that the divine, when it makes itself manifest, can never be without a certain sadness and humility?' It is this, it will be noted, *in its expression*. 'There's reconciliation in the middle of strife', Hyperion writes at the end.[75] Unity is expressed through differentiation, the latter being the necessary image or echo of the former, the only way in which this is capable of being reproduced. The source of poetry is the experience of primal unity, its function to give it expression. But the act of articulation itself requires both the detachment of the poet and the prismatic division of that which is being expressed. In this sense it will not be surprising if the poet and his work display 'an elegiac character'.

Achim von Arnim called *Hyperion* an elegy,[76] and clearly it does have some of the characteristics conventionally associated with the word. The fulfilment enjoyed in happier times weighs heavily on Hyperion, both in the form of his own past experience and also that of the long-departed glory of his fatherland. Modern Greece indeed represents an appropriate choice of setting for a character such as Hyperion. (Given the potentially subversive nature of the subject matter, one cannot help feeling that Hölderlin would have been running something of a risk if he had set the novel anywhere near Germany.) The transience of a great culture, the ephemeral nature of human happiness, the fleeting quality of moments of fulfilment, these are things which Hyperion finds very difficult to come to terms with. The particular narrative technique adopted in the novel is uniquely appropriate to a character of this kind. It enables him to indulge a sense of loss and vast regret, mournfully to reflect on the passing of things of great beauty even as he conjures them before our eyes. Nothing lasts. To say that in itself takes time, and we are made to feel it passing whilst Hyperion writes. Transience is the real challenge Hyperion has to face, and it seems that the task laid upon him is to accept and affirm it, and also in doing so evolve a strategy for defeating it. The problem is a human one and its solution is poetic. There is therefore nothing arbitrary about the elegiac character of the

Hamburger is constrained by the metrical demands of the elegiac couplet, hence his 'grave sadness' for 'Trauer' ('sadness'/'grief').

75 Letter LX: 'Versöhnung ist mitten im Streit' (StA III, 160).

76 See StA III, 319.

novel and its central figure. It corresponds perfectly to Hölderlin's convictions about the nature of life and poetry. And lest we be inclined to dismiss these as merely eccentric, it must be pointed out that he by no means stands alone. In the peculiar significance that he attaches to recollection and memory Hölderlin could be said to articulate, arguably in its purest form, one of the most characteristic tendencies of his age. For his exact contemporary Wordsworth 'poetry takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity', and it has been suggested that the formulation might owe something (via Coleridge) to Schiller.[77]

It is indeed to Wordsworth's *Prelude* that some of the most perceptive critics are inclined to compare *Hyperion*. One of the more obvious affinities is the circular structure of both works. As M. H. Abrams observes of *The Prelude*: 'Its structural end is its own beginning; and its temporal beginning … is Wordsworth's entrance on the stage of his life at which it ends.'[78] In both works it is the evolving consciousness of the narrator that conditions the structure, and produces the combination of retrospection and progression. 'Wordsworth does not tell his life as a simple narrative in past time but as the present remembrance of things past in which form and sensation "throw back our life" and evoke the former self in a multiple awareness that Wordsworth calls "two consciousnesses".'[79] Could it not also be said that *Hyperion*, too, constitutes the 'prelude' to itself, in that it embodies an account of its own genesis? For the purposes of the argument it is necessary to suppose that it is Hyperion's novel (rather than Hölderlin's), and that we take the concluding pages to be indeed the climax of the work. And this would seem to be the great virtue of the comparison, as presented by Cyrus Hamlin in a very fine, if neglected essay, that it rescues and reinforces the hymn to nature at the end of the novel. As Hamlin writes: 'For both poets the act of recollection or remembrance

77 Wordsworth, Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) — see *Schiller*: *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, edited and translated by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. clxvii; also Michael John Kooy, *Coleridge, Schiller and Aesthetic Education* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 36–37. The relevant passage is from Schiller's review of Bürger's poems: 'aus der sanftern und fernenden Erinnerung mag er dichten', translated in Kooy as: 'from tranquil and distanced recollection is poetry made'.

78 M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*: *Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 79.

79 Abrams, p. 75.

is identical with the poetic process. Poetry may thus be understood as a retrospect by the poetic self upon itself and as the recreation of moments of experience which are beyond understanding.'[80] In the case of Hyperion, who is or becomes the poet here, the experience which is being re-created, that from which the writing proceeds and in which it ends, is the experience of all-unity in the German spring. Hamlin argues that:

> the entire experience as presented to us in the final letter of the novel serves as a paradigm for the poetic process itself, as it applies both to the composition of *Hyperion* and to Hölderlin's subsequent practice as a poet. The origin of poetry is the experience of ecstasy or inspiration, here represented as a visitation by the spirit of Diotima, Hyperion's Muse. Only for such experience is the poetic vision, or intuition, authentic. And the motive for writing the poem is found in the immediate response to this experience, as indicated with regard to the novel by the fact that Hyperion apparently returned to Greece immediately after the experience of epiphany in order to start writing his letters to Bellarmin … The fact that the novel concludes with the narration of this event in Hyperion's life suggests that here, in comprehending this experience, the novel achieves fulfilment and completion.[81]

At first sight this might seem to be open to a number of objections. Firstly, as has been argued, the experience of all-unity here is not unique, except perhaps in intensity, for it proves subsequently to be repeatable. Moreover, as I have also argued, such experience serves, precisely because of its fleeting nature, rather to exacerbate Hyperion's problems than to solve them. And furthermore, how is one to account for the apparently relativizing inverted commas around the concluding passage, and the narrator's distancing 'So I thought'? Nevertheless, it seems to me that Hamlin's insights here are valid. The only qualification I would perhaps apply to his argument is that, as formulated here, it might appear to be suggesting that Hyperion returns home specifically to write his letters and recapture his experience. Now although this is in effect what happens, the conscious motivation is something that grows in the course of writing and is hardly present at all in the initial letters, where Hyperion has to be prodded into communication in the

80 Cyrus Hamlin, 'The Poetics of Self-consciousness in European Romanticism: Hölderlin's *Hyperion* and Wordsworth's *Prelude*', *Genre*, 6 (1973), 142–77.

81 Hamlin, p. 152.

first place, and, once embarked on it, still has formidable obstacles to overcome. Insight into the true nature of his activity comes very late indeed.

But what of the above-mentioned objections? An obvious point to be made is that the first and decisive experience of all-unity is the last to be related, and therefore the first to be fully comprehended. The experiences of which Hyperion writes in the second letter are, for him, at the time of writing, elements of an unresolved and apparently unresolvable tension which is driving him to distraction. By the time he reaches that stage in his narrative when the first experience occurs, he knows what he is about, understands the experience and its meaning, and can present it in the form of a solution, not a problem. This is accomplished by a subtle fusing of perspectives that takes place in the last letter.

The experience related in that letter is, like all experience *within Hyperion's narrative*, recounted, recollected experience. It is something he had then: 'so I thought,' he says, not once but twice.[82] It is not, of course, the first time he has recounted his past, as opposed to his present, thoughts; though nowhere else does he use quotation marks for anything other than direct speech, and even then only when there is no accompanying saying verb and to distinguish speakers from one another.[83] Admittedly, he did speak at the time, or thinks he did, but has no recollection of what he might have said: 'and words I spoke, it seems to me, but they were like the fire's rush when up it flares and leaves behind the ashes' (p. 136).[84] Curiously, this is then immediately followed by the passage in question, in which we appear to have an exact reconstruction of the thoughts behind the hypothetical words — set off from the rest of the text by speech marks at the beginning of each line.[85] Yet the thoughts, as we have them, are not known to have been

82 Apart from the last line of the novel, the phrase occurs at the beginning of the passage in quotation marks: 'O du, so dacht' ich, mit deinen Göttern, Natur! ich hab' ihn ausgeträumt, von Menschendingen den Traum' (StA III, 159); '"O you," so I thought, "with your gods, nature! I've dreamed it out, the dream of human things"' (p. 136).

83 For more on Hölderlin's use of quotation marks, and the procedure adopted in the translation, see below p. 191.

84 Letter LX: 'und Worte sprach ich, wie mir dünkt, aber sie waren wie des Feuers Rauschen, wenn es auffliegt und die Asche hinter sich läßt' (StA III, 159).

85 Forty-five of them in the original Cotta edition, all exclusively on the left. There are no concluding quotation marks at the end of the 'speech', though Beissner supplies them: StA III, 160.

uttered at the time of the experience itself, nor can they even be said to have been consciously formulated in Hyperion's mind at that time. They would appear then to be the articulation of (re)creative reflection on the part of the narrator. Hamlin argues, plausibly, that what we are in fact presented with here is a purposeful confusion introduced by Hölderlin between the experience of the character Hyperion and his subsequent narration of it: 'The confusion may be regarded as an attempt to fuse the two perspectives. The speech is certainly the product of creative reflection … but it is also a fully accurate recreation of the hero's revery in response to his visitation …'[86] In this way the circle is closed. The two perspectives come together as a paradigm of the poetic process itself, 'which originates in ecstasy and concludes in reflective self-understanding.'[87]

Yet we still have to confront the question as to why, having ingeniously closed the circle (the final image in the novel is one of circulation), Hölderlin then, disconcertingly, opens it again in the novel's last line. Let it once more be stressed that this is in no way intended to prejudice the authority of the vision itself. The glorious affirmation of Life is not to be dismissed as 'relatively immature' (compared to the reflections that follow the transcription of Notara's account of Diotima's death).[88] That is to say, it may have been at the time of the initial experience, but is no longer so in its present formulation. The distinction is crucial. Whatever we make of the final passage, there can be no doubt that the last letter does voice a critical attitude towards the hermit's self-indulgent self-abandonment. 'Thus I gave myself up more and more to blissful nature,' writes the mature Hyperion, 'and almost too endlessly. How gladly I'd have become a child to be closer to her!'[89] Here the (almost) total immersion in nature is clearly associated with an attitude which, from the point of view of the mature narrator, must

86 Hamlin, p. 152.

87 Hamlin, review of Friedbert Aspetsberger, *Welteinheit und epische Gestaltung*: *Studien zur Ichform von Hölderlins Roman 'Hyperion'* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971), in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 73 (1974), 292–96, p. 295.

88 'My dearest friend! I'm at peace …' (p. 129); cf. also above, p. 159. For Ulrich Gaier, in 'Hölderlins "Hyperion": Compendium, Roman, Rede', *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 21 (1978/79), 88–143, p. 108, n. 66, the concluding hymn to nature is 'vergleichsweise leichtsinnig'.

