

Rainer Maria Rilke

SONNETS TO ORPHEUS, 1.2

translated from the German by Rick Anthony Furtak

It was almost a girl who issued out
from this happy accord of song and lyre
and glowed translucent through her springtime shroud
and made herself a bed within my ear.

And slept in me. And everything was her sleep:
the trees that I looked up to, the unhidden
distances, the meadow I could feel,
and every wonder I myself was given.

She slept the world. Singing god, how then
did you fulfill her that she never hoped
to be awake? See, she got up and slept.

Where is her death? O, could you still compose
this theme before your song dissolves itself?
Where does she sink from me? . . . A girl, almost.