

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF GIORGIO DE CHIRICO

I PARIS 1911-1915

I. HOPES¹

The astronomer poets are exuberant.
The day is radiant the public square filled with sunlight.
They are leaning against the veranda.
Music and love. The incredibly beautiful woman.
I would sacrifice my life for her velvet eyes.

A painter has painted a huge red smokestack
That a poet adores like a divinity.
I remember that night of springtime and cadavers.
The river was carrying gravestones that have disappeared.
Who still wants to live? Promises are more beautiful.

So many flags are flying from the railroad station.
Provided the clock does not stop
A government minister is supposed to arrive.
He is intelligent and mild he is smiling.
He comprehends everything and at night by the glow of a smoking lamp
While the warrior of stone dozes on the dark public square
He writes sad passionate love letters.

1 Original title, *Espoirs*, published in "La révolution surréaliste", n. 5, Paris 15 October 1925, p. 6. The Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts (1911-1915), including theoretical writings and poems written in French and 29 drawings, constitute an essential testimony of de Chirico's early theoretical and artistic considerations. (See J. de Sanna, *Giorgio de Chirico - Disegno*, Electa, Milan 2004, pp. 12-15). De Chirico arrived in Paris, from Florence, on 14 July 1911 and remained in the capital until late May 1915 when, called to arms, he returned to Italy with his brother Alberto Savinio. Initially in Paul Éluard's collection, the manuscripts were later acquired by Picasso. Today they are conserved in 'Fonds Picasso' at Musée National Picasso, Paris. The poems in this section respect the order in which the manuscripts were bound in 1924 circa (2008 n. 1).

2. A LIFE (POEM)²

Life, life, great mysterious dream! All the enigmas you exhibit, joys and flashes of lightning... foreboding visions.

The moving van turns the corner.

Arcades in the sun. Sleeping statues.

Red smokestacks; nostalgia for unknown horizons.

– Beautiful horribly sad days, closed shutters.

– And the enigma of the school, and the prison and the barracks; and the locomotive whistling away at night beneath the icy vault and the stars.

– Always the unknown: waking in the morning after a dream, obscure omen, mysterious oracle; what does dreaming of iron artichokes mean; I have a sore throat, my feet are cold, alas my heart is burning, for hope's great music continually sings within; but love makes me suffer, it is so nice to go walking with my sweetheart on winter evenings when dim lights go on in every prisoner's cell.

And separated from her I suffer like...

The child awakened at the night's deepest hour by the storm's terrible noise runs barefoot to the window and watches the water run in torrents down the streets lit by the lightning's furious flashes.

Then the memory of his father who is traveling in distant lands grips his heart... and he cries.

His bedroom is in the shade in the afternoon for the sun the sad winter sun slowly turns and descends.

There is a railroad station near his house and a large brand-new clock that is illuminated when night falls.

Often at night the noise made by automobiles and by late-comers keeps him from sleeping.

Then he lights his candle and in the huge silence looks at strange paintings hanging on his walls.

Near his bed there is also a glass of water and an automatic pistol and a photograph of a woman who looks sad and astonished.

– And now he waits, he searches for friendship.

– A war is over, it is time to learn a new game.

I want my fingernails to be polished like ivory and my eyes to be striking and pure.

I scorn people who show no interest in me. In the town the crowing rooster has fallen silent. The smokeless powder's detonation is sharper and more powerful.

Plug your ears, the blast is about to go off.

² Original title, *Une vie (poème)*, published in "La révolution surréaliste", n. 5, Paris 15 October 1925, p. 6; Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 2).

3. "RUN, RUN FASTER AND FASTER IN LIFE..."³

Run, run faster and faster in life, or stop looking; your shadow trails behind you, it reaches over there where flags of a thousand colours are madly flapping on the eternal towers. Creaking masts; the loud noise of an anchor being hoisted. – Why are you bent in half with your head on your knees; your body is shaking with sobs. Dressed entirely in black grief is standing near you...

O the night's solitude – The whistling of trains over there behind the wall beneath the stars' terrible mystery. The sky is becoming milder. Calm your heart.

Cover it with something warm, tender, and soft.

Fall asleep there. The night is beautiful.

Your happiness will return. Sing it quietly. Evoke everything you do not know – Men who swim like pink fish in the port's tepid waters; the eternal goodbyes – The voices one hears in the houses with closed windows – The fountains, the motionless statues with their strange gaze and the black crowds' noise passing beneath the dark arcades when love's star blazes in the cold night sky...

4. ONE NIGHT⁴

Last night the wind blew so hard I thought it was going to knock the cardboard cliffs down. The whole gloomy time the electric lights

Blazed like hearts.

In the midst of my sleep I woke up near a lake

Where the water from two rivers came to die. The women around the table were reading.

And the monk grew silent in the shadow.

Slowly I passed over the bridge and in the dark water's depths

I saw large black fish slowly pass by.

Suddenly I found myself in a large square city.

All the windows were closed, silence was everywhere

Meditation was everywhere

And the monk passed by me again. Through the holes in his putrid hair shirt I glimpsed the beauty of his pale body white as a statue of love.

Upon awakening happiness was still sleeping near me.

From my window I gaze at my illusions' corpses

In the humid courtyard below.

Sensibility of iron artichokes... At night the locomotive whistled.

³ First line, "*Cours, cours dans la vie d'un pas toujours plus rapide*", Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 4).

⁴ Original title, *Une nuit*, published in "La révolution surréaliste", n. 5, Paris 15 October 1925, p. 7; Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 5).

The worker was not asleep.
 His hands were icy. The light blinded him.
 His heart was burning.
 Lost love. Sweetheart. – Many footsteps outside my door.
 In the next room someone is talking –
 And the two men with nice eyes have gone away.
 They were holding each other's hands
 And looking into each other in the eyes.
 – I fought hard. I wanted to develop a strong heart.
 – And everyone had his own cabin on the great ship –
 Alas my heart is breaking, is still breaking;
 The hours slipped away so sweet and so even–
 How much time will still need to pass... The Clock
 On the senseless tower...

I used to walk slowly – now I return so fast
 I can scarcely glimpse happiness –
 I searched for words of love
 And at night I cried a long time
 On my burning pillow.

5. "FRIENDS, ALL OF YOU WITH BURNING HEARTS..."⁵

Friends, all of you with burning hearts
 give me your hand through
 your cabin's porthole.
 The sun is slowly rising. The shadows
 happily grow longer on the ground.
 Around our vessels
 the fish dance gaily
 the flags' changeable colours
 now they stick out their serpent tongues
 in the great blueness.
 The hotel's new aesthetic wins us over.
 The railroad station moves us –
 I walked along the long brick wall
 happy I don't know why
 and yet I felt like I was abandoned.

⁵ First line, "*Amis, vous tous qui avez les cœurs brûlants...*", Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 6).

I only had to think to start crying –
 But the hero passed by me wearing a black hat
 and leaving the scent of bananas
 behind him so lovely
 that it reminded me of my sweetheart's hands.
 Be brave (Cannoneer) winter is coming.
 Soon your room will be cold
 and your gun powder wet.
 I look forward to it – I have placed a piece
 of fur over my heart –
 And a mutilated statue of happiness
 in the four corners of my room –
 And now I wait calm and courageous
 like a hunter lying in wait after a stormy night.

6. AUGUST 1911⁶

to my mother

Having left the conquerors' square city
 the tall towers and the huge sunny squares,
 the train rolled along broiling in the summer
 heat. The wide mottled plain
 the flies that defile the food
 the fruit nobody eats because they are afraid of
 cholera. – How awful the hotel room
 smelled. There was no more
 joy. The soldier in the railroad car and all
 the families' sorrow. – The mother sole consolation.
 The mother weak but always brave when necessary
 – sweat running down my body –
 My mouth tastes terrible; enteritis grips
 my bowels. And the night is so hot.
 The evening bugle call on the square;
 the doctor awakened in the middle of the night
 the cafés full of people, the crowds'
 triviality. – And the mother sole consolation.
 The mother gentle and weak, but always brave,
 when necessary.

⁶ Original title, *Août 1911*, Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 7).

7. "IN A BOAT BLACK AS A COFFIN BETWEEN TWO GHASTLY BRIDGES..."⁷

In a boat black as a coffin between two ghastly bridges I had fallen asleep – The sun on my head had disappeared and the last star had been extinguished a long time before – Silence, muffled sounds of my soul. Memories, memories, lapped against the dark sides of the boat – And all of my mind's bas-reliefs appeared beneath the lightning flashes. Uneasy nights. Creations of the gods. – Beautiful arrangements that made me shiver odor of bananas, afternoon weariness; skies full of enigma unrolling before me; gigantic balls, little dead birds near the serpents' horrible grotto.

8. "WHO SHOWED ME THE LARGE BLACK WINDOW..."⁸

Who showed me the large black window,
 who showed me the sad house over there...
 We come filled with love eager and joyous.
 Feel how hot the room is, the coat;
 The squall is past, shaking the large red hand
 with golden nails. The spring grumbles at noon; it is scary –
 waiting becomes anxious for eagles and crows were arriving everywhere
 The soldier kept watch near the empty barrack.
 The weather was gorgeous and everything was lost in dream
 in the sleeping town at noon –
 All by myself I go for a walk along the river bank; the temple
 rises up fine and cold, where the broken hearts of
 so many glorious kings sleep.
 The bugle is sorrowful; – bring the kites
 they are beautiful, the joyful child will soon start shivering –
 Now everything is finished. The panting train whistles
 at the town's crossroad.
 The old blind man was singing near the station and the bananas
 caused a colonial soldier to start dreaming.

7 First line, "*Dans une barque noire comme un cercueil entre deux ponts...*", Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 8).

8 First line, "*Qui m'a montré la grande fenêtre noire...*", Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 9).

9. MELANCHOLY⁹

Weighed down by love and sorrow
 my soul drags itself along
 like a wounded cat.
 – Beauty of the tall red smokestacks.
 Solid smoke.
 A train whistles. The wall.
 Two artichokes of iron regard me.

I had a goal. The flag has ceased to flap
 – Happiness, happiness, I pursue you –
 A nice little old man was softly singing
 a love song.
 The song disappeared in the noise
 of the crowd and the machines
 and my songs and my tears will also disappear
 in your horrible circles
 o eternity.

10. THE SONG OF THE RAILROAD STATION¹⁰

Little station, little station, how much happiness I owe you.

You look in every direction, to the right and also to the left. Your flags flap furiously, why suffer? Let us pass, aren't we already *quite numerous*? With white chalk or black coal let us trace happiness and its enigma; the enigma and its affirmation. Beneath the arcades there are some windows; at each window an eye regards us and voices call to us from *behind*. The station's happiness comes to us and leaves transfigured. Little station, little station, you are a divine toy. What distracted Zeus forgot you in this public plaza so square and so yellow, near this spurting fountain so limpid and so troubling? All the little flags flap together beneath the luminous sky's vertigo. Behind the walls life rolls on like a catastrophe. What does all that matter to you? ...Little station, little station, how much happiness I owe you.

⁹ Original title, *Mélancolie*, Éluard-Picasso Manuscripts, *cit.* (2008 n. 10).

¹⁰ Original title, *Le chant de la gare*, Paulhan Manuscripts (1911-1915). This second group of manuscripts written in French also date to the artist's first period in Paris and include a group of poems in prose. These were initially in possession of Jean Paulhan and later conferred to Giuseppe Ungaretti who acted as a go-between when the Surrealists acquired them. *The Song of the Railroad Station* was published in English translation in J.T. Soby, *Giorgio de Chirico*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York 1955, p. 252 (2008 n. 11).

I I. THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH¹¹

The clock on the bell-tower marks half past twelve. The sun is high in the sky and broiling. It shines on the houses, the palaces, the arcades. Their shadows trace rectangles, squares, trapezoids on the ground with such a pleasant blackness that burning eyes love to refresh themselves there. What light, and how nice it would be to live over there, near a consoling arcade, a senseless tower covered with little multicoloured flags, in the midst of nice intelligent people. Has the hour ever passed? What does it matter, since we watch it pass.

What an absence of storms, of hooting owls, of tempestuous seas. Homer would not have discovered any song. A hearse has been waiting forever. It is as black as hope, and this morning someone claimed it would still be waiting tonight. Somewhere there is a dead man whom we do not see. According to the clock it is thirty-two minutes after twelve, the sun is setting; it is time to leave.

I 2. A CELEBRATION¹²

They were not numerous, but joy gave their faces a strange expression... The whole town was decked with flags. There were flags on the tall tower at the end of the square, near the statue of the great conqueror king. Flags were flapping on the lighthouse, on the masts of the boats moored in the harbor, on the arcades, on the museum with rare paintings.

Toward the middle of the day *they* assembled on the large square where a banquet had been prepared. There was a long table in the middle of the square. The sun possessed a terrible beauty. The regulated shadows. Against the sky's depth were silhouetted the multicoloured flags deployed by the wind on the tall red tower, a red that was so consoling. At the top of that tower some black dots were moving. These were the cannoneers who were waiting for noon to fire the salvos.

