

## A tree in the forest

Open-ended questions: asked.  
As a blindfolded martyr he's declined  
To answer the multi-faceted firing squad,  
Colors of fall in saturated clothes;  
Mockeries. Disappearances come  
In seasonal varietals and some—  
How he determined his preference by 5.

Our model's assumptions make simple,  
Are handed down from high altitudes.  
All the bells and whistles. Mahogany desks  
Into split firewood to warm the villagers.  
Commencing from a zero hour imposed,  
Not agreed upon. Its validity supposed,  
Like the pond, dull enough yet not frozen,  
Near the place he's discerningly chosen,  
Bending one knee to ascertain enticing  
The mushy, leave-strewn forest carpeting:  
Soft to fall on, especially.

All factors of production, they and he,  
Beneath the knowing sigh of a tall tree,  
Hushed, furtively gazing over oriental fans.  
The poor boy took what he was tasked with:  
Preservation of down-falling empires, not himself.  
And the ancient remedies read like fear of dark.  
A Prague Spring skipping along the pond.  
He fell singingly; they pointed the finger at him.  
Alone in their together, but unanimously,  
High-stepping into the shadows with electric detest.  
Red and White waltz to this dirge directed invasion.  
The hot of passing lead leaves ashes.

There was a time worth fighting for.  
One can imagine how he thought this was it.

¿Cómo se dice?

A small town, a smaller church  
And our small talk has grown tired.  
These bricks of mixed grays are old.  
I'm getting there too. So are you.  
Without small talk we're toothless.  
It's clarísimo. Like crystal.  
Someday we'll find ourselves  
In a church like this,  
Breathless "yes's" to harmless questions.  
Finally there's nothing left between us!

For now, we've lost ourselves,  
Forgetting to breathe because a chapel  
That can barely spare room for two  
Looms large above us  
Making light of the eminence  
Before us, the eminent question:  
Where *are* we going?  
Complex as a triple-transept cathedral,  
Lacking only what we need.  
Today it's clarísimo.  
We don't give a damn.

Rua, rua

My Portuguese mistress has come undone.  
At such prices everyone's eager as youth  
Skipping to the market on a pastoral Sunday.  
We're in God's place. It's heaven.  
She's come for my waxen wings,  
Smoldering me, melting them down,  
Only to reform me in the glazed,  
Moonlight incensed azulejos. Reformed.  
Hazier than before.  
Hazier about what came before  
The throes of lithe Lisbon nights  
And microwaved fados.  
More than ever  
I live life between the neck and the knees.

The cosmos in her cup

There was a crater submerged in the evening  
And the café a la francesa reneged.  
The cognac didn't do its job.  
So we lied, open-eyed, on the high-speed line,  
Slashing past pastured, shivering sheep.  
Mammoth complexities. A very woolly situation.  
Best to disembark from those sorts of places.  
Then patient twitching on a seat in the station.  
The schedule is false, so says the functionary.  
Time then for another drink, another wink,  
Another hand placed to leave no doubt  
As to what exactly this trip is about.

The functionary lied.  
We were right on schedule.  
What fools to bloom in the middle of the platform!  
She was a handle when I jumped aboard.  
She was drunk already and already defeated,  
But Provence was asleep  
And didn't mind our soiled attire.  
The renaissance of insouciance.  
We lay back on the panting steel tongue  
And slid down the gullet of night  
Into unspeakable, heretical disarray,  
Exchanging stares at face value  
From our sleepless, stoned visages.

Balmy breeze

A scented breeze from far away,  
Poppy winds, an enervating opiate,  
I breathe you in and find  
Delectatio morbosa once again  
At the end of my nose.  
From afar I sense you.  
You come with the rain,  
Always too much, always flood plain  
Pains of men alone too long.

I breathe you in  
And am senseless  
As before  
Only more.

Through my fingers, out of the present,  
Blowing into the past and future.  
Far away grown, maturation into a bleeding  
Being that sings without seeing  
The plain-as-day way of things.

I smell death instead  
Of the flowers in your hair.

I breathe you in,  
My opiate wind,  
And am reminded of love  
Before the Fall.  
Without remembrance of what's been  
Done—our nude bodies as balms  
To the exposed hidden terrors.

You are opiate winds leaving  
Me alone with the same terror.

I breathe you in  
And am senseless  
As before  
Only more.

Poppy flower, hot-red and strewn,  
I can see flowers but never you.