

## XV. BROJ

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# THE SPLIT MIND

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## SADRŽAJ

Riječ urednice.....	7
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## POEZIJA

Antonio Dević.....	11
Mihovil Ujević.....	13
Nikola Polić.....	14
Nada Vučićić.....	16
Dalibor Mađor.....	19
Ante Tadić-Šutra.....	21
Goran Gatalica.....	22
Tomislav Čulin.....	23
Boris Kvaternik.....	25
Anamarija Mutić.....	26
Antonija Šitum.....	27
Dora Kujek.....	28
Melita Ušljebrka.....	31
Marija Grgić.....	34
Matko Gospodnetić.....	35
Ivan Gaćina.....	36
Matea Miošić.....	37
Stjepan Crnić.....	39
Jasminka Mesarić.....	40

## REZULTATI NATJEČAJA ZA NAJBOLJU NEOBJAVLJENU PJESMU GRADSKE KNJIŽNICE SOLIN 2016.

Anđelka Korčulanić.....	43
Lidija Deduš.....	45
Jelena Marović.....	46

## PROZA

Tina Milas.....	49
Tea Tišljarić.....	51
Ines Ora.....	54
Stjepan Crnić.....	58
Victoria Vestić.....	62
Sunčica Marinović.....	88
Mirta Barić.....	95
Kristina Šimić.....	99

## PRIJEVODI

Branka Granić.....	113
Ivana Bošnjak.....	119
Gianna Brahović.....	126



## RIJEČ UREDNICE

Dragi naši ljubitelji pisane riječi, pred vama se nalazi novi, 15. broj The Split Minda. Od ove godine u časopisu djeluje novo uredništvo koje će nastaviti ovaj dugogodišnji studentski projekt. Svakako treba zahvaliti i bivšem uredništvu koje je uvijek tu da pomogne radu časopisa svojim savjetima. Brojne autorice i autori koji su nam vrijedno slali svoje radove obogatili su i ovaj broj časopisa svojom poezijom i prozom. Nadamo se da će ovaj broj doći do onih koji vole čitati i pisati književnost, te poslužiti kao inspiracija za književno stvaranje.

Za podršku ovom studentskom projektu, posebne zahvale idu dekanu Filozofskog fakulteta, prof. dr. sc. Aleksandru Jakiru, Studentskom zboru Filozofskog fakulteta i Studentskom zboru Sveučilišta u Splitu. Hvala i profesorici Melaniji Marušić koja nas je potaknula na uključivanje u rad uredništva, te profesorima Simonu Ryleu i Brianu Willemsu koji su uvijek spremni pomoći. Ilustracija na naslovnici osvojila nas je na prvi pogled, pa ovim putem zahvaljujemo i talentiranoj Vjekoslavi Margetić.

Posebna zahvala bivšoj urednici časopisa Ivani Šeput koja je pratila i savjetovala uredništvo kroz cijeli proces stvaranja 15. broja. Hvala i dragim kolegicama u uredništvu Branki Granić, Gianni Brahović i Katarini Batinić na pomoći u odabiru radova te ostalim suradnicima: Ivanu Boškoviću Jimiju, Jakovu Bajiću i Sari Kopeckzy.

Izrada ovog broja bio je novi izazov i poseban užitek za nas. Nadam se da ćete i vi, naši vjerni i novi čitatelji, uživati u onome što smo vam pripremili.

**Ivana Bošnjak**





# POEZIJA



## BUĐENJE

*Antonio Dević*

Teških prstiju riječi iz misli stvaram,  
kad brige me svakojake muče;  
teških kapaka oči otvaram,  
kad san me u tamne odaje vuče.

Sam se od svoje vrste osjećam,  
drugi to ne mogu da nauče;  
kad neprijatelj samom sebi bivam,  
kad u meni problem i odgovor čuče.

Ova noć je tmurna i hladna,  
sam sebi sam spasitelj,  
samo ove noći i moja tuga je gladna.

Ove noći sam sebi sam tlačitelj;  
jer u meni nešto se budi,  
da se osjećam drukčije od ljudi.

## OLUJE PROLAZNOSTI

*Antonio Dević*

U mraku svoje duše mislim o ružama,  
silnome moru, modroga vala;  
kako da živim dalje kad mislim o nama,  
kad oaza mog srca već davno je presušila.

Kao da jučer smo bili, a sad nas više nema,  
nekoć bili djeca, a sada stara tijela;  
u mojoj glavi opet se oluja sprema,  
ostaje samo mrak, nema više svjetla.

Ionako smo mi samo prolazna kap kiše,  
što dođe i ode, ne ostavi traga,  
što dođe i ode i nema je više.

Plavo nebo sad je crno kao tuga;  
prepustit se sudbini, ničeg drugoga nema,  
u mom srcu teška kiša se sprema.

## OVIH DANA SVE

*Mihovil Ujević*

Kružim kružecim plavetnilom  
Tražim odgovore i nalazim pitanja  
Sve rijeke istovremeno teku  
Sve je sada  
Kao ptici u ruci  
Ideji su krhka krila  
Ne želim da bude samo plod  
Čiju će košticu odnijeti vrana  
Želim rasti među visokim pticama  
U visoko stablo se pretvoriti  
Sjediti na svojoj grani  
Nositi svoje košnice  
Vidjet ću iz zelenila plavilo  
I po meni mravci će teći  
Pjev u mojim granama  
Pjev ću biti  
Skroman kao korijen  
Lak kao list  
Jer znam  
Prah sam zelen i prah sam plav  
Zelenilo, more i nebo  
Visina prividna i visina  
Jedna život uzima  
Jedna život daje

## REMINISCENCIJE

*Nikola Polić*

„To me ograničenje vodi do mene sama,tamo gdje ne idem dalje od točke objektivnog motrišta, koje ja tek predstavljam,tamo gdje ni ja sam ni život drugih ne mogu više postati objekt za mene.“

K.Jaspers

Le Havre\* je preko puta,draga  
Tvoja su malena stopala prigrllila pijesak  
Gledala si očima čuđenja  
Zar istina je to? Zar smo došli?  
Rastanci su uvijek teški, zar ne?  
Ideš u mjesto o kojem su ti govorili  
Ono o kojem si  
Kada se budnom činiš, sanjala  
I tamom prekrivena lica  
Šapatom rominjala

Na prostranstvima pješčanih nizina  
Vjetar ti je nanosio misli  
Ono što voliš, ono te i plaši

Svjeticionici slučajnog života i ubrazdani zidovi

Tako sam u jednak čas  
Volio ljude - zbog tebe  
Mrzio ljude - zbog tebe

Ono što brojalo se razlogom života  
Pretvoriti se moglo u razlog smrti

Poput one perfidne štampe  
Gdje su ljudi brojevi  
Gdje te nitko ne upita  
Odakle i kamo? A najviše, dokle?

More te prijekorno gledalo  
Ono nikamo pobjeći ne može  
Nema ni snova ni htijenja  
Samo ruke sa kojima  
Neke uzima, a neke pušta  
More uvijek u iste obale mora tući

Inosušne riječi, u pogledu nestaju  
Kao da nisu dio mene

Pogledavši odozgo, čekao te cijeli krug  
Živeći u strahu, prosipali smo vrijeme  
Kada se život stišće u jednu točku...  
U buci carstva, čuvavši bivstvo  
Htjela si ići i čuditi se

Opruga osjeta i trzaji života još su te plašili

Noć je polako dodirivala planine  
I spremna da zauvijek pođeš...  
Pokazala si plaho na kristale zemaljskog svoda

Ime im nisi znala, no shvatila si  
Da udaljini svijetli, i da je moraš stići

\*Le Havre (fra. havre-luka) je grad u francuskoj pokrajini Gornjoj Normandiji, nekad sinonim za urbanu tamu i sivilo.

## KAOS PRETKOMORE SRCA

*Nada Vučićić*

Može se do kardiologa, vrsna specijalista,  
do svećenika sveca, molitvenika...  
može se koješta  
tražiti, mijenjati, piti,  
dok svjetlo ne prodre u tamu  
nema se o čemu sniti.

Komora se grči, pumpa i vuče,  
troši se kao svaki motor kad se isforsira,  
oči se mute, more bez vala,  
livada poplavljena, blatnjava  
bez sjaja...  
Uzalud savjeti, vjera, nadahnuće.

U pretkomori čudna stana nedovršene  
ljubavi i putovanja...  
sahrane i opraštanja  
bezvoljna samoća i tama  
a život drhti, jedva diše  
pomiče sakupljeno, za svjetlom uzdiše.



## VODIČ za zbunjene – ili ODA knjizi

*Nada Vučićić*

Riječi kupuju zločine  
i  
Libreto za mrtve kitove  
dok Kauboj osvaja Ameriku  
a Susjed šalje Crno pismo  
tko da usliša želju  
Pričaj mi o njoj - ispriča  
Pjevač u noći pjeva još jednu  
Na vihoru ljubavi  
Otok se čini mirno mjesto  
i Dvanaesta kuća u daljini  
Otpusno pismo spaja nemoguće  
Putanje Natalije i Ognjena  
u Regiji stranaca vrijeme nije isto  
kao  
nepročitan Grad  
ili Vodič kroz Split za početnike  
pa nekako dođe i  
Splita mi je puna kita  
Zadirivalište ne dira ništa  
Zovem u vezi posla  
Smjer nepoznat  
jer vrijeme je pijesak  
curi kroz život  
curi kroz Poeziju riječi i boje  
curi kroz nas  
kao i Male priče  
u brojevima  
neke neznane nam matematike

nepredvidivog kraja  
i svih  
Sedam valova  
Stoner stiže nepoznat  
Male stvari cure u sjećanjima  
i Godovlje jedne žene  
cure i Riječi iz džepova  
Kupuju zločin koji ćeš počiniti  
i postati San žutog lista  
što zaspao je zauvijek,  
umoran, al' miran.

## SONET NOĆI

*Dalibor Mador*

Vidjet ćeš kada ti otkrijem tajne,  
kako je lako voljeti, predati se tebi;  
reći zbogom noći ostavljenoj drugima,  
sudbini što umire zauvijek.

Vidjet ćeš zašto sam te toliko trebao,  
u ovom svijetu gdje si ti postala moj;  
svijetu od drhtaja I nade,  
prvog poljupca i posljednjeg odlaska.  
Vidjet ćeš koliko sam te dugo čekao,  
tražio tvoje suze prozirne,  
u obećanjima ljubavi što ne iznevjeruju.

A ja ću vidjeti sebe u tvojim očima,  
čeznuću moga sna, zelene tajne;  
životu dosegnute ljepote. . .

## POEZIJA

*Dalibor Mađor*

Na vrhovima stiha,  
drhtaj duše pjesnikove, tih. . .  
Dar Boga sa oltara ljubavi,  
suze od jutarnjih kiša.

Riječi uzete nebu,  
nagovještaj novoga jutra  
u susretu tajni i sna;  
na grani gdje prebivaju ptice.

To drhtavo obećanje dato sanjarima,  
istinski je život Poezije. . .

## TKO SI TI

*Ante Tadić-Šutra*

Tko si ti  
Što skrivaš se ispod maglovite plime  
Za koga šapućeš te nijeme rime  
Što zaustavljaju vrijeme  
U tvoje ime.  
Zaista, tko si ti

Što si tu i kad te nema  
Kad se vidi samo tvoja sjena  
Nemirna kao morska pjena  
Što nasukava se preko stijena.

Zbilja, pa tko si ti  
Umiješ voljeti  
Bez da to izgovoriš  
Pogledom golicaš  
Žudnju moju moliš  
Da ti se prikloni.

Ja znam tko si  
Poznam aureolu  
Što zapliće ti se u kosi  
Sjećam se kad smo bosi  
Zajedno trčali po rosi  
Poljubila si me i rekla  
Da ne zaboravim tko si  
Zaboravio nisam  
Zaboraviti neću  
Još i dan danas  
U sjećanju to nosim.

## KADA PRISNOST POPRIMI OPIS JEZIKA

*Goran Gatalica*

kada usta zašute  
kada bura skine posolicu s barke  
kada arbun pogne glavu parangalu  
kada galebovi potonu u oblaku  
kada prisnost poprimi opis jezika  
usne su blijede  
kada govor vjetra nastani vjetrulju  
kada vodič krvi prigrli krijestu valova  
kada rasjedima mora  
Stvoritelj umili lice  
kada se prokrvljene šake ponizno  
molitvom razmetnu  
svim tišinama tad narastu krila  
i s obzora se u času  
rasele sve tugaljive ptice

## SPLITSKA

*Tomislav Čulin*

Splite - grade, novi, stari;  
duhon tvojín ja se 'ranín,  
umon tvojín ja se branín,  
tilon tvojín životarin.

Zato Splite, svoje riči,  
tu u pismi šta nan dušu liči –  
pivaj, pivaj samo,  
znan da nikad nećeš sramno!  
Zato Splite, svoje zlato -  
vječni prkos jačemu,  
zaigrani dišpet svakomu;  
dici svojoj daj ko prezime,  
ka kapelin nosi ponosno,  
ka i križ – sudbonosno!

Zato Splite, tvoje tilo,  
nek' procvita ka i brnistra;  
Mosor, Kozjak, Marjansko brdo,  
lipe vale, obala ka ponistra –  
oči šta u svit bulje.  
Al' od sve te rulje, oči tvoje vide ljude;  
dok se bude, kad si sude,  
dok ideje štancane naivnima nude,  
kad za umišljeno suviše se trude,  
i čekaju – očekuju da bude.

Zato postojiš Split, grade –  
palačo slabog koji postadoše jak,  
boravku dnevni, životni,  
tako ugodan;  
uživljen sa tobom zagrlj' ću Sredozemlje!



## MJESEC NAD RUŠEVINOM

*Boris Kvaternik*

Tražio sam tvoje lice  
Duž svih plaža svijeta,

među kamenjem,  
u vrtoglavom beskraju.

Nada me napustila,  
Ruke i noge

zaboravih ljudski jezik,  
izranjavalo mi stijenje.

Tolike su bile  
Te mi je duša stala  
Pljesniv biser

dubine moga beznađa,  
rađati tek nakaze -  
u razlupanoj školjci.

Slomljen, obogaljen  
Među beskrajnim  
Tvoja prilika  
Poput detonacije

odjednom sam te ugledao  
bezvrijednim kamenjem -  
me zabljesnula  
Mjeseca na nebu.

I ruševina je proplakala  
Stojeći sred tame  
Držeć Mjesečevo lice

od bezumne sreće  
poput plimnog vala,  
u izranjavanim dlanovima.

## PROSTOR TANJE

*Anamarija Mutić*

---

1. Prostor Tanje: Daljina  
koliko omeđena  
a toliko kad pjeva  
ori joj šumica

---

2. Prostor Tanje: Širina  
postratan kakav bol je vidjeti ju  
sprešana a kao da nije  
(da je malo tanja ne bi imala koje ruke)

---

3. Prostor Tanje: U Uskosti  
skinuvši si tromajku  
U trenutku ugaza U žvaku  
shvatila je  
da nije asfalt jedino što ju mrzi  
U zemlji U kojoj je  
g(h)ost

---

4. Prostor Tanje: Blizina  
da se tanja namaže mrmetine kao  
rakija što je nekad bila pekmez  
ne dolazi u obzir ne dolazi u obzir  
nisu je još toliko načeli

---

## U POČETKU BIJAŠE RIJEČ

*Antonija Šitum*

Kad mi tišina zagrebe grlo  
 zrelim klasom razasutih klica,  
 a demon gorčine ih stješnjava u med  
 što se ne ispire više ni kišom suza,  
 kada zmija teških slutnji  
 niz kičmu mi se polagano svija,  
 najednom nastupaš ti, neokrunjena kraljice Cigana,  
 kao bespolni bog u mašini vremena  
 spuštaš se na zemlju, dostojanstvena i sigurna,  
 da ispravljaš kralješke Atlasu i pokažeš smjer Argonautima,  
 čvrstom i nepotkupljivom ljubavlju,  
 ljubavlju mjerljivom tobom koja si neizmjerena  
 kada plačeš i kada se smiješ baš poput djeteta,  
 u areni bez blokova nametnutoga vremena  
 melješ kamen karme kotačem ispravnoga života,  
 kada te nema i kada je tvoja odsutnost  
 veća od tuge jer te nema...  
 Sve što te dotiče djelomično te se tiče  
 kada uvijek može brže, jače, snažnije...  
 kao hologram koji nije nigdje a odražava sve  
 pred ogledalom vječnosti rasuto je tvoje biće...  
 tvoja ljubav svima nama treba, meni znači sve  
 da odgonetam kada, kako i gdje  
 započinje  
 ono što u početku Riječ bijaše

## OCEAN STIHOVA

*Dora Kujek*

Ocean je poezija, poezija je ocean  
pjesnik je ronilac,  
ronilac bez odijela, Sherlock bez Watsona  
jedine opreme mikroskopske vidljivosti,  
rođen s mikroskopom u zjenicama  
biolog je nove vrste pronađenog,  
on suzama puni čašu oceana  
i stihovi njegovi čestice su kisika  
strofe zamahaji ruku  
tema put prema dnu  
dok tone u svjetskoj boli  
prsni koš Posejdona  
kraljuje bogovskim nemirima,  
ostalima vidljivost je površina  
i uznemiruju ih valovi stihova  
oni rijetki dokuče težinu zarona  
pjesnički duh u njih je vrsta nova  
oni rijetki uvide tsunami emocija,  
bol svijeta na suznim ramenima;  
izvor duše otključava se poezijom  
čovječe, zar ne znaš  
svak' stvoren je izvorom svojim  
mikroskopske zjenice u naletu  
ronilac su u svome svijetu.  
Gdje roniš kada izvoru čezneš?  
Gdje toneš da sretnu bol sretnoš?

