

NE TIMEAS NOCTEM

N S T F.

28th October 1979.

MZX 3, E
P.B. 22b

Ne timeas noctem
neque matutini splendorem
ne timeas cadentem nivem
aeternae candoris
neque viriditatem
aestatis cantus.

Tibzax mil-lejl,
mis-sebh li jzur id-dinja,
mill-borra bajdanija
tax-xitwa dejjiema,
mill-ghanja sajfija
ta' l-art ghammiela.

1.

DAWL

Bhal qawwa
fgata f'cilindru dejjaq
marsus kien l-Univers fi traba ckejkna.
Inferaq is-smewwiet. Mill-berqa
ghammiexa
elf xemx ittajret ghal gol-bahh,
elf dinja.

X'imkien fil-berah wiesa'
fiz-żmien imdendel li ma fihx qisien
tgedwed il-hamba ta' ponn trab
imsejken,
il-hsejjes imbeghdin t'elf saltna kbira
mirduma taht ir-ramel,
il-bikja mdemma tal-imjassar sieket,
il-weggha tat-twellid,
il-karba ta' min jaghnet u min jishar,
l-ghajta tal-mewt li jislet
il-fomm imberrah fl-ahhar nifs tal-hajja.

Mill-gholi wasal issa
id-dawl tal-kewkba gdida
li nzerghet mis-smewwiet miljun sena ilu.

Achille Mizzi

LIGHT

2.

Like a bundle of energy
suppressed in a narrow cylinder
was the universe confined
in an infinitesimal atom.
The heavens split asunder.
From the blinding flash
a thousand suns were born into the void...
a thousand worlds.

Somewhere in the wide expanse,
inside the hanging continuum of time
hums and bustles a handful of dust,
the far off hubbub of a thousand dynasties
buried under the sand,
the bloody outcry of the silent slave,
the groan of parturition,
the moan of him who strives and labours,
the agonizing shriek of the mouth aghast
struggling for the last breath of life...

From the infinite
the light is just reaching us
from a new born star
sown in the universe millions of years ago.

Achille Mizzi

Mill-Alpha Centawri
 mill-gara tad-dinja jasal id-diwi...
 f'erba' snin dawl tasal il-lehha
 bla tisfira.

L-istimmati ta' Kristu nixxew id-demm
 u l-ilma
 mahlula fis-smewwiet
 ta' nzul ix-xemx fil-punent hamrani.

Ir-roża mfişqija fil-weraq
 tohlom dahna shuna ta' mhabba
 effimera
 li tghaddi bhal kull haga ohra
 fid-dinja.

L-eremita halliem ileflef u jisker
 minn qorriegha ras mewt
 l-ispirtu tal-qdusija.

Il-flawt jizviluppa
 purtiera ta' hsejjes ingazzati
 bhal awrora borealis
 imdendla fl-orjent.

Wiċċ l-ghadira
 jinkiser fi frak tal-mużajk
 bhat-twieqi gotiċi ta' Chartres.

O Alpha Centawri mhażżma bl-orbita
 t'elf dinja
 ġo fik thegġeġ qirda u holqien infinit
 huggieġa mitmugha bin-nar taghha nfisha.

Imma dawlek fil-ghodu ma jiddix fuq
 is-shab
 tat-tajjar imxappap fil-pjagi ta' Kristu...
 Ma jiddix fuq ir-roza tohlom l-imhabba...
 fuq il-mohh jikkonċepixxi l-qdusija...
 fuq il-flawt li jraxxax il-hsejjes
 f'dilluvju ta' dwal qawsallin.
 Il-Mohh priżma djamant
 li jilqa' d-dawl tas-sensazzjoni
 u msajjar ikattru f'miljuni ta' mirja
 t'Gharfien.
 Fejn m'hemm il-Mohh hemm
 il-Bahn.

