

Saint Ožbolt and a High Tree with its Crown in Heaven

It happened on a sunny day of 1979
At Jezersko, near the church of St. Ožbolt
From the 15th century; on the steep below the church
Cows were grazing and one could hear their bells.
(On a postcard sold at Jezersko
There is a herd of sheep
Instead of cows, it is nicer to see a sheep
On a postcard, isn't it; sheep, God's sheep.)
I asked a young sacristan: Do you know who
St. Ožbolt is? He blushed and said: I don't know.
How come you don't know? Did you ask your old folks?
They don't know either, they don't. I tell you!
We started looking at the inscriptions on iron
Crosses set around the church,
towards the sun, freshly painted, and we read:

*Dr. Jakobus Presheren provizor
+ 1808. v starosti 86 let*

And three other parish priests until 1855.
I asked myself: What was dr. Jakobus Prešeren
To the great Francè? And that makes me think of
Rilke's grave in Raron: *Rose, oh reiner Widerspruch...*
And a little further from them there lies Mrs. Barbara
Fuchs

mit sechs Kindern 1814.

(Some sensitive enthusiast, while reading,
Will maybe say: Well, what sort of poem is this?
Mere facts! And a poem must, it is well known,
Express feelings, or deep thoughts,
Metaphors! And this? Let's go on. Let's see!)
Their graves have gone, who knows when.

Tadijanović

#3 of Epigrammatic Poetry

Everything has been Said

Everything has been said, or will be
When the past bursts in at the door
Locked with taut drums
And silver flutes which will,

From the dark round lowlands,
Call beautiful slender girls
And without knowing, poor things,
One unexpected day they'll be

Lonely old women who nobody
Notices, not even me who wrote
These thick, winding sentences

While I was having coffee by the sea
And pictures that didn't want to descend to paper
were hanging about in my head.

*Opatija, the Port,
April 1st, 1985*

Tadijanović

A Bunch of Grapes

Hung against the blue of the Universe
I see how it drips
In a stream of transience

Evening birds
Hidden in the vine of the night
Hum somewhere
Like the organ
And fall into the abyss
Of nothingness

In the west there appears
The round head of the Moon
And it laughs at me

And I do not want to think
Of anything else
But only of the bunch of grapes

Hung against the blue of the Universe.

*Opatija, The Admiral Hotel,
April 1st, 1985*

Tadijanović

The Home of Mystery

He is looking for the words with which he would express
What has not yet been said (the inexpressible?)
And labors from dusk to dawn
As if he was harnessed in a yoke
And a driver lashes him with a
Threefold, spiky, wet whip.

The words he is looking for are hidden deep.
The other ones, the ones he does not need, pass
In front of his eyes and laugh
And disappear beyond redemption.
One of them, the Polite One,
Whispered to him at departure:

– The words you are seeking so much
Will appear when you do not
Even hope for their visit:
They live in the Home of Mystery
And there are few of those whom they visit.
Are you perhaps one of the chosen?

*Zagreb, Cajera 2a,
March 26th, 1993
Friday; about noon*

Tadijanović

The White Bride, *genius loci*

The bora has no master. It is a ruler of spring birds and petals.

It takes with one hand, it gives with the other. Its face is invisible, dark bora, crazy signs. When it fumes, you do not see the bora or the sea, corn-cobs or grape-vine. It breaks, it crashes, it brandishes, it carries all of its signs, all the flamingos, all the ropes, each sail. Now black, then green, then fiery, then red, then silver, blue... Bora whistles, crushes, breaks, sinks, moans, cries, screams, waves with its hands, then it speaks, swears, implores... It breaks masts, carries roofs, hits bells, the organ, rocks, graves, it kicks, rolls stones, raises dust, in the depth, in the width, high up, thirsty leech.

When it washes and calms down they call it the prefect, the white bride. It is bad if it finds you near a precipice and even worse on the sea. It breaks and renews, returns health. The bora creates and destroys. They say: Lord, give us a little bora and a big sun.

Juse
Kastelan

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Ten Commandments

I can not go if I stand,
nor can I dream if I go,
but I should.
Everything would be different that way.

I do not want to study,
I will die with these numbers
that multiply and divide.

I do not want to love,
it will not last.
Where the heart is
fog gathers.

I do not want to love,
I am taught indifference
by one who knows it better.

