

RAINER MARIA RILKE:  
THE PANTHER

His gaze, from the revolving bars that bound him,  
Has grown so weary that it will not hold,  
As if there were a thousand bars around him,  
And then behind the thousand bars no world.

The supple steps, here hardened and here softened,  
Turned round upon each other like a spring,  
Suggest a dance of strength around a deafened  
Will, fixed in the center of the ring.

At random points of time the pupil's valance  
Goes softly up: A picture hits the eyes,  
Goes through the members in their tightened silence,  
And reaches to the heart and dies.