



*(Image: Early Fall, target practice at 2000 meters—the Alps)*

## **[I shudder with fear for the human word]**

I shudder with fear for the human word.  
Everything they proclaim is so precise.  
This is called Dog and that is called House,  
and here is the beginning and there is the end.

I worry about their sense, their play with mockery,  
they know everything that's been and shall be;  
no mountain is still to them wonderful;  
their gardens and goods border directly on God.

I want always to warn and resist: Stay away.  
To hear things sing is what pleases me most.  
You touch them: they are stiff and mute.  
You cut to the ground everything that is dear.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*  
(XI.21.1898: Berlin-Wilmersdorf)  
(tr. Cliff Crego)