

Eugenius Ališanka

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dogs' breath steams, cold air catches in your throat
when you step outside, glad to find
the familiar morning: bony earth,
skilled calligraphy of trees, even the smell,

this could be the landscape of the soul,
oikumene in november winds, something
more than the revelation of non-existence,
incarnate in the rhetoric of nature, it could be,

every autumn I give you a frozen
cluster of ashberries: infertile years have taught me
to save, as if I could leave after death
preserved words, but every autumn

I recite an incantation to exorcise hunger,
every autumn I forget history,
why should you need it, when the sun rises
portending another short day

SOLSTICE

neither to leave nor to stay,
no shore, this place has no beginning,
the shorter the day, the clearer the man,
neither absolved nor condemned, without the rust of frost,
in the dark glade the gesture
like lightning reveals rocks:
folios, engravings of night,
but there is more to survive,
memory purges the life

from glacier to city,
illusions oppose the seed of an apple
every night,
in every room,
when one leaps from the highest cliff
and never becomes present tense

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devoted walls stood there,
no one had a sword,
the hay bundled
into a bouquet meant more
than funeral chrysanthemums,
fog rose and fell,
could any least syllable of loneliness
escape november's yard

AUTUMN APOCALYPSE

toward the silence of plains
of hard-frozen earth one beam bends,
the heavy light settles
slowly on the face
and between the bell and night
consonance, created unexpectedly,
bears away dreams: right here,
where are scorching winds, where the returning
warrior bows to the reign of time,
a hand has opened doors to twilight
an eye shatters the view
into the loneliness of things, but there is no heart,
only pulses, premonitions, and a step
beyond the rose traced by frost
on burning windows