## from LABORINTUS · Edoardo Sanguineti

8.

my moon returns alternately full and slender
my moon and moon tongue at the crossroads
buried chronometer and Sinus Roris and psalmody litany shadow
horseshoe and daisy and rotten breast and nausea
(I see my fish die on the reefs of your eyelashes)
and disaster and obstacle two-step epidemic chorus and month of
April

windy apposition whirlpool of inhibition and tail and instrument show all or even insect or ensemble of yellow and black therefore leaf in a field you a bat in fish moon you a stain in augmento lunae (therefore in yellow and black field) dream paintbrush at times cliché vor der Mondbrücke vor den Mondbrüchen in hysterical straw horizon stuffed pig with butterfly wings cryptography gunpowder mask demonic liver nothing

## 11.

our wisdom tolerates all wars tolerates the gentle plague of sciences your stature mixes rocks sirens thumbs maggots

oh solid prison of designs and uterus indicative time eroding fountain and silence and precisely et os clausit digito

Laszo piously distracted

by loves by means of beloved bones

by means of quicklime

by means of concerti for violin and orchestra

by means of your

bedsheets

by means of the Kritik der reinen Vernunft

loves from every quarter

and protested by every betrayal

loves of all masters loves here are essentials promoted by every flower

ergo vacuas fac sedes

tuarum aurium you must accept the desperate stones oh trident of my chemical fatigues Ellie now and always my dense estuary cultivator of spiked scars asking notice of your flammable coins your empty colonnades by law

you will decide its taste the failure existing behind your age matches with dryness under your rabbits subtracting

23.

s.d. but 1951 (unruhig) καὶ κρίνουσιν and half closing his eyes οἱ πολλοί and he askes me (L): are you playing with the lights? καὶ τὰ τῆς μουσικῆς ἔργα ah such continuity! andante K. 467 it's beautiful here (Lake Sompunt) and Laszo you're truly winter et j'y mis du raisonnement and it won't do and du

pathétique and it won't do still καὶ τὰ τῶν ποιητῶν and CAPITAL LETTERS et ce mélange de comique ah now I'm depressed et de pathétique a sadness my inner struggle with one who devoit plaire I'm modest et devoit même I'm modest, not humble surprendre! but distracted by futility but immersed in something and CREATURES the loves OF THE MIND unpleasant truly très-intéressant something happened to me dans le pathétique

dans le comique made me très-agréable to suffer!

an incident

and here it's useful to remember that Aristotle yes there's sadness he says to me there's also this but not only this, I understand and REPRESENTATIONS never takes advantage OF THE THINGS of the words passions or pathetic for signifying perturbations and SEMINAL PRINCIPLES of the soul; et  $\pi \acute{\alpha} \theta \eta$  tragicam scaenam fecit  $\pi \acute{\alpha} \theta \eta \mu \alpha$  and L but read lambda: in that

moment παθητικόν

I understand καὶ κρίνουσιν ἄμεινον he always

wants to signify physical things and ALPHABETICAL NOTIONS

diseases

of the body: as in beatings

torments it's as if I had stripped away my mortal wounds

before you

et de ea commentarium reliquit

(de  $\lambda$ ) etc. de morte I understand

that I never had (they who weren't neglected!)

RADICAL IRRADIATIONS here: had nothing

and I found (in that moment); what can you find

if you've never had anything?

EVERYTHING; and ARCHETYPAL

## **IDEAS!**

this immensely varied subject-matter is expressed! et j'avais satisfait le goût baroque de mes compatriotes!

translated from the Italian by Lawrence R. Smith

## A Note on Edoardo Sanguineti

A glance at the Sanguineti text, as exemplified by these three selections from Laborintus, assures us that he too has read Ezra Pound's Cantos attentively. Edoardo Sanguineti, however, is no imitator. To use Pound's terminology, he is an inventor not a diluter. We might more usefully compare the two rather than argue influence. Like Ezra Pound forty years before him, the Sanguineti of the fifties was a boy genius; his early work established him as the father of the post-World War II avant-garde in Europe, just as Pound had turned things upside down for Americans earlier this century.

