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TWO GREETING

I.

in those sad and bright moments, when you or someone else
stand by the window, where the distant horizons, green,
look into your unconcealable soul, — looking back at ourselves
we see
geese and meadows, horses, wagons by the cottage and
the wind mill

with raised arms. Oh, winds people
hear them in sea shells, whispering among themselves
and then you put the letter aside and lower your eyes:
while robbing the parsonage
two youths raped my young sister caught there unexpectedly

oh, birds
in diaries, returning
for holidays, trains full of students, toward
Lyda

(that linen border
cut about 90 cm, did not fit transferred
into a new representation, hanging
on the wall between
two doors) *Wilia, Wilejka, Žeimiana, Mereczanka*
stretched out, among the grasses, in the currents, among green
swaying
forests, their echo, aldergroves, hopclusters
where the canoe "*kanadyjka*," among the "*wloczėg*'s

at night MKČ in the heavens, reflections of constellations,
of fire, blades of "Scrubbrush"
in the brook the reversed monogram: ČKM: the change
of plans stretched in the depths, the play of light and shadow
where

in the second plan (right before the world's end)
the standing servant, bare-headed, the sixth, unlike
those other five (hatted), independent
of portraiture, and not having to pay the Master

o! on the road from Kėdainiai
with two lowland horses, mother's dowry, by wagon

across the demarcation line (of only not an officer! if only
common soldiers, to let us across with a small "gift")

to Vilnius. And after ___ years
from Kėdainiai
in a post-war freight train
a small blackened dogbeetle, I

crawled in the waste land, in what was once a ghetto, in ruins
to fit in (alone: not sent, placed, seen off
by father or mother) I dug deep into
a dung heap

o! how many beautiful shiny dung beetles
labored there
in a falsified pantomime
"wielbicielei własnych ekskrementow"

(one
even flew through Stalin's window
one night as he was working
and — because of the smoke of his pipe
excrementalized on paper: pan Twardowski!) oh
engineers of horsepear orchard
souls! service of steel skeleton
liniment
superciliating and
self-animalizing
they worked at what they did not know, affirmed what
they did not believe

a band of beetles: and a whitish one
(in that way alone like the white
steed, the
whitish eagle)

the circumcizers' portraits bled
but not the conscience: Monomachas' heavy hat
o! to nuzzle through
strange dung

peace to him!
whitebeetle
from under the whitesteed
from Bubeliai parish, where

the *vytis* is worshipped
(in the dark and neglected land, that's why it was connected
to Poland)
and so in Bubeliai, where

all beetles, even the maybug
are in white surplices
(the composition's cut off part
the architectonic portrayal, the half burned in a fire)

so the whitish one encased in a glass tube
and heated on a fire of spirits
hissed, from the opposite end, persuaded to confess to
zionistic cosmopolitan nationalistic eructations

in exhortations, articulation's papers, collections of whitebeetles
(the linen plowed contours breaking, already on the other
side, in the portrait's
restoration: everything is otherwise: there fed the brook's

blackened;
Jay (in Bereza Kartuska), and the Carp

suffocating in its own aquarium, and the byelorussian
Skurka, out of which the Lord framed
a soviet Tank) poor beetle!
in an animalistic world. Was silent

"donosielski lud przeklęty": its white-
bodiedness, its frightened
nature, was as understandable
as repainting oneself

II.

God God! I shouted, how many
insects in the world, don't step on
the one crawling in the dung, Lord God,
as You walk in the Vilnius countryside, where long ago
poets were
thrushes, canaries, nightingales, falcons
pigs, and where
God's Son died and was buried
in a hat
in a gendarme's cap
but that group of circumcizers, whose semblances in the
name of the world's

flood grabbed the rein
paid much
for the long knocking
for the blood from the nose, phlegm, paid much;
for the Type book of sacrifices
(half of Vilnius died)

and so in that stench
in sewers ruined by war
an insect chorus clamored, and I
sucked my tooth
infected, black
sucked, and the whitish one in the cellar of glass
watched in amazement

later, already old, back in human form, at the story's end
the white white
Bubeliai prince, who had been changed into a bug through lack
of faith, sadly champed in the heart's red
ventricles

the insect's coat of arms, white, on the pillow, beneath
Lithuania's head, alongside the sidewalk

Wilia: Polish name of the Lithuanian river Neris; *Wilejka*: Polish name for Vileika, a town in Byelorussia just over the Lithuanian border; *Żemiana*: Polish name for the Lithuanian lake Zeimena, which is in northeastern Lithuania near the nuclear reactor in *Ignalina*; *Mereczanka*: Polish name of the Lithuanian river Merkys.

