

Matthias Görizt*Metamorphoses*

It is the age of noon
when all the hours are sleeping
and you remain awake, for this
is where the poem begins

Heat lies upon a dog wearing a muzzle
a great stone whose weight he holds in balance
in front of the butcher's shop
where his owner's stepped inside

Really, such heat!
enough to open the book of Lake Starnberg
and read "April is the cruelest..."

The flies hang suspended
behind the glass of the display cases
You can see their bellies
the tiny hearts pulsing

So hot!
Sounds drip
from our foreheads
like beads of sweat

Through the glass the meat
glistens

Around you
things in
a trance

It is...

you begin
find for the sentence
no answer

For Wlodja in Moscow

I go to the window
and become a beautiful evening

What does one do in heaven?
He who dies is no longer in the world

In heaven they eat ice cream
And if there is color?

Is color only a space one dreams of
I'm in the belly of Mama

God makes pizza there
When I come out there's noise

Mama screams
I screams

As for hell I'd rather not think of it
I'm fairly convinced it exists

In contrast to the many things
Nothingness is white in color

My mothers come from the monkey
I can't look at another banana

All this makes noise
And purgatory, I believe, is like dry-cleaning

Everything in the world dies
And if we live on, for example in heaven

it rains

translated from the German by S. Bernofsky

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Wisteria Arch Pangs

Where life appears weak at its outermost edges
Where hard water collects mornings
In the teakettle pot
Mother

With that I vanished
Fire in smooth sunlight
Torn apart by a cloud

translated from the German by S. Bernofsky

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SNOW

Where trees of ice blossom
the words for winter clack against the pavement
First a crane world comes, then the world of pigeons
You can hear their grayness scratching at the door

I fell asleep in Papa's lap
We'd been counting license plates
40 cars from Germany
10 from Bielefeld

Snow
unburdens itself in the darkness
The snowflakes told me their names
I watch through the windshield as they strike the glass

Just now it was five
and now it's ten
Fearlessly the captain steers his ship
between the hours

At twelve we'll be in Zurich
So much time left for sleeping
With a great rumbling din we make our way
among the stars

trans. S. Bernofsky

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Map

The names mean nothing to me
State Street, Clark Street, Belmont
Illusion is no point of reference

Here it's off to the left
Here it's off to the right
from the West to the East

And here is the lake--

But sweat goes unrecorded
the light that descends with its incisors
to the sidewalks at night

making a faint, empty sound
Here, you think, one can only give in
I stand at the window, sweating out who I am

Save yourself if you will

**

The River Beneath the River

The traffic inside my head
and the street traffic
converge

I leapt into the green hallway
to the door
turned my room on its head

Hello there? June?
I concealed myself
took a trip beneath my tongue

I thought: July? We age
and we change
(our locations)

Chicago, O'Hare
the city the river the lake and the

I thought perhaps
a lifetime is long enough
to buy pizza and more

to sit in the back of a taxi
gridlocked in a chessboard of streets
in traffic

I thought: I sit in this city
gridlocked in my body
like a wheelchair

Motion brings immobility

With the stream of newspapers
mornings in the bus of my desires
and evenings with the day's acquaintances

Am I flitting?
Indeed, but as if
there weren't even this day

the taste of this city
the shadows within it--
buildings tumbling down

Perhaps I'm not traveling or just...
onward, that's right, here's the river again...
and here it's very much... but more... beneath my tongue

In the daytime

the skyscrapers will become
row after row

of building blocks
mirrors filled with light

block after block
as though here

right beside me
the sky took a seat

At night
I love water

exude sweat
aswim in the lake

I know a sound
(rain)

which means buildings submerged in water
Everything along the sand

just shadows
on my hand

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Night

Where the night has broken an arm
on the streetlight at the end of the block
I proclaim silence

to be sound

the street--fine-tasting
with a cloud of discharged kerosene (landing zone)--
ends in an alley

the alley extends
to the streetlight
the light

ends
in nothing
What's that?
I bring water to a place

The water has no taste
First it's called airplane
then it's called sweat

my whole body sweats
water welding my skin

together
we are strong

She waits for me

the alley
extends to the streetlight

and ends in

All things are captured

Landscape in a photograph
Moods in writing
Major occurrences on television

Who still remembers the night of July 29th?
The red hair of the pool table owner
reflected on the screen above the bar

