Rilke's SONNETS TO ORPHEUS

PHILOSOPHICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by

HANNAH VANDEGRIFT ELDRIDGE
& LUKE FISCHER

Copyrighted material

RILKE'S *SONNETS TO ORPHEUS*

Philosophical and Critical Perspectives

Edited by Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge

AND

Luke Fischer

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Copyrighted material

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

© Oxford University Press 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Eldridge, Hannah Vandegrift, editor. | Fischer, Luke, editor.
Title: Rilke's sonnets to Orpheus : philosophical and critical perspectives /
edited by Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge and Luke Fischer.
Description: New York : Oxford University Press, 2019. |
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018053851 (print) | LCCN 2018054942 (ebook) |
ISBN 9780190685454 (Online content) | ISBN 9780190685430 (updf) |
ISBN 9780190685447 (epub) | ISBN 9780190685423 (pbk. : alk. paper) |
ISBN 9780190685416 (cloth : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Rilke, Rainer Maria, 1875–1926. Orpheus, Eurydike, Hermes. |
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 1875–1926—Criticism and interpretation.
Classification: LCC PT2635.I65 (ebook) | LCC PT2635.I65 O73 2019 (print) |
DDC 831/.912—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018053851

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Paperback printed by WebCom, Inc., Canada
Hardback printed by Bridgeport National Bindery, Inc., United States of America

Copyrighted material

CONTENTS

List of Contributors vii

1. Introduction 1
   Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge and Luke Fischer

PART I
INTERIORITY, WORLD-DISCLOSURE, AND CONSTRUCTIVISM

2. On Inwardness and Place in Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* 41
   James D. Reid

3. Rilke on Formally Disclosing the Meaning of Things 73
   Rick Anthony Furtak

Copyrighted material

4. The Modernism of *The Sonnets to Orpheus*: Abstraction and Figurality 102
Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge

PART II
DEATH, LOVE, AND THE BEYOND

5. Beyond Existentialism: The Orphic Unity of Life and Death 133
Luke Fischer

6. Love in Paramyth: On Rilke's Figuration of the Orpheus Myth 178
Christoph Jamme

7. The Feminine in Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*: A Philosophy of Productive Deprivation 194
Kathleen L. Komar

PART III
ECOCRITICISM AND ANIMAL ETHICS

8. The Imaginative Ecology of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* 227
Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei

9. The Pozzo Sonnet: Rilke and the Killing of the Doves 259
David Brooks

Index 287

Copyrighted material

CONTRIBUTORS

David Brooks is Associate Professor (emeritus) in English at the University of Sydney. He is a leading Australian literary scholar, poet, novelist, and editor. He is the author of five collections of poetry, four of short fiction, four highly acclaimed novels, and a major work of Australian literary history. His recent books include the essay collection *Derrida's Breakfast* (Brandl & Schlesinger, 2016) on Derrida and animals, the book of short stories *Napoleon's Roads* (University of Queensland Press, 2016), the poetry collection *Open House* (University of Queensland Press, 2015), the novel *The Conversation* (University of Queensland Press, 2013), and the scholarly work *The Sons of Clovis: Ern Malley, Adore Floupette and a Secret History of Australian Poetry* (University of Queensland Press, 2011). He was the 2015/16 Australia Council Fellow in Fiction.

Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge is Associate Professor of German at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her publications include articles on Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Hölderlin, Rainer Maria Rilke, Durs Grünbein, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Stanley Cavell. Her

Copyrighted material

first monograph, *Lyric Orientations: Hölderlin, Rilke, and the Poetics of Community*, appeared in Cornell University Press's Signale series in 2015. She is currently working on a project analyzing prosody as caught between the disciplines of literary studies, poetics, linguistics, and the natural sciences.

Luke Fischer (PhD, University of Sydney) is a philosopher, poet, and scholar of poetry. His books include *The Poet as Phenomenologist: Rilke and the "New Poems"* (Bloomsbury, 2015) and the poetry collections *A Personal History of Vision* (University of Western Australia Publishing, 2017) and *Paths of Flight* (Black Pepper, 2013). He has authored and coedited works on poetry, philosophy, art, and the environment, including the special section "Goethe and Environmentalism" in the *Goethe Yearbook* (2015). He is currently an honorary research associate of the philosophy department at the University of Sydney. More information can be found at his website: www.lukefischerauthor.com.

Rick Anthony Furtak is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Colorado College. His publications include *Wisdom in Love* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), along with two edited (or coedited) essay collections and a philosophical introduction to and translation of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* (Scranton, 2007). His work deals with existentialism, American and ancient Greek philosophy, the moral psychology of the emotions, and the relations between philosophy and literature. His most recent book is *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness in Affective Experience* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei is Kurrelmeyer Professor of German at Johns Hopkins University, having taught previously as Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University. Her books include

Copyrighted material

The Life of Imagination: Revealing and Making the World (Columbia University Press, 2018); *Exotic Spaces in German Modernism* (Oxford University Press, 2011); *The Ecstatic Quotidian: Phenomenological Sightings in Modern Art and Literature* (Penn State University Press, 2010); *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language* (Fordham University Press, 2004); and a book of poems, *After the Palace Burns* (Zoo Press, 2003), which won the Paris Review Prize.

Following his study of German philology, philosophy and comparative literature, **Christoph Jamme** completed his PhD at the Ruhr University of Bochum in 1981 with the work *"Ein ungelehrtes Buch": Die philosophische Gemeinschaft zwischen Hölderlin und Hegel in Frankfurt 1797–1800* (Bouvier, 1983, 2nd ed. 1988). Afterward he was an academic employee in the Hegel-Archive of Ruhr University, Bochum. In 1989–90 he was Fellow-in-Residence at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study. He completed his habilitation in 1990 with the work *"Gott an hat ein Gewand": Grenzen und Perspektiven philosophischer Mythos-Theorien der Gegenwart* (Suhrkamp, 1990, 2nd ed., 1999). From 1994 to 1997 he was professor in the history of philosophy with a focus on German idealism at the Friedrich-Schiller University of Jena. Since 1997 he has been chair of philosophy at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg.

