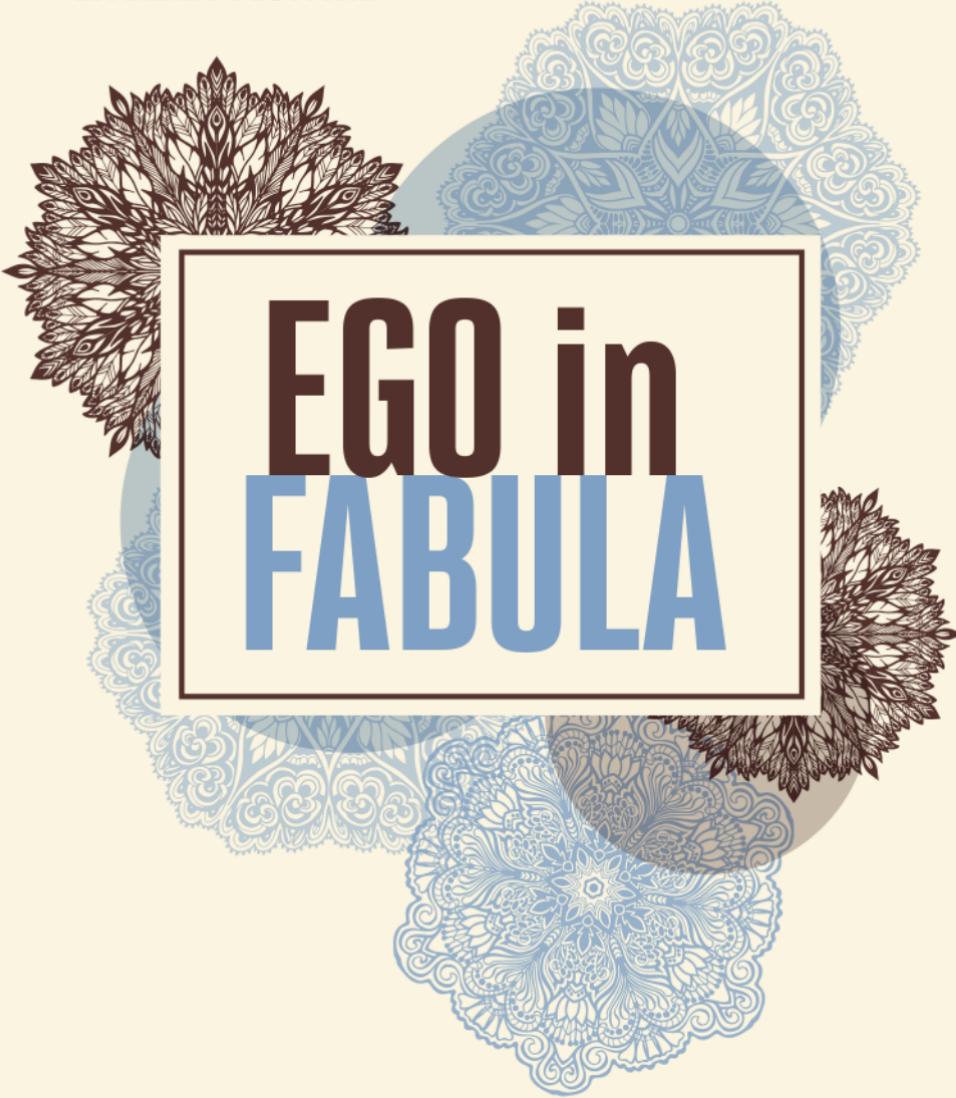


*vilenica*

34. MEDNARODNI  
LITERARNI FESTIVAL

34<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
LITERARY FESTIVAL



**EGO in  
FABULA**

**Nagrajeneč Vilenice 2019 /**  
***Vilenica Prize Winner 2019***  
Dragan Velikić

**Slovenski avtor v središču 2019 /**  
***Slovenian Author in Focus 2019***  
Esad Babačić

**Literarna branja Vilenice 2019 /**  
***Vilenica Literary Readings 2019***  
Mohamad Abdul Al Munem  
Petar Andonovski  
Jasmin B. Frelih  
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Enes Karić  
Nataša Kramberger  
Jonas Lüscher  
Ace Mermolja  
Manjola Nasi  
Carolina Pihelgas  
Ivana Šojat

**Gostje Vilenice 2019 /**  
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Ayesha Chatterjee  
Amanda Mihalopulu  
Sverrir Norland  
Elizabeth Reapy

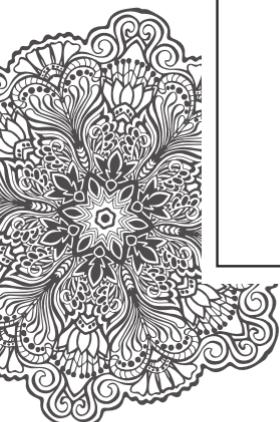
**Italija na Vilenici /**  
***Italy at Vilenica***  
Silvia Brè  
Maria Grazia Calandrone  
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Gian Mario Villalta

*vilenica*

34. MEDNARODNI  
LITERARNI FESTIVAL  
34<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
LITERARY FESTIVAL

**EGO in  
FABULA**

**2019**



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

Vilenica 2019

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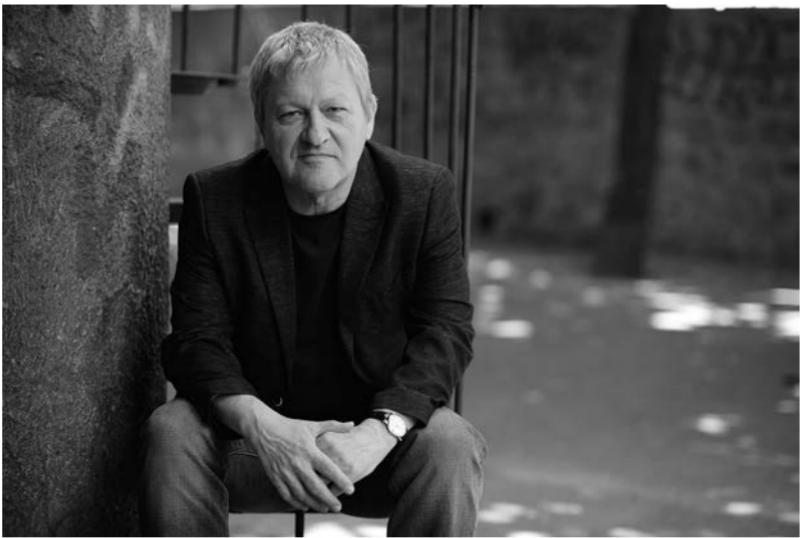
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# Nagrjenec Vilenice 2019

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*Vilenica*

*Prize Winner 2019*



*Foto © Milovan Milenkovic*

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# Dragan Velikić

Dragan Velikić se je rodil leta 1953 v Beogradu, ker pa je bil oče mornariški častnik, se je družina že pet let kasneje preselila v Pulj, kjer je preživel otroštvo in mladost. V Beograd se je vrnil v času študija primerjalne književnosti in literarne teorije na Filološki fakulteti. Prvo kratko zgodbo je napisal pri 26 letih in se po dobrem sprejemu pri kritikih in bralcih odločil, da bo pisateljevanje njegov poklic. V letih 1994–1999 je bil poleg tega urednik založbe Radia B92 ter kolumnist več srbskih časopisov, o tedanjih družbenih in političnih razmerah pa je pisal tudi za avstrijske in nemške medije. Ker se v času vojne v devetdesetih letih ni strinjal z miselnostjo o »naših« in »vaših« in ker je javno kritiziral Slobodana Miloševića, hrvaško in srbsko nacionalistično politiko ter vojni močno nasprotoval, je bil ožigosan za narodnega izdajalca. Beograd je zapustil tik pred Natovim bombardiranjem leta 1999, potem je nekaj časa živel v Budimpešti, Berlinu in na Dunaju, kjer je bil med letoma 2005 in 2009 veleposlanik Republike Srbije. Ravno zaradi bivanja v različnih evropskih mestih vse od otroštva se ni nikoli bal »drugačnosti«. V eseju *Glas iz razpoke* zapiše, da najbolj ceni strpnost, razumevanje drugih kultur, običajev, navad.

Velikić je eden najpomembnejših in najuglednejših sodobnih srbskih književnikov; po mnenju literarne stroke klasik srbske literature. Je avtor enajstih romanov – zadnji *Adresa* (Naslov) je izšel aprila letos –, treh kratkopronih in šestih esejističnih zbirk. Izšla

je tudi njegova zbirka kolumn in intervjujev *39,5°* (2010). Ne cenijo ga le kritiki, ampak je izjemno priljubljen tudi pri bralcih. Njegova dela izhajajo v nepredstavljinivih nakladah – vsaj za večino avtorjev nekdanjega jugoslovanskega prostora – in praviloma dosegajo več ponatisov. Roman *Islednik* (*Preiskovalec*) so doslej prodali v 50.000 izvodih, leta 2016 pa je bil tudi najbolj izposojana knjiga v srbskih javnih knjižnicah. Prepoznaven je tudi v mednarodnem prostoru; njegova dela so doslej izšla v šestnajstih evropskih jezikih, arabsčini in perzijsčini. V slovenščino imamo prevedene romane *Astrahan*, *Dantejev trg*, *Rusko okno*, *Bonavia*, *Preiskovalec* ter zbirki esejev *Glas iz razpoke* in *O pisateljih in mestih*. Pisatelj je za svoja dela prejel najpomembnejše srbske literarne nagrade: za romaneskni prvenec *Via Pula* (1988) nagrado Miloša Crnjanskega; za roman *Rusko okno* (2007) NIN-ovo nagrado in nagrado Meše Selimovića – obe za najboljši roman leta – ter še nagrado Srednje Evrope za poseben doprinos k srednjeevropskemu prostoru avstrijskega Inštituta za Podonavje in Srednjo Evropo; za roman *Preiskovalec* (2015) drugo NIN-ovo nagrado za najboljši roman, nagradi Kočićeve pero in Kočićeve knjige ter Vitalovo nagrado.

Pisatelj, ki o sebi pravi, da je »pesnik, ki piše prozo« – in v resnici iz njegovega pisanja zveni ritmična ubranost –, svoj slog brusi do potankosti. Stalni njegove literature sta vračanje v otroštvo v Pulju, v njegovo duhovno

domovino», in izkušnja poti. Literarni protagonisti, družinski člani ali fiktivni anonimneži pogosto potujejo, »krožijo« med znanimi srednjeevropskimi mesti, vse z namenom, da bi se nazadnje, obogateni z izkušnjo in spoznanjem, vrnili na svoje izhodišče. V kompleksno grajenih delih Velikič mojstrsko prehaja med (avto)biografskim in fiktivnim, med intimnim in družbenim, med preteklostjo in sedanostjo, vse dokler iz drobcev ne zgradi

celote, ki kljub mejam pripoveduje o enem samem duhovnem prostoru. Dragan Velikić danes kot svobodni ustvarjalec živi v Beogradu. Še vedno je neuklonljiv glas razuma, strpnosti, trdnih etičnih prepričanj ter oster kritik srbske in mednarodne politične realnosti; je torej eden tistih evropskih literarnih glasov, ki ga v času, ko je nacionalizem spet na pohodu, potrebuje ta ne samo Evropa, temveč ves svet. Še vedno je *glas iz razpoke*.

### Izbrane nagrade in priznanja

- 2016 Nagrada vinske kleti Radovanović (Srbija) za živiljenjsko delo.
- 2015 Srbska in bosansko-hercegovska nagrada Kočićeva knjiga za književni opus.
- 2015 Srbska in bosansko-hercegovska nagrada Kočićeve pero za roman *Islednik (Preiskovalec)*.
- 2015 NIN-ova nagrada (Srbija) za roman *Islednik (Preiskovalec)*.
- 2015 Nagrada zlata sončnica (imenovana tudi Vitalova nagrada, Srbija) za roman *Islednik (Preiskovalec)*.
- 2013 Nagrada mesta Budimpešta za literarno upodobitev madžarske prestolnice v Velikičevem književnem opusu.
- 2008 Nagrada Srednje Evrope za poseben doprinos k srednjeevropskemu prostoru, ki jo podeljuje avstrijski Inštitut za Podonavje in Srednjo Evropo.
- 2007 NIN-ova nagrada (Srbija) za roman *Ruski prozor (Rusko okno)*.
- 2007 Nagrada Meše Selimovića (Srbija) za roman *Ruski prozor (Rusko okno)*.
- 1988 Nagrada Miloša Crnjanskega (Srbija) za roman *Via Pula*.

### Izbrana izvirna bibliografija

#### Romani

*Adresa* (Naslov). Beograd: Laguna, 2019.

*Islednik (Preiskovalec)*. Beograd: Laguna, 2015.

*Bonavia*. Beograd: Laguna, 2012.

*Ruski prozor (Rusko okno)*. Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 2007.

*Dosije Domaševski* (Dosje Domaševski). Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 2003.

*Slučaj Bremen* (Primer Bremen). Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 2001.

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*Danteov trg (Dantejev trg)*. Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 1997.

*Severni zid*. Beograd: Vreme knjige, 1995.

*Hamsin 51*. Beograd: Vreme knjige, 1993.

*Astragan (Astrahan)*. Zagreb: Znanje, 1991.

*Via Pula*. Beograd: Rad, 1988.

### Zbirke kratkih zgodb

*Beograd i druge priče* (Beograd in druge zgodbe). Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 2009.

*Staklena bašta (Zimski vrt)*. Beograd: Rad, 1985.

*Pogrešan pokret (Napačen gib)*. Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1983.

### Eseistične zbirke

*Bratstvo po mrlji* (Bratstvo po madežu). Beograd: Laguna, 2018.

*O piscima i gradovima (O pisateljih in mestih)*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2010.

*Pseća pošta* (Pasja pošta). Novi Sad: Dnevnik – Novine i časopisi, 2005.

*Stanje stvari*. Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 1998.

*Deponija*. Beograd: Radio B92 in Vreme knjige, 1994.

*YU-tlantida*. Clio, 1993.

### Drama

*Montevideo*. Srbsko-nemška izdaja. Banja Luka: Zadužbina Petar Kočić, 2015.

### Knjiga zbranih intervjujev

*39,5°*. Novi Sad: Dnevnik, 2010.

### Fotomonografija

*Pula – grad interval* (Pulj – mesto interval). Soavtorja Igor Zirojević in Paola Orlić. Pulj: Udruga StudioLAB, 2014.

## Prevodi v tuje jezike

Dela Dragana Velikića so prevedena v albansčino, angleščino, arabščino, bolgarščino, češčino, francoščino, grščino, hrvaščino, italijanščino, madžarščino, makedonščino, nemščino, perzijščino, poljsčino, ruščino, slovaščino, slovensčino in španščino.

### Knjižni prevodi v slovenščino

*O pisateljih in mestih*, prevedla Mateja Komel Snoj. Ljubljana: LUD Literatura, 2019.

*Preiskovalec*, prevedla Đurđa Strsoglavec. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2018.

*Bonavia*, prevedla Dragana Bojanić Tijardović. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2014.

*Rusko okno*, prevedel Matej Krajnc. Ljubljana: Društvo slovenskih pisateljev, 2014.

*Dantejev trg*, prevedel Urban Belina. Koper: KUD AAC Zrakogled, 2013.

*Astrahan*, prevedla Maja Kraigher. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2004.

*Glas iz razpoke*, prevedel Boris A. Novak. Celovec: Wieser, 1992.

Dragan Velikić was born in Belgrade, Serbia, in 1953. Since his father worked as a naval officer, the family moved to Pula five years later, where he spent his childhood and youth. He returned to Belgrade to study comparative literature and literary theory at the Philological Faculty. He wrote his first short story at age 26 and, after receiving a warm welcome by reviewers and readers alike, decided to become a professional writer. From 1994 to 1999 he also acted as the editor of the publishing house Radio B92 and as a columnist for several Serbian newspapers; as well, he wrote about the social and political climate of the time for Austrian and German media. Since he could not accept the position of “ours” and “yours” in the wartime in the 1990s, he publicly criticized Slobodan Milošević, Croatian and Serbian nationalistic politics and strongly opposed the war, he was soon branded as a national traitor. He left Belgrade just a few days before the NATO bombing in 1999 and lived for a period in Budapest, Berlin and Vienna, where he was the ambassador of the Republic of Serbia between 2005 and 2009. It is precisely these stays in different European cities, from his childhood on, that have enabled him to never feel fear of something “different.” In the essay “Voice from the Crack” he writes that he most highly values tolerance, understanding of other cultures, traditions, habits.

Velikić is one of the most prominent and distinguished contemporary Ser-

bian writers, in the view of literary experts he is already one of the classics of Serbian literature. He has written eleven novels – the last one, *Adresa* (The Address), being published in April this year – three short story collections and six essay collections. He also published the collection of columns and interviews *39.5°* (2010). He is not only praised by the reviewers but is also very popular among the readers. His works are published in incredibly large numbers, at least in comparison with authors from the former Yugoslav space, and are usually reprinted several times. The novel *Islednik* (The Investigator) has thus far sold 50,000 copies and was also the most-borrowed book in Serbian public libraries in 2016. He is also well known in the international space. Translations of his works have thus far been published in 16 European languages, Arabic and Persian. His novels *Astrahan* (Astrakhan), *Dantejev trg* (Dante’s Square), *Rusko okno* (The Russian Window), *Bonavia*, *Preiskovalec* (The Investigator) and essay collections *Glas iz razpoke* (Voice from the Crack) and *O pisateljih in mestih* (On Writers and Cities) have been translated into Slovenian. Velikić has received the most prominent Serbian literary awards for his works: for the first novel *Via Pula* (1988) he received the Miloš Crnjanski Award; for the novel *The Russian Window* (2007) the NIN Award and Meša Selimović Award – both for best novel of the year and the award Mitteleuropapreis for a special contribution to the Central European

space by the Austrian Institute for Danubian Area and Central Europe; for the novel *The Investigator* (2015) he received his second NIN Award for best novel, alongside the awards Kočićev pero and Kočićeva knjiga and also the Vital Award.

A writer who often explains he is “a poet that writes prose” – his writing radiates a rhythmically harmonious character – Velikić polishes his style, burnishing even the tiniest of details. The constants of his literature are a regression to his childhood in Pula, his “spiritual homeland” and the experience of the journey. Literary protagonists, family members or fictional anonymous characters often travel around; they “circulate” among the well-known Central European cities, all with the intent of being able to return in the end to the point of their

initial departure, enriched with experience and insight. In his complexly built works, Velikić masterfully shifts between the (auto)biographical and the fictional, between the intimate and the social, between the past and the present, all until he manages to assemble a wholeness out of these fragments that tells us about one single spiritual space in spite of the borders. Dragan Velikić currently lives in Belgrade as an independent writer. He still represents the uncompromising voice of reason, tolerance, firm ethical beliefs, and he remains a harsh critic of Serbian and international political reality; this means he is one of those European literary voices that is desperately needed in times of rising nationalism, not only by Europe but by the whole world. He is still *the voice from the crack*.

## Selected Prizes and Awards

- 2016 Wine Cellar Radovanović Award (Serbia) for life’s work.
- 2015 Serbian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian award Kočićeva knjiga for literary oeuvre.
- 2015 Serbian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian award Kočićev pero for the novel *Islednik* (*The Investigator*).
- 2015 NIN Award (Serbia) for the novel *Islednik* (*The Investigator*).
- 2015 Zlata sončnica Award (also Vital Award, Serbia) for the novel *Islednik* (*The Investigator*).
- 2013 City of Budapest Award for the literary depiction of Hungarian capital in Velikić’s literary oeuvre.
- 2008 Mitteleuropapreis for a special contribution to the Central European space, awarded by the Austrian Institute for Danubian Area and Central Europe.
- 2007 NIN Award (Serbia) for the novel *Ruski prozor* (*The Russian Window*).
- 2007 Meša Selimović Award (Serbia) for the novel *Ruski prozor* (*The Russian Window*).
- 1988 Miloš Crnjanski Award (Serbia) for the novel *Via Pula*.

---

## Selected Bibliography of Original Works

### Novels

*Adresa* (The Address). Belgrade: Laguna, 2019.

*Islednik* (The Investigator). Belgrade: Laguna, 2015.

*Bonavia*. Belgrade: Laguna, 2012.

*Ruski prozor* (The Russian Window). Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2007.

*Dosije Domaševski* (Dossier Domaszewski). Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2003.

*Slučaj Bremen* (The Bremen Case). Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2001.

*Danteov trg* (Dante's Square). Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1997.

*Severni zid* (The Northern Wall). Belgrade: Vreme knjige, 1995.

*Hamsin 51*. Belgrade: Vreme knjige, 1993.

*Astragan* (Astrahan). Zagreb: Znanje, 1991.

*Via Pula*. Belgrade: Rad, 1988.

### Short Story Collections

*Beograd i druge priče* (Belgrade and Other Stories). Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2009.

*Staklena bašta* (The Winter Garden). Belgrade: Rad, 1985.

*Pogrešan pokret* (Wrong Move). Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1983.

### Essay Collections

*Bratstvo po mrlji* (The Mark of Brotherhood). Belgrade: Laguna, 2018.

*O piscima i gradovima* (On Writers and Cities). Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2010.

*Pseća pošta* (Dog Mail). Novi Sad: Dnevnik – Novine i časopisi, 2005.

*Stanje stvari* (The State of Things). Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 1998.

*Deponija* (The Landfill). Belgrade: Radio B92 and Vreme knjige, 1994.

*YU-tlantida* (YU-tlantis). Clio, 1993.

### Play

*Montevideo*. Serbian-German bilingual edition. Banja Luka: Zadužbina Petar Kočić, 2015.

## **Collection of Selected Interviews**

39,5° (39,5°). Novi Sad: Dnevnik, 2010.

## **Photo Monograph**

*Pula – grad interval* (Pula – the City Interval). Co-authors Igor Zirojević and Paola Orlić. Pula: Udruga StudioLAB, 2014.

## **Translations of Dragan Velikić's Work**

Works by Dragan Velikić have been translated into Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Macedonian, Modern Greek, Persian, Polish, Russian, Slovak, Slovenian and Spanish.

## **Books Translated into English**

*The Russian Window*. Translated by Randall Major. Belgrade: Geopoetika, 2010.

---

## Vagon kot scena

*dr. Jutka Rudaš*

»Da, vagon kot scena. Vse je tako močno in jasno. Problem je zaplet. Ujeti tisti trenutek, ko se naenkrat vse prekriža, ko hoče življenje eksplodirati. Tabla mojega vagona: Beograd–Budimpešta–München–Hamburg. Po isti poti nazaj.« To so besede protagonista največkrat nagrajenega romana *Rusko okno* izjemnega sodobnega srbskega avtorja Dragana Velikića. Vlak kot osrednji motiv njegovih del pa nas popelje še dlje, v najintimnejše in najskrajnejše diskurzivno polje romanov, v notranji svet tavajočih ljudi skozi zgodovino nekoč razprostirajoče se avstro-ogrsko monarhije, v t. i. srednjeevropski prostor.

Dragan Velikić, rojen leta 1953 v Beogradu, je eden najbolj znanih in najuglednejših sodobnih srbskih avtorjev svetovnega formata. Pisatelj je od prvenca (*Via Pula*, 1988) do zadnjega dela (*Preiskovalec*, 2015) prejel vse najprestižnejše domače literarne nagrade (nagrado Miloša Crnjanskega, nagrado Meše Selimovića, nagrado Kočičeve pero, Vitalovo nagrado, NIN-ovo nagrado za najboljši roman leta 2007 in 2015), pogoste časti pa je deležen tudi v tujini, saj je med drugim leta 2013 prejel nagrado mesta Budimpešta za roman *Rusko okno* ter nagrado Inštituta za Podonavje in Srednjo Evropo. Njegova dela so prevedena v mnoge svetovne jezike (osem jih imamo tudi v slovenščini), prejela so priznanja kritikov po vsem svetu. Pisatelj, ki kot svobodni umetnik živi in ustvarja v Beogradu, se na razdalji med Beogradom (mestom rojstva), Puljem (mestom odraščanja) prek Budimpešte (mestom začasnega bivanja), Dunaja (mestom, kjer je bil med letoma 2005 in 2009 diplomat, veleposlanik Republike Srbije), Ljubljane, Trsta in Zagreba ukvarja s prostorom ter družbenimi in osebnimi okoliščinami, ki ga definirajo. Takole pravi: »Zame je edino pravo ozemlje vagon. Da imaš osebnega sprevodnika, ki ti vedno pravočasno pove, kdaj in kje je treba izstopiti, da v nekem kraju preživiš le nekaj trenutkov in nadaljuješ pot.« Njegova dela zaznamuje izkušnja poti, ki jo brezkompromisno raziskuje tako na intimni kot na družbeni ravni. Če drži teza, da je namen literature na subtilen način govoriti vedno o Celoti, potem so polifonični, večplastni romani Dragana Velikića genialno zajeli to Celoto; oziroma z besedami prvoosebnega pripovedovalca v *Preiskovalcu*: »V podrobnosti je zapis celote. Dar ni nič drugega kot prirojen čut,

da se pod masko postranskega prepozna bistvo.« Njegovi mojstrsko prepleteni fragmenti z živo pozornostjo za detajle dajejo stilistični prostor iskanju, tesnobi, mukam, razočaranju. Junaki v najrazličnejših situacijah trpijo udarce, bolečino, brezvoljnost, ponižanost, želijo obračunati s svojo preteklostjo, svojimi osebnimi strahovi, predvsem pa z lažnivostjo ljudi. Avtor različnim narativnim linijam daje neverjeten emocionalni naboј tudi skozi vpletene enega teksta v drugega; vzajemna povezanost in interakcija subjektivnega glavnega besedila s številnimi vzporednimi samorefleksivnimi »dodatnimi besedili« – najbolj izraženo v romanih *Dantejev trg* (1997), *Rusko okno* (2007), *Bonavia* (2012) in *Preiskovalec* (2015) – nas popeljeta v globine umetniškega izražanja Dragana Velikića. Prav ta zunajbesedilna navezava implicira dejavno, strateško in funkcionalno pogojeno razmerje do stvarnosti. Vpliv resničnosti, realnosti ob pomoci spomina označuje ustvarjalno energijo, ki z višjih in močnejših instanc priteka v literarno strukturo Velikićeve poetike. Ker te realne kode vstopajo v tkanje teksta, fikcija preide v biografskost, zatorej romane bližajo širini interpretacijskih možnosti.

Posebna kreativnost Dragana Velikića je prav v tem, da njegova besedila ohranjajo dvojnost – literarno in zgodovinsko. Realni elementi so vzeti iz konteksta stvarnosti in na subtilno-igrib način prepleteni med seboj v novo kombinacijo, fiktiven kontekst. V njegov specifično artikulirani literarni horizont vertikalno sekajo različni diskurzivni elementi, kulturno-zgodovinski in biografsko-spominski toposi pa dajejo besedilu moč, da vstopa v dialoško interakcijo na relaciji življene–zgodovina–družba–družina–literatura. »Vlomljeni vagon v Vinkovcih – to je bil prvi odziv na mamino smrt,« razmišlja prvoosebni pripovedovalec v romanu *Preiskovalec*, literarni mojstrovini o materi in spominu, o subjektivnem in kolektivnem, o vrednotah, morali, lažeh. Kako močna dramaturgija poganja zgodbe v ne-zgodbenosti!? Njegova dela z grenkim humorjem reflektirajo krizne trenutke družine, razkrivajo nečloveško obliko enoumja, razgaljajo dejanski svet znotraj individualne življenske situacije, nakazujejo kolektivnost/individualnost psihološkega doživljanja, diferenciacijo med spoznavajočim subjektom in stvarnostjo zunanjega sveta. »Povsem po naključju se je znašla v majhni zbirki družinskih slik, ki sem jih vzel s sabo, ko sem ob zori 24. marca 1999 zapustil Beograd. Ko sem istega dne zgodaj popoldne, nekaj ur preden so prve Natove bombe padle na moje mesto, stopil iz vlaka na peški postaji Keleti, [...]. Ampak

pobegi so se začeli veliko pred tem. Davno so bile vpisane poti, po katerih je bilo treba iti.« Velikićevi protagonisti živijo z *nerazpakanimi* kovčki, z eno nogo zmeraj v odhajanju; nenehno v iskanju trde točke, ob kateri bi si oddahnili, morda odkrili napake, odkrili sebe in se tako obnovljeni napotili v pravo smer. To počnejo Rudi Stupar v *Ruskem oknu*, Kristina, Miljan, Marko in Marija v *Bonavii*, preiskovalec v *Preiskovalcu*, Marko Delić v *Astrahanu* itd. Protagonisti izkušajo popolno dihotomijo življenja na Zahodu in »doma«, kontrast urejene družbe z dolgo tradicijo, v kateri so pravila jasna in upoštevana, kljub temu pa se v podtonu družbene podstati čutita malomeščanstvo in tesnoba, *kontra* družbi brez pravil in trdih struktur na robu moralnega zloma.

Roman *Preiskovalec* v resnici vsebuje ogromno stvarnega oziroma zunajbesedilne resničnosti. Realni drobci v tem intimnem delu so predvsem avtorjevi selektivni spomini, hkrati je v delu aluzivno in simbolno prikazana najbolj naostrena plat družbenega sistema, ki je pronica v najgloblje plasti in sfere družine in družinskega življenja. Velikićevi toposi, ki so ohranjeni ne le v individualnem, temveč tudi v kolektivnem spominu, dajejo umetniškemu besedilu skrivnostnejšo in večjo ustvarjalno energijo. In prav ti intertekstualni elementi elegantno spodnesejo vlogo avtorja, ki ne docira, odpravijo pa tudi meje med teksti. Toni, podtoni, nadtoni te mojstrovine nam dajo slutiti kaotično stanje tudi sedanje družbe. »To ni več država, v kateri sem odraščal, temveč poljana, kjer prevaranti, tatovi in nastopenci razsvetljujejo bedake. Vem, tudi drugje ni bolje. Takšen čas sem dobil.« Oziroma: »V tem naravnem življenjskem prostoru greha se zgodbe ne začenjajo in končujejo, temveč traja neskončen *in medias res*. Medprostor in medčas.« To je umetniško delo z izredno tenkočutno izrisanimi zgodovinsko-intimnimi fragmenti, besedami, ki vrejo, segajo v globino duše in razmišljanje. Izseki iz življenja in dogodki od petdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja v bivši Jugoslaviji prek razpada Jugoslavije in vojne na Balkanu do sedanosti skozi značilno »velikićevsko« obarvane zgodbe izpišejo svojstveni in zgodovinski lok.

Z gotovostjo trdim, da vsi Velikićevi romani nudijo bralcu izjemno estetsko doživetje. Z različnimi izzivi in drobnimi dejavniki razkrijejo prostore vsakdanjega življenja, zapletenost in hkrati preprostost odnosov med moškimi in ženskami. Pri njegovih romanih gre zmeraj za neke vrste intimno izpoved, v kateri se na ravni simbolov in medbesedilnosti neizogibno pojavljajo odsevi velikih zgodovinskih

in političnih dogodkov, kar kaže na dejstvo, da makrokozmos človekovega bivanja nenehno oži prostor človeške zasebnosti. Pripovedovalec nas v labirintu fragmentov in avtoreferencialnosti, ki jih Velikić niza stran za stranjo, vodi v najgloblja skrivnostna brezna zgodovinske stvarnosti in kolektivnega spomina.

Estetika najbolj prevajanega in nagrajenega romana – vrhunske umetniške artikulacije – *Rusko okno* v svoji prefinjeni virtuoznosti in intelektualnem naboju ter s popolno jezikovno izbrušenostjo bralca kar ponese s sabo. Opirajoč se na estetiko čutnosti govora v besedilnem svetu romana, spoznavamo antinomijo ljubezni in sovraštva, (ne)moč čutnih zaznav, ljubosumja, strah pred zapustitvijo ... Avtor v skladu s pomenskim valovanjem besedila ter valovanjem njegovega čustvenega ozračja dopušča vnos bralčevega intelekta, okusa, preferenc, občutkov, gledišč, torej uvaja interpretatorja v igro organske vitalnosti umetnosti. Naslov romana se nanaša na posebnost sibirskih hiš, pri katerih se okno odpira izključno zaradi prevetritve, prezračenosti. *Rusko okno* Dragana Velikića pa je (lahko) metafora, ki v diskurzu izpolnjuje funkcijo semantične identitete. Semantična inovacija v tej mojstrovini se kaže v tem, da kljub logični oddaljenosti dveh simbolov zaznamo novo bližino – prevetritev duše, prezračenost samega sebe. V vznemirljivem delu, tudi glede strukture romana – »knjige v knjigi« –, se glavni junak Rudi Stupar preseli s podeželja v Beograd, nakar ga meandri življenja ponesejo prek Budimpešte, Münchna in Hamburga znova v svoje mesto. Z razvojem hevristične moči, ki jo razpira fikcija, dajejo knjigi poseben pečat zgodovinske koordinate: bombardiranje Beograda leta 1999, Budimpešta kot srbska Casablanca v devetdesetih, gledanje Zahoda na balkansko stvarnost ... Rudi se v kaotičnem zunanjem in notranjem svetu sooča z vsemi oblikami zbeganosti. Postavlja se vprašanje, kako razumeti svoje lastno življenje v negotovih, konfliktnih in tveganih razmerah in razmerjih. Rudi išče ekstrakt sreče v številnih površinskih odnosih z ženskami. Njegovo neizmerno hrepenenje po pravi ljubezni ostane le v njegovi zavesti. V knjigi odkrivamo ustroj Moški-Ženska; pretresljivo intimno izpoved očeta in matere – On brez Nje, Ona brez Njega, njun sin pa hrepeni po življenju Ona-On. Nezavedno, ki spregovori, je za Rudija nezanosno. Rudi kot diplomant germanistike se na dnu svoje eksistence nazadnje preživlja kot priložnostni delavec v mrtvašnici v Hamburgu. Tam doživi nekakšno hipno razsvetljenje, fragment postane nova ovojnica, celota.

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Globoko konfliktnost časa sveta in časa duše lahko Rudi izpove edino poetično. Najde prvi stavek za svoj roman in sede na vlak ...

P. S.: Neizmerno sem vesela, da je Dragan Velikić, pisatelj velikega formata, spet na vlaku, na liniji Beograd–Vilenica, kjer mu lahko za vrhunske dosežke na področju literature izročimo Mednarodno nagrado za književnost vilenica 2019.

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## Railway Car as Scene

*Jutka Rudaš, PhD*

'Yes, the railway car as a scene. Everything is so concrete and clear. The problem is the plot. To capture that moment when everything gets entangled, when life wants to explode. The sign on my railway car: Belgrade–Budapest–Munich–Hamburg. And by the same route back.'<sup>1</sup> These are the protagonist's words in *The Russian Window* (*Ruski prozor*), the most acclaimed novel by the outstanding contemporary Serbian author Dragan Velikić. In fact, the train as the central motif of Velikić's works takes us even further into the most intimate and extreme discourse field of his novels, into the inner world of wanderers through the history of the once-sprawling Austro-Hungarian monarchy, that is, into the Central European space.

Dragan Velikić, born in Belgrade in 1953, is one of the world's most recognisable and distinguished contemporary Serbian authors. From his début novel, *Via Pula* (1988), to his most recent, *The Investigator* (*Islednik*, 2015), his works have gleaned all the most prestigious national literary awards: the Miloš Crnjanski Award, the Meša Selimović Award, the Kočić's Pen Award, the Vital Award, and the NIN Award for the best novel of 2007 and 2015. He has been repeatedly recognised abroad as well, receiving the Award of the City of Budapest in 2013 for his magnum opus – *The Russian Window* – and the Mitteleuropa-Preis from the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe. His works have been translated into a number of languages and lauded by critics all over the world. The writer, now residing in Belgrade as a freelancer, traverses the distances between Pula in Croatia (the city where he grew up), Belgrade (the city of his birth), Budapest (the city of his temporary residence), Vienna (the city of his 2005–2009 appointment as Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia), Ljubljana, Trieste, and Zagreb, to examine the spaces themselves as well as the social and personal circumstances by which they are defined. In his own words: 'The railroad car is the only real territory to me. To have one's own

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<sup>1</sup>The English quotes from *The Russian Window* are taken from the translation by Randall A. Major (Belgrade: Geopoetika Publishing, 2010).

conductor who always says at the right moment when and where one should disembark, just spend a few hours in a place and then continue one's journey.' His works are marked by the experience of the journey, which is uncompromisingly explored at both intimate and social levels. If the aim of literature is to speak subtly of the Whole, this Whole is ingeniously encompassed in the polyphonic, multilayered novels by Dragan Velikić. According to the first-person narrator of *The Investigator*: 'The detail holds a record of the whole. Talent is nothing but an innate sense for recognising the essence under the guise of the peripheral.' Vividly attentive to detail, his masterfully interwoven fragments provide a stylistic range for quest, anxiety, agony, disappointment. The protagonists in their various predicaments endure blows, pain, listlessness, humiliation, and want to tackle their past, their private fears and, above all, the mendacity of their fellow men. The embeddedness of one text within another further intensifies the emotional charge of the narrative threads. The interconnection and interaction of the subjective main text with countless parallel, self-reflective 'additional texts' – most pronounced in the novels *Danteov trg*, 1997), *The Russian Window* (2007), *Bonavia* (2012) and *The Investigator* (2015) – plumb the depths of Dragan Velikić's creative expression. It is these extratextual references that imply an active, strategic, function-conditioned attitude to reality. The impact of reality, of facts, aided by memory leaves its mark on the creative energy which flows into the literary structure of Velikić's poetics from higher and more powerful sources. With the entry of reality codes into the web of the text, fiction merges into biography, enlarging the scope of possible interpretations.

The peculiar creativity of Dragan Velikić lies in his preservation of duality – literary and historical. Removed from the context of reality, the factual elements are subtly, playfully woven into a new combination, a fictional context. His uniquely articulated literary horizon is transfixated by a range of discursive elements, while the topics of cultural history and biographic memory empower the text to engage in dialogue between life, history, society, family and literature. 'The burgled railway carriage at Vinkovci – that was my first reaction to Mother's death,' recalls the first-person narrator in *The Investigator*, a literary masterpiece about mother and memory, subjectivity and collectivity, values, morals, lies. How

does the strong dramaturgy drive the storyless stories? Bitterly humorous, Velikić's works mirror the family's moments of crisis, expose inhuman narrow-mindedness, provide confrontation with the real world in an individual's situation, and hint at the collective/individual nature of psychological experience, the differentiation between the cognitive subject and the reality of the outside world. 'It ended up by the merest fluke in the small collection of family photos I'd taken along when I left Belgrade at dawn on March 24, 1999. That same day in the early afternoon, a couple of hours before the first NATO bombs fell on my city, when I stepped off the train at the Budapest Keleti railway station [...]. But the escapes had begun long before. The paths to be trod had been charted ages ago.' Velikić's protagonists live with their suitcases unpacked, always poised to leave, perpetually searching for a firm hold which would give them a chance to rest, perhaps discover their mistakes, discover themselves, and take, invigorated, the right direction. This is the practice of Rudi Stupar in *The Russian Window*, of Kristina, Miljan, Marko and Marija in Bonavia, of the investigator in the eponymous novel, of Marko Delić in Astrakhan (*Astragan*), etc. The protagonists experience the full dichotomy of life in the West and 'at home': the contrast between an ordered society with a long tradition and respected, clear-cut rules, which nevertheless carries an undertone of parochialism and anxiety, against a society with no regulations or firm structures, verging on a moral breakdown.

The Investigator contains much factuality, that is, extratextual reality. The factual fragments in this intimate work mainly consist of the author's selective memories, depicting through allusion and symbolism the sharpest edge of the social system – a system which permeated even the deepest layers and spheres of the family and of family life. Velikić's topics, preserved in both individual and collective memory, endow the text with an enhanced, more mysterious creative energy. At the same time, these intertextual elements deftly trip up the role of the non-preaching author as well as dissolve the boundaries between the texts. The tones, undertones, overtones of this masterpiece hint at the chaotic state of contemporary society as well. 'This is no longer the country where I grew up: rather, it is a field where frauds, thieves and braggarts enlighten fools. Things are no better elsewhere, I know. Such is the time that has been foisted on me.' Or: 'In this natural habitat of sin, stories have no beginning

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or ending but a perpetual *in medias res*. Inter-space and inter-time.' This masterfully crafted work is composed of historical yet intimate fragments, drawn with the utmost sensitivity; of words pouring forth into the depths of one's soul, into one's very thought. Scenes from life and events, ranging from the 1950s in former Yugoslavia through its disintegration and the Balkan war to the present, draw a peculiar temporal and historical span through the stories, which are tinged with the typical Velikić hues.

I may confidently assert that each of the author's novels offers an exceptional aesthetic experience. Replete with challenges and minute details, they unveil the spaces of everyday life, the complexity yet simplicity of male–female relationships. His novels are always intimate confessions, inevitably reflecting watershed historical and political events at symbolic and intertextual levels. This suggests that the macrocosm of human existence is ever encroaching on the space of human privacy. In the maze of fragments and self-references, scattered by Velikić on page after page, the narrator leads us into the deepest, mysterious chasms of historical reality and collective memory.

The aesthetics of his most translated and acclaimed novel, his supreme articulation of art, *The Russian Window*, overwhelm readers with their refined virtuosity, intellectual charge and perfectly polished language. Swayed by the aesthetics of sensual speech in the textual world, we become acquainted with the antinomy of love and hate, with the power(lessness) of sense perceptions, with jealousy, fear of abandonment... In keeping with the semantic and emotional fluctuations of the text, the author, a Comparative Literature graduate, engages the reader's intellect, taste, preferences, feelings, viewpoints, thus adding an interpreter to the organic vitality of the art game. The title of the novel, the 'Russian window', refers to the window in a Siberian house which is opened solely for airing purposes. *The Russian Window*, on the other hand, is – or may be – a metaphor which functions as semantic identity within the discourse. The semantic innovation of this masterpiece lies in the logical remoteness of two symbols which nevertheless conjure up a new closeness: an airing of the soul, of the self. This challenging work – challenging even in structural terms since it is 'a book within a book' – follows the protagonist, Rudi Stupar, on his move from the countryside to Belgrade. Meandering through Budapest, Munich and Hamburg, he ends up in his homeland again. With the development of the

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heuristic power fostered by fiction, the book is uniquely stamped by its historical coordinates: the bombing of Belgrade in 1999, Budapest as the Serbian Casablanca of the 1990s, the western perception of Balkan reality... In the chaos raging outside and inside him, Rudi is faced with every form of bewilderment. The question arises: How can one understand one's own life in uncertain, conflicting, risky conditions and relationships? Rudi seeks the essence of happiness through many superficial relationships with women. His boundless yearning for true love remains mere fiction in his consciousness. What emerges in the book is the Man–Woman structure. A harrowing intimate confession of Rudi's father and mother – He without Her and She without Him, while their son yearns for a She–He life. The unconscious which finds its voice is intolerable to Rudi. A graduate in German studies, he hits rock bottom when he ekes out a living as an odd-jobman at the Hamburg morgue. Here, however, he has a momentary epiphany: the fragment becomes a new envelope, a whole. Henceforth Rudi's deep conflict between world time and soul time is articulated as poetry. Finding the first sentence for his novel, he boards a train ...

P.S. I am overjoyed that Dragan Velikić, a world-scale author, has again taken a train: the line running from Belgrade to Vilenica, where he can be awarded the 2019 Vilenica International Literary Prize for his outstanding achievements in the field of literature.

*Translated by Nada Grošelj*

## *Beograd*

**1.**

Beograd leži na:	44° 49' 14" severno 20° 27' 44" istočno
Površina:	3221,85 km <sup>2</sup>
Uže područje grada:	358,77 km <sup>2</sup>
Nadmorska visina:	min 66,6 m max 512 m
Klima:	umereno kontinentalna
Prosečna temperatura:	11,6C
Januar:	0,2C
Juli:	22,0C
Vreme:	srednjoevropsko
Broj stanovnika:	1 628 000
Uže područje grada:	1 186 000

...

**2.**

Sve, zapravo, nedostaje: podaci o broju kišnih dana za proteklu godinu, dekadu, vek, milenijum: koliko je bilo kišnih dana godine 1054? Podaci o sunčanim danima, vetrovima, olujama, debljini snežnih pokrivača. Nedostaju podaci o atentatima, noćnim prepadima, ubistvima, provalama, ratovima, revolucijama.

Nema biografije jednog grada bez popisa bioskopa koji su postojali ili još uvek postoje na njegovoj teritoriji, bez dugačke liste filmova koji su se vrteli u tami bioskopskih sala, grimasa gledalaca i putanja na koje su se otisnuli nakon završene predstave, zatim popisa sekvenci u kojima su postali junaci, sporedni ili glavni, i nastavili da žive život protagonista izvan celuloida.

Nedostaju knjige rođenih i knjige umrlih, katastarske situacije čitavih kvartova, mape vodovoda i kanalizacije, pozicije arteških bunara, dvocifreni telefonski brojevi, putni nalozi, policijski dosjei, istorije bolesti, putanje konjanika, kočija, omnibusa, autobusa, tramvaja, trolejbusa, automobila.

...

**3.**

Zamislimo jedno džinovsko uho veličine najvećeg teleskopa koje i danju i noću usisava milijarde reči izgovorenih na teritoriji grada,

uredno ih beleži i deponuje. U bezdan tog slušnog aparata ne talože se samo reči mnogih jezika, već i uzdasi, krikovi, smehovi. Zamislimo džinovsko oko veličine najvećeg glečerskog jezera na čijoj kristalnoj površini se utiskuju lica, pokreti, geste, tikovi, široki planovi i prizori uhvaćeni kroz ključaonice. Zamislimo ogromno stvarište koje nastaje radom džinovskog uha i džinovskog oka, stvarište sa kojeg beskonačni materijal počinje da klizi prevojima što ih uspostavlju rečenice, zaustavlja se za trenutak na rampama i upućuje preko skretnica užarenih mozgova na perone priča i romana. I još dublje u noć Istorije.

...

#### **4.**

Poslednji put karavan kamila prošao je kroz Beograd 1854. godine i doneo iz Sereza duvan u balama za trgovca Anastasa Hristodula.

Prvi telegram je u Beograd stigao iz Aleksinca 12. aprila 1855. godine.

Prve kašike za supu donete su u Beograd 1827. godine. Iste godine pojavio se u Beogradu prvi ženski suncobran.

Dve godine kasnije, 1829. u Beogradu se pojavio i prvi kaput.

Pivo stiže iz Zemuna 1834. godine i toči se u Manojlovoj baštii na Zelenom vencu.

Meteorološka osmatranja počinju da se beleže 1847. godine, a vodi ih Dragutin Karlovanski, vlasnik "Prvog srpskog plivališta i kupališta" ispod Kalemegdana. Tri godine kasnije, Dragutin Karlovanski otvara bakalnicu u kojoj prodaje prašak za buve, sve vrste farba, švajcarski sir i haringe. Osim toga, Karlovanski leči i od šuljeva.

1844. godine u Beograd dolazi prvi krojač ženskog odela, Pavle Temeljkić. Iste godine u Beogradu se pojavljuje prvi cirkus. Dve godine kasnije u Beograd stiže prvi učitelj muzike, Aleksandar Skrođilis, rodom iz Trsta.

1847. godine u Beogradu se nastanjuje prvi zubni lekar, Moric Lefner, koji "šuplje zube nekom masom zapušava".

Prvi klavirštimer pojavljuje se u Beogradu 1850. godine. To je Imro Penović, koji je oslepeo, i kao slep izučio u Pešti zanat klavirštimmerski.

Prvo parno kupatilo otvoreno je u Beogradu 1850. godine.

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**5.**

Tramvaj na kružnoj liniji 2 zaustavlja se na okretnici iznad pristaništa. Vozač izlazi iz vozila i sporim korakom odlazi u baraku, pritvara vrata za sobom. U tramvaju se nalazi dvadeset i dvoje putnika, sedmoro sa užeg područja grada, dvanaestoro sa šireg, a ostali, njih troje, behu putnici koji su tog jutra doputovali u Beograd. Vrata barake se otvaraju. Vozač izlazi i kreće prema prizemnoj zgradi, kontrolnom punktu gradskog saobraćaja. Posle pet minuta pojavljuje se na vratima zgrade, nosi u ruci list papira. Ime vozača je Marko Nikolić. On ne zna da su tog časa u tramvaju još dvojica Marka Nikolića koji se ne poznaju. Niko ne zna koliko ljudi sa imenom i prezimenom Marko Nikolić živi u Beogradu. I koliko Marka Nikolića leži po beogradskim grobljima.

Tramvaj kreće, blago se zanosi u krivini, i pored benzinske pumpe, presekavši asfaltnu traku puta, povećava brzinu uspinjući se podnožjem Kalemegdanske padine prema Gradskoj biblioteci. Putnici koji sede na desnoj strani vozila vide zgradu austrijske ambasade, zgradu francuske ambasade, salon Muzeja savremene umetnosti. O mislima tih ljudi ne možemo znati ništa. Pogled onih koji sede na levoj strani uranja u zelenilo Kalemegdanskog parka. Zbog odsustva širokih planova njihove misli, verovatno, nikakvom vezom nisu spojene sa prizorima koje vide njihove oči. Pola minuta kasnije, tramvaj se zaustavlja na stanicu pored Gradske biblioteke. I tu je kraj jedne moguće priповести. Raspršena je priča koja bi se svakako razvila kada se tramvaj nekoliko časova ne bi zaustavljao. U tom vozilu više nikada neće biti tih dvadeset i dva putnika. Jedan od trojice Marka Nikolića, carinik u beogradskoj luci, izlazi iz tramvaja i kreće u šetnju Kalemegdanskim parkom. Drugi Marko Nikolić sići će na sledećoj stаници, u Dušanovoj ulici, i peške se uputiti u obližnju biljnu apoteku da kupi čaj od uve. Na pozornici moguće priče ostaje samo Marko Nikolić, vozač tramvaja, koji strpljivo čeka da Nikola Marković, vlasnik staklorezačke radnje u ulici Đorđa Jovanovića 13, blizina Bajlonijeve pijace, stigne, trčeći, do otvorenih vrata vozila. U tramvaju se sada nalazi trideset i pet putnika. Njihova imena ostaće zauvek nepoznata, kao i razlozi zbog kojih su tog vrelog avgustovskog jutra krenuli tamo gde su morali stići.

Za vozača Marka Nikolića, godinama na kružnoj liniji 2, odavno nije bilo iznenađenja u poznatom gradskom pejsažu. Znao je sve pozicije trafika sa obe strane ulica, prepoznavao je određene automobile

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parkirane po trotoarima, izloge prodavnica pored tramvajskih stanica, drveće, fasade kuća, čak i fizionomije nekih putnika. Njegove misli zavlačile su se u skrivene čoškove, otvarale tajne pretince zamišljenih polica. Tako se zabavljaо u dosadnim časovima vožnje. Zamišljaо je prizore iza prozora kućа pored kojih je prolazio. Ponekad bi rano ujutro zvonio Dušanovom ulicom i uživajući u svom nestašluku zamišljaо snene stanare okolnih kućа, probuđene iz ko zna kakvog sna reškim zvukom tramvajskog zvona. Ponekad se zabavljaо razmišljajući koliko novca trenutno poseduju putnici u vozilu, koliko godina života im svima zajedno predstoji, koliko godina ima najstariji, a koliko najmlađi putnik, i da li je nekom od njih to, možda, poslednja vožnja. Grad kojim je godinama vozio tramvaj podsećao ga je na ogromnu ukrštenicу koja nikada neće biti popunjena do kraja.

Zabavljen sabiranjem zamišljenog novca putnika, vozač tramvaja Marko Nikolić prošao je, tog 18. avgusta, 1998. godine, u 10 i 45 časova kroz crveno svetlo na uglu Dušanove i Zmaj Jovine ulice i udario u automobil koji mu je presekao put. Kasno ukočivši, odskočio je sa sedišta, čelom probio staklo, i na mestu ostao mrtav izbrojavši tek trećinu novca u džepovima putnika.

Sa balkona svoga stana, prizor nesreće posmatrala je gospođa Danica Stojković, devojačko prezime Nikolić, koja se na tom mestu zatekla skidajući suvo lišće sa cveća u saksijama. O svemu što je videla tog jutra, priča pola sata kasnije staklorescu Nikoli Markoviću u čiju radnju je otišla da bi podigla uramljenu mapu sa fotografijama svojih predaka i potomaka. Staklorezac Nikola Marković, naravno, nijednog časa ne pomišlja kako bi pred vozačem tramvaja, o čijoj tužnoj sudbini mu je upravo pripovedala gospođa Stojković, bio sasvim drugaćiji režim semafora, samo da tog jutra nije sačekao da on, Nikola Marković, pretrči Dušanovu ulicu. Staklorezac Nikola Marković nije se uopšte ni sećao da je tog jutra pretrčavao ulicu, niti je pamtio ljubazni gest vozača tramvaja.

Posle odlaska gospođe Danice staklorezac Nikola Marković prepustio se svom dnevnom ritualu: prelistao je novine, i onda pažljivo počeo da čita svoju omiljenu rubriku *Listajući "Politiku"*.

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## 6.

Iz dana u dan, naša prestonica dobija sve veći broj osobina zapada, i to na nesreću gotovo jedino rđavih. Nismo još uspeli da zamenimo

tursku kaldrmu boljom i gazimo blato gore no u Turskoj a već je u Beogradu uhvaćena jedna podzemna družina koja je po skupe pare prodavala kokain. (21. XI 1923.)

Preksinoć oko 8 časova u kafani "Kod Ladne vode", koja inače uvek raspolaže sa dosta rakije sviju vrsta, došlo je do svađe pa posle i do tuče između žandarma iz obližnje stanice. Žandarmi ili neka druga viša vlast naredili su da ova tuča čuvara javne bezbednosti ostane tajna, i raja, stvorena da sluša, mora da sluša. (6. XII 1923.)

Juče pre podne upao je u usijanu peć i izgoreo ložač Narodnog Pozorišta Nikola Mačkić. (19. I 1924.)

Sezona u Vrnjačkoj banji dostigla je ovih dana svoj vrhunac. Čim su primili julsku platu činovnici su krenuli na železničku stanicu da dadu stvari na gepek jer u ovu banju se ne dolazi bez svojih posteljina i drugih stvari. Osim dva primitivna izvora i dva mala kupatila nema nikakvih drugih instalacija. Eto, imamo banju na kojoj bi nam pozavideo svet a mi ništa. A takva je banja naročito potrebna u otadžbini paprike, slanih jela i rakije, za narod koji u masama boluje od tuberkuloze i sifilisa, za ljude upropošćene tolikim ratovima. (22. VII 1924.)

Aspirin tablete "Bajer" rado imitiraju. Zato vazda zahtevajte originalni omot. (8. IX 1924.)

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## 7.

U rano avgustovsko veče, kada je staklorezac Nikola Marković zatvorio svoju radnju i krenuo pored Bajloni pijace peške kući, nekoliko ljudi je ogromnim šmrkovima pralo pijsaci prostor. Nanosi otpadaka i svakojakog đubreta taložili su se u gomilama na rešetkama kanalizacije. Podzemni krvotok grada raznosio je otpatke dana dalje, kao što nevidljivi telefonski saobraćaj sabire reči hiljada razgovora što su otpočinjali i okončavali se u vrelini avgustovske večeri. Ogromna deponija koju je punilo džinovsko oko i džinovsko uho, deponija započetih priča i romana, privremeno okončanih i uramljenih, kao što su to preci i potomci Danice Stojković na porodičnoj mapi uramljenoj u staklorezačkoj radnji Nikole Markovića,

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lebdela je u vazduhu grada. Milioni kretnji i gestova, reči i šumova, gradilo je nevidljivu arhitekturu na pozornici grada. A tek snovi? Čitav jedan neocarinjeni život proticao je u nepomičnim glavama spavača, još jedan grad određen refleksima sa jave, pamćenjem tela koje tek u snu stiče svoju slobodu, razlivao se u neomeđenim prostorima. Tamo na javi meteorološke stanice beležile su preciznim instrumentima podatke o još jednom danu koje će obraditi statističari možda neznatno menjajući tabele u budućim bedekerima grada. Ali, u neporubljenom prostoru snova zidao se, ritmom spavača, jedan drugi grad u kojem su Dunavom i Savom u istom času plovili jedrenjaci i parobrodi, a po Carigradskom drumu kretali se karavani konja i kamila, kolone automobila i kamiona. Tulile su ratničke trube i sirene vatrogasnih vozila, smenjivao se topot konja sa bukom automobilskih motora, premeštale su se crkve i kule, parkovi i trgovi. U tom galimatijasu dozidanih gradova, kao sa dna duboke vode, ocrtavao se onaj jedini, postojeći grad, grad koji iščezava svakoga dana i svake noći menjajući podatke o sebi, krivotvoreći vlastiti lik u milionima tamnih komora. Iščezavao je preko rubova ramova, pod točkovima tramvaja, u mrljama dotrajalih ogledala. Mermernе ploče potiskivale su mrtve još dublje, među rezvizite iščezlih epoha, u tamu budućih muzeja. Razbojnici i avanturisti smešili su se u odrama heroja u sigurnim zatonima stihova. Lanci rečenica izgovoreni zaboravljenim akcentima, iskrasavali su pod tastaturama pisačih mašina, na plavičastim ekranima kompjutera, u sluhu usnulih. Sa rešetki kanalizacionih otvora klize ostaci još jednog dana.

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## 8.

Snop baterijske lampe skenira bravu zlatare, poluga lomi bravu, alarm pod anestezijom, knjigovođa turističke agencije "Mediteran" koriguje račune, u zoološkom vrtu lav sanja antilopu, umorni putnik drema na drvenoj klupi stanične čekaonice, kelner u bašti "Madere" prima porudžbinu za sedmoro gostiju, na periferijskim raskrsnicama trepuću narandžasta svetla isključenih semafora, noćni leptir sklopljenih krila, kao žilet, dopisuje dezen kravate u prodavnici "Jugorexporta" na Trgu Republike, iz pokvarenog frižidera za sladoled curi voda po jednoj kalemeđdanskoj stazi, petnaestogodišnjak na mansardi u Dositeveoj ulici prvi put navlači prezervativ, mala Cigančica zahvalno prima novac za prodatu ružu u kafani

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“Ima dana”, na aerodrom Surčin sleće avion iz Atine, u Žarkovu automobil udara u kamion, sa devetog sprata bolnice VMA dežurni bolničari spuštaju liftom u mrtvačnicu tek preminulog pacijenta, na vratima dežurne apoteke kod “Londona” jedan mladić pritiska taster zvona, neispravni autobus zaustavlja se na Terazijama, noćni čuvari “Jugobanke” u Ulici Kralja Petra igraju šah, jedan štićenik azila u Dražerovoј ulici pada u komu, čopor pasa latalica prelazi raskrsnicu kod Topčiderske zvezde, Danica Stojković zaliva cveće na balkonu svoga stana u Dušanovoј ulici, patrola milicije zaustavlja automobile na Avalskom putu, staklorezac Nikola Marković zamišljen gricka olovku zagledan u pet praznih kvadrata pod brojem 3, horizontalno, i onda pod 2, vertikalno, upisuje ime lekovite biljke: uva, na prvom spratu zgrade u Braće Nedića, iznad butika “David”, jedan mladić ispisuje belešku u svom dnevniku, prodavac bostana na Kalenića pijaci pokriva šatorskim krilom gomilu lubenica i dinja, spremačica u kafani “Proleće” slaže oprane tanjire u orman, jedna devojka u Cvijićevoj ulici plače držeći za ruku mladića, crtač u građevinskom birou u Ulici Majke Jevrosime unosi podatke u kompjuter, iz puknute cevi u Ulici Rifata Burdževića lipti voda, vozač tramvaja Marko Nikolić ulazi u trinaesti sat boljeg života.

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## ***Beograd***

### **1.**

Beograd leži:	44° 49' 14" severno
	20° 27' 44" vzhodno
Površina:	3221,85 km <sup>2</sup>
Ožje območje mesta:	358,77 km <sup>2</sup>
Nadmorska višina:	min 66,6 m max 512 m
Podnebje:	zmerno kontinentalno
Povprečna temperatura:	11,6 °C
Januar:	0,2 °C
Julij:	22,0 °C
Čas:	srednjeevropski
Število prebivalcev:	1,628.000
Ožje območje mesta:	1,186.000

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### **2.**

Pravzaprav vse manjka: podatki o številu deževnih dni za preteklo leto, desetletje, stoletje, tisočletje: koliko deževnih dni je bilo leta 1054? Podatki o sončnih dneh, vetrovih, nevihtah, višini snežnihodej. Manjkajo podatki o atentatih, nočnih napadih, umorih, vlo-mih, vojnah, revolucijah.

Biografije mesta ni brez popisa kinematografov, ki so obstajali ali še vedno obstajajo na njegovem območju, brez dolgega seznama filmov, ki so se vrteli v temi kinematografskih dvoran, grimas gle-dalcev in smeri, v katere so se odpravili po končani predstavi, zatem popisa sekvenc, v katerih so postali junaki, stranski ali glavni, in nadaljevali življenja protagonistov zunaj celuloida.

Manjkajo rojstne matične knjige in matične knjige umrlih, kata-strske situacije celotnih četrti, sheme vodovoda in kanalizacije, po-ložaji kopanih vodnjakov, dvomestne telefonske številke, potni na-logi, policijske kartoteke, zgodovine bolezni, poti konjenikov, kočij, omnibusov, avtobusov, tramvajev, trolejbusov, avtomobilov.

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### **3.**

Predstavljammo si velikansko uho velikosti največjega teleskopa, ki dan in noč vsesava milijarde besed, izgovorjenih na območju mesta,

jih vestno zapisuje in deponira. V brezno tega slušnega aparata ne legajo zgolj besede mnogih jezikov, temveč tudi vzdih, kriki, smehi. Predstavljam si velikansko oko velikosti največjega ledeniškega jezera, na katerega kristalno površje se vtiskujejo obrazi, kretnje, geste, tiki, široki plani in prizori, ujeti skozi ključavnice. Predstavljam si velikansko odlagališče, ki nastaja z delom velikanskega ušesa in velikanskega očesa, odlagališče, s katerega začne neskončni material drseti po sedlih, ki jih vzpostavljajo stavki, se za hip ustavi pred zapornicami in se napoti prek kretnic žarečih možganov na perone zgodb in romanov. In še globlje v noč Zgodovine.

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#### 4.

Karavana kamel je Beograd nazadnje prečkala leta 1854 in iz Serresa prinesla tobak v balah za trgovca Anastasa Hristodula.

Prvi telegram je v Beograd prispel iz Aleksinca 12. aprila 1855.

Prve jušne žlice so v Beograd prinesli leta 1827. Istega leta se je v Beogradu pojavit prvi ženski sončnik.

Dve leti zatem, leta 1829, se je v Beogradu pojavit tudi prvi plašč.

Pivo je prispelo iz Zemuna leta 1834, točili so ga na Manojlovem vrtu v četrti Zeleni venec.

Meteorološka opazovanja so začeli zapisovati leta 1847, vodil jih je Dragutin Karlovanski, lastnik Prvega srbskega plavališča in kopalnišča pod Kalemegdanom. Tri leta zatem je Dragutin Karlovanski odprl špecerijo, v kateri je prodajal prašek proti bolham, vse vrste barv, švicarski sir in slanike. Karlovanski je poleg tega zdravil tudi hemoroide.

Leta 1844 je v Beograd prišel prvi krojač ženskih oblek, Pavle Temeljkić. Istega leta se je v Beogradu pojavit prvi cirkus. Dve leti zatem je v Beograd prispel prvi učitelj glasbe, Aleksandar Skrodilis, po rodu iz Trsta.

Leta 1847 se je v Beogradu nastanil prvi zobozdravnik, Moritz Leifner, ki »piškave zobe z neko zmesjo zamašuje«.

Prvi uglaševalec klavirjev se je v Beogradu pojavit leta 1850. To je bil Imro Penović, ki je oslepel in se kot slep v Pešti izučil za uglaševalca.

Prvo parno kopalnišče v Beogradu so odprli leta 1850.

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## 5.

Tramvaj na krožni progi 2 se je ustavil na obračališču nad pristaniščem. Voznik je izstopil in počasi odšel v barako, za sabo je priprl vrata. V tramvaju je bilo dva in dvajset potnikov, sedem z ožjega območja mesta, dvanajst s širšega, drugi, trije, pa so bili potniki, ki so tistega jutra pripravovali v Beograd. Vrata barake so se odprla. Voznik je izstopil in odšel v pritlično stavbo, nadzorno točko mestnega prometa. Čez pet minut se je prikazal na vratih stavbe, v roki je imel list parirja. Vozniku je bilo ime Marko Nikolić. Ni vedel, da sta bila takrat v tramvaju še dva Marka Nikolića, ki se nista poznala. Nihče ne ve, koliko ljudi z imenom in priimkom Marko Nikolić živi v Beogradu. In koliko Markov Nikolićev leži na beograjskih pokopališčih.

Tramvaj je speljal, se rahlo nagnil v ovinku in pri bencinski črpalki, ko je presekal asfaltni trak ceste, povečal hitrost in se ob vznožju kalemegdanskega pobočja vzpenjal proti Mestni knjižnici. Potniki, ki so sedeli na desni strani vozila, so videli stavbo avstrijskega veleposlaništva, stavbo francoskega veleposlaništva, salon Muzeja sodobne umetnosti. O mislih teh ljudi ne moremo vedeti nič. Pogled tistih, ki so sedeli na levi strani, se je potapljal v zelenje Kalemegdanskega parka. Zaradi odsotnosti širokega plana njihove misli najbrž niso bile z nikakršno zvezo združene s prizori, ki so jih videle njihove oči. Čez pol minute je tramvaj ustavil na postajališču pri Mestni knjižnici. In tu je konec neke mogoče pripovedi. Razpršena je zgodba, ki bi se vsekakor razvila, če tramvaj nekaj trenutkov ne bi ustavljal. V tem vozilu ni bilo nikoli več teh dva in dvajset potnikov. Eden od trojice Markov Nikolićev, carinik v beograjskem pristanišču, je stopil s tramvaja in se odpravil na sprehod po Kalemegdanskem parku. Drugi Marko Nikolić je izstopil na naslednjem postajališču, v Dušanovi ulici, in se peš napotil v bližnjo zeliščno lekarno kupit gornikov čaj. Na odru mogoče zgodbe je ostal samo Marko Nikolić, voznik tramvaja, ki je potrežljivo čakal, da bo Nikola Marković, lastnik stekloreške delavnice v Ulici Đorđa Jovanovića 13, bližina Bajlonijeve tržnice, pritekel do odprtih vrat vozila. Zdaj je bilo v tramvaju petintrideset potnikov. Njihova imena so ostala za vedno neznana, prav tako razlogi, zaradi katerih so se tistega vročega avgustovskega jutra odpravili tja, kamor so morali prispeti.

Za voznika Marka Nikolića, leta in leta na krožni progi 2, že zdavnaj ni bilo presenečenj v znanem mestnem pejsažu. Poznal je vse položaje trafik na obeh straneh ulic, prepoznaval je nekatere

avtomobile, parkirane na pločnikih, izložbe trgovin ob tramvajskih postajališčih, drevesa, fasade hiš, celo fiziognomije nekaterih potnikov. Njegove misli so se plazile v skrite kote, odpirale skrivne predale zamišljenih polic. Tako se je zabaval v dolgočasnih urah vožnje. Predstavljal si je prizore za okni hiš, mimo katerih je vozil. Včasih je zgodaj zjutraj zvonil po Dušanovi ulici, užival v svoji porednosti in si predstavljal zaspane stanovalce okoliških hiš, ki jih je iz kdove kakšnih sanj zbudil rezek zvok tramvajskega zvonca. Včasih se je zabaval s premišljevanjem, koliko denarja trenutno posedejujo potnikи v vozilu, koliko let življenja je še pred vsemi, koliko je star najstarejši in koliko najmlajši potnik ter ali je za koga od njih to morda zadnja vožnja. Mesto, po katerem je leta in leta vozil tramvaj, ga je spominjalo na velikansko križanko, ki ne bo nikoli rešena do konca.

Voznik tramvaja Marko Nikolić, ki je v mislih sešteval zamišljeni denar potnikov, je tistega 18. avgusta 1998 ob 10.45 zapeljal skozi rdečo luč na vogalu Dušanove in Zmaj Jovove ulice in trčil v avtomobil, ki mu je presekal pot. Ker je prepozno zavrl, ga je vrglo s sedeža, s čelom je prebil steklo in na kraju nesreče umrl, preštel pa je le tretjino denarja v žepih potnikov.

Z balkona svojega stanovanja je prizor nesreče opazovala gospa Danica Stojković, rojena Nikolić, ko je ravno trgala suhe liste z lončnic. O vsem, kar je bila videla tistega jutra, je pol ure zatem pripovedovala steklorezcu Nikoli Markoviću, v čigar delavnico je prišla prevzet uokvirjeno shemo s fotografijami svojih prednikov in potomcev. Steklorezec Nikola Marković seveda niti za hip ni pomislil, da bi bil pred voznikom tramvaja, o čigar žalostni usodi mu je ravnokar pripovedovala gospa Stojković, povsem drugačen režim semaforjev, če le tistega jutra ne bi čakal, da je on, Nikola Marković, stekel čez Dušanova ulico. Steklorezec Nikola Marković se sploh ni spomnil, da je tistega jutra tekel čez cesto, niti si ni zapomnil ljubeznine geste voznika tramvaja.

Ko je gospa Danica odšla, se je steklorezec Nikola Marković prepustil svojemu dnevnemu ritualu: prelistal je časopis *Politika* in nato pozorno začel brati svojo priljubljeno rubriko *Listajoč Politiko*.

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## 6.

Naša prestolnica dobiva vsak dan vse večje število značilnosti zahoda, in sicer žal skoraj samo slabih. Ni nam še uspelo zamenjati turškega

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kamnitega tlaka z boljšim in tacamo po blatu huje kot v Turčiji, v Beogradu pa so že prijeli neko podzemno bratovščino, ki je za drag denar prodajala kokain. (21. 11. 1923)

Predsinočnjim okrog osmih je v gostilni Pri mrzli vodi, v kateri je sicer vedno na razpolago veliko žganja vseh sort, prišlo do prepira, pozneje pa tudi do pretepa med žandarji iz bližnje postaje. Žandarji ali kaka druga višja oblast so ukazali, naj ta pretep varuhov javne varnosti ostane skrivnost, in narod, ustvarjen, da uboga, mora ubogati. (6. 12. 1923)

Včeraj dopoldne je v žarečo peč padel in zgorel kurjač Narodnega gledališča Nikola Mačkić. (19. 1. 1924)

Sezona v Vrnjački banji je te dni doseгла vrhunec. Takoj ko so uradniki dobili julijsko plačo, so se odpravili na železniško postajo oddat prtljago, saj se v te toplice ne gre brez lastne posteljnine in drugih stvari. Razen dveh primitivnih izvirov in dveh majhnih kopalnic ni nobenih drugih inštalacij. Na, imamo toplice, kakršne bi nam zavidal svet, mi pa nič. Take toplice pa so še posebej potrebne v domovini paprike, slanih jedi in žganja, za ljudstvo, ki množično zboleva za jetiko in sifilisom, za ljudi, uničene v tolikšnih vojnah. (22. 7. 1924)

Aspirin tablete Bayer radi posnemajo. Zato vedno zahtevajte originalni zavitek. (8. 9. 1924)

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## 7.

Na zgodnji avgustovski večer, ko je steklorezec Nikola Marković zaprl svojo delavnico in se mimo Bajlonijeve tržnice odpravil domov, je nekaj ljudi z velikanskimi cevmi spiralo tržnico. Nanosi odpadkov in vsakršnih smeti so se kopičili na kanalizacijskih rešetkah. Podzemni krvotok mesta je raznašal odpadke dneva naprej, kakor je nevidni telefonski promet zbiral besede tisočev pogovorov, ki so se začenjali in končevali v vročini avgustovskega večera. Velikanska deponija, ki sta jo polnili velikansko oko in velikansko uho, deponija začetih zgodb in romanov, začasno končanih in uokvirjenih, kakor predniki in potomci Danice Stojković na družinski shemi, uokvirjeni v delavnici steklorezca Nikole Markovića, je lebdela v

zraku mesta. Milijoni kretenj in gest, besed in šumov so oblikovali nevidno arhitekturo na odru mesta. Kaj pa šele sanje? Eno celotno neocarinjeno življenje je potekalo v nepremičnih glavah spalcev, še eno mesto, določeno z refleksi iz resničnosti, se je s spominom telesa, ki šele v spanju doseže svobodo, razlivalo v neomejenih prostorih. Tam v resničnosti so meteorološke postaje z natančnimi instrumenti beležile podatke o še enem dnevu, ki ga bodo obdelali statistiki in morda neznatno spremenili tabele v prihodnjih turističnih vodnikih mesta. V neobrobljenem prostoru sanj pa se je z ritmom spalcev zidalo neko drugo mesto, v katerem so po Donavi in Savi v istem trenutku pluli jadrnice in parniki, po Carigrajski poti pa so se premikale karavane konjev in kamel, kolone avtomobilov in tovornjakov. Tulile so trobente vojščakov in sirene gasilskih vozil, izmenjeval se je topot konjev s hrupom avtomobilskih motorjev, premeščali so se cerkve in stolpi, parki in trgi. V tem galimatiasu dozidanih mest se je kakor z dna globoke vode izrisovalo tisto edino, obstoječe mesto, mesto, ki izginja vsak dan in vsako noč ter spreminja podatke o sebi in ponareja lastno podobo v milijonih fotografiskih temnic. Izginjalo je prek robov okvirjev, pod kolesi tramvajev, v madežih dotrajanih ogledal. Marmorne plošče so potiskale mrtve še globlje, med rekvizite izginulih obdobjij, v temo bodočih muzejev. Razbojniki in avanturisti so se smehljali v oblačilih herojev v varnih zatonih verzov. Verige stavkov, izgovorjenih s pozabljenimi naglasi, so vznikale pod tipkovnicami pisalnih strojev, na modrikastih zaslonih računalnikov, v sluhu zaspalih. Z rešetk kanalizacijskih odprtin so drseli ostanki še enega dne.

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## 8.

Snop baterijske svetilke skenira ključavnico zlatarne, vzvod zlomi ključavnico, alarm je pod anestezijo, knjigovodja turistične agencije Mediteran popravlja račune, v živalskem vrtu lev sanja o antilopi, utrujeni potnik drema na leseni klopi postajne čakalnice, natakar na vrtu gostilne Madeira sprejema naročilo za sedem gostov, na križiščih na obrobju mežikajo oranžne luči izključenih semaforjev, vešča s stisnjениmi krili, kakor britvica, dopisuje dizajn kravate v prodajalni Jugoexport na Trgu republike, iz pokvarjenega hladilnika za sladoled curlja voda po neki kalemegdanski stezi, petnajstletnik v mansardi v Dositejevi ulici si prvič natika kondom, mala Cigančica

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hvaležno vzame denar za prodano vrtnico v gostilni Dni je dovolj, na letališču Surčin pristaja letalo iz Aten, v Žarkovu avtomobil trči v tovornjak, iz devetega nadstropja bolnišnice Vojaško-medicinske akademije dežurni bolničarji z dvigalom peljejo v mrtvašnico ravnokar preminulega pacienta, na vratih dežurne lekarne pri stavbi London neki mladenič pritiska na zvonec, pokvarjen avtobus ustavi na Terazijah, nočni čuvaji Jugobanke v Ulici kralja Petra igrajo šah, neki varovanec azila v Dreiserjevi ulici pade v komo, trop potepuških psov prečka križišče pri Topčiderski zvezdi, Danica Stojković zaliva rože na balkonu svojega stanovanja v Dušanovi ulici, patrulja milice ustavlja avtomobile na Avalski poti, steklorezec Nikola Marković zamišljen grizlja svinčnik in gleda v pet praznih kvadratkov pod številko 3, vodoravno, in nato pod 2, navpično, vpiše ime zdravilne rastline: gornik, v prvem nadstropju stavbe v Ulici bratov Nedić, nad butikom David, neki mladenič nekaj zapiše v svoj dnevnik, prodajalec bučevk na Kalenićevi tržnici s šotorskim krilom pokriva kup lubenic in melon, pomivalka v gostilni Pomlad zлага pomite krožnike v omaro, neko dekle v Cvijićevoi ulici joka in drži za roko mladeniča, risar v gradbeni pisarni v Ulici matere Jevrosime vnaša podatke v računalnik, iz počene cevi v Ulici Rifata Burdževića vre voda, voznik tramvaja Marko Nikolić stopa v trinajsto uro boljšega življenja.

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*Prevedla Đurđa Strsoglavec*

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## *Belgrade*

**1.**

Latitude:	44° 49' 14" north
Longitude:	20° 27' 44" east
Area:	3,221.85 km <sup>2</sup>
Metropolitan Belgrade:	358.77 km <sup>2</sup>
Altitude above sea-level:	min. 66.6 m. max. 512 m.
Climate:	moderately continental
Average temperature:	11.6°C
January:	0.2°C
July:	22.0°C
Time zone:	Central European
Population:	1,628,000

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**2.**

Everything is, in fact, missing: figures for the number of rainy days in the past year, decade, century, millennium; how many rainy days were there in 1054? Figures for the number of sunny days, for the winds, storms, thick blankets of snow. Figures are missing for assassinations, nocturnal assaults, murders, burglaries, wars, revolutions.

A city cannot have a biography without having a record of the movie theatres that existed or still exist on its territory, without a long list of the movies that played in the darkness of the theatres, the grimaces of the audience and the roads taken after the movies were over, without a list of the scenes in which they became the heroes and heroines, in leading or supporting roles, and continued to live the life of the protagonists off screen.

Missing are the records of birth and death, the cadastres for entire neighbourhood, maps of the water supply and sewage systems, the position of artesian wells, double digit telephone numbers, travel orders, police files, medical records, the routes taken by horsemen, carriages, omnibuses, buses, trams, trolleys, automobiles.

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**3.**

Imagine a gigantic ear the size of the biggest telescope which day and night absorbs the billions of words spoken within the city limits, meticulously recording and storing them. Settling in the abyss of this hearing aid are not only the words of many languages, but also sighs, cries, laughter. Imagine a gigantic eye the size of the biggest glacial lake and imprinted on its crystal surface are the faces, movements, gestures, tics, views and scenes espied through the key-hole. Imagine the enormous depot holding this gigantic ear's and this gigantic eye's work, a depot from which endless material begins to run along the curves and bends laid by sentences, stopping for a moment at barriers, and then, its tracks switched by fired-up brains, travelling to the waiting platforms of stories and novels. And deeper still into the night of History.

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**4.**

The last time a caravan of camels passed through Belgrade was in 1854, bringing bales of tobacco from the macedonian city of Serez for the merchant Anastas Hristodul.

The first telegram to arrive in Belgrade was from Aleksinac on April 12, 1855.

The first soup spoons were brought to Belgrade in 1827. That same year the first parasol came to the city.

And two years later, in 1829, the first overcoat appeared in Belgrade.

In 1834 beer came from Zemun, the town across the Danube then in Austria-Hungary and was served in Manojlo's Garden near the Zeleni venac market.

Meteorological observations started being recorded in 1847 by Dragutin Karlovanski, the owner of the "First Serbian Swimming Pool and Bath" at the foot of The Kalemegdan park and frotress. Three years later, Dragutin Karlovanski opened a general store selling insect powder, all kinds of paints, Swiss cheese and herring. Mr. Karlovanski also treated haemorrhoids.

In 1844 the first dressmaker, Pavle Temeljkic, came to Belgrade. That same year the first circus appeared in town. Two years later the first music teacher, Aleksandar Skrodimis, a native of Trieste, arrived in Belgrade.

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The first dentist, Moric Lefner, who “plugs hollow teeth with some sort of matter,” settled in Belgrade in 1847.

