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*Femme écrivain américaine. A son actif s'inscrivent plusieurs livres publiés, prix littéraires et activités culturelles.*

## GIRLFRIEND

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

Miss Claude always talked like she was about to bite it. The old lady only wanted me to feel sorry for her, I knew that. Not that she was ever the least bit sorry for me. But there was no one else to listen, and it was a way to be sure I'd be there to do what she wanted. Take her for a walk, go to the corner store, whatever, and not forget about her which I wouldn't. She'd hold her side and drop a remark about how I should take this or that, the Civil War sword over the mantle, or a wooden radio with tubes, like that, because she was about to go. I'd've done my best for her anyway, I'm responsible on my own without anyone twisting my arm. Ha, ha. I always did my two days a week after school. And she paid me, on time too. She perked up when she saw me, I could tell. The rest of the stuff just washed over the top of my head.

There was someone to come in and clean, but Miss Claude only spoke English so with them it was all pointing and nodding. That particular day no one had answered the door, I found her with the covers pulled up to her chin, her face as white as a sheet of paper. Like some old loveletter, balled into a million creases.

She was pretending to be asleep. "Oh. Napping," I whispered, loud enough for her to hear. I started to back out.

The eyes opened in a nanosecond. "Bring me a glass of water, Young Allen. It's this infernal backache, probably a kidney, I haven't taken a morsel today."

Miss Claude always called me Young Allen, even though I am sixteen years old. That's to distinguish me from my grandfather, old Allen, who she knew. They were neighbors in the old days when everyone around here went to that old dead Dutch Reformed church. I went into the bathroom, a whole ten feet from her bed. Her tooth glass was empty, and the sink had drops of water on it. I filled the blue glass thumbprint tumbler, which according to her was a valuable piece. Colonial, of course.

"Thank you, Young Allen." I made as if she was too weak to hold it herself, bending over and so on, and she shot her hand out and snatched it. "Thank you, I'm not that sick." And she bunched the old white eyebrows into a major frown.

"In fact Miss Claude, you don't look sick at all, you look especially nice today with your hair already combed, and your teeth in, too. That kidney must have kicked in just before I got here. Do I see you have your slippers on under the sheet?"

She started to look embarrassed but right away she said, "My feet were cold. Poor circulation, I've told you. Not that I expect your sympathy, of course. Step out while I dress myself, please." She handed me the glass and pulled her hand back under the spread and pressed at her side, frowning up at the far corner of the ceiling as if she were in too much pain to remember I was in the room. So I walked out.

She took two minutes max because as I expected under the covers she already had everything on. I didn't mind, though. I was glad it wasn't one of her really bad days like the week before, nothing but moaning and then we don't go out, just sit there. And I have to read to her, can you believe she doesn't have a TV? Today was the first break in a week of rainy days, too nice to sit inside even if you're paid for it. At least go to the Park, if she couldn't do more than that. Forget checking on that empty church, forget stopping for her caramels. Just sit, relax, and speculate about everyone else in the park. Maybe a lecture about her ancestors.

I opened the front door, watching the street. No kids—not that I cared. My foot started tapping even though it was only two minutes as I said until the parlor doorknob squeaked and there she was, little gold earrings screwed on and hair all tucked up, reaching for my good arm.

"Hungry for sunshine, bright boy?" Stick in hand, little net bag over her wrist. "What're you waiting for?"

"For a certain old lady to get done with her makeup," I said right away. If I'd said, Nothing, she'd have been disappointed. She had a fresh dash

of pink stuff on each cheek. She could use one of those magnified makeup mirrors, but I've checked and they're way expensive. She's old, anyhow. If she has no idea, what's the difference? I'm the only one who visits Miss Claude, me and that old retired last minister of the dead church, she's even older than him. My Mom stops by on her lunch hour, when she can. "What're you waiting for?" I managed to say it before she got her stick onto the doorstep. She pursed her mouth and jerked me out the door.

Locking her door is complicated, not just because of the three locks. If she keeps holding onto me she has to do the locking herself because of me only having the one good arm. If I let her go so I can lock it she has to find a good spot for her stick and get her other hand on the wall. I looked at her, because it makes no difference to me.

