Classic Poetry Series

Guillaume Apollinaire

- 37 poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Guillaume Apollinaire (26 August 1880 – 9 November 1918)

Wilhelm Albert Włodzimierz Apolinary Kostrowicki, known as Guillaume Apollinaire was a French poet, playwright, short story writer, novelist, and art critic born in Italy to a Polish mother.

Among the foremost poets of the early 20th century, he is credited with coining the word Surrealism and writing one of the earliest works described as surrealist, the play The Breasts of Tiresias (1917, used as the basis for a 1947 opera). Two years after being wounded in World War I, he died in the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 at age 38.

Biography

Born Wilhelm Albert Włodzimierz Apolinary Kostrowicki and raised speaking French, among other languages, he emigrated to France and adopted the name Guillaume Apollinaire. His mother, born Angelica Kostrowicka, was a Polish noblewoman born near Navahrudak (now in Belarus). Apollinaire's father is unknown but may have been Francesco Flugi d'Aspermont, a Swiss Italian aristocrat who disappeared early from Apollinaire's life. Apollinaire was partly educated in Monaco.

Apollinaire was one of the most popular members of the artistic community of Montparnasse in Paris. His friends and collaborators in that period included Pablo Picasso, Gertrude Stein, Max Jacob, André Salmon, Marie Laurencin, Andre Breton, André Derain, Faik Konica, Blaise Cendrars, Pierre Reverdy, Alexandra Exter, Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie, Ossip Zadkine, Marc Chagall and Marcel Duchamp. In 1911, he joined the Puteaux Group, a branch of the cubist movement.

On September 7, 1911, police arrested and jailed him on suspicion of stealing the Mona Lisa, but released him a week later. Apollinaire then implicated his friend Pablo Picasso, who was also brought in for questioning in the art theft, but he was also exonerated.

He fought in World War I and, in 1916, received a serious shrapnel wound to the temple. He wrote Les Mamelles de Tirésias while recovering from this wound. During this period he coined the word surrealism in the program notes for Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie's ballet Parade, first performed on 18 May 1917. He also published an artistic manifesto, L'Esprit nouveau et les

poètes. Apollinaire's status as a literary critic is most famous and influential in his recognition of the Marquis de Sade, whose works were for a long time obscure, yet arising in popularity as an influence upon the Dada and Surrealist art movements going on in Montparnasse at the beginning of the twentieth century as, "The freest spirit that ever existed."

The war-weakened Apollinaire died of influenza during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. He was interred in the Le Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris.

In 1900 he wrote his first pornographic novel, Mirely, ou le petit trou pas cher, which was eventually lost. Apollinaire's first collection of poetry was L'enchanteur pourrissant (1909), but Alcools (1913) established his reputation. The poems, influenced in part by the Symbolists, juxtapose the old and the new, combining traditional poetic forms with modern imagery. In 1913, Apollinaire published the essay Les Peintres cubistes on the cubist painters, a movement which he helped to define. He also coined the term orphism to describe a tendency towards absolute abstraction in the paintings of Robert Delaunay and others.

In 1907, Apollinaire wrote the well-known erotic novel, The Eleven Thousand Rods (Les Onze Mille Verges). Officially banned in France until 1970, various printings of it circulated widely for many years. Apollinaire never publicly acknowledged authorship of the novel. Another erotic novel attributed to him was The Exploits of a Young Don Juan (Les exploits d'un jeune Don Juan), in which the 15-year-old hero fathers three children with various members of his entourage, including his aunt. The book was made into a movie in 1987.

Shortly after his death, Calligrammes, a collection of his concrete poetry (poetry in which typography and layout adds to the overall effect), and more orthodox, though still modernist poems informed by Apollinaire's experiences in the First World War and in which he often used the technique of automatic writing, was published.

In his youth Apollinaire lived for a short while in Belgium, mastering the Walloon dialect sufficiently to write poetry through that medium, some of which has survived.

Works:

Poetry

Le bestiaire ou le cortège d'Orphée, 1911
Alcools, 1913
Vitam impendere amori', 1917
Calligrammes, poèmes de la paix et de la guerre 1913-1916, 1918 (published shortly after Apollinaire's death)
Il y a..., 1925
Julie ou la rose, 1927
Ombre de mon amour, poems addressed to Louise de Coligny-Châtillon, 1947
Poèmes secrets à Madeleine, pirated edition, 1949
Le Guetteur mélancolique, previously unpublished works, 1952
Poèmes à Lou, 1955
Soldes, previously unpublished works, 1985
Et moi aussi je suis peintre, album of drawings for Calligrammes, from a private collection, published 2006

Prose

Mirely ou le Petit Trou pas cher, 1900
"Que faire?",
Les Onze Mille Verges ou les amours d'un hospodar, 1907
L'enchanteur pourrissant, 1909
L'Hérèsiarque et Cie (short story collection), 1910
Les exploits d'un jeune Don Juan, 1911
La Rome des Borgia, 1914
La Fin de Babylone - L'Histoire romanesque 1/3, 1914

Les Trois Don Juan - L'Histoire romanesque 2/3, 1915
Le poète assassiné, 1916
La femme assise, 1920
Les Épingles (short story collection), 1928

Plays

Les Mamelles de Tirésias, play, 1917
La Bréhatine, screenplay (collaboration with André Billy), 1917
Couleurs du temps, 1918
Casanova, published 1952

