Time is the Enemy

Time is the enemy, monstrous time,
It chops our days into little pieces
And the pieces flash by, digestible,
And in a split atom's instant, gone
Then the volcano erupts, spraying us
With the lava of yesterday's moods—
Time is the enemy, monstrous time.

All is confused, there is nowhere to turn—
Pushed forward by the first maddening light,
We run to, then flee from, numerous dawns
As days break up around us, with crevices
And waves hungry for the final swallow.
All is confused, there is nowhere to turn.

Relentless fortune stirs her wheel
Faster and faster, with delicious glee,
She gives the wheel a hefty shove
And brings down the voice of oblivion
On catching metros, mowing lawns
Or wrestling with the details thrown
Like fishnets around our jumping feet
Relentless fortune stirs her wheel

All day every hour the cuckoo sings
And mocks us with silly tales of lost romance—
Lovers hide from each other, each prefers
To sit alone than to clash and feed
The cuckoo's wild tales, the heavy wheel—
Still every hour the cuckoo sings

In a flaming bush the tiger waits
To spring out at the passing world
And leave on it his indelible mark
The cuckoo is riding on his back
And fortune has been known to take his paw
And place it gently on her wheel—
In a flaming bush the tiger waits

Will we become his friend or prey?
Sometimes the tiger enters gardens
Resplendent with dew, and his tail outshines
Many frivolous comets—which he hunts down
As they flash by in a crazy course
Of all spark and no direction. Now
The tiger romps through the daffodils
Like a kitten on the first spring day—
Will we become his friend or prey?

Time is the enemy, monstrous time.
All is confused, there is nowhere to turn
As relentless fortune stirs her wheel
And every hour the cuckoo sings.
In a flaming bush the tiger waits—
Will we become his friend or prey?

Helen Kosacky