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## Fragments of Ten Poems translated by Jascha Kessler

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## FRAGMENTS OF TEN POEMS

### *First Lines*

On the ground floor of the sinking apartment house  
It can be found in none of Oxford's 13 sections  
The universe expanding inch by inch  
What, O fog-wreathed Ossian, have I to do here  
Fight the fight, Man, wait for the answer  
Comes back the croak of this nuncio extraordinary  
They're corporeal, all those guests eating out of that platter  
In the dungeons of the underground palace of lava  
Maybe it's in the flesh that the soul lives  
Still and all, one fine morning the king declares me his son

### *Second Lines*

Sipping their wine, they don't even know it's sinking  
The absolutely perfect synonym  
According to the vague definition of verminkind  
The Celts grow mistier in the mists  
Happy are they who gave birth to their god on the green hill  
Spelling out revelation  
And rapping it along to the continents next door  
The sinews of Atlas are trembling  
Somewhere the ocean is spilled  
Twin-tongued flame erupts from the peony

### *Last Lines, Presumably*

Crammed with Riesling, dead men lie stacked in the cellar  
So we're better off moving to Cambridge  
What a drag, what with all these personal effects  
The only thing needed on Naxos was a Shirt of Nessus  
Every feeling here is shivering in its sealskin with the cold  
O, what it must have been like up in that divine aspic  
It's growing like some explosion in the silent flicks

Nothingness dropping away from under the sole  
A face helpless in the rubble  
Letter and spirit

*translated by  
Jascha Kessler*