

Classic Poetry Series

Bravig Imbs

- 2 poems -

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Bravig Imbs (1904 - 1946)

Bravig Imbs was born in 1904 in Milwaukee to Norwegian-American parents. A graduate of Dartmouth College, he worked as a proofreader for the 'International Edition of the Chicago Tribune in Paris.

In Paris he befriended George Antheil, Pavel Tchelitchev, René Crevel, Georges Maratier, and later Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. In 1931, his wife Valeska gave birth to a child, and Gertrude Stein ended their friendship because of her aversion of childbirth.

He wrote novels, poems and a memoir, and played the harpsichord. He translated some poems by Georges Hugnet. He also co-wrote books with Bernard Fay and André Breton.

In 1944, he worked as a radio announcer, under the pseudonym of 'Monsieur Bobby'. He was killed in a car accident shortly after.

Works:

The Professor's Wife

Eden—Exit this Way, and Other Poems (1926)

Bernard Fay's Franklin: The Apostle of Modern Times (co-written with Bernard Fay; 1929)

Confessions of Another Young Man

Yves Tanguy (co-written with André Breton; 1946)

The Wind was There (co-written with Michael B Matthews; 1982)

Sleep

I

slowly the ponderous doors of lead imponderous
pushed by a wedging force unthinking opened
how like a cloud I floated down the dim green air
unthinking of the soft violence of odorous winds
the falling plaint of hidden violins
and eyes
following

II

doors unto doors unfolded downward
and I was like unto a sailing ship
stern downward sailing on a dim green sea
unmindful of the rich push of flowery winds
the melting voices of far seraphims
and arms
following

III

slowly the ponderous doors of lead imponderous
lowered above my head in absolute slow closing
quiet as a shadow on a dim green wall
I rested in my dark and ivory vault
the violins were no more nor eyes nor arms
hours on hours
following

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The Wind Was There

I

all was in flight
wild geese in the sky
snow from the sky flying
rivers hastening to the sea
and waves from the midsea
hastening to the shore

horses running from a fence
fences running from the ground
ground fleeing from the sky
and the sky was filled with flying stars
and suns innumerable

daisies springing from the grass
pines fleeing up the mountainside
even the mountain was in flight
less swift than southward geese
or rivers in the spring
less swift than these but fleeing still
stone upon stone scraping in slow erosion
gravel grinding into dust and fleeing before the wind

II

all was in flight
even from a distance I
my flight was faster than a fleeing cloud
I only knew the wind was there
swift and imperious and proud
sharper than fine steel

III

so shall I ever flee
swifter yet swifter
until the speed is such
my spirit shall enkindle with the wind
and then
a brown and crackled leaf I'll fall
my flesh to shrivel into mould
my blood to mingle with the seeping rain
and all my body's flight become a strange return

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