

FOR THE NIGHT IS COMING

*For the night is coming
when good chance and mischance
rest in peace with each other*

*You see how twilight falls swiftly
like bells ringing
and window after window is lit bright*

*In there they have had their spaghetti
and without thought for the morrow
they go to bed with each other*

*for the night is coming:
There is no tomorrow:
There is no city*

LONG HAS THE KNIGHT SAT AT REST

*Long has the knight sat at rest
erect in the saddle
high in the hill-country
so desolate that the eye trembles
Wonderful wideness of blue-changing
never-present heights!
Beneath and beyond the mixed sounds of companions
At his chest the falcon waits
its head lain against his cheek
O wonder of tenderness in my heart!
—Then he lifts his hand high
and the bird flies out
away
He sits there and sees its rising up
in ever higher and wider rings
He still sits erect in the saddle
when the night falls
Dreaded night!
Longed-for night!*

TRIONFO DELLA MORTE

*Three knights set forth to ride
lifted to saddle three maidens
Three knights mounted their steeds
their falcons on the glove
Who reaps, who binds the sheaves?
In a lonely, wooded vale
they were met by six open coffins
three she-corpses, three men's in grave-clothes
in a lonely, wooded vale
whereto their falcons lured them
From tangled thicket stares
the owl with yellow eyes*

*To that valley had infection not yet come
Who reaps, who binds the sheaves?
In that valley infection pervaded everything
It was in the death of the Unicorn
It was in the death-watch over fair corpses
It was in the rape of the virgin*

*under the owl's enchanter yellow gaze
Ladies and lords riding along
icecold their wombs, stiffness in their legs
and what they did to each other
I for one will not relate
Everyone knows for himself*

*But there was, in that noble town
three beggars that all men did know
three beggar women known to all
Who reaps, who binds the sheaves?
In six coffins the shrouded waited
as if preserved in fear and hope
treasured up in waiting there
bound about in fear and hope
They saw no lords and ladies ride
They saw no rise of falcon-flight
or the valley with its wood
They saw the clouds in the bright sky*