

End of an Air Raid

April 5, 1944

You dropped your chalk
and the splintered door beat against the wall

the sky appeared, partly hidden
by the spiders
that fed on murdered children.

Someone had taken away
the walls
 and fruit tree
 and stairs.

You hunted after spring
impatiently, like you were expecting
a lunar eclipse.

Toward dawn, they even took away
the fence
you had signed with a scratch,
so the storks would not lose their way
when they came
this spring.

A VISION OF THE FEELINGS

(O viziune a sentimentelor, 1964)

In Praise of People

From the point of view of trees,
the sun is a band of heat,
people – a terrible emotion . . .
They are the wandering fruits
of an even greater tree.

From the point of view of stones,
the sun is a falling stone,
people are a tender pressure . . .
They are motion added to motion
and light you can see, from the sun.

From the point of view of air,
the sun is air full of birds,
wing beating on wing.
People are birds never before seen,
with wings ingrown
that beat, hover, glide,
within an air more pure: thought.

Song on an Aluminum Scaffold

And a wind wrapped around my chest
as it passed, and transparent arms,
tossed by body into the clouds,
where lightning licked my breast.

Oh, and thus, in one toss or another,
were my soles sliced by a peak, whose white
turned ruby red with my blood,
later,
when my body extended its height.

A floating soul and I crossed paths.
It told me, in despair:
I have not descended from these high currents
since Hiroshima's mushroom launched me into the air.

O soul, I shouted,
I am not dead!
Calm yourself with the moon.
The scaffolding sprayed into translucence
and I danced across, surrounded by light,
with the tip of my vision in the future.

The Lion Cub, Love

The lion cub, love
leapt toward my face.
Her hunt had begun, muscles tense,
long before.
Her white fangs plunged into my face,
the lion cub bit me, today, in the face.

And at that moment, nature
encircled me, further
away it felt, then closer
like a narrowing of waters.
And my gaze jettied upward,
a rainbow in two parts,
and I found my sense of hearing
near the song of the skylark.

I moved my hand to my brow,
temple and chin,
but my hand no longer knew them.
And slipping into the unknown
passing over a desert, dazzling
in measured steps
moved a copper lioness
treacherous,
a little further away,
and a little further . . .

To Peace

I look back over my life's ages,
over the line of bodies I set up
straight
like a pillar to support
the sky, with the sun in the center.

There's a child's body whose arms hold
an adolescent's body.
There's an adolescent whose shoulders lift
a man's body.
There's a man's body on whose forehead are
the wrinkled feet of an old man.
There's an old man with whiskers yellowed
from tobacco,
who kisses the mouth
of phantom clouds,
the blue sky, the black universe.

This life of mine, like a pillar,
I offer to hold your heavens
over weddings and births,

and I call on lovers to carve
their initials into me,
enclosed in the outline of a great heart,
pierced by an arrow
of light.

Sentimental Story

In the end, we saw each other more and more often.
I was on one side of the hour,
you, the other,
like the handles of an urn.
Only words flew between us,
before and after.
Their vortex was almost visible,
and then,
I dropped to one knee,
stuck my elbow in the earth,
only to observe how blades of grass
bent under falling words,
as though beneath the paw of a sprinting lion.
The words spun and spun between us,
before and after,
and the more I loved you, the more
they repeated, in an almost visible vortex,
da capo, the structure of matter.

I Remember, Still Amazed

I remember, still amazed
by that time when my mind
was enveloped in a haze,
the jumble
of memories and desires and loves,
and I would wait to fall asleep, to plunge into a sleep,
like a pearl diver, whose ocean
pulls streams of blood from his nostrils.

I was connected to objects
by invisible vines,
I would hang from them and swing,
I threw myself from hour to hour,
the way, once upon a time,
a shouting Tarzan threw himself,
from one jungle tree to another
his feet fluttering through the air,

never touching
the silent, fecund earth.

One Thursday, with Love

An evening one Thursday, an evening heart-thick,
when our destinies grew
like grass in spring,

and I loved you
so much I forgot you
and believed you were part of me.

And only then was I surprised
when I smiled sometimes, and you
didn't

when I stole leaves from the trees
and you
stayed beneath them, a little longer.

Only then did it seem
you were someone other,
but only as
the evening sun can be another –
the moon . . .

Song Without an Answer

Why should I love you, woman dreaming,
wrapped around me like smoke, like a grapevine
around my chest, brow,
ever lithe, ever writhing?

Why should I love you, woman delicate
as a blade of grass that bisects the estival
moon, knocking it into the waters,
separated from itself
like two lovers after an embrace? . . .

Why should I love you, melancholic eye,
pale sun that rises over my shoulder
and drags along a sky, in gentle scents
thin clouds, and no shade?

Why should I love you, unforgotten hour,
when in place of tones
horses race around my heart,
a herd of foals with rebellious manes?

Why should I love you so much, love,
a sky colored by seasons knocked
(always another, always close)
like a falling leaf. Like a breath wind turns to frost.