

NEVERENDING RHIZOME – Pierre Lepori – Translated by Peter Valente

black, the city has white windows  
white, the city has black windows  
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each window like an eye  
a hidden destiny, spit out,  
a hidden destiny each window spitting out  
like a hidden eye every black window  
and behind the window, behind the city,  
behind an eye, behind a face,  
black faces, white cities, hidden eyes  
at every step in this city spitting out  
black eyes from windows eyes in windows  
eyes without eyes or face  
the whites of the eyes that remain silent  
in the white city in the dark of life

put your foot down, your weight                      and  
advance into the city with a thousand windows like eyes

unfortunately  
you always wonder  
if behind the city  
behind the faces behind the eyes  
something pulsates, something proliferates,  
something you call life  
not a life like any other  
a life as you wish, a rich life  
of deeds and gestures, sometimes shattered by screams  
a double or triple life less than zero yet a life  
a garland of sweet thoughts of troubled thoughts  
what kind of life? Just a life with its up and downs

its hazards and especially

memories

memories

memories

days spent as a child in the countryside  
or in the city what do you know  
of the happy days or the horrible emptiness of life  
the memories of hazards  
alleyways covered with red leaves in the setting sun  
early mornings in the thick fog of a winter that does not end

of the keys that jingle  
boots that speak  
the lapping of curly words just to  
warm the heart  
since it won't work when it's banal  
and still more and more eyes  
their eye sockets full of celestial orbits  
planets stars galaxies in an early morning sigh  
little milk little grief  
the rest of the drool clinging to the corners of the lips  
*un baffo di latte*  
what do you know about the bustling life  
that beats quietly in the rustle of the windows

the moon is rising, it's night  
the snow is falling, a blue day like any other

do you know, do you believe, do you want  
people who meet  
graze each other, bump into each other  
that little heat that circulates,  
and sometimes yes! sometimes hands touch  
not necessarily out of love, despair  
sings silently of a better future  
in line with the fault of the rumbling tarmac roads  
morning noon evening

piss stained asphalt cracking  
all those voices that speak  
flutter  
the eyelids: never!  
open your eyes my friend, in the white city,  
in the black city like milk,  
or the dark body of the snow that sucks up the frost  
open your ears  
to the four winds

from one cell to another  
from one radius to one radius  
a cymbal crash  
not a spiral but in rhizome in reticle  
fishnet stockings network of dead skin  
from one synapse to another  
goes up and down this little bit of

this nothing

that you call the others  
behind the eyes but what do you know?

and finally - are you dreaming? -  
*square, hortus clausus, locus circinus,*  
a city sprinkled with clock hands  
a vacant lot at the edge of fear  
a gunshot and the scathing cries of a strange bird

face to face, you ask for a face to face  
to avoid the worst, to escape the crowd  
to trample the eyes the black houses the rumbling pipes  
sometimes it's said like a motto  
in the city a drop of water,  
a bowler hat, is enough  
to find each other, to caress each other

a brief moment this caress  
it's not windy, you meet  
you graze less, you touch  
the city changes color  
rainbow and cotton candy  
shooting *stella*  
oh yes, how ridiculous, quick tongue  
eyes half-closed and finally  
like child's play  
hopscotch *gioco del mondo*  
rough alligator skin, you see?  
sadness goes away  
*ombra mai fu*  
*nei suoi nei tuoi occhi da sempre*

less than a caress  
but still more than the winter cold  
less than a kiss  
but the certainty that the other's skin leaves a mark  
minimal epiphany  
*lacustre un'onda*  
no more tobacco residue in the mouth  
honey of dawn, sugar of evening  
all windows open  
in the open air  
airplane tarmac playground  
compass that spins and small holes  
wind holes storm holes  
*e bonaccia apparente*

*un'esatta sensazione*  
*touching toccare skin*  
*di essere meno soli*  
*lo sai lo senti vuoi lo vivi*

too little, *questa amnistia*

and then and then and then  
the rope unwinds  
the speed catches up with you  
eyes always by the thousands who judge you  
who judge your caress and erase your desire  
why do NO's  
rise up like pickets signs  
*istrice violento*  
NO's like javelins  
and the city shuts its windows  
shame, that's it? *Vergogna!*

*corri, fuggi*, the shame and the race  
*pollice verso* the swarm of bees in pursuit  
gravel that penetrates and pierces the feet  
misery of the city burning  
but the black flames eat the heart  
*Angst essen Seele auf*  
more room to breathe if you linger  
the threshold crossed pointless beliefs  
brooding it's the only thing that remains  
breathing heavily  
spare yourself the shame  
out of pity that fury that lashes out  
licks your bare feet now  
your nakedness is a fall from eden

and when calm returns  
like a sinking ship  
when the city constricts your forehead  
and you finally understand  
like a dog you whisper  
you know that at the end of the road  
shame will outlive you

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