

The
BOOK
of
DISQUIET

The Complete Edition

**FERNANDO
PESSOA**

Edited by Jerónimo Pizarro

*Translated from the Portuguese
by Margaret Jull Costa*



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CONTENTS

Introduction by Margaret Jull Costa • vii

Editor's note by Jerónimo Pizarro • xv

THE BOOK OF DISQUIET First Phase • 1

Manuscript facsimiles • 143

THE BOOK OF DISQUIET Second Phase • 151

Manuscript and typescript facsimiles • 278

Appendices to *The Book of Disquiet* • 397

Index of first lines • 403

INTRODUCTION

by Margaret Jull Costa

Fernando Pessoa's life divides neatly into three periods. In a letter to the *British Journal of Astrology* dated 8 February 1918, he wrote that there were only two dates he remembered with absolute precision: 13 July 1893, the date of his father's death from TB when Pessoa was only five; and 30 December 1895, the day his mother remarried, which meant that, shortly afterwards, the family moved to Durban, where his new stepfather had been appointed Portuguese Consul. In that same letter, he mentions a third date too: 20 August 1905, the day he left South Africa and returned to Lisbon for good.

That first brief period was marked by two losses: the deaths of his father and of a younger brother. And perhaps a third loss too, that of his beloved Lisbon. During the second period, despite knowing only Portuguese when he arrived in Durban, Pessoa rapidly became fluent in English and in French.

He was clearly not the average student. When asked years later, a fellow pupil described Pessoa as: 'A little fellow with a big head. He was brilliantly clever but quite mad.' In 1902, just six years after arriving in Durban, he won first prize for an essay on the British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay. Indeed, he appeared to spend all his spare time reading or writing, and had already begun creating the fictional alter egos, or as he later described them, heteronyms, for which he is now so famous, writing stories and poems under such names as Chevalier de Pas, David Merrick, Charles Robert Anon, Horace James Faber, Alexander Search, and more. In their recent book *Eu sou uma antologia (I am an anthology)*, Jerónimo Pizarro and Patricio Ferrari list 136 heteronyms, giving biographies and examples of each heteronym's work. In 1928, Pessoa wrote of

the heteronyms: 'They are beings with a sort-of-life-of-their-own, with feelings I do not have, and opinions I do not accept. While their writings are not mine, they do also happen to be mine.'

The third period of Pessoa's life began when, at the age of seventeen, he returned alone to Lisbon and never went back to South Africa. He returned ostensibly to go to university. For various reasons, though – among them, ill health and a student strike – he abandoned his studies in 1907 and became a regular visitor to the National Library, where he resumed his regime of voracious reading – philosophy, sociology, history and, in particular, Portuguese literature. He lived initially with his aunts and, later, from 1909 onwards, in rented rooms. In 1907, his grandmother left him a small inheritance and in 1909 he used that money to buy a printing press for the publishing house, *Empreza Íbis*, which he set up a few months later. *Empreza Íbis* closed in 1910, having published not a single book. From 1912 onwards, Pessoa began contributing essays to various journals; from 1915, with the creation of the literary magazine *Orpheu*, which he co-founded with a group of artists and poets including Almada Negreiros and Mário de Sá-Carneiro, he became part of Lisbon's literary avant-garde and was involved in various ephemeral literary movements such as Intersectionism and Sensationism. Alongside his day job as freelance commercial translator between English and French, he also wrote for numerous journals and newspapers, translated Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, short stories by O. Henry and poems by Edgar Allan Poe, as well as continuing to write voluminously in all genres. Very little of his own poetry or prose was published in his lifetime: just one slender volume of poems in Portuguese, *Mensagem* (*Message*), and four chapbooks of English poetry. When he died in 1935, at the age of forty-seven, he left behind the famous trunks (there are at least two) stuffed with writings – nearly 30,000 pieces of paper – and only then, thanks to his friends and to the many scholars who have since spent years excavating that archive, did he come to be recognised as the prolific genius he was.

