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# CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgements <i>Susan Ranson</i>	ix
Introduction <i>Ben Hutchinson</i>	xi
Translator's Note <i>Susan Ranson</i>	xxxv
 <i>Das Stunden-Buch / The Book of Hours</i>	
Erstes Buch: Das Buch vom mönchischen Leben	2
First Book: The Book of Monkish Life	3
Zweites Buch: Das Buch von der Pilgerschaft	94
Second Book: The Book of Pilgrimage	95
Drittes Buch: Das Buch von der Armut und vom Tode	156
Third Book: The Book of Poverty and Death	157
Commentary and Notes	
First Book	199
Second Book	216
Third Book	225
Index of English First Lines	233
Index of German First Lines	237

# INTRODUCTION

*Ben Hutchinson*

## I.

RILKE'S TITLE *THE BOOK OF HOURS* SUGGESTS a collection of personal devotions such as used to be written for private use in worship. That this is a volume of "religious" poetry seems self-evident. Yet Rilke's God is not, or not only, the biblical God: He is creature as much as creator, the physical embodiment of extreme human weakness and need. In order to take on this vulnerability, which enriches and completes Him, God is dependent on humanity. In *The Book of Hours* Rilke accordingly conceives himself, through the personae of monk, painter, and pilgrim, as one of those to whom it is given to picture and fashion God in humanity's own vulnerable image.

Yet this does not simply mean revealing God in the traditional devotional sense. Rilke's monk seeks rather to *conceal* God, hiding Him behind the icons he paints in order to allow Him to continue slowly developing, slowly *becoming* (to use a key term). The complex music of *The Book of Hours* can be seen as a lattice-work through which Rilke encourages his God to grow: in the rhymes, in the rhythms, in the interstices between the poems. This, we will see, places a particular emphasis on the role of the translator, since the artist-monk is in a sense already a translator himself, seeking to transform the divine into human language.

*The Book of Hours* thus offers more than mere piety. The individual poems of the sequence are not only a technical tour de force, impassioned and mystical, but are also extensively varied in voice, style, length, and theme. Their changing moods of love, empathy, inspiration, pity, pleading, even agony, recall at times the biblical Psalms, which exhibit the same emotional immediacy and breadth. Quite apart from this variety of subject matter and mood, the three books of *The Book of Hours* are testament to Rilke's rapid development as a poet. They chart his progression from his tour round Russia in 1899, through his hasty marriage and the birth of his daughter in Westerwede (near the artists' community of Worpswede) in 1901, to his turn towards the urban modernity of Paris in 1903. Rilke travels on the old Romantics' journey into the self, all the while speaking

to God as part luminous deity, part needy neighbour. As the poems proceed, so his view expands outwards, from the ascetic solipsism of his “monkish life” to the teeming cities of “poverty and death.” The poet is passing through the formative phase of his mid-twenties: his travels and relationships bring him new experiences and ideas which lend the three books an immediate biographical resonance.

Despite this accessibility, however, *The Book of Hours* has in recent years suffered from a kind of inferiority complex. Before the war it was amongst Rilke’s most popular works, helping to establish the hagiographic image of an almost saintly poet (tinged, at times, with borderline Nazism).<sup>1</sup> Yet in the second half of the twentieth century it has been steadily surpassed in popularity by the brilliance of its younger brothers the *New Poems*, the *Duino Elegies*, and the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, and has thus often retreated into a cult of Christian mysticism, perceived as prayer rather than poetry: while its siblings fight on the frontline of modern literature, it, like the more sensitive brother, takes to the church. Curiously, *The Book of Hours* seems at times to have inverted Harold Bloom’s famous anxiety of influence: the reception of Rilke’s later books has been so overwhelming that it dare not compete.

Yet is this artistic cringe justified? Whilst the lasting brilliance of Rilke’s other major works is beyond question, this view of *The Book of Hours* as a slight embarrassment to its author needs urgent revising. There is a sense, indeed, in which it is not only Rilke’s first major work, but also his defining work, at least in terms of his development: the subsequent *New Poems* react against it, the later *Duino Elegies* look back to it. As in the elegies, for instance, the God of *The Book of Hours* is not the Christian God, but rather the embodiment of Rilke’s artistic inspiration and development: “God, the rhyme.”

Simplifying just a little, one can say that these are the two main ways in which *The Book of Hours* has been received: either as a work of idiosyncratic religious devotion in its own right, or as the seed of Rilke’s subsequent development. The first wave of its reception followed almost exclusively the former path; indeed the propagation of Rilke’s perceived “mystical” teachings by his hierophants often obscured the actual poetic achievements. Rilke, it should be said, was happy tacitly to collude in this perception, since it fitted his hieratic sense of “calling,” of his life as slowly unfolding myth. He was sanctified as a visionary seer both by influential (and invariably female) friends such as Ellen Key and the Prinzessin von Thurn und Taxis, as well as by early critics like Eva Wernick and Ruth Mövius, and his death in 1926 served only to heighten his legend. In this

<sup>1</sup> See Franz Koch, *Rilkes Stunden-Buch: Ein Akt deutschen Glaubens* (Berlin: Aus den Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1943).

pre-war context *The Book of Hours* had a significant part to play, as a kind of prophet's testimony, John the Baptist to the messianic *Duino Elegies*. Devotional verse was somehow appropriate for a poet who himself elicited such devotion.