Articles

Le Théâtre Italien, illustrated encyclopedia, 1910
Pages d'histoire, chronique des grands siècles de France, chronicles, 1912
Méditations esthétiques. Les peintres cubistes, 1913
La Peinture moderne, 1913
L'Antitradition futuriste, manifeste synthèse, 1913
Case d'Armons, 1915
L'esprit nouveau et les poètes, 1918
Le Flâneur des Deux Rives, chronicles, 1918

Annie

Sur la côte du Texas
Entre Mobile et Galveston il y a
Un grand jardin tout plein de roses
Il contient aussi une villa
Qui est une grande rose

Une femme se promène souvent
Dans le jardin toute seule
Et quand je passe sur la route bordée de tilleuls
Nous nous regardons

Comme cette femme est mennonite
Ses rosiers et ses vêtements n'ont pas de boutons
Il en manque deux à mon veston
La dame et moi suivons le même rite.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Autumn Crocuses

The meadow is poisonous but pretty in the autumn
The cows that graze there are slowly poisoned
Meadow-saffron the colour of lilac and of shadows
Under the eyes grows there your eyes are like those flowers
Mauve as their shadows and mauve as this autumn
And for your eyes' sake my life is slowly poisoned

Children from school come with their commotion
Dressed in smocks and playing the mouth-organ
Picking autumn crocuses which are like their mothers
Daughters of their daughters and the colour of your eyelids
Which flutter like flowers in the mad breeze blown

The cowherd sings softly to himself all alone
While slow moving lowing the cows leave behind them
Forever this great meadow ill flowered by autumn

Guillaume Apollinaire

Autumn Ill

Autumn ill and adored
You die when the hurricane blows in the roseries
When it has snowed
In the orchard trees
Poor autumn
Dead in whiteness and riches
Of snow and ripe fruits
Deep in the sky
The sparrow hawks cry
Over the sprites with green hair the dwarfs
Who’ve never been loved
In the far tree-lines
the stags are groaning
And how I love O season how I love your rumbling
The falling fruits that no one gathers
The wind the forest that are tumbling
All their tears in autumn leaf by leaf
The leaves
You press
A crowd
That flows
The life
That goes

Guillaume Apollinaire

C’est Lou Qu’on La Nommait

Il est des loups de toute sorte
Je connais le plus inhumain
Mon cœur que le diable l’emporte
Et qu’il le dépose à sa porte
N’est plus qu’un jouet dans sa main

Les loups jadis étaient fidèles
Comme sont les petits toutous
Et les soldats amants des belles
Galamment en souvenir d’elles
Ainsi que les loups étaient doux

Mais aujourd’hui les temps sont pires
Les loups sont tigres devenus
Et les Soldats et les Empires
Les Césars devenus Vampires
Sont aussi cruels que Vénus

J’en ai pris mon parti Rouveyre
Et monté sur mon grand cheval
Je vais bientôt partir en guerre
Sans pitié chaste et l’œil sévère
Comme ces guerriers qu’Epinal

Vendait Images populaires
Que Georgin gravait dans le bois
Où sont-ils ces beaux militaires
Soldats passés Où sont les guerres
Où sont les guerres d’autrefois

Guillaume Apollinaire

Clotilde

The anemone and flower that weeps
have grown in the garden plain
where Melancholy sleeps
between Amor and Disdain
There our shadows linger too
that the midnight will disperse
the sun that makes them dark to view
will with them in dark immerse
The deities of living dew
Let their hair flow down entire
It must be that you pursue
That lovely shadow you desire

Guillaume Apollinaire

Hotels

The room is free
Each for himself
A new arrival
Pays by the month
The boss is doubtful
Whether you'll pay
Like a top
I spin on the way
The traffic noise
My neighbour gross
Who puffs an acrid
English smoke
O La Vallière
Who limps and smiles
In my prayers
The bedside table
And all the company
in this hotel
know the languages
of Babel
Let's shut our doors
With a double lock
And each adore
his lonely love

Guillaume Apollinaire

Hunting Horns

Our story’s noble as its tragic
like the grimace of a tyrant
no drama’s chance or magic
no detail that’s indifferent
makes our great love pathetic
And Thomas de Quincey drinking
Opiate poison sweet and chaste
Of his poor Anne went dreaming
We pass we pass since all must pass
Often I’ll be returning
Memories are hunting horns alas
whose note along the wind is dying

Guillaume Apollinaire

In the Sante

I

Before I got into my cell
I had to strip my body bare
I heard an ominous voice say Well
Guillaume what are you doing here

Lazarus steps into the ground
Not out of it as he was bid
Adieu Adieu O singing round
Of years and girls the life I led

II

I'm no longer myself in here
        I know
I'm number fifteen in the eleventh
        Row

The sunlight filters downward through
        The panes
And on these lines bright clowns alight
        Like stains

They dance under my eyes while my
        Ears follow
The feet of one whose feet above
        Sound hollow

III

In a bear-pit like a bear
Every morning round I tramp
Round and round and round and round
The sky is like an iron clamp
In a bear-pit like a bear
Every morning round I tramp

In the next cell at the sink
Someone lets the water run
With his bunch of keys that clink
Let the goaler go and come
In the next cell at the sink
Someone lets the water run

IV

How bored I am between bare wall and wall
        Whose colour pales and pines

A fly on the paper with extremely small
Steps runs across these lines

What will become of me O God Who know
My pain Who gave it me
Have pity on my dry eyes and my pallor
My chair which creaks and is not free

And all these poor hearts beating in this prison
And Love beside me seated
Pity above all my unstable reason
And this despair which threatens to defeat it

V

How long these hours take to go
As long as a whole funeral

You'll mourn the time you mourned you know
It will be gone too soon like all
Time past
too fast too long ago

