

Christ Church
Georgetown
(Washington)

RELIGIOUS
MUSIC OF

NICOLAE
BRETAN

LUDOVIC KONYA
baritone

RONALD STALFORD
organist

Sunday,
March 14, 1976
5 o'clock



The Artists

BARITONE LUDOVIC KONYA

Bretan's cause is admirably argued in Konya's artistic singing. His enunciation is impeccable and he moves with ease from effortless power to a hushed sound of great beauty. (Paul Hume, *The Washington Post*)

Konya is clearly a first class artist with a voice of exceptional beauty. (George London, General Director, The Opera Society of Washington)

Ludovic Konya, young star of Romanian, Hungarian and Austrian opera, is currently First Baritone at the Hungarian Opera in Cluj, Romania. He has represented Romania with tremendous success in singing competitions, concerts, and opera performances throughout Europe and the United States, and has sung the main baritone roles in *La Traviata*, *Così Fan Tutte*, *Madame Butterfly*, *The Masked Ball*, *Attila*, *Turandot*, *Il Trovatore*, *Oedip*, *Bank-Ban*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il Tabarro*, and *Don Giovanni*. Irving Lowens (*The Washington Star-News*) writes:

Ludovic Konya is a superb lyric baritone with an exceptional sensitivity towards Bretan's simple but artful melodic lines.

He has a fine, strong, masculine, flexible baritone voice which is matched in quality by superb musicianship and an attractive personality. That Bretan's music proved so affecting to all in the audience was in part due to the tremendous emotional range of Konya's artistry.

ORGANIST RONALD STALFORD

Ronald Stalford is completing his ninth year as organist and choir-master of Christ Church, Georgetown. He studied in Philadelphia with Alexander McCurdy and Robert Elmore, and in 1967 was graduated as a Fellow from the Washington Cathedral College of Church Musicians. He developed his impressive skills at improvisation with Preston Rockholt and studied repertoire with Paul Callaway.

Stalford's appearances in the Washington area have included one of the first solo organ recitals on the new Kennedy Center Concert Hall organ. Workshops and recitals have taken him all over the United States. In 1975 he spent a six-month sabbatical studying with Francis Jackson at England's famed York Minster, playing many services and recitals.

Both Stalford's work with choral groups and his fine playing have gained him an enviable reputation as one of America's finest young organist-musicians.

PROGRAM

1. Romanian Songs

Născătoare de Dumnezeu
(Ave Maria)

Prăceasă
(Prayer)

Prăcă Doamne...
(Prayer on the text of Psalm 50)

Tatăl nostru
(The Lord's Prayer)

Linigte
(Silence)

2. Songs to Poems by Endre Ady

Kis, karácsonyi ének
(Small Christmas Song)

Közel a temetőhöz
(Close by the Graveyard)

Isten drága pénze
(God's Bankrupting Loan)

Krisztus-kereszt az erdőn
(The Christ-Cross in the Forest)

Az Úr érkezése
(The Lord's Arrival)

Imádság háború után
(Prayer After War)

Intermission

3. Requiem

Introitus

Graduale

Dies irae

Offertorium

Sanctus

Pie Jesu

Agnus Dei



The Texts

ORIGINAL TEXTS IN ROMANIAN AND HUNGARIAN
WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AND SYNOPSSES

by
JUDITH BRETAN LE BOVIT
with
MARION WHITE
and
JUDITH LOTH

Născătoare de Dumnezeu (Ave Maria)

Născătoare de Dumnezeu,
Fecioară bucură-te,
Ceeace ești plină de dar,
Maria, Domnul este cu tine.
Binecuvântată esti tu între muleri
Și binecuvântat este rodul
pântecului tău,
Că ai născut pe Hristos
Mântuitorul sufletelor noastre.
Preasfântă Marie, Maica lui
Dumnezeu,
Roagă-te pentru noi păcătoși,
Acum și în ceasul morții noastre.
Amin.

Priceasnă (Prayer)

A prayer for God's mercy is a plea for a full measure of days and a death neither bitter nor premature.

