criticism in translation

Why Paul Celan Took Alarm

YVES BONNEFOY

INTRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION BY JOHN FELSTINER

Introduction

PAUL CELAN BREAKS INTO "TEARS, HIS BODY SHAKEN BY SOBBING, THE WHOLE AFFAIR AGAIN PRESENT, ACCUSINGS, DENOUNCINGS, AS STUNNED and distressed as on day 1." It's June 1966 in Paris, and he has gone with Yves Bonnefoy to visit a "most generous, most welcoming" friend who has "deep instincts for a poet's quality and for how infamous these attacks on Celan were." But "[t]hat trustful welcome had only deepened the open wound."

Nothing in the life of Paul Celan (1920–70), short of his parents' murder in the Holocaust, racked him more than the vicious, specious plagiarism charges a German French writer, Claire Goll, launched against him on behalf of her deceased husband. As Bonnefoy saw all too well, Celan never recovered from them.

Born in Czernowitz, Bukovina, until 1918 the eastern outpost of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Celan saw his parents transported into Ukraine. While they perished there, he spent nineteen months at hard labor in Romania. Returning to Czernowitz, he had no family, home, culture, possessions, literally nothing but his German mother tongue, which overnight had turned into his mother's murderers' tongue.

Bonnefoy met him shortly after Celan reached Paris in the summer of 1948. Alongside his wife-to-be, Gisèle Lestrange, Celan showed a kind of "nonchalance," says Bonnefoy, and seemed "happier than he'd ever be again" (Message). One afternoon in 1949 when Celan was visiting Bonnefoy, an Alsatian Jewish writer unknown to them showed up unannounced at the door. Yvan Goll (1891–1950), allied with surrealism, had translated Joyce's *Ulysses* into German and dealt in themes of loneliness and Jewish wandering. In November of that year, Celan visited Goll, who was dying in a Paris hospital. Goll took to Celan and his poetry. He began writing again in German and asked Celan to translate his French poetry. But the three collections Celan translated went unpublished because, said Claire Goll, they bore the "signature" of Paul Celan.

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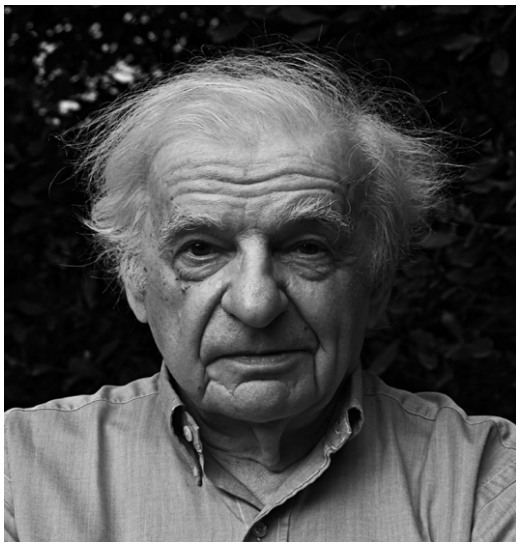
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Struck by the attention given to Celan's first book, *Mohn und Gedächtnis* ("Poppy and Remembrance" [1952]), Claire Goll accused Celan publicly of "cleverly assimilated use of phrases and images" from her husband's poetry. In fact, the opposite was more likely. In 1960 she revived this slander, calling him "master plagiarist."

Yves Bonnefoy (b. 1923) is a distinguished poet, essayist on literature and art, and translator. He is a professor at the Collège de France and an honorary fellow of the Modern Language Association. In 2007 he received the Kafka Prize, the first non-German to do so, and the next year Oxford University gave him an honorary doctorate. He has translated Shakespeare, Donne, Keats, and Yeats, among others. In calling translation "an act of faith," Bonnefoy's 1964 essay "Comment traduire Shakespeare?" ("How Do We Translate Shakespeare?") questions the bipolar nature of that act. "How to be faithful to one experience, while living another at the same moment?" And something else he says there could hold as well for Celan's lifework: "Shakespeare's oeuvre is an entire world this poet discovered little by little, poetry being the tension of soul and existence that opened that discovery" (350–51).

In 1972 Bonnefoy published a short piece on Celan, and in 2007 there followed this intense memoir, *Ce qui alarma Paul Celan*—"What Alarmed Paul Celan" or, if that wording emphasizes cause over effect, perhaps "Why Paul Celan Took Alarm." For these pages not only expose Claire Goll's groundless accusal, felt by the victim as a second Dreyfus affair. They also ask why Celan went on suffering from it, despite unanimous support and Germany's major literary prize. Trying "to grasp the reasons for this irreducible affliction," Bonnefoy says, he "finds them in the deepest rapport between a poet and his thought of what poetry is."

