An Apple Tree for Osip Mandelstam

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AN APPLE TREE FOR OSIP MANDELSTAM

Ah, there you are, Osip Mandelstam, clawfoot in a treehouse, with a notebook in which you transcribe Homer’s blind seas, the Gothic architecture of butterflies.

And now you flash, horizontal lightning, barbed wire of light— your body thrown into a common grave, no rites of burial, before the ground was frozen, somewhere between tree stumps—crackle of snow on a winter morning, dying back to the sleepy rustle of wheat in the slow of noon.

Your eyes are unerasable archives.
The century burns around you, the century of the hyena, of the wolf, of the little clerk who writes down names, then crosses some out.
The spastic laughter of machine guns, then silence in a forest.
Come live in the apple tree in front of my window.
What do you mean, The frost smells like apples?
For you I want summer and ripening light. Don’t think about the clouds bloodied with sunset.