

PANTOUM (after Béla Tarr)

'It was as if the real threat came from elsewhere, from somewhere beneath their feet, though its source was bound to be uncertain: a man will suddenly find silence frightening, he fears to move.'

(LÁSZLÓ KRASZNAHORKAI, *Satantango*)

'To beguile the time, look like the time.'

(*Macbeth*)

Slush throbs on mildewed-soaked windowsills.

The cobwebs are arranged. These aeolians strung up
In a knotted stasis in crack and crevice.
Yet by whom. Never mind. Enter: their brother's distant keeper-
Two scintillating slits, a cold film of cobalt,

Whirling in a knotted stasis in crack and crevice,
Poised watchman, between walls that weep green of cabbage and communal slag.
Enter: another two smouldering slits, to watch over the grimed whirlwind
Of weathervane and choking isle. His webbed skull,-

As it takes in the panorama between walls that weep of cabbage and shared slag,
-Is like a snowflake noting the slow patience of diplomacy,
Alighting whitely on weathervane and isle. The caretaker's slithering skull
Drips, softly, with creation, rising like damp, whilst

A suffocated snowflake notes the mounting insistence of diplomacy.
Her wind-struck wound a phosphorescence from the west sun.
His pulse drips, softly, rising like damp.
Tundra's gift. Thank you. The silencing leopard smothers

Her wind-struck wound, huffing and puffing from the west sun.
In the stewing November mire, a burin of clawed images are chiselled.
Tundra's alms. Bless you. The fugitive leopard dissolves
With the rain, pacing up and down, swigging pálinka outside their frontier.

In the cracked November mirror, an eyelid falls gently like a beaten wing
As the wooden bureaucrat clocks: *tick-tock, knock-knock, tick-tock, knock-knock.*
The rain paces up and down, downing pálinka just outside their harbour.
An imperial talon etches out our nailed-on hands, whilst

The cuckoo yacks: *tock-tick, knock-knock, tock-tick, knock-knock,*
Mumbling, soon enough, (lest fate evade it), the stink shall surely hit the fan,
Like an imperial talon stretching out nailed-on hands.
We ooze please from tipped hats. The rain broods, sparking up, outside our gate

Whilst the winking cock spoils the next act (the brown re-hitting the fan.)
So the prayers fester like lichen suckling the candle-dark altar,
As the rain shimmers outside and a choir of voices is bought to a steady simmer:
Inhuman Leviathan! You raise us, whilst you sink us; you move us, whilst we are muted

*And our hopes moulder like the glaciation of bone under a heart of quicksand.
We are the dust that has danced together since the original chaos;
For what purpose do you endlessly uproot us, careless monstrosity?
Why seize us if your silence will only maul us? Don't we matter?*

Never mind. Here comes their chirpy brother's keeper,
Whistling his aeolian, to restring, to rearrange the cobwebs
Beneath slush scraped away from mildewed-soaked windowsills.