



27. Mednarodni literarni festival Vilenica /  
27<sup>th</sup> Vilenica International Literary Festival

Vilenica 2012

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*Založilo in izdalo Društvo slovenskih pisateljev, Tomšičeva 12, 1000 Ljubljana*  
Zanj Veno Taufer, predsednik

*Issued and published by the Slovene Writers' Association, Tomšičeva 12, 1000 Ljubljana*  
Veno Taufer, President

*Jezikovni pregled / Proofreading*  
Jožica Narat, Alan McConnell-Duff

*Grafično oblikovanje / Design*  
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*Tehnična ureditev in tisk / Technical editing and print*  
Ulčakar&JK

*Naklada / Print run*  
700 izvodov / 700 copies

Ljubljana, avgust 2012 / August 2012

Izvedba tega projekta je financirana s strani Evropske komisije.  
Vsebina publikacije je izključno odgovornost avtorja in v nobenem primeru ne  
predstavlja stališč Evropske komisije.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This  
publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held  
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Zbornik je izšel s finančno podpro Javne agencije za knjige Republike Slovenije.  
The almanac was published with financial support of the Slovenian Book Agency.

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji  
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

821(4)-82  
7.079:82(497.4Vilenica)"2012"

MEDNARODNI literarni festival (27 ; 2012 ; Vilenica)  
Vilenica / 27. Mednarodni literarni festival = International  
Literary Festival ; [uredila Tanja Petrič, Gašper Troha]. -  
Ljubljana : Društvo slovenskih pisateljev = Slovene Writers'  
Association, 2012

ISBN 978-961-6547-65-9  
1. Petrič, Tanja, 1981-  
262808064

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Nagrajenec  
Vilenice 2012

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*Vilenica 2012*  
*Prize Winner*

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# *David Albahari*

David Albahari se je rodil leta 1948 v Peči v Srbiji. Je pisatelj, eseist in prevajalec. Med njegova dela sodijo zbirke kratkih zgodb, kot so *Opis smrti* (1982), za katero je avtor prejel Andrićovo nagrado, *Pelerina* (1993), ki je prejela nagrado »Stanislav Vinaver«, in zbirka *Svake noći u drugom gradu* (Vsako noč v drugem mestu, 2008), ki je prejela Vitalovo nagrado za knjigo leta. Roman *Mamac* (*Vaba*, 1996) je leta 1996 osvojil NIN-ovo nagrado za najboljši roman. Avtorjeva izbrana dela so izhajala med letoma 1996 in 1997 v desetih knjigah. Od ustanovitve beograjske založbe »Stubovi kulture« je njen hišni avtor.

David Albahari je zaslužen tudi za mnoge prevode sodobnih britanskih, ameriških, avstralskih in kanadskih avtorjev v srbski jezik. Prevajal je avtorje, kot so S. Bellow, I. B. Singer, T. Pynchon, M. Atwood, V. S. Naipaul in V. Nabokov. V srbičino je prevedel tudi dramska dela Sama Sheparda, Sarah Kane, Caryl Churchill in Jasona Shermana. Sodeloval je pri programu International Writing Program v Iowi (1986), bil pa je tudi rezidenčni pisatelj na University of Calgary v okviru projekta International Writer-in-Residence in pod okriljem programa Markin-Flanagan Distinguished Writers Program (1994–95). Leta 1994 se je z družino preselil v Kanado.

David Albahari was born in 1948 in Peć, Serbia. He is a writer, essayist, and translator. His works include collections of short stories, such as *Opis smrti* (Description of Death, 1982), which won him the Ivo Andrić award; *Pelerina* (Cloak, 1993), which won the Stanislav Vinaver award; and *Svake noći u drugom gradu* (Every Night in Another City, 2008), which won the Vital company – issued Golden Sunflower award for the best book of the year. His novel *Mamac* (*Bait*, 1996) won the NIN award for the best novel in 1996. Between 1996 and 1997, the author's selected works were published in no fewer than ten collections and anthologies. He has been a house author of the "Stubovi kulture" publishing house since its inception.

David Albahari has, moreover, translated works by many contemporary British, American, Australian and Canadian authors into Serbian. The vast array of authors, whose prose he has translated, includes S. Bellow, I. B. Singer, T. Pynchon, M. Atwood, V. S. Naipaul, and V. Nabokov. He has also translated plays by Sam Shepard, Sarah Kane, Caryl Churchill and Jason Sherman. He was a participant in the International Writing Program in Iowa (1986), and served as an international writer-in-residence at the University of Calgary, under the auspices of the Markin-Flanagan Distinguished Writers Program (1994–95). He moved to Canada with his family in 1994.

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## Izabrana bibliografija

### Zbirke kratkih zgodb

- Porodično vreme* (Družinski čas), Matica srpska, Novi Sad 1973.
- Obične priče* (Običajne zgodbe), Izdavačko-informativni centar studenata, Beograd 1978.
- Opis smrti* (Opis smrti), Rad, Beograd 1982.
- Fras u šupi* (Šok v lopi), Rad, Beograd 1984.
- Jednostavnost* (Preprostost), Rad, Beograd 1988.
- Pelerina* (Pelerina), Narodna knjiga, Beograd 1993.
- Izabrane priče* (Izabrane zgodbe), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1994.
- Neobične priče* (Neobičajne zgodbe), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1999.
- Najlepše priče* (Najlepše zgodbe), Prosveta, Beograd 2001.
- Drugi jezik* (Drugi jezik), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2003.
- Senke* (Sence), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2006.
- Svake noći u drugom gradu* (Vsako noć v drugem mestu), Srpska književna zadruga, Beograd 2008.
- Nema pesma – izabrane priče* (Nema pesem – izbrane zgodbe), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2009.

### Romani

- Sudija Dimitrijević* (Sodnik Dimitrijević), Matica srpska, Novi Sad 1978.
- Cink* (Cink), »Filip Višnjić«, Beograd 1988, 2004.
- Kratka knjiga* (Kratka knjiga), Narodna knjiga, Alfa, Beograd 1993.
- Snežni čovek* (Snežni človek), Narodna knjiga, Alfa, Beograd 1995.
- Mamac (Vaba)*, Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1996.
- Mrak* (Temà), Narodna knjiga, Alfa, Beograd 1997.
- Gec i Majer* (Götz in Meyer), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1998.
- Svetski putnik* (Svetovni popotnik), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2001.
- Pijavice* (Pijavke), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2005.
- Marke* (Znamke), Zepter, Beograd 2006.
- Ludvig* (Ludvik), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2007.
- Brat* (Brat), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2008.
- Ćerka* (Hći), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2010.
- Kontrolni punkt* (Kontrolna točka), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2011.

### Esejistična dela

- Prepisivanje sveta* (Prepisovanje sveta), Književna opština Vršac, Vršac 1997.
- Teret* (Breme), Forum pisaca, Beograd 2004.
- Dijaspora i druge stvari* (Diaspora in druge reči), Akademika knjiga, Novi Sad 2008.
- Ljudi, gradovi i štočta drugo* (Ljudje, mesta in marsikaj drugega), Dnevnik, Novi Sad 2011.

### Fotomonografija

- Pamtivek* (Od nekdaj), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2010.

**Knjige za otroke**

*Ema i jež koji nestaje* (Ema in jež, ki izginja), Zepter, Beograd 2008.

*Ni dana bez čuda* (Niti dneva brez čudeža), Povelja, Kraljevo 2010.

**Prevodi**

Albaharijeva dela so prevedena v albanščino, angleščino, bolgarščino, danščino, esperanto, finščino, francoščino, galicijščino, grščino, hebrejščino, italijanščino, madžarščino, makedonščino, nemščino, nizozemščino, poljščino slovaščino, slovenščino, španščino in švedščino.

**Seznam književnih prevodov v slovenščino**

*Besede so nekaj drugega*, prev. Sonja Polanc, Center za slovensko književnost, Ljubljana 2007.

*Vaba*, prev. Sonja Polanc, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 2008.

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## **Selected Bibliography**

### **Short Fiction**

- Porodično vreme* (Family Time), Matica srpska, Novi Sad 1973.
- Obične priče* (Ordinary Stories), Izdavačko-informativni centar studenata, Beograd 1978.
- Opis smrti* (*Description of Death*), Rad, Beograd 1982.
- Fras u šupi* (Shock in the Shed), Rad, Beograd 1984.
- Jednostavnost* (Simplicity), Rad, Beograd 1988.
- Pelerina* (Cloak), Narodna knjiga, Beograd 1993.
- Izabrane priče* (Selected Stories), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1994.
- Neobične priče* (Unusual Stories), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1999.
- Drugi jezik* (Second Language), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2003.
- Senke* (Shadows), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2006.
- Svake noći u drugom gradu* (Every Night in Another City), Srpska književna zadruga, Beograd 2008.
- Nema pesma – izabrane priče* (Mute Song – Selected Stories), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2009.

### **Novels**

- Sudija Dimitrijević* (Judge Dimitrijevic), Matica srpska, Novi Sad 1978.
- Cink (Tsing)*, ‘Filip Višnjić’, Beograd 1988, 2004.
- Kratka knjiga* (A Short Book), Narodna knjiga, Alfa, Beograd 1993.
- Snežni čovek* (*Snow Man*), Narodna knjiga, Alfa, Beograd 1995.
- Mamac* (*Bait*), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1996.
- Mrak* (Darkness), Narodna knjiga, Alfa, Beograd 1997.
- Gec i Majer* (*Goetz and Meyer*), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 1998.
- Svetski putnik* (Globetrotter), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2001.
- Pijavice* (*Leeches*), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2006.
- Ludvig*, Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2007.
- Brat* (Brother), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2008.
- Ćerka* (The Daughter), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2010.
- Kontrolni punkt* (Checkpoint), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2011.

### **Essays**

- Prepisivanje sveta* (Rewriting the World), Književna opština Vršac, Vršac 1997.
- Teret* (Burden), Forum pisaca, Beograd 2004.
- Dijaspora i druge stvari* (Diaspora and Other Things), Akademska knjiga, Novi Sad 2008.
- Ljudi, gradovi i štošta drugo* (People, Cities and Many other Things), Dnevnik, Novi Sad 2011.

### **Photo Monograph**

- Pamtivek* (Times Immemorial), Stubovi kulture, Beograd 2010.

### **Children's Books**

*Ema i jež koji nestaje* (Emma and the Disappearing Hedgehog), Zepter, Beograd 2008.

*Ni dana bez čuda* (Not a Day Without a Miracle), Povelja, Kraljevo 2010.

### **Translations**

Albahari's works have been translated into Albanian, English, Bulgarian, Danish, Esperanto, Finnish, French, Galician, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Hungarian, Macedonian, German, Dutch, Polish, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish, and Swedish.

### **List of Slovene Book Translations**

*Besede so nekaj drugega* (*Words Are Something Else*), trans. Sonja Polanc, ed. Aleš Debeljak, Center za slovensko književnost, Ljubljana 2007.

*Vaba* (*Bait*), trans. Sonja Polanc, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 2008.

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## **David Albahari**

### **Nagrajenec Vilenice 2012**

**Andrej Blatnik**

David Albahari, v Kanadi živeči pisatelj judovskega rodu in srbskega jezika, se je rodil leta 1948 v Peči. Njegova prva knjiga, zbirka zgodb *Družinski čas (Porodično vreme)*, je izšla leta 1973. Doslej je objavil trinajst knjig zgodb, štirinajst romanov, pet zbirk esejev in dve knjigi za otroke, za *Družinskim časom* še knjige zgodb *Obične priče* (1978), *Opis smrti* (1982), *Fras u šupi* (1984), *Jednostavnost* (1988), *Pelerina* (1993), *Izabrane priče* (1994), *Neobične priče* (1999), *Najlepše priče* (2001), *Drugi jezik* (2003), *Senke* (2006), *Svake noći u drugom gradu* (2008) in izbrane zgodbe (*Nema pesma - Izabrane priče*) leta 2009. Romani so poimenovani *Sudija Dimitrijević* (1978), *Cink* (1988), *Kratka knjiga* (1993), *Snežni čovek* (1995), *Mamac* (1996), *Mrak* (1997), *Gec i Majer* (1998), *Svetski putnik* (2001), *Pijavice* (2005), *Marke* (2006), *Ludvig* (2007), *Brat* (2008), *Čerka* (2010) in *Kontrolni punkt* (2011).

Prevajal je številne knjige, zgodbe, pesmi in eseje ameriških, britanskih, avstralskih in kanadskih pisateljev, med katerimi so bili Saul Bellow, Vladimir Nabokov, Margaret Atwood, Isaac B. Singer in Thomas Pynchon, in urejal vrsto revij in knjižnih zbirk. Od jeseni leta 1994 živi v Calgaryju v Kanadi. Njegove knjige so prevedene v več kot petnajst jezikov, v slovenščino izbor zgodb *Besede so nekaj drugega* (Aleph 2007) in roman *Vaba* (Cankarjeva založba 2008). Albahari je eden najbolj cenjenih in vplivnih prozaistov nekdanje Jugoslavije, kar potrjuje vrsta prejetih literarnih priznanj. Za *Opis smrti* je leta 1982 prejel Andrićevu nagrado, za *Pelerino* nagradi Stanislava Vinaverja in Branka Čopića, za *Vabo* pa cenjeno nagrado NIN-a za najboljši roman leta 1996. Roman *Pijavke* (*Pijavice*) je dobil nagrado mesta Beograda. Albahari je prejel tudi nagrado narodne knjižnice Srbije in mednarodni nagradi Balkanika in Most-Berlin. Že v letih 1996/97 je založba Narodna knjiga izdala njegova izbrana dela v desetih knjigah.

Generacije piscev, ki so v začetku osemdesetih začenjali preoblikovati prevladočo podobo proznega pisanja v jezikih nekdanje Jugoslavije, je estetsko osmisnila Albaharijeva kratka zgodba *Nema pesem*, v kateri Albahari učinkovito povzema tedanjki konflikt med »stvarnostno« in »drugačno« prozo, saj na nekaj straneh vključuje in mojstrsko medsebojno povezuje tako stereotipni prizor falokratske dominance kot soočenje akademizma s svojo intelektualno nemočjo in nazadnje še kot razumsko nedosegljivi misterij presežnosti. Ne preseneča, da je Albahari kot *Nemo pesem* naslovil tudi osebno antologijo iz leta 2009. Omenimo, da za slovenski hommage Albahariju s citiranjem zaključka te zgodbe v zaključku svoje knjige *Balkanska brv* poskrbi Aleš Debeljak. Albaharijev vpliv na prozno pisanje na tleh nekdanje Jugoslavije pa

se ni končal v generaciji današnjih petdesetletnikov, o čemer priča književnost petnajst let mlajšega Muharema Bazdulja in še mlajših – morda je tudi val *popularnih, sobotnih, drugih* in drugačnih zgodb v slovenski književnosti zadnjih let nekakšen (zavesten ali ne) odziv na Albaharijeve *običajne* zgodbe (*Obične priče*) iz leta 1978. Ni nepričakovano, da je Albahari svojo zbirko iz 1999 naslovil *Neobičajne zgodbe* (*Neobične priče*): dandanes je pisati dobesedno običajne zgodbe – rečeno z razumljivejšim jezikom neke druge (neliterarne) kulture – misija nemogoče.

Prostor, v katerega je Albahari na koncu sedemdesetih in začetku osemdesetih let vstopal, pa je bil precej drugačen. Tedaj se je cenila stvarnostna proza, slavila estetika vzdržljivih marginalcev, mojstrov ulice in preživetja, ki so govorili s klenim jezikom, še bolj obvladali govorico pesti in vsaj prek noči, če ne tudi podnevi, obvladovali tudi najlepša dekleta. Ta prozni kod, ki bi v kaki bolj razplasteni družbi dobil domovinske pravice prej v žanrski kot v kanonični prozi, nemara najučinkoviteje zastopa vrh tega specifičnega literarnega konteksta, roman Dragoslava Mihailovića *Ko so cvetete buče*. Povsem drugačno estetsko pot, ki je neogibno vključevala tudi povsem drugačno etično lestvico, v kateri zmaga moči ne povozi vseh ostalih vrednot, je pred prihodom Albaharija v tedanji prozi, pisani v srbsčini, opazneje zastopal pravzaprav edinole Danilo Kiš – in najbrž ni naključje, da je tudi izza Kiševega pisanja, enako kot pri Alabaharijevem, stala judovska družinska in kulturna tradicija, in da je tako specifičen glas lažje preživel v t. i. prostovoljnem eksilu, kakor se glasi ta blažilna fraza, le da tedaj ne v novi obljudljeni deželi Severni Ameriki, temveč še v tradicionalnem zatočišču drugačnih umetnikov, v Parizu. (O sili spopada med stvarnostno prozo in metafikcijskimi prijemi priča dragoceni zbornik dokumentov *Treba li spaliti Kiša?*, o pozornosti, ki jo Kišu namenja Albahari, vrsta znotrajbesedilnih priznanj, o odnosu med, recimo, razmerjem pripovedovalca do starševske usode v Albaharijevi *Vabi* in Kiševem *Vrtu, pepelu* pa bi bilo mogoče pisati zanimive monografije.)

Albaharijeva proza je proza sprememb in praznine. Že našteti naslovi njegovih knjig nam prikazujejo dva pola njegovega pisanja – če se naslovi knjig zgodb v veliki meri ukvarjajo s formo, torej z *vrsto* zgodbe (od običajne do neobičajne), njenim *načinom* (»preprostostjo«) in *predmetom* zgodbarjenja, pa se v naslovih romanov velikokrat kaže posameznik, določen shematično, z *odnosom* (brat, hčerka), *poimenovanjem* ali *dejavnostjo*. Veliko je nedorečenega, prepuščenega bralcu. Temu Albahari na pripovednem krožniku namreč ne postreže z vsem, stalno ga postavlja pred prekoračevanje mej in zapolnjevanje vrzeli, česar pa ne počne le z znotrajbesedilnimi izraznimi sredstvi, ampak tudi z izbiro kontekstov. Že v prvi polovici osemdesetih let, torej v času (še zlasti v Srbiji) komaj mehčajočega se socializma, je v svoje pisanje vnesel hašišarski besednjak in v živiljenja svojih likov urbano popularno kulturo. In vse tiste, ki prostodušno trdijo, da gre za politično

neangažiranega avtorja, je treba opozoriti, da je Albahari zastavil besedo in veljavo za povečevanje svoboščin, še preden se je začela Jugoslavija sesipati – konec osemdesetih je bil med vodilnimi v gibanju za legalizacijo marihuane. Tistim pa, ki se jim zdi tovrstni angažma preparcialen, lahko v celoti navedemo Albaharijevo zgodbo *Pravica močnejšega*, katere poanta presega krajevna določila in časovne omejitve: »Fant stopi na dvorišče s kosom kruha v rokah. Kruh je namazan z marmelado iz gozdnih sadežev in fant se že vnaprej veseli tega okusa. Na dvorišču pa k njemu stopi fant iz tretjega nadstropja, starejši in močnejši od njega, in brez besed mu vzame kos kruha iz roke. Ugrizne, se namršči in pljune. Fuj, gozdni sadež! reče in vrže kruh na tla, v prah.«

Proza spremembe se ni izogibala spremembam. Vojne v nekdanji Jugoslaviji so povlekle veliko ločnic, tudi v Albaharijevem pisanju. Če je bil v kratkih prozah iz svojih prvih knjig mojster zamolka, prikazovanja resničnosti skozi opise praznin in tišin, v novejših knjigah nekako od *Vabe* (*Mamac*, 1996) dalje pisanje spreminja iskanje smisla pisateljske dejavnosti, samo-spraševanje, ki je poprej v Albaharijevem opusu nastopalo skozi odmerjeno samoironijo (ki je hkrati ironija do smiselnosti pisanja nasploh, verniki pisanja bi morali redno brati njegovo prozno miniaturo *Peter Handke*). To smemo brez večjega tveganja imeti za posledico kolektivne jugoslovanske izkušnje, vendar tudi v teh besedilih krivda in greh nista natančno opredeljena, kakor si želi prenekateri današnji bralec, nevoljan sprejemati etične odločitve in razsodbe – Albahari tega ne misli početi namesto njega.

V romanu *Vaba* mama otrokoma, ko se vojna konča, reče, da gredo domov. Otroka si predstavlja, da bodo spet živel tam, kjer so prej, vendar si mama kot »domov« ne predstavlja nič določnega. Sploh ne ve, če mesto »prej« še obstaja, pa tudi, če bi obstajalo, se vanj ne bi več vrnila. »Domov« je prazen označevalec brez označenca. Že v *Nemi pesmi* starec, ki pozna skrivnost te pesmi, na vprašanje, od kod je, reče: »Nihče ne ve, od kod je,« in se smeje.

To pa še ni zadnji kraj ontološkega dvoma, ki ga tematizira Albaharievo pisanje. »Zakaj bi si like izmišljal, če pa še zase nisem prepričan, da vem, kdo sem,« je nekoč rekel pisatelj. Spraševanje o identiteti je zmeraj vprašanje o mejah, pripadnosti, prestopanju in izstopanju. *Apatriid* ni samo tisti, ki mora zapustiti svojo domovino – ta odhod je morda celo lažji, če se tvoja domovina, kot je oznanjena v osebnem dokumentu, ne prilega tvoji družinski, kulturni in morda verski tradiciji. Apatriid je tudi tisti, ki v edini preostali domovini, jeziku, piše tako zelo drugače, da ima v njem malo ali nič somišljenikov.

David Albahari je morda s prehodom iz Srbije devetdesetih let v Kanado devetdesetih let prestopil iz ene vrste brezdomstva v drugo – a s svojimi knjižnimi objavami in uredniškim delovanjem je naredil domovino za številne druge pisce, ki so literarno osamljeni prišli v drugače kultiviran

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literarni prostor. In ko ameriška antropologinja iz *Neme pesmi* spozna, da je neobstoj temeljna človeška resnica, njene v klop čitalnice neopazno vrezane inicialke zažarijo – jaz se vzpostavi z odrekanjem egocentričnosti, ni več na poti le v Beograd, kjer doume, »kaj pomeni obstajati na meji med Vzhodom in Zahodom, pa nikomur pripadati, ne biti ne eno ne drugo« – temveč tudi na poti, da se pridruži pevcem neme pesmi, tistim, ki znajo zavreči sebe, da se povežejo z drugimi.

»Lepota je pelerina na hrbtnu sveta,« reče pripovedovalčeva žena v zgodbi *Pelerina*. Če veliko sodobne proze skuša s takšno ali drugačno pelerino pregrniti svet, ki ga zares živimo, Albaharijevo pisanje s svojimi zamolki in tišinami tako prevleko odgrinja – življenje olupi do čebulnega jedra, kjer se pričenja nema pesem. David Albahari je eden njenih redkih mojstrov.

## **David Albahari**

### **The 2012 Vilenica Prize Winner**

#### **Andrej Blatnik**

David Albahari, a Serbian-speaking author of Jewish origins now residing in Canada, was born in Peć in 1948. His first book, a collection of stories headed *Family Time* (*Porodično vreme*), came out in 1973. He has since published twelve more volumes of short stories, fourteen novels, five essay collections, and two children's books. *Family Time* was followed by the short story volumes *Ordinary Stories* (*Obične priče*, 1978), *Description of Death* (*Opis smrti*, 1982), *Shock in the Shed* (*Fras u šupi*, 1984), *Simplicity* (*Jednostavnost*, 1988), *Cloak* (*Pelerina*, 1993), *Selected Stories* (*Izabrane priče*, 1994), *Unusual Stories* (*Neobične priče*, 1999), *The Best Stories* (*Najlepše priče*, 2001), *Second Language* (*Drugi jezik*, 2003), *Shadows* (*Senke*, 2006), *Every Night in Another City* (*Svake noći u drugom gradu*, 2008), and a selection of his stories, *Mute Song – Selected Stories* (*Nema pesma – Izabrane priče*), in 2009. His novels include *Judge Dimitrijević* (*Sudija Dimitrijević*, 1978), *Tsing* (*Cink*, 1988), *A Short Book* (*Kratka knjiga*, 1993), *Snow Man* (*Snežni čovek*, 1995), *Bait* (*Mamac*, 1996), *Darkness* (*Mrak*, 1997), *Goetz and Meyer* (*Gec i Majer*, 1998), *Globetrotter* (*Svet-ski putnik*, 2001), *Leeches* (*Pijavice*, 2005), *Stamps* (*Marke*, 2006), *Ludvig* (2007), *Brother* (*Brat*, 2008), *The Daughter* (*Čerka*, 2010), and *Checkpoint* (*Kontrolni punkt*, 2011).

He has translated into Serbian many books, stories, poems, and essays by such American, British, Australian, and Canadian authors as Saul Bellow, Vladimir Nabokov, Margaret Atwood, Isaac B. Singer, Thomas Pynchon. Furthermore, he has edited a number of magazines and book series. He resides in Calgary, Canada, since the autumn of 1994. His books are translated into more than fifteen languages: the Slovene translations comprise a short story selection, *Words Are Something Else* (*Besede so nekaj drugega*, Aleph, 2007), and the novel *Bait* (*Vaba*, Cankarjeva založba, 2008).

Albahari is one of the most distinguished and influential prose writers of former Yugoslavia, a fact confirmed by his numerous literary awards. His collection *Description of Death* won the Ivo Andrić award in 1982, another collection, *Cloak*, won the Stanislav Vinaver and Branko Čopić awards, and his novel *Bait* won the prestigious NIN award for the best novel of the year in 1996. Another novel, *Leeches*, won the Belgrade City Prize. Albahari has also received the award of the National Library of Serbia and two international prizes, the Balcanica Award and the Berlin Bridge Prize. As early as 1996/97, a ten-volume selection of his work was published by Narodna knjiga.

The generations of writers who emerged in the early 1980s to reshape the prose then dominant in the languages of former Yugoslavia received their aesthetic justification in Albahari's short story *Mute Song*, which neatly encapsulates the contemporary conflict between "reality" prose and "different" prose. A mere handful of pages includes and masterfully interweaves a stereotypical scene of phallocratic domination, the academe's confrontation with its intellectual powerlessness, and, finally, the mystery of transcendence inaccessible to reason. Thus it comes as no surprise that Albahari used the phrase *Mute Song* as the title of his 2009 personal anthology as well. Moreover, it is by citing the conclusion of this particular story that Aleš Debeljak concludes his own book, *Balkan Bridge (Balkanska brv)*, thus providing a Slovene homage to Albahari. And Albahari's influence in the territory of former Yugoslavia is not restricted to the generation now in their fifties, as is attested by the work of Muharem Bazdulj, fifteen years his junior, and by still younger writers. Indeed, the wave of *popular, Saturday, other*, different stories in recent Slovene literature may be a (conscious or not) response to Albahari's *ordinary* stories (*Obične priče*) from 1978. Not surprisingly, Albahari named his 1999 collection *Unusual Stories (Neobične priče)*: writing "ordinary" stories, to borrow the more familiar language of another, non-literary culture, is today nothing short of a Mission Impossible.

The space which Albahari was entering in the late 1970s and early 1980s was quite different. What was appreciated then was reality prose, the aesthetics of tough marginals, street-wise survivor types, who spoke a robust idiom, were past masters in the language of fists, and – at least by night, if not by day – mastered the most beautiful girls as well. This prose code, which a more layered society might have relegated to a genre rather than to canonical prose, is perhaps best represented by the pinnacle of the literary context in question, the novel *When Pumpkins Blossomed (Kad su cvetale tikve)* by Dragoslav Mihailović. Before Albahari's arrival, the only prominent representative of a different aesthetic path in Serbian prose, a path where the ethical scale was necessarily different and the victory of brute force did not supplant all other values, had been Danilo Kiš. It is no coincidence that both Kiš and Albahari were backed by a Jewish tradition of family and culture, which helped their individual voices survive in their euphemistically called "voluntary exile" – except that theirs was not an exile to the new promised land, North America, but to the traditional refuge of non-conforming artists, Paris. (The clash between reality prose and metafictional techniques is attested by a precious collection of documentary evidence, *Is Kiš to Be Burnt? (Treba li spaliti Kiša?)*, while Albahari's attention to Kiš, his many intratextual compliments, or, say, the narrator's attitude to a parent's fate in Albahari's *Bait* as compared to Kiš's *Garden, Ashes (Bašta, pepeo)*, might form the subject of interesting monographs.)

Albahari's prose is marked by changes and blanks. The very titles of his books reveal the polarity of his writing – if the titles of story collections largely revolve around the form, that is, around the *kind* of story (from “ordinary” to “unusual”), its *mode* (“simplicity”), and its *subject*, the titles of novels often feature an individual, who is schematically defined through a *relationship* (brother, daughter), *name*, or *activity*. Much is left unsaid, left for the reader to puzzle out. Rather than being served everything on the narrative platter, the reader is continually forced to overstep boundaries and fill in gaps – forced not only by intratextual means of expression but also by Albahari’s choice of context. It was as early as the first half of the 1980s, at a time when socialism (particularly in Serbia) was barely beginning to thaw, that he introduced hash vocabulary into his writing and urban popular culture into his characters’ lives. All those who candidly label him as an apolitical author should realise that Albahari had campaigned for greater liberty even before Yugoslavia began to crumble, joining the vanguard of the marijuana legalisation movement in the late 1980s. And those who find such commitment too partial should read Albahari’s story *The Right of the Stronger* (*Pravo jaceg*), here quoted in full, since its point transcends the limitations of time and space: “A boy steps out into the back yard with a slice of bread in his hands. The bread is spread with forest fruits jam, and the boy is savouring the taste in anticipation. But in the back yard he is approached by a boy from the third floor, older and stronger, who plucks the bread from his hand without saying a word. He takes a bite, frowns, and spits. Ugh, forest fruits! he says, tossing the bread down on the ground, in the dust.”

The prose of change did not try to avoid changes. The wars in former Yugoslavia drew many demarcation lines, not least in Albahari’s writing. If the short prose pieces from his early books show him as a master of apopioses, of portraying reality through descriptions of blanks and silences, his more recent books, roughly from *Bait* (1996) onward, search for the meaning of a writer’s activity, a self-questioning that had earlier been conveyed through measured self-irony (which is indeed directed at the point of all writing; the devotees of writing should regularly re-read his prose miniature, *Peter Handke*). This may well stem from the collective Yugoslav experience, but even such recent texts do not define guilt or sin with the precision desired by many readers of today, unwilling to make ethical decisions and judgments, for Albahari has no intention of doing the readers’ task for them.

When the war is over, the mother in the novel *Bait* tells her two children that they are going home. The children imagine that they will go back to living where they lived before, but the mother’s image of “home” is vague. She does not know whether the city of “before” still exists, and even if it did, she would no longer return to it. “Home” is an empty signifier without a signified. Asked where the mute song comes from, the old man

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in *Mute Song* who knows its secret laughingly counters: “Nobody knows where it comes from.”

And this is not the last place of ontological doubt thematised in Albahari’s writings. “Why invent characters, when I am not even sure that I know who I am myself?” the writer said once. Inquiry into identity is always an inquiry into borders, belonging, transit and departure. An *apatrie* is not just one who has to leave his homeland: indeed, this departure may actually be easier if the homeland proclaimed in your ID does not fit the tradition of your family, culture, perhaps religion. An apatrie is also one who writes in the only homeland left to him, language, so very differently that he has few or no sympathisers in it.

With his transit from 1990s Serbia to 1990s Canada, David Albahari may have passed from one kind of homelessness to another, but his book publications and editorial work have built a homeland for many other writers, literary loners who had arrived at a literature site fostered by a different cultivation. And when the American anthropologist of *Mute Song* realises that non-existence is a fundamental human truth, her initials, discreetly carved in the reading room desk, begin to glow: the self is established by a renunciation of egocentrism. She is no longer headed just for Belgrade, where she recognises “what it is to exist on the border between East and West yet belong to neither, to be neither the one nor the other”; she is also on her way to joining the singers of the mute song, those who know how to renounce their selves in order to forge links with others.

“Beauty is the cloak on the back of the world,” says the narrator’s wife in the story *Cloak*. If much contemporary prose seeks to spread a cloak over the world we actually live in, Albahari’s writing, with its incompletions and silences, draws such covers aside – peeling life like an onion down to its ever elusive core, where the mute song begins. David Albahari is one of its rare masters.

*Translated by Nada Grošelj*

## Zlatne ribice

Ne, nikada se duhovi neće smiriti kada je reč o Ilijii. Za mnoge je on, pre svega, ugledan pisac, ali za neke druge, kojih ima sve više, on je, samo i jedino, izdajnik svoje zemlje. Čudno je to, pomislio je na sahrani Veljko, Ilijin prvi komšija, nekome se oproste i zaborave doista gnušne stvari, a nekome, kao Ilijiji, ne briše se mrlja za koju više niko i ne zna šta predstavlja. Ni on, Ilija, nije više bio siguran za šta ga optužuju, ali je pokorno, svih ovih godina, povijao glavu i trpeo teret uvreda.

Sramota, pomisli Veljko, stvarno sramota, a on je tako dobar čovek. Žena koja je stajala ispred njega osvrnu se i uputi mu sumnjičav pogled. Ponovo je, znači, govorio naglas, namršti se Veljko i pomisli da bi trebalo da bude oprezniji, okrenu se i krenu prema izlazu sa groblja. Osim toga, upotrebio je pogrešno gramatičko vreme: Ilija je, naime, *bio* dobar čovek, ali više nije niti će ikada biti. Uzdahnuo je. Sada mu ne ostaje ništa drugo osim da se privikne na Ilijino odsustvo. A to, slutio je, neće biti lako, pogotovo zbog toga što je poslednjih godina, u skladu sa napredovanjem bolesti, Ilija sve češće dolazio kod njega. Poslednjih šest-sedam meseci svraćao je svakog dana, u najraznovrsnijim trenucima, nekada rano ujutru, katkad popodne, često uveče, a jednom ili dva puta probudio je Veljka u sred noći, mada je tada ostao samo desetak minuta, ne izgovorivši nijednu reč.

Veljko nije nikada zamerio Ilijiji što se tako ponaša. Uostalom, pisci smeju da budu ekstravagantni i absurdno je od njih očekivati bilo kakva objašnjenja. Nekoliko puta je Ilija pokušao nešto da kaže na tu temu, ali Veljko ga je odmah prekidao i govorio mu da čuva reči za svoja nova dela.

Ma, koja dela, bunio se Ilija, nisu to nikakva dela – nedela su to, veruj meni na reč.

Veljko mu, naravno, nije verovao, jer je svaki, pa čak i krajnje nedobronameran čitalac morao da prizna da se u njegovim rečenicama osećao duh mudrosti i veličine. U tom pogledu, u pogledu stvaralačkih kvaliteta, niko mu nije ništa zameralo, ni prijatelji ni neprijatelji. U stvari, neprijatelji nisu uopšte govorili o onome što je Ilija napisao ili postigao; oni su govorili samo o onome što Ilija *nije* uradio. Veljko je čak mogao da izrecituje spisak glavnih zamerki jer su oni ponavljali kao papagaji kad god bi im se ukazala prilika. Čak i onda kada je objavljena vest o Ilijinoj smrti i mnogi poštovaoci njegovog dela izgovarali samo pohvalne rečenice, njegovi neprijatelji su nosili plakate sa parolama protiv Ilijije.

Da su te plakate doneli na sahranu, Veljko bi sigurno nasrnuo na njih, ništa ga ne bi zaustavilo. Mrtvi moraju da se poštuju, bar dok su još sa nama. Kada odu u svoj svet, to je druga priča, smatrao je Veljko i nije mu preterano zasmetalo kada je na zidu pored grobljanske kapije ugledao veliki plakat sa Ilijinom fotografijom i tekstrom „Ilija je sramota svog naroda“.

Međutim, plakat je zasmetao mladoj ženi u crnoj haljinici koja je odmah počela da ga cepa. U prvi mah kidala ga je polako, u dugim trakama, a onda

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ga je kidala sve brže i brže, gazeći po otkinutim parčićima, da bi na kraju histerično zaplakala i nasrnula pesnicama na oronuli zid.

Veljko, koji je do tada igrao ulogu nezainteresovanog prolaznika, nije više mogao da izdrži. Prišao je devojci i pokušao da je uhvati za ruke, neprekidno ponavljujući: „Dobro, dosta je, samo polako, sve će biti u najboljem redu.“ Svaki deo te rečenice bio je netačan, ali ništa drugo nije mu palo na pamet. Pa ipak, nekada i laži pomažu i Veljko je osetio kako devojčin otpor slabí. U isto vreme okončali su se i njeni histerični jecaji, što je Veljko iskoristio da joj da papirnu marmicu i uputi osmeh ohrabrenja. Onda se malo pognu i reče joj skoro na uvo da joj je to sigurno bio omiljen pisac kada toliko tuguje za njim.

Devojka se odmače od njega i odgovori: Omiljeni pisac? Koješta, to mi je otac.

Veljko ustuknu – znao je da se Ilija odavno razveo, ali nikada nije pomislio da možda ima decu. Tada se, sa bezbedne udaljenosti, zagleda u devojčino lice. Što je duže gledao, sve više je uviđao da ona ne laže. Crte njenog lica nepogrešivo su se uklapale u crte Ilijinog lica, a njen nos bio je umanjena replika njegovog nosa. Osmeh takođe.. Samo su oči bile drugačije. Ilija je imao crne oči i prodoran, pomalo neprijatan pogled, dok su njene oči bile podatno plave, verovatno, pomislio je Veljko, nasleđene od majke.

Sada su te plave oči piljile u njega i Veljko pozuri da se predstavi. Rekao je da je bio prijatelj njenog oca i da su se posebno zbližili tokom poslednjih šest-sedam meseci, tokom perioda, istakao je, kada je Ilija svakodnevno svraćao kod njega.

O, reče devojka, onda znam ko ste. Vi ste Veljko, je l' tačno? Tata mi je pričao o vama. Donedavno ste imali psa, a sada imate zlatne ribice. Nasmešila se i ponovo se zagledala u Veljka.

On je prvo pomislio na psa, s kojim je živeo poslednjih petnaest godina i nedavno morao da ga vodi kod veterinara da ga uspava, i jedva je uspeo da zadrži suze. Tek tada je pomislio na zlatne ribice, na Hiromi i Joko, kako su se zvale, i na onu treću, bezimenu, i onda podiže glavu i smelo reče: Hoćete da ih vidite? Živim nedaleko odavde, uostalom, to znate.

Devojka klimnu glavom, pride mu i uhvati ga pod ruku. Krenuli su u trenutku kada su ljudi koji su prisustvovali sahrani počeli da izlaze i Veljko malo ubrza korak. Nije želeo da ga sretne neko od poznanika, pogotovo sada kada ga je Ilijina čerka, za koju niko, slutio je, nije znao, uhvatila pod ruku i čak malo oslonila podlakticu na njegov kuk. Pogledao je krišom udesno i njegov pogled se susreo sa njenim. Nasmejali su se i Ilija je upita kako se zove.

Samba, reče devojka.

Ilija pomisli da nije dobro čuo. Kako to mislite – samba, upitao je, samba kao rumba, onaj ples?

Da, reče devojka, samo što samba nije rumba.

Ali, reče Veljko, nikada nisam čuo da se neko zove Samba.

Za sve postoji prvi put, reče devojka i glasno se nasmeja.

Za sve postoji prvi put, ponovi Veljko, tako se zove jedna Ilijina priča i u njoj se pojavljuje devojka koja ima isti takav zvonak smeh.

Nikad čitala, reče devojka. Onda uzdahnu i reče: Nisam ja baš neki veliki ljubitelj književnosti. Zvučala je kao da joj je već dojadilo da to ponavlja i da bi radije razgovarala o nečem drugom.

Tek što nismo stigli, reče tada Veljko.

Jedva čekam da vidim ribice, reče devojka.

I doista, čim su ušli u Veljkov stan, prišla je akvarijumu i nije se više odmicala od njega, čak ni onda kada se Veljko vratio sa flašom rakije i dve čašice.

Red je, rekao je, da popijemo za njegovu dušu. Dodao je punu čašicu devojci i ona je ispi u jednom gutljaju, ne odvajajući pogled od zlatnih ribica.

Onda upita Veljka: Da li znate zašto ga нико не voli?

Koga? upita Veljko.

Mog oca, reče devojka. Gurnula je kažiprst u vodu i pokušavala njime da namami ribice.

Trebalo bi da popijem još jednu čašicu, pomisli Veljko i reče: Bio je bolji i drugačiji od njih, a to se ovde ne opršta.

Ona je čutala i znao je da mu ne veruje.

Samba, pozvao ju je tihim glasom i, kada ga je pogledala suznim očima, rekao je: Zlatne ribice su, u stvari, mali šaranici, jeste li to znali?

Ne, reče Samba, nisam. I polako krenu prema njemu.

## Zlate ribice

Ne, duhovi se nikdar ne bodo pomirili, ko je govor o Ilijici. Za marsikoga je bil predvsem ugleden pisatelj, za nekatere druge, in teh je čedalje več, je pač samo in edino izdajalec svoje domovine. Kako čudno, je na pogrebu premišljal Veljko, Ilijev najblžji sosed, pri nekaterih oprostimo in pozabimo zares nagnusne reči, nekdo, kot je Ilija, pa ne more s sebe izbrisati mudeža, za katerega nihče niti ne ve več, kaj zaznamuje. Tudi on sam, Ilija, ni bil več prepričan, česa ga obtožujejo, vendar je vsa ta leta pokorno povešal glavo in prenašal breme žalitev.

Sramota, je pomisil Veljko, dejansko sramota, pa tako dober človek je. Ženska, ki je stala pred njim, se je ozrla in mu namenila sumničav pogled. Pomeni, da je zopet govoril na glas, se je namrščil Veljko in pomislil, da bi moral biti previdnejši, se zasukal ter krenil proti izhodu s pokopališča. Poleg tega je uporabil napačen slovnični čas: Ilija je namreč *bil* dober človek, a ni več in tudi nikdar več ne bo. Zavzdihil je. Zdaj mu ne preostane nič drugega, kot da se privadi na Ilijovo odsotnost. Kar pa, je slutil, ne bo šlo zlahka, še posebej, ker je zadnja leta skladno z napredovanjem bolezni Ilija vse pogosteje zahajal k njemu. Zadnjih šest, sedem mesecev je prihajal vsak dan, ob najrazličnejših urah, včasih zgodaj zjutraj, spet kdaj popoldne, pogosto zvečer, enkrat ali dvakrat pa je Veljka prebudil sredi noči, čeprav se je takrat pomudil komaj kakih deset minut in ne da bi spregovoril eno samo besedico.

Veljko ni Ilijici nikdar očital njegovega ravnjanja. Navsezadnje si pisatelji smejo privoščiti ekstravagantnost in od njih se je nesmiselno nadejati kakršnih koli pojasnil. Ilija je nekajkrat poskusil spregovoriti o tej zadevi, vendar ga je Veljko takoj prekinil, češ naj prihrani besede za svoja nova dela.

Mah, kakšna dela neki, mu je nasprotoval Ilija, to niso nobena prava dela – to so zlodejstva, verjemi mi na besedo.

Veljko mu kajpak ni verjal, saj je sleherni, še celo skrajno nenaklonjen bralec moral priznati, da je bilo in Ilijevih stavkih občutiti modrost in veličino duha. Glede tega, glede njegovih ustvarjalnih odlik, mu ni nihče ničesar očital, ne prijatelji ne sovražniki. Pravzaprav sovražniki sploh niso govorili o tistem, kar je Ilija napisal ali dosegel; govorili so samo o tistem, cesar Ilija *ni* naredil. Veljko je lahko celo zrecitiral seznam poglavitnih očitkov, ker so ga ponavljali kakor papige, kadarkoli se je ponudila priložnost. Še celo tedaj, ko se je razširila novica o Ilijevi smrti in so bili številni občudovalci njegovega dela polni zgolj pohvalnih besed, so njegovi sovražniki nosili plakate s parolami proti njemu.

Če bi plakate prinesli na pogreb, bi jih Veljko zagotovo napadel, nič ga ne bi ustavilo. Mrtve je treba spoštovati, vsaj dokler so še z nami. Ko odidejo v svoj svet, je druga pesem, je menil Veljko in ni ga kaj prida motilo, ko je na zidu ob glavnem vhodu na pokopališče zapazil velik plakat z Ilijovo fotografijo in napisom »Ilija je sramota za svoj narod«.

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Je pa plakat zmotil mlado žensko v črni obleki, ki ga je nemudoma začela trgati z zidu. Sprva ga je trgala počasi, v dolgih trakovih, potlej pa vedno hitreje in hitreje in pri tem teptala odtrgane kosce, naposled pa histerično zahlipala ter se spravila s pestmi nad zdelani zid.

Veljko, ki je dotej ohranjal držo nezainteresiranega mimoidočega, ni več mogel zdržati. Pristopil je k dekletu, skušal jo je ujeti za roke, pri tem pa ji spet in spet prigovarjal: »Je že dobro, dovolj bo, le počasi, vse bo v redu.« Vsak del tega stavka je bil zgrešen, toda nič drugega mu ni prišlo na misel. Sicer pa, včasih zaležejo tudi laži, in Veljko je začutil, kako dekletovo upiranje popušča. V tistem je potihnilo tudi njeni histerični hlipanje, kar je Veljko izrabil, da ji je ponudil papirnati robček in namenil opogumljajoč nasmešek. Nato se je rahlo sklonil in ji domala na uho dejal, da je bil to gotovo njen priljubljeni pisatelj, ko tako bridko žaluje za njim.

Dekle se je odmaknilo od njega in odgovorilo: Priljubljeni pisatelj? Bedarija, to je moj oče.

Veljko je odstopil – vedel je, da se je Ilija že zdavnaj ločil, vendar ni nikdar pomislil, da ima morda otroke. Tedaj je, z varne razdalje, uprl pogled v dekletov obraz. Dlje ko jo je gledal, tem bolj je spoznaval, da ne laže. Po teze njenega obraza so se nezgrešljivo ujemale s potezami Ilijevega obraza in njen nos je bil pomanjšana kopija njegovega nosu. Prav tako nasmeh. Le oči so bile drugačne. Ilija je imel črne oči in prodoren, po malem nepriljuden pogled, medtem ko so bile njene oči živahnio modre, bržkone, je pomislil Veljko, jih je podedovala po materi.

Zdaj so te modre oči strmele vanj in Veljko se je hitel predstaviti. Povedal je, da je bil prijatelj njenega očeta in da sta se posebno zblížala v zadnjih šestih, sedmih mesecih, v obdobju, je poudaril, ko se je Ilija vsakodnevno oglašal pri njem.

Oh, je reklo dekle, potem vem, kdo ste. Vi ste Veljko, imam prav? Očka mi je pripovedoval o vas. Do pred kratkim ste imeli psa, zdaj pa imate zlate ribice. Nasmehnila se je in se znova zastrmela vanj.

Veljko se je najprej domislil psa, s katerim je živel zadnjih petnajst let in ga je pred kratkim moral odpeljati k veterinarju, ki ga je uspaval, in komaj se mu je posrečilo zadržati solze. Šele potem je pomislil na zlate ribice, na Hiromi in Joko, kakor sta se imenovali, in na brezimno tretjo, ter potlej dvignil glavo in pogumno rekel: Bi jih hoteli videti? Živim nedaleč od tod, sicer pa, saj veste.

Priklimala je, se mu približala in ga prijela pod roko. Odpravila sta se v hipu, ko so ljudje, ki so šli za pogrebom, zapuščali pokopališče, in Veljko je malce podvizał korak. Ni maral, da ga sreča kateri od znancev, zlasti zdaj, ko ga je Ilijeva hči, za katero se mu je zdelo, da ni nihče vedel, prijemala pod roko in se celo s podlaktom rahlo naslanjala na njegov kolk. Skrivoma je pogledal v desno in prestregel njen pogled. Zasmejala sta se in vprašal jo je, kako ji je ime.

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Samba, je reklo dekle.

Veljko je pomislil, da ni dobro slišal. Kako to mislite – samba, je vprašal, samba kot rumba, tisti ples?

Ja, je reklo dekle, le da samba ni rumba.

Ampak, je rekel Veljko, nikoli nisem slišal, da bi bilo komu ime Samba.

Vse je enkrat prvič, je reklo dekle in se glasno zasmehalo.

Vse je enkrat prvič, je ponovil Veljko, tako se imenuje ena od Ilijevih zgodb in v njej nastopa dekle s prav takim zvonkim smehom.

Nikoli brala, je reklo dekle. Potlej pa zavzdihnila in rekla: Nisem ravno kakšna velika ljubiteljica književnosti. Zvenela je, kakor da ji že preseda to ponavljati in bi se raje pogovarjala o čem drugem.

Vsak hip bova, je rekel Veljko.

Komaj čakam, da vidim ribice, je reklo dekle.

In res, kakor hitro sta vstopila v Veljkovo stanovanje, je zavila k akvariju in se ni več ganila od njega, celo tedaj ne, ko se je Veljko vrnil s steklenico žganja in kozarčkoma. Spodobi se, je rekел, da spijeva za njegovo dušo. Ponudil je poln kozarček dekletu in izpila ga je na dušek, ne da bi odtrgala pogled z zlatih ribic. Nato je Veljka vprašala: Ali veste, zakaj ga nihče nima rad?

Koga? je vprašal Veljko.

Mojega očeta, je reklo dekle. Potopila je kazalec v vodo in poskušala z njim zvabiti ribice.

Moral bi zvrniti še en kozarček, je pomislil Veljko in rekel: Bil je boljši in drugačen od njih, tega pa ti tukaj ne odpustijo.

Molčala je in vedel je, da mu ne verjame.

Samba, jo je poklical s tihim glasom, in ko ga je pogledala s solzami v očeh, je rekel: Zlate ribice so v resnici majhni krapi, ste to vedeli?

Ne, je rekla Samba, nisem. In počasi usmerila korak proti njemu.

*Prevedla Sonja Polanc*

## Gold Fish

No, the spirits will never rest as far as Ilija is concerned. For some he is mainly an eminent writer, but for others, and there are more and more of these, he is one thing only, a traitor to his country. At the funeral, Veljko, Ilija's neighbor, was thinking, how strange that in one case it's acceptable to forgive and forget what were truly reprehensible actions, while for someone like Ilija there is no erasing a blot even though no one can remember precisely how it came about. Even Ilija was no longer sure what he was being blamed for, but he bowed his head, all those years, and resigned himself to suffering with the burden of the affront.

An outrage, thought Veljko, a real outrage, and he's such a fine man. A woman standing in front of him turned around and shot him a quizzical glance. Ah, he must have been thinking out loud again, Veljko frowned, realizing he should be more watchful, turned and headed toward the cemetery exit. And besides, he had used the wrong verb tense: Ilija had *been* a fine man, but he was no longer nor would he ever be again. Veljko sighed. Now there was nothing to do but accustom himself to Ilija's absence. But he sensed that this was not going to be easy, especially since over the last years, as his illness progressed, Ilija had come by more often. He had been stopping by daily over the last six or seven months, at all different times, sometimes in early morning, or in the afternoon, or, often, in the evening, and once or twice he woke Veljko in the middle of the night, though then he'd stay for only ten minutes and not say a word.

Veljko never had anything against Ilija's behavior. Writers can be extravagant and it is silly to expect any sort of explanation. Ilija tried to say something about it several times, but Veljko interrupted him right away and told him to save his words for his next heroic deed of the pen.

"No, no," Ilija would protest, "they are not deeds, they're misdeeds, believe me."

Veljko, of course, did not believe him, because every reader, even those with the worst of intentions, had to admit that one could feel the spirit of wisdom and greatness in his every sentence. In terms of his creative prowess, no one could say a word against him, friend or foe. Indeed, his foes never spoke of what Ilija wrote or accomplished; they spoke only of what Ilija *had not* done. Veljko could even rattle off a list of the main gripes because they squawked it like parrots at every available opportunity. Even when the news of Ilija's death was made public and many of those who valued his work had only the most laudatory things to say, his foes were waving around posters with anti-Ilija slogans.

Had they brought the posters to the funeral, Veljko would certainly have assaulted them, nothing would have stopped him. The dead must be respected, at least while they are still with us. Once they had departed for

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their world, that was something else again, in Veljko's opinion, and he was not too upset when he saw a large poster with Ilija's picture and the words "Ilija is a disgrace to his nation" on a wall by the cemetery entrance.

The poster did upset a young woman in a black dress who set to ripping it off the wall. At first she tore it slowly, in long strips, then she ripped off pieces of it faster and faster, stomping on the shreds, and finally she burst into frantic tears and hammered the crumbling wall with her fists.

Veljko, who had been playing the role of indifferent bystander up to that point, could no longer hold himself back. He went over to the young woman and tried taking her by the hand, repeating over and over again, "OK, it's OK, just take it easy, everything will be all right." No part of the sentence was true, but nothing else occurred to him to say. Sometimes lies are a help and Veljko felt the young woman's defiance weaken. The frantic sobs also subsided, which gave Veljko a chance to pass her a paper handkerchief and flash her a smile of encouragement. Then he leaned over a bit and said to her, nearly in her ear, that Ilija must have been her very favorite writer when she was grieving so deeply for him.

The young woman pulled away from him, and answered, "Favorite writer? Not at all, he was my father."

Veljko stepped back – he knew Ilija had gotten a divorce many years before, but it never occurred to him that the man might have had children. He took a better look at the woman's face from a safe distance. The longer he looked, the more he saw she was not lying. The lines of her face fit the lines of Ilija's face without a doubt, and her nose was a smaller version of his. Her smile, too. Only her eyes were different. Ilija had had dark eyes and a piercing, often unpleasant, gaze, while her eyes were a pliant blue, probably, thought Veljko, coming from her mother's side.

Now those blue eyes stared at him and Veljko hastened to introduce himself. He said that he was a friend of her father's and that they had become particularly close over the last six-seven months, during a time, as he said, when Ilija was stopping by his place every day.

"Oh," said the young woman, "then I know who you are. You are Veljko, right? Dad spoke of you. You used to have a dog until recently, and now you have gold fish." She smiled and again fixed her gaze on Veljko.

First he thought of the dog he had spent the past fifteen years with and had recently had put down at the vet's, and he could barely hold back the tears. Then he thought of the gold fish, Hiromi and Yoko, as he called them, and a third one, nameless, and then he looked up and said boldly, "Would you like to see them? I live nearby, as you obviously know."

The young woman nodded, came over and slipped her arm through his. They set off just as the people attending the funeral were starting to disperse and Veljko picked up the pace a little. He wasn't eager to run into anyone he knew, especially now that Ilija's daughter, whom no one, he

sensed, was aware of, had taken him by the arm and perhaps even rested her lower arm on his hip. He glanced stealthily to the right and met her gaze. They smiled and Ilija asked what her name was.

“Samba,” said the young woman.

Veljko thought perhaps he hadn’t heard correctly. “What do you mean – samba,” he asked, “samba, you mean like the rumba, the dance?”

“Yes,” said the young woman, “except the samba is not the rumba.”

“Still,” said Veljko, “I have never heard of Samba as a name.”

“There is a first time for everything,” said the young woman and laughed aloud.

“There is a first time for everything,” repeated Veljko, “Ilija has a story with that for its title and there’s a young woman in it with that same ringing laugh.”

“Never read it myself,” said the young woman. Then she sighed and said, “I am not a big literature fan.” This sounded like something she was weary of repeating and she’d rather talk about something else.

“We’re almost there,” said Veljko.

“I can hardly wait to see the gold fish,” said the young woman.

And sure enough, as soon as they entered Veljko’s apartment she went straight to the aquarium and didn’t move away from it even when Vejlko came back with a bottle of brandy and two glasses. “It is right for us have a drink for his soul.” He handed a full glass to the young woman and she downed it in a single swig, never looking away from the gold fish. Then she asked Veljko, “Do you have any idea why no one likes him?”

“Who?” asked Veljko.

“My father,” said the young woman. She dipped a fingertip into the water and tried to lure the fish with it.

I need another drink, thought Veljko and said, “He was better and different from them, and here no one can be forgiven for that.”

She said nothing but he knew she didn’t believe him.

“Samba,” he called to her in a soft voice, and when she looked up, her eyes brimming with tears, he said, “Gold fish are actually little carp. Did you know that?”

“No,” said Samba, “I didn’t.” And she turned slowly to face him.

*Translated by Ellen Elias Bursac*

## ***Ne, ne i ne***

Ne, ne i ne, kako god pokušao, ma šta uradio, Mileta Micić nije mogao da prihvati tvrdnju da će svet postojati i posle njegove smrti. Pomisao da će već narednog jutra nakon njegovog umiranja ponovo na istoku izaći sunce, da će se otvoriti trafike i prodavnice prehrambenih proizvoda, da će autobusi gradskog saobraćaja tutnjati senovitim ulicama, da će deca ići u školu a odrasli na posao, da će, rečju, biti dan isti kao i svaki drugi dan, ta pomisao, dakle, bacala ga je u očajanje. Ne, ne i ne, ponavljao je u sebi, nije moguće da se sve tako završava, da se sa velike svetske pozornice odlazi gotovo krišom, kao da smo samo statisti u vlastitim životima, statisti koji izlaze na neka pomoćna, prikrivena vrata, dok na sceni ostaju zakukljene i zamumljene spodobe koje najednom tvrde da sve znaju o nama, detaljnije i bolje nego što mi sami znamo.

Ne, ne i ne, odbijao je Mileta Micić to da prihvati i ništa nije moglo da ga razuveri. Ništa, doduše, nije moglo da potvrди ni mogućnost da jeste u pravu, nikakva izjava nekog svedoka nije nigde sačuvana, izjava koja bi, na primer, potvrđivala da se neko, bilo ko, vratio na pozornicu, bez obzira na to na koja je vrata izašao. Ako je neko uopšte bio u drugom svetu i vratio se odande – ne računajući, naravno, junake raznih mitova – onda je taj, taj koji je uspeo da se vrati, ili to zaboravio ili mu je bilo zabranjeno o tome da govori. Mileta Micić je odmah odbacivao drugu mogućnost, jer zabrane ništa ne znače pripadnicima ljudskog roda. Naime, bezbroj puta se uverio da što je zabrana strože definisana, veća je bila verovatnoća da će biti prekršena. Zaborav je bio druga priča i mogao je da zamisli kako posećoci drugog sveta, sveta mrtvih, odnosno, oni kojima je dozvoljeno da se vrate u prvi svet, svet živih, prolaze na graničnom prelazu kroz svojevrstan skener koji im briše sva prethodna sećanja a posebno ona koja se odnose na boravak u drugom svetu.

Ne, ne i ne, prebacivao je Mileta Micić sam sebi, nije to moglo da bude tako jednostavno. Život je ipak zapetljaniji od toga i ne razrešava se jednostavnim prelaskom preko granice. Osim toga, ko je uopšte rekao da postoji neki granični prostor između ovoga ovde i onoga tamо? A šta ako su ti svetovi zapravo izmešani i jednim delom se poklapaju, tako da među živima ima mrtvih i obratno? Tako gledano, mislio je Mileta Micić, možda su njegove dileme uzaludne, jer je on, možda, već odavno mrtav? Ali ako jeste mrtav, kako to da utvrdi? Da se uštine? Uštinuo se i vrisnuo od bola. Dobro je, pomislio je, živ je. Da je mrtav, ne bi ga bolelo, to je sigurno, a verovatno ne bi ni vrištao. Ako mrtvi govore, pomislio je, onda govore dubokim glasovima. Čak i prerano umrla deca, koja još nisu mutirala, čak i ona govore dubokim glasovima.

Ne, ne i ne, opomenuo je Mileta Micić sebe, nije moguće da stvari tako stoje! O čemu on uopšte razmišlja, upitao se, i odakle mu ta ideja o životu

kao filmu strave i užasa? Život je, ipak, lepši. Mnogo lepši; s tom tvrdnjom uvek će se složiti, bez obzira na to što mu je upravo njeno prihvatanje donelo toliko muka i nesigurnosti. Da život nije lep, da svet nije lep, sve bi bilo mnogo lakše. Dovoljno je da pomisli na velelepnu strukturu prirode, životinjskog i biljnog carstva, i da zatim zamisli da je više nikada neće videti, i sve se rušilo oko njega, čak se i on sam rušio u sebi, od čistog očajanja, od nemoći da na to na bilo koji način utiče. Naravno, uvek je mogao da postavi sebi pitanje o smislu života, ali ne, ne i ne, hiljadu puta je rekao sebi da neće praviti takve smešne greške. Naime, pitati se šta je smisao života je apsurdno kada je čovek živ, budući da se smisao svakako nalazi u samom činu življenja. Drugim rečima, smisao života je upravo taj život, odnosno, ako hoće da bude precizniji, smisao života je u obnavljanju smrti. Živi se da bi se umrlo. To sigurno ne zvuči kao parola koja bi mogla da stekne popularnost, pomislio je Milet Micić, ali – ako je to uteha – istina nije nikada popularna, zar ne?

Tu skoro, setio se Milet Micić, pročitao je kratku priču jednog našeg pisca u kojoj je bilo napisano da se smisao života sadrži u ljubavi. Koja glupost, kolika mera lakovernosti! Jer, ako nešto ne može da bude nosilac smisla života, to je upravo ljubav. Kako bi tako nepouzdano osećanje, tako prevrtljivo i podložno najraznovrsnijim uticajima, moglo da bude stegonoša u karavanu smisla? Ne, ne i ne, protestovao je ceo Miletin organizam, nema tu mesta za ljubav, nije ga nikada bilo niti će ga ikada biti. Ljubav je prolazna, bestidno sebična i lako zamenljiva, te prema tome ne može da bude ono što podstiče čoveka da ne veruje da postoji kraj života, trenutak posle kojeg čovek više nije onakav kakav je do tog časa bio, trenutak kada svi postajemo nešto drugo, nešto za šta niko ne zna šta je, kao što niko ne zna šta se dešava na samom početku, kako čovek postaje čovek, odakle dolazi svest i da li ona kasnije iščezava ili ipak ima – odavno to sluti Milet Micić – višekratnu ulogu, tj. dođe s jednom osobom, ode s njom, pa se vrati s drugom, ne govoreći ništa o tome gde je bila i kuda će, možda, ponovo otići.

Ne, ne i ne, udarao je Milet Micić desnom pesnicom u otvoren dlan leve ruke, neće se on tako lako predati, neće dozvoliti da ga život ostavi na milost i nemilost smrti, sačekaće smrt i pokazaće joj ko je gazda u kući, mada – kada malo razmisli – nije jasno zašto se okomio na smrt koja samo dolazi po ono što je život već uradio. Ne umire se zbog dolaska smrti, već zbog odlaska života, zar ne? Život je, u stvari, kriv za sve, i za rađanje i za umiranje, kao i za podrugljivo trajanje nakon što te upotrebi i odbaci poput probušene kese. Dopala mu se ta slika i lepo je video sebe kako hoda razmaknutih nogu zbog povelike rupe na kesi u koju je bio obučen. Kesa je bila velika i visila na njemu, a kroz rupu na dnu videlo se njegovo klatno koje se njihalo na sve četiri strane, tačno onako kako je nekada pročitao u *Tilu Ojlenšpigelu*. Setno se osmehnuo kada se setio knjige koju je čitao u dalekoj mladosti, ali seta mu nije donela nikakvo olakšanje, jer je istog

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trena pomislio na to kako će ljudi čitati to delo i kada njega više ne bude bilo i osetio je gnev, pa je čak i zaškripao zubima.

Ne, ne i ne, ponovo je upozorio sebe, ne sme da dozvoli da ljutnja njime ovlada. Mirna glava duže spava, odrecitovao je sebi i onda se upitao šta ga, doista, ljuti u toj njegovoj ljutnji. Ako svi ljudi mirno idu u smrt, zašto bi on smatrao da mu pripada drugačija sudbina? Otkud mu pravo da traži pravo na večan život? Onaj ili oni koji su sve to zamislili mogli su da osmisle koncept večnog života – samo da su hteli to da urade – ali, očigledno, nisu i sad je bilo kasno za podnošenje žalbe. Svi rokovi su prošli još pre mnoga vekova, a nikakvi nagoveštaji revizije ne postoje. Što bi moglo da znači, pomislio je Mileta Micić, da mu jedino preostaje da pogne glavu i mirno pođe tamo kuda svi odlaze kada otkuca vreme za večni počinak. Ali, ni ta slika nije mu pružila utehu. Bilo je lako zamisliti pogrebnu scenu – ljudi na groblju, iskopanu raku, grobare oznojanih čela, žene u crnini, muškarce sa naherenim kravatama, musavu decu – i osetiti deo drhtavih emocija, ali onda je usledilo pitanje šta će svi oni raditi narednog dana. Ne šta će *on* raditi, jer za njega se znalo: ležaće u svom sanduku, dok će svi ostali nastaviti da žive svojim redovnim ritmom, kao da Mileta Micić nije nikada postojao. Nepravda, šapnuo je Mileta Micić iako nije mogao da kaže zbog čega bi njegov odlazak na drugi svet bio „nepravda“, a onda mu je palo na pamet da bi njegovim odlaskom zapravo otisao ceo svet, jer nisu li neki filozofi tvrdili da je svet samo spoljna slika našeg unutrašnjeg sveta? Kada nas nema, govorili su oni, onda nema ni sveta, nema ničega, iz praznine si došao i u prazninu se vraćaš. Ali, da li je to istina, pitao se Mileta Micić, i kako proveriti valjanost te tvrdnje? Jer, ukoliko sam ja onaj koji zamišlja ceo svet, onda ja zamišljam i druge koji, navodno, zamišljaju svoje svetove. Ne, ne i ne, cela ta priča jeste veoma nategnuta, svet je ili jedan, jedinstven, ili ga uopšte nema. Njegov odlazak ništa ne menja. Sunce se rađa na istoku, zalazi na zapadu, noću se negde krije od meseca i zvezda, a rumeni oblaci prilikom zalaska najavljuju, ako je dobro upamtio, vetrovito vreme uz duže i kraće kišne padavine, kojih neće biti mnogo, dva milimetra u vr' glave, ali nekad je dovoljan i samo jedan milimetar da se čovek udavi. S tim što ga, ukoliko je već mrtav, dubina vode ni najmanje ne zanima, treba to naglasiti budući da uvek ima onih znatiželjnih koji, namerno ili nenamerno, svejedno, sve ispituju i postavljaju stotine nepotrebnih pitanja, iako postoji samo mali broj doista važnih pitanja na koja treba odgovoriti, ili bar pokušati pronaći odgovor, tokom života. Mada, pomislio je Mileta Micić, i to je preterivanje, jer ako čovek već zna svoju sudbinu, onda nijedno pitanje – osim onih koja mogu da promene sudbinu – nema nikakav značaj. Drugim rečima, uzalud se sekira i očajava, jer šta god da pokuša, kakav god odgovor da pronađe, ništa se time neće promeniti. Na kraju svega, posle svih pitanja i odgovora, posle svih reči i postupaka, posle svih pokušaja i odustajanja, uvek ostaje ista stvar – stara, škripava, ledena

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smrt. Što znači, pomislio je Mileta Micić, da u smrt nikada ne treba otići bez džempera, kao što se leti, na moru, uveče uvek ponešće džemper kada se kreće u šetnju, jer morski vazduh je prevrtljiv, čas je prohладан, čas je vlažan, čas greje a čas osvežava.

Ne, ne i ne, prekorevao je sebe Mileta Micić, ne može odgovor na njegovo pitanje da se krije u džemperu. Tajna života ili smrti ne može da bude utkana u štrikanje, premda je, s druge strane, morao da prizna da mu je štrikanje uvek izgledalo kao kakav mističan čin, pravljenje zamršene strukture koju je čovek navlačio na sebe i tako, najverovatnije, postajao nevoljni saučesnik osobe koja mu je ištrikala džemper. Eto, umesto da razmišlja o tome kako da umakne smrti, on razmilja o mustrama i tehnikama štrikanja. Štrikanja ili heklanja, upitao se Mileta Micić, odjednom nesiguran u to što je komplikovanije i magičnije: dve ukrštene igle koje kao da se mačuju ili heklica koja se, nalik na onu zubarsku alatku koja uvek nanosi bol, ne-prekidno uvlači u petlje koje sama sebi sprema, kao da želi da uhvati sebe jednom zauvek? Dugo je razmišljao o tome, a onda je rešio da prilegne. Dan se ionako produžio preko svake mere, za što je kriv sam Mileta Micić, morao je to da prizna, i njegova tvrdoglavica upornost da pronađe smisao u odustvu smisla, što ni mnogo pametnijim od njega nije nikada pošlo za rukom. Zagledao se u svoje ruke kao da bi od njih mogao da dobije neki odgovor. Međutim, ruke su se samo promeškoljile u njegovom krilu i nastavile da čute. Jedino je desni palac, ukočen, pokazivao pravo gore, prema lusteru, pa je i pogled Milete Micića krenuo za njim. Luster je bio velik, starinski i prašnjav. Dno najniže staklene kugle bilo je pokriveno umrlim bubicama i leptirićima, a među njima se vidno izdvajalo crno, sasušeno telo jedne bubašvabe. Otkud bubašvaba u kugli lustera, pitao se Mileta Micić, što to treba da znači? Možda je ta bubašvaba pokušala da se približi izvoru svetla, tog zastrašujućeg sjaja koji je i najsmelije predstavnke njenog roda terao na trk u potrazi za senkom i mrakom? Možda je, drugim rečima, htela da dozna isto ono što je Mileta Micić grozničavo pokušavao da otkrije. A samo sam uspeo da doznam, snuždio se Mileta Micić, da nisam mnogo drugaćiji od bubašvabe i da me sigurno čeka isti kraj. Zagledao se u prašnjavi talog smrti na dnu staklene kugle starinskog lustera, ali ništa se tamo nije pomeralo, ništa nije nudilo neku neočekivanu nadu, prah je ipak samo prah, kao što je smrt uvek samo smrt, i ostalo mu je jedino da zatvori oči, sve ostalo će se odigrati samo od sebe, kao i toliko puta ranije, kao i u ovoj prilici, ovog časa, sada, kada, još malo, evo, sad!

## ***Ne, ne in ne***

Ne, ne in ne, naj je kakor koli poskusil, kar koli storil, se Mileta Micić ni mogel sprijazniti s trditvijo, da bo svet obstajal tudi po njegovi smrti. Pomisel, da bo že naslednje jutro po tistem, ko bo umrl, na vzhodu znova vzšlo sonce, da se bodo odprle trafike in živilske prodajalne, da bodo avtobusi mestnega prometa bobneli po senčnatih ulicah, da bodo otroci šli v šolo, starši pa v službo, da bo, skratka, dan kot vsak drug, ta pomisel torej ga je pahnila v obup. Ne, ne in ne, je ponavljal v sebi, ni mogoče, da se vse tako konča, da z velikega svetovnega odra odidemo malone na skrivaj, kot da smo zgolj statisti v lastnih življenjih, statisti, ki zapustijo prizorišče pri kakšnih stranskih, skritih vratih, medtem ko na njem ostanejo zakrinkane in pritajene postave, ki na lepem trdijo, da vedo vse o nas, podrobnejše in bolje, kakor vemo sami.

Ne, ne in ne, se Mileta Micić ni hotel s tem sprijazniti in nič ga ni moglo prepričati o nasprotnem. Resda tudi ni bilo ničesar, kar bi utegnilo potrditi morebitno pravilnost njegovega mnenja, nobenega ohranjenega pričevanja ni bilo, pričevanja, ki bi, denimo, potrjevalo, da se je kdo, kdor koli, vrnil na oder, ne glede na to, pri katerih vratih ga je zapustil. Kolikor je kdo sploh bil v drugem svetu in se od tamkaj vrnil – če seveda ne upoštevamo različnih mitoloških junakov –, tedaj je tisti, tisti, ki se mu je uspelo vrniti, bodisi na to pozabil ali pa mu je bilo prepovedano o tem govoriti. Mileta Micić je nemudoma izključil drugo možnost, saj so prepovedi brez po-mena za pripadnike človeške vrste. Neštetokrat se je namreč prepričal, da kolikor strožje je bila prepoved postavljenja, toliko večja je bila verjetnost njene kršitve. Pozabljenje je bilo druga pesem, in lahko si je predstavljal, kako obiskovalci drugega sveta, sveta mrtvih, oziroma tisti, ki jim je dovoljeno, da se povrnejo v prvi svet, svet živih, gredo na mejnem prehodu skozi poseben skener, ki jim izbriše vse poprejšnje spomine, še posebej pa tiste, ki se nanašajo na bivanje v drugem svetu.

Ne, ne in ne, je Mileta Micić očital samemu sebi, to že ni moglo biti tako preprosto. Življenje je vendarle bolj zapleteno in se ne razplete s preprostim prehodom čez mejo. Razen tega, kdo sploh pravi, da obstaja kak mejni prostor med tem tukaj in tistim tam? Kaj pa, če sta ta svetova pravzaprav premešana in se deloma prekrivata, tako da so med živimi tudi mrtvi in obratno? Če tako gleda, je menil Mileta Micić, so njegove dileme nemara jalove, ker je morda že zdavnaj mrtev. Toda če je res mrtev, kako naj to ugotoviti? Naj se uščipne? Uščipnil se je in kriknil od bolečine. To je dobro, je pomislil, živ je. Ko bi bil mrtev, ga ne bi bolelo, to je gotovo, bržkone pa ne bi niti krikal. Če mrtvi govorijo, je pomislil, govorijo z globokim glasom. Celo prezgodaj umrli otroci, ki še niso mutirali, celo oni govorijo z globokim glasom.

Ne, ne in ne, se je opominjal Mileta Micić, nemogoče, da je tako! O čem sploh razmišlja, se je spraševal, in od kod ta predstava o življenju kot filmu

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strahú in groze? Življenje je vendarle lepše. Veliko lepše; s to trditvijo se bo vedno strinjal, ne glede na to, da je prav njej na ljubo deležen tolikšnega trpljenja in negotovosti. Ko bi življenje ne bilo lepo, ko bi svet ne bil lep, bi bilo vse veliko lažje. Dovolj je bilo, da je le pomislil na veličastno zgradbo narave, živalskega in rastlinskega kraljestva, ter si nato predstavljal, da ne bo tega nikdar več videl, in že se je začelo vse sesedati okrog njega, celo on sam se je sesedal vase od golega obupa, od nemoči, da bi na to kakor koli vplival. Seveda, vselej si je lahko zastavil vprašanje o smislu življenja, toda ne, ne in ne, tisočkrat si je rekel, da ne bo naredil tako smešne napake. Namreč, spraševati se, kaj je smisel življenja, je absurdno, ko je človek živ, glede na to, da se smisel vsekakor skriva v tem, da živiš življenje. Z drugimi besedami, smisel življenja je prav to življenje oziroma – če naj bo natančnejši – smisel življenja je v obujanju smrti. Živimo, da bi umrli. To prav gotovo ne zveni kot geslo, ki bi lahko postalo priljubljeno, je pomislil Mileta Micić, vendar – če je to v tolažbo – resnica ni nikoli priljubljena, mar ne?

Ni dolgo, se je spomnil Mileta Micić, kar je prebral kratko zgodbo enega naših pisateljev in v njej je pisalo, da je smisel življenja v ljubezni. Kakšna neumnost, kakšna sveta preproščina! Kajti, če kaj ne more biti nosilec smisla življenja, je to prav ljubezen. Kako bi čustvo, ki je tako nezanesljivo, tako nestanovitno in podrejeno najrazličnejšim vplivom, lahko bilo zastavonoša v karavani smislov? Ne, ne in ne, je ves in scela protestiral Milétov organizem, tu ni prostora za ljubezen, nikoli ga ni bilo in ga tudi nikoli ne bo. Ljubezen je minljiva, brezsramno sebična in z luhkoto zamenljiva, potemtakem ne more biti tisto, kar spodbuja človeka, da ne verjame v konec življenja, v trenutek, po katerem človek ni več tak, kakršen je bil dotlej, v trenutek, ko vsi postanemo nekaj drugega, nekaj, o čemer nihče ne ve, kaj je, tako kot nihče ne ve, kaj se godi na samem začetku, kako človek postane človek, od kod pride zavest in ali ta pozneje izgine ali pa ima vendarle – Mileta Micić to od nekdaj sluti – večkratno vlogo, torej pride z neko osebo, odide z njo in se spet vrne z drugo, ne da bi povedala, kje je bila in kam bo morda znova odšla.

Ne, ne in ne, je Mileta Micić tolkel z desno pestjo po dlani levice, ne bo se tako zlahka predal, ne bo dovolil, da ga življenje izroči na milost in nemilost smrti, počakal bo nanjo in ji pokazal, kdo je gospodar v hiši, čeravno – ko malce premisli – ni jasno, zakaj se je spravil na smrt, ki le pride po tisto, s čimer je življenje že opravilo. Ne umremo zaradi prihoda smrti, temveč zaradi odhoda življenja, mar ne? Dejansko je življenje krivo vsega, rojstva in umiranja in posmehljivega trajanja, potem ko te uporabi in odvrže kot preluknjano vrečo. Všeč mu je bila ta podoba in lepo se je videl, kako hodi razmagnjenih nog zavoljo precejšnje luknje na vreči, v katero je bil oblečen. Vreča je bila velika in je visela na njem, skoz luknjo na dnu pa je molel njegov kembelj, binglajoč na vse štiri strani, natanko tako, kakor je nekoč prebral v *Tillu Eulenspieglu*. Otožno se je nasmehnil,

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ko se je spomnil knjige, ki jo je bral v daljni mladosti, toda otožnost mu ni prinesla nikakršnega olajšanja, kajti že isti hip ga je prešinilo, kako bodo ljudje to delo brali tudi, ko njega ne bo več, in obšel ga je gnev, da je celo zaškripal z zobmi.

Ne, ne in ne, se je znova opozarjal, ne sme si dovoliti, da ga premaga jeza. Mirna glava dlje spi, si je zrecitiral in se potlej vprašal, kaj ga zares jezi v tej njegovi jézi. Če gredo vsi ljudje mirno v smrt, zakaj bi sam menil, da mu pripada drugačna usoda? Od kod si jemlje pravico, da terja pravico do večnega življenja? Ta ali tisti, ki so vse to zasnovali, bi lahko ustvarili tudi načrt večnega življenja – ko bi le hoteli to storiti –, vendar očitno niso in zdaj je bilo prepozno, da bi se pritoževal. Vsi roki so potekli že pred davnimi časi in nikakršnih namigov za revizijo ni bilo. Kar bi utegnilo pomneniti, je pomislil Mileta, da mu preostane le skloniti glavo in mirno oditi tja, kamor odidejo vsi, ko odbije ura večnega počitka. Vendar mu niti ta predstava ni prinesla tolažbe. Zlahka si je bilo zamisliti pogrebni prizor – ljudi na pokopališču, izkopan grob, grobarje s prepotenimi čeli, ženske v črnini, moške s postrani kravatami, zapackane otroke – in občutiti delček drhtečih čustev, ampak potem je sledilo vprašanje, kaj bodo vsi oni počeli naslednjega dne. Ne kaj bo počel *on*, kajti zanj se je vedelo: ležal bo v krsti, medtem ko bodo vsi drugi naprej živeli v ustaljenem ritmu, kot da Mileta Micić ne bi nikoli obstajal. Krivica, je pošeplnil Mileta Micić, čeravno ni vedel povedati, zakaj bi bil njegov odhod na drugi svet »krivica«, potem pa ga je spreletelo, da bi z njegovim odhodom pravzaprav odšel ves svet. Mar niso nekateri filozofi zatrjevali, da je svet zgolj zunanja podoba našega notranjega sveta? Ko ni nas, so pravili, tedaj ni niti sveta, ničesar ni, iz praznine prihajaš, v praznino se povrneš. Vendar, ali je to res, se je spraševal Mileta Micić, in kako preveriti veljavnost te trditve? Kajti, če sem jaz tisti, ki si predstavlja ves svet, potem si predstavljam tudi druge, ki si, dozdevno, predstavljajo svoje svetove. Ne, ne in ne, vse v tej zgodbi je prenapeto, svet je bodisi eden, enoten, ali pa ga sploh ni. Milétov odhod ničesar ne spremeni. Sonce vstaja na vzhodu, zahaja na zahodu, ponoči se nekje skriva pred luno in zvezdami, rdeči oblaki ob zatonu pa napovedujejo – če si je dobro zapomnil – vetrovno vreme z dolgotrajnejšim ali kratkotrajnejšim dežjem, ki ga ne bo obilo, dva milimetra je čez in čez dovolj, ampak včasih zadošča en sam milimeter, da se človek utopi. S tem da ga, če je že mrtev, globina vode niti najmanj ne zanima, to je treba poudariti, glede na to, da se zmeraj najdejo radovedneži, ki namenoma ali ne, vseeno, vse preverijo in zastavijo na stotine nepotrebnih vprašanj, dasi obstaja zgolj prgišče zares pomembnih vprašanj, na katera je treba odgovoriti ali se vsaj poskusiti dokopati do odgovora, dokler živiš. Čeprav, je pomislil Mileta Micić, je tudi to pretiravanje, kajti če človek že pozna svojo usodo, potem nobeno vprašanje – razen tistih, ki jo lahko spremenijo – nima nikakršnega pomena. Z drugimi besedami, zaman se razburja in obupuje, kajti naj kar koli

poskusi, naj se dokoplje do kakršnega koli odgovora, se s tem ne bo nič spremenilo. Naposled, po vseh vprašanjih in odgovorih, po vseh besedah in dejanjih, po vseh poskusih in umikih, te vedno čaka ista usoda – stara, škripajoča, ledena smrt. Kar pomeni, je pomislil Mileta Micić, da se v smrt nikoli ne smeš podati brez puloverja, tako kot poleti, na morju, zmeraj vzameš s sabo pulover, ko se zvečer odpraviš na sprechod, ker je morski zrak nestanoviten, zdaj svež, zdaj spet vlažen, zdaj greje, zdaj spet hladi.

Ne, ne in ne, je Mileta Micić ošteval samega sebe, odgovor na njegovo vprašanje se ne more skrivati v puloverju. Skrvnost življenja ali smrti ne more biti vpletena v pletenje, dasi je po drugi strani moral priznati, da se mu je slednje zmeraj zdelo kot kakšno mistično opravilo, izdelovanje zapletene strukture, ki jo je človek nadeval nase in tako, najverjetneje, nehote postal soudeleženec pri pletenju puloverja. Glej, namesto da bi razmišljal o tem, kako naj se izmuzne smrti, razmišlja o pletilnih vzorcih in tehnikah pletenja. Pletenja ali kvačkanja, se je spraševal Mileta Micić, naenkrat negotov, kaj je bolj zapleteno in bolj mistično: prekrižani pletilki, ki kot da se mečujeta, ali kvačka, ki se, podobna tistemu zobozdravniškemu orodju, ki ti zmeraj prizadene bolečino, neprestano vbada v zanke, ki si jih sama nastavlja, kot da hoče enkrat za vselej ujeti samo sebe. Dolgo je premišljeval o tem, potlej pa se je odločil, da se bo malce zleknil. Dan se je tako ali tako podaljšal čez vsako mero, česar je bil kriv Mileta Micić sam, to je moral priznati, in pa njegovo trmasto vztrajanje, da bi našel smisel v odsotnosti smisla, kar še mnogo pametnejšim od njega ni šlo nikoli od rok. Zazrl se je v svoje roke, kot da bi od njih lahko prejel kakšen odgovor. Vendar so mu roke samo rahlo vztrepetavale v naročju in še naprej molčale. Le desni palec, otrpel, je kazal naravnost navzgor, proti lestencu, in tudi pogled Milete Micića se je dvignil za njim. Lestenec je bil velik, starinski in prašen. Dno najnižje steklene krogle je bilo prekrito s poginulimi žužki in metuljčki, med njimi pa je vidno izstopal črn, posušen trup ščurka. Od kod ščurek v krogli lestanca, se je spraševal Mileta Micić, kaj naj to pomeni? Morda se je ščurek poskušal približati izvoru svetlobe, te zastrašujoče bleščave, ki je tudi najdrznejše predstavnike njegovega rodu pognala v beg, v iskanje senče in teme. Morda je, drugače rečeno, hotel izvedeti tisto, kar si je Mileta Micić mrzlično prizadeval odkriti. Vendar sem izvedel zgolj to, se je Mileta Micića polastila potrstost, da nisem kaj prida drugačen od ščurka in da me zagotovo čaka enak konec. Zaziral se je v prašno usedlino smrti na dnu steklene krogle starinskega lestanca, ampak tam se ni nič premaknilo, nič ni dajalo kakšnega nepričakovanega upanja, prah je vendarle samo prah, tako kot je smrt zmeraj samo smrt, in preostalo mu je le, da zatisne oči, vse drugo se bo zgodilo samo od sebe kot že tolifikrat poprej, tako tudi to pot, ta hip, zdaj, kdaj, še hipec, glej, zdajle!

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## No, No, and No

No, no, and no, no matter how hard he tried, no matter what he did, Miletá Micić could not accept the notion that the world would go on existing after his death. The thought that the very next morning after he died the sun would rise again in the east, that newspaper kiosks and grocery stores would open and, city buses would rumble down shady streets, children would go to school and adults to work, that, this would be a day, in a word, like any other, that thought cast him into despair. No, no, and no, he repeated to himself, everything cannot simply come to an end in such a way, that he would leave almost by stealth from the great world stage, as if we are nothing more than extras in our own lives, extras who slip out a hidden side door, while on stage creatures remain cocooned, mummified which suddenly claim to know all there is to know about us, in more detail and better than we know ourselves.

No, no, and no, Miletá Micić refused to accept this and nothing could sway him. There was also nothing, of course, that might confirm the possibility that he was right after all, no statement by any witness had been preserved anywhere, a statement to confirm, for instance, that someone, anyone, had come back to the stage, regardless of which door he'd left by. If there was someone who had been in the other world and had come back from there – not counting, of course, the heroes of myth – then the one, this one who did come back, had either forgotten it all, or had been banned from speaking of it. Miletá Micić immediately dismissed the latter possibility because a ban means nothing to members of the human race. He had seen countless times that the more rigorously a ban was imposed, the greater the likelihood it would be violated. Forgetting was something else and he could imagine visitors from the other world, the world of the dead, or rather, those who had been permitted to return to the first world, the world of the living, crossing through a scanner of sorts at the border which would erase their memories, especially those having to do with their time spent in the other world.

No, no, and no, Miletá Micić fretted, it could not be so simple. Life is more tangled than that, after all, and it does not resolve by simply crossing a border. Besides, who ever said there was a border zone between this here and that there, anyway? And what if these worlds are actually intermingled and partially overlap, so that there are dead among the living and vice versa? Seen from that angle, Miletá Micić thought that maybe his dilemmas were pointless, perhaps he had already been dead for a long time? If he was dead, how to be sure? Pinch himself? He pinched himself and yelped with pain. Good, he thought, he was alive. If he'd been dead, it wouldn't have hurt, for sure, and he also probably wouldn't have yelped. If the dead speak, he thought, they speak in deep voices. Even children who died prematurely, whose voices hadn't changed yet, even they spoke in deep voices.

No, no, and no, Mileta Micić warned himself, things can't possibly be like that! What was he thinking, he wondered, and where did he get this idea about life being like a horror movie? Life is more beautiful than that. Much more beautiful; with this assertion he would always agree, regardless of the fact that agreeing with it brought him so much pain and anxiety. If life were not beautiful, and the world were not beautiful, everything would be much easier. All it took was the thought of the magnificent structure of nature, the animal and plant kingdom, and then imagining that he would never see this ever again, and everything came tumbling down around him, he even tumbled down inside himself out of pure despair, out of his inability to influence things in any way. He could always, of course, wonder about the meaning of life, but no, no, and no, he said to himself a thousand times that he would not make such ridiculous mistakes. To wonder about the meaning of life is absurd while a person is living, since meaning surely lies in part in the very act of living. In other words, the meaning of life is life itself, or, should he want to be more precise, the meaning of life is in restoring death. One lives to die. That did not have the ring of a slogan likely to enjoy widespread popularity, thought Mileta Micić, but – if this is any comfort – the truth is never popular, is it? Recently, Mileta Micić recalled, he had read a short story by a fellow writer from our part of the world in which the writer said that the meaning of life was contained in love. How stupid, what a measure of credulity! Because, if there is something incapable of serving as a vehicle for the meaning of life, that would be love. How could such an unreliable emotion, so fickle and subject to the most varied influences, be banner bearer in the caravan of meaning? No, no, and no, Mileta's entire organism rebelled, there is no place here for love, never has been, never will be. Love is transient, shamelessly selfish and easily replaceable, and therefore it cannot be what spurs a person not to believe in an end to life, the moment after which a person is no longer the way he was until that moment, a moment when we all become something else, no one knows exactly what, just as no one knows what happens at the very beginning, how a person becomes a person, where consciousness comes from and whether it later disappears to or has – as Mileta Micić had long been sensing – a manifold role, i.e. arriving with one person, leaving with that person, then coming back with another, without a word about where it had been and where it would, perhaps, go again. No, no, and no, Mileta Micić smacked his right fist onto the open palm of his left hand, he would not give up so easily, he would not allow life to leave him to the mercy and mercilessness of death and he would show life who's in charge here, even though – when he had thought about it – it wasn't clear why he had it in for death when all death was after was whatever life had already done. It's not the arrival of death that makes a person die, but the departure of life, right? It's all life's fault, the birthing and the dying, the

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mocking duration after it has used you and discarded you like a plastic bag with a hole in it. He liked the image and he could clearly envision himself walking along, his legs far apart because of the largish hole on the plastic bag he was wearing. The bag was large and hung on him, and through the hole at the bottom his pendulum could be seen swinging in all four directions, exactly as he had once read in *Till Eulenspiegel*. He smiled with melancholy when he remembered the books he had read in his distant youth, but the melancholy brought him no relief, because at the same moment he thought of how people would be reading those same books when he was no longer there and he felt fury, and even ground his teeth.

No, no, and no, he cautioned himself again, he mustn't allow anger to gain the upper hand. A calm mind sleeps longer, he recited to himself and then asked himself what it was, really, that angered him in this anger of his. If all people go peacefully to their death, why would he think he deserved a different fate? Where did he get the right to seek the right to eternal life? The person or people who came up with all this could have come up with the notion of eternal life – if they had been so inclined – but, evidently, they hadn't been and now it was too late to lodge a complaint. All the deadlines had passed many centuries before, and there were no indications of a revision in the offing. That could mean, thought Mileta Micić, that the only thing left to him was to raise his head and walk calmly to where all had gone before while the chimes were tolling for eternal repose. But that image gave him no comfort either. It was easy to imagine the funereal scene – people at the cemetery, the excavated grave, the grave-diggers with perspiring brows, women in black, men with crooked ties, snot-nosed children – and feel a part of the quavering emotions, but then followed the question of what they would all be doing the next day. Not what *he* would be doing, because for him it was clear: he would be lying in his coffin, while all the others went on living at their regular rhythms, as if Mileta Micić had never existed. Injustice, whispered Mileta Micić although he couldn't say why his departure to the other world would be "injustice," and then it occurred to him that with his departure in fact the whole world would be departing, because didn't certain philosophers claim that the world is only an external image of our inner world? When we are gone, they said, then there is no world, there is nothing, you came from emptiness and to emptiness you return. But, is that the truth? Mileta Micić wondered, and how to test the validity of that statement? Because, if I am the one who is imagining the whole world, then I am imagining others who are, supposedly, imagining their worlds. No, no, and no, this whole story is over wrought, the world is either one, integral, or it does not exist at all. His departure changes nothing. The sun comes up in the east, sets in the west, it hides somewhere at night from the moon and the stars, and red clouds at night, if he remembered correctly, predicted windy weather with longer or

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shorter spells of precipitation, of which there wouldn't be much, two millimeters tops, but only one millimeter will suffice to drown a person. And of course, if he is already dead, the depth of the water is of no consequence whatsoever to him, this needs to be said since there are always the curious types who, intentionally or otherwise, either way, examine everything and ask hundreds of pointless questions, despite that fact that there is only a small number of truly important questions that need answering, or at least need a stab at an answer, during a lifetime. Although, thought Miletta Micić, this, too, is an exaggeration, because if a person already knows his fate, then no question matters – except one which might change that fate. In other words, there is no point to worrying and despairing, because whatever he tries, whatever answer he finds, nothing will be changed by it. At the end of everything, after all the questions and answers, after all the words and procedures, after all the trying and giving up, the same thing always remains – old, creaking, icy death. Which means, thought Miletta Micić, that one should never go into death without a sweater, just as one always takes a sweater along in the summertime, at the seaside, when going for an evening walk, because the sea air is fickle, chilly at first, then damp, hot for a spell, then refreshing.

No, no, and no, Miletta Micić fretted, the answer to his question is not hidden in a sweater. The secret of life or death cannot be intertwined with knitting, although, on the other hand, he had to admit that knitting had always seemed a mystical act to him, the creation of a tangled structure that a person pulled onto himself and so, probably, became an unwilling accessory to the person who knitted him the sweater. There, instead of thinking about how to evade death, he was thinking of patterns and techniques for knitting. Knitting or crocheting, wondered Miletta Micić, suddenly uncertain of which is the more complicated and magical: two crisscrossed needles which seem to spar, or the crochet hook which, like a dentist's tool that is always inflicting pain, is forever hooking loops it has made itself, as if it wants to snare itself once and for all? He thought about this for a long time, and then he decided to lie down. The day had already stretched on beyond all measure, which was Miletta Micić's fault, he had to admit, as was his stubborn refusal to find meaning in the absence of meaning, which had never been something those far wiser than he was had had in hand. He stared at his hands as if he might get an answer from them. However, the hands merely fidgeted in his lap and kept their silence. Only the right thumb, frozen, pointed upwards at the ceiling lamp, so Miletta Micić's gaze followed it up. The lamp was large, old-fashioned, and dusty. The bottom of the lowest glass globe was littered with dead bugs and moths, among them, visibly apart, was the black, desiccated shell of a cockroach. How did the cockroach get up there into the lamp globe, Miletta Micić wondered, what is this supposed to mean? Maybe the cockroach

tried to get close to the light source, the terrifying glow that propelled even the boldest members of its kind into a race into shadow and darkness? Perhaps, in other words, it was looking for the same thing Mileta Micić was feverishly trying to discover. And all I have managed to learn, Mileta Micić sighed, is that I am not so different from a cockroach and that the same end surely awaits me. He stared at the dusty sediment of death on the bottom of the glass globe of the old-fashioned ceiling lamp, but there was nothing moving there, nothing offered unexpected hope, dust is only dust, just as death is always only death, and all that was left for him to do was to close his eyes, everything else would play out on its own, as it had so many times before, as it was doing here, this instant, now, when, any minute, there, now!

*Translated by Ellen Elias Bursać*



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# Slovenski avtor v središču

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*Slovene Author  
in Focus*

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*Foto © Borut Krajnc*

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# Boris A. Novak

Boris A. Novak, rojen leta 1953, je pesnik, dramatik in prevajalec, redni profesor na Oddelku za primerjalno književnost in literarno teorijo na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani, podpredsednik Mednarodnega PEN-a. V devetdesetih letih je organiziral humanitarno pomoč za begunce iz nekdanje Jugoslavije in pisatelje v obleganem Sarajevu. Po prvencu *Stihožitje* (1977) je napisal še šestnajst pesniških zbirk, med njimi so *Hči spomina* (1981), *1001 stih* (1983), *Kronanje* (1984), *Mojster nespečnosti* (1995), *Alba* (1999), *Žarenje* (2003), *Obredi slovesa* (2005), *Dlaneno platno: izbrane pesmi* (2006), *MOM: Mala Osebna Mitologija* (2007), tragedijo *Kasandra* (2001) ter mnoge pesmi in igre za otroke. Prevaja iz francoščine (Verlaine, Mallarmé, Valéry, Jabès, okcitanščine, angleščine (Heaney), nizozemščine (Paul van Ostaijen, Monika van Paemel), južnoslovenskih jezikov (Josip Osti) itd. Objavil je več znanstvenih del, med drugim knjige *Oblika, ljubezen jezika: recepcija romanskih pesniških oblik v slovenski poeziji* (1995), *Zven in pomen: študije o slovenskem pesniškem jeziku* (2005), *Pogledi na francoski simbolizem* (2007) ter *Salto immortale: študije o prevajanju poezije I-II* (2011).

Boris A. Novak, born in 1953 in Belgrade, Serbia, is a Slovene poet, playwright, and translator, a Professor at the Department for Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, as well as the Vice-President of International PEN. During the 1990s, Novak organized humanitarian aid for refugees from the former Yugoslavia and writers from Sarajevo. His debut, *Stihožitje* (Still-Life-with-Verses, 1977) was followed by 16 more collections of poetry; among them, *Hči spomina* (The Daughter of Memory, 1981), *1001 stih* (1001 Verse, 1983), *Kronanje* (Coronation, 1984), *Mojster nespečnosti* (The Master of Insomnia, 1995), *Alba* (1999), *Žarenje* (Glowing, 2003), *Obredi slovesa* (Rituals of Farewell, 2005), *Dlaneno platno: izbrane pesmi* (The Palm as a Canvas, 2006), *MOM: Mala Osebna Mitologija* (LPM: Little Personal Mythology, 2007), the tragedy *Kasandra* (Cassandra, 2001), and numerous poems and plays for children. He translates from French (Verlaine, Mallarmé, Valéry, Jabès, the Occitane, English (Heaney), Dutch (Paul van Ostaijen, Monika van Paemel), the South Slavic languages (Josip Osti) etc. He has published many academic works, among them the monographs *Oblika, ljubezen jezika: recepcija romanskih pesniških oblik v slovenski poeziji* (Form, Love of the Language: The Reception of Romanic Poetic Forms in Slovene Poetry, 1995), *Zven in pomen: študije o slovenskem pesniškem jeziku* (Sound and Meaning: Studies of Slovene Poetic Language, 2005), *Pogledi na francoski simbolizem* (Views on French Symbolism, 2007), and *Salto immortale: študije o prevajanju poezije I-II* (Salto Immortale: Studies on Translating Poetry I-II, 2011).

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*Odsotnost – Absence – Abwesenheit – L'absence – Assenza – Ausenzia – Odsutnost – Nepřítomnost – Otsustvie,* (pesmi z reproducijami slik Lojzeta Spacala). V angleščino prevedli Erica Johnson Debeljak, Richard Jackson, Andrew Wachtel, Irena Zorko in avtor – v nemščino prevedli Mira Miladinović Zalaznik, Ludwig Hartinger, Klaus Detlef Olof in Neva Šlibar – v francoščino prevedel Viktor Jesenik – v italijanščino prevedli Jolka Milič in Jana Skansi – v španščino prevedli Matias Escalera Cordero, Marjeta Drobnič, Pablo Fajdiga in Marija Uršula Geršak – v hrvaščino prevedla Luko Paljetak in Haris Brčkalija – v češčino prevedel František Benhart – v ruščino prevedli Žanna Gileva, Viktor Sonkin, Olga Prohorova, Maria Stepkina in Galina Zamjatina – v kitajščino prevedla Huiqin Wang in Mitja Saje. Ljubljana: Edina (zbirka Dvanaest), 1999.

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## Oče

Dokler so starši živi, se s telesom  
postavijo med smrt in nas, otroke:  
usodo zremo kakor skoz zaveso.

Bolele so me tvoje suhe roke,  
ko si umrl, o moj edini oče:  
še tvoje, a že tuje, pregloboke,  
so padle, kamor meni ni mogoče,  
v zrak, a čisto blizu, sèm, k izviru  
solzá, kjer padam na obraz in jočem.

V tistem strašnem, vélíkem večeru,  
ko smo umivali usahlo truplo,  
da bi vrnili lep nemir vsemirju,

sem nase vzzel, kristalno jasno in osuplo,  
svojo človeško smrt: odsej sem oče  
jaz, jaz sem gola rana, ki brezupno

ščiti otroka pred udarci toče  
z edino smrtjo lastnega telesa,  
ki raste iz spomina v bodoče

in poje, ritem plesa, sneg slovesa.  
Na ono stran letim z zakonom jate  
selivk, in jočem, ko se vračam nate,

moj oče.

