

## THE POET'S DEATH

He lay. His high-propped face could only peer  
in pale refusal at the silent cover,  
now that the world and all this knowledge of her,  
torn from the senses of her lover,  
had fallen back to the unfeeling year.

Those who had seen him living saw no trace  
of his deep unity with all that passes;  
for these, these valleys here, these meadow-grasses,  
these streams of running water, *were* his face.

Oh yes, his face was this remotest distance,  
that seeks him still and woos him in despair;  
and his mere mask, timidly dying there,  
tender and open, has no more consistence  
than broken fruit corrupting in the air.

Rainer Maria Rilke

from NEW POEMS