Only in this way can I join
what used to be
and what is coming.

The rain that fell
is returning to its cloud
already dried
and so it does each morning.

The first are those
who set off last.

Dreams always stay
outside.
Only leaves enter
and some earth.

*Zvonimir
Golob*

One

It is well known how much
one and one is. But you and I
do not know this simple assignment
and everybody is trying to help us.
Two – they say – usually two,
a pair only sometimes,
if we allow them.

Then, say two,
as if you were adding crickets
at night, before they become silent.

But you and I know
that they are not right,
that there are rules
that question
what confirms them
and we shout: one, one
one.

Added and multiplied
one with the other,
two drops of blood,
we shall fall on the ground
as one drop.

And subtracted one from another,
divided and separated?

We shall be nothing
and only nothing,
huge and round,
leaning with our emptiness
on the shadow of nothing
that rolls
and cries
and burns out.

*Zvonimir
Golob*

That

First it barely arrives
you hardly see it
you do not recognize anything
you believe there is nothing
then it gets larger and larger
you turn around
surprised and scared
you put some blush
on your cheeks
you take a cage with a bird
an apple
a pillow
and the smell of summer
you run
your steps get longer
it will catch up with you
you look back again
it approaches
it is already here
it is already between you
and your life
you can not see the hill
or the fire
or the church any longer
or the cross with the bell
only that which is approaching
only that which is catching up with you
rolling
steadily and without noise
and you suddenly know
that you will fall
and you are falling
and you have already fallen.

*L. Von...
Golob
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Second Class Citizen

He has come to terms with eternity
and maybe this is the only reason why
his name is crossed out in all the lists
of the equal.

At night
with inflamed eyes
he speaks of ancient origins
from the other side of the ocean of space
and maybe only because of that
there is no place for him
in the halls of earthly celebration.

Always at the locked door,
he little by little forgets human speech,
after all, what is there to say to those
who have replaced wisdom with power,
love with violence.

Birds look forward to him,
flowers in the field too,
just as stars greet him.
Here is his home: nowhere and everywhere.
And maybe once
he will really be the guide
to the dead rulers of the world;
restrained and smiling
he will show them their places
in the deserved transience.

*Slavko
Mihalčić*

I Am Pulling the Rope of an Inaudible Bell

I am pulling the rope of an inaudible bell.
Still, it will ring, maybe when

I step away.

And I myself will shatter of its
sound,

spill, get together again.

At the moment I am only touching silence.

I am going down the open field and I see:
everything dissolves.

How well the sky could do with the music
of my bell.

I am carrying it inside me already,
a big shining bud
that will soon explode.

This is the world that no longer cares
for anything,
and only because of that all the people stay in their
places.

They would like to hear the wild
pendulum,
fall meekly under its
ringing
and then get up, portent once again.

*Slavko
Mihalčić*

A Man With a Lamp

He is going down the stairs, raising the lamp, the ancient feeling of order in the absurd, why can one not see the face? Has this order got teeth, is it ever stricken by hunger as by electricity? Everything is only a weak premonition. More like a long ago remembered poem which like empty coaches rambles through the world. Whose is this mind that does not accept anything new, only repeats the old material from the bottom, reason of the man with the lamp or of the one who writes verses in the crowd? Jumps like a little bird in the cage from one stick to the other, is sad or happy. A vision does not vanish. Caught skillfully in the middle of its unreality, it is surprised that it still exists. The man descending the stairs, down non-existence equal to his own, raises his hand with the lamp in vain because there is not a drop of oil in it, what would be the sense of gathering snow in heaps, pictures disappear, only now it is clear that the hint of order was just a false alarm.

*slavko
mihalčić*

Death, All too Clear

t

Paths are entangled, there is no end or beginning
Two deer with entangled horns: the hunter, ashamed,
turns his head
He thinks death is all too clear here; one can hear
scuffing of the hooves
Time elapses quickly or completely disappears
It would be in vain to pray for a clock to tick
You can not move from this place, you are your own
darkened photograph
Tender, even rapacious fingers
would be helpful now
The motionless sky is waiting for the sign agreed upon
In the end, maybe we are allowed
to return
Not into oneself, into one's dead home, but into
a meadow gone yellow
Paths have rotted, two deer cast
their eyes at the hunter
Circle the emptiness where everybody knows each other
but they do not meet

