

Erin Mouré/EIGHT POEMS

GRAVITY

I think only of the split or severed brain. The young
who are poor again & who do not have the coats for
winter & who don't

notice.

What we attend to is what we remember! No, what we are
attentive to is what we remember, its consequence. One
thin coat & then another, another. There is a speech of
such gravity, such layers.

Or there *must* be. Communication between the two
halves, the one cord, centred, the circular thought!

Thus: speech of gravity. Serious rhythm guitar. The
snow light at midnight. Shivering in the thin blue
jacket. Severed without us. The head bowed so we see it.
The silent right brain.

LIGHT

Always this shudder in the retina, having seen that cold & not dreamed it, having known. My dailyness follows me with its shoulder, with its hair, its reminder of the vast sky & intricate branches. Having followed me away “*from*” & back “*towards*” her, with my hope always, patient, the patience of its tonsil, its crying at the age when it was cut from me, no longer part of the body, it was too sore.

The pinpoint of light coming not from the street but from the brain. The human brain looking always from behind, with its sigh & continent, with gentleness, its pin prick light mistaken for sentences or memory, or rain.

That rain. O retinal presence, illusory, reconstituted. “The harsh rain on the snow as the temperature rises.” The memory leaks out from the inside. It’s slippery, treacherous. They walk home, singing. *Rainin’ all over the world* . . . she sang.

GRACE

Suddenly, there is an appearance of many. Many are chosen, & many appear! Their coats are black & yellow, & their yellow are leaves. Their coats have scarves, their fingers buried in these scarves, in the form of embraces! Once in a while, a man has a white shirt, & a name. Many are called! Many answer, distractedly, they come in, undress in the café where the fire was, showing their forgotten centres. O parts of our bodies . . .

Once in a while, a woman has a blue sweater & forgets her name. Not a *woman also*, but a *woman*. She forgets the name because . . . who named her!

Many are chosen, & many appear, they sit cordial, how are your greatest, your least, until between the “we” & “they” there is such a number. Already there are as many coats as people, meaning . . .

an election is close by. That, or some were not chosen. Some had no coat to grace their arm, to grace their eyebrow, to grace their “grace”, which they covet. Some had no phone! Some saw nothing blazing, & did not come! Some did not want to . . . Some were not hungry . . . Some were cold, elsewhere, & could not leave!

CAROLINA

Trees of the earth, who are you. There is this fright, these & these wishes! Tremulous leaves. The rush of pulleys & ropes, & the tree is sand, toppling to sand. In my childhood, there were no such castles! In my childhood there were small trees, bending the weather! Small hidden trees. Not the huge trunks, growing, roots aimed for the sewer. Not these non-transportable trees. Huger than the map, the pink map we live in. The Commonwealth of trees! So many board-feet shipped to Japan, who learned from us: the two-by-four!

The Carolina poplar with its magnificent noise, touching the wires, touching red ash from the chimney, the power lines, touching the sky, making noise of it, short noise of it, noise of the sky. All this is one line of poetry. The margins have it! Deliberately, there are margins! There are borders! This too was written...

This escape from the pulleys. From the ropes. Out there in the back yard, they are lowering this tree! Foot by foot! With a woman's name. The last height, deliberately. Impossible...

VEGETAL ANSWER

In the time of my time, with my horses on end I answered
clearly, vegetal,

my vegetal being. This, & so many grams of *amino* in the
arms. So many grams of *amiga* in the chest, with its whittled
comb, its dagger, its letter-opener. I am speaking of the
breast-bone! The body folded over, into the breast!

As if this dagger could be heard. As if this dagger did the
ticking of the body, not the heart. This pointed fold, this
spring, this *hola, hola*. O horses of the centre, horse of the
vagina, that this comb belongs to... softly... whittled...

I tell you we are in it for keeps, & we will keep this body! We
will keep it forward, its ghost rummaging a red sky, evening,
whether or not you forget it, you who are absence. You who
have corrected us, word for word! To hell with absence. We
will scribble... We will find pens... We will write this down...

MAGDALENIC ANSWER

To remember always the magdalenic wound. To continue with the darkness in the bones, inside them, a marrow! Such women! As if suddenly a noise... hush... the car leaving...

Outside, the tree is on fire, that tree. There is a long road paved by taxes, blasted thru mountains no one in this eastern plain can know. We have come from these extreme rocks, these centres! Sheer cliffs & drainage!

We can stay then. We can answer. The wine in our glasses is red, we are women in our scarves & jackets, in our kohl & glasses. We remember the rock fall! We remember names of some of the apostles. Apostles? Inside us, a marrow! To remember always, for our daughters! The car is gone now; now we can write this down.

LINEAL ANSWER

The trail a voice is. Whither the sound of. In her heart the old aches numbered, numeral, chifferal. A coffee-brown liquid in the glass is, coffee. Or standing on the ladder, conferring with the plasterers, the hawk of wet-smelling earth & measured *swoop* of the trowel, this is

the urge in every answer, making a wall smooth. "If there is to be a wall, let it be written wet in the old way, not that chalk sheeting." She climbs back down the ladder, careful of her feet for if she falls

we too will be hurt, will leave her "hurt", will not read again...

She turns & looks up, in this is her answer; she remembers. We see her, in this we are noticed, absent, we are back with a chicken & groceries, our heads bowed, we call out & stand up; in this we are counted; in this we are written down.

SHEEPISH LOVE

SHEEP

Every year, the neighbour says, its roots push thru the stone. The poplar, its centenary mad reason, a movement we can't see or know. How long it must have looked at my basement, the window & small green door, urging the root outward. The heater is gas, now, she said, pointing. In those days I would throw some sticks & one shovel of coal in, & the warmth would quickly envelope us. Outside, the cold tree. Inside, the tree. Like a dance, she said. Of course, the tree could never grow here. But a tree has centuries of patience, she said. Sometimes a sheep is a tree. Sometimes its hard stare & leather collar are a tree.

LOVE

Because love is necessary & some plants have failed, died from the light, or rain, or lack of either. Because of this lack. Because women wrap carefully scarves over their hair & necks before leaving, it is that bitter cold, *that bitterness*, caught in the air & inhaled, wind against the back where the seams are doubled & there is no entrance to the coat. The root grew into the cellar floor; the neighbour walked down & pulled it. This replica of the tree found in darkness. This tree that saw them kiss, two women in the apartment across from her. A sheep has the four-footed coat of patience, she said. Centuries of patience, she said.

PATIENCE

As if patience were the cure. Chemicals in trains pass thru the suburbs; nerve gas stored near human beings. As if patience were the cure, they reached up & touched each other, the tree crying out to see them, & then touched the iconic objects: bread, salt. Food placed on the chest of the dead, the same as for the living but cut to the food of patience, for a corpse is patient, in Vallejo we know this, in Vallejo where the corpse staunches its cry with ink pens, shudders in its retina, seeing; sits up in its coffin, & combs its hair.