Who dwelt in access to that which other men
Have burnt all their lives to get near, who heard
The high wind, in gusts, seething
From far off, headed through the trees exactly
To this place where it must happen, who spent
Your life on the point of giving away your heart
To the dark trees, the dissolving woods,
Into which you go at last, heart in hand, deep in . . .

Two poems by Yvan Goll, translated by Galway Kinnell

Mannahatta

Ton soleil tombe à la mer
Une rose d'atomes un faisan touché par la balle
Faisan de feu faisan de soufre faisan de la mort liquide

Tombe tombe le dollar d'or
Entre les tours de Birs-Nimrod et de Woolworth
Tombe l'indien au plumage cuivre
Rouge abcès rédempteur
Jeune abcès fixateur de tous les sangs pollués
Crachat de cire verte
Au bas du dernier acte d'injustice

Ah toutes ces tours qui chantent la nuit
Ces Tours Penchées sur le rocher ramolissant
Ces Memnons que l'aurore fait trembler comme des joncs
La mort joue de cette syrinx de ciment
Sur le rythme rageur des Remington

Et Leilah la dactylo danse de ses deux mains
Deux boules de neiges deux chrysanthèmes d'hiver
Deux mains de miel deux crabes qui respirent
Au fond spongieux de la pierre
Leilah l'intouchable danse
Dans les rochers perforés de lumière.

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Mannahatta

Your sun falls into the sea
A rose of atoms a pheasant winged in flight
Flame-pheasant pheasant of sulphur pheasant of the liquid death

The golden dollar falls falls
Between the towers of Birs-Nimrod and Woolworth's
The Indian in copper headdress falls
Red abscess and redeemer
Young abscess coagulant for fouled bloods
Spittle of green wax
To seal the latest act of injustice

And at night all these towers singing
These Leaning Towers on the softening rock
These Memnons shaken by the dawn like rushes
Death plays on these cement pan-pipes
To the wild rattle of Remingtons

And Leilah the typist dances with her hands
Two snowballs two winter chrysanthemums
Two honey hands two crabs breathing
In the spongy depths of the stone
Leilah the untouchable dances
Inside the cliffs riddled with light.