Pessoa lived to write, typing or scribbling on anything that came to hand – scraps of paper, envelopes, leaflets, advertising flyers, the backs of business letters, etc. He also wrote in almost every genre – poetry, prose, drama, philosophy, criticism, political theory – as well as developing a deep interest in occultism, theosophy, and astrology. He drew up horoscopes

not only for himself and his friends, but also for many dead writers and historical figures, among them Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, and Robespierre, as well as for his heteronyms, a term he chose over ‘pseudonym’ because it more accurately described their stylistic and intellectual independence from him, their creator, and from each other – for he gave them all complex biographies and they all had their own distinctive styles and philosophies. They sometimes interacted, even criticizing or translating each other’s work. Some of Pessoa’s fictitious writers were mere sketches, some wrote in English and French, but his three main poetic heteronyms – Alberto Caeiro*, Ricardo Reis, Álvaro de Campos – wrote only in Portuguese and each produced a very solid body of work.

Yet even this ‘book’ had more than one author and was never completed, never put into any order, remaining always fragmentary. Its first ‘author’ was Vicente Guedes, who wrote semi-symbolist prose pieces for inclusion in something that, as early as 1913, Pessoa was already calling *The Book of Disquiet*. These texts often described particular states of mind or imaginary landscapes or offered advice to would-be dreamers or even unhappily married women (a subject about which the apparently celibate Pessoa knew nothing at all at first hand) or those who, like him, had lost their religious faith. Around 1920, however, the book seemed to lose its way, and Pessoa forgot about Guedes and the *Book of Disquiet*. Then, in 1929, the book took a different direction with a different ‘author’, Bernardo Soares, a humble accounts clerk working in an office in downtown Lisbon and spending his leisure hours writing this ‘autobiography of someone who never existed’. Soares was described by Pessoa as only a ‘semi-heteronym’, because, ‘although his personality is not mine, it is not different from, but rather a simple mutilation of my personality. It’s me minus reason and affectivity.’

Pessoa clearly felt that Soares was a more suitable author and even drew up a plan of what to do with all those fragments:

The organisation of the book should be based on as rigorous a selection as possible of the various existing texts, adapting any older ones that are untrue to the psychology of Bernardo Soares... Apart from that, there needs to be

* Alberto Caeiro is Pessoa’s main poetic heteronym, considered by his other two major heteronyms, Álvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis, and by Pessoa himself, to be their Master.

a general revision of style, without it losing the personal tone or the drifting, disconnected logic that characterises it.

Pessoa never undertook this rigorous process of selection and adaptation. The ‘book’ thus remained forever a work in progress. Indeed, although some fragments were published in magazines during Pessoa’s lifetime, it did not appear in book form in Portuguese until 1982, forty-seven years after Pessoa’s death. This was thanks to Maria Aliete Galhoz, Teresa Sobral Cunha and Jacinto do Prado Coelho, who deciphered Pessoa’s near-illegible writing and put the texts (some dated, most not) into some coherent order. Every subsequent Portuguese edition and every translation has, inevitably, been different, including many of the same texts, but nearly always in a different order. This edition – meticulously put together by Pessoa scholar Jerónimo Pizarro – proposes that we read *The Book of Disquiet* as it evolved, without mixing up texts from the Guedes phase with texts from the Soares phase. *The Book of Disquiet*, says Pizarro, is two very different books separated by about ten years, and it is only in the second book that Pessoa ‘discovered’ Lisbon. The author of the first book inhabits a vague, almost spectral universe, whereas the second book embraces and celebrates Lisbon: ‘Oh Lisbon, my home!’ [252]

What makes this such a rich and rewarding book? It is, after all, the ‘notebook’ of a writer or writers filled with feelings of angst and alienation; the title *Livro do desassossego* can be translated variously as Book of Unease/Disquiet/Unrest/Turmoil/Anxiety, and yet most readers find these disparate texts a source of comfort, even exhilaration. This is, I think, in large part, because it is somehow consoling to find such moments, such states of mind, described so sympathetically and in the most extraordinary prose. What I love in this apparently cerebral book is the physical detail, like this street scene:

