

# KRASNI SVET KARSTIC WORLD

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## Lamija Begagić

### Jutro, ko je padel Doboj

Nikoli nisem bila tam, toda nekaj sem vedela o njem. Denimo, dolgo je živel v eni tistih anekdot iz otroštva. Govorilo se je o tem in se vtkalo tudi v družinski sleng, da mu je eden od bratrancev rekel Dvoboj. *Gremo v Dvoboj.*

Mi nismo nikoli šli v Dvoboj – na zemljevidih in v učbenikih Spoznavanja narave in družbe sicer včrtan kot pomembno železniško vozlišče s svojim uradnim imenom: Doboj.

No, po tem ga poznam, po tej skrivnostni deteljici, kraju, kjer so se križale proge in smeri takrat živahne železnice, in po tem, da je res zelo veliko ljudi ravno tam stopilo z vlaka, kadar smo potovali k teti v Tuzlo. Vlak se je takrat čarobno izpraznil in končno smo dobili sedeže, da smo se lahko sezuli, dvignili noge in uživali v preostanku potovanja.

Imeli smo teto v Tuzli. Eno smo imeli tudi v Sarajevu. Na obisk k njima smo šli enkrat na leto. In nikogar več, zunaj rojstne Zenice. Zaradi tega nam ni bilo težko, tudi nenavadno ni bilo.

In zakaj bi, smo premišljevali, kdorkoli bil kjerkoli drugje, če je tu tako ali tako vse.

Bojana in Jelena sta imeli skoraj vse sorodnike ravno tam. In zaradi njiju smo vedeli za ta Doboj. Zaradi deda, ki sta ga klicali dedi. In o katerem sta kar naprej govorili.

*Dedi nama je kupil, dedi naju je naučil, dedi naju je peljal.*

Njima je bil dedi to, kar bi meni zagotovo bil dedek Hazim, če bi bil živ, pri katerem so z žarečimi in nostalgичnimi očmi prisegali starejši bratrance, ki so se ga spominjali. Njihova otroštva je po čopičevsko zaznamoval. Mojega ni žal niti oplazil.

Čeprav sta uživali v druženjih z dedijem, sta ga tudi onidve kakor jaz svoji daljni teti videvali poredko, le med poletnimi počitnicami, ko sta odšli v Doboj in znova spustili ime tega mesteca v mojo drobno intimno geografijo, omejeno z dimniki Železarne na eni strani ter sotočjem Babine reke in reke Bosne na drugi strani.

V tistih letih se ob koncih tedna ni hodilo nikamor. To so bili počasni časi, v katerih sta bila Doboj in Sarajevo daljna kraja, kamor se ni izplačalo potovati za dva dni, četudi sta bila od Zenice oddaljena le kakšnih sedemdeset kilometrov. Naši konci tedna so bili brezmejna svoboda, dolgočasje brez pritiska načrtovanja. Razlikovali smo se samo v tem, kdo bo tisti prvi, ki bo prišel ven, pred blok, drugi pa ga bodo z okna videli in pospešili starševske jutranje procedure, med vpitjem: *Hitro, kaj še moram narediti, lej, Jelena je že zunaj!*

Čez kakšen hip smo se zlivali z vseh strani, od garaž, od trgovine, iz tunela, kakor smo rekli prehodu med dvema blokoma.

Le med tistimi dolgimi poletnimi počitnicami, ko sta odšli k dediju v Doboj, smo potrebovali nekaj dni, da smo se privadili, potem pa smo kmalu spet začeli živeti svoja počasna poletna življenja. Ko je minilo, vedno pa je minilo prehitro, sta se vrnila z zgodbami o novih

veščinah, ki jima jih je odkril dedi, mi pa smo se znova privajali, da sta spet tu in da morata biti del nas, četudi sta izpustili tako bunkerje na garažah kot popravljanje koles in četrtni turnir v namiznem tenisu.

Kakor se za preobrate tudi spodobi, je tudi ta v tej leni in počasni zgodbi prišel, ko smo ga najmanj pričakovali, neke razcvetene pomladi, zgodaj zjutraj.

Med starši se je že več dni nekaj dogajalo, čistile so se kleti, dežuralo se je pred blokom, moj očka je bil zdaj z Aidinim, zdaj z Bojaninim in Jeleninim očkom, občasno se je vprašalo, kako je družina v drugih delih države, kje je teže, v glavnem pa se je kartalo, igral se je remi in pila se je kava iz termovke.

Oblačila sem se za ven, skrbelo me je, ali me bo zdaj zeblo, pozneje pa mi bo vroče, vse pa mi je bilo nekam prekratko in pretesno. Ko sem brskala po omari, v ozadju ni igrala glasba, temveč je večno majhen prostor dnevne sobe zapolnjeval glas zaskrbljenih radijskih poročevalcev. Tistega jutra so redna poročila prekinili s tistim izrednim: da je padel Dobož.

Padel je Dobož.

V prejšnjih dneh in mesecih smo se naučili, da to, ko nekaj *pade*, ni dobro. Ni bilo dobro, ker so starši spet bodisi preklinjali bodisi molčali, ni bilo dobro, ker so neki ljudje nekje trpeli, in ni bilo dobro, ker so reke ljudi prišle v mesto, polnile so se telovadnice, neki otroci so odraščali na parketu, kjer mi spet nismo imeli telovadbe, nismo hodili v šolo in smo se potikali po ulici, ki nam je postala prekratka tako kot tiste demodirane trenirke Yassa.

Premladi smo bili, da bi vedeli, kako sebični in neempatični smo bili v tistih trenutkih, ampak pogrešali smo našo telovadbo v telovadnici in našo vsakdanjo šolo, da bi ji dali priložnost, da bi se je naveličali, da bi jo sovražili in preklinjali, ne pa da smo si je, tako povsem nenaravno, vsake toliko časa zaželeli. In smo kmalu sprejeli vse tiste brezdomne otroke, vedeli smo, da nikakor ne more biti dobro, če šola postane tvoj dom, potem so nas pa tudi oni izdali in odšli naprej, ker, se nam je zdelo takrat, vendarle obstaja dlje od tod in vendarle obstajajo tisti, ki bi šli kam drugam in ki tu ne da nimajo vsega, kot smo do včeraj mislili, temveč nimajo nikjer več čisto čisto nič.

Dotlej smo se naučili, da ko nekaj pade, to pomeni še en majhen konec.

Toda do takrat, do tistega pomladnega jutra, v katerem sem izbirala trenirko, so padala neznana, brezimna mesta, zdaj pa je padel Dobož. Nikoli nisem bila v njem, toda čutila sem, da je mojeksi od drugih.

*Padel je Dobož* je bil, četudi v Dobožu nisem imela nikogar »svojega«, tisti trenutek, po katerem sem pomislila, da vendarle ne bo vse v redu, samo da smo skupaj.

Nenadoma nisem bila lačna in ni bilo več pomembno, v kateri majici bom šla ven, zadihano sem stekla do petega in jima tolkla po vratih. Odprla je Jelena, zaspana, zmedeno me je gledala.

»A je v redu?«

»Kdo?«

»Dedi! Padel je Doboju!«

Ne spominjam se njenih besed, spominjam pa se, kako me je pomirila s pogledom in lahkotnostjo, s katero je izgovorila nekaj kot *V redu je, vsi so v redu*.

V redu je bil dedi. V redu so, so govorili, bili tudi Damir, Adnan in Alma, ko so na začetku poletja prišli v Zenico, iz Doboja, kolikor si lahko, ko življenje stlačiš v torbo za trening in se odpraviš v neznano: očka proti Tešnju, mama s tremi otroki proti Zenici. Ne bodo dolgo, so rekli, mi pa smo se jim že naučili ne verjeti, vendar jim tudi ne razkriti, kako zelo že vemo tisto, česar sami še ne: bodo dolgo. Nekateri tudi za vedno.

Čez nekaj juter je bil čuden mir, potem pa smo spet začeli hoditi ven. Novo poletje, nove kolopopravljalnice v zapuščenih garažah, turnirji na neuporabljanem rokometnem stadionu ter skrivno Damirjevo in Jelenino »hojenje«, da ne bi nihče izvedel, da ju ne bi nihče, skritih na tribunah stadiona, videl.

V poznejših letih nisem nikoli pisala o njiju in teh njunih izmenjavah stripov in morda, kdove, kakšnega stavka o Doboju.

Odločila sem se, da bom oba obdržala tam, kjer sta ostala za nas, četudi sta oba za vedno odšla. Jelena, s sestro Bojano in starši, že proti koncu tistega poletja, najprej v Doboju, končali pa so nekje v Srbiji.

Damir, Adnan in Alma po koncu vojne nazaj v rojstni Doboju in od začetka.

Jeseni, ki je prihajala, niti navdušenje nad vrnitvijo v klopi ni moglo rešiti. Do konca se ni vedelo, ali pouk bo, in od vsega je ostal samo okus tistega poznega poletja, v katerem je nekega jutra izginilo pol prijateljic in prijateljev iz bloka, vrata njihovih stanovanj pa so bila le kakšno uro zatem polepljena z napisi kot *Zasedeno – VVI*.

Vse, kar je prišlo po tisti jeseni, vse, kar je *padlo*, vse, kar se je *osvobodilo*, smo prenašali bolj stoično, manj zainteresirano, najbrž smo mislili, da smo zdaj veliki in da je to pogum ali modrost. Danes vemo, da ni bilo nič od tega in da bi morali oditi, preden je padlo prvo brezimno mesto, v kakšno še bolj brezimno in od tam pisati o nekih trenutkih, v katerih naj bi se nekaj smiselnega, nekaj lepega, nekaj velikega in pomembnega začelo, nekaterim pa se nikoli ni.

*Prevedla Đurđa Strsoglavec*

Iz antologije *Trenutak kad je meni počeo rat* (Beograd, 2022), str. 32–37.

## The Morning Doboј Fell

I'd never been there, but I knew a bit about it. Let's say that for a long time, it existed in one of those childhood stories. Rumor has it that one of my relatives called it Dvoboј – “duel” – and this even made its way into my family's slang: *We're going to Dvoboј.*

We never went to Dvoboј. On maps and in social studies textbooks, though, it was labeled as an important railway hub under its official name: Doboј.