VI

I hear the noises of the city
In the turning world beyond me
I see a sky which has no pity
And bare prison walls around me

The daylight disappears and now
A lamp is lit within the prison
We're all alone here in my cell
Beautiful light Beloved reason

Guillaume Apollinaire

Je pense à toi

Je pense à toi mon Lou ton cœur est ma caserne
Mes sens sont tes chevaux ton souvenir est ma luzerne

Le ciel est plein ce soir de sabres d'éperons
Les canonniers s'en vont dans l'ombre lourds et prompts

Mais près de toi je vois sans cesse ton image
Ta bouche est la blessure ardente du courage

Nos fanfares éclatent dans la nuit comme ta voix
Quand je suis à cheval tu trottes près de moi

Nos 75 sont gracieux comme ton corps
Et tes cheveux sont fauves comme le feu d'un obus
qui éclate au nord

Je t'aime tes mains et mes souvenirs
Font sonner à toute heure une heureuse fanfare
Des soleils tour à tour se prennent à hennir
Nous sommes les bat-flanc sur qui ruent les étoiles.

Guillaume Apollinaire

La Chanson Du Malaime

Un soir de demi-brume à Londres
Un voyou qui ressemblait à
Mon amour vint à ma rencontre
Et le regard qu'il me jeta
Me fit baisser les yeux de honte

Je suivis ce mauvais garçon
Qui sifflotait mains dans les poches
Nous semblions entre les maisons
Onde ouverte de la mer Rouge
Lui les Hébreux moi Pharaon

Qui tombent ces vagues de briques
Si tu ne fus pas bien aimée
Je suis le souverain d'Egypte
Sa sœur-épouse son armée
Si tu n'es pas l'amour unique.

Guillaume Apollinaire

La Jolie Rousse

Me voici devant tous un homme plein de sens
Connaissant la vie et de la mort ce qu'un vivant peut
connaître
Ayant éprouvé les douleurs et les joies de l'amour
Ayant su quelquefois imposer ses idées
Connaissant plusieurs langages
Ayant pas mal voyagé
Ayant vu la guerre dans l'Artillerie et l'Infanterie
Blessé à la tête trépané sous le chloroforme
Ayant perdu ses meilleurs amis dans l'effroyable lutte
Je sais d'ancien et de nouveau autant qu'un homme seul
pourrait des deux savoir
Et sans m'inquiéter aujourd'hui de cette querre
Entre nous et pour nous mes amis
Je juge cette longue querelle de la tradition et de l'invention
De l'Ordre et de l'Aventure

Vous dont la bouche est faite à l'image de celle de Dieu
Bouche qui est l'ordre même
Soyez indulgents quand vous nous comparez
A ceux qui furent la perfection de l'ordre
Nous qui quêtons partout l'aventure

Nous ne sommes pas vos ennemis
Nous voulons vous donner de vastes et étranges domaines
Où le mystère en fleurs s'offre à qui veut le cueillir
Il y a là des feux nouveaux des couleurs jamais vues
Mille phantasmes impondérables
Auxquels il faut donner de la réalité
Nous voulons explorer la bonté contrée énorme où tout se tait
Il y a aussi le temps qu'on peut chasser ou faire revenir
Pitié pour nous qui combattons toujours aux frontières
De l'illimité et de l'avenir
Pitié pour nos erreurs pitié pour nos péchés

Voici que vient l'été la saison violente
Et ma jeunesse est morte ainsi que le printemps
O Soleil c'est le temps de la Raison ardente
Et j'attends
Pour la suivre toujours la forme noble et douce
Qu'elle prend afin que je l'aime seulement
Elle vient et m'attire ainsi qu'un fer l'aimant
Elle a l'aspect charmant
D'une adorable rousse

Ses cheveux sont d'or on dirait
Un bel éclair qui durerait
Ou ces flammes qui se pavanent
Dans les rose-thé qui se fanent

Mais riez riez de moi
Hommes de partout surtout gens d'ici

Car il y a tant de choses que je n'ose vous dire
Tant de choses que vous ne me laisseriez pas dire
Ayez pitié de moi.

Guillaume Apollinaire

L'Adieu

J'ai cueilli ce brin de bruyère
L'automne est morte souviens-t'en
Nous ne nous verrons plus sur terre
Odeur du temps Brin de bruyère
Et souviens-toi que je t'attends

Guillaume Apollinaire

Le Pont Mirabeau

Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine
Et nos amours
Faut-il qu'il m'en souvienne
La joie venait toujours après la peine.

Vienne la nuit sonne l'heure
Les jours s'en vont je demeure

Les mains dans les mains restons face à face
Tandis que sous
Le pont de nos bras passe
Des éternels regards l'onde si lasse

Vienne la nuit sonne l'heure
Les jours s'en vont je demeure

L'amour s'en va comme cette eau courante
L'amour s'en va
Comme la vie est lente
Et comme l'Espérance est violente

Vienne la nuit sonne l'heure
Les jours s'en vont je demeure

Passent les jours et passent les semaines
Ni temps passé
Ni les amours reviennent
Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine

Guillaume Apollinaire

Les Colchiques

Le pré est vénéneux mais joli en automne
Les vaches y paissant
Lentement s'empoisonnent
Le colchique couleur de cerne et de lilas
Y fleurit tes yeux sont comme cette fleur-la
Violatres comme leur cerne et comme cet automne
Et ma vie pour tes yeux lentement s'empoisonne

Les enfants de l'école viennent avec fracas
Vêtus de hoquetons et jouant de l'harmonica
Ils cueillent les colchiques qui sont comme des mères
Filles de leurs filles et sont couleur de tes paupières
Qui battent comme les fleurs battent au vent dément

