

18. Beauty

No. 35. (one of the ten "spheres") by Boris Sandler

What does beauty mean, what?  
Ask a blind man. He guards the secret  
like that guardian in Paradise  
who guards the cleanness of souls.  
He feels beauty with his skin,  
with the nerve-endings of his fingertips  
transmitting, as if through the finest wires,  
to his sight-deprived brain.

He can appreciate beauty  
painted with the colors of night,  
when every rustle and tremor  
tenses the vessels like strings  
on an as-yet-unplayed instrument,  
to hear how the quiet, virginal melody  
gets born.

Ask a blind man  
where the road to beauty is,  
and follow him. Become a shadow  
and tap the earth along with his cane—  
his eyelids and his pupils—  
and he'll bring you there,  
himself unaware  
that he is already near the goal  
and it's just one more step to reach it.

And you, the seeing person with eyes—  
don't stop him,  
and from the very peak of the mountain  
let him take his last step,  
for as he is falling  
he'll first take that last step up  
to his longed-for goal: beauty,  
to which he has blundered in the darkness,  
holding onto the thread of a moonbeam.

(Translation by B.Zumoff.)