## ČESTICE

*Dora Kujek*

Moja ljubav nije od ovoga svijeta  
 moja sreća nije od ovoga svijeta  
 život mi nije započeo niti krajem  
 svršava ovdje, duh je Božji i vječan  
 ja samo koračam sve dok koraka imam  
 koračam dok koracima mogu brojati  
 sve dok mi vrijeme ne istroši cipele,  
 prolazim osluškujući i gledajući  
 slike koje ljudi ostavljaju za sobom  
 šepavo, tužna osmijeha s bezbrojem  
 pitanja na koja ni nema odgovora  
 a vrijeme izaziva lančani sudar  
 osjećaja i razuma, korak je teži  
 alarm hitne nikako da probudi javu  
 pa prebrojavam čestice razočarenja  
 dahom dima gušeći svoje postojanje  
 dim je jedino što preostaje, što dišem,  
 kada se probudim iz pukog promatranja  
 ugledam tragičnu nit svojeg postojanja  
 to je za mene svjetlost na kraju tunela  
 smrt koju tako radosno iščekujem  
 da, smrt koju dobrodošlo očekujem,  
 ako praznina ne postoji kako to da  
 osjećam prazninu, jesu li to čestice  
 razočarenja kojim se želim prožeti  
 poput ljubavi koju ne mogu probati  
 sve dok se toliko ne zasitim boli da  
 postanem zatvorenik držeći ključeve  
 svoga kaveza, bez želje oslobođenja,

zar je to još jedno razočarenje niza  
slagalice što ne žele dati smisao  
svim onim prijašnjim, ali sada se pitam  
koliko ću ih još kušati do trenutka  
kada ću moći pijanim smislom slaviti.

## CARSTVO PJESNIKA I MUZA

*Melita Ušljebrka*

Miris prošlosti na suncu se ljeska  
zaborav, ptica na krilima ne donosi  
prazna pozornica, ni natruhe pljeska  
srce proketo, sobom se ne ponosi.

Odvažno promatram sebe izdaleka  
ni mrtva, ni živa, valjam se u blatu  
kroz mene protječe sjevremenska rijeka  
znam poginut ću u ovom glupom ratu.

Čiju to dušu iz prošlog života nosim  
kad bijelu zastavu poderah na pola  
osjećam trnje u nogama bosim  
opet slijepa zalutah, u predgrađe bola.

I dok mi se magla po licu lijepi  
samo tebe vidim u tragovima suza  
znam, jednom progledat će i slijepi  
zavladat će carstvo pjesnika i Muza.

## DOĐE MI

*Melita Ušljebrka*

Dodę mi  
toliko prokleta puta  
Da pobjegnem  
rasplinem se  
poput mjehurića  
utopim u moru  
besmisla.

Dodę mi  
da se vratim opet  
u onu istu ćahuru gusjenice  
skinem sa sebe prekrasna  
krila leptira  
jer odavno već  
ne letim...



## VOLIM NOĆ

*Melita Ušljebrka*

Volim noć  
jer tišinu mi ugodnu nudi  
daje mi moć  
zaklon od svijeta i ljudi.

Volim noć  
tad maske sve padaju  
jednom i ja do zvijezda ću poć'  
tamo gdje zakoni nebeski vladaju.

Volim noć  
kad obavije me tamom  
tad u sebi završtim upomoć  
i suočim se sa sobom samom.

## MRAZ

*Marija Grgić*

čarobni gospodin  
olinjan lišćem strši  
miruje  
Šuti inje  
dugopoljska jesen  
zavaljala je tigrove  
otkinula im boju dlake  
i prosula prugice u zrak  
kako koja dotakne dno  
tako tintom  
u vodi posjeduje  
međuprostor  
rastopljena stabla  
ližu svoje travke  
kao kad skineš  
naočale s dioptrijom  
minus sedam  
i gledaš  
u daljinu  
a neki mir stoji na vrhu  
iglice bijele  
šutiš planine  
one Šute  
bake u maramama Šute  
zvonici  
listovi miluju trave  
stopljeni  
kist Šuti  
jedno smo savršen

## BIJEGOM DO STVARNOSTI

*Matko Gospodnetić*

Bježao sam predugo.  
Dođem do početka slijepe ulice,  
do kraja se ne usudim nastaviti.  
Sivila stvarnosti se bojim,  
ili više nisam. Sada znam  
za pravu stvarnost.  
Ne prihvaćam više  
onu svoju izmišljenu. Ne.  
Predugo sam bježao.  
Bojao sam se ispasti slabić,  
ali u čijim očima? U očima  
onih koji su mi ravni po grijehu.  
Jednaki smo pred zakonom,  
bez iznimke. Sudit će nam se isto.  
Časni sude, priznajem. Kriv sam.  
Ali spreman sam na promjenu.  
Misli završene.

## PLAMEN MUDROSTI

*Ivan Gačina*

Iz dubine duše  
mudrost progovara  
kroz žubor rijeke  
tihog svanuća.  
Užareni krvotok  
raznosi životne etape  
skrivenim rukavcima  
nabujalih misli.  
Zbilja se utopila  
među krvnicima,  
piratima južnih mora,  
čuvarima sarkofaga.  
S upaljenom svijećom  
slijedim staze  
izgubljenog blaga,  
čelijske vlastite svijesti.  
Zakriljen u sjeni  
lutam dolinama uma  
preko besanih šuma  
(ne)mirnog postojanja.  
U kosti prodiše  
zrno ludosti,  
uz kaplju starog vina  
nastaje plamen mudrosti.

## MOGA ĆAĆE RIČI

*Matea Miošić*

Nije ćaća moj od veliki' riči.  
Su dvi, tri nji rekne cilu štoriju.  
    O moru i galebin,  
    O mrižan i valovin.  
Tak'e su me ko malu u san pratile.  
Sad kad san se u vel'ko čeljade pritvorila  
    Slušan kad ga dojde ura  
    O dobroti i poštenju,  
    O ljubavi i viri.  
Govoradu njegove oči sve šta riči ne mogadu.  
Možda neću upantit sve šta mi je da  
    Ili šta je namisto mene uradija,  
Ali znavike ću pantit onu šaku riči  
    Ćaće moga.

## NE DAJ SE, ČOVJEČE

*Matea Miošić*

Najgore je ovako kad je čovjek daleko od onoga što želi,  
Što osjeća da mu već godinama pripada,  
A opet tako blizu tom polusnu, ili polujavi,  
Da mu teško pada na dušu i pomisao da posustane.  
pa tako izgubljen lebdi tu negdje između onoga što želi biti  
I onoga što mu je predodređeno da bude,  
Ne znajući pravo ni što je jedno  
Ni što je drugo.  
A pomoći ni od koga,  
Utjehe, potpore, razumijevanja,  
Ni od bližnjih ni od daljnjih  
Pa više ni sam ne zna povući granicu između jednih i drugih.  
Život ih nekako sve strpa u isti koš.  
U očima suze naviru, izvori vrele vode,  
Stišće šake, stišće zube,  
Ne da im da kliznu niz obraze.  
Jer padne li suza, dignuta je bijela zastava.  
Zato se, čovječe, ne daj!  
Ne daj da ti sruše snove i isprazne čašu do pola!  
Stisni te zube, oči širom otvori,  
Boj se samo Boga i pred njim jedino strepi,  
A ne prezaj ni pred kim sebi ravnom.  
Možeš sve što hoćeš!

## TRAŽIO SAM TE

*Stjepan Crnić*

Tražio sam te  
na zgarištu nada,  
na izgubljenom putu  
bez početka i kraja...  
Tražio sam te  
u rađanju mrtvoga dana,  
u predvečerje jednog odlaska  
i noći bez svitanja...  
Tražio sam te  
u uzaludnosti snova,  
na raskršću nepostojećih putova,  
u daljini magle i lutanja...  
Tražio sam te i našao  
u dolini neostvarenih želja...

## BEZIMENA

*Jasminka Mesarić*

Ne zovi me imenom  
jer imena više nemam  
za tebe sam tek  
prašina  
što nestaje s vjetrom  
tek pijesak  
što more ga nosi  
tek oblak  
što dođe i prođe.  
Ne zovi me imenom  
bezimena  
lutam svijetom  
tražim izgubljenu cipelicu  
što je tako dobro  
pristajala  
uz modru haljinu  
dok si me kriomice promatrao  
a ja sam se pravila  
kao da ne vidim.  
Ne zovi me imenom  
nikad više  
prolila se tinta -  
moje snove  
više nitko ne piše.



REZULTATI NATJEČAJA ZA NAJBOLJU  
NEOBJAVLJENU PJESMU GRADSKÉ  
KNJIŽNICE SOLIN 2016. GODINE



## 1. MJESTO

### ODGODA LJETA (nedovršena pjesma)

*Anđelka Korčulanić*

noćas budim ptice i hranim ih  
sjemenkama opijuma i stihovima  
i puštam ih uzletjeti  
s nedovršenom pjesmom u kljunu  
u najavljenju odgodu ljeta  
jer  
nebo je bolesno  
i otok se evo, odmiče u nedohvat,  
u more uznemirno tihom kišom  
i brod ostaje vezan nepoznatim čvorom  
uz kameni mol bešćutne obale  
i haljina obješena na vješalici  
nedodirnuta maestralom, otužna,  
uskraćena za mogućnost  
otkrivanja preplanulih bedara  
i vrata  
na kojem je mogla biti  
kolajna od školjki i poljubaca

mogla je, ali neće biti  
jer  
ljetu je odgođeno za jesen,  
a do jeseni  
možda uvene cvijeće na haljini  
i otok se umori od zova  
i odgodi ga za proljeće  
i do tog proljeća  
ako jednom ipak dođe,

tko zna  
koliko ću još probuditi ptica  
sitih od sjemenki opijuma i  
utješениh,  
nikad dovršenih pjesama

## 2. MJESTO

## NEVIDLJIVO ZBIVANJE

*Lidija Deduš*

kao da je sve u redu, stojiš pokraj prozora na četvrtom katu  
i promatraš život ispod sebe. prostro se poput svježje oprane plahte.  
čist i nevin. primamljiv. na uglu pokraj supermarketa  
dvije postarije žene između sebe nešto mašu rukama. čini ti se da bi  
svakoga časa mogle zaplesati. muškarac gura kolica s djetetom.  
crveni opel ga pušta na pješačkom pa skreće ulijevo, a ti  
pomišljaš kako mu je lako jer djeluje kao da zna kamo ide i što će  
sljedeće učiniti. dan je sunčan. u daljini blaga izmaglica,  
na mjestu gdje se spajaju nebo i planina. ili razdvajaju. na radiju  
prognostičar najavljuje lijepo vrijeme u ostatku tjedna. gledaš dolje.  
aproksimativno računaš kolika bi mogla biti razdaljina između  
mjesta  
na kojem stojiš i mjesta na kojem ćeš se dočekati.  
između tebe i tog nevinog, primamljivog života.  
u obzir uzmi ubrzanje. gravitacija ti je suučesnik.  
iza tebe zvoni telefon. glas koji se javlja zvuči pospano,  
ali blago. ne obraća se tebi, ali kaže: možeš ti to.  
možeš. ti. to.  
u tebi nema ni trunke kajanja. pribrana si i staložena. nema  
više strahova, niti one tjeskobe koja te budila iz jutra  
u jutro. samo ta ideja koja te žulja poput rupe u čarapi omotane  
oko nožnog palca. ti ljudi tamo dolje ne znaju za tvoje  
nevidljivo zbivanje. oni voze svoje bicikle i misle svoje misli.  
nose svoje vrećice i smišljaju što će danas ručku.  
stvar bi bila mnogo jednostavnija da je u pitanju balkon.  
više manevarskog prostora. u staklu opažaš odraz svoga lica.  
što ćeš učiniti? na semaforu se svjetlo mijenja u zeleno.  
na radiju tiha pauza.  
sada je pravi trenutak. za bilo što.

### 3. MJESTO

## PROLOM OBLAKA

*Jelena Marović*

Prolom oblaka, dušo.

Ne razaznaješ svoju glavu od brnistrine i vjetra  
i svijet ti se čini najednom  
svet.

Usporedno s tobom  
koračaju anđeli,  
spotiču se o krila i haljine,  
usporavaju ti hod.

Oblaci postaju sve gušći,  
nadire oštar vjetar s planine.  
Čiči resko između klanaca,  
nosi miris kadulje i vtrijesa.

Nebom se rastrčava bijela pješadija  
u vunenim čarapama, s frulama i kratkim noževima o pasu.  
Zatim laka konjica  
odjevena u crnu svilu do očiju.  
Bacaju zrakom tanka koplja  
bez razloga i bez reda.

Kada im ponestane oružja,  
oni šire i napinju svoja čvrsta sukna  
i puštaju vjetru da ih odnosi.  
Za planinom sviće,  
zemlja je suha.

## PROZA





## STEPENICE

*Tina Milas*

Sjedila je na stepenicama. Vrata donjeg kata kuće bila su malo odškrinuta. Do nje su dopirali glasovi. Razmišljala je o tome kako im je rekla da ide spavati. Htjela je čuti njihov razgovor. Pričali su dosta dugo. Nastao je muk. Krenuli su prema vratima. Ona se požurila u sobu. Čula ih je kako ulaze na drugi kat kuće. Nikad nisu saznali da je čula njihov razgovor.

Sjedila je na stepenicama. U mraku. Vrata donjeg kata kuće bila su malo odškrinuta. Kao i obično. Do nje su dopirali glasovi dvoje ljudi. Ona je razmišljala o tome kako im je rekla da ide spavati, a zapravo je ostala na stubištu. Htjela je čuti njihov razgovor nakon što ode. Pričali su dosta dugo. I glasno. Nastao je muk i začulo se pomicanje stolica. Krenuli su prema vratima. Pošli su spavati. Ona se požurila u sobu, jako tiho. Čula ih je kako ulaze na drugi kat kuće, gdje je bila i njezina soba. Nikad nisu saznali da je slušala njihov razgovor. Svake večeri.

Sjedila je na stepenicama. U mraku. Sama. S nožem u ruci. Vrata donjeg kata kuće bila su kao i obično malo odškrinuta kako bi dim cigareta mogao izaći iz prostorije. Do nje su dopirali glasovi dvoje ljudi. Muškarca i žene. Ona je razmišljala o tome kako im je rekla da ide spavati, a zapravo je ostala na stubištu, nadajući se da ju neće otkriti. Htjela je čuti njihov razgovor nakon što ode i oni ostanu sami. Pričali su dosta dugo. I glasno. Barem on. Nastao je muk i začulo se pomicanje stolica. Na trenutak je pomislila da je nasrnuo na nju. Zapravo su krenuli prema vratima. Sporim korakom. Pošli su spavati, već su bili sitni noćni sati. Ona se požurila u sobu, jako tiho. Legla je u krevet. Čula ih je kako ulaze na drugi kat kuće, gdje je bila i njezina soba. Vrata njene sobe polako su se otvorila i ponovno zatvorila. Nikad nisu saznali da je slušala njihove razgovore. Svake večeri. Bez iznimke.

Sjedila je na stepenicama. U mraku. Sama. S nožem u ruci. Djevojčica u prugastoj pidžami sa slatkim pjegicama na licu. Vrata donjeg kata kuće bila su kao i obično malo odškrinuta kako bi dim cigareta mogao izaći iz prostorije, ali dovoljno da može čuti što se unutra događa. Do nje su dopirali glasovi dvoje ljudi. Muškarca i žene. Njezinih roditelja. Ona je razmišljala o tome kako im je rekla da ide spavati, a zapravo je ostala na stubištu, nadajući se da ju neće otkriti, jer se bojala mogućih posljedica. Htjela je čuti njihov razgovor nakon što ode i oni ostanu sami. Htjela je biti sigurna da joj je majka dobro. Pričali su dosta dugo. I glasno. Barem on. Bio je pijan. Nastao je muk i začulo se pomicanje stolica. Na trenutak je pomislila da je nasrnuo na nju. Ne bi mu bio prvi put. Već se ustala pohititi svojoj majci u pomoć kada je shvatila da su zapravo samo krenuli prema vratima sporim korakom. Ipak je on teturao, a ona ga pridržavala da ne padne. Pošli su spavati, već su bili sitni noćni sati, a majka umorna od preklinjanja da prestane piti. Ona se požurila u sobu, jako tiho. Legla je u krevet i pravila se da spava. Vrata njene sobe polako su se otvorila i ponovno zatvorila. Bila je to njena majka koja bi povirila u sobu da se uvjeri da je sve u redu. Roditelji joj nikad nisu saznali da je slušala njihove razgovore. Svake večeri. Bez iznimke. Samo kako bi bila spremna priskočiti majci u pomoć ako je on ponovno odluči udariti. Oni to nikad nisu saznali, jer je nakon pet godina odlučio prestati piti i postati bolji otac i bolji suprug. Oni to nikad nisu saznali, jer ju više nikad nije udario. Oni to nikad nisu saznali, a ona to nikad nije zaboravila. Još uvijek svake večeri sjedi na stepenicama.

## JA KAO MOJA TIHA SNAGA

*Tea Tišljarić*

Nazivaju nas introvertiranim osobama. Osjećam se kao da mi lijepe etiketu koju mrzim. Što uopće oni drugi, ekstrovertirani znaju o nama. O našoj duši i toplini srca koja je zaključana u tišini.

Pojma nemaju koja je snaga čovjeka istovremeno biti i tih i snažan. Koliko opet ovo vrijeme, ovaj svijet, više cijeni ljude od akcije, dominantne, hiperaktivne, usmjerene prema vanjskome, često beskrupulozne, one s „tvrđim laktovima za probitak“ - to je drugo pitanje.

Danas bih ipak željela govoriti o sebi. Važna je to priča radi mnogih drugih Tea (neka se zovu kao ja).

