

Água Viva

Clarice Lispector; Translated by Stefan Tobler.

1973

What I write to you is not comfortable. I don't impart confidences. Instead I metallize myself And I'm not comfortable for you and for me; my word bursts into the space of the day. What you will know of me is the shadow of the arrow that has hit its target. I shall only vainly grasp a shadow that takes up no room in space, and what barely matters is the dart. I construct something free of me and of you - this is my freedom that leads to death.

In this instant-now I'm enveloped by a wandering diffuse desire for marvelling and millions of reflections of the sun in the water that runs from the faucet onto the lawn of a garden all ripe with perfumes, garden and shadows that I invent right here and now and that are the concrete means of speaking in this my instant of life. My state is that of a garden with running water. In describing it I try to mix words that time can make itself What I tell you should be read quickly like when you look.

Now it's day and suddenly again Sunday in an unexpected eruption. Sunday is a day of echoes-hot, dry, and everywhere buzzings of bees and wasps, cries of birds and the distance of paced hammer blows-where do the echoes of Sunday come from? I who loathe Sunday because it's hollow. I, who want the most primary thing because it's the source of generation-I who long to drink water at the source of the spring-I who am all of this, must by fate and tragic destiny only know and taste the echoes of me, because I cannot capture the me itself I am in a stupefying, trembling, marvel expectation, my backturned to the world, and somewhere the innocent squirrel escapes. Plants, plants. I snooze in the summer heat of the Sunday that has flies circling the sugar-bowl. A boast of colors, that of Sunday, and ripe splendor. And all this I painted some time ago and on another Sunday. And here is that once-virgin canvas, now covered by ripe colors. Bluebottle flies glitter in front of my window open to the air of the torpid street. The day seems like the smooth stretched skin of a fruit that in a small catastrophe the teeth tear, its liquor drains. I'm afraid of the accursed Sunday that liquidifies me.

To remake myself and remake you I return to my state of garden and shadow, cool reality, I barely exist and if I exist it's with delicate caution. Around the shadow is

a heat of abundant sweat. I'm alive. But I feel that I have yet to reach my limits, borders with what? without borders, the adventure of dangerous freedom. But I take risks, I live taking risks. I'm full of acacias swaying yellow, and I who have barely started my journey, I start it with a sense of tragedy, guessing toward which lost ocean my steps of life are leading. And madly I take control of the recesses of myself, my ravings suffocate me with so much beauty. I am before, I am almost, I am never. And all of this I won when I stopped loving you.

I write to you as an exercise in sketching before painting. I see words. What I say is pure present and this book is a straight line in space. It's always current, and a camera's photometer opens and immediately closes, but keeping within it the flash. Even if I say "I lived" or "I shall live" it's present because I'm saying them now.

I also started these pages with the goal of preparing myself for painting. But now I'm overwhelmed by the taste of words, and almost free myself from the dominion of paint; I feel a voluptuousness in going along creating something to tell you. I'm living the initiation ceremony of the word and my gestures are hieratic and triangular.

Yes, this is life seen by life. But suddenly I forget how to capture whatever is happening, I don't know how to capture whatever exists except by living here each thing that arises and no matter what it is: I am almost free of my errors. I let the free horse run fiery. I, who trot nervously and only reality delimits me.

And when the day reaches its end I hear the crickets and become entirely replete and unintelligible. Then I live the blue daybreak that comes with its bulge full of little birds—I wonder if I'm giving you an idea of what a person goes through in life? And every thing that occurs to me I note to pin it down. For I want to feel in my hands the quivering and lively nerve of the now and may that nerve resist me like a restless vein. And may it rebel, that nerve of life, and may it contort and throb. And may sapphires, amethysts and emeralds spill into the dark eroticism of abundant life: because in my darkness quakes at last the great topaz, word that has its own light.

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Clarice Lispector. Übersetzung Sarita Brandt.

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W as ich Dir schreibe, ist alles andere als bequem. Ich mache keine vertraulichen Mitteilungen. Eher metallisiere ich mich. Und ich bin Dir und mir nicht bequem; mein Wort platzt in den Tages Raum hinein. Was Du von mir erfahren wirst, ist der Schatten des Pfeils, der ins Schwarze getroffen hat. Unnützerweise werde ich lediglich einen Schatten werfen, der keinen Raum beansprucht, und das einzige, was zählt, ist der Pfeil. Ich baue etwas von mir und von Dir Unabhängiges – und genau das ist meine Freiheit, die zum Tode führt.

In diesem Augenblick Jetzt bin ich eingehüllt in einen vagen Wunsch nach Entzückung und nach Tausenden von Lichtreflexen der Sonne im Wasser, das aus der Rinne in das Gras eines an Düften reifen Gartens fließt; ein Garten und Schatten, die ich unverzüglich und augenblicklich erfinde und die das konkrete Mittel sind, von diesem meinem Lebensmoment zu sprechen. Meine Stimmung ist der Garten mit dem fließenden Wasser. Indem ich ihn beschreibe, versuche ich Wörter zu mischen, damit die Zeit werde. Was ich Dir sage, muß schnell gelesen werden, wie wenn man jemanden mit dem Blick streift.

Jetzt ist es Tag geworden und plötzlich von neuem Sonntag in unerwarteter Eruption. Sonntag ist ein Tag mit Resonanzen, mit heißen, trockenen Resonanzen und überall Bienen- und Wespengesumm, schrilles Vogelgezwitscher und entfernt ein rhythmisches Hämmern – woher kommt dieses Echo am Sonntag? Ich, die ich den Sonntag hasse, weil er hohl ist. Ich, die ich das allererste aller Dinge will, weil es Schoß der Entstehung ist – ich, die ich die Ambition habe, das Wasser am Quell der Quelle zu trinken – ich, die ich all das bin, darf aufgrund von Bestimmung und tragischem Schicksal nur das Echo meiner selbst kennenlernen und auskosten, weil ich das Selbst an sich nicht erfasse. Ich bin erfüllt von einer berauschenenden, zitternden Erwartung, einem Wunder, mit dem Rücken zur Welt, und irgendwo entflieht das unschuldige Eichhörnchen. Pflanzen über Pflanzen. Schläfrig überlasse ich mich der sommerlichen Hitze des Sonntags, der gesegnet ist mit Fliegen, die um die Zukerdose kreisen. Farbenfroh spielt er sich auf, der Sonntag, in reifer Pracht. Und all das habe ich vor einiger Zeit, ebenfalls an einem Sonntag, gemalt. Und siehe da, diese