

HER LEAVES

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(Translated by Maria Tranou)

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CHARACTERS

Woman

SETTING

Place

the juicer,
 the coffee pot.
 Even the doorbell buzzed,
 on its own.
 Determined, I go to open the door
 but then stop.
 I don't make a single move.
 And the bell keeps buzzing.

It may be a salesman,
 my father,
 my friend,
 or the superintendent.
 The bell still buzzes
 and I lie down on the bed.
 I bury my head between the pillows
 and wait.
 After a while the bell goes quiet.
 Whoever it was thought that I wasn't in,
 that I'm at work,
 that I'm out shopping,
 that I'm gone on a trip,
 that I'm sick,
 or that I'm dead.

But why should I die after all?
 Because of a divorce?
 So what?
 I was twenty-two,
 I had all the time in the world on my hands.

I went to the bathroom,
 filled the tub
 and got in.
 I gave myself a week's time to overcome it.
 Not even a day longer.
 Then,
 as if by a miracle,
 I went back
 to living.

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*Winter.
Morning,
Very early,
6.35,
me 8 years old.*

It's dawn.
One of those days when everything seems frozen.
So I remember them,
motionless and frozen.
I got up from bed,
there was loads of snow outside.
Dad was sitting in the kitchen,
at exactly the same place I had left him the previous evening,
staring at the table.
I didn't speak to him again,
I went back to my room,
put on my clothes,
cap,
gloves,
scarf,
wrote down a note that I'm off to buy a book,
I got on my bike
and set off.
I couldn't stay there not even for a moment.
I'd go to town.
Nothing would stop me,
so much the less for some snow.
Which was far more than some.

With my bike I could ride around the whole world.
When I was a kid the whole world was the way
from home to town
and from town back home.
The iced street and the slope
make the wheels spin.
The trees run backwards.
It was dangerous that I was speeding like this, and I knew it.

For the last two days the phone kept ringing
but it is not that people really care
when they call
and say "my condolences",
"I'm so sorry",
"we'll be here for anything you need".
No one was there,
only myself,
Dad
and the snow.

Few made it to the funeral.
The weather had been horrible for a week already

and it wouldn't settle.
The only good thing with the snow is that school is closed.
It wasn't sudden,
Mom used to complain she was tired all the time lately.
She spent the last days in bed
and one morning she didn't wake up.
She kept sleeping.
Dad didn't let me come close to her
but all I wanted was to see
what does dead mom look like.
I was peeping through the keyhole
and the only thing that showed was mom sleeping,
she just continued sleeping.

I used all my strength
and started pedalling faster.
I stopped right outside town.
Most people were still in their beds.
From faraway the town seems motionless,
totally quiet.
A blot on the white landscape.
With the years the blot would expand,
It would eat its way into everything,
It would reach our house,
It would eat that up too.

Lately mom would hardly eat,
She pretended she was eating to comfort us.
Then she stopped.
It seemed to me that her body was shrinking,
Shrinking more and more each day.
Till one morning, three days before she died,
I saw her smiling.
I asked her if she felt any better,
if she wanted something to eat.
She didn't answer.
I think she didn't even hear me.
She looked like she recalled something.
Herself twenty years old,
my father lying next to her.
The lights were off,
they didn't need the light on.
He had fallen asleep
and she had hidden herself in his arms.
That was happiness for mom.

I reached town at half past seven in the morning,
the stores were still closed.
I put chains on my bike,
and I waited.
It was piercing cold.
What was it that I wanted?

I wanted to buy a book, no matter which.
 Books carry you away from your own world
 into another foreign one, different,
 completely in order.

I didn't want to suffer.
 Afterwards the pain would become smaller,
 and then smaller still.
 Then it would be minimal
 and then,
 then it wouldn't exist at all.

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Summer
 3.15
 midday.

I had met him in a bar,
 he was twenty years older than me.
 It's odd to go out with a man twenty years your senior.
 It's really tender.