Volim svoje dane brojiti satima tihih trenutaka, misaonih, nenametljivih drugima, ipak sebedarnih drugima bez traženja uzvratnih djela pomaganja, često neprepoznatljivih, sakrivenih u tajnosti. Kao... kao... ne tako davno volontiranje na Botovskom mostu, u naselju Roma na Autoputu.

Dobra djela obavijena samo zvijezdama i poznata tek nekolicini sličnih meni... držanje u naručju promrzle djece bez čarapa, topli poljubac na putu u neizvjesno preko mosta, skidanje kabanice sa sebe i oblačenje majci dječaka...dok kiša natapa moju majicu...osjećaj kapi koje rose milost s neba...

Ljubav se ljubavlju vraćala odmah istog časa...

Da sam dugačija, bih li bila sada tu???

Moja nenametljivost ne znači da sam manje intelektualna, manje pametna, manje snalažljiva. Moja stidljivost ne znači da sam zaostala već da imam dozu tradicionalne vrijednosti, usađene od djetinjstva. Cura odrasla na selu, često u školi radi toga ponižavana kao manje vrijedna... dočekala eto danas radost studija kojeg volim, vlastitim snagama, bez „veze“, „poznanstava“, bez tuđih preporuka i roditelja koji su „neke face“... Introspektivnu crtu nježno usmjeravam

samotnim trenutcima, miru kojeg svaki čovjek treba a ne nalazi, a meni kao dar dolazi...

Kažu da sam nježna, plaha, skromna. Pun pogodak. Takva sam. Ne težim nemogućem, ne živim u oblacima. „Igram na sigurno“, ne volim rizike.

Kad sve to sažmeš, dobiješ poželjan karakter kojeg bi svatko poželio mijenjati za neki drugi, rođenjem ili odgojem utisnut u krv i gene..

Ali ne ide to tako lako. Često i ja poželim biti kao oni drugi. Kad dođu teški trenutci najradije bih MOGLA viknuti, vrisnuti i reći „nije tako lažeš“ „zašuti“ „lažeš“ „iskorištavaš me“ „muljaš“...

Toliko krikova u mojoj glavi, ali srce, taj filter moje ličnosti jednostavno ne dopušta biti - netko drugi.

Pa sve te misli pretoči u uviđavne riječi koje ne mogu nikoga povrijediti pa usta govore sasvim nešto drugo, nešto što druge nikad neće povrijediti kao „znam da nisi mislio tako“ „hajde dovrši misao pa ću onda ja ispričati što sam htjela“, „znam da uvijek govoriš istinu i da meni nikad ne bi lagao“ „naravno da ću ti pomoći, dat ću sve od sebe“ „vjerujem da si uvijek iskrena“...

Možda onaj koncept introverzije koji uključuje osebine koje bi suvremeni psiholozi svrstali u kategoriju otvorenosti prema iskustvu: mislilac, sanjar, savjestan, idealist sasvim zadovoljava moju analizu osobnosti. Uostalom kao katolkinja radije biram bratski karakter misaonog Jakova „čovjeka krotka“ nego Ezava vještog lovca, koji radi svog ega na kraju baca svog brata u jamu samo da bi se domogao svoga cilja.

Stavim li braću u današnji kontekst pitam se koliko nas se zove Jakov? Ima li sve više Ezava?

Bojim se onih koji su Ezavi a predstavljaju se kao Jakovi.

Da... često iskorištavana, prečesto „šibana“ radi popustljivosti, iz prikrajka ću uvijek gledati one koji „imaju petlje“ popiti čašicu više i opustiti se i zaplesati na stolu, koji imaju petlje „reći ti u facu što zaslužuješ“, ali koliko god da bih poželjela činiti isto opet onaj

plemeniti filter duše otpuše moje čežnje i vrati me lahoru moga postojanja.

Možda sam baš takva potrebna ovom svijetu, ljudima oko sebe. Možda moja tiha snaga druge pokreće više nego mene.

Carnegijev uspješan savjet o tome kako navesti ljude da vam se dive i rade u vašem interesu u knjizi *Kako pridobiti prijatelje i utjecati na ljude* puna je poglavlja poput „kako navesti ljude da rade ono što vi želite i kako ćete se svidjeti drugima“, ciljano možda daje konkretne savjete kako od introverta postati ekstrovertiranom osobom, ali... kad pogledaš sebi ravno u oči, jesi li spreman pod svaku cijenu dopustiti izgubiti ono iskonsko sebe, ono najdragocjenije.

Da, introvertirana sam osoba. Izgrađujem se životom koji mi na moj put donosi sve ono s čim se često teško nosim ali znam kao to podnijeti, znam ostati svoja. Možda ću tako kao i do sada u životu teže stići do cilja, ali sasvim sam sigurna da ovim putem koračam uspravne glave jer sam sve što imam do sada stvorila valstitim znojem, mukom i trudom. Mirno mogu zaspati, sretno se buditi i vjerovati da iako je ovaj svijet prepun lažnih maski koje ljudi stavljaju na lice svaki čovjek u sebi ima ono nešto dobro koje ću uvijek nastojati tražiti.

Završit ću mudrom mišlju Anais Nin koja kaže:

„Ekstrovertirani način života naša je kultura učinila vrlinom. Prezreli smo unutarnje putovanje, potragu za središtem. Tako smo izgubili središte i sada ga moramo ponovno naći“

Treba li ikome pomoć, imat ću vremena za vas. Ne neću vam reći da nemam vremena, jer naći ću ga usprkos tome što radim u školi, studiram popodne i samohrana sam majka koja sve svoje vrijeme daje djetetu. Imat ću vremena za vas jer to sam JA, tiha i snažna mlada žena.

„Kontrolu su preuzeli najglasniji, čak i ako nemaju što reći. Vrijeme je da svi počnu slušati. Vrijeme je da se iskoristi moć introvertiranih. Vrijeme je za tišinu.“ (Susan Cain, „Tišina“)

## PRGA VO DJEVOJČE

*Ines Ora*

"Imaš li vatre?"

Tko to još prilazi muškarcu već dobro pregaženih godina koji sjedi za šankom leđima okrenut vratima neke stare, prastare kavane? Zar je nisu učili da to nikada nije dobitna kombinacija? No, netko ju je sigurno već naučio da su joj oči dobitna kombinacija.

Bila je tako mlada, možda nekih dvadesetak godina, a vjerojatno je negdje u svojim postupcima odavno premašila tridesetu, zato mi je i prišla. Prinio sam upaljač njenom licu i zapalio joj cigaretu koju je zagrizla svojim tankim crvenim usnicama da više nisam mogao prestati sa pripaljivanjem njenih cigareta. Do kraja večeri pripalio sam joj sigurno cijelu kutiju, samo da bih u tim kratkim trenucima mogao uživati u strasti koju već odavno ni ne poznajem. A mislio sam dugo da je nestala, kao i moje godine, moje čežnje, moja očekivanja.

Očekivao sam neku mladenačku priču o teškom, nepremostivom jadu u životu, ali mala je znala barati riječima kao žongler svojim igračkama. Dok je pričala, blago je pomicala kukove u ritmu glazbe koja mi je zvučala odveć poznato.

"Znaš, ovo je ona pjesma iz Tarantinovog Djanga. Obožavam je. Jesi gledao taj film?"

Pa naravno da sam ga gledao, čudakinjo mala. I tako je priča počela, i više nije prestajala. Od Tarantinova Djanga, preko svih polja umjetnosti o kojima je tako voljela pričati. Učinilo mi se u nekim trenucima da drhti od uzbuđenja dok priča. Nikada do tada nisam vidio nekog tko se toliko udubi u priču. Kakve li je godine proživjela u nekom prošlom životu da ovako mlada zna da i u njoj leži Hesseov stepski vuk? Smiješnog li stvorenja. Dočekao bih zoru s njom da je prijateljica nije povukla natrag. Mrzio sam te mlade curice

koje se provlače po kavanama s prijateljicama s kojima nemaju ništa zajedničkog, osim apetita za alkohol. Šta ti misliš mala da je meni lako kao tebi? Nisam ti ja osamnaestogodišnjak više. Ne možeš mene više prevariti crvenim karminom i velikom djetinjim očima. Ili možeš?

"Laku noć čudno stvorenje, ne gubi se puno po Jarunu."

"O ne, ne idem ja tamo. Laku noć P."

Sigurno si je mislila da je velika frajerica što ne slijedi svoju generaciju nego se buntovno odupire žaru tih studentskih pijančenja. Ne, ne, njoj su bila dovoljna samo tri tamna piva u kavani bogu iza nogu, da usne miran san. Možda čak i o meni?

"Piće nekad?"

Odmahnuo sam glavom. Ma ne, naravno da ne, nema mene za tebe mala. Ja sam tuđi čovjek. Ja sam samo tu da ti pripalim cigarete i da ti se zagledam u oči dublje nego itko tvojih zavidnih godina. Bježi od mene, ja pripadam negdje sasvim drugdje, imam dom, obitelj i vlastite zvijezde.

I otišla je, naravno da je, a znao sam da će se vratiti.

Tu večer sam samo o njoj razmišljao dok sam brojio korake do kuće. Spoznao sam naposljetku da je mala vjetropirka imala svoj zippo, a prišla mi je tko zna zašto. Današnje su djevojke mnogo starije nego što su nekada bile, ili je to samo ona? Njen stav snažne, neovisne mlade žene koja boravi daleko od kuće da bi spoznala život približio ju je meni. Približio je mojim zvijezdama. Ja ih gledam, a ona se utopila među njihovim sjajem.

Prošli su mjeseci dok sam je opet sreo, a sreo sam je, oh kako sam je samo sreo. I u najširem gradu na svijetu ona bi sigurno opet prošla pored mene. Postoji nekakav kompas u svima nama koji nas vodi točno tamo gdje ne bismo trebali biti, na onu strelicu kojom vješto upravlja čežnja.

"Hej P."

"Hej. Pa što ti radiš ovdje?"

"Imala sam nekakav sastanak. Ništa važno, do sada. Vidimo se?"

Sasjekla me kao nož, toliko da više nisam ni uspio da joj pogledam

u oči. Pozdravio sam je i nastavio pričati sa svojom bandom. Ništa oni nisu uočili. Ne znaju oni koje se vatre pale u meni, a samo s njima bih mogao da zapalim toj maloj sedmodnevnu dozu cigareta. Čovjek doista dođe do razine kada ne može poželjeti više od onog što ima. Ja nisam ni želio, bilo mi je sasvim dobro. Imao sam sve, do neke mjere, točno onoliko koliko sam želio, no kada život osjeti da si zadovoljan pošalje ti hladan vjetar. Priviđenje. Ili sliku, kako je moglo biti?

Znala je ona dobro gdje će me pronaći tu večer. Došla je s prijateljicom i bezobrazno sjela van u baštu, a znala je da sam ja za šankom, a ja sam znao da je ona gore. Čekao sam je da siđe, ali nije. Poslala je opet istu iritantnu prijateljicu da joj naruči pivu. Da, opet pivu. Prgavo djevojče. No, sišla je nakon par sati. Itekako je sišla, okrzla me ramenom i čavrljala s konobarom. Bila je pijana. I ja sam bio pijan. A ona me je čekala.

Prišao sam joj, vrlo brzo. No, njoj je očito to izgledalo kao cijela vječnost, ali to joj nije smetalo da mi se nasloni na rame, a meni nije smetalo da osjetim njen ljetni parfem. Mirisala je na jugo. U pozadini je svirala pjesma "Apokalipso" od majstora svog zanata, a samo početni vers "Ti si premlada, a ja sam prestar za čekanje" učinio je svoje. Dok je pričala o istočnoj filozofiji s onim istim žarom s kojim je pričala u Tarantinu ja sam ju uzeo za ruku i odveo je negdje iznad Zagreba, malo iznad svjetala grada, malo ispod zvijezda. Smijala se, vrtorepka. Znala je da ću je otet.

"Što hoćeš ti od mene mala?"

"Sve"

Plesala je ispod zvijezda, može biti da je piva zaigrala, ili sam to bio ja? Zamolila me da joj pričam bilo što. Voljela je moj duboki glas, podsjećao je na zrelost koju je toliko htjela. Približila mi se i pogledala me u oči.

"P. Imaš tako duboke oči. Ima li mene negdje unutra il' sam ti tek klinka koja voli Tarantina?"

"Što da ti kažem mala? Nisam ja za tebe, odavno me je uzela jedna, a ti si samo prgavo djevojče koje je zakasnilo."



"Nisam ja zakasnila, ti si uranio. Trebao si me čekati. Al ja sam premlada, a ti si prestar za čekanje. Idi onda. Ostavi me ovdje. Što mi može jedan Zagreb?"

Što ti može? Eh, da samo znaš. Ali ja u tom trenutku više nisam mogao. Njen besramni nedostatak straha svom silinom me privukao njoj. Privukao sam je sebi. Obuhvatio sam je rukama po obrazu, zagledao se u njene pjege i poljubio je. Spustio sam ruke ispod njene haljine i imao je na mjestu gdje ne znam što je sijalo, njene oči, zvijezde ili Zagreb. Nakon toga više ni riječi nije rekla. Priljubila se uz mene, zagrlila me i pokazala mi da se u tom snažnom tijelu krije tek mala sanjarka. Pravo malo biće koje valja čuvati do neba i nikada ne pustiti.

Lagao bih kad bih klišeizirao i rekao da nakon te noći više ništa nije bilo isto. Vratio sam se doma, uvukao ženi u krevet i poljubio je zahvalno što mi je pružila svoje najbolje godine. A mala vjetropirka? Nikada je više nisam vidio. Čuo sam da je postala neka lokalna faca, da je svi znaju, a da ona priča samo o muškarcu s kojim je rado pričala o novom Tarantinovom filmu. Kažu da kad čuje Rundeka ostari barem jednu godinu.

I tako to ide, prgavo djevojče. Proći će i tebi život kao i meni. Samo pazi da ne sjediš za šankom okrenuta leđima vratima neke stare kavane, jer bi te netko kada budeš sasvim zadovoljna svojim životom mogao upitati:

"Imaš li vatre?"

## GROZDANA

*Stjepan Crnić*

Ivan je lagano skrenuo s ceste na veliko odmorište s benzinskom pumpom i restoranom. Natočio je gorivo, parkirao auto i sjeo za stol u dvorištu restorana. Puhao je lagani povjetarac, baš onako kako je njemu odgovaralo. Bublje ljeto u rujnu. Okrenuo se licem prema suncu, nagnuo glavu unazad, zažmirio i kao gušter uživao u njegovoj toplini. Potpuno se umirio, gotovo zaspao. Isključio se od svega što se događalo oko njega i ni o čemu nije razmišljao. Bilo je to vrijeme potpunog opuštanja i mira. U stvarnost ga vratila cika djece za susjednim stolom. U prvi je tren iznenađeno pogledao oko sebe kao da se probudio iz sna, pitajući se gdje se nalazi, a onda uzdahne shvativši da sjedi za stolom uz kavu koju još nije ni počeo piti. Rastegne se, srkne kavu i zagleda se u obitelj za susjednim stolom. Dječak i djevojčica su jeli grožđe. Ivan uoči veliki grozd u dječakovoj ruci.

'Grozdana!' prođe mu glavom.

Na licu mu se pojavi veliki smiješak. Sjeti se svog prvog boravka u Šibeniku.

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Ivan je ušao u prazan kupe vagona, stavio torbu sa stvarima u prostor za smještaj prtljage iznad sjedišta, otvorio prozor, naslonio se i promatrao ljude na kolodvoru. Činilo mu se da promatra izgubljenu gomilu koja traži izlaz i neuspješno tumara amo - tamo. Ljudi su hodali na sve strane. Neki su trčali bojeći se da će zakasniti na vlak, dovikivali nekome nešto, mahali rukama. Drugi su zbunjeno hodali kao da su se izgubili u toj velikoj gužvi koja se stvorila.

„Je li slobodno?“ upita ženski glas.

Ivan se okrene. Na vratima kupea je stajala djevojka izražajnih zelenih očiju u laganoj ljetnoj haljini. Crna joj je kosa bila podrezana taman do ramena, ravno počesljana, uvijena prema vratu.

„Slobodno, slobodno je! Izvolite!

Djevojka uđe i unese prtljagu.

„Dozvolite da vam pomognem!“ ponudi se Ivan.

Djevojka se nasmiješi i prepusti mu kofer. Kupe se ispuni svježim mirisom jorgovana. Miris podsjeti Ivana na jorgovane koji su rasli u ogradi bakina vrta. Tijelom mu prođe ushit proljeća.

„Ja sam Ivan. Putujem u Šibenik, a vi?“

„I ja putujem u Šibenik. Ime mi je Grozdana.“

xxxx

Vlak se polagano zaustavljao na stanici. Grozdanu su čekali roditelji. Ivan joj je pomogao nositi prtljagu. Sišli su na peron.

„Bok Ivane! Hvala na pomoći! Vidimo se sutra!“ sa smiješkom se pozdravila.

„Bok!“ pozdravi Ivan i mahne joj rukom.

Pogledao je uokolo, Šimu nije primijetio. Očito kasni. Nije ga to iznenadilo. Šime je uvijek kasnio. Opravdao bi se starom narodnom izrekom „Tko žurio, vrat slomio!“ I što da mu kažeš? Nasmiješ se i prihvatiš to kao zdravo za gotovo. Odlučio je ostati na peronu. Bio je smiren. U zraku je osjećao miris jorgovana. Godilo mu je jutarnje sunce i lagani vjetrić koji je strujao. Okrenuo je lice prema suncu, zažmirio i uživao.

„Bok Ivane! Jesi li se to ti dokotrljao?“

Stigao je Šime. Ivan ga pogleda i radosno pozdravi.

