

Zbigniew Herbert

Shore

She waits on the bank of a great slow-moving river
Charon is on the other side The sky glows turbidly
(it isn't a sky at all as it happens) Charon is here
he has just cast the ropes out over a branch
She (this soul) takes out the obol
from under her tongue where it soured only briefly
sits down at the rear end of the empty boat
all this without a word

if only there were a moon
or a dog howling

Translated by Alissa Valles