



Desig

Josep M. Benet i Jornet

Desire

The Man This afternoon, once again a marvellous afternoon.
And the damp cold in your bones.
Cold, how wonderful it is to know it's cold. Knowing.
Without a scarf.
The thick sky, solid, as if it were about to fall.
Those are not imposing clouds... I remember, we used to call them Wagnerian clouds.
Those clouds that moved towards us, that evening, then, thirty years?, almost thirty years ago.
A memory of yours.
This afternoon's sky, so different. Equally marvellous, too.
Or more so.
Seeing it that way, that's your gift.
A scarf, or better still, a vest.
Always without a vest.
Not wearing a vest doesn't mean you're young any more, but you don't wear it and the cold gets into your bones more easily.
Those clouds moving... What simplicity.
The wet road, some hedges, the drizzle that stops and now starts again, the closed sky: beauty.
Beauty without excuses that you can still see, hear, smell...
That should not last.
Paradise will not last.
Freed to the exterior shadows, where there is nothing.
Not even pain or longing.
Not yet. Not at the moment. Being here.
Here, waiting.
Now, your job.
Taking advantage of everything. The obsession with not wasting a single crumb.
Taking advantage of the cool breeze that hits your neck.
Taking advantage of your numb feet, of your hands numb from the cold.
Taking advantage of the fact that there is a job to complete: helping with it.
I hope it's done.
Perhaps later, explaining your gift to them, but there won't be any time.
The wet asphalt glistening just for you.
From the day, no long ago, when you had received the gift, from the day that face was met again.
From that day on there is nothing more.
It doesn't matter.
At times, burning with fever, suddenly embarrassed.
You take the hand, you encourage, you push.
Why not? So there's a job to be done.
During this marvellous afternoon, these final wonderful days.
Looking at the gift, a job, this word of comfort.
An unstable word of comfort, which nevertheless allows you to be here, almost happy, on this selfish afternoon.
Understanding finally the leaden colour of the sky, the trembling of the hedges, the hardness of the asphalt...

Understanding, above all, this damp cold that gets to your bones, that makes your sickly body shiver.
The illness.

The sentence that sharpens the senses, that allows you to understand, that allows you to be here,
patient and expectant.

That still doesn't prevent you from being able to listen for those sounds you most anticipate.

That still... I would say that... that still allows me to listen for the sound of a car as it drives nearer,
at first far off, barely a slight noise, and then, immediately, the rumble of an engine getting louder
and louder, dissolving the panic, at least for a while, that spurs me to work, to resolve the waiting, to
try again.

Perhaps it will happen this afternoon, in the course of this marvellous afternoon.

Perhaps.

I am signalling.

And yes, the car is coming to a stop.

Translated by Sharon G. Feldman