

Furies and Sorrows
By Pablo Neruda, Chile

In the depths of our hearts we are together,
in the cane field of the heart we cross through
a summer of tigers,

watching over a meter of cold flesh,
watching over a bouquet of inaccessible skin,
with our mouths sniffing sweat and green veins
we find ourselves in the moist shadow that drops kisses.

You, my enemy of so much sleep broken just
like bristly plants of glass,
like bells destroyed menacingly, as much as shots
of black ivy in the midst of perfume,
my enemy with big hips that have touched my hair
with a harsh dew, with a tongue of water,
despite the mute coldness of the teeth and the hatred of the eyes,
and the battle of dying beasts that watch over oblivion,
in some summer place we are together
watching with lips invaded by thirst.
If there is someone that pierces
a wall with circles of phosphorus
and wounds the center of some sweet members
and bites each leaf of a forest giving shouts,
I too have your bloody firefly eyes
that can impregnate and cross through knees
and throats surrounded by general silk.

When in meetings
chance, ashes, drinks,
the interrupted air,
but there are your eyes smelling of the hunt,
of green rays that riddle chests,
your teeth that open apples from which blood drips:
your legs that stick moaning to the sun
and your pearly teats and your poppy feet,
like funnels filled with teeth seeking shade,
like roses made of whips and perfume,
and even, even more, even more,
even behind the eyelids, even behind the sky, even behind the costumes and the travels,
in the streets where people make water,
you sense the bodies,

in the sour half-destroyed churches, in the cabins that the sea bears in its hands,
you watch with your lips nonetheless florid,
you knife through wood and silver,
your great frightening veins swell:
there is no shell, there is no distance or iron,
your hands touch hands,
and you fall making the black flowers crackle.
You sense the bodies!
Like an insect wounded with warrants,
you sense the center of the blood
and you watch over the muscles
that disregard the dawn, you attack shocks,
lightning flashes, heads,
and you touch
lingering the legs that guide you.

Oh guided wound of special arrows!

Do you smell the damp in the middle of the night?

Or a brusque vase of burnt rosebushes?

Do you hear the drop of clothes, keys, coins
in the filthy houses where you come naked?
My hatred is a single hand that shows you
the silent road, the sheets where somebody has slept
in fear: you come
and roll on the floor handled and bitten,
and the old odor of semen like a clinging vine
of ashy flour slips from your mouth.

Ah light and mad goblets and eyelashes,
air that floods a half-open river
like a single dove of irate riverbed,
like an emblem of rebellious water,
ah substances, tastes, live-winged eyelids
with a trembling, with a blind fearful flower,
ah grave, serious breasts like faces,
ah huge thighs filled with green honey,
and heels and shadow of feet, and spent
breath and surfaces of pale stone,
and harsh waves that mount the skin toward death
filled with heavenly soaked flour.
Then, does this river go between us, and do you along one shore

go biting mouths?

Then is it so that I am truly, truly distant
and a river of burning water flows by in the dark?
Ah how often you are the one that hatred does not name,
and how sunken in the darkness
and under what showers of mashed manure
your statue devours the clover in my heart.

Hatred is a hammer that strikes your gown
and your scarlet brow,
and the days of the heart fall on your ears
like vague owls with eliminated blood,
and the necklaces that were formed drop by drop with tears
encircle your throat burning your voice as if with ice.

It is so that you will
never, never speak, it is so that never, never
will a swallow come out of the tongue's nest
and so that its nettles will destroy your throat
and a bitter ship's wind will inhabit you.

Where do you undress?

In a railroad station, next to a red Peruvian
or with a harvester, in the fields, in the violent light of the wheat?
Or do you run around with certain fearful-looking lawyers,
you lengthily naked, at the edge of the water of night?
You look: you do not see the moon or the hyacinth
or the darkness dripping with dampness,
or the slimy train, or the split ivory:
you see waists as slender as oxygen,
breasts that wait getting heavier
and just like the sapphire of lunar avarice
you flutter from the sweet navel to the roses.

Why do you? Why not? The naked days
bring red sand ceaselessly shattered
to the pure propellers that inaugurate the day,
and a month goes by with tortoiseshell,
a sterile day goes by,
an ox, a corpse goes by,
a woman named Rosalie,
and in the mouth remains only a taste of hair

and of golden tongue nourished on thirst.
Nothing but that human pulp,
nothing but that goblet of roots.

I pursue as if in a broken tunnel, at another end,
flesh and kisses that I must forget unjustly,
and in the backwaters, when the mirrors now
liven the abyss, when fatigue, the sordid clocks
knock at the doors of suburban hotels, and the flower
of painted paper falls, and the velvet shit by the rats and the bed
a hundred times occupied by wretched couples, when
everything tells me that a day has ended, you and I
have been together knocking bodies down,
building a house that neither endures nor dies,
you and I together have gone down a single river
with linked mouths filled with salt and blood,
you and I have made tremble again the green lights
and we have asked once more for the great ashes.

I remember only a day
that perhaps was never intended for me,
it was an incessant day,
without origins, Thursday.
I was a man transported by chance
with a woman vaguely found,
we undressed
as if to die or swim or grow old
and we thrust ourselves one inside the other,
she surrounding me like a hole,
I cracking her like one who
strikes a bell,
for she was the sound that wounded me
and the hard dome determined to tremble.

It was a dull business of hair and caverns
and crushing tips of marrow and sweetness
I have reached the great genital wreaths
among stones and submitted subjects.

This is a tale of ports
which one reaches, by chance, and goes up to the hills,
so many things happen.

Enemy, enemy,

is it possible that love has fallen to the dust
and that there is only flesh and bones swiftly adored
while the fire is consumed
and the red-dressed horses gallop into hell?

I want for myself the oats and the lightning
flesh bottomed,
and the devouring petal unfolded in fury,
and the labial heart of the June cherry tree,
and the repose of slow paunches that burn without direction,
but I lack a floor of lime with tears
and a window at which to wait for foam.

That's the way life is,
you, run among the leaves, a black autumn has come,
run dressed with a skirt of leaves and a belt of yellow metal,
while the mist of the station corrodes the stones.
Run with your shoes, with your stockings,
with the distributed gray, with the hollow of the foot, and with those hands that wild tobacco
would adore,
strike staircases, knock down
the black paper that protects doors,
and enter amid the sun and the anger of a day of daggers
to throw yourself like a dove of mourning and snow upon a body.

It is a single hour long as a vein,
and between the acid and the patience of wrinkled time
we pass,
separating the syllables of fear and tenderness,
interminably exterminated.

Trans by DONALD D. WALSH

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