I started Early – Took my Dog –
And visited the Sea –
The Mermaids in the Basement
Came out to look at me –

And Frigates – in the Upper Floor
Extended Hempen Hands –
Presuming Me to be a Mouse –
Aground – upon the Sands –

But no Man moved Me – till the Tide
Went past my simple Shoe –
And past my Apron – and my Belt
And past my Boddice – too –

And made as He would eat me up –
As wholly as a Dew
Upon a Dandelion’s Sleeve –
And then – I started – too –

And He – He followed – close behind –
I felt His Silver Heel
Upon my Ancle – Then my Shoes
Would overflow with Pearl –

Until We met the Solid Town –
No One He seemed to know –
And bowing – with a Mighty look –
At me – The Sea withdrew –

It would have starved a Gnat –
To live so small as I –
And yet I was a living Child –
With Food’s necessity

Upon me – like a Claw –
I could no more remove
Than I could coax a Leech away –
Or make a Dragon – move –

Nor like the Gnat – had I –
The privilege to fly
And seek a Dinner for myself –
How mightier He – than I –

Nor like Himself – the Art
Upon the Window Pane
To gad my little Being out –
And not begin – again –

When I hoped, I recollect
Just the place I stood –
At a Window facing West –
Roughest Air – was good –
Nor a Sleet could bite me –
Not a frost could cool –
Hope it was that kept me warm –
Not Merino shawl –

When I feared – I recollect
Just the Day it was –
Worlds were lying out to Sun –
Yet how Nature froze –

Icicles upon my soul
Prickled Blue and Cool –
Bird went praising everywhere –
Only Me – was still –

And the Day that I despaired –
This – if I forget
Nature will – that it be Night
After Sun has set –

Darkness intersect her face –
And put out her eye –
Nature hesitate – before
Memory and I –

iv – 956
What shall I do when the Summer troubles –
What, when the Rose is ripe –
What when the Eggs fly off in Music
From the Maple Keep?

What shall I do when the Skies a’chirrup
Drop a Tune on me –
When the Bee hangs all Noon in the Buttercup
What will become of me?

Oh, when the Squirrel fills His Pockets
And the Berries stare
How can I bear their jocund Faces
Thou from Here, so far?

’Twouldn’t afflict a Robin –
All His Goods have Wings –
I – do not fly, so wherefore
My Perennial Things?

v – 963
A nearness to Tremendousness –
An Agony procures –
Affliction ranges Boundlessness –
Vicinity to Laws

Contentment’s quiet Suburb –
Affliction cannot stay
In Acres – Its Location
Is Illocality –

Quando sperai, ricordo con certezza
il luogo dove mi trovavo: quella
finestra di una stanza occidentale –
l’aria rigida – buona –

non poteva la grandine ferirmi,
né assiderare il gelo –
a riscaldarmi c’era la speranza,
non lo scialle di merino –

Quando temetti, bene mi ricordo
che giorno era –
i mondi si tuffavano nel sole
ma la Natura si faceva gelo –

ghiaccioli azzurri, freddi
mi pungevano l’anima –
in ogni dove uccelli salmodianti –
io solamente – muta –

E quando disperai, se mai dovessi
dimenticare quel giorno –
scorderà la Natura che sia notte
quando il sole è calato –

la tenebra ricoprirà il suo volto
e spegnerà i suoi occhi –
esiterà la Natura dinnanzi
alla Memoria e a me –

iv – 956  Traduzione di Cristina Campo

Che farò io quando turba l’estate,
quando la rosa è matura?
Quando le uova svolino in melodia
da un carcere d’acero: – che farò io?

Che farò io quando dai cieli in gorgheggio
cada su me una canzone?
Quando al ranuncolo dondoli tutto il meriggio
l’ape sospesa – che mai farò io?

E quando lo scoiattolo si colmerà le tasche
e guideranno le bacche...
Resisterà a quelle candide facce
se tu da me sei lontano?

Al pettirosso non sarebbe gran pena:
volano tutti i suoi beni.
Io non ho ali: a che servono, dimmi,
i miei tesori perenni?

v (a) – 963  Traduzione di Silvio Raffo

Dimorare nei pressi del Terrore
conduce a un’agonia –
L’afflizione si estende a dismisiura –
Che tranquillo sobborgo è l’acquiescenza

alle norme, il sapersi contenere –
The last Night that She lived
It was a Common Night
Except the dying – this to Us
Made Nature different

We noticed smallest things –
Things overlooked before
By this great light upon our Minds
Italicized – as ‘twere.

