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The Wolf

and he is alien, alien to me the wolf that bites into my flesh
from below, sticks his snout in every nook and licks it, it
feels strange,
strange, I hide, shrivel in my body, I flee
into my head, away, off, I am scared of feeling this, scared
of feeling
my flesh, scared of feeling his flesh, and he bites in deeper,
his snout is a maw, it is sharp-teethed and eats me, savours me
like soft juicy food, he tears, pushes in between the legs
with his tongue, nose, chin, paws, hair, the pestle whenever
he can
tear himself off from the sweet fare and he rams it in, to the root,
more, again and again, into this body that is no longer
mine, pure violence
which I allow and do not fight, but I am not swept off, I am
soft, he moves me like a doll, that's how it is, then, I think,
he is a man
and I a woman, it is as it should be, that's how it goes, he
thins me,
thins me into a fine membrane, until nothing but a fine
membrane separates me
and then the paradise opens in my head, Eden in the flesh,
no, not of the flesh, and he keeps diving into me,
shoves, tears, pushes inside, searches, searches, within me
there's a fullness, a completion, I am serene and calm, so
full of the clear
liquid that I am indifferent to whatever might happen, I
couldn't care less if
I bled, I feel neither pain nor pleasure and I know that
everything will be all right, I do not trust the wolf, but it
will be all right, this
force in me is more potent than he, it transforms him,
heals him, it heals me, heals the wound.

Translated by Mia Dintinjana

Uroš Zupan

Psalm-Magnolias in the April Snow

Let us bite through the chains of enchanted words, father,
let us melt
the iceberg of silence which has grown between us,
I am ready, I have disconnected the telephone,
locked the door, there is nobody left in my world.

Now my psalm will sing to you about dreams,
you call them dreams, of springs of blossoms,
of water, which the magnolias drink
when they open in the April snow, of evenings
which have encamped in my head.
Long purple clouds glide above the earth
you see them, father, you see right through them.
While your silhouette - as it stands on the treshold -
is being embraced by the cold wings of the night.

No, they cannot be classified
they cannot be appointed places in the calendar of escaping days.

I cannot, father, I do not even try.
It is not my intention to spend endless hours
in the maws of various offices, between lips that sip,
cheap perfumes, the want-a-fuck smelling of the cheap
spirits of business colleagues.

For me - verses, long wild verses,
which run like horses in the yearning of the traveller.
Like the crystal, cold water, into which I slip naked.
Verses, which are a present from the air.
Verses, which I forever hammer into the paper.
Verses measure time, father, my time, our time
they are the only things which set the milestones of our
mortality.

Now my psalm will sing to you of the world that you will
never enter, of heaven and hell,
of ecstasies that take possession over me and of the falls of Icarus.
Of the magical union, the divine connection, which
is felt by jazz musicians when their instruments,
with unusual ease, address the shadows and draw kaleidoscopic
images in the unknown fragrant night, on empty streets
where the last drunks stagger
and cat muzzles peer out of dustbins.

Now my psalm will sing to you of Kafka, about how
he wrote a long letter to his father and never
found enough courage to send it.
No, you have never heard of Kafka.
Though you have ordered the World's Classics,
though every Saturday you dusted your books.

Too unstable a world for you.
Too intangible a world for you.

And my friends spoke to me about
their sick experiences with their fathers
I wanted to beat him up - said one -
he was lucky however to die, cancer,
cirrhosis of the liver, we were all relieved.
We were all afraid to confess, that in seclusion
we shed tears.

And we, father.
We have met for years now, the way trains meet
at fixed places, at fixed times
ice cold with the crash of speed.
With live cargo inside ourselves.
We are stubborn, stubborn.

Now it's time, father, to hear my psalm.
A psalm which is breaking through the claws of darkness,
which is setting fire to the leaves of forest paths,
which, like a bird, sits on mountain slopes, a psalm
which is whispered by the fish and the stones, a psalm which is
whispered by the man of the rain and of the sun.

I am preparing myself for war, father, for war
 and you know that I am going.
 You are more scared than I
 yes, the hardened castles of habits will have to come down
 let ivy overgrow them, let princes peacefully sleep in them.

Yes, fingernails will have to be broken and skin wrinkled
 and there will be many victims, many hours of stillness
 silently breathing between four walls,
 on bridges which lead across the metaphors of eternity.
 When the only food will be the dust of dreams,
 and the only sanctuary the transparent body of false love
 and the silver pieces will cease to be.
 And I will not feel like Judas Iscariot
 who was bribed to betray the one
 who loved him most.
 And maybe I will be the winner, maybe the loser,
 but I will always remember you,
 when I see a clean shaven employee
 who didn't try anything unusual,
 who didn't break a single rule, who curses,
 because he cannot find a parking space,
 who wrote boring love letters to his wife.
 And you will also remember me,
 if somewhere you start drinking beer by yourself and everything
 around you starts to crumble to dust and for the first time
 in your life you say - let it all go to hell.
 I don't care -
 and for the first time in your life
 you will have the feeling that there is something else,
 something unusual.
 Some piece of the moon above us and some bright moments
 which open to us like the magnolias
 of my dreams, magnolias opening in the April snow.

