

FATHERS IN EXILE

We are exiles

Not only from the land but from our sons.

The young men who no longer desire our worn suitcases and torn books.

We never held

A map of love, a way of knowing

The secret directions to the heart.

When we became fathers

Something made us jump back from the heat of it,

The burning innocence, the hot scars on our failed breath.

It was about the land and body we could no longer see or touch

Between the entrance and the exit.

Between somewhere and nowhere.

We tried to make a home out of the ruins of imagination.

What is lost is bone and memories more than sperm.

The faces of our sons are the fingerprints on our souls.

Our sons catch breath – struggle to breathe

Each small fist is a nail hammered to air.

FATHERS IN EXILE

(For Naomi)

NERUDA

Neruda's head is across town.
It's in the garden outside
the OAS building

I need to go there.
No, I need to find what they
did to the rest of Neruda's body.

Where are Neruda's hands?
Legs? Feet? Did someone believe
Neruda's poems came only from his head?

What does one make love with?
Bring me Neruda's poems.
Ask them to confess.

STONES

Maybe next year
we will live with more urgency.

We will love days of dangerous
new beginnings.

I once waited near windows
and doors for your return.

Outside it is October (again),
everything is changing color.

Red, orange, brown.
The leaves are falling.

I remain black. A small stone
for your coat pocket?

I like how your hands hold me.
Maybe you could *skip* me across

the lake and make me believe
It's love.

MEETINGS

(For Holly)

I'm sitting in another meeting

where people are talking about money.

They call this fundraising. We spend the time

talking about people who have money.

We mention names of people we don't know.

This is what you do when you don't have money.

You talk about people who do.

Before the meeting ends there is agreement

among everyone to contact three people

who have money. I leave the meeting knowing

I won't make any calls. I walk down the street

talking to myself. At the bus stop I search

my pockets for money. This too is fundraising.

When the bus arrives all the poor people board.

I'm on my way to another meeting.

The poor people are going to work.

A guy sitting in front of me is yelling

on his cell phone. He is talking about money.

He says –

I don't give a fuck!

I want my fuckin' money!

This too is fundraising.

AUSTERITY

(For Temo)

We will all lose our jobs

If not today then tomorrow.

A writer calls me asking about

How to get published. Writers

Are having a difficult time. I start

To explain the journey we are on,

The poet's path. The writer interrupts

Me and says –

Cut the metaphorical bullshit!

I want a Mercedes Benz.

What do you want?

Today I returned my poems to my lover.

I filed for unemployment.

My heart stopped.

Please recycle to a friend.

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S e l e c t i o n s

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