



(Image: Purple Gentian—the Alps)

Sonnets to Orpheus XIV [FIRST PART]

We are involved with flower, grapeleaf, fruit.
They speak not just the language of the year.
Out of the darkness rises colorful revelation,
having perhaps the shine on it of the jealousy

of the dead, who strengthen the earth.
What do we know of the part they play?
It has always been their nature, with their
free marrow, to invigorate the clay.

But still we ask: do they enjoy doing it? . . .
Does this fruit, the work of heavy slaves,
fortified, press up to us, to their Masters?

Or are they the Masters, those who sleep with roots
and grant us out of their superabundance
this hybrid thing made of mute energy and kisses.

Rainer Maria Rilke (tr. Cliff Crego)