

Poesia /
Poetry /
Poésie

Luogo e Segni

Punta della Dogana,
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Mostra a cura di / Exhibition curators /
Commissaires de l'exposition de /
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Luogo e Segni, concepita come un paesaggio interiore, trae ispirazione dalla poesia, più precisamente dai versi di Etel Adnan. Gli artisti esposti a Punta della Dogana sono stati invitati a mettere in dialogo le proprie opere con uno o più testi poetici a scelta, pubblicati in lingua originale. Questa raccolta, preceduta da uno scritto inedito di Etel Adnan, costituisce una memoria dell'esposizione.

Conceived as an inner landscape, *Luogo e Segni* [Place and Signs] is inspired by poetry, and in particular the writings of Etel Adnan. The artists exhibited at Punta della Dogana were invited to have their works hold a dialogue with one or more poems of their choice, published in the original language. This collection of texts, preceded by an unpublished poem by Etel Adnan, represents a memory of the exhibition.

Conçue comme un paysage intérieur, "Luogo e Segni" [Lieux et Signes] est inspirée par la poésie, notamment par les écrits d'Etel Adnan. Les artistes exposés à Punta della Dogana ont été invités à faire dialoguer leurs oeuvres avec un ou plusieurs poèmes de leur choix, publiés en langue originale. Ce recueil de textes, précédé d'un poème inédit d'Etel Adnan, constitue une mémoire de l'exposition.

Yes. The shifting, after the return of the tide, and my own. A question rushes out of the stillness, and then advances an inch at a time: has this day ever been before, or has it risen from the shallows, from a line, a sound?

When we name things simply, with words preceding their meaning, a cosmic narration takes place. Does the discovery of origins wash the dust? The horizon's shimmering slows down all other perceptions. It reminds me of a childhood of emptiness which had taken me near the beginnings of space and time.

Now, dark animals roam in the forest, you could touch them. A particular somnolence takes hold of you when the shadows start grooving. The heart creates a different beat. You want to touch the leaves, look intensely at each tree. The night falls, already tired, already bare.

The size of the future is not any longer than this alley's. And questions are falling, and failing. But to go by a narrow gully, find the tide at its lowest, watch ducklings follow their mother in search of evening food, is a sure way to illumination.

I am wearing the rose color of Syria's mountains and I wonder why it makes me restless. Often my body feels to be close to sea creatures, sticky, slimy, unpredictable, more ephemeral than need be. From there I have to proceed, as an avalanche of snow is falling. That's what the radio has just said: that entire villages have been made invisible. But they are faraway: the news never covers my immediate environment.

And having more memories than yearnings, searching in unnameable spaces Sicily's orchards or Lebanon's thinning waters, I reach a land between borders, unclaimed, and stand there, as if I were alone; but the rhythm is missing.

What is not missing is fear. It's a matter of arteries clogged, of long hours of sleeplessness, of the lack of resolution for any outstanding problem. My feet are sliding on a wet floor, but I have to thank my good luck: I let the horizon define my terror.

Why, oh why!

I miss the cosmic energy of ancient Greece. They loved their gods to whom everything was given save the supreme power. Free, none of them were in the absolute sense, only Zeus was, though his arbitrariness was often looked at with a critical eye. Prometheus was chained because he rebelled, and Io was condemned to suffer an opposite but equally radical punishment, to turn and turn and never rest. There was a raw cruelty to their world, but I miss them.

To put one's feet on the rocks of Delphi is worth damnation. And to Sikiyonou the offerings for the oracle are still coming. For me, the pain of dying is going to be the impossibility of visiting that site.

When you have no urge to go anywhere, what do you do? Of course, nothing. But that's no answer. We let so many replies go unformulated, as a liberation of sorts, so many tides uselessly advance, so many desires be buried, (the mind gets tired too). In the middle of the night I measure the cold outside, the silence.

To speak greek is to use most of Aristotle's words. But I rely on Eschylus. He reminds me of the mystics from Bukhara. He placed Prometheus on Mount Aetna, linking him to Empedocles. How can one live away from their circle?

But, returning to my condition, if I had to choose a place for spending this night, what would it be?: at this point, I will turn my back and go into my room. The major part of the beauty of the world I will ignore, if not all.

