

SONNETS TO ORPHEUS IV

Rainer Maria Rilke

O you lovers that are so gentle, step occasionally
into the breath of the sufferers not meant for you,
let it be parted by your cheeks,
it will tremble, joined again, behind you.

You have been chosen, you are sound and whole,
you are like the very first beat of the heart,
you are the bow that shoots the arrows, and also their target,
in tears your smile would glow forever.

Do not be afraid to suffer, give
the heaviness back to the weight of the earth;
mountains are heavy, seas are heavy.

Even those trees you planted as children
became too heavy long ago - you couldn't carry them now.
But you can carry the winds . . . and the open spaces . . .