„Jesam. Evo me ovdje. A ti si nešto uranio?“

„Ma znaš ti mene. Vrag ti odnija prišu!“

„E, Šime, Šime! Uvijek si isti!“

„A što bi se mijenjao? Dobra se ekipa ne mijenja.“

„Ma imaš ti pravo! Nego, idemo li mi?“

„Hajde, kupi tu torbu i kreni! Kako je bilo na putu? Sigurno si sav slomljen.“

„Ma da znaš, nekako uopće nisam umoran. U vlaku sam upoznao divnu djevojku. Zamisli, zove se Grozdana i iz Šibenika je.“

„Ma daj!“

„Pa kad ti kažem! Cijelim smo putem razgovarali. Dogovorili smo spojak sutra popodne u šest. Nalazimo se kod Katedrale. Moraš me

odvesti tamo i pokazati put.“

„Ma nemaš problema. Sve ću ti ja pokazati. Nego, vidim da si se dobro zagrijao. Moglo bi ispasti da si u goste došao kod nje, a ne kod mene.“

„Ma daj! Ne pretjeruj! Neću te ja ostaviti samo tako. Ona sigurno ima neku prijateljicu pa možemo zajedno na plažu i u noćni život. Sve ću provjeriti sutra.“

xxxx

Po dogovoru, Ivan je čekao Grozdanu ispred ulaznih vrata na pročelju Katedrale sa rozetom. Radovao se ponovnom susretu i već je u zraku osjećao miris jorgovana. Ljudi su prolazili i prolazili, ali nikako da se pojavi ona. Uznemirio se. A što ako uopće ne dođe? Zaboravio je tražiti broj telefona i neće ju moći nazvati. Naljutio se na sebe. Kako je to mogao zaboraviti? Kako će ju sresti, ako sada ne dođe? Lutat će Šibenikom i tražiti je. Nervozno je gledao u ljude koji su prolazili, a onda se pomirio sa situacijom i odlučio otići.

„Bok! Oprosti, da li se ti zoveš Ivan i čekaš Grozdanu?“

Trgne se. Pred njim je stajala djevojka srednjeg rasta, okruglog lica, kratke smeđe kose i nježnih kestenjastih očiju.

„Da“, izusti.

„Super. Ja sam Lucija, Grozdanina prijateljica.“

„Drago mi je! Ja sam Ivan“, predstavi se pribivši se od šoka.

Lucija se nasmije.

„Grozdana nije mogla doći pa je zamolila mene da se nađem s tobom. Napisala je broj telefona pa ćeš ju moći nazvati kada se vrati kući. Jutros su otišli kod bake na Zlarin. Vratit će se možda sutra, ali najvjerojatnije prekosutra.“

„Baš ti hvala. Vidiš kako sam smotan da ni broj telefona nisam tražio.“

„Događa se!“ reče Lucija kroz smijeh i nastavi: „Važno je da ćete se ipak moći čuti.“

„Da. Imaš pravo. Zahvaljujući tebi.“

„Ma nije to ništa. Ako želiš, mogu te ja malo provesti Šibenikom.“

„Odlično! Ako imaš vremena.“

xxxx

„E, Grozdana, Grozdana!“ reče Ivan na glas smiješeći se i vrteći glavom lijevo - desno. Ispije kavu do kraja, plati račun i ode u auto. Vozio je polako slušajući glazbu i prebirući po uspomenama. Vrijeme je brzo proletjelo i prije nego što je i mislio, našao se u dvorištu Šimine kuće. Izvadio je vrećicu sa poklonima i veliku orhideju sa plavim cvjetovima prošaranim bijelim linijama. Pozvonio je. Na vratima se pojavio Šime, a odmah iza njega Grozdana i njihov sin.

„Ma gdje si Ivane? Ne vidjeh te punu godinu dana.“

„A evo me Šime, evo!“

„Kako je bilo na putu?“

„Odlično! Lijepo vrijeme, a nema gužve!“

„Kako su djeca i Lucija?“, upita Grozdana.

„Ma super! Odlično su!“

## THE GIANT AND THE GLASS ROOM

*Victoria Vestić*

My brother seemed bright, but normal child as we were growing up, except he sometimes didn't hear you when you spoke to him. This happened so often that my parents and our family doctor thought he might be deaf. They ran some tests on him, but everything checked out all right. As a child, I was often annoyed by these episodes. Now I know he was listening to the Future. He still does this, but now everyone in the family leaves him to it, because they know he is designing a new space rocket or something.

I hate mysticism, mainly because to me it often seems to be a rather mundane mix of stupidity and greed, but there is some gentle, almost imperceptible and yet omnipresent magic to our daily lives. My brother was the only magical thing in my life. His very existence as is now, a self-made billionaire at thirty five, seems somehow to be a freak accident, as if he, by the virtue of his own indomitable will, choose the least likely option when picking a life path and, as a consequence, his life blossomed in abundance in this accidental, alternate time line in which the rules of the world as we think of it bend more easily to will.

I remember myself talking about him with reverence as early as first grade. Of course, I was just repeating, like a monkey, my parent's words. A charming picture of a little boy comes to mind, chirping my brother's praises to strangers. However, the charm and the seeming moral valor of that picture was cause of much of my later suffering. Even at that age, I would always feel a distinct dislike for the person who would repeat my praise for my brother after me. I always secretly wanted them to oppose me. This dislike intensified when I was in high school and achieved ridiculous levels when I became a college student, to the point where I was almost ready to hit the person who agreed with me on my brother's virtues.

It must have been something about the solidifying of life paths in college, of the hierarchy of life slowly falling into place for me and my peers that made me feel this way. At this point we all knew that, without a question, whatever we do later in life and however hard we try, there will always be people who are better than us, by the virtue of making the choices we hadn't made and that are now behind us. Now we were all to lick our wounds by praising them incessantly, hoping for some feeble credit in it. I, of course, refused to believe that a human being could praise another human being without it being pretense.

Especially in those last months of college, when the fear of the open plains of life outside of school mounted in me, praising other people, and not only my brother, became a habit, even when I knew just some snips of their faraway lives. What's more, I met some truly unabashed praisers, people whom I despised. I thought myself better than them because I actually was secretly ashamed of my praising, while they were not aware of their praising degrading them. That was the fine point of distinction I found between myself and them.

A story that sticks out in my mind that was made by one such shameless praiser, a casual acquaintance of mine, is a story about her cousin, a beautiful young man with blue eyes who had perfect teeth and was particularly adept at physics and mathematics. He wanted to be a pilot, but couldn't because he had some hearing loss in his right ear. This broke his heart. His father convinced him to take the hearing test again, as he was at the time just recovering from flu and that might have influenced the test. However, he failed again. Instead of becoming a pilot he became an engineer and, in this time and age, when finding a job in accordance with your qualifications is exceedingly difficult, he had numerous job offers, many of them from abroad, all of which he received while still a student. In the end, he chose a job here in the RSA, got married and

earned a doctorate while working. He was also extremely well liked, considered easy-going, and his father in particular called him 'a real angel'.

It must be that I liked to repeat this story so many times (and repeat it I did), despite of not even knowing the name of the person in question, because it contained in itself a contradiction. I wondered if this wildly successful person secretly considered his life to be a failure.

Still, this sensible way of thinking which was here foreshadowed became completely eclipsed by my overbearing jealousy and hatred of anyone I perceived as more successful than me. There was an element of fate to it all which I thought to be terribly unfair. The people that fared best in life didn't seemed to me all that smart or deserving of it. In consequence of this pressure of comparison which I made worse with my incessant praising of others, I felt the happiest among the derelict because there was no pressure to achieve.

The pressure to be successful and the very concept of success seemed to me to be the most horrible trap devised by man. Man made life itself a trap in this way. As far as I had some social standing, been enrolled in a school or had a job, the very ground below me felt traitorous. It felt that way because any social standing connoted to me that I was in a literal high place, and I feared the fall. In contrast, I found the very bottom of life to be safe and comforting.

It was not long that I developed a drug addiction and attempted suicide.

I was rescued from this ignoble life by my brother. My parents hid from him that they were no longer on speaking terms with me. He came to visit me in the hospital, while I was under suicide watch. Even my neck was immobilized and I had something in my mouth that was supposed to prevent me from biting into my tongue. I



suppose that I had never been so humiliated in my life, but I barely felt it. I fell so low that I took it all with gratitude. When I saw my brother, I cried and my tears rolled into my hair. These were also tears of gratitude. Poverty and addiction had made of me, in just a few years, something like a sainted simpleton.

However, even quicker, in a matter of months, the infusion of money returned muscles to my bones and I was again myself, I suppose. I thought myself lucky that the horrid metamorphosis was not irreversible. But with a full stomach and free from my crippling addiction, my old worries sheepishly returned to me. I now lived with my brother and had a chance to see him in action, managing with unimaginable energy all his daily challenges. An obsessive micromanager, he visited every week all his companies around the world. He always wanted me along, like a shadow.

I've thanked God a thousand times that my brother was not one of those insecure people who constantly want your gratitude, that is, who constantly want you to remind them they are superior to you. He didn't want my gratitude for saving me and I was happy to leave it in that hospital room. He just gently, seamlessly involved me in his high achieving, miraculous life. His unconditional love made me human again.

...

My brother went to his desk, took some papers and handed them to me.

"I want you, Adam, to read this," he said.

"Ok," I said. I was just about to add that I will take a look at it later, when I saw his expression. It was clear he expected me to read the story right now, in front of him. He drove himself and other people equally relentlessly. That is why we felt so unjust in our resentment of him. I bowed my head and began to read.

### *The Giant and the Glass Room*

*Once upon a time there was a giant. The giant was given charge of a room full of glass figurines.*

*The giant himself doesn't remember anymore who gave him the order to watch over the figurines. The only thing he knows is that, when a thousand years have passed and the doors of the room are opened again, his success will be measured by the number of figurines that are still whole.*

*The giant doesn't see his task as a laborious one, as he is spellbound by the beauty of the figurines. He is in love with them. He forgot all about the World outside the Room. The only world that exists now is the World of Glass.*

*The figurines are beautiful.*

*Only in the middle of the Room can the giant stand safely. From this point he can oversee all the figurines. But the day came when he wished to look at one of them up close.*

*This must have happened shortly after the door of the glass Room closed.*

*He made three steps towards it.*

*After the first step he noticed that it was purple in colour, and not deep blue, as he previously thought. After the second step, he noticed, engraved in it, a small ornament, mysterious and lovely. After the third step, he saw it in the most beautiful light, burning like a pyre.*

*It seemed then to the giant that it was very wise of him to leave the center of the Room and look at this figurine up close. He raised his hand to lift it. Then he heard behind him the unmistakable sound of breaking glass. He turned around and saw the shreds of all the other figurines which he'd knocked down in order to reach this one. With every step he'd broken a figurine which was equally beautiful (or perhaps even more beautiful) than the one he wanted (he will never know this with certainty). But until this moment he didn't even notice he was breaking them. He didn't hear he was breaking them.*

*'When something gentle is broken, the sound is very quiet.', thought the giant and fell into tears. If he's known anything about butterflies, he would have thought that a butterfly makes the same amount of sound when it flies. It was*

*hard to know that your carelessness and clumsiness was the cause of something beautiful leaving the world. He decided, in the future, to stay in the middle of the room.*

*Much time had passed. The giant came to see this decision of his as a particularly painful one. He wanted so much to come close to at least one of the figurines. To put his great arms around it, to find out how it felt having something that beautiful in his hands.*

*But he couldn't. He would break the rest. And every one of them carried its own undiscovered beauty. Who was he to decide which figurines are to be denied to the World, their beauty unseen for all eternity?*

*He is here to watch over, not to see.*

*The Glass World, which to the giant seemed at first to be beautiful and full of wonders, became a torture room. His giant's nature was to blame. A giant had no place in this Glass World, among all these fragile figurines. A giant is bound to destroy the Glass World when he wants to see more and feel more. He is bound to destroy it – without wickedness, but never without regret.*

*Whose idea was it to put the giant into the Glass World?*

*Some smaller being could leave safely the lonely center of the Room. This being could skillfully go from one figurine to the next, feel them all in his small, weak hands; they were made for small, weak hands.*

*The giant asked himself constantly this question, while he watched all that untouched and untouchable beauty, always from the same distance.*

*"Why are figurines not guarded by small, weak hands?" he asked the Room and asked the Glass World "Wouldn't then more figurines stay whole?"*

*"...figurines are not guarded by small, weak hands." came the answer. Echo.*

*The giant wondered why he was guarding the figurines. He was the only person in the Glass World. There was no outside villain here, only his aching heart.*

*More time passed. Half of the allotted time. Half of a thousand years.*

*The Glass Room was not locked, as far as the giant knew. He could leave any time. But he didn't want to. That would ruin his mission. And he was afraid of what was behind the Door of the Glass Room. He forgot completely what lay beyond the Glass World. The Glass World must have erased with its beauty the memory of other worlds.*

*What if, beyond the Glass World, lay only Nothing?*

*'It is not possible', though the giant and in this way tried to banish unwanted thoughts 'because I was a Giant even before I came to the Glass Room.'*

*However, after six hundred years, the giant grew weary with his desire. To be in the center of the Room, means to be lonely. To be in the center of the Room means to see everything, and nothing.*

*'You cannot see all.' concluded the giant 'You can truly see only one figurine.'*

*For whom did he watch the figurines in the Room? Who was to profit from his great suffering?*

*When the Door opens, will someone other than himself enjoy them without restriction, look at them from all sides and angles, without any fear of breaking something? The giant would then have to leave and, in one day, the stranger would see more than the giant saw in a thousand years.*

*To remain in the Room made sense only if he really saw a figurine, touched it.*

*He picked one at random and started walking towards it. He cried while he did so, because around him other figurines, those the beauty of which will never be known to anyone, were falling. Tears blinded him, played tricks on the image of the elect one. They made of it a brilliant vision of beauty that existed only to save him. When, in the end, he came before her (Because it was a she, wasn't it? He could see that from here little breasts and gentle chin.), he took her gently with his giant hand. She was thin, warm and she twinkled. She was beautiful. The giant looked only at her for a long time. But, after some time, his eyes naturally wandered away. It is in the giant's nature to want more, even when happy.*

*The glass Room was in shreds. Not one other figurine remained whole. He broke them all. The elect figurine burst in his hand. The glass cut his giant flesh. Blood flowed.*

*The road to the Door led over broken glass.*

*'To come to the Door after this will be painful', thought the giant.*

*And it was. It was painful.*

*On his way he was stepping on little green hands, red torsos and purple heads. It was impossible not to step on them.*

*The giant gritted his giant teeth. This was the pain that belonged to him. He should weather it.*

*Finally, he stopped in front of the Door and, for the first time in his life in the Room, he felt small.*

*His great height was nothing in comparison with the even greater height of the Door. It went all the way to the ceiling, and the ceiling of the room was so high it could barely be seen.*

*'You can leave the Room voluntarily only if you are feeling small.' thought the giant 'No one left the Room on his own and felt big while doing it.'*

*He was ashamed.*

*'But my task here is finished.' he thought again. He failed, but his failure didn't make his task any less finished. He looked down, at his bloody feet. There were a few pieces of glass there, lodged deep in the flesh.*

*The doorknob shrunk so that his giant hand could grasp it. He turned around once more to look at the Room. It was dark there. All the light was in the figurines. When they broke, there was no more light.*

*'There is no hope.' thought the giant and left the room.*

"This is a wicked story." was the first thing I said.

My brother nodded his head. He seemed half-amused, half-sorrowful.

"Who wrote it?" I asked him.

"I did." he said.

I sharply looked up, surprised beyond my wits. I was shocked he thought of himself or his life in this way.

"Come on, Adam." he said, smiling. He was always a charming slave-owner. "Is that all you can say about it? That it was wicked?"

"It was good." I said "It was really good."

He waited a little more after that, and in his face you could now see the wild unrest. But then he smiled again and dismissed me with one hand.

...

Months passed and I did not give that story much thought. I still thought it wicked, because it rang untrue to me. To hear something like that from my brother's mouth was truly shocking. Of course, in my darkest moments, I tried to find respite in thinking all the worst of him, but that was fantasy. I didn't really believe that he could not, with all his money and brilliance and youth, make some sense of his life, that he considered himself just another failure. I was now becoming more and more worried about myself. I had my little life-intermission in my brother's embrace, but how will I handle, what will I do with the rest of my life? It seemed to me that I still lived a life of a half-witted invalid, with no plans or purpose of my own.

'It might be that what we lack are just other lives.'

This thought occurred to me suddenly. I remembered the giant and all those glass figurines he broke. While we go through life, we smash a myriad of our other selves, until we come to realize the one, now unavoidable option. That is what feels unnatural to the human mind, that it would not make real all those other lives it could so easily imagine. I remembered my own attempted suicide. The psychologists have it all wrong. It was not that I wanted to delete my life, I wanted to restart it, because it was becoming narrower and narrower. The running out of options hurt me physically, like I was forced to walk on broken glass.

...

My brother was one of those persons visibly moved by their thoughts. If there was anything extraordinary in his appearance, it would be the eyes that, once he became excited with an idea, glowed so much that they seemed disembodied. The self-awareness in them always frightened me.

"Do you know, Adam, the might of sound?"

I shook my head no.

"You know how a singer can shatter a glass with their voice? That doesn't just work with glass. All matter vibrates on a specific

frequency. If you get the frequency right, you are God. You can get concrete bridges to move like they're made of Jell-O."

"You are better than God." said tipsily Patrick Stone, my brother's chief adviser in the company "You can actually destroy something and not only create."

"It goes both ways if you're God." said my brother with an easy smile "Stoney, heard of the Great Deluge?"

"Ah, yes." said Stoney and gave off a peculiar little laugh.

My brother turned to me, his eyes glittering.

