

For Fernando Pessoa and Alberto Caeiro

Doutores, it is constant: appearing
now in diatribe, now in dialogues
with M., doutores, even now new peat
presses down on the old, unleashing acid,
and this, combined with lack of oxygen,
tans my skin and dissolves my bones: in brief,
there is no authority, pessoa,
or sickness I can find that feels as radical
as seeking a prescription to constrain
my heart: it isn't even real,
I cannot make it a mammal or a bird
or even larger than myself, because
I'd need permission. And who, beside you
(or Rilke or Szyborska or the long dead)
might meet me in a café, and pass along
the buttons for a uniform, doutores?
On authority, as I said to M.:
Who decides who I say I am?