

# The LITERARY REVIEW

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**Pythia: the prophetess of Apollo  
at Delphi**

**for Eduardo**

*. . . Who, what man or god, could or ever will  
be able to tell me what is my life and what is  
my death, and what isn't? . . .*

**—Juan Ramón Jiménez**

**I**

**1**

**Light rises in waves  
whimpering**

**in the Name's hushed immensity  
alone and mortal      the Word  
wanders    pierced**

**the accomplice  
old mother      gropes  
priestess  
intercedes**

**pleads**



4

**Words**

**short**

**damp**

**skim the surface  
like a snake**

**and the voice knows it doesn't know**

5

**Avalanche of leaves  
and its dried crimson complaint**

**the river bends  
to its thirst**

**time moves faster than I do**

**night rips away  
I touch its water-nakedness  
and from inside the scream she screams**

6

I burst in orphan I entered the place

where are the words? why won't they testify?  
why won't they help me?

7

suddenly  
light in the frenzy  
of Hades

and still the water like a hairshirt  
eroding violent

and my voice isn't enough

**II**

**8**

**the white walls  
crack**

**your screams  
a yellow spiral  
knot**

**at the edge**

**9**

**In a dream  
dropping through its own mud  
the stone  
falls to its depths**

**the pounding voice  
deaf  
tumbles in an empty sky**

10

and they sowed the land with salt  
they plowed it with salt  
and the scribe sealed the words

to purify the stone quarry  
    faith     in its labyrinth  
            in its laceration

And she  
in her longing  
            face to the ground

11

and     deep in herself  
alone             incubating

she shudders  
contracts     like a mollusk  
                    pale

in the depths of her core  
                    lurking





III

14

Touch me from inside yourself  
with this overflowing restraint

touch me  
in the darkness of thought

where I am unknowable  
my incomprehensible otherness

ah if only you could brand me

if you'd stay there  
if only you'd stay

like a blind bitch  
suckled

stay  
give me the words

15

I ought to rip you out  
I ought to crush you

you delicate  
you trembling

restore me to myself  
so the earth can be gentler with me

I can't go on  
I've gone dry

16

where?

what?

sketches for the joy of oblivion  
illegible tracings

dark     dark roses sprouting in memory  
barely a line on the landscape of thought

it might be a song  
— or a sob?

17

the scent of ancient rain  
blooming between the stones

the eternal longing for other things  
unknown

the rain fades  
turns yellow  
like the echo of a reed flute

and this nostalgia  
that barely touches the flesh  
but mortifies the soul

18

**the moon's steady pulse slows**

**can you still hear me?**

19

**Consciousness stings this dark obedient body  
like a medusa sea-swimming  
these words**

**poor thing    defenseless    sleepwalking  
in the end    sea-weed covered**

**or was I the one who lost myself?**

20

**Immoderate beggar  
empty-handed hostess**

**barren mother**

**the light dims  
insidious  
as a gadfly**

**I'm not permitted to understand**

21

**So many years to arrive at this morning  
the same as any other**

**to come to this day  
just like any other**

**and to receive it  
like an offering**

22

**in what part of me are you crying?**

**warm inevitable dream  
like an open lap**

**like a mother's memory**

23

**ridges of pale fog  
in this spring equinox**

**lonelier than I ever imagined  
older than I ever imagined**

**damp ideograms  
between the anemones and the hyacinths**

**scattered words  
that will rise from my ashes one day**

IV

24

I am still inside the light  
but you are the one who must tell me  
you the empty word  
                  you who watch over the word

Overflowing light  
where dream-rivers merge  
inundate the heart

Light absolved  
in the swelling instant

Only light       nothing else  
loosened  
smallest at its source

Fractured light       harsh  
held in its scream  
quivering in my hands

25

and I said your name  
and the place was made of air

and the word  
captured

in the waste of faith

and the word   doe  
in the fullness of silence  
plummets  
tractable in its infinite contradiction  
in its mercy

and the heart closes  
and the heart opens  
astonished

26

Stillest light  
almost dust

is it you who dwells in the name?  
you who comes rushing in?

Pythia        weighing  
on consciousness

stammering  
I hover     circle like a falcon

light harvested  
in its astonishment

27

ebb and flow of vestal years

here inside    the light spills over  
and the word crosses the threshold

and I filled my mouth with earth  
to silence the words