

Time is the Enemy

Time is the enemy, monstrous time,
 It chops our days into little pieces
 And the pieces flash by, digestible,
 And in a split atom's instant, gone
 Then the volcano erupts, spraying us
 With the lava of yesterday's moods—
 Time is the enemy, monstrous time.

All is confused, there is nowhere to turn—
 Pushed forward by the first maddening light,
 We run to, then flee from, numerous dawns
 As days break up around us, with crevices
 And waves hungry for the final swallow.
 All is confused, there is nowhere to turn.

Relentless fortune stirs her wheel
 Faster and faster, with delicious glee,
 She gives the wheel a hefty shove
 And brings down the voice of oblivion
 On catching metros, mowing lawns
 Or wrestling with the details thrown
 Like fishnets around our jumping feet
 Relentless fortune stirs her wheel

All day every hour the cuckoo sings
 And mocks us with silly tales of lost romance—
 Lovers hide from each other, each prefers
 To sit alone than to clash and feed
 The cuckoo's wild tales, the heavy wheel—
 Still every hour the cuckoo sings

In a flaming bush the tiger waits
 To spring out at the passing world
 And leave on it his indelible mark
 The cuckoo is riding on his back
 And fortune has been known to take his paw
 And place it gently on her wheel—
 In a flaming bush the tiger waits

Will we become his friend or prey?
 Sometimes the tiger enters gardens
 Resplendent with dew, and his tail outshines
 Many frivolous comets—which he hunts down
 As they flash by in a crazy course
 Of all spark and no direction. Now
 The tiger romps through the daffodils
 Like a kitten on the first spring day—
 Will we become his friend or prey?

Time is the enemy, monstrous time.
 All is confused, there is nowhere to turn
 As relentless fortune stirs her wheel
 And every hour the cuckoo sings.
 In a flaming bush the tiger waits—
 Will we become his friend or prey?

Helen Kosacky