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The mortals whom we love but do not know
Suddenly we grow beyond ourselves
The cherry now in bloom so satisfies
The smaller detail gives us hope,
We could be flying to those Roman pines
In Hadrian's safeguarded world
The gods were given all their due
And mercy granted except the Jew
Twice paid back for cruelty,
We the inheritors worship strange gods
Yet money is better than sacrifice
And cushions all our blows.

Luckily we are not stretched so far
I drink to my imagined woes
Absorb Radnoti, Mandelstam et al
Brought to their feet by cool Brodsky
But still the agony of woe
Brings forth the encrypted metre
Where sound brings greater meaning
Footprinted surely through the cosmos
To meet in distant meadows, woods,
With deserts and our foes redeemed
And all our thoughts are water-borne
Among those limestone hills
Where we can meet on equal terms
Our Auden and our Joseph
Longing for that free and ancient world.