

The Second Coming

BODO REICHENBACH

All those who still believe the great Anointed

Will bodily some day return to earth,

To change man's self-inflicted pain to mirth,

Are bound to be forever disappointed.

What should he do if he came back this day?

Destroy the wicked by divine decree?

Reward the good with righteous ecstasy?

Undo the wrongs that did his words betray?

Should he repair the chaos mankind wrought?

Transform its battlefields to paradise?

To sanctuaries countless mental styes?

Delete all guilt with greed and hatred fraught?

His second coming is a quaint belief.

It is for mankind to redeem its grief.

[Bodo Reichenbach is a retired professor of German language and literature. After receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1970, he taught there and at Boston University, and offered a course in theological German at Harvard Divinity School. He is currently translating works of the German writer Bô Yin Râ on "final things."]