

## Wallace Stevens: The man with the blue guitar

The man bent over his guitar,  
A shearsman of sorts. The day was green.  
They said, "You have a blue guitar,  
You do not play things as they are."  
The man replied, "Things as they are  
Are changed upon the blue guitar."  
And they said to him, "But play, you must,  
A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,  
A tune upon the blue guitar,  
Of things exactly as they are."

Two

I cannot bring a world quite round,  
Although I patch it as I can.  
I sing a hero's head, large eye  
And bearded bronze, but not a man,  
Although I patch him as I can  
And reach through him almost to man.  
If a serenade almost to man  
Is to miss, by that, things as they are,  
Say that it is the serenade  
Of a man that plays a blue guitar.

Three

A tune beyond us as we are,  
Yet nothing changed by the blue guitar;  
Ourselves in tune as if in space,  
Yet nothing changed, except the place  
Of things as they are and only the place  
As you play them on the blue guitar,  
Placed, so, beyond the compass of change,  
Perceived in a final atmosphere;  
For a moment final, in the way  
The thinking of art seems final when  
The thinking of god is smoky dew.  
The tune is space. The blue guitar  
Becomes the place of things as they are,  
A composing of senses of the guitar.

Four

Tom-tom c'est moi. The blue guitar  
And I are one. The orchestra  
Fills the high hall with shuffling men  
High as the hall. The whirling noise  
Of a multitude dwindles, all said,  
To his breath that lies awake at night.  
I know that timid breathing. Where  
Do I begin and end? And where,  
As I strum the thing, do I pick up  
That which momentarily declares  
Itself not to be I and yet  
Must be. It could be nothing else.