

MUSIC

You have to understand that if words are so few
it's because they are also too many.

If I say that for me your torso and chest with its thick hair
are a harp (curly strings I've broken with so much stroking),
that the fleshy part of your leg is like a saxophone
and I want to go on, I come to the grotesque idea
of the drummer and *the flute of the member*.

What poverty of language!

Because, in fact, what remains unuttered is a melody
that our bodies make, side by side:

Schubert, the shoulders, the back; Haydn if you touch
my feet, Bach if we look deep, sky and well, into each other's eyes.

But it's this, this terrible poverty of words

that we redeem as ours. For then we bring our bright ideas into play,
our puns: for Schubert, sherbet, for Bach

'turn your back,' for Wolfgang Amadeus, wolf-bites/love-bites,
for Haydn, 'you hide.' 'I'll seek.'

If words weren't so many, or in so many different languages,
how could we leave unsaid all that cannot be said,
or how would we ever hear the music our fingers make?

Soup

Noodles for soup were letters and stars.
And a few shreds of burnt onion like quarrels
floating in the middle of the spoon.
Sometimes our hands were tied behind our backs,
but you always had umbrellas and shut the doors against the storm.
If we lit one fire only to put out another it's you who are
the fireman, or it's me, and we climbed the steps
to rescue old dreams that had clambered up too high, from
the top of a prickly yucca.
But isn't it too late to tell you I *could* see up there?
That with my eyes blindfolded by pieces that don't fit
and some that deceive us, the phrase 'white seal'
emerges bit by bit, and warms us, as the prelude to a winter
that steamed like broth. The puzzles in those soups
are there to last a long time. With what's left over, tomorrow,
we'll fit in ideas that today are unknowns and lost.
Let me cover you up with the blanket of forgiveness while
you doze open-eyed, through October afternoons, on the terrace.

The Travelling Companion and other tales

There is a witch sitting on the slates
pulling the fur from a cat squashed
by a car. From your bed you can feel little bits
of its paw: the rocking of the lullaby that is taking care
all who will die today.
But now here comes dawn already and you fall asleep,
Because in this tale it's the hour
of the water maiden. She will leave you
the pearls of her grief, pearls of love that words
have killed. And in this you will be lucky, but alone.
Alone in your fear. Standing alone before the princess
and her task: where you have to guess what she
is thinking now. If you fail, you will be hanged
from the tree where the skulls of those who came
before you knock together like pomegranates.
Grab the night by its legs and away with it and the witch
into the cooking-pot! Plunge it thirty times! You will be rewarded
with the white swan, and the kindly farewell of the travelling companion.

Colours

This wavering is like Venetian glass.

A heart of a shade of green, as though your gut
were gripped by waves of pain.

It's an insolent colour, in autumn,
like a chunk of May, that has been removed,
stolen goods; for the heart is something
we don't want given back to us.

A green that has gone on growing
all round a white as hard as a milk-tooth,
hard as a child's crying caught on an answering machine.

White on green, like daisies
stiff with pride because they're sharing death
with red carnations. Glossy white.

The white stucco of brides dressed in silver-coated white hair,
silver reasons like those of the star that the screwdriver borrows
from Cassiopeia. White and red blood, like the happiness
of a Sigismundo and his mahogany wardrobe
in a place without windows. (Before thinking
about what 'window' meant.) For windows are
rosy-red, because they come from 'to smile'. Because if you're happy,
you can be contented sorting plastic bags.

Don't miss the next point: Can the bent guy make happiness
into a habit, as he did with sadness?

Or it will overcome the fear of going back to the same place
simply by always moving forward in a straight line.

What about fear, is it blue in colour?

Blue and yellowish like the middle of a bruise,
yellow as the pages of an old book, yellow as a bird's thirst.
Yellow as jaundice in a newborn child. Cirrhosis yellow, cystitis yellow,
bilirubin yellow. The yellow of blue eyes
keeping watch on the golden yellow of this fear of mine,
the only treasure I own, the only light in that dark room
where they shut me when I wouldn't finish my soup.

Such childish misery, and so pink!

So gum-pink, so lip-pink, so mark-of-fingers-pink
across the cheek or a slap that catches the chin.

