

An Unanswered Letter

By Rainer Maria Rilke

5 My dear Mr. Kappus: I have left a letter from you unanswered for a long time; not because I
had forgotten it - on the contrary: it is the kind that one reads again when one finds it among
other letters, and I recognize you in it as if you were very near. It is your letter of May second,
and I am sure you remember it. As I read it now, in the great silence of these distances, I am
10 touched by your beautiful anxiety about life, even more than when I was in Paris, where every-
thing echoes and fades away differently because of the excessive noise that makes Things
tremble. Here, where I am surrounded by an enormous landscape, which the winds move
across as they come from the seas, here I feel that there is no one anywhere who can answer
15 for you those questions and feelings which, in their depths, have a life of their own; for even
the most articulate people are unable to help, since what words point to is so very delicate, is
almost unsayable. But even so, I think that you will not have to remain without a solution if
you trust in Things that are like the ones my eyes are now resting upon. If you trust in Nature,
in what is simple in Nature, in the small Things that hardly anyone sees and that can so sud-
denly become huge, immeasurable; if you have this love for what is humble and try very
simply, as someone who serves, to win the confidence of what seems poor: then everything
will become easier for you, more coherent and somehow more reconciling, not in your con-
scious mind perhaps, which stays behind, astonished, but in your innermost awareness, awake-
ness, and knowledge.