The trams growl and clang around the edges of the square, like large, yellow, mobile matchboxes, into which a child has stuck a spent match at an angle to act as a mast; as they set off they emit a loud, iron-hard whistle. The pigeons wandering about around the central statue are like dark, ever-shifting crumbs at the mercy of a scattering wind. [240]

Or this meditation on waking up:

With the coming of the dark light that fills with grey doubts the chinks of the shutters (so very far from being hermetic!), I begin to feel that I will be unable to remain much longer in my refuge, lying on my bed, not asleep but with a sense of the continuing possibility of sleep, of drifting off into dreams, not knowing if truth or reality exist, lying between the cool warmth of clean sheets unaware, apart from the sense of comfort, of the existence of my own body. I feel ebbing away from me the happy lack of consciousness with which I enjoy my consciousness, the lazy, animal way I watch, from between half-closed eyes, like a cat in the sun, the logical movements of my unchained imagination. I feel slipping away from me the privileges of the penumbra, the slow rivers that flow beneath the trees of my half-glimpsed eyelashes, and the whisper of waterfalls lost among the sound of the slow blood pounding in my ears and the faint persistent rain. I slowly lose myself into life. I don't know if I'm asleep or if I just feel as if I were. [205]

The 'second book' is very much a hymn to the Lisbon Pessoa loved and rarely left after his return from South Africa:

...I love the Tejo because of the great city on its banks. I enjoy the sky because I see it from a fourth-floor window in a street in the Baixa. Nothing in the countryside or in nature can give me anything to equal the ragged majesty of the calm moonlit city seen from Graça or São Pedro de Alcântara. For me no flowers can match the endlessly varied colours of Lisbon in the sunlight. [358]

It is that sheer pleasure in language and pleasure in thinking and, indeed, pleasure in seeing, that makes *The Book of Disquiet* such a book of comfort, as it seems it was to the author(s):

I often write without even wanting to think, in an externalized daydream, letting the words caress me as if I were a little girl sitting on their lap. They're just meaningless sentences, flowing languidly with the fluidity of water that forgets itself as a stream does in the waves that mingle and fade, constantly reborn, following endlessly one on the other. That's how ideas and images, tremulous with expression, pass through me like a rustling procession of faded silks amongst which a sliver of an idea flickers, mottled and indistinct in the moonlight. [326]

When, in 1990, Pete Ayrton of *Serpent's Tail* asked me if I would (could?) translate Pessoa's *Livro de Desassossego*, it was precisely that pleasure in language and thinking and seeing that made me say Yes. The *Serpent's Tail* version followed the selection made by Maria José Lancastre and translated into Italian by Antonio Tabucchi. When, a year or so ago, I was asked if I would translate a more complete version following Jerónimo Pizarro's edition, I jumped at the chance.

Jerónimo Pizarro's edition contains many texts that were omitted from Maria José Lancastre's edition, and faced with those new texts, I was reminded of just how difficult it is for the translator to find meaning in those 'meaningless' sentences – which can often be oblique or enigmatic – and, at the same time, reproduce that same languid fluidity in English, that seductive voice. Earlier in text 326, Pessoa writes: 'I enjoy using words... For me, words are tangible bodies, visible sirens, sensualities made flesh.' And capturing that tangible sensuality is the third challenge for the translator. Here is the second sentence from text 264:

As casas desigualam-se num aglomerado retido, e o luar, com manchas de incerteza, estagna de madreperla os solavancos mortos da confusão.

The houses, all different, stand together in a tightly-packed crowd, and the equally uncertain moonlight puddles with mother-of-pearl this dumb, jostling confusion.

