

“Fugue of Death” (“*Todesfuge*” as translated by Christopher Middleton, 1962)

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at nightfall  
we drink it at noon in the morning we drink it at night  
we drink it and drink it  
we are digging a grave in the sky it is ample to lie there  
A man in the house he plays with the serpents he writes  
he writes when the night falls to Germany your golden  
    hair Margarete  
he writes it and walks from the house the stars glitter he  
    whistles his dogs up  
he whistles his Jews out and orders a grave to be dug in  
    the earth  
he commands us strike up for the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night  
we drink you in the morning at noon we drink you at  
    nightfall  
drink you and drink you  
A man in the house he plays with the serpents he writes  
he writes when the night falls to Germany your golden  
    hair Margarete  
Your ashen hair Shulamith we are digging a grave in the  
    sky it is  
ample to lie there

He shouts stab deeper in earth you there and you others  
    you sing and you play  
he grabs at the iron in his belt and swings it and blue are  
    his eyes  
stab deeper your spades you there and you others play on  
    for the dancing

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at nightfall  
we drink you at noon in the mornings we drink you at  
nightfall  
drink you and drink you  
a man in the house your golden hair Margarete  
your ashen hair Shulamith he plays with the serpents

He shouts play sweeter death's music death comes as a  
master from Germany  
he shouts stroke darker the strings and as smoke you  
shall climb to the sky  
then you'll have a grave in the clouds it is ample to lie  
there

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night  
we drink you at noon death comes as a master from  
Germany  
we drink you at nightfall and morning we drink you and  
drink you  
a master from Germany death comes with eyes that are  
blue  
with a bullet of lead he will hit in the mark he will hit  
you  
a man in the house your golden hair Margarete  
he hunts us down with his dogs in the sky he gives us a  
grave  
he plays with the serpents and dreams death comes as a  
master from Germany

your golden hair Margarete  
your ashen hair Shulamith.