

The Edge of a Page

The Edge of a Page
New Poetry in Croatia:
Generation 2010+

Ed. Marko Pogačar

The New Who: Or Talkin' 'Bout The Ones After My Generation

This selection, with the total number of verses roughly the size of an average book of poems, was commissioned by *Relations* in a format that is on one side strictly fixed while on the other open to interpretation and authorial choice. The number of authors—seven—as well as the equal number of ten poems by the included author were determined in advance and, right from the start, they seemed like a good and, taking into consideration my insight into the field, a “realistically” set working framework. In the process of selection, which included a detailed reading of thirty-some poetry collections I considered even potentially relevant for the corpus in question, I was led to a conclusion that the probing of the current poetry field presented here would be more precise and critically more balanced if the selection included an

additional system of evaluation—the number of selected poems—and if the whole selection, on account of poetry slots made available in this way, expanded to include another name or two. Nevertheless, it was decided that, respecting the initial idea, we remain within the field of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, where the freedom of selection was completely mine, the principle of equality—the principle I am ready to defend unconditionally and always, except when it comes to art—suggested from “above”, while the brotherhood—as Tin Ujević would have it, “the blood brotherhood of faces” in the poetic universe—is always, following every such selection, at least a little tarnished, which is part of the standard description of a job of every critic and selector who lose and gain their brothers periodically.

The more potent, and by that more problematic, category of selection referred to delimiting the area of selection, setting the “upper” or “lower” boundary, regardless of how it may be defined. It was

suggested that the selection included the poets who appeared and affirmed on the scene after “my generation” and myself as a poet, all the way to the youngest representatives who are still competing for their position in the field. I decided to use the turn of the decade as the milestone—in other words, to take into consideration the authors whose first books of poetry appeared after 2010. In the roughest sense, it also presents a generational watershed, leaving “on the other side” the authors such as Ivana Bodrožić, Branislav Oblučar and Marija Andrijašević, or some other poets who biologically belong to their generation yet have established themselves earlier, such as Ana Brnardić or Ivan Šamija. The lower boundary was not temporal, but it referred to the criterium of at least one independent book of poetry. This, naturally, understands the loss of insight into the most recent developments as well as the lack of that “messianic” look into the future, the projection of the future situation in the field, however, I think that the

character of such selection necessarily demands a certain preselection and a degree of previous verification, and the independent book of poetry—even in these relatively unselective and porous conditions of ours—nevertheless presents a certain threshold. The selection, on top of everything, is aimed first and foremost at foreign readers who follow and perceive the local dynamics with the necessary distance.

The names in this selection have thus been verified in more ways than one: the selected authors' bibliographies include two or three poetry collections, their work has received multiple awards, and the domestic readers are not unfamiliar even with the youngest authors—born in the 1990s—included here. Not many of them, however, had the opportunity to be adequately presented to the international readership; none of the selected poets, for example, have a book in translation.

Even a fleeting glance at the selected texts indicates some rather heterogenous poetics and tendencies,

with the common denominator of all the poets being predominantly raised on the domestic poetic canon, while particular poetic parallelisms, as well as common starting points, can be noticed first and foremost among the youngest poets; they grow denser as the funnel of this selection narrows. From the melancholy of the plains hybridized in the nervousness of the digital age in the poems of Davor Ivankovac to Martina Vidaić's confessional vignettes stretched across the porous foundation of the body and the superstructure of alienated existence; from playful, linguistically induced and simultaneously conceptualized floods of Mario Glavaš to Alen Brlek's paronomasia and the testing of short-circuits in the lexical and semantic fabric of the language; from the phenomenology of landscape and the disintegration of the dichotomy of nature and culture in Goran Čolakhodžić's complex verses to the genealogy, microhistory and emancipation of women dislodged in Monika Herceg's seductive metaphors and Marija Dejanović's

branched out symbolic networks, this selection brings a gallery of fastmoving sketches of the Croatian poetic field after 2010 and its main protagonists, seen through the eyes of the author of this introduction on the already mentioned, predetermined basis of seven folios with ten poems each. This field, of course, is by no means delimited by the ones included here. Let us name, at the very end, just some of the authors who also make it (according to the criteria listed above) yet who, in the very last stage of the selection, so to say, in the photo finish, did not find their place in this edition of *Relations*: Darko Šeparović, Željka Horvat Čeč, Denis Ćosić, Matea Jurčević, Sebastian A. Kulkavica, Katja Grcić, Lara Mitraković, etc. This list is far too short, as if my memory, attention and concentration. Please, dear readers, do direct yours to the poems that follow.

Marko Pogačar

DAVOR IVANKOVAC
(1984)

Translated by Damir Šodan

Screensaver, Heavy Words

Spread above us like a spiderweb,
the most patient God watches over us,
as the stars shimmer silently.
With the initial stirring of limbs, the mouse
 wagged its tail
and the conscious wor(l)d gaped open.
Inside the frame, in the abyss of the screen,
the tables, mirrors and a window
- reconstruction of a symbolic alphabet.
The morning is a two-toned Facebook, its eternal
 bluish-white light
spills blessed heavy words
between the walls, both private and public,
onto the small benches, parks, streets,
onto the bridges and the tables in *Walkow*.
In the third-rate waiting rooms,
in hospital corridors, in life's corridors,

they gallop metastasizing,
modelled by faces and gestures
into Klingon eyebrows and foreheads.
Demolition squad parachutists drop them down
on us, on our lips, ears and eyes,
onto the triangles made of coffee cups,
from the Moon and space stations,
from the passenger and military aircraft,
from the fluffy and stormy clouds,
my God,
how simply, silently and easily
those heavy words fall.

Fractal (Rust of a De-centered Subject)

I.

We even gave away the little that we had.
Separating earthly waters from the celestial ones
precisely like hope from the future
or a lizard from its tail.

In the scorching heat of mined summers, we
lined them up
on the railway rails, soft and dead (like those
people
lying in the streets), waiting for hours,
believing that the passenger train to Borovo
will pass that way once again.

(Fragmented patience still glitters
on the red-hot rails).

II.

They even gave away what they received.
Separating themselves from themselves,
 nightmares from love,
painstakingly like pathos from verse or
defeats from shame.

Look how easily childhood slips off from
 maturity,
leaving symbolism deprived of reality, phallic
like that tank turret standing
at the crossroads in Nuštar.

Stomach pills do not reduce anxiety.

On the Slavonian plains
a bladder stone stands for a cornerstone.

III.

Among the discarded iron,
we gave away to the Gypsies.
Sentiment next to a segment, a fridge next to a
stove.

Semantostylemes are rusting fractally.

This is as depressing as neorealist prose, I thought
loudly.

Then read poetry, some smart-ass added.

Thus, you will at least be left with something, a
can of sardines,

a little blue pony...

split in half by a mortar-shell long ago.

Precisely like separating Russell from philosophy,
a detonation from its consequence.

Statehood Day*

The red button and green pill successfully
pre-empt
an attempt at a new reinterpretation.
Some Croats suspect that Vukovar actually never
fell.
For if it remained living within us this entire
time
it becomes even clearer what our within is like.
Ouch!
Even Davor Ivankovac, the unknown poet
from Vinkovci, is not despite everything
a Neanderthal and a nationalist.