As We went out and in
Between Her final Room
And Rooms where Those to be alive
Tomorrow were, a Blame

That Others could exist
While She must finish quite
A Jealousy for Her arose
So nearly infinite –

We waited while She passed –
It was a narrow time –
Too jostled were Our Souls to speak
At lenght the notice came.

She mentioned, and forgot –
Then lightly as a Reed
Bent to the Water, shivered scarce –
Consented, and was dead –

And We – We placed the Hair –
And drew the Head erect –
And then an awful leisure was
Belief to regulate –

The Lilac is an ancient shrub
But ancieniter than that
The Firmamental Lilac
Upon the Hill tonight –
The Sun subsiding on his Course
Bequeaths this final Plant
To Contemplation – not to Touch –
The Flower of Occident.
Of one Corolla is the West –
The Calyx is the Earth –

L’Afflizione non può stanzarsi in ettari –
Sua sola dimensione
l’Assenza di Confini

Della Contentezza la quieta Periferia
Afflizione non può misurarsi
In Acri – la Sua locazione
È l’Illocazione –

È il lilà un arboscello antico,
ma più antico di lui
è il lilà del firmamento
sopra il colle, a sera.
Marisa Bulgheroni

The Capsules burnished Seeds the Stars
The Scientist of Faith
His research has just begun –
Above his synthesis
The Flora unimpeachable
To Time’s Analysis –
“Eye hath not seen” may possibly
Be current with the Blind
But let not Revelation
By theses be detained –

viii – 1398
I have no Life but this –
To lead it here –
Nor any Death – but lest
Dispelled from there –

Nor tie to Earths to come –
Nor Action new –
Except through this extent –
The Realm of you –

ix – 1568
To see her is a Picture –
To hear her is a Tune –
To Know her an Intemperance
As innocent as June –
To know her not – Affliction –
To own her for a Friend
A warmth as near as if the Sun
Were shining in your Hand.

x – 1581
The farthest Thunder that I heard
Was nearer than the Sky
And rumbles still, though torrid Noons
Have lain their missiles by –
The Lightning that preceded it
Struck no one but myself –
But I would not exchange the Bolt
For all the rest of Life –
Indebtedness to Oxygen
The Happy may repay,
But not the obligation
To Electricity –
It founds the Homes and decks the Days
And every clamor bright
Is but the gleam concomitant
Of that waylaying Light –
The Thought is quiet as a Flake –
A Crash without a Sound,
How Life’s reverberation
Its Explanation found –

xi (a) – The Storm

There came a wind like a bugle;
it quivered through the grass,
and a green chill upon the heat
so ominous did pass
we barred the windows and the doors
as from an emerald ghost;
the doom’s electric mocassin
that very instant passed.
On a strange mob of panting trees
and fences fled away
and rivers where the houses ran
the living looked that day.
The bell within the steeple wild
the flying tidings whirled.
How much can come
and much can go,
and yet abide the world!

xi (b) – 1593

There came a Wind like a Bugle –
It quivered through the Grass
And a Green Chill upon the Heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the Windows and the Doors
As from an Emerald Ghost –
The Doom’s electric Moccasin
That very instant passed –
On a strange Mob of panting Trees
And Fences fled away
And Rivers where the Houses ran
Those looked that lived – that Day –
The Bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings told –
How much can come
And much can go,
and yet abide the World!

trova le case e adorna i giorni
e ogni clamore luminoso
è scintilla compagna
della luce in agguato –
il pensiero è quieto come un fiocco –
urto senza rumore
come riverbero della vita
trovò la sua ragione –

Con un suono di corno
il vento arrivò, scosse l’erba;
un verde brivido diaccio
cosi sinistro passò nel caldo
che sbarrammo le porte e le finestre
quasi entrasse uno spettro di smeraldo:
e fu certo l’elettrico
segnale del Giudizio.
Una bizzarra turba di ansimanti
alberi, siepi alla deriva
e case in fuga nei fiumi
è ciò che videro i vivi.
Tocchi del campanile desolato
mulinavano le ultime nuove.
Quanto può giungere,
quanto può andarsene,
in un mondo che non si muove!

2 quivered through/ bubbled in –
9 On a strange Mob/ Upon a Mob –
12 The Living looked that Day –
17 abide/ remain

xi (a) – Tempesta Trad. di Eugenio Montale (1953)

xi (b) – 1593 Traduzione di Margherita Guidacci