There are so many islands I dreamed of visiting, where have they gone ? They're probably lying where they have always been. Do they possess a consciousness all of their own? I would think so. They are probably like the peacock who recognized me after all the years I had been absent, and he sent a loud sound, of a kind I had never heard, and he made my joy. He stirred a kinship between us.

That was at the end of a game for a world championship, a european football game. England against Colombia; the British team playing war, the South-americans playing for the fun of it, always the same story. The peacock followed the excitement, it was late at night and he couldn't sleep.

My thoughts drip, not unlike the faucet. They don't let me know what they're about. Other ones follow, strangers equally.

The daylight is getting dim. We're not in winter, no, we're somewhere in early July. The sunset will happen soon. Then it will disappear too.

Dreams lack any power, but come in bunches, flood the spirit, shake the bones. They favor love-making while we refuse what we yearn for. Watching sunset after sunset doesn't heat the house.

Watching the hours go by doesn't help either. Thus, we're cornered. I leave my door open pretending it's because of my difficulty in breathing, but nothing is true. Better to admit that with the passing of days we know less about just everything. Let's let things roll their own ways, if only they have some.

I am not used to ask for help, but on what kind of a ground am I standing? An incantation puts me to rest, at last, in undue hours. With eyes swollen we try to see the here, and the overthere, never sure, always dissatisfied. Let's wait even when we don't know what for, a faint line on the horizon always more welcome than this void.

We have lost the liturgies under the wars, the bombings, the fires we went through. Some of us didn't survive, and they were many. The Greeks had their exuberant gods, the sunrise over Mount Olympus. The Canaanites had Mount Sannin. We have our own private mountains, but they're far away: are they already too tired from waiting for us? I have no roads to them, no wires. In their splendor let them be.

There's a dance of fireflies, little lights turning around the boats of the Bay, tiny creatures chanting, fish jumping—the feast of early summer subsiding in the heat, and lemonades!

We try to subvert the gods, buy their powers, corrupt their souls—we, a race of mercenaries. A tide of mud is moving on the shore, messing the shore-line. Sounds are raining. How many tomorrows do I have to worry about? A cup of tea doesn't taste like ice-cream, but it will do. Tea in the evening, unlike the British.

There were times when to be overlooked by death created sacred terror; and those times have returned. The rivers continued to run. I followed some, and others I drew. Most frequently they came as dreams, some were of an amazing magnitude, others mixed their waters in oversized waterfalls. I loved them in all instances. But death, I didn't.

Death abandoned us, not coming when it's due, not answering. Its enemy, a form of life unstoppable, I mean the Oceans, used to appear on stage for events of gigantic dimensions. They spoke human languages besides their own. But we pushed them back gradually, polluted them to the brim. And we heard not a single cry.

Io cannot die. Prometheus cannot rest. The oceans are helpless. As for us, we can neither live, nor disappear. The stars, at night, emit sparks at the rhythm of our breath. My window is blessed. It opens in daylight on the fields of Greece, that's what I'm trying to believe.

Almost all of my beliefs have deserted me. I take it as a kind of liberation, and anyway, they were never too many. Our houses are clattered, our minds too, so a fire as devastating as it could be, can well clear the air, enlarge the space, make room for some silence. Year after year all we do is gather dust.

Prometheus rebelled, and Zeus died many centuries later. Large areas of snow replace the banquets held by the gods on Mont Olympus. Skiers prefer things as is. I don't know what I would have done if I could move more easily around. I would start with Delphi, that's sure. I may desire to die there. The stones in Delphi, in mid-summer, are sizzling hot. They burn one's skin, and one's heart. Revelation is abundant over there.

My soul, you're close by,
not in me,
we ought to get together,
I miss you

I am night, I keep saying,
living in dark luminosity,

a rainy night

was 4 years old, and 5,
and more,
when swimming every summer

Grains of sand contain
secrets,
that can be deadly

I feed on memories
remember most
Hart Crane's coat on the
railing,
the wave's open mouth

The beach is endless,
the continent empty,
waiting for the soul's return

But where's my soul? –
only in the question

Long corridors appear
a voyage underground
hard tunnels
A few stamps, a pencil

what is close, is far away –
like a bridge

The East River advances in waves
like one's thinking,
to rather be the river

There's life in life,
death in death,
both accelerating

An ocean resides between my
eye and its eyelid

To chase the Pacific's horizons
I will need an infinity of lives

In a civilization of dispersion
to be autumn leaves

Dark national elections,
irreversible...

