

Vasyl Stus

[Untitled]

I cross the edge. This conquering the circle,
this forward motion of a foot,
this lived experience, this naked emptiness,
this salty water, like an oily sludge,
this hopelessness of first beginning,
they terrify me! Better to forget
this land of hesitation, and to extinguish the flame
and embers from memory. I cross the edge.
As leopards leap through burning rings
carrying the impulse of bewildered souls,
So you must aim at the center of death's eye,
And be reborn in death. Do not disturb
the old despondency. Begin beyond it,
well past the barrow, out there on the brink,
Where sacred tablets seemingly appear,
(but do not mention them to others).
Where the sea of humanity swims and step by step
a proud continent grows out into the sea,
like an ossified mirror of eternity,
like a prophetic word or a prophetic scream.
Go, cross the edge! Your birth will follow death.
Strive headlong for the path,
as bright as blood,
That favors honest and repentant souls
who live as such, expecting in their end
a new beginning. Yearning for the stars
as adversity spreads its wings and turns its energy toward
eternity.

18.IV.1972

Translated by Artem Pulemotov

Original publication: Vasyl' Stus, "Idu za krai," *Palimpsest. Vybrane*, Ed. Dmytro Stus, Kyiv: Fakt, 2003, p. 161.