"You do it." Either she wanted to prove she was way tired today, or she wanted to show she was strong enough to stand alone. It was a hard choice for her. "If you had two good arms it wouldn't be such a production, sir." Nothing stops Miss Claude, I'm telling you. She thumped her stick between some bricks, it's a brick walk, and placed two fingers against the door frame, like she was holding up the house.

"If I had two good arms I'd be playing football, not babysitting you," I told her. Which I think is true. I pulled her keyring out of my back pocket, careful not to pull my five out with it, and turned the locks, one two three, no problem. Seems I was meant to be left-handed which is lucky, since my right arm got totally screwed when the doctor was yanking me out. My Mom told me the story a million times, I won't go into it here. All I know is we never sued because it was Mary Immaculate Hospital and my Mother is a good Catholic unlike my Dutch Reformed father's family. So zero money for me because a good Catholic does not sue Mary Immaculate. Period. My Dad researched it, I heard a lot about it before he split. We coulda had millions, etc.

So, not having millions, I continue to earn my four bucks an hour by politely offering her my good arm and escorting her down the mossy old walk and out to the curb. The park is right across the street, four blocks square, and on a clear fall day like that one it is a fine place to hang out no matter how poor the neighborhood gets, sitting on a bench in the sunshine with acorns falling around your head and listening to an old lady tell stories.

We walked straight out to the curb, it took a few minutes because she actually does have a bum foot. Born wrong, like me. She has a special

shoe when she goes out but still it doesn't point straight, and even with the extra two inches of built-up sole she walks funny. She hates how slow it makes her these days. I stopped and surveyed the traffic, easy since all the streets around here are one way.

"We're jaywalking again, I see."

"Sorry, Miss Claude. I didn't realize you wanted to walk to the corner, stand there waiting for the light, and cross on the green with some baby carriage bumping us or a dog on a leash to trip you, and then walk all the way back to your favorite bench right across there. My mistake, let's go."

"Too late. All this standing on the curb, I'm already tired. Cross us and get it over with." She bent forward and put her stick down on the street, taking me with her. "At least you have two good eyes, that's a help. You are paying attention to the traffic, aren't you?"

We tottered across and up, she'll keep going as long as she needs to, over to her bench. "The usual, Ma'am? Or something exotic, perhaps the next bench? Or cross over that way, the one by those Indian ladies?"

"Oh, I think this will do. Perhaps they'll pass us by later." She made a small hiss, like something pneumatic sitting down. "Perhaps they'll circle the Park to look at the old gal with the handsome escort." She looked at me with that twinkle she knows how to shine at you. Pleased with herself, for bothering to get out of the house at all. And maybe, thanking me for helping. And she was right, seems like women do check me out these days. Even smile, sometimes, but then, like all my life, whether they're Asian or Hispanic or European or whatever when they see the arm, they'll look away. Do the pretending thing, I'm not here and they're not there and no one has seen anything, and that's that. I'm to the point where I don't even think about it. Like the kids in my high school, ignoring me because I'm not a jock, and, I mean, what gang would want me?

At least the old lady can talk about it, doesn't act as if there's something terrible we can't mention. I stuck out my legs, settled back and closed my eyes, ready for an hour of nonstop lies about the old days. Sometimes she has to hand out helpful advice, I should do one-armed pushups, start an after-school computer club. Rah rah stuff she never does either. "Interrupt yourself if you see anyone good-looking coming this way," I told her.

I could have pulled out my Walkman, but she hates that, and anyhow I've heard every track I own a thousand times so I watched the kids

playing in the leaves and the dogs running away from the cops and I let Miss Claude ramble on about her Sacred Ancestor, Rufus King. This park was named after him. She's not lying, I looked him up in the Library. He did sign the Declaration of Independence, another true thing. And he died on his farm right in guess where, here, in Jamaica, Queens. So this Park is all that's left of acres of cows and sheep and corn and who knows what. Apple trees. Horses? His big white house is right in the middle, it's a museum now. Of course when I'm here it's never open. I could ask her sometime when it is, but that would encourage her. They say he was against slavery, it would be neat if that house was an Underground Railroad stop. But when she starts with how her ancestors owned land from here to Boston, and the Civil War general in the State of Washington and who followed who and who stole it or how they frittered it away I tune out. My Mom says her family hasn't had real money since 1929.