Priceasnă

Spune-mi Doamne, spune-mi Doamne
SFârșitul meu, SFârșitul meu.
Și numărul zilelor care-mi este
Ca să știu de ce mă lipsesc eu.
Și să mă mântuiesc de amar.
Nu mă lua la jumătatea
zilelor mele,
Tu, ai cărui ani țin veșnic!
Aliluia, aliluia.

Prayer

God, tell me; God, tell me
My end, my end.
And the number of days that I have
So that I will know
what I will be missing,
And to save me from what is bitter
Do not take me after half of
my days,
You, whose years last forever.
Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Pleacă Doamne... (Prayer on the text of Psalm 50)

Pleacă Doamne urechea Ta,
Pleacă urechea Ta,
Și auzimă auzimă,
Și auzimă, auzimă.

Pleacă Doamne urechea Ta
Și auzimă, și auzimă,
Auzimă, auzimă.

A mea inimă greu încercată,
Greu încercată n'o urgisi,
Doamne, Tu nu o urgisi,
N'o urgisi, Doamne,
Tu nu o urgisi,
Ca pre cei fără de lege
Ți voi învăța

A Ta cale, Ți voi învăța a Ta cale
Ți voi întoarce la Tine iară.
Deschide Doamne buzele mele,
Buzele mele și gura mea
Va vesti mărirea ta și gura
Mea va vesti mărirea ta
Aliluia, Aliluia,
Aliluia, Aliluia,
Aliluia, Aliluia,
Aliluia! Aliluia! Aliluia!

Tatăl nostru (The Lord's Prayer)

Tatăl nostru, carele ești în
ceruri,
Sfântiasca-se numele tău
Vie împărăția ta, fie voia ta,
Precum în cer, așa și pe pământ.
Pâinea noastră cea de toate zilele,
Dă-ne-o nouă astăzi,
Și ne iartă nouă păcatele noastre,
Precum iertăm și noi greșiiilor
noștri
Și nu ne duce pe noi în ispită,
Ci ne mântuiește de cel rău.
Amin.

Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
On earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Linigte (Silence), by Victor Eftimiu

In praise of a silence so deep that one can catch the singing of oarsmen on Mars.

Linigte

O rază târzie se șterge'n apus
Și noaptea tăcută coboară...
Nu-i nimeni pe apă și nimeni
la țarm,
Planetele-s toate departe.
Si atâta-i tăcerea,
de parcă s'aud
Cum cântă văslăii din Marte....

Nici foșnet, nici soaptă,
nici freacă de val
Tăcutul amurg nu'nfioară.
Nu-i nimeni pe apă și nimeni
la țarm,
Planetele-s toate departe.
Si atâta-i tăcerea,
de parcă s'aud
Cum cântă văslăii din Marte....

Kis, karácsonyi ének (Small Christmas Song) by Endre Ady (1877-1919)

Eager to follow his elders in praising God, a small child offers to soil his brand-new shoes one muddy Christmas day in order to prove to the Almighty that he wishes to be truly beautiful in His sight.

Kis, karácsonyi ének

Tegnap harangoztak,
Holnap harangoznak,
Holnapután az angyalok
Gyémánt-havat hoznak.

Szeretném az Istent
Nagvosan dicsérni,
De én még kisfiu vagyok,
Csak most kezdek élni.

Isten-dicséretre
Mégis csak kifllok,
De boldogok a pásztorok
S a három királyok.

Silence

The last ray of light melts in
velvety dark
In silence, the air fills with
night.
The shore is deserted, the sea
is at peace.
The planets watch from afar
In a silence so deep
You can almost hear
The song of the oarsmen on Mars....

The leaves scarcely whisper,
the waves scarcely sigh
The strong arms of silence
embrace them.
The shore is deserted,
the sea is at peace.
The planets watch from afar
In a silence so deep
You can almost hear
The song of the oarsmen on Mars....

Small Christmas Song

Bells rang yesterday and
Bells will ring tomorrow.
Then will come the Christmas
angels,
Bringing lots of snowflakes!

I wish there were something
I could do for Jesus,
But I'm not a grown-up person,
Life is just beginning.

Still I can come forward
Singing in God's honor,
Blessed, blessed are the shepherds
And the Eastern Wise Men.