* Statehood Day (Croatian: Dan državnosti) is a holiday that falls every year on June 25th in Croatia to celebrate the country's 1991 Declaration of independence from Yugoslavia.

For a guy from Vinkovci this is a miracle
in itself weirder and greater than hypothetically
waking up
inside of a ping-pong ball.

Which can be reduced to:

- a) orgasmic whiteness;
- b) Arctic whiteness;
- c) blindness from José Saramago's novel,
or more appropriately considering the geography
- d) a Catholic notion of Paradise -
more stupid and boring than Sunday afternoons
in neighborhood bars.

In the calm of the evening, sitting in front of the
TV-screen, I ask myself:
do I believe in any of the above?

Northeastern

Standing at the water's edge, I realised: half of
the land has gone missing!

The stitches on the tablecloth are essentially
equally responsible.

The picture of home at the bottom of an empty
plate.

The ruthless horizon-wide gusts of wind
blew in smoke from the jagged factory plants.

And I saw the northern sky, the city, the
decision:
a translucent crystal in the night. That's how
winter
came, then autumn, then her. She stood there
south-west
of comfort, stiff as nailed laughter.

The fish were hitting against lacquered legs,
against a slipper with a hole, making the cat
twitch its ear.

While God wanted prayers, bites on the hooks of
death.

Just as stillness craved for wind, a basket full of
bread, the ticking of the heart wall.

I was North, moonlight, nothing:
dull pain in the dull corner of happiness.

Just like Mars's surface, I expect fear and horror.
Between them rows of aspens and willows, naked
poplars.
A railway line.

The Promised Land

for Slađan Lipovac

The train in the rain, cutting fields in halves,
thirds, quarters, turfs.

The night won't fall, the fog refuses to spread, just
wet railway tracks and pillars, poles
and concrete stands, all wet, all isolated,
all non-existing.

In swift passing, the landscape is
strange and unavailable, alien life
in faraway squares of light.

We do not enter there by virtue of memory,
a hand or desire,
as they slowly light up and disappear in darkness,
so do we, disappearing, rushing and
as we rush through nothing
our ageing slows down.

In space: houses and emptiness, houses and
emptiness.

On one of the gates somebody had written

HONEY

and we knew right away: this land
was promised to someone else.

Undercurrent

We were putting together a sky, a mountain and
a hut.

We were splitting one cloud from another,
planting trees

at the designated spots, connecting things.

Someone said, “vantage point”

and we glanced at the valley below.

Someone said, “cattle”,

somebody else added, “cattle on a grassy plain”

and we could immediately see them, two, three
of them, then the whole

herd

eating and chewing the cud,

producing milk and other

unbelievable words, almost inconceivable,

for someone had pronounced and denounced

them all,

maybe I took part in the process, maybe not,
maybe I added a stone on top of a lizard or kept
silent.

It was mostly nighttime, sometimes daylight,
we were and weren't aware of it, behind drawn
blinds the world was simply happening.
We placed the mill and the job in the valley,
the river was still, shimmering,
sinking into the landscape, like a cliché.
Through an empty slot in the puzzle
the stream spilled over onto the carpet.

Sick Leave

I enter the supermarket like an axe hitting a fresh
stump.

A poplar, a horse, an eagle circling above, a
security camera.

The canned river water, a lake in a carton of milk,
the pure Croatian air, gathered in eco-cities
along the border, there by the silo
and carbonized hangars for train repairs.

“Bitumen”, I hear, “Bitumen”, what a word!
“Bitumen”, my stomach feels heavy, a bundle
of puke, hunger deposited in a shoe-box.

The shoe-box, an archive for bills, popular
culture, non-culture, light exhibited in wooden
crates

rots inside plants, one rushes just to slow down.
Soft tar drips from the rot, the price tags
sticking to the dry soles, the railway junction

smells of ghosts of steel and hydraulics, up
North,
it's always cold, the animals know me
like they know rain. A breath on the glass,
penciled shapes at discount prices, permanent
highs
and lows, low and lower, even more affordable, as
I enter
the stump as an axe enters the supermarket.

Class Poem

Just as I thought I have finally
finished with all that,
I felt a close presence of the state.
The mailman delivered evidence proving
that I'm not in touch with the new social order.
Failing to see how that differs from communism
and dictatorship, I continued digging
around lilies and vines. Come mid-week
or mid-year walnut blood sprays the axe blade:
its handle once a landing spot for birds
or for a suicide:
it was cut down recently so that it could continue
cutting.
In the distance one hears the barking of chipped
dogs, strayed purebreds,
love for them pulsates in the heart of the satellite

descending from heaven - the invisible and brutal
homeland.

The rust from a knife enters the pig circulating
in the blood of hungry parents: who masturbated
to French crotches of the 70s,
and later they: burned down the movie-theatres,
raped the women
and shot the dogs point blank.

On the radio, under the cherry-blossom tree:
ion motors are riding comets' tails,
robots are digging
our graves in space.

Traffic-Light Poem

It does what a totem does.
On weekends and holidays
it fills out the sky and earth with crimson feathers.
Whom or what? There is some bureaucratic justice
in its actions, some essence from a fish's backbone,
a fossil of spirit.

I carry my thought in the heart of a lead pencil,
cutlery
for a dead cub, Croatian history in ever-growing
rows of styrofoam
volumes stretching across the shelves of antique
bookcases.

Plastic bananas, wooden cucumbers, ceramic
cherries.

I wish I had been born in some other time,
in some other space, as if the Roman Empire had
landed on the Moon,

or to descend upon the Battle of Sutjeska,
out of this world into the same other world,
being able to predict every noon, rain,
the eclipse of the Sun, the state, the Sun, the
nation.

I would really love to get by without limping,
sliding, stuttering,
but the cunning shapes of the body of the text
are switching on, switching off,
switching on, not switching off,
never ending
their hallucinatory logical dance:
like a fire dancing around the enemy.

Shadow Poem

Little by little everything in me darkens:
the corners, the edges, the lemon tree in the corner
of the basement,
under a dim bulb.

The heat enters the pigment like an enemy
enters a mine-field. That's how history enters
these regions,

like the lymph of lightning entering a house
with open chimneys - in and out.

The crouched shadow steps out of the night fern.

A sleepwalker drowned in pigment, a knife
drowned in a pig's, a bovine's, a rabbit's scream.

The shadow of an animal

is my equal,

the fatal merging and loss between footsteps,
never out of sync,

the deadness spreading pollen

only to withdraw yet again into itself, the quiet
gravity.

The leaves in the basement absorb darkness, the
heat gives up,
as I stand and watch
those fruits ripening.

MARTINA VIDAIĆ
(1986)

Translated by Damir Šodan

Blame the Chickens for God's Existence

tonight, my hair is a cap made of coarse wool
disintegrating down my neck and that part
under my forehead (that I call the mind).

the room vomited me out through the window;
so much restlessness made it sick.

the sky is lined with coagulated bloody clouds.
that's what the sizzling inside of a brick stove
must look like,
the one that papa bought at the benkovac fair,
with a little crack on the side through which
the dawn peeks in.

the darkness behind the house is thick with
rattling noises
as if we still keep our chicken coop out there.

we had it for as long as
all our neighbors had theirs
so, nobody was bothered by the smell.

one of the neighbors
recognized a butcher in my father so she kept
bringing him chickens for slaughter.
when the wings began flapping,
she would clasp her arms
and start praying for his soul. she thought
quite rightly
that god should rule over my father
the same way my father rules over that chicken.
just like most creations are superior to its creator.

