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In Memoriam III

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Franco Fortini

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In the last hours
you stared wide-eyed.
You were terrified that you would not
be able to talk any more
not even inside yourself
about the one thing.
Now the noise is so violent
so furious the shaking-up of all reality
that even down there in the end
the tremor must reach you
felt as it was in the cellars once, in the war.
I shall not have time enough to reckon up, even now
it’s too late for that.
And this is the very thing
I did not know before.
Now you know it too
we know it
while about to be reborn.

translated by
Michael Hamburger

IN MEMORIAM III

The little girl crushed the mantis with a rock.
It jerked its head at each blow.
From its abdomen an omelet of seed
a stain of eaten meals.

The mandibles bit.
The knives of the claws slashed
air. One half
of an insect fulfilled itself.

translated by
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