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Voice over Silence, from Passi Passaggi

(translated by A. Molino)

I

This reading is meant for the dark
I repeat every word to myself, use my finger
to keep my place, repeat what I've heard
mimic what I've understood, because
love means: transforming
one's distaste for a loved one
transforming a filthy mouth into a budding bush
a furrowed womb into an open field
sealed pudenda into the lips of a fish
until darkness and the black ceiling
come crashing down on words

II

This reading can take place in broad daylight
running one's finger across the page, keeping
step with the pen as it spells out what I've yet
to understand, recounts what I've yet to see because
love means: following nature's
plan, leaping into the void.

III

Love: I find the strength to spell it out, and already
its mutant poisons run through my veins
I don't know her (thrice repeated as an incantation)
I know of no loved one know she doesn't exist and never
will: this way I'm free to start out reassured
I'll only talk for a few minutes
then forever hold my peace –
if I don't set my own limits I may never
get up from this chair and if the escapade isn't timed
in advance, the ghosts stay stuck in my throat
instead of acting on stage: which is why I'm paid,
and that I get paid

is all-important, forced as I am to move my tongue
through the dust of the theater; otherwise I stare
in silence at the sky-blue unsurmountable wall
that appears every day at dawn
in my workroom's only window. There I continue
to stare without speaking, or writing you a single word
unless somebody drags me here with a rope of dollar bills.

IV

Apparent opposites stand unopposed, and yet
the contradiction persists, a signal
of writing's desire to erase itself writing
of the word's to negate itself in speech (negative
transfers of what we reDress) (upper cortex:
self-destructive brain: jet engine
mounted on a jalopy)
the body, our history inscribed in the body is proof enough
witness: all the severed fingers fallen
into the mother's womb
witness: the shit that gets mixed with the sperm.
But my project entails the Other, its
blueprint: positive articulation.
(Other means change, without
calling for capital punishment
or any early demise – let the end
relieve us of its own accord)

V

My desire: to open up your forehead
before your wrinkles fence it in forever
reveal its wide open fields
before it puts on a cowl of cobwebs
free it, stretching to the very roots of your gossamer hair
from the circle of blood that partitions off your wig
with the bulge of a brow shaven to resemble a ram's
you'll butt and batter inside these four walls
inside my belly where you'll flatten me into a pancake but first
let me rummage through your forehead's locked drawer
squeeze the invisible knob in my hand
search your forehead now that it's free.

VI

there's a wick in the drawer
I pull on the wick out comes a candle
light the candle shed light on your mouth
your mouth's full of wax spit out the wick
I light the wick it becomes a beak
a bird of prey's hook-shaped beak dipping into my eyes
eyes liquefy visions spread

VII

then there's your body without its lost forehead
your eyes in the clutches of a hen
lips half-open a wall of teeth drives me back to the shadows
mumbling: open sesame!
there's your tongue your throat with my entire body
I enter without getting up from my chair
take my nipples between your fingers
close my cock in your armpit, dry me off with your hair
as mirrors multiply our handshakes
in this boundless hoax you're to wrest me of language
mute you brandish scissors and a silk scarf
I can answer in jest and end up castrated
or castrate myself with my answer – in which case you'll mock me
and munch on the apple of my body / preserved under winter straw

VIII

in order to continue I offer
you my eyes my glance on a dish
my severed breasts / served on a tray
to be stuffed slices of ham from my thighs
that I'll stash away in a cupboard then serve
fresh from the oven I'll pull it out
au naturel with the sweet-smelling bread to ask you
why you've zipped yourself up like your lips I'm
cracked without entering the dream when I exit
you're there sleeping not knowing if I'm there if I drip
my seed down your hair when you stir I beg of you: suck me
and it snaps like a fruit you can swallow
grows back from the stump in a morning's time
as the rose blossoms old age will gain the upper hand
my hat and cane will fall into the abyss
and I'll be led on my knees by a leash
I no longer know how to sing

