Entrances
Also by George Messo:

From the Pine Observatory
GEORGE MESSO

Entrances

- New Poems -

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Yaşar Çalık


for
Musa Kul
Ferhat Öztürk
Mustafa Kılıç
&
Durukan Ordu
Lost in Leaves
Winter by the Choruh River

A woman is rowing across a dark rift.
The scarf she wears is blue. But
she does not see me here among the trees.
The snow is thick as cream and the river
a black cloud she steers across.

On the far bank smoke rises blue from her house.
Blue of her scarf, blue of the wood-smoke rising.
In Ketel Paulsen’s House

for Stephen McLoughlin

October on the high plateau. My friends
and I are gazing, half-surprised,
through Ketel Paulsen’s window.

It’s colder
than we know: ice in the hazel grove
a barrel splits to hold.

Yet surprised,
by sudden snow we scarce expect,

and moved,

already,

to the verge of enterprise.
Mothlike I

For once I know we have to live and why.

A thought entirely you, each day makes spaces shaped for inner things.

Tonight, a Trabzon balcony in spring. The sky has peeled a segment set in time.
Mothlike II

Still it is something the storm can wake us;
chords of driven rain strike the window.

We rise and thumb around the darkness,
oblique in unlit skins, and cling to it,

what love there is, close enough
to sense how far we’ve moved apart.
The Orchard at Night

The walk uphill inspired you.
– Others know the world turns slow going up. –
You closed yourself off from the town,
pursued by fusts and Autumn smells.

Darkness spat figures along the path.
Men with beards and suspicions
– of what they were not yet sure.
But wait. You were just an idea
of a thing they’d truly hate, given time.

Move on. Look back. Ahead,
the sky turned red behind the trees
and the mountain sang once more of home.
Behind, a future of holes you’d return through.

A comet appeared in the sky that night.
You trembled and slept.
Why had you gone there?
Didn’t I say you’d be cold?
Hotel Paris, Trabzon

for Mustafa Kılıç

Rumour is I’m leaving.  
My room is shaped like a cage  
and the sun puts a fist through the window.

But I, who only want to smoke,  
know nothing, and light my cigarette.

I don’t want to leave.  
I want to smoke.

After Apollinaire
A Trabzon Orchard

Earth smells rising up.
A week of rain unbinds
a summer mountain, cools
a sense left sleeping there.

In groves, I knew him once,
coaxing fruit or yielding grass
– some esoteric scheme
to stir the inside out of life.

A man alone is almost mythic.
The city closing in could not
subvert him. And who can touch
him now, among the hazel,

lost in leaves and God?
Entrances

for Michael Lowenthal

All morning climbing down the wooded gorge
who knows sometimes the loneliness you move towards
or where you unexpectedly are lost in mud and greenage
finally to be among the river’s thickest coils

in silence oh my God and nothing there but beauty
not enough the silvering of water-quiffs or fish
which rise imperceptibly to flies or what
you think may even be seed-pods floating by.

Bored, as you are, with constant re-description
no longer swayed by frightful sounds –
named inner lives, imagined selves
– you opt to leave the afternoon
and step, one naked foot, into the Choruh river.

Unmistakably it is light
fading or else failing always
into which you will emerge –

the wish to be there, suddenly real,
puts everything in its place.
Shenyuva

with apologies to Li Shang-Yin

I
At night
standing by the river,
the sound of water,

and the water itself
swollen by sudden rain
falling in the summer pool.

II
You ask how long before we catch a fish. Still we cannot say. But the night rains swell the summer pool.

III
Day after day we come
and cannot move the shy trout
with our flies and quaint philosophy.

IV
Would you say
the mystery that we are
to ourselves

is any less so here
at night
when the big fish move
unheard
for the sound of the body
they move within . . .

V
And how long now before we too
talk back to the time we stood
beside the falls in Shenyuva.
Farewell Memur Bey

Nights are long and cold.  
Say, if they ask,  
he followed a heart.  

Red nails  
and a torn cloud  
mark the trail.