

WE'LL CALMLY SWALLOW THIS

TOMAŽ ŠALAMUN

They don't know what they're doing.
Girls remain lying.

You're rabid.
The papyrus' breath.

When you tear yourself away from the chain,
do you still sense saltiness?

I passed the night on the sieve.
Below the grill there were eyes and water.

Little cloths, with them you mopped
the tiger's front, where are the temples from?

The poodle has built himself the wooden shack
and leveled it with his right leg.

I shudder in the bindweed.
The bindweed overgrew my shoulder.

Translated from the Slovenian by Michael Taren and the author

EYES ARE DEEPER THAN PLANTS

It smells lemons here,
it smells your ears. The cast

iron. *Nachtigal*. There're cathedrals.
The gutter unstitches. I walk

on the nib of the sky
and clap. The gutter inclines

to the smooth ground.
Let the frog use the axis. In Moscow

I trod on rice and Dragomoschenko.
You know what, you know what,

undress the direction. Don't walk
barefoot in the palace. The grass is

viscid. I was thrown into the capital
to mask my parachute, docker.

Translated from the Slovenian by Michael Taren and the author

THE SHORE, THE CREEK

Lord, these are little bags, these are little hammers,
and these are little hammers again. This is

not even Merz, this is Merz's wife. A fat
boa constrictor - or horned viper - with a black

baseball cap sliding across the coppice,
she creeps like a trill. Like mad I wait

for the evening. It swallows the straw, the hair,
the bugs each time at Pomeranie with its

hinterland. The bushel thrives. Ethanol
falls. Bard dies. Brown becomes the most

interesting. In La Paz, did that poet really have
the cut off human leg beneath his bed? Where did

he put it later? Was it taken away? Did Lorca wake up
in Spicer's jaw beneath the palate *behind* his teeth?

Translated from the Slovenian by Thomas Taren and the author

I TOOK A WHEELBARROW

I took a wheelbarrow, washed the words.
I watched who was taking the shower, who
went to the shower. Students of the Academy of
Visual arts in Ljubljana have their models put in
underwear. Obviously curators invaded this place
too. What dull monas! Puffed up blockheads,
forty years of terror. On Kawara and me were
something else. Michael Heizer and me were
something else. What a luck to be saved by
Ferlinghetti and my instinct. And gracious women
in Rome, too. What a deluxe pompous asses,
I can't believe this professional craze. Darlings,
you're entrapped in horrible dullness, already
forty years producing vapid salons from Duchamps.

Translated from the Slovenian by Michael Taren and the author