Kathleen L. Komar is Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. She was president of the American Comparative Literature Association and vice president of the International Comparative Literature Association. She investigates women authors such as Christa Wolf, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Monique Wittig as well as male authors such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Wallace Stevens, and Hermann Broch. She authored *Reclaiming Klytemnestra: Revenge or Reconciliation* (University of Illinois Press, 2003), *Transcending Angels: Rainer*

Copyrighted material

Maria Rilke's "Duino Elegies" (University of Nebraska Press, 1987), and *Pattern and Chaos: Multilinear Novels by Dos Passos, Faulkner, Döblin, and Koeppen* (Camden House Publishers, 1983). She edited *Father Figures and Gender Identities in Scandinavian and Comparative Literature* (North Pinehurst Press, 2016) and coedited *Lyrical Symbols and Narrative Transformations*, with Ross Shideler (Camden House Publishers, 1998). She has published on the status of feminist studies in the academy and on cyber literature.

James D. Reid holds a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Chicago and is currently Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Metropolitan State University of Denver. His research is interdisciplinary, drawing from philosophical, scientific, and literary sources, and devoted to problems in the theory of meaning, value, and significance, and finding appropriate ways of talking about the importance of what we care about. He has published several articles on the philosophical legacies of Kant, Fichte, Dilthey, and Heidegger. He is the recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support a translation, with Benjamin D. Crowe, of Heidegger's *Die Frage nach dem Ding* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). He coedited, with Rick Anthony Furtak, *Thoreau's Importance for Philosophy* (Fordham University Press, 2012), and is the author of *Being Here Is Glorious: On Rilke, Poetry, and Philosophy* (Northwestern University Press, 2015) and *Heidegger's Moral Ontology* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). His current projects include a monograph on German philosophical poet Novalis (Northwestern University Press), and, with Candace R. Craig, a book on agency and imagination in the major films of David Lynch (Lexington).

Copyrighted material

RILKE'S *SONNETS TO ORPHEUS*

Copyrighted material

Copyrighted material

Chapter 1

Introduction

HANNAH VANDEGRIFT ELDRIDGE AND LUKE FISCHER

I. RILKE'S OEUVRE AND PHILOSOPHY

This volume features eight philosophical and critical essays on various aspects of Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry, with a focus on one of his major late works, *The Sonnets to Orpheus* (*Die Sonette an Orpheus* [completed in the winter of 1922 and first published in 1923]). Readers unfamiliar with the history of Rilke scholarship might wonder what warrants a specifically "philosophical" treatment of Rilke, in addition to literary and critical considerations. The validity of this question becomes immediately apparent when Rilke is compared to a number of other poets in the German-language tradition who can be rightly called poet-philosophers, such as Friedrich Schiller, Friedrich Hölderlin, and Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg).

In contrast to Rilke, who wrote no strictly philosophical texts, Schiller, Novalis, and Hölderlin were deeply schooled in philosophy, abreast of the latest developments in Kantian and post-Kantian thought, and wrote works (published and unpublished in their lifetimes) that set forth significant independent views in relation to the philosophy of the time.[1] While Rilke did read a number of works by

Copyrighted material

philosophers (Kant, Kierkegaard, Emerson, Nietzsche, and Bergson, among others) and studied some philosophy at university, he did not write any texts that can be classified as philosophical in any straightforward or strict sense; he neither engages in detail with philosophical works nor elaborates logically structured arguments for his views on life and existence. Hence, if there is any "philosophy" in Rilke, it is embodied in the figurative and sonorous language of his poetry and prose. One cannot locate any philosophy independent of his literary works, nor is it possible to consult any philosophical texts that he authored (as one can in the case of Schiller, Hölderlin, and Novalis) as keys to deciphering the philosophical dimensions of his poetic figurations. Why, then, speak of a Rilkean (poetic) "philosophy" at all?

While Rilke was not a philosopher in any strict disciplinary sense, he has both influenced and been a significant interlocutor for a number of philosophers and literary theorists, including major figures such as Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jean-Paul Sartre, Giorgio Agamben, Maurice Blanchot, Paul Ricoeur, and Paul de Man.[2] Rilke has also been fruitfully, but not uncontentiously, interpreted as both a phenomenologist and an existentialist in a number of studies over the century (almost) since his death in December 1926.[3] Heidegger found in Rilke a stimulus for formulating his conception of "world,"[4] food for thought in articulating the meaning of "things,"[5] examples of a nonobjectifying thinking (evinced by *The Sonnets to Orpheus*),[6] and related conceptions of mortality and authenticity,[7] although he disagreed with the Rilkean conception of "the open."[8] Heidegger also regarded Rilke as a poet capable of saying and intimating "the holy" in a time of divine absence and nihilism (though he was, to Heidegger, inferior to Hölderlin).[9] Gadamer found in Rilke, especially the *Duino Elegies*, a philosophically significant portrayal of finitude, mortality, and human feeling, and used one of Rilke's uncollected poems as an epigraph for his magnum opus, *Truth and Method*.[10] Rilke's experimental novel, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910), which

Copyrighted material

explores the existential themes of angst, mortality, authenticity, alienation, and a loss of meaningfulness in the modern, technological world, was an influence on Sartre's *Nausea*. These are just a few examples of the philosophical resonances and influences of Rilke's poetry and prose. Yet a list of such influences does not suffice to determine why Rilke himself should be considered a "philosophical poet," and it is possible that the denomination of Rilke as a "philosophical poet" at the same time calls for a redetermination and expansion of the meaning of the "philosophical."