Finally noon arrived. It was solemn. It was melancholy. When the sun arrived at the top of the celestial curve, they inaugurated the new clock on the town's railroad station. Everybody was crying. A train passed by frantically whistling away. The cannons thundered. Alas it was so beautiful. Then seated at the banquet *they* ate roast mutton, mushrooms, and bananas and drank fresh limpid water. In the afternoon, divided into small groups, they strolled beneath the arcades and waited for evening to rest. That was all.

11 Original title, *La mort mystérieuse*, Paulhan Manuscripts, cit. English translation in J.T. Soby, *op. cit.*, p. 252 (2008 n. 12).

12 Original title, *Une fête*, Paulhan Manuscripts, cit. English translation in J.T. Soby, *op. cit.*, p. 252 (2008 n. 14).

African feeling. The arcade is there forever. Shadow from right to left, cool breeze bringing forgetfulness – the shadow falls it falls like an enormous leaf.

But its line is its beauty: enigma of fatality, symbol of unyielding will power.

Ancient times, glimmers and shadows. All the gods are dead. The knight's bugle. The evening call in the wood's clearing: a town, a square, a port, some arcades, some gardens: evening celebration; sorrow.

Nothing.

You can count the lines; the soul traces itself and grows longer.

They *had* to erect the statue. The red wall conceals everything about infinity that is mortal.

A sail; lovely boat with such tender sides; small loving dog.

Passing train; enigma. Banana tree's happiness; voluptuousness of sweet, golden, ripe fruits.

No battles. The giants have descended behind the peaks.

In the dark and silent rooms the horrible swords hang from the walls.

Death is there, full of promises. Medusa with sightless eyes.

Wind from behind the wall. Palm trees. Birds that never arrived.

13. THE MAN WITH THE SORROWFUL LOOK¹³

In the noisy street the passing catastrophe. He arrived with his sorrowful look. He slowly ate a cake so sweet and so tender that you would have thought he was eating his heart. His eyes were very far apart.

What do I hear? Thunder growls in the distance and everything trembles on the crystal ceiling; it is a battle.

The rain has polished the paving stones: summer joy.

A singular tenderness inundates my soul: o man, man I want to make you happy. And if someone attacks you I will defend you with a lion's courage and a tiger's cruelty. Where do you want to go, speak. Now the thunder is no longer growling. See how the sky is pure and the trees radiant.

The room's four walls broke him, blinded him. And the ice in his heart slowly melted: he was dying of love.

Humble slave you are as gentle as a slaughtered lamb. Your blood flows on your soft beard. Man I will cover you if you are cold. Come up there. No happiness rolls at your feet like a crystal ball. And all the *constructions* of your mind will applaud you together.

That day. I will applaud too, sitting in the middle of the square filled with sunlight, near the stone warrior and the empty basin. And toward evening, when the lighthouse's shadow lengthens on the jetty, when the flags are flapping and the white sails are round and hard like breasts swollen with love and desire, we will fall in each other's arms and together we will cry.

13 Original title, *L'homme au regard douloureux*, Paulhan Manuscripts, *cit.* English translation in J.T. Soby, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253 (2008 n. 15).

14. THE STATUE'S WISH¹⁴

"I desperately want to be alone," said the statue with an eternal look. Wind, wind that cools my burning cheeks. And the terrible battle began.
 Broken skulls fell revealing the brains inside
 polished like ivory.
 Flee, flee toward the radiant, square city.
 Behind, demons whip me with all their might. My
 calves bleed terribly.
 Oh the sadness of the solitary statue down there. Beatitude.
 And never the sun. Never the *consoling* yellow of earthly sunshine.
 It *desires*.
 Silence.
 It loves its strange soul. It has *conquered*.
 And now the sun has halted high in the center
 of the sky; and with eternal happiness the statue bathes its soul
 in the contemplation of its shadow.

There is a room whose shutters are always closed. In one corner a book nobody has read. On one wall a picture nobody can see without crying.

15. "BENEATH THE ROOM WHERE HE IS SLEEPING..."¹⁵

Beneath the room where he is sleeping there are arcades. When the evening comes the crowd goes there, black with a dull noise. When the heat has been torrid at noon, she comes there panting, searching for coolness. But he sleeps, he sleeps, he sleeps.

What happened, the beach was empty and now I see *someone* sitting there on a rock. A *god* is sitting there and he observes the sea in silence. And that is all.

The night is profound. I roll over on my burning mattress. Morpheus detests me. I hear the sound of a car arriving from afar. The trot of a horse; a short gallop; and the noise disappears into the night; a locomotive whistles far away. The night is profound.

The statue of the conqueror in the palace. His head bare and blessed by fate. Everywhere the sun's will. Everywhere the shadow's consolation.

14 Original title, *La volonté de la statue*, Paulhan Manuscripts, *cit.* English translation in J.T. Soby, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253 (2008 n. 16).

15 First line, "*Sous la chambre où il dort...*", Paulhan Manuscripts, *cit.* English translation in J.T. Soby, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253 (2008 n. 17).

Friend with a vulture's look, with a smiling mouth, a garden fence is making you suffer. Imprisoned leopard, pace within your cage... And now on your pedestal proclaim your victory with the pose of a conqueror king.

I 6. PROTEUS¹⁶

Often occult forces, songs, and passions sleep within us. Involved with human life we work, we even create as others have created. A happiness invades us. And yet we are not happy. An insistent voice murmurs to us every minute: It's not that. – And suddenly a moment, a thought, a scheme occurs to us in a flash that shakes us, casts us before ourselves as before the statue of an unknown god. As an earthquake shakes a column on its plinth, we shiver to the depths of our being. We glance at things with astonished looks. The *moment* is here. The Proteus who was asleep in us has opened his eyes. And we say whatever we needed to say. These shocks are for us what the noose and torture were for the sea-green prophet.

II FERRARA 1915-1918

I 7. MYSTERIOUS NIGHT¹⁷

for Bongiovanni the astronomer

It was the professor Martino and his sweet friend Grancane.
Inseparable in good as
in adverse fortune. Through the same telescope
the one gazed at the afternoon constellation
already spotted by the other.
O sweetness...
Two iron artichokes on the ochre table.
The geometry of shadows lacerated the heart
all melancholy morning.
But evening came and the volumes and forms fused.
Men and animals were passing like silent shadows
in the crepuscular light.
Long dream's light. The strange sounds arrive stifled

16 Original title, *Protée*, Paulhan Manuscripts, *cit.* A passage from this poem in prose was published for the first time by André Breton in *L'art et l'occultisme*, Paris 1954, p. 120 (2008 n. 22).

17 Original title, *La notte misteriosa* dated "January 1916" and dedicated "to Bongiovanni the Astronomer". Giuseppe Bongiovanni was a well-known astronomer and physicist who worked in Ferrara that Savinio and Filippo de Pisis also mentioned in their prose. The Italian poem was published in "Noi" directed by Enrico Prampolini in January 1919 (2008 n. 23).

only the mind's wheels, vertiginous, rotate.

.....

And morning was late. In the stable I saw them and I also saw myself.

The stench of the cows shortened my breath.

Nude lay Martino and Grancane in the rafters still damp with the fluids of their parts. Nude they lay and their backs were covered with hair, brown and shiny-long like silk. Each one on all fours in his rafter was singing like the nightingale in love on a moonlit night. Taciturn men with Herculean arms slowly circled curves over them.

Snow-white skin appeared beneath the livid lightning of steel shears.

The night is long...

That I never hear! ...Are they screams? ...Maybe the raving crowd splinters the dreadful beam against the unsteady door that shatters like battlements beneath the blows of the cat and the ram?

No, it is nothing. Everything sleeps; even the owls and bats who also in the dream dream of sleeping.

January 1916

18. SONG¹⁸

Tetzcatlipoca

Brilliant mirror and I go

with hopes more beautiful than down

from the tall palm trees they pour like

shaken ripe higüeros

in the lustre of autumn.

The sea moorings no longer broken

magnetic the kayak will row.

Under the hard rectangular blue sky

like in Guadalajana the façade

of the gubernatorial building blues the heart

(in the clamp oil in the wool)

I brought borealis.

Now I trace on the dullness of the dry walls

the calculiform signs of the mind.

Rubbergloved the fingers on the frame

delicate my joy I draw like

a good Aztec craftsman the profound

mosaic of iridescent plumes.

Ferrara, June 1916

18 Original title, *Canzone* dated "Ferrara June 1916". This Italian poem was published for the first time in "Avanscoperta" directed by Ettore Marchionni, Rome, January 1917 (2008 n. 24).

19. FRAGMENT¹⁹

I am a piece of mortgaged real estate.
 The blind doorman – *ad limina custos* – teaches the plaster disciple
 the algebra of my longings.
 My window is a ship's porthole.
 My base is a mast without its sail.
 I am a piece of mortgaged real estate.
 Reheated, comforted by afternoon's warmth – warned by the daily
 howling of the calling siren.
 I am mortgaged real estate.
 Today, feast of San Michele, the yellow van (X Bros. Moving and Shipping
 via Caravelli 7B TORINO)

Has reinflated my languor
 In the autumn that lessens
 Odorless evacuations.
 Now it goes along the canal
 (streetcar rails)
 Toward faraway stations
 Of the avant-city.

20. JOURNEY²⁰

for Carlo Carrà

O Quetzalcoatl
 Strident rigid banner of zinc
 black above the roof tiles of my paternal
 house, which I will never see again.
 Magnetic pole in the snowy air.
 On the sidewalk white with dust and cold,
étrange jouet, of my already far-off
 childhood.
 I think of a city in Alaska on a winter
 morning, white below the white
 mountains, near the dark
 sea.

19 This "fragment" in Italian, datable to 1916-1917, was published in "Avanscoperta", *cit.*, in February 1917 (2008 n. 25).

20 Original title, *Viaggio*, written at Poggio Renatico near Ferrara. The poem in Italian, dedicated to Carlo Carrà and "dated April 1917", was published in "Avanscoperta", *cit.*, in May 1917 (2008 n. 26).

I think about a packet-boat taking coal in Tenerife
 on a warm September afternoon and then steaming off
 toward the ports of old Europe.
 And in this hour of grace we don't remember
 the spring, destroying storm,
 cyclone of love and of death.
 Winter will come loosely dressed with a Browning automatic
 in the pocket of its trousers.
 "Vous ne fûtes jamais en Italie Madame?"
 And you Piedmontese engineer, constructor of new
 railway lines, why are you so melancholy today?
 That America was not a part of Asia
 no one suspected until that evening in 1513
 when from the highlands of Panama Balboa saw
 the vast Pacific Ocean and understood that the world
 discovered was *truly*
a new world.

Poggio Renatico, April 1917

2 I. MR. GOVONI SLEEPS²¹

In the city where they hail him among a thousand statues on pedestals
 so low it seems they are walking with the hurried citizens.
 On stage everything is mystery...
 The mirror on its stand. The picture is not yet finished.
 The philosopher sleeps. He bangs himself against the door.
 It is the friends; because the sun is already descending, and shadows
 already long get longer, and invite
 peripatetic friendship.
 ...He bangs himself against the door. In vain! In vain!...
 The obscene foot soldier shrieks from the window:
 All night he has been wakeful, watching
 the piazza, and the red castle, and the clear river...
 and now he sleeps, sleeps, sleeps, ...and one must not,
 must not wake him!

²¹ Original title, *Il signor Govoni dorme*. A passage from this poem written in Italian was published in A. Savinio, "Frava" città del Worbas in "La Voce", 31 October 1916 and later in *Hermaphrodito*, Florence 1918 (2008 n. 27).

22. EPODE²²

– Return O my earliest felicity!
 joy inhabits strange cities
 a new magic has descended on the earth.

City of dreams not dreamed
 built with holy patience by daemons
 it is you that faithfully I will sing.

One day I will also be a human statue²³
 widowed spouse on the Etruscan sarcophagus
 on that day o maternal city
 hug me in your great stony embrace.

23. RESORT²⁴

for Carlo Carrà, the painter with the seven levels

I set up the beautiful games
 In the gardens between the gates
 Seraphic mediators. Who won the game? In the packet-boat café they bore in triumph the president in alpaca.
 There was a terrible chest of drawers and a never-before-seen animal speaking in the street.
 I am sleeping. The image comes to me of shadowy trees seen from the corridor of a house I lived in as a boy.
 Someone was calling me from the other room.

I pushed the motorboat near the promontory. It was afternoon, friends. The sea all boiling.
 The workshops and the mines were smoking on the jagged rocks of the coast. A metaphysician in a pink sweater slept under a pine tree. Colourful tin birds were moving about the beach.
 – I gambled soul and happiness. He remained for a long time without moving a die. The game was impossible.
 We went out because the air was already beginning to blacken. In the street, suddenly, I thought of that box of those bright and multicoloured things abandoned *alone* in the terrifying solitude of the rental property.

