



*brisk morning at the crest
of the steep hill—
two strong breezes turned
and spoke to each other*

First I am Francesco,
Son of Assisi,
called *il Poverello*.
I come here
to the thinner Air
as if it were my lighter sister,
and here I speak to her.
Who are you?

Second I am Hildegard von Bingen,
Eine arme, kleine Frau,
from very far away from you.
I was a Paramount Singer,
but adore also the simpler songs
of my friend of breezes,
future You,
caro Francesco.

First “With every breeze
I awaken everything to life,”
spoke our God,
as you heard.
You, World Thought-Maker & Speaker,
Singer & Picture-Painter, too,
whom your many Sisters called Wondrous.
How do you know me
who loved each creature,
as you did,
I who lived after
You?

Second Your silences and songs, my friend.
I spoke and sang
always with an airy breath.
And I watched and watch now, too:
while “The wind and air issue a blast
with whirlwinds,
the fire sends forth ferocious noises.”

First Why Sun-Facing
do you wince
as if your head throbbed
and burned?

Second Not blaze,
but warming I sought and seek.
Though I am a wind
to you now,
I once was green
and walked the knobbly earth.
I painted the faces
of the angels green.
Their hymning voices echo, whistling still.

First Suddenly I am ice-cold,
near frozen.
Can you sense the threat,
a supreme engraving
arriving?
Hell will be fire-hot,
but also frigid.
The warm earth is beautiful and green
in every floret and fragrant herb
and those sweet fruits,
quince, fragola, and yellow apple.
Green is true and just in structure,
but so are the stiff grey stones,
even glacial.

I cherished them as well, and do still.
All melts and changes
as we walk along.

Second As that great Rabbi
Simeon ben Gamaliel taught:
“The world rests on three things:
justice, truth, and peace.”
I painted them as two,
but left out peace,
something I never found.
As I walked, the world
stones often jumped
and thumped my head.

First I cared for my brothers
and my little light sister Chiara.
With them, there I found my peace.
Speaking to the little birds
who answered me in kind,
as my brothers watched and marveled.
Perhaps your sisters helped you as well?
They followed you,
as my brothers followed me,
and they knew us, then,
as great pillars to rest upon.

Together *And yet,
we left them spinning
at the crossroads
and laughing
to each direction,
up and down
as they whirled.*