

# Some Kind of Compass

by Sam Rasnake

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

— *Dekalog 2*, Krzysztof Kiesłowski,

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*

