

## PRIVATE PAPERS (LOBOTOMY)

In perfect accordance with the  
Smirnoff firm

I open  
one of their bottles

I feel the serene  
contact  
of the glass on my  
fingers its  
exact  
temperature

I drink I feel  
how it fills my  
mouth Warms  
my stomach  
with its bathing light

If anything in the world is a friend to me  
now it's the moment when  
night opens strange eyelids  
on the great glass windows of this Club

And the sea licks

the wood of the boats  
the bar's stepped terraces  
As the years do our body

Oh stiff wings  
of drunkenness  
incredible halls  
where delirium spreads roses

My  
life from all it was  
only drags these  
bedraggled locks

Advancing blindly through age  
Every year it leaves behind  
dreams not dreamed by the next

The golden past

The city  
Streets so loved

Ornaments destroyed

The abated splendours  
of the old licentious streets

Scenes where birds built painful  
nests

Cherished images

Devoured by brilliance everywhere

Like a woman so long desired  
whom we see grow old before  
we have been able to take her to our bed

Tell the barman that

The stare of a drunkard

Women painted like dried flowers

King Lear  
pool halls

Hotels which bring to my life  
a new silence

Keep these moments in your yeart  
and if you reach old age  
may they be of use to you

“ You and I are the two  
greatest artists of  
our time You  
in Egyptian style and I  
in modern”

Let us say like Flaubert’s

Frédéric  
It’s the  
best  
time  
we ever had.

All which remains unsatisfied

I put on one card

Trying now so alone  
finally to get right with life  
Like two people hunted by the police

Learning to die without anyone

How much will one have buried in this life.  
I gaze upon a city kneeling  
before the mirror of Submission

The floors of a once crowded Club

The waiters  
                  at that hour  
when the waiters themselves are drunk

And I sigh  
                  Oh Melancholy  
I dance wit you when I dance alone

We are being exterminated

I'ts perhaps the moment  
to look at a Dürer and understand it  
Reminisce on some poems  
of Villon  
Put on a Fass Waller record  
Or a Lester Young

Drink the last toast  
to Billie Holliday

And wait for the police  
to break down the door and find me  
dead.

## NAME WRITTEN WATER

Like ivy in an old wall  
desire clutched my soul.  
If I could only erase your image.  
I was happy without her.  
Why did luck place your body before me,  
the shine of your skin, your golden gaze?  
I was happy without her.  
I was talking under the sun about the sunset  
With a friend. We spoke about Stendhal.  
I was happy.  
And suddenly you appeared, playing with a cat,  
you looked at me, laughed, and in the background  
[the sea that separates  
the worlds.  
It is the light of adolescence –that friend  
said to me. It will be dead in six months quenched.  
I was happy without you. And truthfully  
six months before or after  
you could be nothing. But the evening of that hour  
----as the poet can stop time in his poems-----  
you showed the most beautiful you could be  
and the beauty condemned my soul  
to a cruel exile. So even if you were mine now  
I would not have what that moment was.  
I will not have what that moment was.  
I will never have her. And my eyes  
will wander forever. And I will die hating my hands  
that will be dust without having touched the miracle.

## DESERTS

There is no God in the burnt sands.  
I have seen what the ancient kings  
raised to perpetuate their race and their death.  
I have seen the sun set beyond cities  
that you would find difficult to believe existed.  
And I have seen a man beg for a snake  
to finish him off. And I have seen the leper  
[and the lights of Alexandria.

I have contemplated the splendour of kingdoms  
further than the desert  
and listened to the song of the nomadic fighters  
of the sands, and my nights heard  
the lamentations of heroes  
in the camp's ashes of their beloved.  
I have fought in the sea, and against the lion,  
[and against other men.

I was captive and healed bodies.  
I have enjoyed the milk of a princess  
and the pleasures of the women of Karib'el's house.  
What wine I haven't drunk or what breed  
I haven't had beneath my body?  
I know how much a slave  
must know, and how much a king's protégé knows.  
My sword is a present from a leader of men  
and my scars a souvenir from another leader of men.

The moon shines tonight with all its beauty  
on the ships and the port.  
The city sleeps. Everybody has a place  
they can call their own.  
Only I, the poet, am ash in the wind.

