

backbone of bloody encounters dinner's back peelings'
tendon of blueness mechanical zone of mundane tasks
of the possibility of piercing the weightless cataract
which grows between our kitchens and latin america
constellations of rams of beefsteaks clusters of beautiful souls
disguised in the forms of tomatoes
rigorous image of hunger congealed rivulet of tears
eye spitlike stretching to a slice of bread
tongue of one word only babeldom of steel
promise of a dead avalanche ripping the earth's breast

let us stubbornly smile to it for if it left us
in our halved kitchens we should drift away
beyond the flashing stillness of the cutting edge
in a yellow field under a yellow sun
robbed of our polarity which lies in the basket among the potatoes
we should run from blade to blade of grass from god to god
forgetting what to remind ourselves of and what meaningful questions to ask

Translated by Jan Darowski

SHIRAIISHI KAZUKO / JAPAN

Phallus

for Sumiko's birthday

God exists, though he doesn't exist
And, humorous as he is,
He resembles a certain kind of man.

This time,
Bringing a gigantic phallus,
He joined the picnic
Above the horizon of my dream.
By the way
I regret

I didn't give Sumiko something for her birthday:
But at least I would now wish
To implant the seeds of that God-brought phallus
In the thin, small, charming voice of Sumiko
At the other end of the telephone.

Forgive me, Sumiko,
But the phallus shooting up day by day
Now grows in the heart of the cosmos
And, like a damaged bus, cannot be moved.
Therefore
If you want to see
The beautiful sky with its bright star-spangle
Or some man other than this God-brought phallus,
A man who dashes out in a car
Along the highway with a hot girl,
Then you must really
Hang out of the bus window
And peep about.

When the phallus
Begins to move and comes to the side of the cosmos
It commands a most splendid view. In such a time,
Dear Sumiko,
The loneliness of the way in which the starred night shines
And the curious coldness of midnight
Thrill me to the marrow.
What is seen is seen whole-heartedly. No man
But goes mad.
Because a phallus has neither name nor personality
And is timeless,
It sometimes leaves its traces
On the tumbled air
When someone passes by
Carrying it uproariously like a portable shrine.
In that hum of voices
One hears the expansion of savage
Disturbance, the imprecations
Of semen not yet ruled by God. Sometimes
God is apt to be absent:
He seems to go somewhere else
Leaving debts or a phallus behind him.

Now
The phallus abandoned by God
Comes this way.
Being young and gay
And full of clumsy confidence
It, surprisingly, resembles the shadow
Of an experienced smile.

The phallus seems to grow beyond all numeration,
And, beyond counting, comes this way.
It is in fact in the singular. It comes alone.
Seen from whatever horizon,
It has neither face nor words.
I would like to give you, Sumiko,
Such a thing for your birthday.

When therewith your whole life is enswaddled,
You will become invisible to yourself.
Occasionally you will turn into the will of the very phallus
And wander endlessly.
I would wish to catch in my arms,
Endlessly,
One such as you.

Translated by Ikuko Atsumi

T A H E R E H S A F F A R Z A D E H / I R A N

Nostalgia

We are nostalgic
For the earth we know well
For the fraud we know well
Our own bread, our own compliments
And the fresh air of our own narrow streets in the mornings of yesterday
My sister wrote that my postcards do not arrive if they are attractive
But the safety of a registered letter is so sad