As Rilke scholarship developed in the second half of the twentieth century, however, attention shifted from the exuberance of *The Book of Hours* to the sober craftsmanship of the *New Poems* and the philosophical speculations of the late elegies and sonnets. The ontological "scream" at the start of the *Duino Elegies* became the poetic equivalent of Edvard Munch's famous painting, an image of existential despair that fitted well with the prevailing philosophical climate of the postwar years. Once again, Rilke had cultivated his own myth, insisting on his story of quasi-divine inspiration which the winds on the cliffs of Duino had whispered to him.

In the 1960s and 70s the *New Poems* came to the fore. The preponderance of sonnets, the thematic and stylistic coherence of the "Thing-poems" with their emphasis on animals and objects, the "sculptural" influence of his Master Rodin: these "new" poems were ripe for close textual criticism. Their craftsmanship is indeed unsurpassed in Rilke's entire oeuvre, a technical tour de force whose strictly aesthetic programme, forgoing any religious or philosophical speculation, stands as a towering achievement of artistic willpower. Understood as a reaction against the visionary cadences of *The Book of Hours*, the extent to which Rilke was able to remake his style so utterly and so quickly is little short of staggering.

Aside from the unquestionable poetic achievement of this subsequent work, however, what is striking is the success of Rilke's self-mythologizing. The general perception of both the *New Poems* and the later elegies and sonnets is inextricably tied not only to the circumstances of their creation, but also to their *legend*. The *Duino Elegies* famously took ten years to complete, from that moment of windswept inspiration on the clifftops to the Swiss seclusion of his tower in Muzot; the *Sonnets to Orpheus* erupted from him in an unparalleled three-day burst of intoxication, let loose by the long-awaited release of finishing the elegies. Similarly the *New Poems* are set against the background of Paris, of Rilke's apprenticeship to Rodin and the sculptor's famous injunctions to work and to "see." Rilke's visit to the Jardin de Luxembourg to study the panther pacing in its cage resulted in the most anthologized of all his poems; every German schoolboy knows the story.

Has the reception of *The Book of Hours* been lacking this coherent narrative? Perhaps it represents a rare instance of Rilke failing to establish the biographical context of his reception. No comparable legend has attached itself in the public consciousness to the genesis of *The Book of Hours*, no iconic *Entstehungsgeschichte* precedes the poetry. Yet its story is equally compelling, a story of both artistic and topographical influence,

the story of a seminal four-year period in the life of one young poet but also in the broader culture of the turn of the century. The book itself emerges as something like a *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: both a document of development and a major work in its own right, capable, on its own terms as highly personal “devotional” verse, of competing with its better-known brothers. To tell this story, we have to reacquaint ourselves with Rilke’s biography.

\* \* \*

Rainer Maria Rilke was born in Prague in December 1875, the son of a non-commissioned officer turned railway inspector. His mother, who had lost a daughter a week after her birth, called her boy “René Maria” and dressed him as a little girl, a peculiarity which, to judge from comments made in his novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, Rilke does not seem to have found disagreeable. He was by all accounts as precious and effete a child as this suggests, in fear of paternal authority and cosseted by his socially ambitious mother. “I had to wear beautiful long dresses,” Rilke recalled, “and until I started school I went about like a little girl. I think my mother played with me as though I were a big doll.”<sup>2</sup>

To combat this effeminacy, at the age of ten Rilke was sent away to military boarding school in St Pölten, where he endured four years of what he melodramatically called “the world’s most violent anguish.”<sup>3</sup> After a brief spell in another military school and in a commercial academy in Linz, Rilke retreated to Prague to devote himself to his poetic ambitions, getting involved in various affairs of the heart along the way, the most important of which was an engagement to Valerie (“Vally”) von David Rhonfeld, a colonel’s daughter. The verse from this period has not aged well: even specialist scholars can barely bring themselves to defend its *fin-de-siècle* pretensions, and indeed Rilke himself later disowned these early efforts as derivative. The quickly repudiated 1894 collection *Life and Songs* was followed in 1895 by *Offering to the Lares*, which itself barely manages to rise above the level of picture-postcard sentimentality, hymning his native city in effusive verse such as the opening lines of the book:

The old house; in front of me  
I see all Prague stretched wide;  
far below the twilight strides,  
with silent tread goes by.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by Ralph Freedman, *Rainer Maria Rilke* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1996), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Freedman, *Life of a Poet* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1998), 16.

Whilst the best poems in the collection can be said to anticipate the great city-portraits of the *New Poems* (of Venice or Bruges, for instance), the difference in quality remains significant. With the indiscriminate enthusiasm characteristic of young poets, Rilke's earliest verse relies on overwrought alliteration and assonance — techniques which will find their first sustained achievement in *The Book of Hours*. Certainly it is hard to claim much intrinsic merit for this earliest poetry on its own terms; yet the subsequent work would not have been possible without it. Rilke's juvenilia is akin to Wittgenstein's famous ladder: he threw it away once he had climbed up it.

