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To the Nicaraguan Poet Francisco Valle, Exhorting Him to Not Write His Corresponding Elegy to Alejandra Pizarnik

Translated from Spanish by Carlos F. Grigsby

I

It's not indispensable, poet, that you write it.

Your elegy.

You won't help her die by doing so.

You won't bury her more.

If anything you'll unearth her. A foot
among clods of *humus* in the Wax Museum.

Let others write her obituary.

A writer for the magazine *Gente* says:

"She enjoyed the friendship of Octavio Paz and Julio Cortázar."

I'm sure they—and others

less famous but nonetheless significant,

who were also friends of hers—will write.

And those who weren't her friends or ever met her,

will anyway say, now that she can't prove them wrong:—*Ah, yes,
Alejandra, Sacha, always broke, "fauchée."*

*Whenever we ran into each other she would sit with me
and I would buy her some toast and green tea.*

2

You'd first have to find a good quote.

Then, what genre would you employ?

The colloquial: *When arm in arm
under the same coat, yours, feet cold,
we were going back to the pension from la place
de Saint-Germain to la rue de l'Ambre . . . Or: You are
coming toward me, agilely climbing the Metro stairs,
gasping, because it's getting late and we're going to miss "L'Age d'Or" . . .?*

It's not worth it.

Like those reeking confessionalists, junkmen
of poems as foul as dirty laundry, when you have to
go through all of it rummaging
to find something you might've left
in one of the back pockets?

Never.

The sheets of those that take their own life are always clean.
They shower before the act. The shower is short and energetic.

I know something about them.
Beings that invoke silence and receive noise as an answer.
And the most affectionate ones, the first ones to make noise.

What could you tell us of this girl, barely human enough
for how human how all too human she wanted to be?
What could you tell someone who wanted to enter silence?

3

Poet, I've come here to exhort you by inducing you
with words and entreaties to not write any elegy
for your friend Alejandra Pizarnik.
I've presented my arguments.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I must leave.