

1. Consciousness enclosed in itself every separate birch  
And the woods of New Hampshire, covered in May with green  
haze.  
The faces of people are in it without number, the courses  
Of planets, and things past and a portent of the future.  
Then one should extract from it what one can, slowly,  
Not trusting anybody. And it won't be much, for language is weak.
2. It is alien and useless to the hot lands of the living.  
Leaves renew themselves, birds celebrate their nuptials  
Without its help. And a couple on the bank of a river  
Feel their bodies draw close right now, possessed by a nameless  
power.
3. I think that I am here, on this earth,  
To present a report on it, but to whom I don't know.  
As if I were sent so that whatever takes place  
Has meaning because it changes into memory.
4. Fat and lean, old and young, male and female,  
Carrying bags and valises, they defile in the corridors of an airport.  
And suddenly I feel it is impossible.  
It is the reverse side of a Gobelin  
And behind there is the other which explains everything.
5. Now, not anytime, here, in America  
I try to isolate what matters to me most.  
I neither absolve nor condemn myself.

The torments of a boy who wanted to be nice  
And spent a number of years at the project.

The shame of whispering to the confessional grille  
Behind which heavy breath and a hot ear.

The monstrance undressed from its patterned robe,  
A little sun rimmed with sculptured rays.

Evening devotions of the household in May,  
Litany to the Maiden,  
Mother of the Creator.

And I, conscience, contain the orchestra of regimental brasses  
On which the moustachioed ones blew for the Elevation.

And musket volleys on Easter Saturday night  
When the cold dawn had hardly reddened.

I am fond of sumptuous garments and disguises  
Even if there is no truth in the painted Jesus.

Sometimes believing, sometimes not believing,  
With others like myself I unite in worship.

Into the labyrinth of gilded baroque cornices  
I penetrate, called by the saints of the Lord.

I make my pilgrimage to the miraculous places  
Where a spring spurted suddenly from rock.