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## *Meje*

To isto polno luno gledava ... obzorja  
daleč, predaleč drug od drugega. Med nama  
se pno gorovja. Mehka mahovnata skorja  
zarašča najine stopinje. Čisto sama

si prečkala vse meje in prišla na tuje,  
v domovino mojih rok. Nevarno sam  
se plazim mimo varuhov mejá: potujem  
na severozahod, kjer me je bridko sram

škripanja duše sredi gladkih, strašnih sten.  
Stojim pred njimi, temni moški z jugovzhoda,  
sumljivega imena, drhteč, gol kot plen.  
Ne morem pobegniti. Meja je usoda.

Zdaj veš: čeprav prestopiš mejo, je ne zbrišeš.  
Še višja bo krojila tvoj korak, kot dvom.  
Zemljevid ni privid. Zato govôri tiše.  
Onstran vseh mejá so tvoje ustnice moj dom.

## *Tvoj vonj*

Tvoj vonj izvira iz razkošja mleka.  
Tvoj vonj je mlečno blag in svež in gost.  
Prihaja vame v valovih, reka  
daljave, zrak nevidni, vedežna skrivnost.

Oblečena si vanj. Tvoj vonj je obleka,  
ki je ne morem nikdar sleči. Gozd,  
ki je tako zgoščen, da ga ne poseka  
čas. Vonj me veže s tabo, rahli most.

Ko vonje cvetja, krhke in bogate,  
ki skrivajo tvoj vonj, z objemi slečem,  
dokončno in neskončno ležem vate.

Dišanje dveh teles je mera sreče ...  
Nato se ne umijem in tvoj vonj  
v meni kradoma, skrivnostno traja

in me skeli brez konca in brez kraja,  
da tvojo lepo in nevidno sled

zaznam kot najbolj smrtno vseh besed:  
kako si daleč in je vse zastonj.

---

## *Najina edina hiša*

Po ljubljenju leživa na zmečkani  
postelji, še omamljena z vonjavo  
bližine, in že dihava daljavo  
in riševa načrt na zadnji strani

popisanega zvezka: širni vrt,  
velika kuhinja, jedilnica in soba,  
ki vanjo skoz visoka okna vre svetloba,  
potrebna za pisanje, iz nerodnih črt

že rastejo zidovi, barva sten bo živa,  
v spalnici bo krasna dvojna postelja,  
natanko taka, kot je tale, kjer leživa,

v budnem stanju sanjava in veva  
– vsak zase veva, a si ne poveva na glas –  
da bo edino najino prebivališče,

edino varno, toplo skrivališče  
pred smrtonosno ljubosumnostjo sveta,

ta postelja, ta splav, ki plava skozi čas,  
skozi nesojeno svetlobo dneva ...

Dovolj za ljubezen. Dovolj za smrt.

Premalo za življenje ...

## ***Odločitve***

**11**

Med dvema besedama  
izberi tišjo.

Med besedo in molkom  
izberi poslušanje.

Med dvema knjigama  
izberi tisto, ki je bolj prašna.

Med zemljo in nebom  
izberi ptico.

Med dvema živalma  
izberi tisto, ki te bolj potrebuje.

Med dvema otrokoma  
izberi oba.

Med manjšim in večjim zlom  
ne izberi nobenega.

Med obupom in upanjem  
izberi upanje:  
težje ga boš nosil.

## ***Moj dvojnik***

Imam dvojnika. Medtem ko se jaz,  
nečimrn kot sem, kažem očem sveta,  
on sedi doma in gara, gara, gara ...  
Moj zvesti suženj, moj nikomur znan obraz.

Priklenem ga za mrzel radiator  
in v skodelico nalijem vode  
(da ne umre od žeje). Luč svobode  
dolgujem njemu, ki je moj gladiator.

Jé malo, hvaležen za suh kruh in mrk pozdrav.  
Spi malo, le po nekaj ur na noč.  
Ko jaz omagam, mi priskoči na pomoč.

On je tisti, ki piše; jaz le podpisujem.  
Zdaj je v zadregi zardel. Moj intimni tujec,  
moj dvojnik. Rad bi ga malo bolje spoznal.

## Cunjologija

Naša nona je vse življenje bojevala  
srdit in sistematičen boj proti prahu,  
blatu in vsakršni umazaniji.

V ta namen je izdelala natančno strategijo,  
imenovano *cunjologija*.

V slehernem trenutku je namreč razpolagala  
s kar sedemnajstimi cunjami,  
ki jih je pošiljala v spopad zoper umazanijo  
kot general oklepne divizije na bojno polje.  
Bog ne daj, da bi jih nepooblaščeni  
zlorabljal za napacne namene!

Kdor se je tako daleč spozabil,  
je bil nemudoma najstrože kaznovan.

Celo lastni služkinji tozadevno ni povsem zaupala,  
zato jo je z budnim očesom nadzorovala,  
še rajši pa je armado cunj uporabljala  
lastnoročno in lastnonožno.

Naštejmo te posvečene krpe in tkanine,  
zvesto sledeč znanstvenemu izrazoslovju noninega cunjoslovja:

- 1) »ta groba« cunja za stopnišče pred vhodnimi vrti;
- 2) »ta fina« cunja za marmorna tla v *entréju*;
- 3) »ta mehka« cunja za loščenje starega parketa po sobah;
- 4) »ta šmucig« cunja iz ostankov starih oblek  
za čiščenje bakrene plošče pod kaminom;
- 5) »ta velika« vpojna cunja za kamnita tla na terasi;
- 6) »ta majhna« vpojna cunja za kamnita tla v kuhinji in kopališči;
- 7) »ta star«, vselej čista cunja za lonce in drugo kovinsko posodo;
- 8) »ta nova«, vselej čista cunja za porcelanasti servis;
- 9) »ta občutljiva« cunja za vinske kozarce;
- 10) »ta hitra« cunja za nože;
- 11) »ta zvita« cunja za vilice;
- 12) »ta pedantna« cunja za žlice;
- 13) »ta glanc« cunja za srebrni jedilni pribor;
- 14) »ta zauber« cunja za ogledala;
- 15) »ta speglana«, skoraj prozorna stara cunja za likanje;
- 16) »ta moška« cunja za vojaške škornje in
- 17) »ta šik« cunja za njene lastne ženske šolenčke z visoko peto.

---

Nonine razlage velevažnih cunjoloških distinkcij  
so bile strastno pikolovske in temeljito premišljene:  
– noži so gladki in si jih ponavadi ne tlačimo v usta,  
zato zadošča preprostejša obravnava s »ta hitro« cunjo;  
– drobni ostanki hrane se radi zataknejo med zobe  
vilic, zato jih je treba skrbno izbezati s »ta zvito« cunjo;  
– žlice, ki jih tako radi ližemo, pa nezadržno privlačijo  
kar največje število bakterij, zato terjajo  
resne in radikalne higienične ukrepe,  
ki jih lahko zagotovi samo »ta pedantna« cunja.

A vsa ta visoko specializirana in široko razvejena cunjologija,  
vseh teh sedemnajst fanatičnih divizij Antiprašne armade,  
ki jih je danonočno pošiljala v zagrizen boj  
zoper svetovno nesnago  
ter jih redno vzdrževala in menjavala,  
ves ta meščanski red,  
ki je predstavljal smisel in smoter njenega življenja,  
ni mogel pomagati,  
ni mogel preprečiti,  
da se naši noni,  
da se naši noni ni življenje,  
da se naši noni ni življenje razdrlo,

razsulo,

nepovratno sesulo

v prah in pepel.

---

## *Metulji*

Še teden dni pred smrtjo je gospod Novak vzel mreže  
in – kakor slednje jutro – šel lovit metulje.  
Spremljal ga je sosedov deček, droben, živ in nežen.  
Starec ga je učil, kako naj v šatulje

spravlja metulje in kako naj prime krila,  
da s prsti ne bi ranil rahlega prahu,  
ki brez njega ne morejo leteti, ta mila,  
trepetajoča, pisana síca na dnu

neba ... Na tragikomičnem pogrebu  
zakrknjenega ateista, kjer so krsti  
odbili križ in so pogrebci kar po vrsti

obračali plašče, da so se videli vsi šivi,  
je deček odprl škatlo, polno metuljev,  
ki so nenačoma zleteli k nebu,

tako trepetajoči, pisani in mili, tako živi!  
O vnebovzetje bary! Letečih src se je kar trlo!

Uradnemu govorcu je metulj zletel v grlo.  
Obstal je nad odprtим grobom. Ves svet je obstal.

Nebo se je odprlo.

Bog se je smehljal.

## *Pospravljanje mrtvih*

Celo zdaj, ko to pišem, mi okus pepela napolni usta, da s težavo diham. Kajti, pospravljanje po mrtvih je strahota. Céla

življenja bližnjih po pogrebu presejati, izbrati med stvarmi nesrečne, ki gredo v pekèl pozabe, in srečne, za v raj spomina. Najti

med zapuščino dragocenosti, zlato za plombe in poročne prstane, zapestnice in žepne ure z zlomljenimi kazalci, vso to

staro šaro spominkov in vizitk, razglednice in pisma, važne dokumente in fotografije, šivalni pribor in škatle z gumbi, strgane ogrlice

in rjaste ključe, v hladilniku sadje, ki gnije, le čigav prvi zob, osnovnošolske učbenike, ducat očal različnih dioptrij in okvirjev,

dva ducata osebnih izkaznic in potnih listov, slike in grafike in na zvrhano polnih policah te prašne knjige, knjige, knjige ...

Zadnji pregled življenja, čudenje, kakšna lepotica je bila mama v mladosti, zadnje vonjanje njenih kril, kjer v gubah še lebdi oblistan

duh, tako lep. – Spomin živi, doklèr se vonj še pne iz spraznjenih oblek. – Pospravljanje po mrtvih je sladko-grenki ritual, ki še zadnjič oživi vse,

kar so bili in imeli, preden jim mrtvaški prti odsotnosti izbrisajo sledi. Strašna je dilema, kaj obdržati in kaj odvreči. V dokončno zaprtih

zabojih romajo spomini v smeti. Med dvema večernima oblekama in rutama iz svile, le katero izbrati in rešiti nič? ... Vnema

nas živih pa gre neusmiljeno naprej, sile  
sedanjosti izrivajo utež preteklosti,  
polne omare stare krame bi nas zadušile,

treba je narediti prostor in očistiti  
spomin, še preden pregori od teže tovora,  
ki ga mora nositi ...

Nato še dolgo žari

v kotu kipec z Afriškega roga, brez odgovora,  
kdo ga je prinesel sèm daleč, na alpsko pobočje,  
naprej bledí intimno strastnega nagovora

očeta materi, tik preden sta postala oče  
in mati, datirano '53, *devetega aprila*,  
ki ga je oče hotel uničiti, a ga je za bodoče

oči še po njegovi smrti ohranila  
mati,

zdaj ga hranim jaz, ker sem v njem omenjen prav jaz,  
ki me je takrat nosila, tako ženstvena in mila,

in muči me vprašanje, kakšna bo – ko pride čas –  
usoda tega pisma, ob naslednjem pospravljanju,  
véliki čistki živih nad sledovi mrtvih,

se bo kak obraz

še sklanjal nad tem pismom in sanjaril o trajanju  
in nehanju, bo ljubezen mojih staršev romala  
v kanto za smeti

ali škatlo praspomina?

Pokriva me tišina ...

Fragment iz še neobjavljenega epa

## **Father**

As long as they live, parents stand  
with their own bodies between death and us,  
their children: destiny appears as if through a curtain.

I was hurt by your thin arms  
when you died, o my only father:  
still yours, but already foreign, too deep

they fell where I could not reach them,  
into the air, yet quite near, here, to the spring  
of tears, where I fall upon my face and weep.

In that terrible evening  
when we washed the withered body  
to return sweet unrest to the all-embracing peace,

I took upon myself, crystal-clear and amazed,  
my own human death: since then I  
am the father, I am the naked wound desperately

protecting the child against the hailstones  
with the death of my own body  
that grows from memory into the future

and sings, the rhythm of dance, the snow of farewell.  
I fly across to the other side, bound by the law of the flock  
of migratory birds, and I cry when I return to you,  
my father.

*Translated by Mia Dintinjana*

## ***Borders***

We gaze at the same full moon... horizons  
far away, too far from each other. Mountains  
rise between us. A soft, mossy crust  
grows over our footsteps. All alone

you crossed all borders and came to a foreign country,  
to the homeland of my arms. Dangerously alone  
I crawl past the keepers of borders: I travel to the  
northwest, where I am bitterly ashamed

of the screeching of the soul among smooth, horrible walls.  
I stand before them, a dark man from the southeast,  
with a conspicuous name, shuddering, as naked as prey.  
I cannot escape. Border is destiny.

Now you know: although you cross the border, you don't erase it.  
Rising even higher it will measure your steps, like doubt.  
A map is not an illusion. So speak more softly.  
Beyond all borders your lips are my home.

*Translated by Lili Potpara*

## ***Your Scent***

Your scent wells up from the opulence of milk.  
Your scent is milky mild and fresh and thick.  
It washes over me like waves from distant rivers,  
unseen air, the secrets of soothsayers.

You are dressed in it. Your scent is a robe  
that never falls from you. A forest so thick  
that even time cannot cut through it. Your scent  
connects me to you: it is a delicate bridge.

When your own scent is concealed by the smell of flowers,  
fragile and rich, I strip them away from you with tender  
embraces. I lie inside of you: final and eternal.

The aroma of two bodies is a measure of happiness...  
That is why I don't wash myself and your scent  
steals furtively inside of me, mysterious enduring,

timeless and placeless, stinging me.  
I recognize your beauty and your unseen  
trace as the most fatal of all words.  
How far away you are. It is all in vain.

## ***Our One House***

We lie, after love, on a wrinkled  
bed, intoxicated with the smell  
of nearness yet already breathing  
distance, and we sketch on the last page

of a scribbled notebook: a wide garden,  
a big kitchen, dining alcove and a room  
flooded from a high window with the light  
needed to write. Walls rise up from the

awkward letters, the colors will be bright,  
in the bedroom a magnificent double bed,  
the same one where we lie now

awake and dreaming and knowing – each  
of us knowing but neither of us saying it aloud –  
that this will be our one and only home,

our one safe and warm hiding place  
in a jealous and lethal world,

this bed, this raft floating through time,  
through the unfulfilled light of days ...

Enough for love. Enough for death.

Too little for life ...

*Translated by Erica Johnson Debeljak*

## ***Decisions***

**11**

Between two words  
choose the quieter one.

Between word and silence  
choose listening.

Between two books  
choose the dustier one.

Between the earth and the sky  
choose a bird.

Between two animals  
choose the one who needs you more.

Between two children  
choose both.

Between the lesser and the bigger evil  
choose neither.

Between hope and despair  
choose hope:  
it will be harder to bear.

*Translated by Mia Dintinjana*

## *My Doppelganger*

I have a doppelganger. While I,  
vain as I am, show myself to the world,  
he sits at home and works, works, works...  
My faithful slave, my face known to no one.

I chain him to a cold radiator  
and pour him a glass of water  
(so he won't die of thirst). I owe him  
the light of my freedom, he, my gladiator.

He eats little, is grateful for a bit of dry bread and a dark hello.  
He sleeps little, only a few hours each night.  
When I stagger in exhaustion, he rushes to my aid.

He is the one who writes; I only put my signature there.  
Now he's blushing in embarrassment. My intimate stranger,  
my doppelganger. I wish I knew him a little better.

---

## *Ragology (The Study of Rags)*

All her life, our *nona* waged  
a systematic battle against dust,  
mud, and all manner of filth and muss.  
To this end, she developed a precise strategy,  
the study of rags, known to her family as *ragology*.  
At any moment, she would have arrayed  
before her some seventeen different rags  
that she would send into combat  
as division generals in the battle field.  
God forbid any unauthorized use  
of one or the other for the wrong purpose!  
Whoever did so received  
the strictest of punishments.  
In this regard, our *nona* did not trust even her maid,  
and followed her movements with the sharpest gaze.  
In the end, she preferred to dispatch her army of rags herself  
with her own feet and hands.  
I shall enumerate the various types of rags and cloths  
using the scientific terminology of *nona's* ragology:

- 1) the “rough” one for the stairs to the front door;
- 2) the “fine” one for the marble in the *entrée*;
- 3) the “soft” one for waxing the old parquet;
- 4) the “plush” one made from pieces of old clothing  
for the copper tiles under the hearth;
- 5) the “big” absorbent one for the stone floor on the terrace;
- 6) the “little” absorbent one for the stone floor in the kitchen  
and the bathroom;
- 7) the “old” clean one for the pots and other metal pans;
- 8) the “new” clean one for the porcelain service;
- 9) the “sensitive” one for the wine glasses;
- 10) the “fast” one for the knives;
- 11) the “clever” one for the forks;
- 12) the “pedantic” one for the spoons;
- 13) the “shiny” one for the silver;
- 14) the “splendid” one for the mirror;
- 15) the “see-through” rag for the ironing;
- 16) the “male” rag for the military boots;
- 17) the “chic” rag for her own high-heeled shoes.

*Nona*'s explanation for these all-important ragological distinctions was passionately detailed and deeply considered:

- knives were smooth and generally not put in the mouth  
hence a simple treatment with the “quick” rag would suffice;
- little scraps of food tended to get lodged between the tines  
of the fork, hence the need for careful treatment with the “clever” rag;
- spoons which we like to lick so much and which relentlessly attract  
a great number of bacteria, require serious  
and radical hygienic measures that can only  
be assured by the “pedantic” rag.

But all this advanced and specialized study of rags,  
all of these seventeen fanatical divisions of the anti-dust armada,  
sent day and night into pitched battle  
against the great filth of the world,  
regularly deployed and redeployed,  
all this bourgeois order,  
that represented meaning and purpose in her life,  
could not help,  
could not prevent,  
our *nona*,  
our own dear *nona*,  
our own dear *nona*'s life from falling apart,

from being scattered about,  
irretrievably dispersed

like so much ash and dust.

## *Butterflies*

Just one week before his death, Mr. Novak took his net  
and – like the morning before – went out to catch butterflies.  
He was accompanied by the neighbor boy, small, lively, and gentle.  
The old man taught him how to place the fragile things

into a special case and how to hold their wings  
so the fingers wouldn't damage that trace of dust,  
without which they couldn't fly, these tender,  
fluttering, colorful hearts at the bottom

of the sky ... At the tragicomic funeral  
of this incurable atheist, the cross removed  
from his coffin, all the mourners wearing

their coats inside out, seams exposed,  
the boy opened a box full of butterflies  
and they took sudden flight to the sky,

so fluttering, tender, and mild, so wonderfully alive!  
Oh, the ascension of colors! A swarm of flying hearts!

A butterfly flew into the eulogizer's throat.  
He stood by the open grave. The whole world stood.

The sky opened.

And God smiled.

---

## *Tidying up after the Dead*

Even now, as I write this, the taste of ash  
fills my mouth and it is hard to breathe. Because  
tidying up after the dead is a horror. To pass

a whole life through a sieve, to choose among  
the unfortunate things destined for the hell of oblivion,  
and the more happy ones, for the paradise of memory.

To find in this legacy gold used for fillings  
and for wedding rings, bracelets and pocket  
watches with broken hands, the old detritus

of souvenirs and letters, visiting cards and  
post cards, important documents and photographs,  
a sewing kit, a box of buttons, a broken necklace

and rusted keys, fruit rotting in the refrigerator,  
someone's first tooth, primary school textbooks,  
a dozen glasses with different lenses and frames,

two dozen identification cards and passports,  
paintings and prints, and shelves filled to overflowing  
with dusty books, books, books...

A last glance at a life, amazement, what a beauty  
my mother was when she was young, the scent  
in her skirts, her rounded soul hovering in the pleats,

so lovely. – My memory of her will live until her scent  
abandons the empty clothes. – Tidying up after the dead  
is a bittersweet ritual that revives for the last time

everything that she once was and had, before the death  
shroud erased all traces. It's a terrible dilemma,  
what to keep and what to throw away. Discarded

memories roam in boxes closed forever.  
Two evening dresses with matching silk scarves,  
which pair should I save from oblivion? ...

---

The zeal of the living continues relentlessly, the force  
of the present pushing aside the weight of the past.  
All those closets filled with junk would suffocate us,

we must make room, cleanse our memory,  
lest it collapse under the weight of the burning  
cargo it carries...

It burns for so long,

that statuette from the Horn of Africa –  
who brought it so far, to this Alpine land –  
and a faded letter, a passionate appeal,

from my father to my mother, just before they  
became father and mother, dated 1953, *April 9*,  
that father wanted to destroy but mother saved

after his death for future eyes, and now  
I also save because I, who my mother – so feminine,  
so mild – carried then, am mentioned in it.

I am tormented by the question: what will be the fate  
of this letter when my time comes – the next tidying-up  
by the living of the traces left behind by the dead?

Will another face

lean over this letter and dream of lives lived  
and lives ended? Will my parents' love be tossed  
in the garbage bin

or in the box of memory?

Silence descends ...

Fragment from the epos (2009-2012)

*Translated by Erica Johnson Debeljak*



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# Literarna branja 2012

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*Literary  
Readings 2012*

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# *Antonia Arslan*

Antonia Arslan se je rodila leta 1938 v Padovi v Italiji. Priznana avtorica znanstvenih del, prozaistka, literarna kritičarka, urednica, publicistka, prevajalka in nekdanja profesorica moderne in sodobne italijanske književnosti na Univerzi v Padovi je znana po inovativnih študijah o ženski popularni prozi in o »potopljeni galaksiji« italijanskih pisateljic 19. stoletja. Uredila je več del o genocidu nad Armenci in o izkušnjah armenskih beguncov v Italiji ter v sodelovanju s Chiaro Haiganush Megighian in Alfredom Hemmat Sirakyjem iz armenščine prevedla dve pesniški zbirki Daniela Varjuana – enega največjih armenskih pesnikov, ki je postal žrtev armenskega genocida. Med njena literarna dela sodijo trije romani: *La Masseria delle Allodole* (Pristava Škrjančkov, 2004), za katerega je prejela številne nagrade, kot sta nagrada italijanskega kluba P.E.N (2005) in nagrada »Premio Manzoni« (2005), leta 2008 pa je pri Cankarjevi založbi izšel tudi v slovenskem prevodu Irene Trenc-Frelih; *La Strada di Smirne* (Cesta do Smirne, 2009) ter *Il libro di Mush* (Muševa knjiga, 2012). Njena dela so prevedena v več kot dvajset jezikov.

Antonia Arslan was born in 1938 in Padua, Italy. A distinguished academic writer, novelist, literary critic, editor, columnist, translator, and former professor of modern and contemporary Italian literature at the University of Padova, she is renowned for her innovative studies on Italian popular women's fiction and on the "submerged galaxy" of Italian women writers of the nineteenth century. She has edited many works on the Armenian genocide and on the experiences of Armenian refugees in Italy, and translated two volumes of poetry by Daniel Varjuan – one of the greatest Armenian poets, who died during the Armenian genocide – from the Armenian in collaboration with Chiara Haiganush Megighian and Alfred Hemmat Siraky. Her literary works include three novels: *La Masseria delle Allodole* (*Skylark Farm*, 2004), for which she won numerous awards, such as the Italian P.E.N Club award (2005) and the Premio Manzoni (2005), and which has been translated into Slovene by Irena Trenc-Frelih (2008); *La Strada di Smirne* (The Road to Izmir, 2009), and *Il libro di Mush* (The Book of Mush, 2012). Her texts have been translated into more than 20 languages.

## Katerina e l'incendio di Smirne

Abitava negli anni Cinquanta a Venezia una bella signora greca. Andavamo da lei a lezione di ballo. Ogni giovedì prendevamo da Padova la corriera delle due, in modo da avere un'oretta in città prima della lezione. Ci scatenavamo per Venezia, per calli e campielli, correndo, esaltati, e finivamo a fare merenda col pane buonissimo di una delle tante panetterie della città.

La signora Katerina era grassa, vitalissima e affascinante, portava sempre scialli multicolori e vistose sciarpe colorate. A casa sua i dischi con le canzoni greche andavano tutto il giorno, e noi imparammo a danzare col fazzoletto in mano, i maschi col gilè e la *fustanelà*, le femmine con le collane di monetine e il fazzoletto incrociato sul petto. Prima di tutto però ci insegnò i versi delle canzoni, con le loro struggenti storie di amore e di morte, come la *Samiotissa*, la ragazza di Samo, e la canzone dei tramonti del sole, su cui le nostre voci immature provavano gorgheggi ed estensioni orientali.

Poi attaccammo con le danze. Il *syrtos* delle isole, e poi il meraviglioso *kalamatianos*, il *tsakonikos*, la danza del labirinto cretese, e tante altre, lente e veloci, nostalgiche e gioiose. Ascoltando la *kyria* Katerina, col suo piffero magico di storie, leggende e racconti orientali, ci innamorammo di lei e della Grecia.

Un giorno, che poi chiamammo sempre “il giovedì nero”, la trovammo seduta rigida su una sedia in cucina, con gli occhi cupi e la faccia aggrondata. “Oggi non si fa niente, ragazzi – ci disse quasi con uno sforzo – andate a giocare in campo, ho mal di testa e sono nervosa”.

Questo lo vedevamo benissimo anche noi, ma non era da lei. Era vero che qualche volta aveva l’emicrania, ma anche del male lei faceva uno spettacolo, avviluppandosi intorno alla testa fazzoletti colorati imbevuti di acqua e aceto, parlando a voce bassissima e sventolandosi con un grande ventaglio. Siccome poi l’emicrania le veniva di mattina, nel pomeriggio cominciava a star meglio ed appariva soltanto più illanguidita, e propensa ai racconti malinconici dei *palikari*, gli eroi della guerra d’indipendenza del 1821. Noi ci raccoglievamo intorno a lei per sentirla raccontare con un fil di voce drammatico, mimandole con sapienza, le avventure di quei giovani spavaldi o la storia di Ali Tepeleni, pascià di Joannina.

Scendemmo in campo allarmati e curiosi, ma poi, dopo aver girovagato per un po’ senza meta e col cuore grosso, decidemmo di tornare su e di farla parlare. Il nostro amore devoto era deposto ai suoi piedi, per lei avremmo affrontato qualunque nemico. Dunque parlasse, dividesse con noi la sua pena. Saremmo riusciti a rasserenarla, avremmo ascoltato insieme le nostre canzoni e provato i passi degli ultimi balli.

Ma con lei c’era adesso qualcuno. Un grosso signore che non avevamo mai visto, che ci guardava con aria malinconica e un po’ ottusa, respirando pesantemente. Stavano bevendo un caffè. Lui le teneva le mani mollemente,

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lei sospirava, e quando ci vide disse, quasi a fatica: “Bambini, vi presento mio cugino Harutiun Adamian. E’ il mio unico parente, e vive a Losanna. Siamo sfuggiti insieme all’incendio di Smirne.”

La frase non ci rivelò molto, anche se aveva un suono impressionante. Cos’era Smirne? Evidentemente una città, ma non riuscivamo ad andare più in là. Eppure quella frase bastò perché capissimo che Katerina aveva ancora una storia da raccontarci, la più avventurosa, la più terribile, e perché ci venisse una gran voglia di sentirla.

“Allora raccontaci dell’incendio di Smirne”, pregammo tutti insieme lamentosamente. Ci pareva di essere stati defraudati fino ad allora della storia più importante. Ma Katerina ci disse che per quel giorno poteva parlare solo con suo cugino, e ci diede un solenne appuntamento per la settimana successiva. “Croce sul cuore e sputo per terra?”, le domandammo tutti insieme: e lei si fece un solenne segno di croce alla greca e sputò per terra con decisione, dopodiché ci mandò via in fretta.

Il giovedì successivo eravamo eccitatissimi. Arrivammo a Venezia trafelati, sotto una pioggia diluviente. Io fantasticavo silenziosamente, e mi pareva di vedere un grande fuoco, il fuoco di Smirne che ci aspettava, bruciare incandescente e inestinguibile dietro la cortina spessa dell’acqua, che ci bagnava i capelli e le scarpe. L’umidità ci entrava nel cuore, e una grande malinconia, ma l’acqua non spegneva il fuoco, e come l’immagine di un vulcano che nessun’acqua può estinguere, acqua e fuoco da quel giorno si unirono nella mia mente come i due poli di un pericolo minacciosamente incombente.

Il signor Harutiun sedeva sul divano vicino a Katerina, avvolto in una lussuosa giacca da casa verde scuro, con una camicia giallina e una cravatta a fiocco di seta verde chiara. Noi lo guardammo estatici, a bocca aperta. Ci piaceva da morire, e quando appoggiò la manona sul braccio di lei, e disse: “I bambini sono qui, *Katerinoula mou*, adesso beviamo un *kafedaki* e poi gli raccontiamo la storia”, quasi quasi lo applaudimmo.

“Noi due siamo gli unici superstiti della nostra famiglia – cominciò lei quasi esitando – e ogni volta che ci vediamo non possiamo che piangere. Nostro nonno era un contadino armeno, veniva da un paesino dell’entroterra, e sposò una greca di Smirne, un’elegante cittadina che si innamorò di lui vedendolo al mercato e sentendolo cantare le canzoni del suo paese. Lottarono con le famiglie e riuscirono a sposarsi e ad essere felici. Come si volevano bene! Nonno Harutiun e nonna Haroula non riuscivano a stare distanti l’uno dall’altra”.

Prontamente, Harutiun nipote cavò dalla tasca un fazzoletto di seta verdemare, e lei si soffiò teatralmente il naso. Questo ci riconfortò molto, era un indubbio segnale che il racconto era partito bene. “Avevamo tanti parenti – continuò Katerina con aria sognante – e tutti lavoravamo insieme nella stagione dei bachi da seta, in quella dell’uva e della frutta secca. Gli

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adulti inscatolavano i famosi fichi di Smirne e noi bambini ci occupavamo dell'uva sultanina, dei pomodori essiccati, dei meloni rotondi, così grandi che ci mettevamo in quattro per sollevarli...”

Prima che si perdesse nei ricordi, il cugino cominciò a dialogare con lei appassionatamente, e per due ore assistemmo a una specie di canto a due voci, il canto della nostalgia e dell'orrore. Ci descrissero la bella città di Smirne, la perla dell'impero Ottomano, col suo splendido porto naturale e la sua variegata popolazione, in maggioranza composta di greci, e poi di armeni, turchi, ebrei, levantini.

La città era rimasta indenne dalle distruzioni della grande guerra, e i suoi abitanti si illusero di poter rimanere un'isola felice nella quale le diverse etnie potevano continuare a convivere, in nome della propensione al commercio e della prosperità dei suoi abitanti. Ma Smirne la Bella faceva gola a molti, e nel maggio del 1919, approfittando della debolezza della Turchia sconfitta, i greci sbarcarono per una folle avventura di conquista.

Tre anni dopo, nel settembre 1922, l'esercito nazionalista turco, guidato brillantemente dal generale Mustafa Kemal, riconquistò la città. I soldati greci, esausti e mal guidati, si erano reimbarcati precipitosamente, e la popolazione civile fu abbandonata indifesa alla mercé dei conquistatori, desiderosi di vendetta. “Noi eravamo tutti riuniti nella casa dei nonni, nel quartiere armeno – disse Harutiun – erano tempi calamitosi, non si poteva restare in campagna. Era settembre, l'uva era matura, e l'aria così dolce... ma vedere i soldati greci in fuga, ridotti come selvaggi, vestiti di stracci, che abbandonavano le armi, ci colmò di paura. Riempimmo qualche cesto di cibo e di pane, e scappammo come tutti in città. I carretti, gli asini, i buoi, i cavalli, le capre e la gente: una moltitudine furiosa e impaurita si convegliava su Smirne da tutte le direzioni, riempiendo le strade, dirigendosi al porto e alla speranza di salvezza.

“Noi pensammo – proseguì Katerina, come svolgendo il filo di un discorso fatto fra loro mille volte – che fosse più sicuro rifugiarsi nella zona della Cattedrale armena di Santo Stefano, situata al centro di un quadrilatero circondato di solide mura alte da sei a sette metri, e intervallate da massicce porte metalliche. Ci andammo tutti, dal nonno al vecchio servo Hovakim, che uscì per ultimo di casa, girò l'enorme vecchia chiave nella toppa e pianse con la testa contro il muro. Io avevo sette anni, e dimenticai la mia bambola-principessa, tutta vestita di tulle celeste, e ancora di notte la sogno, che mi chiede perché l'ho abbandonata: ma per fortuna mi ricordai di afferrare l'immenso scialle rosso di mia madre, che ci salvò, me e Harutiun, quando ci trovammo da soli.

Nell'inenarrabile confusione che si verificò quando ci fu infine permesso di uscire dagli edifici della cattedrale per rifugiarci al porto, perdemmo tutto e tutti. Le donne vennero portate via, mia madre urlante trascinata per i capelli, mio padre e gli altri uomini furono uccisi sul posto, i bambini dispersi. Io

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e Harutiun ci avviluppammo nello scialle, rifugiandoci sotto un ponticello dove si gettava l'immondizia, in un angolo del grande giardino dei ricchi signori Louludias, e chiudemmo gli occhi per ore.

Quando li riaprimmo, il fuoco infuriava. Alte fiamme danzavano dappertutto, come mani malvagie uscendo dalle finestre cieche dei palazzi, attraversavano scoppiettando le strade, esplodevano sibilando nei cortili, dietro le buganvillee immobili, come pietrificate. Sembravano guidate da una mente accorta, da un progetto preciso: distruggere la città degli infedeli, purificarla attraverso il fuoco. Colori impazziti attraversavano come meteore il cielo sconvolto.”

Sospirando, e guardandosi le mani, Harutiun allora sussurrò: “Quattro giorni durerà quell'inferno, da mercoledì 13 settembre 1922 alla domenica 17, distruggendo più di cinquantamila edifici, il cuore e l'anima dell'antica città. Il fuoco era stato appiccato cominciando dal quartiere armeno, il nostro quartiere, lo *Haynots*, poi si era diffuso con estrema rapidità. Noi ci guardammo intorno, stringendoci nello scialle rosso, ed eravamo soli. Soffiava un forte vento di nord-ovest, e non c'era scampo.

Spiavamo il mondo impazzito dalle fessure dello scialle incrociato, che conservava ancora un odore tenero di mamma: ma il calore che emanava non era più il suo, ci soffocava, e diventava ogni momento più intenso. Il fuoco sempre più vicino si rifletteva oscillando nella vasca al centro del giardino, sull'acqua che ancora copriva il fondo.

Ci capimmo al volo, Katerina ed io. Corremmo alla vasca immergendo lo scialle nella poca acqua rimasta, e assorbendola tutta. Poi, con tutte le nostre forze, nervosamente strizzammo il pesante tessuto di lana e ce lo avvolgemmo stretto intorno, un bozzolo rosso e goffo che camminava su quattro piedi non sempre in sintonia fra loro, cercando di correre, ma dove? Eravamo circondati dal fuoco e – oltre il fuoco – da un cordone minaccioso di soldati turchi.”

“Ti ricordi, *mon chéri*? – intervenne Katerina – ci salvammo infilandoci oltre il ponticello, nello stretto cunicolo che di solito serviva allo scarico dell'acqua piovana, e che si riempiva solo per tre giorni all'anno, in novembre. Andammo avanti per un po' sottoterra, e io avevo paura di tutto, ma tu dicesti che non c'era ragno o topo o scorpione più cattivo degli esseri umani che ci cercavano e stavano per raggiungerci, e mi spingesti avanti e avanti, nell'aria irrespirabile della galleria, finché sbucammo all'aperto in un angolo del porto ancora tranquillo.

Ma illuminato a giorno. Dentro i grandi, moderni edifici della passeggiata a mare si vedeva gente agitarsi come farfalle impazzite che apparivano e sparivano passando da una finestra all'altra; e dietro, altissime, occhiegianti maligne sopra gli edifici, le fiamme, crepitanti in un calore insopportabile, che sembravano aggredire i palazzi per farsi strada più rapidamente verso l'indifesa massa umana che gremiva ogni angolo dei moli, stretta fra il fuoco e il mare.

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Nei nostri occhi, in quel momento, si fissò per sempre la visione dell'orrore e della solitudine che ci attendevano, noi due soli contro il vasto mondo. Non ci ha mai più abbandonato, e non la possiamo condividere con nessuno.”

“Lo scialle, già asciutto, ci servì da coperta – concluse Harutiun con gravità. – Ci salvarono due marinai francesi, impietositi dagli occhi di Katerina, che ci presero in braccio, ce lo avvolsero intorno e ci portarono sulla loro nave come un pacco vivente. Ma questa è un'altra storia.” E strinse Katerina fra le braccia.

Allora anche noi ci alzammo tutti insieme, silenziosamente, e li circondammo con le nostre braccia.

## Katerina in požar v Smirni

V Benetkah je v petdesetih letih živela lepa grška gospa. K njej smo hodili na plesne vaje. Vsak četrtek smo se odpeljali iz Padove z avtobusom ob dveh, da nam je ostala še kakšna urica za po mestu. V Benetkah smo si dali duška, se navdušeno podili po *callib* in *campiellib* in si nazadnje za malico privoščili slastni kruh v kateri izmed številnih mestnih pekarn.

Gospa Katerina je bila debela, živahna in očarljiva, vedno je nosila pisana ogrinjala in vpadijive barvaste šale. V njeni hiši so se ves dan vrtele plošče z grškimi popevkami in plesati smo se naučili z robčkom v rokah, fantje v telovniku in *fustaneli*, dekleta z ogrlicami iz kovancev in ruto, prekrižano na prsih. Najprej pa nas je naučila stihe popevk s pretresljivimi zgodbami o ljubezni in smrti, kakršni sta bili *Samiotissa*, dekle s Samosa, in pesem o sončnih zahodih, na katerih so se naši nezreli glasovi poskušali s trilčki in vzhodnjaškimi zategovanji.

Potem smo začeli s plesi. Otoškim *syrtosom*, pa čudovitim *kalamatianosom*, pa *tsakonikosom*, plesom kretskega labirinta, in še mnogimi drugimi, počasnimi in hitrimi, otožnimi in veselimi. Ob poslušanju *kyrie* Katerine in njene čarobne piščali pravljic, legend in vzhodnjaških pripovedk smo se zaljubili vanjo in v Grčijo.

Nekega dne, ki smo ga odtlej vedno imenovali »črni četrtek«, smo jo našli vso togo na stolu v kuhinji, z mračnimi očmi in namrščenim obrazom. »Danes ne bo nič, otroci,« nam je skoraj mukoma dejala, »pojdite se igrat na trg, boli me glava in živčna sem.«

To smo videli tudi sami, vendar ji ni bilo prav nič podobno. Že res, da je imela včasih migreno, toda tudi iz bolečine je znala narediti predstavo, ko si je ovila glavo s pisanimi rutami, namočenimi v vodo in kis, govorila s komaj slišnim glasom in se pahljala z velikansko pahljačo. In ker jo je migrena napadala dopoldne, ji je popoldne že šlo na bolje, zdela se je le malce bolj medla in raje je pripovedovala otožne zgodbe o *palikarijih*, junakih vojne za neodvisnost leta 1821. Zbrali smo se okrog nje in jo poslušali, ko nam je z dramatično utišanim glasom in poznavalsko mimiko pripovedovala o dogodivščinah teh neustrašnih mladeničev ali zgodbo o joanninskem paši Aliju Tepeleniju.

Vznemirjeni in radovedni smo odšli na trg, toda po krajšem tavanju brez cilja in težkega srca smo se odločili, da se vrnemo in jo prisilimo, da spregovori. Naša vdana ljubezen ji je ležala pri nogah, zanjo bi se spoprijeli s katerim koli sovražnikom. Zato mora spregovoriti, deliti z nami svojo muko. Uspelo nam jo bo razvedriti, skupaj bomo poslušali naše popevke in poskusili korake najnovejših plesov.

Toda nekdo je bil že pri njej. Debel gospod, ki ga nismo še nikoli videli, ki je otožno in malce topo zrl v nas ter težko dihal. Pila sta kavo. On jo je mlahavo držal za roke, ona je vzdihovala; ko nas je zagledala, je skoraj

z muko dejala: »Otroci, naj vam predstavim svojega bratranca Harutiuna Adamiana. Je moj edini sorodnik in živi v Lozani. Skupaj sva pobegnila iz požara v Smirni.«

Stavek nam ni povedal kaj dosti, čeprav je zvenel presunljivo. Kaj je bila Smirna? Očitno neko mesto, toda kaj dlje nam ni uspelo prodreti. Pa vendar nam je stavek dal vedeti, da nam ima Katerina povedati še eno zgodbo, tisto najbolj pustolovsko, najstrašnejšo, in zgrabila nas je strašanska želja, da bi jo slišali.

»Potem pa nam pripovedujte o požaru v Smirni,« smo roteče zaprosili v en glas. Zdelo se nam je, da nam je dotlej skrivala najpomembnejšo zgodbo. Toda Katerina nam je rekla, da se lahko tega dne pogovarja samo s svojim bratrcem, in nam svečano obljudila sestanek za naslednji teden. »Častna beseda?« smo vprašali vsi hkrati, in ona je slovesno naredila znamenje grškega križa ter odločno pljunila na tla, nato pa nas na hitro odslovila.

Naslednji četrtek smo bili neznansko razburjeni. V Benetke smo prispeли zasopli, v hudem nalivu. Molče sem se prepričala domišljiji in zdelo se mi je, da za debelim zastorom vode, ki nam moči lase in čevlje, vidim razbeljen in neukrotljiv velikanski ogenj, ogenj v Smirni, ki nas čaka. V srce nam je silila vлага, pa tudi velika otožnost, toda voda ni gasila ognja, in tako kot podoba ognjenika, ki ga ne more pogasiti nobena voda, sta se tistega dne voda in ogenj združila v moji glavi kakor dva pola grozeče skorajšnje nevarnosti.

Gospod Harutiun je sedel na divanu poleg Katerine, zavit v razkošen temno zelen domači jopič, z rumenkasto srajco in svetlo zelenim svilenim metuljčkom. Zamaknjeno, z odprtimi ustmi smo se zagledali vanj. Na smrt nam je bil všeč, in ko je svojo velikansko roko položil na njeno podlahet in rekel: »Otroci so prišli, *Katerinoula mou*, zdaj bova popila *kafedaki* in potem jim bova povedala zgodbo,« smo mu skoraj zaploskali.

»Midva sva edina preživila člana naše družine,« je skoraj obotavljivo začela ona, »in vsakokrat, ko se vidiva, lahko samo jočeva. Najin ded je bil armenski kmet, doma iz neke vasice v notranjosti, in poročil se je z Grkinjo iz Smirne, elegantno meščanko, ki se je zaljubila vanj, ko ga je zagledala na trgu in ga slišala peti pesmi iz njegove vasi. Kljubovala sta vsak svoji družini in nazadnje se jima je uspelo poročiti in biti srečna. Kako sta se imela rada! Ded Harutiun in babica Haroula nista prenesla, da bi bila daleč drug od drugega.«

Harutiun vnuk je nemudoma izvlekel iz žepa svilen robec zelenomodre barve in Katerina se je teatralno useknila vanj. To nas je precej pomirilo, kajti bilo je nedvomen znak, da je zgodba na dobri poti. »Imeli smo toliko sorodnikov,« je zasanjano nadaljevala Katerina, »in vsi so delali skupaj, ko je bil čas pobiranja kokonov sviloprejk ali trganja grozdja ali sušenja sadja. Odrasli so spravljali v škatle slavne smirnske smokve, mi otroci pa smo skrbeli za rozine, posušene paradižnike, okrogle melone, tako velike, da smo jih lahko dvignili šele štirje ...«

Preden se je izgubila v spominih, jo je bratranec pritegnil v strasten dvogovor in dve uri smo bili priče nekakšni pesmi za dva glasova, pesmi hrepenenja in groze. Opisala sta nam prelepo mesto Smirno, biser Osmanskega cesarstva, s sijajnim naravnim pristaniščem in pisanim prebivalstvom, med katerim so prevladovali Grki, potem pa Armenci, Turki, Judje, Levantinci.

V veliki vojni je ostalo mesto nepoškodovano in njegovi prebivalci so se slepili, da bo ostalo srečen otok, v katerem bodo različne etnije še naprej živele druga ob drugi v dobro trgovine in blaginje prebivalcev. Toda po Lepi Smirni so se marsikomu cedile sline in marca 1919 so Grki izkoristili oslabljenost poražene Turčije in pripluli na noro osvajalsko avanturo.

Tri leta pozneje, septembra 1922, je turška nacionalistična vojska pod sijajnim vodstvom generala Mustafe Kemala znova zavzela mesto. Izčrpani in slabo vodeni grški vojaki so se na vrat na nos znova vkrcali in nezaščiteno civilno prebivalstvo prepustili na milost in nemilost osvajalcev, žejnih maščevanja. »Vsi smo se zbrali v hiši starih staršev v armenski četrtri,« je povedal Harutiun, »bili so hudi časi, na deželi nisi smel več ostati. Bil je september, grozdje je bilo zrelo in vreme tako milo ... toda pogled na bežeče grške vojake, podobne razcapanim divjakom, ki so odmetavali orožje, nas je navdal s strahom. Nekaj košar smo napolnili s hrano in kruhom ter tako kot vsi pobegnili v mesto. Cize, osli, voli, konji, koze in ljudje: besna in prestrašena množica se je z vseh strani valila proti Smirni, polnila ceste in se usmerjala proti pristanišču in upanju na rešitev.

»Mislili smo,« je nadaljevala Katerina, kot bi odvijala nit že tisočkrat povedeni pripovedi, »da se je varneje zateči v območje armenske katedrale sv. Štefana, ki stoji sredi pravokotnika, obdanega z debelim obzidjem, visokim od šest do sedem metrov in prekinjenim z debelimi železnimi vrati. Vsi smo odšli tja, od deda do starega hlapca Hovakima, ki je zadnji stopil iz hiše, obrnil velikanski stari ključ v ključavnici in se razjokal, naslonjen z glavo na zid. Jaz sem bila stara sedem let, pozabila sem svojo punčko-princesko, oblečeno v sinji til, in še zdaj se mi ponoči sanja, da me sprašuje, zakaj sem jo zapustila; na srečo sem se spomnila in pograbila materin velikanski rdeči šal, ki naju je resil – mene in Harutiuna –, ko sva ostala sama.

V nepopisni zmedi, ki je nastala, ko so nam končno dovolili zapustiti stavbe katedrale in se zateči v pristanišče, sva izgubila vse in vsakogar. Ženske so odpeljali, mater so kričečo odvlekli za lase, očeta in druge moške so na mestu postrelili, otroci so se porazgubili. S Harutiunom sva se zavila v šal in se zatekla pod mostiček v kotu velikega vrta bogatih gospodov Louludias, s katerega so odmetavali smeti, ter dolge ure mižala.

Ko sva ponovno odprla oči, je že besnel požar. Povsod so poplesavali visoki plameni, kakor zlohotne roke švigali skozi slepa okna palač, se prasketajo podili po ulicah in se sikaje razletavali po dvoriščih za negibnimi, nekako okamnelimi bugenvilejami. Bilo je, kot da jih vodi preudaren um, natančen načrt: uničiti mesto nevernikov, ga očistiti z ognjem. Nore barve so kot meteorji parale pretreseno nebo.«

Harutiun je zavzdihnil in si pogledal roke, nato pa zašepetal: »Pekel je trajal štiri dni, od srede, 13. septembra 1922, do nedelje, 17., in uničil več kot petdeset tisoč poslopij, srce in dušo starega mesta. Ogenj je bil podtaknjen pri armenski četrti, naši četrti *Haynotes*, nato pa se je strašansko hitro razširil. Stiskajoč se v rdeči šal sva pogledala okrog sebe, bila sva sama. Pihal je močan severozahodnik in izhoda ni bilo.

Skozi špranje v prekrižanem šalu, ki je še ohranil nežni vonj po mami, sva kukala na ponoreli svet: toda vročina, ki je vela iz šala, ni bila več mamina, sušila naju je in postajala vsak trenutek hujša. Odbleski vse bližnjega ognja so trepetali v bazenu sredi vrta, na vodi, ki je še pokrivala dno.

V trenutku sva se razumela, Katerina in jaz. Stekla sva k bazenu, potopila šal v ostanek vode in pustila, da jo je vsrkal. Potem sva z vsemi močmi živčno ožela težko volneno tkanino in se tesno zavila vanjo kot rdeč in neroden zapredek, ki se je premikal na štirih, ne vedno usklajenih nogah in poskušal teči, vendar kam? Obkrožal naju je ogenj in – za ognjem – grozeč kordon turških vojakov.«

»Se spominjaš, *mon chéri?*« se je vmešala Katerina, »rešila sva se tako, da sva se zavlekla na drugo stran mostička v ozek rov, po katerem se je navadno zlivala deževnica in ki je bil poln le tri dni v letu, v novembru. Zlezla sva malce naprej, pod zemljo, in mene je bilo strah vsega, ti pa si rekeli, da ni hujšega pajka ali miši ali škorpijona, kot so človeška bitja, ki naju iščejo in se nama bližajo, potiskali si me naprej in naprej po rovu, po neznosnem zraku, dokler nisva prilezla na plano v še mirnem kotu pristanišča.

Toda osvetljenem kot sredi belega dne. Za velikimi, modernimi zgradbami ob obmorskem sprehajališču sva videla ljudi, ki so tekali vznemirjeno kakor ponoreli metulji, se pojavljali in izginjali od enega okna do drugega; in za njimi, nad stavbami, visoke, grozeč zlobne plamene, ki so prasketali v neznosni vročini in napadali hiše, da bi si čim hitreje utrli pot do nezaščitene človeške množice, ki je, stisnjena med ognjem in morjem, napolnila vse kotičke pomolov.

V tistem trenutku se je v najine oči za vedno vtisnila vizija groze in osamljenosti, ki sta naju čakali, naju sama proti širnemu svetu. Nikoli naju ni zapustila in z nikomer je ne moreva deliti.«

»Šal, zdaj že suh, sva uporabila kot plahto,« je resnobno končal Harutiun.

»Rešila sta naju francoska mornarja, ki so ju ganile Katerinine oči, vzela sta naju v naročje, naju ovila s šalom in naju kakor živ zavoj odnesla na ladjo. Toda to je že druga zgoda.« In tesno objel Katerino.

Takrat smo vsi hkrati vstali tudi mi in ju molče oklenili s svojimi rokami.

*Prevedla Irena Trenc Frelih*

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## Katerina and the Fire of Izmir

In the Fifties, a beautiful Greek lady lived in Venice. We used to go to see her for our dancing lessons. Every Thursday we would take the bus from Padua at two o'clock so as to be able to enjoy an hour in the city before the lesson. We had a great time walking around Venice, around its narrow lanes and small squares, and running about excitedly until we grabbed a snack of some exquisite bread from one of the many bakeries of the city. Signora Katerina was fat, vigorous and charming; she always wore multi-coloured shawls and garishly scarves. At her place, records with Greek songs were played all day long, and we learned to dance with handkerchiefs in our hands, the boys with their waistcoat and *fustanella* and the girls with coin necklaces and handkerchiefs crossed on their bosom. But before anything else she taught us the lyrics, with their heartbreakingly stories of love and death, like the *Samiotissa*, the Samos girl, and the song about sunsets, which made our immature voices experience oriental trills and extensions.

Then we began to learn the dances: the *syrtos* from the islands and then the marvellous *kalamatianos*, the *tsakonikos*, the dance of the Cretan labyrinth, and many others, slow and fast, nostalgic and joyous ones. We listened to *kyria* Katerina, whose magic whistle allured us with stories, legends and oriental tales into falling in love with her and with Greece.

One day, which from then on we always called "the black Thursday", we found her sitting stiffly in a kitchen chair, her eyes grim and her face contracted. "Today we won't do anything, children," she told us as if with an effort, "go and play in the square, I've got a headache and I'm nervous."

We too could see that perfectly, but it was not like her. It was true that sometimes she had migraine, but she was theatrical with her pain as well, wrapping around her head coloured handkerchiefs soaked in water and vinegar, talking in a low voice and waving a big fan. Since her migraine would come in the morning, in the afternoon she would begin to feel better, so she would only look weaker and inclined to telling melancholy stories about *palikari*, the heroes of the 1821 war for independence. We gathered around her to hear her tell us in a thin voice, full of drama, and with the help of skilful mime, about the adventures of those daring youngsters or the story of Ali Tepeleni, pasha of Ioannina.

We went down to the square disturbed and curious, but then, after having wandered around aimlessly and with a heavy heart, we decided to return to her and get her to speak. Our devout love was there at her feet, for her we would have stood up against any enemy so that she would talk and share her suffering with us! We would manage to cheer her up, we would listen together to our songs and tried the steps of the last dances.

But now there was someone with her. A large gentleman whom we had never seen before, who was looking at us with a melancholy and slightly

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dull air, breathing heavily. They were drinking coffee. He was holding her hands softly, she was sighing, and when she saw us she said, as if with fatigue: "Children, I introduce you my cousin Harutiu Adamian. He is my only relative and lives in Lausanne. We escaped together from the fire of Izmir."

The sentence did not say much to us, although it sounded impressive. What was Izmir? Obviously a city, but we couldn't make any more of it. Nonetheless, that sentence was enough for us to see that Katerina had yet another story to tell, the most adventurous, the most terrible one, and to acquire a great desire to hear it.

"Now, tell us about the fire of Izmir," we asked all together plaintively. It seemed as if we had by then been tricked out of the most important story. But Katerina said that that day she could only talk to her cousin and gave us a formal appointment for the following week. "A Cross on the heart and a spit on the floor?" we asked her all together; and she made a solemn sign of the Greek cross and spat on the floor with determination, whereupon she sent us away in haste.

The following Thursday we were thoroughly excited. We arrived in Venice panting, under a downpour of rain. I was daydreaming silently and I seemed to have a vision of a big fire, the fire of Izmir that was waiting for us, burning incandescently and inextinguishably behind a thick curtain of water which was soaking our hair and shoes. The damp was entering our heart, together with heavy melancholy, but the water did not put the fire out, and like the image of a volcano that no water can extinguish, from that day on water and fire were united in my mind like two manifestations of a menacing danger.

Signor Harutiu was sitting on the sofa next to Katerina, wrapped up in a dark green luxurious casual jacket, wearing a light yellow tie with a light green silk knot. We looked at him ecstatically, our mouths agape. We liked him immensely and when he laid his big hand on her arm saying: "The children are here, *Katerinoula mou*, now let's drink a *kafedaki* and then let's tell them the story," we nearly applauded him.

"The two of us are the only survivors of our family," she began almost hesitantly, "and each time we see each other we cannot but cry. Our grandfather was an Armenian farmer, he came from a tiny inland village and married a Greek from Izmir, an elegant lady who fell in love with him when she saw him in the market and heard him sing the songs of his village. They had fights with their families and managed to get married and be happy. How much they loved each other! Grandfather Harutiu and grandmother Haroula couldn't be away from each other."

Readily, Harutiu the grandson took from his pocket a sea-green silk handkerchief and she blew her nose theatrically. This comforted us greatly,

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being an undoubted signal that the story had begun well. “We had many relatives,” Katerina continued with a dreamy air, “and we all worked together in the seasons of silkworm rearing, of grape picking and of dried fruit making. The adults tinned the famous Izmir figs and we children were busy with sultanas, dried tomatoes and round melons, which were so big that we formed a group of four to lift them...”

Before he would get lost in his memories, the cousin started to talk to her passionately and for two hours we witnessed a type of duet, a singing of nostalgia and horror. They described to us the beautiful city of Izmir, the pearl of the Ottoman Empire, with its magnificent natural harbour and its diverse population, made up mostly of Greeks, followed by Armenians, Turks, Jews, Levatines.

The city remained undamaged from the devastation of the Great War and its inhabitants were under the illusion that they would be able to continue to have their happy island where the different peoples could go on living together with a view to their commercial endeavours and the prosperity of the inhabitants. But the fair city of Izmir wetted the appetite of many and in May 1919 the Greeks, taking advantage of the weakness of a defeated Turkey, disembarked plunging into a crazy adventure of conquest.

Three years later, in September 1922, the nationalist Turkish army, brilliantly led by the general Mustafa Kemal, reconquered the city. The Greek soldiers, who were exhausted and without a reliable leader, re-embarked hastily and the civilians were left defenceless to the mercy of the conquerors, who were eager for revenge. “We were all reunited at our grandparents’ place, in the Armenian quarter,” Harutiu said. “The times were hard, it was impossible to stay in the country. It was September, the grapes were ripe and the air so sweet... but seeing the Greek soldiers, reduced to a primitive state and clothed in rags, run away and abandon their arms instilled fear in us. We filled some baskets with food and bread and fled to the city, like everyone else. Handcarts, donkeys, oxen, horses, goats and people: an angry and frightened multitude converged upon Izmir from all directions, filling up roads while heading towards the harbour in the hope of salvation.”

“We thought,” Katerina continued as if she was taking up the thread of the story they had told each other a thousand times before, “that it was safer to take refuge in the area around the Armenian Cathedral of Saint Stephen situated in the centre of a rectangle surrounded by solid walls which were between six and seven metres high and were interrupted by several massive metal gates. We all went, including our grandfather and our old servant Hovakim, who left the house last, turned the enormous old key in the key-hole and wept with his head against the wall. I was seven and had forgotten my doll princess, dressed all in blue, of which I still dream by night and it keeps asking me why I abandoned it. Fortunately, I remembered to grab my mother’s enormous red shawl, which saved us, me and Harutiu, when we found ourselves alone.

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"In the unspeakable confusion which took place when we were finally allowed to get out of the cathedral buildings and seek refuge in the harbour, we lost everything and everyone. The women were taken away, my mother was pulled by her hair, screaming; my father and other men were killed on the spot; the children were dispersed. Me and Harutiu wrapped ourselves in the shawl and took shelter under a small bridge where rubbish was thrown, in a corner of the large garden of the rich Louludias family, and we closed our eyes for hours.

"When we opened them again, the fire was raging. High flames were dancing everywhere like evil hands crawling out of the blind windows of the palaces; they crackled as they crossed the roads and exploded with a hiss in the courtyards, behind bougainvilleas, which were motionless, as if petrified. They seemed to be guided by a cunning mind, by a precise goal: to destroy the city of the infidels and purify it by means of fire. Colours gone mad were crossing like meteors the distressed sky."

Sighing and looking at his hands, Harutiu then whispered: "The hell would last for four days, from Wednesday 13 September 1922 to Sunday 17 September, destroying more than fifty thousand buildings, that is the heart and soul of the ancient city. The fire began first in the Armenian quarter, which was our quarter, *Haynots*, then it spread with the utmost speed. We looked around, clinging to each other in the red shawl, and were on our own. A strong northwestern wind was blowing and there was no escape.

"We were spying on the maddened world through the openings of the crossed shawl, which preserved soft perfume mother's; but the emanating heat was not hers any more, it suffocated us getting stronger from one moment to the next. The flickering fire, which was coming closer and closer, was reflected in the pond in the middle of the garden, on the surface of the water still covering the bottom.

"We understood each other immediately, Katerina and me. We ran to the pond and sank the shawl into the small quantity of water that remained, absorbing all of it. Then, with all our forces, we nervously wrung the heavy woollen fabric and wrapped it tightly around our bodies, a red and clumsy cocoon walking on four feet, which were not always in agreement with each other, and trying to run – but where? We were surrounded by the fire and, on the other side of the fire, by a menacing cordon of Turkish soldiers."

"Do you remember, *mon cheri*?" Katerina resumed. "We rescued ourselves slipping across the small bridge into the narrow underground passage which was normally used only as rain water drain and became full for just three days a year, in November. For some time we continued underground, and I was scared of everything, but you said that no spider or mouse was more evil than the human beings that were looking for us and were trying to reach us, and you pushed me on and on, in the unbreathable air of the tunnel, until we got out into the open in a corner of the harbour which was still quiet.

“But it was lit up as if by daylight. Inside the big, modern buildings on the seaside promenade one could see people moving restlessly like butterflies gone mad, who kept on appearing and disappearing as they passed from one window to another; and behind all that, there were high-rising flames glancing maliciously above the buildings and crackling in an unbearable heat so that they seemed to be attacking them to quickly find their way towards the defenceless mass of people who, squeezed between the fire and the sea, filled up every single corner of the wharfs.

“That moment, a vision of horror and solitude which awaited the two of us, who were alone against the big outside world, became for ever fixed in our eyes. It has never disappeared and we cannot share it with anyone.”

“The shawl, which was already dry, served us as our shield,” concluded Harutiu heavily. “We were rescued by two French sailors, who – moved to pity by Katerina’s eyes – took us in their arms, put them around us and took us onto their ship like a living parcel. But this is a different story.” And he clasped Katerina tightly in his arms.

Then we too got up all at the same time, silently, and we surrounded them with our arms.

*Translated by Martina Ožbot and Oliver Currie*



*Foto © Valentin Casarsa*

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# *Miljana Cunta*

Miljana Cunta, rojena leta 1976 v Šempetru pri Gorici, je magistrirala iz angleške viktorijanske poezije na Univerzi v Ljubljani. Bila je odgovorna urednica revije za kulturo *Emzin* ter programska vodja literarnih festivalov Vilenica in Fabula. Je soavtorica *Malega angleško-slovenskega in slovensko-angleškega slovarja*. Iz angleščine je mdr. prevedla izbrane pesmi Gerarda Manleya Hopkinaa in Christine Georgine Rossetti. Svojo poezijo je objavljala v vseh osrednjih literarnih revijah v Sloveniji pa tudi na Hrvaskem in v Italiji ter bila nagrajena na Mladikinem literarnem natečaju. Njen pesniški prvenec *Za pol neba* (2010) je bil nominiran za Veronikino in Jenkovo nagrado. Z družino živi v Ljubljani, a se vedno rada vrača na ljubljeno Primorsko.

Miljana Cunta was born in 1976 in Šempeter pri Gorici in Slovenia. She completed her MA in English Victorian poetry at the University of Ljubljana. She was the editor-in-chief of the Slovene magazine on culture *Emzin* and the programme director of the Vilenica and Fabula literary festivals. She co-authored the *English-Slovene and Slovene-English Pocket Dictionary*. She has translated the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Christina Georgina Rossetti, among others, into Slovene. Her poetry has appeared in all the major literary reviews in Slovenia, and also in Croatia and Italy. She received an award in competition by the *Mladika* literary magazine from Trieste, Italy. Her first poetry collection, titled *Za pol neba* (By Half the Sky, 2010), was shortlisted for the Veronika and Jenko Prize for the best poetry collection of the year and for the last two years, respectively. She lives with her family in Ljubljana, but always enjoys returning her beloved Primorska region.

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## **Nekaj voljnega in mehkega**

Nekaj voljnega in mehkega  
se osuva čez mesto  
ob sončnem zahodu.  
Odelo nas bo. V orjaški kepi  
z majhnim srcem že si bomo dihalni  
za vrat. Izginuli, vsem na očeh  
bomo zarili globoko  
v varnost časa,  
kjer telesa niso obrobljena s koncem,  
pač pa se razlivajo čez rob  
osebnega.

Kjer se dvigne roka  
in voljno in mehko in brezprizivno  
sune v ozko lino vmes.

In tako naprej, v vse smeri.

Rdeče  
nas bo zajel sram  
pod neonskim blagoglasjem.

Obkoljeni z grozo nepremišljenih  
gest, sredi razdejanja,  
bomo morali počakati,  
da sonce vendarle zaide.

Zrak vse redkejši popusti  
objem in ugasne vid  
v valilnici prividov.

Preživila piščeta se stisnejo  
v topel kót pocitka.

*Nismo hoteli, nismo že leli,  
zaspimo, zaspimo, zaspimo,  
noč je.*

## *Rimska impresija*

Noli me tangere

je napis pod sliko  
v cerkvi, kjer spomin  
vrača se k začetkom.  
Na pragu

izhodnih vrat  
se sipka svetloba vsuje  
na čelo  
in se vendorle dotakne

hladne kože.  
Zaprhuta  
stotero golobov  
iznad Piazze Navona  
visoko, še više,  
prebode nebo in

izlije se jutro.  
Spran trg se zaoblji  
okoli vodnjaka  
in vse je voda,

ki teče.  
Neprizadeti pročelji  
minulega,  
vmes midva

v pričakovanju poldneva.

## Za pol neba

Posedali smo kot ptiči  
na najvišjih vrhovih  
sosedove češnje in svetloba  
je lila po dlaneh in čez,  
po vejah in deblu  
do tal. Po pobočju do morja  
so žvrgolele sestradiane želje  
po dnevih brez ur,  
ki smo jih zlagali kot dragocen nakit  
okoli zagorelih vratov  
in se učili, kako se senca  
vedno pomika s soncem.  
Nismo zaklepali vrat hiš  
iz vonja borovcev.  
Vsak je imel svoj ključ,  
ki je odklepal tudi morje  
na ogreti površini,  
da smo padali v shlajene globine  
kot cirkuške opice  
in se vračali vsakič za las  
večji.  
Ko smo zvečer opazovali posledice  
igre, smo molčali,  
ker nismo imeli besede  
za konec,  
ki prihaja vedno od daleč in je majhen,  
kakor pikica na obzorju,  
preden postane ladja,  
velika, če pogledaš od spodaj navzgor,  
za pol neba.

## *Tulipani*

Nekateri  
gojijo tulipane  
v trebuhu:  
vsako jutro občudujojo barve,  
čutijo, kako kaplja po pecljih sonce,  
po sosečini prislruškujejo klepetom,  
da bi jim našli primerna imena.  
Pozno v noč razmišljajo,  
kako do čebulic,  
odpornih na visoke temperature.

Vsakič ko se stemni nebo  
in ostali pomislimo,  
ali ne bodo morda zopet deževale  
žabe in kobilice,  
se zazrejo v vrt, priprejo oči  
in čakajo, da mine.

Vsakič ko ostali  
dvigamo veke,  
da bi uzrli lepoto,  
oni le stegnejo roko.

Vsakič ko ostali  
krenemo na pot,  
si oni razvežejo vezalke  
in stopijo bosí  
naobarvano gredo.

Ko mine, kot vse,  
tudi čas tulipanov,  
se usedejo med gredice in  
počakajo,  
da tudi čakanje, kot vse,  
premine.

Ko mine, kot vse,  
tudi vse,  
priprejo oči  
in mislijo na tulipane.

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## *Something Pliant and Soft*

Something pliant and soft  
is pushing its way through the city  
at sunset.

It will envelop us. In a giant ball  
with a little heart, we'll soon be breathing  
down each other's necks. Vanished, in plain sight  
we'll dig deep into  
the safety of a time  
where bodies are not bordered by an end  
but overflow the brim  
of the personal.

Where a hand is lifted  
and pliantly and softly and unappeasably  
thrusts itself through a narrow window.

And on and on, in all directions.

Red,  
we'll be engulfed by shame  
beneath the euphony of neon.

Surrounded by the horror of unconsidered  
gestures, in the midst of destruction,  
we'll have to wait  
for the sun to set all the same.

The air, thinner and thinner, eases  
its embrace and sight goes out  
in a hatchery of visions.

The surviving chicks press into  
a warm corner of rest.

*We did not want, we did not desire,  
let's sleep, let's sleep, let's sleep,  
it is night.*

*Translated by Rawley Grau*

## *Roman Impression*

Noli me tangere

is the inscription below the painting  
in the church, where memory  
returns to the beginning.  
At the threshold

of the exit door  
fine-grained light pours in  
onto the forehead  
and nevertheless touches

cold skin.  
With a flutter,  
a hundred pigeons  
fly up above Piazza Navona,  
high, even higher,  
piercing the sky and

morning pours out.  
The washed square  
swells  
around the fountain,  
and all is water,

flowing.  
Two unaffected facades  
of the past,  
between them, the two of us

in expectation of noon.

*Translated by Alan McConnell-Duff and Rawley Grau*

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## *By Half the Sky*

We settled like birds  
on the highest tops  
of the neighbour's cherry tree,  
and the light poured over our palms  
and through, over the branches and trunk  
down to the ground. Over the hillslope  
down to the sea, famished desires  
were warbling over days without hours,  
which we arranged like precious jewellery  
around suntanned necks  
and learned how the shadow  
always shifts with the sun.

We did not lock the doors of the house  
made of the scent of the pines.

We each had our own key  
which also unlocked the sea  
on the heated surface,  
so that we fell into the cooled depths  
like circus monkeys  
and each time returned barely by a hair  
bigger.

When in the evening we observed the outcome  
of the game, we were silent,  
since we did not have words  
for the end,  
which always comes from far away and is small,  
like a dot on the horizon  
before it becomes a ship,  
big – if you look upwards from below –

by half the sky.

*Translated by Alan McConnell-Duff*

## *Tulips*

Some  
grow tulips  
in their stomach:  
each morning they wonder at the colours,  
feel the sun dripping over the stems,  
they eavesdrop on the chatter around the neighbourhood  
to find suitable names for them.  
Late into the night they think about  
where they can get bulbs that are  
resistant to high temperatures.

Each time when the sky darkens  
and we others are considering  
whether perhaps it will again rain  
frogs and locusts,  
they peer into the garden, half-close their eyes,  
and wait for it to pass.

Each time when we others  
lift our eyelids  
to catch sight of beauty  
they just stretch out a hand.

Each time when we others  
set out on a journey  
they untie their laces  
and step barefoot  
onto the colourful flowerbed.

When, like all things,  
the time of tulips also passes,  
they sit down among the little flowerbeds  
and wait  
for the waiting also, like all things,  
to pass away.

When, like all things,  
all things also pass,  
they half-close their eyes  
and think of tulips.

*Translated by Alan McConnell-Duff and Rawley Grau*



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# László Darvasi

László Darvasi se je rodil leta 1962 v Törökszentmiklós na Madžarskem. Diplomiral je na Pedagoški akademiji v Szegedu (1986). Do leta 1989 je delal kot učitelj v osnovni šoli, potem se je zaposlil pri dnevniku *Délmagyarország*. Leta 1990 je soustanovil literarno revijo *Pompeji*, pri kateri je deloval do leta 1998. Od leta 1993 redno piše prispevke za literarno revijo *Élet és Irodalom*. Je pisatelj, pesnik in novinar, ki objavlja tudi pod psevdonimom Ernő Szív; med njegova dela sodijo pesniška zbirka *Horger Antal Párizsban* (Antal Horger v Parizu, 1991), zbirki kratkih zgodb *A Borgognoni-féle szomorúság* (Žalost po borgognonsko, 1994) in *A könnyumutatványosok legendája* (Legenda čarodejev solz, 1999) ter zbirki proze *Szerezni egy nőt* (*Do-bití žensko*, 2000), ki je pri Študentski založbi leta 2005 izšla tudi v slovenskem prevodu Marjance Mihelič, in *Virágzabálók* (Požiralcí rož, 2009). Je dobitnik številnih literarnih štipendij in priznanj za književnost, kot sta nagrada za madžarsko knjigo leta (1994) in nagrada »Brücke Berlin« (2005).

László Darvasi was born in 1962 in Törökszentmiklós, Hungary. He graduated from the Pedagogical Academy in Szeged (1986) and worked as a primary school teacher until 1989, after which he joined the daily newspaper *Délmagyarország*. He was one of the co-founders of the *Pompeji* literary magazine (1990), working there until 1998. Since 1993, he has been a contributor to the *Élet és Irodalom* literary magazine. The works of the writer, poet, and journalist, who also writes under the pseudonym Ernő Szív, include the collection of poetry *Horger Antal Párizsban* (Antal Horger in Paris, 1991), the short-story collections *A Borgognoni-féle szomorúság* (Sadness a la Borgognoni, 1994) and *A könnyumutatványosok legendája* (The Legend of the Magicians, 1999), as well as the volumes of prose *Szerezni egy nőt* (To Get a Woman, 2000), which was also translated into Slovene by Marjanca Mihelič and published by the Študentska založba Publishing House in 2005; and *Virágzabálók* (Flower Devourers, 2009). He received many literary grants and accolades, such as the Hungarian Book-of-the-Year-Prize (1994) and the Brücke Berlin Prize (2005).

## Édenkert

### Árulás

Egy napon a férfi azt ígért a nőnek, hogy soha nem fog meghalni. A nő a haját igazgatta, majd tétován a férfi vállára engedte a tenyerét. A férfi kert vándorló árnyait bámulta, alkonyodott. Évek óta éltek a házban. A férfi szeretett a tornácon időzni, innen rálátott a kert virággyására, a tölgyfákra, a világító derekú nyírekre, és a fatörzsekre, ágakra is felkúszó lönök örököld füzéreire. A kert mögött tó kéklett, a távolban hegyek fehér kucsmái magasodtak.

Ahogy ideköltöztek, már az első napon találkoztak idegen halottakkal, akik a part felé hullámzó pázsiton és a lombok által vetett árnyékokon heverésztek, vagy a tó partján időztek. Nem csodálkoztak, hiszen némelyik halott éppen velük érkezett. A nőnek népesebb családja volt, ő több halottal bírt, közülük soknak sír sem jutott. A férfi és a nő olyan korban születtek, amikor nem lehetett minden elhunytat eltemetni.

Soha nem halok meg, mondta a férfi a nőnek azon a napon, és talán bólintott is. Idővel a férfi halottai a nő halottai lettek, s nem volt ez fordítva sem. Természetes dolognak tekintették, hogy a sajátjuknak tekintik a másik gyászait. Ám a halottak is csak olyanok voltak, mint az élők, éppúgy ünnepeltek, társaságokat alkottak, szövetkeztek, árulkodtak és vitatkoztak. Némelyik halott barátságos és nyíltszívű volt, a másik mogorva és hallgatag. S akadtak közük kellemetlen alakok, ezek állandóan pereltek, nyugtalanok voltak, hiábavaló kérdésekkel zaklatták őket, folyvást lázadoztak. A halottakkal többnyire a nő foglalkozott, beszélgetett vagy játszott velük, hallgatta a panaszaikat és az észrevételeiket, néha igyekezett meggyőzni őket, hogy nincs mód visszatérniük az életbe. A halottak a tavaszi rügyek és a kavargó hóhullások mögül, az őszi avarból figyelték őket, halott tekintetük halott tükrén az ő életük tükröződött. Némelyik halott békésen viselte a sorsát, mások folyvást próbálkoztak, visszatértek volna, lehetőségek után kérdezősködtek, akaratoskodtak. Meg lehetett érteni a kifogásait. Egyeseknek igazán a rövidre szabott idő jutott, másokat a sors igazságtalansága, megint másokat az értelemmel föl nem fogható emberi kegyetlenség kínzott meg.

Soha nem halok meg, mondta a férfi azon a napon.

Köszönöm, mondta a nő.

Soha, mondta a férfi.

Köszönöm, mondta a nő.

Ha a halottaknak már nem volt mit mondaniuk, vagy belefáradtak a jogos vagy kevésbé jogos panaszaikba, visszatértek az éjszakába. Tévedés azt hinni, hogy a halottak kizárálag az éji világban lakottak, hogy csak a sötétség hínya elő őket. Számosan voltak halottak, akik egy délután álmoss pillanatába, mások a hajnali ködbe tértek vissza, és aztán különösebb ok

nélkül hosszan elmaradtak, és soká jelentkeztek újra. Ha a férfi a harmattól vagy az esőtől átánya a tért haza, sokáig szürcsölte a forró teát, a bögrét az asszony adta a kezébe.

Némelyik halott nem akart elmeni, állandóan a kertben téblábolt, de mert az efféle szerzetből mégsem volt nyomasztóan sok, a férfi és a nő úgy döntötték, nem csinálnak ebből gondot. Velük maradt néhány halottuk, s ha kipillantottak az ablakon, bármikor láthatták őket. S a kertjük mint-ha segített volna nekik, maga is szabályozta a halottak jelenlétét, mint-ha lombjai, füvei, nyíló és hervadó virágjai, az égi történések fakaszották árnyékfoltok, a lágy permetezéssel hulló vagy vadul csapkodó esők és a szélfúvások révén óvta volna magát a túlzások bonyodalmaitól. A kert soha nem engedett magába annyi halottat, ami a rend felborulását veszélyeztette volna. De ahogy múltak az évek, a kertben tanyát verő élettelen lények száma mégiscsak növekedett, aztán egy-két halott a házba is bejáratos lett, s nem csak afféle régi, örökölt tárgyak, fényképek segítségével, de egy ajtónyikordulásból, a nyári álmukkból fölköltött őszi kabátok illatából is ők köszöntek vissza.

Amikor a férfi beteg volt, a nő ápolta. Amikor a nő gyöngült el, a férfi hozott gyógyszereket a városból, orvost is kerített. A priznicet mennyire szerették. Szerettek teregetni. Szerettek mosni, együtt főzni, szerették a hajnalokat. Olykor a tornácon szerelmeskedtek, és a halottak néztek őket. Egészen közel jöttek, és sóvárogva figyelték a mozdulataikat.

Soha nem halok meg, mondta azon a napon a férfi.

Soha?, kérdezte a nő.

Soha, mondta a férfi.

A nő elemelte a férfi válláról a kezét.

Miért mondod ezt?, kérdezte.

Nem tudom, mondta a férfi,

Biztosan tudod, mondta a nő.

A halottak udvaroltak is. S hiába is tagadták volna, mindkettőjüköt megkísértette a féltékenység zavaros érzése, a férfit különösen dühítette egy pimasz alak, aki föltűnően sokat sugdolozott a nő fülébe. A nő kuncogott, élvezte a férfi gyötrelmét. Azután másnap ő duzzogott, mert a férfi csevegett fölszabadultan egy halott lánnal.

Nem igaz, hogy minden boldogok lettek volna. A maguk módján azonban rájöttek, hogy a boldogtalanság érzése, amiért nyilván mindenket feleltek, bármikor megmutatja magát. S arra gondoltak, a boldogság majd kései beismérésük lesz. Arra gondoltak, eljön majd a pillanat, amikor közösen jelentik be, a legkisebb kétély nélkül állítják, hogy boldogok voltak. S nem az lesz a fontos, hogy ennek az állításnak mennyi igazsága van, hogy így volt-e, hanem az, hogy kimondták.

Egy tavaszi reggel, amikor szokatlanul erős szél zúgatta a fákat, a nő kelt hamarabb. S mert nem akarta zavarni a férfit, a hálóköpenyét magára kapva,

csöndesen osont ki a hálószobából. A kert halvány párában úszott. A lonc bokrok közelében sápadt kisgyerekek időztek, akik a nő testvérei, rokonai voltak, füstkarikákkal, a pártól csillogó faágakkal, levelekkel játszottak. A nő szórakoztott készítette a kávét. Bugyogó vízzel forrázta le az üveghengerbe szort darált kávészemeket, némi mandulaport, vaníliát hintett a fekete vízbe, majd a szűrővel a zaccot óvatosan alányomta. A nő két kézbe fogta a forró bögrét, hagyta, hogy a forró pára az arcát gőzölje. A konyhásztalt bámulta, amely roskadozott a friss zöldségektől, salátáktól, retkek piros fejeitől, paradicsomuktól, a jégsaláta halvány labdájától, valóságos öröngés volt ez, igazán túlzás. De már nem volt mit tenni. Talán meg kellett volna fésülködni. Talán másik papucsba kellett volna belebújni. Talán csak kicsit tovább kellett volna állni, lehunyt szemmel, itt, a konyhában, ahogy mindenig is szokta reggelenként.

A nő fölpillantott, és meglátta meg a férfit.

A férfi kint állt a kertben, a halottakkal beszélgetett.

A férfi maga is halott volt.

A nő letette a kávés bögrét, kiboltadózott a tornára. Bizonyára intett. Bizonyára kiáltott, vagy csak felnyögött, minden esetre a férfi feléje fordította a tekintetét. S e tekintet nem mutatott sem fájdalmat, sem megbánást. Nem kért megbocsátást. Pedig elárulta őt. A nő azt gondolta, hogy a gyalázatos tettek mélyén, nem rosszaság, nem valamiféle alávaló akarat munkál, hanem a hasztalan és hiábavaló ígéretek erőzioja, a be nem váltott szavak elromlása, a szavak, melyek csak szavak maradnak. Nem tudta, mennyi időt töltött a tornácon. Hőség volt, föltámadt a szél, forrón sepregetett a kertben. Elárulták. Sírt is talán, a haját igazgatta. Megszámolta a tornác hamutartójában maradt csikkeket. Mindegyik más méretű volt. Elárulták. A nő a gyász módzatain gondolkodott, ruhákon, melyeket hordani fog, a sír helyén, a szertartáson, a tor eseményén, és azon, hogy elárulták. Képtelen volt visszamenni a hálószobába, ahol a férfi holtteste hevert. Aztán esni kezdett.

És még másnap is esett.

És aztán már nem, nem akart elmúlni.

A férfi a kertben, a lonc bokrok mellett ásta meg a sírt. Olyan könnyű volt a nő teste, hogy a döbbenettől elakadt a lélegzete. Mintha a ruhán kívül nem is lett volna súlya. Nem szólt senki rokonnak, sem ismerősnek, nem értesített senkit. A város felől elért hozzá a harangszó, az elég volt. A tornácról jól láta a megbolygatott föld feketeségét és a kicsiny kereszttet. Még azt akarta, hogy közel maradjanak egymáshoz. Még nem akarta elkerülni a másik vádló pillantását. Tudta, az árulóknak mindenig többet kell dolgoznia. És aztán úgy költözött, mint aki soha nem élt.

## *Edenski vrt*

Izdaja

Nekega dne je moški obljudil ženski, da ne bo nikoli umrl. Ženska mu je urejala lase, nato pa obotavljivo spustila dlani na njegove rame. Moški je strmel v potepuške sence na vrtu, mračilo se je. V hiši sta živelia že več let. Moški se je rad zadrževal na verandi, od koder se je odpiral pogled na cvetlične grede na vrtu, na hraste, na breze svetlikajočih se ledij, na hlode, veje in zimzelene vence vzpenjajočega se kovačnika. Za vrtom se je modrilo jezero, v daljavi so se dvigale bele kučme gorskih vrhov.

Ko sta se priselila sem, sta že prvi dan srečala neznane mrtvece, ki so poležavali na valujoči travi v senci krošenj v smeri proti obali jezera ali se zadrževali na njej. Temu se nista čudila, saj je marsikateri mrtvec prišel prav z njima. Ženska je imela večjo družino, ona je imela več mrtvecev, mnogi od njih niso niti prišli do groba. Moški in ženska sta se rodila v času, ko ni bilo mogoče pokopati vsakega pokojnika.

Nikoli ne bom umrl, je tistega dne moški rekел ženski in nemara zraven tudi pokimal. Sčasoma so postali mrtveci moškega mrtveci ženske in isto je veljalo tudi obratno. Za njiju je bilo nekaj naravnega, da sta enako žalovala za svojimi mrtvimi kot za mrtvimi drugega. Ti mrtveci pa so bili kot živi, ravno tako so praznovali, se družili, se povezovali, izdajali drug drugega, se prerekali. Marsikateri mrtvec je bil prijateljski in odprtrega srca, kakšen drug čemeren in molčeč. Med njimi pa so se našli tudi neprijetni mrtveci, ki so se stalno pravdali in bili nemirni, zaman sta silila vanje z vprašanji zakaj, venomer so se puntali. Z mrtvimi se je v glavnem ukvarjala ženska, z njimi se je pogovarjala ali igrala, poslušala njihove pritožbe in opažanja, včasih jih je poskušala prepričati, da ni načina, ki bi jih vrnili v življenje. Mrtveci so ju opazovali izza pomladanskih popkov in vrtinčastega snežnega meteža, jesenskega suhega listja, v mriškem zrcalu njihovih mrtvih pogledov se je zrcalilo njuno življenje. Marsikateri mrtvec je mirno prenašal svojo usodo, spet drugi so se neumorno poskušali vrniti, spraševali so, kakšne možnosti imajo za to, in kar naprej trmoglavili. Njihove ugovore je mogoče razumeti. Nekaterim je bil v resnici čas kratko odmerjen, druge je mučila nepravičnost usode, tretje človeška krutost, nedojemljiva človeškemu razumu.

Nikoli ne bom umrl, je rekел moški tistega dne.

Hvala, je rekla ženska.

Nikoli, je rekel moški.

Hvala, je rekla ženska.

Če mrtveci niso imeli več ničesar povedati ali so bili že utrujeni od svojega upravičenega ali manj upravičenega pritoževanja, so se vrnili v noč. Zmoteno bi bilo verjeti, da prebivajo mrtveci izključno v nočnem svetu in da jih

prikliče na dan šele tema. Številni mrtveci so se vrnili s sanjavim trenutkom nekega popoldneva, drugi z jutranjo meglo, potem pa brez posebnega razloga za dolgo časa izostali in se nikoli več pojavili. Če se je moški, premočen od rose ali od dežja, vrnil domov, je dolgo srebal vroč čaj iz lončka, ki mu ga je v roke potisnila ženska.

Marsikateri mrtvec ni hotel oditi in je nenehno kolovratil po vrtu, toda ker tovrstnih vendarle ni bilo moteče veliko, sta se moški in ženska odločila, da si zaradi njih ne bosta belila glave. Nekaj mrtvecev je ostalo z njima in če sta pogledala skozi okno, sta jih lahko videla kadar koli. In kot da bi jima bil vrt v pomoč, kot da bi tudi sam uravnaval prisotnost mrtvecev in ju s pomočjo svojih krošenj, trave, razcvetajočih se in venečih rož, madežev senc, ki jih je ustvarilo nebesno dogajanje, blagega škropljena ali divjega zlivanja dežja in pihanja vetra varoval pred zapleti pretiravanj. Vrt ni nikoli spustil vase toliko mrtvecev, da bi lahko porušili red. Toda z leti je število bitij brez življenja, ki so se naselila v vrtu, vendarle naraslo, tako da sta en ali dva mrtveca postala pogosta obiskovalca tudi v hiši, pa ne samo kot stari, podedovani predmeti in fotografije, saj sta odzdravljala že tudi iz škripanja vrat in vonja jesenskih plaščev, vzdramljenih iz poletnih sanj.

Ko je bil moški bolan, ga je ženska negovala. Ko je ženska oslabela, je moški prinesel zdravila iz mesta in priskrbel zdravnika. Kako rada sta imela ovijanje v mokro hladne obkladke. Rada sta obešala perilo. Rada sta prala, skupaj kuhalo, rada sta imela jutranjo zoro. Takrat sta se ljubila na verandi, mrtveci pa so ju gledali. Prišli so čisto blizu in s koprnečim poželenjem opazovali njune gibe.

Nikoli ne bom umrl, je rekel moški tistega dne.

Nikoli? je vprašala ženska.

Nikoli, je rekel moški.

Ženska je dvignila roko z ramena moškega.

Zakaj praviš to? je vprašala.

Ne vem, je odgovoril moški.

Zagotovo veš, je rekla ženska.

Mrtveci so tudi dvorili. In zaman bi zanikali, da je kalen občutek ljubo-sumja spravljal oba v skušnjavo, moškega je jezik zlasti neki neotesanec, ki je nenavadno veliko šepetal ženski v uho. Ženska se je hihitala in uživala v mukah moškega. Naslednjega dne pa je ona kuhalo rilec, ker je moški sproščeno kramljal z nekim mrtvim dekletom.

Ni res, da sta bila vedno srečna. Na svoj način pa sta prišla do spoznanja, da se lahko občutek nesreče, za katerega sta odgovorna oba, pojavi kadar koli. Mislila sta tudi na to, da bosta kasneje prišla do spoznanja sreče. Mislila sta, da bo nastopil trenutek, ko bosta lahko skupaj obelodanila in trdila brez najmanjšega dvoma, da sta bila srečna. In ne bo pomembno to, koliko resnice je tej v trditvi, se pravi, ali je bilo tako, ampak to, da sta to izrekla.

Nekega pomladanskega jutra, ko so drevesa hreščala v nenavadno močnem vetru, je ženska vstala prej. In ker ni želela motiti moškega, se je hitro

ogrnila z jutranjo haljo in tiho smuknila iz spalnice. Vrt se je kopal v rahli meglici. V bližini grmovja kovačnika so se zadrževali majhni bledi otroci, bratje, sorodniki ženske, in se igrali z obročki pare, z drevesnimi vejami in listi, ki so se bleščali od vlage. Ženska je raztreseno pripravila kavo. S klokotajočo vrelo vodo je prelila zmleta kavna zrna v steklenem valju, v črno vodo posula malo mandljevega prahu in vanilije, potem pa s cedilom previdno usmerjala kavno usedlino na dno. Ženska je prijela vroč lonček z obema rokama in pustila, da ji vroča para mehča obraz. Buljila je v kuhinjsko mizo, ki se je šibila pod težo sveže zelenjave, solat, rdečih glavic redkvic, paradižnikov, v bledikasto žogo ledenke, to je bila resnična neobrzdost, pravo pretiravanje. Toda ni bilo več kaj storiti. Morda bi se morala počesati. Morda bi si morala natakniti druge copate. Morda bi morala stati samo še malo dlje, zaprtih oči, tu, v kuhi, kot je imela zjutraj navado. Ženska je dvignila pogled in zagledala moškega.

Moški je stal zunaj na vrtu in se pogovarjal z mrtvimi.

Tudi moški sam je bil mrtvec.

Ženska je odložila lonček s kavo in se opotekla na verando. Gotovo je pomahala. Gotovo je zakričala ali samo zastokala, vsekakor je moški obrnil pogled proti njej. Ta pogled pa ni kazal niti bolečine niti obžalovanja. Ni prosil odpuščanja. Pa čeprav jo je izdal. Ženska je pomislila, da v globini sramotnih dejanj ni na delu zlo ne nizkotna volja, ampak erozija nekoristnih in ničevih obljud, izpridenost neuresničenih besed, besede, ki ostanejo samo besede. Ni vedela, koliko časa je preživela na verandi. Bilo je vroče, vstal je veter in vroče pometal po vrtu. Izdali so jo. Morda je tudi jokala, si uredila lase. Preštela je čike, ki so ostali v pepelniku na verandi. Vsak je bil druge velikosti. Izdali so jo. Ženska je razmišljala o oblikah žalovanja, oblekah, ki jih bo nosila, o mestu za grob, žalni slovesnosti, pogrebščini in o tem, da so jo izdali. Ni bila sposobna iti nazaj v spalnico, kjer je ležalo mrtvo telo moškega. Potem je začelo deževati.

Deževalo je tudi naslednji dan.

In potem ni hotelo, ni hotelo nehati.

Moški je izkopal grob na vrtu poleg grmovja kovačnika. Telo ženske je bilo tako lahko, da mu je od osuplosti zastal dih. Kot da razen obleke ne bi imela nobene teže. Povedal ni nobenemu sorodniku ali znancu, nikomur ni poslal obvestila. Iz mesta jo je doseglo zvonjenje in to je bilo dovolj. Z verande je dobro videl črnino sveta, vrženega iz reda, in majcen križ. Želel je še to, da ostaneta drug blizu drugega. Ni se še želel izogniti obtožuječemu pogledu drugega. Vedel je, da morajo izdajalci vedno delati več. Potem pa se je odselil kot nekdo, ki ni nikoli živel.

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## *Garden of Eden*

Treason

One day the man promised the woman that he would not die. The woman was fixing her hair, then she hesitantly placed the palm of her hand on to his shoulders. The man was gazing at the rambling shades of the garden, it was getting dark. They had been living in that house for several years. The man liked sitting on the porch, from there he could see the flowerbed of the garden, the oaks, the luminous waisted birches, and the evergreen spikes of the branch climber honeysuckle. A blue pond was located behind the garden, white mountain peaks were towering far away.

When they moved here, they had already met unknown dead people on the first day who were lying on the sward wavering to the coast, and on the shadows of the greenery. They were not surprised, because some of the dead arrived with them. The woman had a larger family, so she had more dead people, for a lot of them there was no grave left. The man and the woman were born in an age, when not every dead person could be buried.

I will never die – said the man to the woman that day –, and he also even nodded. In the course of time the dead of the man became the dead of the woman, and it was the same in reverse. They regarded each other's mournings as a matter of course. However the dead were just like the living; they were celebrating, founding communities, co – operating, informing and arguing. Some of the dead were amiable and open – hearted, the others were morose and reticent. There were some unpleasant fellows among them; they were always squabbling, they were anxious, they were bothering them with useless questions, they were rioting on and on. Mostly the woman was caring for the dead; she was chatting or playing with them, she was listening to their complaints and observations; sometimes she was trying to persuade them that there was no way for them to return to life. The dead were watching them from the autumnal dead fallen leaves behind the spring – buds, and the whirling snowfall; their life was reflected on the dead mirror of their dead eyes. Some of them put up with their destinies peacefully; others were constantly trying, they would have returned, they were asking for opportunities, they were stubborn. Their excuses could be understood. Some had to fall back on short time; others were tortured by the injustice of fate, or human cruelty incomprehensible by sense.

I will never die, said the man that day.

Thank you, said the woman.

Never, said the man.

Thank you, said the woman.

When the dead had nothing to say, or were weary of their rightful or less rightful complaints, they returned to the night. It is a mistake to believe

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that the dead were residing only in the nocturnal world; that only darkness can make them appear. There were several dead who returned to one sleepy moment of an afternoon, then they disappeared for a long time for no apparent reason at all, and they came back again very much later. If the man came home got soaked to the skin by dew or by rain, he was slurping the hot tea for long from the mug given into his hands by the woman.

Some of the dead did not want to leave, they were constantly strolling in the garden, but because there were not depressively many from these guys, the man, and the woman decided not to make a fuss of it. Some of their dead stayed with them, so if they looked out of the window, they could see them anytime. It seemed as the garden was giving a hand for them, it was controlling the presence of the dead; it seemed as though it was trying to protect itself from the ravels of exaggerations through its greenery, grasses, blossoming and wilting flowers, the shades caused by the celestial phenomena, the wildly flapping rains, or the rains falling with smooth sprinkles, and the gust of winds. The garden never let as many dead in as it could have endangered order. But as time went by, the number of the lifeless creatures settled down in the garden was increasing after all; then some of the dead showed up as regular guests in the house, and they were not using only old, inherited items, photographies to appear, but their existence was also noticeable in a door creak, or in the scent of the autumnal coats waked from their summer sleep.

When the man was ill, he was nursed by the woman. When the woman was weak, the man brought medicines from town, he also got a doctor. How they loved the cold pack. They liked to hang the washes out to dry. They liked to wash, and cook together, they liked the dawn. Sometimes they were making love on the porch, and the dead were watching them. They got quite close to them, and they were watching their moves wistfully.

I will never die, said the man that day.

Never?, asked the woman.

Never, said the man.

The woman got her hands off the man's shoulders.

Why are you telling me this?, she asked him.

I do not know, said the man.

You must know it, said the woman.

The dead were also courting. No matter how they would have denied, both of them were tempted by the confusing feeling of jealousy; the man was infuriated by especially one cheeky bloke who was whispering strikingly too much into the woman's ears. The woman was chuckling, she enjoyed the sufferings of the man. And she was offended the next day, because the man was chatting loosely with a dead girl.

It is not true that they were always happy. At the same time they realized that the feeling of unhappiness – which both of them were responsible for – could

emerge anytime. And they thought that happiness would be their late confession. It came to their mind that the time would come, when they would announce together that they could claim without the smallest doubt that they had been happy. What will be important is not the fact if this claim is true or not, but the fact that it was announced.

On a spring morning, when an unusually strong wind was boozing the trees, the woman got up earlier. And because she did not want to disturb the man, she got on her negligee, and she quietly slipped out from the bedroom. The garden was floating in a vague mist. Pale children – who were the woman's siblings, and relatives – were loitering around the honeysuckle, playing with smoke rings, boughs in sparkling mist, and leaves. The woman was making the coffee abstractedly. She was drawing the cracked coffee beans – strewed into a glass mug – with boiling water; she sprinkled some almond powder, and vanilla into the black water, then she carefully pressed down the grounds with the filter. The woman was holding the hot mug with two hands, letting the burning steam fuming her face. She was staring at the kitchen – table that was groaning under the fresh vegetables, salads, red heads of radishes, tomatoes, the dim ball of the iceberg lettuce; it was really a rampage, even something very extreme. But there was nothing to do. Perhaps she should have combed her hair. Perhaps she should have had to slip into other slippers. Perhaps she should have stood with closed eyes for a longer time – here in the kitchen –, how she always did in the mornings.

The woman lifted up her eyes, and saw the man.

The man was standing outside in the garden, he was chatting with the dead.

The man himself was also dead.

The woman put down the coffee mug, she fumbled her way to the porch. She must have waved her hand. She must have shouted, or she just moaned, nevertheless the man glanced at her. This look showed neither pain, nor regret. It did not ask for forgiveness. Although it betrayed him. The woman thought that in the deep structures of ingominous acts it was not badness, it was not a kind of abject will which was labouring, but the erosion of the useless and purposeless promises, the failure of the unfulfilled words, the words which just remained words. She did not know how much time she had been spending on the porch. The weather was hot, the wind was getting up, it was warmly sweeping in the garden. She has been betrayed. She might have been crying, she was fixing her hair. She counted the stubs left in the ashtray of the porch. All of them had a different size. She has been betrayed. The woman was thinking about the methods of mourning; about the clothes she would wear, the spot of the grave, the funeral, the events of the thorax, and about the fact that she had been betrayed. She was not able to go back to the bedroom, where the body of the man was lying. Then it started to rain.

And it was still raining the next day.

And then it was not, it did not want to stop.

The man dug the grave in the garden, next to the honeysuckles. The body of the woman was so light that he gasped because of the horror. As if she did not have weight apart from the clothes. He did not tell any of the relatives, or acquaintances what had happened, he did not inform anyone. He was hit by the chime coming from the town, it was enough for him. From the porch he could see the blackness of the fiddled ground, and the small cross quite well. He wanted them to stay close to each other. He did not want to avoid the other's accusing glance. He knew that traitors always had to work more. And then he moved as if he had never been alive before.

*Translated by Kristóf Kálóczi, proofread by Dr. Andrea Papp*



*Foto © Akademiphotos*

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# Dimitré Dinev

Dimitré Dinev se je rodil leta 1968 v Plovdivu v Bolgariji. Leta 1990 je pobegnil v Avstrijo, kjer se je preživelj z različnimi priložnostnimi deli. Diplomiral je iz filozofije in ruske filologije na Univerzi na Dunaju. Romanopisec, eseijist, dramatik in scenarist je leta 1991 začel redno pisati v nemškem jeziku. Med njegova dela sodijo roman *Engelszungen* (Angelski jeziki, 2003), zbirki kratkih zgodb *Die Inschrift* (Epigraf, 2001) in *Ein Licht über dem Kopf* (Luč nad glavo, 2005), zbirka esejev *Barmherzigkeit* (Sočutje, 2010), več dram, med katere sodijo *Russenhuhn* (Ruska kokoš, 1999), *Haut und Himmel* (Koža in nebo, 2006) in *Eine heikle Sache, die Seele* (Kočljiva stvar, duša, 2008); ter scenarij za celovečerni film *Spanien* (Španija, 2011). Med ugledna priznanja, ki jih je prejel za svoje delo, spadata nemška nagrada Adelberta von Chamissa za avtorje, ki pišejo v nemškem jeziku, pri čemer njihov materni jezik ni nemčina (2005), in bolgarski gledališki oskar »Askeer« za najboljše izvirno dramsko besedilo (2007). Nedavno je kot gostujuči pisatelj organizacije One World Foundation bival na Šrilanki. Njegova dela so prevedena v 15 jezikov.

