

Nikola Madžirov

When Someone Goes Away Everything That's Been Done Comes Back

For Marjan K.

In the embrace on the corner you will recognize
someone's going away somewhere. It's always so.
I live between two truths
like a neon light trembling in
an empty hall. My heart collects
more and more people, since they're not here anymore.
It's always so. One fourth of our waking hours
is spent in blinking. We forget
things even before we lose them –
the calligraphy notebook, for instance.
Nothing's ever new. The bus
seat is always warm.
Last words are carried over
like oblique buckets to an ordinary summer fire.
The same will happen all over again tomorrow—
the face, before it vanishes from the photo,
will lose the wrinkles. When someone goes away
everything that's been done comes back.

Tr. by Magdalena Horvat

Clock Hands

Inherit your childhood from the photos.
Transfer the silence
that expands and withdraws like
a flock of birds in flight.
Keep in your palm
the roughly circular snowball
and the drops that trickle along the lifeline.
Say the prayer
with closed lips:
the words are seeds falling in a flowerpot.

Silence is learned in the womb.

Try to be born
as the big hand of a clock at midnight
and the seconds will overtake you at once.

Tr. by Zoran Ančevski

Shadows Pass Us By

We'll meet one day,
like a paper boat and
a watermelon that's been cooling in the river.
The anxiety of the world will
be with us. Our palms
will eclipse the sun and we'll
approach each other holding lanterns.

One day, the wind won't
change direction.
The birch will send away leaves
into our shoes on the doorstep.
The wolves will come after
our innocence.
The butterflies will leave
their dust on our cheeks.

An old woman will tell stories
about us in the waiting room every morning.
Even what I'm saying has
been said already: we're waiting for the wind
like two flags on a border.

One day every shadow
will pass us by.

Tr. by Magdalena Horvat

The Sky Opens

I inherited an unnumbered house
with several ruined nests
and cracks in the walls like the veins
of a lover aroused.

It is here that the wind sleeps
and the words of concentrated
absences. It's summer
and there's a scent of trampled thyme.
The monks finish telling their beads,
the sky opens to create a current of air
in our souls.

The trees are verdant, we are invisible,
and only thus can they be seen:
our unborn children and the night
which makes the angels
purer still.

Tr. by Peggy and Graham Reid

Things We Want To Touch

Nothing exists outside us:

the reservoirs dry up
just when we thirst
for silence, when nettles
become a healing herb, and the cities
return their dust to the nearest cemetery.

All those black-and-white flowers on the wallpaper
of the homes we've abandoned
blossom among impersonal histories
just when our words
become an unwritten heritage,
and the things we want to touch
some other person's presence.

We're like a shoe carried off in a scurry of stray dogs,
we hug each other
like close-twined cables through the hollow bricks
of houses no-one lives in yet.

And it's been like this for a long time now -
nothing exists outside us:

sometimes we call each other
sun, light, angel.

Tr. by Peggy and Graham Reid