1984

Flirting with a Pig

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Charles Simic

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Come to me pig, you dressing yourself in king’s cloth while you come straight from the mud, your small eyes averted;
I have understanding for your embarrassment and your vanity.

It’s not right that I as a poet should approve of what you do,
but there’s something dear to me in your debauchery to which you yield with permanent ambivalence.

Still, the devil waits for you in the local slaughterhouse, he has fat fingers, thin blades, wears a sheepskin as he stands in the middle, legs spread in rubber boots, playing with knives.

Meanwhile, his helper washes the wooden pail and watches the master’s daughter who climbs down the ladder lifting her skirts so that the pink soles show and shins.

Come to me pig, mistress of the bog, whisper some love-word in my wide ear, before they lead you away while taking turns throwing curses and praises upon you.

*translated by Charles Simic*