

James Kirkup

Memory from Beyond the Tomb

(after Chateaubriand)

The tree I planted is still a child,
With a child's stature, a child's grace.
But no children ever grew so wild,
Or offered the sun more trustful face.

When I stand beside this little one,
My shadow protects and shields its frailty.
– Even so, when I am old, may sun
– Be tempered for me by this little tree.

And my present gift of shade be given back
A thousand times, still all shadow
And all suns are black.

From *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*

Antique

Haiku version of Arthur Rimbaud's prose poem, 'Antique', in his collection *Les Illuminations*.

Graceful son of Pan!
around your forehead, crowned with
flowerets and bays

your eyes' precious stones,
stained with wine less, keep playing
in hollow cheeks, where

the fanged teeth are bright...
Your chest is a guitar in
blond lights of your arms.

Your heart keeps beating
in that belly's double sex...
At night, you go roaming

gently moving that
thigh, then that other thigh and
that leg on the left...