

Jaccottet

I know this essence

A man... indeed a tree.

Birds land on his shoulder...

Listening to his breathing...

They spin his silence into songs of awakening,

And coats for the winter.

Infected by Paris' dizziness...

Which intoxicates the bewildered with its cacophony,

While the poet bends in agony.

He was aware how green his lungs were,

Carbonated air is too much for them..

His ears could not hear its hissing

Climbing south.

Far away... his soul went twice,

and his body departed yesterday.

A drop of wine in a lover's vein...

A fish slips into the blue...

And disappears to live.

Assimilates with grass and quick water.

This essence is so familiar,

A man... indeed a tree.

A pen that has a hand

Lightly and faintly

Passed.

And without distraction...

Plant a candle in the shade of Grignan,

And another in the sky.

The breeze whispered: "Demolishing is the path to advancement" ...

Dissolving to glory.

Masaccio

Whenever gold flows...

We grow shorter.

While Masaccio with his brush strikes

– with muscles undefeated –

Laments our expulsion from Paradise,

Smiling

We reserve our luxurious graves

on nearby planets.

Welcome...

We are the naked

The wet...

Tattooed with our bright names,

– Here's my hand –

The increasingly insignificant,

We are the ones shivering,

Strangers in our own homes.

What is the end of an exile?

– What is the beginning – but this body?

Octopus

Coming to thirsty heads...

through open windows,

Intentionally wiping away our footsteps on the dunes,

Committing forgery with 'One Thousand and One Nights.'

My grandfather was born in heaven,

As for my father, he was born in Ras Al Khaimah's Dihan.

To this limit

My family loves beginnings and pitfalls.

As long as we remember

We are in a fresh childhood.

No daggers, no syringes,

Without guns...

the invaders strut,

They give us new cards,

With pictures we don't recognize,

Next to which, our full names.

There are messages that no one will touch,

In the city's post office,

Floating confidently...
Like a shadow of a memory
That eyes cannot read.

From left to east...
I draw my pen
to draw my dreams,
I may not care to interpret them.

A Pair of Spectacles

The only thing of which I dreamt
Last night
was the sea;
It was green,
The way I saw it...
Ripe,
Rough,
With a promise of satiety.

I am not blind,
But walking on pristine earth
Through a frame
with trees on either side
Pricks my feet.

My breath in harmony with my steps;
My heartbeat with the battle,
Things are as I envision them to be.

The sky is so green too,
As dark as the songs of young men,
And when I thirst for the shore
With a cleaver,

I draw my way through the woods.
I follow the roar,
And the smell of fear.

My mother's bread, timeless as the sky.
Gulls pass
So slow,
As though the air's suppleness
Had long since departed.
Ships warm me,
Wake me with a soprano's song;
Chanting without words!

I will not leave this house,
With its bare walls,
As they do bring me such a pleasure.

I will not leave just for a dwarf...
Blinkers his eyes with mirrors,
And approaches me with a dagger,
Or, because my neighbour digs through garbage,
Counting the dates my children had for breakfast

On lonely nights, I relate tales of revenge to jackals;

They listen like a curious stranger would.
We all learned the lesson...
With incense, the darkness recedes,
With the chosen spectacles, the storm passes.

The cancer of meaning pervades the air,
I pick a fistful of light,
A balm for my anxiety,
Then I slip down an alley with no end.

The sky is nothing more than a twisted river,
Lives that never run out,
Six-sevenths of the universe is silence;
Singing unlike us,
The rest is but nonsense.

Bitter Orange

One gloomy cup...
Another,
The morning theatre
Begins anew.
A train plows through my skull,
Emptying its lungs of air
With a soft howl,
An ancient train
That missed all its appointments.
Another waits to cross.

Intended for lovers' footsteps,
Their way lost in the ports,
Leaves torn,
A huge whale this path,
It does not end until it begins,
The sun's fingers poking through its shade.

Autumn, a shy festival,
Afflicted with successive curses,
You both live a deferred lie.

Turning away in the morning
Seeking a tomb with shards of glass,
Or a mansion that overlooks – inevitably –
A traffic jam...
Even so!

Iron clatters down on an idol's head,
Roar,
Not enough hoes,
Maybe they ignite the gardens...
False is a climbing plant.
Clinging to the trail of light,
And coloured paper.

Away from home
Noise calls him back,
Before catching his breath twice.

His language a bitter orange so mature,
Squeezed dry,
Then sprinkled
On the neatly folded garments,
A bitter language...
Leaves none satisfied.

Brightness...

Dimness...

Brightness...

Drooping eyelids,

A padded prison cell,

What a sneaky sponge!

When colluding with isolation.