So I knew about it from that ominous loop, where the tracks and lines of the railway, so lively back then, split off. Also from watching so many people pour out of the train right there on our way to visit our aunt in Tuzla. The train would magically empty there and we would finally find seats, take off our shoes, put our feet up, and enjoy the rest of the trip.

We had that one aunt there in Tuzla. We had another in Sarajevo. We would go visit them once a year. Otherwise, we didn't have anyone outside our hometown Zenica, which was neither a problem nor unusual for us.

Besides, we told ourselves, what could we want anywhere else when we had everything here anyway?

Bojana and Jelena had pretty much their whole family right there. It's through them that we knew about Doboј. Through their grandfather that they both called Đed, the one they never stopped talking about.

*Ded bought us this, Ded taught us that, Ded took us there.*

Đed was to them what Deda Hazim would have surely been to me if he had still been alive: all my older relatives who remembered him gushed about how great he was, their eyes filled with emotion and nostalgia. They described their childhoods as if he were that grandpa from Branko Ćopić's stories, but unfortunately, he had had no impact on mine.

And even though they loved all their get-togethers with Đed, they rarely saw him, just like me with my faraway aunts. It was only during summer break that they would leave for Doboј and once again place that tiny town on my mind's personal map, bounded by the chimneys of the Željezara iron works on the one side and the confluence of the Babina and Bosna Rivers on the other side.

In those years, no one went anywhere on the weekends. Those were slow times, when Doboј and Sarajevo were faraway destinations that weren't worth visiting for just two days, even though they were a mere forty-five miles from Zenica. For us, weekends meant endless freedom, idle hours unburdened by the pressure of planning. The only difference from one weekend to the next was which of us would be the first to go out in front of the building while those of us still in the house watched from the window and rushed their parents through the morning routine, shouting, *Hurry up, what else we gotta do? Look, Jelena's already outside!*

In no time at all, we were pouring out from every side: from the garage, from the market, even from the tunnel, as we called the passage between two buildings.

It was only during the long summer breaks, when the two of them would leave to visit Ded in Doboj, that we would need a few days to get used to the change, but then we quickly went back to our slow summer routines. When summer was over, though, it always felt too fast: there they were again with their stories about new things Ded had taught them how to do, but we soon got used to them being there again and they reminded us that they belonged there with us, despite missing out on our garage bunkers, bike repairs, and neighborhood ping-pong tournaments.

And, as is fitting with twists and turns, in this slow, lazy story, it also happened when we least expected it, on a budding spring day, early in the morning.

Something had been going on between our parents for days: the basements were being cleaned, my dad was on duty in front of the building, sometimes with Aida's dad, sometimes with Bojana and Jelena's, asking how family in other parts of the country were doing, places where things were more difficult. Most of the time, however, they just played card games like rummy and drank coffee from a thermos.

I got dressed to go outside, and Dad worried that I might be cold now and hot later. Everything had become sort of slim and tight on me. There was no music playing in the background as I rummaged through the closet, but the ever-too-tiny living room was filled with the voices of worried radio reporters. The regular programming was interrupted that morning with extraordinary news: Doboj had fallen.

Doboj, fallen.

We had learned in the days and months leading up to that moment that when something *falls*, it's never good: it couldn't be good because my parents were once again either swearing or absentmindedly silent, it couldn't be good because people were suffering somewhere, and it couldn't be good because droves of people were coming to town, gyms were filled, some children were growing up on those wooden floors where we used to exercise, and we weren't going to school and instead were hanging around in the street, which seemed to shrink just like our old-fashioned Yassa tracksuits.

We were too young to know how selfish and unempathetic we were in those moments, but we missed our gym classes and going to school every day. We wanted the chance to get bored, to hate and curse school, not to have this unnatural desire to always want to go there. Soon, we accepted all those homeless children; we knew there was no way it could be good for school to become your home, but then they betrayed us too and moved on because, as we thought back then, evidently you could even go past here, and there were even people who would go to those places and who not only didn't have everything here like we thought everyone did until yesterday, but who no longer had anything anywhere.

By that point, we had learned that when something fell, that meant yet another small ending.

But by that moment, by that spring morning when I picked out my tracksuit, nameless, unknown cities had fallen, but now Doboj had fallen. I'd never been there, but I felt like it was more mine than other places.



*Doboj had fallen.* Even though I didn't have anyone in Doboj, in that moment I thought: Things aren't going to be okay; hopefully at least we can stay together.

Suddenly, I wasn't hungry, and it no longer mattered which shirt I was going to wear outside; out of breath, I ran to the fifth floor and knocked. A sleepy-eyed Jelena opened the door and looked at me, pale.

“s'he alright!?”

“Who?”

“Ded! Doboj has fallen!”

I no longer remember what she said, but I do remember how much her look calmed me, the ease with which she said something like, *Oh, he's fine, everyone's fine.*

Ded was fine. Damir, Adnan, and Alma were also fine, they said, when they came to Zenica from Doboj at the beginning of the summer, as fine as you can be when you've put your life in your gym bag and traveled into the unknown: their dad toward Tešanj, their mom with all three children to Zenica. They wouldn't stay long, they said, though we had already learned not to believe them, but also not to let on the extent to which we knew what they hadn't yet figured out: they would be staying a long time. Some of them forever.

A few mornings later, there was a strange peace, and then we started going out again. A new summer, new bicycle repair shops in abandoned garages, tournaments in the unused handball stadium, and Damir and Jelena secretly dating, so that no one would notice, so that no one would ever see them, hidden in the stadium bleachers.

In the years that followed, I never wrote about the two of them and those alleged comic book exchanges, and who knows, maybe they even exchanged a few words about Doboj.

I decided to always think of the two of them as still being here with us, even though they were both gone forever. Jelena, along with her sister Bojana and their parents, had left later that summer, first to Doboj, to later end up somewhere in Serbia.

Damir had left with Adnan and Alma for his hometown Doboj at the end of the war: a fresh start.

Not even the excitement of going back to our old school benches could save the upcoming fall. Until the very last moment, no one knew if there would still be schools, so we were left with only the taste of that late summer when half of our friends disappeared from our building one morning, and just a few hours later, the doors of their apartments were plastered with notices like, *Occupied – Disabled War Veterans.*

Everything that came after that fall, everything that *fell*, everything that was *liberated*, we faced it all with stoicism, more disinterested, thinking, I guess, that we were big now and that it was courage or wisdom. Today, we know that it was neither of the two and that we should have left before the first nameless city fell and gone to an even more nameless one, and from there, we should have written about those few moments when something meaningful,



# Ikar 2.0 Icarus 2.0

something beautiful, something big and important was about to happen, but for some people,  
it never did.

*Translated by Shaydon Ramey*

From the book *Trenutak kad je meni počeo rat* (Belgrade, 2022), pp. 32–37.



## Ryan Falzon

### C.

S C. se ne bi smela srečati. Vse se je začelo napol v šali s testom, enim od tistih spletnih testov z generičnimi imeni, kot so ›Še danes najdi ljubezen‹ ali ›Čaka te ljubezen tvojega življenja‹. To so trivialni testi, banalni, tisti, ki se pojavijo ob obisku dvomljivih spletnih strani, ali pa se prikažejo kot oglasi z vmesnikom, ki spominja na Windows 95. Večina ti da slutiti, da bo tvoj prenosnik kmalu okužen z vsemi vrstami vohunske programske opreme. Takšne teste človek izpolni, da bi si krajšal čas, sledi pa mu srečanje, prav tako zato, da bi zabil čas. Ko sva oba brez premisleka navedla, da iščeva stik z drugimi, je bil rezultat zame in za C. slab in nesposoben. Nimam pojma, kako ti testi delujejo. Mislim, da podobno kot ujemanje v horoskopu določajo planete in zvezde, ti testi delujejo na podlagi zapletenih izračunov umetne inteligence.

Med pisanjem tega kratkega besedila sem raziskal, kako se določa verjetnost uspeha v razmerju glede na horoskopsko znamenje, v katerem si se rodil. OpenAI ti pove, da horoskop analizira simbole, horoskopska znamenja in izračune astroloških podatkov, zbranih iz natalne karte, pri čemer ga vodijo astrologija, matematika in intuicija.

Pravim ji C., ker je to ime navedeno v njenem profilu. Povedala mi je, da je C. dovolj in da je edini resnični odgovor, ki ga je dala med testom, zadeval priložnostni seks. Test nama je predlagal, naj greva na kak miren kraj ali pa se srečava v kakšni gneči. Pokazal nama je sliko para, ki si gleda v oči sredi knjižnične tišine. Pokazal nama je sliko para, ovitega v moštveni šal, ki proslavlja zmago. C. mi koketno pove, da se bova odpravila na kratek sprehod v obalno vasico, potem pa bova že videla.

OpenAI mi je povedal, da so nekatere obalne vasi na Malti San Ġiljan, Tas-Sliema, il-Mellieħa, Marsascula, Birżebbuġa, Buġibba in Marsaxlokk. Razmišljal sem, da bi to zgodbo postavil v Buġibbo ali Birżebbuġo. Obe sta zanemarjeni in prepuščeni sami sebi, kot nevestna šolarica v zadnjem koncu učilnice. Pametna, lepa, karizmatična, ki se zaveda svojega potenciala, vendar ji je povsem vseeno.

Birżebbuġa je prazna in zanemarjena, vendar še vedno ohranja videz vzvišene zrele dame, ki je v najboljših letih, pozabljena, vendar še vedno razpoložena. Znaki trgovin so napol osvetljeni. S čudovitih pročelij počitniških hišic, ki so obrnjene proti Freeportu, blede živa barva. Policijska postaja je zaprta.

Restavracije so zaprte. Stoli in mize so priklenjeni na kandelabre. C. mi pove, da že dolgo sanja o tem, da bi prenočila v hotelu na obali, tistem, ki štrli v zaliv, vendar nihče ni želel z njo, saj AI nikoli ne predlaga romantičnih srečanj v dekadentnih, razpadajočih, zanemarjenih krajih, ki se bodo kmalu za vedno zaprli. C. hrepeni po tem, da bi med nevihto obtičala zgoraj, najela sobo v najvišjem nadstropju in preživela noč ob opazovanju valov, ki se lomijo, divjajo, poskušala videti, kako se morje dviga do njene sobe, in zmoči par čevljev, ki jih je namenoma pustila na balkonu. Do zdaj še nikoli nisem vstopil v nobeno od hotelskih sob, sem pa obiskal bar. V njem so lutke, oblečene v malteške viteze s šlemi na glavah, in neujemajoči se fotelji. Plastične rastline prekriva prah. Ogromna miza za biljard je osvetljena z belo neonsko svetlobo. Naokrog vedno teka pes, velik kot osel. Ob poletnih večerih na



terasi organizirajo vrstni ples in predvajajo country glasbo. Ob vonju pice, ki prihaja iz zunanje krušne peči, igrajo bočci.

