BOTH POEMS

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Anne Tardos

ROOF BOOKS
NEW YORK

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ISBN: 978-1-931824-43-6
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: TK

Cover art by Anne Tardos, "Large Red and Yellow Ez," 1989, acrylic on linen, 34 x 48 inches (122 x 92 cm).

Author photo by Ben Sherry.

Acknowledgements
Poems from this collection have appeared in *New American Writing, Poets.org (as poemflow)*, *Web Conjunctions, Boog City*, *Peep / Show*, *Viz Journal of the Arts*, *Jivin' Ladybug*, and *Jacket2*.

This book was made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

Roof Books are distributed by
Small Press Distribution
1341 Seventh Street
Berkeley, CA. 94710-1403
Phone orders: 800-869-7553
www.spdbooks.org

Roof Books are published by
Segue Foundation
300 Bowery
New York, NY 10012
seguefoundation.com

for Michael Byron

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Nobody

Nobody wants to hear that death can always come in the next minute yet everyone accepts the premise.

Nobody never nothing is more important than anybody ever anything.

Nobody thinks of a tiny crevice as a moment in time.

Nobody knows anything.

Nobody is waiting for me.

Nobody ever loved anyone the way everyone wants to be loved.

Several

Several is one of those words that is difficult for me to pronounce, no doubt due to my non-anglophonic origins.

Larry Rivers gave me a lot of trouble with his ri-ri.
Larry I can do. Rivers is no problem. But Larry Rivers is hard for me.

My first "r" was the French *rigolo*, *ravissant*, *escargot*, *ratatouille*. Then I learned the Hungarian one with its *répa retek mogyoró korán reggel ritkán rikkant a rigó*. And then the German *Sprache*, *Marx*, *Strudelhofstiege*. And finally the radiant articulation of the English "r," that semivowel, that glide.

33

Touch me, stalk me, smell me out, suggest me.

Feel fondle hold hug kiss lick and “everything” me.

Shanghai me, print me, blow my mind, flabbergast me.

Drop my name, ooze, chime, percolate my varnish remover.

Pave my way, determine me, come live with me.

I am paved with pebbles, callously acute crunchy pebbles.

Rigid uncompromising harsh obdurate intransigent rigorous endlessly hard pebbles.

Impeccable outcome trespass ill-timed and definitely malfeasant duality.

Multitasking polylingual bone-crunching tenacious backbreaking traces of pebbles.

39

I survived everything so why do I feel defeated?

The rule of the game is that we lose.

Because the meaning of life is that it stops.

And the meaning of stopping is that we're living.

The eccentric biography will have to be sprinkled in.

Russian school in Hungary, French school in Austria—true.

The artist controls what she allows into her work.

Teeth clenched, she pushes and pulls until something breaks.

A danger to herself, the artist decides to stop.

63

I wasn't even told we were Jewish, until later.

Because Europeans couldn't take any chances in those days.

I was born in Cannes, in hiding, in fear.

After the war, my mother became a radio producer.

I listened to her live broadcasts, alone, after school.

Alone, I listened to my mother on the radio.

You might say I was being neglected a bit.

I became someone who had to grow up fast.

Only later to shrink herself, like Alice, to fit.

.