



Grotto Angel (photograph by Kathleen Gunton)

Kathleen Gunton

A Nest of Softness

—Cynthia Macdonald: Cento

It is all clear.  
Here there are flights of angels like  
A nest of softness.  
Here we see the water converted by the fire—  
Our incense, O country, O moon, O stars.

But all the poets here agree that sitting on a chair atop  
Tender resolutions  
(Perhaps)  
Promising miracles—what a relief!  
I think I cannot say it better than to say . . .

Like the host, He will greet them with music.

Inside the Bell of Colors

—Tomas Tranströmer: Cento

My soul glides  
Outside time.  
In the rainbow's silence  
Was the other shore.  
An angel with no face embraced me.  
Soaring now over the ocean  
With invisible oars against the current.  
Here ends world history.  
Language but no words.  
I wanted to say something—  
A surging litany.  
I walk slowly into myself.  
I open the first door.  
It's not a house but has many rooms.  
I'm inside the bell of colors, it chimes with sunlight.

I am transparent.

Everything is singing. (This you will remember. Travel on!)

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Kathleen Gunton is “a poet/photographer who believes one art feeds another.” A cento is a poem made up of passages taken from another author. Other centos by Gunton have appeared in *Rhino*, *West Trestle Review*, and elsewhere.

Cynthia Macdonald (1928–2015) was an American poet, psychoanalyst and educator. The passages in Gunton’s cento come from Macdonald’s book *Living Wills*.

Tomas Tranströmer (1931–2015) was a Swedish poet, translator and psychologist. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2011. The passages in Gunton’s cento come from his collection *The Great Enigma*.