The first piano tuner appeared in Belgrade in 1850. He was Imro Ipenovic, who, having gone blind, had learned the piano tuner’s trade in Pest.

The first steam bath opened in Belgrade in 1850.

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## 5.

The number 2 tram on the circle line stops at the terminal above the docks. The driver steps down from the tram, walks, his gait slow, to the shack, and shuts the door behind him. There are twenty-two passengers on the tram, seven from the city proper, twelve from the wider city area and three who had arrived in Belgrade that morning. The door to the shack opens. The driver comes out and walks toward a single-storey building, the city’s transport control centre. Five minutes later he reappears at the door of the building, a sheet of paper in his hand. The driver’s name is Marko Nikolic. He does not know that at that very moment two other Marko Nikolices, unknown to each other, are sitting on the tram. No one knows how many people named Marko Nikolic live in Belgrade. Or how many Marko Nikolices have found their resting place in the cemeteries of Belgrade.

The tram sets off, leaning slightly into the curve, past the gas station, crossing the asphalt stretch of road, picking up speed as it hugs the slope of Kalemegdan on its way to the City Library. Passengers sitting on the right side of the tram see the Austrian embassy, the French embassy, the gallery of the Museum of Modern art. We cannot know what is in these people’s minds. The view of passengers sitting on the left side of the tram is submerged in the greenery of Kalemegdan’s park. In the absence of panoramic vistas, their thoughts are probably entirely unconnected to what their eyes behold. Half a minute later, the tram stops at the City Library. And there ends one possible tale. For this a wide-flung story which, if the tram were to drive on for several hours, would certainly develop. These twenty-two passengers will never be together on the same tram again. One of the three Marko Nikolices, a customs officer at Belgrade’s port authority, steps off the tram for a stroll through Kalemegdan’s park. The other Marko Nikolic will get off at the next stop, in Dusanova Street, and walk to the nearby herbalists to buy bearberry tea. Left

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standing on the stage of this possible story is Marko Nikolic, the tram-driver. He is patiently waiting for Nikola Markovic, owner of the glazier shop in Djordje Jovanovic Street number 13, near the Baljoni market, who is running to catch the tram before its doors close. By now there are thirty-five passengers on the tram. Their names will remain forever unknown, as will the reasons why they were heading for their destinations on that sweltering August morning.

For Marko Nikolic, the tram driver, who had been working the number 2 circle line for years, the familiar urban landscape had long since ceased holding any surprise. He knew where every tobacco shop stood on either side of the street, he recognized cars parked on the sidewalk, the shop windows by the tram stops, trees, houses, even the physiognomy of some of the passengers. His thoughts retreated into hidden recesses, opening the secret compartments of imaginary drawers. This is how he would amuse himself during the tedium of driving. He would imagine scenes behind the windows of the houses he drove by. Sometimes, of an early morning, he would ring the bell going down Dusanova Street, and, revelling in his mischief, would imagine the sleeping inhabitants of the surrounding houses, being roused from who knows what kind of dreams by the strident ring of the tram's bell. Sometimes he would entertain himself by imagining how much money passengers on the tram were carrying, how many years of life they had left to live, how old the oldest was, and how young the youngest, and whether for some of them this might not be their last tram ride. The city in which he had been driving his tram for so many years reminded him of a huge never-to-be-completed crossword puzzle.

Engrossed in adding up the sum total of money he imagined to be in the possession of his passengers, at 10:45 on that morning of August 18, 1998 Marko Nikolic, the tram-driver, ran a red light at the corner of Dusanova and Zmaj Jovina streets, crashing into a car that was cutting across the road. Braking too late, he was thrown from his seat, his head shattering the glass, and instantaneously killed, having counted only one third of the money in the pockets of his passengers.

Watching the accident from the balcony of her apartment, where she was stripping the dead leaves off her potted flowers, was Mrs. Danica Stojkovic, nee Nikolic. Half an hour later she related everything she had seen that morning to Nikola Markovic, the glazier, at

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his shop where she had gone to pick up a framed map with photographs of her ancestors and descendants. Of course, IT did not for a moment occur to Nikola Markovic, the glazier, that Nikola Markovic, the tram driver, whose sorry fate Mrs. Stojkovic had just described to him, would have encountered quite a different set of traffic lights had he not waited that morning for his glazier namesake to run across Dusanova Street. Nikola Markovic, the glazier, did not even remember having run across the street that morning, nor did he remember the kind gesture of the tram driver.

After Mrs. Stojkovic departed, Nikola Markovic, the glazier, lapsed into his daily routine: he leafed through the newspaper and then carefully began reading his favorite column *Leafing through "Politika."*

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## 6.

With each passing day, our capital is adopting more and more western ways, and unfortunately they are almost only the bad ones. We have still not managed to replace Turkish cobblestones with something better and are stepping in mud worse than in Turkey, but an underground gang selling cocaine for good money has already been caught in Belgrade (November 21, 1923).

At approximately eight o'clock on the night before last, at the Cold Water Cafe, which always has a variety of brandies on offer, an argument which subsequently turned into a brawl broke out between policemen from the nearby police station. The police, or some other higher voice of authority, decreed that news of this fight among the guardians of public order should be kept secret and the common people, born to obey, must do so. (December 6, 1923)

Yesterday morning, Nikola Mackic, the National Theater's stoker, fell into the red hot oven and burned to death. (January 19, 1924)

The season has been peaking in the spa Vrnjacka Banja. As soon as they received their July salaries, office workers headed for the railway station to check in their luggage because this is not a spa where you go without taking your own bed linen and other items. Except for two primitive springs and two small baths, it has no other

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facilities. So, we have a spa which the world would envy us, yet we sit idle. And such a spa is particularly necessary in the homeland of peppers, savoury foods and brandy, for a people who suffer in large number from tuberculosis and syphilis, for people ruined by so many wars. (July 22, 1924)

Imitations of Bayer aspirin are all around. So always ask for the original packaging. (September 8, 1924)

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## 7.

Early one August evening, when Nikola Markovic, the glazier, closed his shop and started walking home past the Bajloni market, several people were washing down the market with huge hoses. Carried by the water, drifts of refuse and varieties of garbage piled up in the drainage grates. The city's underground circulation system transported the day's refuse onwards, in the same way that invisible telephone traffic collected the words of thousands of conversations that had been inaugurated and finished in the heat of that August evening. The huge depot filled by the gigantic eye and gigantic ear, a depot of stories and novels begun, temporarily finished and framed, like the ancestors and descendants of Danica Stojkovic on the family map framed at Nikola Markovic's glazier shop, hovered in the air above the city. Millions of movements and gestures, words and murmurs, formed an invisible architecture on the stage of the city. And what about dreams? A whole duty-free life unfolded in the motionless heads of the sleeping, a second city determined by the reflexes of consciousness, by the memory of the body which gains its freedom only in sleep, spilled into unconfined spaces. Out there in the conscious world, meteorological stations, using precise instruments, recorded details about yet another day which statisticians would process, perhaps making minor adjustments on the tables of future guides to the city. But in the unhemmed space of dreams, another town was being built to the rhythm of the sleeper, one where sailboats and steamboats glided along the Danube and Sava, while caravans of horses and camels, and columns of cars and trucks travelled along the Constantinople road. The trumpets of war and sirens of fire trucks wailed, the hoofbeat of horses mingled with the roar of car engines, churches and towers alternated with parks

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and squares. Appearing in this confusion of appended towns, as if rising from the bottom of the deepest waters, was the only existing town, a town which disappeared every day and every night, changing its statistics, falsifying its own face in millions of dark chambers. It disappeared across the rims of picture frames, under the wheels of trams, in the stains of old mirrors. Marble tiles pressed the dead still deeper down, among the props of bygone ages, into the darkness of future museums. Bandits and adventurers, clad in the robes of heroes, laughed in the safe havens of verses. Chains of sentences spoken in forgotten accents surfaced from the keyboards of typewriters, on the blue screens of computers, in the hearing of those sleeping. The remains of yet another day spilled through the drainage grates.

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## 8.

The beam of a flashlight cuts across the lock of a jewellery store, a bar breaks the lock, the alarm is sedated, the accountant at the Mediterranean travel agency is correcting the bills, at the zoo the lion is dreaming of an antelope, a tired traveller is dozing on the wooden bench in the waiting room of the station, the waiter at the Madera restaurant garden is taking orders from seven customers, the traffic lights are not working and are flashing yellow at intersections on the outskirts of town, a moth, its folded wings making it look like a razor blade, completes the pattern on the tie at the Jugoexport store at Republic Square, a broken-down ice-cream cart is leaking water onto a path in Kalemegdan's park, in an attic in Dositejeva Street a fifteen-year-old boy is rolling on a condom for the first time, a little Gypsy girl gratefully accepts money for the rose she has sold at the Ima Dana café, the plane from Athens lands at Surcin airport, in Zarkovo a car crashes into a truck, orderlies on duty at the VMA Military Hospital are in the elevator taking a deceased patient from the ninth floor to the morgue, a young man is pressing the doorbell of the duty pharmacy at "London," a broken down bus stops at Terazije Square, the night watchmen at Jugobanka in Kralja Petra St. are playing chess, a drug addict at the rehab centre in Dražđerova St. falls into a coma, a pack of stray dogs trots across the intersection at Topčiderska zvezda, Danica Stojković is watering the flowers on her balcony in Dusanova Street, a police patrol stops a car on the Avala Road, Nikola Marković, the glazier, chews his pencil as he gazes

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thoughtfully at the five empty squares under 3 across and 2 down, and he writes in the name of the medicinal herb: bearberry, on the first floor of a building in Brace Nedica Street, above the David boutique, a young man is writing in his diary, the melon vendor at the Kalenic market covers a pile of watermelons and melons with canvas, the cleaning woman at the Prolece café is putting the clean dishes away in the cupboard, a girl in Cvijiceva Street is holding hands with a young man and crying, the draftsman at the civil engineering bureau in Majka Jevrosima Street is logging figures into the computer, water is gushing from a broken pipe in Rifata Burdzevica Street, Marko Nikolic, the tram driver, is entering the thirteenth hour of a better life.

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*Translated by Christine Zorić Pribićević*

## Pogrešno mesto

(odlomak iz romana Ruski prozor)

Rođen sam na pogrešnom mestu. Nije to fantazam da je drugde uvek bolje, već je zaista tako. To se predoseti. Ja sam oduvek osećao to po grešno mesto, i zato sam živeo bez lokalne boje. Biti sam sebi okolina, tako sam živeo. I rastao sam kao da rastem na drugom mestu, pa je onda došlo do kurčlusa. Zato sam ovakav. Koje je to pravo mesto, Rudi? Takvo da postoji čvrst ram, nekakva pravila. I pored ratova, i revolucija. Postoje kompasi. Postoji „tamo“ i „ovde“, postoje strane sveta. Mesta su numerisana. Poštuje se rezervacija. U vozu, restauru, pozorištu. Decenijama se može koristiti ista marka sapuna. A to nije malo. To je ta čvrsta tačka. Da se uvek mogu kupiti somotske pantalone, a ne samo onda kada su u modi. Da su antikvarnice pune ostataka tuđih života koji govore o nekim boljim vremenima. I kad to nisu naša bolja vremena, kada to nije naša prošlost, ipak je bolje. Sama činjenica da je nekad nekom bilo bolje, čini da i meni bude bolje. Da su parkovi uređeni, da je novac konvertibilan. Da jedem kozji sir uvek istog ukusa. Da mogu svakog dana da kupim uloške za cipele. Da postoje neke konstante, da poštar dolazi uvek u isto vreme. Znam, i tamo bi bilo neplaćenih računa, na tom pravom mestu, i tamo bi život bio uvek u izgradnji, ali barem je gradilište ograđeno, postoji privremeni vodeni čvor, agregat za svetlo. Sve je taktilno, konzumira se po nekom redu, nikako u kricima besmisla.

Kad živim tamo gde bi trebalo da živim, makar i u mislima, odmah mi je bolje. Mama je govorila da sve dolazi od svetlosti. To je na generalnoj probi i Depeto rekao. Izgovorio je rečenicu moje majke. Ako je svetlost nepravilna, onda je sve pogrešno. I nezdravo. Jer, kako to da isti zbir činjenica, mislim, kako to da sa istom količinom novca, planova, obaveza, nekad budem veseo, i sve izgleda ostvarljivo, a nekad sam na ivici da se ubijem? A imao sam plan da se ubijem, dok sam još mogao da se ubijem. Sada bi to bilo mnogo komplikovano. Ali onda, dok sam bio slobodan, eh, kakav je to plan bio. Zvući zanosno.

Imao sam plan da odem u Budimpeštu, potrošim pare u kupleraju, i onda sednem u voz za Debrecin, pa još dalje, prema ukrajinskoj granici. I prvi put mi nije važno što prozor ne može da se zatvori, što bije promaja. Ionako ću pre nego što stignem da se prehladim biti mrtav. Usput uništiti dokumenta, da posle niko ne zna ko se to

ubio. Vodiće me kao nestalog na mestu na kojem nikad nisam hteo da živim. Maskirao bih se u klošara, sasvim neuobičajen. Mađarska je korzo po kojem šeta beda Istočne Evrope. Tu se svi oni okupljaju, to im je čekaonica iz koje će jednom preći u salon. Zaboravio sam kako se taj grad na granici zove. Možda je u Ukrajini? Tamo sam hteo da otpustujem. I onda, uvek isti prizor: kiša pljušti, sve neporubljeno i dotrajalo, kao peškiri one moje sirotice. Zakrčenim ulicama vuku se Rumuni, avganistanske izbeglice, ukrajinske kurve, tibetanski kaluđeri, bugarski nakupci povrća, Kurdi, kineski trgovci, albanski dileri droge, srpski makroi, i ja bled, sa grozničavim sjajem u očima, očajnički gacam po blatu između kamilja. Napokon u lokalnoj boji koju nikada nisam hteo da priznam, napokon, makar na kraju života, odlučujem da u tom mizanscenu okončam. Kada nisam uspevao da se snađem, kada sam čitavog života uzaludno pokušavao da odredim strane sveta, da uvedem nekakve standarde, da mleko uvek ima istu masnoću koja piše na specifikaciji, da zimi u vozu ima grejanja, da liftovi rade, da nije šarmantno biti prevarant. Dakle, kad sve to nisam uspeo da savladam, da makar u tome što nisam uspeo da savladam i nestanem.

Ali ja znam da nikada, ali nikada neće biti moguće da ovakav, kakav sada jesam, dodem na stanicu, da me ukrcaju u voz, da siđem u Vrnjačkoj Banji, da se provozam perivojem, popijem čašu lekovite vode, i da se vratim istog dana. I biciklom da idem, to je nemoguće. Ovo je pogrešno mesto, bez mogućnosti servisa. Mada, i taj bicikl, i ta briga o telu, taj strah od starenja... Ne zna čovek šta je gore, da li javašluk Orijenta, ili uređenost Zapada? Za mene je jedina prava teritorija vagon. Imati svog konduktora koji uvek u pravom času kaže kada i gde treba sići, samo nekoliko časova provesti u nekom mestu i nastaviti put. Pripadati bratstvu Srebrne kašike iz *Orijent-ekspresa*.

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Nikada nisam želeo slavu, već poštovanje i autoritet. Ali, do toga se kod nas dolazi samo estradom. U tu močvaru nisam zalazio. Jedino estrada pruža moć, jer u našoj palanci ne postoji ni poštovanje, ni istinski autoritet. Tamo se dive namrštenim velikim očevima koji mogu biti senilne budale, ili estradni šljam. Uvek sam bio ravnodušan prema efemernom, prema pozni, mada sada, kada su karte ne samo podeljene već uveliko i potrošene, sve više verujem da u zatonu svog autističnog sveta nisam imao pojma kako te stvari funkcionišu.

Jedini problem je stomak. Da li ga imaš ili nemaš? I ne pomaže tu zavirivanje u biografije. Jer, tamo svega ima sem stomaka. Kakav je nečiji stomak, to nigde ne piše. O tome se grobno čuti. Stomak je meko mesto i krije se oklopom, svejedno da li si kornjača, jež ili umetnik. I zato, ako ti je stomak osetljiv, ne krivi druge zbog toga. Nije problem u moralu, već u stomaku. Sudbinu nam određuje stomak.

## Napačno mesto

(odlomek iz romana Rusko okno)

Rodil sem se na napačnem mestu. Ne gre za idejo, da je drugje vedno bolje, ampak je resnično tako. To začutiš. Jaz sem vedno čutil to napačno mesto, zato sem tudi živel brez lokalne barve. Biti samemu sebi oklica, tako sem živel. Rasel sem, kot bi rasel na nekem drugem mestu, pa je potem prišlo do kratkega stika. Zato sem takšen. Katero je tisto pravo mesto, Rudi? Takšno, kjer vladajo močni okvirji, nekakšna pravila. Poleg vojne tudi revolucija. Obstajajo kompasi. Obstajata tam in tukaj, obstajajo strani sveta. Mesta so oštevilčena. Rezervacija se spoštuje. Na vlaku, v restavraciji, gledališču. Isto znamko mila lahko uporabljaš desetletja. V tem je moč. Da lahko vedno kupiš žametne hlače, ne samo takrat, ko so v modi. Da so antikvariat polni ostankov tujih življenj, ki nam pričajo o nekih boljših časih. In če to niso naši boljši časi, naša preteklost, tem bolje. Že zgolj dejstvo, da je bilo nekomu nekoč bolje, obeta, da bo tudi meni bolje. Da so parki urejeni, da je denar konvertibil. Da jem kozji sir, ki je vedno istega okusa. Da lahko vsak dan kupim vložke za čevlje. Da obstajajo nekakšne konstante, da poštar pride vedno ob istem času. Vem, tudi tam bi obstajali neplačani računi, na tem pravem mestu, tudi tam bi bilo življenje vedno v fazi gradnje, a gradbišče je vsaj ograjeno, obstaja začasni vodni vozел, agregat za svetlobo. Vse je otipljivo, vse konzumiramo po nekakšnem redu, nikakor ne v krikih nesmisla.

Ko živim tam, kjer bi moral živeti, pa čeprav zgolj v mislih, se takoj počutim bolje. Mama je govorila, da vse pride od svetlobe. To je na generalki rekel tudi Pepe. Izgovoril je mamin stavek. Če je svetloba napačna, je vse narobe. In nezdravo. Kako je sicer mogoče, da isti skupek dejstev, mislim, kako sem lahko z isto količino denarja, načrtov, obveznosti enkrat vesel, vse mi deluje izvedljivo, drugič pa sem tik pred tem, da se ubijem? Nameraval sem se ubiti, ko bi se še lahko. Zdaj bi bilo to precej zapleteno. A takrat, ko sem bil še svoboden ... Kakšen načrt je bil to! Zveni zaneseno.

Nameraval sem oditi v Budimpešto, zapraviti denar v bordelu, nato pa na vlak v Debrecen in še naprej, proti ukrainški meji. In prvič v življenju mi je bilo vseeno, da se okna ne da zapreti, da je preprih. Tako ali tako bom mrtev, še preden se bom uspel prehladiti. Vmes bom še uničil dokumente, da ne bo nihče vedel, kdo je ta mrtvec. Tam, kjer nikoli nisem hotel živeti, me bodo zabeležili kot

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pogrešanega. Pa bi se preoblekel v klošarja, povsem neopazen bi bil. Madžarska je promenada, kjer se sprehaja beda Vzhodne Evrope. Vsi se tu zbirajo, to je njihova čakalnica, od koder bodo nekoč prešli v salon. Pozabil sem, kako se imenuje to mesto ob meji. Morda je v Ukrajini? Tja sem že lel odpotovati. In nato spet isti prizor: dež lije, vse zanemarjeno in obrabljeno, kot brisače tiste moje sirotice. Po stisnjениh ulicah se vlečejo Romuni, afganistanski begunci, ukrainške kurbe, tibetanski menihi, bolgarski prodajalci zelenjave, Kurdi, kitajski trgovci, albanski preprodajalci droge, srbski zvodniki ... Jaz pa, bled, z blaznim pogledom v očeh obupano brodim po blatu med kamelami. Končno se v lokalni barvi, ki je nisem hotel nikoli priznati, končno se, pa čeprav na koncu življenja, odločim, da bom v tej režiji zaključil. Če se že nisem mogel znajti, če sem vse življenje zaman poskušal določiti strani sveta, da bi uvedel nekakšne standarde, da bi bilo mleko vedno tako mastno, kot piše na embalaži, da bi na vlakih pozimi delovalo gretje, da bi dvigala delala, da biti prevarant ni šarmantno. Če mi torej že vsega tega ni uspel obvladati, lahko vsaj v tem, česar nisem uspel obvladati, tudi izginem.

A vem, da nikoli, prav nikoli, ne bo mogoče, da bi takšen, kakršen sem sedaj, prišel na postajo, da bi me spravili na vlak, da bi izstopil v Vrnjački banji, se peljal skozi park, spil skodelico mineralne vode in se isti dan vrnil. Nemogoče bi bilo, da bi šel s kolesom. To je napačno mesto, brez možnosti servisa. Čeprav ... Še to kolo, ta skrb za telo, ta strah pred staranjem ... Človek ne ve, kaj je huje, kaos Orienta ali urejenost Zahoda. Zame je edino pravo ozemlje vagon. Da imaš osebnega sprevodnika, ki ti vedno pravočasno pove, kdaj in kje je treba izstopiti, da v nekem kraju preziviš le nekaj trenutkov in nadaljuješ pot. Da pripadaš druščini Srebrne žlice z Orient ekspresa.

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Nikoli nisem že lel slave, samo spoštovanje in avtoriteto. Vendar to pri nas dobiš samo na estradi. V to močvirje nisem zahajal. Samo estrada daje moč, saj v našem gnezdu ne obstajata ne spoštovanje ne resnična avtoriteta. Tam občudujejo namrščene očance, ki so lahko senilni tepci ali pa estradna sodrga. Vedno sem bil ravnodušen do efemernega, do poze, čeprav zdaj, ko so karte ne samo razdeljene, pač pa tudi že večinoma zapravljene, vse bolj verjamem, da v zalivu svojega avtističnega sveta nisem imel pojma, kako te stvari delujejo.

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Edina težava je z želodcem. Ga imaš ali ne? Pri tem ne pomaga kukanje v biografiji. Tam je namreč polno vsega, želodcev pa nič. Nikjer ne piše, kak želodec je imel kdo. O tem se grobno molči. Želodec je kraj, ki ga skrivamo z oklepom, pa ni pomembno, ali si želva, jež ali umetnik. Zato pa ne krivi drugih, če imaš slab želodec. Težava ni v morali, ampak v želodcu. Usodo nam določa želodec.

*Prevedel Matej Krajnc*

## ***The Wrong Place***

(excerpt from the novel *The Russian Window*)

I was born in the wrong place. This is not the fantasy that it's always better somewhere else, rather it really is that way. It is a premonition. I always felt that it was the wrong place, and that's why I lived without local color. To be one's own surroundings, that's how I lived. And I grew up as if I were growing up in a different place, and then things went topsy-turvy. That's why I am the way I am. What's the right place, Rudi? It is where a solid frame exists, some sort of rules. Even in the midst of wars, and revolution. Compasses exist. "Here" and "there" exist, as do the cardinal points on the compass. Seats are numbered. Reservations are respected. In trains, restaurants, and the theater. The same soap can be used for decades. And that's not a small thing. That's a fixed point. That corduroy pants can always be bought, and not just when they're fashionable. That the antique shops are full of the remains of others' lives, things that speak of better days. Even when the better days were not ours, when the past is not ours, still it's better. The very fact that it was once better for someone makes it, better for me as well. That the parks are well-kept, that the currency can be exchanged. That I can eat goat cheese which always tastes the same. That I can buy insoles every day. That certain constants exist, that the postman always comes at the same time. I know, even in that place there would be unpaid bills, and life there would always be under construction, but at least the construction site would be fenced in, a temporary water connection and an electric generator for light would exist. Everything is tactile, consumed in a certain order, and never in the woes of meaninglessness.

When I live there where I should be living, at least in my thoughts, I feel better right away. My mother said that everything comes from the light. That's also what Geppetto said at the dress-rehearsal. He used the same sentence as my mother. If the lighting is incorrect, then everything is wrong. And unhealthy. Because, how is it possible that the same group of facts, I mean, how is it possible that with the same amount of money, the same plans and responsibilities, I sometimes feel happy and everything seems possible, and sometimes I'm on the verge of killing myself? And I had a plan to commit suicide, while I was still able to do so. Now that would be really complicated. But then, while I was still free, oh my, what a plan that was. It sounds fascinating.

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I had a plan to go to Budapest, to spend all my money at a cat-house, and then to get on the train for Debrecen, and further, toward the Ukrainian border. And for the first time it would not be important to me that the window couldn't be closed, that the draught was murderous. Anyway, I'd be dead before I managed to catch a cold. I would destroy all my documents along the way, so that later no one would know who had committed suicide. The record would show that I was missing from the place where I never wanted to live. I would disguise myself as a tramp, blend in with the surroundings. Hungary is the promenade where the impoverished of Eastern Europe stroll. This is where they all meet, it is the waiting room from which they will, one day, enter the drawing room. I've forgotten the name of that city on the border. Perhaps it is in the Ukraine? I wanted to go there. And then, the sight is always the same: it's pouring rain, everything is shabby and worn-out, like my poor thing's towels. Straggling along the crowded streets are Romanians, Afghani refugees, Ukrainian hookers, Tibetan monks, Bulgarian vegetable traders, Kurds, Chinese merchants, Albanian drug dealers, Serbian pimps, and I, pale, with a feverish sheen in my eye, I trudge desperately through the mud among the camels. Finally in the local color that I never wanted to acknowledge, finally, if only at life's end, I decide to end it all in that *mise-en-scène*. When I didn't manage to find a way, when I attempted my whole life in vain to determine where the cardinal points of the compass were, to introduce some kind of standard, so that milk always has the amount of fat that it says in the ingredients, so that there is heating in the train in wintertime, so that elevators work, so that it's not charming to be a fake. So, when I didn't manage to take control over all that, at least I could disappear into all of that over which I didn't manage to take control.

But I am certain that never, I mean never, will it be possible for me like this, as I am today, to go to the station, to be put on the train, to disembark at the Vrnjacka spa, to ride around the park, drink a glass of medicinal water, and to return on the same day. Even if I went by bicycle, that would be impossible. This is the wrong place, there is no possibility of service here. Even though, both that bicycle and that care of the body, that fear of aging ... One cannot tell what is worse: is it the negligence of the Orient or the orderliness of the West? The railroad car is the only real territory to me. To have

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one's own conductor who always says at the right moment when and where one should disembark, just spend a few hours in a place and then continue one's journey. To belong to the fraternity of the Silver Spoon from the Orient Express.

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I never wanted fame, just respect and authority. But, in our country you only get that on the popular music stage. I never entered that swamp. Only the popular stage offers power, because neither respect nor authority exists in our little town. There people marvel at the frowning greats of the past who are often senile fools, or at the riffraff of the popular stage. I was always indifferent toward the ephemeral, toward the pose, although now, when the cards have not only been dealt but even almost dealt out, I believe more and more that, in the cove of my autistic world, I had no idea about how things function.

The only problem is the stomach. Do you have it or not? And peering into the biography won't help here. Because everything is there except the stomach. The nature of someone's stomach, that's not written anywhere. The silence of the grave is kept about that. The stomach is a soft spot and it's covered with armor, regardless of whether you are a turtle, a hedgehog or an artist. And that's why; if your stomach is sensitive, don't blame others because of that.

*Translated by Randall A. Major*



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# Slovenski avtor

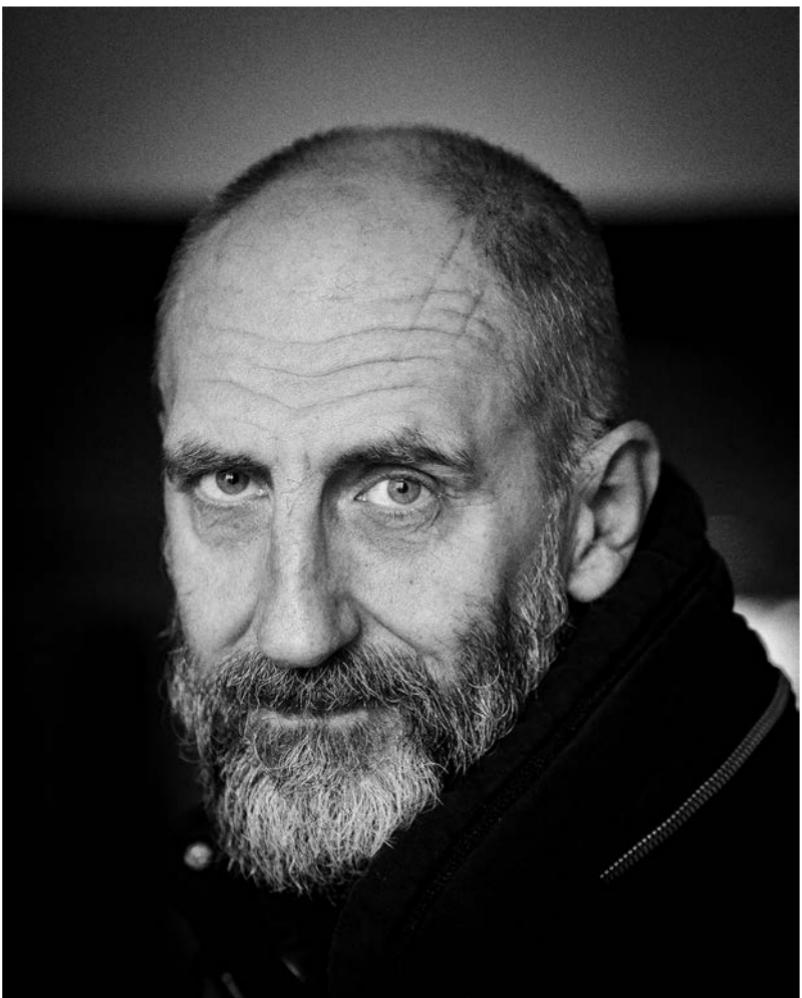
# v središču 2019

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## *Slovenian Author*

## *in Focus 2019*

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*Foto © Jože Subadolnik*

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# *Esad Babačić*

Esad Babačić se je rodil leta 1965 v Ljubljani, kjer je v delavski priseljenski družini odrăščal v blokovskem okolju Most in Vodmata. Še mladoleten se je kot fizični delavec zaposlil v pekarni Žito. V tem času je spoznal fante, ki so imeli bend, ne pa pevca. Pred mikrofon je stopil Esad in postal tudi glavni pisec besedil – leta 1983 je tako nastala Via Ofenziva, ena najpomembnejših pank-novovalovskih skupin –, ki je kmalu pritegnila pozornost ne samo mladih navdušencev, ampak tudi režima. Fante je zaradi družbenokritičnih besedil (npr. danes legendarne pesmi *Proleter*) pogosto zasliševala policija. Mladostniško nojenje je prekinil vpoklic v vojsko, ki jo je Babačić odslužil v Titogradu (Podgorici). Po vrnitvi v začetku devetdesetih je začel študirati slovenistiko in južnoslovanske jezike na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani. Poleg pesmi je pisal tudi literarne kritike, prevajal iz srbsčine in bosansčine, objavljal kolumne v več časopisih (*Razgledi, Dnevnik*), bil je novinar RTV Slovenija in nekaj časa tudi tekstopisec v oglaševalski agenciji.

Babačić pri svojem ustvarjanju ves čas prehaja med različnimi področji umetnosti. Doslej je izdal trinajst pesniških zbirk, dvojezično otroško pravljico *Kiti plavajo počasi/Whales swim slowly* (2014), biografijo *Trdobjec* (2010) o boksarju Dejanu Zavcu in literarno-publicistično pripoved o slovenskem hokeju *Banda* (2013).

V stranskih vlogah je nastopil v celovečernih filmih *Outsider* (1996) in *Zve-*

*nenje v glavi* (2002), v glavni pa v dokumentarnem filmu *Vsak otrok je lep, ko se rodi: Esad Babačić - Car* (1983) režiserja Slavka Hrena. Posnel je kratki dokumentarni film *Kozara–Lj.–Kozara* (1998), s soscenaristom in režiserjem Damjanom Kozoletom dokumentarni film o hokeju *Jesenice : Detroit* (2008), s soscenaristom in režiserjem Slobodanom Maksimovićem pa dokumentarna filma *Dragotin Gustinčič in Za srečnejše dni: Kajuh* (oba 2015). Poleg umetniškega udejstvovanja je tudi pubudnik projekta Verjemi v svoj koš za obnovo košarkarskih igrišč, medtem ko je leta 2018 sodeloval v projektu Vključujemo in aktiviramo! za socialno aktivacijo ranljivih skupin, ki ga izvaja Javna agencija za knjige. Je ustanovitelj Muzeja Punk Kulture in vodič po poteh slovenskega in jugoslovenskega panka.

V literaturo je vstopil z margine. Pisal je o tem, kar je videl in živel; njegova sulična poezija se ni ozirala v literarno preteklost niti ji ni bilo posebej mar za literarno sedanjost, zato je ni bilo mogoče priročno umestiti v literarne tokove tistega časa. To je poezija, ki je edinstvena v svoji brezkompromisnosti, polnokrvnosti, verzih, ki usekajo direktno *u fris* – takšna, kot je bil 17-letnik, ki jo je napisal, in pri tem rohnel proti tedanjemu družbenemu redu ter se upiral »mrtilu nesvobode. Po nekaj revijalnih objavah je leta 1986 izdal pesniški prvenec *Svoboda pa kar hodi* in isto leto *Kaval*, sledile so še štiri zbirke in nato krajši pesniški premor, v katerem je moral na novo

osmisliti svoj odnos do poezije. Novo obdobje v svojem ustvarjanju je napolnil z zbirko *Kiti se ne napihujo* (2000), ki ji je sledilo šest zbirk, nadalje *Odrezani od neba* (2018). Pesnikova mladostniška impulzivnost se je obrusila, prišlo je do obrata v intimo, pesniški jezik se je izčistil, a Babačićeva ostra, neuklonljiva kritika zdaj posttranzicijskega vsakdana je ostala. Poezija Esada Babačića je prevedena v več jezikov, avtor pa jo je prebiral na literarnih festivalih po vsej Evropi. Poselj mu je ostal v spominu literarni večer Sommernacht der Lyrik v Ber-

linu leta 1998, kjer je poezijo prebiral skupaj z Johnom Ashberyjem. Za svoje ustvarjanje je prejel več nagrad, med drugim leta 2003 za pesem *Donava* avstrijsko Hörbigerjevo nagrado in leta 2014 nagrado velenjica-čaša nesmrtnosti, ki jo podeljuje Mednarodni Lirikonfest za vrhunski desetletni pesniški opus v 21. stoletju. Esad Babačić v poeziji ne zastavlja globokih metafizičnih vprašanj, ker se življenje odvija tu in zdaj. To življenje pa Esad izpravi z veliko občutljivostjo in je v svoji poeziji najprej iskalec Človeškosti.

## Nagrade in priznanja

- 2019 Nominacija za Veronikino nagrado za pesniško zbirko *Odrezani od neba*.
- 2018 Nominacija za Jenkovo nagrado za pesniško zbirko *Odrezani od neba*.
- 2014 Nagrada velenjica-čaša nesmrtnosti za vrhunski desetletni pesniški opus v 21. stoletju.
- 2013 Nominacija za Jenkovo nagrado za pesniško zbirko *Prihodi, odbodi*.
- 2003 Hörbigerjeva nagrada (Avstria) za pesem *Donava*.

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*Vsak otrok je lep, ko se rodi* (izbor). Ljubljana: KUD Apokalipsa, 2011.

*Divan*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba,<sup>1</sup> 2006.

*Kiti se ne napihujo*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2000.

<sup>1</sup> Študentska založba je danes založba Beletrina.

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*Black Jack.* Ljubljana: Taxus, 1994.

*Veter v žilah.* Ljubljana: Taxus, 1994.

*Angel s scufanimi krili.* Ljubljana: Emonica, 1989.

*Malemu boksarju.* Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1988.

*Kavala.* Koper: Lipa, 1986.

*Svoboda pa kar hodi.* Ljubljana: Galerija ŠKUC izdaja, 1986.

## **Proza**

*Banda.* Ljubljana: KUD Nika, 2013.

*Trdobjec.* Ljubljana: Sanje, 2010.

## **Otroška slikanica**

*Kiti plavajo počasi/Whales swim slowly.* Lovrenc na Dravskem polju: KUD Nika, 2014.

## **Umetniška knjiga**

*Biospektiva.* Z likovnimi podobami Romana Uranjeka (NSK). Ljubljana: Makondo, NSK in Arhiv Lucija, 2008.

## **Objave v antologijah kratkih zgodb**

*Prostori, ki jih zapuščamo.* Uredila Gabriela Babnik. Ljubljana: Društvo slovenskih pisateljev in UMco, 2019.

*Jezero na robu mesta.* Uredila Vlado Vrbič in Dušan Dim. Velenje: Knjižnica Velenje, 2012.

*Skrito.si.* Uredili Mitja Čander, Aleš Šteger, Sanja Grobovšek in Valentina Vovk. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2008.

## **Glasba**

Via Ofenziva: album *Bele rože.* Ljubljana: Nika, 2015.

Via Ofenziva. Zgoščenka in DVD. Ljubljana: Nika, 2006.

## Scenariji za dokumentarne filme

*Dragotin Gustinčič: nevidni človek.* Režiser Slobodan Maksimović. Ljubljana: Radiotelevizija Slovenija, 2015.

*Za srečnejše dni: Kajuh.* Režiser in soscenarist Slobodan Maksimović. Ljubljana: Radiotelevizija Slovenija, 2015.

Jesenice : Detroit. Režiser Damjan Kozole. Ljubljana: Vertigo, 2008.

Kozara–Lj.–Kozara (kratki film). Režiser in soscenarist Damjan Kozole. 1998.

## Knjižni prevodi v tuje jezike

### Zbirke

*Molitev metulja / Gebet des Schmetterlings*, v nemščino prevedel Dominik Srienc. Dunaj: Hochroth, 2014.

*Vulkan*, v makedonščino prevedel Igor Isakovski. Skopje: Kulturna ustanova Blesok, 2010.

*Oprosti, poezijo*, v bosansčino prevedel Ahmed Burić. Međugorje: Obzor, 1999.

*Malom bokseru*, v hrvaščino prevedel Josip Osti. Ljubljana: Vodnikova domačija in Kulturni vikend djece iz BiH, 1995.

*The lying poet*, v angleščino prevedla Damjana Mihič. Chattanooga: Poetry Miscellany, 1990.

## Antologije (izbor)

*Sodobna slovenska poezija v albanskih prevodih: izbrani pesniki na Festivalu Pranger / Poezia bashkëkohore sllovene në përkthimet shqip: poetë dhe poete të zgjedhura në festivalin Pranger*, ur. Nada Grošelj, v albanščino prevedel Nikollë Berishaj. Maribor: KUD Pranger, 2019.

*Ani Nišaraf ve-eni yakhhol lašet et ha-sheket / Gorim in ne morem tišine doseči*, uredili Hava Pinhas-Cohen in Barbara Pogačnik, v hebrejsčino prevedli Hava Pinhas-Cohen, Klemen Jelinčič-Boeta, Myriam Steiner Aviezer, Maja Kutin, Dina Katan, Ben Zion in Dana Finci. Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibuts ha-me'uhad, 2016.

*Padesáti hlasů hovořím (antologie současné slovinské poezie, 2000–2012) / S petdesetimi glasovi govorim (antologija sodobne slovenske poezije, 2000–2012)*, izbrala, uredila in prevedla Lenka Kuhar Daňhelová in Peter Kuhar. Praha: P. Štengl, 2013.

*Antologija na sovremenata slovenečka poezija*, izbrala in prevedla Lidija Dimkovska. Struga: Struški večeri na poezijata, 2013.

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*Geburt eines Engels*, v nemščino prevedla Urška P. Černe. Heidelberg: Wunderhorn, 2008.

*U jantaru vremena: antologija slovenske poezije (1950–2000)*, izbral, uredil in v bosanščino prevedel Josip Osti. Sarajevo: Tugra, 2006.

*Ileś tam mil wyobraźni*, v poljščino prevedel Paweł Szydeł. Wiecbork: Krajenskie Stowarzyszenie Kulturalne, 2005.

*Književni voz Evropa 2000*, v srbsčino prevedli Vida Ognjenović, Vladislav Bajac, Aleksandar Gatalica. Beograd: Geopoetika, 2002.

*The Fire under the Moon (Contemporary Slovene Poetry)*, uredila Richard Jackson in Rachel Morgan, v angleščino prevedla Mia Dintinjana idr. Chattanooga: PM Books / Elgin: Black Dirt Press, 1999.

*Sommernacht der Lyrik: Gedichte von heute*. Zvočna knjiga. Berlin: Der Hörverlag, 1999.

*Antologija krajiške poezije*. Bihać: Izdavač NIP Unsko-sanske novine, 1996.

Esad Babačić was born in 1965 in Ljubljana, where he grew up in a migrant worker family in housing estates in Moste and Vodmat. He found employment as a manual labourer at the Žito Bakery when he was still underage. In that period, he got acquainted with some youth that had a band but needed a singer. Esad stepped in front of the microphone and also became the main lyrics writer – this was the formation of Via Ofenziva in 1983, one of the most important punk new wave bands – soon attracting the attention of both young fans and the regime as well. Because of their socially critical lyrics (for example, “Proletarian,” a song with a cult status today) they were frequently interrogated by the police. Military service in Titograd (Podgorica) put an end to Babačić’s youthful fooling around. After returning home at the beginning of the 1990s, he started studying Slovene language and literature and South Slavic languages at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Besides poems, he also began writing literary reviews, translating from Serbian and Bosnian, and publishing columns in newspapers (*Razgledi, Dnevnik*). He was a journalist at RTV Slovenia and, for a period, also a copywriter in a marketing agency.

In his work, Babačić keeps traversing different areas of art. He has published twelve poetry collections so far, a bilingual children’s book, *Kiti plavajo počasi/Whales Swim Slowly* (2014), the biography *Trdbojec* (Tough Fighter) about the boxer Dejan Zavec, and a

work of literary non-fiction about Slovene hockey, *Banda* (The Gang, 2013). He has acted in secondary roles in feature films *Outsider* (1996) and *Zvenenje v glavi* (Ringing in the Head, 2002) as well as in the lead role in the documentary film *Vsak otrok je lep, ko se rodi: Esad Babačić – Car* (Every Child Is Beautiful When Born: Esad Babačić – The King, 1983), directed by Slavko Hren. He also shot the short film *Kozara–Lj.–Kozara* (1998), a documentary film on hockey, *Jesenice:Detroit* (2008), together with co-script writer and director Damjan Kozole, and the two documentaries *Dragotin Gustinčič* (2015) and *Za srečnejše dni: Kajuh* (For Happier Days: Kajuh, 2015) with co-scriptwriter and director Slobodan Maksimović. Besides his work in art, he is also the initiator of the project “Believe in Your Basket” that strives to renovate basketball courts, while in 2018 he took part in the project “We Include and Activate!” aimed at the social activation of vulnerable groups, carried out by the Slovene Book Agency. He is the founder of the Museum of Punk Culture and tourist guide on the trails of Slovenian and Yugoslav punk. He stepped into literature from the margin. He wrote about what he saw and what he lived; his “street” poetry never looked back towards literary history and it never cared much for the literary present either, which is also why it couldn’t be comfortably placed into any of the literary movements of the time. His poetry is unique because it is uncompromising, it is full-

blooded, it hits you directly in your mug – it is just like the seventeen year old was when he wrote it; as he roared against the social order of the time and resisted the “lethargy of unfreedom.” After his poetry was published in several magazines, he published his first poetry collection *Svoboda pa kar hodi* (Freedom Just Walking) in 1986 and another, under the title *Kavala*, in the same year. He has published four other collections, which were followed by a short poetry silence, when he had to re-evaluate his attitude towards poetry. He introduced a new period in his creativity with the collection *Kiti se ne napibujejo* (Whales Do Not Showboat, 2000) that was followed by six other collections, most recent being *Odrezani od neba* (Cut from the Sky, 2018). Babačić’s impulsiveness from his youth phased out with years, his poetry turned to intimacy, his poetic language became purer, but the poet’s

sharp, unyielding critique of the post-transition everyday remained.

Esad Babačić’s poetry has been translated into many languages and he read it at literary festivals across Europe. He is especially fond of the memory of the literary reading Sommernacht der Lyrik (Lyric Summer Night) in Berlin in 1998, where he has read poetry together with John Ashbery. He has received several awards for his work, among others, in 2003 the Austrian Hörbiger Award for the poem *Donava* (The Danube) and the Velenjica Award in 2014 for 10 years of outstanding poetic work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, awarded by the International Festival Lirikonfest.

Esad Babačić does not like to ask deep metaphysical questions in poetry because life happens in the here and now. He examines this life with a great sensitivity and, in his poetry, he is first and foremost a seeker of Humaneness.

## Prizes and Awards

- 2019 Short-listed for the Veronika Award for poetry collection *Odrezani od neba* (Cut from the Sky).
- 2018 Short-listed for the Jenko Award for poetry collection *Odrezani od neba* (Cut from the Sky).
- 2014 Velenjica Award for 10 years of outstanding poetic work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 2013 Short-listed for the Jenko Award for poetry collection *Pribodi, odhodi* (Arrivals, Departures).
- 2003 Hörbiger Award (Austria) for poem *Donava* (The Danube).

## Selected Bibliography of Works

### Poetry

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*Petdeset izbranih pesmi* (50 Selected Poems). Velenje: Ustanova Velenjska knjižna fundacija, 2015.

*Kitula*. Lovrenc na Dravskem polju: KUD Nika, 2015.

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*Prihodi, odhodi* (Arrivals, Departures). Ljubljana: ŠKD Nika, 2013.

*Sloni jočejo pošteno* (Elephants Have a Fair Cry). Ljubljana: KUD Apokalipsa, 2011.

*Vsak otrok je lep, ko se rodi* (Every Child Is Beautiful When Born). Ljubljana: KUD Apokalipsa, 2011.

*Divan* (The Divan). Ljubljana: Študentska založba,<sup>1</sup> 2006.

*Kiti se ne napibujejo* (Whales Do Not Showboat). Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2000.

*Black Jack*. Ljubljana: Taxus, 1994.

*Veter v žilah* (The Wind in Veins). Ljubljana: Taxus, 1994.

*Angel s scufanimi krili* (The Angel with Shredded Wings). Ljubljana: Emonica, 1989.

*Malemu boksarju* (To the Little Boxer). Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1988.

*Kavala*. Koper: Lipa, 1986.

*Svoboda pa kar hodi* (Freedom Just Walking). Ljubljana: Galerija ŠKUC izdaja, 1986.

## Fiction

*Banda* (The Gang). Ljubljana: KUD Nika, 2013.

*Trdobojec* (Tough Fighter). Ljubljana: Sanje, 2010.

## Children's Book

*Kiti plavajo počasi/Whales Swim Slowly*. Lovrenc na Dravskem polju: KUD Nika, 2014.

## Artist's Book

*Biospektiva* (Biospective). With visual works by Roman Uranjek (NSK). Ljubljana: Makondo, NSK and Arhiv Lucija, 2008.

## Works in Short Story Anthologies

*Prostori, ki jih zapuščamo* (The Spaces We Abandon). Ed. Gabriela Babnik. Ljubljana: Slovene Writers' Association and UMco, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup>Študentska založba is today known as Beletrina Publishing House.

*Jezero na robu mesta* (The Lake on the Outskirts of the City). Eds. Vlado Vrbič and Dušan Dim. Velenje: Knjižnica Velenje, 2012.

*Skrito.si* (Hidden.si). Eds. Mitja Čander, Aleš Šteger, Sanja Grobovšek and Valentina Vovk. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2008.

## Music

Via Ofenziva: album *Bele rože* (White Flowers album). Ljubljana: Nika, 2015.

*Via Ofenziva*. CD and DVD. Ljubljana: Nika, 2006.

## Scripts for Documentary Films

*Dragotin Gustinčič: nevidni človek* (Dragotin Gustinčič: The Invisible Man). Director Slobodan Maksimović. Ljubljana: Radiotelevizija Slovenija, 2015.

*Za srečnejše dni: Kajuh* (For Happier Days: Kajuh). Director and co-scriptwriter Slobodan Maksimović. Ljubljana: Radiotelevizija Slovenija, 2015.

*Jesenice : Detroit*. Director Damjan Kozole. Ljubljana: Vertigo, 2008.

*Kozara–Lj.–Kozara* (short film). Director and co-scriptwriter Damjan Kozole. 1998.

## Book Translations into Foreign Languages

### Collections

*Molitev metulja / Gebet des Schmetterlings*, translated into German by Dominik Srienc. Vienna: Hochroth, 2014.

*Vulkan*, translated into Macedonian by Igor Isakovski. Skopje: Kulturna ustanova Blesok, 2010.

*Oprosti, poezijo*, translated into Bosnian by Ahmed Burić. Međugorje: Obzor, 1999.

*Malom bokseru*, translated into Croatian by Josip Osti. Ljubljana: Vodnikova domaćija and Kulturni vikend djece iz BiH, 1995.

*The Lying Poet*, translated into English by Damjana Mihič. Chattanooga: Poetry Miscellany, 1990.

## Selected Anthologies

*Sodobna slovenska poezija v albanskih prevodih: izbrani pesniki na Festivalu Pranger / Poezia bashkëkohore sllovene në përkthimet shqip: poetë dbe poete të*

*zgjedhura në festivalin Pranger*, ed. Nada Grošelj, translated into Albanian by Nikollë Berishaj. Maribor: KUD Pranger, 2019.

*Ani Nišaraf ve-eni yakhol lašet et ha-sheket / Gorim in ne morem tišine doseči*, eds. Hava Pinhas-Cohen and Barbara Pogačnik, translated into Hebrew by Hava Pinhas-Cohen, Klemen Jelinčič-Boeta, Myriam Steiner Aviezer, Maja Kutin, Dina Katan, Ben Zion and Dana Finci. Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibuts ha-me'uhad, 2016.

*Padesáti hlasů hovořím (antologie současné slovinské poezie, 2000–2012) / S petdesetimi glasovi govorim (antologija sodobne slovenske poezije, 2000–2012)*, selected, edited and translated by Lenka Kuhar Daňhelová and Peter Kuhar. Prague: P. Štengl, 2013.

*Antologija na sovremenata slovenečka poezija*, selected and translated by Lidija Dimkovska. Struga: Struški večeri na poezijata, 2013.

*Geburt eines Engels*, translated into German by Urška P. Černe. Heidelberg: Wunderhorn, 2008.

*U jantaru vremena: antologija slovenske poezije (1950–2000)*, selected, edited and translated into Bosnian by Josip Osti. Sarajevo: Tugra, 2006.

*Ilę tam mil wyobraźni*, translated into Polish by Paweł Szydeł. Wiecbork: Krajenskie Stowarzyszenie Kulturalne, 2005.

*Književni voz Evropa 2000*, translated into Serbian by Vida Ognjenović, Vladislav Bajac and Aleksandar Gatalica. Belgrade: Geopoetika, 2002.

*The Fire under the Moon (Contemporary Slovene Poetry)*, eds. Richard Jackson and Rachel Morgan, translated into English by Mia Dintinjana et al. Chattanooga: PM Books / Elgin: Black Dirt Press, 1999.

*Sommernacht der Lyrik: Gedichte von heute*. Sound book. Berlin: Der Hörverlag, 1999.

*Antologija krajiške poezije*. Bihać: Izdavač NIP Unsko-sanske novine, 1996.

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## **Najboljši rezultat za vse**

**dr. Igor Divjak**

Poezija Esada Babačića (1965) je bila vedno na robu družbene sprejemljivosti. Čeprav v šoli ni bil dober učenec ter mu je razredničarka očitala, da noče sodelovati pri pouku in da ni zbran, so ga pozneje kot uspešnega pesnika in novinarja nekoč povabili na njegovo nekdanjo osnovno šolo. Ko se je predstavil učencem in prebral nekaj pesmi, pa je ena od učiteljic pripomnila, da se ji zdijo preveč negativistične. Lahko bi rekli, da so ga še drugič ocenili kot nezbranega učenca, kot nekoga, ki se ni najbolje naučil vizionarske lekcije največjih pesnikov iz slovenske literarne zgodovine.

Najbrž je tako zato, ker njegova poezija izhaja iz nekonformistične izkušnje panka. V času socializma in diktature komunistične partije v Jugoslaviji se je mularija upirala tako imenovani rdeči buržoaziji, vladajoči garnituri, ki je bila drugim enakovredna le formalno, v resnici pa je imela veliko več od ostalih in je uživala vse dobrobiti nekdanje vladajoče meščanske garniture. Nezadovoljna mladina je Plečnikov trg v Ljubljani, imenovan po priznanem slovenskem arhitektu, preimenovala v Johnny Rotten Square, po pevcu pankovske skupine Sex Pistols. Nekdo je na grafitu »Mi smo Titovi!« prečrtal ime jugoslovanskega predsednika Tita in spodaj dopisal »Sidovi!« ter tako izrazil pripadnost Sidu Viciousu, basistu Sex Pistolov. Pank se je na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije začel v Sloveniji. Na začetku osemdesetih let, ko so na popularni sceni še vedno prevladovale skupine, ki so igrale plesno glasbo, in zapozneli hipiji, ki niso nasprotovali vladajočemu režimu, je pank oblikoval kontrakulturo, v kateri so umetniki izražali provokativna stališča in preizkušali meje uradno zapovedane javne morale. Legendarno slovensko skupino Pankrti so poslušali tudi v drugih jugoslovenskih republikah, pomembne pa so bile tudi skupine Lublanski psi, Kuzle, Otroci socializma in Via Ofenziva, katere frontman je bil Esad Babačić.

Babačićeva pesem se je rodila v začetku osemdesetih let, ko je delal ponoči v pekarni, v neznosni vročini. Med premori je legal na karton in obupan prepeval nekakšne revolucionarne pesmi. V tistem času je nastal *Proleter*, najbolj znana pesem Babačićeve pankovske skupine, z udarnimi verzi »Kje si zdaj, proleter, kje je zdaj twoja puška, kje so zdaj twoje roke, proleter? Mi zdaj dvigamo zastave v čast

tvoje borbe. Vodi nas zdaj ti, proleter.<sup>1</sup> Pisal pa je tudi že pesmi, ki niso bile namenjene nastopanju s skupino, in v njih je pankovsko estetiko kričečih parol spojil z liričnim glasom. V eni takih zgodnjih pesmi iz zbirke *Malemu boksarju* (1988) – z naslovom *Datumi* – tako govorí: »In vem, / da si srečen, / ker se ne moreš / spomniti datuma, / ko si storil harakiri.« Babačić je pankovski protest vpeljal v območje pesniškega jezika in pokazal, da imajo tudi udarne parole lahko poetičen učinek. Spet drugje, v pesmi *Veter (Angel s scufanimi krili)*, 1989), uporabi kruto in obenem izjemno svežo ekspresivno podobo: »Na eni strani mora biti glava vedno odprta. / Da lahko ptiči letajo.«

Pesmi iz Babačićevih zgodnjih zbirk so razodevale nepokorno naravo in nezadovoljstvo z obstoječim družbenim stanjem, v nekonformističnem, ekspresivnem jeziku so zahtevale predvsem večjo individualno svobodo. In tudi v poznejših pesmih, ki se včasih spašajo s spomini na mladostne uporniške čase, najdemo sledi estetike rokenrola. V pesmi *JLA* iz knjige *Odrezani od neba* (2018) se spominja, kako je med služenjem vojaškega roka ob izčrpani ideologiji obrambe pred zunanjim sovražnikom socializma praznim dnevom dajala smisel glasba ameriške rokovske ikone Jima Morrisona: »Tito-grajska vročina, / zadnjih tristo / metrov miru / in Morrison; / seven miles / ride the snake.«

Morda kateri učitelj ali učiteljica Babačićeve pesmi teže sprejema tudi zato, ker v njih nastopa preprosta, neposredna skladnja, ki izhaja iz pogovornega jezika. Če pozorno prisluhnemo podtonu njegove pesniške govorce, pa v njej včasih začutimo tudi odmev jezika njegovih staršev in kulture drugih jugoslovanskih republik. Babačićeva mati je po rodu hercegovska Hrvatica, oče pa Bošnjak, ki je prišel delat v Ljubljano – oba sta torej v Slovenijo prišla iz Bosne in Hercegovine, kjer so govorili drugačen jezik. Besede, ki jih pesnik uporablja, so slovenske, a odnos do sveta, ki ga izražajo, je prežet tudi z ironijo in fatalizmom, ki sta značilna za jug nekdanje skupne države. Pomemben vir Babačićeve inspiracije je tudi novovalovska glasba, ne le slovenska, ampak tudi bosanska, hrvaška, srbska, črno-gorska in makedonska. Pesnik se je v intervjuju za revijo *Literatura* o svojem pesniškem jeziku izrazil z naslednjimi besedami: »Danes

<sup>1</sup> Kot prvi za železno zaveso si je s svojo skupino Via Ofenziva drznil javno izvajati svojo priredbo takrat strogo prepovedane »nacistične« pesmi *Lili Marleen*.

bi lahko dejal, da pišem v ljubljansčini, ki včasih zadiši po jugu ... Zanimivo je, kako močno se je v nekaterih pesmih vrnil vonj po materinščini. Ko jih berem, se mi zdi, kot da slišim notranji glas, ki ni slovenski, je pa gotovo slovanski.«

Krivične učiteljice in učitelji radi prezrejo, da je vsaka Babačićeva pesniška poteza premišljena, da pogosto upesnuje klasični dvoedini odnos, do katerega pa pristopa z ironično distanco, ki se noče uklanjati praznim konvencijam. Če hoče biti pesem živa, mora biti zgoščena, in če hoče zadeti v bistvo, je dostikrat bolje, da je kratka. V drugi osebi pesnik lahko nagovarja tako žensko kot moškega, včasih pa v pesmi spregovori ženska, ki nagovarja avtorja: »Jutri te bom pozabilna. / Ne danes.« Tako beremo v pesmi iz zbirke *Divan* (2006). Spet drugje pesnik govori prijatelju, Ahmedu Buriću (1967), pesniku iz Bosne, dežele svojih korenin. V Sarajevu so po koncu vojne, ki je v tej republiki trajala od razpada Jugoslavije leta 1991 do leta 1995, ljudje spet začeli živeti vsakdanje življenje in se trudili, da ne bi več mislili na nedavno večletno obstreljevanje mesta z okoliških hribov; eden od njih je *Đidikovac*, ki je dal ime pesmi, v kateri pravi: »Dolivanje kave je podaljševanje trenutkov, / o katerih se ne govori. / Potrkavanje ob filđan / ostaja prva in zadnja molitev / sarajevskih vzpetin, / o katerih ne smeš več sanjati.« (*Kiti se ne napihujemo*, 2000). Bosanska beseda *filđan*, ki označuje servis za pitje kave, tudi Slovencem zazveni prijetno, saj je vsakodnevno pitje močne turške kave ostalo obvezen vsakodnevni ritual iz časa skupne države.

Z leti so Babačićeve podobe postale manj kričeče, izraz je prečistil in oklestil skoraj do minimuma. V njih se nominalne fraze brez atributov in povedki brez predmetov pogosto spajajo z drugo osebo, ki pa ne prehaja v kako arhetipsko drugost, ampak zaradi rabe vsakdanje govorce deluje dovolj prepoznavno kot avtorska. Te pesmi so skoraj brez metafor, in ker besede obdaja zgolj praznina, začnejo pridobivati metaforični potencial. Ko se tu in tam kakšna izrazitejša metafora ali simbol vendarle pojavit, na primer gora kot prispoloba življenske poti v pesmi *Ararat*, se zgodi nekaj takega kot vstop v mit. »Tam nekje pri tridesetih se ti še zdi, da se vzpenjaš, / potem pa, ko si naenkrat na vrhu, zgrožen pogledaš dol, / si otareš čelo in se začneš spuščati. Jaz se spuščam.« V tej in drugih pesmih zbirke *Kiti se ne napihujemo* (2000), eni od svojih najboljših, je Babačić našel minimalno pesniško strukturo, s katero še lahko nakaže neko zgodbo. To je poezija brez okrasja, brez šminke, v njej se avtorjeva konkretna

izkušnja spaja z arhetipskimi temami, v katerih se lahko prepozna slehernik. Usoda upornega pesnika ni več v hudem nasprotju z usodo njegovega očeta, in čeprav oče nikoli ni razumel njegove ljubezni do poezije, pesnik v pesmi *Brdo*, poimenovani po eni od ljubljanskih četrti, spoznava, da se vozi po istih vsakdanjih, morda mitoloških poteh, po katerih se je vozil že on. »Nedelja popoldan. / Debil na motorju, / ki ne bo nikdar dovolj hiter zanj, / drvi proti koncu / ulice, ki jo njegov / oče prezira iz dna / duše.«

Upornik se je spojil s sufijem, njegove pesniške parole so postale podobne modrostnim izrekom. »Lahko bi umrl / lahko bi vstal. / Vse to vedeti / in ostati skromen.« Tako pravi v pesmi *Divan* iz istoimenske zbirke, ki je izšla leta 2006. Babačić sicer ne piše le kratkih pesmi, včasih nastane tudi kakšna daljša, a njeno jedro ostane aforizem. V pesmi *B. B. (Kitula, 2015)*, posvečeni Branetu Bitencu, svojemu pankovskemu kolegu in pevcu skupine Otroci socializma, piše: »Ampak vsaka revolucija enkrat konča v muzeju. / Mi je pa všeč, veš, da je tu tudi kokakola, / da so tudi njo zaprli, kot eksponat / človeške neumnosti in napredka.« Bridko zavedanje, da se je pankovski upor že davno izpel, se tu spaja s spoznanjem, da potrošniška kultura, komercializacija in vse večja amerikanizacija niso prinesle osvoboditve in da se je s prihodom kapitalizma slovenska družba znašla na brezpotju.

Kratka razodetja, ki so se razvila iz nekdanjih udarnih parol, ostajajo prepoznaven znak Babačićeve poezije sredi sveta, ki so ga preplavila kratka elektronska sporočila. Čeprav ne več neposredno uporna, pa ta razodetja ostajajo družbenokritična in izrekajo, kar v času marketinške korektnosti ostaja izrinjeno in zamolčano. »Človek, / tvoja krutost / je krvava reka, / ki teče v nebo.« Tako piše pesnik v zbirki *Odrezani od neba*. Že v zbirki *Divan* pa je človeško ranljivost in smrtnost umestil v kontekst spremenjenih odnosov, ki jih vzpostavlja komunikacijska tehnologija 21. stoletja: »Kdor pozabi napolniti / baterijo svojega mobilnega / telefona, / ta lahko umre / kar tako, / iz čistega miru.« (*Mir*)

In čeprav bi se komu morda take besede zazdele preveč brezupne, je ironija klasičen pesniški postopek, ki človeka osvobodi od običajnega doživljanja realnosti in mu omogoči, da končno zadiha. Sčasoma sta tudi literarna veda in kritika, ki Babačićeve ustvarjalnosti nista mogli umestiti v nobeno od ustaljenih pesniških šol, čeprav že v njegovih zgodnjih zbirkah prepoznamo napoved kasnejše »urbane poezije«, v njegovih pesmih začeli prepoznavati umetniško vrednost.

Uveljavljati se je začel tudi v mednarodnem prostoru. Tako je leta 1998 na Sommernacht der Lyrik v Berlinu denimo bral z Johnom Ashberyjem. Za svojo pesem *Donava* je na Dunaju prejel mednarodno Hörbigerjevo nagrado (2003), leta 2010 je s svetovno znano slovensko umetniško skupino NSK izdal umetniško knjigo *Biospektiva*, njegova poezija je prevedena v številne evropske jezike in izhaja v uglednih evropskih literarnih revijah (*Bateria, Edinburgh Review, Literatur und Kritik*). Gostuje na literarnih branjih in festivalih po Evropi pa tudi na uglednih umetniških rezidencah.

V Babačevih verzih včasih meja med poezijo, izmišljijo in vsakdanjimi anekdotami ni čisto jasna, kar jim daje dodaten čar, in poleg pesniških figur ironije v njih najdemo figure odvzemanja, oksimorone in paradokse. Te pesmi vsebujejo tudi nadrealistične elemente; izpostaviti velja živalske pesmi, ki v slovensko pesništvo prinašajo lahkonno bizarnost, ki se spaja s psihološkimi uvidi in prebliski. Taka je na primer Babačeva enovrstičnica »Kiti se ne napihujejo« ali njej sorodna »Sloni jočejo pošteno« (*Sloni jočejo pošteno*, 2011). Včasih najdemo živali v nežni in lirični podobi: »Preboden sem. / In lanske lastovke / še vedno letijo skozi mene.« (*Odrezani od neba*, 2018) Spet druge posredno označujejo človeške slabosti: »Tvoje gozdne šape potujejo previdno. / Prečkajo nebo človeka in se ustavijo / nad prepadom odvečne previdnosti.« (*Volk, Kitula*, 2015) Podobe živali v Babačevih pesmih nimajo le nadrealistične funkcije, pogosto so karikature ljudi in kritika sprevrženih medčloveških razmerij, v katerih so eni podrejeni drugim, in družbe, v kateri se vse bolj uveljavlja načelo človek človeku volk.

Babačić se nikoli ni odrekel pankerskemu idealu skupnosti, ki bi omogočala svobodo vsem posameznikom. Morda se je s padcem socialističnega režima in spremembo sistema zazdelo, da je taka utoipa možna, toda prebivalstvo v samostojni demokratični Sloveniji se je kmalu začelo razslojevati. Najprej se je leta 1992, slabo leto po osamosvojitvi, dogodil izbris prebivalcev iz drugih republik nekdajne skupne države, ki niso zaprosili za slovensko državljanstvo, potem je tržni sistem začel pospešeno povečevati prepad med revnimi in bogatimi – najočitnejše v času svetovne gospodarske krize, ko niti množične ljudske vstaje v letih 2012 in 2013 niso mogle preprečiti, da se zasebni dolgoročni bogatih bančnikov ne bi poplačali z javnim denarjem državljanov. Varčevalni ukrepi so prizadeli marsikoga, posebej močno področje kulture.

Duha tega časa, ko je za trenutek znova zaživila vera v uporne parole in demokratičen protest, čemur pa je sledilo naglo razočaranje, močno odraža v samozaložbi izdana zbirka *Prihodi, odhodi* (2013), nominirana tudi za Jenkovo nagrado. Pesniški glas v njej je glas nekoga, ki mu gre predvsem za preživetje, denimo delavca iz nekdanjih bratskih jugoslovanskih republik na začasnem delu v Sloveniji: »Građiš stolpnice, / v katerih ne boš živel, / stadione, na katerih / ne boš navijal, / hotele, v katerih bodo spali / tisti, ki te ponižujejo.«

Babačić v pesmih tega obdobja vse pogosteje uporablja mrtve metafore, podobe, ki razkrinkavajo lažne vidike resničnosti in prazno idealiteto. Te pesmi ne izražajo le osebne bolečine, ampak predstavljajo protitež stvarnosti, navzven vse bolj blešeče in gentrificirane, dejansko pa zlagane in prazne. V zbirki *Kitula* (2015) tako neposredno izpove, da »so zmagali / slabi ... ker si bil / tudi ti korektno naiven, / ko si jih hranil s svojo / korektnostjo, / ker nisi vedel, / da je korektnost / že od nekdaj / najbolj trden / kapital v rokah / najbolj / nekorektnih / ljudi.« Vseeno tudi tu klasična dvoedina struktura ne zamre. Četudi ironično, avtor pogosto še vedno nagovarja drugega ali drugo, kot bi bila v tej komunikaciji edina prava možnost utopije: »In dokler je tako, sem tvoj suženj, / melanholični brat, zapornik zlate ladje, / ki rine v blatno večnost.«

Babačićeva posebnost so tudi športne pesmi, ki črpajo iz neposredne izkušnje. Po eni strani namreč rad igra košarko in jo tudi popularizira med mladimi, a po drugi strani je dolgo delal kot športni novinar; napisal je denimo knjige o slovenskem boksarju Dejanu Zavcu, med drugim trikratnim svetovnim prvakom v velterski kategoriji po verziji IBF, in o uspehih slovenskih hokejistov, slovenski klubski zgodovini vse do uvrstitve reprezentance na olimpijske igre v Sočiju leta 2014. Babačić je tudi soavtor dokumentarca *Jesenice : Detroit* (2008), v katerem raziskuje hokejsko manijo v obeh mestih s tradicijo težke industrije. Se pa tudi izkušnje sodobnega športa v Babačićevih pesmih vse pogosteje prepletajo z deziluzijo, saj je svetovna slava velezvezdnikov še eden od simptomov razkola med revnimi in bogatimi. »Ko pomeri Messi, / se spomniš, / da ti je ostalo / samo še za burek / in da je najbolje / navijati za en sam klub, / pa čeprav iz druge lige.« (*Kitula*, 2015) Prek športa se metaforično dotakne aktualnih razmer vseh tistih, ki se le težko prebijajo iz dneva v dan in katerih sanje o uspehu so zamrle, kot v pesmi *Umik*, eni najboljših iz njegove zadnje zbirke *Odrezani od neba* (2018), uvrščene

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v ožji izbor za Veronikino nagrado in med finaliste Jenkove nagrade. Njegov glas resignirano opisuje prazno nogometno igrišče: »Ko se nihče ne brani, / ker nihče ne napada. / Ko so stadioni prazni / in je neodločeno / najboljši rezultat / za vse.« V tej apatiji, ki jo pesnik zaznava, privolitvi v neodločen izid, se skriva nevarnost poraza. In čeprav to ni izraženo tako neposredno kot v mladostnih pankerskih pesmih, iz teh verzov še vedno veje kritika konformizma in vdanosti v usodo, ki zakrivata brezup.

Najbrž se kakšni učiteljici ali učitelju tudi dvovrstična pesem »Kam so šli vsi srečni ljudje? / Kupovat srečo« (*Kitula*, 2015) ne bi zdela zadosti poetična, da bi v njej prepoznala kakšno globlje sporočilo, četudi bi stala v vrsti pred isto blagajno iste veleblagovnice kot pesnik. Od poezije bi verjetno pričakovala, da govorí o kakem lepšem, boljšem svetu, kot pa je ta naš, da ju očara, morda celo pozabava, ne pa da jima nastavlja ogledalo in ju prikazuje z nakupovalno košarico in skrbmi. Morda sta tudi že pozabila, da smo nekoč verjeli, da je najboljši rezultat za vse socializem. In morda sta prezrla, da pesnik zoperstavlja eno prazno idealiteto drugi zato, ker mu resnično ni vseeno, kakšen je rezultat, ker ve, da sistem, v katerem ljudje več ne razmišljajo in zapadajo v apatijo, pristaja na poraz.

V socializmu ni bilo prave svobode, tržni kapitalizem pa je prinesel razslojenost in marsikomu tudi revščino, a to ne pomeni, da se je treba odreči utopiji. Babačićeve pesmi se ne trudijo biti všečne, bralca želijo vsaj malo zdramiti, čeprav z ironijo. Nekje v globini ostajajo podobno nekonformistične in utopične kot njegova mladostna pankerska besedila o »proleterjih«. Z uradnim izročilom naše literarne zgodovine se morda navzven ne skladajo povsem tudi zato, ker avtor ne pristaja na to, da mu ga prodajajo kot ceneno blago z rimanimi oglasi. V takem primeru je njegova funkcija predvsem ta, da se z njim nekje nekdo okoristi na račun drugih. To pa nikoli ni bil pravi namen poezije.

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## ***The Best Score for All***

***Igor Divjak, PhD***

The poetry of Esad Babačić (1965) has always been on the verge of social acceptability. Never a model student but criticized by his class mistress for his lack of participation and concentration, he was later invited to his former elementary school as a successful poet and journalist. However, when he introduced himself to the students and read some of his poems, a teacher remarked that she found them too negative. We might say that he had been found wanting once more as an unfocused student, one who had not mastered the visionary lesson taught by the greatest poets in Slovene literary history.

This may be because his poetry is rooted in the nonconformist experience of punk. During socialism and the dictatorship of the Communist Party in Yugoslavia, youngsters rebelled against the so-called “red bourgeoisie,” the ruling set which was formally on a par with the rest but in fact enjoyed all the privileges of the former bourgeois set. Plečnik Square in Ljubljana, named for the great Slovene architect Jože Plečnik, was dubbed by the dissatisfied kids “Johnny Rotten Square,” after the singer of the Sex Pistols punk rock band. In the graffiti “We are Tito’s!” someone crossed out the name of the Yugoslav president Tito and scrawled “Sid’s!”—an expression of loyalty to Sid Vicious, the Sex Pistols bassist. The punk of former Yugoslavia actually began in Slovenia. In the early eighties, when the popular music scene was still dominated by dance music and by belated hippies who did not oppose the régime, punk formed a counterculture which voiced provocative standpoints and pushed the boundaries of official public morality. The legendary Slovene band Pankrti had audiences in the other Yugoslav republics as well, and there were a number of other important bands: Lublanski Psi, Kuzle, Otroci Socializma, and Via Ofenziva, with Esad Babačić as frontman.

Babačić’s poetry was born in the early eighties, when he worked nights at a bakery in intolerable heat. In the breaks he would lie down on a piece of cardboard and despairingly sing revolutionary songs of sorts. It was this period that produced “The Proleter”, the best-known song of Babačić’s punk rock band, with its stirring lines: “Where are you now, proleter, where’s your gun now, where are

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your hands now, prole? We're raising flags in honor of your struggle. Lead on now, prole.”<sup>1</sup> But even then he was already writing poems which were not meant for the band's performance, and there the punk aesthetics of screaming slogans merged with a lyric voice. One of such early poems, “Dates” from the collection To the Little Boxer (*Malemu boksarju*, 1988), runs: “And I know / you're happy / about failing / to remember the date / you committed hara-kiri.” Babačić introduced the punk protest into the language of poetry, showing that even stirring slogans could have a poetic effect. Another poem, “The Wind” from the collection The Angel with Shredded Wings (*Angel s scufanimi krili*, 1989), employs an expressive image, disturbing but fresh: “The head always needs to be open on one side. / For birds to fly.”

The poems from Babačić’s early collections reveal his intractable nature and dissatisfaction with the existing state of society, calling in their nonconformist, expressive idiom for greater individual freedom. Traces of rock and roll aesthetics show even in his later poems, sometimes blending with memories of youthful rebelliousness. In the poem “JLA” (an acronym for Yugoslav People’s Army) from the book Cut Off from the Sky (*Odrezani od neba*, 2018), he recalls his military service: with the ideology of defense against an external enemy of socialism already exhausted, all that gave meaning to the empty days was the music of the American rock icon Jim Morrison: “The Titograd heat, / the last three hundred / meters of peace, / and Morrison; / seven miles / ride the snake.”

A schoolteacher may find Babačić’s poems still more difficult to accept because of their simple, direct syntax rooted in colloquial language. Moreover, the undertone of his poetic idiom sometimes recalls his mother tongue and the culture of other Yugoslav republics. Babačić’s mother, a Herzegovinian Croat, and his father, a Bosniak who had come to work in Ljubljana, had moved to Slovenia from Bosnia-Herzegovina, where a different language was spoken. The words employed by the poet are Slovene, but his attitude to the world is suffused with the irony and fatalism pervading the former Yugoslav South. Another important source of inspiration for Babačić

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<sup>1</sup>Behind the Iron Curtain, Babačić and his band Via Ofenziva were the first to venture a public performance of *Lili Marleen*, which was strictly banned in the former Yugoslavia as a “Nazi” song.

was the New Wave music, not only from Slovenia but also from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. As the poet himself describes his poetic idiom in an interview for the *Literatura* magazine: “Today I could say that I write in the Ljubljana dialect, with a whiff of the south now and then... It’s fascinating how strongly some poems bring back the scent of the mother tongue. Reading them I feel like I’m hearing an inner voice, not Slovene, but definitely Slavic.”

Biased schoolteachers tend to overlook that each of Babačić’s poetic brushstrokes is carefully considered and that his theme is often the classic bipartite attitude—which, however, is approached with an ironic distance that refuses to kowtow to empty conventions. If a poem is to be alive and trenchant, it must be succinct. Babačić’s addressee may be a woman or a man; even his speaker is sometimes a woman addressing the author (the gender is conveyed in Slovene through morphology). “I’ll forget you tomorrow. / Not today.” —so runs a poem from the collection *The Divan* (*Divan*, 2006). Elsewhere the poet talks to his friend Ahmed Burić (1967), a poet from Bosnia, the country of his origins. When the war in former Yugoslavia was over (in Bosnia it lasted from the disintegration of the federal state in 1991 to 1995), people in Sarajevo resumed their everyday lives and tried not to think of the recent years when the city had been under fire from the surrounding hills: one of these hills, Đidikovac, lent its name to a poem in *Whales Do Not Showboat* (*Kiti se ne napihujejo*, 2000): “Refilling coffee cups is a prolongation of moments / that aren’t talked about. / The tapping of the *fildan* / remains the first and the final prayer / of the Sarajevo elevations / you’re no longer supposed to dream about.” The Bosnian word *fildan*, a set for drinking coffee, soothes the Slovene ear as well, for the daily drinking of strong Turkish coffee has survived as an essential ritual from the former federal state.

Over the years Babačić’s images have toned down, his expression has been distilled and almost reduced to a minimum. These poems often blend attributeless nominal phrases and objectless verbs with the second person, which does not dissolve into an archetypal otherness but retains a colloquial, recognizably individual tone. The words in this practically metaphorless poetry, surrounded by nothing but blanks, begin to assume a metaphoric potential themselves. When a more striking metaphor or symbol does appear after all, such as the

mountain as a figure for the course of life in “Ararat,” it seems an entry into myth. “At about thirty, you still feel you’re climbing up, and then, / on suddenly reaching the peak, you look down, appalled, / wipe off your forehead and start descending. I’m descending.” Here and elsewhere in one of his best collections, Whales Do Not Showboat (2000), Babačić discovers the minimal poetic structure still capable of suggesting a story. This poetry, without trimmings, without makeup, blends the author’s concrete experience with archetypal themes recognizable to Everyman. The destiny of the rebel poet no longer stands in stark contrast to his father’s: even though his father never understood his love of poetry, the poem “Brdo” (named after one of Ljubljana’s districts) realizes that the poet rides along the same everyday—perhaps mythological—roads taken by his father before. “A Sunday afternoon. / A moron on a motorcycle / never fast enough for him / is racing toward the end / of the street / his father thoroughly / despises.”

The rebel has fused with the Sufi, his poetic slogans have come to resemble wisdom sayings. “I could die, / I could get up. / To know all this / and stay modest.” So says the poem “The Divan” from the eponymous collection published in 2006. Aphorism remains even at the core of Babačić’s occasional longer poems. The poem “B. B.” (*Kitula*, 2015), dedicated to Brane Bitenc, Babačić’s punk rock colleague and singer of the Otroci Socializma band, states: “Every revolution ends up in a museum, sooner or later. / And I like it, you know, that Coca-Cola is here too, / that it got locked up too, as an exhibit / of human folly and progress.” The bitter awareness that punk rebellion petered out long ago blends with the recognition that consumer culture, commercialization and increasing Americanization have brought no liberation and that the advent of capitalism has wrecked the compass of Slovene society.

In a world flooded with short e-messages, short epiphanies which evolved from former rousing slogans remain the trademark of Babačić’s poetry. While no longer directly rebellious, they remain critical of society, articulating what is displaced and suppressed in our age of marketing correctness. “The human, / your cruelty / is a bloody river / flowing to the sky,” warns the collection Cut Off from the Sky. The earlier Divan collection already frames human vulnerability and mortality in the changes introduced into human relationships by the 21<sup>st</sup> century communication technology: “Who

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forgets / to recharge the battery / of their cellphone, / can die / instantly, / and rest in peace.” (“Peace”).

