

LINDA ZISQUIT

War Sonata

It was unlike anything else.

Using the past tense must refer to music that cannot stay but is all movement

or passion that doesn't lie, as Marina Tsvetaeva said, but also doesn't last.

Orpheus agreed to the condition not to speak to her or turn around to be sure her soundless footfalls followed him.

Isn't it something to agree to such conditions when the music continues and the heart strings do not rest?

I agreed to not speak.

But that was after the first movement. Already conditioned to his notes our chords the incredible harmony—

What was it? a change of rhythm, too long a pause after the crest, a rippling that could not return to its whirling center?

I agreed even then

because I refused to let the song end. A false attenuated finale? Or like the head on the water that keeps singing its grief, I could not unlearn the song.

In the first moments, there were no words, only notes made of holes.

On the river, as if a boat kept us afloat, I repeated measures of an earlier rapture. I turned to him and tried to touch his flesh. And like some god who repels because of a higher law, he pushed me away.

As if one could enter the underworld and speak the language of innocence, I repeated my error. I lost him again. And again.

That was the scenario until the evening performance of Prokofiev's Sonata in B-flat major Opus 83 performed by Sara Daneshpour.

Andante dolce.

I wanted to sleep.
Prokofiev's wasn't the music I wanted to hear.

Its dissonant lyrics. Its sweetness. Its lies.

It kept waking me.

Andante sognando. Slow and dreamy.

Girls in the row in front kept pressing the keys of their cell phones, lighting the dark, drawing my eyes, but they didn't interrupt the hush as she played.

She wore a silver shimmering sheath. Suddenly her hair moved in one flash as she swayed

vivace

octaves brutal
and
divine

1939

Alive!

It was then without thought my body reconstructed

something in me started to rise

a solo symphony

primordial flame, forgotten promise, skirmishes, bruises,
sand thrown in my face

became a billowy spray, a shield, the music covered me.