

A Breath of Life
(Pulsations)

"I want to write pure movement."

THIS IS NOT A LAMENT, IT'S THE CRY OF A BIRD OF PREY. AN IRIDESCENT AND RESTLESS bird. The kiss upon the dead face.

I write as if to save somebody's life. Probably my own. Life is a kind of madness that death makes. Long live the dead because we live in them.

Suddenly things no longer need to make sense. I'm satisfied with being. Are you? Certainly you are. The meaninglessness of things makes me smile complacently. Everything surely must go on being what it is.

Today is a day of nothing. Today is down to the wire. Could there be a number that is nothing? that is less than zero? that begins where there is no beginning because it always was? and was before always? I tap into this vital absence and I'm a young man again, both contained and complete. Round without beginning or end, I am the point before the zero, before the period of the sentence. From zero to infinity I walk without stopping. But at the same time everything is so fleeting. I always was and just as quickly was no longer. The day runs along aimlessly outside and there are abysses of silence within me. The shadow of my soul is my body. My body is the shadow of my soul. This book is my shadow. Excuse me, may I pass by? I feel guilty when I don't obey you. I am happy at the wrong moment. Unhappy when everyone's dancing. I've heard that cripples rejoice just as I've heard that the blind can be glad. Because unhappy people make up for it somehow.

Life has never been as current as it is today: a hair's breadth from the future. Time for me means the dissolution of matter. The rotting of the organic as if time were a worm robbing the fruit of its pulp. Time does not exist. What we call time is the movement of the evolution of things, but time itself does not exist. Or it exists immutably and into time we transfer ourselves. Time passes too quickly and life is so short. And so — to avoid being swallowed by the voracity of the hours and the news that makes time rush by — I cultivate a certain tedium. That's how I savor every loathsome minute. And I cultivate too the empty silence of the eternity of our species. I want to live many minutes within a single minute. I want to multiply myself to take in even the desert regions that give the idea of eternal immobility. In eternity time does not exist. Night and day are opposites because they are both time and time cannot be divided. From now on,

time will always be the current moment. Today is today. I'm stunned and at the same time suspicious that I've been given so much. And tomorrow I shall once again have a today. There is something painful and pungent about living the today. The paroxysm of the highest and sharpest note of an insistent violin. But then there's habit and habit numbs. The stinger of the bee in the flowering day that is today. Thank God, I have enough to eat. Our daily bread.

I wanted to write a book. But where are the words? all the meanings have been exhausted. Like the deaf and the mute we communicate with our hands. I wanted permission to write the scraps of words while accompanied by a rustic harp. And to dispense with being discursive. Like this: pollution.

Do I write or not?

To know when to quit. Whether to give up — this is often the question facing the gambler. No one is taught the art of walking away. And the anguish of deciding if I should keep playing is hardly unusual. Will I be able to quit honorably? or am I the type who waits stubbornly for something to happen? something like, for instance, the end of the world? or whatever it might be, maybe my own sudden death, in which case my decision to give up would be beside the point.

I don't want to race against myself. A fact. What becomes a fact? Should I be interested in the event itself? Have I been reduced to filling these pages with information about "facts"? Should I make up a story or do I allow my chaotic inspiration free rein? There's so much false inspiration. And when real inspiration arrives and I don't realize it? Would it be too horrible to want to move closer to the lucid self within? Yes, and it's when the self no longer exists, no longer makes demands, that it joins the tree of life — and that's what I struggle to attain. To forget oneself and yet to live so intensely.

I'm afraid to write. It's so dangerous. Anyone who's tried, knows. The danger of stirring up hidden things — and the world is not on the surface, it's hidden in its roots submerged in the depths of the sea. In order to write I must place myself in the void. In this void is where I exist intuitively. But it's a terribly dangerous void: it's where I wring out blood. I'm a writer who fears the snares of words: the words I say hide others — which? maybe I'll say them. Writing is a stone cast down a deep well.

A light and gentle meditation on the nothing. I write almost completely free of my body. As if levitating. My spirit is empty because of so much happiness. I'm feeling an intimate freedom comparable only to riding a horse through the fields without any destination. I'm free of destiny. Perhaps my destiny is to reach

freedom? there's no wrinkle on my soul spreading out in delicate froth. No longer am I being assailed. And it's delightful.

I'm hearing music. Debussy uses the froth of the sea dying on the sands, ebbing and flowing. Bach is a mathematician. Mozart is the impersonal divine. Chopin reveals his most intimate life. Schoenberg, through his self, reaches the classical self of everyone. Beethoven is the stormy human elixir searching for divinity and only finding it in death. As for me, I've got nothing to do with music, I only arrive at the threshold of a new word. Without the courage to expose it. My vocabulary is sad and sometimes Wagnerian-polyphonic-paranoid. I write very simple and very naked. That's why it wounds. I'm a gray and blue landscape. I rise in a dry fountain and in the cold light.

