1981

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"I hear that the axe has flowered," you said. It must have been a furious bloom, for the chips that flew to heal you, and then lie soft and harmless on your collar.

It must have been a flowering when the train rolled from its tunnel, led by a shaft of the purest light, as if goodness could roll from the grave.

Your parents, riding that train, could not have foreseen an axe gone crazy, glinting black, an axe that would salt and eat its own handle.

Was it impossible for you in Paris, lecturing to children of the dead? Did I hear you sift down like chalk dusting a classroom?

Under a desktop in the last row your initials deepen. But I will have to stop saying "Imagine Celan, who killed himself." Everyone kills himself.