22 Original poem, *Epodo*, in Italian dated “Ferrara 1917”, published in January 1919 in “Ars Nova” directed by Alfredo Casella. The manuscript was owned by Filippo de Pisis. De Chirico later included *Epode* translated in French in the lyrical text *Salve Lutetia* (*ivi*. n. 69) published in “Bulletin de l’Effort Modern” directed by Léonce Rosenberg, Paris, March 1927. See W. Bohn, “Arcades in the Sun” – *Giorgio de Chirico’s French Poetry*, in this periodical (note 11) (2008 n. 29a).

23 A variation of the third verse that reads: “One day I also will be a marble effigy / Figure standing tall on a low base” (dated 6 November 1971), was published in Italian in G. Bianchini, *Tic de Guelfo*, De Rossi, Rome 1979.

24 The lyrical prose in Italian, *Villeggiatura*, dedicated to Carlo Carrà and dated “May 1917”, was written at Villa Seminario military hospital for nervous disorders where de Chirico spent a period in the spring-summer of 1917 and met Carrà for the first time. Published in “Cronache letterarie”, Rome, August 1917 (2008 n. 30).

The hurricane breaks out. Where have you led me O dreadful destiny?
 I look all around me at the marvels positioned on spring's terrible stages. Each booth contains a ghost. I
 discover them one after another shifting the curtains.
 – I am the survivor and the unborn.
 I carry the diver's helmet. My brain's throbbing shatters into many little bubbles on the lacquered platform of
 my seventh ceiling.
 The sky is a mosquito net of iron thread.
 The shipyards no longer smoke.
 Farewell days of tired bliss.
 The shutters are closed. The doors barred.
 Everywhere is the wait and the gathering.

Villa Seminario, May 1917

24. ANXIOUS HOUR²⁵

All the houses are empty
 Sucked up by the aspirator sky.
 All the piazzas deserted.
 All the pedestals widows.
 The statues – migrated in long
 Stone caravans
 Toward faraway ports.
 – Strange inscriptions crop up at each crossroads.
 Gloomy warnings to *go no further* –
 “Danger of death”
 But even immortality is dead
 In this hour without name on the quadrants
 Of human time.
 Can it be that I am left alone with
 the remains of vital warmth at the
 top of my skull?
 Can it be that I am left alone with a beat
 surviving in a heart that won't quiet?
 Come back tired bliss of my spent years!
 That which I have lost I will never have again.
 But in your beautiful hand, oh woman, you hold
 the sacred token of eternal youth.

²⁵ De Chirico sent the original poem in Italian, *Lora inquietante*, to Mario Broglio to be published in the first issue of “Valori Plastici”. His poem in prose, *Zeuxis the Explorer* (*ivi*. n. 27) was published instead (2008 n. 31).

25. PROMONTORY²⁶

Nine years have passed since that discovery illuminated the dark room of my consciousness with stormy nocturnal lightning; I know no photographs more terrible than those taken inside a house at night by flash of magnesium. Today this well-defined surface remains continually before me, like a compass: two-faced level for the mounting of walled-up sadness and the multi-coloured scaffolding of ever-living joy.

No one would have supposed *before* that on the floor of a room (similar to the painted deck of a long distance packet-boat) one day I would position big pears of coloured papier-mâché to represent: *The Fruit of the Poet*; not even I imagined it, even when during the daily hallucinations of my gloomy infancy I would see the tragedy of Golgotha above a city street shaded by two rows of pepper trees.

There is also an enormous pike, made of zinc and lead, raised up on iron poles, and placed in the middle of a solitary room with a large red rug.

And so today, from this 29th-year promontory I see the latitude of my work lengthen for kilometres and kilometres, to the South and due North, without the foolish indeterminacies of sidereal infinities. The ship of the Argonauts has disappeared amid the ice and mists.

Profundity and solitude have finally left the oceans unfathomed. Amphibians with sensitive skin, wrapped in a net of strange shivers, now slither through the tepid waters of the ports. In those waters bounded by burnt and solid land and by industrial buildings. Waters that don't stupidly reflect the superimposed landscape because they are fully coloured by the boiling sulphurous cascades that pour down continually from the smoking rocks of the coast.

Gentlest outlets of telluric bile.

In that fecund heat made up of the steamy sulphurous afternoon the work soaked in bitter sweat is born from a thousand throbs.

To accompany this happiness of mine the most perfect reliefs form along the walls of my room.

I see Roman centurions, pressed by serragonii, crossing in tender symmetry the bridges of boats cast on fated faraway conquests.

At the end, like a promise, (similar to a glossy map tacked to the wall) the sweet profile of the Laurion takes shape.

Ferrara, July 1917

26. THE WEARY ARCHANGEL²⁷

On this April afternoon, while the idiot almond trees are not the only ones tossing the flowers of promises, I want to affix onto the windows and door of my house the banner of the newly established publicly traded company of which I am the principle shareholder.

²⁶ Original title, *Promontorio*, poem in prose in Italian dated "Ferrara July 1917" sent to Bino Binazzi together with a text by Savinio for publication in "La Brigata", but remained unpublished (2008 n. 102).

²⁷ Original title, *L'arcangelo affaticato*, poem in prose in Italian dated "April 1918". The manuscript was given to Filippo de Pisis (2008 n. 103).

My room is a beautiful vessel in which I can take adventurous voyages worthy of a headstrong explorer. In the anteroom the revenants crowd.

What do they do while I can't see them? While the wall's motionless curtain remains drawn between them and me? Nobody could tell me. Whenever, curious, I leave my work and approach on the tips of my slippers that half-closed door and look into the mystery of that anteroom *they* always appear in the same *natural poses*.

True still lifes.

It is the terrible naturalness, the inexorable logic that each object – destined by the immutable laws of gravity to remain on the earth's crust – carries within, printed on its Center.

But when I go away and see them again only with my mind's eye; when I aim my gaze like the metallic dart of drill on the wall-curtain then, oh then every revenant seems still another, and behind every curtain I hear things moving that I've never imagined.

Then even the natural pose of the chess player seated at the meditation table appears to me in all its tremendous spectrality. And from the vine-stitched, gagged, sealed, armoured mouth, I hear welling up the most dismal murmuring summoning the companion who at that hour perhaps also sits down there, in some faraway city in the industrial territories beyond the seas. Cities sliced by asphalted and shining streets; beautified by the sunny squares' perfect quadrants and by piazzas pregnant with shade. Cities where the strident life sings night and day amid the cheerful circle of mines and industrious shipyards, with the dwarfish railroads that climb and run pitching like hasty ants, along the cement bastions and on the platforms yellowed by the yellow earth, with the armoured trucks filled with the flesh and the blood of the freshly sliced channels. Cities that joust between the metallic scaffolding decked out in blasts of steam, and the sweet symmetry of the long, low workshops wrapped in a belt of large academic windows; curled up into herds beneath the noontide heat; kept awake by the solemn sentry of the tall chimneys continually spewing thick, dark clouds that slowly fade in a most comforting *premier* between the city and the sky turbid with heat where up above nostalgic families of bald-necked birds of prey trace tired spirals circling without rest...

Then I, too, feel beaten by all that distance and fatally as though pressed by the plaster hand of some inexorable ghost who would wake me, I fold beneath the contractions of an imminent birth...

Then the great metaphysical paintings go, the hermetic visions squared for populous cities of faraway continents.

The great river of the idiot crowd will filter them forward without trembling for the terrible mystery frozen within the frames' rectangles...

But then as centuries will have followed centuries and the new mechanics will have plotted new metal laces, sketched out new complications for the ossified exhaustion of the dead planet, my name, murmured within tribes chosen by the future, will be the sweetest emotion to the brother who I will never know but who will carry stamped in his eyes that strange and tremendous longing that in this faraway today burns my heart and brain, and shakes my weary body with rape, and blackens the veins across all my flesh with a blood pregnant with bile and tears.

April 1918

27. ZEUXIS THE EXPLORER²⁸

for Mario Broglio

Once the passageways are opened within the idiot fences that shut in the various *groups* – whimpering or roaring – the new Zeuxis' depart alone in search of curiosities that burrow like moles across the crust of the terraqueous globe.

“The world is full of demons,” said Heraclitus of Ephesus, strolling in the shade of the porticos, in the hour pregnant with high noon's mystery, while in the dry embrace of the Asiatic gulf, the salty water was simmering beneath the south-western wind.

You must find the demon in every thing.

The ancient Cretans printed an enormous eye in the middle of the skinny profiles that chased each other around their vases, their domestic tools, the walls of their houses.

Even the fetus of a man, of a fish, of a chicken, of a serpent is, in its first stage, entirely an eye.

You must find the eye in every thing.

I was already thinking that way in Paris during the final years preceding the explosion of the conflict.

Around me the international gang of *modern* painters was stupidly striving between exhausted formulas and sterile systems.

Only I, in my squalid atelier on the rue Campagne-Première, was beginning to perceive the first ghosts of an art more complete, more profound, more complicated and, to say it in a word though at the risk of giving hepatic colic to a French critic: *more metaphysical*.

New lands appeared on the horizon.

The big zinc coloured glove, with the terrible golden nails, swung on the shop door in the sad breaths of the civic afternoons; with its index finger pointing toward the slabs of the sidewalk it showed me the hermetic signs of a new melancholy.

The papier-mâché skull in the middle of the hairdresser's window cut in the strident heroism of gloomy prehistory, burned my heart and mind like a recurring song.

The demons of the city opened the road for me.

When I returned home other harbinger ghosts came towards me.

On the ceiling I discerned new Zodiac signs when I watched its desperate flight go to die at the back of the room in the rectangle of the window opened onto the mystery of the street.

The door half closed upon the night of the anteroom had the sepulchral solemnity of a rock shifted before the empty tomb of the resurrected.

And the new harbinger paintings arose.

Like autumnal fruits we are now ripe for the new metaphysics.

That strong winds may bear down from distant turbulent seas.

²⁸ Original title, *Zeusi l'esploratore*, poem in prose in Italian dated “Rome April 1918” dedicated to Mario Broglio, director of “Valori Plastici”, published in the periodical's first issue (year I n. 1, November 1918) and later published in *Commedia dell'arte moderna*, Traguardi-Nuove Edizioni Italiane, Rome 1945 (2008 n. 104).

That our cry may reach the populous cities of faraway continents.
 We must not fatten ourselves, not even in the happiness of our new creations.
 We are explorers ready for new departures.
 Below roofs echoing with metallic clanging the quadrants are struck at the sign of departure.
 In the signal boxes the bells ring out.
 It is time ...
 "Gentlemen, all aboard ...!"

Rome April 1918

III PARIS 1925-1930

28. VALE LUTETIA²⁹

... and you return to places you loved long ago.
 Gaston Marcelle, *Les Sans-Souci*

Against the great backdrop of fog, so tenderly grey and mysterious like the backdrops of a photography studio where the equal light raining from up high isolates every being and every thing strangely in space, the suburbs of the avant-city appeared to me suddenly speckled with singing colours, papered with charming surprises. It was the early hours of a November morning. I had left Torino the metaphysical the day before, in the afternoon (Torino is the afternoon city *par excellence*) after a long rest at the border station in front of that gloomy Modane – suffocated by the overhanging Alpine cliffs, tortured by the continual dripping of the waters, resounding with the endless din of the falls – the train resumed its westward course and all night, in dark spasms, it rolled up along France's soil. I still had the Piedmontese capital in my mind; the monarchic city with its piazzas inhabited by scientists and kings, by politicians and by warriors motionless in tired and solemn poses on their pedestals of stone, I still had in mind all of the strange lyricism of its fateful geometric construction. Torino is still an Italian city and, despite certain deceptive Nordic and Occidental aspects, a Mediterranean city. The Mediterranean sky covers her and is often revealed showing itself above her like that disturbing mask that appears on the bedroom ceiling to the man about to abandon himself to sleep. The Mediterranean sky, the anticeliling *par excellence*; men destined to live below that sky experience the need for a square house (anti-Gothic) – not for a tall house, but for one well affixed to the earth. From the Greeks to all the Italic peoples, rectilinear construction has been necessary as a shield against the terrible menace of the implacable sky. And I still say that the more astute and cunning peoples, like the Greeks, reached the summit of square solidity

²⁹ The poem in prose in Italian evoking the artist's impressions upon arriving in Paris by train: "It was the early hours of a November morning. I had left Torino the metaphysical the day before...", refers without doubt to his brief return to the capital in November 1924. Six months later he was in Paris once more on occasion of his personal exhibition at Léonce Rosenberg's Galerie L'Effort Moderne (5-30 May). His definitive return to Paris occurred in November 1925. Published in "Rivista di Firenze", *cit.*, May 1925. See also, M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *op. cit.*, pp. 468-469 (2008 n. 107).

especially in the construction of their temples and sanctuaries, which for men threatened by demons must have been, with regard to defense and protection, the last resort. And cross-eyed and pusillanimous peoples like the Etruscans, their heels bitten by the demons of the North, sought refuge even in the darkness of underground chambers and became moles in order to flee the triangular eye of their sky.

