FANTASIESTÜCKE

(After Schumann, Op. 12)

I

Des Abends

Shadow are long at dawn and dusk;
then long for dusky dawn light,
for soft and downy dusk.
Perhaps beneficent are shadows?

Dark lines on the land
at dusk or dawn are
attenuated shapes subtly drawn
of tree and fencepost and the windmill’s metal flower.
Strange that flesh slept in
takes on these folds and forms afresh.
The shadows of the creased sheets
Remain to witness toiling dreams.

Early I learned to love the shadows
giving the land its folded forms;
mind has shadows too.
II

In der Nacht

Shadows dissolving to darkness,
their coolness cast through
burning catacombs, lulling
malevolent dreams of despair,
taking by the throat wide-eyed passion,
startled from slumber in terror.
Easing shaking shoulders back
on to the cool receiving covers,
smoothing to quiescent slackness,
to enfolded peace, the flames of images
redolent of the fevered blood.
Embers cooling dwindle to ash
as grey as shadows. Shadows
that are, perhaps, beneficent.

III

Ende vom Lied

Cast across silence of the land
shadows are only mirror images,
crawling behind and before,
of rearing monoliths;
and such thin and dusty trees;
and of the stalking presences of mankind.
So, if you should prefer the image to the form,
longest are the shadows at the dusk and dawn.

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