

THE ECHO

All the necessary Words have long since been spoken,
 All Wisdom uttered, everything's been said.
 The Wind harps on old tunes, and seeks an echo
 In every generation that has bled.
 The Waves on unresponsive beaches are still broken,
 The living multiply the dead—are dead.
 'O Wind, why do you wish to evoke Words long spoken
 From bells of uncertain metal, bells of lead?
 O Waves, why do you seek blindly to suck an echo
 From cockle-shells of everything Wisdom's said?'
 'Simply because the Word has been, once and for all, broken,
 Cast on the waters, scattered to the winds, as bread.
 We gather the crumbs, catch and cherish the broken echo,
 Messengers of the living Word to the heedless dead.'

All the necessary Words have long since been spoken,
 All Wisdom uttered, everything's been said.
 'O Wind, O Waves, do you never awaken an unbroken echo?
 Are all of them so heedless, all those dead?
 Have you not found one to answer the Word that is broken
 In every generation that has bled?'
 'Yes, sometimes I have plucked a clear echo
 From silver bells, melodious in song;
 And sometimes I have leapt among the giants and woken
 To rolling clangour every ponderous tongue.'
 'Yes, sometimes we have pounded out an echo,
 And heard the beaches' deep responsive roar;
 And sometimes our gallant crests, breaking, receive a token,
 A whispered recognition from the shore.'

E.H.