



(Fall Storm, Urnerland, the Alps)

Death Experience

We know nothing of this going away, that
shares nothing with us. We have no reason,
whether astonishment and love or hate,
to display Death, whom a fantastic mask

of tragic lament astonishingly disfigures.
Now the world is still full of roles which we play
as long as we make sure, that, like it or not,
Death plays, too, although he does not please us.

But when you left, a strip of reality broke
upon the stage through the very opening
through which you vanished: Green, true green,
true sunshine, true forest.

We continue our play. Picking up gestures
now and then, and anxiously reciting
that which was difficult to learn, but your far away,
removed out of our performance existence,

sometimes overcomes us, as an awareness
descending upon us of this very reality,
so that for a while we play Life
rapturously, not thinking of any applause.

*Rainer Maria Rilke
(tr. Cliff Grago)*