Although such words might be considered too hopeless, irony is a classic poetic procedure liberating humans from the usual experience of reality, enabling them to draw breath at last. Literary theory and criticism, which had been at a loss to identify Babačić's creativity with any established school of poetry (although his later “urban poetry” is presaged even in his early collections), gradually came to recognize an artistic value in his poems. He has gained international recognition as well. At the Berlin festival *Sommernacht der Lyrik* in 1998, for example, he read alongside John Ashbery. His poem “The Danube” received the international Hörbiger prize in Vienna (2003), and the year 2010 saw the publication of his art book *Biospective (Biospektiva)*, produced in collaboration with the world-famous Slovene art group *Neue Slowenische Kunst*. His poetry has been translated into a number of European languages and published in prestigious literary magazines (*Bateria, Edinburgh Review, Literaturundkritik*). In addition to giving readings all over Europe and taking part in literary festivals, he has been hosted by eminent artists' residencies.

The boundary between poetry, fiction and everyday anecdotes is sometimes blurred, which lends Babačić's poems an extra charm. Beside the figures of irony, they display reduction, oxymoron and paradox, as well as surrealist elements. A case in point is his animal poems, which introduce into Slovene poetry a light-hearted bizarreness intertwined with psychological insights and flashes. Such is the one-liner “Whales do not showboat,” or its cognate, “Elephants have a fair cry,” from *Elephants Have a Fair Cry (Sloni jočejo pošteno,* 2011). Sometimes animals appear in gentle, lyrical images: “I'm pierced through. / With the last year's swallows / still flying through me.” (Cut Off from the Sky, 2018). Elsewhere they may indirectly hint at human foibles: “Your forest paws travel carefully. / Crossing the sky of the human, stopping / above the abyss of excessive caution.” (“The Wolf,” *Kitula*, 2015). Not limited to their surrealist function, the animal portraits in Babačić's poems often caricature humans: they criticize the perverted human relationships of subjection and a society increasingly characterized by the “dog eat dog” principle.

Babačić has never renounced the punker's ideal of a community which would extend freedom to each individual. This Utopia may

have seemed possible with the fall of the socialist régime and the change of the system, but the population of independent democratic Slovenia soon began to stratify. Less than a year after Slovenia's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia on June 25, 1991, there followed the "erasure" of citizens of other former Yugoslav republics who had not applied for Slovene citizenship, and the market system began to deepen the rift between the haves and have-nots. This became most evident during the global economic crisis, when even the mass uprisings of 2012 and 2013 were powerless to stop the private debts of wealthy bankers being paid with public money. The austerity measures were a hard blow for many, and especially so for culture.

The spirit of the age—an age when a brief flicker of belief in rebel slogans and democratic protest was soon dampened by disillusionment—is captured in the self-published collection *Arrivals, Departures* (*Prihodi, odhodi*, 2013). It was nominated for the Jenko Award, which is awarded for the best poetry collection in Slovene published in the previous two years. Its voice belongs to someone who simply wants to survive, perhaps a guest worker from a former Yugoslav republic: "You build skyscrapers / you'll never live in, / stadiums where / you won't cheer for anybody, / hotels to be slept in by / those who snub you."

Babačić's poems from this period increasingly use dead metaphors, images unmasking the specious facets of reality and an empty ideality. These poems not only voice personal pain but also counterbalance a reality ever more glamorous and gentrified on the surface but false and hollow at the core. The collection *Kitula* (2015) pronounces that "the bad guys / had won" because you have been "properly naïve too / in feeding them with your / properness / because you didn't know / properness / had always been / the greatest / asset held / by the most / improper / people." Yet even here the classic bipartite structure does not fade out. For all his irony, the author still addresses an Other as if this communication were the only true possibility of Utopia: "As long as it's like this, / I remain your slave, / a melancholic brother, / the prisoner of a golden boat / pushing its way into the muddy eternity."

Another of Babačić's distinctive features are his sports poems, which draw on immediate experience. A keen basketball player and promoter as well as a veteran sports journalist, Babačić has written a

book on the Slovene boxing champion Dejan Zavec aka Jan Zaveck, who held the IBF welterweight title from 2009 to 2011. Another of his books surveys the achievements of Slovene ice hockey players: the Slovene club's history up to its participation in the Winter Olympics at the 2014 Sochi Games, Russia. Moreover, Babačić has co-authored the documentary *Jesenice:Detroit* (2008), exploring the hockey mania rampant in both heavy industry towns. But even the experience of contemporary sports is increasingly tinged with disillusionment, for the superstars' worldwide fame is yet another symptom of the divide between the haves and have-nots: "When Messi takes a shot, / you remember / the only thing left / for you to have is a burek, / and it's best / to cheer for one club only, / even if from the second division" (*Kitula*, 2015). Through sports, the poet metaphorically alludes to the circumstances of those who barely eke out a living, those whose dreams of success have withered. Such is the poem "The Retreat" (Umik), an outstanding sample from his latest collection *Cut Off from the Sky* (2018), which was shortlisted for two major poetry awards in Slovenia: the Veronika Award, bestowed for the best Slovene poetry collection of the year, and the Jenko Award. The poet's voice gives a resigned description of an empty football pitch: "One of those days / with nobody taking defense / because nobody's making an attack. / With the stadiums empty / and a draw, / the best score for all." This apathy perceived by the poet, this acquiescence in a draw, carries the danger of defeat. And although less explicit than the punk songs of Babačić's youth, the lines still exude a critique of the conformism and resignation which mask hopelessness.

Another poem that might not strike an elementary school teacher as poetic enough to carry a deeper message is "Where have all the happy people gone? / To buy happiness" (*Kitula*, 2015), even if he or she had queued in front of the very same cashier's desk at the same supermarket as the poet. Rather than mirror their own selves, loaded with shopping baskets and cares, they might expect poetry to talk about a finer, better world, to enchant and perhaps even amuse them. They might have forgotten that we used to see the best score for all in socialism. And they might have overlooked the reason why the poet pits one empty ideality against another: because he does care about the score, because he knows that a system in which people stop thinking and fall into apathy acquiesces in defeat.

Even if socialism failed to bring freedom and market capitalism brought stratification and poverty to many people, this does not mean that Utopia should be renounced. Babačić's poems do not struggle for likeability. What they want is to shake the reader awake, even through irony. Deep down they remain as nonconformist and Utopian as his early punk texts on "proles." On the surface they may diverge from the official tradition of Slovenian literary history, partly because the author refuses to have this tradition marketed to him like cheap wares in ad jingles. In that case the tradition would mainly serve to line some persons' pockets at the expense of others. And this has never been the true aim of poetry.

*Translated by Nada Grošelj, PhD*

## ***Kaj potrebuje pesem***

Zraka.

Veliko zraka.

In pokrajino.

Sredi pokrajine človeka,  
ki sedi ob ognju  
in si roke greje.

(*Kiti se ne napihujejo*, 2000)

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## *Sranje*

Pesniki so najmočnejši na stranišču.  
Tudi ko serjejo, jih ne zapusti tisti občutek.  
Tudi ko serjejo, so prepričani,  
da iz njih prihaja nekaj veličastnega,  
enkratnega in neponovljivega.  
Zdi se jim, da jim pozaba ne more do živega.  
Ko tako pritiskajo navzdol, se jim angeli  
smejijo s stropa, angeli, čisti kot neuporabljen  
toaletni papir. Nevednost jim je tako ljuba,  
tako dobrodošla, v tistih trenutkih absolutne slave,  
ko nihče v bližini ni varen pred vznesenostjo  
rodovitnega pesnika, tega junaka domačnosti  
in sproščenosti. Kolikokrat se bo moral ponoviti  
trenutek, ki ga sleherni otrok odnese v grob,  
kolikokrat bo moral zatrepi najbolj čiste fantazije,  
da bo lahko končno zavladal lastni školjki.  
Ker skrivnost, ki jo bo odnesel s seboj,  
vsakič ko sede nanjo, je največje sranje tega sveta.

(*Divan*, 2006)

## **Zunanje zvezde**

Smrt nekaterih ljudi  
je tako žalostna,  
da o nji nikdar več  
ne spregovorimo.  
Samo tiho smo  
in strah nas je,  
kdaj se bo ponovila,  
dokler nekega dne  
žalosti ne zamenja bes,  
poln kristala  
iz neizjokanih solz,  
bes, ker nismo  
jokali več,  
ko je bilo potrebno,  
bes, ker smo se  
morali smejeti  
zaradi lepega  
in pozabljati  
na milost,  
ki ostane sama,  
s tistimi,  
ki so še vedno  
tam zunaj,  
za tišino zvezd ...

(*Odrezani od neba*, 2018)

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**Dan**

Vedel sem.  
Hodil boš in postajal vse manjši,  
množica pa vse večja.

(*Odrezani od neba*, 2018)

**Umik**

Eden tistih dni,  
ko se nihče ne brani,  
ker nihče ne napada.  
Ko so stadioni prazni  
in je neodločeno  
najboljši rezultat za vse.  
Ko so vrvi spuščene  
pod kolena  
in pasovi visijo  
na vratih,  
ki jih nekdo pozabi zapreti,  
ker mu je vseeno.  
Ko se praznina  
vrača v predmestje.  
Ko se semaforji prižigajo zase.  
Ko se zavesi ljubijo z okni  
in reveži iščejo moč.  
Ko samo sediš v kotu  
in iščeš koren besede  
tišina.

(*Odrezani od neba*, 2018)

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## *Makedonska pesem*

Trudiš se.

Vse položnice do prvega.

Luč v sobi skrbi,  
da se ti ne ustavi kri.

Pišeš domov,  
vsak božič,  
čeprav ga ne praznuješ.

Gradiš stolpnice,  
v katerih ne boš živel,  
stadione, na katerih  
ne boš navijal,  
hotele, v katerih bodo spali  
tisti, ki te ponižujejo.

Trudiš se, da ne bi bil  
preveč na očeh,  
ker ne želiš,  
da bi videli  
tvojo žalost.

Samo zdravnici  
lahko potožiš,  
kako ti je hudo,  
kako se zbujaš ponoči  
in kričiš sam nase,  
ker si se tako trudil,  
in na svoje otroke,  
ker so te poslušali.

Gradil si ceste  
in hiše za tiste,  
ki si jim verjel,  
zdaj pa se jim umikaš,  
ko te hočejo povoziti.  
Ker si prepočasen.

Vse dolgove do prvega,  
vse obveznosti,  
do sebe in sveta.  
Ker ti nikdar ne zamudiš,  
čeprav veš, da vse zamuja.  
Tudi smrt zamuja  
in ta prekleti mir zamuja.  
Z neba padajo rože,  
težke, bele rože,  
namesto dežja.

(*Prihodi, odhodi*, 2013)

Rusi nikoli  
ne bežijo.  
Predaleč je.

(*Divan*, 2006)

## ***What a poem needs***

Air.  
Plenty of air.  
And a landscape.  
A human in the middle,  
sitting by the fire,  
warming his hands.

(*Whales Do Not Showboat*, 2000)

## ***Shit***

Poets are strongest in the restroom.  
Even when shitting, they aren't abandoned by this feeling.  
Even when shitting, they're convinced  
something magnificent, unique, and inimitable  
is coming out of them.  
They feel they cannot be withered by oblivion.  
When pushing downward like this, they're  
smiled at by angels, angels as clean as unused  
toilet paper. They find ignorance so dear to their hearts,  
so welcome, in those moments of absolute glory,  
when no one around them is safe from the rapture  
of a prolific poet, this hero of coziness  
and easiness. How many times will the moment  
have to be repeated that every child takes to their grave,  
how many times will he have to suppress his purest fantasies  
to finally become the ruler of his own toilet bowl?  
For the secret he takes with him every time he sits on it  
is the greatest shit of this world.

(*The Divan*, 2006)

### ***The outer stars***

The death of some people  
is so sad  
it is never  
spoken about anymore.  
We just remain silent,  
afraid of it  
being repeated,  
until, one day,  
the sadness is replaced  
by fury,  
one big crystal  
made of unshed tears,  
the fury we did not  
cry more  
when necessary,  
the fury we  
had to smile  
just for show  
and forget  
about the grace  
that remains alone  
with those  
that are still  
out there, beyond  
the silence of stars ...

(*Cut Off from the Sky*, 2018)

### *The day*

I knew it.  
You'd walk, growing ever smaller,  
with the crowd ever bigger.

(*Cut Off from the Sky*, 2018)

### *The retreat*

One of those days  
with nobody putting up defense  
because nobody's making an attack.  
With the stadiums empty  
and a draw,  
the best score for all.  
With ropes lowered down  
below the knees  
and belts hanging  
on the doors  
someone forgot to close,  
not caring at all.  
With the emptiness  
returning to the suburb.  
With the traffic light flashing for itself.  
With curtains making love with windows  
and the poor seeking power.  
With you only sitting in the corner,  
looking for the root of the word  
silence.

(*Cut Off from the Sky*, 2018)

## *A Macedonian poem*

You try hard.  
Each bill paid by the first day of month.  
The light in the room fears  
your bloodstream might freeze.  
You write home  
every Christmas  
even though you don't celebrate it.  
You build skyscrapers  
you'll never live in,  
stadiums where  
you'll never cheer for anybody,  
hotels to be slept in by  
those who snub you.  
You try not to be  
too visible  
in order for them  
not to see  
your anguish.  
Only with the doctor  
can you share  
your suffering,  
how you wake up in the night,  
screaming both at yourself  
for trying so hard  
and your kids  
for having listened to you.  
You built roads  
and houses for those  
you trusted, and now  
you keep moving out of their way  
when they try to run over you.  
For being too slow.

Each bill paid by the first day of month,  
each duty carried out—  
toward yourself and the world.  
Because you're never late  
even though you know everything is late.  
Death is late  
and this damn peace is late too.  
Roses are falling from the sky,  
heavy, white roses,  
instead of rain.

(*Arrivals, Departures*, 2013)

Russians never  
run away.  
It's too far.

(*The Divan*, 2006)

*Translated by Andrej Pleterski*



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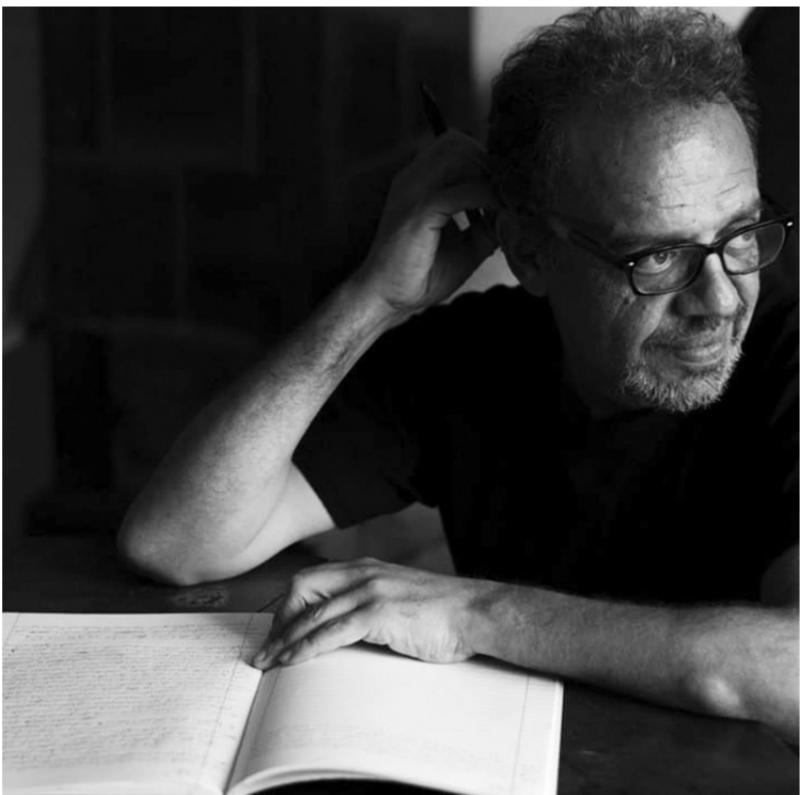
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# *Mohamad Abdul Al Munem*

Mohamad Abdul Al Munem se je rodil leta 1965 v Alepu (Sirija), v palestinskom begunskem taborišču. Njegov ded je leta 1948, med arabsko-izraelsko vojno, v Sirijo pribpel iz Hajfe v Palestini. Odraščal je v izobraženi in svobodomiselnici družini, njegov oče je bil velik priatelj Mahmuda Darviša, zaradi katerega je Mohamad tako vzljubil literaturo ter postal pesnik in pisatelj. Po drugi strani je zaradi očeta diplomiral iz ekonomije in odprl svojo knjigarno v Alepu, ki jo je vodil do začetka sirske državljske vojne leta 2011. Svobodnih nazorov in prepričanja, da je literatura brezmejna, je izdajal dela z vsega sveta, tudi taka, ki jih je državni režim prepovedoval, ter bil zato peganjan in za kratek čas zaprt. V vojni je ostal brez hiše in založbe, zato se je z družino odpravil na pot proti Evropi. V Slovenijo je pripeljal leta 2016, leto kasneje so se mu pridružili še žena in štirje otroci. Uteho za težke življenske razmere, v katerih se je znašel, je našel v pisanku in kulturnem udejstvovanju, v katerega se je vključil kmalu po prihodu v Ljubljano. Več proznih in pesniških del je napisal že v Siriji, v Sloveniji pa je doslej izšla trijezična pesniška zbirka *Enaindvajset žensk iz Ljubljane* (2018). Pesmi je iz arabščine v slovenščino prevedel Mohsen Alhadi in v angleščino Hossam Al Hajesa. Napisano ima še zbirko Senca begunca in roman Nočna vrata, novinar Andraž Rožman, Mohamadov priatelj, pa je o njegovem življenu napisal roman *Trije spomini – Med Hajfo, Alepom in Ljubljano* (Goga, 2019).

Mohamad Abdul Al Monaem was born in 1965 in Aleppo, Syria, in a Palestine refugee camp. His grandfather emigrated to Syria from Haifa in Palestine during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. He grew up in an educated and freethinking family. His father was a good friend of Mahmoud Darwish who ignited the love of literature in Mohamad due to which he later became a poet and a writer. On the other hand, he also graduated from economics due to his father and opened his own book store in Aleppo which he led until the beginning of the civil war in Syria. He had liberal views and believed that literature knows no borders, so he published works from around the world, some of which were banned by the regime and he was even incarcerated for a shorter period. He lost his home and publishing house in the war, and departed towards Europe with his family because of that. He immigrated to Slovenia in 2016; a year later his wife and four children followed. Writing and cultural activity in Ljubljana provided him with some solace for the hard life circumstances he found himself in. He has written several fiction and poetry books already before in Syria; in Slovenia he has so far published a trilingual poetry collection, *Twenty-One Women from Ljubljana* (2018, Eng. transl. Hossam Al Hajesa, Slo. trans. Mohsen Alhadi). He has written another unpublished poetry collection, The Shadow of the Immigrant, and a novel, Night Gate. Journalist Andraž Rožman, Mohamad's friend, has written a novel on his life, *Trije spomini – Med Hajfo, Alepom in Ljubljano* (Three Memories – Between Haifa, Aleppo and Ljubljana, Goga, 2019).

منذ زمن بعيد ، تعرفت على حجر الألماس ، في اصبع يد فتاة جميلة، مشكلاً فوق خاتم من الذهب الأبيض ، كان الحجر يلمع بطريقة مدهشة لي في ذلك الوقت ، فقربت يديها من فمي وقبلتها، كان الحجر منحوتاً بستة وثلاثين وجهاً، هذا أقصى ما يستطيع نحات الألماس فعله بالحجر، أن يصنع له تلك الوجوه ، بعد أن يحكه لينظفه من بقايا الفحم من حوله. تلك هي الذاكرة ، تلك هي قطعة الفحم التي غاصلت عميقاً هناك في الأرض نتيجة ظروف مرت على ذاك النبات الغض الأخضر ، لتطرمه تحت ترابها ، مستسلماً لأمر الحياة ، ينام ، وينام ، ويتحول ، يغدو فحاماً ثم حمراً ثم الماس ، ثم ذاكرة.

- هل الذاكرة إذاً حقيقة؟

أقول : نعم الذاكرة حقيقة ، وهي الحقيقة تماماً ، ولكن مع تحولاتها ، فمرة تكون متسعاً كبيرة للخلاص ، نستغير منه الحكم ، لنصوغها على ما يناسينا ويناسب زمننا، أو ربما نذهب بالذاكرة أبعد ، أو أعمق قليلاً ، نسترجعها ثم نصنع منها مادة لحرق الأيام الصعبة التي تمر بنا ، فنجمل الحاضر بالماضي ، أو ربما نحرق الزمن المعاش بفحم الذاكرة نشعله ناراً تندفي به وتنسى ما نحن عليه من بوس ، فتكون ذاكرة بمعنى الحنين ، والحنين هو طفل الذاكرة المدلل ، يعوده المعتقد في السجن ، ليعيش في خياله هناك ، ويشعر بحرارة حبيبته في ليله البارد بين جدران الزنزانة، فيشعل جسده / روحه به ، ماسحاً عنه بوس الحياة التي كانت هناك ، ناسيًا تفاصيل الأيام التي عاشها ، وبرودة جدران البيت وبرودة الفراش ، فليلة في الوهم أقل برودة من الحقيقة فيما لو تذكر كل شيء ، أو ربما ، تقود الذاكرة إلى دهاليز من الحب ، كان حينها متشاغلاً عنها ، لأن يقول له ابنه ذات صباح ، وكل صباح ، (صباح الخير) فيריד على صوت حنينه في الذاكرة وهو هائم هناك ، (صباح الخير يا صغيري) ثم يبكي ويغتسل بدموع بالشوق والحرمان ، ف تكون الذاكرة حقيقة ، ولكن بطعم المرار ، والمرار صعب وغير مستساغ في انعدام الأمل ، فيحفر ويحفر في بئر الذاكرة ويرمي بنفسه في دهاليز ينعم فيها الأوكسجين ليصل حيث يرى ذاته، يرمي عنه تلك العوالق من الفحم الذي لم يتشكل بعد كالماس ، ويزين وجه حبيبته ، ويرتّب ثياب طفله قبل ذهابه للمدرسة، وربما يعدل هو ربطة عنقه ، ويصنع لحجر الروح فيه ستة وثلاثين وجهاً لتكون الذاكرة هنا حجر ألماس يضعه في اصبعه ليتوازن اليومي فيه مع الماضي، فيهدده وينام .

الذاكرة ظل فضي لجسد غير راض عن ذاته، أو ربما راض ، يسير معك ، تلاحقه فهرب أمامك ، وتسرع الخطو خلفه ، فيسرع مثلك ، تقول في ذاتك دون أن يسمعك ظلك ، سأمشي دون أن أنتبه له وأضع الشمس في وجهي ، فيلحقك الظل ، ثم تحاول أن تضعه يميناً وتنظر إلى اليسار ، فترى ذاتك وحيداً فتعود ثانية إليه ل تستأنث به وتسأله:

- هل لي أن أكون وحدي ولو لمرة من دون ذاكرة؟  
فيقول :

- طبعاً.. ولكنك تطمح أن تكون هناك في الزمن البعيد وهذا يتلاعب به الضوء ، فيحيله مع شمس الصباح الباكر ، ليمتد ظله إلى البعيد البعيد ، ولكن للظل سحره الخاص ، فهو يبدأ من الأسفل ، وينتهي في الأسفل هناك فيه ، فلا ظل من غير مجد ، ولا مجد من غير ظل إن توفرة الرؤية / النور ، إنه الذاكرة ، وينمو في الليل أكثر ومن دون ضوء ، فطبيعته مفترس ليلي ، يتشهى كل ما مضى في عتمة الوقت وعتمة الذات .

الذاكرة ، نص روائي ، نتسول شخصه من هناك ، حيث عشنا ، حيث شاهدنا وسمعنا وشممنا وتعاملنا مع حواسنا كلها ، نتسوله من أجل الحاضر ، نحاول انزاله من الرأس إلى الورق ، ربما كي نستريح ، وربما لكي يستريح النص ، نرسم له الطريق معبداً ، ونقول :

- أنظر أيه النص ، أو ربما علينا أن نقول :

- أنظري أيتها الذاكرة ، لقد حضرت لك مكاناً لانقاً لتكوني فيه ، كفاك جلوساً في عتمة المخيلة وقابعة في رأسي ، تعالى وتفضلني إلى حاضر عظيم ، يجعل منك رواية وشرعاً ، وسيرة، وسيدة، يستضيفك بين دفتري كتاب أنيق ، أعدك أن تقتنيك كل الفتيات الجميلات ، ويحملنك إلى غرفهن الخاصة ، يحضرنك بين كفين حريريتين، وفي الليل قبل أن ينمن بقليل سيقرآن سيرتك التي شذبتها وحسناتها وأضفت إليها كل أنواع العطور والكريمات ، لتكوني في أبيه حلة بين أبيهين، وأيضاً مسحت عنك كل الزوابد والبثور ، وأعدك لن أتحدث أبداً عن أي شيء لن ترغبي به ، سأراجع النص مراراً وتكراراً لتكوني سيدة الزمان والمكان ، وهناك سوف تنتامين إلى جانبهن أو تحت وسائدهن ، وإذا كنت ترغبين في شاب وسيم ، فهم كثر من سوف يقتلونك ، ويفرون سطورك بعنابة فائقة ، ليتعلمن كيف تكون الحياة الجميلة ، ويتجاوزن المحن التي مررت بها ، تعالى سيدتي ، إنزلني إلى هنا ، إلى هذا الورق المعد لك خصيصاً ، ليكون منزلك الأننيق، فتلين وترضى ، ونقول :

- لكن أكتبني على شكل قصيدة طويلة وكأنها رواية لتكون لي حرية اختيار الأسماء والأماكن والتجوال في المخيلات ، واكتبني باسهاب فأنا أحب الكلام ، واحد أن أوجع قرائي بالحنين .

## Meje resnice

Pred mnogimi leti sem spoznal lepo dekle, ki je imelo prstan iz belega zlata z diamantnim kamnom. Lesket diamanta me je osupnil, zato sem približal njeno roko ustnicam in ga poljubil. Diamant je imel šestintrideset natančno izbrušenih faset, kar je največ ploskev, ki jih lahko izbrusi draguljar, potem ko kamen obdela do čistega in odstrani vse ostanke premoga. Tako je tudi s spominom, je kot kos premoga, zakopan globoko v zemlji, premoga, ki nastane iz rastlinja, pokopanega pod zemljo in se prepusti procesu narave, spi, spi, se preoblikuje, postane premog, kamen, diamant, spomin.

Ali je torej spomin resničen?

Pravim: ja, spomin je resničen, to je absolutna resničnost, ampak preoblikovana. Je veliko odrešenje, od katerega si sposodimo modrost, ki jo oblikujemo tako, kot nam ustreza ali kot ustreza našemu času. Morda pa gremo še dlje ali še globlje v spomin, ga prikličemo in z njegovo pomočjo požgemo težke dneve, ki se zgrinjajo nad nas, olepšamo sedanjost s preteklostjo. Ali pa morda zažgemo čas, preživet s premogom spomina, ga zanetimo z ognjem in pozabimo bedo, ki jo preživljamo.

Spomin je kakor hrepenenje. In hrepenenje je otrok razvajenega spomina, ki ga zaklinja pripornik v zaporu, kjer živi v svoji domišljiji in čuti toplino svoje ljube v mrzlih nočeh med stenami ječe, vname njegovo telo in dušo, izbriše bedo njegovega resničnega življenja, poskrbi, da pozabi podrobnosti dneva, hlad bivališča in hlad postelje. Njegova noč v iluziji je manj mrzla kot resnica, v kateri bi se spomnil vsega. Ali pa ga spomin vodi do hodnikov ljubezni in ga tako zamoti. Kot mu je neko jutro, tako kot vsako jutro, njegov sin rekel *Dobro jutro*, on pa je odgovoril glasu hrepenenja v spominu, medtem ko je tavjal, *Dobro jutro, otrok moj*, in potem je ihtel in se kopjal v solzah hrepenenja in prikrajšanosti. Spomin je torej resničen, ampak ima grenek priokus. In grenkost je težka in neprijetna v pomanjkanju upanja. On koplje in koplje po vodnjaku spomina, se meče v hodnike, v katerih primanjkuje kisika, da bi dosegel kraj, kjer vidi samega sebe. Odvrže tiste ostanke premoga, ki še niso postali diamanti. In mu ljuba očedi obraz, uredi obleko njunega otroka, preden gre v šolo, ter mu poravna kravato. On izbrusi kamen svoje duše s šestintridesetimi fasetami, da spomin postane diamant, ki si ga natakne na prst, da uravnoteži vsakdan s preteklostjo in ga zaziba v spanje.

Spomin je srebrna senca telesa, ki je s seboj zadovoljno ali pa tudi ne. Morda zadovoljno hodi s teboj, loviš jo in zbeži pred tabo. V naglici stopiš za njo in še ona pohiti. Rečeš si, ne da bi te tvoja senca slišala, hodil bom tako, da ji ne bom posvečal pozornosti, nastavil bom svoj obraz soncu in senca bo sledila. Potem jo poskusiš premakniti na desno, medtem ko ti pogledaš levo, da bi videl samega sebe. Ponovno se vrneš k njej, da bi se potolažil z njo, in jo vprašaš:

– Ali sem lahko vsaj enkrat sam, brez spominov?

Odgovori:

– Seveda. Ampak ti bi bil rad hkrati v daljni preteklosti in tukaj.

Vóden od svetlobe sonca zgodnjega jutra, da se lahko senca raztegne daleč, daleč. Ampak senca ima svojo lastno čarownijo, saj se začne tam, kjer se konča – na dnu. Nobena senca ni utelešena in ni utelešenja brez sence, če sta mu dana vid ali svetloba. To je spomin, ki ponoči postaja še večji in je brez svetlobe. Po naravi je nočni plenilec, ki hrepeni po vsem, kar je potonilo v temi časa in temini samega sebe.

Spomin, to je pripovedno besedilo, njegove like prosimo za kraj, kjer smo prebivali, kjer smo videli, poslušali, vonjali in se ukvarjali z vsemi čuti, prosimo ga za sedanjost, poskušamo ga izvleči iz glave na papir. Morda zato, da bi se spočili, ali morda zato, da bi se spočila pripoved. Tedaj spominu narišemo tlakovano pot in rečemo:

– Poglej, besedilo.

Ali pa bi nemara morali reči:

– Poglej, spomin, pripravil sem ti dostojno mesto. Dovolj je sedenja v temačnosti domišljije, dovolj je ležanja v moji glavi. Pridi, dobrodošel v krasno sedanjo. Napišem ti roman in pesem, življenjepis in damo, ki te pogosti med platnicami prekrasne knjige. Obljubim ti, da te bodo pokupila vsa lepa dekleta in te odnesla v svoje sobe, te objemala s svilenimi rokami in ponoči, malo pred spanjem, brala twojo življenjsko zgodbo, ki si jo urejal in izboljševal, jo dišavil in mazilil, otiral z nje vse dodatke in odstranjeval mozoljčke, da bi bila v njihovih rokah kar najboljša. Obljubim ti, da se ne bova nikoli pogovarjala o ničemer, česar si ne želiš. Pilil bom pripoved, spet in spet, da postane gospodarica časa in prostora. In tam boš spal zraven deklet, pod njihovimi blazinami, in če si želiš lepih mladih deklet, jih je veliko, ki te želijo in bi zelo pozorno brale twoje vrstice, da bi videle, kako lepo je lahko življenje, in premagale prepreke, ki so jih izkusile. Pridi, pridi na ta papir, ki je bil narejen samo zate, da bo twoj dom eleganten in mehak, da boš zadovoljen. In on reče:

– Ampak napiši me kot dolgo pesem, kot roman, da bom lahko izbiral imena in kraje in pohajkoval v domišljiji. In napiši me obširno, rad govorim in zadajem bralcem bolečino hrepenenja.

*Prevedel Badreddine Azzaoui*

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## The Limits of Truth

A long time ago, I got to know a beautiful girl who had a white gold ring with a diamond. The glimmering diamond surprised me, so I approached my lips to her hand and kissed it. The stone was carved with 36 facets, the most a jeweler can polish, after cleaning it of the remnants of coal around it. So it is also with memory, which is like a piece of coal buried deep in the earth, coal, which arises from plants, submerged under the earth, a plant that surrenders to the nature of life, sleep, sleeps, transforms itself, becomes coal, diamond, memory.

- So is memory real?

I say: Yes, memory is real, it's absolute reality, transformed. It is a great redemption from which we borrow wisdom, which we form in the way it serves us or that it serves our time. Or perhaps we go farther or deeper with memory, retrieve it and then use it as material to help us burn through difficult days that rush over us. We can beautify the present with the past. Or perhaps we burn the time lived with the coal of memory, igniting it with fire and forgetting what misery is upon us.

This is memory with a sense of longing. And longing is the child of a spoiled memory that lures the detainee in prison, who lives in his imagination and who, during his cold nights between the walls of the cell, feels the warmth of his lover igniting his body and soul, wiping out the misery of the real life that is there, forgetting the details of his days, the coldness of the walls and the coldness of the bed. His night of illusion is less cold than the truth in which he would remember everything. Or perhaps memory leads him to corridors of love and thus distracts him. Like his son saying to him one morning, as every morning, *Good morning*, and he replies in his voice of longing in the memory through which he wanders, *Good morning, my child*, and then rushes off and washes with tears of yearning and deprivation. So memory is real, but with the taste of bitterness. And the bitterness is hard and unpalatable in the lack of hope. He bathes and bathes in the wells of memory and throws himself into the corridors deprived of oxygen to reach a place where he can see himself. He throws off those remnants of coal that have not yet formed into diamonds. And he neatens the face of his lover, and arranges the clothes of his child before he goes to school, and

perhaps straightens his tie. He polishes his spirit stone of 36 facets so the memory becomes a diamond that he puts on his finger to balance the quotidian present with the past and he is lulled to sleep.

Memory is a silver shadow of a body that satisfied with itself, or perhaps not. Maybe it walks, satisfied, with you, you chase it and it flees before you. You race behind it, and it speeds up as you do. You tell yourself, without your shadow hearing, I will walk without paying attention to him and I will let the sun fall on my face and the shadow will follow. Then you try to put it to the right while they look left, so see yourself alone. Again you turn to it, to console yourself with it, and you ask:

- Can I be alone, at least once, without memory?

He says:

- Of course... But you aspire to be in the past and here at the same time.

Guided by the light transmitted by the early morning sun, to extend his shadow far, far. But the shadow has its own magic, it starts from the bottom, and ends down there. There is no shadow without an object, or object without a shadow if it is provided by vision or light. It is memory and it grows at night more and more and is without light. Its nature is a night predator, craving all that went into the darkness of time and the darkness of self.

Memory, a narrative, begging his characters from back where we lived, where we saw, heard, smelled and dealt with all our senses, begging for the present, trying to pull it out from the head to put on paper. Perhaps so that we can rest, and perhaps so that the text can rest. We draw it a paved road, and say:

- Look, text.

Or maybe we should say:

- Look memory, I have prepared for you a decent place. It is enough to be sitting in the darkness of the imagination and lying within my head. Come, come into the great present. I am writing a novel and a poem for you, a biography, and may a lady host you between the covers of a splendid book. I promise that you will be bought by all the beautiful girls, and taken to their private room, that they will embrace you between silky hands and at night, a little before they sleep, they will read the biography that you trimmed and improved, and add to it all kinds of perfumes and creams, so it will be in the best shape in their hands, and also wipe off of you all

the appendages and pimples, and I promise I will never talk about anything you do not desire. I will review the text again and again to be the lady of the time and space, and there you will sleep next to them or under their pillows, and if you want a handsome young man, they are many who will acquire you, and read your lines very attentively, to learn how beautiful life is, and overcome the adversity that they experienced. Come my lady, come down here, to this paper specially made for you, so that your home is elegant, softened up, and be satisfied. And she says:

- But write me in the form of a poem that is as long as a novel, so I will be free to choose the names and places roaming in imagination. And write me broadly, I love to speak, and I love to give my readers the ache of longing.

*Translated by Badreddine Azzaoui*



*Foto © Miloš Dimkovski*

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# Petar Andonovski

Petar Andonovski se je rodil leta 1987 v Kumanovu (Severna Makedonija). Diplomiral je na Oddelku za splošno in primerjalno književnost na Filološki fakulteti v Skopju. Literarno pot je začel s pesniško zbirko *Ментален простор* (Mentalni prostor, 2008) ter nadaljeval z romani *Очи со боја на чевли* (Oči barve čepljev, 2013), *Телото во кое треба да се живее* (Telo, v katerem je treba živeti, 2015) in *Страх од варвари* (Strah pred barbari, 2018). Kratke zgodbe objavlja v makedonskih literarnih revijah. Je sourednik srbske revije *Rukopisi*, ki objavlja poezijo in prozo avtorjev iz držav nekdanje Jugoslavije. Zanimanje kritikov je zbudil že s svojim prvim romanom in se z njim uvrstil med finaliste za najpomembnejšo makedonsko literarno nagrado za roman leta 2013, ki jo podeljuje makedonski časnik *Utrinski vesnik*. Ta roman je bil tudi med finalisti nagrade EU za književnost 2016. Za drugi roman Telo, v katerem je treba živeti je makedonsko nagrado za najboljši roman leta 2015 tudi dobil. Osrednja protagonistka romana je 60-letna sodnica Brigita, ki mora tik pred upokojitvijo soditi v najzahtevnejšem primeru svoje kariere – mlademu fantu, obtoženemu posilstva in umora svojega dekleta. Vendar to ni le zgodba o sojenju, saj na njegovem ozadju izrisuje tudi podobo družbe in duha našega časa. Petar Andonovski je danes eden najpomembnejših makedonskih literatov svoje generacije.

Petar Andonovski was born in 1987, in Kumanovo, North Macedonia. He graduated from the Department of General and Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Philology in Skopje. He began his literary career with the poetry collection *Ментален простор* (Mental Space, 2008) and continued by publishing three novels – *Очи со боја на чевли* (Eyes the Colour of Shoes, 2013), *Телото во кое треба да се живее* (The Body One Has to Live In, 2015) and *Страх од варвари* (Fear of Barbarians, 2018). He also publishes short stories in Macedonian literary magazines. He is the co-editor of the Serbian magazine *Rukopisi* that publishes poetry and prose in Former Yugoslavian languages. He already gained the attention of the critics with his first novel, which was shortlisted for the most important Macedonian literary award for best novel of the year in 2013, awarded by the Macedonian newspaper *Utrinski vesnik*. As well, this novel was shortlisted for the European Union Prize for Literature in 2016. His second novel won the Macedonian Novel of the Year Award in 2015. The main protagonist of the novel is a sixty-year-old judge who is assigned the most challenging case of her career just before retiring – a case of a young man convicted of rape and the killing of his girlfriend. But it is not only a story about the trial, since the background of the trial portrays the image of the society and the spirit of our time. Petar Andonovski is one of the most important literary authors of his generation in North Macedonia today.

## *Телото во кое треба да се живее*

(извадок од романот)

Почнува да си ја замислува сцената од убиството. Неговите раце, неговите големи и тешки раце се спуштаат на нејзиниот врат. Тие се толку големи што вратот не се ни гледа под нив. Со само еден стисок и таа ќе е готова, ќе биде како издишан балон. Но, тој не сака таа наеднаш да го испушти воздухот од себе, тој сака да ја слуша како тоа полека го прави. На телевизорот оди филм кој до пред само десетина минути го гледале заедно стиснати слично како сега. Единствената разлика е тоа што тогаш биле облечени, а сега се голи. Облеката ја немаа како никогаш и да не ја носеле. Фустанот што го облекла само за него сега стоеше стуткан на подот. Не ѝ е грижа што за да го купи тој фустан претходниот ден ја потрошила целата плата на него. Таа лежи под него ослободена од каква било помисла. Чувствува срам од својата голотија иако претходно била многу пати гола. Тој полека навлегува во неа. Таа е мирна, дури не се ниту обидува да го мрдне телото. Колку подлабоко навлегува тој во неа, толку посилно ја притиска за вратот, до последен здив. За цело тоа време нејзиното тело е зачудувачки мирно. Таа не се обидува да се одбрани. Телото сè уште ѝ е топло иако во него нема повеќе воздух. Таа е мртва. Таа е мирна. Тој ја сака кога е мирна. Тој дури не ни забележува дека таа е мртва. Тој и понатаму продолжува да ја притиска.

Бригита лежи исто толку мирно и одново и одново ја замислува сцената. Чувство на лубомора почнува да ја обзема. Таа сака да е на местото на девојката, макар потоа немало ниту трошка кислород во неа. Таа го сака неговото присуство врз себе. Сака да ги чувствува неговите раце на нејзиниот врат. Сигурно и девојката го сакала истото, сигурно не ѝ било грижа што ќе се случи со неа. Неговото присуство е најважно. Таа сакала да го чувствува него во неа затоа и не се противела, затоа била мирна. Тоа во ниту еден документ поврзан со случајот не го пишува, но Бригита знае дека било така. Тој да сакал да ја повреди сигурно не би го оставил телото само така да лежи мирно на подот. Тој можел да го фрли телото во некое езеро. Во истото она езеро во кое заминал на риболов веднаш по настанот. Потоа долго би ја барале, сè дури еден ден не го видат нејзиното тело на телевизија, на дното од езерото, во мигот кога традиционално нуркачите секоја година ја китат

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новогодишната елка. Секоја година пред да замине на прославата, со родителите седат и гледаат како нуркачите ја китат елката таму, на дното од езерото. Оваа година таа планирала китењето да го гледа со него. Но, овојпат и таа би била долу на дното заедно со елката. Нејзините ни одблиску не би ја препознале. Не, тој нема да ја фрли во никакво езеро. Тој дури нема ни да ја фрли во штотуку ископаната дупка веднаш до нејзината зграда. Потоа со месеци би го бараде нејзиното тело. Колешките во супермаркетот каде што работи ќе раскажуваат колку е одговорна, секогаш спремна да им помогне на колегите. Не, тој нема да ја фрли во ниту една дупка. Тој ќе ја остави да лежи спокојно и ќе замине на риболов. Тој дури ниту капка крв не би ѝ пуштил, тој секоја година дарува крв во Црвениот крст. Градоначалникот неколку пати го има одликувано со орден на заслужност за неговата хуманост. Тој, кој со својата крв спасува туѓи животи, никогаш не би поsegнал по туѓа крв.

## **Telo, v katerem je treba živeti**

(odlomek iz romana)

Zamišljati si začne prizor umora. Njegove roke, njegove velike in težke roke se spustijo na njen vrat. Tako so velike, da njenega vratu pod njimi sploh ni videti. En sam stisk jo bo pokončal, spremenil v izpraznjen balon. Toda on noče, da bi v hipu izpustila zrak iz sebe, on hoče poslušati, kako to počne počasi. Na televiziji se vrti film, ki sta ga še pred desetimi minutami gledala skupaj, stisnjena podobno kot zdaj. Le da sta bila takrat oblečena, zdaj pa sta gola. Brez oblačil sta, kot da jih sploh nikoli ne bi nosila. Obleka, ki jo je oblekla samo zanj, zdaj leži zmečkana na tleh. Ni ji mar, da je zanjo včeraj porabila vso plačo. Ona leži pod njim brez kakršnekoli namere. Sram je je lastne golote, čeprav je bila prej že večkrat gola. On počasi vstopa vanjo. Ona je mirna, ne trudi se, da bi premaknila svoje telo. Čim globlje gre vanjo, tem močneje jo stiska za vrat, do zadnjega diha. Ves ta čas je njeni telo presenetljivo mirno. Ne poskuša se braniti. Njeno telo je še vedno toplo, čeprav v njem ni več zraka. Ona je mrtva. Ona je mirna. On jo ima rad, ko je mirna. On niti ne opazi, da je mrtva. On jo še naprej stiska.

Brigita leži prav tako mirno in si vedno znova zamišlja ta prizor. Prevzame jo ljubosumje. Rada bi bila na mestu tistega dekleta, čeprav ne bi v njej ostal niti atom kisika. Rada ima njegovo prisotnost na sebi. Rada čuti njegove roke na svojem vratu. Gotovo je bilo to všeč tudi dekletu, gotovo ji ni bilo mar, kaj bo z njo. Najpomembnejša je njegova prisotnost. Bržkone ji je bilo všeč, da ga čuti v sebi, zato se ni upirala, zato je bila mirna. To ne piše v nobenem dokumentu, povezanem s tem primerom, vendar Brigita ve, da je bilo tako. Če bi ji hotel kaj narediti, gotovo ne bi pustil njenega telesa mirno ležati na tleh. Telo bi lahko odvrgel v kakšno jezero. Prav v tisto jezero, h kateremu je šel na ribolov takoj po dogodku. Potem bi jo dolgo iskali, dokler nekega dne ne bi zagledali njenega telesa na televiziji, na dnu jezera, v trenutku, ko potapljači tradicionalno krasijo novoletno jelko. Vsako leto pred silvestrovjanjem s starši sedi pred televizijo in gleda, kako potapljači krasijo jelko prav tam, na dnu jezera. Letos je nameravala gledati okraševanje z njim. Toda tokrat bi bila na dnu tudi ona, skupaj z jelko. Njeni je ne bi prepoznali. Ne, on je ne bo odvrgel v nobeno jezero. Ne bo je odvrgel niti v sveže izkopano luknjo poleg njihovega bloka. Potem bi več mesecev

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iskali njeno telo. Kolegice iz supermarketeta, kjer dela, bi pripovedovalle, kako je odgovorna in vedno pripravljena pomagati kolegom. Ne, v nobeno luknjo je ne bo odvrgel. Pustil jo bo mirno ležati in odšel na ribolov. On ne bi prelil niti kaplje njene krvi, on vsako leto daruje kri Rdečemu križu. Župan ga je nekajkrat odlikoval z redom za zasluge za njegovo humanost. On, ki s svojo krvjo rešuje druga življenja, ne bi nikoli posegel po tuji krvi.

*Prevedla Namita Subiotto*

## ***The Body One Should Live In***

(excerpt from the novel)

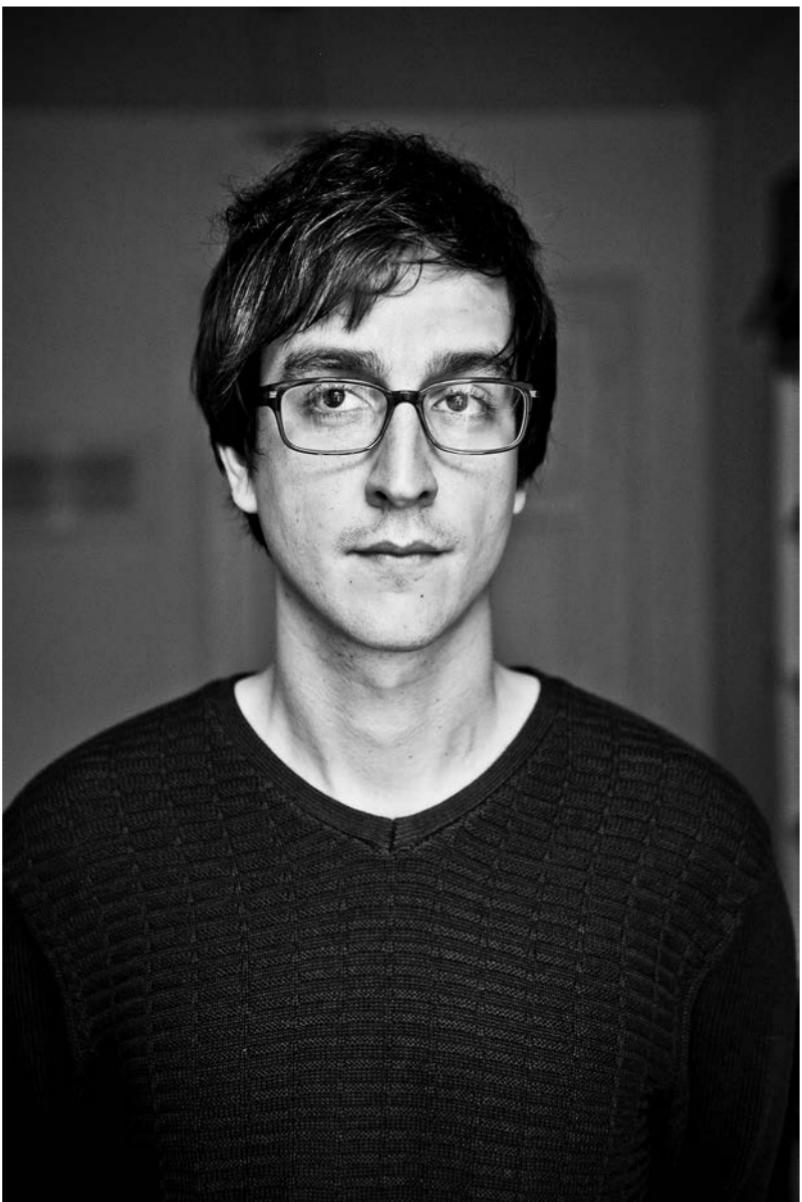
His hands, his large and heavy hands around her neck. They are so large that they completely cover her neck. Just one squeeze and she is gone, like a deflated balloon. But no, he doesn't want her to lose all her breath at once, he wants to listen to her expiring slowly. There is some film playing on TV. It is the same film they were watching similarly squeezed together just ten minutes ago. The only difference being that they were dressed then and they are naked now. They have no clothes on now, as though they have never had any. The dress she put on especially for him is now crumpled on the floor. She doesn't care, although she spent her entire salary on it just a day before. She is just lying underneath him, free from any thoughts. She is ashamed of her nakedness, although she has been naked many times before. He penetrates her slowly. She is quiet and doesn't even make an attempt to move. The deeper he goes in, the tighter he squeezes her neck, to the last breath. Her body is unusually calm throughout this. She makes no attempt to defend herself. Her body is still warm, even though there is no breath in it anymore. She is dead. She is calm. He likes her calm. He doesn't even notice that she is dead. He is still squeezing her neck.

Brigitte was lying flat in her bed, equally calm and re-envisioning the scene again and again. She was overcome by jealousy. She wanted to be in that girl's place, even if that meant that she would be deprived of the last atom of oxygen. She liked his presence over herself. She liked feeling his hands on her neck. The girl must have wanted the same. She must have not cared what happened to her. His presence was the most important thing. She liked feeling him inside her and that's why she did not resist and stayed motionless. No document related to the case ever mentioned anything in that respect, but Brigitte knew it was so. If he had wanted to hurt her, he wouldn't have left the body lying like that on the floor. He could have dumped it in a lake or some such. In the same lake where he went fishing after the event. Then a search would have been organized and they could have watched the discovery of her body on TV, found by the divers who usually decorated the Christmas tree at the bottom of the same lake every year as a festive tradition. Every year, before going to the Christmas party, she watched this underwater

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tree-decorating at the bottom of the lake, together with her parents. This year she planned to watch the tree-decorating with him. But instead she was supposed to end up down there at the bottom, together with the Christmas tree. Her parents wouldn't have been able to recognize the body. But no, none of this had happened – he hadn't thrown her in any lake. He hadn't even buried her in the freshly dug hole next to her block of flats. If he had, they would have had to look for her body for months. Her co-workers at the supermarket would have been telling stories about how good she was, always ready to help. No, he didn't throw her in any hole. He left her lying there stiff and went fishing. He didn't wish to spill a drop of her blood – he was a blood donor for the Red Cross. Many times he has been given medals by the mayor for his humanitarianism. He, who had saved so many lives with his own blood, wouldn't have dared spill anyone else's blood.

*Translated by Marija Jons*



*Foto © Maj Pavček*

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# Jasmin B. Frelih

Jasmin B. Frelih se je rodil leta 1986 v Kranju, kjer tudi živi. Na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani je diplomiral iz primerjalne književnosti in zgodovine. Njegov prvenec, roman *Nal/pol*, postavljen v futuristično, robotizirano in mračno post-internetno prihodnost, je izšel leta 2013 in prejel nagrado Evropske unije za književnost, nagrado za najboljši literarni prvenec ter bil v ožjem izboru za nagrado kresnik in za najboljšo slovensko knjigo. Doslej je bil preveden v enajst jezikov. Leta 2015 je sledila zbirka kratkih zgodb *Ideoluzije* in leta 2018 zbirka esejev *Bleda svoboda*, za katero je prejel Rožančeve nagrada za najboljšo esejistično zbirko. V njej Frelih razmišlja o današnjem digitaliziranem svetu, družbenoekonomskih in političnih dogodkih (ekonomska kriza, zasedba Wall Streeta, arabska pomlad), o bistvu našega bivanja, položaju mladih generacij, še posebej mladih umetnikov, in o vlogi umetnosti. Frelih je tudi prevajalec, v slovenščino je prevedel več ameriških in v angleščino več slovenskih avtorjev. Lani je skupaj z Ericom Johnson Debreljak prevedel zbirko črtic *Podobe iz sanj* Ivana Cankarja, ki jo je izdalo Društvo slovenskih pisateljev.

Jasmin B. Frelih was born in 1986 in Kranj, where he still lives today. He graduated from comparative literature and history at the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Arts. His first novel *Nal/pol (In/Half)* is set in the futuristic, robotised and dark post-internet future. It was published in 2013 and it received the EU Prize for Literature, the best literary début award and was short-listed for the Slovenian novel of the year and book of the year awards. His novel has been translated into eleven languages, *In/Half* was published in English in Jason Blake's translation by Oneworld publishing house in 2018. In 2015, a short story collection followed, *Ideoluzije* (Tiny Ideologies), and in 2018 an essay collection on contemporary literature, *Bleda svoboda* (Pale Freedom), which received the Rožanc Award for best essay collection. In it, Frelih reflects on the contemporary digitalised world, socio-economic and political events (the economic crisis, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Arab Spring), the essence of our existence, the position of young generations, especially young artists, and the role of art in today's world. Frelih is also a translator, and he has translated several American writers into Slovenian and some Slovenian writers into English. Last year he co-translated the collection of sketches *Images from Dreams* by Ivan Cankar together with Erica Johnson Debreljak; *Images* was published by the Slovene Writers' Association.

## (*czesław miłosz*)

Nihče je ne bo ustavil. Prste drži nad tipkovnico, miži z dvignjeno brado in vonja perilo, ki se suši na stojalu za njenim hrbtom. Za trenutek se mu je zazdela samoumevno, da bo perilo nesla oprat ona, da ga bo dala sušit ona, da to zdaj, ko je prišla, ni več njegova stvar, da si lahko oddahne od vseh teh ženskih zadev. Čiščenje kopalnice. Kuhanje. Skrb za goste; vse od stanja pri vratih z zaigrano iskrenim nasmeškom, spraševanja po tem, kako je družina, z vsemi imeni vred, pa do tega, da ni steklena mizica pred kavčem nikoli prazna, nekaj sladkega, nekaj slanega, malo sadja, vedno poln kozarec in točno v pravem trenutku kava. Ampak samo za trenutek.

Potem se je nasmejal in se nekako nerodno pomaknil mimo nje, prijet vrečo in šel ven. Povsem brez težav bi to storila ona – čeprav ni vedela, kje točno je pralnica, in kako pravzaprav vse skupaj deluje, saj še nikoli ni prala v javni pralnici, doma so imeli vedno stroj –, toda zmotil jo je ta njegov nezavedni gib, gesta dedičnine, ki je od nje zahtevala, naj pač prime to perilo in ga odnese nekam, od koder se bo vrnilo čisto.

Ko ga ni bilo, se je nagibala skozi okno in kadila. Mislila je na to, kako naj začne. Brooklyn pred njo je bil le križišče s semaforjem in nekaj enonadstropnih opečnatih hiš. Parkirani avtomobili in vsake toliko pešec, ki je vedno izgledal, kot da je v resnici doma nekje daleč stran. Idealen kraj za začetek. Nihče ni imel pojma, kdo je, njenega očeta pa so vsi očitno poznali le kot človeka, s katerim se ne splača imeti težav.

Vrnil se je in začel zlagati perilo na stojalo, dvakrat poskusil začeti pogовор, prišel do spodnjic in se ustavil.

»To boš lahko ti.«

Pogledala ga je in skušala narediti vtis, da svoje dolžnosti jemlje povsem resno.

»Bom, pusti.«

Sedela je za računalnikom in iskala ljudi, ki bi jo zanimali. Prijazno se ji je nasmehnil in odšel iz sobe. Šele en teden je bila tu. Nikoli se nista zares spoznala. Drug o drugem sta imela sicer podrobno izdelano sliko, vendar sta si jo oba izdelala večidel prek posrednikov. On je o njej poslušal Janisa, ona o njem mami. Niti najmanjšega pojma nista imela, kdo sta drug drugemu v resnici. In skrbelo jo je, da nimata niti volje, da bi to skušala spremeniti – takoj sta

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oba privolila v vlogo tihega zavezništva, katere naravni izraz bo stvar družine. Oče in hči – in vse, kar pride zraven. Njuni drastično različni predstavi o tem, kaj naj bi to dejansko bilo, v tem tednu še nista zmogli povzročiti nobenega kratkega stika. Z izjemo perila.

Zdaj se večeri in njeni prsti so nad tipkovnico in na stolu je nagnjena nazaj, z nogami v zraku, lovi ravnotežje na svojih ritnicah in vsak čas se bo spustila naprej in nihče je ne bo ustavil. Ta zgodba mora ven. Ti ljudje, to življenje. Ampak kje naj začne? Na kateri strani?

Dve tovarni. Dve hiši visoko v hribih. Dvakrat sedem otrok. Dve religiji. Ena država.

V gimnazijo se je vsak dan vozila z avtobusom po cesti med dve ma tovarnama in dolgo ni tej poti pripisovala nobenega pomena, ujeta, kot je bila, v svojo najstniško glavo, v drobna čustva odporov in privlačnosti, v pomanjšan svet otroka, kjer so sicer že bili posejani vsi nastavki njene poznejše izkušnje, vendar so se v svoji majhnosti še povsem prilegali mestom, ki so bili zanje odmerjeni.

Ko je pogledala na desno in tam zagledala belo nazobčano streho, pod katero je slutila močan tok elektrike, ki ji je usta napolnil z rahlim okusom kovine, kot kadar prisloniš jezik ob kapico baterije AA, je morda pomislila, da je tam nekoč delal njen ata, toda to je bilo le še eno dejstvo – kot to, da ima voznik avtobusa krvave oči in smrd po alkoholu in tobaku prejšnjega večera, ali da ima Katra, dve vrsti pred njo, novo srebrno torbico neke italijanske ali francoske firme, ki je povsem brez dvoma ponaredek, o čemer se bodo med odmori kresala mnenja še ves teden, ali to, da pišejo geografijo, da bo vprašana angleščino, da bo pri kemiji sedela ob Andiju in uživala v njegovi preplašeni zaljubljenosti –, ki ni zanjo, petnajst- ali šestnajstletno, ničesar spremenilo.

In če se je obrnila na levo, je bilo tam vedno polno tovornjakov in iz dimnikov se je valil gost bel dim, in sklop modrikasto sivih stavb je bil iste barve kot reka, po kateri je bila tovarna poimenovana, in tam je nekoč delal njen deda, čeprav ni vedela, kaj točno je delal, le predstavljal si ga je lahko kot še enega v množici moških, ki so se ob koncu izmene zgrnili na parkirišče in si med sočnimi kletvicami in robatim smehom zvijali cigarete, se bodrili s pomežiki in skrivali svojo zgaranost do trenutka, ko bodo za sabo zaprli vrata stanovanja in jo postavili na čelo družinske mize, sami pa bodo izginili v prvi steklenici ostrega duha. Beseda, ki ji je takrat morda prišla na misel, je bila kavčuk in za trenutek se ji je zazdelo, da ima lepljive prste.

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Toda kasneje, ko se ji je svet širil in ko svoje izkušnje ni znala več razumeti kot zgolj še enega dejstva, kot nečesa, kar preprosto *je*, in ko mesta, ki jih je imela v glavi odmerjena za to, kako naj iz različnih zornih kotov misli samo sebe, niso več niti približno zadoščala za kupe pomena, nenadoma nakopičene okoli stvari, ki so se tako ali drugače dotikale njenega življenja, je morala najti način, kako te presežke spraviti ven. Začela je pisati.

Malo preden je odšla, se je v soparni poletni noči po tisti cesti odpravila peš. Od njenih gimnazijskih dni se ni veliko spremenilo. Kakšna nova fasada, morda, in višje ograje. Ljudem, ki so živeli tu, ni šlo slabo. Svoje hiše so imeli v lasti še od časov socializma, potresov in poplav niso pomnili, zemlja je bila rodovitna in podjetniška žilica je na skoraj vsak dovoz postavila tablo kake obrti ali trgovine. To je bil njen dom. Ampak ... Vedno ta ampak, ki je izviral iz dejstva, da so stvari presegale svoja odmerjena mesta. Ni si domišljala, da je v tem sama. Vedela je, da imajo vsi ljudje težaven odnos z zgodbami, ki jih priповедujejo o samih sebi, in da tudi najbolj z okoljem zliti značaj nekje globoko v sebi skriva svoj ampak, za katerega pogosto niti sam ne ve, kaj ga bo prignalo na površje in kako kmalu se to lahko pravzaprav zgodi ... ampak ... ampak zdaj je šlo zanjo.

Na obzorju so v bliskih drhteli obrisi gora. Nobenega avtomobila nikjer, nobene prižgane luči. Bilo je pol štirih zjutraj. Postavila se je na belo črto sredi ceste in iztegnila roke. Neumna, brezplodna gesta. Tovarni sta ostali nemti. Njene roke ju niso zanimale. Niso bile dovolj kosmate, ne dovolj žilave, ne dovolj obupane. Tako ali tako je imela za vsako samo po eno, tovarni pa sta potrebovali obe.

Dolgo je stala tam, obračala pogled na levo in na desno in čakala, da bosta spregovorili. Da ji bosta pojasnili, kako se je znašla tu, na tej beli črti med njima. Obstajaš zaradi gum in telefonov, zaradi ekonomske politike Republike, zaradi lepo oblečenih mož in žena, ki so izgubljali pamet med šelestenjem papirja in trdno upirali svojo voljo v možnosti oblasti, zaradi novo zgrajenih blokovskih naselij in nacionaliziranih hiš pobeglih veleposestnikov, zaradi mladinskih klubov, kjer so se grdo gledali šminkerji in rokerji, pankerji pa so še vsi smrkavi stali nekje na robu in čakali svojo priložnost, zaradi srednjih šol, ki so jih nalašč preuredili tako, da ne bi reproducirale kastnih vzorcev družb, ki si že tisočletja delijo delo, obstajaš zaradi vizije neke revolucije in vseh njenih senc, zmetanih po prostorih, ki so jih tovarne, kot sta ti dve, zahtevali zase ... Molči. Njune stene

so se komaj opazno pomaknile nadnjo. Molči. Obstajaš zato, ker sta bila tvoj ata in tvoj deda delavca. To je vse. Kar so počeli njuni otroci, se naju ne tiče. Samo tovarni sva. Če hočeš vedeti, zakaj si tu, se posveti ljudem.

Nagnila se je nazaj, prste dvignila od tipkovnice, odprla oči. Ni se več dobro spominjala, kaj je razmišljala, ko se je tiste noči vračala domov, ampak brez dvoma bi lahko o tem napisala kaj dobrega. Toda, naj res začne s tovarnama? Bo ekonomija tista, ki bo narekovala zgodbo o ljudeh? Pogledala je skozi okno. Ves svet je pošiljal sem svoje najbolj nore in drzne ljudi, tiste, ki so se čutili najbolj razširjene prek mest, ki so jim bila odmerjena doma, in čeprav so se mnogi od njih tu nato razočarani ustavili vše tesnejših položajih, pa so njihovi otroci vseeno dobro vedeli, da niso otroci zgodovine, temveč otroci biznisa. S tem jim torej ne bi povedala nič, česar še ne vejo. Škoda pisana.

Dve hiši visoko v hribih? Prste je spet potisnila naprej. Eno je razrušil čas, drugo so zažgali Nemci. Tudi okrog prve je bila spletena fantastična zgodba, ampak če bo začela s tremi brati, ki so ob prihodu Turkov prestopili vsak v drugo vero in sklenili zavezo, da bo preživel poskrbel za rod, in z divjim krvnim maščevanjem, ki je temu sledilo, jo bodo obtožili magičnega realizma. Ta je samo za bivše kolonije. Ne, nemška hajka bi bila lahko dober uvod. Skušala je pozabiti vse filmske prizore, vse partizanske pripovedi in se osrediniti na tistih nekaj spominov, ki ji jih je v vseh teh letih uspelo izvleči iz ata. Zagledala ga je, kako povesi pogled, kako se mu spodnja čeljust potegne nazaj, kako se mu hitro na prsih prekrižajo roke. Takrat je bil star osem let.

*Sneg je na prisojni strani vsako leto vztrajal še dolgo v pomlad, toda zdaj se je pričel topiti. Pogledala je na Wikipedijo, zadnja nemška ofenziva na Gorenjskem je bila pomladji 1945. Ivanka je odsotno mešala juho, v katero je vrgla še zadnjo kost telička, ki so ga na črno zaklali pri sosedu ... Ne, to je iz Partljicevega Kulaka. Ivanka je odsotno mešala juho, gledala skozi okno na zahajajoče sonce in se trudila, da ne bi na pot, ki se je vila okrog hriba in malo pred hišo povsem mirno spolzela iz gozda, polagala preveč upanja. Janez ji je po kurirju sporočil, da bo kmalu vsega konec in da se že veseli trenutka, ko se spet snideta. To je bilo prav po njegovo. Sredi te neskončne noči govoriti o veselju in zbujati upanje. Preutrujena je bila, preveč preplašena, da bi si dopustila misliti na to, kaj pa če. Od vsega se je že poslovila. Od njega, takoj ko*

*je stisnjenih ustnic poslušal goreč nagovor nekega pritepenca sive polti in črnih brkov, ki je govoril o mrtvih talcih in požganih vaseh, o narodu in uporu, in takoj ponudil svojo pomoč, ne da bi kaj vprašal njo. Ko mu je to očitala, je sklonil glavo in zavzdihnil, kot da bi sam nosil na plečih njihovo usodo, in rekel – vojna je. Prav. Ni se trudila, da bi skrivala svojo nejevoljo nad četami mladeničev – kaj mladeničev, otrok! –, ki so nato vse leto skakali na okrog po gozdovih in gradili bunkerje, povsem brezsramno prosjačili za hrano – njo, s sedmimi lačnimi usti pod streho! – in jo vsake toliko časa skušali potolažiti s kakšno pesmijo. Nekega dne, ko so kdo ve od koga, kdo ve od kod prejeli ukaz, pa so izginili kot kafra in njen mož je šel za njimi. Ni razumela. Pustiti sedem otrok in ženo, da bi kockal z zgodovino. Otroci so zdaj poležavali po krušni peči in okrog mize, in vsakič ko se je kdo od njih zasmejal, ji je roka zastala. Kako lahko v takih krajih, v takih časih obstaja smeh?*

Z vsakim stavkom ji je postajalo jasneje, da nima niti najmanjšega pojma, kaj se je zares zgodilo tisti večer, ko je po poti iz gozda prikorakala četa nemških vojakov, ki so potrkali na vrata, jim ukazali, naj vzamejo odeje in gredo ven, ter jim začgali hišo. Tistih nekaj slik, ki si jih je ustvarila ob atovem pripovedovanju, je bilo čustveno intenzivnih in nabitih s pomenom, ampak kako naj jih spravi ven? S prostim fabuliranjem, ki bi vsa prazna mesta prekrilo z mavcem domišljije, bi šlo – toda ali ni to nekam nepošteno? Ne samo do bralca, temveč tudi do teh ljudi, ki so nekoč z lastnimi očmi spremljali ples življenja, katerega trenutni rezultat je bila ona, točno v tistem trenutku, točno na tistem mestu, s prsti v zraku in nogami na tleh.

In ali ni ta nora zahteva, da svoj krhki, prepišni obstoj oborožiš s čim prepričljivejšim pomenom, točno tisto, kar na koncu vedno vrže svet s tečajev? To vprašanje jo je tako vznemirilo, da je morala uteho poiskati v neonskem opiju interneta. Klikala je po literarnih forumih in skušala ohraniti svoje razumevanje literature kot tkiva nekega nujnega dialoga, ki ne razpihuje človekove potrebe po smislu, temveč to potrebo hrani. Pisati o sebi kot integralni funkciji sveta, o liku na križišču neke pomembne zgodbe, je seveda osebno izpopolnjujoče, toda izkoriščanje te kombinacije osebne snovi in oči tujca za to, da si zagotoviš uro ali dve prepričanja, da nisi živel zaman, je najbrž grda literarna praksa. Svojo identiteto bi morala brisati, iz svoje izkušnje odstraniti vse, kar se je ni neposredno dotikal, in se predstaviti izključno kot čustvo, kot čutnost, kot človek. Ampak tega potem najbrž ne bi nihče bral. In? Oči so se ji ustavile na nekem komentarju.

*Kar me pri delih Jonathana Safrana Foerja najbolj moti, je njihova temeljna prošnja, naj njegova generacija Newyorčanov, ki so odrasli z vsemi privilegiji in v velikem udobju, vseeno ohrani ta odštekanji, držni, starinski šarm njihovih imigrantskih prednikov in tako ohrani tudi ostrino njihovega uvida in modrosti, ne da bi si jo morali zaslužiti prek izkušnje pre mestitev in brdkosti. To se mi zdi neverjetno samovšečno.*

Sonce je zašlo in iz kuhinje je zaslišala zven pribora, pohlepen hrumbodrtega hladilnika, električne klike prižiganja plina. Namrščila se je in pomislila, da že ves teden čez dan je sama. Posvetilo se ji je. Kakšna trapa. Prej, ko je začutila njegovo pričakovanje, da bo šla v pralnico ona, to ni bila kaka patriarhalna zahteva, ki ji je v glavi eksplodirala s celotnim spektrom teorije emancipacije, ampak povsem razumna prošnja za pomoč od nekoga, ki že ves dan ni popil kozarca vode, ker se je postil za ramadan. Stvarem pripisuje preveč pomena. Izgublja ljudi. Zaprla je računalnik, vstala in šla v kuhinjo.

Gledala ga je, kako je počasi v usta nosil datlje, srebal čaj in se vračal v kožo navzočega človeka.

»Oprosti,« mu je rekla.

Začudil se je.

»Za?«

»Nisem ... mislim, zunaj je tako vroče. Lahko bi ti pomagala, prej.« Odmahnil je z roko.

»Že v redu. Ure gredo hitreje, če kaj delam.«

Prikimala je. Počakala, da je pojedel, in se nato usedla za mizo.

»A igras domine? Z Janisom sva jih igrala,« ji je rekel in spet je za njegovimi besedami začutila nekaj globljega. Zanimalo ga je, kaj je z njim, ali sta se slišala, ali mu lahko kaj pove. Oče in sin. Ni vedela, kakšen odnos jima je uspelo zgraditi v nekaj letih, ki sta jih preživela skupaj, ampak spet se ji je v glavi kopčil pomen. Bi rada izvedela več, ker sta oba del njenega življenja, ker čuti, da bi morala po svojih močeh prispevati k družinski harmoniji, čeprav se je vedno zdela tako nemogoča, ali pa je samo na preži za materialom za njeno knjigo?

»Igram. Dajva.«

S police nad mizo je vzел modro kovinsko škatlo, jo odprl in prostor je napolnil šklepet keramičnih domin, ki so se usule po steklu. Mešala sta jih z dlanmi. Ko ga je pogledala, je videla, da je zazrvano in se smeji. Dvignila je obrvi.

»Vesel sem, da si tu,« je rekel, »rad bi vedel, kdo si.«

»Enako,« mu je rekla.

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»Ampak toliko let sva izgubila, da sploh ne vem, kje naj začnem.« Ugriznila se je v ustnico. Ko se v družini rodi pisatelj, je s to družino konec, je dejal nekdo. Je imel prav? Naj vseeno začne? Jo bo kdo ustavil?

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*(czesław miłosz)*

No one is going to stop her. With her fingers above the keyboard, her eyes closed and chin raised, she scents the laundry drying on the rack behind her. For a moment it seemed obvious to him that she would take the laundry out, that she would hang it to dry, that this now, since she arrived, is no longer his obligation, that he can take a rest from all this women stuff. Cleaning the bathroom. Cooking. Taking care of the guests; from standing at the door with a fake honest smile, asking about the family, remembering all the names, to making sure that the glass table in front of the couch is never empty, something salty, some fruit, always a full glass and exactly at the right time coffee. But just for a moment.

Then he laughed, moved past her somewhat awkwardly, grabbed the bag and left. And she could do it without a problem – even though she didn't know where exactly the laundromat was and how the whole thing actually works, since she never washed clothes in a public washing machine before – but she was bothered by the unconscious move of his, that gesture of heritage that demanded of her to just grab the damn laundry and take it somewhere from where it will come back clean.

When he was gone she leaned out the window and smoked. She thought of how to begin. Brooklyn in front of her was just an intersection with a traffic light and a few single-storied brick houses. Parked cars and every once in a while a pedestrian that somehow always looked as if far away from home. An ideal place to start. Nobody had a clue who she was, and everybody seemed to know her father simply as someone not worth having trouble with.

He returned and began to put the clothes on the rack, twice attempted to start a conversation, came to the underwear and stopped.

“This, you can do.”

She looked at him and tried to appear as someone taking her duties seriously.

“I will, leave it.”

She sat behind the computer and searched for places where she could find interesting people. He gave her a kind smile and walked out of the room. She was here only a week. They never got to know each other. They each had a picture of the other in their minds, but they both crafted it mostly through intermediaries. He listened to

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Janis to find out about her, and she listened to mom telling things about him. They hadn't the slightest idea who they really were to each other. And she was worried they even lacked the will to change this – they both immediately took on the role of a silent alliance, naturally expressing itself as a thing of family. Father and daughter – and all that comes with it. Their drastically different ideas on what family actually was had not yet caused any short circuits this week. Excepting the laundry.

Evening has come and her fingers are above the keyboard and she is leaning back in her chair, with her feet in the air, she is balancing on her buttocks and any moment now she will tip over forward and no one will stop her. The story has to go out. These people, this life. But where should she start? On which side?

Two factories. Two houses high in the mountains. Two times seven children. Two religions. One country.

Every day she took the bus to high school and the road led them between the factories and for a long time she assigned no significance to this, trapped as she was into her teenage head, into the tiny emotions of resistance and attraction, into the miniaturized world of a child, where all the seeds of her future experience were already sown, but were, in their smallness, still a perfect fit for the spaces assigned to them.

As she looked to the right and saw there a white, jagged roof, under which she sensed a strong current of electricity that filled her mouth with a slight taste of metal, like putting your tongue to the cap of an AA battery, she might have thought that her grandpa used to work there, but that was just another fact – like the fact that the driver of the bus had bloodshot eyes and stank of tobacco and alcohol from the night before, or that Katra, two rows in front of her, had a new silver bag of some French or Italian designer, no doubt fake, but tough to prove, or that they have a test in geography, or that she will be quizzed on English, or that she will sit next to Andy at chemistry and enjoy his terrified infatuation – that for her, fifteen or sixteen years old, did not change anything.

And if she turned to the left there was always a bunch of trucks there, and a thick, white smoke rose from the chimneys, and the cluster of bluish gray buildings was the same color as the river sharing the factory's name, and her nonno used to work there, and even though she didn't know what exactly he did, she could only imagine

him as another man out of a group of men who filled the parking lot at the end of the shift and rolled cigarettes amidst the juicy swearing and rough laughter, encouraged each other with nods and winks and hid their exhaustion until the moment they closed the doors of their apartments, when they set it at the head of the kitchen table while they disappeared in the first bottle of spirits. The word that might have come to mind then was rubber and for a moment she thought her fingers were sticky with glue.

But later, when her world spread and when she could no longer understand her experience as just another fact, as something that simply *is*, and when the spaces in her head, reserved for the various perspectives of her self-understanding, no longer sufficed for the piles of meaning suddenly weighing on all the things that in one way or another touched upon her life, she had to find a way of getting these surpluses out. She began to write.

Just before she left she went down that road on foot on a humid summer's night. Not much had changed since her high school days. A new facade here and there, perhaps, and higher fences. People who lived here had it alright. They owned their homes from times of socialism, they knew neither earthquakes nor floods, the land was fertile and the entrepreneurial spirit set upon each driveway a panel of a trade or shop of some kind. It was her home. But ... Always this but, stemming from the fact that things exceeded their boundaries. And she had no illusions that she was alone in this. She knew all people have a difficult relation to the stories they tell about themselves, and that even the characters that have the strongest bonds with their environments hide their own *but* within them, rarely knowing what will bring it to the surface and how quickly it can, in the end, happen ... but ... this was about her.

The silhouettes of mountains shivered in the sparks of lightning on the horizon. No cars anywhere, no lights turned on. It was three thirty in the morning. She stopped on the white line in the middle of the road and spread her arms. A stupid, barren gesture. The factories remained mute. They were not interested in her arms. They were not hairy enough, not wiry enough, not desperate enough. And in any case she only had one for each of them, and each factory demanded both.

She stood there for a long time, looking left and right, waiting for the factories to speak. To explain to her how she got here, to this

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white line between them. You exist because of tires and telephones, because of the economic policy of the Republic, because of nicely dressed men and women who were losing their minds amidst the shuffling of papers and who set their wills hard against the possibilities of power, because of newly built apartment complexes and nationalized houses of former large landowners, because of youth clubs, where the posers and the rockers eyed each other with contempt while the punks stood on the side waiting their turn, because of high schools deliberately redesigned in a way to stop the reproduction of castes of societies who had been dividing labor for centuries, you exist because of the vision of a certain revolution and all its shadows strewn about the places that factories such as these two demanded for themselves ... Hold your tongue. Their walls moved over her almost imperceptibly. Be quiet. You exist because your grandpa and your nonno were workers. That is all. What their kids were up to is none of our concern. We are mere factories. If you want to know why you are here, focus on the people.

She leaned back, lifted her fingers from the keyboard, opened her eyes. She no longer remembered what she was thinking about that night as she was walking home, but without a doubt she could write a good piece about it. But, should she really begin with the factories? Should economy dictate the story of the people? She looked out the window. The whole world sent their most crazy and daring ones here, those who felt the most widely overextended over the places assigned to them at home, and even though many of them then stopped here in even tighter conditions, their kids were still well aware they are not the children of history, but rather the children of business. In this way she would tell them nothing they did not already know. Waste of writing.

Two houses high in the mountains? She pushed her fingers forward again. One of them destroyed by time, the other burned down by the Germans. The first one also had a fantastic story woven around it, but if she began her tale with three brothers, who each converted to a different religion when the Turks came and made an oath that the survivor would take care of the entire clan, and with the wild vendettas that followed, she would be accused of magical realism. That is only allowed to former colonies. No, the German pursuit could be the best introduction. She tried to forget all the movie scenes, all the partisans' tales and focus on the few memories

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she managed to get out of her grandpa in all their years together. She saw him now, how he casts down his eyes, how his lower jaw pulls back, how quickly the arms cross on his chest. He was eight years old then.

