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Ricardo Rizzo

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Autor

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Penal Architecture

School, prison, state orphanage,
I walked your gray hallways,
Stood in your darkest corners
With my face to the wall.

The murderer sat in the front row.
A mad little Ophelia
Wrote the date on the blackboard.
The executioner was my best friend.
He already wore black.

Cracked, peeling walls
With every window barred,
Not even a naked lightbulb
For the boy left in the solitary
And the old master
Putting on his eyeglasses.

In that room with its red sunsets,
It was eternity's turn to speak,
So we listened breathlessly
Even though our hearts
Were made of stone.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

To the One Tunneling

Penitentiaries secured for the night,
Thousands lying awake in them,
As we too lie awake, love,
Straining to hear beyond the quiet.
The blurry whiteness at the ceiling
Of our darkened room like a sheet
Thrown over a body in the ice-cold morgue.

Do you hear the one tunneling?
So faint a sound he makes
It could be your heartbeat or mine
In this wall we lean our heads against.
With our eyes now tightly shut
As if a jailer has stopped to peek
Through the small crack in our door.

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Country Fair

for Hayden Carruth

If you didn't see the six-legged dog,
It doesn't matter.
We did and he mostly lay in the corner.
As for the extra legs,

One got used to them quickly
And thought of other things.
Like, what a cold, dark night
To be out at the fair.

Then the keeper threw a stick
And the dog went after it
On four legs, the other two flapping behind,
Which made one girl shriek with laughter.

She was drunk and so was the man
Who kept kissing her neck.
The dog got the stick and looked back at us.
And that was the whole show.

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Nearest Nameless

So damn familiar
Most of the time,
I don't even know you are here.
My life
My portion of eternity,

A little shiver,
As if the chill of the grave
Is already
Catching up with me —
No matter.

Descartes smelled
Witches burning
While he sat thinking
Of a truth so obvious
We keep failing to see it.

I never knew it either
Till today.
When I heard a bird shriek
The cat is coming,
And I felt myself tremble.

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Read Your Fate

A world's disappearing.
Little street,
You were too narrow,
Too much in the shade already.

You had only one dog,
One lone child.
You hid your biggest mirror,
Your undressed lovers.

Someone carted them off
In an open truck.
They were still naked, travelling
On their sofa

Over a darkening plain,
Some unknown Kansas or Nebraska
With a storm brewing.
The woman opening a red umbrella

In the truck. The boy
And the dog running after them,
As if after a rooster
With its head chopped off.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

Windy Evening

This old world needs propping up
When it gets this cold and windy.
The cleverly painted sets,
Oh, they're shaking badly!
They're about to come down.

There'll be nothing but infinite space.
The silence supreme. Almighty silence.
Egyptian sky. Stars like torches
Of grave robbers entering the crypts of kings.
Even the wind pausing, waiting to see.

Better grab hold of that tree, Lucille.
Its shape crazed, terror-stricken.
I'll hold on the barn.
The chickens in it are restless.
Smart chickens rickety world.

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Obscurely Occupied

You are the Lord of the maimed,
The one bled and crucified
In a cellar of some prison
Over which the day is breaking.

You inspect the latest refinements
Of cruelty. You may even kneel
Down in wonder. They know
Their business, these grim fellows

Whose wives and mothers rise
For the early Mass. You, yourself,
Must hurry back through the snow
Before they find your rightful

Place on the cross vacated,
The few candles burning higher
In your terrifying absence
Under the darkly magnified dome.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

*image
not
available*

The Secret

I have my excuse, Mr. Death,
The old note my mother wrote
The day I missed school.
Snow fell. I told her my head hurt
And my chest. The clock struck
The hour, I lay in my father's bed
Pretending to be asleep.

Through the windows I could see
The snow-covered roofs. In my mind
I rode a horse; I was in a ship
On a stormy sea. Then I dozed off.
When I woke, the house was still.
Where was my mother?
Had she written the note and left?

I rose and went searching for her.
In the kitchen our white cat sat
Picking at the bloody head of a fish.
In the bathroom the tub was full,
The mirror and the window fogged over.

When I wiped them, I saw my mother
In her bathrobe and slippers
Talking to a soldier on the street
While the snow went on falling,
And she put a finger
To her slips, and held it there.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

*image
not
available*

Factory

The machines were gone, and so were those who worked them.
A single high-backed chair stood like a throne
In all that empty space.
I was on the floor making myself comfortable
For a long night of little sleep and much thinking.

An empty birdcage hung from a steam pipe.
In it I kept an apple and a small paring knife.
I placed newspapers all around me on the floor
So I could jump at the slightest rustle.
It was like the scratching of a pen,
The silence of the night writing in its diary.

Of rats who came to pay me a visit
I had the highest opinion.
They'd stand on two feet
As if about to make a polite request
On a matter of great importance.

Many other strange things came to pass.
Once a naked woman climbed on the chair
To reach the apple in the cage.
I was on the floor watching her go on tiptoe,
Her hand fluttering in the cage like a bird.

On other days, the sun peeked through dusty windowpanes
To see what time it was. But there was no clock,
Only the knife in the cage, glinting like a mirror,
And the chair in the far corner
Where someone once sat facing the brick wall.

