

BOZUK PARA*

Something is wrong,
but something is also right, or
will at least do for now. Always so.
The cat, for example, is called "Plume"
for obvious reasons, but it's her paws
I like best. Large and sturdy,
they seem to make the house stand up straight
even when the kitchen floor's under two inches
of water, and the newly-arrived guests
can be heard splashing about, making
the best of it, as we must I suppose,
like survivor of a mudslide.
Of course, she has her mad scenes, the house too-
Its shutters thudding in the wind,
hanging off their hinges, the light fixtures
indulging in bad special effects,
as if all of this were a pantomime
of such unsurpassed tawdriness and boredom
that the child-audience dozed. And then,
the frenzied skittering of claws on wooden boards
is heard. Besides, I'd swear that roofbeam's
getting lower, and have the lumps to prove it.
I reel into the wall dizzy...
The repeated blows are making me stupider
by the day, which is sort of relaxing
like lying down in the middle of a landscape
without even a tree or a gas station,
just grass really, long grass I'd guess...

So this is exile, is it?
Can it be, if you wanted to leave
in the first place, at no emperor's behest?

* The original title of the poem is in Turkish.

*In fact even the way the local transvestite
saunters down the street,
demurely dressed in a long green skirt,
seems familiar as a storefront in Liverpool,
although, like everything else in these parts,
more extreme in its manner of expression:
ugly-beautiful, beautiful-ugly, and so on.
And what about those letters home-
scores of them – that I should be writing,
full of wit, advice and melancholy?
I've tried, but all I came up with was:*

*"Hi! I really like it here. The people are nice,
and you don't have to pretend to be happy all the time,
which is a big relief I can tell you. You can sit*

*in a café looking just as glum as you please,
and no one will think anything of it. If a tear escapes,
and embarks on the long journey to your shirt collar,
well, that's fine too. Anyone who looks in your direction
will just say to themselves, "Ah, life is like that sometimes",*

*then continue drinking their coffee,
while gazing out sympathetically towards the water,
which is just beginning to shimmer a little
after several days of unseasonal rainstorms,
and the smoke from his cigarette makes a nimbus".*

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