

Ingmāra Balode
Poetry
Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Geibere and
Mārta Ziemelis
Edited by Eluned Gramich

Expressing denial

I can't hear you.
Only the news.
I haven't touched this hair.
I don't recognize this drawing.
I can't imagine.
I can't hear you.
I haven't spent the night here.
I can't feel it with my hands, it's hidden.
Turn off the light.
These rays draw new veins
on the leaves of an innocent tree,
and that's
not necessary.

(translated by Mārta Ziemelis)

The wall

Come, lean against this wall. There was a bike
propped up here
in a dream.
A yellow star. On the ground
like a leaf.
Come, that train's just a line.
It's rushing away
into the night.
On the other side, the morning promises colours.
We're watching a film of fog.
Cloud
pianists
are surrounding all these slowly
collapsing houses.
with sound.

Come, lean against this wall, here.
That sick feeling will pass.
You'll feel – someone stroking your forehead
with a hand
slow
as rain.

(translated by Mārta Ziemelis)

Grammar

Polish is a great language
it saves on pronouns
what is this I YOU HE SHE?

Shadows on your loved one's body
when it lies next to you
giving itself to light.

(translated by Mārta Ziemelis)

Salty

I

The light that uses its palm to wipe off the spot where spilled milk soaks into the floor is familiar.

The floor's injuries are much older than any of us. A huge longing for warmth. For warmth in the leafy treetops, which now end somewhere near the sheet of tin nailed to the stove.

II

When the sweet streams down your back slowly replace tears, remind me that it's time to go.

Go out into the street, where houses use chimneys to prove they're alive and try to let light in through panes of ice, and where the air is clean, neither sweet nor salty.

Winter air.

It closes open wounds quickly, can't hear through the double glazing, doesn't hang around pointlessly under your windows.

It's often silent.

(translated by Mārta Ziemelis)

Thank you for the dance

in a grey passageway through which
one must walk with raised hands
hands raised so high that it seems
I will take off from the ground

on their rough sides balustrades
hold the light

a grey cat with a brown watchband around his neck
is sliding across the stone floor from one to another
and several times nudges me on the side with
his nose

it is time to go

time is

to go

having met without conversations
we knew how to dance
how to slide out of this passageway
to the place where you have invited me
which ends with grey pebbles

why does everything seem so short-lived at times
why does the day-mind interfere with those buildings from long ago
in porous stone
those dry castles not touched by the waves and where no sound follows our footsteps
where scents live instead of water

where it is time to go
where we have been left alone where we know how to dance

with hands raised high

(Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Geibere)

darkness stuck to glass

darkness stuck to the glass
cannot enter
the black eyes

I whisper through your skin here I
here I am here but am answered by
skin

the endless soul
can be in one point

a bird knocks at the feeder
it can be in one point

a bird knocks at the feeder

you look out the window I fall out on the slope of light
along with you learning it all from breath to breath

we are born
in someone's pain to dwell in until it freezes over and under the snow
silence sets in

(Translated by Ieva Lešinska-Geibere)