THE STRANGE JOY OF LIVING
(1949-1955)
The tenderness the tenderness is revealed
when new things about tenderness are named.
Oh don’t put on
superior airs. Once
I saw a look worthy of that.
It was when a baby was annoyed
at a party.
Your righteous arrogance
in regard to my nasty gesture
seemed strangely gentle
gilded, of course, by your personal style.
How beautiful it is to follow a youth while the city sleeps at night. You hesitate. If you suddenly stop at the corner, and remain there at a distance, I will stay where I am, far from you and leave you at peace. Oh my solitude is like a flickering candle in the wind.
Lonely, you stand near the fountain,
your face reflected in the water.
The raw poetry of the military decoration
burns in your heart with a fire
greater than Botticelli’s Venus.
The stars looked at me and it was as if a ray of light opened halfway like the slit of a cat’s eye.
Your life is pleasing and gentle.
Along the way appeared a well-dressed gentleman,
full of love but who was, simply, a worm.
Your life is quiet and unconcerned with style.
The cyclist with the dirty face
can only offer the bride
his vow of celibacy.
Walking over a bridge at twilight
I gaze at the horizon.
You seem to vanish from my mind.

But the countryside remains
full of the novel reality of things.
All these useless blue balloons
not worth a second thought.
I lay between two young wiseasses who mocked the words of my heart. As I gaze at their sleeping faces, I forgive them with love.
The skinny boy returns home
a little tired but very interested
in those things that concern the bus. He thinks
— with that light that comes from the senses
that light that still barely touches-
about all the possible ways
to use something new. Something
that won’t take hold,
though sometimes he touches it.
Then he notices me. Now he feels cold.
He blows on his heart
which he holds in his big hands.

I have to get off and it’s probably just as well.
In all my romances
I didn’t only love the outer form,
but also the fragile sweetness that is lost
between these mountains of strength.