OpenAI ti pove, da so v številnih malteških rustikalnih barih prisotni lokalni motivi, kot je malteški križ. Omeniti velja, da malteški križ ne pripada izključno Malti, temveč viteškemu redu svetega Janeza, skupini evropskih plemičev, ki so skoraj tristo let vladali otoku, kakor se jim je zljubilo. Prav tako ti pove, da je na Malti veliko novih barov z najnovejšim minimalističnim dizajnom, ki ponujajo zapletene koktajle in elegantno vzdušje. Z drugimi besedami, predstavniki gentrifikacije, zlasti v glavnem mestu Valletta. Čeprav je OpenAI v večini vidikov natančen, spregleda nekatere bistvene elemente, na primer komično imitacijo ruševin, ki so po stenah obdane z betonom, ali zbirko pogrebnih kartic, raztresenih med steklenicami viskija in ruma. Te podobe, ki spominjajo na minula obdobja, ki še niso povsem izginila, so bile nekoč vir zabave, do nedavnega pa simbol sramu in zaostalosti. Danes jih celo progresivni posamezniki romantizirajo, saj se bojijo globalne homogenizacije v majhnih državah, kot je Malta, kjer je učinek odmevne komore kar močan. Tu ni težko narediti vtisa na postkolonialno prebivalstvo, ki še vedno hrepeni po tem, da bi bilo podobno tistim v tujini, saj je vse, kar je uvoženo, boljše in vselej prekaša domači proizvod, zrasel na suhem otoku.

C. vztraja pri obisku obskurnega hotela, čeprav se zaveda, da tam kozarci nikoli niso dobro oprani in da natararji drobiža namenoma ne vračajo točno. Vprašam jo, ali želi iti sama ali v družbi, vendar ne odgovori. Pove mi le, da bo, ko bo vstopila v najeto sobo, izgubila internetno povezavo, izklopila telefon in pustila morju, da ji govori, da jo objamejo valovi, ji dajo občutek krhkosti, majhnosti, podrejenosti in jo odtrgajo od sveta. Napol v šali ji rečem, naj pohiti, ker lahko hotel ob morju kaj hitro izgine. Babica je govorila, da bo po besedah starejšega moža, ki je živel v jami v pečinah in varil mistična zelišča, Malta kmalu za vedno izginila. V prihodnosti bodo mimo plule ladje in kapitan bo mornarjem povedal, da je bil na tem mestu nekoč otok, ki so ga naseljevali pirati, oboroženi z bigillo, dokler jih ni naposled doletela usoda in jih je bog, ki so ga častili in preklinjali obenem, izbrisal. C. mi resno pove, šalo na stran, da se na otoku, kjer z vsakim vdihom zajamemo sol in so naše kosti oslABLJENE zaradi artritisa, grožnja podnebnih sprememb zdi veliko bolj resnična kot v celinski Evropi.

OpenAI navaja, da je verjetnost, da bi Malta popolnoma izginila, minimalna, vendar bi lahko obalne vasi utrpeli škodo, Malta pa mora prispevati svoj delež k ublažitvi vpliva podnebnih sprememb na svet. Vendar pa, kaj lahko spremeni prenaseljen otok, ki je na zemljevidih pogosto prezrt?

V skledici na mizi so arašidi. C. vpraša, ali v tem zanikrnem hotelu strežejo s polži. Pove mi, da bi si rada privoščila polže. Po naključju mi je včeraj oče povedal, da so vsi polži poginili, ker niti septembra niti oktobra in novembra ni deževalo. Polži so hibernirali veliko dlje kot sicer, saj se niso zavedali, da se je začela zima, in so pomrli od lakote. Danes niti v tradicionalnih malteških lokalih, v katerih lahko požrete, kolikor hočete, ne strežejo polžev kot prigrizka k pivu. Takoj ko je skleda z arašidi prazna, se zaveva, da sva se naveličala spogledovanja, in to je to. Spontano se odločiva, da najameva sobo, in se tja v naglici odpraviva seksat. C. me spomni, da jo tečasne nastanitve zares vznemirjajo. C. mi pove, da imajo minljiva stanja vedno pridih svobode. Hotelske sobe so kot internet. Tvoje, a hkrati ne tvoje. Vsaka soba v vsakem hotelu se zdi kot virtualni prostor, v katerega vstopiš, čeprav veš, da je sosednja soba in vsaka druga soba na hodniku enaka, vendar s prvim korakom, s prvim

klikom sprejmeš piškotke in dovoliš, da se tvoji podatki obdelujejo. Narediš jo za svojo. Z njo manipuliraš. Oblačila odvržeš, kamor se ti zahoče, ali pa jih zložiš na dve polici. Po dolgem dnevu se sprostiš. Dvigneš rolete. Na telefonu si ogleduješ nespodobne slike in posnetke. Začneš se premikati in vrteti po virtualnem prostoru, ugotavljaš, koga boš osvajal, s kom boš perverzen, kdo ti bo poslal sliko svojega golega telesa in ti rekel, to je zate. Pridružil se ti bom v tvoji sobi in se ulegel v tvojo posteljo, čeprav ne vem, kdo si. Prišel bo in vdrl v tvoj prostor, prodrl vate in odšel ter ob zvoku zaloputnjenih vrat pritisnil na gumb X.

Ko umetno inteligenco vprašaš, katero vrsto pornografije ljudje običajno gledajo v prehodnem stanju, v katerem se znajdemo v hotelski sobi, te OpenAI z nežnim tonom obvesti, da razpravljanje ali deljenje tovrstnih informacij ni namen te platforme.

Ko si v hotelski sobi, imaš občutek, da si v prostoru, ki ni tvoj, v prostoru, kamor se lahko prijaviš in odjaviš, kakor ti je po godu. Tako kot na spletnih straneh tudi v hotelske sobe vstopaš in iz njih izstopaš, kakor se ti zljubi, v tolažbo pa ti je anonimnost, funkcionalnost, dekor ali njegova odsotnost. Generično pohištvo služi vsem, tako kot spletna mesta in aplikacije. Tu sta še osamljen aparat za kavo in vodeno mleko v posodicah za enkratno uporabo. Sterilne bele brisače, skrbno zložene za uporabo, pripravljene, da se umažejo, da se vanje ovije, skrije, da se z njimi pokrije in ogreje telo. Kopel je do roba napolnjena z vročo vodo, iz katere se dviga para. C. si ne zmoči las. Vso noč fukava, utapljač se v sanjah o sredozemskih poletnih nočeh, podobah enega sladoleada za drugim iz pisanega tovornjaka, parkiranega ob obali, ohlajeni limonadi, soncu in senci izza poševnih oken med popoldansko spokojnostjo, vetriču po maši v skromni kapelici v Zalivu svetega Pavla s starimi starši.

Na tem mestu ti OpenAI ponudi še zadnje opozorilo, ko ga vprašaš, katerim užitek se predajajo zaljubljeni pari ali spolno kompatibilni posamezniki, ko so zaprti v hotelski sobi.

Na tem mestu postane OpenAI nič in neuporaben.

Napočil je čas, da s C. zapustiva hotel. Na vratih C. ne obljubi, da se bova še kdaj srečala, ne v lepem ne v slabem vremenu. C. mi pove, da je morda razpoložena za ponovno reševanje kakšnega testa, ko se bo ta nepričakovano pojavil. Najverjetneje bo tokrat odgovorila na kar najbolj iskren način in upoštevala nasvete iz testa. Morda, kdo ve, naju bo test tokrat označil kot zelo kompatibilna. Med kakšno nogometno tekmo bova šla proslavljat z množico ali pa si bova v zapuščeni knjižnici recitala ljubezenske pesmi. Vse drugo, razen mečkanja v zanikrnem hotelu ob morju, kjer v toplih poletnih večerih plešejo vrstni ples in so vse plastične rastline še vedno prekrte s prahom.

*Prevedla Petra Meterc*

### C.

Me and C. shouldn't have met. Everything started from a half-joke test, those online dodgy ones, with generic names such as 'Find Your Love Today' or 'Here is the Love of your Life.' These are trivial tests, banal, the ones that appear when visiting dubious sites, or pop up as adverts, with an interface reminiscent of Windows 95. Most of them give you the vibe that your laptop will soon be infected with all types of spyware. One does such tests to pass the time and follow up with a meeting just to kill time as well. When, half arsed, we indicated that both of us were seeking contact with others, the result for me and C. was weak and discouraging. I have no clue how these tests work. I believe that, much like how horoscope matches are determined by planets and stars, these tests operate based on complex AI calculations. While writing this short text, I researched how to determine the probability of success in a relationship according to the zodiac sign under which we were born. OpenAI tells you that the horoscope analyses symbols, zodiac elements, and astrological data calculations gathered from the birth chart, guided by astrology, mathematics, and intuition.

I refer to her as C. because that name appears in her profile. She told me that C. is enough, and the only true answer she gave during the test concerned casual sex. The suggestion from the test's side was for us to go to a quiet place or meet as part of an audience. We were shown an image of a couple gazing into each other's eyes amidst the quiet of a library. We were shown an image of a couple wrapped in a team scarf, celebrating some win. Cockily, C. tells me that we will be going for a short walk in a coastal village and take it from there.

OpenAI informs me that some of the coastal villages in Malta are San Ġiljan, Tas-Sliema, il-Mellieħa, Marsascula, Birżebbuġa, Buġibba, and Marsaxlokk. I was considering setting this story in either Buġibba or Birżebbuġa. Both are neglected and left to their own devices, like a scruffy student at the back of the class. Clever, handsome, charismatic, aware of the potential, but couldn't care less.

Birżebbuġa is empty and neglected, but still holds onto a facade of a haughty mature lady, past her prime, forgotten but still up for it. The shop signs are half lit. The colourful paint is fading from the beautiful facades of the holiday homes facing the Freeport. The police station is closed.