89 'So gab ich mehr und mehr der seeligen Natur mich hin und fast zu endlos. Wär' ich so gerne doch zum Kinde geworden, um ihr näher zu seyn!' (StA III, 158).

be regarded as regressive. For the naïve, un(self)conscious innocence of childhood, which is longed for by the hermit and which is still lovingly and nostalgically celebrated in the third letter, is not only recognized by the narrator as something which is not realistically available to him, but is actually explicitly rejected as inadequate, even as an ideal. After all, he has written only a few pages earlier (p. 129): 'But the bliss that does not suffer is sleep, and without death there is no life. Should you be, like a child, eternal and slumber as nothingness? forego the victory? not pass through all the perfections?'[90] Yet in the final letter the narrator who proclaims this conviction is confronted with a former self who would like nothing better than to sink into oblivious communion with nature, abjuring his fellow man, himself and all he knows and has learnt, and in fact is on the point of doing just that, losing himself in ecstatic, spontaneous babbling, ephemeral froth without substance. This is not to deny the reality of the experience while it lasts. The point is that it cannot last. Because it is so totally spontaneous, and above or beyond or below rational comprehension, it leaves nothing behind but a sense of loss and despair. It is only in the interpreting recollection of the narrator that the experience acquires structure and content; and that only at the end of a long process of reflection which produces in Hyperion a comprehensive sense of himself and the meaning of his life. The thoughts with which Hyperion is credited in this concluding passage are valid only if taken in conjunction with all that precedes them. They are valid as the culmination of a series of experiences and reflections on those experiences, and indeed reflections on the reflections. They are of limited validity as the spontaneous outpouring of the hermit. The Hyperion who has the experience has turned his back on his fellows and relinquished self-control. He is not even in a position to preserve his ecstatic intuitions for himself, still less communicate them to others. He is 'in' his experience to such a degree that he can no more grasp it than the aether. Yet the experience will have lasting value for himself and others only if it can be given some form of articulation, and this the hermit is patently incapable of doing. Even if he is already at this stage in a position to sense the unity of all things, including the positive value

90 Letter LVIII: 'Aber die Wonne, die nicht leidet, ist Schlaf, und ohne Tod ist kein Leben. Solltest du ewig seyn, wie ein Kind und schlummern, dem Nichts gleich? den Sieg entbehren? nicht die Vollendungen alle durchlaufen?' (StA III, 150).

of pain and suffering, the conviction as yet has no sustaining power; it belongs to a passing phase, another swing of the pendulum. The activity of the narrator is not pure cerebration, but ultimately practical and sustained demonstration of a truth which emerges 'in eternal, indestructible glory' only in the narrator's own creation, as a result of that creation.[91] It's important therefore that the provisional and inchoate nature of the hermit's bliss be indicated, and the reader referred back (and forward) to the next stage in Hyperion's development, which begins with the writing of the letters. Hence the justification for the 'So I thought. More anon' which obliges us to ask what could follow in Hyperion's narrative, the answer being that he returned to Greece and started to write the letters we have just been reading.

At the end of the first letter Hyperion writes (addressing his own heart): 'just forget that men exist … and return whence you came, into the arms of nature' (p. 8).[92] This is echoed by the motto from *Oedipus Coloneus* with which Hölderlin prefaces the second volume of the novel and which might be translated: 'Not to be born is, past all prizing, best. But when a man has seen the light of day, this is the next best by far, that with the utmost speed he should go back whence he came.' The echo makes it seem likely that Hölderlin uses the motto for his own purposes, so that it need not necessarily strike the pessimistic note which it has in its Sophoclean context (though that might be in some measure appropriate for the nature of the events to be narrated). Certainly, death and reunion with nature may be seen as equivalents, witness Diotima. But we would also do well to note the final sentence of Hyperion's hymnic vision: 'The arteries part and return in the heart and one eternal glowing life is All' (p. 137). It is hardly fortuitous that the novel ends with an image of circulation (of the bloodstream), nor that in the German it is a metrical line whose catalectic final foot is completed by being joined to the first.[93] The motto from Sophocles

91 Letter XIII: 'in ewiger unzerstörbarer Klarheit' (StA III, 51). For the rendering of 'Klarheit' as 'glory', see below p. 200.

92 'vergiß nur, daß es Menschen giebt … und kehre wieder dahin, wo du ausgiengst, in die Arme der Natur' (StA III, 8).

93 'Es scheiden und kehren im Herzen die Adern und einiges, ewiges, glühendes Leben ist Alles' (StA III, 160). As Hans Gerhard Steimer notes in his excellent 'Hölderlins Klauseln', *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 31 (1998/99), 281–328, p. 282, after the unstressed opening syllable, there is a sequence of eight dactyls in a row followed at the end by a trochee which, if joined up to the first syllable of the sentence, yields a ninth

can be seen as a hint to the reader not to ignore the circular structure of the novel. The structure of *Hyperion* is circular and at the same time open. And if it were not open, it would not be obviously circular. The narrator's concluding comment ensures that it is both. For if the fusion of the two perspectives at the end were too perfect, we would be in danger of taking the end to be the end, and might well miss the second line of development altogether. The snake must be *seen* to have its tail in its mouth. Yet we are dealing here with a circularity that accommodates progression (which is why critics can talk of the novel as having a spiral structure). The progression is dependent on the circularity. As linear development it is incomplete, and there is a risk that the ending will be seen as an ultimate solution, a detachable end-product (the novel's message) which transforms all that precedes it into redundant scaffolding. Coleridge claims 'the common end of all *narrative*, nay of *all* Poems, is to convert a *series* into a *Whole*'.[94] And this is precisely what Hölderlin (or perhaps one should say, Hyperion) has done here. In interpretative recollection what is initially a disjointed series is transformed into a whole, and the truth is the whole. The circle and the line have to be combined. For what is purely cyclical lacks progression, and what is purely linear lacks wholeness. At the risk of appearing wilfully paradoxical, one could add that the linear sequence of experiences, the raw material of Hyperion's narrative, betrays a seasonal, cyclical rhythm (from joy to despair), and that it only achieves retrospective linearity, in the sense of meaningful progression, through the adoption of the circular narrative procedure whereby end is joined to beginning. At the same time the circular route to understanding issues in a definitive advance, so that the mature narrator ends on an ascending course, where the hero of the narrative is still trapped within the cycle of bliss and despair.

The way out and the way forward for Hyperion has been found in writing. Not that his writing is obviously therapeutic, at least initially. He begins by giving vent to his despair and then, at the instigation of Bellarmin, proceeds with justifiable reluctance to recall the harrowing events of his life, at the same time recording his present reaction to

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dactyl. I cannot believe this is not intentional. (Nor have I found any satisfactory way of replicating it in English.)

94 To Joseph Cottle, 1807 (Letter 135); Abrams, p. 271.

them. By the beginning of the second book of the first volume he begins to suspect that there may be a hidden pattern, and therefore meaning, to his experiences, though for the time being it remains hidden.[95] At the same time there are indications that his state of mind is becoming more stable. He begins to employ oxymoronic expressions, suggesting an emergent ability to embrace polarities, rather than being thrown off balance by them.[96] The second book of the first volume proves to be the most severe test of all for the narrating Hyperion, since it is here that he is forced to confront the most blissful experience of his past life, the blossoming of his love for Diotima, knowing all the time what the fate of the relationship is going to be. The strain drives the narrator to the brink. Once this ordeal has been successfully sustained, there seems to be a steady advance towards tranquillity and serenity of vision. The gap between Hyperion as narrator and as the central figure of his own narrative widens, almost to the point where his ability to empathize with his former self is challenged. The straightforward transcription of the lovers' correspondence, with very little in the way of comment, might indicate this. It seems to me questionable to speculate, as has been argued, that the division of Diotima's swansong into instalments should be seen as suggesting that Hyperion is periodically overcome as he copies it out. The 'continuations' are surely to be taken as those of the dying Diotima, indicating resumption of writing, and telling evidence of her physical weariness and exhaustion. But it is of course Hyperion who does the transcribing, so that even here he is rewriting his life. And by the time he copies out the swansong, he realizes what has been happening. It is not simply that he has grown calmer by learning to accept his fate. He has made sense of it in the only way open to him, by fulfilling the mission assigned to him by Diotima. 'You would have to go under,' she writes:

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95 See p. 41: 'Or I look out upon the sea and ponder my life, its rising and sinking, its bliss and its grief, and my past often sounds to me like a lyre when the master runs through all the tones, throwing together discord and harmony in hidden order.' Letter XII: 'Oder schau' ich auf's Meer hinaus und überdenke mein Leben, sein Steigen und Sinken, seine Seeligkeit und seine Trauer und meine Vergangenheit lautet mir oft, wie ein Saitenspiel, wo der Meister alle Töne durchläuft, und Streit und Einklang mit verborgener Ordnung untereinanderwirft' (StA III, 47).

96 Cf. p. 42: 'in smiling earnest', 'like the starry heavens I'm both still and moved'. Letter XIII: 'mit lächelndem Ernste', 'wie der Sternenhimmel, bin ich still und bewegt' (StA III, 48).

> you'd have to despair, yet the spirit will save you. No laurel will comfort you, and no wreath of myrtle; Olympus will, the living and present, that eternally youthful blossoms around all your senses. The beautiful world is my[97] Olympus; in this you will live, and with the holy beings of the world, the gods of nature, with them you will be joyful. …
>
> Grieving youth! soon, soon you will be happier. Your laurel failed to ripen and your myrtles faded, for priest you shall be of divine nature, and your poetic days burgeon already. Oh, could I only see you in your future beauty! Farewell. (pp. 126, 128)[98]

The double reference to myrtles and laurels should, as Ryan has persuasively argued, be taken as alluding to Hyperion's activity as a lover and a man of action.[99] With the death of Diotima and the failure of the insurrection, fulfilment is denied to him in both these spheres. Diotima's consolation for him is that his true vocation lies elsewhere. And what she has to say about it must be seen in conjunction with her earlier vision of his mission at the end of the first volume, when the lovers contemplate the ruins of Athens. There Diotima exhorts him to become the 'educator' of his people. Hyperion appears excited by the prospect, and what on that occasion he envisages as the goal of his future efforts emerges clearly enough in his recorded thoughts, which conclude the volume and are offered without comment by the narrator, suggesting that the ideal they celebrate remains valid:

> Do you ask after men, nature? Do you lament like a lyre which the brother of chance, the wind alone plays, since the artist who kept it in tune is dead? They will come, your men, nature! A rejuvenated people will rejuvenate you too, and you will become as its bride, and the ancient covenant of spirits will renew itself with you.

97 Not wishing to follow some editors in assuming a misprint in the original edition here (*mein* for *dein*), I have opted for 'my' rather than 'your'. For the reasons, see below, p. 190.

98 Letter LVIII: 'Du müßtest untergehn, verzweifeln müßtest du, doch wird der Geist dich retten. Dich wird kein Lorbeer trösten und kein Myrthenkranz; der Olymp wirds, der lebendige, gegenwärtige, der ewig jugendlich um alle Sinne dir blüht. Die schöne Welt ist dein Olymp; in diesem wirst du leben, und mit den heiligen Wesen der Welt, mit den Göttern der Natur, mit diesen wirst du freudig seyn. … Trauernder Jüngling! bald, bald wirst du glüklicher seyn. Dir ist dein Lorbeer nicht gereift und deine Myrthen verblühten, denn Priester sollst du seyn der göttlichen Natur, und die dichterischen Tage keimen dir schon. O könnt' ich dich sehn in deiner künftigen Schöne! Lebe wohl' (StA III, 147, 149).