To speak? How strange
Those three at the bar are a cocktail society
Slowly a ball rolls across yesterday

Was a door left ajar
or just the sound dimmed to nothing
Heat like a message

From whom to whom?
We rode from block to block
and up the tall building

Below, cars commit
slow-motion suicide
vanish

speed up
vanish
And somewhere one hears

the sound of flushing
cicada music
the windowpane pierced

from below by a shot
The landscape lies as if in music
On the table sit giant
cicadas
observing us
What strangers we must be

**

Cruiser

I wish to set sail
To set sail I wish

my own frigate
my cruiser

Set sail
into a summer filled with sweat

in the Land of the Lincoln
I know I am here

here where State
crosses Grant

right where Grant crosses Wabash
right where Wabash crosses Illinois

and again to the right
where Illinois crosses State

Perfect crossing
Eternal rotary

If only they could carve out this block for me
Empty parking lot low buildings

the firebreak a dark canal
my cruiser-me wants to sail

to set sail at once
to the right to the right

Blade Runner City

Blade Runner City in the early morning
Fog hangs over the Bank of America

Just now, in the dark
the trashmen passed by with their black bags

The city below
once more as clear as a childhood room

**

Day after the day

By day
By night

No one vantage point satisfies
(Writing) a passage backward

over time

Just now
after the buildings' karate chops

I set off to watch people's lives
the sunrise

the Caribou Coffee with milk
the penetrations of sleep

errant (thus human) behind my forehead
my self

From the doorway goes
the man with the apple turnover

Noises like driftwood
Passed away reading the paper this morning..

I stand up
set off to watch

the city awaken

**

Daily I take place in newspapers

Daily I take place in newspapers
Elementary, my used car buyer
a circular informs me this morning
here we perform used car inspections
that may even surpass Sherlock Holmes' detections

I resolve
to draw comparisons
Hamburg, Moscow, Paris--
the way of memory
then away with memory

Running
as attempted meditation
in motion
letting oneself run dry
letting oneself

letting things be as they are
opposition, juxtaposition
letting oneself take time
city and time in

Chicago
Chicago

On the corner of Sheffield/West Belmont
the scene is set by the gay disco Berlin
One describes dissolves, sees
streets extending endlessly to gaze back through
How many streets did you do in your life?

sees in piercing salons and jellybean shops
in newspapers the tongues of time
the city's newsprint animation
what happened yesterday

Ullrich Victory Tour close to home
his chick called Gabi
tomorrow's weather

just opposite me
a dog runs down the street
the street, a dog from
Chicago

I too partake
in the splits
between faces and billboards
I take place as a headline

I walk up and down streets
with their crosswalks and stars
I suggest linkages
the asphalt and its tires
the long pedestrian crossings
concrete and the street's sound

Until then all that's left
is the simple vice of locomotion
Chicago
letting oneself go be seen
a strangely solitary zebra at the zoo

I lay down lines for myself in the city
Lincoln Park, Sears Tower, Loops
the two towers with horns on top
the people the
Loops

You go doglike
on the trail
of an experience

Markings here markings there
making the city
and sometimes
making space
taking place

**

As for the wind, as for the rain

As for the wind, as for the rain--I raise my hat
Some weather they have here

Clambering atop a twig beside the nightingale's dreams
I look around: flophouses. Cheap bunks for a dollar

Men in shirtsleeves
Busted concrete

As though the air were sufficiently filled with bad tidings
buildings the shade of cognac gleam

Finally
there is brick nearby

towards which I flow
diluted

with sweat
and the warm, moist weather

I smell my own skin
it is like music

**

Evening

No sun in the evening
The book closes
Evening pains me

People circumscribed by their problems

The streets--dark gray backs in the light
The traffic--sparse
The stars--scarce

evenings
night falls

Not a car
Not a car
No more wind at your back

Above Lake Michigan
Color like tar
beside it: the city

With this lady I mask myself
or rather:
with the solitude of a single letter.

**

In the water

I lie in the water
I know that if time

went in the same direction we do
up Lakeshore Drive in the first evening light

A rose-colored river floats above the exhaust fumes
of eighteen-wheelers, taxis, traffic

then the distances spin around
spinning you

at the tip of the Hancock Building high up
it's as if the buildings have lost their footing

and will live on forever between the clouds