In 1896 Rilke left Prague for ever, moving initially to the artistic centre of Munich, the start of what would become a lifetime spent moving between European cities. Several more volumes of early verse followed, highly derivative of the prevailing *Jugendstil* climate: *Dream-crowned* in 1896, *Advent* in 1897. The dominant idiom is organic, wallowing in romantic reveries of thwarted desire against a picturesque background of permanent spring. Rilke is essentially *dreaming* of being a poet, rather than becoming one:

This my labour:  
crowned by desire  
to wander the paths of days.  
Then sturdied, strong,  
send rootlet streamers down  
deep into life as I may —  
and through its pain  
mature far beyond it, and long  
past the end of time.

*In Celebration of Myself* is the first collection in which Rilke starts to show any real promise. Written between 1897 and 1898, but first published in Berlin in 1899, the style of the verse is true to its original cover, a typically *Jugendstil* arabesque by Rilke's friend Heinrich Vogeler. The book shows no great stylistic break with its predecessors, yet an increasing confidence is apparent, as the narcissistic title suggests. The first-person perspective adopted in *The Book of Hours* is rehearsed here: from the first poem onwards, Rilke attempts to explore the relationship between his incipient self and a stylized organic world around him:

I am so young. To sounds that rustle past me  
I give myself in full in the ear's thrill,  
and following the wind's sweet pressure,  
like climbers bowering the garden path,  
my longeys twist and intertwine their tendrils.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

*Susan Ranson*

HOW DOES A LITERARY WORK ATTRACT A TRANSLATOR? The answer must be that it takes a reader by the scruff of the neck. *Das Stunden-Buch*, the first book I bought in my youthful “gap summer” in Germany, decades later still has a hold on me: I have found its range of emotions and ideals, its sequential structure and strong sense of progression, its characters, images, and language lastingly beguiling.

The translator of poetry determines precisely not to let the poetry slip through her fingers. Some of it must escape with the change of language: German is naturally more sonorous than English, and Rilke calls up all its resonance to weight his verse with intense music. More of the poetry is abandoned when the translator must decide how much even of the music available to it English prosody will accept. Far less, certainly, than the original German, but assessing the music in both languages affected my decisions on rhythm; it could not be ignored. This was an unexpected finding that has guided my hand at all levels, in decisions of verse form, rhythm, word choice, and rhyme.

### Rhythm and Metre

Picking up *The Book of Hours*, the reader is struck first by the crowding visions that speak directly through these prayer-poems, and by the language that almost makes tone-poems of them. Equally striking is the contrastingly conventional framework of much of the verse: how can translation do justice to this rich, dense, regular texture? Rhythms are on the whole strict, lines are of four or five metrical feet (tetrameters, pentameters), and defined or undefined pauses tend to mark the line endings. Rhyme schemes are usually regular, and the rhymes are “perfect,” that is, with final vowel and consonant(s) coinciding. All this, one might think, would make for jingles rather than poems. Not so in Rilke’s hands, but it does call for particular care in translation. After a century of free verse, English poetry is intolerant of regularity.

The translation passed through several drafts before it became clear how much regularity of rhythm would need to remain. There is now a

fluctuating alternation between regular and irregular, but the final compromises are less in the larger scale of metre (the count and underlying type of metrical foot used by Rilke in a poem), which is left largely untouched, than in the detail of rhythm (the number of syllables in the line and the placing of stress within the metrical foot). For an example of metre versus rhythm, as here defined, see the opening six lines of “I cannot think that little figure Death” (p. 41). Rilke’s *metre* (iambic pentameter) is strictly regular, bar the feminine ending to line 5. My underlying metre is the same, but the regular *rhythm* of lines 1, 5, 6 varies in the other lines: some of the stresses slip and the nominal ten syllables per line vary between eight and twelve:

I cannot think that little figure Death,  
over whose smooth pate we look at life,  
will be our forced fate, our dark care.

I cannot imagine him a serious threat;  
I am alive, have time to build, my blood  
is red for longer than the roses are.

Why this rhythmic semi-regularity? By way of answer, let us look at this first hurdle for the translator, the sheer inability of English to reproduce Rilke’s waves of sound and the difficulties this presents not only in aural but in *rhythmic* terms. His miraculous rhymed iambic tetrameters, for example, readily turn to sing-song in English; why do they not in the original?

