

Textiles

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p 59-68

LETTERS FROM PRAGUE

I know I'm not like that, I just try to live that way. —
Here they are, the words that I can't write unless you write them first.
I hang a poet on every letter. I who would love to be the white serenity
of a cloud of birds on rippleless water. Not this hand
that comes to pluck the heart from the chest, not now that I've already given
what I want to give: my hard mouth, the name, her comma and salute,
good night good night good night.

-

I had spotted the snake: in the burning contours of the window I had
recognised it, cypress above water with a long green arm. I will hack it
to pieces with an axe under an utterly clear sky, the dawn
of a Saturday in March. Indefinable: two doors like wings, a pale chest
and a tremulous flapping under glass all day. Yesterday evening there was
no light, you said. 'Come back, and I will love you like a dog.' —

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I am writing to you. I have no news and this letter mirrors that—
a point of no return, the contours: a constant shifting
of kneeled words, bruised and battered. Yesterday was for the immortally
incurable: birds that thread themselves to branches, the cypresses, the sun
that strikes shadows like wires. A face that you remember
as if it were a misunderstanding. That is the memory.—

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— And so at night and every night I go and swim in the Vltava.
On nights when I don't swim I've drowned. Beyond me
there's a millifingered riverbed: shell-work, driftwood, writing.
A swan breaks from the bank like a bone.
Yes, I love madly – the right of any drowner. I swim
down the Vltava all night, so darkly am I dredged.

-

It's enough to broach one of the two thirsts. The cake
and the child that share the devouring, and I with my divisible dual nature,
dual and separable and one: in this I find the joy
that my spirit burns its hand on.
— A fragile scene in which your word crawls out of your mouth like a fly.
It's important to implicate myself,
mirror myself in this.

-

In the water I'm a poor swimmer. It leads me to believe
I am indispensable: after all, I don't know this life, I who get in a panic
over street names — in a city square I'm lost.
March is full and glorious,
like a pond. There's so much more I want to say: there is so much,
so much space under these heavens. Absence leaves me powerless.

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Nearby, the larches. Grasses, thornapples, cherry tree resin and wolfberries.
— I myself am a green snake in a young skin, but I don't listen
to the heart-tongue. Ever. I don't tell you everything. A letter as a reply
is a hand that doesn't meet a hand. Verses emerge,
like moist chicks. Unwanted soothsaying, laws of physics
and white burning ferns: explosion, gradualness, crisis.

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Write back, I have awoken. I have no more knowledge
of personal circumstances and the past, all I remember
are humanity and community,
and you on a bank or balcony, your face towards the glassy sky
that we hold ourselves to as well.
It took days – no years – before you let go, dog.
