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**SHORT POEMS and
PROSE POEMS**

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translated by
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*brief poems and prose poem pieces
available together or independently in script form
for use for festival
by anyone who wants to pick any of them up*

HAWKING

Raised hangar
 the door open
The sky
 Up there two hands extended
Lifted eyes
 A voice rises
The roofs have begun to tremble
The wind launches dead leaves
And the clouds delayed
Set out for the other end of the world
Which perhaps had begun to whistle
In the calm of a summer evening
The song
 The bird
 The stars
And the moon to listen to you

DIAL

On the moon
 is inscribed
 A word
with its tallest letter on top
Moist as an eye
Half of it closes
 And the sky
 Clouds over
 A heavy curtain is opened
Soundlessly
 A quick light
Gleams
It's another glow just now
 that guides me

LIGHTSHADE

Around the table

On the shadow's edge

Each one of them quite motionless

And someone abruptly speaks

It's cold outside

But here it's peaceful

And the light holds them together

The fire crackles

A spark

The hands have come to rest

Bluer on top of the tablecloth

Behind the beam of light a head reads

Nearly holding its breath

Everything's falling asleep

The silence drags on

But still it is not time to go

The windowpane mirrors the scene

the family

From a distance the lips all seem to be fervent and praying

LATE AT NIGHT ...

The color night disintegrates
They are sitting around the table
The chimney glass
 The lamp giving out like a heart
It's another year
 One more wrinkle
Had you thought of that before
 The window pours out a square of blue
More personal is the door
 A separation
 Remorse and crime
Farewell I'm falling
Into the gentle angle of open arms
I see the drinkers from the corner of my eye
 To move could be dangerous
They sit there
 The table is round
My memory is too
I remember everyone
Even those who have gone

ON THE BANK

Evening as it sets closes a door
We are on the edge of the road
In the shadow
 close to the brook where everything waits

If that's one more line of light
 It's heading for infinity

The water rises like a kind of dust

 Silence closes the night

SECRET

 The bell is empty
 The birds dead
In the house where everything is falling asleep
 Nine o'clock

The earth stands immobile
 That sounds like a sigh
The trees look as if they are smiling
 Water trembles at the tip of every leaf
 A cloud moves across the night

In front of the door a man is singing

 The window opens not making a sound

ANIMALS

You give a passing glance to the beast in chains
His leap is beyond his power
Exile between hedges
His astonished eyes plumb the sky
His head against the bars
Toward that hint of the infinite
Immensity
A prisoner just as you are
Boredom will never leave you
But I will always remember
the look in your eyes
And your voice
so terribly human

JETTY

The stars are behind the wall
Inside leaps a heart that would like to go out
Loves the moment passing
Weary no doubt your memory
Of hearing cadavers of sound
In the silence
Nothing's alive
The image finds an underwater cell
On the border of the sky resounds a bell
The sail is a piece of the harbor moving away

There you stay
You watch what is leaving
Someone sings and you don't understand
The voice comes from higher up
The man from a more distant place
You aspire to breathe less and less
And the other would draw in the whole sky on one breath

WING

A dry breath from further on
The black wings trim their flight
Nothing leaves
On the winding road
The heat of the day relaxes
The heavy house sleeps on
The lights go out
In the garden two dying trees
Embrace
One talks
And the other weeps
In the evening
It's eleven o'clock
And the formless bird has left
The Soul whose wings are too short
They've destroyed the nest
Something passes through the cold air
A slight noise rises higher
A prudent dream going to hide

CROSSROAD

To stop in front of the sun
After the fall or the waking up
Once the armor of time is shed
To take white cloud for a bed
And sip from transparent crystal
Air
And light
Gleams on the edge of the glass where
Nothing fills my disappointed hand
So I'll have lived all alone
Up to the final day
Not a word to let me know which one was the right way

THE EXOTIC

An immortal profile on the pediment
In Borneo or beyond
 Frozen rivers
The animals race on the track
And the crazy spectator is entertained
At the concert in the Marquesas
 Bright cafe
She looks very stylish
Arranging her glass jewelry
Her hands are crayfish
The straw that they pick up slips
 Hat
 Bracelets
 Fake batiste
 The music plays on
I'd like to get out of here
 to see if the sky is still there

DARK

A long needle crosses the circle
A tree
 A finger
 The one-eyed moon
A monocle-window aimed at us
 The tired house goes to sleep
A brief summons from the water's edge
Along the trees flows silver
Featureless marble your face
Where have the birds all gone
 Night
 Noises
 A finger on someone's lips

On the path of the little cemetery footsteps

FACE

He scarcely knows where you come from
Despite the wrinkle that brands you
And those lines on your cheeks
And the way your hands move
He doesn't want you to go away
All that's left in the chair is a hole
An indistinct form in the shadow
The charcoal portrait in the darkest corner
Almost nothing
Someone passes his hand over the wall
In the shutters the wind rages
Everything's closed until morning
He must be well on his way by now

FETISH

Tiny doll and marionette for a charm,
thrashing about at my window by the will of the wind.