But for he who moves north or west away from the atmosphere of the Mediterranean the sky becomes more clement. It is like an alliance between sky and land. Outside of his house man no longer feels lost; he finds himself as though in a second house with a higher ceiling and thus his architecture rises; the builder acquires a taste for the play of the trapezium, becomes ogival and triangular, the roofs lengthen, the builder enjoys himself working; in his hours of rest he becomes sentimental, in those of meditation, protestant and metaphysical. Such were my thoughts as I watched, through the window of my second-class compartment, the first French country houses appearing and disappearing among the Verlainian gardens and the parks made golden by autumn, while the express, accelerating and flying past Neuilly and Eubonne and Tremblay and Marly-le-Roy, was approaching Paris.

After leaving the station and entering the heart of the city the landscape becomes ever more magical; one has the impression of being in a giant jack-in-the-box; of finding oneself before the open curtain of a marvelous theater: the background scenery is the tenderest grey of the fog that connects the sky to the earth and to human constructions, which are grey as well and rising curious and inviting, solemn and surprising right and left like enormous curtains from which emerge, similar to magic lantern figures, hurried throngs of men and of vehicles – strange and multicoloured herds (I think of a line from Apollinaire: *bergère tour Eiffel...*). And I think also about the great mystery of colour and of its infinite surprises; I think of the strange lyricism of those coloured paintings like the colours of pictures by Zeuxis and Apelle and that appeared to me one evening on the screen of a movie theater where they were showing that marvelous metaphysical film, *The Ten Commandments*. The magic of colour was even more surprising as it would appear after long scenes of grey or dull brown. The rainbow of the warriors' armour and of the horses' rumps would then show itself in all of its magical mystery and, at the same time to a contrasting effect, would reveal the mystery of the neutral colour that preceded it.

Such is Paris. Every wall papered over with *réclames* is a metaphysical surprise; and the gigantic cherubic child of *Cadum Soap*, and the red colt of *Poulain Chocolate* rise with the disquieting solemnity of ancient divinity.

At night the mystery does not die. The shops close their doors but their windows, like theaters during gala evenings, remain lit up.

And there are entire scenes, dramas of modern life reconstructed in the brief space of the window-theater. Strolling through the Boulevards in the dead of night you see all the romanticism of modern life parade before you; and here the houses with golden gates, and the parks and turreted castles of France, and ocean and Riviera beaches inhabited by phantom mannequins in gymnastics leotards; and the halls of the international *palazzi* with their funereal and spectral inhabitants like companies of ghosts about to depart and surprise the Brutes who meditate in their houses during sleepless nights. At times metaphysical realism is brought to its height with the clever tricks and sophistications from an old *routier* of metaphysical surprise. Thus in a window in which a group of gentlemen and women with their children were depicted on a Riviera beach, I thought of *The Odyssey* and of wandering Ulysses, because a piece of fabric placed in front of the scene and artistically painted in ultramarine and veronese green represented the extreme lip of water that wets the beach, while in

all directions little piles of sand offered themselves up to the construction games of the baby ghosts, and a few well-distributed iridescent spiral shells completed the lyricism of this Homeric vision.

The spirit and love of man tend toward the west. In a city, in a country, in a house, in a garden, the part that is always most pleasant to me, toward which I look always with more love is the part turned toward the horizon where the sun sets.

Therefore it is always with a mysterious sadness that I set out toward the east when, for whatever motive, I must take that direction. So in Paris, the most western city of Europe, the breaths of all that which has taken place and will take place die out and objects of all kinds and the most loving peculiarities migrated from the three remaining cardinal points reach you and shine upon you in a light full of the most tender mystery. Beneath the arches of a peculiar passageway which is adjacent to the *Boulevard des Italiens*, and which, not even on purpose, is situated on the west side of that Boulevard, I discovered the strangest rifle shop: in the window lit up like an aquarium, among old revolvers with rotating cylinders for capsule cartridges like those used by gold prospectors in America during the Civil War, I saw displayed the strangest weapon: it was a kind of giant toy, a black light cannon from whose mouth, similar to the spear of an ancient warrior, protruded the point of a harpoon tied to a fine tarred rope that unfurled in a luminous spiral through the wheels of the childlike cannon. Beside it was a highly dramatic and suggestive picture: amid a dark and stormy sea strewn with icebergs, drifting in the currents of lacy silhouettes like the ruins of bombed cities and white like sepulchral stones, a ship carrying several bearded and anguished Nordic fishermen was dragged by an enormous cetacean that carried in its side, plunged up to the metallic feathers, the fatal spear; the appalled fishermen were hastily unrolling the rope in order not to be drowned by the terrible tugboat. Below an inscription read: "*Colouvrine avec son projectile-harpon pour la pêche à la baleine.*" The same gun dealer also sold wool sweaters and bottles of Provençal wine.

Modernity, this great mystery, lives everywhere in Paris; at each corner you run into it coupled with that which was, pregnant with that which will be. The image of Pallas Athena that rises, stone sentry, to the right of the ancient Bourbon palace is as solemn as certain solemn representations of the great modern metaphysical painters and as that other image of the same god, which near the Propylaea of the Athenian arches would awaken leaning upon her staff, motionless amid the crooked flight of the common swifts who were shrill in the sultriness of the summer dusk, during that evening in which not so far away, there below the low vaults of a prison dug out of the rock, Socrates was awaiting death speaking of mysterious things to his weeping disciples.

Among these encouraging and exciting aspects the *Parisian* moves and works. The Parisian is the strangest animal. This does not mean only a man born in Paris to French parents. There are individuals of each race and from each country who live and work in Paris and the transformation that they undergo has nothing dishonorable about it like some too-zealous patriots might malignantly observe. The man endowed with creative faculties, the artist born in Paris develops and becomes complicated. The forces that might be latent in him in other countries and other cities bloom and flower in Paris upon contact with that powerful rhythm of life with its thousand aspects and thousand colours. Even works of art born in other countries increase in beauty and mystery in Paris on account of the mysticism and the curiosity that surround them and that most mysterious light that bathes and softens them. Seen at the Louvre, the same masters of the Italian schools made an impression on me more profound than the one I experienced seeing them in Italian museums; and in the hypogea of the ancient palace of the kings the Greek sculptures appeared to me with the mystery that must have surrounded them when they sprung up in the shadows of the sanctuaries. And at the feet of the

large stairway that leads from the basement to the art galleries a strange decapitated statue appeared to me: it was an *ex-voto* by Tessaglioti; it depicted a man with his shoulders covered by a cape similar to those worn by our infantrymen, his right leg stretched forward a bit and spread; he was in a strange attitude of meditation; looking at that decapitated statue I thought of the profound and melancholy sound of the word: *revenant*.

In Paris love and curiosity for all that which reveals spirit, intelligence, lyricism, and talent increases continuously. I, who, when I left Paris in 1925³⁰ knew only German-speakers, people who *en masse* and garishly, as was the custom for some hysterical muddlers in Italy, would condemn any German creation, have now found very many French artists full of curiosity and love for German art and (oh miracle) I have even found admirers of Böcklin; one of whom, the writer Maurice Fels, goes every year to Berlin and Monaco to see the great Swiss painter's originals.

Nowadays in Paris the cult of lyricism and metaphysics is huge. Naturally this signals the definitive condemnation of all of that stumpy painting, of all that literary foolishness, of all those banalities that in Italy unfortunately continue still to struggle along amidst yawns and hysterical grimaces. One understands how in Paris, that very selective environment, art might acquire such a lyrical and spiritual appearance.

Schools arise one after another, passion grows, production assumes striking proportions. And wherever you turn you meet smiling and affable faces, friendly hands that clasp your own, intelligent and serene glances that rest upon you with admiration, curiosity, and sympathy. Like Athens in the time of Pericles, Paris is today's city for artistic and intellectual excellence. It is there that each man who can be called an artist must claim recognition of his value. It will not be denied him, especially because in Paris men are made more serene by the very work that absorbs them and makes them happy and satisfied, and are therefore less prone to be hysterical. Less prone I say to poison and create obstacles of every kind and to bombard with every kind of dissatisfaction those persons who have the grave defect of quite surpassing the common standard. *Amen*.

29. DREAM³¹

In vain I struggle with the man whose eyes are crossed but very soft. Each time I throw my arms around him he escapes by gently opening his arms and these arms have an exceptional strength, an incalculable power, they are like irresistible levers, like all-powerful machines, these gigantic cranes that above the swarming work sites lift quarters of floating fortresses with heavy turrets like the breasts of antediluvian mammals. In vain I struggle with the man whose eyes are crossed but very soft; from each embrace, however furious, he gently frees himself smiling and scarcely opening his arms... it is my father who appears to me in dream and yet when I look at him he is not exactly the same as he was when he was living, during my childhood. And yet it is he; there is something more *distant* in his face's expression, something that existed perhaps when I saw him alive and that now, after more than twenty years, appears to me in all its power when I see him again in dream.

30 Editor's note: the specification of the year "1925" is an error by the author. The correct date is 1915 as de Chirico is referring to the end of his first period in Paris from 1911 to 1915.

31 The poem in prose, *Rêve*, was published in the first issue of "La Révolution Surrealiste", n. 1, Paris December 1924 and republished in "La rivista di Firenze", edited by G. Castelfranco in May 1925. The manuscript is conserved at Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève, fond Jacques Doucet, Paris. See M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Il meccanismo del pensiero. Critica, polemica, autobiografia 1911-1943*, Einaudi Editore, Turin 1985, pp. 467-468 (2008 n. 105).

The struggle ends when I *abandon* it, when I *renounce* it; then the images become confused; the river (the Po or the Peneus) which during the struggle I had a presentment was flowing near me darkens, the images become confused as if storm clouds had descended very near the earth; there was an *intermezzo*, during which I am perhaps still dreaming, but I don't remember anything except the agonizing searches through dark streets, when the dream became brighter again. I find myself on a public square of great metaphysical beauty; it is perhaps *piazza* Cavour in Florence; or perhaps one of those very beautiful squares in Turin, or perhaps neither one; on one side one sees arcades surmounted by apartments with closed shutters, some solemn balconies.

On the horizon one sees hills with villas; above the square the sky is very clear, cleansed by the storm, yet one feels that the sun is setting since the shadows of the houses and the rare passers-by on the square are very long. I look toward the hills towards which the fleeing storm's last clouds are hurrying; the scattered villas are pure white and seem solemn and sepulchral, viewed against the sky's deep black curtain at this point. Suddenly

I find myself under the arcades, together with a group of people pressing themselves against the door of a pastry shop with shelves crowded with multicoloured cakes; the crowd presses forward and peers inside like people at pharmacy doors when they bring someone in who is hurt or has fallen sick in the street; but then while I am looking too I see my father from the rear who, standing in the middle of the shop, is eating a cake; however I don't know if the crowd is pressing forward because of him; a certain anguish seizes me and I feel like fleeing toward the west to a country that is newer and more hospitable, and at the same time I search beneath my clothes for a dirk or a dagger, since it seems to me that some danger is threatening my father in this pastry shop and I sense that the dirk or the dagger will be indispensable if I enter, as when one enters the lair of bandits, but my anguish increases and suddenly the crowd squeezes against me like swirling water and drags me off toward the hills; I have the impression that my father is no longer in the pastry shop, that he is fleeing, that they are going to pursue him like a thief, and I wake up with the anguish of that thought.

30. ON SILENCE³²

Before mankind appeared on earth the god Harpocrates reigned everywhere, present but invisible. Some black flabby things resembling fish-rocks slowly emerged, like submarines on maneuvers, then dragged themselves painfully along the seashore like badly-disabled soldiers deprived of their mechanical car. Vast epochs of silence on earth, everything was smoking, Columns of steam rose from the boiling ponds, from between the tragic cliffs and from the middle of the forests. Nature, Nature without noise! Silent deserted shores; far away above the milky seas and with a disturbing tranquility, a red sun, a dramatic disc, a solitary disc slowly sank in the horizon's vapours. From time to time a monstrous animal, a sort of islet with a swan's neck and a parrot head, rose from the water to enter the land's interior, the mysterious forests, and the depths of the humid valleys. The shores were strewn with strange seashells: stars, helices, and broken spirals; some of which move slightly using short jerky movements and then collapse as if exhausted by the effort, and then remain immobile. Evening battles along the Ocean's edge! O evening on Quiberon! In sublime poses of weariness and sleep the

32 Original title, *Sur le silence*. An abridged version of this poem in prose was published in "Minotaure", n. 5, Skira, Paris 1934, pp. 31-32. The manuscript comprises of seven carefully written pages. See M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, who dates the poem to 1924, *op. cit.*, p. 468. For an interpretation of the text, see J. Clair, *Dans la terreur de l'histoire* in *Giorgio de Chirico*, exhibition catalogue edited by W. Rubin, W. Schmied and J. Clair, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris 1983, pp. 49-51 (2008 n. 106).

warriors lie in their final repose while over there, behind the black cliffs with the profiles of gothic apostles, a moon with a northern paleness rises in the great silence; its rays softly illuminate the faces of the dead and awaken a veiled reflection in their weapons' metal.

