

BAKHYT KENJEEV

TRANSLATED BY J. KATES

---

RAIN POURS DOWN IN ROME, REPEATING

Rain pours down in Rome, repeating: “Believe you will not vanish into the pit, nor into the noise of your native aspens”—but animals die, stars die, waves die. Even Brodsky died.

Jack-of-all-trades, a tootling one-man band, lips all bloody, wrapped in a greasy cloak—already another, a different living singer falls mute in confusion among the ruins.

He has no desire to laugh, and none to howl. It smells of Latin in the stony fog. So, what is left now? Forgetting it all and calling everything by its proper name?

But at this hour the Coliseum stands empty, only on one wall, caught in a ray of moonlight, a black inscription scrawled by unknown friends—“We were here: Seryózha, Alik, Pétya.”

*from the Russian*