Achille Mizzi

min ma jafx imut ghall-imhabba
 w ma jafx jaqra l-istilel imhallba
 f'kull ghabex
 bhal-lampi tal-fidda
 min ma jirtabx ghall-biki tat-trabi
 li ommhom
 habbilha dragun
 u ghar-romol li bkew fuq l-irhama
 ghal seba' mitt sebh
 minghajr xemx
 ma jifhimx il-vjolini.
 jien drajtu hoss il-vjolin
 u kull nota tajtha lewn
 djamant tupaz jew ametist
 daqshekk drajthom il-vjolini
 daqshekk hsibt li fhimthom
 drabi hassejthom tant qrib li idi
 mrieghda griet fuq sidri
 biex nara xaffrux il-pompa ta' qalbi
 drabi, bhal daqqaq taċ-ċetri
 gharwien huta nigri
 f'tarf xmajjar kristall
 sthajjiltni l-mużiċist etern
 izda mbaghad ghidt
 jien qatt irtabt ghall-ilfiq tat-trabi
 ltiema
 w ghar-romol li jifirxu s-sodod
 tat-tnejn
 ghalihom biss ma' kull sebh bla xemx?
 herqan u mbikkem kont se nlisten
 hafif l-iva
 izda kif ergajt ghafast il-kustilji
 ta' genbi
 l-vjolini siktur hesrem -
 u mill-boghod xi hadd tniehed
 l-ghafja ta' mewt ohra.

Riha ta' mastka mixruba fin-nghas
fiha l-mewt...
riha ta' nokkli sewdiena ta' zingara...
riha ta' xemgha lewn l-ghasel
li tlebleb
f'toqob l-ghajnejn mudlama
ta' ras ta' mewt leqqija daqs irhama.

Mahżuż gol-avorju xpakkat
il-mincott tal-qorriegha li ndamm
f'terremot irid jarga' jinhatt.
Riha ta' xemgha lewn l-ghasel fiha l-mewt...
li tlebleb fit-toqob bil-gmied.
Giet buffura tintlewa b'dawran
u belghet go fiha l-irmied.

Imsadda dduur iċ-ċavetta
fil-bieb ta' l-etern.
X'hoss taghmel il-mewt
fis-saqaf tal-halq... f'gherien l-immifsejn?
Qanpiena mtaffija ċuqlajta
'llamtata fil-lożor ta' kefen l-ilsien:
tkarwit tal-fatati...
bhal tiben jinqasam il-qofol tal-mohh.

Iċ-ċipress dendel nebuli
fosfru l-kwiekeb li xorob
ghajnejn il-mejtin.

Il-wegħha ghaslija ta' sider omm
minn hanek tarbija migdum
tixbah il-hafna tal-mewt qarnita.
Gharwien huta l-gisem jinxtehet
b'żibeg l-gharaq tas-silg
bhal gharus bejn il-lożor.

Got-tperpira ta' korda mzaqqa
 titwieled in-nota
 titwieled il-harba miż-Żmien.

Achille Mizzi

Death

Death smells of absinthe drunk in sleep...
 Death smells of the black locks
 of a gipsy maid.
 Death smells of the honeyed wax that
 flickers
 in the dark eye sockets of a skull
 shiny as a slab of marble.
 The dovetail
 meshed and carved
 in the cracked ivory of the cranium
 shall be cracked again.
 Death smells of the honeyed tallow
 that flickers and smuts in the sockets.
 There came a whirlwind
 that swallowed the ashes.

The key creaks in the eternal portals.
 What sound does death make
 in the palate and the caverns of the
 sinus...?
 A dampened bell like a rattle
 starched in the shrouds...
 a scampering of ghosts...
 the lock of the brain is shattered
 like straw.

The cypresses have hung nebulae
of the phosphorescent eyes of stars
that devoured the eyes of the dead.
The sweet pain of the maternal breast
bitten by the gum of a baby
resembles the grip of the tentacled death.
As a bridegroom between the sheets,
naked like a fish,
with the ice cold beads of sweat
is the body cast into death.

From the vibration of the plucked string
is the note born...
the flight from the flow of Time.