"Just think of it, Adam, a Great Deluge made not by water, but by sound. We just have to find a frequency on which the human body vibrates and well... You can imagine the rest of it. No damage to buildings and no adverse ecological effects. Clean warfare."

"You are then working on this for the government?" I asked "Anti-terrorist measures?"

"Yes." he said earnestly "The world is a glass in my hand and I have the voice to shatter it, and the means to preserve it."

...

I awoke in an empty room where I felt like there was a mountain above me. For some reason it reminded me of the room in which the giant from my brother's story found himself in. It was like a tomb. I imagined the walls being perhaps fifty meters thick, but they could have easily been ten times as thick. The doors were locked. I waited in silence.

"A new world begins today..." a shaky voice behind me said that. I turned around. My brother was at the doors of this crypt, but he looked different. He looked now as if the whole world was on his shoulders, a horrible dead burden.

"We are now the only two people on this Earth." he said "The whole world shattered today like a glass by our Sound Machine."

"Oh, my God, my God." I said. "What did you do?"

"Life is just a series of mistakes." he said "It cannot be anything

other than that. Just remember Christ's words on the cross. 'Why God, why did you leave me?', was it? Life cannot be anything other than a compensation, that's the terrifying thing."

"I cannot believe that you did that." I said.

I sat down and started crying in earnest.



## HIS PINK SARCOPHAGUS

*Victoria Vestić*

"Until April 14, 1816, although Napoleon's imprisonment was not comfortable or by any means pleasurable – for such a big man on so tiny an island it couldn't be – it was relatively bearable. But that day a new governor, Hudson Lowe, arrived on St Helena, to take over from the affable Colonel Mark Wilks. At their first meeting Napoleon gave Lowe a gold watch – which can now be seen in the National Army Museum in London – but their relationship deteriorated swiftly. Napoleon was already chafing at his fate and his punctilious, unimaginative, regulations-obsessed new jailer was a bad choice for the post."

*Napoleon the Great*, Andrew Roberts

On the night of August 20th, 1820, on the little island of Saint Helena which faces, or maybe just turns its back, to the terrible, vast spaces of the Atlantic Ocean, there was a sudden summer storm.

A powerful gust of northern wind made the sea wash ashore a most peculiar object – a pink sarcophagus. The islanders were making the sign of the cross upon seeing it and when they walked up, very slowly, to it, they kept their hands to themselves. But Melita, better known here as Hudson Lowe, touched it as soon as he got there and, to his surprise, it really seemed like a pink marble sarcophagus. Why wasn't it down on the bottom of the ocean, being made of heavy stone, but here, like it was a regular wood coffin? Was it made of foam that just looked like stone? Why was it pink?

He was somewhat hesitant to open it, because he knew, as everyone on the beach that day knew, what sarcophagi contained, even a nicely looking one like this, with a faintest shine of light green to it and with a few shells attached to its heavy lid like solemn decorations.

But Melita, even though his first reaction to the sarcophagus was that it was strangely beautiful for such a foreboding object, couldn't turn his eyes from the faint shine of light green once he'd noticed it. 'The bonapartist colour!' he hissed in himself while the whole of his being convulsed with disgust. He observed, like someone outside his body, how the hand he put on the sarcophagus's lid shook almost imperceptibly. Even though he had wanted to obtain his current position for months, he now, after five years, saw it as some kind of personal hell, being both the prison guard and the caregiver of a vicious, little man who was, he was well aware of it, more successful than he was in all his thousand lives.

Melita felt once again he had only this one and only sorrowful life, and in reaction to his thoughts his spirit shrunk to the size of a pea that was perpetually stuck somewhere in the bottom of his throat. He yearned for that expansive feeling of the soul being in every part of his body, and not only in that forsaken place in the bottom of his throat, like damned Saint Helena was a forsaken place in the vastness of the green ocean, the one pea on which all that magnificence could choke on.

And this morning, just before he was summoned by one of his men to the shore, he saw the other little, vicious man whose prison guard and caregiver he often felt he was, and he was growing peas here in Bonaparte's garden, enormous, green peas which were probably going to give Melita nightmares at one point of his stay here. Melita was so shocked that he couldn't even muster the strength to say hello to his lord and felt relieved when one of his men came with a new task for him. Work made all those pesky, insecure thoughts run away and he was again in every part of his own body, not only in the bottom of the throat. He was again Hudson Lowe, the commander of this fine establishment and everything was under his control.

He decided not to open the sarcophagus on the beach and

commanded his men to bring it up to the house. It turned out that the sarcophagus was every bit as heavy as it looked. A makeshift cradle was devised for the task and, as his men were making the slow ascend, Melita saw another curious object twinkling in the sun. Using a stick, he extracted from between two rocks a gold pocket watch. What was peculiar about this watch is that it seemed the exact, albeit older and battered, replica of the one he had in his quarters, locked in the armoire. The watch had been a present from the ex-Emperor upon his arrival here, but he never actually wore it, even though he had a passion for watches and their commendable purpose of measuring time so that you could organize it in the best possible way. The only reason why he did not wear the watch was because the ex-Emperor gave it to him. And even though he was painfully aware his disgust was the result of jealousy, that is, of his own problems with life, he was finding himself more and more unable to be kind to the ex-Emperor. In fact, even worse, he was finding himself more and more unable to be civil to him.

‘Not wearing his watch was such a nice, succinct gesture of contempt’, Melita thought.

He opened the watch and saw that it did not work. There might have been a picture in there once, but you couldn't be certain.

With the watch in his hand, finally he strode after his men. He instructed them to leave the sarcophagus on the front terrace as it gave off the strong smell of the sea and went inside the house to check on his prisoner. Not finding him in the dining room, where he expected him to be, because it was time for breakfast, he went up to the bedrooms.

"Is Bonaparte still in bed?" he said to the soldier on guard in front of Napoleon's room. The soldier nodded. "Yes, sir."

Melita went inside the bedroom without a knock and stood before the bed without saying a word, looking at the scene before him. The Emperor lay sprawled in bed, white in the face. He looked exhausted.

The window had been opened and cold air was coming in. The pan by the bed clearly indicated that the ex-Emperor had been sick. Melita picked it up and inspected its contents. The acidic smell of vomit rose in his nostrils but the content of the pan was sparse. There was just saliva in it along with some brown pea-like globules that Melita suspected to be blood.

"I have a horrible stomach ache." said the Emperor.

"You will then not be eating today?" asked Melita brusquely.

Napoleon looked at him with hatred and pain in his eyes.

"No, I don't think so."

"Again you will not be eating." said Melita "Do I have to remind you, monseigneur colonel, that if I begin to think that you are doing this intentionally, so to starve yourself to death, I will force feed you need be?"

"Yes, you've said as much before, mister Lowe." said Napoleon quietly "What was that commotion on the coast all about?"

"I see you haven't been sick enough not to be snooping around!" said Melita, even though one part of him pleaded with his other parts to be gentle with this man so obviously in pain.

Napoleon was silent.

"You don't need to concern yourself with it." Melita finally said. He wasn't actually certain did he just show some mercy or not – could telling Napoleon that they just found a pink sarcophagus worthy of an Emperor on the beach be interpreted like a cruel joke aimed at an ill man? And was this cunning person really in pain or was just out to trick him? It seemed to him that behind the pain in the Emperor's eyes he could detect something mocking and that infuriated him.

"What is that in your hand?" Napoleon said. The eyes which now peered at him from the shadows below the canopy were intent. Melita looked at the hand in which he still held the gold watch which he found on the beach.

"Nothing," he said and put down the pan "Make an effort to eat the dinner, at least, monseigneur colonel." he said, already on his way to leave.

He went directly to his bedroom, took out the little key he held in his pocket and opened his armoire. Tucked away behind the underwear was the little box which Bonaparte gave him four years earlier. After a moment of hesitation, Melita opened the box – and in it there was the pristine gold watch. Melita took it for the first time out of the box by its chain and held it against the sunshine coming through his high windows. He then similarly held up beside it the watch he found on the beach.

There was no doubt – it was a perfect copy of this watch, except it seemed older and it had that same greenish gleam you could notice on the pink sarcophagus.

He opened the new watch even though he felt its beat in his hand. To his surprise, inside there was a picture of Napoleon, smiling smugly at him, and it had been signed!

'Imagine that, he had signed it!' Melita scoffed indignantly.

However, he thought that he shouldn't really be that surprised as the Emperor was so self-absorbed that he had already signed most of his possessions in his quarters, ready to be given away as keepsakes for admirers.

He put both watches in the armoire (the one he found on a separate shelf, away from his clothes), and then went down to the kitchens to find the other tyrant living on this little island. And, sure enough, he found the Mighty One in the back doors of the kitchen, looking at his little garden.

The Mighty One looked up, as he was sitting in the doorway and smoking.

"I see you have been growing oranges." said Melita as a means of introduction, pointing from the door frame at the peas.

"I see your agricultural knowledge hasn't yet made any quantum

leaps." said the Mighty One "Oranges grow on trees Melita. You've seen plenty of both oranges and peas. You should know the difference."

"In my defense," said Melita laughing "no peas are that big! Look at them! Those are horrifying! They do look like bloody oranges. Where are the pea pods? And they are green, my lord." he now pulled a chair near the doorway "Green...!" he said and was silent for a moment "Was there ever a more disgusting colour? Do yourself a favour and in the future grow only white peas! But, I'm not here because of this, actually. I'm kind of worried, my lord, about a medical matter."

Melita described him the brown globules and voiced his concerns about them being blood.

The Mighty One nodded.

"Then it can be blood?" Melita said "How serious do you think this is?"

"It is probably very serious", said the Mighty One. "Stomach ulcers or stomach cancer. I'm not surprised, to be honest. You are a very distressing person, Melita."

Melita took a moment before he answered.

"Oh, please," said Melita. "Me? He did himself over while on his war campaigns." he scoffed "What am I to that kind of stress?"

The Mighty One looked at him in a strange, almost calculating way.

"Yes." said the Mighty One quietly "But this is a prison, is it not? And you are his jailer, are you not? This is a man almost forced to live with his death."

"Or he wants to kill himself. Or maybe it's all an act?"

"Be gentle with him." said the Mighty One.

"Perhaps I should give him your peas," said Melita, but only half as a joke. "Maybe they will make him better, heal him."

The Mighty One shook his head. "They're just big peas, Melita."

"But look at these! That one is almost as big as a piglet! How did

you come to the idea to grow them like this?"

"I had a dream," said the Mighty, "that I was on the road home and on the corner I saw these huge grapes. It was only one berry per vine, instead of a whole cluster. I took one berry and I could barely carry it. I didn't intend for it to happen to the peas, but I think that the inspiration came from there."

"Home?" said Melita.

"Home," nodded the Mighty One.

"I will still order them to make him tonight a pea soup."

That night Melita came to the dining room door and made one discrete peak inside. He, of course, never ate with the ex-Emperor. In truth, he almost never saw him, unless some of the servants and the soldiers guarding him became alarmed, as they just recently were because of Bonaparte's failure to eat.

"What is this?" he heard the ex-Emperor say.

"Pea soup, monseigneur colonel."

Bonaparte took some of the soup in a little spoon (and there was not much soup around the giant pea) and spilled it on the pea. The pea remained largely unchanged. It seemed that all this puzzled Bonaparte but also made him smile for some unknowable reason. In the end he made a puree of the pea and it now dominated the plate like a great green, dry island.

Melita went outside, to the terrace on which he ordered that pink sarcophagus to be lowered down. It gleamed in the moonlight like it was made of mother of pearl. Perhaps he should have opened it, but that thought strangely frightened him.

'A sarcophagus worthy of an Emperor.' he thought. And what a strange thought that was! It came to him while he looked at the sick ex-Emperor and Melita now had a keen impression that his brain knew something he did not.

'Is this actually an Emperor's sarcophagus?' he thought while watching its splendor 'And is this a sarcophagus of an Emperor I know?'

He smiled at the sarcophagus.

What if he opened it here and now? He didn't actually think there would be much in it – if anything - anyway. The sarcophagus looked ancient and only smelled of the sea. There could be nothing but bones or dust in it. Most likely it was completely empty. He will not be finding Bonaparte's fresh corpse in it. But that the watch, which looked so much like the watch Napoleon gave him, which was, Melita was now entirely certain, the very same watch as the one Napoleon gave him, was found here, not far away from this sarcophagus, bothered him.

It seemed most improbable, but have these objects actually traveled through time?

It wasn't impossible, of course, as the lord was also here, and he was known to bend space and time by his presence in the most frightening ways. Wasn't a bend of time and space also the reason why Melita existed here, in this world? And yes, the Mighty One could bend time and space supposedly unintentionally, but could not take them back home? Melita was again angry and his anger towards the Mighty One was, he became aware of it, so similar to the anger he felt towards Bonaparte, that, in fact, it was actually the same anger.

He left the sarcophagus unopened on the terrace and went to bed.

Half a year passed and Melita watched the Emperor's condition steadily worsening. By May he couldn't hold down a glass of water in his stomach and Melita knew that the end was near. The pink sarcophagus still lay on the terrace, a remarkable case of procrastination in Melita's usually highly efficient, action-packed life. The watch also remained, together with its twin, in the armoire. And the Mighty One stayed in the garden, even though the frost murdered his peas. Melita felt more and more agitated as the Emperor's death approached, so much so that he sometimes pestered the Mighty One with his doubts down in the kitchens.



"It is not only him that is imprisoned on this island," he said on one such occasion. "I am also imprisoned here as long as he lives."

"That is simply not true," said the Mighty One. "You can do whatever and go wherever you want."

"No, I can't," Melita said. "I'm inherently unable to do anything worthwhile in my life. I cannot be like him. He changed the world."

"But legacy is just an empty sea shell," said the Mighty One. "You use the shell to protect yourself, but in the end it fails you. However, it's somewhat uplifting to look at, especially empty."

Suddenly Melita thought of that sarcophagus on the beach and how much it reminded him of an enormous sea shell.

"Aren't coffins and sarcophagi kind of like sea shells?" he asked the Mighty One.

"And sarcophagi – they're kind of a way to tell the future about a great legacy?" he continued. "Pick me up, because I am here washed on this shore for you."

He almost broke into tears, because he suddenly saw himself in that Emperor's pink sarcophagus. The Mighty One looked at him with a troubled expression.

"What?" said Melita and rudely left.

It got worse when one morning in bed, during a time his mind was putting the least resistance to the strange currents of time, a melody with words, a full song, came to him. And it was strange, and new, and unlike anything he had heard before. It was not that inspiration visited him, it was like his brain picked up this song as, more than half a year earlier, his hand picked up that sarcophagus and that watch, like shells washed on the shore. He was humming it constantly, so much so that it was becoming indecent, considering the impending death in their midst. He often caught the disapproving eye of a soldier guarding the dying Emperor's door, but Napoleon probably couldn't have heard him, as he seemed so lost in his own pain. He often murmured his own song-like sentences, broken and requiring a dream to bind them together and give them meaning.

Melita would forget them as soon as he would hear them, but the Emperor's last lucid words, uttered secretly, seemed to have stayed very well etched in his memory. He was in the next room, listening. The Emperor was dictating his will to his valet Marchand and even though he gave away, with supreme arrogance, many objects he actually no longer possessed, what the Emperor was most concerned about was some meager plot of land in Ajaccio he wanted to leave to his son: "I bequeath to my son my estate in Ajaccio – two houses in the environs of Salines and their gardens. All my property in the area of Ajaccio which is capable of raising 50 000 francs a year in rent."

He mentioned that plot of land several times and asked to be shown the paper to be reassured what he had said had been written down. Then he said something about returning home, and Melita, who became singularly bent on listening the nefarious plot in the other room, flinched.

"Returning home... over mulberry trees," the Emperor said. "When I was... twenty four years old."

'He probably just asked leave as a young lieutenant to return home to settle a land dispute over mulberry trees.' Melita explained to himself with relief.

He was the one who was listening, and it was quite impossible that he was at the same time listened to, as he, for a moment there, had irrationally suspected. What he had on his side was superb, if not supernatural hearing, and what the Emperor had was just the common human experience that even after great military victories, and many times even without them, you return home and mulberry trees again become a life and death issue like they had been in the beginning of your journey.

But the Emperor couldn't have heard him, not even his thoughts, and those words were not meant for him.

Later, Melita found the will scribbled in a copy of a book on Caesar

in Marchand's bedroom, on the blank page before the preface. For some reason he decided to continue to act as if nothing had happened. He doubted that there would be a way for this document to reach the other side of the sea, and even if there was such a way, he found himself unwilling to intercept it.

He dreamed that night that the mulberry trees got drowned by the sea. He woke up in the middle of the night, crying. It had never happened to him before, that he cried in his sleep. Both his pillowcase and his face were wet. The mulberry trees disappeared underwater and he could see nothing anymore but the ocean.

"You know that the sea can sometimes act like a time machine?" said the Mighty One that morning in the garden.

"A time machine?" Melita said. Of course, he thought of it before, but he did not actually think it was the sea that did this, the clock and the sarcophagus; it was the person before him that was the time machine. But he wouldn't say this.

"Yes." said the Mighty One "It must be that a tide of future has come our way and brought us that song you've been singing."

"Oh, you mean this wretched song." said Melita and gently hummed:

*And I can easily understand  
How you could easily take my man  
But you don't know what he means to me, Jolene  
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
I'm begging of you please don't take my man  
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
Please don't take him just because you can*

*You could have your choice of men  
But I could never love again  
He's the only one for me, Jolene*

*I had to have this talk with you  
My happiness depends on you  
And whatever you decide to do, Jolene*

*Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
I'm begging of you please don't take my man  
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
Please don't take him even though you can  
Jolene, Jolene*

"That song does invite analysis, doesn't it?" said the Mighty One.

"Analysis!" said Melita with a little contemptuous smile "What is there to analyse? Everything is clear."