En is mennék, mennék,
Énekelni mennék,
Nagyok között kis Jézusért
Minden szépet tennék.

Uj csizmám a sárban,
Százszor bepíszkoltam,
Csak az úrnak szerettemet
Szépen igazoltam.

(Igy üdölgattam én
Gyermek hitte), bátran,
1883
(Csúf karácsonyában.)

Közel a temetőhöz (Close by the Graveyard), by Endre Ady

The poet's death will be his view of a village graveyard that magnetically draws him to itself the closer it approaches.

Közel a temetőhöz

Egy ablaka lesz a szobámnak
És arcomon ezer redő
S száz lépésre a temető.

Kis temető a falú alján,
Olyan szelid s mégis merész:
Holdas éjen szemembe néz.

Hajnalig bálmulunk egymásra
S olykor a lelkem is remeg:
Jaj, a temető közeleg.

Engem is visznek titkos szárnyak
S már azt sem tudom, hogy vagyok,
Hogy élek-e? S a Hold ragyog.

Alszik a falú, én virrasztok,
Nézem, nézem a temetőt:
Itt van az ablakom előtt.

How I'd love to go
Singing with the grown-ups.
I would outdo all of them to
Honor little Jesus.

I would even dirty
My nice brand-new shoes
In the mud a hundred times
To prove how much I love Him.

(Thus sang I long ago
With childhood's daring faith,
In the ugly Christmas night of
Eighteen eighty three.)

Close by the Graveyard

My room will have one single
small window,
And on my face will be
one thousand wrinkles,
And, one hundred steps away,
the graveyard.

Small graveyard at village end,
So mild but yet daring.
Through moonlit night it looks
into my eyes.

Until dawn we lock glances;
On and off even my soul trembles.
The graveyard lurches near.

Too I am taken by secret wings
And know no longer whether I exist,
Whether I live.
And the Moon glitters.

The village sleeps, I keep my
deathwatch.
I look upon, I look upon
the graveyard.
It is come here,
beneath the window.

Síró, rettegő félfálomban
Ezerszer is megkérdem én:
En szallok vagy ő jön felém?

In a cry-pierced, on-and-off,
interrupted half-sleep
I ask myself one thousand times,
Do I float toward it?
Does it draw toward me?

Isten drága pénze (God's Bankrupting Loan), by Endre Ady

In repaying God for his costly gift of life, we are bankrupted by the interest payment levied by day-to-day existence.

Isten drága pénze

Hát eljöttem a kamattal,
Uram-Isten,
Agyonnyargalt akarattal
Siettem, hogy el ne késsek.

God's Bankrupting Loan

I have come with the payment
of interest,
My Lord God.
With totally sapped will
I drove myself not to be late.

Itt az Élet, itt a pénzed.

Here is my life, here is your money

Sokat kellett ráfizetni,
Uram-Isten,
Magamnak nem maradt semmi:
Ráment mind a kamatokra.

I had to mortgage a lot in addition
My Lord God.
Nothing was left for me,
All went to paying off the interest

Gyilkos volt a világ sodra.

The eddying pull of the world
was deadly.

Inaimak frissességét,
Uram-Isten,
Barna hajam sűrűségét,
Erőmet a vérben, agyban:

The tautness of my muscles,
My Lord God,
The thickness of my brown hair,
My strength in blood, in brain:

Neked adtam, odahagytam.

I abandoned, I gave up to You.

Drága pénz volt, mindég most már,
Uram-Isten,
De hogyha már megkötöztsél,
Hagyd meg nálam drága pénzed.

It was bankrupting but
it no longer matters;
The devil take it.
As long as You have tormented me,
Leave me Your dear money.

Drága kölcsön, drága Élet.

Bankrupting loan, bankrupting life.

Fogatlanul, akaratlan,
Uram-Isten,
Lehessek még hatalmadban,
Uziorával legyek még ott:

Without teeth, without will,
My Lord God,
Let me rest in Your power,
At usurious interest!

A világbán, nyomorékod.

A cripple, in Your world.

Nagy adóval, nagy kamattal,
Uram-Isten,
Akaratlan akarattal
Add, egy kicsit visszatérjek.

Your crushing tax,
crushing interest,
My Lord God,
With will-less will,
Let me keep returning to pay off.