Clearly, nothing is clear

Color is a particular manifestation of light
everything else is doubtful

We live in imaginary countries

know that food will soon
be unavailable;
that the end will end

I caused pain,
overlooked her need for life

then we each went away

When I too will disappear
we will be lost
once more for ever

The sun has aged, weary for
dragging along
its turbulent planets

Transparency emerges when the time has
come to revive by any available window
a shred of reality

Nietzsche kissed a horse. He, at last, found
a friend. We're the ones to be
crying

A long night I spent
thinking that reality was the story
of the human species

the vanquished search for the vanquished

Sounds come by, ruffling my soul

I sense space's elasticity,
go on reading the books she wrote on the
wars she's seen

Why do seasons who regularly follow
their appointed time, deny their kind of energy
to us?

why is winter followed by a few
more days of winter?

We came to transmit the shimmering
from which we came; to name it

we deal with a permanent voyage,
the becoming of that which itself had
become

Night is a shadow due to interferences
with the sun's divine path,
a river running through its opposite

The principle of reality filters the real
which faints into it
the operation is epiphanic:
the surging, into an instant, of an instant

Reality is messianic apocalyptic
my soul is my terror

da / from / de
Surge
2018

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Philippe Parreno

Rains return to the sound of their origins when night
begins to spread; over the land the night is as long as
a city's deserted avenues,

... or the way to distant galaxies. The animals feel the
disorientation.

Thoughts are metallic and melt in salt water. Their
frequency increases the melancholy, the pervading
melancholy.

Meaning is ephemeral.

The world reverberates its disorder, creates waves of
determination

A lit candle can bring out the whole absurdity of victories.

To look at the stones, out there, the cracked wall, the rain.

When a child, I was found in a basket, they said,
full of roses, and with ribbons too. No thorns were
mentioned.

*

Much has to do with what we mean by reality: is a
basket's reality a concept, or a tool for keeping our feet
Grounded? (physically and mentally).

And was the basket as evident as the child?

We have a few certitudes to lay our shoulders on, and
still we go on opening the shutters, welcoming friends
... in cities left-over by wars...

People breathe heavily between the old nightmare
and the dullness of the day. A simple question can
raise reality's temperature.

The moon is more than I am, but she can't give more
than what she is.

The heat and the cold fill many gaps, but is reality
real? For now, the november sky is watery, California
skies over artichoke fields, redwoods, trucks going
south in the night.
Eleni sprang off her chair, raising her voice: «there's
no reality any more!» That brought beauty to her eyes.

The fish's ability to shift environments makes me
want to inhabit the tummy of any whale that swims
by the coast, to get out of my skin and lie under his,
on the first new moon of the year...

and daydream for hours and hours.

*

Jaime de Angulo

*The Gilak Monster and his Sister
the Ceremonial Drum*
1974

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Édith Dekyndt

How to dismiss century-old plane trees? They're
murmuring during their spring renewal, in this Holy
week that tells me that I won't resurrect, not the way
they do...

Paradise is certainly a bore, unless it's still a
garden. Solitude doesn't make for better thinking.
Unfortunately. It can thicken the air, yes, it can do that.

Coming close to the sun, there's fear, tremendous fear.

Let's keep windows open to ease the anguish that the
furniture exudes. The sea throws its waves very high.
Salt for the Earth.

Oh to enter reality like a boat does the night!

Comprehensibility has nothing to do with the real.

It was Swan-woman who wove the first basket, the first
basket ever made... she wanted something to keep her
ear-rings in, and her beads, and her comb... so she thought
about making a basket, she thought about it, she thought
about weaving it

she went to see her sister... her sister was a woman who
knew a great deal about the mysterious things, about magic...
and now the Swan-woman asked her what she thought about it,
what she thought about this idea of hers of making a basket,
of making a basket by weaving

“yes, I think so... I think you can
do it... altho it is a dangerous thing
to do... something might happen while you
are doing it... there is danger in it... you
will have to be careful, you will have to be careful.”