At a first reading, the sentence in Portuguese could be one of those 'meaningless' sentences, and yet it is full of meaning. The difficulty for the translator lies (a) in understanding *what* the author means, (b) picturing the image he creates, and (c) transporting that meaning and that image into meaningful, tangible, sensuous English. Keeping close to the original simply won't work. Paradoxically, the translation has to take quite a bold step away from the original if meaning and imagery are to be preserved. The first verb '*desigualam-se*' – literally 'become different or differentiated' – works far better, I felt, if turned into an adjective, 'different'. Needing another verb in that sentence, I chose 'stand together' because, in my mind, those houses, seen at night from a distance, are like a packed, silent crowd, reluctantly rubbing shoulders. Their humanity is further emphasized by my use of 'dumb' and 'jostling' to describe that '*confusão*'; 'dumb' is quite a long way from the usual sense of '*morto*', which is, of course, 'dead', but which also has the sense of 'dull', 'lifeless', 'weary', 'extinguished', 'muted'.

And ‘jostling’ is quite a long way from ‘*solavancos*’, which means ‘jolts’ or ‘bumps’. Then again, the words he uses in Portuguese are not necessarily words one would associate with houses. The addition of ‘equally’ to ‘uncertain’ is there because the word ‘uncertain’ appears in the first paragraph too, and my addition is a way of explaining that repetition. And then there’s ‘*estagna de madreperola*’ – ‘stagnates with mother-of-pearl’ – which makes no sense at all in English. Again, I had to picture what he was describing, the moonlight dappling – my interpretation of ‘*manchas*’, ‘stains’ – the houses with mother-of-pearl, but I wanted a verb that, like ‘*estagna*’, had watery associations, and ‘puddles’ – which is far from being a common verb in English – seemed to me to provide the necessary wateriness as well as furnishing that dappled effect. I am aware that I could be accused of straying too far from the original, but when faced by a sentence so complex as regards syntax and meaning, I felt I had no alternative but to reinvent the whole thing, while simultaneously – again that paradox – keeping as close as possible to connotation, nuance, rhythm, and, yes, oddity of phrasing or vocabulary. Pessoa’s/Guedes’s/Soares’s prose, like all the best prose, forces the translator to stretch his or her own language to its limits and to mine his or her imaginative unconscious in order to find new ways to express meaning.

The Book of Disquiet has been translated into many languages, and each of those translated editions is different, with often different texts in a different order. In early 2017, Tim Hopkins of the London-based Half Pint Press produced yet another version, consisting of various fragments typeset by hand and printed by hand on a selection of ephemera – for example, a black-and-white photo, a book of raffle tickets, a napkin from a café, a visiting card, a matchbook – and housed unbound in a hand-printed box. It gives one a sense, in miniature, of what it must have been like to discover that trunk of papers after Pessoa’s death, and to begin piecing together whole books of poetry and prose. In a way, though, its very incompleteness is enticing, encouraging the reader to make his or her own book out of those fragments. What awaits every reader of *The Book of Disquiet* is the sheer serendipitous pleasure of opening the book at random and reading whichever fragment you happen to alight on. And whenever I come across a photograph of Pessoa and his famously blank, not-wanting-to-be-seen face, I imagine his mind as being like that trunk,

EDITOR'S NOTE

by Jerónimo Pizarro

The Book of Disquiet, a portrait of Lisbon and of its portraitist, is now considered to be Fernando Pessoa's prose masterpiece and one of the twentieth-century's greatest works of literature. This seems somewhat ironic when we think that Pessoa never completed *The Book of Disquiet*. What he did was accumulate hundreds of fragments in his trunks; he believed that completing it would be a form of cowardice, of impotence or a 'March of Defeat' (a title he initially gave to the poem 'The Tobacconist's Shop'). But this book, which successive editors have been striving to put together and finish, this happy cowardice, this fecund impotence, this triumphal defeat, is now a must-read book for anyone who wants to 'begin' Pessoa. *The Book of Disquiet* started off as a kind of post-symbolist diary influenced by conventional nineteenth-century diaries and confessions, but it ended up as the diary of a fictitious person: first, Vicente Guedes and later, Bernardo Soares, who worked in the downtown area of Lisbon. But more than this fictitious alter ego's diary, it was the portrait of an assistant bookkeeper in Lisbon, a portrait that is impossible to separate from the description of the city in which this latter-day Bartleby lives.