The key to the new European avant-garde is a revival of interest in surrealism and futurism. The same kinds of influences which had been so stimulating to Pound, when they first appeared, were behind this new burst of literary radicalism. But it wasn't just a second run at the same old stuff. The old influences were viewed from a new perspective. Alfredo Giuliani, one of the chief theorists for the new poets, coined the term "schizomorphism" to explain what he and his friends were doing. Schizomorphism is a projection of the individual subconscious, but it portrays the schizophrenic nature of modern society as well. So, when Cesare Vivaldi accused him of creating "philological collage," just a variation on an old technique, Sanguineti replied that his works had more affinity to abstract expressionism, to action painting in particular. These Italian literary radicals, who were to nickname themselves the novissimi or "new guys," were not going to let anyone call them old-fashioned or derivative. Whatever the best descriptive phrase for Sanguineti's style may be, he "modernized himself on his own," as Pound once said of T. S. Eliot. During the period from 1951 to 1954, when the rest of literary Italy was struggling between neorealism and the hermetic revival, Sanguineti wrote Laborintus and with it created the program for a generation of the new European avant-garde. He did all this at least five years before any of his French or Italian colleagues made a move in this direction.

The work of both Pound and Sanguineti depends on an extensive knowledge of the distant literary past. Whereas Pound's scholarship has often been called into question, Sanguineti is a well-known classicist and one of the most respected Dante scholars in Italy. Regardless of academic credentials, both writers make their frontal attacks on poetic language through classical and medieval literature, rather than by ignoring those literatures under the pretext of modernity. In describing *Laborintus*, Giuliano Manacorda makes the Pound connection:

In the manner of Pound, Sanguineti takes all the linguistic elements he has at his disposal—Latin interpolations, an erudite "latino terrifico e medioevale" (Zanzotto), Greek, French, German, English, slang expressions, punctuation marks—and he flings them on the page with a crescendo that begins moderato and sweeps to the absolute linguistic disorder of the final sections.

The use of these fragments by both Pound and Sanguineti is the sign of an expansive vision rather than pedantry. Pound became obsessed with the interconnection of art, poetry, and music. But Sanguineti actually participated in collaborations which crossed those lines. In fact, he collaborated with Luciano Berio to put *Laborintus* to music. Sanguineti doesn't hear the

same music Pound did, but it is clear that he is serious about the fusion of poetry and music.

Even though political opposites, Pound to the right and Sanguineti to the left, these two writers are parallel in commitment. Both have been notoriously tenacious in their adherence to political doctrines long after those doctrines have ceased to be fashionable. The personal disaster which resulted from Pound's loyalty to Benito Mussolini needs no comment. Sanguineti's loyalty to traditional Marxism is similar. Although such enthusiasm was entirely acceptable during the early and middle fifties, there was a massive turning away from the Party by writers and artists after the Russians crushed the Hungarian Revolt in 1957. Sanguineti was almost alone among sixties avant-gardists in arguing the old political line. The rest had become suspicious of ideology as such; most accepted politics as simply another object in the collage. In the Palermo conference of the "Gruppo 63," after asserting that an attack on rationalist bourgeois linguistic structures would pave the way for Marxist liberation, he was rebuked by the other participants. They pointed out that Marxism was a rationalist philosophy too, and that it would also collapse under irrationalist pressures. Nonetheless, Sanguineti's commitment remains firm. He has left the university and become a senatore communista.

Finally, both Ezra Pound and Edoardo Sanguineti express a faith rare among twentieth-century writers. Pound believed that a new order would arise from the collapse of the old, that there would be a "rose in the steel dust." Sanguineti's faith in such a triumph is equally strong. In an essay appended to the *Novissimi* anthology of 1961, he speaks of the new poets throwing themselves

into the labyrinth of formalism and irrationalism, right into the Palus Putredinis, into anarchy and alienation, with the hope, which I persist in not believing illusory, of later coming out of it, having traveled its whole length, with dirty hands, but also with the mud behind us.

Lawrence R. Smith