

PAINTING¹

Painting is the magic art, the fire set alight on the windows of the rich dwelling, as on those of the humble hovel, from the last rays of the setting sun, it is the long mark, the humid mark, the fluent and still mark that the dying wave etches on the hot sand, it is the darting of the immortal lizard on the rock burnt by the midday heat, it is the rainbow of conciliation, on sad May afternoons, after the storm has passed, down there, making a dark backdrop to the almond trees in flower, to the gardens with their washed colours, to the ploughmen's huts, smiling and tranquil, it is the livid cloud chased by the vehement blowing of Aeolus enraged, it is the nebulous disk of the fleeting moon behind the ripped-open funereal curtain of a disturbed sky in the deep of night, it is the blood of the bull stabbed in the arena, of the warrior fallen in the heat of battle, of Adonis' immaculate thigh wounded by the obstinate boar's curved tusk, it is the sail swollen with the winds of distant seas, it is the centuries-old tree browned in the autumn, it is the still life dappled by the disperser of flowers, by Flora the ineffable, by Flora the reborn, it is amber and honey, it is the petrified tear on a trunk, it is the sap of the benevolent fruit, it is the laden oil and the impalpable pollen, it is the hard stone and the billowing foam, it is the gleaming ivory of the pachyderm, it is the ocellus skin of the beast, it is the tender, warm feather of a bird, it is the flaring dawn, it is the painful sunset, it is the motionless afternoon, the long shadow, convalescence of the day tired from its noon, it is the modest night that navigates hidden in the fog and vapour rising from the earth, that navigates in the brownish air above the sleeping houses, above the roofs shining in the moonlight, it is the blast of Mars' trumpets on troops resting in the predawn hours, it is the song of the shepherd, poor and happy, between his flock and his faithful dog, in the evening, close to the silent woods.

¹ G. de Chirico, *Dipingere*, presentation to the catalogue of his solo exhibition *Mostra personale del pittore Giorgio de Chirico*, Galleria Rotta, Genoa, May 1938, translated here for the first time.