Csak hogy éljek, csak hogy éljek.

Let me live, only live.

Krisztus-kereszt az erdőn (The Christ-Cross in the Forest), by Endre Ady

The young poet and his father mock the snow-covered cross from their speeding sleigh; and only after the pain of years has bent the son's stiff-necked pride can he finally genuflect in memory.

Krisztus-kereszt az erdőn

Havas Krisztus-kereszt az erdőn
Hojdas, nagy, téli éjszakában:
Régi emlék. Csörgős szánkóval
Valamikor én arra jártam
Hojdas nagy, téli éjszakában.

The Christ-Cross in the Forest

Christ-cross covered with snow
in the forest
In the moonlit, great winter night:
Ancient memory. Long ago
I rode a sleigh
With jingling bells there
In the moonlit, great winter night.

Az apám még vidám legény volt,
Dalolt, hogyha keresztre nézett,
Én meg az apam fia voltam,
Ki unta a faragott képet
S dalolt, hogyha keresztre nézett.

Father still was young and carefree,
Singing like Time in our sleigh.
I was his son, most like him,
Too jaded to care for an image,
We sat at the cross
in the moonlight.

Két nyakas, magyar kalvinista,
Miként az idő, úgy röppültünk,
Apa, fiu: egy igen s egy Nem,
Egymás mellett dalolva ültünk
S miként az idő, úgy röppültünk.

Two stubborn Hungarian Calvinists,
Flying like Time in our sleigh.
Father, Son: one Yes, one No.
We sat side by side singing,
Flying like Time in our sleigh.

Húsz éve elmúlt s gondolatban
Ott röppül a számon az éjben
S amit akkor elmulasztottam,
Megemlel kalapom mélyen.
Ott röppül a számon az éjben.

Twenty years have passed,
and in my thoughts
My sleigh flies through the night.
Now I bow my head in reverence
As I failed to do in the past
While my sleigh flies
through the night.

Az Úr érkezése (The Lord's Arrival), by Endre Ady

The first vision of God cancels out all pain, youth and the world,
and fills the newborn believer with the light of a clear noon sun.

Az Úr érkezése

Mikor elhagytak,
Mikor a lelkem roskadozva vittem,
Csöndesen és váratlanul
Atőlt az Isten.

Nem harsonával,
Hanem jött néma, igaz őleléssel,
Nem jött szép, tűzes nappalán,
De háborus éjjel.

És megvakultak
Hiú szemeim. Meghalt ifjúságom,
De Ot, a fenyezt, nagyszerut,
Mindorokre latom.

The Lord's Arrival

I was forsaken,
Dragging my soul like a heavy
burden.
Then God put his arms around me,
Silent, unexpected.

There were no fanfares,
Only wordless truth embraced me.
Not in sun, but in tortured night,
The Lord embraced me.

And blinded were my vain and
wanton eyes,
And my youth was ended.
But He, the Lord of Glory,
I shall see forever, forever.

Imádság háború után (Prayer After War), by Endre Ady

Mutilated and numbed in battle, the poet's self-healing and survival
are to be found only in his making peace with God.

Imádság háború után

Uram, háborúból jövök én,
Mindennek vége, vége:
Békíts ki Magaddal s magammal,
Hiszen Te vagy a Béke.

Nézd: tűzes daganat a szívem
S nincs, ami nyugtat adjon.
Csókolj egy csókot a szívemre,
Hogy egy kicsit lohadjon.

Lécsukdóttak bús, nagy szemeim
Számra a világnak,
Nincs már nekik látnivalójuk,
Csak Téged, Téged látnak.

Prayer After War

My Lord, I come from war,
All things have come to an end,
Oh end:
Set me at peace with myself and
Thee,
Because You are the Peace.

Behold, my heart is a flaming tumor,
And there is nothing to give me calm.
Kiss your kiss upon my heart
That the swelling may subside
a little.

My great sad eyes
Have shut their grilles
to the world,
They have nothing more to see,
They see only You, You.

Két rohanó lábam egykoron
Térdig gázolt a vérben
S most nézd, Uram,
nincs nekem lábam,
Csak térdem van, csak térdem!

