

ELIS DANCES

By

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ELIS DANCES

Improvisations

O, wie lange bist, Elis, du verstorben.
(Georg Trakl)

O, how long, Elis, you have been dead.
(Georg Trakl)

1

SEEPING between paving stones
Blood tears and fear
Struck dumb are you who once sang
Blood tears and fear
Seeping between paving stones

2

THE SUN PAINTED
Golden patches on the house
Inside it was dark cool
Through the slats in the window
Shutter pale light dotted
Marks against the wall
Cold the floor cold Dust
Stuck to fingers

Fallen
Stars danced around Elis

Warm the
Hands warm The white bones
Glowed Doors clattered in the wind
Open and shut Hair hung across
Eyes Hands felt their way
Across a face

Fallen
Stars danced around Elis

Trees rustled far away in
The dark forest blackbirds sang
A hand caressed eyes caressed
Mouth With both hands
Elis held something tight as warm as him a
Gentle animal He stroked it
Buried his fingers deep in its coat
Eyes moonlike as big as those of
Mad children stared at the
Pale marks on the wall
Flies buzzed beat against glass
Voices whispered into ears

Fallen
Stars danced around Elis

Tears fell
Against temples black as
Dew A mouth fled across a cheek
Inertia crawled Legs upward
In the body the hyacinth
Arms sank to the ground
Into the dust
A head fell
A hand made contact with the head

Elis got up went on soft
Steps over to the script so

Gentle was he he never felt
The floor beneath his feet stood

Stood

In the doorway dazzled by the glare
A hand pushed him forward
Pressed forward into the light
Out of the house pushed him forward
Elis

Fell to his knees

With warm

Hands warm he caressed
Green buried his fingers deep
In the cold earth

Legs

Circled in splits above him
Waxy fingers reached
Thighs raised alongside the body
Burrowed themselves into cavities -
Suddenly : A ray on golden
Eyelids : Clattering -
A head fell
A burden broke down onto
Elis

3

GREEN RESTS

Soothingly on his eyelids

Close to Elis pale
In the noonday light double she
Close to her the animal that
With a glance from below oblique
Her and him the parts - of which whole? - for

Moments joined to each other again

Round about
Stubble fields
Deforested slopes
Scooped out ditches
Fir trees bark beetle scarred
Genista bushes pressed flat
A confusion of thorns along fences :

The borders of their staying

Yes they hold fast
Rain in linden green more beautiful
Whispering over here secretly in hedges
Finches of all colours whispering
Over here the hoarse jay and the woodpecker
The blackbirds that promise destruction

They dance with the blackbirds
Three of them as one in across the meadow away
To the gold speckled house

4

FEET GLIDE SLIDE
Carry off bodies from here to there
Keeping track
 Stepping farther
Through the rooms
 So nimbly
Transcending the plant's stiffness

Movement is still felt when standing still
Deep all the way to the spots
 in the fretwork of light

Constant pressure
Unlearned steps acquired intuitively
To walk from here to there :

Soles

Slide over wood squeak slip across
Shale

Balancing on the smooth floor
Placing feet down pushing away

And the straddling of the legs makes
The ground give way Trampoline
That tosses high

Steps float through the air

Animals and plants are one

Feet slither
Falter Perception is
Movement is music
in the fretwork of light

Up high up down
In the depths to
The tips

5

FROST BUDDING

On his brow which
Bleeds quietly

A picture

One of many
Intersecting with others
Dissolving branching out
At the edges into
The depths where it
Breath-stoppingly

Sprouts in places
That never pricked
An eye the layers
Of ice breaking
 before it
Takes itself back again
Limp before the ascent
Of the blossom
 paling

6

OUT OF LONELINESS

He takes for himself

The right

To hold his breath

He has

Since his first scream

Once and for all

Rejected

The instinctive

Beneath Elis' knee he
Yearned for contact Grounding
White knowledge
 Cress
Spreads seed grains around

Scatters between his fingers
Taps the scent from wet
Needles
Rosemary

7

NO MAN'S LAND

A twist a fold and a swing

Arrived at the border

Eyes that do not see check
Similarities Fingers run
Along names in registers Numbers
Prodded beneath the skin read

Hands wave past
The lights on green

No man's land

A twist a fold and a swing -

Crossing the borders

Deleted
Everything
Gone
Eradicated

8

TURNING CIRCLING WHIRLING

That is the loss

Of every connection

and the hills dance

Text is

Dance is

Music is

Expression of the innermost is

Play

and the beloved is a veil

with elements of

Any number of realities

Turning syllables Circling words Whirling sentences

Shadows

Projections

without

Borders

equal to the flute breaking into melodies

ELIS TWISTS

Twists
 Around himself
 Moves
 His arms more finely
 Knee
 Whips
 Dizziness
 Writhes into
 Knots
 Curves
 Screeche downward
 Strung across
 Elis twists
 Twists himself
 On tiptoe
 What was always
 Fixed
 Raises more finely
 The arms
 Everything visible
 Falls away
 Falls into decay
 Calm
 Stilled at the centre
 Of movement
 Elis twists
 Twists
 Around himself
 Raises more finely
 His arms
 Twisting bends
 The wand
 Draws
 Blood
 Springs from
 The shafts

10

ELIS ANTICIPATES

Following the one
Who comes to fetch him

Names stream
High from the wires
Chances Syllables Games

On a cat's feet
He drifts over
Paving stones Railway lines

Futile sniffing on
Congealed blood he
Physically reassures himself

All is distant Wrapped
In neon lights he raises
Himself up along

Smooth stairways steps
Where to? To her?
To him? Tears

Over trestles
Wobbling
Into the void

He leaps onto

The tip



A major Austrian writer, **Hans Raimund** is considered one of the most important voices of his generation in all of German-language poetry today. Born in 1945 in Lower Austria, Raimund and his wife live in a country house — the stimulus of much of his poetry — in the Austrian province of Burgenland. A gifted translator as well as a writer, Raimund received the Austrian W.H. Auden Translation Prize for his translations of Italian, French, and English authors. In addition to the wide publications of his essays in literary publications and newspapers, Raimund is the author of eight books of poetry and four prose collections. In recognition of his oeuvre, Raimund was awarded Austria's prestigious Georg Trakl Prize in 1994 and the Anton Wildgans Prize in 2004, and he has also received literary prizes in Italy . His books are translated into Slovenian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Italian, and English, including: *Hardly the blink of an eye*, Words and Spaces, Phoenix, Arizona, 1993; *Verses of a marriage*, Event Horizon Press, Desert Hot Springs, California, 1996; and *Viennese Ventriloquies*, Event Horizon Press, Desert Hot Springs, California, 1998. His poetry has been described as "outstanding in its musical quality and its extremely successful blending of classical forms with modern elements."

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