

Some Kind of Compass

by Sam Rasnake

“The one thing I know is that I don't know”

— *Dekalog 2*, Krzysztof Kieslowski,

dir.

The gods are broken. A tear for us all.
When the mind figures what the heart
believes — all the reason in the world
can't unspill ink from a blank page.

~

*This frozen solitude:
smoke from a winter's fire
with wet eyes searching*

In the glass of fruit, a bee climbs the length
of spoon out of syrup, then shakes her wings.
Drunk with not knowing, she edges along
the rim as if moving were the only absolution.

~

What remains unsaid is not the gift we dreamed —
as if other worlds were possibility. Betrayal is
a bitter cold of dull razors, empty drawers, and
lies with midnight calls. The streets are deserted.

~

In the shadow of candles as they go out,
letters from the dead can never give us truth
to hold — no matter what the body wants or
the fingers need or the eyes cannot unsee.

~

What's the measure of grit and belief — How is the love
of trees ever strong enough — When do these bits of life
happen — when *was, is & will* are one — so guilt is not the only
thing to feel — Why is the crease of an old photograph always
a map for hidden grace or loss — Where's the gaze, the last
hard look into my eye — Whose face sees mine

~

*The river is cold — and
uncertainty, a throb
so the rains will come*

Every window a story, every voice a telling.
Beauty never hides from the sharpest edge.
Only the bandaged pain of fools would think
otherwise, and if we stare into the dark long
enough, we see ourselves at some end or
beginning — moving, aching, spilling milk.

~

All life is stolen, ripped away. No face, no name, no place
to stand. And the catalogue of innocence? — an empty
merry-go-round, a thrown twig floating downriver,
the train headed for brittle fields of a restless doubt.

~

There's a life we all grow into — long stands of birches
with bird calls, talks of what is and is not, then cups
of tea while an orchestra plays, all the years dragging
at our borders. If the only thing left is nothing — what then?

disappear; —

~

The eyes appear;

*as if this flash
could mine a truth*

Every moment is liquid, and the physics tells us
the body will lose its weight, will submerge into mirrors
& notebooks & closets. What's broken opens its fissures
so light and shadow can whisper to the troubled silence.

~

When the world screams, I scream back
in a frenzy, in a rage, a mosh — “Everything
is yours” — the growled anthem to dead fish,
lost kidneys, to the undiscovered child.

— *Warsaw, 1989*