Some of these reflections echo Käte Hamburger's discussion of Rilke in *Philosophie der Dichter: Novalis, Schiller, Rilke* (*The Philosophy of Poets: Novalis, Schiller, Rilke* [1966]), in which she contrasts Rilke to Novalis and Schiller and offers an in-depth phenomenological reading of Rilke (primarily in connection to Husserl's phenomenology).[11] While both Schiller and Novalis were poets *and* philosophers, in Rilke there is no separate philosophy, but rather his poetry (and other literary works) assumes the place of a philosophy.[12] With poetic and literary means, Rilke shows that poetry can respond to and explore fundamental philosophical matters while never leaving the domain of the figurative and the aesthetic. If we are to speak of a philosophy in Rilke's works, then it is a "philosophy" that is embodied in figures, verse structures, and euphony and cannot ultimately be detached from them. But is it a contradiction or even nonsense to speak of a "figurative philosophy"? And what is the fitting terminology and adequate form of criticism for explicating this "poetry in the place of a philosophy"? While it is not the task of an introduction to give a rigorous answer to these questions, we will sketch in broad outlines how these issues might be addressed.

Rilke demonstrates—as the essays in this volume elucidate—how the figurative and resonant language of poetry can orient philosophical thinking, open up new horizons for thought, and creatively

Copyrighted material

respond to philosophical problems. Although Rilke wrote no separate philosophy, he can be regarded as a significant contributor to philosophical and literary traditions that have emphasized (either performatively or thematically) the philosophical significance of figurative language, in contrast to the philosophical mainstream that has valued the "gray on gray" of the concept in contradistinction from the figure (writers as diverse as Heraclitus, Plato, Novalis, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Derrida come to mind). Of course, figurative language and metaphors have played a much more significant role throughout the history of philosophy than philosophers have traditionally been willing to recognize. However, whether it is Plato's "allegory of the cave" or Hegel's "owl of Minerva," figurative language in philosophy is generally situated within a rationally framed context of inquiry. In contrast, Rilke shows how a deep dedication to the poetic can open up epistemic dimensions in the figurative without (or with only minimal) articulation of a conceptual framework (as discussed in the subsequent sections, Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* are exemplary in this regard)—though conceptual frameworks need to play a role in critical and hermeneutical explications of his poetry. In speaking, with Käte Hamburger, of "poetry in the place of a philosophy," we are characterizing Rilke's own relation to his poetic and literary work and not our own approach to his oeuvre. Rilke seems to have felt no need for a system of conceptual thought or for a worked-out philosophy (nor did he write didactic poetry). While he does at times express his views on philosophical and metaphysical matters in literal statements, his deepest engagement with "philosophical" concerns is found in his poetry. However, in order to shed light on the philosophical dimensions inherent to Rilke's poetry as poetry—in order to bring these "philosophical dimensions" into self-reflexive awareness—the interpreter must draw directly on philosophical ideas and bring philosophy into dialogue with Rilke's poetry.

Copyrighted material

The philosophical concerns that find articulation in Rilke's poetry and prose include a phenomenology of perception and the constitution of "things" (exemplified by the "thing poems" in the two volumes of *New Poems*, 1907–08), various conceptions of the relation between language (especially poetic language) and the world, and the aforementioned existential themes (exemplified in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, 1910), as well as a poetic and monistic response to dualism and an articulation of a poetic worldview that appear in virtually all of his works, from the earliest to the last.[13] Most scholarly accounts divide Rilke's career, and thus his handling of these philosophical concerns, into four overlapping phases: an initial period from his earliest publications until (roughly) 1902 that is characterized by an emphasis on projected subjectivity that Rilke later criticized; a middle phase from 1902 to 1910, including both the extensive engagement with the visual arts in the *New Poems* and the crisis thematized in the novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*; a "late" period outlined by the anticipation, beginning, and completion of the *Duino Elegies* (1911–22); and finally the "latest" work, beginning with *The Sonnets to Orpheus* (1922) and including the German and French poems that Rilke wrote up until his death in 1926.[14] There are significant overlaps between these periods, especially in the poems that he did not collect into carefully organized volumes: in the uncollected poems, Rilke often anticipates the handling of language and the themes that emerge in his later works.[15] Moreover, the individual poems within his volumes often complicate the poetologies he assigns them.[16] Nonetheless, we give a rough outline of the development of Rilke's poetic responses to some of the concerns we identify as philosophical to show how the central themes of the *Sonnets* and the late work more generally are prepared throughout his career.

One of the key notions that evolves throughout the course of Rilke's poetic development is that of "transformation," or

Copyrighted material

Verwandlung. Although Rilke's philosophical and metaphysical poetics of transformation becomes especially important in his late works (*Duino Elegies, The Sonnets to Orpheus*, the late French poems), its seeds can be found early on. In his early major work *The Book of Hours* (*Das Stunden-Buch*, 1899–1905), Rilke writes in the persona of a poet-monk who conceives of God as a process of becoming and transformation that is immanent to the human, pervades the natural world, and comes to fruition in great works of art, which are conceived as the "completion" of God.[17] Like the German Romantics before him,[18] Rilke holds an unconventional theological view of an immanent and pantheistic God of becoming (in contrast to a transcendent and omniscient God of eternal perfection). Spinoza, in his conception of the unity of God and nature, was a particularly significant influence on the pantheistic currents of German Romanticism, while the view of the divine as immanent to the human had its precursors in authors from the German mystical tradition (from the late Middle Ages until the Reformation and after), who emphasized the interdependence of humanity and God.[19] Yet, Rilke's view of God in *The Book of Hours* carries this immanentism to a point where it raises major philosophical questions (which have also been a key concern of scholarship on German idealism and Romanticism): is a "God" that is so closely identified with the human still a God in any significant theological sense, or have humanity and God simply become synonyms? Is this position, in the end, hardly different from the Feuerbachian view that "God" is no more than a culturally inflected anthropomorphic projection?

