

so many lethal traps on the way
the angels refuse to accompany us
the lights blink ostentatiously
the harangues lead us far from the encampment

This is the moment

to enter surreptitiously I go in
my purpose my utterance to open the door
to say under the dictation of a continuous effusion
to align a text without history
for a moment to enjoy the stopping
to reveal the splendor and brilliance of the vestiges
without giving in to the letter's subterfuges

Paris november rue Saint-Antoine Constantine
cité du 20 août Paris again
examine each of these addresses

a small light rift whips the clouds

Itinerary

of precise annotations the return therein
envisaged I know
the tracings the dwellings and the hunger
the hesitation to take to the road is real

renown by auction
victims interrogate who kills and reason

pomp makes sense only if sustained
a hollow word illusions
charisma is not a copyright trademark
danger metamorphoses the limbs
there is nothing to brag about today

the days have become flat right after the exchange
the rivers advance in error in the moonlight
I hesitated a long time before coming
what is man without the praise that precedes him

you he; me for a long time tightly in your arms
without a word

the eyes closed I believed

passion an outburst of eloquence ah
how to get rid of that one there image
to put fire to the house what an adventure
country or metaphor causes prejudice
the brothels have five stars

the city rejects you as you step off the bus
it fears the look devoured by exile
the limitless pretension of the accomplished witness
he knows how bitter all food is
the quick incendiary glance at the sidewalk cafés

elsewhere

there are bars where the name imposes itself
the throat forges a name
customers attentive to the mordant killer wit
beauties day envies their black stockings

neither the bus nor the town-hall square have doubts
the lover's glory when the glasses clink
nor the play of mirrors where friendship melts

trajectory fixed
meeting inevitable

there is no sales point nor waiting room
where you didn't exercise your gifts in pure loss
fascinated by the tenebrous beauty of forgetting
that grabs the sonorous cohorts in the city
a short-circuit

Lemurs
night escapades
to watch your secretive ways of appearing

smiles and congratulations
facade

the complaints of those who are not dead reach you
you know burning hate a secret remedy

...

the long sliding night introduces to the telling
of adventures the magnanimous outlaw hero
the poem carries along since the art of weaving
the assembly settles there as if around a fire
each one dreams of his kin left with no worries
the rhythms are favorable for enjoyable meetings
but sometimes the poet strains to blur
the narration's weft through an excess of figures

the bird that takes its flight at midnight is blind

Interpreter,
the lexicon at work
far in the abyss the wandering gait
no care taken
with the staging neither obscure rhetoric
nor this imperious vanity of surging forth

sun

the instant contains its light — cursive resonance
it dazzles the cantankerous audience you
undecided your gear
slung across your back chains
the house is narrow
you declaim what you know onto a canvas
a sorting out occurs invisible
scattered traces
to describe the table the luminous circle
it is possible to forget oneself in the description of objects while
carefully watching
the precision of the study time
that one's not sparing with embellishments
you enhance the declamation at the risk of perturbing the reception
to catch depends on to the baited trap
the chant doesn't harmonize with the voice
something you no longer doubt

urns preserved the spirits of the ancestors
 dogs for the circumstance
 the occurrence demands vagueness to the detriment of
 urgency the celebration in fireworks
 one by one

all

tutelary deities

praise consecrates them at the vault's summit
 once the tower has been abolished

obsession

from quarrel to break

the argument contracts then loses itself

in the blackness of the invoked night

system of control

ineffectual despite the forces deployed

the warning shots

the blade

I was walking

up Boulevard Mohamed V. Kalachnikovs firing. The city safe

no longer for night wanderings.

The moon exposes the flaneur to danger.

life hangs on a thread

but the needle and the hand and the freezing lover

at the gate of the labyrinth

fear of the worst hastens the cadence

a breath missing to calm the grief

from the announcements to the road crossings

the blue-gray mysteries of the traveling show

Letters

bricolage of symbols gathered in neighboring

countries

the golden thread imprints on the memory

the one I question answers to no

demand

rigid it invents for itself

a republic in which reading commands

summary hierarchy
 in the scenery
 a hidden laser
modern he said
 to tread territories made to measure
 where the places knot into a tight rope
 to live truly
 to be god
 to claim it loudly
 reckless pride

you the Impeder-of-wind with bronze sandals
 you the Obscure who loves to disguise yourself
 and I all alone tracking you
 lives a concise inventory the detail
 adorns the gathering
 the fragments are classified
 to observe a usage
 just as white milk curdles

was it in Heidelberg on a road in Sicily
 in Evry or in Mostaganem by the seaside
 ill-used infinite
 few words carry when the tension increases
 alternation of the forms does not resolve much
 nor do the *rivets of love* assemble
 I remain an orphan

neither wine of Anderin flowing freely nor bravado
 at the moment when the clan wobbles
 neither catalyzing places a sequence of cast names
 nor beauties offering themselves along the way
 nor the poetic lineage you claim
 nor this hard to decipher manuscript nor
 any allegiance excluded
 rupture

Always
 this array of set-backs
 you register
 stifled passion
 far the epic gesture
 the solemn declamations at the tribune

in her kernel a poem constructs

to perish

the elements fuse

by hate or by love

invention

that which retains the guest in the house

that which terrorizes the virgins of Tamim

that which persuades the number

the titration is deceptive

Igneous

the soul in its crystal

the way constellated waves deploy themselves

harnessing

ONE engenders destroys yet alternates

he keeps me captive

corruptible

the sweet water in the sea on which the fish feed is not

an irrefutable argument against the establishment of paradise on

earth other elements of a subtle nature enter into

the composition of the air man breathes which inserts the

human species into a specific animal category

man is like a weathervane at the heart of the whirlwind

the sky attracts him

Aristotle's disciples debated physics meteorology

natural science

then one did not consider armed struggle in the

cities in order to impose a thesis a phenomenon that

keeps spreading as does repression the system has seized up

to analyze sea water or to examine the conditions of the ground can

in no way unscramble the mechanism does that mean that in

this process it is necessary to sink with the logic of the ancients

the trace of the poem in fragments initiates formal audacities

a rhythm pursues you this is no longer the time to evade

meaning the words order themselves

the year ends white

wishes crackle on all sides

from the orient to the occident is it but a reflection

light effluvia when the moon scatters

hail-stones

what remains accessible in the face to face
*this country where the violet grape once loved
 to grow for a better people, and the golden fruit
 in the dark thicket, and noble wheat, and some day
 the stranger will ask, treading through the rubble
 of your temples, if that's where the city
 rose...*

this sovereign generosity
 this evil which hardens in the apple of the eye
 these plaints without notification
 a salute to the dead friends

Ochre

maturity, it ends with the day
 the questions left hanging

you observe the flight of a flock of starlings
 bad news is spreading
 from the palms of Bahrain to the villages of Iraq

a tenacious worry
 the long crossing from deserts to cities
 these buried peoples with strange languages

there are only scattered signs
 truth surprises you
 at a metro gate

this visible and invisible world is decomposing
 science assures the poet of his wording
 the risks hidden in the hands' palms
 let's leave tears and blood

our friends are everywhere
 the voyage completes itself
 by day as by night
 all things astounded

Parceled

out they glitter under the moon
 motionless

the white armed virgin flies over the offerings

Translated from the French by Pierre Joris