

Sometimes a Day Comes Along with Blue Eyes Like a Night

Translated by Beni Gothajner and Andrew Firestone (2014)

Sometimes a day comes along with blue eyes like a night
and the curtains are whiter than he is... so that ashamed and shy,
he advances slowly, faint and dim, approaching sufferers
the way a weak unspoken answer comes to vague unspoken
questions...

The day wants to give comfort because he is sick as well.

The patients ponder "What's he sick with? Stomach? Heart?
Kidneys? Liver?"

As ever darker matters come to mind they drowse like shadows,
drowse long,

They drowse like shadows and drowse long...

Suddenly, a dreadful sound, a cruel clanging.

The rapid wail of the copper bell throws horror onto the scales
of their repose.

Sleep falls away and eyebrows rise:

Where are we, where?

As the rapid wail of the copper bell

makes a dozen hearts go out
to the patient who says: friends, I have seen
above my head
a rainbow in a dream.

Everyone waits.

Eyes wide open, dreams sundered as if by shears.

Darkness. All watchful, lying still, listening.

Darkness. All watchful, lying still, listening,
afraid that a move could let thought in.

But a jaundiced man turns yellower yet and laughs:

“Gentlemen, we’re under the whip.

What such a dream means is:

sudden death.”

Ah – really? Yes – oh – is that it!

Now they see Him, He sits on all their noses ó
and in the man's staring eyes, just like the glitter
that comes off shattered glass:

Death.

The day is shocked and moves off far away.

The clouds transport dead children on tin trays.

Someone's fist has mashed the sun and ground it up for flour.

What is it now: dawn, midday or dusk? So pale and spectral
there's nothing to see. The anguish continues but no one speaks.

The hours hang heavy, blue as spleen, white as marrow and green
as gall...

There's nothing to see. The day has fled. The hours hang heavy,

Blue as spleen, white as marrow and green as gall...

The walls in the ward stand as if blind.

Who can see what will be? Is it day now? Or night?

And a jaundiced man turns yellower still and laughs:

"Seeing a rainbow in dream means: sudden death."