Miss Claude's own house has gone way downhill, it needs everything from a new roof to bars on the upstairs windows now the neighborhood got so poor. The second floor is locked off since she can't do stairs anymore, and the downstairs windows do have bars. A couple of times speed junkies got in upstairs and trashed everything looking for money under the mattresses. The police caught them, high and ready to fight. At least word's out nothing's up there. Which is true, except mouldy dresses and stuff. I looked myself. With her permission. Nobody's bothered her since, she never even put the glass back. She says broken glass is a better deterrent because people can see it's empty. By better she means cheaper. Rain and squirrels get in, but I guess it's her house. She has lived a pretty long time.

I was looking over at the old house, all peeling, and noticing how sad it was, with the roof on the old turret tipping, about to slide. Thinking, if I had two good arms I could at least put in the glass and meanwhile she was going on about the old Rufus King estate up in Massachusetts so I sat up and looked around and saw a little Spanish kid playing with his grandmother in a big drift of maple leaves and I poked Miss C in the ribs and pointed at them.

"Want to play in the leaves with me, Grandma?" We don't have to explain ourselves. And we never apologize, she doesn't so why should I?

Every time the kid would jump into the leaves he'd bury his face and the Grandma would clap her hands and shout "?Hola? ?Hola?" The kid would laugh hysterically.

They were maybe fifty feet off, in a pile of leaves blown up against the spiked iron fence. "You're way too big for that little heap of leaves. Or are you expecting me to jump in and hide myself? Humph." And she thumped her stick at her own joke.

I grinned too, that was the whole idea. It was a good moment, people strolling and kids playing in the sunshine and nothing bad happening, why get upset about an old house turning into a wreck. Jamaica Queens, crossroads to the world. West Indians and Asian Indians, African Americans and American Africans, Spanish people from South America and Europeans from Spain and Italy, even a couple of gimps descended from the English. All out for a nice day in the park, and so far so good. That's when I noticed someone else.

All right, it was this really pretty girl about my age walking along the path and going to pass our bench in a minute. She had thick black hair and eyebrows and big dark eyes and I think when I spotted her she looked away, quick. Over at the grandma and the little boy. But then she laughed out loud at the kid spraying leaves in the air so maybe she hadn't noticed me.

I kept smiling anyway hoping she would look back and even if she didn't, she really was pretty and not at all city-girl tough looking. Just before she got to us, lo and behold she saw me and smiled back. I was on Miss C's left side so my good arm was stuck out along the back of the bench, my little arm was sort of up against Miss Claude, behind the sleeve of her coat. There was a chance the girl wouldn't notice anything. Which she didn't, I winked and she just sort of laughed and smiled as she walked.

"!Hola!"

That was not me. It was Miss Claude herself. Seemed she had noticed something, and decided to cause trouble. I didn't even know she could say any Spanish. I almost jumped in my seat, I would never have said anything, first. But the girl stopped.

"Hola, Senora," she said. Just like that. I guess it's okay when an old person says something. "Nice day, isn't it?"

"Very nice, signorina. Or is that Italian?"

"It is senorita, in espanol, senora."

"And it's a nice day in English," I said. "Senorita." And I smiled some more, but I didn't move. No point getting in her face and all. She nodded and seemed to be hesitating so I asked, "Know them?" I waved over at the grandmother and kid. With my left hand.

"Yes. That's my grandmother. And my little cousin."

I was glad it wasn't her kid. People have been leaving my school pregnant every year since eighth grade. The action some guys get never fails to amaze me. I didn't know her, so I figured she must go to the Catholic school. They're supposed to keep a tighter lid on the students. Maybe. "You going to jump in the leaves too?"

That made her giggle. "His mother wants him back, I came to tell Grandma." She made a face. "She won't like it. I have to get them both to go home now."

"Let them have their fun, dear. Sit down by us for a minute, and tell us your name?"