In the major poetic achievement of his middle period, the *New Poems*, the idea of "transformation" also plays a key role, but there it centers on the rendering of a perceptible "thing" (*Ding*) of the world in the "art-thing" (*Kunst-Ding*) of the poem,[20] which Rilke conceives as a transfiguration and intensification of a "thing's" existence. Rodin's sculptures and Cézanne's paintings influenced Rilke's approach to,

Copyrighted material

and understanding of, poetic writing at this time. What Rilke says of Cézanne's painterly composition of colors can be applied to Rilke's poetic language in exemplary "thing poems" such as "The Panther,"[21] "Blue Hydrangea,"[22] and "Archaic Torso of Apollo"[23] (the last poem is one of a number of ekphrastic instances in which the "thing" thematized in the poem is already an "art-thing"): "The color does not preponderate over the object, which seems so perfectly translated into its painterly equivalents that, while it is fully achieved and given as an object [*Gegenstand*]," the reality of the object relinquishes "all its heaviness to a final and definitive picture existence."[24] Rilke analogously transforms things into a definitive poetic existence. These poems give rise to important aesthetic, epistemic, and ontological questions about the precise relation between the thing encountered in the world and the thing as conjured and embodied in the poem.

In the *Elegies* and *Sonnets* Rilke's interest in "things" and "transformation" persists, yet he no longer aims at a poetic embodiment of perceptible things, but at an imaginal and mythopoetic transfiguration of reality that, in more oblique and abstract ways than the *New Poems*, transforms the visible into the invisible. Rilke connects this shift in his poetics of transformation with the new historical era of mass production, and, especially, his view of World War I as entailing a destructive break with the past and the disappearance (the becoming invisible) of a meaningfulness that traditionally inhered in things (see Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge's essay in this volume).[25] A restoration of meaningfulness could no longer depend to the same extent on things as they are; rather, it needed to transfigure them mythopoetically. While Rilke distances himself more and more, according to his self-conception, from views of the divine that are found in the tradition of Christian theology and what he perceives as a dualism (between this world and the beyond) and otherworldliness that neglect the earth in Christianity (Nietzsche was one, but not the only, influence here), the divine and the numinous as suggested by figures

Copyrighted material

such as the angel (the *Elegies*) and the godly Orpheus (the *Sonnets*) remain part of Rilke's poetics of transformation. Some recent scholarship has drawn attention to how these figurations of the numinous indicate that Rilke—like a number of other modernist writers and artists—was in dialogue with heterodox forms of spirituality and esotericism.[26]

In short, the poetology of transformation (*Verwandlung*) that is central to the *Elegies* and *Sonnets* (we elaborate the specific connections between these cycles in section II) has a prehistory in Rilke's earlier major works, where it also raises significant philosophical and metaphysical questions. Rilke himself placed the highest value on the *Duino Elegies*, which he worked on over ten years and completed concurrently with the *Sonnets* in 1922. In the *Elegies*, the questions of transformation, immanence, and transcendence that occupy Rilke throughout his career expand into a poetic articulation of the human condition and the place of humanity in the cosmos. Rilke presents his own distinctive perspectives on the "great chain of being," including plants, animals ("Eighth Elegy"), humanity, angels ("First Elegy," "Second Elegy"), and God ("First Elegy"), and the role of poetry in overcoming our alienation from the world ("Ninth Elegy").[27] (He also expresses his perspectives on the unity of life and death, the relation between the living and the dead, and the significance of unpossessive love, among other themes.) While Rilke shows an openness to the "transcendent," he is not traditionally religious, and like other existentialists he affirms the need for humans (and, more specifically, the individual) to determine their own place and meaning in the world (the speaker in the "First Elegy" claims that he is not able to turn to angels or animals or other humans to resolve his needs).[28] He also contrasts the alienated self-consciousness of the adult with the child's and the animal's participation in the "whole" of existence.[29] Ultimately, it is the task of poetry to overcome this alienation, to reunite self and world and to transform the visible and

Copyrighted material

exterior into the invisible and interior ("Ninth Elegy").[30] Yet even in this respect it remains a question as to whether poetry can, in actual fact, achieve more than a provisional unification.[31] Rilke's predilection for subjunctive formulations in the *Elegies* is one way in which he underscores a discrepancy between an ideal of unification and its actual attainment. Although a central aspect of philosophy consists in arguing for particular theoretical conclusions, if we think back to the Socratic/Platonic roots of Western philosophy (the Socratic method of dialogue, which explores significant questions without arriving at a definitive conclusion), a philosophical value can also be discerned in the inconclusiveness of the poet. An exploration of diverse perspectives on a problem invites the reader into "the workshop," so to speak, of philosophy, and in a manner similar to existentialist philosophers (Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, for example) Rilke also makes us feel why certain philosophical issues should matter to us personally and affectively.

Rilke's poetic thought, then, goes through a process of development and maturation, in which the notion of "transformation" becomes increasingly determinate and central to his poetics, but this is not a progression toward a philosophical system in the manner of a Kant or a Hegel. In spite of the existential, metaphysical, and epistemological dimensions of his literary works, there is no Rilkean system of thought, even one couched in poetic figures. Rilke expresses the view that philosophical systems hold the danger of problematically limiting the richness of experience and existence.[32] He is not worried about whether he contradicts himself from one poem to the next, and he has moments of skepticism and ambivalence that embody what Keats famously called the poet's "negative capability"—the ability to live with uncertainties without reaching for an easy conclusion or an artificial "certainty." In addition, his key poetic terms and figures—"worldinnerspace," "the open," "transformation" or "transmutation" (*Verwandlung*), "the angel," "things," "the

Copyrighted material

invisible," "Orpheus," etc.—which at times almost seem to be concepts, hold a greater ambiguity than the more precise contours of a philosophical concept (or at least the precision philosophy seeks in its concepts).[33] Nevertheless, we—as this project itself suggests—do not share the view that Rilke's poetry is philosophically incoherent to the extent that the very idea of a philosophical reading of Rilke is problematic.[34] In contrast, it is precisely these hermeneutic challenges that call for philosophical attention, interpretation, contextualization, and elucidation.