Apart from his age there was nothing else I knew about him.
 About him who could stare at me naked,
 see the defects of my body,
 see my breasts,
 be able to caress them.

I unlocked the door and got into his place.
 He had made an extra key especially for me,
 and that should mean something.
 I put the key back in my bag and rushed into the room.
 He was sitting on the bed smoking.
 As he sees me he leaves space for me to lie next to him.
 The French window was wide open,
 I went to close it.

On the second floor of the block of flats opposite
 I see a girl about seven years old,
 caressing a cat which is purring with pleasure.
 Her mother is washing the dishes in the kitchen
 and the little chit, after she has caressed the cat's back,

moves her finger
into the animal's dark tiny hole.

"You aren't coming?" he said,
and leaving the French window open
I returned,
took off all my clothes
and sat next to him.
We embraced
as if it was the most common thing in the world.

"A little longer mommy".

The little girl
is thinking of dinosaurs,
tyrannosaurs,
brontosaurus,
mammoths,
lepidoptera,
and all monstrous
animals that have existed throughout the centuries
and then disappeared
and now are hidden in a cat's hole
and if you put your finger in it
you overcome the barrier of time
and are driven to the other side,
the one inside.
It was time for homework,
then sleep
and in the morning she'd be
at school with her girlfriends
at the zoology class.

"A little longer mommy".

The dishes
the glasses
the spoons
the forks
and the knives,
are all washed
and *mum* goes out to
call me.
It's time I left the cat alone
and started doing my homework.

"A little longer mommy".

And me naked,
leaning next to him.
He always slips away,
he avoids answering my questions.
We've spent five days together
and he hasn't told me anything yet.
How does he feel?

Is he in love?
 Does he love me?
 Has he got any feelings for me?
 I put my hands between his legs
 so that he realizes I'm here too,
 so that he's not thinking of other things,
 make him pay attention to me,
 make him want me.
 Him a Taurus, myself a Pisces with a Sagittarius ascendant,
 him a wild animal, me in the sea,
 he who talked in his sleep,
 me who changed places all night in bed,
 him and myself,
 together,
 that summer.

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Autumn.
Night
At 12.05

We were sitting on the bench at the square.
 I should have been home since much earlier,
 Dad would kill me for being out still,
 and my boyfriend's folks too,
 they would snap at him
 for being late.

The light of the lamp post
 because of some disorder
 went on and off above us.
 When it was off it was perfect.
 We hugged,
 we didn't talk,
 we didn't even move.
 We were going to High School,
 we had only one year left to graduate.
 He was an average student,
 I was good,
 particularly at math,
 I always was a numbers' person
 I could have gone to university.

It had been three months since we started going out together,
 we hadn't done it yet,
 I was the only one of my friends who hadn't,
 but he hadn't pushed me either.
 I wouldn't resist him,
 I wanted the first time to be with him.

Neither of the two of us dared look at the time.
 We kept trying to disentangle from each other
 and we stayed hugging.
 How is the castaway expected to leave the lifebuoy?
 The best thing was that I was seventeen,
 myself, at seventeen,
 and I was trembling (for) real in his arms.

He was about to take off his jacket and give it to me,
 I didn't let him.
 "You'll catch a cold" he says.
 "Shall we meet tomorrow?"
 "Tomorrow."
 We got up and left in a hurry.
 Time had beaten us.
 But the hours would pass,
 the night would pass,
 the next day we'd be together again,
 the months would pass,
 we would fuck,
 we would finish High School,
 we would get engaged,
 we would marry,
 we'd be together for a whole life.

He started working at his father's store right out of school
 and I played the housewife part for two years.
 A few months after our wedding
 not even for a moment
 could either of us look into the other's eyes.
 Luckily enough we didn't have time to have kids.