"Two things in your situation," said the Mighty One "The first one – that Jolene is just death's name. And the second – that you love her, it seems, just as the man for whose life you plead."

"You mean to say, the clock just stopped for me?", laughed Melita.

"My growth has been stilted and I'm afraid of Bonaparte's death because it would mean that I would have to leave this little island and not just pretend that I want to leave it?"

"Yes."

"No, he's not that sick," said Melita. "He is trying to trick me! He is trying to escape!"

"Yes, he will escape," said the Mighty One. "He will die."

"And why don't you take that fine powers of perceptions and turn them to yourself?" said Melita, suddenly furious and yelling. "Why are you here, in this little garden, growing peas? I hate your peas, and I hate your little garden!"

He stormed off.

That night the horror started to unveil itself. The Emperor was dying. And standing by his bed, looking at that agonized face, Melita could not stop singing that song in his head, like a prayer. Around

ten o'clock he left the room and went down to the cliff overlooking the shore. He sat there on the ground. It was warm, but windy and uncomfortable. Still that song was in his head.

'It must be that a tide of future has come our way and brought us this song.' Melita remembered the Mighty One's words and just began to silently sing out loud:

*Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
I'm begging of you please don't take my man  
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
Please don't take him just because you can  
Your beauty is beyond compare  
With flaming locks of auburn hair  
With ivory skin and eyes of emerald green  
Your smile is like a breath of spring  
Your voice is soft like summer rain  
And I cannot compete with you, Jolene*

*He talks about you in his sleep  
There's nothing I can do to keep  
From crying when he calls your name, Jolene*

Melita finished the song and continued to look at the darkened, wavy sea.

'Death has green eyes for sure,' thought Melita strangely. 'And I can't compete with it. And I can't do anything when he calls its name in his sleep.'

Never did the vastness of the ocean which he claimed so many times to have yearned for, seemed so threatening, so death-like. The unavoidable change in his life stripped away from him his favorite illusions.

'I want to be buried on the banks of the Seine.' Melita remembered

Napoleon saying and actually murmured it out loud.

'I know I won't grant him his wish and bury him on the banks of the Seine,' he smiled bitterly while he thought this. 'I will bury him here, on this godforsaken island, as if he died in a foreign land where they can't even pronounce his name and was buried by strangers. And I will bury him in his colonel's uniform.'

He looked away from the dark sea and back at the house, in which there was a light in a window. Knowing what he did, this light indicated to Melita mortal agony. He imagined the light not trying to stay lit – it seemed to have such tortured quality about it – but trying to extinguish itself and pass into the relaxed dark.

'I have to go up there again,' he thought and stood up and dusted off his trousers.

He went up, and even though the light was not extinguished, he knew that the Emperor was dead as soon as he looked at him – his face, so new to death, already held nothing anymore of the intelligent expression it had in life. He searched with his eyes for the lord, but did not see him in the crowded room.

He gave orders for dispatches. Then he again went outside. Almost from the doors, he saw someone standing at the edge of the cliff where he previously sat. The figure seemed heroic, facing the vastness of the ocean.

And the first cruel, deceiving thought that came to Melita was: 'The Emperor is alive!'

But the Emperor was dead, he knew that. And the figure was much younger than the Emperor, and perhaps a centimeter taller. But the figure still seemed heroic, facing the vastness of time.

"You were right, Melita," the Lord said when Melita came to him. "I will put the peas aside for a while. It is sometimes a crime to insist on a small garden."

He could see even in the dark that the lord had been crying.

"Then you are leaving too?," Melita thought of asking, but decided

against it. Of course, the lord will be leaving this small place. And he will be leaving soon too, after the funeral, carried on this strong wind of change.

"My Lord," he said, "please take this with you. It doesn't work now, but I'm sure you can fix it. Thank you for everything. We will, of course, meet again."

He put the gold watch from the future in the Mighty One's hand.

The Mighty One immediately opened it to, presumably, observe the still hands of the clock.

"I will fix it one day," he said.

Melita nodded and went back to the silent house which now harbored two dead Napoleons. He would take the sarcophagus with him and bury it on the banks of the Seine, as the Seine is long and doesn't only pass through Paris, of course. He would have his death wish fulfilled as everyone deserves their death wishes fulfilled because of the helplessness that death imposes onto them from the moment they die to eternity.

He went to his quarters and took from the armoire the clock he was given, took it out of the box and put it in his breast pocket. He then immediately opened it. The hands were still moving and you could hear time ticking. Melita smiled and put the clock back again next to his heart.

## FRIDA

*Sunčica Marinović*

Sun, clouds, little children running and shouting fully excited for no reason while playing hide and seek. These are all things of everyday life which I took for granted before I lost my sight due to illness. I would spend my days worrying about a million things, and never stopped, even just for a second, to take a deep breath and to actually pay attention to the surrounding beauty of small ordinary things. There it stood, on the top shelf, an old cup that I got from my late grandma, cracked on one side because of my little brother's clumsiness, and the colourful 'hippy' curtains that my mother loved to put on our window, watching at the street where people rushed by being all busy and worried. Someone would just watch pensively at the floor completely ignoring the sound of the hooting and clever, not to say imaginative, swearing of the driver. Others would rush as if some evil force taking the form of their boss was chasing them down the street, completely focused only on their steps and, of course, on not getting hit by a car. I was also that kind of person some time before, but now my perspective is completely changed.

People often say that you truly appreciate someone or something in your life only after you lose it. This was also the case with me and my sight. When the doctors told me that there was a great chance of losing my sight because of diabetes, and that I was among 10% of young people who actually had this awful chance, I didn't take it seriously. I thought to myself, I will try to eat healthier, exercise more and I will not pick over trivial things. All of this was useless. By each day, my sight was getting worse. At first all objects were pretty much blurred in front of my eyes, and wearing the glasses helped me to perceive them better. Suddenly, even the glasses were no longer my friend. They couldn't help me. One day I woke up and everything was black. I rubbed my eyes countless times in hope that



the darkness would turn into the light, but there was no use. The reign of darkness started to rule over my everyday life leaving only the traces of light as I was able to see just some outlines of objects with the help of the light itself.

I will always remember the first couple of weeks after losing my sight. They were pure torture for both me and my family. I was constantly hitting them in the arm or crashing into their toes simply by not being aware of their presence. Now, I'm used to it, although I believe that neither my toes nor my head will ever get used to bumping to the side of a bed or a wall. 'Ruby, not that way' followed by 'ouch, that must hurt really bad' was all that I could hear for the first couple of months. As the time passed by I decided to try to live alone, but also to put focus on one thing that could help me not to think so much about losing my sight. I wanted to concentrate on what I actually had. That magical life and, as I dare to say, mental saving thing for me was art. Soon enough, I found myself painting as some crazy artist, and spending all my time trying to remember the colours of objects, but most significantly how to transform them into a piece of art. As often happens, at first I was discouraged by every small thing. I would find excuses like that old school cliché 'the dog ate my homework', just that mine was 'I lost my picture somewhere in the clutter and I can't find it' so I didn't have to show it to my friends and family. Foolish of me to forget that they could easily find it somewhere in my apartment without me noticing. How to find inspiration? That is probably the most common question buzzing over the head of all artists. I would say that inspiration is all around us, it takes multiple forms, but it also takes more than sight to perceive it and to actually make it worthy and admirable. For someone, broken chair and pair of old, dusty boots can be more than enough to make a creative, unique painting about some cowboy mouse biting the leg of the chair made out of delicious cheese. Perhaps childish, but certainly creative. I would

never take art as an option before, only that now I perceived it as a sort of medicine. It helped me to get back the perspective of a child watching the world innocently and paying attention to every single detail out there while asking innumerable questions. Those questions most of the time annoy parents because they are too busy with their problems to think about such 'trivial' things. As I was no longer able to rely on the visual perception of my surroundings, I started to rely heavily on the sense of touch. I have to say that it is quite amazing how different the object may seem to you by just relying on the touch. Take a hair brush for example. When you just look at it, it is nothing more than some hair brush with different designs on it. But consider its form. The curve that fits perfectly into the palm of your hand. The brush that is at the same time flexible, but sharp enough to tame the different types of hair. I would dare to say that the sense of touch helps the artist to have even the closer relationship with the object, than the visual perception of it. With the paint it is a bit harder, but I heard from my friend that some blind artists use Brailled bottles and paint tubes so I decided to go with that. You just have to be careful when mixing colours. You have to use the exact portion of each colour to get what you need. Over time I got used to it, and I also believe that my lines are much clearer now. I am more confident.

Losing my sight was certainly the hardest thing that I had to deal with until I realized that it was up to me to let it take me into the world of complete darkness and misery, or to let it be a sort of reminder of all the things that I still had. One thing is certainly true, you can have your sight and yet be completely blind, or you can lose it but only then open your mind.

I remember one sunny autumn day rushing to work and thinking how nice would it be to stop for a while just to sit in the park to watch red, yellow leaves falling like snowflakes from the trees while

dancing in the air and then slowly hitting the ground, light as cotton yet noisy as the chewing of cornflakes in your mouth. Back then, that kind of thought would just pass through my mind, but soon enough I was thrown back into the real world of business and stressfulness. Now, I had plenty of time to think about the past, while it was hard to look ahead. It certainly had a lot of magical moments abruptly stopped by the reason. It was time to get back to life those magical moments and to shush reason. Bearing this thought in my mind, I decided to go to that same old park, to actually take a moment and to let my senses blossom. I sat on the bench in the park trying to feel the falling of leaves around me. The rays of the sun were my best friend simply because they helped me to recognize some shapes. In that way I could get the idea of the object in my mind. I could 'see' soft white light taking the shape of some sort of triangle slowly falling on the ground and presumed that it must be the leaf in its magnificent fall from the tree. Ruby! Ruby, is that really you?! All the magic was suddenly interrupted by the sound of voice that seemed quite familiar to me. Then I remembered....it was the voice of one of my colleagues at work.

- Oh, you poor thing, how are you?

- Fine, thank you! And you?

- I am great but have to rush! Well...it was nice seeing you, stay well and hope to see you soon around.

As she was pronouncing that last sentence only the echo of her voice filled my surroundings. I was forced back into the process of reasoning and thinking. I liked my former job at the pastry shop. I always loved to have small chats with different people and making someone's day by giving them their number one cupcake or coffee. I also remember one moment that was a sort of tragicomedy. It happened when my sight started to get worse, but back then I didn't think about the consequences. One customer came in our pastry for the first time and decided to order some coffee. He seemed to

already have difficult day when I made it even worse, but not on purpose. You see, instead of sugar I put the salt in his coffee because the sign on the jar with salt seemed to me to say sugar. He got really mad and promised that for sure he would never come back again. At first it was funny for both me and my colleagues, but soon enough my routine at work started to be mixing of ingredients. As the time passed I decided that I couldn't work anymore. Not in this way.

The routine, I miss this word sometimes. My routine now is completely different. I need to plan everything the day before, from what to wear to what to eat. Even the furniture in my apartment had to be adjusted to my needs. Somehow I still manage to get bumped into my head or some other part of my body. I guess clumsiness has never been healed in my case. I was slowly walking back home...my mind filled with all kind of memories. Suddenly the heat got into my cheeks, they were 'burning'. My eyes were watery and my mind was blank. It is funny how one person, that is one simple greeting from someone related to my past life could get me to this state of mind just as I was trying to get adapted to my present condition by getting the most of it. Reason and reality had once again punched me in the face, leaving the fat purple bruise of my present state. As I was thrown back in this self-pithiness, I sensed something wet and cold on my hand. It took me a while until I realized it was the slobber of the dog that had continued to follow me all the way home. He rushed into my house as some sort of silent thief, without me even noticing, and you can imagine how easy that was for him. I heard glass smashing and the spilling of the water all over the floor. He'd broken something. At first, I was trying really hard to get him out of my apartment because it was difficult enough for me to take care of myself. I thought that some smelly old dog was the last thing I needed at this point of my life. Believe me, he really smelled like most of the dogs probably do.

They have that specific smell that is hard to describe. Only people who own the dog can understand it. Anyway, it turned out to be quite the opposite. I asked my friend to give him a good bath and to take him to the vet and then bring him back to me. My friend told me that he was actually she and that the dog was healthy and probably did not belong to anyone. I decided to keep her.

What name should I give to her? That question really bothered me for a couple of days. It was hard because I couldn't see the colour of her hair or her eyes. On the other hand, what I could do was to rely on my sense of touch. I tried to catch her, and God knows how hard that was considering that she was really fast, but luckily as clumsy as me. When I finally caught her, I realized that she had a tousled fur and tail. My friend told me that she was black but that her fur shined as if she was poured with sequins. I decided to name her Frida as I couldn't think of, at the time, a better name, and the fact is that she was always one of my favourite artists. At first it sounded a bit foolish, but then I thought why not? After all, she was as unique in her looks (according to the description of my friends) as Frida Kahlo. Soon enough Frida became my best friend and the true connection to reality. As I would find myself lost for hours in painting she would remind me to take her out for a walk by crushing my paintbrushes and probably getting the paint all over the apartment. I am not sure if it was the paint or her slobber all over the walls, but it was certainly something dense, wet and done by Frida. Lucky for her that I can't see, but the cleaning lady that comes to my apartment three times a week probably goes off when she sees all the mess on the floor along with the fingerprints on the furniture.

The chirping of the birds, sun discretely peaking as a spider web through the curtains into my bedroom and the smell of fresh baked pretzels coming from the street sometimes wouldn't be enough to get me out of the bed, even if it was almost noon. But now, the

sound of endless barking and whining was more than enough to get me out of my bed at 6.00 am and to take that silly, fluffy creature out for a walk. It was one morning that we were in our usual walk and Frida took something carrying it in her mouth all the way home. I could feel that she had something in her mouth as her breathing suddenly changed the rhythm. When I finally got it out of her mouth, by getting a paper cut, I realized that it was some sort of fly sheet. I had put it aside, but Frida constantly brought it back to me. Finally, when my friend came by to visit us I decided to ask her what was written on that fly sheet. She told me that it was promoting the audition for amateur artists that will be held in our old high school. She thought, obviously as did Frida, that it would be perfect for me to apply for that audition and in that way have some fun and at the same time try something new. Usually this kind of decision would take me months, and finally I would not apply. But now I decided to do it immediately. What was there to lose? After all I couldn't see the expression of someone's face when observing my painting. A couple of weeks before the audition came again that inevitable question. Where to find inspiration? Suddenly I thought to myself; sun, clouds, little children running and shouting for no reason while playing hide and seek. That could be a good start.

## AWAKE

*Mirta Barić*

I am in her room, looking at her from above. I am a spider, hidden in my net, looking at her from my corner. She is asleep. Asleep and beautiful. She is wearing her Bloc Party T-shirt and looks so perfect. She is lying on her side, her right leg so fluently crossed over her left leg, both of her arms tucked underneath the pillow. The room is dark and only the paleness of her skin and the color of the night coming in from the window are making it possible for me to see anything. Her breathing is deep and calm. I can feel her. I can see how soft her skin is, I can feel how addictive her scent is, I can smell how warm her body is. I want to taste her. I stretch my arm towards her, but see a hairy little leg in front of me. I am a spider. I start crawling across my silky net, in hope that if I am silent enough, I might just get as near as possible to crawl up her leg. To walk upwards across her mountainous hips and over her silky belly. I would then sneak in between her breasts and rest there for a while, listening to the soothing melody of her breathing. Suddenly, I see her twitch. I hear somebody approaching the room. They open the door and shine a bit of light from the other room on her beautiful face. They close the door. Her lips look so soft, maybe I could rest there as well... I look at the shadow that entered the room. It's not a shadow on the wall. It's a shadow standing in the middle of the room. On its own. Its outline looks so strict and determined. It looks so big and powerful. But it is only a shadow, right? The shadow creeps near her, and lies beside her. She twitches again. Shadow's wicked arms slither across her back, and I feel a fire burning in my chest. She wakes up. Her beautiful porcelain skin is becoming more and more covered by the shamelessness of the shadow. It's getting darker. This is not right. My net seems narrower and I feel like it will eat me alive if I don't move. I hear her moan

once. I look away. I remember that earlier that day I created a bridge that leads from my corner, all the way to her bed. I start moving and my tiny legs feel so heavy, as if they got stuck to my net and I have to struggle to make each step. I hear the shadow moan. The moan is strange. It's so dark, so possessive. I don't want to look. I have to keep going. My net starts to feel so uncomfortable, so unknown. I feel like it might take me somewhere I don't want to be. I want to be with her, I want the shadow to go away. I hear her moan again. A fast glance escapes beyond my control, and I see them intertwined, her pale arms around the shadow's neck. I look away. I am ashamed and furious and devastated. I keep moving. Maybe there's still time to stop this. I am so close now. Their moans become louder and more synchronized. The fire in my chest has now taken over my entire body, and suddenly my tiny legs feel enormous. I must reach them, I must tell her to stop. Finally, I reach the wall right above their heads. It is cold, and my tiny legs start to feel cold as well. I try to say her name, but I can't. I am a spider. I try to yell but I can't and the fire starts to burn in my chest again. I can hear myself screaming on the inside. The shadow looks up. Maybe they heard me. Its eyes are so dark and deep and vicious. They stop moving. The shadow's enormous angry hand starts moving towards me, fast. My heart is racing but I can't move, I can't escape. Everything's black.

