

ENGLISH TITLE

It Must Be Said Twice

AUTHOR:

Rikardo Arregi Diaz de Heredia

ORIGINAL TITLE:

Bitan esan beharra

TRANSLATED BY:

Lawrence Schimel

LOVE POEMS MORE OR LESS

*Love is the best interface
that sex has invented in the past three centuries.*

Ángel Erro

*Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit,
will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!*

Friederich Nietzsche

Développez votre étrangeté légitime.

René Char

IX

What must it be like to be you.

Ana Rosetti

What must it be like to be you,
to be in your skin,
to see the world with your eyes,
see my body, my soul,
the streets and highways.

What must it be like to be you,
to look, to thrill in the mirror
at your imagine, mine,
to have your hands,
your nose, your chest...

What must it be like to be you,
to explore the world with your words,
what would it be like to sleep or eat with me,
to live beneath that skin,
to suffer your headaches...

What must it be like to be you,
to touch what you touch,
the paper, the socks, the earth, the gasoline,
what, to hope for my call,
what, to love as you do...

What must it be like to be you,
to put your boots on each morning.
(That I do know, more or less
we wear the same size,
the gods have behaved.)

What must it be like to be you.

XI

The atmosphere is friendly and the night pleasant,
the paths wander between houses toward the forest,
roses dangle from walls—yes, that’s how it is, roses,
what can we do?—trees, also trees,
and aromatic herbs, flowering bushes
and vineyards. Vineyards? But, what is this?
Is this fate, is this fatality,
or have we all suddenly gone crazy?

Then, we said, a pleasant night
and (need it even be said?) there’s also company,
very tall, robust, voice deep-timbered.
We’re walking and I start to think
that I have already lived this in a dream
perhaps even in a wish, or in an improbable past,
in some uncertain future, at some point,
because the exactness of the details startles me.

And I think: now, here, is where the town ends
and the forest begins, here, just beyond the wall.
And it happens, just as if it were so written—
an entire forest appears before our eyes.
I think: we shall now fall silent here.
And it happens, we are quiet for a good while.
Really, isn’t this all maddening?
Where is the director? Where is the producer?

We remain standing, watching the dark forest,
motionless and mute, as was ordained.
He and I look at one another at the same time.
I feel somewhat nervous because I know what’s next:
caresses will happen, slow at first.

And, sure enough, slow caresses to start with
but right away everything plunges forward: kisses,
tight embraces, strong, tense and hard,

without realizing I throw something to the ground,
tongues, arms, other extremities struggle,
our bodies face off, we're both equally tall,
our thighs interlock and settle together,
cocks, heads and knees crash together...

I think: he will remove my belt and that happens.
As if it had always been written so,
we delve into darkness, that's what the script indicates.

He speaks my name and I voice his,
our clumsy accents make us laugh,
both of us foreigners, then there are no more words
but the rushing water deep beneath our feet.

Then I think: now the image will shatter,
but that doesn't happen, nothing breaks down.
Half naked now, here we still are
to write this verse that's already written.

XVII

I've always appreciated
the chlorine smell of pools.
There might be pleasanter scents,
I admit, but
for me no better exists.

Technical, precise, spotless, bitter.
Blue, chemical, penetrating.

When
I say I like the smell of chlorine
everyone thinks I'm crazy,
not
you.

We've both realized it,
our bodies naked and wet,
the paradisiacal smell of chlorine
on our tight swim trunks
(not so naked, then). It's wrapped
in damp cloth of delights,
upon our shivering flesh,
the chloride blue of the pool.

XXII

In love poems there are too many hearts,
many poets seem like surgeons or butchers,
their hands covered in blood,
but ignorant of what a pericarditis is,
an electrocardiogram, pain or fever;
how a calf or lamb is quartered—
they've never seen a real heart.

I was once offered a chunk of heart
and I still feel nauseous.

Right away you told me, to have something to say,
that your surname meant heart
in your language you explained to me how
it was pronounced, how you came here.

Then you turned on the television
to watch soccer, our thighs in a huddle,
and complaining about the game's level in your country,
we already forgot about hearts and began
to love our bodies at minute seventeen.

XXIV

Us, romantically you mentioned
our situation, our lovely relationship
when we were asking for the bill.
My dear, the only thing that is ours
is this that we must pay,
a badly printed bill, leftovers,
numbers that will fade completely
without leaving any memory or witness.

XXV

Opening an old book by Auden
and suddenly a photo of you peeks out,
one you gave me at the last moment.
If it weren't thanks to this piece
of paper you'd continue lost
somewhere, in the labyrinths
of my weak memory; however,
I force myself to sit, to reflect.

One night we spent together, one
night, the next day until the evening,
through streets, bars, my tiny room.
On the back of the photo you wrote a number
and a date (it's been seventeen years already?)
and some other detail, ready
to ransom those hours of July,
to exorcise the mists of oblivion.

It begins with *Pour ne pas oublier*,
words that expect a miracle,
Habitat, until the miracle has happened,
and despite having forgotten now
I know more of *notre recontre au* (do I remember?)
because my entire spirit labors
to construct renewed memories
clumsily among the distinct ones *et puis le...*
et puis la...

Neuron by neuron I search for your reflection:
cropped hair, looking to one side,
leaning on one elbow, hands
together, straight nose, that gaze.

That urgent yearning felt by what is destined
to fade to yet endure a little while
before it consumes and dilutes itself.
Here I deliver to you what I revive
only in words.

XXXV

Not the blue of the wide sea,
nor the blue of the blue heavens,
nor an exotic blue flower,
and cobalt blue neither,

not the most beautiful blue diamond,
nor the blue of methylene,
nor the blue blood of nobility,
nor a tropical blue crab.

The blue pants
that cover your strong thighs,
worthy blue countryman,

sweaty blue worker,
out of all the blues
is the color I prefer.

XXXIX

On the beach I lazily read to you
the story of Vitelio and Mesalina:
the great Roman asked her for a buskin
to thereby always carry her by his side;
Mesalina, therefore, with a smile,
offered him the sandal from her left foot.
From that moment, beneath his toga
Vitelio bore the prized footwear
of his beloved and often pulled it out
to smell it and cover it with kisses.

Cackling, you declared
that at last there is a classic foundation
for my devotion for your black Adidas.

XLII

You and I from our lukewarm laptops
the most perfect long distance love,
of which the troubadours shall one day sing,
the finest *amor de lonh* do we renew.

The poets chose a *senhal*,
a secret code with which to name
complementary the beloved person,
and we act in the same fashion
in choosing a nickname that conceals ourselves.

It's undeniable that when it comes to images
we've advanced incredibly
since the Middle Ages until the present,
obviously, if we start to compare
those imprecise miniatures.

Now, when I desire, I can see you
in dreams codified in pixels,
although if I amplify your photograph,
those most appetizing details
pale because of a lack of kilobytes.

It is your own flesh I type
when you have the camera turned on
and like a powerful god
I can wander your very sidewalk
on Google Maps or Google Earth.

Perhaps we are not you and I so distant,
although we are separated by many kilometers,
our perfect long-distance love
won't survive so denied of flesh,
soon we'll have a date in Berlin.