ČASOPIS ZA KNJIŽEVNOST, KULTURU I KNJIŽEVNO PREVOĐENJE

Future Insights
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Lines

The heart's wave would not
froth up so beautifully, and would not
become spirit, if, fate, the old
silent rock, did not oppose it.

Hyperion, quoted inexactly,
Johann Christian Holderin (1770-1843)

1

Down a line of humming pillars,

Propping up the Empyrean,
I send you my share
Of earthly dust.
Down an avenue
Of sighs—by a line on a pole—
My telegraphic: I lo—o—ve...
I implore... (no printed form

Will hold it! Using this line is easier!)
These—the pillars, upon which Atlas
Lowered the racetrack
Of the Celestials...
Down these pillars

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My telegraphic: go—o—odbye...
Hear this? This is the last stop

In my broken throat: forgi—i—ve...
This—rigging above the sea of fields,
Quiet Atlanta's path:
Up, up—and we are en—tangled

In Ariadne's: we are re—tur—ned,
And mangled! ... A charity ward's

Dolor: I'll never get out!
These—in a sendoff of steel
Lines—are the voices of Hades
Distancing themselves... Distance

Imploring: Take pi—ty...
On me! (From the chorus—can

You make this out?) In the dying clamor
Of obstinate passion is—
The small breath of Eurydice:
Down the embankments—and—ditches

Eurydice's: a—a—las,
Don't lea—

17 March 1923

2

I want to say to you... well, no, to put into lines

And squeeze into rhyme... My heart's—grown larger!
But still's too cramped, I'm afraid, for the sort of trouble
Found in all of Racine and Shakespeare!

“They each wept, and if blood could ache...

They each wept, and if there were snakes—in the roses”...
There was just one—for Phaedra—Hippolytus!
Ariadne keened—but just over Theseus!
Torn apart! Leaving no shores or landmarks!

Yes, I can say, having lost count,
That in you I lose all those
Who sometime and somewhere were fabulous!

What expectations—when the air is full

Of you—when you take up all the air!
When I am like Naxos—to the bone!
When blood runs under my skin—like the Styx!
Vanity! in me! Everywhere! having closed

My eyes: It’s fathomless! no daylight! A date
Lies on the calendar...
Like you—A rift,
I’m no Ariadne and not able...
—A loss!
O, over what seas and in what cities

Do I look for you? (The invisible—as the blinded!)
I trust my seeing you off to these lines,
And having come up against this telegraph pole—I cry.
18 March 1923

3

(Tracks)

All sorted out and all discarded,

(In particular—your message!)
Wildest of dissonances
Of schools, of thaws... (a whole choir
Of help!) Sleeves hoisted

Like banners...
—Shamelessly!—
These lyrical lines hum
With my high desire.
Telegraph pole! Could anything

Be a more ready choice? So long as the sky remains—
An indisputable transmitter of feeling,
The palpable news of lips...
Know, so long as there is a vault to heaven,

So long as there are dawns at the border—
So with clarity and in every part everywhere
And lovingly I will bind you.
Across the ill-starred years of this epoch,

Over mock-embankments—from rigging to rigging—
My un-issued sighs,
My tempestuous passion...
Beyond my telegrams (those unregistered

And unfailing urgencies!)
Spring-melt rushes down the drainpipes
To flood the line's expanse.
19 March 1923

4

Well-ordered streets!

Telegraph lines!
Bombastic—lustings—of mine,

A cry—from my gut and onto the wind!
This heart of mine, like a spark
Of magnetism—disrupts the meter.
—“Meter and measure?” But a four—th

Dimension takes vengeance!—Rushing
Above the metrical—this mortal
And false witness—of a whistle!
Ssh... So what if (after all aren’t there

Lines and poles everywhere?) understanding
Were to dawn on you: he difficulties
Of these utterances—are just the howl
Of a nightingale, run off the rails:

—Without you, beloved, the world is empty!—
Fallen, as I am, in lo—ve with the Lyre
Of your arms, and the Layla of your lips!
20 March 1923

5

I’m no reader of the dark arts! On the white book

Of the River Don’s vista I train my eye!
Wherever you are not—there I overtake you,
Pass through you—and haul you back.
In my arrogance, as from a tall cedar,

I survey the world: its vessels swim,

Their lights yaw... Out of the sea's depths
I wrench you up—from the bottom!
What you go through for me! When I am everywhere:

I, who am dawns and stones, bread and sigh,
I, who am and will be, and who probe
Your lips—as God probes your soul:
Who breathe—into your hour of hoarseness,

Who drag you through the hedgerows
Of an archangel's judgment!—I, with a mouth full of thorns
And bloodied, haul you back from the dead!
Give up! You know this is no fairy-tale!

