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The Island

Coiled
above
 the clouds

Closer to the sky

Between
 death
 and journey
there is no difference

Sleepy sheep
behind that
 what's coming
or has been

On the inner side of
the island
 from its
 bottom
returns the night

I hear the waves
separated by the sea
 dragging
 the salty darkness

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

Winter on the Island

in winter

solid trackways overgrow the sea
storms sift down to the bones of fishes

in winter

stonecracks grip the hawsers of a boat laid open
an arc of bruised sky shivers down the mast

for the dead, rough ends and days grown short

in winter

snails swell on frozen stumps
a snake stiffens on the side of the old temple

in winter

the wall drinks in the sloping fig
hardest of all, to plumb the deeps of beggary

Translated by Kim Burton

Shadow

Pierced by blackberries the shadow squeezed itself into the rock-garden, crawling between jagged sinkholes, dragging its bruised vertebrae.

Stretched into a thin thread it glues itself to hollowed places. Cracked it hangs in drops. Farther away it gushes out of the underground stream, following us everywhere. Constantly tied to some suffering that resides in us – like a broken staff it leans on.

It takes us along its edges, or we do so. It crumbles from the sun, from burned-out rays: it condenses in the ash that marks it.

When the sky is overcast, it's extended over the whole day.

And everything is a shadow when there is no shadow.

Translated by Mario Suško

Ewe

Fallen silent against the wall it makes another – a lower wall.
Rain drizzles into its open eyes.
It rinses the landscape.

Translated by Mario Suško

Mother Going from One Room to the Other

In the cube of dimness she always carves the same path with her heavy gait that supports her. Between entering the darkness and going to the other room, she relies on an invisible signpost.

Days are her obstacle.

Nights, on the other hand, awaken the presence of mind that guises her movements impeccably. Or, is it a habit repeated mechanically: going away and coming back?

A hand chooses, a stick measures.

Does anything help her or it is the need to cover the same distance, radiating particles of energy unknown to others?

I listen to the floor squeaking, the door creaking, the journey continues. Several times, with the same perseverance.

Yet – where did she arrive, and with what glory?

Translated by Mario Suško

How Quickly She Forgets It All

As it passes her unheard, mother spins time onto a stick, tents it as she walks. She calls from here and there, tests, questions. And as she walks her stick's a feeler, with which she probes and peers.

How quickly she forgets it all, always repeating and repeating: how, when, where? The present flows through her like absence. All she recalls harks back to childhood and on to the parts to come. She speaks of it to us, the same anew.

When she climbs the stairs, behind her time spins an invisible carpet. At every step she asks: "You down there? Are you down there?"

No one. Nothing.

Translated by Kim Burton

Like Saints

Winter night. Frozen trees. And we, warmed up from our walk rest in front of the old door. From naked almond branches the milt of extinguished stars.

Surrounded by darkness we watch the ring of blackness. Candle's flame shines the light on some other, shadowy faces, which stand around in a circle.

They are the ones approaching the living light, no matter how little it is. Shadow touches the arm. Silently melts the wax.

In a winter night, in front of a rundown house, we sit like saints. On the table prosecco, almonds and wine.

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

I'm Moving the Things

I'm moving the things from one house slowly to the other. All that fits within oblivion nears, looms larger.

The fig, the drystone wall, the wind: these mark the journey. The cracked gate. From wherever I approach, the other side is hidden. I pass myself by with unseen folk. They whisper brightly in the summer's day, hungry to recognise one another. They stumble around the spider's web, swaying with the swarms of gnats.

They trade past for future.

I carry over the boxes, obscured photographs, a map, creased pictures behind cracked glass. Empty spaces in wait for me.

Pushing at the door awakes the secret within the lock, at the same time masks it. Memories return from long ago, parched in the stonefield, nothing reviving.

I brush the dust with a finger, slowly, not to disturb it. Shoes, silk dresses, raisins, strewn all about. And something intimate, watching me.

