

THE DEATH OF MY COUSIN ATHANASE

To Athanase Raussinaff

"I found you and I lost you

All on a gleaming day."

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Sleep, my beloved cousin, sleep,

Your tender heart has said farewell to you,

It ceded to silence, placing a spray of narcissi

On the quiet velvet of your eyelids!

Your heart

Has travelled far from your face like snowdrops,

As the sweet song of pure water

Flows away gently

From its happy source.

Sleep, sleep now, my kindly cousin,

My beloved soul,

Sleep beneath the limpid music of the golden leaves

Of the old lime tree,

Planted by the starry hand

Of Grandfather Athanase,

In the magical courtyard of our elegiac childhood.

Only my tears will wake you sometimes

To let you hear once more

The harpsichord of evening

Sing the boundless sky of crimson silk

Brushed lightly by the agile fingers of the high grass.

Sleep, the many waters of our Thrace

Will perpetuate your memory

And your name will find again

The white roses

Which you loved so much

In the pink stained glass of spring dawns,

In the fleshly garden of my words of love.

My cousin sleeping

In the smile of narcissi.

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