

Agnes Nemes Nagy · *Hungary*

FOUR SQUARES

1

The first windowpane is a park.  
A garden path between bare branches,  
a garden path offside a clump of yew  
speckled with small winter fruit,  
rose-tinted fin-de-siècle glass,  
and there's more  
I could provide more details but why?  
What spells out the image on the pane  
is the garden path the birdneck path,  
what cannot be spelled out in words, only  
in gesture as it cranes back  
and extends its unimaginable birdhead in-  
to the garden's obscure denseness.

2

The second windowpane is clouded up.

3

The third pane is concrete.  
What I mean is: a garage roof  
(sliced in two by the window sill and under it  
invisibly covered with fitted tarpaulins  
the mechanical animals,  
the varnished, polished, chromed  
lightning-brilliance of surfaces,  
and inside cavernously their cylinders  
the mute quadruple meter  
crammed with the winter garages' congealed cool)  
and outside rays of the hot winter sun  
and—climatic misfit—

the variegated woodpecker's tropical colors  
as it shears the snowfield  
and reels away the horizon  
like a steering wheel spinning  
imaging the dazzle of the noonday sun meridian.

4

The fourth windowpane is the sky,  
sky strung taut, unwrinkled.  
The atmosphere's rarefied silence  
that does not record, dense blackboard,  
its irreducible cloud-colloquies,  
only, here and there, a line sign-snippets,  
gropings for meaning,  
rags of promise.

#### STREETCAR

*to the memory of Sidney Keyes*

The streetcar groans down the street.  
In its pain, poor thing, it lurches.  
On the yellow animal's dwindling  
electric-milk we hang in bunches.

From the depths an African house rises slowly,  
it is white and round, like the girl who rose from the sea,  
the grass touches the windows' parted lips,  
in the curve of an armchair a small salamander sits.

A bathroom—tiles, bakelite—on its own ledge  
a steel helmet, colored for camouflage,  
preserves the molding helmet-liner, the leather straps,  
as its shell preserves a dead turtle's corpse.

They're always fixing the streets.  
The stones almost touch your feet  
under the thin platform;  
as the streetcar jolts along