

Running on

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To Réka Dudás. *Almost.*

Like a cup of tea
overflowing

she keeps going places
unexpected
beyond will and power

drawing silhouettes
of sweet fragrance
on this white morning

and I can't help but clutch
at the burning tablecloth

again and again

I drape this tainted love
over my broken heart
and I keep going places
unexpected

like a make-believe ghost
haunting cups of tea
with trembling faces

Without a thought
you hand me a second jar

Without a thought
I open it and you smile
in profile
at this intimacy
like a wife

Hidden in plain sight
I wish we were them

secret delights
that can touch
and be open
without a thought

Late among the guests
shining and laughing
at brilliant jokes

we share one last drink
with two ice cubes

Side by side
complicit and beautiful
reflecting the moonlight

fatal icebergs
always
float in a world of silence

always
shortchange the stars
ninety percent

below the surface

Her dangling arms
abandoned to the wind
like lianas

gently beat to the rhythm
of her footsteps

oblivious to the choir
of the forest around us
whispering

staring
at the divine pendulums

waiting for a sign

as I do

know the wild deer
invisible yet so close

Hear its deep chest
darkly drumming
an untamed song

about you

What a waste
I tell myself

this whole bread
stale
which you forgot
at the back of the cupboard

I remember the loaf
warm and tender
like a promise
of young love

and

— Let's make French toasts!
you say

Cheerfully
you guide me through
your physics book

on magnetism
between opposites

on forward
and reverse phases

on tension
and discharge

Finally
I listen to you
only with gravity

weak

within arm's reach

When you go through my lines
with me

sometimes
I slip in my own words
and you want to slip too

with me

a blank page

Away

birch trees
bathed
in warm sunlight

Close

your white fingers
combing
your golden hair

Blinded

you guide my hands
to the clear waters
of the fountain

Thirsty

from your lips
the gulp
eclipses the sun

You used to hide in my books
like in crannies and nooks

I would find you in Neruda
sieving my favorite pages
for a nugget of my soul

but metaphors whispered
in ways I could not
in ways I dared not

until I found a curl of hair
you left in a margin

Suddenly

a prod to the brass spring
sends my heart palpitating
like a broken watch

Bent over those pages
on the corner of a table
the words fade to white
like a film overexposed
to the halo of your blond hair

only leaving behind
the offbeat heart
of a blind man

Tonight
you open for me
an alchemy book

By the oil lamp
flickering
the mute book speaks
in crucibles and symbols

of wild roses blooming
on a lover's grave

of a split pomegranate
under two half moons

of bellows sighing
over furnace anew

of the mystical kiss
of water and fire

of the geography
of beauty spots

a secret zodiac for all senses
on your body of soft amber
where I die and am reborn

Do you remember
how we used to play
winter in summer?

I'd furrow your hair
with the tip of my tongue
and the field would shiver
under the plow

I'd sit behind you
and embrace you like a coat
my breath sending a frisson
down your spine

I'd pretend to sled
my hands on your waist
and your nervous laughter
would melt my heart

As exhausted as the day
you'd fall back on me
and our breaths like geysers
would ascend into the starry night

slowly spinning
around our cold noses
against each other
in the equator of my arms
around you

Once
through a window
of the log cabin
at dawn

we caught
the shivering world
transfixed
watching its reflection
in the dew

In a blink
the round mirrors
of iridescent water
had formed
a boundless kaleidoscope
and showed each other

your dreamy eyes
in vision wide

and wondered

Already the avid hour
swallows
the shores of the world

Towards the horizon
shadows pursue whispers
lost among the graves
along the walls

From his skull
the poet sees everywhere
ink flooding in

Yet you arise
in the still second
of the vault
illuminating the doorway

with your bright face
smiling down on me
simple and elegant
like a blade

In a sarabande
you seem to say
come outside
in the fields of blue

and let your heart
slowly beat the drum
of another day

let this long night
surprise you
with a blue moon

The dying day shrinks
between the clouds
and the rain starts drawing
mirrors in the mud

until darkness drowns
the match of eloquence
and needles start piercing
the firmament
into countless suns

They blink leagues away
like you used to

when you stretched over me
like a constellation
and kissed me distantly

Now on my knees
my lips still reach for the stars
but the gulp is dirty water

Quietly set against the light
you are perfectly framed

I don't care what they think
about the optics of love
about the perfect shot
at wild happiness

Like a forest
leaning against the twilight

you harbor within yourself
multitudes
that murmur darkly like one
and suddenly go silent
whenever someone laughs

Slowly I dare a hand
to your black hair
shadow amongst shadows

but you are startled by my eyes
like those of a silent film actor
in a close-up

Caught in my headlights
this magnificent soul of yours
hesitates before flitting away

leaving me in awe

pupils dilated
quietly peering into your night

In my brimming eyes

the hinterland
suddenly
met a rising tide

a painting by Turner

of ripped curtains of mist
behind an old boat
tugged to her last berth
to be broken up

where flowing waters wash

beams and lashes across

your overcast eyelines

wrecked by promises
lying eerily at the bottom
of your Black Sea

magnificent and haunting

you follow again the wind
moaning in faraway sails

I raise my standard like a sail

catching oblique sunbeams
from the fleeing horizon
on the seas
above the firmament

and I set the course

for your heart
overturned
like an inkwell on a letter

to you

for I smuggle jewels
from the celestial orbs

under the cover of night

I will show you
my treasure
quaint and eccentric

like a comet

always feeling the pull
to your circular orbit

from an archipelago of solitude

because the island
comes to the shipwrecked

Under a coat of ermine
dreams offer the skies
echos scattered away

on the white page

the inkwell overturns
like the horizon

Under shroud and vermin
the yearning soul cries
echos scattered away

on the snow field

darkness many returns
flood the horizon

Those clear eyes

clearer yet this morning
to have loved another

A clearer sky

whose rising Sun
left two blue puddles
where you search for me
amid the dew

Sleds rush down a hill —
each bump threading a note
to the braids of their life lines
to the necklaces of their laughter

Like them
I draw on immaculate pages
invisible parallels
that conjure up your silhouette

Hide and seek in the mist —
your white hands over my eyes
your panting for breath
sends a long shiver down
blending with that of winter

I caress the blank pages
of a book open to the invisible
invoking your pale body
under my fingers

trembling on soft hills

my breath is taken away
at each descent
so impatient at each ascent!

