

Michael Dean

The Stamp of Anything or That part which never bears leaves or reproductive organs, ordinarily underneath and descending, and serving to absorb, but often upon, often from other parts, often serving other functions, though morphologically comparable.

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Es war Erde in ihnen

Paul Celan (1963)

Es war Erde in ihnen, und
sie gruben.

Sie gruben und gruben, so ging
ihr Tag dahin, ihre Nacht. Und sie lobten nicht
Gott,
der, so hörten sie, alles dies wollte,
der, so hörten sie, alles dies wusste.

Sie gruben und hörten nichts mehr;
sie wurden nicht weise, erfanden kein Lied,
erdachten sich keinerlei Sprache.
Sie gruben.

Es kam eine Stille, es kam auch ein Sturm,
es kamen die Meere alle.
Ich grabe, du gräbst, und es gräbt auch der Wurm,
und das Singende dort sagt: Sie graben.

O einer, o keiner, o niemand, o du:
Wohin gings, da's nirgendhin ging?
O du gräbst und ich grab, und ich grab mich dir zu,
und am Finger erwacht uns der Ring.

Havia terra dentro deles

Paul Celan (1963)

Havia terra dentro deles e cavavam.
Eles cavavam e cavavam, assim passava
o dia, a noite. E eles não louvavam à Deus,
quem, eles ouviam, tudo isso queria,
quem, eles ouviam, tudo isso sabia.

Eles cavavam e ouviam nada mais;
sábios não se tornaram, nenhuma canção inventaram,
para si mesmos nenhuma linguagem criaram.
Eles cavavam.

Veio um silencio, veio uma tempestade,
E vieram todos os mares.
Eu cavo, tu cavas, e cava também o verme,
E aquele canto lá ao longe diz: eles cavam.

Ó um, ó nada, ó ninguém, ó tu:
onde o caminho levava quando à lugar nenhum levou?
Ó, tu cavas e eu cavo, e eu cavo ao seu rumo,
e no dedo acorda-se o anel.

traduzido do alemão por Matthew Wood e Pedro Mendes

There was Earth inside them

Paul Celan (1963)

There was earth inside them, and
they dug.

They dug and dug, and so
their day went past, their night. And they did not praise God,
who, so they heard, wanted all this,
who, so they heard, witnessed all this.

They dug and heard nothing more;
they did not grow wise, invented no song,
devised for themselves no sort of language.
They dug.

There came a stillness then, came also storm,
all of the oceans came.
I dig, you dig, and it, the worm, digs too,
and the singing there says: They dig.

O one, O none, O no one, O you:
Where did it go, then, making for nowhere?
O you dig and I dig, and I dig through to you,
and the ring on our finger awakens.

translated from the German by John Felsteiner

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