

Two Jaws, Two Flowers

Dushko Petrovich

I've worked for several years on a book of Eugenio Montale's Motets, translating the poems into English as well as making illustrations. Some of the motifs that emerged—the sphinx, the jaw, the flower—have had, as Montale would have put it, “a second life.” These new flowers, for example, don't exactly transcribe Motet XVI (“Il fiore che repete...”), but the image started in that poem. Eventually, the transcription took another turn, as I began include other words—the name of the pigment, autobiographical details, other poems—in the titles, which were themselves, I realize now, (very brief) transcriptions of the paintings. Recently, I started to write these “titles” at the bottom of the watercolors in pencil, so the transcription, now reversed, has become more direct.



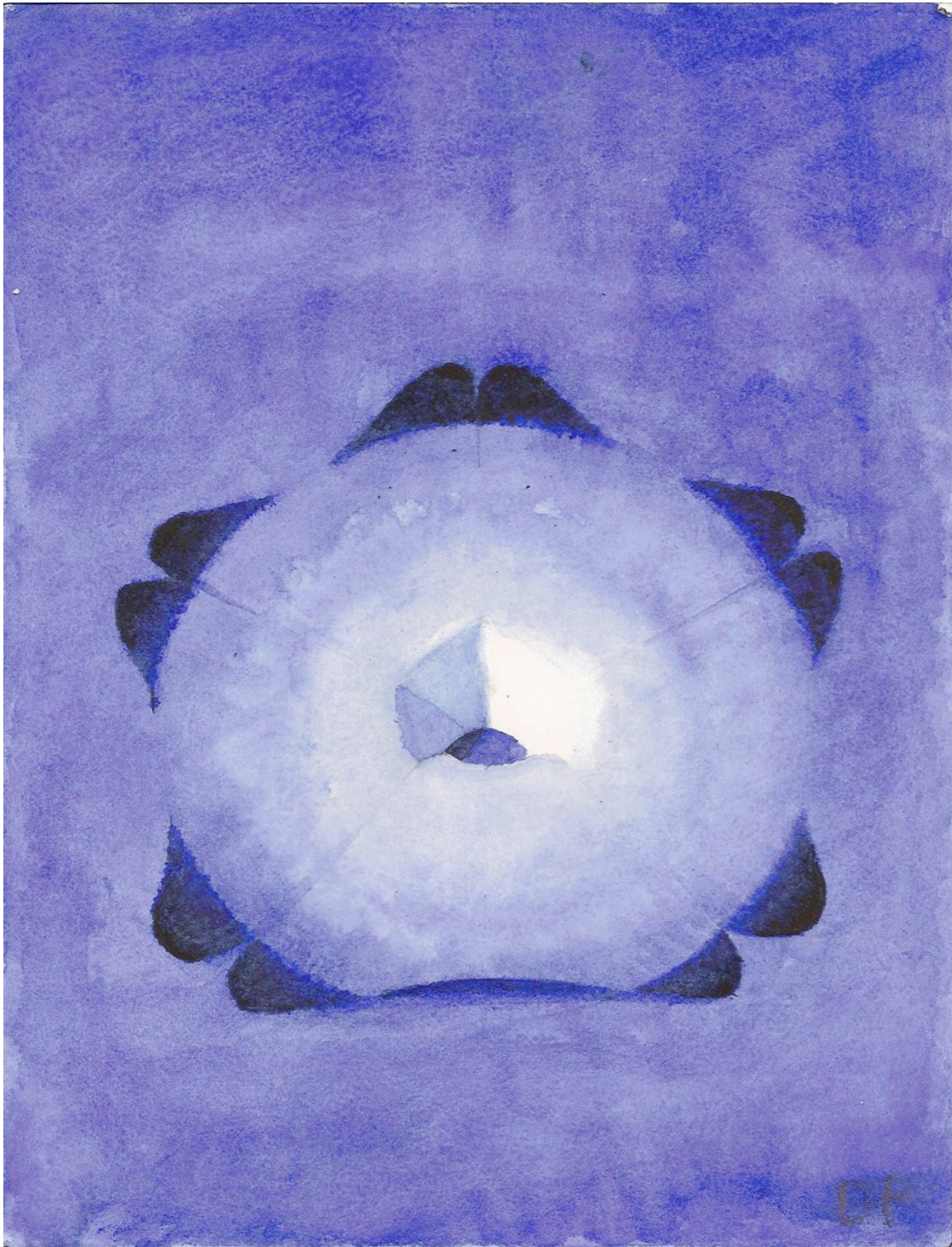
Father Tongue (2008)
watercolor on paper, 7 x 10"



Translator (2008)
watercolor on paper, 7 x 10"



Persian Rose (2008)
oil on canvas, 11 x 14"



Across the Sea (2008)
watercolor on paper, 7 x 10"