

and also the blind hunter  
I am the hunter  
I am the enemy  
I am the brave enemy

12 I will  
struggle to a shack at sunset  
Stunted, scrawny shrubs will become a big forest;  
my small dream will shut out the lava,  
the sun and the ebbing tide  
I will drink a glass of bitter water  
slowly as if it were poison  
I will close my eyes, and will open them again  
I will cut my whiskey with water.

13 I will not return to the shack  
I could not dilute the words with meanings  
like whiskey with water

*Translated by Takako Uchino Lento*

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PAOL KEINEG / BRITTANY

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from *The Poem of the Country Which Hungers*

Good day to you  
people of these houses  
good day good day  
and let me please  
remove my hat  
and set it with my wooden shoes  
and since I happen to be here then  
good day to the tripod good day to the sugar bowl  
good day to the chest-like bench  
brimming with draughts flipsides of playing cards and with backstages  
good day to my soul's cupboard where bright roosters are adorned  
with rose and heather in a scent of holly

good day sabotmaker roadmender good day  
good day wisteria whose frail threads line crumbling fences  
good day to the slashing blade of April hail  
good day to our blood's unending highway  
good day to you forests who make each treetop an arrow  
good day to you waves of wind my hands hold prisoner  
good day crowd of women's hands grown hard in water's fire  
good day to the crowd of well-loved faces

good day to you  
my people and my country  
heir to our eternity  
I want to live and die  
where bundled branches flame  
in fires of farmhouse ovens  
over the fired clay of factory chimneys  
beneath the ash of reminiscent afternoons  
and if I write  
it is for the winged crest of the cow shed  
for the flocks of pregnant ewes trailing the ditches' length  
for the scaffolding in the new quarters of the city  
for my brothers' eyes which fire has branded

sink your eyes in my eyes  
you will clear inaccessible Cape Horns  
you will climb the lunar ranges of our hopes  
place your hands on my hands  
you will feel the wheat change into bread  
and the bread change into blood

you will see the tree of my blood grow  
beneath my eyelids

here I am wholly whole  
in my table of chestnut wood  
both feet firm upon the ground  
in the cracked murmur of the crowd which leans  
upon the well-wall of the window  
in the will-o'-the-wisp near the churchyard calvary  
in the carting-off of hay and grass  
by immense determined horses  
in the heavy rebound of the pail  
against the cool wall of the well

in the apples newly fallen from the tree  
in the cider press of my worn joy  
ironing the patched clothes at the foot of my bed  
here I am whole  
both feet firm upon the ground

understand me  
I had to be the shadow curved and clattering through pools  
the word of friendship which goes straight to simple hearts  
the given word  
I had to be the cress and then gnarled roots  
the orchard on the slope  
the child robber and fibber shy with strangers  
understand me  
I had to be the horseshoe in the blacksmith's vise  
the mane of slate roofs over prostrate cities  
I had to be the cracked notes of the words which wound  
enigma of the words which go unspoken

understand me  
everywhere  
taking part in all  
one day I had to learn  
to be myself

. . .

the wave of new generations rises  
flooding the calendar's red and black days illumined letters in a poor man's  
alphabet the gullied slopes of bread  
hacking at the roads already traced and paved and surfaced  
my country is heavy moving like the sea which catches in the outcroppings  
of rock and tears the hulls of ships in silence  
my country is braided by cables ropes affixed to the iron hills  
and drifting nightmares  
my country has hands by the million she sleeps her light sleep behind a  
screen of mist  
my country shelters churches made of wind and scans in vain the gate to hell

I blush  
my hands are red  
standing on my roots  
my house is red

I hide at all the crossroads  
I have shivered in the winds  
now that I see the soft banks of muddy rivers the betrayal of the weeds  
the aching chalice of uprooted hearths

since the day of my birth  
despoiled of all possessions of my eyes my pores my bones my hands  
robbed of my bread  
the mother tongue torn from the palate of my childhood  
all familiar names borne off  
the magic name for cat for dog  
the words for molehill rudder flowering cherry  
since the day of my birth  
waiting at the door of my self  
in search of the great chimneys of boats rotting in the sheds of the brand  
upon the anvil  
loving to bridge arches bending from the water mills  
since the day of my birth  
lacking my own substance  
dispossessed of veins and blood  
doubled in for by a stranger  
I myself

when the logs fall in the brown heath I love to hear the knell of all that is  
the real world ring upon my doorstep

my country drifting and transparent in the mirror of the gulfs which clouds  
and seasalt weave  
my country inlaid like jewels along the railway and the wake of shrivelled  
hamlets  
the birds stream between her fingers the showers cut across her as they  
pass the flights of wild ducks span her distant corners  
in her thousand arms my country blinds and chokes me

*Translated by Candace Slater*