

ADAM WIEDEMANN

POEMS

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how come I find myself
on this lonely road
for the fourth time
hoping for a comrade

maybe comrades there
are none to go with me
and they would scorn
my simple short-cut

maybe in His own good time
the kindly wanton God
will tear apart whatever
company I am for myself

at this lonely crossroads
maybe for a joke
he'll set four plains a-flying
in the sky above

to suck a man in
to make him quiver thinking
journey's end catastrophe

Książenice, 16 September 1989

translated by Ciaran Carson

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don't laugh at me. where the world ends
New Life begins. nobody trusts
death any more. there is no need
to trust anybody now. what we speak
is already old. New Life
is also getting older. each time
it ends better

Kraków, May 1991

translated by Paweł Meroz

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There is a paper on the bench No doubt it's wet
It's wet Sports again It's dark With much strain
I go word by word through the verses Verses Words
Somebody's words that no one will wish to read any more
Mein Herz ist müde sings the mortally ill Dead
My heart is tired It consents to solutions
improper for a heart Somebody's heart Soon it will be
wet as well Awful And me leaning over it
lost in reading Although it's a broad day
and the pedestrians glance at me with laughter

Kraków, 7 January 1992

translated by Paweł Meroz

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Rafał was right: phones in Podgórze are good for nothing
and the world has shrunk again: now it's a handful of raisins
out of which I pick up the best ones. But is it really sure
that anything more will happen? Is it possible at all?
There can't be more than there just is. This moment,
which seems to me but an presage of
Something, for someone else must stand for All.
And perhaps, no phone will get cheated any more,
ever, though one wouldn't believe.

Kraków, 23 March 1992

translated by Paweł Meroz

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Apple

It's got cold Time to take a warm jacket from the wardrobe
To wrap desire trembling for autonomy
with warm love To fill with warm fat sauce
the empty church of the body With warm Brahms the ears

Sharp rime at every turn But with body in down
with love in heart and even with need for
God by way of an exception transformed in God
you can go now and catch the town cold-handed

Now sitting in the dark surrounded by people
by the clatter of poems by walls suddenly I see
an apple left (in the wardrobe) in the pocket of my autumn coat
: what should I do to remember That it won't rot there

Kraków, 19 January 1994

translated by Paweł Merecz

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Tongue

Yep, I love to keep my feet on the type-writer.
Doesn't matter how I do it, I don't feel like explaining it to you now;
soft touch of all those tiny keys soothes
my mind suspended at the other end of my frame — like the clatter

of the spinning-wheel restoring order to the brain
of — fictitious as she was — Gretchen. Well yes, I can be only
Faust, yet maybe later. So you write your poems
with your feet? Yep, I write them with my feet, I write them with my

arse. My arse is a great artist, as used to say
the leaders of those parties. My spleen is like jelly
in my belly. I've been so alone since the crack of dawn. For so long
I haven't written anything in this tongue. Nothing in nobody's mouth.

Kraków, 28 April 1994

translated by Paweł Meroz & Adam Wiedemann

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Poem Of Intervention

it's war again war poems are again and even
I dream of war so I almost know how it's like
I lost my scissors this goddamned milosz
was uncorking wine yesterday it's always the same
lapse of attention and I cannot find'em
in any of those five or six places they should be
I light a cigarette I do so many cancerigenic things
boys sing *dona nobis pacem* in a while
I'll be biting my nails furiously I think

Kraków, 26 November 1994

translated by Paweł Meroz

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Good Manners

We are all too kind If we were
less less we would hurt one another
Less and less all the time Why it's so little of you?
I owe something to you It's
my oversight

I make fun of myself (too many
guests at the party)
I can wake up no more It's already the past
Translucent Look at it Can you see me?
I'm sitting under the table listening Under the couch
an ink paddle Look: I am all blue

Nobody to apologise to Nothing to remember
Nobody to look at One gets trembles
We do live No secret
Somebody was kind enough

Kraków, 21 April 1995

translated by Paweł Meroz

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PECCANCY despite strawberries,
despite thistles. Ponds all in
duckweed, a flitting flock of
tiny yellow butterflies. No more
words. Life is so beautiful.