I nearly fell off the bench but Miss C looked like absolutely nothing was happening. And the girl sat. She settled on the other end of the bench from me, sort of balanced on the front part. Like not exactly nervous, but looking over at the fence and back.

"My name is Sondra." She nodded and waited, serious.

"My name is Claude. You may call me Miss Claude. And this is Young Allen."

"Miss Claude. Allen. Very nice to meet you. Are you also the grandmother and her grandson?"

Before I could answer Miss C said, "No. He's not my grandson. I have never married, my dear. Therefore I have no progeny, unlike today's movie stars and young people." She patted the back of her hair, touching at the big tortoise shell pins she sticks it up with. "Young Allen is my date."

"What!" We both shouted it, then we looked at each other and laughed.

Miss Claude looked smug. "It's my charm, Sondra." And she twinkled at the girl, who smiled back. Miss C was looking pretty cute for an interfering old lady, but Sondra was beautiful. She even had perfect teeth, and probably not from orthodonture.

"Your charm?" I gave the old lady the evil look I've used since my savage kindergarten days. "Any woman who wants can date me, for four dollars an hour."

Sondra looked confused, but the old lady thumped her stick and nodded.

"Yes, yes. And worth it at twice the price."

"Really?" I said, and I raised my eyebrows. "I could use it, Grandma."

Now Sondra really looked confused.

"I haven't got it, don't get any ideas," Miss Claude snapped. "You make me tired. All this fresh air and sunshine makes me tired. Why don't the

two of you go over and bother that other grandmother?" And she put her hands together on top of her stick and made to lean her head forward and close her eyes. "Give Sondra a hand with retrieving her cousin, Young Allen. Let me alone, I want my siesta now."

Sondra looked at me, like she was okay with that, but not me. I was annoyed. I knew what the old witch was up to, it had to be obvious to Sondra too even if she did think it was a fine idea. But a girl like that would have a boyfriend already. And what was the point? A casual chat with her on the bench like everything was normal, that was plenty for me. That was a lot. Sondra saw me frowning and got up right away, now we were both embarrassing her. I was sorry but it still didn't make me want to stand up in front of her. The old lady opened her left eye and peered at me, next thing she'd be pushing me off with her stick.

"Miss Claude, I'm supposed take care of you until I get you back home." I kept my voice easy, like nothing was happening. "If some jerk comes along and does something while I'm over there, my mother'll kill me."

"Buenos dias." I was almost relieved when Sondra turned toward the path but Miss Claude was quick, wide awake in a second and grabbing her wrist.

"Wait, Sondra dear. It's not you." She whipped back her coat sleeve and there was the old right arm, in all its tiny puppet glory.

"He didn't want to scare you. He doesn't mind talking about it, if you don't."

Which I realized was generally true, most of the time. But she had spoiled my nice little personal moment, making some kind of truth in packaging statement, and I did mind. I was ready to leave the both of them and head for home, for the privacy of my own room at the top of a ten story building. Close the door and boot up the old computer. No employers, no pretty strangers pretending my right arm didn't exist. It was only four-thirty, no Mom home either.

When guys gang up on you, you're better off not running. If you have to, a swift kick where it hurts. Taking off is a final option. But this time the old hag had gone too far. Let her get herself home. Let her new best friend Sondra get her home. I shook myself to my feet and prepared to stalk away.

"Young Allen?" Sondra was looking straight at the arm. Right at the

freaky little thing, and I realized, she could see it. Unlike everybody else on the planet. So, I waited. "That is an accident of birth, is it not? The herida, your arm. How do you call it in English?"

"My arm? I call it Arthur. Hah, hah. Sorry." Stupid, obscure reference to a sixties rock group. Actually, to myself I call it, Buddy. "It's an Erb's palsey. And yeah, it's a birth thing. These days you don't see them, they cut the kid out."

"With a good doctor it does not have to happen." She sounded angry. "You should have been paid a lot of money for unnecessary and permanent damage. I am going to become a lawyer and I intend to help people who are wrongly injured."

"Don't get yourself all in knots about it," I said. "It's my problem."

