

Hans Lodeizen, Selected Poems  
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## THE INNER WALLPAPER

I will give the reasons  
for my love, for my despair  
I will live in the room  
of my body and tell you  
why I love the landscape

I will put my hand  
on the sunbeam and with my fingers  
unravel the rainbow  
I will take the wind into my arms  
and listen to the shell of the night

with your body I will  
describe mine and in your eyes  
as in a prism I will see the world  
decrypted—a secret corner behind which  
stairs lead endlessly to black cellars

I will say that my body  
is a tower, that my hands  
walk at night and that my head  
has been calibrated so that all I see of the world  
is my friends: you and another.

I who am highly homosexual  
(Or so they say) will show  
What truly is natural  
And live like a hand caressing  
The water in a bathtub.

Because who cares if I'm good  
Or evil as long as  
I can give everyone my wrist  
And say feel this, I'm alive.

If I can be the small  
Thunder with the  
Hidden bolts of lightning  
That send the swimmers running  
From the beach to the guesthouse—  
It is five o'clock in the afternoon.

If I can be the satin  
Between the symbols  
Of skyscrapers  
A wise smile that says  
Better than not yet is  
Not ever.

If I can greet the rain  
In his car

If I can wash myself  
In the shower  
If I can say  
I am Hans Lodeizen good  
Or evil I am in love  
Without blushing a cherry orchard  
For all the people.

this country in which I  
did not lay down my love

if the black trees say so  
during a thunderstorm it must be true

afterwards rain falls in abundance  
a meagre comfort on the paths

and we who walk see  
the villages from the darkness

and her hand, very small and  
white was found among the leaves

only the thunder contradicts us

this country  
a shitty country

where the smell  
of sleaze will never blow away

this country  
whose language I will speak  
under the sun, under the clouds,  
happy (or else silent)  
happy as a beetle  
even under a different sky  
even on a different beach,  
flying

this country  
will be the lap for my tears  
the ear shell for my cries  
the mouth of my arms  
the sickness of my love  
the sun of my desire  
a big wound,  
a shitty country.

I will never do a lot of work, but I'll never  
sully the world.

I will listen in the wind like an old friend, and  
despair of happiness.

I will tend to my genitals and gesticulate.

I will die in a city where it often rains.

in the end I will always be alone again and that's when things are  
loveliest.

but in order to accept that mercy I must take all  
roads

into the world.

*February 12th 1949*

I am the purest animal on earth  
I sleep with the night as with my body  
and the night expands in my heart

on the dark loom of your fingers  
I stitch a night of loneliness  
colorful challenging changeable

I know all the tears of loneliness  
hit me open me  
I am a rose of happiness

come here trust me  
I scatter the wind with stars

like a boat of abundance  
in the parsimony of the sea

now you haven't come  
and softly I close.

bisecting this hour  
supreme understanding runs  
like a river  
separating my two countries  
one a dream  
the other the dream's cloudplay.

once, when I lived with the ants  
in Switzerland, I heard  
that wisdom is a mountain stream,  
crashing down out of the sky  
but I wasn't listening

later I waited  
by the open rock  
but the hours melted and  
the blue crystal did not

finally  
a long rain  
fell in my footsteps.

I who have known so many things  
now I display glowing things.

now I let the kapok  
of clouds drown me.

and once, I say, I walked  
around town like a translucent eagle

landing on rooftops  
and crying because the sky was so gray

and the clock struck four thirty.

alive, I existed  
on an island floating  
in the middle of the sea

ignorance  
grew there like shrubbery

I waited for  
a bird to fly over

it was four  
o'clock in the afternoon and  
the sky was faceless

I carried  
empty buckets  
in the evening, when  
the sun, lingering  
no longer, died

gold spilled  
in silk.

tomorrow you'll be dead; a smile  
is what you'll send to these verses  
which will wait for it as for  
a telegram. Don't let the mailman  
running with your final hours  
bring bad tidings.

live. Smash the mirror  
in which your face wept.

when I wasn't doing this alone yet  
when I, before this, still had people I would see  
and didn't cry in the bathtub in the mornings  
when I could still walk and slept only once a  
day, blissful and overcome

when I knew the shapes the wind makes  
and full of desire fumbled through the night  
when I began a new life looking  
out across the mountains of the Sierra Nevada  
when I longed for Tahiti in the summer

when I lived in Los Angeles and full  
of tumult scoured the white morning  
when in Amherst snow creaked beneath  
my feet and I thought of Seldon  
when I walked in the Elysian Fields

I lived longer than in Wassenaar.