

## Cavalls cap a la fosca

Baltasar Porcel

### Horses into the night

“Was it the spell of autumn with its luxuriant, rusty foliage, Notre Dame rising in the distance, each stone so precisely cut and self-contained, its spire outlined sharply against the bleak gray sky? I don’t know...

I always get up late, toward midday. The heating system has created a stuffy atmosphere in the apartment, which makes me drowsy. I fix some orange juice and coffee. I open the window and sip the coffee slowly, then I light a cigarette. And I invariably ask myself how I would describe the huge gargoyles perched on the cathedral I see in front of me just across the river. It’s sort of an obsession, maybe tied to the dream that plagues me. Every night the dream traps me in its exhausting and vicious underground existence that I know nothing about, but carry inside me and have to relive...where vague, unidentified threats lurk...

I think the gargoyles come from a similar world. They have animal bodies with the sleekness of birds, perverted by beastly, sardonic human grimaces. The Seine flows by, smooth, stoic, and leaden. I usually drop by the Shakespeare and Company bookstore. It’s right beside my apartment building on Bûcherie Square. The books, posters, and other unique objects, such as balalaika or shabby postcards from the twenties, fill the decrepit bookstore to overflowing and exude a heavy darkness. The man with the goatee always nods off behind the little counter. It moves me somehow to think of the shadows of Joyce, Gertrude Stein, and Hemingway haunting this place from the time when Sylvia Beach had this shop on Odéon Street. It’s as if in that remote air, in the eroded neglect floating among those piled-up shelves, an echo of their time remains. Among the corners stuffed with books - most of them used - I find a trace of peacefulness.”

Translated by John L. Getman