

Long Vigil

When will we return to the interrupted conversation?
Give me the place and address though the darkness is thick
and matches are wet from fog

I recognize footsteps
that approach and go away
how full the past is of images
cut through by sudden lightning

Streets and attics where we lived
places of deportation war humiliation and pain
—all drowned

Only sometimes when it's silent
a whisper can be heard:
we are here

It's two in the morning
why are you already having breakfast?

Translated from the Polish by John and Bogdana Carpenter