Dimitré Dinev was born in 1968 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. He fled to Austria in 1990 and took on various odd jobs to make ends meet. He obtained a degree in Philosophy and Russian philology from the University of Vienna. The novelist, essayist, playwright, and screenwriter began regularly writing in German in 1991. His works include: the novel *Engelszungen* (Angelic Tongues, 2003), the collections of short stories *Die Inschrift* (The Epigraph, 2001) and *Ein Licht über dem Kopf* (A Light above the Head, 2005), the collection of essays *Barmherzigkeit* (Compassion, 2010); several plays, among them *Russenhuhn* (Russian Chicken, 1999), *Haut und Himmel* (Skin and Sky, 2006), and *Eine heikle Sache, die Seele* (A Slippery Affair, the Soul, 2008); and the script for the movie *Spanien* (Spain, 2011). His literary accolades include the German Adelbert von Chamisso Prize for non-native German language authors (2005) and the Bulgarian theatre Oscar "Askeer" for the best original play (2007). He most recently resided in Sri Lanka as a writer-in-residence fellow of the One World Foundation. His works have been translated into 15 languages.

## **Lass uns Radio hören**

Das Radio hatte im realen Sozialismus einen besonderen Stellenwert. Es war das einzige Gerät mit dem man unmittelbar Kontakt mit dem Westen haben konnte. Um also das Gefühl haben zu können, ein Dissident zu sein, brauchte man nicht mehr als ein gutes Radio, eingestellt auf die Frequenz der Sender „Freies Europa“ oder „The voice of Amerika“. Sammeln-ten sich drei Menschen um ein Radio, um eine Flasche Schnaps zu teilen, konnte man schon von einer Widerstandsbewegung reden. Das Radio war eine wundersame Sache, denn anders als der Schnaps, gab es jedem das Gefühl ein Held zu sein. Und alle liebten es.

Sarko Kischev liebte es auch, doch diesem Gefühl lag eine andere Geschichte zu Grunde. Bis zum Jahr 1987 hatte das Radio so gut wie keine Rolle in seinem Leben gespielt. Im Herbst desselben Jahres sollte sich nun alles ändern. Sarko ging nach Plovdiv, um dort Agronomie zu studieren und mietete ein Zimmer in der Wohnung einer pensionierten Volksschullehrerin. Die Wände dieser Wohnung waren aber so dünn, dass Sarko nicht nur das Blättern im Fotoalbum, das seine Vermieterin sich im Nebenzimmer ansah, hören konnte, sondern auch ihre leisesten Seufzer. All das wäre nicht so bedeutend gewesen, wenn er nicht zwei Wochen später Weneta kennengelernt hätte. Je näher er Weneta aber kam, desto wichtiger wurden die Wände um ihn herum.

Eines Tages war auch die letzte unsichtbare Wand zwischen den beiden gefallen, gleich danach ihre Kleider und wie er es befürchtet hatte, geschah dies in seinem Zimmer. Im Nebenraum rührte die Wohnungsbesitzerin gerade in ihren Kaffee.

„Hier hört man alles“, sagte er außer Atem.

„Schalte das Radio ein“, flüsterte ihm Weneta zu.

Von nun an wurde das Radio ständiger Begleiter ihres Liebeslebens. Es gab kaum eine Sendung, die sie nicht kannten. Mal hörten sie Musik, mal die Nachrichten, mal Berichte über den Wasserstand der Donau, aber auch Abhandlungen über die Erfolge sozialistischer Planwirtschaft und lobende Worte für alle Brigaden, die den Plan vorzeitig erfüllt hatten. So geschah es, dass die beiden immer wenn sie miteinander schlafen wollten, nur einen Satz auszusprechen brauchten. „Lass uns Radio hören“.

Die Sendungen beeinflussten ihre Liebesspiele auf verschiedenste Art und Weise. Während Revolutions- und Partisanenlieder Weneta am stärksten erregten und sie experimentierlustiger, erforderlicher und feuriger machten, konnte Sarko es am längsten wenn er die Reden hoher Parteifunktionäre hörte. Vielleicht weil seine Phantasie mit dem Kommunismus beschäftigt war, dessen Kommen selbst immer weiter und weiter aufgeschoben wurde. Auf diese Weise verband Sarko das Nützliche mit dem Angenehmen, denn das was durch diese Reden fester wurde war nicht allein sein Klassenbewußtsein. Er war nie ein Dissident gewesen, aber auch

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ihm gab das Radio manchmal das Gefühl ein Held zu sein. Leider sollten bald andere Zeiten kommen und mit ihnen auch andere Helden. Nach dem Zusammenbruch des Kommunismus trennte sich Weneta von Sarko, weil ihr Liebesleben nicht mehr so recht funktionieren wollte. Wie sollte es auch. Zwar waren viele neue Sender entstanden, aber die Parteidreden waren verschwunden. Nun war Sarko nichts Festes geblieben. Er hatte keine feste Beziehung, keine feste Arbeit, keinen festen Wohnsitz, geschweige denn ein festes Klassenbewußtsein. Also ging er wie viele andere sein Glück im Westen suchen. Durch eine Ironie des Schicksals schmuggelte man ihn in einem mit Radiogeräten beladenem Laster nach Österreich. So begann, wie er selber später zu sagen pflegte, die längste Sendepause seines Lebens. Doch verglichen mit anderen Einwanderern hatte Sarko Glück. Nach einem Jahr schon konnte er eine eigene Wohnung mieten, nach drei hatte er einen festen Arbeitsplatz. Eine der ersten Sachen, die er sich kaufte, war ein Radio. Er schaltete es aber nie ein. Er wartete.

Obwohl es keinem mehr das Gefühl gab, ein Held zu sein, spielte das Radio weiterhin eine wichtige Rolle im Leben der Einwanderer. Diejenigen, die früher den Sendern des Westens gelauscht hatten, versuchten jetzt mit derselben Inbrunst ihre Heimatsender im Äther zu finden. Es gab auch kaum eine Werkstatt oder Baustelle, wo nicht Radio gehört wurde. Nicht zufällig waren die ersten Sätze, die Einwanderer akzentfrei aussprechen konnten den Radiowerbungen entliehen. „Schau in die Krone“ sangen Sarkos polnische Kollegen oft auf der Baustelle, während sie Beton mischten. Sarko dagegen suchte nie einen Sender und schaltete kein Radio ein. Er wischte nur ab und zu den Staub von seinem Gerät und wartete.

Eines Tages wurde sein Warten belohnt. Bei der Taufe der Tochter eines Kollegen aus Serbien, lernte er nach dem vierten Sliowitz Jasminka kennen.

„Wenn du Lust hast, können wir zu mir gehen“, sagte er, als das Fest zur Neige ging.

„Und was sollen wir dort tun?“ Die Frage schien einen Teil ihrer Lippenfarbe fortgewischt zu haben, denn sogleich zog sie einen Lippenstift aus der Handtasche und schminkte sie nach. Sarko holte tief Luft, denn er hatte 7 Jahre, 3 Monate und 12 Tage gewartet, um diesen Satz wieder aussprechen zu können.

„Radio hören“, sagte er laut.

## **Kein Wunder**

Die Sonne scheint, die Hitze steigt, drei Schwarzarbeiter bauen in Wien für sechs Euro die Stunde ein Haus. Sie bauen schnell. Sie bauen morgens, sie bauen mittags, sie bauen abends. Bezahlt werden sie freitags oder später, so wie der Herr, der sie gemietet hat, es will. Würde er wollen, dass sein Haus bis an den Himmel reicht, würden sie es gern so hoch bauen. Aber soviel will keiner bezahlen. Der Herr, der sie gemietet hat, ist bescheiden. Nur zwei Stöcke will er und ein Schwimmbecken. Und bezahlen würde er sie am liebsten später.

Also bauen die drei nur zwei Stock hoch und der Herr im Himmel bleibt ruhig, weil die Löhne so niedrig und die Herren auf Erden so geizig sind, dass keiner mehr Interesse hat, einen Turm bis an den Himmel zu bauen.

Die drei Arbeiter kommen aus Osteuropa. Der erste, der Meister, ist Tscheche. Seit 50 Wintern ist er auf dieser Welt, seit fünf Sommern in Wien. Sein Name ist Karel Nemetz, sein Gesicht noch jung, seine Augen klein und blau, sein Kopf kahl, seine Gedanken in der Heimat, sein Deutsch gut. Er hat auch in Italien gearbeitet. Mit seinem Vater und seinem Sohn hat er dort gearbeitet. Äpfel haben sie gepflückt. Schwere Arbeit soll das gewesen sein. Auf die Bäume hätten sie klettern müssen. Auf dem einen sein 70jähriger Vater, auf dem anderen sein 22jähriger Sohn und in der Mitte er, Karel. Nicht nur die Männer der Familie Nemetz, alle Männer der Strasse „Pobeda“ in Brno hingen in italienischen Äpfelbäumen. Hinauf und hinunter hatte man sie gehetzt, für vier Euro die Stunde. Schlimm. Sehr schlimm. Danach hat Karel in Österreich bessere Arbeiten gefunden.

Sein Vater sei leider inzwischen gestorben, sonst hätte er ihn auch hierher mitgenommen. „Er hat's jetzt ruhig unter der Erde. Keiner kann ihn mehr hetzen, weder hinauf noch hinunter“, sagt Karel während sie bauen.

Der zweite Arbeiter kommt aus Rumänien, heißt Dan, ist 28, lebt seit sieben Jahren illegal in Wien, hat sieben Kilo abgenommen, schickt seinen sieben Geschwistern immer wieder Geld und, obwohl er mit der deutschen Sprache schon gut umgehen kann, weiß er immer noch nicht, was das Wort Wahrheit bedeutet. Er hat es all die Jahre nicht gebraucht. Ein Visum hat er gebraucht, einen Meldezettel, eine Arbeit, aber nie die Wahrheit. Vor ein paar Tagen hat Karel etwas auf deutsch erzählt und das Wort verwendet. Dan hatte es nicht gekannt. Karel versuchte eine Weile, ihm die Bedeutung des Wortes zu erklären, aber bald gab er auf. Es war nicht so wichtig. Dan ist auch ohne die Wahrheit gut zurechtgekommen. Der dritte Arbeiter kennt die Bedeutung vieler Worte noch nicht. Er heißt Juri, ist 33, kommt aus Moldawien, ist vor einem Jahr aus einem Schiff in Italien gestiegen, hat sich unter die Leute gemischt und ist sechs Monate später plötzlich in Wien aufgetaucht. Deutsch spricht er wenig. Am häufigsten gebraucht er zwei Sätze, die er inzwischen tadellos aussprechen

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kann. Beide sind Fragen. „Kommt heute der Chef?“, lautet die eine, „Wie lange sollen wir noch auf unseren Lohn warten?“, die andere.

Nun bauen alle drei gemeinsam ein Haus. Sie bauen morgens, und mittags und abends. Nur bezahlt werden sie, wann der Chef will.

Eines Morgens beginnen Juris Hände zu bluten. Nachts hat er, während er auf der Baustelle in seinem Schlafsack schlief, Stigmata bekommen. Da er nicht versichert ist und sich nicht getraut, die Wunden einem Arzt zu zeigen, bleibt den Menschen ein Wunder und der Kirche ein Heiliger vorenthalten. „Es ist vom Schaufeln“, meint Karel und holt Verbandszeug aus der Apotheke. „Schnell, der Chef darf das nicht sehen. Sonst nimmt er einen anderen“, rät ihm Dan. Juri verbindet seine Hände und arbeitet weiter.

Die Sonne scheint, die Hitze steigt, drei Schwarzarbeiter bauen in Wien für sechs Euro die Stunde ein Haus. Sie sprechen deutsch miteinander. Der erste erzählt viel, am liebsten aber, dass sein Vater nie mehr auf einen Apfelbaum hinauf- oder von einem hinuntergehetzt werden kann. Der zweite erzählt wenig und kennt das Wort Wahrheit immer noch nicht. Der dritte hört zu, schaut mal seine Kollegen an, mal in den Himmel und fragt: „Kommt heute der Chef?“ und „Wie lange sollen wir noch auf unseren Lohn warten?“ Gestern hat er die Stigmata bekommen. Aber keiner soll etwas davon erfahren, sonst verliert er seine Arbeit.

## *Poslušajva radio*

Radio je imel v realsocializmu posebno vlogo. Bil je edina naprava, s pomočjo katere si bil lahko v neposrednem stiku z Zahodom. Če si torej hotel imeti občutek, da si disident, nisi potreboval drugega kot dober radio, nastavljen na frekvenco oddajnikov »Freies Europa« ali »The voice of Amerika«. Če so se okoli radia zbrali trije ljudje, da bi si delili steklenico žganja, si že lahko govoril o odporniškem gibanju. Radio je bil prečudovita stvar, kajti za razliko od žganja je vsakomur dajal občutek, da je junak. In vsi so ga imeli radi.

Rad pa ga je imel tudi Sarko Kischev, toda za to čustvo je bila kriva neka druga zgodba. Radio ni v njegovem življenju igral tako rekoč nobene vloge do leta 1987. Jeseni prav tistega leta pa se je vse spremenilo. Sarko je odšel v Plovdiv, da bi tam študiral agronomijo, in tako je najel sobo v stanovanju upokojene osnovnošolske učiteljice. Toda stene tega stanovanja so bile zelo tanke in Sarko ni slišal le listanja po foto albumu, ki si ga je v sosednji sobi ogledovala njegova najemodajalka, temveč tudi njene najtiše vzdihljaje. Vse skupaj ne bi bilo tako pomembno, če ne bi dva tedna pozneje spoznal Wenete. In bliže kot mu je bila Weneta, tem bolj pomembne so bile stene okoli njiju.

Nekega dne je padla še zadnja nevidna stena med njima, takoj zatem še njuna oblačila, in kot se je bal, se je to zgodilo v njegovi sobi. V sosednjem prostoru je lastnica stanovanja ravno mešala po skodelici kave.

»Tukaj se vse sliši,« je zadihano reklo.

»Prižgi radio,« mu je zašepetala Weneta.

Odtlej je bil radio stalni spremljevalec njunega ljubezenskega življenja. Skorajda ni bilo oddaje, ki je ne bi poznala. Včasih sta poslušala glasbo, včasih poročila, včasih novice o vodostaju Donave, pa tudi uradna poročila o uspešnosti socialističnega planskega gospodarstva in hvalnice vsem brigadam, ki so plane predčasno dosegle. Tako je prišlo do tega, da sta takrat, ko sta se hotela ljubiti, morala izgovoriti le en stavek. »Poslušajva radio.«

Oddaje so najrazličnejše vplivale na njune ljubezenske igrice. Medtem ko so Weneto najbolj vzbujale revolucionarne in partizanske pesmi, jo navduševale za eksperimentiranje, odkrivanje ter jo podžigale, je bil Sarko najbolj vzdržljiv, če je poslušal govore visokih partijskih funkcionarjev. Morda zato, ker je bila njegova domišljija zaposlena s komunizmom, katerega prihod je bil vedno znova odložen. Tako je Sarko združeval prijetno s koristnim, kajti to, kar je med temi govorji postal bolj trdno, ni bila le njegova razredna pripadnost. Nikoli ni bil disident, vendar je radio včasih tudi njemu dajal občutek, da je junak. Žal pa so kmalu prišli drugačni časi in z njimi tudi drugačni junaki. Po padcu komunizma je Weneta pustila Sarka, ker njuno ljubezensko življenje preprosto ni več funkcionalo. Le kako naj bi. Pojavilo se je sicer veliko novih oddajnikov, ampak izginili so partijski govorji. Sarko zdaj ni imel ničesar trdnega več. Ni imel trdne zvezze, ne trdnega delovnega razmerja, ne trdne strehe nad glavo, kaj šele trdne razredne pripadnosti. Tako je šel kot veliko drugih iskat srečo na Zahod.

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Po ironičnem naključju so ga pretihotapili v Avstrijo prav v tovornjaku z radijskimi sprejemniki. Začela se je, kot se je sam pozneje večkrat izrazil, najdaljša prekinitev oddajanja v njegovem življenu. Toda v primerjavi z drugimi priseljenci je imel Sarko srečo. Že po enem letu si je lahko najel stanovanje, po treh letih pa je imel stalno službo. Ena od prvih reči, ki si jih je kupil, je bil radio. Toda nikoli ga ni prižgal. Čakal je.

Čeprav ni radio nikomur več dajal občutka, da je junak, je imel še naprej pomembno vlogo v življenu priseljencev. Tisti, ki so poprej prisluškovali zahodnim oddajnikom, so zdaj z enako vnemo poskušali v etru najti oddajnike iz domovine. Domala nobene delavnice ali gradbišča ni bilo, kjer ne bi poslušali radia. Ni bilo naključje, da so bili prvi stavki, ki so jih priseljenci znali izgovoriti brez naglasa, iz radijskih reklam. Sarkovi poljski kolegi so na gradbišču pogosto prepevali *Schau in die Krone*, medtem ko so mešali beton. Sarko pa ni nikoli iskal nobenih oddajnikov ali prižigal radia. Le tu in tam je s svoje naprave obriral prah in čakal.

Nekega dne je bilo njegovo čakanje poplačano. Pri krstu hčerke kolega iz Srbije je po četrti slivovki spoznal Jasminko.

»Če hočeš, greva lahko k meni,« je rekel, ko se je zabava bližala koncu.  
»In kaj bova tam?« Vprašanje ji je očitno z ustnic zbrisalo nekaj barve, kajti iz torbice je takoj potegnila šminko in jo osvežila. Sarko je globoko vdihnil, kajti čakal je 7 let, 3 mesece in 12 dni, preden je spet lahko izgovoril ta stavek.

»Poslušala radio,« je glasno rekел.

## Brez čudeža

Sonce sije, vročina narašča, trije delavci na črno, plačani po šest evrov na uro, gradijo hišo na Dunaju. Gradijo hitro. Gradijo zjutraj, gradijo opoldne, gradijo zvečer. Plačo dobijo ob petkih ali pozneje, kakor se zazdi gospodu, ki jih je najel. Če bi hotel, da njegova hiša sega do neba, bi jo z veseljem zgradili tako visoko. Toda toliko ne želi nihče plačati. Gospod, ki jih je najel, je skromen. Hoče le dve nadstropji in bazen. In plačal bi najraje pozneje.

Tako torej trojica gradi le dve nadstropji in gospod v nebesih ostaja miren, kajti plače so tako nizke in gospodje na zemlji tako skopuški, da gradnja stolpa do neba nikogar več ne zanima.

Trije delavci prihajajo iz vzhodne Evrope. Prvi, mojster, je Čeh. Na tem svetu je že petdeset zim in pet poletij na Dunaju. Ime mu je Karel Nemetz, ima mlad obraz, majhne modre oči, plešo, misli v domovini in dobro govori nemško. Delal je tudi že v Italiji. Tam je bil z očetom in sinom. Obirali so jabolka. To je bilo težko delo. Morali so plezati na drevesa. Na prvem njegov sedemdesetletni oče, na drugem dvaindvajsetletni sin in na sredini on, Karel. A ne le moški iz družine Nemetz, vsi moški z ulice *Pobeda* v Brnu so viseli na italijanskih jablanah. Gonili so jih gor in dol, za štiri evre na uro. Hudo. Zelo hudo. Nato je Karel našel boljše delo v Avstriji.

Njegov oče je medtem žal umrl, drugače bi ga vzel s seboj. »Zdaj ima pod zemljo svoj mir. Nihče ga ne more več goniti gor in dol,« pripoveduje Karel, medtem ko gradijo.

Drugi delavec prihaja iz Romunije, ime mu je Dan, star je osemindvajset let, že sedem let živi ilegalno na Dunaju, shujšal je za sedem kilogramov, svojim sedmim bratom in sestram redno pošilja denar in, čeprav mu nemščina ne dela več težav, še vedno ne ve, kaj pomeni beseda resnica. Vsa ta leta je ni potreboval. Potreboval je vizum, potrdilo o bivališču, delo, toda resnice nikoli. Pred nekaj dnevi je Karel pripovedoval nekaj po nemško in uporabil to besedo. Dan je ni poznal. Karel se je nekaj časa trudil, da bi mu obrazložil pomen, a je kmalu obupal. Pa saj niti ni bilo tako pomembno. Dan se dobro znajde tudi brez resnice.

Tretji delavec še ne pozna pomena veliko besed. Ime mu je Juri, star je triintrideset let, prihaja iz Moldavije, pred enim letom se je izkrcal z neke ladje v Italiji, se pomešal med ljudi in se čez šest mesecev nenadoma pojavit na Dunaju. Zna le malo nemško. Najpogosteje uporablja dva stavka, ki se ju je doslej naučil brezhibno izgovoriti. Oba sta vprašanji. »Pride danes šef?« se glasi prvo, »Koliko časa bomo morali še čakati na plačo?« drugo.

Zdaj vsi trije skupaj gradijo hišo. Gradijo zjutraj, opoldne in zvečer. Le plačo bodo dobili takrat, ko bo to hotel šef.

Nekega jutra so Juriju začele krvaveti dlani. Ponoči je, medtem ko je spal v spalni vreči na gradbišču, dobil stigme. Ker ni zavarovan in si ran ne upa

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pokazati zdravniku, človeku preostane le čudež, cerkvi pa svetnik. »To bo od lopate,« meni Karel in iz lekarne prinese obvezе. »Hitro, tega ne sme videti šef. Če ne, bo vzel nekoga drugega,« mu svetuje Dan. Juri si povije dlani in dela naprej.

Sonce sije, vročina narašča, trije delavci na črno, plačani po šest evrov na uro, gradijo hišo na Dunaju. Med sabo govorijo nemško. Prvi veliko pri-poveduje, najraje o tem, da njegovega očeta ne more nikoli več nihče goniti gor in dol z jablan. Drugi pri-poveduje bore malo in še zmeraj ne pozna be-sede resnica. Tretji posluša, včasih pogleda kolega, včasih v nebo in vpraša: »Pride danes šef?« in »Koliko časa bomo morali še čakati na plačo?« Včeraj je dobil stigme. Toda tega ne sme nihče izvedeti, sicer bo ostal brez dela.

*Prevedla Tina Štrancar*

## *Let's Listen to the Radio*

Radio was especially important during real socialism. It was the only instrument that let you come into direct contact with the West. To be able to feel like a dissident, all you needed was a good radio tuned to the frequency of "Radio Free Europe" or "Voice of America." If three people gathered around a radio to split a bottle of schnapps, you could already speak of a resistance movement. Radio was a wondrous thing because, unlike schnapps, it made everybody feel like a hero. And everyone loved it.

Sarko Kischev loved it, too, though his feelings had another story behind them. Until 1987 radio had played next to no role in his life. In the fall of that same year everything would change. Sarko left for Plovdiv to study agronomy and he rented a room from a retired primary school teacher. The walls of this apartment, however, were so thin that Sarko could hear his landlady in the next room, not just as she flipped through the photo album she was looking at, but even her quietest of sighs. None of this would have mattered much had he not met Weneta two weeks later. The closer he came to Weneta, the more important the walls around him became.

One day also the last unseen wall between them fell, immediately followed by their clothes, and, as he had feared, this happened in his room. In the next room the owner of the apartment was at that very moment stirring her coffee.

"You can hear everything here," he said, breathless.

"Turn the radio on," whispered Weneta.

From then on radio became a constant companion to their love life. They knew practically every programme. Sometimes they listened to music, sometimes the news, sometimes reports about the water level of the Danube, but also treatises on the successes of socialist planned economy with their laudatory words for all those brigades that had fulfilled their plan ahead of schedule. And so it was that whenever the two of them wanted to sleep together, they only had to utter a single sentence: "Let's listen to the radio."

The programmes influenced their loving play in a variety of ways. While revolutionary and partisan songs stimulated Weneta the most and made her more eager to experiment, more inventive and fiery, Sarko could go longest if he was listening to speeches by high-ranking party functionaries. Perhaps because his fantasy was caught up in communism, whose own coming was increasingly protracted. This is how Sarko joined the useful to the pleasurable, since not only his class awareness was made firmer by these speeches. He had never been a dissident, but radio sometimes lent him, too, a heroic feeling. Unfortunately other times were soon to come, and with them other heroes. After the collapse of communism Weneta broke up with Sarko because their love life was no longer functioning properly.

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And how could it? True, many new stations had been created, but the party speeches had disappeared. Nothing solid or steady remained for Sarko. He had no steady relationship, no steady employment, no steady place of residence, not to speak of a steady sense of class. And so like many other others he left to try his luck in the West. Through an irony of fate he was smuggled into Austria in a truck loaded up with radios. That's how, as he himself later put it, the longest interruption of programmes in his life began. And yet compared to other immigrants Sarko was fortunate. After just one year he could rent an apartment on his own, and after three years he had steady employment. One of the first things he bought himself was a radio. But he never turned it on. He was waiting.

Even though it no longer gave anyone the feeling that he was a hero, radio continued to play an important role in the lives of immigrants. Those who used to listen to stations from the West now searched the ether with the same ardour to find stations from their homeland. There was hardly a workshop or construction site where they didn't listen to the radio. It was no coincidence that the first sentences that immigrants could pronounce without an accent were borrowed from radio commercials. "*Schau in die Krone*," often sang Sarko's Polish co-workers at the building site as they mixed concrete. Sarko, in contrast, never looked for a station and never switched on a radio. Now and then he merely wiped the dust from his unit and waited.

One day his waiting was rewarded. At the baptism of the daughter of a Serbian co-worker, after the fourth slivovitz, he got to know Jasminka.

"If you feel like it, we can go to my place," he said as the party was dwindling.

"And what should we do there?" The question seemed to have wiped off some of the colour from her lips, since she immediately pulled some lipstick out of her purse and dabbed some more on.

Sarko took a deep breath, for he had waited 7 years, 3 months and 12 days to utter that sentence again.

"Listen to the radio," he said loudly.

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## No Wonder

The sun is shining, the temperature's rising, and in Vienna three illegal workers are building a house for six Euros an hour. They build quickly. They build in the mornings, they build in the afternoons, they build in the evenings. They are paid on Fridays, sometimes later, depending on the mood of the gentleman who hired them. If he wanted his house to reach to the heavens, they would gladly build it that high. But nobody wants to pay them that much. The gentleman who hired them is humble. He wants only two stories and a swimming pool. And he would prefer to pay them some time later.

And so the three of them build up to two stories and the Lord in heaven remains calm because the wages are so low and the lords over the earth are so cheap that nobody is interested anymore in building a tower that may reach unto heaven.

The three workers come from Eastern Europe. The first, the head-builder, is Czech. He's seen 50 winters in this world, and has been in Vienna for five summers. His name is Karel Nemetz, his face is still young, his eyes small and blue, his head bald, his thoughts in the homeland, his German good. He has also worked in Italy. He worked there with his father and his son. They picked apples. It is said to have been hard work. They had to climb trees. In one of them, his 70-year-old father, in the other, his 22-year-old son, and in the middle, him, Karel. Not only the Nemetz family's men, all the men from Pobeda Street in Brno hung from Italian apple trees. They were chased up and down the trees, for four Euros an hour. Bad. Very bad. After that Karel found better work in Austria.

His father has, unfortunately, died in the meantime; otherwise he could have also come here. "It's peaceful for him below ground. Nobody can chase him anymore, up or down," says Karel as they build.

The second worker comes from Romania, is called Dan, is 28, has been living illegally in Vienna for seven years, has lost seven kilograms, always sends money home to his seven siblings and, although he can get by well enough in German, still doesn't know what the word *Wahrheit* means. In all these years he has never needed it. He has needed a visa, a certificate of registration, a job, but never the truth. A few days ago Karel was relating something in German and used the word. Dan did not know it. Karel tried, for a while, to explain the word's meaning to him but soon gave up. It wasn't that important. Dan got along well without the word "truth".

The third worker still doesn't know the meaning of many words. He's called Juri, is 33, comes from Moldavia, got off a ship in Italy a year ago, mixed in with the people and six months later suddenly surfaced in Vienna. He doesn't speak much German. Mostly he uses two sentences, which he has since learned to pronounce irreproachably. Both are questions. "Is the boss

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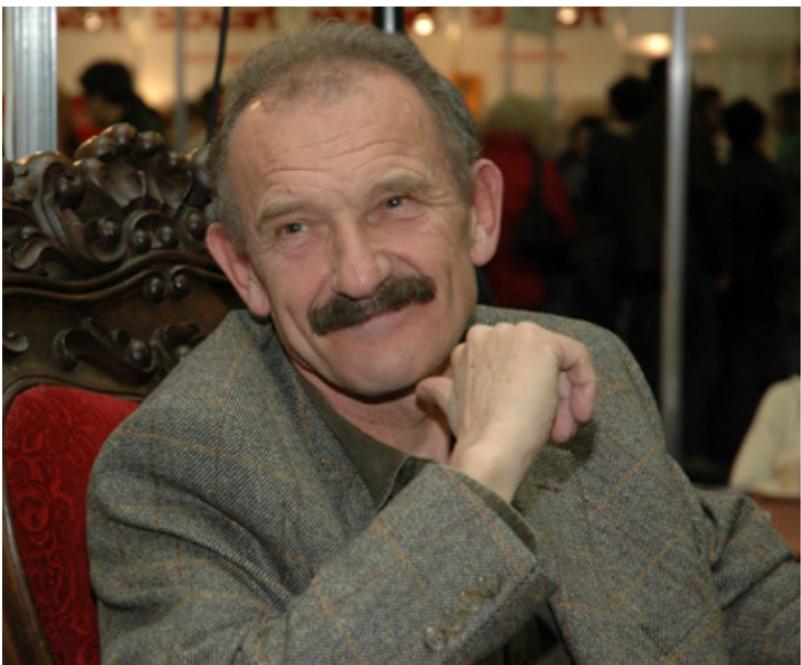
coming today?” is one, “How long do we still have to wait for our wages?”“ the other.

Now the three of them are building a house together. They build in the mornings, and the afternoons and the evenings. They are only paid when the boss feels like paying.

One morning Juri’s hands start to bleed. The stigmata appeared overnight, while he was sleeping in his sleeping bag at the building site. Since he does not have any insurance and since he did not dare to show his wounds to a doctor, the people have been deprived of a miracle and the church of a saint. “It’s from shovelling,” says Karel, and picks up some bandages from the pharmacy. “Be quick,” advises Dan, “don’t let the boss see that, or he’ll hire somebody else.” Juri wraps up his hands and gets back to work.

The sun is shining, the temperature’s rising, in Vienna three illegal workers are building a house for six Euros an hour. They speak German to each other. The first one talks a lot, most happily, however, about the fact that his father can no longer be chased up an apple tree or down from an apple tree. The second does not talk much and still doesn’t know what the word *Wahrheit* means. The third listens, sometimes looks at his colleagues, sometimes into the heavens, and asks, “Is the boss coming today?” and “How long do we still have to wait for our wages?” Yesterday the stigmata appeared on him. But nobody should learn about this, or he’ll lose his job.

*Translated by Jason Blake*



*Foto © Peter Procházka*

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# Dušan Dušek

Dušan Dušek se je rodil leta 1946 v Gbelcah na Slovaškem. Diplomiral je iz geologije in kemije na Univerzi Komenskega v Bratislavi. Preden je leta 1993 postal predavatelj scenaristike na umetniški akademiji (VŠMU) v Bratislavi, je deloval kot urednik pri različnih periodičnih publikacijah in kot samostojni pisatelj. Kot pisatelj, pesnik, scenarist za film in televizijo ter pisec radijskih iger in knjig za otroke je napisal več zbirk kratke proze, kot sta *Peš do neba* (Peš v nebesa, 2000), za katero je prejel nagrado Dominika Tatarke za književnost, in *Naha veta o laske* (Goli stavek o ljubezni, 2010), knjiga za otroke *Dvere do klúčovej dierky* (Vrata v ključavnico, 1987), ki je leta 1993 izšla pri Državni založbi Slovenije v slovenskem prevodu Andreja Rozmana, radijska igra *Muchy v zime* (Zimske muhe, 1992), ki jo je leta 1993 v slovenščino prevedel in priredil Igor Lampret, več scenarijev za celovečerne filme, kot sta *Ja milujem, ty miluješ* (Jaz ljubim, ti ljubiš, 1978) in *Krajinka* (Pokrajina, 2000), ter dve pesniški zbirki. Njegova dela so prevedena v osem jezikov.

Dušan Dušek was born in 1946 in Gbelce, Slovakia. He graduated in geology and chemistry at the Comenius University in Bratislava. He worked as an editor for various periodicals and as a freelance writer before becoming a screenwriting lecturer at the Academy of Performing Arts (VŠMU) in Bratislava in 1993. The works of the writer, poet, screenwriter for film and TV, and author of radio plays and children's books include many collections of short prose such as *Peš do neba* (Walking to Heaven, 2000), which won him the Dominik Tatarka Award for literature (2000), and *Naha veta o laske* (A Naked Sentence about Love, 2010), the children's book *Dvere do klúčovej dierky* (The Door to a Keyhole, 1987), which was translated into Slovene by Andrej Rozman and published by the Državna založba Slovenije Publishing House in 1993; the radio play *Muchy v zime* (Winter Flies, 1992), which was translated and adapted into Slovene by Igor Lampret in 1993; various original scripts for feature films such as *Ja milujem, ty miluješ* (I Love, You Love, 1978), and *Krajinka* (Landscape, 2000), and two collections of poetry. His works have been translated into eight languages.

## *Zvyky*

Adam si pred spaním čistil zuby. Stál nad umývadlom a videl sa v zrkadle. Najprv si dúškom vody vypláčhol ústa, vytláčil pastu na kefku, aj tú strčil pod prúd vody – a potom si dlho a dôkladne drhol všetky plôšky zubov; prešiel aj na ďasná a jemne si pobehal aj po vyplazenom jazyku.

Napoly už spal.

Spoľahol sa na zvyk – a pokojne čakal, až sa ruka sama od seba prestane posúvať po zákutiach ústnej dutiny.

Vzápäť sa pristihol, že robí to isté, čo robil aj pred chvíľou. Opäť si čistil zuby; opäť si na zubnú kefku vytláčil zubnú pastu, vypláčhol si vodou ústa, opäť si šmátral po zuboch. Nenašiel iné vysvetlenie ako to, že teraz si čistí zuby chlapík v zrkadle a Adam je iba jeho odraz.

Napoly ešte spal.

A vtom mu svitlo.

Predtým si povedal slovíčko – už; teraz si povedal – ešte.

Medzitým bola noc, medzitým Adam spal, medzitým sa chlapík v zrkadle už česal.

## *Rozprava o metóde*

Adam ticho závidel. A zároveň obdivoval. V trolejbuse videl pána s najväčším obočím na svete. Na hlave mal klobúk – a pod jeho strechou akoby visela ďalšia strieška zo spojených chlpov, skáčucich nad nosom do voľného priestoru, dve mohutné vlnovky, spoľahlivá ochrana a úschovňa očí do každého počasia. Nepotreboval nijaké slnečné okuliare. Pochytal by do nich dva-tri dažde, ba aj lejaky – a tvár by ostala suchá: ako vo vate. Po výdatnom zaliatí by sa mu oboče premenilo na kríkovú aleju. Žili by v ňom drobné vtáčiky a priateľský hmyz. Mohol by sa chváliť, že sú v nej ukryté hniezda sýkoriek a stehlíkov, čo sú najvrťkejší letci v mestských záhradách, ale našlo by sa aj niekol'ko ľažišť drozdov. A určite aj nejaká straka. A iskrivé pavučiny, cíhajúce na mušky, alebo aspoň na slnko, ktoré by v nich zažínało jemne vytepáné vlákna striebra, prinajmenšom ortuti. Zrazu by sa mu v nich križovali vľudne a tienisté chodníky. Konáriky s lístím by obrástli milostnými vzdychmi. Okrem toho by oboče fungovalo ako mach, ako prívetivá správa o riasach a lišajníkoch, istota priaznivej vlhkosti a živého pareniska, kde sa darí exotickým kvetom, najmä takým oleandrom alebo krikľavým orchideám, čo sú papagáje medzi kvetmi (ako to raz Adamovi povedala Škorica). Za takýchto okolností by sa z niektorého vrabca celkom iste stal kolibrík – a do obočia by z jeho ligotavých pierok vošiel smaragdový jas.

Na najbližej zastávke pán s najväčším obočím na svete vystúpil. Vietor mu odfúkol klobúk, no chytil ho ešte vo vzduchu a prilepil dlaňou na dosť veľkú plešinu, popri ktorej, či skôr pod ňou, z obočia nápadne ubudlo, akoby sa zrazu scvrklo a prestalo oslňovať, čo však ani trochu neubralo z Adamovho obdivu. A tá jeho závisť bola iba poctou prírodnému úkazu. Zamyslel sa.

Vždy je to len trápenie a nemožnosť: napísat akýkoľvek text vysnívaným spôsobom.

## *Plávanie*

Adam počul svoju starobu. Mala štyri nohy, dve a dve, viac z nej nevidel. O to lepšie ju počul. Plavárne uprostred zimy sú vždy tiché.

Prešiel zo spŕch do šatne a stál pri otvorennej skrinke, kde mal šaty, najprv nahý ako prst, postupne sa utieral a obliekal, práve vhupol do spodkov a do tielka z bavlny, do ich dier – a v tej chvíli k nemu z uličky susedných skriniek priletel hlas s výčitkou: „Neprišiel si. Čo si neprišiel? Hovoril si, že prídeš – a neprišiel si.“

Spolu sedem dier, hovoril si Adam, štyri na tielku a tri na spodkoch, pričom ten istý driek, teda jeho, zapĺňa dva otvory – a stihol sa ešte začudovať, že si to doteraz nevšimol.

A iný hlas odpovedal: „Fakt? Fakt som to hovoril? Je to možné, ja už som teraz taký, že aj niečo poviem a zabudnem, že som to povedal, alebo niečo hovorím a myslím na niečo celkom iné. Už ma len toto plávanie drží, už sa len na to tešíم, ako si zaplávam. A ty ešte robíš na tej vrátnici, pri tej žene, čo toľko rozprávala – a furt len o sebe?“

„Nerobím. Nedalo sa to počúvať.“

Adam sa vyklonil spoza skrine, no nikoho nevidel, hlasy starých chlapov vylietali spoza rohu, jeden tenký, druhý ešte tenší, oba krotko veselé, či skôr bodro trasľavé.

„To je dobre, že si ešte môžme zaplávať,“ povedal druhý. „Ale tie naše životy, to bola katastrofa, všetko najhoršie sme zažili. Toto plávanie, to ma drží, aj som volal jedného, že nech ide s nami, nech sem príde, ale ten len stonal, že sa mu nechce, tak som mu povedal, že nech ide na balkón a skočí odtiaľ, bude mať pokoj. No povedal, že sa bojí. Už sa teším do vody.“

„To len veľkí ľudia boli takí statoční, že vládali spáchať samovraždu, taký Hemingway, no takých je málo.“

„Ale to je dobre, že si môžeme takto zaplávať, už od rána sa teším.“

„Aj ja.“

A takisto Adam: mal za sebou dvadsať dĺžok bazénu, čo bol kilometer plávania, hodina času. Zohol sa, oprel sa rukami o podlahu – a v medzere pod skriňami zbadal štyri bosé nohy, dve a dve.

„To nás ešte drží,“ povedal druhý. „To plávanie. Keď si spomeniem na – “  
Ale nespomenul si, zrazu bolo ticho, nohy sa prestali hýbať.

„Na čo?“

A zase bolo ticho.

„Na čo si chceš spomenúť?“ opýtal sa prvý.

„Je to možné?“

„Prosím?“

„Zabudol som si zobrať plavky,“ povedal druhý. „Nemáš nejaké náhradné  
spodky? Aspoň požičať. Operiem ti ich.“

„Nemám,“ povedal prvý.

„Fakt nemáš?“

„Nemám nijaké.“

„Tak už som si zaplával.“

Adama prenikla lútost', až akási vrúcnosť, náhla vlna súcitu. Zároveň sa ro-zsmial, no len ticho, za zubami, nerád by sa prezradil. Potom buchli dvere do spŕch; nohy zmizli. A potom si uvedomil, že už opäť počíta, akoby ani neprestal, dierky a otvory na košeli, na svetri, na remeni, na nohaviciach, na ponožkách, na topánkach, na kabáte, na čiapke. Aj na mokrých plavkách. Spolu 53 dier. To už sa smial nahlas – a ešte dve gombíkové dierky na golieri košelete, na tie zabudol – a dve v nose a dve v ušiach, smial sa, napokon aj oči – a keď ústa so zlým zubom, tak aj zadok s tmou.

## Pokus

Adam cvičí Škoricu, aby sa nebála psov, vodí ju po uličkách okolo ich domu – a drží ju za ruku, keď sa z niektorého dvora vyrúti pes bez náhubku. Ako dieťa zažila šok z toho, že cudzí pes na ulici zaútočil na jej mamu a zranil ju na nohe. Odvtedy sa ich bojí. Mykne sa pri každom zobrechaní. Adam prestrkáva ruky cez ploty a hladká psov po hlavách, pokúša sa dýchať na jej strach, no darmo ju nahovára, aby to aj sama skúšila.

„Najprv mu dás ovoňať ruku,“ hovorí. „A potom ho pohladkáš.“

„To sa ti povie.“

„Neboj sa.“

Za plotom sa vrtí malý špic, celý šťastný, že niekoho vidí, no Škorica váha a nevie sa odhodlať, aby sa ho aspoň dotkla.

„Bojím, bojím,“ povie detsky.

„Tak si to skús na mne.“

„Ako?“

Priloží jej ruku pod nos, chvíľu počká a potom jej zľahka prejde po líci.

„Takto.“

„A ty ma pohryzneš.“

„Čo som pes?“

Škorica opatrne natiahne ruku; nechá si ju ovoňať, potom ho chce pohlaďať, no opäť sa zháči a schová ju za chrbát. Zvládne to až na druhý pokus. Adam jej pobozká prsty – a potom ju uhryzne. Pomôže to. Škorica sa osmelí a pohladká psa za plotom.

## *Styky*

Adam je zaskočený, takmer znehybnel, stišuje hlas. Vlastne je to hlúpost', prečo by ho mal stišovať, keď sa zhovára sám so sebou. Teda: obrazne povedané. O to väčšmi je zaskočený. Stišovanie vnútorného hlasu sa podobá otáčaniu gombíka na starom rádiu, rozdiel je len v tom, že aj pri najnižšej hladine zvuku môže v hlave nahlas kričať – sám na seba. A ešte jeden malý rozdiel: nemôže sa vypnúť.

Obrazne povedané: jeho myšlienky sa vedia vybrať na necudné chodníky. Preto aj po prvých krokoch zastanú. Hanbia sa. Ale potom sa hneď vyhovoria zo zábran a kráčajú priamo k sexu (ako ináč: necudnému). Horšie je to s úchylkami, tu už niet výhovoriek, obrazne povedané, je z toho len pocit akéhosi vypchatého hlasu, čím si Adam hovorí, že sa so svojim vnútorným hlasom môže dať vypchať. To je zvláštne, hovorí si ďalej, sex nikdy nie je necudný, ale myšlienky naň – vždy.

Táto necudnosť je vlastne slast'. Nepomáha nijaké – pŕíť! Oveľa hlasnejšie počuť – hijooó!

Adam sa pred sebou, aj keď len vypchatým hlasom, dosť úboho vyhovára, že ide o odľahčenie témy, o jej rozveselenie. To by hádam mohol uznáť: sám sebe. Pridá hlasitosť. A tak si to uzná. Pretože téma je naozaj smutná, prinajmenšom neveselá, dokonca trápna – a keby poctivo zašiel na koniec chodníka, vysvitlo by, že aj nechutná.

Ide o hemoroidy.

Adam si ich natiera hojivou mastou, vklzne prstom do konečníka, šmyk tam, šmyk sem, pričom tam je dnu, sem je von, aby to mal čo najrýchlejšie za sebou, no ani krátkosť času nezabráni, aby si nepredstavil čosi, čo mu sice Nehrozí, ani sa toho Nehrozí, len s tým nemá nič spoločné. Pri ženách: žiaľbohu. Pri chlapoch: chvalabohu. Pretože ide o análny styk. A tak sa z prsta stane penis. Odtiaľ stačí krok na stranu, malý úkrok bokom, aby si spomenul (neklam: pomyslel) na onaniu. Venuje ju (či už spomienku alebo myšlienku) svojej druhej ruke – slávnej pravačke. Práve s jej pomocou sa v ďalekom detstve (neklam) dostával do raja. Napokon (neklame) vláčne zovretie je vždy poruke.

Adam si umýva ruky.

A keď si do dlane pravačky zovrie ukazovák ľavej ruky, uvedomí si, ba aj si to povie, že vlastne súložia.

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Vystačia si aj bez Adama.  
A jeho vypchateľného hlasu.  
A bez jeho necudných myšlienok.

## ***Slávnostné otvorenie očí***

Adam každoročne udeľoval svoju malú jarnú cenu. Začal pred piatimi rokmi. Vtedy ju získal posledný sneh, ktorý napadal začiatkom mája, takže hneď sa roztopil, ale Adam ocenil jeho samovražednú odvahu. Nasledujúci rok ju získala Škorica, ktorej vietor na ulici odfukoval čiernu sukňu so zástrihom, až jej bolo vidieť biele nohavičky, čo ju hnevalo, lebo Adam sa jej smial, preto nečakane zašla do obchodu s bielizňou, nechala ho trčať na ulici, kúpila si čiernu náhradu, vzápäť sa v kabínke prezliekla – a už si vietor mohol fúkať kol'ko chcel. Ďalšiu cenu dostali tzv. morušové deti, ktoré Adam objavil na najtenších konárikoch tohto stromu pri ich balkóne, ako sa tam napchávajú vo výškach druhého a tretieho poschodia, takže mal strach, aby odtiaľ nespadli, no najstarší chlapec ho upokojil, že sa nič nemôže stať, pretože s oboma malými sestrami majú v škole z lezenia po stromoch samé jednotky. Vo štvrtom ročníku sa pre nedostatok kandidátov ušla cena vetru, jeho fúkaniu a povievaniu, prípadne aj láskaniu, ale predovšetkým ako najlepšiemu dôkazu o hmotnosti vzduchu. Predposlednú cenu udelil obrázkom pred svojimi očami, čo sa mu tam vynorili po prečítaní novinovej správy – o svadbe lastovičiek: dvojica týchto vtáčikov si nad oknom bytu dokončila svoje typické hlinené hniezdo, obaja sa v ňom usalašili a vystrčili von hlavičky, pričom desiatky ostatných lastovičiek potom v pároch nalietali do ich blízkosti, prudko sa tam obracali a nezvyčajne hlasno švitorili, až ich správanie vyvolávalo predstavu, že mladému páru blahoželali k dokončeniu hniezda a zároveň k sobášu.

Tohtoročnú malú jarnú cenu dostal Adamov kamarát Karas – herec, režisér a výtvarník – za sériu pozvánok, ktoré počas jedného mesiaca rozosielal poštou na niekoľko adres; naštastie aj Adamovi.

Na prvej ho pozýval na vernisáž mračien, ktorá sa uskutočnila dňa 1. mája o 17.00 hodine na nebi strednej Európy. Na ďalšej ho čakalo pozvanie na prezentáciu ranných spevov mestského vtáctva, ktoré sa uskutočnilo 11. mája o 4,30 hodine v parkoch strednej Európy. Potom prišla pozvánka na aukciu závanov jarného vzduchu zo dňa 16. mája o 18,00 hodine vo výbežku vysokého tlaku nad územím strednej Európy. Nasledoval multimedialiálny projekt večerných pohybov, ktorý sa uskutočnil 19. mája o 21,00 hod. v uliciach strednej Európy. Po necelom týždni prišla ešte pozvánka na účasť pri zahájení rastu vybranej zelene v pešich zónach strednej Európy – a vzápäť posledná pozvánka do galérie Mona Lisa na slávnostné otvorenie očí, ktoré sa uskutočnilo dňa 30. mája o 17,00 hodine.

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Všetky pozvánky boli neprenosné a platili pre dve osoby.

Adam z nadšenia a obdivu premenoval svoju malú cenu na veľkú a v duchu ju poslal Karasovi ako výraz úcty, náklonnosti a nehyrnúceho obdivu. Vzápäť cenu zrušil. A založil novú: malú letnú cenu.

Prvým kandidátom bolo more.

## *Navade*

Adam si je pred spanjem umival zobe. Stal je pri umivalniku in se gledal v ogledalu. Najprej si je s curkom vode splaknil usta, iztisnil pasto na ščetko in tudi to potisnil pod vodo – potem pa dolgo in natančno drgnil vse zobne ploskve; ustavil se je tudi pri dlesnih in nežno krožil še po iztegnjenem jeziku.

Napol je že spal.

Zanašal se je na ustaljeno rutino – in mirno čakal, da bo roka sama nehala premikati ščetko po kotičkih ustne votline.

Obenem se je zalotil, da dela natanko to, kar je delal že malo prej. Spet si je umival zobe; spet si je na zobno ščetko stiskal zobno pasto, si z vodo splaknil usta, spet drgnil po zobeh. Ni imel druge razlage kot to, da si zdaj čisti zobe moški v ogledalu in je Adam samo njegov odsev.

Napol je še spal.

V tem trenutku se mu je posvetilo.

Pred tem je rekel – že; zdaj je rekel – še.

Medtem je bila noč, medtem je Adam spal, medtem se je moški v ogledalu že česal.

## *Razprava o metodi*

Adam je potiho zavidal. In obenem občudoval. V trolejbusu je zagledal gospoda, ki je imel najmočnejše obrvi na svetu. Na glavi je imel klobuk – pod njegovo streho pa je visela nekakšna druga strešica iz povezanih dlačic, ki so poskakovale nad nosom v prazen prostor, dve ogromni krvulji, zanesljiva obramba in zatočišče oči ob vsakem vremenu. Sončnih očal sploh ni potreboval. V obrvi bi ujel samo par kapljic ali celo naliv – in obraz bi ostal suh: kot v vati. Po izdatnem nalivu bi se obrvi spremenile v grmičast drevored. V njem bi živel drobni ptički in prijazen mrces. Lahko bi se pohvalil, da so v njem skrita gnezda sinic in liščkov, ki so najbolj spretni letalci v mestnih vrtovih, našel pa bi se tudi kakšen težji kos. In seveda kakšna sraka. In iskrive pajčevine, ki prezijo na mušice, ali vsaj na sonce, ki bi skoznje sevalo nežna, zglajena vlakna srebra ali celo živega srebra. Naenkrat bi skoznje prodrlje prijazne in senčne stezice. Majhne veje z listjem bi bile porašcene z ljubezenskimi vzdihljaji. Poleg tega bi obrvi delovale kot mah, kot privlačno sporočilo o algah in lišajih, zanesljivost ugodne vlage in živega gojišča, kjer uspevajo eksotične rastline, predvsem kakšen oleander ali kričeče orhideje, ki so kot papagaji med rožami (kot je to Adamu nekoč omenila Škorjica). V takšnih okoliščinah bi iz navadnega vrabca čisto zagotovo lahko nastal kolibri – in v obrveh bi se iz njegovih svetlikajočih peresc prikazala smaragdna jasnina.

Na najbližjem postajališču je gospod z najmočnejšimi obrvmi na svetu izstopil. Veter mu je odpihnil klobuk, vendar ga je še v zraku ujel in ga z dlanjo prilepil na precej veliko plešo, ob kateri, bolje rečeno pod njo, so obrvi postale neznatne, kot bi se zgubale in prenehale izžarevati, kar pa ni niti malo zmanjšalo Adamovega občudovanja. Tudi ta njegova zavist je bila izraz čisto naravnega spoštovanja.

Zamislil se je.

Samo težave in neuresničljivost: da bi kakršno koli besedilo nastalo na zasanjan način.

## *Plavanje*

Adam je slišal svojo starost. Imela je štiri noge, dve in dve, več kot to ni videl. Veliko bolje pa jo je slišal. Bazen sredi zime so vedno tihi.

Od tušev je šel proti garderobi in stal pred odprto omarico, kjer je imel oblačila, najprej takšen, kot ga je rodila mati, počasi se je brisal in oblačil, najprej je skočil v bombažne spodnjice in spodnjo majico, v njihove luknje – in v tistem trenutku je izza sosednje omarice priletelo očitajoče:

»Ni te bilo. Zakaj nisi prišel? Rekel si, da prideš, pa nisi.«

Vse skupaj sedem lukenj, si je prigovarjal Adam, štiri na majici in tri na spodnjicah, pa vendorle isti trup, torej njegov, zapoljuje dve odprtini – ob tem se je še utegnil začuditi, da tega ni opazil še nikoli prej.

Drugi je odgovoril: »A res? A to sem rekel? Čisto mogoče, se mi dogaja, da nekaj rečem, potem pa pozabim, da sem to rekel, ali pa nekaj rečem in mislim na nekaj čisto drugega. Samo še to plavanje me drži pokonci, samo tega se še veselim, kako bom zaplaval. A ti si še vratar, tam pri tisti ženski, ki ves čas samo govori – in to samo o sebi?«

»Ne, nisem več tam. Tega se ni dalo več poslušati.«

Adam se je sklonil pod omarico, videl pa ni nikogar, glasova starejših gospodov sta pridušeno poletavala okrog vogala, eden je bil tanek, drug še tanjši, oba krotko vesela ali pa kar rezko tresoča.

»Fino, da lahko še plavava,« je rekel drugi. »Najino življenje je bilo res katastrofa, kaj vse sva preživel. Tole plavanje, samo to me še drži pokonci, tudi jaz sem nekoga povabil, da bi prišel z nama, da naj pride, ampak je rekel, da se mu ne da, pa sem mu rekel, da naj stopi na balkon in od tam skoči, pa bo imel mir. Pa mi je rekel, da se boji. Komaj čakam na vodo.«

»Samo veliki ljudje so bili tako močni, da so naredili samomor, recimo Hemingway, ampak takšnih je malo.«

»Ampak res je dobro, da lahko greva plavat, že od jutra se veselim.«

»Tudi jaz.«

In prav tako Adam: preplaval je že dvajset dolžin, to je kilometer plavanja in ena ura časa. Sklonil se je, se z rokami oprl ob tla – in v vmesnem prostoru med omaricami opazil štiri bose noge, dve in dve.

»To naju še drži pokonci,« je rekел drugi. »To plavanje. Če se spomnim na –« Vendar se ni spomnil, naenkrat je bilo vse tiho, noge se niso več premikale.

»Kaj?«

In spet je bilo tiho.

»Kaj si se spomnil?«

»Pa to ni res!«

»Prosim?«

»Kopalke sem pozabil,« je rekel drugi. »Imaš kakšne rezervne gate? Samo za posodit. Ti jih bom opral.«

»Nimam,« je rekel prvi.

»A res nimaš?«

»Nimam, ne.«

»Toliko o plavanju za danes.«

Adama je prevzelo obžalovanje, skorajda nekakšna toplina, hitri val sočutja. Obenem pa se je nasmehnil, samo potihem, za zobmi, ni se hotel izdati. Potem so se zaloputnila vrata od tuša; noge so izginile. In potem je ugotovil, da spet šteje, kot da sploh ne bi nehal, luknje in odprtine na srajci, na puloverju, na pasu, na hlačah, nogavicah, na čevljih, plašču, na kapi. In na mokrih kopalkah. Vse skupaj 53 lukenj. In že se je smejal naglas – in še dve luknji za gumbe na ovratniku srajce, na ti dve je pozabil – in dve v nosu in dve v ušesih, smejal se je, konec koncev tudi oči – in če štejemo tudi usta z načetim zobom, potem tudi zadnjica s temo.

## *Poskus*

Adam trenira Škorjico, da se ne bi več bala psov, vodi jo po ozkih ulicah okrog njune hiše – prime jo za roko, če s kakšnega dvorišča steče pes brez nagobčnika. Kot otrok je videla, da je nek tuj pes na ulici napadel njeni mamo in jo ugriznil v nogo. Od takrat se jih boji. Zdrzne se ob vsakem laježu. Adam steguje roko čez plot in boža pse po glavah, poskuša pregnati njen strah, ampak zaman jo prepričuje, da bi tudi sama poskusila.

»Najprej naj povoha twojo roko,« pravi. »Potem pa ga pobožaš.«

»To je lahko reči.«

»Ne boj se.«

Za plotom se vrti mali špic, ves vesel, da nekoga vidi, Škorjica pa je negotova, ne upa se odločiti, da bi se ga vsaj dotaknila.

»Bojim se, bojim,« reče otroško.

»Pa poskusi na meni.«

»Kako?«

Vzame njeno roko in jo potisne pod nos, trenutek počaka in potem jo narahlo poboža po licu ...

»Tako.«

»Ugriznil me boš.«

»A sem pes?«

Škorjica previdno stegne roko; pusti, da jo ovoha, potem ga hoče pobožati, on pa jo takoj spet skrči in skrije za hrbet. Šele drugič ji uspe. Adam poljubi njene prste – in potem jo ugrizne. To pomaga. Škorjica se opogumi in poboža psa za plotom.

## *Stiki*

Adam je pretresen, skorajda obstane, utiša glas. Pravzaprav je neumno, zakaj bi utišal glas, če se pogovarja sam s sabo. Torej: z drugimi besedami. Toliko bolj je pretresen. Utisanje notranjega glasu je podobno obračanju gumba na starem radiu, razlika je samo v tem, da lahko tudi pri najnižji frekvenci zvoka v glavi naglas kriči – sam nase. In še ena majhna razlika: ne da se ga izklopiti.

Z drugimi besedami: njegove misli se lahko podajo na nespodobna pota. Zato po prvih korakih zastanejo. Sram jih je. Potem pa se kaj hitro znebijo predsodkov in gredo naravnost k seksu (kako drugače: nespodobnemu). Huje je s perverznostjo, tam ni več izgovorov, drugače rečeno, ostane samo občutek skorajda kosmatega glasu, s katerim Adam sam sebi pravi, da lahko nasprotuje svojemu notranjemu glasu. To je pa res čudno, si prigovarja, seks nikoli ni nespodoben, misli o njem pa – vedno.

Ta nespodobnost je pravzaprav slast. Ne pomaga – phhhhhh! Veliko glasneje je slišati – hijaaaaaaaa!

Adam se pred samim sabo, čeprav samo s kosmatim glasom, bolj slabo izgovarja, da samo rahlja temo, jo razveseljuje. Lahko pa bi priznal: sam sebi. Povzdigne glas. In tako tudi prizna. Ker je ta tema res žalostna oziroma vsaj ne vesela, dejansko neprijetna – in če bi občutljivo stopil čisto na konec poti, bi se izkazalo, da je celo ogabna.

Za hemeroide gre.

Adam si jih maže z mastjo za celjenje, prst potisne v zadnjico, smuk tja, smuk nazaj, tja pomeni noter, nazaj pa ven, da bi bilo čim hitreje mimo, ampak tudi kratkost časa ga ne ustavi, da si ne bi predstavljal nečesa, kar mu sicer ne grozi in ga tega ni groza, dejansko pa s tem nima nič. Pri ženskah: na žalost. Pri fantih: hvala bogu. Ker gre za analni stik. In tako iz prsta nastane penis. Od koder je samo še korak naprej, malo stran, da bi se

spomnil (ne laži: je pomislil) na onanijo. Posveča ji (spominu ali pa misli) svojo drugo roko – slavno desnico. Prav z njeno pomočjo je v davnem otroštvu (ne laži) vstopal v raj. Konec koncev (ne laže), prožna vdanošč je vedno pri roki.

Adam si umiva roke.

In ko si v dlan desnice stisne kazalec leve roke, mu pride na misel in si tudi pove, da pravzaprav seksata.

Tudi brez Adama si zadostujeta.

In njegovega kosmatega glasu.

In brez njegovih nespodobnih misli.

## *Slavnostno odprtje oči*

Adam vsako leto podeljuje svojo malo pomladno nagrado. Začel je pred petimi leti. Takrat je dobil nagrado zadnji sneg, ki je zapadel v začetku maja in se tudi takoj stopil, ampak Adam je cenil njegov samomorilski pogum. Naslednje leto jo je dobila Škorjica, ki ji je veter na ulici dvignil črno krilo z razporkom, da so se pokazale bele spodnjice in Adam se je smejal, kar jo je tako razjezilo, da je čisto nepričakovano odšla v trgovino s spodnjim perilom, ga pustila stati na ulici, kupila črno rezervo, se v kabini preoblekla – in veter je lahko pihal, kolikor je hotel. Naslednjo nagrado so dobili t. i. murvini otroci, ki jih je Adam odkril na najbolj tankih vejah tega drevesa pri njihovem balkonu, kako plezajo gor v višini drugega ali tretjega nadstropja, tako da ga je bilo strah, da ne bi padli, najstarejši fant pa ga je pomiril, da se ne bo nič zgodilo, ker imajo vsi trije – tako on kot njegovi mali sestri – v šoli pri plezanju po drevesih same petke. Četrto leto je zaradi pomanjkanja kandidatov pripadla nagrada vетru, njegovemu pihanju in popihavanju, mogoče tudi ljubkovjanju, predvsem pa kot najboljši dokaz, da zrak obstaja – se premika – je materialen. Predzadnjo nagrado je podelil podobam pred svojimi očmi, ki so se mu prikazale ob branju časopisne novice – o poroki lastovičk: lastovičji par si je pod oknom stanovanja naredil svoje tipično glineno gnezdo, namestila sta se v njem in kukala ven z glavicama, potem pa je priletelo k njima na desetine lastovičk v parih, tam so se vrteli in tako nenavadno glasno čivkali, da je bilo videti, kot da mlademu paru čestitajo za dokončanje gnezda in tudi za poroko.

Letos je malo pomladno nagrado dobil Adamov prijatelj Karas – igralec, režiser in likovni umetnik – za celo vrsto povabil, ki jih je v razponu enega meseca razposlal po pošti na kar nekaj naslovov; na srečo tudi Adamu.

Prvo povabilo je bilo na otvoritev mraka, ki se je zgodila 1. maja ob 17. uri na nebu srednje Evrope. Na drugem ga je čakalo povabilo na predstavitev jutranjega petja mestnih ptičev, ki se je zgodilo 11. maja ob 4.30 v parkih

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srednje Evrope. Potem je prišlo povabilo na dražbo vetrov pomladnega zraka dne 16. maja ob 18. uri na območju visokega zračnega pritiska nad srednjo Evropo. Sledil je multimedijijski projekt večernih premikov, ki se je zgodil 19. maja ob 21. uri na ulicah srednje Evrope. Po malo manj kot celem tednu je prišlo še eno povabilo za udeležbo na otvoritvi rasti izbrane zeli na peš conah srednje Evrope – in takoj nato še zadnje povabilo v galerijo Mona Lisa na slavnostno odprtje oči, ki se je zgodilo 30. maja ob 17. uri.

Povabila niso bila prenosljiva in so veljala za dve osebi.

Adam je od navdušenja in občudovanja svojo malo nagrado preimenoval v véliko in jo v mislih poslal Karasu kot izraz spoštovanja, naklonjenosti in večnega občudovanja.

Obenem je ukinil nagrado. In si izmislil novo: malo poletno nagrado.

Prvi kandidat je bilo morje.

*Prevedla Špela Sevšek Šramel*

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## Habits

Adam was cleaning his teeth before going to bed. He was standing at the wash basin and he could see himself in the mirror. First he rinsed out his mouth with a little water, squeezed the toothpaste onto the brush, which he also held under the running water – and then he took his time giving all the surfaces of his teeth a thorough scrubbing; he then moved on to his gums and gently ran the brush over his stuck-out tongue.

He was already half asleep.

He was relying on habit – and was content to wait until his hand stopped moving around all the nooks and crannies in his mouth of its own accord. Suddenly he caught himself doing the same thing he had done a while ago. He was cleaning his teeth again, squeezing paste onto the toothbrush once more, rinsing his mouth with water and foraging around his teeth. He could find no explanation other than it was now the fellow in the mirror who was cleaning his teeth and Adam was just his reflection.

He was still half asleep.

And then it dawned on him.

Before he had used the word “already”; now he had said “still”.

In between had been the night, in between Adam had been sleeping, and in between the fellow in the mirror had already combed his hair.

## *A Treatise On Method*

Adam quietly envied. And at the same time admired. In the trolleybus he'd caught sight of a gentleman with the largest eyebrows in the world. He was wearing a hat – and hanging under its roof there seemed to be another little roof of joining hairs, protruding into the space above his nose, two huge wavy lines, reliable protection and a repository for the eyes in all weathers. He didn't need sunglasses. They could catch two or three rain showers or even downpours and his face would stay dry, as if wrapped in cotton wool. After a thorough soaking his eyebrows would be transformed into an avenue of bushes. Little birds and friendly insects would live in them. He could boast that they were hiding the nests of tits and goldfinches, which are the nimblest fliers in town gardens, but a few of the heavier thrushes would be found there too. And no doubt a magpie. Shimmering cobwebs lying in wait for flies, or at least for the sun, which would light up in them finely hammered threads of silver, or at least of mercury. All of a sudden welcoming, shady paths would cross in them. Branches with leaves would grow over them with amorous sighs. Apart from that the eyebrows would act as moss, as a friendly report on algae and lichens, the certainty of a

favourable dampness and a living hotbed, where exotic flowers flourish, especially those such as oleanders or brightly-coloured orchids, which are the parrots among flowers (Cinnamon once said to Adam). Under such circumstances a sparrow would no doubt become a hummingbird – and its iridescent feathers would lend his eyebrows an emerald shine.

At the next bus stop the gentleman with the largest eyebrows in the world alighted. The wind blew his hat off, but he caught it in the air and with his hand he stuck it down on his largish bald patch, alongside which, or rather under which his eyebrows looked noticeably smaller, as if they had suddenly shrunk and ceased to dazzle, which did not diminish Adam's admiration in the least. That envy of his was only respect for a wonder of nature. He pondered.

It is always tormentingly impossible to write any text in the manner he dreamed of.

## *Swimming*

Adam heard his own old age. It had four feet, two and two; he couldn't see any more of it. But he could hear it all the better for that. Swimming pools are always quiet in the middle of winter.

He'd walked from the showers into the changing room and was standing next to the open locker where his clothes were, first stark naked, but gradually drying himself and getting dressed; he had just slipped into his underpants and cotton vest, into their holes – and at that moment a reproachful voice came from the next row of lockers: "You didn't come. Why didn't you come? You said you'd come – and you didn't."

Seven holes all together, Adam told himself, four in his vest and three in his underpants, while the same trunk, that is, his, fills two openings – and he still managed to wonder why he hadn't noticed that before.

Another voice replied: "Really? Did I really say so? It's quite possible. I'm like that nowadays; I say something and I forget I've said it, or I say something and I mean something quite different. It's only this swimming that keeps me going; I'm already looking forward to having a swim. Are you still working in that porter's office with the woman who talks all the time – and only about herself?"

"No, I'm not. Couldn't listen to it any more."

Adam looked round the locker, but he couldn't see anyone; the voices of the old men were coming from round the corner, one weak and high, the other even more so, both of them tamely merry, or rather cheerfully shaky. "It's a good thing we can still swim," said the second voice. "But our lives have been a disaster; we've lived through the worst of everything. This

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swimming keeps me going. I even invited one man to come here with us, but he only groaned that he didn't feel like it, so I told him to go out onto the balcony and jump, then he wouldn't have anything more to worry about. But he said he was scared to. I'm looking forward to getting into the water."

"Only great people have found the courage to commit suicide; ones like Hemingway, but there aren't many like that."

"Anyway, it's a good thing we can go swimming like this. I've been looking forward to it since the morning."

"So have I."

Adam likewise; he'd already done twenty lengths of the pool, which was a kilometre of swimming, an hour in time. He bent down, supporting himself with his hands on the floor – and in the gap under the lockers he caught sight of four bare feet, two and two.

"This keeps us going," said the second man. "This swimming. When I remember..." But he did not remember; there was a sudden silence, the feet stopped moving.

"What?"

Silence again.

"What did you want to remember?" asked the first man.

"I can't believe it."

"What?"

"I've forgotten to bring my swimming trunks," the second man said. "Haven't you got some spare underpants? At least to lend me. I'll wash them for you."

"No, I haven't," said the first man.

"You really haven't?"

"No, I haven't."

"Then I've had my swim for today."

A sudden wave of sympathy overcame Adam. He felt genuinely sorry. At the same time he laughed, but only quietly, under his breath, because he didn't want to give himself away. Then the door to the showers banged; the feet had disappeared. And then he realised he was once more counting the holes and openings in his shirt, his sweater, belt, trousers, socks, shoes, coat and hat, as if he had never stopped. Those in his wet swimming trunks too. Fifty-three holes all together. This time he laughed out loud – and two more button-holes in the collar of his shirt – he'd forgotten those – and two in his nose and two in his ears, he laughed, his eyes as well, after all – and if he counted his mouth with its bad tooth, then also his bottom with its darkness.

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## *The Experiment*

Adam is training Cinnamon not to be afraid of dogs. He is leading her through the streets around their house – and he holds her hand if any dog without a muzzle comes dashing out of someone's yard. As a child she had a shock when a strange dog attacked her mother in the street and bit her leg. Ever since then she has been afraid of them. Every bark makes her jump. Adam sticks his hands through the fences and strokes the dogs on the head; he tries to ease her fear, but he can't persuade her to try it for herself.

"First you must let him smell your hand," he says. "And then you stroke him."

"That's easier said than done."

"Don't be afraid."

A little spitz is leaping about on the other side of the fence, delighted to see someone, but Cinnamon hesitates and cannot even get up the courage to touch him.

"I'm scared, I'm scared," she says childishly.

"Then try it on me."

"How?"

He puts her hand under his nose, waits a moment and then lightly runs it over his cheek.

"Like this."

"And you'll bite me."

"What do you think I am - a dog?"

Cinnamon cautiously holds out her hand, allows him to smell it and then is about to stroke him but once more draws it back and hides it behind her back. She only succeeds at the second attempt. Adam kisses her fingers – and then gives her a nip. It helps. Skorica plucks up courage and strokes the dog through the fence.

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## *Intercourse*

Adam is taken aback, he is almost transfixed; he lowers his voice. Actually, that's silly; why should he lower it when he's talking to himself. That is: metaphorically speaking. This surprises him all the more. Lowering his inner voice is like turning the knob on an old radio, the only difference being, that at the lowest level of sound he can still shout aloud in his head – at himself. And one more little detail: he can't switch himself off. Metaphorically speaking: his thoughts can set off along improper paths. That's why after the first few steps they come to a halt. They are ashamed. But then they talk themselves out of their inhibitions and make a beeline

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for sex (how else: improper). It's worse with perversities, there's no excuse there; metaphorically speaking, it's just a feeling of having something like a stuffed voice, Adam having told himself that he and his inner voice can go and get stuffed. That's odd, he says to himself: sex is never improper, but thoughts about it – always.

Actually, impropriety is bliss. No *whoa!* helps. *Gee-up!* is to be heard much louder.

Adam gives himself the pretty lame excuse that the intention is to make the subject less serious, more amusing. I guess he could allow himself that. He turns up the volume. He does allow it. Because the topic really is sad or, to say the least, not cheerful, even embarrassing – and if he went the whole way, it would become clear that it is also distasteful.

It is haemorrhoids.

Adam is applying some healing ointment; he slips his finger into his rectum, slip here, slip there, while here is out and there is in, to get it over and done with as soon as possible, but not even the shortness of the time prevents him from imagining something which, though high unlikely, is not against his liking, it simply has nothing to do with him. In the case of women: alas. In the case of men: thank God. Because this is anal intercourse. And so his finger becomes a penis. From there it is only a step off the path, a little step to one side, for him to remember (don't lie: to think of) masturbation. He dedicates it (whether the memory or the thought) to his other hand – his famous right hand. It was with its help that in far-off childhood (don't lie) he found himself in paradise. After all, (he's not lying) the supple squeeze is always at hand.

Adam washes his hands.

When the palm of his right hand closes around the first finger of his left hand, he realises, actually tells himself, that they are in fact having intercourse.

They can manage even without Adam.

And his stuffed voice.

And without his improper thoughts.

## ***A Ceremonial Opening of Eyes***

Every year Adam awarded his own little spring prize. He'd begun this five years ago. On that occasion it had been bestowed on the last snow that fell at the beginning of May, so it melted immediately, but Adam appreciated its suicidal courage. The following year it had been won by Cinnamon, whose skirt with a slit had been blown up by the wind in the street, revealing her white panties, which made her angry, because Adam laughed, so

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she had unexpectedly popped into a lingerie shop, leaving him to hang around in the street, while she bought a black replacement and immediately changed in the cubicle – and then the wind could blow as much as it liked. The next prize went to the “mulberry kids” who Adam found on the slenderest branches of this tree next to their balcony, stuffing themselves at a height of the second or third floor, so he was afraid they might fall, but the oldest boy assured him that nothing could happen, because at school he and his two younger sisters had top marks in tree climbing. In the fourth year, for lack of other candidates, the prize was granted to the wind, its blowing and wafting, or caressing, but above all as the best proof of the weight of the air. He awarded the last but one prize to some pictures that appeared before his eyes when he had finished reading a newspaper report about a wedding of swallows: a pair of these birds had completed their typical clay nest above the window of a flat; they both had made themselves comfortable in it and stuck their heads out, while dozens of other swallows flew close to them in pairs, swiftly turning to look at them and chirping unusually loudly, so their behaviour made you imagine they were congratulating the young pair on finishing their nest and also on their wedding.

This year’s little spring prize went to Adam’s friend Karas – an actor, director and artist – for a series of invitations he sent by post in the course of one month to several addresses; one of them fortunately being Adam.

In the first he invited him to a preview of an exhibition of clouds that took place on 1st May at 5 pm in the sky over Central Europe. The next was an invitation to a performance of morning choruses given by town birds, on 11th May at 4.30 am in Central European parks. Then an invitation arrived to an auction of gusts of spring air on 16th May at 6 pm in a ridge of high pressure over Central Europe. This was followed by a multimedia project of evening movements that took place on 19th May at 9 pm in the streets of Central Europe. Less than a week later came yet one more invitation to participate in the inauguration of the growth of selected greenery in the pedestrian zones of Central Europe – which was quickly followed by the last invitation to the Mona Lisa Gallery for a ceremonial opening of eyes, which took place on 30th May at 5 pm.

All the invitations were non-transferable and for two persons.

Adam was so delighted, he renamed his little spring prize a grand prix and he sent it in spirit to Karas as an expression of respect, affection and undying admiration.

He then immediately abolished the prize and founded a new one: a little summer prize.

The first candidate was the sea.



*Foto © Wallstein Verlag*

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# *Maja Haderlap*

Maja Haderlap se je rodila leta 1961 v Železni Kapli v Avstriji. Študirala je germanistiko in gledališke vede na Univerzi na Dunaju in se po koncu študija zaposlila kot dramaturška in produkcijska asistentka v Ljubljani in Trstu. Med letoma 1989 in 1992 je bila urednica koroške slovenske literarne in kulturne revije *Mladje*, med letoma 1992 in 2007 pa je delovala kot glavna dramaturginja v Mestnem gledališču v Celovcu. Med dela dvojezične avstrijskokoroške pesnice, pisateljice, eseistke in prevajalke spadajo pesniške zbirke *Žalik pesmi* (1983), *Bajalice* (1987), za katero je prejela nagrado Prešernovega sklada za poezijo (1989), in *Gedichte=Pesmi=Poems* (1998) ter roman *Engel des Vergessens* (*Angel pozabe*, 2011), katerega izid v prevodu Štefana Veverja v slovenščino je predviden v letu 2012; zanj je prejela številne nagrade, med drugim nagrado Ingeborg Bachmann (2011) in nagrado Bruna Kreiskega za politično knjigo leta (2012). Leta 1999 je z naslovom *Der Knabe und die Sonne* prevedla v nemščino tudi pesniško zbirko Srečka Kosovela *Deček in sonce*.

Maja Haderlap was born in 1961 in Bad Eisenkappel, Austria. She studied Theatre and German Philology at the University of Vienna. After graduation, she worked as a dramaturgy and production assistant in Ljubljana and Trieste. She edited and published the Carinthian-Slovenian literary and culture magazine *Mladje* between 1989 and 1992 and served as the chief dramaturge at the Klagenfurt City Theatre between 1992 and 2007. The works of the bilingual Carinthian Slovene poet, novelist, essayist, and translator include the collections of poetry *Žalik pesmi* (Salutary Poems, 1983), *Bajalice* (Divining Rods, 1987), for which she received the Prešeren Foundation Award for poetry (1989); *Gedichte=Pesmi=Poems* (1998), and the novel *Engel des Vergessens* (The Angel of Forgetting, 2011), which will be translated into Slovene by Štefan Vever and is due to be published in 2012; it has also won her many awards, among them the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize (2011), and the Bruno Kreisky Award for Political literature (2012). In 1999 she also translated a collection of poetry by the Slovene poet Srečko Kosovel *Deček in sonce* into German as *Der Knabe und die Sonne* (The Boy and the Sun, 1999).

## Engel des Vergessens

(Auszug)

Großmutter hat ihre eigenen Absprachen mit der Natur. Sie glaubt, dass man Feld und Wald freundlich stimmen müsse und nicht mit Versen bekränzen. Ein Gedicht bedeute für die Natur überhaupt nichts, sagt sie, man müsse sich der Natur gegenüber untertäig zeigen.

Sie hat Weidenruten auf dem Dachboden gesammelt, die sie aus den gebundenen Palmbuschen herauszieht, welche jährlich am Palmsonntag in der Kirche geweiht werden. Aus den Weidenstängeln fertigt sie kleine Kreuze an, die wir im Frühjahr auf die Felder tragen, um sie in die gepflügte Erde zu stecken, damit der Kartoffelacker fruchtbar bleibe und der Weizen gedeihe. Wenn sich ein Gewitter zusammenzieht, legt sie Weidenstücke auf die Glut und trägt sie in einer Eisenpfanne durch das Haus. Der bittere Rauch soll die Luft klären und die Gewalten der Atmosphäre besänftigen. Den Glauben an Gott müsse man im Herzen tragen, sagt Großmutter, es genüge nicht, ihn in der Kirche zur Schau zu stellen. Auf die Kirche sei kein Verlass, findet sie, man könne ihr nicht trauen.

Großmutter vertraut nur ungewöhnlichen Zeichen am Himmel und kann sie deuten. Sie glaubt an die Quatemberfeiertage und an den 8. Mai, an dem sie jedes Jahr zur Messe geht, um sich für das Ende der Nazizeit zu bedanken. Sie glaubt an die Sprache, die an den Willen gerichtet ist, nicht an das menschliche Ohr. Sie sagt, dass Worte über eine große Macht verfügten, dass sie Gegenstände verzaubern und Menschen heilen könnten, dass ein besprochenes, mit einer Fürbitte versehenes und bedachtes Brot in Krankheit und Not helfen könne. Ihr älterer Sohn sei von einer Schlange gebissen worden, erzählt sie. Seine Wunde wollte nicht heilen und die Ärzte wussten ihm nicht mehr zu helfen. Sie sei zum alten Rastočnik gegangen, damit er ihr einen Zauber gegen das Schlangengift in das Brot lege. Der alte Rastočnik habe sich jedoch geweigert, weil er fürchtete, das gefährliche Odium zu verstärken. Daraufhin sei sie zur Želodec gewandert, die ihr das Brot geweiht habe. Du giftiges Tier sollst dein Gift zurücknehmen aus diesem Menschen, habe die Želodec vom Schlangengeist erbeten. Ich banne nicht sein Fleisch, ich banne nicht sein Blut, ich banne den schrecklichen Krampf, seien die Worte gewesen, mit denen die Želodec das Brot geweiht habe. Nachdem ihr Sohn jeden Tag einen Bissen von diesem Brot gegessen und ein Vaterunser gebetet habe, ohne am Ende Amen zu sagen, sei er wieder genesen. Das Gift sei aus ihm gewichen. Und das Wort ist Brot geworden und hat in ihm gewohnt, sooft er das heilende Wort eingespeichelt hatte. Das gesprochene Brot, das verzehrte Wort.

Ein Gerstenkorn, eine Entzündung am Augenlid, die ich zuweilen bekomme, kann Großmutter abbeten. Ich müsse auf ihre Fürbitten mit *ne verujem* – ich glaube nicht, antworten und an die Heilung glauben, sagt

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sie. Sie spricht ihre Beschwörung und ahmt mit der Hand über meinem kranken Auge die Bewegungen einer Schnitterin nach. *Ječmen žanjem*, sagt sie, *ječmen žanjem*, während ich wiederhole, dass ich nicht glaube, dass sie die Gerste schneide. Weil ich meinen Zweifel bekenne, sage ich die Wahrheit, und der Wortzauber wirkt, bilde ich mir jedenfalls ein, weiß es jedoch nicht.

Großmutter vertraut mir auch an, dass sie von ihrer Mutter einen Haussegen bekommen habe, als Mitgift, als Wortdach über ihrem Kopf. Sie solle ihn in Notzeiten aufsagen oder an die Tür des Hauses nageln, damit es beschützt bliebe, vor Hagel und Blitz und vor allem Unheil. Sie verwahre diesen Segen in einem Kuvert, das man nicht ungefragt öffnen dürfe. Die Gebete könnten vom Blatt gelesen und berührt werden, allerdings sei es besser, wenn sie auswendig gelernt würden, denn die Wirkung liege im Gesprochenen, nicht im Geschriebenen.

Ich stelle mir vor, wie die Worte aus dem Brief über die Augen in den Kopf steigen und von dort in unbekannte Höhen; wie die Worte auch unberührt, aus dem Kuvert heraus ihre Wirkung entfalten können; wie sie mit der Stimme der Sprechenden einen Wortfittich über die Beschwörer breiten.

Die alte Keberin habe meinem Großvater, bevor er zu den Partisanen gegangen ist, auch einen Segen mitgegeben, in ein samtenes Tuch eingefasst, damit er ihn behüte vor plötzlichem Tod, vor Verrat und vor einer übeln Tat, erzählt Großmutter. Fünf Vaterunser täglich und fünf Ave-Maria sollte er beten. Er habe täglich gebetet und habe überlebt als Partisan. Er kam aus dem Wald zurück. Wie auch jener Mann den Krieg überlebt habe, an den sich Romana aus Remschenig erinnern könne, sagt Großmutter. Romana sei damals, zur Zeit ihrer Verhaftung, kaum zehn Jahre alt gewesen. Man habe sie im Gefängnis in Klagenfurt verhört und an den Haaren gerissen, als ein Partisan ins Zimmer gebracht wurde, den sie nicht kannte und bei dem man den göttlichen Schild, wie er sagte, den *štit božji*, gefunden habe. Die Gestapo habe den Partisan gefragt, wozu das gut sei, und er habe geantwortet, ich stehe unter Gottes Schutz. Daraufhin hätten sie ihn so lange geschlagen, bis er blutüberströmt unter den Schlägen zusammengebrochen sei. Das Mädchen musste alles mit ansehen, aber der Partisan habe überlebt und sei bewusstlos aus dem Zimmer getragen worden. Er hat den Schutz gehabt durch das Wort, sagt Großmutter.

Es schaudert mich. Ich bitte den göttlichen Schild, mich davor zu bewahren, daran denken zu müssen, was er abwenden konnte. Denk nicht darüber nach, sagt Großmutter, du hast zu viel gehört und zu viel geglaubt. Sie lächelt ihr dünnes, verhaltenes Lächeln und schiebt mich aus unserer Kammer hinaus auf den Hof.

Piko läuft bellend an seiner Kette hin und her. Die Hühner rennen mit lautem Gegacker den Wiesenhang hinter unserem Haus hinab. Sie spreizen die Flügel und versuchen zu fliegen.

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Das muss ein Habicht sein, sagt Großmutter, jetzt jagt er schon vor unserer Haustür! Sie werde den Vorfall den Jägern berichten, damit sie den Raubvogel schießen. Mutter kommt mit einem blutenden Hahn im Arm hinter dem Haus hervor. Er habe mit dem Habicht gekämpft, sie musste den Räuber regelrecht vom Hahn herunterreißen, so sehr habe er sich in seine Flügel gekrallt, erzählt sie und stellt das verletzte Tier auf den Boden. Der Hahn schüttelt sich und streckt die blutenden Flügel aus. Hinkend und krähend hüpfte er auf den Stall zu.

Wirst du seine Wunden verbinden, frage ich Mutter.

Das wird schon verheilen, sagt sie, da hilft kein Verbund.

Nachdem wir allein sind, will ich wissen, was ein Partisan sei. Mutter ist überrascht. Hat dir Großmutter wieder ihre Geschichten erzählt? Die Partisanen haben in Erdbunkern gelebt und sich vor den Deutschen versteckt, antwortet sie. Das sei lange her und müsse mich nicht beschäftigen. Großvater, habe Großmutter gesagt, sei auch einer gewesen, sage ich.

Mutter geht wortlos ins Haus. Gleich darauf sehe ich Großmutter ins Freie treten. Von dir lasse ich mir nicht vorschreiben, wie ich das Mädchen zu behandeln habe, von dir nicht, sagt sie vorwurfsvoll und setzt sich an den Brunnen vor der Haustür. Mutter bleibt auf der Hausschwelle stehen. Ich drehe meinen Kopf zu ihr und habe auch Großmutter im Blick. Unmerklich zieht es das niedrige Hausdach zu Boden. Im Brunnen plätschert das Wasser minutenlang in unser Schweigen.

## *Angel pozabe*

(odlomek)

Babica se po svoje sporazumeva z naravo. Misli, da je treba prijazno prisluhniti poljem in gozdovom, ne pa jih kranljati z verzi. Pesem naravi ne pomeni čisto nič, pravi, naravi se je treba ponizno ukloniti.

Na podstrešju zbira vrbove šibe, ki jih navleče iz butar, vsako leto na cvetno nedeljo blagoslovjenih v cerkvi. Iz vrbovja izdeluje majhne križe, ki jih pomlađi odneseva na polja in zatakneva v zorano zemljo, da bo še naprej rodila njiva krompirja, da bo uspevala pšenica. Ko se pripravlja k nevihti, naloži vrbovje na žerjavico in ga v železni ponvi nosi po hiši. Grenki dim naj očisti zrak in pomiri sile ozračja. Vero v Boga je treba nositi v srcu, pravi babica, ni dovolj, da jo v cerkvi postavljaš na ogled. Na cerkev se človek ne more zanesti, meni, ne more ji zaupati.

Babica verjame le v nenavadna znamenja na nebu in jih zna razložiti. Verjame v praznike pokore in v 8. maj, dan, ko vsako leto odide k maši, da bi se tam zahvalila za konec nacizma. Verjame v jezik, ki se ravna po volji, ne po človeškem ušesu. Pravi, da imajo besede veliko moč, da lahko uročijo stvari in zdravijo ljudi, da lahko kruh, ki se mu priporočimo in se mu zapisemo v priprošnji, pomaga v stiski in bolezni. Njenega starejšega sina je pičila kača, pripoveduje. Rana se mu ni hotela zaceliti in zdravniki mu niso več mogli pomagati. Pa je odšla k staremu Rastočniku, da bi z urokom pregnal kačjistrup. Ampak star Rastočnik tega ni maral, ker se je bal, da bo zeločesto nadlogo samo še podkreplil. Potem se je odpravila k Želodčevki in ta ji je blagoslovila kruh. Ti stupena žival, vzemi nazaj svoj stup iz tega človeka, je rotila kačjega duha. Ne zaklinjam njegovega mesa, ne zaklinjam njegove krvi, zaklinjam strašni krč, so bile besede, s katerimi je Želodčevka zarotila kruh. Potem ko je njen sin vsak dan pojedel košček tega kruha in zmolil očenaš, ne da bi na koncu rekel amen, je spet ozdravel. Stup se je pobral iz njega. In beseda je kruh postala in je v njem prebivala, brž ko je oslinil zdravilno besedo. Ubesedeni kruh, zaužita beseda.

Babica zna z molitvicami zarotiti ječmen, vnetje na veki, ki ga včasih dobim. Na njene priprošnje moram odgovarjati *ne verujem* in verjeti v ozdravitev, pravi. Ko izreka svoje zarotitve, nad mojim bolnim očesom z roko posnema gibe žanjice. *Ječmen žanjem, ječmen žanjem*, govori, jaz pa vmes ponavljam, da ne verjamem, da res žanje ječmen. Ker priznam, da dvomim, izgovorim resnico in besedna čarovnija deluje, tako si vsaj domišljam, zanesljivo pa tega ne vem.

Babica mi tudi zaupa, da je od svoje matere dobila hišni blagoslov, *hišni žegen* – za doto, za streho iz besed nad svojo glavo. V hudič časih naj ga izgovarja na pamet ali ga pribije na hišna vrata, da jo bo obvaroval toče in strele in vsega hudega. Ta blagoslov hrani v ovojnici, ki je ne smeš odpreti nepovabljen. Molitvice lahko beres z listka ali se jih dotikaš, vseeno pa je boljše, če se jih naučiš na pamet, deluje namreč izgovorjeno, ne zapisano.

Zamišljam si, kako besede iz pisma skozi oči vstopajo v glavo in se od tod vzpenjajo v neznane višine; kako tudi nedotaknjene, kar iz ovojnice porajajo svoje delovanje; kako glasovi skoznje govorečih razpirajo krila besed nad zaklinjevalci.

Stará Kebrova je mojemu dedu, preden je šel k partizanom, tudi dala žegen na pot, blagoslov, obrobljen z žametom, da bi ga varoval pred nenadno smrtno, pred izdajo in slabim dejanjem, pripoveduje babica. Vsak dan je moral zmoliti pet očenašev in pet zdravih Marij. Vsak dan je molil in je kot partizan preživel. Vrnil se je iz gozda. Kakor je vojno preživel tudi moški, ki se ga spominja Romana iz Remšenika. Romana je imela takrat, ko so jo prijeli, samo deset let. Zasliševali so jo v celovškem zaporu in jo vlekli za lase, ko so v sobo privlekli partizana, ki ga ni poznala in pri katerem so našli božjo podobico, ščit božji, kakor je reklo. Gestapovec je partizana vprašal, za kaj mu tisto rabi, in ta je odgovoril, da je v njim v božjem varstvu. Potem so ga tako dolgo pretepali, da se je oblit s krvjo zgrudil pod udarci. Deklica je morala vse gledati, ampak partizan je preživel in so ga nezavestnega odnesli iz sobe. Beseda ga je obvarovala, reče babica.

Spreleti me srh. Prosim božji ščitek, naj me varuje pred mislico na tisto, kar je zmogel odvrniti. Ne misli na to, reče babica, preveč si slišala in preveč verjameš. Nasmehne se, medlo in zadržano, kakor zna, in me iz najine skupne sobe potisne na dvorišče.

Piko se z laježem zaganja ob verigi. Kokoši z glasnim kokodakanjem tekajo po travnatem pobočju za našo hišo. Širijo krila in skušajo vzleteti.

Kragulj bo, reče babica, zdaj lovi že na našem pragu! Povedala bo o tem lovcem, da plenilca ustrelijo. Z okrvavljenim petelinom v rokah pride izza hiše mama. Bojeval se je s kraguljem, ujedno je morala dobesedno odtrgati s petelina, tako se mu je s kremljji zarila v peruti, pripoveduje in postavi ranjeno žival na tla. Petelin se otrese in razširi krvaveča krila. Šepavo poskušajoč odkikirika proti hlevu.

Mu boš obvezala rane, vprašam mamo.

Se bo že zacelilo, reče, obvezet tu ne pomagajo.

Ko ostaneva sami, bi rada izvedela, kaj je to partizan. Mama je presenečena. Ti je že spet babica pripovedovala svoje zgodbe? Partizani so živeli v bunkerjih pod zemljo in se skrivali pred Nemci, odgovori. Ampak to je bilo davno, s tem naj se rajši ne ubadam. Dedi, pravi babica, je bil tudi zraven, rečem.

Mama se brez besedice vrne in hišo. Tako zatem vidim babico stopiti na prosti. Ti mi ne boš predpisovala, kako naj ravnam z dečvo, ti že ne, očitajoče reče in sede na vodnjak pred hišnimi vrati. Mama obstane na pragu. Obrnem se k njej in tudi babico imam v vidnem polju. Nizko streho hiše neopazno vleče k tlom. Voda v vodnjaku neskončne minute klokoče v naš molk.

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## ***The Angel of Forgetting***

(Excerpt)

Grandmother comes to her own agreements with nature. She believes that you should appease field and forest, not engarland them with verses. A poem means nothing to nature, she says, you have to show that you are humble before nature.

In the attic she has gathered together the willow switches she plucks from the Palm Sunday bundles that are blessed each year in the church. She makes little crosses from the twigs and in spring we take them to the fields and push them into the ploughed earth so that the potato patch will be fruitful and the wheat will thrive. Whenever a storm is brewing she lays bits of willow over embers, then carries them through the house in an iron pan. The acrid smoke is supposed to clear the air and put the ethereal forces at ease. Belief in God must rest in the heart, says grandmother, it is not enough to make a show of it in church. You cannot rely on the church, she thinks, you cannot trust in it.

Grandmother puts all her faith in strange celestial signs, which she can interpret. She believes in the Ember Days and in the 8th of May, and each year she goes to mass on that day to give thanks for the end of the Nazi regime. She believes in language that aims for the will, not the human ear. She says that words possess great power, that she can bewitch objects and heal people, that charmed bread can help in times of sickness and need. Her eldest son was bitten by a snake, she says. His wound would not heal and the doctors could do nothing for him. She went to old Rastočnik and asked him to charm some bread for her to counteract the snake's venom. But Rastočnik refused to help because he feared the wicked odium would become stronger through that act. Then she walked to Želodec, who consecrated the bread. Venomous beast, thou shalt reclaim the poison from this human, demanded Želodec of the snake spirit. Flesh I do not banish, blood I do not banish, I banish the loathsome seizure. It was through these words that Želodec consecrated the bread. After her son had taken a bite a day from this bread, each time praying an Our Father without saying amen, he recovered. The poison drained from him. And the Word became bread and lived in it for as many times as the Word entered the bread through his saliva. The charmed bread, the consumed Word.

Grandmother can pray away the eyelid infection, the sty, I occasionally get. To her intercessions I had to reply *ne verujem* – I do not believe – all the while believing in the cure, she says. As she chants her hand imitates the movements of a carver over my ailing eye. *Ječmen žanjem*, she says, *ječmen žanjem*, while I repeat that I do not believe she is cutting the sty. Admitting my doubt means I am telling the truth, and the verbal magic works, or so I imagine, although I don't know.

Grandmother also confides in me that she was given a house blessing as a dowry, as a verbal roof over her head. She is supposed to recite the blessing in times of trouble, or hammer it into the door of the house to protect the house from hail and lightning and, especially, from disaster. She keeps this blessing stowed away in an envelope that no one can open without her permission. Though the prayers can be read from the page and caressed, it is better if they are learned by heart, for the effect lies in the spoken not in the written word.

I imagine how the words from the letter ascend past eyes and head and up to unknown heights; how, even if untouched, the words from the envelope can unleash their effect; how they, through the voice of the speaker, spread a charmed wing of words over those who hear.

Before he left to join the Partisans, Old Keberin also gave my grandfather a blessed charm, wrapped up in a silk scarf, to protect from sudden death, betrayal and evildoing, says grandmother. He was to recite five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys daily. He prayed every day and, even though he was a Partisan, survived. He returned from the forest, just like that other man who survived the War, the one Romana from Remschenig could remember, says Grandmother. Romana was barely ten years old when she was put in jail. They interrogated her in Klagenfurt and tore at her hair when a Partisan she did not know was brought into the room and found to be in possession of a blessed shield, *ščit božji*. The Gestapo asked what the point of it was, and he replied, I am protected by God. Then they beat him until he collapsed, bloodied by the blows. The girl had to witness all of this. But the Partisan survived and was carried unconscious from the room. It was the Word that protected him, says Grandmother.

This makes me shudder. I ask the blessed shield to prevent me from thinking about what it is capable of driving away. Don't think about those things, says grandmother, you've heard and believed too much. She smiles her thin, reserved smile and pushes me out of our front room into the yard.

Piko pulls, barking, at his chain. The loudly clucking chickens run down the hilly slope behind our house. They spread their wings and try to fly.

It must be a goshawk, says Grandmother. Now it comes right up to the door to hunt! She will inform the hunters, and they will shoot the bird of prey. Mother appears from behind the house, holding a bloodied rooster. It had fought with the goshawk and she had to literally tear the predator from the rooster, so deeply had he torn into the rooster's wings, she says, and places the injured animal on the floor. The rooster shakes itself and stretches out its bloodied wings. Limping and crowing, it hops towards the coop.

Will you bandage its wounds? I ask mother.

They'll heal soon enough, she says, they don't need bandaging.

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When we're alone together, I ask what a Partisan is, which surprises mother. Has Grandmother been telling you her stories again? The Partisans lived in bunkers dug into the earth in order to hide themselves from the Germans, she replies. But that was a long time ago and should be of no concern to me. Grandmother says grandfather was also one of them, I say.

Mother walks wordlessly into the house. Immediately I see Grandmother leaving the house. I won't let you dictate how I have to treat the girl, she says accusingly, and sits down at the well by the door to the house. Mother stands at the threshold. I turn my head to her and can also see Grandmother. We are silent and the water bubbles forth for several minutes.

*Translated by Jason Blake*



*Foto © Martin Straka*

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# Petr Hruška

Petr Hruška se je rodil leta 1964 v Ostravi na Českem. Leta 1987 je diplomiral na Fakulteti za rudarstvo in geologijo Tehnične univerze v Ostravi. Nato je vpisal študij češke književnosti in literarne teorije na Univerzi v Ostravi in leta 1994 magistriral. Leta 2003 je doktoriral iz literarne vede na Masarykovi univerzi v Brnu. Od leta 1995 je zaposlen na Inštitutu za češko književnost Češke akademije znanosti. Pesnik, kritik in literarni zgodovinar je začel v zgodnjih 90-ih letih prejšnjega stoletja objavljal svoja dela v različnih čeških literarnih revijah. Je tudi soavtor različnih leksikonov o češki književnosti. Med njegove pesniške zbirke sodijo *Obývací nepokoje* (Nemirni prostori, 1995), *Měsíce* (Meseci, 1998), *Zelený svetr* (Zeleni pulover, 2004), *Auta vjíždějí do lodí* (Avti vjíždějí v lodě, 2007) in *Darmata* (2012). Leta 2004 je pri založbi Društvo Apokalipsa izšel izbor njegovih pesmi iz različnih pesniških zbirk z naslovom *Meseci in druge pesmi* v slovenskem prevodu Anke Polajnar in Stanislave Chrobákové Repar. Njegova dela so prevedena še v nizozemščino, angleščino, francoščino, madžarščino in ruščino.

Petr Hruška was born in 1964 in Ostrava, in the Czech Republic. He graduated from the Faculty of Mining and Geology at the Technical University of Ostrava in 1987. After that, he went on to study Czech Literature and Literary Theory at Ostrava University and obtained a master's degree in 1994. He earned a PhD in literary science at Masaryk University in Brno in 2003. He has been working at the Institute of Czech Literature at the Czech Academy of Sciences since 1995. The poet, critic, and literary historian began publishing his work in various Czech literary magazines in the early 1990s. He also co-authored various lexicons on Czech literature. His collections of poetry include *Obývací nepokoje* (Unrest Rooms, 1995) *Měsíce* (Months, 1998); *Zelený svetr* (The Green Sweater, 2004), and *Auta vjíždějí do lodí* (Cars Drive into Ships, 2007), and *Darmata* (2012). In 2004 a selection of his poetry from various volumes was translated into Slovene by Anka Polajnar and Stanislava Chrobáková Repar and published by the Društvo Apokalipsa publishing house under the title *Meseci in druge pesmi* (Months and Other Poems). His work has also been translated into Dutch, English, French, German, Hungarian, and Russian.

\*\*\*

je den  
leden  
ostré světlo  
dá se rozličně využít  
do slepé ulice zabloudit  
kde překvapená  
kde překvapená hubená ženská  
zvedne  
oči

## **Pět**

Známe ty stoly přes celé odpoledne.  
V pět hodin je potřeba někde zjistit  
jak dál.  
Lidé pijí nesvlečení,  
už jdou,  
jenom zjistí jak dál.  
Hledí do lesku desky,  
vlasy jim lezou přes límec,  
pak se najednou zvednou,  
jako by na něco přišli,  
vycházejí ven  
a jejich záda  
jsou temná jak nikdy.