Rilke has a particular ear for language in that his vocabulary and syntax are, in the main, of everyday simplicity but work to unusual aural effect. Their (literal) English translations below are brighter, more buoyant, less plangent, with shorter, lighter vowels and few rich agglomerations of consonants:

du fühlst dich nur leise berührt von den ähnlichen Ernten  
[you feel yourself only lightly touched by similar harvests:]  
(“I lived with the ancient monks,” p. 81)

der selig auf der Städte Dächer fällt  
[falling blessedly on the city roofs]  
(“You are the Poor,” p. 181)

As an example at stanza level, here are the first tetrameters of “The emperors of earth are old” (pp. 136–37):

<p>Die Könige der Welt sind alt und werden keine Erben haben. Die Söhne sterben schon als Knaben, und ihre bleichen Töchter gaben  die kranken Kronen der Gewalt.</p>	<p>The emperors of earth are old and have no heirs. Their sons died young, and their pallid daughters loosed their hold on the crowns bequeathed them and yielded into the hands of force the sickened gold.</p>
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In the German, apart from the graceful feminine end-rhymes, which a close translation cannot replicate, there is alliteration and insistent internal part-rhyme (Knaben/kranken/Kronen, werden/Erben/haben, sterben/Knaben, Welt/alt); the sounds of the English stanza cannot match such resonance. Some full rhymes and as many long vowels as possible remain, but those vowels tend to be varied in the English, to generally lighter effect. Moreover, in both the perfect form and the imperfect, Rilke's rhyme always flows more abundantly than English rhyme ever can; English presents fewer opportunities for rhyme, partly because its largely uninflected words are less uniform in their final syllables.

Once these German/English differences are taken into account, it becomes clearer why they affect the perception of rhythm: Rilke uses resonance so luxuriantly that it creates fierce tensions with the straitjacket of his rhythms *and camouflages them*. In choosing to recall or use these rhythms to any extent the translator may therefore wish to shadow the original music, if at some distance, but avoiding rhythmic monotony also requires, as a matrix for the regular lines, a surrounding semi-regularity of texture. The English stanza above retains the four metrical stresses per line but releases the rhythm in line 4 and uses enjambment in two consecutive lines to give a less insistent overall rhythm. In the German, the drenching musicality counters the rhythms. In English, without this effect, some rhythms must be freed. This, then, becomes the norm: deleting end-of-line pauses, switching the positions of stresses, and adding or deleting syllables in the line. This last can occasionally even have the effect of altering the metre of the individual line rather than merely the rhythm, changing an iambic line to a largely dactylic or anapaestic one for instance.

Where Rilke adopts an irregular rhythm this translation reproduces and may extend it. However, despite what is said above, the new rhythmic variations, although pervasive, remain minor. Distorting the regular rhythms vigorously in twenty-first-century fashion would destroy the essence of Rilkean style and would be like subjecting baroque harmonies to the weight of the large Romantic orchestra (this was the norm until these last few decades, but who would do it now?). Nor did I wish to extinguish variety; the book's larger-scale regularities and irregularities must be allowed to enhance each other. An original regular rhythm may be retained especially in short, reflective (and celebrated) poems such as "The bar-

berries already ripen red" (p. 151), "Put out my eyes" (p. 107) or "I find your trace in all these things" (p. 27), or in the poems of psalm-like plaint and pleading in the third book or the final paean to St Francis (p. 195).

Varying the metre would be quite another question; despite their new internal rhythms, pentameters remain pentameters, and so on. Exceptionally, a true change of metre seems justified: in very long poems, for instance, which in English may demand a line or two of different length for reasons of variety or emphasis, or in otherwise metrically regular poems with stanzas of set length, where a shorter line, perhaps at the close of a stanza, occasionally feels right. Rilke does this himself to refreshing effect; this translation slightly extends the practice. Sometimes a whole poem simply falls naturally in English into a shorter metre ("Here I am, least of the least," p. 115, "And yet, although we strain to leave," p. 117, "So would I seek you," p. 141, "You are the Poor," p. 181). Perhaps the shorter average length of English words has something to do with this and with why a rare shorter line insists on standing, without rhyme or reason, among the lines of original length.

## Chronological Development of Metre in *The Book of Hours*

In *The Book of Hours*, originally written without publication in mind, the three constituent books are dated at two-year intervals. They reveal the brisk development of a personal style. The first book, *The Book of Monkish Life*, is the least regular metrically, with over a quarter of its sixty-seven poems written in mixed metres, often highly mixed, with both very short and long lines. This book also contains almost all the poems written as fairly regular patterns of mixed pentameters and tetrameters (five poems), and mixed tetrameters and trimeters (seven poems).

As this first book continues, it progresses towards the style of the later two books, with whole poems — most of them regularly so, bar the odd one or two lines — in tetrameters or, at the end of the book, pentameters (these two metres make up only 22% and 33% of the first book's total respectively). An exhilarating poem in anapaestic hexameters, another in anapaestic lines of mixed length, and two trochaic poems add to the impression that Rilke is casting round to find his personal rhythm. The flying anapaestic foot, usually mixed into iambic lines, appears only in the first book, more or less frequently in about a quarter of the poems; it is a highly effective tool in Rilke's hands and attractive to translate, but Rilke may have considered it lacked gravitas in the later, more poignant, pages.

About sixty per cent of *The Book of Pilgrimage* is written in regular or almost regular iambic pentameters, seven poems (20%) in mixed metres,

and another seven in iambic tetrameters. In *The Book of Poverty and Death*, all but three of the poems are in pentameters, completing Rilke's progression away from irregular versification.