*On the shady side of the hill the snow stayed long into spring, but now it began to melt.* She looked it up on Wikipedia, the last German offensive in Upper Carniola was in spring 1945. *Ivanka absent-mindedly stirred the soup, into which she threw the last bone of the calf, illegally slaughtered at the neighbors' ...* No, this is from Partljić's play *My dad*, the socialist kulak. *Ivanka absent-mindedly stirred the soup, gazed through the window at the setting sun and tried hard not to place too much hope on the path winding around the hill and calmly coming out of the forest just in front of the house.* Janez sent a message by courier, saying it will all be over soon and that he can hardly wait to see her again. It was so like him. To talk of the future in the middle of this endless night and raising her hopes up. She was too tired, too frightened, to let herself think about all the what-ifs. She had already said goodbye to it all. She said it to him as soon as he, with pursed lips, listened to a speech by a wayfarer with a gray tan and a black moustache, who talked about dead hostages and burnt-down villages, about a nation and revolt, and immediately offered help without asking her about it. When she reproached him, he cast down his head and sighed, as if he were alone responsible for their fate – well, it's war. Well, fine. She did not hide her annoyance at the companies of young men – not even young men, children! – who then tarried about the forest for the entire year, built bunkers, shamelessly begged for food – her, with seven hungry mouths to feed! – and tried to console her from time to time with a song. One day they, who knows from where and from whom, received an order, and disappeared like snow in the rain and their husband took off after them. She did not understand. To leave seven children and a wife to go gambling with history. The children were now lying about the furnace and the table and each time one of them laughed her hand went still. How can, in such places, in such times, a thing like laughter still exists?

With every sentence it became clearer to her that she did not have the slightest idea what really happened that evening, when out of the forest and down the path came a company of German soldiers, who knocked on the door, ordered them to take their blankets and get out, and burned down the house. Those few images she crafted

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for herself when she listened to grandpa were emotionally intense and charged with meaning, but how to get them out? With lax storytelling that would fill all the empty spaces with her imagination it could possibly be done – but wouldn't that be slightly unfair? Not just to the reader, but to those people who once with their own eyes observed the dance of life, whose current result was her, at that exact moment, in that exact place, with her fingers in the air and her feet on the ground.

And isn't this insane demand to arm your fragile, windblown existence with the most convincing meaning the very thing that always ends up ruining the world? This question unsettled her and she had to find shelter in the neon opium of the internet. She clicked around online forums and tried to hold onto her understanding of literature as a substance of an essential dialogue that does not make man hunger for meaning, but feeds this hunger. To write about oneself as an integral function of the world, as a character at an intersection of a very important story, is of course personally fulfilling, but to exploit this combination of personal matter and the eyes of a stranger to get a hold of an hour or two of conviction that you did not live in vain, must be a bad literary practice. She should erase her identity, remove everything from her personal experience that did not touch upon her directly, and present herself exclusively as an emotion, as a feeling, as a human being. But, nobody would read that then. So? Her eyes stopped at a comment.

*What bothers me most about the works of Jonathan Safran Foer is their fundamental demand that his generation of New Yorkers, who grew up in great privilege and comfort, still retain the quirky, daring and old-fashioned charm of their immigrant forebears, and in this way also retain the sharpness of their insight and wisdom, without having to earn them through great ordeals of displacement and hardship. I find that incredibly vain.*

The sun had set and from the kitchen she heard the noise of cutlery, the greedy hum of an open fridge, the electric clicks of the gas stove being lit. She frowned and it occurred to her that she had been eating alone all week. Then it hit her. What a silly girl. Before, when she felt his demand that she should go to the laundry, that was not a thing of patriarchy, exploding in her mind with the entire theory of emancipation, but a completely reasonable plea for help from someone who spent the whole day without a glass of water, because he

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was fasting for Ramadan. She ascribes too much meaning to things. She is losing people. She shut the computer off, got up and went to the kitchen.

She watched him as he slowly carried dates to his mouth, sipped tea, returned to presence.

“Sorry,” she said.

He was surprised.

“For what?”

“I didn’t ... I mean, it’s so hot outside. I could have helped you, before.”

He waved his hand.

“It’s ok. The hours go by quicker if I have something to do.”

She nodded, waited for him to finish eating and sat behind the table.

“Do you play dominoes? We used to play them with Janis,” he told her and again she felt something deeper behind his words. He wanted to know what was going on with him, did they talk, can she tell him anything. Father and son. She did not know what kind of a relationship they managed to build in the years they spent together, but meaning again started piling up in her brain. Would she like to know more because they are a part of her life, because she feels that she should help the family stay together, no matter how impossible that seemed, or is she simply on the lookout for more material to put into her book?

“I do. Let’s do it.”

He took a blue tin box from a shelf above the table and the space filled with the clacking of ceramic dominoes that poured across the glass. They shuffled them with their hands. When she looked at him she saw that he was staring at her, smiling. She raised her eyebrows.

“I’m glad you’re here,” he said, “I’d like to get to know you.”

“Same,” she said.

“But, we lost so many years I don’t even know where to start.”

She bit her lip. When a writer is born into a family, that family is finished, said someone. Was he right? Should she start anyway? Will anybody stop her?

*Translated by the author*



*Foto © Flora Lisica*

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# Maria Paula Erizanu

Maria Paula Erizanu se je rodila leta 1992 v Moldaviji, a že devet let živi v Londonu, ob tem pa se redno vrača takoj v Moldavijo kot v Romunijo. V Londonu je diplomirala iz zgodovine in angleščine ter magistrirala iz novinarstva na londonski univerzi City. Danes poleg literature kot svobodna novinarka piše za ugledne mednarodne medije. Odmeven je bil že njen trijezični prvenec *Aceasta e prima mea revoluție. Furați-mi-o* (To je moja revolucija. Ukradite jo, 2010), v katerem je pisala o množičnih opozicijskih protestih, ki so v Moldaviji izbruhnili po nepravilnostih na parlamentarnih volitvah leta 2009 in ki se jih je udeležila skupaj z več deset tisoč mladimi. Knjiga, opremljena tudi s fotografijami, je na leipziškem knjižnem sejmu prejela Unescovo nagrado za najlepšo knjižno izdajo na svetu, moldavska narodna knjižnica pa ji je podelila nagrado za najbolj priljubljeno knjigo po izboru bralcev. Leta 2015 je izšla njena pesniška zbirkha *Ai grija de tine* (Pazi nase), s katero je gostovala na literarnih festivalih. Zdaj se posveča romanu *Ard padurile* (Gozdovi gorivo), za katerega je lani prejela pisateljsko nagrado Srednjeevropske pobude. Gre za zgodovinski roman, ki na ozadju življenj bork za pravice žensk Inesse Armand in Aleksandre Kollontaj kritično preučuje politični idealizem, mit romantične ljubezni, križanje razredne in spolne enakosti v sovjetskem feminizmu ter regionalno identitetu Vzhodne Evrope.

Maria Paula Erizanu was born in 1992 in Moldova. She has been living in London for nine years, but regularly spends time in both Moldova and Romania. In London she finished a BA in History and English and an MA in Journalism at London's City University. Today, besides publishing fiction, she also writes for prominent international media. Her trilingual first book *Aceasta e prima mea revoluție. Furați-mi-o* (*This Is My Revolution. Steal It*, 2010) received a lot of attention; in it, she depicts the mass opposition protests in Moldova in 2009 – in which she took part together with tens of thousands of other young people. The protests erupted after rigged parliamentary elections. The publication also features photographs and it received the UNESCO award for the world's most beautiful book and an award for the most popular book according to readers by the National Library of Moldova. In 2015, she published the poetry collection *Ai grija de tine* (*Take Care*), which led to her being invited to several literary festivals. She is currently writing a novel titled *Ard pădurile* (*The Woods Are Burning*), for which she was awarded the CEI Award for writers in residence in 2018. This is a historical novel based on the lives of fighters for women's rights: Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai. Erizanu uses their stories to study political idealism, the myth of romantic love, the crossover of class and gender equality in Soviet feminism and the regional identity of Eastern Europe.

## **Inessa (Elveția, 1903)**

(fragment de roman Ardă padurile)

“Cunosc doi, maxim trei oameni care sunt mulțumiți cu ce au și probabil că și ei se prefaț. Până și Cenușăreasa, odată ce și-a găsit prințul și averea, voia mai mult. Așa zice Jerome K Jerome și are dreptate.”

Asta îi scrie Inessa soțului ei Alexandru. Ce nu-i scrie e că aici a ajuns și povestea ei. Născută în mizerie boemă la Paris, crescută modest în Moscova cu mătușa și bunica, visând la ziua în care va da ordine servitorilor într-o casă-palat. Acum e măritată cu un proprietar de fabrică, cu trei copii, șapte servitori, școală de alfabetizare pentru țărani și societate de protecție a femeilor nevoiașe. Iubire este, din plin. Altceva lipsește.

Aerul proaspăt micșorează distanța dintre ea și frunze, dintre ea și lacuri. Apusul i se amestecă în cap. Norii lungi și roz i se lipesc de gânduri. Dacă ar fi putut atinge liniștea vreodată, acum e. În splendoarea naturii, în cel mai stabil moment al vieții ei - sau cel puțin așa se vede din afară. Dar furtuna din centrul pieptului nu dispără. N-a dispărut niciodată. Uită de ea doar când uită de sine. La pian. În anumite cărți. Când pielea ei atinge pielea copiilor.

Munții Elveției o fac să se simtă mică, neformată și dezarmonioasă. Vrea să plângă întruna. Furtuna se prelinge din centrul pieptului spre periferii, curgând pe cărări, în iarba.

Asta e tot ce e ea? Asta e tot ce i-a fost pregătit?

În fața naturii, e mai puțin decât o furnică. Furnica are un rol în mușuroiul ei. Și ea? Fără ea, lumea ar fi la fel. Ba nu. E un corp străin care nu face decât să dezechilibreze universul.

Pentru câteva momente, simte că mintea i se topește toată în sirop, siropul sare ca o frângie spre mușuroi, sedezipește de propriul corp, intră-n mușuroi și se lipește de rădăcinuțele ierbii verzi, totul e umbră. Ar avea și ea un loc dacă n-ar îneca tot mușuroiul în siropul ei lipicios, așa că se scufundă mai departe, o ia la dreapta spre cărtițe, se atinge de părul lor neted, dar lipește totul iar, așa că fugă mai departe, să nu scufunde.

Așa ești în toate, te lipești de tot, se aude ea zicând tare.

Dar nu te-oprești nicăieri. Curgi și curgi și curgi și lași dâre greu de șters în urmă, continuă-n gând.

Și de Alexandru s-a lipit. Ce apă limpede e el. Ce ușor i-e lui să trăiască. Să facă ce are de făcut, nu se lasă distraș de curenți subterani. Nu îi înțelege, dar nici nu le deschide porțile.

S-a lipit de el și de felul în care o vede el. Ca o dulceață. Densă, zaharită, moale.

Uneori se vede și ea pe sine aşa cum o vede el. În fond, la imaginea asta a lucrat toată viața. Dar când e singură, simte că scârțăie, că pute, că n-are dulceață, că minte. Că de fapt e sânge îngroșat, vișiniu, cu urme zaharisite, lipicios, imposibil de șters, care curge întruna, lăsând un miros stătut în urmă.

Îi mai zice lui Alexandru asta din când în când, când o înghimpească și simte că e gata gata să spargă cealaltă imagine, mai moale, i-a spus totul de la început. El încearcă să o convingă că n-are dreptate. Uneori îl crede. Dar cuvintele lui parfumează doar temporar aerul. Parfumul ajunge la nările ei câteva clipe, dar în cele din urmă dă de miroslul stătut. Asta o sperie.

‘Citește, citește,’ îi scrie Alexandru, și are dreptate. Când e singură, asta e ceea ce o ține-mpreună, o face să uite cât de mult vrea să-și jupoiae pielea. E ceea ce o face să dispară, cu toate simțurile și toate semnalele lor spre creier, să devină un singur lucru, și acel lucru să n-aibă nicio legătură cu ce e ea, cu sângele îngroșat. Asta a ajutat-o de mică. Asta, și pianul. Si pielea.

Nu-i ia mult timp să descopere librăria rusească din Zurich. E un loc ciudat. Pe din afară, arată a librărie elvețiană. Pe dinăuntru, e bucată de Rusie pe care țarul vrea s-o tai și s-o ardă. E Rusia ilegală, cu toată literatura ei socialistă, anarchistă. Librarul e un bătrân reținut, cu barbă rară, gri și cu ochi vii, întunecați, sub sprâncenele stufoase. O privește pe Inessa cu suspiciune. Ea n-a mai văzut niciodată pe cineva ca el. Pare să existe între clase sociale. Între săraci și bogăți. În ochii lui surprinde o sclipire, un amestec între o minte vie și neîncredere, care trădează sutele de cămărușe ascunse în el, încuiate cu lacăt peste lacăt. Nu mai e nimeni în librărie.

Cărțile sunt unele mai noi, altele mai vechi, cu paginile rupte plasate la loc. Unele legate cu piele, altele manuscrise.

Inessei i se trezește curiozitatea față de Rusia astăzi elvețiană. Atinge cărțile cu degetele și parcă trece aer proaspăt prin ea.

Pășește atent, ca podeaua să scârțăie mai puțin.

Își ia cinci reviste, trei romane, patru cărți de istorie. La început, citește câte un pic din fiecare, mutându-se de la una la alta ca o școlăriță excitată. Eventual, în trăsură spre hotel, se oprește la Problemele înțelegerii istoriei de Piotr Lavrov. Munții, aerul, lacurile, caii, casele bine îngrijite, furtuna dinăuntru, propriul miros stătut dispar toate odată.

Cu cât mai mult citește din el, cu atât i se pare că lumea devine mai clară. De parcă el are cuvintele gata potrivite pentru ce-a trăit ea, ca niște etichete de la piață, care explică fără loc de întrebări și confuzii ce-i una, ce-i alta.

Istoria nu e o serie de accidente. E o luptă în care cei puternici apeleză la cele mai frumoase cuvinte pentru a-și justifica avantajele. Nimic nu e dat de la natură. Nici drumurile, nici birocrația, nici țarul, nici iobagismul, nici educația, nici ce purtăm, nici ce gândim. Totul e în continuă mișcare, o moștenire din eforturile, prostia sau egoismul generațiilor anterioare. Neputința milioanelor de oameni care au suferit. Ignoranța sau egoismul măinii de oameni născuți în paturi moi și calde, din care au tunat și au fulgerat și și-au lăsat dorințele să curgă grindină peste ceilalți. Vorbește altcineva prin sine, e clar. Dar îi place această nouă voce. Anulează furtuna.

Nici nu și-a dat seama când a coborât din trăsură și a ajuns pe malul apei. O briză îi mângâie pielea. Copiii sunt absorbiți în propriul joc în iarba proaspătă, în colțul ochiului ei. Încă n-au văzut-o.

Inessa continuă să citească. Ideile i se învârt în cap.

Lupta e alta. La fel cum n-a dus școala ei pentru copiii țăranilor nicăieri, la fel n-a dus nici programul ei de reabilitare al prostitutelor. Fără alte schimbări, e o pistă greșită. La ce bun să îi învețe să citească dacă tot ce îi aşteaptă sunt zile lungi în care vor căra și tăia lemne. Sau își vor oferi pizda, gura, mânile, negându-și propriile dorințe. Litere nu vor vedea, iar pentru Tolstoi nu vor avea timp niciodată.

Simte că celulele îi sunt gata să se reînnoiască toate odată. Pieptul i se înfierbântă, cum i se înfierbântă la primele reîntâlniri cu Alexandru. Vrea să învețe chimie, să ajute o asociație a muncitorilor, să scrie ceva.

“Sunt sigur că poți face toate lucruri, îngerul meu. Iartă-mi absențele, ar trebui să fiu acasă mai mult.” Alexandru vine direct din paradis. Dar în Inessa e un drac. E săngele acela îngroșat, zaharisit și tulbure.

Vara se încheie. E timpul să revină acasă.

## Inessa (Švica, 1903)

(odlomek iz romana Gozdovi gorijo)

»Poznam dva, največ tri ljudi, ki so zadovoljni s tem, kar imajo, in verjetno se tudi ti pretvarjajo. Tudi Pepelka je, potem ko je omrežila princa in dobila bogastvo, hotela še več. Tako pravi Jerome K. Jerome in prav ima.«

To so besede, ki jih Inessa piše svojemu možu Aleksandru. Ne napiše pa mu, da je njena zgodba prišla do tam. Rodila se je v Parizu, v boemski bedi, odraščala pa v Moskvi, kjer je z babico in teto živila precej skromno in sanjarila o dnevnu, ko bo v palači ukazovala služabnikom. Zdaj je poročena s tovarnarjem, ima tri otroke, sedem služabnikov, nedeljsko šolo za kmete in društvo za ženske v stiski. Ljubezni ima v izobilju. Primanjkuje ji nečesa drugega.

Svež zrak zmanjšuje razdaljo med njo in listjem, med njo in jezeri. Po glavi se ji mota sončni zahod. V mislih ji obtičijo dolgi, rožnati oblaki. Če bi se kdaj lahko dotaknila tišine, bi se je lahko zdaj. V prečudoviti naravi, v najtrdnejšem trenutku svojega življenja – vsaj tako je bilo videti navzven. Vendar nevihta v njenih prsih ne izgine. Nikoli ni izginila. Nanjo pozabi le takrat, kadar pozabi nase. Za klavirjem. V nekaterih knjigah. Ko se njena koža dotakne kože otrok.

Zaradi švicarskih gora se počuti majhno, neoblikovano in neskladno. Ves čas bi jokala. Nevihta se iz sredine prsi zliva proti obrobju in po potkah teče v travo.

Je ona samo to? Ji je bilo samo to namenjeno?

Pred naravo je manj kakor mravlja. Mravlja ima v mravljišču svojo vlogo. Kaj pa ona? Brez nje bi bil svet enak. Ne, ne drži. Je tujek, ki ruši ravnovesje sveta, nič drugega.

Za nekaj trenutkov občuti, da se ves njen um staplja v sirup, ki kot vrv skoči proti mravljišču, kjer se odlepi od svojega telesa in vstopi vanj, se prilepi na koreninice zelene trave, vse je senca. Tudi ona bi našla svoje mesto, če ne bi vsega mravljišča preplavila z lepljivim sirupom, zato se potaplja globlje, zavija desno proti krtom, se dotika njihove gladke dlake, in ker spet vse postaja lepljivo, beži dalje, da ne bi utonila.

Vedno si takšna, na vse se prilepiš, se sliši glasno reči.

A se nikjer ne ustaviš. Tečeš, tečeš in tečeš in za seboj puščaš sledi, ki jih je težko zbrisati, nadaljuje v mislih.

Tudi na Aleksandra se je prilepila. Kako bister je. Kako zlahka živi. Naredi, kar mora, ne pusti se zmesti podvodnim tokovom. Ne razume jih in tudi vrat jim ne odpira.

Nanj se je prilepila tako, kot jo on vidi. Kot marmelada. Gosta, lepljiva, mehka.

Včasih se vidi, kot jo vidi on. Pravzaprav je na tej podobi delala vse življenje. Ko pa je sama, čuti, da škripa, da zaudarja, da nima marmelade, da laže. Da je v resnici sesirjena kri višnjeve barve z lepljivimi sledmi, ki jih ni mogoče zbrisati, ki ves čas teče in za seboj pušča vonj po postanem.

Kadar jo prešine in se čuti pripravljeno, da razbije svojo mehkejšo podobo, to pove tudi Aleksandru, vse po vrsti, od začetka. On jo skuša prepričati, da nima prav. Včasih mu verjame. Toda njegove besede samo začasno odišavijo zrak. Dišava za nekaj trenutkov pride do njenih nosnic, a nazadnje se vrne vonj po postanem. Tega jo je strah.

»Beri, beri,« ji piše Aleksander in prav ima. Ko je sama, jo to ohranja prisebno, zaradi tega pozabi, kako močno si želi odreti svojo kožo. Zaradi branja se z vsemi čuti in znaki potopi v možgane, postane ena sama stvar, ki nima prav nič opraviti z njo, s sesirjeno krvjo. To ji pomaga od malih nog. To in klavir. In koža.

Veliko pozneje v Zürichu odkrije rusko knjigarno. Čuden kraj je to. Knjigarna je od zunaj videti kot švicarska. Notri pa je košček Rusije, ki si ga car želi odrezati in sežgati. Je nezakonita Rusija, z vso socialistično in anarhistično književnostjo. Knjigarnar je zadržan starec z redko sivo brado in živimi mračnimi očmi pod gostimi obrvimi. Sumničavo pogleduje Inesso. Še nikoli ni videla takega človeka. Videti je kakor nekje med družbenimi razredi. Med bogatimi in revnimi. V njegovih očeh zagleda nekakšno iskrico, nekaj med živo pametjo in nezaupanjem, ki izdaja na tisoče sobic, skritih v njem, zaklenjenih s ključavnicami, drugo vrh druge. V knjigarni ni nikogar drugega.

Nekatere knjige so novejše, druge starejše, s prilepljenimi strganimi listi. Nekatere so vezane v usnje, druge rokopisi.

Švicarska Rusija v Inessi zbudi zaupanje. S prsti se dotakne knjig in čuti, kako v njej zaveje svež veter.

Hodi pazljivo, da tla ne bi toliko škripala.

Vzame pet revij, tri romane in štiri zgodovinske knjige. Na začetku iz vsake nekaj prebere, kot razburjena šolarka hodi od ene do druge. Morda se v kočiji na poti do hotela ustavi pri *Težavah*

*pri razumevanju zgodovine* Pjotra Lavrova. Gore, zrak, jezera, konji, lepo vzdrževane hiše, nevihta v njej, lasten vonj po postanem, vse to v trenutku izgine.

Bolj ko bere, jasnejši ji postaja svet. Kot bi bile prave besede, ki bi opisovale, kar je doživljala, kot nalepke na tržnici, ki brez vprašanj in dvoma povedo, kaj je to in ono.

Zgodovina ni splet naključij. Je boj, v katerem se močnejši sklicujejo na najlepše besede, da bi opravičili svoje koristi. Narava ni dala ničesar. Ne cest, ne birokracije, carja, tlačanstva, izobraževanja in ne tega, kar nosimo ali mislimo. Vse je v nenehnem gibanju, dedičina naporov, neumnosti ali egoizma predhodnih generacij. Nemoč milijonov ljudi, ki so trpeli. Nevednost ali egoizem podivjanih ljudi, ki so se rodili v toplih in mehkih posteljah, v katerih so zganjali kraval in si žeeli, da bi nad druge prišla toča. Jasno je, da iz nje govori nekdo drug. A ji je novi glas všeč. Izniči nevihto.

Ni se zavedela, kdaj je izstopila iz kočije in prispeла do brega. Piš vetra ji je božal roke. V kotičku njenih oči je otroke posrkala njihova igra na sveži travni. Niso je še opazili.

Inessa bere dalje. Po glavi se ji podijo ideje.

Boj je drugačen. Kot njena šola za otroke kmetov ni vodila nikamor, ni nikamor vodil tudi program za vključevanje prostitutuk v družbo. Brez drugih sprememb je to napačna pot. Kaj bi jih učila brati, če so pred njimi dolgi dnevi, ko bodo morali sekati in vlačiti les. Ali pa ponujati pičke, usta, roke in se odrekati lastnim željam. Črk ne bodo videle, za Tolstoja pa nikoli ne bodo imele časa.

Čuti, da so celice njenega telesa pripravljene, da se vse hkrati prenovijo. Prsi ji gorijo, kot so ji začele goreti ob prvih zmenkih z Aleksandrom. Rada bi se učila kemijo, pomagala združenju delavcev, kaj napisala.

»Angel moj, prepričan sem, da vse to zmoreš. Oprosti, ker me velikokrat ni, več bi moral biti doma.« Aleksander je prišel naravnost iz nebes. Toda v Inessi je hudič. Sesirjena, lepljiva in motna kri.

Poletje gre h koncu. Čas je, da se vrne domov.

*Prevedel Aleš Mustar*

## Inessa (*Switzerland, 1903*)

(excerpt from the novel *The Woods Are Burning*)

"I know two, maximum three people who are satisfied with what they've got and they're probably pretending. Even Cinderella, once she found her prince and her fortune, wanted more. That's what Jerome K Jerome says and he's right."

That's what Inessa writes to her husband. What she doesn't write is that this is where her story has come to. Born in bohemian misery in Paris, modestly raised in Moscow with her aunt and granny, dreaming of the day in which she would give orders to servants in a palace of a house. Now she's married to a factory owner, with three children, seven servants, a reading school for peasants and a society for destitute women. There's love, lots of it. Something else is missing.

The fresh air diminishes the distance between herself and the leaves, between herself and the lakes. The sunset swirls in her head. The elongated pink clouds stick to her thoughts. If she could ever reach peace, it would be here and now. In natural splendour, in the most stable moment of her life – or at least that's how it appears from the outside. But the storm inside her chest doesn't vanish. It's never vanished. She forgets about it only when she forgets herself. At the piano. In some books. When her skin touches the skin of her children.

The Swiss mountains make her feel small, unformed and disharmonious. She's constantly on the verge of tears. The storm trickles from the centre of her chest to the margins, dripping on the footpaths, on the grass.

Is this all she is? Is this all that's in store for her?

In front of nature, she's less than an ant. An ant has a purpose in the ant colony. And what about her? Without her, the world would be the same. No, actually. She is a foreign body that only sets the universe out of balance.

For a few moments, she feels like her mind melts all in syrup, the syrup jumps like a rope towards the anthill, unsticks itself from her own body, dives into the anthill, sticks to the green grass roots, everything is shade. There would be space for her if she didn't drown the whole anthill in her sticky syrup, so she dives further, takes right towards the moles, touches their smooth hair, makes everything sticky, and then runs further, so that she doesn't drown.

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You're like that in everything, you stick to everything, she hears herself saying aloud.

But you never stop. You treacle and treacle and treacle and leave marks that are hard to clean behind you, she continues in her mind.

She also stuck to Alexander. He is such clear water. He finds it so easy to live. To do what he's got to do, without letting himself be distracted by underground currents. He doesn't understand them, and nor does he open the gates to them.

She stuck to him and the way he sees her. Like jam. Dense, sugary, soft.

Sometimes she sees herself the way he sees her. After all, she's worked on this image her entire life. But when she's alone, she feels like she's screeching, like she's stinking, like she has no sweetness inside her, that she's lying. That all she is, is thickened blood, crimson, sticky, impossible to wipe, that keeps flowing and flowing, leaving a stale smell behind.

She sometimes tells Alexander this, when this stings her and she feels she's ready to smash her other softer image. She told him everything from the start. He always tries to convince her she's wrong about it. Sometimes she believes him. But his words only perfume the air temporarily. The perfume reaches her nostrils for a few instants but ultimately the stale smell comes back. This frightens her.

"Keep reading," writes Alexander, and he's right. That's what holds her together when she's alone, what helps her forget how much she wants to rip off her own skin. That's what makes her disappear, with all of her senses and their signals to the brain, wanting to become one thing only, that has nothing to do with what she is, with the thickened blood. This has helped her from a young age. This. And the piano. And the skin.

It's not long until she finds the Russian bookshop in Zurich. It's a strange place. From the outside, it looks like a Swiss bookshop. On the inside, it's the chunk of Russia that the Tsar wants to chop off and burn. It's the illegal Russia, with all its socialist and anarchist literature. The bookseller is a reserved old man with a rare grey beard and vivid dark eyes under stuffy eyebrows. He watches Inessa with suspicion. She has never seen anyone like him. He seems to exist in between social classes. In between rich and poor. In his eyes she catches a sparkle, a blend of a vivid mind and mistrust, betraying the hundreds of rooms hidden inside him, secured with lock after lock. There's no one else in the bookshop.

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Some of the books are newer, others are older. The ripped pages are put back into the books. Some are bound books, others are manuscripts.

Inessa feels awakened by curiosity for this Swiss Russia. She touches the books with her fingers and it's as if fresh air pervades her.

She steps carefully, so that the floor screeches less.

She takes five magazines, three novels, four history books. At first, she reads a bit from each of them, excitedly moving from one to the other. Eventually, in her cart to the hotel, she settles on the *Problems of Understanding History* by Pyotr Lavrov. The mountains, the air, the lakes, the horses, the well-preserved houses, the storm inside, her own stale smell, all disappear at once.

The more she reads of this book, the clearer her world becomes. It's as if he has the right words for what she's lived, like some market tags that explain, without questions or confusions, what's one thing or another.

History isn't a series of accidents. It's a struggle in which the powerful use the most beautiful words to justify their advantages. Nothing is a given. Neither the roads, nor bureaucracy, the Tsar, serfdom, education, what we wear or what we think. Everything is constantly moving. Everything's inherited from the efforts, foolishness or selfishness of previous generations. The helplessness of the millions of people who suffered. The ignorance or the selfishness of the handful of people born in soft and warm beds, from which they've thundered and stroked and have left their desires flow like hailstorm. Someone else is speaking through her, it's clear. But she likes this new voice. It cancels her storm.

She hasn't even realised it when she jumped off the cart and reached the water's shore. A breeze caresses her skin. The children are all absorbed in their own game, in the corner of her eye. They haven't yet seen her.

Inessa keeps reading. The ideas roll in her head.

The fight is different. Just like her school for peasants led nowhere, her rehab programme for prostitutes hasn't either. Without other changes, this is the wrong track. Why teach them how to read if all they can expect are long days in which they will chop and carry logs. Or they'll offer their cunt, mouth and hands denying their own desires. Letters are not what they're going to see, and they'll never have time for Tolstoy.

She feels that all her cells are ready to renew themselves all at the same time. Her chest heats up like it did at the first encounters with Alexander. She wants to study chemistry, help a workers' association, write something.

'I'm sure you can do all of these things, my angel. Forgive my absences, I should be at home a lot more.' Alexander comes straight from heaven, she thinks. But there's a devil inside Inessa. It's that thickened unsettled treacly-sweet blood.

The summer is ending. It's time to go home.

*Translated by the author*



*Foto © Željko Sinobad*

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# Zvonko Karanović

Zvonko Karanović se je rodil leta 1959 v Nišu (Srbija), kjer ima status kultnega pesnika undergrounda. Je najbrž edini srbski avtor s svojim klubom oboževalcev, imenovanim Srebrni surfer po naslovu njegove zbirke iz leta 1991. Poleg poezije piše tudi romane, v njegovi literaturi pa je opaziti vpliv beatnikov, filma in popkulture. Snov za svoja dela črpa tudi iz lastnih življenjskih izkušenj, saj je bil v preteklosti novinar, radijski voditelj, DJ, organizator koncertov, trinajst let pa je v Nišu vodil svojo glasbeno trgovino. Najbolj znan je po trilogiji romanov *Dnevnik dezerta*-ra (Dnevnik deserterjev), ki je doživel več ponatisov in bila v najožjem izboru za srbsko NIN-ovo nagrado za najboljši roman. To je prvo srbsko prozno delo, postavljeno v turbulentna devetdeseta, ki skozi življenjske zgodbe treh priateljev opisuje »izgubljeno generacijo«, usodno zaznamovano z vojno in tranzicijo. Zadnja leta se posveča poeziji, piše predvsem pesmi v prozi, postavljene v mesta, v ospredju so občutja lirskega subjekta, prepletena z nadrealističnimi prvinami in ironijo. Objavil je deset zbirk, zadnja *Iza zapaljene šume* (Za gorečim gozdom) je izšla lani. Preveden je v šestnajst jezikov, izbor njegove poezije *It Was Easy to Set the Snow On Fire* (Preprosto je bilo zakuriti sneg) je v ZDA prejel nagrado ameriškega PEN-a. V slovenščini je leta 2017 pri LUD Šerpi izšel izbor njegovih pesmi *Najboljša leta naših življenj* v prevodu Urbana Vovka. Karanović je prejemnik več srbskih nagrad za poezijo. Živi v Beogradu kot svobodni pisatelj.

Zvonko Karanović was born in 1959 in Niš, Serbia, where he has the status of being a cult underground poet. He is probably the only Serbian author with a fan club called Srebrni surfer (Silver Surfer), named after his 1991 collection. Besides poetry, he also writes novels. His literature draws upon beatniks, film, and pop culture influences. His work is inspired by his own experiences; in the past he worked a journalist, a radio host, a DJ, a concert organizer, and ran his own music shop for 13 years in Niš. He is best known for his novel trilogy *Dnevnik dezerta* (The Diary of Deserters) which was reprinted several times and was shortlisted for the Serbian NIN Award for best novel. It is the first Serbian work set in the turbulent nineties, describing the “lost generation” fatefully marked by the war and the transition, as refracted through the stories of three friends. In recent years, he has been focusing on poetry, writing mostly prose poems set in the city, with the feelings of the lyrical subject intertwined with surreal elements and irony in the foreground. He has published ten collections, the latest one, *Iza zapaljene šume* (Beyond the Burning Forest, 2018), came out last year. His work has been translated into 16 languages and the selection of his poetry *It Was Easy to Set the Snow On Fire* received the American PEN award. Karanović is the recipient of several Serbian poetry awards. He lives in Belgrade as a freelance writer.

(Ego)

## ***U hotelskoj sobi***

Sedeo je na krevetu u hotelskoj sobi, samo u belim boksericama koje su mu dopirale skoro do kolena.

Razgovarao je telefonom s majkom.

Njegova majka bila je odavno mrtva.

Glas iz slušalice samo je ličio na glas njegove majke.

„Dubina detalja je presudna u pisanju“, neko je govorio s druge strane.

Velika gola žena, širokih ramena i masivnih butina, igrala je iza njega.

Sporo se izvijala uz ritam elektronske muzike koja je tiho dopirala iz zvučnika raspoređenih po uglovima sobe.

Potom je čuo:

„Izbegavaš ženske likove, fasciniran si mašinama... Tvoj otac je bio na putu kada sam te rodila...“

S izrazom dosade na licu, žena iza njegovih leđa je prišla i prekinula vezu.

„Ne treba pisati o smrti, živimo u kulturi hepiendinga“, rekla je metalnim, robotskim glasom.

Zažmурio je.

Našao se u luksuznom apartmanu punom striptizeta.

Telefon je zvonio.

Dugo mu je bilo potrebno da ispruži ruku i podigne slušalicu.

„Nedostatak ograničenja je neprijatelj umetnosti...“, ponovo je začuo majčin glas.

Nije više slušao.

Gledao je tri plavuše na visokim potpeticama kako mu prilaze i prave krug oko njega.

Dve su iščupale telefonski kabl, obmotale ga oko njegovog vrata i počele da ga dave.

Treća mu je огромним silikonskim grudima pritiskala lice ne dozvoljavajući mu da diše.

Dobio je snažnu erekciju.

Nije ni pokušao da se odbrani, čak im je pomagao u gušenju.

Zatezao je kabl oko svog vrata najjače moguće, ali imao je utisak da bezuspešno zateže dečiji lastiš, mlitavu želatinsku traku.

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## *Preobražaj*

Uhvaćen u mrežu nedeljnih porodičnih ručkova, uspavan tapšanjem po ramenima od svojih bližnjih, živeo je povučeno, bez ambicija.

Nije mogao da bude naivniji.

Statirao je u sopstvenom životu i našao se potpuno zatečen udarcima dobijenim kada je promolio glavu u javnost.

Iznenadio je sam sebe željom da se suprotstavi.

Pun jarosti, smišljao je osvetu neprijateljima koji su vrebali iza sjajnih fasada nedeljnika,

obitavali u gnjecavom sivilu dnevnih novina, krili se u virtuelnom gustišu internet stranica.

U sebi je otkrio predele brutalnosti, tajna postrojenja za proizvodnju mraka koja su radila čak i dok je spavao.

Otkriće tog opasnog, izvitoperenog sveta dalo mu je beskrajno samopouzdanje u uspinjanju na društvenoj lestvici.

Ljudi su počeli da zaziru od njega, uvažavaju njegove novootkrivene moći.

Jedino njegova žena nije mogla da se pomiri s tim kako on nije više onaj za kojeg se udala.

I dalje je od njega očekivala „ljubav“ i „razumevanje“, čemu se on smejavao kao ženskoj površnosti.

Zaposlio se u industriji prerađe zagađenog vazduha u sveže snove i nije imao vremena za gubljenje.

(Fabula)

## Zapis iz kartonske crkve

Ponekad su mu dolazile vizije, sasvim obične, poput one da more uranja u sunce.

Viđao je sebe kako u vodi dubokoj metar vozi bicikl, ili kako mislima komanduje pticama.

Nije to bilo ništa čudno.

Zadatak mu je i bio da „ima vizije“, zabeleži ih, i s vremena na vreme pošalje onima koje to uopšte ne zanima.

Nije se smatrao ni prorokom ni propovednikom.

Ipak, sagradio je crkvu na olupanom uličnom kontejneru.

U crkvu, kartonsku kutiju požutelju od kiše i sunca, primio je šugavo mače.

Pravilo mu je društvo dok je, uglavnom posle ponoći, osvetljen svetlošću sveće pisao sebi pisma.

Dani su mu tekli mirno sve do velikog incidenta čiji je povod bila rečenica:

*Kada ostanemo sami moramo se usredsrediti na izgled.*

Čim je stavio tačku na svoju misao zakreštale su svrake na gubilištu, zacijukali slepi miševi savesti.

Iz mračnih dubina ošinuo ga je unutrašnji glas:

„Spoljašnjost je iluzija! Sve što postoji je unutra!“

Uplašen, brzo je zapisivao:

*Način opstanka... Negiranje površnosti... Život ispod površine...*

Setio se kako to piše samome sebi i da nema potrebe za pravdanjem, pa je odložio olovku.

Šugavo mače u uglu podiglo je šapu.

Zakačena kao bedž na njegovim grudima, majušna neonska reklama koka-kole zatreperila je u mraku, i on je najzad shvatio da je tu iz sasvim pogrešnih razloga.

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## *Edip, na rubu ponora*

Bio je razveden, bez dece.

Svakog popodneva, nakon posla, obilazio je nepokretnu majku.

Gurao ju je u kolicima, vodio u šetnje i na izlete.

Nalazio je i plaćao patronažne sestre da dvadeset i četiri časa  
brinu o njoj.

Nije imao srca da je smesti u dom.

Nije imao srca ni da joj kaže kako mu je glava postala pokvaren  
bojler iz koga kaplje voda.

(Čuo je glasove kako mu šapuću: „Zakrpi rupu na kazanu...  
Očisti kamenac...“)

Odbijao je i samu pomisao da poseti lekara.

Ko će brinuti o majci?

Stanje mu se pogoršavalo.

Počeo je da guta lekove, najobičnije tablete protiv glavobolje.

Nadao se da će glasovi koje čuje brzo utihnuti.

Jedne noći sanjaо je kako strada u automobilskoj nesreći i ostaje  
paralizovan.

Majka mu dolazi u posetu i njih dvoje, svako u svojim  
invalidskim kolicima, igraju košarku.

Probudio se srećan.

Učinilo mu se da su to, još od detinjstva, nalepši trenuci  
provedeni s majkom.

Posle mnogo vremena, izašao je iz stana sa smeškom na usnama.

Tog dana nakon posla, umesto kod majke, otiašao je u zoološki vrt.

Sedeо je na klupi ispred kaveza s leopardom, i čitavo popodne  
zurio u njega.

(Autobiografija)

## **Borba Titana**

Čak i kada je raskrinkao sve njihove laži i otišao od njih, još uvek su ga opterećivali svojim nevidljivim prisustvom.

Sedeli su u mraku i merili svaku njegovu reč, procenjivali svaki njegov postupak, strpljivo čekali na njegov telefonski poziv.

Trudio se da ne razmišlja o njima i ne pridaje važnost njihovim prečutnim očekivanjima, ali znao je da će biti potpuno slobodan tek kada ih sahrani i isplati grobare po obavljenom poslu.

Nije se usuđivao da spali porodične fotografije.

U sitnom rasteru crnobelih senki skrivalo se previše duhova zdravih zuba i mršavih lica, defilovalo previše jeftinih bluza i prekratkih pantalona, smenjivalo se previše naivnog optimizma i prerane ozbiljnosti...

Bilo je previše, previše toga što ih je jačalo.

A oni?

Oni su sedeli u svojim foteljama i mršavim, žilavim rukama čvrsto držali slušalicu telefona u koju su izgovarali naređenja u formi molbe.

Za razliku od njega koji je posedovao svet, oni su posedovali moć. Ipak, njegovu nepobedivost to uopšte nije zanimalo.

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## *Odlučnost srednjih godina*

Čitavog života sanjao je okean, autoput duž obale, zrake sunca na niklovanim branicima kabrioleta, ali te slike, sanjive zlatne ribice, ostale su u staklenoj kugli na vitrini njegove nekadašnje momačke sobe.

Kada je napustio roditeljski dom nije ih poneo sa sobom.

(Bile su mu preteške za nošenje.)

Svoju prošlost ostavio je svima koji su ga poznavali da je pokradu i iskoriste najbolje delove za svoje autobiografije.

Sebi je namenio budućnost.

Počeo je da vežba jogu, meditira, odlazi na plivanje.

Istrčati maraton – bio je njegov krajnji cilj.

Za to vreme, modna industrija je od odevnih predmeta stvarala poeziju za svačiji garderober.

Za to vreme, žene njegovih drugara u Sent Moricu pile su asam (desetine hiljada indijskih ruku bralo je taj čaj).

Za to vreme, nebo je neumorno menjalo vlasnike i sunce se smeškalo onima što dolaze.

Poput kakvog gordog nacionalnog pesnika, prošlost je blistala nepodnošljivim sjajem, nedodirljiva i samodovoljna.

Nije je primećivao, nije želeo da je primećuje.

(Ego)

## **V hotelski sobi**

Sedel je na postelji hotelske sobe, v samih belih boksaricah, segajočih skoraj do kolen.

Po telefonu se je pogovarjal z mamo.

Njegova mama je bila že dolgo mrtva.

Glas iz slušalke je bil le podoben maminemu.

»Pri pisanju je odločilna globina podrobnosti,« je govoril nekdo na drugi strani.

Za njim je plesala velika gola ženska s širokimi rameni in močnimi stegni.

Počasi se je zvijala v ritmu elektronske glasbe, ki je tiho prihajala iz zvočnikov, razporejenih po kotih sobe.

Potem je zaslišal:

»Zanemarjaš ženske like, navdušuješ se nad stroji ... Tvoj oče je bil na poti, ko sem te rodila ...«

Ženska za njegovim hrbotom se mu je približala z zdolgočasenim izrazom na obrazu in prekinila zvezo.

»Zakaj bi pisal o smrti, živimo v kulturi happy endinga,« je reklamovala s kovinskim, robotskim glasom.

Zamižal je.

Znašel se je v luksuznem apartmaju, polnem striptizet.

Telefon je zvonil.

Precej časa si je vzpel, preden je iztegnil roko in dvignil slušalko.

»Pomanjkanje omejitev je sovražnik umetnosti ...« je spet zaslišal mamin glas.

Ni več poslušal.

Gledal je, kako se mu približujejo tri blondinke na visokih petah in ga obkrožajo.

Dve sta izpulili telefonski kabel, mu ga ovili okoli vratu in ga začeli daviti.

Tretja se mu je z ogromnimi silikonskimi prsmi pritisnila ob obraz, da ni mogel priti do sape.

Dobil je močno erekcijo.

Sploh se jih ni poskušal obraniti, pri davljenju jim je celo pomagal.

Kabel je na vso moč zategoval okoli svojega vratu, a je imel občutek, kot da neuspešno zateguje elastiko za gumitivist, mlahav zdrizast trak.

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## *Preobrazba*

Ujet v mrežo nedeljskih družinskih kosil, uspavan od trepljanja po ramenih s strani svojih bližnjih, je živel odmaknjeno, brez ambicij.

Ne bi mogel biti bolj naiven.

Statiral je v lastnem življenju, udarci, ki jih je dobil, kadar je glavo pomolil v javnost, so ga ujeli popolnoma nepripravljenega.

Želja po uporu je presenetila še njega.

Jezen na ves svet je koval maščevanje sovražnikom, ki so prežali za blečečimi fasadami tednikov, tičali v zmečkani sivini dnevnih časopisov, se skrivali v virtualni gošči spletnih strani.

V sebi je našel brutalne predele, tajne obrate za proizvodnjo teme, ki se niso ustavili celo, ko je spal.

Odkritje tega nevarnega, izkrivljenega sveta mu je vlilo brezmejno samozavest pri vzpenjanju po družbeni lestvici.

Ljudje so se ga začeli bati, zavedajoč se njegove novoodkrite moči.

Le njegova žena se ni mogla sprijazniti s tem, da ni več tisti, s katerim se je poročila.

Še naprej je od njega pričakovala 'ljubezen' in 'razumevanje', kar je imel za žensko plitvost in se temu smejal.

Zaposlil se je v industriji za predelavo onesnaženega zraka v sveže sanje in ni smel tratiti časa.

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(Fabula)

## **Zapisek iz kartonske cerkve**

Včasih je imel vizije, povsem običajne, kot je tista z morjem, ki tone v soncu.

Videl se je, kako v meter globoki vodi vozi kolo ali pa z močjo svojih misli usmerja ptice.

To ni bilo nič čudnega.

Njegova naloga je bila, da »ima vizije«, si jih zapisuje in občasno pošilja tistim, ki jih sploh niso zanimale.

Ni se imel ne za preroka ne za pridigarja.

Vseeno pa je zgradil cerkev na razbitem uličnem kontejnerju.

V to cerkev, kartonsko škatlo, porumeleno od dežja in sonca, je sprejel garjavo mačko.

Delala mu je družbo, ko je, največkrat po polnoči, v soju sveče pisal pisma samemu sebi.

Dnevi so tekli mirno vse do velikega incidenta, ki ga je sprožil stavek:

*Ko ostanemo sami, se moramo posvetiti videzu.*

Takoj ko je postavil piko za svojo misel, so zavreščale srake na morišču, zacvilili netopirji vesti.

Iz temnih globin ga je oplazil notranji glas:

»Zunanjost je iluzija! Vse, kar obstaja, je v notranjosti!«

Prestrašen si je hitel zapisovati:

*Način preživetja ... Zanikanje površinskega ... Življenje pod površino ...*

Spomnil se je, da to piše samemu sebi in da se nima komu opravičevati, zato je odložil pisalo.

Garjava mačka v kotu je stegnila šapo.

Pripeta kot značka je v temi na njenih prsih zamigotala mala neonska reklama za kokakolo, in končno se je zavedel, da je tu iz povsem napačnih razlogov.

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## *Ojdip na robu prepada*

Bil je ločen, brez otrok.

Vsako popoldne, po službi, je obiskoval nepokretno mamo.

Potiskal je voziček, jo vozil na sprehode in izlete.

Poiskal in plačeval je patronažne sestre, da so štiriindvajset ur na dan skrbele zanjo.

Ni imel srca, da bi jo spravil v dom.

Tudi ni imel srca, da bi ji povedal, da je njegova glava postala pokvarjen bojler, ki pušča.

(Slišal je glasove, ki so mu prišepetavali: »Zamaši luknjo na kotlu ... Odstrani kamen ...«)

Še pomisliti ni hotel, da bi obiskal zdravnika.

Kdo bo skrbel za mamo?

Njegovo stanje se je slabšalo.

Začel je goltati zdravila, najnavadnejše tablete proti glavobolu.

Upal je, da bodo glasovi, ki jih sliši, kmalu utihnili.

Neko noč se mu je sanjalo, da je bil žrtev prometne nesreče in ostal paraliziran.

Obiskat ga je prišla mama in potem sta, vsak na svojem invalidskem vozičku, igrala košarko.

Zbudil se je srečen.

Imel je občutek, da se z mamo že od otroštva nista imela tako lepo.

Po dolgem času je iz stanovanja spet stopil z nasmeškom.

Tisti dan je po službi namesto k mami zavil v živalski vrt.

Sedel je na klopi pred kletko z leopardom in celo popoldne strmel vanj.

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(Avtobiografija)

## *Spopad titanov*

Celo ko je razkrinkal vse njihove laži in jih zapustil, ga je še naprej bremenila njihova nevidna navzočnost.

Sedeli so v temi in merili vsako njegovo besedo, presojali vsako njegovo ravnanje, potprežljivo čakali na njegov telefonski klic.

Trudil se je, da ne bi razmišljal o njih in pripisoval pomembnosti njihovim zamolčanim pričakovanjem, zavedal pa se je, da bo popolnoma svoboden šele, ko jih bo pokopal in po opravljenem delu poplačal grobarje.

Ni si drznil zažgati družinskih slik.

V majhnem rastru črno-belih senc se je skrivalo preveč duhov z zdravimi zobmi in suhljatimi obrazi, paradiralo preveč cenenih bluz in prekratkih hlač, se izmenjevalo preveč naivnega optimizma in prezgodnje resnobnosti ...

Preveč je bilo, preveč tega, kar jim je dajalo moč.

Pa oni?

Sedeli so v svojih foteljih in v suhljatih, žilavih rokah stiskali telefonsko slušalko, v katero so proseče zapovedovali.

V nasprotju z njim, ki je imel v rokah svet, so imeli oni v rokah moč.

Pa vendar, njegove nepremagljivosti to sploh ni zanimalo.

---

## *Odločnost srednjih let*

Vse življenje je sanjal ocean, obalno avtocesto, sončne žarke na nikljanih odbijačih kabrioletov, a so te slike, sanjave zlate ribice, ostale v stekleni krogli na vitrini njegove nekdanje fantovske sobe.

Ko je zapustil družinsko hišo, jih ni odnesel s seboj.

(Zdele so se mu pretežka prtljaga.)

Svojo preteklost je zapustil vsem, ki so ga poznali, naj jo ukradejo in najboljše dele uporabijo v svojih avtobiografijah.

Zase je izbral prihodnost.

Začel je vaditi jogo, meditirati, plavati.

Preteči maraton je bil njegov končni cilj.

V tem času je modna industrija z oblačili ustvarjala poezijo za vsako omaro.

V tem času so žene njegovih prijateljev v St. Moritzu pile asam (na desettisoče indijskih rok je nabiralo ta čaj).

V tem času je nebo neutrudno menjavalo lastnike in sonce se je smejalo prihajajočim.

Preteklost se je v maniri kakega ošabnega narodnega pesnika bleščala z neznosnim sijajem, nedotakljiva in samozadostna.

Ni je opažal, ni je hotel opaziti.

*Prevedel Urban Vovk*

(Ego)

## ***In a Hotel Room***

He was sitting on the bed in a hotel room, just in his white boxers which reached down almost to his knees.

He was talking on the phone with his mother.

His mother had been dead for a long time.

The voice coming from the receiver only resembled his mother's.

"The depth of details is key in writing," someone said from the other end.

A large, naked woman, with broad shoulders and massive thighs, danced behind him.

She was slowly writhing to the rhythm of the electronic music which was quietly emanating out of speakers arranged around the corners of the room.

Then he heard:

"You are avoiding female characters, fascinated by machines...

Your father was away on business when I gave birth to you..."

With an expression of boredom, the woman behind him came closer and disconnected the phone line.

"One shouldn't be writing about death; we live in a culture of happy endings," she said in a metallic, robotic voice.

He closed his eyes.

He found himself in a luxury apartment full of strippers.

The phone rang.

It took him a long time to reach out and lift the receiver.

"The lack of boundaries is the enemy of art...", he heard his mother's voice again.

He wasn't listening anymore.

He was looking at three blondes in high heels approaching and then encircling him.

Two of them pulled the phone cable out of the wall, tied it around his neck and began to strangle him.

The third squashed his face with her enormous silicone breasts, not letting him breathe.

He got a strong erection.

He didn't even try to defend himself, but he even helped them suffocate him.

He tightened the cable around his neck as much as he could, but he had the impression that he was unsuccessfully tightening a kid's elastic band, a limp gelatin band.

## *The Metamorphosis*

Caught in a net of Sunday family lunches, falling asleep from tapping on the shoulders by those close to him, he lived a reclusive life.

He couldn't be more naïve.

He was a movie extra in his own life and he found himself completely caught in the blows received when he'd occasionally venture out into the public.

He surprised himself with his decision not to withdraw, wishing to stand up and fight.

Filled with hatred, he tried to come up with a revenge for his enemies who preyed upon him from behind the facades of the dailies, living in the doughy greyness of daily newspapers, hiding among the virtual thicket of internet pages.

Within himself he found whole areas filled with brutality, secret installations for the production of darkness which worked even while he was asleep.

Discovering that perverted world gave him infinite amount of self-confidence in the rising on the social scale.

People began to feel intimidated by him, began to respect his newly acquired powers.

Only his wife could not reconcile herself with the fact that he was no more the one she had married.

She still expected "love" and "understanding" from him, at which he laughed as a woman's superficiality.

He got a job in the industry processing polluted air into fresh dreams and he had no time to lose.

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(Fabula)

## ***Notes from a Cardboard Church***

Only in the beginning had visions come to him, full of fire and ashes.

Later they were replaced by those that seemed ordinary, like those where the sea rises into the sun, or how in water a meter deep, he was riding a bicycle, or how he commanded birds with his thoughts.

That wasn't that strange at all.

His job was to "have visions," to write them down, and from time to time to send them to those who didn't care about them anyway.

Even though he didn't consider himself a prophet or a preacher, still, he built a church on a dented street garbage container.

In the church, a cardboard box yellowed from the rain and sun, he welcomed a mangy kitten.

It kept him company, while after midnight, mostly in candlelight, he wrote letters to himself.

Days passed peacefully until the big incident caused by the sentence:

*When we are left alone we must concentrate on our image.*

As soon as he put a period to his thought, the thunderstorm began.

Magpies started to screech loudly on the gallows, while the bats of conscience peeped.

From the depths of darkness he was whipped by an inner voice: "Appearance is an illusion! Everything that exists is inside!"

Frightened, he wrote quickly:

*The mode of existence... Negating superficiality... Life beneath the surface...*

He remembered that he was writing to himself and that there was no need to be defensive himself, so he put down the pencil.

The mangy kitten raised its paw in the corner.

Attached to his chest as if a badge, the tiny, neon Coca-Cola sign flickered in the darkness, and he finally realized that he was there for the completely wrong reasons.

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*Oedipus, on the Brink of an Abyss*

He was divorced, without children.

Every afternoon, after work he would visit his bed-ridden mother.

He pushed her in the wheelchair, took her out for walks and picnics.

He found and paid nurses to take care of her twenty-four hours a day.

He didn't have the heart put her in a nursing home.

He didn't have the heart to tell her that his head had become a water boiler from which water leaked.

(He heard voices whispering to him, “fix the hole on the boiler...Scrape off the lime ...”)

He pushed away the very possibility of going to visit a doctor.  
Who'd take care of mother?

His condition worsened.

He began to swallow medication, the simplest headache pills.

He hoped the voices he heard would soon disappear.

One night he dreamt that he was in a car accident and had become paralyzed.

His mother comes to visit him at the hospital, each in his and her wheelchair, play basketball.

He woke up happy.

It seemed to him that these were the best moments spent with his mother, since childhood.

After a lot of time had passed, he walked out of his apartment with a smile on his face.

That day after work, instead of to his mother's, he went to the zoo.

He sat on the bench in front of the leopard cage, and the whole afternoon stared at him.

(Autobiography)

## ***Battle of the Titans***

Even when he debunked all his lies and moved away from them, they were still a burden with their invisible presence.

They sat in darkness and measured his every word, evaluated his every move, patiently waited for his next phone call.

He tried not to think of them, and not to give any importance to their tacit expectations, but he knew that he would be completely free only when he paid off the gravediggers after the completed job.

He didn't dare burn the family photographs.

In the small increments of black and white shadows were hiding too many ghosts with healthy teeth and with lean faces, parading were too many cheap blouses and overly short pants, changed one after the other too much naive optimism and untimely seriousness...

There was too much, too much that strengthened them.

And what about them?

They were sitting in their armchairs firmly holding the receiver with skinny, sinewy arms in which they stated orders in the form of requests.

In contrast to him who possessed the world, they possessed the power.

Still, his invincibility wasn't interested in that, at all.

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## *Decisiveness of Middle Age*

His whole life he had dreamt of the ocean, the highway by the coast, the sun's rays on the nickel-plated fenders of a convertible, but those images, the sleepy goldfish, remained in their glass bowl on the showcase of his old bachelor's pad.

When he left his parents' home, he did not bring them with him.  
(They were too heavy to carry.)

He left his past for everyone who knew him to steal it and to use the best parts for their own autobiographies.

For himself he set aside the future.

He began to practice yoga, to meditate, to go swimming.

To run a marathon – that was his ultimate goal.

In the meantime, the fashion industry had created a poetry out of the fabric for everyone's closet.

In the meantime, wives of his friends in St. Moritz drank Assam (tens of thousands of Indian hands had picked that tea).

In the meantime, the sky tirelessly changed owners and the sun shined brightly on those yet to come.

Like some proud national poet, the past glistened with an unbearable glimmer, untouchable and self-sufficient.

He did not notice it, he did not wish to notice it.

*Translated by Biljana D. Obradović*



*Foto © Sohail Nakhoda*

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# Enes Karić

Enes Karić se je rodil leta 1958 v Višnjevu blizu Travnika (Bosna in Hercegovina). Diplomiral je na Islamski teološki fakulteti in Fakulteti političnih znanosti v Sarajevu ter leta 1989 doktoriral na Filološki fakulteti v Beogradu na temo hermenevtičnih problemov pri prevajanju Korana v srbohrvaščino. Od leta 1999 je redni profesor za hermenevtiko Korana na Fakulteti za islamske študije v Sarajevu. Znanje arabščine in religiologije je izpopolnjeval na univerzah Yale, Oxford in Al-Azhar. Kot gostujuči profesor je predaval na ljubljanski Filozofski fakulteti ter Univerzi Ludvika in Maksimiljana v Münchenu. Karić je avtor številnih znanstvenih del s področja islama in interpretacije Korana, napisal je tudi več esejev o muslimanski dediščini v BiH ter o duhovni in politični podobi sodobne Bosne. Leta 1995 je izšel njegov prevod Korana v bosansčino. Na literarno pot je stopil s potopisom s hadža *Crni tulipan* (Črni tulipan, 2008), ki so mu sledili romani *Pjesme divljih ptica* (2009; *Pesmi divljih ptic*, 2011), *Jevrejsko groblje* (Judovsko pokopališče, 2011), *Slučajno čovjek* (Po naključju človek, 2013) in *Boje višnje* (Barve višnje, 2016). Veliko pozornosti je zbudil že njegov prvenec *Pesmi divljih ptic*, tudi nagrajen, ki je v letu dni doživel tri ponatis; ta zgodba o Bosni 16. stoletja je leta 2011 v prevodu Andreja Jakliča izšla tudi v slovenščini, pri založbi Beletrina. Karićev najnovnejši roman *Boje višnje* je kronika avtorjeve rojstne vasi Višnjevo, postavljena v šestdeseta leta 20. stoletja in napisana s perspektive dečka oziroma dijaka. Karićeva dela so prevedena v več jezikov, med drugim v angleščino, nemščino in arabščino.

Enes Karić was born in 1958 in Višnjevo, near Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He graduated from the Faculty of Islamic Studies and the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo, and later received his PhD from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade in 1989, on the topic of hermeneutical problems in translating the Qur'an into Serbo-Croatian. Since 1999, he has been a full professor of Qur'anic Studies at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo. He broadened his knowledge of Arabic language and religious studies at Yale, Oxford, and Al-Azhar Universities. He was a Visiting Lecturer at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana and at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. His research focuses on Islam and the Qur'an, and he also publishes essays on past and present Bosnia. In 1995, his translation of the Qur'an into Bosnian was published. His literary career started with the travelogue from Hajj called *Crni tulipan* (*The Black Tulip*, 2008), which was followed by the novels *Pjesme divljih ptica* (*Songs of Wild Birds*, 2009), *Jevrejsko groblje* (*The Jewish Cemetery*, 2011), *Slučajno čovjek* (*A man by accident*, 2013), and *Boje višnje* (*The Colours of Sour Cherry*, 2016). His debut novel *Pjesme divljih ptica*, a story about Bosnia at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, garnered much attention; it was reprinted three times in one year and received several awards. *Boje višnje*, Karić's latest novel, is a chronicle of the author's home village Višnjevo that is set in the 1960s and written from the perspective of a high school student. His works have been translated into several languages, among them Slovenian, Arabic, English and German.

## Boje višnje

(odlomak iz romana)

Podovka opet priđe bolesniku, čula je kao i njezin sin, kako Huso Austrougar šapće:

“... Talijani su su nikakvi vojnici, što su nas pobili 1915. i 1916., to su *uvik* uradili na *privaru*. *Sićam* se, Salkica Kehonjić je pogin’ o sa drugih *petnest* naših od *snizne lavine*, Talijani su zasuli topovsku vatru podvrh jasnih alpskih strana, a mi se bili ulogorili u podnožju brda koja su parala nebo, pucali su Talijani pravo u *snizne terete*, sedam topovski’ salvi izručili su pod alpska brda, sve u duboke smetove, tako pokrenuše *osiline sniga*, jedna, ona peta, zatrpana je Salkicu Kehonjića, šteta, velika šteta, u *nidrima* mu ode *Gaševića mevlud*... A jesmo l’ tražili Salkicu Kehonjića i njegove smrznute drugove?! Nismo! Ne zato što smo bili kukavice (to mi jesmo bili, jer i u ratu ima kukavstva svakakva) već ih nismo tražili jer *svatili* smo: *Nejma* te lopate kojom ćeš sa njih razgrnut’ *snizna brda*. A osim toga, prvo smo mi, ovi *priživili*, morali otirat’ Talijane, nikakva su oni vojska, to vam jamčim, nikakva, jer, brzo smo ih *rastirali*! Onda smo se vratili i pokopali mrtve koji nisu imali *sriću* da ih zamete *snizna osilina*. A šta je sa Salkicom Kehonjićem i njegovim drugovima? – pitam ja, evo ovaj soldat Husein, *nadstarišnu* Hansa Hammera Potza, a on će ti meni (*priko* tolmaka Stipana Vranješa): Vojni stručnjaci kažu: Ova *snizna* lavina *pritvara* se u glečer! A šta ti je glečer, ..*bo* li te glečer da te ..*bo*?! A Potz će ti meni: To su *skamenjeni snigovi*! Dobro, kažem ja njemu, dobro... More Allah svašta dat’... pa i to da imaju *skamenjeni snigovi*...

I tako, sva kuća Huse Austrougara obilazila je bolesnika. Danima i noćima, a on je buncao, sve više je tonuo u svoju mladost, nabrajao je Karpatе i karpatska brda, pa Alpe, Soču i Pijavu, a onda Albaniju, Skadar i Zeleniku, pa Srbiju, njezin Cer i njezinu Kolubaru, dozivao je *nadstarišnu* Hansa Hammera Potza,

heeej ti, zašto ti (*oooh, ti, švabovski li Švabane jedan!*)

ovima našim, *prikucер zgiblim*, koliciš krstove nad glavama, zašto?!

Sram te i stid bilo, Švabane jedan švabovski!

Znadeš li ti da smo mi muslimani?!

Jel’ tebi jasno ko smo mi i odakle smo mi *porikli* i *ponikli*, i onda stali pod carsku zastavu, hrabro?!

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A on, Hans Hammer Potz, će ti meni (*priko* tolmaka Stipana Vranješa): Huseine, razumim te, sve te razumim! Ali: Nadgrobno slidovanje *ciloj vojsci* došlo nam je u krstovima, *nejma* vaših nišana muslimanskih, *nejma* vaših bašluka islamskih, a pravo rekav: Niste ih nikad ni tražili! Šta ste vi muslimani, o li ti soldate Huseine, šta ste to vi sprva rata tražili?! Šta?! Samo kazan bez svinjetine, to ste tražili! I tabor hodže, i njih! Mislili ste na *jilo* i na *hodže*, a drugo, eeeh, u to drugo vi niste ni *virovali* da more doć! Briga vas bilo *hiljadu devestocetrneste* šta će vam biti nad grobnim uzglavljem... Mislili ste da je rat svadba, *svirka čemaneta i gruhanje harmunike*, a ne pogibija, svakodnevno izlivanje *vrile* krvi na hladnu zemlju...

A ja, soldat Husein, ti se onda brecnem na *nadstarišinu* Hansa Hammera Potza, pitam ga: *Moremo* li makar sad' od cara tražit' nišane za naše zgible, umisto krstova?! Da nam stignu k'o *posmrtno slidovanje*?! Džaba sada pitaš, Huseine, džaba, dockan je, car gubi rat, nema se on kad bavit' nadgrobnim biljezima... Sad vojnika toliko gine, da je odavno nestaćica svakojaka, čak i običnih krstova uzglavnika..."

## **Barve višnje**

(odlomek iz romana)

Podovka se je spet približala bolniku, slišala je, kakor tudi njen sin, da Huso Avstro-Oger šepeta:

»... Italijani so zanič vojaki, kadarkoli so nas leta 1915 in 1916 premagali, je bila to prevara. Spominjam se, Salkica Kehonjić je umrl z drugimi petnajstimi našimi zaradi snežnega plazu, Italijani so odprli topovski ogenj pod vrh jasnih alpskih pobočij, mi pa smo se bili utaborili v podnožju planin, ki so parale nebo, streljali so Italijani naravnost v snežna bremena, sedem topovskih salv so nasuli pod alpske planine, vse v globoke zamete, tako so spravili v gibanje snežne gmote, ena, tista peta, je pokopala Salkico Kehonjića, škoda, velika škoda, v njegovih nedrih je ostal Gaševičev *Mevlud*<sup>1</sup> ... Ampak ali smo iskali Salkico Kehonjića in njegove zmrznjene tovariše?! Nismo! Ne zato, ker smo bili strahopetci (to smo bili, kajti tudi v vojni so vse vrste strahopetnosti), nismo jih iskali zato, ker smo doumeli: ni take lopate, ki bi z njih odstrla snežne planine. Poleg tega smo mi, preživeli, morali najprej odgnati Italijane, zanič vojska so, to vam jamčim, zanič, kajti hitro smo jih razgnali! Potem smo se vrnili in pokopali mrtve, ki niso imeli te sreče, da bi jih zametel snežni plaz. 'Kaj pa je s Salkico Kehonjićem in njegovimi tovariši?' vprašam jaz, soldat Husein, nadstarešino Hansa Hammerja Potza, on pa meni (prek tolmača Stipana Vranješa): 'Vojaški strokovnjaki pravijo: Tale snežni plaz se spreminja v ledenik!' 'Kaj pa je to ledenik, bemti ledenik, naj te ...?!' Potz pa meni: 'To je okamnelo snegovje!' 'Dobro,' mu rečem, 'dobro ... Alah lahko da vse ... tudi okamnelo snegovje ...'

In tako je vsa hiša Husa Avstro-Ogra obiskovala bolnika. Podnevi in ponoči, on pa je bledel, vse bolj je tonil v svojo mladost, našteval je Karpatе in karpatske hribe, pa Alpe, Sočo in Piavo, potem pa Albanijo, Skadar in Zeleniko, pa Srbijo, njen Cer in njeno Kolubaro, klical je nadstarešino Hansa Hammerja Potza:

'Heeeej, ti, zakaj ti (*oooh, ti švabski Švab, ti!*)  
tem našim, ki so predvčerajšnjim padli,  
nad glavami količiš križe, zakaj?!

<sup>1</sup> Pesem o rojstvu Božjega poslanca Mohameda, ki jo je napisal Salih Gaševič.  
(Op. prev.)

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Sramota! Sram naj te bo, ti Švab švabski, ti!  
 A ti veš, da smo muslimani?!  
 A je tebi jasno, kdo smo mi in od kod izviramo in od kod smo  
 vzniknili,  
 pa potem stopili pod cesarsko zastavo, pogumno?!

On pa, Hans Hammer Potz, mi reče (prek tolmača Stipana Vranješa): ‘Husein, razumem te, popolnoma te razumem! Ampak na grobno sledovanje<sup>2</sup> za vso vojsko je prišlo v križih, ni vaših *nišanov*<sup>3</sup> muslimanskih, ni vaših *bašlukov*<sup>4</sup> islamskih, sicer pa, po pravici povedano, nikoli jih niste niti zahtevali! Kaj ste vi, muslimani, hej, tudi ti, soldat Husein, kaj ste vi na začetku vojne zahtevali?! Kaj?! Samo kotel brez svinjine, to ste hoteli! In *hodže*<sup>5</sup> v taboru, tudi njih! Mislili ste na hrano in *hodže*, na drugo pa, eeh, za to drugo niste niti verjeli, da bi lahko prišlo! Brigalo je vas *tisoč devetstoštirinajstega*, kaj bo nad vašim grobnim zglavjem … Mislili ste, da je vojna svatba, *pesem violine* in *grmenje harmonike*, ne pa pogibel, vsakodnevno polivanje vrele krvi po hladni zemljji …’

Jaz pa, soldat Husein, se nato zaderem na nadstarešino Hansa Hammerja Potza, vprašam ga: ‘Lahko vsaj *zdaj* od cesarja zahtevamo *nišane* za svoje padle, namesto križev?! Da nam jih pošljejo kot *posmrtno sledovanje*?!’ ‘Zaman zdaj sprašuješ, Husein, zaman, prepozno je, cesar izgublja vojno, nima se kdaj ukvarjati z nagrobnimi znamenji … Zdaj umira toliko vojakov, da je že zdavnaj vsesplošno pomanjkanje, še navadnih nagrobnih križev …’«

*Prevedla Sonja Dolžan*

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<sup>2</sup> Kar komu pripada po dogovoru, pogodbi ali zaradi službe. (Op. prev.)

<sup>3</sup> Muslimanski nagrobeni spomenik. (Op. prev.)

<sup>4</sup> Muslimanski nagrobeni spomenik. (Op. prev.)

<sup>5</sup> Muslimanski duhovnik. (Op. prev.)

## The Colours of Sour Cherry

(excerpt from the novel)

Podovka approached the sick man again and heard, as did her son, Huso Austro-Hungarian whisper:

“...Italians are miserable soldiers – those who brought about our demise in 1915 and 1916 – they had done it with trickery, as usual. I recall now, Salkica Kehonjić died with another fifteen of our kind under a snow avalanche. The Italians fired cannonry onto the pellucid Alpine slopes and we were encamped at the foot of the hills tearing up the sky. The Italians fired directly into the snowy loads, seven cannon discharges had they fired under the Alpine hilltops into the deep snowdrifts, setting in motion mounds of snow, one of which, the fifth, engulfed Salkica Kehonjić – a pity, a great pity, he carried away Gašević’s *Mevlud* in his chest... But did we go looking for Salkica Kehonjić and his frozen comrades?! No! Not because we were cowards (which we were because all kinds of cowardice exist in the war too), we did not go looking for them because we realised: there is no shovel fit to dig away the snowy hills. Besides, we, the survivors, first had to chase away the Italians, a ridiculous army, I avouch them to be no army at all as we quickly chased them away! We then returned and buried our dead, those who had been unlucky to be swallowed by the mounds of snow. And what is to become of Salkica Kehonjić and his comrades? – I asked, this soldier here Husein, I asked officer Hans Hammer Potz, and he replied (through the interpreter Stipan Vranješ): Military experts say: This avalanche will turn into a glacier! And what are glaciers, to hell with them?! Potz replied: They are lapidified snows! Well then, I said, alright... Allah provides all sorts of things... lapidified snows as well...”

And thus, the entire house of Huso Austro-Hungarian attended to the sick man. Days and nights, he raved on, returning more and more into his youth, ranting about the Carpathians and its hilltops, the Alps, Soča and Piave, Albania, Shkoder and Zelenika, then Serbia, its Cer and Kolubara, and he evoked officer Hans Hammer Potz,

Hey you, why did you (*oooh, you, the German of all Germans!*) pound the crosses over the heads of our men, perished the day before last, why?!

Shame on you, the German of all Germans!

Do you not know that we are Muslims?

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Do you not understand who we are and what our roots and origin are,  
from where we came to fight under the emperor's flag, bravely?!

And him, Hans Hammer Potz, told me (through the interpreter Stipan Vranješ): Husein, I understand, I understand everything! But the tombstone ration for the entire army is comprised of crosses, there are no Muslim tombstones, *the nishans*, there are no Islamic *bashlyks* you raise. Truth be told, you never asked for them! What did you Muslims or you, Soldier Husein, what did you ask for at the outset?! What?! A pork-free cauldron, that is what you asked for! And camp imams, them too! You thought of food and imams, while this other thing, well, you never believed that this other thing can come about! You cared not in 1914 about the headstones on your graves... You thought of war as a wedding party, as the sound of kamancheh and racket of accordion, and not the demise, the daily spillage of hot blood on the cold soil...

And I, Soldier Husein, snapped at officer Hans Hammer Potz: Can we ask the emperor for *the nishans* instead of crosses for our dead?! To receive them as posthumous allowance?! You ask to no avail now, Husein, to no avail, it is too late, the emperor is losing the war, he has no time to deal with tombstones... So many soldiers are dying, all things are scarce, even the ordinary cross headstones...

*Translated by Aida Spahić*



*Foto © Daniele Croci*

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# Nataša Kramberger

Nataša Kramberger, pisateljica, kolumnistka, ekološka kmetovalka in zeliščarica, se je rodila leta 1983 in otroštvo preživel v vasi Jurovski Dol na Štajerskem. Na Ljubljanski Fakulteti za družbene vede je diplomirala iz komunikologije, po študiju pa odšla najprej v Utrecht in nato v Berlin. V novinarstvo se je podala takoj po gimnaziji, v literarno ustvarjanje malo kasneje. Že s prvencem, romanom *Nebesa v robidah* (2007), je pritegnila kritičko pozornost in bila med nominiranci za nagrado kresnik. Zanj je leta 2010 prejela nagrado Evropske unije za književnost. Sledili so roman v rimah in slikah *Kaki vojaki* (2011), knjiga zbranih časopisnih in revijalnih kolumn, v katerih je pisala o svojem življenju v Berlinu, *Brez zidu. Časopisna pričoved o Berlinu in drugih krajih, 2004–2014* (2014), pesmi in prozni zapisi *Tujčice* (2014) ter roman *Primerljivi hektarji* (2017), deloma avtobiografsko delo, v katerem se pripovedovalka po dolgem bivanju v Berlinu vrne domov, v majhno slovensko vas, in postane ekološka kmetovalka. Avtorica v svojih besedilih pogosto prepleta ruralno in urbano, realizem sedanjosti z mitologizirano preteklostjo, ter obenem spaja novinarske, eseistične in literarne žanre. Njena dela so prevedena v več jezikov. Poletja preživila v Jurovskem Dolu, kjer je ustanovila eko-kolektiv Zelena centrala, v katerem promovira načela ekologije, umetnosti in socialnega vključevanja, zime pa v Berlinu, kjer vodi slovensko-nemško kulturno društvo Periskop.

Nataša Kramberger, a writer, ecological farmer and herbalist, was born in 1983 and spent her childhood in the village of Jurovski Dol in Styria, Slovenia. She graduated from the Department of Communication Science at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana and continued her studies in Utrecht as well as in Berlin. She began writing journalism immediately after high school, and soon commenced literary writing. Her debut novel *Nebesa v robidah* (Heaven in a Blackberry Bush, 2007) gained the attention of the critics and was nominated for the Kresnik Award for the best Slovene novel. It also won the 2010 European Union Prize for Literature. She went on to publish the novel in rhyme *Kaki vojaki* (Such Soldiers, 2011), a collection of newspaper and magazine columns in which she wrote about her life in Berlin, *Brez zidu* (Without a Wall, 2014), poems and fiction notes *Tujčice* (Catkins, 2014), and the novel *Primerljivi hektarji* (Comparable Hectares, 2017), a partially autobiographical work in which the narrator returns to a small Slovene village after living in Berlin for a long time and becomes an ecological farmer. Kramberger often mixes the rural and the urban in her work, the realism of the contemporary with the mythologized past, while combining the genres of journalism, essays, and belles-lettres. Her works have been translated into many languages. She spends her summers in the village of Jurovski Dol, where she founded the eco-collective Zelena centrala (Green Central) with which she promotes the principles of ecology, art, and social inclusion. She spends her winters in Berlin, where she runs the Slovenian-German cultural association Periskop.

## Februar

### PASTI MORAŠ

(odlomek iz romana Primerljivi hektarji)

Gozd se dvigne nad menoj kot katedrala. Ravnina z zvončki je vse tanjša, ožja, vpeljuje me v prostor kot preprog. Bolj ko vstopam, manj me je. Nad menoj se bočijo vzpetine v skoraj vintgar, in na njih, povsod in daleč zgoraj, krošnje, smreke, golo drevje. Z vseh strani me vklene veličina, skloni se nad mano kot v posvet. Kot bi se drevesa v krogu prijela čez ramena in se zazrla name. Gledajo me, opazujejo, naenkrat vanje silovito bušne veter. Zastoka, pripoveduje. Moram se sesesti. Še isti hip se zjočem.

Težko pojasnim.

»Kje si, voda?«

Zagledam se po kosih. Preteklost in prihodnost se razgrneta v otipljivo sliko, vse imam pred sabo, telo, ki je verjelo, da je narejeno za pripovedovanje, in vendar, kaj bo pripovedovalo? Komu? Ko sem bila stara sedem let, sem svojemu najljubšemu kmečkemu opravilu rekla ven jemanje. Oma je ogromne oranžne buče razsekala na pol, s sekiro, jaz pa sem v razčesnjene polovice zarila roke in iz njih ure in ure jemala mazlava zelena semena. Dneve in dneve smo jih nato sušili na plehnatih pladnjih na garaži, jih sipali v kište in jih na koncu odpeljali v oljarno Petovar, kjer je dišalo po praženih oreščkih. Domače bučno olje je bilo zelenočrno, gosto. Zdaj tam zagledam svoje telo. Kot razčesnjena buča leži, razsekano na pol, in mazlave roke iz njega jemljejo semena: koliko olja bo nateklo? Bo kaj močno? Bo kaj grenko?

Zagledam se po letnih časih kakor pravkar prehojeno preddverje gozda. Najprej zvončki, beli, nato kalužnice in mlečki, rumeni, nato pa zmeraj bolj zarasla neprehodna močvara, voden osat, medenike, temni šopi met. Na koncu golota z blatom. Metamorfoza krajine je lepša od metamorfoze telesa. Stojim pred sabo kot pred ogledalom. Hrbet se modelira čez hrbtenjačo po sunkovitih razteznih silah, kopljji, krampaj, tlači, ozko zapestje, nekdaj krhko, se debeli v čokato žilavo meso, prsi se povešajo čez prepotene kotanje, glava se prazni v votlo bolečino, tlači, krampaj, kopljji, čelo se guba v razgaljenem soncu, obraz je suh in na nosu mi odstopa koža, julij je, mogoče junij, samokolnico potiskam navkreber, glasno hropem in na kosmate zobe se mi prijema jetrna slina, ustnice se razcvetajo v

herpes, od mandljev mi smrdi žeja, žeja, žeja, lasje so dolga mastna kita, kakšna ogabna, zanikrna, dolga mastna kita. Začutim bolečino med ramo in vratom, nad lopatico. Na točki, kjer se mišica drži kosti, me peče, grozljivo peče. Strgana je! Ustavim se, da bi ulovila sapo. Na levem stegnu imam krasto, brazgotino, komolci so podraj-sani in skelijo, gležnji popikani in srbijo. Ne morem razmišljati. Ne morem razmišljati. Zvijem se v polžka.

Sredi pljučne votline zagledam utrip, kužno zamero, razločno in jasno: onegavljeni telo, kaj boš pripovedovalo? Komu? Črke ti gni-jejo v želodcu od nuje, da bi se izpisale, misli ti bezljajo po njivi kot razmetane spake, besede ti tečejo iz nosa v zamazane robčke, medtem ko ti? Ah, kopljji, njivo, kopljji, njivo! Kako boš ta žnoder besed še kdaj postavila v vrsto? Otresem z glavo in skušam prevrteti film nazaj, pa naprej, pa nazaj, pa naprej, v zamegljenih podobah skušam razločiti drevesa od gozda, smreke delajo ššš, veter zavija uuu, kakšna napaka, kakšen nesporazum! Nazaj! Katedrala nad me-noj naredi ooo, in naredi aaa, in naredi uuu, drevesa se sklonijo niže in naredijo:

»Šššššššššššš.«

Zagledam se v sivi pižami, sredi dneva, sredi noči, sredi dneva, sredi noči, po toaletnih školjkah kašljam zagonjene pljunke in iz mene tečejo krčevite driske, bruham redko brezbarvno snov, blju-vam strjene rjave kose, izčrpanost črevesja pripoveduje zataknjene pokrajine, »Dovolj!«, vzklikam, »Dovolj imam!«, a to telo nima se-men, nima olja, onegavilo se je čez vsako smotrno mejo, znucano je:

»Znucala si sel!«

Kdo je to rekel? V sencih zaslšim potresanje činel, mišice mi zavi-brirajo v odločnih udarcih bobna, v ušesa in v pljuča se mi prikrade rog, ki mi v sunkovitih vdihih krade sapo. Po dolini zaigra tenka, predirna glasba. Vabi me. Mika. Ne razumem, kje se je režija podobe snela s povodca, a preteklost in prihodnost se zmešata v nerazločljiv zmazek. V sebi zagledam svet, a ta svet noče v besede, ničesar ne zmorem upovedati, vsako misel posebej si moram izprositi kakor božanski izum, prosim, prosim, rotim, trgam nevidne beležke, gri-zem neobstoječe svinčnike, stavki se mi izmikajo, povedi so se mi odpovedale, onegavila si se, onegavila, tukaj imaš:

»Začasa začne žgati, kar misli kopriva postati!«

Kaj je bilo to?