"You have been hurt and should be compensated. Because of that Erb's you can't play sports, right? Nor can you drive a car. Or even ride a bicycle."

Actually she was right about the car, which was one big reason why we didn't move out to the burbs with all the extended cousins. Buses and subways required for the one-armed bandit. That, and my mother's good job. Here in the Courthouse, over twenty years now. "So what? I can run fine, faster than most. I could play tennis if I wanted. I surf the net, I'm the best one-handed gamester on the web." I stopped myself, what did she care?

"Oh, on the Web? Young Allen, the one-armed Spiderman?"

"Good girl, Sondra." Miss Claude cackled and did her thing again with the stick. I guess she liked the way her game was playing out. "You have backbone, and brains too."

"Thank you. I also have—never mind. I must go and persuade my grandmother now. It was a pleasure to meet both of you." She shook Miss Claude's hand, looked at me and back at the fence.

I looked at Miss Claude, who nodded her head about five times, so I gave in. "All right, all right. I'll come along and evaluate your powers of advocacy."

"Advocacy, like un abogado?"

"Right. If you can talk your grandmother into leaving I might hire you."

We started walking.

"Sorry, Young Allen, but you are too old already. To go to the law, I mean. Ten years is too old. Unless you are a really really mature nine years?" She looked at me demurely.

I laughed and told her I was a really really mature sixteen, and she laughed. Then she sighed, and said, "I am fifteen and it feels like forever until I can go to law school. Did you ever try to make the doctor compensate you?"

So I explained about my mom the good Catholic. "You're a Catholic? You look like one of those George Washington types."

"That's my father. His family all went to that empty old church up the block. He lives in Canada." I haven't seen old Dad in years, I just wanted to make it clear I knew who he was.

"That's a creepy place." She shuddered. "Those blank windows, and all dark inside." I mostly think it's just sad, with the stained glass sold and gone, but I could see her point and I was agreeing with her as we reached Grandma and the kid.

The grandmother was tiny, and all bent over looking at the boy who was now on his back, swinging his arms and legs like he thought he could make a leaf angel. We stood and watched until they noticed us. Right away the old woman took her hands off her knees and straightened up a little, but not much, frowning.

"Ques hora es?" She looked at me and back down at her grandson right away, like we should both go away.

"I told you she wouldn't want to see me." Sondra was talking behind her hand. "She won't believe me the time's really up."

"I got that." I understand a little Spanish, you'd better if you grow up in Jamaica, Queens. Of course if it's Cuban, that makes it more interesting.

"She speak any English?"

"A little. But she understands, more than she lets on. Let's go, Roberto. Mami's waiting!" Sondra was smiling, holding out her hands to the boy.

The old lady turned to me. "?Ya es hora para irnos?" Looking very suspicious. Clearly she didn't want to believe Sondra. I didn't say anything, just showed her my watch, on the good arm, and smiled as she peered at the dial and up at me, shaking her head like it was a conspiracy. Then her face changed. She'd noticed my other arm. She turned her head away like it was bad luck to see a withered arm or something, and spat. "¡Inocente!" She hissed, and grabbed the little kid by the hand. She pulled him up and started hobbling away down the path, bent back and all.

"!Abuelita!" Sondra turned and looked at me, clasping her hands, but I shrugged. By now nothing bothers me, even an old Cuban lady who thinks an Erb's palsey means a person is simpleminded. Some people

actually think you can give them cripple cooties, if she was afraid for her precious grandson I could only feel sorry for her.

They were almost at Miss C's bench, so I just said, "Let 'em go, we can follow them. They go home, you don't have to do anything." I joked about it. "She's right, I am innocent."

"But I am sorry, Allen." Sondra was trying to smile back but embarrassment was winning out. "She's always that way, but—not this bad. Sometimes I think she's growing crazy."

"Maybe, but look at the bright side. Your old bat's making great time, almost up to my old lady." Which is where we caught them.

Sondra ran right around in front of them and stopped her grandmother. "Grand-mami! Por favor, esperate." She took a deep breath and said, "Miss Claude, may I present to you my Grandma Senora Eloisa Maria Lugo. Abuelita, Miss Claude. She is our neighbor."

