

The Day Death Comes

How will it be, the day death comes?
Perhaps like the gift at the beginning of night,
the first kiss on the lips given unasked,
the kiss that opens the way to brilliant worlds
while, in the distance, an April of nameless flowers
agitates the moon's heart.

Perhaps in this way: when the morning,
green with unopened buds, begins to shimmer
in the bedroom of the beloved,
and the tinkle of stars as they rush to depart
can be heard on the silent windows.

What will it be like, the day death comes?
Perhaps like a vein screaming
with the premonition of pain
under the edge of a knife, while a shadow,
the assassin holding the knife,
spreads out with a wingspan
from one end of the world to the other.

No matter when death comes, or how,
even though in the guise of the disdainful beloved
who is always cold,
there will be the same words of farewell to the heart:

"thank God it is finished, the night of the broken-hearted.
Praise be to the meeting of lips,
the honeyed lips I have known."

Translated by Naomi Lazard