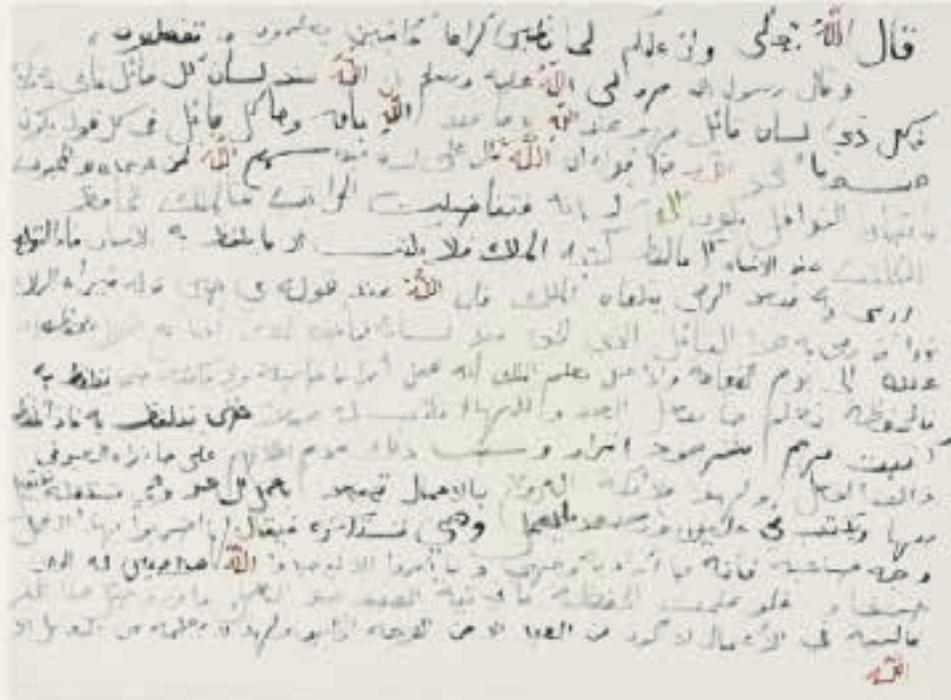
da / from / de
al-Futubat al-Makkiyah
c. 636 A.H. - c. 1230 C.E.

calligrafia di /
calligraphy by /
calligraphie de
Simone Fattal

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Simone Fattal

O beco
1936

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Lucas Arruda



Que importa a paisagem,
a Glória, a baía, a linha do horizonte?
– O que eu vejo é o beco.

*Sou um guardador
de rebanhos*
1925

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Tatiana Trouvé

IX

Sou um guardador de rebanhos.
O rebanho é os meus pensamentos
E os meus pensamentos são todos sensações
Penso com os olhos e com os ouvidos
E com as mãos e os pés
E com a nariz e a boca.

Pensar uma flor é vê-la e cheirá-la
E comer um fruto é saber-lhe o sentido.

Por isso quando num dia de calor
Me sinto triste de gozá-lo tanto,
E me deito ao comprido na erva,
E fecho os olhos quentes,
Sinto todo o meu corpo deitado na realidade,
Sei a verdade e sou feliz.

*O horror sórdido
do que, a sós consigo*
1935

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Tatiana Trouvé

Estou tonto,
Tonto de tanto dormir ou de tanto
pensar,
Ou de ambas as coisas.
O que sei é que estou tonto
E não sei bem se me devo levantar da
cadeira
Ou como me levantaria d'ella.
Fiquemos nisto: estou tonto.

Afinal
Que vida fiz eu da vida?
Nada.
Tudo interstícios,
Tudo aproximações,
Tudo função do irregular e do absurdo,
Tudo nada...
É por isso que estou tonto...

Agora
Todas as manhãs me levanto
Tonto...
Sim, verdadeiramente tonto...
Sem saber em mim o meu nome,
Sem saber onde estou,
Sem saber o que fui,
Sem saber nada.

Mas se isto é assim, é assim.
Deixo-me estar na cadeira.
Estou tonto.
Bem, estou tonto.
Fico sentado
E tonto,
Sim, tonto,
Tonto...
Tonto...

Giorgio Caproni

L'occasione
1982

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Alessandro Piangiamore

L'occasione era bella.
Volli sperare anch'io.
Puntai in alto. Una stella
o l'occhio (il gelo) di Dio?

Heather Christle

Basic
2013

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Nina Canell

This program is designed to move a white line
from one side of the screen to the other.

This program is not too hard, but it has
a sad ending and that makes people cry.

This program is designed to make people cry
and step away when they are finished.

In one variation the line moves diagonally
up and in another diagonally down.