## ***Komora***

Jednou na sebe narazíme v přítmí komory,  
navzájem dopadeni – s husí krví a petrolejem,  
vyhrnutými košilemi na doma, rýsujícími se  
nádory brambor. Přišli jsme brát.

Je slyšet přistižené oddechování, hubená  
nit světla z netěsnícího okénka trapně leží  
mezi námi.

## ***Krádež***

Ty naše věci z odcizené tašky  
jistě v závětří u řeky  
zklamaně házeli na jednu hromadu:  
košíli s kostkami,  
obálky,  
červenou ženskou sponu.

Jistě to leží někde na sněhu,  
navždy, v nepotřebě.  
Obálky se občas pohnou.  
Modrá barva košile těžkne.  
Kdy naposledy jsme byli  
tak spolu?

## ***Moje matka***

Na krev se vždycky dívala  
opatrně.  
Ne, neubíhala pohledem,  
ale ani nepřihlídalá,  
zvědavě nebo věcně.  
Lidi stáli na linu a drželi si ruce,  
seděli na lehátku,  
někde to teklo  
a moje matka to otírala,  
něco říkala  
a dívala se tak opatrně,  
jako by mohla všechno  
snadno zvrhnout  
do hrozné  
směšnosti.

Moje matka je velmi unavená,  
najdete ji vzadu,  
leží u odpoledních seriálů.

## ***Nocleb***

tiráky řvaly jak hladová  
noční zvěř  
volala jsi na mne cenu  
pokoje pro dva  
chlápek od pumpy  
kostnatý nevyspání  
nás pak vedl po strmém schodišti  
Berlín Krakov Terst všechno  
bylo za náma  
nikdy jsem neviděl  
tak úzký pokoj  
když jsme se chtěli otočit  
museli jsme se obejmout

---

## *Kšiltovky*

Už si nevzpomeň co jsi říkala  
tomu malému chlapci s mokrými kalhotami  
který nevěděl kam jede  
zatímco hlavy jeho rodičů  
v kšiltovkách hokejových klubů  
pravidelně tloukly o noční okna  
tramvaje  
Bylo taky jedno  
co mu říkáš  
šlo o to prostě mluvit  
mluvit k němu  
až do Zábřehu  
než svým suchým pláčem  
probudí nakonec ty hlavy  
a než dostane jednu přes záda  
na neznámé noční zastávce

Vzpomeň si  
vzpomeň si tady ve tmě Zábřehu  
co jsi mu říkala  
vzpomeň si  
na ta marná tramvajová slova

---

## *Partyzánské náměstí*

Tolik zimních bot ve vietnamské tržnici  
až to vysiluje  
přespříliš bot i na velké severní město  
bot na celou vietnamskou válku  
Co všechno by se dalo zařídit  
nakopnout a přejít  
v tolika botách  
kde už jsme mohli být  
Kolem opilecké parčíky  
v nichž se pochlakují tlupy stromů  
za nimi hliníkový jas  
Den velký  
jak složený jelen  
leží na Partyzánském náměstí  
Pak noc ukáže holý  
měsíc  
a je vidět zas jenom na krok  
na jeden jediný krok  
někam domů  
v levných vietnamských botách

## *Co ještě chci*

Ve zprávách se oběsila  
polská školačka.

Nemohu se tam dostat  
přes další přicházející zprávy,  
abych ji objal v kolenou.  
A  
malinko pozdvihнул.

---

\*\*\*

je dan  
januar  
ostro svetlobo  
se da različno izkoristiti  
v slepo ulico se izgubiti  
kjer presenečena  
kjer presenečena suha ženska  
dvigne  
pogled

### *Ob petih*

Poznamo tiste mize za ves popoldan.  
Ob petih je treba nekje ugotoviti,  
kako naprej.  
Ljudje pijejo, ne da bi se slekli,  
že gredo,  
samo da še ugotovijo, kako naprej.  
Strmijo v lesket deske,  
lasje jim zlezejo čez ovratnik,  
pa se naenkrat dvignejo,  
kot da jih je nekaj prešinilo,  
stopijo ven  
in njihovi hrbtni  
so temni kot še nikoli.

## ***Shramba***

Nekoč naletiva nase v mraku shrambe,  
vzajemno zалotena – z gosjo krvjo in petrolejem,  
z zavihanimi srajcama za doma, z orisi  
krompirjevih novotvorb. Prišla sva jemat.

Sliši se prestreženo dihanje, tanka  
nitka luči iz netesnjenega okenca moreče leži  
med nama.

## ***Kraja***

Zagotovo so v zavetju ob reki  
tiste naše stvari iz ukradene torbe  
razočarano metali na kup:  
karirasto srajco,  
kuverte,  
rdečo žensko sponko.

Zagotovo vse to leži nekje na snegu,  
za zmeraj, nepotrebno.  
Kuverte se včasih premaknejo.  
Modra barva srajce postaja težka.  
Kdaj nazadnje sva bila  
takole skupaj?

---

## *Moja mati*

Na kri je zmeraj gledala  
previdno.  
Ne, ni odmikala pogleda,  
niti ni pogledovala,  
zvedavo ali stvarno.  
Ljudje so stali na linoleju in sklepali roke  
sedeli na ležalniku,  
nekje je to teklo  
in moja mati je to brisala,  
nekaj je rekla  
in gledala tako previdno,  
kot da bi lahko vse  
zlahka sprevrgla  
v grozljivo  
smešnost.

Moja mati je zelo utrujena,  
zadaj jo boste našli,  
pri popoldanskih nanizankah leži.

## *Prenocišče*

kamioni so hrumeli kot sestradiana  
nočna zverjad  
zaklicala si za mano ceno  
sobe za dva  
možakar s črpalke  
koščen od neprespanosti  
nas je potem peljal po strmem stopnišču  
Berlin Krakov Trst vse  
je bilo za nama  
nikdar nisem videl  
tako ozke sobe  
ko sva se hotela obrniti  
sva se morala objeti

---

## Čepici

Ne boš se več spomnila kaj si govorila  
tistemu fantku v mokrih hlačah  
ki ni vedel kam gre  
medtem ko sta glavi njegovih staršev  
v čepicah hokejskih klubov  
enakomerno udarjali ob nočne šipe  
tramvaja  
Vseeno je sicer bilo  
kaj mu govorиш  
šlo je prav za ta govoriti  
ga nagovarjati  
kar do Zábřeha  
dokler s svojim suhim jokom  
končno ne prebudi tistih glad  
in dokler ne dobi ene po ta zadnji  
na neznani nočni postaji.

Spomni se  
spomni se tu v temi Zábřeha  
kaj si mu govorila  
spomni se  
tistih odvečnih tramvajskih besed

---

## *Partizanski trg*

Toliko zimskih čevljev na vietnamski tržnici  
da je že utrujajoče  
preveč čevljev celo za veliko severno mesto  
čevljev za celo vietnamsko vojno  
Kaj vse bi lahko uredili  
brcnili in prehodili  
v toliko čevljih  
kje bi že lahko bili  
Okoli parki za pijance  
kjer se klatijo trume dreves  
za njimi aluminijev sij  
Dan velik  
kot ustreljen jelen  
leži na Partizanskem trgu  
Nato noč pokaže golo  
luno  
in videti je spet samo za en korak  
za en samcat korak  
nekam domov  
v poceni vietnamskih čevljih

## *Kaj bi še rad*

V poročilih se je obesila  
poljska šolarka.

Ne morem priti tja  
preko naslednjih poročil, ki se valijo,  
da bi jo objel pod koleni.  
In  
za malenkost vzdignil.

*Prevedla Stanislava in Primož Repar*

\*\*\*

it is day  
january  
the sharp light  
can be used diversely  
to get lost in a blind alley  
where surprised  
where a surprised thin woman  
raises  
her eyes

## ***Five***

We've known these tables all afternoon  
At five o'clock it's necessary to somewhere find out  
how to go on.  
People drink unundressed,  
they're going now,  
just finding out how to go on.  
They regard the tabletop gloss,  
hairs crawling over their collars,  
then suddenly they rise,  
as if realising something,  
they go out  
and their backs  
are black like never before.

---

## *Chamber*

Once into each other we collide in the twilight chamber,  
a capture of each other – with goose blood and paraffin,  
rolled up home shirts, looming  
potato tumours. We came to take.

Startled panting's heard, a thin  
thread of light from an unsealed window lies awkwardly  
between us.

## *Theft*

These things from our stolen bag  
on the lee side of the river surely  
they threw disappointedly in one pile:  
a chequered shirt,  
wrappers,  
a red woman's clasp.

It's surely lying somewhere on the snow  
forever, unneeded.  
The wrappers sometimes move themselves.  
The shirt's blue colour gets heavier.  
When was the last time we were  
together like this?

## *My Mother*

She always looked at blood  
carefully.

No, she didn't turn from it  
but she noticed it neither  
curiously nor matter-of-factly.

People stood on the lino and held their hands,  
sat on deck chairs,  
somewhere bleeding  
and my mother wiped it,  
said something  
and looked so carefully  
as if she could easily  
topple everything over  
into a terrible  
ridiculousness.

My mother is very tired  
you'll find her in the back,  
lying by the afternoon serials.

## *Night Lodging*

the TIRs tore like starving  
night animals  
you called to me the price  
of a room for two  
the guy from the petrol station  
bony unslept  
took us then along the steep staircase  
Berlin Krakow Trieste everything  
was behind us  
never had I seen  
such a narrow room  
when we wanted to turn over  
we had to embrace

## *Baseball Caps*

You don't remember now what you said  
to that little boy with the wet trousers  
who didn't know where he's going  
whilst the heads of his parents  
in hockey club baseball caps  
knocked regularly on the night windows  
of the tram  
It made no difference  
what you said to him  
it was all just about talking  
to talk to him  
all the way to Zábřeh  
till his dry weeping  
awakened the heads at last  
and until he got one across the backside  
at an unknown night stop

Remember  
remember here in the Zábřeh dark  
what you said to him  
remember  
the futile tram words

---

## *Partisan Square*

So many winter shoes in the Vietnamese market  
that it's exhausting  
far too many shoes even for a large northern town  
shoes for the whole Vietnam war  
All that could be done  
kicked and walked over  
in so many shoes  
where could we be already  
Around are the drunks' little parks  
where packs of trees loaf around  
aluminium brightness behind them  
A day as big  
as a felled stag  
lies on Partisan Square  
Then night shows the bald  
moon  
and we can see again just a step  
one single step  
somewhere homeward  
in cheap Vietnamese shoes

## *What I Still Want*

In the news she hung herself  
a Polish schoolgirl

I cannot get there  
across the next incoming messages  
to hug her knees  
And  
elevate her a little bit

*Translated by Martin Neal*





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# Igor Isakovski

Igor Isakovski se je rodil leta 1970 v Skopju v Makedoniji. Diplomiral je iz svetovne in primerjalne književnosti na Univerzi sv. Cirila in Metoda v Skopju in magistriral iz študij spolov in kulturologije na Srednjeevropski univerzi v Budimpešti. Je glavni urednik in direktor kulturnega združenja Blesok, ki ga je ustanovil leta 1998. Je pesnik, pisatelj in prevajalec iz angleščine in slovanskih jezikov nekdanje Jugoslavije; napisal je številne nagrjenе knjige, kot so pesniška zbirka *Hočma e najtemnna pred razdenuvanje* (Noč je najtemnejša pred zoro, 2009), za katero je prejel nagrado beograjskega Festivala poezije in knjige »unique« za poezijo (2010), roman *Plivanje vo prasiina* (Plavati v pesku, 2005; 2010), za katerega je prejel nagrado mojster proze (2005), ter zbirko proznih radirank *Blues говорница II* (Bluesovska telefonska govorilnica II, 2006), za katero je prejel nagrado »FOSIM« za najboljšo vizualno in grafično podobo tiskane knjige. V slovenščini je v prevodu Namite Subiotto pri KUD Apokalipsa izšel izbor njegove poezije *Iz bliskov in ognja* (2011). Njegova dela so prevedena v šestnajst jezikov.

Igor Isakovski was born in 1970 in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. He obtained a BA in world and comparative literature from the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, and an MA in gender and cultural studies from the Central European University in Budapest. He is the director and editor-in-chief of the Blesok Cultural Institution, which he founded in 1998. The works of the poet, writer, and translator from English and all ex-Yugoslavian Slavic languages include several award-winning volumes, such as the collection of poetry *Hočma e najtemnna pred razdenuvanje* (The Night Is Darkest Before Dawn, 2009), for which he received the Unique Poetry Award of the Belgrade Poetry and Book Festival (2010); the novel *Plivanje vo prasiina* (Swimming in the Dust, 2005; 2010), which won the Prose Master Award (2005); as well as the collection of prose etchings *Blues говорница II* (Blues Phone Booth II, 2006), which won the FOSIM-Prize for the best visual and graphic design of a printed book. In 2011 KUD Apokalipsa published *Iz bliskov in ognja* (From Lightning and Fire), a volume of his selected poetry translated into Slovene by Namita Subiotto. His works have been translated into sixteen languages.

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*Ти овде спиеш...*

ти овде спиеш откако ќе завршиш  
со пишувањето, а, тато? така ме прашува,  
додека шета околу креветот, мојата помлада ќерка.  
ко книжевен критичар во инспекција. или како  
дете без никакви зли намери (што е голема разлика,  
зnam). сеедно, мислата што тогаш ми ја даде  
беше остра и ме сепна во облекувањето: ќе можам ли,  
се прашав, да бидам безмилосен кон себе и светот  
кога следниот пат ќе седнам да пишувам? (сеедно  
кога ќе биде тоа: сега, се сплеткав со панталоните.)  
ќе можам ли да не мислам дека таа  
ми ги слуша прстите како штракаат врз буквите  
додека заспива, и веројатно мисли дека и пред белината  
секогаш сум нежен и топол како со неа. мојата ќерка,  
која допрва ќе треба да се соочи со сувроста на вистината.  
за потоа да научи (сеедно кога ќе биде тоа: јас и денес  
мислам дека уште учам) – безмилосноста кон себе е  
најдобриот пат кон сомилоста за светот: јас тута  
понекогаш спијам – најчесто бдеам  
додека си гребам низ цигерот.

08.11.2010, 00:10

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*Ноќи кога помислуваши на самоубиство*

во такви ноќи (кога помислуваш) кои се  
баш пеколно долги и бесмислено вакуумизирани,  
кои се понекогаш тивки, понекогаш бучни,  
кои се секогаш самотни и пеколно осамени:  
затвори ги сите прозори, сите балконски врати.  
не оди во тоалет дури и во најголема нужда:  
таму е жилетот и секогаш спремната топла вода.  
не оди ни во кујната (откако веќе си затворил сè):  
таму е рерната, таму се ножовите. (а има и отров  
за глувци.) во ноќи кога помислуваши на самоубиство  
наточи си една дебела (затоа е добро шишето секогаш  
да ти е при рака, а не во кујната), запали си цигара  
(или свеќа, важно нешто да запалиш) но немој  
да се палиш себе: каква корист  
ако никој не може да ти го идентификува  
трутот? пушти си музика која те нервира: и мисли  
на гневот, остави го да прсне низ тебе  
и изблуј го до последната капка. но  
блуј во себе: нема резон да ја укашкаш собата  
(клозетот и прозорците ти се забранети зони).  
додека ова го читаш (ти латентен самоубиец!) стани  
и почешај се. и помисли дека немаш животно  
осигурување. откако ќе помислиш дека никој нема  
да се офајди од твојата смрт, наточи си.  
уште една дебела. можеби тогаш ќе помислиш:  
нешто. сеедно што. можеби ќе ја помислиш мислата  
која конечно ќе те дотепа. онаа која отсекогаш  
само тебе те чекала. и која ниедна обдукција  
нема да може да ја означи како причина за смрт.  
(за поводите и онака ретко кој размислува.)

31.05.2011, 00:28

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**Жеден, нежен**

тогаш, сопирам зад завесата.  
тука не сум дома, тука никој  
не ме познава. кога ќе се сепнам  
во сништа полни болни бои и мириси:  
кога ќе се сепнам среде улица, небаре  
загубен на асфалтот. тогаш, застанувам.  
и се огледувам наоколу, се обзирам како  
здив од усна хармоника дувнат кон сид.  
сите свои минати грубости ги чувствуваам.  
и молчам, зашто веќе немам кому да се извинам.  
тогаш би тргнал: по води и асфалт и бетон, каде  
било, само да стигнам. најдалеку од себе,  
ваков натажен и нежен. допир на издраскан  
прст врз жица од гитара. треба да ги скратам  
ноктите. ги одрав сидовите низ сите напластени  
бои. малтерот нема вкус на земја. малтерот нема  
вкус. водата е далеку. како чувството дека живеам  
со тебе, не сам. и дождот престанава. како музика  
во бар на затворање. понекогаш ја добивам  
последната пијачка. другпат, го гребам асфалтот.  
сопирам зад завесата. тогаш. и сега. збунет  
од големината на пазарот, од неговите панаѓурски  
димензии. од сите тие измешани мириси, мирудии  
за немирна душа, трепети по нови океани. од сето  
тоа. и од жедта што ми вие низ гркланот. небаре  
малтер сум пластел во себе. жеден сум. и нежен.

25.01.2012, 02:17

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знаеш дека ноќта ќе биде долга.  
знаеш уште пред полноќ.  
попусто размислуваш за крајот  
на ноќта; ништо не завршува  
кога ќе ги склопиш очите.  
главата ти е немирна, прстите  
би ти пишувале поезија, или  
едно долго писмо. би требало  
да читаш; би требало да си  
ја преточиш душата низ гласот.  
а само нови кратки точиш: огнени  
јазици од спомени, кои горат само  
низ сеќавањето. не и низ гркланот;  
зашто дишеш испрекинато, зашто  
зборовите те избегнуваат; соодветна  
казна за сите твои заборавања. и за сите  
досегашни намерни и ненамерни  
 злоупотреби на зборовите; потруди се  
да им бидеш искрен соговорник,  
секогаш. знаеш дека ништо не завршува  
кога ќе ја затвориш устата: потокот  
мисли постојано плави. и расне. и  
нанесува остатоци од гранки и  
сончеви зраци. како кога понекогаш  
сонуваш. или кога таму некаде  
длабоко во себе плачеш. и се смееш.

11.02.2012, 00:20

## *Смртта има коса од морска трева*

во последно време  
често помислувам дека ќе умрам  
набргу. тивко. затоа на сите им велам  
дека ќе живеам барем уште педесет години.  
слатки измами кои никого нема да повредат.

во последно време  
често помислувам дали да си ја исечам  
косата. одеднаш. често се гледам во сандак  
со мека постава со боја на течно старо злато.  
па помислувам дали на милите ќе им бидам убав мртовец.

затоа, ножиците ги чувам  
што подалеку од дофат, уште подалеку  
од мислите. кога веќе ќе умирам, нека ме таков:  
со коса, со брада, како симнат од икона. или како  
тукушто тргнат од шанк. навистина, нема голема разлика.

во последно време  
не помислувам на ништо посебно. доволно ми е  
што понекогаш преспивам. не сонувам. ме будат птици.  
нема луѓе во моите соништа: само површини и простори:  
ме чекаат со нетрпение, да заиграме весел танц со смртта.

во последно време  
навистина помислувам дека ова е последно  
време. смртта е убава жена со прдорни очи и  
дланки претенки за мој вкус. има коса од морска трева,  
има допирни од алги. мириса на жена која отсекогаш сум ја познавал.

08.11.2010, 02:10

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*Ti tu spiš*

ti tu spiš, potem ko nehaš  
s pisanjem, a, oči? me vpraša moja mlajša hčerka,  
medtem ko hodi okrog postelje.  
kot književni kritik v inšpekciiji. ali kot  
otrok brez kakršnihkoli zlih namenov (kar je velika razlika,  
vem). vseeno je bila misel, ki mi jo je takrat dala,  
ostra in me je zmedla pri oblačenju: a bom lahko,  
sem se vprašal, neusmiljen do sebe in sveta,  
ko bom naslednjič sedel k pisanju? (vseeno,  
kdaj bo to: zdaj sem se zapletel v hlače.)  
bom lahko ne mislil na to, da ona  
posluša, kako moji prsti tolčajo po črkah,  
preden zaspi, in verjetno misli, da sem tudi pred belino  
vedno nežen in topel kot z njo. moja hčerka,  
ki se bo morala kmalu soočiti s surovostjo resnice.  
da bi se potem naučila (vseeno kdaj: jaz še danes  
mislim, da se še vedno učim), da je neusmiljenost do sebe  
najboljša pot k usmiljenju do sveta: jaz tu  
včasih spim – največkrat bedim,  
medtem ko si praskam po jetrih.

08.11.2010, 00:10

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## Noči, ko pomisliš na samomor

v takšnih nočeh (ko pomisliš), ki so  
prav peklenko dolge in nesmiselno izpraznjene,  
ki so včasih tihe, včasih hrupne,  
ki so vedno samotne in peklenko osamljene:  
zapri vsa okna, vsa balkonska vrata.  
ne hodi na stranišče, pa naj bo potreba še tako velika:  
tam je britvica in vedno pripravljena topla voda.  
ne hodi niti v kuhinjo (potem ko si že vse zaprl):  
tam je pečica, tam so noži. (pa tudi strup  
za miši.) v nočeh, ko pomisliš na samomor,  
si natoči enega poštenega (zato je dobro, da imaš steklenico vedno  
pri roki, ne pa v kuhinji), prižgi si cigaret  
(ali svečo, samo da nekaj prižges), ne  
prižigaj pa sebe: kaj imaš od tega,  
če ne more nihče identificirati  
tvojega trupla? nastavi si glasbo, ki te živcira: in misli  
na gnev, pusti mu, da brizgne skozte,  
in izbljuvaj ga do poslednje kaplje. toda  
bljuvaj v sebi: nima smisla, da posvinjaš sobo  
(vece in okna so zate prepovedani coni).  
medtem ko bereš tole (ti, latentni samomorilec!), vstani  
in se popraskaj. in pomisli, da nimaš življenskega  
zavarovanja. ko se boš domislil, da se nihče ne bo  
okoristil s twojo smrtjo, si natoči.  
še enega poštenega. morda se boš takrat domislil:  
nečesa. česar koli. morda se boš domislil misli,  
ki te bo končno pokopala. tiste, ki je od vedno  
čakala le nate. in ki je nobena obdukcija  
ne bo mogla prikazati kot vzrok smrti.  
(o povodih tako redkokdo razmišlja.)

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## Žejen, nežen

tedaj, obstanem za zaveso.  
tu nisem doma, tu me nihče  
ne pozna. ko se zdrznem  
v sanjah, polnih bolnih barv in vonjav:  
ko se zdrznem sredi ulice, kot  
izgubljen na asfaltu. tedaj, obstanem.  
in pogledam naokoli, ozrem se kot  
dih orglic, izpihnjen proti zidu.  
vse svoje bivše grobosti začutim.  
in molčim, ker se nimam več komu opravičiti.  
tedaj bi šel: po vodi in asfaltu in betonu, kamor  
coli, samo da pridem. najdlje od sebe,  
tako otožen in nežen. dotik razrezanega  
prsta na kitarski struni. postriči si moram  
nohte. odrl sem zidove skozi vse naplastene  
barve. malta nima okusa po zemlji. malta nima  
okusa. voda je daleč. kot občutek, da živim  
s tabo, ne sam. tudi dež je ponehal. kot glasba  
v baru pred zapiranjem. včasih dobim  
zadnjo pijaco. drugič, drgnem asfalt.  
obstanem za zaveso. tedaj. in zdaj. zmeden  
od velikosti trga, od njegovih sejemskeh  
razsežnosti. od vseh teh premešanih vonjav, dišav  
za nemirno dušo, trepetanj za novimi oceani. od vsega  
tega. in od žeje, ki tuli skozi moje grlo. kot da  
bi plastil malto vase. žejen sem. in nežen.

25.01.2012, 02:17

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veš, da bo noč dolga.  
veš še pred polnočjo.  
zaman razmišljaš o koncu  
noči; nič se ne konča,  
ko zapreš oči.  
tvoja glava je nemirna, tvoji prsti  
bi pisali poezijo. ali  
kakšno dolgo pismo. moral bi  
brati; moral bi  
preliti svojo dušo v glas.  
pa si nalivaš le nove kratke: ognjeni  
jeziki spominov, ki gorijo samo  
v obujanju. ne pa tudi v grlu;  
ker dihaš prekinjeno, ker  
se te besede izogibajo; primerna  
kazen za tvoje pozabe. in za vse  
dosedanje namerne in nenamerne  
zlorabe besed; potrudi se  
postati njihov iskreni sogovornik,  
vedno. veš, da se nič ne konča,  
ko zapreš usta: potok  
misli nenehno poplavljaj. in raste. in  
nanaša ostanke vejic in  
sončnih žarkov. kot takrat,  
ko sanjaš. ali ko tam nekje  
globoko v sebi jočeš. in se smeješ.

11.02.2012, 00:20

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## *Smrt z lasmi iz morske trave<sup>1</sup>*

zadnje čase  
večkrat pomislim, da bom umrl  
kmalu. taho. zato vsem pravim  
da bom živel še najmanj petdeset let.  
sladke prevare, ki ne bodo nikogar prizadele.

zadnje čase  
večkrat pomislim, da bi si postrigel  
lase. naenkrat. večkrat se vidim v krsti  
z mehko podlogo v barvi tekočega starega zlata.  
in razmišljam, ali bom svojim dragim lep mrlič.

zato hranim škarje  
čim dlje od dosega rok, še dlje  
od misli. če bom že umrl, naj bom tak:  
z lasmi, z brado, kot snet z ikone. ali kot  
pravkar odmaknjen od šanka. res, ni velike razlike.

zadnje čase  
ne razmišljam o čem posebnem. dovolj mi je  
da včasih prespim. ne sanjam. budijo me ptice.  
ni ljudi v mojih sanjah: samo površine in prostori:  
čakajo me nestрpno, da zaplešemo veseli ples s smrtjo.

zadnje čase  
res pomislim, da je to poslednji  
čas. smrt je lepotica s prodornimi očmi in  
dlanmi, pretankimi za moj okus. ima lase iz morske trave,  
ima dotike iz alg. diši po ženski, ki sem jo vselej poznal.

08.11.2010, 02:10

*Prevedla Namita Subiotto*

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<sup>1</sup> Prevod pesmi objavljen v: Igor Isakovski: *Iz bliskov in ognja* (izbrane pesmi). Izbrala in prevedla Namita Subiotto. Ljubljana, KUD Apokalipsa, 2011, Zbirka Fraktal, str. 85–86.

## *You Sleep Here...*

you sleep here after you finish  
writing, right, daddy? that's how she asks me,  
while strolling around the bed, my younger daughter.  
like a literary critic in an inspection. or like a  
child with no hidden thoughts (which is a big difference,  
i know). however, the thought she gave me then  
was sharp and distracted me while dressing; would i  
be able, i asked myself, to be merciless toward myself  
and the world when i'll be writing next time? (whenever  
it may be: now, i mingled up in my trousers.)  
would i be able not to think that she listens  
my fingers clicking over the letters while she falls asleep,  
and most likely thinks that in front of the whiteness  
i am always gentle and warm like i am with her. my daughter,  
which will have to confront the cruelty of truth.  
so she'd be able to learn (whenever it would be: even today, i  
think i'm still learning) – the mercilessness towards self is  
the best way towards the mercy for the world: sometimes  
i sleep here – most often i vigil  
while i scrap my liver.

08.11.2010, 00:10

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*Nights when You Think of a Suicide*

in such nights (when you think of) that are  
really hellishly long and senselessly vacuumed,  
that are sometimes quiet, sometimes noisy,  
that are always sole and hellishly alone:  
close all the windows, all balcony doors.  
do not go to the toilet even in a biggest need:  
there is the razor and the always ready hot water.  
do not go to the kitchen, either (after you've closed everything):  
there is the oven, there are the knives. (and a rat  
poison, too.) at nights when you think of a suicide  
pour yourself a fat one (that's why it's good to keep the bottle  
always by hand, not in the kitchen), light a cigarette  
(or a candle, just burn something) but do not  
put yourself on fire: what's the use  
if no one would be able to identify  
your corpse? play music that annoys you: and think  
of anger, let it burst through you  
and belch it till the last drop. but  
vomit within yourself: it makes no sense to mess up the room  
(toilet and windows are forbidden zones).  
while you read this (you latent suicide!) get up  
and scratch yourself. after you'd think that no one wont  
get greasy from your death, pour to yourself.  
another fat one. maybe then you'll think:  
something. anything. maybe you'll think the thought  
that will finally kill you. that no autopsy  
will be able to mark as a reason for death.  
(rarely anyone thinks of motives, anyhow.)

31.05.2011, 00:28

*Translated by the author*

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*Thirsty, Gentle*

at that moment, i stop behind the curtain.  
this is not my home, nobody knows  
me here. when i wince in my dreams,  
full of sick colours and scents:  
when i wince in the middle of the street  
like i were lost on the asphalt. at that moment  
i stop and look around, i glance like  
harmonica's breath, blown out to the wall.  
i feel all of my past brutalities.  
and i keep silent, because there is no one left to apologize to.  
at that moment i'd walk: on the water and asphalt and concrete,  
wherever, only to arrive. the farthest from myself,  
so gloomy and gentle. a touch of a slit  
finger on a guitar string. i must cut  
my fingernails. i've scaled the walls through all the layers  
of paint. mortar doesn't taste like ground. mortar has  
no taste. water is far away. like a feeling of living  
with you, not alone. the rain has faded out, as well.  
like the music in a closing bar. i sometimes get  
the last drink. other times i rub asphalt.  
i stop behind a curtain. then. and now. confused  
by the size of the square, by its market  
dimensions. by all those combined scents, fragrances  
for a restless soul, those quivers for new oceans. by  
all of it. and by the thirst that winds through my throat.  
like i were laying mortar into myself. i am thirsty. and gentle.

25.01.2012, 02:17

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you know it's going to be a long night.  
you know it even before midnight.  
vainly, you're thinking about the end  
of night; nothing comes to an end  
when you close your eyes.  
your head is restless, your fingers  
would write poetry, or  
a long letter. you should  
read; you should  
pour your soul through your voice.  
but you just keep pouring yourself shot after shot: fiery  
tongues of memories that only burn  
through reminiscence, but not through the throat;  
because your breaths are cut off, because  
words are avoiding you; a suitable  
punishment for all of your oblivions. And for all  
of your previous, intentional and unintentional  
abuse of words; try to become  
their sincere interlocutor,  
always. you know that nothing comes to an end  
when you close your mouth: the stream  
of thoughts overflows constantly, and grows, and  
piles up the remains of twigs and  
sun rays, like  
when you dream, or cry deep down inside, and laugh.

11.02.2012, 00:20

*Translated by Aleksandra Kocmut*

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## *The Death Has a Hair of Seaweed*

lately  
i often think i'll die  
soon. quietly. hence i tell everybody  
that i'll live for at least fifty more years.  
sweet deceptions that will harm no one.

lately  
i often think i should cut  
my hair. all at once. i often see myself in a coffin  
with soft lining colored in liquid old gold.  
so i think whether i'd be a pretty corpse to my dear ones.

hence, i keep the scissors  
as far as possible, even further  
from thoughts. since i'll be dying, let me be as i am:  
with hair, with beard, as if hung down from a fresco. or as if  
just removed from a bar. really, there is no big difference.

lately  
i don't think of anything in particular. it's enough  
that sometimes i sleepover. i don't dream. birds awake me.  
there are no people in my dreams: only surfaces and spaces:  
they await for me eagerly, to have a joint joyful dance with the death.

lately  
i really think this is the latest  
time. the death is a beautiful woman with piercing eyes and  
hands too thin for my taste. she has a hair of seaweed,  
she has touches of algae. it smells of a woman i've always known.

08.11.2010 02:10

*Translated by the author*





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# *Erica Johnson*

## *Debeljak*

Erica Johnson Debeljak se je rodila leta 1961 v San Franciscu v Kaliforniji (ZDA). Leta 1981 se je preselila v New York, kjer je diplomirala iz francoske književnosti na Univerzi Columbia. Po tem je magistrirala iz ekonomije na Univerzi New York in se zaposlila kot bančnica pri poslovalnici Banque Nationale de Paris v New Yorku. Leta 1993 se je preselila v Slovenijo, kjer se je poročila s slovenskim pesnikom Alešem Debeljakom. Študirala je jezik svoje nove domovine in delovala najprej kot prevajalka, nato tudi kot pisateljica in kolumnistka. Prvo knjigo esejev z naslovom *Foreigner in the House of Natives* (*Tujka v hiši domačinov*) je objavila leta 1999. Slednji so sledile še knjiga *Srečko Kosovel: The Poet and I* (*Srečko Kosovel: Pesnik in jaz*, 2004), zbirka kratkih zgodb *You Are So Mine* (*Tako si moj*, 2007) in memoar *Forbidden Bread* (*Prepovedani kruh*, 2009). Leta 2006 je prejela magistrski naziv s področja kreativnega pisanja. Čeprav piše v materinščini, najde svoje bralce in teme predvsem v Sloveniji. Njen roman *In the Antifa Zone* (*Antifa Cona*) bo izšel v slovenskem prevodu Andreja E. Skubica jeseni 2012 pri založbi Modrijan. S soprogom in tremi otroki živi v Ljubljani.

Erica Johnson Debeljak was born in San Francisco, California, USA, in 1961. She moved to New York City in 1981 to attend Columbia University where she received a bachelor's degree in French literature. She went on to get a Masters of Business from New York University and began a banking career at the New York branch of Banque Nationale de Paris. In 1993, she moved to Slovenia, where she married the Slovene poet Aleš Debeljak. She studied the language of her new home and began a career, first as a translator and then as a writer and columnist. Her literary debut took place in 1999 with the publication of a series of essays entitled *Foreigner in the House of Natives*, and was followed by the book *Srečko Kosovel: The Poet and I* (2004), a collection of short stories *You Are So Mine* (2007), and the memoir *Forbidden Bread* (2009). She received a Masters of Fine Arts in creative writing in 2006. Although she continues to write in her native English, she finds her readership and her themes mostly in Slovenia. Her novel *In the Antifa Zone* (*Antifa Cona*), translated into Slovene by Andrej E. Skubic, will be released in the autumn of 2012 by the Modrijan Publishing House. She lives in Ljubljana with her husband and three children.

## *In the Antifa Zone*

(excerpt from novel)

The scream of the chainsaw could be heard long before they entered the antifa zone. Masculine voices shouted above the din. Pero and Ina went up separately as they had the night before. Despite the events of the previous night, she wasn't ready to be with him yet, to be seen together as a couple in the morning light. Plus whatever had been discovered in the cave in the forest clearing had set the town on edge, had triggered an unusual flurry of activity, a panicky energy out of character with the slow unfolding of a warm market morning.

It was the third Saturday in June, the temperature still fairly mild but getting warmer as the hours passed and the sun climbed higher up the dome of sky. Though only a few minutes past ten, Ina spotted many of her schoolmates walking or riding up the access road to the forest clearing informally known as the antifa zone. Strangest of all at this early hour, on this bright Saturday morning, a day when generally only women moved about the town with their baskets and patterned shopping totes, were the black-clad antifa boys roaring up the hill in a pack of scooters, some on their own and others with the slender rounded backs of girls slouched behind them, silken hair flapping about their bare shoulders and soft cheeks. Ina supposed they had dragged themselves out of bed because it was their clubhouse, their zone, so naturally they would have a proprietary feeling for whatever had been found up there.

The forest clearing extended some five or six meters between the clubhouse and the opening of a deep hidden crevasse. A brawny local man in rough soiled clothes directed the work around the perimeter. Several men sawed away methodically at the bramble, at the young oak and alder branches that obscured the entrance to the cavity as they reached up toward the sunlight above the forest clearing. A couple of police cars stood waiting nearby, doors lolling open, and, ominously, an ambulance as well. Clusters of observers milled about, talking and smoking and watching, women holding their baskets, men fumbling to unscrew tiny pewter flasks with calloused fingers. The antifa boys slouched around in front of the clubhouse, off their scooters now, disengaged of their girls, offering each other cigarettes, fiddling with Zippo lighters, feigning a lack of interest.

Ina noted several strangers in the gathering crowd. Three young people, two men and one woman, stood by the container where the archeological equipment, tarps and tools were stored. The young woman, who wiped her cheeks repeatedly, seemed as if she were upset, crying even. Were it not for the fact that the three were wearing some sort of protective clothing – pale green coveralls and surgical masks pushed down from the mouths – they would have looked like tourists. All three appeared a bit shell-shocked and

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out-of-place, as if they had just stumbled off a night train at their destination, blinking at the unfamiliar local sunlight. Ina presumed they were members of the archeological team that was supposed to start digging in the cave.

Two uniformed police officers squatted at the edge of the cavity, peering down, waiting for the saws to fall silent, for the debris to be cleared. Ina recognized, standing behind them, a tall plain-clothes cop named Suban, a chief or detective, someone with authority. He was a tall, slightly bent, and humorless man who the kids instinctively avoided not just because he was a cop but because, in his gruff and melancholy manner, he seemed to see right through them, to measure their mettle, or usually lack of it, in an instant. And the town loner was also present, a lean gray-haired icy-eyed German with a lame right arm. Klaus Schultz. He had been Ina's German language teacher during the first year of high school though she didn't have much to do with him anymore. It was strange to see him up here now, hovering above the perimeter of the hole, next to Suban, with Suban it seemed, waiting for whatever was going to happen, whatever was going to be found.

As Ina sidled up to a couple of girlfriends from school, she noticed the two ends of an aluminum ladder jutting out of the entrance to the cave, and a bright green electrical cord flowing down the hole. Neither of those things had been there the night before when she and Pero had laid down on the tarpaulin. Or had they? They had noticed so little of their surroundings, eventually being alert only to their own two bodies.

"It's a dead boy," Eva Fabiani whispered in Ina's ear.

"A boy?" Ina turned her head sharply.

"Our age, I mean. Not a child. That's what they're saying," Eva explained. Then she pointed to the young foreign-looking woman standing in front of the container, the crying one. "She found him."

"A skeleton?" Ina asked, confused. Didn't archeologists dig for fossils and bones? For old things, ancient things?

"No, stupid," Eva said. "A boy like us. A real boy. A real body. That's what the big deal's all about."

Ina turned around and scanned the faces of the young men in front of the clubhouse, as if she were counting heads, checking to see who was missing. A real boy, a real body. Ina's gaze fell on Pero who stood among the antifa boys, quiet and motionless, somehow apart from the others.

By this time, both of the uniformed policemen had lowered themselves down into the hole. They were down there for a while, with Suban and Schultz crouching at the top, calling down to them. It seemed they were having some difficulty figuring out how to pull the body up from the cavity. At first they tried to lower a stretcher from the ambulance down into the hole but it proved too long and rigid to go down the narrow entryway, even though most of the foliage had been cleared away. It would be much

harder to maneuver it up with a heavy body on it. With all the fumbling around, mistakes were probably being made from the standpoint of gathering evidence, not least the destruction of the branches through which the boy must have fallen, but such was the pressure to get the body out, almost as if there was still some hope of reviving it, that nobody seemed to care about anything else. Whispers circulated through the crowd that it was too tall, too heavy, impossible to handle in the dark, that it was utterly limp and lifeless, or alternatively stiff with rigor mortis, that it was maimed, cut into pieces, decapitated.

Eventually with the help of most of the men present – the two young men from the archeological team, the two foresters who had cut the trees away, the ambulance driver, Suban and Schultz – a soft sling was fashioned from a tarpaulin and some ropes found among the archeological team's equipment. Unseen by the onlookers, the body was placed into this makeshift sling and hauled laboriously upward. One of the laborers stood on the aluminum ladder to keep the sling from tilting or upending altogether while also blocking the body from bouncing roughly against the steep vertical walls. When the sling finally emerged from the depths, Suban and Schultz pulled it up to the surface, opened the tarpaulin on the ground, and arranged the young man's body carefully upon the plastic folds. Ina, her hand rising involuntarily to her lips, realized that the tarp might well have been the same one that she and Pero had laid on the night before. It was dark green, almost black, and had been taken from the top of the pile. The dead boy lay in the same position that she and Pero had, cave opening behind his head, feet pointed in the direction of the antifa clubhouse.

Once the body was laid out, Suban stepped back and inspected it silently. He had a studious expression on his face, as if what had been discovered was not a corpse, but some ancient scroll or artifact that not only needed to be deciphered and dated but also inspired a feeling of respect, of awe even. The cluster of onlookers – unable to see the dead boy's face clearly from their distance and angle of vision, and made even more curious by Suban's attitude of intense contemplation and by the sudden hush in the clearing and forest all around – pressed anxiously forward toward the opening of the cave and the prone figure laying in front of it. The special quality of the light, green from the surrounding foliage and golden from the morning sun, cast the whole scene in a magical sylvan aura, as if the clearing were illuminated from above by an immense halo. There was a stillness and density to the scene that made it seem momentarily more like a painting in a museum than reality. What is it about the recent dead that excites everyone so much, Ina wondered, though she felt unaccountably excited herself. She had, paradoxically, the feeling one has when spotting not the presence of unexpected death, but rather that of unexpected life: a fox or a stag in the forest. That moment of rapture, the stoppage of time, the miracle when the animal's wild eyes meet yours, that fleeting connection with something alien, and then it's gone.

## *Antifa cona*

(odlomek iz romana)

Vreščanje motorne žage je bilo slišati že daleč pred prihodom v antifa cono. Skozi trušč se je razlegalo kričanje moških. Pero in Ina sta prišla gor vsak posebej, tako kot sinoči, najprej on v prastarem očetovem spačku, ona pa, potem ko si je oplagnila obraz in se oblekla, na stari vespi svojega brata. Kljub dogodkom prejšnje noči še ni bila pripravljena, da bi bila z njim, da bi ju ob belem dnevu videli skupaj kot par. Poleg tega pa je tisto, kar so odkrili v breznu, postavilo vse mesto na prežo, sprožilo je vrvež dejavnosti, ustvarilo nenavadno energijo, ki je bila povsem neskladna z lagodnim razgrinjanjem toplega sobotnega jutra.

Bila je tretja sobota v juniju, vročina je bila še zmeraj dokaj blaga, a je z minevanjem ur in vzpenjanjem sonca po kupoli neba vse bolj rasla. Manjkali so še natanko trije dnevi do konca sole in poletja, do svobode, dolgih juter v postelji in počitnic ob morju. A čeprav je bil konec tedna in je bila ura zgodnja, komaj nekaj minut čez deset, je Ina opazila več sošolcev, kako po cesti pešačijo ali kolesarijo proti gozdni jasi, ki so ji rekli antifa cona. Ob tej zgodnji uri, v svetlem sobotnem jutru, na dan, ko so po mestu navadno hodile le ženske s košarami ali z vzorčastimi cekarji v rokah, so bili še najbolj nenavadni v črno oblečeni antifajevci, ki so v hrib rjoveli na skuterjih, nekateri sami, nekateri z dekleti, zgrbljenimi zadaj, da so jim svileni lasje plapolali okoli golih ramen in mehkih lic. Ina si je lahko predstavljal, da so se skobacali iz postelj tako zgodaj zato, ker je šlo za njihov klub, njihovo cono, tako da so seveda gojili zaščitniška čustva do tistega – karkoli je že bilo –, kar je nekdo našel tam zgoraj.

Gozdna jasa se je raztezala kakih pet ali šest metrov od kluba do ustja brezna. Delo je usmerjal mišičast domaćin v grobi, umazani obleki, Ina ga je prepoznala kot občasnega delavca pri njenem očetu. Več mož je sistematično žagalo robidovje ter mlade hrastove in jelševe veje, ki so zastirale vhod v votlino. V bližini je stalo nekaj policijskih avtomobilov z odprtimi vrti, zlovešče pa tudi reševalni avto. Naokrog so postopale gručice opazovalcev, ki so klepetali in kadili in pogledovali, ženske s košarami v rokah in moški, ki so z žuljavimi prsti odčepili cinaste čutarice. Antifajevci so sestopili s skuterjev, raztovorili so dekleta, zdaj pa so posedali pred klubom in si ponujali cigarete, kresali vžigalnike in hlinili popolno brezbriznost.

Ina je v zbrani množici opazila tudi neznane obraze. Trije mladi, dva moška in ženska, so stali poleg zabojnika, v katerem so bili shranjeni arheološka oprema, šotorke in orodje. Ženska, ki si je večkrat obrisala lica, je bila videti razburjena, morda je celo jokala. Če ne bi vsi trije nosili nekakšnih zaščitnih oblek – bledo zelenih kombinezonov in kirurških mask, ki so si jih zdaj z ust potegnili pod brado – bi bili videti kot turisti. Vsi trije so se zdeli nekako v šoku in na napačnem kraju, kot da bi bili pravkar na končnem cilju izstopili iz nočnega vlaka in zdaj mežikali v nedomače

lokalno sponce. Ina je domnevala, da so člani arheološke ekipe, ki naj bi začela kopati v jami.

Dva policista v uniformi sta čepela ob robu brezna in kukala dol, čakala sta, da žage potihnejo, da se vejevje odstrani. Ina je za njihovimi hrbiti prepoznala policista v civilu, ki se je pisal Suban, inšpektorja ali detektiva, moža z avtoritetom. Bil je visok, rahlo sključen možkar brez nasmeška, ki so se mu fantje nagonsko izogibali – ne samo zato, ker je bil policist, temveč predvsem zato, ker se je zdelo, kot da jih s svojim mrkim in melanholičnim pogledom kadarkoli skoz in skoz spregleda, kot da lahko v trenutku premeri, koliko jih je zares v hlačah. Že večkrat je bil na njihovi šoli, navadno v spremstvu enega od svojih mož. Nekoč je celo zalotil nekoga, ki je v bližnji ulici prodajal hašiš, porinil ga je ob zid, pritisnil obraz čisto k fantovemu, glasno kričal nanj, ga stresal. Ina se je tega dobro spominjala, vse tiste grobijanske nasilnosti, nenadnega vala vznemirjenja, ki je zajelo vse, a nazadnje je Suban fanta vendarle izpustil.

Tam je bil tudi vaški samotar, mršavi, sivolasi Nemec ledenih oči s hromo desno roko, Klaus Schulz. Bil je Inin učitelj nemščine v prvem letniku srednje šole, a danes ga ni več kaj dosti videvala. Tu pa tam ga je opazila, kako piye kavo v lokaluu, kamor je rada zahajala s priateljicami, kako bere časopis ali pa tava po ulicah, navadno sam, izgubljen v lastnem svetu, ki ni docela vgrajen v njihovega. Bilo je čudno, da ga zdaj vidi tukaj, nad obo-dom brezna, poleg Subana, zdelo se je celo, da sta skupaj, kot da čakata, kaj se bo zgodilo, kaj bodo našli.

Ina se je pridružila priateljicama, sošolkama; opazila je konca aluminijaste lestve, ki sta štrlela iz lame, in svetlo zelen električni kabel, ki se je spuščal v luknjo. Prejšnji večer, ko sta s Perom legla na šotorko, ni bilo tukaj ne enega ne drugega. Ali pač? Okolice se nista kaj dosti zavedala, navsezadnje sta bila pozorna le na lastni telesi.

»Neki mrtev fant je,« je Ini na uho zašepetala Eva Fabiani.

»Fant?« je Ina ostro zasukala glavo.

»Naših let, mislim. Ni otrok. Tako pravijo,« je pojasnila Eva. Potem je pokazala mlado žensko tujega videza, ki je stala pred zabojsnikom, tisto objokano. »Ona ga je našla.«

»Okostnjaka?« je vprašala Ina, ki je bila zmedena. Kaj arheologi ne izkopavajo fosilov in kosti? Starih stvari, prastarih?

»Ne, trapa,« je dejala Eva. »Pravi fant. Pravo truplo. Zato je tak cirkus.«

Ina se je zasukala in preletela obraze mladeničev pred klubom, kot da jih prešteva, če kdo manjka. Pravi fant, pravo truplo. Ina se je zastrmela v Pera, ki je stal med antifajevci, tih in negibeni, ločen od drugih, zamišljen.

Zdaj sta se že oba uniformirana policista spustila v jamo. Nekaj časa sta bila tam spodaj, Suban in Schultz pa sta čepela ob robu in klicala dol. Zdelo se je, kot da se ne morejo odločiti, kako naj truplo dvignejo iz votline. Sprva so skušali vanjo spustiti nosila iz reševalnega avta, a so bila predolga in pre-toga, da bi šla skozi ozki vhod v jamo, čeprav so večino rastlinja odstranili.

Še dosti teže bi jih bilo potem spraviti ven z natovorjenim težkim truplom. Pri vsem tistem šarjenju po okolici so gotovo naredili tudi kako forenzično napako, navsezadnje so uničili veje, skozi katere je verjetno padel fant, toda v zraku je bil tak pritisk, da ga je treba spraviti na plano, kot da je še zmeraj kakšno upanje, da bi ga lahko oživili, in zdelo se je, da nikogar ne briga za kaj dosti drugega. Med množico je krožil šepet, da je truplo preveliko, pretežko, da ga je nemogoče premikati v temi, da je povsem mlahavo in brez življenja oziroma da je povsem trdo zaradi mrtvaške okorelosti, da je izmaličeno, razsekano na koščke, obglavljeno.

Nazadnje so s pomočjo večine navzočih mož – obeh mladeničev iz arheološke ekipe, gozdarjev, ki so klestili goščavo, voznika reševalnega avta, Subana in Schultza – izdelali mehko nihalko iz šotorskega krila in vrvi, ki so jih našli med opremo arheološke ekipe. Truplo so brez radovednih oči gledalcev položili v to improvizirano dvigalo in ga začeli mukotrpnno vleči navzgor. Eden od gozdarjev je stal na aluminijasti lestvi in si prizadeval preprečiti, da bi se gugalnica preveč nagnila ali pregrubo butnila ob strme, navpične stene. Ko se je dvigalo nazadnje pojavilo iz globine, sta Schultz in Suban tovor potegnila na površje. Suban je šotorsko krilo razgrnil po tleh in mladeničevu truplu skrbno poravnal. Ina, ki se ji je roka nehote dvignila k ustom, je spoznala, da bi šotorsko krilo prav lahko bilo natanko tisto, na katerem sta prejšnjo noč ležala s Perom. Bilo je temno zeleno, skoraj črno, in vzeli so ga z vrha kupa. Mrtvi fant je ležal v enakem položaju kot Pero in ona, brezno je bilo za njegovo glavo, noge pa obrnjene proti klubu antifajevcev.

Ko je bilo truplo enkrat poravnano, je Suban stopil korak nazaj in si ga molče ogledoval. Na obrazu je imel zamišljen izraz, kot da pred njim ni truplo, temveč nekakšen starodaven rokopisni zvitek ali artefakt, ki ga ni treba le razvozlati in mu določiti starost, temveč vzbuja tudi strahospoščovanje. Gruča opazovalcev – ki s svoje oddaljenosti in zornega kota ni mogla jasno videti fantovega obraza in je postala še radovednejša zaradi Subanova vega zbranega premišljevanja ter nenavadne tištine na jasi in v okoliškem gozdu – je neučakano pritisnila naprej proti breznu in iztegnjeni postavi, ki je ležala pred njo. Posebna svetloba, z zelenilom okoliškega listja in pozlato jutranjega sonca, je dajala celotnemu prizoru čarobno gozdno avro, kot da jaso od zgoraj osvetljuje velikanska svetilka. Na prizoru je bilo nekaj tiste umirjenosti in gostote, zaradi katere se je za hip zdel bolj podoben muzejski slikci kot stvarnosti. Le kaj je na ljudeh, ki so nedavno umrli, da se vsi tako vznemirijo, je ugibala Ina, čeprav je tudi sama čutila nerazložljivo razburjenost. Presenetljivo je imela občutek, kakršnega ima človek, kadar naleti ne na nepričakovano smrt, temveč na nekaj nepričakovano živega: na lisico ali jelena v gozdu. Ta trenutek zamaknjenosti, zaustavljenosti časa, čudeža, ko se divje oči živali srečajo s tvojimi, tiste bežne povezave z nečim tujim, in potem je kar naenkrat vse mimo.



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# Rumen Leonidov

Rumen Leonidov se je rodil leta 1953 v Sofiji v Bolgariji. Leta 1979 je diplomiiral iz bolgarščine na Univerzi Paisija Hilandarskega v Plovdivu in bil urednik različnih bolgarskih literarnih revij. Je pesnik, novinar, publicist, založnik in prevajalec iz ruščine in francoščine. Je avtor pesniških zbirk *Предупреждение* (Opozorilo, 1977), *И огънят си спомни за искрата* (Tudi ogenj se spomni na iskro, 1982; 2004), *Голям и малък* (Velik in majhen, 1990), *Немоchnите размери на живота* (Neustreerne življenjske razmere, 1995), *Край на митологията* (Konec mitologije, 1997; 2009), *Нощта на продавача* (Prodajčeva noč, 1997), *Класически парчета* (Klasični odlomki, 1999) in *Сляпа неделя* (Slepa nedelja, 2011). Izdal je tudi zbirko esejev z naslovom *Улациенят човек* (Prestrašeni človek, 2011). Izbor njegove poezije z naslovom *Z vrha jezika* v slovenskih prevodih Metoda Čeparja, Namite Subiotto in Boruta Omerzela je izšel leta 2009 pri Študentski založbi. Je član Društva bolgarskih pisateljev in Bolgarske akademije znanosti in umetnosti.

Rumen Leonidov was born in 1953 in Sofia, Bulgaria. He graduated in Bulgarian language from Paisius of Hilendar University in Plovdiv in 1979 and worked as editor for various Bulgarian literary magazines. The poet, journalist, publicist, publisher, and translator from Russian and French has authored the following collections of poetry: *Предупреждение* (Warning, 1977), *И огънят си спомни за искрата* (Fire Remembers the Spark As Well, 1982; 2004), *Голям и малък* (Big and Small, 1990), *Немоchnите размери на живота* (Inferior Living Conditions, 1995), *Край на митологията* (Mythology's End, 1997; 2009), *Нощта на продавача* (The Retailer's Night, 1997), *Класически парчета* (Classical Excerpts, 1999), and *Сляпа неделя* (Blind Sunday, 2011). He also published a collection of essays entitled *Улациеният човек* (The Petrified Human, 2011). A selection of his poetry, translated into Slovene by Metod Čepar, Namita Subiotto, and Borut Omerzel, was published by the Študentska založba Publishing House in the volume *Z vrha jezika* (From the Top of the Tongue) in 2009. He is a member of the Bulgarian Writers' Association and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

## Псалм

Някой ни отучи да летим.  
И посели ни на чуждо място.  
И в гърлата ни насипва пясък.  
И в прахта ни кара да пълзим.

Някой ни е стиснал като в длан.  
И в яйцето на съня ни съска.  
И крилата ни в зародиш къса.  
Смуче от жълтъка ни без свян.

Някой ни вкопава през нощта.  
И мълчим заровени до шия.  
Реже от душите ни с бичкия.  
Голи ни разравя сутринта.

Някой приземи ни до един.  
Бие с чук дървото на живота.  
И събarya птичето с гнездото.  
И нозете му завинтва с винт.

Кой се разпорежда в Твоя дом?  
Кой върлува в Твоята градина?  
Господи, остана без Родина.  
И без семе Твойто потекло.

Толкова души, а няма дух.  
Няма изход, няма очищение.  
Вечното лете не е спасение –  
беше грешка кацането тук.

Онзи, който първи те презря,  
нищият, с когото си глаголиш,  
него утре за любов ще молиш,  
щом до нас, Спасителю, опря.

---

## *Последният човек*

Последният човек върви към нас.  
Без пол. Без Библия. Без знаме.  
Той няма име. Няма глас. И памет.  
Последният човек не иска власт.

Последният човек не иска власт.  
Не се усмихва. Нито ни се сърди.  
Не чувства страх. И студ. И няма гъдел.  
Последният човек върви към нас.

Последният човек върви към нас.  
Върви човек, а виждаш – гола кукла.  
Върви без срам. Върви – и си пиука.  
Последният човек не иска власт.

Последният човек не иска власт.  
Последният е първи между равни.  
Последният човек е тук отдавна.  
Последният е първи между нас.

Последният е първи между нас.  
Човек без род. Без детство. И без майка.  
Върви сред нас. Безчувствен като тайна.  
Последният човек не иска власт.

Последният човек не иска власт.  
Яде орехи, мед и дъвчи лапад.  
А рожбата, която е наляпал  
е времето, което беше в нас.

## *Претръпване*

Когато убиха моето куче  
Аз мълчах  
Когато отровиха моята котка  
Аз мълчах  
Когато заклаха моето петле  
Аз мълчах  
Когато умъртвиха второто ми Аз  
Аз замълчах като добро другарче  
И досега мълча.  
Мълча и хапя.

## *Къде отлитат гласовете ни...*

Гласовете на поетите временно нямат крила.  
Изкуството е удушена птица, захвърлена в краката  
на поетите. И може би така ни е писано –  
потребността от изкуство се явява там, където  
животът не е такъв, какъвто трябва... Ако  
изкуството е сурогат на живота, то у нас има  
голямо и продължително бъдеще. И ще дойде не  
от естествения глад, а от естествената скръб на  
горската птица.

## *Скафандър*

Моята мисъл лети трийсет светлинни години  
из Там.  
И по всяка вероятност ще ме надвижее.  
Може би никога вече  
няма да се срещнем с нея  
тук, на Земята.  
И няма да мога никога да разбера  
какво толкова дълго  
са си говорили с Бога,  
без мен.

---

## *Изповед на едн кон*

Предпочитам камшика пред юздите.  
Но ме вкараха в пътя  
като ме оседлаха.

## *Сляпна неделя*

Иде сляпата неделя.  
Нощем броди из гората,  
гола с глутници беснее –  
вълци близкат ѝ снагата.

И с вълчиците играе,  
и в тревите се въргалят...  
Стенат, викат и се каят,  
вият като на умряло.

После тича край реката,  
паднали души събира,  
остри сърпа си в луната,  
точи в кремъка секира...

Ходи на смъртта на гости.  
Черни сънища засява,  
пие кръв и глозга кости.  
Жъне в тъмното тинтява...

Плодовете не опложда,  
градинар е и гробар е...  
Ангелите нямат кожа,  
но дере ги като яре.

Духа, види ли кандило,  
сол на жадните раздава.  
Живите петли опява.  
И ги веси на бесило.

...Но в небесната постеля  
зорлем се зората се буди...  
Утре сляпата неделя  
никой няма да учуди.

---

## ***Psalm***

Nékdo nas leteti oduči.  
In na tuje mesto nas posaja.  
In nam peska v grlo nasipava.  
In v prahu nam telo pred njim polzi.

Nékdo nas kot v svojo pest mečka.  
Žejno v jajcu sna nas izsesava.  
Podlo krila nam v zarodku trga.  
Brez sramu nam rumenjak sesa.

Nékdo nas ponoči zakoplje.  
In molčimo, do vratu vkopani.  
Duše s cirkularko nam mesari.  
Zjutraj pa nas gole izkoplje.

Nékdo nas je čisto prizemljil.  
Bije s kladivom drevo življenja.  
Drobno ptico z gnezdom vred razdira.  
Noge ji bo z matico privil.

Kdo je v Tvojem domu gospodar?  
Kdo po Tvojem vrtu divje ruje?  
Bog, saj si ostal brez Domovine.  
In pa brez semena Tvoj izvor.

Toliko je duš, nikjer duha.  
Ni očiščenja in ni izhodov.  
Le v letenju večnem je rešitev –  
tu pristati hiba je bila.

Tisti, ki te prvi je prezrl,  
bednik, s komer zdaj se pogovarjaš,  
njega jutri za ljubezen prosiš,  
če si nas, Odrešenik, uzrl.

---

## *Poslednji človek*

Poslednji človek proti nam hiti.  
Brez biblije. Brez prapora. Brez spola.  
Imena nima. Ne glasu. Spomina.  
Poslednji človek noče oblasti.

Poslednji človek noče oblasti.  
Ne smeje se. A niti jezen ni.  
Ne čuti straha. Mraza. Ni žečkljiv.  
Poslednji človek proti nam hiti.

Poslednji človek proti nam hiti.  
Koraka človek, zdi se gola lutka.  
Koraka brez sramu. In požvižgava.  
Poslednji človek noče oblasti.

Poslednji človek noče oblasti.  
Poslednji – prvi med enakimi.  
Poslednji človek tu od davnih dni.  
Poslednji človek – prvi je med nami.

Poslednji človek – prvi je med nami.  
Brez roda. Matere. In brez otroštva.  
Med nami stopa. Hladen kakor tajna.  
Poslednji človek noče oblasti.

Poslednji človek noče oblasti.  
Orehe jé in med, kislico žveči.  
A ves pridelek, ki ga bo pomlatal,  
je čas, ki smo ga imeli v sebi.

## **Prenašanje**

Ko so ubili mojega psa  
Sem molčal  
Ko so zastrupili mojo mačko  
Sem molčal  
Ko so zaklali mojega petelinčka  
Sem molčal  
Ko so omrtvili moj drugi Jaz  
Sem zamolčal kot dober priatelj  
In še sedaj molčim.  
Molčim in grizem.

## ***Kam odletajo naši glasovi ...***

Glasovi pesnikov so trenutno brez kril.  
Umetnost je zadušena ptica, zalučana v noge  
pesnikov. In morda nam je tako usojeno –  
da se potreba po umetnosti pojavi tam, kjer  
življenje ni takšno, kot bi moralo biti ... Če je  
umetnost nadomestek življenja, tedaj ima pri nas  
veliko in trajno prihodnost. In ne bo prišla  
iz naravne lakote, pač pa iz naravne žalosti  
gozdne ptice.

## ***Skafander***

Moja misel leti trideset svetlobnih let  
od Tam.  
In po vsej verjetnosti me bo nadživila.  
Nemara se nikoli več  
ne bom srečal z njo  
tu, na Zemljji.  
In nikoli ne bom izvedel,  
o čem sta se tako dolgo  
pogovarjala z Bogom  
brez mene.

---

## *Izpoved nekega konja*

Raje imam bič kot uzde.  
A so me najprej osedlali,  
šele nato pognali.

## *Slepa nedelja*

Bliža slepa se nedelja.  
V mraku brodi skozi hosto,  
s tropi volčjimi razsaja –  
ližejo ji golo kožo.

In z volkuljami zapleše  
in po travi se kotljajo ...  
Cvilijo in se kesajo,  
tulijo kot za umrle.

Potlej pa ob reki teče,  
padle duše si nabira,  
srp ostrí si z bledo luno,  
brusi s kvarcem si sekiro ...

Potlej pa še smrt obišče  
in zaseje črne sanje,  
kosti gloda in kri pije,  
v temi žanje encijane ...

Sadežev ne oplojuje,  
je vrtnarka in grobarka ...  
Angeli so vsi brez kože,  
a odira jih kot kozle.

Piha, če kadilo vidi,  
žejnim dušam sol razdaja.  
Žive kure pokopava  
in obeša na vešala.

... A na postelji nebeški  
morasto se zora zbuja ...  
Jutri pa nedelja slepa  
prav nikogar ne začudi.

## *Psalm*

Someone weaned us from flying.  
And planted us on foreign land.  
And he's pouring sand in our throats.  
And is making us crawl in the dust.

Someone's got us clenched in hand.  
And is hissing in the egg of our sleep.  
And he's tearing up our inchoate wings.  
Sucking shamelessly from our yolk.

Someone digs us in at night.  
And we keep quiet, buried up to our necks.  
With a bucksaw, he's cutting from our souls  
He digs up our naked bodies in the morning.

Someone landed us, one by one.  
And with a hammer, he's beating the tree of life.  
And he's shaking down the nest and the bird in it.  
And he's tightening a screw on its feet.

Who's in charge in Thy home?  
Who is raging in Thy garden?  
God, you're left without a Country.  
And there is no seed for Thy descent.

So many souls and yet no spirit.  
No exit, no purification.  
Eternal flying is salvation –  
alighting here was a mistake.

He, who scorned you first,  
the poor one with whom you're chatting,  
tomorrow you'll be begging him for love  
Since you, Savior, reduced to us.

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## ***The Last Man***

The last man is walking towards us.  
Without a gender. Without a Bible. Without a flag.  
He has no name. No voice. And no memory.  
The last man doesn't want power.

The last man doesn't want power.  
Doesn't smile. Nor does he get mad.  
He doesn't feel fear. Nor cold. And he's not ticklish.  
The last man is walking towards us.

The last man is walking towards us  
A man is walking, but what you see is a naked dummy.  
He's walking shamelessly. He's walking and he's cheeping.  
The last man doesn't want power.

The last man doesn't want power.  
The last is first among equals.  
The last man has been here for so long.  
The last is first among us.

The last is first among us.  
A man without a family. Without a childhood. And without a mother.  
He's walking among us. Unfeeling like a secret.  
The last man doesn't want power.

The last man doesn't want power.  
He eats walnuts, honey, and he chews on dock leaf.  
And the child, whom he has swallowed  
is the time which was in us.

### ***Inurement***

When they killed my dog  
I kept silent  
When they poisoned my cat  
I kept silent  
When they slaughtered my cockerel  
I kept silent  
When they destroyed my alter ego  
I kept my mouth shut like a good buddy  
And I still do.  
I keep silent and I bite.

### ***Where Do Our Voices Fly Off To...***

The voices of the poets are temporarily without wings.  
Art is a strangled bird, thrown at the feet  
of the poets. And maybe it was meant to be –  
The need of art appears where  
life is not as it should be. If  
art is a surrogate of life, then there is  
great and lasting future in us. And it will come not  
from the natural hunger, but from the natural grief of  
the forest bird.

### ***Space Suit***

My thought has been flying for thirty light years  
out There.  
And it will most probably outlive me.  
Maybe we'll never meet again  
here on Earth.  
And I will never be able to understand  
What were they discussing for so long  
with God up there,  
without me.

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*Confession of a Horse*

I prefer the whip to the bridle.  
But they brought me into line  
When they saddled me.

*Blind Sunday*

Blind Sunday's coming.  
At night, she's walking through the forest,  
naked, she's raving with the packs –  
wolves lick her figure.

And she's playing with the she-wolves,  
and they wallow in the grass...  
Moaning, crying and repenting,  
howling to the dead.

Then she runs along the river,  
gathering fallen souls,  
she sharpens her sickle into the moon,  
she grinds her axe into the flint...

She goes to visit death.  
She plants black dreams,  
Drinks blood and gnaws at bones.  
She reaps gentian in the dark.

She doesn't fertilize the fruits.  
She's a gardener and a gravedigger.  
Angels have no skin,  
But she skins them like a goat.

She's blowing, if she sees a float light,  
She's giving salt to the thirsty.  
She mourns the living roosters.  
And she hangs them on the gallows.

...But in the heavenly bedding  
unwillingly the dawn awakens...  
Tomorrow Blind Sunday  
will astonish no one.



Foto © Tomasz Wierzejski/Fotonova.pl

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# *Dorota Masłowska*

Dorota Masłowska se je rodila leta 1983 v Wejherowu na Poljskem. Vpisala je študij psihologije na Univerzi v Gdansku, a se je čez čas prepisala na študij kulturologije na Univerzi v Varšavi. Je pisateljica in dramatičarka, njen romaneskni prvenec *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną* (*Poljsko-ruska vojna pod belo-rdečo zastavo*, 2002) je leta 2011 izšel tudi v slovenskem prevodu Tatjane Jamnik pri založbi Modrijan. Kljub temu da je razburkal širšo javnost, je požel pohvale številnih intelektualcev in bil odlikovan z nemško nagrado za mladinsko književnost (2005). Roman je preveden tudi v angleščino, češčino, nizozemščino, francoščino, nemščino, madžarščino, italijanščino, ruščino in španščino, režiser Xawery Żuławski pa je po avtoričini literarni predlogi posnel tudi istoimenski celovečerni film (2009). Med njena pomembnejša dela spadajo še roman *Paw królowej* (*Kraljičini jeleni*, 2006), za katerega je prejela nagrado »Nike« (2006), ter drami *Dwoje biednych Rumunów mówiących po polsku* (*Dva revna Romuna, ki govorita po poljsko*, 2006) in *Między nami dobrze jest* (*Mi se mamo fajn*, 2008).

Dorota Masłowska was born in 1983 in Wejherowo, Poland. She began to study psychology at the University of Gdańsk, but eventually switched to the cultural studies programme at the University of Warsaw. She is an author and playwright, whose debut novel *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną* (*White and Red* (UK); *Snow White and Russian Red* (US), 2002) was translated into Slovene by Tatjana Jamnik and published by the Modrijan Publishing House in 2011. Although perceived as controversial by the broad public, it was highly praised by many intellectuals and won her the German Youth Literature Prize (2005). In addition to Slovene, it was also translated into Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. The novel was also adapted for a feature film of the same title, which was directed Xawery Żuławski (2009). Her other notable works include the novel *Paw królowej* (*The Queen's Peacock*, 2006), for which she received the Nike Award (2006), as well as the plays *Dwoje biednych Rumunów mówiących po polsku* (*A Couple of Poor Polish Speaking Romanians*, 2006) and *Między nami dobrze jest* (*All is Right between Us – No Matter How Hard We Try*, 2008).

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## *New York I Love You, But You're Bringing Me Down.*

### *Listy do Bijou*

26 marca

Droga Bijou,

byłyśmy z Agatą u wróżki. Powiedziała mi, że będę miała 5 dzieci, za 3 lata będę mieszkać w Kanadzie, mam zanieczyszczony piąty czakram, mam jeść rano jabłko, dwa gryzy, resztę mogę wyrzucić, słabo? Zero ściemy, same konkrety.

D.

27 marca

Cześć,

mam już internet. Przyjechałam, i mimo że jestem już trochę weteranką przelotów klasą ekonomiczną, to ciągle prosty kilkuwojowy umysł nie radzi sobie z tą sytuacją i nieodmiennie klasyfikuje ją do puli „horoskopy, UFO, życie po życiu”. Wchodzisz do teleportu, kupujesz parę gówien w sferze wolnocłowej, akurat przeczytasz jakąś książkę Zofii Nałkowskiej, ja-kaś baba z krakowską suchą w papierze pewex w bagażu podręcznym rzuci ci kilka oschłych spojrzeń na temat twojego ubrania, odwiniesz z papierka prince polo i ani szybko, ani powoli jesteś w Nowym Jorku, tępniącym betonowym labiryncie z bardzo małym fragmencikiem teflonowego nieba symbolicznie mającym gdzieś między wieżowcami.

Czy to nie może wydawać się dziwne prostej dziewczynie z nie znowu tak dużego państwa w Europie Wschodniej, nawykłej do niskiej zabudowy i architektury przybudówki? Już tego dnia dwa kieliszki wina plus ogólny niepokój organizmu z powodu nieposzanowania zasady decorum jedność miejsca i czasu doprowadziły mnie do stanu szczególnie beznadziejnej podatności na grawitację i tylko leżałam na kanapie dysząc, a w telewizji był akurat program „learn to read” – nauka czytania. Kobieta w chryzantemie na łbie siedzi i opowiada, jak wyglądają litery, podczas gdy na ekranie pojawiają się ich doskonale komputerowe symulacje, a wszystko to ma to charakterystyczne buddyjskie tempo telewizji edukacyjnej. Myślałam, że musiałam się jakoś pomylić i parę razy przeczytałam sobie napis „learn to read”, ale to nie było ani to słynne delirium tremens, ani ekstremalny przypadek jetlagu, to była rzeczywistość.

Swoją drogą uważam, że jetlag jako kompleks objawów psycho i fizjolo wynikających z wojny światów to potrafi być naprawdę coś: budzisz się o 3.30 nad ranem kompletnie trzeźwa, myślisz tylko o tym, by zarzucić na szyję sa- szetkę z paszportem, kartą euro 2000 i dziesięcioma dolarami na widokówki, a twoje nogi wykonują ruchy fantomowe w kierunku drzwi, jednocześnie odmawiając najdrobniejszej współpracy. Kończy się tak, że tluczysz się w dre-sach po kompletnie ociemniałym i obumarłym Manhattanie razem z garstką

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deklamujących coś w głuchy świt bezdomnych i raz za razem łapiesz się na myśli „no patrz go, niby bezdomny, a mówi płynnie po angielsku”.

W ogóle Manhattan jako doskonały obieg zamknięty ludzi pięknych, młodych i niekoniecznie pięknych i młodych, ale za to w dużej mierze bogatych, ze swoim okrucieństwem wesołego miasteczka „albo się śmiejesz, albo wypierdalaj”, musi generować dużo odrzutu, dużo zawodników rezerwowych z przetrąconą nóżką. Jak zagubione bakterie pałtają się bezdomni i radykalni psychole, którym muzyka nie przeszkadzi w tańcu. Kultura mówienia do siebie osób idących ulicą jest tu w rozkwicie. Wszystko pędzi i nikt na nic nie zwraca uwagi. Nie ma zbyt wyraźnego podziału na margines i właściwą stronę rzeczywistości, wszystko jest potencjalnym właściwym marginesem. Chaotyczna fala rozpedzonych jednostek, zawsze gotowa cię wdeptać pomiędzy rzygi, nadgryzione pączki i kubki ze Starbucksa. Zdaje się, jakby twój los tu mógł rozsypać się w ciągu minuty, spalić jak gazeta. Zupełnie nie dziwię się ludziom, którzy pędzą ulicą na rowerze przebrani za Supermana, krzycząc do siebie, albo śpią pod metrem w stroju króla Murzynów. Są dni, że czujesz, że sama zaraz tak zrobisz albo pojdziesz z jednym z tych grubych blondynów w tenisówkach, co szykanują cię świeżo odbitą na ksero biblią i spojrzeniem tak jasnym, że aż straszny.

Kultura ludzi, którym nie do końca wyszło śrubuje wszelkie poziomy!!

Jakże różni się od stylistyki odrzutu społecznego w pl, gdzie wylansowane przez tę znaną epokę średniowiecze wartości takie jak cierpienie, łaknienie kary i gorzki żal rzutują na wszystko, poczawszy od architektury, przez budowę zdania, a skończywszy na žebractwie miejskim, a žebrak to pół-martwa natura z fioletową nogą bez stopy wystawioną z zaropiałych szmat jak relikwia do całowania, a teraz zapłać, że wszystko można o tobie powiedzieć, ale nie że jesteś mną!!

A tu każdy wie, że fajerwerk to podstawa wszelkiego życia: przyjeżdża na samodziennie skonstrowanych kólkach koleżka bez nóg i rąk, wyjmuję gitarę, jednym kikutem loopuje bas, drugim uruchamia perkusję, połową ust gra na gitarze, a drugą śpiewa w tak beztrosko piękny sposób, że 300 osób czekających na metro milknie, chociaż każdy tu drze mordę dwadzieścia cztery ha. Inny przebierze się za Statuę Wolności, jeszcze inny wyjebie z trzymetrowym krzyżem na skrzyżowaniu i z wydrukowanym na drukarce napisem JESUS będzie preżył dziąsła barwy ciemnej jarzębiny w najbardziej promienistych uśmiechach jakie jest w stanie wygenerować otwór gębowy ludzki, jednym słowem tutaj oni wiedzą jak się zakręcić, całymi garściami czerpią inspirację z gospodarki wolnorynkowej i popkultury!

Zaraz potem były święta. Poszłam odwiedzić mojego kolegę, który przeżywał akurat okres fascynacji niską ceną win za 3 dolary i potem miałam kaca, i nie mogłam zbliżyć nawet do ust żadnej z tych zakupionych na Greenpointie sentymentalnych rewelacji kulinarnych, i zniszczyłam całą świętą atmosferę, ląpiąc na wszystkich spode łba swoimi oczami koloru najczystszej

purpury. Ale było bardzo eklektycznie: i płonące zajęczki, i makowiec, i ryba po grecku, i ser tylżycki, i placek z marmeladą z niezidentyfikowanych szczątków owoców, i pieśni żydowskie, i herbata zielona z puszką light, globalizacja to zjawisko nie do przecenienia.

To miasto jest chore i doznaje się tu tak ogłuszającej samotności, że tak jak w Polsce w ogóle już mi się nie chce z nikim gadać, a tutaj jakieś mechanizmy obronne, terapia fabułą, jakby zamknięte raz przez nieuwagę usta mogły się zatrzasnąć. Mam taki rodzaj zatrucia konwersacyjnego, które mogę porównać tylko z tym, jak spotkałam Cię pod automatem z kawą (a skórki po pomarańczach? Pasjami! Uwielbiam! Biorę, wącham, przekładam skórkami po bananach...).

W poniedziałek pojechałyśmy z Agatą na Brooklyn do fryzjera, bo ona domagała się radykalnej odmiany losu poprzez radykalną odmianę włosów, i mówią, że chcieć to mówić, albo że marzenia się spełniają – otóż nie zawsze. Zakład fryzjerski wygląda jak bric-a-brac i napad na Olimpię, wśród różnego luksusowego śmiecia paleta się z dziesięciu zwyrodnialców z takimi kolczykami typu, że jest koło średnicy 10 cm i to jest wmontowane w ucho w ten sposób, że całe jest otoczone skórą. Może to zwykła rzecz, tylko ja jestem taką gumową protezą Europejki z Europy Wsch. i nie mam pojęcia o najnowszych trendach w piercingu, ale przyprawia ten widok o podświatome tortury i chcę krzyczeć: ludzie, nie róbcie tego, świat będzie lepszy!

Było też kilka fryzerek i wszystkie wyglądały jak chórki w B52's.

Przeczytałam tam wszystkie gazety o bliźniakach J.Lo i różnych zoomach na wąsy, pachy i włosy łonowe prześwitujące przez foliowe spodnie osób, których nazwiska brzmią dla mnie równie znajomo co Dawid Ozdoba czy Anna Głogowska, a w tym czasie ten fryzjer utworzył z włosów Agaty nieco zachowawczą fryzurę Crystal Carrington spotyka Weronikę Rosati na pokazie Ewy Minge, suto polewa ją amoniakiem i niezwłocznie podpalą.

Wiec potem, by sobie odbić poszłyśmy do tej wróżki, która przyjmuje w takiej brudnej kanciapie na głównej ulicy Greenpointu, gdzie prawdopodobnie żyje na traumach emigracyjnych niemówiących po angielsku Polaków.

Jest to skromny zakład czytania z rąk i lotu ptaków, właściwie wyłącznie witryna z kawałkiem podłogi o powierzchni około 2 metrów kwadratowych, o urządzeniu bardzo ascetycznym (2 krzesła ogrodowe), atmosfera nieuchronnie nadchodzącej przeszłości podrzymywana jest przez snującego się wytarzanego w gnojówce kota, kilka pudzików w konwencji zdobniczej hare hare, wydrukowaną na drukarce 200 dioptrii planszę z czakrami oraz odgłos zacieklego zamiatań z za przepierzenia.

Wiec oto co mi powiedziała Jacy, ta demoniczna osoba o niezwykle brudnych, jakby wprost wyjątych z ziemi ogrodowej rękach: nie skończyłam studiów.

Mam przestać zajmować się mężczyznami i natychmiast skończyć studia. Niezależnie od tego niedługo urodzę bliźniaki. Potem jeszcze troje dzieci.

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Co do sumy tych wszystkich dzieci, nie mogłyśmy dojść do ładu: raz było to 5, raz 7, w każdym razie zawsze więcej niż mniejsz, a przynajmniej nigdy tyle samo. Za trzy lata będę mieszkać w Kanadzie, będę miała miliardy dolarów, ale będę wciąż ubierać się tak samo i jeść te same rzeczy (czy chodzi jej o jajka?). Zajdę na sam szczyt. Ale źle śpię. Wróżka widzi stosy ciuchów w pokoju, mam to natychmiast uprzątnąć.

Codziennie, zanim zacznę rozmawiać przez telefon, dwa gryzy jabłka. Jak dam jej sto dolarów, to wszystko się zmieni i nie będę już niemiła dla tego starszego mężczyzny, dla którego jestem niemiła, i ona zapali za mnie 24 świece. Tak czy siak jeszcze tu wróć dziękować jej na kolana, „wróćisz do Jacy, będziesz Jacy przynosić kwiaty”, 30 lat w zawodzie, mam certyfikat z Californii. Przy czym na prawo i lewo sypała ze swoich fanatyckich czarnych oczu (potem powiedziała nam, że jest Rumunką) snopy iskier cokolwiek tylko zetlałych, matowych i już jakby używanych, i znać było po niej pewne znużenie zawodowe, pewne takie „ile można”, które np. ja też odczuwałam bardzo silnie po piątym dniu sylwestra.

Ściskam Cię mocno i przesyłam trochę ryku samochodów, syren i wrząsków ludzi z ulicy Lexington. Pa! Bardzo współczuję Ci, że jesteś taka grubą, a ja taka chuda. D.

Otoż moja droga,

dzisiaj szwendając się tu i ówdzie, nagle natrafiłam na Baracka Obamę wychodzącego z jakiegoś sądu na Astor's Place, zobaczyć mojego starego znajomego Baracka Obamę w tak wielkim pełnym ludzi mieście, przyznaj, to był naprawdę fart. Były barierki i stali jacyś ludzie, więc akurat wychodziłam ze Starbucks i pomyślałam, a co, też sobie stanę, może będzie jakiś skandal. No i tak stałam, i podchodziło coraz więcej ludzi, pytając mnie, po co tu stoję, ja już pokątnie dowiedziały się, że będzie wychodził Barack Obama, szastałam tą informacją na prawo i lewo, z coraz swobodniejszym akcentem a to z Oklahomy, a to z Północnej Karoliny, czując się prawie jakbym to ja sama była Barackiem, który ma zaraz wyjść i ogólne podniecenie udzielało mi się. Wreszcie Barack wyszedł i mimo że byłam b. blisko, trudno mi ten widok jakoś bliżej zrelacjonować, bo szybko zasłoniła go szczerle ściana telefonów komórkowych i aparatów. Zastanawiam się, cóż za perwersyjna przyjemność musi być w posiadaniu filmu z takiego zdarzenia, minutowego trzęsącego się filmu bez dźwięku 20 pikseli, takiego samego, który zrobiło sobie 200 innych osób? Ale przez tę chwilę czułam się pełnoprawną organiczną częścią zbiorowego spazmu i bezdechu społeczeństwa amerykańskiego, i czułam, że Barack macha prosto do mnie, i bijąc brawo i krzycząc „Barack!” czułam, że mój głos, którego nie posiadam, należy tylko do niego.

Po tym wszystkim tylko to mogę powiedzieć: Barack Obama istnieje.

## New York I Love You, But You're Bringing Me Down. Pisma Bijou

26. marca

Draga Bijou,

z Agato sva ble pri vedeževalki. Povedala mi je, da bom mela 5 otrok, da bom čez 3 leta živila v Kanadi, da mam zapacano peto čakro, da moram zjutraj pojest jabolko, dva griza, drugo lahko vržem stran, hudo? Brez natega, sam dejstva.

D.

27. marca

Živjo,

mam že internet. Prispela sem, in čeprav sem že kar mal veteranka letov v ekonomskem razredu, unih par vijug v mojih preprostih možganih še zmerom ne zmore dojet te situacije in jo še naprej razvršča v rubriko »horoskopi, NLP, življenje po življenju«. Stopiš v teleport, kupiš par brezveznosti v brezkarinski coni, glich prebereš kakšno knjigo od Zofie Nalkowske, kakšna babinca s krakovsko suho v pewex papirju v priročni prtljagi te parkrat ošvkne s hladnim pogledom v zvezi s tvojo obleko, odviješ prince polo, pa si ne hitr ne počas že v New Yorku, utripajočem betonskem labirintu z zelo majhnim koščkom teflonskega neba, ki se simbolično svetlika nekje med stolpnicami.

Le kako se to preprosti punci iz spet ne tko velike države v vzhodni Evropi, vajeni nizkih gradenj in arhitekture prizidkov, ne bi zdelo čudno? Še isti dan so me dva kozarca vina plus splošna vzburjenost organizma zaradi nespôstovanja slogovnega načela enotnosti kraja in časa dogajanja spravili v stanje še posebej bedne dovzetnosti za gravitacijske vplive, in sem samo ležala na kavču in sopla, po televiziji je bla pa ravno oddaja »learn to read« – tečaj branja. Ženska s krizantemo na glavi sedi in razlaga, kako zgledajo črke, medtem ko se na ekranu pojavlajo njihove popolne računalniške simulacije, vse to ma pa tipično budističen tempo izobraževalne televizije. Mislila sem, da sem se najbrž zmotila in sem večkrat prebrala napis »learn to read«, ampak to ni bil niti slavni delirium tremens niti ekstremni primer jetлага, bila je realnost.

Sicer pa opažam, da ta jetlag kot kompleks psiho in fiziolo simptomov, ki izvirajo iz vojne svetov, ni kar tko: zbudiš se totalno trezna ob 3.30 zjutraj, misliš sam na to, da bi si obesila okol vratu svojo torbico s pasošem, kartico euro 2000 in desetimi dolarji za razglednice, tvoje noge pa izvajajo fantomske gibe proti vratom, ne da bi te kakorkoli ubogale. Konča se tko, da v trenerki kolovratiš po totalno potemnelem in opustelem Manhattnu, skupaj s peščico klošarjev, ki nekaj deklamirajo v gluhi svit, in se na vsake tolk zalotiš ob misli »no, le poglej, kao klošar, pa tekoče govori anglešk«.

Sploh pa Manhattan kot popoln zaprt krog lepih, mladih in ne nujno lepih in mladih, zato pa precej bogatih ljudi s svojo krutostjo lunaparka »al se smej al se pa spoki« mora generirat precej škarta, precej rezervnih igralcev s pofavljano nogo. Kot zgubljene bakterije se klatijo naokrog klošarji in radikalni psihiči, ki jim glasba ni moteč element pri plesu. Kultura pogovarjanja s samim sabo je tukaj pri osebah, ki hodijo po cesti, na višku. Vse nekam šiba in nobenga nč ne briga. Delitev na obrobje in pravo stran realnosti ni najbolj jasna, vse je potencialno pravo obrobje. Kaotični val drvečih posameznikov, ki so te zmerom pripravljeni zgazit med bruhanje, načete krofe in lončke iz Starbucksa. Zdi se, kot da bi se lahko tvoja usoda v eni minutni sesuli, zgorela kot časopis. Čisto nič se ne čudim ljudem, ki po ulici šibajo na kolesih, preoblečeni v Supermena, in sami zase kaj vpijejo, al pa spijo pod metrojem v noši kralja črncev. So dnevi, ko čutiš, da boš vsak čas tut sama isto nardila al pa šla z enim od unih debelih blondincev v supergah, ki te šikanirajo s sveže sfotokopiranim svetim pismom in pogledom, ki je tko razsvetljen, da je kar grozen.

Kultura ljudi, ki jim ni čisto ratalo, forsira do nezavesti!!

Kako zelo drugačna je od stilistike družbenega škarta na pl, kjer vrednote srednjega veka, kot so trpljenje, hrepenenje po kazni in grenko obžalovanje, ki jih lansira ta znana doba, puščajo sled na vsem, začenši z arhitekturo, prek zgradbe stavka in končavši z beračenjem v mestih, berač je pa napol mrtvo tihožitje z vijolčno nogo brez stopala, ki jo postavlja na ogled v gnojnih cunjah kakor relikvijo za kušnt, zdej pa plači pa se zahval, da si vse drugo, sam jest ne!!

Tuki pa vsak ve, da je duhovitost osnova slehernega življenja: tipček brez nog in rok se pripelje na vozičku, ki ga je sam naredil, prime kitaro, z enim štrcljem loopira bas, z drugim začne igrat na bobnih, polovica ust igra kitaro, druga pa poje na tako brezskrbno lep način, da 300 oseb, ki čakajo na metro, utihne, čeprav tle vsak gara k črna žvina štiriindvajset ha. Drugi se ti preobleče v Kip svobode, spet drug uleti na križišče s trimetrskim križem pa z na tiskalnik sprintanim napisom JESUS pokaže dlesni temno rdeče barve v tako bleščecih nasmehih, kar jih je zmožna generirat človeška ustna odprtina, skratka, oni tle vejo, kako se pobrigat zase, na veliko se navdihujo pri tržnem gospodarstvu in popkulturi!

Takoj zatem so bili prazniki. Šla sem obiskat svojga frenda, ki je bil ravno v fazi navdušenja nad nizko ceno vin za 3 dolarje, in potem sem mela mačka in še povohat nisem mogla nobene od tistih na Greenpointu kupljenih sentimentalnih kulinaričnih specialitet in sem pokvarila celo praznično vzdušje, ko sem bolščala v folk spod čela z unimi očmi v barvi najčistejšega škrlata. Ampak blo je zelo eklektično: pa flambirani zajčki, pa makova potica, pa riba po grško, pa tilzitski sir, pa hlebček z marmelado iz neidentificiranih ostankov sadja, pa židovske pesmi, pa zeleni čaj iz piksne light, globalizacija je res nenadkriljiv pojav.

To mesto je bolano, in tukaj lahko izkusiš tako strahotno samoto, da se mi tko kot na Poljskem sploh ne da več z nobenim govorit, zdaj pa kar eni obrambni mehanizmi, terapija s fabulo, kot da bi se usta, ki jih enkrat v trenutku nepozornosti zapreš, lahko zaloputnila. Mam ene vrste konverzacijsko zastrupitev, kar lahko primerjam samo s tistim, kako sem te srečala pred avtomatom s kavo (in pomarančni olupki? Nora sem nanje! Obožujem jih! Primem, voham, prekrivam s slojem bananinih olupkov ...).

V ponedeljek sva se z Agato peljale v Brooklyn k frizerju, ker je ona rabila radikalno spremembo usode s pomočjo radikalne spremembe podobe, in pravijo, da močna volja gore premika al pa da se sanje izpolnijo – se pravi ne vedno.

Frizerski salon zgleda kot bric-a-brac pa rop v Olimpiji, sredi raznorazne luksuzne krame se mota kakih deset degenerancev z uhani v smislu krogov s premerom 10 cm, to je pa pol tko namontiran v uho, da je okolinokol koža. Mogoče to ni nič posebnega, pa sem samo jaz taka gumijasta proteza Evropejke iz vzh. Evrope in nimam pojma o najnovejših trendih v piercingu, ampak ob pogledu na to začnem prestajat podzavestne muke in bi najrajs zakričala: ljudje, ne si tega delat, svet bo boljši!

Blo je tut par frizerk in vse so zgledale kot unedve pevke v B52's.

Prebrala sem vse revije o dvojčkih J.Lo in raznih zoomih brkov, pazduh in sramnih dlak, ki se vidijo skoz polivinilne hlače oseb, katerih imena mi zvenijo enako znano kot Dawid Ozdoba oziroma Anna Głogowska, tačas je pa frizer iz Agatinih las ustvaril nekoliko konservativno frizuro Crystal Carrington sreča Weroniko Rosati na modni reviji Ewe Minge, jo obilno polje z amoniakom in nemudoma zaže.

Potlej sva pa za nagrado šle k uni vedeževalki, ki uraduje v eni taki umazani luknji na glavni ulici Greenpointa, kjer se verjetno šlepa na emigracijskih travmah angleško negovorečih Poljakov.

To je skromna firma, specializirana za branje iz roke in ptičjih letov, prav-zaprav izključno izložba s koščkom tal površine približno 2 kvadratna metra, zelo asketsko opremljena (2 plastična stola), vzdušje neizogibno bližajoče se prihodnosti vzdržuje v gnojnici povaljana mačka, ki lazi naokrog, nekaj škatlic v okrasnem stilu hare hare, na tiskalnik 200 dioptrije sprintan plakat s čakrami in zvok besnega pometanja izza pregradne stene.

Tole mi je torej povedala Jacy, ta demonična oseba z nenavadno umazanimi rokami, kukr da bi z njimi še pred kratkim rila po vrtni zemlji: nisem končala študija.

Neham naj se ukvarjat z moškimi in takoj končam študij. Ne glede na to bom kmalu rodila dvojčka. Potem pa še tri otroke. Kar se tiče seštevka vseh teh otrok, se nama ni uspelo zedinit: enkrat jih je blo 5, enkrat 7, vsekakor zmerom več kukr manj, nikakor pa ne isto. Čez tri leta bom živila v Kanadi, mela bom milijarde dolarjev, vendar se bom še vedno isto oblačila in jedla iste stvari (a je mislila jajca?). Prebila se bom na sam vrh. Ampak

slabo spim. Vedeževalka vidi kupe cunj v sobi, to naj takoj pospravim. Vsak dan, preden se začnem pogovarjat po telefonu, dva griza jabolka. Če jí dam sto dolarjev, se bo vse spremenil in ne bom več grda do unga starejšega gospoda, do katerega sem grda, in ona bo zame prižgala 24 sveč. Itak se ji bom vrnila še na kolenih zahvalit, »vrnila se boš k Jacy, Jacy boš rože nosila«, 30 let delovnih izkušenj, mam certifikat iz Kalifornije. Pri čemer je iz svojih fanatičnih črnih oči (kasneje nama je povedala, da je Romunka) na levo in na desno stresala snope isker, čeprav bolj ko ne skurjenih, motnih in nekak že rabljenih, pa poznala se ji je poklicna izčrpanost, en tak »a je lohk že konc«, ki sem ga npr. tudi jaz zelo močno občutila po petem dnevu silvestrovjanja.

Toplo te objemam in pošiljam malo hrupa avtomobilskih motorjev, siren in vpitja ljudi z ulice Lexington. Čau čau! Sočustvujem s tabo, da si tako debela, jaz pa tako suha. D.

Torej, draga moja,

danes sem med pohajkovanjem po mestu nenadoma naletela na Baracka Obama, ki je prihajal z nekega sodišča na Astor's Place, ej, videt mojega starega znanca Baracka Obamo v mestu, ki je tako polno ljudi, priznaj, da je bil to krompir. Postavljene so ble pregrade in okol njih so stali eni ljudje, jaz sem glih šla iz Starbucks, pa sem pomislila, pa kaj, se bom pa še jaz ustavlja, mogoče bo kakšen škandal. No, pa sem tko stala, in prihajalo je čedalje več ljudi in me spraševalo, zakaj tam stojim, in jaz sem, ker sem podtalno že zvedla, da pride ven Barack Obama, razmetavala s to informacijo na desno in na levo, s čedalje bolj sproščenim naglasom, pa enkrat iz Oklahome, pa enkrat iz Severne Karoline, in se počutila skoraj, kot da bi bla sama Barack, ki naj bi vsak čas prišel ven, in sem bla deležna splošnega vznemirjenja. Končno je Barack prišel ven, a kljub temu da sem bla ful blizu, o tej sceni težko kaj več rečem, ker ga je hitro nepropustno zakrila stena mobitelov in fotoaparatov. Sprašujem se, kakšen perverzen užitek mora bit posedovanje filma s takega dogodka, enominutnega tresočega se filma brez glasu 20 pikslov, istega, kot ga je posneto 200 drugih ljudi? Ampak za hip sem se počutila kot polnopraven organski del kolektivnega krča in osupnjenosti ameriške družbe, in čutila sem, da Barack maha naravnost meni, in ko sem ploskala in vpila »Barack!«, sem čutila, da moj glas, ki ga nimam, pripada samo njemu.

Po vsem tem lahko rečem samo to: Barack Obama obstaja.

*Prevedla Tatjana Jamnik*

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## **New York, I Love You But You're Bringing Me Down Letters to Bijou**

(excerpts)

March 26

Dear Bijou,

Agata and I went to see a psychic. She told me I would have five children, in three years I'll be living in Canada, my fifth chakra is polluted, in the morning I should eat an apple, two bites, I can toss the rest. You believe that? No shit, just the facts.

D.

March 27

Hey,

I have internet now. I arrived, and despite being something of a veteran at flying coach, this simple four-cylinder brain of mine can't deal with how this works and invariably files it under "horoscopes, UFOs, the afterlife." You step into the teleporter, buy yourself some crap in the duty-free zone, sure, you'll read some book by Zofia Nałkowska, some old lady with dry Krakow sausage wrapped in Pewex paper in her carryon bag casts you a few cold glances on account of how you're dressed, you peel a Prince Polo bar out of its wrapper and, neither fast, nor slow, you're in New York, a pulsating concrete labyrinth with an itsy-bitsy little fragment of Teflon sky looming symbolically somewhere among the skyscrapers.

Might this not seem strange to a simple girl from what is after all a not-so-big country in Eastern Europe, used to short buildings and the architecture of the annex? That day, two glasses of wine, plus the general disquiet of my organism, what with the disrespect for the principle of decorum of the unity of place and time, brought me to a state of especially hopeless susceptibility to gravitation, and all I did was lie panting on the couch, and just then there was this educational show on TV, *Learn to Read*. A woman with a chrysanthemum on her forehead sits and tells you how the letters look while their perfect computer simulations appear on the screen, and all this has the characteristic Buddhist tempo of educational programming. I thought I must have gotten it wrong somehow, and I read the title *Learn to Read* over a couple times, but this was neither the famous *delirium tremens*, nor an extreme case of jet-lag; it was reality.

At any rate, I think that jetlag, as a complex of psychophysical symptoms arising from the war of the worlds, can really come to something: you wake up at 3:30 in the morning, totally sober, you think only about throwing on your neck pouch with your passport, Euro 2000 card, and ten bucks for postcards, and your legs execute their phantom movements toward the door, simultaneously refusing the slightest cooperation. It ends with you

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wearing sweats, trudging around an utterly dim, dead-quiet Manhattan with a handful of homeless declaiming something into the deaf sunrise, and every so often you latch on to the thought, *Well have a look at that, he's homeless, but he's fluent in English.*

In general, Manhattan, as a perfectly closed circuit of people who are beautiful, young, and not necessarily beautiful and young, yet still in large part rich, with their own happy-town cruelty, "Have a good time, or fuck off," must generate a lot of rejection, a lot of back-up contestants who've already been winged. Like lost bacteria, the homeless and the hardcore nutsos never stop dancing around, whatever the music. Here, the culture of people walking the street in conversation with themselves is in full bloom. Everything moves forward, and no one will pay any attention to anything. There is no clear distinction between the margin and the proper side of reality; everything is a potential proper margin. A chaotic wave of rushing individuals, ever ready to trample you into puke, half-eaten donuts, and paper cups from Starbucks. It seems as if your destiny could dissolve here in the space of a minute, burn up like newspaper. I can totally see why some people race down the street on their bikes, dressed up as Superman, screaming to themselves, or else sleep in the subway under the finery of the King of the Congo. There are days when you feel you'll do the same in a minute, or else go out with one of those fat blond dudes in sneakers who torment you with a Bible hot off the photocopier and a gaze so clear it's almost terrifying.

The culture of those who haven't quite come out on top hits every level! How much this differs from the stylistics of social rejection in the PL, where the medieval values promoted by that familiar era, like suffering, bloodlust, and bitter sorrow, infuse everything, beginning with the architecture, then to formulating a thought, and ending with begging in the streets, a beggar being a still-(if you want to call this) life with a footless purple leg sticking out of festering rags like a relic to be kissed, and now pay me, because say what they want about you, they can't say you're me!

But everybody here knows that a flash of brilliance is the basis of any life: my buddy, no arms, no legs, rolls up on wheels he put together himself, takes out a guitar, loops the bass with one stump, gets the percussion going with the other, plays the guitar with one half of his mouth and sings with the other, in so serenely beautiful a manner that 300 people waiting for the subway fall silent, even though everybody here screams bloody murder 24/7. Somebody else will dress up as the Statue of Liberty, and someone else still will fucking jump out on the crosswalk with a three-meter cross and a printer-printed sign that says JESUS, he'll be flashing gums the color of dark rowan berries in the brightest smiles the human oral cavity is capable of—in a word, around here they know how things get done, they draw whole fistfuls of inspiration from their free-market economy and pop culture!

