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translated from the Serbian by Steven and Maja Teref

[A mirror hangs in  
the butcher shop]

A mirror hangs in the butcher shop  
opposite blessed slabs of meat,  
their metaphysical meaning gutted. The wet snout  
of the farmer's market dog nuzzles the doorjamb.  
The legs of summer flies tap on a bone,  
gloved hands gather light  
dripping from its melancholic tracks.

No one owns the mirror – not the butcher,  
not the slabs of meat; not even the evening charwoman  
wiping up blood plasma from the floor,  
bird droppings from the windows,  
and scrubbing previous night's rusty scraps  
at the foot of the stairs.  
The indifferent mirror doesn't need the shop.  
Let the butcher relocate,  
let the short peasant women carry away their meat  
in butcher wrap, and let the dog die  
along a muddy road, swarming with the harmonious  
idolatry of fleas.  
A stranger, a self unknown,  
will grope for the mirror at night, bring a lit match  
to the glass and his baffled  
frostbitten face.