

Mercedes Mühleisen - Dead Cat, 2017

Animal.

Animal.

It is said, and that is how it becomes true.

Whose voice is this who's talking?
Who is speaking in my ear drum?

Smell. Smell the air.

That is the smell of the rising tide.

Yes, it is my voice you hear,
Floating up like a cork through the water.

But all day my voice is being licked away.

For the sound of the waves
Disappears in the waves.

Try again.

A trickle coming out of quarks.
A bag of gas moves through the dark.

Yes, speak, say more, and it may start!

With what?

With us.

We are pale.
We have no arms and long necks.

And a tiny face.

Dank, dripping, and clinging together,
Fever wreathes our brow and feathers,
And the folds of our fur distill the dew.

But now it seems,
We are gaunt with hunger,
Glazed with doubt.

Something isn't right.
This is not a break, or a pause.

It's night.

And what are we doing inside the night?
We're floundering about,

Gnawing at twigs, pebbles, bones and crumbs.

A strange fixation!

Like we wanted to eat,
But we also wanted to cry,
While eating.

And then?

We'll count our twigs, pebbles, bones and crumbs,
And rend each with our teeth,
To ensure they are still real.

Still real?

For the next time we'll see them,
it won't be them!

Because the twigs will become the pebbles,
The pebbles will become the bones,
The bones will become the crumbs,
The crumbs will become the twigs.

Try again.

This is a thaw! Of cells and souls.

And each little cell has its own smell,
As they leak acid through their navels,
From the shore into the river.

And the river seeps through nimble hands,
And wet feet

Through heather, through membranes,
Through peat.

And into mouths without teeth.

And each little mouth
Is gaping and aroused.

A meal is wriggling under every stone.
And all the rules are gone!

Every twig, every pebble, every bone,
Every crumb will be ground into a meal.
The meal goes on and on!

There are these queues of meals.
Never a meal without another
Waiting in its shadow.

Listen!
This is no ordinary river.
This is not a river at all.
This is a huge repeating mechanism.
A muscle bearing sea.
All night the river's eyes peep and pry
Among the reeds.
Wave follows wave. Slime follows slime.
It is said, and that is how it becomes true.
By it being said.

Will you know yet more?

Yes!
We have to reach out,
To liver, spleen, brain and mouth!

So follow the tide, deep into her hide.
Creep deeper in and up,
To peer out through her eyes.

A certain kind of... wind,
Sets the dry reeds stirring and cussing.

As we drift along the river,
Far, far beneath the abysmal sky,
Woken from our uninvaded sleep,
A stench salutes our nostrils.
Harboring childhood and fermentation.

And the tide is hunted down
By the long white foot of time.
Can I have you, are you mine?

We licked you forward, into being here.
With us.
It tasted basalt, cobalt, salt and pus.
You are our progeny, sibling, maker.
In short; the Caretaker.

But now it seems,
You are gagged with stiffness,
Glazed with grief.
This is not a break, or a pause,
It is a leap!

The fog comes, on little cat feet.
Is it not time for us to meet?

If the Caretaker won't listen, talk to the tide!
For our thirst will teach the water.

[I am somewhat purple and afraid.]

Enter a small tide creeping over the reeds quickly.
Enter thin threads of nervous ganglion.
Enter specks of cell mucus, enter carmine, indigo,
pale blue, enter nausea.

Yes, yes! Enter liver!

Enter brackish swamps and reed beds,
interspersed with islands, and causeways of
raised but marshy ground.

Enter somebody out late, lost in the mud.
Enter a little spleen, who has not yet been seen.

Enter mild pods of eyelids,
Enter wooing water gnats, enter the skull's eye.
Enter dura mater,
Enter arachnoid mater,
Enter pia mater.

Say what you like!

Enter corner, enter sky,
Enter Caretaker.

No, no answer.

Enter the wind descending through the valley
And passing over the broken reeds of a marsh.
Enter a flock of sleeping tonsils, cooing with the
wind, cheeks full of chyle, fresh, warm, benign!
Enter into the dreaming of the mouth.
Enter the sound of moistness digesting stiffness.
Enter what speaks when no one speaks.

And I see...

Not stars! but something glowingly hidden
In holes and folds.
Collarbone, cherry stones, vortex, vertebrae!

Leap over the collarbone.
Swallow all the cherry stones.
Scream at the vortex.
Lay your eggs on the vertebra.

Start again.
And then?

Wave follows wave. Slime follows slime.