In a passage in which the fictitious author is trying to escape romantic influences, we find the following observation:

Amiel said that a landscape is a state of mind, but the phrase is the feebly felicitous one of a feeble dreamer. A landscape is a landscape and therefore cannot be a state of mind. To objectify is to create and no one says of a finished poem that it is a state of thinking about writing a poem. To see is perhaps to dream but if we use the word 'see' rather than the word 'dream', it's because we distinguish between seeing and dreaming. [...] It would be more accurate to say that a state of mind is a landscape; that would have the advantage of containing not the lie

of a theory but the truth of a metaphor. [386]

As I see it, the landscape of *The Book of Disquiet* is not exactly the city of Lisbon, which so disquiets the protagonist; rather, it is Pessoa's own malaise or tedium that becomes the book's landscape. *The Book of Disquiet* both is and isn't an intimate diary like Amiel's *Journal Intime*. It is the diary of a writer and of someone who writes to while away the hours after dinner, but these modern-day *Confessions* – if we are thinking of St Augustine and Rousseau – are only intimate or personal in the sense that all great fiction is universally personal. The portraits of Lisbon and of its portraitist, an office worker employed in various firms in downtown Lisbon (just like Pessoa), are the same. Pessoa's disquiet falls on the city like rain.

This edition proposes that *The Book of Disquiet* should be read as it emerged, rather than alternating the texts of the first phase with those from the second. There was a first and a second book – and several years passed between the two – and there is no need to make a thematic montage to unify what required no unification. There is an unnecessary violence about bringing together texts written many years apart, or creating longer texts out of smaller ones or minimising the importance of Vicente Guedes as co-author, imposing an authorial unity, which it already has under the name of Fernando Pessoa, a name that always was and always will be both singular and plural.

In this edition, the texts mostly appear in the order in which they were arranged in my 2010 critical edition, *Livro do Desassossego*, published by Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, and republished, without the same critical apparatus, by Tinta-da-china in 2013. In this last edition, I only changed the placement of certain texts intended as preliminaries and a few others that bore the initial indication 'L. do D.' followed by a question mark. I also, of course, consulted all the other editions of *The Book of Disquiet* available before June 2012 and made some further adjustments to my reading of some of the originals.

This book is, to use Pessoa's words, a 'great symphonic certainty', which Margaret Jull Costa has succeeded in translating into English with – to quote one of Pessoa's aphorism – 'that re-inspiration without which translating is merely paraphrasing in another language'. I would like to thank her for her excellent work and Nick Sheerin of Serpent's Tail for his unconditional support for this project.

The
BOOK
of
DISQUIET

THE BOOK OF DISQUIET
(First Phase)

PREFACE (1917?)

Installed on the upper floors of certain respectable taverns in Lisbon can be found a small number of restaurants or eating places, which have the stolid, homely look of those restaurants you see in towns that lack even a train station. Among the clientele of such places, which are rarely busy except on Sundays, one is as likely to encounter the eccentric as the nondescript, to find people who are but a series of marginal notes in the book of life.

There was a period in my life when a combination of economic necessity and a desire for peace and quiet led me to frequent just such a restaurant. I would dine at around seven each night and, as chance would have it, I was almost always there at the same time as one particular man. At first, I took little notice of him, but as time passed he came to interest me.

He was a man in his thirties, thin, fairly tall, very hunched when sitting though less so when standing, and dressed with a not entirely unselfconscious negligence. Not even the suffering apparent in his pale, unremarkable features lent them any interest, nor was it easy to pinpoint the origin of that suffering. It could have been any number of things: hardship, grief or simply the suffering born of the indifference that comes from having suffered too much.