The restaurants are closed. The chairs and tables are padlocked to light posts. C. tells me that she has long been dreaming of staying in the hotel on the shore, the one protruding on the bay, but no one ever wanted to join her because AI never suggests romantic meetings in decadent, dilapidated, shabby places which are about to close for good. C. yearns to be stuck there during a storm, to rent a room on the top floor and spend the night watching the waves crashing, raging, attempting to see the sea rise to her room and soaking the pair of shoes left in the balcony on purpose. I have never entered any of the hotel rooms until now, but I have visited the bar. There are mannequins dressed as Knights of Malta with helmets on their heads and a mismatch of armchairs. Plastic plants covered in dust. There is an enormous billiard table under white neon light. There is always a donkey-sized dog running around. On summer evenings, they organize line dancing on the parapet and play country music. They play boċċi amidst the scent of pizza coming out of the open-air oven.

OpenAI tells you that many of Malta's rustic bars feature local motifs, such as the Maltese cross. It's worth mentioning that the Maltese cross is not exclusively to Malta, but rather to the Knights of the Order of St. John, a congregation of European noblemen who ruled the island as they pleased for almost three hundred years. It also tells you that there are many new bars with the latest minimalist design, offering complicated cocktails and a stylish atmosphere. In other words, agents of gentrification, especially in the capital city, Valletta. While OpenAI is accurate in most aspects, it overlooks certain intrinsic elements, such as the comical imitation rubble stuck with concrete to the walls, or the collection of funeral cards strewn among whiskey and rum bottles. These images, reminiscent of bygone eras yet to be fully eradicated, once served as sources of amusement and, until recently, symbols of shame and backwardness. Today even progressive individuals are romanticizing them, fearing global homogenization in tiny countries like Malta, where the echo chamber effect resonates loudly. Here, it's easy to impress a post-colonial population still longing to be like those from abroad, because everything imported is better, and is always superior to the homegrown product grown on a dry island.

C. insists on going to shabby hotel, fully aware that the glasses are never washed properly and that the bar people give you the wrong change on purpose. I ask her if she wants to go alone or in company, but she doesn't answer. She just tells me that as she enters the rented room, she will lose her internet connection, turn off her phone, and let the sea speak to her, allow the waves to embrace her and make her feel fragile, small, submissive, detach her from the world. Half joking, I tell her to hurry up because the seaside hotel might quickly vanish. Grandma used to say that, according to an elderly man who lived in a cave on the cliffs brewing mystical herbs, soon Malta will disappear forever. In the future, ships will be sailing, and the captain will announce to the sailors that once here there was an island, now submerged, inhabited by bigilla-wielding pirates, until finally they met their fate and the god they simultaneously worshiped and cursed eradicated them. In a serious tone, C. tells me, joking apart, on an island where we inhale salt with every breath and our bones are weakened by arthritis, the threat of climate change feels much more real than in continental Europe.

OpenAI states that the probability of Malta disappearing altogether is minimal, but coastal villages might suffer damages, and Malta must do its part to mitigate the impact of climate change on the world. However, what difference can an overpopulated island that is often overlooked on the maps make?

There are peanuts in a small bowl on the table. C. asks if they serve snails at the shabby hotel. She tells me she wants to feast on snails. Coincidentally, yesterday my dad told me that all the snails died because it didn't rain in September, or in October, or in November. The snails hibernated for a much longer period as they didn't realize that winter had started and they died of starvation. Not even the traditional gobble-down-as-much-as-you-can Maltese food places are serving snails as an appetizer with beer nowadays. As soon as the peanut bowl is empty, we realize that we are tired of giving each other the eye and that's it. Spontaneously we decide to rent a room and get there in a rush ready for a shag. C. reminds me that she really gets excited by these temporary accommodations. C. tells me that ephemeral states always contain a flavour of freedom. Hotel rooms are like the internet. Yours, but not yours. Every room in every hotel feels like a virtual space, where you enter knowing that the one



next door, and every other one all the way down the corridor is identical, but with the first step, with the first click, you accept the cookies and give permission for your data to be processed. You make it yours. You manipulate it. You toss the clothes as you please or organize them on two shelves. You relieve yourself after a long day out. You open the shutters. You view obscene pictures and clips on your phone. You start scrolling and rolling in the virtual, identifying whom you will hit on, perv on, who will send you a picture of his naked body and tell you, this is for you. I am joining you in your room and I will get in your bed, even though I don't know who you are. He will come and invade your space, penetrate, and leave, pressing the X button as the door closes with a bang.

When you ask AI about what type of pornography people tend to watch in the transient state one finds themselves in when in a hotel room, OpenAI, with a gentle tone, informs you that discussing or sharing this type of information is not the purpose of the platform.

When you're in a hotel room, you feel like you're in a place that isn't yours, a space you check in and out of at your convenience. Just like websites, in hotel rooms you enter and leave as you please, comforted by anonymity, functionality, decor, or its absence. The generic furniture serves everyone, like websites and apps. There's the solitary coffee maker and watery milk in disposable containers. The sterile white towels folded neatly for use, ready to be stained, to wrap around, hide, cover, and warm up the body. The bath is full to the brim with steaming water. C. doesn't wet her hair. We spend the night fucking, drowning in a dream of Mediterranean summer nights, images of one ice cream after another from the colourful van parked by the shore, lemonade from the cooler, the sun and the shade from behind the slanted windows during the afternoon stillness, the breeze after mass in the modest chapel of St. Paul's Bay with the grandparents.

Here, OpenAI gives you a final warning when asked about what activities couples in love or sexually compatible individuals indulge in when they are locked in a hotel room.

Here, OpenAI becomes null and useless.

Here, it is time for C. and me to leave the hotel. At the door, C. does not promise that we will meet again, neither in fair nor in harsh weather. C. tells me she might be in a mood to re-do some test that comes up by surprise. Most probably, this time she will answer in the most honest manner and follow the test's advice. Perhaps, who knows, this time the test will mark us as highly compatible. We will go celebrate with the crowd during some football match, or quote love poems to each other in a deserted library. Anything but cresting in a shabby hotel by the seaside where in the warm summer evenings they do line dancing and all the plastic plants are still covered in dust.

*Translated by the author*

## Miljenko Jergović

### Dvorci iz orehovine

(odlomek iz romana)

*Pred sto in sto leti, ko se še ni vedelo, da veter piha v jadra in da se kolo na kočiji vrti, preden so bila na svetu nekrščena bitja in ko so bili namesto krasa in kamnite pokrajine povsod gosti borovi gozdovi. V njih so živele vile in čarovniki, bilo jih je več, kot je zdaj ljudi na svetu. V teh gozdovih je bilo tudi več ptic, kot jih je zdaj, pa medvedov, lisic, volkov in bitij vseh vrst, kakršnih si ni mogoče niti zamisliti. Vsi so bili krotki, jedli so drug drugemu z glave, ker ni bilo pošasti, ki bi drugim delale zlo. Le ljudi ni bilo v teh gozdovih. Če se je kak butec odločil in se napotil v gozd, ga je mati objokovala, ker se nikoli več ni vrnil domov. Niti živ niti mrtev, njegove duše pa celo na sodni dan ne bo mogoče prepoznati. Takšen je bil zakon! Niso si ga izmislili ljudje, niti gospod Bog. To je bil zakon vil in čarovnikov. Gozd so varovali pred vsem, kar je bilo človeško in božje, zdaj pa vi uganite, za koga! Ne, niso ga čuvali za hudiča, ker je bilo to pred sto leti, ko hudiča še ni bilo. Vile in čarovniki so gozd čuvali za pošasti, pošasti pa so čuvale gozd za njih. Tako bi ostalo do konca sveta, če se ne bi nekaj zgodilo: ribiču Cipoliću je zbolela hči, v njo pa je bil zaljubljen mladi Lubinko. Fant je bil pameten kot knjiga, dober kot mirno morje in tako lep, da nihče ne bi znal povedati, kot kaj je bil lep. Če bi kdo rekel, da je karkoli na tem svetu tako lepo kot Lubinko, bi se mu vsi smejali in govorili, da je nor. Lubinko je iskal zdravilo za svojo Srdelico, iskal ga je od Boke pa do Trsta, vendar zdravila ni našel nikjer. Najboljši jasnovidci so mu rekli, da bi jo lahko pozdravili samo džundžur bobi. A veste, kaj so džundžur bobi? Ne veste! E, izvedeli boste na koncu zgodbe. Niti Lubinko ni vedel, kaj so džundžur bobi, niti vrači niso vedeli, niti noben drug, ki je pred sto leti živel ob morju, ni vedel, kaj so to džundžur bobi. Vedelo se je samo, da jih je mogoče dobiti le na oni strani gostih gozdov, polnih vil, ki so rasli tam, kjer je danes kamenje in skale. Kdor je zbolel za tako boleznijo, da je potreboval džundžur bobo, ta je bil tako rekoč že mrtev. Ampak lepi Lubinko ni mislil tako; sedemkrat je poljubil svojo Srdelico, da bi poljubi trajali, dokler se ne vrne, potem pa je šel v gozd, da najde drugo stran, kjer rastejo džundžur bobi. Vsi so ga prepričevali, naj ne gre, odvrčal ga je tudi stari Cipolić, govoril mu je, da ga bo posinovil, če ostane, zaklinjal se je na hčerino lepoto, vendar se Lubinko ni dal pregovoriti. Če na svetu obstaja džundžur bob, ga moram dobiti, je rekel in se napotil v gozd. Že po treh korakih ga je gozd pogoltnil. Tudi če bi se hotel vrniti, se ni mogel. Tako so vile uredile stvari. Ko se enkrat vstopi, se nikoli ne pride ven. Tako je hodil dan, dva, tri, srečeval vseh vrst zverine, medvede z zajčjimi ušesi, zajce z medvedjimi glavami, krilate volkove, ki se hranijo s semeni pinij in namesto vode pijejo smolo, ampak ustrašila se ga ni niti ena zverina, ker so vile uredile tako, da strah ni mogel vstopiti v gozd. Sedmi dan je prišel Lubinko pred dvorce, ki so bili večji od mesta in višji od neba. Vrhovi najvišjih stolpov so bili tako visoki, da jih orel ni mogel preleteti. Dvorci niso bili zgrajeni iz kamenja, ampak iz soli. V njih so živele vile in čarovniki. To je takoj vedel, ne da bi vedel, kako ve. Preprosto padlo mu je na pamet. Stal je pred vrati, srce mu je udarjalo, kot da mu bo skočilo iz prsi, potem pa se je spomnil svoje Srdelice in potrkal. Ni močno udaril, vendar so se vrata sesula v prah, v čisto belo sol, in pred njim se je nenadoma pojavila lepotica z lasmi iz vročega zlata, s postavo kot cipresa in s krili iz vetra. To je bila Varja, kraljica vil. Kaj delaš tu, nesrečnež? ga je vprašala kraljica. Po džundžur bobo grem na drugo stran! ji*





