

POETRY ON FILM

Poems chosen by Dr Immanuel Mifsud

OLIVER FRIGGIERI

THE STREETLIGHT

Like the humble caper bush nestled
in the fortress walls, like a snail gleefully sliding
back onto the damp ground, two lovers
huddle together in the corner
under the streetlight, full of life.

Soon they'll return home, and the streetlight,
alone, will begin waiting for tomorrow,
for the two to snuggle up again under its glow.

Translation by Antoine Cassar

SEPTEMBER IN BUDAPEST

A postcard for my daughter Sara, from afar

The early-rising crow's cawing has already
roused the folk on the street. Dark clouds
shroud the sky for yet another day.
The distant train is heard coming and going,
its wagon jolts weave a single rhythm
along a fixed path of railway lines.
Raindrops hit the window pane,
then trickle slowly down.
As frigid air invades the room
the last dregs of sleep disappear. New day,
same old questions, the same silences,
a clock making its usual turn, shorn of surprises.
The crow hovers still over trees and rooftops,
lone crooner of that joy which only it can comprehend.

Translation by Martha Vassallo



APPENDIČI B (EN)

NIGHTTIME INSIDE THIS STATION

Night descended at this station just before I did,
I wait for nothing more. The train has
now taken its slow leave of me.
I pant, she stirs without haste,
the two of us weary in this corner of a city asleep.
Night descends a tad early at this station,
the final journey is now marked. Black wagons
hide in the darkness, the last sound abates
and the hope of another city wanes within me.

Translation by Martha Vassallo

ACHILLE MIZZI

BEES

Is it bees
or a Pablo Casals cello
groaning the resonant drone
of three in the afternoon sunbaking
on a Swedish femme's Ambre Solaire-anointed body
in the sands at Armier?

Translation by Martha Vassallo

COFFEE

Round and round ...
roaster resound
a clangor of coffee
my grinder to grind.
Refined through the fumes
the coffee is charged
till it yields
a curative charm.
Nightlong I continue
my vigil,
distilling from heavenly vaults
the elixir
of poetry.

Translation by Albert Gatt

AGONY

A swarm of blackbird chatter
In the trees of an evening
Heard inside the skull
A whistle-note finale
Of blood retiring
To its death.

Translation by Martha Vassallo