

Do not ask

Do not ask, my love, for the love we had before:

You existed, I told myself, so all existence shone,

Grief for me was you; the world's grief was far.

Spring was ever renewed in your face:

Beyond your eyes, what could the world hold?

Had I won you, Fate's head would hang, defeated.

Yet all this was not so, I merely wished it so.

The world knows sorrows other than those of love,

Pleasures beyond those of romance:

The dread dark spell of countless centuries

Woven with silk and satin and gold brocade,

Bodies sold everywhere, in streets and markets,

Besmearred with dirt, bathed in blood,

Crawling from infested ovens,

My gaze returns to these: what can I do?

Your beauty still haunts me: what can I do?

The world is burdened by sorrows beyond love,

By pleasures beyond romance,

Do not demand that love which can be no more