# Ikar 2.0

## Icarus 2.0



*hrabro reče Lubinko. Še noben človek ni prišel do druge strani, se mu nasmehne vila. Je že kdo pred mano prišel do tvojih dvorcev? jo vpraša Lubinko. Ne, reče kraljica. Še vsak je ubil kako gozdno zver ali pa vsaj pohodil mravljinca. Tu pa vlada pravilo, da se isti hip spremeniš v tisto, kar si ubil. Polovica zveri, ki si jih srečal, so bili včasih ljudje, mu reče vila in ga vpraša, kaj bo z džundžur bobom. Potrebujem ga za zdravilo. Si bolan? Nisem bolan, moja Srdelica je bolna. In zaradi nje si se pripravljen spremeniti v gozdno zver? se je čudila kraljica. Če bi jo to pozdravilo, bi se spremenil v podgano. Kraljica se zamisli, ampak ji ni všeč. Kako pa drugače, če je naletela na takega junaka. Je tvoja Srdelica lepša od mene? vpraša. Kakor za koga, ji odgovori Lubinko. Zame je! Ampak kako bo uboga Srdelica lepša od kraljice vil! Vila Varja je bila lepša od vseh žensk na svetu. Problem je v tem, da je bil Lubinko lepši od vseh moških na svetu. Lepši od vseh čarovnikov skupaj, in zato se Varja zaljubi! Tako bova naredila, reče ona, jaz bom tebi dala džundžur bobo, ti pa meni srce! Ne morem ti dati srca, ker je zaklenjeno, ključ pa ima samo moja Srdelica, ji reče Lubinko. Ne skrbi za ključ, odgovori, ga bom že jaz odklenila. Lubinko vidi, da ima vila čarobno moč, hkrati pa tudi zdravilo za Srdelico, zato pristane. Tri dni je čakal pred dvorci iz soli, da vila prinese džundžur bobo, četrty dan pa pride Varja z ranami po nogah in z dušo v nosu, saj je tudi zanjo pot na drugo stran dolga. Lepa vila, daj mi džundžur bobo, takoj reče Lubinko, ona pa stiska dlan in pravi: Ne dam, najprej si izruj srce za jamstvo, da se boš vrnil. Kako naj ga izrujem, ne morem ostati živ brez srca. Lahko, kako da ne, kdor v tem gozdu izruje srce, ta živi tudi brez srca, samo ljubiti ne more. Vrnila ti ga bom takoj, ko boš izpolnil zaobljubo, in potem bova živela srečno v dvorcih iz soli. Lubinko ni imel druge možnosti, kot da si izruje srce, vila pa mu je v zameno dala dve pisani frnikoli. To so džundžur bobi, naj Srdelica zapre oči, prekriža sredinec in kazalec in stopi čez džundžur bob. Ko se ji bo zazdelo, da vidi štiri, ne pa dva, bo zdrava. Potem se vrni k meni po svoje srce. Če se ne boš vrnil, boš doživel veliko nesrečo. Lubinko je kraljici Varji obljubil, da se vrne, in že isti trenutek vedel, da obljube ne bo držal. Ko je prišel domov, je imela Srdelica dušo že v nosu, poslavljal se je od očeta in mame, pripravljena, da leže v ledeni grob. Ampak takoj ko je s prekrižanimi prsti stopila čez čudežni džundžur bob, sta se ji vrnila moč in zdravje, skočila je iz postelje in nastalo je veliko slavlje. Sedem noči in sedem dni se je slavilo vse od Boke pa do Trsta. Vsi so slavili, samo Lubinko in Srdelica nista. Ko se je je dotaknil, je bilo, kot da se dotika lesa, ko jo je pogledal, je bilo, kot da gleda mrliča, ko pa jo je hotel poljubiti, je Srdelica obračala glavo. Zanjo je bil hladen kot led in ogaben kot zelen rogač. Izgledal je kot njen Lubinko, v resnici pa je bil kot Arabec, črn tujec. Ni vedela, kaj se dogaja. On pa! Nista bila več za skupaj, zato sta jokala sedem dni in sedem noči. Od njune ljubezni je ostal samo njun skupni jok. V tem času je kraljica vil doumela, da se Lubinko ne bo vrnil, da jo je prevaral in da zaman drži v rokah njegovo zaklenjeno srce. Bila je tako nesrečna in obupana, da je bila pripravljena svoje kraljestvo zamenjati za njegovo ljubezen. Druge vile so ji govorile, da jo je zaslepilo zlo, čarovniki so ves dan plesali in peli okoli nje, da bi kdo osvojil njeno srce in tako rešil kraljestvo, vendar ni nobenega pogledala. Kraljica je vzela ključ, ki odpira vsa srca in rekla – če te ne bom imela jaz, te ne bo imela nobena! Porinila je ključ v ključavnico Lubinkovega srca in isti trenutek so se začeli rušiti dvorci iz soli in gozd. Te groze ni mogel gledati nihče živ na tej zemlji, zato so vsi zaprli oči. Ko so sedemnajstkrat pomežiknili, je od gozda ostalo samo kamenje in skale, dvorec pa se je spremenil v steber soli, ki je segal do neba. Burja je sol odnesla na morje in od takrat je morje slano, prav tako pa od takrat mežikajo vsa živa bitja. To se je začelo, ker niso mogli gledati, kako se ruši kraljestvo*



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*vil. Ko je Lubinko osmi dan odšel proti gozdu, da bi od Varje zahteval nazaj svoje srce, gozda ni bilo več, niti vil, niti čudnih zveri. Vse je izginilo, ker je kraljica naredila zlo in odklenila srce, ki je pripadalo drugi. E, tako je izginil gozd nad morjem in tako so izginili ljudje brez srca, nesreča pa je zavládala svetu.*

*Prevedel Aleš Čar*

Roman *Dvorci iz orehovine* je izšel pri založbi V. B. Z. (2005).  
[str. 473–476]

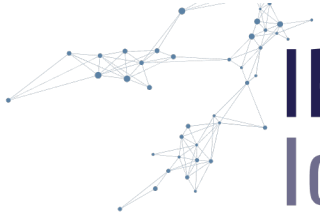
## Rabinova mačka

Rabinu Baruhu Danonu je zbolela mačka. Pa to ne katerakoli mačka, ampak modra mačka, s katero preživlja dneve in noči, glej, že petnajst let, vse odkar mu je umrla mlada, devetnajstletna žena Simha. Na sabat je bil jasen poletni dan in nenadoma je zapihal nekakšen veter, zaloputnila so polkna, zato se je Simha namenila zapreti okno. Naredila je dva koraka in se zrušila, mrtva; tedaj je veter zapihal še močnejše, okno se je razbilo, steklo pa razletelo po sobi. Bos je stal rabin, na sabat, nad svojo mrtvo ženo, in zdelo se mu je, da je konec tudi z njim. Po glavi so mu rojile grde misli in to ga je plašilo. Namesto da bi Simho objokoval ali jo z nezatnostjo svoje duše priporočil Tistemu, ki pozna vsak razlog, je bil rabin Baruh besen na lahkomišelnost Simho, ker je pustila odprto okno, ne da bi ga zavarovala z lončkom mačeh, čeprav ji je že stokrat naročil, naj to stori, kajti človek nikoli ne ve, kdaj bo zapihal veter. V tem mestu je steklo drago, ji je govoril, in niti enega judovskega steklarja ni, zato bo za naju še dražje, ampak ni ga ubogala, kdo ve, kaj je mislila, zato je bil besen na svojo mrtvo ženo in pomislil je, da bo ta bes tudi njemu prinesel konec.

Toda po tistem, ko je Simho pospremil na pokopališče in trikrat sam prespal v praznem domu, katerega tišina in mir sta ga prestrašila bolj kot lasten bes, se je na vratih rabinovega doma pojavila mačka. Kratkodlaka, mišje sive barve in nenavadne oblike glave, drugačna od vseh drugih sarajevskih mačk, zdelo se je, kot da bi pobegnila iz ruskega cirkusa, ki je dan poprej po dvotedenskem gostovanju zapustil mesto. Nemara tudi je pripadala temu cirkusu, a ni bila njegova naloga, da bi to raziskoval, enako kot se za njegov ugled ni spodobilo, da bi obiskoval cirkuške predstave. Posmehoval se je vsem, ki so to počeli, kajti le čemu bi človek to potreboval, kako kratke pameti mora biti, koliko časa mora imeti na voljo in kako brez sleherne vere mora biti, da si gre ogledovat slona. Če bi Tisti, ki ga med takšnim mlatenjem prazne slame ne omenjamo, hotel, da opazujemo slona, bi nas naredil črnice ali maharadže in vsakdo bi imel na dvorišču vsaj enega slona. Rabin Baruh tudi o mačkah ni imel boljšega mnenja.

Toda ko se mu je kot prva gostja prikazala pred večno odprtimi vrati njegovega doma – odprta pa so za primer, da pride sovrag, kajti tako mu ni treba vdirati in razbijati, tako kot ob Baruhovi postelji, na nočni omarici, leži dobro nabrušen nož, da sovrag ne bi naletel na kakega topega, ko ga bo ločeval od življenja –, ko ga je torej obiskala ta nenavadna mačka, je rabin Baruh Danon hipoma občutil mir. Tako kot se je nenadoma dvignil veter, ki je razbil okno in pred katerim se je mrtva zrušila Simha, je zdaj rabina nenadoma, po treh dneh in treh nočeh, minil njegov bes. Zgodilo pa se ni nič drugega, kot da je prišla mačka. In tako se je začelo življenje počasi razpletati, kakor klobčič niti, nad katerim nekdo bedi, da se ne zavozla, dolina pod okni pa se Baruhu ni več zdela njegova gehena.