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*Autumn,
Friday,
4.10 in the afternoon*

Out of sheer foolishness I got pregnant.
Maternity was the only thing I hadn't thought of,
I always considered myself as the "kid",
and I get pregnant at forty.
There is a great series of tests,
biochemical,
blood tests,
sugar level,
hormones,
hepatitis,
and several others
one must take at this age.
I had them all.
The doctors concluded that I'm lucky,
I'm healthy,
that the baby is healthy, too,
and that I can have it.
A healthy baby.
The next day I woke up
I pulled down the awning,
I had a cigarette
and went to do away with it,
to have it out of my system.

That day I felt I was
the happiest woman in the whole world.

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*Beginning of winter.
Almost midnight.
11.15*

The only thing I knew about him was his name,
but names on a one night stand are usually false.
I introduced myself under a false name too,
not because I was scared,
but my own name pointed to another woman,

the one I was at home,
at work,
with my girlfriend...

We reached the hotel,
he left his identity card and paid.
The man at the reception desk smiled,
gave us the key and we went upstairs.
The room was on the second floor.
The man took off his clothes quickly and got under the duvet,
I turned the light off and opened the window.
He was definitely wondering when I would undress and go near him,
he didn't want to ask me,
he wanted me to go by myself,
he wished he could guess what I was thinking of,
to understand how, after a couple of drinks, I accepted
to follow him to that pathetic hotel.

Some people from the next room started having a fight.
You couldn't hear what they were saying,
you could only hear the sound of a shrieking female voice
and that of a bass male voice.
Fights calm me down.
It's better to fly off the handle rather than keep things inside,
letting them grow, blocking you.
I always admired those who had the courage
to fight
and clear things up a bit.
I closed the window,
I took off my clothes and I lay next to him.

I asked if he was after something particular.
He was dumbfounded with my question
and I had a fit of laughing.
I explained to him that I work at a company
and this was the only job I had,
it was just that I wanted to know beforehand what we would do.
He says "just the ordinary"
and it did sound odd
because everyone is more or less looking for something more than that.
As we were lying next to each other looking at the ceiling,
I turned to his side and I kissed him.
He must have wondered if it was a routine kiss,
just to break the ice,
and it was.

The act had no great length, neither peaks nor valleys.
It was rather quiet with some sort of potential for something more.
Then, he caressed my hair
and got up to go to the bathroom.
The door closed behind him and I stayed waiting for my turn.
I was relieved it had gone well.

He left the bathroom and I went in.
 As soon as he heard the water running,
 he certainly searched his trousers for his wallet,
 counted his money,
 only to put it back in his pocket, relieved.

When I got out he was already dressed,
 he had made the bed,
 had folded my clothes on the chair
 and was standing by the window looking outside.
 I went near him to embrace him.
 That was it,
 the moment I touched him,
 the moment my fingers came into contact with his skin,
 he pulls my hands off him annoyed,
 he turns to me
 and punches me straight in the face with his right fist.
 I would have been flung backwards
 'cause the punch was a strong one,
 but he held my right wrist with his left hand
 and I sprang back to his arms.

When I realised what he had done,
 I pushed him back with all my strength,
 but he held me even stronger.
 Not even he himself knew why he had hit me.
 It's like when you are running an experiment,
 you pour some liquid into a test tube
 and wait to see the reaction,
 if it changes colour,
 if it lets out any smoke.
 So did he,
 he waited to see.
 After all, only with a one night stand kind of woman
 could he try this game.

I tried to get out of his hold
 but he squeezed me against him.
 He was squeezing me so hard that I heard
 his heartbeat against mine.
 I was scared that he might kill me,
 but he didn't intend to.
 He was satisfied with my fear.
 He enjoyed making me panic.
 "If you don't let me go I'll start screaming," I told him.
 He did, and quite unconsciously I started calling him names,
 "asshole," "son of a bitch," "jerk," and the rest,
 my hands were shaking.
 He got confused,
 he pulled his wallet out of his pocket
 and emptied all the money on the bed.
 He opened the door and left.

I press the button and the elevator goes up.
 It was the first time I went to see him and I hadn't bought him anything.
 Better this way.
 If he wanted to borrow any money, I would tell him that I couldn't give him any,
 and I would leave.
 There was no chance I'd tell him
 I could hardly make ends meet,
 after all my financial situation was no one's business.
 If I could afford to lend him any money I would,
 but I couldn't.