I did not get close to the chickens, especially to
that grey hen
with hair like radovan karadžić.
I couldn't bear so much power.

tonight, my tissue wants to outgrow itself.
it wants to become that speck that will vomit out
 a new line of evolution.
the chickens know that
this is how every god comes into being.

the consequences are lasting but healable.
the rooster knows how to widen the crack
 in the brick stove,
how to spoil god`s lunch,
how to feed the chickens something raw.

The Beach Next to the Hospital

you exist because of hospitals,

like dummy books exist

for showroom bookcases.

kitchens are decorated with plastic fruits,

surgeons are decorated with blood.

your own tissue conspired against you.

the rebellion is laid bare on a tray,

round and final like someone's hard-won medal.

well-deserved,

for you ran and came first.

then you laid down exhausted on the beach.

female tourists provocatively bared their tits,

each one had at least two.

the sea did not leave enough space

around the table for the dead,

it filled the hole immediately,
remaining equally at service, good-natured
like a nurse, insensitive
like poetry.

Bird, a Plum Fruit

That summer the plums ripened backwards
Their flesh was first dark blue
then green
then it would lighten to a flower

Dark fruits ripen best by way of denial,
by way of those white walls
 that Iva wrapped herself in
before going to each and every party

Iva's folks taught their children that the brain
is best pressed in by hand and Iva's brother
had big hands, so one hemisphere
 could fit each palm

sharing everything in half with his sister

Ripening was there to make us wooden,
filling us with buds from throat to throat

The plums were bursting with confidence, pits
were flying around like ossified tears,
 crushed vertebrae,
each bearing a crooked tree

Later, Iva's brother
hanged himself from a tree
that might as well have been a plum tree

The fruit of dark knowledge
 ripened into oblivion

I saw it, death is an unusually big specimen
of an ordinary private eclipse,
they are everywhere, growing, I saw that,
even on the edges of furniture

Later my eyes grew dark, nothing was
dark enough for one to actually perceive it

I decided: I will wrap a blind wall
around my eyes and resort to vigorous silence
picking the pitch silence

keep silent with the brain's dark hemisphere
to illuminate love,

but that summer
the walls were poorly flexible
The crusts of buds kept on smashing against the
concrete,
as if someone
was about to sing

The Rhythm of Sparrows

come winter father's teeth fall out
stones pulverize punishment
sometimes it's right on target but poorly visible
blood falls down slowly like a Latin curse
this summer I was soaked up by a gadfly's flight
I'm not a cow I'm not a cow
fear is powdered red the expired blood
the gadflies fall along
 with the first winter goulash
how come in inns a cook's head never falls off
it's only the case with birds more frequently pigs piaf
no I don't want to hear the brain rain ever again
here, I'd rather let my own personal head
 hit the table
I'm supposed to dream that I'm five years old
now I can write "I'm falling down"
 and create a knee

then wake up and write down “knee”
when there is a knee in a poem,
 you can surely fall into it
when I’m inside of a poem, I’m five again
each day I must fall down through the years
 for half an hour
come evening I’m tough
 and the hail will drown out the dripping
faucet that drop by drop
 disturbs your composure
the net of fallen hair is like a drawing
 of a bundle of nerves
here, here use a marker to highlight it
 and your eyes will open wide
drop by drop the first signs of gum disease
 are becoming apparent
how badly that blood is colored
the barely visible memento on the white sheet
sometimes I draw the sheets way too high and
 don’t wake up

I'm falling asleep I'm falling asleep pif
when I dream I dream a knee
when I write down "knee" one too many times
 the *windows* fall
when the windows fall so do the profiles
my profile falls when the wall of
 the family house falls
that's the drawing of me
 that w. made in the third grade
the topic was "winter in my town"
I'm simply good at impersonating a fall pif
like snow in a glass snow-globe:

I fall from the bottom

Surreal Girl

I will never be fully realized,

my work consists of staring
at the radiators inhaling and exhaling,
checking if the needle is ticking

Maybe I'm made of those ribs,
for I don't remember myself
from before I saw them

The plant lies above, several pages of poetry,
and even higher above
the square of a well-planned day

The corners of the table,
like stern eyes overlooking
the outcome of each and every movement,

its dull stare intensifying, Soon,
the last traces of sharpness will vanish:

the restless parquet is already
 streaming out of the umbrella
the bones are softening for the coming dark

All I need is here, the world turning
around the chair, the boss:
 an unrealistically small
word for a deity,

the paper cutter
bearing increasingly greyer hairs

I don't want to be fully realized,
only in the most surreal of orders
there is a square smaller than the smallest one,
a gap full of ship sirens,

a happy departure

Five Bloody Poppies

II. The Incorrectly Hanged Woman

To be secretly in love - that means:
to hang one's shoes onto a tree in december:

the foot bones, as sincere as naked branches,
reveal the terrible tree top,

the trunk, stiffer and thicker as the years go by,
the head split into roots,
into the rage hushed by the powdered powder
as it looks for a deeper meaning,

a life in lava, the stomach essence,
But the first flakes are covering the soles,
yet the body cannot catch up with the thoughts

IV. The Woman Eating Herself Alive

To be unwillingly in love - that means:
looking at a nice pair of shoes in the shop-window,
tell yourself audrey hepburn wore these,
trying not to think about belgium
in the second world war

She was so hungry that she ate roots,
as people supposedly do
in north korea Thought
is unstoppable: does life in that country
really resemble a reality show,
let's say the truman show?
Do you know, asks the evil thought, that comedians
usually suffer from depression?

Black shoes fly through your pupils
like the trunk of a hearse:

language leaves permanent consequences

V. Happy Woman

To be unhappily in love - that means:
to organise a picnic for a pop-star
at the foothill of a mountain,
on the tame green plain with no beasts around,

in a red dress so it's immediately clear
what I want to say,
and with a red necklace so that the head
can be at any moment separated from the body

I brought out into the sun
the cheese, juice and a whip,
things that he likes,
so I'll wait for it all to go sour

In theory, he might appear,
in theory, there's a peak
The city is inaudible, the moist palpable,
freedom shallow,
yet absolute

A Girl Looking for Problems, or a Job

Hey hammer, take those nails
so I don't dare build a bird-house,
so I don't resemble myself
while making it:

I fear we are too weak, the circle is narrowing,
and the severity of winter always makes me
a little happy

Hey House, eat that pollen,
your partitions will be more english,
you won't be able to tell one uncle from another

I need the soil to say
whatever it has to say,

so that constructions can become more fragile

My worried relatives are trying to fool me
with paper and plastic sparrows,
the little pollination machines,
polished flowers,

but I know that mortal life lies
buried somewhere underneath all that kitsch

Hey House, eat up that pollen,
eat up those birds,
I want to open the window one day
and see who I really am

Olive Picker:

Come on you olive, try to concentrate,
now I need a bit of rough tenderness,
no love whatsoever, no, no, nothing cruel,
just simple respect for the body,
like a massage,
or preparing a dead body for the funeral

May the oil never turn its back
 on my grandfather,
I'm thinking as I watch the pickers in the fields
clumsily imitating
that one move
 with which he would simultaneously
pull at the branches and ask for their forgiveness

Today, the tree wants to shake me off,
it wants to regain its structure

before the wind picks up
you can already feel the true north in its breath
(The stones, sharp in darkness,
already eagerly awaiting)

In a little while,
all picking will come to an end, so, olive,
concentrate, do concentrate,
for the time comes
when sticking your hands into a nettle bush
will be the only way
for a man to relax

MARIJO GLAVAŠ
(1986)

Translated by Damir Šodan

I.