Right after this it was the holidays. I went to visit a friend of mine who was just then going through a period of fascination with the low price

of three-dollar wines, and then I had a hangover and couldn't even draw to my mouth any of those sentimental culinary revelations I'd bought in Greenpoint, and I ruined the whole festive atmosphere, glowering from under my brow with eyes the color of purest crimson. But it was quite electric: the blaring little lights, and the poppy-seed cake, and fried fish in tomato sauce, and the Tilsit cheese, and the tart with marmalade from unidentified fruit carcasses, and the Jewish songs, and green tea in a can from light beer: globalization is a phenomenon that cannot be overestimated. This city is sick, and here one suffers from such deafening loneliness that, just like in Poland in general, I no longer feel like talking to anybody, and these are defense mechanisms, story-therapy, as if the mouth, once closed through negligence, could get stuck. I have some sort of conversation poisoning that I can only compare with the time I met you by the coffee machine (orange peels? A passion of mine! I love 'em! I take 'em, sniff 'em, I sandwich them between banana peels...).

On Monday Agata and I went to a hairdresser in Brooklyn, since she needed a radical change of destiny through a radical change of hair, and they say that if you want it you can have it, or else that dreams do come true—though not always.

The hair salon looks like bric-a-brac and the assault on Olympus, among various luxury garbage about ten degenerates are loafing around with these earrings with a ten-centimeter center hole and placed in the ear in such a way as to stretch the skin all around it. Maybe that's a common thing, only I'm just some rubber prosthetic of a European from E. Europe, and I have no idea about the latest trends in piercing, but the sight of it tortures me subconsciously, and I want to scream: People, don't do that, the world will be a better place!

There were also several women-hairdressers, and they all looked like the vocal girls from the B52s.

I read all the papers there about J.Lo's twins and various close-ups of mustaches, armpits, and pubic hair showing through the plastic-wrap pants of people whose names sound as familiar to me as Dawid Ozdoba or Anna Głogowska, and meanwhile this hairdresser has made Agata's hair into the somewhat conservative doo of Crystal Carrington meets Weronika Rosati at an Ewa Minge show, and he douses her in ammonia and lights her up without delay.

So after that we went for some self-reflection, to that psychic, who takes her clients in this filthy hole in the wall on Greenpoint's main street, where she probably exploits the traumas of Polish émigrés who don't speak English.

It's a modest shop for reading palms, reading from a bird's-eye view, it's actually nothing more than a window front with a bit of floor, about two meters square, furnished quite ascetically (two lawn chairs), an air of the unavoidably approaching future is maintained by a cat curled up and

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sleeping in its own mess, a few boxes in the *hare hare* decorative style, a board with chakras printed on a 200-dioptral printer, and the echo of furious sweeping from behind the partition.

So this is what I was told by Jacy, that demonic figure with unusually dirty hands, as if she'd only just pulled them out of garden soil: I never finished my degree.

I have to stop bothering with men and finish my degree right away. Regardless of the fact that I'm soon going to give birth to twins. And three more children after that. How many kids total we couldn't say for sure: once it was five, once it was seven, and anyway the number only went up, not down, and it was never the same. In three years I'd live in Canada, have billions of dollars, but I'd still dress the same and eat the same things (did she mean eggs?). I'd go straight to the top. But I don't sleep well. The psychic sees heaps of clothes in the room, I have to straighten up right away. Daily, before I start talking on the phone, two bites of apple. If I give her a hundred dollars, all this will change, and I will no longer be unkind to the older man I'm unkind to, and she'll light twenty-four candles for me. Come hell or high water, I will come back to thank her on my knees, "You will come back to Jacy, you will bring Jacy flowers," thirty years of experience, I have the certificate from California. All the while, to left and right, her fanatical dark eyes (she later told us that she was Romanian) gushed streams of sparks only slightly decayed, dull, as if already used, and she gave you a sense of professional fatigue, a certain kind of "as best I can," the likes of which I, for one, also felt quite powerfully by the fifth day of New Year's.

Big hugs, and I'm sending you a little of the din of cars, sirens, and people yelling from Lexington Avenue. Bye! I really sympathize with you: you're so fat, and I'm so thin. D.

My Dear,

Today, knocking about here and there, I suddenly ran into Barack Obama coming out of some court at Astor Place, and to see my old acquaintance Barack Obama in such a big city full of people—you have to admit, it was a real fluke. There were barriers set up, and some people standing there, so I was just coming out of Starbucks and thinking, *Why not, I'll stand here, too, maybe something big will happen*. So there I was, and more and more people showed up and asked me what I was standing there for, and I, having already learned on the sly that it was Barack Obama who would be coming out, flung this information all around in an increasingly free accent, now from Oklahoma, now from North Carolina, feeling almost as if I were Barack, who was supposed to come out any minute, and I was infected with the general excitement. Finally, Barack walked out, and despite the fact that I was esp. close, it's hard for me somehow to describe the sight

more clearly, since he quickly disappeared behind a wall of cell phones and cameras. I wonder what kind of perverse pleasure there must be in having this event on film, a minute's shaky, soundless, twenty-pixel film that's the same as 200 other people have? But for that moment I felt an authentic, organic part of the collective spasm and breathlessness of American society, and I felt that Barack was waving right at me, and applauding and crying out "Barack!" I felt that my vote, which I don't have, belongs to him alone. After all this, all I can tell you is: Barack Obama is real.

*Translated by Benjamin Paloff*





*Foto © Anna-Magdaleena Kangro*

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# *Indrek Mesikepp*

Indrek Mesikepp se je rodil leta 1971 v Tartuju v Estoniji. Leta 1999 je diplomiral iz umetnostne zgodovine na Univerzi v Tartuju. Pesnik, ki svoja dela objavlja tudi pod pseudonimoma *fs* in *François Serpent*, od leta 2000 so-deluje pri literarni reviji *Looming*. Objavil je štiri pesniške zbirke: *Ka Jumal on inimene* (Tudi Bog je človek, 1997) in *Valgete kaantega raamat* (Knjiga z belimi platnicami, 2000) kot *François Serpent*; ter *2004* (2004), za katero je prejel prestižno nagrado estonskega kulturnega sklada za pesniško zbirko leta, in *Alasti ja elus* (Gol in živ, 2008) kot *fs*. Njegova nagrajena zbirka *2004* je bila prevedena v ruščino (prev. Igor Kotjuh, 2005), švedščino (prev. Peeter Puide, 2007), bolgarščino (prev. Zdravko Kisjov, 2008), finščino (prev. Hannu Oittinen, 2009) in latvijščino (prev. Guntars Godinš, 2009). Izbor njegovih pesmi je bil preveden tudi v angleščino in v prevodu Miriam McIlfatrick objavljen v antologiji *New European Poets* (Novi evropski pesniki, 2008).

Indrek Mesikepp was born in 1971 in Tartu, Estonia. He obtained a degree in art history from the University of Tartu in 1999. The poet, who publishes his works under the pseudonyms *fs* and *François Serpent*, has been working with the literary journal *Looming* since 2000. He has published four volumes of poetry: *Ka Jumal on inimene* (God Is Human Too, 1997) and *Valgete kaantega raamat* (The Book With White Covers, 2000) as *François Serpent*, and *2004* (2004), for which he received the coveted Cultural Endowment of Estonia Award for the best poetry collection of the year; as well as *Alasti ja elus* (Naked And Alive, 2008) as *fs*. His award-winning volume *2004* has been translated into Russian (by Igor Kotjuh in 2005), Swedish (by Peeter Puide in 2007), Bulgarian (by Zdravko Kissiov in 2008), Finnish (by Hannu Oittinen in 2009), and Latvian (by Guntars Godinš in 2009). A selection of his poetry has also been translated into English by Miriam McIlfatrick and included in the anthology *New European Poets* (2008).

\* \* \*

see võib olla 42 kraadi  
või 40  
aga võibolla ka 38  
või 36  
see võib olla tee Tallinnast Riiga  
Iggy Popi ja David Bowiega  
vahepeatustega  
42 ja 36 kraadiga  
see võib olla ka veel pikem tee  
koridori lõppu ja teisele korrusele  
läbi vannitoa kitsaste torude  
kust punane vesi alla ei lähe  
aga see kõik tuleb  
oktoobri järel november  
kylm ja jäät  
valu  
valu  
see kõik tuuakse kandikul kätte  
teel Sinuni

\*\*\*

yhel ööl ma tajusin surma  
olematust  
ja lõplikku pimedust  
peale 35 aastat  
millest vähemalt 24  
olin soovinud surra  
ja teinud kaks katset end tappa  
aga nyyd  
esimest korda  
oli see masendav  
mitte pääsemine  
vaid lämmatav vältimatus  
tal oli Robbie Williamsi nägu  
Tina Turneri hääl  
ta oli seksjalinn  
isamaaliidu valimisplakat  
ta oli kõik see  
mida ma kunagi  
ei ole vajanud  
mis on tytu  
ja võõras  
nyyd oli see käes  
kui kõik mis sulle omane  
on kadunud  
kõik millest oled sa tehtud  
need vónked ja valemid ajus  
mis teeval kellegi mina  
see rakkude kooslus  
lähedased suhted  
kiindumused  
need kellel pole su jaoks enam aega  
see kõik millest oled loobunud ise  
uskudes et ajutiselt  
ja siis on nad kadunud  
põördumatult läinud  
pimedus  
tyhjus  
Robbie Williamsi laul  
kellegi raadios  
minu ja mu kaugenened  
elu vahel  
mitte-elu  
ehk surm

\*\*\*

kui inimene sureb  
siis kolksuvad uksed  
söidavad autod  
ja taevas venivad pilved  
kass peseb silmi  
mõödujatel on kiire  
ja kõrvaltoas undab arvuti  
suur mees on pikali  
pool pôrandat teda täis  
või veerand  
või vähemalt viidendik  
keha läbivad krambid  
näonahk on sinakas  
silmad enam ei näe  
ega näita välja  
suust voolab verist sylge  
enam ta ei räägi  
ei nyyd  
ega kunagi hiljem  
suur raske keha  
keeratud yhele kyljele  
viimase hetkeni pyyad päästa  
kuigi enam ei looda  
ja siis on see hetk käes  
sina oled elus  
ja näed ja mõtled ja tunned  
et see tuttav kogu  
ei näe ei mõtle ei tunne

kui inimene sureb  
ei muutu sellest midagi  
tänav on tunglemist täis  
kellegi tööpäev lõpeb  
ta lukustab kontoriukse  
ema viib lasteaiast  
väikse tytre koju  
tee peal ostavad kypsist  
täna enam ei nuta  
tramm keerab vasakule  
lift laskub alla  
kohvikulaual on suhkruterad

---

tehasevärava ees  
mees kysib teiselt suitsule tuld  
saab  
tänab  
vaikib  
nagu päevast päeva  
raudteeleysöidukohal  
seisva takso juht  
vannub oma keeles  
raadio reklamib kaupa  
aknaklaasile langeb  
esimene piisk  
taevas on hall betoon on hall  
asfalt on niiske  
ja hall  
rohi ei ole veel tärganud  
rohelises majas  
on vana naise jalgaladel kylm  
yksinda teleka ees

kui inimene sureb  
kõik jäab endiseks  
see ei saagi teisiti olla

see ei saagi teisiti olla  
et sina seda ei usu

\*\*\*

kurbus on nagu sitahäda  
kas sa talle mōtled või ei  
ikka ta tuleb  
kus sa ka ei oleks  
mida ei teeks  
varem või hiljem  
sa tunned teda  
sa vōid olla kodus  
või tööl  
anda endast kōik  
või olla niisama  
mängida tytrega liivakastis  
seista treipindi taga  
molutada raamatukogus  
kōndida yle raudteesilla  
Prenzlauer Bergil  
minna kunstigaleriisse  
Kreuzbergis  
komberdada East Endis  
kitsast trepist alla  
kopituse haisus  
nahkjaki taskus piletid  
kontserdile Astorias  
või kolmanda liiga mängule  
juua sōpradega  
Eestist toodud viina  
jätta pulber teistele  
leida Camdeni turult  
helehallis hilishommikus  
rariteetne Sistersi plaat  
või elada synnist surmani  
Virumaa metsade vahel  
soovimatagi mujale minna  
leida yles loodus  
selline mida sa naudit  
avara vaatega mererand  
kōrged punased mäed  
mets või kōrb või raba  
või autodest tormlev jōgi  
järskude kivist kallaste vahel  
ärgata naise kōrval

keda sa armastad

avada silmad

olla õnnelik

ja rahul

ja soovideta

heledas voodis

kuid veel enne

kui päev loojub

tuleb nii kurbus kui sitahäda

kehasse koguneb raskus

paratamatu ja tungiv

ja loomulik

ilus ta ei ole

\*\*\*

lahko je 42-odstotni  
ali 40  
mogoče tudi 38  
ali 36  
lahko je cesta iz Talina v Rigo  
z Iggyjem Popom in Davidom Bowiejem  
z vmesnimi postanki  
in z 42 ter 36-odstotnim  
lahko je še daljša pot  
do konca hodnika in do drugega nadstropja  
skozi ozke cevi v kopalnici  
po katerih rdeča voda ne odteka  
ampak to še vse pride  
oktober potem november  
mraz in led  
bolečina  
bolečina  
vse to servirano na pladnju  
na poti k tebi

\*\*\*

neke noči sem zaznal smrt  
praznino  
dokončno temo  
po 35 letih  
od tega sem si vsaj 24 let  
želet umreti  
in se vsaj dvakrat skušal ubiti  
ampak zdaj  
je bilo prvič  
depresivno  
ne beg  
ampak zadušljiva neizbežnost  
imelo je obraz Robbieja Williamsa  
glas Tine Turner  
bilo je seks v mestu  
volilni plakat konservativne stranke  
bilo je vse tisto  
česar nisem  
nikoli potreboval  
kar je nadležno  
in tuje  
zdaj je bilo pri roki  
ko izgine vse tisto  
kar si ti  
vse iz česar si narejen  
vsi signali in možganski vzorci  
ki tvorijo podobo nekoga  
kombinacija celic  
bližnji odnosi  
navezanosti  
tisti, ki nimajo več časa zate  
vse, čemur si se sam odrekel  
kot bi bilo nekaj mimobežnega  
potem izginejo  
nepreklicno so izgubljeni  
tema  
praznina  
pesem Robbieja Williamsa  
po radiu neke osebe  
med mano in mojim  
oddaljenim življenjem  
ne-življenjem  
ki je smrt

\*\*\*

ko človek umre  
se zaloputnejo vrata  
avtomobili se premikajo  
po nebu se razprostirajo oblaki  
maček si umiva obraz  
mimoidočim se mudi  
v sosednji sobi brni računalnik  
velik moški leži iztegnjen  
čez polovico tal  
ali četrtnino  
ali pa vsaj petino  
telo se mu zvija v krčih  
obraz je pomodrel  
oči ne vidijo  
nič ne razkrivajo  
iz ust mu teče curek krvi  
ne govori več  
ne zdaj  
in ne kasneje  
veliko težko telo  
je prevaljeno na eno stran  
do zadnjega ga skušaš rešiti  
čeprav ni več upanja  
potem nastopi trenutek  
ti živiš  
in vidiš in razmišljaš in čutiš  
kako ta znana pojava  
ne vidi ne razmišlja ne čuti

ko človek umre  
se nič ne spremeni  
na ulici vrvež  
nekdo zaključi z delom  
zaklene vrata pisarne  
mama pelje svojo punčko  
domov iz vrtca  
na poti kupita piškote  
danes ne bo več joka  
tramvaj zavije levo  
dvigalo se spusti  
zrnca sladkorja na mizi v kavarni

---

moški prosi za ogenj  
pred vhodom v tovarno  
ga dobi  
se zahvali  
je tiho  
kot vsak drug dan  
na železniškem prehodu  
šofer taksija čaka  
preklinja v svojem jeziku  
na radiu reklamirajo izdelke  
na šipo pade  
prva kapljica  
nebo je sivo beton je siv  
asfalt je moker  
in siv  
trava še ni pognala  
v zeleni hiši  
starka s hladnimi nogami  
sama pred televizorjem

ko človek umre  
vse ostane enako  
ne more biti drugače

ne more biti drugače  
kot da tega ne verjameš

\*\*\*

žalost je kot potreba, da se userješ  
če misliš nanjo ali ne  
kar pride  
kjerkoli si  
karkoli počneš  
slej ko prej  
jo začutiš  
lahko si doma  
ali v službi  
daješ vse od sebe  
ali samo si  
se igraš z otrokom v peskovniku  
stojiš za stružnico  
postopaš po knjižnici  
prečkaš železniški most  
v Prenzlauer Bergu  
na poti v galerijo  
v Kreuzbergu  
se opotekaš navzdol  
po ozkem stopnišču East Enda  
v smradu po plesni  
z vstopnicami za koncert v Astorii  
v žepu usnjene jakne  
ali med tekmo tretje lige  
ko s prijatelji piješ  
vodko iz Estonije  
podaš bel prah naprej  
ko na tržnici v Camdenu  
neko umirjeno sivo dopoldne  
najdeš redko ploščo od Sistersov  
ali ko od rojstva do smrti živiš  
sredi gozdov Virumaa ja  
in si ne želiš nikamor drugam  
srečuješ se z naravo  
v kateri uživaš  
z odprtim pogledom na morsko obalo  
na visoke rdeče hribe  
na gozd ali puščavo ali barje  
ali na deročo reko avtomobilov  
med strmimi kamnitimi bregovi  
ko se zbudiš poleg ženske

ki jo ljubiš  
odpreš oči  
si srečen  
in zadovoljen  
brez želja  
na beli postelji

ampak še preden  
bo konec dneva  
bosta prišli žalost in potreba, da se userješ  
v telesu se bo nabrala teža  
neizbežna in nujna  
naravna

ne bo lepo

*Prevedla Julija Potrč*

\*\*\*

it might be 42 degrees proof  
or 40  
or maybe 38  
or 36  
it might be the road from Tallinn to Riga  
with Iggy Pop and David Bowie  
with stops on the way  
with 42 and 36 degrees  
it might also be an even longer road  
to the end of a corridor and a second floor  
through narrow bathroom pipes  
down which red water won't go  
but this is all to come  
October then November  
cold and ice  
pain  
pain  
all served up on a tray  
on the road to you

\*\*\*

one night I sensed death  
nothingness  
and final darkness  
after 35 years  
for at least 24 of which  
I had wanted to die  
and twice tried to do myself in  
but now  
for the first time  
it was depressing  
not a way out  
but a stifling certainty  
it had Robbie Williams' face  
Tina Turner's voice  
it was sexandthecity  
a pro patria union poster  
it was everything  
that I had never needed  
that is annoying  
and alien  
now it was at hand  
when all that is you  
has vanished  
all that you are made of  
those pulses and patterns in the brain  
that make someone's me  
that cell combination  
close relations  
attachments  
those who no longer have time for you  
all that you yourself have abandoned  
treating it as temporary  
and then they are gone  
irrevocably lost  
darkness  
emptiness  
a Robbie Williams song  
on someone's radio  
between me and my  
distanced life  
not-life  
that is death

\*\*\*

when a human dies  
doors bang  
cars move  
and clouds stretch across the sky  
a cat washes its face  
people rush on by  
a computer hums next-door  
a large man lies flat out  
taking up half the floor  
or a quarter  
or at least a fifth  
his body gripped by spasms  
his face turns blue  
his eyes no longer see  
nor reveal  
from his mouth comes  
a dribble of blood  
he no longer talks  
not now  
or ever again  
a big heavy body  
turned onto one side  
you try to the last to save him  
though no hope is left  
then the moment comes  
you are alive  
and see and think and feel  
that this familiar figure  
neither sees nor thinks nor feels

when a human dies  
it changes nothing  
the street is bustling  
someone leaves work  
locks the office door  
a mother takes her little girl  
home from kindergarten  
they buy biscuits on the way  
no crying today  
a tram turns left  
a lift goes down  
sugar grains on a café table

at a factory gate  
a man asks for a light  
gets it  
says thanks  
is silent  
like every other day  
at a level crossing  
a waiting taxi driver  
swears in his own tongue  
the radio promotes goods  
the first drop  
hits the windscreen  
the sky is grey the concrete is grey  
the tarmac is wet  
and grey  
not a blade of grass in sight  
in a green house  
an old woman with cold feet  
alone in front of the TV

when a human dies  
everything stays the same  
it couldn't be otherwise

it couldn't be otherwise  
that you don't believe it

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sadness is like the need to shit  
whether you think about it or not  
it still comes  
wherever you are  
whatever you're doing  
sooner or later  
you feel it  
you might be at home  
or at work  
giving your all  
or simply being  
playing with your child in a sandbox  
working at a lathe  
loafing in the library  
crossing the railway bridge  
in Prenzlauer Berg  
going to a gallery  
in Kreuzberg  
tottering down narrow  
East End stairs  
in a stink of mildew  
tickets in your pocket  
for a concert at the Astoria  
or a third division match  
drinking with friends  
vodka from Estonia  
passing on the powder  
spotting a rare Sisters record  
in Camden market  
on a muted grey mid-morning  
or living from birth to death  
among Virumaa forests  
undesiring of anywhere else  
encountering nature  
the kind that you like  
with a sweeping view of the sea  
of high red mountains  
of forest or desert or bog  
or a raging river of cars  
between steep stone banks  
waking beside the woman

that you love  
opening your eyes  
being happy  
and content  
and wishless  
in a white bed

but before  
the close of day  
sadness and the need to shit both come  
heaviness builds up in the body  
unescapable and urgent  
and natural

and it's not pretty

*Translated by Miriam McIlfatrick*



Foto © B. Čegec

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# Miroslav Mićanović

Miroslav Mićanović se je rodil leta 1960 v Brčkem v Bosni in Hercegovini, odraščal pa je v bližnji vasi Gunja na Hrvškem. Diplomiral je na Fakulteti za humanistiko in sociologijo Univerze v Zagrebu, danes pa je zapošlen na Zavodu za šolstvo Republike Hrviske. Je pesnik, pisatelj, literarni kritik, eseijist in nekdanji urednik literarne revije *Quorum*. Med njegova literarna dela sodijo pesniške zbirke *Grad dobrih ljudi* (Mesto dobrih ljudi, 1984), *Zid i fotografije kraja* (Zid in fotografije konca, 1989) in *Zib* (1998), prozna dela *Trajekt* (2004), *Zapadni kolodvor* (Zahodna železniška postaja, 2006) in *Jednosmjerna ulica* (Enosmerna ulica, 2010) ter knjiga poezije v prozi *Dani* (Dnevi, 2011). Izbor njegove poezije je v slovenskem prevodu Jurija Hudolina izšel pri založbi KUD Apokalipsa v zbirki *Tisoč majhnih sonc na razbitem steklu* (2011), izbor njegove kratke proze v slovenskem prevodu Andreja Jakliča pa pri Študentski založbi (2011).

Miroslav Mićanović was born in 1960 in Brčko, Bosnia and Herzegovina and grew up in the nearby Croatian village of Gunja. He graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb and works for the Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency. He is a poet, writer, literary critic, essayist, and the former editor of the *Quorum* literary magazine; his individual literary works include: the collections of poetry *Grad dobrih ljudi* (The City of Good People, 1984), *Zid i fotografije kraja*, (The Wall and Photos of the End, 1989), and *Zib* (1998); the works of prose *Trajekt* (Ferry Boat, 2004), *Zapadni kolodvor*, (Western Station, 2006), and *Jednosmjerna ulica* (One-Way Street, 2010), as well as the volume of prose poetry *Dani* (Days, 2011). A selection of his poetry was translated into Slovene by Jurij Hudolin and published by the KUD Apokalipsa Publishing House in the volume *Tisoč majhnih sonc na razbitem steklu* (A Thousand Small Suns on Shattered Glass, 2011), while a selection of his short prose was translated into Slovene by Andrej Jaklič and published by the Študentska založba Publishing House (2011).

## Gračani

(ljubavnici)

Pivske boce na prepunom stolu trebale su završiti u rukama radnika, ali sva je opasnost u iznenadnom rasulu i smijehu: pale su na stol, pale su na tlo i njihov se mlaz od stakla i mirisa hmelja zakotrljao oko nas.

Što prazne čaše rade u tom trenutku? Što se događa s tobom koji sjediš na tajnom (ljubavničkom) mjestu i postaješ sudionik zavjere u obično ljetno popodne? Zavlačiš se u priču koja ne želi biti ljubavna, stojiš u njezinoj sredini i misliš da povlačiš krajeve koji vuku naprijed. Lijepo je reći da ti misliš za ona mjesta gdje si samo bio lijep u oku ljeta, prije oluje, prije nevremena.

I što radiš, što radiš još?

Daleko je do kraja događaja i nitko ne želi ponoviti narudžbu. Dakle, recimo sada da bi nam bilo lakše. Odlučimo se što ćemo dok su nam još ruke slobodne, um i srce čisti i hrabri! Radnici su završili posao, istovarili cement, sklonili lopate, ostavili bluze na travnjaku i sjeli u podnožje izmišljenog brda, izmišljene planine. Zaokruženi u mišiće i psovke, bezbrižni, bradati, snažni, iscrpljeni i različiti, pripadaju onome što ne traži ime, što ne mari za djetinjstvo. Oni se smiju, oni puše, oni piju. Oni su siromašni. Oni su bogati. Oni su bolesni. Oni su zdravi. Oni su sretni. Oni se muče. Oni se ne muče s tim što su i tko su? Poteškoće svijeta, ratne i političke krize završavaju u njihovim psovjkama, malim plaćama, ostavljenim obiteljima i podnebljima gdje sada za njih nema mjesta. Oni su puno mržnje. Oni su prazni od samoće.

Ali ne možeš se skriti iza njih, jer ne pripadaš podnevnu u Gračanima, dok boce padaju i mlaz od stakla, pjene i mirisa hmelja zaokuplja smijeh, glasove.

I što ćeš uraditi sad? Što ćeš uraditi sad?

Učiteljica sjeda u auto i odnosi zvonjavu školskog sata. To je bilo mojih 45 minuta, kaže. Dječak ne žuri nigdje. To je bio moj dan, utorak ili srijeda, sretni petak, kaže.

Gdje je tvoj sretni dan, gdje je tvoj sretni sat, pitaš.

Ona šuti. Ona ga samo gleda – i tako će Gračani zauvijek ostati u njezinim očima. U njezinoj šutnji. U njezinu pogledu.

## Viktor

(Vila Ružić)

Viktor živi u vili na moru, ali to sad nije tema. On zaslužuje daleko zanimljiviju i veću priču, priču baš o njemu. On zaslužuje više od uvoda. Ali neka sada tako bude. Pitalo nas je za ime, za točan datum rođenja nas i naših najbližih (ako se to tako kaže). Osjećaš neku uznemirenost i zebnju kao na ispitu ili pred onima koji ti mogu nanijeti ozbiljno zlo.

Što ako ne znaš točan datum rođenja svoga starijeg ili mlađeg sina? Koji je datum rođenja tvoje žene? Možda bi sve ovo trebalo početi pričati ispočetka: smjestiti vilu u njezinu stvarnost, opisati njezin izgled i kako joj se prilazi i kako joj se dolazi. Kako se u njoj razgovara? Kako se s njom razgovara? Povijest te kuće opsežnija je od povijesti nekih velikih gradova ili bezimenih pustara. Veća je i zanimljivija, ako se ne obaziremo na floru i faunu, velike i male tragove vjetra u pijesku, ako ne plačemo nad porazima ljubavnika kad stiže zora i sve izgleda kao da nikada neće izaći sunce...

Trebalo bi se sasvim približiti njeziniim prozorima, približiti se moru, jer kao da ta vila pretrpana knjigama, starim i vrijednim stvarima gubi metar po metar slave, gubi sve ono što je okruženo i zarobljeno njeziniim zidovima. Vila se miče prema moru onako kako je napuštaju vlasnici i posjetitelji. Njezina je jedina stvarnost pogled prema pučini. Krili smo se, nas dvoje, iza velikih prozora misleći da smo nevidljivi, neprimjetni...

Ali to je već priča za neku drugu stvarnost i raspravu o predjelima koji u jednom trenutku stvaraju privid vječnosti. Prije negoli bilo što kažem o tebi, bolje da se oboje vratimo u *buduću prošlost*, među Viktorova pitanja, koji će zauvijek zapamtiti datum našega dolaska u vilu, datum rođenja nas i naših najbližih (ako se to tako kaže!?).

## Ogledalo

Izlaziš iz kupaonice poslije onoga što radiš iza zatvorenih vrata. Između nas je maleni hodnik s velikim ogledalom. Nestaješ u lijevom kutu, jer je tamno ormari s odjećom. Hoću te vidjeti golu u zrcalu i bježim od kompjutora, okrećem se za 180 stupnjeva: jedino što ugledam jest moje ponovljeno lice u golemom i pustom prostoru.

Sjedam na svoje mjesto pred lice ekrana, lupam po tastaturi: hoću li te tako dozvati, hoću li te tako opisati? Priznajući što sam htio, pokazujem koliko sam slab i to će mi se osvetiti u budućem životu, u tekstu.

Ali tko bi sad o tome brinuo? Gdje si, hoću reći da mi je to važno? Što radiš? Kako si odjevena, raspitujem se za pokrov, za kraj.

## Ciklona

Javili su da dolazi Đenovska ciklona i zbog te smo spasonosne vijesti donijeli odluku – odlazimo. Složili smo se da napustimo našu privremenu kuću za odmor i da je to najbolje za sve nas, da to moramo izvesti u idućih pola sata.

I to je to.

I to je to.

I sada zatvaramo hitro vrata, učinili smo sve nužno prije toga: presložili hranu iz plinskog hladnjaka, poslije čemo ga ugasiti i ostati u nedoumici. Jesmo li smjeli zalupiti vrata ili ih ostaviti otvorena, kako su učinili naši prethodnici, koji se nisu proslavili u našim očima, jer su ostavili mnogo toga neurednog i nesavršenog iza sebe. Znamo da su im za to povoda dali vlasnici kuće, naša rodbina, s gomilom narezanog kruha ostavljenog na radost puzećim i gadnim štetočinama, ili s neuništivim mirisom raspadajućeg krumpira pronadenog u skladištu ispod stepenica.

Stop, mogli smo reći svemu tome, i sve promijeniti. Sada se treba hitro spremiti, pomesti za sobom, sudaramo se, mijehaju se ruke i različite ovlasti. Ali zna se, koliko god to bilo prešućeno, kako su podijeljene moći i nema velikih promjena u tim ulogama i nitko se ne buni. Djeca su odrasla, oni crni, veliki i lijepi sliče na rijetke ptice s posebnim glasovima, ljuti i krasni u neskladu s rukama, nogama, vratovima i glavama, prenose stvari do nesigurna broda, preko prove i konopa do kabine: robu, ribe uhvaćene mrežom i ostima koje čemo jesti u gradu.

I dolazi trenutak o kojem se bojiš pisati: privlačenje prozora i vrata, grilja, nastupanje tame i hladnoće, sjena dana u kojoj su odumrli glasovi izvana i u tebi. Strah da će sve tvoje ostati u toj kući u Smokvici, dok zatvaraš sve oko sebe i nesvesno loviš zadnji dio mora, zadnji razgovor i pokret koji si napravio samo trenutak prije. Loviš prizore oko sebe dok polumahnit juriš i skupljaš, rasipaš i bacaš, dok zatvaraš.

Dok se zatvaraš, dok na glas govoriš, sebi o samom sebi, da će duhovi Kornata uzeti tvoje lice i tijelo, skriti se u njega i prezimeti pokraj onih koji dođu brati masline, sjediti među njima i plašiti ih kad usnu da dolazi nevrijeme ili da će bura raznijeti sve što su prikupili.

Ne dišeš u trenutku dok govoriš i povlačiš zrak i uspomene ljeta. Htio bi ostati u toj nepomičnosti, uživati u strahu da nećeš nikada više pokrenuti ruku ili noge, kao što se događa u snovima, sav si u jednom tijelu saliven, nema ožiljaka i pamćenja, nema ničega osim nepomičnosti, nema ničega od sve one žudnje za drugim tijelom, nema ničega što bi pretvorio u riječ veću od samog sebe.

Ali već si na suncu u brodu i mašeš onima koji ostaju. Oni su u pokretu, rade, kao da im teret u rukama daje sigurnost i kao da se u njima krije pravi razlog njihova ostanka. Oni skaču u more i spremaju jedrilicu na izlet do

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obližnjih otoka. Mašemo jedni drugima jer želimo ostati, opstati, jer se želimo vratiti. Ti mašeš jer te je strah da ćeš umrijeti, da zauvijek napuštaš ovo mjesto i da se nikada nećeš u njega vratiti: zbog žene koja je tražila cvijeće po putovima koji su vodili prema vrhu brda, zbog kupina koje su ostale male i grke...

Mašeš i dok odmičeš i dok zamičeš, mašeš i dok odavna sjediš i već se priča o prošlom ljetu i kako je bilo, mašeš dok šutiš i gledaš. Mašeš jer znaš da ništa nije ostalo u kući što bi trebalo nestati. Ti mašeš jer znaš da opasnost, smrt i strah, duhovi i vjetar – ništa tamo nije ostalo i ničega tamo nema, samo jednostavna prazna kuća na otoku, na Kornatima, u Dalmaciji, zatvorena kuća pokraj restorana i jedrilica.

Ali ti mašeš jer znaš da tamo ništa nije skriveno i zaboravljeni, ničeg nema jer si ponio sa sobom i taj užas. On se ne vidi na tvome licu, ali on lupa i pojavit će se kad-tad, i onda kad ne budeš mislio na zatvorenu kuću u Smokvici. Pojavit će se užas kojem misliš da si zatvorio vrata i okrenuo mu leđa.

### *Prezent. Perfekt. Poezija*

Prolazeći pokraj glavnoga željezničkog kolodvora, gledam Zrinjevac koji blista u iznenadnoj zimi: kristalan, precizan, svijetao i hladan, kao vjetar koji raznosi zadnje jesensko lišće, hodam i mislim koliko sam sretan, radujem se da je poezija na dobrom putu, jer sve je bliža onomu što ona i jest: ezoterična, kućna radinost. Dolazeći na književnu večer, posvećenu mojoj knjizi, osjećam zahvalnost prema onima koji su došli, zahvalnost koja je bez ikakve moje obveze prema njima i njihove prema meni, jer ne mučim se s njihovim razlozima, o svom dolasku nisam obavijestio nikoga, ništa nisam rekao familiji, prijateljima, gotovo da bih i ukućanima prešatio razlog kasnog izlaska. Jednostavno, radujem se da je poezija na dobrom putu, jer sve je bliža onomu što ona i jest: ezoterična, kućna radinost. I sve se ponavlja. Prezent. Perfekt. Poezija.

## Gračani

(ljubimca)

Pivske steklenice na prepolni mizi bi morale končati v rokah delavcev, vendar je vsa nevarnost v nenadnem razsulu in smehu: padle so na mizo, padle so na tla in njihov curek stekla in vonja hmelja se je zakotjal okrog naju.

Kaj delajo prazni kozarci v tem trenutku? Kaj se dogaja s tabo, ki sediš na tajnem (ljubimčevskem) mestu in postajaš udeleženec zarote v navadnem poletnem popoldnevu? Zavlečeš se v zgodbo, ki ne želi biti ljubezenska, stojiš v njeni sredini in misliš, da vlečeš konce, ki vlečejo naprej. Lepo je reči, da misliš za tista mesta, kjer si bil samo lep v očesu poletja, pred nevihto, pred neurjem.

In kaj počneš, kaj še počneš?

Daleč je do konca dogodka in nihče ne želi ponoviti naročila. Torej, reciva sedaj, da bi nama bilo lažje. Odločiva se, kaj bova, dokler imava roke še proste, um in srce čista in pogumna! Delavci so končali delo, iztovorili so cement, pospravili lopate, pustili jakne na travniku in sedli v podnožje izmišljenega hriba, izmišljene planine. Zaokroženi v mišice in kletvice, brezbrizni, bradati, močni, izčrpani in različni pripadajo tistem, kar ne zahteva imena, čemur ni mar za otroštvo. Smejijo se, kadijo, pijejo. Revni so. Bogati so. Bolni so. Zdravi so. Srečni so. Mučijo se. Ne mučijo se s tem, kaj so in kdo so. Težave sveta, vojne in politične krize končajo v njihovih kletvicah, nizkih plačah, zapuščenih družinah in podnebjih, kjer zdaj ni prostora zanje. Polno sovraštva so. Prazni zaradi samote so.

Vendar se ne moreš skriti za njimi, ker ne pripadaš popoldnevu v Gračanah, ko steklenice padajo in curek stekla, pene in vonja hmelja prevzame smeh, glasove.

In kaj boš storil zdaj? Kaj boš storil zdaj?

Učiteljica se usede v avto in odnese zvonjenje šolske ure. To je bilo mojih 45 minut, reče. Fantu se nikamor ne mudi. To je bil moj dan, torek ali sreda, srečni petek, reče.

Kje je tvoj srečni dan, kje je tvoja srečna ura, vprašaš.

Ona molči. Ona ga samo gleda – in tako bodo Gračani za vedno ostali v njenih očeh. V njenem molku. V njenem pogledu.

## Viktor

(Vila Ružić)

Viktor živi v vili na morju, ampak to zdaj ni téma. Zasluži si precej bolj zanimivo in večjo zgodbo, zgodbo prav o sebi. Zasluži si več kot uvod. Ampak naj bo zdaj tako. Vprašal naju je po imenu, po točnem rojstnem datumu, najinem in najinih najbližjih (če se temu tako reče). Čutiš neko vznemirjenost in strah, kakor na izpitu ali pred tistimi, ki ti lahko resno škodujejo.

Kaj, če ne veš točnega rojstnega datuma svojega starejšega ali mlajšega sina? Kateri je rojstni datum tvoje žene? Mogoče bi bilo treba vse to začeti pripovedovati od začetka: umestiti vilo v njeno stvarnost, opisati njen videz in kako se pristopa k njej in kako se prihaja k njej. Kako se v njej pogovarja. Kako se z njo pogovarja. Zgodovina te hiše je obsežnejša od zgodovine nekaterih velikih mest ali brezimnih pušč. Večja in zanimivejša je, če se ne oziramo na floro in favno, velike in majhne sledi vetra na mivki, če ne jočemo nad porazi ljubimcev, ko pride zora in je vse videti, kakor da nikoli ne bo vzšlo sonce ...

Treba bi se bilo povsem približati njenim oknom, se približati morju, kajti kakor da bi ta vila, prepolna knjig, starih in vrednih reči, izgubljala meter za metrom slavo, izgubljala vse tisto, kar je obdano in ujeto z njenimi zidovi. Vila se pomika proti morju tako, kot jo zapuščajo lastniki in obiskovalci. Njena edina stvarnost je pogled na odprto morje. Skrivala sva se za velikimi okni, misleč, da sva nevidna, neopazna ...

Ampak to je že zgodba za kakšno drugo stvarnost in razpravo o predelih, ki v nekem trenutku ustvarijo privid večnosti. Preden karkoli povem o sebi, bo bolje, da se oba vrneva v *prihodnjo preteklost*, med Viktorjeva vprašanja, on si bo za vedno zapomnil datum najinega prihoda v vilo, nain rojstni datum in najinih najbližjih (če se to tako reče?!).

## Ogledalo

Prideš iz kopalnice po tistem, kar počneš za zaprtimi vrati. Med nama je majhen hodnik z velikim ogledalom. Izgineš v levem kotu, ker je tam omara z oblačili. Hočem te videti nago in pobegnem od računalnika, obrnem se za 180 stopinj: edino, kar zagledam, je moj ponovljeni obraz v velikem in pustem prostoru.

Usedem se na svoje mesto pred obraz zaslona, tolčem po tipkovnici: te bom tako priklical, te bom tako opisal? S priznanjem, kaj sem hotel, kažem, kako šibek sem, in to se mi bo maščevalo v prihodnjem življenju, v besedilu.

Ampak koga bi zdaj to skrbelo? Kje si, hočem reči, da je to zame pomembno. Kaj delaš? Kako si oblečena, sprašujem o mrtvaškem prtu, o koncu.

## Ciklon

Sporočili so, da prihaja genovski ciklon in zaradi te odrešilne novice smo se odločili – gremo. Strinjali smo se, da zapustimo našo začasno počitniško hišo in da je to najbolje za vse nas, da moramo to storiti v naslednje pol ure.

In to je to.

In to je to.

In zdaj hitro zapiramo vrata, pred tem smo postorili vse nujno: hrano smo prestavili iz plinskega hladilnika, zatem ga bomo izključili in dvomili. Smo smeli zaloputniti vrata ali bi jih morali pustiti odprta, kakor so storili naši predhodniki, ki se v naših očeh niso proslavili, ker so za sabo pustili veliko razmetanega in nedokončanega. Vemo, da so jim povod za to dali lastniki hiše, naši sorodniki, s kupom narezanega kruha, ki so ga pustili v veselje plazečim se in zoprnim škodljivcem, ali z neuničljivim vonjem razpadajočega krompirja, najdenega v skladišču pod stopnicami.

Stop, bi lahko rekli vsemu temu in vse spremenili. Zdaj se je treba hitro pripraviti, pomesti za sabo, zaletavamo se, mešajo se roke in različne zadolžitve. Vendar se ve, pa naj bo še tako zamolčano, kako so razdeljene vloge, in ni veliko sprememb v teh vlogah in nihče se ne upira. Otroci so odrasli, tisti črni, veliki in lepi so podobni redkim pticam s posebnimi glasovi, jezni in čudoviti v neskladju z rokami, nogami, vratovi in glavami nesejo stvari k nezanesljivi ladji, prek preanca in vrvi do kabine: oblačila, ribe, ujete z mrežo in ostmi, ki jih bomo jedli v mestu.

In pride trenutek, o katerem se bojiš pisati: primikanje oken in vrat, naoknic, nastop teme in hladu, senca dneva, v kateri so odmrli glasovi od zunaj in v tebi. Strah, da bo vse tvoje ostalo v tej hiši v Smokvici, medtem ko zapiraš vse okrog sebe in nezavedno loviš zadnji del morja, zadnji pogovor in gib, ki si ga naredil samo hip prej. Loviš prizore okrog sebe, medtem ko napol nor drviš in zbirаш, stresaš in mečeš, medtem ko zapiraš. Medtem ko se zapiraš, medtem ko na glas govoriš, sebi o samem sebi, da bodo duhovi Kornatov vzeli tvoj obraz in telo, se skrili vanj in prezimili ob tistih, ki pridejo obirat olive, sedeli med njimi in jih strašili, ko bodo pospalii, da prihaja neurje ali da bo burja raznesla vse, kar so zbrali.

Ne dihaš v trenutku, ko govoriš, in vlečeš zrak in spomine poletja. Rad bi ostal v tej nepremičnosti, užival v strahu, da ne boš nikoli več premaknil roke ali nog, kakor se dogaja v sanjah, ves si zlit v enem telesu, ni brazgotin in spomina, ni ničesar razen nepremičnosti, ni ničesar od vsega tistega hrepenenja po drugem telesu, ni ničesar, kar bi spremenil v besedo, večjo od samega sebe.

Ampak že si na soncu na ladji in mahaš tistim, ki bodo ostali. Premikajo se, delajo, kakor da bi jim tovor v rokah dajal varnost in kakor da bi se v njih skrival pravi razlog njihovega ostanka. Skačejo v morje in pripravljajo jadrnico za izlet do bližnjih otokov. Drug drugemu mahamo, ker želimo

ostati, preživeti, ker se želimo vrniti. Mahaš, ker te je strah, da boš umrl, da za vedno zapuščaš ta kraj in da se ne boš nikoli več vrnil vanj: zaradi ženske, ki je iskala rože po poteh, ki so vodile na vrh hriba, zaradi robid, ki so ostale majhne in gRENKE ...

Mahaš, ko se oddaljuješ in ko se oddaljiš, mahaš, ko že zdavnaj sediš in se že govori o minulem poletju in kako je bilo, mahaš, ko molčiš in gledaš. Mahaš, ker veš, da v hiši ni ostalo nič, kar bi moralo izginiti. Mahaš, ker veš, da nevarnost, smrt in strah, duhovi in veter – nič ni ostalo tam in ničesar ni tam, samo preprosta prazna hiša na otoku, na Kornatih, v Dalmaciji, zaprta hiša ob restavracijah in jadrnicah.

Vendar mahaš, ker veš, da tam ni nič skrito in pozabljeno, ničesar ni, ker si vzel s sabo tudi to grozo. Ni je videti na tvojem obrazu, vendar razbija in pokazala se bo slej ko prej, tudi takrat, ko ne boš mislil na zaprto hišo v Smokvici. Pojavila se bo groza, o kateri misliš, da si ji zaprl vrata in ji obrnil hrbet.

### *Sedanjik. Preteklik. Poezija.*

Hodim mimo glavne železniške postaje, gledam Zrinjevac, ki se blešči v nenadni zimi: kristalen, natančen, svetel in mrzel kot veter, ki raznaša zadnje jesensko listje, hodim in premišljujem, kako sem srečen, vesel sem, da je poezija na dobri poti, ker je vse bližja tistemu, kar tudi je: ezoterična domača obrt. Ko grem na literarni večer, posvečen moji knjiggi, čutim hvaležnost do tistih, ki so prišli, hvaležnost, ki je brez kakrsnekoli moje obveznosti do njih in njihove do mene, kajti ne mučim se z njihovimi razlogi, o prihodu nisem obvestil nikogar, nič nisem povedal družini, prijateljem, tudi domačim sem skoraj zamolčal razlog za pozni odhod v mesto. Preprosto, vesel sem, da je poezija na dobri poti, ker je vse bližja tistemu, kar tudi je: ezoterična domača obrt. In vse se ponavlja. In vse se ponavlja. In vse se ponavlja. Sedanjik. Preteklik. Poezija.

*Prevedla Đurđa Strsoglavec*

## **Gračani**

(Lovers)

Beer bottles on a cramped table were supposed to end in the workers' hands, but the danger lies in sudden disarray and laughter: they fell on the table, then on the ground and a gush of glass and hop smell hit us. What are empty glasses doing at that moment? What is happening with you, while you are sitting in a secret (lovers') place, becoming an accomplice in a conspiracy on an ordinary summer afternoon? You are creeping into a story that does not want to be a love story; you are standing in its centre, thinking that you are pulling its ends, the ones that are pulling it forward. It is nice to say that you are thinking of the places where you were just beautiful in the eye of the summer, before the storm, before the weather became rough.

And what else, what else are you doing?

The end of events is still far away and no one would order again. Let us say it now, then, to make things easier. Let us decide what we are going to do while our hands are still free, our minds and hearts pure and brave! The workers have finished their work, unloaded the cement bags, put their shovels away, and left their blouses on the grass. Now they are sitting at the foot of an imagined mountain. Enveloped in muscles and curses, light-hearted, bearded, strong, exhausted, and different, they belong to that which demands no name, which does not care for the childhood. They are laughing, smoking, drinking. They are poor. They are rich. They are sick. They are healthy. They are happy. They are trying hard. They do not ponder over the question who and what they are? The hardships of the world, wars and political crises end in their curses, low wages, abandoned families, and places that hold no room for them now. They are full of hatred. They are void with loneliness.

But you cannot hide behind them, because you do not belong to the noon in Gračani, while bottles are falling and a gush of glass, spume, and hop smell attracts laughter and voices.

And what now? What now?

The teacher gets into her car and takes the ringing of a school lesson with her. My 45 minutes are over, she says. The boy does not hurry anywhere. This was my day, Tuesday or Wednesday, a happy Friday, he says.

Where is your happy day, your happy hour, you ask.

She is not saying a word. She is just looking at him – thus Gračani will always remain in her eyes. In her silence. In her gaze.

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**Viktor**

(Villa Ružić)

Viktor lives in a villa at the seaside, but this is not our topic. He deserves a much more interesting and longer story, a story only about him. He deserves more than just an introduction. But for now, we shall leave it that way. He asked us our name, our exact birth date and the birth date of our closest relatives (if this is the right expression). You feel uneasiness and anxiety, like in an exam or when facing people who can seriously harm you.

What if you do not know the exact date of birth of your older or younger son? What is your wife's date of birth? Maybe this story should be told from the beginning: the villa ought to be placed into its reality, its appearance described, as well as the access to it and the way to reach it. How do you talk in it? How do you talk to it? The history of that house is longer than the history of some large towns or nameless stretches of wilderness. It is longer and more interesting if we disregard plants and animals, large and small traces of wind in the sand, if we do not cry over the defeats of lovers when dawn comes and everything looks as if the sun would never rise...

We should come very close to its windows, to the sea, because it seems that this villa, crammed up with books, old and valuable objects, is losing its glory yard by yard, losing everything surrounded and captured by its walls. The villa is moving towards the sea as its owners and friends are abandoning it. Its only reality is a view of the open sea. We hid, the two of us, behind large windows, thinking that we were invisible, imperceptible...

But this is already a story for some other reality and a discussion on landscapes that at a certain moment create an illusion of eternity. Before I say anything about you, it is better that we both return into the *future past*, to Viktor's questions, who will forever remember the date of our arrival into the villa, our date of birth and the date of birth of our closest relatives (if this is the right expression!?).

**Mirror**

You are getting out of the bathroom after what you have done behind the closed doors. Between us is a small corridor with a large mirror. You are disappearing in the left corner, because there is a wardrobe. I want to see you naked in the mirror, so I flee from the computer and turn around: the only thing I see is my repeated face in a vast and abandoned space.

I return to my place before the face of the screen, striking the characters of my keyboard: shall I summon you in this way, shall I describe you? By confessing what I wanted I show how weak I am and this will take revenge on me in my future life, in the text.

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But who would worry about that now? Where are you, I mean to say that this is important to me? What are you doing? What are you wearing, I am asking about the cover, about the end.

## *Cyclone*

They said that the Genova Low was coming and because of this liberating news we have decided to depart from our temporary leisure home. This was supposed to be the best thing to do for all of us, to be done within the next half an hour.

And that was all.

And that was all.

Now we are closing the doors in a hurry and we have done everything necessary before that: took the food out of the gas refrigerator that we would turn off later, unsure of one thing – should we have closed the door or should we have left it open, like this had been done by our predecessors. They were not much of a role model, having left so many untidy and imperfect things behind them. We know that the house owners, our relatives, had encouraged this approach by a pile of bread cut in slices, left there to the joy of creeping and ugly pests or by the omnipresent smell of decaying potatoes found in the storage under the stairs.

We could have called a stop to all that and changed it. Now we should pack quickly and tidy up a bit; we collide, hands and different jurisdictions intersect. But, as much as this is left unspoken, we know with whom the authority lies; there are no great changes in these roles and nobody protests. The children have grown up. Suntanned, tall, and beautiful, they resemble rare birds with special voices; angry and wonderful, in discord with their hands, legs, and heads they carry things to the unstable boat, over the bow and ropes to the cabin; merchandise, fish caught in a net and with a trident that we shall eat in the town.

Then comes the moment you are afraid to write about: locking the doors and closing the shutters, enveloping the house in darkness and cold, a shadow of the day in which voices outside and within you have subsided. There is a fear that everything deeply yours will remain in that house at Smokvica, while you are closing everything around you, unconsciously catching the last glimpse of the sea, the last conversation and movement you have made only a moment earlier. You catch a glimpse of the scenes around you, while half-crazed you run around picking up, spilling, throwing away, and locking up.

While you are locking up yourself, while you are talking aloud to yourself about yourself that the ghosts of Kornati would take your face and your

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body, hide in it and spend the winter by the side of the ones who will come to pick olives, sit among them and scare them, when they fall asleep, that a storm is coming or that the northern wind will scatter around everything they have gathered.

You are not breathing at the moment when you are talking and drawing the air in and the memories of summer. You would like to remain frozen, to enjoy the fear of never moving a hand or a leg again, like this happens in dreams. You are cast all in one body; there are no scars and memories, nothing apart from immobility, nothing of that craving for another body, nothing that you could turn into a word larger than yourself.

But you are already in the sun, on board, waving to the ones that remain. They are busy, working, as if the weight they carry would give them security, containing the real reason for their staying on the island. They jump into the sea, preparing a sailboat for a trip to nearby islands. We wave to each other, because we wish to stay, survive, and come back. You are waving because you are afraid of dying, of abandoning this place forever and never coming back; because of a woman who sought flowers along the paths leading to the top of the hill, because of blackberries that remained small and acrid...

You are waving while you are getting away and out of sight, you are waving, although you have been sitting for some time. People are already talking about past summer, how it was, you are silently waving and looking back. You are waving because you know that nothing has been left in the house supposed to disappear. You are waving because you know that danger, death and fear, ghosts and the wind – nothing has remained there and there is nothing, just a simple empty house on an island, on Kornati Islands, in Dalmatia, a locked up house near a restaurant and sailing boats. But you are waving because you know that there is nothing hidden and forgotten, that there is nothing because you have taken that horror with you as well. It is not visible on your face, but it is knocking and will appear at some point, even when you will not be thinking of the closed house at Smokvica. Horror will appear of which you think that you have slammed the door at its face and turned your back to it.

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***Present. Perfect. Poetry***

Passing the main railway station I am looking at Zrinjevac glittering in a sudden winter: crystal, precise, illuminated and cold, like the wind that swirls the last autumn leaves, I am walking and thinking how happy I am. I am happy that poetry is on a good path, because it is getting closer to what it really is: an esoteric cottage industry. Arriving at a poetry evening, devoted to my book, I feel gratitude towards the ones who came, gratitude devoid of my obligation to them and their obligation to me, because I am not pondering over their reasons; I have not informed anyone that I'll be there, said nothing to my family and friends. I almost failed to reveal the reason of my going out late to my dearest. I am simply glad that poetry is on a good path, because it is getting closer to what it really is: an esoteric cottage industry. And everything keeps repeating. And everything keeps repeating. And everything keeps repeating. And everything keeps repeating. Present. Perfect. Poetry.

*Translated by Andy Jelčić*





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# *Ioana Nicolaie*

Ioana Nicolaie se je rodila leta 1974 v Sângeorz-Băiu v Romuniji. Leta 1997 je diplomirala in leto pozneje magistrala na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Bukarešti. Kot pesnica in pisateljica je leta 1991 začela svoja dela objavljati v literarni reviji *Contrapunct*. Njen pesniški prvenec *Poza retușată* (Retuširana fotografija) je izšel leta 2000. Med njene pesniške zbirke sodijo še *Credință* (Vera, 2003), ki je bila nominirana za nagrado Združenja pisateljev Bukarešte, *Nordul* (Sever, 2005), nominirana zbirka za nagrado »ASPRO«, ki jo podeljuje Društvo poklicnih pisateljev Romunije, in *Cenotaf* (2006). Objavila je tudi dva romana: *Cerul din burtă* (Nebesa iz trebuha, 2005; 2010) in *O pasare pe sîrmă* (Ptica na žici, 2008), ter knjigo za otroke z naslovom *Aventurile lui Arik* (Arikove dogodivščine, 2008). Njene izbrane pesmi so bile objavljene v različnih mednarodnih antologijah, kot sta *Poésie 2003: Roumanie, territoire d'Orphée* (Poezija 2003: Romunija, Orfejeva dežela, 2003) in *New European Poets* (Novi evropski pesniki, 2008). Njena dela so prevedena v bolgarsčino, angleščino, nemščino in švedščino.

Ioana Nicolaie was born in 1974 in Sângeorz-Băiu, Romania. She graduated from the Faculty of Letters at the University of Bucharest in 1997 and earned a master's degree the following year. The poet and writer began publishing her work in the *Contrapunct* literary magazine in 1991. Her debut collection of poetry *Poza retușată* (Retouched Photograph) was published in 2000. Her other collections of poetry include *Credință* (Faith, 2003), which was nominated for the Bucharest Writers' Association Award; *Nordul* (The North, 2005); which was nominated for the ASPRO Prize conferred by the Professional Writers' Association of Romania; and *Cenotaf* (Cenotaph, 2006). She has also published two novels: *Cerul din burtă* (Belly Heaven, 2005; 2010) and *O pasare pe sîrmă* (Bird on a Wire, 2008), and a children's book entitled *Aventurile lui Arik* (The Adventures of Arik, 2008). Her selected poems have been published in various international anthologies, such as *Poésie 2003: Roumanie, territoire d'Orphée* (Poetry 2003: Romania, Land of Orpheus, 2003) and *New European Poets* (2008). Her works have been translated into Bulgarian, English, German, and Swedish.

## Savură

Toate zilele aveau consistență de clopot

ca țelina pe răzătoare  
cădeau de pe ulițele Ștezei,  
cu țigani și fierăstraie isterizate  
se izbeau drăgăștos de geamul  
cît un bloc de desen mai mare  
pe unde își zornăia talerii  
lumina

cădeau în rotunjite duminici  
iubindu-se neînțeles cu lumina

și-mi plăcea lumina  
măturînd camera într-un loc pătrățos

“stai pe locul acela,  
stai paralizată pe locul acela,  
căci în el întotdeauna vei sta!”

dar locul se-acoperea pe la prînz  
cu crestele tâlpilor de cauciuc,  
cu noroiul de bocanc sau de cizmă,  
și rochița se umplea de pete,  
fantomele orbitoare zdrobeau zarzavatul,  
plopii cu viespi și miez neajuns,  
buba aprinsă de jar,  
rostogolindu-se ca un înecat,  
tot mai flămîndă, spre apus...

“stai pe locul acela, stai!...”

și aburii evadau de prin oale,  
și fumul puștesc scria pe tavan,  
și cotoarele de varză semănau cu o poză:

o fetiță oglindindu-se într-un ciob,  
o fetiță pîndindu-și mama într-un ciob  
și frații sporovăitori,  
și îndepărtații vecini

“stai cuminte acolo, pe locul acela stai!...”

iubind nemîșcată acele duminici.

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## *Firimituri*

Mama a fost cea mai bună și cu mult  
cea mai frumoasă femeie din lume...

de la unu săizeci și ceva de centimetri începea  
cu ochii căprui și genele boltind păstrăvii  
în apele din reziduuri aurifere  
vopsite la minele din Rodna

era o fată naivă,  
o fată mai mereu singură sub pielea umflind  
rochiile ei de material ieftin,  
din doi în doi ani umflându-se foarte tare  
mult după al patrulea copil  
care am fost eu

mama era acolo mereu  
puțin, puțin mai mare,  
cu înflorita-i tristețe scotocind după măruntiș,  
aducîndu-mi doctorii și bomboane,  
cheltuindu-se picătură cu picătură  
în intersecțiile lipicioase ale orașului  
unde părinții ei o măritaseră  
pe la șaisprezece ani

mama rîdea mult și-mi spunea  
cum e cu proștile, cum e cu țîncii din vecini,  
cu numeroșii mei frați,  
cu sandalele rupte, iubiții de mai tîrziu,  
nefericirile și neliniștea

și rîdea și mai mult  
printre fericiri solidificate între certuri  
    și spălat rufe,  
ducîndu-mă la doctor,  
luîndu-mi uniforma albastră de școală,  
printre fericiri și uitare

și rîdea  
ca să rîzi trebuie să cureți cenușa,  
leșia s-o aluneci lucioasă pe pînze

și rîdea, știind  
că într-o duminică n-avea să plece,  
într-o duminică n-avea să uite de noi și de tata,  
ca să-și sugrume isteriile,  
ca să-și amaneteze  
frica înnebunitoare în care  
ca într-un ciclon mai mereu plutea

și rîdea  
de viața-i de celofan,  
de întrebările putrezind cu boarfele-n pod,  
de serbările unde printre altfel de mame  
ea n-avea zi de naștere  
ea gătea prost, din ce în ce mai prost,  
și genele-i aurifere și le încrunta  
între o ședință și alta,  
între o frică și alta...

mama era o fetișcană trăsnită  
și a rămas aşa, o soră mai mică,  
la care mă gîndesc des,  
care-mi lipsește,  
deși părul i s-a rărit,  
deși s-a îngrășat...

## *Reluare*

Părinții mei se certau,  
noi între noi ne certam,  
bine era să fii cel mai tare!

în decembrie înțepeneau porcii  
sub două sunătoare lovitură de cuțit...  
bine era să-ți înfuzi capul în perne,  
aburii groazei să se prindă în țurțuri!

bunica, la etajul patru,  
tot în decembrie,  
cu mîinile frumos împreunate  
își amalgama secreta paloare  
peste camera cu mine alături,  
peste buzunarele de ciment încă pline  
cu vorbele ei de pe cînd  
dulciuri ne împărtea...

bine era să-i vedem de departe  
făptura cernită  
ca o figurină-n mulaj!

roua se curba dintr-o măduvă  
roz-verde sau albastră...  
bune erau iernile de cozonac  
și noroaiele gălbenelelor  
primăvara!

dulapul se lăsa într-o rînă,  
laptele șubrezit inunda din șistare,  
cărticelele soioase de joc  
fumegau cu sticla topită a lămpii,  
impregnînd în tavan toate drumurile...  
bune erau ele pe-atunci!

părinții mei se certau,  
noi între noi ne certam,  
bine era să fii cel mai tare!

## ***Lut vopsit***

Viața mi se sfîrșea întotdeauna  
cînd din sticla de lapte a lămpii  
lîncezeala cădea pieziș  
pe nesfîrșitele paturi  
    cu-ale lor învelișuri de pai

viața avea o cămărușă secretă  
printre glande lacrimale și nervi roșietici  
    se retrăgea pe nesimțite  
    în ascunzișul ei de popas,  
    devorîndu-și unul câte unul jupoanele  
    în neaerisite dulapuri

și frații mei se dizolvau  
în glasul tatei zdruncinînd versete din Biblie  
    Daniel în groapa cu lei,  
    un prinț Ionatan străpuns de săgeți  
    și Iona înghițit de-o balenă

și glasul tatei prindea pojghiță  
ca o rană de curînd făcută,  
căci bănuielii de dragoste aşa se iveau :  
    niciodată nu tăcea atît de aproape,  
    niciodată palmele îngreunate de bătături  
    nu-mi atingeau la fel creștetul

mai tînăr ca atunci nu era niciodată,  
mai tînăr, și arăgos,  
și aspru cu cerul negru-verzui  
al reflectării în geamuri,  
    în frustrările-i de bărbat dat în copt  
    și poate împovărat

căci într-un fel veghea,  
urînd acea nemărturisită veghere  
și fața schimbătoare a neînțelegerii  
peste ofilate răsaduri

---

și poate în felu-i veghea  
peste mine și viața-mi,  
ce seară de seară își fărâmiță anticorpii  
în denivelările glasului lui,  
în crevasele atât de apropiate  
de moarte...

## **Gramoz**

Vsi dnevi so imeli trdnost zvona

kot zélena na strgalniku  
 so padali z ozkih ulic Šteze  
 s cigani in histeričnimi žagami,  
 se ljubeče zaletavali v šipo  
 velikosti malo večjega risalnega bloka,  
 kjer je s činelami udarjala  
     svetloba

padali v zaobljene nedelje,  
 se nerazumno ljubili s svetlobo

všeč mi je bila svetloba,  
 ki je sobo pometla v kvadratni kotiček

»stoj na tistem mestu,  
 ohromljeno stoj na tistem mestu,  
 saj boš tam ostala za vedno!«

toda v času kosila se je mesto prekrilo  
 z grebeni gumijastih stopal,  
 z blatom z delovnih čevljev ali škornjev  
 in oblekica je bila polna madežev,  
 slepeče prikazni so teptale zelenjavvo,  
 topole z osami in premalo sredice,  
 kot od žerjavice razbeljena oteklinia  
 se je kot utopljenec  
 vse bolj požrešno prevračala proti zahodu ...

»stoj na tistem mestu, stoj! ...«

in iz loncev je uhajala para  
 in pobalinski dim je pisal po stropu  
 in zeljni štori so bili videti kot fotografija:

neka deklica se je zrcalila v črepinji,  
 neka deklica je prežala na svojo mater v črepinji  
 in klepetavi bratje  
 in oddaljeni sosedje

»mirno stoj tam, na tistem mestu stoj! ...«

ko nepremično ljubiš tiste nedelje.

---

## *Drobtine*

Mama je bila najboljša in daleč  
najlepša ženska na svetu ...

začela se je pri malo več kot metru in šestdesetih centimetrih  
z rjavimi očmi in trepalnicami kot postrvmi, ki so ustvarjale loke  
v vodah iz zlatonosnih odplak,  
obarvanih v rudnikih iz Rodne

bila je naivno dekle,  
malodane vselej sama pod kožo,  
ki je napihovala njene obleke iz poceni materiala,  
vsaki dve leti so se silovito napihnile,  
še bolj po četrtem otroku,  
ki sem bila jaz

mama je bila vedno tam,  
malo, čisto malo večja,  
ko je z razcvetelo žalostjo brskala za drobižem,  
mi prinašala zdravila in bonbone,  
se kapljico za kapljico trošila  
na lepljivih mestnih križiščih,  
kjer so jo starši omožili  
pri šestnajstih.

mama se je veliko smejava in govorila,  
kako je s traparijami, kako je s sosedovimi pobi,  
mojimi številnimi brati,  
strganimi sandalami, bodočimi fanti,  
nesrečo in nemiro

in še bolj se je smejava  
sredi sreč, utrjenih med prepiri  
              in pranjem perila,  
ko me je peljala k zdravniku,  
kuvovala modro šolsko uniformo,  
med srečami in pozabo.

res se je smejava

da bi se lahko smejal, moraš očistiti pepel,  
na platno vreči sijoči lug

smejala se je, vedoč,  
da neke nedelje ne bo odšla,  
da neke nedelje ne bo pozabila ne na nas in ne na očeta,  
da bi potlačila svoje histerije,  
da bi zastavila  
ob pamet spravljalajoči strah, v katerem  
je malodane ves čas plula kot v ciklonu

posmehovala se je  
svojemu celofanskemu življenju,  
vprašanjem, ki so s capami vred plesnela na podstrešju,  
proslavam, na katerih, za razliko od drugih mam,  
ona ni imela rojstnega dneva,  
kuhala je zanič, vedno slabše,  
in njene zlatonosne trepalnice so se mrščile  
med tem in onim sestankom,  
med tem in onim strahom ...

mama je bila trapasta deklica  
in je takšna tudi ostala, mlajša sestra,  
na katero pogosto mislim,  
ki jo pogrešam,  
čeprav so se ji zredčili lasje,  
čeprav se je zredila ...

---

## **Ponovitev**

Moji starši so se prepirali,  
mi smo se prepirali med seboj,  
dobro je bilo, če si bil najmočnejši!

decembra so prašiči odreveneli  
pod dvema odzvanajajočima udarcema z nožem ...  
dobro je bilo, če si zakopal glavo med blazine,  
da se je para groze spremenila v točo!

babica je v četrtem nadstropju,  
prav tako decembra,  
z lepo sklenjenimi rokami  
svojo skrivno bledico vlivala  
v sobo z menoj ob sebi,  
in v cementne žepe  
še vedno polne njenih besed  
iz časov, ko nam je delila sladkarije ...  
dobro je bilo, če smo od daleč zagledali  
njeno užaloščeno podobo  
kot kipec v odlitku!

iz rožnato zelenega  
ali modrega mozga se je vila rosa ...  
dobre so bile zime iz šarkljev  
dobro je bilo blato ognjiča  
spomladji!

omara se je povesila,  
zvodenelo mleko se je polivalo iz golid,  
majhne umazane igralne karte  
so se dimile s stopljenim steklom svetilke,  
in na strop vrisovale vse poti ...  
takrat še dobre!

moji starši so se prepirali,  
mi smo se prepirali med seboj,  
dobro je bilo, če si bil najmočnejši!

## *Pobarvana glina*

Mojega življenja je bilo konec vsakič  
 ko je iz mlečnega stekla svetilke  
 na neskončne postelje  
 z njihovimi slavnatimi ovoji  
 poševno padala otopelost

življenje je imelo skrivno sobico  
 med solznimi žlezami in rdečkastimi živci

nesramno se je umikalo  
 v svoje skrivno počivališče  
 in v neprezračenih omarah  
 drugo za drugo goltalo spodnja krila

in moji bratje so se topili  
 v očetovem glasu ki je zamajal svetopisemske verze  
 Daniel v levji jami  
 neki princ Jonatan ki so ga prebodle puščice  
 in Jona ki ga je pogoltnil kit

in na očetovem glasu se je naredila krasta  
 kot na čisto sveži rani  
 tako so se namreč kazali ljubezenski namigi:

še nikoli ni molčal tako od blizu  
 še nikoli se z žulji otežene dlani  
 niso tako dotikale vrha moje glave

mlajši kot takrat ni bil še nikoli  
 mlajši in godrnjav  
 in strog s črno-zelenkastim nebom  
 odseva v šipah med zorenjem  
 v svojih moških frustracijah  
 in verjetno obremenjen

ker je nekako bdel  
 in sovražil svoje neizpovedano bdenje  
 kot tudi spreminjači se obraz nerazumevanja  
 na ovenelih sadikah

in morda je na svoj način bdel  
nad menoj in mojim življenjem  
ki je noč za nočjo drobilo svoja protitelesa  
v zniževanju njegovega glasu  
v razpokah tako blizu  
smrti ...

*Prevedel Aleš Mustar*

## ***Gravel***

Every day had the consistency of bells  
like celery root from a grater  
they fell from the narrow streets of Steza  
with Gypsies and the noisy tantrums of saws  
banged seductively on the window  
as large as a sketchpad  
on which light clanged bright  
cymbals

fell into the round of Sundays  
perversely making love to the light

and I took pleasure in the light  
sweeping the room together into a sort of square spot

“stay on that spot,  
paralyzed on that spot  
for that’s where you’ll always be”

but by lunchtime the spot got covered  
by the ridged grid of rubber soles  
by mud from work shoes or heavy boots  
and the threadbare little dress filled with stains  
dazzling phantoms crushed the vegetables  
the poplars with wasps but not enough pulp  
the ravenous burn from the embers  
tumbling like a drowned man  
toward the setting sun

“stay on that spot, stay! . . .”

steam rising from pots  
an adolescent smoke scribbling on the ceiling  
the cabbage stalks that looked like a photo

a little girl a little girl’s face mirrored in a shard  
a little girl spying on her mother in a shard  
and her chattering brothers  
and neighbors twice removed

“stay there quietly on that spot, stay! . . .”

motionless loving those Sundays.

---

## *Crumbs*

My mother was the best and by far  
the most beautiful woman in the whole wide world...

at five foot three she started out  
with hazel eyes and lashes like trout leaping  
in the waters of auriferous residues  
painted in the mines of Rodna

she was a naïve girl  
a girl almost always lonely under her skin filling  
her dresses of cheap materials  
year by year stretching them more  
even more after her fourth child  
me

my mother was always there  
little by little growing bigger  
with her sadness in full bloom looking a few coins  
bringing me pills and candy  
squandering herself drop by drop  
at the sticky intersections of the town  
where her parents had married her  
when she was sixteen

my mother laughed a lot and told me  
about joking around, about the kids next door  
about my numerous brothers  
about broken sandals, my eventual lovers  
disappointments and worries

and she laughed even more  
in the midst of the happiness solidified  
    between quarrels and laundry  
taking me to the doctor  
buying me my blue school uniform  
between happiness and forgetting

and she laughed

to laugh you must clean away the ashes  
wipe everything with lye that glistens on dust cloths

and she laughed knowing  
that one Sunday she wouldn't just run off  
one Sunday she wouldn't forsake Father and us  
to stifle her hysteria  
to pawn the maddening fear  
which forever buffeted her every which way  
as in a cyclone

and she laughed  
at her cellophane life  
at questions rotting with the rags in the attic  
at school performances where among other kinds of mothers  
she didn't have a birthday  
she was a bad cook, continually getting worse  
and her auriferous lashes frowned  
between one meeting and the next  
between one fear and the next...

my mother was a crazy girl  
and so she remained, a younger sister  
whom I often think of  
whom I miss  
    though her hair thinned  
    though she grew fat...

---

## *Replay*

My parents kept quarreling  
we quarreled among ourselves  
better be the strongest

in December the pigs stiffened  
under two ringing blows of a knife  
    better bury your head under the pillow  
        the steam of fear freezes into icicles

on the fourth floor, my grandmother  
also in December  
her hands neatly folded  
slowly infused her secret pallor  
throughout the room next to me  
into the pockets of cement nearly full  
with her veins of witchcraft darkened  
since the times she'd give us sweets...  
    better look from a distance  
        at her mourner's pose  
            like a plaster figurine!

the dew curved in a marrow-bone  
pink-green or blue  
    better the marigold-muds  
        of spring!

the wardrobe leaned to the side  
the thinner milk spilled over from pails  
the filthy little playing cards  
smoked by the molten glass of the lamp  
impregnating into the ceiling all roads...  
    better those roads

my parents kept quarreling  
we quarreled among ourselves  
better be the strongest!

## *Painted Clay*

My life was forever coming to a stop  
when from the milky glass of the lamp  
drowsiness fell slantwise  
across the endless beds  
with their entrails of straw

life held a secret little room  
among lacrimal glands and pink nerves  
it withdrew unnoticed  
into the hiding place she'd retreat to  
devouring one by one her petticoats  
in stuffy wardrobes

and my brothers dissolved  
in my father's voice hammering out Bible verses  
Daniel in the lion's den  
a prince Jonathan pierced by arrows  
Jonah swallowed by a whale

and my father's voice formed scabs  
as on a recent wound  
because this is how hints of love came to the surface  
near us he was never quiet  
his palms hard with calluses  
never touched the top of my head the same way

he had never been younger than at that time  
younger and more stubborn  
rough like the green-black sky  
of reflections on the windows  
in his man's harvest of frustrations  
probably overburdened

because in some way he kept watch  
hating his unacknowledged vigil  
and the changing face of misunderstanding  
over withered seedlings

maybe in his way he kept watch  
over me and my life  
which night after night crumbled its antibodies  
in the lowering of his voice  
into crevices so close  
to death...

*Translated by Adam J. Sorkin and Irma Giannetti*



Foto © Jože Suhadolnik

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# *Sebastijan Pregelj*

Sebastijan Pregelj se je rodil leta 1970 v Ljubljani. Diplomiral je iz zgodovine na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Svoje zgodbe je začel objavljati leta 1991 v različnih literarnih revijah. Je avtor štirih zbirk kratke proze: *Burkači, skrunilci in krivoprisežniki* (1996), *Cirilina roža* (1999), *Svinje brez biserov* (2002) in *Prebujanja* (2011), ter treh romanov: *Leta milosti* (2004), *Na terasi babilonskega stolpa* (2008) in *Mož, ki je jahal tigra* (2010). Vsak od njegovih romanov se je uvrstil v finalni izbor za nagrado kresnik za najboljši slovenski roman leta. V sodelovanju z Gašperjem Troho je objavil literarni vodnik z naslovom *Literarne poti Ljubljane* (2010), ki je bil leto kasneje preveden tudi v angleščino (*Ljubljana Literary Trail*). Njegove zgodbe so bile objavljene v več antologijah in so prevedene v angleščino, nemščino, poljsčino in slovaščino. Je član Društva slovenskih pisateljev. Živi in ustvarja v Ljubljani.

Sebastijan Pregelj was born in 1970 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He earned a degree in history from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana. The writer started publishing his stories in various literary journals in 1991. He has authored four collections of prose: *Burkači, skrunilci in krivoprisežniki* (Buffoons, Defilers, and Perjurors, 1996), *Cirilina roža* (Cirila's Flower, 1999), *Svinje brez biserov* (Swine without the Pearls, 2002), and *Prebujanja* (Awakenings, 2011), as well as three novels: *Leta milosti* (Years of Grace, 2004), *Na terasi babilonskega stolpa* (On a Terrace of the Tower of Babel, 2008), and *Mož, ki je jahal tigra* (The Man Who Rode a Tiger, 2010), all of which were short-listed for the Kresnik Literary Prize for the best Slovene novel of the year. He also published a literary guide entitled *Literarne poti Ljubljane* in collaboration with Gašper Troha, which was translated into English (*Ljubljana Literary Trail*) the following year. Many of his stories have been published in a number of anthologies and translated into English, German, Polish, and Slovak. He is a member of the Slovene Writers' Association, and lives and works in Ljubljana.

## Mir

Zbudim se. Preden odprem oči, zaslišim glas, ki pove, da bodo naslednji dnevi sončni in hladni, za praznike pa lahko pričakujemo kakšno snežinko. Privzdignem glavo in z desno poiščem daljinski upravljalec. Pritisnem tipko. V levem zgornjem kotu se pokaže ura. Deset čez polnoč. Še slabe pol ure imam, pomislim in se dvignem iz troseda, na katerem sem zaspal. Stopim v kuhinjo, prižgem luč nad štedilnikom in iz omare vzamem posodo s kavo. Kava mi sicer ne pomaga pri premagovanju spanca, a imam rad okus črnega napitka. Brez sladkorja, z malo mleka.

S skodelico kave se vrnem v dnevno sobo. Hitro preletim programe na televiziji. Nič, vržem daljinski upravljalec na trosed. Petek zvečer, šestdeset programov, na televiziji pa nič. Vedno je tako, naredim kratek požirek, odložim skodelico in s troseda potegnem pregrinjalo, s katerim sem bil pokrit. Na hitro ga iztrepem in prekrijem sedežno pohištvo. Potem z mize pospravim knjige, revije in časopise. Nazadnje pospravim še pošto, med katero prevladujejo voščilnice in računi. Poravnam prt in na sredo postavim vazo, ki je bila te dni na tleh, da je bilo na mizi več prostora. Poleg vase postavim rdečo svečo. Še enkrat poravnam prt in si prikimam, da je v redu. V tem se razlikujeva, se nasmehnem. Katarina mora imeti vse pospravljeno, mene knjige in revije ne motijo. Ustvarjalni nered, se skušam izgovoriti, kadar me vpraša, zakaj imam vse razmetano. Skušam se izgovoriti, čeprav vem, da ni bilo mišljeno kot vprašanje.

Preden si iz predsobe prinesem jakno, naredim še en požirek kave. Preverim, če imam denarnico v žepu. Avtomobilski ključi so skupaj z drugimi ključi v vhodnih vratih. Počasi obujem čevlje, potem zgrabim daljinski upravljalec, vendar televizorja ne ugasnem. Gledam oglase, ki en za drugim govorijo o prihajajočih praznikih. Oglasi opozarjajo, česa ne smemo pozabiti, in opominjajo, kaj moramo storiti, da bo naše življenje in življenja tistih, ki nas obdajajo, napolnila zares velika in popolna sreča. Sporočajo nam, kakšni hočemo biti in kaj je treba za to kupiti. Ponavljam, da je vse, kar ima pomen, možno zaviti v rdeč papir, povezati z zlato mašno in plačati po povzetju ali s kartico. Če zadovoljstva ni, so prodajalci v naslednjih štirinajstih dneh pripravljeni vrniti denar. Sledijo novice. Ugasnem televizor. Vožnja skozi okrašeno mesto gre hitro. Pred odcepom na avtocesto je benzinska črpalka. Hočem se ustaviti, da bi kupil kakšno malenkost, a mi policist, ki stoji sredi ceste, z rokama kaže, da ne morem zaviti. Peljati moram naprej. Vidim, da se na črpalki nekaj dogaja. Okrog zgradbe utri-pajo modre in rdeče luči. Policisti in reševalci. Dosti ljudi je zunaj. Dosti ljudi je notri. Med zunaj in notri so nosila. Nosila so med tu in tam. Med ranjenimi in tistimi, ki jim ni nič. Med živimi in mrtvimi.

V naslednjem križišču zavijem na avtocesto. Pohodim plin, avto zdrvi skozi tunel. Na drugi strani je večna noč. Nobene luči, samo zasnežena

pokrajina, ki jo tu in tam obsije odsev srebrne lune. S pogledom na uro se prepričam, da imam dovolj časa. Vozim previdno, ker je cesta poledenela. Na cestninski postaji je kolona. Za postajo stoji policist v neprebojnem jopiču, z avtomatsko puško na prsih. Dokumente, prosim, je vljuden. Iz denarnice vzamem osebno izkaznico in mu jo podam. Mlad moški pogleda izkaznico, potem mene in še enkrat izkaznico. Vozite previdno, mi vrne dokument. Mirne praznike.

Z avtocesto zavijem v trenutku, ko na ravnini, na kateri je pristajalna steza, utripnejo modre luči. Minuto kasneje ustavim. Avto pustim na ovinku, kjer se začne pločnik. Pohitim proti steklenim vratom, nad katerimi je napis *Prihodi*. Na monitorju poiščem letalo, s katerim prileti Katarina. Piše, da je že pristalo. Zdaj pristaja naslednje. Stopim korak naprej in gledam ljudi. Moški pred menoj je v elegantni temno sivi obleki. Nestrpno pogleduje na ročno uro. Na njegovi desni стоji mlajša ženska. V ušesih ima slušalke in na glavi volneno kapo. Gleda nekam naprej, skozi okno, mimo vozičkov in kolone taksijev. Za njo стоji debel moški pri šestdesetih. Na nosu ima očala in v desni roki sendvič. Smrdi po tuni. Pred njim стоji deklica, ki vsake toliko steče do mlajše ženske, ki ima ustnice namazane z bleščečo šminko. Pri vratih sloni suhljat moški s kartonom, na katerem ima z debelim flomastrom napisano ime. Čevlje ima mokre. Vrata se ves čas odpirajo in zapirajo.

Ko se na izhodu pojavi stevardesa in takoj za njo še ena, med ljudmi, ki čakamo, završi. Debeluh zbaše v usta še zadnji kos sendviča s tuno, ženska z bleščečimi ustnicami počepne, da ji deklica priteče v objem, in ji reče: Vidis, že prihajajo. Moški s kartonom se postavi na vidnejše mesto in pogleda napis, kot bi hotel še enkrat preveriti, ali ima prav napisano ime. Moški v elegantni obleki pogleda na uro, potem se obrne k meni in mi prikima: Brez zamude. Ženska s slušalkami v ušesih stopi na prste, čeprav ne vidi nič več kot prej, ker potniki prihajajo okrog vogala.

Naslednji pride pilot s črnim kovčkom, za njim pa vsi, ki jih čakamo. Debeluh se poljublja in objema z drugim debeluhom, moški v obleki objema gospo v krznenem plašču, ženska z bleščečimi ustnicami se poljublja z moškim, ki ima že naslednji trenutek na ramenih deklico. Moški s kartonom se rokuje z žensko v kostimu. Ženska s slušalkami treplja starejšega moškega, jaz objemam Katarino.

Tukaj, na tem letališču, se je pravkar zgodil čudež. Zgodil se je *mir*. Vse je dobro. Vsi, ki smo jih čakali, so z nami. Moški, ki so mu odstranili raka z debelega črevesja, je priletel domov. Ta božič bo preživel z bratom. Starejša ženska se je vrnila z zadnje službene poti. V torbici ima vavčer, s katerim bo presenetila moža. Čez dva dni odletita. Tam, kamor gresta, ne bo potrebovala krznenega plašča, on pa ne obleke. Pila bosta koktejle in se glasno smejalna. Očka se je vrnil od ljubice. Prepričan je, da nihče nič ne ve. Na letalu je sklenil, da je bilo tokrat zadnjič. Izkoristil bo priložnost. Ne ve,

---

s čim si jo je zaslužil, odločen pa je, da je ne izpusti. Nekaj sem ti prinesel, potegne iz žepa barbiko in jo poda deklici. Potem poljubi ženo, ki ve za drugo žensko, ampak vztraja. Zaradi male. Ženski v kostimu je odleglo. Sporočilo je prišlo do agencije. Sklenili bomo posel. Za novo leto bom doma, pohiti za moškim s kartonom. Starejši moški ne zadržuje solz. Spet lahko objame hčer. Vse bo še dobro. En dan, en mesec, eno leto. Kolikor jima je namenjeno.

Objemam Katarino. Poljubljam jo na usta in lica in vrat. Še malo, pa bova doma. Še malo, pa bova objeta ležala in nič govorila. Samo gledala se bova in vedela, da imava vse. Poljubljal jo bom na čelo in počakal, da zaspí. Potem jo bom gledal, dokler ne zaspim še sam. Ko se zbudiva, bova mogoče že stara, mogoče bova bolna, mogoče bo en sam in ne oba. Zato je pomembno, da jo objemam in poljubljam zdaj in ne potem, nocoj in ne zjutraj, pomembno je, da se je dotikam, da jo čutim, da zaspim ob njej.

---

## *Peace*

I wake up. Even before I open my eyes, I hear a voice saying that we are in for a sunny and cold spell, with a snowflake or two in store for the holidays. I raise my head, groping for the remote control with my right hand. Press a button. The left upper corner of the screen flashes the time. Ten past midnight. Less than half an hour left, I think, rising from the three-seater sofa where I had fallen asleep. I make my way to the kitchen, turn on the light above the stove, take the coffee box from the cupboard. While coffee does not help me drive away sleep, I like the taste of the black beverage. No sugar, a dash of milk.

I return to the living room with a cup of coffee. Skim through the TV programs. Nothing. I toss the remote control on the three-seater. Friday night, sixty programs to pick from, and nothing worth watching. It's always like this. I take a short sip, put the cup away and scoop up the three-seater spread I'd been wrapped in. Shaking it out in a hurry, I cover the seats. Then I empty the table of books, magazines, newspapers. Finally I put away the post, mainly Christmas cards and bills. I smooth the tablecloth, setting in the middle a vase banished to the floor for the past few days so as to make room on the table. Next to the vase I place a red candle. I smooth the tablecloth once more, nodding: it looks fine. This is where we differ, I smile. Katarina must have everything tidy, while I'm not bothered by books or magazines. Creative chaos, that is how I excuse myself when she asks why the place is such a shambles. I excuse myself even though I know that it is not meant to be a question.

Before bringing my jacket from the hall, I take another sip of coffee. I check that my wallet is in my pocket. The keys to the car and the rest are in the front door lock. Slowly, I pull on my shoes, then grab the remote control but do not turn off the TV. I watch the ads instead, every one of them about the upcoming holidays. The ads warn us what we should not forget and remind us what to do so as to let into our lives, and the lives of those around us, a flood of great and perfect happiness. They tell us what we want to be like and what to buy for the purpose, repeating that all that matters can be wrapped up in red paper, tied with a golden bow, and paid on delivery or by card. Satisfaction guaranteed, or the sellers will reimburse us in a fortnight. The news come next. I turn off the TV.

The drive through the Christmas-lit city is fast. There is a petrol station before the motorway junction. I want to stop for a few trifles, but the policeman standing in the middle of the road waves me away. I have to drive on. I see there's something going on at the station. Blue and red lights pulsing around the building. Policemen and aides. Lots of people outside. Lots of people inside. There is a stretcher lying between the outside and the inside. Lying between here and there. Between the wounded and the well. Between the living and the dead.

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At the next junction, I take the motorway. I step on the gas, the car shooting through the tunnel. There is eternal night on the other side. No lights, only a snowy landscape, lit up at times by the reflection of a silver moon. A glance at my watch tells me that I'm in good time. I'm driving carefully because the road is iced over.

There is a line-up before the toll station. Behind the station stands a policeman in a bullet-proof jacket, with an automatic rifle slung over his chest. Papers, please. He is polite. I take my ID from my wallet and hand it over. The young man looks at the ID, then at me, then at the ID again. Drive carefully, he says, handing back the document. Have a peaceful holiday.

I turn from the motorway just as blue lights flash from the plain with the taxiway. Pulling up a minute later, I leave the car on the curve where the pavement begins. I hurry toward the glass door marked *Arrivals* and look up Katarina's plane on the screen. It seems to have landed already. Right now, there is another landing. I take a step forward, looking around at people. The man in front of me is wearing an elegant dark grey suit. He is impatiently glancing at his watch. To his right stands a younger woman wearing earbuds and a woollen cap on her head. She is gazing ahead, through the window, past the trolleys and the cab queue. Behind her stands a fat man of about sixty, with glasses perched on his nose and a sandwich in his right hand. He smells of tuna. In front of him, a little girl scampers every now and then up to a youngish woman, whose lips are painted with a glossy lipstick. Lounging by the door is a skinny man holding a sign, the name on it written with a thick felt pen. His shoes are wet. The door keeps opening and closing.

When a stewardess appears at the exit and is followed by another, there is a stir among the waiting crowd. The fat man crams the last of the tuna sandwich into his mouth, the glossy-lipped woman squats down so that the girl can run into her arms, telling her, See, they're coming. The man with the sign takes up a more conspicuous position and looks at the name, as if to make sure once more that it is spelled correctly. Glancing at his watch, the elegantly dressed man turns to me and nods: No delay. The woman with the earbuds stands on tiptoe, even if she can see no better than before since the passengers are coming around the corner.

Next comes the pilot with his black suitcase, followed by all those we are waiting for. The fat man is hugging and kissing another fat man, the man in the suit is hugging a lady in a fur coat, the glossy-lipped woman is kissing a man who at once swings the little girl up on his shoulder. The man with the sign is shaking hands with a woman wearing a suit. The earbuds woman is patting an older man, I am hugging Katarina.

Here, at this airport, a miracle has just happened. *Peace* has happened. All is well. All those we have been waiting for are here with us. A man operated for colon cancer has flown back home. He's going to spend this Christmas

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with his brother. An elderly woman has returned from her last business trip. She has a voucher in her handbag, a surprise for her husband. They are flying away in two days. Where they are going they will need no fur coat or suit. They will drink cocktails and laugh out loud. A father has come back from his mistress. He's sure nobody knows. He decided on the plane that this had been the last time. He's going to take a second chance. While unsure how he has deserved it, he is determined not to let it go. I've brought you something, he pulls a Barbie doll from his pocket, handing it to the girl. Then he kisses his wife, who knows about the other woman but holds on. For the kid's sake. A woman in a suit feels a surge of relief. The message had reached the agency. The deal is going through. I'll be home for New Year's Eve, she thinks and hurries after the man with the sign. An older man can't hold back his tears. He can hug his daughter again. All will be well. For a day, a month, a year. As long as the fates of the two allow. I'm hugging Katarina. Kissing her lips and cheeks and neck. A little longer and we'll be home. A little longer and we'll be lying in each other's arms, not talking. Just looking at each other, knowing that we have it all. I'll be kissing her forehead, waiting for her to fall asleep. Then I'll watch her until I fall asleep myself. When we wake up, we may be old, we may be ill, we may be one instead of both. That's why it is important that I hug and kiss her now rather than later, tonight rather than in the morning, that I touch her, feel her, fall asleep beside her.

*Translated by Nada Grošelj*



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# Pino Roveredo

Pino Roveredo se je rodil leta 1954 v Trstu v Italiji. Po viharnem življenju in več letih dela v tovarni deluje danes kot socialni delavec, pisatelj in novinar. Je redni sodelavec dnevnika *Il Piccolo* ter različnih humanitarnih organizacij, ki delujejo v prid deprivilegiranih. Njegov prvenec je pripoved *Capriole in salita* (Strmi prevali), ki je izšla leta 1996, njegov opus pa obsega tudi romane *La citta dei cancelli* (Mesto za rešetkami, 1998), *Ballando con Cecilia* (Plesati s Cecilijo, 2000) in *Caracreatura* (Ljubobitje, 2008), za katerega je prejel nagrado »Premio Torre di Castruccio« (2008); zbirko kratkih zgodb *Mandami a dire* (*Sporoči mi*, 2005), ki je pri tržaški založbi Mladika leta 2008 izšla tudi v slovenskem prevodu Magde Jevnikar, za njo pa je avtor prejel številne nagrade, med drugim »Premio Campiello« (2005) in »Premio Bruno Cavallini« (2006); prozna dela, kot sta *Schizzi di vino in brodo* (Curki vina v mineštri, 2000) in *La melodia del corvo* (Krokarjeva melodija, 2010), ter več gledaliških iger. Njegova dela so prevedena v francoščino, grščino, romunščino, ruščino in slovenščino.

Pino Roveredo was born in 1954 in Trieste, Italy. After a turbulent life and years of labouring in a factory, he now works as a social worker, writer, and journalist. He is a regular contributor to the daily newspaper *Il Piccolo* and collaborates with various humanitarian organisations, offering aid to the underprivileged. His debut work, the narrative *Capriole in salita* (Steep Rolls), was published in 1996. His opus also includes the novels *La citta dei cancelli* (City behind Bars, 1998), *Ballando con Cecilia* (Dancing with Cecilia, 2000) and *Caracreatura* (Lovelycreature, 2008), for which he received the Premio Torre di Castruccio award (2008); the collection of short stories *Mandami a dire* (Let Me Know, 2005), which was translated into Slovene by Magda Jevnikar and published by the Triestine publishing house Mladika in 2008, and which won him numerous awards, such as the Premio Campiello award (2005) and Premio Bruno Cavallini award (2006); works of prose such as *Schizzi di vino in brodo* (Streams of Wine in the Broth, 2000) and *La melodia del corvo* (The Crow's Melody, 2010) as well as several plays. His works have been translated into French, Greek, Romanian, Russian, and Slovene.

## ***Le margherite di Germana***

*No, non era assolutamente una persona simpatica, il signor Bruno Benevoli. Lui era nato, cresciuto e vissuto con l'indole naturale dell'antipatico. Antipatico dentro, e antipatico fuori.*

*Quando parlava, per quel poco che parlava, usava sempre il tono sgarbato di chi vuole cercare lite, e con l'espressione immobile di ciglia raccolte, sguardo scuro, labbra abbassate e mento sollevato, avvisava a qualsiasi tentativo di approccio, un umore eternamente incazzato. Persino i conoscenti, a dire il vero molto pochi, affermavano che vederlo sorridere il signor Bruno, era come vedere la neve scendere in agosto.*

*Bruno Benevoli lavorava da trentacinque anni come spazzino, zona stazione, e da quasi trenta era sposato con la signora Germana, il suo esatto opposto. Si perché, lei era tranquilla e dolce come il sonno, e cortese come quel sorriso che portava in giro quasi fosse il castigo immobile di una paresi. Da trent'anni, la signora, oltre a fare la moglie, per una scelta imposta dal marito, occupava il suo tempo col lavoro della casalinga. A lui il compito di tirare avanti la carretta, e a lei la dolce attenzione di accudire la casetta. Ed è per questo che la signora Germana, per una vita accudì, venerò e onorò il suo consorte con la gratitudine della testa bassa e della schiena piegata.*

– Si Brunetto! Senz'altro Brunetto! Tutto quello che vuoi Brunetto! –

*Per trent'anni, quando il capofamiglia, recitando una stanchezza da minatore, rincasava, puntuale saltava il saluto, si lamentava della fatica e si stravaccava sul divano, mentre lei, sempre col sorriso stampato in bocca, amorevolmente gli toglieva le scarpe, le calze, e gli immergeva i piedi nel riposo di un catino di acqua e sale. Poi, con l'attenzione della cameriera, apparecchiava la tavola e gli serviva la cena, e quindi si metteva a disposizione del servizio: quando il cibo era di gradimento assisteva all'ingozzamento, quando invece un pugno protestava sul tavolo perché non gradiva la "portata", allora lei scattava e si premurava di fornirgli il ricambio.*

– Subito Brunetto! Va bene così Brunetto! Sei sazio, Brunetto? –

*Finita la cena, il signor Bruno prima ruttava la sua soddisfazione e subito dopo liberava l'urgenza di tutti i chiodi che gli pestavano dentro l'umore. Gli accidenti passati sul lavoro, l'infamità dei colleghi, le maledizioni contro il Governo ladro, e altri chili di bestemmie da dedicare a quella merda di mondo che aveva il torto di girare all'incontrario del suo volere. E lei, sempre vicino e sempre in silenzio, a dargli ragione col gesto automatico dell'assenso. Per trent'anni, alla sera, lui si coricava sul fianco destro e s'infilava nel corridoio pesante del sonno ordinando un massaggio sulla schiena, e ogni tanto, quando*

*gli avanzavano cinque minuti d'insonnia, si metteva a pancia in giù nella posizione dell'amore, e allora lei, docile, obbediente e sorridente, allargava le gambe e gli esauriva il piacere coi tre colpi del coniglio.*

– Eccomi pronta Brunetto! Sei contento Brunetto?... Buonanotte Brunetto! –

*Grazie a uno di quei colpi notturni, nacque Sergio, il loro unico figlio. Figlio bello come il sole per mamma Germana, che amò e curò quella sua creatura fino a lucidargli il capello. Figlio da tirare su a pane e rimproveri, per il padre Bruno, che per anni martellò quella sua discendenza con tutti gli esempi rancorosi che giravano nella sua storia. – Non avere mai pietà per nessuno, nemmeno degli amici, che sono i primi a sotterrarti sotto i piedi! E non abbassare mai la testa, e pretendì sempre la tua ragione: con gli uomini usa la forza, e con le donne pretendì l'obbedienza! Vero Germana?... –*

– Sicuro Brunetto! Hai ragione Brunetto! Serve qualcosa Brunetto? –

*Poi, quando il ragazzo fu bocciato due volte in terza media, e iniziò a reagire agli esempi col fiato largo dello sbadiglio, portare i capelli sulla spalle come la debolezza delle donne, e a guadagnarsi la vita con la sottomissione umiliante di una paga operaia, il padre tolse lo spreco dei consigli e si rassegnò a crescere quel figlio senza schiena, col distacco della delusione.*

*Andò avanti così per anni: l'urlo del padre, la noia del figlio, e la paresi della madre che imperterrita continuava a sorridere, sorridere... .*

*Sì, la signora Germana, come se non avesse mai imparato a piangere, sorrideva sempre. Lei non spese una lacrima per la scomparsa dei genitori, per la morte del Papa, il tormento degl'umori, e nemmeno per quella terribile sciatalgia che nelle giornate umide gli spaccava la schiena. Niente. Solo all'improvvisa morte del marito, come per miracolo, riuscì finalmente a manifestare lo sfogo del pianto, tanto che la ristretta cerchia di conoscenti si stupì come per una neve ad agosto.*

*La signora Germana pianse per tutti i dieci anni che le restarono di vita, mantenendo però sempre e rigorosamente il contrasto di quell'immobilità che le obbligava il sorriso. Pianto e sorriso che, con frequenza settimanale, lei portava fino al camposanto, davanti alla foto imbronciata del marito. Lì, si faceva il segno della croce, provvedeva al ricambio dei fiori e poi, nella calma dei defunti, si accomodava su una piccola sedia pieghevole e si concedeva il piacere di una conversazione... .*

– Ben trovato Brunetto! Tutto a posto? Bisogno di qualcosa?...