99 Ryan, *Exzentrische Bahn und Dichterberuf*, pp. 198–99.

> There will be but one beauty; and humanity and nature will unite into one all-embracing godhead. (p. 77)[100]

In whatever way this rejuvenation of his people, this higher synthesis of mankind and nature is to be achieved, it will clearly be the result of public activity. It will not be brought about by a complete retreat into silent or inarticulate communion with nature, and this is not the way in which Diotima's final words should be construed. Becoming a priest of nature will entail something more than transient and subjective experiences of total absorption, though it may be conditional on an ability to have them. The experience of all-unity must be rendered capable of mediation. It must be communicated. As that other Diotima tells Socrates in *The Symposium*, the object of love is not simply beauty; its object is to 'procreate and bring forth in beauty'.[101] Hyperion must be active and not merely passively receptive to the gods of nature. The 'spirit' which is to rescue him must, in one sense at least, be his own. In the words of the woman of Mantinea, Diotima could be said to hope for Hyperion that 'having his eyes fixed on beauty in the widest sense, he may,' with her death, 'no longer be the slave of … devotion to an individual example of beauty … but by gazing upon the vast ocean of beauty to which his attention is now turned, may bring forth in the abundance of his love of wisdom many beautiful and magnificent statements and ideas …'[102] Hyperion will indeed find solace in nature, but only if the experience engages his understanding, and above all, issues in creative activity. Priests mediate. The days that Diotima prophesies for Hyperion will be 'poetic' ('dichterisch'), and I take the adjective to have both a subjective and an objective sense. That is to say, Hyperion will both experience and communicate poetically. He will have been made capable of appreciating universal beauty, Diotima's 'Olympus'. And he will also be able to articulate his perceptions, sharing

100 Letter XXX: 'Du frägst nach Menschen, Natur? Du klagst, wie ein Saitenspiel, worauf des Zufalls Bruder, der Wind, nur spielt, weil der Künstler, der es ordnete, gestorben ist? Sie werden kommen, deine Menschen, Natur! Ein verjüngtes Volk wird dich auch wieder verjüngen, und du wirst werden, wie seine Braut und der alte Bund der Geister wird sich erneuen mit dir. // Es wird nur Eine Schönheit seyn; und Menschheit und Natur wird sich vereinen in Eine allumfassende Gottheit' (StA III, 90).

101 Plato, *The Symposium*, 206e (translation by Walter Hamilton).

102 *Symposium*, 210e.

and mediating his experience of a beautiful world, and developing a similar response in his fellows.

Clearly if the narrating Hyperion is to accept his vocation, he is obliged to emphasize his detachment from the incipient hermit at the end of the narrative. Priests are not hermits. They may stand apart, but they are not permanently turned away from the communities they serve. What they receive, they transmit. Their unworldliness, their apparent aloofness from human affairs is justified as a necessary concomitant of their mission, since it is only by remaining detached from the world that they are able to serve and influence it. Their detachment is thus an expression of their commitment to mankind, and only as such is it valid. As an end in itself it has no value, issuing merely in social sterility and impotence. The hermit's isolation is a denial of humanity, and in rejecting his fellowship with others, he is condemning himself. Literal perdition, loss of self and soul, awaits those who would abandon humanity; their speech is without echo, their gratification chimerical (for they lack a self to fulfil), 'and they go under in their solitude.'[103] One might think here of the vision of Tree of Life in Hyperion's final speech, where he sees himself at the top and the rest of humanity down amongst the roots — but it is still the same tree. The distance from ordinary humanity implied in Hyperion's words still holds good (and indeed receives its justification, like everything else in the hymn to nature) when they cease to be mere intuitions and become articulated speech. The difference is that now they are communicated, so that the isolation is lifted and relationship established. The hermit addresses only nature. The poet-priest is addressing men.

The hermit's retreat from the world is an extreme reaction to the frustrations of excessive engagement with it. Either way, he would seem to have deprived himself of the possibility of 'proper effectivity'.[104] As a hermit Hyperion has turned his back on his fellows, and his beatific experience of nature remains subjective, private and uncommunicated. And he pays the penalty for this. He loses himself in the experience, and is left with nothing. Because the experience is not articulated, it is not preserved. But then, on Hyperion's return to Greece, the recovery

103 The last of 'Seven Maxims' — see Adler's translation in *Hölderlin*: *Essays and Letters*, p. 243; 'und Sie gehen in ihrer Einsamkeit unter' (StA IV (1), 247).

104 'rechte Wirksamkeit' — see above, n. 103.

begins. It is a process of recovery in that an anguished soul gains peace of mind; in the sense that the self comes to itself and establishes its identity through reflective recollection; and also in the related sense that lost experiences of beauty are recreated in such a way that they acquire permanence and objective validity. It is in the communication of such experience that Hyperion finds both his mission and his salvation. It is in and through his writing that he develops the embracing consciousness, of himself and the world, that constitutes the resolution of the dissonances. And it is only in creative writing ('Dichtung') that such consciousness could possibly be fostered and expressed. Who but a poet could be both in everything and above everything? And how else could he accomplish this but through the medium of his own work? The simultaneity of experience and reflection, involvement and detachment, is available only to the mediating consciousness of the poet. It is difficult to see how it could be achieved directly, in life, for we are not gods. But it can be created and sustained in the work itself, which is the product of poetic recollection. Discrete experiences can be reconstituted and held together in the interpretative, reflective consciousness of the poet, whose primal impulse is the sense of the unity and cohesion of all life. If the essence of beauty is 'εν διαφερον εαυτω' (pp. 70, 71), the poetic work, reflecting this, will be a differentiated, an 'organized', articulated unity, a linguistic incarnation.[105] And like God in relation to the world, the poet will be both in and above his creation. And this is nowhere better demonstrated than in the last letter of *Hyperion* where the narrator contrives to empathize with an ecstatic experience of his former self, conveying it to us from the inside, as it were, and at the same time makes it clear that he is presenting us with a retrospective articulation of something beyond words. And moreover, implied within the act of articulation itself is criticism of the self-abandonment which was a pre-condition of the initial experience. Intense involvement is combined with clear-headed detachment, and the latter is emphasized by the narrator's concluding comment, which brings us back to his own present, refers us to his past, and anticipates his future. Hyperion is in control. He is not wholly contained in the work he has just created, but is

105 Letter XXX: 'the One differentiated in itself'; Heraclitus, rendered by Hyperion as 'das Eine in sich selber unterschiedne'. Cf. also Abrams, p. 260, where the allusion is to Blake.

poised to continue writing, presumably on the basis of the combination of experience and insight, and insight into that combination, which he has evidenced in his letters. Thus Hyperion's novel, no less than *The Prelude*, 'incorporates the discovery of its own *ars poetica*'.[106] In its turn it promises to be the prelude to future works. 'More anon.'

If the arguments advanced above are valid, *Hyperion* deserves pride of place in any list of 'self-begetting'novels. The type is defined by Steven Kellman as follows:

> Truly *samizdat* in the original sense of self-publishing, it is an account, usually first-person, of the development of a character to the point at which he is able to take up his pen and compose the novel we have just finished reading. Like an infinite recession of Chinese boxes, the self-begetting novel begins again where it ends. Once we have concluded the central protagonist's story of his own sentimental education, we must return to page one to commence in a novel way the product of that process … We are at once confronted with both process and product, quest and goal, parent and child.[107]

Far-fetched as it may seem, Hölderlin might even be said to anticipate Proust by linking 'within a single book the story of the spiritual genesis of a vocation, the story of the genesis of a work, and the very embodiment of that work.'[108] It should not, however, be necessary to argue Hölderlin's modernity here. For what he offers us in his novel is a remarkable practical realization of the Romantic aspirations of his own generation. If we think of Romanticism in terms of the poetics of self-consciousness, we are confronted here with a work which, as narrative, contains its own built-in commentary and critique; which is about the growth of comprehensive self-awareness in its narrator as he narrates; and which turns out to be writing about writing in that it culminates in the narrator's recognition of his poetic vocation, realized both practically and theoretically in the work he has just written. It is more surely a novel of poetic initiation than Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802). Hölderlin has his poet initiated by making him the

106 Abrams, p. 78.

107 Steven Kellman, *The Self-Begetting Novel* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 3. This stimulating study is based largely on French models, and gives no consideration to *Hyperion* and — as indicated by the absence of Hoffmann, Jean Paul, Raabe and others from the index — precious little to a rich German tradition of self-conscious fiction.

108 Kellman, p. 27, quoting Germaine Brée on *À la recherche du temps perdu*.

writer of the work that constitutes his initiation. The writing is therefore self-contained and self-justifying. At the same time, it embodies a statement about the function of poetry ('Dichtung') and the vital role of the poet in society, exemplifying the aesthetic evangelism which is such a characteristic feature of the age. Poetry is redemptive — has it not just saved Hyperion? The poet is the teacher of his people, and Hyperion's first pedagogical act as an (almost) fully-fledged poet is to berate Bellarmin's, and of course Hölderlin's people, like a fiery Hebrew prophet. The *disjecta membra* of German society are confronted with a gospel of reunification through beauty. The roots of division are conveyed in terms of familiar polarities: subject and object, self and world, individuation and unity, thinking and feeling. And the resolution is seen to be accomplished in the aesthetic act itself. Bearing in mind the observations above on the linearity and circularity of the novel, it could be argued that in *Hyperion* we have perhaps the most perfectly achieved example of 'progressive universal poetry', to use the terms of Friedrich Schlegel's famous Romantic programme (1798).[109] That the combination of involvement and detachment here does not yield irony in the conventional sense will be readily acknowledged, though it in no way vitiates the argument. The dialectical tension between the narrator and the subject of his narrative (the feelings, thoughts and actions of his former self) is expressed not only by the device of juxtaposing narrative and distancing comment, but also quite remarkably by fusing them and making the same words serve both perspectives, in the consummating vision at the end of the novel.

Hölderlin's obsession with his own art has, however, always to be seen in the context of his devotion to nature. His thorough-going pantheism survives the speculative acrobatics of Kantian and post-Kantian transcendentalism, and he is never really tempted to find beauty solely in the eye of the beholder or interpret nature as alienated ego. The problem is rather that man is alienated nature and has to be taught to recognize the primacy of the source of his own being. This is accomplished by accepting the alienation itself as a necessary and divinely-sanctioned differentiation of primal oneness, a prismatic division whose function is to articulate the unnamed and unknowable in quintessential form. The division itself cannot be reversed, except

109 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Athenäums-Fragment', No. 116.

in death (or self-transcending peak experiences of short duration and variable degrees of legitimacy), and the inevitable pain and suffering of separation has to be borne. Indeed, it has to be affirmed as the source of ultimate bliss, since without it there is no feeling of any kind. But it can only be affirmed as the result of the experienced conviction of the unity of 'one eternal glowing life'. And it is this, above all, that poetry must communicate.

Englishing *Hyperion*

This is not the first English translation of Hölderlin's novel, nor will it, I hope, be the last. It is not intended as a critical response to the perceived shortcomings of other versions, two of which appeared after I had begun work on my own.[110] On the contrary, I am grateful to, and have learnt from all of them. We are each of us contributing in our own different ways to the afterlife of a remarkable and beautiful work, one that deserves to be far better known than it is in the anglophone world.

Every translation presupposes an 'original', although the concept can be a rather slippery one, and a translator may often find her/himself in the role of editor as well.[111] In the present instance this should not really be a problem. After all, in the post-war period Hölderlin has been the subject of extensive and meticulous editorial activity, issuing in two multi-volumed historical-critical editions (Appendix A). And whereas much of his major poetry remained unpublished in his lifetime — ensuring that the sorting and deciphering of the manuscripts he left behind, sometimes virtual palimpsests, has proved to be a task of hideous complexity — *Hyperion* actually appeared in print. Nor has the copy sent to the publisher survived, only various drafts in manuscript, including substantial fragments of one which is quite close to the finished version, as issued by Cotta in 1797 and 1799. On the face of it, therefore, the situation would not seem unduly complicated. However, the original edition inevitably contains misprints. Some of these were picked up post-publication by Hölderlin himself and corrections and

110 Those of Ross Benjamin and India Russell — see Appendix B.

111 On the instability of originals, and translators as editors, see Karen Emmerich's stimulating *Literary Translation and the Making of Originals* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

additions inserted into the dedicatory copies for Susette Gontard (the model for Diotima) and his good friend Franz Wilhelm Jung. These corrections and modifications have been duly incorporated into the two historical-critical editions and their offspring. But Hölderlin was not the world's greatest proof-reader, either before or after publication, and there are numerous occasions when the modern editor will see the need to intervene (though not to the extent evinced by nineteenth-century editions, including the second Cotta of 1822, published of course without Hölderlin's imprimatur). In almost all cases these will be minor matters, affecting mainly consistency of spelling and punctuation. Sometimes, however, the most conscientious editor can make arbitrary decisions or even mistakes.