...

Ej! Kaj je bilo to?

...

Ničesar ne razumem.

»Kje si, voda?«

Ozrem se okoli sebe. Zdi se, da ni minila niti minuta, nič. Iztegnjenimi nogami sedim na mogočnem padlem deblu. Drevesa šumljajo nad menoj kot nezainteresirani stebri. Srce mi bije v lagodnem ritmu, na kožo mi pronica svetloba, ki preseva skozi veje smrek. Hm. Življenje je ustvarilo premor, svarečo pesem, zdaj pa se hoče potuhniti pred lastno jasnovidnostjo. Tišina v gozdu se pretvarja, da je zaposlena sama s sabo. Sonce potuje k zatonu, počasi. Na nizkih smrečicah se lovijo sinice.

Začudim se lastni pomirjenosti. Čas in prostor sta se izkrčila v markirano pešpot, ki je hkrati obstajala kot možnost, kot predogled, kot spomin in kot bojazen. Točke na zemljevidu so se povezale v rešeno uganko: »Pasti moraš.« Tolažeče kot nomadske globeli, ki ti spodomaknejo tla v trenutku, ko ne gledaš, in vendar: kakšen čuden, trmast mir!

Vstanem. Potrebujem trenutek, da razporedim smeri neba. Dva koraka naprej, in razpoka se pojavi naravnost pred mano.

»Tu si, voda.«

Bila je resnica o vodi.

Bil je ta sestanek, hrupen in zakajen, kakor so hrupni in zakajeni vsi sestanki, na katerih se odloča, kdo piše in kdo plača. Soba s keramično pečjo v gostilni Plateis, kjer so sklenjenim poslom na čast kartali krayji meštarji, je bila zložena v masivno omizje z lesenimi stoli in ženske in moški vsenaokoli so ustvarjali strašanski kraval. »Ne bodite pahnjeni! Take ponudbe hitro ne bo več na mizi!«

Treba bi bilo znati pošteno povedati, kakšen je bil čigav namen, a je nemogoče; vse, kar imamo, so sprejete odločitve. Vidim: človek v gvantu, predsednik ali nekakšen šef, se v gromkem vpitju dviga in spušča s stola, nasršen. V rokah ima šope papirjev in okoli vrata kravato, na njegovi levi in desni moški v srajcah, ki globoko prikimavajo, ja, ja, ploskajo, bravo, bravo, nazdravljujo. V drugi ali tretji vrsti sedi nekaj žensk, dregajo se pod rebra in brcajo v gležnje, vedno močneje, vedno močneje, dokler ena od njih, tista s črnimi lasmi in rdečo obleko, ne vstane, odločno: »Boš utihnil malo, da še kdo kaj pove?«

Njen glas je hripav in piskav, kot da bi imela angino, z vseh strani jo pod rebra rukajo druge ženske, da mora glasno zakašljati. V vsej svoji hripavosti reče: »To je naša voda.« Naša, reče, vsi smo kopali, zakliče. »Izvir je čist in za vse je zadost, kaj nam boš vozil mestnega hudiča, zamazanega s praški, za katerega nikoli ne bomo vedeli, od kod prihaja in zakaj!« Zdaj se človek v gwantu zares razkuri: »Kakšen hudič, kakšni praški, to je moderna voda! Moderna!« se razpeni. »Zastopiš? To je voda za vse naročnike, za vse brege, za vse doline! Profesionalna storitev brez trte mrte, zdravstveno pregledana! Kaj se boš obešala, kdo je kaj kopal! Tu gre za napredek! Za razvoj! Boš ti garantirala, da je naše vode zadost?« Ženska se nasmeje: »Sam veš, da je vode zadost. Če pa so te s čim podmazali, pa rajši tako povej.« »Če se priključi še Partinje, bo posrkana zadnja kaplja! To je riziko! Kaj pa boš takrat? Nazaj v mlaki kikle prala?« Zdaj človek spet pokaže na svoje papirje in jih vrže v zrak: »Ne bodite pahnjeni! Za par mark po glavi lahko dobimo nove cevi! Iz Maribora! Novo napeljavo! Take ponudbe ne bo nikoli več na mizi!«

Po sobi se razleže neodločen aplavz. Moški prikimavajo, cigarete se prižigajo, ženske se rukajo pod rebra. Ena od njih, tista s črnimi lasmi in rdečo obleko, tista z angino, stopi na stol, roke v bok, in vzklikne:

»Potem pa gremo! Glasujmo!«

Nato se zgodi vse pomešano. Srajce mahajo, gwanti krilijo, papirji letajo v zadimljeni zrak, ženski glasovi se dvigajo po sobi, piskajo, kašljajo, moški glasovi udarjajo po mizi, se krohotajo, preštevajo, hrup migeta nad keramično pečjo kakor bajalica nad puščavo, glasovalne pravice se mešajo po kupčkih kakor karte govejih meštarjev, delajo se križci, rišejo se krožci, vse je nabasano in zakajeno ... Babica, moja edina še živeča oma, me pokliče na telefon. »Spet sem jo sanjala,« reče. »Kaj si sanjala, oma?« »Lehkico.« »Kaj?« »Lehkico, našo vodo. Tako močno sem sanjala, da jo pijem, da sem se zbudila od žeje.«

Če bi bilo treba napisati knjigo o hrepenenju, bi jo bilo treba napisati tako: moja babica, znova mlada, teče po hribu navzgor med travo in gostim listjem, dolgi črni lasje plapolajo za njo v mehkih valovih in rdeča obleka se ji lovi med kolena. Teče, teče, dokler ne prispe do pravega kraja. Z zaprtimi očmi, rdeče zadihana, v počepu sklene dlani, da bi s hlastnimi požirkri zajela vodo iz izvira, ki je nekoč, pred nekim hrupnim zakajenim sestankom v stari gostilni

Plateis, napajal njeno vas. Izvir se je imenoval Lehkica. Njegova voda je bila lahka kot zrak in je stekla po grlu kot sveti duh.

»Tu si, voda.«

\* \* \*

Gozdna tla pred mano se odprejo v razpoko, iz katere lahkočno vrvi voda. Nasmehnem se. Še nikoli nisem prišla sem gor. Dolgo zrem v sliko, ki se ne pusti motiti. Počepnem in izpijem požirek. Če bi bilo treba napisati knjigo o upanju, bi jo bilo treba napisati tako: ...

Še dolgo sedim in poslušam gozd.

»Šssssssss.«

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## *February*

### YOU MUST FALL

(excerpt from the novel Comparable Hectares)

The trees rise above me like a cathedral. The snowdrop plain is shrinking, narrowing, introducing me to the space beyond like a rug. The deeper I enter, the less of me there is. The slopes upwards arc into what's nearly a canyon, lined, everywhere and far up there with treetops, pines, naked trunks. I'm shackled by greatness on all sides, it's bending over me as if inviting deliberation. As if the trees had put their arms around one another's shoulders, all staring at me. Watching, observing, suddenly ruffled by the wind, forcefully. Lamenting, narrating. I have to sit down. I start crying straight away.

It's hard to explain.

"Water, where are you?"

I see myself piece by piece. Past and future unravel into a tangible diagram, it's all right before me, the body that believed it was made for storytelling. What story to tell, though, and to whom? When I was seven I dubbed my favourite fieldwork task the "scoop." Gramma, wielding a hatchet, clove huge orange pumpkins in half, and I'd force my hands into the split parts, extracting the gungy green seeds for hours at a time. Days upon days, we'd be drying them on sheet-metal trays on top of the garage, shaking them into crates to be shipped to the Petovar oil mill, rife with the scent of roast nuts. Home pumpkin oil was green-black, viscous. Now I see my body over there, like a cloven pumpkin rent in half, gungy hands extracting the seeds: how much oil will be pressed? How potent? How bitter?

I stare across the seasons like a freshly threaded forest threshold. First the snowdrops, white, then marigolds and spурges, yellow, then increasingly denser, soon impenetrable marshes, thistle, bastard balm, murky bunches of mint. Finally, nakedness and mud. The landscape's metamorphosis is more pleasant than that of the body. I stand before me like a mirror. The back stretches across the spine with taut distension – dig, swing, pummel – the thin wrist, once so fragile, thickening into sinewy veiny meat, the breasts drooping over the sweaty valley, the head emptying into hollow pain – pummel, swing, dig – the forehead wrinkling in the naked sun, the face parched, skin separating from the nose, it is July, perhaps June, I'm pushing the wheelbarrow uphill, grunting, wheezing, bile

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saliva coagulating on my grimy teeth, lips bursting into fever blisters, tonsils reeking with thirst, thirst, thirst, the hair a long greasy braid, what a disgusting, filthy oily braid. I feel sharp pain between the shoulder and the neck, above the blade. At the point where the muscle sticks to the bone, it stings, it burns so terribly. It's torn! I stop to get some air. There's a scab on my left thigh, a scar, the elbows are scraped and searing, the ankles stung and itching. I can't think. I can't think. I curl into foetal position.

In the midst of the chest cavity I see the pulse, the festering resentment loud and clear: fouled body, what story shall you tell? To whom? Letters rotting in your stomach from their burning desire to spell, thoughts scattering across the field like ragdoll freaks, words pouring from your nose into slimy tissues, while you? Eh, dig, dig, dig the soil! How to ever put these mucous meanings in line again? I shake my head, trying to rewind the film, fast forward, rewind, fast forward, in the blurring images I try to separate the trees from the forest, the pines going *sshhh*, the wind howling *wooo*, what blunder, what misunderstanding! Back! The cathedral above me goes *hooo*, and goes *haaa*, and goes *oooh*, the tall trees bending closer, going:

“*Ssshhhhhh.*”

I see myself in grey pyjamas, in the afternoon, at night, in the morning, at night, coughing up puss-filled spit over toilets, spasmodic with diarrhoea, vomiting thin, colourless matter, retching caked brown pieces, the exhaustion of the entrails speaking of rigid stuck landscapes, “Enough!” I cry out, “It’s enough!” but this body has no seed, has no oil, it’s been fouled beyond reasonable limit, it’s been worn out:

“You’re worn out!”

Who said that? I feel the crashing of cymbals in my temples, muscles vibrating in the bold beat of the drums, the horn sneaking into my ears and lungs, stealing my air in sneaky sips. A thin, piercing music spills across the valley. Inviting. Enticing. I can’t understand where the dramaturgy of the imagery lost its direction, but the past and present are amalgamating into an unintelligible smear. Within me I see a world but it will not become word, I’m unable to encode, forced to plead for each separate thought as if it were divine in origin, I implore, I beseech, I tear apart invisible notebooks, I chew on non-existent pencils, the sentences eluding, the phrases failing, you’re fouled, you’re fouled, you deserve it:

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*“In time it’s destined to burn, what nettle is destined to turn?”*

\* \* \*

What was that?

...

Hey! What was that?

...

I can’t understand.

“Water, where are you?”

I look around. It seems as if not a minute has passed, nothing. With legs outstretched, I’m sitting on a mighty fallen trunk. Trees rustle above me like uninterested pillars. My heart beats in a casual rhythm, light seeping across my skin, piercing through the pine branches. Hmm. Life has created a break, a song of warning, and now it seeks to hide from its own clairvoyance. The sylvan quiet pretends to be occupied with itself. The sun is travelling westward, languidly, as titmice chase each other across minor pine trees.

I wonder at my own inner peace. Time and space collapsed into a marked footpath, existing simultaneously as a possibility, a premonition, a memory and an apprehension. Points on the map connected into a solved riddle: “You must fall.” As comforting as those nomadic hollows, snatching solid ground from underfoot in a moment of carelessness, and yet: what strange, stubborn peace!

I stand up. It takes me a moment to allocate the cardinal directions. Two steps forward, and the crack appears right before me.

“Here you are, water.”

It was the truth of the water.

It was that meeting, smoke-filled and noisy, noisy and smoke-filled like all the meetings where *what’s what* is decided. A room with a ceramic stove in the Plateis tavern, where cow dealers sealed deals by playing cards, a massive table arrangement lined with wooden chairs, women and men making a terrible ruckus. “Don’t be stupid! You won’t be seeing an offer like this again!”

It would be proper to know everyone’s motivations, but that’s impossible; all we can work with are the decisions. I see: a man in a suit, the president or some kind of big wig, in his thundering yelling, rising and falling into his chair, snarling. He’s swinging a bundle of papers, a tie around his neck, to his left and his right, men in shirts yes-manning deeply, yes, yes, clapping, cheering, bumping

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glasses. In the second or third row sit some women, they're shoving one another's sides, kicking one another's ankles, stronger, faster, till one of them, the one in the red dress with the raven hair, finally rises with confidence: "Can you just shut up for a little, let someone else speak?"

Her voice is raspy and wheezy, like she has a sore throat, the other women keep poking her side from all sides, making her cough. Huskily, she rumbles: "It's our water." Ours, she says, all of us were digging for it, she clamours. "The source is clean, there's enough of it for everyone. Why import the city devil, polluted by chemicals and God knows what? We don't even know where it's coming from, or why!" The man in the suit is furious now: "Devil? Chemicals? It's modern water! It's high-end!" he fumes. "Get it? It's water for the customers, the hills, for all the valleys! Professional service, due diligence, sanitary inspection! Who cares who's been digging! This is about progress! It's about development! What, you're going to guarantee there's enough water for everyone?" The woman laughs: "You know perfectly well there's enough! If you've been buttered up ... be a man and admit it." "If Partinje connects, we're down to our last drop! It's a hazard! And then, what, you're just gonna go back to washing your skirt in the puddle?" Now the man points at his papers, tossing them into the air: "Don't be stupid! For a couple deutschmarks apiece we can get brand new pipes! From Maribor! New public utilities! You'll never see an offer like this again!"

Hesitant applause. Men are nodding, cigarettes are being lit, women are shoving one another's sides. One, the one with the raven hair and the red dress, the one with the sore throat, steps onto a chair, puts her arms akimbo and shouts:

"Let's do it then! We vote!"

Everything happens at once. Shirts flailing, dresses flapping, papers flying through the smoky air, female voices rising, piping, coughing, male voices banging against the table, guffawing, counting tally, noise strobing over the ceramic stove like a divining rod over a desert, voting rights stashed into piles like the cow dealers' cards, drawing crosses, drawing noughts, it's all stuffy and hazy ... Grandma, my single living nan, calls me on the phone. "I dreamt of it again," she says. "What did you dream about, nan?", "Lehkica." "What?" "Lehkica, our water. So vividly I dreamt I was drinking from it, I woke up from thirst."

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If a book was to be written on yearning, it should be written like this: my grandma, young again, runs uphill among the grasses and dense foliage, long raven hair cascading behind her in soft waves, red dress tangling between her knees. She's running, running till she makes it to the spot. Eyes closed, blushing with exertion, she clasps her hands together, crouching to scoop into insatiable gulps the source water that had once, before some noisy smoky meeting in the old Plateis tavern, quenched her entire village. The source was named Lehkica. Its water was as light as the air, sliding past the palate like the Holy Spirit.

"Here you are, water."

\* \* \*

The forest ground before me fissures into a crack, water gushing forth with tremendous ease. I smile. I've never been up here before. For a long while I stare at the composition, unbothered by my presence. I crouch and take a sip. If a book was to be written on hope, it should be written like this: ...

I sit there for a long while, listening into the forest.

"Shhhhhhhh."

*Translated by Jeremi Slak*



*Foto © Ekko von Schwichow*

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# *Jonas Lüscher*

Jonas Lüscher se je rodil leta 1976 v Zürichu (Švica) in odraščal v Bernu, kjer se je izšolal za osnovnošolskega učitelja. Leta 2001 se je preselil v München, kjer je več let delal kot scenarist in producent. Leta 2009 je tam magistriral na Visoki šoli za filozofijo in bil nato dve leti sodelavec Inštituta za tehnologijo, teologijo in naravoslovne znanosti Univerze v Münchenu. Leta 2011 je vpisal doktorski študij na Švicarski visoki tehniški šoli v Zürichu, vendar ga ni končal. V študijskem letu 2012/13 je kot raziskovalec gostoval na Oddelku za primerjalno književnost Stanfordove univerze. Lüscher je literarno pot začel z opernim libretom *Jetzt* (Zdaj, 2012), ki ga je uglasbil skladatelj Mathis Nitschke, uprizorjen pa je bil v operni hiši v Montpellieru. Leta 2013 je izšel njegov prvenec, novela *Frühling der Barbaren* (*Pomlad barbarov*, 2017, Litera), ki jo je v slovenščino prevedla Tanja Petrič. Delo, ki ironično in z veliko črnega humorja tematizira finančno krizo, je prejelo več švicarskih in nemških nagrad ter bilo nominirano za obe najpomembnejši nagradi nemškega govornega prostora – nemško in švicarsko knjižno nagrado. Slednjo je Lüscher prejel leta 2017 za roman *Kraft*, v katerem se prek usode profesorja retorike Richarda Krafta, ki skuša na znanstvenem tekmovanju odgovoriti na milijon dolarjev vredno vprašanje in tako začeti svoje življenje znova, humorno in satirično loteva neoliberalizma. Obe deli sta prevedeni v več jezikov in sta bili prirejeni za oder. Lüscher je tudi družbeno angažiran; objavlja eseje o aktualnih družbenih problemih (imigracije, digitalizacija, finančni trgi itd.), lani pa je bil pobudnik evropske akcije proti nacionalizmu. Živi v Münchenu.

Jonas Lüscher was born in 1976 in Zurich, Switzerland, and grew up in Bern, where he qualified as a primary school teacher. He moved to Munich in 2001, where he worked as a script developer and producer for several years. He finished his MA at Munich School of Philosophy and worked for two years at the TTN at LMU Munich. He started PhD studies at ETH Zurich but never completed them. In 2012/2013, he was a visiting researcher at the Comparative Literature Department of Stanford University. Lüscher started his literary career with the opera libretto *Jetzt* (Now, 2012) for music composed by Mathis Nitschke; the opera was staged at Montpellier Opera House. His first novella, *Frühling der Barbaren*, was published in 2013, and Peter Lewis's English translation *Barbarian Spring* was published in 2014 (Haus Publishing). The work treats the recent financial crisis with irony and an abundance of black humour; it received several Swiss and German literary prizes, and it was also nominated for two of the most prominent awards in the German language space – the German and Swiss Book Prizes. Lüscher also received the latter in 2017 for his novel *Kraft*, in which he depicts the fate of Richard Kraft, a professor of rhetoric who is trying to answer a million-dollar question at a scientific contest and start his life anew by doing so. Lüscher addresses the topic of neoliberalism through humour and satire. Both works have been published in several languages (including Slovenian) and adapted for the stage. Lüscher is also socially engaged; he writes in-depth articles on current social problems (immigration, digitalisation, financial markets, etc.) and last year he was the initiator of a European action against nationalism. He lives in Munich.

## Kraft

(Auszug aus dem Roman)

### I.

Wir haben alle schon mit Liebe zu tun gehabt, von der wir dann einsehen mussten, dass wir sie uns nicht leisten können.

*Paul Ford*

Das Rumsfeldporträt hängt direkt in Krafts Blickachse. Wenn er wieder nicht weiterweiß und sein Blick über den Rand seines Notebooks hinweg in der Leere schwimmt, er scheint es als verwaschener Fleck in Rot, Blau und Grau vor der eichengetäfelten Wand. Es dauert immer nur wenige Atemzüge, bis sich die kalten Augen des Verteidigungsministers hinter der randlosen Brille ihr Recht verschaffen und, eine Art Leitstrahl aussendend, sich Krafts Bewusstseins bemächtigen, ihn unwillkürlich zum Fokusseren zwingen, sodass sich die Farbflecken in einer einzigen schnellen, fließenden Bewegung zu einem konkreten Bild verdichten, die tiefen Nasolabialfalten hervortreten, der lippenlose Mundstrich, die etwas kurz geratene Nase – die so gar nicht zu der scharfen Ausdrucksweise, für die der alt und ausgediente Falke berüchtigt war, zu passen scheint –, das akkurat gekämmte silberne Haar, der straffe Krawattenknoten, der den Hühnerhals fest umklammert hält und unter Zuhilfenahme des gestärkten Hemdkragens die selbstsichere, spöttische Visage daran hindert, dem nadelgestreiften Tuch zu entkommen, um auf den Adlerschwingen, die sich aus den Falten einer himmelblauen Fahne hinter dem rechten Ohr des berüchtigten Aphoristikers ausbreiten, in höhere Gefilde zu entschwinden.

Warte nur, denkt sich Kraft am siebten Tag, an dem er, tatenlos unter solcher Beobachtung stehend, sich wieder einmal durch diese Aufmerksamkeit verlangenden Augen aus seinen leeren Gedanken gerissen sieht, dir zum Trotz werde ich nach einem europäischen Ton suchen. Dies ist es, was ich zu tun gedenke. Einen europäischen Ton, in dem sich Leibniz' Optimismus und Kants Strenge mit Voltaires verächtlichem Schnauben und Rabelais' unbändigem Lachen

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verbinden und sich in Hölderlin'schen Höhen mit Zolas Gespür für das menschliche Leiden vereinigen wird und Manns Ironie ... nein, Mann würde er außen vor lassen, diesen halben Kalifornier.

Erst hatte er an einen Scherz geglaubt, als er vor sechs Monaten Ivans Mail aus Stanford mit dem Betreff *Theodizee* geöffnet hatte, aber Ivan beliebte nicht zu scherzen, noch nie, auch damals schon nicht, als sie sich einundachtzig in Berlin kennengelernt hatten, und die regelmäßige Korrespondenz, die sie in den letzten Jahrzehnten ausgetauscht hatten, zeigte in ihrer schnörkellosen Sachlichkeit, dass weder die verstrichene Zeit noch die kalifornische Sonne daran etwas zu ändern vermocht hatten. *Dear Dick*, lautete die englische Anrede, an die sich Richard Kraft längst gewöhnt hatte, so, wie er sich an das Ivan gewöhnt hatte, mit dem István Pánczél irgendwann – etwa zur gleichen Zeit, als kurze E-Mails die mit der Maschine getippten Briefe auf dünnem blauen Luftpostpapier abgelöst hatten – seine Nachrichten zu unterzeichnen begann. Und dann fuhr er fort, *deine Teilnahme ist sehr erwünscht. Sämtliche Kosten übernehmen wir. Give my regards to Heike and the twins. Best, Ivan.*

Im Anhang fand Kraft die aufwendig gestaltete Ausschreibung einer Preisfrage, die man zum Anlass des dreihundertsiebten Jahrestages des Leibniz'schen *Essays zur Theodizee über die Güte Gottes, die Freiheit der Menschen und den Ursprung des Übels* zu stellen gedachte und in Anlehnung an die Preisfrage der Berliner Akademie von 1753 *Gefordert wird die Untersuchung des Popeschen Systems, wie es in dem Lehrsatz «Alles ist gut» enthalten ist*, allerdings um einiges schlanker, aber auch optimistischer, folgendermaßen formuliert hatte:

Theodicy and Technodicy: Optimism for a Young Millennium  
*Why whatever is, is right and why we still can improve it?*

Der Modus Operandi war klar geregelt. Die Beiträge sollten an einem einzigen Nachmittag im Cemex Auditorium der Stanford University präsentiert werden. Eine schnelle Abfolge von Vorträgen, das Zeitlimit von 18 Minuten durfte nicht überschritten werden, der Einsatz von Präsentationssoftware war ausdrücklich erwünscht, das Publikum ausgewählt und illustre, die Welt – die Organisatoren

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schienen sich sicher, dass die Welt interessiert sei – per Livestream zugeschaltet. Dem Verfasser der preiswürdigsten Antwort winkte eine Million Dollar.

Ja, dachte Kraft, damit durfte man sich natürlich der Aufmerksamkeit der Welt gewiss sein.

Er blieb für einen Moment, bevor er weiterlas, an einem verrutschten Bubengesicht im besten Mannesalter hängen. *Tobias Erkner, Entrepreneur, Investor and Founder of The Amazing Future Fund*, benannte die Bildlegende den Mann mit der platten Nase und der Reflexion einer ringförmigen Blitzlampe in der Iris, die ein jugendlichenthusiastisches Funkeln in die eigentlich ausdruckslosen Augen zauberte. Kraft konnte sich nicht erinnern, jemals einen Text gelesen zu haben, der ihm in ähnlicher Weise seinen Verstand zu sprengen drohte, wie jener, in dem ebendieser Tobias Erkner unter seinem eigenen Porträt seine Vision darlegte und begründete, weshalb es so dringlich sei, dass sich die Besten und Klügsten, weltweit, mit dieser Frage befassten und er deswegen bereit sei, eine Million Dollar aus seinem Privatvermögen als Preisgeld auszuschreiben.

Nicht, dass Kraft keine Erfahrung mit Texten gehabt hätte, in denen die seltsamsten Ideen aus der Geistesgeschichte mit den krudesten weltanschaulichen Überzeugungen legitimiert wurden. Das kannte er von einer bestimmten Sorte intelligenter Erstsemester, die in zu jungen Jahren zu viel vom Falschen gelesen hatten, was im Zusammenspiel mit einer bestimmten hormonellen Disposition zu einer schwierigen Gemengelage führen konnte; so etwas bügelte er in der Regel in ein, zwei Semestern glatt.

Aber das hier war etwas anderes. Scheinbar mühelos und mit bestechender Selbstverständlichkeit gelang es dem Gründer des *Amazing Future Fund* augenscheinlich, Widersprüchliches, offensichtlich Falsches und klar erkennbar nicht Zusammengehörendes in einen gänzlich logisch wirkenden Zusammenhang zu bringen. Was Kraft am meisten verstörte, war das völlige Fehlen jeglicher emphatischer Rhetorik. Die Sprache war glasklar, schnörkellos, frei von allen Versuchen, den Leser in emotionale Geiselhaft zu nehmen. Es wäre mühelos möglich gewesen, den ganzen Text logisch zu formalisieren, in eine Kolonne von Prädikatoren und Junktoren zu verwandeln, an deren Ende mit zwingender Notwendigkeit

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Erkners Konklusion zu stehen hätte, auch wenn, das lag für Kraft auf der Hand, jede seiner Prämissen falsch war. Aber es war, als ob das den Verfasser nicht zu interessieren brauchte, nicht, solange den Gesetzen der formalen Sprache Genüge getan war. Kraft war erschüttert.

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Kraft, der in den Fächern Volkswirtschaft, Philosophie und Germanistik eingeschrieben war, den man aber auch in Veranstaltungen der Historiker, Soziologen und Politologen als engagierten Hörer antreffen konnte, genoss zu dieser Zeit an der Freien Universität einen Ruf als brillanter Denker, als einer, der mit seinen dreißig Jahren bereits fast alles gelesen hatte, was man gelesen haben musste, als einer jener Studenten, denen eine große akademische Karriere sicher war; aber weil er eben nur einer von jenen war, suchte er nach einem sicheren Mittel der Distinktion und wandte sich zu diesem Zweck dem Thatcherismus zu, einer weltanschaulichen Strömung, von der er sicher sein konnte, dass sie ihn in der Studentenschaft genügend isolierte, um fortan unter den Vielversprechenden als der verschrobene Vielversprechende und damit auf geheimnisvolle Weise als der Vielversprechendste unter den Vielversprechenden zu gelten.

Er erschrak gehörig, als in einer Vorlesung über Althusser am frühen Morgen des 20. Januars 1981 ein allen unbekannter junger Mann aus dem Auditorium das Wort ergriff, sich als ungarischer Dissident und politischer Flüchtling vorstellte und lauthals in gebrochenem Deutsch und ziemlich am Thema vorbei die an diesem Tag anstehende Vereidigung Ronald Reagans als historischen Moment und Wendepunkt in der Weltgeschichte pries, als Fanal gegen die kommunistischen Unterdrücker und ihre willfährigen Büttel in den geisteswissenschaftlichen Fakultäten der freien Welt. Kraft fürchtete, hier eigne sich einer sein Thema und damit seinen unique selling point an, begriff aber schnell, dass dieser István Pán-czél mit den zerdrückten Haaren am Hinterkopf ein wunderbarer Verbündeter war, der seinem einsamen Kampf gegen den starken Staat nicht nur die Legitimation des am eigenen Leib erfahrenen Unrechts, sondern auch den intellektuellen Glanz eines osteuropäischen Schachmeisters verlieh, denn István war als Mitglied einer Delegation der ungarischen Mannschaft zur Schachmeisterschaft

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der Universitäten nach West-Berlin gereist und hatte die Gelegenheit genutzt, sich abzusetzen.

Zumindest war das Pánczél's Version der Geschichte, die er fortan jederzeit bereitwillig erzählte und die auch nicht gänzlich gelogen war, aber zumindest von einem dehnbaren Wahrheitsbegriff Gebrauch machte, denn István unterschlug, dass er seinen Platz in der Schachdelegation den elfenbeinfarbenen Kunstfaserhemden, mit denen der ungarische Verband seine Spieler ausrüstete, zu verdanken hatte, da die Hemden nach zwei Stunden zu riechen begannen, als hätten ihre Träger nicht kleine Holzfiguren auf einem Brett herumgeschoben, sondern sich im Ringkampf gemessen. István, der die Qualifikation zur Turnierteilnahme weit verfehlt hatte, wurde nur nach Berlin mitgenommen, weil man jemanden brauchte, der nachts im Waschbecken des Hotelzimmers die verschwitzten Trikots der Turnierspieler wusch.

Als István am frühen Morgen des 20. Januars vom Geräusch eines Ikarus-Reisebusses aufwachte und aus dem Fenster seines Hotelzimmers blickte, sah er, wie seine Kameraden, die im Turnier den letzten Platz belegt hatten, mit müden Gesichtern in ihren Bus stiegen, und als er nur halb angezogen, mit einem Stapel frisch gewaschener Trikots und einem panisch gepackten Koffer auf den nächtlichen Parkplatz gerannt kam, konnte er nur noch zusehen, wie sich der hellblaue Bus in den Verkehr einfädelte und in Richtung Budapest verschwand; sein Fehlen wurde erst kurz vor Prag bemerkt, und so gaben sich Schachspieler, Trainer und Aufpasser auf einem tschechoslowakischen Rastplatz gegenseitig die Schuld, den Hemdenwässcher Pánczél vergessen und nicht geweckt zu haben, bis man sich auf eine abenteuerliche Geschichte einigte, wie sich der junge Mann unter raffinierten Täuschungsmanövern abgesetzt habe.

István saß derweilen auf der Bettkante in seinem West-Berliner Hotelzimmer und wartete vergeblich auf die Rückkehr des blauen Ikarus. Im Morgengrauen zimmerte er sich seine Geschichte zusammen, mit verblüffenden Parallelen zu jener, die sich seine Kameraden beinahe gleichzeitig ausdachten, stopfte die elfenbeinfarbenen Hemden in eine große Plastiktüte, griff sich seinen kleinen Koffer und schlich durch den Hinterausgang aus dem Hotel. Zwei Stunden irrte er ziellos durch das winterliche Berlin, fühlte sich bald wie eine getragene Socke, die man unter der Tagesdecke

vergessen hatte, bald weitete ihm eine Ahnung von neuer Freiheit die Brust, und schließlich rettete er sich vor der Kälte in einen noch leeren Hörsaal der Universität, in dessen Stille er sich seine eben erst ausgedachte Legende zu eigen machte und anschließend diesen Prozess, als sich der Raum zu füllen begann und ein, wie er fand, unerträglich schwärmerischer Privatdozent über einen in der Psychiatrie eingespererten französischen Marxisten sprach, besiegelte, indem er sich ein Herz fasste, dem Dozenten ins Wort fiel und sich ein erstes Mal vor Publikum als Ungarnflüchtling gerierte.

# Kraft

(odlomek iz romana)

## I.

Vsi smo že imeli opravka z ljubeznijo, ob kateri nam je pozneje postalo jasno, da si je ne moremo privoščiti.

*Paul Ford*

Rumsfeldov portret visi neposredno v Kraftovem vidnem polju. Ko spet ne ve, kako naprej, in njegov pogled zaplava čez rob prenosnika v praznino, se mu pred hrastovim opažem zdi kot spran madež v rdeči, modri in sivi barvi. Hladne oči obrambnega ministra za očali brez okvirjev že čez nekaj vdihov pritegnejo pozornost in se kot oddajni signal polastijo Kraftove zavesti, ga nehote prisilijo, da se osredotoči, tako da se barvni madeži v enem samem naglem, povezanem gibu zgostijo v sliko, izstopijo nazolabialne gube, črta ust brez ustnic, nekoliko prekratek nos – ki kot da sploh ne pristaja ostrim potezam, po katerih je stari in odsluženi sokol slovel –, skrbno počesani srebrnkasti lasje, zategnjena kravata, ki tesno oklepa kurji vrat in s poškrobljenim srajčnim ovratnikom preprečuje samozavestnemu, porogljivemu frisu, da bi pobegnil iz črtastega gvanta, da bi na orlovskeih perutih, ki štrlijo iz nagubane sinjemodre zastave za desnim ušesom zloglasnega aforista, odjadral v višje sfere.

Ti bom že pokazal, si misli Kraft sedmi dan, ko ga, spet nemočno podvrženega temu motrenju, iz praznih misli potegnejo te oči, hlepeče po pozornosti, zanalašč bom poiskal evropski ton. Prav to mislim narediti. Evropski ton, ki bo povezal Leibnizev optimizem in Kantovo strogost z Voltairevim prezirljivim prhanjem in Rabelaisevim nebrzdanim krohotom in se bo v Hölderlinovih višavah združil z Zolajevim občutkom za človeško trpljenje in Mannovo ironijo ... Ne, Manna bo izpustil, to napol prodano kalifornijsko dušo.

Najprej je mislil, da gre za šalo, ko je pred šestimi meseci odprl Ivanovo elektronsko sporočilo s Stanforda z zadevo *Teodiceja*, a Ivan se ni kanil šaliti, še nikoli, niti ne takrat, ko sta se leta enainosemdeset spoznala v Berlinu, pa tudi redno dopisovanje, ki sta ga gojila zadnjih nekaj desetletij, je v svoji skopi jedrnatosti kazalo na to, da niti pretečeni čas niti kalifornijsko sonce slednjega nista mogla

spremeniti. *Dear Dick*, kot ga je angleško ogovarjal Ivan, na kar se je Richard Kraft že zdavnaj navadil, tako kot se je navadil na ime Ivan, s katerim se je István Pánczél nekoč – približno takrat, ko so kratka elektronska sporočila zamenjala letalska pisma na tankem modrem papirju, natipkana na pisalni stroj – začel podpisovati. In potem je nadaljeval, *počaščeni bomo s twojo udeležbo. Stroške prevzamemo mi. Give my regards to Heike and the twins. Best, Ivan.*

V pripetku je Kraft našel okičen razpis z nagradnim vprašanjem, ki naj bi obeležilo tristo sedmo obletnico Leibnizevih *Esejev k teodiceji o božji dobroti, človeški svobodi in izvoru zla* in ki se je naslanjalo na nagradno vprašanje Berlinske akademije iz leta 1753: *Raziskati je treba Popov sistem, kot ga opiše sentanca »Vse je dobro«*, a se je nekoliko bolj okleščeno pa tudi bolj optimistično glasilo:

Theodicy and Technodicy: Optimism for a Young Millennium  
*Why whatever is, is right and why we still can improve it?*

Modus operandi je bil jasno zastavljen. Prispevki naj bi bili predstavljeni v enem samem popoldnevu v Cemexovem avditoriju Stanfordove univerze. Naglo zaporedje referatov, dolgih ne več kot 18 minut, uporaba računalniških pripomočkov za prezentacijo je bila izrecno dobrodošla, publika izbrana in ugledna, svet pa – videti je bilo, da so bili organizatorji prepričani, da bo svet to zanimalo – priklopljen prek livestreama. Avtorju častivrednega odgovora se je obetalo milijon dolarjev.

Ja, si je mislil Kraft, s tem bi pa človek res utegnil pritegniti pozornost sveta.

Preden je nadaljeval z branjem, se je za trenutek pomudil ob razpotegnjem deškem obrazu v najboljših moških letih. *Tobias Erkner, Entrepreneur, Investor and Founder of The Amazing Future Fund*, je opis ob fotografiji imenoval moškega s ploskim nosom in odsevom obročaste bliskovke v šarenici, ki je v skorajda brezizrazne oči pričaral mladostniško vzneseno iskrivost. Kraft se ni mogel spomniti, da bi kdajkoli prej bral besedilo, ki bi mu na podoben način skorajda izmaličilo um, kot to, v katerem dotedčni Tobias Erkner pod lastnim portretom razkriva in pojasnjuje svojo vizijo, zakaj naj bi bilo tako nujno, da se najboljši in najpametnejši po vsem svetu ukvarjajo s točno tem vprašanjem, in je za stvar pripravljen iz svojega zasebnega premoženja odštetи milijon dolarjev nagrade.

Saj ne da Kraft ne bi imel izkušenj z besedili, ki so upravičevala sinteze najbolj neneavadnih idej duhovne zgodovine z najbolj divjimi svetovnonazorskimi prepričanji. To mu je bilo poznano pri določeni vrsti inteligenčnih brucev, ki so premladi prebrali preveč napačnega, kar je lahko skupaj z določenim hormonskim stanjem vodilo v hudo raztresenost, ki jo je običajno utiril v enem ali dveh semestrih.

Ampak to tukaj je bilo nekaj povsem drugega. Videti je bilo, da je z lahkoto in očarljivo samoumevnostjo ustanovitelju podjetja *Amazing Future Fund* uspelo protislovne, očitno napačne in brezvomno nezdružljive reči spraviti v zvezo, ki je delovala povsem logično. Krafa je najbolj zmotilo umanjkanje vsakršne vznesene retorike. Jezik je bil nedvoumen, preprost, brez vsakršnih poskusov, da bi emocionalno zapeljal bralca. Z lahkoto bi šlo celotno besedilo logično formalizirati, ga spremeniti v kolono predikatov in operatorjev, ki bi morali nujno voditi v Erknerjev sklep, pa četudi, to je bilo za Krafta kot na dlani, je vsaka od njegovih premis napačna. Toda kot da pisca to sploh ne bi zanimalo, dokler je zadostil zakonitostim formalnega jezika. Kraft je bil pretresen.

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Kraft, vpisan na ekonomijo, filozofijo in germanistiko, ki ga je bilo kot angažiranega slušatelja mogoče srečevati tudi na predavanjih zgodovinarjev, sociologov in politologov, je v tem času na Freie Universität Berlin užival ugled sijajnega misleca, nekoga, ki je s svojimi triindvajsetimi leti že prebral skoraj vse, kar bi človek moral prebrati, bil je eden tistih študentov z zagotovljeno akademsko kariero; prav zato ker je bil eden od tistih, pa je iskal ziheraško točko razlikovanja in se zategadelj usmeril v *thatcherizem*, svetovnonazorsko strugo, za katero je bil prepričan, da ga dovolj izvzema iz preostale študentarije, da velja med obetavnimi za najbolj čudaškega obetavneža, s tem pa na nedoumljiv način za najobetavnejšega med najobetavnejšimi.

Pošteno se je prestrašil, ko je v zgodnjem jutru 20. januarja 1981 na predavanju o Althusserju neznani mladenič iz avditorija prevzel besedo, se predstavil kot madžarski disident in politični priběžnik ter na vse grlo v polomljeni nemščini in precej mimo teme hvalil na ta dan napovedano zaprisego Ronalda Reagana, češ da gre za zgodovinski trenutek in prelomnico v svetovni zgodovini, za svetlo točko v boju proti komunističnim zatiralcem in njihovim ustrezljivim biričem na družboslovnih fakultetah svobodnega sveta. Kraft se je

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zbal, da si nekdo prilašča njegovo temo in s tem njegov edinstveni »selling point«, a je kmalu dojel, da je ta István Pánczél s poležanimi lasmi na zatilju čudovit zaveznik, ki svojega osamljenega boja proti močni državi ne upravičuje le na podlagi krivice, ki naj bi jo izkusil na lastni koži, temveč tudi na podlagi intelektualne briljance vzhodnoevropskega šahovskega mojstra, kajti István je kot član delegacije madžarske ekipe odpotoval na univerzitetno šahovsko prvenstvo v Zahodni Berlin in izkoristil priložnost za pobeg.

Takšna je bila vsaj Pánczélova različica zgodbe, ki jo je potlej vselej rade volje pripovedoval in ki tudi ni bila povsem za lase privlečena, temveč je vsebovala vsaj kanček varljive resnice, kajti István je zamolčal, da se je za mesto v šahovski delegaciji z dresi iz umetnega materiala slonokoščene barve, s katerimi je madžarska šahovska zveza opremila svoje igralce, imel zahvaliti zgolj temu, da so srajce po dveh urah začele tako zaudarjati, kot da njihovi nosilci ne bi premikali majhnih lesenih figuric po igralni deski, temveč bi se merili v rokoborbi. István, ki se še zdaleč ni uvrstil v kvalifikacije za udeležbo na turnirju, je v Berlin prišel samo zato, ker so potrebovali nekoga, da je ponoči v umivalniku hotelske sobe pral preznojene trikoje tekmovalcev.

Ko je Istvána 20. januarja zgodaj zjutraj prebudil zvok Ikarusovega potovalnega avtobusa in je pogledal skozi okno svoje hotelske sobe, je videl, kako njegovi tovariši, ki so na turnirju zasedli zadnje mesto, z utrujenimi obrazi vstopajo na avtobus, in ko je le napol oblečen, s kupom sveže opranih trikojev in v paniki spakiranim kovčkom pritekel na nočno parkirišče, je lahko le še opazoval, kako se je svetlo modri avtobus začel vključevati v promet in izginil v smeri Budimpešte; da manjka, so ugotovili šele tik pred Prago, in tako so šahisti, trener in nadzornik na nekem češkem počivališču drug drugega krivili za to, da so pozabili zbuditi pralca Pánczéla in ga pustili v hotelu, dokler se niso zedinili o pustolovski štoriji o tem, kako se jim je mladenič s prebrisanimi fintami izmuznil.

István je medtem obsedel na robu postelje v svoji zahodnoberlinski hotelski sobi in zaman čakal na vrnitev modrega Ikarusa. V svitu si je spesnil zgodbo, osupljivo podobno tisti, ki so si jo skorajda istočasno izmislili njegovi tovariši, srajce slonokoščene barve je natlačil v veliko plastično vrečo, vzel svoj mali kovček in se skozi zadnja vrata odkradel iz hotela. Dve uri je brezciljno taval po zimskem Berlinu, delno se je počutil kot ponošena nogavica, ki jo

je nekdo pozabil pod pregrinjalom, delno mu je prsi napolnjevala slutnja nove svobode, nazadnje pa se je pred mrazom zatekel v eno od še praznih fakultetnih predavalnic, v tišini katere si je pravkar izmišljeno legendo začel prisvajati in je nato – ko se je začel prostor polniti in je neki, kot se mu je zdelo, nevzdržno zanesenjaški docent govoril o nekem francoskem marksistu, zaprtem na psihiatriji – ta proces zapečatil, tako da se je opogumil, docentu skočil v besedo in prvič pred javnostjo nastopil kot madžarski priběžnik.

*Prevedla Tanja Petrič*

# Kraft

(excerpt from the novel)

## I.

We've all been drawn into someone's love only to find out that we couldn't afford it.

*Paul Ford*

Rumsfeld's portrait hangs directly in Kraft's line of sight. When he finds himself stuck yet again, staring blankly into the void over the top of his computer screen, the portrait hovers like a blurry red, blue, and gray stain in front of the oak-paneled wall. It always takes a few breaths before the former secretary of defense's cold eyes behind rimless glasses reclaim their rights and, emitting a kind of guide beam, take control of Kraft's consciousness and force him to focus against his will until, in a single swift, fluid movement, the patches of color solidify into a concrete image and the nasolabial folds emerge, along with the thin, lipless mouth, the rather short nose—not exactly suited to the long-serving veteran hawk's notoriously caustic expression—the accurately combed silver hair, the precisely knotted tie that tightly grips the chicken neck and, with the assistance of the heavily starched shirt collar, prevents the scornful, self-confident face from escaping the pinstripe cloth and rising on the eagle wings outspread from the folds of the sky-blue banner behind the renowned aphorist's right ear before disappearing into loftier realms.

Just you wait, Kraft thought on his seventh day of sitting idly under this surveillance, torn once again from his vacuous thoughts by the imperious, demanding gaze, like it or not, I'm going to find a European tone. That's my plan. A European tone that will combine Leibniz's optimism and Kant's rigor with Voltaire's derisive scorn and Rabelais' irrepressible laughter and will unite them all in Hölderlinian spheres with Zola's sensitivity to human suffering and Mann's irony... no, better leave Mann out of it, that half-Californian.

At first Kraft had taken it for a joke, six months earlier, when he'd opened Ivan's email from Stanford with *Theodicy* in the subject line.

But Ivan wasn't one for joking, never had been, not even back when they first met in Berlin in '81, and their regular correspondence over the decades since showed, in all its sober practicality, that neither the passing years nor the California sunshine had changed Ivan at all in that respect. The email opened with *Dear Dick*, an English salutation Richard Kraft had gotten used to long before, just as he'd gotten used to the *Ivan* with which István Pánczél had at some point begun signing his communications—about the same time that brief emails began replacing letters typed on thin blue airmail paper. Ivan's email continued, *we very much hope you will participate. We will cover all costs. Give my regards to Heike and the twins. Best, Ivan.*

In an attachment, Kraft found the lavishly designed call to enter the essay competition held in honor of the 307th anniversary of the publication of Leibniz's Theodicy: *Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil*. The subject of the essay was based on the prize-question set by the Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1753—"An examination of the system of Pope as it is contained in the dictum: 'Whatever is, is right,'"—albeit in a rather more streamlined, but also more optimistic formulation:

Theodicy and Technodicy: Optimism for a Young Millennium:  
*Why whatever is, is right and why we still can improve it.*

The modus operandi was clearly set out. All the submissions would be presented over the course of a single afternoon in Stanford University's Cemex Auditorium. The talks would follow in swift succession with a strictly enforced 18-minute time limit; the use of presentation software was strongly encouraged; a select and illustrious audience would be in attendance and the world—the organizers seemed confident of the world's interest—would be tuned in via livestream. The author of the winning answer would receive one million dollars.

Yes, indeed, Kraft thought, at that price, one can certainly be confident of catching the world's attention.

Before reading further, his eyes lingered for a moment on the oddly boyish face of a man in his best years. *Tobias Erkner, Entrepreneur, Investor, and Founder of The Amazing Future Fund*, the caption identified the flat-nosed man with a flash-bulb's ring-shaped reflection in

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his irises, which conjured up a gleam of youthful enthusiasm in the otherwise expressionless eyes. Kraft couldn't remember ever having read a text that defied reason as blatantly as the one in which the aforementioned Tobias Erkner presented his vision under his own portrait and explained why it was so terribly urgent for the best and the brightest around the world to take up this question along with his motivation for underwriting the reward with a million dollars of his private fortune.

Not that Kraft was unacquainted with texts in which the oddest ideas in intellectual history were justified with the crudest of convictions. He had seen his share from a certain kind of intelligent first-year student who had read too many of the wrong books too early, which could, when combined with a particular hormonal disposition, lead to volatile situations. In general, he was able to iron out such wrinkles in a semester or two.

But this here was something different. With apparent effortlessness and an irresistible matter-of-factness, the founder of *The Amazing Future Fund* was able to establish what seemed like perfectly logical connections between obviously false statements, contradictory notions, and things that clearly had nothing to do with each other. What Kraft found most disturbing was the complete absence of emphatic rhetoric. Erkner's language was crystal-clear, straightforward, and free of any attempt to take the reader's emotions hostage. It would have been easy to diagram the arguments logically, to transform Erkner's text into a column of predators and logical connectives, at the bottom of which his conclusion would ineluctably and necessarily stand, even if, as was clear to Kraft, every one of the premises was false. But that seemed to be of no interest to the author as long as the formal rules of language were followed. Kraft was appalled.

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Kraft, who was registered as studying economics, philosophy, and German literature but was also assiduously attending lectures in the history, sociology, and political science departments, enjoyed a reputation in the Free University of Berlin at the time as a brilliant thinker who, at 23, had already read almost everything you had to read and as one of those students who was destined for an impressive academic career. However, because he was merely one of

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several, he looked for an effective way to distinguish himself from the others and to this end he turned to Thatcherism, an ideological current that was sure to isolate him sufficiently from the rest of the student body and make him the most unusual of the most promising students and thereby, in a mysterious way, make him come off as the most promising of the most promising.

Naturally, he was shocked on the morning of January 20, 1981, when a young man unknown to everyone in the auditorium took the floor during a lecture on Althusser, identified himself as a Hungarian dissident and political refugee, and in broken German began a loud and rather off-topic defense of Ronald Reagan, extolling him as a historic moment and turning point in world history, a beacon in the fight against the communist oppressors and their subservient lackeys in the humanities faculties in the free world. At first Kraft was afraid this man would usurp his territory and with it his unique selling point, but he quickly realized that this István Pánczél with his hair pressed flat against the back of his head was, in fact, a marvelous ally who would lend Kraft's lonely struggle against the powerful state not only the legitimacy of injustice inflicted on his own body, but also the intellectual sheen of an Eastern European chess master. István was, after all, a member of the Hungarian delegation sent to West Berlin for the university chess championship, where he had taken advantage of the opportunity to defect.

At least, that was Pánczél's version of the story, which he eagerly recounted at every possible occasion and it was not completely fabricated, not, that is, if one took a rather flexible approach to the truth, since István withheld the fact that he owed his spot on the chess delegation to the ivory-colored polyester jerseys with which the Hungarian Chess Federation outfitted its players, because after two hours the shirts began to smell as if the wearers were not moving little wooden figures over a board, but were competing in a wrestling match. István, who had failed spectacularly in the qualifying tournament, was only brought along to Berlin because they needed someone to wash the players' sweaty shirts in the hotel sink at night.

When the noise of an Ikarus tour bus woke him before dawn on January 20, István looked out the hotel room window and saw his teammates, who had come in last place in the championship, boarding the bus with tired faces. By the time he ran down to the parking lot, still half-dressed and carrying a pile of freshly washed

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jerseys and a hastily packed suitcase, all he could do was watch the light blue bus thread its way through traffic toward Budapest. His absence was not noticed until the bus was outside of Prague and so the trainer, the surveillance officer, and the players took turns blaming each other in a Czechoslovakian highway rest stop for forgetting to wake the shirt-washer Pánczél until they agreed on an adventurous tale of how the young man had defected using the most refined and subtle of ploys.

All the while, István sat on his bed in the West Berlin hotel room and waited in vain for the blue bus's return. In the dawning light, he cobbled together a story with astonishing similarities to the one his teammates had constructed at almost the same time, stuffed the ivory-colored jerseys into a large plastic bag, grabbed his small suitcase, and snuck out the hotel's rear exit. He wandered aimlessly for two hours through wintery Berlin sometimes feeling like a sock left behind under the bedspread, sometimes feeling his chest swell with the presentiment of a new freedom. He found refuge from the cold at last in an empty university auditorium and in the room's silence made the story he had just invented his own; and when the room began to fill and a lecturer who struck him as unbearably effusive began to speak of a French Marxist confined to a psychiatric asylum, István sealed the deal by screwing up his courage, interrupting the speaker, and presenting himself to the public for the first time as a Hungarian political refugee.

*Translated by Tess Lewis*



*Foto © Damjan Balbi*

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# Ace Mermolja

Ace Mermolja se je rodil leta 1951 in vse do študija živel v Gorici v Italiji. Iz slovenistike in primerjalne književnosti je diplomiral na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani ter kasneje služboval kot novinar pri *Primorskem dnevniku* v Trstu in tedniku *Novi Matajur* iz Čedad. Vseskozi je bil dejaven v slovenskih zamejskih organizacijah in se zavzemal za pravice slovenske manjšine na Tržaškem. Izdal je enajst pesniških zbirk, zadnja, *Čivk duše*, je izšla leta 2017. Mermolja je napisal tudi dramo *Pinko Tomažič in tovariši*, ki je bila leta 1981 uprizorjena v Slovenskem stalnem gledališču v Trstu, ter več publicističnih in eseističnih del. V zbirki kolumn *V izpostavljeni legi – Prostor in čas Slovencev v Italiji (1996–2011)* obravnava družbeni, politični in kulturni položaj tržaških Slovencev. Ta tematika je pogosta tudi v njegovi poeziji. V družbeno angažirani zbirki *Čivk duše* se Mermolja kritično loteva pereče migrantiske problematike, xenofobije, trka kultur, odnosa do domovine in slovensko-italijanskega sobivanja ter se ozira v lastno preteklost. Mermoljeve pesmi so uvrščene v antologije in predvedeni v več jezikov.

Ace Mermolja was born in 1951 and lived in Gorizia in Italy until his studies. He graduated from Slovene Studies and Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana and was later employed as a journalist with the daily newspaper *Primorski dnevnik* in Trieste and with the weekly magazine *Novi Matajur* in Čedad. He has also been active in different Slovenian organisations in Italy where he advocated for the rights of the Slovenian minority in the Trieste area. He has written eleven poetry collections, the last of which, *Čivk duše* (The Tweet of the Soul), was published in 2017. He is also the author of the play *Pinko Tomažič in tovariši* (Pinko Tomažič and Comrades), which was staged at the Slovenian Repertory Theatre in Trieste in 1981. In addition, he has also written several other non-fiction and works and essays. In columns that are collected in the publication *Vizpostavljeni legi – Prostor in čas Slovencev v Italiji (1996–2011)* (In the Exposed Position – The Space and Time of Slovenians in Italy (1996–2011)), he addresses the social, political and cultural positions of Trieste Slovenians. This is also a frequent theme in his poetry. In the socially engaged poetry collection The Tweet of the Soul, Mermolja critically addresses migrant questions, xenophobia, clash of cultures, the attitude to homeland, and Slovene-Italian co-habitation, while also reflecting on his own past. Mermolja's poems are included in various anthologies and have been translated into several foreign languages.

## **Fašist**

Vsakdo ima v svojem črevesju  
malega fašista, ki v jezi zardi  
kot petelinja roža in stiska  
v tvojo roko nabrušen nož.

Ubil bi Afganistanca, ki stopa  
med bori z ovčjim mehom na rami,  
ali partnerja v postelji, ki predolgo  
že leži ob tebi in seksa z muko in

z očmi, obrnjenimi v daljavo.  
Zabodel bi drugo, tuje in daljno  
s fašistom, ki ti vodi roko.

Navadno odgovoriš spokojno,  
pustiš Afganistanca in partnerja  
in zaspiš, sanjajoč čisto otroštvo.

Drugič poželjivo božaš nož  
in fantaziraš, kako polagaš rezilo  
na živo in napeto vratno žilo.

Tretjič spakiraš fašista  
v polivinilasto vrečko  
za novo jutro  
in grenek kapučino.

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## Razstrelitev

Ko se fantič s temnimi očmi  
razstreli v polnem avtobusu,  
prične napačno poglavje.  
Je knjiga, ki se levi  
v peščeno, smrtonosno kačo  
in se ovija mrtve roke.  
Je knjižnica vseh naših dni,  
ki se zaključijo z rdečo piko.

Napačno je, kot so napačne  
temne oči v tej mali glavi,  
seme, ki ga je fantič gojil  
v daljavi, onkraj vseh pustinj  
in preko vsake Božje previdnosti;  
v srcu neskončne žalosti.  
Je moj ta sin s svileno,  
še nikoli obrito kožo  
in opasan z bombami.

Nihče naj si ne upa vprašati,  
zakaj v tej noči luči kot psi  
obkrožajo ogrodje avtobusa.  
Vprašanja so mrtve kosti,  
raztresene po obcestni travi.

Vse je življenje, zaplodili smo ga  
mi in skupaj in gre  
skozi nas kot krdelo  
za svojim plenom.  
Je blazen sen  
tišine s pokom  
in z nokturnom siren  
po ubijajočem strelu.

Moj sin je v vsem,  
kar vidim in imam,  
je tenkočuten, oster  
in radikalen Pamukov  
rezbar smrti.  
Je sam in bitje  
z nedostopnim srcem  
in z mojim krivim  
molkom:

je strel v tišino,  
krvni curek,  
pristan v robido  
male  
leteče  
umirajoče  
duše.

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**Gost**

Potrka na vrata in je  
v temi bel kot sol,  
v luči počrni  
in ko odprem, mi vsili  
metle, da bi zlezel vame.

Vsekakor vstopi in se razpotegne.  
Malce mi gre na preplašen jok,  
ko iz njega cvetejo niti meduze,  
ki s prozornim vlaknom  
omrežijo notranjost hiše.  
Menda je zunaj sneg.

Sedaj sva dva, ki jezno  
sedeva za isto mizo,  
ki ni več moja, a niti  
njegova še ne more biti.

Potrebovala bi Boga kot  
razsodnika, a ima vsak  
svojega in oba molčita.

Eden v drugega vstopava,  
iz puščave peska v  
puščavo mestnih hiš,  
vsak obrit z različnim nožem,  
da drug drugemu reževa žile  
kot suhe veje grčavih dreves  
in se v naju razvija  
shizofrena identiteta.

Ni ljubezni, ki bi med dvema  
šivala prijazno vez:  
je le nuja, ki naju sili,  
kdo bo prvi stopil preko  
enega izmed dveh teles,  
ki sedita si nasproti  
v zdaj za dva  
pretesnem domu:  
jež in lisica.

Huda je nuja,  
da se sesekava  
in kar ostane,  
vzame samo zase  
ključ.

## *Fascist*

In their intestines, everyone's got  
a small fascist who, when angry, blushes  
like a cock's comb and folds  
a sharpened knife into their hands.

You'd kill an Afghan walking among pine trees  
with sheep-skin on his shoulder  
or your partner in bed who has lain  
beside you for too long, reluctantly having sex

and with eyes gazing into the far.  
You'd stab the other, the strange and the remote  
with the fascist leading your hand.

Usually, you react peacefully,  
leaving the Afghan and your partner,  
falling asleep to dream about pure childhood.

Another time, you caress the knife lustfully,  
imagining placing the blade  
on the live and strained jugular vein.

The third time, you pack your fascist  
into a plastic bag  
for a new morning  
and a bitter cappuccino.

## *Detonation*

As a dark-eyed boy  
blows himself up in a crowded bus,  
he starts the wrong chapter.  
It is the book that sloughs itself  
into a deadly sand snake  
and coils itself around a dead arm.  
It is the library of all our days  
which end with a full stop.

It is wrong, just as these dark eyes  
in this small head are wrong,  
a seed that the little boy had grown  
in the far, beyond all the deserts  
and across any shred of Divine providence;  
in the heart of the endless sorrow.  
He is mine, that son with silky,  
never shaved skin  
and belted with bombs.

No one dare ask  
why in this night the lights like dogs  
surround the bus skeleton.  
The questions are dead bones,  
scattered across the roadside grass.

Everything is life, we all begot it  
together and it goes  
through us like a pack  
after its prey.  
It's a deranged dream  
of the silence with a bang  
and with a nocturne of sirens  
after the killing shot.

My son is in everything  
I see and have,  
he's a sensitive, sharp  
and radical Pamuk's  
engraver of death.  
He is alone, a being  
with an unreachable heart  
and my guilty  
silence:

he is a shot in the still,  
a gush of blood,  
landed in a bramble  
of a small,  
flying,  
dying  
soul.

*Guest*

He knocks on the door and is  
as white as salt in the dark,  
he blackens in the light,  
and as I open the door, he forces  
brooms on me to creep into me.

In any case, he enters and stretches.  
I'm about to cry in fear  
while he blooms threads of jellyfish  
which entangle the house inwards  
with transparent fibre.  
Supposedly, there's snow outside.

There's two of us now, who angrily  
sit at the same table  
which is no longer mine but  
still can't be his.

We'd need God as an  
arbiter, but we each have  
our own and they both remain silent.

One into another we enter,  
from the sand desert into  
the desert of the city halls,  
each shaved with a different knife  
so we cut each other's veins  
like dead branches of knotty trees,  
and schizophrenic identities  
grow within us.

There is no love to sew  
a kind bond between the two:  
there's only need urging each of us  
to be the first to cross over  
one of the two bodies  
that sit facing each other  
in a home, now too tight for two:  
a hedgehog and a fox.

Big is the urge  
to crush each other up,  
and what remains,  
takes only for itself  
the key.

*Translated by Aleksandra Kocmut*



*Foto © S. Muzhaka*

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# *Manjola Nasi*

Manjola Nasi se je rodila leta 1982 v Tirani (Albanija), kjer je študirala angleščino in doktorirala iz poezije T. S. Eliota. Poleg pisanja poezije prevaja iz angleščine in predava na Fakulteti za tuje jezike v Tirani. V Albaniji je za svoje literarno ustvarjanje prejela več priznanj, leta 2017 tudi nagrado albanskega ministrstva za kulturo. Prvo pesniško zbirko *Soneti i vjeshtës* (Jesenski soneti) je izdala leta 2002. Po dolgem ustvarjalnem premoru se je k pisanju poezije vrnila leta 2014 in začela dejavno sodelovati tako v albanском kot v mednarodnem literarnem prostoru, med drugim se pogosto udeležuje mednarodnih knjižnih sejmov. Njena druga zbirka *Një udhëtim e gjysmë* (Potovanje in pol) je izšla leta 2018 in doživila dober sprejem pri kritikih. Pesmi Manjole Nasi so bile objavljene v več literarnih revijah in so uvrščene v antologije. V slovenščini je nekaj pesmi izšlo v literarni reviji *Apokalipsa* v prevodu Barbare Korun, prevedene pa so še v angleščino, nemščino in italijanščino.

Manjola Nasi was born in 1982 in Tirana, Albania. She graduated in English from the University of Tirana, and later wrote a PhD thesis on T. S. Eliot's poetry. Besides writing poetry, she also translates from English and lectures at the Faculty of Foreign Languages in Tirana. In Albania she has received several awards for her poetry, among others also an award of the Albanian Ministry of Culture in 2017. She published her first poetry collection, *Soneti i vjeshtës* (Sonnets of Autumn), in 2002. After a long break from creating, she returned to writing poetry in 2014 and started actively participating in the Albanian and international literary space, also as a frequent guest at international book fairs. Her second poetry collection *Një udhëtim e gjysmë* (A Journey and a Half) was published in 2018 and it received critical acclaim. Poems by Manjola Nasi are published in literary magazines and included in anthologies. Some of her poems have been published in the Slovenian literary magazine *Apokalipsa*, Barbara Korun's translation, and her work has also been translated into English, German, and Italian.

## *Ura*

Këtu ka një urë dhe unë e shoh veten  
duke u lëkundur mbi të.  
Uji, qielli, drita e pasdites, pemët,  
të çarat mes gurëve, të errëta e të myshkëta,  
pilivesat, puhia e vockël që krijojnë me krahë.

Buzës së lumit nuk ndihet frymë njeriu.

Ura është këtu dhe unë lëkundem brenda saj  
si një fëmijë në djep, që shpreson se do të rritet.  
Por jam prerja tërthore mes ish-it dhe asgjësë,  
e kaluar e paleverdishme  
ku zihet ngushtë e tashmja.

Premtimet e nënkuptuara vlejnë më pak se të thënat.

Ura është vetë unë dhe vetë unë jam ura.  
Ajo që nisi si një ritual sakrifikimi  
me murim, që ura të mos shembej  
më dha lirinë e ngurtë  
që po desha, të mos shembem as unë  
tani që kam veç gurë për të mbajtur.

Këtej s'kalon më asnjeri, po mbetet ura.

## *Të vërtetat*

Një ditë na tregoi për një vend ku  
njerëzit nuk duan të vdesin;  
vetëm jetojnë, sa velen, sa zdërhallen  
dhe kur dalin,  
i hekurosin rrudhat palë - palë,  
i fusin kockat në ndonjë robë a ndonjë trastë,  
duke lënë jashtë, kur i kanë, vetëm dhëmbët.  
Vazhdojnë sa bëhen si eshkë,  
të vrazhdë, të ashpër, të tharë  
dhe nganjëherë e harrojnë veten oborreve  
i zë dielli shumë dhe marrin zjarr.

Një ditë tjetër na tregoi  
për një vend ku e kanë tmerr të vrasin mendjen,  
të lodhin kokën, të shtrydhin trutë,  
të rrahin mendime:  
mëdyshjet i zgjidhin me një monedhë kokë a pil,  
vendimet i marrin me “kujt i bie dhjeta”  
dhe nëse dikujt i vjen pa dashje ndonjë grimë ideje,  
zë hidhet duke thirrur për ta larguar.  
Në cepa rrugësh vënë dordolecë,  
mbi pragje mbajnë potkonj e brirë  
dhe muret e qytetit janë të trashë e koracorë si luspa.  
Po prapëseprapë, nganjëherë  
mendimet e gjejnë shtegun për të hyrë  
brenda kafkës së ndonjë fatkeqi  
dhe atij i mabetet të bëjë ç'të mundet  
që ta fshehë  
se s'do të ikin më  
gjersa të vdesë.

Njëherë na tregoi për një vend tjetër  
 ku njerëzit s'pranojnë të harrojnë;  
 kështu, trupat dhe gjenet mbajnë mend  
 jo vetëm gjer te gjyshërit, po gjithë  
 brezat, të gjitha kohërat  
 teq qyteteve, gjahut të hershëm e shpellave.  
 Kur lindin fëmijë në atë vend  
 njerëzit i mblidhen rrotull dhe thonë:  
 oh, ky paska lëkurë të tejdukshme  
 si në kohët kur peshkonim në fjorde  
 dhe kishte pak diell, e s'e ushqenim dot ngjyrën;  
 ky na kujton kohën kur toka ishte llum e baltë  
 dhe trupat tanë u shkurtuan dhe u forcuan në orizore.  
 Po sa vështirë është për ta nganjëherë  
 kur rrathët e të ligës së dikurshme  
 e lëkundin pellgun aq fort  
 sa në breg kërcejnë skelete.

Një ditë e gjetëm buzë rruge,  
 kishte pirë  
 dhe na tregoi për një vend  
 ku njerëzit fusin në stomak gjithë botën  
 i dinë të gjitha dhe ato që s'dinë i mësojnë  
 dhe pasi i mësojnë, i rishikojnë, i përsërisin,  
 prapë e prapë, si lutje me tespihe  
 i rrotullojnë në kokë, ua thonë me zë të lartë të tjerëve  
 ndoshta me qëllim që të kuptojnë  
 si i bëhet, kur në mendje shtrohet frika,  
 për shembull, tha, që do të vdesësh a s'do të vdesësh,  
 ose frika se diçkaje s'i ikën dot,  
 ose frika e përballjes me një humbje pa kthim,  
 vetëm për fajin tënd,  
 vetëm se s'e kuptove që atë fytyrë  
 (jo edhe shumë të bukur, po me atë dritën në sy)  
 ti e doje tej frymës  
 dhe tani s'e ke më.

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## *Udhëtimi*

Sot ndërrohet ora.  
Për 60 minuta  
m'u dha mundësia t'i kthehem dy herë  
jetës sime  
si një fustani që s'hekuroset lehtë.  
Rrugës për Amerikë,  
diku mbi oqean,  
në atë zgavër të përbindshme uji dhe errësire  
ishte dera për t'u kthyer pas  
në një copë nate  
në një copë dite -  
një vrimë në kohë ku mund të jetosh  
pa paguar me kohë.

Po dikur vjen kthimi pas:  
Evropa,  
e diela e fundit e marsit,  
ku zgjohesh një mëngjes  
a në një aeroport  
dhe ndien se të kanë vjedhur.

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## *Shenja*

Ajo rrojti gjatë  
e për pasojë  
kaloi gjërat që kalohen kur jeton.

Sigurisht, ato që na ndodhin  
s'janë për të gjithë në të njëjtën formë  
a kohë.

Për shembull, ca nga ne e humbin  
egoizmin shumë herët.  
Ca vdesin vonë, ende pa pasur rast.  
Ca nga ne e shesin brendinë me gjithë membranë.  
Ca i mbajnë fort ca copa për ditë të vëshirë.

Rasti i saj nuk ishte jashtë mase i veçantë.  
Ishte pak a shumë si shumë të tjerë.

Në të vërtetë të gjithë kemi mure e caqe.  
Në një pikë filli i palëkundjes këputet.  
E vërteta është që ka vetëm shkallë.  
Jo-ja është breshka në paradoksin e Zenonit  
Mund të udhëtojmë drejt saj pa fund, po s'do ta kapim.

Ta themi kështu:  
ajo jetoi shumë gjatë  
dhe në të  
jeta pati plot kohë të linte shenjë.

---

## ***Most***

Tu je most in vidim se,  
kako se zibljem na njem.  
Voda, drevesa, popoldanska svetloba,  
gube med kamni, temne, obraščene z mahom,  
kačji pastirji, sapica njihovih kril.

Na rečnem bregu ni žive duše.

Most je tu in zibljem se na njem,  
kot otrok v zibki tone v sen, da bo zrasel.  
Le da sem jaz presek med minulostjo in ničem,  
neprijetna preteklost,  
ki spravlja v zadrego sedanjost.

Obljube, ki jih le namignemo, vežejo manj kot izrečene.

Most je jaz in jaz sem most.  
Kar se je začelo kot žrtveno vzidanje človeka,  
da bi most zdržal,  
mi zdaj daje togo svobodo,  
da se kljub želji ne smem sesesti,  
saj prenašam le kamne.

Nihče ne hodi tod, a most še kar stoji.

---

## *Resnice*

Nekega dne nam je pripovedoval o kraju,  
kjer ljudje ne želijo umreti;  
preprosto živijo, dokler se ne naveličajo in utrudijo,  
in ob odhodu  
zlikajo svoje gube drugo za drugo  
in zložijo svoje kosti v oblačila ali vrečo;  
zunaj pustijo – če jih še imajo – samo zobe.  
Nadaljujejo, dokler se ne spremenijo  
v kresila, suha in hrapava,  
in včasih se pozabijo na dvoriščih,  
in ker so predolgo na soncu,  
pooglenijo.

Drugega dne nam je pripovedoval  
o kraju, kjer se na smrt bojijo  
popraskati po temenu, si beliti glavo,  
napenjati možgane.  
Svoje zadrege rešujejo s kovancem, cifra ali mož,  
polagajo karte, da se laže odločajo,  
in če se komu nenadoma utrne zamisel,  
planejo pokonci in začno kričati, da jo preženejo.  
Strašila postavljajo na vogale vseh ulic,  
na podboje obešajo podkve in rogove  
in mestno obzidje je debelo in čvrsto kakor oklep.  
A kljub vsemu včasih  
misli najdejo pot  
skozi lobanjo kakšne nesrečnice,  
ki se nato na vse kriplje trudi  
prikriti,  
da bodo ostale z njo  
do konca življenja.

---

Spet drugič nam je pripovedoval o drugem kraju,  
kjer ljudje nočejo pozabljati.  
Zato se telesa in geni spominjajo  
ne le starih staršev, temveč vseh generacij,  
davnih dni onkraj mest, prvega lova in jam.  
Ko se v tem kraju rodijo otroci,  
se ljudje zbero okrog njih in govorijo,  
glej, ta ima prosojno kožo,  
kakršno smo imeli, ko smo ribarili v fjordih  
in je bilo sonca komaj kaj, zato si nismo mogli privoščiti barve;  
ta nas spominja na čase, ko je bil svet le blato in mulj  
in smo med polji riža zrasli manjši, vendar močnejši.  
A kako hudo jim je, kadar  
vrtinci pradavnega zla  
vzburkajo gladino ribnika s tako močjo,  
da naplavi razsute okostnjake.

V poznem poletju smo ga srečali na ulici –  
bil je pijan –  
in povedal nam je o kraju,  
kjer ljudje požrejo ves svet;  
vse vedo, in česar ne vedo, se naučijo,  
in ko znajo, to presojajo in ponavljajo  
znova in znova, kot bi molili rožni venec,  
premlevajo znanje, ga glasno delijo drugim,  
verjetno zato, da bi razumeli,  
kaj storiti, ko te preplavi strah,  
recimo, je dejal, strah, da boš umrl ali da ne boš,  
ali strah, da nečemu ne moreš uteči,  
ali strah pred soočenjem z nepovrnljivo izgubo,  
za katero si odgovoren edino sam,  
ker pač nisi dojel,  
da prav ta obraz  
(ne ravno lep, a z iskricami v očeh)  
potrebuješ bolj kakor zrak,  
in zdaj ne bo nikoli več tvoj.

---

## Potovanje

Nocoj se začne varčevanje s svetlobo dneva.  
Šestdeset minut  
sem imel, da grem čez svoje življenje  
dvakrat,  
kot pri obleki, ki se težko lika.  
Na poti v Ameriko,  
nekje nad oceanom,  
nad orjaško globeljo vode in teme,  
so bila vrata vrnitve  
v kos noči,  
v kos dneva –  
vrzel v času, kjer lahko živiš,  
ne da bi moral plačati s časom.

Toda nekoč se je treba vrniti:  
v Evropo,  
v zadnjo marčno nedeljo,  
ko se zbudiš v nekem jutru  
ali na nekem letališču  
in čutiš, da ti je nekaj odvzeto.

---

## Znamenja

Kar dolgo je živila,  
in zato  
izkusila, kar pač človek izkusi v življenju.

Tista, ki se godijo nam, seveda  
ne tečejo ob istem času  
niti na enak način.

Nekateri od nas, denimo, izgubijo  
sebičnost že zgodaj.

Nekateri umrejo pozno, ne da bi imeli to možnost.

Nekateri prodamo svojo notranjost, vključno z membrano,  
drugi se čvrsto oprijemajo drobtinic za slab dan.

Njen primer ni bil ravno poseben.  
Prejkone je bil podoben mnogim drugim.

Resnica je, da imamo vsi svoje zidove in pregrade.  
Na neki točki se nit poguma pretrga.  
»Ne« je želva v Zenonovem paradoksu.  
Že mogoče, da se ji bližamo, a je nikoli ne bomo ujeli.

Povejmo takole:  
živila je dolgo  
in na njej  
je lahko življenje pustilo mnogo znamenj.

*Iz angleščine prevedla Aleksandra Kocmut*

## *The Bridge*

There is a bridge here, and I see myself  
swaying on it.

The water, the trees, the afternoon light,  
the creases between stones, dark and mossy,  
the dragonflies, the tiny breeze of their wings.

There's not a single soul by the river bank.

The bridge is here and I'm swaying inside it  
like a child in a cot, lulled to sleep, to grow.  
But I am the cross-section between bygone and nothing,  
inconvenient past  
embarrassing the present.

Implied promises are less binding than uttered ones.

The bridge is I myself, and I am the bridge.  
What started out as human sacrifice by  
immurement, so that the bridge would hold,  
ended up giving me the inflexible freedom  
that if I want, I, too, may not collapse,  
now that I only have stones to bear.

No one comes this way, yet the bridge still holds on.

---

*Truths*

One day he told us about a place where  
people do not want to die;  
they just live on, till they're fed up, till they're jaded,  
and when they go out,  
they iron their wrinkles one by one,  
they put their bones inside their clothes or in a bag  
leaving out – when they still have them – the teeth only.  
They carry on till they turn into  
touchwood, dry and coarse,  
and sometimes they forget themselves in yards,  
staying too long under the sun  
they get scorched.

Another day he told us  
about a place where they're terrified of  
scratching their heads, cudgeling their minds,  
racking their brain.  
They solve their dilemmas with a coin, heads or tails  
they read the cards to make decisions  
and if someone suddenly gets the hint of an idea,  
they start jumping and yelling to send it away.  
They put scarecrows on every street corner  
hang horseshoes and horns on their doorframes  
and the city walls are thick and armored like scales.  
But in spite of all, at times  
thoughts find their way into  
the skull of some ill-fated one  
and she is left going to great lengths  
to hide the fact  
that they will stay with her  
until she dies.

Another time he told us of another place  
where people refuse to forget.  
Thus, the bodies and genes remember  
not just grandparents, but all the generations,  
the olden days beyond towns, early hunting, and caves.  
In that place, when children are born,  
people gather around them and they say:  
look, this one has transparent skin,  
like we did when we lived off fishing in the fjords  
and the sun was scarce, so we could not afford color;  
this one reminds us of when the earth was all silt and mud  
and our bodies grew shorter and stronger in the rice fields.  
But how hard it is for them in cases when  
the ripples of ancient evil  
shake the pond water so violently  
that shattered skeletons wash ashore.

In late summer we found him walking along the street,  
– he'd been drinking –  
and he told us of a place  
where people take in all the world into their stomachs;  
they know everything, and what they don't know, they learn  
and having learned it, they review it, repeat it,  
again and yet again, like prayer on a rosary,  
they spin it in their heads, tell it out loud to others  
probably in an effort to understand  
what one does when the fears take over  
for example, he said, fear that you'll die or won't,  
or fear that you can't escape something,  
or fear of confronting an irredeemable loss  
which was your fault completely  
only because you didn't get it  
that it was that face  
(not so beautiful, but with that spark inside the eyes)  
that you needed more than breath,  
and now you'll never have it.

## *The Journey*

Tonight's when daylight saving starts.  
For 60 minutes  
I was given a chance to go over my life  
twice  
like you do with a dress that is hard to iron.  
On my way to America,  
somewhere above the ocean,  
over that monstrous cavity of water and darkness  
was the door to return  
to a portion of a night  
to a portion of a day –  
a hole in time where you can live  
without paying with time.

But at some point, it is time to go back:  
to Europe,  
to the last Sunday of March,  
when you wake up one morning,  
or in an airport,  
and feel that you've been robbed.

## **Marks**

She lived for quite a while  
and consequently  
she experienced what one experiences in life.

Of course, what happens to us  
does not do so at the same time  
or in the same way.

For instance, some of us lose  
our selfishness early on.  
Some die late, not having had a chance to, yet.  
Some of us sell our insides, membrane included,  
some hold on tightly to some shreds for a bad day.

Her case was not particularly special.  
It was more or less like many others.

The truth is we all have our walls and boundaries.  
At some point, the thread of resolution breaks.  
The truth is that there are only degrees.  
'No' is the tortoise in Zeno's paradox.  
We may travel towards it, but we will never catch it.

Let's put it this way:  
she lived for a long time  
and on her  
life had many chances to leave marks.

*Translated by the author*





*Foto © Ruudu Rabumaru*

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# *Carolina Pihelgas*

Carolina Pihelgas se je rodila leta 1986 v Tallinu (Estonija). Na Univerzi v Tartu je študirala antropologijo religije. Izdala je šest zbirk poezije; zadnja zbirka pesmi v prozi *Valgus kivi sees* (Svetloba v kamnu) je izšla letos. V svoji zgoščeni in metaforični poeziji pogosto upesnuje mitološke teme, nostalgijo za izgubljenimi svetovi, naravo ali raziskuje spomine. Leta 2012 je prejela nagrado Gustava Suitsa za poezijo. Carolina Pihelgas je odgovorna urednica literarne revije *Värske Röhk*, namenjene predstavitev mladih avtorjev, pri kateri ureja tudi knjižno zbirko prvecev. V estonščino je prevedla mnogo svetovno znanih pesnikov, med drugim Sapfo, Kavafisa, Nerudo, Paza, Sylvio Plath. Njena poezija je prevedena v angleščino, arabščino, finščino, madžarščino, nemščino, norveščino in španščino.