Le gardien du troupeau chante tout doucement
Tandis que lentes et meuglant les vaches abandonnent
Pour toujours ce grand pré mal fleuri par l'automne

Guillaume Apollinaire

Les Fenêtres

Du rouge au vert tout le jaune se meurt
Quand chantent les aras dans les forêts natales
Abatis de pihis
Il y a un poème à faire sur l'oiseau qui n'a qu'une aile
Nous l'enverron en message téléphonique
Truamatisme géant
Il fait couler les yeux
Voilà une jolie jeune fille parmi les jeunes Turinaises
Le pauvre jeune homme se mouchait dans sa cravate blanche
Tu soulèveras le rideau
Et maintenant voilà que s'ouvre la fenêtre
Araignées quand les mains tissaient la lumière
Beauté pâleur insondables violets
Nous tenterons en vain de prendre du repos
On commencera à minuit
Quand on a le temps on a la liberté
Bignorneaux Lotte multiples Soleils et l'Oursin du couchant
Une vielle paire de chaussures jaunes devant la fenêtre
Tours
Les Tours ce sont les rues
Puits
Puits ce sont les places
Puits
Arbres creux qui abritent les Câpresses vagabondes
Les Chabins chantent des airs à mourir
Aux Chabines marrones
Et l'oie oua-oua trompette au nord
Où le train blanc de neige et de feux nocturnes fuit l'hiver
O Paris
Du rouge au vert tout le jaune se meurt
Paris Vancouver Hyères Maintenon New-York et les Antilles
Le fenêtre s'ouvre comme une orange
Le beau fruit de la lumière

Guillaume Apollinaire

Mareye

Mareye était très douce étourdie et charmante
Moi je l'aimais d'Amour m'aimait-elle, qui sait?
Je revois parfois à la lueur tremblotante
Des lointains souvenirs cet Amour trépassé.

Sur ma bouche je sens celle de mon amante
Je sens ses petites mains sur mon front glacé
Ses mains dont doucement elle me caressait
Ses rares mains de sainte pâle ou bien d'infante

Mon amante d'antant dans quels bras t'endors-tu
Pendant l'hiver saison d'amour où les vents pleurent
Où les amants ont froid où les passants se meurent

Sous les tristes sapins meurent en écoutant
Les elfes rire au vent et corner aux rafales?
Songes-tu quelquefois quand les nuits sont bien pâles
Que telles nos amours sont mortes les étoiles?

Guillaume Apollinaire

Marie

Vous y dansiez petite fille
Y danserez-vous mère-grand
C'est la maclotte qui sautille
Toutes les cloches sonneront
Quand donc reviendrez-vous Marie

Les masques sont silencieux
Et la musique est si lointaine
Qu'elle semble venir des cieux
Oui je veux vous aimer mais vous aimer à peine
Et mon mal est délicieux

Les brebis s'en vont dans la neige
Flocons de laine et ceux d'argent
Des soldats passent et que n'ai-je
Un cœur moi ce cœur changeant
Changeant et puis encor que sais-je

Sais-je où s'en iront tes cheveux
Crépus comme mer qui moutonne
Sais-je où s'en iront tes cheveux
Et tes mains feuilles d'automne
Qui jonchent aussi nos aveux

Je passais au bord de la Seine
Un livre ancien sous le bras
Le fleuve est pareil à ma peine
Il s'écoule et ne tarit pas
Quand donc finira la semaine.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Marizibill

Dans la Haute-Rue à Cologne
Elle allait et venait le soir
Offerte à tous en tout mignonne
Puis buvait lasse des trottoirs
Très tard dans les brasseries borgnes

Elle se mettait sur la paille
Pour un maquereau roux et rose
C'était un juif il sentait l'ail
Et l'avait venant de Formose
Tirée d'un bordel de Changaï

Je connais des gens de toutes sortes
Ils n'égalent pas leurs destins
Indécis comme feuilles mortes
Leurs yeux sont des feux mal éteints
Leurs coeurs bougent comme leurs portes

Guillaume Apollinaire

Mirabeau Bridge

Under Mirabeau Bridge the river slips away
And lovers
Must I be reminded
Joy came always after pain

The night is a clock chiming
The days go by not I

We're face to face and hand in hand
While under the bridges
Of embrace expire
Eternal tired tidal eyes

The night is a clock chiming
The days go by not I

Love elapses like the river
Love goes by
Poor life is indolent
And expectation always violent

The night is a clock chiming
The days go by not I

The days and equally the weeks elapse
The past remains the past
Love remains lost
Under Mirabeau Bridge the river slips away

The night is a clock chiming
The days go by not I

Guillaume Apollinaire

Moonlight

Mellifluent moon on the lips of the maddened
The orchards and towns are greedy tonight
The stars appear like the image of bees
Of this luminous honey that offends the vines
For now all sweet in their fall from the sky
Each ray of moonlight’s a ray of honey
Now hid I conceive the sweetest adventure
I fear stings of fire from this Polar bee
that sets these deceptive rays in my hands
And takes its moon-honey to the rose of the winds

Guillaume Apollinaire

One Evening

An eagle descends from this sky white with archangels
And you sustain me
Let them tremble a long while all these lamps
Pray pray for me
The city’s metallic and it’s the only star
Drowned in your blue eyes
When the tramways run spurting pale fire
Over the twittering birds
And all that trembles in your eyes of my dreams
That a lonely man drinks
Under flames of gas red like a false dawn
O clothed your arm is lifted
See the speaker stick his tongue out at the listeners
A phantom has committed suicide
The apostle of the fig-tree hangs and slowly rots
Let us play this love out then to the end
Bells with clear chimes announce your birth
See
The streets are garlanded and the palms advance
Towards thee

