

## Chapter II

I bought myself two bras. One white, with narrow straps, the other black, a push-up bra, all lace. In it I feel as if a man was holding me hard by my breasts. An erotic bra.

But why now (when I am alone), I have such a beautiful body?

If I could stop anything, for example time, I would like to preserve forever the way I look now.

I experience everything in context... I don't want to see that, because when I start to see that, I am seized with terror.

In this house where there are so many rooms, there is not a single place for me. Everyone has a room, but not me.

In the bedroom it stinks of laundry and there's a draft from the window. When I arrive, there's no place of my own to sleep. In the morning it's too cold to wash, there's no fire in the stove, everywhere a mess, the windows unsealed, bills unpaid for months. When I sleep, I dream that I'm being robbed. When I wake in the night, I listen hard to tell if the car's still outside. The gates don't shut, there's no light, the fence's wire mesh torn. Trash outside the house, scattered about by dogs.

Nine empty rooms, and behind the bedroom rats. You can hear them, things have been bitten. The floor is worn by the sink, and under it a putrefying mass, a burst pipe. Beside that, the washing machine – useless, all the clothes are dirty, you have to use a bucket to flush the toilet.

Here it is: the downfall of the soul.

But I still cannot stand face to face with this reality, I continually defend, blindly, probably from myself, the way that I remember him from a few years ago.

The whole night long in the studio I heard how he told stories and laughed merrily. He said I was never to count on him.

Me: a temperature of 39.7, the first night back home after the anesthetic. Loud music on the other side of the door. Later they moved to the kitchen. And that's how it was until morning, though I asked for quiet.

He didn't ask what I felt.

This paranoia became my obsession, I can think of nothing else now.

Along with his appearance in my life, something died,

joy

and the feeling

I'm going forward.

■

But...

It was beautiful: wasting time.

He had it written in the corners of his mouth.

Reality and time flowed by him,

and he allowed

events

like lovers  
to come and go.  
He received them with all his warmth  
and let them go  
when they wanted.

■

What I say to you is like a stone sunk in a well's dark water.  
Those dreams cannot be saved.  
I shiver, I can't sleep.  
I came in by myself  
and alone  
I must  
find  
the way  
out.

■

between us:  
emptiness, barren fields  
sorrow  
a consciousness of making the wrong decisions  
much too heavy in their consequences  
everything that happened  
lasts between us  
a dumb space without oxygen that you can't pass through  
a void  
almost a year and still –  
will we never be completely indifferent to each other?  
what a strange person you are  
how your space intrigues me  
and returns like an echo  
and says, I think, we're still not separate

distant love, like a fire's dying glow  
the fire's been out for ages, but deep down  
under the black and burnt, the embers burn out  
safe to the touch

## Chapter III

this dream is different  
the hours pass stiffly  
day and night are an unchanging time  
they don't follow each other  
time changes its gradations  
every moment is a grain of sand  
separate  
recordable by memory  
time above strength  
the thread of loneliness  
like a sinew  
like a scar after an operation  
stretching at any forced movement  
sweat on the forehead  
tugs inside  
when you try to fix your hospital gown  
three tubes in your belly  
in your warm belly...  
three plastic tubes  
through which flows  
fluid to the containers  
yellow or yellow-red

the containers are solidly fixed  
to the edges of a metal bed  
so when you move, the tubes pull out from your belly or go deeper in

internal hemorrhage  
puss  
fever  
tubes up your nose  
to the duodenum  
draw off some brown fluid  
from there  
the machine is noisy  
the tubes tear my nose cartilage  
they're too wide  
the nurse forces them in  
I hear a crackling

it's me who's dying  
and they're saving me  
the drips provide liquid day after day

my belly filled up  
with a dark green fluid  
more and more  
I was able to vomit, but only a little  
so I felt a bit better  
as long as my belly won't bulge up again  
it was water from a very dirty fountain  
from a bad dream

and tremblings, tremblings  
when I woke on the operating table  
from a strange height I could observe the scene  
they sewed my belly  
I saw it  
I understood what they were saying  
...no one heard my cry of mortal terror  
again a tube down my throat  
I wanted to wave my hands  
but my hands were tied down  
with leather straps to the operating table  
and then my attempt to wave turned into convulsions  
I tried to break free  
to let them know  
that I can see it all, that I feel,  
then I lost consciousness

ICU  
waking up as if in space  
winking diodes, monitors, computers

so some events  
you don't forget  
the wound of those times  
doesn't hurt, but the scar remains

the banal dichotomy  
the hellish marriage  
of spirit with matter

what is the body, if not  
a rotting mass?  
why is the spirit  
airy and winged  
dependent on the bowels?  
why such poverty  
and such richness  
inseparably together?



Later, when things were all right, it was hard for me to see in the faces of the nurses and doctors the same people I had seen when I was dying.

Then I saw them differently. They emanated burning heat, energy, their features were terribly sharp and three dimensional, concave-convex, transformed, powerful.

Once in the night a doctor and a nurse stood at my bedside and it seemed to me that they were one organism, like a tree, growing out of the same trunk, that they were fused halfway down together. I felt the sap circulating in them. It was obvious that they were doing it together.

Later everything lost this intensity...

It was hard for me to recognize in those banal, shapeless, common faces, those burning, so intensely existing figures from my time of dying.