



*(Image: Cottongrass Moor—the Alps)*

## Sonnets to Orpheus IV [SECOND PART]

O this is the creature that does not exist.  
They knew nothing and yet without a doubt  
—his gait, his posture, his neck, down  
to the silent light of his gaze—they had loved.

Indeed, it wasn't real. But because they loved,  
it became a pure animal. Always, they gave it space.  
And in that space, clear and spare  
it raised lightly its head and needed scarcely

to be. They nourished it not with grain,  
but with only the possibility that it truly was.  
And this gave such strength to the animal

that it grew a horn from its brow. But one horn.  
It passed in its whiteness a young maiden—  
and appeared in the silver mirror, and in her.

*Rainer Maria Rilke  
(tr. Cliff Crego)*