

# The Animal Hungers

Jesús Sepúlveda

2018

The animal hungers  
for light and strength  
He hungers

.

Killing himself while hunting  
Groaning  
fatally and the last

.

Hunger springs  
Sleepless

.

There are beasts without burden  
that dance / grow fiery  
They warily drink water

.

Famine distorts  
Tea or sugar or bread  
or fuel  
or a tender hand?

.

The animal hungers  
for goodness

.

The famished grow fat  
leaving scraps for neither him  
nor her  
who remained with her cubs

.

The animal hungers  
Tramps through trenches

.

up slopes  
Sets out

.

He rears up on both paws and ransacks a beehive  
Spreads his wings and throws himself from a cliff

.

The animal hungers  
when he moves with the flock  
or sells his lungs, his eyes  
his goodness, his fury  
hangs from meat hooks

.

There is no slaughterer without slaughterhouses  
there is a journal. a story. a bus

.

and the *barrio* where he who writes grew up

.

There are massacres

.

Slaughterers dressed as generals in plastic aprons  
or doctors in white coats  
the chemists the priests enrobed

.

Or gold buttons / stripes  
or suits  
Bare-chested  
or sweaty

.

When the animal hungers  
Everything trembles  
Books crumble  
The earth quakes

.

Autumn flowers bloom in the garden

In the gazebo unreal and necessary  
the breeze rushes  
people stroll by

.

Home is one  
who smokes sitting in the patio of his house  
or in a hotel  
or silently waits in the corner of his  
infancy  
or lingers outside  
until they open the door

.

Hunger squeezes through crevices

Cuts grooves

Breathes

Climbs fences

Feeds

.

But the animal doesn't wait  
grows weak or devours  
He is hungry  
and cold

.

He doesn't know how to live  
with pain and anguish  
but tries

.

He prepares tea / bathes  
or doesn't

.

He has had enough

.

Slurps

Dips his bread

.

Sits still a moment

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Translated from Spanish by Bill Rankin

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