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A Letter

Milorad Pejić

No one chooses his life: the pecking of boats at the ramparts. My messages to friends, my shame toward those whom we will conquer: you know the end and the beginning of everything, the words that led me to exile.

We recuperated on Hvar, going there in winter and at night when the water was far from us, under the lighthouses. Like over the cressets of sages, we leaned over around old couples' tables in the smoke-filled steerage, watching the cards like our own destiny. Listening to the dripping of rings on their fingers.

You remember what I was looking for wandering in abandoned fishing villages, pushing aside the hanging ropes wherever I went. Ever deeper from the roads on which the benighted ones pass, ever farther from applause, so that my sense of struggle would dull, the stretched-out nets fearing prey would start to tremble.

Once, fleeing before the line of rain, like juice up a straw, I fell into a dark garden, into a buzz of lemons. Up to here, so to speak. As the years wriggle on, I find it harder and harder to tell memories apart, as if I were from nowhere. Almost equated with silence. A ship in a bottle.

Milorad Pejić

Luleå, April 1994

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