

[HUMIDITY AT THE UNAWARED  
CONTINENT'S EDGE]

Humidity at the unawaited continent's edge,  
where dreams slowly begin to change,  
and language, soon after, will yield.  
It, too, cannot hold out for good.

In speech—not even the blackness of pines  
remains, nor the rough-lined face of autumn,  
nor the damp and shining waste of death  
whose glacier bangs at the door.

The denouement, with voices swamped,  
passes on, leaving an empty space of lies.  
Erasing the globe, you listen all night  
to the darkness of a distant, alien body.

All night, you listen to the flow of another's  
blood in which you live as in a mirror—  
when the heaviest reflections leave no mark  
in the waters of the Neva or the Neris.

*These poems are from Tomas Venclova's collection  
Pašnekesys Žiemą (Vilnius: Vaga, 1991).*