

Holidays with Pay

Pere Quart

I've made up my mind to go away for ever.
Amen.

I'll come back tomorrow
because I'm old
and my feet are spoilt,
swollen with gout.

But I'll be back the day after,
made young by disgust.
For ever and ever. Amen.

And the day after that I'll come back,
like a carrier pigeon,
stupid as him,
but not so straight,
not even white either.

Poisoned by myths,
creels crammed with blasphemies,
bony, shrunk, bleared,
a prince dispossessed even of his dream,
fake Job;
tongue-cut, gelt,
grazing for lice.

I'll take the train to those holidays with pay.
Clinging to the buffers.
The land that was once our inheritance
runs away from me.
A gush between my legs
rejecting me.
Grass, rock:
pledges of love dissolving in shame.
Oh skylless land!

But look at me now:
I'm back again.
Ah alone, so leprous I'm nearly blind.
I'm off tomorrow —
and this time I mean it.

Yes yes, I'm away on all fours,
like great-great-grandad,
by the smugglers' short cut
to the black frontier of death.

Then I'll leap into the burning darkness
where all is foreign.
Where the ancient god of my fathers
lives, in exile.

Quart, Pere. *Vacances pagades*. Barcelona: Proa, 1972.

Traduit per Pearse Hutchinson