He always ate sparingly and, afterwards, he would smoke a cigarette rolled from cheap tobacco. He would watch the other customers, not suspiciously, but as if genuinely interested in them. He did not scrutinize them as though wanting to fix in his memory their faces or any outward evidence of their personalities; rather he was simply intrigued by them. And it was this odd trait of his that first aroused my curiosity.

I began to observe him more closely. I noticed that his features were illuminated by a certain hesitant intelligence, but his face was so often clouded by exhaustion, by the inertia of cold fear, that it was usually hard to see beyond this.

I learned from a waiter at the restaurant that he worked as a clerk in a company that had its office near by.

One day, there was a scuffle in the street immediately outside the restaurant – a fight between two men. The customers all rushed to the windows, as did I and the man I've been describing. I made some banal comment to him, and he replied in kind. His voice was dull and tremulous, the voice of one who hopes for nothing, because all hope is vain. But perhaps it was foolish of me to attribute so much to my evening companion at the restaurant.

I don't quite know why but, after that, we always used to greet each other. And then, one day, prompted perhaps by the foolish coincidence of us both turning up for supper later than usual, at half past nine, we struck up a casual conversation. At one point, he asked whether I was a writer. I said I was. I mentioned the magazine *Orpheu*^{*}, which had recently come out. To my surprise, he praised it, indeed praised it highly. When I voiced my surprise, saying that the art of those who wrote for *Orpheu* tended to appeal only to a small minority, he replied that he was one of that minority. Besides, he added, he was not entirely unfamiliar with that art, for, he remarked timidly, since he had nowhere to go and nothing to do, no friends to visit and no interest in reading books, he usually returned to his rented room after supper and spent the night writing.

So I met Vicente Guedes purely by chance. We often went to the same quiet, cheap restaurant. We knew each other by sight and would, of course, always nod a silent greeting. Once, though, finding ourselves seated at the same table, what started as a brief exchange became a conversation. We began meeting there every day, at lunch and supper. Sometimes, once we had finished our supper, we would leave the restaurant together and go for a stroll, chatting as we went.

Vicente Guedes endured his empty life with masterly indifference, the foundations of his mental attitude being built on the stoicism of the weak.

He was constitutionally condemned to suffer all kinds of anxieties, but fated to abandon them all. I never met a more extraordinary man. He had abdicated everything to which he was by nature destined, but not out of any kind of asceticism. Though naturally ambitious, he savoured the pleasure of having no ambitions at all.

^{*}The literary magazine *Orpheu* was started in 1915 by Fernando Pessoa, Mário de Sá-Carneiro and Luís de Montalvor. Although only two issues were produced, the magazine had a considerable impact on the evolution of modern Portuguese literature.

The thin man gave me an awkward smile and eyed me distrustfully, but there was no malice in that look. Then he smiled again, sadly this time, before looking down at his plate and continuing his supper in silent absorption.

He furnished his two rooms – doubtless at the expense of a few basic necessities – with something akin to luxury. He took particular pains over the chairs – deep, soft armchairs – door curtains and carpets. He told me that this was his way of creating an interior that would ‘maintain the dignity of his tedium’. In a modern-style room, tedium becomes a discomfort, a physical pain.

He had never been obliged to do anything. He had spent his childhood alone. He had never belonged to any group. He had never been to university. He had never been part of a crowd. As happens with many people or, possibly, who knows, with everyone, the chance circumstances of his life and the direction it had taken were dictated by his instincts, in his case inertia and detachment.

He had never had to deal with the demands of state or society. He even avoided the demands of his own instincts. He had never acquired friends or lovers. I was the only person who, in some way, became close to him. Along with the knowledge that I knew only that false personality of his – and the suspicion that he never really thought of me as a friend – came an awareness that he needed someone to whom he could bequeath his book. Even though, initially, I found this rather wounding, it now pleases me to think that, when I finally saw everything from the one point of view worthy of a psychologist, I did remain his friend, a friend devoted to the reason he had drawn me to him in the first place, that is, the publication of this his book.

