

# I

Night throughout the house.  
Where the snail melts his horns.

Animals hung,  
frozen edges of face,  
frozen hands.  
In gloves. Because water entered  
suddenly as it had to,  
unseizable water.

Under the tunnel,  
and even well before the station,  
against walls,  
man and cat piss,  
smelled so  
that we held our noses  
the whole way under the tunnel,  
mouth closed  
to die, yes,  
it smelled.  
It still smells here.

What house?

Someone climbs  
the ladder,  
as much to catch the moon  
as to finally see  
to understand the meaning of quests.  
Yes.

What house and what night,

which stay caught  
or planted?  
Excavated?  
But exposed to the birds who search,  
they also search,  
the corner of their beaks dig  
where it smells.  
Not much farther, infinitely there.

*Because there is:  
This is a day to bare  
in the country  
Oh!  
It's today,  
great day!  
Let's shake sheets out  
the windows,  
smash panes and  
replace them,  
empty drawers, pockets,  
shelves.  
Great day!*

*Because my country is in the  
house,  
each house has its  
face,  
one of the dead  
one of the living.*

*"What country," said  
she, "what country  
are you from?"  
So it was said.  
A little voice  
insisting it was,  
come from far away*

*under armor, come  
as far as under there,  
come from there?  
What did she want,  
“We have nothing! We have  
nothing!” (Someone from  
the village, who moved forward  
with claws)*

*Little voice that insists  
soft and hard  
from far away  
with arrows, and  
lots of water,  
better than a cry.  
Even better than a truth  
of truth  
pushed to the edge,  
on the ridge of a fish-bone, the edge  
of a shield, bruised.  
A posture for  
birds.*

*Because the bird is thirsty  
today,  
more thirsty than hungry,  
all the birds.  
A posture full of  
blood and grit.*

*“What country,” said  
she,  
“what country are you from,  
I don’t recognize the  
sound of your voice.  
Nor your harness do  
I recognize.  
Nor even the dress  
of your horse.”  
So it was said.  
And he trembles.  
One knee enters  
the stone.  
Loses his fingers, to Grip.  
“Where are you from?”  
And he doesn’t even know  
his name anymore.  
Loses his eyes, to naught.*

*Country of Orlando  
and Gaby  
Country of Michel,  
Country of Jeanne and  
Madeleine  
(so are there Queens  
to polish stairs,  
scour cooking pots,  
dry asses)*

*Country of Anna,*

*And there is Alparegho,  
the poor lookout,  
man with bandages,  
like nothing else*