Achille Mizzi

On the isle of Patmos
entranced I went...
on the peaks of song
where the winds gripped me
like autumn leaves in whorls.
And a resonant voice bade me write
a paean about the sweet delirium of life
that weeps with the exultation of living.
There is a hidden motive force in creation.
The beads of Life are strung on a vein
filled with the same blood.
The hubbub of Life's restlessness is pervasive.
Like the beating of drums
the voices of volcanoes resound,
spluttering fiery mud.
Like nymphs the cataracts groan
enveloped in a veil of spray.
On the sharp pointed rocks
the sea is lost in a swoon
seething with sadism.
There is a hidden force that goads life.
From the moist earth like a dream
vegetation stirs and shoots up.
The dark fingers of the conifers
tickle the breeze
that hungers for the phosphor of thunderbolts.
The lusty grass covers
every nook and cranny.
Knotted are the thick roots of the olive tree
like awesome cobras that know no rest!
What do they seek in their sleepy contortions,
wrestling against damp rocks...?
All creatures sing the same song
as the wind vibrates the pipes of an organ
pressed by the pulse of a giant.
There is a covetous attraction in the womb of
the earth
which would embrace everything.
The ocean gravitates there
as well as the peach that falls in mellowness.

But Life throws its challenge. 10.
Through the inert clod, through the mud
from the rancid compost of the leaves
the stem grows upright.
Like the clear notes of oboes in stillness
rises the cypress erect on the horizon.
What a boundless exuberance there is in nature
in the climbing ivy that carpets the walls,
in the solid oak, in the araucaria,
in the fingers like antennae probing the breezes,
in the cactus with the beaming prickles,
in the jasmine like a woman with her hair undone
whispering a dream of whiteness!
What a power in the horn of the bull
enveloped in the steam
emanating from the ringed nostrils...
in the knotted muscles on the sides of a horse,
in the terrible forge of the lion's jaw
with the tongue twisting like flame!
What a frenzy stimulates the ants to bustle
like a bagful of beads strewn about...
and the herons that migrate in tens
like oarsmen of the celestial ocean,
and the blue fish that twist in the sea
like silver ducats...!
What freedom seeks the bean
that liberates itself from its skin under soil?
From what does the snake flee
when he abandons his skin in a cave...?
What urgency crazes the silkworm
to free itself from the chrysalis?
Like a colourful rocket exploding
in expanding haloes
Life seeks in its stride, renewal and dominion
through regeneration.

Achille Mizzi

11.

L-Ghid tal-Mejtin

Mara tibkix,
sabiĥ li torqod bla nikta
ghas-serĥ ta' lejla bla qamar,
tissama' fis-sikta
ghall-waqgħa tan-nida
li tinżel bħal barka
minn ħdan il-mulej.

Mara tibkix,
ghax xuxtek jiddellel
u ġismek jixxaxxax m'għeruq
iċ-ċipress
ghad tinsa mal-hsus ta' żgħożitek
u l-fwieħ tal-pensjeri
id-deni li jifni
u l-holm li ħabbejt.

Daniel Massa

Death be not proud

Death be not proud, though some have
 called thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not soe,
 For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost
 overthrow,
 Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou
 kill mee.
 From rest and sleepe, which but thy
 pictures bee,
 Much pleasure, then from thee, much more
 must flow,
 And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
 Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
 Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings,
 and desperate men,
 And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse
 dwell,
 And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe
 as well,
 And better than they stroake; why swell'st
 thou then?
 One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
 And death shall be no more; death, thou
 shalt die.

John Donne

I

Wilt thou forgive that sinne where
 I begunne,
 Which is my sin, though it were done
 before?

Wilt thou forgive those sinnes, through
 which I runne,
 And do run still: though I still do
 deplore?

When thou hast done, thou hast
 not done,
 For I have more.

II

Wilt thou forgive that sinne by which
 I've have wonne
 Others to sinne? and, made my sinne
 their doore?

Wilt thou forgive that sinne which I
 did shunne

A yeare, or two: but wallowed in,
 a score?

When thou hast done, thou hast
 not done,
 For I have more.

III

I have a sinne of feare, that when I
 have spunne

My last thred, I shall perish on the
 shore;

Sweare by thy selfe, that at my death
 thy sonne

Shall shine as he shines now, and
 theretofore;

And, having done that, Thou haste
 done,

I feare no more.

Since I am comming to that Holy roome,
Where, with thy Quire of Saints
for evermore,
I shall be made thy Musique; As I come
I tune the Instrument here at the dore,
And what I must doe then, thinke here
before.

Whilst my Physitians by their love are
growne
Cosmographers, and I their Mapp, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be
showne
That this is my South-west discoverie
Per fretum febris, by these streights
to die,

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;
For, though their currants yeeld
returne to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one,
So death doth touch the Resurrection.