It’s odd, but even in this respect, he was fortunate, in that circumstances presented him with someone like me, who could be of service to him.

...this gentle book.

This is all that remains and will remain of one of the most subtly inert, the most dreamily debauched, of beings the world has seen. I doubt there has ever been an outwardly human creature who so completely embodied his image of his own self. A dandy in spirit, he paraded the art of dreaming through the pure happenstance of existence.

This book is the autobiography of someone who never existed.

No one knows who Vicente Guedes was or what he did, nor...

This book is not *by* him, it *is* him. However, we should always remember that behind everything written here lies a shadow, a mystery...

For Vicente Guedes, being self-aware was an art and a morality; dreaming was a religion.

He created an inner aristocracy, an attitude of soul that most closely resembles the attitude of body of the consummate aristocrat.

1 (1913?)

My soul is a hidden orchestra; I do not know what instruments, what violins and harps, drums and tambours, sound and clash inside me. I know myself only as a symphony.

All effort is a crime because every gesture is but a dead dream.

Your hands are like caged doves. Your lips are silent turtle doves (which my eyes can see cooing).

All your gestures are birds. You are a swallow when you stoop down, a condor when you look at me, an eagle in your ecstasies as a proud, indifferent woman. You are merely a fluttering of wings, like those of the [...], you are the lake of my seeing.

You are all winged, winged [...]

It's raining, raining, raining...

It's raining constantly, plaintively...

My body sets my soul shivering with cold, not the cold that exists in space, but the cold of me being that space...

All pleasure is a vice because seeking pleasure is what everyone does in life, and the worst vice of all is to do what everyone else does.

2 [1913?]

I do not dream of possessing you. What would be the point? It would be tantamount to translating my dream for the benefit of a plebeian. To possess a body is to be banal in the extreme. To dream of possessing a body is perhaps, were such a thing possible, even worse; it would mean dreaming oneself banal – the supreme horror.

And since we choose to be sterile, let us also be chaste, because there can be nothing baser and more ignoble than to renounce in Nature all things fertile, and yet vilely keep back anything that takes our fancy among those things renounced. There are no partial nobilities.

Let us be as chaste as dead lips, as pure as dreamed bodies, as resigned

to being both these things as mad little nuns...

Let our love be a prayer... Anoint me with seeing you, and out of the moments when I dream you I will make a rosary on which all my tediums will be Our Fathers and all my anxieties Hail Marys...

Thus we will remain forever like the figure of a man in a stained-glass window opposite the figure of a woman in another stained-glass window... Between us, shadows whose footsteps echo coldly – humanity passing by... Between us will pass murmured prayers, secrets... Occasionally, the air will fill with incense. At other times, to left or right, a figure like a statue will sprinkle us with prayers... And there we will stay, always in the same windows, all colour when the sun shines through and all dark lines when night falls... The centuries will not touch our glassy silence. Outside, civilizations will come and go, revolutions will break out, parties will whirl past, meek, everyday people will rush by... And we, my unreal love, will be frozen in the same pointless pose, the same false existence, and the same [...], until one day, after centuries of empires, the Church will, at last, crumble and everything will end...

But we, knowing nothing of this, will still be here, quite how or where or when I don't know, like eternal stained-glass windows, hours of innocent art painted by some artist who has long been sleeping in a Gothic tomb where two angels, hands clasped in prayer, have set the idea of death in cold marble.

3 [1913?]

Glorification of the Barren

If, one day, I were to choose a wife from among the women of this Earth, may your prayer for me be this – let her be barren. But ask too, if you pray for me, that I never win that imagined wife.

Only barrenness and sterility are noble and dignified. Only killing what never was is rare, sublime, absurd.

4 [1913?]

Our Lady of Silence

Sometimes, when, feeling exhausted and humble, even the effort of dreaming unleaves and withers me, and the only dream I'm capable of having is thinking about my dreams, then I leaf through them, like a book