The Autumnal Madrigal

Bozica Jelusic
The Autumnal Madrigal (For Daniel)

BOZICA JELUSIC (Croatia, Yugoslavia):

the lily opens a room for the bodies in the eve
when the lovers' hands trace behind an unknown door
the enchanted dance of butterflies in a secret candle's round
and the autumn showers them with traces of incense and gold

through the ring of fragrant ripeness a languid splendor flows
it is a time when in the pupil the beauty's flowering ends
bent over the lake of peace a narcissus closes his eyes
and at the bottom of the dark water death imprisoned sleeps

with intimacy reverberates within us all that falls and fades
and scattered fruits rot at the edge of the banqueting table
into a space of glistening nets fall the moldy shades
of the cities that keep sinking down the ocean of pain

that is where our frailty unites in things' decay
insuperable reality becomes our common possession
where in a long-drawn-out suffering, an interminable fall,
into a touch of two bodies eternity is transformed.

Translated from Croatian by Ivo Soljan

Translator's note: Božica Jelusic belongs to the generation of relatively younger Croatian women poets. She has published many collections of poetry and essays. For her "daily bread" she "professes" English in the small town Djurdjevac, North Croatia, Yugoslavia, while for her soul she writes an extremely varied and rich poetry. This poem, "Jesenji Madrigal (Za Danijela)," is a good example of her Neo Baroque phase, of her poetry of deep sensuality and still considerable modernity.