The title of this volume describes the essays collected here as "philosophical and critical perspectives," and, in our view, an emphasis should be placed on the "and." It is precisely the "and"—the uniting of philosophical and critical ("critical" in the limited sense of "exegesis" or "criticism" and not in the broader sense of "literary criticism" or "literary studies" as a whole discipline, which includes theory and criticism), theoretical and exegetical, systematic and contextual approaches—that avoids a twofold danger and facilitates an adequate grasp of Rilke's poetry, which can also provide a model for the treatment of similarly "philosophical" poets (in the American tradition, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Wallace Stevens come to mind;[35] in the Australian context, Judith Wright, Francis Webb, and Robert Gray; in the English tradition, of course, Wordsworth and Coleridge [though Coleridge, like Schiller and Novalis, was also a philosopher]). The danger of a critical approach to Rilke's poetry that focuses almost exclusively on literary-historical questions, questions of genre, or the formal and technical qualities of his language is that the philosophical dimensions, which are deeply significant to the meaning of his work, will be overlooked. Such interpretations fail to shed light on the universal concerns that find a distinctive voice in Rilke's poetry. There are at least two problems entailed by the converse danger of a philosophical or theoretical approach (as much "literary theory" could be described as an application of philosophy

Copyrighted material

to literature, for the current purposes we are treating the "philosophical" and the "theoretical" as belonging together). First, such an approach overlooks the distinctively aesthetic and poetic qualities of Rilke's language and can make the mistake of converting poetic intimations, figurations, and resonances into univocal theoretical propositions (see the essay by James Reid in this volume). Second, and this is a problem with many theoretical approaches to literature today, a certain theory or philosophy is artificially applied to the poetry—Rilke is read as a Nietzschean, as a Heideggerian, as a poststructuralist, etc.[36] The problem with this approach is that it overlooks what is philosophically native to Rilke's poetry; while Rilke's poetic positions might overlap in part with Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, or Derrida, Rilke's take on the world is ultimately distinctive to him and thus also conflicts with the views of each of these philosophers.

A more adequate approach to Rilke must be transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary; it must unite the philosophical and the critical. "Philosophical critics" must draw on both their knowledge of philosophy and their familiarity with the distinctive character and trajectory of Rilke's oeuvre; they must be open to discovering unanticipated philosophical perspectives in Rilke's poetry and sensitive to the ways in which these perspectives are embodied in Rilkean motifs, figures, handling of verse forms, and the sonority of his language (its meters, rhythms, assonance, consonance, and rhymes)—to the ways in which Rilke "sings" and imagines existence. This volume includes contributions from literary critics, Rilke scholars, and philosophers. A number of the contributors are also—in addition to their scholarly occupations—published poets and translators of poetry, which we mention as another indicator that poetry and thinking (including reflection on poetry) can be connected pursuits. While some of the contributions are more philosophical/theoretical and others are more exegetical/critical, all of the essays contain both elements and, significantly, sublate these elements in specific syntheses. In this way,

Copyrighted material

philosophy is expanded through a sensitivity to the aesthetic and the figurative (a sensitivity to how philosophical concerns are embodied in the poetic), and the critical achieves a theoretical universality that it would otherwise lack. Most importantly, it is such syntheses of the critical and the philosophical that facilitate an adequate articulation of how Rilke's unique oeuvre presents us with "poetry in the place of a philosophy." While from Rilke's point of view, poetry sufficed to address his deepest "philosophical" concerns (poetry assumed the place of a philosophy), a hermeneutic grasp of his work must draw explicitly on specifically philosophical resources, without severing the philosophical substance of his poetry from its distinctively poetic embodiment. Moreover, this dialogue between poetry and philosophy has the potential to extend and transform the self-understanding of both poetry and philosophy.

II. *THE SONNETS TO ORPHEUS*: CONTEXT, THEMES, STRUCTURE

The Sonnets to Orpheus—the main focus of this volume—takes up many of the broadly philosophical themes of the *Elegies,* while also developing significantly new responses to them, in part by way of their distinctive deployments of language and poetic form. Several of the authors in this volume both link and contrast the *Sonnets* and the *Elegies,* the latter of which have until recently received more scholarly attention and might seem a more obvious choice for a volume on Rilke's contributions to philosophy.[37] Both cycles take up the problem of mortality, affirm the value of earthly existence, articulate relations between the sensible and the supersensible, and thematize their own poetologies, but they do so in very different ways, as we noted previously. Whereas the *Elegies* center around the transcendent figure of the angel (which presents both an ideal for and contrast to the

Copyrighted material

human—the angel is entirely at home in "the invisible," in contrast to humans who are suspended between the visible and the invisible), the *Sonnets* are dedicated to the more immanent figure of Orpheus, who nonetheless transgresses the boundary between life and death. Both figures, however, emerge from Rilke's quest to illuminate and articulate the oneness of life and death, and thus themselves call the distinctions between the immanent and the transcendent (and so between angel and Orpheus) into question.

In their stylization as a grave monument ("Grabmal") the *Sonnets* are also dedicated to Wera Ouckama Knoop, a young woman and talented dancer who died at the age of nineteen in December 1919. Rilke had met her briefly and knew her mother, Getrud Ouckama Knoop (from his time in Munich during World War I) with whom he maintained a correspondence. At the beginning of January 1922, Rilke received a letter from Gertrud, in which she recounted the details of Wera's incapacitating illness and how when Wera was no longer able to dance, she turned to music, and finally to drawing. Rilke was deeply affected by Gertrud's account, and a month later Wera's death coalesced in his mind with Orphic legends (on the wall of Rilke's study in the Château Muzot was a reproduction of an early sixteenth-century drawing of Orpheus charming the animals with his music by Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano). From this network of associations, the *Sonnets* emerged with exceptional rapidity: Rilke completed twenty-five sonnets in the first four days, almost the entirety of the first part of the two-part cycle. This burst of productivity carried over to the long-unfinished *Elegies*, and within a few weeks (February 2–26) both the *Elegies* and the *Sonnets* were completed. Though concentrated bursts of inspiration (what Rilke described as "dictation") and poetic labor were not uncharacteristic, this was the most intensive creative period in Rilke's life.

