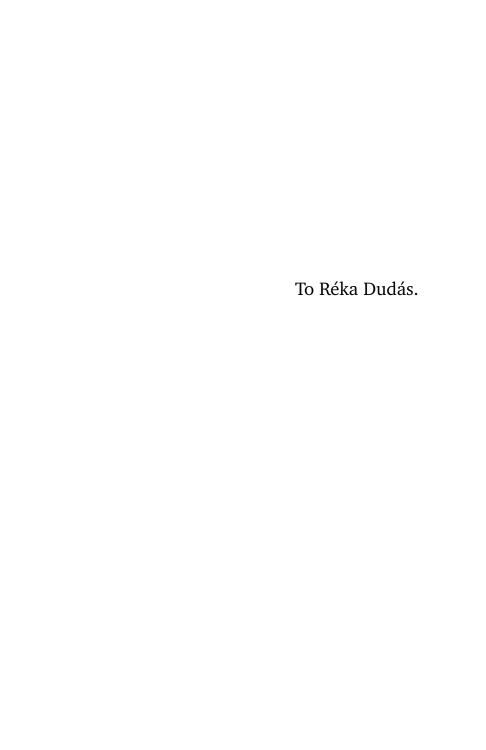
Running On

Christian Rinderknecht

2024



I

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.

II

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.

IV

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.

\mathbf{VI}

Cheerfully you guide me through the physical laws

of magnetism between opposites

of forward and reverse phases

of tension and discharge

Finally
I listen to you
only with gravity

weak within arm's reach.

VII

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.

VIII

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.

XI

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.

XII

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.

XIII

Already the avid hour swallows the shores of the world

Toward 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.

XIV

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.

XV

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.

XVI

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.



XVII

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.



XVIII

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.

XIX

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.

XX

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 backward 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.

XXIII

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?



XXIV

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.

XXV

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.

XXVI

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.

XXVII

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.

XXIX

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.

XXX

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.



XXXI

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.

XXXII

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.



XXXIII

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.

XXXIV

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 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.



XXXV

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.

XXXVI

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.