

Poetry (<http://www.thewhitereview.org/poetry/>)

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ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

January 2015

Why I'm Not a Great Lover
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The circumstances.

The zeitgeist.

The inner uncertainty.

The lack of belief

in something after.

Literature.

The wrong music

at the wrong time.

The creaking chandelier

in the next room.

The shouting of drunks

down in the street.

The frost patterns on the window.

The poem by Rossetti.

By John Donne.

The thought of giant octopuses.

Of umbilical cords.

Of porridge.

The squeaking of the bedsprings.

The bitter smell

of oranges consumed this morning.

The tons of soap, accumulated in the course

of an entire life.

The three-legged dog, seen

in a park fifteen years ago.

The power outage in '98.

The atmosphere in the apartment

in winter around four o'clock in the afternoon.

The cold, insect-speckled light

of the fluorescent tubes above us.

The toys under the bed in the box.

The neck muscle pains.

The sea.

*

A Sentence from the Great French *Encyclopédie* of 1756

The human population
on the planet
is, in its size,
constant
and will remain constant
until the end of humanity
when no one is left
on this earth

*

Theory of Literature

An infinite number of monkeys
with typewriters, it is said,
would ultimately produce
the complete works of Shakespeare.

And shortly thereafter the work of Dante,
followed by Joyce, Goethe, Kafka,
Dickens,
Dostoyevsky.

Then, after a few months,
a few pieces of their own about things like
paws, trees or
eternal repetition.
Then a little Dostoyevsky again
and all of Shakespeare, once again from the beginning,
line by line.

In between pieces about trees,
about paws, about bananas,
and about eternal repetition.

*

*These poems were selected for inclusion in the January 2015 Translation Issue by Daniel Medin, a contributing editor of **The White Review**. He helps direct the Center for Writers and Translators at the American University of Paris, and is an editor of **The Cahiers Series** and **Music & Literature**.*

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

CLEMENS J. SETZ ([HTTP://WWW.THEWHITEREVIEW.ORG/CONTRIBUTOR-BIO/CLEMENS-J-SETZ/](http://www.thewhiterewiew.org/contributor-bio/clemens-j-setz/))

was born in 1982 and lives in Graz, Austria. He has received numerous prizes for his work, including the Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2011 (for ***Die Liebe zur Zeit des Mahlstädter Kindes***), the Literature Prize of the City of Bremen 2010, and the Ernst-Willner-Preis at the Ingeborg Bachmann Competition in 2008. In 2009, Setz was shortlisted for the German Book Prize for his novel ***Die Frequenzen***. His latest novel, ***Indigo***, was recently published by Norton and Serpent's Tail in a translation by Ross Benjamin.

Ross Benjamin is an acclaimed translator of German literature living in Nyack, New York. His most recent translation is Clemens J. Setz's novel ***INDIGO***, and he is currently at work on a translation of Franz Kafka's complete ***DIARIES***, to be published by Liveright/Norton.

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