Guillaume Apollinaire

Palace

In deepest dream towards Rosemonde's palace
My barefoot brain inclined for the evening
Like a naked king the walls are waking
Beaten flesh and fresh-cut roses

You can see my thoughts immersed in roses
Smiling at the concert of the toads
They are in the mood for cypress bedposts
The sun is a broken mirror of the rose

What badly wounded bowman opened
Stigmata of palms on the windowpane
At the white lamb's love-feast I have tasted
Resins that bitter the Cyprian wine

On the jagged lap of the lascivious king
In the May-time of her age and finest frock
Mysterious Madame Rosemonde rolls
Her little round eyes like a Hun

Lady of my thoughts your pearly asshole
Is unrivalled by anything Oriental
For whom are you waiting
Deepest dreams en route to the Orient
Are my loveliest neighbors

Knock knock Come into the forecourt night is coming
In shadow the night-light is toasted tinsel
Hang your heads by the hair on the hat-rack
The evening sky is aglimmer with pins

We entered the dining room our noses
Caught a whiff of grease and mucus
Of twenty soup bowls three were urine
The king ate two poached eggs in bouillon

And then the scullions brought in the meat dishes
A standing roast of thoughts deceased in my brain
My lovely still-born dreams in slices still bloody
And gamy little meatballs of memory

Dead for millennia now these thoughts
Had a flavorless taste of frozen mammoth
Bones or visionaries danced out of ossuaries
The dance of death in the folds of my brain

And all those meats pronounced revelations
But Holy Christ!
A famished belly has no hearing
The guests continued their best mastications

Ah Holy Christ! cried out the rib-eyes

The huge pâtes the marrow and hot-pots
Tongues of fire o where is the pentecost
Of my thoughts for all places nations and times

Guillaume Apollinaire

Pour Madeleine Seule

Lune candide vous brillez moins que les hanches
De mon amour
Aubes que j'admire vous êtes moins blanches
Aubes que chaque jour
J'admire ô hanches si blanches

Il y a le reflet de votre blancheur

Au fond de cet aluminium

Dont on fait des bagues

Dans cette zone où règne la blancheur
O hanches si blanches.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Pour Y.B.

Bien qu'il me vienne en août votre quatrain d'avril
M'a gardé de tout mal et de toute blessure
Votre douceur me suit durant mon aventure
Au long de cet an sombre ainsi que fut l'an mil

Je vous remercierai s'il se peut je l'assure
Quand nous aurons vaincu le Boche lâche et vil
Dont la vertu française a ressenti l'injure.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Rhénane d'Automne

Mon verre est plein d'un vin trembleur comme une flamme
Ecoutez la chanson lente d'un batelier
Qui raconte avoir vu sous la lune sept femmes
Tordre leurs cheveux verts et longs jusqu'à leurs pieds

Debout chantez plus haut en dansant une ronde
Que je n'entende plus le chant du batelier
Et mettez près de moi toutes les filles blondes
Au regard immobile aux nattes repliées

Le Rhin le Rhin est ivre où les vignes se mirent
Tout l'or des nuits tombe en tremblant s'y refléter
La voix chante toujours à en râle-mourir
Ces fées aux cheveux verts qui incantent l'été

Mon verre s'est brisé comme un éclat de rire

Guillaume Apollinaire

Shadow

Here you are beside me again
Memories of my companions killed in the war
The olive-branch of time
Memories that make only a single memory
As a hundred skins make only a single coat
As these thousands of wounds make only a single
newspaper article
Impalpable and ark presence who have assumed
the changing shape of my shadow
an Indian on the watch through all Eternity
shadow you creep beside me
but you do not hear me any more
you will not know any more the divine poems I sing
but I hear you still and see you still
Destinies
Multiple shadows may the sun preserve you
You who love me so much that you will never leave me
And who dance in the sun without stirring the dust
Shadow ink of the sun
Signature of my light
Holder of sorrows
A god that condescends.

Guillaume Apollinaire

The Bells

My gipsy beau my lover
Hear the bells above us
We loved passionately
Thinking none could see us
But we so badly hidden
All the bells in their song
Saw from heights of heaven
And told it everyone
Tomorrow Cyprien Henry
Marie Ursule Catherine
The baker’s wife her husband
and Gertrude that’s my cousin
Will smile when I go by them
I won’t know where to hide
You far and I’ll be crying
Perhaps I shall be dying

Guillaume Apollinaire

The Bestiary: or Orpheus's Procession

(Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée)

Orpheus

Admire the vital power
And nobility of line:
It's the voice that the light made us understand here
That Hermes Trismegistus writes of in Pimander.

The Tortoise

From magic Thrace, O delerium!
My sure fingers sound the strings.
The creatures pass to the sounds
Of my tortoise, and the songs I sing.

The Horse

My harsh dreams knew the riding of you
My gold-charioted fate will be your lovely car
That for reins will hold tight to frenzy,
My verses, the patterns of all poetry.

The Tibetan Goat

The fleece of this goat and even
That gold one which cost such pain
To Jason's not worth a sou towards
The tresses with which I'm taken.

The Serpent

You set yourself against beauty.
And how many women have been
victims of your cruelty!
Eve, Eurydice, Cleopatra:
I know three or four more after.

The Cat

I wish there to be in my house:
A woman possessing reason,
A cat among books passing by,
Friends for every season
Lacking whom I'm barely alive.

