Softness With Teeth

A Study of Desire, Boundaries and Becoming

Chantal Schiltmeijer

Foreword

This is not a book about pain.
Pain is only the evidence.

This is a study
of the quiet mechanics
of a feeling woman.

How she senses before she understands.
How she stays longer than logic allows.
How her body knows
what her heart keeps negotiating.
You will find love here,
but not the kind
that survives on illusion.
You will find tenderness
examined under harsh light.

Desire slowed down
until its true shape appears.
This is a record
of patterns noticed too late,
silences that spoke clearly
once the noise disappeared.
Some poems are confessions.
Some are autopsies.

All of them are observations
written by a woman
who stopped asking
why did this happen to me?
and began asking
what was I refusing to see?

Softness is still here.
In the hands.
In the breath.
In the way the heart insists on feeling.
But somewhere along the way
something sharper grew
along the spine.
Not cruelty.
Not bitterness.
Discernment.

The quiet understanding
that empathy without awareness
is just another form of disappearance.

So read this
not as a story of survival.
Read it as documentation
of a mind
learning to stay awake
inside its own tenderness.
Because softness,
when it finally understands itself,

grows teeth.

— Chantal

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