Slavko Mihalić

People Who Are Singing

People who are singing
Came from caves, skyscrapers, from under the bridges
Stop above the door-step of the earth
Their mouths are lovely outlined
Their voices penetrate from all the body's postures

The lit obelisks that grow inspired
See beyond the permitted borders and sing
And they do not know that they are; they dream with
their eyes open
They feel themselves dragged out of sick-beds
Out of courtrooms, dungeons, in front of the wall
Of the destroyed classrooms

Those who run down the oblique streets
Stand behind the counter of a shop with floral radiation
Guide their round children through the heavenly labyrinth
Those who were violent husbands and spiteful wives

Stand on the top of the mountain of humanity
Thousands of flutes that turn into a destructive harmony
Into a song of celebration which is the key of human
existence

The one that stumbles, mourns, while children are born
for her

Rises above the top of what is visible and opens the
door of heaven

Plants woods who have not won their freedom yet
Cries above the dead river and returns its green source to it
Writes verses, acts on the square, paints under the
storm of the sun

A poem which does not stop even when singers disappear
Is constantly heard above the golden deserts
And the mouth can be seen – but nobody knows who it
belongs to.

*Slavko
Mihaljević*

Going Out to Cmrok

It was a half-rainy day
and then the sun started to shine
My darling and I were on Tuškanac
Watching others' youngsters.

"Essentially all is still the same"
you think, but she says nothing profound.
We were going to that posh restaurant
next to the children's playground.

"Fall, another fall", I said,
"when I thought that I would die
and I am still here" – "You said
that already on Tuesday 5th, and why?"

You're looking for that exit to Cmrok,
escaping from problems, you wonder about.
You're a man, keep searching, but I am a woman
and I know that there is no way out."

*Ivan
Slamney*

Cemetery in Imotski

where my mother and father rest

This cemetery has never been fully conquered by death.
Still today, it is full of dense blue instead of rotting;
While the green of ancient holes inaudibly rises high above,
Sprinkled with the round light of invisible stars.
Huge birds sing in a wild dream –
Giant nests surrounded by the news:
Unconscious, the ice of infinity melts
Nothing is separated by chance anymore –
This is not the comfort of chemistry: They agree with
each other,
The ecstasy of harmony and black teaching.
Everything gets closer.

The three of us clasp our hands together;
How old is this reserve of wonders? – We hear the same
sounds,
The same nearness is inexpressible.
Mother, father and son –
This is no order anymore:
Infinity is kind, the ice has melted;
A prayer, suffering and a deed –
Everything is getting ready for resurrection here.
And it does not matter where the three of us are:
The same words take their toll from everything, even
from the smallest rag.

Vlado
Gotovac

Moonlight in Novi Zagreb

A row of skyscrapers instead of cypresses
darkly line up by the road and embrace
and I have found myself walking
of all places in this place.

I am tipsy, I sing and in the skyscrapers
no windows are awake anymore:
only a silly, strange or drunken man
wanders around so late – what for?

And only the moon shines behind the town
my ribs are blown through by the wind, they cry:
shadows of the blocks have paved my way
like a giant pedestrian zebra. Good-bye.

I criss-cross in that geometry, but in the moonlight
each shadow gasps like a pit, makes you swoon
and I, what else, jump from light to light
and in between I sing to the moon.

I shout drunkenly – the best I can –
although my heart feels tight
and, in my backside, I think: brother, what a song;
this is the way to answer the night!

But nobody wakes up, the moon goes on,
shadows get together trace by trace, they bark
and when they fully condense under me
singing, I'll disappear in the dark.

*Antun
Soljan*

On St. Ivan

You probably don't remember
the pulled-down church on St. Ivan, but it is still here,
above the abandoned quarry, exposed to the south
where the sea, the old stone-cutter, arranges white stones
like huge cubes of sugar: it toughly
sweetens our long departure.

Or how we wanted our house to be here:
in the tower, three rooms, one above another,
like sparrows' nests, where we return every summer,
and a spacious living-room in the nave, with children,
with friends
on the old church benches arranged round the table
bungled together of boards of what used to be an altar.

We never made it. Children are small, one ought to think
how a doctor will come to the island. The world is young
and this is only one opportunity of many.
Should the island hold us? We wanted to get far
and you did go far: to England.
I would like to believe that you saved yourself.

