Photography by Ingbert Grüttner

ALFRED A. KNOPF NEW YORK 1975
FROM THE RIG-VEDA

Translation and Sanskrit Calligraphy by Jean Le Mée
Neither nonbeing nor being was as yet,
Neither was airy space nor heavens beyond;
What was enveloped? And where? Sheltered by whom?
And was there water? Bottomless, unfathomed?
Neither was there death nor immortality,
Nor was there any sign then of night or day;
Totally windless, by itself, the One breathed;
Beyond that, indeed, nothing whatever was.
In the Principle darkness concealed darkness; Undifferentiated surge was this whole world. The pregnant point covered by the form matrix, From conscious fervor, mightily, brought forth the One.
In the Principle, thereupon, rose desire,
Which of consciousness was the primeval seed.
Then the wise, searching within their hearts, perceived
That in nonbeing lay the bond of being.
Stretched crosswise was their line, a ray of glory.
Was there a below? And was there an above?
There were sowers of seeds and forces of might:
Potency from beneath and from on high the Will.
Who really knows, who could here proclaim
Whence this creation flows, where is its origin?
With this great surge the Gods made their appearance.
Who therefore knows from where it did arise?
This flow of creation, from where it did arise,  
Whether it was ordered or was not,  
He, the Observer, in the highest heaven,  
He alone knows, unless . . . He knows it not.