It might seem from the referencing conventions adopted in the 'Afterword' that I favour Beissner's *Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe* (StA) over Sattler's *Frankfurter Hölderlin Ausgabe* (FHA). This is not the case. The reason I quote and use page references from the former is simply that the Stuttgart edition is readily available online. Beissner's *Hyperion* does in fact contain blemishes. For instance, in the twenty-seventh letter when Diotima speaks of the implications of Hyperion's idealism, his search for a better world, she is made to say: 'one can't say precisely when it was there, when it went away' (p. 57). Here Beissner's text, and all subsequent editions based on it, including Schmidt's, has: 'man kann so genau nicht sagen, wenn es da war, wenn es weggieng'.[112] In the critical apparatus we are told that, instead of the conjunction 'wenn', Cotta's second edition of 1822 has 'wann'.[113] Given the wide variety of eighteenth-century practice in the use of conjunctions — for instance, the occurrence of 'wenn' as an interrogative — Hölderlin's usage here would not raise many eyebrows. Admittedly, judging by *Hyperion*, he seems more likely to use 'wann' where one would nowadays expect 'wenn', rather than vice versa.[114] And in fact, if one actually consults

112 StA III, 66–67.

113 StA III, 362 (line 34).

114 One example, but by no means the only one, in Letter LV: 'Du lächelst, Alabanda? o wie oft, in unsern ersten Zeiten, hast du so gelächelt, wann dein Knabe vor dir plauderte, im trunknen Jugendmuth' (StA III, 127); ['You're smiling, Alabanda? Oh, how often in our early days together did you smile that way when your boy prattled away before you in the drunken exuberance of youth' (pp. 109–110).] Here Hölderlin uses 'wann' as the equivalent of 'whenever', although elsewhere he

Cotta's first edition, it is clear that Beissner is quite simply wrong. There in the first volume we read: 'man kann so genau nicht sagen, wann es da war, wann es weggieng' (p. 118). It seems then that Beissner has mistakenly taken over the 'wenn' reading from the second Cotta edition of 1822. This is clearly what the editors of the FHA assume him to have done.[115] The trouble is that it is not there either. In the same place on the same page in the same volume we read: 'man kann so genau nicht sagen, wann es da war, wann es weggieng'.[116] But at least in this instance, even if the footnote is wrong, the Frankfurt edition gives us an accurate primary text, without editorial intervention. This cannot be said of the change of possessive pronoun, already referred to, in the final instalment of Diotima's swansong: 'The beautiful world is my Olympus' (p. 126). Here the FHA follows nineteenth-century editions in substituting 'dein' ('your') for 'mein' ('my').[117] One could perhaps understand the reasoning behind the change, if any were offered. But as far as I can tell, it has never been properly argued. I see no problem in having Diotima say the equivalent of: 'for me the beautiful world is Olympus'. And whatever shortcomings Hölderlin might have had as a proof-reader of his own work, one would have thought that he would have given particular attention to Diotima's last letter, and therefore himself picked up and corrected any blatant error in the copy he dedicated to her.

For the purposes of the translation I have been extremely reluctant to assume any but the most obvious of misprints. There is just one notable exception, which I take to be sanctioned by Hölderlin himself. In the eighteenth letter we are told that Diotima's heart was at home amongst the flowers:

> She called them all by name, made them new and more beautiful names out of love and unerringly knew the happiest season of each.

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also tends to have 'wenn'. As the conjunction for non-recurrent events he usually has 'da', even 'wie', hardly ever 'als'.

115 FHA 11, 662: '[line] 12 StA (mit der zweiten Auflage von 1822) *wenn es da war*, *wenn*.'

116 It seems to me that the editors of the FHA have not actually consulted the Cotta second edition themselves, relying rather on Gustav Schlesier's later compilation of a list of corrections made in red ink in a copy of the original Cotta, in preparation for the 1822 edition. For this list, see Gustav Schlesier, *Hölderlin-Aufzeichnungen*, ed. by Hans Gerhard Steimer (Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 2002), pp. 165–68. The FHA editors must have assumed that the correction is one that Schlesier missed, for it is not in his list either.

117 See above, p. 182; FHA 11, 766.

> Like a sister when from every nook a loved one comes clamouring, each wanting to be greeted first, so the still being was busy with hand and eye, blissfully distracted, whenever we walked through wood or meadow. (p. 49)[118]

The image of the sister being besieged by a multitude of boisterous siblings perhaps recalls Lotte in Goethe's *Werther*. However, any element of riotousness is absent from the original as published, where the verb I have rendered as 'comes clamouring' is simply the rather tame 'entgegenkömmt' ('comes towards'). Beissner himself points to the possibility that this might be down to compositor's error, since the surviving last draft has 'entgegentönt' (literally: 'sounds towards').[119] Originally this was 'ruft und winkt' ('calls and waves'), which also suggests lively competing for attention. Why Hölderlin should later have amended 'entgegentönt', and substituted a bland nothing verb, is beyond me. I have therefore chosen to assume that he did not.

With regard to punctuation, this translation generally tries to be faithful to usage in the original so far as this is not merely a matter of the grammatical conventions of German, but characteristic of Hölderlin's (or Hyperion's) style and reflects the rhythms of the source. Thus, I generally preserve the position of the many question and exclamation marks if possible, even if this might occasionally look odd in English. However, I have deviated in one significant respect, and that concerns the use of inverted commas. As mentioned above, the convention adopted in the original — and also in the published 'Fragment' and Hölderlin's manuscripts — seems to be that they are only used for direct speech when there is no saying verb that makes it clear who is speaking. For instance, „Werden wir das?" in the draft becomes in the final version: Werden wir das? fragt' ich.[120] The principle is fairly straightforward, or would be if editors did not occasionally decide to remove quotation

118 'Unter den Blumen war ihr Herz zu Hause, als wär' es eine von ihnen. // Sie nannte sie alle mit Nahmen, schuff ihnen aus Liebe neue, schönere, und wußte genau die fröhlichste Lebenszeit von jeder. // Wie eine Schwester, wenn aus jeder Eke ein Geliebtes ihr entgegenkömmt, und jedes gerne zuerst gegrüßt seyn möchte, so war das stille Wesen mit Aug und Hand beschäftigt, seelig zerstreut, wenn auf der Wiese wir giengen, oder im Walde' (StA III, 56).

119 StA III, 259, 525. A diplomatic transcription and facsimile of the MS may be found in FHA X, 308–309.

120 Letter XX: "'Shall we?' I asked" (p. 50); StA III, 260, 57.

marks for no apparent reason.[121] Nevertheless, it will not be a convention familiar to many modern anglophone readers, who may be inclined to ask what is so special about the sporadic instances where it is employed (and may well also find the plethora of saying, crying, asking verbs a little repetitive, but that cannot be helped). I have therefore made the decision to use quotation marks for direct speech throughout, whether or not it is made explicit by a verb. Like Trask (Appendix A) I also use them for direct thought. There are numerous occasions throughout the narrative where Hyperion records the thinking of his former self, and if one is going to argue that it is important to be able to distinguish between the perspective of the hero within the narrative and that of the maturing narrator, then it seems to me that visual assistance of this kind is no bad thing. I have chosen to use single quotation marks, except for Hyperion's final 'speech'. As already mentioned, Hölderlin emphasizes its unique significance by having quotation marks at the beginning of each of the original's forty-five lines. Rather than trying to reproduce this, I have here chosen to distinguish the passage by using double quotation marks.

The modern sanitized texts of German 'classics' tend to obscure (if not conceal) the fact that these were produced when even the written language had yet to be thoroughly standardized. Nor is it only a matter of orthography, which can nowadays look decidedly antiquated, although that is perhaps the most striking difference.[122] If the English of my translation comes across to the reader as a strange mixture of the poetically highly charged with the colloquial and regional, my justification is the nature of Hölderlin's original and the impression it makes on me. There are numerous occasions where he deviates from currently accepted norms. There follow some examples. I have already mentioned the use of temporal conjunctions ('wenn', 'wann'), although any unorthodoxy will not be reflected in an English translation, where just the one will do, namely 'when'. Similarly, though still common

121 Beissner arbitrarily deletes the first quotation marks in the novel: [„]Und wenn ich fragte?["] (StA III, 33). And both StA and FHA delete the second set: [„]sind es und werden es seyn["] (StA III, 57; FHA XI, 650; Cotta I, 102), though they are clearly there in the draft.

122 And can lead translators astray. For instance, Hölderlin spells 'glimmen' ('glimmer') as 'klimmen', though it has nothing to do with 'climbing'; Letter XLV: 'klimmt noch in uns ein Sehnen nach den Tagen der Urwelt' (StA III, 112).

enough in spoken German, using the conjunction 'wie' in comparisons of inequality would nowadays attract the red pen and a firm underlining in student work.[123] Similarly, the use of 'so' as a relative pronoun.[124] What would doubtless elicit a double underlining with an exclamation mark in the margin, are vestiges of the Swabian strong adjectival ending following the definite article in the plural. These are a feature of Hölderlin's language in his letters, and not every instance is picked up in the Cotta edition of *Hyperion*.[125] There are instances of double negatives for emphasis.[126] I wish I dared to replicate these in the English, but since the construction has been frowned on too much for too long, I fear it would jar unacceptably. There are sundry deviations from conventional word order, particularly the position of the auxiliary in subordinate clauses, although in an eighteenth-century context they are perhaps not quite so striking.[127] Some apparent solecisms appear to be Swabianisms, for instance, 'nimmt' instead of 'nehmt', as the second-person plural familiar form of 'nehmen'.[128] This is 'corrected' in the 1822 edition, though not the anacoluthon in 'wir fürchteten uns, sich ihrer [der Liebe] zu überheben in Reden und stolzen Gedanken', where in the

123 Cf. Letter XLVIII: 'stille zu stehn, ist schlimmer, wie alles' (StA III,116). Elsewhere he can be more orthodox — cf. Letter 27: 'ich versteh' es und besser, als du' (StA III, 66); Letter 58: 'alt zu werden, da wo alles alt ist, scheint mir schlimmer, denn alles' (StA III, 149). But that such 'correctness' perhaps goes against the grain, is suggested by the following examples from the drafts: 'ich war besser, wie sie!' (StA III, 242); 'Warum bin ich später geboren, wie er' (StA III, 273).

124 Letter XLIX: 'Diese trauernde Erde! die nakte! so ich kleiden wollte mit heiligen Hainen, so ich schmüken wollte mit allen Blumen des griechischen Lebens!' (StA III, 117).

125 Cf. Cotta II, 96: 'die schöne Tage'.

126 Cf. Letter VIII: '[das merkte keiner,] da vermißte keiner nichts' (StA III, 40); Letter XXIII: '[da wäre ja geholfen,] wo kein Gott nicht helfen kann' (StA III, 60).

127 For instance, Letter VII: '[das hat manchen zum Thoren gemacht vor andern,] die er sonst, wie ein Orpheus, hätte beherrscht' (StA III, 39): '[Unsre Seelen mußten um so stärker sich nähern,] weil sie wider Willen waren verschlossen gewesen' (StA III, 26); 'daß er mit seinem Diener von Räubern wäre überfallen worden … daß er den Weg aus dem Walde verloren gehabt und darum wäre genöthigt gewesen, auf der Stelle zu bleiben' (StA III, 25). The last example contains a colloquial south-German pluperfect of which Duden would disapprove.