Translated by Nikolai Jeffs

Brane Senegačnik

Aphrodite

The green wind's wing eclipsed
the night's smile, radiating from her lips.
The body, like a rose of distances, is diffused
into the pale red wave of remembrance that will be crushed,

among the stars, by the sun's hoof.
The dawn's singing shell is open.
O sand-dune skin, infused with dreams!
O the sky's eye, cast into the restlessness of days!

The scarlet leaves of sex quiver
in the tear's solitary glow; her flower
aroused under passion's one thousand fingers. Silence

kisses the time, and a warm wind caresses
life that trickles away. The stars are asleep.
Her silence burns like death, like a rapture of memory.

Peter Semolič

A Poem About Childhood

I've kept quiet about the attic
where the two of us lay on hay
and quivered with a longing for women.

Touching one another was not love.
It was friendship
driven to the extreme limits of bodies.

We felt no shame,
no guilt,
when the sunlight poured on us

or when we trembled in premature passion.
We were too young
to besprinkle one another with semen,

we just trembled
like two night butterflies in the circle
of an electric light.

5 Gestrinova Street

Before we finally moved into
our new home, the Red House, and fixed
a red letter box with jaws big enough
for the format of foreign magazines, and before our neighbour
bid us welcome by whacking the box
on its gob,
we had both seen the
ten months slip unnoticed through the fingers,
and the extra two were
also wasted in improving the rating
of the bland local intellectual atmosphere,
even though we only believe in vistas
of independent breakthrough, we watched
the years and decades merge into a weaving
of a thick monochrome Caspian rug we might
buy for our sitting room, and we talked about how
every one of their highly praised
solitudes is measurable in the same drained meanings of words,
the same gestures even, one of which hit
our poor letter box, and
how, as the ethics sings out
its high C, all of them lose ground beneath their feet and
they stammer unintelligible litanies out of manuals and
old Austro-Hungarian or Yugoslav books of manners,
or they grab for their last convenient strategy
before leaping into the gullet of language,
irony and formalism, and
before we had truly moved into the Red House,
we knew that the ever readiness of conflict
comes from below; from the ground floor or the cellar,
from where the body and voice split apart, much like
in our new spiral staircase, where you can
hear the echo to the topmost floors,
yet never see the physical presence
of the addresser.

Translated by Ana Jelnikar

Lucija Stupica

Enchanting

You travel a long way between the sun and darkness,
restless fear reading itself into your bones.
Enchanting, you say. And blush. And stop speaking.

Has any one recognized you in too long trousers,
in the walking of a vulnerable stag, when you
pursue a spellbound memory all alone in the crowd?

Has fear arisen out of these people? Have fetishes run out?
Cities too transparent for you and you for them?
Only she unknowingly slipped into you,
where she is now offering a Milky Way, a honeyed hand,
all fragrances and names of the wind, pains and passions.
And in the language she speaks everything laughs.

You'd like to walk your legs off. You know that. Nothing
has changed from the outside: you can whistle a tune as you
did before. But you think of her. Enchanting, you say. And
blush.

Primož Čučnik

Hymn

We cannot live without You
in between the torn-down walls of houses.
When we part, distance grows
and clouds darken. But we don't know
why. Nor for how long.
Legs and hands and heads grow darker,
the rooms are darker on the night's crossing.

We know one another but don't reveal
our true faces. This is no way
to live! So we open bottles of wine,
open our mouths and chests,
walk with a darker step, sleep a darker sleep;
we are darker. We put up high fires,
camping on people's hot cheeks.

And only with darkness does light
thicken. In temporary homes,
under temporary roofs,
on temporary tables we rest our hands
to see. Skin grows accustomed. Faith
helps. Hearts' contours become visible.

Some rise, others leave
for the infinite night. But without
You, they cannot live. They walk
with a darker step, dream a darker sleep,

on a way to nowhere,
in a land of no-one,
with a name nobody.

Jurij Hudolin

In the morning my dreams
And perception of art
Are at their best.

At noon I'm demented
And at lunch I babble on
About the Manichaeans
Or fatwahs and Fascists.

At night everything comes down
And a single thing is left:
I sing a raucous elegy
On the softness of peachy
Breasts.

Miklavž Komelj

A very special greeting, darling Death!

Though I have sung conditions without name
since you're a woman, I shall you proclaim -
I've been obsessed with you since my first breath.

We love each other, I don't hide the fact,
and this I know: through you I shall migrate
into a newer, brighter, joyful state;
Pure bliss will be my final painful act.

And if a chasm gaped behind, above,
my blood would love you more and prize,
though knowing its redemption was destroyed.

I'd ask you, as my mother and my love,
to cover with your fingers both my eyes
that I could never see into the void.