I reach the fifth floor,
 I have to push the metallic elevator door,
 to get to the corridor,
 with my smiling face,
 the kind one,
 the condescending one.
 The face of the nice girl
 which often makes me
 want to puke my own self.

Uncle hugs me tightly
 and shows he's honestly happy to see me
 and why not.
 His face betrays a tired man,
 plagued with junk and hardship,
 but his living room was in the same mess,
 like there had been a whirlwind in.
 A living room suffocating with things.
 On the wall there are forty water colour paintings,
 anchors,
 lights,
 a wooden steering wheel,
 compasses,
 beams,
 propellers,
 helms,
 parts I don't even recognize,
 post-cards from exotic countries stuck with tacks on the wall,
 a dirty aquarium without fish
 (they must have died from lack of any care)
 and dozens of different objects.
 He had spent all his life on ships.

We sit and start chatting about nothing
 and this goes on for over a quarter of an hour.
 I look at my watch and uncle has to come to the point.
 He expresses his desire
 to let me have his things when he dies,
 those, of course, that have some value.
 In fact they had no value,
 if something had any he would have sold it already.

Eventually my uncle tells me what he wants,
 he wants me to go every Tuesday and Saturday,
 to take off my clothes,
 for an hour at the most.
 There is nothing sinful in mind,
 nothing we do together, anything. No way!
 Only that I come for an hour
 every Tuesday and Saturday,
 take off my clothes and he will be looking at me,
 without us doing anything wicked,
 he stresses with emphasis.
 I ask him if he wants any money,
 he says he is penniless,
 I take out my purse,
 I give him all the money I've got
 and leave like I'm being chased.
 I didn't see him again.

Three years later, uncle...passed away.
 His funeral was done at the expense of relatives,
 there was no money,
 no house,
 it had been confiscated a long time ago.
 His things ended up in the nearest playground
 the remnants of a ship
 hastily bundled off onto land.

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Morning.

Early summer.

7.20

Sometimes something needs to happen,
 even something small,
 to remind you there is a reason for you to be well.
 During the last year absolutely nothing had happened, not the slightest.
 But this is how it is,
 you are waiting,
 and waiting,
 and waiting,
 and out of the blue everything happens on a single day, suddenly,
 when you've just got used to waiting.

I've always been living at places I rented,
 I had nothing of my own,
 not a husband,
 not a child,
 not a boyfriend,
 not even a house,
 a place of my own.
 Only during the last month I had pushed myself
 and I was looking for a house to buy,
 even a small one.
 Never till then had I felt such a need.
 A house of your own makes you stick to the same place,
 to the same spot for years,
 for the rest of your life.
 And the only thing I dreamed of then was of leaving,
 passing the borders,
 crossing the sea,
 going to another country,
 to another continent,
 to the U.S. for instance.
 But it is difficult to leave everything behind and just go.

That day
 I woke up like every other morning,
 I sat at my balcony,
 I had my coffee,
 I got dressed,
 I opened the car door,
 I turned the engine on,
 I released the handbrake,
 and set off for work.
 I got held up in an amazing bottleneck,
 I hardly know how long I was stuck at the traffic lights.
 I reached the office one hour late.
 I parked the car
 and went in.

The head of the department, instead of scolding me, smiled at me.
 I smiled back.
 At the coffee break he asked if I had any plans for the night,
 I said "no" and he asked me to go out with him on a date.
 When I finished work
 I rushed home to make time to have a nap
 to be fresh for the evening.
 I had a message on the answering machine,
 the estate agent wanted to show me yet another "terrific" two-bedroom flat.
 I called him back and he urged me to see it right away, on the spot.
 He insisted so much that I couldn't find the nerve to refuse.
 As soon as we entered the house,
 the moment I saw it,
 saw "my" balcony,

I knew that this was it, my own house.
 I closed the deal without a second thought
 and asked him to give me the keys immediately.
 It is like this,
 you're waiting
 and waiting.

