

Temp/Press

## Song for Long-legged Epsilon

*Louky Bersianik*

*Translated by Erika Grundmann*

In rupture  
with second hands marking precise moments knitters  
of accurate hours an old millennium bursts transfixed  
by needles through wrists through walls of cities of  
fields

In equilibrium  
in a pool of quartz a new thousand years spreads  
out to live free the temples from the vise of  
time

To the sextant  
of clepsydrian customs to sun-dial the patient bee  
had sealed water and stars between her repeated  
angles kleptomaniac

To the time-belt  
of honeyed sleep tight schedule of hourglass  
stretches out gripping life in passage of the  
archaeological future

A sharp  
to abrupt escarpments whose abutment leans to  
the sky retains beyond tides errata of  
generations past and chants the urgency of  
new emergences

A flat  
to sleeping peninsulas hanging on mouldings  
of the world plays on trapeze sleepwalks on  
sunflower turnable without arm and without  
needle till the becoming of whole islands  
wings spread wide

A FAR-REACHING LEVER RELEASES  
LOVE AT THRESHOLDS  
UNFORGETTABLE

Crystalline time  
liquid temperature rising enclosed confines  
under pressure sounds the calender of inconceivable  
celebrations impels each fraction of second  
doomed before to shame

“Time’s running out”\*  
insists my dashboard lights a red signal  
caution the “generator” of poetry and “cool  
added” water water water

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\*Translator’s note:

The title “Temp/Press” refers to the temperature/pressure gauge on Bersianik’s old car which, through its unrelenting red-light warning, inspired this poem emphasizing the rapid passage of time and the urgency to write. The play on words “Temp/Press” and “Le temps presse” defies translation.

Erika Grundmann  
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TEMP/PRESS, in “1984”, *Poetry Agenda Poésie*,  
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Qc, Ed. The Muses’ Company/La  
compagnie des Muses, 1983.