In summary, this translation quietly loosens Rilke's sustained regularities of both rhythm and, occasionally, metre, while allowing a beat that is audible enough and sustained enough to sound Rilkean. Any original non-iambic or mixed rhythms stand, since their variety is valuable, and there is now much more enjambment than Rilke uses; his preferred iambic rhythms receive an initial trochee more often, and the iambus within the line more often translates to a trochee, dactyl, or anapaest. All the above allows *The Book of Hours* to retain its own persuasive and powerful flow.

## Rhyme

Rilke is celebrated for his rhyme. In *The Book of Hours*, with youthful exuberance, he scoops up words with similar sounds and pours them barely diluted into his verse, taking fullest advantage of the frequency with which rich or repetitive sounds (whether vowels, diphthongs, consonant combinations, or merely similar inflections) appear in German. Such virtuosity is very often untranslatable.

A second major difficulty for the modern translator is the refusal of the last eighty years of poetry to walk in its older tracks. Simile, formal stanzas, and equal line-lengths have all become outmoded, at least to the extent to which Rilke uses them, and this is particularly true of his formal metre and rhyme. This has affected translations: some, following current fashion, conspicuously ignore even the most basic rhythmicality, not to mention formal metre, and use a subtler (sometimes inaudible) word-music. Rilke without his soundscape? — a landscape still unlike any other, but lacking the dramatic mantle he flung over it, and in the end, I submit, a lesser landscape. Removal of his rhyme, especially, turns a cold back on what he achieved.

Indeed Rilke explicitly expresses awe for the power of rhyme, in *The Book of Hours* and elsewhere. His later poem "The gazelle" allows it a spell-binding power:

Enchanted creature: how may the twinned tuning  
of words I choose ever rival the rhyme  
that comes and goes in you . . .

and in two lines of *The Book of Hours* he attributes to it a particular divinity:

## FIRST BOOK

---

### *The Book of Monkish Life* (1899)

**B**right with metallic strike, the hour  
tilts, and touches me:  
my senses shiver. I feel — I create —  
and I seize the plastic day.

Until I discovered it nothing was yet  
complete, transformation stilled.  
But my vision matures and receives — like a bride —  
the fulfilment of its will.

To me nothing's too small to love.  
I paint it, large, on gold  
and hold it up. Who is to say  
in whom it will free the soul? . . .

**I**live my life in widening rings.  
The last ring, in spite of my trying, I doubt —  
as it wanders across and over things —  
if I shall ever complete.

For in this ring I encircle God,  
the aged tower — millennia long;  
and I need to know: am I falcon, or storm,  
or song, an immense song?

Ich habe viele Brüder in Sutanen  
 Im Süden, wo in Klöstern Lorbeer steht.  
 Ich weiß, wie menschlich sie Madonnen planen,  
 und träume oft von jungen Tizianen,  
 durch die der Gott in Gluten geht.

Doch wie ich mich auch in mich selber neige:  
*Mein* Gott ist dunkel und wie ein Gewebe  
 von hundert Wurzeln, welche schweigsam trinken.  
 Nur, daß ich mich aus *seiner* Wärme hebe,  
 mehr weiß ich nicht, weil alle meine Zweige  
 tief unten ruhn und nur im Winde winken.

Wir dürfen dich nicht eigenmächtig malen,  
 du Dämmernde, aus der der Morgen stieg.  
 Wir holen aus den alten Farbenschalen  
 die gleichen Striche und die gleichen Strahlen,  
 mit denen dich der Heilige verschwieg.

Wir bauen Bilder vor dir auf wie Wände;  
 so daß schon tausend Mauern um dich stehn.  
 Denn dich verhüllen unsre frommen Hände,  
 sooft dich unsre Herzen offen sehn.

**M**any my brothers of the cloth, in the fair  
 land of the south where cloister laurels bloom.  
 And I know they draw Madonnas to the life,  
 and I dream of early Titians on their walls  
 where God walks in his glory of fire.

Yet as my mind inclines to its own bent:  
*my* God is dark, roots of secret weave  
 in hundreds that I cannot hear, drinking.  
 Simply, his warmth grows me. I divine  
 no more, for my branches rest deep, reticent,  
 only the message of the winds in their waving.

**S**o arbitrarily we may not paint you,  
 you who are dawn, from whom the morning rose.  
 We fetch our colours out of the ancient trays,  
 the same brush-strokes, even the haloed rays  
 with which the painter-saint overlaid and stilled you.

Images we build you in their thousands,  
 and set them up in dense walls round you.  
 Our hands veil you in devotion, lest  
 you stand apparent to the heart that finds you.

Ich liebe meines Wesens Dunkelstunden,  
 In welchen meine Sinne sich vertiefen;  
 in ihnen hab ich, wie in alten Briefen,  
 mein täglich Leben schon gelebt gefunden  
 und wie Legende weit und überwunden.

Aus ihnen kommt mir Wissen, daß ich Raum  
 zu einem zweiten zeitlos breiten Leben habe.

