

Two Poems

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The Pigeon

*Prague
July, 2006*

Perhaps it was as tired of false praise as I was,
or of lazy language, or maybe it was merely exhausted
from the summer heat, for when I returned
to my apartment, it was lying there
on the doormat, eyes open, wings spread,
as if to say it had had enough of the hot weather,
the tourists, the humidity, (the talking),
and there was little more I could do
than fill a small dish with water
and place it beside it in front of the door.

It wasn't a day for optimism, or high hopes
about humanity, so I went for a nap,
hiding myself in the age-old solace of sleep,
far from bad literature and the spineless flattery
concerning it, and, when I awoke two hours later,
went back to the door. My little dish of water
was the color of tomato juice, the bird's head
extended, eyes closed, over the edge, and I knew
there was nothing more I could do
but empty the syrupy liquid into the bowl,
fold the straw doormat over the stiffened body,
and carry it downstairs.

It landed in the garbage bin with a thud—poor
dead, eloquent thing—and then there was silence,
profound silence, a deep, wise, beautiful
silence: nothing less, certainly nothing more.

Two Short

for Isabelle

They'll never be, the other two
that life had made, but love denied
that could have been of me and you.

We were too young, and neither knew
how easily the other cried.
They'll never be, the other two.

So full of purpose gone askew
you came back home, all teary-eyed
to no one else but me and you.

Life turns to life, a yearning stew
that boils and burns and breeds surprise
though they won't be, those other two

that we had made, a witch's brew
of careless love and human pride.
I blame myself, I don't blame you

whose wiser instincts were too few
to summon me to life's good side.
They'll never be, those other two
who could have been of me, and you.