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## ***Giriş***

Brian Lennon

### **1**

STUNNED: this *is* my life, mathematical motion, a highway at highway speed,  
a train, a plane, blinking in the ether.

### **2**

THE CULTIVATED NORTH and the wild south: hurtling toward and through each other  
Complementarity of desire, counter-desire: a secret structure, reduction of uncertainty to a key  
you live in the world you have made: a world of national character traits  
this city shoving itself grasping graying vasting the water, the land: the electronic sign flashing  
Beş Dakika, a looping semaphore, an old-fashioned beeper  
you're driving faster now, you're coming home, leaving a place lost: you hit eighty-five on a  
long curve, whipping past everyone

### **3**

THE CITY SPREAD blue and heaving in its water: your nation, your nation, its suspended life  
you are home: stars in a light-blotted sky

### **4**

I COULDN'T have been further from a traveler, when I arrived; Reyhan Teyze, who had been hospitalized in Istanbul the day I left, died a few hours after I landed. So it was from the airport directly to the hospital, then to her apartment, where family arrived from points near and far; then to the mosque in Fenerbahçe, then the cemetery, outside Edirnekapı: and I'm in the stream of everyday

life and death as soon as I exit the plane, and it's impossible to take a distanced approach to anything.

Blindsided by insomnia, I woke in a patch of dawn at the foot of the bed, having turned in my sleep to try and catch a breeze. Clear blue opened over the city; someone was bouncing a basketball; the house silent: a mottled crow screamed from the lamppost across the street.

## 5

LEAVING HER CITY again: pure repetition. This is the last time I'll last time I'll. The sensation of pure motion, here, and of his body, there: finite and aging, fastened to the earth, hungry all the time. Desire for action, for memory; for time to stop; for time to go on.

Emptied footsteps: a shadow on Broadway, under the nightlamps, pools of humanity leaching the life-channel. A favorite street, its park bench and public telephones: impossibly warm and personal life, life without beginning or end. You love it because it will not recall you, can never remember you.

Emptied streets: the park one never visited, the river never gazed at — ripples of sun, fish and tide; the City never fully inhabited: blue oppression of survival. "One day I'll be dead and I'll never have lived." She lived as a ghost here, pure memory, drifting through public transportation, alone beyond risk. Breakpoints: this I have done, not done, these things I was, have become, never will become, a City that takes me, dead, waiting in desire, dead, involuntarily, impossibly dead: alive. To love, to be taken, to fail: I'm here, I'm here, I'm still here.

## 6

WHITE-OUT of writing: in leisure, it makes nothing happen; in money, it blankets the globe. The shadow of the house advancing, a border of concrete and grass: the weeds standing tall and petrified, soaking their chemical arms in the sun. He heard the roar of the truck, at the road in front of the house, the public face of this circumscribed world: a soccer ball abandoned by a pet dog, a dozen half-apples rotting in the morning, watched by a coiled garden hose. All of it spectral, strung with cable: the utility pole pierced, leaning slightly, clamped in relays, saying to no one at all: once I was a tree, giving off fragrance, hosting wildlife, building underground; now I am nude, a robot in a crowd, a minaret in an orchard, a stripped and converted *thing*: and all of this on the satellite map, scaled roughage under the zoom, a patch of mathematics. How tenuous, all this. When I leave I'll walk out along that line, flattening the grass, crushing to death things invisible, my own life an abstraction, globally positioned, taking and giving off heat and radio.

## 7

BY NEW JERSEY I'm speeding, passing on the right, impatient, come on, come on, come on, *Beş Dakika*. A skyline rises from the dust, a scale model or a game board.

Over the bridge, the line of the island slicing away, and down the ramp onto the parkway, pulling the wheel hand-over-hand through a crescent, structure rotating around me, a virtual object. The exit, the road, the anachronism of the iron trestle, and under, under, into the chaos of traffic, of intercourse in all directions, and a tank of gas on One Hundred Twenty-Fifth Street and back to the hidden ramp to Riverside Drive.

## 8

WE'D TAKEN the midnight bus to Antalya, daylight creeping from small dry hills, the downshift on sharper turns whining in neck-aching sleep. From Antalya, a minibus on a westward coast road, over blue-water coves.

The hotel overlooking a cove, stone cut into terraces, the bay crossing blue and green to the dry hills opposite, dotted with houses, scratched by the road.

A bus speeding: too fast.

A single sailboat, hugging the shoreline.

A swimmer in a white hat, toward the bay's center, laughing something.

Swimmers' legs.

A patch of sun inching up on the right.

## 9

BEHIND, BENEATH THE face: the skull, symbol of life, not death. Inside, atop the head, the eyes: only flesh, only flesh. Eyes as depth, door, the face flesh over bone — the skull pivoting on its stem, radiant through the face: a creature, we are creatures. Yielding attention, loving, knowing the other must die, wishing to die in the other's place, to die *for* the other.

## 10

I TURN THE WHEEL hand over hand, relishing curves, watching the sun flame in gaps between trees, animal life surging a sunset wave. The ethnographer who never comes back — who vanishes, disappears, who stays — who does not take notes or publish them, who *lives*, who leaves, who is converted, who enters the other.

## 11

STREET LIFE: CREATURES with arms sticking hopefully out.

Shapes of bodies on the street: life trying to try — conatus — impossible having of hope.

Dead description of the physical world. The desire for life — laughter, misunderstanding, release: to continue to live, to want to live, to want life.

Waiting, tensed.

## 12

AND THE LOVE I had and its words.

We met on a street, I turned the wheel into a street.

Kissed you and life hurtled by.

I say "I" in a language I cannot live in.

You say "you" to a monstrous thing.

## 13

THERE NEVER WAS a decision, but there was: your life washed over you, yet you waded into it; you have been helpless, yet you direct it; neither is true, nothing is not permitted: the solitary is in life, it is death, the communal is in life, it is death.

She had looked at a city at night: seen a map of desire:

electricity against nature: hell together over flowers

## 14

GIDDED WITH WINE:

sunburst on the retina,  
the mosque that has always been a mosque,  
still beating heart and errancy

down, down, gilded  
hairs of excitement

a leveled pen  
a free street in the city

*not knowing*

## 15

HE FOUND HER there  
on a hill,  
dispensing letters and things

in the alphabets she knew

open air silence and noise

*geri, geri*  
we're being attacked  
by invisibles