Silence reigns also before battles; during the night-watches of the chiefs, of the generals with absolute authority, who, in their tents sheltered from enemy fire, meditate until dawn on their strategic plans and search to remember what their predecessors did in the same situation. Silence is necessary, even indispensable for their meditation for on this silence depends the quality of their strategic thoughts and thus the destiny of the warriors presently asleep, their weapons within reach, and who, when the bugle has sounded the alarm tomorrow, when the sparse squadrons on the plain will suddenly charge quicker than an eaglet, could well know the intoxication of victory or the pain of defeat; they could know triumph, the sublime joy of entering the conquered towns as victors, of crossing deserted streets between the double bays of the houses with solemn balconies and shutter hermetically sealed, whose renters not knowing how to express their spite at hearing the rhythmic step of the victorious enemy phalanxes resonate beneath their windows, cannot find anything better to do than to close themselves up in their rooms, their living and dining rooms, with the curtains lowered and the doors locked; and then pout, ha! But these same warriors, alas, could also experience defeat, the shame of being dragged as prisoners through the enemy country, of passing through a screaming and hooting crowd beneath a rain of rotten eggs and filthy balls of paper, thrown by ferocious grimacing boys. This is why before the chiefs' and the generals' tent, the night before a battle, the indispensable sentinel must be accompanied by sleep's younger brother: Silence.

God created the world in silence; afterward, when he had released the elements and the animals on the spheres that revolve (or do not revolve) in space, that is when noise began. Every creation takes place in silence; afterward, its secret forces produce noise, or rather noises throughout the vast world. First, in their rooms situated above the arcades, the philosophers meditate. Their double windows, while allowing them to enjoy the view of the hills, the ports, the vast and beautiful squares adorned with well-sculpted statues placed on low pedestals, prevent outside noises from troubling their work as metaphysical thinkers. In their room not a single noise troubles their meditation; scarcely are a few sighs and slight squeaks heard from time to time; their dog sleeping and dreaming and sometimes complaining in his dream. Other slight noises are heard but they are not properly speaking noises: the scratching of a mouse which, encouraged by the silence and immobility of the sleeping dog, makes some lengthy excursions across the library as across a fantastic country of abrupt cliffs and rocky escarpments or like a pilgrim, a traveler at the Sphinx's feet, stops beneath the plaster copies, beneath statues of Belisarius, Socrates, Hipocrates, Minerva, and Alexander the Great who, helmeted or bare-headed, bald or hairy, gaze into the void tranquil, indifferent. Sometimes too the philosopher's ear detects, but scarcely perceptible and as if he were dreaming, the songs of the servant washing dishes or preparing the evening meal (the best hours for meditation are especially those of the afternoon); some songs have a poignant sadness, for they express the sorrow that sometimes traverses the life of weak and obscure beings:

Grant me leave, captain,
Please grant me my leave,
When I left her she was sick.

Bearer, you who carry the coffin,
 Halt a moment.
 I who never kissed her alive
 Now that she is dead,
 I want to place my lips
 On her forehead.

And the tic-toc of the clock on the mantle; a glass globe on which is leaning Time, a tall desiccated old man with a flowing beard, pensive and sad between his scythe and his hourglass. – But all that isn't really noise, properly speaking, and to the ear of the philosopher absorbed in his profound thoughts and his high metaphysical speculations it seems like a rumbling and, all things considered, like the harmonious vibration that, according to Pythagoras, the planets and suns produce as they revolve in space. In that atmosphere where all true and proper noise is carefully banned the philosopher's thoughts mature; they are transferred onto paper and then form volumes of printed writing. And thus they go around the world, they cross the Oceans, penetrate every race, become the bedside book of the rich man who suffers and the poor man who hates and thus revolutions and revolutions are born as a storm springs up in the burning sky of a summer afternoon. Squads of fierce and resolute men, led by a Colossus with the beard of an ancient god, snatch beams from workshops and push them like catapults against the doors of great hotels, of palaces, of sumptuous residences where millionaires have accumulated riches and precious works of art, for they never thought they were threatened and always listened to reassuring discourse, always read calming articles that began with the eternal refrain: "Our people have too much good sense" etc. etc. ...

Thus it can be said that every good creation should be
 conceived in silence.

There is nothing more annoying than people who talk while you are contemplating a monument, a beautiful spectacle of nature, a statue, a painting, an art object, or who loudly express their opinion at the theater or during the projection of a film. As far as painting is concerned one must regard it in silence; today unfortunately the type of amateur, of connoisseur, no longer exists who remains a long time before a painting, standing or seated, contemplating it without speaking and even, if the dimensions of the canvas permit it, takes it in his hands to closely examine it like one examines a jewel, a fabric, a precious print, etc.

As soon as they are standing before a painting people today, without concentrating their attention on the center of the canvas, without scanning it with their eyes, but pushing their visual line to the painting's corners and even beyond, begin to talk, more preoccupied with trying to be smart and look intelligent, either by exaggerated admiration – with the eternal "Fantastic!" "Unbelievable!" "Astonishing!" etc. – or by expressing skepticism, than with understanding and appreciating the true value of the painting before them. In this case we prefer the atmosphere of schools, of those severe halls with their walls painted white where young people bend over books and notebooks thinking and studying in solemn silence while all around them, depicted with beautiful colours, hanging on the walls, the appearance of the earth, of plants, animals, and human history is presented in silence; there are geographical maps, sometimes gray, sometimes pink, but always blue where there are lakes and vast bodies of water; there are polar bears, splashing in the middle of the ice and ostriches,

yes poor ostriches fleeing desperately before the Arab horseman lying on the neck of his mount running at a quadruple gallop; and History: Caesar, surrounded by his legions in a conquered valley, Pericles dying of the plague, in the midst of his relatives and his tearful friends, and also soldiers dressed in uniforms that change in form and colour across the ranks and monarchs, potbellied ministers their chests a mosaic of ribbons and decorations who look each other in the eye and shake hands with a historic gesture.

May God protect you from bad silence, my dear friends! For bad silence also exists; a silence that is not the source of any mental work or any creation. The silence of the desert where death and desolation reign, where every seed sown rots or fossilizes instead of fructifying, where the aridity slowly burns everything where caravans pass noiselessly, exhausted, for not a single man ... feels like singing, not a single ass has the strength to bray.

May God protect you also, my dear friends, from these heavy painful silences that fall with an unheard of fatality and implacability, right in the middle of a get-together, of a party, when a clumsy oaf, a moron, or a nasty person utters one of those words that suddenly renders everyone mute and in a wink transforms a gay group of people, come together to amuse and distract themselves, into a group of preoccupied and taciturn people; that happens for example when, in a salon frequented by puritanical people, an awkward person who is not attuned to the gathering's atmosphere begins to speak about the problem of prostitution and pederasty, or explains in great detail the means employed in certain cases by obstetricians and midwives. Be on the lookout also for natural silences, when thousands of things that make noises in the fields, in the forests, in the valleys, and on the shores suddenly become mute, for they sense vaguely that over there somewhere, behind the distant horizons, lost in the skies, behind the high mountains, a tempest and a storm are slowly forming in order to charge later with booming thunder and bright lightning flashes. We all know them, these exciting and dramatic moments. In the Villas hidden at the center of parks, the servants have left the windows open, for it has been hot, implacably hot since the early hours; but suddenly gusts of wind create terrible currents of air; magazines and illustrated newspapers forgotten on the metallic chairs and the willow armchairs fly whirling up to the rooftops while the window panes break and objects in the room are knocked over; and then the storm erupts; thunder plays mysterious and macabre tricks; master chefs lie on the kitchen tiles, completely stripped of their clothes, holding in their right hand a spit traversing the half-cooked body of a chicken! The gentlemen poets shut up in their rooms, where they spend whole days sitting at their work tables smoking a pipe and covering the blank pages of their notebooks with platonic sonnets, raise their heads to contemplate the spectacle, for they love that; they love nature's angers; they love to see the trees in the garden bend beneath the tempest and twist like damned souls under the blows of eternal punishments, they love to hear the wind roar in the great empty chimneys where between the massive andirons one can find the calcinated remains of logs from the past winter, they love to hear the thunder, artillery salvos that awaken every echo at the four corners of the horizon; but often while they witness the cataclysm comfortably seated in their armchair, in the middle of their room where the pipe has created a sweet fog agreeable to the smoker but thick enough to cut with a knife, while they witness the storm's ravages sheltered from the rain and the wind and feel that perverse and unhealthy joy of the spectator who, watching the dangerous trapeze exercises of a troupe of acrobats while calmly sitting on a solid seat, fears neither dizziness nor falling, or of the sportsman who from an armchair in the front row, safe from all the blows, watches two heavyweights in the ring, who aim with all the force of their muscled arms great uppercuts to the point of the chin or jabs to the hollow of the stomach. A violent blast of wind opens the window and an irresistible cyclone causes sheets of paper to fly everywhere, sowing confusion and disorder in the midst of their work; forgetting everything else, they begin to run after the white sheets

grab them in mid flight with the charming gestures and movements of rhythmic dancers and chaste young girls chasing frisky butterflies on a beautiful prairie covered with spring flowers.

Beware, friends, the silence that precedes such events.

3 I. SALVE LUTETIA³³

... and you returned to the places that formerly you loved.

Gustave Arfeux, *Les Sans-Souci*.

A mysterious law pushes men to move toward the horizon where the sun descends. Great emigrations always proceed from east to west. In a house, in a town, in a land, in a country, the part that is the happiest, the most attractive, the richest in promises and also the most troubling is the part facing the setting sun. When I go walking in a town I love to direct my steps toward the western districts; I have a vague feeling that happiness is waiting for me *in that direction*; that a *surprise* is reserved for me; and that if for some reason I should go in the opposite direction, toward the east, toward the sad and infernal orient, I sense a mysterious and indefinable anguish grip my heart. Although having often meditated on the possible causes of this attraction to the west, I have not found an explanation up to the present that satisfies me; thus I let myself indulge in the charm of metaphysical considerations and I relegate the enigma of the westward walk to the world of so many other enigmas that remain for the present, alas, unsolved.

In Europe Paris represents the most western city of all. Not only do people emigrate toward it but so do *things*, in the Latin sense of the word *res*; curious things, *ideas*, moods of people far away or dead centuries ago, lyricisms that history has forgotten if not always ignored the existence, *creations*, artists' creations, real or imagined, and also creations of which each epoch, each century of human history offers us very strange examples, and which, far from being the fruit of a modern or an earlier artist, seem created by circumstances, by that *divine chance* previously singled out by Friedrich Nietzsche. All that, by land, air, sea, and rivers, and also and especially by the unknown routes of the surreal, sails toward Paris. There *things* discover the scene and their *décor*; transformed, rendered more brilliant and mysterious by the city's vast gray backdrop which serves as a foil, they appear with a new vividness; colours become more tender, brighter, and richer; *there are colours that are only found in Paris*. Even Homer, the mysterious Homer whose existence is uncertain, of whom seven cities dispute the honor of having been his birth place, even Homer is reborn in Paris; during the charming season when France's coasts are awakened by the polychrome agitation of swimmers, its spirit glides by in the windows of the Galeries-Lafayette. While the flags up above flap tranquilly in the warm summer winds, the shop windows below, the little theaters that are always available, feature strange gentlemen and ghost babies gambling on the sand, with a few cleverly arranged still-lives, seashells, seafood, pebbles polished by the waves' secular action, and in the background a piece of canvas painted sea-blue at the top and cerulean blue at the bottom, reminds us of Ulysses and his wandering destiny. It is in Paris that the modern spirit acquires its most consoling aspect; it retains the gifts of surprise, charm, and that happy agitation a work of art gives us when it contains the enigma of talent; it loses its frightening, cruel,

³³ In French, published in "Bulletin de l'Effort Moderne", edited by L. Rosenberg, Paris, March 1927. The text is closely related to the text in Italian, *Vale Lutetia*, cit. See M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *ibidem* (2008, n. 108).

and mean aspects. Reconquered, the Greek and Babylonian divinity is illuminated by a new beacon's beam; *Cadum Soap's* gigantic baby and *Colt Chocolate's* red horse present the troubling aspect of ancient divinities.

...return O my earliest felicity
 joy inhabits strange cities
 a new magic has descended on the earth.