Mačka ni zahtevala ničesar. Če jo je nahranil, je bila zadovoljna in je spala ob peči. Če je ni nahranil, je kam odšla in se vrnila sita – in znova spala ob peči. Nekoč je ni hranil cele tri mesece, in vendar se je po tistem, ko se je nekje najedla, vsakič vrnila. Takrat je rabin Baruh začel skrbeti zanjo, da jo je nahranil po dvakrat na dan, zjutraj in zvečer. Ni mu ugajala misel, da bi imela še nekoga drugega, ki mu je nekoč prišla pred vrata, da jo prav tako hrani in verjame, da je ta mačka njegova. To bi utegnil biti hodža Vejsilbega ali pa patri iz samostana nasproti pivovarne, ki so vsi enaki, vsi rdečelični in debeli, kot da jih molitev redi. Ni mu



ugajala misel, da imajo Vejsilbega in tisti patri kaj opraviti z njegovo mačko. Ne oni ne kdorkoli drug. Njegova mačka je njegova mačka, tako kot je njegovo trpljenje samo njegovo trpljenje. Z vsemi je tako, ampak ni Baruhova stvar, da bi skrbel za vsakogaršnje skrbi.

Mački ni mogel nadeti imena. Če bi bila kužek, bi bila zlahka Lisko, Kravželj ali Sajko, toda z mačko ne gre tako. Mačka ne dovoli, da bi ji pravil tako ali drugače; če ji ni po volji, se ne bo odzvala na nobeno ime, če pa ji je, bo prišla na sleherno lepo besedo, ki ji je namenjena. Baruh je poskusil tudi z grdimi besedami, dvakrat, trikrat jo je poklical strupenjača, smrdulja in spaka, ampak ni prišla, čeprav je prej kazalo, da bo. Zato jo je klical vsakokrat drugače, vendar z izbranimi besedami, kot da bi pesnil, ona pa je prihajala k njemu. »Pridi k meni, moja Sarajevčica, le kaj naju je, žalostni duši, prineslo v to mesto,« ji je govoril potihoma in mačka se je odzvala. »Stopi k meni, duša moje duše, danes sem malček bolan,« je šepnil, da ga zunaj ne bi kdo slišal pa da ne bi govorili, da je rabin od samote znorel in se zdaj pogovarja z zverjo. »Približaj se mi, sončece moje, da me ogreješ, v peči nimava več drv,« je rabin Baruh rekel mački, s katero se je v teh petnajstih letih pogovarjal več kot s komerkoli drugim.

Z njo ob sebi ga ni nikoli več grabil bes. Mirno je sprejemal svojo usodo, krotko je pomagal ljudem, ne da bi od njih kaj prida pričakoval. Spravil se je celo s tistimi, o katerih je verjel, da z njimi ni miru, zato je s hodžo Vejsilbegom spregovoril nekaj besed, mu nekaj odpustil, le da ne on ne hodža nista vedela, kaj natanko, na koncu pa mu je nehal slabšalno praviti Vejsilbega, ampak le še Vejsil ali Vejsilbeg. Ta je pa še najraje bil samo Vejsil, saj je bil v teh časih tako ali tako že sit begovanja, za povrh se je pa ob tem vsakokrat zdrznil, saj je pomislil, da je Baruha spet kaj prijelo.

»Sreča je imeti dobro ženo, da ti narodi zdrave otroke. Toda sreča je tudi imeti modro mačko,« je pravil rabin Baruh Danon, kot se je govorilo še petdeset let pozneje, vse dokler ni naše mestece izginilo, z vsemi nami vred. Ves čas je bilo enako: nekateri so se rabinu in njegovi mački rogali in posmehovali, drugi pa so resno prikimali. Ob neki priložnosti, ko je videl njegovo veliko ljubezen do mačke, je učeni Turek, ki so ga pripeljali k Baruhu, da bi mu prevedel pismo nekega Grka iz Odese, povedal zgodbo o tem, kako si je poslanik Mohamed odrezal kos plašča, na katerem je spala njegova najljubša mačka – samo zato, da mu je ne bi bilo treba prebuditi. Rabin Baruh je od čudenja izbuljil oči, nemara ga je za hip celo pograbila jezica, zato je Turku rekel, da bi tej mački zavil vrat ali pa bi jo preprosto s šibo pregnal s plašča. Turek mu ni odgovoril, samo nasmehnil se je, pokimal in se zahvalil za prevod.

Še isti večer, tik preden je Baruh odšel v čaršijo na sestanek z nekimi ljudmi iz Carigrada, je mačka zaspala na robu njegovega plašča. Zatopil se je v branje in tega sploh ni opazil. Toda ko se je namenil vstati, je imel kaj videti. Na njegovem plašču se je zvijala kakor burek, usta pa so se ji razlezla v nasmeh. Trza z brčicami in obrvmi, najbrž nekaj sanja. Ali pa ga nemara izkuša? Baruh je počasi z nočne omarice vzel nož, tisti ostri – za primer, da bi ga sovragi prišli zaklat –, odrezal kos plašča, na katerem je spala mačka, in se tak podal v čaršijo. Ljudje so ga spraševali, on pa jim je odgovarjal. In še petdeset let pozneje so eni o tem govorili eno, drugi pa drugo, nikoli pa se niso strinjali.



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Ko je mačka zbolela, je bila že popolnoma slepa, imela je motne oči, kakor tisti mutasti Ića, ki berači pred samostanom, in imela je revmo. Kadar se je spremenilo vreme, je mijavkala od bolečin, natanko tako kot takrat, ko je še mlada kotila. Takoj ko se je vreme spet malo polepšalo, pa je bilo tudi z njo bolje. »Starčica, postarala si se pred mano,« jo je poklical, ona pa je prišla k njemu.

Ni dočakala naslednjega jutra. Pokopal jo je malce nad mestom, kjer se začenja borov gozd. Ljudem o tem ni pravil, saj nihče ne bi razumel, ampak jim je govoril, da je živa. Še trideset let pozneje ni priznal, da mačke ni več. Šele takrat, ko je tudi sam umrl in so prišli ponj, so videli, da mačke ni nikjer, čeprav je bila hiša Baruha Danona polna njenih dlak.

*Prevedla Aleksandra Rekar*

### The Walnut Mansion

(excerpt from a novel)

A hundred hundred years ago, when people still didn't know that wind blows sails and that the wheels on a baby carriage turn, before there were any unchristened creatures, instead of karst and quarries there were dense pine forests everywhere. And in them lived fairies and sprites, there were more of them than people in the world. In those forests there were more birds than there are today anywhere, more bears, foxes, wolves and all kinds of creatures that one can't even imagine. Everything was tame, they ate food off of each others' heads because there were no beasts that acted wickedly to another animal. People were the only thing that wasn't in those forests. If some hardhead took courage and went off into the forest, his mother would mourn him because he would never return home. Not alive or dead, nor would they be able to make out his soul on judgment day. That was the way it was! No man thought it up, nor did the Lord God either. It was the way of fairies and sprites. They guarded the forest from everything human and divine, and you can guess for whom they did it! No, they didn't do it for the devil, because this was a hundred hundred years ago and the devil didn't exist yet. The fairies and sprites guarded the forest for the beasts, just as the beasts guarded the forest for them. And it would have stayed that way until the end of the world if this hadn't happened: Srdelica, the daughter of a fisherman named Cipolić, fell ill, and his daughter had caught the eye of the young Lubinko. The young man was as smart as a book, as good as a calm sea, and so handsome that no one could say what he was as handsome as. If someone said that anything was as handsome as Lubinko, everyone would laugh and say that that person was a nut. Lubinko sought a cure for Srdelica, his love, he searched for it from Boka all the way up to Trieste, but there was no cure anywhere. The best healers told him that the only thing that could cure her were džundžur beans. Do you know what džundžur beans are? You don't! But you'll know at the end of the story. Not even Lubinko knew what džundžur beans are, nor did the healers or anyone alive who was living by the sea a hundred hundred years ago. But people knew that one could only find them on the other side of the dense, magic forests that grew where today we have only rock and karst. So whoever fell ill and needed džundžur beans was as good as dead. But the handsome Lubinko didn't think like that. He kissed his Srdelica seven times, so the kisses would last until he came back, and set off into the forest to cross over to the other side, where the džundžur beans grew. Everyone tried to dissuade him, the old Cipolić tried to dissuade him, and told him that he would adopt him as his son if he didn't go. He pleaded with him in the name of his daughter's beauty, but Lubinko wouldn't be talked out of it. If there were džundžur beans in the world, he had to go find them—that's what he said and set off into the forest. He'd gone only three steps into the forest when it swallowed him up. He wouldn't have been able to go back if he'd wanted. That was how the fairies had arranged things. Whoever went in, never came out. And so he walked for a day, then two, and then three; he came upon all kinds of beasts, bears with rabbit's ears, and rabbits with bear's heads, winged wolves that fed on pine nuts and drank sap instead of water, but not a single beast was afraid of him because the fairies had made things so that fear would never enter the forest. On the seventh day Lubinko came to a palace that was bigger than a city and higher than the sky. The tops of its towers were so high that an eagle wouldn't be able to soar up to them. The palace