But for the music

The light of the lantern extinguished,

Sore,

his head hanging down; withered,

And his legs floating.

Suffocation

Through dark metal
Passes cooled oxygen
towards our silence.
To cross the distance will take time,
So...
This is how losses happen.

Has anyone listened?
The arteries of our home,
Were never to my liking.

The two candles
on the table's shoulders
Two Sumerian princesses...
Maybe we are here tonight
Because they sought
to merge with our heartbeat.

Not without reason, except
that the chariots
that carried us to this paradise

wanted to hang out
on the lunar frustrations.

I'm yet to drink wine..
A blind man advised me
While passing surreptitiously...
That its bitterness
won't make up for my memory,
On nights knitted with grief.

As fumes emerge...
a knife near my eyes told me
Time is not enough to reach the wharf;
Either immerse in battle,
Or forever await it.

Soldiers of deferred defeat
is who we are,
And the bullets just departed
The symphony of fate.

Absence

The darkness climbed over me. From the first apple

Up until my language.

Colorful, compassionate flames,

Lick the years...

From obscurity to a cloud of doubt.

Blazing spirit,

Clothed in silence,

As essential as a loaf of bread...

As a postal address in a crowded city.

Your name no longer has a voice.

Water, a metaphor for your face,

A worn-out basin of alabaster,

The prayers of passersby dissolve in it,

Their lewd obsessions,

Embezzlement of life.

An unmapped treasure...

That pirates failed to find.

At night, your presence descends.

Silence is the flight of the weary.

In a naked shack...

Yesterday's poems turn into ashes in the fireplace.

The further you withdraw into yourself...

An anchored cloud –

– too heavy to pass –

Resides in your right hand.

This is a lonely field,

The antidote may be a song.

Solace

On the last night
We walked
On thickened sponge
To a station
that did not exist...
The tinsel withered,
Even the city's finest fabric
cannot banish the decay,
The noses haven't overflowed.
There was only deafening silence.
Disclosure plagues us...
And on the heads
Minutes fell
Like sharpened stones.

Out of my ears,
Leaked the reason of our gathering.
Why are we here?
My consciousness asked,

What came before,
what comes after?
Who are the dead...
Who are the living,
Men reached out,
over-stretched
to grasp the meaning,
Torn asunder.
In the form of tight crescents...
Cousins stood,
Glorifying survival
while the dust of the graveyard still clinging
to their consciences.

Family photos are immune to mites
Yet, memory raids them...
as vivid as a scandal.

The hand holding the camera
never shook hands with my father,
most faces had no features.

A tent for receiving condolences
Is but a ship,

aged and fragile,
Boarded by armed pirates,
The abyss has no end.

With tattooed necks.
They crack jokes,
And when there was no room left in the air...
They packed them off to distant continents...
And clinked the money.

Card Game

We are each other's mirror.
You reveal a card,
So do I,
You reveal another.
I draw three,
And lay them before you,
Like a monk drunken with chess,
Marching back to bed like a general
on the verge of a glorious triumph.

You throw down a joker,
With a drooping hat ...
Colours disperse,
And chuckles,
'Hooray',
Life courses through veins suddenly,
We smile for your eternity...
And my hard-won survival.
Yet...
The game is not over.

The electricity of an idea overwhelms us.
The euphoria of victory is a cruel deception.

Yet another jolt.
Losing in front of the one you love is,
in a sense, a blessing.

Otherwise, life is but a cat,
That passes over your neighbour's wall,
Without turning around.

We lose...
Both of us.
We kneel on marble,
Egos vanish,
Into the centre of the Earth,
Metals fuse into each other,
Our hands and lips begin to speak.
Our lexicon is limited, but
it is enough for what we have to say,
Or for what time allows to convey.
Listen as I sing your name...
Pay attention to the flames,
Among the commas.

What's more,
if you so desire...
Engrave me on your bracelet.

Mud

Here...

Among those who watch

The passersby

With magnifying glasses,

Those who misspell

Counting steps,

Keeping silent

Too late...

With naiveté uncommon.

There,

The finishing line within arm's reach,

So we drag our feet

Mud falls away,

as does history,

And thorny questions.

Lighter than air, we become,

Lustily we inhale...

Like fish kissed by a camera

While dangling from a hook.

My hand on the remote,

A serial killer appears

Centered on the screen

Stripped of everything but

Clothes carefully pressed for this day,

And dark remorse.
His cigarette melting
Before the current flows through his soft body.

Bareness

We delve into the realm of dreams,
Thirst snaps at us,
As it suits those who are lost,
Our backs are hunched,
Mechanical arms sweep away our lives,
A memory the size of a planet
Without details,
Smooth as a marble slab.

