

VIRGILIO PIÑERA

ELEGY LIKE SO

TRANSLATED BY DAN BELLM

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I invite the word
to wander barking and deserted among dogs.
Everything's sad.
If it crowns its breast and brow with shiny leaves
a cold smile will flower on the moon.
Everything's sad.
Later the sad dogs will eat the leaves
and bark out words with shiny sound.
Everything's sad.
A dog invites hyacinths into the river.
Everything's sad.
With moony words, with doggy arrows,
with toothy little leaves
the hyacinths hurt the mute maidens.
Everything's sad.
The black grass grows with a tranquil hum,
but shiny blade edges stroke the rhythm.
Everything's sad.
In back of words, serpents laugh.
The deaf earth won't allow a sound.
Everything's sad.

A celestial bird barks across the sky
to ward off death,
uncovers it with flowers of night,
entices it with words of dogs,
buries it with a cup of earth.

Everything's sad.
I invite the earthy word
to bore through life and mirrors
and the echo of its image split in two.
Everything's sad.
A play on words, with barking.

Everything's sad.

A wand whips through wild wind
with the machinations of a man.

Everything's sad.

Half a cup of earth silenced the music.

Everything's sad.

Later the earth drank itself.

Everything's sad.

And when the time of death arrives,
stand me at the mirror to see myself.

Everything's sad.