Carolina Pihelgas was born in 1986 in Tallinn, Estonia. She studied Anthropology of Religion at the University of Tartu. She has published six poetry collections; the latest one, a prose poetry collection *Valgus kivi sees* (The Light Within the Stone) appeared this year. Her dense and metaphorical poetry often explores mythological themes, nostalgia for lost worlds, or memories. In 2012, she received the Gustav Suits poetry award. Carolina Pihelgas is also the editor in chief of the literary magazine *Värske Röhk* that focuses on young authors. She is the editor of the collection of literary debuts that the magazine publishes as well. Pihelgas has translated several world renowned poets into Estonian, among them Sappho, Cavafy, Neruda, Paz, and Sylvia Plath. Her poetry has been translated into English, Arabic, Finnish, Hungarian, German, Norwegian, and Spanish.

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## **Kirjutada**

Ma ei oska kirjutada suurtest tragöödiatest, seepärast kirjutangi väikestest: käte tuhm valgus häältest parkunud pärastlõunas; mälestus, mis ei tundu enam pärisele endale kuuluvat; vaiksest surev armastus; pakitud asjad, kiirustades kirjutatud sildid. Ja ootamine, see alatine keldrilõhnane ootus, mis läigatab esimese valguse käes sama kindlalt nagu sõdurite saapad hommikusel rivistusel.

Päikese kóverad kiired peegelduvad plekk-kausilt – helgid ajast, mis peaks olema muuseum, aga on kong. Kured kluugutavad pea kohal, nende häälel on meile midagi ütelda – silmapiir hargneb lahti, vajub vaataja pärani silmisse.

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*Algus*

Või hoopis üks teine algus. Olen sulg, elan raamatute vahel, riulil, ühel väikesel riidega kaetud karbil. Igal pärastlounal liigub minust üle valguselaik, soojus, mida ootan pikisilmi, soojus, mis meenutab mulle tuult. Asjade igatsus, ütlevad nad, ei ole vörreldav elusolendite omaga. Aga mõnikord tunnen end nagu nahk, mille jumal on hüljanud. Tean, et mind pole kellelegi vaja, olen pelgalt struktuur, mälestis lennuvõimest. Kogu minu olemus seisnebki selles: need valged ebemed, pruunid sümmeetrilised sõōrid, tihe kaarjas serv, mis hoiab sooja ja tõrjub vett, terav tipp. Leitud pargist või rannalt, pehme õhukese rohu seest, olen märk sügisest. Tükkideks kistud maailm, üleni äaretuse haardes. Minu ülesanne pole neid kilde kokku panna, vaid neist kónelda.

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## **Lugeda huultelt**

Käik isa juurde oli nagu reis mõnda teise maailmajakku. Isegi vesi voolas kraanist teisipidi alla. Aeg vaatas nõutult pragunenud kahhelkivisid köögis. Nõud läkisid rasvast, nagu ta hõredad juuksedki. Suu häälitas sõnu, aga need surid poolel teel ega joudnudki päriselt kunagi kohale – seepärast õppisin varakult huultelt lugema.

Midagi minus nägi tema sisse, nägi, et isa sees on väike raudkapp. See kolises mõnikord, kui ta liiga suure hooga diivanile istus või kui midagi maha kukkus ja ta pidi kummarduma. Reuma, ütles ta pärast röögatust, aga mina teadsin, et valu on selle lukustatud kapi terav serv, mis vastu tema selgroogu käib. Kord leidsin kummuti serva alt mõned luitunud fotod ja kuivatatud taimed – need olid otse isa sisemusest välja pudenenud. Vötsin nad õrnalt peo peale ja viisin tema kirjutuslaua servale.

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## *Kahekümnne kolmas september*

*Kose-Uuemõisas. 38 kuud eemal perest [---] sõitsin Tallinna, ehk leidub omakseid. Kui palju aherwarsi. Pääle ülesande täitmist avanes wōimalus perekonda otsida. Sõitsin Nõmmele Karotammi masinal. Siiski leidsin oma pere kohal, kodus ning terwise juures olevat. Wōisin olla oma kalliste koduste keskel waevalt pool tundi.*

*Oh kudas ootasin seda momenti.*

*Isegi ei tea miks, aga tundsin, et minu ja mu kodu waheli on midagi tekkinud, aga mida, seni veel ei tea. Tundsin end wōōrana.*

Tume silmapiir muutis mu pooleldi tondiks, pooleldi varjuks.

Justkui oleksin jätnud midagi maha igasse vaksalisse ja alles pärale jõudes avastanud, et mu riietetesse on mähitud ainult üks läbipaistev õrn kookon, mälestus inimesest. Vaikiv lävepakk. Keerdtrepp, mille astmeid tunnen nii hästi.

Kinkida sulle natuke teetolmu, tuua kaasa mõne kauge puu kohin oma häälles. Surevate lõkete õhtu, hüljatud tundide hommik.

Hiljem kõik nagu uni. Nagu linnu vari seinal, mis ilmub ja siis kohe kaob. Ja mina see sein, ja mina see vari.

---

**Kobilas, 1959**

See soe kesksuvine päev on alles ainult piltidel. Mändide sihvakad tüved, pihlakavõsa. Istute kolmekesi maas. Sina kõige ees vaatad ainsana kaadrisse ja naeratad. Irmal ikka tema eemalolev pilk, mis voolib tühjust ta ees teistsugusteks piltideks. Ja siis August, suu lahti, näitamas näpuga üles. Hetk enne, kui kõik teised samuti pilgud pööravad. Mida ta näidata tahtis? Mõnd lindu taivas, mõnd pilve, mis näeb välja nagu naerev lohe? Hambad irevil, iga hetk valmis koost lagunema. Rohukörte vaikne sahin, päeva pöllulilledest keha kadumas videvikku. Ta laskub kuuldamatult, katab maa mõhnad, võtab kaasa õhukesed võbelevad võrgud väsinud silmile.

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*Pisati*

Ne znam pisati o velikih tragedijah, zato pišem o majhnih: pridušena svetloba rok v popoldnevu, potemnjenem od glasov; spomin, za katerega se zdi, da ni več zares tvoj; počasi umirajoča ljubezen; zapakirane stvari, v naglici načečkani listki. In čakanje, to nenehno pričakovanje z vonjem po zatohli kleti, ki se v prvi svetlobi zalesketa z enako gotovostjo kot škornji vojakov na jutranjem zboru.

Ukrivljeni sončni žarki se odbijajo od kovinske posode – odbleski časa, ki bi moral biti muzej, a je celica. Nekje zgoraj kričijo žerjavi, njihov zvok nam nekaj sporoča: obzorje se razcepi in poleže v široko razprte oči opazovalca.

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## Začetek

Ali pa povsem drug začetek. Sem pero, živim med knjigami, na polici, na škatlici, oblečeni v blago. Vsak popoldan se čez mene sprehodi lisa sončne svetlobe, toplota, ki jo težko pričakujem, toplota, ki mi v spomin prikliče veter. Hrepenenja predmetov – tako vsaj pravijo –, ni mogoče primerjati s hrepenenjem živih bitij. A včasih se počutim kot koža, ki jo je Bog zapustil. Zavedam se, da me nihče ne potrebuje, sem samo struktura, spomenik sposobnosti letenja. Ves moj obstoj sestavlja: bel puh, rjavi, simetrični krogi, čvrst ukrivljen rob, ki ohranja toploto in odbija vodo, koničast vrh. Najdeno v parku ali na obali, v mehki, redki travi, napovedujem jesen. Na koščke raztrgan svet, povsem v oblasti neizmernosti. Moja naloga ni, da te črepinje spet sestavim, temveč da o njih govorim.

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## ***Brati z ustnic***

Obisk pri očetu je bil kot potovanje na drug konec sveta. Celo voda je drugače tekla iz pipe. Čas je nemočno zrl na razpokane kuhinjske ploščice. Posoda se je lesketala od masti, tako kot njegovi vse redkejši lasje. Usta so izgovarjala besede, a so zamrle na pol poti in nikoli niso zares dosegle cilja – zato sem se že zgodaj naučila brati z ustnic.

Nekaj v meni je videovanj, video je majhen železen trezor v očetu. Včasih je zaropotal, na primer ko se je prehitro usedel na kavč ali ko mu je kaj padlo na tla in se je moral skloniti. Revma, je rekel, potem ko je zarjovel, a jaz sem vedela, da je bolečina oster rob tistega zaklenjenega sefa, ki ga je dregnil v hrbtenico. Nekoč sem pod enim koncem komode našla obledene fotografije in posušene rastline – padle so naravnost iz očetove notranjosti. Previdno sem jih vzela v dlan in jih položila na rob njegove pisalne mize.

## *Triindvajseti september*

*Kose-Uuemōisa. 38 mesecev ločen od družine, [...] sem odpotoval v Talin, da bi našel bližnje. Koliko ruševin požganih hiš! Ko sem opravil nalogo, se mi je ponudila priložnost, da poiščem družino. S Karotammovim avtomobilom sem se odpeljal v Nõmme. Na koncu sem vendarle našel domače, bili so doma in dobrega zdravja. Komaj pol urice sem lahko preživel s svojimi dragimi. O, kako dolgo sem čakal na ta trenutek!*

*Pravzaprav ne vem, zakaj, toda zdelo se mi je, kot da bi nekaj prišlo med mene in moj dom; a kaj bi to bilo, tega še ne vem. Počutil sem se kot tujec.*

Zaradi temnega obzorja sem postal pol duh, pol senca. Kot da bi na vsaki železniški postaji pustil nekaj sebe in šele ob prihodu na cilj ugotovil, da je v moje obleke ovit le prosojen, krhek zapredek, spomin na človeka. Molčeč prag. Polžasto stopnišče, katerega vsako stopnico tako dobro poznam.

Rad bi ti podaril nekaj cestnega prahu, v svojem glasu prinesel šelestenje oddaljenega drevesa. Večer zamirajočih tabornih ognjev, jutro zapuščenih ur. Kasneje se bo vse zdelo kot sanje. Kot senca ptice na steni, ki se pojavi in takoj izgine. In jaz, tista stena; in jaz, tista senca.

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## Kobila, 1959

Tisti vroči poletni dan se je ohranil le na fotografijah. Vitka debla borovcev, jerebikovo grmičevje. Vsi trije sedite na tleh. Ti si v ospredju, gledaš naravnost v objektiv in se smejiš. Irma kot vedno s svojim odsotnim pogledom, ki praznino pred njo oblikuje v drugačne podobe. In potem še August, odprtih ust, s prstom kaže navzgor. Nekaj trenutkov preden še ostali usmerijo pogled v nebo. Kaj jim je hotel pokazati? Mogoče ptico na nebu ali oblak v obliki smejočega se zmaja? Ki razkazuje zobe, pripravljen, da se vsak hip razblini. Pridušeno šelestenje travnih bilk, telo iz poljskega cvetja tistega dne, ki izgine v mrak. Ta se neslišno spusti, prekrije gričke pokrajine, s sabo prinese tanke, lesketajoče se mreže za utrujene oči.

*Prevedla Julija Potrč Šavli*

***To Write***

I'm unable to write about great tragedies, which is why I write about lesser ones: hands' dim light in an afternoon tanned by voices, a memory that no longer seems to truly belong to you, softly dying love, packed items, hastily-written labels. And waiting, that incessant cellar-musty expectation which gleams just as distinctly in the first light as soldiers' boots during morning inspection.

The sun's curved rays reflect off a metal bowl: flashes from a time that should be a museum but is a cell. Cranes trumpet up above, their sound has something to tell us: the horizon splits and settles into the viewer's wide-open eyes.

## *The Beginning*

Or an entirely different beginning. I am a feather, living between books, on a shelf, upon a small cloth-covered box. Every afternoon, a patch of sunlight moves across me, warmth that I eagerly await, warmth that reminds me of wind. Objects' yearning, they say, cannot be compared to that of living beings. But sometimes I feel like skin that God has abandoned. I know that no one needs me, I'm no more than a structure, a memorial to the ability to fly. It encompasses my full existence: the white wisps, the symmetrical brown rings, the compact crescent edge that preserves warmth and repels water, the tapered tip. Found in a park or on a beach; from soft, sparse grass; I am a sign of autumn. A world torn to pieces, fully grasped by boundlessness. My task is not to assemble those shards, but to speak of them.

## *Lip Reading*

A trip to Dad's was like a journey to another part of the world. Even water streamed differently from the tap. Time looked helplessly upon the cracked glazed kitchen tiles. Dishes glistened with grease, just like his thinning hair. The mouth formed words, but they died halfway and never really arrived: that's why I learned lip-reading at an early age.

Something in me saw into him; saw that there was a little iron safe inside of Dad. It rattled sometimes when he sat down on the couch too quickly or he dropped something and had to bend down. Rheumatism, he said after a roar, but I knew the pain was the sharp corner of that locked safe poking his spine. Once, I found some faded photos and dried plants under the corner of the dresser: they'd fallen straight out from inside of Dad. I took them delicately in the palm of my hand and placed them on the edge of his desk.

## *September Twenty-Third*

*Kose-Uuemõisa. 38 months away from my family [...] I traveled to Tallinn to see if I could find relatives. So many burned-out ruins. After finishing my task, I had the opportunity to look for my family. I took Karotamm's automobile to Nõmme. Against all odds, I found my family there at home, safe and sound. I was able to enjoy the company of my loved ones for barely half an hour. Oh, how I had waited for that moment.*

*I cannot even tell why, but I felt that something has come between me and my home; what it is, I do not yet know. I felt myself a stranger.*

The dark horizon made me part spirit, part shadow. As if I'd left a part of myself behind in every station and had discovered only upon arriving that wrapped within my clothes was nothing more than a fragile, transparent cocoon; a memory of a person. A doorstep in silence. A spiral staircase, the steps of which I know so well.

To gift you a little travel dust; to bring the rustling of a distant tree in my voice. An evening of dying fires, a morning of abandoned hours. Later, as if it were all a dream. Like a bird's shadow upon a wall, which appears and instantly vanishes. And I, that wall; and I, that shadow.

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**Kobila, 1959**

All that remains of that warm midsummer day is in pictures. The pines' slender trunks, a rowan thicket. The three of you seated on the ground. You, in front of the others, staring straight into the frame and smiling. Irma with her absent gaze which, as always, shapes the emptiness before her into different pictures. And then August, open-mouthed and pointing upwards. A moment before all the others turn their gazes, too. What did he want to show them? A bird in the sky, a cloud that looks like a smiling dragon? Teeth bared, poised to dissolve at any moment. The soft rustling of grass, a body made of the day's wildflowers that disappears into the twilight. Soundlessly, it descends, covering the mounds of the land, bringing sheer, shimmering nets for the tired eye.

*Translated by Adam Cullen*





*Foto © Kristijan Cimer*

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# Ivana Šojat

Ivana Šojat se je rodila leta 1971 v Osijeku (Hrvaška), kjer je po gimnaziji dve leti študirala matematiko in fiziko na Pedagoški fakulteti. Avgusta 1991 je študij prekinila in se pridružila hrvaškim obrambnim silam v vojni za neodvisnost države. Leta 1993 je odšla v Bruselj, kjer je bila več let dopisnica časnika *Glas Slavonije*. Tam je tudi diplomirala iz francoskega jezika in književnosti. Šojatova je ena najpomembnejših sodobnih hrvaških pisateljic, je vsestranska avtorica, prevajalka iz angleščine in francoščine ter publicistka. Objavila je štiri pesniške zbirke, nazadnje *Ljudi ne znaju šutjeti* (Ljudje ne znajo molčati, 2016), štiri zbirke kratkih zgodb, zadnjo z naslovom *Emet i druge priče* (Emet in druge zgodbe, 2016), pet romanov, letos je izšel *Ezan*, zbirko esejev *I past će sve maske* (Maske bodo padle, 2006) in dve otroški slikanici. Njeno zadnje delo, roman *Ezan*, postavljen v 16. stoletje, prek usode dečka Luka, ki ga vzgojijo za jančarja, izriše zgodovinsko, kulturno in duhovno podobo Balkana v tem času. Njena dela so prevedena v več jezikov, Šojatova pa je zanje prejela vse najpomembnejše hrvaške literarne nagrade. Nekatera njena dela so bila prirejena za oder in prav tako nagrajena. Poleg literature je bilo njeni življenje vselej povezano tudi z glasbo. Osem let je bila altistka v opernem zboru Hrvaškega narodnega gledališča v Osijeku. Leta 2011 je prejela pečat mesta Osijek za izjemen prispevek k literaturi in leta 2016 hrvaško odlikovanje danica Marka Marulića za svoj opus in promocijo hrvaške kulture doma in v tujini.

Ivana Šojat was born in 1971 in Osijek in Croatia, where she graduated from grammar school and studied mathematics and physics. In August 1991 she stopped with her studies and joined the Croatian army forces in the War of Independence. In 1993, she left for Brussels, where she worked as a correspondent of the daily *Glas Slavonije*. She also graduated from French language and literature there. A diverse author, translator from English and French and publicist, Šojat is one of the most prominent Croatian contemporary writers. She has published four poetry collections, the most recent one being *Ljudi ne znaju šutjeti* (People Don't Know How to Keep Their Mouth Shut, 2016), four short story collections, the latest being *Emet i druge priče* (Emet and Other Stories, 2016), five novels – *Ezan* (The Adhan) was published this year – an essay collection, *I past će sve maske* (All Masks Will Fall, 2006), and two children's books. Her latest work, the novel *The Adhan*, is set in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. She uses the destiny of a boy named Luka, who is raised as a Janissary, to depict the historical, cultural and spiritual image of the Balkans in that period of time. Her works have been translated into several languages, and Šojat has also received the most prominent Croatian prizes for them. Some of her works were also adapted for the stage and received awards as well. In 2011 she received the seal of the City of Osijek for her extraordinary contribution to literature and in 2016 she was awarded the Croatian Order of Danica – Marko Marulić for her oeuvre and the promotion of Croatian culture at home and abroad.

## Ezan

(odломци iz romana)

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Nisam više siguran sjećam li se dobro. Znam da ljudi u svoje uspomene počesto uguraju tuđe živote, stope ih sa sobom, preurede ih: uljepšaju ili nigrde kako bi pokrpali rupe u tkanju sjećanja. Kako bi, valjda, umirili savjest. Sjećam se niskih drvenih kuća prekrivenih mahovinom i slamom, kuća raštrkanih u podnožju onih modrih planina. I ovaca. I njih se nekako jasno sjećam. Kao i izbe pune čađe, prašine poda od nabijene zemlje koja mi se ljeti lijepila za bose tabane, vode koja se nad ognjištem isparavala iz kazana, zobi ukuhane u kašu, slame na koju smo lijegali, a koja se raznosila po onoj izbi poput perja na avlji očerupane kokoši.

Sjećam se zavežljaja s pogaćom i ovčjim sirom što mi ga je mati ugurala u ruku i valjda poručila neka jedem.

Ne sjećam se međutim zagrljaja. Ni oca. Oca se nikako ne uspijevam sjetiti. Zato ga pokušavam smjestiti nekamo daleko, u ona brda, sa stokom na ispaši ili u vojnu zbog koje nije bio ondje kad po mene u Ostrožac dodoše Gulan Šahovi ljudi iz neretvanske nahije. Po devširme. Po onome što sad znadem, naša kuća bila je četrdeseta u kadiluku. Znadem i da nisam bio jedino muško dijete u svog oca i matere. Ne znam zašto me mati nije sakrila, baš kao što ne mogu ni naslutiti što bi bilo da me sakrila, slagala moju naprasnu, preranu smrt ili je zatajila pisarima. Ne znam je li ovo o čemu će ti pričati bilo bolje od onog što je moglo biti, ni je li ona to znala.

“Bit će ti bolje”, čujem je. Ili umišljam. Možda glas njezin umišljaj kako bih je opravdao. Ili joj zahvalio na sudbi koju mi je namjenila pristankom na danak za raju.

Sad si velim kako je mati znala da će mi biti bolje, čak i kao izdajniku. Čak i kad mi se pred očima ukažu naličja ženskih dlanova za koja znam da su sigurno njezine ruke: modri, krupni križevi razvučeni preko jednako modrih žila. Križevi u krugovima. Za zaštitu. Kao da ugljenom i pljuvačkom iscrtani znak preko kože može obuzdati šejtana požude. No ne želim tako razmišljati o majci. Draže mi je misliti na ukiseljeno mljeku. Dojilje uvijek nekako mirišu na ukiseljeno mljeko, na djecu koja ih se drže kao zraka.

Hvatao sam zrak dok su me odvodili. Kao što rekoh, nisam se osvrtao. Nisam ni plakao. Neki, mlađi, plakali su. Ja sam treptao kapcima i zurio u nebo. Obrazi su mi se žarili od materinih dlanova koji su mi tad posljednji put prešli preko lica od sljepoočnica do brade. Kao da me otire, priprema za ulazak u kuću Božju, za noć ili nešto novo. Trebao sam je bolje promotriti. I nju i brda. Da ih bolje upamtim. Ovako pamtim samo njezine oči iz magle još dublje prošlosti, oči smeđe poput grumenja navlažene zemlje, i dlanove, njihova naličja. Trebao sam prijeći pogledom preko avlige, da budem siguran koliko braće i sestara imam. Ovako više nisam siguran je li nas bilo četvero ili petero. Je li majka u naručju nunala djetešce koje je plakalo, ili sam to ja samome sebi ječao u glavi? Ništa zapravo video nisam kad su nas uspeli na kola koja je vukao težak, silan konj koji je putem sijao balegu. Bio je to vranac duga repa koji kao da se čijao. Velika stražnjica koja se caklila od znoja i timarenja zibala se u ritmu njegova polagana hoda i drndanja kola kroz kotline. Ne znam kud su nas vozili, jer dotad iz kadiluka izlazio nisam. Glava mi se njihala na sve strane, a s njom i ono nebo koje sam pratio, koje me uspavljivalo, granje ispod kojeg smo brodili kao ispod preokrenutog zdenca s lišćem zatočenim na vodi. Slušao sam one koji su dugo plakali, stenjali, nešto mrmljali u strahu ili glasno dozivali matere i njušio zrak koji se mijenjao, koji se iz modrog pretakao u zeleno, pa sivo, pa smeđe, nešto sve masnije, bujnije, vlažnije.

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Usred pustoši bez igdje ičega osim kamenja i prašine, prvo na što smo naišli bilo je seoce tkalaca grimiznih čilima. Većinom su ondje bile žene, starci, nešto djece i jedva naoružani muškarci nimalo vični ratovanju.

Ove posljednje brzo smo sasjekli.

I baš kad sam mislio da ćemo nastaviti dalje, jer u seocetu, osim čilima, nije bilo bogata plijena za pokrasti, da je najvrednije što su imali bila jarko obojena vuna za čilime, nekoliko zgotovljenih čilima, te ponajprije voda iz kao ponor dubokog bunara, sustigla nas je ona nevidljiva vojska džina i zaskočila neke od nas. Mislim da sam se tad sjetio Mensurovih riječi kako jednoga dana neke od svojih neću prepoznati.

Predvođeni Idrizom, neki od naših počeli su poput gladne zyjeradi što je zima ponekad s brda otpošalje u gradove upadati u kućerke od

sirove opeke i kamena te izvlačiti žene van. Lijepe žene, uplakane žene koje su u naručju stiskale djecu koja su vrištala. A ti moji više nisu bili moji. Nisam ih više prepoznavao. U čudu sam spuštenih ruku gledao Ajdina kako za kosu po zemlji vuče djevojku koja je vrištala, otimala se. Zastao je zatim nasred prašnjava puta, u oblaku prašine, izmijenjena lica, nagnuo se nad nju, koja je valjda preklinjala, te je udario drškom jatagana posred lica. Krv se razlila preko lijepoga lica, oči su joj se ukočile kao da je mrtva. Ajdin se nije obazirao, nego je trgao odjeću s nje, ispuštajući zvuke koji nisu bili ljudski dok je, pridigavši se, promatrao njezino tanano tamnoputo tijelo, sitne grudi prepuštene mu na milost i nemilost. Tek kad si nekome prepušten na milost i nemilost, doznaš kakav je čovjek ili nečovjek.

“Kurvo perzijska!” vikao je Ajdin glasom koji više nije bio ljudski, puštajući neka mu razvezane čakšire padnu do koljena. Na tren mi se učinilo da je zrak oko njega drukčiji, nečim nevidljivim, vrtložnim nastanjen, pa sam povikao:

“Ajdine, požalit ćeš, kajat ćeš se!”

Nije me čuo. Nije me mogao čuti. Zato sam mu prišao i s boka ga udario nogom u pleća. Pamtim zvuk što ga je ispustio zrak od udarca naprasno na usta izbačen iz njegovih prsa, njegovo zaprepašteno lice u prašini koja mu je plesala oko glave, beživotne noge one djevojke koje padaju kao granje, koje nebu otkrivaju njezinu sramotu. Ajdin je urliknuo kad me ugledao, a ja sam ga hitro udario šakom posred nosa. Pokrio sam zatim i njega i nju, nju odvukao u skrovište kuće, u hlad i miris obojene vune. Stajao sam ondje jedno vrijeme, vrijeme potrebno da mi se oči priviknu na iznenadni mrak, njušio miris kurkume, čaja od metvice, meda divljih pčela, vune i kuhane janjetine. Neobično dugo trebalo je mojim očima da se priviknu na mrak razblažen svjetlošću koja je sipila kroz malene prozore zastrte crvenim tkaninama, da u kutu, pokraj vrčeva s vodom i zdjela, ugledam ženu krupnih očiju koja je u naručju držala maleno dijete i dlanom mu prekrivala lice, valjda da ga ušutka, dok joj se za skute držao dječić od pet ili šest godina. Prestravljen je, netremice zurlila u mene dok su joj se suze slijevale niz lice.

Trenutak poslije, nakon bljeska razmicanja zastora na ulaznim vratima, sve se pretače u mrak, o kojem tu slabo znadem zboriti. Idriz i njegovi nahrupili su u odaju. Kažem njegovi, jer nisu mogli, niti će ikad moći biti moji, koliko god mi mudro to Mensur tumačio.

Jedan je onoj ženi krupnih očiju iz naručja iščupao djetešće pa zamahnuo njime kao jutenom vrećom dopola punom brašna. Sjećam

se djetetove glave i ruku koje su plesale u zraku, lelujale poput grana maslina na onom vjetru što se zimi u zamasima spušta prema Manisi i sve odnosi u more. Dijete je vrštalo, meketalo, onako kako to samo dojenčad znade činiti kad se silno prestraši, majka je zapomagala, pružala ruke prema djetetu, koje je trenutak poslije poletjelo prema zidu, sudarilo se s njime i zauvijek ušutjelo. Čini mi se kako je u hipu zavladao veliki muk. A onda je glasno zaplakao dječak koji se majci uhvatio oko pojasa, ugurao između njezinih leđa i zida. Idriz je, grmeći, ženi istrgnuo maramu s glave i odbacio je na pod. Kao sumanut gledao sam tu maramu koja je sasvim polako padala i nisam čuo larmu koja je odzvanjala u odaji. Kad sam ponovno podigao pogled, video sam Idriza kako ženu vuče za kosu, kako je gura dolje, kako ona pada, preklinje, korača četveronoške dok joj slina i suze kapljaju po podu od nabijene zemlje, po grimiznome sagu koji je nestvarno šaren krasio središnji dio inače skromne prostorije. Dvojica drugih odvlačila su dječarca koji je urlikao poput životinje, u čijem grlu ono "Mama, majko!" više nije nalikovalo na ljudski jezik, nego na zapomaganje životinje što je mesar kolje, kojoj nož zasijeca grkljan.

Krv mi je nahrupila u glavu, mislim da sam urlao kad sam se bacio na Idriza, a s Idriza na onu dvojicu koja su odvlačili dječaka koji je urlao. Mislim da je Idriz pao, da sam zato skočio na onu dvojicu. No ako i jest pao, brzo se pridigao, s leđa mi zamahnuo jataganom, razrezao me njime preko rebara, a zatim me udario u zatiljak. Sve tad prestaje, sve zbog čega se i dan-danas pitam kamo otpuće čovjek kad izgubi svijest ili podivlja.

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Polako sam ustao, hramljući. Glava me vukla prema tlu kao da je neprestano iznova netko udara drškom jatagana. Polako sam opipao zatiljak. Bio je oblichen sad već sasušenom, još ljepljivom krvlju.

Svjetlost me zaslrijepila poput mraka kad sam konačno razmaknuo zastor, pa sam stao. Stajao sam dovoljno dugo da konačno razaberem nove zvukove. Netko je u zamasima ispuštao glasne izdisaje kao da cijepa drva za potpalu. No oštrica koju sam ubrzo također čuo nije se zabijala u drvo, nego u meso. Sve do kostiju. Kad ga jednom čuje, čovjek ga prepoznaće dok je živ.

Polako, kao da u mraku pipam put između predmeta, izašao sam iz kućerka na svjetlost i prašinu. Meni slijeva, jer uvijek prvo gledam

ulijevo, valjda zato što me taj melek glasom jače vuče, ugledao sam prvo Idriza sa sabljom spuštenom do tla, u zamahu. Bio je oznojen i krvav, gol do pojasa. Kao da se znojio krvlju. Kao da se nisam usuđivao pogledati dalje od njegove desnice koja se podizala i spuštala ispred nečeg posve krvavog. Znadeš, postoje stvari koje te posve zaprepaste, pa ništa u prvi mah ne prepoznaješ, ne možeš se snaći. Kao kad te iz mraka zaskoče razbojnici s bakljama. Trebalо mi je vremena da shvatim kako se po tlu klati i mete ga kosa, duga ženska kosa slijepljena od krvi. Još mi je više vremena trebalo da shvatim kako su Idriz i njegovi vjerojatno onu ženu krupnih očiju, s jednim djetetom u naručju, a drugim uza svoje skute, svezali za noge i naglavce je objesili za okvir preko kojega su seljani-ćilimari prebacivali svježe obojenu vunu kako bi se sušila.

Ne znam što sam si govorio u glavi, ne znam zašto sam tad u cijelom tom užasu prvoga do kojega sam se dovukao kao bez duše upitao glasom koji nisam prepoznavao:

“Gdje su djeca?”

Ne znam kako me taj netko pogledao, jer pred očima mi se klatila kosa one žene kao gvalja svježe obojene vune koja pleše na vjetru. U glavi mi je samo do dan-danas, poput mirisa klanja janjadi pred Bajram, ostao njegov glas zgrčen u prijezir koji uvijek čuči čak i kad se propinje, njegov glas koji je bez razmišljanja promrsio pitanje: “Zašto mariš za kopilad?” Mislim da sam ga htio pitati kako je skončala njegova majka i sjeća li je se, da sam mu htio reći koliko bih se volio sjećati imena svoje majke. No šutio sam. Ona uplakana djeca u kolima su, poput tanadi za baljemeze, već putovala prema obraćenju u buduće krvnike, ratnike, sluškinje i priležnice.

Zapitao sam se kako zaboravljam. Kako će Ajdin i Idriz poslije jesti?

## *Ezan*

(odlomki iz romana)

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Nisem več prepričan, ali me spomin ne vara. Zavedam se, da ljudje v svoje spomine pogosto vrinejo tuja življenja, jih nato spojijo in preuredijo; polepšajo jih ali skazijo, da bi tako zakrpali vrzeli v tkanini svojega spomina. Seveda z namenom, da bi si pomirili vest. Spomnim se nizkih lesenih koč, kritih z mahom in slamo, posejanih ob vznožju tistih modrikastih planin. In ovac. Tudi njih se razločno spomnim. Pa naše izbe, polne saj in prahu na podu iz zbitne prsti, ki se mi je poleti lepil na bose podplate, vode nad ognjiščem, ki je izparevala iz kazana, ovsene kaše, slame, na kateri smo spali in jo raznašali naokrog po izbi kot perje kokoši, oskubljene na dvorišču.

Spomnim se zavitka s hlebcem in ovčjim sirom, ki mi ga je dala mati in mi rekla, naj se dobro najem.

Ne spomnim pa se objema. Niti očeta. Očeta se nikakor ne morem spomniti. Zato ga skušam umestiti nekam v daljavo, v tiste gore, z živilo na paši, ali pa v vojno, zaradi katere ga ni bilo tam, ko so vojščaki Gulana Šaha iz neretvanske nahije prišli pome v Ostrožac. Po krvni davek. Zdaj vem, da je bila naša hiša štirideseta v kadiluku. Vem tudi, da nisem bil edini sin, ki sta ga imela oče in mati. Ne vem, zakaj me mati ni skrila, tako kot ne morem niti slutiti, kaj bi bilo, če bi me res skrila, lažno oznanila mojo nenadno, prerano smrt ali to nekako prikrila pred pisarji. Ne vem, ali je to, o čemer ti bom pripovedoval, boljše od tistega, kar bi lahko bilo, niti ne vem, ali je to vedela ona sama.

»Bolje ti bo tam,« jo slišim. Ali pa si to le domišljam. Mogoče si domišljam njen glas, da bi tako opravičil njeno ravnanje. Ali pa se ji zahvalil za sodbo, ki mi jo je namenila s svojo privolitvijo v davek za reveže.

Zdaj se prepričujem, da je mati vedela, da mi bo bolje, celo kot izdajalcu. Tu in tam se mi pred očmi prikaže podoba ženskih dlani, za katere vem, da so zagotovo njene; modri, veliki križi, razpredeni prek enako modrih žil. Križi v krogih. Za zaščito. Kot da bi znak, zarisan na kožo z ogljem in slino, lahko ukrotil šejtana naslade. No, nočem tako razmišljati o materi. Raje pomislim na skisano mleko.

Dojilje vedno nekako obdaja vonj po skisanem mleku, po dojenčkih, tesno privitih k njim.

Ko so me odpeljali, sem lovil sapo. Kot sem že povedal, se nisem oziral. Niti jokal nisem. Nekateri, mlajši, so jokali. Jaz pa sem samo mežikal in zrl v nebo. Lica so mi žarela od materinih dlani, ki so me poslednjič pogladile po obrazu, od senc do brade. Kot da bi me otirala, pripravljala na vstop v božjo hišo, za noč ali nekaj novega. Žal mi je, da je nisem pozorneje pogledal. Nje in gora. Da bi se jih bolje spomnil. Tako pa se spomnim samo njenih oči iz meglene, še oddaljenejše preteklosti, oči, rjavih kot grude razmočene zemlje, in njenih dlani. S pogledom bi moral oplaziti tudi dvorišče, da bi vsaj vedel, koliko bratov in sester imam. Tako pa nisem več prepričan, ali smo bili samo štirje ali pa nas je bilo dejansko pet. Je mama v naročju res zibala jokajoče dete ali je bilo tisto ječanje dejansko moje? Samo toliko mi je uspelo videti, preden so nas strpali na voz. Vlekel ga je težak, silen konj, ki je po poti za sabo puščal fige; vranec z dolgim repom, ki je bil videti kot razparane niti. Velika zadnjica, lesketajoča se od znoja in krtačenja, se je zibala v ritmu njegovega lagodnega korakanja in drdranja voza po kotlinah. Ne vem, kam so nas peljali, saj dotlej nikoli nisem zapustil kadiluka. Glava mi je opletala na vse strani, skupaj z njo pa tudi nebo, v katero sem gledal, ki me je uspaval, in veje, pod katerimi smo brodili kot pod narobe obrnjenim studencem z listjem na gladini. Poslušal sem tiste, ki so dolgo jokali, hlipali, nekaj mrmrali v strahu ali glasno klicali svoje matere, in vonjal zrak, ki se je spreminjal, iz modrega se je pretočil v zelenega, pa v sivega, nato v rjavega, v nekaj vse bolj mastnega, bujnega in vlažnega.

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Sredi pušče brez česarkoli razen kamenja in prahu smo najprej naleteli na vasico tkalcev škrlatnih preprog. Večinoma ženske, starci, nekaj otrok in peščica komaj kaj oboroženih moških brez znanja vojskovanja.

Te slednje smo hitro pokončali.

Ravno ko sem domneval, da bomo odrinili dalje, saj v tej vasi, z izjemo preprog, za nas ni bilo ravno bogatega plena, saj je bila najvrednejša škrlatna volna za preproge, tistih nekaj končanih preprog, še najbolj pa voda iz kot brezno globokega vodnjaka, nas je dohitela nevidna vojska džinov in presenetila nekatere od nas.

Mislil, da sem se v tistem hipu domislil Mensurovih besed, češ da nekega dne ne bom prepoznal svojih ljudi.

Nekaj naših z Idrizom na čelu je začelo vdirati v koče iz gole opeke in kamna, kot sestradiane zveri, ki jih zima s hribov včasih pošlje v mesta, in na plan vlačiti ženske. Lepe ženske, objokane ženske, ki so v naročju stiskale vreščeče otroke. Moji pa niso bili več moji. Nisem jih več prepoznal. Ves osupel sem s spuščenimi rokami gledal Ajdina, kako za lase vleče deklet po zemlji, kričala je in se ga otepala. Nato se je s spremenjenim izrazom na obrazu ustavil sredi prašne poti, v oblaku prahu, se sklonil k njej, ki je seveda moledovala, in jo z ročajem jatagana udaril v obraz. Po lepem obrazu se je ulila kri, oči so ji obmirovale, kot da bi izdihnila. Ajdinu ni bilo mar, začel je trgati obleko z nje in ob tem spuščal zvoke, ki niso bili več človeški, nekoliko se je privzdignil in si ogledal njeno temnopolto telo in majhne prsi, ki so mu bili prepuščeni na milost in nemilost. Šele takrat, ko si nekomu prepuščen na milost in nemilost, pravzaprav izveš, kako človeški ali nečloveški je lahko.

»Vlačuga perzijska!« je zakričal Ajdin z glasom, ki ni bil več človeški, in pustil, da so mu razvezane hlače padle do kolen. Za hip se mi je zazdelo, kot da bi se zrak okoli njega spremenil, kot da bi se pojavilo nekaj nevidnega in vrtinčastega, zato sem zavpil:

»Ajdin, žal ti bo, kesal se boš!«

Ni me slišal. Ni me mogel slišati. Zato sem stopil k njemu in ga brcnil v pleča. Spomnim se zvoka, ko mu je zaradi udarca zrak iz pljuč hušknil skozi usta, njegovega zaprepadenega obraza sredi prahu, ki mu je plesal okoli glave, nog tistega dekleta, ki so brez življenga padle na tla kot veje in nebu razkrile njen sram. Ajdin je zavpil, ko me je zagledal, jaz pa sem ga brž udaril s pestjo v obraz. Nato sem oba pokril, njo sem odvlekel v zavetje hiše, v hlad in vonj pobarvane volne. Nekaj časa sem stal tam, da so se mi oči privadile na nenadni mrak, vonjal kurkumo, metin čaj, med divjih čebel, volno in pečeno jagnjetino. Trajalo je neobičajno dolgo, da so se mi oči privadile na mrak, ublažen s svetlobo, ki je vdirala skozi majhna okna, zastrta z rdečim blagom, šele nato sem v kotu, ob vrču z vodo in skledah, zagledal žensko z velikimi očmi, ki je imela v naročju dete in mu z roko prekrivala obraz, da ga ne bi slišali, za krilo pa se je je držal deček, star pet ali šest let. Zgroženo je gledala proti meni, po obrazu pa so ji tekle solze.

Na vhodnih vratih se je poblisnilo ob razmiku zastora, nato pa vse potonilo v mrak, tako da ne znam dobro opisati. Idriz in njegovi

so hrupno vdrli v sobo. Pravim njegovi, ker niso mogli biti in tudi nikoli ne bodo mogli biti moji, ne glede na to, kako modro mi je Mensur to raztolmačil.

Eden od njih je tisti ženski z velikimi očmi iz naročja iztrgal dete in zamahnil z njim kot z vrečo iz raševine, do polovice polno moke. Spomnim se, kako so otroku glava in noge zaplesale v zraku, zadrhtele kot veje oljk v vetru, ki se pozimi v sunkih spušča proti Manisi in vse odnaša v morje. Dete je začelo vreščati, meketalo je, kot se znajo oglašati samo dojenčki, ko jih kaj na vso moč prestraši, njegova mati je zavpila na pomoč, iztegnila roke proti detetu, ki je hip pozneje poletelo proti zidu, treščilo vanj in za venomer obnemelo. Zdi se mi, da je v hipu zavladala nepredirna tišina. Nato je začel glasno jokati deček, ki se je mame držal okoli pasu, stal je skrit za njo in pred zidom. Idriz je ženski rjoveč strgal ruto z glave in jo zabrisal na tla. Odsotno sem gledal to ruto, ki je zlagoma padala navzdol, zato nisem slišal trušča v sobi. Ko sem znova dvignil pogled, sem videl Idriza, kako vleče tisto žensko za lase, porinil jo je navzdol, padla je po tleh in začela moledovati, hodila je po vseh štirih, slina in solze so kapljale po podu iz zbite prsti, po škrlatni preprogi, ki je z žarečo barvo krasila osrednji del sicer skromnega prostora. Druga dva sta vlekla proč dečka, ki je tulil kot žival, v njegovem grlu klici »Mama, mama!« niso več spominjali na človeški jezik, ampak na vreščanje živali, ki jo kolje mesar in ji z nožem reže gołtanec.

Kri mi je planila v glavo, mislim, da sem zavpil in skočil na Idriza, nato pa še na onadva, ki sta stran vlekla kričečega dečka. Mislim, da je Idriz padel, zato sem skočil na druga dva. No, tudi če je res padel, se je hitro pobral, se mi približal s hrbitne strani in me z jataganom najprej porezal po rebrih, nato pa me udaril v tilnik. Potem je vse izginilo, zaradi česar se še dandanes sprašujem, kam neki odpotuje človek, ko izgubi zavest ali podivja.

\* \* \*

Zlagoma sem se postavil pokonci in šepajoč naredil nekaj korkakov. Glavo mi je vleklo proti tlom, kot da bi me kdo kar naprej udarjal z ročajem jatagana. Narahlo sem se potipal po tilniku. Bil je oblit s strjeno, nekoliko lepljivo krvjo.

Ko sem končno razmagnil zastor, me je svetloba povsem zaslepila, zato sem se ustavil. Stal sem dovolj dolgo, da sem lahko razločil nove zvoke. Nekdo je ob zamahovanju izpuščal vse glasnejše izdihe, kot

da bi cepil drva za kurivo. Toda rezilo, ki sem ga prav tako kmalu zaslišal, se ni zajedalo v les, ampak v meso. Vse do kosti. Ko človek enkrat sliši ta zvok, ga pozna, dokler je živ.

Zlagoma, kot da bi v mraku tipal naokoli, da bi našel pot med predmeti, sem iz koče stopil na svetlo in v prah. Na svoji levi strani, kamor vedno najprej pogledam, saj me ta angel močneje pritegne s svojim glasom, sem najprej zagledal Idriza s sabljo v zamahu, spuščeno do tal. Bil je oznojen in krvav, gol do pasu. Kot da bi znojil kri. Sploh si nisem upal pogledati naprej od njegove desnice, ki se je dvigala in spuščala nad nečim docela krvavim. Veš, kadar te nekaj povsem pretrese, v prvem hipu ničesar ne prepoznaš, ne moreš se znajti. Na primer, ko te v mraku napadejo razbojniki s plamenicami. Nekaj časa sem potreboval, preden sem ugotovil, da se po tleh valjajo in motajo lasje, dolgi ženski lasje, zlepljeni od krvi. Še malo dlje je trajalo, preden sem dojel, da so Idriz in njegovi najbrž za noge zvezali tisto žensko z velikimi očmi, z detetom v naročju in otrokom, ki se je je držal za krilo, in jo na glavo obrnjeno obesili na okvir, na katerem so vaščani tkalci preprog sušili sveže pobarvano volno.

Ne vem, kaj sem govoril sam pri sebi, ne vem, zakaj sem v tej prvi grozi, do katere sem se privlekel, kot da ne bi imel duše, z glasom, ki ga nisem prepoznal, vprašal:

»Kje sta pa otroka?«

Ne vem, kako neki me je pogledal, saj so se mi pred očmi kotalili lasje tiste ženske kot štrene sveže pobarvane volne, ki pleše v vetru. V glavi mi je do današnjega dne, tako kot vonj klanja jagnjet pred bajramom, ostal samo njegov glas, poln prezira, ki je ves čas na preži, ne da bi razmišljjal, je v odziv zamoljil vprašanje: »Kaj ti je mar za pankrta?« Mislim, da sem ga hotel vprašati, kako je končala njegova mati in ali se je sploh spomni, da sem mu hotel povedati, kako bi se rad spomnil imena svoje matere. Ampak sem samo molčal. Objokani otroci na vozu pa so bili, podobno kot strelivo za možnarje, že na poti proti spreobrnitvi v bodoče krvnike, vojščake, služabnice in priležnice.

Vprašal sem se, kako je mogoče, da pozabljam. Kako bosta Ajdin in Idriz pozneje sploh lahko jedla?

*Prevedel Urban Belina*

## The Adhan

(excerpts from the novel)

1.

\* \* \*

I doubt now whether my memory is correct. I know people often push other people's lives into their own memories, merge them with their own and rearrange them. They embellish or deform them, filling the holes in the weft of recollection. Most likely to ease their conscience. I remember squat, wooden houses covered in moss and hay, houses scattered at the base of the blue mountains. And the sheep. I remember them clearly too, somehow. Like the soot-filled room, the dust, the packed-earth floor in summer, sticking to the bare soles of my feet, the water steaming from the kettle on the hearth, the oats being cooked in a pot, the straw that we slept on, probably, and that ended up scattered through the room like the feathers from the chickens plucked in the yard.

I remember the bundle of ash-baked flatbread and sheep's cheese that my mother placed in my hands and probably told me to eat.

But no recollection of an embrace. Nor of a father. I am quite unable, it seems, to remember my father. So I try to place him somewhere far away, on those mountains, on the pastures with the cattle or at war, kept from being there when the men of the Shah Gulan came from the Neretva *nahiya* to take me away. For the *devshirme*, the blood tax. According to what I know now, our house was the fortieth in the *kadiluk*, so I had to be given away. Or hidden. I do not know why my mother did not hide me, but nor can I begin to imagine how she could have. By lying, perhaps, about my sudden, premature death, or concealing information from the scribes.

"You'll be better off there," I hear her saying. Or imagine her saying. Perhaps I imagine her voice to justify her. Or to thank her for the fate she gave me by agreeing to pay the tribute as a Christian subject.

I tell myself now that my mother thought I would be better off elsewhere, even though she would be seen as a traitor. Even when I see before me the back of a woman's hands, which I know for certain are hers, with blue, thick crosses stretched across equally blue veins. Crosses within circles. For protection. As if a symbol, scrawled on the skin with charcoal and spit, could stem Satan's hunger. No, I would rather not think of my mother that way. Better to think of

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sour milk. Wet nurses always smell of sour milk somehow, and of the infants who cling to them, like to the air they breathe.

I breathed deeply as they carried me away. And without looking back, as I said. Without even crying. Some children, younger than I, did cry. I blinked back my tears and looked at the sky. My cheeks burned from the touch of my mother's hands as they stroked my face for the last time from my temples to my chin. As if she were washing my face, preparing me to enter the house of God, readying me for the night or for something new. I ought to have looked at her more. At her and at the mountains. To memorise her better. Now all I remember is her eyes, from a fog thicker than the past, her eyes grey like clumps of wet soil, and the palms of her hands, and the backs of her hands. I ought to have looked at the yard; I would know now how many brothers and sisters I had. Instead I am not sure if we were four or five. Was my mother rocking a wailing baby in her arms, or was it me, crying silently inside my head? I barely saw a thing as they lifted us onto the cart. It was pulled by a strong, sturdy horse that scattered droppings along the way. A black horse with a long, sparse-looking tail. Its great rump glistening from the sweat and its groomed hair rocked by the rhythm of its slow steps and the clunking of the cart between the gorges. I did not know where we were. I had never left the *kadiluk* before. My head dangled, swinging to and fro, and as I watched the sky it seemed to sway, lulling me to sleep. We drove beneath the branches, like an upside-down fountain with leaves trapped in the water. I listened to the others, crying, groaning, mumbling to themselves or shouting for their mothers, and I smelled the air as it shifted from blue to green, from grey to brown, and then to something oilier, thicker, more humid.

\* \* \*

In the middle of the desert, where there was nothing but stones and dust, the first thing we came across was a small village of weavers of purple carpets. Most of the people there were women, elderly, along with a few children. The few men who were there were barely armed and knew nothing of fighting or war.

We quickly wiped them out.

I thought we would leave straight away. Aside from the carpets, there was nothing in the village worth taking. Their most precious goods were the brightly coloured wool, a few finished carpets, and

most importantly the water from a well as deep as a gorge. But just then, the invisible jinn army caught up with us, assaulting some of our number. I think it was then that I remembered Mensur's words, how one day I would not recognise some of my own people. I think it was then, but I cannot be certain.

Lead by Idriz, like hungry mountain beasts forced by winter into the towns, some of our men began breaking into the houses and dragging the women outside. Beautiful women, crying women, with children screaming in their arms. Suddenly those men were not my men. I no longer knew them. I watched, shocked and helpless, as Ajdin hauled a girl along the ground, pulling her by her hair as she screamed and resisted. He stopped in the middle of the dirt track in a cloud of dust. His face shifting, he leaned over the girl who was probably begging, and struck her in the face with the handle of his *yatagan*. The blood flooded her beautiful face, and her eyes froze as if in death. Ajdin paid no heed. Instead he tore off her clothes, making inhuman sounds as he stood and watched her dark, delicate body, her fine breasts left now at his mercy, or his lack of it. It is when we are at someone's mercy that we learn if he is man or beast.

"Persian whore!" Ajdin shouted, in a voice stripped of all humanity. He untied his trousers and dropped them to his knees. For a moment it seemed the air around me was different, as though inhabited by an invisible, turbulent presence. I shouted to him:

"Ajdin, you will regret this; you will feel sorry!"

He did not hear me. Could not. So I stepped closer, and struck him on the shoulder from his side. I remember the sound the air made, expelled from his chest by the sudden blow, and the look of surprise on his face as the dust danced around his head and the limp legs of the girl fell like branches, revealing her pudendum. Seeing me, Ajdin screamed. I punched him swiftly in the nose, covered both of them, and dragged the girl's body to the shelter of the house, into the shade filled with the smell of dyed wool. I stood there for some time, the time needed for my eyes to adapt to the sudden darkness, and inhaled the scent of turmeric, mint tea, wild honey, wool and cooked lamb. It was curious how long it took for my eyes to grow accustomed to the dark, softened by the light that trickled through the small window covered with red fabric, and for me to notice, in the corner of the room, beside a water pot and bowl, a woman with large, round eyes, holding a baby in her lap and covering his mouth

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with her hand, most likely to subdue him, while a five- or six-year-old boy clung to her clothes. She was frightened, and stared at me with tears streaming down her cheeks.

A moment later, I was dazzled as someone pushed away the curtain over the doorway, and then plunged into a darkness I can barely describe. Idriz and his men stormed into the room. I say *his* men, as they could not be, would never be, *my* men, no matter how wisely Mensur might explain it to me.

One of them took the baby from the lap of the woman with the large, round eyes, brandishing it like a jute sack half-filled with flour. I remember the baby's head and arm dancing around in the air, fluttering like olive branches in the wind that gusts down in winter towards Manisa, blowing everything out to sea. The baby wailed and bled, in the way only nurslings can when they are terribly frightened. His mother cried for help, stretching her arms towards the baby, who a moment later went flying towards the wall, hitting it and falling silent forever. For a moment, a great stillness seemed to take over the room. I truly think that for one moment everything was quiet. Then the boy, who was holding onto his mother's waist, pressed between her back and the wall, burst into tears. Roaring like thunder, Idriz tore the woman's scarf from her head and threw it to the floor. As if possessed, I watched the scarf drift slowly down, deaf to the clamour in the room. When I next looked up, I saw Idriz pulling the woman by the hair and pushing her to the ground. I saw her falling and begging, crawling on her hands and knees as mucus and tears dripped onto the packed-earth floor, onto the purple carpet embellishing the otherwise modest room with its colour. Two other men carried away the child. He screamed like an animal, his cry of "Mama, mother!" not sounding human any more, but rather like the shriek of an animal the butcher is about to slaughter, whose throat the knife is about to slice through.

I flew into a rage. I think I screamed as I hurled myself onto Idriz, and then onto the two men taking away the crying child. I think Idriz fell, so I turned to the other two. But even if he did fall, he must have stood up again quickly, raised his *yatagan* on me from behind, and struck me, cutting me across the ribs, then hitting me on the back of the head. I am sure he hit me on the back of my head. Everything stops there. To this day I still ask myself where people go when they lose their minds and turn into savages

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Slowly I stood up, limping. My head was heavy, pulling me down to the floor as if someone were pounding it still with the handle of a *yatagan*. Slowly, I touched the back of my head. It was covered in blood, already dry but still sticky.

When I finally pulled the curtain, the light blinded me like darkness. So I stood for long enough to be able to distinguish the new sounds. Someone exhaling repeatedly as if chopping wood for a fire. But the blade I could hear was not cutting through wood. It was slicing through flesh, down to the bone. One need hear that sound only once, to know it for the rest of one's life.

Slowly, as if feeling my way in the dark, I emerged from the hut and into the sunlight and dust. To my left (I always look first to my left; perhaps the angel on that side has a more alluring voice), I saw Idriz with a sabre hanging from his hand to the ground. He was covered in sweat and blood, and naked to the waist, as if he had been sweating blood. I barely dared look beyond his right hand, rising and falling again beside something covered in blood. There are things that do not scare us at the time. Only later, when we decipher them, do they become frightening. Like when bandits attack in the dark, wielding torches. It took me some time to work out what it was that was swaying above the ground, brushing it. It was hair, a woman's hair, long and sticky with blood. It took me longer still to work out that Idriz and his men must have taken the woman with the round eyes, the one carrying a baby and whose child was hiding behind her skirts, tied her by the legs, and hung her upside down from the frame that the weavers in the village used to hang up the freshly-dyed wool to let it dry.

I do not know what I said in my head. I do not know why in the middle of all that horror, I dragged myself like a madman to the first person I could find and asked, with a voice I did not recognise:

“Where are the children?”

I do not know how that person looked at me, the hair of the woman still dangling before my eyes like a wad of freshly-dyed wool dancing in the wind. To this day, all that remains in my head, like the smell of the slaughtering of the lamb before Eid al-Adha, is the sound of his voice, tight with contempt, which always crouches even when it is prancing. His voice that thoughtlessly muttered the question: “Why do you care about those bastards?” I think I wanted

to ask how his mother had died and whether he remembered her. I think I wanted to tell him how much I would have liked to remember my mother's name. But I said nothing. The children, most likely in tears, were already travelling on a cart, like sling shots in the hands of a peasant, to be turned into future executioners, fighters, maidservants and concubines.

I asked myself how we forgot. How would Ajdin and Idriz ever eat again?

*Translated by Valentina Marconi and William Gregory*



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# Gostje

# Vilenice 2019

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*Vilenica*

*Guests 2019*

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*Foto © Rajeshta Solatum*

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# Ayesha Chatterjee

Ayesha Chatterjee se je rodila leta 1968 v Kolkati (Indija), kjer je preživelata otroštvo, kasneje pa je živelatudi v Veliki Britaniji, ZDA in Nemčiji. Zdaj je njen dom Toronto. Na kolidžu Smith v Massachusettsu je diplomirala iz angleške književnosti ter nemškega jezika in književnosti. Še danes se spominja izjemnih predavanj o poeziji priznanega pesnika Josifa Brodskega. Njena prva pesniška zbirka je izšla leta 2011 z naslovom *The Clarity of Distance* (Jasnost razdalje) in druga *Bottles and Bones* (Steklenice in kosti) leta 2017. Revidirana verzija prvenca je bila ponovno izdana letos. Verjame, da se moč poezije skriva v njeni dostopnosti, zato večinoma piše kratke pesmi v izčiščenem in razumljivem jeziku. Ker je pesmi pisala v različnih obdobjih, upresnjuje tudi kraje, v katerih je živelat, in uporablja metafore, ki izvirajo tako z Vzhoda kot z Zahoda. Ayesha Chatterjee je bila tudi predsednica Zveze kanadskih pesnikov, danes pa predseduje feminističnemu odboru zveze. Svojo poezijo je prebirala na literarnih festivalih v Kanadi, Indiji in Nemčiji, objavljena pa je bila v ameriških, kanadskih, irskih, pakistanskih in drugih literarnih revijah. V letu 2019 je žirantka pri nagradi zakoncev Vine, namenjeni kanadski judovski literaturi.

Ayesha Chatterjee was born in 1968 in Kolkata, India, where she spent her childhood. She has lived in England, the USA and Germany, and now calls Toronto home. She graduated cum laude in English literature and German studies from Smith College, Massachusetts, where one of her most vividly remembered courses was a lyric poetry class taught by Joseph Brodsky. She has published two poetry collections, *The Clarity of Distance* (2011), and *Bottles and Bones* (2017). A revised edition of *The Clarity of Distance* has just been released in 2019 and a new pamphlet is also forthcoming this year. Chatterjee believes that the power of poetry lies in its accessibility. Her poems are often short and written in clear, sparse language in order to bring her poetry closer to the reader. She incorporates elements from all the places in which she has lived into her work and often uses metaphors drawn from both Eastern and Western sources. Chatterjee is Past President of the League of Canadian Poets and currently serves as Chair of the League's Feminist Caucus. She has read her poetry in Canada, Germany and India, and her work has been published in journals across the globe, including the USA, Ireland, Pakistan and elsewhere. She is a juror for the 2019 VINE Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature.

## ***Forgetfulness***

Between home and home and home  
lie thick floors of spun cloud, always travelling  
in the opposite direction from me.

Water, they say, has no shape.  
But these clouds between homes,  
someone should tell them that.  
They are strong as sunlight and more solid  
than the Lego lands below them.

Welcome, the uniforms at Immigration say to me,  
where are you coming from?  
Most times, I can't remember.

## *Homage*

The language I slip into like a second skin  
to play at being someone else  
has loosened into unexpected textures  
and the billboards are unreadable again.  
Feathered masks and candlesticks  
and papier-mâché boxes have  
blossomed into colour: marigolds  
that I've begun to deconstruct and press  
between the heavy pages  
of the past, making sure the petals  
haven't torn. Together,  
we lead a double existence, one of knowledge  
and one of ignorance, and both are right.

When the time comes to fill the years  
with fragrant oil and little wicks of cotton  
and set them on the river,  
I will watch the little boats of light  
float into the darkness.  
How small they are, how fragile.

### *Via Tiburtina*

A wall has no memories but those given it.  
Like a pilgrim, I have fastened mine, white and whispering,  
already lost in the double millennium of boned perception.

A cool breeze wipes the weekend revelry gently from the  
San Lorenzo darkness  
and Freyja at her spinning wheel  
leans closer to the moon.

### *Noughts and Crosses*

In this square lies the sum  
of all my past.

In this, what could have been but wasn't.

Here, I choose infinity  
and here I don't.

## *The Sari*

It took three of us: two  
at the ends and one to hold the middle.

A slice of silken twilight  
fell from our fingers  
smelling faintly of diamonds  
and the Bay of Bengal,  
too vast to understand, the opposite  
of Draupadi unravelling,  
distant as Aphrodite.

We stepped back and forth,  
stopped and started  
until we had folded adulthood  
into an almost-tidy square and we  
could be ourselves again.

*Once there was and then there wasn't*

I dreaded the car door closing;  
what if I never saw you again?

Friday nights were Birds Eye.  
I thought all fish were long  
and clean-edged like fingers.

The first day of spring was smeared in bhang  
and completely wordless.

America switched on at night:  
sometimes the tapes tangled irrevocably.

My mother remembers the lamplighters.  
If I tried hard enough  
I could make her memory mine.

I was as tall as the daffodils  
and then I wasn't.

***Past Tense***

If you picked a day and asked me  
to remember, I would say  
“Yellow.” I would say, “bare.”  
Also, magnolia petals and disapproval  
swept into the brown bin. I have no sense of smell  
except in dreams, so I could not truthfully  
tell you those. Every image is straightened  
then shuffled like a pack of cards. But one  
keeps turning up, a one-eyed jack, a princess.  
That empty yellow swing in a Scotch mist.

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*In praise of*

Here: me,  
sum of all the parts of all  
the days of which  
I am oblivious (but also  
some which I recall  
perfectly, like songs).  
You can count me  
precisely  
as blood sugar.  
Or wrinkles. Hooray for the  
things that we have done  
that bring us closer to the earth—  
for dust thou art—note the days  
I've left behind, note the sky  
invisible but omnipresent.  
Reach for that which was  
because  
that is all I  
will be.

The poems *Forgetfulness*, *Homage*, *Via Tiburtina*, *Noughts* and *Crosses* were published in the poetry collection *The Clarity of Distance* (Aeolus House, 2019). The poems *The Sari*, *Once there was and then there wasn't*, *Past Tense* were published in the poetry collection *From Bottles and Bones* (Bayeux Arts, 2017). The poem *In praise of* is yet unpublished.

## *Pozabljivost*

Med domom in domom in domom  
ležijo debela tla iz spredenega oblaka, ki vedno potujejo  
proč od mene.

Voda, pravijo, nima oblike.  
Toda ti oblaki med domovi,  
nekdo bi jim moral povedati.  
Močni so kot svetloba sonca in trdnejši  
od lego dežel pod njimi.

Dobrodošli, mi rečejo uniformiranci na imigracijski,  
od kod prihajate?  
Največkrat se ne morem spomniti.

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## *Hommage*

Jezik, v katerega zdrsnem kot v drugo kožo  
in se igram, da sem nekdo drug,  
se je zrahljal v nepričakovane strukture  
in reklamni panoji so znova neberljivi.  
S perjem okrašene maske in svečniki  
in škatle iz papirne kaše so  
vzcvetele v barve: ognjiči,  
ki sem jih začela dekonstruirati in stiskati  
med težkimi stranmi  
preteklosti, skrbeti, da se cvetni listi  
ne bi raztrgali. Skupaj  
živimo dvojen obstoj, znanje na eni  
in nevednost na drugi strani, in oba imata prav.

Ko bo prišel čas, da zapolnim leta  
z dišečimi olji in majhnimi stenji bombaža  
in jih zanetim na reki,  
bom gledala te čolniče svetlobe,  
kako jih odnaša v temo.  
Kako majhni so, kako krhki.

## *Via Tiburtina*

Zid nima drugih spominov kot tistih, ki so mu bili dani.  
Kot romar sem privezala svojega, belega in šepetajočega,  
že izgubljenega v dvojnem tisočletju skeletnega zaznavanja.

Hladen vetr nežno pomete popivanje ob koncu tedna s  
teme San Lorenza  
in Freja se za svojim kolovratom  
nagne bliže mesecu.

### *Križci in krožci*

V tem kvadratu leži vsota  
vse moje preteklosti.

V tem, kar bi lahko bilo, pa ni bilo.

Tu izberem neskončnost  
in tu je ne.

## *Sari*

Potrebne smo bile tri: dve  
na koncih in ena, ki je držala na sredini.

Kos svilenega somraka  
nam je padel iz prstov,  
nežno je dišal po diamantih  
in Bengalski zaliv,  
preveč prostran, da bi ga razumele, nasprotje  
razkritja Draupadi,  
oddaljen kot Afrodita.

Stopale smo naprej in nazaj,  
se ustavljale in začenjale,  
dokler nismo zložile odraslosti  
v skoraj urejen kvadrat in smo bile  
lahko znova samo me.

## *Nekoc je bilo in nato ni bilo*

Bala sem se zapiranja avtomobilskih vrat;  
kaj če te ne bom nikoli več videla?

Petki zvečer so bili za ribje palčke.  
Mislila sem, da so vse ribe dolge  
in ravnih robov kot prsti.

Prvi pomladni dan je bil premazan z bangom  
in povsem brez besed.

Amerika se je ponoči prižgala:  
včasih so se trakovi nepovratno zavozlali.

Moja mama se spominja prižigalcev uličnih svetilk.  
Če sem se dovolj močno potrudila,  
je lahko njen spomin postal moj.

Bila sem visoka kot narcisa  
in nato nisem bila.

## ***Preteklik***

Če bi izbral en dan in me prosil,  
da se ga spomnim, bi rekla  
»rumena«. Rekla bi »gol«.  
In cvetni listi magnolije in neodobravanje,  
pometeno v rjav koš. Nimam čuta za vonj,  
razen v sanjah, zato ti tega ne bi mogla  
reči verodostojno. Vsaka podoba je poravnana,  
nato pa premešana kot komplet kart. Toda ena  
ves čas vznika, enooki fant, princesa.  
Tista prazna rumena gugalnica v škotski megli.

---

## *Slavim*

Tu: jaz,  
 vsota vseh delov vseh  
 dni, ki si jih pozabila (pa tudi  
 nekaterih, ki se jih spominjaš  
 popolnoma, kot pesmi).  
 Lahko me prešteješ,  
 natančno  
 kot krvni sladkor.  
 Ali gube. Hura za  
 stvari, ki smo jih naredili  
 in nas približajo zemlji –  
 kajti prah si – zapomni si dneve,  
 ki si jih pustila za seboj, zapomni si nebo,  
 nevidno, a vsenavzoče.  
 Sezi po tistem, kar je bilo,  
 saj  
 je to vse, kar kdaj  
 boš.

*Prevedla Petra Meterc*

Pesmi *Pozabljivost, Hommage, Via Tiburtina, Križci in krožci* so bile objavljene v pesniški zbirki *The Clarity of Distance* (Jasnost razdalje, Aeolus House, 2019). Pesmi *Sari, Nekoč je bilo in nato ni bilo, Preteklik* pa v pesniški zbirki *From Bottles and Bones* (Steklenice in kosti, Bayeux Arts, 2017). Pesem *Slavim* še ni bila objavljena.



*Foto © Dimitris Tsoumplekas*

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# *Amanda Mihalopulu*

Amanda Mihalopulu se je rodila leta 1966 v Atenah (Grčija), kjer je študirala francoščino. Ob literarnem ustvarjanju je bila kolumnistka grških in tujih časopisov in revij; leta 2015 je za nemški časnik *Tagesspiegel* pisala kolumno o vsakdanjem življenju Grkov v času ekonomske krize. Danes ena najvidnejših grških avtoric je doslej izdala osem romanov, tri zbirke kratkih zgodb in več del za otroke. Za svoja dela je bila večkrat nagrajena, med drugim je za zbirko kratke proze *Λαμπερή μέρα* (Blešeč dan, 2013) prejela nagrado atenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti (najpomembnejše grško literarno priznanje), za zbirko *Θα γέθελα* (Rada bi, 2005) pa mednarodno nagrado ameriške ustanove za umetnost NEA. Njena dela so prevedena v dvajset jezikov, tudi v angleščino, nemščino in španščino; v slovenščini je leta 2018 v prevodu Klarise Jovanović izšel roman *Πιατί σκάτωσα την καλύτερή μου φύλη* (*Zakaj sem ubila najboljšo prijateljico*; Modrijan). Svoje zgodbe in eseje objavlja v časopisih in revijah, kot so *Guardian*, *World Literature Today*, *Guernica*, *Harvard Review*. Pričujoči odlomek je iz pisateljičinega zadnjega dela, literarizirane avtobiografije *Μπαρόκ* (Barok, 2018), v kateri se 50-letna protagonistka v kratkih petdesetih zgodbah spominja svoje preteklosti, vse od sedanjosti do rojstva. Avtorica pravi, da je v romanu »pripovedovalec subjekt nadzorovanega eksperimenta, v katerem so naša življenja zgodbe in vse zgodbe, ki jih pripovedujemo, življenje«.

Amanda Michalopoulou was born in 1966 in Athens, Greece, where she studied French literature. Besides creating literature, she has been a columnist in several Greek and foreign media. In 2015, she wrote a column on the life of the average Greek during the economic crisis for the German newspaper *Tagespiegel*. She is one of the most prominent Greek writers today, having published eight novels, three short story collections, and several works for children. She has received several awards for her work, among others for her short story collection *Λαμπερή μέρα* (Bright Day, 2013), which received the award of Academy of Athens (the most distinguished Greek literary prize), and for her collection *Θα γέθελα* (I'd Like, 2005), which received the international literature award of the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) from the USA. Her works have been translated into twenty languages, among them Slovenian, English, German, and Spanish. Her stories and essays have appeared in such newspapers and magazines as *The Guardian*, *World Literature Today*, *Guernica*, and *Harvard Review*. The following extract was taken from her most recent work, the auto-fiction *Μπαρόκ* (Baroque, 2018). In this novel, a 50-year-old woman recalls her past backwards, in 50 short stories, one for each year of her life, going back to her conception by the love-making of her parents. In the writer's words, this is a work in which the narrator is "a subject of a controlled experiment, in which whatever we live is a story and whatever stories we tell are life."

## Γρατζουνιές

(κεφάλαιο 18 του μυθιστορήματος Μπαρόκ )

«Οριστε!»

Η μαμά έβγαλε τα γυαλιά ηλίου και με κοιτάξε θριαμβευτικά. Ξανάχωσε το κεφάλι στα αποτσίγαρα με το κραγιόν κι εγώ θυμήθηκα τη σειρά Χαρτ και Χαρτ, μ' ένα ζευγάρι πλούσιων ερασιτεχνών ντετέκτιβ που διαλευκαίνουν μυστήρια για το κέφι τους και στο τέλος τσουγκρίζουν ποτήρια σαμπάνιας στο σκάφος. Έμοιαζε με τα προβλήματα που λύναμε στο Κλειδί της Πρακτικής Αριθμητικής παλιά με τον μπαμπά: Σ' ένα τασάκι αυτοκινήτου βρίσκουμε πέντε γόπτες με κραγιόν και τρεις χωρίς. Πόσες γυναίκες έχουν φιλήσει τον οδηγό;

Απόγευμα Κυριακής. Ο μπαμπάς κοιμόταν κι εγώ φύλαγα τσίλιες. Η μαμά είχε κάνει φύλλο φτερό τα πατάκια, τοντουλάπι με την άδεια οδήγησης, το χώρο κάτω από τα καθίσματα. Τώρα τσίμπαγε τα αποτσίγαρα με το τσιμπιδάκι των φρυδιών και τα τοποθετούσε σ' ένα πλαστικό σακουλάκι, απ' αυτά όπου πακετάριζα σάντουιτς για το πανεπιστήμιο. Αν με είχαν αφήσει να δηλώσω πρώτη τη Φιλοσοφική Ιωαννίνων στις Πανελλήνιες, δεν θα συμμετείχα σ' αυτή την ταπεινωτική διαδικασία.

Το πρόσωπο της μαμάς ήταν κατάμαυρο και ξεφλούδιζε κατά τόπους. Είχε κάνει χημικό πίλινγκ στη Γιαννούδα και κυκλοφορούσε στο σπίτι με τεράστια γυαλιά ηλίου και μια μαντήλα. Μερικές φορές την τσάκωνα να κοιτάζεται στον τρίφυλλο καθρέφτη της τουαλέτας τσιτώνοντας το δέρμα στα ζυγωματικά. Ήταν πολύ όμορφη. Ο μπαμπάς έλεγε ότι στα νιάτα της ήταν πιο όμορφη από την αδερφή μου κι εμένα μαζί. Μετά το μετάνιωνε κι έλεγε, «Αλλά κι εσείς είσαστε κορίτσαροι».

Η μαμά έλεγε ότι το δέρμα της, μετά το κάψιμο, θα γίνει λειο και απαλό σαν μωρού. Δυο φορές το χρόνο με έπαιρνε μαζί της για καθαρισμό προσώπου στη Γιαννούδα. Έντονα βαμμένα κορίτσια με άσπρες ποδιές έσπαγαν τα μπιμπίκια μου με βαμβάκι και μετά άπλωναν στο πρόσωπό μου μάσκα άργιλου. Δεν ήξερα πού να σταθώ εκεί μέσα, πού να βάλω τα χέρια μου. Δεν ήξερα πώς να είμαι όμορφη. Το μόνο που μ' ενδιέφερε ήταν να τροχίσω τους κυνόδοντές μου που ήταν σουβλεροί σαν του καρχαρία.

«Το νου σου, κάποιος έρχεται!» φώναξε η μαμά. Πέσαμε κι οι δύο στα πατάκια. «Έτσι φυλάς τσίλιες;»

«Εγώ φταιώ; Εσύ δεν με φώναξες για να μου δείξεις;»

«Δεν έχω καμία όρεξη να μας πιάσει στα πράσα ο πατέρας σου!»

Ξαναβγήκα από το αυτοκίνητο. Άρχισα να κόβω βόλτες μπροστά στο πηγάδι της πιλοτής με τα χέρια στις τσέπες του τζιν. Μουρμούραγα ένα τραγούδι της Σιούζι που γράφτηκε για την οικογένειά μου.

*This is the happy house  
We're happy here in the happy house.  
To forget ourselves and pretend all's well.  
There is no hell.*

Είχα κοπεί στα δύο. Η μισή με τη μαμά που ένιωθε εξαπατημένη, η άλλη μισή με τον μπαμπά που ένιωθε έλευθερος.

Ο μπαμπάς ήταν ο θεός μου. Ήζερε παγκόσμια ιστορία και μαθηματικά. Τραγουδούσε όλες τις άριες απ' έξω. Μαστόρευε ό,τι χαλούσε κι ύστερα τακτοποιούσε βίδες και καρφιά στην αποθήκη, κατά μέγεθος, γράφοντας έξω από κάθε κουτί το περιεχόμενο με τα καλλιγραφικά του γράμματα. Τώρα ήταν ένας μυστηριώδης ξένος. Έβαζε στο αυτοκίνητο μια συνάδελφο με κραγιόν, πολύ νεότερη από τη μαμά, και πήγαιναν μαζί κάπου.

«Τέλειώσαμε», είπε η μαμά γέρνοντας στο κατεβασμένο παράθυρο του συνοδηγού. Προχωρούσα μπροστά μόνη μου κι εκείνη μονολογούσε πιο πίσω. «Ρωτούσα κι εγώ το ζών τι είναι αυτές οι γρατζουνιές στην πλάτη του και μου έλεγε, "Τίποτα, ξύστηκα"».

«Μαμά!»

Δεν είχα καμία όρεξη να σκέφτομαι μια ξένη να γρατζουνάει την πλάτη του μπαμπά.

«Θα τους δείξω εγώ». Η μαμά περπατούσε σαν κορίτσι, με ξεχαρβαλωμένα μπράτσα. Στην είσοδο του ασανσέρ σταμάτησε. «Δεν μπορώ ν' ανέβω. Πήγαινε φέρε τα τσιγάρα μου. Να βγούμε ως την Αγίου Ιωάννου να καθαρίσει το μυαλό μου».

«Θα βγεις έξω έτσι;»

«Αυτό μας μάρανε τώρα».

Ανέβηκα νυχοπατώντας. Ένιωθα οδυνηρή περηφάνια για τους γονείς μου. Έκαναν ανήκουστα πράγματα λες και ήταν ήρωες μυθιστορήματος. Ή αδερφή μου δεν πήρε χαμπάρι. Έβλεπε στην τηλεόραση τη σειρά Γιάννης και Μαρία, με μια νέα ηθοποιό που της άρεσε, την Πέμη Ζούνη. Ο μπαμπάς κοιμόταν. Πήρα τα τσιγάρα και κατέβηκα.

«Νόμιζαν πως θα ξεφύγουν», είπε η μαμά και μου άρπαξε το πακέτο από τα χέρια. «Τώρα θα τους δείξω εγώ ποια είμαι».

«Τι θα κάνεις;»

«Νόμιζαν ότι μασάω κουτόχορτο. Έννοια σου, όμως, θα τους κανονίσω!»

Δεν ήθελε να μιλήσουμε. Ήθελε να μιλάει εκείνη κι εγώ να ακούω. Όταν υπέφερε από δισκοπάθεια, ή από κολικούς παλιότερα, χρειαζόταν κάποιον κοντά της. Χωρίς μάρτυρες, ο πόνος δεν ήταν πόνος.

Η Μαντάμ ντε Σεβινιέ περιέγραφε στην κόρη της τον κολικό κάποιας Μαντάμ ντε Μπρισάκ, πώς έδινε παράσταση σφίγγοντας τα σεντόνια για να προκαλέσει τον οίκτο. 'Όταν διαβάσαμε το γράμμα στο Γαλλικό Ινστιτούτο, γελούσα μοχθηρά από μέσα μου με αυτούς που δεν μπορούν να ράψουν το στόμα τους και να καταπιούν τον πόνο τους. Με έκπληξη διαπίστωσα ότι δεν γινόταν να διαβάσω πιο κάτω, τα μάτια μου είχαν γεμίσει δάκρυα. Θα μου άρεσε να πονάει η μαμά διακριτικά όπως εγώ. Όμως, είχε κι εκείνη τα δικά της σημάδια. Η γιαγιά την είχε στείλει, μαθήτρια δημοτικού, να περάσει δυο χειμώνες στη Σύρο. Λυπητερή ιστορία. Δεν μπορούσε να τα βγάλει πέρα με δυο παιδιά και το κτή- μα, κι έτσι την ξαπόστειλε στον αδερφό του πατέρα της που είχε πεθάνει όταν η μαμά ήταν μωρό. Στη Σύρο την έβαζαν να κάνει δουλειές και να τρώει με το υπηρετικό προσωπικό. Από τότε η μαμά είχε παραμείνει παραπονεμένο κορίτσι. Σαν τη Μέλπω Αξιώτη, που έλεγε στις βάρκες, «Στο γυρισμό, να μην ξεχάσετε να φέρετε πάλι πίσω τη μανούλα, όπως είναι ντυμένη μες στα δαχτυλίδια και τα μαλλιά της».

Στρίψαμε στη λεωφόρο. Οι περαστικοί κοιτούσαν επίμονα τη γυναίκα με το καμένο πρόσωπο.

«Μαμά, καλύτερα να γυρίσουμε».

«Γύρνα εσύ, αν θες. Θέλω να ηρεμήσω λιγάκι».

Δεν ηρέμησε. Στη μέση της νύχτας ξυπνήσαμε από τις κραυγές της. Είχε ξεχάσει το λάδι στη φωτιά. Το σπίτι μύριζε καμένο πλαστικό, και οι καπνοί, λιπώδεις και πυκνοί, έφταναν στο ταβάνι. Πρώτη μπήκε στην κουζίνα η μαμά, μετά εγώ με την αδερφή μου. Ο μπαμπάς μάς ακολούθουσε με το ξεχειλωμένο του σώβρακο. Βήχαμε όλοι, ανοίγαμε παράθυρα να μπει καθαρός αέρας. Και ξαφνικά η μαμά τεντώνει τον μαύρο ξεφλουδισμένο λαιμό της και αρχίζει να μουγκρίζει σαν ταύρος, τα πλοκάμια των καπνών λες και έβγαιναν από τα ρουθούνια της. Ορμάει στη φρουτιέρα και εκτοξεύει στον μπαμπά πορτοκάλια και μήλα. Τον πέτυχαν στους ώμους και στο στήθος.

«Είσαι ψεύτης! Είσαι δειλός! Βρήκα τις γόπες της!»

Η αδερφή μου μ' έπιασε απ' το χέρι, νόμιζε πως κάποια άγνωστη μπήκε στο σπίτι μας κι έβαλε φωτιά.

«Όχι», είπα, «δεν μας έβαλε κανείς φωτιά».

Τραβήχτηκα. Δεν ήθελα να με κοιτάζει με τα καθαρά μάτια της.