You see, I did not get far. I tried,
but the world started to shrink quickly under me:
the more I ran, the less I went away
and here I am, dressed up with a noose of the horizon,
sitting
in front of the abandoned church, at dusk, where
I would also pray
but I do not know how; where I wait, but I do not know
what.

I am alone. The others have probably also concluded
that it is not worth living here. Distances whistle
over this island like winds, like Vandals! Ships

pass on the horizon day and night, on other beaches,
luxuriously lit – and here it is getting darker.
This place is of no use to anyone anymore.

If they had built a casino here, as they wanted,
at least somebody could be lucky here:
the little ball would chirp on the roulette, it would tick
away time,
evening dresses would rustle, women would laugh
resonantly –
and like this, only seagulls shriek around me, they
want to go to their nests
and the sea gurgles in grottos, it wants to go into the stone.

Only the remaining echo of your happy laughter rustles
here and there
like a gecko among the stones – how happy you were!
The traces of your household ideas still
overgrow these walls like moss and for a moment
make a corner of my homeland out of these ruins; a place
worth returning to. But everything is sinking into the dark.

Everything sinks into the dark and I am more and more
alone.
the island is getting smaller, the deep sea around it is
getting bigger
and the big stream of time which we are caught by
separates us more and more, takes us across the open
sea into the dark.
I call you, but my voice is getting weaker:
I wake up more and more seldom to croak out of my
dream like a seagull.

And what now? To start here anew? It is late.
Or to run away? Swim across the sea, be it with bare hands,
to Croatia, to Italy? Only a bit narrower or wider channel.
And then one by one: railways, custom officers, passports,

Angelus

Looking down the field, I see my father
standing in a furrow with a mattock

and a bit further his father, my grandfather
leaning against a mattock, wiping his face,

and yet a little further, my great-grandfather:
and so all of them stand in a row like grape-vines

as if they have stopped working for a moment
and they are standing in place where they were in a furrow

Around them, various plants are growing
but there are no grapes, no oil, no olive.

The untilled field overgrows
the bulbs of their feet with shrubbery

They are silent. On this land no one
has been heard singing while digging.

They are in old costumes, serious, dignified,
as if they were getting ready for a feast.

They are waiting, standing, they are silent. It is dusk
already,
they are listening to a ghostly angelus.

*Antun
Soljan*

An Old Poet at a Conference

He has realized his ambition,
now he is an old poet and,
while still alive, one can safely
say, a living classic.

In his crumpled, unfashionable suit,
bloated of drinking, slow of sciatica
or of doubt: can a tired body
thus give birth to its own monument

He staggers among the people like a dinosaur
who somehow, behind his words,
clumsily tries to squeeze
into this too everyday life.

But with his pension of honor,
with his little local prestige
and with those already bitten-through hopes – he is safe:
nothing else can happen to him.

He wanted, in fact, to be celebrated as a master
of the work he himself used to admire
and now he is slightly offended
to see that work is admired, not the master.

And he is always on his guard, as one
of these youngsters might suddenly say:
Listen, old pal, you have done such wonderful things,
and what has finally become of you?

And there he is at the conference: while the youngsters
are talking
about old things with a new passion
to please their teacher, and with many new words
to please the world – he is carefully napping.

*Anton
Soljan*

Through Seven Deadly Walls

Stick out your tongue.
Stick out your brain.

Over the Adriatic karst,
over the human karst.

Where snake flowers bloom.
Where snake brains ponder.

Seek a drop
of wild honey.

A drop
of wild text.

A sentence which
horned vipers used to wrap themselves in.

A word against which a hawk
used to sharpen its beak.

Hawk's sister's
first period

horned viper's mother's
last tear.

A lyrical place in a she-wolf:
where a wolf's seed
falls and sprouts.
Where little wolves grow.

An epic place: a gorge closed in
by the bones of the humans and of horses.

In the bones of a wild bee.

An egg of a wild hen.
A rib of a wild goat.

*Peter
Gudly*

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Between the City Gates

The gates are open and the bridge is down. You can
get out or get in: as a soldier, a comedian, a serf –
as a gentleman or his servant.

I am standing between the city gates, reliably
not getting out, still more decisively refusing the
thought

of entering. Of the two possibilities – neither the
attacker

nor the defender. I resist
every call.

I wanted to be able to stand in that
no matter how narrow
space

between the door posts
that stays empty even when the city gates
are closed.

