

**Six Poems from the Second Cycle of *Lightduress***

Paul Celan

ONCE, death was much in demand,  
you hid in me.

HATCHETSWARMS

above us,

conversations

with socket-axes in the lowland—

Islandpasture, you,

with the hope

fogging you

in.

PRECOGNITION bleeds  
twice behind the curtain,

Cognizance  
pearls

## TWO AT BRANCUSI'S

If one among these stones  
were to tell  
what conceals it:  
here, nearby,  
on the old man's crutch-stick,  
it would open, as a wound,  
into which you'd have to dive,  
lonely,  
far from my scream, the already also  
hewn, white one.

WHERE I forgot myself in you,  
you became thought,

something  
rushes through us both:  
the world's first  
of the last  
wings,

the hide  
spreads over my  
storm-riddled  
mouth,

you  
come not  
to  
you.

LONG AGO boarded mudskiff.

A but-  
ton, come  
off,  
nitpicks every buttercup,

the hour, the toad,  
takes its world off the hinges.

If I gulped down the cartrut,  
I'd be there too.

*Translated by Pierre Joris*

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