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o n c e

How to stay
my things, clean
clean and tidy to stay
after my death

How after the death of mine
this space to remain
clean and silent
and all things which till a moment ago
(a moment before my death)
fitted me
how to leave them
to stay in order
clean from my death

How to leave behind like this:
a writing desk for example
a typewriter in a posing position
and a white paper in it
ready to endure
On the left of it, an ashtray
the cigarette butts a moment ago spilled out
(only a moment before my death)
and on the right, far right of all these despondencies
a pencil; the pointed nostalgia on its top
(ah how long, long ago were our pencils
long before my death)

So much as for the table
and the things put in order
those surplus thrown away
from my desk

And in the closet? Oh in that solemn intimacy
all clean and white
the intimate lingerie first of all
and then a coat collar clean
oh how chemically clean
on a thin coat hanger

Enough about the closet and its rigorous secrets

In the bookshelf
oh in that sweet small house
everything meek and vilifying
books neatly dusted
those borrowed returned
some letters lost in them
in the private of course
as one for example goodbye girl
then the rows and chapters underlined
all the true next to the true of course
of the former beauty and wisdom
(my death's indifferent to it of course
of course indifferent)

Last purchased book at the bedside
read to the end
the written letters
for the due, for praise, for forgiveness,
or for. . .
at the post office, already
and the remaining debts

Shoes, cleaned as for the feast
a ceremonial glow on them
(Hmm, just ceremonial!)
consumed lunch, cooked yesterday
after a strenuous day
in the office, not to be forgotten
well-ordered acts
honourably earned salary

Behold, a thread on the stocking's torn up
to buy quickly new one
comb the hair
refresh oneself with a deodorant
or with the clean water
nails to be rounded smooth once more
as all that is right
as it is right to be done according to neatness
then again all that
a moment
only a moment before my death

And how then as soon as possible
(a little time after the death of mine)
how clean and fitting me

the things being mine till a moment ago
how to forget me

How all that?
Easily!
If only were time
on dying
on time, arrive

Sarajevo, 1.26, 1977

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h o p e

Had all things once started
been completed
This world would be not
only a small oasis in deserts
A rose would carve a figure
from the hawthorn
A slender line of the music dreaming of
the cosmic indifference, would save
a little high wire art-walker
from falling

Had all things one started. . .
for the abyss would be not any place
every hand would reach someone
and everybody would have a token
of one's own perfection

Had all things, once initiated
been completed
this world wouldn't be
the last threshold for Eternity
and on the threshold would dream instead
the hard essence
about its old trips

(The poem was first recited at Sarajevo Museum of Literature, 1977)