Nem harcolok és nem csókolok,
Elszáradt már az ajkam
S száraz karó két károm már,
Uram, nézz végig rajtam.

Uram, léssz meg Te is engemet,
Mindennek vége, vége.
Békíts ki Magaddal s magammal,
Hiszen Te vagy a Béke.

My two racing legs
Were racing knee-deep in blood.
Now behold, my Lord, I have no leg.
I have only knee, only knee.

I do not fight, I do not kiss,
My lip has dried out
And my two arms are a scarecrow's.
My Lord, scrutinize me.

My Lord, You as well should see me,
All things have come to an end,
an end.
Set me at peace with myself
and Thee,
Because You are the Peace.

December 4, 1968--A bitterly cold day without sun. In the small
graveyard of Cluj, Romania, my birthplace and the town where my father
spent most of his life, there are no more than twenty persons who come
to say farewell to one of Romania's leading composers. For this singer
and composer there is no composition or song, save for the tape that I
have brought myself, a recording made by my American husband of my
father at age 76 singing some of his lieder. He is buried high up the
hill, all but invisible from the main road. "Can't he be buried
closer?" I ask the town's mayor. "My mother is also buried far up the
slope," he responds. "It is hardly the same," I tell him. "This small
graveyard someday will be famous as Nicolae Breitan's final resting
place. Some day millions of people throughout the world will come to
know my father and his music."

--Judith Breitan Le Bovit

NICOLAE BRETAN:
SINGER, OPERA DIRECTOR, COMPOSER

Nicolae Bretan (1887-1968), who spent almost all his life within a hundred-mile radius in Transylvania, is increasingly acknowledged as a leading Romanian composer of lieder, operas, and religious music.

In "Nicolae Bretan--The Emergence of a Major Composer," an article written for the United States Information Agency in January 1976, Irving Lowens says:

One of the most remarkable musical phenomena of the past five years or so has been the rise to international eminence of the Romanian composer, Nicolae Bretan, after nearly 25 years of total neglect in his native country and in the world at large.

Bretan's great musical talent was obvious at an early age. As a young man he studied violin, singing and composition at the Conservatory of Cluj, Romania. By 1908, his musical gifts were so evident that he was awarded a scholarship to continue his studies at the Academy of Music in Vienna. He later transferred to the Budapest Academy of Music, and graduated at the head of his class in 1912. He was offered a position with the world-famous Viennese Volkoper, but due to the impending World War he was forced to return to Romania.

Over a span of thirty years, Bretan was first baritone of the Romanian Opera of Cluj, subsequently stage manager, occasionally conductor, and later artistic director and general manager. He sang all the major baritone opera roles, including Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, Wagner, Bizet, and Tchaikovsky. As artistic director he staged over 50 operas and established both the basic repertory of Romanian Opera and the Cluj Opera as the leading opera of the country. At the same time he was forced to take a municipal administrative job on the side, in order to make ends meet, thus making use of the law degree which he held in addition to his degree from the Academy of Music of Budapest.

Bretan held an eminent position in Romania's musical life not only as singer and general manager of the Cluj Opera, but also as a composer. His opera *Luceafarul* (*The Evening Star*), performed in 1921, was the first to be written by a Transylvanian Romanian musician. This and other Bretan operas were often mounted during the 1920s and 1930s, and *Horia* and *The Evening Star* have recently been revived in his homeland, with great success.

His three-fold expertise--singer, opera director, and composer--helped Bretan develop in his own music a variety of range of tone and coloration that makes his operas and more than 230 lieder perfect show-cases for the performer. Paul Hume (*The Washington Post*) writes:

Any singer who composes will always write gratefully for the voice. Every time in Bretan's songs is one in which the singer can delight.

Bretan, who died forgotten in his homeland in 1968 at the age of 81, spent most of his life in Transylvania--"crossroads of history," meeting place of three groups separated by language and cultural traditions: Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, the Romanians forming the majority, the Hungarians a substantial minority, and the Germans a smaller minority. Bretan, who captured equally well the flavor of lyrics in all three languages, calls forth in listeners of all nationalities an extraordinary immediacy and depth of emotional response. In his songs, the music is always rooted in the language of the text, it has an unmistakable national physiognomy, but it also expresses universal feelings, feelings that transcend national boundaries. Irving Lowens (in *The Washington Star-News*) writes:

Bretan's artistry was universal--he understood and sympathized with great poets whether they were Romanian, Hungarian or German, and he set to music the verse of Mihail Eminescu, Endre Ady, or Heinrich Heine with equal humanity and penetration.