In that atmosphere saturated with creation and surprise, the Parisian artist lives and works. In Paris the painter and the foreign poet can come to recharge their virtues in the flame of the great hospitable and consoling city. They will give gifts to the natives and receive some in return without that wounding the pride of men who have a well-defined nationality and a passport in order, as a few overly zealous nationalists from here or elsewhere could easily think. Paris is a city of miracles. One winter evening, in a dark street above the Place Clichy, I saw ghostly lions wandering around which, in Rome, used to appear the night before great calamities; another time, walking along the rue de la Paix late at night, I heard the mysterious Gallic cock crow three times in a grand jewelry store; and a few steps further on, the deep murmur of Roman fountains emerged from an antique dealer's basement. But the most astonishing miracle I witnessed was the departure of the Argonauts.

At dawn one morning last spring, following a night of insomnia, I took the first subway train at the Kléber station in order to get to Montparnasse, to the rue Campagne-Première. Just when the train was emerging onto the bridge over the Seine, I perceived a splendid vessel down below that partly resembled a galley, a barge, a plow, and an airplane; the spirit of Neptune, Ceres, Aeolus, and Peneus seemed to be concentrated in this magnificent vessel, which was simultaneously marine, terrestrial, aerial, and fluvial. Jason was standing at the bow whom I immediately recognized by his majestic beard and especially by the royal manner with which he leaned on his lance, emphasizing the exaggerated curve of his right haunch where the pleats of his *chlamys* descended in stylized lines. At the same time, a mysterious individual sitting near me and who disappeared from view several moments later, like those whom one encounters in dreams, whispered to me "They spent the night in the Trocadero museum; they slept there without the guards knowing". But I focused my attention elsewhere, for the vessel had already left the river and was skimming over the tops of the buildings lining the quay; unfortunately the train was going too fast, then faster, I just had time to see the strange boat veer toward the southeast, toward the Ecole Militaire, and then disappear.

... City of dreams not dreamed
 built with holy patience by daemons
 it is you that, faithfully, I will sing.
 One day I will also be a human statue
 widowed spouse on the Etruscan sarcophagus
 on that day O maternal city
 hug me in your great stony embrace.

32. "IN THE MOST SILENT VALLEY..."³⁴

In the most silent valley
 the sanctuary the richest
 in flowers
 Before mankind appeared on earth some
 black flabby things, animals – trees
 – fish – cliffs, slowly emerged
 like submarines on maneuvers they
 dragged themselves painfully along the seashore like
 badly disabled soldiers. Vast epochs
 of silence on earth, everything was smoking! Columns
 of steam rose from the bubbling alluvial deposits
 and fumaroles smoked and smoked continually.
 Nature, soundless Nature – Deserted and
 silent shores of the milky tranquil seas.
 Far away a red sun a tragic and
 solitary disc, slowly sinks
 into the smoking vapours on the horizon.
 Occasionally a monstrous animal, an enormous
 black mass with a parrot's head, slowly emerges
 from the water and drags itself heavily along the shore
 among the seashells some of which move slightly
 using short jerky movements and then
 collapse and are immobile again.

33. AFTERNOON AWAKENING³⁵

A horse regarding an abyss
 Such was the dream he recounted,
 A marvelous and sublime painting

34 First line, "*Dans la vallée la plus silencieuse...*", published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 32). The poem belongs to a group of poems referred to here as "Poesie in francese" (poems in French) with the title the artist wrote in Italian on a notebook: "Monsieur Dusdron - Primi appunti in francese e poesie in francese" (Mr. Dusdron - first notes in French and poems in French), datable for the most part from 1925 to 1930 during de Chirico's second period in Paris. This poem, with variations, forms part of the first verse of the poem in prose, *On Silence* (*ivi.* n. 30).

35 Original title, *Réveil d'après-midi*, written in Juan les Pins, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published in *Giorgio de Chirico*, exhibition catalogue, Musée Marmottan 1975. The poem's four final verses were published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 34b). It is plausible that the poem was written in the summer of 1925 when de Chirico and Raissa Krol, his companion and future wife, spent time in Juan les Pins. A small drawing datable to 1925 bearing the inscription "Memory of a dream, a horse regarding an abyss", seems to evoke the first verse of the poem, the original title of which, *The Talented Pupil*, was later changed to the present one.

In vain I search for the idea it embodied.

The more I lose myself in this mysterious life
The more I dream of kings' pleasures,
The more my ardent and anxious anticipation
Increases in this tranquil but narrow place.

And there where the steed bends down toward the river
the horizon is distant and promises happiness.
Great wading birds move southward
And I hear my heart's seconds beating.

Later toward evening, the sad evening of a life
Or the evening of a long blurry day
He came to show me a painting that I saw
Strange and new in the sweet gray hour.

And again wandering
Again through dark corridors
Toward that room full of celestial confidence
I spoke to a deaf mute, to a man sleeping
And I search for you everywhere, Alcestis, his wife.

For if he doesn't understand that one can finally
Flee society and its broad wrinkled forehead.
Alcestis by thinking arrives at
Great confines
Illuminated far away by the shadow and his idea.

Juan les Pins

34. "HOUSE ON THE SQUARES, HOUSE AT THE END OF THE WORLD..."³⁶

House on the squares, house at the end of the world
on the horizon very near your distant desires.
Friends you came one evening when all the seconds

36 First line, "*Maison sur les places, maison au bout du monde...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 40). De Chirico translated the poem and recited it in Italian in the documentary *Le poesie inedite di Giorgio de Chirico* (Unpublished poetry by Giorgio de Chirico), filmed at his apartment-studio in Piazza di Spagna, Rome, and transmitted on his 88th birthday, 10 July 1976. The manuscript dated "Rome, 20 May 1973" is dedicated to Franco Simongini, the documentary's director.

fled before your hands trying to seize them.
 Do you remember friends the white acropolises
 where the ardent poet exults
 and prostrates himself
 and where the owls of the vast necropolises
 wail hermits in the depths of their caves?

35. ANCIENT SHORES³⁷

Behold the bleached ruin, sad ruin above.
 Two pure white steeds whinny on the shore.
 One can hear the waves dying away,
 A man sighing and complaining in his dreams.

36. POEM³⁸

No I am not the king o screaming
 crowd
 In the mournful days of the
 middle of summer
 When love cries revolt is
 latent
 and I think o Africa of your waving
 palms
 I think of the clash of arms in the
 deserted salons
 of whale hunts in the northern
 seas
 of distant roaring at night
 in the desert
 and the gleam of torches at Lupercalia festivals
 But I ignore your helmet
 accursed angel
 Your helmet that blasphemes without
 unclenching its teeth

37 Original title, *Rivages antiques*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 42).

38 Original title, *Poème*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 43).

and when someone approaches whistles and then
tells you
“Look, the beacon catches fire in
the ardent setting sun
The beacon, last goodbye to the fellows
who push the frail skiff
over the waves
toward those blessed shores
where vagabond troupes
of blue-eyed virgins, shepherds
with brown bodies
pass by singing.

37. “FAITHFUL JOYS FOR YOUR PRETTY FIELD...”³⁹

Faithful joys for your pretty field
Leave your sweet cares rural
Heavy snows, fierce wolves
Surround your blackening heart
When a miner falls into the cave
At the well’s bottom you contemplate
That star whose number
Has since changed the flash.

38. ITALY⁴⁰

Rich rhymes unreasonable rhymes
Pure and distant autumn days
Barrel organs playing beneath the houses
And the great sorrow O Rome of your fountains

39 First line, “*Joies fidèles pour ton beau champ...*”, in “Poesie in francese”, *cit.*, published for the first time in “Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico” n. 7/8 (2008 n. 45).

40 Original title, *Italie*, in “Poesie in francese”, *cit.*, published for the first time in *De Chirico - La Metafisica del Mediterraneo*, exhibition catalogue edited by J. de Sanna, Rizzoli, Milan 1998; English edition, *De Chirico and the Mediterranean*, Rizzoli, New York 1998, p. 112. (2008 n. 47).

39. "DAY FOLLOWING THE VERY COOL NIGHT..."⁴¹

Day following the very cool night
 Gods fleeing the enormous sun
 Look hunter bleached bones like yours
 lying on the dry ground.
 These powerful remains of a wild animal
 awaken in you the ill-fated dreams
 of a giant bear lying in wait
 for the exiled king who lives modestly.

40. "SHELTERED FROM DREAM YOU..."⁴²

Sheltered from dream you
 Live a very sweet peaceful destiny
 Which by the increasing daylight

41. THE CLOCK OF A SUDDEN⁴³

You could certainly forget the evening when long
 companies of ancestors struck out toward the sea
 where troubadours singing complaints under your windows
 awakened a bitter memory in your heart
 You could certainly forget the ardent promise
 that made you our fields' neighbor one sad night
 and the feast day, of violent tenderness,
 and the disappointed friend, who wanders everywhere looking for you
 You could certainly forget the languor of lovely days
 when warily in time uncertain life
 when the gray hours or rocks alternate in turn
 when the wounded steed halting staggers
 What you will never forget tender soul
 is the sublime sweetness these waves offer
 after so many tears, coming to stretch themselves along the shore
 and fleeing the useless plenitude of the Ocean

41 First line, "*Jour qui suit la nuit très fraîche...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 48).

42 First line, "*Vous qui à l'abri du rêve...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.* (2008 n. 50).

43 Original title, *L'horloge d'une go*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 51).

42. ENIGMAS⁴⁴

The black and white man is decomposing
 Who can ever tell us
 Why one day this gorgeous rose
 Troubles my future so powerfully.

43. "I KNOW YOUR HELMET LIES HEAVY ON YOUR FOREHEAD TURNED..."⁴⁵

I know your helmet lies heavy on your forehead turned
 Toward the distant horizon from which you await his return
 Fatigue oppresses you another day's end
 And the sun dying and reviving in turn

44. "...YOU AND REPOSE HERE DIE THE WAVES..."⁴⁶

...you and repose here die the waves
 of life
 Heat without waves
 Come back lighter the feeble echo
 Abandon yourself..... to this serene
 Peace where

45. BUILDING⁴⁷

O House of my absence
 Sad house with thick walls
 When I have the chance
 Some day to enjoy your peace
 Sad signal that on the floor
 Where I never will be

⁴⁴ Original title, *Enigmes*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 52). De Chirico translated and recited the poem in Italian in the documentary, *Le poesie inedite di Giorgio de Chirico*, *cit.*

⁴⁵ First line, "*Je sais ton casque est lourd à ton front tourné...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 54).

⁴⁶ First line, "*...Toi et repose ici meurt les flots...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 55).

⁴⁷ Original title, *Immeuble*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 56).

Where life that follows the ages
 Will die when I return.
 A story like this sometimes causes
 People in the world to cry.

46. "GUARDS FORMING A RING..."⁴⁸

Guards forming a ring
 In the brightly illuminated town
 Could ruin my trip
 Where, the day of great happiness
 Crown the hostage with roses
 that formerly imprisoned my heart.

47. POEM⁴⁹

Where are you children the walls of white
 cyclamens in the sun arrest the passer-by
 on the edge of this happiness on the threshold of this hand
 Where exhausted workers work and die
 The hope of remaining, the ports where everything is sheltered
 The calm of beautiful nights on the warm shore
 Compensate those instants when joy crumbles
 In the constant effort of a useless voyage
 Why wish to attempt a crazy adventure
 Why wish to cry in the desert's shadow
 a joy that basically for you is only rotten
 and obsesses your day on your deserted heart
 See how quickly without thinking of you
 The guards in the clearings repel their worries
 and upon the old country of Artois' decaying towers
 The fathers hide their faces in their hands
 Give way to the shivering cohort passing by
 cross this bridge that patient carpenters built
 years ago so the lady in love could shelter herself

48 First line, "*Garde partir en rond...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 58).

49 Original title, *Poème*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 59).

on stormy nights.
 Changing plans during the day, watching all night long
 Arming these defenders with an oath's protection
 they threaten the peasant the peasant who annoys you
 and sleeps on the millstone under the open sky
 Years that slipped away in time's mist
 Sorrows forgotten together with memories
 rested and with a happy heart that's where
 I'm headed celebrating my anticipated return.

48. FRAGMENT⁵⁰

The artificial joys, the futile pleasures
 the ardent constancy where I fought in vain
 It only remains to break my useless lyre
 before the tenderness of your divine feet

49. NOCTURNE⁵¹

During the hours of solitude
 as during the days of weariness
 During the most
 charming moments
 and when hope was still alive
 effort brought intense joys
 In sorrow
 armed hoplites
 In your ecstasy enchanted poet
 In what one defends and permits
 In steps and visits
 I encounter you again and again
 O beautiful Gardens of the past! Gardens closed
 For ever

50 This "fragment" in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, was published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 60).

51 Original title, *Nocturne*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 62).

50. NOCTURNE⁵²

Tall is the night, in a profound calm
the earth sleeps buried
as in a black tomb
The breeze blows softly
on the midnight shores The wave rolls
and toward you
slowly, o sea, the rivers flow
Tall is the night
as in a dark tomb you sleep o earth
in the profound salty calm, and just as together
the tempest appeared to us
together with you my heart's tempest was appeased
my heart's tempest
was slowly appeased.

