

About Death and Other Things · *Alexander Ristic*

How strange will be the death of which I've thought
since my childhood:
an old man barely able to move leaves a small town
library,
bends to one side till he drops onto the green lawn.

I've reasons to believe that I too will experience
what others have
while I climb the stairs carrying the food for the evening
meal in a nylon bag,
and without turning to look at the one who in that moment
descends curly-haired and in a party dress.

It could be an ordinary death in a train coach:
a man who carefully studies the fields, the hills and snow,
shuts his eyes, drops his hands into his lap,
and no longer sees what a moment ago he admired.

I'm trying to remember other possibilities and so here
I am once again
disguised as myself in a small merry company,
where, after emptying my glass, laughing, I fall on the floor
pulling after me the tablecloth and the vase with roses.

My death would have an entirely spiritual meaning
in some sanatorium for the insane among the mountain ranges;
while we die we complain to each other in beds
with freshly changed sheets.

But, suppose I die in an entirely different way from
the one I expect:
with my wife and daughter and surrounded with books,
while outside the neighbor tries to start the car
which the night has surprised with snow.

translated by Charles Simic