"kanadyjka" a Polish neologism referring to canoe; *"wloczeg"* Polish for "tramp" or "rover"

"wielbiciel własnych ekskrementow" in Polish, "an admirer of his own excrement"

pan Twardowski: Polish reference to the man in the moon

Bereza Kartuska The name of a small Polish town

Skurka: diminutive form of Byelorussian word for "skin" or "hide"

"donosielski lud przeklęty" in Polish, "denouncing (or informing on) forsaken (or accursed) people"

Nijolė Miliauskaitė

THE WOMAN FROM THE ARCHIVE

a woman of indeterminate age;
in the fading light
hands folded on her lap

those same days
those same faces
a current carried
on and on

hair full of archival dust
dishevelled, calligraphic
writing, deeply hidden
sadness

on the window
a bouquet of dried
meadow flowers, barely fragrant
in the fading light

you turn and set
next to one another
flowers, dreams, gazes
a fragment of song, a smile

all
of your treasures
at twilight, woman
no one loves

in the nets of psychoanalysis
you might find a few small stones, a black feather, silt
or some tiny box
filled with forget-me-nots

perhaps you will unexpectedly pull out
a black lace dress
given by your grandmother — it fits just right
but there's no place to wear it

such a small dark storeroom
in the half-cellar, heaped to the ceiling
a dusty black piano
you are probably four years old

and your father
and your mother
are so young still
on the facing halves

an icy wind suddenly tears open
the door
you cry and cry
and cannot sleep
you are four years old

night, night, our benevolent
night, let down the curtain
gentle black heavy
dust
will fall on your hair, spider webs
will wrap your body, crepe de Chine
outside the window will blossom
a Chinese rose

in the dream I sewed a black dress
a black dress falling
with deep heavy folds

through the black
transparent lace
stares the windswept night
and loudly
rustling trees

with no regrets
I cut off my long hair
threw it into the fire, let it burn
let it

I dreamed that I dream
that I sew a black dress
a black dress falling
with deep heavy folds

let it burn
so the toad that lives by the well
will not carry it
to its nest

what are you afraid of
it asks me, what are you afraid of
mice, owls, snakes, spiders
bats
are beloved creatures

I sew a black dress
a black dress falling
with deep heavy folds
I sew a black dress

heavy
vapors rise above the thick brew, swamps
stirred by a dried hand
only skin and bones

FOR ROMAN POLANSKI

o Pan's flute! you call to me
in the middle
of the nineteenth century

I am so happy

familiar, comfortable
things: a straw hat
on a round table, a white

dress on a chair, the mirror
you gave me on the dresser, its frame engraved
and a bouquet of flowers

the wind
stirs the curtains, brings up the fragrance
of fresh cut grass, what a remarkable
morning

make love
in fields of heather!

light purple
clusters of heather, dark
sharp heather honey, my head
spinning

my bright
encapsulated world

those three girls, possibly sisters
out for a walk
on Sunday

their whispers
fade
down rustling lanes, their secrets
and laughter

eyelids trembling
like butterfly
wings

he
a few steps behind
with hat in hand

with a quiet
all knowing
all fixing
gaze

that's how you read even
the deepest secrets in my heart

there is still
one more happy awakening after
the sun has risen: the apple
on the warm white windowsill
that someone's hand put down
as I slept (just as it did for my young
mother, long ago, in that distant
house): juicy and fragrant

o summer, o dream!

