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THE NUMERICALLY SECOND ELEGY

What
is being written is unwritten, approaching completion.
What is written — it's incomplete, perpetually approaching
completion.

A choice of meanings.
The seductiveness of a particular meaning. Then the plural.
A cherry
and the temples are poised for now in an equation, like the wall's
blooming clusters, studying the rain.

Not meant for the hands — neglect . . .
Can you hear, has enough been said?
Are there enough meanings of myself for me to stop,
What is being written reduced to what's been written,
desiring no other:
what is not and never could have been said here
and now again: guess who sent this postcard.
A guess is an obstacle, a leaven of distinctions
But not the tangle of their transformations into metaphor . . .
The magnificent rainbow of breath falls back toward the mouth,
Now and then in the cold one sees its formation
and, finally, here is its description — whether or not its beginning
is within me
is uncertain: desire. The sting of desire and so forth.
To repeat, desire expiring. Strong smell of frozen beet.
The sunflower is black,
The sovereignty of the cold is flowering like a wall
of things passing by.

The end is always sudden.
You distance yourself from the one who chooses for himself
the first person,
Several persons.
One of them is first. The end is unexpected, like completion,
and intimacy collapses — now everything is close to the body —

Not to name it home under any circumstances,
Not to name it
Better to be silent, as in the cold.
Have you finished?
Better the evening with a glass of wine and you
as your own guest,
when one writes about wine, as about the eyes of a frozen fish
in which one thing will never become another
by studying the walls blossoming with the unspoken
in spring.

(trans. by Lyn Hejinian and Elena Balashova)