Und manchmal bin ich wie der Baum,  
 der, reif und rauschend, über einem Grabe  
*den* Traum erfüllt, den der vergangne Knabe  
 (um den sich seine warmen Wurzeln drängen)  
 verlor in Traurigkeiten und Gesängen.

Du, Nachbar Gott, wenn ich dich manchmal  
 in langer Nacht mit hartem Klopfen störe, —  
 so ists, weil ich dich selten atmen höre  
 und weiß: Du bist allein im Saal.  
 Und wenn du etwas brauchst, ist keiner da,  
 um deinem Tasten einen Trank zu reichen:  
 Ich horche immer. Gib ein kleines Zeichen.  
 Ich bin ganz nah.

Nur eine schmale Wand ist zwischen uns,  
 durch Zufall; denn es könnte sein:  
 ein Rufen deines oder meines Munds —  
 und sie bricht ein  
 ganz ohne Lärm und Laut.

Aus deinen Bildern ist sie aufgebaut.

Und deine Bilder stehn vor dir wie Namen.  
 Und wenn einmal das Licht in mir entbrennt,  
 mit welchem meine Tiefe dich erkennt,  
 vergeudet sichs als Glanz auf ihren Rahmen.

Und meine Sinne, welche schnell erlahmen,  
 sind ohne Heimat und von dir getrennt.

## INDEX OF ENGLISH FIRST LINES

All but sunless: the great Sobór, 75  
All who are bent on seeking you out tempt you, 121  
A mad nightwatchman, 129  
A name is a light, set with intent, 53  
And God commanded me to write, 69  
And grant that these two voices go with me, 173  
And see, their body is a bridegroom's, 187  
And so one man above all portrayed her, 39  
And these your poor linger, 193  
And they have hands like those of women, 185  
And when they sleep they seem to be returning, 187  
And yet, although we strain to leave, 117  
And yet, it has happened to me, 93  
And you inherit the green, 111  
A thousand theologians steeped, 71

Because, once, He desired you, 19  
Bright with metallic strike, 3  
But bear them away again from urban evils, 189  
By day you are a hearsay-sound, 143

Chaos has found you, yesterday a boy, 45  
Cities turn their force full on their own, 193  
Consider them and look at what reflects them, 183  
Create One who is glorious, Lord, 169

Darkness of night, out of which I came, 13  
Deep in the night I dig you up, you treasure, 155  
Do you know of those holy men, 129

Eternal being, revealing yourself to me, 103

For gardens *are* — designed by kings for hours, 175  
For poverty is luminous from within . . . , 179  
For see, they will live, flourish, multiply, 189  
For we are only rind of fruit, 165

God, how do I comprehend you, 49

God, you must not take fright when you hear them say, 153  
 God speaks only before he makes his creature, 79  
 Great cities are untruth, 173

Here I am, least of the least, 115  
 His tenderness burdens us like an incubus, 107  
 Houses will not know peace, 139

I am, you Anxious One, 23  
 I am here just as the century goes, 9  
 I am not. The harm my brother has done me, 11  
 I am the same, 99  
 I am too alone in the world and yet not alone enough, 15  
 I believe in all that is not yet said, 13  
 I cannot think that little figure Death, 41  
 I cherish my mind's hours of the dark, 7  
 If I'd grown up somewhere with brighter days, 25  
 I find your trace in all these things, 27  
 If only there were peace, 9  
 I know that riddles are your ground, 59  
 I live my life in widening rings, 3  
 I lived with the ancient monks, 81  
 I love you, you our most beneficent law, 29  
 In this hamlet is the last house, 127  
 In those days they loved her too, 37  
 I read it as it rises in your Word, 11  
 I return from my swinging pulses, 61  
 I want to laud him, 171

Just as the watchman of the vineyard lands, 79

Leaf-light rustles in your canopy, 87  
 Let your last sign happen to us, 171  
 Lord, we are poorer than the poor beasts, 167  
 Lord: for the larger cities lie, 161

Make me the watcher of your wastes, 159  
 Many my brothers of the cloth, 5  
 My life is not this steeply dipping hour, 23  
 My life takes the style of dress and hair, 67  
 My neighbour God, do I disturb your peace, 7

Notice the life walking in their feet, 185  
 Not yet stormed, you many cities, 61

Often a man may leave his evening bread, 127  
 O God, if only I were many pilgrims, 141  
 O Lord, give each of us our own death, 163  
 One hour from the end of day, 91  
 Only the deed grasps you, 65  
 O where is he that rose out of his time, 195

People who move their hands, 51  
 Perhaps I am isolate in immense mountains, 157  
 Pilgrims' morning, 145  
 Poets achieved your scattering, 73  
 Pray then, as he he has taught you, 47  
 Put out my eyes: I see you still the same, 107

Rumours run that conjecture you, 119

See, God, among your builders one is new, 29  
 She is womanly in your eyes, like Ruth, 109  
 So arbitrarily we may not paint you, 5  
 So is my work of every day, 59  
 So I wake full of a child's trust, 85  
 So many angels seek you in the light, 33  
 Some hymns I have that are my silence, 49  
 So would I seek you, 141  
 Submissive you want us, faces inclined, 125

