Writing Sample

José Eugenio Sanchez Garza

Includes "NEW YORK WAS LEFT SUDDENLY WITHOUT JOSEPH BRODSKY," "BLUE MEDLEY," "A SUICIDE'S LETTER," "MY LANDLADIES" and "I WOULD PROBABLY LEARN TO LOVE HER IF SHE SPRINKLED HER BODY WITH BOURBON."

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NEW YORK WAS LEFT SUDDENLY WITHOUT JOSEPH BRODSKY

an old car guffaws by
a trembling fellow offers what you want
prostitutes in overcoats huddle together against the wind
some uniformed gents leave a bar completely smashed
a vagabond stretches out his hand
at street’s end a police patrol car
lights up as it moves slowly to the right
a couple leaves the theater
two black men speak to each other
and in the shop window in front
a pair of silk socks
hang silently
they seem to be more indispensable than us.

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BLUE MEDLEY

he met her at a bar or a concert
and talks of how to care
for bonsais
or some new single he read about in melody mirror
he probably does not remember if he asked her name
or forgot it
but slides his hands over her ass
and they dance

she screams
by fits and starts her clothes come off

he died months later
and various circles paid attention
his biography was written (on a number of occasions)
they gave him memorials
the president never tired of talking about him

how to imagine his fall from the cliff’s edge
in his yellow Volkswagen
now that he’s in underwear looking in the kitchen
for whiskey or some rum
to see if there’s any left

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A SUICIDE’S LETTER

not the dart that hit the bull’s eye
nor the poison nor the butterfly
pinned on the point

not a lucky stroke
perhaps a bit of patience and of course
a soft target

I do not blame this woman for blowing my head off
for bringing the song of her hips to my lips

don’t be ashamed
don’t pity me

and don’t stop her ferocious
desire to undress

only light the candles
raise the music
assure there’s wine and cheese
in winter
catastrophes require subtleties.

* 

MY LANDLADIES

although the three are unmarried,
the youngest is 62,

they requested no references:
one told me I looked
like christ.

I hope the day does not come
when they ask me to fix the door
the flyswatter  the shower

I can already imagine myself
with a wrench going into the bathroom
witness to a sad and painful tragedy:

a woman with dust rag skin
and soapy hair saying:
come here little boy,
or if you’re afraid of the water
let’s go to the bedroom,
just pass me the walking stick,
you can hit me with it.

I WOULD PROBABLY LEARN TO LOVE HER
IF SHE SPRINKLED HER BODY WITH BOURBON

she’s just passed a towel between her legs
because she was below a middle-aged guy
whom she obliged to use a condom
and she danced for him and sucked his cock
for 100 dollars as they had agreed
on the corner of sunset and western

now she adjusts her tights and leather skirt
puts on her shoes
pulls up her black jacket’s zipper half way at the breast
ruffles her hair
says goodbye smiling before closing the door
and walking under a persistent drizzle
on a lit and solitary street

she drags her handbag with a certain reluctance
and there’s something poetic in all this.

- Translation from the Spanish by Indran Amirthanayagam

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