This makes people cry differently,
diagonally. A whole room of people

crying in response to this program's
variations results in beautiful music.

This program is designed to make such
beautiful music that it feels like at last

they have allowed you to take the good canoe
into a lake of your own choosing

and above you the sky exposes one
or two real eagles, the water

warm or marked with stones,
however you like it, blue.

Emily Dickinson

To Make a Prairie
1755

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
One clover, and a bee.
And revery.
The revery alone will do,
If bees are few.

Federico García Lorca

Romance Sonámbulo
1924

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Liz Deschenes

Verde que te quiero verde.
Verde viento. Verdes ramas.
El barco sobre la mar
y el caballo en la montaña.
Con la sombra en la cintura
ella sueña en su baranda,
verde carne, pelo verde,
con ojos de fría plata.
Verde que te quiero verde.
Bajo la luna gitana,
las cosas la están mirando
y ella no puede mirarlas.

Verde que te quiero verde.
Grandes estrellas de escarcha
vienen con el pez de sombra
que abre el camino del alba.
La higuera frota su viento
con la lija de sus ramas,
y el monte, gato garduño,
eriza sus pitas agrias.
¿Pero quién vendra? ¿Y por dónde...?
Ella sigue en su baranda,
Verde carne, pelo verde,
soñando en la mar amarga.

—Compadre, quiero cambiar
mi caballo por su casa,
mi montura por su espejo,
mi cuchillo por su manta.
Compadre, vengo sangrando,
desde los puertos de Cabra.
—Si yo pudiera, mocito,
este trato se cerraba.
Pero yo ya no soy yo,
ni mi casa es ya mi casa.
—Compadre, quiero morir
decentemente en mi cama.
De acero, si puede ser,
con las sábanas de Holanda.
¿No ves la herida que tengo
desde el pecho a la garganta?
—Trescientas rosas morenas
lleva tu pechera blanca.
Tu sangre rezuma y huele
alrededor de tu faja.
Pero yo ya no soy yo,
ni mi casa es ya mi casa.
—Dejadme subir al menos
hasta las altas barandas;
¡dejadme subir!, ¡dejadme,
hasta las verdes barandas.
Barandales de la luna
por donde retumba el agua.

Ya suben los dos compadres
hacia las altas barandas.
Dejando un rastro de sangre.
Dejando un rastro de lágrimas.
Temblaban en los tejados
farolillos de hojalata.
Mil panderos de cristal
herían la madrugada.
Verde que te quiero verde,
verde viento, verdes ramas.
Los dos compadres subieron.
El largo viento dejaba
en la boca un raro gusto
de hiel, de menta y de albahaca.
¡Compadre! ¿Dónde está, díme?
¿Dónde está tu niña amarga?
¡Cuántas veces te esperó!
¡Cuántas veces te esperara,
cara fresca, negro pelo,
en esta verde baranda!

Sobre el rostro del aljibe
se mecía la gitana.
Verde carne, pelo verde,
con ojos de fría plata.
Un carámbano de luna
la sostiene sobre el agua.
La noche se puso íntima
como una pequeña plaza.
Guardias civiles borrachos
en la puerta golpeaban.
Verde que te quiero verde.
Verde viento. Verdes ramas.
El barco sobre la mar.
Y el caballo en la montaña.

I watched the shadowplay
of trees
against the blinds
one October—
in the way sometimes
you stare

at a pale face across the bed
so long
you hardly see it—
fingers trembling,
vague as a street
at night, as nature

stripped of accident,
they shook
with a gusting stutter
more restless still
for being not
the thing itself.

Philippe Jaccottet

da / from / de
Airs. Poèmes 1961-1964
1967

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Ann Veronica Janssens

Je ne veux plus me poser
voler à la vitesse du temps

croire ainsi un instant
mon attente immobile

Ezra Pound

da / from / de
The Cantos
1948

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Cerith Wyn Ewans

“Such hatred”
wrote Bowers,
and La Spagnuola saying:
“We are perfectly useless, on top,
but they killed the baker and cobbler.”

“Don’t write me any more things to tell him
(scripsit Woodward, W.E.)
“on these occasions

HE

talks.” (End quote)

“What” (Cato speaking) “do you think of
murder?”