If I need to, from blue and yellow I can always
go back to making that green with murky and clayey waters.

Green in the end, the apple green, emerald green,
of your call.

Orpheus

My keys, when they fall on the ground, make the noise
of a gong or the bell of some religious
ceremony with a God I do not know.
Because the ground was wet, I saw the gleam
of the safety-pin that had been dropped
on the pavement, and a bit before that the mattress
soaking up last night's rain. My hands
trembled when I wanted to open the door.
A God I don't know and who sports a cap and,
why not, a moustache, and punches the tickets
on the *vaporetto* that was making Venice recede.
Your pass and mine, joined by a hole
of synchronicity that afterwards was going to make us
vanish. You were not supposed to fall
until you were outside the underworld. No looking,
as simple as that. And now you are four or maybe
forty, and your eyes are full of sand. You squeeze
your pain, your eyelids are hate, and a voice
from nowhere rebukes you, demands that you open them; now,
they tell you to weep. "look," they repeat, "look":
Eurydice isn't there, she cannot be lost again.
Yes, these damaged, bloodshot eyes are still
yours. And the narrow pass that leads to Hades.

Big Bang

Maybe the stars too found they no longer wanted
to be together, and that is why they scattered.

Maybe when they grazed each other, they realized that
being able always to do this, every day, amounted in fact
to a separation. Like the poster on the bar:

“Today we don’t trust you, but tomorrow we will” (tomorrow another “today”).

Maybe it’s the stars’ fault when sometimes I phone home
and a voice says: “The number you have dialled has not
been recognized.” Or when I can’t open the door, the lock
we had mended only yesterday.

I feel my weakness, and its weight, like a refrigerator on my eyelids,
like metal rusted by the slime of a lettuce we failed to eat.

Was it an oversight? A day without appetite? Or a cruel thought
like the bread-knife slicing our dream into fairy food.

But you too were weeping, and your sadness was called
“amore gratia”. Let me wrap up these weaknesses, then,
one with another, like tiny lies

inside a sealskin,

like sunny winter days saved from the snow while
we lay the table.

I’ll come in a second, I’m just washing my hands.

On sliced-up dreams the cheese won’t melt
but neither has it gone hard.

Let’s eat it. Quickly. Now.

Bridges

What seemed extraordinary was maybe nothing more
than the oft repeated reply life throws us, our childish longing
to be the card turned-up in the conjuror's show,
touched by fate's magic wand.

Everyone's taken a photo of himself in the mirror and come out faceless.
If I look cross-eyed, I can see colours that come from images
superimposed: the bridge over the irrigation-channel and the bridge over the Vltava.
And the question of whether we can return without regret
to the same hotel floats on the corner
where we met, on the lack of time we turned
to middays without end.

Going back to being poor in love, like children fishing with their hands.
Water up to their knees, happiness gleaming for the dying fish,
saliva flowing.

You had to be precise, be patient, suffer great hunger. The swiftness
in stealing him from the river a part of life, the way I steal these lines
from the lights at red, from the refrigeration truck, from the well-ironed
traffic-policeman,
from the lane marked-out for road repairs, telling you that going back there
is just an idea of mine, nothing but that, like a stillborn child.

St George's Day

(after *Days of Wine and Roses*, by Blake Edwards)

Instead of a single red rose you've given me a whole bouquet.
The thank you to the whore that made it seem as though you were wanting
to be hostile and absent.

They were yellow roses, flecked with twilight
and omens: would such a huge desire leave
such a void?

And so they were tidied away on the landing on the stairs; presumed
islands for the presumed shipwrecked. But, some time later,
they appeared again in that hotel.

And another time they stayed in an empty room
awaiting the arrival of the *princess* who does the cleaning.
Afterwards they turned red and, now, they languish
at home in the dining-room. They darken like strips of veal
in the freezer and drop their petals silently.

We had to live passion because I could not live forever.
We wanted to finger the insides of things: the guts
of the rose, the lungs of the rose, the spleen of the rose.
Intoxicated by the drops of dew they produced when alive,
re-affirming ourselves in the scent of those corpses and reciting
some psalms we thought we had made up. Anonymous word-addicts.