Milan Melešić

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Waiting For His Turn

I watched him sitting; waiting for his turn
In front of the dentist's...
Who really cares for this little boy's turn?
Maybe only God with his scattering mercy
With the fringes, the ends of his mercy
With the tops of his long waves of mercy
He was drooping behind his blue eyes
That were drooping in his head; the hours were passing...
He was sitting on the little wall in front of the clinic
Playing with something in his hands – for a millionth time
He was turning over two bent nails
Some marbles or God knows what...

Thin, just like all the little thin ones
uncombed and somehow rectangular in
the bent universe –
The nurse was exchanging lascivities with the dentist
Overeaten with sweets that she had got, she was
cooking coffee
The dentist was having long, neurasthenic
telephone conversations
With his wife's friend

Some fat ladies were loudly gossiping
Other fat ladies were skipping the line
And trying to push their little girls
Through the slightly open door themselves...
Here, in front of the entrance, under the blue heavenly cross
He is standing upright again...

Hands in his pockets, eyes afloat
Following all the visible outpourings of the mercy of life –
If he knew how to generalize, he would generalize:

First Night in the Invisible House

Yesterday for the first time
Without touching me the evening passed
It does not know me!
For the first time I did not come of my own will
I was sent to replace those who had gone
This is my first night in the invisible house

And the harmless parish priest does not even understand
What I am stealing from him entering like this
Or what I am giving to him refraining from the resistance
in our conversation
He is leaving around carobs, wax, dated books
And sleeps soundly because he will find everything
untouched
I blink like a tom-cat, drink wine

Dry white core of the cane –
Lead whitewash of the wall is a background to everything
The candle takes from the island with a slight twinkle
The sky is getting dark with shower as with shouting
I could have endured here; it is all the same
The night is passing in the invisible house.

*Milan
Meljčić*

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A Search

Two enter
The compartment, one asks for documents
The other is silent. Father, numb
Sits supine. She says
Look at this little child,
Are you heartless? The other one says give it back
The first one what's the matter with you?

 There are still some lights on the horizon
Of this meager hinterland
And on the altar of this madness
A cracking rush-light staying without oil.

 The following moment born again
Of the non-material father who is convincingly putting
down his fingers
On the pistol butt; the wonder of not equalizing
That you cannot remember and must not
Forget. Something bitter
A little eye out of which a branch of a plant grows
Or an inclination to self wounding is opening.
This is added in writing on your wheels.

Far from the medal of holes in the ground
And in the new shape
The one who is carrying the meow
You rush further with pricked up ears
Between the tense rails of the night peace
Carved with whistles, now indented
With breathless laughter of refrigerators from the
butcher's shops
Stung with little pieces of TV program, with crackling
Twisted with darkness that moves stuffy rooms
With saints on the walls

Next Time They Shoot at Radić

Tamburitza and a cricket in the throat –
Appear dignified
Send messages in the name of beneficence
Especially because it has not been expressed

Listen only to the judgment of God
If we hear it
And to the judgment of conscience –
The only war is won
Take a clean shirt, color in the face
Hope for nothing:
Not even for the stones
or for the trees

I will redeem you
With a smile of a boy from an orphanage
Next time aim more carefully
When I fiercely go against a word

If a spike can grow a grain
And a human within a human
By the very nature of creation
But he did not finish –

Between good and bad contingencies he was holding a
door-handle
While they were breaking the door
To do what they wanted, making excuses
Also for the next time!

*Milan
Melić*

Words of a Prayer and Words of a Poem

They are hardly different...
It is strange that I am thinking about this in a butcher's
shop
Looking at a wash-basin with offal
And like tears extorted with the modesty of a wish
Drops of blood on baby beef liver

Later, in the kitchen, a sprinkling scene
I spit out a door-handle, I strike a match
I scratch with the handle of the spoon
In the azure soup I observe
Constellations of star pasta

Outside a state of darkness
With its laws as needed
Mops are full of dampness, iron of threat
And everything written down
As if it was written down with hatred

And it is clear to me, although in the middle of the night
So inexpressibly near, so
Lacustrively similar
Words of a prayer and words of a poem
Can not be the same.