*Hai visto caro, oggi ti ho portato le margherite! Sì, lo so, a te non sono mai piaciuti i fiori, però mi sembrava un modo tanto carino per avvisarti che qui,*

*da questa parte, sta girando una meravigliosa primavera! E poi, perdonami Brunetto, ma per tutta una vita mi hai proibito di infilare anche solo mezza rosa in un bicchiere, e adesso che posso, vuoi che rinunci?...*

*Sapessi che emozione che provo, ogni volta che entro in un negozio da fioraio. Lo faccio sempre in posti diversi, così la signora dietro il banco è costretta ad informarsi sul motivo dell'acquisto: matrimonio, battesimo, anniversario, compleanno. Ed io che me ne sto lì in silenzio a scuotere la testa, poi, quando si arrende, tiro un lungo sospiro e quasi felice che non abbia compreso il senso del mio acquisto, le sbatto sul viso la sorpresa di un bel: - Sono per il mio marito defunto! -.*

*Defunto, estinto, sepolto e trapassato!*

*Ah Brunetto mio, vedessi che noia da quando non ci sei!...*

*Preparo i catini di acqua e sale, e pensandoti, mi lavo i piedi da sola imitando i gemiti del tuo sollievo. Poi preparo la tavola coi piatti della solitudine: spaghetti con le vongole, spaghetti col sugo, fragole con la panna e un brindisi col fernet per aiutare la digestione. Spesso m'ingozzo sbadigliando, perché so che non ci sarà nessuna scossa che pesterà i pugni sulla tavola per protestare il suo dissenso. Dio mio, che noia!... Alla sera, dopo che non c'è più la tua schiena, mi sono tolta l'abitudine di addormentarmi sul fianco destro, e ho tolto anche la pazienza dalle dita, quelle che si muovevano nel massaggio sperando che tu guadagnassi il sospirato sonno. Adesso dormo a pancia in giù, e ho pure impedito a fumare! Si Brunetto, serenamente e tranquillamente impasto la camera di fumo, con la certezza che nessuno può interrompermi con l'ordine perentorio di allargare le gambe, per accontentargli la voglia amorosa del coniglio.*

*Oggi, dentro un letto grande come la libertà, mi addormento dentro un sonno senza salto, e prima di chiudere gli occhi, ti penso sempre Brunetto mio, e immancabilmente, giuro, ti dedico con tutta la forza che ho l'attenzione di una preghiera...*

*Prego che nell'Aldilà giri una vita per i giusti e per gli ingiusti. E allora spero tanto che qualcuno abbia la bontà di mozzarti i piedi e poi di infilarli in bocca, fino a frantumare quei denti che hanno morsicato la rabbia del padrone. Spero che qualcuno ti pieghi la testa col bastone degl'umili, e ti laceri la schiena con la frusta offesa di chi ha dovuto rinunciare alla dignità. Spero tanto che ci sia anche una folla di occhi, perché possano concepire e godere il piacere che ho provato io nel tuo ultimo istante di vita, proprio quando l'infarto ti stava strozzando la voce, e tu col bisbiglio del servo cercavi disperatamente il mio aiuto, mentre io inginocchiata sul letto ti incitavo a tagliare quel benedetto traguardo.*

*Su Brunetto, dai che ce la fai! Ti prego Brunetto, fai il bravo, ancora un ultimo sforzo, un ultimo strappo! Dai che ci siamo, dai... Si, ecco, così, così... così!... Complimenti Brunetto, complimenti, hai visto che ce l'hai fatta? Pace all'anima tua Brunetto, e che Dio ti riservi un occhio di riguardo, mi auguro quello più severo!*

*Si, spero, prego, e continuamente penso, perché più lo faccio e più mi illudo che tu viva nel debito piacevole della mia rivalsa.*

*Beh! Adesso vado Brunetto, si è fatto tardi, e io devo ad andare a vivere la mia noia. Ci vediamo tra una settimana Brunetto! Ah! Brunetto?... La prossima volta insisto con le margherite, o preferisci i tulipani?...*

## *Germanine ivanjsčice*

*Ne, gospod Bruno Benevoli sploh ni bil prijeten človek. Rodil se je, odraščal in živel je z naravno zoprnim značajem. Zoprni navznoter, zoprni navzven.*  
*Njegovo govorjenje, kadar je sploh govoril, je bilo vedno v neprijaznem tonu, kot da išče prepir, in z negibnim izrazom namrščenih obrvi, mrkega pogleda, spuščenih ustnic in dvignjene brade je svaril pred kakršnimkoli poskusom približanja, večno razkjurjene volje. Celo znanci, resnici na ljubo maloštevilni, so trdili, da je bilo videti nasmeh gospoda Bruna, kot bi videli sneg v avgustu.*  
*Bruno Benevoli je petintrideset let delal kot smetar v okolici glavne postaje in je bil skoraj trideset let poročen z gospo Germano, ki je bila njegovo popolno nasprotje. To pa zato, ker je bila mirna in mila kakor spanec in prijazna kakor nasmeh, ki ga je nosila, kot bi bila otrpla kazen pareze. Ne samo, da je bila gospa že trideset let žena, ampak je po moževi želji delala kot gospodinja. On je imel nalog, da ju preživilja, ona sladko skrb hišnih opravil. In zato je gospa Germana celo večnost gospodinjila ter soprogu izkazovala spoštovanje in čast s hvaležno sklonjeno glavo in sključeno hrbtenico.*

– Ja, Brunetto! Vsekakor, Brunetto! Karkoli hočeš, Brunetto!

*Trideset let, kar se je družinski poglavar z zaigrano rudarsko utrujenostjo vračal domov, redno ni pozdravil, potožil je, da je zbit, in se zavalil na divan, medtem ko mu je ona vselej z narisanim nasmehom na ustih ljubeče sezula čevlje in nogavice in mu položila noge v vedro slane vode, da si odpočije. Potem je z natagarsko natančnostjo pogrnila mizo, mu postregla z večerjo in mu bila potem na voljo: če mu je bila hrana všeč, je bila priča goltanju, če pa je udarec pesti po mizi ugovarjal, ker mu »jed« ni bila pogodu, je stekla proč in mu hitela pripravljat kaj drugega.*

– Takoj, Brunetto! Takole bo v redu, Brunetto! Si sit, Brunetto?

*Po večerji je gospod Bruno najprej rgnil od zadovoljstva, takoj zatem pa si je potešil nujno potrebo, da se olajša vsega, kar ga je tišalo. Nesreč, ki so se zgodile v službi, podlosti sodelavcev, preklinjanja tatinske vlade in na kilogramov kletvic na račun tega usranega sveta, katerega krivda je bila, da se vrti nasprotno od njegove volje. Ona pa, zmeraj ob njem in zmeraj molčeča, mu je v znak strinjanja pritrjevala s samodejnim gibom. Trideset let se je vsak večer ulegel na desni bok, in ko je stopil na težek hodnik spanca, je zahteval masajo hrbta in sem ter tja, kadar mu je ostalo pet minut nespečnosti, se je namestil na trebuh v ljubezenski položaj in takrat je ona, voljna, ubogljiva in nasmejana, razširila noge in mu izsrkala užitek v treh zajčijih sunkih.*

– Sem že nared, Brunetto! Si zadovoljen, Brunetto? ... Lahko noč, Brunetto!

*Po zaslugi enega izmed teh nočnih sunkov se je rodil Sergio, njun edinec. Sin, lep kot sonce za mamo Germano, ki je ljubila svojega otroka in tako skrbela za nj, da so se mu še lasje lesketali. Sin, ki ga je treba vzugajati ob kruhu in očitkih, je bil prepričan oče Bruno, ki je leta in leta zasipaval potomca z vsemi primeri zamer, ki so se mu pripetile. – Nikoli se nikogar ne usmili, tudi prijateljev ne, ti te bodo prvi poteptali! In nikoli ne skloni glave in zmeraj zahtevaj svoj prav: pri moških uporabi silo, pri ženskah zahtevaj poslušnost! Ni tako, Germana?*

– Seveda, Brunetto! Prav imaš, Brunetto! Ali kaj potrebuješ, Brunetto?

*Ko je potem fant dvakrat padel v osmem razredu in se začel na zglede odzivati s široko sapo zehanja, nositi lase na ramenih kot žensko šibkost in si služiti denar s ponižajočo vdanostjo v delavsko plačo, je oče nehal zapravljati nasvete in se s hladnim razočaranjem sprijaznil, da ima sina brez hrbitenice.*

*Tako je bilo leta in leta: očetovo kričanje, sinovo dolgočasje in otrplost matere, ki se je še naprej ravnodušno smehljala, smehljala ...*

*Ja, kot da se gospa Germana nikoli ne bi naučila jokati, zmeraj se je smehljala. Niti solze ni potočila ob smrti staršev, papeževi smrti, kadar jo je mučilo slabo razpoloženje ali jo je ob vlažnih dneh sekal v hrbitenico grozen išias. Nič. Šele ob nenačni moževi smrti se ji je kot po čudežu vendarle posrečilo dati duška joku, da se je ozki krog znancev začudil, kot če bi snežilo avgusta.*

*Gospa Germana je jokala vseh deset let, kar je še živila, vendar je ves čas in dosledno obranjala kontrast z otrplostjo, v katero jo je primoral nasmešek. Jok in nasmešek je vsak teden nosila na pokopališče, pred moževou namrgodeno fotografijo. Tam se je pokrižala, zamenjala cvetje, potem pa s pokojniško mirnostjo sedla na zložljiv stolček in si privoščila pogovor ...*

– Pozdravljen, Brunetto! Je vse v redu? Ali kaj potrebuješ?

*Si videl, dragi, danes sem ti prinesla ivanjsčice! Ja, vem, tebi rože niso bile nikoli všeč, ampak to se mi je zdel prijazen način, da te spomnim, da je na tem koncu čudovita pomlad! Pa tudi, oprosti mi, Brunetto, vse življenje mi nisi pustil, da bi vtaknila v kozarec vsaj pol vrtnice, kako naj se temu odpovem zdaj, ko to lahko storim? ...*

*Ko bi vedel, kako sem vznemirjena vselej, ko stopim v cvetličarno. Vsakokrat grem v drugo, tako da me mora gospa za pultom vprašati, za kakšno priložnost jih kupujem: poroko, krst, obletnico ali rojstni dan. In jaz tam molče odkimavam, ko pa se vda, globoko vzdihnem in ji skoraj vesela, da ni ugotovila namena mojega nakupa, vržem v obraz takole lepo presenečenje: – Za mojega pokojnega moža so!*

*Pokojnega, preminulega, pokopanega in rajnega!*

*Ah, Brunetto moj, ko bi vedel, kako mi je dolgčas, odkar te ni! ...*

*Pripravljam si vedra slane vode in si z mislijo nate sama umivam noge in pri tem posnemam twoje stoke ob olajšanju. Potem postavim na mizo jedi*

osamljenosti: špagete s školjkami, špagete v omaki, jagode s smetano in nazdravim s fernetom za boljšo prebavo. Pogosto med goltanjem zeham, ker vem, da ne bo nobenega tresljaja, ki bi tolkel s pestmi po mizi v znak negodovanja. Moj bog, kakšen dolgčas! Zvečer, ko ni več twojega hrbita, sem se odvadila zaspati na desnem boku in potrpežljivost sem si spravila iz prstov, ki so te masirali v upanju, da te zazibajo v želeni spanec. Zdaj spim na trebuhi in celo kaditi sem se naučila! Ja, Brunetto, vedro in mirno zasmradim sobo z dimom, z gotovostjo, da me nihče ne bo prekinil z brezpojnim ukazom, naj razširim noge, da mu zadovoljim zajčjo slo.

Danes v postelji, veliki kakor svoboda, zaspim v spanec brez trzljajev, in preden zaprem oči, mislim vedno nate, Brunetto moj, in res vsakokrat, prisežem, vsakokrat ti z vso močjo, ki jo premorem, ti posvetim pozorno molitev ...

Molim, da je v onstranstvu življenje za pravičnike in krivičnike. In zato močno upam, da bo kdo tako dober, da ti bo odsekal noge in ti jih zatlačil v usta, da ti polomi zobe, ki so grizli gospodarjevo jezo. Upam, da ti bo kdo s palico ponižnih upognil glavo, ti z užaljenim bičem tistega, ki se je moral odpovedati dostojanstvu, razparal hrbtenico. Močno upam, da je tam tudi množica oči, ki si lahko predstavljajo veselje in uživajo v njem, veselje, ki sem ga okusila v zadnjem trenutku twojega življenja, prav takrat, ko ti je infarkt dušil glas in si s suženjskim šepetom obupano iskal mojo pomoč, medtem ko sem te kleče na postelji spodbujala, da prispeš na presneti cilj.

Daj, Brunetto, saj ti bo uspelo! Prosim te, Brunetto, bodi priden, samo še malo, še zadnjič se potрудi! Daj, skoraj ti je uspelo, daj ... Ja, tako, tako, tako, tako ... tako! Čestitam, Brunetto, čestitam, vidiš, da ti je uspelo. Počivaj v miru, Brunetto, in naj Bog pazi nate z budnim očesom, upam, da z najstrožjim!

Ja, upam, molim in neprestano mislim, kajti bolj ko to počnem, bolj si domišljjam, da živiš v prijetnem dolgu mojega maščevanja.

No, zdaj pa grem, Brunetto, pozno je in moram iti živet svoj dolgčas. Se vidiva čez en teden, Brunetto! Saj res, Brunetto! ... Prinesem naslednjič spet ivanjščice ali imaš rajši tulipane?

Prevedla Veronika Simoniti

## *Germana's Daisies*

*No, Mr. Bruno Benevoli was definitely not a nice person. He was born, grew up, and lived with a naturally repulsive disposition. Repulsive within, and repulsive without.*

*When he spoke, for as little as he did speak, it was always in an unfriendly tone, as if he was looking for a fight, and his immobile expression and wrinkled brows, his gloomy look, pursed lips and upraised chin, warned against any attempt to come near to him in his perpetual anger. Even his acquaintances, the few he actually had, said that seeing Bruno smile was like seeing snow fall in August.*

*For thirty-five years Bruno Benevoli had been a garbage man in the station zone, and he'd been married for almost thirty years to Mrs. Germana, his very opposite. She was as peaceful and mild as sleep and as friendly as the smile she always bore, as if she had been stricken by palsy. Not only had the woman been his wife for thirty years, she had, by her husband's choice, spent all her time doing the housework. His task was to keep plodding along, and hers was sweetly and attentively to look after the little house. And that is why Germana kept up the household for a lifetime, worshipping and honouring her husband with a bowed, grateful head and a back bent low.*

– Yes, Brunetto! Of course, Brunetto! Whatever you desire, Brunetto!

*For thirty years, when the head of the household came home, like an exhausted miner and regularly failing to greet her, he would complain of being beat and crash onto the couch, while she, always, and with a smile stamped onto her mouth, would lovingly remove his shoes and socks and dip his feet into a soothing pail of salt water. And then she would set the table with a waiter's precision, serve him dinner, and wait on him: if he liked the food, she would see him gorge and gulp, but if he felt, pounding his fists on the table, that the "dish" was not to his liking, she would scamper off to make something else for him.*

– Right away, Brunetto! This will be fine, Brunetto! Are you satisfied, Brunetto?

*After dinner Bruno would first belch in satisfaction, then immediately take care of the urgent need to relieve himself of all that was plaguing him. Accidents that had occurred at work, the dishonour of his co-workers, curses against the thieves in government and curses by the pound against the shitty world that had wrongfully turned against his every wish. She, meanwhile, ever beside him and ever silent, would nod mechanically in agreement with him. For thirty years he had laid on his right side every night, and as he slipped into the corridor of deep sleep, he would demand a back-rub and sometimes, when five minutes of insomnia overcame him, he would lie on his back ready for love, and she would, willingly, obediently and smilingly, spread her legs, drawing out his pleasure in three rabbit thrusts.*

– I'm ready, Brunetto! Are you happy, Brunetto? ... Good night, Brunetto!

*It was as a result of one of these nocturnal thrusts that Sergio, their only child, was born. The son, the mother Germana found as beautiful as the sun itself and whose hair she cared for until it shone. The son who was to be raised on the bread and reproaches of Bruno the father, who for years hammered into his descendant example after rancorous example of all that had gone wrong in his life. – “Never have pity on anyone, not even friends! They’ll be the first to bury you! And never lower your head and always demand what is yours: be forceful with men, and demand obedience from woman! Right, Germana?”*

– Of course, Brunetto! You’re right, Brunetto! Is there anything I can get you, Brunetto?

*When the boy failed the eighth grade for the second time and began to react to these examples with great yawns, to wear his hair down to his shoulders like a weak woman, and to survive on the demeaning wages a worker makes, the father stopped wasting his advice and, with detached disappointment, accepted that his son had no backbone.*

*And so it went for years and years: the father’s yelling, the son’s boredom and the mother’s numbness as she continued apathetically to smile, to smile... .*

*Indeed, it was as if Germana had never learned how to cry, for she was always smiling. Not even when her parents died, when the pope died, did she smile, not even when a bad mood overcame her, or on those damp days when her back was stricken by a horrible sciatica. Nothing. Not until the sudden death of her husband did she, as if by miracle, finally manage to display an outpouring of tears, and her closest circle of acquaintances were as amazed as if it had snowed in August.*

*Even though Germana cried for ten long years, for as long as she lived, she always maintained a rigorous contrast with the numbness onto which she used to force a smile. Every week she carried tears and a smile to the graveyard, to her husband’s wrinkled photograph on the tombstone. There she would cross herself, change the flowers, before allowing herself, in the calmness of the dead, to sit on a folding chair and converse with him... .*

– Hello, Brunetto! Everything all right? Is there anything you need?

*Did you see, honey, I’ve brought you daisies! I know you’ve never liked flowers but it seemed such a nice way of letting you know that our side is having a lovely spring! And forgive me, Brunetto, but your whole life long you never allowed me to put even a single rose into a glass, and how can I renounce this now that I’m allowed to?... .*

*If you only knew how excited it makes me to go to the florist’s. I always go to a different one so that the woman behind the counter can ask me what the occasion is: a wedding, a baptism, an anniversary or a birthday. I stand there silently, shaking my head until she gives up, and then I let out a deep sigh and, almost joyous that she could not guess why I was buying them, throw her a lovely surprise: They’re for my late husband!*

*My late, passed, buried and deceased one!*

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*Ah, my Brunetto, if you only knew how boring things are now that you're gone! I prepare the salt water and wash my own feet with thoughts of you, imitating your moans of relief. And then I set the table with plates of loneliness: spaghetti with mussels, spaghetti in sauce, strawberries and cream, and I raise a glass of bitter as a digestive. I often yawn as I gorge myself, for I know there will be no shock of pounding fists expressing displeasure. My God, how dull it is! At night, now that your back is no longer there, I've gotten over the habit of sleeping on my right side and I've drawn out the patience from the fingers that used to massage you in hopes that you would be rewarded with the sleep you desired. Now I sleep on my stomach and I've even learned how to smoke! Yes, Brunetto, I serenely, peacefully, stink up the room with smoke, confident that nobody will interrupt me with peremptory orders to spread my legs so he can satisfy his bunny urges.*

*Today, in a bed as great as freedom, I fall asleep without a stir, and before I close my eyes, I always think of you, my Brunetto, and invariably, I swear, I dedicate to you with all of my power an attentive prayer ...*

*I pray that on the other side there is life for the just and for the unjust. And that's why I deeply hope that someone will be so good as to chop off your feet and stuff them in your mouth, breaking those teeth that have bitten at the master's anger. I hope that somebody with the stick of humility will make you bow your head down, and will tear into your back with the insulting whip of one who had to renounce dignity. I deeply hope that over there is a mass of eyes that can conceive of and appreciate the joy that I tasted in the last moments of your life, at the very moment the heart attack was choking out your voice and, with a slave's whisper, you desperately sought my help, while I knelt near the bed and encouraged you to reach that damned goal.*

*Brunetto! You can make it! I beg you, Brunetto, be good, just a little more, try just a little harder! You're almost there, go... Yes, like that, like that, like that...! Congratulations, Brunetto, congratulations! You see that you've made it? Rest in peace, Brunetto, and may God watch over you with a wakeful eye, with the sharpest of eyes, I hope!*

*Yes, I hope, pray and constantly think, for the more I do that, the more I imagine that you are living in the friendly debt of my revenge.*

*Now I'm going, Brunetto. It's late and I have to go live out my boredom. See you in a week, Brunetto! Oh, and, Brunetto ... next time should I bring daisies again, or would you prefer tulips?*

*Translated by Jason Blake*



*Foto © Florian Thiele*

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# *Monique Schwitter*

Monique Schwitter se je rodila leta 1972 v Zürichu v Švici, od leta 2005 pa živi in dela v Hamburgu. Leta 1997 je diplomirala iz gledališke igre in teatrolologije na Mozarteumu v Salzburgu. Po končanem študiju je kot uspešna gledališka igralka gostovala v Zürichu, Frankfurtu, Gradcu in Hamburgu, kjer je leta 2010 zaključila svojo igralsko pot. Od tedaj se posveča izključno pisateljevanju. Za svoj literarni prvenec, zbirko novel *Wenn's schneit beim Krokodil* (Ko sneži pri krokodilu, 2005), je prejela več nagrad, med drugim tudi nagrado Roberta Walserja za književnost (2006) in nagrado švicarskega Schillerjevega sklada (2006). Med njena dela sodita še roman *Ohren haben keine Lider* (Ušesa nimajo vek, 2008) in zbirka proze *Goldfischgedächtnis* (Spomin kot zlata ribica, 2011), za katero je leta 2011 prejela nagrado »Rotahorn«. Leta 2012 je prejela literarno rezidenčno štipendijo nemške kulturno-umetniške ustanove Künstlerhaus Lauenburg.

Monique Schwitter was born in 1972 in Zürich, Switzerland and has been living and working in Hamburg since 2005. She obtained a degree in acting and theatre studies from the Mozarteum University of Salzburg in 1997, after which she embarked on a successful career as a theatre actress in Zürich, Frankfurt, Graz, and Hamburg, where she retired as a performer in 2010. Since then, she has been focusing exclusively on writing. Her debut book, the collection of novellas *Wenn's schneit beim Krokodil* (When It Snows at the Crocodile), won many awards, among them the Robert-Walser-Prize (2006) and the Swiss Schiller-Foundation-Award (2006); it was published in 2005. Her works also include the novel *Ohren haben keine Lider* (Ears Have No Lids, 2008) and the collection of prose *Goldfischgedächtnis* (Memory Like a Goldfish, 2011), for which she was honoured with the Rotahorn-Prize in 2011. In 2012, she was awarded the writer-in-residence fellowship of the German Künstlerhaus Lauenburg arts-and-culture institution.

## **Goldfischgedächtnis**

(Auszug)

Ich bin ihm nachgegangen. Immer wieder. Das erste Mal war ich dreizehn. Ich habe ihn in der Mittagspause an der Uferpromenade gesehen, lachend am Arm einer mir fremden Frau. Er deutete gerade aufs Wasser, als er mich sah. Für einen Moment verschwand das Lachen, er sah mich prüfend an; aber dann, als hätte ich meine Komplizenschaft signalisiert, lachte er sehr über etwas, das die Frau ihm zuflüsterte, und legte den Arm um sie. Wir gingen wie Fremde aneinander vorbei. Mir wurde innerlich kalt, vom Brustkorb bis in die Eingeweide, ein heftiger inwendiger Wintereinbruch mit überfrierender Nässe und Blitzeis.

Ich zählte bis zehn und ging ihnen nach, mehrere hundert Meter weit, bis er sich umdrehte. Ich stand still und starrte ihn an. Es war nur ein kurzer Blick, den er mir zuwarf, der nachhaltigste, den ich je auf mich gerichtet fühlte. Dieser Blick war ein schneller, sauberer Schnitt. Verbindung gekappt. Ich sah ihm nach, ihm und dieser Frau, stand da und sah dem schlendern den Paar tatenlos zu, das sich wie ein leinenloses Schiff weiter und weiter vom Ufer entfernte.

Abends saßen wir gemeinsam am runden Tisch. »Erzähl was«, forderte meine Mutter mich auf. Sie sah traurig aus. Ich unterhielt die Familie beim Essen, weil ich die Stille nicht ertragen konnte. Es waren sehr lustige oder ganz schreckliche Geschichten. Ich erfand sie, manche stimmten im Ansatz, die schmückte ich aus. Entweder war ein Mitschüler in atembe raubender, aber pfiffiger Weise frech gewesen und der Lehrer hatte einen Kreislaufkollaps erlitten, oder der Vater einer Mitschülerin war in einem Boot auf den See hinausgerudert, um sich im Sonnenuntergang zu erschießen, und ich zitierte einen Abschiedsbrief an die Tochter. Meinen Vater sah ich dabei nur verstohlen an. Er war mit den Augen ganz bei den Speisen und mit den Ohren ganz bei den Geschichten. Er aß mit gutem Appetit und nahm lebhaft Anteil, amüsierte sich oder schüttelte bedauernd den Kopf, je nachdem, was die Geschichten an Zuhörerreaktion verlangten. Aber einen Blick zwischen uns gab es nicht.

**Ich habe oft erzählt, mein Vater sei tot. Aber das stimmt nicht.**

Mein Vater trinkt. Jeder Mensch trinkt. *Du musst viel trinken* ist der häufigste Rat, den man mir gibt. Mein Vater trinkt viel, aber nichts Heißes. Er verabscheut heiße Getränke. Er trinkt Milch, wenn er Durst hat, und Weinbrand, wenn nicht. Morgens nach dem Duschen zieht er sich einen Anzug an. Dann trinkt er eine Tasse Milch und geht zur Arbeit. Samstags bleibt er da und setzt sich im Anzug in seinen Ledersessel. Mittags trinkt er

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einen Weinbrand. Dann sagt er: »Ich muss noch mal ins Büro.« Meistens bleibt ein Stuhl beim Abendessen frei, nicht nur samstags. Er kommt spät nachts im Taxi nach Hause.

Ich wache auf. Ich höre dumpfe Schläge, jemand klopft mit einem Hammer auf den Teppichboden. Ich liege und horche. Nein. Es sind meine Eltern, sie kämpfen. Ich weiß, wie das aussieht. Ab und zu höre ich ihre unterdrückten Schreie. Ich bleibe liegen. Meine Schwester hat mir beigebracht: Wenn man ganz still verharrt und leise »ich bin bereit« murmelt, packt einen der Tod, sticht zu und lässt sein Gift eindringen, das sich blitzschnell ausbreitet und einen erstarrt lässt. Sie habe es schon oft ausprobiert. Beim Versteckenspielen, und wenn sie in der Schule nicht aufgerufen werden wolle. Es habe immer geklappt, sie sei dann unsichtbar. Man dürfe nur nicht vergessen, rechtzeitig »lass mich los« zu rufen. »Ich bin bereit«, flüstere ich. Und schon lähmt es mich, das Gift. Es funktioniert!

Ob diese Geschichte wahr ist, weiß ich nicht, aber ich habe sie so oft gehört, dass ich mir nicht vorstellen kann, sie sei es nicht.

An seinem 35. Geburtstag, dem 13. November 1976, besuchte mein Vater zum ersten Mal eine illegale Spielbank, die gelegentlich im Saal eines traditionsreichen, angesehenen Hotels eingerichtet wurde. Er trat an einen Tisch, ließ sich die Regeln erklären, verstand sie nicht ganz und pokerte los.

Als er in die regnerische Sonntagnachmittagdämmerung stolperte, trug er die dickste Brieftasche über dem Herzen, die er selber je gesehen hatte. Er hatte eine ganze Nacht lang gewonnen, auch ohne die Spielregeln im Detail verstanden zu haben.

Er war noch nicht betrunken genug, um schon nachhause zu fahren. Der Taxifahrer weigerte sich, ihn zu verstehen. »Schreiben Sie die Adresse hier auf den Zettel«, verlangte er. »Frühbar« kritzelt mein Vater, »kenne ich nicht«, antwortete der Taxifahrer, »komm, ich bring dich nach Hause. Wo wohnst du denn?« Mein Vater zog seine Brieftasche aus dem Jackett, öffnete sie und hielt dem Taxifahrer einige Scheine hin. »Frühbar«, wiederholte er. Es war keine Bar, sondern ein Bordell, auch wenn es einen Bereich gab, in dem Getränke ausgeschenkt wurden. Andere Gäste waren nicht da, jedenfalls keine trinkenden. Mein Vater bestellte einen Brandy. Als er völlig durchnässt zu sich kam, lag er vor dem Etablissement auf dem Trottoir. Ohne Mantel, ohne Uhr, ohne Brieftasche. Seine Brille war zu Bruch gegangen und hing halb auf seiner Nase, halb am Ohr. Er hatte einige Blutergüsse im Bauch- und Rippenbereich sowie im Gesicht.

Er erzählte uns die Geschichte immer wieder, als Warnung, nehme ich an, vor Alkohol, Glücksspiel und Rotlichtmilieu, aber sie bewirkte nichts, weder bei uns Kindern, wir fanden sie spannender und abenteuerlicher als *Robinson Crusoe* und liebten es, sie immer wieder zu hören und jede Einzelheit nachzufragen, noch bei meinem Vater, er trank weiter, pokerte weiter,

hurte weiter. Kam frühmorgens im Taxi nach Hause, schwer angeschlagen oft, verletzt, zerfetzt, blau und blutend, legte sich zu meiner großen Schwester ins Bett, weil er wusste, dass meine Mutter ihn dort, aus Rücksicht auf das schlafende Kind, nicht zur Rede stellen würde, stand morgens auf, duschte, zog sich ein frisches Hemd, einen gereinigten Anzug an, lutschte ein Eukalyptusbonbon, um die Alkoholfahne zu überdecken, und erzählte uns die Geschichte von seinem 35. Geburtstag, der schon Jahre zurücklag. Obwohl mir jetzt gerade auffällt, dass meine große Schwester nie dabei war, wenn mein Vater erzählte. Sie hasst meinen Vater. Sie will nicht, dass er sich zu ihr ins Bett legt. Mein Vater stinkt, und er schnarcht. Meine große Schwester wacht auf und versucht ihn rauszuschubsen. Aber mein Vater ist schwer und schläft abgrundtief.

**Ich habe oft geträumt, mein Vater sei tot. Darüber bin ich erwacht, schreiend, behaupten Zeugen.**

Ich bin ihm nachgegangen. Immer wieder. Einmal, ich war 15 und arbeitete als Aushilfe in einem Café, das einem alten Ehepaar gehörte, saß er plötzlich an einem der kleinen Marmortische und bestellte ein Glas Milch. »Bitte geh wieder!«

»Ich hätte gerne ein Glas Milch«, wiederholte er.

Der alte Besitzer drehte seine Runde und erkundigte sich bei den Gästen, ob alles zu ihrer Zufriedenheit sei.

»Und, wie macht sich meine Tochter?«

»Sie sind der Vater?« Die beiden schüttelten sich die Hände, »höflicher könnte sie sein, gerade zu den Stammkunden, aber sonst ist sie gar nicht so übel«, der Besitzer neigte sich zu meinem Vater: »Hauptsache hübsch, Sie wissen ja«, fügte er zwinkernd hinzu. Mein Vater sah mich kurz von oben bis unten an und nickte fachmännisch. In diesem Moment schloss ich die Hand um den Griff des Kuchenmessers.

»Ein Gentleman, dein Vater, ein echter«, raunte der Besitzer mir zu.

»Kann ich Feierabend machen?«

»Aber ja, und die Milch geht aufs Haus.« Dann schüttelten sich die beiden die Hände, als bereitete es ihnen größtes Behagen, sie wollten gar nicht mehr aufhören. Ich nutzte das und ging. »Ade! Herr Storrer, Sie rufen mich an, ja?« Mein Vater rief mir etwas Unverständliches nach. Ich betrat die Musikalienhandlung im Haus gegenüber und blätterte ein Notenheft durch, während ich den Eingang des Cafés beobachtete. Mein Vater erschien, blieb stehen, blickte nach links, nach rechts, zögerte, und ging links die Gasse hoch.

Er weiß nicht, wo er hin will. Alle paar Meter bleibt er stehen, sieht sich das Schaufenster einer Apotheke an, eine Leuchtreklame, eine Speisekarte. Einmal steht er da und wendet sich wie ein Bettler den Passanten zu,

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wortlos, aber mit Mitleid heischendem, dümmlichem Lächeln, wie ich sogar aus der Entfernung erkenne. Ich schäme mich. Ich gehe mit ein paar schnellen Schritten auf ihn zu, packe ihn am Ärmel, als wollte ich ihn verhaften, und bringe ihn nach Hause.

\*

Einmal, Jahre später, sind wir in der Straßenbahn aneinander vorbeigefahren. An einer Haltestelle erblickte ich ihn in der Bahn, die in entgegengesetzter Richtung unterwegs war. Menschen stiegen aus und ein. Er blickte stumpf vor sich hin. Er schien nichts wahrzunehmen. Ich starrte ihn durch die beiden Scheiben an und überlegte kurz, die Bahn zu wechseln. Er sah jäh auf und in meine Richtung. Meine Straßenbahn setzte sich in Bewegung. Ich drehte mich auf dem Sitz nach ihm um, aber alles, was ich sehen konnte, war sein Nacken. Der Kopf war nach vorne gekippt, es sah aus, als sei er ganz plötzlich eingenickt. Oder gestorben.

**Ich war mir oft sicher, mein Vater sei tot, und dann tauchte er an einer unerwarteten Ecke auf.**

## **Spomin zlate ribice**

(odlomek)

Vedno znova sem ga zasledovala. Prvič, ko sem bila starata trinajst let. Med opoldanskim odmorom sem ga videla na obrežni promenadi, kjer se je z roko v roki smeje sprehajal z meni neznano žensko. Ko me je zagledal, je ravno z roko kazal proti vodi. Za nekaj trenutkov je smeh izginil in s pogledom me je preizkušal; potem pa se je, kot da bi mu nakazala odobravanje, zelo smejal nečemu, kar mu je prišepnila ženska, in jo objel. Kot tujca sva šla drug mimo drugega. V notranjosti me je zmrazilo, od prsnega koša do drobovja; vame je vdrla zima, z vlažnostjo, ki je zmrzovala, in s poledico.

Preštela sem do deset in jima sledila, več sto metrov, dokler se ni obrnil. Obstala sem in strmela vanj. Namenil mi je le kratek pogled, a najbolj vztrajen, kar sem jih kdaj čutila na sebi. Ta pogled je bil hiter, čisti rez. Povezava prekinjena.

Gledala sem za njim, za njim in za tisto žensko; stala sem in nemočno gledala za parom, ki je pohajkoval in se kot ladja brez jadra čedalje bolj oddaljeval od obale.

Zvečer smo skupaj sedeli za okroglo mizo. »Povej kaj,« me je spodbujala mama. Videti je bila žalostna. Med večerjo sem zabavala družino, ker nisem prenesla tišine. Pričevala sem zelo zabavne ali pa zelo grozne zgodbe. Izmišljala sem si jih; nekatere so bile v osnovi resnične pa sem jih potem malce polepšala. Pričevala sem, da je bil neki sošolec tako osupljivo, a nabrito nesramen, da je učitelja zadela kap, ali pa da je sošolkin oče s čolnom odveslal na jezero, da bi se ob sončnem zahodu ustrelil, in citirala sem poslovilno pismo hčerki. Očeta sem ob tem le na skrivaj pogledala. Z očmi je bil čisto pri hrani in z ušesi čisto v zgodbah. Jedel je z velikim tekom in živahno sodeloval, se zabaval ali pa obžalujoče zmajeval z glavo – odvisno od tega, kakšen odziv so zgodbe zahtevale od poslušalcev. Toda spogledala se nisva.

### **Pogosto sem pričevala, da je moj oče mrtev, ampak to ni bilo res.**

Moj oče pije. Vsak človek pije. *Veliko moraš piti* je najpogosteji nasvet, ki ga dobim. Moj oče veliko pije, a nič vročega. Vroči napitki se mu gnusijo. Kadar je žejen, pije mleko, če ni žejen, pa vinjak. Zjutraj se stušira in si obleče obleko. Potem spije skodelico mleka in gre v službo. Ob sobotah ostaja doma in se v obleki usede v svoj usnjeni naslonjač. Opoldne spije vinjak, potem pa reče: »Še enkrat moram v pisarno.« Pri večerji ostaja en stol večinoma prazen, ne le ob sobotah. Pozno ponoči se s taksijem vrača domov.

Nekaj me zbudi. Slišim pridušene udarce; nekdo s kladivom udarja po preprogi. Ležim in poslušam. Ne. To sta moja starša, ki se tepeta. Vem, kako

je to. Tu in tam slišim njune potlačene krike. Ostanem v postelji. Sestra me je podučila: če ostaneš čisto pri miru in tiho mrmraš »pripravljena sem«, te zagrabi smrt, zabode te in spusti vatestrup, ki se bliskovito razširi, in potem otrpneš. Ona je to že pogosto preizkusila, ko se igrajo skrivalnice in kadar v šoli ne želi biti vprašana. Vedno je delovalo in ona je potem nevidna. Paziti moraš le, da pravočasno zakričiš: »Spusti me.« »Pripravljena sem,« zašepetam. Instrup me že hromi. Deluje!

Ne vem, če je ta zgodba resnična, a sem jo že tolkokrat slišala, da si ne predstavljam, da ne bi bila.

Na svoj 35. rojstni dan 13. novembra 1976 je oče prvič obiskal ilegalno igralnico, ki so jo občasno uredili v dvorani uglednega hotela z bogato tradicijo. Stopil je k mizi, si dal razložiti pravila, ki jih ni čisto razumel, in začel igrati poker.

Ko se je opotekel v deževni svit nedeljskega jutra, je pri srcu nosil najdebelejšo denarnico, kar jih je kdaj videl. Celo noč je zmagoval, tudi če podrobnih pravil ni razumel.

Ni bil še dovolj pijan, da bi se odpeljal domov. Taksist ga ni hotel razumeti. »Napišite naslov na listek,« je zahteval. »Jutranji bar,« je nakracal oče. »Ne poznam,« je odgovoril taksist. »Pridi, odpeljal te bom domov. Kje stanuješ?« Oče je iz sukniča potegnil denarnico, jo odprl in taksistu pomolil nekaj bankovcev. »Jutranji bar,« je ponovil. Ni bil bar, ampak bordel, čeprav so točili tudi pijačo. Drugih gostov ni bilo, predvsem ne takih, ki pijejo. Oče si je naročil brendi. Ko se je popolnoma premočen ovedel, je ležal na pločniku pred igralnicijo. Brez plašča, brez ure, brez denarnice. Očala so bila zlomljena in so visela pol na nosu, pol na ušesu. Krvavel je v predelu trebuha, reber in po obrazu.

To zgodbo nam je pripovedoval vedno znova, predvidevam, da kot opozriло pred alkoholom, igrami na srečo in bordeli, a ni učinkovala niti pri nas otrocih – zdela se nam je bolj napeta in bolj avanturistična kot Robinson Crusoe in smo jo radi vedno znova poslušali in spraševali o vsaki podrobnosti – niti pri očetu. Še naprej je pil, igral poker in se kurbal. Domov je prihajal zgodaj zjutraj s taksijem – pogosto zelo načet, ranjen, raztrgan, pijan in krvaveč – ter se ulegel v posteljo k moji večji sestri, ker je vedel, da ga mama tam iz obzirnosti do spečega otroka ne bo klicala na zagovor. Zjutraj je vstal, se stuširal, si oblekel svežo srajco, čisto obleko, lizal evkaliptusov bonbon, da bi zakril alkoholno zaveso, ter nam pripovedoval zgodbo o svojem 35. rojstnem dnevnu, ki ga je imel že pred leti – sem se pa pravkar spomnila, da moje starejše sestre ni bilo nikoli zraven, ko je oče pripovedoval. Očeta sovraži. Noče, da se uleže k njej v posteljo. Oče smrdi in smrči. Moja starejša sestra se zbudi in ga poskuša poriniti s postelje. Toda moj oče je težek in zelo trdno spi.

**Pogosto se mi je sanjalo, da je moj oče mrtev. Zaradi tega sem se zbuljala, priče pravijo, da sem kričala.**

Vedno znova sem mu sledila. Nekoč, ko sem bila stara petnajst let in sem pomagala v neki kavarni, ki je bila v lasti starega zakonskega para, je kar naenkrat sédel k eni izmed marmornih mizic in naročil kozarec mleka.

»Odidi, prosim!«

»Rad bi kozarec mleka, prosim,« je ponovil.

Stari lastnik je bil na obhodu in goste spraševal, če so zadovoljni.

»In – kako se razvija moja hči?«

»Njen oče ste?« Segla sta si v roko. »Do stalnih strank bi lahko bila bolj prijazna, drugače pa sploh ni tako slaba.« Lastnik se je nagnil k očetu: »Glavno, da je luštna, saj veste,« je dodal in pomežiknil. Oče me je na kratko premeril od glave do peta in poznavalsko prikimal. V tistem trenutku sem prijela ročaj kuhinjskega noža.

»Tvoj oče je pravi gentleman,« mi je prišepnil lastnik.

»Lahko sedaj grem domov?«

»Seveda, mleko pa častimo mi.« Potem sta si stresala roke, kot da bi jima bilo to v največje veselje, in sploh nista več nehala. Izkoristila sem priložnost in odšla. »Adijo, gospod Storrer. Saj me boste poklicali, kajne?« Vstopila sem v trgovino z muzikalijami *vis-à-vis* in brskala po notnem zvezku, medtem ko sem opazovala vhod v kavarno. Oče se je pojavit, se ustavl, pogledal na levo, na desno, malce okleval in zavil v ulico na levi.

Saj ne ve, kam bi rad šel. Vsakih nekaj metrov se ustavi, si ogleduje izložbo lekarne, svetlikajočo se reklamo, jedilni list. Potem se ustavi in nagovarja mimoidoče kot kak berač, brez besed, a z neumnim nasmehom, ki vzbuja sočutje – kar vidim celo od daleč. Sram me je. Z nekaj hitrimi koraki se mu približam, ga zgrabim za rokav, kot da bi ga hotela aretirati, in ga odpeljem domov.

\*

Nekoč, čez nekaj let, sva se v tramvaju peljala drug mimo drugega. Na eni izmed postaj sem ga zagledala v tramvaju, ki je peljal v nasprotno smer. Ljudje so vstopali in izstopali. Topo je gledal predse. Zdelo se je, kot da ničesar ne zaznava. Skozi obe šipi sem zrla vanj in za hip pomislila, da bi prestopila. Nenadoma je dvignil pogled in pogledal proti meni. Moj tramvaj se je začel premikati. Obrnila sem se na sedežu, toda vse, kar sem videla, je bil njegov tilnik. Glava je padla naprej in videti je bilo, kot da je v trenutku zakinkal – ali umrl.

**Pogosto sem bila prepričana, da je moj oče umrl, potem pa se je pojavit v kakšnem kotu, kjer ga nisem pričakovala.**

## ***Memory Like a Goldfish***

(extract)

I would follow him. Again and again. The first time, I was thirteen. I saw him during lunch hour on the promenade by the shore, laughing beside a woman I didn't know. He was just pointing out at the water when he saw me. The laughter died out for a moment, his eyes examined me; but then, as if I had signaled my complicity, he laughed openly at something the woman was whispering to him and draped his arm around her. Like strangers we passed each other. I turned cold inside, from my chest down to my belly I felt a severe internal onslaught of winter, with extremely frigid wetness and flash freezing.

I counted to ten and followed them for several hundred metres, until he turned around. I stood still and stared at him. It was merely a fleeting glance that he cast my way, the most sustained that I had ever felt directed at me. This look was a quick, clean slash. Contact cut off.

I watched him, him and that woman, I stood there and idly watched the ambling couple that was drifting like a ship without sails further and further away from shore.

In the evenings we would sit together at the round table. "Tell us something," my mother would urge me. She looked sad. I would entertain the family while we ate, because I could not bear silence. The stories would be hilarious or absolutely horrific. I would make them up, embellish the ones that were based on truth. Either a classmate had been stunningly, but cutely, cheeky and the teacher had suffered a circulatory collapse, or a classmate's father had rowed out on the lake in order to shoot himself at sunset, and I'd quoted the farewell letter to his daughter. While doing this I would look only surreptitiously at my father. His eyes would be trained on the food, and his ears on the stories. He would eat heartily and show keen interest, chuckling or ruefully shaking his head depending on the reaction the stories demanded from listeners. But no glance would pass between us.

### **I often said that my father had died. But that isn't true.**

My father drinks. Everybody drinks. *You have to drink a lot* is the advice people are always giving me. My father drinks a lot, but nothing that's hot. He finds hot drinks nauseating. He drinks milk when he's thirsty and brandy when he isn't. After his morning shower, he puts on a suit. Then he drinks a cup of milk and goes to work. On Saturdays he stays around and sits, in his suit, in his leather chair. At lunch he has a brandy. Then he says, "I have to stop by the office." Usually there's an empty chair at dinner, not only on Saturdays. He comes home late at night, by taxi.

I wake up. I hear thudding, somebody is banging a hammer against the carpeted floor. I lie there and listen. No. It's my parents, they're fighting.

I know what that looks like. I hear the odd restrained shout. I keep lying there. My sister has taught me something: If you keep very still and murmur "I'm ready," death will snatch you, dig in, and let his poison seep into you, which will spread lightning-fast and you'll grow stiff. She's tried this out many times. While playing hide-and-seek, and whenever she didn't want to be called on in school. It worked every time, and she would then be invisible. You just have to remember to yell "Let me go" in time. "I'm ready," I whisper. And the poison already paralyzes me. It works!

I don't know if this story is true, but I've heard it so often that I can't imagine it wouldn't be.

On his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday, November 13, 1976 my father visited an illegal casino for the first time. A venerable, distinguished hotel would occasionally set one up in the ballroom. He went up to a table, had the rules explained to him, didn't quite get them, and gambled away.

By the time he stumbled out into the Sunday morning dawn, resting above his heart was the thickest wallet he had ever seen. The whole night through he had won, even without completely understanding the rules.

He wasn't yet drunk enough to go home. The taxi driver couldn't understand him. "Write the address on this scrap of paper," he demanded. "*Frühbar*" scribbled my father. "Don't know it," said the taxi driver. "Come on, I'll take you home. Where do you live?" My father yanked his wallet out of his jacket, opened it, and waved a few bills at the driver. "*Frühbar*," he repeated. It was a bordello, not a bar, even if it did have an area that served drinks. There were no other guests there, at least no drinkers. My father ordered a brandy. When he came to, he was drenched, lying on the sidewalk in front of the establishment. No jacket, no watch, no wallet. His glasses were broken and hung half from his nose, half from one ear. His stomach and ribs had a few bruises, and so did his face.

He would tell us this story over and over again, as a warning, I guess, about alcohol, gambling and the red-light-milieu, but it had no effect, neither with us children, who found it more gripping and exciting than *Robinson Crusoe* and loved hearing it over and over again and query every detail, nor with my father, who carried on drinking, gambling and whoring. Coming home by taxi in the early morning hours, often roughed up, injured, tattered, blue and bleeding, he would crawl into my older sister's bed, because he knew that my mother, out of consideration for the sleeping child, would not take him to task there, then get up in the morning, shower, put on a fresh shirt, a clean suit, suck on a eucalyptus candy to cover up his alcohol breath, and tell us the story of his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday, which had happened years ago. Come to think of it, my older sister was never around when my father was telling the story. She hates my father. She doesn't want him to crawling into bed with her. My father stinks and he snores. My big sister wakes up and tries to push him out. But my father is heavy and sleeps like a rock.

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**I have often dreamt my father was dead. Then I wake up screaming, witnesses claim.**

I would follow him. Again and again. Once I was 15, working part-time in a café that belonged to an old married couple, and all of the sudden he was sitting at one of the little marble tables, ordering a glass of milk.

“Please just go!”

“I would like a glass of milk,” he repeated.

The old owner was doing his rounds, asking the guests if everything was to their liking.

“And, how’s my daughter doing?”

“You’re the father?” They shook hands. “She could be more polite, especially to the regulars, but otherwise she’s not bad,” the owner leant down to my father: “The important thing: she’s pretty. You know how it is,” he added with a wink. My father gave me a once over, from top to bottom, and nodded expertly. I immediately clutched the handle of the kitchen knife.

“A gentleman, your father, a real gentleman,” whispered the owner to me.

“Can I go home?”

“Sure. And the milk is on the house.” Then the two of them shook hands as if it was so fun they didn’t want to stop. I took advantage of that and left. “See you later! Mr. Storrer, you’ll give me a call, right?” My father shouted something incomprehensible. I went into the music shop in the building opposite and leafed through a sheet music book while I watched the entrance to the café. My father appeared, stopped, looked left, right, hesitated, then headed left down the lane.

He doesn’t know where he wants to go. Every few metres he stops, looks in the display window of a drug store, a neon sign, an outside menu. Once he stands and turns like a beggar towards the passers-by, silent, but with a silly, sympathy-craving smile, as I can see even from a distance. I’m ashamed. I rush towards him, grab him by the sleeve like I want to arrest him, and bring him home.

\*

Once, years later, we drove past each other while on the streetcar. I caught sight of him at a station, in a streetcar going in the other direction. People were getting out and in. He was gazing blankly ahead. He didn’t seem to notice anything. I stared at him through the two panes of glass and for a second thought of switching streetcars. He looked up suddenly, and in my direction. My streetcar started moving. I turned in my seat to look at him, but all I could see was the nape of his neck. His head was slouched down, and it looked as if he had unexpectedly dozed off. Or died.

**I have often felt certain my father is dead, and then he appears in an unexpected place.**



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# Bekim Sejranović

Bekim Sejranović se je rodil leta 1972 v Brčkem v Bosni in Hercegovini, leta 1985 pa se je z družino preselil na Reko na Hrvuškem. Tam je končal Srednjo pomorsko šolo in vpisal študij hrvaške književnosti na reški univerzi. Vojna vihra na območju te danje Jugoslavije ga je leta 1993 prisilila v emigracijo na Norveško, kjer živi še danes. Leta 1999 je magistriral iz južnoslovanskih književnosti na Univerzi v Oslo, kjer je med letoma 2001 in 2006 tudi služboval kot predavatelj južnoslovanskih književnosti ter bosanskega, hrvaškega in srbskega jezika. Ker je bosanskega rodu, piše v hrvaščini, hkrati pa je tudi državljan Norveške, se sam opredeljuje za bosansko-hrvaško-norveškega pisatelja in prevajalca iz norveščine. Med njegova dela sodijo zbirka kratkih zgodb *Fasung* (Tepež, 2002) ter romana *Nigdje, niotkuda* (Nikjer, od nikoder, 2008), za katerega je prejel nagrado Meša Selimovića za najboljši sodobni roman z območja Hrvaške, Srbije, Črne gore ter Bosne in Hercegovine (2008); in *Ljepši kraj* (*Lepši konec*, 2010), ki je v slovenskem prevodu Višnje Fičor letos izšel pri založbi Arsem.

Bekim Sejranović was born in 1972 in Brčko, Bosnia and Herzegovina. His family moved to Rijeka, Croatia in 1985. There he graduated from the Maritime Secondary School and enrolled at the University of Rijeka to study Croatian literature. The spread of the Yugoslav Wars forced him to emigrate to Norway in 1993, where he has lived ever since. He obtained a master's degree in South Slavic literature from the University of Oslo (1999), where he also worked as a lecturer in South Slavic literature as well as in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian between 2001 and 2006. As he is of Bosnian descent, writes in Croatian, and holds Norwegian citizenship, he denotes himself as a Bosnian-Croatian-Norwegian writer and translator from the Norwegian. His works include the collection of short stories *Fasung* (The Beating, 2002) and the novels *Nigdje, niotkuda* (Nowhere, from Nowhere, 2008), for which he received the Meša Selimović Prize for the best new novel from Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro (2008); and *Ljepši kraj* (A Nicer Ending, 2010), which was also translated into Slovene by Višnja Fičor and published by the Arsem Publishing House earlier this year.

## Sandale

Ipak sam našao nekakvo rješenje. Nakon što su me pustili s odsluženja moje jednotjedne kazne u zatvoru, ostao sam bez novca, a, bogami, i bez posla. To dvoje samo po sebi i nije bilo tako gadno, ali stvar je u tome da čovjek mora imati love da plati stan. I hranu. Dobro sad hranu, uvijek možeš kupiti vreću krumpira ili riže i preživjeti. Ali ako nemaš love za stan, niski i čelavi gazda izbací te a da od toga ne radi nekakav slučaj. Bez ikakve ljutnje. Sažaljenja. Ali, kao što rekoh, snašao sam se. Čini se da se čovjek uvijek nekako snađe. Ili umre. A i to je nekakvo rješenje, zlu ne trebalo. To je uvijek rješenje.

Sudac s nepokretnim, staklastim očima ponudio mi je da biram između jednomjesečnog ležanja u zatvoru i plaćanja kazne. Ja sam, naravno, sav usplahiren od prijetnje zatvorom, odmah pristao da platim kaznu. No, pokazalo se da ipak nemam dovoljno novca za cijeli mjesec, nego tek za tri tjedna. I tako sam ostao bez love, a ipak sam sjedio u zatvoru u središtu Osla, niti dvjesto metara od moje iznajmljene sobe. Tjedan dana. Imao sam osjećaj da sam se negdje prevario. U računici. A uvijek sam bio vješt u matematici. Još od malih nogu. Svi su se čudili: "kako je to dijete, za boga dragoga, vješto u matematici".

I onda, kad sam izmigoljio iz čelije, shvatim da nemam za stan za ovaj mjesec. A već sam kasnio s plaćanjem. Nekako istovremeno kad sam zaglavio i Sara, moja djevojka, ponekad i moja buduća žena, otputovala je. Mora na jug Norveške kod svoje mame koja, jadna, živi sama u toj kućerini. No, ipak sam je uspio izmoliti da me pusti da ta dva ljetna mjeseca provedem u njezinom stanu. Dok se malo ne snađem, nađem neki posao i novu sobu. Jedini je problemčić bio u tome što je stan bio potpuno prazan. Sara je zapravo tek dobila ključeve od stana i onda je odmaglila i ne stigavši preseliti stvari. Jer ja sam bio taj koji ih je trebao unijeti u stan snagom svojih mišica. A ja sam zaglavio. Sara je samo rekla kako je znala da će se to dogoditi. Kad-tad, kad-tad. I sad sam bio sam u tom stanu. Potpuno praznom. Ubacio bih ja svoje stvari, ali nisam ih imao. Osim nešto malo odjeće i nekoliko knjiga. Našao sam jednu čvrstu kartonsku kutiju i stavio je nasred velike sobe da mi služi kao stol. U drugoj sobi na pod sam prostro vreću za spavanje. Tako sam namjestio dnevni boravak i spavaću sobu.

Prvih tjedan dana proveo sam na isti način kao i u zatvoru. Ležao sam u nekom tupilu i razmišljao kako bih trebao oženiti Saru i napraviti joj troje djece. I onanirao sam mnogo. Isto kao i u zatvoru. Nisam mogao jesti, nisam se mogao podignuti iz postelje. Ležao sam zatvorenih očiju i zamišljao djevojke s kojima sam bio. S kojima sam se mogao sjetiti da sam bio. Nabolje je bilo s onima koje sam možda mogao imati, ali koje iz nekog nesretnog razloga nisam dobio. Ili su možda djevojke koje su me htjele i imale, a one koje nisu- nisu. Čovjek nikad nije mogao biti siguran. Osim

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u duljinu koju osjeti pod debelom kožom skliskog dlana. Iako sam mišljena da je ženama važnija debljina. Debljina ti je najvažnija, uvjeravao sam se razmazujući pljuvačku pomiješanu s ljepljivim znojem svojih mlohavih prepona. Najvažnija, ponavljao sam.

Ali jednog dana je glad postala neizdrživa i morao sam izaći vam. Odlebdio sam u bunilu do najbližeg dućana i sitnišem kojeg sam uspio skupiti kupio kruh i džem od kajsija. Veliku staklenku džema od kajsija poput onoga što ga je pravila moja nana. U nekom drugom životu, dok sam svoju nesreću još uvijek znao izraziti riječima. I dok sam jeo taj uvenuli džem od kajsija, učinilo mi se kao da je to vrijeme dio nečijih tuđih uspomena. Bio sam siguran da nikad ranije nisam jeo džem od kajsija. I ovaj koji sam sad jeo imao je sve bolji okus. Mrve su padale po kartonskoj kutiji. Trebao bih nabaviti komad kakve tkanine za stolnjak.

Sljedećih dana sam se uspio sabrati. Prijavio sam se na biro za zapošljavanje gdje su mi rekli da ne brinem, neki poslić će iskrasnuti prije ili kasnije. Kontaktirat će me čim se nešto pojavi. U međuvremenu, strpljenja. I budući da mi je novac hitno trebao, vratio sam se onome što sam i ranije radio kad bih zapao u akutnu besparicu. Svirajući u hodniku podzemne željeznice. Stajao bih na toj stanici kod Narodnog kazališta i udarao po žicama svoje već odavno islužene gitare. Otuznim glasom pjevao melankolične melodije. Ljudi bi prolazili i poteklo bi ubacio kovanicu. Nekad i dvije. Tako se, ako bi čovjeku sreća bar malo bila naklonjena, moglo pristojno zaraditi.

Nakon nekoliko dana svirke, činilo se kao da sam se preporodio. Sad si već mogao priuštiti hamburger ili čak kebab, a ostajalo bi ponekad i za pivo koje bih poslije svirke podijelio s nekim od kolega što su zarađivali na isti način. Bilo nas je nekoliko stalnih što smo svakodnevno svirali na tom mjestu, a s vremenom na vrijeme pojavili bi se i neki novi koji su bili na propovijedanju i koji bi tu svirali nekoliko dana, a zatim nestajali u smjeru svojih želja za nekim novim gradovima.

Jedne večeri, dok sam svirao u tom akustičnom hodniku, začujem zvuk harmonike koji je dopirao iz dubine hodnika. U prvo vrijeme nisam obraćao pažnju na taj zvuk, ali s vremenom mi je počeo smetati. Svi smo znali da je, ako čovjek želi svirati u podzemnoj, ovo jedino mjesto za koje si mogao dobiti dopuštenje čuvara. Pa ako je mjesto zauzeto, a bilo je jer sam upravo ja svirao, onda se moralo sačekati da taj koji svira, dakle ja, završi, i tek onda doći na moje mjesto i svirati. Jedan sat ako je netko drugi već čekao na red ili neograničeno ako nije bilo nikog. Napokon krenem ljutito niz hodnik prema izvoru te muzike. Kako sam se približavao, počeo sam razaznavati melodiju. Sličilo je na borbene koračnice iz NOB-a. Iako se nije moglo baš moglo biti siguran. Kad sam prišao, ugledao sam djevojku kako sjedeći na koferu rasteže malu harmoniku. Kofer na kojem je sjedila bio je od harmonike. To sam odmah shvatio. Pored je bio njezin ruksak, ništa veći od onog s kojim čovjek krene na piknik. Zurila je u prazno u

beton ispred sebe i mehanički rastezala i skupljala svoj mijeh. Dobro, nije odavde pa ne zna za običaje. Čekao sam da završi pjesmu, a onda prišao do kutije u kojoj su joj bacali novac i ubacio pet kruna. Pozdravio sam je na engleskom i nasmiješio se. Rekao sam joj da lijepo svira. Imala je prazne, vodnjikave oči. I mali, jedva vidljivi, gnojni prištić u kutu usne. Ja sam se i dalje smješkao. Ona se zatim naglo digne i počne spremati harmoniku u kofer. Prikupljeni novac iz kutije istresla je u jednu malu kožnatu vrećicu. Imala je na sebi plavu, ispranu sukњu, bijelu ljetnu košulju i sandale. Sandale. Kožne i isušene. Imala je ogromno stopalo. Bila je niža od mene, ali sam se mogao zakleti da je imala veće stopalo. Ja sam imao ravna i velika stopala. Sandale su, vidjelo se to, bile ženske, i iako dimenzijama velike, izgledale su elegantno. Ali na njenim grubim i prljavim stopalima činile su se još ženstvenijima, nježnijima. Nokti na nožnim prstima bili su nalakirani u tamnocrveno. Ali prošlo je otada dosta vremena. Jer samo su usamljeni, crveni otočići svjedočili o posljednjem lakiranju. Sličila je maloj djevojčici koja se voli igrati s dječacima. I voli s njima dijeliti njihovu grubost. Kosa joj je bila raščupana i svijetla bez neke određene boje. Svo njezino dječaštvo bilo je strpano i zatomljeno u jednom paru iznosanih i ocvalih sandala. Želio sam imati nešto s tim sandalama. Bilo što, pomislio sam dok se udaljavala.

Poslije toga je nije bilo nekoliko dana. Onda opet, jednog kišnog i teškog dana, dok sam svojim glasom pokušavao unijeti još više jada u vlagom ispunjen hodnik ugledam je kako ide tegleći kofer s harmonikom. Stala je malo sa strane, a zatim sjela na kofer čekajući nezainteresirano da završim sa svojom svirkom. Kosa joj je bila mokra i slijepljena. Sandale crne i ljigave od vlage. Kimnuo sam joj glavom i spakirao svoju gitaru.

Vratio sam se na isto mjesto nakon sat vremena. Dok sam išao prema njoj koračajući u svojim zimskim cipelama, učinila mi se poput neke pionirke što svira borbene pjesme u tjeskobnom Domu kulture moje rodne kasabe. Prišao sam joj i ubacio kovanicu od dvadeset kruna. Samo je podigla pogled, bezizražajno kimnula glavom i nastavila šetati prstima po izlizanim tipkama. Sjeo sam sa strane i zapalio cigaretu. Čekao da završi. Vani je pljuštalo i puhalo u taktu njene muzike.

Kad je završila, prišao sam joj i tada smo po prvi put put počeli pričati. Bila je iz Letonije. Engleski je govorila prilično loše pa smo se sporazumjevali na mješavini engleskog, ruskog i našeg. Izraz njezina lica nije se mijenjao dok je pričala. Kao da je bila na nekom drugom mjestu, nisi mogao doprijeti do prave nje. Zvala se Ida i još uvijek je imala prištić u kutu usne. Ili je to možda bio novi prištić.

Iskreno sam se začudio kada je nakon kraćeg objašnjavanja pristala da idemo popiti piće. Nekako smo se probili kroz tešku kišnu zavjesu. Pomislio sam kako ova kiša nema ničeg zajedničkog s ljetom. I pogledao na njezinu stopala. Protrnuo sam. Sandale su bezobrazno plazile po njezinoj koži. Kao du su znale. Kao da smo svi sve znali.

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Ja sam pio pivo, a ona čaj. Na kraju smo popili sve što smo zaradili tog dana. Pitao sam je gdje spava. Odgovorila je da spava u vreći za spavanje ispod jednog mosta. Tamo joj je bilo prilično dobro, rekla je. Pozvao sam je da prespava tu noć kod mene. Moj stan je u blizini. Gledala me je neko vrijeme nepovjerljivo, a onda je ipak pristala. Ali samo ako obećam da će biti dobar. Uvijek sam dobar kad sam pijan, rekao sam. Onda popij još jedno, ne, popij još dva piva prije nego što krenemo.

Kad smo ušli u stan bilo je već oko ponoći. Izvadio sam dva piva iz ormara, ali ona je htjela čaj. Nisam imao ni čaja ni u čemu bi ga skuhao. Ništa. Ali nju to nije previše smetalo. Dok je skidala sandale i odlagala ih pored mojih cipela, rekla je da joj se sviđaju. Moje cipele. Otvarajući pivo rekoh da se možemo mijenjati. Nasmiješila se i iz ruksaka izvadila crvenu vreću za spavanje. Bila je tanka i čemerna. Imala je etiketu na kojoj je pisalo "Yassa". Pitao sam je odakle joj ta vreća, a ona je samo neodređeno odmah-nula rukom. Prostrla je svoju vreću malo dalje od moje i onako odjevena uvukla se u nju. Činilo se da je odmah zaspala. Sjedio sam na svojoj vreći, pušio, tiho ispijao pivo. Kroz prozor je dopirala crvena svjetlost. Oblaci su se razišli i negdje na zapadu je bio prekrasan zalazak. Sunce će ponovo izaći za dva- tri sata, pomislio sam. I gledao u svoje gole i prljave prozore. Trebalо bi imati nekakvu zavjesu. Nije se moglo spavati s ljetnim, noćnim suncem. Neizdrživo je.

Sjedio sam i dugo čekao da se sunce ponovo pojavi. Ona se ubrzo nakon što je zaspala poče nemirno vrtjeti i okretati u svojoj vreći. Ponekad bi izgovorila neku riječ na nerazumljivom jeziku. Jednom se, okrenuvši prema meni, otkrila i pokazala razdrljena prsa. Kroz tanku bijelu košulju nazirale su se grudi. Nije imala grudnjaka, samo potkošulju bez rukava. Nije imala zašto nositi grudnjak. Imala je grudi poput gojaznog dvanaesetogodišnjaka. Poput mene u šestom razredu. Kada su me od hormona poludjeli dječaci u nedostatku boljeg grabili za sise dok bismo igrali nogomet na tjelesnom. Bile su to grudi bez ikakve težine i mase za koju bi se moglo čvrsto uhvatiti. Bradavice su bile tvrde i napete. Zašiljene poput vrhova džamija. Da nije bilo tih bradavica čovjek ne bi mogao sa sigurnošću reći jesu li to ženske sise ili dječačke grudi. Makinalno prođem po svojim prsim i osjetim krutost svojih preosjetljivih bradavica. A i krutost ispod stomaka. Primaknem se i dodirnem joj kosu. Ljepljivu i skorenju. Istovremeno. Osjetio sam kožu na ruci kako se naježila dok sam je milovao po kosi. Želio sam je poljubiti u prištić. Ili ga možda istisnuti, ako je to bilo moguće. Rukom kliznem do grudi. Bradavice su bile napete da sam pomislio da će prsnuti. Pomislio sam pijano kako će, božemesaćuvaj, te bradavice prsnuti i iz njih poteći rijeka krvi. Iz ovih sisa nije moglo teći mljeko. Male bebe bi izrezale sva usta ako bi ih se dojilo na ove sise. Pomislim to i požurim da ih dotaknem usnama. Lagano. Oština dodira zamuti mi pogled. Poželim da mi se taj ubod zauvijek usiječe. U usne, u ruke. Poput nekog rijetkog otrova.

Ona se, istovremeno, trgnu i okrenu na drugu stranu. Nije se probudila. Iako nisam znao da li bi to bilo dobro ili loše. I za koga. Nakon toga sam znao da moram onanirati. Ali dok sam sjedio ispod prozora na kojeg su počele padati prve zrake svjetlosti i pokušavao se smiriti drkanjem, osjećao sam kako mi neka sila to nije dopuštala. Najprije nisam mogao svršiti. Poslije me uhvatila neka neobjašnjiva tuga i izgubio sam erekciju. Držao sam u ruci taj amorfni komad mesa i kože i pokušavao misliti na njezine bradavice. I na prištić u kutu usne. Ali nije išlo. Onda sam pogledao na njezine sandale koje su se kočile ispred ulaza u sobu. Tada sam počeo plakati. I svršavati.

Ne znam kad sam se probudio, nisam imao sat, ali moral je biti prilično kasno sudeći po jakom suncu. Ide nije bilo. A niti mojih cipela. Jedinih koje sam imao. Sandale su ležale netaknute. Dok sam hodao u njima, vrc-kao sam neumjereno svojom gužičicom. Bio sam se pomalo plašio prije nego sam na svoja stopala navukao te sandale. Moja su stopala u njima izgledala mnogo ženstvenije od njezinih. To me je plašilo. Samo to, želio sam vjerovati. Ali dok sam koračao prema gradu, tog straha nestade. Osjećao sam nešto oslobađajuće oko kukova. I uživao miješajući dupetom od jednog do drugog kraja ulice. Želio sam da me netko uhvati za guzicu. Ali ne previše grubo. Ako ikako može.

U podzemnoj sam našao Idu kako čeka Roya da završi sa svojom svirkom. Roy je crni dečko iz Londona. Svira, kako kaže, Irsku narodnu muziku na violini. Zapravo je znao odsvirati samo jednu melodiju. Na dva načina. Brzo i veselo, te sporo i tužno. Ali bio je jako dobar. Osjetio sam nešto životinjski u njemu kad me je spazio u sandalama. Poznavao sam ja takve poglede. Samo je bilo čudno dobivati ih.

Ida je izgledala snažno i hladno u mojim teškim cipelama. Čim je Roy završio, samo je bez riječi otvorila svoj kofer, izvadila harmoniku i počela svirati. Roy mi se smješkao s onim svojim pogledom i upitao da li sam za malo hašiša. Naravno, rekao sam. Otišli smo van i na jednoj zaklonjenoj klupi popušili džoint. Osjećao sam se poput princeze. Koju zavidne priateljice opisuju kao kurvicu. Želio sam da me taj crnac podigne i stavi na svoja koljena. I da me miluje po guzici. I po nogama. Po mojim snažnim i velikim prsim.

Kad je Ida završila sa svirkom, bio je moj red. Svirao sam, a njih dvoje su duvali na istoj klupi. Ida ga nije voljela, to se odmah dalo primijetiti. Plašila ga se, ali je ipak poduvala njegov džoint. Vidjelo se to na njoj kad su ponovo sišli u podzemnu slušati me dok sviram. Ubrzao se pridružio i Roy na svojoj violini. A cijela stvar je izmakla kontroli kad je i Ida izvadila svoju udarničku harmoniku i ožeži po ruskim borbenim. Ne znam što su ljudi mislili o nama dok su prolazili pored nas. Ali ubacivali su nam kao nikad do tad. Kad smo zaradili brdo love, otišli smo do one iste klupe i dok sam ja brojao kovanice, Roy je motao novi džoint. Složili smo se da je nabolje novce od-

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mah potrošiti. Zapravo, Roy je to rekao, a mi smo se morali složiti. Kaže da zna dobar pub i odlazimo tamo držeći se za ruke. Bio sam kćerka sovjetske bacačice kladiva i nekog američkog zajebanog sprintera.

Taj pub je bio jedna velika izložba čudaka, šarlatana i akrobata. Bilo je tu svega, od buntovnih tinejdžera do istrošenih bezglasnih rastafarianaca. Činilo se da Roya svi znaju. On se ubrzo pope na stol i poče svirati svoju brzu melodiju. U pubu nastade lom. Poslije smo opet svi skupa svirali i pobrali duge aplauze. Pili smo brzo i halapljivo. Hašić se osjećao u svakom kutu te rupe. I Ida je pila. Vidjelo se da zna piti. U jedno trenutku podiže me i spusti na svoje krilo. Sjedio sam tu neko vrijeme potpuno nemoćan i sretan. Ona me je lizala i ljubila po licu. Štipala mi je bradavice i poput majke milovala po kitici. Vonjala je po zemlji. Vlažnoj i plodnoj crnici.

Kad smo se napokon izvukli iz tog nestvarnog lokala, predložio sam da opet odemo k meni. Ida samo odmahnu glavom i reče da noćas želi spavati na njezinom mjestu. Pokazalo se da je to "njezino mjesto" zbilja ispod mosta u jednom malom parku. Rekao sam da je bolje da idemo k meni jer se tu motaju samo narkomani i beskućnici. Samo me je mrko pogledala, ništa ne govoreći. Shvatio sam i nasmiješio se. Posramljeno. Ona je pripremila svoju vreću za spavanje. Upravo se smrkavalo i čekala nas je kratka i uzbudljiva noć. Ovdje je bilo mračnije i nekako toplije nego doma kod mene. Odnosno kod Sare. Na Saru nisam ni pomislio.

Uvukli smo se oboje u vreću, iako nije bilo lako. Ljubili smo se gladno, kao da smo si s tijela pokušavali otkinuti komade mesa. Mislio sam kako će me pojesti. Šaptala mi je najprije na engleskom, zatim ruskom, a da bi poslije stenjala na nekom nerazumljivom jeziku za kojeg sam pretpostavljaо da mora biti letonski. Mogao sam zamisliti tu sliku iz daleka. Nas dvoje u vreći izgledali smo poput nekog velikog crva što se koprca na suncu. Poput divovskog crva u samrtnom hropcu. Zvukovi koje smo ispuštali podsjećali su na zvuke ogorčene borbe dva umorna očajnika. Snažnim rukama grabila je moje tijelo kao da me oblikuje, kao da me cijelog mijesi svojim ručerdama. Onda se okrenula leđima. Skinuli smo odjeće tek koliko je bilo potrebno. Jednom rukom sa pokušavao naći ta bodljikava prsa, ali nisam uspijevao u svoj toj gunguli. Na kraju sam ušao u nju i naš crv započe novi, ujednačen ples. Pretvorio sam se u sluh. Čulo se klokotanje rijeke, auta u daljinu, cvrkut ptica, nas dvoje kako otpuhujemo, kao pri nekom teškom poslu. U jednom trenutku smo se otkotrljali i umalo pali u rijeku. Ali nije nas to omelio. Poput jahača na rodeu uspio sam se održati u sedlu. Ukrzo je sve bilo gotovo i svo moje sjeme se prosulo unutar "Yassine" vreće za spavanje. Zatim sam je nježno zagrljio odstraga i šapnuo joj na uho, na našem: -Volim te Ida. Jako te volim. Razumiješ. Volim te.

Nisam joj mogao vidjeti lice. Nešto vlažno kapnu mi na ruku što je ležala ispod njezine brade. Bilo je tiho. I mračno. Price se nisu više čule. Ida se digla bez riječi i istrgla vreću ispod mene. Ostao sam ležati na tlu gledajući

je kako zamotava svoju vreću i zakopčava suknju. Obukla je moje cipele, podigla sve svoje stvari i nekako hladno i nestvarno izgovorila jednu rečenicu. Na letonskom, valjda. Nakon tog se okrenula i otišla stazom što je vodila niz rijeku. Cijelo vrijeme sam ležao na zemlji i promatrao je. Tek nakon nekoliko minuta sam skočio, navukao sandale i krenuo za njom. Hodao sam cijelu noć, cijelu ljetnu bijelu noć. I nisam je našao. Sjeo sam na jednu klupu i promatrao svoja stopala u tim sandalama. Poslije sam ih skinuo i ostavio ispod klupe. Uredno. Zatim sam otišao kući bosonog. Ponovo su se čule ptice. Galebovi, vrane i svrake.

Stajao sam na vratima i gledao u unutrašnjost svoje duše. U tom stanu su mi najviše nedostajale zavjese. Samo zato je zato sve izgledalo tako ogoljelo i prazno. Samo zato.

## *Sandali*

Kljub vsemu sem našel nekakšno rešitev. Potem ko sem odslužil enotedenško kazen v zaporu, sem ostal brez denarja, pa tudi, bogme, brez službe. To dvoje samo po sebi niti ni bilo tako strašno, toda gre za to, da moraš imeti kaj pod palcem, če hočeš plačati stanovanje. In hrano. No ja, pri hrani je tako, da lahko vedno kupiš vrečo krompirja ali riža in preživiš. Če pa nimaš denarja za stanovanje, te čokat in plešast gazda vrže ven, ne da bi iz tega delal dramo. Brez kakršne koli jeze. Sočutja. Toda, kot sem rekel, znašel sem se. Zdi se, da se človek vedno nekako znajde. Ali umre. Tudi to je nekakšna rešitev, če ti nič drugega ne preostane. To je vedno rešitev. Sodnik z nepremičnimi, steklenimi očmi mi je ponudil na izbiro, da mesec dni sedim v zaporu ali pa plačam kazen. Grožnja z zaporom me je seveda prestrašila, tako da sem takoj privolil v plačilo kazni. Toda izkazalo se je, da nimam dovolj denarja za ves mesec, ampak samo za tri tedne. In tako sem ostal brez denarja, a sem vseeno sedel v zaporu v središču Osla, niti dvesto metrov stran od moje najete sobe. Teden dni. Imel sem občutek, da sem se nekje uštel. V računici. Čeprav sem bil vedno spreten v računstvu. Že od malih nog. Vsi so se čudili: »Ljubi bog, kako je ta otrok spreten v računstvu.«

Ko sem se rešil iz zapora, sem sprevidel, da nimam denarja za stanovanje za ta mesec. Pravzaprav sem že zamujal s plačilom. Nekako istočasno je tudi Sara, moja punca, včasih pa tudi bodoča žena, odpotovala. Morala je na jug Norveške k svoji mami, ki, revica, živi sama v tisti bajti. No, nekako mi je vendarle uspelo izprositi, da lahko ta dva poletna meseca preživim v njenem stanovanju. Dokler se nekoliko ne znajdem, najdem kakšno službo in novo sobo. Edina težava je bila v tem, da je bilo stanovanje popolnoma prazno. Sara je namreč ravnokar dobila ključe od stanovanja in jo potem pobrisala, ne da bi ji uspelo preseliti stvari. Ker sem bil jaz tisti, ki naj bi jih odnesel noter, z močjo svojih mišic. Toda jaz sem zamočil. Sara je rekla, da je vedela, da se bo to zgodilo. Prej ali slej. In zdaj sem bil sam v tem stanovanju. Docela praznem. Saj bi ruknil noter svoje stvari, a jih nisem imel. Razen nekaj malega oblačil in par knjig. Našel sem trdno kartonsko škatlo in jo postavil na sredo velike sobe, da bi mi služila za mizo. V drugi sobi sem si na tleh razprostrl spalno vrečo. Tako sem opremil dnevno sobo in spalnico.

Prvi teden sem preživel enako kot v zaporu. Ležal sem v nekakšni otopelosti in razmišljjal, da bi se moral oženiti s Saro in ji narediti tri otroke. Tudi onaniral sem precej. Enako kot v zaporu. Nisem mogel jesti, nisem mogel vstati s postelje. Ležal sem z zaprtimi očmi in si predstavljal punce, s katerimi sem bil. Katerih sem se lahko spomnil, da sem bil z njimi. Najboljše so bile tiste, ki bi jih morda lahko imel, a jih iz kakšnega nesrečnega razloga nisem dobil. Ali pa so me morda punce, ki so me hotele, imele, tiste, ki me niso, pa ne. Človek nikoli ne more biti prepričan. Razen v dolžino, ki jo čuti pod debelo kožo spolzke dlani. Kljub vsemu sem mnenja, da je ženskam bolj pomembna debelina. Debelina je najpomembnejša, sem

se prepričeval, medtem ko sem razmazoval pljunke, pomešane z lepljivim potom svojih mlahavih dimelj. Najpomembnejša, sem ponavljal.

Toda nekega dne je lakota postala nevzdržna in moral sem ven. V blodnji sem odtaval do najbližje trgovine in z drobižem, ki mi ga je uspelo nabратi, kupil kruh in marelično marmelado. Veliko stekleno posodo marelične marmelade, ki je spominjala na tisto, ki jo je delala moja mama. V nekem drugem življenju, ko sem svojo nesrečo še znal izraziti z besedami. In ko sem jedel to pusto marelično marmelado, se mi je zdelo, kot da je ta čas del spominov nekoga drugega, tujega. Bil sem prepričan, da nikoli prej nisem jedel marelične marmelade. Ta, ki sem jo jedel zdaj, pa je imela čedadljive boljši okus. Drobline so padale po kartonski škatli. Moral bi nabaviti kos kakšnega blaga za prt.

V naslednjih dneh se mi je uspelo zbrati. Prijavil sem se na zavod za zaposlovanje, kjer so mi rekli, naj me ne skrbi, češ da se bo kakšna službica prej ali slej pojavila. Obvestili me bojo, takoj ko zvejo za kaj. Medtem pa – potrpljenje. Glede na to, da sem nujno potreboval denar, sem se vrnil k temu, kar sem že počel, kadar sem zapadel v akutno pomanjkanje denarja. K igranju v hodniku podzemne železnice. Stal sem na postaji pri Narodnem gledališču in tolkel po žicah svoje že zdavnaj odslužene kitare. Z otožnim glasom sem pel melanholične melodije. Ljudje so hodili mimo in vsake toliko časa je kdo vrgel kovanec. Včasih tudi dva. Tako si, če ti je bila sreča vsaj malo mila, lahko spodbodno zaslužil.

Po nekaj dneh igranja se je zdelo, kot da sem se prerodil. Zdaj sem si lahko privoščil že hamburger ali celo kebab, včasih pa mi je ostalo še za pivo, ki sem ga po igranju podelil s katerim od kolegov, ki so si služili denar na enak način. Bilo nas je nekaj stalnih, ki smo vsak dan igrali na tem prostoru, občasno pa so se pojavili tudi kakšni novi, ki so samo potovali mimo in igrali nekaj dni, nato pa izginili v smeri svojih želja po kakšnih novih mestih.

Nekega večera, ko sem igral v tem akustičnem hodniku, zaslišim zvok harmonike, ki je prihajal iz globine hodnika. Prvi hip se nisem zmenil zanj, sčasoma pa me je začenjal motiti. Vsi smo vedeli: če hoče človek igrati v podzemni, je to edini kraj, za katerega si lahko dobil dovoljenje varnostnika. In če je prostor zaseden – in bil je, ker sem pravkar igral – potem si moral počakati, da ta, ki igra, torej jaz, neha igrati, in šele potem si lahko prišel na njegov prostor in igral. Eno uro, če je kdo drug že čakal v vrsti, ali neomejeno, če ni bilo nikogar. Končno sem se jezno odpravil vzdolž hodnika proti viru te glasbe. Ko sem se približeval, sem začel razpoznavati melodijo. Spominjala je na borbene koračnice NOB-ja. Čeprav je bilo težko zagotovo vedeti. Ko sem se približal, sem zagledal punco, ki je sedela na kovčku in raztegovala malo harmoniko. Kovček, na katerem je sedela, je bil od harmonike. To sem takoj dojel. Zraven je bil njen nahrbtnik, nič kaj večji od tistega, s katerim gre človek na piknik. Strmela je v prazno v beton pred sabo in mehanično raztegovala in krčila svoj meh. Dobro, ni od tod pa ne ve za navade. Čakal sem, da konča pesem, nato pa stopil do škatle, v katero so ji metali denar, in vrgel vanjo pet kron. Pozdravil sem jo v angleščini in se nasmehnil. Rekel sem ji, da lepo igra. Imela je prazne,

vodene oči. In majhen, komaj opazen gnojni mozoljček v kotičku ustnic. Še naprej sem se smehljal. Nato je naglo vstala in začela pospravljati harmoniko v kovček. Zbrani denar iz škatle je stresla v usnjeni mošnjiček. Na sebi je imela modro, sprano krilo, belo poletno srajco in sandale. Usnjene in izsušene. Imela je ogromno stopalo. Bila je nižja od mene, ampak lahko bi prisegel, da je imela večje stopalo. Sam sem imel ravna in velika stopala. Sandali so bili, to je bilo očitno, ženski in so, čeprav veliki po dimenzijah, delovali elegantno. Toda na njenih grobih in umazanih stopalih so se zdeli še bolj ženstveni, še nežnejši. Nohti na prstih so bili nekoč temnordeče nalakirani. Ampak odtlej je minilo precej časa. Saj so samo osamljeni rdeči otočki pričali o zadnjem lakiranju. Spominjala je na majhno punčko, ki se rada igra s fantki. In ki z njimi rada deli njihovo grobost. Njeni lasje so bili razmršeni in nedoločne svetle barve. Vsa njena deškost je bila stlačena in zadušena v paru ponošenih in odcvetelih sandalov. Hotel sem imeti kaj s temi sandali. Kar koli, sem pomislil, ko se je oddaljevala.

Potem je nekaj dni ni bilo. Nato pa, nekega deževnega in težkega dne, ko sem s svojim glasom skušal vnesti še več trpljenja v vlažni hodnik, sem jo spet zagledal, kako hodi in tovori kovček s harmoniko. Stala je malo ob strani, nato pa sedla na kovček in brez zanimanja čakala, da neham igrati. Njeni lasje so bili mokri in zlepjeni. Sandali črni in spolzki od vlage. Pokimal sem ji z glavo in pospravil svojo kitaro.

Čez eno uro sem se vrnil na isto mesto. Ko sem korakal proti njej v svojih zimskih čevljih, se mi je zazdela kot kakšna pionirka, ki igra borbene pesmi v tesnobnem Kulturnem domu v mojem rojstnem mestecu. Pristopil sem k njej in ji vrgel dvajsetkronski kovanec. Samo dvignila je pogled, brezizrazno pokimala z glavo in še naprej sprehajala prste po zlizanih tipkah. Sedel sem vstran in prižgal cigaret. Čakal, da konča. Zunaj je besnelo neurje in veter je pihal v taktu njene glasbe.

Ko je končala, sem stopil do nje in tedaj sva se prvič začela pogovarjati. Bila je iz Latvije. Angleščino je govorila precej slabo, tako da sva se sporazumevala v mešanici angleščine, ruščine in našega jezika. Izraz na njenem obrazu se med govorjenjem ni spreminal. Kot da je bila nekje drugje, nisi se mogel dokopati do njene resnične podobe. Ime ji je bilo Ida in še vedno je imela mozoljček v kotičku ustnic. Ali pa je bil to že nov mozoljček.

Iskreno me je začudilo, ko je po krajišem pojasnjevanju pristala na pijačo. Nekako sva se prebila skozi težko deževno zaveso. Pomislil sem, kako nima ta dež ničesar skupnega s poletjem. In pogledal njena stopala. Otrpnil sem. Sandali so se nesramno plazili po njeni koži. Kot bi vedeli. Kot bi vsi vedeli.

Jaz sem pil pivo, ona pa čaj. Na koncu sva spila vse, kar sva zaslужila tistega dne. Vprašal sem jo, kje spi. Odgovorila je, da v spalni vreči pod nekim mostom. Tam ji je kar dobro, je rekla. Povabil sem jo, da prespi to noč pri meni. Moje stanovanje je v bližini. Nekaj časa me je nejeverno gledala, nato pa vendarle privolila. Ampak samo če obljudim, da bom priden. Vedno sem priden, kadar sem pijan, sem rekel. Potem pa spij še eno, ne, spij dve pivi, preden se odpraviva.

Ko sva vstopila v stanovanje, je bilo že okoli polnoči. Iz omare sem vzel dve pivi, toda ona je hotela čaj. Nisem imel ne čaja ne posode, v kateri bi ga skuhal. Nič. Ampak to je ni preveč motilo. Ko si je sezuvala sandale in jih odlagala zraven mojih čevljev, je rekla, da so ji všeč. Moji čevlji. Ko sem odpiral pivo, sem rekel, da si jih lahko zamenjava. Nasmehnila se je in iz nahrbtnika izvlekla rdečo spalno vrečo. Bila je tenka in bedna. Imela je etiketo, na kateri je pisalo »Yassa«. Vprašal sem jo, od kod ji ta vreča, a je samo nedoločno zamahnila z roko. Razprostrala jo je malo stran od moje in se kar oblečena zavlekla vanjo. Zdelo se je, da je v hipu zaspala. Sedel sem na svoji vreči, kadil, tiho pil pivo. Skozi okno je prihajala rdeča svetloba. Oblaki so se raztrgali in nekje na zahodu je bil čudovit sončni zahod. Sonce bo ponovno vzšlo čez dve, tri ure, sem pomislil. In gledal svoja umazana okna. Moral bi imeti kakšno zaveso. Ni mogoče spati pri poletnem, nočnem soncu. Nevzdržno je.

Sedel sem in dolgo čkal, da se sonce znova pojavi. Ona se je kmalu po tem, ko je zaspala, začela nemirno vrtniti in obračati v svoji vreči. Včasih je izgovorila kako besedo v nerazumljivem jeziku. Ko se je enkrat obrnila k meni, se je odkrila in pokazala razgaljene prsi. Skozi tenko, belo srajco je bilo mogoče videti obrise prsi. Ni imela modrca, samo spodnjo majico brez rokov. Ni bilo razloga, da bi nosila modrc. Prsi je imela kot kakšen rejen dvanajstletnik. Kot jaz v šestem razredu. Ko so me od hormonov obnoreli fantje, ker ni bilo ničesar boljšega, grabili za prsi, ko smo igrali nogomet pri telovadbi. To so bile prsi brez kakršnekoli teže in mase, ki bi jo lahko prijel. Bradavice so bile trde in napete. Zašljene kot vrhovi džamij. Če ne bi bilo teh bradavic, človek ne bi mogel zatrdro reči, ali so to ženske ali fantovske prsi. Mekanično se pogladim po prsih in začutim nabreklost svojih preobčutljivih bradavic. Pa tudi nabreklost pod trebuhom. Približam se ji in se dotaknem njenih las. Lepljivih in skorjastih. Istočasno. Čutil sem, kako se mi je koža na roki naježila, ko sem jo božal. Hotel sem jo poljubiti na mozoljček. Ali ga morda stisniti, če je bilo to možno. Z roko zdrsnel do prsi. Bradavice so bile napete in pomislil sem, da bo brizgnilo iz njih. Pijano sem pomislil, kako bo, bog me nima rad, iz teh bradavic brizgnila reka krvi. Iz teh prsi ni moglo teči mleko. Dojenčki bi si porezali vsa usta, če bi se dojili iz teh prsi. To pomislim in se jih hitro dotaknem z ustnicami. Narahlo. Ostrina dotika mi zamegli pogled. Zaželim si, da bi se ta vbod za vedno vsekal vame. V ustnice, v roke. Kot kak redek strup.

V istem hipu se je zdrznila in se obrnila na drugo stran. Ni se zbudila. Čeprav nisem vedel, ali bi bilo to dobro ali slabo. In za koga. Nato sem vedel, da moram onanirati. Ampak ko sem sedel pod oknom, na katero so začeli padati prvi žarki svetlobe, in se poskušal umiriti z drkanjem, sem čutil, kako mi neka sila tega ne dopušča. Najprej mi ni prišlo. Nato me je zajela nerazumljiva žalost in zgubil sem erekcijo. V rokah sem držal ta brezoblični kos mesa in kože in skušal misliti na njene bradavice. In mozoljček v kotičku ustnic. Toda ni šlo. Nato sem pogledal njene sandale, ki so štrleli pred vhodom v sobo. Tedaj sem začel jokati. In tedaj mi je prišlo.

Ne vem, kdaj sem se zbudil, nisem imel ure, ampak glede na močno sonce je morallo biti že zelo pozno. Ide ni bilo. Pa tudi mojih čevljev ne. Edinih,

ki sem jih imel. Sandali so ležali nedotaknjeni. Ko sem hodil v njih, sem prekomerno migal z ritko. Preden sem obul te sandale, me je bilo nekoliko strah. Moja stopala so bila v njih videti veliko bolj ženstvena kot njena. Tega me je bilo strah. Samo tega, sem hotel verjeti. Ampak ko sem korakal proti mestu, je strah izginil. Čutil sem nekaj osvobajajočega okoli bokov. In užival, ko sem z ritjo migal od enega konca ulice do drugega. Želel sem si, da bi me kdo zagrabil za rit. Samo ne preveč grobo. Kakorkoli že lahko. V podzemni sem našel Ido, ki je čakala, da Roy neha igrati. Roy je bil črnec iz Londona. Igral je, kot kaže, irsko ljudsko glasbo z violino. Pravzaprav je zнал odigrati samo eno pesem. Na dva načina. Hitro in veselo ter počasi in žalostno. Ampak bil je zelo dober. Ko me je opazil v sandalih, sem v njem začutil nekaj živalskega. Dobro sem poznal takšne poglede. Samo nenavadno jih je bilo dobivati.

Ida je bila močna in hladna v mojih težkih čevljih. Ko je Roy končal, je samo brez besed odprla kovček, vzela ven harmoniko in začela igrati. Roy se mi je smehljal s tistim svojim pogledom in me vprašal, če sem za malo hašiša. Jasno, sem rekel. Šla sva ven in na neki klopi, skriti pred pogledi, pokadila džoint. Počutil sem se kot princesa. Ki jo zavistne prijateljice oписujejo kot kurbico. Želel sem si, da bi me ta črnec dvignil in posadil na kolena. Da bi me božal po riti. In nogah. Po mojih močnih in velikih prsih. Ko je Ida nehala igrati, sem bil na vrsti jaz. Igral sem, onadva pa sta kadila na isti klopi. Ida ga ni imela rada, to si lahko pri priči opazil. Bala se ga je, ampak je vseeno pokadila kakšen dim njegovega džointa. To se je video, ko sta se ponovno spustila v podzemno, da bi me poslušala, ko sem igral. Kmalu se je pridružil tudi Roy na svoji violinini. Vsa stvar pa je ušla izpod nadzora, ko je še Ida izvlekla svojo udarniško harmoniko in užgala ruske borbene. Ne vem, kaj so si ljudje mislili o nas, ko so hodili mimo. Ampak metalki so nam kot še nikoli doslej. Ko smo zasluzili goro denarja, smo šli do tiste klopi, in medtem ko sem jaz štel kovance, je Roy zvijal nov džoint. Strinjali smo se, da je najbolje, če denar takoj porabimo. Pravzaprav je to rekel Roy, midva pa sva se morala strinjati. Rekel je, da ve za dobro pivnico, in odpravili smo se tja, držeč se za roke. Bil sem hčerka sovjetske metalke kladiva in nekega zajebanega ameriškega sprinterja.

Ta pivnica je bila ena sama razstava čudakov, šarlatanov in akrobatov. Tu si imel vse mogoče, od uporniških najstnikov do iztrošenih rastafarijancev, ki niso dali od sebe niti glasu. Zdelo se je, da vsi poznajo Roya. Kmalu je stopil na mizo in začel igrati svojo hitro melodijo. V pivnici je nastal trušč. Nato smo spet igrali vsi skupaj in vsakokrat poželi dolg aplavz. Pili smo hitro in pogoltno. Hašiš si lahko čutil v vsakem kotu te luknje. Tudi Ida je pila. Video se je, da zna piti. V nekem trenutku me je dvignila in posedla v naročje. Tu sem sedel nekaj časa, popolnoma nemočen in srečen. Ona me je lizala in poljubljala po obrazu. Mi ščipala bradavice in me kot mama božala po lulčku. Vonjala je po zemlji. Po vlažni in plodni črnici.

Ko sva se končno izvlekla iz tistega neresničnega lokala, sem predlagal, da greva spet k meni. Ida je samo odkimala z glavo in rekla, da si nočoj želi spati na svojem mestu. Izkazalo se je, da je ta »njen prostor« čisto zares pod

mostom v nekem majhnem parku. Rekel sem, da je bolje, če greva k meni, ker se tod naokoli motajo samo narkomani in brezdomci. Brez besed me je mrko pogledala. Dojel sem in se nasmehnil. Osramočeno. Pripravila je spalno vrečo. Pravkar se je mračilo in čakala naju je kratka in vznemirljiva noč. Tukaj je bilo temneje in nekako topleje kot pri meni doma. Oziroma pri Sari. Na Saro nisem niti pomislil.

Oba sva se zavlekla v vrečo, čeprav to ni bilo lahko. Ljubila sva se lačno, kot bi si hotela s telesa odtrgati kose mesa. Mislil sem, da me bo pojedla. Najprej mi je šepetala v angleščini, nato v ruščini, nato pa je stokala v nekem nerazumljivem jeziku, za katerega sem predvideval, da mora biti latvijski. Predstavljal sem si to sliko od daleč. V vreči sva bila videti kot kakšen velik črv, ki se kobaca na soncu. Kot velikanski črv, ki smrtno hrope. Zvoki, ki sva jih spuščala, so spominjali na zvoke ogorčene borbe med dvema utrujenima obupancema. Ž močnimi rokami je grabila moje telo, kot da me oblikuje, kot da me celega mesi s svojim šapami. Nato mi je obrnila hrbet. Slekla sva se le toliko, kolikor je bilo nujno. Z eno roko sem skušal najti njene bodičaste prsi, ampak mi v tem direndaju ni uspelo. Na koncu sem vstopil vanjo in nainj črv je začel nov, izenačen ples. Spremenil sem se v sluh. Slišalo se je klokotanje reke, avta v daljavi, žvrgolenje ptic, naju, kako sopihava kot pri kakšnem težkem opravilu. V nekem trenutku sva se odkotalila in skoraj padla v reko. Ampak to naju ni zmedlo. Kot jezdec na rodeu sem se nekako obdržal v sedlu. Kmalu je bilo vsega konec in moje seme se je razlilo znotraj »Yassine« spalne vreče. Nato sem jo nežno objel od zadaj in ji zašepetal v uho po naše: »Rad te imam, Ida. Zelo te imam rad. Razumeš. Rad te imam.«

Nisem mogel videti njenega obraza. Nekaj vlažnega mi je kapnilo na roko, ki je ležala pod njeno brado. Bilo je tiho in mračno. Ptic ni bilo več slišati. Ida je brez besed vstala in strgala vrečo izpod mene. Še naprej sem ležal na tleh in jo gledal, kako je zavijala svojo vrečo in si zapenjala krilo. Obula je moje čevlje, prijela svoje stvari ter nekoliko hladno in nestvarno izgovorila stavek. Po latvijsko, verjetno. Nato se je obrnila in odsla po poti, ki je vodila vzdolž reke. Ves čas sem ležal na zemljji in jo opazoval. Šele čez nekaj minut sem poskočil, si obul sandale in se odpravil za njo. Hodil sem vso noč, vso belo poletno noč. In je nisem našel. Sedel sem na neko klop in opazoval svoje noge v teh sandalih. Nato sem jih sezul in pustil pod klopjo. Ostala sta drug zraven drugega. Domov sem odšel bos. Znova so se zaslišale ptice. Galebi, vrane in srake.

Stal sem na vratih in gledal v notranjost svoje duše. V tem stanovanju so mi najbolj manjkale zavese. Samo zato je bilo vse videti tako ogolelo in prazno. Samo zato.

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## *Open-toe Sandals*

I found some kind of solution, though. After I was released from prison, where I had done my one-week sentence, I had no money, and what was worse, no job. Both these things were not that bad as such, but you need money to pay the rent. And food. Well, food, you can always buy a sack of potatoes or rice and survive. But if you can't pay the rent, a sturdily built, bald landlord will throw you out without much ado. Without anger. Without pity. But as I said, somehow I managed. It seems that we always find a way. Or die. This is also a kind of solution, a back-up solution so to say. This is always a solution.

The judge with immovable, glassy eyes offered me a choice between one month of prison and paying a fine. Of course, I immediately went for the fine, horrified at the threat with imprisonment. However, it turned out that I did not have enough money for the whole fine, but just for three weeks. Thus all my money was gone without sparing me from prison in the centre of Oslo, not even two hundred metres away from my rented room. A week. I had a feeling that I had miscalculated something, even though I had always been good at maths. Since the earliest childhood. Everyone was astonished: "Oh my, how good this kid is at maths".

And then, after crawling out of my cell, I figured out that I had no money for this month's rent. And I was already behind with it. About the same time when they locked me up, Sara, my girlfriend, at times even my future wife, went to the south of Norway to see her mom, who, poor thing, lived alone in that huge house. I still somehow managed to persuade her to let me spend these two summer months in her apartment, until I bring things in order, find a job, and a new room. The only tiny problem was that the apartment was completely empty. Actually Sara only got the keys and then rushed away, without having moved her stuff in. I was actually the one who was supposed to provide muscles for moving things in. But I got busted. Sara only said that she knew this would happen. Sooner or later, sooner or later. Now I was in that completely empty apartment. I would have brought my stuff, but I had none. Apart from some clothes and a couple of books. In the back room I spread the sleeping bag on the floor. Thus I arranged the living-room and the bedroom.

I spent the first week in the same way as in prison. I lay in a kind of stupor, thinking that I should marry Sara and have three kids with her. I also masturbated a lot. Same as in prison. I could not eat or get out of bed. I lay with my eyes closed, imagining the girls I had been with. The ones I could remember. My nicest memories were of the girls I maybe might have had, but for some unfortunate reason this had not happened. Or maybe it is so that the girls who wanted me had me, while the others just didn't. One can never be sure. Except in the length you feel under the thick skin of a greasy

palm. Although I actually think that women find girth more important. Girth is most important, I tried to persuade myself, spreading spit mixed with gluey sweat of my limp groins. Most important, I kept repeating. But one day I could not endure hunger anymore and had to go out. In a trance I hovered to the nearest store and with the change I was able to dig out of my pockets I bought some bread and a jar of apricot jam. A large jar of jam like the one my grandma used to make. In some other life, when I was still able to express my unhappiness in words. While I was eating this withered apricot jam, it seemed to me that this time in my life was part of someone else's memories. I was sure that never before I ate apricot jam. The taste of the one I was eating seemed to improve. Crumbles fell on a cardboard box. I should get a piece of such cloth for the table.

During the next days I managed to pull myself together. I registered with the public employment office, where they told me not to worry, because sooner or later some job would turn up. They would contact me immediately. In the meantime, I had to be patient. Because I badly needed money, I reverted to what I had done earlier in acute money shortages. Singing in the underground. I would stand at that National Theatre station, picking the strings of my old worn-out guitar. I sang melancholic songs in a sad voice. Some of the passers-by would throw a coin, sometimes even two, into a lid of a box. If one was not entirely abandoned by luck, this was a decent income.

After a couple of days of playing, I felt reborn. I could already treat myself to a hamburger or even kebab; sometimes I could even afford a beer, which, after we were done playing, I would share with some of the colleagues who earned their living in the same way. There were a couple of regulars, who played there every day, but from time to time a couple of new ones would turn up, just passers-by who would linger around for a few days and then disappear to some new cities their minds depicted as more desirable.