In a well-known letter to his Polish translator, Witold von Hulewicz, Rilke himself draws connections between the *Sonnets*

Copyrighted material

and the *Elegies* and also articulates the turning point achieved in the *Sonnets*. He describes how both works gather and resolve key concerns explored throughout his oeuvre and are united in articulating his conviction that "affirmation of life-AND-death" is "one" (see Luke Fischer's essay).[38] Furthermore, they are both occupied with the fundamental task of "transformation":

> *We are,* let it be emphasized once more, *in the sense of the Elegies, we are these transformers of the earth; our entire existence, the flights and plunges of our love, everything qualifies us for this task* (beside which there exists, essentially, no other). (The Sonnets show details from this activity which here appears placed under the name and protection of a dead girl whose incompletion and innocence holds open the [door] of the [tomb] so that, gone from us, she belongs to those powers that keep the one half of life fresh and open toward the other wound-open half.) Elegies and Sonnets support each other constantly—, and I see an infinite grace in the fact that, with the same breath, I was permitted to fill both these sails: the little rust-colored sail of the Sonnets and the Elegies' gigantic white canvas.[39]

The *Sonnets* and the *Elegies*, then, share the project of "transformation of the earth," a complex and paradoxical task that many of the contributors address. The letter charges Wera, the "dead girl," with the task of holding open the "door of the tomb," replacing the more general "those who died young" in the *Duino Elegies* and placing the cycle under the auspices of a female and unequivocally human figure. As Rilke's assertion that the *Sonnets* show "details" from the activity of transformation suggests, transformation or metamorphosis (*Verwandlung*) becomes a central theme and a structural principle in the cycle, making it a performance or execution of the poetic ideal that Rilke sets forth in the *Elegies* ("Ninth Elegy") but whose absence

Copyrighted material

is lamented there.[40] It is a central contention of this volume that not only the themes of transformation, mortality, and openness toward death but also the specific poetic approach to them in the *Sonnets* make a distinctive, and distinctively poetic, contribution to questions generally treated by philosophy.

While the *Sonnets* and the *Elegies* address related themes, embody a mythopoetics (their imaginal "spaces" differ significantly from the perceptually oriented "thing poems" of the *New Poems*), and were completed within the same period, they are strikingly different from one another in tone and style. In keeping with the genre, the mood of the *Elegies* is primarily in a "minor key"—though they contain moments of exuberant affirmation—whereas the tone of the *Sonnets* tends more toward the celebratory, affirmative, and even the joyful. However, this difference is ultimately a matter of emphasis, as one of Rilke's key concerns in both works is to overcome the opposition between joy and grief and to show their interdependence. In keeping with the tightness of the form, the sonnets contain a higher level of abstraction and compression than the *Elegies*. In the *Sonnets* Rilke achieves an apex of symbolic concentration, ambiguity, and leaps. These densely figurative poems, which were mysterious to Rilke himself and which he described as "open and secret at the same time,"[41] can only be deciphered on the basis of a deep familiarity with Rilke's oeuvre combined with close reading. While the *Elegies* can hardly be described as accessible and transparent, their elaborate sentences and wide-ranging explorations of overtly philosophical and existential themes (see the discussion in the previous section) make them more immediately susceptible to philosophical interpretation. Yet it is precisely the hermeneutic challenges of the *Sonnets* and their resistance to paraphrase that bring into relief how the philosophical can be captured in what is irreducibly poetic. In addition to their relative neglect, this is one of the reasons why we as editors chose to dedicate this volume on Rilke and philosophy to the *Sonnets* rather than the *Elegies*.

Copyrighted material

In keeping with Rilke's assertion that the *Sonnets* perform the task of transformation, the sonnets are linked by numerous thematic clusters without a single theme appearing in every poem. Both Annette Gerok-Reiter and Christoph König give useful overviews of the distribution of themes, words, and images across the cycle.[42] Even Orpheus and Wera and the images and ideas associated with them do not appear in every poem, though these associations underlie much of the *Sonnets*. The figure of Orpheus activates a network of ideas both influenced by and distinct from a general surge of interest in Orpheus and the Orphic in the early twentieth century.[43] Rilke shares the epoch's interest in Orpheus as a primeval singer and the founder of an esoteric cult teaching openness toward death, but whereas (especially) French symbolism reads this openness as the overcoming of transience in a beyond (*Jenseits*), Rilke asserts the immanence of poetry (an "immanent transcendence") and rejects any dualism between the ephemeral and the enduring.[44] This accords with Rilke's interpretation of the *Sonnets* as showing "details" of the activity of transforming the visible into the invisible, the transient into a lasting significance.[45]

Several other elements of the Orpheus myth appear in the cycle: the journey to the underworld (the *Sonnets*, unlike the earlier poem "Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes,"[46] portray Orpheus as a skillful navigator of ontological boundaries; see the essay by Christoph Jamme in this volume), the power of his song to move nature, and his violent death at the hands of the maenads, after which his severed head continued to sing.[47] Motifs associated with Wera include that of the girl suspended between childhood and adulthood (see the essay by Kathleen L. Komar in this volume), childhood and early death, and especially dance. This last figures the principle of transformation as a physical-corporeal movement, especially of spinning or turning;[48] Rilke read and admired Paul Valéry's *L'âme et la danse* shortly before writing the *Sonnets*, and in particular Valéry's affiliation of the

Copyrighted material

movement of dance with the movement of thought and his treatment of the problem of dance's relation to representation proved influential for the cycle.[49]

The figures of Orpheus and Wera also structure the work's arrangement of its fifty-five sonnets, which Rilke kept almost entirely in the order he wrote them.[50] The second and penultimate sonnets in each part refer to Wera, while the first and last of each part refer to Orpheus (either directly or in dedications), creating a double frame that fits the *Sonnets*' doubled dedication.[51] Orpheus's death is described as the precondition of earthly poetry in the final sonnet of the first part, and, appropriately, his presence becomes more diffuse in the second half of the work.[52] Other thematic clusters hint at some of the questions of philosophical interest in the cycle and are treated either directly or indirectly in many of the essays in this volume: childhood, love, sexuality, gender, interiority, music, animals, hunting, death, nature, technology, history, the absence of the gods, emotion, and myth, to name only a few. The contributors demonstrate how the *Sonnets* offer food for thought and articulate distinctive perspectives that are relevant to areas of philosophy and theory, including phenomenology and existentialism, hermeneutics and philosophy of language, philosophical poetics, philosophy of mythology, metaphysics, modernist aesthetics, feminism, ecocriticism, animal ethics, and philosophy of technology (see the "Volume Overview" for synopses of each essay).

