The Trees

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THE TREES

The trees that I see from my window appear not to have changed.
But they have. One of the tallest is broken, and now we don’t remember what a great wall of green it made.
Others have a disease.
The earth does not breathe enough.
The hedges hardly have time to put out their new leaves before August clogs them with dust and October with smoke.
The garden’s history and the city’s are not of interest. We have no time to sketch the leaves or the insects or to sit in the white light hour after hour, working.
The trees don’t seem to have changed, they look true to their kind.
And yet they have been carried far away. Not even a cry, not even a sough is heard.
This is no cause for despair, my daughter, but for understanding while together we look at the trees and you learn who your father is.

translated by
Michael Hamburger

IN MEMORIAM I

Once you asked me what was on my mind and I did not reply.
But it’s become very difficult to talk of last things, my mother.