



(Photo: Calyx with bracts. . .)

Everything is plundered, betrayed, sold,
Death's great black wing scrapes the air,
Misery gnaws to the bone.
Why then do we not despair?

By day, from the surrounding woods,
cherries blow summer into town;
at night the deep transparent skies
glitter with new galaxies.

And the miraculous comes so close
to the ruined, dirty houses—
something not known to anyone at all,
but wild in our breast for centuries.

(1921) **Anna Akhmatova**

(tr. by Stanley Kunitz with Max Hayward)

*(from "Woman in Praise of the Sacred" (1994), an
anthology with commentary by North American
poet, Jane Hirshfield)*