

Cyclists

Two scoundrels straddled
bicycles at night,
they bought candles,
red paper lanterns
and set off for the outskirts;
twenty hearts beating there
in the same hotel of dirty sheets
and behind it the sea
where sailboats disappear,
all the well-kept lighthouses
constellate the vast horizon,
large birds assemble
their white troupes on the rock;
though the opera glasses
and the joy were seized in one go
from the girls that we loved,
all their blood was left in them
and when in the silvery dawn
there was nothing but trees and God
the delinquent with the dreamy air
filled his tires while singing.

Masons of 1830

Placid the masons from La Creuse
in long silent bands
crossed back through Paris in the evening
to their dormitories of bunks
and without seeing the displays
of fatty salmon
frothy gowns
gold and colored gemstones,
they were daydreaming of returning to their lands
of vipers and sinkholes
as they passed pale dandies dressed
in beautiful aubergine and ivy fabrics.
Builders of new palaces
they headed back in slow troops
to their daily gathering around the table
when each in his own turn lifted
through shreds of twilight
the bowl of thick soup.

History

As history seems
sad to the world at times
the heavy dinner gets cold
the great orator never returns
his mistress follows her dreams
then later on
there is the uprooting
the muffled gunshots
the bells of a grand congress
on which night falls
while out in the fields
of his eternal childhood
the poet is walking
not wanting to forget a thing.

Artisans

Artisans full of order
make the most of time
that slips through their fingers
one reworks tirelessly
the circle and the hexagon
in the broad evening;
the other has finished oiling the harnesses
his child is asleep
in the wicker crib;
the most skilled of them all
believes in wearing down death at best
letting the shadows spread out
on the festival square
without forcing dreams.

In Humans

In humans
sometimes a balance
of good nature is reached
as the smoke rises
a day laborer carrying back his scythe
while hammering the ground
reaches the hamlet colored like burnt bread
where with half-closed eyes his daughters rest.
On each face of the same rock
the insects of a floating world sleep.

Dogs

Barking dogs silent dogs
on alert from morning till night
at the entrance or along the streets
remain standing, sitting, lying down
often with a bloodshot eye.
A Newfoundland without knowing it
carries his island name and searches
through the mountains.
Great Danes like their masters trail on their backs
the gleam of yellow lamps
that light up and flicker
on a windy evening
full of troubles.

The Plant

A wild species said to be noxious
points toward the sky
its fluted stem and large umbels
sap rises bitter in its veins.
The emaciated man walking along
ready for war
tramples similar triumphant vegetation;
then hearing all the shouts of children
who are playing in the mist
he has had enough
of living and misusing it all.

Earthy Things

The foundation
riddled with animals
of the house by the side of the road
keeps its faithful walls up
chicken coops, rabbit hutches
beehives widowed or full
stretch to the end of the horizon
friends, enemies and the indifferent
cast adrift or united by their footfalls
again uncover leafy detours
prudent shortcuts
crossroads of tall grass
and sometimes go looking in full sun
for bravery.

Shreddable

The woman looks without speaking
at cloth she thought was durable
shreddable
world she thinks
where nothing lasts
and yet each evening
the clinking of tools
can be heard inside the bag
on the back
of the man returning mortified at the end of the day
while from a lightly raked path
there comes a smell of food.

Village Square

In the village square
at the foot of the church
one of the drinkers puts on
the kepi of his soldier friend as a joke
above them the hour strikes so loudly
they flinch
a horse that is unhitched
when it stamps the soft earth
radiates an abundant calm
they say to get there
leave before nightfall.