Senora Eloisa tossed a quick nod at Miss C and then whispered to Sondra, good and loud as if Miss C and I were too deaf to hear "tres brazos" and "cinco piernas."

I had to laugh. Three arms and five legs, that just about described the two of us. Sondra looked at me again but this time she had tears in her eyes. I shook my head, no problem. Except the little kid started jumping around pointing, "Five legs! Five legs!" He got that out about two and a half times before Sondra slapped her hand over his mouth. She held on while he jerked and twisted like a madman.

"Madame, your manners disgrace your family." Miss Claude was suddenly teetering to her feet and thumping her stick on the ground in front of the little spitfire. "These two young people put you to shame."

"Sondra! No time for this—no tengo tiempo para un tullido que no puede cuidarse!" Senora Eloisa faced Miss Claude. "O usted, old woman!" she snapped. Miss Claude just looked blank, and I didn't get all of it, myself. I told myself let it ride, let the old lady get the heck out of the park and on home.

But not Sondra. "They are my friends!" Now she was mad, too. "How can you say that?" She lost her grip on the kid and he dived under the bench and balled himself up. Grandma opened her mouth but Miss Claude got in there first.

"You old fool! It's his arm, I believe the trouble is his arm. Do you realize this Young Allen is a straight A student at Jamaica High School, and his mother runs Judge Jenkins' whole courtroom? He has a brilliant

future, not to mention a family going back practically as far as mine, you, you—you immigrant!”

That was nasty. I tried to put my arm around my old lady, steer her away before one of them had a stroke or something. She shook me off.

Grand-mami was just getting warmed up. “Immigrant! Con su permiso, no para nada vivria to this America esta muerta la imitad del ano!” Now her back was straight as a ramrod, and she was shrieking up at Miss Claude, who was looking completely blank. “I would no have abandoned my home if—si no fuera par mi hijo y ese carajo de revolucion.”

“The revolution? !Aqui no hay ninguna revolucion, abuelita!” Sondra again.

“The Revolution. How dare you talk about the Revolution!” Miss C trumpeted. That word, she understood. “My ancestor fought in that bloody war. To make this a free country where anybody, even the likes of you, could come and live a good life. Safe, prosperous and free.”

“Please, no, please! Miss Claude, she is a little crazy. Please understand, she had to leave Cuba because of Castro. Leave her whole life behind. Her oldest son was killed, my Mami says she is never the same. My uncle was—handicapped,” she finished softly.

“Well, that’s irrelevant now,” snorted Miss Claude. “In America it’s your brain that counts. This boy is a computer genius,” and she darted a quick look at me, like, keep still. “Don’t you go yet, young man. Time’s not up.” Screaming fights I do not need, I was absolutely ready to leave them to it.

“Es muy bueno con las compus,” Sondra announced, pointing at me. Like, me being good at computers was supposed to mean something to Grand-mami?

“Take my e-mail?” I said quickly, smiling. I was hoping she’d laugh, break it up, but no, she took a breath and started in again on Senora Eloisa.

“His grand—, his friend Miss Claude, she says in America, la mente y no los musculos.”

“Es muy bueno con las compus, Sondra,” Grand-mami said right back. Making sure Miss Claude knew Sondra was as good on the computer as me. That did surprise me. “El ni siquiera pode hablar porsimismo.” And she sniffed.

That did it. “Talk for myself!” I shouted. “Con tres damas ya hablando deja, senora? And not even listening to each other?” I threw up both arms, and the fingers on the little one flapped at Grandma. “Listen, Miss

Claude. Three women talking all at one time, and she's asking why I don't defend myself." I glared at all three of them, standing there with their mouths hanging open.

"Just, don't you three start in on me now." I was sure I was as good as finished with Sondra after that but to my amazement she started laughing and even Grandma cackled once, by God. Miss C smiled serenely.

"Young Allen, perhaps living here in Jamaica you are becoming more Latin than you think." Sondra was holding out her right hand. I looked at her. What, was she some kind of freak freak? She put her left hand on her hip, kept her right hand stuck out there.

