

Malca Litovitz

L'œuvre de Charlotte Salomon est une combinaison innovatrice et intensément touchante de peintures et de textes illustrant sa jeunesse à Weimar et dans le Berlin nazi, son inspiration artistique et amant, Amadeus Daberlohn et son exil en France. Dans son poème, Malca Litovitz s'intéresse particulièrement à quelques-uns des détails sensuels de l'affirmation de Salomon qui veut que l'amour triomphera sur la mort. Le poème en prose « I Hear » est une expérience d'écriture au présent, un effort de demeurer dans le moment, comme dirait Virginia Woolf, pour capter les sensations, les souvenirs et les émotions d'un seul instant.

For Charlotte Salomon

(artist born in Berlin 1917, died in Auschwitz, 1943)

Arrest, arrest –
stop your eye
wherever it flies.
Daberlohn's dark glasses,
handsome wisdom.

I am Lotte;
my vulnerable nude
lies down on
your flowered carpet,
rises to paint you as a gift –
800 poems wrapped in brown paper –
my whole life
given to you –
Death and the Maiden,
the sound of the sea –
that bird still singing sweetly –
all of those who told me I couldn't,
all of those who went mad
before me –
sinking into the big couch of oblivion
upon which I refused to rest.

I Hear

I hear the fridge purring. I hear my pen scratching across these lines. I hear my own breathing. I hear your delicious groan, feel your arms enclosing my whole body, making me safe. I hear Leonard's cereal spoon scraping the bottom of his bowl, scraping his teeth. I hear a small licking noise the coffeepot makes now and then, the scratching of this pen, the scraping of the spoon. I hear the newspaper rustling. Leonard is reading *To the Lighthouse*. Will he understand what it means when Mr. Ramsey reads the paper? I hear him turning the pages of his newspaper.

The pen continues to scratch along the page as quickly as I can move it. Black ink. I'll buy a new pen, less disposable. I hear my breathing, the old diningroom chair creaking. Leonard clears his throat.

Now, I feel the presence of Virginia Woolf. I see Leonard pushing a large spoonful of cream of wheat into his mouth, hear the spoon again. No wonder Virginia Woolf made up so much even in her diaries. I scratch my head; suddenly, there is not enough air circulating here. The coffeepot makes another click. My pen scratch along the page reminds me of the way my fingers used to slide up and down a strand of hair that imagined it was a violin. I hear daddy's voice on the phone – warm, loving, excited. I let out a long breath, almost a sigh. The plane can still be heard now in the distance. Leonard's paper moves a fraction on the table.