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STANZAS OF THE OLD UNREST

I

In the garden
 Where smooth pebbles are
 And palm trees next to pine trees
 And the many benches there,
 A lawn is shining;
 It is hedged in by a square.

II

In the garden
 Where the cherub-statues are
 And the lake is often looked at
 But never with a stare,
 The heads of children growing
 Out of the shining lawn
 Were afraid of the cities;
 They were glad the cities were far.

III

But somewhere is much walking
 On desolate dawns;
 Somewhere are beaches,
 Far from all lawns,
 And the lovers the lovers
 The lovers walk up and down.

IV

"The world has a thousand cities;
 Beware.
 The world has a thousand cities,
 Exactly one thousand cities,"
 Warned a marble garden-child.
 "And pains that nobody pities
 And lonely sorcerers are there,
 And birds have human voices,
 And lovers are sick with love,
 And the seagulls the seagulls
 The seagulls are bitter and wild."

V

In the garden
Where breezes and benches are kind,
Where grave-eyed heads are growing
But never threateningly,
The mildest head asked sadly,
"For the sake of her eyes and her hair,
To where cities and beaches are,
Why are you going?"

The garden shuddered suddenly in all its roots.

VI

"New eyes new hair
Have changed you so,
Now you must go.
Now you must be
Where waters are,"
Said the gentlest statue there.
"Now you will sometimes walk
Where gulls talk."

*Viale dell'Aranciera,
Borghese Gardens, Rome, 1944*

PETER VIERECK