

It wasn't a date –
we simply went to the shop for laundry detergent,
because our dirty laundry basket was full.
It was a completely normal spring day.
Airplanes roared overhead.
People brought their trash out. Some sorted, some didn't.
Parents pushed their kids on swings in their yards.
And the swings reminded you of old clocks,
the time of which had just been turned ahead.
We walked past thrushes,
which were pecking at something in the first shoots of grass.
I had rubber boots on, but you had a hood on.
We had forgotten the umbrella.
I held on to your arm
so I could jump over a puddle.
Then we came to the stoplight.
There was a flower vendor there.
You bought narcissuses for me.
When we got to the shop, we bought everything,
just we forgot
the laundry detergent.

We drank night from the bottle.

We boldly called the stars whores,
which shone in the night to everyone
who was asleep and who wasn't

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The stars got offended
and promised nothing good for us.

*

We awaited the morning naked, trembling and hung-over.
Our souls had touched,
said goodbye to one another, having never met.

The most beautiful rain is always
the rain right after a play,
that moment as the spectators leave each taking
the performance in their own direction through Riga,
with two of those people being us.

With eyes that are more energetic than usual,
we grasp the darkness,
it's October – all of the sidewalks are clothed in fallen leaves –
And the silence is rhythmically interrupted by our steps.

A street sweeper's sigh can be heard on a side street.

We look at one another, as if to be sure that
we are still next to one another, and then satisfied
look away from one another
forever.

On tropical summer nights
the girls return home
to their man or their loneliness
which sometimes means one and the same thing.

Their bare feet hold all steps
that have been made a secret,
and their skin keep caresses silent.

Their hands smell of the sea,
of swimming into the distance,
of returning to the shore,
where there is so much sand –
spilled from broken
hour glasses.

Crumpled curtains
and sheets
the floor's been creaking
since the last century
the sounds and memories
blow through the window.
which lets the air in,
which has yet to be replaced
with plastic frames.
Hanging from the ceiling – three burnt-out bulbs.
The wine is our only light

in this room

everything else is silent.
We don't know each other –
it's easier
to love and forget then.
We look for tickets
for never coming back,
but the price is too steep,
and our courage wanes, when
as the light touches the dark,
morning comes.

From I don't know you
to I know you better than myself
we traveled far and wide.

Until we reached our final destination.

And then we travelled back
even farther and wider
from I know you better than myself
to I don't know you at all.

Inga Pizāne

Poetry

Translated by Jayde Will

A boy and a girl
in the yard
there is a scent of lilacs
that persists
they don't sense it
they have gone too far
a city worker mows the entire yard
around them
they don't hear it
their narrow vision
makes them happy
far too much so

the rowan trees ripened like longing
in your absence
I composed
roofs which
we could run under from the rain
the soles
which the bitter taste of the summer's departure sticks to,
and our laughing,
in trying to get rid of it.

I composed
cities,
in which we accidently meet
doors, which you
come home through
with red dahlias and rowanberry wine,
and slippers, which you slip into
to stay,
whispering softly into my ear:
turn off the light,
it's fall

Inga Pizāne

Poetry

Translated by Jayde Will

We delete the photos we don't like of ourselves
but the ones we like, we keep,
robbing our memory of objectivity
and becoming a made-up version of ourselves.
A beautiful version of ourselves.
A version of ourselves.
But I want to peel away all of those versions
from myself
like layers of an onion.
And then cut that onion down to the core
and cry –
finally cry
real and totally imperfect
tears

We bow our heads
In front of our phones
that is
in front of the pretence of others
in other words
we hope,
that it isn't pretence
(or are we pretending, that we believe that?)

We bow our heads
so we don't look into the eyes
of strangers,

which we have become
to ourselves