

ANISE KOLTZ
THE FIRE EATER (SECTION 1)

TRANSLATED BY PIERRE JORIS

TO RENÉ (IN MEMORIAM)

He left
without turning back.

His disoriented angel
stands motionless
wings spotted
with blood

My breath pronounces
the loved one's name
he is but a bit of vapor
a few letters
of the alphabet

My hair as does
my sadness keeps
growing

I accumulate hair
— odorous herbs —
arms that embrace me
bodies that cover me
I lose myself in their skin
I no longer exist

Galaxies swim
in my blood

Your loins rock
like a boat

I become
the high seas

To float you
to sink you

Loving me
you taught me
the sun's movements

There is no road
longer than
the one to you

Each arrival
a mirage

In your silence
hear my voice
drawing closer

(à René)

You are the one
with whom I wrestle
on a bed from hell
angel of my terrible nights
You have turned me in-
to a fire-eater

When my love was born
I washed it
with my right hand

When my love died
I washed it
with my left hand

Without a future
I survive
both hands cut

Our tongues whet
themselves one a
-gainst the other

sharper
than knives

They cut
each other's
words

Leaning against the wall
of your mouth
I rest
in your shadow

Bound lamb
you thrust about in my blood
promised to a carnivorous god

I am the bad shepherd
who secretly
has sworn fealty to the wolf