

ADVANCED STUDIES¹

(For Adonis)

1, A MOMENT OF LICKING

ivy's red leaves haemorrhage
licking the smell of imminent snow

lick it does your tongue exist?
do our tongues exist?

dead mothers embrace this little window
still in hiding after death
a place addicted to betrayal smeared with massacres

beneath the vine's claws does barbed-wire-torn flesh exist?

walking by the lake death has a sweet and happy taste
walking by deep autumn iron railings tightly girdle lamplit words
scattered words smash rifle butts in mothers' faces
in a landscape of ash the gaze still fixes on a railway line
coasting it is cast into 33 89 2001

how uncaring must you be to bear a single red leaf
brandishing the beauty of butchery?

2, WALK THROUGH: BOOKS OF BRONZE AND GLASS

calligraphy born from a lexicon of bronze your choice
the British Museum opens a void ignores us as we walk by arm in arm
a piece of jade wards off repentance ignores the cobalt blue of the ocean waves
carved with a sculptor's precision dazzling as Damascus

dark as Damascus a six-thousand-year photographic plate
contains trees amongst the loden green of a poetess that Adonis
contains chemistry lies down into a row of grey children
glass cases silently shaken to pieces by a certain day

every day extracts unbreathingness
jade wards off both high-rise ears intent on hearing the blood-streaked skyline
leaching out of cracks in Dachau Checkpoint Charlie Jerusalem
candle flame wet and sticky every mother will shed tears

¹ Author's Note: From the title of the Berlin Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute for Advanced Studies).

in silence mothers tick off reflected shadows
forget imperceptible explosions in the thermostat control cube
*mothers' hair that will never turn white again*² goes terrifyingly black
sets off a stone-blind lamp post on a Ramallah street corner³

shining day and night on monsters walking arm-in-arm
glorious as a ghazal the rose you just pinched back
a whiff of the stench of hell washing page after page of congealed pain
downward we marry the haemorrhaging moon

3, POETIC INQUIRY – ANOTHER EMBEDDED VOICE

can't be real is that beauty's fault?
 imagine a shirt spread out on the riverbed
steeping in the black of a Berlin night
 imagine two eyes water-choked mother choking on water
who says death isn't a drenched harmony?
a little window on the riverbed lights up the show
riverbed a word that never stops leaping downwards
 never stops finding leaked-out sobs
leaves go down and wounds go up
houses down enjoyment of imminent snow goes up
tongue tip is hooked ruin not enough by far?
 imagine a self plunging down
drowning in history's black water plunging like a pebble
there's no time other than a contraction of the lungs
there's no grammar other than a shirt that strips life away
say death's immeasurable side-on human shape
is filling up with sediment again still not enough?
 in self-indulgent poetry there are only newly-arrived words
touch in here he does all he can to pursue his own river bed
 to become it
 mother's vaporizing white travels in the opposite direction to beauty
spreads the worst of news no one saw this poem coming so quickly
 shattering
 dazzling as
 our aesthetic?

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² Author's Note: From Paul Celan

³ Author's Note: The town of Ramallah is occupied by Israel. Palestinian writer Mourid Barghuti's famous line *I saw Ramallah* describes the town and his own intense sense of exile.

2001 BC September 11⁴ that snow
still unfallen ivy withered into barbed wire
still encircling a distant view of the great eye of 1933
space on either side of the stone walls filled with ruins
sky's edge tears a breach open as each tower burns you collapse twice
then distinctly hear the heart of an East German soldier tightening his belt
"No Tiananmen in my hand!"

a poem's anniversary the throng is a dark cast-iron cloud

brewing a crystallised reality snow
invisible underground a string of fresh rotten rosary beads
counting your hand-counted jades to ward off the white inside you
our hands stretched out never far from butchery
another square heaped with dirty shrivelled children
soaks the street-corner oak little locust tree olive tree roots
with staring here and there at the bronze medal of the cold moon
with the iron gates a Berlin Wall made of water can't pry open
one teardrop expels the unrecognizing eye socket
a poem on fire jumps down start to finish never plummets into screams

(on Potsdamer Platz
youthful dusk with chemical-smelling liquids
spray paints a city covers a city
always this one
second person of the BC of black sand crunching underfoot)

walking along unscrapable tongue fur the solids of time
smash into your solidity along the skyline
letters created every second murdered mothers make us
reiterate murder stated and re-stated along bone-chilling cold
poetry can't but be there playground laughter wiped sparkling clean
Mandelstam exposed
each snow as the first snow

a poem destroyed is indestructibly alive
a tiny hexagon can't go past its
tongue snags on the world its dribbling more than the world
a little window props one side of us up as we walk leaning together
choosing not to shoot as you pull the trigger like a DDR soldier picking a word in
a poem
scribbling into an elegy that transcends every death that has ever been
BC at both ends of a verse suffering utterly red pinching

⁴ Author's Note: See the long poem by Adonis entitled *September 11th 2001BC Concerto*

one more suck holds the Sunday anniversary
a silvery white recording stings the all-pervading
heart spasms once and has won history

a poem waits until the dead come lifelike back

