

# *Entrances*

**Also by George Messo:**

*From the Pine Observatory*

GEORGE MESSO

*Entrances*



- New Poems -

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in memory of  
*Yaşar Çalık*



for  
*Musa Kul*  
*Ferhat Öztürk*  
*Mustafa Kılıç*  
&  
*Durukan Ordu*





# *Lost in Leaves*





## *Winter by the Choruh River*

A woman is rowing across a dark rift.  
The scarf she wears is blue. But  
she does not see me here among the trees.  
The snow is thick as cream and the river  
a black cloud she steers across.

On the far bank smoke rises blue from her house.  
Blue of her scarf, blue of the wood-smoke rising.

## *In Ketel Paulsen's House*

*for Stephen McLoughlin*

October on the high plateau. My friends  
and I are gazing, half-surprised,  
through Ketel Paulsen's window.

It's colder  
than we know: ice in the hazel grove  
a barrel splits to hold.

Yet surprised,  
by sudden snow we scarce expect,  
and moved,  
already,  
to the verge of enterprise.

## *Mothlike I*

For once I know we  
have to live and why.

A thought entirely you,  
each day makes spaces  
shaped for inner things.

Tonight, a Trabzon balcony  
in spring. The sky has peeled  
a segment set in time.

## *Mothlike II*

Still it is something the storm can wake us;  
chords of driven rain strike the window.

We rise and thumb around the darkness,  
oblique in unlit skins, and cling to it,

what love there is, close enough  
to sense how far we've moved apart.

## *The Orchard at Night*

The walk uphill inspired you.  
– Others know the world turns slow going up. –  
You closed yourself off from the town,  
pursued by fusts and Autumn smells.

Darkness spat figures along the path.  
Men with beards and suspicions  
– of what they were not yet sure.  
But wait. You were just an idea  
of a thing they'd truly hate, given time.

Move on. Look back. Ahead,  
the sky turned red behind the trees  
and the mountain sang once more of home.  
Behind, a future of holes you'd return through.

A comet appeared in the sky that night.  
You trembled and slept.  
Why had you gone there?  
Didn't I say you'd be cold?

## *Hotel Paris, Trabzon*

*for Mustafa Kılıç*

Rumour is I'm leaving.  
My room is shaped like a cage  
and the sun puts a fist through the window.

But I, who only want to smoke,  
know nothing, and light my cigarette.

I don't want to leave.  
I want to smoke.

*After Apollinaire*

## *A Trabzon Orchard*

Earth smells rising up.  
A week of rain unbinds  
a summer mountain, cools  
a sense left sleeping there.

In groves, I knew him once,  
coaxing fruit or yielding grass  
– some esoteric scheme  
to stir the inside out of life.

A man alone is almost mythic.  
The city closing in could not  
subvert him. And who can touch  
him now, among the hazel,

lost in leaves and God?

## *Entrances*

*for Michael Lowenthal*

All morning climbing down the wooded gorge  
who knows sometimes the loneliness you move towards  
or where you unexpectedly are lost in mud and greenage  
finally to be among the river's thickest coils

in silence oh my God and nothing there but beauty  
not enough the silvering of water-quiffs or fish  
which rise imperceptibly to flies or what  
you think may even be seed-pods floating by.

Bored, as you are, with constant re-description  
no longer swayed by frightful sounds –  
named inner lives, imagined selves  
– you opt to leave the afternoon  
and step, one naked foot, into the Choruh river.

Unmistakably it is light  
fading or else failing always  
into which you will emerge –

the wish to be there, suddenly real,  
puts everything in its place.

## *Shenyuva*

*with apologies to Li Shang-Yin*

### I

At night  
standing by the river,  
the sound of water,

and the water itself  
swollen by sudden rain  
falling in the summer pool.

### II

You ask how long before we catch a fish.  
Still we cannot say. But the night rains  
swell the summer pool.

### III

Day after day we come  
and cannot move the shy trout  
with our flies and quaint philosophy.

### IV

Would you say  
the mystery that we are  
to ourselves

is any less so here  
at night  
when the big fish move

unheard  
for the sound of the body  
they move within . . .

V  
And how long now before we too  
talk back to the time we stood  
beside the falls in Shenyuva.

## *Farewell Memur Bey*

Nights are long and cold.  
Say, if they ask,  
he followed a heart.

Red nails  
and a torn cloud  
mark the trail.