Days
of roses and words from a crossword.
But it's not me or you up there at the window, who sees the other go out
through the doorway, watching that figure fading, in black and white, down
the grey alley.

It is hope that stays up there. As for us, we leave the house
together.

SCURVY

Without any baggage, smoother the voyage.
Freed from all grief, like going on leave.
I'll say yes, in a jam, to your cold resolution.

Bartomeu Fiol, "El Cuitat", *Cròniques bàrbares*.

Scurvy

(memoir of 1492)

Perhaps we seem strange to them because we have made a far more arduous choice. And it's because they gaped at us with such amazement that the hardships now appear more grievous to us, as something we might have avoided. We eat stale ship's biscuit, and meat from which we have to pick the maggots of moments of loathing in the port that now seem like treasure, maggots of the memory of those whose eyes stared their question, why, how could it be that we dreamed such a prodigy: that the sea did not fall from the horizon in a huge cataract. They were the ones astray and wandering: behind the eyes is where the sea falls, or in your guts like a river of rats, and in your mouth this is a smarting sharper than salt. To live the idea is hard; where the cutting edge means slices of lemon laid on the wound, on the bleeding gums, and at night you need to pray that you'll not die on the morrow, you or your brother. Pray that you'll not murder that man who cried, "Land ahoy!", and was raving. In spite of it, and because of the pain's knife, you feel how remote they are, those who thought you strange. Now there is no more future. A gull's mewing, and that dusky line you have glimpsed on the horizon. You hold your tongue.

Earache

If you explain your illnesses, the pigeons give advice :
“How to give up smoking,” by the world’s top boxer.
(And this mother-hamster who hides behind bookshelves
would never easily be found by her young, weaned by her running away.)
The leaks in the ceiling wet your letters;
the consequences of optimism sliding towards
the cold causes of hostile pessimism.
They take a while to read, if we have to guess at words
and uncover intentions leached away by doubt.
This sharp pain love makes, is it a remission that comes
before death? Or is it the crisis, the cold point, of love
that comes followed by healing (*Algid*, from *algere*, to be
cold). The inner ear blocked by words devouring
fairground music. And the disease? The weary postponement
of the expression of hate inspired in us by those
we love.
The glass in the photo-frame’s all smashed. Now you can cut off the head,
have a swig of so many degrees centigrade, we can get drunk on wine,
release the otters
from the zoo.
In the palm of my hand the blood-blister shaped like a ventricle
that was for us a symbol of rough hope, has gone away. I think
you will come. Soon.

Relativity

(homage to Maurice Cornelius Escher)

Picking up green bottle-ends and golden shells
on the beach may be an innocent act, full of beauty
for the walker who uses his eyes. But it can also be
a treacherous episode, if your wandering thoughts frame
an alien face, unknown to the bodies that are yours
and which concern you.

But that does not make less beautiful or strange your objets trouvés,
stored in the tubular glass belly of your hope.

Now, the figures you see when you rub your eyes
are green snow-crystals, a negative looked at through the microscope
of a hurricane's eye. Your life like a drawing
where you see two faces: an old woman and, afterwards, the woman when young;
a rabbit if you look at it with the left eye (and this is love
entirely); if with the right, a duckling's beak aimed
directly at the open heart of a patient in theatre.

Even so, although we stayed on the edge, we were afraid
of the lorries back-firing.

Today, a calm mind sees how past and future rush by
haughty and utterly opposed. Let us not cease to thank the man
who painted it: spring, the present, the dividing line.

God?

God

I've searched for you in all the places where you are not.

It seemed that part of you had escaped
into the library: maybe your head; your white .
beard gone into pages.

It seemed that if I learned to see in the darkness
of ravines, in the chasms of history, I might see
your eyes.

Searching for your voice I climbed up to the red throat
of volcanoes, afraid you might be in the fire and demand
sacrifices from me.

And I have swum deep in the sea, thinking the oceans
were your tears, when you used to weep with laughter.

One day, when I'd already stopped looking for you, some hands, anointed
with questions like mine, stroked the back of my neck.