One of the epigraphs he chooses, from a letter Celan wrote to Theodor W. Adorno in the wake of the revived charge, finds the poet "very alone . . . with myself and my poems (which I hold as one and the same)." This terse parenthesis may touch on Adorno's famous postwar dictum "After Auschwitz, to write a poem is barbaric" (34). For some time



Yves Bonnefoy. Photo © 2007 Jean-Pierre Loubat

it was taken as a rebuke of Celan's monumental poem "Todesfuge" ("Deathfugue"), though the philosopher didn't know of Celan when he coined it.

To sense Celan's absoluteness, his belief that poetry was a matter of life and death, we need to realize the destitute nature of his exile. He once said to Bonnefoy, "You are at home within your language, your reference points, among the books, the works you love. As for me, I am on the outside" (Bonnefoy, "Paul Celan").

How could a young poet survive, go on writing, in that atrociously abused language, wherein *Judenfrage* ("the Jewish question") demands an *Endlösung* ("final solution") and *judenrein* posits a world purified of Jews. Yet he went on—not despite but because of that language. Celan's Romanian was excellent, his French only slightly less so. Asked why he wouldn't write in them, he replied, "Only in the mother tongue can one speak one's own truth. In a foreign tongue the poet lies" (Chalfen 148). Given this desperate necessity, to tell truth only by way of the most fraught language, we can see how fateful the plagiarism charge must have felt.

Balladlike, "Deathfugue" begins in the camps:

> Black milk [*schwarze Milch*] of daybreak we drink
> it at evening
> we drink it at midday and morning we drink it at
> night
> we drink and we drink (1: 41)

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The truth claim of this relentless quotidian cadence hangs on its being authentic, created by his own hand. Or take Celan's other signature poem, "Psalm":

> No one kneads us again out of earth and clay,
> no one incants our dust.
> No one.
> Blessèd art thou, No One. (1: 225)

The news ingrained here occurs when a pronoun of desolation, "No one," mutates into a proper noun blessing and blaspheming the creator: "No One." "In a poem," Celan said, "what's real *happens*" (Letter).

Yves Bonnefoy's memoir comes to know what alarmed Paul Celan. For what is poetry if not "the grasp of a word's sound in verse, or of the world's immediacy—poetry that breaks the authority of fossilized ideas, momentarily opening on a reality beyond them?" Evoked for Celan by Claire Goll's plagiarism charge, Nazism and anti-Semitism threatened poetry itself: "This grand store of truth, of possible salvation—from now on he could only fear for it as fiercely as he'd felt charged by it. . . ."

Bonnefoy's "brief essay," as he calls it, finds its way to a defense of poetry, of poetry under duress. It took some spirit for him to speak for Celan's hope against hope and not to cast over the 1960s the shadow of a later event—on 1 May 1970 a fisherman came upon Celan's body caught against a filter in the Seine, seven miles downstream from the Pont Mirabeau, near which he was living then.

It takes spirit for Bonnefoy to end by imagining Europe's most challenged and challenging postwar poet "hoping these dire moments would mutate, trigger their opposite," and "reveal in spite of the evidence that *il y avait sens à croire au miracle*"—that "there was some point in believing in miracle."

Note

1. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

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Why Paul Celan Took Alarm

YVES BONNEFOY

IT'S ONLY NORMAL THAT PAUL CELAN WAS harshly affected by the base slander—accusations of plagiarism—leveled at him by Claire Goll. It's less normal that he should have suffered from this all his life even though these clearly mendacious accusations allowed him to know that most readers spontaneously took his side.

This brief essay tries to grasp the reasons for this irreducible affliction and finds them in the deepest rapport between a poet and his thought of what poetry is.

I feel very alone, I am *very alone—with myself and my poems (which I hold as one and the same).*

—Paul Celan, letter to Theodor W. Adorno, 17 March 1961

Poets see *injustice*—never *where it does not exist—but very often where the unpoetical see no injustice whatever. Thus the poetical irritability has no reference to "temper" in the vulgar sense, but merely to a more than usual clear-sightedness in respect to wrong.*

—Edgar Allan Poe, "Fifty Suggestions," no. 22

[I]

One of his life's most painful moments came when Paul Celan found himself defamed by Claire Goll, who claimed he had plagiarized the poems of her Alsatian husband, Yvan Goll. Yet the worst of his ordeal was not the first assault, in August 1953, however unexpected and unpredictable, but the slanderer's shameless renewal of her charge in 1960.

