

Scamps

Translated by Beni Gothajner and Andrew Firestone (2014)

Never before did the dusk
bring so many green, red and brown flowers
on its breast.

A nurse gazes out of the hospital windows:
now the great courtyard in the centre of the sky
is paved with weariness and silence, it suffers and is blue.
Blond fair-skinned children, both happy and sad, frolic there
and all of them carry golden sheaves of straw

which they set on fire,
they play and set fires.

Through the hospital windows the young nurse marvels,
smiling up at the heavens she recalls
how once each child was her patient here
and their sleep would fall in her arms, like a tear.

She marvels, and her eyes sadden:
"Their hard lives flickered, so sickly ó
they themselves were wind and yellow corn ó
pale and lonely, they long stayed silent
until from home I brought in "Nestle's" milk,
biscuits, orange juice and lead soldiers."
The astonished nurse's eyes burn more deeply ó
"Look what they've become up there! Such lively scamps!
They are allowed to set the fires at dusk... "

And as she stares, her supple limbs
lurch forward drunkenly and she sobs:
her little brothers dance in glorious flames ó
never has evening been more beautiful.

Never anywhere has evening come before
with so many green, red and brown flowers
on its breast.

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