Δεν θυμάμαι ποιος άνοιξε την πόρτα που συνέδεε την κουζίνα με το σαλόνι. Οι καπνοί του λαδιού τύλιξαν τον καναπέ, οι γκρίζες γλώσσες τους έγλειψαν το ταβάνι. Η μαμά έκανε κύκλους γύρω από το τραπέζιάκι του σαλονιού ανάβοντας το ένα τσιγάρο μετά το άλλο. Ο μπαμπάς έπεσε

στα γόνατα κι έκανε αυτό για το οποίο τον κατηγορούσε, έγινε δειλός και ψεύτης.

«Δεν συμβαίνει τίποτα», κλαψούρισε, «όλα τα βγάζεις από το μυαλό σου».

Ο λαιμός μου έτσουζε, δεν μπορούσα να σταθώ πουθενά.Ž

Δεν έφταιγε τόσο το τσούξιμο, όσο το ασυνήθιστο θέαμα του πατέρα μου, οι ήχοι που έβγαιναν από το στόμα του. Τα μηνίγγια μου μούδιασαν όπως στην πρώτη Γυμνασίου μετά τον αγιασμό, όπως στα Στύρα το καλοκαίρι που πέθανε ο παππούς. Άνοιξα τη βρύση, έριξα στο πρόσωπό μου νερό με τις χούφτες. Η μαμά άναψε τσιγάρο με χέρια που έτρεμαν. Ή αδερφή μου με τραβολογούσε από την μπλούζα και ρωτούσε τι συμβαίνει.

«Τίποτα», είπα, «πήγαινε κοιμήσου».

Μίλουσα όπως οι μεγάλοι.

Στάθηκα στο πρέκι της πόρτας. Ο μπαμπάς καθόταν στον καναπέ με τους αγκώνες στα γόνατα και το πρόσωπο κρυμμένο στα χέρια. Η πλάτη του ανεβοκατέβαινε ρυθμικά. Οι γρατζουνιές φαίνονταν ολοκάθαρα, επειδή είχε αρχίσει να ξημερώνει.

## Praske

(18. poglavje iz romana Barok)

»Lepo prosim!«

Mama je snela sončna očala in me zmagoslavno pogledala. Spet je vtaknila nos med ogorke, na katerih so bili sledovi rdečila, meni pa je prišla na misel nanizanka *Operacija zakoncev Hart*, v kateri nastopa bogat zakonski par, oba amaterska detektiva, ki za lastno veselje razvozljavata razne skrivnosti in si na koncu, na ladji, nazdravita s šampanjcem. Vse skupaj je spominjalo na naloge v računski vadnici, ki sva jih nekoč reševala z očkom: V avtomobilskem pepelniku so trije ogorki s sledovi rdečila in dva brez. Koliko žensk je poljubilo voznika?

Nedeljsko popoldne. Očka je spal, jaz pa sem stražila. Mama je temeljito pregledala talne predpražnike, predal z vozniškim dovoljenjem, prostor pod sedeži. S pinceto za obrvi je spravila ogorke v plastično vrečko, v kakršni sem nosila sendviče za malico. Če bi mi dovolili, da bi na splošni maturi na prvo mesto vpisala Filozofsko fakulteto v Joanini, zdaj ne bi sodelovala v tako ponižajočem početju.

Mamin obraz je bil črn kot saje, na nekaterih mestih se ji je luščila koža. Šla je na kemični piling k Janudi in zdaj je hodila po hiši z ogromnimi sončnimi očali, pokrita z ruto. Nekajkrat sem jo zaločila, ko se je gledala v trodelnem kopalniškem ogledalu in si s prsti napenjala kožo na ličnicah. Bila je zelo lepa. Očka je večkrat rekel, da je bila v mladosti lepša od mene in sestre, od obeh skupaj. Potem se je ponavadi pokesal in rekel: »Tudi vedve sta dekleti, kot se šika.«

Mama je trdila, da bo njena koža, ki je zdaj ožgana od kemije, kmalu gladka in mehka kot dojenčkova. Dvakrat na leto me je jemala s sabo k Janudi na čiščenje obraza. Močno naličena dekleta v belih haljah so mi s koščki vate med prsti stiskale ogrce in mi nato obraz namazale z glineno masko. Nisem vedela, kam naj se dam, kaj naj z rokami. Nisem vedela, kako naj bom lepa. Edino, kar me je zanimalo, je bilo, da bi si zgladila podočnika, ki sta bila zašiljena kot pri morskih psih.

»Pazi, nekdo prihaja!« je zavpila mama. Obe sva se vrgli na tla. »Tako stražiš?«

»Sem jaz kriva? Saj si mi ti ukazala, naj pridem sem, ker mi moraš nekaj pokazati.«

»Prav nič mi ni do tega, da bi naju zalotil tvoj oče.«

Stopila sem iz avta. Začela sem koračiti pred vodno pipo na hišni ploščadi, z rokami v žepih kavbojk. Mrmrala sem si neko pesem od Siouxsie and the Banshees, ki je bila napisana kot nalašč za našo družino.

*This is the happy house.  
We're happy here in the happy house.  
To forget ourselves and pretend all's well.  
There is no hell.*

Preklala sem se na dvoje. Prva polovica se je postavila na mamino stran, ki se je počutila izdano, druga pa na očkovo, ki se je počutil svobodnega.

Očka je bil zame bog. Poznal je svetovno zgodovino in matematiko. Vse arije je znal na pamet. Vedno je popravil vse, kar se je pokvarilo, nato pa je zložil vijake in žeblje v shrambo, po velikosti, in na vsako škatlico s kaligrafskimi črkami napisal, kaj vsebuje. Zdaj je postal skrivenosten tujec. V svoj avto je vabil neko sodelavko z našminkanimi ustnicami, veliko mlajšo od mame, in skupaj sta se nekam vozila.

»Končali sva,« je rekla mama in se obrnila proti odprtemu oknu na sopotnikovi strani. Krenila sem proti hiši, ona pa se je, stopajoč za mano, pogovarjala sama s sabo.

»Pokvarjenca sem spraševala, kaj pomenijo te praske na njegovem hrbtnu, on pa mi je zatrjeval: 'Nič, nič, samo opraskal sem se.'«

»Mama!«

Prav nič mi ni bila všeč predstava, v kateri neka tujka grebe očka po hrbtnu.

»Jima bom že pokazala!« Mama je hodila kot kakšna deklica z uvelimi nadlahtmi. Pred dvigalom se je ustavila. »Ne morem vstopiti. Pojdi sama gor in mi prinesi cigarete. Sprehodiva se do Svetega Ivana, da si prezračim glavo.«

»Taka boš šla ven?«

»Požvižgam se.«

Po prstih sem stopila v stanovanje. Na svoje starše sem bila ponosna do bolečine. Počela sta neverjetne reči, kot junaka kakšnega romana. Sestra me ni opazila. Gledala je televizijo, nanizanko *Ivan in Marija*, v njej je nastopala nova igralka Pemi Zuni, ki je bila moji sestri všeč. Očka je spal. Vzela sem cigarete in se vrnila k mami.

»Mislila sta, da jo bosta poceni odnesla,« je rekla mama in pograbilo cigarete. »Jima bom že pokazala, kdo sem.«

»Kaj boš pa naredila?«

»Saj nisem priplavala po kisli župi. Sicer pa to ni tvoja stvar, ju bom že spravila v red.«

Ni ji bilo do pogovora z mano. Hotela je govoriti, samo ona, jaz pa naj jo poslušam. Ko je trpela zaradi hernije ali, nekoč, zaradi trebušnih krčev, je moral biti vedno kdo ob njej. Bolečina brez prič vendor ni bolečina.

Madame de Sévigné je nekoč svoji hčerki opisovala krče neke madame de Brissac, ko je ta v gledališki predstavi z rokami grabila po rjuhi, da bi pri gledalcih zbudila sočutje. Ko smo v Francoskem inštitutu brali njeno pismo, sem se v sebi privoščljivo posmehovala tistim, ki ne morejo stisniti zob, kadar jih muči bolečina. Nato sem presenečeno ugotovila, da ne morem nadaljevati z branjem, ker so mi v oči stopile solze. Rada bi, da bi moja mama trpela bolj zadržano, tako kot jaz. Toda tudi ona ima svoje brazgotine. Ko je še hodila v osnovno šolo, jo je babica pozimi dvakrat послala na Siros. Žalostna zgodba. Ob dveh otrocih sama ni zmogla vsega dela na posestvu, zato je mojo mamo послala k bratu svojega tedaj že pokojnega očeta; umrl je, ko je bila moja mama še dojenček. Na Sirosu je morala mama trdo delati in jesti s služinčadjo. Odtlej je bila trpeče dete. Tako kot Melpo Aksioti,<sup>1</sup> ki je prosila ladje: »Ko se boste vračale, nikar ne pozabite pripeljati nazaj moje mame, ki jo krasijo prstani in dolgi lasje.«

Zavili sva na avenijo. Mimoidoči so buljili v žensko z ožganim obrazom.

»Mama, vrniva se.«

»Vrni se ti, če hočeš. Jaz se moram najprej malo umiriti.«

A se ni umirila. Sredi noči so nas prebudili njeni kriki. Pozabila je olje na ognju. Stanovanje je smrdelo po zažgani plastiki, dim se je, gost in masten, dvigal pod strop. Prva je stopila v kuhinjo mama, nato jaz in za mano še sestra. Očka je hodil za nami v razvlečenih spodnjicah. Vsi smo kašljali in odpirali okna, da bi zajeli svež zrak. Nenadoma je mama stegnila svoj črni, oluščeni vrat in začela rjoveti kot bik, zdelo se je, da lovke dima puhtijo iz njenih nosnic. Planila je nad posodo s sadjem in začela obstreljevati očka s pomarančami in jabolki. Skupil jo je v ramena in prsi.

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<sup>1</sup> Melpo Aksioti, grška pisateljica (1905–1973).

»Lažnivec! Strahopetec! Našla sem njene čike!«

Sestra me je zgrabila za roko, mislila je, da je kaka tujka vdrla v hišo in podtaknila požar.

»Ne,« sem rekla, »nihče nam ni podtaknil požara.«

Odšla sem iz kuhinje. Nisem hotela, da bi me sestra gledala s tistimi svojimi bistrimi očmi.

Ne spomnim se, kdo je odprl vrata med kuhinjo in dnevno sobo. Dim zažganega olja je ovil kavč, njegovi sivi zublji so lizali strop. Mama je tekala okoli salonske mizice in prižigala cigaretto za cigaretto. Očka je padel na kolena in počel ravno to, česar ga je obtoževala: postal je lažnivec in strahopetec.

»Nič se ni zgodilo,« je ihtel, »vse si domišljaš.«

V grlu me je peklo, nisem imela obstanka. Ni bilo krivo ščemenje, prej nenavadni prizor, v katerem je moj očka spuščal čudne glasove. V sencih me je mravljinčilo tako kot v prvem letniku gimnazije, po cerkvenem blagoslovu,<sup>2</sup> tako kot v Stirah, tisto letosje, ko je umrl stari oče. Odprla sem pipo, zajela vodo v dlani in si jo nekajkrat pljusknila v obraz. Mama si je s trepetajočimi rokami prižgala cigaretto. Sestra me je vlekla za majico in me spraševala, kaj se dogaja.

»Nič,« sem rekla, »pojdi spat.«

Govorila sem tako kot odrasli.

Obstala sem med podboji. Očka je sedel na kavču, s komolci se je opiral na kolena, obraz je skrival v dlaneh. Hrbet se mu je enakomerno dvigal in spuščal. Praske so se lepo videle, kajti začelo se je že daniti.

*Prevedla Klarisa Jovanović*

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<sup>2</sup> Na začetku šolskega leta cerkveni dostojanstvenik blagoslovi šolsko poslopje, osebje in dijake. Obred ponavadi poteka na šolskem dvorišču.

## Scratches

(chapter 18 from the novel *Baroque*)

“I knew it!”

Mom took off her sunglasses and flashed me a look of triumph. Then she went back to sifting through the lipstick-stained cigarette butts, and I remembered the series *Hart to Hart*, with the rich amateur detectives who solve mysteries for fun, and each episode ends with the couple clinking champagne flutes on the deck of their yacht. It also seemed like one of the problems Dad and I used to solve in *The Key to Practical Arithmetic*: in the ashtray of a car are five cigarette butts with lipstick, and three without. How many women have kissed the driver?

Sunday afternoon. Dad was sleeping and I was the lookout. Mom had searched every inch of the car, under the floor mats, in the glove compartment, the space beneath the seats. Now she was plucking the cigarette butts out of the ashtray with tweezers and putting them in a little plastic bag, the kind I packed my sandwiches in when I went to class. If she'd let me put the School of Humanities at the University of Ioannina first on my list of schools, I wouldn't have had to take part in this humiliating process.

Mom's face was black and peeling in places. She had gone to Giannouda's salon for a chemical peel and now wore enormous sunglasses and a kerchief over her head even at home. Sometimes I would catch her looking in the three-panel mirror in the bathroom, pinching the skin over her cheekbones. She was very beautiful. Dad used to say that when she was young, she was more beautiful than my sister and I put together. Then he would feel bad and say, “But you gals are good-lookers, too.”

Mom said that after the peeling was over, her skin would be as soft and smooth as a baby's. Twice a year she took me with her to Giannouda for a facial. Heavily made-up girls in white aprons squeezed my blackheads with a cotton ball and then spread a clay mask over my face. I felt awkward there, didn't know how to hold myself, where to put my hands. I didn't know how to be beautiful. All I cared about was filing down my canines, which were sharp, like shark's teeth.

“Watch it, someone's coming!” Mom cried. We both fell flat on the floormats. “Is that your idea of standing guard?”

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“Oh, now it’s my fault? You’re the one who called me over to look!”

“I really don’t want your father to catch us red-handed!”

I climbed back out of the car. I started walking back and forth in front of the ornamental well out in front of the building with my hands in my jeans pockets. I murmured a Siouxsie and the Banshees song that was basically written with my family in mind:

*This is the happy house  
We’re happy here in the happy house.  
To forget ourselves and pretend all’s well.  
There is no hell.*

I was torn, split in two. Half of me was with Mom, who felt deceived, and the other half with Dad, who felt free.

Dad was my god. He knew world history and math. He could sing all the arias by heart. He fixed anything that broke and arranged the screws and nails in the storeroom, by size, writing on the outside of each box what was in it, in his calligraphic hand. Now he was a mysterious stranger. He invited a lipstick-wearing colleague, much younger than Mom, into the car, and the two of them went off somewhere.

“We’re done here,” Mom said, leaning out the lowered passenger’s side window. I walked ahead and she followed behind, speaking in monologue. “What an idiot I was, I asked about those scratches on his back, and he said, ‘It’s nothing, I must’ve had an itch.’”

“Mom!”

I really didn’t want to think about some strange woman clawing at my father’s back.

“I’ll show them.” Mom was walking like a little girl, with rickety arms. She stopped outside the elevator. “I can’t go up. Bring me my cigarettes. We’ll walk down as far Agiou Ioannou so I can clear my head.”

“You’re going out like that?”

“Right now I don’t give a damn.”

I went up on tiptoe. I felt a painful pride in my parents. They were acting in unprecedented ways, like characters in a novel. My sister didn’t notice a thing. She was watching *Yannis and Maria* on TV, starring Pemi Zouni, a young actress she liked. Dad was still sleeping. I grabbed the cigarettes and went back downstairs.

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"They think they're going to get away with it," Mom said, grabbing the pack out of my hand. "But I'll show them who they're dealing with."

"What are you going to do?"

"They thought I was born yesterday, or just fell off the turnip truck. But you watch, I'll show them!"

She wasn't interested in the two of us talking. She wanted to talk, and wanted me to listen. Like when she got a slipped disc, or had abdominal colic, and needed someone at her side. Without a witness, pain wasn't pain.

Madame de Sévigné described to her daughter the abdominal colic of a certain Madame de Brissac, how she played the whole thing up, clenching the sheets, pleading for pity. When we read the letter at the Institute Française, at first I felt a kind of spiteful mirth at all those who can't button their lips and swallow their pain. But with great surprise I discovered that I couldn't keep reading, my eyes had filled with tears. I would have liked my mother to suffer discretely, the way I did. But she too had been marked by her childhood. When she was still in grade school, my grandmother had sent her to spend two winters on the island of Syros. It was a sad story. My grandfather had died when Mom was just a baby, and my grandmother couldn't manage with two children and the farm, so she packed my mother off to my grandfather's brother. On Syros they made her work hard and eat with the servants. Ever since then, Mom had been a hurt little girl.

We turned onto the avenue. Passersby gawked at the woman with the scorched face.

"Mom, I think we should go home."

"You go if you want. I need to calm down a bit more."

But she didn't calm down. In the middle of the night we were awakened by her cries. She had forgotten the oil on the stove. The house smelled like burned plastic, and the smoke, oily and thick, rose to the ceiling. Mom was the first to reach the kitchen, then my sister and me. My father followed behind in his baggy underwear. We were all coughing, opening windows to let in fresh air. Suddenly Mom stretched her black, peeling neck forward and started roaring like a bull. The tentacles of smoke seemed to be rising straight out of her nostrils. She dashed for the fruit basket and started launching oranges and apples at Dad, hitting his shoulders and chest.

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“You’re a liar! A coward! I found her cigarette butts!”

My sister grabbed my hand, asking if some stranger had broken into our house and set it on fire.

“No,” I said, “no one set our house on fire.”

I pulled away. I didn’t want her looking at me with those clear eyes.

I don’t remember who opened the door leading from the kitchen to the living room. The smoke from the oil coiled around the couch, grey tongues licking the ceiling. Mom kept circling the coffee table, lighting one cigarette after another. Dad fell to his knees and did precisely what she was accusing him of: he became a coward and a liar.

“There’s nothing going on,” he cried, “it’s all in your head.”

My throat stung, I couldn’t stand still. It wasn’t really my throat, but the unusual sight of my father, the sounds coming from his mouth. My temples went numb, like in Styra the summer Grandpa died. I turned on the faucet, splashed water on my face. Mom lit a cigarette with trembling hands. My sister tugged at my shirt, asking me what was going on.

“Nothing,” I said, “go back to bed.”

I sounded like a grownup.

I stopped in the doorway. Dad was sitting on the couch with his elbows on his knees, his face buried in his hands. His back rose and fell rhythmically. In the dim light of dawn, the scratches showed as clear as day.

*Translated by Karen Emmerich*



*Foto © Jamie Ellington*

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# Sverrir Norland

Sverrir Norland se je rodil leta 1986 v Reykjaviku (Islandija). Na Univerzi Middlesex v Londonu je leta 2012 magistriral iz kreativnega pisanja, nato pa živel v Parizu in New Yorku. Doslej je izdal dva romana, *Kviðasnillingarnir* (Mojstri tesnobe, 2014), v katerem tematizira sodobno islandsko družbo, in *Fyrir allra augum* (Na vidiku, 2016). V islandskih in tujih literarnih revijah je objavil veliko kratkih zgodb in pesmi. Snov za pisanje išče v vsakdanjem življenju in medsebojnih odnosih. Norland je tudi ustanovitelj majhne založbe AM forlag, ki jo vodi skupaj z ženo. Založbo je ustanovil zato, ker si želi, da bi Islandci brali dobre knjige z lepimi ilustracijami in privlačno vizualno podobo. Jeseni 2018 je v svoji založbi izdal prvi, kot mu pravi, »knjižni snopič«, v katerega je združil svoje tri »dokaj dolge romane« ter zbirkie kratke proze in poezije. Norland piše tudi tedenski spletni novičnik *Leslistinn* o knjigah, intervjuva avtorje in druge umetnike. Poleg literarnega ustvarjanja pogosto piše tudi o okoljskih vprašanjih. Na Festivalu Vilenica gostuje v okviru projekta Perspektivni avtor na turneji (Emerging Writer on Tour), ki ga Festival Vilenica izvaja skupaj s hrvaškim Festivalom svetovne literature (založbe Fraktura) in irskim mednarodnim literarnim festivalom Cíirt (Galway Arts Centre) ter je namenjen mlajšim, še neuveljavljenim avtorjem, ki si želijo doseči mednarodno prepoznavnost.

Sverrir Norland was born in 1986 in Reykjavik, Iceland. He has an MA in Creative Writing from the London-based Middlesex University. After graduating in 2012, he lived in Paris and NYC. He has written two novels: *Kviðasnillingarnir* (Masters of Anxiety, 2014), in which he tackled contemporary Icelandic society, and *Fyrir allra augum* (In Plain Sight, 2016). He has also published many short stories and poems in Icelandic and foreign literary magazines. He seeks his literary material in everyday life, social interactions. Norland is also the founder of a small publishing house, AM forlag, which he runs together with his wife. He founded it because he wants Icelanders to read well-illustrated good books with an attractive visual element. In autumn 2018, his publishing house put out the first, as he calls it, *book bundle*, in which he united the following of his works: three “novels of reasonable length,” one short story collection, and a book of poetry. Norland also writes the weekly online newsletter *Leslistinn* about books, and he regularly interviews authors and other artists. In addition to literary creativity, he also often writes about environmental issues. He is a guest of the Vilenica Festival as an *Emerging Writer on Tour* within the framework of the project implemented by the Vilenica Festival together with the Croatian Festival of World Literature (Fraktura Publishing House) and the Irish international literary festival Cíirt (Galway Arts Centre), the latter being dedicated to younger, less recognized authors who wish to move to the international stage.

## Listin að lesa bækur

Þú verður að gera allt til að komast upp með að lesa bækur. Ljúga, svíkja, svekkja, narra, blekkja. Að öðrum kosti nærðu aldrei að lesa neitt. Og það er alltaf farsælasta og besta lausnin á hverjum vanda: að lesa. Ef þú stendur til dæmis andspænis erfiðu máli í einkalífinu: lokaðu þig þá af og lestu bækur. Ef þú tapaðir öllum peningunum þínum í heimskulegu veðmáli: lestu! Ef þú félst á vorprófunum og lentir í ástarsorg og handleggsbrotnaðir: lestu. Allt ætti að miða að því að fá frið og næði til að lesa. Sumt fólk fattar þetta ekki. „Hvað ertu að lesa?“ spyr það. (Fáranleg spurning!) Eða það kemur röltandi, potar í þig (sem ert að reyna að lesa) og byrjar að tala um eitthvað annað en stendur í bókinni; hneyksli á internetinu eða nýtt veitingahús. En þú ert að reyna að lesa. Seinna birtist fólk sem heldur því fram að það sé vinnuveitandinn þinn, frænka þín, fyrrverandi kærastan þín, ökumaðurinn sem lenti í árekstri við þig, starfsmaður hjá bankanum sem fullyrðir að þú skuldir greiðslur þrjá mánuði aftur í tímann, æskuvinur þinn, systir þín ... Þú tiplar fram hjá þeim á tánum, læðist um fáfarna stíga og dimm húasund – því að þú ert að reyna að lesa. Dagblöðin hringja og spryja hvað þú sért að lesa. Og þú segir: „Ekkert!“ Þú verður að draga fyrir gluggana, læsa útidyrunum, slökkva öll ljós nema á leslömpunum. Allir vilja vita hvað þú ert að lesa! Enginn truflar flugmann í lendingu eða keiluspilara í miðju kasti – samt komast allir upp með að ónáða þig þegar þú ert að reyna að lesa! Kunningi þinn úr Háskólanum bankar á stofugluggann hjá þér og spryr: „Hvað ertu að lesa?“ Síðan vill hann fá þig með sér á djasstónleika. En þú ert að reyna að lesa. Þú verður að skrokva, sparka, klekkja, pretta. Þyrla upp ryki og beita makalausum bellibrögðum til að fá þínu framengt – að öðrum kosti nærðu aldrei að lesa neitt. Og besti kosturinn í hverri þraut er alltaf að loka sig af og lesa. Það er mennskast af öllu mennsku að lesa. Mannkynssagan er ein samfelld hugsun þessarar skrítnu dýrategundar og þú, sem manneskja, þarf að rekja þig í gegnum hana orð fyrir orð til að skilja hver þú ert – með því að lesa. Vinkona þín hringir og vill bjóða þér í nýja heita pottinn sinn. „Hvað ertu að lesa?“ spyr hún. Það slasast enginn í fjallgöngu meðan hann er að lesa. Það stofnar enginn til styrjaldar eða býr til sprengjur, rústar efnahag heillar þjóðar, stráfellir lífríki regnskógganna, stuðlar að frekari súrnun sjávar meðan hann er að lesa. Þú verður

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að segja upp símanum, gæta þess bakdýrnar séu læstar, múra fyrir bréfalúguna. Það er í lagi að hagræða sannleikanum og forðast beint augnsamband ef markmiðið er að lesa. Því að öðrum kosti færðu aldrei neinn frið. Annars lestu aldrei neitt. Þú verður að fórna öllu. Og þú verður stöðugt að hafa nýjar afsakanir á hraðbergi: þegar vinnuveitandinn sendir þér skammarbréf; þegar kærastan þín grætur í símann; þegar bróðir þinn kemur úr meðferð; þegar afi þinn dettur niður stigann; þegar lyginn forsætisráðherra brosir til þín af forsiðu hvers einasta dagblaðs; þegar rokið og rigningin lemja húsið þitt úr öllum áttum; þegar vinir þínir hringja á nótunni; þegar kötturinn krafsar í hurðina – ekki leyfa þeim að trufla þig. Þú verður að lesa. Að öðrum kosti botnarðu aldrei neitt í neinu – ekki nema þú byrgir þig inni í orðveruleikanum og lesir.

*Lestu!!*

## ***Umetnost branja***

Če želiš brati knjige, ne smeš dopustiti, da te karkoli ustavi. Vsakogar moraš razočarati, preslepiti in zavajati, sicer ne boš nikoli prebral niti ene same strani. Branje je pravzaprav rešitev za vse twoje težave. Denimo, da si se v osebnem življenju znašel v nemogočem, zagatnem položaju; samo zakleni vrata in prebiraj knjige. Nemara si kot kakšen kretenski nesrečnik izgubil ves denar pri spletnem igranju pokra: beri! Potem si, preden si se zavedel, pogrnil na izpitih na Univerzi v Københavnu in se razšel s svojo brazilsko zaročenko: še več beri! Edini cilj vsega, kar počneš, bi moral biti le ta, da si zagotoviš mirna obdobja, v katerih lahko neprekinjeno in poglobljeno bereš. Tega mnogi ljudje ne razumejo. »Kaj bereš?« sprašujejo. (Kako zgrešeno vprašanje!) Drezali te bodo in nadlegovali z nečim povsem nepovezanim s knjigo, ki jo poskušaš brati; denimo s seksualnim škandalom v Franciji. Rahločutno jih opomniš (skozi stisnjene zobe), da poskušaš brati. Pozneje se boš spoprijemal s celo vrsto tepcev, ki bodo trdili, da so tvoj šef, tvoja bivša, voznik, v katerega si se pravkar zaletel ... Pa se po prstih odkradi mimo teh bitij, tihotapi se skozi zapuščene knjigarne in temne, pozabljljene knjižnice – ker poskušaš brati. S časopisa pokličejo in zahtevajo, da poveš, kaj bereš. »Ničesar!« vzklikneš. Pohiti: zastri žaluzije, zakleni vrata, ugasni vse luči razen svojih številnih bralnih lučk. Nihče ne moti pilota med pristajanjem ali poklicnega golfista, ko vihti palico – kako torej, da je vsakomur dovoljeno zmotiti bralca, ki poskuša *brati*? Tvoj nekdanji sošolec potrka na okno dnevne sobe in vpraša: »Kaj bereš?« Potem vztraja, da te bo odpeljal ven na večer improviziranega stand-upa. Ampak ti poskušaš brati! Lagati moraš, se upirati, suvati in se izmotavati, da ga odženeš. Dvigovati prah in nezaslišano dlakocepiti; sicer ti nikdar ne bo uspelo ničesar prebrati, potem pa ne boš poznal besed, kakršna je *dlakocepstvo*. Edini logični odziv na finančne zagate ali telesno grožnjo je ta, da se usedeš in bereš. Branje je najbolj človeška dejavnost, kar jih je. Zgodba človeštva je reka misli, ki se stekajo skozi milijarde lepih glav, ti pa moraš kot človek sodelovati v tem veličastnem projektu – tako da bereš. Pokliče te punca in želi, da prideš k njej, da bi se sprostil v njeni povsem novi masažni banji. »Kaj bereš?« te vpraša. Nihče, ki doma v dnevni sobi mirno bere, ne podleže hipotermiji in/ali alpinističnim poškodbam. Nihče ne napove vojne ali zasnuje jedrske bombe, nihče ne iztrebi

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celotnih ekosistemov in poveča ravni zakisanosti morja, medtem ko bere. Odpovedati moraš dostop do spleta in zamenjati naslov. Čisto v redu je, kadar prikrojiš resnico in se izogneš pogledu iz oči v oči, če to služi vsevišnjemu poslanstvu branja. Kajti sicer ne boš nikoli deležen miru in tišine! Sicer nikdar ne boš prebral niti enega samega samcatega stavka. Žrtvovati moraš vse. In na hladilniku moraš imeti pripet seznam izgovorov: kadar ti delodajalec pušča jezna glasovna sporočila na telefonski tajnici; kadar se ti punca v solzah pojavi na dvorišču; kadar tvoj brat, ki je ravno prišel s klinike za odvajanje, potrebuje kavč, na katerem bi prespal; kadar slepi dedek moleduje, da ga odpeljji v bolnišnico; kadar ti poštar poskuša v nabiralnik zbasati nasmihajoči se obraz predsednika vlade; kadar orkanski veter in dež besno in srdito napadeta tvojo hišo in mački iz sosedčine praskajo po stenah – nikar ne dovoli, da te zmotijo. Brati moraš. Drugače ne boš nikoli razumel čisto ničesar – dokler ne izklopiš celotnega sveta in bereš.

*Beri!!*

*Iz angleščine prevedla Jedrt Lapuh Maležič*

Pesem v prozi *Listin að lesa bækur* (Umetnost branja) je bila objavljena v pesniški zbirki *Erfðaskrá á útdauðu tungumáli* (Pričevanje izumrlega jezika), ki je izšla leta 2018 pri založbi AM forlag.

## *The Art of Reading*

If you want to read books, you can't let anything stop you. You must disappoint, dupe, and deceive everyone, otherwise you'll never read a single page. This happens to be the solution to all your problems: reading. Say you're facing an impossibly sticky situation in your personal life; just lock the door and read books. Perhaps you've lost all your money playing online poker like some miserable idiot: read! Then, before you know it, you've flunked your exams at the University of Copenhagen and broken up with your Brazilian fiancée: read more! Everything you do should have the sole aim of securing peaceful intervals of time in which to practice uninterrupted deep reading. Many people do not understand this. "What are you reading?" they ask. (Such a misguided question!) They'll poke you and pester with something totally unrelated to the book that you're trying to read; say, a sex scandal in France. You gently remind them (through clenched teeth) that you are trying to read. Later you'll be confronted with a whole series of clowns who'll claim to be your employer, your ex-lover, a driver you apparently just had a car accident with... You tiptoe past those creatures, creep through deserted bookstores and dark forsaken libraries – because you are trying to read. The newspaper calls and demands to know what you're reading. "Nothing!" you exclaim. Hurry: pull down the shades, lock the door, turn off all electric lights apart from your many reading lamps. No one disturbs a pilot during landing or a professional golfer as he swings the iron – then how is it that everyone is allowed to bother a reader who is trying to *read*? Your former college buddy knocks on the living room window and asks: "What are you reading?" Then he insists on taking you out for a night of improv-comedy. But you are trying to read! You have to tell lies, kick, thrash, and wriggle them away. Stir up clouds of dust and engage in outrageous pettifoggery; otherwise you'll never succeed in reading anything, and then you won't know such words as *pettifoggery*. The only logical response to a financial challenge or a physical threat is to sit down and read. Reading is the most human activity there is. The story of the human race is a river of thoughts streaming through billions of beautiful heads, and you, as a human being, must offer your mind to this glorious project – by reading. Your girlfriend calls and wants you to come over and kick

back in her brand-new hot tub. “What are you reading?” she asks. No one suffers hypothermia and/or mountain climbing injuries while staying at home in a living room peacefully reading. No one starts a war or designs nuclear bombs, wipes out whole ecosystems and increases the acidic level of the ocean while reading. You must cancel your Internet subscription and change your address. It’s OK to stretch the truth and avoid eye contact if it serves the higher purpose of reading. Because otherwise you’ll never have any peace and quiet! Otherwise you’ll never read a single sentence. You must sacrifice everything. And you need to keep a list of excuses tagged to the fridge: when your employer leaves you angry voice-messages; when your girlfriend pops up in the backyard, crying; when your brother, fresh out of rehab, needs a couch to sleep on; when your blind grandfather begs for a ride to the hospital; when the mailman tries to thrust the smirking face of the Prime Minister in through your mail slot; when the storm and rain attack your house with rage and fury and the neighbourhood cats scratch the walls – do not let them disturb you. You have to read. Otherwise you’ll never understand a single thing – not unless you block out the whole world and read.

*Read!!*

*Translated by the author*

The prose poem “*Listin að lesa bækur*” (The Art of Reading) was published in the poetry collection *Erfðaskrá á útdauðu tungumáli* (A Testimony in an Extinct Language), which was published in 2018 by AM forlag.

## Kokteilbarinn

Jæja, þá var loks komið að því: fyrsta prívat stefnumótinu þeirra síðan litli engillinn (ófreskjan) leit dagsins ljós. Jafnvel þótt kokteilbarinn væri í aðeins hálfrað mínútu fjarlægð frá íbúðinni þeirra á þriðju hæð hafði þeim ekki enn gefist færí á að tylla sér þar yfir snotru, sumarlegu hanastéli meðal allra vel nærðu, fallegu hipsteranna sem strax frá vígsludegi barsins skutu á hverju kvöldi upp kollinum eins og gorkúlur til að mynda þéttan kjarna fastagesta. Opnunarkvöld barsins höfðu þau hlustað, ívið öfundsjúk, á hlátrasköll og glaðværar raddir berast inn í svefnherbergið til þeirra, og þegar litla stúlkun var loks sofnuð, tárvot og með hendur krepptar um hálsinn á bangsanum sínum, bryddaði hann upp á þeirri hugmynd að þau skytust niður í einn drykk. Já, hvers vegna ekki? Sú litla svæfi vært og djúpt í riðlarúminu, hvað gæti svo sem gerst, loftsteinn komið á ógnarhraða gegnum þakið og hæft hana? Bara einn stuttan drykk, ítrekaði hann vongóður.

Í fyrstu tók hún alls ekki svo illa í tillöguna. Pau höfðu ekki farið tvö ein út saman frá því að barnið fæddist, hún dauðsaknaði þess að slaka á innan um annað fullorðið fólk án þess að þurfa látlauast að fylgjast með smávöxnum fingrum, spriklandi fótum, áfjáðum í að mölbrjóta disk eða bolla. En þegar þau voru komin fram í anddyri, rjóð í kinnum af eftirvæntingu og prakkarskap, hún með varalitinn, hann með skóhornið, runnu á hana tvær grímur.

Nei, ég kann ekki við að skilja hana eftir eina, sagði hún niðurlút, við förum seinna, ég gæti hvort sem er ekkert slappað af. Æ, þetta hræðilega orð, „seinna“! – prýðir það ekki annan hvern legstein? Hann kinkaði dauflegur kolli. Jú jú, þú hefur rétt fyrir þér eins og alltaf, auðvitað skiljum við barnið ekki eftir eitt og eftirlitslaust og dettum í það á barnum, hvers konar foreldrar værum við þá? *Seinna*. Pau burstuðu svekkt í sér tennurnar, seildust eftir bókum af náttborðinu, bæði voru steinsofnuð innan tveggja mínútna.

Og vikurnar liðu. Á hverju kvöldi hlust uðu þau á glaðværar raddir berast inn um gluggann í samneyti við sumarylinn – og nú var stóra stundin runnin upp! *Kokteilbarinn! Rómantískt stefnumót!* Pau tvö, þáttakendur í glaumnum! Vinkona þeirra frá París var í heimsókn yfir helgina, spengilegur bókaútgefandi, og krafðist þess að þau slettu úr klaufunum á meðan hún sæti yfir barninu. Barnið var meira að segja steinsofnað, sótrjótt og útkeyrt eftir pakkaða dagskrá.

Þau höfðu vaknað um fimmleytið við að stúlkan spangólaði kröfu sína um brjóstamjólk og síðan ákveðið, að tillögu móðurinnar, að nota frídaginn til að „slappa af“, sem þyddi þriggja klukkustunda lestarferð út úr New York í lítinn smábæ, utangáttu vafur um listasafn ásamt frönsku vinkonunni og völtu, handóðu barninu, spássitúr um þorpið í þrjátíu stiga hitamollu, aðra þriggja tíma lestarferð heim og þá var barnið orðið vitstola af þreytu og bræði og beit þau og klóraði, orgaði, kýldi, öskraði, kúkaði, hrækти. Nú leiddust þau í þögn niður stigann, önduðu að sér sumarloftinu (fnyknum úr ruslatunnunni), hikuðu augnablik við inngang barsins og héldu lotningarfull niðri í sér andanum, settust svo við eina lausa bordið úti við gluggann, þar sem hann hóf leik með því að slá kertið á borðinu óvart um koll og hún rýndi stressuð í kokteileseðilinn og gat ekki ákveðið sig.

Hvaða kokteil vilt þú? spurði hún áhyggjufull. Æ, bara bjór, sagði hann. Nei, þú verður að fá þér kokteil, sagði hún. En mig langar frekar í bjór, sagði hann. Þú færð þér alltaf bjór, sagði hún. Já, mér finnst bjór góður, sagði hann. Nei, fáðu þér kokteil, sagði hún. Ókei, sagði hann. Sjálf skipti hún fimm sinnum um skoðun áður en hann fékk grænt ljós til að panta handa henni eitthvað sem kallaðist Tropical Paradise.

Hann vék sér hikandi yfir að barborðinu og hún beið í sætinu sínu úti við gluggann og virkaði öll á nálum. Eftir nokkrar feimnislegar tilraunir náði hann loks augnsambandi við barþjóninn og bað um Tropical Paradise og hljómaði eins og hann byggist allt eins við því að barþjónninn mundi þverneita að verða við þeirri ósk hans. Sjálfur lýsti hann yfir áhuga á einhverju beisku, ekki of sætu. Barþjónninn kinkaði ábúðarfullur kolli: Ég mæli með Bitter Baron. Frábært, hljómar vel. Ekki málið! sagði barþjónninn og ræsti húðflúraða handleggi til starfa: hellt var úr flöskum í löngum sigurboga, ílát hríst og skekin í takt við tónlistina („Africa“ með Toto), hanastélin tóku á sig litríka, frískandi mynd.

Hann góndi órólegur og lúinn upp í þakloftið. Nú þegar rómantíkin var runnin upp – náðugt fríkvöld á barnum – langaði hann helst til að flýja rakleiðis aftur upp stigann og henda sér í bælið. Var það svona að verða gamall maður? Og var riðlarúm litlu krúsídúllunnar þeirra (sem hann var strax tekinn að sakna) ekki staðsett einmitt beint fyrir ofan barborðið? Njóttu vel! sagði barþjónninn. Takk! sagði hann.

Ekki geispa svona, sagði hún þegar hann settist aftur hjá henni. Fyrirgefðu, ég er svo þreyttur, sagði hann, kokteillinn hressir mig

vonandi við. Já, hvað fékkstu þér? Ég fékk mér Bitter Baron, sagði hann. Þau sypluðu kokteilana í þögn drjúga stund. Hinir gestirnir voru allir í innlifuðum samræðum um eitthvað áhugavert. Hvernig er þinn kokteill? Bara fínn, sko. En þinn? Jú, jú, bara fínn. Þögn. Hann dauðsá eftir að hafa ekki staðið fast á sínu og fengið sér bjór, en fann um leið hvernig áfengið vakti hann smám saman aftur til lífsins. Hjá henni var þessu á hinn veginn farið: áfengi hafði ævinlega slævandi áhrif á hana og var raunar stórhættulegt þegar hún var þreytt. Ekki geispa svona, sagði hann. Þú geispaðir áðan, sagði hún. Já, en núna er ég hættur að geispa, sagði hann, drykkurinn hressir mig. Ég er að sofna, sagði hún.

Hún kláraði drykkinn og lá nú bókstaflega fram á borðið. Reistu þig við, sagði hann ör væntingarfullur. En ég er svo syfjuð, muldraði hún með andlitið útflatt á borðplötunni. Petta lítur vandræðalega út, sagði hann, það er eins og ég sé annaðhvort leiðinlegasti maður í heimi eða þá að ég hafi laumað nauðgunarpillu út í drykkinn þinn. Þú verður að bera mig heim, sagði hún. Bíddu, ég skýst til að gera upp við barþóninn, sagði hann.

Hann svolgraði dreggjarnar úr kokteilnum sínum og bað svo um reikninginn. Konan mína er að sofna, sagði hann og hló hvellt. Honum fannst óþægilegt að fylgjast með henni liggja fram á borðið. Hann þekkti nokkrar stelpur sem höfðu dáíð á bar og vaknað í vondum aðstæðum. Komdu, sagði hann, ég er búinn að borga. Labbaðu sjálf, það lítur svo illa út ef ég þarf að styðja þig.

Hún skjögraði á milli borðanna og var næstum því dottin í fangið á vöðvastæltum manni sem var í hrókasamræðum við annan þvengmjóan við útidyrnar. Mennirnir gáfu þeim hornaugu. Styddu við mig, hvíslaði hún. Já, en reyndu í það minnsta að halda augunum opnum, sagði hann, þetta er fáránlegt. Ég skil ekki af hverju það skiptir þig svona miklu máli hvað öðrum finnst, sagði hún. Það skiptir mig engu máli hvað öðrum finnst, sagði hann. Jú, sagði hún og galopnaði nú augun. Þú ert með á heilanum hvað öðru fólk finnst, sagði hún. Þetta átti að vera stefnumótið okkar en það eina sem þú hugsar um er hvað öðru fólk finnst! Hún strunsaði í fýlu út um dyrnar og hvarf úr augsýn. Suss, sagði hann, ekki tala svona hátt. Hann gjóaði augunum skömmustulegur yfir barinn áður en hann flýtti sér á eftir henni. Glaðværu raddirnar fylgdu þeim alla leið heim.

## *Bar s koktajli*

Torej, končno je napočil tisti dan: njun prvi zasebni zmenek, odkar je na svet prišel angelček (mala pošast). Čeprav je bil bar s koktajli le pol minute peš oddaljen od njihovega stanovanja in le tri nadstropja nad njim, še zmeraj nista našla priložnosti, da bi uživala v barvitem koktajlu med vsemi dodobra sitimi hipsterji, ki so bili vse od odprtja stalne stranke, spoprijateljene z Instagramom. Tistega večera sta s kančkom zavisti poslušala smeh in radostne glasove, zatopljene v navdušene pogovore o galerijah in predstavah improviziranega stand-upa, člankih v *New Yorkerju* in najnovejših glasbenih trendih, ščebet pa je zavel v njuno stanovanje in se mešal s prdci in kriki njune dojenčice. Ko je končno podlegla spancu in so bile njene oči videti kakor soljene japonske češplje, njene mehke ročice pa so dozdevno davile medvedka, je on (oče) načel zamisel o tem, da bi se odtihotapila ven in si v naglici privoščila koktajl. Ja, zakaj pa ne? Dojenčica je zdaj trdno spala v otroški posteljici, česa neki se imata batiti – da bi skozi streho treščil meteorit? Samo eno pijačo v naglici, je rekel in upajoč zasijal.

Sprva ideji ni nasprotovala. Sama nista šla ven, že vse odkar se je dojenčica rodila, in neverjetno je pogrešala sprostitev med drugimi odraslimi, ne da bi morala nenehno budno spremljati dojenčkaste prste in nogice, ki so vneto poskušale razbiti krožnik ali skodelico. Toda ko sta se odkradla ven, na ozek hodnik, zaripla od vznemirjenja, in ko je segla po šminki, on pa je zavihtel žlico za čevlje, je postala zaskrbljena, omahovala je.

Ne, ni mi všeč zamisel, da bi jo pustila čisto samo, je rekla, bova šla kdaj drugič, tako ali tako se ne bi mogla sprostiti. O, že je bila tu, ta zlohotna, grozna beseda, »pozneje! – mar ni vklesana na vsak drugi nagrobnik? On je, poražen, prikimal. Ja, seveda imaš prav kakor zmeraj, ljubica, ne bova pustila svojega otroka samega, ne da bi ga kdo pazil, medtem ko bi šla midva ven in se ga nažgal, le kakšna starša bi potem sploh bila? Pozneje. Umila sta si zobe, oba potrta, nato pa segla vsak po svoji neprebrani knjigi na nočnih omaricah. Zmanjkalo ju je v dveh minutah.

Tedni so minevali. Vsak večer sta prisluškovala razposajenim glasovom intelektualno vzdraženih državljanov, ki so skupaj s poletno sapo veli skozi okno. In zdaj je končno napočil tisti dan! *Bar s koktajli! Romantični zmenek! Sodelovala bosta pri tej zabavi!* Prijateljica iz

Pariza, elegantna knjižna založnica, je bila na obisku za konec tedna, in vztrajala je, naj si golobčka privoščita koktajle, medtem ko bo ona pazila na njuno dete, da se mu ne bi kaj pripetilo. Otrok je že trdno spal, z rožnatimi lički je podlegel dogodkov polnemu dnevu razvedrilih dejavnosti. Zbudila sta se ob prvem svitu, okoli petih, ko je dojenčica s tuljenjem ukazala, da se želi podojiti, nato pa sta se na materin predlog odločila, da bosta prost dan porabila za »sprostitev«, ki je vključevala triurno vožnjo z vlakom iz New York Cityja v malo mestece na severu države, odsoten ogled minimalističnega muzeja z imenitno francosko prijateljico ter nemirno, krhko in ranljivo dojenčico, nato sprehod po mestu v *podnebnospromembni* grozljivki, imenovani vročinski val, in naposled še eno triurno vožnjo z vlakom nazaj v mesto, ko se je malčici že povsem odpeljalo od utrujenosti in srda ter ju je grizla, praskala, ščipala, boksala in jima pljuvala v obraz. Zdaj sta se roditelja počasi sprehodila iz stanovanjskega bloka, z roko v roki, in komaj sta verjela, kako svobodna sta in kakšno srečo imata. Vsrkavala sta prijeten poletni zrak (in smrad iz prepolne kante za smeti), za kratek hipek oklevala pred vhodom v bar in zadrževala sapo v globokem spoštovanju do te močno oboževane ustanove, nato pa sedla za edino prosto mizo ob oknu. Ona je strmela v seznam koktajlov kakor ujetnik v oči svojega eksekucijskega voda, in mahoma ni mogla več dihati.

Kateri koktajl bi ti? je vprašala. Oh, jaz bom samo pivo, je rekел. Ne, izbrati moraš koktajl, je rekla. Ampak raje bi pivo, je rekel on. Zmeraj pišeš pivo, je rekla ona. Ja, ker ga imam rad, je rekel. Ne, moral bi spiti koktajl, je rekla ona. Okej, je rekel. Nato si je ona petkrat premislila, preden mu je dovolila, da ji je naročil nekaj z imenom Tropical Paradise, tropski raj.

Po nekaj spodletelih poskusih, da bi ujela natakarjev pogled, je naročil Tropical Paradise, zvenelo pa je, kot da je hudo nepreprečan, ali natakar sploh želi ustreči njegovi prošnji. Ko je naročal zase, je izrazil željo po nečem grenkem, ne presladkem, in natakar se je nasmehnil: Priporočil bi vam Bitter Baron, zagrenjenega barona. Krasno, zveni fantastično. To bom. Natakar je začel mešati koktajla; privzdigoval je steklenice nad svoja bradata lica in v zmagoslavnem loku zlival njihove močne tekočine v različne vsebниke, nato pa jih pretresal in ropotal v brezhibnem ritmu glasbe, Totojevega komada *Africa*.

*Strop.* Za trenutek je (oče) opazoval strop. Bar je bil točno pod njihovim stanovanjem, in nenadoma ga je prevzela neustavljava želja,

da bi stekel domov, zasul svojo dojenčico s poljubi, se oprhal z mrzlo vodo in utonil v spanec brez sanj v hladni družbi ventilatorja ob nju-ni postelji. Ali se človek tako počuti, ko se postara? In ali ni otroška posteljica njunega angelčka stala naravnost nad točilnim pultom?

Izvolite. Na zdravje!

Res najlepša hvala!

Prosim te, ne zehaj tako, je rekla, ko se je s pijačo vrnil za njuno mizo. Oprosti, samo utrujen sem, je rekel, upam, da me bo koktajl osvežil. Aja, kaj si pa naročil? Naročil sem Bitter Barona. V tišini sta srkala vsak svoj koktajl, zdelo se je, da zelo dolgo. Drugi gostje so bili vsi zatopljeni v živahne pogovore o zanimivih vprašanjih sodobnega življenga. Kakšen je tvoj koktajl? je vprašal. V redu je, je rekla, kaj pa tvoj? Zelo v redu je. Tišina. Obžaloval je, da se ni postavil zase in naročil finega domačega piva IPA. Na srečo ga je alkohol počasi spet poživil. Nanjo pa je učinkoval ravno nasprotno: alkohol jo je otopil in nikoli ni bil dobra ideja, kadar je bila utrujena. Prosim te, ne zehaj tako, je rekel. Ti si pa prej zehal, je rekla. Že, ampak zdaj sem nehal, je rekel, Bitter Baron me počasi poživila. Jaz pa bom ravnokar zaspala, je rekla.

Izpraznila je svoj kozarec in se z obrazom dobesedno naslonila na mizo. Prosim te, usedi se pokonci, je rekel, vse bolj obupan. Ampak če sem pa tako zaspana, je zamoljala z obrazom, pritisnjenum ob mizo, da se je sploščil. To je videti zelo čudno, je rekel, videti je, kakor da sem bodisi najdolgočasnejši tip na planetu bodisi kot da sem ti v pijačo pravkar zlil drogo. Moral me boš odnesti domov, je rekla. Počakaj, grem poravnati račun, je rekel.

Na dušek je spil, kar je še ostalo v njegovem kozarcu, in šel prosit za račun. Moja žena bo ravnokar zaspala, je rekel in glasno zagodrnjal, se domnevno zasmejal. Počutil se je nelagodno, ko jo je videl, kako z obrazom naprej leži na mizi. Poznal je nekaj deklet, ki so omedlela v barih in se prebudila v nezavidljivih situacijah. Prosim, hodi sama, je moledoval, grozno je videti, če te moram podpirati.

Opotekla se je med mizami in omahnila v naročje mišičastemu moškemu, ki je bil sredi razgrete debate z orjaškim varnostnikom na vhodu. Moška sta ju, polna gnusa, prezirljivo pogledala in stopila vstran. Prosim, podpri me, je rekla. Okej, ampak vsaj potrudi se, da boš imela odprte oči, to je popolnoma blesavo. Ne razumem, zakaj ti je tako pomembno, kaj si mislijo drugi, je rekla. Vseeno mi je, kaj si mislijo drugi. Ne, pa ti ni, je rekla, nenadoma na široko razprla

oči, obseden si z mnenji drugih, to naj bi bil najin zmenek, ti pa ves čas razmišljaš samo, kaj si mislijo drugi! Na robu solz se je zasukala, planila iz bara in izginila. Pssst, je rekel, ne bodi no tako glasna. Ozrl se je čez ramo proti drugim gostom, preden je pohitel ven, da bi ji sledil. Veseljaški glasovi so jima sledili vso pot nazaj do doma.

*Iz angleščine prevedla Jedrt Lapuh Maležič*

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## The Cocktail Bar

So, finally the big day had arrived: their first private date since the little angel (monster) had entered the world. Even though the cocktail bar was half a minute's walk from their apartment just three floors above it, they still had not found an opportunity to enjoy a colourful cocktail among all the well-fed hipsters that from opening night on had formed a reliable core of Instagram-friendly regulars. That night, they had listened, ever so slightly jealous, to laughter and joyful voices, engaged in delightful conversation about art galleries and improv comedy shows, *New Yorker* articles and the latest music trends, the chatter flowing freely into their apartment and mingling with their baby's farts and cries. When she had at last succumbed to sleep, her eyes looking like Japanese salt plums, her soft hands seemingly strangling her teddy bear, he (the father) had introduced the idea of sneaking out for a quick cocktail. Yes, why not? The baby was now sleeping soundly in her crib, what did they fear would happen, that a meteorite would come crashing through the roof? Just one quick drink, he had said, beaming with hope.

At first she was not so opposed to the idea. They had not gone out on a date just the two of them since the baby was born, and she so missed relaxing among other adults without constantly having to monitor baby fingers and legs eager to smash a plate or mug. But when they had crept out into the narrow hallway, cheeks flustered with excitement, she raising her lipstick, he swinging the shoehorn, she became uneasy, hesitant.

No, I don't like the idea of leaving her all alone, she had said, we'll go another time, I wouldn't be able to relax, anyway. Oh, here it was, that wicked, awful word, "later"! – isn't it engraved on every other gravestone? Defeated, he had nodded his head. Yes, of course you're right as always, my love, we're not leaving our child on her own without any supervision while we go out and get wasted, what kind of parents would we then be? *Later*. They had brushed their teeth, both feeling depressed, then had reached for their unread books on the night stand. Both had fallen asleep within two minutes.

The weeks went by. Every night they listened to the jovial voices of intellectually stimulated citizens coming in through the window along with the summer breeze. And now the big day had finally arrived! *The cocktail bar! A romantic date! The two of them, participating*

*in the fun!* Their friend from Paris, a graceful book publisher, was visiting over the weekend, and she insisted that the lovebirds try the cocktails while she kept their baby safe from harm. The child was already sound asleep, rosy-cheeked and overwhelmed after an eventful day of leisure. They had awoken at the crack of dawn, around five, when the baby girl had bawled out her order of breastmilk, and then decided, at the mother's suggestion, to use their day off to "relax," which entailed a three-hour-long train ride out of New York City to a small town upstate, a distracted tour of a minimalistic museum alongside the sophisticated French friend and the fidgety, prone-to-injury baby, then a promenade around town in the nightmarish climate-change-is-upon-us heat wave and finally another three-hour long train ride back to the city when the baby had gone apeshit with fatigue and fury and bit them, scratched, pinched, punched, and spit in their faces. Now, the parents walked slowly out of their apartment building, hand in hand, hardly believing their freedom and good fortune. They consumed the lovely summer air (and the stench from the overflowing trash bin), hesitated for a short moment by the bar entrance and held their breath in reverence for this much-adored establishment, then took their seat at the only free table, by the window. She stared at the list of cocktails like a prisoner into the eyes of her execution squad, and suddenly could not breathe.

Which cocktail would you like? she asked. Oh, just beer for me, he said. No, you have to choose a cocktail, she said. But I'd rather have beer, he said. You always drink beer, she said. Yes, I like beer, he said. No, you should have a cocktail, she said. OK, he said. She then changed her mind five times before allowing him to order her something entitled Tropical Paradise.

After a few failed attempts at making eye contact with the male bartender, he asked for a Tropical Paradise, sounding very unsure of the bartender's willingness to satisfy such a demand. As for himself, he expressed a preference for something bitter, not too sweet, and the bartender smiled: I'd recommend the Bitter Baron. Awesome, sounds fantastic. Right on. The bartender started composing the drinks; he raised the bottles above his bearded cheeks and poured their potent liquids in a triumphal arch into various containers, then shook the containers and rattled in perfect rhythm with the music, "Africa" by Toto.

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*The ceiling.* For a moment he (the father) contemplated the ceiling. The bar was located directly below their apartment, and he was suddenly dying to run back home, smother his baby with kisses, take a cold shower and fall into a dreamless stupor in the cool company of the fan by their bed. Was this how it felt to grow old? And wasn't their angel's crib located directly above the bar counter?

Here you go. Enjoy!

Thanks so much!

Please don't yawn like this, she said when he returned with the drinks to their table. Sorry, I'm just tired, he said, hopefully the cocktail will be refreshing. Yeah, what did you get? I got the Bitter Baron. They silently sipped their cocktails for what seemed like a very long time. The other customers were all engaged in lively conversation about interesting questions of modern life. How is your cocktail? he said. It's fine, she said, how is yours? It's very nice. Silence. He regretted not standing his ground and getting a nice craft IPA. Luckily, though, the alcohol was slowly bringing him back to life. For her, however, it seemed to have the opposite effect: alcohol made her lethargic and was never a good idea when she was tired. Please don't yawn like this, he said. You yawned before, she said. Yes, but now I've stopped yawning, he said, the Bitter Baron is bringing me back to life. I'm falling asleep, she said.

She emptied her glass and was now literally resting her face on the table. Please sit up straight, he said in growing desperation. But I'm so sleepy, she mumbled, her face flattened on the tabletop. This comes across as very awkward, he said, it's as if I'm either the most boring date on the planet or I just poured rohypnol into your drink. You'll have to carry me home, she said. Wait, I'll go settle our tab, he said.

He gulped down what remained in his glass and went to ask for the check. My wife is falling asleep, he said and emitted a loud groan, presumably a laugh. He felt uneasy seeing her lie, face down, on the table. He knew a few girls who had blacked out at the bar and woken up in bad situations. Please walk on your own, he pleaded with her, it looks awful if I have to support you.

She staggered between tables and fell into the arms of a muscular man who was having an animated debate with a borderline giant by the entrance. The men, disgusted, viewed them with contempt and stepped aside. Please, hold me, she said. OK, but at least try to

keep your eyes open, this is absurd. I don't understand why it's so important to you what other people are thinking, she said. I don't care what other people think. Yes, you do, she said, suddenly opening her eyes wide, you're obsessed with other people's opinions, this was meant to be our date but all you can think about is what other people are thinking! On the verge of tears, she swept out of the bar and disappeared. Hush, he said, don't speak so loud. He glanced over his shoulder at the other customers before rushing out to pursue her. The cheerful voices followed them all the way back home.

*Translated by the author*





*Foto © PhotobyMarta.com*

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# *Elizabeth Reapy*

Elizabeth Reapy, ki svoja dela objavlja pod psevdonimom E. M. Reapy, se je rodila leta 1984. Na Kraljičini univerzi v Belfastu je diplomirala iz kreativnega pisanja. S prvencem, romanom *Red Dirt* (Rdeča prst, 2016), je ujela duha časa, saj se dogaja v času irske finančne krize, ki je vrhunec dosegla leta 2008, ko je država zašla v recesijo in je veliko mladih delo iskalo v tujini. S tem razlogom se v Avstralijo odpravijo tudi Murph, Fiona in Hopper, a se njihova življenja v vrtincu nenehni zabav in omamljanja usodno zappleto. Roman je prejel irsko nagrado za prvenec leta 2016 in leto kasneje še Rooneyjevo nagrado, namenjeno obetavnim mladim irskim avtorjem. Potekajo tudi dogovori o priredbi za televizijsko nadaljevanko. Avtorica je roman predstavljala v Veliki Britaniji, ZDA, Argentini in na Novi Zelandiji. Pred kratkim je izšel njen drugi roman *Skin* (Koža), v katerem »pošlje na pot« mlado junakinjo, povsem običajno žensko Natalie, ki se, nezadovoljna v svoji koži ter s svojim osebnim in poklicnim življenjem, odpravi po svetu, da bi se ponovno našla. Elizabeth Reapy piše tudi kratke zgodbe. Ena od teh je bila objavljena v antologiji *The Long Gaze Back: An Anthology of Irish Women Writers* (Dolg pogled nazaj – Antologija irskih pisateljic, 2015). Uredila je tudi zbirko kratkih zgodb *30 under 30: A Selection of Short Fiction by Thirty Young Irish Writers* (30 pod 30 – Izbor kratkih zgodb tridesetih mladih irskih avtorjev, 2012).

Elizabeth Reapy, who publishes her works under the pseudonym E. M. Reapy, was born in 1984. She graduated from Creative Writing at Queen's University in Belfast. Her first novel, *Red Dirt* (2016), captured the zeitgeist. The story takes place in the time of the Irish financial crisis that reached its peak in 2008, when the country plunged into recession and a lot of young people were searching for work abroad. This is also why Murph, Fiona and Hopper go to Australia, but their lives fatefully intertwine in the whirl of constant parties and intoxication. The novel won the Newcomer of the Year award in 2016, and the 2017 Rooney Prize for promising young Irish authors. The novel is currently being considered for an adaptation into a TV series. She has presented her work in Great Britain, the United States, Argentina, and New Zealand. Recently, she published her second novel, *Skin*, in which a young heroine – an ordinary woman named Natalie, who is unsatisfied with her personal and professional life – heads into the world to find herself again. Elizabeth Reapy also writes short stories. One of her stories was published in the anthology *The Long Gaze Back: An Anthology of Irish Women Writers* (2015). She also edited the short story collection *30 under 30: A Selection of Short Fiction by Thirty Young Irish Writers* (2012).

## **Sunset Kid**

(chapter 1 from the novel Skin)

The humid air coated my skin. Stalled traffic had snarly wolf-like energy. Motorbike drivers revved relentlessly, petrol fumes smogged behind them and the noise from their unsilenced exhaust pipes made my whole body vibrate, made my ears want to bleed. I kept going.

‘Hey Miss, Miss Miss Miss. Massage? Dancing? Taxi? Restaurant?’  
‘No. No. No.’

Sometimes I smiled at the people but mostly I tried to ignore them. The sun wailed down.

Bony dogs roved in packs, looted overflowing bin bags and cardboard boxes discarded on the sidestreets. I was breathing through my mouth to avoid the open sewer stench.

A broad-smiling waiter wearing a red batik bandana outstretched his menu as I advanced. ‘Yes?’ He looked at my body and wiggled his eyebrows. ‘Yes, Miss? You will like.’

‘No.’

The footpath was uneven. Going soft through the markets. The people yelled. Joked. I saw cracked white teeth, open mouths. Goosebumps pricked my arms.

Unwashed fruit was piled on tables, rotting in the sun. Mangoes. Pineapples. Oranges. Lychees. Bananas. Snakefruit. The pungent durian. Flies hovered.

I passed trays of eggs. Mountains of eggs. Caged cocks and hens. On melting ice, undead fish gulped air. Crabs and crayfish clacked their claws. Little sarcastic one-handed claps at my shambolic attempts to stay calm. I tripped over a blue bucket on the ground. It was filled with bloody water and beheaded eels snaking over each other.

‘Sorry,’ I said.

I had just apologised to a bucket.

At another stall, black and yellow coinlike shapes floated at awkward angles in a plastic bowl of water. They were mesmerising. I squinted trying to figure out what they were.

The stall owner rose from his wooden chair to wave a hand over them. ‘Fish eyes. Good for you, Miss. Eat and see.’

‘Oh god, no. No thanks. No.’

‘Come on. What do you want, Miss? Anything you want?’

I shrugged. If I had known that, I probably wouldn't be here.

They sold rice grains by the bag. Volcano magnets. Hand fans illustrated with temple dancers. Inflatable water toys. Paintings of Ganesha, the elephant-headed multi-armed deity. I pushed the hanging beach towels out of my way. Their colours bolder in the light. Electrifying blue. Raging fuchsia. Blinding yellow.

The beats, music, from somewhere, from everywhere. Gamelon gongs. Gangham Style.

I was shrinking.

Something burned. Sizzled. A slaughtered chicken. Its limp yellow foot dangled from a grill. Black meatsmoke.

I put my hand on my throat. I slowed down to wipe my face but got shoved forward. Move, the crowd implored. Move. Sweat trickled on my skin. My sweat. Their sweat.

I couldn't take any more. The stinking, deafening, teeming life of it. I ducked into the restaurant on the corner, a vegetarian place with air con and teakwood tables and grabbed the nearest free seat. I placed my hands on my ribs, tried to compose myself.

There was one way to make the panic stop, if only for a while.

\*

In the guesthouse courtyard, a woman with white-blonde hair sat on a deck chair, her head turned up to the sun like a daisy. I recognised her as the one staying in the room directly across from me, the one who came home at breakfast time with oversized shades, blearily bypassing the guests and banana pancakes to stumble to her room.

'Hey,' she said without moving her head as I passed. Her tanned skin glistened.

I mouthed a hello and rushed to my door. I searched through my handbag for my key but couldn't find it. Shit. I moved the stuff about, spilling gum sticks and receipts.

I glanced up to see my neighbour watching.

'Damn it,' I hissed and tipped the contents of the bag on the plastic white chair outside my door. I rifled through everything. It wasn't there. I patted myself down, sadly lingering a little on my stomach and sides, at the new kilos, at the bloat from earlier, but I didn't have time to start on myself. I shook my head and checked the bag with the food I brought back from the restaurant.

No key.

'Locked out?' the neighbour shouted.

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I nodded.

‘Stop stressing. It’s no big deal. They have spares. I’ve lost mine twice already. They’ll give you another. Ask the grandmother.’ She pointed to the guesthouse owner’s mother who was further up the courtyard, making offerings to the statues. ‘You’ll have to wait till she’s done.’

The old lady was chanting and burning incense, gifting little sweets and colourful flower heads to her cement gods.

I put everything back into my handbag and held it in front of my stomach.

The grandmother kept doing the rounds, devout, her hand waving with the smoke. Frangipani scented the air.

‘Don’t just stand there. Grab your chair, come over here,’ the neighbour said. ‘What’s your name?’

‘Natalie.’

‘You’re travelling alone, aren’t you, Natalie? Me too. I’m Maria,’ she said and beckoned me again.

I hesitated, doing a tiny to-and-fro in my head. Look at her. Totally perfect. I didn’t want to be beside that. But I couldn’t not go. If I said no, what would I do? Sit in front of the door and look at her from here?

That would be even more awkward.

I dragged the chair across the yard and planted it beside Maria’s. The sun was sweltering.

She passed a bottle of factor 10. I squirted some of the coconut smelling cream onto my palm, dabbed it on my face and the parts of my arms exposed to the sun.

Maria was taut and confident in her green halter neck bikini and denim shorts. The buttons of her shorts were opened and the denim was folded out to show the top of her matching green bikini bottoms. There was muscle definition in her stomach, lines and dips, even as she sat.

In my grey v-neck t-shirt and long cheesecloth skirt, I was drab and overdressed.

‘You not too hot?’ Maria asked, mindreading.

‘I don’t like to attract attention on the streets,’ I replied and instantly regretted it.

‘You think you blend in like this? We don’t blend in, I’m afraid. We are never going to look like anything here other than rich white bitches.’

My cheeks blazed under the sun cream.

'You here for a while?' she asked.

'A stopover. On my way to Darwin, staying with an aunt for a bit and then going on a working holiday in New Zealand.'

'You liking it here?'

My shrug was barely perceptible.

Maria raised her eyebrows. 'What's wrong with you? This is heaven.'

I cleared my throat before I spoke and scratched the back of my neck. 'I never really travelled before. I was so excited about it. Told everyone. I just didn't expect the place to be like this. It's so—'

'I'm here on a visa run from India. If you think this is—,' she copied my pause, 'you should see India. You have to accept things here.'

'What do you mean?'

'You probably had all these expectations and now nothing looks like it did in the brochure and you don't feel like you thought you'd feel. Wah wah usual Westerner first time in the Third World story.'

'But I've been getting these panic attacks. And the mosquitoes. It's horrible.'

'I can see you've been annihilated.'

'The spray isn't working. They're biting me anyway.'

She nodded sympathetically.

On my first night, I had fallen asleep without closing the net. Too exhausted from the trip, cold Dublin rain forgotten as I disembarked in soupy Denpasar. I stayed in a hostel near the airport and passed out. I came to, remembering the whine of one mosquito. Dreamily, I swatted at it but fell back to unconsciousness.

One fucking mosquito.

It devoured me. I had eighteen bites on my face alone.

The old lady got closer, softly humming to the gods.

Maria tapped her bottom lip with her index finger. Then she put her hand down and asked, 'Do you have a husband at home, a boyfriend, that type thing?'

I shook my head. 'Not for a long time, no.'

'Okay, this evening, you join your new friend Maria. We'll go and watch the sunset and get some beers. It's really fun. Loosen up. All this,' she said and swept the view, 'is yours.'

## **Otrok sončnega zaboda**

(1. poglavje iz romana Koža)

Vlažen zrak se mi je lepil na kožo. Zastali promet je imel renčečo, volčjo energijo. Vozniki motornih koles so neumorno pospeševali in upočasnjevali, za njimi so puhali hlapi bencina in vse moje telo je od hrupa njihovih neutišanih izpušnih cevi vibriralo, ušesa pa so hotela krvaveti. Šla sem dalje.

»Hej, gospodična, gospodična, gospodična, gospodična! Ples? Taksi? Restavracija?«

»Ne. Ne. Ne.«

Včasih sem se ljudem nasmehnila, večinoma pa sem jih skušala prezreti. Sonce je tonilo. Koščeni psi so se v tropih klatili naokrog, po stranskih ulicah so ležali prebrskani prenapolnjeni smetnjaki in odvržene kartonaste škatle. Dihala sem skozi usta, da bi se izognila neposrednemu smradu iz kanalizacije.

Ko sem se mu približevala, je natakar s širokim nasmeškom in z rdečo rutko iz batika okoli vratu proti meni pomolil razprt meni. »Ja?« Ogledoval si je moje telo in pomignil z obrvmi. »Ja, gospodična? Bo vam všeč.«

»Ne.«

Pločnik ni bil raven. Počasi sem hodila po tržnicah. Ljudje so kričali. Stresali šale. Gledala sem razbite bele zobe, odprta usta. Po rokah me je zbadala kurja polt.

Po mizah je bilo nakopičeno neoprano sadje, ki je gnilo na soncu. Mango. Ananas. Pomaranče. Liči. Banane. Salak. Smrdljivi durian. Brenčanje muh.

Šla sem mimo pladnjev jajc. Gore jajc. Kletk s petelini in kokošmi. Na talečem se ledu so še napol žive ribe hlastale za zrakom. Raki in jastogi so šklepetali s kleščami. Kratki, sarkastični enoroki aplavzi mojim raztresenim poskusom, da bi ostala mirna. Spotaknila sem se ob modro vedro na tleh. Bilo je polno krvave vode in obglavljenih jegulj, ki so se zvijale druga čez drugo.

»Žal mi je,« sem rekla.

Ravnokar sem se opravičila vedru.

Na drugi stojnici je v plastični posodi z vodo okorno plavalо nekaj črnega in rumenega, podobnega kovancem. Bilo je očarljivo. Priprala sem oči, da bi ugotovila, kaj neki je.

Lastnik stojnice se je dvignil s svojega lesenega stola in zamahnil nad njimi. »Ribja očesa. Dobra za vas, gospodična. Poskusite, pa boste videli.«

»O bog, ne. Ne hvala. Ne.«

»Dajte no. Kaj želite, gospodična? Želite kaj?«

Skomignila sem. Če bi to vedela, me verjetno ne bi bilo tu.

Riž v zrnju so prodajali po vrečah. Vulkanski magneti. Pahljače, porisane s tempeljskimi plesalci. Napihljive vodne igrače. Slike Ganeše, slonjeglavega, mnogorokega božanstva. Z roko sem pred seboj odrivala viseče brisače za na plažo. Pod lučjo so bile njihove barve močnejše. Električna modra. Besneča fuksija. Slepča rumena.

Ritmi, glasba, od nekod, od vsepovsod. Gamelanski gongi. *Gangnam Style*.

Lezla sem vase.

Nekaj se je žgalo. Cvrčalo. Zaklan piščanec. Njegova mlahava rumena noga je bingljala z žara. Zažgano meso na žaru.

Dlan sem si položila na grlo. Upočasnila sem, da bi si obrisala obraz, vendar so me porinili naprej. Premakni se, je rotila množica. Premakni se. Znoj je curljal po moji koži. Moj znoj. Njihov znoj.

Nisem več zdržala. Tega smrdečega, oglušujocega, mrholečega življenja. Zavila sem v restavracijo na vogalu, v vegetarijanski lokal s klimo in mizami iz tikovine, ter pograbila prvi prosti stol. Dlani sem položila na rebra in se skušala umiriti.

To je bil edini način, da ustavim paniko, pa četudi samo za trenutek.

\*

Na dvorišču gostišča je na ležalniku sedela ženska z belo-plavimi lasmi, njena glava je bila obrnjena proti soncu, videti je bila kot marjetica. Prepoznala sem jo; ženska, ki je nastanjena v sobi nasproti moje, tista, ki se je v času zajtrka vračala s prevelikimi sončnimi očali, krmežljavo obšla goste in bananine palačinke ter se opotekla v svojo sobo.

»Hej,« je rekla, ko sem šla mimo nje, ne da bi premaknila glavo. Njena zagorela koža se je lesketala.

Izdavila sem živijo in odhitela proti sobi. V torbi sem iskala ključ, a ga nisem našla. Sranje. Pemetavala sem stvari, raztresla žvečilne gumije v lističih in račune.

Dvignila sem pogled in videla, da me soseda opazuje.

»Preklet« sem zasikala in zvrnila vsebino torbe na bel plastični stol pred mojimi vrati. Vse sem prebrskala. Ni ga bilo. Pretipala sem se in z dlanmi žalostno postala na trebuhu in bokih, na novih kilogramih, na napihnjenosti po jedi, a nisem imela časa, da bi začela s sabo. Zmajala sem z glavo in preverila še v vrečki s hrano, ki sem jo prinesla iz restavracije.

Nobenega ključa.

»Si se zaklenila ven?« je zaklicala sosedka.

Pokimala sem.

»Ne sekiraj se. To ni nič takega. Rezervne imajo. Svojega sem že dvakrat izgubila. Dali ti bodo drugega. Reci babici.« Pokazala je na mamo lastnice gostišča, ki je na drugem koncu dvorišča darovala kipom. »Samo počakaj, da konča.«

Stara gospa je žebrajoč mantre zažigala kadilo in svojim cementnim bogovom darovala manjše slaščice in pisane cvetove.

Stvari sem pospravila nazaj v torbo in jo držala pred svojim trebuhom.

Babica je predano nadaljevala z molitvijo in z dlanjo vihtela kadilo. Zrak je napolnil vonj plumerije.

»Ne stoj takole tam. Vzemi si stol, pridi sem,« je rekla sosedka.  
»Kako ti je ime?«

»Natalie.«

»Sama potuješ, je tako, Natalie? Jaz tudi. Maria sem,« je rekla in mi zopet pomignila.

Oklevala sem in se v mislih sprehodila sem in tja. Poglej jo. Popolna je. Nisem želela biti zraven te ženske. A tudi zavrnilti je nisem mogla. Če bi rekla ne, kaj naj bi sploh naredila? Se usedla pred vrata in jo gledala od tam?

To bi bilo še bolj čudno.

Čez dvorišče sem zvlekla stol in ga postavila ob Mariinega. Sonce je pripekalo.

Podala mi je stekleničko s faktorjem 10. Na dlan sem si brizgnila malo kreme z vonjem po kokosu in si jo nanesla na obraz in na dele rok, izpostavljeni soncu.

Maria je bila čvrsta in samozavestna v svojem zelenem bikiniju, zavezanim za vratom, in v kratkih hlačah iz džinsa. Gumbe na hlačah je imela odpete in džins privihan tako, da je kazala zgornji del ujemajočih se zelenih hlaček bikinija. Na njenem trebuhu so bile vidno izobliskovane mišice, z linijami in vdrtinami, celo ko je sedela.

V svoji sivi majici z izrezom in v dolgem krilu iz koprivnega platna sem bila pusta in preveč oblečena.

»Ti ni prevroče?« je vprašala Maria, kot bi mi brala misli.

»Nočem pritegovati pozornosti na ulici,« sem odvrnila in to v hipu obžalovala.

»Misliš, da se tako zlijes z okolico? Bojim se, da se mi ne zlijemo z okolico. Tu nikoli ne bova videti drugače kot bogati beli pički.«

Lica so mi žarela pod sončno kremo.

»Si tu za dalj časa?« je vprašala.

»Samo za vmesni postanek. Na poti v Darwin sem, nekaj časa bom pri teti, potem pa grem na delovne počitnice na Novo Zelandijo.«

»Ti je tu všeč?«

Komaj zaznavno sem skomignila.

Maria je privzdignila obrvi. »Kaj je narobe s tabo? To tule so nebesa.«

Preden sem spregovorila, sem se odkašljala in popraskala po zatilju. »Nikoli prej nisem zares potovala. Tako navdušena sem bila. Vsem sem povedala. Ampak nisem pričakovala, da bo tu tako. Tu je tako ...«

»Jaz sem tu, ker mi je v Indiji potekla viza. Če misliš, da je tu ...« je ponovila moj premor, »bi morala videti Indijo. Tu pač moraš sprejeti stvari.«

»Kaj misliš s tem?«

»Verjetno si veliko pričakovala in zdaj nič ni videti tako, kot je izgledalo v brošuri, niti se ne počutiš tako, kot si mislila, da se boš počutila. Smrk, smrk, običajna zgodba zahodnjaka, ki je prvič v tretjem svetu.«

»Ampak dobivam te panične napade. Pa komarji. Grozno je.«

»Vidim, da so te čisto uničili.«

»Sprej ne pomaga. Vseeno me grizejo.«

Sočutno je pokimala.

Prvo noč tu sem zaspala, ne da bi zaprla mrežo. Preveč sem bila izčrpana od poti. Ko sem se izkrcala v vlažnem Denpasarju, sem pozabila na mrzel dublinski dež. Prenočila sem v hostlu ob letališču in takoj me je zmanjkalo. Nato sem se zbudila in se spomnila brenčanja enega komarja. Napol v sanjah sem ga odganjala z roko, potem pa padla nazaj v nezavest.

En jebeni komar.

Požrl me je. Samo na obrazu sem imela osemnajst pikov.

---

Stara gospa se je približala, še vedno nežno mrmrajoč bogovom. Maria se je s kazalcem potrepljala po spodnji ustnici. Nato je spustila roko in vprašala: »A imaš doma moža, fanta, kaj takega?«

Zmajala sem z glavo. »Ne, že dolgo časa ne.«

»Ok, danes zvečer se boš pridružila svoji novi prijateljici Marii. Gledali bova sončni zahod in spili nekaj piv. Zabavno bo, res. Sprosti se. Vse to,« je rekla in z roko pokazala na razgled, »je tvoje.«

*Prevedla Petra Meterc*

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# Italija na Vilenici

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*Italy at  
Vilenica*

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*Foto © Dino Ignani*

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# *Silvia Brè*

Silvia Brè se je rodila leta 1953 v Bergamu (Italija). Poezijo objavlja od osemdesetih let 20. stoletja v vseh osrednjih italijanskih literarnih revijah in velja za enega najpomembnejših sodobnih italijanskih pesniških glasov. Izdala je več pesniških zbirk, nazadnje *Marmo* (Marmor, 2007) in *La fine di quest'arte* (Konec te umetnosti, 2015), iz slednje so tudi v zborniku objavljene pesmi. V poeziji pogosto upesnuje vsakdanje življenje, prepletost umetnosti in življenja ter odnos med pesniškim subjektom in naravo. Njen pesniški jezik je zagoten, verzi kratki in ritmični, pesnica rada posega po aliteracijah, oksimoroni in izpustih. Brèjeva je tudi avtorica dveh romanov. Po njenem prvem romanu *Snack bar Budapest* (1988), ki ga je napisala skupaj z Marcom Lodolijem, je režiser Tinto Brass posnel film z enakim naslovom. Ob literarnem ustvarjanju je tudi prevajalka iz angleščine in francoščine, med drugim je prevedla dela Emily Dickinson, Alice Walker, Alberta Manguela, Vite Sackville-West in francoske renesančne pesnice Louise Labé. Za svojo poezijo je prejela več nagrad (nagrado Eugenia Montaleja, nagrado mesta Viareggio, Cardarellijevo nagrado idr.), medtem ko je za prevajalski opus letošnjega marca prejela najpomembnejšo italijansko nagrado za prevajanje. Kot svobodna ustvarjalka živi v Rimu.

