



## Departure

How I've come to sense this thing called departure.  
How I still know: a dark unscathed  
cruel something, holding up a delicate braid,  
showing it to us again, only to tear it apart.

How defenseless I was, looking upon  
that which, calling to me as it left me,  
remained behind, as if it were all women  
and yet small and white and not quite that:

A waving, already no longer meant for me,  
followed by lightly echoing waves—, all  
but inexplicable: a plum tree perhaps  
out of which a cuckoo, hastily, flew away.

*Rainer Maria Rilke (tr. Cliff Crego)*