The Lion

O lion, miserable image
Of kings lamentably chosen,
Now you're only born in a cage
In Hamburg, among the Germans.

The Hare

Don't be fearful and lascivious
Like the hare and the amorous.
But always let your brain weave
The full form that conceives.

The Rabbit

There's another cony I remember
That I'd so like to take alive.
Its haunt is there among the thyme
In the valleys of the Land of Tender.

The Dromedary

With his four dromedaries
Don Pedro of Alfaroubeira
Travels the world and admires her.
He does what I would rather
If I'd those four dromedaries.

The Mouse

Sweet days, the mice of time,
You gnaw my life, moon by moon.
God! I've twenty eight years soon,
and badly spent ones I imagine.

The Elephant

I carry treasure in my mouth,
As an elephant his ivory.
At the price of flowing words,
Purple death!…I buy my glory.

Orpheus

Look at this pestilential tribe

Its thousand feet, its hundred eyes:
Beetles, insects, lice
And microbes more amazing
Than the world's seventh wonder
And the palace of Rosamunde!

The Caterpillar

Work leads us to riches.
Poor poets, work on!
The caterpillar's endless sigh
Becomes the lovely butterfly.

The Fly

The songs that our flies know
Were taught to them in Norway
By flies who are they say
Divinities of snow.

The Flea

Fleas, friends, lovers too,
How cruel are those who love us!
All our blood pours out for them.
The well-beloved are wretched then.

The Grasshopper

Here's the slender grasshopper
The food that fed Saint John.
May my verse be similar,
A treat for the best of men.

Orpheus

His heart was the bait: the heavens were the pond!
For, fisherman, what fresh or seawater catch
equals him, either in form or savour,
that lovely divine fish, Jesus, My Saviour?

The Dolphin

Dolphins, playing in the sea
The wave is bitter gruel.
Does my joy sometimes erupt?
Yet life is still so cruel.

The Octopus
Hurling his ink at skies above,
Sucking the blood of what he loves
And finding it delicious,
Is myself the monster, vicious.

The Jellyfish

Medusas, miserable heads
With hairs of violet
You enjoy the hurricane
And I enjoy the very same.

The Lobster

Uncertainty, O my delights
You and I we go
As lobsters travel onwards, quite
Backwards, Backwards, O.

The Carp

In your pools, and in your ponds,
Carp, you indeed live long!
Is it that death forgets to free
You fishes of melancholy?

Orpheus

The female of the Halcyon,
Love, the seductive Sirens,
All know the fatal songs
Dangerous and inhuman.
Don’t listen to those cursed birds
But Paradisial Angels’ words.

The Sirens

Do I know where your ennui’s from, Sirens,
When you grieve so widely under the stars?
Sea, I am like you, filled with broken voices,
And my ships, singing, give a name to the years.

The Dove

Dove, both love and spirit
Who engendered Jesus Christ,
Like you I love a Mary.
And so with her I marry.

The Peacock

In spreading out his fan, this bird,
Whose plumage drags on earth, I fear,
Appears more lovely than before,
But makes his derrière appear.

The Owl

My poor heart's an owl
One woos, un-woos, re-woos.
Of blood, of ardour, he's the fowl.
I praise those who love me, too.

Ibis

Yes, I'll pass fearful shadows
O certain death, let it be so!
Latin mortal dreadful word,
Ibis, Nile's native bird.

The Ox

This cherubim sings the praises
Of Paradise where, with Angels,
We'll live once more, dear friends,
When the good God intends.

Guillaume Apollinaire

The Gypsy

The gypsy knew in advance
Our two lives star-crossed by night
We said farewell to her and then
from that deep well Hope began
Love heavy a performing bear
Danced upright when we wanted
And the blue bird lost his plumes
And the beggars lost their Ave
We knew quite well that we were damned
But hope of love in the street
Made us think hand in hand
Of what the Gypsy did foresee

Guillaume Apollinaire

The Ninth Secret Poem

I worship your fleece which is the perfect triangle
Of the Goddess
I am the lumberjack of the only virgin forest
O my Eldorado
I am the only fish in your voluptuous ocean
You my lovely Siren
I am the climber on your snowy mountains
O my whitest Alp
I am the heavenly archer at your beautiful mouth
O my darling quiver
I am the hauler of your midnight hair
O lovely ship on the canal of my kisses
And the lilies of your arms are beckoning me
O my summer garden
The fruits of your breast are ripening their honey for me
O my sweet-smelling orchard
And I am raising you O Madeleine O my beauty above the earth
Like the torch of all light

Guillaume Apollinaire

The Sign

I am bound to the King of the Sign of Autumn
Parting I love the fruits I detest the flowers
I regret every one of the kisses that I've given
Such a bitter walnut tells his grief to the showers
My Autumn eternal O my spiritual season
The hands of lost lovers juggle with your sun
A spouse follows me it's my fatal shadow
The doves take flight this evening their last one

Guillaume Apollinaire

The Skirt

Hallo Germaine that's a fine skirt you have
A fine skirt for a queen A cruel queen
Let's feel the silk of it Silk from Japan
And trimmed with wide lace made on no machine

Your skirt's a silken bell whose double clapper
Your legs have struck the passing of my fancies
O Germaine now I ring it my breast heaving
My hands press down upon your willing haunches

Your bedroom O my bell is a fine belfry
My hands touch silk and seem to tear my ears
Those pegs are gallows on which skirts are hanging
Those hanging men are dazzling my eyes

