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DIOGEN
pro kultura magazin pro culture magazine

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Every Day I Discover A Length Of Breath

it doesn't matter
what's forgotten
once I get this close
the voices
all the weight
in tone
judgment
when the next word dissolves all punctuation
someone I love very much
is trying to say something to me
the air granulates between our faces
notice the wingspan
in a room where the bed should have been
between lying down
and
(in any language)

falling
remembering what makes us
but not without stretch marks
saying our names

and dedicating them to someone close
or to bring them closer

passion & vengeance

forming halos
aureolas of light
around a grain of sand
with leaves
so no one can see your face in tree light
in the film negative held up to light
you could play yourself for a while

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So In The End It's Perception

a little sacredness in the midst of all the profanity and mediocrity
to hear the action you make surrendering intention
you have to turn around and be behind the *other* eyes
vanishing into those places at the edge of seeing and sight
place and destination are completely unavailable for a while
toying with the floral arrangements
as if your eyeballs were a leaf and a great gusting wind was let loose
you won't know where you stand moving the words around until they feel right
it might be a place where people are gathering according to tone of voice
I need to hear someone speak who can really delay the background noise
in the midst of getting ready the particulars escape me

Opening A Tremendous Silence Between Us

I measure inheritance in a tone of voice
underneath that certain look

What was it we were promised
a particular gesture traced back to

What was it we had to let go
someone somewhere recognizable a long time ago

Where in the Bible does it say unconditional

I read the newspapers

Was there something eating you
from what you didn't get last time

Here

I give you everything I found since a boy
a few hard-placed words and this moment reading

Each Day A Legendary Search For The Lost Cry

of children in the woods
each day a woman leaves her house
walks into the woods looking for her children
each day she falls in love with a tree
makes love to it and walks home before it gets dark
each day a woman leaves her home
walks into the woods looking for her children
each day she wraps her arms around the trunk of a tree
rubs herself against it until the tree quakes
until she becomes a rope of hair
then walks back home before it gets dark
a woman searching for her children
walks into the woods but there aren't any trees
she keeps walking to the other side
silvery and shimmering
ahead of her the gravel is shimmering

For Years

I look at people in the eyes
to see if there's somebody in there

wide digital almost sky
with the strength of an answer

almost a hope in how vast
and curious in the same place

the same troubled half-squint
faraway like a question

or tedious wish to be somewhere

like last night left over from something

forgotten and seen inside a book

looking up carried into a smile

I saw you with my same eyes

we were tired and old

Mrtva Sabota

But even in a cemetery you can't eat without music

the waiter has just set down a plate of grilled meat mushroom sauce bottle of red wine

I'm hunched over my coat pulled tight warming

my fingers on the small sterno lamp

lips kissing a glass of *rakia*

small upstairs room where the lake hews driftwood

into benches steaming cold breath each table its own kiosk

each of us our own thoughts touch wood be a doorway

reading poems of a poet now dead about the dead

it's not me alone who can boast being a cemetery

the musicians are playing the old way like a secret lifted out of its broken thought

their violins splayed open for the petals they'll row across this murky light

before looking up

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Walking Around

it was almost morning
and I wanted to crawl back in with you
where we sleep alongside the jetty
but the tide had come up
just about covering the stones with sand
and I couldn't find our bed
I was surprised the sea washes over us when we sleep
and started digging with my hands
then pounding the wet sand for you to open up
let me slide in beside you
scratching and pounding the sand
calling your name to wake up
but it was my sister's name I was calling
and I woke up knowing it hadn't been you I loved all those years
in your house along the shore
go back to sleep

In My Country

you'll die in some desolate town
thinking it's a movie
surrounded by people who don't look
anything like you
just to see if you fit in
just to see if you can hold your breath
you'll die holding their breath that long
toothless mouth-to-mouth
not speaking wide open
you won't have a say
that laughing moon face we loved
I loved you this whole time
sewn into the star of your breast pocket
spiritual afterthought of my harmonica
pulsating kiss

In My Silence To Justify

we're sitting in dark corners smoking

the middle of the day

sitting in dark corners talking in low tones

middle of night

in dark corners filled with our dead

hours into centuries

the dead who are also tucked away in dark corners

as if they're thinking

as if they're quietly reading the situation

as if almost an air of self-satisfaction

walking our women home at night
confident nothing's wrong
our women who're acting uptight
nervously pretending nothing's wrong

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Once Night Falls

there is only room for so many
night makes sure of that
soaked with adrenalin

by morning more of us are gone

some weird twist of choice

where one is born or being born

your horoscope reads arm yourself with that look

beyond language your shadow crosses over

mother leaves you the persian rug in her dream

you know she's really not just sleeping

roll it up

music carries its own gunshots and weeping

once night falls our bodies convulse

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It's True

in the cemetery the softest grass to lie down on

is a woman

I have many times rolled on and across

lips of the angelic dead

but tonight

I drag my dark bones overlooking the river bed

to drink your legs

there is no dreamy look of innocence

on her face turning stone

no moaning hollow of her breasts

I have come here to sleep the absolute sleep

of wings rising from your breath

a rootless wet green in the mouth at night

from *CLICK*

Among the poets of my generation from the former soviet, former dirty war, current troubles, current jihad, ethnic cleansing...poets, journalists, professors, survivors sliding in and out of prisons, shelters, mental wards, community centers, schools...

I have no language to speak this beyond
or in some personal knowing
to say yes it's like that with me too

in time

how we've been together

will grow to resemble a way

to linger to pass by

especially to laugh

that heartiest absurd brief moment

that the world didn't get us

glance or gaze

look of knowing they didn't kill us yet

or even if they did it didn't matter

in those first ephemeral signs of a smile

just to laugh

Assalamu alaikum

The photographer's hunched over his camera screaming, *That's it!* The same moment Big Nana shifts to her champion bowling pose Miklós Radnóti is being exhumed from a mass grave, *blood mixed with mud was drying in my ear*, his last poem I'm reading in the bulb flash, blood-crustled from his overcoat pocket. Underdeveloped glimpse of Anna Akhmatova staring out of *the torpor common to all of us in those days*, faint smile of the woman who gave birth to me, her lips blue from the cold. *That was a time when the dead could smile*. My old man exhales a plume of cigar smoke, *the afternoon is all fallen plaster, black stones, dry thorns*. *The afternoon has a difficult color made up of old footsteps halted in mid-stride*. Yannis Ritsos coughs up a glob of tubercular phlegm. That's me, second to the left, spiking my flat-top with the palm of my hand, squeezed between Kafka and Calvino, who prop me up between sense and direction. Of course I'm late for school. Everything I need and reach for as I'm racing for the door breaks off in my hands. When I grab the door it doesn't open. It doesn't open, and I wake up running through the neighbors' yards where women are hanging sheets on clotheslines I brush, tangle, and, pumping my arms, lift myself off the ground, up, clear of the clotheslines, clear of the power lines. I'm treading the air above a crowd of tiny people who are chasing me when I wake up standing in the wings of an auditorium being introduced as a very important person I don't recognize and I've grown a

beard. Walking out across the stage I'm not wearing any clothes. The house is packed with everyone in a tux or a gown with hairdos, I walk behind the podium feeling protected as I begin to read from a sheet of paper all the words are mixed up and what comes out of my mouth is gibberish when I wake up peeing the bed I'm covered with seeds it's my birthday and I'm 50 years old all my friends are teenagers



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