Why was Paul shaken even more by the second than the first attack? Because his new renown made it an object of public debate? Yes, that gossip mongering sharpened his distress. But not at all for reasons we'd expect, which would have troubled a lesser poet.

To begin with, Paul Celan could have taken this libelous new plagiarism campaign not as cause for suffering but the opposite, as proof of how much admiration and confidence he enjoyed in German-speaking countries. Not only did the finest spirits mobilize against these vapid accusations and outright lies, not only were certain critics, who'd let themselves be taken in, forced to recant publicly, but the German Academy of Language and Literature quickly defended this maligned writer and awarded him its Büchner Prize, one of Germany's highest honors. His accusers were buried by derision. Claire Goll had proved nothing except her sheer villainy.

At the end of this trial, Paul Celan should have felt reassured, could have forgotten the whole thing, which had served only to bring the truth to light.

Yet we know he did not forget. His distress and anxiety only increased with time. The year 1961 sees him crafting retorts he must have known were futile. He imagines leaving Paris and that autumn seeks a psychiatrist. Next year his torment dictates letters to persons he respects, letters he doesn't send (today we have them), hoping for "one or two hours" of conversation—as he tells Marthe Robert—on what obsesses him. Besides Marthe Robert, they're destined for Jean-Paul Sartre, who he dreamed would speak of the affair—a new Dreyfus affair, he says—in *Les temps modernes*, and for René Char [whose wartime *maquis* notebooks he'd translated], who must lend him the deepest solidarity.

In December 1962, haunting turns to delirium. Ahead of him Paul now has years of psychic travail, hospitalization at times, the Goll affair always playing a major role.

In June 1966, for instance, he breaks with [Gottfried Bermann] Fischer because the publisher will not support him against Claire Goll's attacks. This relentless obsession shows up again in a small but revealing event I witnessed: his visit to Boris de Schloezer, who

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should have been just the opposite of a cause for alarm or distress. Though I've evoked this evening before, I go back for what it can tell us. Boris was most generous, most welcoming, with deep instincts for a poet's quality and for how infamous these attacks on Celan were. As we went to Boris's that evening, I told Paul this, hoping they might become friends. And in fact those fine hours were what I'd hoped for: the cheerfulness in one man, the other's face lit by a timid smile betraying a confidence the hard years had abused but not destroyed.

All was well, but right afterward on the sidewalk of the rue de l'Assomption, in the night, tears, his body shaken by sobbing, the whole affair again present, accusings, denouncings, as stunned and distressed as on day 1. That trustful welcome had only deepened the open wound.

[II]

Why could Paul Celan never shake off the memory of the slander? He certainly knew what tied those lies to an anti-Semitism whose cynical gestures unnerved him, even in his Paris quarter. He showed me tracts I never imagined circulating in the city, maybe because I wasn't then living like him in what are called *les beaux quartiers* ["elegant neighborhoods"]. What unknown passersby slipped into his hands would have had him expelled from France, if not had him killed. To Marthe Robert, to Jean-Paul Sartre, he presented himself in draft letters as "a poet of the German language, and who is Jewish."

He knew well enough that this anti-Semitism came hand in hand with a reading of his poetry both wrong and reductive yet perfectly explicable in terms of veiled interests. Some critics, if that's the right word, conveniently found too much art in his poetry, too much aestheticism—evidently because they wanted to steer readers toward the literary aspect of these complex poems at the expense of their essential burden, which was suffering, memory, and witness. They detested the clarity of mind that Paul Celan gave proof of, especially when the German words his poems threw into question, torn but at the same time preserved, made clarity a proof of faith in the word—just what Nazism had persecuted. Claire Goll's accusation gave them a weapon, along with the hostility they must have known was as feckless, vis-à-vis these poems, as it was bloodthirsty.

In short, faced with Claire Goll, Paul had every right to feel himself besieged by a force beyond the commonplaces of literary discussion. Though his accuser had no such aim, bent only on harming someone she'd likely found much too attractive from the first day in Paris, once again he could see the workings of extermination—if only *mezza voce*. So this time an alarm could surge up in him because he was on the front line, standing before other Jews and in their name. He could hardly take on this responsibility, since his enemies knew how to dismantle the very texts that bore his condemning words. Shouldn't he be "the Jewish warrior"? he asked himself in 1965. These are not empty words.

