

***You're Standing In My Garden***

Klaas Vanhee

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My love,

I picture it like this: I'm standing in your garden. As a substitute for a walk, I'm wandering here and there, and hoping that something will reveal itself to me. Should I have brought earplugs? It's as if something is about to happen; there's waiting, and expectation. As I wait, I am thinking of E. whom I helped, not long ago, to climb onto a concrete pipe that reached higher than his head. From there, he surveyed the other children who were taking turns as they attempted to climb onto the pipe and then back down again. A girl counted, 'one, two, three,...' That reminds me of your one, two, three, followed by a 'test, test' and the Half Pipe in your garden. There was a commotion of two boys running back and forth, opposite the pipe. On the pipe, two meters away from E., stood the girl. She was conducting. Now and then, the boys' running was interrupted by a fall, by being out of breath, by a change in the game's instructions, by passersby getting in the way, and so on. These intervals accentuated a rhythm, an experience of time, just as you draw breath in-between speaking, or the silences between the sounds of a conversation, or a piece of music. A pendulum swings back and forth and propels the forward motion of life: this is how I picture it. The girl is composing music, but she doesn't know it. I don't know if she wants to be seen, there on her platform. I can see her. E. mostly can see her instructions as they are being carried out. In the same way as he would take in Bach, unnoticed, he does not see his self, looking. Children do not wait. The girl, she's bound to bear a resemblance to someone, without a doubt. We always look like someone or are confused with someone else. When I look in the mirror, I appear to see myself, but it is my double. Left is right and right is left. When you cut your hair you also look in the mirror. You need to reverse your actions. Can you then see yourself? Or do you see another? Do you then see your portrayed versions passing by? Do you hope to find your twin brother? With three mirrors, you see more dimensions; you get a better overview, but

are you maybe also looking for the second K.? Or are they reproductions of a same 'I'; do you hope to be seen, via the other? They're substitutes. I see you. In the hall of mirrors, I didn't know where the space was that I could move. I kept bumping into parts of myself, into the walls of mirror. As a child I'd go to the fair each year, around Easter, with my grandmother and grandfather and my brothers and sisters. We were allowed into the hall of mirrors; the shooting range was for looking only. I dreamt of shooting and hitting the target. We were allowed to fish for ducks, and then I'd choose a toy that, once isolated from the cacophony of colour, became small and vulnerable. The euphoria occurred at the moment of pointing at what I wanted, within the chosen category. A prize every time. And it was mine. The fun-fair was everyone. Here I am in your garden; I feel more like an invited guest than a passer-by. Or could I also end up here by accident? I recognize the objects. They seem to be treasured actions or products of desires for something else. They seek out a destination, a new life, but can only be what they were, what they remind us of, what they embody. There is more silence here, which gives me pause to think. In the past, the racket of the fair would ring inside of me, stopping every thought. Always. It would take a year to recover. You don't work at a fair, do you? You only flirt with the images, the thought of our producibility. Grandma and Grandpa also took us to the circus. Although I'd always look forward to the acrobats, I think I loved the clowns most. You know what I mean. Now I'm not so sure. But still. They live in the margins. Your garden would be a good habitat for a clown. Although the first glance makes me laugh and feel joy for the endless, idiosyncratic, dysfunctional items, I don't know now whether I am going to a party or whether I want to lay down my innate urge for speech, tied into a corset, grotesque and laughing on the grass. The grass of your garden, that allows itself to be read, elliptically, like infinity, doesn't grow. It's just like the dog that won't bark. Am I lost in the frame of a street party? Do I have to find my way back to myself? My love, Autumn is here, but not in your garden, protected by white walls, where the mass is non-existent, and the grass always green. It reminds me of a slide of my mother, she was over twenty, somewhere in Canada. Her soft smile, her introspection somehow directed at the photographer, confirm to me a desire to maintain a sturdy sense of her own space, where an aura-like landscape made of snow keeps this desire safe. What you project is clear, yet I am in search of the hidden space. The shadow of your personality

causes a mechanism of encounters, of energy. It is as tangible as it is intangible, just as mysterious as it is clear, and your apparent clarity, your order, arouses the suspicion that there are hidden layers. Words do not cover the weight. Every utterance, each language, shaped, compels complexity to hold back. Your images are like words and sentences. I close my eyes in your garden and let your images meander in me like abstractions.

My love, although I lie beside you each night, I think I miss you as much as I have you beside me.

With love,  
Your wife

Maité Baillieul