

Henrik Strindberg

I thought someone came

Selected poems by Bruno K. Öijer

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I thought someone came
but it was nothing
only the dusk
straightening out my blanket
and the wallpaper sang

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you didn't exist
not yet
only as a thought

...

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an empty
vacated apartment
and weren't you warned

...

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nail holes
empty spots in the wallpaper
showed where paintings and mirrors once hanged
and in the dream I ran

...

These are the opening lines from the four poems by Bruno K. Öijer. In my interpretation they are all - on one level - about sensing the presence of someone who isn't there. So the music starts just like that - hardly audible.

"... but it was nothing; only the dusk; straightening out my blanket..."

The first poem is about a very private experience. Small miracles. The second poem is a love story. But did it happen, does she exist? In the the next poem we are in a vacated apartment. The people that used to live here "...were seized; taken away and lost forever...". And the final poem takes us outside to the city streets "... chased by nothingness..."

"I thought someone came" is dedicated to the wonderful conductor Joel Sachs who led the first performance by Ryan McKinney and the New Juilliard Ensemble in New York 1/4 2004. It was commissioned by the Swedish Rikskonserter.

Bruno K. Öijer (1951--) is one of Sweden's best known living poets. He debuted in 1973 with "Sång för anarkismen" (Song for Anarchy) and was part of the eruptive 1970s poet's group called Vesuvius. Bruno K. Öijer made a name for himself as a poetic performance artist, a rebellious societal critic and outsider, who took his rhythm and feeling from rock and beat. And one can wonder if there is any other living Swedish poet who is as unbending in his convictions as Bruno K. Öijer. Few other poets draw such large audiences outside of the traditional literary circles. Nowadays his suggestive appearances are much rarer, and his readings are always sold out.

The poems by Bruno K. Öijer are published in "Dimman av allt" (The Mist of All, Wahlström & Widstrand, 2001). The English translation is by Öijer.

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