I want to write squalidly and structurally as though with the acute angles of a rigid, enigmatic triangle plotted with ruler and compass.

Does "writing" exist in and of itself? No. It is merely the reflection of a thing that questions. I work with the unexpected. I write the way I do without knowing how and why — it's the fate of my voice. The timbre of my voice is me. Writing is a query. It's this: ?

Could I be betraying myself? Could I be altering the course of a river? I must trust that abundant river. Or maybe I'm damming a river? I try to open the flood-gates, I want to watch the water gushing out. I want every sentence of this book to be a climax.

I must be patient for the fruits will be surprising.

This is a quiet book. And it speaks, it speaks softly.

This is a fresh book — recently emerged from nothingness. It is played delicately and confidently on the piano and every note is clean and perfect, each distinct from the others. This book is a carrier pigeon. I write for nothing and for no one. Anyone who reads me does so at his own risk. I don't make literature: I simply live in the passing of time. The act of writing is the inevitable result of my being alive. I lost sight of myself so long ago that I'm hesitant to try to find myself. I'm afraid to begin. Existing sometimes gives me heart palpitations. I'm so afraid to be me. I'm so dangerous. They gave me a name and alienated me from myself.

I feel as though I'm still not writing. I foresee and want a way of speaking that's more fanciful, more precise, with more rapture, making spirals in the air.

Each new book is a journey. But a journey with eyes covered thro' seas never before discovered — the muzzle on the eyes, the terror of the dark is total. When I feel an inspiration, I die of fear because I know that once again I'll be traveling

alone in a world that repels me. But my characters are not to blame and I treat them as best I can. They arrive from nowhere. They are inspiration. Inspiration is not madness. It's God. My problem is the fear of going mad. I have to control myself. There are laws that govern communication. Impersonality is one condition. Separativity and ignorance are sin in a general sense. And madness is the temptation to be totally power. My limitations are the raw material to be worked as long as I don't reach my objective.

I live in the living flesh, that's why I make such an effort to give thick skin to my characters. But I can't stand it and make them cry for no reason.

Self-moving roots that are not planted or the root of a tooth? For I too cast off my chains: I kill what disturbs me and good and evil disturb me and I head definitively to encounter a world that is inside me, I who write to free myself from the difficult burden of a person being himself.

In every word a heart beats. Writing is that search for the intimate truth of life. Life that disturbs me and leaves my own trembling heart suffering the incalculable pain that seems necessary for my maturity — maturity? I've lived this long without it!

Yes. But it seems the time has come to fully accept the mysterious life of those who one day shall die. I must begin by accepting myself and not feeling the punitive horror of every time I fall, for when I fall the human race inside me falls too. To accept myself fully? that is a violation of my very life. Every change, every new project is scary: my heart is scared. And that is why each word of mine has a heart where blood flows.

Everything I'm writing here is forged in my silence and in shadows. I see little, I hear almost nothing. I finally dive into myself down to the birthplace of the spirit that inhabits me. My source is obscure. I'm writing because I don't know what to do with myself. I mean: I don't know what to do with my spirit. The body tells a lot. But I don't know the laws of the spirit: it wanders. My thought, with the enunciation of the words mentally blossoming, without my saying or writing anything afterwards — this thought of mine in words is preceded by an instantaneous vision, without words, of the thought — the word that follows, almost immediately — a spatial difference of less than a millimeter. Before thinking, then, I've already thought. I suppose that the composer of a symphony only has the "thought before the thought," is what can be seen in this very quick mute idea little more than an atmosphere? No. It's actually an atmosphere that, already colored with the symbol, lets me sense the air of the atmosphere from which everything comes. The pre-thought is in black and

white. The thought with words has other colors. The pre-thought is the pre-instant. The pre-thought is the immediate past of the instant. Thinking is the concretization, materialization of what was pre-thought. Really pre-thinking is what guides us, since it's intimately linked to my mute unconsciousness. The pre-thought is not rational. It's almost virginal.

Sometimes the feeling of pre-thinking is agonizing: it's the tortuous creation that thrashes in the shadows and is only freed after thinking — with words.

