

The Red House

To Alexandra Dominguez

Someone is spreading rumors that on the outskirts of town there's a red house. A house where black cardinals sacrifice parrots to the flood's voice. The flood's beard is white, like the willow of jurisprudence at a Sunday wedding. Preachers love the storm & they beat the hard-ons of midshipmen with their nacre Bibles. Families lap-up liquor, they cross themselves, collect insects. The child in the metal sheet calmly jerks-off to the transparency. The rose of Jericho smells like vanilla. Someone's spreading rumors that on the outskirts of town there's a red house. A house whose dreams are filled with fish, the fish of Saint Peter, the conscience of the dolphin encircled by the ring of a deserted bay. Lorenzo de Medici had a red house, the marionettes from Byzantium had a red house. My heart is a red house with glass scales, my heart is a beach hut whose eternity is as short as a column of tears. The minotaur rolls his eyes down the starry cliff, the nightfall's wound nestles in the sand. I speak with wings, speak with the lava of what's been burned & with diamond smoke. Geometry drinks poison, the harmony of the dance of the dead can be heard in birdsong. In the red house there's a white table, on the white table there's a silver box filled with Saturday's nothings. The elements groan against the walls, sadness moans against the marble statuary. The prophet had a papyrus house by the lakeshore, the ghetto girl lived in the house of questions. My left hand flaunts a water ring, the thermometer's mercury shines in the superstitious girl's cameo. I sing fire, sing horses against arithmetic & numbers. Someone's spreading rumors that on the outskirts of town there's a red house, a house under heaven's index & the black water lily of the devoted lover. The boy with ebonite eyes loves disease & the regal ruby. The beautiful women dream in watercolor, dream of storks & bulk & sudden wonders on woolen rugs. I live lost between two blood roses, the one that stains disaster with impatient beauty, the one that stains dawn with its Eucharistic star. My will has a metalsmith's anger, my whim the rust of your iron forehead. Nobody travels through the evil forests, nobody on death's grass listens to the heartbroken speech of diligent ceremonies. I see the rainbow, see the musicians' country & the gospels' olive tree. My house is a red house beneath a sunbeam's thread, my house is the vision & the beauty of an island. There's room enough here for the Mandarin's gala & the scrupulous usury of ages past. This house faces north toward the fern marshes, this house faces southeast battered by the breath of those who beg for alms.

Instructions on How to Kill a Nightingale

Pin his tongue down in the butterfly box
extract his colors by flaying the butter of the head
wherever you see him he's out searching small snow-white snout
he screws all the moms snacks on the grandbabies prowls about the villa
stupidly ham-handedly he extracts the hazelnuts from the chocolate
the king of cups receives him he used to have a tie but no longer wears ties
has three ears one solely for his ten fingers
he lifts the bride's veil shows no concern for the white violets
he's disgusting if you knew how he kisses the forest rangers
he gets up with his head full of mistakes
calls on the phone is as chatty as lezama himself
they stay in capri as if they were somebody imagine that
all of a sudden I'm thinking that maybe there's a way
without even mentioning anything about beating them with sticks before
they turn nineteen I say all this with my heart in my hands

Baker's Son

There he goes, as if reason had no breaks
It's one of 2, or aristotle tripped him up
or saint thomas pushed him down the hill
He's the baker's son, on a bike
through the lead tunnels where snow
falls when the chicken truck rumbles through
The epoch when splendid things would happen
has already passed, those once-in-a-lifetime
events that come to nothing
Few trust anymore in biblical multiplications
No one finds gold nuggets in rivers
No newspaper has front-page nightingales
Between historical landscapes and hopeful maxims
for scholastic doctrine
everything definite remains definitely unresolved
There's no going back, things have pulled in the opposite
direction and no street leads to the entrance
of so to speak the world's great panaceas
He leaves bread in the cloth bags hung from knobs
He spins the turnstile in the house of the confused
And the unseen returns smelling of those enchantments
that give meaning to foolish day and to the still more beautiful infinite day
Heather crackles in the oven
Those who have gone before flee the boredom of sacred warnings
and they wander toward the chance fire of happiness
Winter mists have no other plan
when the tramps raise their hoods
and the hunters track roe deer in their dreams
Night has ended, the new sun of day
shows up behind the beehives to lend a hand
who knows if it's with the water, who knows if it's with the fire
The wind comes, the choughs that look like rooks come
The rooks that look like crows and the raven
The violet and blue black come
And what's said flies away and what's not said, remains said

Poem One

I told him chairs become unbearable when empty more than anything he told me after burials more than anything after weddings once guests leave you're right I told him a hammer is a deep secret in shirt sleeves that enters a lecture halls screaming ready to open anything it can that's a little much he said no book opens its mouth wide enough to get wrapped up in a police investigation I'm not so sure I told him there've been cases in france & in the south of occupied poland yeah but not here he said where cowardice & raincoats overfill the coat stands as soon as two drops fall

poems he said have turned into window displays for clothing stores I made a face he eyed me on the sly as if to say I've got you swindler you thought you could just take your straightjacket off & head out to steal the chickens from among the street trash I didn't tell him & it wouldn't even had occurred to me tears have made me mediocre & the prestige of dramatic texts have unleashed mockery on the automatons forced to work for the human affairs team

well he said the bags are there start carrying them when you want I don't know if I can I told him he responded that's up to you but how can I do it all alone don't come at me with those things he responded sullen what was I supposed to tell him my role was just to be quiet the road to infancy is a long one & the sooner it begins the better I thought to myself now the doctrine of the academicians had wreaked havoc on my mind & the pregnant nuns with their divine information offered me a position in their factory

he told me manners and kindness are on the outs so that's your business I don't understand what you're trying to tell me I'm not going to repeat it for an actor to fail is to end up in the circus parade beside the zebra cage in the best of cases you now understand me not altogether I told him I feel like an apostate wandering through a landscape of empty chairs the excessive use of makeup doesn't really matter all that much do what you want he responded you lack any common sense & self-esteem that's true I responded

all the books full of words

& all the books full of words
& all the calendars full of days
& all the eyes full of tears
& full of clouds the heads of all the seas
& full of crowns & kicks all the hourglasses
& of ground up giraffes all the decorated chests
& all the hands full of summer & sea snails
& all the bedrooms full with a fistful of explanations
& of preserved trousers the chairs in all the whorehouses
& all the holes full of spectators
& all the beds full of the electrocuted
& all the animals full of spirit & fright
& of fierce screams all the trees in the sawmills
& all the courts full of testimonies
& all the dreams full of corkscrews
& full with girls all the stars
& all the books full of words
& all the calendars full of days
& all the eyes full of tears
& all the fish tanks & all the school desks & all the intimate dinners
& all the reasons full of undeniable buildings
& all the springtime full of flies & chrysanthemums
& full all the churches & all the socks & all the hair salons
& all the women full of glory
& full also of glory all the men
& all the dog pounds full of angels
& all the keys full of doors
& the dollar stores full of rats
& full of street sweepers all the blocks
& full of dung all the brooms of the nation
& all the heads full of x-rays & ulterior motives
& full of light all the electrical substations
& full of love all the insane asylums
& all the cemeteries full of lifeguards