128 Letter LVIII: 'o nimmt die allesversuchenden Menschen, nimmt die Flüchtlinge wieder in die Götterfamilie, nimmt in die Heimath der Natur sie auf, aus der sie entwichen!' (StA III, 147). And just as well. I shudder to think of the lovely lines from 'Abendphantasie' being 'corrected': 'o dorthin nimmt mich / Purpurne Wolken! und möge droben // In Licht und Luft zerrinnen mir Lieb' und Laid! — ' (StA I (1), 301).

infinitive clause a third-person reflexive pronoun ('sich') is used instead of the first-person plural ('uns').[129]

One does not have to read very far in the German *Hyperion* before encountering examples of elision more commonly associated with the spoken language. One might think here of the frequent omission of the second 'e' in 'gehen', here clearly outnumbered by 'gehn'. Many involve the contraction of 'es' ('it') to 's': with pronouns — 'ich's', 'mirs', 'dus', 'dirs', 'ihr's', 'man's'; with conjunctions — 'wie's', 'wenn's', 'weils'; with verbs — 'braucht's', 'geht's', 'giebt's', 'hab's', 'ists', 'sind's', 'war's', 'sahen's'. And there are literally hundreds of instances of the elision of the final 'e' of a verb before a word starting with a vowel. On the first page alone we have 'wär' ich', 'würd' ich', 'schnürt' er'.[130] Bearing all this in mind, I had no compunction about using English contractions in the translation. If they might seem unsuitably colloquial for a literary text of such high seriousness, then so be it. But one ought also to consider that the novel is epistolary, consisting of letters addressed to a familiar, so that the contractions are perhaps not out of place. There is, however, a further argument that is relevant here. It was the young Nietzsche who claimed that the prose of his favourite poet's novel is music.[131] Like many of the deviations from 'normal' word order, the elisions of Hölderlin's language are often there to serve euphony and rhythm. He abhors vowel sounds in hiatus and generally does his best to avoid them. Whether hiatus can ever be pleasing on the ear in either language is perhaps moot. In any case, in the translation I have taken my cue from the original by, for instance, using contractions such as 'I'm', 'you're', 'we're', 'they're', for 'I am', 'you/we/they are', and as far as possible trying to circumvent hiatus elsewhere.

As Hölderlin indicates in the Preface, the meaning of his novel is the whole. What it means is inseparable from how it means. In order to render that meaning one must at least try to approximate to its linguistic beauty, which is not an incidental bonus, but an integral part of the message. In one of her letters Susette Gontard expresses surprise

129 Letter XXXVI: StA III, 100, 471–72. Beissner argues that this also corresponds to Swabian usage, quite apart from here avoiding an ugly 'uns, uns' sequence.

130 StA III, 7. There would appear to be no fewer than 327 examples of verbs ending with an apostrophe followed by 'ich'.

131 Friedrich Nietzsche: 'diese Prosa ist Musik', 'Brief an meinen Freund, in dem ich ihm meinen Lieblingsdichter zum Lesen empfehle' (19 October, 1861).

that Hölderlin should call his dear *Hipperion* a novel. For her it is more like a 'beautiful poem'.[132] And indeed it confronts the translator with demands that are normally associated with lyric poetry, rather than prose. I confess that I find myself unequal to the task, in the sense that I can only hope to hint at the rhythms of the novel's language, but there is no way in which I can closely replicate them in English. The reader should still at least be able to recognize that the original is written in poetic prose, though not perhaps that some of the lines resolve into hexameters.[133] At the most basic level I can follow Hölderlin in as far as possible avoiding sequences of more than two unaccented syllables, and also steering clear of stress clashes.[134] This often involves rejecting polysyllabic Latinate vocabulary. In the rendering of the 'Song of Fate' (p. 123) I have tried to be more faithful to the stress patterns and rhythms, but with limited success, since accented sounds may still be of varying length — there cannot be many four-syllable words that take less time to say than 'Götterlüfte'. In the third stanza I opted for the archaic northern 'blindling' for 'blindlings', not only because it looks almost identical to the German, but because I hear it as longer than 'blindly'.[135]

If being faithful to Hölderlin's text means mediating its beauty, there are bound to be occasions when the literary will have to be privileged over the literal. But I have tried to keep these to a minimum. I would rather take liberties with the conventions of English than with Hölderlin, subject only to the results being consistent with my notions of what is poetically effective. It is a besetting sin of literary translations to be linguistically conservative. This is especially inappropriate when we are dealing

132 Letter of 19 March, 1799 (StA VII (1), 75).

133 Cf. Letter V: 'wie ein Geist, der keine Ruhe am Acheron findet' (StA III, 17). I am grateful to Wolf Schmidt for this example.

134 See Steimer, 'Hölderlins Klauseln', p. 287: 'Für die Diktion des Romans ist nämlich charakteristisch, daß sie den Hebungsprall ebenso meidet wie Folgen von mehr als zwei gleichmäßig tonlosen Senkungen.'

135 Rightly or wrongly, I read the German 'blindlings' here as a near-spondee. I was tempted to follow Edwin Muir and have the variant spelling 'blindlings' in English, but then the word would likely be taken as a noun ('blind person'). I would rather it suggest a neologism: 'blindly (s)tumbling' (?). For Muir's fine part-translation, see 'A Note on Friedrich Hölderlin', *The Freeman*, 7 (1 August 1923), p. 489. Together with two stanzas from 'Patmos' in the same article, this represents Muir's earliest translation from Hölderlin, and the only one he published of the 'Song of Fate', much though it meant to him.

with the work of a writer who was developing into one of the greatest poets of world literature, and who himself used translation to push the boundaries of literary German.[136] As David Constantine observes: 'There is in [translations], very often, a poorer deployment of the host language's lexical and grammatical possibilities, altogether less variety of utterance … Translations die fast because there is, on the whole, less adventure, less risk, less departure from the norm in them than in the originals.' And, of particular relevance to the translation of an eighteenth-century source: 'You have to write in a language neither antiquarian nor up-to-the-minute modern; which is to say a language which is, in relation to the text equivalently poetic.'[137] There are excellent lessons to be learnt here, but applying them successfully is of course a tall order.

One of the things I have tried to do in the translation is to use, wherever feasible, English words that are cognate with the German. Occasionally this involves slight shifts of meaning, a subtle approaching of the source to the target language. For instance, 'Strom' normally suggests something rather more imposing than 'stream'; 'wirken' would not normally be rendered by 'work'; and 'wandern' is given here throughout as 'wander', even though there is an element of aimlessness in the English verb which is not quite so present in the German. In these and other cases, I have allowed myself to be swayed by my own feeling for the euphony of Hölderlin's language and a desire to approximate to it, if necessary at the cost of strict accuracy. For instance, at the beginning of the second volume:

> A brother of spring was the autumn for us, full of mellow fire, a feast time for commemorating sorrows and past joys of love. The withering leaves wore the red hues of dusk, only the spruce and the laurel stood in eternal green. In the bright breezes wandering birds lingered, others swarmed in vineyard and garden, merrily reaping what people had left. (p. 81)[138]

136 Particularly in his translations from Pindar and Sophocles. See StA V: Übersetzungen.

137 David Constantine, *Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 46–47.

138 Letter XXXI: 'Ein Bruder des Frühlings war uns der Herbst, voll milden Feuers, eine Festzeit für die Erinnerung an Leiden und vergangne Freuden der Liebe. Die welkenden Blätter trugen die Farbe des Abendroths, nur die Fichte und der Lorbeer stand in ewigem Grün. In den heitern Lüften zögerten wandernde Vögel, andere schwärmten im Weinberg, und im Garten und erndteten fröhlich, was die Menschen übrig gelassen' (StA III, 93).

In the first clause of the last sentence the loveliness of the season is causing the birds to delay their migration. But rightly or wrongly, there is no way in which I could countenance such a jarring word as 'migrating' in this context.

As far as 'Mädchen' is concerned, like other translators I have felt obliged to opt in the great majority of instances for the cognate 'maiden' (and this definitely does not imply an answer to a meaningless question). Given the pedestal he places her on, it seemed to me to be utterly incongruous to have Hyperion referring to Diotima as a 'heavenly girl'.[139] On the other hand, she would be hardly likely to address herself as a 'silly maiden'.[140] One decision in favour of a cognate word might seem more contentious.

> 'What are we talking about just now?' I could cry, 'it's often so hard, you can't find the matter to hold fast your thoughts.'
>
> 'Are they taking off into the air again?' replied my Diotima. 'You'll have to bind lead to their wings, or I'll tie them to a string, like the boy his flying dragon, so they can't get away from us.'[141]

In modern German 'Drachen' means 'kite', and is distinguished, at least in the nominative, from 'Drache', the mythical fire-breathing monster. In Hölderlin's day there appears to have been no distinction in the word, at least to judge by a contemporary bilingual dictionary, which gives as one of four definitions for 'der Drache': 'the Dragon, a Machine of Paper &c. which the Boys let fly into the Air.'[142] According to the Oxford English Dictionary 'dragon' as 'paper kite' seems no longer to be current, except in Scots usage. Nevertheless, I have opted for it here. It seems to me that there is an ironic contrast between the formidable lofty thoughts and the callow youth who has them, and this is brought

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139 Letter XXI: 'des himmlischen Mädchens' (StA III, 58); Letter XXX: 'das himmlische Mädchen' (StA III, 86). Other epithets preceding 'Mädchen' include: 'herrliches' ('glorious'/'magnificent'), 'edles' ('noble'), 'göttliches' ('divine'), 'hohes' (literally 'high'), and 'heiliges' ('holy'/'hallowed').

140 Letter XLIII: 'o des albernen Mädchens!' (StA III, 109).

141 'Wovon sprechen wir doch geschwind? konnt' ich rufen, man hat oft seine Mühe, man kann den Stoff nicht finden, die Gedanken daran festzuhalten. // Reißen sie wieder aus in die Luft? erwiederte meine Diotima. Du mußt ihnen Blei an die Flügel binden, oder ich will sie an einen Faden knüpfen, wie der Knabe den fliegenden Drachen, daß sie uns nicht entgehn' (StA III, 66).

142 Joh(an)n Ebers, *The New and Complete Dictionary of the German and English Languages* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Haertel, 1796), I, p. 608.

out better by the use of 'dragon' here. Certainly, Hyperion's slightly peeved reaction suggests he is sensitive to the implications of the simile.

In a very modest way I have tried to make room for a fuller range of literary English than may be usual in a translation of this kind. This involves what I hope is judicious use of northern or Scots words, not for their own sake, but when they seem to me to be the best choice. Some, such as 'burn', 'dreich', 'couthie', 'reekie', 'fey', 'thrawn', 'airt', 'drouth' ought to present no problem. Others, such as 'drum(b)ly' or 'wimple' should be self-explanatory from the context, I hope. If not, they can usually be found in good dictionaries. And they are words that appeal to me. It is not that I hear Hyperion speaking English with a Scottish accent. But then neither do I hear him using bland Received Pronunciation. When reading Hölderlin for myself in German, I try, as best I can, to incorporate a Swabian lilt — and make 'Geist' as frothy as possible.