That some time ago I was not, 87  
 The barberries already ripen red, 151  
 The bough of the tree that is God, 35  
 The emperors of earth are old, 137  
 The house of the poor is like an altar shrine, 191  
 Their mouth brings to mind the carved bust, 185  
 Their voice reaches us from distances, 187  
 Then, as a pilgrim, I went in, 77  
 Then I saw palaces alive, 177  
 There the white-bloomed lead their pale existence, 163  
 The world will find the mould of its old might, 137  
 They are not poor, but rather the unrich, 179  
 They are so quiet as to be almost things, 183  
 Those were the days of Michelangelo, 33  
 To you I pray, the Illustrious, 97  
 To you my prayers are no blasphemy, 105  
 Trickling, trickling: I run like sand, 27

We build you with our trembling hands, 19

- What will you do, God, when I die, 43  
 When something drops from my windowsill, 123  
 Where is he gone, brilliant, ringing being, 197  
 Whoever smooths life's absurdities, 21  
 Why are my hands unskilful with the colours, 21  
 With a bough so unlike that other, 39  
 Workers we are: apprentice, journeyman, master, 31
- Yet, as though the heavy-fruited garlands, 37  
 You, who know, whose wide knowledge rises, 183  
 You are so great, Lord, that I am nothing, 31  
 You are the Cloister to the Stigmata, 135  
 You are the Deepest, who loomed high, 57  
 You are the future, sovereign morning red, 133  
 You are the heir, 109  
 You are the murmurer asleep, 43  
 You are the old man with his hair, 117  
 You are the Poor, stripped of means, 181  
 You come and go. The doors close, 55  
 You darkening ground, patiently bearing the walls, 83  
 You feel no awe at the storm's rage, 95  
 You: mountain that *is* when mountains came, 157  
 You see, there is much I want, 17  
 You too, God, will be great, 139  
 You willing, full source, 89  
 Your first word: *Light* — and time became, 53

## INDEX OF GERMAN FIRST LINES

- Aber als hätte die Last der Fruchtgehänge, 36  
Alle, die ihre Hände regen, 50  
Alle, welche dich suchen, versuchen dich, 120  
Alles wird wieder groß sein und gewaltig, 136  
Auch du wirst groß sein, 138
- Bei Tag bist du das Hörensagen, 142  
Betrachte sie und sieh, was ihnen gliche, 182
- Da leben Menschen, weißerblühte, blasse, 162  
Da neigt sich die Stunde und rührt mich an, 2  
Dann bete du, wie es dich dieser lehrt, 46  
Dann sah ich auch Paläste, welche leben, 176  
Daraus, das Einer dich einmal gewollt hat, 18  
Das letzte Zeichen laß an uns geschehen, 170  
Daß ich nicht war vor einer Weile, 86  
Das waren Tage Michelangelo's, 32  
Da trat ich als ein Pilger ein, 76  
Da ward auch die zur Frucht Erweckte, 36  
Dein allererstes Wort war: *Licht*, 52  
Denn, Herr, die großen Städte sind, 160  
Denn Armut ist ein großer Glanz aus Innen . . . , 178  
Denn Gärten sind, — von Königen gebaut, 174  
Denn sieh: sie werden leben und sich mehren, 188  
Denn wir sind nur die Schale und das Blatt, 164  
Der Ast vom Baume Gott, der über Italien reicht, 34  
Der Name ist uns wie ein Licht, 52  
Des Armen Haus ist wie ein Altarschrein, 190  
Dich wundert nicht des Sturmes Wucht, 94  
Die Dichter haben dich verstreut, 72  
Die grossen Städte sind nicht wahr, 172  
Die Könige der Welt sind alt, 136  
Die Städte aber wollen nur das Ihre, 192  
Dir ist mein Beten keine Blasphemie, 104  
Du, der du weißt, und dessen weites Wissen, 182  
Du, gestern Knabe, dem die Wirrnis kam, 44  
Du, Nachbar Gott, wenn ich dich manchesmal, 6

