

Robert Graves (1895-1985)

2 *The Foreboding*

Looking by chance in at the open window  
I saw my own self seated in his chair  
With gaze abstracted, furrowed forehead,  
Unkempt hair.

I thought that I had suddenly come to die, 5  
That to a cold corpse this was my farewell,  
Until the pen moved slowly upon paper  
And tears fell.

He had written a name, yours, in printed letters:  
One word on which bemusedly to pore — 10  
No protest, no desire, your naked name,  
Nothing more.

Would it be tomorrow, would it be next year?  
But the vision was not false, this much I knew;  
And I turned angrily from the open window 15  
Aghast at you.

Why never a warning, either by speech or look,  
That the love you cruelly gave me could not last?  
Already it was too late: the bait swallowed,  
The hook fast. 20

1953

(From *Poems*. London: Cassell, 1953)