

Les chansons tristes

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Translated from Serbo-Croatian by **Danijela Kambasković – Sawers**

the vernal

I know that the poplar beneath your window
is shooting
young leaves
and that the magnolias and tulips
across the road
are in blossom
yet I give your street
a wide berth
as, gods knows why,
I remember the beautiful vow
we made long ago:
“my body will wait for yours
under a rock somewhere”—

by what accident
through which torn pockets
did we ever lose
those mornings
the grey ones
the warm ones
mornings of every kind
those evenings
spent to a glass of wine
quiet music
and glances exchanged
through sunlit eyes
those nights
in which I was
calm, quiet,
curled up next to you

on the other hand
the rumors are true
I still manage
to bring a smile to a woman's face
every now and then
and some of them even venture
to my distant suburb
for no other reason
but to bring me chocolate

fruit cake
a bottle of wine
a new book
to have a cup of tea
or a different drink

"life goes on"
say the wise
but I suspect that
those pictures
which spin around me all night
and all day
that hole in my guts
that void in my heart
will not be mended by time
or modern medicine

I know
we have wasted much
deliberately or accidentally
much that we could have done
for each other instead
I know, I know

under a
vernal
drizzle
I slide down Lorca street
(it is quite clear that new shoes are
long overdue)
I arrive home
feed the turtle
sit in the armchair
taking strict care not to
look at the corner of the room
where your painting gear used to stand
your easel
canvasses
paints
brushes
and things

on the table next to me are
a bottle
a glass
coffee untouched since this morning
and a vase
with those weird little yellow flowers
I can never remember the name of
which (OK, I'm ashamed)

I stole for myself last night
from the little park
across the road

I light my cigarette
gaze at nothing in particular
and let the yellow petals
quietly shed on my shoulder