One evening, while I was playing in that resounding corridor, I heard the sound of accordion that came from its depth. At first I paid no attention to that sound, but it increasingly irritated me. We all knew that, if one wanted to play in the underground, this was the only place where one could get the permission of the watchman. If the place was occupied, and it was, because I was playing there, then one had to wait until that other person, which was me, finished, and only then replace me and play. For one hour if there was already someone else waiting or unlimited if there was no one. In the end I angrily walked down the corridor towards the source of that music. Coming nearer, I began to recognize the melody. It resembled a partisan military march from the Second World War. Actually, one could not be sure. Approaching, I saw a girl sitting on a case and stretching a bandoneón. The case she sat on belonged to the instrument.

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I figured that out immediately. At her side she had a backpack, no larger than the kind we use for a picnic. She stared with glazed eyes into the concrete in front of her, mechanically stretching and folding together her bellows. Ok, she was not local and did not know our customs. I waited until she finished the song, then approached the box and threw five crowns in. I greeted her in English and smiled. I told her she played well. She had empty, watery eyes. And a tiny, almost imperceptible purulent pimple in the corner of her mouth. I kept smiling. She suddenly stood up and started to pack her bandoneón into the case. She poured the coins from the box into a small leather sack. She wore a blue, washed-out skirt, a white summer shirt, and open-toe sandals. Sandals. Made of leather and dried out. She had giant feet. She was smaller than me, but I could have sworn that she had larger feet. Although I have flat and large feet. Sandals, this was obvious, were women's and, although so large, they looked elegant. On her coarse and dirty feet they looked even more feminine, tender. Her toe nails were varnished dark red. But long time ago. Because only lonely, red islands witnessed of the last varnishing. She resembled a little girl who liked to play with boys. And who liked to share their bluntness. Her hair was a mess, fair without a definitive colour. All her boyhood was captured and contained in a pair of worn-out and withered sandals. I wanted to have something with these sandals. Anything, I thought, while she was going away.

After that, she did not appear for a couple of days. But then, one heavy and rainy day, while I tried to bring even more sorrow into the damp corridor with my voice, I saw her dragging the bandoneón case. She stood aside for a while and then sat on the case, disinterestedly waiting for me to finish my playing. Her hair was wet and glued together, her sandals black and slippery with dampness. I nodded and packed my guitar.

I returned to the same place after an hour. While I was walking towards her in my winter shoes, she seemed to me like a kid playing combat songs in the gloomy Culture House of my native village. I approached her and threw in a twenty crowns coin. She just lifted her eyes, nodded without expression and continued to pass over the worn-out keys with her fingers. I sat aside and lit a cigarette. I waited for her to finish. Outside, the heavy rain and the gusts of wind followed the rhythm of her music.

When she finished, I approached her and for the first time we talked. She was from Latvia. She spoke a pretty bad English, so that we talked in a mixture of English, Russian, Serbian, and Croatian. The expression of her face did not change while she was talking. As if she were someplace else, one could not reach her real self. Her name was Ida and she still had a pimple in the corner of her mouth. Or maybe this was a new pimple.

I was truly astonished when after a while she said yes to a drink with me. Somehow we found our way through the curtain of heavy rain. I thought

how this rain had nothing in common with summer. I looked at her feet and shuddered. The sandals were outrageously creeping over her skin. As if they knew. As if we all knew everything.

I drank beer, she drank tea. Finally we spent everything we had earned that day on drinks. I asked her where she slept. In a sleeping bag under a bridge, she said. It is ok, she said. I invited her to sleep over in my place. My apartment is not far away. She looked at me distrustfully, but then she nodded. But only if I promised her to behave. I always behave when I am drunk, I said. Then have another one, no, two beers before we start.

When we entered the apartment, it was already around midnight. I took two beers out of the cupboard, but she wanted tea. I neither had tea nor anything to cook it in or on. Nothing. But she did not mind too much. While she was taking off her sandals and putting them next to my shoes, she said she liked them. My shoes. Opening a beer, I said that we could swap. She smiled and took a red sleeping bag out of her backpack. It was thin and shabby. It had a label that said *Yassa*. I asked her where she got it from, but she just vaguely waved her hand. She spread her sleeping bag at some distance from mine and crept into it with her clothes on. It seemed that she fell asleep right away. I sat on my bag, smoking and silently drinking beer. Red light came in through the window. Clouds cleared up and somewhere in the west revealed a beautiful sunset. The sun will rise again in two or three hours, I thought. I watched my dirty windows without curtains. I should get some, really. One cannot sleep in the summer night sun. It is unbearable.

I sat so very long, waiting for the sun to reappear. Soon after falling asleep, she began to turn and twitch in her bag. Sometimes she would murmur a word in an unintelligible language. Once, turning towards me, she revealed her uncovered chest. Through her thin, white shirt, I could discern her breasts. She had no bra, just a sleeveless undershirt. There was no reason for a bra. She had breasts like a fat twelve-year-old. Like me in the second grade, when hormone-crazed boys, lacking a better object, grabbed my tits while we played football in our sports class. These were breasts with no weight or mass one could hold firmly. Her nipples were hard and protruding. Like tips of mosque towers. If it were not for these nipples, one could not be certain if these were a woman's breasts or a boy's chest. I mechanically touched my chest, feeling the hardness of my oversensitive nipples. And hardness below my belly. I bent forward and touched her hair. Gluey and rigid. At the same time. I felt goose pimples on my hand while I stroked her hair. I wanted to kiss her pimple. Or maybe pop it, if possible. My hand slipped to her breasts. Her nipples were so hard that I thought they would burst. In my drunken dizziness I thought how, oh my God, these nipples would burst and a river of blood would flow out of them. These breasts could yield no milk. Babies would cut their mouths if

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they had to be fed by these breasts. So I thought, rushing to touch them with my lips. Gently. The sharpness of this touch obscured my sight. I wished that this stinging would remain captured forever, in my lips, in my hands. Like a rare poison.

At the same time she twitched and turned to the other side. She did not wake up. I did not know if that would be good or bad. And for whom. After that I knew I had to masturbate. But as I was sitting under the window, illuminated by first rays of light, trying to calm down by jerking off, I felt that some force prevented me from doing it. First I could not come. Then some inexplicable sorrow got hold of me and I lost my erection. I held this amorphous piece of flesh and skin in my hand, trying to think of her nipples. And the pimple in the corner of her mouth. But it did not help. Then I looked at her sandals proudly standing in front of the doorway. Then I began to cry. And I came.

I do not know when I woke up; I had no watch, but it must have been pretty late, judging by the glaring sun. Ida was not there. As well as my shoes, the only ones I had. The sandals were there, untouched. While I walked in them, I exaggerated playfully moving my hips. I was somewhat afraid before putting the sandals on. My feet looked much more feminine in them than hers. This frightened me. Just that, I wanted to believe. But as I was walking towards the town, this fear was gone. I felt something liberating around my hips. And enjoyed shaking my arse along the street. I wished that someone might grab me by the arse. But not too roughly. If possible.

In the underground I found Ida waiting for Roy to finish playing. Roy is a black boy from London. He plays, as he says, Irish folk music on the violin. Actually he could play just one tune. In two ways: swiftly and merrily and slowly and sadly. But he was very good. I felt something beastly in him when he spotted me in the sandals. I knew that kind of look. It was only strange getting one.

Ida looked strong and cold in my heavy shoes. At the moment when Roy finished, without saying anything, she instantly opened her case, took the bandoneón out of it and commenced to play. Roy smiled at me with that look of his, asking me if I would like some pot. Of course, I said. We went outside and on a sheltered bench we smoked a joint. I felt like a princess. Described by her jealous friends as a little whore. I wished that this black guy would lift me up and put me on his knees. And stroke my arse. And my legs. My strong and large chest.

When Ida finished playing, it was my turn. I played, they smoked grass on the same bench. Ida did not like him; that was obvious. She was afraid of him, but took his joint anyway. That could be seen in her when they again descended into the underground to listen to me playing. Soon Roy joined in with his violin. The whole thing was out of control when Ida took out her shock-worker's bandoneón and stout-heartedly sang her Russian combat

songs. I have no idea what people thought passing us by. But they threw in coins like never before. When we earned a pile of money, we went to that same bench. While I counted the coins, Roy wrapped a new joint. We agreed that it was best to spend the money right away. Actually Roy said that and we had to agree. He said he knew a nice pub, so we went there holding hands. I was a daughter of a Soviet hammer-thrower and some American hot shot sprinter.

This pub was a large exhibition of lunatics, queers, quacks, and acrobats. There were all kinds here, from rebelling teenagers to worn-out, silent Rastafarians. It seemed that everyone knew Roy. He soon climbed on a table and started to play his swift melody. There was havoc in the pub. Later on we played together again and earned a long applause. We drank quickly and greedily. Pot could be smelled in each corner of that hole. Ida drank too. She obviously knew how to do it. At one moment she lifted me from the floor and put me on her lap. I sat there for some time, entirely powerless and happy. She licked and kissed my face. She pinched my nipples and like a mother caressed my prick. She smelled of earth. Humid and fertile black earth.

When we finally found our way out of this unreal place, I proposed that we could go to my place again. Ida just shook her head and said that tonight she wanted to sleep in her usual place. It showed that this "her place" was indeed under a bridge in a small park. I said that it would be better if we went to my place, because only junkies and homeless people stumbled around here. She just gave me a severe look, saying nothing. I understood and smiled. Ashamed. She prepared her sleeping bag. It was just getting dark and a short and exciting night was before us. Here it was darker and somehow warmer than in my home. In Sara's home. I haven't even thought of Sara.

We both crept into the bag, although this was not easy. We kissed hungrily, as if trying to tear pieces of flesh off our bodies. I thought that she would eat me up. First she whispered in English, then in Russian; finally she moaned in some strange language of which I supposed that it had to be Latvian. I could imagine this scene from a distance: the two of us in a bag looked like a giant worm twisting in the sun. Like a huge worm in a death rattle. The sounds we uttered reminded of a deadly combat of two tired, desperate rivals. With her strong hands she grabbed my body as if she shaped me, as if she kneaded me with her large hands. Then she turned her back to me. We took off only the clothes that were in the way. With one hand I attempted to find these spiky breasts, but in all that fuss I did not succeed. I finally penetrated her and our worm began a new, synchronized dance. I turned into hearing. I could perceive the gurgling of the river, cars in the distance, chirping of birds and the two of us breathing heavily, like people do when they work hard. At one moment we rolled over and

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almost fell into the river. But this did not discourage us. Like a rodeo rider, I managed to remain in the saddle. Soon everything was over and my semen was spilled inside the *Yassa* sleeping bag. Then I tenderly hugged her from behind and whispered in her ear, in my language: "I love you Ida. I love you very much. Do you get it? I love you."

I could not see her face. Something moist dripped onto my hand under her chin. Everything was quiet. And dark. We could hear the birds no more. Ida stood up without a word and pulled the bag beneath me. I remained on the ground, looking at her packing the bag and buttoning up her skirt. She put on my shoes, lifted all her belongings and in a manner somehow cold and unreal spoke one sentence. In Latvian, I suppose. After that she turned away and left on the path that led along the river. All the time I was lying on the ground and watching her. Only after a couple of minutes I jumped up, put on the sandals and followed her. I walked all night, all that white summer night. And could not find her. I sat on a bench, watching my feet in those sandals. Later I took them off and left them under the bench. Neatly aligned. Then I went home barefoot. Again I could hear birds. Seagulls, crows, and magpies.

I stood in the doorway and looked inside my soul. In that apartment I missed curtains most. Just because of them everything looked so bare and empty. Just because of that.

*Translated by Andy Jelčić*



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# Dmitrij Strocev

Dmitrij Strocev se je rodil leta 1963 v Minsku v Belorusiji. Na Beloruskem politehničnem inštitutu v Minsku je diplomiral iz arhitekture. Nekdanji oblikovalec, ki je v letih 2005, 2007, 2009 in 2011 koordiniral Festival zvočne poezije v Moskvi, danes deluje kot vodja literarno-založniškega projekta *Новые мехи* (Novi kožuh) in urednik pesniškega zbornika *Минская школа* (Minška šola). Med dela pesnika, ki piše v ruščini, sodijo zbirke 38: *Стихотворения и пьеса* (38: Pesmi in igra, 1990), *Виноград* (Grozdje, 1997), *Лициние сумки: Роман в стихах* (Odvečni dnevi: roman v verzih, 1999), *Остров Це* (Otok Ce, 2002), *850 строк* (850 vrstic, 2007) – slednja je zasedla tretje mesto na mednarodnem natečaju za rusko nagrado za poezijo (2008) – in *Бутылки света* (Steklenice svetlobe, 2009). Njegove izbrane pesmi so bile objavljene v številnih revijah in antologijah, kot sta *Освобожденный Улисс* (Osvojeni Odisej, 2004) in *Русские стихи 1950–2000* (Ruske pesmi 1950–2000, 2010), in so prevedene v beloruščino, gruzinščino, hebrejščino, italijanščino, ukrainščino, francoščino in švedščino. Je član beloruskega kluba PEN. Živi in dela v Minsku.

Dmitry Strotsev was born in 1963 in Minsk, Belarus. He graduated in architecture from the Belarus Polytechnic Institute in Minsk. The former designer, who also supervised the Festival of Sound Poetry in Moscow in 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011, currently serves as head of the literary and publishing project *Новые мехи* (New Pelts) and editor of the *Минская школа* (The Minsk School) poetry magazine. The works of the poet, who writes in Russian, include the collections 38: *Стихотворения и пьеса* (38: Poems and Play, 1990), *Виноград* (Grapes, 1997), *Лициние сумки: Роман в стихах* (Redundant Days: A Verse Novel, 1999), *Остров Це* (Ce Island, 2002), *850 строк* (850 Lines, 2007), which was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the international contest for the Russian Prize for poetry (2008); and *Бутылки света* (Bottles of Light, 2009). His selected poems have been published in numerous magazines as well as in the anthologies *Освобожденный Улисс* (Odysseus Liberated, 2004) and *Русские стихи 1950–2000* (Russian Poems 1950–2000, 2010), and translated into Belarusian, Georgian, Hebrew, Italian, Ukrainian, French, and Swedish. He is a member of the Belarus PEN Club and lives and works in Minsk.

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## *Молчание адама*

*Анe, жeнe и coавтoрy*

сва  
я устал  
отец неугомонный  
сеет жизнь  
направо и налево  
дарит дыхание  
легионам и легионам  
я просто  
не успеваю за ним

я нарекаю имена  
всей этой твари  
которой нет конца  
это просто ад  
пойми  
я мечтаю  
о своём творчестве  
я хочу называть  
свои изделия

\*\*\*

обыкновенный мальчик обычновенный  
не обольщайтесь дима  
сказала Богатая Тётя  
это она о тебе сказала  
мой необыкновенный

загляни в свой мрак  
говорила она  
когда закроешь глаза любви  
найдёшь его там  
и с закрытыми глазами  
познаешь  
ничего не стоит этот прах ничего  
это она о тебе говорила  
мой свет

не обижай лучезарную сестру твою  
не закрывай глаза  
не бойся

### *Военный турист*

я  
провинциал  
не бывал за границей  
а тут предложили  
место в танке  
не удержался

побывали  
поубивали  
цхинвали гори поти

какие горы  
какое море  
какое горе

а это уже на всю жизнь  
впечатлени  
я

## *Планета болельщиков*

спортивный курьер

первая полоса

я болею за клуб ЕВРОПА  
я хочу чтобы наши всегда побеждали  
хочу чтобы мы побеждали красиво  
а если красиво не получается ну и хер с ним  
важно чтобы всегда всегда побеждали  
потому что наш клуб ЕВРОПА

вторая полоса

я болею за клуб ИЗРАИЛЬ  
я хочу чтобы наши всегда побеждали  
хочу чтобы мы побеждали красиво  
а если красиво не получается ну и хер с ним  
важно чтобы всегда всегда побеждали  
потому что наш клуб ИЗРАИЛЬ

третья полоса

я болею за клуб РОССИЯ  
я хочу чтобы наши всегда побеждали  
хочу чтобы мы побеждали красиво  
а если красиво не получается ну и хер с ним  
важно чтобы всегда всегда побеждали  
потому что наш клуб РОССИЯ

четвертая полоса

в новом выпуске  
с нами  
болельщики  
клубов

АМЕРИКА ГРУЗИЯ  
КИТАЙ и БЕЛОРУССИЯ

---

*Душа милой франции**Эв Сорин*

ошибаетесь  
франция  
мрачная страна  
мы бы уже  
не могли жить  
в белоруссии

слушали  
минское радио  
полный отстой  
где культура  
парижане  
поверхностны  
это им не надо  
идти в глубину слов  
они скользят

тьма нательная  
вещая слепота  
где мы где мы  
глаз слышит  
где хочет

не вернёмся  
оставайтесь  
до свидания

## *На площадь*

\*

приходите с жёнами  
позвал кандидат в президенты  
мои люди вас защитят

мужики  
отозвался другой кандидат  
человек спортивный  
переходим в нападение

\*

вот и у нас  
декабристы  
вот и у нас  
кровавое воскресенье

кровью цветёт  
наш общий цветок  
наша ненависть

\*

подвели под мечи  
хор бабочек  
облако неофитов  
тучу романтиков

сдали палачу  
всю нарнию  
все бобровые хатки  
все сховы десятилетия

поддержали цмока  
за пятку  
на юру славы

триумфаторы  
други  
  
благодарим за попытку

на плацу пыльца  
на ветру слёзы

\*\*\*

мама  
одного из мальчиков

успел только сказать  
не был в метро  
в тот день

\*

в тот день  
без сумки  
моего сына  
кто видел

кто видит  
моего сына  
из тьмы в свет  
грядущего

## *Два письма*

письмо богу

мы ничьи  
мы тебе не стадо  
что ты держишь нас за овец  
нам и крови твоей не надо  
отойди от нас наконец

письмо князю

мы твои  
мы ему не стадо  
что он держит нас за овец  
нам и тела его не надо  
умертвши его наконец

\*\*\*

*Павлу Гольдбергу*

в саду открытая земля  
как чёрная постель  
и никому сказать нельзя  
чтоб лечь ещё тесней

среди распахнутых корней  
и согнутых локтей  
углы и головы детей  
овалы матерей

и так дыхание дрожит  
и так земля парит  
как будто для меня магнит  
и вся семья лежит

в саду открытая земля  
как чёрная постель  
и никого предать нельзя  
и не рыдать на ней

\*\*\*

*Светлане Алексиевич*

земля крепостей  
стёртых до дёсен  
дикое поле  
европейских споров

эй ленивые  
живо к нам  
в новый век  
кличут соседи

из угольных куч  
из землянок  
выходим блаженно

тихое солнце  
как верную новость  
целуем

\*\*\*

свет мой

я твоя пыль

танцующая

---

## ***Adamov moltk***

*Ani, ženi in soavtorju*

eva  
utrujen sem  
oče neugnani  
seje življenje  
desno in levo  
podarja dihanje  
legijam in legijam  
preprosto  
ne morem mu slediti

dajem imena  
vsem tem bitjem  
ki jim ni konca  
to je pravi pekel  
razumi  
sanjam  
o lastnem ustvarjanju  
rad bi poimenoval  
svoje izdelke

---

\*\*\*

navaden deček navaden  
ne varajte se dima  
je rekla Bogata Teta  
to je rekla o tebi  
moj nenavadni

zazri se v svojo temo  
je govorila  
ko zapreš oči ljubezni  
jo boš našel tam  
in z zaprtimi očmi  
boš spoznal  
ta prah ni vreden nič nič  
to je govorila o tebi  
moja luč

ne jezi svoje sijoče sestre  
ne zapiraj oči  
ne boj se

### *Vojni turist*

sem  
podeželan  
nisem bil še v tujini  
pa so mi ponudili  
prostor v tanku  
nisem se mogel odpovedati

bili smo  
pobili smo  
chinvali gori poti

kakšne gore  
kakšno morje  
kakšno gorje

za eno celo življenje  
vtiso  
v meso

---

## ***Planet navijačev***

športni vestnik

prvi stolpec

navijam za klub EVROPA  
hočem da bi naši vedno zmagali  
hočem da bi zmagali sijajno  
če ne sijajno pa klinc ga gleda  
pomembno je da bi vedno vedno zmagali  
kajti naš klub je EVROPA

drugi stolpec

navijam za klub IZRAEL  
hočem da bi naši vedno zmagali  
hočem da bi zmagali sijajno  
če ne sijajno pa klinc ga gleda  
pomembno je da bi vedno vedno zmagali  
kajti naš klub je IZRAEL

tretji stolpec

navijam za klub RUSIJA  
hočem da bi naši vedno zmagali  
hočem da bi zmagali sijajno  
če ne sijajno pa klinc ga gleda  
pomembno je da bi vedno vedno zmagali  
kajti naš klub je RUSIJA

četrti stolpec

v novi izdaji  
bojo z nami  
navijači  
klubov

AMERIKA GRUZIJA  
KITAJSKA in BELORUSIJA

---

## *Duša drage Francije*

*Eve Sorin*

motite se  
francija  
je temna dežela  
mi ne bi  
mogli živeti  
v belorusiji

ste poslušali  
radio minsk  
popoln zastoj  
kulture  
parižani  
so površni  
ni jim treba  
seči v globino besed  
te so zmuzljive

gola tema  
preroška slepota  
kje smo kje smo  
oko sliši  
kjer hoče

ne bo nas nazaj  
ostanite  
na svidenje

## *Na trg*

\*

pridite z ženami  
je vabil predsedniški kandidat  
moji ljudje vas bojo zavarovali

možje  
je odvrnil drugi kandidat  
človek iz športa  
gremo v napad

\*

tudi mi imamo  
dekariste  
tudi mi imamo  
krvavo nedeljo

v kri cveti  
naš skupni cvet  
naše sovraštvo

\*

pripeljali so pod meč  
zbor metuljev  
jato neofitov  
oblak romantikov

predali so rablju  
vso narnijo  
vse bobrove hišice  
vse prihranke desetletja

dvignili so zmaja  
za peto  
na vzpetino slave

zmagovalci  
so drugi

hvala za poskus  
na placu pelod  
v vetru solze

\*\*\*

mama  
nekega dečka

lahko je rekel le  
nisem bil v metroju  
tistega dne

\*

tistega dne  
brez torbe  
kdo je videl  
mojega sina

kdo vidi  
mojega sina  
ki stopa  
iz teme v luč

## *Dve pismi*

pismo bogu

nikogaršnji smo  
nismo tvoja čreda  
imaš nas za ovce  
ne maramo tvoje krvi  
zapusti nas že

pismo knezu

tvoji smo  
nismo njegova čreda  
on nas ima za ovce  
ne maramo njegovega telesa  
ubij ga že

\*\*\*

*Pavlu Goldbergu*

režeča zemlja je na vrtu  
kot črna postelja odprta  
nikomur nimaš niti reči  
da globlje mora vanjo leči

med temi koreninami  
in med komolci zvitimi  
ovali mater in na bok  
zvaljene glavice otrok

in dih tako pretresa svet  
in zemlja se kadi  
kot zame bi bila magnet  
družina vsa leži

režeča zemlja je na vrtu  
kot črna postelja odprta  
nikogar nimaš zdaj izdati  
in ne na njej se razjokati

\* \* \*

*Svetlani Aleksijevič*

dežela trdnjav  
razdejanih do dlesni  
divja planjava  
evropskih prepirov

hej lenobe  
hitro k nam  
v novo stoletje  
kličejo sosedje

iz kupov premoga  
in iz zemljank  
prihajamo blaženo

tiho sonce  
poljubljamo  
kot dobro novico

\* \* \*

luč moja

sem tvoj prah

plešoči

*Prevedel Drago Bajt*

## *Adam's Silence*

*To Ana, my wife and co-author*

eve  
i am weary  
the relentless father  
sows life  
left and right  
gives breath  
to legions upon legions  
i just  
cannot keep up with him

i bestow names  
on all this creaturedom  
which is limitless  
it is just hell  
understand  
i dream  
of my own art  
i want to name  
my handiwork

\*\*\*

a common boy common  
do not flatter yourself dima  
the Rich Aunt said  
that's what she said about you  
my uncommon you

glance into your gloom  
she would say  
when you close your love eyes  
you will find it there  
and your eyes closed  
you will discern  
nothing are these ashes worth nothing  
that's what she would say about you  
my sunshine

don't hurt your radiant sister  
don't close your eyes  
don't be afraid

### *The Military Tourist*

me  
a provincial  
never been abroad  
and suddenly they offered  
a seat in a tank  
i couldn't resist

we visited  
we slew  
tsinkhvali gori poti

what mountains  
what sea  
what sorrow

to last a lifetime  
impress  
me

## ***Fan Planet***

sporting news

column one

i pull for team EUROPE  
i want us always to win  
want us to win stylishly  
and if stylishly doesn't work the hell with it  
it's important that we always always win  
because our team is EUROPE

column two

i pull for team ISRAEL  
i want us always to win  
want us to win beautifully  
and if beautifully doesn't work the heck with it  
it's important that we always always win  
because our team is ISRAEL

column three

i pull for team RUSSIA  
i want us always to win  
want us to win beautifully  
and if beautifully doesn't work the heck with it  
it's important that we always always win  
because our team is RUSSIA

column four

in the next issue  
we will have  
the fans  
of soccer clubs

AMERICA GEORGIA  
CHINA and BELARUS

## *The Soul of Dear France*

*Ev Sorin*

you're mistaken  
france  
gloomy country  
no longer  
could we live  
in belarus

we listened to  
minsk radio  
it sucks  
where is culture  
parisians  
are superficial  
they don't need  
to plumb the depths of words

they glissade  
darkness of the crucifix  
seer's blindness  
where are we where are we  
the eye hears  
where it pleases

we won't return  
farewell  
good-bye

## *Into the Streets*

\*

come with your wives  
called the candidate for president  
my people will protect you

boys  
another candidate responded  
an athletic man  
we're going on offense

\*

and we got  
Decembrists  
and we got  
bloody sunday

the bloody blooms  
our common flower  
our hatred

\*

they put them to the sword  
a choir of butterflies  
a cloud of neophytes  
a nimbus of romantics

they handed over to the executioner  
all narnia  
all the beaver lodges  
all the troves of the decade

they held the dragon  
by his heel  
on the glorious mount

the triumphant  
the droogs

we are grateful for the attempt

pollen on the plaz  
tears on the wind

\*\*\*

the mother  
of one of the boys

he managed to say only  
he was not in the subway  
that day

\*

that day  
without a satchel  
my son  
who saw

who sees  
my son  
as he cometh  
from darkness into the light

## ***Two Letters***

a letter to god

we're nobody's  
we're not your flock  
why do you treat us like sheep  
we don't need your blood either  
leave us alone at last

a letter to the prince

we're yours  
we're not his flock  
for him to treat like sheep  
and we don't need his body either  
slay him at last

\* \* \*

*For Pavel Goldberg*

the bared earth in the garden  
is like black bedding  
and there's no one to tell  
to lie closer

in the unearthed roots  
are angles  
of bent elbows and children's heads  
mothers' ovals

and breath so trembles  
and the earth so steams  
as if a magnet to me  
and the whole family lies

the bared earth in the garden  
is like black bedding  
and no one is to be betrayed  
and weep not upon her

\* \* \*

*For Svetlana Aleksievich*

a land of forts  
erased to the gums  
a barren field  
of european feuds

hoj you lazy things  
quick come with us  
into the new age  
call our neighbors

we emerge dazed  
from coal pits  
from bunkers

the quiet sun  
like a true novelty  
we kiss

\* \* \*

my sunshine

i am your dust

dancing

*Translated by Timothy Pogačar and Irina Stakhanova*



Foto © Liene Rūce

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# Kārlis Vērdiņš

Kārlis Vērdiņš se je rodil leta 1979 v Rigi v Latviji. Diplomiral je iz teorije kulture na Latvijski akademiji za kulturo in doktoriral iz književnosti na Univerzi v Latviji (2009). Od leta 2007 deluje na Inštitutu za književnost, folkloro in umetnost omenjene univerze. Je tudi član uredništva literarne revije *Latvju Teksti* (Latvijska besedila). Je pesnik, ki je objavil tri pesniške zbirke: *Ledlauži* (Ledolomilci, 2001), *Biezpiens ar krējumu* (Skuta s kislo smetano, 2004) in *Es* (Jaz, 2008), za katero je prejel nagrado za najboljšo latvijsko pesniško zbirko (2008); in knjigo v verzih za otroke *Burtiņu zupa* (Abecedna juha, 2007), za katero je prejel latvijsko letno literarno nagrado za književnost (2007). Njegova poezija je bila objavljena v različnih antologijah, kot sta *A Fine Line* (Tanka črta, 2004) in *Six Latvian Poets* (Šest latvijskih pesnikov, 2011). Prevodi njegovih izbranih pesmi v slovenščino so bili objavljeni v zborniku *Dnevi poezije in vina* (2007) in v antologiji *Moral bi spet priti*, ki je leta 2009 izšla pri založbi ŠKUC. Njegova dela so prevedena še v poljščino, ruščino in nedavno tudi v češčino.

Kārlis Vērdiņš was born in 1979 in Riga, Latvia. He obtained a B.A. in cultural theory from the Latvian Academy of Culture, and a PhD in Literature from the University of Latvia (2009). Since 2007, he has been working at the Institute of Literature, Folklore, and Art at the aforementioned University. He is also a member of the editorial team of the literary magazine *Latvju Teksti*. He is a poet, who has published three collections of poetry: *Ledlauži* (The Ice-breakers, 2001), *Biezpiens ar krējumu* (Cottage Cheese with Cream, 2004), and *Es* (Me, 2008), for which he won the Latvian Poetry Prize (2008); and a children's verse book titled *Burtiņu zupa* (Alphabet Soup, 2007), for which he received the Annual Literary Award of Latvia (2007). His poetry has been included in various anthologies, such as *A Fine Line* (2004) and *Six Latvian Poets* (2011). Translations of his selected poems into Slovene are included in the almanac *Dnevi poezije in vina* (Days of Poetry and Wine, 2007) and the anthology *Moral bi spet priti* (I Should Be Coming Back Sometime), which was published by the ŠKUC publishing house in 2009. His works have also been translated into Polish, Russian, and most recently Czech.

## *Ūdens malki*

Teicams paradums – uzglabāt vārītu ūdeni.  
Teicama sajūta aiziet ciemos un redzēt,  
ka vēl kāds piekopj šo paradumu.  
Nav taisnība manam bijušajam,  
kurš šo nodarbi uzskatīja par psihisku novirzi  
un katru dienu nesa no veikala minerālīti.  
Metroseksuāļi un sievietes  
manto šo paradumu no paaudzes paaudzē:  
vārītais ūdens uzkrājas glītā kannā  
un karstās dienās glābj kalstošo rīkli.

Taču reizēm var glābt arī nevārīts ūdens.  
Kad epidemioloģe vaicāja,  
kur gan es sadabūju šo infekciju  
un es jau paguru domās uzskaitīt  
visas neķitrās, pazemojošās epizodes,  
viņa kā glābšanas riņķi man pasvieda ideju:  
„Varbūt no krāna ūdeni dzērāt?”  
„Jā,” es laimīgi izsaucos, „kā tad, ka dzēru!”  
Viņa nosodoši kratīja galvu un pirkstu,  
bet acis silti iemirdzējās – kā divi ūdens malki.

## *Uzvara*

Uzspēlēsim kādu spēli, kurā tu varētu uzvarēt!  
Noderēs gan galda teniss,  
gan orientēšanās sacīkstes Kalngales mežā.  
Varam samērīties ar krāniņiem vai izdzertām glāzēm –  
uzmanīgi klausīšos tavus noteikumus.

Gribu redzēt to smaidu,  
kas apskaidros tavu seju pēc pārliecinošās uzvaras.  
Gribu redzēt, kā tu apmierinājumā aizmiedz,  
astādams mani bezmiegā –  
mani, kam vārdi „uzvara”, „sasniegums”, „panākums”  
tagad liek tikai netīksmē nodrebēt.

---

***Labu apetīti!***

Ja tu zinātu, kas tajā cīsiņā iekšā,  
tu to vis neēstu.

Ja tu zinātu, kā tas šķīvis ir mazgāts,  
tu to pēc maltītes nelaižitu.

Ja tu zinātu, kas tavu jaciņu šuva  
un kā ieguva tiesības viņu pārdot,  
tu tajā vis nestraigātu.

Ja tava māte zinātu,  
kas tev vakarā novilks šo jaciņu,  
diez vai būtu laidusi tevi pasaulē.

Ja tu zinātu, kur mana mute maldījusies,  
tu mani vis nebučotu.

Ja tu zinātu, ko mana mute teikusi,  
tu manī vis neklausītos.

Tāpēc apēd to cīsiņu, aizpogā jaciņu,  
samaksājam un braucam pie manis.

Viss, ko tev varu pateikt no sirds,  
ir izsakāms īsi: labu apetīti!

## *Putekļus slaukot*

Telpa ap mani nometa veco ādu,  
tā sakrājās istabas kaktos putekļu vērpetēs.  
Telpa dzīvo vien tālāk un neatceras neko.  
Arī es mācos no viņas – saslauku putekļus,  
eju dušā, noberzēju sev veco ādu.

Jaunā, sārtā un mitrā āda neatceras neko.  
Kā gan citādi es varētu sēdēt tai pašā istabā,  
gulēt tai pašā gultā, iet tajā dušā,  
berzēt sevi ar tām pašām rokām.

Citādi sen jau man bija jānokrīt istabas kaktā,  
jāsabirst putekļos, jānokļūst melnajā plastmasas maisā,  
jāgaida otrdiena vai sestdienā,  
kad atbrauks miskastes mašīna,  
savāks konteinerā un dosies tālāk  
tais pašās, sen zināmās ielās.

Es guļu tai pašā gultā,  
mana piere kā tikko slaucīta grīda,  
mana āda kā rožaina spilvendrāna,  
es neatceros neko.

## *Pieaugušie*

„Neturi muti valā,” saka pieaugušie, „tev zupa uz kreklīņa līst!”

Viņi slauka man lūpas taukainā dvielī un strīdas –

citi šai vecumā paši jau ēdot,

paši noslaukoties un sakot „paldies”,

ciemē ūjai vecumā varot pateikt, kas kamī atsities.

Barojiet mani, pieaugušie,  
jūs, kas paši ēdat tik veikli un daudz.

Kad izaugšu, studēšu jurisprudenci un grāmatvedību,  
spēlēšu vijoli, šahu un tenisu jums par prieku, kā vien vēlaties,  
tikai nevajag pacelt balsi.

„Neturi muti valā,” saka pieaugušie, „klausies:  
kad jūs pāriesiet otrajam tiltam, tad metīsiet vainadziņu,  
pasniegiet pīrāgus, šņabi lielajiem, morsu mazajiem.  
Tad jums uztaisīs vārtus un palaidīs balonus.  
Neskrieniet visiem pa priekšu, smaidiet!”

Barojiet mani, pieaugušie, jūs jau labāk zināt tos tiltus.  
Tantes un onkas no abām pusēm,  
kolēgi, draugi un kursabiedri,  
visi jau šovakar dabūs izteikt savus padomus, novēlējumus.  
Gari, ilgi un laimīgi gadi paies, lai visus tos īstenotu.

„Neturi muti valā,” saka pieaugušie,  
„apgulies, mērīsim asinsspiedienu.  
Ja tu vēl vienreiz līdisi tuvu pie gāzes plīts,  
ja tu vēl vienreiz kaut ko cepsi,  
tad aizsūtīsim uz citu māju, tur tevi baros sveši!”

Barojiet mani, pieaugušie, jūsu vārdus vairs neatceros,  
bet katrs vaibsts jūsu piktajās sejās šķiet pazīstams.

Garus gadus es klausījos, mācījos,  
daudz ko jums varētu pastāstīt,  
tikai vienmēr tās karotes maisās pa vidu –

pusvārdā apklust, pusvārdu norij  
mana mute pavērtā, brīnumu pilnā.

## **Vodni kaplji**

Lepa navada je, da hraniš prekuhano vodo.  
 Sijajen občutek, ko greš na obisk in vidiš,  
 da to navado gojijo tudi drugi.  
 Moj bivši se je motil,  
 to navado je imel za duševno motnjo,  
 zato je vsak dan prinašal ustekleničeno vodo iz trgovine.  
 Metroseksualci in ženske  
 prenašajo to navado iz roda v rod:  
 prekuhano vodo hranijo v čednem kotličku  
 in tako rešijo mnogo presušenih grl v vročih poletnih dneh.

A včasih lahko pomaga tudi neprekuhana voda.  
 Ko me je epidemiologinja vprašala,  
 kje bi se lahko navzel te okužbe,  
 in sem bil že sit naštevanja  
 vseh razuzdanih, ponižujočih prigod,  
 mi je kot rešilni obroč vrgla idejo:  
 »Ste morda pili vodo iz pipe?«  
 »Ja,« sem veselo vzkliknil, »pa sem jo res!«  
 Zmajala je z glavo in požugala s prstom,  
 toda njene oči so toplo zažarele – kot dve vodni kaplji.

## **Zmaga**

Igrajva se igro, v kateri ti lahko zmagaš!  
 Namizni tenis na primer  
 ali orientacijski tek v kalngalskem gozdu.  
 Lahko primerjava svoja lulčka in kozarčke, ki sva jih spila –  
 pripravljen sem sprejeti tvoja pravila.

Rad bi videl nasmešek,  
 ki bi ti razvedril obraz po zmagi.  
 Rad bi videl, kako zadovoljno zaspis,  
 ko vidiš, da ne morem spati –  
 brž ko slišim besede *zmaga*, *dosežek*, *uspeh*,  
 se stresem od groze.

---

***Dober tek!***

Ko bi ti vedel, kaj je v tej klobasi,  
je sploh ne bi jedel.

Ko bi vedel, kako so pomili ta krožnik,  
ga po jedi ne bi polizal.

Ko bi vedel, kdo je sešil tvoj jopič  
in kdo je imel od tega dobiček,  
ga sploh ne bi nosil.

Ko bi tvoja mati vedela,  
kdo ti bo ta jopič nocoj slekel,  
te morda sploh ne bi rodila.

Ko bi ti vedel, kam vse so že zatavala moja usta,  
me sploh ne bi poljubil.

Ko bi vedel, kaj so moja usta rekla,  
me sploh ne bi poslušal.

Zato pojey klobaso, zapni si jopič,  
plačajva in odidiva k meni.

Vse, kar ti lahko rečem iz srca,  
ti povem na kratko: dober tek!

## ***Brisanje prahu***

Prostor okoli mene je odvrgel svojo staro kožo,  
ta se je po kotih nabirala v svaljkih prahu.  
Prostor živi naprej in se ničesar ne spomni.  
Iz tega se lahko nekaj naučim: pobrišem prah,  
se oprham, si zdrgnem staro kožo.

Nova, rožnata, vlažna koža se ničesar ne spomni.  
Le kako bi sicer lahko sedel v isti sobi,  
spal v isti postelji, odhajal pod isto prho,  
se drgnil z istimi rokami.

Sicer bi se moral sesesti v kotu,  
se spremeniti v prah, končati v črni plastični vrečki,  
počakati na torek ali soboto,  
ko bi se pome pripeljal smetarski tovornjak,  
me stlačil v zabojnič in se odpeljal naprej  
po istih, znanah ulicah.

Spim v isti postelji,  
moje čelo je podobno pravkar pobrisanim tlom,  
moja koža je kot rožnata prevleka za blazino,  
jaz pa se ničesar ne spomnim.

## Odrasli

»Zapri usta,« pravijo odrasli, »juha ti kaplja na srajco!«  
 Obrišejo mi usta z mastno brisačo in zagodrnjajo:  
 »Otroci pri tvojih letih jedo že sami,  
 sami se umivajo in znajo reči hvala,  
 pri drugih otrocih tvojih let točno veš, komu so podobni.

Hranite me, odrasli,  
 vi, ki tako spretno in tako veliko jeste.  
 Ko bom velik, bom študiral pravo in računovodstvo,  
 igral bom violino, šah in tenis – kar koli vas bo osrečevalo,  
 samo ne povzdijujte glasu.

»Zapri usta,« pravijo odrasli, »in poslušaj:  
 ko gresta čez drugi most, odvrzita venček,  
 potem postrezita z mesno pito, dajta žganje odraslim, sok otrokom.  
 Potem bosta stopila skozi vrata in baloni bodo spuščeni.  
 Ne tecita pred vsemi, nasmehnita sel!«

Hranite me, odrasli, vi, ki bolje poznate te mostove.  
 Tete in strici po obeh straneh,  
 sodelavci, prijatelji in sošolci,  
 vsi boste nocoj dobili priložnost, da mi zaželite kaj lepega.  
 Minilo bo mnogo dolgih, srečnih let, da se bo vse uresničilo.

»Zapri usta,« pravijo odrasli,  
 »lezi, da ti izmerimo pritisk.  
 Če se boš še kdaj preveč približal plinskemu štedilniku,  
 če si boš še kdaj poskušal kaj ocvreti,  
 te bomo poslali od hiše in hranili te bodo tujci!«

Hranite me, odrasli, ne spomnim se več vaših imen,  
 toda prepoznam vsako potezo vaših jeznih obrazov.  
 Dolga leta sem poslušal in se učil,  
 marsikaj bi vam lahko zdaj povedal,  
 le tiste žlice so mi ves čas v napoto –

prekinjen sredi besede pogoltnem neizrečeno  
 s svojimi razprtimi ustmi, polnimi čudes.

## *Drops of Water*

An excellent habit, to save boiled water.  
An excellent feeling to go for a visit and see  
others indulging this habit.  
My ex was wrong,  
he considered this habit a mental disorder  
bringing bottled water from the shop every day.  
Metrosexuals and women  
inherit this habit from generation to generation:  
the boiled water is kept in a nice kettle  
to save many a parched throat on hot summer days.

Yet there are times when unboiled water can help.  
When the epidemiologist asked,  
where could I have contracted this infection  
and I got tired listing to myself  
all the lewd, humiliating episodes  
she threw me the lifeline of an idea:  
“Have you been drinking tap water perhaps?”  
“Yes,” I cried happy and relieved, “that I surely did!”  
She shook her head and wagged her finger at me,  
yet her eyes sparkled with warmth – two drops of clear water.

## *Victory*

Let's play a game in which you could win!  
Table tennis would do,  
as would orienteering in the Kalngale forest.  
We can compare our weenies or shots we have downed –  
I am ready to accept your rules.

I'd like to see the smile,  
that would brighten your face after the victory.  
I'd like to see how you fall asleep, satisfied,  
leaving me sleepless –  
me, who upon hearing “victory”, “achievement”, “success”,  
just shudders with disgust.

***Bon Appétit!***

If you knew what's in that hot dog,  
you would certainly not eat it.  
If you knew how that plate was washed,  
you would certainly not lick it clean.  
If you knew who sewed your jacket  
and how its sales rights were obtained,  
you would certainly not wear it.  
If your mother knew,  
who will take off your jacket tonight,  
she might not have even borne you.

If you knew where my mouth may have strayed,  
you would certainly not kiss me.  
If you knew what my mouth has said,  
you would certainly not listen.  
So eat your hot dog, button up your jacket,  
let's go ahead and pay and go to my place.  
What I can say to you in all sincerity  
takes just a couple of words: bon appétit!

## **Dusting**

The space around me shed its former skin,  
and it collected in the corners as whirls of dust.  
The space lives on without remembering.  
I try to learn from it: I pick up the dust,  
take a shower, rub off old skin.

The new pink, moist skin remembers nothing.  
How else could I be sitting in that same room,  
sleeping in that same bed, taking that same shower,  
rubbing myself with those same hands.

Otherwise I would have to drop down in the corner,  
turn to dust, end up in a black plastic sack,  
wait for a Tuesday or a Saturday  
when the garbage truck would come  
to put me in a container and then drive on  
to these same familiar streets.

I sleep in that same bed,  
my forehead like a freshly swept floor,  
my skin like a pink pillow-case,  
and I remember nothing.

## ***Adults***

“Close your mouth,” say the adults, “you’re getting soup all over your shirt!”  
They wipe my lips in a greasy towel and mutter:  
other kids your age eat on their own,  
they clean themselves and know to say “thank you”,  
with other kids your age one can tell who takes after whom.

Feed me, adults,  
you who eat with such agility and much.  
When I grow up, I will study law and accounting,  
I will play the violin, chess and tennis – whatever will make you happy,  
just do not raise your voices.

“Close your mouth,” say the adults, “and listen up:  
when you cross that second bridge, toss in the wreath,  
then serve the meat pies, give schnapps to the adults, lemonade to kids.  
Then you will go through a gate and balloons will be released.  
Don’t run ahead of everyone, smile!”

Feed me, adults, you who know more about those bridges.  
Aunts and uncles from both sides,  
colleagues, friends and classmates,  
all will have a chance to come up with good wishes.  
It will take long, happy years to make them all come true.

“Close your mouth,” say the adults,  
“lie down, let’s take your blood pressure.  
If you get close to the stove one more time,  
if you try to fry something there one more time,  
we’ll send you elsewhere and you’ll be fed by strangers!”

Feed me, adults, I no longer remember your names,  
yet I recognize every feature in your cross faces.  
For many long years I listened and learned,  
there is much I could tell you now,  
yet the spoons keep getting in the way –

interrupted mid-word, I swallow it all unsaid,  
with my mouth half-open, my mouth full of wonders.



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# Gian Mario Villalta

Gian Mario Villalta se je rodil leta 1959 v Pordenonu, kjer živi in poučuje na tamkajšnji srednji tehniški šoli. Diplomiral je iz književnosti na Univerzi v Bologni. Je umetniški vodja pordenonske literarne prireditve Pordenonelegge, v okviru katere organizirajo tudi delavnice kreativnega pisanja. Pesnik, pisatelj, literarni kritik, dramatik in urednik je začel svoje pesmi objavljati v literarni reviji *Alfabeta* leta 1986. Njegova literarna dela obsegajo pesniške zbirke *Altro che storie!* (Vse prej kot zgodbe!, 1988), *Vose de vose/Voce di voci* (Glas glasov, 1995; 2009), *Vedere al buio* (Videti ponoči, 2007) in *Vanità della mente* (Nečimnost uma, 2011), za katero je prejel nagrado »Premio Viareggio« za poezijo (2011), prozno delo *Un dolore riconoscente* (Hvaležna bolečina, 2000) ter romana *Tuo figlio* (Tvoj sin, 2004) in *Vita della mia vita* (Življenje mojega življenja, 2006). Uredil in souredil je tudi več zbirk o literarnem ustvarjanju enega najvplivnejših italijanskih pesnikov 20. stoletja Andree Zanzotta ter objavil številne znanstvene članke o njegovi poeziji.

Gian Mario Villalta was born in 1959 in Pordenone, Italy, where he lives and teaches at a *liceo scientifico*. He holds a degree in literature from the University of Bologna and is now the artistic director of the Pordenonelegge, a literary event organized in Pordenone that also features workshops in creative writing. A poet, writer, literary critic, playwright and editor, Villalta began to publish his poetry in the literary magazine *Alfabeta* in 1986. His literary works include books of poetry *Altro che storie!* (All but Stories!, 1988), *Vose de vose/Voce di voci* (The Voice of Voices, 1995; 2009), *Vedere al buio* (Seeing at Night, 2007), and *Vanità della mente* (Vanity of the Mind, 2011), which received the 2011 Premio Viareggio for poetry; a volume of prose *Un dolore riconoscente* (Grateful Pain, 2000) as well as two novels *Tuo figlio* (Your Son, 2004) and *Vita della mia vita* (The Life of my Life, 2006). He has edited and co-edited several volumes on the work of Andrea Zanzotto, one of the most influential Italian poets of the twentieth century, and has also published several academic papers on his poetry.

## ***Kindergarten***

— *Dev'essere stato davvero bellissimo crescere in campagna,  
ai tuoi anni, per tutto quel verde... La libertà... E poi gli animali,  
i coniglietti, i vitellini, i pulcini... Per gli animali, credo,  
soprattutto...  
— Sì, soprattutto per gli animali.*

### **Porcellino**

Gli avevano trovato una palla di crusca nell'intestino, compatta come legno. Mio padre aveva ordinato di scavare una buca e seppellirlo in fondo al campo: era tardi per scolargli il sangue, e poi non si poteva veramente sapere.

Avevamo soltanto iniziato, la terra era dura e non avevamo portato il piccone, quando sono comparsi Morasset e suo figlio, che aveva la mia età ma era malato e aveva ripetuto la terza.

Il padre ha fatto domande.

Siamo tornati contenti, dopo che avevamo rimesso al loro posto e ben calpestato le poche zolle appena intaccate.

### **Coniglietto**

Poi veniva il lavoro fino: l'incisione tra la polpa e la pelle.

Se era perfetta, scuoiarlo era come sfilare un calzino.

Che eri bravo si capiva dalle giunture pulite, senza intaccare i tendini.

All'inizio, però, togliendolo dalla gabbia, non dovevi guardarlo

— solo afferrarlo bene, calare il fendente a mano nuda dietro le orecchie.

Non era tanto il fremito, dopo il colpo, quando entrava nella

morte con una scossa che risaliva il braccio fino alla spalla.

Era l'attimo prima, quando la potenza degli arti si umiliava,

quel cedere, la testa rilassata, come se già sapesse.

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### Vitellino

Gli zoccoli giallini, quasi trasparenti. La lingua  
che fuoriusciva dalle labbra pallide, sigillate, era livida.  
Quando tutto era in ordine veniva fuori tirando le zampe,  
senza bisogno di corde. Era come vederlo arrivare dall'eternità,  
o dalla morte, prima di scuotterlo a testa in giù,  
mettergli il sale in bocca e sentirlo piangere.

### Pulcino

La vecchia con la cerata sulle gambe aveva gli occhiali sporchi  
di grasso e di sangue. Piantava la forbice, strappava. Due grani  
gialli cadevano nel catino.

Non c'erano schiamazzi, né mai luce abbastanza.

La vecchia teneva uniti i lembi del taglio con tre dita. Strofinava  
l'altra mano dentro uno straccio, afferrava ago e filo, già  
pronti, stretti nelle gengive: tre punti, e serrava il nodo, con  
la stessa furia, prima di consegnarlo al bambino, che aveva  
già pronto il successivo – arrogante, non sapeva far altro che  
roteare l'occhio con sdegno, arruffare le piume.

### Gattini

Ne aveva portati due, dagli scavi della nuova casa di là della  
strada, dove aveva partorito, depositandoli davanti alla stalla,  
per mostrarli, lasciando gli altri alle fosse.

Avrebbero avuto migliore sorte, i prescelti, nella stagione difficile che arrivava.  
Dovevo imparare che ne era certa, non perché lo fosse.

### Fratellino

Era necessario tornare per riconoscerlo. Toccava a me. Per tutta  
la strada in auto e poi a piedi, dal parcheggio fino alle sale  
dell'obitorio, sono stato ostaggio di una luce che mi svuotava  
il cervello.

Poi qualcosa che non era sgomento e non era sollievo. *Riconoscere*  
chi? Non era lui, non era lì, non era altrove.

## **Regione**

### Stazione di servizio

Affanno nel fogliame, nell'attesa  
della prima sgrondata di piovasco.  
Tu che sei sceso dall'auto per pagare  
annusi l'aria, alzi il bavero, ti guardi  
nella vetrata mentre ti avvicini.  
La bandiera tentenna nei tiranti.  
Tu alla colonna della benzina  
con la faccia controvento di tre quarti.  
L'uomo prende la carta, l'erba alta  
preme sul cartellone con un paesaggio  
appoggiato tra il marciapiede e il muro.  
Tu e le tue dita che perdono lo schema  
delle cifre da imprimere sulla tastiera.  
Quando riparti (hai pagato, confuso  
– dopo altri due tentativi – in contanti)  
l'uomo è rimasto immobile a guardarti  
come avresti ripreso la strada con quel sorriso.

### Sera

La luce si alza verso il cielo sopra le luci  
e il buio dolce degli edifici  
abbraccia a lungo lo sguardo.  
La luce si alza con un respiro  
e promette a tutti un segreto, quiete profonda, pianto.  
Passano una sull'altra  
facce nelle auto che incroci,  
le guardi, a cosa appartieni questa sera, a chi parli?  
La lingua perduta degli stormi  
che alti si adunano nella luce.  
La lingua dei perduto per una parola non detta,  
per una parola distorta pervenuta all'orecchio.  
Per una volta non sia la ragione o la colpa,  
chiama tu, pronuncia le parole che più non hai detto.  
Non c'è vergogna se trovi nel cielo di questa sera  
fiducia in qualcosa che non conosci,  
e non la vita che si sogna,  
ma qualcosa di tuo nella vita che vedi.  
Adesso componi il numero, adesso chiedi.

## *Kindergarten*

– *Najbrž je bilo res prelepo odraščati na deželi,  
pri tvojih letih, zaradi vsega tistega zelenja ... Svoboda ... Pa živali,  
zajčki, telički, piščančki ... Predvsem zaradi živali,  
se mi zdi ...*  
– *Ja, predvsem zaradi živali.*

### Pujsek

V njegovem črevesju so našli kepo otrobov, čvrsto  
kakor les. Moj oče je ukazal, naj se izkopljje jama  
zanj na robu polja: bilo je prepozno, da bi mu odcedili kri,  
in poleg tega ni bilo mogoče zanesljivo vedeti.  
Komaj začela sva, zemlja je bila trda in nisva prinesla  
krampa, ko se je pojavil Morasset s sinom,  
ki je bil mojih let, a bolan, in je ponavljjal tretji razred.  
Oče je postavljal vprašanja.  
Vrnila sva se zadovoljna, po tistem, ko sva položila nazaj  
na mesto in skrbno poteptala redke, rahlo načete grude.

### Zajček

Potem je prišlo na vrsto natančno delo: zarez med mesom in kožo.  
Če je bil ta dovršen, si ga odrl zlahka, kot bi sezul nogavico.  
O tvoji spremnosti so pričali sklepi z nenačetimi kitami.  
A na začetku, ko si ga vzel iz kletke, ga nisi smel gledati –  
le trdno zgrabiti in z golo roko ostro usekat za ušesi.  
Ni bil toliko tisti trzljaj po udarcu, ko je stopil v smrt  
in je njegov drget prešinil roko tja do ramena.  
Bil je trenutek prej, ko je moč udov popustila,  
tisto vdajanje, sproščena glava, kakor da že ve.

### Teliček

Rumenkasta, skoraj prosojna kopita. Jezik,  
ki je molel izza bledih, stisnjeneh ustnic, je bil modrikast.  
Ko je bilo vse nared, je šel ven, za sabo je vlekel tace,  
vrv ni bila potrebna. Bilo je videti, kot da prihaja iz večnosti  
ali iz smrti, preden si ga obrnil na glavo in stresel,  
mu nasul soli v usta in slišal, kako joče.

### Piščanček

Starka s plahto na kolenih je nosila očala, umazana  
od maščobe in krvi. Zasadila je škarje, razparala. Rumeni  
zrni sta padli v favor.  
Ni bilo slišati čivkanja in nikoli ni bilo dovolj luči.  
Starka je držala skupaj robova ureznine s tremi prsti. Drugo  
roko si je obbrisala v cunjo ter pograbila iglo in nit, ki sta ji že  
tičali med dlesnimi: trije šivi, in zadrgnila je vozel,  
z enakim besom, preden ga je izročila otroku, ki je čakal  
že z naslednjim – bil je nadut, ni znal nič drugega  
kot zaničljivo vrteči oko in mršiti perje.

### Mucki

Prinesla je dva, z gradbišča nove hiše tam  
čez cesto, kjer je skotila, in ju odložila pred hlevom,  
da ju pokaže, ostale pa prepustila jarkom.  
Izbranca naj bi čakala boljša usoda, v težkih časih, ki so prihajali.  
Moral sem spoznati, da je to vedela, in ne, *zakaj* je bilo tako.

### Bratec

Treba se je bilo vrniti, da bi ga prepoznali. Mene je doletelo. Vso  
pot, v avtomobilu in nato med hojo, od parkirišča do prostorov  
v mrtvašnici, sem bil talec neke luči, ki mi je praznila  
možgane.  
In potem nekaj, kar ni bila zbeganost in ne olajšanje. *Prepoznati*  
koga? Ni bil on, ni bil tam, ni bil drugje.

## *Dežela*

Bencinska črpalka

Tesnoba med listjem, čakajoč,  
da se usujejo prve kaplje naliva.  
Ti, ki si stopil iz avta, da bi plačal,  
ovohaš zrak, privihneš ovratnik,  
se ogleduješ v šipi, ko prihajaš bliže.  
Vpeta zastava plapola.  
Ti ob plačilnem avtomatu, obrnjen  
proti vetrju s tremi četrtinami obraza.  
Moški vzame papir, visoka trava  
pritiska na plakat s pokrajino,  
ki sloni med pločnikom in zidom.  
Ti in tvoji prsti, izmika se jim zaporedje  
štrevk, ki jih moraš odtipkati.  
Ko se odpelješ (zmeden si  
– po še dveh poskusih – plačal z gotovino),  
moški ostaja negiven in opazuje,  
kako boš nadaljeval pot s tistim nasmehom.

Večer

Svetloba se dviga proti nebu, nad lučmi,  
in blagi mrak poslopij  
dolgo objema pogled.  
Svetloba se dviga z dihanjem  
in vsem obljudbla skrivnost, globok mir, jok.  
Drug drugega prekrivajo  
obrazi v avtih, ki ti vozijo nasproti,  
gledaš jih, čemu pripadaš ta večer, komu govoriš?  
Izgubljeni jezik jat,  
ki se zbirajo visoko, v svetlobi.  
Jezik izgubljencev zaradi neke neizrečene besede,  
zaradi neke popačene besede, ki je prišla na uho.  
Naj vsaj enkrat ne bo razum ali krivda,  
pokliči ti, izgovori besede, ki jih nisi več izrekel.  
Ne bo sramu, če na nočojšnjem večernem nebu  
najdeš zaupanje v nekaj, česar ne poznaš,  
in ne življenja, ki ga sanjamo,  
temveč nekaj svojega v življenju, ki ga vidiš.  
Zdaj zavrti številko, zdaj vprašaj.

## ***Kindergarten***

— *It must have really been great, growing up in the country,  
at your age, all that greenery... The freedom... And then the animals,  
the baby rabbits, calves, chicks... For the animals, I think, in particular...  
— Yes, in particular for the animals.*

### The Piglet

They found a bran ball in its bowels, as hard  
As wood. My father ordered us to dig a hole and  
To bury it at the end of the field: it was too late to drain its blood,  
And then we couldn't really be sure.  
We had just begun, the soil was stiff and we didn't  
Bring the pick, when Morasset and his son appeared,  
Who was my age, but was ill and had repeated the third grade.  
My father asked questions.  
We returned and felt good, after having put back to their place  
And treading firmly on the few lumps of earth which had hardly been  
touched upon.

### Little Rabbit

Then came delicate work: cutting between the skin and the flesh.  
If it went perfectly, skinning it was like taking off a sock.  
If you were good at it, the joints were cleaned without touching the tendons.  
At the beginning, though, taking it out of the cage, you mustn't look at it  
— Just grab it tight, strike a downward blow with a bare hand behind its ears.  
It wasn't so much the shiver, after the stroke, when it was entering into  
Death with a jerk travelling up your arm all the way to the shoulder.  
It was the moment before, when the strength of the limbs yielded,  
The surrender, its limp head, as if it already knew.

---

### Little Calf

Light yellow hoofs, almost transparent. The tongue  
Coming out of the pale, sealed lips was bluish.  
When everything was ready, it came out pulling its legs,  
With no need for ropes. It was like seeing it emerge from eternity,  
Or from death, before shaking its head down,  
Putting salt into its mouth and hearing it cry.

### Chick

The old woman with oilskin-covered legs had her glasses dirty  
With grease and blood. She thrust the scissors and pulled. Two yellow  
Grains fell into the basin.  
There was no cackle, and never enough light.  
The old woman held together the edges of the cut with three fingers. She rubbed  
The other hand in a cloth, seized needle and thread, which were  
Ready, held tight between her gums: three stitches; and she tightened the  
knot, with  
The same rush, before giving it to the child, who was as yet  
Ready with the next one – arrogant, it wasn't able to do anything but  
Roll its eye with resentment, ruffle its feathers.

### Kittens

She brought two of them, from the excavations for the new house across  
The road, where she had given birth, placing them in front of the cowshed,  
To show them, leaving the others to the pits.  
They were to have a better lot, the chosen ones, in the difficult season that  
was approaching.  
I had to learn that she was sure about it, not *why* she was.

### Little Brother

It was necessary to return to identify him. It was up to me. All  
The way in the car and then on foot, from the parking place up to the mortuary  
Halls, I was hostage to a light which emptied  
My brain.  
Then something came which wasn't dismay and it wasn't relief. *Identify*  
Who? It wasn't him, he wasn't there, he wasn't elsewhere.

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## *The Region*

### Petrol Station

Anxiety in the leaves, in expectation  
Of the first downpours.  
Having got out of the car to pay,  
You smell the air, lift your collar, look at yourself  
In the glass door as you're getting closer.  
The flag halyards are wavering.  
You're in the fuel queue  
With three quarters of your face against the wind.  
The man takes the card, high grass  
Presses on the advertising board, with a landscape  
Leaning between the pavement and the wall.  
You and your fingers that loose track  
Of the numbers to type on the keypad.  
When you leave (confused as you were, you paid  
– After another two attempts – in cash)  
The man, motionless, kept looking at  
How you would resume your way with that smile.

### Evening

The light is rising towards the sky above the lights  
And the sweet darkness of the buildings  
Holds the look long in its embrace.  
The light is rising with a breath  
And promises everyone a secret, profound calm and tears.  
One on top of another faces  
Come and go in the cars passing by,  
You look at them, what do you belong to tonight, who are you talking to?  
The lost language of the flocks  
Gathering high up in the light.  
The language of those lost because of a word unsaid,  
Because of a distorted word that reached the ear.  
For once let it not be right or wrong,  
You call, pronounce the words you stopped saying.  
It isn't a disgrace if you find in tonight's sky  
Trust in something you don't know,  
And not life dreaming about itself,  
But something yours in the life that you see.  
Now dial the number, now ask.





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# Aldo Žerjal

Aldo Žerjal se je rodil leta 1957 v Postojni. Osnovno šolo je obiskoval v Pliskovici in Dutovljah, v Novi Gorici pa je končal poklicno lesno šolo in se zaposlil v tovarni pohištva Krasoprema v Dutovljah. Je pesnik, ki je svoje literarne prispevke začel objavljati konec 70-ih let; od takrat najdemo njegove pesmi v večini slovenskih literarnih revij, kot so *Mentor*, *Sodobnost*, *Problemi* in *Dialogi*, in časopisov ter v drugih medijih, ki objavljojo literaturo. Izdal je šest samostojnih pesniških zbirk: *Obrobljena noč* (1982), *Po pikapolonici* (1989), *Vzpostavljeni stavki* (1995), *Glasbajala* (2000), *Smrtne razlike* (2005) in *Izzabranja* (2009), njegove izbrane pesmi pa so bile objavljene tudi v trijezični zbirki šestih slovenskih pesnikov in pesnic *V skrivne samopoti / On a secret solitary path / Per strade segrete e individuali* (1998). Med priznanja, ki jih je prejel za svoje delo, spadata nagrada zlata ptica (1983) in plaketa Srečka Kosovela (2001). Živi in ustvarja v Pliskovici.

Aldo Žerjal was born in 1957 in Postojna, Slovenia. He went to primary school in Pliskovica and Dutovlje and graduated from the Vocational Secondary School for Carpentry in Nova Gorica, after which he found work at the Krasoprema Furniture Factory in Dutovlje. He is a poet, who began to publish his literary pieces at the end of the 1970s. Since then, we can find his poetry in the majority of the Slovene literary magazines, such as *Mentor*, *Sodobnost*, *Problemi*, and *Dialogi*; journals, and other literature-publishing media. To date he has published six individual collections of poetry: *Obrobljena noč* (Outlined Night, 1982), *Po pikapolonici* (After the Ladybug, 1989), *Vzpostavljeni stavki* (Established Sentences, 1995), *Glasbajala* (Voicemusic, 2000), *Smrtne razlike* (Mortal Differences, 2005), and *Izzabranja* (Behind-the-Reading, 2009). His selected poetry has also been published in the three-lingual collection by six Slovene poets and poetesses, *V skrivne samopoti / On a secret solitary path / Per strade segrete e individuali* (1998). The accolades he received for his literary work include the Zlata ptica award (1983) and the Srečko Kosovel plaque (2001). He lives and works in Pliskovica.

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## *Izzabranja*

Da se ne bi morda v  
srednjih letih sprevrgli  
v umetne knjige, ki so  
vselej lahko samo vrnitve  
vodostaja, zdrs pod jamčenje;  
v jasne opredelitve vrst.  
Izza katerih ni bilo  
prikrivanja branja, ki je samotno  
nedotakljivo sporočilo in ne sme  
zjutraj izgledati kot izzabranja;  
metodična trditev moralistov,  
čeprav je tukaj vse umirjeno, tudi toni.

## *Od tod*

Z leti zaupaš svoji pisavi  
in si je več ne zapisuješ  
na telo, ker paziš nase.  
Čeprav te včasih zanese  
v samo govorico telesa  
in so vsa priporočila prisotnih  
brez pomena; kajti pot od  
govora do zapisa je lahko kratka  
ali pa sumničava, zato si številko  
napišeš na roko. Potem, ko jo rabiš,  
pogledaš in vidiš, da je roka narobe  
obrnjena in da so vsi predali  
prazni.

---

## Črta

Ko zrem v nebo, ohranjam  
pred sabo tvoje prste in nohte  
na njih, takrat vem, da tudi  
ti prav tako gledaš iste zvezde;  
vse skupaj zveni kot kliše, ko  
take in podobne sestave lahko  
bereš mimogrede: na avtobusu  
ali med čakanjem nanj.

Zelo domiselno bi bilo, da sploh  
ne bi brali, mogoče bi bili manj  
zlobni in včasih brez zlomljenega  
nosu; pokazali bi, da je premikanje  
rib pravzaprav ena sama črta.

## *Na naše veke*

Na veke je in bo v nočeh  
legala Glasba na naše veke: otroške  
snežno svetle, nabreklo rdeče,  
ženske in moške veke; zgubane,  
stare in mirne, kakor okamnele,  
a ne kamnite; pozlačene, ali  
res zlate, ali res mrtve; na  
vse te v nočeh lega Glasba,  
ki smo jo osamili, da lahko  
tako krepi voljo do življenja.  
Pomagamo ji z lažjimi električnimi  
sunki, da preživi in na veke  
lega na naše veke.

## **Tišina**

Da ne rečem najprej, kar je izgubljeno,  
bom rekel: zdaj je bila beseda.  
Kaj bi si še lahko žeeli: da ne potrebuje  
večje hiše kakor prej ali še prostornejše  
v globeli. Pojdite domov in vsaka  
vaša hiša bo večja, ko boste spregovorili besedo  
za nazaj in kmalu prenehali,  
da Vas ne bi prijavili k tišini,  
ko takrat ljudje vzamejo s seboj  
skoraj vse stvari in pobegnejo v zdaj.

## **Pesem**

Včasih si opora samemu sluhu  
in si breztežna; samo sapa v grlu,  
ki je moja sipka sled v razsulu  
in prhka mati v vsezvočju Konca.  
... In brez kraja rojeva hčere,  
ki se same kličejo v imena,  
v pare rož zaradi rojstva ...

## **Nekaj na čistem**

Z leti si vse bolj svoboden,  
kot skelet je lahka tvoja duša:  
... nezadržana v upanju  
in v obupu je nevzdržna  
kot sipka slika peska  
v puščavi, da lahko samo  
še veter kaj stori, popravi.

Potem na čistem nekaj se lotevaš;  
kot dan, ki je samo curek iz noči,  
obarvan s klijočimi in kamnitimi  
očmi.

## ***Behind-the-Reading***

In middle age, be careful  
not to turn into  
those artificial books  
that have always been nothing but the restitution  
of the water level, a slide below security;  
into a clear definition of species.  
Behind them, there was never  
any hidden reading, which is a lonely,  
untouchable message and can't seem  
like behind-the-reading in the morning;  
a methodic statement of moralists,  
although everything is calm here, even the tones.

## ***From Here***

After the years, you now trust your handwriting  
and stop putting it down on your  
body, because you take care of yourself.  
Although sometimes you get caught  
into the body language itself,  
and all recommendations of the present ones  
are meaningless; for the road  
from talking to writing can be short  
or suspicious, so you write a number  
on your hand. Then, when you need it,  
you look, and you see that the hand  
is inverted and that all the drawers  
are empty.

## *A Line*

When I look into the sky, I keep  
your fingers and your fingernails  
before me, then I know that you  
look at the same stars;  
it sounds like a cliché, for you can  
read such compositions incidentally: on a bus  
or while waiting for it.

It would be very wise not to read  
at all, maybe we would be less  
mean and sometimes without broken  
noses; we'd show that the movement  
of the fish is, in fact, nothing but a single line.

## *On Our Lids*

Through always open lids of time  
Music has lain and will lie on our lids in the nights: childish,  
snowy bright, swollen red,  
women's and men's lids; wrinkled,  
old and calm, like petrified,  
but not stony; gilt, or  
actually gold, or actually dead;  
on all of those, Music lies in the nights,  
Music which we have isolated, so  
it can strengthen the will to live.  
With mild electric shocks we  
help it survive and lie through the  
lids of time on our lids.

## *Silence*

Not to say what is lost firstly,  
I'll say: now there has been a word.  
What more could we want: that it doesn't need  
a bigger house than before, or wider  
in the hollow. Go home, and each of your  
houses will be bigger, as you will speak a word  
for the bygones and soon stop,  
not to be enrolled to silence,  
because in that moment, people take almost  
everything with them and run off to now.

## *A Poem*

Sometimes, you support the hearing itself  
and you are weightless; just a breath in my throat  
which is my sandy trace in the breakdown,  
and a loose mother in the whole-consonance of the End.  
...And endlessly, she gives birth to her daughters  
who call their names themselves,  
who call their flower pairs because of the birth ...

## *Something From Scratch*

Through the years, you're becoming more and more free,  
your soul is light like a skeleton:  
...irrepressible in hope  
and unbearable in despair  
like a grainy picture of sand  
in the desert where only the wind  
can do, can mend something.

Then from scratch you set about something;  
like a day that is nothing but a jet from the night,  
coloured with sprouting and stony  
eyes.

*Translated by Aleksandra Kocmut*



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# Gostje

# Vilenice 2012

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*Vilenica*

*2012 Guests*

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# Zineb El Rhazoui

Zineb El Rhazoui se je rodila v Maroku. Je pisateljica, novinarka in borka za človekove pravice. Je soustanoviteljica Gibanja za posameznikove svoboščine (Mouvement Alternatif pour les Libertés Individuelles – MALI), ki je postalo širše znano po organizaciji piknika v času ramadana – islamskega svetega postnega meseca – v znak protesta zoper zakon, ki prepoveduje uživanje hrane in pičače v času od sončnega vzhoda do zahoda. Diplomirala je iz sociologije religije na Visoki šoli za družbene vede (EPHE) v Parizu in leta 2010 v reviji *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, ki jo je maroški režim prepovedal, objavila več strokovnih člankov o verskih manjšinah in marabujski sekti. Med njena literarna dela spadata prispevek k zbirki *Les 1000 unes de Charlie Hebdo* (1000 naslovnic satiričnega tednika Charlie Hebdo, 2011) in kratka politična zgodba *Ahmed le « businessman »* (»Poslovnež« Ahmed), objavljena v zbirki *Nouvelles du Maroc* (Novice iz Maroka, 2011). Zaradi ostrega političnega preganjanja v domovini se je pridružila mreži mest zatočišč za pregnjane pisatelje (International Cities of Refuge Network – ICORN), v okviru katere od leta 2011 biva in deluje v Ljubljani.

Zineb El Rhazoui was born Morocco. She is a writer, journalist, and a human rights activist. She co-founded the Alternative Movement for Individual Liberties (MALI). The movement gained broad notoriety after staging a picnic during Ramadan – the Islamic holy month of fasting, to protest against the law prohibiting eating and drinking during daylight hours. She has a degree in sociology of religion from the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EPHE) in Paris and has published several research papers on religious minorities and the marabout cult in *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, which was banned by the Moroccan regime in 2010. Her literary works include a contribution to the collection of stories *Les 1000 unes de Charlie Hebdo* (The 1000 Covers of the Satirical Weekly Charlie Hebdo, 2011) and the political short story *Ahmed le « businessman »* (Ahmed “the Businessman”) featured in *Nouvelles du Maroc* (News from Morocco, 2011). After being subject to severe politically motivated harassment in her native country, she joined the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN), as a member of which she has been living and working in Ljubljana since 2011.

## Ahmed le « businessman »

A Rabat, *Taqaddoum* a la réputation d'être un quartier de businessmen. On est pourtant loin des gratte-ciels de Wall-Street ou de Shinjuku. Ici, les maisons dépassent rarement les 4 étages, et seuls quelques axes tracent un semblant d'urbanisme. Ni assez moderne pour attirer les hommes d'affaires, ni assez pittoresque pour figurer dans les guides touristiques, le quartier est celui des gens ordinaires, ouvriers, petits fonctionnaires, artistes, commerçants, chômeurs, soldats, artisans... Tous les matins, des autobus bondés quittent *Taqaddoum* pour décharger leur cargaison humaine dans les pôles administratifs, industriels ou commerciaux de la ville. A la même heure, des essaims de femmes en djellaba, foulard noué sur la tête et porte-monnaie à la main, pressent le pas pour traverser la route qui sépare *Taqaddoum* de *Souissi*, le quartier huppé où habitent les puissants du pays. Cuisinières, nounous ou femmes de ménages chez les riches, elles doivent s'activer pour servir le petit-déjeuner à des gens importants, elles côtoient le faste le plus opulent la journée pour rentrer à *Taqaddoum* au crépuscule, en pressant le pas pour aller servir les restes du dîner qu'elles emportent dans des sacs en plastique à leur familles.

Au sud, à la lisière du quartier de *Souissi*, l'ancien *Taqaddoum* qui fleure bon les années 60 ressemble à toutes ces médinas postindépendance, ces villes-nouvelles autochtones où une architecture pittoresque s'est adaptée aux besoins de circulation des voitures. Derrière des façades Potemkine de maisons jaunâtres ou rose barbe-à-papa dilué à la chaux, se cache un enchevêtrement de blocs de ciment couleur poussière. Plus au fond, un coulis de taudis en briques se déverse sur le fleuve *Bouregreg* qui délimite le quartier au nord. Là, tout ornement de façade est superflu, une jungle urbaine où seule la prédatation de l'espace façonne les constructions. Dans cette excroissance mutante du vieux quartier, de vingt ans son aîné, c'est toute la laideur des années 80 qui défigure le flanc de la vallée du fleuve. *Taqaddoum*, progrès en arabe, est l'avatar dégénéré d'une modernité mal digérée. En vingt ans seulement, les arbres ont disparu, les avenues ont rétréci, et des ersatz de matériaux de construction ont fait leur apparition. Explosion démographique, corruption, exode rural, l'absence de politique sociale de Hassan II avait déjà déclenché la bombe à retardement, vingt ans auparavant. Aujourd'hui, c'est le règne de l'informel, de l'esbroufe et du système D, un abysse sépare l'Etat des damnés de cette zone. Pas de bâtiments administratifs, ni de signalisation routière, ni même de panneaux publicitaires. Ici, dans des bicoques peintes en vert, des pharmaciennes voilées vendent la pilule contraceptive sous le manteau, et des cyber-cafés d'étage autorisent des gamins à se masturber en groupe devant du porno américain. C'est que businessman, *beznass* en darja<sup>1</sup>, veut dire dealer.

<sup>1</sup> Arabe marocain.

Ce 19 juin, tous les businessmen de *Tagaddoum* nous attendent. Ils ne sont pas seuls. Il y a aussi des camés, des voyous de quartier, des repris de justice, et toute la faune humaine que les tréfonds des bidonvilles ont pu vomir. Pour une fois, l'Etat est là, à leurs côtés, leur distribue des œufs, des drapeaux et des portraits du roi. Armes blanches et bâtons, sinon fournis, sont du moins tolérés. Les œufs, c'est pour nous les jeter à la figure, les drapeaux et les portraits, c'est pour annoncer la couleur, quant au reste, disons que c'est pour nous intimider.

Le taxi me dépose en bas de l'avenue principale.

– Je ne peux pas aller plus loin, c'est bloqué.

– Je sais.

Je scanne rapidement des yeux le dispositif de sécurité : fourgons de police et des forces auxiliaires, motards, barricades. Ça va cogner. Un détail me rassure toutefois, les *merda*<sup>2</sup> aux combis vert douteux qui leur a valu leur surnom ont leurs casques mais pas leur armure de Robocop. Ça va. Je presse le pas pour atteindre le château d'eau, point de rencontre avec les autres militants. Nous savons tous qu'une horde déchaînée aux velléités revanchistes nous attend de pied ferme, mais c'est trop tard, nous devons y aller.

Il y a deux jours, quelques heures avant le discours du roi, nous savions déjà à quoi nous en tenir. Les *moqaddems*, ces agents d'autorité qui font partie du folklore national sillonnaient les villes du royaume sur leurs mobylettes Peugeot 103 pour appeler les gens à descendre exprimer « leur joie spontanée » immédiatement après l'allocution royale. Comme on louait jadis les services des pleureuses pour les enterrements, on peut aujourd'hui s'offrir une foule de supporters qui s'époumonera à crier des slogans panégyriques à volonté aussi longtemps que le commanditaire continuera à miser. « Vive le roi ! », quel sésame magique ! Le simple fait de le psalmodier peut s'avérer plus efficace que la prière, non seulement on est rétribué sonnant trébuchant, mais qui sait ? On peut même être gratifié d'un agrément de transport ou de l'envoi d'un proche à la Mecque si le sujet se montre suffisamment enthousiaste et surtout s'il a l'insigne chance de se faire remarquer par son maître. A Rabat, ville impériale entourant les remparts de la cité interdite où le roi règne en monarque absolu, le syndrome de cendrillon fait des ravages.

Ils sont encore loin, mais je les vois, hissés sur des camions, brandissant des grands drapeaux rouges frappés d'un sceau de Salomon vert au centre. La dorure du cadre du grand portrait du roi, kitchissime esthétique du trône, jure avec la carcasse bleu pétrole du camion où il est accroché. Je ne peux m'empêcher de noter que les drapeaux sont neufs et le tissu de bonne qualité, ils ne peuvent provenir que des réserves logistiques de la commune urbaine. Mais pourquoi diable est-ce que je traque ces détails,

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<sup>2</sup> Agents des forces auxiliaires chargés de réprimer les manifestations au Maroc.

comme si je cherchais encore à me prouver qu'il s'agit d'une manifestation préfabriquée ? Moi, je n'ai jamais cru à cette farce. C'est aux autres de s'en rendre compte, ça saute aux yeux enfin. Les autres, ce sont ces crédules qui prennent encore le discours des médias officiels pour argent comptant, ceux qui accréditent la thèse d'un pays divisé entre ceux qui veulent la liberté et ceux qui veulent le statut quo. Ils ignorent que la liberté est indissociable, et ignorent surtout que le *makhzen*<sup>3</sup> est un vieillard repoussant qui ne peut plus s'accorder les faveurs de l'amour qu'en payant.

Voilà à quoi ressemble un rassemblement de *Baltagia*<sup>4</sup> au Maroc. Certes, le mot vient d'Egypte, mais toute cette mélasse humaine a l'air si local. Elle me fait penser à une fantasia des temps modernes, les chevaux sont remplacés par des camions, et les élégants exercices de style équestres de jadis par des gesticulations de hooligans nourris au raï et à la frustration. Après tout, le but reste le même, la démonstration de force. Tous ces drapeaux, cet étalage du culte de la personnalité et de la sainte trinité marocaine : Dieu, la Patrie, le Roi, me renvoient à l'imagerie d'une autre époque dont on a convaincu le peuple, la marche verte. C'est que le national monarchisme a une esthétique. Plus de 35 ans auparavant, les *mogaddems* avaient déjà distribué des drapeaux, des corans et des portraits de Hassan II à des centaines de milliers de Marocains pour marcher sur le Sahara espagnol. Aujourd'hui, la fresque paraît biblique, elle est partout, même sur les billets de 100 dirhams distribués aux patriotes occasionnels plus discrètement que le reste. J'ai ouï-dire que l'Etat allouait un budget de 300 dh<sup>5</sup> à chaque *baltagi*, mais que les agents d'autorité empochaient la différence. Dans certaines villes, le cachet ne dépasse guère les 30 dh, mais ça, c'est une autre histoire. Grâce à un dispositif makhzenien tentaculaire, le mythe de l'union nationale libératrice est gravé dans le marbre, les écoliers marocains, après avoir récité l'hymne national, apprennent le coran et le serment de la marche verte dans des salles de classe où le portrait du roi veille au-dessus du tableau noir. Le souvenir d'autres épopées, celle du Rif d'Abdelkrim ou de Bou Gafer des Aït Atta, a soigneusement été effacé des mémoires. Au Maroc, il ne peut y avoir d'héroïsme qui ne porte les armoiries du trône. Au mépris des milliers d'anonymes morts en lutte contre la colonisation, l'Histoire officielle du Maroc n'accorde le crédit de l'indépendance qu'au Mouvement nationaliste, et évidemment à la monarchie. En 1956, la machine de propagande était déjà en marche depuis longtemps, en quelques décennies seulement, les Alaouites<sup>6</sup> ont réussi à faire oublier aux Marocains que ce sont eux qui avaient ouvert la porte à la France. Plus

<sup>3</sup> Et. « magasin », terme péjoratif utilisé par les Marocains pour désigner l'Etat féodal.

<sup>4</sup> Mercenaires.

<sup>5</sup> Dirhams marocains. 1 euro = 11 Dh.

<sup>6</sup> La dynastie régnante au Maroc.

de cinquante ans plus tard, ce sont encore eux qui lui ouvrent des fenêtres d'investissement, il y a eu une décolonisation, mais pas d'indépendance. Au Maroc, il y a un vrai problème de mémoire.

## »Poslovnež« Ahmed

V Rabatu je *Taqaddoum* poznan kot četrt poslovnežev. Vendar smo daleč od nebotičnikov Wall Streeta ali Šindžukuja. Tukajšnje stavbe redko presegajo štiri nadstropja in le nekaj glavnih cest začrtuje približek urbanizma. Četrtni dovolj moderna, da bi pritegnila poslovneže, niti dovolj slikovita, da bi se znašla v turističnih vodnikih; to je četrt navadnih ljudi, delavcev, nižjih uradnikov, umetnikov, trgovcev, brezposelnih, vojakov, obrtnikov ... Vsako jutro se nabito polni avtobusi odpeljejo iz četrti *Taqaddoum* in raztovorijo svoj človeški tovor v administrativnih, industrijskih ali trgovskih središčih mesta. Istočasno trume žensk v dželabah, z ruto na glavi in denarnico v rokah, pospešijo korak, da bi prečkale cesto, ki ločuje *Taqaddoum* od *Souissi*, imenitne četrti, kjer živijo vplivnejši te države. Kot kuharice, varuške ali gospodinjske pomočnice bogatih se morajo podvzitati, da pomembnejšem postrežejo zajtrk; čez dan se srečujejo z največjim razkošjem, da se potem v mraku vrnejo v *Taqaddoum*, hiteč, da ostanke večerje, ki jih nosijo v plastičnih vrečkah, postrežejo svojim družinam.

Na jugu, na obrobju četrti *Souissi*, je stari del *Taqaddouma*, ki močno diši po šestdesetih letih, podoben vsem tistim poosamosvojitvenim medinam<sup>1</sup>, avtohtonim novim mestom, kjer se je slikovita arhitektura prilagodila potrebam cestnega prometa. Za Potemkinovimi pročelji hiš rumenkaste ali rožnate barve sladkorne pene, razredcene v apnu, se skriva zmešnjava cementnih opek pepelnate barve. Bolj zadaj se brozga opečnatih podrtij razliva v reko *Bou Regreg*, ki zamejuje četrt na severu. Tam je vsakršna okrašenost fasade odveč, urbana džungla, kjer je oblikovanje stavb podrejeno le plenjenju prostora. V tem mutantskem izrastku stare četrti, dvajset let starejše od njega, je vsa grdota osemdesetih, ki kazi bočni del rečne doline. *Taqaddoum*, ki v arabščini pomeni napredek, je degeneriran avatar slabo usvojene modernosti. V le dvajsetih letih so drevesa izginila, avenije so se zožile, pojavili pa so se nadomestki gradbenih materialov. Demografska eksplozija, korupcija, izseljevanje s podeželja in odsotnost socialne politike Hasana II. so sprožili bombo s časovnim vžigalnikom že dvajset let prej. Danes vladajo siva ekonomija, blefiranje in iznajdljivost; državo od pogubljencev tega predela ločuje prepad. Ni upravnih poslopij, ni prometne signalizacije, kot tudi reklamnih panojev ne. Tu v zeleno pobaranah podrtijah zakrite lekarnarke na skrivaj prodajajo kontracepcijske tablete, spletnje kavarne v zgornjem nadstropju pa pustijo mulcem, da skupinsko masturbirajo ob gledanju ameriških pornofilmov. Poslovnež, *beznass* v dialektu darija<sup>2</sup>, pomeni diler.

<sup>1</sup> Arabski izraz za mesto, zdaj mestno jedro starih orientalskih mest, ki so v izrazitem nasprotju s sodobnimi mestnimi četrtmi evropskega videza [op. prev.].

<sup>2</sup> Maroška arabščina [op. avt.].

19. junija nas vsi poslovneži *Taqaddouma* čakajo. Niso sami. Tu so tudi narkomani, četrtni huligani, delinkventni povratniki in vsa človeška favna, kar so je lahko izbruhnile globine slumov. Za spremembo je država tam, ob njih, razdeljuje jim jajca, zastave in portrete kralja. Hladno orožje in palice so, če že ne priskrbljeni, vsaj tolerirani. Jajca so za to, da se jih meče v obraz, zastave in portreti za razkrivanje namer, kar pa se tiče ostalega, recimo, da je namenjeno temu, da nas prestraši.

Taksi me odloži na koncu glavne avenije.

– Dalje ne morem, zaprto je.

– Vem.

Z očmi na hitro preletim razporeditev varnostnih sil: kombiji policije in pomožnih vojaških sil, motoristi, barikade. Vroče bo. Nekaj me vendarle pomiri, pripadniki *merde*<sup>3</sup> v umazanih zelenih kombinezonih, ki so jim prislužili njihov vzdevek, nosijo svoje čelade, in ne robokopskih oklepov. Dobro. Pospešim korak, da dosežem vodni stolp, zbirno točko z drugimi borci. Vsi vemo, da nas pobesnela horda z maščevalnimi nagibi odločno čaka, a prepozno je, moramo iti tja.

Pred dvema dnevoma, nekaj ur pred kraljevim govorom, nam je bila situacija že kristalno jasna. *Moqaddemi*, agenti oblasti, ki so del nacionalne folklore, so podolgem in počez prevozili mesta kraljevine na svojih mopedih Peugeot 103, da bi ljudi pozvali, naj pridejo izrazit »svoje spontano veselje« takoj po kraljevem nagovoru. Kot se je nekoč najemalo žalovalke za pogrebe, si lahko danes človek privošči množico podpornikov, ki na ves glas po mili volji kričijo slavospevne slogane tako dolgo, dokler tih družabnik vлага denar. »Živel kralj!«, Kakšna čarobna formula! Že samo žebranje teh besed se lahko izkaže za učinkovitejše od molitve, ne le, da je poplačano z novci, a kdo ve? Nagrada je lahko tudi prevozno dovoljenje ali pošiljanje bližnjih v Meko, če se osebek izkaže za dovolj zavzetega, predvsem pa, če ima posebno srečo, da ga opazi njegov gospodar. V Rabatu, kraljevem mestu, ki obdaja obzidja prepovedanega mesta, kjer vlada kralj kot absolutni monarh, sindrom pepelke povzroča veliko opustošenje.

Daleč so še, a vidim jih, kako se dvigajo iz kamionov, vihteč velike rdeče zastave z zelenim Salomonovim pečatom v sredi. Pozlačenost okvirja z velikim portretom kralja, estetski kič prestola se tepe s petrolejsko modrim ogrodjem kamiona, na katerega je obešen. Ne morem si pomagati, da ne bi opazila, da so zastave nove, blago pa kvalitetno, prihajajo lahko le iz logističnih zalog mestnih oblasti. A zakaj za vraga prezim na te podrobnosti, kot da bi si še vedno skušala dokazati, da gre za zrežirano manifestacijo? Sama nisem nikoli verjela tej farsi. Drugi so tisti, ki morajo to dognati, saj navsezadnje bode v oči. Drugi, lahkovrneži, ki še vedno nasedajo diskurzu uradnih medijev, tisti, ki utrujujejo tezo o državi, razdeljeni na tiste, ki si želijo svobode, in tiste,

<sup>3</sup> Agenti pomožnih vojaških sil, zadolženi za zatrtje demonstracij v Maroku [op. avt.].

ki želijo ohraniti status quo. Ne zavedajo se, da je svoboda nedeljiva, predvsem pa se ne zavedajo, da je *makhzen*<sup>4</sup> oduren starec, ki si lahko ljubezensko naklonjenost privošči le še tako, da jo plača.

Takole je videti shod *Baltagie*<sup>5</sup> v Maroku. Seveda, beseda prihaja iz Egipta, a vsa ta kaotična masa ljudi ima tako lokalen pridih. Spomnila me je na moderno različico fantasie<sup>6</sup>; konje so zamenjali kamioni, elegantne jahalne vaje v slogu iz nekdanjih časov pa gestikulacije huliganov, pitanih z raï glasbo<sup>7</sup> in frustracijami. Naposled cilj ostaja enak, razkazovanje moči. Vse te zastave, paradiranje s kultom osebnosti in sveto maroško trojico: Bogom, Domovino, Kraljem, me spominjajo na podobe neke druge epopeje, v katero se je prepričalo ljudi, Zeleni pohod. Državni monarhizem ima čut za estetiko. Pred več kot 35 leti so *moqaddemi* že delili zastave, Korane in portrete Hasana II. na sto tisoč Maročanom, da bi šli nad Špansko Saharo. Danes se legenda zdi biblična, povsod je, celo na bankovcih za 100 dirhamov, ki jih razdeljujejo priložnostnim patriotom bolj diskretno kot vse ostalo. Slišala sem govorice, da je država dodelila 300 dh<sup>8</sup> vsakemu pripadniku *baltagie*, a so agenti oblasti razliko pospravili v svoj žep. V nekaterih mestih plačilo znaša le nekaj malega čez 30 dh, a to je druga zgodba. Zahvaljujoč razraščenim lovkam makhzenske mašinerije je mit osvobodilne državne enotnosti vgraviran v marmor; maroški šolarji se, še preden recitirajo državno himno, naučijo Koran in prisego Zelenega po-hoda v šolskih učilnicah, kjer nad šolsko tablo bdi portret kralja. Spomin na druge epopeje, epopeje Abd El Krima v Rifu ali berberskega plemena Aït Atta pri Bou Gaferju, je bil skrbno izbrisani. V Maroku tisti, ki ne nosi kraljevega grba, ne more biti heroj. Kljub tisočim anonimnim mrtvim, ki so se borili proti kolonizaciji, uradna zgodovina Maroka pripisuje zasluge za neodvisnost le Nacionalnemu gibanju in seveda monarhiji. Leta 1956 je propagandni aparat že dolgo deloval; v le nekaj desetletjih so Alaviti<sup>9</sup> uspeli izbrisati iz spominov Maročanov, da so bili oni tisti, ki so odprli vrata Franciji. Več kot petdeset let pozneje so ponovno oni tisti, ki ji odpirajo okna investiranja; dekolonizacija se je zgodila, neodvisnost pa ne. V Maroku obstaja resen problem spomina.

*Prevedla Špela Bibić*

<sup>4</sup> Izvorno pomeni skladišče, slabšalni izraz, ki ga Maročani uporabljajo za fevdalno državo [op. avt.].

<sup>5</sup> Plačanci [op. avt.].

<sup>6</sup> Borilna igra na konju, znana v severni Afriki in Arabiji [op. prev.].

<sup>7</sup> Družbeno angažirana ljudska glasba, ki izvira iz Alžirije in med drugim kritizira odnos evropskih kolonij do domačega prebivalstva [op. prev.].

<sup>8</sup> Maroški dirham. 1 evro = 11 dh [op. avt.].

<sup>9</sup> Vladajoča dinastija v Maroku [op. avt.].

## Ahmed the “Businessman”

In Rabat, *Taqaddoum* has the reputation of being a district of businessmen. Yet we are far from the skyscrapers of Wall Street or Shinjuku. Here, the buildings rarely exceed four floors and only a few main roads give some semblance of urbanism. Not modern enough to attract business people, nor picturesque enough to be featured in tourist guides, this is the district of ordinary people, workers, low-level officials, artists, shopkeepers, the unemployed, soldiers, craftsmen... Every morning, packed buses leave *Taqaddoum* to unload their human cargo in the city's administrative, industrial or commercial zones. At the same time, swarms of women in djellabas, scarves tied around their heads and wallets in hand, quicken their pace to cross the road which separates *Taqaddoum* from *Souissi*, the posh district that is home to the powerful of the country. As cooks, nannies or housekeepers to the rich, they have to make haste to serve breakfast to important people; by day, they come into contact with the most opulent of splendours, only to return to *Taqaddoum* at dusk, hurrying back to serve the dinner leftovers they are carrying in plastic bags to their families.

In the south, at the edge of the *Souissi* district, the old *Taqaddoum*, which has a strong sixties flavour, resembles all those post-independent medinas, the autochthonous new towns where a picturesque architecture has adapted to the needs of road traffic. Behind the Potemkin façades of houses, yellowish or candyfloss pink diluted with lime, hides a tangle of cement blocks the colour of dust. Further in, a stream of brick hovels flows into the River *Bou Regreg* which demarcates the district in the north. There, all ornament of façade is superfluous, an urban jungle where buildings are modelled only by the predation of space. In this mutant excrescence of the old district, twenty years its senior, is all the ugliness of the 80s, disfiguring the flank of the river valley. *Taqaddoum*, progress in Arabic, is the degenerated avatar of a badly assimilated modernity. In only twenty years' time, the trees have disappeared, the avenues have narrowed and the ersatz of building materials have appeared. Demographic explosion, corruption, rural exodus, the absence of social politics under Hassan II have already set off the delay-action bomb twenty years ago. Today, it is the reign of the informal economy, bluff and wangling; an abyss separates the State from the damned of this area. No administrative buildings, nor traffic signals, nor even billboards. Here, in shacks painted green, veiled women pharmacists sell contraception pills under the counter and the cyber-café upstairs allow boys to masturbate in groups while watching American porn. Businessman, *beznass* in darija<sup>1</sup>, means dealer.

<sup>1</sup> Moroccan Arabic [Author's Note].

On 19 June, all the businessmen of *Taqaddoum* are waiting for us. They are not alone. There are also junkies, district hooligans, habitual criminals and all the human fauna that the depths of slums could spew out. For a change, the State is there, by their side, distributing eggs, flags and portraits of the king. Cold weapons and sticks are, if not provided, at least tolerated. The eggs are for throwing in the face, the flags and portraits are for announcing intentions, as for the rest, let's say its purpose is to intimidate us.

The taxi drops me off at the end of the main avenue.

– I can't go any further, it's blocked.

– I know.

I quickly scan the deployment of the security forces: police and auxiliary forces vans, motorcyclists, barricades. Things are going to get ugly. Something reassures me nevertheless, the *merda*<sup>2</sup> in their dirty green suits, which earned them their nickname, are wearing their helmets but not their Robocop armour. Okay. I quicken my pace to reach the water tower, the meeting point with the other militants. We all know that a furious horde with revanchist inclinations defiantly awaits us, but it is too late, we have to go there.

Two days ago, a few hours before the king's speech, we already knew where we stood. The *moqaddems*, agents of the authorities which are part of the national folklore, drove all over the cities of the kingdom on their Peugeot 103 mopeds to ask people to come down and express "their spontaneous joy" immediately after the king's address. The same way that the services of weepers could be hired in the past, today one can get themselves a crowd of supporters who shout themselves hoarse crying out panegyric slogans at their will, as long as the silent partner continues to invest. "Long live the king!", what a magical formula! The simple act of chanting it can prove to be more effective than a prayer, besides being paid in hard cash, but who knows? The reward can also be a transport authorisation or a chance to send a loved-one to Mecca if the subject proves enthusiastic enough and above all, if they have the incredible luck of getting themselves noticed by their master. In Rabat, the imperial city surrounding the ramparts of the forbidden city, where the king reigns as absolute monarch, the Cinderella syndrome wreaks havoc.

They are still far, but I see them, rising from the trucks, brandishing big red flags with the green Seal of Salomon in the centre. The gilt of the frame with the large portrait of the king, aesthetic kitsch of the throne, clashes with the petrol blue of the truck's framework that it hangs from. I cannot help myself noticing that the flags are new and the fabric of good quality, they cannot come from anywhere else but the logistic reserves of the

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<sup>2</sup> Agents of auxiliary forces, responsible for suppressing the demonstrations in Morocco [Author's Note].

city authorities. But why the hell do I hunt for these details, as if I were still trying to prove to myself that this was a prefabricated manifestation? Personally, I have never believed in this farce. It is the others who need to realize it, it is obvious, after all. The others, the credulous people who still buy into the discourse of the official media, the people who support the thesis of a country divided between those who want freedom and those who want the status quo. They do not realize that freedom is indivisible and, above all, do not realize that the *makhzen*<sup>3</sup> is a repulsive old man who is no longer able to get favours of love other than by paying.

This is what the gathering of the *Baltagia*<sup>4</sup> in Morocco resembles. Of course, the word comes from Egypt, but all this chaotic jumble of people has such a local air. It makes me think of a modern-day fantasia<sup>5</sup>; the horses have been replaced by trucks and the elegant equestrian exercises in style of the old times by the gesticulations of hooligans, fed on rai music<sup>6</sup> and frustration. In the end, the goal remains the same, the demonstration of force. All these flags, this parade of the personality cult and the Moroccan holy trinity: God, the Homeland, the King, takes me back to the imagery of another epic which was sold to the people, the Green March. The national monarchy has a sense of aesthetics. More than 35 years ago, the *mo-qaddems* were already distributing flags, Qurans and portraits of Hassan II to hundreds of thousands of Moroccans to march on the Spanish Sahara. Today, the legend seems biblical, it is everywhere, even on the 100 dirham bills distributed to casual patriots more discreetly than all the rest. I have heard rumours that the State has allocated a budget of 300 Dh<sup>7</sup> to each *baltagi*, but agents of the authorities have pocketed the difference. In some cities, the fee barely exceeds 30 Dh, but that is another story. Because of the *makhzen*'s network of far-reaching tentacles, the myth of the liberating national union is engraved in marble; before having recited the national hymn, Moroccan school children learn the Quran and the oath of the Green March in classrooms, where the king's portrait watches over from above the blackboard. The memory of other epics, that of Abd el-Krim in the Rif or the Aït Atta in Bou Gafer, was carefully erased. In Morocco, the one who does not bear the royal coat of arms cannot be a hero. Despite thousands of the anonymous dead who fought against colonisation, the Official History of Morocco gives credit for the independence only to

<sup>3</sup> Et. "warehouse", pejorative term used by Moroccans to designate the feudal state [Author's Note].

<sup>4</sup> Mercenaries [Author's Note].

<sup>5</sup> A traditional equestrian performance, practised in North Africa and Arabia [Translator's Note].

<sup>6</sup> A form of Algerian folk music with outspoken lyrics that concern social issues, such as the attitude of European colonies towards native populations [Translator's Note].

<sup>7</sup> Moroccan Dirhams. 1 Euro = 11 Dh [Author's Note].

the Nationalist Movement and, naturally, to the monarchy. In 1956, the propaganda machine had already been going for a long time; in just a few decades, the Alaouites<sup>8</sup> have succeeded in making the Moroccans forget that it was them who opened the door to France. More than fifty years later, it is once again them who are opening the windows to investment for them; there was a decolonisation, but no independence. In Morocco, there is a serious problem of memory.

