Thinking as Two

(Thoughts That Wander Free)

To open my heart wider, I left my childhood ajar,
let through a memory still luminous with Mum.
I offered you its light; you traced a rival's shadow,
gave her the first place, then searched for yours
among the paranoid echoes of a life before us,
until you vanished where I had made room for you.

I brought you another's words, a thought still stirring,
a phrase gathered along the byways of my wandering,
a passing TikTok post whose echo sought your ear.
You turned it slowly towards its hidden face,
then feverishly threaded my silences through its seams,
until another's voice confessed what I had never said of us.

An old poem carried departures from a time before you,
yet at a stanza's turn, our bags stood packed.
Another, dear to me, sang of solitude's secret harvest,
and you asked if its verses were my veiled request for room.
Even in my Réminiscences, among another life's echoes,
you read our Reviviscences as a veiled confession addressed to you.

In time, I learned to read my words through your suspicions,
to sift each thought before I placed it in your hands:
could this verse wound you, this memory sound like a reproach?
Would you hear in this word a weariness I did not feel?
I held back the freest phrases, the thoughts that wandered furthest,
until only what could not be misconstrued passed between us.

Soon, soon, my days reached you with their windows closed.
I, who detach the couple from everything, and everything from the couple,
could scarcely find my own reflection in what remained.
You received it all at last - and alas - with serenity,
unaware that beneath the stillness you welcomed,
what bound us was unravelling in the silence that reassured you.

Yet, yet I only wished to read beside you,
to lift my eyes from a page still warm with feeling,
and say, "Listen to this," holding out a phrase like a hand,
inviting you towards a horizon neither of us had seen,
where, for the brief life of a thought shared freely,
we might grow larger than the story of us.

Surely love must leave a margin where thought can wander free:
we are one line upon my page, where a thousand others breathe.
Others, before you, sought to write us over every inch;
there love choked on its hunger for the whole.
I know that narrowing circle, the world drawn to one navel,
and already feel the ache of vanishing there with you.

I weary myself and my mother, theorising each unravelling.
Still, I would let this love take root, with doors and windows open,
and share what stirs in me without my words being called to trial.
But if they must be pruned to keep us, I will choose solitude -
again, again and yet again, however tender the ties:
Neither her hopes, nor ours shall eclipse my sky in the name of us.

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