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Every time from the beginning

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I'm turning over a new leaf, I've got my health back
I'll write about love again, I murmur
to myself while the chock-full bus
tilts dangerously on a curve like a blue
flower on its too-frail stem
I will spend this day looking
at façades freshly painted in shiny
Austrian ochre around Zrinjevac Park
I will fill my eyes with the contents of show windows
with Italian fashions that look good
only on teenagers
I will spend a bit of money on useless trifles
in a nicely arranged shop the radio softly
announces new reports of continued fighting
The death toll matches the size number
of the T-shirt with white beads on it
that I'm looking at
On the hanger an empty sleeve sways

in which occasionally for no clear reason
nervously twitches an imaginary limb stump
I go out to a perfectly level pavement
and pant as if climbing a slope
Passersby look at me oddly
I left my sunglasses behind
because it was raining
when we fled from the besieged city

Zagreb, 13 November 1994

tr. W. Browne

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