IX

trace it with a finger, does my body exist?
ORG you know it doesn't, little boy?
can't find the SPOT you're looking for?
don't you know ASM doesn't exist, pinocchio?
and did momma ever wash your birdie?
ORG you know it exists along with ASM if
finger tickles finger ad infinitum?
are you sure it's a tingle you feel,
you puppet? and do I have a dickeybird too?
is it me or is he the one not in the mood?
should I show you my moves, you puny asshole?
rap you hard across the knuckles? or somewhere else?
(Can you really be such a clod?)

then what about me if you can't get inside?
how will I feel if you simply don't fit?
eat if you pullout and run?
if you come in your pants
how about making me something to eat
some luscious side-dish
roast potatoes boiled cauliflower
olive oil onions and celery
with lots of wine to guzzle down
and loads of fruit to stick up my hole
Listen boy, are you for real?

IX (cont'd)

I'll freeze you, consume you, slice by slice
top your pubis with heaps of whipped cream
first those slender thighs those arms
then I'll suck on your sauteed fingers cook
your eyes sunny-side up, don't you like the idea?
Here I am starving and you want to screw?
make me have babies to eat?
do you really think bread comes out of my pussy?
or ducklings you can gnaw to the bone?
I'll leave nothing but your bones behind / whereas I
will enter the earth, and be fruitful
already I feel roots up my ass
and can hear the rain
on its way to fill my mouth
I can hear frogs squirting away already
and newborn fish...
if you sow your tongue, behold a lake.

X

you and I will not be
until two becomes one, and happy
until one equals two in becoming one
so let me propose a game
that little by little we hook up
suck each other up
until our feet
bare roots
our eyes
grow leaves
so goats come nibbling at our hands
and the hunger cycle / starts again

XI

I think I saw a rooster
or a baby dragon on a leash
or a giant bat starting the dance
or a naked girl with no arms

or nothing but arms across supple breasts
or a smothering kiss without any milk
or a man with his throat slit
or a knife made of bread inside the womb
or an endless flight through the hole

XII

” . . . but if all the blood / spilled
spurts back into my veins / and my
ice-cold body starts throbbing again / and again
I should feel the tip of my flipper
pressing hard against my zipper
(please swallow the rhyme I just can’t erase it)
how I wish, my precious Pandora,
that I could teach you how to love, when
the mere sight of you whets my desire! But deafmute
that you are, you watch me flee in horror...”

XIII

“Women do dream, my dear, they say so
themselves: they eye a man for a split second
behind a glass door, in a downtown
cafe, or taking a leak outdoors by a tree,
no matter, there’s nothing wrong,
and they dream of love, desire him on the spot, gladly
experience love’s trickle, gingerly guide a teacher’s
well-disposed hand. The body exists, my dear
it’s for real. Whereas food, provisions,
cups and trays, silverware, the bread I like warm
against my womb... Once again, my dear,
I agree, not only words exist
beyond words. I / am always very hungry...”

XIV

Here come the clowns, my love, the clowns
they’re here
Ophelia with Hamlet, Hamlet with Ophelia
my love / let’s hear them / let’s listen together
as they talk about us, before we take a bath or stroll
before we break for lunch or dinner —
we’ve made our choice, for
VOICE OVER SILENCE

Hamlet, 2

but getting back to mother and father:
the male’s always busy preparing his death
new couples form get this much straight you’ll see
poison ooze into newly sucked ears
fondled like lobes and lashes

then in dreams steering images back to desire
it's the mother who yanks open her toothed vulva
chews on your penis spits it out
snaps at your scrotum like she would at an apple
leaves you flat on the bed stripped to the bone

but now let's step things up
since the dire awe of swollen
images wants you put to silence
you're afraid of language as it swells
and already this metaphor tastes like cauliflower
gardens erupting cabbages spilling curdled milk
metaphors multiplying, if I keep talking
there's no way out but to accept silence is worse
out of desire I bring my head to the block
facedown, yield to the tongue's blade
where I relax and request that it be the mother:
I've pronounced the sentence, now carry it out