I wake up. I'm on the couch in the living room. I feel as if I am sweaty and in tears. It was a dream? Oh God. Oh thank God. I stretch and rush to the room. But the bed is empty. What time is it? She must've gone to work by now. I'll wait for her. I'll just lie down and wait for her, because I miss her so much. It's empty and boring here without her. I need her so that my life can make sense. I feel like this ugly dream has taken a part of her away from me, and I want to hug her to know we're okay. I'm a bit hungry. There are some leftovers on the kitchen table. I reach it and literally swallow



what was on the plate. I go back to the couch, sit on my favorite cushion and wait. The clock is ticking. I stare at it for a while. I hear a buzz. The buzz is getting louder and more annoying. I see a fly. It's trying to escape through the closed kitchen window. It's so annoying. I want to kill it. Maybe not kill it right away. Just knock it out a bit and then watch it struggle. Play with it. Okay, that was an unusual thought. Whatever. I hear the door unlock. It's her, it's finally her. I rush to the door, she looks at me and smiles with the most loving eyes I have ever seen in my life. I try to say her name, but a meow comes out. What the hell?! I try again. Now a more piercing meow comes out. I start panicking so much I run away, under the sofa, away from her beautiful gaze. I hear her laugh and say something to herself like What a bloody weird cat. Am I losing my mind? How could I have forgotten that I am this creature? How could I have ever, even for one second, believe that I am a human being? It's because I'm in love with her so much. I want to be her kind. I want her to be able to love me the way I love and desire her. She sits on the couch and opens her laptop. I peek at her from under the sofa. Her hair is up, in a ponytail, and I can see her beautiful neck and the perfect path from her ear to her collar bone. She looks so calm and inviting. I want to sit in her lap and lay my head on her warm belly. She looks at me and smiles, but I hide. Stupid, she says. I am ashamed. She plays a song from her laptop. The song is sad. I look at her. She is sad. She is looking at the screen of her laptop and her eyes are in tears. But her face remains calm. Calm and sad. This doesn't feel right. I suddenly get an overwhelming urge to run away from her, to escape that negativity that is inside her. It's making me anxious and scared. She leaves her laptop on the coffee table and I see a picture of her on it. The shadow is behind her. Shadow is gone now. Shadow left her. She is sad. I must be there for her no matter how disturbing it is for me. She lies on the couch and covers her head with a blanket. I come

out from under the sofa and climb the couch. I reach her lap and tuck up there. She looks at me and smiles, through the tears, and I get the feeling that that is the most beautiful scene I have ever seen in my life. She reaches for my head with her hand and starts petting me. Her touch is warm, soothing and loving. It reveals what she is feeling inside. It gets shaky and insecure. Then calm again. She puts her hand away and tucks it under the couch cushion. She falls asleep while the tears on her face haven't yet dried. I finally feel calm again. Her breathing is pressing against my back, and this rhythm makes me want to fall asleep. Suddenly the movement stops. I stop breathing as well, to hear better. But I hear nothing. I look at her. Her face is pale and blue, her lips dry as ever. I get up and start running up and down her body, feeling that's the best I can do. But she doesn't move. I start scratching her body hoping that pain will wake her up. And then I can't stop. My claws slide through her skin like perfect little knives and her beautiful body is covered more and more in blood. She opens her eyes and looks at me.

I wake up. I am breathing heavily and my body is covered in sweat. It takes me a few seconds before I realize where I am. It's finally my room, she's here next to me, fast asleep. I check her breathing and her pulse. I look at my human body and my human hands and start laughing. I must be losing my mind, I think to myself. My lips are dry and my throat is sore as if I've been yelling the whole night. I put my slippers on and go to the bathroom. I look at myself in the mirror. I look exhausted and beaten. In the mirror, on the wall behind me, I see a spider. Chills run down my legs and to my feet. Come on man, you had a rough dream and now there's a spider on your wall, calm down. I take my slipper and hit the wall as hard as I can. The light goes off. Everything's black.

I wake up.

## POCKET FULL OF WISHES

*Kristina Šimić*

In his forty-year career, Mr Fairfax had never seen the space of Rymeton train station filled with more than fifteen people at once. Fifteen familiar people, that is, because Rymeton's train station was not a ground on which any modern, ambitious or healthy man between the ages of 16 and 56 would put their two feet and walk towards the city's retirement home...voluntarily. You see, the connection between Rymeton's pintsize population and youthful hastiness of surrounding cities was still running due to only one reason. That reason was the increasing need of those modern, ambitious and healthy people to evacuate all the ones unable to catch the fleeting speed of time with their sore ankles and demented minds. Peaceful Passing Retirement Village sounded like a lovely place for senior migration to God's Neverland.

Mr Fairfax knew he did not belong to either world. His good physical shape enabled his aged hands to repair every problem occurring on the heavy railways as well as for the lungs to produce loud whistle sounds at train's departures. He was proud of himself. His skin might have endured decades of oxidation, but the mind – oh, the mind – was sharp as a razor. Even though the schedule itself was impoverished and easy to remember, it was a job an average Villager could only dream of while lying in a multifunctional Invacare hospital bed and looking outside at the old, miserable oaks. Moreover, Mr Fairfax possessed an astonishing ability to recognize the guilty face of a criminal in Midsomer Murders and was skilled enough to solve the medium hard Sudoku in the Daily Mail. Some time ago, his grandson Andrew joked that, once grandpa masters Sudoku, it would be impossible for the family to put him into any kind of nursing home. David Fairfax smiled sadly for a moment and

continued his morning ritual in silence. He would prevent that from ever happening.

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April, 2nd was not a busy day. In Rymeton, there are usually no busy days to start with, but the employees always tried to fulfil their time as best as possible. For example, after the arrival with 6.33 a.m. train from Bristol, Mrs Nugget, along with her six female colleagues, walked into Mr Fairfax's cabin for some hot mint tea (he always put extra sugar in her cup, which was welcomed with a grin). They talked about trivialities, like the day's weather or would old Mrs Raymond die of pneumonia or of watching too many reruns of General Hospital, or when would they finally cut down the rotting oaks in front of the Peaceful Passing Retirement Village logo. Sometimes, the chat would become almost too heated and the voices too agile – a sign for the seven nurses to start their lingering shift among the dying; first the bath for the bravest, afterwards oatmeal for the calmest. Meanwhile, Mr Fairfax was trying to solve the hardest daily Sudoku in his cabin, to watch over the railways and, in his spare time, to read M. H. Clark's latest thriller.

The dull April afternoon was interrupted by the distant noise of heavy machinery. The train was arriving and Mr Fairfax was shocked. No train aside from the 6.33 a.m. and p.m. from Bristol never left Rymeton or stopped there. Because never ever wanted to be there. The Melody Lingers On fell from his hands.

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Luke Knight was trying to calm down the passengers, but worse than finding a dead body on the train was the acknowledgment that they were heading towards the village whose main slogan was Your last station to heaven. Life can be so ironic at times, Luke thought while covering man's body with his coat.

Stopping at the nearest station was the only rational solution (the ringleader agreed) not only because of the growing panic. Indeed, it is uncomfortable to carry on a journey with a dead body, but even

more frightening to do is to carry on a journey with the body of a person who experienced high temperature, respiratory problems and muscle pain just hours before the 'final departure'. The acronym SARS began to truck between dozens of lips, and suddenly all the passengers started to breathe heavily and cover their mouths with handkerchiefs. Was this just the fruit of a tumultuous imagination or a real problem, Luke Knight, the retired Scotland Yard's detective, did not know. But, he concluded it was the best for everyone to stop in the middle of nowhere and wait for professionals to handle the situation properly. Until then, it appeared that all eyes were on him.

Just as the train stopped, Mr Knight abruptly straitened his ill back and confidently smiled at a confused, egg-shaped head of an elegant man in working uniform and introduced himself. Mr Fairfax straightened his hand to give a proper handshake. Just after a few minutes of confidential whispering ("I'm counting on you, Mr Fairfax, to handle the situation calmly as possible until we found the cause of death. It's very unlikely to be a virus, but you never know these days," he jockingly winked), the sleek grey moustache of an egg-shaped head twitched as they knew their moment had arrived after all the years spent in dullness. A real-life murder!

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David Fairfax could not do much, except offer some tea. He used the last stash of mint and camomile tea and even that was not enough to serve the dozens of exited mouths. As he passed through the crowd of unfamiliar faces, he tried to distinguish the guiltiest one. An elderly woman in blue dress, tanned like a stranger, holding a suitcase, was obviously shaken by her partner's death. Mr Fairfax put on his nicest smile and most comforting look when he asked her if she would like some tea or milk.

"No, thank you, I drink neither", she answered absently looking at the suitcase. He was appalled, but continued the talk.

"Mr Knight told me you're the wife of the deceased. Receive my deepest condolences."

“Thank you. But it had to happen eventually”, she said woefully.

“He was still a young man, Madame! He could have lived many years more.”

“This is the best for everyone. He will never suffer again.”

“How do you mean? Mrs Robinson, is it?”, old David Fairfax was now intrigued.

“I don’t want to talk anymore. With all due respect, mister, I’m tired of these distressed people around us, panicking about some disease, calling their families. It would be better to dissolve all of them their misery and...”

“And...what?”, Mr Fairfax replied suspiciously.

“Nothing, nothing”, Mrs Robinson firmly held the suitcase. Something was very wrong. Maybe even dangerously wrong.

“Mrs Robinson”, Mr Fairfax gently said, “would you like to get some refreshment? There is a toilet just around the corner.”

She shook her head in the act of rejection.

“No, no, you are still shaken by his death, Mrs Robinson. You must. I will take the suitcase so it does not bother you...”

“No, no...I...” the woman stared in amazement, trying to figure out why would an old train station attendant put his hand on her belongings and fiercely tried to take it.

Mr Fairfax become aware that his interference too much obvious. He saw in a movie a plot very similar to the events taking place (a suicidal woman with the virus in the suitcase) he watched with his grandson last Christmas. He could not remember the name of a movie, but knew what he must do. Again he smiled at the poor woman and rushed to his cabin to call Mrs Nugget for help. She was the only person who could be trusted with such a delicate issue. The plan was reasonably thought through in a manner of minute. Virginia would leave Mrs Raymond in front of her favourite soap opera and come to the station to reveal the content hidden in the suitcase. She had a special way of making people open up to her. And if that would not work, she had a needle full of sleeping pinkish cocktails.

Luke Knight made all the important calls. Just a few more hours and the situation would be under control. He slowly sat on the bench and thought about how much he loved trains as a child. If it were not for Agatha Christie's novels, today he might have walked in Mr Fairfax's shoes and directed the passengers towards Peaceful Passing. This idea horrified him. Luckily, a scream interrupted his flow of thoughts.

On the floor of the waiting room, Mrs Robinson was lying unconsciously. Around her, a group of people looked at the scattered papers...and two of the guiltiest faces Luke Knight had ever seen in his life. He walked towards Mr Fairfax and Mrs Nugget, partners in crime.

"What happened", brisk air came from his lips.

"She killed him! She did!", Mrs Nugget exclaimed.

Luke Knight was not sure what these two elderly people were talking about. Maybe they were in fact the residents of a huge, decaying building with old oaks in front of it.

"Who killed who?", he asked.

"Mrs Robinson killed her husband!", Mr Fairfax answered trembling. "I can see it in her eyes!"

"Firstly, her eyes are closed because she is unconscious. Secondly, I am not sure about what murder you are talking about because..."

"She! She killed her husband and put the virus in the suitcase", Mr Fairfax at this point could not breathe out of excitement, "if we hadn't stop her, she would have killed all of us!"

"Let me stop you here, mister", Luke gently replied to accusations.

"There was no virus. I spoke to Mr Robinson's doctor. He had recently recovered from pneumonia, but it seems like the illness was coming back. And his body could not handle another respiratory attack. Aren't you a nurse, Mrs Nugget? Are those not the symptoms of pneumonia?"

Virginia Nugget stood in silence.

“Well?”, Mr Knight continued, “Indeed, they are. And this suitcase... I will presume you thought it contained a virus. Mr and Mrs Robinson were heading towards Transworld Independent Publishers to meet the leading publisher of his memoirs. These shattered papers are the memoirs of his laborious work as the counsellor for the problematic youth in New Delhi...”

Mr Fairfax sat on the floor and started to cry. The passengers were staring at him.

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Mrs Robinson was still unconscious, but the paramedics said she would wake up the next day. Mr Knight decided it was best for the ‘criminal couple’ to be taken to questioning. The victim would probably not sue them, but the police had to do their job properly. As Mr Fairfax was entering the train, he was holding the Daily Mail in his hands. He gently kissed Mrs Nugget on the cheek and said: “Darling, I never asked you if you’re good at solving Sudoku?”



## MEET ME AT THE CEMETERY GATES

*Kristina Šimić*

When the engine of my old Ford started making irregular grudging noises, we knew we were in trouble. Bob involuntarily joined the disharmonic mechanical tune by making regular sounds of teeth grinding. It was his highest form of incoming anger. I, on the other hand, silently kept on driving and put all of my focus on the road. Road which was empty. Because we were in the middle of nowhere. Yes, that was the trouble. Nevertheless, the past experiences affirmed that any sound of my nervous high-pitched vocals at this point was entitled to open another series of complaints regarding my naivety in buying this “yellow piece of trash”.

However, I loved my old-heavy-metal-doors, time-wormed-seats and smell-of-adventure wreck of a vehicle. Even its hissing noise which made me feel uneasy when driving to work. Just enough dose of adrenaline rush caused by stress of being late to Michael's. And the colour of the fading sunset which resembled the scenery of prolonged days on beaches. Bob said it could get even gayer only if I draw pink flowers on it, which was, coincidentally, exactly what the previous owner, a 70 year-old man from Florida, with a Chihuahua and red sleeveless shirt, intended. I kept that information to myself and occasionally laughed imagining his reaction if he would have ever learnt who I bought it from.

I loved Bob, immensely. We bumped into each other constantly on our freshman year at the Saxton University and concluded that it must had been our destiny since we never took the same classes. Tall, bold, blonde, successful intellectual and short girl with curly black hair and glasses, the one trying to fit in. And failing usually. It was a strange combination of few similarities and more contraries, but we made each other happy. We were suited for each other like two different pieces of a puzzle: impulsive and calm, energetic and

weary, funny and serious, ambitious and lost. He proposed on my 23rd birthday and few weeks later we were sharing our lives in a tiny apartment in the big city.

The map in front of me was not very helpful so I took the phone from the pocket. The application showed we were only five miles from the nearest gas station. Next to me, Bob's teeth stopped making noise but his nostrils spread and reduced in a funny manner. He was annoyed, but not angry. I smiled and turned on the radio so high to the point all the tension and discord lost in musical poetry. Suede was on. I lowered the window and let the wind play with my curls. Oh, here they come, the beautiful ones, the beautiful ones... la, la, la, la... loved up, doved up, hung around, stoned in a lonely town...

...

Luckily, the car gleefully purred after receiving full-sized dosage of gasoline. In the review mirror I saw Bob on the back seat put his black sunglasses and leaned his hand on the window.

"We should have switched to the highway, it could save us at least an hour", he said and took a huge sip of water, "God, it's hot!"

I nodded. My uncovered thighs were glued to the driver's seat.

"But then you wouldn't see this all of this. Isn't it beautiful?", I pointed to the lonely fields of gold.

"It's eaqually nice on the pictures, though", he sighted.

The presenter on the radio announced what was coming next. My heart started beating.

"It's the Smiths. Peter loved them!", my eyes got teary as strongly hold the wheel. After all those years, few familiar accords could easily access the parts of inner pain I seldom forgot that was once overwhelming. Sometimes, even the sadness could be beautiful, and that day it burst in flames as I quietly sang the lyrics of This charming man.

Bob waited for the song to end and looked at me.

"You never talk about him."

“No? I told you we were best friends growing up.”

The music choice changed so something new and unfamiliar.

“Yeah, but that’s it. You say you spent the summers together, he gave you your first kiss. He died in an accident when he was 14. That’s all I know.”

“I don’t like to talk about it.”

“Then way are you bringing me to his mother’s house? I never met the woman and now you expect me to go with two of you on her son’s grave.”

“I know...it’s just special this year. 10 years. And...I want you to be there. And understand.”

“Understand what?”

“Why I sometimes don’t talk about things.”

“You don’t talk about many things, Veronica”, he leaned over to the radio from the back seat and turned the volume up.

...

We stopped in front of a large country white house with a porch covered in white flowers. Mrs Nelson always looked after her plants with the most care. Even in this dry weather, her daisies looked as fresh...as a daisy. Just as the phrase said.

Bob got out of the car and stretched a little, looking at the neighbourhood compiled of similarly looking used-up residences containing different kinds of colorful plants and herbs. “It’s nice. Lots of flowers.” He tried to sound cheerful.

I took the square brown box with a tie and two bouquets of fake pink and purple carnations and closed the yellow metal door. “You probably wouldn’t believe me if I say that few years ago, even the garden was covered in daisies. I’m not sure what happened.”

“She realised this place looks like a second-hand flower shop. I don’t know why you brought even more.”

“Behave your best, will you?”, I said as we climbed three wooden staircases and saw Mrs Nelson’s lovely face through the open window. When she smiled, the wrinkles around her eyes arranged as

the landscape of dunes in the desert.

First few minutes elapsed in warm greetings and tight hugs. We sat in the kitchen and watched Mrs Nelson prepare the afternoon coffee. She put the cinnamon cookies in front of us. "These are her favorite, Robert", she winked at him. Bob smiled and continued to talk about his work at the University. Mrs Nelson was thrilled.

...

The graveyard was a half-an-hour walk away and the sun slowly started to come down, so we left the house with a bunch of flowers and a bottle of water. I was not in the mood to talk, the scenery compelled my mind to meditate past and present events. As a result, Mrs Nelson and Bob carried on conversation few meters in front of me, while I stayed at the back looking at the sky.

We were 13 when my aunt Lydia died. I was dressed in a black dress with white clamshells and hated the way the collar irritated my neck. Peter had a blue, freshly ironed shirt and black bow tie. When they put the casket down into the ground, Mrs Nelson started sobbing and grabbed Peter's hand. Yellow and white carnations grew everywhere. The priest recited the Psalm with dignity, as if there was anything fantastic in an event designed to praise the decomposition of our bodies. I looked at the sky above and, in that moment, was crushed with its endless greatness. Everybody cried with their eyes looking at the ground, only the tear from my face rolled in the ode to the fading sunset of colors.

