

CÉSAR VALLEJO

This dead body bursting into flower
—good breeding
raises its knife-edge—
this body not yet introduced to me
better than when it lived yields to death itself
it waves its petals to the seeds of love

This dead body who would have imagined it
defending its cup of storms
visited by blind circus butterflies
its huge pores dead
its old smokes dead from his sitting there
with only its dead-looking roots alive
prompt with the word it keeps to itself
its eternal slippery hand still trembling

This dead body that contradicts me
growing shoulder to shoulder with the language
of a just calamity that crackles

This dead body of dry water
this critically ill
dead body whose bones are guests
comes in runs its fingers over its flags
interrogates its interrogators
this body gives with all its heart the only thing it owns
it wept it comes back and goes away weeping

Somewhere in the world his tombstone breathes
under the solemn weight of the name he gave life to
one day he said things that will always last
the world is much heavier since his death
[HSM]