

In the Saxon Garden

Translated by Freda Hodge (2015)

I.

Smaller and smaller
dwindle the flames in the sky.

The weary clouds spread out
on long beds of mother-of-pearl
and rest.

Softly, softly
the rubber wheels talk
with the asphalt of the street beside the Garden.

The great city has been taken over
by blue shadows.

The high hot day
bent over, lower and lower
until it toppled —
and now the trees move freely,
shaking from their heads
the final sparks.

Now the evening lies
in the cold pool,
between two swans.

The swans look on
and swim in silence
white through the darkness,
white through the darkness.

They listen
to an old man who strides
along the edge of the water
and murmurs to himself
How good... how good...
Blessed be the Creator!
Ah....

II.

Out from the verandah of the "Summer Theatre"*
cheerful sounds
waft
into the dark avenue,
of hearty laughter.
To each side statues stand unseen
in marbled silence.

They bear Night on their shoulders,
and Night rejoices — —
stars...stars...stars...

Close by
the pride of the trees grows...

On a corner bench
a boy sits alone
lost in thought, and sings:

"Are bright stars scarce in the sky?
Are precious girls
scarce on the earth?
Today you did not come
tomorrow you will be mine —
and if you have taken another
I have another nine..."

The verandah empties.
In the "Summer Theatre"
the Second Act
now begins — —

(1920)

** The Saxon Garden was an elegant park in the centre of Warsaw. It included a building where in summertime theatre performances were held. (Ed.)