Finally, something ought to be said here about intertextuality. It is difficult for anyone reading the original to avoid picking up the odd echo from *Werther*, and Hölderlin clearly wrote *Hyperion* in the expectation that his readership would know Goethe's novel. However, there have been at least twenty different translations of the latter into English, including four in the last fifteen years, so that it is clearly extremely unlikely that any precise verbal echoes would be registered by an anglophone — not even the 'einiges, ewiges, glühendes Leben' at the end of Hölderlin's novel, which surely recalls Werther's 'das innere glühende, heilige Leben der Natur'.[143] *Hyperion* also contains a possible allusion to Mignon's song in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795): 'Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn, / Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn …'. It is difficult to avoid thinking of this when we read Hyperion's evocation of the groves of Angele: 'wo die goldne Frucht des Zitronenbaums aus dunklem Laube blinkt'.[144] Goethe's lines are themselves a reminiscence from James Thomson's *Seasons* (1744 edition): 'Bear me, *Pomona!* to thy Citron-Groves; / To where the Lemon and the piercing Lime, / With the deep Orange, glowing thro' the Green,

143 See Werther's letter of 18 August, in Constantine's translation: 'the holy fires of the inner life of Nature' (p. 45).

144 Letter XXIX: 'where the golden fruit of the citron tree gleams through the dark green' (p. 74)

/ Their lighter Glories blend.'[145] In the earlier unpublished version of Goethe's novel, the foliage from which the lemons glow had been 'green' rather than 'dark'.[146] Since the relevant passage in Thomson was added too late to be included in Brockes' translation (1745), and Goethe learned to read English early with his father, the only source for the echo in Mignon's song must be the original. As far as we know, Hölderlin never developed a reading knowledge of English, the only book in the language he is known to have fleetingly had in his possession being 'Monk' Lewis's translation of Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*. Goethe's novel obviously made an impression on Hölderlin, and so I tend to assume an echo in *Hyperion*, though it is unlikely to resonate in the translation. The same will be true of the probable allusion to Augustine's *Confessions* at the beginning of the fifth letter, 'Whither could I flee from myself …?', which surely bears more than a passing resemblance to 'quo a me ipso fugerem?' from the fourth book of the *Confessiones*.[147] The Bible is another matter.

It is no surprise that someone who grew up in an orthodox Protestant (if perhaps pietistically inclined) environment in provincial Württemberg in the last third of the eighteenth century, who spent five years at the theological seminary ('Stift') in Tübingen (1788–93), and whose whole education was in fact predicated on the assumption that he would become a minister of religion, should be thoroughly conversant with the Bible, particularly in Martin Luther's translation (1545). And there are of course numerous turns of phrase in *Hyperion* that are obviously biblical. One example may serve for many. When Hyperion's father offers the Pauline advice: 'prüfe alles und wähle das Beste!', I have translated with something close to the equivalent in the King James Bible (1611): 'prove all things and hold fast the best!' (p. 17).[148] That may perhaps be seen as making the biblical allusion too

145 James Thomson, 'Summer', *The Seasons* (London: A. Millar, 1744), p. 82.

146 Curiously enough, Thomson's friend and fellow Scot, John Armstrong, has a very similar line in his *Art of Preserving Health* (1745) 'Thro' the green shade the golden Orange glows' (Bk 2, line 331) — See Adam Budd, *John Armstrong's The Art of Preserving Health: Eighteenth-Century Sensibility in Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 76.

147 'Wohin könnt' ich mir entfliehen [, hätt' ich nicht die lieben Tage meiner Jugend]?' (StA III, 17); Augustine, *Confessiones*, Book IV, ch. 7 (12).

148 Letter VI: StA III, 20. See 1 Thessalonians 5:22/21: 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good'; 'Prüfet aber alles / und das Gute behaltet.'

explicit, but on the other hand it enables me to use the cognate 'prove' for 'prüfe' without appearing to indulge in antiquarianism. Whenever I think I have picked up a biblical reference, image, or idiom, I have tried if possible to reflect it in the English. Occasionally this might result in a translation that appears to deviate wilfully from the obvious. A case in point would be the final lines of the second stanza of the 'Song of Fate': 'Und die seeligen Augen / Bliken in stiller / Ewiger Klarheit', where I have 'And the blissful eyes / Gaze in eternal / Tranquil glory'.[149] As mentioned above (p. 143), the imagery of the Song is anticipated in the thirteenth letter:

> Ich hab' es heilig bewahrt! wie ein Palladium, hab' ich es in mir getragen, das Göttliche, das mir erschien! und wenn hinfort mich das Schiksaal ergreift und von einem Abgrund in den andern mich wirft, und alle Kräfte ertränkt in mir und alle Gedanken, so soll diß Einzige doch mich selber überleben in mir, und leuchten in mir und herrschen, in ewiger, unzerstörbarer Klarheit![150]

The language in the last clause recalls the shining light of the glorious gospel of Christ, the image of God.[151] I cannot be the only translator to be struck by the inadequacy of 'clarity' as a rendering for 'Klarheit', either here or in the 'Song of Fate'. Quite apart from the prosaic flatness of the word, it lacks all religious resonance by comparison with the German. For 'Klarheit' occurs fifteen times in the Luther Bible (always in the New Testament), but 'clarity' not at all in King James. On every occasion bar one the word used here is 'glory', and even the exception features the adjective 'glorious'. Examples: 'And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid' (Luke 2:9); 'And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory … But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory' (Luke 9:30–32); or 'There is one glory of the

149 Letter LVIII (p. 123): StA III, 143. I have reversed the order of the epithets for reasons of rhythm.

150 StA III, 51; 'I've kept it sacred! like a palladium I've carried it within me, the divine that was revealed to me! and if fate henceforth should seize and plunge me down from abyss to abyss and drown in me all energy and all reason, yet shall this one and only outlive myself in me and shine in me and reign in eternal, indestructible glory!' (p. 44).

151 Cf. 2 Corinthians 4:4.

sun, another of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory' (1 Corinthians 15:41).[152] If we look at the definitions of 'glory' in the OED, we find amongst them: 'the majesty and splendour attendant upon a manifestation of God'; 'resplendent beauty or magnificence … effulgence of light such as is associated with conceptions of heaven'; 'the splendour and bliss of heaven'. It seems to me that, in the circumstances, 'glory' represents in almost every respect a better choice than 'clarity', particularly in the 'Song of Fate'. It does not, admittedly, contrast as well with 'confusion' in the last line of the 'Song'. But one cannot have everything.

One respect in which *Hyperion* might seem to have no similarity with *Werther* is in the significance for the latter of Macpherson's *Ossian*. No less than seven percent of Goethe's novel consists of translation from two of the Ossianic poems, the recital of which by the protagonist precipitates the tragic outcome.[153] And throughout the novel there are sundry echoes of his favourite reading in the letters he writes. There would appear to be nothing comparable in *Hyperion*. And yet, a twentieth-century critic can claim that the novel is 'unthinkable' without *Ossian*.[154] He does not go into specifics. But then neither do those contemporaries of Hölderlin who are reminded of *Ossian* when they read *Hyperion*. The earliest reviewer (1799) states explicitly that whoever does not like *Ossian* will cast the book aside after the first letter.[155] Reactions that suggest an Ossianic influence on the novel, whether approving or not, continue well into the nineteenth century.[156] The reason they have not been much in evidence in more recent years is not far to seek. Macpherson's work is assumed, wrongly, to be totally fraudulent; it is assumed, equally wrongly, to be aesthetically worthless. Consequently, it is left unread.

152 It should be noted that in the Luther Bible, at least since 1984, 'Klarheit' has been replaced here by 'Glanz', and the total instances of the word have been reduced to two.

153 For the role of Ossian in *Werther*, also the way it is tackled by anglophone translators, see Howard Gaskill, '"Arise, O magnificent effulgence of Ossian's soul!": Werther the Translator in English Translation', in *Translation and Literature*, 22 (2013), 302–21.

154 Herbert Schöffler, 'Ossian: Hergang und Sinn eines großen Betrugs', in Schöffler, *Deutscher Geist im 18.Jahrhundert. Essays zur Geistes- und Religionsgeschichte*, 2nd edition (Göttingen 1967), pp. 135–54, pp. 149–50. The essay first appeared in 1941.

155 See StA III, 323 for this benevolent anonymous review of the first volume.

156 One of the last comes from Karl Rosenkranz in his Hegel biography of 1843 — see Howard Gaskill, 'Hölderlin und Ossian', *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 27 (1990–91), 100–30 , pp. 114–15.

Embarrassment combines with ignorance to repress the uncomfortable truth, that historically *Ossian* is one of the most influential works in world literature.[157] Whether we like it or not, Hölderlin knew the Ossianic poetry extremely well. He can be shown to have devoured it as an adolescent, declaring his intention to read it until he has it (half) off by heart.[158] Nor was his admiration confined to a youthful phase. Probably the last work he prepared for publication, the stunningly beautiful *Pindar-Fragmente* (1804?), features Ossian in the final sentence of the final Fragment.[159] Nor will *Ossian* have been too far from his mind when he was working on *Hyperion*. Franz Wilhelm Jung, whose acquaintance Hölderlin first made on his arrival in Frankfurt in January 1796, was himself producing a translation of *Ossian* in free rhythms and immediately sought to gain the poet's interest in it. Successfully, as it seems, for when Jung was negotiating with the publisher Cotta, late in 1797, the manuscript was with Hölderlin, whose judgement is expected to carry authority. Almost a year later Jung claims in a letter to Fichte that Hölderlin is pressing him to publish the translation. And in 1799, when Hölderlin was attempting to set up his abortive literary periodical *Iduna*, it was his intention to include commented excerpts from Jung's *Ossian*. Hölderlin's affection for Jung is demonstrated by the fact that, together with Susette Gontard, he has a corrected copy of *Hyperion* (first volume) dedicated to him. Under the circumstances, it would not be surprising to find a plenitude of Ossianic resonances in the novel, if one knew what to look for. I have attempted to translate in such a way that anglophones familiar with *Ossian* — and they do exist — might also be reminded of it when they read *Hyperion*.

James Macpherson wrote his translations/adaptations/fabrications of ancient Gaelic verse in what he calls 'measured prose', whilst continually

157 For evidence of the ubiquity of *Ossian*, including the impact on art and music, see *Ossian in Europe*, ed. by Howard Gaskill (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004); also 'Versions of Ossian: Receptions, Responses, Translations', ed. by Howard Gaskill, in *Translation and Literature*, 22 (2013), 293–435. For Ossian in Germany, see the magisterial study by Wolf Gerhard Schmidt, *'Homer des Nordens' und 'Mutter der Romantik': James Macphersons Ossian und seine Rezeption in der deutschen Literatur*, 4 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003–4); for Hölderlin, see especially II, pp. 901–26; for *Hyperion*, pp. 905 ff.