Overwhelmed by bareness
We no longer stand on tiptoe

When the people of the earth are done with Measuring skulls,
Language's saws,
Frames engraved with countless breaths,
Gilded with the workers' sweat,
And their forearms ache...
When we avoid looking carefully
At the diameters of noses,
And light reflecting off bare skin...
Like a wild animal avoiding carrion,
Then we'll find time to arrange our dreams,
Our neighbours in the galaxy will hear
Our gypsy songs.

A lady asked
Emerging from the shadows near me
If I could interpret dreams,

Her blondness captivated me.
I stayed silent...
She read my thoughts,
I awoke.
Then I awoke again.
She tasted me
While I was still,
And she lost again and again.

I cannot smile...
My mouth is narrow,
With sweet water.
I address the fruit seller with my eyes
To avoid removing the mask
and spreading disease.

Meaning suffocates...
as cities expand,
Like a stench in a cellar.

From the balcony,
No one can
Watch himself crossing the street a few minutes ago.

A man smoking questions told me
– While I am an unwanted guest –
Sound does not vanish,
Rather, it goes where it is intended to.

We lock the light up in the cabin,

to believe we exist,
We immortalise the illusion.

A long time ago, I was called
to work as a waiter in a dinosaur's dream.
And here I am
Pouring wine for monkeys,
And my head, a marvellous vessel
For nine crows.

Cover me up...

I'm losing my memory.

Sitting while silence engulfs us both.

Like sculptures on display in a museum dimly lit.

My inner traveller has arrived at his final destination,

Or perhaps we both have.

I clung to your hand,

Like a lost bird,

I forgot to let go

For the whole performance,

To hold the other,

So we journey together...

Like intertwined sunbeams

Making their way to the warmth.

Thus did I become the one

Who paints words on a pond of light

But never sends it.

I am prone to forgetting

That rooms have doors

For entering and for leaving,

that stories end,
that cities have airports and harbours
And that none of us could grasp the true meaning of time and its mission.

Late came we...
As befits dreamers.
Bearing enough disappointment,
Feeding a monster
That is never sated.

Frost seeps into the joints no longer
My concern alone.

So where are you going?
Leave me your voice,
Cairo's poem,
Another blanket.

Is the watch still with you?
I'm still here...
A captive to fate
And fate's plan

I stand, barely...
In an endless war with winter,

smoke, and malformed verses.

Time and again,

I swallow the hours' incessant ticking,

The singer Najat questions why.

I sip off the lip

of that one painted cup.

Where do you go next?

And whose side are you on,

mine, or winter's?

Pure Woman

Picking bunches,

leisurely,

Arranging them for a winter

that hasn't come yet...

Will it?

All that life has exchanged for her

Leaves stained with wine.

Yearning for the 'Seine',

and defeats.

Silence is her ink.

And hermetically sealed copper her favorite commas.

Necks turn,

but she's reckless,

Wandering,

Floating a little in the air...

Lining up beads in praise
of that which fades away.

She sent me a poem
drenched in darkness...

I hide it

My clock melts,

I close my eyes.

Dali smiles
in his absolute vanishment,
Where she longs to be.

Gradually,
I sip off bitterness,
That bit my leg,
For two days or more...
Without letting go.

Smallpox

A fan
With its eternal buzzing
Arrives without an appointment,
Scrapes up the mornings
Without brittle nails.

A polygon bird
Scratches our tender skies,
Who has decided to spread candy
Of baked steel
over the borders of France?

A gap opens in the field
Followed by another...
In a school
that forever wished for a gym.

The pools were very spacious...
But not suitable for swimming.

Some men got intoxicated..

And one woman or more...
In result, the maps
were infected with smallpox.

I'm drinking coffee
at the Museum of Humankind...
The waitress brings a twisting palm,
Rubber spotted..
with meanings.
And in my book,
shadows developed a beating heart.

Perhaps the waitress with the astonishingly broad grin
Didn't read– In Asia's countryside–
About the second war,
Maybe she doesn't
hate Nazism
As befits those who
dwell in vertical cities.

Time stains the library's shelves.
And in our neighbourhood
There is no longer anyone who cares;
How did all the legends break out
of a single mouth.

Windows

The stretched canvas,
Leaning on the first letter of the plague,
Fate stares at me...
What happens
When we think nothing is happening?

This is a boat,
Drawn in pencil,
The lines a little crooked,
It fits us both.

That is a tree,
With a swing,
Her braids are not yet loosened.
Wherever we turn, there is a shadow.

And another tree...
Windows beside it,
Opening their familiar arms.

Two pigeons...

A hunting dog.

And white curtain dancing in the breeze.

If I were you...

I would empty the box of colours,

And finish what fate began.

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