51. TWILIGHT⁵³

The zephyr blows softly,
The wave rolls slowly,
The earth is deserted
Like a dark tomb.

52. "WE WILL NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN ON EARTH..."⁵⁴

We will never see each other again on earth
In the beautiful park
Two wingless spirits
Watching over your tomb.

52 Original title, *Nocturne*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 63).

53 Original title, *Crépuscule*. The poem is a re-elaboration of the previous, *Nocturne*, that was published in the catalogue of de Chirico's solo exhibition at Musée Marmottan in Paris in 1975 (2008 n. 64).

54 This "fragment" is found in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 65).

53. "THE WORLD IS DESERTED, FLEETING VIRTUES..."⁵⁵

The world is deserted, fleeting virtues
 ascend in spirals toward the great backdrop
 The children asleep in their mothers' arms
 the springtime call of the melting snow
 – Far away on the desert's resounding shores
 the sound of long waves come there to die
 the nostalgic cries of fleeing mares
 awaken pious memories dear to me
 I evoke the dawn that pauses in its splendour
 and prolongs the hours of human sleep
 the sleep of the beggar beneath his sordid cape
 and the light in his eyes the tenderness of his hands
 and higher up toward the flash of that eternal summit
 for which far away I search and do not find
 I sadly tune my solemn and sorrowful lyre
 and continue pensively following the trace of his footprints.

54. "HER SINGULAR GLANCE AND FOR ME SHADOW AND LIGHT..."⁵⁶

Her singular glance and for me shadow and light
 Only her glance and morning rose/rocks and ardent evening

55. "ARDENT DOVE WHO TAKES WING ALONE AT NIGHT..."⁵⁷

Ardent dove who takes wing alone at night
 night rock night shore
 Toward the ruins standing beneath the passing cloud
 wave dream high
 Drowning in your bright eyes a star shines
 To drive away the evils that threaten you.
 – Voyager dove when you are up there

55 First line, "*Le monde est desert, les vertus effemères...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 66).

56 First line, "*Son regard seul et pour moi ombre et lumière...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 67).

57 First line, "*Colombe ardente qui t'en vas seule dans la nuit...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 68).

Look far off toward the great night of dreams
Toward the pale frontier where the waves come to die
Look at my boat shipwrecked on the shore.

The great temple in the great black night
The demented wind twists the trees' hair.
But tomorrow the calm of gentle cares will come
(Coolness) beneath the dying rays on the marble summits.

marble
evening
trees
black

56. PRAYER⁵⁸

On the dark beach a sleeping god dreams.
Lord save all these tired gods!
Come closer to them, climb on board their ship.
Let the assassins over there keep watch.
Loaded with victuals and sweet cargos,
You will see your old friends of long ago.
The seasons will dance around you, Lord,
Barefoot in sails that change like the weather.

57. PROVINCIAL PASTORAL⁵⁹

Rivers flowing along the fluvial banks
Peaceful songs at the water's edge
Salty lake with quiet shores
Arid walls beneath the jonquils
Great threat from the deep South
Stormy winds in the Pelsudes mountains
No ferryboats, everything is secured

58 Original title, *Prière*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in *De Chirico - La Metafisica del Mediterraneo*, English edition, *cit.*, p. 126 (2008 n. 69).

59 Original title, *Bucolique provinciale*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 70).

White curtains inside the entry arch
 Of a town that smells like almonds
 In vain the passer-by asks directions
 from the deaf shepherd
 Nothing moves and a young painter
 On the rue Massours sleeps joylessly
 His sleep of a blonde Liege citizen.

58. I SEE CHALOUÏ ISLAND⁶⁰

I see an island, a ship
 Surges forth at the end of the cape.
 This way that way the wind bellows
 And guardedly creases the sea
 Anguishing ascension in the furious
 Wind
 The tower moves slightly
 Every moment we expect
 The cage to make a great leap.
 I see an island, if I were there
 This fright would no longer exist
 For I saw it and it pleased me
 That long island like a jetty
 What do the plants with black spines matter
 The hard rocks one quickly slips
 The sky is mild the sea is smooth
 The clouds form the shape of a funnel
 One feels like reaching out to touch things far away
 This is an effect of the very pure air
 Not a corner not a cut
 On Chalouï Island's rocky shores.

⁶⁰ Original title, *Je vois l'île Chalouï*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 71).

59. VOYAGE IN THE NIGHT⁶¹

The second is the last
 He cannot deny
 The sense of this strange dream
 In the tunnel an engineer who arranges
 Twelve beach huts resounding with
 A strange ringing.
 Twelve on the right and twelve on the left
 And nobody inside
 On the coast the wind mows everything down
 The cliff has these two teeth
 Teeth of stone in the black ruins.
 Where are your clothes hanging
 O Voyager whom everything fascinates
 On the road that basically lies to you.
 Go straight ahead and when moss
 Moistens your exhausted hand
 It is north, listen the moss
 Sang all by itself, so blond and gay
 What good is mistrust
 In this vile wooden cage
 It is evening and your constancy
 Hunts the exhausted deer having a drink
 Sweet thoughts of yesteryear
 You returned to the voyager
 And his soul is lying in wait
 Protected by the dreaming eye.

60. REVELATION AND PROPHECY⁶²

As Agamemnon's steed
 Halts pensive before the wave
 You fair Lord at the Parthenon

61 Original title, *Voyage dans la nuit*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in *De Chirico - La Metafisica del Mediterraneo*, English edition, *cit.*, p. 156 (2008 n. 72).

62 Original title, *Revelations et prophétie*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 73).

Adult with piercing gaze
 Continue to wait sweet Sea for the reward
 To arrive from on high
 Wait for the white herald on the tower
 To announce to the kings what you are thinking.
 Fear neither me nor my anger
 For the years have passed quickly
 In the next quarter of our era
 The joy of youth will grow tired
 Then more alone but more modest
 You will be able to read my heart
 And part toward that ancient white city
 We shall part to seek your fortune you will find the great ancient
 Parting to seek your fortune

61. (COMMERCIAL) CONTRACT⁶³

There were four of us who signed with calm strokes
 Everything was rolled up, signed, the stamp and the date
 One kept the laurel wreath and the other got the palm

62. "TIRED OF INSPIRATION YOUR SOUL CONTINUES..."⁶⁴

Tired of inspiration your soul continues
 To search for the flight that the other night
 Flights in a ship
 God with a shiny winged helmet
 God so sweet that one condemns him
 There where the shade sleeps the lover
 near her for whom he suffered damnation
 In vain did you search for
 The guards vile hired hands
 The haunt of the black Penates
 and damaged goods;
 his destiny is polychromatic

⁶³ Original title, *Contrat (commercial)*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 74).

⁶⁴ First line, "*Laisse d'inspiration ton âme à tout moment*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 75).

The calculations are all mental
 Your sole guide is the sweet aroma
 of these tropical trees
 There toward the other fatal zone
 When he returns in the evening
 The happiness that makes
 (For one... to resell)
 I wonder a little what that means
 Your gaiety which betrayed me last night
 Plan, Medusa, as much as I know
 It is for me to come and sit down
 To think again about my sad task
 Why serious when the white columns
 Furrow our fields and our sweet hillsides.

63. "IN THE JOY OF MY ANCESTORS..."⁶⁵

In the joy of my ancestors
 O sweet banker with fine share certificates
 When leaning on your elbow at your window
 you hear the sad Nations' songs
 The future life whether on earth
 or in a very sweet gray sky
 always announces itself by the barrel
 and the taste of the sour wine
 what you think what you dream
 What the world expects of you
 is only a hope that continually flees

65 First line, "*Dans le joie de mes ancêtres...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 76).

64. "WHEN AVALANCHES DESCEND AFAR..."⁶⁶

When avalanches descend afar
 And boats run aground
 You bolt your large gateway
 And standing in the long hallway
 You risk your wonderful life
 To save your valet who has fallen asleep.

65. RAID⁶⁷

So smile at the tempest
 Handsome Lord with blue belly
 No longer fear the vile request
 Of the unemployed with long hair
 You will come to days little/more
 Your distant airplane
 Beneath the great. Innumerable stars
 and the lion tamer

66. MEMORY⁶⁸

O villas of my childhood!
 Summer nights on the water's edge!
 Quiet evenings full of hope,
 The pale moon in its halo.
 Lifting their tender violet haunches
 Above the setting sun in the good seasons,
 The nearby mountains cast
 A sorrowful shadow on the houses.

...

The great futures, everything
 A child's heart hopes for with no worries.
 The weary goodbye, a father's goodbye...
 O Time, we are at your mercy.

⁶⁶ First line, "*Quand au loin roulent les avalanches...*", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 78).

⁶⁷ Original title, *Raid*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 79).

⁶⁸ Original title, *Souvenir*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "L'Italiano" directed by L. Longanesi, n. 42-43, June-July 1936 (2008 n. 90a).

67. NOCTURNE⁶⁹

On your white clouds illuminated by the moon
 I would like, O night, to sail, in sleep
 over the sleeping towns, the dunes' silence
 toward the horizon where the sun is born
 toward a distant country where my sun resides
 Formerly it is the setting sun that my glance searches for
 this earth where hopes can finally appear
 the green island that far off the mists always hidden
 where man never happy hopes to finally be reborn
 but now, O night, it is not for the dawn
 that I want to sail toward the morning sky

68. MR. MORNASCO'S DREAM⁷⁰

A rampart near the road
 The tomb of boxes and bottles
 A fisherman sang noiselessly
 On the shores of Lake Vanteille
 But this Great soft gray décor
 Was stirring before the square
 Where the smell of the tinder
 Replaced the taste of the ice cream
 The open air theater
 The public actors all mixed together
 The hills were very bright
 On the river the colour of milk
 He walked toward the shore
 "Baltimora" he had said
 The steamer in the mirage
 Transported these cursed sacks.

69 Original title *Nocturne*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008 n. 90b). De Chirico translated and recited the poem in Italian in the documentary, *Le poesie inedite di Giorgio de Chirico*, *cit.*

70 Original title, *Le rêve de Monsieur Mornasco*, in "Poesie in francese", *cit.*, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 7/8 (2008, n. 93).

69. PHILEAS FOGG⁷¹

He walked toward the shore
 “*Baltimore!*” he had said.
 The *steamer* in the mirage
 Transported his cursed sacks.

70. SOMBRE FOREST OF MY LIFE⁷²

to Madam R. L.

I have always loved you sombre forest
 of my life.
 Forest more sombre
 than a sombre night
 at the sombre pole...
 The sky's vault, at the pole, at night...
 night without sails
 but without stars
 or northern lights...
 The sky's vault, at the pole, at night...
 In my enthusiasms and my fantasies
 in my fatigue and my baseness,
 my foolish hopes, my sweet tendernesses,
 my deep sorrows, my wise actions,
 my great courage, my weariness,
 my cowardice, my depravity,
 my abstractions, my essence,
 my solitude, my great liberties,
 my vain appeals, my clumsy confidences,
 in all the voices within me
 that celebrate innumerable
 great emotions
 I have always loved you sombre forest
 of my life.

71 *Phileas Fogg*, comprising of the last four lines of the previous poem, was published for the first time in the periodical “L’Italiano”, *cit.*, n. 42-43, June-July 1936 (2008 n. 92).

72 Original title, *Forêt sombre de ma vie*, published in “La ligne du cœur”, January 1927. A draft of the poem appears on a drawing owned by Savinio. Waldemar George published the poem with a brief addition in the monograph *Chirico – avec des fragments littéraires de l’artiste*, Éditions des Chroniques du Jour, Paris 1928. The dedication “R.L.” refers to the pseudonym “Raissa Lork” of de Chirico’s first wife Raissa Krol (2008 n. 33).

71. ANTIBES⁷³

Pine trunks, chesty pines,
 On the salutary gulf
 Daily pines
 Consumptive pines
 On the sweet meridian.
 Polychrome pines rising triumphantly
 Along his trunk he who, sitting,
 Smiles, craftily, in the antechamber.

.....
 The cocks have crowed
 Time is changing...
 Time is singing, enchanted.
 It is an indefinite time; they say they are waiting for
 Someone, something, but if they only knew!...
 Perhaps also that *nothing would come*.
 He who is sitting in the armchair,
 He who cannot stand up otherwise
 Would be crazy, impossible, incorrect...
The Gothic apostle is not standing.
 It is very consoling that instead of a *chlamys*
 The pines on his trunk form a pyramid.
 He carries his subconscious destiny on his trunk.
 Useless voyage, insane fatigue,
 Stopped clock, lost suitcase.
 And *he* who is waiting in the antechamber
 And bears the colour of our time on his trunk.

