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STREET SCENE

in the quiet street
not even the sound of footsteps on the pavement
the shutters drawn down over all the windows

where has the murmuring leaves’ gold dust gone?
where has the pale-faced woman consumed by illness
staring all day from a second-floor balcony vanished?

reddish brown buildings their doors nailed shut
now only the bones of branches piercing the chilly air

god now there is no-one even to call your name

beyond zinc roofs the endlessly open sea
on a tower an unseen flag flutters
SCENE II

summer 1945

scabs of black memory tear off
the guillotine river cuts up
the city’s torn skin

pushed along in the flow
countless burnt eyes
eyes
eyes

in the iridescent light
the guts of civilisation crumble like broken tiles
sticking out, a rib
a malleus
a thigh bone
nerve fibres tangled around them
like rusty phone wire

where are unravelled organs
starting to sound again?

in the collapsed temple’s hollowed eye-sockets
the illusion of poppies
burning silently
DÉCALCOMANIE II

shi (poem)  is a needle’s gleam spreading on the marble
me (eye)  is the magnet on which its light converges

shi (death)  is invisible sap climbing inside a tree
me (bud)  is the thorn it feeds pricking the outside world

*

shi (poem)  is the shadow of a soaring bird
me (eye)  is the rifle bullet following in its tracks

shi (death)  is a moth’s disturbance circling the night’s crown
me (bud)  is the flame subsiding on the candlestick

*

shi (poem)  is a black rose
me (eye)  is the trembling antenna

shi (death)  is the sea-bed’s tangled algae
me (bud)  is the slicing blade

*

shi and shi  are the ciphers
me and me  are the decipherers

shi and shi  are the pollen
me and me  are the carriers
Fautrier’s Birds

Fautrier four tori e four birds painting
one bird purple
one bird green
two birds transparent
skim through a magnetic storm
perturbed purple
gathered green
scud through the gouache sharply
steel skygleam before dawn spills through the windowframe
cold clawmarks’
unseen tracks
unheard ether of flutes
sky done in clay
clouds of waves
waves
waves
waves
purple the burning flame of mu
green the predawn bud-sap
the birds fly through the invisible shadows of birdless forms
whirling world
turning time
the birds forever flying
never arriving
never stopping
at themselves
solid wind
whirlpool poem
large looming music
endlessly emerging from themselves
the birds do not stop flying
the whip of purple’s *mu*
the predawn green’s
wake...
PASSING SUMMER

in the morning hair of a palely brightening
dawn garden’s tangled grassy darkness
waves of summer’s tears overflow
gone the dream of trembling lily skin
gone the white death of gardenias’ scent
in first light over fields of darkness
the voice of dissolving time’s distant storm
scatters revolving green’s dazzling illusion
into empty sky…
JULY

1

the Kannon temple bell distantly echoes
the burning of the chaff scorches the night sky of memory
fetching purifying sand at Gion Yamakasa festival

2

the rain’s harp sweeps past allegro
irises peonies rhododendrons too swept past
from a green wound a drop drips andante

3

rotting grass gives birth to fireflies
a lily morphs into a butterfly
in the sky swim countless silver fish

4

one morning white waves come crashing into the mind
the endless traveller alone
walks through beautiful southern streets

5

amid the rubble water bursts from pipes
tears are burnt and parched
darkly bright noon
the author of ‘Spinning Gears’ drank Veronal on an innocent young day for the first time
I felt the terror of life