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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

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