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on Lucia morning i Niemisel 2021

Prayers & Poems, Pain & Patience

Wipe the present clean
of these past tenses
that stick to my face and clothes
like old spider webs in barns

Swing these windows open;
breathe cold, fresh time

I am free
to munch juicy mouthfuls
of the day
on my winding winter walk,
without hurry or haste
in the sovereignty
of sweet seniority
and boots made for walking

Here, in the coniferous North,
Wilderness is no distant fantasy,
but a reality 150 yards from the house,
inhabited by brown bears, reindeer, moose,
foxes, lynxes, owls and ravens

and the alphabet glistens like Christmas tree baubles,
growls like the kargyraa throat singers of Kyzyl,
sentences staged with vowels,
consonants and peppery punctuation marks,
handfuls of which
may be freely cast about
into prayers and poetry
by the likes of the sowers of olden

Thus the days land their Strindberg stories;
the nights their full moon Saigyo poems,
and the seasons join hands,
the stars eject their elements
and the Now looks ahead again,
to future presences,

carrying so much pain and patience

Sometimes – more often than not -

I want to lie like a piece of driftwood

under the stars,

rocking

in the swell of life expectancy

and good poetry,

or fly low over Lapland like a swimmer,

the tops of spruces tickling my belly

I turn down the flame so low

I can hear the Aurora Borealis crackle

through my spine

Somewhere in the Universe

Terry Riley plays Persian Surgery Dervishes

on his electric organ;

I see the houses pulsate

up on their moraine hills

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