

## THE BLIND COW

Joan Maragall

COLLIDING HER HEAD AGAINST THE TRUNKS,  
ADVANCING EMPTILY TOWARDS THE WATER,  
ALONE GOES THE COW. SHE IS BLIND.  
AT THE TOSS OF A STONE TOO PURPOSELY THROWN  
THE YOUNG LAD HAS EMPTIED ONE EYE,  
AND SWOLLEN THE OTHER OVER: THE COW IS BLIND.  
SHE GOES TO DRINK FROM THE FOUNTAIN SHE IS USED TO,  
NO LONGER AS STEADY AS BEFORE  
NOR WITH HER COMPANIONS, BUT ALONE.  
HER SISTERS, BY GLENS AND KNOLLS,  
BY THE SILENCE OF MEADOWS AND RIVER BANKS,  
RING THEIR COWBELLS AS THEY GRAZE  
FRESH GRASS AT RANDOM. SHE WOULD FALL.  
SHE BUMPS HER NOSE INTO THE WORN SINK,  
AND RECOILS, AFFRONTED, BUT RETURNS,  
AND BOWS HER HEAD TO THE WATER AND DRINKS CALMLY.  
SHE DRINKS LITTLE AND WITHOUT MUCH THIRST; AFTERWARDS, SHE RAISES  
TO THE SKY, ENORMOUS, HER HORNED HEAD  
WITH A GRAND AND TRAGIC GESTURE; SHE BLINKS  
OVER THE DEAD DOLLS, AND RETURNS,  
ORPHAN OF LIGHT UNDER THE BURNING SUN,  
HESITATING OVER UNFORGETTABLE PATHS,  
BRANDISHING IN LANGUOR HER LONG TAIL.

(TRANSLATED BY JORDI TORRES)

**Joan Maragall** (Barcelona 1860-1911) was the leading poet and essayist of *Modernisme*. He introduced Nietzsche to the Iberian Peninsula readership and was acutely aware of the many contradictions in culture and politics at the turn of the century. In Arthur Terry's incisive evaluation, 'Though his engagement takes many forms, his underlying sense of poetry as an instrument of metaphysical exploration is never allowed to exclude an awareness of the immediate problems of his own society'. In one of his best-known poems, '*Oda Nova a Barcelona*' (A New Ode to Barcelona, 1909), he sees Gaudi's unfinished church the *Sagrada Família* is a 'mystical example' for future generations. His essays which were published in the *Diario de Barcelona* are crucial to understanding Catalonia's dreams and tensions during his lifetime.