

"For this fear of death is indeed the pretense of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being the appearance of knowing the unknown; since no one knows whether death, which they in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good."
--Apology, by Plato

TO PLATO WITH THANKS

That you, so long before Christ came to Earth,
Perceived that death might be man's greatest boon
Is marvelous to me. Your mentor was
A wise man, yet no wiser than you were
Who recognized dualities in things
Man clings to (sometimes right and often wrong,)
Who recognized that striving for the good
Should be man's first concern, not mortal life.

Who recognized philosophies were void
Without the caring for each other's souls,
Researching truth, supporting what withstood
The test of dedicated minds to God.
A God not made of myth, but felt without
The stone designs, the sun, the temple fires.
A sense of love surpassing Eros, far
From self, past filial, best called agape.

Surrounded by possessions, gazing blind
At columns posing as eternity,
Its caryatids wrought exquisitely
In marble lies, I marvel at the minds
That reached beyond acceptable assumptions.
Forsaking comfort zones of thought, you plumbed
New answers, keener scruples, higher knowledge.
Applying logic, you defeated fear

Of death, its old genetic grip on man,
Its hollow eyes and baleful leer, a false
Reflection of the body's armature.
These centuries removed, you could not know
A modern Cardinal who called death "friend."
Of course, he knew of you, plus centuries
Of wisdom and the holy Word passed down.
This Bernadin would seek you out, I think.

I hope the two of you have met by now.
You have so much to talk about. You learned
The greater part of truth when you passed through
The gate you knew was there. Two Old World sons,
Two intellectuals with well-known names,
Believers of two different faiths, but kin.
What conversations you will have together!

My wish would be to listen, but you gave,
Before my birth, the words I cherish now:
The perfect ideology for life.