

Milan Djordjevic

THE COAT

The coat is lying. On the floor.
Without a drop of blood in it.
The coat is lying. He's tired,
contracted, thrown away and black.
- Oh, you coat! You coat! You coat!
- Dear brother! Get up! Get up!
Just kneel next to your
Milan Djordjević!
Dear brother, showered
with the snow, with the rain,
with the insults, with the flatteries,
you, guard of my loneliness!
Get up! Get up!
I swear you to the empty pockets,
I'll fill them with my palms.
Their wings will fly off in you.
I swear you to the gaping sleeves,
I'll let those suffered little beasts,
my hands, to crawl in you!
And the coat started to breathe,
opened his eyes, trembled,
then moved one sleeve,
spread wings, flied, began to croak,
and covered me with his darkness.
And now I'm his inside.

Translated by the author

MUMMY

I am a mummy.
Like a bream
under ice
I am opening my mouth.
Without a scream
I am looking
at a blue canvas
where a red-hot ball
explodes and
disperses drops
of wild honey.

Translated by the author and Amy Sillman

THE CLOUD

I see reddish and dark,
I see Bellini's cloud
above the island Hvar.
The blade, the slanting sunray is
falling down through it.
The air is balm
as we look at the cloud.
The cloud is mother,
the cloud is lamb,
it's your dark sign,
a top of an oak tree.
One should be exact,
one should, you say,
and a beam of light will gush.
We'll be saved!
You're looking at the cloud,
you're looking, and in the silence,
under the cloud you are snowing
on the wine, bread and fishes,
on the family sagas,
on conversations of father and son.
And I wait, wait
between the olive trees,
underbrush, lizards and snakes,
between stones and scorpions,
I wait to see the way,
to move through the night.
Like a dog under stars.
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Translated by the author and Amy Sillman

PURE COLORS

He jumps over wooden stairs,
beginning to dance in the night of a fish-roe, fireflies,
beginning to dance in the night of snakes, sparks,
and throws a black cat on his bed,
into a spreading fresh snow.
My wife and I come to his home,
we rip the silk, squeeze sweet cherries,
then we run out to a sunlit square,
we dip our heads in the intoxicating yellow juice,
and we go to the sea, then sail on a white ship to Venice.
We breathe in Giardini di Castello,
we smell vestments of treetops,
we devour the greenery with our eyes.
The ultramarine, the dove-like white
is running in our blood, in the Palazzo Grassi
we absorb Klimt's old gold,
the clotted red of Shiele,
we smoke grass, tenderly we touch our bodies, a foam,
the sun drunks a blue, fresh line.
And then we run away to the darkest mountain, in the Alps,
we collect mushrooms, in the Sava River we caress round pebbles and
ice,
and we chew wild strawberries as never, never before,
interwoven, we lick the honey from each other,
we merge with everything we see,
with plants, animals, men,
we merge, because the world is a celebration of lights
and we are his pure colors.

Translated by the author

ORANGE

A bluish blade cuts into her bark
like the cry of a seagull in immobility of the air
over a deserted beach, where brown seaweed dries.

And my fingers bare this orange lamp to light
the darkness of my room with the smell of Crete,
like fresh water sprinkling over a dry plant.

Translated by the author

ANSWERS

You are trying to get the answers to your questions because you don't know
who you are, where you are coming from and where you are going?
You are
trying to get exact answers in dreams of the Old Testament, in the unclear memories.

But, maybe the answers are in swallows of red wine
whose dry taste is taking you to a bunch of grapes or to red earth
of a Mediterranean island or the green banks of the Danube.

Maybe the answers are in intoxication of inhaled smoke
of Afghanistan hashish or in whitish houses on Tunisia's
seashore, maybe in wet insides of some mussel?

Or in the groaning of a woman, in all fevers and pleasures?
But those are not answers, those are not any answers.
The answers are in things that you will do, blind man!

They are maybe in the cutting of a tree in a Belgrade garden,
in the squeezing of cherries that color fingers a dark red?
Or they are in you, because you'll kill a friend in the next war.

And maybe one night, after a long storm, you'll discover
in some lonely house next to the furious Atlantic that this world is
a story narrated by someone very, very forgetful.

Someone who never repeats the story, someone who never,
never will come, though people are inviting him, though they are
waiting for him, as the burned Gobi is waiting for hot rain to fall.

Translated by the author and Amy Sillman