You demand from me a tremendous effort of writing; please, I beg your pardon, my dear, allow me to pass by. I am a serious and honest man and if I don't tell the truth it's because the truth is forbidden. I don't put what's forbidden to use but I free it. Things obey the vital breath. We are born to enjoy. And enjoying is already being born. When we were fetuses we enjoyed the total comfort of the maternal womb. As for me, I know nothing. What I have enters me through my skin and makes me act sensually. I want the truth which is only given to me through its opposite, through its untruth. And I can't stand everyday life. That must be why I write. My life is one single day. And that's how the past for me is present and future. All in a single dizziness. And the sweetness is such that it causes an unbearable itch in the soul. Living is magical and wholly inexplicable. I understand death better. Being everyday is an addiction. What am I? I'm a thought. Do I have the breath within me? do I? but who does? who speaks for me? do I have a body and a spirit? am I an I? "That's exactly right, you are an I," the world answers me terribly. And I am horrified. God must never be thought because either He flees or I do. God must be ignored and felt. Then He acts. I wonder: why does God demand our love? possible answer: so that we might love ourselves and in loving ourselves, forgive ourselves. And how we need forgiveness. Because life itself already comes muddled with error.

The result of all this is that I'll have to create a character — more or less as novelists do, and through this character understand. Because I cannot do it alone: solitude, the same that exists in every one, makes me invent. And is there another way to be saved? besides creating one's own realities? I have the strength for this like anybody else — isn't it true that we ended up creating a fragile and mad reality that is civilization? this civilization guided only by dreams. Every invention of mine sounds to me like a layman's prayer — such is the intensity of feeling, I write to learn. I chose myself and my character — Angela Pralini — so that perhaps through us I might understand that lack of definition of life. Life has no adjective. It's a mixture in a strange crucible but that allows me in the end, to breathe. And sometimes to pant. And sometimes to

gasp. Yes. But sometimes there is also the deep breath that finds the cold delicateness of my spirit, bound to my body for now.

I wanted to initiate an experiment and not just be the victim of an experiment I never authorized, that merely happened. That's why I'm inventing a character. I also want to shatter, not just the enigma of the character, the enigma of things.

This I suppose will be a book made apparently out of shards of a book. But in fact it is about portraying quick flashes of mine and quick flashes of my character Angela. I could grab onto every flash and go on about it page after page. But it so happens that the essence of the thing is often in the flash. Each entry in my diary and in the diary I made Angela write, scares me a little. Each entry is written in the present. The instant is already made of fragments. I don't want to give a false future to each flash of an instant. Everything happens exactly at the moment in which it's being written or read. This passage here was actually written in relation to its basic form after I reread the book because as the book progressed I didn't have a clear understanding as to which way to go. Yet, without giving greater logical explanations, I clung entirely to the fragmentary aspect in Angela as in myself.

My life is made of fragments and that's how it is with Angela. My own life has an actual plot. It would be the history of the bark of a tree and not of the tree. A bunch of facts that only the senses would explain. I see that, without meaning to, what I write and what Angela writes are passages that might be called random, though within a context of . . .

That's how the book occurs to me this time. And, since I respect what comes from me to myself, that's exactly how I write.

What is written here, mine or Angela's, are the remains of a demolition of soul, they are lateral cuts of a reality that constantly escapes me. These fragments of book mean that I work in ruins.

I know that this book isn't easy, but it's easy only for those who believe in the mystery. As I write it I do not know myself, I forget myself. The I who appears in this book is not I. It is not autobiographical, you all know nothing of me. I never have told you and never shall tell you who I am. I am all of yourselves. I took from this book only what I wanted — I left out my story and Angela's. What matters to me are the snapshots of sensations — sensations that are thought and not the immobile pose of those waiting for me to say, "say cheese!" Because I'm no street photographer.

I've already read this book through to the end and I'm adding to this beginning something for you to keep in mind. It's that the end, which shouldn't

be read beforehand, comes back to the beginning in a circle, a snake swallowing its own tail. And, having read the book, I cut much more than half of it, I only left what provokes and inspires me for life: a star lit at dusk.

Do not read what I write as a reader would do. Unless this reader works, he too, on the soliloquies of the irrational dark.

If this book ever comes out, may the profane recoil from it. Since writing is something sacred where no infidel can enter. I am making a really bad book on purpose in order to drive off the profane who want to “like.” But a small group will see that this “liking” is superficial and will enter inside what I am truly writing, which is neither “bad” nor “good.”

Inspiration is like a mysterious scent of amber. I have a small piece of amber with me. The scent makes me sister to the sacred orgies of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Blessed be your loves. Could it be that I am afraid to take the step of dying at this very instant? Careful not to die. Yet I am already in the future. This future of mine that shall be for you the past of someone dead. When you have finished this book cry a hallelujah for me. When you close the last page of this frustrated and dauntless and playful book of life then forget me. May God bless you then and this book ends well. That I might at last find respite. May peace be upon us, upon you, and upon me. Am I falling into discourse? may the temple’s faithful forgive me: I write and that way rid myself of me and then at last I can rest.