

Orpheus in Hell (ca. 1950)

By Jack Spicer (United States)

When he first brought his music into hell
He was absurdly confident. Even over the noise of the
 shapeless fires
And the jukebox groaning of the damned
5 Some of them would hear him. In the upper world
He had forced the stones to listen.
It wasn't quite the same. And the people he remembered
Weren't quite the same either. He began looking at faces
Wondering if all of hell were without music.
10 He tried an old song but pain
Was screaming on the jukebox and the bright fire
Was pelting away the faces and he heard a voice saying,
 "Orpheus!"
 He was at the entrance again
15 And a little three-headed dog was barking at him.
Later he would remember all those dead voices
And call them Eurydice.

Orfeo (1958)

By Jack Spicer (United States)

Sharp as an arrow Orpheus
Points his music downward.
Hell is there
At the bottom of the seacliff.
5 Heal
Nothing by this music.
Eurydice
Is a frigate bird or a rock or some seaweed.
Hail nothing
10 The infernal
Is a slippering wetness out at the horizon.
Hell is this:
The lack of anything but the eternal to look at
The expansiveness of salt
15 The lack of any bed but one's
Music to sleep in.