

VOWELS

A black, E white, I red, U green, O blue: vowels,
I will tell, one day, of your lying hidden birth:
A, black velvety corset of shining flies
Which buzz around some cruel stench,

Gulfs of shadows; E, whiteness of steams and tents,
Lances of proud glaciers, white kings, flowers quivering
I, crimsons, spitting blood, laughter pouring out
From lovely lips in wrath or penitent drunkenness;

U, cycles, divine rousing of green translucent seas,
Peace of animal's pastures, of the wrinkled ease
Which alchemy imprints upon the great scholar's brow;

O, the last Bugle, full of strangely strident brass,
Silences through which the worlds and angels pass:
-O, the Omega, a violet glow from Their Eyes!

From *Premiers Vers* (1870-1872)
Arthur Rimbaud

Translated by Salvador Ortiz-Carboneres