*Translated by Špela Bibić*

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<sup>8</sup> The ruling Moroccan dynasty [Author's Note].





*Foto © Joe McCartney, The Echo*

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# *Colm Keegan*

Colm Keegan se je rodil leta 1975 v četrti Ballymun v Dublinu na Irskem. Je pesnik, romanopisec, pisec kratkih zgodb, scenarijev in gledaliških iger ter kritik poezije in umetnosti pri irskem državnem RTE Radiu 1. Je soustanovitelj umetniške skupine Nighthawks, ki redno nastopa v dublinski kavarni Cobalt Café, deluje kot vodja kluba mladih avtorjev »Inklinks« ter poučuje kreativno pisanje na srednjih šolah na Irskem. Njegov pesniški prvenec je zbirka *Don't Go There* (Ne hodi tja), ki je izšla maja 2012. Od leta 2005 je bil štirikrat nominiran za literarno nagrado »Hennessy New Irish Writing«, tako za poezijo kot za prozo. Leta 2008 je bil nominiran tudi za nagrado mednarodnega natečaja za kratko zgodbo »Seán Ó Faoláin«, leta 2010 pa je zmagal na vseirskem tekmovanju pesnikov All Ireland Poetry Slam. S predstavo gledališča govorjene besede *Three Men Talking About Things They Kinda Know About* (Trije moški se pogovarjajo o rečeh, o katerih menda nekaj vedo) v letu 2012 nastopa po Irski, gostovanja pa so predvidena tudi za leto 2013. Trenutno živi v Clondalkinu, zahodnem predmestju Dublina, in končuje svoj prvi roman.

Colm Keegan was born in 1975 in the Ballymun area of Dublin, Ireland. He is a poet, novelist, short-fiction writer, screenwriter, playwright, and a poetry/arts reviewer for RTE Radio 1. He is a co-founder of the "Nighthawks" art collective, who regularly perform at the Dublin-based Cobalt Café. He also runs "Inklinks," a young writers club, and teaches creative writing in secondary schools across Ireland. His debut collection of poetry, *Don't Go There*, was published in May of 2012. Since 2005, he has been shortlisted for the Hennessy New Irish Writing Award for both poetry and fiction of four different occasions. He was also short-listed International Seán Ó Faoláin Short Story Competition in 2008 and was crowned as the deserving All Ireland Slam Poetry Champion in 2010. His spoken word play *Three Men Talking About Things They Kinda Know About* (co-written with Kalle Ryan and Stephen James Smith) is touring Ireland in 2012, with the tour scheduled to continue in 2013 as well. He is currently living in Clondalkin, a western suburb of Dublin, and is finishing his first novel.

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## *Stony, Grey, Soiled*

### *After Kavanagh*

Ballymun you rock hard bitch  
My childhood love you thieved.  
Your harsh nature quarried my passion.  
You carved me from barren streets.

You concreted the feet of my boyhood  
And twisted my stride to a stumble.  
Your sprawl corrupted my naïve tongue,  
Indian-inking my guttural mumble.

You preached from the trough of the scrounger,  
The heaving, life-strangling trough.  
Your mantra stained, your culture stunted,  
You kept diamonds dull, in the rough.

You screamed 'cross piss-stained balconies  
The wail of the deserted brood.  
You stewed my clothes in smoke and booze  
You reared me on stale food.

Your silhouette sours my vision  
Of beauty, love and truth.  
Ballymun, you barren whore  
You spoiled the stock of my youth.

Not for me golden views of mothers  
As poverty free young hens,  
So I vow to stab at your crusted back  
And embrace the poisoned pen

That scars these loveless verses  
And curses the tarmac where  
The first clean flight of my fury  
Got caught in this poet's prayer.

Ceannt, McDermott, Balbutcher, Shangan,  
Wherever I run I see  
The stony grey rubble of Ballymun  
Rebuilt as dark towers in me.

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## *Hazelnuts*

The hazel grove.  
A schoolboy's paradise.  
Five minutes in a car.  
Forever using eight year old legs  
through cornfields.  
Concrete? What concrete?  
Heaven on earth  
to me at eight.  
Trickling water  
fluttering leaves  
the smell of moss and  
rotting trees  
turning to muck.  
And hazelnuts.  
Real  
bleeding  
hazelnuts.  
Not from a shop  
from a tree.  
From God to me.  
From then on in  
and even now I see –  
the whole world is in my grasp.  
The whole world belongs to me (for sharing).  
Nothing can stop me eating hazelnuts.  
Beautiful  
brown  
shiny like eggs.  
I filled a plastic bag –  
blue it was.  
I carried them  
all the way home.  
I only ate a few.  
But I'll never forget  
  
those trees I climbed  
the hills I rolled down  
the hazelnuts  
the sunlight  
the smiles.

## ***The Crackle***

*for Stephen Kennedy*

There's a party full of 'Fat-Frogs'  
and coke all over the table.  
There's a man out by the Liffey  
getting out while he's able.  
There's a fight starting somewhere  
a fellah getting stabbed.  
There's a car doing hand-brakers  
two girls jumping a cab.

There's twitchy bouncer hacks  
keeping an eye on the door.  
That poor lad in the jacks stuck  
cleaning puke off the floor.  
The country's getting locked.  
There's nobody to care.  
There's a slut going down  
and there's danger in the air.

There's men drowned in money  
girls who'll never bend.  
There's a beggar whispering 'honey'  
but that's nothing down his end.  
There's the gentle sound of heartbeats.  
There's alleys full of death.  
There's a man after your brother.  
There's a lightness to your breath.

All these people hanging around  
everybody acting cool  
and the night-times fucking freezing  
but don't let that fool you.

There's a crackle to the city.  
There's a steam of dreams that rises  
and it gets behind your eyeballs  
and it kind of compromises  
the concrete  
the shell  
all the bits that sing 'to hell with it.'  
There's another bit  
a hoping bit  
that screams out

make a difference.

The city's  
electricity.  
It shines on us.  
We're sparkling!

And love it man  
'cause further out  
there's nothing

only darkness.

## *Kamnit, siv, krušljiv*

### *Po Kavanaghu*

Ballymun, ti betonska cipa,  
ki otroško si ljubezen mi ukradla.  
Tvoja krutost mojo strast je pogubila.  
Iz golih ulic si me izklesala.

Zacementirala si noge moje deške dobe  
in spotaknila moj korak, nekoč krepak.  
Tvoje razpredanje je razkrojilo moj naivni jezik,  
potemnilo moj šepet mehak.

Pridigala iz jarka si berača,  
Tistega grozečega, pogubnega.  
Tvoja mantra je umazala, kultura tvoja uničila,  
ob tebi diamantov površina ostane surova, neobdelana.

Čez poscane balkone se razlegalo je  
tvoje tarnanje zalege zapuščene.  
Oblačila si mi namočila v dim in alkohol  
me vzgojila s pomočjo postane hrane.

Tvoj obris moj pogled na  
lepoto, ljubezen in resnico greni.  
Ballymun, ti jalova pocestnica,  
oropala si me moje mladosti srži.

Zame ni bilo zlatih pogledov mater,  
mladih kokoši, revščine rešenih,  
zato prisegam, v krastavi hrbet te zabodem  
in si prisvojam besed strupenih,

ki v teh verzih brez ljubezni brazgotine puščajo  
in preklinjajo makadamske poti,  
kjer se je prvi čisti napad divjega besa  
ujel v molitev tega pesnika.

Ceannt, McDermott, Balbutcher, Shangan,  
kjerkoli hodim, vidim  
kamniti, sivi gramoz Ballymuna,  
kot temačni stolpi, ki dvigajo se v meni.

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## *Lešniki*

Leskov gaj.  
Za šolarja raj.  
Pet minut z avtom.  
Z osemletnimi nogami celo večnost  
prek koruznih polj.  
Beton? Kakšen beton?  
Nebesa na zemlji  
zame pri osmih.  
Vodne kapljice  
drhteče listje  
vonj po mahu in  
gnijočih drevesih,  
ki postajajo blato.  
In lešniki.  
Resnični  
krvaveči  
lešniki.  
Ne iz trgovine,  
z drevesa.  
Od Boga do mene.  
Od tedaj dalje  
in celo zdaj vidim –  
ves svet mi je na dosegu.  
Ves svet pripada meni (da ga delim).  
Nič mi ne prepreči, da bi jedel lešnike.  
Prelepi,  
rjavi  
se svetijo kot jajca.  
Napolnil sem plastično vrečko –  
modra je bila.  
Nesel sem jih  
vse do doma.  
Pojedel sem jih le malo.  
A nikoli ne bom pozabil  
  
tistih dreves, po katerih sem plezal  
gričev, po katerih sem se kotalil  
lešnikov  
sončnih žarkov  
nasmehov.

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## **Prasketanje**

za Stephena Kennedyja

Zabava je in miza se šibi pod  
kokakolo in koktajli.  
Nek moški stoji ob reki Liffey,  
da pobegne, dokler njegov pogum ne zataji.  
Nekje se v zrak letalo dviga,  
nekdo pod rebri čuti nož.  
Nek avto za zabavo se vrti v krogu,  
dve dekleti oprezata, ali je taksistu pobegniti moč.

Trzajoči vunbacači  
pazijo na vrata.  
Tisti ubogi fant v delovnem pajacu  
mora pucat bruhanje po tleh.  
Država se zapira.  
Nikogar ni, ki bi bilo mu kaj do tega.  
Še ena kurba gre k hudiču  
in po zraku plava nekaj nevarnega.

Neki možje so v denarju se utopili,  
neka dekleta se nikoli ne bodo upognila.  
Potepuh šepeče »srči«,  
a sam ve, to še nič ni.  
Sliši se nežni zvok srčnih utripov.  
Uličice polne smrti.  
Nekdo ima na muhi tvojega brata.  
Tvoje dihanje pa tako lahkomiselno.

Vsi ti ljudje kar tako postopajo,  
vsi, kot da ni nič,  
in ponoči je prekleto mrzlo,  
ampak nikar temu ne nasedaj.

---

V mesti nekaj prasketa.  
Para sanj se dviga  
in ti pod veke sili  
in na nek način zastre  
beton  
lupino  
vse koščke, ki pojejo »k vragu vse skupaj«.  
In potem še en  
košček, ki upa,  
zakriči  
naredi nekaj.

Mesto je  
elektrika.  
Sveti na nas.  
Kako se lesketamo!

In fant, le ljubi ga,  
ker dalje  
ni ničesar več  
samo tema.

*Prevedla Tanja Ahlin*



*Foto © Peter-Cook*

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# *Paul Muldoon*

Paul Muldoon se je rodil leta 1951 v okrožju Omagh na Severnem Irskem. Izobraževal se je v Amraghu in na Kraljičini univerzi v Belfastu. Med letoma 1973 in 1986 je bil radijski in televizijski producent na BBC-ju v Belfastu, leta 1987 pa se je prese�il v Združene države Amerike, kjer deluje kot predavatelj in direktor Centra Petra B. Lewisa za družbene vede. Od leta 2007 je urednik za poezijo pri reviji *The New Yorker*. Izdal je več vplivnih pesniških zbirk, med drugim: *New Weather* (Novo vreme, 1973), *Meeting The British* (Srečanje z Britanci, 1987), *Moy Sand and Gravel* (Prod in pesek v kraju Moy, 2003) in *Maggot* (Ličinka, 2010). Leta 2008 je pri Študentski založbi izšla tudi zbirka njegovih izbranih pesmi v slovenskem prevodu Uroša Mozetiča z naslovom *Zapuščanje otoka* (Leaving the Island). Je štipendist Kraljeve družbe za književnost, Ameriške akademije znanosti in umetnosti ter Ameriške akademije za umetnost in književnost. Med številna najuglednejša mednarodna priznanja, ki jih je prejel za svoje delo, spadajo nagrada T. S. Eliota (1994), nagrada Ameriške akademije umetnosti in književnosti (1996), Pulitzerjeva nagrada (2003) in evropska nagrada za poezijo (2006).

Paul Muldoon was born in 1951 in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, and educated in Armagh and at the Queen's University of Belfast. From 1973 to 1986, he worked in Belfast as a radio and television producer for the BBC. Since 1987, he has lived in the United States, where he is now a Professor at Princeton University and Chair of the Peter B. Lewis Center for the Arts. In 2007, he was appointed Poetry Editor of *The New Yorker* magazine. He has written many influential collections of poetry, among them *New Weather* (1973), *Meeting The British* (1987), *Moy Sand and Gravel* (2003), and *Maggot* (2010). An anthology of his poetry has also been translated into Slovene by Uroš Mozetič and published by the Študentska založba Publishing House under the title *Zapuščanje otoka* (Leaving the Island) in 2008. He was named a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The numerous literary accolades he has received for his work include the T. S. Eliot Prize (1994), the American Academy of Arts and Letters award in literature (1996), the Pulitzer Prize (2003), and the European Prize for Poetry (2006).

## ***A Civil War Suite***

### **1. Mathew Brady: *First battle of bull run***

Wasn't it, after all, Irish riff-raff  
from the docks of New Orleans,  
Irish "wharf-rats,"  
louts and longshoremen,

Irish toughs and roughs  
(any of whom would gleefully drive a lance  
through the heart  
of William Tecumseh Sherman),

Irish rogues and rapscallions,  
culchies and munchies  
who'd make up the 1<sup>st</sup> Louisiana Special Battalion  
at the First Battle of Manassas  
and allow Brady to become such a dab  
hand at fixing that *guerre* in Daguerreotype?

### **2. Walt Whitman: "Cavalry crossing a ford"**

It's hardly too much to trace the "guidon"  
to the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine  
and her idea of chivalry bred in the bone.  
The "loitering" horses about to spill their guts  
are by Keats, for sure, but Keats  
out of Tennyson.  
That "musical clank" is Whitman's alone.

---

**3. Louis Lang: *The return of the 69<sup>th</sup> (Irish) regiment from the seat of war***

It's been just a week since they were seen off  
by Stonewall Jackson at Bull Run,  
which may be why the only one to doff  
his cap as if there might be an outbreak of fun  
is Captain Meagher, an intimate of muddling through  
since he escaped Van Diemen's Land in 1852.  
You'll notice how a smoothbore gun

of the type Meagher favors for close combat  
has found its way into the hands  
of two brothers who are themselves in a spat  
as to why a bayonet might expand  
on an entry wound. Sometimes it's only by a crowded pier  
we recognize what we hold dear.  
The rifle points toward the linen bands

in which Sergeant Tracy's own wounds are wrapped.  
His wife helps him off the baggage-cart.  
Lieutenant Nugent's right arm is strapped

awkwardly in a sling. The crowd must surely part  
before these six or seven drummer boys.  
We can all but hear the poise  
they bring to those snare drums. It's a tribute to Lang's art

that we might for a moment forget the sniper  
to whom so much of this may be assigned  
and focus on an *uilleann* piper  
lodged in the shadows, for when it comes to what lies behind  
the impulse to fade  
into the background at this or any parade  
the truth is he's no less blind

to us than we are to him.  
I doubt somehow he'll ever make a start  
on learning "The Battle Hymn  
of the Republic." I suppose some might take heart  
from Father O'Reilly confiding in a widow how this cup  
will pass while drawing up  
a slightly revised version of the heaven-chart

---

or the half-smile on a man who greets his child  
for the first time, or the non-sniper up a tree,  
or even the piper who's beguiled  
Meagher into thinking Ireland might soon be free.  
Stooped though he may be over his chanter and drones,  
he raises everything a semitone  
and allows us for the first time to see

beyond the harbor sky with its rents and rips  
to what is now a no-fly dome  
where we at last begin to get to grips  
with the discontinued Kodachrome  
of our great transports  
that hardly ever put into ports  
and our flag-draped coffins secretly airlifted home.

#### **4. Emily Dickinson: “A slash of blue – A sweep of gray”**

Here some still scout  
a vineyard path  
to trample out  
the grapes of wrath...  
How many died  
in the blood bath?  
This side? That side?  
You do the math.

**5. Sally Mann: *Manassas***

Less the idea of what the world might be “like”  
than what it is “like *photographed*”  
has had us lug  
over glacier-grooved

and -polished mountains what we once took  
for luggage, bags of hominy grits,  
barrels of pork and hardtack,  
wall-to-wall crates

of wet-glass negatives,  
the tackle by which we still hold on with grim  
determination to our salt codfish,  
the portable darkroom  
in which we’ve yet to cure  
ourselves of the idea that art is “pure” or “impure.”

---

## *Suita državljanke vojne*

### **1. Mathew Brady: *Prva bitka pri Bull Runu***

Ni bila, navsezadnje, tista irska drhal  
iz dokov New Orleansa,  
irske pristaniške podgane,  
tesla in težaki,

irski grobijani in neotesanci  
(kdor koli od njih bi z radostjo  
Williamu Tecumsehu Shermanu  
v srce zadrl kopje),

irski suroveži in klateži,  
nastopači in cmokači,  
tisto moštvo 1. lousijanskega specialnega bataljona  
v Prvi bitki za Manassas,  
ki je napravilo iz Bradyja takega mojstra  
v fiksiranju tiste *guerre* v dagerotipiji?

### **2. Walt Whitman: »Konjenica prečka plitvino«**

Le komajda je pretiravanje slediti »praporcu«  
na dvor Eleonore Akvitanske  
in k njeni prirojeni predstavi o viteštvu.  
»Prestopanje« konj, ki jim bodo skoraj parali drob,  
je, zanesljivo, Keatsovo,  
Keatsu ga je posodil Tennyson.  
A tisti »glasbeni žvenket« je zgolj Whitmanov.

### 3. Louis Lang: *Vrnitev 69. (irskega) regimenta z bojišča*

Komaj tezen je minil, odkar je njihov odhod  
 videl Kamniti Jackson pri reki Bull Run,  
 in je mogoče stotniku Maeghru bil povod,  
 da je edini privzdignil kapo, kot da prihaja izbruh  
 šal, ta zaupni poznavalec vseh zmešnjav,  
 vpletten vanje po pobegu iz Van Diemen Landa.  
 Vidite lahko takšno puško z gladko cevjo,

kakršna je Meagherju všeč za bližnji spopad  
 in se je zdaj znašla v rokah  
 dveh bratov, ki sta se zapletla v spor,  
 zakaj bajonet najbrž razširi rano  
 ob vbodu. Včasih le v gneči na pomolu  
 spoznamo, kaj nam je res dragoo.  
 Puška kaže proti platnenemu povoju,

ki seržantu Tracyju rano zakriva.  
 Z voza leze in žena ga podpira.  
 Poročniku Nugentu desna roka okorno

visi v zanki. Množica bo morala odpreti pot  
 tem šestim ali sedmim bobnarčkom.  
 Samo še slišati ne moremo  
 samozavesti, ki jo razglašajo z bobni. Langovi umetnosti je poklon,

da lahko za hip pozabimo ostrostrelca,  
 ki je mogoče vsega tega krivec,  
 in se v *Severnjaškega* piskača tam v séncah  
 zazremo, kajti ko pride do tega, kaj se zadaj skriva,  
 impulz pojena  
 onkraj te ali katere koli parade  
 in je res, da ni on nič manj slep

za nas, kot smo slepi mi za njega.  
 Nekako dvomim, da se bo kdaj  
 naučil »Bojno himno  
*Republike*. Koga bo le opogumil, upam,  
 oče O'Reilly, ko vdovi pravi, kako ta kupa bo šla mimo,  
 in pri tem malce popravi nebeški zemljevid,  
 ali mož, ki prvikrat pokaže svoj napol smehljaj  
 v pozdrav otroku, ali vrh drevesa strelec, ki ne strelja,

---

ali celo piskač, ki je Meagherja zapeljal  
v misel, da Irska morda kmalu dočaka dan svobode.  
Tako najbrž nad svojim muzikantom in momljanji sklonjen  
vzdigne vse poltone  
in nam prvikrat videti da

onkraj rež in paranj pristaniškega neba  
do tja, kar je zdaj brez muh svod,  
kjer končno začenjamо biti kos  
prekinivam kodakromov  
naših velikih prevozov,  
ki komaj kdaj zavijejo v pristan,  
in z zastavo pokritim krstam, ki prilete skrivaj domov.

#### 4. Emily Dickinson: »Usek modrine – zamah sivine«

Oglednik tih  
stopa sredi trt,  
da potepta  
jeze sad ...  
Koliko smrti  
v kopelih krvi?  
Na oni strani? Na tej?  
Kar sam preštej.

---

**5. Sally Mann: *Manassas***

Manj ideja, čemu bi svet lahko bil »podoben«,  
kakor kakšen je »kot fotografiran«,  
nas je potegnilo  
prek ledeniško zbrazdanih

in zglajenih planin, kar smo nekoč razumeli  
kot prtljago, vreče ovsene kaše,  
sode svinjine in prepečenca,  
od stene do stene okvirje

z mokrimi steklenimi negativi,  
pribor, s katerim še zmeraj vztrajamo nepopustljivo  
odločeni za našo nasoljeno polenovko,  
prenosno temnico,  
v kateri se moramo še posloviti  
od naše ideje, da je umetnost »čista« ali »nečista«.

*Prevedel Veno Taufer*



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# *Tom Petsinis*

Tom Petsinis se je rodil v pokrajini Macedonia v Grčiji leta 1953. Leta 1959 je z družino emigriral v Avstralijo. Diplomiral je iz matematike na Univerzi v Melbournu ter magistriral in doktoriral na Univerzi v Viktoriji, kjer je zaposlen kot docent za matematiko. Je pisatelj, dramatik, pesnik in prevajalec iz grščine. Med njegova dela spada šest pesniških zbirk, med njimi naj izpostavimo *The Blossom Vendor* (Prodajalec cvetov, 1992), *Naming the Number* (Poimenovati število, 1998), *Four Quarters* (Štiri četrtiny, 2006), za katero je prejel nagrado Wesleyja Michela Wrighta Univerze v Melbournu za poezijo (2006), in *My Father's Tools* (Orodje mojega očeta, 2009). Napisal je več dramskih del: za dramski prvenec *The Drought* (Suša, knjižna izdaja 1994) je prejel nagrado »Wal Cherry« za najboljšo izvirno dramsko delo (1993), ter več romanov, kot so *Raising the Shadow* (Vzgajati senco, 1992), *The French Mathematician* (Francoski matematik, 1997) in *The Death of Pan* (Panova smrt, 2001). Prejel je različne štipendije, nazadnje literarno štipendijo Državne knjižnice v Viktoriji; leta 2009 pa je kot gostujoči pisatelj bival tudi v Lavignyju v Švici. Njegova dela so prevedena v več jezikov.

Tom Petsinis was born in 1953 in the Greek region of Macedonia and emigrated with his family to Australia in 1959. He obtained a degree in mathematics at the University of Melbourne and completed his MA and PhD at Victoria University, where he works as a mathematics lecturer. He is a novelist, playwright, poet, and translator from Greek whose works include six collections of poetry, among them *The Blossom Vendor* (1992), *Naming the Number* (1998), *Four Quarters* (2006), for which he received the Melbourne University's Wesley Michel Wright Poetry Prize (2006); and *My Father's Tools* (2009). He also wrote a number of plays; with his debut play *The Drought* (published as a book in 1994) winning him the Wal Cherry Award for best play script of the year (1993); and a number of novels such as *Raising the Shadow* (1992), *The French Mathematician* (1997), and *The Death of Pan* (2001). He has been awarded various fellowships, most recently the Creative Fellowship of the State Library of Victoria (2008/2009). He was also a writer-in-residence in Lavigny, Switzerland in 2009. His work has been translated into a number of languages.

## Pencil

It lay in a corner of your tool-box:  
Red, black-edged, the rectangular stock  
Providing rough fingers a firmer grip;  
*Columbia* in gold beginning to fade;  
Lead flat, substantial for wood and brick,  
And last sharpened by a razor blade;  
Its length whittled to less than a third  
By crosses, numbers, lines, never words.

Working, you wore it behind your ear  
That always blazed crimson with sunset.  
A man's best friend, you instructed,  
It marks and remembers, keep it near.

A lifetime later I heed your advice  
And start sketching the first draft of this.

## Sickle

It waited in the long-abandoned house,  
Above the bread-oven bulging like a womb,  
Left behind by youth gone overseas  
And Death, now driving a diesel harvester.  
I rescued it, imagining your delight.

Circumspect, you gripped the handle  
Worn bone-smooth by sweat's abrasive salt,  
Reaped a sheaf of sunlight angling in,  
Felt the curve blunted by decades of disuse –  
But not with the touch I'd expected.

You grimaced using its Slavic name,  
Almost whistling it between clenched teeth,  
As though that sharp three-letter word  
Were made bitter from an absence of vowels,  
From its assonance with blood and death.

---

Or at that moment did you see again  
Wheat fields stricken by unrelenting drought?  
Hear again cicadas hard at their song?  
Taste that mix of warm vinegar and leeks  
Which never eased your hunger and thirst?

You placed it on the kitchen bench,  
Saying it was used to cut my umbilical cord.  
I thought of Mum, recently gone,  
Labouring for each breath in her dying pain.  
You turned to the smell of burning toast.

## *Plane*

There were rules and rituals for its proper use,  
Like those that rigged a ship for the voyage South:  
Loosening the central screw, re-jigging parts,  
Feeling the bevelled blade with a moist thumb,  
And tightening again, making the many one.

I'd watch it cruise over rough, weathered wood,  
Like Mum's iron steaming smooth my sea-blue jeans,  
Exposing black knotted reefs, treacherous rips,  
The strong undercurrents of opposing grain,  
Renewing grey timber, smoothing all in its wake.

I'd follow its forward surge, its swish and rush,  
Collecting the curled shavings, like crests of waves,  
Which we'd race in gutters after the storm,  
Or save to stoke Mum's copper on washing day,  
Fascinated by how happily they flamed.

## *Trowel*

A morning of beginnings and dead ends –  
It's already noon and there's nothing to show:  
The shadow of a three-fingered pen  
Caught by lines like the veins in my wrist.

My frustration has sounded a dozen sheets  
(Others appreciate the music in this),  
Doubled by tearing in halves, quarters, eighths –  
Reducing me to a state of unletteredness.

But I compose myself around your tools:  
Recalling how this trowel slipped into cement,  
Slapped, tapped in time, echoed like a bell  
In breaking solid reds cleanly in two.

The wall of the vegie-patch is done:  
Four courses high, mortar defined, hardening.  
You're cleaning up, the tap's whistling,  
The kite-shaped blade gleaming in the sun.

## *Clawhammer*

I served my apprenticeship in growing up:  
Observing, always an arm's length from the job,  
Pigeon-quick in reacting to your call,  
Determined to show I was no longer a child.

They were days of hardwood, not pine,  
When you'd pick your ear with the nail's point  
(The wax of dark words softened steel)  
And hammer out a rhythm I knew by heart:

Constrained at first, three steadyng taps,  
Then harder, driving deeper, until halfway in,  
When you'd strike head to round head,  
Each hit a signature of your unbending will.

---

I'd practise when you weren't at home,  
Testing myself on the backyard bench and stool,  
The gate's impenetrable redgum post,  
Struggling to straighten what I couldn't direct.

A son's apprenticed to his father for life –  
That's why I'm finding new uses for this tool:  
Today it's a gavel judging my work,  
Tomorrow its claw will extract my mistakes.

### ***Chisel***

An extended metaphor long,  
It's more singular than the prime  
Divisible by nothing and one.  
A conduit for the moving mind,  
Head silvered by experience,  
It channels the urge to create,  
Converging to a tapered end  
That breaks rock, brick, concrete –  
Each impact spicing the air  
With approaching thunderstorms,  
Adding to unnumbered stars,  
Its ring celebrating from sea to sky  
The marriage of idea and form:  
A wall fourteen courses high.

## **Svinčnik**

Ležal je v kotu tvoje škatle za orodje:  
 rdeč, s črnim robom, držalo štirioglato  
 za boljši oprijem raskavim prstom;  
*Columbia* v zlatu že bledeča;  
 ploska mina, čvrsta za les in opeko  
 in nazadnje priostrena z britvico;  
 pirezana na tretjino svoje dolžine  
 od krogcev, številk, črt, nikdar besed.

Med delom si ga imel za ušesom,  
 zmeraj škrлатno plamtecim v večerni zarji.  
 Človekov najboljši prijatelj, si učil,  
 označuje in pomni, vedno ga imej pri roki.

Življenjsko dobo pozneje upoštevam tvoj nasvet  
 in začnem skicirati prvi osnutek tega.

## **Srp**

Čakal je v davno zapuščeni hiši,  
 nad krušno pečjo, izboklo kot maternica,  
 mladi, ki so šli prek morja, so pustili tam njega  
 in Smrt, ki zdaj vozi dizelski kombajn.  
 Rešil sem ga in si predstavljal tvoje veselje.

Preudarno si zagrabil za ročaj,  
 zbrušen gladko kakor kost od slanega potu,  
 požel snop sončave, lebdeče v njem,  
 potipal krivino, skrhano od desetletij nerabe –  
 toda ne z občutkom, ki sem ga pričakoval.

Spačil si se, ko si izrekel njegovo slovansko ime,  
 ga skorajda zažvižgal med stisnjениmi zobmi,  
 kot da je ta ostra beseda iz treh črk  
 tako grenka zaradi odsotnosti vokalov,  
 zaradi njene asonance s krvjo in smrtjo.

---

Ali pa si v tistem trenutku spet videl  
žitna polja, trpeča od nenehne suše?  
Spet zaslšal čričkov težki spev?  
Okusil tisto mešanico toplega kisa in pora,  
ki ni nikoli potesila tvoje lakote in žeje?

Položil si ga na kuhinjsko klop,  
rekoč, da mi je prav ta prerezal popkovino.  
Pomis�il sem na mamo, pred kratkim umrlo,  
hlastajočo za zrakom v smrtni bolečini.  
Ti si se posvetil vonju po zažganem toastu.

## ***Oblic***

Pravila in rituali za njegovo pravilno rabo  
enaki kot za ladje za plovbo proti jugu:  
popusti osrednji vijak, zategni dele,  
potipaj poševno rezilo z vlažnim palcem  
in spet pritegni, iz mnogih ustvari eno.

Gledal sem ga, kako drsi po gladini izsušenega lesa  
kot mamin žareči likalnik, gladeč moje morsko modre kavbojke,  
razkriva črne grčaste klečí, zavratne vrtince,  
močne podvodne protitokove  
in obnavlja sivi hlod, gladeč vse v svoji brazdi.

Sledil sem njegovemu navalu, švistu in naletu,  
zbiral oblance, te skodrane valov grebene,  
za dirke v jarkih po nevihti,  
ali pa jih shranil za mamin bakreni kotel na pralni dan,  
očaran nad tem, kako veselo so vzplamtelci.

## ***Kela***

Jutro začetkov in koncov brez izhoda –  
poldne je že, nikjer ničesar, kar bi lahko pokazal:  
senca peresa, ki ga držijo trije prsti,  
ujeta med črte kot žile na mojem zapestju.

Moj obup v zvenu ducata listov,  
(glasbo v tem cenijo drugi),  
s trganjem pomnožen dva-, štiri-, osemkrat  
me spravi v stanje analfabetizma.

Toda ob tvojem orodju se spet zberem:  
obudim, kako je ta kela zdrknila v malto,  
tlesknila, potolkla v ritmu, odmevala kot zvon  
in somerno razpolovila čvrste opeke.

Zid zelenjavne grede je končan:  
štiri vrste visok, ometan, malta se trdi.  
Ti čistiš, pipa šumi,  
rezilo v obliku zmaja se blešči v soncu.

## ***Razcepno kladivo***

Opravil sem vajeništvo iz odraščanja:  
opazujoč delo z varne razdalje  
odgovarjal na tvoj klic hitro kot golob,  
odločen, da pokažem, da nisem več otrok.

Tisto so bili dnevi trdega lesa, ne bora,  
ko si se bezal po ušesu s konico žeblja  
(vosek temnih besed je mehčal jeklo)  
in nabijal ritem, ki sem ga znal na pamet:

sprva zadržan, trije enakomerni udarci,  
nato močnejše, zabijajoč globlje, do polovice,  
ko si udaril z glavo po okrogli glavi,  
vsak udarec podpis tvoje neupogljive volje.

---

Vadil sem, ko te ni bilo doma,  
se preizkušal na klopi in stolu na dvorišču,  
se trudil na neprebojnem kolu evkaliptove lese,  
da bi poravnal, česar nisem znal uravnati.

Sin je vajenec očetov vse življenje –  
zato odkrivam nove rabe za to orodje:  
danes leseno kladivce, ki presoja moje delo,  
jutri bo njegov razcep izpulil moje napake.

## ***Dleto***

Dolžine ene razširjene metafore,  
je bolj enkratno kot praštevilo,  
deljivo z nič in ena.  
Vod za premikajoči um,  
glava, posrebrena z izkušnjo,  
kanalizira slo po ustvarjanju,  
stekajočo se v priostreni konec,  
lomeč kamen, opeko, beton –  
vsak udarec odišavi zrak  
z bližajočimi se nevihtami  
in dodaja zvezdam brez števila  
zven svoj, slaveč od morja do neba  
to zlitje ideje in forme:  
zid, štirinajst vrst visok.

*Prevedla Tina Mahkota*



*Foto © Humin*

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# Jiaxin Wang

Jiaxin Wang se je rodil leta 1957 v provinci Hubei na Kitajskem. Po kulturni revoluciji se je vpisal na Univerzo v Wuhanu, kjer je študiral kitajsko filologijo in književnost. Leta 1985 se je preselil v Peking in se zaposlil kot urednik pri reviji *Poezija*. Kot gostujoči predavatelj je bival v Angliji med letoma 1992 in 1994. Kot redni profesor od leta 2006 poučuje kreativno pisanje na Univerzi Renmin v Pekingu. Je eden najuglednejših sodobnih kitajskih pesnikov, literarni kritik, eseijist in prevajalec. Med njegova dela spadajo pesniške zbirke 纪念 (Spomenik, 1985), 游动悬崖 (Potujoče skale, 1997), 王家新的诗 (Pesmi, 2001) in 未完成的诗 (Nedokončana poezija, 2008) ter eseji 人与世界的相遇 (Srečanje ljudi s svetom, 1989), 夜莺在它自己的时代 (Slavec v lastni dobi, 1997), 没有英雄的诗 (Pesem brez junaka, 2002), 为凤凰找寻栖所 (Iskanje gnezda za feniksa, 2008) in 雪的款待 (Snežna zabava, 2010). Uredil je tudi šest antologij in v kitajščino prevedel izbrane pesmi in eseje Paula Celana. Njegove izbrane pesmi so prevedene v več jezikov.

Jiaxin Wang was born in 1957 in Hubei Province, China. After the Cultural Revolution he enrolled in Wuhan University where he studied Chinese philology and literature. In 1985 he moved to Beijing and began working as an editor for the journal *Poetry*. He spent time as a visiting scholar in England between 1992 and 1994. Since 2006 he has been teaching creative writing as a full professor at the Renmin University of China in Beijing. He is one of China's most eminent contemporary poets, a literary critic, essayist, and translator. His works include the collections of poetry 纪念 (Memorial, 1985), 游动悬崖 (Wandering Rocks, 1997), 王家新的诗 (Poems, 2001), and 未完成的诗 (Incomplete Poetry, 2008); and the essays 人与世界的相遇 (The Encounter of Men with the World, 1989), 夜莺在它自己的时代 (The Nightingale in Its Own Era, 1997), 没有英雄的诗 (Poem Without a Hero, 2002), 为凤凰找寻栖所 (Finding a Nest for the Phoenix, 2008), 雪的款待 (The Snow's Entertainment, 2010). He has also edited six anthologies and translated selected poems and essays by Paul Celan into Chinese. His selected poems have been translated into many languages.

## 蝎子

翻遍满山的石头  
不见一只蝎子：这是小时候  
哪一年、哪一天的事？  
如今我回到这座山上  
早年的松林已经粗大，就在  
岩石的裂缝和红褐色中  
一只蝎子翘起尾巴  
向我走来

与蝎子对视  
顷刻间我成为它脚下的石沙

1987

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瓦雷金诺叙事曲  
——给帕斯捷尔纳克

蜡烛在燃烧，  
冬天里的诗人在写作；  
整个俄罗斯疲倦了，  
又一场暴风雪  
止息于他的笔尖下；  
静静的夜，  
谁在此时醒着，  
谁都会惊讶于这苦难世界的美丽  
和它片刻的安宁；  
也许，你是幸福的——  
命运夺去一切，却把一张  
松木桌子留了下来，  
这就够了。  
作为这个时代的诗人已别无他求。  
何况还有一份沉重的生活，  
熟睡的妻子，  
这个宁静冬夜的忧伤，  
写吧，诗人，就像不朽的普希金  
让金子一样的诗句出现，  
把苦难转变为音乐……  
蜡烛在燃烧，  
蜡烛在松木桌子上燃烧；  
突然，就在笔尖的沙沙声中  
出现了死一样的寂静  
——有什么正从雪地上传来，  
那样凄厉，  
不祥……  
诗人不安起来。欢快的语言  
收缩着它的节奏。  
但是，他怎忍心在这首诗中  
混入狼群的粗重鼻息？  
他怎能让死亡  
冒犯这晶莹发蓝的一切？  
笔在抵抗，  
而诗人是对的。  
我们为什么不能在这严酷的年代  
享有一个美好的夜晚？  
为什么不能变得安然一点，  
以我们的写作，把这逼近的死

再一次地推迟下去？  
闪闪运转的星空，  
一个相信艺术高于一切的诗人，  
请让他抹去悲剧的乐音！  
当他睡去的时候，  
松木桌子上，应有一首诗落成，  
精美如一件素洁绣品……  
蜡烛在燃烧，  
诗人的笔重又在纸上疾驰，  
诗句跳跃，  
忽略着命运的提醒。  
然而，狼群在长啸，  
狼群在逼近；  
诗人！为什么这凄厉的声音  
就不能加入你诗歌的乐章？  
为什么要把人与兽的殊死搏斗  
留在一个睡不稳的梦中？  
纯洁的诗人！你在诗中省略的，  
会在生存中  
更为狰狞地显露，  
那是一排闪光的狼牙，它将切断  
一个人的生活，  
它已经为你在近处张开。  
不祥的恶兆！  
一首孱弱的诗，又怎能减缓  
这巨大的恐惧？  
诗人放下了笔。  
从雪夜的深处，从一个词  
到另一个词的间歇中，  
狼的嗥叫传来，无可阻止地  
传来……  
蜡烛在燃烧，  
我们怎能写作？  
当语言无法分担事物的沉重，  
当我们永远也说不清，  
那一声凄厉的哀鸣  
是来自屋外的雪野，还是  
来自我们的内心……

1989年冬，北京

---

田园诗

如果你在京郊的乡村路上漫游  
你会经常遇见羊群  
它们在田野中散开，像不化的雪  
像膨胀的绽开的花朵  
或是缩成一团穿过公路，被吆喝着  
滚下尘土飞扬的沟渠

我从来没有注意过它们  
直到有一次我开车开到一辆卡车的后面  
在一个飘雪的下午  
这一次我看清了它们的眼睛  
(而它们也在上面看着我)  
那样温良，那样安静  
像是全然不知它们将被带到什么地方  
对于我的到来甚至怀有  
几分孩子似的好奇

我放慢了车速  
我看着它们  
消失在愈来愈大的雪花中

2004

## 桔子

整个冬天他都在吃着桔子，  
有时是在餐桌上吃，有时是在公共汽车上吃，  
有时吃着吃着  
雪就从书橱的内部下下来了；  
有时他不吃，只是慢慢地剥着，  
仿佛有什么在那里面居住。

整个冬天他就这样吃着桔子，  
吃着吃着他想起了在一部什么小说中  
女主人公也曾端上来一盘桔子，  
其中一个一直滚落到故事的结尾……  
但他已记不清那是谁写的。  
他只是默默地吃着桔子。  
他窗台上的桔子皮愈积愈厚。

他终于想起了小时候的医院床头  
摆放着的那几个桔子，  
那是母亲不知从什么地方给他弄来的；  
弟弟嚷嚷着要吃，妈妈不让，  
是他分给了弟弟；  
但最后一个他和弟弟都舍不得吃，  
一直摆放在床头柜上。

（那最后一个桔子，后来又怎样了呢？）

整个冬天他就这样吃着桔子，  
尤其是在下雪天，或灰濛濛的天气里；  
他吃得特别慢，仿佛  
他有的是时间，  
仿佛，他在吞食着黑暗；  
他就这样吃着、剥着桔子，抬起头来，  
窗口闪耀雪的光芒。

2006

---

## 和儿子一起喝酒

一个年过五十的人还有什么雄心壮志  
他的梦想不过是和久别的  
已长大的儿子坐在一起喝上一杯  
两只杯子碰在一起  
这就是他们拥抱的方式  
也是他们和解的方式  
然后，什么也不说  
当儿子起身去要另一杯  
父亲，则呆呆地看着杯沿的泡沫  
流下杯底。

2007, 12

---

## 变暗的镜子

一

热爱树木和石头：道德的最低限度。

二

时代在进步，傍晚时分在路边招手的染发女孩也多了起来。为什么你不把车停  
下？你还有什么可骄傲的？难道你高贵的灵魂真的会比一把她们的梳子更为不  
朽？

三

葡萄酒沉睡在你的头脑里，而忘却的痛苦有时比一枚钉子尖锐。

四

终有一天，你会忆起京郊的那家苍蝇乱飞的小餐馆：坐在那里，  
望着远处希尔顿大酒店顶层的辉煌灯火，你第一次知道了什么叫做对贫苦人类  
的侮辱。

五

机场关闭，暴风雪仍在发疯地填着大海；不是回家，而是一种对话变得更困难了。

六

那些已知道在严寒中生活是怎么一回事的人，将从院子里腾出一小块地来，种上  
他们的向日葵。

七

是到了从墙上取下从前女友的画的时候了，但，在新女主人投来的目光中，该把  
它放在何处呢？

八

活到今天，要去信仰是困难的，而不去信仰是可怕的。

九

发霉的金黄玉米，烂在地里的庄稼，在绵绵秋雨中坐在门口发楞的老人。为什么你要避开他们眼中的辛酸？为什么你总是羞于在你的诗中诉说人类的徒劳？

十

如果一头驴子说它是伟大诗人，你要肃然起敬，因为这是在一个诗的国度。

十一

当你变老，开始接受儿子眼中那一丝讥讽的眼光，就像在一个等待已久的节日里，却得到一份最不应有的礼物。

十二

我喜欢听这样的音乐，在大师的演奏中总是响起几声听众的咳嗽：它使我重又在黑暗中坐下。

十三

不是你老了，而是你的镜子变暗了。

十四

不是你在变老，而是你独自用餐的时间变长了。

十五

不是家乡的女人不贞，而是那个在风暴中归来的水手已瞎了多年。

十六

你每天都在擦拭着房间里的松木地板，是为了和你的永不降临的赤足天使生活在一起？没有天使。在你的墙角上方，一只大蜘蛛下凡。

十七

早上起来听管风琴，黄昏时听小提琴，晚上听钢琴；而在夜半醒来后，你听到的，是这无边的寂静。

十八

再一次获得对生活的确信，就像一个在冰雪中用力跺脚的人，在温暖自己后，又大步向更远处的雪走去。

十九

多年之后重游动物园：她仍一如既往地迷恋于蛇馆，而你想看到的已不再是老虎或天鹅，现在，你走向被孩子们围住的猴山。

## 二十

当他像苦役犯一样完成这一生的写作，我想他将走出屋子，对着远方这样喃喃自语地说：孩子，现在，我可以感受到温暖的阳光了，我可以听到从你的花园里传来的你的女儿的笑声了……

2000，北京

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## Škorpijon

Preobrnil sem vsak kamen na planini,  
niti enega škorpiona: to je bilo otroštvo.  
Vendar katero leto, kateri dan?  
Zdaj sem se vrnil,  
planinski bori močnejši, višji  
in iz špranje okraste skale  
se mi, z vzdignjenim repom,  
škorpijon približuje.

Oko proti očesu, v enem samem hipu,  
že sem kamenje pod njegovimi nogami.

1987

**Balada o varikinu**

Pasternaku

Sveča gori,  
pisatelj piše sredi zime.  
Vsa Rusija je izčrpana  
in še enkrat mu pod peresom obstane  
sapa snežnega viharja.  
Noč, tišina,  
kdor koli buden  
bi bil osupel ob lepoti bednega sveta  
in njegovem bežnem miru.  
Morda imas srečo –  
usoda je vzela vse  
razen borove mize,  
več kot dovolj  
pesniku v teh časih,  
ob lastnem bremenu življenja,  
ženi, ki spi, žalosti  
spokojne zimske noči.  
Piši, pesnik, tako kot je Puškin  
pisal v zlatu  
in spremenjal bolečino v glasbo.  
Plamen sveče  
gori na borovi mizi,  
potem tiho škrebljanje  
peresa –  
nekaj se bliža prek zasneženega polja,  
hladno in zlovesče.  
V pesniku narašča vznemirjenost. Brenkajoča radost verzov  
se krči.  
Kako bi mu moglo srce vzdržati vdor  
raskavega dihanja volkov?  
Kako naj smrti dopusti,  
da onečasti to kraljestvo modrega kristala?  
Pero se upira,  
čeprav je pesnik vljuden.  
Čemu ne ena spodobna noč  
v vseh teh bridičnih letih?  
Zakaj ne malo miru  
in z našimi besedami  
še enkrat odvrniti smrt?  
Jasno nebo orkestriranih zvezd,

---

pesnik se zanese na umetnost bolj kot na kar koli.

Naj izbriše tragične note.

Ko bo spal, bo končana pesem  
ležala na borovi mizi,

nežna kot vezenina, preprosta in čista.

Sveča gori

in pero spet poskoči prek lista.

Verzi udarjajo v svojem ritmu,

kljubujoč namigom usode.

Vendar volkovi zavijajo dalje,

volkovi se bližajo.

Pesnik, zakaj ne bi vtkal njihovih mrazečih glasov  
v svoje stihe?

Zakaj smrtni spopad zveri in človeka  
zapirati v kletko morastih sanj?

Čisti pesnik, kar izpustiš v pesmi,  
bo vdrlo v svet z večjo divjostjo  
kot bleščeče vrste volčjih zob,  
ki trgajo človeško življenje  
in so že dovolj blizu za ugriz.

Zla slutnja!

Jalova pesem,  
kako bi mogla zmanjšati  
brezmejnost groze?

Pesnik odloži pero.

Volče zavijanje predira skozi vse,  
ko narašča iz globin snežne noči,  
v odmorih med eno  
in drugo besedo.

Kako lahko še pišemo,  
ko besede ne zmorejo bremena stvari,  
ko ne moremo nikoli povedati,  
ali mrazeča tožba prihaja z onkraj zasneženega polja  
ali se vzdiguje iz naših src.

*zima 1989, Peking*

## *Pastorala*

Prepričan si lahko, da boš zunaj Pekinga  
na podeželskih cestah naletel na ovce,  
raztepene po poljih kakor neraztopljeni sneg  
ali nabrekli cvetovi, ki so se odprli.  
V trumah prekrižajo cesto,  
pastir jih kriče podi  
v plevelnati jarek, ko se zaletavajo in poskakujejo sem in tja  
skozi prah.

Nikoli nisem bil posebej pozoren,  
dokler nisem nekega popoldneva  
v snežnem metežu  
tesno dohitel tovornjaka z ovcami,  
temne oči so strmele dol  
nežno in mirno, nezavedajoč se,  
kam gredo.  
Takrat so se ozrle name  
radovedno kakor otroci.

Zavesa snega se je debelila,  
ko sem popustil plin  
in opazoval, kako izginjajo.

2004

## Mandarine

Vso zimo jé mandarine,  
včasih za mizo,  
včasih na avtobusu.  
Včasih, med jedjo,  
v knjižni omari sneži.  
Včasih, namesto da bi jih jedel,  
jih samo lupi, počasi,  
kakor da je v njih nekaj živega.

Tako jé mandarine vso dolgo zimo,  
in ko jé, se spominja romana,  
v katerem junakinja tudi prinese na mizo  
krožnik mandarin. Ena se potem trklja  
do konca zgodbe.  
Imena avtorja ni vedel povedati.  
Le mandarine jé v tišini.  
Olupki na okenski polici se kopičijo.

Končno se spomni podobe nekaj mandarin  
v otroštvu, položenih ob njegovi postelji  
v bolnišnici.

Mati jih je našla nekje.  
Mlajši brat je prosil za eno, a mati mu je ni hotela dati.  
On sam si jih je delil,  
čeprav nobeden ni pojedel zadnje mandarine,  
ki je ostala na mizici ob postelji.

Kdo ve, kaj se je zgodilo z njo?

Tako vso zimo jé mandarine,  
še posebej ob dneh, ko sneži ali kadar je oblačno.  
Jé počasi, kakor da je  
časa na pretek,  
kakor da pozira temo.  
Jé, lupi, in ko vzdigne glavo,  
se v oknu blešči sneg.

## ***Pivo s sinom***

Mož več kot petdesetih let, zadnja želja,  
da bi posedel ob sinu, odraslem,  
a dolgo odsotnem.

Sreča se dvoje kozarcev,  
njun zvenk nekakšen objem,  
popustita,  
potem tišina.

Sin se vzdigne, da bi naročil še enega,  
oče strmi v svoj kozarec,  
medtem ko pena z roba  
drsi na dno.

*December 2007, Amherst, ZDA*

---

## **Vse bolj motno ogledalo**

1

Ljubezen dreves in kamnov: korenine sleherne etike.

2

Staranje narašča, ob mraku se prikaže več deklet, pobarvanih las,  
pomežikujejo s cestnega roba. Zakaj se ne bi ustavil? Kaj si zapustil  
takega, da bi bil lahko ponosen? Kaj res misliš, da je tvoja plemenita duša  
v primerjavi z enim njihovih glavnikov vzdržljivejša?

3

Čeprav ti vino močno kali um, pozabljene rane zbadajo ostreje kot osti.

4

Nekega dne se boš spominjal majhne restavracije, brenčeče od muh na  
robu Pekinga: kako smo strmeli v veličastne luči Hiltona v daljavi in  
prvič videli, kako ponižanje prizadene revščino.

5

Letališče zaprto, snežni vihar zasipava morje; ni vrnitve domov, le neke  
vrste dialog, ki postaja naporen.

6

Tisti, ki živijo v hudem mrazu, prihranijo majhen kos zemlje v dvorišču,  
da bodo posejali sončnice.

7

Čas je, da snameš sliko svoje nekdanje ljubice, vendar pod pogledom  
nove ljubimke hiše, kam jo lahko skriješ?

8

Glede na to, da si živel od tedaj do zdaj, je težko verovati, vendar nevera  
je strahota.

9

Zlato zrnje plesní, žetev gnije na polju. Na pragu starec strmi v blagi  
jesenski dež. Kaj te je odvrnilo od trpkih bežnih pogledov? Zakaj se  
zmeraj sramuješ pisati pesmi o neplodnem človeškem prizadevanju?

10

Če osel trdi, da je Velik Pesnik, se resnobno prikloniš, zakaj to je Dežela  
Poezije.

11

Ko se staraš, je prvi drobni žarek poroga v očesu tvojega sina nezaslužen  
dar na dolgo pričakovani praznik.

12

To je glasba, ki jo imam rad, kašljanje iz občinstva, ko mojster igra: v  
temi spet sedem na svoj sedež.

13

Ne gre za to, da si morda starejši; samo tvoje ogledalo se je zameglico.

14

Ni stvar v tem, da so dekleta v domačem mestu razpuščena; le tisti  
mornar, ki se je vrnil iz viharja, je že zdavnaj oslepel.

15

Vsek dan loščiš borova tla svoje sobe. Da bi bil pripravljen na življenje z  
bosim angelom, ki se nikoli ne prikaže? Nobenega angela ni. Iz kota na  
tvojem stropu se spušča debel pajek.

16

Zjutraj vstaneš in poslušaš orgle, ob mraku violino in zvečer klavir;  
ponoči pa buden slišiš brezkončno tišino.

17

Povrnitev vere v življenje je kakor korak noge v zimo; vrne se toplota,  
potem stopaš dalje v snegu.

18

Leta so minila, odkar sta bila zadnjič v živalskem vrtu: njo še zmeraj  
privlači Dvorana Kač, ker pa si ti nič več ne želiš videti tigrov ali labodov,  
se nameriš naravnost proti Griču Opic, kjer se tare otrok.

20

Ko bo njegovo vseživljenjsko pisanje končano kakor obdobje težkega  
dela, se mi zdi, da bo stopil iz sobe in se ozrl daleč, sam sebi mrmraje:  
Dete, zdaj čutim toplino sonca in slišim iz vrta smeh tvoje hčerke ...

*2000, Peking*

*Po angleških prevodih Diane Shi in Georgea O'Connella  
poslovenil Veno Taufer*

*Scorpion*

Turned every stone on the mountain,  
not one scorpion: this was childhood.  
But which year, what day?  
Now I've returned,  
the mountain pines thicker, taller,  
and from a cleft of ochre rock  
a scorpion, tail up,  
comes toward me.

Eye to eye, in a single moment,  
I am the stones beneath his feet.

1987

---

## ***The Ballad of Varykino***

*for Pasternak*

A candle is burning,  
the writer writes in winter.  
All of Russia's exhausted,  
and once more the breath of the snowstorm  
stops beneath his pen.  
Night, silence,  
anyone awake  
would be astonished at the beauty of the wretched world  
and its momentary peace.  
Perhaps you're lucky –  
fate took everything  
but one pine table,  
more than enough  
for a poet of these times,  
aside from life's own weight,  
the wife asleep, the sadness  
of the peaceful winter night.  
Write, poet, just as Pushkin  
wrote in gold,  
turning pain to music.  
The burning candle  
burns on the pine table,  
then the rustle of the pen  
goes still –  
something's coming over the snowfield,  
chill and ominous.  
The poet grows uneasy. The thrumming joy of his lines  
contracts.  
How can his heart bear to include  
the rasping breath of wolves?  
How can he let death  
profane this realm of blue crystal?  
The pen resists  
though the poet is correct.  
Why not one good night  
in all these bitter years?  
Why not some peace  
and with our words  
stave off death once more?  
Bright sky of orchestrating stars,

a poet trusts art above everything.  
Let him erase the tragic notes.  
When he sleeps, a finished poem  
should lie on the pine table,  
delicate as embroidery, plain and clean.  
The candle is burning  
and the pen leaps again across the page.  
The lines beat their rhythms  
despite fate's hints.  
But wolves keep howling,  
wolves draw near.  
Poet, why not weave their chilling sound  
into your lines?  
Why cage the mortal clash of man and beast  
inside a fretful dream?  
Pure poet, what you left out of the poem  
will enter the world with more savagery  
than the glinting rows of wolf teeth  
that shear off human life,  
already near enough to bite.  
An omen!  
Impotent poem,  
how can it reduce  
terror's immensity?  
The poet puts down his pen.  
The wolves' howls cut through everything,  
mounting from the depths of the snowy night,  
from the intervals between one word  
and another.  
The candle is burning.  
How can we write on  
when words can't bear things' weight,  
when we can never tell  
if the chill whine rises from the snowfield beyond  
or from our own hearts.

*1989, Winter, Beijing*

## *Pastoral*

On the country roads outside Beijing  
you're sure to spot sheep  
scattered over fields, like unmelted snow  
or swollen blooms burst open.  
They cross the road in clumps,  
the herdsman barking them down  
a weedy ditch, tripping and tumbling  
through the dust.

I never paid much attention  
until one afternoon  
in flurries of snow  
I nosed close behind a sheep truck,  
the dark eyes gazing down  
gentle and quiet, not knowing  
where they were headed.  
They turned toward me then,  
curious as children.

I let the car drift back  
through the thickening curtain of snow  
and watched them disappear.

2004

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## *Tangerines*

All winter he eats tangerines,  
sometimes at the table,  
sometimes on a bus.  
Sometimes, as he's eating,  
snow falls inside the bookcase.  
Sometimes instead of eating,  
he simply peels, slowly,  
as if something lives within.

So he eats tangerines, all winter long,  
and while eating recalls a novel  
in which the heroine also brought to the table  
a dish of tangerines. One kept rolling  
till the end of the story.  
But he can't name the author.  
He simply eats the tangerine in silence.  
The peels on his windowsill rise higher.

At last an image comes, several tangerines,  
in childhood, placed near his hospital bed.  
His mother had found them somewhere.  
Though his little brother begged one, mother refused.  
He shared, but neither  
would eat the last tangerine,  
which stayed on the night stand.

Who knows what became of it?

So he eats tangerines all winter,  
especially on snowy days, gray days.  
He eats slowly, as if  
there's plenty of time,  
as if he's devouring darkness.  
He eats, peels, and when he lifts his head,  
snow glitters at the window.

2006

## ***A Beer with My Son***

For a man over fifty, the lasting wish  
to sit beside his son, grown  
but long absent.

Two glasses meet,  
their clink a kind of hug,  
a coming to terms,  
then silence.

The son stands to order another,  
the father staring in his glass  
as the foam at the rim  
slides to the bottom.

*December, 2007, Amherst, USA*

## *Darkening Mirror*

1

Loving trees and stones: the root of all ethics.

2

The Age advances, and at dusk more girls appear, with tinted hair, beckoning from the roadside. Why not pull over? What have you left to be proud of? Do you really think your noble soul, compared to one of their combs, is more enduring?

3

Though the wine lies heavy on your mind, forgotten wounds stab sharper than a spike.

4

Someday you'll recall the little restaurant buzzing with flies on the edge of Beijing: how we sat gazing at the glorious lights of the far-off Hilton, seeing for the first time how humiliation smites the destitute.

5

Airport shut down, a blizzard madly filling in the sea; no homecoming, but one kind of dialogue, grown difficult.

6

Those who know how to live in deep cold save a plot of earth in the yard to sow sunflowers.

7

Time to take down your ex-lover's painting, but under the eye of the new mistress of the house, where can you put it?

8

Having lived from then till now, belief is hard, but disbelief is terror.

9

Gold corn mouldering, crops rotting in the field. Old man on the doorstep, staring in the soft autumn rain. What makes you turn from bitter glances? Why are you always ashamed to write poems about fruitless human labor?

10

If a donkey claims he's a Great Poet, you bow solemnly, for this is The Land of Poetry.

11

As you grow old, that first thin gleam of scorn in your son's eyes comes like an undeserved gift on a long awaited holiday.

12

This is the music I love, coughs from the audience as the master performs: I resume my seat in darkness.

13

It's not that you're any older; your mirror's just grown dim.

14

It's not that you're any older; dining alone just takes longer.

15

It's not that the hometown girls are loose; just that the sailor back from the storm went blind long ago.

16

Daily you polish your room's pine floor. To prepare for life with a barefoot angel who never appears? There is no angel. From a corner of your ceiling descends a fat spider.

17

You arise in the morning and listen to the organ, at dusk the violin, and evening the piano; but awakened at night, you hear unending silence.

18

Restoring faith in life is like stamping your feet in winter; warmth returns, then you stride off further in the snow.

19

Years since your last trip to the zoo: she's still drawn to the Hall of Snakes, but as you no longer wish to see tigers or swans, you head straight for Monkey Hill, thronged with children.

20

When his lifetime of writing is finished like a term of hard labor, I think he'll step from the room and look far away, murmuring to himself: Child, now I feel the sun's warmth, and from your garden hear your daughter's laughter.

*2000, Beijing*

*Translated by Diana Shi & George O'Connell*

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# Mlada vilenica 2012

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*Young Vilenica  
Award 2012*

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*Nagrajenka 12. mlade vilenice v skupini od 7 do 10 let je Tilka Namestnik, učenka drugega razreda OŠ Franca Rozmana - Staneta Maribor, za pesem Pozabljeni čevlji. Mentorica: Mira Golob.*

Izbrana pesem *Pozabljeni čevlji* mlade avtorice Tilke Namestnik morda daje na prvi pogled napačen vtis ali kritički pomislek. Zgodb o čevljih, ki pripovedujejo, se spominjajo, so takšni in drugačni, poznamo v otroški literaturi, tudi v pesemskih oblikah, veliko. A Tilkini čevlji nekako niso iz povsem znane zbirke »literarnih« čevljev. Pesnica svojih čevljev ne personificira, kar v otroški literaturi pa tudi v literaturi za otroke največkrat zasledimo, ampak so čevlji še vedno samo čevlji, torej predmet, tako da je pesnica edini (prvoosebni) subjekt in prvoosebna (pri-)iz-povedovalka. Tako kot jo razočarajo čevlji, kar je razumljivo, saj so samo objekt (nepersonificiran), jo razočara tudi bližnja okolica oziroma njeni bližnji. Nihče se namreč ne spomni avtoričnih preteklih doživetij. Pesnica uspe rešiti razočaranje, morda celo stisko, tako da izpostavi prepričanje vase, da verjame sebi, svojim občutkom, in to s simpatično otroško kljubovalnostjo, kar pripelje do poetičnega obrata: *Jaz sama vem, da hodim.*

### ***Pozabljeni čevlji***

Rjave packe na čevljih,  
raztrgani okraski,  
uničeni podplati  
in zamegljeni dodatki.

Nihče ne ve,  
kaj sem v njih doživela.

Mar se ne spomnijo več,  
kako sem v njih pobegnila  
pred tisto trumo vojakov,  
pred tistimi sabljami in oklepi?  
Se nihče več ne spomni,  
kaj sem v njih dočakala  
za svoja leta?

Zdaj so sami na polici  
na našem hodniku.

A jaz vsako noč hodim z njimi,  
a me ne nosi luna,  
kot bi kdo pomislil.  
Jaz sama vem, da hodim.

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*The winner of the 12th Young Vilenica Award in the 7–10 year age category is Tilka Namestnik, a second-grader from Elementary School Franc Rozman – Stane, Maribor, for the poem Forgotten Shoes. Mentor: Mira Golob.*

At first glance the selected poem, *Forgotten Shoes* by the young author Tilka Namestnik, may give the wrong impression or provoke critical reservations. Stories about all manner of shoes narrating or reminiscing abound in children's literature, including poetry. But somehow Tilka's shoes do not belong to the thoroughly familiar collection of "literary" shoes. Rather than being personified, as is common in literature written by and for children, the shoes remain mere shoes, objects, which leaves the poet as the only first-person subject and narrator. Just as she is disappointed by her shoes – logically, for they are mere objects (not personified) – she is disappointed by her environment, by the people near to her, because nobody remembers her past experiences. The poet succeeds in assuaging her disappointment, distress even, by highlighting her self-reliance. With a child's endearing defiance, she relies on herself, on her own feelings, which leads to a poetic twist: *I know myself that I walk.*

### ***Forgotten Shoes***

Brown stains on the shoes,  
tattered tassels,  
run-down soles  
and blurry extras.

Nobody knows  
where I have worn them.

Can they no longer remember  
how I ran, wearing them,  
from the troop of the soldiers,  
from the sabres and mailcoats?  
Can no-one remember  
what I have seen in them,  
for my age?

They sit alone on a shelf  
in our hallway.

But I walk in them every night,  
and not in my sleep,  
as someone might think.  
I know myself that I walk.

*Translated by Nada Grošelj*

*Nagrajenka 12. mlade vilenice v skupini od 11 do 14 let je Marta Radić, učenka osmega razreda OŠ Nikole Tesle Reka, Hrvaška, za pesem Svoboda (Sloboda). Mentorica: Irena Peić.*

Izbrana pesem *Svoboda* avtorice Marte Radić je pesem, ki z izčiščeno pesniško govorico pričara bralcu impresivno in tudi refleksivno vzdušje. Iz preprostega, naključnega dejanja, kot je iz vode pobrati kamen in ga zalučati v daljavo, avtorici uspe samo vsebino (dogodka) izpovedno oplemenititi in jo povzdigniti v svet metaforike. Pesnica posredno odpira mnoga vprašanja, ki in njene strani ostanejo neodgovorjena – tako vprašanja kot odgovori so prepuščeni bralcu. Kaj je svoboda, kakšna je lahko njena posledica, kako jo kdo razume, so vprašanja, ki niso neposredno postavljena, a so nekje v ozadju in ob branju pesmi in po njem stopijo v ospredje. Pesem ponuja še druge vsebinsko poetične dimenzije in s tem občutno vsebinsko poetično večpomenskost, ki je odlika dobrih pesmi. Kljub po obsegu nekoliko skromni uporabi pesniških »sredstev« lahko za Martino pesem *Svoboda* rečemo, da ji ni kaj dodati niti odvzeti.

### ***Sloboda***

Pružim ruku,  
a u ruci dio mora,  
kamen se kotrlja.  
Zamahnem  
i odleti u daljinu.  
Leteći prema stijeni  
radosno misli:  
»Napokon sloboda!«  
A onda udari o stijenu,  
nastanu dva kamena  
i ponovo se stope s  
krhkem staklastom površinom.

### ***Svoboda***

Iztegnem roko,  
v roki pa košček morja,  
kamen se kotali.  
Zamahnem  
in v daljavo odleti.  
Ko leti proti skali,  
radostno premišljuje:  
»Končno svoboda!«  
Potem pa udari ob skalo,  
nastaneta dva kamna  
in se ponovno zlijeta  
s krhko, steklasto površino.

*Prevedel David Terčon*

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*The winner of the 12th Young Vilenica Award in the 11–14 year age category is Marta Radić, an eighth-grader from Elementary School Nikola Tesla, Rijeka, Croatia, for the poem Freedom. Mentor: Irena Peić.*

With its finely honed poetic idiom, the selected poem, *Freedom* by Marta Radić, conjures up an impressive and reflective atmosphere for the reader. A simple, accidental act like plucking a pebble from the sea and tossing it into the distance is enriched with additional meaning and elevated into a metaphor. Indirectly, the poet opens many issues which remain unanswered on her part: both questions and answers are left to the reader. What is freedom, what its consequences may be, how it is understood – all these questions are not posed directly but hover in the background, stepping to the fore during and after the poem has been read. The poem offers still other dimensions of poetic content and thus manifold layers of meaning, a trademark of good poetry. Despite its sparing use of poetic “devices”, Marta’s poem *Freedom* admits no amplification or reduction.

## ***Freedom***

I stretch out my hand,  
inside a bit of the sea,  
a pebble is rolling.  
I swing my arm  
and it flies far away.  
Flying towards a cliff,  
it thinks, joyous:  
“Freedom at last!”  
But, smashing against the cliff,  
one becomes two  
and they blend again  
into fragile glass surface.

*Translated by Nada Grošelj*

*Nagrajenka 12. mlade vilenice v skupini od 15 do 17 let je Veronika Martinčič, učenka devetega razreda OŠ Toneta Čufarja Ljubljana, za pesem Sonet s črko R. Mentorica: Anica Dobrovc.*

Pesem Veronike Martinčič *Sonet s črko R* je precejšnja osvežitev med prispevki – ko imamo v mislih 3. starostno skupino avtoric in avtorjev – na tečaja Mlada Vilenica 2012. Pesnica se je preizkusila v klasični pesniški obliki, sonetu, ki je pri Veroniki sicer precej svobodna (tako pri rimah kot pri številu zlogov), vendar dosega dovolj izrazit ritem, ki razen na redkih mestih omogoča bralcu tekoče branje ali interpretacijo. Kar posebej pritegne, je vsebina in izbrana, pesniško ne ravno vsakdanja tematika. Pesem je humorna, sproščena. Avtorica neobremenjeno »vpesni« svojo črko R, svojo zadnjico kot glavni objekt pesmi. Pri tem se spretно izogne banaliziranju in ostane presenetljivo iskrena do sebe in bralca. Veronikina humorost, sproščenost, iskrena neposrednost, ki pa je glede na vsebino daleč od prozaičnosti, daje pesmi *Sonet s črko R* tisto poetično vrednost, ki zasluži večjo pozornost.

### ***Sonet s črko R***

Usedla sem se nanjo,  
pod mojo težo ječi,  
malo mar mi je zanjo,  
dokler me ne boli.

Zjutraj jo v tesne hlače stlačim,  
zvečer jo preoblečem in umijem,  
v šoli večkrat jo potlačim,  
na stranišču pa razkrijem.

A je vseeno vesela,  
dokler je del mene,  
je vsak dan bolj debela.

In če kdo potrka,  
spoštljivo vstanem  
in z mano moja črka.

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The winner of the 12th Young Vilenica Award in the 15–17 year age category is Veronika Martinčič, a ninth-grader from Elementary School Tone Čufar, Ljubljana, for the poem *A Sonnet with the Letter A*. Mentor: Anica Dobrovc.

The poem by Veronika Martinčič, *A Sonnet with the Letter A*, comes as a breath of fresh air in the third age category of authors participating in the “Young Vilenica” 2012 competition. The poet tries her hand at a classic verse form, the sonnet. While Veronika’s sonnet is not strict in terms of rhyme and syllable count, it generally achieves a sufficient rhythmic quality to enable fluent reading or interpretation. Particularly attractive is the content, the choice of subject-matter, which is hardly a common poetic choice. The poem is humorous, laid back, with the author cheerfully “setting to verse” her letter A, her bottom, as the main object. Adroitly evading banality, she remains startlingly frank with herself and her reader. Veronika’s humour, relaxation, her sincere immediacy, which is – in the light of her theme – far removed from prosiness, invests the poem *A Sonnet with the Letter A* with the kind of poetic value which merits closer attention.

### ***A Sonnet with the Letter A***

I've sat down on it,  
it groans beneath my weight,  
but I don't care a whit  
as long as there's no pain.

By day it's squeezed in pants, too tight,  
and washed when nighttime falls,  
I tuck it in at school sometimes,  
but strip in toilet stalls.

Still, it seems happy for all that,  
as long as it's a part of me,  
it grows each day more fat.

When someone knocks to enter,  
I rise for them respectfully,  
and so, with me, my letter.

*Translated by Nada Grošelj*



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# Dosedanji udeleženci in nagrajenci Vilenice

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*Previous  
Participants and  
Vilenica Prize  
Winners*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1986  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Fulviu Tomizzi*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Jože Pirjevec*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1986 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Péter Esterházy, Reinhard P. Gruber, Ingram Hartinger, Zbigniew Herbert, Gert Hofmann, Tadeusz Konwicki, Lojze Kovačič, Slavko Mihalić, Gerhard Roth, Milan Rúfus, Eva Schmidt, Jan Skácel, Wisława Szymborska, Fulvio Tomizza, Istvan Vas, Igor Zidić*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1987  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Petru Handkeju*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Erik Prunč*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1987 – *Gregor Strniša*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1987 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Ivan Aralica, Dezsö Tandori, Erzsébet Galgóczí, Lúboromír Feldek, Carmela Fratantonio, Peter Handke, Bohumil Hrabal, Geda Jacolitti, Drago Jančar, Alfred Kolleritsch, Ryszard Krynicki, Andrzej Kuśniewicz, Giuliana Morandini, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, Jan Skácel, Gregor Strniša, Wisława Szymborska, Dominik Tatarka, Veno Taufer, Pavle Ugrinov, Adam Zagajewski, Vitomil Zupan*

DISPUT: *Claudio Magris: Ewaldova bakla / Ewald's Torch*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1988  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Pétru Esterházyju*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Jože Hradil*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1988 – *Ewa Lipska*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1988 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Birgitta Arens, Francesco Burdin, Sándor Csoóri, Jaroslav Čejka, Miroslav Červenka, Milan Dekleva, Danijel Dragojević, Benedikt Dyrlich, Vlado Gotovac, Marian Grześcak, Klaus Hoffer, Anton Hykisch, Gert Jonke, László Lator, Ewa Lipska, Marcelijus Martinaitis, Vesna Parun, Erica Pedretti, Richard Pietras, Ilma Rakusa, Christoph Ransmayr, Renzo Rosso, Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz,*

Ryszard Schubert, Tomaž Šalamun, Rudi Šeligo, Josef Šimon, Aleksandar Tišma, Judita Vaiciunaite, Tomas Venclova, Giorgio Voghera, Josef Winkler, Dane Zajc, Štefan Žary

DISPUT: Czesław Miłosz: Četrta učna ura / The Fourth Teaching Lesson

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1989  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Janu Skáclu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Albina Lipovec*  
*KRISTAL VILENICE 1989 – Dubravka Ugrešić*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1989 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
H. C. Artmann, Jan Beno, Volker Braun, Gino Brazzoduro, Jan Buzásy, Paola Capriolo, Sándor Csoóri, Miroslav Dudok, Bogumil Đuzel, Petar Gudelj, Christoph Hein, Milan Jesih, Gert Jonke, Eugeniusz Kabatc, Danilo Kiš, Ivan Klíma, Jurij Koch, Kajetan Kovič, Gabriel Laub, Florjan Lipuš, Miklos Meszöly, Emil Mikulenaite, Adolph Muschg, Tadeusz Nowak, Josip Osti, Tone Pavček, Kornelijus Platelis, Ingrid Puganigg, Miroslav Putik, Alojz Rebula, Carlo Sgorlon, Werner Sollner, Andrzej Szczypiorski, Antonio Tabucchi, Dubravka Ugrešić, Miroslav Valek, Dragan Velikić, Ligio Zanini

DISPUT: György Konrad: S sredine / From the Centre

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1990  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Tomasu Venclovi*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Veno Taufer*  
*KRISTAL VILENICE 1990 – Aleš Debeljak*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1990 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
Jonynas Antanas, Aleksandra Berková, Andrej Blatnik, Leon Briedis, Miroslav Červenka, Aleš Debeljak, Nedjeljko Fabrio, András Fodor, Branko Gradišnik, Niko Grafenauer, Reinhardt P. Gruber, Maja Haderlap, Paweł Huelle, Anton Hykisch, Eugenius Ignatavičius, Lubomir Jurík, Diana Kempff, Tomas Saulius Kondrotas, Michael Köhlmeier, György Konrád, Miroslav Košuta, Stelio Mattioni, Libuše Moníková, Péter Nádas, Gáspár Nagy, Boris Pahor, Miodrag Pavlović, Giorgio Pressburger, Eva Schmidt, Knuts Skujenieks, Jože Snoj, Ján Józef Szczępański, Andrzej Szczypiorski, Susanna Tamara, Ladislav Tažký, Goran Tribuson, Božena Trilecová, Ludvík Vaculík, Joachim Walter, Anka Žagar

DISPUT: VENO TAUFER: Izziv ali zgaga? / Challenge or Hassle?

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1991  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Zbigniewu Herbertu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Niko Jež*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1991 – *Grendel Lajos*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1991 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Ladislav Ballek, Andrej Brvar, Lenka Chytilová, Heinz Czechowski, István Eörsi, Lajos Grendel, Fabjan Hafner, Reto Hänni, Ivanka Hercold, Andrej Hieng, Alois Hotschnig, Vítazoslav Hronec, Anna Jókai, Donaldas Kajokas, Milan Kleč, Mirko Kovač, Lojze Krakar, Vít Kremlíčka, Bronisław Maj, Laura Marchig, Štefan Moravčík, Luko Paljetak, Oskar Pastior, Jure Potokar, Hans Raimund, Rolandas Rastauskas, György Somlyó, Mario Suško, Ivo Svetina, Susanna Tamara, Arvo Valton, Szabolcs Várady, Bite Vilimaitė, Alena Vostrá, Joachim Walther, Ernest Wichtner, Josef Winkler*

DISPUT: *Vlado Gotovac: Skica o Atlasu / Sketch of the Atlas*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1992  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Milanu Kunderi*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Jaroslav Skrušný*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1992 – *Endre Kukorellý*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1992 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Alexandra Berková, Vytautas Blozé, Branko Čegec, Slavenka Drakulić, Gustav Januš, Dušan Jovanović, Ferenc Juhász, Ryszard Kapuściński, Marie-Thérèse Kerschbaumer, Eftim Kletnikov, Krzysztof Koehler, Uwe Kolbe, Mirko Kovač, Endre Kukorellý, Krzysztof Lisowski, Drahoslav Machala, Vytautas Martinkus, Ivan Minatti, Libuše Moníková, Boris A. Novák, Lajos Parti Nagy, Aarne Puu, Gerhard Roth, Štefan Strážay, Jana Štroblová, Marjan Tomšič, Miloslav Topinka, Dragan Velikić, Jani Virk, Peter Waterhouse*

DISPUT: *Evgen Bavčar: Univerzalizmi in njihova Facies Hypocritica / Universalisms and Their Facies Hypocritica*  
*Péter Esterházy: Postmoderni barbarizem ali Evropa brez lastnosti / Postmodern Barbarism or Europe with No Characteristics*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1993  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Libuši Montíkoví*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Neva Šlibar*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1993 – *Francesco Micieli*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1993 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Zsófia Balla, Józef Baran, Roberto Dedenaro, Helmut Einsendle, Alojz Ilhan, Dževad Karahasan, Matjaž Kocbek, Vlastimil Kovalčík, Marko Kravos, Zvonko Makovič, László Márton, Robert Menasse, Francesco Micieli, Marjeta Novak Kajzer, Paul Parin, Denis Poniž, Diana Pranckietytė, Carlo Sgorlon, Arvo Valton, Michal Viewegh, Piotr Woiciechowski, Ifigenija Zagoričnik Simonović*

DISPUT: *Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, Vlado Gotovac, László Krasznahorkai, Antonin J. Liehm: Edvard Kocbek: Palica / Edvard Kocbek: The Stick*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1994  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Josipu Ostiju*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Denis Poniž*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1994 – *Slavko Mihalić*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1994 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Marjorie Agosán, Edoardo Albinati, Árni Bergmann, Miloš Biedrzycki, Christa Dericum, Janko Ferk, Antonio Fian, Antanas Gailius, Vlado Gotovac, Egyd Gstättner, Gunnar D. Hansson, Daniel Hevier, Vítazoslav Hronec, Paweł Huelle, Goran Ignjatije Janković, Richard Jackson, Dževad Karahasan, Lubor Kasal, Thomas Kling, Majda Kne, Miklavž Komelj, Jurgis Kunčinas, Feri Lainšček, Phyllis Levin, Svetlana Makarovič, Giuseppe Mariuz, János Marno, Mateja Matevski, Andrej Medved, Slavko Mihalić, Dušan Mitana, Grzegorz Musiał, Juan Octavio Prenz, Aleksander Peršolja, György Petri, Lenka Procházková, Gianfranco Sodomaco, Matthew Sweeney, Tomaž Šalamun, Igor Škamperle, Jachým Topol, Urs Widmer, Uroš Zupan*

DISPUT: *Alain Finkielkraut: Intelektualci, politika in vojna / Intellectuals, Politics and War*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1995  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Adolfu Muschgu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Vesna Kondrič Horvat*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1995 – *Marzanna Bogumiła Kielar*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1995 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Jovica Aćin, Kurt Aeblí, Marjorie Agosán, Eugenijus Ališanka, Marcin Baran, Árni Bergmann, Krzysztof Bielecki, Dariusz Bittner, Loredana Bogliun, Berta Bojetu-Boeta, Tereza Boučková, Lucas Cejpek, Róża Domaścyna, Erik Groch, Gunnar D. Hansson, Nora Ikstena, Richard Jackson, Marzanna Bogumiła Kielar, Rade Krstić, Phyllis Levin, Tonko Maroević, Manfred Moser, Danielius Mušinskas, Juan Octavio Prenz, Radovan Pavlovski, Tone Perčič, Sibila Petlevski, Raoul Schrott, Zorko Simčič, Rudolf Sloboda, Andrzej Stasiuk, Matthew Sweeney, Tomaž Šalamun, Ján Štrasser, Zsuzsa Tákács, Dezső Tandori, Jaromír Typlt, Miloš Vacík, Saša Vegri, Pavel Vilikovský, Ernest Wichner, Cyril Zlobec, Vlado Žabot, Aldo Žerjal*

DISPUT: *Lojze Kovačič: Ali pisatelj potrebuje svet, ki njega ne potrebuje? / Does a Writer Need the World which Doesn't Need Him?*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1996  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Adamu Zagajewskemu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Niko Jež*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1996 – *Kaća Čelan*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1996 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Lothar Baier, Uldis Berzinš, Petr Borkovec, Magda Carneci, Karol Chmel, Claude Michel Cluny, Branko Čegec, Kaća Čelan, Zita Čepaite, Stefano Dell'antonio, Ljiljana Dirjan, Dušan Dušek, Milan Đorđević, Menna Elfyn, János Háy, Ann Jäderlund, Antanas A. Jonynas, Julian Kornhauser, András Ferenc Kovács, Vladimir Kovačič, Friederike Kretzen, Enzo Martines, Lydia Mischkulnig, Brane Mozetič, Boris A. Novak, Iztok Osojnik, Žarko Petan, James Ragan, Ales Razanov, Hansjörg Schertenleib, Triini Soomets, Karel Šiktanc, Aleš Šteger, Thorgeir Thorgeirson, Maja Vidmar, Márton Zelmenis*

DISPUT: *Svoboda imaginacije – imaginacija svobode / Imagination of Freedom – Freedom of Imagination*  
*Branko Miljković: Poezijo bodo vsi pisali / Everybody Will Be Writing Poetry*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1997  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Pavlu Vilikovskemu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Andrej Rozman*  
*KRISTAL VILENICE 1997 – Nicole Müller*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1997 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Attila Balázs, Pauls Bankovskis, Peters Brüveris, Stefan Chwin, Gillian Clarke, Vittorio Cozzoli, Vera Čejkovska, Liutauras Degėsys, Evald Flisar, Franjo Frančič, Niko Grafenauer, Marianne Gruber, Aime Hansen, Jože Hudeček, Hanna Johansen, Vanda Juknaite, Mila Kačič, Doris Kareva, István Kovács, Kristina Ljaljko, Peter Macsovský, Herbert Maurer, Neža Maurer, Christopher Merrill, Katja Lange Müller, Nicole Müller, Ewald Murrer, Miha Obit, Albert Ostermaier, Pavao Pavličić, Delimir Rešicki, Brane Senegačnik, Abdulah Sidran, Andrzej Sosnowski, Pierre-Yves Soucy, Ragnar Strömborg, Olga Tokarczuk, Alta Vášová, Anastassis Vistonitis, Anatol Vjarcinski, Andrew Zawadcki*

DISPUT: *Daimon zapeljevanja / Daimon of Temptation:*  
*Rainer Maria Rilke: Orfej • Evridika • Hermes / Orpheus • Eurydice • Hermes*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1998 JE DRUŠTVO  
SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Pétru Nádasu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Orsolya Gállos*  
*KRISTAL VILENICE 1998 – Peter Semolič*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1998 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Amanda Aizpuriete, Andrei Bodiu, Jan Čikvin, France Forstnerič, Natasza Goerke, Felicitas Hoppe, Zoë Jenny, Arne Johnsson, Jiří Kratochvíl, José Jorge Letria, Vida Mokrin Pauer, Maja Novak, Hava Pinhas-Koen, Ilma Rakusa, Izet Sarajlić, Peter Semolič, Marko Sosič, Alvydas Šlepikas, Slobodan Šnajder, Pia Tafdrup, Veno Taufer, László Villányi, Milan Vincetič, Hugo Williams, Andrea Zanzotto*

DISPUT: *Timothy Garton Ash: Konec stoletja, začetek tisočletja / The End of the Century, the Beginning of the Millennium*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 1999  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Erici Pedretti*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Vesna Kondrič Horvat*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1999 – *Angelo Cherchi*

V publikaciji Vilenica 1999 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Neringa Abrutytė, Angelo Cherchi, Lelo Cjanton, Richard Flanagan, Marius Iváškevičius, Richard Jackson, Jana Juránová, Jaan Kaplinski, Dražen Katunarić, Taja Kramberger, Ryszard Krynicki, Franco Loi, Miha Mazzini, Miloš Mikeln, Mimmo Morina, Andrej Morovič, Amir Or, Razvan Petrescu, Asher Reich, Christopher Reid, Kathrin Röggla, Ljudmila Rubljévska, Anna Santoliquido, Armin Senser, Sande Stojčevski, Vojo Šindolič, Adriana Škunca, Ottó Tolnai, Bogdan Trojak, Nenad Veličković, Karen Volkman, Dane Zajc*

DISPUT: *Trst na začetku 20. stoletja: futuristična utopija ali možni model za nadnacionalno in ustvarjalno sožitje v združeni (srednji) Evropi / Trieste at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Futuristic Utopia or Realistic Model of Trans-National and Creative Coexistence of People in the Common (Central) Europe*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2000  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Slavku Mihaliću*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Veno Taufer*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2000 – *István Vörös*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2000 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Zoran Ančevski, Peter Božič, Uke Bucpapaj, Aleš Čar, Primož Čučnik, Jacques Darras, Lidija Dimkovska, Mircea Dinescu, Michael Donhauser, Janis Elsbergs, Leopold Federmair, Mila Haugova, Željko Ivanković, Liudvikas Jakimavičius, Urs Karpf, Georgiu Konstantinov, Hasso Krull, Gary Lawless, Umberto Mangani, Erik Menkveld, Jaume Perez Montaner, Imre Oravec, Silvana Paletti, Katherine Pierpoint, Angelina Polonskaya, Milorad Popović, Ana Ristović, Sudeep Sen, Marcin Sendeki, Ronny Someck, Marjan Strojan, Brina Švigelj Mérat, Yórgos Veis, Istvan Vörös, Gerald Zschorsch*

DISPUT: *Friederike Kretzen: Vloga in pomen literature danes / The Meaning and the Role of Literature Today*  
*Niko Grafenauer: Pisatelj v ekscentru časa / Writer in the Off-Centre of Time*  
*Régis Debray, Zdenko Vrdlovec: Literatura in mediji / Literature and the Media*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2001  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Jaanu Kaplinskemu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Veno Taufer*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2001 – *Natalka Bilocerkivec*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2001 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Esad Babačić, Mohammed Bennis, Natalka Bilocerkivec, Casimiro De Brito, Richard Burns, Peteris Cedrinš, Robert Davis, Michel Deguy, Ferida Duraković, Andreas Ehin, Hans Eichhorn, Mauro Faccioni Filho, Michael Farrell, László Garaczi, Greg Gatenby, Adam Globus, Adela Greceanu, Petr Hruška, Valdo Immovilli, Dragan Jovanović Danilov, Laurynas Katkus, Vladimir Kavčič, Katica Kjulavkova, Barbara Korun, Maruša Krese, Roman Ludva, Sonja Manojlović, Narlan Matos, Marián Milčák, Ban'ya Natsuishi, Claudio Pozzani, Matthew Rohrer, Erik Stinus, Franco Supino, Vivienne Verme, Thor Vilhjálmsson, Hans Van De Waarsenburg, Adam Wiedemann*

DELAVNICE / WORKSHOPS: *Prevajanje poezije, O estetski komponenti vsakdanjega življenja / Translating Poetry, On the Aesthetic Component of the Everyday Life*  
MLADA VILENICA 2001 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2001: *Špela Poljak*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2002  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Ani Blandiani*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Lidija Dimkovska*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2002 – *Pál Závada*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2002 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Jorge Enrique Adoum, Dritëro Agolli, Andriy Bondar, Snežana Bukal, Bora Čosić, Jozefina Dautbegović, Tanja Dückers, Oswald Egger, Jakša Fiamengo, Ioan Flora, Janice Galloway, Chuah Guat Eng, Sinan Gudžević, Michál Hvorecký, Anatol Kudravec, Anatolij Kudrjavicki, Leena Lander, Franco Manzoni, Maciej Melecki, Dušan Merc, Petr Mikeš, Vinko Möderndorfer, Herta Müller, Patricia Nolan, Knut Ødegård, Justo Jorge Padron, Monika Van Paemel, Ratimir Pavlović, Janis Rokpelnis, Ken Smith, Glen Sorestad, Luan Starova, Vidosav Stevanović, Lucija Stupica, Tone Škrjanec, Willem Van Toorn, Pál Závada*

DELAVNICE / WORKSHOPS: *Prevajanje poezije, O literaturi na internetu, O vizualni in literarni podobi / On Translating Poetry, On Literature on the Internet, On Visual and Literary Image*  
MLADA VILENICA 2002 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2002: *Ana Šalgaj*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2003  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Mirku Kovaču*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Josip Osti*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2003 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Constantin Abaluță, Hana Andronikova, Kostas Assimacopoulos, Vladimír Balla, Marek Bieńczyk, Boris Biletić, Nicole Brossard, René De Ceccatty, Paulo Da Costa, John F. Deane, Paulette Dubé, Lynn Emanuel, Pavle Goranović, Norbert Gstrein, Jacques Izoard, Rutger Kopland, Herkus Kunčius, Taras Luchuk, Donal Mclaughlin, Gordana Mihailova Bošnakoska, Tom Petsinis, Vivienne Plumb, Gregor Podlogar, Alek Popov, Stella Rotenberg, Paolo Ruffilli, Fiona Sampson, Ljudka Silnova, Andrej E. Skubic, Eira Stenberg, James Tate, Krisztina Tóth, Suzana Tratnik, Christian Uetz, Vladimir Vertlib, Erika Vouk, Juli Zeh*

DELAVNICE / WORKSHOPS: *Prevajanje poezije, Prostori transgresije, Revija v reviji / Translating Poetry, Places of Transgression, Review in Review*  
MLADA VILENICA 2003 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2003: *Žiga Mohorič, Agata Venier*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2004  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Brigitti Kronauer*

Utemeljiti nagrade: *Neva Šlibar* in *Vesna Kondrič Horvat*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2004 – *Valžina Mort*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2004 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Jan Balabán, Muharem Bazdulj, Eric Brogniet, Štefan Caraman, Daša Drndić, Martin Fahrner, Edward Foster, Georgi Gospodinov, Gintaras Grajauskas, Daniela Kapitáňová, Vojislav Karanović, Artjom Kavalevski, Juris Kronbergs, Alain Lance, Sydney Lea, Vasyl Makhno, Katarina Marinčič, Txema Martínez Inglés, Valžina Mort, Novica Novaković, Gino Pastega, Szilárd Podmaniczky, Aleksandar Prokopiev, Barbara Simoniti, Peter Steiner, Anni Sumari, Vladimir P. Štefanec, Cai Tianxin, Krzysztof Varga, Peter Weber, Andrea Zanzotto*

PREVAJALSKA DELAVNICA / TRANSLATION WORKSHOP: *Mererid Puw Davies, Louis De Paor, Helena Sinervo*  
DISPUT: *Primer Edvard Kocbek in svoboda izražanja danes / The Edvard Kocbek Case and the Freedom of Expression Today*  
MLADA VILENICA 2004 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2004: *Eva Rener, Brigita Berčon*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2005  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILo

## *Ilmi Rakusa in Karlu-Markusu Gaušu*

Utemeljiti nagrade: *Vesna Kondrič Horvat* in *Drago Jančar*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2005 – *Vladas Braziunas*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2005 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Carlos A. Aguilera, Veljko Barbieri, Juras Barisevič, Vladas Braziunas, Anna Maria Carpi, Theodora Dimova, Jure Jakob, Janez Kajzer, Viljam Klimáček, Olivera Korvezirovska, Cvetka Lipuš, Jaan Malin, Jim Mcgarrah, Anna Mitgutsch, Sinead Morrissey, Duško Novaković, Gregor Papež, Leung-Ping Kwan, Jean Portante, Zsuzsa Rakovszky, Ralf Schlatter, Stephanos Stephanides, Faruk Šehić, Magdalena Tulli, Miloš Urban, Liliana Ursu*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»*Možnosti sobivanja različnih kultur v Evropi in proces iskanja nove kulturne paradigm*« / “*The Possibilities of Coexistence of Different Cultures in Europe and the Process of Searching a New Cultural Paradigm*”

MODERATOR: *Aleš Debeljak*

MLADA VILENICA 2005 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2005: *Rožana Švara, Eva Mohorič*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2006  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILo

## *Miodragu Pavloviću*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Veno Taufer*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2006 – *Moja Kumerdej*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2006 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Inga Abele, Michál Ajvaz, Venko Andonovski, Lindita Arapi, Alhierd Bacharevič, Szilárd Borbély, Yiorgos Chouliaras, Daiva Čepauskaitė, Ervin Fritz, Tatjana Gromača, Brian Henry, Oto Horvat, Nora Iuga, Iva Jevtić, Zdenko Kodrič, Márius Kopcsay, Miran Košuta, Mojca Kumerdej, Terézia Mora, Birgit Müller-Wieland, Tönnu Önnepalu (Emil Tode), Claudio Pozzani, Gabriel Rosenstock, Goran Samardžić, Ostap Slyvynsky, Breda Smolnikar, Olga Tokarczuk, Marko Uršič, Raphael Urweider, Ekaterina Yossifova*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»*Kdo sliši sosedovo zgodbo?*« / “*Who Can Hear One’s Neighbour’s Story?*”

MODERATOR: *Simona Škrabec*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: *Sodobna baskovska književnost / Contemporary Basque Writing: Barnardo Atxaga, Miren Agur Meabe, Rikardo Arregi, Harkaitz Cano, Kirmen Uribe*

MLADA VILENICA 2006 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2006: *Dita Škalič, Aljaž Ferencek, Miroslava Furtkevičová*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2007

JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Goranu Stefanovskemu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Lidija Dimkovska*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2007 – *Piotr Sommer*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2007 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*David Albahari, Attila Bartis, Ataol Behramoğlu, Balša Brković, Gentian Çoçoli, Dumitru Crudu, Vytautas Deksnys, Dagnija Dreika, Kristiina Ehin, Carolyn Forché Mattison, Nejc Gazvoda, Sonja Harter, Ioana Ieronim, Andrej Kurkov, Meta Kušar, Ermis Lafazanovski, Agi Mishol, Senadin Musabegović, Aleš Mustar, Dennis O'driscoll, Maja Panajotova, Roberto Pazzi, Monika Rinck, Edi Shukriu, Piotr Sommer, Igor Štiks, Ján Štrasser, Sami Tchak, Tomas Tranströmer, Christina Viragh, Matjaž Zupančič, Barys Žančak*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»(Samo)cenzura danes: literarna cenzura v luči politične korektnosti« / “(Self)-Censorship Today: Literary Censorship in the Light of Political Correctness”

MODERATOR: *Alenka Puhar*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: *Sodobna književnost v irščini / Contemporary Literature in Irish: Celia de Fréine, Tomás Mac Síomóin, Dairena Ní Chinnéide, Micheál Ó Conghaile, Cathal Ó Searcaigh, Gabriel Rosenstock*

MLADA VILENICA 2007 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2007: *Katja Lavrenčič, Matic Može*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2008

JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Andrzeju Stasiuku*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Jana Unuk*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2008 – *Andrej Hadanovič*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2008 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Jurij Andruhovič, Laslo Blaškovič, Cvetanka Elenkova, Iztok Geister, Andrej Hadanovič, Kica Kolbe, Florin Lăzărescu, Arian Leka, Yang Lian, Diego Marani,*

*Jean-Michel Maulpoix, Irina Nekit, Imre Oravecz, Marina Palej, Ulrich Peltzer, Ivana Sajko, Peter Stamm, Magdalena Svetina Terčon, Dušan Šarotar, Bina Štampe Žmavc, Jüri Talvet, Zoé Valdés, Andrea Winkler, Yo Yo, Inga Žolude*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»Avtor med tekstrom in kontekstom« / “The Author between Text and Context”

MODERATOR: *Marko Uršič*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: *Sodobna litovska književnost / Contemporary Lithuanian Writing: Eugenijus Ališanka, Birutė Jonuškaitė, Sigitas Parulskis, Kornelijus Platelis, Tomas Venclova*

MLADA VILENICA 2008 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2008: *Liam Visentin, Ana Šemrov*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2009

JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Claudiu Magrisu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Veronika Simoniti*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2009 – *Luljeta Lleshanaku*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2009 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:

*Jana Benová, Ines Cergol, Kalin Donkov, Umberto Galimberti, Forrest Gander, Andrea Grill, Miljenko Jergović, Štefan Kardoš, Yasmina Khadra, Herkus Kunčius, Alejandra Laurencich, Luljeta Lleshanaku, Dan Lungu, Tone Partljič, Jana Putrle Srđić, Peter Rezman, Victor Rodríguez Núñez, Maria Šleahitički, Ewa Sonnenberg, Vlada Urošević, Oksana Zabužko*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»Izbira med svobodo in zapovedjo: literarna avtonomija in mehanizmi izbora« / “Choice between Freedom and Command: Literary Autonomy and the Mechanics of Choice”

MODERATOR: *Andrej Blatnik*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI: FLANDRIJA NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: FLANDERS AT VILENICA: *Miriam Van Hee, Stefan Hertmans, Monika Van Paemel, Peter Verhelst*

MLADA VILENICA 2009 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2009: *Jana Stekar, Gaja Rupnik Caruso*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2010  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Dževadu Karahasanu*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Jana Unuk*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2010 – *Goran Vojnović*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2010 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Max Blaeulich, Jacek Dehnel, Kristin Dimitrova, Veronika Dintinjana, Aris Fioretos, Ludwig Hartinger, Enes Karić, Blaže Minevski, Salvatore Niffoi, Radoslav Petković, Taras Prohasko, Viktória Radics, Maja Razboršek, Joachim Sartorius, Illja Sin, Octavian Soviany, Veronika Šikulova, Jáchym Topol, Suzana Tratnik, Goran Vojnović, C. D. Wright, Agnė Žagrakalytė*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»*O branju: bralna izkušnja in njene oblike v sodobnem času*« / “*On Reading: Reading Experience and its Forms in Modern Times*”

MODERATORKA / MODERATOR: *Tanja Lesničar Pučko*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI: WALES NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: WALES AT VILENICA: *Lloyd Jones, Siân Melangell Dafydd, William Owen Roberts, Angharad Price*

MLADA VILENICA 2010 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2010: *Nina Rozman, Rok Muhič, Lidija Magdevska*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA ZA LETO 2011  
JE DRUŠTVO SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV PODELILO

## *Mirceu Cărtărescuju*

Utemeljitev nagrade: *Lidija Dimkovska*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2011 – *Dan Coman*

V publikaciji Vilenica 2011 in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali:  
*Pavel Brycz, Pierluigi Cappello, Sarah Clancey, Dan Coman, Ivan Dobnik, György Dragomán, Jean-Michel Espitallier, Xavier Farré Vidal, Guy Helminger, Stanka Hrastelj, Ljiljana Jokić Kaspar, Gorazd Kocjančič, Tatjana Komissarova, Alain Lance, Vesna Lemaić, Vladimir Levčev, Nikola Madžirov, Alberto Manguel, Aleksander Peršolja, Edo Popović, Angelika Reitzer, Tomasz Różycki, Lubica Somolayová, Ognjen Spahić, Agron Tufa, Arturas Valionis, Jan Wagner*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»*Beri me v živo*« / “*Read Me Live*”

MODERATOR: *Gregor Podlogar*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI: TURČIJA NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: TURKEY AT VILENICA: *Nazlı Eray, Nedim Gürsel, Mehmet Yaşin*

MLADA VILENICA 2011 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2011: *Julija Železnik, Teja Gerjovič, Lara Ružič Povirk*

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## **Člani žirije / Jury Members**

*Andrej Blatnik*, predsednik žirije, pisatelj, prevajalec, urednik / President of the jury, prose writer, translator, editor

*Lidija Dimkovska*, podpredsednica žirije, pesnica, prevajalka, esejistka / Vice President of the jury, poet, translator, essayist

*Niko Grafenauer*, pesnik, prevajalec, esejist, urednik / poet, translator, essayist, editor

*Ludwig Hartinger*, pesnik, prevajalec, esejist, urednik / poet, translator, essayist, editor

*Vesna Kondrič Horvat*, docentka za novejšo nemško književnost na Univerzi v Mariboru / Professor of modern German literature at the University of Maribor

*Tone Persak*, pisatelj / prose writer

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*Veno Taufer*, pesnik, prevajalec, esejist, ustanovni predsednik Vilenice / poet, translator, essayist, founding President of the Vilenica Festival

*Jana Unuk*, prevajalka / translator

*Jani Virk*, pisatelj, prevajalec / prose writer, translator

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