

## Afternoon

An afternoon of this familiar river  
moves up against me:  
the taste of a morning I loved once,  
the light skeleton of a fish,  
and in the sky's east, an arc of flight.  
The dark eyes of the boats are rivetted  
to the bank, as though they were  
expecting people, but there is no one  
to cross. The past  
lies everywhere, like water.  
I listen for moments to fill my life:  
a dumb wind closes in. Arms fall, mine,  
growing darkly like roots. Water,  
which has never left us, covers  
whatever is here, in its lonely well  
that pulls down all our skies.  
That is all I can finally believe in,  
seeing how my friend can pretend better  
than me, dismissing the future of the woman  
who belongs to someone else  
like a souvenir in a flashy store window —  
even the worn volume of poetry lying about  
which doesn't let one forget anything one loved once;  
again the loss of one's understanding  
without a whisper, without pity  
at the afternoon moving away in the mindless sun.

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