Motionless as an owl the oil lamp watches

Guillaume Apollinaire

The White Snow

The angels the angels in the sky
One’s dressed as an officer
One’s dressed as a chef today
And the others sing
Fine sky-coloured officer
Sweet Spring when Christmas is long gone
Will deck you with a lovely sun
A lovely sun
The chef plucks geese
Ah! Snowfalls hiss
Fall and how I miss
My beloved in my arms

Guillaume Apollinaire

There Is

There is this ship which has taken my beloved back again
There are six Zeppelin sausages in the sky and with night coming on it makes a man think of the maggots from which the stars might some day be reborn
There is this enemy submarine slipping up beneath my love
There are one thousand young pinetrees splintered by the bursting of the same shells falling around me now
There is this infantryman walking by completely blinded by poison gas
There is the obvious fact that all that is happening here was hatched a long time ago in the intestinal trenches of Nietzche Goethe and the metaphysicians of the town of Cologne
There is the obvious fact that I'm dying over a letter which has thus far been delayed
There are in my wallet various photos of my beloved
There are prisoners marching past with anxious faces
There is this artillery battery with its faithful servants hurrying among the guns
There is the postmaster arriving at a trot on the road beneath the single tree in silhouette
There is according to rumor a spy who infiltrates somewhere near here invisible as the horizon as the horizon-blue French uniform he has assumed for offensive purposes and in which he is now most effectively camouflaged
There is erect as any lily the bosom of my beloved
There is this captain anxiously awaiting the latest radio dispatch to reach us via transatlantic cable
There are at midnight these details of soldiers sawing planks for coffins
There are women somewhere in Mexico pleading with wild cries for more indian corn and maize
There is this Gulf Stream which is so warm and beneficial
There is this cemetery covered with crosses only five kilometers away
There are all these crosses everywhere this way that way
There are paradisial persimmons growing on cactus-trees in Algeria
There are the long hands of my love
There is this inkwell which I've made from a 150 mm shell I saved from shooting
There is my calvary saddle left out in the rain
There are all these rivers blasted off their courses which will never go back to their banks
There is the god of Love who leads me on so sweetly
There is this German prisoner carrying his machine-gun across his shoulders
There are men on earth who've never fought in the war
There are Hindus here who look with astonishment on the occidental style of campaign
They meditate gravely upon those who've left this place wondering whether they'll ever see them again
Knowing as they do what great progress we've made during this

particular war in the art of invisibility.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Twilight

Brushed by the shadows of the dead
On the grass where day expires
Columbine strips bare admires
her body in the pond instead
A charlatan of twilight formed
Boasts of the tricks to be performed
The sky without a stain unmarred
Is studded with the milk-white stars
From the boards pale Harlequin
First salutes the spectators
Sorcerers from Bohemia
Fairies sundry enchanters
Having unhooked a star
He proffers it with outstretched hand
While with his feet a hanging man
Sounds the cymbals bar by bar
The blind man rocks a pretty child
The doe with all her fauns slips by
The dwarf observes with saddened pose
How Harlequin magically grows

Guillaume Apollinaire

Vitam Impendere Amori

(Vitam Impendere Amori: To Threaten Life for Love)

Love is dead within your arms
Do you remember his encounter
He’s dead you restore the charms
He returns at your encounter

Another spring of springs gone past
I think of all its tenderness
Farewell season done at last
You’ll return as tenderly

****

In the evening light that’s faded
Where our several loves brush by
Your memory lies enchained
Far from our shades that die

O hands bound by memory
Burning like a funeral pyre
Where the last black Phoenix
Perfection comes to respire

Link by link the chain wears thin
Deriding us your memory
Flies ah hear it you who rail
I kneel again at your feet

****

You’ve not surprised my secret yet
Already the cortège moves on
But left to us is the regret
of there being no connivance none

The rose floats at the water’s edge
The maskers have passed by in crowds
It trembles in me like a bell
This heavy secret you ask now

****

Evening falls and in the garden
Women tell their histories
to Night that not without disdain
spills their dark hair’s mysteries

Little children little children
Your wings have flown away
But you rose that defend yourself
Throw your unrivalled scents away

For now’s the hour of petty theft
Of plumes of flowers and of tresses
Gather the fountain jets so free
Of whom the roses are mistresses

****

You descended through the water clear
I drowned my self so in your glance
The soldier passes she leans down
Turns and breaks away a branch

You float on nocturnal waves
The flame is my own heart reversed
Coloured as that comb’s tortoiseshell
The wave that bathes you mirrors well

****
O my abandoned youth is dead
Like a garland faded
Here the season comes again
Of suspicion and disdain

The landscape’s formed of canvasses
A false stream of blood flows down
And under the tree the stars glow fresh
The only passer by’s a clown

The glass in the frame has cracked
An air defined uncertainly
Hovers between sound and thought
Between ‘to be’ and memory

O my abandoned youth is dead
Like a garland faded
Here the season comes again
Of suspicion and disdain

Guillaume Apollinaire

Zone

At last you're tired of this elderly world

Shepherdess O Eiffel Tower this morning the bridges are bleating

You're fed up living with antiquity

Even the automobiles are antiques
Religion alone remains entirely new religion
Remains as simple as an airport hangar

In all Europe only you O Christianism are not old
The most modem European Pope Pius X it's you
The windows watch and shame has sealed
The confessionals against you this morning
Flyers catalogs hoardings sing aloud
Here's poetry this morning and for prose you're reading the tabloids
Disposable paperbacks filled with crimes and police
Biographies of great men a thousand various titles

I saw a pretty street this morning I forgot the name
New and cleanly it was the sun's clarion
Executives laborers exquisite stenographers
Criss-cross Monday through Saturday four times daily
Three times every morning sirens groan
At the lunch hour a rabid bell barks
The lettering on the walls and billboards
the doorplates and posters twitters parakeet-style
I love the swank of that street
Situated in Paris between the rue Aumont-Thieville and the avenue des Ternes

