

One Day in the Secret Forest of Words

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QUANTUM PROSE

POEMS

I

The leaves of this fig tree are like words;
like softly spoken words.

The blackbird summons them and utters them with his black tongue of dawn.

I still believe in all of you.

I believe in this winter's yellow air and the lightless leaves that now slip; naked they
slide, like the last words of this world:

dark heralds of a more profound and flawless clarity.

VII

The wanderer banishes his demons, walking.
They are always sedentary.

VIII

The innermost thought of a hunter is of his gunshot.

With it he always, and on his own, pierces the silence of long distances, in the brackish moisture of the dawn.

With it he bores deep into the dark hearts of doves.

X

As far as I can gather, my soul has also been seen here in these woods on some nights with the hare; bathing in the river or in company with the genet; freed from me for a few hours, happy and surprised like a bird that, despite having at last learned to fly, and thus who knows why, always returns to its nest.

XIII

Eye of the forest, look at my footprints. They are like dried out roots that still await the breath of the sea.

Like the wrinkles on the body of a lonely old man who still loves the songs of midday.
Or like the blue veins always throbbing on the soft reddish temples of the deer.

Eye of the forest take pity on them, protect their path.

XIX

Naked and alone among the branches of the evergreen Oak, trembling, I have found
you at last, December sun.

Come home with me.

COMMENTARIES

I

Let us state this very clearly. A fig-tree in a forest is always an abandoned fig-tree, a tree that has been regarded as lost. Let us then try to imagine its forsakenness, and even more, the suffering of its roots. These, besieged by more powerful trees, slowly slip away, fleeing towards places still empty where they will again be importuned.

It is said that the branches of the fig-tree flourish and grow always in the same direction as its roots. Thus we have no need of a map to find our way around the invisible world of this tree.

So we observe how some of its branches wither, but also how others, on the opposite side, sprout vigorously and happily put forth towards more life. Nevertheless, this inner and outer disharmony, born of pressing need, born of its desperate flight, harms the tree. What is certain is that, throughout its interminable subterranean struggle the fig-tree masters mortality and its fleeting shadows.

For this reason one could say that a fig-tree in the forest is, above all, a fig-tree bereft of hope, an unfeasible tree.

However, let us draw nearer to the leaves that I say are like words, like wise and softly spoken words. Sole owners of these verdant words seem, apparently, to be the blackbirds, tense and always dark denizens of the dawn.

Gorged with berries in the already yellowing autumn, it would appear that the blackbird tarries in the fig-tree out of gratitude, not simply to watch how the leaves fall, but himself to help them fall in the winter.

The toil of the grave-digger, is this then the blackbird's task? Only he, it seems, really understands this curious language: this funereal cascade of the fig-tree's dry leaves onto the damp earth below. He always joins in, pronouncing them over and over again with his stygian and dayspring whistling.

And yes, I too declare that I still believe in his truth, the truth of the leaves falling like words that slowly and softly say what matters: the approaching clarity, the perfect radiance in the all the fallings.

VI

Trees have no knowledge of themselves. Pliny avows this, and long before him, Aristotle. There is nothing, however, that prevents us assuming that trees might well be creatures that dream.

One day in the forest, while Eric, the woodsman, was chopping down an old pine-tree, I wanted to think that, after all, a last dream might vouchsafe the tree a certain awareness of itself. That is to say: that the tree might, in that instant, dream it had been a tree.

When I said this to him, Eric burst out laughing, but he also told me that on one particular occasion as he prepared to chop down another old pine-tree, also in this forest, he had noticed a rapid movement about its branches, like a tremor, something akin to a flinching, a short, unfamiliar disturbance, yes, an *awakening* of the tree, all very strange

XIX

It is known that amongst all the beings of the forest the December sun is the one that evokes the most pity, that appears the most forsaken. He is not even that easy to come across.

Doubtless he feels the cold and hunger, and on his dripping body are to be seen the marks or wounds of extinguished auroras, celestial lacerations.

That is why, when I saw him one day amidst the old branches of an oak tree, trembling and alone, with his eyes tightly closed, I told him to come along with me.

That is why I also opened the door of my house to him.