Blok Illuminated: An Italian Memory

The bar, the tower, the shuttered house
Each enveloped in brilliance
Along the twisting road.
You will never return
Yet all will remain unchanged
Clear and sharp, in the sunlight.

I and Thou

To admire, yet not to envy,
To challenge, but never to despise,
To love, perhaps also to pity,
To transcend the singularity of the self,
To see in you the luminosity I see in me —
That self-same consciousness I possess –
The image of the self refracted through itself.
Yet not to require reciprocation,
Bowing to the asymmetry of the I and the Thou.
That is what is required of me –
And so, paradoxically, also of you.
The Doomed Environment

Through the doomed environment I stride
Musing on the violence
Done by my species
To the natural order.
From this current reign of idiots
There is no escape
Despite the tawdry dreams of billionaires
Feverishly plotting the overthrow of gravity
Or worse.

Nuclear war, climate catastrophe
Twin dooms
One fast, one slower
Scorched earth, baked earth
For both of which we have to hold
Ourselves responsible.
Nothing else to blame
Just us.

Butterflies and polar bears
Cardinals and catfish
If they could just protest!
All unknowing
Free of the very concept of doom
Is it not monstrous that these innocent creatures
Should themselves be doomed
Through the initially unthinking
But now deliberate actions
Of a legion of arrogant strutting bipeds
The product of a massive evolutionary error.

Yet, self-doomed
And knowing it
I stride on
Along with the rest
Into the furious future.

With Apologies to C. P. Cavafy

I see the days past
As a row of lighted candles —
Golden, warm, lively and enduring.
Candles of memory that can always be relit.
The days before us remain uncertain
A potential, but finite line of unlit candles,
The nearest yet cold, unmelted and straight.
I don’t want to think about them; their form doesn’t interest me,
Nor do I look forward to their future glow.
I look back to my lit candles.
Turning back, I rejoice
At how fast the line of light grows —
How fast the glowing candles of memory multiply.
Eddies of intent

Within the purposeless current of time
Eddies of intent occasionally swirl
Only to vanish with a smooth rapidity
Their fugitive meaning effaced in the unceasing temporal flow.

Time Stilled

A subjective experience offers a potential stasis
Within the flux of time,
Made real through a poem, a painting, a melody, a gesture.

Epitaph

My past grows vast
My future's much diminished
Everything considered
It looks as if I'm finished.