wasn't made of stone, but of salt. The fairies and sprites lived there. He knew that right away, but didn't know how he knew. It just came to him. He stopped in front of the gate. His heart was pounding like crazy, but he remembered his Srdelica and knocked on the gate. He didn't strike it very hard, but the gate collapsed into powder right in front of him, into pure white salt, and suddenly there appeared a beautiful maiden with hair of burning gold, with the figure of a cypress tree and wings of wind. That was Varja, the queen of the fairies. "What are you doing here, poor man?" the queen asked him. "I'm going to the other side, I'm going to get džundžur beans!" Lubinko answered courageously. "No man has reached the other side," the fairy said and laughed at him. "Has one ever reached your palace?" Lubinko asked her. "No," answered the queen. "Every one of them up to now killed an animal or stepped on an ant. And here there is a rule that you turn into whatever you kill right away. The demi-beasts that you met were once people," the fairy said to him and asked him why he needed džundžur beans. "I need them for medicine." "And are you sick?" "I'm not sick, but my Srdelica is." "And you'd turn into a forest animal for her?" the queen asked, surprised. "I'd turn into a rat if it would help her get better." The queen fell into thought and was not happy. How could she be happy when she'd taken a fancy to such a hero? "And is your Srdelica prettier than me?" she asked. "It depends on who you ask," answered Lubinko. "I think she is!" But how could poor Srdelica be prettier than the queen of the fairies?! Varja the fairy was the prettiest of all female beings in the world. But the problem was that Lubinko was the most handsome of all male beings in the world. More handsome than all the sprites put together, and Varja had fallen in love with him! "Here's what you and I will do," she began, "I'll pick you some džundžur beans, and you'll give me your heart!" "I can't give you my heart when my heart is locked, and my Srdelica has the keys," Lubinko said to her. "Don't you worry about the keys," the fairy said, "If you give me your heart I'll unlock it." Lubinko saw that the fairy had magic powers, and that she had the medicine for Srdelica, so he agreed. He waited for three days in front of the palace of salt for the queen to bring the džundžur beans, and on the fourth day there she was, with wounds on her legs, half dead because it was a long way to the other side even for her. "Beautiful fairy, give me the džundžur beans," Lubinko said straightaway, and she clenched something in her palm and said: "I'm not giving them. First you pluck out your heart as a pledge that you'll come back." "How can I pluck it out? I can't live without my heart." "You can, why wouldn't you be able to? Whoever plucks out their heart in the enchanted forest can live without his heart, he just can't love. I'll return it to you as soon as you fulfill your vow and we'll live happily in the palace of salt." Lubinko had no choice, and plucked out his beating heart, and the fairy gave him two brightly colored marbles. "Those are džundžur beans. Have Srdelica close her eyes, cross her middle and index fingers, and pass them over the džundžur beans like that. As soon as it seems to her that there are four of them and not two, she'll be healthy. Then you come back to me, because your heart is with me. You will suffer great misfortune if you don't return." Lubinko promised Queen Varja to come back and knew there and then that he wouldn't keep the promise. When he got back home, Srdelica was already half dead. She was bidding farewell to her mother and father, ready to lie down in her cold grave. But as soon as she passed her crossed fingers over the magic džundžur beans, her strength and health came back to her. She jumped up out of her bed and a great celebration followed. From Boka to Trieste they celebrated for seven days and seven nights. Everyone was celebrating, only Lubinko and Srdelica weren't. When he touched her it was as if he were touching wood, when he looked at her it was as if he



were looking at a corpse, and when he wanted to kiss her, Srdelica turned her head away. He was as cold as ice to her and disgusting as green carob. He looked like her Lubinko, but was as foreign to her as the black Arab. She didn't know what was going on. He did! They were no longer for one another, but they wept together for seven days and seven nights. Being able to cry together was all that was left of their love. During that time the fairy queen realized that Lubinko wasn't coming back, that he'd deceived her and she held a locked heart in her hands in vain. She was unhappy; she was desperate and was ready to give her queendom for his love. The other fairies told her that she'd gotten involved in something wicked; the sprites danced and sang around her all day long, hoping that one would capture her heart and thus save the queendom, but she didn't look at any of them. The queen took the key that unlocks all hearts and said, "If you won't be mine, you won't be anyone's!" She shoved the key into the lock of Lubinko's heart and as soon as she did that the palace of salt began to collapse and the forest started withering. No one could bear looking at that horror, and all living beings on the Earth closed their eyes. After they had blinked seventeen times, in the place where the enchanted forest was there was only a quarry and karst, and the palace had turned into a pillar of salt as high as the sky. The bora swept the salt into the sea and ever since that time the sea has been salty, just as since that time all living creatures have blinked. They began blinking because they couldn't watch the ruin of the queendom of the fairies. When on the eighth day Lubinko went to the forest to get his heart from Varja, there was no forest, no fairies, no strange beasts. They disappeared because the queen had committed evil and unlocked a heart that belonged to another woman. So you see, that's how the forest above the sea disappeared and that's how people without hearts came into being, and unhappiness took hold in the world.

*Translated by Stephen M. Dickey, with Janja Pavetić-Dickey*

### The Rabbi's Cat

Rabbi Baruch Danon's cat became sick. But it wasn't just any cat, it was a wise cat, one that he'd spent days and nights with, for the fifteenth year now, ever since his young, nineteen-year-old wife, Simha, had died. On Shabbat, it was a clear summer day when suddenly a wind of some sort came about, the shutters started to slam, so Simha went to shut the windows. She made two steps and fell over, dead, and the wind just became even stronger, the window shattered, with the glass scattering across the room. The rabbi stood barefoot, on Shabbat, above his dead wife, and for a time it had seemed that he was done for as well. Nasty thoughts were buzzing around his mind, and that frightened him. Rather than feeling sorrow for Simha, or, from the lowliness of his soul, putting in a good word for her to Him who knows every reason, Rabbi Baruch was furious with the inconsiderate Simha, because she had left the window without fixing it open by using the pot with pansies, even though he had told her a hundred times to do so, since a person can never tell when the wind will blow. Windowpanes are expensive in this city, he used to tell her, and there's not a single Jewish glazier, so it will be even more expensive for us—but she wouldn't listen, who knows what she was thinking about, and so he was furious, while standing above his dead wife, and he thought that this rage would be the end of him.

But then, after he had sent Simha off to the graveyard and spent three nights on his own in the desolate home, where the peace and quiet were frightening him even more than his own rage, a cat appeared at the doorstep of rabbi's home. Short-haired, gray, and mouselike in color, and with an unusual shape to its face, different than any other Sarajevo cats, she looked like she must have escaped from a Russian circus that had left the city the day before, after a two-weeks' visit. Maybe she did belong to that circus, such things weren't his to investigate, just like it wasn't worthy of his reputation to visit any circus shows. He mocked those who did, because what need was there, what kind of a simple mind must you have to have, or simply too much time on your hands and no faith whatsoever, to make you go see an elephant. If He whom we don't mention in this great carnival wanted us to see elephants, he'd have made us all either blacks or maharajas, and each of us would have at least one elephant in his yard. And Rabbi Baruch didn't have a much higher opinion of cats.

But then she appeared, as the first guest in front of the eternally open door to his home. And his doors are open, so that if an enemy comes, he doesn't have to break in and make a mess—just like right next to Baruch's bed, on the night stand, there's a well sharpened knife, so that this enemy doesn't have to use a blunt knife to take away his life. And when this unusual cat visited him, Rabbi Baruch Danon immediately felt at peace. Just as suddenly as the wind had risen to break the window next to where Simha had fallen dead, just as quickly, after three days and three nights, the rabbi was over his fury. Yet nothing else had happened, except that a cat appeared. And in this fashion his life suddenly began to unravel, just like a ball of thread being watched over by the One who makes sure it doesn't tangle, and to Baruch the valley under his windows no longer seemed to him a personal Gehenna.

The cat didn't ask for much. If he'd fed her, she was content and would sleep by the furnace. If he hadn't, she'd go somewhere and come back full, and she would still sleep by the furnace. Once he didn't feed her for three whole months, but she would come back



regardless, after finding food somewhere else. It was then that Rabbi Baruch began to make sure to feed her twice each day, in the morning and at night. He wasn't pleased to think that she had someone else whose door she'd also suddenly appeared on, who also fed her and believed that she was actually his cat. It could easily have been Hojja Vejsilbeg, or the friars from the convent across from the brewery—they all look the same, rosy-cheeked and plump, as if their prayers fatten them up. He didn't like thinking that Vejsilbeg or those friars had anything to do with his cat. Either them, or anyone else. His cat is his cat, just as his suffering is only his. It's like that with everyone, though it wasn't Baruch's job to worry about everyone's worries.

He couldn't name the cat. If it were a dog, he could've easily been Šarov, Rundov, or Garov, but it wasn't like that with a cat. A cat doesn't let you call her this or that, and she won't answer to any name if it doesn't suit her. But if it does, then she'll come, no matter which kind words are spoken. Baruch had tried insults, too, two or three times, calling her an asp, a skunk, or a freak, but she wouldn't come, though earlier it had seemed she would. That's why he'd try a different name each time, with carefully chosen words, as if he were writing a poem, and then she would come to him. "Come to me, my Sarajevo girl. What misery brought us to this city?" He'd talk to her in a quiet voice, and the cat would come. "Come, soul of my soul, I feel a bit ill today." He'd whisper, so that someone outside wouldn't hear and then say that the rabbi had gone mad from loneliness, and that he's now talking to a beast. "Come closer, my sun, to keep me warm; we're out of wood in the furnace," Rabbi Baruch would say to the cat, conversing with her more in those fifteen years than he did with anyone else.

He had never felt rage when he was near her. He'd accepted his fate quietly, meekly helping others out, not expecting much in return. He'd also made peace with those who he believed would never make peace, so he even spoke a few words with Hojja Vejsilbeg; he forgave him for some matter, for what neither he nor the imam really knew. And in the end he stopped addressing him with the derogatory Vejsilbeg, and would instead say Vejsil or Vejsil Bey. The man himself preferred simply Vejsil, since his official title was only a nuisance anyway, and he'd wince each time he heard it, thinking that Baruch was again bothered by something.

"It's fortunate to have a good wife, so she can give birth to many healthy children. But it's also fortunate to have a wise cat," Rabbi Baruch Danon would say. His words would be retold as much as fifty years later, until our small town was itself gone, together with all of us in it. It was always the same: some of us would laugh and mock the rabbi and his cat, while others would knowingly nod their heads. One time, after witnessing this great love for his cat, a learned Turk—who had been brought to Baruch so that he could translate a letter from some Greek from Odessa—told him the story of how the prophet Muhammad had cut out a piece of his cloak, when his favorite cat was sleeping on it, just so he wouldn't have to wake it up. Rabbi Baruch's eyes went wide with surprise; he might have even been a little bit upset. He told the Turk that he'd have strangled that cat, or simply just shooed it away from his cape with a stick. The Turk didn't respond at all. He just smiled, nodded, and thanked him for the translation.

That same night, right before Baruch was about to go to town to meet some people from Istanbul, the cat fell asleep on the tail of his coat. He was lost in his readings, so he didn't

even notice. When he was about to get up, it was something to be seen. The cat had curled up like a piece of rolled pastry on his coat, and her mouth was formed into a smile. Her whiskers and brows were twitching, as if she were dreaming. Or perhaps he was being tempted? Yet Baruch slowly took the knife from his nightstand—it was sharp, in case his foes came to slit his throat—and he cut off the piece of coat his cat was sleeping on, and, disheveled in this fashion, went to town. People asked, and he answered. Fifty years later, some people said one thing about it, others said something else, and no one ever agreed on the issue.