In the evening the boss took me to a very swanky restaurant.
 When I saw the prices on the menu all colour drained from my face.
 There comes the first dish,
 there comes the second,
 he pours me wine,
 he refills my glass,
 he tops it up again,
 he tells me the story of his life,
 there comes the dessert,
 the waiters go to and fro over our heads,
 when he suddenly becomes very formal and asks me to marry him.
 I almost spat the panacota onto his face.
 It is impossible for me to understand
 how can someone ask you to marry him
 without having slept with you first.
 He paid, we left the restaurant
 and he took me for a ride in his car.
 As I intended, we got close to my brand new home quite by chance.
 I took him upstairs to show it to him.
 Naturally we screwed on the floor.

You're waiting
 and waiting,
 and out of the blue everything happens in one day,
 when you 've got used to just waiting.
 I refused his marriage proposal.
 Not because he was a bad lover,
 quite the opposite,
 it was just that there was no reason to accept.

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*Time does not matter.
 Late at night.*

Take me wherever you like.
 I don't mind where we're going.
 We'll get into the car and you'll be driving all night,
 I will be looking at the lights
 and it will be raining.
 All the cars will have couples like us.
 Couples that have no home,
 Couples that don't want to go back to the home they've got.
 I could stay in the car for days, could you?
 You'll be driving and I'll be sitting next to you,
 I'll be cooking for you,
 I'll make you coffee,
 I'll light your cigarette
 and you'll be driving.
 Did you know that in the U.S highways have no turns?
 Endless straight lines that connect the different states.
 One could sleep on the steering wheel,
 as long as he keeps his hands steady.
 He might sleep for hours.

You'll be sleeping in the car,
 I'll be sleeping next to you,
 I'll be leaning my head on your shoulder
 and I'll be sleeping with you
 we'll be dreaming of being together,
 of driving across the U.S.,
 of me leaning on your shoulder,
 and you'll be dreaming that you and me are together,
 that I'm your wife,
 and you my husband,
 that we are in the car,
 we got married yesterday,
 and you are driving on our honeymoon trip,
 and I haven't yet taken off my wedding gown,
 and small cans are hanging from the car,
 they are jingling on the asphalt
 behind the wheels.
 The car,
 you,
 and me, we are listening to music,
 and I am leaning on your shoulder.
 Like this.
 And a little later I will have fallen asleep
 and you'll keep on driving,
 and I'll be sleeping,
 and you will wake me up.
 Like this.

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Spring.
Afternoon.
 5.10

There are people who wear their wedding ring everywhere.
 They go to work with their wedding ring on,
 they sleep with their wedding ring on,
 they take their baths with the wedding ring on,
 well, my husband was one of them.
 He never took it off his finger,
 though "never" is a big word.
 Me, the moment I was in I'd put it anywhere,
 and when I was to go out
 I had to search for it for at least a quarter of an hour.

It had become such a nuisance
 that I decided to start putting it in a specific spot
 so that I could find it easily.
 On the TV,
 on the TV it would be,
 nowhere else.
 Till I lost it.
 Somehow,
 somewhere.

"Where did you lose it?"
 " I 've just lost it."
 "How did you lose it?"
 " I 've just lost it."
 "When did you lose it?"
 " I 've just lost it."
 "Why did you lose it?"
 "There is no reason why. I just lost it."
 From that day on, my husband started nagging,
 mumbling,
 having arguments with me for no reason,
 sulking all the time.
 As if the wedding ring was the problem in our relationship.
 Maybe it was after all.
 He had become such a pain with all his nagging
 that I thought of buying a new one,

but new gold shines
and if he discovered my sham
I would have worse troubles to deal with.

It was then when I remembered my mother's wedding ring.
It was the only thing of hers I had kept.
I rummage through my jewellery,
I try it,
it fits my finger perfectly.
I told him I'd found it somewhere at work,
and everything turned back to what it was before.
I wouldn't say we became happy
but at least the nagging stopped.
He would come home from work,
we would eat,
I told him about my day,
he told me about his,
we lazed about,
we watched *the* TV,
we ate again,
at nights we slept together.
At the weekends he wasn't tired we made love.
Everything was like it used to be.