Rain has dampened her dress, her face,
and her hands whose color is fading.

She has even lost a leg.

But her ring remains and with it, her power.

In wintertime,
she raps against the windowpane with her little blue-shod foot
and dances, dances for joy.

With cold to warm up her heart,
her charmed-wood heart.

Nightly, she lifts her arms in supplication toward the stars.

THE POETS

His head took shelter fearfully under the lamp shade.
He is green, his eyes red.
There is a musician who does not move.
He sleeps:
his severed hands play the violin
to help him forget his misery.

A staircase leading nowhere
climbs round the house.
Nor are there any doors or windows.
On the roof shadows can be seen shifting about
and hurtling into emptiness.
One by one they fall, unharmed.
Quickly they move back up the stairs and start again,
eternally charmed by the violinist still playing,
his hands not listening.

THE TRAVELER AND HIS SHADOW

It was so hot that he shed his clothes one by one along the road.
He left them hanging on the shrubs.
And when he was naked,
he was already nearing the town.
An immense shame came over him and kept him from entering.
He was naked, and how could he help being stared at?

Then he went round the town
and entered by the opposite gate.
He had taken the place of his shadow which,
going first,
protected him.

THE GIRL IRONING

Once her hands used to make rose colored spots
on the gleaming linen she ironed.
But in the shop where the stove is too hot
her blood has evaporated little by little.
She becomes whiter and whiter
and in the rising steam
you can barely make her out
among the lace in its shiny undulations.

Her blond hair floats in the air in radiant curls
and the iron continues its path,
raising clouds from the linen--
and around the table her soul still resisting,
her ironing girl's soul runs about
and is pleated like the linen humming a song--
without anyone noticing.

A MEDIOCRE APPEARANCE

The train whistles
and sets off again in the smoke melting in the low sky.

Tears in a long convoy
and on each track where people part,
other arms wave handkerchiefs.
But that one is alone
and his glasses mist with others' tears
or with the rain lashing the windowpane
where his nose presses.
He has left no one and will be met by no one at the station.

Nor does he tell about his trips,
unable to describe the countries he has seen.
Perhaps he has seen nothing and when he is looked at,
fearful lest he be asked a question,
he lowers his eyes
or raises them toward the sky where other clouds are melting.
At his arrival, with no expression of joy or impatience,
he sets off alone in the night,
and under the gas lamps lighting him now and again,
he is seen disappearing,
his small suitcase in his hand.
His is alone, seems to be alone.
Still, something is following him
or perhaps someone in the strange form of his shadow.

THE INTRUDER

Between the four walls of this low room,
somber spirits wandered,
and others extremely light and luminous.

A man almost naked entered
amid these canvasses and in these stretches of ice and desert.

With him he brought a caravan of disorder and walked alone.
A voice which came from elsewhere rang a new sound in our ears.
But in this mixture of capes and swords,
of songs and shouts,
a carnival air reigned --
above all grace was missing, and wit.

An ancient world spun about in our heads
and we awaited the moment when everything would collapse.

But outside,
instead of moonlighting on a theatre backdrop,
there was a gray weather,
where shrieking machines were to dissipate anxiety.
In the street
we had found the crowd once more
and our own century.
But from what epoch
had there come all these somber or luminous spirits,
light and heavy,
and the naked man that evening?

TRIPS IN EXCESS

It was perhaps the first time he had seen anything clear.
He felt hooked to the last car of the first-class train
headed for some magnificent destination
and looked absent-mindedly at the landscape,
which was going backwards much faster than he was.
A new world could have been created
with all the lost details;
but he needed nothing.
He saw no meaning in his role,
which he was playing with the greatest possible seriousness.

The greatest stations did not have enough noise to move him;
in the corner of all the hills
he better understood the isolation of the white houses.
When they went alongside the sea,
he saw only the sails of the boats,
revealing its reach.

Everything is inert or too large for his eyes and his heart.
His head had to remain empty and nothing could ever fill it.

When he came back at last to the place where he had started,
his task completed,
his day finished,
he thought only of the little corner of earth where his life fit in,
where he would have just enough room to die.

TO EACH HIS SHARE

He chased the moon and left the night.
One by one the stars fell into a net of living water.

