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Two Poems

Miroslav Holub

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Two Poems

MIROSLAV HOLUB

Death of a Sparrow

The death of a sparrow
is quite tiny,
 gray,
with little claws
 of wire.
And the dust
at the end of hopping
 calls,
 right now.
And the empty air
shuts its eyes and
 calls.
Mummy does all the
feeble chirping before nightfall
and
 calls,
the shadow flies away
and
 calls,
—No, we don't stay here,
the setting sun
 yells,
—Hurry, the rot's coming,
all the smoothness in the world
 begs and begs
 —Away
Only
it's impossible
at the moment.

—translated by Dana Hábová
and Stuart Friebert from the Czech

On the Dog Angel

False tears of light on macadam.
Maybe he was thinking of a bitch
or remembering a bone—
knives of evil-eyed wheels
caught and cut and crushed—

his jaw's dislocated, he
crawls off, whelps—no!
whelps, falls, whimpers
and lies still.

People around
see:
the dog angel,
shaggy and black
with muddy wings
and the huge pain
spreading its halo
over the puddles.

Darkness
wings its hands
over the body and sound
columns to the sky.
They drag him
out of the way.

Just a rag,
a graveyard rag,
nothing more.

The angel's
on the roof,
sniffing the chimney,
gnawing the bones of shooting stars.

—translated by Dana Hábová
and Stuart Friebert from the Czech