Marina Tsvetaeva - Mary Jane White

God, Factories, Correspondence

God

1

Face without aspect.

Serenity. —Charm.
All who share flesh
In you are rehearsed.
Like fallen leaves,

Like loose gravel.
All who make outcry
In you are silenced.
Rime grown over rust—

Over blood—over steel.
All who lie facedown
In you are risen.
1 October 1922

2

Beggars' and doves'

Lonely run of scales.
These would be your
Clothes laid out over
A run of trees?
Groves', copses'.

eISSN 1847-7755; doi: 10.15291/sic/1.8.lt.1

Books and temples
Returned to us—you rise up.
Like a secret escort
Pine forests rush by:
—We hurry! —And won't let you!
Using a goose foot

He christened the earth to dream.
Even as an aspen
He rushed by—and pardoned her:
Even for having a son!
Beggars sang:

—Dark, O, dark are the forests!
Beggars sang:
—The last cross is cast off!
God is risen from the churches!
4 October 1922

3

O, there's no fastening him

To your symbols and cares!
He slips through the least chink,
Like the sveltest gymnast...
By drawbridges and

Migratory flocks,
By telegraph poles
God—escapes us.
O, there's no schooling him

To stay and accept fate!
In the settled muck of feeling
He—is a grey ice floe.

O, there's no catching him!

Set out on a homely saucer,
God—is no tame begonia
Left to bloom at a window!
Under a vaulted roof all

Waited the judgment of their Master.
Whether poets or pilots—
They all despaired.
Since he's one on the run—who moves.

Since the great starry book
Of All: from Alpha to Omega—
Is a trace of his cloak, at best.
5 October 1922

About Factories

They stand in the laborer's shadow

As smoke-blackened blocks.
The curls of a moving heaven
Toss now above their soot.
Into the lonely vapor of a tea-room

A greasy peaked-cap shuffles.
These outskirts' last smokestack,
A final trumpet, clamors for justice.
Smokestack! Trumpet! From knit brows

A last blast: we are still here!
What death-sentence is this
Last complaint, this final trumpet!
How deeply into your velvet satiety

Their pitiful sounds sink their teeth!
With what buried-aliveness
And dragging-out to slaughter!
And God?—Up to his neck in smoke,

Won't intercede! We wait in vain!
On him—above beds in hospitals
And prisons, he is tacked up.
In mutilation! Of the living flesh!

As it was and as it will be—to
The end.
—All the singing of the rails,
Where every despair comes to roost:
Factory! Factory! Because it's called

A factory, this black flock lifting.
Get used to the despair of factory
Smokestacks, trumpets—because
The factory calls. And no intercessor

Will come for you then,
When over the last city
The last smokestack, a final trumpet, begins to roar.
23 September 1922

By Correspondence

That Castalian current,

Reciprocity, is not blocked!
By correspondence: beyond my eye
Lies, a larger reality.
Beyond calling, beyond seeing

Like a certain long la

Between my mouth and temptation
A mile of distance...
Blessed are the longitudes,

The latitudes of oblivions and strata!
Whose expanse moves into you
Like a note, like a moan
Prolonging itself in you,

Like an echo of a granite heart
Beating into you:
Don't look and don't listen and don't be—
Not that I need it in black

And white—in chalk on a board!
Nearly beyond range
Of my soul, beyond range of ennui—
... As a literary conceit

The final card is dealt.
Expanse, expanse
Now you are—a blank wall!
4 August 1923

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License