And on these hands there were finger-nails.

And thus, in the littlest places of all, I have seen your naked smallness.

Because if you made me in your own image and likeness, you are

- a) a woman
- b) fragile as a poem
- c) the one they tell me to keep quiet about. That must be why

I hear you, God, in the silence.

Oversights and Trees

Today has been a day when I have had eyes, ears and hands. Why must they give us two?
Gilbert Keith Chesterton

It is the things that you forget, they clatter gently
like slats in a blind, and the wind of a hope,
speaking a language no longer underpinned by grammar,
makes them stutter like Chinese toys.
You are in some place and you had a mouth, ears, hands
and maybe eyes, but now you no longer remember.
Like him, you asked yourself why you needed
yet more days, and now, perhaps you are dead already. Perhaps
we have nothing but the memory and you see the ashes
of the bridges where you burned zinnias. You hear
the notes of a violin on which your son is saying goodbye to you
as he plays the first piece he learned.
Now perhaps you are dead already, and this breeze is kissing the forehead
of a stranger, like the breath from a few words
as they cool. I see how the hands that command you
leave off worrying whether you are dead or alive. They forget you
as the hours do, or the rain that does not wet you, and sleep
that lets you slip away out of the house. The day you really
do die, perhaps you will be re-born as a Japanese flowering cherry
for you are not a green tree.
Your sterile blood, when it dries up, is the colour of earth,
of days that go on without you: without the grievous and good
and the empty promises that once lifted you high above
the bamboo's branches. You are dying, going on giving
thanks, as plants do.

DUST

For in you now is the dust
of a snow you groped for blindly,
a light that lasted only an hour
and is now your crystal of blood everlasting.

Francesc Parcerisas, 'Wicker Basket',
Still Life with Children

Dust

Suddenly sadness is back, like
a dust that has never gone away,
and virginal, with no prints of words.
Yours was a new glance, that
saw nothing of the hideous souls
of things. But the dust came,
on the heels of a dinner for two
which you ate all alone, one of those suppers
where sleep cancels out hunger.
Now it's *Truth* that strolls through
nightmares as though dressed in a wig, and
searches for gaps, half-open like lips,
in order to penetrate the space of the nightmare you call
"home".

Your sword of mirth, forged from copper alloy,
you brandish futilely against a fog
that drifts right up to your children's bedside:
the slightest movement lifts tiny bits of things.
The infant's woolly that you imagine
pierced by the crochet-hook just above the heart.
You marvel at this triumph on the part of the enemy
you thought disinherited: "You will not be able to kill us,
because we are a dead people." And what if you opened
the doors, the windows? The autumn wind,
that pulls off dry leaves as though they were lost
and crushes them in a blind fury, will not
be long in coming. Perhaps it's better to be stupid than
sad.

Psychiatric

We are brains made of crystal, cut by the artist so that they sparkle like glass from Bohemia. Cut-glass decanters where light resonates like Bach played on the harpsichord. And now? Was it a pot of glue, a cow-pat, a shower of mud? The post-war dust is encrusted on each tiny facet of our inheritance. People dressed in white returning from lunch to whom there has fallen this task: to have a good clean-up with the help of some toothpicks and the cloth embroidered by a grandmother who had the same illness. Who says you are ill? Those who don't know that they are ill themselves? The green room is the emergency unit. "They get better, they go away. Unusual for them not to come back," says the cleaning woman. Can a five per cent solvent get rid of the greasy gravy of a *normal* life? Can it turn glass to cellophane, the wrapping on Christmas hampers, days when you were watched like pins passing through the œsophagus? A lobotomy of kisses you never received, or the ones you received in excess. What do I do? Do I take it home? Tell me how I should prepare this blood so that I get out of it a good broth, an Easter cactus or "some red carnations" to put in the jug: obscenity isn't to be found only in someone else's house. Now the ambulance is coming, the sick gawping at the window. No, mummy, not my overcoat. You've forgotten to bring my pyjamas. It's the heating as well, always turned up so high. The revolt of your body, sweating; the revolt of your brain, sweating from the sting of the unforeseen; the nettle that lashes your eyes. You stop breathing. In your child's dream, the roads smell like soufflés, and in yours the roads are always too narrow. But everything ends happily: you're in the great hall at court and a stammering princess with fair curls and blue eyes is finally the one who cuts you into a thousand pieces.