Yet the innermost reason for his disquiet, his pain, doesn't lie there, in identifying these maneuvers and their source in anti-Semitism.

This paradoxical reason at first seemed to mean Paul needn't take the affair seriously—that is, Claire Goll's superficial charges against him. We know that her open letter of August 1953 accused his recent book *Mohn und Gedächtnis* ["Poppy and Remembrance"] of plagiarizing Yvan Goll's 1951 poems and that to back up her claim she'd aligned various passages by the two writers. A feeble scheme, since if there had been any borrowing it would have been done by Goll: Paul read his own poems to Goll [in 1949] when he visited the hospital where the old man was dying but also writing again in German, influenced by his new friend. To damage this young man, Claire Goll simply reversed the chronology.

These words, more or less the same in two authors' poems, were only a few images or symbols among many other elements in very

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different texts. But to my mind it's precisely because only details were in question that isolating them from their contexts was devastating for Celan—though for a reason few people then seemed to grasp, which only alarmed him even more. The reason was that rumors of deliberate borrowing, of plagiarism, were accosting the work of a true poet, engaged in specifically poetic experience, from an angle where that core experience would be grossly deformed or go unseen, poetry like his having nothing to do with such treatment.

Put more precisely: the question of plagiarism does not belong to poetry, where this notion makes no sense. Real poetry does not involve meanings one tries to convey pleasantly, efficiently, by borrowing some metaphor or image from another author. Even less is it a montage of images or other evocations that words would present without anchoring their meaning deeply in one's conscious or unconscious being.

Poetry has it that meanings of everyday speech get snared in conceptual form, which entails forgetting lived time and the strictly chance events that everyone undergoes. From the first go, poetry wants to flout that sort of meaning, opening itself to wordings that rise from the depth of personhood. This way we live writing as an inner thrust, constant and irresistible, turned within the poem into something irreducibly singular and thus all the more universal. Even if they wanted to take from another, poets—true poets in the act of making—could not do so; their borrowing would right away translate into a meaning of their own. Who dares to cite plagiarism in the "borrowings" of Shakespeare or Baudelaire?

[III]

No plagiarism is possible in poetry. This point has consequences, throwing light on Paul Celan's first reactions in 1953 but especially in 1960 and after, when he was celebrated, even revered—as a witness too, giving him hope he might be understood, might provide an example.

Consequences, serious and dangerous, in the reading of his work. Once we allow that plagiarism, willful plagiarism, has meaning in his poems, then they aren't only thrown in question but their authenticity is denied, their author suspect as a patcher of words, taking from others to enrich himself while staking nothing of his own being. Not to mention making poetry itself suspect, counting it natural that poets should traffic in such a way. This kind of suspicion probably entered many readings of Celan. But to see a work of poetry as simply rhetoric deprives it yet again of its specificity and possible grandeur. In both cases the plagiarism charge didn't just dismiss Paul Celan. However premeditated or conscious, it stripped him, in front of his readers, of a self-rapport that meant his very life.

Yes, Paul could have judged that peril unimportant, for he knew himself a recognized poet in the full sense of the term, at least by some of those who took up his cause at both moments of slander. And surely Paul needn't have doubted the urgency of his experience with words, a bodily struggle with the great and small vocables of German, a confrontation with no room for little worries and little gains. . . . In fact, apart from the doubts inherent in poetic creation, doubts sometimes devastating at the level of writing, this great poet never worried much about his right to speak in the name of poetry, about his place with the greatest: among others I witnessed this. I've known precious few spirits with such firmness of basic certainty. Even in asking almost humbly for meetings with Jean-Paul Sartre or Marthe Robert, he would have met the gaze of even Hölderlin with assurance.

So why trouble over a few mean or clueless critics? Wasn't the truth clear or soon to be so, as is the way with poetry?

[IV]

But we can think further about what took place and understand how what should have comforted Paul Celan instead fueled his disarray.

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What reaction prevailed among those who followed "the affair"? I'm not one who knows all the ins and outs. But I think I know—am I wrong?—that the debate centered on this question of plagiarism and that most critics and readers supporting Paul Celan's cause decided that, no, he hadn't plagiarized, no, he hadn't taken words or images from Yvan Goll. That's to say, alas, they failed to question the pertinence of this kind of thought—borrowing, plagiarism—in reflecting on poetry. They should have said loud and clear that such a criterion ought not to distract us.