Is the Pacifique Sea my home? Or are
The Easterne riches? Is Jerusalem?
Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibraltare,
All streights, and none but streights,
are wayes to them,
Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham,
or Sem.

We thinke that Paradise and Calvarie,
Christs Crosse, and Adams tree, stood
in one place;
Looke, Lord, and finde both Adams met in me;
As the first Adams sweat surrounds my face,
May the last Adams blood my soule embrace.

So, in his purple wrapp'd receive
 mee Lord,
 By these his thornes give me
 his other Crowne;
 And as to others soules I preach'd
 thy word,
 Be this my Text, my Sermon to
 mine owne,
 Therefore that he may raise
 the Lord throws down.

John Donne

Fire in the Earth

16.

It is done.

Once again the Fire has penetrated the earth.

Not with sudden crash of thunderbolt, riving the mountaintops: does the Master break down doors to enter his own home? Without earthquake, or thunderclap: the flame has lit up the whole world from within. All things individually and collectively are penetrated and flooded by it, from the inmost core of the tiniest atom to the mighty sweep of the most universal laws of being: so naturally has it flooded every element, every energy, every connecting-link in the unity of our cosmos; that one might suppose the cosmos to have burst spontaneously into flame.

In the new humanity which is begotten today the Word prolongs the unending act of his own birth; and by virtue of his immersion in the world's womb the great waters of the kingdom of matter have, without even a ripple, been endued with life. No visible tremor marks this inexpressible transformation; and yet, mysteriously and in very truth, at the touch of the supersubstantial Word the immense host which is the universe is made flesh. Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate.

Teilhard de Chardin
(from The Mass on the World)

And now in the heart of the whirling cloud a light was growing, a light in which there was a tenderness and the mobility of a human glance; and from it there spread a warmth which was not now like the harsh heat radiating from a furnace but like the opulent warmth which emanates from a human body. What had been a blind and feral immensity was now becoming expressive and personal; and its hitherto amorphous expanses were being moulded into features of an ineffable face.

A Being was taking form in the totality of space; a Being with the attractive power of a soul, palpable like a body, vast as the sky; a Being which mingled with things yet remained distinct from them; a Being of a higher order than the substance of things with which it was adorned, yet taking shape within them.

The rising Sun was being born in the heart of the world.

God was shining forth from the summit of that world of matter whose waves were carrying up to him the world of spirit.

The man fell to his knees in the fiery chariot which was bearing him away.

And he spoke these words:

Hymn to Matter

18.

'Blessed be you, harsh matter, barren soil,
stubborn rock: you who yield only to
violence, you who force us to work if we
would eat.

'Blessed be you, perilous matter, violent
sea, untameable passion: you who unless
we fetter you will devour us.

'Blessed be you, mighty matter, irresistible
march of evolution, reality ever new-born;
you who, by constantly shattering our
mental categories, force us to go ever
further and further in our pursuit of the
truth.

'Blessed be you, universal matter,
immeasurable time, boundless ether, triple
abyss of stars and atoms and generations:
you who by overflowing and dissolving our
narrow standards of measurement reveal to
us the dimensions of God.

'Blessed be you, impenetrable matter:
you who, interposed between our minds and
the world of essences, cause us to languish
with the desire to pierce through the
seamless veil of phenomena.

'Blessed be you, mortal matter, you who
one day will undergo the process of
dissolution within us and will thereby
take us forcibly into the very heart of
that which exists.

...../

'Without you, without your onslaughts, without your uprootings of us, we should remain all our lives inert, stagnant, puerile, ignorant both of ourselves and of God. You who batter us and then dress our wounds, you who resist us and yield to us, you who wreck and build, you who shackle and liberate, the sap of our souls, the hand of God, the flesh of Christ: it is you, matter, that I bless....

'Raise me up then, matter, to those heights, through struggle and separation and death; raise me up until, at long last, it becomes possible for me in perfect chastity to embrace the universe.'

Down below on the desert sands, now tranquil again, someone was weeping and calling out: 'My Father, my Father! What wild wind can this be that has borne him away?'

And on the ground there lay a cloak.

Teilhard de Chardin