(Canto LXXXVI)

Georges Schehadé

da / from / de
Si tu rencontres un ramier
1951

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Stéphanie Saadé

Dans le sommeil quelquefois
Des graines éveillent des ombres
Il vient des enfants avec leurs mondes
Légers comme des ossements de fleurs
Alors dans un pays lointain si proche par le chagrin de l'âme
Pour rejoindre le pavot des paupières innocentes
Les corps de la nuit deviennent la mer

Jack Spicer

*I Love –
The Eyelid Clicks –
I See Cold Poetry*
1957

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
R.H. Quaytman

I Love – The Eyelid Clicks
I see
Cold Poetry

5
I can't stand to see them shimmering in
the impossible music of
the Star Spangled Banner. No
One accepts this system better than
poets. Their hurts healed
for a few dollars.

Hunt
The right animals. I can't. The poetry
Of the absurd comes through San
Francisco Television. Directly
connected with moon-rockets.
If this is dictation, it is driving
Me wild.

6
The poem begins to mirror itself
The identity of the poet gets
more obvious.
Why can't we sing songs like
nightingales? Because we're not
nightingales and can never
become them. The poet has an
arid parch of his reality and the
others.
Things desert him. I thought of you as a
butterfly tonight with
clipped wings.

Wallace Stevens

*Bouquet of Roses
in Sunlight*
1947

poesie scelte da /
poems selected by /
poésies choisies par
Roni Horn

Say that it is a crude effect, black reds,
Pink yellows, orange whites, too much as they are
To be anything else in the sunlight of the room,

Too much as they are to be changed by metaphor,
Too actual, things that in being real
Make any imaginings of them lesser things.

And yet this effect is a consequence of the way
We feel and, therefore, is not real, except
In our sense of it, our sense of the fertilest red,

Of yellow as first color and of white,
In which the sense lies still, as a man lies,
Enormous, in a completing of his truth.

Our sense of these things changes and they change,
Not as in metaphor, but in our sense
Of them. So sense exceeds all metaphor.

It exceeds the heavy changes of the light.
It is like a flow of meanings with no speech
And of as many meanings as of men.

We are two that use these roses as we are,
In seeing them. This is what makes them seem
So far beyond the rhetorician's touch.

Domination of Black
1916

At night, by the fire,
The colors of the bushes
And of the fallen leaves,
Repeating themselves,
Turned in the room,
Like the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind.
Yes: but the color of the heavy hemlocks
Came striding.
And I remembered the cry of the peacocks.

The colors of their tails
Were like the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind,
In the twilight wind.
They swept over the room,
Just as they flew from the boughs of the hemlocks
Down to the ground.
I heard them cry—the peacocks.
Was it a cry against the twilight
Or against the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind,
Turning as the flames
Turned in the fire,
Turning as the tails of the peacocks
Turned in the loud fire,
Loud as the hemlocks
Full of the cry of the peacocks?
Or was it a cry against the hemlocks?

Out of the window,
I saw how the planets gathered
Like the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind.
I saw how the night came,
Came striding like the color of the heavy hemlocks
I felt afraid.
And I remembered the cry of the peacocks.

August Strindberg

The Snow Man
1921

da / from / de
Inferno
1897

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Hicham Berrada

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

Les fleurs, ces vivantes-
mortes, qui mènent
une existence sédentaire,
n'opposant point de résistance
contre une attaque, qui
souffrent plutôt que de faire
le mal, qui simulent
les amours charnelles,
se multiplient sans lutte,
et meurent sans se plaindre.
Etres supérieurs, qui ont
réalisé le rêve du Bouddha,
ne rien désirer, tout
supporter, s'absorber en soi-
même jusqu' à l'inconscience
voulue.

Est ce pour cette raison que
les sages hindous imitent
l'existence passive de la
plante, s'abstenant d'entrer
en relation avec le monde
extérieur soit par un regard,
soit par un signe, ou un mot ?

William Carlos Williams

The Mind Hesitant
1944

poesia scelta da /
poem selected by /
poésie choisie par
Anri Sala

Sometimes the river
becomes a river in the mind
or of the mind
or in and of the mind

Its bank snow
the tide falling a dark
rim lies between
the water and the shore

And the mind hesitant
regarding the stream
senses
a likeness which it

will find—a complex
image: something
of white brows
bound by a ribbon

of sooty thought
beyond, yes well beyond
the mobile features
of swiftly

flowing waters, before
the tide will
change
and rise again, maybe

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