Homage to Ernest Lluch

Some people will never be right, because they already know they are wrong.

Because they think that being right in the head is not something you have, that it's not a solid substance and doesn't come all tangled up, but can be filtered because it's fluid, and colourless like a gas. That its molecules become progressively unstable under any kind of pressure, and that it rises with the ambient temperature. It escapes from cages, from pockets, and only rarely (and doubtfully) does it dissolve in another liquid, such as now the word, leaving a tiny patch of foam.

But those of us who will never be right, we know that rightness, or reason, can be lost. That it can be extracted, as though when making jam, through boiling. And it is then, yes, that reason is lost (the cries, the blows, the deaths, and also persistence and deafness) a solid thing that seems to have angles. And it's odd, and yet so easy to lose what we never had!

In the lost-property office we call to mind a few recognizable features: the colour of a bruise, the shape of a big oil spillage. It's called "what we do and don't want them to do to us, what we said and don't want to hear."

And perhaps it is a good thing to know we're not right in the head. For those who, according to history, had right on their side, killed my grandfather.

Sixty years have passed, and still the blood from his corpse, which was never found, comes away from my hair when I brush it, like a dry, blackened dust, repellent to the bodies of those who are busy tanning themselves on the beach.

Ernest, my friend, when you get to heaven (which must be a dictionary in which the noun, 'reason', the verb, 'to lose', and the adjective, 'sound' do not appear), look out for

a gentleman with a monocle called *Joan Baptista*.

I think you will get on famously: he spoke six languages and being as wise as he was and with so much time at his disposal, he is sure to have learned to speak Euskera, and to speak it like a true Basque.

The Hamster

Today a creature died that lived in darkness.
maybe his fellows, who shared the same cage,
abandoned him. He knew how to do acrobatics in spite of being the son
of his own sister. Perhaps he fell. Perhaps
some principle of genetics decreed that that night there would be no
stars. Greed took him by surprise, as it does the wolf, and he ate
his newspaper bedding. Or else he couldn't digest notoriety. The silences of fate
as to the pentagram of the species.

The creature that died today was someone else's toy and
could not sleep. And it could not squeeze through the tiny gap
between the bars of custom, of appropriate
behaviour. Medical prescriptions for your rheumy
eyes that are unable to see the deceits in someone else's sacrifice,
of those that are supposed to heal you, that are
essential in helping you survive. The health and
strength you now lack to escape and know
you live on paper for food, on the words of Foix
or Pavese. As for the children, your illness irritates them.
They would rather have to hunt for you under the chest-of-drawers
than watch your feeble snapping as you die.
And it's understandable. If we're not far away, no one else can come.
And to save one love you have to kill
another. And it has affected you, being forbidden to live to the very
utmost of your being, too important to rejoice over predators:
owls, wild-cats and foxes, alley-cats, snakes.
Is this the reason? Your dignity, mine?
Today I have killed a creature that could see in the dark

The Fir-tree

You are vulnerable. A fir-tree living on a balcony.
Your crown unkindly forces you to remember the hostile
anonymity of green expanses.
And the fleeting glory of fatuous Christmas-lights,
lofty wildernesses so feebly jollified, with desire
and an aftertaste of sin.
And who knows whether rain is falling because you want to weep,
because climate and love might well be part of the same
thing. Part of the same puzzle of clouds that struggle
and whirl from one white-coloured mountain to another, undoing
the work they have made. Part of the faded watercolour landscape
painted by the child we imagine we once were.
And if you are weeping now it's not because it's teeming down,
big fat drops of summer rain that wash away all colours,
but because of the dream you've lost: you dreamed that it was raining.
And because, in spite of yourself, you give thanks for life.

Overflow

The liquid is made of mud, as dense as blood, and carries along chairs, tables, trees and a moped.

Like one of those bulls with knobs on its horns, it rushes unpredictably down the main street of a town where you lived when times were normal: a wife and children, potato stew and the boredom of afternoons.

