



Eve Aschheim, *Untitled* (2016).

## A Window in the North

Lâle Müldür

*translated from the Turkish by*

Ayten Tartici

*This is a selection from Lâle Müldür's A Window in the North, a long prose poem that forms a part of her 1992 book Kuzey Defterleri (Notebooks from the North). These poems were partly inspired by Müldür's four-year stay in Brussels during the early 1980s as a result of her marriage to the Belgian painter Patrick Claeys. In these wide-ranging meditations, Müldür combines the cosmic with the quotidian, and the scientific with the artistic, as the Turkish speaker of these poems looks out onto the Flemish landscape through a window. We find ourselves interrogating the monumentality of a moment compared to the vast scale of universal time. As raindrops gather on the window, distances of all kinds suddenly come into focus: between exterior and interior, winter and summer, North and East, the solitary self and others.*

everyone accepts that photographic representation  
is the closest transfer of reality into perfection. the day I refused that reality  
of photographic vision I began seeing things  
in a different way. as when we look at ourselves deeply in a mirror,  
objects looked at for a long time become unfamiliar,  
even if they did not betray their secrets, they parted the doors  
of a foreign world. one of my first discoveries was the congruence  
of internal and external reality. this was perhaps a fifth dimension,  
a dimension of consciousness. the moment I saw this,  
individual psychologies lost their meaning. looking from a wide or distant angle  
all people, chinese, african american, were becoming alike.  
each individual case slipping farther away from us  
into the unknown.

people are like Bohr's atomic models. only understood in a cloud  
of possibilities, always moving farther away from us  
in spirals. in this light the efforts of the surrealists are fruitless,  
they transform themselves into a narcissistic charlatanism. and the classics  
are falling into a self-satisfied ordinariness of monochromatic vision  
and uniformity. the few who wriggled out,  
they were real visionaries, like Leonardo, William Blake, Holbein, van Eyck...  
in the middle of this thing we call reality, they were slipping  
farther away from us. people like Munch, Hopper, Picasso, Dali, and Bacon,  
they were trying to nail onto the wall the other  
that could only be sensed, in order that, in a wider and cosmic  
understanding of realism, one beyond Euclidean geometry,  
on a theoretical platform that exceeds the speed of light,  
where time and space are re-organized, there, the painted, depthless figures  
of Picasso, Dali, and Giacometti turn out to be the most realistic of them all.

then even though it is not continuous we can speak of an evolution in art  
parallel to the evolution of knowledge, to the progress in science.  
you cannot talk of a Picasso before Einstein, of a Giacometti  
before Bohr. yes in fractal geometry the part is equal to the whole and it is  
necessary to also see people in this light. each part, parallel to the ratio  
in which it resembles the whole, goes to its essence, and at the same time,  
when considered one by one, quickly loses its familiar face,  
slipping farther away from us. when you look at someone or at a plant  
for a long time, every line, every form, every stain begins going beyond time.  
you see the vulnerability of every living being there, its fragility...  
everything is barely surviving, barely protecting its totality.  
the moment we are able to see the bow between a person's interior  
and exterior about to be broken, and how everything can change  
its position, we will feel either great terror or relief.

these notes you are holding in your hand are only a minimal sequence of a similar time tunnel. the story of all the times and the time spent in a gray armchair in front of a window in the north and some randomly chosen plants. taken successively everyday in the same place and same spot these notes and their simultaneous projections are an extension of trying to see things differently as well as the stories of everyone and everything, an analytical essay. for this reason you will not be able to find tangible people. just as in quantum physics there are countless twins even though not independent from the subject. though in a way these notes carry the quality of an archival study, they are an almost invisible stain slipping into the vastness at the same ratio at which every brief and brittle line and form marks mutability.

there is something in a vegetative state living inside archival studies, travel notes, detective novels, memoirs, biographies, poems and novels that talk of love. this book is a mad silhouette of them all, a tiny moment though one in which you are hearing the years go by. oh, that sound, when the familiar face of a moment is torn, like an atom's cloud of possibilities, wouldn't it move you like the double-winged magic of a window about to be broken?

You are sleeping on a bed of wind, on a bed of cyclones...  
*A Rhinemaiden is looking at you, self-crowned...*  
A white horse is passing by...  
Silence is revolving around me like the minute hand...  
Is it north here, or north-west?  
Save yourself! Return to the East!  
The Traveller's song divides loneliness into slices  
Is there nowhere someone joyful and calm?  
I am extracting myself out of a foreigner, out of an unknown  
Is it north here, or north-west?  
Loneliness is a gray bow in the sky...  
The north is bringing you a language of water...  
In the nights, you abandon yourself to a rainforest  
Jaguar, my younger sibling,  
I am singing a song for your distant heart  
don't you know that I am singing for you?

maybe someone who has become sick with melancholia is the best interpreter of the Kabbalah. someone whipped with melancholia, someone who can't leave the house. because Paracelsus's kabbalistic charm is trapped in the imagination and can only be kept alive in memory. a reader sick with melancholia... once upon a time in a place where a star lived... leaves every hope behind. an imagination that can convert itself to motion can change a foreign body. the places where a star lived once upon a time can be recreated through Gabalia. "it is melancholics who best know how to read the world." they categorize objects best. the more lifeless things are the better they can be analyzed. this is why I never left this armchair by this window. if it is craziness for someone reading and writing in Turkish to try to understand the north, it's worth exaggerating the dimensions of this madness. if the north can't be understood from this narrow angle, it will never be understood from a wider angle. after this book, my deadly flirtations with the north will be over, and still other poles and axes will never take me from this window.