

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)