Men spend their nights wide awake
They bore children from their fingers
In darkness they count atoms of dark like rosaries
in search of their small sleeping bodies
Years later they quarrel with TV-sets
and throw cordless phones against the kitchen tiles
just to prove they are still men
Big and handsome men
With voices deeper than silence
and when they keep silent the silence shudders
They fear loneliness and forgetting
therefore they exude love in great crowds as they sing
and wave their scarves
So that they can be heard
So that they can be seen
They never keep anything valuable in their pockets
The good men

Their hands are always free
and white and long as they brandish them in the air
waiting to find you and
hug you hit you kill you

XVII.

They are waiting on someone or something
Some things men cannot forget
they cannot let bygones be bygones
they are never over it
For men time passes slower
It suddenly starts thinning out until it finally breaks
Leaving them hanging on the edge
Time leaves men
As well as traces upon their faces hands and cheeks
They count the rings of age remembering how
once upon a time night smelled of infinity
Men are waiting patiently standing
next to a wall at the end of a crooked street
They don't come late
they are never late
Here, men are just about to come

XVIII.

Men write letters that never arrive
and bet on combinations that don't win
The coffee is too thick but doesn't last
the tea is so tasty it glistens
If something could last longer or cost less
what would you choose
There is no deposit at the bottom of the cup
There are fingers at the bottom of men
Life can be packed under one's fingernail there is
 no need
 even to push
Men ate all the fingernails and now they are
 chewing on flesh
and sipping tea
It costs the same but it lasts longer

13

(I HOLD A PATENT ON GOD)

The shadows sown underneath the eyelids
smell of fresh arson
Last night the fat eyelashes of supermarkets were
on fire
and bank safes holding firemen's
nacre hoses were melting
Four main characters from the last chapter of the
gospel
stormed through our town
This morning we opened our eyes and witnessed
the changes
The burned down stores
are allowed to stay open even outside
working hours

The Club of Disoriented Leftists

(A BANNER SEXUALLY MOLESTED BY A FLAG)

You come to me in instalments like
high resolution thrills or intakes of breath
Sentenced by sentences we construct our gazes
using old suburban stoves broken glass touches
through which madmen communicate tactilely
as we laugh

Go search my navel and try to find the point
of convergence wherein we begin and end
Remember that spot for there we are eternal
eternally split like protons inside of a Greek vase
Don't look at your watch switch yourself to silent
I know time is impatient but just try
to escape

I secured your spine with the spiral binding
of my fingers so you have nowhere to run
Perhaps this city indeed is a cemetery but what
do you care

for even if you manage to melt reality in a glass
you will
end up with nothing else but a glass full of reality
Yukio Mishima is stitching up his innards on my
grave

Some Things

Some things you can't even imagine
the starved bodies scattered across parallel lines
of a camp's barbed wire
the sounds of the notes from your primary
 school music book
the thick roll of magnetic tape containing
 recordings
from an interrogation
the metal rainbow of the railway tracks
the loose threads of roughly woven clothes of the
 marked ones
a layer of death, a layer of lime and soil above all
the patches of randomly dreamt dreams
the thick rope of reality
the list of names growing like a shopping list
 overflowing past
the edge of a page

the column of silenced words
the music made by notes scattered across parallel
 lines of a camp's
 barbed wire
the thick roll of death, lime and soil
the starved rope of reality
the lose threads of rough railway tracks
the list of randomly picked names
the composition of fabric in the clothes of the
 marked ones
the music overflowing past the edge of a page
the music of the silenced ones
the music and the soil above all
some things

All Over Again

death kneels in the corner of every word
its wavelength and the sound that propels it into
duration
the brass music of a tin can with an imprinted date
and vacuumed contents,
the vocal chords of the one who speaks, the palate
of the one
who remains silent
the branch broken off from the smallest tree in the
park,

therein lies that little word along with its tree rings,
its letters, its amber rosary, beaded time
compressed into its own flow,
the train infirmary, the insect orphanage,
their tiny legs twitching,

many a pickle makes a mickle, many a word makes
you bristle,
words burning on stakes in squares, words on the
walls,
each carrying one death,
there's an igniting spark in every breath of a group
chant,
they can never be silenced, words never die, words
transmit death,
once pronounced the words are there to be used by
others too,
words made to kill,
words durable as wartime tin cans,
made of fleshy vowels and palatal bones,
the words of mass graves, the graves of mass words,
their endurance, their insistence on repetition, again
and again

the wavelength of the column of the murdered ones,
the vocal chords

and palates with imprinted dates,
the vacuumed rosaries in the park,
the tree rings of an endless stake, death kneels
inside each twitching leg, the word

preserved in amber

Plural

Let's take death, for instance
or the lace that nuns from Hvar weave from agave
threads
it's all made of the same, a threadlike metamorphosis
the cut-up lines of sunny hours, enough to ripen
the grapes,
to make dying boil, to drain out the oil from an olive
tree,
to make lavender evaporate,
the essence of supernatural,
distilling God to extract the souls of all those who are
departed,
but departed is too heavy a word,
weighing four tons and nine hundred and fifty grams,
the overall mass of all souls, but then again this "all"
is inadequate for we need a cauldron
big enough

and many logs for the fire, maybe even water,
but they're missing, just listen to that silence,
word doesn't own it, like water, it crackles long after
it's been spoken,
pieces of wood in flames,
a heap of burning eyes, the ember of the departed,
death pinned onto the thinnest agave thread, a whole
 line of deaths,
for it never comes alone, death is never single, however
no one ever pronounces it in plural,
even a single one is too much, plural sounds stupid even,
frivolous,
as if it's not finite,
not nearly as sharp as singular, for singular cuts you up,
a grape vine, an olive leaf, a sprout of lavender
just listen to that silence

Halfness

Melt, melt the snow at the doorstep,
the snow house and snow people that inhabit it
Clear away the past, dig passages through it
long, narrow passages, so that the air can flow, so
that the Sun can enter
Supply skin with oxygen and your lungs with light
for that's the new starting point
those fragile hands of trees, hungry birds and the
spring
bearing fish and still waters
Bouncing a cube of ice from one palm into another
watching in disgust how it disappears, how stiffly
you grow into each other, as it shapes
and fills the gaps of your absence
Hush your movements so that smell is all that's left,
the smell of skin, the smell of sweat, the smell of
estate and blood

circulating disgustingly
inside, it's omnipresent and the heart propels it
intentionally,
propelling you and their grainy halves,
the halves of your grandfathers and late great
grandfathers, that cruel
halfness
keeping you alive
Prolonging life, protecting ice with fire, bursting
into pieces
of light
that will travel beyond the reach of the telescope
accelerating
while remaining inside the unreachable, dusty
present

