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To Say Dark Things by Ingeborg Bachmann

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To Say Dark Things

Ingeborg Bachmann
Dunkles zu sagen

Like Orpheus, I play
death on the strings of life,
and in the beauty of the earth
and your eyes, which govern the heavens,
I can only say dark things.

Don't forget how, all of a sudden,
on that morning when your camp
was still wet with dew and the carnation
lay asleep on your heart,
you too saw the dark river
flowing by.

The string of silence
pulled taut on the wave of blood,
I grasped your sounding heart.
Your curls were turned
into the night's hair of shadows,
black flakes of darkness
fell on your face.

And I don't belong to you.
We lament both now.

But like Orpheus I know
life strung on the side of death
and your eyes, closed forever,
are blue to me.