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Day and night are not inevitable stages of a recurring cycle: usually they melt into each other imperceptibly, sometimes they seem to flow alongside each other simultaneously, and occasionally they plunge into each other. Seething. Then it's as if someone jumps through the window into the room in front of your eyes, but if you take your hands away from your eyes the glass is whole again. Whoever has looked into the flash of a camera knows that nothing is what it is. A miniscule sliver, nestled in the pupil, adds a gleam to your eye. You sit in Piazza San Marco, you look at a church, but you see horses foaming at the mouth as they gallop through space. During the day you let yourself drift through the city, smiling. At night you stand at the quay, smoking, listening to the buzzing of mosquitoes above the water. You breathe deeply, turn around and walk back across the square. Glass tinkles at your feet, magnesium flares up behind your eyelids.

*Campo San Francesco della Confraternita*

No one remembers who planted the trees. Maybe one day two boys stood on the square. Moments before, they had prayed in the chapel. Eyes closed. Pale. Introspective. Maybe their eyes had met then already. Two swan necks moving towards each other briefly between the other heads. Now they're standing on the square with their backs to each other: one boy motionless, the other looking at the lacquered door. One boy laughs while the other sees his reflection in the lacquer. One boy turns his head a few millimetres to the side, almost imperceptibly, but enough to rouse the other boy into action. Leaning backwards, as if falling in slow motion. Until the other boy can catch him in the corner of his eye. Nothing more. They shrug their shoulders briefly and walk away in different directions.

Years later the treetops have become entangled. Where they first touched, sap drips onto the paving stones. One drop at a time. A stalagmite rising up out of the stones. Heavenwards.

*Campo Santa Maria Formosa*

The cooks in Venice are as nimble-fingered as the Thai miracle-doctors who, armed only with fingers, manage to massage the lumps and sorrow out of your body. As they spin the dough on their index finger, and your eyes become bewitched, they pluck vegetables and squid out of nowhere with the other hand. Motley rings.

You take a bite and your mouth is caressed.

The coffee afterwards is as dark and hot as the Venetians' glance. As you drink it, you feel – defencelessly – how boys' and girls' fingers find their way into your trousers' pocket, your jacket, your shirt.

Later, you sit, penniless, and giddy, as you watch the fountain that rises up out of the square like a crowned finger.

When you undress in your hotel room you find – in your clothes, in pockets whose existence you had never suspected – names, addresses and telephone numbers embroidered on paper-thin material still warm from other bodies. It lies pulsating in the palm of your hand like a heart.

*Campo San Giacomo di Rialto*

Aubergines. Tomatoes. Figs. Pineapples. Peppers. Courgettes. Lettuce. Passion fruit. A woman looks at the fruit, kneels, bends over to tie the laces around her ankles. A man looks at the woman and slices a watermelon open with a single stroke. Dripping between his fingers. A moment later the woman pensively touches the tongue with a fingertip. The man wipes his knife clean on his apron. The aubergines blushing deeply. The tomatoes veined. The figs swollen. The pineapples succulent. The peppers firm. The courgettes smooth. The lettuce curling voluptuously. The passion fruit tender between thumb and index finger.

Velveteen water wells up out of the fountain.

At night the square exhales a dense sticky air that you can barely wash off.

*Campo San Beneto*

It's not only the earth that pushes stones up out of itself. Sometimes a city dislodges its stones, or pushes surrounding buildings onto a square.

Whoever puts an ear to the ground hears a voice. Singing that comes together under the stones like spring water. Can a throat produce a noise so subtle it makes windows, walls and floors crack? Can our eyes see that voice? A solid alabaster voice-box surging up out of the ground?

We didn't have the heart to remove the voice-box. We covered it with a bronze lid, because it's impossible to live virtuously day and night.

Sometimes we slip out of the house at night to embrace the voice-box. Until we're satiated. After, we go to the fountain. Leaning forwards we see how our naked bodies, reflected in the rippling water, are clad in dozens of sighing, perfect bodies draped all over us.

*Campo San Maurizio*

At night the paving stones recall the sun's warmth and the reclining men and women. Shadows, which separate themselves from bodies in the evening and wait, crouching, till night falls. Some stand next to buildings and assume poses, others stroll across the square, leaning back slightly like matadors. Until the first shadow kneels in front of another shadow, and one shadow languidly paints the contours of another on the sweltering wall, with a tongue or a fingertip. One shadow after another in the wet plaster.

In the morning the sun sucks the walls dry.

A silvery cloud drifts away over the shimmering lagoon. Somewhere the cloud will empty itself and anoint the people and the landscape.

In the middle of the square there's a tomb. Someone sweeps the square clean, throws the remnants of the nocturnal revelry into the tomb, firmly secures the lid.

*Campo San Samuele*

Forget everything you know. Everything is a lie. The city is a lie. The gondolas are a lie. The boy and girl swimming are a lie. One day the boy leapt out of the water like a dolphin and at the same moment winter struck with a fury. During that leap the whole canal froze solid. The girl's face and palms were waxen. The boy put his hands on the ice. Eye to eye. They stretched out. It wasn't clear who lay on whom, but the crust of the ice began to melt. And whether because of gravity or love, the fact was that the boy sank away through the ice. When the water splashed up, it froze instantly. A splash in the shape of a bud.

We never found the boy and girl again – maybe that's what they always wanted.

It took us hours to chisel the frozen bud out of the ice. We dragged it to the square with our last ounce of strength. It's been winter on that spot ever since. But touch the ice for a second and your fingertips burn.