Here's the young street and you're still a baby
Dressed by your mother in blue and white only
You're very pious and with your oldest friend Rene Dalize
Nothing is more fun than Masses and Litanies

It's nine o'clock the gaslight is low you leave your bed
You pray all night in the school chapel
Meanwhile an eternal adorable amethyst depth
Christ's flamboyant halo spins forever
Behold the beautiful lily of worship
Behold the red-haired torch inextinguishable
Behold the pale son and scarlet of the dolorous Mother
Behold the tree forever tufted with prayer
Behold the double gallows honor and eternity
Behold the six-pointed star
Behold the God who dies on Friday and rises on Sunday
Behold the Christ who flies higher than aviators
He holds the world's record for altitude

Christ pupil of the eye

Twentieth pupil of the centuries knows its stuff
And bird-changed this century like Jesus climbs the sky
Devils in the abyss look up to watch
They say this century mimics Simon Magus in Judea
It takes a thief to catch a thief they cry
Angels flutter around the pretty trapeze act
Icarus Enoch Elijah Apollonius of Tyana
Hover as close to the airplane as they can
Sometimes they give way to other men hauling the Eucharist
Priests eternally climbing the elevating Host
The plane descends at last its wings unfolded
bursts into a million swallows
Full speed come the crows the owls and falcons
From Africa ibis storks flamingoes
The Roc-bird famous with writers and poets
Glides Adam's skull the original head in its talons
The horizon screams an eagle pouncing
And from America there comes a hummingbird
From China sinuous peehees
Who have only one wing and who fly in couples
And here's a dove immaculate spirit
Escorted by lyre-bird and shimmery peacock

Phoenix the pyre the self-resurrected
Obscures everything ardently briefly with ash
The sirens abandon their perilous channels
Each one singing more beautifully arrives
Everyone eagle Phoenix Chinese peehees
Eager to befriend a machine that flies

You are walking in Paris alone inside a crowd
Herds of buses bellow and come too close
Love-anguish clutches your throat
You must never again be loved
In the Dark Ages you would have entered a monastery
You are ashamed to overhear yourself praying
You laugh at yourself and the laughter crackles like hellfire
The sparks gild the ground and background of your life
Your life is a painting in a dark museum
And sometimes you examine it closely

You are walking in Paris the women are bloodsoaked
It was and I have no wish to remember it was the end of beauty

In Chartres from her entourage of flames Our Lady beamed at me
The blood of your Sacred Heart drenched me in Montmartre
I'm sick of hearing blissful promises
The love I feel is a venereal disease
And the image possessing you in your pain your insomnia
Vanishes and it is always near you

And now you are on the Riviera

Under lemon trees that never stop blooming
You are boating with friends
One is from Nice one is from Menton two from La Turbie
We are staring terrified at giant squid
At fish the symbols of Jesus swimming through seaweed

You are in the garden at an inn outside of Prague
You are completely happy a rose is on the table
And instead of getting on with your short-story
You watch the rosebug sleeping in the rose's heart

Appalled you see yourself reproduced in the agates of Saint Vitus
You were sad near to death to see yourself there
You looked as bewildered as Lazarus
In the Jewish ghetto the clock runs backwards
And you go backwards also through a slow life
Climbing the Hradchen listening at nightfall
To Bohemian songs in the singing taverns

You in Marseilles among the watermelons

Yu in Coblenz at the Hotel Gigantic

You in Rome beneath a Japanese tree

You in Amsterdam with a girl you find pretty who is ugly
She's engaged to marry a student from Leyden
Where you can rent rooms in Latin Cubicula locanda
I remember spending three days there and three in Gouda

You are in Paris hauled before the magistrate
You are under arrest you are a criminal now

You went on sorrowful and giddy travels
Ignorant still of dishonesty and old age
Love afflicted you at twenty and again at thirty
I've lived like a fool and I've wasted my time
You dare not look at your hands I want to weep all the time
On you on the one I love on everything that frightened you

And now you are crying at the sight of refugees
Who believe in God who pray whose women nurse babies
The hall of the train station is filled with the refugee-smell
Like the Magi refugees believe in their star
They expect to find silver mines in the Argentine
And to return like kings to their abandoned countries
One family carries a red eiderdown you carry your heart
Eiderdown and dreams are equally fantastic

Some of the refugees stay on in Paris settling
Into slums on the rue des Rosiers or the rue des Ecouffes
I have seen them often at dusk they breathe at their doorways

They budge from home as reluctantly as chessmen
They are chiefly Jewish the women wear wigs
And haunt backrooms of little shops in little chairs

You're standing at the metal counter of some dive
Drinking wretched coffee where the wretched live

You are in a cavernous restaurant at night

These women are not evil they are used-up regretful
Each has tormented someone even the ugliest

She is the daughter of a police sergeant from Jersey

Her hands I'd never noticed are hard and cracked

My pity aches along the seams of her belly

I humble my mouth to her grotesque laughter

You're alone when morning comes
The milkmen jingle bottles in the street

Night beautiful courtesan the night withdraws
Fraudulent Ferdine or careful Leah

And you drink an alcohol as caustic as your life
Your life you drink as alcohol

You walk to Auteuil you want to go on foot to sleep
At home among your South Sea and Guinean fetishes
Christs of another shape another faith
Subordinate Christs of uncertain hopes

Goodbye Goodbye

Sun cut throated

Guillaume Apollinaire