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The Price of Ignorance

The wild raspberries have made their way into my garden again, their thorns tearing up my hands when I pick tomatoes. There's always a price to pay when one wants a little sweetness.

My wife, inside, hides from mosquitoes. They don't bite me. I must taste like shit, all those years of living a life equally charmed and cursed. I have to stoop low to pick the cucumbers. The ones I missed have turned bloated and yellow. I toss them into the bushes where chipmunks chew at their rotten cores.

Today, I'm waiting for an important package to arrive. I don't care what's in it. I just like the excitement of cutting it open with one scissor blade and rummaging both hands into the cardboard box. There's nothing like reading a mystery with only your fingers, little feelers sending messages directly to the brain.

Like a surgeon with both hands inside
someone's chest, I drift off into the world
of pure feeling, forgetting everything around me.

The Exile Returns

1.

In the dream of my death I've come back
to where I began,
twisted my feet around so they face
the door, squeezed out the last
of my childhood fantasies with my face
planted on the floor.

2.

What does a bell sound like
ringing in reverse? Me,
blinder than the face
on a dollar bill, cleaning out the pantry
and filling it with empty perfume bottles.
Turn up the fire, and settle in.

The soup has always been cold.

Henry Israeli

Henry Israeli's poetry collections are *god's breath hovering across the waters*, *Praying to the Black Cat*, and *New Messiahs*. He is also the translator of three books by Albanian poet Luljeta Lleshanaku and the founder of Saturnalia Books.