

## PROSE POEMS

2012

Translation by: Martin Aitken

### THE GARDEN IS AN EYE

The garden is an eye. A flourish of dark-green leaf edging the lawn, perennials in the middle, older than us all. You proceed to walk around the bed, calm, as though you were a planet keeping its orbit around a sun, older than us all; or else you are a beam in search of something, a spot of light working its way through an eye so as to find a weakness, perhaps even illness. The light has no age. The light is neither older nor younger than the eye on which it falls. You stop and point to a flower. They're strangling each other, you say to me, hushed. A bed like this is war; a war when you look away.

No, it's a shame, you say, hushed.

I have always thought you to be a child, but now I see you are not. You have all ages inside you, and I stand open, a scene, like the flower beds. No age will stick to me, and no time; in that way I am already someone you miss.

I stand barefoot on the lawn and begin to walk backwards out of the garden. I can hear you speak to me. Your loved one is in the window, preparing pigeon and curly kale, a face that is new each day. Unlike the rest of us, your loved one masters the art of living; she lives the same way as fledgling birds; they hatch in a nest, unaware of any outside, unaware of anything else; fledgling birds that die if they should fall and depart the nest too soon. I have dreamt of becoming as such, of becoming her, but today I no longer know what dream it is, or to whom it belongs. A strange lot some of us draw; all the loose dreams in this world, the ones left over, settle inside us. There's no way to tell which of them come from ourselves and which from outside, belonging to someone else. The lawn is alive with caterpillars and madwort, and I am acquitted. Outside, it's like in the garden and being with you; I am desolate. Like this, one can stand and squeeze juice onto one's brow until no longer able to stay inside the body, until one almost becomes an animal that turns in the gut, or perhaps until the human within begins to give inside the body. Perhaps you think I am still close by, but then you could turn around and see something else. My eyes slam shut when I leave; and the gate clatters, metallic, before everything falls quiet again.

## THE DRAMA

Your face has a frailness that reminds me of something from childhood, a teacher quick to pick herself up again, with no other explanation than all the various explanations there were and which could not be avoided.

You push open a window and hear the blue wind draw leaves into the flat.

Is this a bad idea, you ask.

Nothing is for sale, at any price, without becoming something else the moment hands are shaken. There is no capital besides money. Even gold is something else.

You know how the media works, you say. They want the drama.

Yes, I think to myself. Like us.

My hands repeat your hands and:

My eyes repeat all that you endeavour to put behind you

A body you cannot forget, but more than that

You ask me about this love of ours, is it a good idea

Perhaps you are only explaining something

But love is hardly an idea

You look like you think I can protect you; but

You are a child, you know everything

So you say

You look at me as though I had removed your teeth,

emptied your entire mouth in one blow

We look into the moist eyes of the woman, but instead of seeing our reflections there we see only the man. The man as she sees him, the man picking himself up.

His body rips the woman's eye, splits open her gaze.

And everything his broken body must accommodate; everything she can see.

And us: being unable to see ourselves in the woman's eyes is what makes this the most beautiful picture to be found in the world. The most beautiful of what may be borrowed, here. To behold a beauty one thought not to exist, a beauty that is: the eyes that see.

The gaze that remains.

There is a love, handing me something across the table

Here, help yourself

And like us now: a standing invitation to

take whatever you want

A green dresser collecting its breath in the room

A despondency becoming no more obvious, and yet contradicted

To see each other without destruction –

without refraction or reflection;

To simply see what is there.

## YOU HAVE BEEN THINKING

The cows cast blue shadows up the banks; the crop has been harvested; the fields gasp beneath the sun that sweeps the land – a human warmth in the light that makes all things living again; you say you have been thinking.

The summer is almost gone, the loan we took is costly, and now we must repay it with interest.

Every day with this sun is like a blessing now; a blessing, and a sedative, all at once.

You sit on the bench in front of the house, leaning forward, arms on knees, a furrow in your brow, rocking gently as though to work something free. To weaken a joint and make it break in order to – well, what, exactly? That's what I think about again. What it is, exactly, you want to come loose.

How many days of August can a person withstand; how much harvest sun, how much field waiting – as plain as one could wish – to be ploughed up again. An expectation in reverse; we are beyond halfway, and we know it.

You clear your throat and look up at me. Your brow is a furrow, like it's holding down the sky around us. The sun brushes your eyelashes, and your mouth is open.

A bird descends on a mouse; I gather my hair in a bun too high on my head; the shadows cast by it all; someone's breath when lying on a rug beneath a tree; everything that occurs at the same time. And when, nevertheless, something brings these single events together; me lying beneath a tree and feeling the wind die, a sudden change in the weather taking place somewhere else, almost simultaneously. And you parting from someone you loved there makes it no less insane for me to wake with a start – as though I had fallen straight through the air. Your parting is mine, with a delay.

I open my eyes and see the sky above the tree; you stand on the boat, see the ash and the dust descend like a film upon the sea, which is calm now, the wind has died; and someone you loved becomes a hand of comfort, a membrane around all that gushes out. The sky that stops reflecting in the sea at that very place; the sky that no longer reflects in your eyes, ash settling on eyes, eyelids over the seas; and me, who sees the sky torn by living branches. The wind dying makes me open my eyes, makes the sky reflect there in my tired eyes; in that way I take over; when you can't see, I do; and this year, years after – us walking there at the beach, together.

There are so many good reasons for not believing in something, so many good reasons for this not to exist, for two people always to come apart: for nothing in this world to ever stay together.

You scrape your foot in the gravel.

I am afraid you have begun to doubt. Such an awful lot to lose, and:

everything is built in a night. If it collapses, it collapses just as quickly, in a day. If you still choose not to believe.

And that's perhaps how it is: one must choose to believe. Choose to believe in something that keeps the world together, to believe in there being an us. A decision to see what is – instead of spending time trying to understand.

You say you're worried; I understand what you're thinking, I am too, I say. You nod, and I nod back and look out across the field in the same direction. The shadows are growing longer, the sentences shorter. There's nothing we know in this world, but much we can choose to see.

I look at the worry in your face and think I should like to choose what is greatest of all and believe that to exist. I sit down in the gravel in front of you, so your eyes have room. I was already there, I whisper; or – I have missed you here.

## NOTHING IS FOR SALE

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