When the cat fell ill, she was already completely blind—her eyes were diluted like those of mute Ico's, begging for change in front of the convent—and rheumatic. When the weather would change, she would whimper from pain, just as she did when she gave birth when young. As soon as the weather got better, so would she. "Little old lady, you grew old before me," he'd call to her, and she would come.

She didn't welcome a single morning more. He buried her above the town, where the pine forest begins. He told the world nothing at all about it, because no one would've understood. Instead he simply told them she was alive. Even thirty years later, he still didn't want to admit that the cat was gone. Only when he died, too, and when they came for him, did they see the cat was nowhere to be found, even though Baruch Danon's home was still filled with her fur.

*Translated by Aleksandar Brezar*



## Robert Šerban

### Živo meso

IMAMO SVEŽE MESO

piše na izložbi mesnice  
tudi takrat ko je zaprta

na ulici je nekdo poskušal  
z britvico spraskati naslikane črke  
verjetno kak ljubitelj živali  
vegetarijanec ali pa konkurenca  
a je na koncu  
s svojimi odtisi in praskami samo umazal šipo

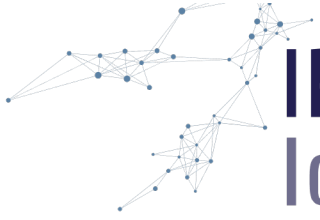
ponoči  
se od zunaj  
vidijo zamrzovalne skrinje  
polne rožnatega ali vinsko rdečega mesa  
eno lepše od drugega

naj rečejo karkoli  
smrt ima svojo luč



## Delovna nedelja

pomivalni stroj  
in pralni stroj  
delata tudi ob nedeljah  
in prevzemata nase odgovornost za  
naše grehe in nečistost



## Ex libris

vse več ljudi  
daje stare knjige  
v trpežne vrečke  
iz Lidla Carrefoura Kauflanda  
in jih počasi odlaga  
k zabojnikom za smeti  
nimajo srca da bi jih kar tako zavrgli  
doma pa jih tudi ne morejo obdržati  
zato jim naredijo nekakšno gnezdo  
z mislijo da se bodo že kako znašle  
če jim je tako usojeno





# Ikar 2.0 Icarus 2.0



## **EKG**

velikokrat  
je srce  
samo  
črpalka



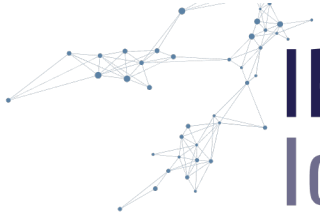
## Grozljiva ljubezenska zgodba

od mene bodo ostali  
samo govorica opazka domneva  
prgišče besed  
o mojih brezsravnih dejanjih  
neodpustljivih napakah  
energiji ki sem jo črpal  
o vsem kar sem naredil  
se ne bo vedelo nič nič nič  
morda le to da sem bil dober fant  
marljiv poba  
poskočen  
od fare  
medel  
neiznajdljiv  
preklemanski nebodigatreba  
podlež  
drekač ki ni vreden prebite pare  
se pravi  
nič kar bi štelo  
in nihče ne bo imel časa  
da bi me vsaj za silo  
sestavil nazaj  
iz madežev ali vsaj iz črt  
kot nerodni slikar

ima me da bi brez prestanka kričal  
da bi se  
čez tisoč let  
čez milijon let  
moj krik širil od ust do ust  
kot grozljiva ljubezenska zgodba  
ki je rešila svet

## Igrača

poznal sem moškega  
v katerega je sredi polja  
udarila strela  
ne samo da ga ni podrla na tla  
ampak je še naprej hodil  
privezan s strelo na nebo  
kot daljinsko vodena igrača  
nejeverno sem mu rekel da  
je Bog velik  
z nasmeškom mi je odvrnil  
da je Bog otrok



## Kar ostane od življenja

ljudje so prepričani  
da se v pesmih nič ne zgodi  
da jih je treba brati  
po smrti  
ko je bolje da nimaš več želja  
idej

ljudje ne odpirajo tankih knjig  
če pa že  
tako opazijo  
da je notri le  
malo besed v eni vrstici  
malo besed na eni strani  
v celoti  
belina veliko beline  
zato jih brž zaprejo

toda ne da bi jim kdo povedal  
ljudje vedo da  
je potem ko jo doživiš  
poezija tisto kar ostane od življenja

*Prevedel Aleš Mustar*

## Flesh versus meat

WE HAVE FRESH MEAT

says a notice in the butcher's window  
words that stay there even when the shop is closed

somebody passing by must have tried  
to erase the painted letters with a razor blade  
possibly someone who loves animals  
or is a vegetarian or just the competition  
but he merely smeared the windowpane  
with his fingerprints and scratches

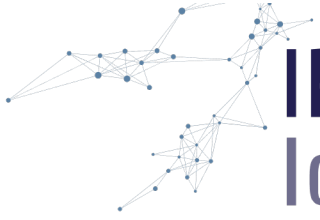
in the dark  
from outside  
one sees the refrigeration cabinets  
filled with red, pink or bordeaux meat  
unbelievably beautiful all of them

it cannot be denied  
that death has a light of his own



## Working Sunday

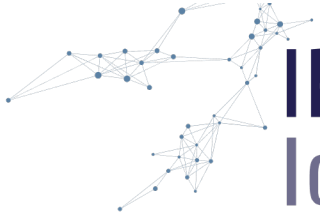
the dishwasher  
the washing machine  
work on sundays too  
and deliver us from  
sin and uncleanliness



## Ex libris

more and more people  
cram their old books  
into solid bags  
from Lidl Carrefour Kaufland  
and stealthily leave them  
by the side of a rubbish bin  
they don't have the heart to destroy them  
but there's no more room in their flats  
so they find a good place for them  
hoping that those books that really have  
something to say  
will manage by themselves





# Ikar 2.0 Icarus 2.0



## ECG

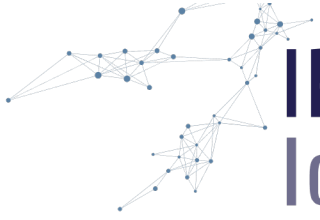
pretty often  
a heart is  
a mere  
pump



## Scary love story

all that will be left of me  
will be an impression rumour gossip suspicion  
a handful of words  
my principled behaviour  
my unforgivable faults  
the energy I spent  
doing what I did all my life  
every little thing I ever did will be completely forgotten  
they'll say, maybe, well, he was a good bloke  
hardworking  
obliging  
kind insignificant silly  
a bloody bastard  
a scoundrel  
a shitty good for nothing  
which means nothing will matter  
and nobody will take the time to remember me as I was  
part of me  
spots and lines at least drawn by a clumsy painter

I feel like howling for ever  
and ever so that  
in a thousand years  
a million years  
my howl may travel from mouth  
to mouth like a scary love story  
which has rescued mankind



## Toy

I once met a man  
who was struck by lightning  
in the middle of a field  
yet he never fell down  
but kept on walking  
tied to the skies by lightning  
like a remote-control toy  
in disbelief, I remarked,  
God is great  
and he smiled back and replied  
God is a child



## What's left of life

humans are certain  
that nothing happens in a poem  
that poetry should be read  
after death  
when you had better forget lust and  
ideas

humans never open thin booklets  
or if they do  
they notice at once that there are  
few words in a row  
few words on a page  
surrounded  
by white, white every  
where they close those books at once

and yet, without ever being told  
humans know that  
poetry is what's left of life  
after you've lived it through

*Translated by Lidia Vianu and Anne Stewart*

## Muanis Sinanović

### Poem to my Brother

Brother, since you  
departed,  
just as you'd feared  
you would,

I no longer see you,  
the way I might.

I'm just a shadow  
behind the sun,  
and you dwell behind  
the sun's back.

Bright light  
blinds me,  
yet I'm not afraid to be a shadow

and you said  
you'd been  
my shadow  
when you were still here.

When I address you,  
I don't think that  
you'll hear my words  
or have any use for them.

I'm merely telling my shadow,  
that it is my companion  
and that I don't fear it.

If only you knew  
how the sunlight seeps  
into this narrow mining valley  
that's no longer mined.

It was once burrowed  
by our father,  
who left before both of us.

Half of this life of mine  
ago.

Since you left, I've been disburdened  
of words  
and poetic mysteries.

Softly do my fingers  
land.

I sense your joy  
and knowledge, and my  
false erudition

with which I always covered  
you as if with a steel blanket

no longer bothers me  
when I go to sleep.

How much longer? Another half of life  
before the last time?

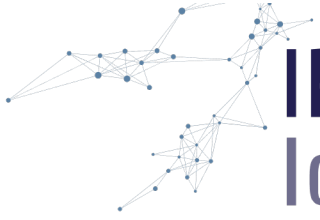
Before I'm merely  
still awake,  
like you,  
who were beset by nightmares.

You know, brother,  
sleep is the cousin of death.  
That's why I like going to sleep.

I don't see you in my dreams,  
but sometimes it's as if I feel you  
brush up against me.

And then I go for a walk through  
the mining valley,  
where the sun shines again  
after several months

and count  
the times I've smelt



# Ikar 2.0 Icarus 2.0



the lush soil

which is destined  
to remain here after the last  
of us,  
and cannot be  
burrowed,

it just rises,  
like us.

You have a whole poem,  
and I but a snippet.

## What Did I See?

Sunny days, flicker of leaves on the ceiling,  
flutter of fresh washing, sweat wrung from muscle  
like juice pressed from grapes.  
Hours when light hovered above us like a  
thin billowing bed sheet.

Clocks, whose dark corners stretched across  
whole settlements, great big grasshoppers  
hopping out of them with masks on their human faces.  
Fear that spread like laughing gas,  
the racket it caused for some reason,  
and plagues that arose for all the wrong reasons,  
like man sprung from a drop of seed.

Full of faith, I cast anchor into the sky,  
and I felt when it caught.



## The House With the Old Wardrobes

It was a house  
with large wooden  
wardrobes.

All the clocks  
had stopped long  
before. One showed  
correct time each time  
you were there.

Through the window you  
heard voices as if  
through water.

You couldn't make out the words.  
By the sound of them you knew it was  
your language.

Each time  
night fell for ever.

Each time  
a new day dawned.

*Translated by Mirza Purić*