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## Solstice

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## *Eugenius Ališanka*

\* \* \*

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

from glacier to city,  
illusions oppose the seed of an apple  
every night,  
in every room,  
when one leaps from the highest cliff  
and never becomes present tense

★      ★      ★

devoted walls stood there,  
no one had a sword,  
the hay bundled  
into a bouquet meant more  
than funeral chrysanthemums,  
fog rose and fell,  
could any least syllable of loneliness  
escape november's yard

### AUTUMN APOCALYPSE

toward the silence of plains  
of hard-frozen earth one beam bends,  
the heavy light settles  
slowly on the face  
and between the bell and night  
consonance, created unexpectedly,  
bears away dreams: right here,  
where are scorching winds, where the returning  
warrior bows to the reign of time,  
a hand has opened doors to twilight  
an eye shatters the view  
into the loneliness of things, but there is no heart,  
only pulses, premonitions, and a step  
beyond the rose traced by frost  
on burning windows