Think of it, please. Please,
do write that he has passed (it is not
quite true) into the better and shed light,
Lord, despite the rain (in miniature
it looks like that), despite gas lighters.

Kraków, 17 September 1996

translated by Paweł Meroz

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Break In Traffic

Today I saw a car run into
a woman 'cause of a stupid dog
run away with him indeed

like shot she flew a few meters wham
rump on the ground she was fatty dog
at once seized by the daughter crying mommy

So misfortunes come on men out of sheer stupidity
which is not a sin after all besides perhaps
the dog was old and deaf and she had truly
loved him since long more of all in the world

Petty common sense thinking with laughter
of what is most important at this moment now
nothing hurts me but in a while no later
I will learn that just now or already now

It's right obvious he is not here so I run
I lose him from my sight I run I scream I still can
make him be he's coming back my scream's coming back

I run somewhere in my mind perhaps he's running right at me
tears my dress off is it wind? *It is autumn*
Here comes the rain I count stars on a wet asphalt

Kraków, 9 September 1996

translated by Paweł Meroz

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and suddenly a single moment takes away a good
part of your life and you sit there in it like in a bus
that's come to a stop halfway through a gloomy forest
because the driver (probably) had to take a leak in any case
he turned off the motor and walked out without asking anyone
and besides you're the only passenger your objections
would hardly sound convincing (at least that's what you

tell yourself though to be honest you just don't have the energy
to make a scene) so he walked out vanished in the underbrush
and still hasn't returned gradually dusk descends and
any chance of making it on schedule is out of the question
you'll have to spend a night in the station your anger
turns to listlessness you're drowsy you feel
cold you feel completely indifferent and suddenly

through the rear door someone gets on sits down way
in the back it's dark you can't make out his face
so dark you hope he didn't notice you
over the sough of wind in the branches you hear the muffled
clatter of percussion from a less-than-superior walkman
you sit curled up in a ball you're practically not even there
though at a certain moment he gets up starts moving toward you

Kraków 9/13/97

translated by Bill Martin

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Spring's Feces

So long as you feel you deserve to be loved, then.
What are you scared of? At a certain
point it just doesn't matter. Just think
how much it threatens those cats in the yard,
otherwise busy finding mice to kill.

So if you're out of love, then maybe you're tired
or hungry even? Or you'd rather go drink
with your friends under shuddering skies? Just think
of the problems you-know-who has, passed out in the chair,
and how many she'll have once you all wake her.

What you love most is always the first to go,
the gooseberries will grow mold and cats
will piss under the loveliest of rhododendrons.
But just think if that mold isn't worth more
than the furry bouquet of your most heartfelt wishes.

Grabón, 7.6.98

Translated by Bill Martin

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Bandaïd (2)

It's all over now and Maciek says to me
over dinner that it's only because
I maintain the diet that I maintain
that I'm still holding up somehow. And what

use is it to him, not
of use to anyone? And right then
the thought of the demon that appeared to me
in Tomek in conversation with Piotr after having drunk

an excessive amount of vodka, and afterwards
(or beforehand, but rather afterwards) Marcin's story
about Rafał, who also had the impression,
that he saw a demon (in Marcin) and in connection

with which (or without any connection) he was killed, by some guys,
who threw him unconscious under a train, and Marcin
saw the whole thing, in a dream, to which Bohdan
standing nearby said that for him

most important is the way dreams
transform themselves into reality. Henryk says
the same, I say, though with them after all it's never quite
clear, who said what to whom first.

Grabów, 30 September 1998

translated by Jamie Harmon Ferguson

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Black Man On A Business Trip

I ride the train with a black man; black man smokes
Marlboro; the carriage is for smokers; two policeman

enter the carriage, actually a policeman
and an employee; the policeman looks like Krystian

Lupa, which I can tell, because I have with me a paper
with a photo of Krystian Lupa; the employee looks

like an employee, which I can tell, as he's staring
at me & a cigarette, which I smoke, while the policeman

interrogates routinely the black man, so now
I know all about the black man, his family,

his social and business relations; considering
the logic of the situation, I suspect, there are

all lies; after the policemen leave, the black man pulls out
a mobile & talks for a long time in his black man's language,

he lights a Marlboro, and laughs to himself,
then puts on his jacket and gets off the train; the train

starts up, the policemen come back; no black man,
so I'm next; *Ausweis bitte*, says the

employee; *I have no ausweis with me*, I say, *but I have*
a book about me, with a photo, written by

Kinga Dunin, well-known Polish writer, the employee
laughs at me; serves me right.

