

A PLEA FOR DOUBT

*Jakarta, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2006*

A tree is a tree.  
A drop is liquid.  
A mountain is made of stone.

Or maybe not?

Some days stone is transparent.  
In faraway countries the waves speak.  
I've seen it, I've heard it,  
since then all has changed, since then

I don't know whether I'm not also an insect  
I don't know if death is the end  
I don't know if the sun's back is really green.

Yet I do know that knowing  
starts with not knowing, with looking  
at the light in the eyes  
of a stranger, with not knowing  
how I will live my tomorrow.

I might sing, I might remain silent  
I might be a bougainville  
flourishing in a garden in Jakarta  
I might be a thief  
stealing from who has even less  
I might be just me.

Nobody knows  
Nobody could know  
Nobody to turn to and ask.

Or maybe?

The bird who hops from branch  
to branch, as if he's waiting?  
The flower growing fiercely  
on what bit by bit dies?  
Or the man right in front of me  
his hair gray, his skin smooth?

I know I don't know  
what lives in his heart  
I know I don't know  
why his one eye burns  
the other one freezes.

When I ask him: *Siapakah kamu?*  
he laughs and says  
- his lips not moving -  
'There is no difference  
the question is the answer  
there is no difference, look  
I am you.'

**Peter Swanborn**

*Translated by the author and Linde Voûte*