

Yukio Mishima

Excerpts

From **Sun and Steel**

“Do I, then, belong to the heavens?
Why, if not so, should the heavens
Fix me thus with their ceaseless blue stare,
Luring me on, and my mind, higher
Ever higher, up into the sky,
Drawing me ceaselessly up
To heights far, far above the human?
Why, when balance has been strictly studied
And flight calculated with the best of reason
Till no aberrant element should, by rights, remain-
Why, still, should the lust for ascension
Seem, in itself, so close to madness?
Nothing is that can satisfy me;
Earthly novelty is too soon dulled;
I am drawn higher and higher, more unstable,
Closer and closer to the sun's effulgence.
Why do these rays of reason destroy me?
Villages below and meandering streams
Grow tolerable as our distance grows.
Why do they plead, approve, lure me
With promise that I may love the human
If only it is seen, thus, from afar-
Although the goal could never have been love,
Nor, had it been, could I ever have
Belonged to the heavens?
I have not envied the bird its freedom

Nor have I longed for the ease of Nature,
Driven by naught save this strange yearning
For the higher, and the closer, to plunge myself
Into the deep sky's blue, so contrary
To all organic joys, so far
From pleasures of superiority
But higher, and higher,
Dazzled, perhaps, by the dizzy incandescence
Of waxen wings.

Or do I then
Belong, after all, to the earth?
Why, if not so, should the earth
Show such swiftness to encompass my fall?
Granting no space to think or feel,
Why did the soft, indolent earth thus
Greet me with the shock of steel plate?
Did the soft earth thus turn to steel
Only to show me my own softness?
That Nature might bring home to me
That to fall, not to fly, is in the order of things,
More natural by far than that improbable passion?
Is the blue of the sky then a dream?
Was it devised by the earth, to which I belonged,
On account of the fleeting, white-hot intoxication
Achieved for a moment by waxen wings?
And did the heavens abet the plan to punish me?
To punish me for not believing in myself
Or for believing too much;
Too eager to know where lay my allegiance
Or vainly assuming that already I knew all;
For wanting to fly off
To the unknown
Or the known:
Both of them a single, blue speck of an idea?"

From **Confessions of a Mask**

“What I wanted was to die among strangers, untroubled, beneath a cloudless sky. And yet my desire differed from the sentiments of that ancient Greek who wanted to die under the brilliant sun. What I wanted was some natural, spontaneous suicide. I wanted a death like that of a fox, not yet well versed in cunning, that walks carelessly along a mountain path and is shot by a hunter because of its own stupidity...”

“When a boy...discovers that he is more given into introspection and consciousness of self than other boys his age, he easily falls into the error of believing it is because he is more mature than they. This was certainly a mistake in my case. Rather, it was because the other boys had no such need of understanding themselves as I had: they could be their natural selves, whereas I was to play a part, a fact that would require considerable understanding and study. So it was not my maturity but my sense of uneasiness, my uncertainty that was forcing me to gain control over my consciousness. Because such consciousness was simply a steppingstone to aberration and my present thinking was nothing but uncertain and haphazard guesswork.”