White

Snow first covers your feet
when you feel it's cold then you know
it fell
It asks you:
you can choose whatever you want you can
 whitewash
 your unwashed face
the ripped off cuticles the sound of ankle joints
even if you leave some traces
the snow will follow you covering them
It's best to move during snowfall
an albino alibi for the coldblooded ones
The first houses are distant
women are not crying loudly in order not to
 awaken the neighbours
violence is always at hand

it has no ground zero
And the snow silences everything

A L E N B R L E K
(1988)

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

The Tundra Skin

It lost its scent, oranges and compassion.
Darkness descended into my throat
when it assented to mediocrity,
demagogy and wind.
I nurtured the north. The tundra skin.
Abloom, the smell of ataraxy in the air.
My eternal typing grounds.

Blue

Today is Sunday, I breathe with eerie softness
like a deer with an arrow in its neck. This place is
thousands upon thousands of hounds rushing
 into my arms.

In the morning, I read the silence of sleepy birds,
 the sound of pots
that always has something to do with the space
 between two objects
from the balcony, equal distance grows.

At noon, I look into the mirror and repeat – it's
 all a dream,
it's all a dream.

Afterwards, I read deep into what was said, wait
 for the symbols
and symbioses, and something else with an s.
 Such as sunset, such as

smiling, to sleep
destiny.

In the evening, I read articles about people
running away from wars and hunger
about the death of poetry and the sea, I cry and
everything tilts into blue.

Today is Sunday, in everything I see a glimpse
of you in everything I wait for you.

Blue

Today is Monday, I write with a needle and
thread.

This is flesh, you. In my chest, the honeycomb
overflowing with royal jelly of the night opens up
the pain

as I pick up the baking powder from a store shelf.

I close the farms and the farms of words

today is Monday. This morning

I saw an earring at a crosswalk,

I passed by six cats that meowed

and one child's pink flipflop.

All of it has to mean something.

Ambedo

Something ordinary should be done
like consent to Monday's knuckle,
drink a glass of water, skip the heart.
At night have less faith in lightbulbs,
determinateness and one's self.
Something simple should be done,
something within a reflex, primitively gentle
like to cover yourself with a blanket
during the day.
Give up on it. Give it up. Give up.
Stop searching for a natural place of a crack,
for time and one's self outside of it
And be happy.
Know that it's not wrong to say
– *I love.*

Describing the Ordinary

For days I've been trying to describe the parquet
floor. The parquet is
insurmountable, it consents only to being
scratched
and is always potentially full of water.
The parquet is an indescribably painful
version of the east,
a space without cherry trees. The trajectory of
palms and
feet into the pain of the lonely person.
I will not consent to death above the parquet
floor,
just as I do not consent to trams, elevators,
clocks, and hatred.
The parquet floor is an indescribably permanent
lack of oxygen
and her.

Describing the Ordinary

The chair is the painless fracture of the body, a
temporary
lack of needs and identities. A respite.
A space of unconditional acceptance.
Equality.
An assumption about levitation
and travel through time.
A reminder of legs and healthy diet,
basic mathematics, waiting.
A proof that someone understood how to love,
a peak of philosophy.

Do Not Object

You get born, and then your whole live you try to
go back.

In the morning with towels, in the evening with
pillows, blankets and
dreams.

Wet ground on your hands is not pleasant
because everything comes out of it, except for
you. You belong to it
yet no one taught you how to die.

Days change flavor, but you seldom change your
taste

and your gait and you are sick, in the end you are
always sick

of yourself. You do not exist certain that you live,
you respect bank queues and traffic signs.

You respect the lifeless because it is present even
when you leave.

Then you yield before commercials, pills
and seasons,
hooked to a marketing IV drip
and wait to return to something like a mother.

Corn Starch

From my window, through my sights,
I watched the antennae on the city roofs,
I took their tops from them.
Your burning hair inscribed a big bang
into my skin, we slid a knife
through each other's feet
and prayed. Love is a slaughterhouse
to which we tirelessly go in peace.

The posts were full of obituaries in various colors,
then Sunday came down. The locksmiths fell
from the sky
right under the wheels and unlocked California.
Thousands of throats came down from the hill
into the water's bosom
to kiss our satiety, because our satiety
did not interrupt anyone's breathing.
I thought two things:
this is Bosnia, no one understands this
yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I fear no evil,
for thou art with me.
Our satiety did not interrupt anyone's breathing,
it was just silence that retracted into little sounds
outside of the bodies and we loved.

This Morning

The city loses its density, the glass in the bones
awakens

warns the birds, the sun tries to be faster
than the production of cutlery.

This morning her eyes closed my hands.

This morning the rails undid my blood
like the sea, my son, this morning

I realized that every one of us is the mother
and the stone.

The Almond

The last of this year's blackberries ripen, the wind
ripens too.

One morning the morning will blacken too and
the dry air will
conquer the lungs
oil wants the body, oil.

The warm cataract on the tongue ripens.

Everything

I say feels like overcooked rice, the coals
it wants.

Oil wants the body, Lazarus, my friend,
almond, open.

Tiredness

The whole winter we read labels, wool-less
we calmly collided with the minus.

The whole winter we combed pines with our
eyes, thoroughly in silence,
unconsciously we developed our telepathic
capabilities

like algae.

We read the tired future from the frostbite scars
because what fats do not remove, remains to live
through,

and much of the last has remained.

After this biology, white biology, will be the
science of
comb teeth.

GORAN ČOLAKHODŽIĆ
(1990)

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

Thorough Preparations

1

Grandma has been dreading the first days of
August,
because they blue the plums, the plums bother
her the most.

Everyone decides on their own trigger of
melancholy:
she took the plums whose reaction cannot be
deferred,
they have to become the blue Saint Elmo and by
that –
already too late – announce the blow of colder
nights.

Week in and week out, the track is kept as the
sunset
shifts back to the east, every year, as if this is
something

never seen before, there's a lament for the fast
shortening of days
(which is always longer then lengthening), the
autumn is lived
for months in advance, the whole year is
subjected to
its departure, to the sweet shiver of
extinguishing.

Invocation of the Elderberry

Perhaps we should bring this exile to an end:
the elderberry is in full bloom.
A calm and systematic tyranny
has long kept the green shoots out of the garden;
 they should come back
they should settle in it in peace,
that's what we want now.
Let them spread their hanging shields
over the hedge, over the shed, when we move their
 house
back here again. They say they keep the evil away,
feed the insects, the birds, and the people;
it seems the elderberries, like hawthorn, also offer
secretive cleansing of the night from darkness.
And as I once looked for you, perfidiously,
to see how I would, among the poppies

and rhubarb leaves, snatch you, stub you, today I
hoarsely
call your name and summon you to me, to break
the fence,
to cross over to our authority,
to forget the feud,
because in our home cosmos
from now on you will be invited to blossom in
peace.