Exhausted —
lying on the snow
we watch passing clouds
and I quench my thirst
in the calm stream
of your words
before oblivion

Only remain these verses
in Braille
where I feel your steps
toward the white paradise

In your secret garden
when the early light
accounts for the world
you prune the rosebushes

like the many queer lives
within you that ask
something always refused

You keep saying to them

*If I listened to you
we would grow wild
and who would love us then
You can only feel and I see
Go to your places and sleep*

But sometimes
a whisper quivers
and blooms under the sun

transfiguring you
and making you divine
in spite of yourself

before flitting away
like a dream cut short

Will you ever be
like that always
for any one being?

In this waltz
of oblivion and regrets

I step forward
and I forget
all the lessons
I swore to remember

You step backwards
and you regret
learning so much
about me

Come

The third beat
is not here yet
We don't have to repeat
the same missteps

against each other

let us stand still
like that afternoon
in the pouring rain
when I warmed you
in my arms

Across the dinner table
a basin of apples
where you used to sit

classically framed and lit
with the soft tones
of your cheeks

full and ripe
from your wide smile

where I used to sink
my teeth for a taste
of good and naughty

Is this still life
still a life?

Again
she reaches up
on one foot
to my neck

and the world
again
is an old-fashioned waltz

slowing with a smile

like a ballerina
on a music box
she did her best

like the rest of us
spinning
on this Earth

raising our arms
to the sky

By the Seaside
when everyone's going home

tired

an orange Sun is planed down
by the swaying horizon

and grated zest dances
on the waters

of salty pupils

by a Monet in a museum
when everyone's going home

Stitched little doll
you felt forgotten

needles in your heart
when pressed
against her bosom

so
softly

you wished away
the wise tailor
mending your seams

Like you
she was cursed

but so close
that her heartbeat
was already yours

The wake of two passing boats
joggled the lonely pier
in the late evening

and it was love in a blink
by the riverside

Rocked like buoys

bulging tears
mirrored those tipsy ships
larger than life

until night fell
and your head leaned softly
like a wilting rose

Eyes closed
you took his hand

Eyes closed
arms stretched
you'd seek my neck

up

you'd bring your toes
to the feast

laughing at the tasting

So I followed your footsteps
to your neck
which grew strong

up

from acorn to oak
sheltering my tired hands

and now you pick me up
so high
I can't reach my feet

little brother

I like the way you feel
about things

You pull sour grapes
on a blanket at your feet
and the night ripens
with aromas known
only to you

Like a blind woman
telling fortunes
you grope faces
in your night
full of constellations

so they might see
they are not alone

I like the way you fill
the blanks of my life

like the summer storm knocks
on my windows
and puts my sorrows to sleep
after a silent day

Most of all
I like the way you feel
about me

As evening falls

leaves start swirling
in a corner of my heart
and jangle joyfully

Like sparks
twist and turn away
from the crackling logs

midsummer Eve
kindles promises
of Adam's fall

away
from the camp fire
into our night

Playful like the echo
you come back to me

and tickle my ears
with your tongue
in a curl

and breathe out shivers
up and down my spine

Losing myself in your arms
you are me and I am you

in a sigh

I hear a distant memory
but I don't recall
what words are

or who spoke last

As God didn't create
the darkness and the waters
above and below

also in my eyes

your silhouette diminishes
like a sail toward the dusk

as I sigh

like a shipwrecked
on the last embers

you are blameless

The genuine heart of sadness
is the hub of the wheel of life

Without it
there is no journey
and no hope

Yet it remains still
and hopeless

Without it
there is no carrying others
and no love

Yet it remains lonely
and loveless

as I love you

I could never read you
even blinded by love

and I used to feel your face
like pages of Braille

Familiar passages
are still punctuated
by your teardrops

and your longhand
still casts eyeshadows
under my fingers

Now that my eyesight is restored
and I learned to read
modern novels

I finally understand
ancient tales
of love and despair
in the palimpsest of life

I love you
like I love the dead

whispering in our ears
words from another land

a breeze encouraging
embers in our hearts

I love you
like Cleopatra

sleeping on the same side
of the world

always awakening late
to the same regret

I love you
like my funeral

for only the dead
can forgive

Breathtaking art is heart
blown away
beyond the threshold
between said and unsaid

It is the prize of a quest
you didn't know you had

so your last step
is also your first
on the beaten path
of Renaissance

where angels
with dark wings
look fiercely after us

and invoke the tempest
from the black treasure
in your chest

Death of Attila József

A lonely sleeper at night
waits on railway tracks
to be taken away

like a casket steadied
on iron shoulders
that can only journey down

Among his own shadow
and the dreamy clanging
of freight trains switching

the poet bid farewell
to the cogwheels of trains
and desires switching