

TWO TRANSLATIONS FROM THE
SWEDISH BY ROBERT BLY:

ZERO

by Göran Sonnevi

There's more light when I fall asleep than when I wake

That means:

my private death, but
also — the world's
economy spinning faster
life and death

going around wildly

There's more light when I fall asleep

I'm asleep now

No one can wake me

Facing the Alfa Laval factory a smaller plant:

once the Clio Works, now

The Scandanavian Gear Factory, Inc.

I feel the wheels

going faster, lights flashing on and off

once a minute, once a second

I'm alive in microseconds

I'm nearly dead

The bones in my skull

have stopped expanding

I'm shrinking

going around so fast

I look motionless and now:

zero!

The dark circle is opening disappears

The private agony is opening

all of us here

are vanishing Pain

is opening

We don't live any more

We start things

Start to open wake up

The bed, the house keels over, shaking, rocking

The sun goes on burning

through every window in the house

it rolls in

I've got in my skullbones, what is

waking up, what

is sleeping, wants to get out It is

the bomb

that I've got in my skull that wants

to get out

The private bomb Our only defense

against FEAR OF CHINA You've

got it You're afraid

Lasse Söderberg and Göran Sonnevi are two of Sweden's important younger poets. Sonnevi is the most famous of the younger political poets. Born in 1939, he studied at the University of Lund and now lives near Stockholm, spending his time entirely in poetry and political work. His sympathies lie with the Swedish National Liberation Front. Lasse Söderberg is slightly older, a long-time advocate of political content in poetry. He is the inventor of the American General Gluff-Gluff.

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WITH HEART-CHALK

by Lasse Söderberg

Walt Whitman, what has become of your
America? What has become of that powerful
affection that you sang of
and the institutions that you distrusted?
You intimate speech-maker for democracy
what has become of your sons?
Led by moronic technocrats
they wallow in the odor of gold
and are swallowed up in the latrines
of racehate where the whitest grubs do best.
Your America is no longer yours.
Therefore using my own heart-chalk
I write the word Vietnam old Walt
Whitman swiftly across your name.