



(Photo: Springwater Fountain—late May at 1800 meters, the Alps)

Sonnets to Orpheus XV [SECOND PART]

O fountain mouth, giver, you mouth which
speaks inexhaustibly of that one, pure thing,—
you, mask of marble placed before
the water's flowing face. In the background

the aqueducts' source. Further, beyond
all the graves, on the slopes of the Apennines,
they bring you your stories, that then,
upon the black aging of your chin,

pour over into the vessel below.
This is the ear that sleeps, laid down,
the ear of marble, into which you always speak.

An ear of the Earth. Only with herself
alone does she thus converse. Insert a jug,
and it seems to her that you interrupt.

Rainer Maria Rilke (tr. Cliff Crego)