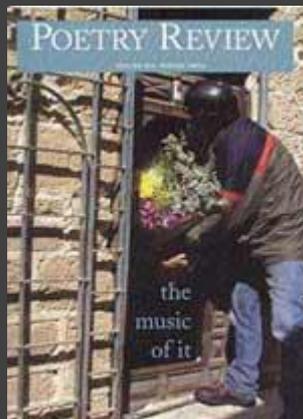


An Afternoon at Snowfall

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I'm not here.
What a shame, tomorrow day will break
and I won't be here anymore.
Shame, I won't be here tomorrow
when someone opens the window,
when someone writes a name
on the window's mist,
when someone waters the flower pots
and, with an intense gaze,
observes the confusion of fallen sparrows.

I'm not here.
What a shame, I won't be here tomorrow
when someone,
still drenched in a blue dream,
slowly staggers towards the mirror,
runs the tap,
and tells the lonely man in the mirror -
a man who has turned to mist,
to a grain of sand,
to a drop of dew -

You silly thing, what a strange dream I had about you!
I swear, you came into my dreams
more than a hundred times last night.

I'm not here
What a shame, I won't be here
when, in the light snowfall one morning,
his heart racing,
somebody suddenly starts worrying without reason,
wishing that someone,
someone who no longer walks the streets,
someone who no longer walks out the door,
or stares out the window,
will walk past
and say:
I haven't seen you for ages, my friend!

I'm not here.
Shame, I won't be here tomorrow
when someone in a fast train
passes by a small brooding cloud
above a mournful station
and, having a sudden premonition,
calls to the cloud,
raises his hand,
turning round to look back
as it vanishes out of sight,
muttering under his breath:
Maybe that's him?
Maybe that's the one who doesn't exist,
someone who can't ever stop
at a single station anywhere.

I'm not here.
Shame, I won't be here
when in a drizzly hour one morning
in a library --
a library dressed in a tarboush
and a suit,
a library stuffed full of musty books --
a sad poem, sitting in
its own attic of solitude --
a poem which still gazes expectantly
and speaks as clear as a mirror --
is picked up by someone,
the kindest person in the world,
who takes it by the hand
and helps it off the shelf.
Together they leave for
a teahouse near the library
where they sit in the sun
and laugh in the rain,
and putting their hands in their pockets,
they whistle in the snow.
As the world passes by,
they think about life, considering

all the the things that are important
all the things that are simple
and new.
They consider the things
that have been fenced off,
that have been disappeared
and pushed to one side.
They consider a poem
that has not come to life.
They consider an infant
wrapped up in a blanket patterned with butterflies.
They consider an orange seller.
They consider a kite threaded to childhood.
They consider their morning sweet tea.
They consider a blade of grass.
They consider a baby sparrow
risking its first flight through the rain.
They consider a crushed can
tinkling downstream at siesta-time.

I'm not here.
Shame I won't be here
when a door is opened
but no one walks through.
When a window is open
but no pollen-down drifts in with the evening.
When a ladder dies from waiting
for someone to climb it
carrying a bunch of grapes
up to the roof on a warm summer night.
When a road pines away from loneliness
and no one gives it a hug.
When a tree collapses
and no one remembers its colours.
When a garden is overgrown
and its flowers are never worn anymore.

I'm not here.
Shame I won't be here
when you come out to the courtyard one evening
and it isn't me
whose finger presses the doorbell,
waiting by the door
with a heart full of doubt like green grapes.

I'm not here.
Shame I won't be here
when in a cold hour one winter afternoon
you walk out all worried
and it won't be me
who stares like a child at the rising wind
and the falling rain.
I'm not here.
Shame I won't be here
when one afternoon at snowfall
you walk through the city looking for me.
You search for me under the wing of a bat.

You knock on the door of an ant friend of mine;
worried, you ask, Haven't you seen him today?

You stop a drunk squirrel's truck.
You enter an owl's florist shop.
You coo along with a pessimistic pigeon.
You stop by a garden related to me
to look through the closed fists of flowers.
You search through the straw under the house of a stork,
in the beaks of fledgling sparrows,
in the claws of a hedgehog.
You look through the depths of a drop of water for me,
you search under a ladybird's feet,
beneath a crumb of clay,
inside the warm heart of a stalk of wheat,
in the bitterness of a hawk,
under a bruised leaf of basil,
beneath the tongue of a speechless cicada,
in the corner of a dank pocket of a story,
in the iris of a bead,
in the sleeve of a rhubarb stalk,
on the roof of a fresh smell,
in the middle of a bundle of dreams,
under the skin of a snowflake,
in the heartbeat of a pomegranate seed --
in everything.
You will search for me in everything.
What a shame that at that sad hour of the afternoon
you'll be looking for me
but I won't be here,
what a shame that
on this afternoon as snow falls
I'm
not
here
anymore.