—Give up!—This arrow describes its compass...
—Give up!—Not one has ever escaped
The one who takes you in without arms:
By breathing... (Whose bosom rises,

Whose eyelids are blind, around whose mouth mica—dries...)
As a woman of some intuition—I have come to mislead you,
Samuel—and am bound to return alone:
Since another woman is with you, and since on Judgment

Day we will cease to contend...
I circle and wait.
I who am and will be, I, who probe
Your soul—as I probe your lips, using my own
To lay you to rest...

25 March 1923

6

Hour, when the tsars above

And sacraments move, one to another.
(Hour, when I walk downhill):
Hills come to know.
Designs gather in a circle.

Fates converge: I can't give up!
(Hour, when I see no arms)
Souls come to see.

25 March 1923

7

At the hour my dear brother

Passed the last of the elms
(Those waving, formed up in file),
Tears came—greater than my eyes.
At the hour my dear friend

Rounded the last of the capes
(To mental sighs: revert!)
Waves came—greater than my arms.
Indeed my arms—followed you—to my shoulders!

Indeed my lips followed too—to entreat!
Little by little my voice lost volume,
Little by little my wrist lost fingers.
At the hour my dear visitor...

—Lord, look at us!—
Tears came greater than the eyes
Of humanity, than the stars

Of the Atlantic...
25 March 1923

8

Patiently, as one pounds stone,

Patiently, as one waits to die,
Patiently, as one absorbs news,
Patiently, as one nurses revenge—
I wait for you (fingers laced—

As a consort waits on a Sovereign)
Patiently, as one waits on rhyme,
Patiently, as one worries a cuticle.
I wait for you (eyes—downcast,

Teeth in my lips. Stunned. A paving brick).
Patiently, as one holds off coming,
Patiently, as one strings beads.
Creak of a sledge, answering creak

Of a door: roar of taiga winds.
An imperial decree has issued:
—Regime change, entry of a new grandee.
Welcome:

Unearthly home that it is—
It is my own.

27 March 1923

9

Spring brings on sleep. So, let's sleep.

Even apart, it seems we yield: every piece
Of our broken set unites in sleep.
Maybe we see each other in dreams.
The one who sees it all knows whose

Palm—slips into whose, who—is with whom,
To whom I bring my sorrow,
To whom I confide my everlasting
Sorrow (a child, whose father

Goes unnamed and whose end
Comes unexpectedly!) O, sorrow of those
Who cry with no shoulder to cry on!
Crying over what slips from my fingers

As memory, like a pebble off a bridge...
Over all the places already taken,
Over all the hearts already engaged
To servitude—with no break—forever.

Bound to live—a lifetime—without joy!
O, buried—barely able to rise!—at dawn!
Consigned to a shelf, that Elysium of the stunted.
Over how you and I are quieter

Than grass, stone, terror, water...
Over the seamstress taking up a hem, left to:
Slave—slave—slave—slave.
5 April 1923

10

I may sleep with others—in rosy tangles

Of tangles... For problematical fractions
Of weeks...
But I will be in you
As a treasure-house of similes
At second-hand—in the sands, gleaned

From detritus—overheard in the winds,
On the tracks... Beyond all the hungry
Outposts, where youth wasted itself.
My shawl—remember it? Drawn tight

In the cold, and hotter than hell
Thrown open...
Know, that a miracle
Of the heart—lies beneath my skirt, a living creature:
Song! With this firstborn, finer

Than all earlier-born and all Rachels...
—My truest heart, caught up in thickets
I clear with our imagined connections!
11 April 1923

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