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it's kind of dumb to say goodbye in advance  
this eternity with small breaks  
real fractures in fake marble  
and did anyone even suggest mentioning the significant gaps  
yet within these constraints space for doubt exists

is it worth it now or afterwards or much later  
holding the pose damp tree by suspiciously white blank wall  
to voice instinctively the glance sliding  
    from still undeveloped polaroid ceilings  
from homemade swollen mirrors  
losing its grip in the uneven marble light

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I was riding my bike, the one that got stolen afterwards  
with my girlfriend, the one I broke up with a year later  
along that street that got completely rebuilt  
to that café – later on it simply closed  
we were happily rattling off our thoughts and our legs  
now there's a pizzeria where the café used to be

I even go there sometimes  
and order a four-cheese pizza  
they bring it to me and the knife strokes through the pizza  
remind me of spokes on a wheel

just like that: bike spokes – knife strokes

but just now, when I was riding on my bike  
with my sweet girlfriend  
along the well-known street  
to our favorite café  
I didn't stop to think that with every push on the pedals  
I was also driving the world into entropy and chaos  
although the pizza wasn't bad at all

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so when the motor conked out at the intersection  
the wind whirled under the soft top  
and then the goon in blue came up  
gave his salute by the book  
spoke such words in a halftone

to the badass at the wheel

so he spoke and spoke and went on

the goon to the badass

what'cha trying to pull you so and so push-me-pull-you

pull yourself together, top gun

yesterday you were some kind of hot cicero

orangutan on the dance floor

he was glancing at the back seat

and popped a serious chubbie

not pulling hands from pockets

poured it on for the mind-blowing blonde

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bronzefaced statue

slave girl with ivory teeth

two days before the auction

became ill

contorted

joints aching

fractures throb in overly thin wrists

coral lip bitten, bloodied from pain

paralyzed in fear, she stares

neck deadened from strain, numb

one limp arm has fallen insensibly

note crumpled in fist, now dropped

the experienced conservator

has cozied up to her, resetting

the dislodged marble backbone

whispers "don't be afraid, it'll crack a bit"

about to boil over, tears cool

he works over the spot

where a smear has dried and hardened

on whitened knuckles

makes a brush from his whiskers

cleans up chips, seams, underarms, instep and maker's mark

later she'll tremble

at the mallet's strike

and instinctively recoil

when her new owner clicks his tongue

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let me tell you a story from back when I was still a burglar  
I plied my trade in the suburbs, cleaned out private residences  
one time I wound up with this married couple; they were already sleeping  
I was going through the bedroom, they were in this huge bed, him facing up  
towards the ceiling and her flopped out in a nightie, and both  
were talking in their sleep, so I stand there on my tip toes by the wall and he says:  
“I don’t believe you, your words are good for a couple of days, then they  
turn into cardboard, lies...” then he wheezed through his nose. She was silent, then  
sighed: “woven... right here and here... sitting in our box...”  
“no matter,” he seemed to reply, then hollowly “she’s already arrived,”  
and then she began to laugh, for real, in short spurts, but often and piercingly  
“don’t you touch me,” her voice trembled, “don’t dare.” He snorted and I was  
already getting ready to move on, when he clearly pronounced: “glass,  
glass has frozen into the ice, shards, hide... hide me, I can’t...  
you’re killing me,” while she was saying at the same time:  
“there’s no firing pin, we don’t have any, ask a collector...” and with the last word  
she seemingly completely ran out of energy. I owe to this episode a handful of silver  
jewelry and port cigars. I knew that behind every picture was a safe,  
and behind all of the wallpaper were mirrors. It was just like that, dear friends,  
just like that, respected gentlemen.

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you turn on the water – and there goes the

phone while drowning you answer

maybe there is a 411

that infested your pipes through the foam

turn the tap all the way, let the water run faster

what am I – your neighbor? or what? or perhaps “Information”?

are you pulling my leg, what’s your problem? answer the question

how did you get my number? what gave me away?

was it my lathered pronunciation?

or my singular bare-skinned drawl?

or this brimming bathtub, where I am sprawled?

oh, I know, it was by the way the tiles are fogging

by the way that a nearby cable

runs invisible under the flooring

or by way of the receiver giving out this unequivocal coughing

so immersed by this chit-chat with water

I didn’t notice the waves move the stopper

and the water slither away

so what should we play today

the invincible plunger?

or sinking in the drain?

(Translated by Anton Tenser, Sasha Spektor and Daniil Cherkassky)

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at the bus station takes shape

a story a really old saw

a got-no-hackneyed tale

once upon a time a Chukchi, an Estonian, and an Old Jew

a German, Frenchman, and Russian in one person

met, a heart, liver, and a spleen

ran out of cash and from out of town

late for the bus no place to lay head

need a bit more to buy a ticket

if you can spare any extra then of course

go meet your relations at the station, she says

so up and went but its been days and no sight

can't not demand a little loan, all in the family

one buck to spend the night in the waiting for nothing area

noisy trains can't really sleep

the canal splashing against foundations below

sit in the glassy café above the dispatcher's booth

after a glass or two the river comes in focus better  
hear departures better maybe they'll announce the relations  
seagulls fly in from the market pavilions  
sensing bread and sausage in the buffet's depths  
pocketbook found would owner please  
proceed to information counter  
grab at heart, at billfold  
at crumpled self-portrait on ID  
passport's stuck fast to the card  
lost wallet has anyone found it  
line shrinking at window six  
a crowd again at the tram stop  
where's the pan? Info display burns bright for nothing  
loudspeaker really hits hard  
now boarding on platform number eight  
climb into the freight compartment with the bags  
head off to your native out of town  
to meet with the one who sent you off  
her song pouring from the well