

FROM DAY TO THE SHADOW OF DAY

1

The book is the place where a writer offers his voice up to silence.

Hence every margin is the beach of an avowal held back. And on its edge, the words gather and seal their alliance with the sea.

My bible is the page you cannot choose.

2

What can a stone reply to the charge that it is hard except that it is hard to last?

Tell me which road you take, and I will tell you who you will become, whom you will join.

1

All is created. You remember nothing. You see all.

One day, I learned my name from my books. You were not with me. I broke into the world which was going to be ours. The road stretched before me, split the horizon.

Nothing subsists in death, so memory is queen.

One day, I saw myself in all the stages I had gone through. My memories had gorged on memories down through the centuries.

So that I cannot tell in what era, on which continent I was born.

"The road taken by a Jew," some sage said, "is the imperceptible course of a drop of water from the mountaintop to the sea."

I will have been a Jew in my course.

(No roll of parchment holds a sentence of mine copied by hand. I write on the flimsiest, least durable material which perfectly suits the words relieved of my death.)

So I will have been a Jew in the legitimate lightness of my pen.

God, in the book, can stand only God.

This Judaism after God, my kind, is a lake over which my questions hover like mountaintops, some of them out of reach. The lake has given birth to the river on which I have traveled without paying too much attention to the landscape, subdued by the absolute in motion which would flood me with the day.

Even the most daring diver could not separate the words in my books from the sentences written in the vast bottom of the sea where any question dies of its questioning.

The same death indefinitely opts for the same man.

My work bears witness to this as if from the extreme point of my being, at the dawn of all end and all birth.

I will have been a Jew for not being able to answer to any but myself, more of a stranger than anyone else, and close to the poorest in the losing word.

(... of a certain Judaism which takes its force and features from the word and is contemporary with the book.

Deprived of God in His equivocal death where the creature's fate is a baroque pattern of writing.

"O my lover," cried Yaël, "who was ever closer to

*the word than you who came to love it when it was
gently silent?"*)

2

Jew, for you the homeless fruit of aggressive silence.

So, with God dead, I found my Jewishness confirmed in the book, at the predestined spot where it came upon its face, the saddest, most unconsolated that man can have.

Because being Jewish means exiling yourself in the word and, at the same time, weeping for your exile.

The return to the book is a return to forgotten sites.

God's heritage could only be handed on in the death He ushered in.

At the end of our lives, with all tasks done, we will in turn hold up the book of our apprenticeship.

(Circular work; you must tackle my work in its circles.

And each of them will demand a new reading.)

3

The day's freedom consists in the light's secret climb back to the beginnings of the shores deserted by men.

The heart beats in the emptiness of the astonished body. Its form will come from *the other*.