Bebra, 10 October 2000

translated by Ana Jelnicar, Primož Čučnik & Michael Farrell

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Calypso

The colour of the sea is green.
On the white sand a big blood stain.
An elderly lady is dying in a canteen, still hungry,
not ready. There is only a chip-card telephone.

Some people it is difficult to recognize, even
in the street. The beginning of April and imagine,
snow. *Contradictions, contradictions.* Ah,
better late than never, better never.

So, isn't it possible to live more? Even when
alone, we turn to the metaphors of the heart.
Imagine a situation in which
no other situation comes to mind.

Kraków, 5.4.02

Translated by Ana Jelnikar

Small Dose

With warm leavings, unknowingly,
without ostentation. The body will do.
The mind entertains strange
words like curare, Colorado, caoutchouc.

The Reds haven't been that attractive
since they buried the hatchet. All in good time.
You can prepare for the worst and you can
prepare not at all. Comes

to the same. We don't remember
our fiancées names, why should we need those names or voices?
The body will never do. And neither will whiteness
on which you can draw and laugh.

translated by Tadeusz Pióro

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*Æsthetics of the Word**For Christoph & Rosie*

This poem joins the one before. The sun has no face,
especially today. Before, it would go on leave
and we could leave work, look straight into darkness.

Work wasn't so bad. Nothing to do,
so we gave ourselves to the spoken
word. It's so simple: you open

your mouth and something leaves it, by no means the tongue
in its pure state. To think that so many lovely
creatures do without a word, as this gentleman

putting key chains on tables to pick them up again.
Embodiment of hopes for a pleasant afternoon
with a glass of spirits. Ah, words

take on meaning, and then... See, you look like a worn-out beast.
Paradoxically speaking, every one of us
resembles a termites' mound and our denizens

can mingle freely, but only within
a limited range. Limited by what?
Ask rather by whom, we feel we're somebody yet.

And we feel the one above us is somebody, too,
for how could we be ruled by a rude monkey
and speak to it: You swinish, hungover tomato?

More can be said thanks to this poem's form.
I don't know how it is that we'd like to be
aware of everything, but then say: Sorry,

I wasn't there, I was in the kitchen.
Some women spend half their lives in the kitchen
and no wonder they'd like to see it all

from that angle. It's for them all those
meaningless things were invented, regardless
of what used to pass for the wholesome embrace of sex.

From time to time someone tells us
to kiss their hands and we think: Is he pulling our leg?
All we can kiss is some pretty

ass, admiring the hairline between its cheeks,
provided it's pretty, of course. Some cheeks
are prettier than some symphonies. I read

about that somewhere, obviously the ass
must have been put into verse. My hilarity is on the rise
and, as J.Górnicki said, show me someone who really thinks

he's mortal. We can always count
on our lover's not having been born yet:
only the young fuck with their own generation.

Bit here I'm amusing you with anecdotes while
somewhere in the Third World a serious scientific
conference is afoot with major founding. Just

imagine: the cream of the Cracow professoriate
in a debate with the cream of Warsaw professoriate. They should
Show such things at the movies for crowd's amusement.

Too bad the crowd doesn't know what's good. Yesterday, for instance,
I drank Kasztelan beer and it seemed quite passable,
but then I puked like a cat. Maggy told me of a cat

that bit her girlfriend's finger and died. You, brother,
got the mill, but I got the cat. The fact
that some of us will not survive childhood is much more

serious than the fact that others will go to prison
for their convictions. You can have convictions
of one kind or another, some of them we call criminal and it's those

that most often germinate in prisons, therefore
prisons should be closed down and inmates
made to hang or take electric shocks. Death

is far more interesting than penal servitude, just as
writing a poem surpasses writing applications. Oh, feline attitude, oh Mother
of God, may all this round off nicely since

we still think so well of each other.

Kraków, 23 May 2002

translated by Tadeusz Pióro
