

Bella terra, bella gent

Josep Carner

To a fountain, at night

Whimpering fountain, why disturb
infinity's gentleness,
over what, in the end, may prove
only a small distress?

Are you regretting the time you'd heard
nothing of all the earth,
inside the crevice you then abandoned,
the blind place of your birth?

Are you frightened by the icy air
dishevelling your spell? Do stars
reflected in your little lake
leave deep scars?

Who can tell whether, envious
under strangers' mockery,
like my life you go on complaining,
anxious and miserly?

If only one could be a distant star,
a mountain-range, a tree
full of enchanted wings,
a never-conquered sea!

Fountain, my languishing sister,
can you tell me, can you recall
whether you weep because you exist, or
because you barely exist at all?

Translated by Pearse Hutchinson