Behind the quaking aspens,
a strange fisherman waits impatiently,
with one eye open, the only one,
hidden under his wide hat;
and the line quivers.

Nothing gets caught,
but he fills his game-bag with gold pieces
whose gleam is extinguished in the closed basket.

But another is waiting further from the shore.
More modestly,
he was fishing in the mud puddle left by the rain.
This water,
having come from the sky,
was filled with stars.

FACE TO FACE

He is moving forward
and the stiffness of his timid step
belies his assurance.
Attention is focused on his feet.
Everything shining in these eyes,
which radiate evil thoughts,
makes clear the hesitation of his gait.
He is about to fall.

In the back of the room a well-known figure stands up.
Its hand, held out, reaches for his.
He sees only that and nothing else;
but he collides,
suddenly,
with himself.

THE RIDICULOUS BODIES OF THE SPIRITS

A procession of more or less honorable people.
Some of them smile into emptiness serenely.
They are naked.

A halo around the head of the first ones
who managed to take their places.
The littlest ones trailing behind.

They pass between the bending trees.
The spirits who have taken refuge behind the stars are looking.
Curiosity on all sides.
The road lights up.

In the dignified silence,
a sweet voice sings and no one laughs.
Everyone knows the song.

They are passing by the house of a poet not at home.
The rain falling on his piano through the roof sent him away.

Soon there is a boulevard lined with cafes
where the crowds are bored.
Everyone rises.
The procession has grown.

Finally along the rising avenue,
the line of people goes off,
the last ones seeming tallest.
The first ones have already disappeared.

Behind a monument to a forgotten time
the sun is rising with separate beams
and the shadows of the passersby fade slowly.
The curtains are drawn.

OLD PORT

One more step towards the lake,
on the docks,
before the tavern's lighted door.

Against the wall,
the sailor sings,
the woman sings.
The boats sway,
the ships pull a little harder on their chains.
Inside there are deep landscapes etched in the glass:
clouds are in the room,
and the heat of the sky and the sea's sound.
All the vague adventures set them to one side.
Water and night wait beyond.
Soon will come the moment to go out.
The port lengthens,
the arm stretches towards another clime,
all the frames are full of memories,
the streets sloping,
the roofs about to sleep.

And yet everything always stands upright ready to leave.

MAN'S MEMORY

With his broad shoulders,
against the shadow dancing on the wall,
he takes up the space where the other heads would have passed.
The instrument is a guitar whose notes do not resound.
No one hears anything,
yet his fingers pluck the strings;
he plays and his feet keep tapping out the beat.
One eye closed,
the other lost behind the pleated curtain,
when the air spreads out and the crowd dances,
everyone dances,
everyone shouts
and finally two white arms
issuing from the smoke puffs of his pipe
encircle his neck.
In the background the dancers, stilled,
are gazing at the carpet.

AFTERNOON

In the morning rising behind the roof,
in the shelter of the bridge,
in the corner of cypress trees extending past the wall,
a cock has crowed.

In the bell tower whose glittering peak splits the air,
the notes are sounding
and already morning noises rise in the only street;
the unique street leading from the river to the mountain
and parting the wood.

A few other words are sought
but the ideas are still just as black,
just as simple and oddly painful.

Little more than eyes, open air,
the grass and the water in the background,
with a spring or a cool basin at every turn.

In the right-hand corner,
the last house with a larger head at the window.

The trees are intensely vital,
and all these familiar companions border on the demolished wall,
which crashes laughing into the thorns.

Above the ravine the sound increases, swells,
and if the car passes on the high road
you can no longer tell if the flowers or the bells are ringing.

Under the ardent sun,
when the landscape flames,
the traveler crosses the stream on a very narrow bridge,
in front of a black hollow
where the trees edge along the water napping in the afternoon.

And against the backdrop of quivering wood,
the man motionless.

WALKING BESIDE DEATH

I have lost this white figure which guided the roofs.
The spirits of the roofs, the weathervanes--
and the tips of the fingers.

At the same time we have lost all the lines
which linked the stars of the sky and sky to earth.
The metal lines.
all the preparations are done,
the birds are taking flight,
leaving the earth for another pavement.

The guards of the regular currents are present,
and the horsemen,
and I lose my head in this wind sweeping the open path
and the dust across countries as yet unknown.
In the water's mirror deformed men are seen.
I think they are coming forward.
But the opposing current brings them back,
bends them,
or lets the float.
Yet these are only images.
The images of men deformed
in a great draught of air or another mirage.

And step by step--
they are coming closer--
against the edge of the frame with the hard face.