Demonstrably, then, many Celan defenders did not know or know well what poetry is. Their embrace didn't let him feel recognized; instead, it revealed how little the compliments that he'd been getting for years meant. What a paradox! Words spoken for his sake showed Paul Celan that even among his partisans many had no idea what he and every true poet knew instinctually. Thus, they couldn't see who he himself was in his work as poet, his take on poetry, his knowledge of the world and of history. Realizing all this brought home his sweeping solitude and poetry's as well. It was futile for him to place such hope in poetry.

Why then trouble himself, especially in 1960? Notoriety could only put him more in touch with readers who wished him well, but it let him see, one way or another, they had no access to what he was. How to explain his letters to Sartre, to Marthe Robert with her deep and real poetic intelligence—above all, his hope vested in the supposed friendship of René Char and quickly crushed? Wasn't this man a genuine poet? In a time short on true words, Char could have seen Paul for what he was and said how and why he was just that, a poet.

The fact is that Paul's choice to dwell in France left him little chance to be acknowledged by more than a few. And the life he led until his tragic spell, in a society ignorant of the language of his poems, deserves an accounting that no one has made. It would meet first with a curious abstention. Paul lived then in Paris but quite often in the countryside too, where he encountered things of nature proffered in French words and names that he was attentive to—he would tell me of this—and that nourished his close rapport with the language. He spoke the French of the intelligentsia perfectly, and, while never composing in our language—poetry allows no break with the native tongue—he could have risked a few essays, conversations with critics, and discussions bringing out his care for poetry and way of living it. He knew, didn't he, recent history and its dramatic effect on the word? Better than many others, he could have brought this knowledge to those who did not come by it directly. Nonetheless, he had friends in France. For instance, he was on the editorial committee of *L'éphémère*, where friendship, though sometimes stormy, decided everything. Still, Paul abstained from French debates. He didn't really want his poems translated, and for a long time they weren't. True, they pose great difficulties for translation, which he knew well enough. In any event, France had none of his work.

Thus, during his life in Paris, in France, Paul Celan was a poet only by hearsay. With very few people could he live what he knew himself to be, knowing further how difficult it would be for him to explain, even to those who most wanted it, the sorrow the Jew he was had to live with. At moments he'd fall silent, smiling, even when those he was speaking with shared his sense of poetry. But how much did they know of what he truly was? They weren't acquainted with his childhood places. If they'd read him, they couldn't have made out his poems' metonymic richness. Who knows, maybe at times he feared they just couldn't be bothered by rumors from Germany?

In any case, these few friends were marginal like him when it came to what he cared about: intelligence, receptiveness, poetry. After all, they lived in a society whose interest, during those years of structuralist and textualist speculation, went sooner to the functioning of language than to the powers of the word.

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France is not the world's best country for grasping poetry instinctually, at certain moments, anyway, which can be lasting. She could not help Paul Celan struggle against a feeling that the poetic is something almost universally misunderstood here, though it's avidly discussed, a matter of pride and even boasting.

[V]

So it seems natural that this exile from almost everywhere should have been dogged by anxiety. I've come to believe that, having this unlooked-for cause, his alarm had to mean troublous, overwrought relations with other people, sometimes best friends, and his waywardness of the 1960s. Wartime ordeal and cruel memories swelled this excess. At the same time his violence, a cry for help, signaled an acute concern he couldn't temper or explain—though his alarm might be everyone's affair.

I should make this clear, and for that I go back to the events of 1960, linking them to what Paul's memory held on to: Europe's recent totalitarianism, which could well have triumphed, and the massacre of the Jews.

The meaning of these events, this "Goll affair," seems clear to me. Briefly, Paul Celan feared he'd no longer be known for what he was, a poet with a poet's concerns, distinct from the thought and practice of ordinary literature. But above all he feared that poetry as such, as it's existed for centuries, was now recognized and lived by only very few people.

Here a survivor of disaster had cause for profound dismay, knowing what that disaster had threatened to destroy. Perhaps poetry's plight of recognition meant that the struggle holding disaster in check for the moment was like to be lost.

At stake in that struggle is nothing less than the meaning we give to life to make it worth living. This meaning doesn't go without saying, or, rather, it's constantly masked by cognate concerns where human speech confronts the world. What opens the way to meaning is knowing we are mortal—that is, unique. Through a sense of finiteness—what chance has given us, our prime reality—we encounter other beings equally, taking them too as absolutes, not to be dominated. This meaning would ground social intercourse on the freedom of the Other. But then the idea of such community is merely something conceptual; in real life our sense of finiteness gets reduced and abstracted. That's why the very meaning of life is constantly endangered.

