

# Poems for Lili

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Like a cup of tea  
overflowing

she keeps going places  
unexpected  
beyond will and power

drawing silhouettes  
of sweet fragrance  
on the white morning

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

again and again

I drape my heart  
like a make-believe ghost  
and keep going places  
unexpected

haunting every cup of tea  
with a trembling face

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

I wish we were them  
  
hidden in plain sight

secret delights  
that can touch  
and be open  
without a thought

Among the guests  
beaming and laughing  
at brilliant jokes

we share a drink  
with two ice cubes

Side by side  
complicit and beautiful

reflecting the sunlight

fatal icebergs  
always  
float in a world of silence

always  
shortchange the suns  
ninety percent

below the surface

Her dangling arms  
abandoned to the wind  
like Len's

gently beat  
to the rhythm of her steps

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

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

In this waltz  
of oblivion  
and regrets

I step forwards  
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 mistakes

spinning  
against each other

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



Blinded

you guide my hands  
to the clear waters  
of the fountain

Thirsty

from your lips  
the gulp  
eclipses the sun

Away

birch trees  
bathed  
in warm sunlight

Close

your white fingers  
combing  
your golden hair

Those clear eyes

clearer yet this morning  
to have loved another

A clearer sky

whose rising sun  
left two puddles  
where I seek my reflection  
amid the dew

Life asleep under the ermine coat  
offers to the crystalline air  
echos scattered away

on the snow field sowed with crows  
where the night drops anchor  
flooding the horizon

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Under shroud and vermin  
the yearning soul cries  
in echos scattered away

on the page sowed with full stops  
where the inkwell overturns  
like the horizon

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

I would find you in Neruda  
in Dickinson  
sieving my favourite pages  
for a bit of my soul

But metaphors whispered  
about love  
in ways I could not  
in ways I dared not

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

A prod to the brass spring  
suddenly  
has 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 showed me  
an alchemy book  
flickering by the oil lamp

a mute book speaking  
in symbols and crucibles

of wild roses blooming  
on a lovers' grave

of a split pomegranate  
under a full moon

of bellows sighing  
over furnace anew

of the mystical union  
of water and fire

of the celestial geography  
of your 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 outside  
winter in spring?

You would furrow my hair  
with the tip of your tongue  
and the fields would shiver  
under the plough

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

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

As exhausted as the day  
you would fall back on me  
and our breaths like geysers  
would meet the night immense  
and become the same silence