Who is responsible for this dark brew that backs up like left-overs, in the toilet-bowl?

Who is the clumsy cook who has chopped and fried and mashed in order to chuck the entire potful on to the hillside?

In the phrase, “the bridge you cross”, the tense of the verb is wrong on two counts: neither the bridge nor you is present.

“You are the most important one” is yet another example of the febleness of language: it should end with a full-stop.

On your birthday you took some toffees into school for your friends. It seems you were doling them out too slowly: they threw themselves upon you and tore your school pinafore.

Always the same mistake: ask for rain.

You want some soup?—Have it! Here, this sweetie-jar has nothing to do with my heart. Crawl about on the floor, cement your teeth together with that moment and its clamour.

Let me pick the memories from out of the hours and the rubble.

AERODYNAMICS

Recognise in me a son, a prodigal reclaimed,
and find again in my eyes
the old splendour that may be yours one day.

ANA ROSETTI, "The burnt-out angel",
A Book of Devotions

Aerodynamics

Today, a children's programme reminded me,
or taught me, rather, how it is that planes are able to fly.
Because of the shape of the wing, the air passing over it
moves faster and is, therefore, of lower pressure than
the air beneath it.

If I could make my arms have an upper surface and an underneath
and I could run a lot beside the sea and next to soft things,
I could fly to where you are.

But all the places on my body are round:
time is round, the sky is round, loneliness too; death
is round as an eye, as a cough. And even my name
ends the way it begins, arbutus-fruit from an autumn
that's already old, a berry that ripens and withers, shrinks,
grows rounder and rounder, gripping fear's branch.
Falling can also mean flying, and in losing myself I can find myself,
when I give up counting the days.

Insoles

These are already too small for you now. I slip
my fingers in and feel the soles
of your feet, the negative both of a time in which
we were always together and also of the days you
will live through when I disappear. A future
modelled for us by orthopaedics, the heaviness
that's made you walk as a stranger to my
footsteps. Tread my failures underfoot
as though they were steps of an ancient
wisdom, because they are the cabin-trunk you can
always sell to a passing carrier.
Tell him you've lost the key, that
they can pay you according to the weight; if they think
that it's too light, say that it's maps; if they think
it's heavy, precious stones. And afterwards
travel as far as you can, climb right up to the summits. Drop
a coin or two in the forgiveness box. Every bit you give
will carry you that much further.

Nocturne

There is a child crying. It's still pitch-dark, and he is sitting up in bed giving shrill orders. He orders me to wipe away the cobwebs of a bad dream from his face. He orders me to bring him a drink of water, to lie down beside him, to turn his pillow over, to second-guess his thoughts, to soothe him with my voice, not to talk about myself, not about the monsters he sees, or about yesterday or the effort of tomorrow or friends or enemies or animals that have died and which lie on our plate. Did you fry that story with the *paella*? Put breadcrumbs on the *tapas*? Eat up your meat, there are no nerves in it, or blood, it comes from an animal made of cotton and plush. Why are you so frightened? The toys in the bedroom don't come alive, the dark doesn't add any extra lies to the list of those that belong to the day. I never deceive you. I will never leave you. I will never judge you when you deceive me and leave me. Neither will I deprive you of the hate, the deafness, the lack of discipline, the overturned glass, the denial of what you have most desired, the dagger in the breast of the one you love. Why are you so frightened? Why is there a child crying? It's pitch-dark. You spit out four cobwebs you still had in your mouth. With the words you're warm, with the silence, cold.

Lithograph

You never admitted that you were wrong and I
that I no longer loved you even then. We're outside the cave
of the forty thieves and now we can't remember that magic
word. We try out words like "*licorella*".

No good. Nor "*llucareta*", the greenish grey bird
that the more timid gangs of kids try to chase in the school
playground. Where are the crossroads where you said we *didn't*
get lost? You have to pull out a tooth
with two stones. We have the revenge of the spider
you killed that afternoon and you wonder why
you can't make the plush squirrel smile.

