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# Everything Is Plundered...

Stanley Kunitz

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FIRESTICKS

*for José Guerrero*

Conjugations of the verb “to be”  
asleep since Adam’s fall  
wake from bad phosphor dreams  
heavy with mineral desire.  
Earthstruck they leave  
their ferny prints of spines  
in beds of stone  
and carry private moons  
down history’s long roads,  
gaudy with flags.  
The one they walk behind  
who’s named “I AM”  
they chose with spurts of flame  
to guide them  
like the pillar of a cloud  
into the mind’s white exile.

“EVERYTHING IS PLUNDERED . . .”

*from Anna Akhmatova*

Everything is plundered, betrayed, sold,  
Death’s great black wing scrapes the air,  
Misery gnaws to the bone.  
Why then do we not despair?

By day, from the surrounding woods,  
cherries blow summer into town;  
at night the deep transparent skies  
glitter with new galaxies.

And the miraculous comes so close  
to the ruined, dirty houses—  
something not known to any one at all,  
but wild in our breast for centuries.

1921