

Barberries - Life-review Writing Exercise

This poem challenges us to think about our lives by providing us with a harsh warning. After reading the poem write a response to his warning (in whatever form you choose). Do you need to make changes in your life to be ready for this time? What does the poet mean when he says "And you (God) are like a stone which draws him daily deeper into the depths?"

Barberries

Rainer Maria Rilke, Translated by Robert Bly

Already the ripening barberries are red
and in their bed, the aged asters hardly breath.
whoever now is not rich inside, at the end of summer,
will wait and wait, and never be himself.

Whoever now is unable to close his eyes
absolutely certain that a crowd of faces
is only waiting till night comes
in order to stand up around him in the darkness---
That man is worn out, like an old man.

Nothing more will happen to him, no day will arrive,
and everything that does happen will cheat him.
even you, my God. And you are like a stone
which draws him daily deeper into the depths.