Peter grabbed my hand as we were walking towards home. He started to whistle a song. "I'll show it to you after the dinner", he said. We kissed that night with the Smiths' song in the background. And even though it was sad and wet from the tears covering our faces in the bleak moonlight, it had the warmth of a bright future ahead. Next summer he died. Crushed by a drunk driver.

"Dear, give me the bouquet", Mrs Nelson said. I had not noticed we were at the cemetery gates. It seemed so unfair I wanted to cry.

Bob was standing in front of Peter's grave, few meters from me, tall,

dressed in black, eloquent and charming. I felt a sudden flow of anger. I came closer. There was no any grinding from my teeth or shallow breathing. Just an impulsive series of thoughts: I hated the way he ran his fingers through his hair. I hated how he never held my hand when alone. I hated that we compromised on selling my car next month. I hated his papers on Charles Dickens and how he never prepared dinner and always took me for granted. I hated the way he did not enjoy the silence and fresh air of the countryside. I hated his family and their close-mindedness. His homophobia. His selfishness in the bedroom. I hated he only wore black. I hated the fact that we fell apart and had not spoken sincerely in months. And the way I had to silently cross over his passive-aggressive behavior. I hated he had to show his eloquence to others. To be kind, funny and loving to complete strangers. I didn't want to have kids. I didn't want to live in the big city. I wanted someone who would give me warm kisses. And understand in silence. And be lost in the wanderings of life. I wanted someone like Peter.

He noticed I was staring at him. "Babe, what's wrong?"

I approached them.

"I'm not selling my car." Mrs Nelson stood in wonder. Bob was confused. "I'm not selling the Ford," I repeated and put the bouquet in front of the grey engraved stone.

## PRIJEVODI



## DON'T BE BEAUTIFUL

*Nikita Gill*

They keep saying that beautiful is something a girl needs to be.

But honestly? Forget that. Don't be beautiful.

Be angry, be intelligent, be witty, be klutzy, be interesting,

Be funny, be adventurous, be crazy, be talented –

There are an eternity of other things

to be other than beautiful.

And what is beautiful anyway

But a set of letters strung together to make a word?

Be your own definition of amazing, always.

This is so much more important than anything beautiful ever.



## NEMOJ BITI LIJEPA

*Branka Granić*

Ljudi stalno govore, biti lijepa je nešto što svaka djevojka mora biti.

Ali iskreno? Zaboravi to. Nemoj biti lijepa.

Budi ljuta, budi inteligentna, budi duhovita, budi nespreatna, budi  
zanimljiva,

Budi smiješna, spremna na avanture, budi luda, budi talentirana –

Postoji bezbroj drugih stvari koje žena može biti osim lijepa.

A što je zapravo ljepota osim skupine slova koja zajedno tvore riječ?

Budi svoja vlastita definicija nevjerojatnog, uvijek.

To je puno važnije od ičega lijepog.

## 93 PERCENT STARDUST

*Nikita Gill*

We have calcium in our bones, iron in our veins,  
Carbon in our souls, and nitrogen in our brains.  
93 percent stardust, with souls made of flames,  
We are all just stars with human names.

## 93 POSTO ZVJEZDANE PRAŠINE

*Branka Granić*

Imamo kalcij u našim kostima, željezo u venama,  
Ugljik u dušama i dušik u mozgovima.

93 posto zvjezdane prašine s plamenim dušama,  
svi smo mi zvijezde s ljudskim imenima.

## WRITERS ARE DANGEROUS PEOPLE

*Nikita Gill*

Never take a writer  
for granted.

They are snipers  
armed with words.  
They know  
how to aim  
with sentences,  
how to fire with paragraphs,  
and how to immortalise  
their kills in verse

## PISCI SU OPASNI LJUDI

*Branka Granić*

Nikada ne podcjenjuj  
Pisca.

Oni su snajperi  
naoružani riječima.  
Oni znaju  
kako ciljati rečenicama,  
kako pucati paragrafima  
i kako ovjekovječiti  
žrtve stihovima.

## STILLNES

*Michael Faudet*

There is a certain stillness, when even the gentle flutter of a butterfly's wing feels like a hurricane.

The moment when crashing waves fall asleep, peaceful, lost to the serenity of salty dreams.

When tall trees stand to attention and every leaf pauses, takes a deep breath and holds it.

It is here, beneath the maddening silence I hear your name.

An echo of you.

## MIROVANJE

*Ivana Bošnjak*

Postoji stanovito mirovanje, kada se čak i nježno lepršanje  
leptirova krila čini kao uragan.

Trenutak kada snažni valovi utonu u san, smireni, izgubljeni u  
spokoju slanih snova.

Kada visoka stabla stoje mirno, a svaki list zastane,  
duboko udahne i drži dah.

Evo ovdje, ispod izluđujuće tišine čujem tvoje ime.

Jeku tvoju.

## THE DROWNING

*Michael Faudet*

I fell into a sea of tears  
and sank beneath its waves,  
each breath I lost,  
became the cost,  
I paid for wasted years.

To sink or swim  
a question posed,  
an answer lost within,  
a sorrow kept,  
drowned by regret,  
I cry for you again.



## UTAPANJE

*Ivana Bošnjak*

U more suza upao sam  
i pod njegovim valovima potonuo,  
svaki dah bez kojeg sam ostao,  
cijena je postao,  
plaćena za godine koje izgubio sam.  
Plivati ili potonuti,  
pitanje je sad,  
odgovor izgubljen unutar,  
potisnutoga jada,  
utopljen žaljenjem,  
opet za tobom plaćem.

## THE EGG

*Andy Weir*

You were on your way home when you died.

It was a car accident. Nothing particularly remarkable, but fatal nonetheless. You left behind a wife and two children. It was a painless death. The EMTs tried their best to save you, but to no avail. Your body was so utterly shattered you were better off, trust me.

And that's when you met me.

"What... what happened?" You asked. "Where am I?"

"You died," I said, matter-of-factly. No point in mincing words.

"There was a... a truck and it was skidding..."

"Yup," I said.

"I... I died?"

"Yup. But don't feel bad about it. Everyone dies," I said.

You looked around. There was nothingness. Just you and me. "What is this place?" You asked. "Is this the afterlife?"

"More or less," I said.

"Are you god?" You asked.

"Yup," I replied. "I'm God."

"My kids... my wife," you said.

"What about them?"

"Will they be all right?"

"That's what I like to see," I said. "You just died and your main concern is for your family. That's good stuff right there."

You looked at me with fascination. To you, I didn't look like God. I just looked like some man. Or possibly a woman. Some vague authority figure, maybe. More of a grammar school teacher than the almighty.

"Don't worry," I said. "They'll be fine. Your kids will remember you as perfect in every way. They didn't have time to grow contempt for

you. Your wife will cry on the outside, but will be secretly relieved. To be fair, your marriage was falling apart. If it's any consolation, she'll feel very guilty for feeling relieved."

"Oh," you said. "So what happens now? Do I go to heaven or hell or something?"

"Neither," I said. "You'll be reincarnated."

"Ah," you said. "So the Hindus were right,"

"All religions are right in their own way," I said. "Walk with me."

You followed along as we strode through the void. "Where are we going?"

"Nowhere in particular," I said. "It's just nice to walk while we talk."

"So what's the point, then?" You asked. "When I get reborn, I'll just be a blank slate, right? A baby. So all my experiences and everything I did in this life won't matter."

"Not so!" I said. "You have within you all the knowledge and experiences of all your past lives. You just don't remember them right now."

I stopped walking and took you by the shoulders. "Your soul is more magnificent, beautiful, and gigantic than you can possibly imagine. A human mind can only contain a tiny fraction of what you are. It's like sticking your finger in a glass of water to see if it's hot or cold. You put a tiny part of yourself into the vessel, and when you bring it back out, you've gained all the experiences it had.

"You've been in a human for the last 48 years, so you haven't stretched out yet and felt the rest of your immense consciousness. If we hung out here for long enough, you'd start remembering everything. But there's no point to doing that between each life."

"How many times have I been reincarnated, then?"

"Oh lots. Lots and lots. An in to lots of different lives." I said.

"This time around, you'll be a Chinese peasant girl in 540 AD."

"Wait, what?" You stammered. "You're sending me back in time?"

"Well, I guess technically. Time, as you know it, only exists in your universe. Things are different where I come from."

“Where you come from?” You said.

“Oh sure,” I explained “I come from somewhere. Somewhere else. And there are others like me. I know you’ll want to know what it’s like there, but honestly you wouldn’t understand.”

“Oh,” you said, a little let down. “But wait. If I get reincarnated to other places in time, I could have interacted with myself at some point.”

“Sure. Happens all the time. And with both lives only aware of their own lifespan you don’t even know it’s happening.”

“So what’s the point of it all?”

“Seriously?” I asked. “Seriously? You’re asking me for the meaning of life? Isn’t that a little stereotypical?”

“Well it’s a reasonable question,” you persisted.

I looked you in the eye. “The meaning of life, the reason I made this whole universe, is for you to mature.”

“You mean mankind? You want us to mature?”

“No, just you. I made this whole universe for you. With each new life you grow and mature and become a larger and greater intellect.”

“Just me? What about everyone else?”

“There is no one else,” I said. “In this universe, there’s just you and me.”

You stared blankly at me. “But all the people on earth...”

“All you. Different incarnations of you.”

“Wait. I’m everyone!?”

“Now you’re getting it,” I said, with a congratulatory slap on the back.

“I’m every human being who ever lived?”

“Or who will ever live, yes.”

“I’m Abraham Lincoln?”

“And you’re John Wilkes Booth, too,” I added.

“I’m Hitler?” You said, appalled.

“And you’re the millions he killed.”

“I’m Jesus?”

“And you’re everyone who followed him.”

You fell silent.

“Every time you victimized someone,” I said, “you were victimizing yourself. Every act of kindness you’ve done, you’ve done to yourself. Every happy and sad moment ever experienced by any human was, or will be, experienced by you.”

You thought for a long time.

“Why?” You asked me. “Why do all this?”

“Because someday, you will become like me. Because that’s what you are. You’re one of my kind. You’re my child.”

“Whoa,” you said, incredulous. “You mean I’m a god?”

“No. Not yet. You’re a fetus. You’re still growing. Once you’ve lived every human life throughout all time, you will have grown enough to be born.”

“So the whole universe,” you said, “it’s just...”

“An egg.” I answered. “Now it’s time for you to move on to your next life.”

And I sent you on your way.

## JAJE

*Gianna Brabović*

Bio si na putu kući kada si poginuo.

Automobilska nesreća. Ništa posebno, ali svejedno smrtonosno. Iza sebe si ostavio ženu i dvoje djece. Smrt je bila bezbolna. Medicinsko osoblje se potrudilo koliko god je moglo, ali uzalud. Tijelo ti je bilo toliko smrskano da je bolje ovako, vjeruj mi.

Tada si upoznao mene.

„Što... što se dogodilo?“ Pitao si. „Gdje sam?“

„Umro si,“ rekao sam, jednostavno. Nema smisla uljepšavati činjenice.

„Bio je.... kamion i počeo je kliziti...“

„Aha,“ rekao sam.

„I... umro sam?“

„Aha. Ali ne moraš se osjećati loše zbog toga. Svi umiru,“ rekao sam.

Osvrnuo si se oko sebe. Nije bilo ničega. Samo ti i ja. „Kakvo je ovo mjesto?“ Pitao si. „Je li ovo život poslije smrti?“

„Više-manje,“ odgovorio sam.

„Jesi li ti bog?“ Pitao si.

„Aha,“ odvratio sam. „Ja sam Bog.“

„Moja djeca... moja žena,“ rekao si.

„Što s njima?“

„Hoće li oni biti dobro?“

„To je ono što volim vidjeti,“ rekao sam. „Upravo si poginuo i tvoja je glavna briga tvoja obitelj. To je odlično.“

Pogledao si me s čuđenjem. Tebi nisam izgledao kao Bog. Izgledao sam kao obični muškarac. Ili možda žena. Možda neka nejasna figura autoriteta. Više kao učitelj iz osnovne škole nego svevišnji.

„Ne brini se,“ rekao sam. „Oni će biti u redu. Tvoja će te se djeca sjećati kao savršenog u svakom pogledu. Nisu imali vremena razviti

prijezir prema tebi. Žena će ti plakati izvana, ali će duboko u sebi osjetiti olakšanje. Budimo iskreni, vaš se brak ionako raspadao. Ako te to tješi, bit će joj krivo što osjeća olakšanje.“

„O,“ rekao si. „Što će se sada dogoditi? Idem li u raj ili pakao ili nešto takvo?“

„Nijedno,“ rekao sam. „Reinkarnirat ćeš se.“

„Aha,“ rekao si. „Znači Hindusi su bili u pravu.“

„Sve su religije u pravu na svoj način,“ odvratio sam. „Prošeći sa mnom.“

Slijedio si me dok smo koračali kroz ništavilo. „Gdje idemo?“

„Nigdje posebno,“ rekao sam. „Samo je lijepo šetati dok razgovaramo.“

„U čemu je onda svrha?“ Priupitao si me. „Kad se ponovno rodim, opet ću biti tabula rasa, zar ne? Beba. Sva moja iskustva i sve što sam napravio u ovom životu neće biti važno.“

„Nije tako!“ Rekao sam. „U sebi nosiš sva znanja i iskustva svih svojih prošlih života. Samo što ih se sada ne sjećaš.“

Prestao sam hodati i uhvatio te za ramena. „Tvoja je duša veličanstvenija, ljepša i kolosalnija, no što ti možeš uopće zamisliti. Ljudski um može sadržavati samo mali djelić onoga što ti jesi. Kao kada umočiš prst u čašu vode da vidiš je li topla ili hladna. Stavljáš malen dio sebe u posudu i kad ga izvučeš, dobio si sva iskustva koja je on stekao.

„Bio si unutar čovjeka zadnjih 48 godina, pa se još nisi istegnuo i osjetio ostatak svoje goleme svijesti. Da se družimo ovdje dovoljno dugo, sjetio bi se svega. Ali, nema potrebe to raditi između svakog života.“

„Onda, koliko sam se puta reinkarnirao?“

„O, puno. Puno, puno puta. I to u puno različitih života.“ Rekao sam. „Ovaj put, bit ćeš mlada kineska seljanka, u 540. godini.“

„Čekaj, što?“ Promuckao si. „Vraćaš me natrag u vremenu?“

Pa tehnički da. „Valjda, tehnički. Vrijeme, kakvoga ti poznaješ, samo postoji u tvom svemiru. Stvari su drugačije ondje odakle ja dolazim.“

„Odakle ti dolaziš?“ Pitao si.

„Naravno,“ objasnio sam „ja dolazim od negdje. Negdje drugdje. Postoje i drugi poput mene. Znam da želiš znati kako je tamo, ali iskreno ne bi razumio.“

„O,“ uzdahnio si pomalo razočaran. „Ali, čekaj. Ako se reinkarniram u drugim mjestima u vremenu, možda sam nekada razgovarao sam sa sobom.“

„Naravno. To se stalno događa. I kada su oba života samo svjesna svojih životnih vjekova, niti ne znaju što se događa.“

„U čemu je onda smisao svega ovoga?“

„Ozbiljno?“ Pitao sam. „Ozbiljno? Pitaš me o smislu života? Nije li to pomalo stereotipno?“

„Pa to je sasvim razumno pitanje,“ ustrajao si.

Pogledao sam te u oči. „Smisao života, razlog zbog kojeg sam napravio ovaj cijeli svemir, taj je da ti sazriješ.“

„Misliš na čovječanstvo? Želiš da mi sazrijemo?“

„Ne, samo ti. Napravio sam cijeli ovaj svemir samo za tebe. Sa svakim novim životom ti rasteš i sazrijevaš te postaješ veći i snažniji intelekt.“

„Samo ja? A što je s drugima?“

„Nema nikoga drugoga,“ objasnio sam. „U ovom svemiru postojimo samo ti i ja.“

Pogledao si me praznim pogledom. „Ali, svi ljudi na Zemlji...“

„Sve si to ti. Različite inkarnacije tebe.“

„Stani. Ja sam svi!“

„Sada počinješ shvaćati,“ rekao sam čestitajući ti tapšanjem po leđima.

„Ja sam svako ljudsko biće koje je ikada postojalo?“

„Ili koje će ikada postojati, da.“

„Ja sam Abraham Lincoln?“

„Ti si i John Wilkes Booth,“ dodao sam.

„Ja sam Hitler?“ Zgroženo si upitao.

„Ali si i milijuni koje je ubio.“



„Ja sam Isus?“

„I svi koji su ga slijedili.“

Zašutio si.

„Svaki put kada si nekoga zlostavljao,“ rekao sam, „zlostavljao si sebe. Svako dobro djelo koje si napravio, napravio si sebi. Svaki sretni i tužni trenutak koji je neka osoba doživjela, ti si doživio ili ćeš doživjeti.“

Dugo si razmišljao.

„Zašto?“ Pitao si me. „Čemu sve ovo?“

„Zato što ćeš jednog dana ti postati poput mene. Zato što je to ono što ti jesi. Jedinstven si. Ti si moje dijete.“

„Wow,“ uzviknuo si ne vjerujući. „Misliš, ja sam bog?“

„Ne. Ne još. Ti si fetus. Još rasteš. Jednom kada si proživio svaki ljudski život kroz cijeli vijek, narast ćeš dovoljno da se rodiš.“

„Znači cijeli svemir,“ rekao si, „samo je...“

„Jaje.“ Odgovorio sam. „Sad je vrijeme da odeš do svog sljedećeg života.“

I pustio sam te da odeš.