- Du Berg, der blieb da die Gebirge kamen, 156  
 Du bist das Kloster zu den Wundenmalen, 134  
 Du bist der Alte, dem die Haare, 116  
 Du bist der Arme, du der Mittellose, 180  
 Du bist der Erbe, 108  
 Du bist der raunende Verrufte, 42  
 Du bist der Tiefste, welcher ragte, 56  
 Du bist die Zukunft, großes Morgenrot, 132  
 Du bist so groß, daß ich schon nicht mehr bin, 30  
 Du Dunkelheit, aus der ich stamme, 12  
 Du dunkelnder Grund, geduldig erträgst du die Mauern, 82  
 Du Ewiger, du hast dich mir gezeigt, 102  
 Du Gott, ich möchte viele Pilger sein, 140  
 Du kommst und gehst, 54  
 Du meinst die Demut, 124  
 Du mußt nicht bangen, Gott, 152  
 Du siehst, ich will viel, 16  
 Du Williger, und deine Gnade kam, 88  
 Du wirst nur mit der Tat erfaßt, 64
- Eine Stunde vom Rande des Tages, 90  
 Ein Pilgermorgen, 144  
 Es lärmt das Licht im Wipfel deines Baumes, 86  
 Es tauchten tausend Theologen, 70  
 Es wird nicht Ruhe in den Häusern, 138
- Gerüchte gehn, die dich vermuten, 118  
 Gott, wie begreif ich deine Stunde, 48  
 Gott spricht zu jedem nur, eh er ihn macht, 78
- Herr: Wir sind ärmer denn die armen Tiere, 166
- Ich bete wieder, du Erlauchter, 96  
 Ich bin, du Ängstlicher, 22  
 Ich bin auf der Welt zu allein und doch nicht allein genug, 14  
 Ich bin derselbe noch, der kniete, 98  
 Ich bin nicht. Der Bruder hat mir was getan, 10  
 Ich bin nur einer deiner Ganzgeringen, 114  
 Ich finde dich in allen diesen Dingen, 26  
 Ich glaube an Alles noch nie Gesagte, 12  
 Ich habe Hymnen, die ich schweige, 48  
 Ich habe viele Brüder in Sutanen, 4  
 Ich kann nicht glauben, daß der kleine Tod, 40  
 Ich komme aus meinen Schwingen heim, 60  
 Ich lebe grad, da das Jahrhundert geht, 8

- Ich lebe mein Leben in wachsenden Ringen, 2  
 Ich lese es heraus aus deinem Wort, 10  
 Ich liebe dich, du sanftestes Gesetz, 28  
 Ich liebe meines Wesens Dunkelstunden, 6  
 Ich verrinne, ich verrinne, 26  
 Ich war bei den ältesten Mönchen, 80  
 Ich weiß: Du bist der Rätselhafte, 58  
 Ich will ihn preisen, 170  
 Ihr Mund ist wie der Mund an einer Büste, 184  
 Ihr vielen unbestürmten Städte, 60  
 In diesem Dorfe steht das letzte Haus, 126  
 In tiefen Nächten grab ich dich, du Schatz, 154
- Jetzt reifen schon die roten Berberitzen, 150
- Lösch mir die Augen aus: ich kann dich sehn, 106
- Mach Einen herrlich, Herr, mach Einen groß, 168  
 Mach mich zum Wächter deiner Weiten, 158  
 Manchmal steht einer auf beim Abendbrot, 126  
 Mein Leben hat das gleiche Kleid und Haar, 66  
 Mein Leben ist nicht diese steile Stunde, 22  
 Mit einem Ast, der jenem niemals glich, 38
- Nachtwächter ist der Wahnsinn, 128  
 Nur nimm sie wieder aus der Städte Schuld, 188
- O Herr, gib jedem seinen eignen Tod, 162  
 O wo ist der, der aus Besitz und Zeit, 194  
 O wo ist er, der Klare, hingeklungen, 196
- Selten ist Sonne im Sobór, 74  
 Sieh, Gott, es kommt ein Neuer an dir bauen, 28  
 Sie sind es nicht. Sie sind nur die Nicht-Reichen, 178  
 Sie sind so still; fast gleichen sie den Dingen, 182  
 So bin ich nur als Kind erwacht, 84  
 So hat man sie gemalt, 38  
 So ist mein Tagwerk, 58  
 So möcht ich zu dir gehn: von fremden Schwellen, 140  
 So viele Engel suchen dich im Lichte, 32
- Und deine Armen leiden unter diesen, 192  
 Und dennoch: mir geschieht, 92  
 Und doch, obwohl ein jeder von sich strebt, 116  
 Und du erbst das Grün, 110

Und gib, daß beide Stimmen mich begleiten, 172  
 Und Gott befiehlt mir, daß ich schriebe, 68  
 Und ihre Hände sind wie die von Frauen, 184  
 Und ihre Stimme kommt von ferneher, 186  
 Und meine Seele ist ein Weib vor dir, 108  
 Und seine Sorgfalt ist uns wie ein Alb, 106  
 Und sieh, wie ihrer Füße Leben geht, 184  
 Und sieh: ihr Leib ist wie ein Bräutigam, 186  
 Und wenn sie schlafen, sind sie wie an alles, 186

Vielleicht, daß ich durch schwere Berge gehe, 156

Was irren meine Hände in den Pinseln, 20  
 Was wirst du tun, Gott, wenn ich sterbe, 42  
 Weißt du von jenen Heiligen, mein Herr, 128  
 Wenn etwas mir vom Fenster fällt, 122  
 Wenn es nur einmal so ganz stille wäre, 8  
 Wenn ich gewachsen wäre irgendwo, 24  
 Werkleute sind wir: Knappen, Jünger, Meister, 30  
 Wer seines Lebens viele Widersinne, 20  
 Wie der Wächter in den Weingeländen, 78  
 Wir bauen an dir mit zitternden Händen, 18  
 Wir dürfen dich nicht eigenmächtig malen, 4