



**Marc Widershien / TRANSLATIONS  
FROM ARTHUR RIMBAUD  
*LES ILLUMINATIONS***

*in memoriam Helmut Krommer*

## CHILDHOOD I

That idol, black eyes, yellow mop of hair, without  
ancestry or court, more high-brow than myth, Mexican  
and Flemish; his kingdom, azure and green tableaux,  
runs along beaches of shipless waves too proud for  
names, Greek, Celtic, or Slav.

At the forest's edge — the dream flowers tinkle,  
flash, flare — a girl with saffron lips, her knees  
a floodgate, crossing the aqua meadows,  
the shadowed torso screened by rainbow and flora,  
the sea's penumbra.

Ladies strolling on terraces; schoolgirls, sybils,  
lush negresses in cancerous green moss, sunspots  
lounging in spotted groves and melting gardens,  
young mothers and old maids with vacant eyes toward  
Mecca, sultanas in tyrannical dress, cunts, mongrels,  
czarinas, and delicate souls sick with a mild  
contagion. It's boredom, the mystical moment of love's  
"gliding torso" and "ulcerous heart."

## VIII DEPARTURE

Enough seen. The Vision held me under every sky.  
Enough had. The roar of cities, at nightfall, at sunbreak,  
and always.  
Enough known. Life breaks down — the silence — 0 sound and  
Vision!  
Departure — new affections, finer stimulations!

## XXV SEASCAPE

See the rust-colored chariots  
The chrome prows  
Beat up the foam  
Uproot the stubble.  
The currents of the moor  
And the ribbed ruts of the ebb-tide  
Wind in a circle toward the east,  
Toward the dark timberlands  
Toward the dregs of the breakwaters,  
Smashing crosswise in dervishes of light.

## YOUTH I Sunday

Leave off study, the sky runs down the page,  
and the arrival of fresh memories within the seance  
of rhythms washes out the heart the head and the world of the mind.

— A horse riddled with disease charges through  
the suburbs toward the woodland estates. A woman  
out of some cardboard drama sobs for her lost aficionado.  
Thugs mark time in the shadows of the past, coughing up  
its blood and booze. Orphans gag on the current  
of the unholy waters, and smother their pain.

Let us return to our masks as the stifled broodings  
of our dreams well up and drown out the chorus  
of the masses.

## YOUTH II Sonnet

*Man* of average constitution, wasn't his flesh lately  
a fruit hanging in the orchard, oh childish game!  
the body a windfall; oh love, the perilous snare  
of the Psyche? Once, the earth was rich with watersheds  
sustained by the bones of princes and artists, now our  
forbears drive us to our genocides; the world's your wheel  
of fortune, but now the earth sweats tears, you with  
your compass and your expectations, they last no  
longer than your dance and your voice, neither fixed  
nor formulated but adrift in a cosmic lens where time  
is an invention, the flux of a universe without  
mirrors — strength and rightness elevated to  
dance, its voice only now just barely sur-  
mised.

## YOUTH III Twenty

Those instructive exiled voices . . . the bone house  
mellows. Adagio, ah! the adolescent in his mawkish  
pride, the studied optimism; how the world  
glittered in the summer garden! The dying forms greet one  
with a stoic expression . . . a dying choir to quench absence!  
Nocturnes clinking in the wine glass . . . Indeed, only the  
nerves thrill to the sortilege.