

mirror a bouquet was fading. The vertical river of the shops had carried away neither the bits of chaff nor the bits of dream.

So thereafter I decided to put my joy and my grief somewhere else rather than in myself, but such was my folly that on the sad road, from each creature I met, I asked not just amusement, nor some exaltation, which I might have touched, thanks to past loves, but—the absolute.

With difficulty could I find from time to time again, that little pack of bones, of revelling papillas, of confused ideas and of clear feelings, that bore my name.

What a fine mirror is a stranger's eyes!

Well, one day what I saw in transparence and in my eyes this time, was their eyes, the eyes of the others.

Then how could it be that I should not long for the minute when free from all thought, I could be rid of the very memory?

Thus, toiling by day and playing by night.

Alas! mosaic of pretense that could not hold, the acts of my daily life separated showing the original illness.

And there were painful surprises in this work and these fêtes.

A singer, when intricate drinks, a good victrola, and a few scattered desires, through two salons, began to put some magic into a most banal assembly, asking me what I think of her repertoire and I myself excited by a cocktail and two eyes beautiful enough for me to want to seduce the body to which they belong, I answering her that she is worth more than her art, anxious to justify herself in an explanation of her career, and for that searching out reasons but without succeeding in redeeming her songs at the end of her wits declares: Yes, I know the little value of my songs, the little value of all that are here, all those we must see, but . . . She did not finish. She has just experienced, made me experience that activity which does not endow man with a lasting oblivion, does not console him as much as some commanding and sufficient sensation as, for example, the sensation of grandeur or truth.

This singer and I—very wise, refuse to underestimate ourselves, above all when we confess.

So she, in spite of the will of the eyes, in spite of the wrinkles of fear all over her face, where the failure of the make-up exposes the most secret decompositions, her hands like sick flowers on her chest of velvet already undermined by lassitude, her body rebelling against the shock that the spirit commands, very slowly, with the gravity of one who offers to the court his last plea, asserts: *I go to everything by modest roads.*

And I, touched by these mere words, I would like to kneel, to kiss her footsteps.