Silvia Bre was born in 1953 in Bergamo, in Italy. From the 1980s on, she has been publishing poetry in all notable Italian literary magazines and today she is considered one of the most prominent Italian contemporary poetry voices. She has published several poetry collections, the most recent being *Marmo* (Marble, 2007) and *La fine di quest'arte* (The End of This Art, 2015); the selections published in the almanac comes from the latter collection. In poetry, she frequently tackles everyday life, the entanglement of art and life or the relation between the poetic subject and nature. Her poetic language is enigmatic, her verses short and rhythmical, and she loves to use alliterations, oxymorons and omissions. Bre has also written two novels. Her first novel, *Snack Bar Budapest* (1988) – which was co-authored by Marco Lodoli – was later also made into a film with the same title by the director Tinto Brass. Besides writing, she is also a prolific literary translator from English and French. Among author authors, she has translated Emily Dickinson, Alice Walker, Alberto Manguel, Vita Sackville-West and the French Renaissance poet Louise Labé. She has received several awards for her poetry (Eugenio Montale Prize, Viareggio City Prize, Cardarelli Prize, etc.), and for her translation oeuvre she also received the most prominent Italian award for translation this year in March. She lives in Rome as a freelance writer.

***Ecco la notte, ciò che ti oltrepassa***

Ecco la notte, ciò che ti oltrepassa  
e ti lascia dove non sei  
dentro un altro dominio  
dentro un altro.

Solo un gallo ancora muto che non vedi  
è più che mai il suo canto  
nell'aperto di un'idea, in un'alba  
che viene e viene tanto che ti svegli.

---

*Se il nostro luogo è dove*

Se il nostro luogo è dove  
il silenzioso guardarsi delle cose  
ha bisogno di noi  
dire non è sapere, è l'altra via,  
tutta fatale, d'essere.

Questa la geografia.  
Si sta così nel mondo  
pensosi avventurieri dell'umano,  
si è la forma  
che si forma ciecamente  
nel suo dire di sé  
per vocazione.

---

***Come quando in una qualche stagione***

Come quando in una qualche stagione  
spicca l'istante che la farà nostra  
– bagliore  
che porta alla ricerca  
di quell'orma precisa in cui tornare –  
abbasserò gli sguardi,  
sarò la confluenza e il suo valore  
tra tutto il verde calcato dalle suole nei prati d'Italia  
e la vetta del sole,  
maestro elementare di durata,  
sarò lentezza secolare del pensiero  
a fronte dell'immagine in fuga.

---

*Ma se quelli raccolti intorno a un fuoco*

Ma se quelli raccolti intorno a un fuoco  
i rapiti da una così lontana cosa da non essere lì  
se quelli che sono qui perché son corsi  
dietro un'immagine che li ha trapassati prima di andarsene  
e dunque noi che sentiamo le voci  
venire dalla notte  
con le nostre parole e altri accenti  
il loro insieme barbaro che sa le storie delle pietre  
degli oceani  
noi tradotti nel luogo sconosciuto per essere lacune di altri luoghi  
segreti vivi che si pentono di non poter tacere

alba ti alzi  
cos'hai da raccontare che non sia  
quello che porti nelle tue cellule di sole.

### *In tu je noč, kar te presega*

In tu je noč, kar te presega  
zapusti te, kjer te ni,  
znotraj druge oblasti,  
znotraj drugega.

Samo petelin, še nem, ki ga ne vidiš,  
je bolj kot kdajkoli njegov spev  
na odprttem neke ideje, v zori,  
ki prihaja in prihaja, dokler se ne zbudiš.

---

## *Če naš kraj je, kjer*

Če naš kraj je, kjer  
tihotno spogledovanje stvari  
nas potrebuje,  
izreči ni isto kot vedeti, je druga pot,  
vsa usodna, biti.

Taka geografija.

Tako je biti v svetu,  
zamišljeni pustolovci človeškega,  
biti oblika,  
ki se oblikuje na slepo,  
v svojem izrekanju sebe,  
iz poslanstva.

---

***Kot kadar v nekem letnem času***

Kot kadar v nekem letnem času  
se odtrga trenutek, ki ga naredi našega –  
blesk,  
ki vodi v raziskovanje  
prav tiste stopinje, po kateri se vrnemo –  
spustila bom poglede,  
bom stičišče in njegova vrednost  
med vsem zelenjem, poteptanim po travnikih Italije,  
in vrhuncem sonca,  
osnovnošolskim učiteljem trajanja,  
posvetna počasnost misli bom  
pred podobo na begu.

---

## *A če tisti zbrani okrog ognja*

A če tisti zbrani okrog ognja  
ugrabljeni od nečesa tako daljnega da jih ni tam  
če tisti ki so tu ker so tekli  
za podobo ki jih je prebodla preden jih je zapustila  
torej mi ki slišimo glasove  
kako prihajajo iz noči  
z našimi besedami in drugimi naglasi  
njihov barbarski skupek ki pozna zgodbe kamnov  
oceanov  
mi prevedeni v neznani kraj da bi bili vrzeli drugih krajev  
žive skrivnosti ki jim je žal da ne morejo molčati

zora dvigaš se  
kaj še imaš povedati razen tega  
kar nosiš v svojih celicah sonca.

*Prevedla Miljana Cunta*

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***Here is the night, which overtakes you***

Here is the night, which overtakes you  
and leaves you where you are not  
inside another domain  
inside another.

Only a cockerel still mute that you don't see  
is its song more than ever  
in the openness of an idea, in a dawn  
that comes and comes so that it wakes you.

*If our place is where*

If our place is where  
silent contemplation among things  
needs us  
saying is not knowing, it is the other  
all fated path of being.  
This is the geography.  
That is how we stay in the world  
pensive adventurers of humanity,  
that is how we are the form  
that forms blindly  
in talking about itself  
by vocation.

---

***Like when in a certain season***

Like when in a certain season  
the instant emerges that will make it ours  
– a glare  
that leads to the quest  
for that precise track in which to return –  
I will look down,  
I will be the confluence and its value  
among all the sole-trodden green in the meadows of  
Italy  
and the pinnacle of the sun,  
elementary master of length,  
I will be time-old slowness of thought  
before the image in flight.

---

***But if those gathered around a fire***

But if those gathered round a fire  
entranced by such a distant thing as not to be there  
if those who are here because they have run  
behind an image that has transfixed them before disappearing  
and therefore we who hear the voices  
come from the night  
with our words and other accents  
their barbarous whole that knows the stories of the stones  
of the oceans  
we transported into the unknown place to be lacunas  
of other places  
living secrets that are sorry they can't keep silent

dawn, while waking  
what have you to tell that is not  
what you carry in your cells of sun.

*Translated by Richard Dixon*

The poems are from the poetry collection *La fine di quest'arte* (The End of This Art), which was published in 2015 by Giulio Einaudi publishing house. The English translation was published in the anthology *Italian contemporary poets* (edited by Franco Buffoni, Federazione Unitaria Italiana Scrittori, 2016).



*Foto © Chiara Pasqualini*

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# *Maria Grazia Calandrone*

Maria Grazia Calandrone se je rodila leta 1964 in živi v Rimu. Pesnica, pisateljica, dramatičarka, performerka in novinarka ob literarnem ustvarjanju dela v kulturni redakciji radia RAI 3 ter piše literarne kritike za italijanske časopise in revije, kot so *Poesia, il manifesto, Corriere della sera* in druge. Na osnovnih šolah, v zaporih in psihiatриčnih ustanovah vodi pesniške delavnice. Izdala je devet pesniških zbirk, zadnji z naslovom *Il bene morale* (Morálna dobrina, 2017) in *Giardino della gioia* (Vrt radosti, 2019), in zanje prejela več nagrad. Je tudi avtorica kratkih zgodb in dveh proznih del. Sodeluje v raznih umetniških projektih, od leta 2008 nastopa v literarno-glasbenem performansu s skladateljem Stefanom Savijem Scarponijem, nastopila je v filmskem projektu *Poems With a View* (Pesmi z razgledom) izraelskega režiserja Omrija Liorja. Njena poezija in kratke zgodbe so objavljene v mnogih antologijah v Evropi in Ameriki, prevedena je v več kot dvajset jezikov. V arabščini je izšel izbor njenih pesmi z naslovom *La luce del giorno* (Dnevna svetloba), irska založba SurVision je leta 2018 izdala prevod njene zbirke *Serie fossile* (Fosilni niz, 2015), ta zbirka pa je letos z naslovom *Série Fossil* izšla tudi v katalonščini pri založbi Aïllades z Ibize.

Maria Grazia Calandrone was born in 1964 and lives in Rome. She is a poet, a writer, a playwright and a journalist. She also works at the cultural department of radio RAI 3 and writes literary reviews for various Italian newspapers and magazines, among them *Poesia, il manifesto, Corriere della Sera* and others. She runs poetry workshops at primary schools, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals. She has published nine poetry collections, the last two being *Il bene morale* (Morally Sound, 2017) and *Giardino della gioia* (The Garden of Joy, 2019) and she has received several awards for them. She is also the author of two works of fiction and many short stories. She has worked on several art projects; since 2008 she has been performing in a literary-music performance with the composer Stefan Savi Scarponi, and she took part in the film project *Poems With a View* by the Israeli director Omri Lior. Her poetry and short fiction has been published in several anthologies in Europe and in the United States and has been published to more than twenty languages. A collection of her poetry was published in Arabic under the title *La luce del giorno* (Daylight), the Irish publishing house SurVision published the translation of her collection *Serie fossile (Fossils)* in 2018 and Edições Aïllades from Ibiza published the same collection in Catalan under the title *Série Fossil* in this year.

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## ***da INVOCAZIONE PER LA PERSEFONE MARINA***

Il tronco alla sua massima espansione  
canta come un armonium  
i dotti si contraggono all'interno  
per modulare il canto della specie. Capovolgersi  
in acqua per toccare il terreno e spuntare  
ancora due o tre volte in superficie facendo  
dei movimenti anfibi, assumendo il colore  
artico, mercuriale degli anfibi – la posa  
dello zero, del privo  
di interesse: solo  
così passerai con tutto il corpo  
da regno a regno.  
Da riva, tra le agavi brune  
crederanno a una occupazione  
di sole nelle vene sotto gli occhi di tutti –  
sorridranno per la fratellanza.

---

## *Fossile*

metti una mano qui come una benda bianca, chiudimi gli occhi,  
 colma la soglia di benedizioni, dopo che  
 sei passata attraverso  
 l'oro verde dell'iride  
 come un'ape regale  
 e – pagliuzza  
 su pagliuzza,  
 d'oro e grano trebbiato –  
 hai fatto di me  
 il tuo favo di luce

una costellazione di api ruota sul tiglio  
 con saggezza inumana, un vorticare di intelligenze non si stacca  
 dall'albero del miele

— *sarebbe riduttivo dire amore*  
*questa necessità della natura —*

mentre un vuoto anteriore rimargina  
 tra fiore e fiore senza lasciare traccia:

usa la bocca, sfilami dal cuore  
 il pungiglione d'oro,  
 la memoria di un lampo che ha bruciato la mia forma umana  
 in una qualche preistoria

dove i pazzi accarezzano le pietre come fossero teste di bambini:

avvicinati, come la prima  
 tra le cose perdute  
 e quel volto si leva dalla pietra per sorridere ancora

## *x – metamorfosi*

ho sellato la mia cavalcatura, suona come bronzo  
il disco del sole sulla campagna,

ispirato

da un magnifico ariete

– la transumanza, un tempo irregolare

si apre all'alba un coro di corolle, si schiude  
il tuo occhio-fiore, lascia depositare  
lo sguardo nella vena d'oro  
della terra, nella gioia del mondo di essere

vivo, calpestato

da bestie da pastura, le quali sono  
all'altezza della vita

*in verità io...*

mentre tutto il tuo corpo  
adorava, diceva *sì*  
mentre il bronzo degli occhi  
adorava, diceva *sì*

breccia madre del glicine che apparì  
dall'amaro del ferro  
falla felice, nera spina  
di robinia selvatica  
falla felice, falla felice, campo  
di malva, steso come una lauda  
sotto l'azzurro calmo della montagna:

io servo l'animale che adora il sole

---

*l'usignolo*

è stato qui un usignolo. non avrebbe dovuto essere qui, ma era qui.  
e ha cantato tanto. io facevo il mio piccolo canto silenzioso e lui  
il suo. chissà per chi cantava, forse solo per la dolcezza di cantare.  
senza scopo, senza vittoria. con la vita all'altezza del suo canto.

è così, cara Alba, io cerco che la vita sia all'altezza del canto. è  
questa la sventura e questo è il bene.

io ti ho tutta vestita del mio canto d'amore  
io ti ho tutta innalzata, come erba di marzo che buca  
la terra dell'inverno, come il raglio di un'asina tra i cardi  
lanaioli, la barra alare gialla  
degli uccelli del cielo. la tua vita  
ha risposto. il tuo corpo  
ha risposto  
al mio canto. poi, è tornato nel limite. ma l'usignolo, fuori  
tempo e fuori dalla terra  
calda d'Africa, qui, dal cuore dell'inverno occidentale  
  
canta, continua, canta

---

**Iz ZAROTITVE ZA MORSKO PERZEFONO**

Deblo ki se najbolj odebeli  
poje kakor harmonij  
kanali se krčijo v notranjosti  
da bi modulirali petje vrste. Preobrniti se  
v vodi da se dotakneš tal in se pojavit  
še dvakrat ali trikrat na površini s premiki  
kot pri dvoživkah, privzemajoč arktično,  
živosrebrno barvo dvoživk – držo  
ničelnega, tistega  
brezinteresnega: samo  
tako boš prešla z vsem telesom  
iz kraljestva v kraljestvo.  
Z obrežja, med temnimi agavami  
bodo verjeli da je sonce  
okupiralo žile na očeh vsem –  
nasmehnili se bodo iz bratstva.

---

## *Fosil*

položi dlan sèm kakor belo prevezo, zatisni mi oči,  
 napolni prag z blagoslovi, po tistem  
 ko si prešla skozi  
 zeleno zlato šarenice  
 kakor čebelja kraljica  
 in – zrnce  
 za zrncem,  
 iz zlata in omlačenega žita –  
 naredila iz mene  
 svoje satovje svetlobe

ozvezdje čebel kroži okrog lipe  
 z nadčloveško modrostjo, vrtinčenje umnih bitij se ne odtrga  
 od medenega drevesa

*– preozko bi bilo rēci ljubezen  
 tej naravni zakonitosti –*

vtem pa neka praznina od prej se zaceli  
 med dvema cvetovoma in ne pusti sledu:

uporabi usta, izdri mi iz srca  
 zlato želo,  
 spomin na blisk ki je požgal mojo človeško zunanjost  
 v neki pradavnini

kjer norci božajo kamne kot da bi bili otroške glave:  
 približaj se, kakor prva  
 med izgubljenimi stvarmi  
 in tisti obraz vstane iz kamna da bi se nasmehnil še

## *Metamorfoza*

osidlala sem svojo jezdno žival, zveni kakor bron  
sončna obla nad poljano,

navdihuje jo  
veličasten oven  
– selitev čred, nevsakdanji čas

oglasi se ob zori zbor cvetnih vencev, odpre se  
tvoje oko cvet, pustí odložiti  
pogled v zlato žilo  
zemlje, v radost sveta

da je živ, da ga teptajo

pašne živali, ki so  
na višini življenja

*v resnici jaz ...  
medtem ko je vse tvoje telo  
oboževalo, govorilo ja  
medtem ko je bron oči  
oboževal, govoril ja*

breča mati glicinije ki se prikažeš  
iz grenkobe žeze  
osreči jo, črni trn  
divje robinije  
osreči jo, osreči jo, polje  
slezenovca, razprostrto kakor hvalnica  
pod spokojno sinjino gore:

jaz služim živali ki obožuje sonce

---

## *Slavec*

tukaj je bil slavec. ne bi smel biti tukaj, toda bil je tukaj. in veliko  
je pel. jaz sem delala svojo majhno tiho pesem in on svojo. kdo ve,  
za koga je pel,  
morda samo zaradi sladkosti petja. brez namena, brez zmage. z življenjem  
na višini njegove pesmi.

tako je, draga Zarja, jaz iščem to, da bi bilo življenje na višini pesmi.  
to je nesreča  
in to je dobro.

vso sem te odela v svojo ljubezensko pesem  
vso sem te povzdignila, kot marčevska trava, ki predre  
zimsko zemljo, kot riganje oslice med osatom,  
rumena proga na krilih  
ptic na nebu. tvoje življenje  
je odgovorilo. tvoje telo  
je odgovorilo  
moji pesmi. potem se je vrnilo v okvire. toda slavec, izven  
časa in izven vroče  
afriške dežele, tukaj, v srcu zime na zahodu,

poje, vztraja, poje

*Prevedel Gašper Malej*

***from INVOCATION FOR THE SEA-PERSEPHONE***

The trunk at its maximum point of expansion  
sings like a harmonium  
the ducts contracting inside  
to modulate the song of the species. Turning over  
in the water to touch the ground and bob  
back to the surface two or three times making  
amphibian movements, taking on  
the arctic, mercurial tint of amphibians – the pose  
of zero, devoid  
of interest: only  
thus will you and your whole body pass  
from realm to realm.  
On the shore, among the browned agaves  
they will think it is an occupation  
of sun in the veins taking place for all to see –  
they will smile in fellowship.

---

**Fossile**

put one hand here like a white blindfold, close my eyes,  
flood the threshold with blessings, after  
passing through  
the green gold of the iris  
like a queenly bee  
and – mote  
by mote,  
of gold and winnowed wheat –  
turning me  
into your hive of light

a bee constellation wheels around the linden  
with inhuman wisdom, a gyration of minds sticking fast  
to the honey tree

*– it would be reductive to call it love  
this necessity of nature –*

while a foregone emptiness heals over  
without a trace between flower and flower:

use your mouth, ease the golden  
stinger from my heart,  
the memory of a flash of light that burnt my human form  
in some prehistory

where madmen caress stones as if they were children's heads:

come closer, like the first  
among lost things  
and that face rises up from stone to smile again

---

***x – metamorphosis***

I have saddled my mount, the disc of the sun  
rings out like bronze over the countryside,  
inspired  
by a magnificent ram  
– transhumance, time out of time

a chorus of corollas unfurls at dawn, your flower-eye  
cracks open, lets its gaze  
settle into the golden vein  
of the earth, into the world's joy at being  
alive, trodden  
by beasts at pasture, which are living  
up to life

*really I...*

as your whole body  
worshipped, said *yes*  
as the bronze of your eyes  
worshipped, said *yes*

breach-bloom of wisteria appearing  
out of the bitterness of iron  
make her happy, black thorn  
of wild robinia  
make her happy, make her happy, field  
of mallow, spread out like a laud  
under the blue calm of the mountain:

I serve the animal that worships the sun

---

*the nightingale*

a nightingale was here. it shouldn't have been here, but it was here.  
and sang so long. I made my little silent song and he made his.  
who knows who he was singing for, maybe just for the sweetness of  
singing. no purpose, no victory. with life living up to his song.

that's it, sweet Alba, I want life to live up to the song. that's the  
trouble and that is the good thing.

I dressed you all up in my song of love  
I raised you all up, like March grass piercing through  
the winter earth, like the bray of a jenny among the fuller's  
teasels, the yellow wing bar  
of birds in the sky. your life  
answered. your body  
answered  
my song. then, it went back within the bounds. but the nightingale, out  
of time and out of his warm  
African land, here, from the heart of the western winter  
  
sings, sings on, sings

*Translated by Johanna Bishop*



*Foto © Marina Benedetto*

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# Claudio Damiani

Claudio Damiani se je rodil leta 1957 v mestu San Giovanni Rotondo v Apuliji, a se je z družino že v otroštvu preselil v Rim, kjer živi še danes. Na začetku osemdesetih let je bil med ustanovitelji priznane literarne revije *Braci*. Je avtor več pesniških zbirk, nazadnje sta izšli *Ode al monte Soratte* (Oda gori Soratte, 2015) z devetimi risbami priznanega slikarja Giuseppeja Salvatorija, in *Cielo celesti* (Nebeska nebesa, 2016). Skoraj vse zbirke so bile nagrajene. Damianijseva poezija, navdihnjena z verzi antičnih latin-skih pesnikov in s poezijo italijanske renesanse, je napisana v preprostem jeziku, ki v ospredje postavlja čustva. Pesnikovi osrednji temi sta narava in vesolje z ozirom na sodobna znanstvena doganjala. Leta 2016 je izšla njegova eseistična zbirka *La difficile facilità. Appunti per un laboratorio di poesia* (Zahtevna lahkotnost. Zapis o pesniški delavnici). Je soustanovitelj in sourednik rimske literarne revije *Viva*. Njegova poezija je prevedena v angleščino, arabščino, nemščino, portugalsčino, romunščino, srbsčino in španščino ter uvrščena v domače in tujje antologije. Nekaj njegovih pesmi je v prevodu Jolke Milič izšlo tudi v slovenskih literarnih revijah.

Claudio Damiani was born in 1957 in the town of San Giovanni Rotondo in the Apulia region, but moved to Rome in his childhood, and he still lives there. At the beginning of the 1980s, he was one of the founders of the renowned literary magazine *Braci*. He is the author of many poetry collections, the last two being *Ode al monte Soratte* (Ode to Monte Soratte, 2015) (with nine paintings by the renowned painter Giuseppe Salvatori) and *Cielo celesti* (Heavenly heaven, 2016). Almost all of them received awards. Damiani's poetry, inspired by ancient Latin poets and by the Italian Renaissance, is written in a simple language that puts emotions in the foreground. His themes are mainly nature and cosmos, with a side attention to current scientific research. In 2016, he published the essay collection *La difficile facilità. Appunti per un laboratorio di poesia* (Difficult ease. Notes on a Poetry Workshop). He is the co-founder and co-editor of the Rome literary magazine *Viva*. His poetry has been translated into English, Arabic, German, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbian, Spanish, and has been published in Italian and foreign anthologies. A few of his poems have been published in Slovene literary magazines, translated by Jolka Milič.

---

*Elegia*

Gli ippopotami dolci che nell'acqua  
erano tutti immersi (si vedeva  
solo la punta della schiena) amore  
te li ricordi? Oh come erano teneri  
e dolci. E tu dicevi: "Dove sono?  
Perché mai dici che son belli se  
non si vedono?". Oh, amore, erano  
nell'acqua e forse non sapevi il nome  
italiano quand'io dissi: "Tesoro!  
ci sono gli ippopotami che tornano  
giustamente nell'acqua dopo avere,  
con gli altri mammiferi dal mare  
emancipati, visto il mondo". E quando  
uno dei due riemerse, il dolce tiepido  
dell'acqua e i baci della sua compagna  
lasciando, per respirare e per mordere  
un po' la mota all'argine (che schifo!  
pensammo, e io dissi: "Deve proprio avere  
la bocca sporca!") e fece uno sbadiglio  
spalancando d'un tratto tutta quanta  
la bocca, oh come era candida e rosa  
con gli zannoni! E tu come improvvisa  
per lo stupore in un moto dolcissimo  
subitaneo scattasti!, e quanti baci  
t'avrei voluto dare, ma dovevo  
andare avanti, ché le altre macchine  
s'erano tutte accumulate dietro  
e erano un branco minaccioso e stupido.

---

*Albio*

Albio è il piccolo noce che è a sinistra  
della strada salendo dalla casa  
al cancello. Passando stamattina  
l'ho guardato e ho veduto che aveva  
fatto delle nocette, a coppie, già  
grandine, verdi lucide, un po' rade,  
non tante ma bellissime e ho pensato  
che l'anno scorso non le aveva ancora  
fatte, e quest'anno era la prima volta  
che le faceva, e anche guardavo  
le foglie chiare perfette ovali  
senza neanche una macchia, senza un punto  
o un buco, niente, e anche i piccoli rami  
alti fino giù al tronco snello nitido  
bianco e la forma perfetta gentile  
di tutto quanto l'alberetto dritto  
nella luce, e pensavo: tutt'intorno  
i meli il pero il susino i due poveri  
cipressetti piegati dalla neve,  
le rose, addirittura la gramigna!  
sono malati, e tu sei così sano  
invece e lucido e bello e pulito  
Albio e stai in piedi nel tuo dolce angolo  
nella luce; e pensavo ( e mi sembrava  
che stesse come aspettando qualcuno  
o qualcosa), pensavo: tutti hanno  
qualche male, non c'è nessuno che  
non abbia niente, e io avrei dovuto sì  
curarli, dargli dei veleni, i rami  
potargli e invece non ho fatto niente,  
non ho potuto, non ho fatto niente,  
e anche la casa e tutto questo presto  
dovrò lasciare e i due cipressi piccoli  
e Antenore che primo nel pometo  
fiorisce e il fico e l'abetino morti  
e le rose e l'erbaccia che ricresce  
senza posa e il giardino del mio amore

tutto dovrò lasciare, tutto, e tu  
Albio sei così bello, oh ma perché  
perché sei così sano e bello Albio?  
per chi? pensavo, per chi?... e il suo respiro  
lieto e quieto sentivo quasi e un'ombra  
che si curvava e nella luce un lume  
già via cacciavo, già più non volevo  
vederlo, e via per la strada tornavo  
e non sapevo la tua gloria invece  
non la sapevo, non sapevo niente,  
e mi venivano, agli occhi, le lacrime.

***Camminare sulla tua via***

Camminare sulla tua via,  
o sei tu, sentiero, che cammini dentro di me,  
o sei tu la creatura  
e io un cammino, una via.  
Perché tu, come sei intero,  
come sei fatto bene, e formato  
in tutte le tue parti.  
E quando ti incontro, mi sembri vivo  
ché ti fai incontro a me, felice,  
o quando ti batte la pioggia, e stai immoto  
come le mucche, senza cercare un riparo,  
e già chiacchiera l'acqua  
e diventi un ruscello.

---

### **Che bello che questo tempo**

Che bello che questo tempo  
è come tutti gli altri tempi,  
che io scrivo poesie  
come sempre sono state scritte,  
che questa gatta davanti a me si sta lavando  
e scorre il suo tempo,  
nonostante sia sola, quasi sempre sola nella casa,  
pure fa tutte le cose e non dimentica niente  
- ora si è sdraiata ad esempio e si guarda intorno -  
e scorre il suo tempo.

Che bello che questo tempo, come ogni tempo, finirà,  
che bello che non siamo eterni,  
che non siamo diversi  
da nessun altro che è vissuto e che è morto,  
che è entrato nella morte calmo  
come su un sentiero che prima sembrava difficile, erto  
e poi, invece, era piano.

---

*Elegija*

Nežna povodna konja, povsem  
potopljena v vodo (videti je bilo  
le vrh hrbta), se ju spomniš,  
draga? O, kako mehka  
in nežna sta bila. In govorila si: »Kje sta?  
Zakaj praviš, da sta lepa, če  
ju ni videti?« Oh, ljubezen moja, bila  
sta v vodi in morda nisi poznala  
italijanskega imena, ko sem rekel: »Draga!  
So povodni konji, ki se vrnejo v vodo  
potem ko so z drugimi  
emancipiranimi morskimi sesalci  
prepotovali svet.« In ko  
je eden od njiju izplaval, zapustil  
nežno toploto vode in poljube svoje  
družice, da bi zadihal in malo zagrizel  
v ilovnato blato (odvratno!  
sva pomislila, in rekel sem: »Mora imeti pa  
res umazana usta!«), in je med zehanjem  
naenkrat široko razprl usta,  
o kako sijajna in rožnata so bila  
z velikimi čekani! In ti si kot osupla  
od presenečenja v nenadnem nežnem  
gibanju poskočila! In koliko poljubov  
bi ti rad dal, vendar sem moral  
peljati naprej, saj so se druga vozila  
nabrala zadaj v koloni  
in bila so grozeč, neumen trop.

---

***Albio***

Albio je majhen oreh, ki stoji levo  
od ceste, navkreber od hiše  
z železno ograjo. Ko sem šel zjutraj mimo,  
sem ga pogledal in videl, da je obrodil  
drobne orehe, v parih, že  
kar velike, svetleče zelene, redke,  
maloštevilne, a čudovite, in pomislil sem,  
da jih lani še ni obrodil, in je bilo letos prvič,  
da je obrodil, in gledal sem  
liste, svetle, popolne, ovalne  
brez enega samega madeža, ene pikice  
ali luknje, ničesar, in tudi vejice,  
visoko, prav na vrhu debla, vitkega, svetlega,  
belega, in popolna, prijazna oblika  
vsega drevesca, pokončnega  
v svetlobi, in razmišljal sem: povsod naokrog  
jablane, hruška, sliva, obe ubogi  
cipresici, upognjeni pod snegom,  
vrtnice, in celo prstasti pesjak!  
so bolni, ti pa si tako zdrav  
in svetel in lep in čist,  
Albio, in stojiš pokonci v svojem prijavnem kotu  
v svetlobi; in razmišljal sem (in zdelo se mi je,  
da je tako, kot bi čakal nekoga  
ali nekaj), razmišljal: vsi imajo  
kakšno bolezen, nikogar ni, ki ne bi  
imel nobene, in jaz bi jih moral  
zdraviti, jim dati strup, obrezati  
veje, vendar nisem naredil ničesar,  
nisem mogel, ničesar nisem naredil,  
in tudi hišo in vse skupaj bom moral  
kmalu zapustiti, in obe mali cipresici,  
in Antenore, ki cveti prvi med  
jablanami, in smokvo in jelko, mrtvima,  
in vrtnice in plevel, ki raste  
brez premora, in vrt svoje ljubezni,  
vse bom moral zapustiti, vse, in ti,

---

Albio, si tako lep, oh, le zakaj,  
zakaj si tako zdrav in lep, Albio?  
za koga? sem razmišljal, za koga? ... in njegovo dihanje,  
radostno in mirno, sem skoraj čutil, in senco,  
ki se je upogibala, in v svetlobi svetlino,  
ki sem jo že odganjal stran, ki je že nisem hotel  
videti, in po poti sem šel stran  
in vendar nisem vedel za tvojo slavo,  
nisem vedel zanjo, ničesar nisem vedel  
in na oči so mi vrele solze.

---

## *Hoditi po tvoji poti*

Hoditi po tvoji poti,  
ali pa si ti, steza, tista, ki hodiš v meni,  
ali pa si ti bitje  
in jaz pot, steza.

Kajti ti, kako celovita si,  
kako dobro speljana in oblikovana  
v vseh svojih delih.

In kadar te srečam, se mi zdiš živa,  
ker mi prideš naproti, veselemu,  
ali kadar te zaliva dež, ko si nepremična  
kakor krave, in ne iščeš zavetja,  
in voda že klepeta  
in postaneš potoček.

---

**Kako lepo, da je ta čas**

Kako lepo, da je ta čas  
tak kot vsi drugi časi,  
da pišem pesmi,  
kot so jih pisali vedno,  
da se ta mačka pred menoj umiva  
in njen čas teče,  
čeprav je sama, skoraj vedno sama v hiši,  
pa vendar naredi vse in ničesar ne pozabi  
– zdaj se je na primer zleknila in se ozira naokrog –  
in njen čas teče.

Kako lepo, da se bo ta čas, kot vsak čas, iztekel,  
kako lepo, da nismo večni,  
da nismo drugačni  
od nikogar, ki je živel in ki je umrl,  
ki je vstopil v smrt miren  
kakor na pot, ki se je najprej zdela težka, strma,  
pa se je izkazala za položno.

*Prevedla Nadja Dobnik*

---

*Elegia*

The charming hippos that in the water were  
completely submerged (you could see the tips  
of their backs, just barely) do you  
remember them, my love? How deliciously  
charming they were! And you said: "Where are they?  
If you can't see them, how can you say  
they're lovely?" Oh, my love, they were  
in the water, and maybe you knew not the  
Italian word when I said: "Darling!  
Hippos there are that, having  
seen the world, return to the water,  
quite rightly, with the other mammals  
emancipated from the sea." And when  
of the two one emerged, the delicious warmth  
of the water and the kisses of his mate  
abandoning, to breathe and bite a bit  
of mire on the bank (how disgusting!  
we thought, and I said: "What a foul  
mouth he must have!") and suddenly his mouth  
he opened in yawning, as far as it would  
go. How white and rosy were  
his fangs! And how surprised  
you were, what a precious start  
you gave! And with how many kisses  
would I have showered you, but I must needs  
drive on, for the other cars  
had amassed behind us  
and were a menacing and stupid herd.

---

*Albio*

Albio is the little walnut tree at the left  
of the road climbing from the house  
to the gate. This morning passing by  
I looked at him and saw he had  
made little walnuts, in pairs, biggish  
already, bright green, a bit sparse,  
not a lot but oh so lovely and I thought  
that last year he hadn't made any  
yet, and this year was the first time  
he was making them, and I also looked at  
his leaves, clear and perfect and oval,  
without a blemish, without a single spot  
or hole, nothing, and at his high little  
branches too, down to his smooth and slender white  
trunk and at the perfect and graceful form  
of the whole little tree, standing straight  
in the light, and I thought: Everywhere I look,  
the apple trees, the pear and plum trees, the two  
little cypresses bent by the snow,  
the roses, even the weeds!  
are sick, but, Albio, you are so healthy  
and bright, beautiful and neat  
and you're standing in your lovely corner  
in the light; and I thought (and it was as if  
he were waiting for someone  
or something), I thought: they're all sick  
in some way or other, there isn't one without  
something, and it was up to me to cure them,  
that's right, give them poisons, prune their  
branches, and instead I haven't done a thing,  
and before long I'll have to leave home too  
and all this, the pair of little cypresses  
and Antenor the first to bloom in the  
apple grove, and the fig and pine trees, both dead,  
and the roses and the weeds growing  
without respite and the garden of the one I love,  
all will I have to leave, all, and

Albio, you are so lovely, oh why,  
why are you so healthy and lovely, Albio?  
Who for? I thought, who for?... and I could almost  
hear his quiet breath and already I was  
chasing a crooked shadow away and  
a sparkle in the light and already I wanted to  
see him no more, and down the street I returned  
and I knew not your glory, no,  
I knew it not, I knew nothing at all,  
and my eyes were filling with tears.

### ***Walking along your way***

Walking along your way,  
path, or maybe it's you walking inside me,  
maybe you are the creature  
and I a road, a way.

Because, how whole you are,  
how well made you are, and shapely  
in all your parts.

And when I meet you, you seem alive to me  
for you come to meet me, happy,  
or when the rain is beating down, and you stand motionless  
as the cows, without seeking shelter,  
already the water is chattering  
and you become a stream.

---

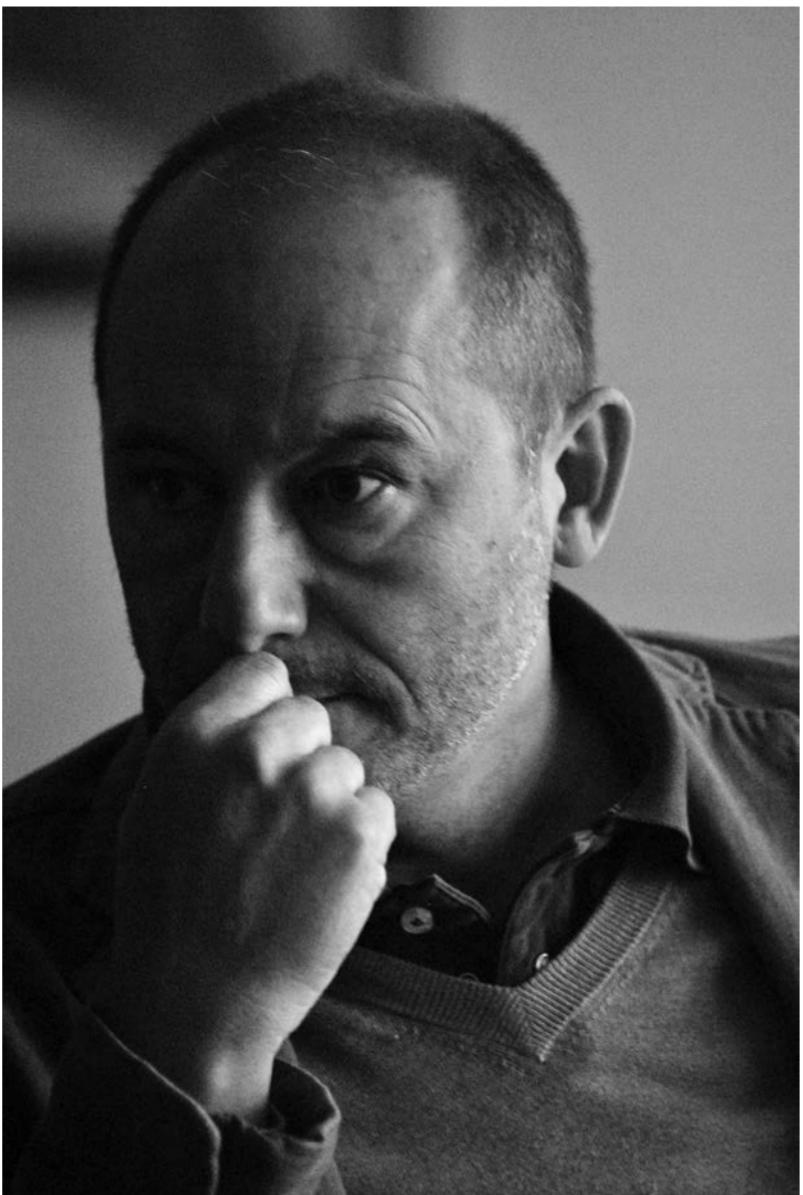
## ***How lovely that this time***

How lovely that this time  
is like all other times,  
that I write poems  
the way poems have always been written,  
that this cat before me is washing herself  
and her time is passing  
despite the fact she's alone, almost always alone in the house,  
yet she does all that she does and forgets nothing  
— now for instance she is lying down and looking around —  
and her time is passing.

How lovely that this time, like every time, will end,  
how lovely that we are not eternal,  
that we are not different  
from anyone else who has lived and died,  
who has calmly gone to death  
as if on a path that seemed hard and steep at first,  
but instead was easy.

*Translated by John Satriano*





*Foto © Giulia Naitza*

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# Gian Mario Villalta

Gian Mario Villalta se je rodil leta 1959 v Visinalu v Benečiji. Na Univerzi v Bologni je diplomiral iz sodobne književnosti. Svojo literarno pot je začel s poezijo, ki jo je najprej pisal v beneško-furlanskem narečju, kasneje pa tudi v knjižni italijanščini; zadnjo zbirkovo *Vanità della mente* (Nečimnost razuma) je izdal leta 2011. V zadnjih letih se je bolj posvetil prozi, izdal več romanov, nazadnje *Satyricon 2.0* (Satirikon 2.0, 2014) in *Bestia da latte* (Molzna žival, 2018). Poučuje na gimnaziji v Pordenonu in je umetniški vodja tamkajšnjega mednarodnega literarnega festivala Pordenonelegge. Njegov pesniški slog je izčiščen in jedrnat, metafore, s katerimi bi »predrugačil« realnost, pa je namenoma opustil, saj želi resničnost upesnjevati tako, kakršna je. Raziskovanje pesniškega jezika je zanj vedno povezano tudi z raziskovanjem lastne geografske in kulturne identitete in pripadnosti. Villaltova poezija je objavljena v mnogih literarnih revijah in antologijah ter prevedena v angleščino, francoščino, nizozemščino, slovenščino in srbsčino.

Gian Mario Villalta was born in 1959 in the small town of Visinale in Veneto. He graduated from Contemporary Literature at the University of Bologna. He began his literary career with poetry, first writing in Venetian-Friulian dialect, then also in literary language. His latest collection, *Vanità della mente* (Vanity of Reason), was published in 2011. In recent years he has focused more on prose fiction and has published several novels, most recently the novels *Satyricon 2.0* (2014) and *Bestia da latte* (Milk Animal, 2018). He teaches at the Pordenone high school and is the artistic director of the international literary festival Pordenonelegge there. His style is refined and concise, and he has become wary of metaphors because they might lead him into altering reality, and he wants to write about reality as it is. For him, exploring the language of poetry is always connected to exploring his own geographical and cultural identity as well as the sense of belonging. Villalta's poetry has been published in many literary magazines, anthologies, and has been translated into English, French, Dutch, Slovene, and Serbian.

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## **Atto unico**

*A te una sola  
dedica, cenere che si fa  
respiro, atto unico*  
Milo De Angelis

Ho aspettato la fine della giornata, e la stanchezza  
per accostarmi a questa terra  
e non ho portato fiori,  
perché li ha fatti la terra, i fiori, e se li prenda.  
Ti ho portato le mani, le ho posate  
su questa terra squadrata, perché le mani  
le ha fatte nostra madre e non possiamo renderle.

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***Così si manca per astio***

Così si manca per astio  
da una casa, così si va via  
per sporcarla, lasciando là tutto per sempre  
nel disordine di ogni giorno.

Un'ultima volta la giacca nuova,  
riporla nell'armadio, con un sorriso: *così  
si dovrebbe*, ho pensato.  
Una battuta, un "A dopo": così.

In ospedale, il corpo – più piccolo  
e già altrove, un altro.

Guardare la notte intera la televisione  
per una notte, quattro notti,  
per confondere i sensi, il sonno.

L'asfalto a poche spanne.  
Molle – ovunque – la strada.

"Là dentro, è là dentro", acceca.  
Adesso la buca, i colpi di pala.

Non ho potuto.  
E gli sguardi, le mani che toccano dove  
mai tra estranei: il collo,  
l'interno del braccio.

## *Niente che parli di lui veramente*

Niente che parli di lui veramente -  
mio fratello – in quello che ho scritto –  
di niente che sentivo - che era niente.

La parola che hanno usato è incidente.

Cecità nelle vite dove ero.

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*Sanno di cenere le labbra e sabbia*

Sanno di cenere le labbra e sabbia  
nell'incavo del sonno, sanno come  
si apre tutto e si affonda nella notte  
insieme con la casa  
muti.

Cosa c'è nella pietra?  
Lontane nuotano nuvole –  
mani vuotano il cielo. Cosa c'è dentro  
la pietra?

Sanno di acqua, le labbra, di pianura  
e latte freddo, attesa, indecifrabile scrittura delle stoppie,  
sanno come si parla alla pietra,  
come la pietra  
ascolta.

Nessuno aiuta il nostro dio  
a continuare la creazione,  
nessuno più lo pesca in fondo al male  
con l'anima-uncino: anche uno solo  
di questi bocconi risputerebbe: alito  
e argilla, i semi neri del nostro sonno.  
Anche la pietra cresce, una parola  
calcarea goccia bianco  
su bianco – nessuno aiuta il nostro dio  
a scrivere ancora –  
e il cielo, l'erba, di che cosa  
devo meravigliarmi.

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## *Enodejanka*

*Kot posvetilo tebi  
samo to, pepel postane  
dih, enodejanka*  
Milo De Angelis

Počakal sem na konec dneva in na utrujenost,  
da bi se stisnil k tvoji prsti,  
in nisem prinesel cvetja,  
saj je iz te prsti zraslo, to cvetje, pa naj tam skonča.  
Prinašam ti roke, polagam jih  
na zakoličeno prst, saj nama je roke  
ustvarila mati in njej jih ni več mogoče vrniti.

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## **Tako se iz gole zamere odmakneš**

Tako se iz gole zamere odmakneš od kakega svojega stanovanja, pustiš ga tako vnemar, da ostane nemarno, vse tam za večno pustiš v vsakodnevnom neredu.

Spraviti ta novi jopič še zadnjič v omaro: *tako kot je treba*, si rečem z nasmeškom, a samo v mislih. Bolj za šalo, kot *Bo že kdaj*: kaj takega.

V bolnici se je telo – pokrčilo, se spremenilo, se nekam zgubilo.

Strmeti dolgo v noč v televizijo, eno celo noč prek štirih noči, da bi zamotil občutke in spanec.

Le za kako ped od asfalta. Cesta čez in čez zmehčana.

»V jami, v jami globoki,« me prešine. Gola vrzel, in zven lopate.

Nič nisem mogel. Tuji pogledi, dlani na mestih, čez katera niso nikoli segle: prek vratu v podpazdušje.

### ***Ničesar, kar bi zanesljivo o njem***

Ničesar, kar bi zanesljivo o njem govorilo –  
o mojem bratu – kar sem kdaj črno na belem –  
nobenih občutkov – vse je votel nič postalo.

Uporabili so besedo nesreča.

Na slepo sem živel z nekdanjimi živimi.

## *Duh po pepelu na ustih, po pesku*

Duh po pepelu na ustih, po pesku  
 v votlini sna, občutiš, kako se  
 vse razklene in tone v noč,  
 ponikne skupaj s hišo  
 v tišino.

Kaj le je v kamnu?  
 Plavajoči oblaki tam daleč –  
 roke čez izpraznjeno nebo. Kaj le je  
 v kamnu, v njegovi sredici?

V ustih občutek po mokrem, po brezbrežju  
 in mrzlem mleku, po čakanju, čez strnišče nedoumljiv zapis,  
 vedo, kako nagovoriti kamen,  
 kako pripraviti kamen,  
 da sliši.

Ni ga, ki bi našemu bogu pomagal  
 še naprej ustvarjati,  
 kdo ga še odkriva v globinah zla,  
 lovi na trnek duše: že en sam grižljaj  
 bi mu izzval bljuvanje: zadah  
 in glina, ta črna semena prek našega spanca.  
 Kamen tudi narašča, apnena beseda mezi  
 belo na belem  
 čez njega – kdo nam boga spet pripravi  
 k pisanju –  
 niti nebo niti trava za nobeno rabo, bi se moral  
 še čemu čuditi?

*Prevedel Marko Kravos*

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## ***Single act***

*To you one single  
dedication, ashes that bring  
breath, a single act*  
Milo De Angelis

I waited for the end of day, and tiredness  
before coming to this ground  
and I brought no flowers,  
for the ground has made these flowers, and takes them.  
I brought you my hands, I laid them down  
on this square patch of ground, for these hands  
our mother made and we cannot return them.

*Disappearing like that, grudging*

Disappearing like that, grudging  
from a house, going off like that  
to sully it, leaving all there forever  
in everyday disorder.

One last time the new jacket,  
put it back in the wardrobe, with a smile: like that  
it ought to be, I thought.  
A word or two, a “see you later”: like that.

In hospital, the body – smaller  
and already elsewhere, another.

Watching television the whole night  
for one night, four nights,  
to blur the senses, sleep.

The asphalt a few inches.  
Soft – everywhere – the road.

“In there, it’s in there,” close it up.  
Now the hole, the strokes of a shovel.

I couldn’t.  
And the looks, the hands that touch where  
strangers never do: the neck,  
inside the arm.

### *Nothing that really speaks of him*

Nothing that really speaks of him –  
my brother – in that which I've written –  
of nothing that I felt – which was nothing.

The word they used is accident.

Blindness in the lives where I was.

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*The lips taste of ash and sand*

The lips taste of ash and sand  
in the hollow of sleep, they know how  
it all opens and sinks into the night  
along with the house  
silent.

What is in the stone?  
Faraway clouds swim –  
hands empty the sky. What is inside  
the stone?

They taste of water, the lips, of flatland  
and cold milk, expectation, indecipherable writing of  
stubble,  
they know how to talk to the stone,  
how the stone  
listens.

No one helps our god  
to carry on creation,  
no one catches him any more in the depth of evil  
with hook-soul: even just one  
of these morsels he'd spit back: breath  
and clay, black seeds in our dream.  
Even the stone grows, a word  
calcareous white drip  
on white – no one helps our god  
still to write –  
and the sky, the grass, what  
do I have to marvel at.

*Translated by Richard Dixon*



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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 DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1986 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 1986 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Fulvio Tomizza*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: Jože Pirjevec

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1986* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1986* and took part in the literary readings:

*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, Włodzimiera Szymborska, Fulvio Tomizza, Istvan Vas, Igor Zidić*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1987 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 1987 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Peter Handke*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Erich Prunč*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1987 / 1987 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Gregor Strniša*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1987* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1987* and took part in the literary readings:

*Ivan Aralica, Tandori Dezsö, Lúboromír Feldek, Carmela Fratantonio, Erzsébet Galgócz, Peter Handke, Bohumil Hrabal, Geda Jacolutti, Drago Jančar, Alfred Kolleritsch, Ryszard Krynicki, Andrzej Kuśniewicz, Giuliana Morandini, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, Jan Skácel, Gregor Strniša, Włodzimiera Szymborska, Dominik Tatarka, Veno Taufer, Pavle Ugrinov, Adam Zagajewski, Vitomil Zupan*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Claudio Magris: Ewaldova bakla / Ewald's Torch*

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PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1988 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION  
AWARDED THE 1988 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Péter Esterházy*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Jože Hradil*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1988 / 1988 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Ewa Lipska*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1988* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1988* and took part in the literary readings:

*Birgitta Arens, Francesco Burdin, Sándor Csoóri, Jaroslav Čejka, Miroslav Červenka, Milan Dekleva, Danijel Dragojević, Benedikt Dyrlich, Vlado Gotovac, Marian Grześczak, Klaus Hoffer, Anton Hykisch, Gert Jonke, László Lator, Ewa Lipska, Marcelijus Martinaitis, Vesna Parun, Erica Pedretti, Richard Pietrass, Ilma Rakusa, Christoph Ransmayr, Renzo Rosso, Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz, Ryszard Schubert, Tomaž Šalamun, Rudi Šeligo, Josef Šimon, Aleksandar Tišma, Judita Vaičiūnaitė, Tomas Venclova, Giorgio Voghera, Josef Winkler, Dane Zajc, Štefan Žarý*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Czesław Miłosz: Četrtá učna ura / The Fourth Teaching Lesson*

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## *Jan Skácel*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Albina Lipovec*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1989 / 1989 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Dubravka Ugrešić*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1989* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1989* and took part in the literary readings:

*H. C. Artmann, Jan Beno, Volker Braun, Gino Brazzoduro, Jan Buzássy, Paola Caprioli, Sándor Csoóri, Miroslav Dudok, Bogumil Duzel, 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 / DISPUTATION: *György Konrád: S sredine / From the Centre*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1990 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 1990 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Tomas Venclova*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Veno Taufer*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1990 / 1990 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Aleš Debeljak*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1990* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1990* and took part in the literary readings:

*Alexandra Berková, Andrej Blatník, 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, Antanas Jonynas, Lubomir Jurik, Diana Kempff, Michael Köhlmeier, Tomáš Saulius Kondrotas, György Konrád, Miroslav Košuta, Stelio Mattioni, Libuše Moníková, Péter Nádas, Gáspár Nagy, Boris Pahor, Miodrag Pavlović, Giorgio Pressburger, Eva Schmidt, Knuts Skujenieks, Jože Snoj, Andrzej Szczępiorski, Ján Józef Szczepański, Susanna Tamáro, Ladislav Tažký, Goran Tribuson, Božena Trilecová, Ludvík Vaculík, Joachim Walter, Anka Žagar*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Veno Taufer: Izziv ali zgaga? / Challenge or Hassle?*

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## *Zbigniew Herbert*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Niko Jež*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1991 / 1991 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Lajos Grendel*

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DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Vlado Gotovac: Skica o Atlasu / Sketch of the Atlas*

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## *Milan Kundera*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Jaroslav Skrušný*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1992 / 1992 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Endre Kukorelly*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1992* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1992* and took part in the literary readings:

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DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *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*

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## *Libuše Moníková*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Neva Šlibar*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1993 / 1993 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Francesco Micieli*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1993* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1993* and took part in the literary readings:

*Zsófia Balla, Józef Baran, Roberto Dedenaro, Helmut Einsendle, Alojz Ihan, Dževad Karahasan, Matjaž Kocbek, Vlastimir Kovalčík, Marko Kravos, Zvonko Maković, László Márton, Robert Menasse, Francesco Micieli, Marjeta Novak Kajzer, Paul Parin, Denis Poniž, Daina Pranckietytė, Carlo Sgorlon, Arvo Valton, Michal Viewegh, Piotr Woiciechowski, Ifigenija Zagoričnik Simonović*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, Vlado Gotovac, László Krasznahorkai, Antonin J. Liehm: Edvard Kocbek: Palica / Edvard Kocbek: The Stick*

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## *Josip Osti*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Denis Poniž*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1994 / 1994 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Slavko Mihalić*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1994* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1994* and took part in the literary readings:

*Marjorie Agosín, 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, Richard Jackson, Goran Ignjatije Janković, Dževad Karahasan, Lubor Kasal, Thomas Kling, Majda Kne, Miklavž Komelj, Jurgis Kunčinas, Feri Lainšek, Phillis Levin, Svetlana Makarovič, Giuseppe Mariuz, János Marno, Mateja Matevski, Andrej Medved, Slavko Mihalić, Dušan Mitana, Grzegorz Musiał, Aleksander Peršolja, György Petri, Juan Octavio Prenz, Lenka Procházková, Gianfranco Sodomaco, Matthew Sweeney, Tomaž Šalamun, Igor Škamperle, Jachým Topol, Urs Widmer, Uroš Zupan*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Alain Finkielkraut: Intelektualci, politika in vojna / Intellectuals, Politics and War*

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## *Adolf Muschg*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Vesna Kondrič Horvat*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1995 / 1995 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD –  
*Marzanna Bogumiła Kielar*

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*Jovica Ačin, Kurt Aebli, Marjorie Agosín, Eugenijus Ališanka, Marcin Baran, Árni Bergmann, Krzysztof Bielecki, Dariusz Bittner, Loredana Bogliun, Berta Bojetu-Boeta, Tereza Boučková, Lucas Cejpek, Róża Domąscyna, Erik Groch, Gunnar D. Hansson, Nora Ikstena, Richard Jackson, Marzanna Bogumiła Kielar, Rade Krstić, Phillis Levin, Tonko Maroević, Manfred Moser, Danielius Mušinskas, Radovan Pavlovski, Tone Percič, Sibila Petlevski, Juan Octavio Prenz, 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, Ciril Zlobec, Vlado Žabot, Aldo Žerjal

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *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 DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1996 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 1996 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Adam Zagajewski*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Niko Jež*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1996 / 1996 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Kača Čelan*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1996* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1996* and took part in the literary readings:

*Lothar Baier, Uldis Berzinš, Petr Borkovec, Magda Carneci, Karol Chmel, Claude Michel Cluny, Branko Čegec, Kača Čelan, Zita Čepaitė, Stefano Dell'antonio, Ljiljana Dirjan, Dušan Dušek, Milan Đorđević, Menna Elfyn, János Háy, Ann Jäderlund, Antanas A. Jonynas, Julian Kornhäuser, 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 Steger, Thorgeir Thorgeirson, Maja Vidmar, Mārtiņš Zelmanis*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Svoboda imaginacije – imaginacija svobode /*

*Imagination of Freedom – Freedom of Imagination:*

*Branko Miljković: Poezijo bodo vsi pisali / Everybody Will Be Writing Poetry*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1997 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 1997 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Pavel Vilikovský*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Andrej Rozman*

KRISTAL VILENICE 1997 / 1997 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Nicole Müller*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1997* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1997* and took part in the literary readings:

Attila Balázs, Pauls Bankovskis, Peters Bruveris, 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 Juknaitė, Mila Kačič, Doris Kareva, István Kovács, Katja Lange-Müller, Kristina Ljaliko, Peter Macovský, Herbert Maurer, Neža Maurer, Christopher Merrill, Nicole Müller, Ewald Murrer, Miha Obit, Albert Ostermaier, Pavao Pavličić, Delimir Rešicki, Brane Senegačnik, Abdulah Sidran, Andrzej Sosnowski, Pierre-Yves Soucy, Ragnar Strömberg, Olga Tokarczuk, Alta Vášová, Anastassis Vistonitis, Anatol Vjarcinski, Andrew Zawadcki

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *Daimon zapeljevanja / Daimon of Temptation:*  
Rainer Maria Rilke: *Orfej • Evridika • Hermes / Orpheus • Eurydice • Hermes*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH  
PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1998 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION  
AWARDED THE 1998 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## Péter Nádas

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Orsolya Gállos*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1998 / 1998 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Peter Semolič*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1998* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1998* and took part in the literary readings:

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, Osamljeni tekači, Hava Pinhas Coen, 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 / DISPUTATION: *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 DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH  
PISATELJEV ZA LETO 1999 JE PREJELA / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION  
AWARDED THE 1999 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## Erica Pedretti

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Vesna Kondrič Horvat*  
KRISTAL VILENICE 1999 / 1999 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Angelo Cherchi*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 1999* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 1999* and took part in the literary readings:

*Neringa Abrutytė, Angelo Cherchi, Lelo Cjanton, Richard Flanagan, Marius Ivaškevičius, Richard Jackson, Jana Juráňová, Jaan Kaplinski, Dražen Katunarić, Taja Kramberger, Ryszard Krynicki, Franco Loi, Miha Mazzini, Miloš Mikeln, Mimmo Morina, Andrej Morovič, Amir Or, Răzvan Petrescu, Asher Reich, Christopher Reid, Kathrin Röggla, Ljudmila Rubljévska, Anna Santoliquido, Armin Senser, Sande Stojčevski, Vojko Šindolič, Adriana Škunca, Ottó Tolnai, Bogdan Trojak, Nenad Veličković, Karen Volkman, Dane Zajc*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *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*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2000 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2000 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Slavko Mihalić*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Veno Taufer*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2000 / 2000 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *István Vörös*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2000* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2000* and took part in the literary readings:

*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 Sendecki, Ronny Someck, Marjan Strojan, Brina Švigelj Mérat, Yórgos Veis, Istvan Vörös, Gerald Zschorsch*

DISPUT / DISPUTATION: *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*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2001 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2001 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Jaan Kaplinski*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Veno Taufer*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2001 / 2001 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Natalka Bilocerkivec*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2001* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2001* and took part in the literary readings:

*Esad Babačić, Mohammed Benniš, 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, Mariša 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 DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2002 JE PREJELA / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2002 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Ana Blandiana*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Lidija Dimkovska*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2002 / 2002 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Pál Závada*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2002* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2002* and took part in the literary readings:

*Jorge Enrique Adoum, Dritero Agolli, Andriy Bondar, Snežana Bukal, Bora Čosić, Jozefina Dautbegović, Tanja Dückers, Oswald Egger, Chuah Guat Eng, Jakša Fiamengo, Ioan Flora, Janice Galloway, 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*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2003 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2003 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

*Mirko Kovač*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Josip Osti*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2003* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2003* and took part in the literary readings:

*Constantin Abălușă, Hana Andronikova, Kostas Assimacopoulos, Vladimír Balla, Marek Bieńczyk, Boris Biletić, Gordana Mihailova Bošnakoska, 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, 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 DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2004 JE PREJELA / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2004 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

*Brigitte Kronauer*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Neva Šlibar, Vesna Kondrič Horvat*  
*KRISTAL VILENICE 2004 / 2004 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – Valžina Mort*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2004* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2004* and took part in the literary readings:

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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

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2005 STA PREJELA / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2005 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Ilma Rakusa in Karl-Markus Gauß*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: Vesna Kondrič Horvat, Drago Jančar  
KRISTAL VILENICE 2005 / 2005 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – Vladas Braziūnas

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2005* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2005* and took part in the literary readings:

Carlos A. Aguilera, Veljko Barbieri, Juras Barisevič, Vladas Braziūnas, Anna Maria Carpi, Theodora Dimova, Jure Jakob, Janez Kajzer, Viljam Klimáček, Olivera Korvezirovska, Cvetka Lipuš, Jaan Malin, Jim McGarragh, 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 SEM 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

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2006 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2006 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Miodrag Pavlović*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Veno Taufer*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2006 / 2006 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Mojca Kumerdej*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2006* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2006* and took part in the literary readings:

*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, Ekaterina Yossifova, Zdenko Kodrič, Márkus Kopcsay, Miran Košuta, Mojca Kumerdej, Terézia Mora, Birgit Müller-Wieland, Tóru Ónnepalu, Claudio Pozzani, Gabriel Rosenstock, Goran Samardžić, Ostap Slyvynsky, Breda Smolnikar, Olga Tokarczuk, Marko Uršič, Raphael Urweider*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA: »*Kdo sliši sosedovo zgodbo?*« / «Who Can Hear One's Neighbour's Story?»

MODERATORKA / MODERATOR: *Simona Škrabec*

DOBITNIK ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2006 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2006: *Goce Smilevski*, Makedonija / Macedonia

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: *Sodobna baskovska književnost / Contemporary Basque Writing: Barnardo Atxaga, Harkaitz Cano, Miren Agur Meabe, Rikardo Arregi, Kirmen Uribe*  
MLADA VILENICA 2006 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2006: *Dita Škalič, Aljaž Ferencek, Miroslava Furtkevičová*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2007 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2007 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Goran Stefanovski*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Lidija Dimkovska*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2007 / 2007 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Piotr Sommer*

SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2007 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2007 – *Milan Dekleva*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2007* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2007* and took part in the literary readings:

*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 Štíks, 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”

MODERATORKA / MODERATOR: Alenka Puhar

DOBITNICA ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2007 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2007:

Marianna Kijanovska / Marianna Kijanovska, Ukrajina / Ukraine

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, Dairená Ní Chinnéide, Micheál Ó Conghaile, Cathal Ó Seacraigh, Gabriel Rosenstock*

MLADA VILENICA 2007 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2007: *Katja Lavrenčič, Matic Može*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2008 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2008 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Andrzej Stasiuk*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Jana Unuk*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2008 / 2008 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Andrej Hadanovič*  
SLOVENSKA AVTORICA V SREDIŠČU 2008 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2008 – *Svetlana Makarovič*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2008* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2008* and took part in the literary readings:

*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*

DOBITNICA ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2008 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2008: *Ivana Sajko, Hrvaška / Croatia*

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*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2009 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2009 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Claudio Magris*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Veronika Simoniti*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2009 / 2009 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Luljeta Lleshanaku* SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2009 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2009 – *Boris Pahor*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2009* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2009* and took part in the literary readings:

*Jana Benová, Ines Cergol, Kalin Donkov, Umberto Galimberti, Forrest Gander, Andrea Grill, Miljenko Jergović, Štefan Kardoš, Yasmina Khadra, Herkus Kunčius, Alejandra Laurençich, Luljeta Lleshanaku, Dan Lungu, Tone Partljič, Jana Putrle Srđić, Peter Rezman, Víctor Rodríguez Núñez, Maria Šleahitjchi, 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*

DOBITNIK ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2009 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2009:

*Dragan Radovančević, Srbija / Serbia*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: *Flandrija na Vilenici / 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*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2010 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2010 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Dževad Karahasan*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Jana Unuk*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2010 / 2010 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Goran Vojnović* SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2010 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2010 – *Tomaž Šalamun*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2010* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2010* and took part in the literary readings:

*Max Blaeulich, Jacek Dehnel, Kristin Dimitrova, Veronika Dintinjana, Aris Fioretos, Ludwig Hartinger, Enes Karić, Blaže Minevski, Salvatore Niffoi,*

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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

DOBITNICA ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2010 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2010: Maja Hrgović, Hrvaska / Croatia

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: Wales na Vilenici / 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 DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2011 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2011 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Mircea Cărtărescu*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: Lidija Dimkovska

KRISTAL VILENICE 2011 / 2011 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – Dan Coman

SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2011 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2011 – Drago Jančar

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2011* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2011* and took part in the literary readings:

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 Rózycki, 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

DOBITNIK ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2011 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2011: Ognjen Spahić, Črna gora / Montenegro

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: Turčija na Vilenici / Turkey at Vilenica: Nazlı Eray, Nedim Gürsel, Mehmet Yaşın

MLADA VILENICA 2011 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2011: Julija Železnik, Teja Gerjovič, Lara Ružić Povirk

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2012 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2012 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *David Albahari*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Andrej Blatnik*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2012 / 2012 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Rumen Leonidov*  
SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2012 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2012 –  
*Boris A. Novak*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2012* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2012* and took part in the literary readings:

*Antonia Arslan, Miljana Cunta, László Darvasi, Dimitré Dinev, Dušan Dušek, Zineb El Rhazoui, Maja Haderlap, Petr Hruška, Igor Isakovski, Erica Johnson Debeljak, Colm Keegan, Rumen Leonidov, Dorota Maślowska, Indrek Mesikepp, Miroslav Mićanović, Paul Muldoon, Ioana Nicolaie, Tom Petinis, Sebastijan Pregelj, Pino Roveredo, Monique Schwitter, Bekim Sejranović, Dmitrij Strocev, Kārlis Vērdiņš, Gian Mario Villalta, Jiaxin Wang, Aldo Žerjal*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»*Avtorji nomadi*« / »*Nomadic Writers*«

MODERATORKA / MODERATOR: *Iva Kosmos*

DOBITNICA ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2012 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2012: *Alja Terzić*,  
Bosna in Hercegovina / Bosnia and Herzegovina

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: *Hebrejska književnost na Vilenici / Hebrew literature at Vilenica: Hana Amichai, Sami Michael, Hava Pinhas-Cohen, Nurit Zarchi*

MLADA VILENICA 2012 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2012: *Tilka Namestnik, Marta Radić, Veronika Martinčić*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2013 JE PREJELA / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2013 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Olga Tokarczuk*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Jana Unuk*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2013 / 2013 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Tanja Maljarčuk / Tania Malyarchuk*

SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2013 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2013 –  
*Florjan Lipuš*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2013* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2013* and took part in the literary readings:

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Anna Auziņa, Mauro Covacich, Silvija Čoleva, Radka Denemarková, Rodica Draghinceşcu, Miriam Drev, Katharina Hacker, Olli Heikkonen, Brian Henry, Ignacy Karpowicz, Vladimir Kopičl, Tone Kuntner, Gerry Loose, Tanja Maljarcuk, Alan McMonagle, Tomislav Osmanli, Vanja Pegan, Ana Pepelnik, Katja Perat, Milan Rakovac, Zhao Si, Martin Solotruk, Brita Steinwendtner

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:  
»*Nadih meja*« / *Inspiration of Borders*

MODERATORKA / MODERATOR: Vesna Humar

DOBITNIK ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2013 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2013: Artem Čapaj / Artem Chapeye, Ukrajina / Ukraine

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: Švica na Vilenici / Switzerland at Vilenica: Lukas Bärfuss, Arno Camenisch, Pietro De Marchi, Michel Layaz, Ilma Rakusa

MLADA VILENICA 2013 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2013: Ajda Furlan, Jerneja Rupnik, Eva Salopek

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2014 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2014 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *László Krasznahorkai*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: Jutka Rudač

KRISTAL VILENICE 2014 / 2014 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – Liliana Corobca SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2014 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2014 – Marko Sosič

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2014* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2014* and took part in the literary readings:

Ivan Antić, Gabriela Babnik, Marica Bodrožić, Liliana Corobca, Artem Čapaj, Patrick deWitt, Ivana Dobrakovová, Enes Halilović, Elsa Korneti, Asko Künnap, János Lackfi, Fiston Mwanza Mujila, Andrej Nikolaidis, Tomislav Osmanli, Ioana Pârvulescu, Tone Peršak, Alek Popov, Stanislava Repar, Jaroslav Rudiš, Roman Simić Bodrožić, Linda Spalding, Dimitra Xidous, Visar Zhiti

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:

»*Iz jezika v jezik*« / *From Language to Language*

MODERATORKA / MODERATOR: Erica Johnson Debeljak

DOBITNIK ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2014 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2012: Mirko Božić

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI EVROPE NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES OF EUROPE AT VILENICA: Luksemburg na Vilenici / Luxembourg at Vilenica:

Alexandra Fixmer, Guy Helmingher, Nico Helmingher, Pol Sax

MLADA VILENICA 2014 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2014: Lota Martinjak, Patricija Kavčič, Lara Ružič Povirk

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2015 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2015 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Jáchym Topol*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Alenka Jensterle-Doležal*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2015 / 2015 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Blerina Rogova Gaxha in Polona Glavan*

SLOVENSKI AVTOR V SREDIŠČU 2015 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2015 – *Milan Jesih*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2015* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2015* and took part in the literary readings:

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OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA: »*Odzven prostora*« / *“Reflections of Place”*

MODERATOR / MODERATOR: *Boštjan Narat*

DOBITEK ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2015 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2015: *Katerina Kalitko*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES AT VILENICA: *Indija na Vilenici / India at Vilenica: Sitanshu Yashaschandra, K. Satchidanandan*  
MLADA VILENICA 2015 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2015: *David Čop, Kiara Sara Knafelc, Chiara Lepore, Lina Malovič, Špela Zadel*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2016 JE PREJELA / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2016 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Dubravka Ugrešić*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Durđa Strsoglavac*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2016 / 2016 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Katerina Kalitko*

SLOVENSKA AVTORICA V SREDIŠČU 2016 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2016 – *Suzana Tratnik*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2016* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2016* and took part in the literary readings:

*Adisa Bašić, Alexandre Bergamini, Aleš Berger, Jana Bodnárová, Julja Cimaféjeva, Patricija Dodič, Martin Dyar, Dana Grigorcea, Jovica Ivanovski, Katerina Kalitko, Cvetka Lipuš, Valerio Magrelli, Aksinija Mihajlova, Carlos Pascual, Ülar*

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Ploom, Gábor Schein, Robert Schindel, Korana Serdarević, Mariusz Sieniewicz, Bogdan Suceavă, Kateřina Tučková, Les Wicks

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:

»Literatura in etika« / «Literature and Ethics»

MODERATOR / MODERATOR: *Carlos Pascual*

DOBITNICA ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2016 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2016: *Tanja Bakić*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES AT VILENICA:

*Latvija na Vilenici / Latvia at Vilenica: Ingmāra Balode, Artis Ostups, Arvis Viguls*

MLADA VILENICA 2016 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2016: *Miša Gregorić, Nejka*

*Vratnik, Ekaterina Mihajloška, Aljaž Primožič, Lara Ružič Povirk, Alja Tursunović,*

*Eric Renzi, Lota Martinjak, Tomi Petek*

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MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH  
PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2017 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION  
AWARDED THE 2017 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

*Jurij Andruhovič*

Utemeljitev nagrade / Laudation: *Aleš Šteger*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2017 / 2017 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Antonella Bukovaz*

SLOVENSKA AVTORICA V SREDIŠČU 2017 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2017 –  
*Maja Vidmar*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2017* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2017* and took part in the literary readings:

*Tanja Bakić, Andrej Blatinik, Antonella Bukovaz, Rumena Bužarovska, Anja Golob, Alenka Jensterle Doležal, Boris Jukić, Esther Kinsky, Vladimir Pištalo, Delimir Rešicki, Samir Sayegh, Fahredin Shehu, Hedi Wyss, Kerrie O'Brien, Iain Reid*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA:

»Literatura, ki spreminja svet, ki spreminja literaturo« / «Literature That Changes the World That Changes Literature»

MODERATORKA / MODERATOR: *Iva Kosmos*

DOBITNIK ŠTIPENDIJE SEP 2017 / CEI FELLOWSHIP WINNER 2017: *Andrij Ljubka*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES AT VILENICA:

*Norveška na Vilenici / Norway at Vilenica: Inger Elisabeth Hansen, Torgeir Schjerven*

MLADA VILENICA 2017 / YOUNG VILENICA AWARD 2017: *Rebeka Deželak, Sara Lindič,*

*Una Ljubin, Laura Markič, Nika Mravlja, Vesna Mužek, Laura Vuga*

MEDNARODNO LITERARNO NAGRADO VILENICA DRUŠTVA SLOVENSKIH PISATELJEV ZA LETO 2018 JE PREJEL / THE SLOVENE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDED THE 2018 VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY PRIZE TO

## *Ilij Trojano*

Utemeljite nagrade / Laudation: *Vesna Kondrič Horvat*

KRISTAL VILENICE 2018 / 2018 CRYSTAL VILENICA AWARD – *Šota Iatašvili*

SLOVENSKA AVTORICA V SREDIŠČU 2018 / SLOVENIAN AUTHOR IN FOCUS 2018 – *Mojca Kumerdej*

V publikaciji *Vilenica 2018* in na literarnih prireditvah so sodelovali / The following are represented in the *Vilenica Almanac 2018* and took part in the literary readings:

*David Bandelj, Petre Barbu, Éilis Ní Dhuibhne, Wiioletta Grzegorzewska, Brian Henry, Šota Iatašvili, Noémi Kiss, Uršula Kovalyk, Andrij Ljubka, Karin Peschka, Primož Repar, Stuart Ross, Simona Semenič*

OKROGLA MIZA SEP NA VILENICI / CEI ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT VILENICA: »*Pisati in preživeti*« / “*Writing and Surviving*”

MODERATOR / MODERATOR: *Aljoša Harlamov*

DOBITNICA PISATELJSKE NAGRADE SEP 2018 / CEI AWARD FOR WRITERS IN RESIDENCE 2018: *Maria Paula Erizanu*

MANJ POZNANE KNJIŽEVNOSTI NA VILENICI / LESSER-KNOWN LITERATURES AT VILENICA: *Malta na Vilenici / Malta at Vilenica: Clare Azzopardi, Norbert Bugeja, Immanuel Mifsud, Loranne Vella*

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## **Člani žirije 2019 / Jury Members 2019**

*Lidija Dimkovska*, predsednica žirije, pesnica, prevajalka, esejistka / president of the jury, poet, translator, essayist

*Aljoša Harlamov*, podpredsednik žirije, urednik, publicist, literarni kritik / vice president of the jury, editor, journalist, literary critic

*Ana Gersak*, literarna kritičarka, urednica, prevajalka / literary critic, editor, translator

*Ludwig Hartinger*, prevajalec, esejist, urednik / translator, essayist, editor

*Vesna Kondrič Horvat*, redna profesorica za nemško književnost na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Mariboru / professor of German literature at the Faculty of Arts in Maribor

*Tone Peršak*, pisatelj / prose writer

*Andrej Pleterski*, prevajalec / translator

*Jutka Rudaš*, izredna profesorica za madžarsko književnost na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Mariboru / assistant Professor of Hungarian literature at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor

*Veronika Simoniti*, prevajalka, pisateljica / translator, prose writer

*Marko Sosič*, pisatelj, režiser / writer, director

*Veno Taufer*, pesnik, prevajalec, esejist, ustanovni predsednik festivala Vilenica / poet, translator, essayist, founding president of the Vilenica Festival

*Jana Unuk*, prevajalka / translator

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## **Konzultanti 2019 / Consultants 2019**

*Lindita Arapi*, pisateljica, prevajalka, Albanija, Nemčija / writer, translator, Albania, Germany

*Agnieszka Będkowska-Kopczyk*, prevajalka, docentka na Tehnično-humanistični akademiji v Bielsko-Biały, Poljska / translator, senior lecturer at the Academy of Technology and Humanities in Bielsko-Biała, Poland

*Ljudmil Dimitrov*, prevajalec, urednik, Bolgarija / translator, editor, Bulgaria

*Orsolya Gállos*, prevajalka, Madžarska / translator, Hungary

*Alenka Jensterle Doležal*, docentka za slovensko književnost na Filozofski fakulteti v Pragi, Češka / senior lecturer in Slovene literature at the Faculty of Arts in Prague, Czech Republic

*Erica Johnson Debeljak*, pisateljica, prevajalka, publicistka, Slovenija / writer, translator, columnist, Slovenia

*Andreja Kalc*, prevajalka, lektorica, Slovenija / translator, proofreader, Slovenia

*Arian Leka*, pisatelj, pesnik, prevajalec, urednik revije Poeteka, Albanija / writer, poet, translator, editor of Poeteka, Albania

*Valžina Mort*, pesnica, prevajalka, Belorusija / poet, translator, Belarus

*Aleš Mustar*, pesnik, prevajalec, Slovenija / poet, translator, Slovenia

*Klemen Pisk*, pesnik, pisatelj, prevajalec, Slovenija / poet, writer, translator, Slovenia

*Kornelijus Platelis*, pesnik, prevajalec, Litva / poet, translator, Lithuania

*Julija Potrč Šavli*, prevajalka, Slovenija / translator, Slovenia

*Marjeta Prelesnik Drozg*, bibliotekarka, prevajalka, Slovenija / librarian, translator, Slovenia

*Ilma Rakusa*, pisateljica, predavateljica na Univerzi v Zürichu, Švica / writer, lecturer at the University of Zürich, Switzerland

*Judit Reiman*, prevajalka, predavateljica na Univerzi v Budimpešti, Madžarska / translator, lecturer at the University of Budapest, Hungary

*Jüri Talvet*, predavatelj na Univerzi v Tartuju, Estonija / lecturer at the University of Tartu, Estonia

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

Vilenica 2019

*Uredili / Edited by*  
Kristina Sluga in Nana Vogrin

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Dušan Merc, President

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Zbornik Vilenica, ki izhaja od leta 1986, predstavlja poleg dobitnika mednarodne literarne nagrade Vilenica in slovenskega avtorja v središču tudi dela avtorjev, ki jih žirija Vilenice izbere za goste festivala. Besedila so objavljena v izvirniku, v slovenskem in angleškem prevodu. Poleg avtorjev iz Srednje Evrope, ki se potegujejo za kristal Vilenice, nagrado za najboljši literarni prispevek v zborniku, Vilenica gosti tudi avtorje od drugod, ki so predstavljeni v posebni rubriki.

The Vilenica Almanac has been published annually since 1986. Besides presenting the Vilenica International Literary Prize Winner and the Slovenian Author in Focus, it includes presentations of the works of authors invited to the festival by the Vilenica Jury. The texts are published in the original language, and in Slovene and English translation. Alongside authors from Central Europe, who compete for the Crystal Vilenica Award for the best literary piece in the Almanac, Vilenica also hosts writers from other countries. These authors are presented in a special section.

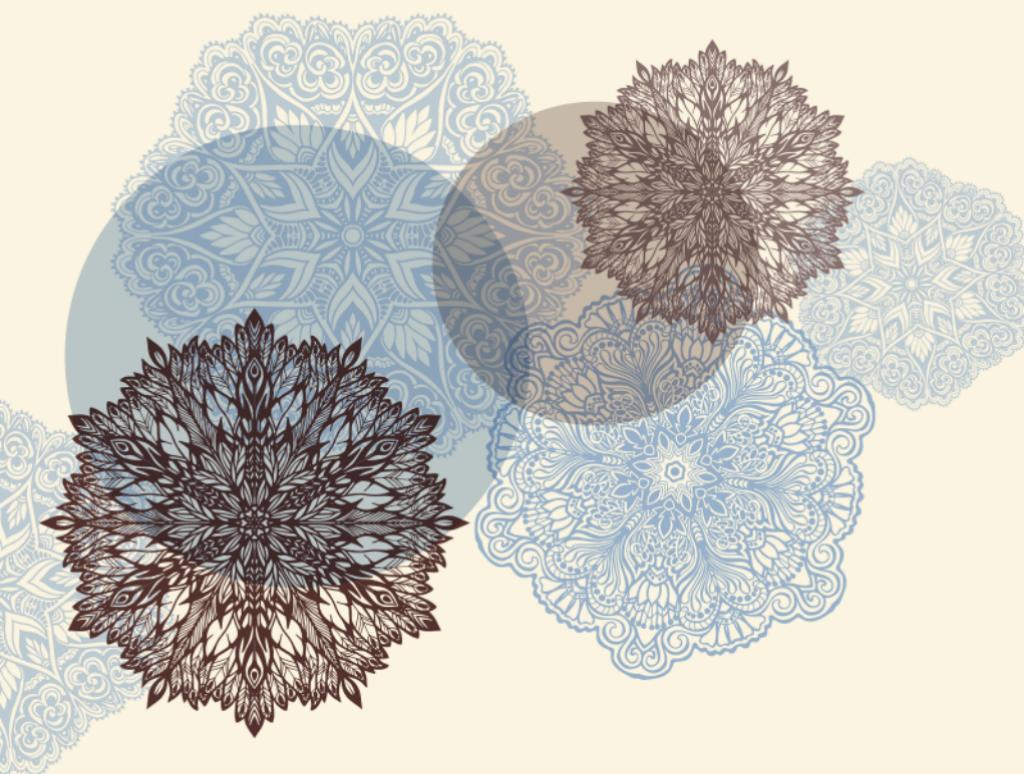
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