So, two months passed like this
and my mother in law, while cleaning up the house,
because someone had to do it,
discovers in some corner, under the carpet
my lost wedding ring.
I had gone out shopping
and she gives it right away to her beloved son
who was changing the filter of the stove hood.
When I opened the door he was waiting for me in the hall,
he takes the shopping bags from my hands,
he hugs me,
takes off my jacket,
pulls softly but steadily the ring from my finger,
reads on the inside, not of course his name,
but my father's name,
he puts the loan wedding ring on the table,
puts our wedding ring on my finger,
our own wedding ring
and he says: "it was under the carpet".

The next day he collected his stuff and left home,
the next week he sent the divorce application form,
which I signed.
Within a year we divorced officially, too.

I hadn't seen him for seventeen years,
seventeen whole years,
and I saw him accidentally outside of a court of appeal.

I saw him,
 he saw me,
 I saw him staring at my hand,
 he smiles at me
 and he passes me by.
 I continued walking confused
 till I turned into the first sidestreet
 and for the first time...,
 for the first time I realised
 that throughout these seventeen years since we had split up,
 I had forgotten,
 I had never taken our wedding ring
 off my finger.

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Summer.
Soon before noon.
11.20 a.m.

I went out of the telephone booth,
 my telephone had been temporarily cut off, but I didn't mind,
 across the street there is a telephone booth.
 I go out of the booth
 and I feel I'm surrounded by... feathers.
 Feathers coming from all different directions
 filling the sky.
 I turn and see a turkey,
 then a second,
 then dozens of them,
 hundreds of turkeys running panic stricken in the streets,
 whole pavements flooded with turkeys
 astonished people looking at them confused,
 and feathers everywhere.
 Some of them are motionless,
 dead in the middle of the street.

The truck that carried the turkeys
 had crashed into a white DCV,
 which was about to overtake it
 and got stuck right on the truck.
 Both drivers had been lightly injured,

had exchanged screwball niceties, but they both survived.
Some of the turkeys didn't make it,
most of them did, even in an unfeathered state.

And the sky was full of feathers.
What is a man after all,
a mere nothing,
so much the worse for a turkey.
At first sight it seemed better to be a human,
but I wouldn't swear on it.

For three months I had been unemployed.
I had lost my position because of
my unwillingness to marry the boss.
The pretext was I was never on time, who, me!
I had just answered another ad,
they had just hired someone else.
What difference did it make?

But it did make some.
I returned home and gorged myself till I was fit to burst.
During the last months I had put on eight pounds.
Food was the only thing that relaxed me.
"I look like a total cow, I've been eating like a beast," I tell my friend
who was on a diet again.
" I've been living on chicken only," she says,
on the verge of tears.
So, the morning turkey incident occurs to me
and I tell her.
We start laughing, soon we get into a laughing fit.
We couldn't stop.
"Will you stop it, just stop it," my friend says,
but it was impossible.
I had hiccups.
"Will you stop it, my belly aches."
We start crying,
we fall on the floor,
still laughing,
laughter spreads out of the room,
crosses the hall,
goes out to the corridor,
reaches the street
and is lifted up.
Our laughter floats over the city.

I don't remember when I had last laughed that much.
A long time ago, when I was little
something dad had told me,
it had made me laugh to tears,
but I don't remember what it was.
I'll call him just in case he still remembers.

We haven't talked for quite a while,
 almost four years.
 It seems like yesterday.

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Spring,
 12.10

When I was little,
 five or six years old,
 my parents took me for a walk in the park every Sunday.
 Dad would hold one hand
 and mom the other.
 Every now and then oops! they would lift me up to the sky.
 Then they would let me go
 and I would dash about frantic all over the place.

