

SAMPLER

The Slowing Ride

ALSO BY WILL STONE

POETRY

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To The Silenced – Selected Poems of Georg Trakl

Arc Publications (2005)

Journeys – Stefan Zweig Hesperus Press (2010)

Rilke in Paris – Rainer Maria Rilke & Maurice Betz

Hesperus Press (2012)

Selected Poems of Emile Verhaeren Arc Publications (2013)

Nietzsche – Stefan Zweig Hesperus Press (2013)

On the End of the World – Joseph Roth Hesperus Press (2014)

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Will Stone

*The
Slewing
Ride*

SAMPLE

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For my parents

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One can belong to a people but when the people fall prey to insanity one is not obliged to remain in the same time as them.

Stefan Zweig

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I

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When all buildings are destroyed, language will nevertheless persist. It will be an enchanted castle with towers and battlements, with primeval vaults and passages which none will ever search out. There in deep galleries, oubliettes and mine-shafts one will be able to find habitation and be lost from the world. At this hour such a thought consoles me.

Ernst Jünger
Paris Journals, 1943

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SONG OF THE WEST

It is a spring rain come at last
and the white doves will not leave the tower.
Aware, the tree crowns sway, take what is owed.
The grey green sea where later a sail might show,
plumage down which the rain beads gently go
losing themselves but each remains a gemstone.
In the wood there is a torn quilt of silence
and with reluctance the old priory walls
have recalled their long shadows.
The bay is a deep cave where eyes wait
and the drift of smoke and bells sinks down.
The stranger passed behind leaded lights
in the weft of forebodings, he stayed on
as another's fingers ran like frightened deer
across the keys, with pure instinct
then slowed suddenly in time
each creature senses our downfall.

LATECOMERS

In clover fields, flax, or barley still green
a mist of fallow deer, far off, afraid.
Our approach brought love, but they turned
and as one moved away.
A yearning for islands, fruit-stocked shorelines
imagined through eyes closing with salt.

Nature, the patient persistent labourer
who does not look up as we pass.
Here, where the insane rose from holes
like heaven denied souls, and minions at web centre
wove their black silk, the impossible perfected
through stray nightingale song or prayer,
the same trunks are thicker in the grove.
There the old Ruthenian with glittering eyes
lent a smile to the child who never saw,
so absorbed plaiting weed flowers and grasses.
I watched them descend the slope with care
to lower their little cans into the bitter ditch.
Then the dust rose in that waiting place
and the breeze gently removed their spaces.

Over confidently light returns to the summit
following the storm. The shepherd darkness.
We descend now to the valley in shadow
a few finding tree crowns and the amber eyes
of forest animals, streams rolling with sun.
The rest are found later, trussed with frost,
their eyes become mother of pearl.

AFTER THE STORM

Moon, spectre beyond daybreak,
resting on the oak's invalid crown.
Through any crack seeps history
and we now at the storm's edge,
beginners in our nest till we fly or fall,
today, tomorrow or further on,
ending high or broken on the road.
In whose light are we saved, sun or moon?
Sound of burnt angels drifting down,
reeds of Iken moving as one.
Or we retire under the soft weave
of a nun's hands in the lily heavy room,
the sister who knelt before her saviour's
greening desert tree and for beauty
sang in the high cathedral of Sion.
Now the white wayfarer is in retreat,
a strengthening sun sends out riders,
heirlooms this generation will accept,
but the tomb inscription of a noble line
can no longer be detected.

THE LAST PILOT

On Memorial Day he stares out
to the channel that overlooked him,
saw brothers then who raised fist or thumb
from the lonely trail into swell and chasm.
He the last of them now, the remaining bricks
of the wall long crumbled back to sand.
They were directed towards the directed,
racing over chatter and human derangement
*Well we had to stop them at any cost
they wanted to enslave us...*
It was a hard thing when a chum disappeared.
All gone elsewhere now, the squadron disbanded.
From straw-filled nissen huts come swallows,
saplings rudely crowd the trimmed pathways
and greedily the wind works at the glass,
the last clear fragment that clings to the frame.
Voices deleting each time you look up,
another consumed star leaves a space.
But darkness shrank back and on each casket
was laid the weightless wreath of light.