Two Poems translated by Stuart Friebert

Karl Krolow

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WE WERE YOUNG

We were young and the summer
outside town like hay high as a house.
Nights we heard people breathing
through the wall.
Each day was the beginning of a story.
We sailed along
on the soles of old shoes.
I knew nothing of
'melancholy-factors'
and that proofs make sentences behave.
There was no date on a street scene.
There really was wind when
the trees rustled.
Someone fed me
a piece of cold chicken
while I couldn't get out of watching
some love-making.
Later the friendliness was huge.
In the hall a grown woman
put her huge breast in my hand.
I shoved my tongue in her mouth.
I'd grown older.

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THE EFFECT OF CHEMISTRY

The effect of chemistry—a moment of sadness
appears. It's raining outside.
You have to watch the coated pills
in this dampness.
Each body is sad in its own way.
Desire grows for someone
who's not there.
It's as if a certain bird began
to sing.
No, you're not happy
going through daydreams
with people who speak a different language.
It rains in our eyes.
Misunderstandings grow
if the door is open.
Just where is it we're supposed to spend some time?
Dreamy democrats
stare after us.
They think
we have to love each other.

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