158 To Immanuel Nast, March 1787: 'da leß ich ihn so lang, biß ich ihn halb auswendig kan' (StA VI, 16).

159 StA V, 290; Adler, *Hölderlin: Letters and Essays*, p. 339.

underlining the lyrical beauties of his originals. Translators of the English text did not feel constrained to follow Macpherson in reproducing it in prose, poetic or not, but one who did is Schiller's friend Johann Wilhelm Petersen, whose *Die Gedichte Ossians neuverteutschet* appeared in 1782.[160] This is, in my view, the translation that exerted the greatest influence on Hölderlin, the one he was going to read and re-read until he had it by heart.[161] The first German translation, in fact the first complete translation of Macpherson's *Ossian* into any language, had been made into hexameters by Michael Denis, appearing in 1768–69.[162] In 1784 he adapted his version to accord with Macpherson's revised edition, *The Poems of Ossian* of 1773, and took the opportunity to issue it together with three volumes of his own poetry, written under his bardic name Sined (Denis spelt backwards).[163] It is known that Hölderlin must have had access to this edition, or at least to one of its volumes, since as an eighteen-year-old he uses as a motto lines taken from one of Sined's poems.[164] Although the Denis was probably not so suitable for everyday use (I find it difficult to imagine Hölderlin wandering around with expensive bulky quarto volumes under his arm — Petersen's translation comes in a handy single octavo), it is tempting to think that he might have found time to peruse the German version of Hugh Blair's 'Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian', with which Denis opens the third volume. Blair writes: 'The "joy of grief," is one of Ossian's remarkable expressions, several times repeated.'[165] Denis translates: 'Die *Wonne der Wehmuth* ist einer von Ossians merkwürdigen Ausdrücken, den er zu verschiednen Malen wiederholt.'[166] This felicitous phrase, the first ever occurrence, was coined by Denis (or suggested to him) too late for inclusion in the first two volumes of 1768, though he made sure to incorporate it throughout in the revised edition of 1784. And it appealed to others too, whatever they might have thought of Denis's hexameters. For it is taken over by all German translators of the complete *Ossian*

160 Tübingen: Heerbrandt.
161 For the reasons, see Gaskill, 'Hölderlin und Ossian', pp. 106–9.
162 Denis, *Die Gedichte Ossians eines alten celtischen Dichters*, 3 vols (Vienna: Trattner, 1768–69).
163 *Ossians und Sineds Lieder* (Vienna: Wappler, 1784).
164 See StA VI (2), 508; the lines are from the fourth volume, p. 163.
165 'Critical Dissertation', in *Poems of Ossian* (ed. Gaskill), 343–408, p. 381.
166 *Ossians und Sineds Lieder*, III, p. xcv (Denis's italics).

before 1800, including of course the three known to be known to Hölderlin (Petersen, Denis, Jung).[167] When he has Hyperion write, then: 'Wie aber am Strahle des Morgenlichts das Leben der Erde sich wieder entzündete, sah ich empor und suchte die Träume der Nacht. Sie waren, wie die schönen Sterne, verschwunden, und nur die Wonne der Wehmuth zeugt' in meiner Seele von ihnen', he is deliberately evoking *Ossian*.[168] Amongst historians of eighteenth-century German literature there has been a widespread tendency to misattribute 'joy of grief' (usually to Edward Young), or to assume that 'Wonne der Wehmuth', if not a catchphrase spontaneously self-generated in an age of sensibility, derives from Goethe, whose short and joyfully weepy poem of that title was written in 1775, but did not appear in print until 1789. Certainly, if editors think it worth a comment, they refer only to Goethe, never to *Ossian*.[169] Yet I cannot believe that someone who knows the work as well as Hölderlin can possibly write 'Wonne der Wehmuth' in all innocence of its Ossianic associations. I have therefore translated the passage: 'But when the life of the earth took fire again from the ray of the morning light, I looked up and sought the dreams of the night. Like the beautiful stars they had vanished, and only the joy of grief bore witness to them in my soul' (p. 61).

Ironically, it is with some slight reluctance that I use 'joy of grief' here.[170] Both this phrase and its German equivalent are too readily associated with mawkish sentimentality, tears without fears. Blair defines it as 'that gratification, which a virtuous heart often feels in the indulgence of a tender melancholy.'[171] But there is more to it than that. Naturally, one can regard the 'joy of grief' as typical of the contemporary predilection for diluted mixed feeling and the pleasures of melancholy in which anything genuinely painful is kept at arm's length. But *Hyperion* is made of sterner stuff, and even *Ossian*'s pathos is not groundless. When we read: 'There is a joy in grief when peace dwells in the breast

167 A successful, if unpoetic prose version was that of Edmund de Harold, *Die Gedichte Ossian's eines alten celtischen Helden und Barden*, 3 vols (Düsseldorf, 1775; also Mannheim, 1782; Münster, 1795).

168 Letter XXVIII: StA III, 71.

169 Cf. Beissner, StA III, 462.

170 David Schwarz is the only other anglophone translator to do so, in his re-working of Trask (who has 'ecstasy of grief'). I presume that Schwarz recognizes the allusion — see *Hölderlin*: *Hyperion and Selected Poems*. ed. by Santner, p. 57.

171 'Critical Dissertation', *Poems of Ossian*, p. 381.

of the sad. But sorrow wastes the mournful,'[172] may we not think of 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'? The narrating Hyperion's journey is one from joy and grief to the joy of grief, and embodies perhaps its finest celebration in world literature.

172 *Poems of Ossian*, p. 381.

Acknowledgments

Over the years that this translation has been in gestation, many friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and scholars I have never even met, have given generously of their time, and I cannot recall an email sent in vain. They have of course been pestered in unequal measure. The first individual mention here must therefore go to the long-suffering Iain Galbraith with whom I appear to have exchanged 251 emails on *Hyperion* and how best to translate particular passages. Others who received and responded to multiple queries are Wolf Gerhard Schmidt, Gerald Bär, and David Constantine. Special thanks must go to my colleagues in the language sections of the University of Edinburgh, in particular Andrew Barker, Eleoma Bodammer, Peter Davies, Peter France, Peter Graves, and Bill Webster. I have also gratefully received help and advice from Rudolf Brandmeyer, Marco Castellari, Sheila Dickson, Stuart Gillespie, David Hill, Duncan Large, Gauti Kristmannsson, Anthony Krupp, Charlie Louth, Jürgen Link, Matthias Löwe, Luigi Reitani, Thomas Roberg, Ritchie Robertson, Mark Roche, Gerhard Sauder, Hans Gerhard Steimer, Gideon Stiening, Jochen Schmidt, and Seán Williams. In addition, I should mention the stimulating responses to queries addressed to lists such as German-Studies, C18-L, and non_current_German.

I am greatly indebted to Roger Paulin for his close reading of the finished translation, and his many helpful observations and suggestions. Any errors or oddities that remain may be put down to my stubbornness.

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Very special thanks are due to Jutta Gaskill. She has been an invaluable and patient sounding-board from the beginning, and anything about the translation that is good owes much to her inspiration. She and our daughter, Fiona Blair, also did sterling work as proof-readers of the English *Hyperion*, for which I am extremely grateful.

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Appendix A

Editions consulted

Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechenland*, 2 vols (Tübingen: Cotta, 1797/1799), http://www.hoelderlin.de/register/fh-erstdrucke-d-11a.html; http://www.hoelderlin.de/register/fh-erstdrucke-d-11b.html (facsimile): http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Hyperion (transcription).

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Friedrich Hölderlin: *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. by Michael Knaupp, I (Munich: Hanser, 1992).

Friedrich Hölderlin: *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. by Jochen Schmidt and Katharina Graetz, II (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994).

Appendix B

Translations

English

'Friedrich Hölderlin: Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece', translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan (typescript, Library of the University of Stanford, 1941).[1]

Friedrich Hölderlin: *Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece*, translated by Willard R. Trask (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1959); also, with a Foreword by Alexander Gode-von Aesch (London: Signet Classics, 1965).

'Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece', translated by Willard R. Trask, adapted by David Schwarz, in *Friedrich Hölderlin*: *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner (New York: Continuum, 1990), pp. 1–133.

'The Thalia Fragment', in *What I Own*: *Versions of Hölderlin and Mandelshtam*, translated by John Riley and Tim Longville (Manchester: Carcanet, 1998), pp. 82–97.

Friedrich Hölderlin: *Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece*, translated by Ross Benjamin (New York: Archipelago Books, 2008).

Friedrich Hölderlin: *Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece*, translated by India Russell (Ely: Melrose Books, 2016).

Other translations consulted

Hölderlin: *Hypérion ou l'Hermite de Grèce*, *précédé du Fragment Thalia*, translated by Phillippe Jaccottet (Paris: Gallimard, 1973).

1 I am grateful to Jim Devin for alerting me to this and providing me with photocopy.

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Friedrich Hölderlin: *Hyperion*: *En Brevroman*, translated by Gösta Oswald (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2002).

Hölderlin: *Hypérion ou l'Hermite de Grèce*, translated by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (Paris: Flamarion, 2005).

Friedrich Hölderlin: *Iperione o l'eremita in Grecia*, translated by Laura Balbiani, with an introductory essay by Giuseppe Gandolfi Petrone (Milan: Bompiani, 2015).

'Hyperion o l'eremita in Grecia', translated by Adele Netti (for an Italian edition by Luigi Reitani and due to be published in 2019).[2]

2 I am grateful to Professor Reitani for providing early access to this version.

Appendix C

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Index of Proper Names

Academe — olive grove outside the walls of Athens where Plato taught.

Acheron — river at the border of the underworld.

Achilles — Homeric hero of the Trojan War, rendered invulnerable (apart from his heel) by being dipped as a baby in the underworld river Styx; his friendship with Patroclus is alluded to by Hyperion on p. 31.

Agis (IV) — executed 241 BC; reforming king of Sparta.

Agora — 'gathering place' or 'assembly'; central public space in ancient Greek city-states; stressed by Hölderlin on the second syllable.

Ajax — King of Salamis, warrior in the Trojan war, in strength second only to Achilles.

Adamas — name of Hyperion's mentor; signifies 'unconquerable'.

Adonis — mortal lover of the unnamed 'beautiful divinity', Aphrodite.

Alabanda — Hyperion's activist friend, whose name is probably derived from that of the ancient city in Caria, western Anatolia.

Alexander (the Great) (356–323 BC) — Macedonian king and conqueror.

Alpheus — longest river in the Peloponnese; as a river god Alpheus pursues the nymph Arethusa, herself transformed into a stream.

Angele — Angelepikos or Angele gardens, east of Athens, said in Chandler's account to be a favourite summer haunt of the Athenians.

Apollo — god of music, poetry, truth, prophecy, also sun and light.

Arcadia — region in the central Peloponnese, in mythology home of the god Pan, associated with idyllic harmony.

Arcturus — bright star in the constellation Bootes, becomes visible in September, hence the association with the approach of winter.

Arethusa — see *Alpheus*.

Aristogeiton — see *Harmodius*.

Athos — mountain and peninsula in north-eastern Greece.

Atlas — Titan condemned to hold up the heavens on his shoulders; mountain range in the Maghreb.

Attica — ancient region of east-central Greece, with Athens as its chief city.

[*Augustine* (of Hippo)] — the 'wicked tongue' (p. 132) who described the virtues of the Romans as 'glittering vices'.

Brutus (Marcus Iunius) (85–42 BC) — Diotima alludes (p. 126) to Porcia, the unnamed 'great Roman' (woman), second wife of Brutus; she reputedly killed herself by swallowing hot coals.

Calauria — Diotima's home island in the Saronic Gulf, part of the island pair now known as Poros.

Castor — see *Dioscuri*.

Cayster — (modern Küçük Menderes = "Little Meander"), river south of Smyrna.

Charon — ferryman who carries the souls of the newly deceased across the Styx and the Acheron into the underworld.

Chesma (Çeşme) — the naval battle of that name, between the Russians and Turks, took place in July 1770, in the area between the western tip of Anatolia and the island of Chios.

Chios — island off the Anatolian coast.

Cleomenes (c. 260–219 BC) — king of Sparta; continued the reforms of Agis.

Cleopatra — Hyperion alludes (p. 74) to the Egyptian queen's wager with Marc Antony that she could consume ten million sesterces at a single meal; she won by drinking pearls dissolved in wine vinegar.

Corinth — ancient city in Peloponnese; the Isthmus of Corinth connects the Peloponnese with mainland Greece.

Coron (Koroni) — town in Messenia, on the south-west peninsula of the Peloponnese.

Cybele — Phrygian mother of the gods, worshipped in ancient Anatolia.

Danaids — in mythology the daughters of Danaus, condemned to spend eternity carrying water in sieves to fill an ever-draining barrel.

Delos — island in the Cyclades archipelago.