III. THE *SONNETS*: LANGUAGE AND FORM

The philosophical interest—however "philosophical" is construed—of the *Sonnets* exceeds their thematic content; likewise, Rilke's unfolding of the themes listed previously moves into his treatment of language itself in the formal shaping and construction of the *Sonnets*

Copyrighted material

as sonnets. The argument for Rilke's use of the formal resources of language to grapple with problems generally understood as philosophical relies on the particular appearance of those quandaries in each sonnet, and as such cannot be made fully in the space of an introduction or without close readings. Generally put, however, in the *Sonnets* Rilke seems to embrace what he characterized as a rupture or loss in the *Elegies* and in the novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*: the idea that the organizations of world, subject, and perception that take place in language are necessarily temporal and constructed. Whereas in the "Eighth Elegy," for example, Rilke links the "constructivism" of human awareness with our alienation from nature, in contrast to the prereflexive participation in "the whole" of existence ("the open") that characterizes animal consciousness,[53] the *Sonnets* enact and celebrate the constructive power of language and closely affiliate this power with the poetic task of transformation. A key insight of the *Sonnets* and perhaps of Rilke's latest poetry more generally is that this organization within language has the capacity to shape human relations to the world in a world-relating constructivism; the origins of such structures in language does not make them illusory or deceptive, but productive or generative.[54]

At times the *Sonnets* represent this world-relating constructivism as a reciprocal and magical relation between language and being. The opening sonnet invokes the legend of Orpheus charming animals and moving trees through the power of his song/poetry. This legend, and Rilke's distinctive appropriation of it, attribute both a constructive role and an ontological power of transformation to language (see the essay by Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei in this volume). Orphic language enchants the natural world, reaches into the heart of being, and—in addition to thus transforming the human relationship to the world—brings about a transformation in those beings that are responsive to it.[55] Orphic language is at once epistemically generative and ontologically transformative.[56] At other times,

Copyrighted material

though, the syntheses of language are presented in a more fictive or skeptical light; Rilke underscores the virtuality of language and moments of incommensurability between language and its referents (see, for example, sonnet I.11).[57]

Sonnet form proves an ideal resource for formulating and performing the constructive relation between language and world. Rilke greatly expands the constraints of the form while adhering to its outer dimensions (fourteen lines, organized into two quatrains and two tercets). He describes the *Sonnets* as "the freest, as it were most transformed that can be understood as belonging to this otherwise so static and stable form."[58] Thus he departs from the traditional iambic pentameter line, using dactylic or occasionally composite rhythms;[59] he often uses pronounced enjambments not only between lines or strophes with quatrains or tercets but also across the traditional pivot point of the Italian sonnet between quatrain and tercet. Furthermore, he uses the traditional discursive-argumentative structure of the form, which is canonically a balancing of antitheses incorporating a turning point or *volta*, both to address the reader directly[60] (by questioning and constructions such as conditionals, qualifications, and negations) and to introduce an element of skepticism or self-questioning to the sonnets, which persistently pose the question of the conditions of their own possibility.[61]

The sonnets often conclude with a surprising synthesis and resolution of the antitheses that they have established. These syntheses perform and realize Rilke's endeavor to overcome various forms of dualism—between the earthly and the spiritual, this world and the beyond, life and death, grief and joy, the transient and the enduring, becoming and being, self and world—and thereby bring about specific transformations in the relations of these terms. Yet even in these (often paradoxical) "conclusions," there is often a provisionality in that they become theses subject

Copyrighted material

to further interrogation in subsequent sonnets. What seems like a final statement on a subject or problem thus turns out to be an inconclusive moment of transition in a larger poetic inquiry.[62] This provisionality (which in Rilke's oeuvre is by no means exclusive to the *Sonnets*) raises a number of hermeneutic questions. Are all of Rilke's poetic propositions equally provisional (is Rilke ultimately a skeptic or agnostic?), or should some propositions be given more weight than others in light of the trajectory and horizon of the whole cycle and, ultimately, of Rilke's oeuvre? In other words, are the *Sonnets* more like a poetic analogue of Derridean methodology or more like a poetic analogue of Hegelian methodology (to name just two philosophical approaches)? Is "the resolution" of the antitheses infinitely deferred, or are the antitheses resolved in an ultimate synthesis (but in a less linear fashion than the progression of Hegelian dialectic)? Here we will not attempt to answer these questions (the contributors to this volume articulate varying perspectives on the matter), but this handling of the sonnet form contributes to the epistemic self-awareness of the role of language in constructing meaning and demands an exceptional openness and attentiveness on the part of the reader.

Self-referentiality and constructedness likewise appear in or indeed constitute Rilke's handling of the interacting material and semantic dimensions of language down to the lexical and phonological levels; he creates composite neologisms, uses unusual prefixes and transforms words from one part of speech to another (for example, the appearance of the word "Winter" as a noun and an adjective, *überwinternd*, or overwintering, in quick succession in sonnet II.13).[63] These transformations of language—another iteration of the principle of metamorphosis—give the *Sonnets* an exceptionally plastic or even performative quality, as they both follow the questions they raise into linguistic material and draw out the influences of that material into the questions themselves.

Copyrighted material

IV. THE *SONNETS*: RECENT SCHOLARSHIP AND TRANSLATIONS

Rilke's treatment of language, with its elusive symbolism, oblique allusions (to Orphic myths, Wera, etc.) and its simultaneously celebratory and baffling combination of neologisms, foreign words, colloquial phrasing, and archaic flourishes,[64] poses significant difficulties for interpretation and translation; this may be, along with Rilke's own initial devaluation of the *Sonnets* as opposed to the *Elegies*, a reason for their relatively minor place in Rilke scholarship (including the philosophical reception of Rilke) prior to the turn of the millennium.