The Hunt

I hunted hares
amply and silently:
the sights killed, there was no shot,
furry sacks falling without delay
into the dry grass of the twilight. They remained
rigid, their eyes open, not a drop of blood
on the stiffened wounds, actually funny,
undangerous in the death that did not
take over a life, so it was transparent.
I wasn't running out of bullets,
and they of death: they kept producing it
all over mounds and gullies.
The autumn descends, that must be it.

The Last Mowing

The last mowing another quiet ritual.
It's not necessary, but it is good,
and it is beautiful, because it takes you back to
 August,
the time when the mowing is as contagious as
 yawning,
when you turn on the engine and go,
and the first time you stop,
you hear the whole choir of engines from
close by, from every side of the world.
We all conquer grass, we play cows,
we play neighbors in the Chicago suburb.

The last mowing is more beautiful and more manly:
you're alone in it, the fog and twilight often settle.
You do something ugly and painful to the grass,
for its own good, like a doctor or a father.

You take care of the machine, you bathe it before
sleep,
you pour out gasoline, you deal, as you never deal,
because you are a philologist, a scribe and a gay,
with oil and steel. In the end
you lock the door, breathing out one, “It’s all done
now” –
the winter can come, the long nights without
growth
spent far away from the soil,
that’s where the sigh comes from.

We Stood and Used the Past Tense

We stood and used the Past Tense
talking about your death –
actually, not about it, because it'd already happened,
we handled it effortlessly like verbs.

We had to deal with an issue or two
about sowing and the spring, the sun;
a few remarks before going to the field,
the lack of encouragement is your expression of trust.

Only about noon, after the fog,
as you cut roots with a shovel,
did I remember I'd also cried at night, woken up,
briefly, toppling over sadness in the dark, like soil

during autumn tilling; it went back
in, into the humus, like an earthworm.

Now both of us push our fists into the supple
darkness,
everything happened before it happened, the soil
is good.

I've Got Some Unresolved Issues with the City

I've got some unresolved issues with the city,
that is, I think that by day we're not capable of
telling each other everything. I make up for it,
whether

I want it or not, at night, when the hedges come close
and the hills start rolling under my feet.

There's a lot of alleys streets arches arcades
there's also a lot of bronze, green from the wet
darkness

in rarely mowed parks.

It keeps sending me from one façade to another
by inconveniently connected tram lines
and it often writes the names of buildings and squares
in completely unknown languages.

It wheels me down sidewalks, thrusts me into halls,
hiding inner courtyards nevertheless –

a proof that it can have lucid dreams, even if I
stagger where I have to
along passageways and underpasses.
And then in the morning it makes me chuckle
and cackle, because I know it braggartly
 multiplies
in me throughout the night, it whitewashes and
 brainwashes me,
trying to make itself appear bigger blacker deeper
pretending to be endless, in vain in illusion.

The Botanical Garden

3

I burn the garden I burn the garden I burn I burn
the street

I soak the fire with snow and tears and wait
wait for the sides of my greenhouse to break
oh when will we have the rain and the snow and
the wind

if not now in the greenhouse

I burn the garden I burn the valerian I burn the
fatsia japonica I burn

oh garden in the middle of the forest
the hospital, the hospital at the end of the garden
the trams
the dead

come, you're so close the fire bangs against your
window

come, help, come and burn

the sides of my greenhouse are breaking and
 everything nestling in it
gushing forth through the trellises the holes the
 frames
the water lilies
the bodies
for when will we have the rain and the snow and
 the sweat and the bodies in the greenhouse
if not now
from the top to the gullet
the backs
the bosoms
the thighs

Much, Much Later

Much, much later, unannounced,
they came –
the gate and the entrance
into the dark fruit forest. The thick mattresses of grass
have reached the height of the undergrowth. In the
unmowed peace
they've been settling for a long time. Just
one meandering path where the hare
ran towards death.

This is where the moonlight burned
the linked elderberry shields; tiny but strong.
They needed to be picked – while the pollen was alive
and quivered
to be quicker than the bugs. Yet leave them
a large honorable portion.

In the north, the path did not
lead home.

The spruces blocked it with their steady growth,
black and invulnerable in a circle.

If you leave once, there's no back, except
by groundwater, by the flap of
the soldier beetle's wings, riding in
the green lizards' saddles, all
across the hidden landmines of onion bulbs,
the devious tripwire stolons
of strawberries in the grass.

I could only go further
through the bushes and step into the woods
that had grown full during my short youth:
there, in a niche in the wall or in the hill,
find a bundle of mushrooms like a crystal growth.

Up front, in the sun, between the hazels
a boy runs with a rifle faster than the hare,
he seems familiar from the end of the century.
And nothing behind him. Dust and silence.

The Reapers

There were:

the river the levee the football stadium
the rundown lazuline hospital grass
before anything yet who cut it?

The past century mowed it all down.

The chaff remained

borne in circles from the Southern
to the Northern Cross in the heads on all sides
of the holy world
from the plastic sea to the mountains of trash.

Upon return:

a soundless hiss of the scythes
flicking in the dark.

The three men from the tenth village
came out onto the hill. Heard from the levee
the last quiet ah of the planet:
they reaped slowly, their faces gaunt

Alnilam Alnitak Mintaka the three
sparkling blue and the song
 quivering like the wires of
a powerline:

*they reap in the last folk costumes
the June wind jingling their scrotums
this is just your cycle returning
the reaping and the cows in tree crowns*

I Instruct You: Walk Along the Edge

I instruct you: walk along the edge
and do not touch the landscape, enough for now,
you'll see it all.

The icy fog dispersed on its own
from the shadow. The tiny warmth told me you
were here

but you did not matter: the sky flashed.

The snow broke, broke straight
like the will of the universe, up there the stars
had scattered a long time ago, the image of what
was what would be –

the strands, the strands of reality in the night
frozen in the bright fields of darkness.

Every sky suddenly
was above us. Through every world
we walked the same. Watching myself under the
light

I watched the light above me
the Hunter and the Lion, the Swan and the River.
The paths exploded,
the hedgehogs in the darkness pulsed under the
snow.

We all knew how to be everything
and the darkness wanted, the light wanted it for us
now.