Delphi — ancient sanctuary on the south-western slope of Mount Parnassus; seat of the most famous oracle Pythia, priestess to Apollo.

Demosthenes (384–322 BC) — statesman and orator of ancient Athens, supported independence from Macedonia; committed suicide on Calauria to avoid capture.

Diana — Roman equivalent of Greek Artemis, goddess of the hunt; Hyperion alludes obliquely to the fate of her victim Actaeon.

Dioscuri — heavenly twins, Castor and Pollux (constellation Gemini); in mythology Castor persuades Zeus to let him share his immortality with Pollux.

Diotima — Hyperion's beloved; the name, stressed by Hölderlin on the penultimate syllable, is derived from Plato; in the *Symposium* it is Diotima of Mantinea who teaches Socrates the 'philosophy of love'.

Dodona — in Epirus, north-western Greece; seat of an ancient oracle of Zeus, who communicated his means of the rustling of the leaves of the oak-tree.

Draco (7th century BC) — responsible for the first written laws of ancient Athens, known for their harshness.

Etna — the unnamed 'titan in/of Etna'(p. 16) is Typhon; see also [*Empedocles*].

Elis — region in the Peloponnese.

Elysium — 'plain of the blessed'; place/state of perfect happiness; paradise.

[*Empedocles*] (c. 490– c. 430 BC) — Hyperion alludes to him (p. 130) as 'the great Sicilian'; pre-Socratic philosopher, said to have perished in the flames of Etna; the abortive drama *Empedokles* was to be Hölderlin's next major project after *Hyperion*.

Ephesus — ancient city on the coast of Ionia, south-west of Smyrna.

Epidaurian (mountains/woods) — south of Epidaurus, on the north-east coast of the Peloponnese.

Euphrates — river flowing into the Persian Gulf and marking the eastern frontier of the Ottoman Empire.

Eurotas — one of the major rivers of the Peloponnese.

Ganymede — Trojan prince of great beauty; carried off to Olympus by Zeus in the shape of an eagle to become cupbearer of the gods.

Harmodius (and *Aristogeiton*) (d. 514 BC) — ancient Athenian lovers and tyrannicides; see also *Hipparchus*.

Helicon (Mount) — mountain in Boeotia, central Greece.

Helios — (god of the) Sun; see also *Hyperion*.

Hellespont — ancient name of the strait between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara; Dardanelles.

Heraclitus — pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, active around 500 BC.

Hercules — Roman equivalent of Greek Heracles, hero and demi-god, renowned for his strength.

Hipparchus — son of *Pisistratus*, tyrant of ancient Athens from 528/27 BC until his assassination in 514 BC by Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

Homer (c. 740–650 BC) — legendary Greek epic poet; see also *Iliad*, *Nestor*, *Ulysses.*

Hymettus — mountain range in the Athens area of Attica.

Hyperion — ('he who looks from above'); the name is taken from that of the Titan in Greek mythology, the father of Helios, the Sun, but often conflated with the latter (for instance, in Homer).

Ida (Mount) — (modern Kazdağı) in the ancient Troad region of western Anatolia.

Ionia — ancient Greek region on the western coast of Asia Minor, land of Homer; Hölderlin can use the term with some latitude (Knaupp, III, 742 f.).

Iliad — Homeric epic of the Trojan War.

Ilissus — river in Athens whose grassy banks were shaded by plane trees and favoured by Socrates for walking and teaching — see Plato's *Phaedrus* (section 229 a,b).

Isis — Egyptian goddess; her veil, indicating the inaccessibility of nature's secrets, provided contemporaries of Hölderlin such as Schiller and Novalis with a major literary motif.

Jupiter — Roman equivalent of Greek Zeus, king of the gods.

Karaburun — town on peninsula west of Smyrna.

Lacedaemon — another name for *Sparta*.

Lethe — underworld river of oblivion and forgetfulness.

Lycabettus — hill in central Athens.

Lycurgus (9th century BC) — legendary law-giver of Sparta.

Macedonian phalanx — formation of infantry carrying overlapping shields and long spears, developed by Philip II of Macedon and used by Alexander the Great.

Marathon — town in Attica, 42 km from Athens; site of a famous victory of the Athenians over the Persians in 490 BC; see *Pheidippides.*

Megaera — one of the Furies in Greek mythology.

Meles — river flowing through Smyrna.

Messogis — mountain range south-west of Tmolus.

Mimas (Mount) — mountain on peninsula west of Smyrna.

Minos — mythological king of Crete, judge of the dead in the underworld.

Miletus — ancient Greek city on the western coast of Anatolia.

Mistra — fortified town near ancient Sparta.

Modon (Methoni) — town in Messenia, on the south-west peninsula of the Peloponnese.

Morea — older name for the Peloponnese.

[*Muhammad*] — Hyperion alludes to him (p. 76) as 'the Arab merchant'.

Navarin (Pylos) — town in Messenia, on the south-west peninsula of the Peloponnese.

Nemea — ancient site in the north-eastern part of the Peloponnese.

Nemesis — goddess of retribution.

Neptune — Roman equivalent of Greek Poseidon, god of the sea.

Nestor — King of Pylos in the Homeric epics; (p. 14) Hyperion may have in mind *Odyssey*, Book III, lines 102–200, or perhaps *Iliad*, Book XI, lines 655–761, both containing circumstantial accounts by the reminiscing veteran.

Nios (Ios) — island in the Cyclades archipelago.

Notara — friend who invites Hyperion to come to stay with him on Calauria, and provides material and moral support for his participation in the uprising against the Turks.

Oedipus — Hyperion refers (p. 131) to the reception of the blind Oedipus at the gates of Athens in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (Act I).

Olympia — sanctuary of ancient Greece in Elis.

Olympieion — Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens.

Olympus — mountain in Thessaly, central Greece; seat of the Greek gods; heaven.

Ossa — mountain in Thessaly, central Greece; in mythology the giant Aloads attempted to scale Olympus by piling Mount Pelion on top of Mount Ossa.

Pactolus (modern Sart Çayı) — river rising from Mount Tmolus and flowing through the ruins of Sardis.

Parcae — Roman equivalent of Greek Moirai, the three sisters controlling human and divine destiny.

Parnassus (Mount) — mountain in central Greece, north of the Gulf of Corinth.

Paros — island in the Cyclades archipelago.

Parthenon — temple on the Athenian acropolis.

Pelion — mountain in Thessaly, central Greece; see *Ossa*.

Pelopidas (d. 364 BC) — Theban statesman and general; fought for the liberation of his people from Sparta.

Peloponnese — peninsula in southern Greece.

Pentelikon — mountain range in Attica, north-east of Athens.

[*Pheidippides*] — the unnamed 'victory messenger' (p. 84), said to have run from Marathon to Athens to deliver news of the defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Marathon.

Phoebus — byname of Apollo as the sun-god, whose chariot is pulled through the sky by steeds nourished on ambrosia, according to Ovid, of whom Notara is thinking (p. 85).

Pisistratus — (600–527 BC) tyrant of ancient Athens.

Plataea — ancient Greek city in south-eastern Boeotia; location of the Battle of Plataea in 479 BC, in which an alliance of Greek city-states defeated the Persians.

Plato (c. 428–347 BC) — philosopher whose conception of beauty is of major significance for Hölderlin's novel — the preface to the penultimate version ends with an apology to 'holy Plato' for the extent to which we have wronged him; see also *Diotima*, *Stella*.

Plutarch — (c. AD 46–120) author of *Parallel Lives*, biographies of famous Greeks and Romans.

Pollux — see *Dioscuri*.

Polyxena — daughter of Priam and Hecuba, king and queen of Troy; on p. 105 Hyperion (mis)quotes from Euripides' *Hecuba*, line 415.

Porte (Sublime) — central government of the Ottoman Empire.

Procrustes — 'stretcher'; mythical bandit who stretched or amputated the limbs of travellers to make them conform to the length of his bed.

Prometheus — Titan, punished by the gods for stealing fire and giving it to man; symbolizes creativity and human striving.

Pythia — oracle of *Delphi*, priestess to Apollo.

Rhodes — largest of Greece's Dodecanese islands.

Salamis — largest Greek island in the Saronic gulf where the narrating Hyperion lives from the beginning of book two of the first volume; the Battle of Salamis was a decisive naval battle fought by a Greek alliance under Themistocles against the Persians in 480 BC.

Sardis — capital of ancient kingdom of Lydia, modern name Sart (Turkey), at the foot of Mount Tmolus.

Scipios — distinguished Roman patrician family of the third and second centuries BC.

Sicilian — see [*Empedocles*].

Sicyon — ancient Greek city state on the Gulf of Corinth in the northern Peloponnese.

Sipylus (Mount) — (modern Spil Dağı), mountain west of Tmolus.

Sirius — chief star in the constellation Canis Major, brightest in the night sky; associated with heat and the 'dog days' of summer.

Smyrna — ancient name of İzmir (Turkey).

Sunium (Sounion) (Cape) — promontory at the southernmost tip of the Attic peninsula.

Sophocles — the motto at the beginning of the second volume is from *Oedipus at Colonus* (line 1225); see also *Oedipus*.

Sparta — prominent ancient city-state in the south-eastern Peloponnese.

Stella — Latin version of Greek 'Aster', 'star' pupil of *Plato* (and male).

Styx — river of the underworld; see also *Achilles.*

Taenarum — peninsula in southern Greece, containing a cave with access to the underworld.

Tantalus — mythical king of Lydia; having been admitted to the table of the gods, he incurred divine displeasure, and was punished in the underworld by being tantalized with eternally unreachable food and drink.

Teos — ancient Greek city on the coast of Ionia, south-west of Smyrna.

Themistocles (c. 524–459 BC) — Athenian politician and general.

Thermopylae — narrow pass on the east coast of central Greece, site of the first battle against the invading Persians in 480 BC.

Theseus — mythical founder hero of Athens and its democracy.

Tinos — Hyperion's home island in the Aegean (Cyclades archipelago), spelt 'Tina' by Hölderlin.

Tiniot — adjective from *Tinos.*

Tmolus (Mount) (modern Bozdağ) — mountain with Lydian capital Sardis at its foot.

Tripolitsa (Tripoli[s]) — town in the central Peloponnese; in spring 1770 scene of a rout of the Greek revolutionaries who fled, leaving the inhabitants to be massacred by Albanian mercenaries.

Troad — historical name of the Biga Peninsula in the north-western part of Anatolia.

Ulysses (Latin form of Odysseus) — central figure of Homer's *Odyssey*; Hyperion alludes (p. 133) to his return home in disguise, ten years after the end of the ten-year Trojan war, to find Penelope, his wife, beset by profligate suitors — see Books 20, line 377, and 21, line 400.

Urania — heavenly muse; goddess of universal love and beauty.

Vulcan — Roman equivalent of Hephaestus, god of fire and forge; he had a permanent limp from being tossed off Mount Olympus.

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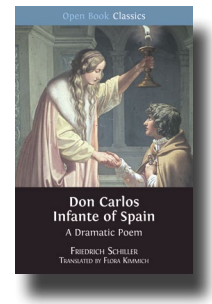

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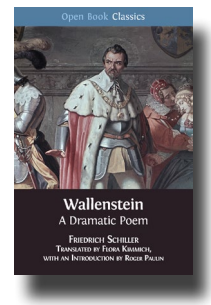

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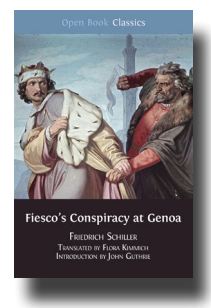

Hyperion,
or the Hermit in Greece

Friedrich Hölderlin
Translated by Howard Gaskill

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