## BUGLE CALL RAG

The city, a big flatland,  
is lost behind the windows of this place.

My life transpires on the panes.

It was in this bar that I became 17,  
And a woman drank with me that  
afternoon at a table that's no longer here.

Ah, you return silhouette,  
just as my eyes have reached  
the calm contemplation of ruins.

We drank like old friends.  
To the health of health. And then we coronated  
the event, in a bed, above the local.

What does it matter if money intervened  
at that moment. Or if I paid.

It's like  
when your tongue travels all the roads  
of love, it enters, it bites,  
it uproots  
a mysterious dream,

so that  
there was a moment  
when grabbed like a thunderbolt.

Wherever you are, oh exalted  
with time, oh light of my life, I want

you to feel on your skin the same  
quiver, the same  
heat, the intensity that I feel.



## THROUGH AN ALCOHOLIC GLASS (NYCTALOPS)

Beneath the cold leftovers of the party  
The beach extended like a bland mass  
A thick dream scouted by the last drunks

    It dawned sticky  
Over glasses bottles pieces of crab  
Clothes

    Undertow  
Of a night which like the image of life  
Had quickly burned  
Its illusions and its beauty

Over the dunes the first light  
The pale sea of dawn  
The cold body of a girl  
Who last night still might awaken  
Insolent desire---showing us  
Her inverisimil youth  
A mockery of time

    Frozen  
Reproach  
At each hour of wasted pleasure.

    And the memory  
Of when we were insolent like her  
As we never again could be

Like condemned men seeing the rising  
of a sun they will not see et  
    we contemplated

Everything  
    Someone  
Very intimate  
With the lucid cynicism that characterizes us  
Whispered to me      The shadow  
Of Creusa

    I  
Said Eneas  
Acates  
    the mural paintings of  
Carthage  
    The sea was a  
mirror      A calcined light  
Beneath which we got dressed  
Taking leave of everyone until another  
Happy reunion  
    Until another beach  
On which to burn a little more another night  
Our loyalty and our pride.

## GOLDEN CLOUDS

What good is my life?

Each time I put up my house.  
I destroyed it. Any country  
I arrive at I love  
only at first sight.  
I could never say welcome  
to the same woman twice.

To appreciate myself.

To think.

I watch the rose bushes I planted grow,  
uncork the last bottle of the last shipment.

I watch  
how my life clings to whatever is noble.

To you, Culture, and to all those  
who dead or alive accompany me, I drink.

Beyond time and my body,  
I drink. I fill  
the glass again and let  
the alcohol slowly cut  
the threads that tie me  
to this mediocrity

And with the last  
drink, the drink of scorn,  
I toast those who love the way I love.

## WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Make yourself bring  
just what you need. Don't go out. What  
for? There is no place  
where you could be happy.  
Whatever business allows you to keep yourself  
alive, handle it by telephone. Or write  
letters, these, to your friends,  
in the best style you can cultivate.  
Every now and then check  
if the city is burning. Keep your  
38 clean. Take scrupulous  
care of your rose gardens.  
And feel proud  
that birds nest  
in your yard which offers peace.  
Under your trees, congregate every afternoon  
and contemplate the twilight. Give thanks  
to your gods for that  
magical sojourn, for the living  
day, for the books, the music, the paintings  
you save from Death.  
And when a stone or ball breaks your window panes,  
don't lift your eyes  
from whatever you're doing; moreover, immersing them  
in the beautiful panorama of your books,  
choose the noblest  
edition you own of *Treasure Island*.  
And while the riffraff and soldiers,  
equally villainous, knife one another,  
read calmly, listen to Rubinstein  
interpret Chopin. Pet  
your dog's forehead.  
And deep into the night  
direct your steps toward sleep.

**Translation of PRIVATE PAPERS (LOBOTOMY), THROUGH AN ALCOHOLIC GLASS (NYCTALOPS), GOLDEN CLOUDS and THE TOMB OF THE MARVELOUS (LESTER YOUNG), by Susan Ludvigson and José María Alvarez.**

**Translation of WUTHERING HEIGHTS and BUGLE CALL RAG, by Risa M. Hazel.**

**Translation of DESERTS and NAME WRITTEN WATER, by John Liddy**