MONIKA HERCEG
(1990)

Translated by Damir Šodan

*

we're trodding carefully beyond the forest's edge
perfectly aware that down below us
death lies intact
the path accessible only to a few
the passage towards the family tree

we remember we have to beware of amphibians
for if you step on them you go deaf instantly
we remember we should let the snakes pass
 undisturbed
should they get in our way
they swallow down creatures cunningly
just like the milk of the first morning fog
when it begins condensing
infecting all rifts and foothills

moles hide themselves in holes
complementing the clay's softness
the bones of the forest protruding its ribs
in warmer days
to impale careless walkers
who are about to cough up
pomegranates and moisture

we wake up
in the depths of autumn
with hot soles
pierced by a beech rib
always budding
when the Sun's bite tightens
around the naked forest

deaf cats

when the thunderer rearranged the sky
the first bolt of lightning struck our stable
and the second struck young kata

they buried her up to her neck
in the garden next to the onion beds
and waited for two days
for her hands to sprout
out of the wet peat

it was yet another wonder
the villagers witnessed
our deaf cats mewed sadly
unable to hear their own sounds
or the purring of their own insides full of kittens
and mice

while kata wore lightning under her heart
that kept on skipping
like a broken toy

silence

the piousness of snow
wraps around the village in layers
like a cabbage head
the transformation of thoughts into words
depends on the air temperature
and often nothing is traded
between the two languages
except silence
unnaturally smooth and warm
its detritus forcing one into a lasting cough

for as long as there's ember in the hearth
women are sitting
chewing on the lord's prayer
knitting socks

god answers
with the trembling of orion's reapers
too quiet to be heard

birds' deaths

nobody talks about how winter
inhabits the birds
the light grows thick on their feathers
and they begin falling from the frozen clouds
powerless and pregnant with the landscape

inside sparrows the winter eats away
at even the stubbornest of the inner signposts
so they hurtle down from the sky
like kamikazes
onto the layers of white peace

for generations we've kept the secret
that birds don't really die

with the first gush of sirocco
sunspots come alive in them
taking them back to the initial
coordinates

amnesia

one borrows warmth from brandy
plums soak up the sun's spices
so the essence of summer heat
can boil up in the pomace
hurling the dawn towards
the tree crowns
before the rooster's crow
the villagers dine on fire
to peel off the dark's cataracts
the sediments of melancholy from organs
come morning the northern wind
bends drunken necks

last night the neighbor was looking for his
brother
who died a decade ago
his death coagulates next to his lips

every time he dilutes in brandy
the subcutaneous murmur of ancestors

in each night there is an abyss
as tranquil as a barn before a fire
one has to swallow a hot nip of summer
in order not to step aside when the oxen
mad from fire come rushing in again

he said he was on the run and must not return
for someone was severing people's heads
and planting them in the forest
to grow an army

grandma's eye

she laid there all dusty
an old rotten piece of furniture
inside a renovated house
not recognizing us
and in a few weeks time
she melted like snow
so we could carry her on our hands
all around the globe
for she was as light as wool
but we waited for the juices to seep out of her
like syrup from an elderberry blossom
fearing death that gnaws at you from the inside
so slowly that it seems invisible

come february
mother found just one frozen eye on her bed

the cat must have eaten the other
and allowed it to sprout
a whole jasmine bush
out of itself

Hunt

We had to wait for the light to transform
into a mass inside of the womb,
for cruelty to turn into birth
so that the afforestation of Borneo could begin
You often plunge your face
into the grieving stumps
and I know that you're asking me
if there is any sense in
forcing someone to survive in this world
here and now

Mother said
When the milk starts to scream
you must remain brave and silent like a felled tree
She said that the body is porous
and you should not mind
if you recognize the designs

on the kitchen tablecloth
in the chambers of your heart
A bad mother bears
the genetic mutation of solicitude
A bad mother sometimes
gives birth to a good mother

Other women said
your feet would grow bigger,
but from words,
not from giving birth
Outside my belly they are studying
my measurements
A public dance of dandruff,
the evergreens displayed above their lips,
I'm cutting up
autumn in thirds,
puffing a firm skeleton into my belly
just like a glass-blower
creating a stable armature

They observe me stroking my belly
in my mother tongue
baby talking to a beech, a wolf and a nettle
who surreptitiously
hurl themselves down
into a single being

A Short Break before Entering the Yard

The bald head of Tsvetaeva
rolls across the meadow
and this asymmetrical aleph
immediately
begins cutting sentences open
so they flee
the crucial words
for a wireless spring
A poetess:
the unconscious
organ of a poem

A Short Break for Resurrection

The dusty soul of Sylvia Plath
parks itself illegally
into God's neighborhood
having decided:
the entire day out of spite
I'm going to hunt here
for beloved birds
and I will grind their hearts into coffee
for all those senseless conversations
about his incurable
fear
of Eve

MARIJA DEJANOVIĆ
(1992)

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

To Heal a Horse

She's always been smarter than her years:
overtaking, outsmarting, outjumping them.
At seven, she knew how to root willows.
At seventeen, she could heal a horse.

Years kept coming like sphynxes,
asking questions with their sly lips.
She just laughed, she knew:
her words could not help them.

Once she mixed the primrose's shadow
and sawdust from making a table.
She sealed windows and doors with them
it will save us from years.

Still, two years came
dressed as travelers with children.
They asked for a little of her kindness.

She bridled one, saddled the other,
and told them *get lost*
or it's your life.

The Ethics of Bread and Horses

The sorceress was called Sunday
because she always worked
so at least in her name she could rest.
Were she from England, they'd name her after
the sun she deserved. But they're all quiet.
They were quiet when she lost her son,
when she left and took her magic
from the village where she'd grown up in.
By day she picks oat heads
and halves them with her knife.
She burns their bodies. At night she conjures up
her sons in the grammatical double and sings:

*Little white horse,
little black horse.
Little red horses
went to the well of fire.*

In the morning, she buys talking chickens,
sets them free, catches them and breaks their beaks.
Her apron never frowns,
self-imposed repentance is the greatest achievement
in the ethics of bread and horses.

No one needs to know what you think,
she said one Sunday morning.

In her hands,
like a question mark without a dot,
the headless chicken's neck sagged.

The Invisible Bow

Her skull is a tough oval chariot.
Her head a pumpkin that the fairies bestowed a bow.

She tells me: *When they come, it closes up like a fist.*
And emptiness yawns within me.

Human feet enter through the pupils
in soaked-through boots of old hats.
Horseshoes worth observing
come out through the mouth.

Our skulls are an achievement to have
unseen thoughts, so no one can tell
what kind of an animal you are.

Her retina is the queen of taciturn wait.
Our heads are the site of an eternal trombone.

To Double the Profit

Her strength is in the sheers.
Wisdom gathers in her teeth.
Horse magic is emptiness
between two halves of a split kernel of
oat.

People's fortune is read from ashes. They're interested
in future days – who will bring the jars of
honey and will their child fall into the well.
This custom is distant to stable horses.

They use tanned dog hides
to cover their eyes before knowledge.
They come to our willow house
only when they need to double the profit.

*When we visit the humans, we pick herbs.
We sheaf it with a barbed wire.*

*We insert metal nails
into edges of ours hoofs
so as not to injure ourselves when we bring
future to the humans on our backs.*

In the Exercise Room

*Finger against finger, knuckle against knuckle:
glass, plum and bone are the same sign.*

Parts of horse bodies are limbs
whose fractures do not heal, teeth
used to tally the years, tails
from which violin bows are made.
When I'm angry, I prefer to find a table.
I take the smallest knife from the drawer
and slowly carve its legs.

*The stone is the flint and the bread,
parts of the stone are snail shells
whose days the years have eaten into a spiral.*

They'll never take me to a psychiatrist,
I'm a magic horse from the province
and am not subject to human code of
sensible behavior.

The Zoo

The man says: *The hare will never catch the tortoise.*

I reply: You're poisoned with classic idealism.

Afterwards, we don't talk for years.

He tries, I always escape him.

We didn't go to the library or the zoo on that day,
or on any day after that. We always met too early
or too late. Once we watched horses in a paddock.
Afterwards, twice on the TV.

