

For all the grief I have given with words
 May now a few clear flowers blow,
 In the dust, and the heat, and the silence of birds,
 Where the friendless go.

For the thing unsaid that heart asked of me
 Be a dark, cool water calling — calling
 To the footsore, benighted, solitary
 When the shadows are falling.

O, be beauty for all my blindness,
 A moon in the air where the weary wend,
 And dews burdened with loving-kindness
 In the dark of the end.

Ashurbanipal

When in the diamond clarity of dawn,
 in a long-forgotten springtime,
 Ashurbanipal went riding out
 through the great gate of Nineveh,
 he never for one moment cast a glance
 towards the human skins upon the walls,
 the tattered corpses impaled on spikes.

Acknowledging the adulation
 of his people, returning the salute
 of the Royal Guard, tall and upright
 on his proudly trotting sleek black mare,
 he passed beneath the massive winged bulls,
 the sculptured reliefs recording his victories,
 over the narrow bridge to the waiting plain.

Then being fresh from sleep and eager
 for the chase, he went galloping away,
 accompanied by a troop of mounted bowmen,
 towards the promise of the impassive hills.

RAYMOND TONG