



From *Pittura y Arte* (detail of *Primavera*, by Sandro Botticelli).

Ivan Argüelles & Jack Foley

Call and Response

Ivan Argüelles:

DEATH-WATCH

all these guys lined up waiting

some waiting so long they've
forgotten their own names
waiting for the sea to reclaim
waiting for the sky to cancel out
waiting for the winds to lift
waiting for the north in *her* eyes
to change direction becoming blue
waiting for something else to happen
it's Saturday springtime tulips up
crocus chrysanthemums daffodils
narcissus hyacinth jasmine
Joe ! let's go down by the water
where they say the Greek heroes
have landed looking for a restaurant
lamb kebab ouzo olives and squid
photographs of Troy after the fall
seas in upheaval waiting for more
forgotten their own names waiting
the death-watch they call it
can we only see it from the outside ?
have they all lost their shadows ?
waiting for the stygian summons
waiting for a goddess in gossamer
to deceive them once and for all
heaven's priceless nickel cloud
Neptune's furious salty spume
waiting for *never* to come again
Joe ! you're waiting there too
Saturday's in the bright effusion
Primavera in her see-through breeze
skinless the sheen of infinity
and you puffing a marijuana "joint"
hitchhiking without moving an inch
cars of enormous immobility
come and go chauffeured by demons
they won't stop for you *ever*
big High on the way to eternity
the thousands of guys sailors
dead-end high school drop-outs
earth worms galley dogs freaks
waiting just waiting for BIG BANG
and you cool elite button-down
staring that cigarette in the face
burning just burning with desire
for the perplexing complete Unknown
it wasn't the rain it wasn't the hospital

it wasn't the lawnmower on the
precipice of time !
it was all inside out outside in
up the interminable hill of tricks
down the slope to the bottom of space
legend and myth history and lie
you tied yourself in knots
trying to explain the very *why*
traffic of half-finished deities
revolving doors and the Morgue
right next to the county Jail
where they left you to dry out
tomorrow will never come, Joe !
Dante wrote it all on the back
of a grain of sand !
guys waiting just waiting
for ...

Jack Foley:

Yeah, they're waiting
But the trick is
Death never comes
To those who wait
It comes only
To those who have *stopped*
Waiting
Vous êtes ma mort
Or was it ma morte
Cocteau has a character say
To a beautiful, elegant woman
In his film *Orphée*
Ma morte
Which doesn't mean
Mother dead
But might.
Joe
And Mother
Wait for you at the strict crossroads
The "trivial"
One road for Mother
One road for Joe
One road for you.
It's a beautiful day there
Though it's also a beautiful night.
Trees

Simultaneously
Blossoming and in the flame of autumn.
Joe and Mother
Are smiling tenderly.
You will greet them with love
Saying,
Vous êtes ma mort
Vous êtes ma morte

Mexican-American poet Ivan Argüelles is the author of numerous poetry publications, most recently *Fragments from a Gone World* (2017), *La Interrupcion Conversacional* (2016) and *Orphic Cantos* (2016). A retired librarian, he has resided in Berkeley since 1978.

Jack Foley has published books of poetry, criticism, stories and sketches, and a two-volume “chronoencyclopedia,” *Visions & Affiliations: California Poetry 1940–2005*. He became well known through his “multivoiced” performances with his late wife, Adelle. Foley’s most recent books are *The Tiger & Other Tales*, a book of stories, sketches and two plays; *Riverrun*, a book of poetry; and *Grief Songs*.