
would mention: *Jacobsen*, that great, great poet,
and *Auguste Rodin*, the sculptor, who is without
peer among all artists who are alive today.—

And all success upon your path!

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

T H R E E

Viareggio, near Pisa (Italy)

April 23, 1903

You gave me much pleasure, dear Sir, with
your Easter letter; for it brought much good
news of you, and the way you spoke about
Jacobsen's great and beloved art showed me
that I was not wrong to guide your life and its
many questions to this abundance.

Now *Niels Lybne* will open to you, a book
of splendors and depths; the more often one

reads it, the more everything seems to be contained within it, from life's most imperceptible fragrances to the full, enormous taste of its heaviest fruits. In it there is nothing that does not seem to have been understood, held, lived, and known in memory's wavering echo; no experience has been too unimportant, and the smallest event unfolds like a fate, and fate itself is like a wonderful, wide fabric in which every

thread is guided by an infinitely tender hand and laid alongside another thread and is held and supported by a hundred others. You will experience the great happiness of reading this book for the first time, and will move through its numberless surprises as if you were in a new dream. But I

Life [image of connectedness.

can tell you that even later on one moves through these books, again and again, with the same astonishment and that they lose none of their wonderful power and relinquish none of the overwhelming enchantment that they had the first time one read them.

One just comes to enjoy them more and more, becomes more and more grateful, and somehow better and simpler in one's vision, deeper in one's faith in life, happier and greater in the way one lives.—

And later on, you will have to read the wonderful book of the fate and yearning of Marie Grubbe, and Jacobsen's letters and journals and fragments, and finally his verses which (even if

a vitality
of life
of its
own.

they are just moderately well translated) live in infinite sound. (For this reason I would advise you to buy, when you can, the lovely Complete Edition of Jacobsen's works, which contains all of these. It is in three volumes, well translated, published by Eugen Diederichs in Leipzig, and costs, I think, only five or six marks per volume.)

In your opinion of "Roses should have been here . . ." (that work of such incomparable delicacy and form) you are of course quite, quite incontestably right, as against the man who wrote the introduction. But let me make this request right away: Read as little as possible of literary criticism—such things are either partisan opinions, which have become petrified and meaningless, hardened and empty of life, or else they are

what is the purpose of criticism.
now do we criticize respectfully

just clever word-games, in which one view wins today, and tomorrow the opposite view. Works of art are of an infinite solitude, and no means of approach is so useless as criticism. Only love can touch and hold them and be fair to them.—Always trust *yourself* and your own feeling, as opposed to argumentations, discussions, or introductions of that sort; if it turns out that you are wrong, then the natural growth of your inner life will eventually guide you to other insights. Allow your judgments their own silent, undisturbed development, which, like all progress, must come from deep within and cannot be forced or hastened. Everything is gestation and then birthing. To let each impression and each embryo of a feeling come to completion, en-

is kind

tirely in itself, in the dark, in the unsayable, the unconscious, beyond the reach of one's own understanding, and with deep humility and patience to wait for the hour when a new clarity is born: this alone is what it means to live as an artist: in understanding as in creating.

In this there is no measuring with time, a year doesn't matter, and ten years are nothing. Being an artist means: not numbering and counting, but ripening like a tree, which doesn't force its sap, and stands confidently in the storms of spring, not afraid that afterward summer may not come It does come. But it comes only to

those who are patient, who are there as if eternity lay before them, so unconcernedly silent and vast.

Art is in understanding not just creating

This is how the Bible calls us to live

re-birthing a poem = criticism
↳ giving it a new life

I learn it every day of my life, learn it with pain
I am grateful for: patience is everything!

creative process

and its pleasure, that the two phenomena are really just different forms of one and the same