Particularly in the English-language context, the contributors to this volume are among those remedying the relative neglect of the *Sonnets*.[65] In the German context, much of the scholarship emerged from a Heideggerian school of Rilke interpretation, of which Beda Allemann's *Zeit und Figur* is perhaps the most prominent example and Gerok-Reiter's *Wink und Wandlung* is both the most recent and the most attuned to formal as well as thematic attributes of the cycle. In both German- and English-language scholarship, the last ten to fifteen years have seen an increased interest in the *Sonnets.* Christoph König's monograph *"O komm und geh": Skeptische Lektüren der "Sonette an Orpheus" von Rilke* shares with this volume an attention to both philosophical problems and the modernist currents in which Rilke approached them, while his coedited volume with Kai Bremer, *Über "Die Sonette an Orpheus" von Rilke: Lektüren,* combines collaborative readings of each sonnet with the first published edition of the *Sonnets* to take into account Rilke's own corrections to print proofs, held in the Deutsches Literatur-Archiv, Marbach. Numerous other essays treat one or a few sonnets, with particular focus on the poetological eleventh sonnet of the first part.[66]

The surge of interest in the *Sonnets* is likewise visible in the number of English translations: at least ten complete or partial translations

Copyrighted material

have appeared since 2000 (see the bibliography at the end of this introduction, which lists many of the English translations of the *Sonnets*). Each of these translators takes different approaches to the challenges of Rilke's language use and formal virtuosity. Because these choices are themselves interpretive decisions, the editors have left the choice of translation up to each contributor. Each essay prints all extended quotations from the *Sonnets* in the original German and in English, citing either the critical edition or other standard published versions of Rilke's works (see the notes and bibliography supplied with each essay). Moreover, several contributors reflect on difficulties of translation and differences between translations as a point of entry into the questions their essays consider. They thereby demonstrate that and how Rilke's approach to specific problems and themes cannot be divorced from their presentations in poetic language and, conversely, that poetic language itself has something to say about such "philosophical" problems.

V. VOLUME OVERVIEW

The volume is divided into three parts, albeit with significant connections between essays across as well as within each part. The first part, "Interiority, World-Disclosure, and Constructivism," takes up one of Rilke's central questions: how poetry responds to the fundamental anthropological question of finding ourselves in and of the world; of what kind of world that might be and what relation to it and the things in it we might have. The essay by James D. Reid, "On Inwardness and Place in Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*," begins by foregrounding the risks of reading together philosophy and poetry. Reid shows how Rilke's work calls for such a reading and presents previous philosophical interpreters of Rilke, especially Heidegger. The essay then introduces the idea of inwardness, probing the ways in which Rilke both engages

Copyrighted material

with and goes beyond the Romantic preoccupation with subjectivity and inwardness by taking seriously Rilke's language of place (and its implications for "philosophical topology") as enabling an openness or receptivity that, *pace* Heidegger, does not succumb to a Cartesian ontology of subject-object divisions. Reid notes that this receptivity, and the places in which Rilke suggests it might occur, is often linked with love.

In "Rilke on Formally Disclosing the Meaning of Things," Rick Anthony Furtak investigates the ways in which the *Sonnets* display modes of seeing and being in the world as meaningful by way of their affective significance. Furtak argues that the role of poetry in disclosing the world as meaningful relies on what he calls poetic voice, understood as Rilke's distinctive way of working with or responding to the formal-material sound patterning of language, most virtuosically on display in Rilke's handling of sonnet form. This attentiveness to the sensory qualities of language likewise involves a kind of receptivity or even surprise, as the music of the poetic voice prompts the poet to say something he didn't already know; the formal-material features of language thus become central to the project of world-disclosure.

Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge, in "The Modernism of *The Sonnets to Orpheus*: Abstraction and Figurality," continues the question of the work done by the formal shaping of the *Sonnets*; she uses Rilke's discussions of modernist and protomodernist visual art to understand the paradoxical artistic task of transforming the visible into the invisible as a response to the world-annihilating threats of technological mastery and modern alienation. She argues for taking the poetics of the figure in the *Sonnets*—which shapes their formal features—as a particularly poetic version of that task and thus a poetic response to the problems of world-disclosure and orientation, one that recognizes the constructed but still communicable nature of its meaning-making.

Copyrighted material

The second part, "Death, Love, and the Beyond," examines Rilke's poetic conceptions of the unity of life and death, the significance of nonpossessive love, the creative power of the feminine, and the ways in which Rilke's appropriations and revisions of Orphic mythology serve in the articulation of his views. Luke Fischer's essay, "Beyond Existentialism: The Orphic Unity of Life and Death," discusses the limitations of predominant existentialist readings of death, mortality, and authenticity in Rilke and the presence of spiritual and esoteric dimensions that also need to be taken into account. Rilke's distinctive conception of the unity of the realm of the living and the realm of the dead involves a marriage of existentialist and spiritual perspectives. Fischer shows how the *Sonnets* build on Rilke's treatment of these themes in his earlier major works and how the unity of life and death is part and parcel of Rilke's monistic conception of the unity of the visible and the invisible. In the *Sonnets* Rilke draws on the legend of Orpheus entering the realm of the dead (in his attempt to bring back Eurydice) through the power of his poetry/music, in order to articulate the role of poetry in facilitating an expanded awareness of the ultimate unity of existence.

Christoph Jamme's essay, "Love in Paramyth: On Rilke's Figuration of the Orpheus Myth," shows Rilke's relevance to debates within philosophy of mythology and illustrates the distinctive manner in which Rilke revises mythic material. Rilke combines a deep appreciation of the ancient role and power of myth with a modernizing tendency to refashion myths in order to express individual viewpoints (in contrast to the collective significance of myths in the ancient world). In addition to shedding light on the *Sonnets* from this perspective, Jamme offers a close reading of Rilke's earlier appropriation of Orphic myth in the celebrated poem "Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes" (included in the *New Poems*). While in contrast to the *Sonnets* and to traditional mythology Orpheus is no hero in this poem, "Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes" reimagines Orphic legend in

Copyrighted material