

IN THE PASSENGER CAR

Aleksander Wat

In the passenger car heading south
two old ladies, fighting off sleep,
sharing an egg. Yellow crumbs
powder their knees. On the sweating panes
rosy-fingered dawn. Doesn't say much
to their dead carp eyes.
Close by a grove of trees zipped past. From the river
the smell of sweet flag. To be
a cow in the meadow.

AND ON THAT NIGHT, WELL AFTER MIDNIGHT, ...

Aleksander Wat

And on that night, well after midnight,
P. B. came to me.
This time as an earthworm,
4 meters 20, that's what I measured
at first sight. And my room
was less than 3 meters.
Therefore he shrank
like a spring squeezed by a finger.
Thereafter he wound around me, unhurriedly,
Rhythmically. Tighter and tighter.
Through his soft hairiness I felt rings
hard as india rubber. I didn't cry out, though it hurt.
Everyone knows: whatever he does, he does out of love for me.

ON OUR STREET

Aleksander Wat

1

On Benvenue trees change color through the night:
yesterday wedding-white, today the color of rotting plum.
On the terrace wind from the Pacific kneads
my face. Like this!
And he got to me here, even though I fenced myself off with the ocean,
jetted away in the sleepy elastic night
above the black waters. In vain.
And he found me even here, on this good street Benvenue.
Each morning I go into the green water,
watch in the mirror a skeleton
with loosely stretched skin.
In twelve hours a little bell from the campanile will remind us of the
lost melodies of childhood.
Roses smell different here than back home. And all this
enters the one-dimensional course of time, whatever philosophers
might say.
Summer follows spring, fall comes after summer, and winter
waits for me
irrevocable. Although here, on the good street Benvenue
seasons are unrecognizable as twins. Four orphan sisters
patiently waiting for mother's return, benvenue.

2

From under an umbrella I look at the far ocean.
The sun warms my cracked palms.
I have folded them into a prayer, but I'm not praying.
Once I read how Ibsen was dying:
The sidewalk was paved with felt, and the carriages were sent
the long way around.
Here the automobiles are soundless. And there aren't any now.
It's meal time. Footsteps on the stairs.
A black postman tells me I owe three extra cents.

Ola goes to the living room for the pennies.
For a few long moments I'm unguarded.
I rip the envelope open. White card stock.
An invitation to my funeral,
which will take place on Tuesday at half past eleven.

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