*Milan
Mešić*

Hammering Skills

I'm a box of nails that I pick out one by one,
and bang them in inside myself, and then suspend
decorations, pictures, inner organs, land –
scapes, and diverse records of my common
life, or my eternal life (I somehow always blend
the times), and make sure there's room for them to stand

and that the nails hold, and that there are enough
for the things to come; I sometimes hit too hard
and the nail will pierce my skin, protruding trouble,
a thorn of steel, I scratch myself – it's not too tough,
as long as no blood runs, but it has an awkward
effect on people, for they think it my stubble

growing out, a bit stronger, not a nail; I slice
it off too; but, with just the same vigour, I still
bang nails thick within me, inside, as I've maintained,
for different uses, with movements fine and nice,
into the tongue and heart, from within, to instil
a fluent circulation; bit by bit I've gained

the skill of handling a hammer, handling
in general

Translated by Graham McMaster

*Luko
Palfetak*

The Door of Notre Dame

For some test, the nurse withdraws a cc
or two from a vein (this morning I gave some pee
for the purpose) then takes my BP and keeps mum
soon, upon the table, she'll have a part of me
a heroic part, and look in the microscope (I see
from the other side) in a day or two will come

the news: OK; and so I'll be able to dedicate
myself to work I'm doing now; to help some still
completely closed-up poppies bloom, with C-section
make buds for them; crumpled tight in its strait
birth canal the flower is liberated and will
with no wind slowly spread, that's my rejection

of all and everything short lasting; oh well
my systole's one twenty, while the lower force
is seventy or so, too low, they say, and so
I must get worked up more often, impel
the blood into my head, I wonder how the horse
solves the pressure problem, and their eyes go

glassy while they stare into the scope, where Lipid
and all my lipids are up to the same thing,
try to turn me into a horse, and the poppy
I'll find for myself, for the barricades that
I leap over, like Victor Hugo from one tower
to another, Caesareanly thus opening

the door of Notre Dame.

Translated by Graham McMaster

*Luko
Paljetak*

A Little Night

Concealed in the garden, a cricket with great skill
assimilates a small sweet Mozart, its protein
a finger nail of chocolate, some black and white
ribs upon the ground, hard harpsichord a bit still
retuned for different sounds, when night will not retain
its dress, old fashioned cut, its body light,

of mannish lines, like Salieri the cold breeze
brings scent of stars and horses, and the taste of beer
from the hollow foam of which comes, like a cone,
Maria Teresa, and conceals us all, one by one,
under her skirt, for the sake of comfort, it's drear
to make the night's acquaintance with thin knees,

unprotected in the garden in which you hear
the cricket that digests a little sweet Mozart
skilfully; and in, each night, I crawl, achieve
good progress, slow, dependable, to the sheer
smooth knee, then further; now the garters start,
and, look, I'm past them; dark, I'm yours this eve,

completely, little night hairy music

Translated by Graham McMaster

Luko Paljetak

Narcissus and the Water

Water

Narcissus in the water, in him the water too,
lips look for lips, and eyer seeks eyer,
clouds are benign moles on the skin of blue.
Encountering self, the youth moves an arm in desire.
The smoothness of the surface comes afire
fingers stretch out, a chance too good to be true,
rings give birth to rings, and in a ring expire,
the speechless youth affords himself anew.

Slowly flows the water, like glass lies straight,
in a gilded frame on which alights a fly,
its own kiss at once increased in weight
the water flows on to the sea and gazes at the sky
the lily folds its petals, in lust the waves dilate,
To kiss himself Narcissus need not try.

Narcissus

To kiss himself Narcissus need not try,
the lily folds its petal, in lust the waves dilate.
the water flows on to the sea and gazes at the sky,
its own kiss at once increased in weight,
in a gilded frame on which alights a fly,
slowly flows the water, like glass lies straight.

the speechless youth affords himself anew
rings give birth to rings, and in a ring expire,
fingers stretch out, a chance too good to be true,
the smoothness of the surface comes afire
encountering self, the youth moves an arm in desire.

A common mosquito

How do you dare to suck my darling joy,
who gives you, tiny cosmic creature,
the right to whine your siren, are you what you seem,
or yet some ancient godhead who must employ
full power to prove himself, or does your life endure
in harmony with him who claims a dream

is what we're made of and not made; your blood
is my lover's blood too, so come and bite
me; as in a bowl of life without a tale unite
us, for your theatre premises are the gloom,
and the audience applauds you in the room,
in fact, it aims at you with burning wood

and smoking wick, and spray of cursed might,
while you're a catalyst of passion, you're the spark
of love, degraded Cupid flying in the air here
without a purpose in this room-sphere,
although you're stamped with certain ancient mark,
no one hears the music of the spheres in that flight

of yours without a plan, nor I, who try at least,
but I believe you, because you bear my blood
and the blood of my dear to some unclear far-off
collection point, where perhaps the deity
really is decanted.

