

ANA BLANDIANA

Translated by Paul Scott Derrick and Viorica Patea

SWING

Green descends into yellow
Like a gentle swing
Upon which the angels undress and throw
Their wrinkled garments to the ground.
The earth hides in cassocks
Beneath which the thread of night weaves into the world

And grows pure,
Yes, you can only find naked angels laughing
In the woods in October.
With dew on their cheeks,
With blackberry stains on their teeth,
With thorns and leaves all tangled in their feathers
They beckon to us
Without any fear or shame,
Not knowing who we are.
Wherever they tread
They crush some fruit
And point to
The seeds that are destined to be wasted.
We get lost among them –
We are the bride and groom
Of this twilight
World.
The fortunate lovers that never
Were fated to bear fruit.

In their clumsy, somewhat silly way
The angels notice that I have no wings;
Childish, they try to unbutton
The symbols of power on my shoulder-blades
And when they see that they can't,
They angrily bend down
And begin to throw
Fruit and seeds at me . . .

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO COME BACK AGAIN

If you don't want to come back again
Beware of the mandrake root –
It steals my voice at night
To cry with
From your footprints;
If you want to forget me
Go hide in the moon –
It will remind you of
How I once walked barefoot
In its light;
If you want to leave me
Go hide in the rain,
Be careful with the snow,
If you want to forget me
Do not go near the sea,
Go round it,
Don't be seen beneath flocks of birds,
Flee
From the long-haired willows
Till you find a place
Where oblivion is waiting,
Hide yourself from everything that lives.
Oh, but if you want to leave me,
If you want to forget me,
Don't try to die,
Above all, don't try to die –
I know how to descend, as if into
A fountain,
Through the flowers...

YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THE LANGUAGE OF PLANTS

I know, you've only come back to tell me something,
Something that the clouds couldn't say,
I know you can't
Stay, you haven't warm clothes
And you haven't forgotten the language of plants,
You've only come to leave on my brow...
A sign that says, "Good Night."
You get cold and you go away
Without me,
All of the animals of the world
Come near, they see the sign

And they worship me,
The woods bring an offering of leaves,
The lizards, their skin,
But around me there is light.
And then
The animals of the world
Hold me accountable, and make me pay,
The woods draw back and whisper, offended,
You've gone.
You've left no bridge, you've placed
The sign of the night on my face
But you haven't told me
If night will ever come.