

PLEASE HEAR WHAT I'M NOT SAYING

Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear
For I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks,
Masks that I'm afraid to take off and none of them are me.
Pretending is an art that's second nature with me
But don't be fooled, for God's sake don't be fooled.
I give you the impression that I'm secure
That all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without,
That confidence is my name and coolness my game,
That the water's calm and I'm in command,
And that I need no one.
But don't believe me. Please!
My surface may be smooth but my surface is my mask,
My ever-varying and ever-concealing mask.
Beneath lies no smugness, no complacency.
Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, in aloneness.
But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.
I panic at the thought of my weaknesses and fear exposing them.
That's why I frantically create my masks to hide behind.
They're nonchalant, sophisticated facades to help me pretend,
To shield me from the glance that knows.
But such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only salvation, and I know it.
That is, if it's followed by acceptance, if it's followed by love.
It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself
From my own self-built prison walls
From the barriers that I so painstakingly erect.
That glance is the only thing that assures me
Of what I can't assure myself, that I'm really worth something.
But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to.
I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh
And you laugh would kill me.
I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing, that I'm just no good
And you will see this and reject me.
So I play my game, my desperate, pretending game
With a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within,
So begins the parade of masks, the glittering but empty parade of masks,
And my life becomes a front.
I idly chatter to you in suave tones of surface talk.
I tell you everything that's nothing
And nothing of what's everything, of what's crying within me.
So when I'm going through my routine do not be fooled by what I'm saying.
Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm *not* saying.
Hear what I'd like to say but what I can not say.
I dislike hiding. Honestly.