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[Dogs' Breath Steams, Cold Air Catches in Your Throat]

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Eugenius Ališanka

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dogs' breath steams, cold air catches in your throat
when you step outside, glad to find
the familiar morning: bony earth,
skilled calligraphy of trees, even the smell,

this could be the landscape of the soul,
oikumene in november winds, something
more than the revelation of non-existence,
incarnate in the rhetoric of nature, it could be,

every autumn I give you a frozen
cluster of ashberries: infertile years have taught me
to save, as if I could leave after death
preserved words, but every autumn

I recite an incantation to exorcise hunger,
every autumn I forget history,
why should you need it, when the sun rises
portending another short day

SOLSTICE

neither to leave nor to stay,
no shore, this place has no beginning,
the shorter the day, the clearer the man,
neither absolved nor condemned, without the rust of frost,
in the dark glade the gesture
like lightning reveals rocks:
folios, engravings of night,
but there is more to survive,
memory purges the life