Translated by Kim Burton

Rain

The rain confines us to a water box. There's no way out.
We float from one end of the day to another, in an unclear search.
No matter where we head for, heavy curtain cancels the logic of
departure. Water is in us and around us. Wet pages filled with wind
and clouds.

The pen drags out moist words, arranges them on the surface.
It is an imagined oar which I sway on my way to the dry land.

Freed, like broken leaves we float from the wall to
the drywall. The sky radiates twice as much. Beneath and above
the clouds it poises the spume. Shortens the view of grottos and figs.

All what we see leans on some other age. Behind our
backs rain in waves. The forceful gale strains the impenetrable
net of the day. Fish scales mixed with algae on the deck.
Masts tied up against soaked fisher boats.

The mold all around us. Everything that was once firm
gets unglued. The rain washes the letters from the crosses, it breaks
withered flowers. It crumbles the chrysanthemums, makes its way
into graves. How many are brought close to us by the dampness sunk
into basements and grave mounds. Into old houses and empty rooms.

Between alive and dead rains. Narrowed distance of the known
and the unknown. At night, dim cloak settles around the island.
Mourning clothes in which the dust rots.

When it's not here, it is on the other end of the bay. It comes
back again, as if nothing can stop it. It pours down on bells, rosaries,
cemeteries. On extinguished lampions, vases, gravestones. Hollows
open for the chilling song.

Under the fig's leaves the birds unravel the entangled drops.
Between two rains – a seagull.

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

Evening Among the Rocks

Sunset sweeps away the tangible sides of the world. Sheep climb up the damp path. They catch up with the mugginess. Crammed up shadows on the cliffs.

The hill has split open under the evening's weight, it peels off and falls apart while the night wind ripples the sea. The same darkness permeates the verticals of the hill and the universe. It lines the bluffs with a cluster of stars. In the rock the cloud is captured, it rings when everything goes quiet.

Stranded island in the crests of weary waves, it scattered like a sail in the middle of the open sea. Shadows of saltbush descend in extended trails.

In the rock cracks the moon's spawn grows, the dark rose of the universe.

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

Dried Figs

Grains of light in a dried fig, and beebread for autumn's bitter mouth. An empty cup chimes to a close on the table. Beside it, mint and lemon. A bee snatched at a ray of sun, covered by a cold shadow like a butterfly.

The wall grows dark. The wine is bottled, taste of over-ripened grapes. The figs, plucked long ago, dry on the board. Late summer clings to the moistened fruits. Sweetness glistens.

In the box, between the stems, blackness. Now to add two or three bay leaves to separate the thick clumped fibres, press them in silence.

By Christmas, crystals on the skin. A dusting of sugar. Frost stalks the hands of the clock. It seems that hoarfrost has fallen from the lid, blanched the room, figs and our fingers.

Translated by Kim Burton

Phases of the Sun

The sun glued to the window is no more a white-hot ball that
defeats the eye. Shrunken to a point of cold that I wipe from the glass.
It stamps its drained reflection on the wall.

After, vanished, sun pollinates the dark. Glimmers from burnt-
out cracks. Glides with the dark, itself inters itself.

Translated by Kim Burton

Keeper of the Absent

The deserted house comes alive again, it opens and gives away everything it kept in solitude. The odour of mildew, the squeaking of a dilapidated floor. The cracks are familiar with everything that got sneaked in. Only from time to time the wall interior, ever crumblier, becomes visible.

The house, a keeper of the absent and their perpetual yearning. Although chipped at the edges, it collects the thought that has built it. The stars concur from air. Silent, they preserve its shape.

Translated by Mario Suško

Bundling up the Village

Bundling up the village
mother doesn't turn
to those remaining

Before her
 and behind her
 an empty space
filled with oblivion

The houses, cramped
one against another
won't let past
a blade of grass
a shadow

Branches hold to the roofs
 observe the barrens
featureless

Her palms apart
mother winds on the
ends of the scarf
 grasping
 hedges
 the tower

Far away now,
She is no one's

Translated by Kim Burton