Translated by Graham McMaster

Luko
Paljetak

Deer

You bound, and the wood diminishes, but the sky
tinkles in all its stars like a ship's galley
in a storm, the mountains that I make

in bed, in a pair, are for you, and the snow,
when it falls, you've bared your mould in the air,
to fill it, I smear it with lather, shave

with a father's hand the face, you're exposed, all bend
their heads to read the caption: DEER;
I'm the keeper of the show, the pensioned-off custodian

of this exhibition, from this I live, I relate
that when you bound the wood diminishes; you bound
and the wood diminishes and the medicines tinkle

in the dresser of flour-chest boards
my father made my mother as a wedding
gift, as well as me, and perhaps you, too, deer.

Translated by Graham McMaster

Luko
Paljetak

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With the Pressure of the Words

We get up
into a long silence

The spider web is broken
with the edge of the bed

From the motion of the palm
the bed rhymes
with betrayal

Tied

with a breath
we retreat
on our knees

The world is cold here
nobody serves anybody

Everything is in the pressure of the words
in the present that allows it

Except hair
a freckled hand and feet

Silence holds well

It plays with you

Andriana Škunca

I Remove Things

I remove things from one house into another.
Everything that
fits into oblivion approaches and grows.
The path is being completed by: a fig, a stone wall,
the wind.
Broken door-posts. Wherever I approach them from,
one is hidden. I
pass by the invisible. They happily rustle in the
summer day
longing for mutual recognition. They get stuck in the
spider's web,
they swing with a swarm of flies.
I exchange what is past with what is future.
I carry boxes, blackened photographs, a map,
paintings
broken in cracked glass. Desert places are waiting for me.
Pressing against the door cuts into a secret and
hides it in
the lock. Memories return to a distant time dried in the
rocks
bringing nothing back to life.
I touch the dust, gently, so that it doesn't disperse. Shoes,
silk dresses, raisins scattered around. And something
intimate
that is supervising me.

*Andriana
Skunca*

You Grow into the Dark

Dusk burnt in the yard. The sky is smoldering in the bark of the darkness, it covers the house. At the table, scattered pictures are looking for support.

We know nothing about the ways disentangled behind our backs. We could go anywhere, into any night adventure. The Milky Way is already opening near the knee. You say: The north star, the first star hung above the roof like a lamp. Everybody is asleep and we are stealing the thin line of the invisible. The edge of the dream.

To go down unknown paths, this is well known, too, you say. With a scattering trace you grow into the dark that dissolves you. Like the temptation of the crisp walls.

Andriana
Skunca 312
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The Way of the High Tide

And then high tide stormed in and took me away
but I am weak and I don't have a boat strong enough
to direct it towards any heart, the center of passion

I forget sirens, I forget sea monsters
and I am not related to the moon to fertilize
the open sea and to be crucified in the rose of the winds
under the canopy lacquered for every
occasion, in which everything appropriate to the sea
and to the land, everything that
laughs and frowns tumbling my flags down,
destroying my forts and governing my
joys which I take like bread and which
mean more than a light bed and the grass of dream
breathes and mixes

It was said: everything comes out of the sea and everything
returns into the sea, all our transformations and all
that we mythically and truly grow in our garden

And I have already sacrificed horses
and bulls to that sea, given to it more than it needs, taken
its gills and the grace of its crib,
the passion of ancient chests and painted on
the drowned canvas all its sealed
fortunes, all the months whose words
I can't so easily and peacefully renounce

This sea has curbed me, it throws its high tide on me
and I return with a stone and so we always
exterminate one another, follow the motion of the stars
and we stir, we stream and are deadly
in all those salty ambiguities in all
the sighs of those hidden by the rocks of fear