True enough, one can struggle, turning this idea into a simple instrument. But once an abstract idea names its conditions, finiteness gives way and leaves an enigma; it frightens us; we can't bear it. Then what a temptation—to slough off anguish by building cozy structures we take for what's real! This system, cold as it is, offers refuge from the thought of death.

Now we must shut off outside voices saying this structure's a dream. In our perversion, called ideology, those criticizing it are evil, to be destroyed symbolically or literally. Ideology breeds murder. Murder of people, murder through ideology, of what I've called meaning—as was shown out of all measure in Paul Celan's century by Nazism. He suffered this ideology firsthand, drawing from it—and here I pause—radical conclusions.

[VI]

Murder, to begin with, was the massacre of Jews, who were rightly seen by Nazism as free consciences, apt to fight prejudice and dogma. To uphold the cause of meaning, after the war's end but with this genocide in mind, was thus to note the new forms of anti-Semitism, still a real danger. Paul Celan well knew this—hence his gloss on certain words of his antagonists from 1953 on and hence his poetry too, already marked by testimony and historical reflection. Numerous poems emerge from the "Jewish warrior," as he called

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himself, a warrior fighting by testifying—for others too, besides the Jews.

But this wasn't Paul Celan's only thought, after the war that made him test his fate anew. To ponder ideology, violent or not, convinces those who truly know poetry that it's essential to their persisting struggle—provided it is as conscious of its specificity as it is radical.

What is ideology? A total webbing of ideas, closed on itself, guarded against outer reality. And what is poetry, in turn, poetry at its deepest, if not the grasp of a word's sound in verse, or of the world's immediacy—poetry that breaks the authority of fossilized ideas, momentarily opening on a reality beyond them? Now this reality, regained, is lived time, is a place, is finiteness. Poetry from its birth among words, speech, overruns abstract formulations and the absolutes made from them. It can destroy ideology, as long as dreams, its childhood illness, don't infect its words.

Is this what Paul Celan was thinking? Did he realize that his poems' personal response to misery, at one moment in history, would not be the only weapon he resented needing? That he wasn't really a "Jewish warrior" unless first a poet, simply though fully a poet? I've no doubt he did; his life proves it. Poetry reckoned on and lived during the most ordinary days let him fuse his whole being after years of self-severance under the weight of events, a Jew's duty meshing with his own self-work at every level, even the humblest: care for flowers of the field, let's say, or mere reverie for hours—everything Paul, from the heart of his experience as victim and combatant, had felt was the privilege of others. Clearly, he sought to join together his scattered parts. Clearly, his connection to Turk's cap and bluebell, modest mountain or meadow flowers, involved not only his destiny as man and poet but a share in saving humankind.

This strength of poetry also drew the Jewish poet toward those who were not Jewish, since poetically their deepest experience and their ambition are akin to his and as effective. So Paul Celan's whole existence rests on a desire to realize the universality of poetry and to be at heart more simply present among other people, though still a warrior. That's anyway how I see his coming to France, his marriage, his sense of religion and belief—which he had to probe further, since it touched the essence of poetry—and even his work on the German language, questioning words to square them with universal meaning. With his smile and a nonchalance I saw in him, open to simple pleasures, Paul willingly faced others, and himself, with candor. He hoped this would brace his fight against anti-Semitic or other ideologies that are simply hatred of the trusting life. He could nurse this dream because he had poetry, an access to oneself that gives access to others.

Now if poetry itself suddenly seems endangered; if it's all too clearly the aptitude of only a few people, maybe the last of their kind; if under Nazism's mid-century wave of nothingness there rises another wave, too dispersed in modern existence to be spotted or stopped; if anti-Semitism signals a vaster evil, the fear of finiteness, crushing freedom of mind less visibly than in the camps but just as effectively—well, all this will thrust anguish and despair on one who knows in his gut what poetry could offer in a destitute time.

And all this explains why Paul Celan, after the "Goll affair," showed such alarm in everyday life and close friendships, even assaulting his loved ones. Wasn't the life of trust, tomorrow and throughout the world, about to become a mode of being persecuted, again on the defensive like Europe's Jews? This grand store of truth, of possible salvation—from now on he could only fear for it as fiercely as he'd felt charged by it, wishing to act in its simplest ways. How could he live in such anguish except by rending its prize and possibility from it, hoping these dire moments would mutate, trigger their opposite, revive his spirit from nightmare, reveal in spite of the evidence that there was some point in believing in miracle?

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