

Eugene Dubnov

WITH THE FACE UPHELD

Holding up the face,
light will gush from the throat,
a half-dark house
resounding to a minuet.

A technique to defend
dignity on edge,
a stance to privilege
this chosen end.

Grass is a sounding string;
voices in the wind;
implacable words
exhausting the vocal cords.

A step, and the mouth's round bell,
and the hand's trajectory;
and swivelling lips will waste
themselves in euphony.

A plaster mask or a trace
left in the empty air,
a half-dark house,
a loud minuet there.

This is blood conversing
with cathedral bells,
blood's rhythm coursing
across the mirrored walls.

And now lit up through looking
deep in your own eyes
you will qualify death
with the first theme of words —

when out of mortal mouth
gushes the blazing light ...

A half-dark house,
a resounding minuet.



APPROACHING THE SEA

Agitated by its total liberty,
the wave is swelling and advancing,
marching towards the shore in line ahead,
commanding what exists for you and me.

Living and dying teach us thus to raise
freedom to the height and that is why,
tensing yet again my lips, I say to you
approaching the sea is always the first time.

Translated from the Russian by Peter Porter with the author