I know a place where when you
brush your foot across the sand
the sand moans sadly
as if weeping

sometimes
a woman appears there, dressed in black, with eyes
emptied of tears

wind carries her across the sand like
the shadow of a cloud

there was a death camp there, during the war

Kornelijus Platelis

APOCRYPHA

On the road to Golgotha
Ahasuerus is still chasing the man with a cross
Away from his home, while in Jerusalem's custom's-house
Scripture's decoders compose secret documents,
Prepare visas for the apostles,
Study life in the diaspora, strengthen
The net of agents in Rome and in the provinces.
It is essential to evaluate correctly
The Grecian spirit, the hunger in their souls,
Their dreams, repeating for millenia.
(A man is nailed to the cross.)
The world is brutal and old. Gnosticism's ships
Abandon the exhausted civilization
And spread across the Mediterranean Sea, penetrate
Islands and seaside ports.
Reconnaissance multiplies the apocrypha
About the human nature of god.
(Guards throw lots for his cloak.)
Wise men consider the game plan
And that, which is
On the other side of the game, remains for the condemned,
Remains for travellers on this earth, leaving
Meekly one by one, because theirs is the kingdom of death.
A few influential
Workers have plastic surgery.
The stone removed by the builders
Is mentioned ever more often.
Candidacies of martyrs are considered.
In the beginning was Logos.

TRIPTYCH WITH A LAUGHING WOMAN

A glance through the thicket of leaves scalds consciousness.
The sun in a drop of dew, the fragrance of grass,
The raven's piercing voice
Grows in significance
becomes speech
For the fisher's frail body (beneath a cloak of ermine).
The lost carp
leaps in the bright landscape
And drops again, leaving behind a golden glittering.

A glance through the thicket of leaves
paralyzes the joints —
She separates herself from the trunks of trees,
From the brown-headed reeds
that reach to her breasts.
The gold in her skin is like the gentleness
Of fruit, the air is heated with passion,
Drops of dew
in the brown hair on her belly
;Refract the shameless rays of light.

Drawing close she puts her hand
on my chest and looks
Into my eyes the way the black eye
Of this pond stares into the depths of heaven.
And suddenly the landscape begins to tilt: the water pours
Over the banks, the quiet fluttering of fish
Stipples your body, a flash of gold.
It is only
water for washing — I assure myself —
only water
Taken into the luminous midday of existence,
Only living water
(but why does a stream
Of blood writhe in it like a reddish snake?)
;Only baptismal water, protecting
Against death, which hides behind every shape...
Only water,
into which you take another step and
You flutter in the snares of the body,
Golden carp,
fragrant wind of paradise!....

II

Sleep pours across consciousness in a sweet stream,
The sirens' song of oblivion fills my dreams,
Fish wander gassed through coral caverns.
Your body's bottomless depths
Awaken desire, cruelty, fear, and again lull them to sleep.
;In your breathing
full of voices like a forest on a spring morning,
In the clouded pond of your eyes
I can't recognize the reality I've known
for so many years...

I say something in my dream, point it out
To someone with no ears,
Later a procession of pilgrims draws near in fours
With coarse Flemish faces,
change the decorations.
My speech begins to crack

In air filled with sensuous sighs:
to break away!

My arms and legs
Press against the softness of a woman's back,
Stiff masculine body,
The sharp maenadic nails leave red streaks
On my belly and chest,
The tart smell of sweat fills my nostrils...
Later... Two half-circles of backs
Pressed in the soft grass, a snake
Lazily slithers from one to the other, thrusting out
Its two-pronged tongue...
Do you know that desire
When every cell
feels itself separated
From the one loved,
Severed by a sharp sword
and only through the power of fear
Holds within itself the fluid of life?
Do you know the body —
A single bed for a double soul? Night
Changes to day, while this ever-deeper sadness
transfigures the instants of joy.

III

I often watch her in the morning, until she awakens,
;Brushes a strand of golden hair from her face
And looks at me with frightened distrust
And then with a smile...
Later we eat breakfast,
Pouring the milk of daily conversations for each other.
And I say in sudden anger:
Salmakide!
(Drops of coffee splatter from our cups.)
Your bewitching likeness to the daughters of dreams
Enchants me and binds me with the fetters of love
Which are woven by my doubled soul
From the delicate webs of oblivion!
You hide death behind your glittering smile.
Trembling
(and now too with passion) I remember
The other mandorla-like pond,
The treacherous snares
the gods set for us
(And now — the fear of death),
So we would be incarnated.
Salmakide,
Who will show me the way out of you?
Doubled desires. Doubled speech.
She laughs loudly, head tilted back, splashing
The whitened coffee on her breast. And my
Eyes watch her
through a veil of desire
and my
Spirit falls asleep murmuring: they
are only words, only words, only words.