That Sunday the weather was wonderful,
 and the park was filled with people.
 As we were walking to the lake
 I saw a stray dog in the distance.
 I rushed to touch him.
 The moment the dog sees me he hides behind the trees,
 and I follow him.
 Among the leaves it was dark,
 I got scared and I went out right away.
 But dad wasn't where I had left him.
 Neither was mom.
 Nobody was.
 Then I rush to check if they had met some friend of theirs,
 but they are nowhere to be seen.
 I start calling "Mom! Dad!"
 Nothing.
 The passersby are looking at me,
 The children are looking at me,
 A lady with a big hat and huge shades
 comes towards me,
 I run off in the opposite direction.
 I'm alone in the park,
 it will get dark,
 Dad and mom are missing,

somebody took them away.
 From now on I'm going to be an orphan.
 I have to swallow this.
 My heart sank.
 I started to cry,
 sobbing with tears.

Then I heard mom calling me
 and as if by a miracle,
 first dad and then mom
 appear behind the leaves.
 "Where have you been?" dad asks
 and I start hitting his legs.
 Mom hugs me to sooth me
 "You've grown to a real woman,
 you must learn not to get scared when you're alone."

Three years later, mom died.
 My dad told me "she died, God bless her,
 from now on we have to think of ourselves."
 The earth caved,
 I felt he had never really loved her.
 "Dad, if I die you'll go on living?"
 "Darling, we have to go on living, what else can we do?"
 and he went to do the cooking.
 I started crying.

I felt alone like then in the park,
 only this time they wouldn't appear laughing
 behind the leaves
 first dad and then mom.
 I was on my own and I had to learn not to be afraid on the spot.
 I didn't do that bad.

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Summer
3.25 in the afternoon.

The moment we met I felt that he would
 at last, be the man of my life.
 But it didn't turn out that way.
 Time was passing by and we got on worse and worse,
 till yesterday he decided to move back to his place.

I started crying my heart out,
 so all the neighbours hear me,
 have them hear what I'm going through.
 I was shouting "I wish I'd never met you.
 I wish you 'd never come to stay with me,
 I was much better off alone.
 A million times better!"

He didn't pay the slightest attention to me.
 He picked up his stuff,
 somewhat hastily the truth be told,
 and closed the door behind him silently.

At least he had stated it from the beginning
 "as long as we are fine we'll be together, then it's over."

Two long relationships,
 a kid
 and a divorce later,
 had convinced him you'd better be clear,
 cause you can't play with these things.
 And he's right, you don't play with these things.

I went to the kitchen,
 everything had happened so suddenly,
 I hadn't yet had any coffee.
 I called work and reported sick.
 They didn't really believe me, but I couldn't go anyway.
 I took my coffee and sat to drink it on my balcony.
 The wall has been covered by the ivy,
 and the whole place is filled with flower pots.
 My geraniums,
 the roses,
 my jasmine,
 the basil,
 my heart's eases,
 my olive tree,
 the benjamins,
 the papyrus,
 my fern.
 I spend one hour a day
 on my plants' care,
 I prune them,
 give them fertilizer,
 I take the dust off them with a piece of cloth,
 I water them.
 There are plants that wither
 if you don't water them every day.
 I sit and talk to them,
 I can't understand people who have automatic watering installed.

Under the roses
 I have a table with two chairs.
 I folded one,
 moved it to the kitchen so that it wouldn't remind me of him,
 and sat to have my coffee,
 quiet.
 Completely relaxed.
 As if he hadn't just left me,
 as if I wasn't alone again,
 as if he was still in my bed sleeping
 and we were happy,
 as if it wasn't that important that he had gone,
 as if some weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

And myself,
 calm,
 staring at my plants,
 looking at them carefully.
 As if I could make out things to come
 on the thin stalks,
 on the lines of the leaves
 on their polished colour,
 their shape,
 the patterns they form together,
 the light that goes through them
 and unwinds among the leaves.

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Nothing.

So what happened?
 Nothing.
 Nothing happened.
 Nothing ever.

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