

PETR MALAPANIS

SYSTEM RESTORE

One unspoken word at a time
Tumbles from the space
Between two thoughts,
And soundly fills
The ever growing gap between us.

Each hopeful attempt,
Each impulse to connect
Meets the same barrier,
The same technological white noise.

Segments of my life
Intrude into your thoughts—
Thoughts marked high importance
And filed with remarkable attention
To every detail.

I compete with your system.
Battle to keep a connection,
Strive to make an impression
On a level that needs no recharging.

Unless I am wireless,
Unless I am black, silver or shiny,
Unless I beckon with different tones,

Unless I am backlit and flat,
I slip under your radar.

You used to live with me,
On this side of the screen.
Taking part in the banter,
Involved in the exchange.
Ready to deal with wet tears
With real faces, with deep fears.

There was a time
When your eyes talked to me.
Your touch was more than just contact,
And your smile genuinely met my gaze.
A time when your words were not a template.
When there was no delay
Between the question and the answer.

A time when I did not have to log on
To have a conversation with my partner.