



Ales Steger

Poems

With Closed Eyes

When you close your eyes you see a poem.
It is emptied of the firmness of all things you secretly desire.
It reminds you of a white room freshly painted
Where summer forgot to close the windows and doors.
But this too is only an insufficient allusion to forms of the physical world.
Entrances and exits do not exist in this poem.
This poem consists only in vaporousness.
The figures floating in it, the metaphors
Hanging on its walls a galactic draft could
dispel and recombine as something else.
Two naked clouds, about to make love,
Are dissolved and exhaled by stars as a cloud
Of a slaughtered wild boar encircled by grey smoke
From the cigarette of a father, who, hidden
In a dark corner of the poem, watches everything. Most likely
He is the true author of all poems. You cannot see him
In the dark until he chooses to appear,
Soundlessly, from behind, playfully covering with his hands your eyes,
Asking: Who am I? Will you kill me? Are you mine?

Translated by W. Martin with the author

Wall

Not a day passes without you thinking
How they've walled you too out of the world.
They've taken your perspective. Banished you.

Not a morning passes that you don't vow
To dismantle this wall today, and not a night
You don't come home dismantled. Resistance is meaningless.

No one is there to give you the safety of contraposition.
The bricks shift apart, soft as the hours,
Letting you step through before your palm can touch them.

Although there is no other side, no elsewhere.
Nowhere do you arrive, and nowhere nothing keeps you.
You have no wall where any of this might end.

And your wall is nowhere nobody never.

Translated by W. Martin and the author

Europe

Even now you peddle the story of the Turks
At the gates of Vienna, dismantling their tents only as a ruse.
And how masquerading as kebab vendors
Even now they're only waiting for the right moment
To leap out from their kiosks and cut your throats.

No matter that your tribes are lost forever
In the marshes of your barbaric designs
And even you can't tell the skull of a Goth from the skull
Of a Slav from the skull of an Angle from the skull of a Frank,
Still you believe only your sons' spilt blood will rejuvenate you.

Still you think you'll give the lie to all of us.
When I close my tired eyes, you appear
In the form of a hairy fat woman who gives birth while snoring
And of the man in the dark beside her secretly masturbating,
Thinking about America.

Translated by W. Martin and Tom Lozar

Protuberances

Silent eruptions of ions. Energy suspended in signs.
Antigravity. Magnetism's dance in bone swellings.

Protuberances.

Visible to the naked eye only with the body thrust in darkness,
With the body in shadow and helpless, the body surrendered,
Like the patient surrendered to the indifferent hands of technicians
Closing behind them the door to the x-ray cabinet.
They leave him to himself and the machine

Elastically suctioning his chest.
Radiation. Possibly fatal.
Protuberances.

A hundred million miles away from the sun's chromosphere
Masses of white-hot gas lift up for no real reason
Etch the miraculous image on the periphery of the void
Then detach and race off into space at great speed.
Radiance. Barely perceptible.

Protuberances.
Protuberances.

Be the word length of the light waves
That travel through memory and flesh

Recording the wounds to heal the names
Of this world's mutilations.

Translated by W. Martin and Janko Lozar

Stone

No one hears what the stone holds in.
Insignificant, all its own, an affliction
Caught between the foot's sole and the shoe.

When you release it, leaves whirl in the bare avenues.
What once was will never be again;
And piles of other decomposing meanings.
The smell of clinics nearby. Mute, you continue.

No one hears what you hold in.
You're your own stone's sole occupant.
You've just thrown it away.

Translated by W. Martin and the author

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