

Jos Knipscheer: A Portrait¹

by Astrid H. Roemer

Write, you said. If need be, let your
nightmares trot across the paper. Take comfort
in the beauty of their glistening images. Be
fruitful, you said.
Open your body to the word's seed.
You must fill the blank page with stories.
Turn the wounds inflicted by experience into marks
of wisdom: rein in the emptiness at all costs.

No one will bless you.
Bless yourself, you said.
No one will honor you. Make your own crown
of evergreen.
Doubt contains no printer's ink.
Doubt not, you said. Live on the paper's sharp slash
and build your castles between the lines
in the autumn, you said.

Translated by Nancy Forest-Flier

¹ Inspired by the poem 'The Fall' by Osama Isbers (Syria)

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