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available*

[The stone is a mirror]

The stone is a mirror which works poorly. Nothing in it but dimness. Your dimness or its dimness, who's to say? In the hush your heart sounds like a black cricket.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

[My guardian angel is afraid of the dark]

My guardian angel is afraid of the dark. He pretends he's not, sends me ahead, tells me he'll be along in a moment. Pretty soon I can't see a thing. "This must be the darkest corner of heaven," someone whispers behind my back. It turns out her guardian angel is missing too. "It's an outrage," I tell her. "The dirty little cowards leaving us all alone," she whispers. And of course, for all we know, I might be a hundred years old already, and she is just a sleepy little girl with glasses.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

Department of Complaints

Where you are destined to turn up
Some dark winter day
Walking up and down dead escalators
Searching for someone to ask
In this dusty old store
Soon to close its door forever.

At long last, finding the place, the desk
Stacked high with sales slips,
Concealing the face of the one
You come to complain to
About the coat on your back
Its frayed collar, the holes in its pockets.

Recalling the stately fitting room,
The obsequious salesman, the grim tailor
Who stuck pins in your shoulders
And made chalk marks on your sleeves
As you admired yourself in a mirror,
Your fists clenched fiercely at your side.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

Scribbled in the Dark

A shout in the street.
Someone locking horns with his demon.
Then, calm returning.
The wind tousling the leaves.
The birds in their nests
Pleased to be rocked back to sleep.
Night turning cool.
Streams of blood in the gutter
Waiting for sunrise.

[[Clique aqui para ler a tradução](#)]

Traduções

Inominado ao lado

Tão familiar
A maior parte do tempo,
Nem percebo que você está aqui.
Minha vida
Minha parte na eternidade,

Um calafrio
Como se o frio da cova
Já estivesse
Quase me alcançando —
Não importa.

Descartes sentia o cheiro
De bruxas queimando
Enquanto pensava
Numa verdade tão óbvia
Que ainda não conseguimos vê-la.

Eu também nunca soube
Até hoje.
Quando ouvi um pássaro grasnar:
O gato está vindo,
E senti que tremia.

[[Clique aqui para ler o original](#)]

Teatro de bolso

Dedos no bolso de um sobretudo. Dedos despontando da luva de couro preto. As unhas roídas até ferir. Uma peça chama-se “Mercado de ladrões”, outra “Uma noite no Museu de Quinquilharias”. Os dedos quando se despem são como banhistas nus enfeitiçados ou membros falsos de madeira na fábrica de próteses. Ninguém jamais assiste à peça: você põe sua mão no bolso de alguém na rua e sente a ação.

[[Clique aqui para ler o original](#)]

O segredo

Tenho minha desculpa, Sr. Morte,
O velho bilhete que minha mãe escreveu
No dia em que faltei à escola.
Nevava. Falei que minha cabeça doía
E o peito também. O relógio deu
A hora, deitei na cama do meu pai
Fingindo dormir.

Pela janela pude ver
Telhados cobertos de neve. Na minha cabeça,
Eu montava um cavalo; estava num navio,
Num mar tormentoso. Então cochilei.
Quando acordei, a casa estava calma.
Onde estava minha mãe?
Escrevera o bilhete e partira?

Levantei e fui procurá-la.
Na cozinha nosso gato branco
Mordiscava a cabeça sangrenta de um peixe.
No banheiro, a banheira estava cheia,
O espelho e a janela embaçados.

Quando os enxuguei, vi minha mãe
De roupão de banho e chinelos
Falando com um soldado na rua
Enquanto a neve ia caindo,
E ela pôs um dedo
Sobre os lábios, e lá o deixou.

[[Clique aqui para ler o original](#)]

Fábrica

As máquinas se foram, como os que nelas trabalhavam.
Só uma cadeira de encosto se destacava como um trono
Em todo aquele espaço vazio.
Eu estava no chão procurando ficar à vontade
Para uma longa noite de algum sono e muita reflexão.

Uma gaiola vazia balançava presa a um cano.
Lá dentro botei uma maçã e uma faquinha de descascar.
Espalhei jornais por todo o chão ao meu redor
De modo que pudesse pular ao menor ruído.
Era como o risco de uma caneta,
O silêncio da noite escrevendo em seu diário.

Dos ratos que vinham me visitar
Eu tinha o melhor dos conceitos.
Eles ficavam em duas patas
Como se prestes a fazer um educado pedido
A respeito de algo muito importante.

Muitas outras coisas estranhas se passaram.
Uma vez uma mulher nua subiu na cadeira
Para apanhar a maçã na gaiola.
Eu estava no chão vendo-a na ponta dos pés
Sua mão se agitava na gaiola como um pássaro.

Nos outros dias, o sol espiou através das vidraças empoeiradas
Para ver que horas eram. Mas não havia relógio,
Apenas a faca na gaiola, reluzindo como um espelho,
E a cadeira no canto distante
Onde alguém uma vez se sentara de frente para a parede de
tijolos.

[Clique aqui para ler o original]