72. NUPTIAL CONFESSION⁷⁴

Scythian my sweet husband
 You who embroider in silk and wool
 Your beard is full of lice

⁷³ *Antibes* was published for the first time in the periodical "L'Italiano", *cit.*, n. 42-43, June-July 1936. The last seven lines with variations appear in the text *Naissance du Mannequin* (Birth of the Mannequin), 1938, published for the first time in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico", n. 1/2 (2002); original French pp. 277-278; English translation pp. 282-283). De Chirico specifies in the text that *Antibes* was written circa eleven years earlier, which dates the poem to 1927-1928 (2008 n. 37a).

⁷⁴ Original title, *Confession Nuptiale*, dated "Marseille 18 Mars 1928", in "Poesie in francese", *cit.* Published for the first time in *De Chirico - La Metafisica del Mediterraneo*, *cit.*, English edition, *cit.*, p. 178 (2008 n. 35).

Your body is out of breath

When you wore your helmet
A ghost suddenly come
From the next room
Showed me his naked torso

But the overflowing city of joy
Can no longer move you
You are dying here on the plain
And he leaves without knowing it.

Marseille, March 18, 1928

73. THE EUROPEAN SOUTH⁷⁵

Digniferous cohort
Petroliferous mountains
Auriferous terrain
Diamondiferous valley . . .

It is nice to go to the Exchange
At the hour when in Berlin
The Archangels' chefs
Are dining on linen tablecloths

Marseille, 18 March, 1928

74. TO ITALY⁷⁶

O Italy, before that lovely pale horizon
From whence the waves come to die beneath dead kings' stones
Memories of yesteryear, songs sung by masculine voices

⁷⁵ This poem, the original French title of which is, *Midi européen*, is written on the same sheet as *Nuptial Confession*, dated "Marseille 18 Mars 1928"; published *ibidem*, p. 84 (2008 n. 36).

⁷⁶ Original title, *A l'Italie*, dated "Menton May 1929", published for the first time in "Sélection. Chronique de la vie artistique et littéraire" (Antwerp), a special issue dedicated to de Chirico in December 1929 with a text by Pierre Courthion, *L'Art de Giorgio de Chirico* and an autobiography by de Chirico, *La vie de Giorgio de Chirico*, signed with the pseudonym "Angelo Bardi". The autobiography was published in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico" n. 5/6 (2006); original in French, pp. 485-490; translation in English, pp. 496-500 (2008 n. 80).

Fill my heart this evening with a sorrowful remorse.

The warrior who resembles my father from the rear
Contemplates these mountains sloping down to you.
I am no longer afraid to visit the lair
Of the bandit who once slept under my roof.

The narrow spaces and all these vast domes
Murmuring the eternal *always* in chorus,
Illuminate the beautiful necropolises at night
That fall dark later, at the approach of day.

O Italy, denying your prayer
I fled toward the cities of work and night
For I saw on your mute and haughty face
The sign I fear, the emblem that wounds me,

And yet how many times passing over
Your distressing ground on sacred wings would I like
To see those statues that resemble you still
And solemnly move off sometimes with slow footsteps.

Menton, May 1929

75. WEARINESS⁷⁷

Fernande, do you see that tender flower?...
The harbor is far and tired of waiting
My fair pilot is also falling asleep.

76. ODYSSEUS⁷⁸

The petty officers run toward the Sirens,
Charming Ulysses, what do you want with me?...
See these athletes standing in the arena
Whose only armour is their virtue.

⁷⁷ Original title, *Lassitude*, published for the first time in "Sélection. Chronique de la vie artistique et littéraire", December 1929, *cit.*, and later in the periodical "Circoli" directed by Adriano Grande, Genoa January-February 1933 (2008 n. 81).

⁷⁸ Original title, *Odysseüs*, published for the first time in "Sélection. Chronique de la vie artistique et littéraire", *cit.*, December 1929 (2008, n. 82).

77. CORNELIA⁷⁹

...Short statue with ardent forehead,
 Cornelia touching as an ass with no pack-saddle,
 On the wing of the poem trembling I write
 Your name sweet as peace,
 Loud as battle.

78. CHILDHOOD MEMORY⁸⁰

I recall having often seen
 The whole town whirling
 There where the wind was whirling around.

79. ON MY UNCLE'S DEATH⁸¹

You never escaped
 From your prison's enclosure
 You loved the slow poison
 Of that easy life
 Curled up in your silent room,
 Hallway where the past was
 Enslaved, the easy life,
 Whatever dies, whatever survives.
 The years flowing by
 Nothing affected your great heart
 The doves taking wing
 Did not see your last tears.
 Those living far away from home
 Who hoped one day to
 Postpone the hateful hour
 Of their sad and vain return,
 Can no longer listen to you

79 Original title, *Cornélia*, published for the first time in "Sélection. Chronique de la vie artistique et littéraire", *cit.*, December 1929 (2008 n. 83).

80 Original title, *Souvenir d'enfance*, published for the first time "Sélection. Chronique de la vie artistique et littéraire", *cit.*, December 1929, and later in the periodical "Circoli", *cit.*, January-February 1933 (2008 n. 84a).

81 Original title, *Sur la mort de mon oncle*, published for the first time in "Sélection. Chronique de la vie artistique et littéraire", *cit.*, December 1929 (2008 n. 85).

In that beautiful ardent valley,
Nor dread the pains
Of your incredibly slow life.

*Baron Gustave de Chirico died in Florence on 18 July 1928 at the age of 78.

80. MARIA LANI⁸²

“Maria Lani! Maria Lani!” Repeated several times in the middle of the night by the hysterical puppeteer, the cry aroused the whole factory district.

Awakening with a start the petty officers jumped out of bed and ran toward the sirens in their nightshirts and bare feet, like parricides being led to the scaffold . . .

The petty officers
run toward the sirens
Charming Ulysses
what do you want with me?
See these hoplites
standing in the arena
Whose only armour
is their virtue.

IV 1930s-1970s

81. ANCIENT BATTLE⁸³

Frightened trumpets, heralds struck dead
On the bridge streaming with the victims' blood
Sunken galley, slave hired to
Deliver that sublime woman to the executioners
They lived in hope, they dreamed of death,
They placed their destinies in that single scale

82 De Chirico wrote this poetical text dedicated to Maria Lani for the catalogue of his exhibition on portraiture held at Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin and Galerie Bernheim, Paris (June and November 1930), which also included a presentation by Jean Cocteau (2008 n. 86).

83 Original title, *Bataille antique*, published for the first time in “Circoli”, *cit.*, January-February 1933, with *Lassitude* (*ivi.* n. 75) and *Souvenir d'enfance* (*ivi.* n. 78) (2008 n. 87a).

And now, their hearts consumed by remorse,
They cry leaning on the shafts of their lances.

82. DAWN⁸⁴

It is dawn.
In the harbor sails are slowly being hoisted.
Child with soft colours!...
In the east where you left the stars grow pale,
And the songs go out in my sorrowful heart.
The countries have gone away on the earth
Navigators of a night, where are you now?
The cool winds the rain follow the bell-ringer
In order to refresh your soul it was only an instant
The passing noises, the chariots drawing away
And great pauses when nothing is heard
But where the new hours rejoin the dead hours
And to you everything is useless evil as much as good.

83. NIMROD⁸⁵

Emitting the cry of your drunkenness,
Hard hunter with muddy boots,
You scold your dogs kept on leash
Solicited by hunting horns on every side.
Night falls and shadow glides
Over the black pond's mist.
In their stable the ox and the ass
Re-ascend time's river in their dreams.

84 Original title, *Aurora*, published for the first time in the periodical "L'Italiano", *cit.*, n. 42-43, June-July 1936 (2008 n. 89c).

85 Original title, *Nemrod*, published for the first time in the periodical "L'Italiano", *cit.*, n. 42-43, June-July 1936 (2008, n. 94a).

84. IT'S SUNDAY⁸⁶

I finished my painting yesterday;
 It's Sunday, it's winter, it's morning;
 They told me it is very beautiful,
 But my heart cries from sorrow...
 – People enter the church
 I don't exactly know why...
 In the streets the north wind is blowing,
 And I think of you.
 Some people are hunting, others fishing,
 Work resumes tomorrow.
 Rain is falling, softly it preaches
 That everything is vain.

85. HOMAGE⁸⁷

for Isa

The glove fallen from your exquisite hand
 I will carry it, O woman, in the desert night
 And further yet on the solitary shores
 Of a great mysterious Ocean
 There stands an intangible pure white altar
 Guarded by two severe and smoking tripods
 Trembling I will gently place the glove
 On the sacred stone, O ineffable one
 Then across the immense liquid expanse
 As far as the distant horizons' sombre edge,
 Waves, long silent waves will arise...
 And roll the polychrome pebbles
 And the black wreckage of broken ships
 There in homage to the glove from your exquisite hand
 They will roll, O woman, endless roses.
 Roses without number, immortal roses,
 Splendid roses, roses...
 That are eternal.

Florence, February 1933

86 Original title, *C'est Dimanche*, published for the first time in "L'Italiano", *cit.*, n. 42-43, June-July 1936. De Chirico translated the poem in Italian and recited it in the documentary *Le poesie inedite di Giorgio de Chirico*, *cit.* (2008, n. 95a).

87 Original title, *Hommage*, dedicated to "Isa", dated "Florence, February 1933". The manuscript with a sketch of a glove and roses was reproduced in, *Vita Silente – Giorgio de Chirico dalla Metafisica al Barocco*, exhibition catalogue edited by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, Acqui Terme 1997 (p. 37) (2008 n. 88a).

86. SADNESS⁸⁸

The ancient memory assails my soul
 I recall you pallid and dying
 As faraway I dreamed of you and tell me: – Farewell! –
 I hear you, mama, tell me sweetly.

87. PAINTING⁸⁹

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.

88 Original title, *Tristezza*, the poem written in Italian is addressed to de Chirico's mother who passed away in June 1937, during de Chirico's stay in New York (August 1936-January 1938). The sketch of a lakeside landscape appears on the manuscript, published in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico", n. 1/2 (2002), p. 386 (2008 n. 99). The manuscript is reproduced in this periodical, p. 188.

89 Original title, *Dipingere*, presentation to the catalogue of the artist's solo exhibition *Mostra personale del pittore Giorgio de Chirico*, Galleria Rotta, Genoa, May 1938, published in English for the first time in "Metaphysical Art – The de Chirico Journals", n. 9/10, 2011, p. 211. This poem in prose was not included in the *Complete Poems* published in 2008).

88. MORNING PRAYER BY THE TRUE PAINTER⁹⁰

Lord, allow my profession as a painter –
 To continually improve itself. – Lord,
 allow me to make great progress in the quality
 of my paint – Until the last day of my life, –
 Give me, Lord, more intelligence. – more
 Force, health and will power, – So I can continue
 to improve my emulsions and my colour mixtures –
 So they can always give my paint –
 More transparency and density, – even more
 splendour and more fluidity. –
 Finally, Lord, help me – and give me more
 than anything the inspiration – to solve the material
 problems – of my work as a painter – so I can return
 to painting – the lustre that for almost a century
 – it has lost, – Help me, Lord, to give back that
 lustre – while solving painting's material problems –
 Since metaphysical and spiritual problems
 are today the concern of critics and intellectuals!
Amen.

89. "IF YOU LET ME LIVE QUIETLY..."⁹¹

If you let me quietly
 live my life,
 I could, finally free,
 satisfy my every wish.
 And without being tortured by your eternal demands
 I could finally achieve
 my most foolish foolish hopes.

90 Original title, *Preghiera mattutina del perfetto pittore*, written in Italian and published for the first time in "L'Illustrazione Italiana", 19 July 1942 and republished with minimum variations in *Commedia dell'arte moderna*, cit. (in *Assortimento di verità*). De Chirico later translated the *Prayer* in French, changing the term "perfect painter" to "true painter" in the title, from which the present translation was carried out by Willard Bohn (2008, n. 97).

91 First line, "*Si vous me laissez vivre...*". The poem, datable to the 1970s, was written on a medical prescription of professor Lamberto Perugina, the physician of Aviva Najjar (wife of Emile Najjar, Israeli ambassador in Italy), who was a friend of de Chirico's. Published for the first time in *Siniscalco, Studio S Arte Contemporanea*, Roma 1980, p. 53 (2008 n. 100).

90. "SO AS NOT TO THINK ABOUT SO MUCH AMORALITY..."⁹²

So as not to think about so much amorality
and stupidity, as about so many horrors,
I search more and more for refuge in that
sacred temple where two Goddesses hold
hands: true Poetry and true Painting.

⁹² Original title, "*Per non pensare a tante amoralità...*". The poem, for which no indication as to its date was found, was published for the first time in G. Bianchini, *cit.* The notion de Chirico expresses: "I search more and more for refuge in that sacred temple where two Goddesses hold hands: true Poetry and true Painting", seems to be the best way to conclude this collection of his poetry (2008 n. 101).