

RAINER MARIA RILKE:
THE LAST SUPPER

They sit assembled, credulous and furtive,
With him who like a sage is closed in thought,
Who takes himself from these whom he was part of,
And flows beyond their heads, and knows them not.
He feels the coming-on of loneliness,
In which his deep necessity was nourished;
Now he will wander in the olive forest;
Who love him most, will flee him in distress.

He asked to eat with them before he leaves;
And, as a bullet scatters birds from sheaves
Of grain, he scatters their fingers from the loaves
With this, his word. They crumple at his knee;
They flutter vaguely through the hall, intending
To find a window or a door. But he
Is all around them, like the dusk descending.