I come to the library and say: I'd love to sleep forever.
In the zoo, I come and say: I'd love to sleep forever,
but so I could wake up, should I wish so.

The Table

A horse without a head with a firmer leg.

Adapted to sit on, but different.

At the table, the shots are called.

The greatest crimes in the history of mankind
were agreed upon at mediocre tables.

The Flood

We all celebrate some kind of a flood.
Once a year, once in a century
the water reaches up to someone's neck and sets free
the furniture, the city, or the cage,
it creates a deluge washed aground.

The water reaches up to someone's neck, someone's
knees, the hem of a dress – of a lady
who walks her wooly poodle in the morning
and has coffee with cream at nine o'clock
tired from leaving her bed.

Once a year, once in a century
a pipe happens to burst.

At nine, the cup is quite full,
the coffee watered to disappearance,

and the body of the wet dog
slowly moves through the water
like a hairy, toothy angel.

The One You Fell in Love With

When I was the one you fell in love with,
I was the sea. The stars knocked on my roof.
I asked: *How should I be?*
You said: *Find two feet and walk.*

I turned into a ballerina
and glided down wires that conducted electricity
from the fingertips to the chest cavity.

If I sway and begin to fall,
the skirt will spread open
like a medusa without water.

White Rabbits

They said: *This will make you grow a moustache
like Salvador Dali and unmarried women.*
Still, bring it to your mouth carefully.

As she takes a sip,
white rabbits peek out of her sweater.

Her name lives in the careful
pulling of the beauty out of the sleeve.

The Notes on the Authors

DAVOR IVANKOVAC (Vinkovci, 1984) completed elementary school and high school in Vinkovci and graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek. He published poetry, short stories and literary criticism in magazines and online journals in Croatia and abroad. His poetry was translated into a number of languages and included in several overviews and anthologies. Among others, he is the recipient of the 2012 Goran Award for Young Poets for his collection *Freud on Facebook* as well as the 2017 Lapis Histriae Award for his short story titled “Monday”. He published three books of poetry: *Rezanje magle* (Splitting the Fog, 2012), *Freud na Facebooku* (Freud on Facebook, 2013), and *Doba bršljana* (The Age of the Ivy, 2018).

MARTINA VIDAČIĆ (Zadar, 1986) published three books of poetry: *Era gmazova* (The Era of the Reptiles, 2011; Goran Award for Young Poets), *Tamni čovjek Birger* (Dark Man Birger, 2016; shortlisted for the Janko Polić Kamov Award), and *Mehanika peluda* (The Mechanics of Pollen, 2018, Ivan Goran Kovačić Award). Her poems were included in *Hrvatska mlada lirika 2014*, an anthology featuring the works of a younger generation of Croatian poets, *Ritualul omului fericit – 18 poeti croati tineri* (2017), an anthology bringing young Croatian and Romanian poets, *Grand Tour (Reisen durch die junge Lyrik Europas)* (2019), an anthology of emerging European poets published in German, as an e-book *L'insopportabile delicatezza della polvere* (2019), as well as in a number of noteworthy literary journals. In May 2019, she published *Anatomija štakora* (The Anatomy of the Rats), her first novel.

MARIJO GLAVAŠ (Split, 1986) published three books of poetry, *GrAD*, *Ciklona* and *Permutacije* (C/Shi/Ty, Cyclone, and Permutations), and a novel *Libreto za mrtve kitove* (The Libretto for Dead Whales). His book reviews and interviews with Croatian and foreign writers were published at literary web portal Moderna Vremena. He organized and hosted a literary show called *Bookara* in Split. At Croatian Radio-Television Split, he edited and hosted a literature program called *Klin se knjigom izbija* and he also hosted and developed the TV program called *Stimulator*. He collaborated with Split based organization KURS on their writers-in-residence program. He is the member of Croatian Writers' Society and he served at the Council for Books, Publishing and Library Activities at the City of Split.

ALEN BRLEK (Zagreb, 1988) is the author of two books of poetry *Metakmorfoze* (Munitionmorphoses, 2014) and *Pratišina* (Ursilence, 2017). His

poems were translated into English, Slovenian, Turkish, Albanian, and Ukrainian. He is one of Croatian representatives at Versopolis – the platform for promoting emerging European poets.

GORAN ČOLAKHODŽIĆ (Zagreb, 1990), is a poet, translator and cultural worker. He graduated in English and Romanian from the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. He published two books of poetry: *Na kraju taj vrt* (That Garden at the End of It All, 2015; the 2017 Goran Award for Young Poets and the 2017 Bridges of Struga Award), *Pred gradom kosci* (Reapers at the City Gates, 2018), while his short story was awarded the SFERA Award as the best SF miniature in 2017. His poetry was published in a number of magazines and online journals in Croatia and abroad, included in several anthologies and overviews, and translated into several languages. Since 2017, he serves as one of the editors at Besplatne elektroničke knjige. He is also one of the participants of Versopolis – the

platform for promoting emerging European poets.

MONIKA HERCEG (Sisak, 1990) won the 2017 Goran Award for Young Poets for her debut manuscript *Početne koordinate* (Initial Coordinates). Her book was published in 2018 and it received the Kvirin Award for Young Poets, the Fran Galović Award for the best work of literature on the topic of home and/or identity, the Slavić Award for the best debut book, and the international Bridges of Struga Award. In the same year, she won the Na Vrh Jezika Award for the best unpublished manuscript, while her book *Lovostaj* (The Closed Season) was published in 2019. She was the runner-up at the 2016 Castello di Duino International Poetry Competition and the winner of the regional competition of humor and satire at 2017 Elemir Ball, as well as the 2019 Lapis Histriae Best Short Story Award. Her poems were published in various magazines and literary journals.

MARIJA DEJANOVIĆ (Prijeđor, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992) grew up in Sisak and now lives in Zagreb. She studies comparative literature and pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. Her poems and criticism appeared in various magazines (*Poezija, Tema, Quorum, Forum, Republika, Zarez, Fantom slobode, Riječi*, etc.), anthologies and online journals in the region. Her poems have been translated into English, Romanian, and Slovenian. In 2018, she published two books of poetry: *Etika kruha i konja* (The Ethics of Bread and Horses; the Goran Award for Young Poets) and *Središnji god* (The Central Tree Ring; the Zdravko Pucak Award). She collaborates with musicians Sara Renar and Vedran Peternel on projects *In Temporary Residence with Humans* and *Flood*, as part of her experimenting with music and poetry. She is a member of Croatian Writer's Society.

The Note on the Editor

Marko Pogačar was born in 1984 in Split, Yugoslavia. He has published eleven books of poetry, essays and prose, for which he received Croatian and international awards. In 2014, he edited the *Young Croatian Lyric* anthology. He serves as the editor of *Quorum*, a literary magazine, and *Proleter.me*, web-magazine for cultural and social issues. He was a fellow of, among others, Civitella Ranieri, Literarische Colloquium Berlin, Récollets-Paris, Passa Porta, Milo Dor, Brandenburger Tor, Internationales Haus der Autoren Graz, Literaturhaus NÖ, Krokodil Belgrade and Poeteka Tirana fellowships. Currently, he is a DAAD fellow. His books and texts have appeared in more than thirty languages.

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