The history books will have to be rewritten. In the future, they will have to contain a chapter about this composer-singer-director from Transylvania, trapped in the struggles between Romania and Hungary for his homeland, who maintained a fierce pride in his mixed heritage while, at the same time, eloquently relating its cultural values to the rest of the civilized world.

The mood of Bretan's music is one of bittersweet discontent, of sad joy, of intense involvement with the sorrows and happinesses of life. There is a touch of romance to it, a touch of irony, a touch of humor, and above all, the gift of an over-arching humanity.

Of Bretan's more than 230 lieder, approximately 100 are Romanian, 80 Hungarian, and 50 German--a subconscious reflection of the proportion of the three nationalities of Transylvania. His ability to create in three languages and three cultures comes not only from Bretan's genius to project the empathy of a classical humanist, but also from a linguistic talent that enabled him to write and translate many of his works in two and three languages.

Classical not only in his point of view but also in his achievements, Bretan as lieder composer has been compared with Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strauss, Mahler, and Wolf. His too is a richness of melodic line joined to a strikingly economical, rigorous structure in which no detail--folkloric or psychological--is allowed to detract from the music's essential purity.

BRETRAN MUSIC ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED

Ironically, it was the discovery of Bretan's music by the American public that led to a revival of interest in the composer in his native Romania and other European countries. The music of Nicolae Bretan was first introduced to the Western world in a lieder recital in December 1972 at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian concert, subsequently broadcast over the National Public Radio (NPR) network of more than 200 stations in 44 states, was so well received that it has been followed by a long series of performances and broadcasts of Bretan's music both in the U.S. and abroad.

These broadcasts produced a profound effect. Over a short period of time American musical consciousness incorporated a new name in the universal musical heritage.

Interest in Bretan began to snowball. On July 17, 1974, the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) devoted an entire session at its Eastern Regional Conference to Nicolae Bretan and his songs. Later that summer, the National Public Radio System, the Library of Congress, and the National Academy of Sciences sponsored baritone Ludovic Konya to return to the U.S. for Bretan concerts. One of these concerts, presented at the prestigious National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., was also broadcast nationwide over the NPR network of 200 stations. While in this country, the artist taped a large number of Bretan songs for the Library of Congress Archives of Eminent Performing Artists and Composers. In November 1974, Bretan was the only composer chosen to have his music featured in three special tape presentations, with introduction and comments by the composer's daughter, at the Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) held in Houston, Texas. A recent series of Bretan concerts on the American university circuit proved so popular that regular tours are scheduled to meet the many requests. The NPR network plans at least four nationwide broadcasts of Bretan music during 1976.

The Voice of America and Radio Free Europe have broadcast Bretan music several times to central and eastern Europe—certainly a dramatic illustration of cross-fertilization! Bretan concerts have been held in Budapest, Hungary, and in Bucharest and all the main cultural centers of Romania. Numerous radio and TV programs, as well as newspaper and magazine articles, now pay homage to Bretan in Hungary and in his native land.

The operas *Horia* and *The Evening Star* were revived during the 1973-74 season in Romania, and *Horia* opened the 1974-75 and the 1975-76 seasons at the Cluj Opera. In the U.S., NPR featured *Horia* in a nationwide broadcast in October 1975. George London, General Director of the Opera Society of Washington, writes:

I think HORIA is a major work, of a quality that one does not expect from a composer still of our time.... One feels in HORIA a strong folkloric element, similar to works by Bartok and Kodaly.

Nicolae Bretan is living today. And he is living as he wanted to live, not just as a composer, but also as a humanist who in posterity is reuniting on a musical level people of different nationalities and religions formerly divided from one another.

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50 lieder set to German poems by Heine, Lenau, Rilke, Bretan, and others.

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Luceafărul [*The Evening Star*]

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