

DENISA COMANESCU

Return From Exile

Eleven years, four months and seventeen days.
Was it a short exile?
This is not the same notebook as then.
I've had lots of them.
Some were large, bound in leather, with golden covers,
others small, light, with Bible paper.
I would stealthily touch them at night
stroking their pages like membranes
faster and faster, more and more intense, insatiable.
At day, I would not dare get near them,
as if they were someone else's private property.
After a while, I gave them away to friends—
it's for your new poetry book, I'd tell them.
To some it brought luck, or so they say.
And then you came,
after eleven years, four months and seventeen days.
Mornings, in the light that seems to elude death,
we fearlessly keep filling in, simple and natural, membrane after
membrane.
Each time I turn a full page,
Orpheus turns his eyes away.

Translated from the Romanian by Adrian G. Sahlean