Axis

To open the window to look at the plaza
to see it all to be embraced by it
with its measure with its people
that whatever there is shall be a solid stone
that a little church is on it, that it has
a little belfry that bells are my
m o r n i n g n o o n e v e n i n g
props of heaven borders of the dream

that there are balconies and passages
that there are pot-flowers that there is ivy
and stone consoles and sparrows' nests
that there is a plaza, a small plaza, the smallest plaza
plates and tiles the crown of the fountain
that I see the outline of the fireplace and the chimney
and I feel
that I myself am a fireplace an altar
steps into a psalm door to a word

that I am a little church an altar a niche
that I let the sun through my fingers
that I open the shades and that I need
nothing else but this mercy of stone
its walk through the walls its steady speech
voice of a mother children's chirp of rosaries
that this stone covers me
that I can tell everybody that I have finally
achieved a holy death

Jalisco
Fiamengo

Corona Mortis

They find you on the rocks behind the school,
you beaten crown of the Lady of Carmel
and while we gathered, out of breath,
touching you with our glances, my heart wanted to
jump out. As if life itself, ashamed
by this insolence unheard of, cracked the land
under me — incurable crack
that will never close. And now,
when I set off towards the end of the road, I know
for sure that the last one in the line of misfortunes
will be a direct consequence of this insolence;
and the only mercy which, after the fall
into the black crack, I may expect
from God's angels — is the closing of the land
above me; so that I do not feel ashamed, naked, before
the sky, the castles of light and the ways of the stars.

*Drago
Stansbuh*

Laborer

You, God's plough
that tills the lent
of the soul
and picks the rock
under the sharp plough-share,
breathe the salt of endurance
to the heaps
and to the field of Brač.
Sow the dragon's seed,
plant little angel's wings.
Whatever crops up
may it grow slowly
into the thirsty eye of dreams
and into the crystal of snows.
Fruits, may they be
small, wilted,
tasting bitter-sweet.
Spirits of the table and of the hills,
may they break unleavened bread
on the clearings.
Like mica embraced by an olive tree,
a kiss of
two mouths.
Just as the sea
kisses the island,
little by little, steadily,
so will we too,
children of God's providence,
begin to love ourselves again.

Knife Stuck Into the Tree, Overgrown by the Bark

It sprinkles the dead with stale water
helps the decay of proteins and the outlet of salt,
equals the division, protects the retreat and the prints.

It brings the key pepper and the grains of Delphi
rosaries to the arrested lips.

A skinhead agnostic,
a wanderer who secretly adores the growth,
with mica eyes, infected by numbers to death.

A cold mindless one with hands warm
of unimportant embraces.

While incidental marshes,
suffocated peat-bogs and beads of fossils last,
he gives up, he retreats as easily as a scarf slips off,
lays a bed of dry broom-plant and pale asphodel,
almost devoted to an alien name, he gives thanks,
strange and lonely.

And when the light boils in the black ball
of disintegration, he becomes saintly and just,
he becomes a passionate stroke of wit, a thunder in the
wooden box,
with a stuffed smile from Glaucus's dead mask.

Drago Stambuk

A Teuton Perfidiously Killed, Disarmed,
Then Buried, Rotten in the Island Soil
– Wakes Up to the Strokes of the Hoe
and Minds Being Dug Out

There remained the bones, cloth, a flask,
white inlay and gold-coated glasses.
My right hand had to be laid on
my bosom; now it is in the thorax which
it has caved in with its weight and with the weight
of the land. Scattered ankles of remnants
seem to collect the powdered dust
of my muscles. Since ancient times and forever
I have been dust. Who is disturbing me,
dragging me out of the deaf dream,
which haughty scoundrel digs
my grave and my bones, to which
air and to which light is he exposing the only
things that are imperishably mine? I am
fully integrated into the island soil, fastened
with thick roots of the grass and underbrush, propped up;
and therefore, because of the steadiness of this position
and invariability of the endless
rest in which I last more durable
than any remembrance – do not call
me, do not change my grave, my dark force
is not for the daily light.
My fathom eyes rest in a ball
of the dark, I am nested in the thick
back side of the world, one with the divine being.

Drago Stambuk

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Nives, Departure

Like a little game of echoes
chilly whisper on the necklace.

You must descend down the walkway
to the castles of silent beings.

How to pick an almond blossom
and not spill its fragile hearts?

Breath-like crystal of nearing death
next to the powder on our eye-lids.

Do not put out these saintly bonfires
that are cracking in the mountains.

Snowy, quiet apparition
white trough of darkening fire.

*Drago
Stambuk*