

Jeffrey Bolt

THE POETRY OF CANCER

1

I thought there would be so much to say, that
death would fill me with words of wisdom
for those who would follow me into the black.
Instead, it's this tongue-tied gravity
that keeps pulling me down, closer to the earth.

2

Spring is in the air before spring should be:
the sweet taste that turns the wind into a breeze,
and the smell of new grass under dead leaves.
Sitting in the cold park alone, I am the first
robin of spring, somehow come back too soon.

3

Then there's the idea that it had no meaning,
that you lived a few years that added to nothing,
that nothing adds to nothing. And death.
For some reason I think of New York city:
all the excitement and hassle, the myth of meaning.

4

Way out in the woods, I keep coming back to that
smell of spring: and the spaciousness of nature
stripped free from ordering human hands.
New grass and dead leaves, holy black of wet elm-bark —
if the next world is made by god I'll like it there.