We're outside the cave of the forty thieves or in the kingdom
that's cursed because of the stolen harp, or in the misty land
of the beast who was once an unkind prince, and
you don't know how to pronounce the "*ll*". Because of that,
you've come too late. Why didn't you stick with "*linotip*"?
Or else with "*litòfag*", a mollusc that eats stones?

A word that surely existed on my grandfather's lips and
which you now repeat to your seven year-old son, as though
this dictionary were a book of fairy tales.

And he, as well as being unenthusiastic, would like to be off playing.

Maybe molluscs too have conflicting desires.

The accent, I tell him, faces backwards.

Notes:-

<i>licorella</i> :	slate
<i>llucareta</i> :	siskin
<i>linotip</i> :	linotype
<i>litòfag</i> :	lithophage

SMALL THINGS

1. Noodles

A tiny bit of sparerib and a peeled prawn
chat unhurriedly about the day, which is trying to rain noodles.
And a squid has come apart through laughing so hard. And the fork
like the funfair at Tibidabo, up and down, everyone half falling off
with little shrieks that are ways of forgetting how the world avoids going down
the plug-hole. You're at the bottom of the plate, like an oily smear.
Now, my appetite spoiled, you go back to being like the air I breathe.

Tea-time

At tea-time it's nice to find a little bead of surprise:
the thoughtlessness of the day you called me "little squirrel" or
pocketed those stones. In the hot chocolate there are
flakes of hazelnut, like a fortuitous resistance,
always so easy to break up with the kisses and with words
as precise and pretty as teeth. I apply a softer, gentler pressure,
for the afternoon lasts for ever.

The Dark

The war was over, but we were poor children
who wore out the whole week with two sticks of liquorice.
The war was over, but we were lonely children
who spent the summer on a red-hot roof, which certainly
allowed us to stretch unenthusiastically up to look at the stars.
Now, what should I buy with the money they give me?
They say that if the blind are cured, as soon as they can see
they would rather go back to being as they were before. It's habit.
There is something friendly about the dark.

Carpe Diem

The children push snow into a bag, proud
of their plot to rob the gods.

“We’ll put it in the freezer. And it will still be there
when we’re dead.”

There are tricks, or stealth, or maybe just left-overs. Colours
hidden by white.

And in the same way we’d like to hide the shy away.

This slender girl who has brought her dog for a walk in the park
and who stares at you intently. What can you have said to her?

Women in scarves always seem pretty to me.

She would be a good choice. Better a wisp of lust even though
it’s cold and freezes my heart, than the nicely gauged weather
from the warmth of the excrement they leave, on the grass.

When I stay behind, can you see me in another’s glance, another’s face?

When I am the one touched by a seconds-long glance of a strange pair of eyes

I think there must be a desire there that you’ll be able to see.

Perhaps we could parcel up our passion and store it
in the fridge.

Or treasure the brief moment, already breaking up,
of this snowy morning, unusual for many winters, these days
when no one recalls the winter of ’62 (it’s likewise
the memory that we all share that melts away).

“What shall we do with this snow?” we’ll ask one day,
and the children, who’ll be grown-up, will frown.

Nothing lasts for ever, and I am filled with the sour and bitter knowledge
that they may all be right, a rightness poached from *us ourselves*.

But this error in forecasting the weather which has brought
me a late fall of snow has brought me a present. The end of the error,
the wandering hands that hug me,
the eyes and this smile that belongs to the error,
when the dog ran off in a scatter of dirty snow.

And the girl followed it.

Entomology and cinema

Waiting is soft at first, like a drop of resin,
the stifled desire of the insect you are; futile showiness
these fragile wings inside the dense liquid.

While I wait until it's time to see the children,
the day is a station entrance and summer has sat down
in the sixth row. On the screen it says that twenty years have already
passed, and you come out when the bottle of oil breaks for the second
time. You put your hand on the back of your neck to check
that the mask is in place, that's supposed to make the tiger not know where
your back is. And the tiger is the sequence where you scold
a girl for spilling the drop of water.

You can do it: change the stone of this waiting
into a coloured fish, or maybe a peach. With words
paint the grey with orange, remember that
honey-coloured wait, when the tiny child was flying
across the sand. Move and escape from the glory of
staying forever, like a fossil in amber.

Write, write, write.