"You have a right hand, sir. I don't think anyone cut it off."

So I stepped up and got the floppy hand under her hand, then I bent over quick and kissed the back of it. Thinking, now I'm the crazy one.

Sondra laughed, a pleased sounding laugh. "Es un caballero de Espana, abuelita." "Mas o menos. Su Castellano es muy malo."

"Now my Spanish is no good?" I pulled out my notepad, and smiled. "Good as your English." I scribbled something and handed the page to Sondra. "My e-mail, Senorita Abogada. Do you have a card?"

"Not yet, smart guy." But she slipped it into her jeans pocket and now she put both hands on her hips. "!A casa, abuelita! !A mami, muchacho!"

So they walked away, and I watched her a couple of minutes, thinking, nice. Everything in the right place, when there was a sound beside me. I hadn't noticed, Miss Claude was sitting down again, and she was looking funny.

"Miss C? Miss Claude?" She was almost blue. "Miss Claude, I'm calling 911." She was breathing, but barely, I wished to hell I knew CPR, there must be CPR for one-armed people, because how about in wars? "Hold on, I'm calling." I just got my mobile open when she whispered something. I leaned over and thought I heard, "Wait." It came again, like distant wind. "Just wait."

"Fuck waiting! You're going blue!" I felt her cheek. "And cold!"

She made a sound, I had to lean in. Sounded like, "Language, young... man." Correcting my manners with her dying breath?

"Shut up!" I shouted. "Shut up while I talk!" She jumped, and her eyes cracked a gleam. It was right in her ear, I guess I blasted the old brain. I whispered, "Sorry, Miss C, but let me call." Next thing I knew her withered fingers were creeping around my phone and she was whispering some more. I put my ear to her mouth.

"The excitement. Too much. I need. Rest." She drew out the last word, made it sound so peaceful, and final.

“Miss Claude.” It’s hard to whisper when you’re desperate. “You need oxygen, or a shot, or something. You could die.”

She started making a funny little sh, sh, sh noise and unbelievably, I realized, she was laughing. And laughing. When she stopped the blue was gone from around her mouth, there was even pink in her lips. “Dance on my grave, if you dare.” She whispered it, and then she laughed that laugh again, only it finished in a little tinkle.

I was up so close I was practically breathing down her throat, her face gone all blurry like your fingers do when you spread out your hand flat against your nose and suddenly I saw shining up at me the biggest, bluest, widest eyes, as deep as any girl’s I ever saw and I just froze, bent over, and knowing for an endless moment everything some old beau must’ve felt about seventy-five years ago, when he gathered up his courage to move in and she gave him the treatment. I couldn’t speak, I just stared without breathing, believing in my body the warm, serious, delicious promises I have never ever allowed myself to hope for in my life until finally she squeezed my hand and shut her eyes tight so I saw all the wrinkles around them and then she let go. She patted my cheek softly and covered her mouth and did it again, almost too quiet to hear. Sh, sh, sh.

I sat up right away and for a second I thought I was going to puke. A hard-on for a hundred year old lady? Whoa, gross. Way too disgusting to tell anyone. Never, ever, not even to a priest, if I did ever go to Mom’s church again. I was definitely the crazy one in this park today. Senora Louisa was right, I must be an idiot. As far as I was concerned, if Miss C didn’t want 911 she should just go home now, as fast as possible. Time was definitely up for me. I was still shaking my head, sweating, when I heard her clear her throat. She was sitting straight up, like nothing had happened.

“Not planning to die until I’ve taught you a few things, Young Allen.” She thumped her stick. I jumped, but she waved her hand, don’t worry. “Now that you’re finally growing up. Yes, I know you’re six feet, and probably more to go, but what do you know about women?”

The silence was embarrassing. God, was this about the birds and the bees? She smoothed her hair again and laughed. “Just a few airs and graces, my dear. What is it they say? Information to your advantage.” She looked off into the late afternoon sunshine, I suppose remembering.

“Okay, Miss Claude. So how come you never married if you know so much.”

“Spanish Flu took the only man I didn’t think was sorry for me, or after my money.” I nodded, I got it. She nodded back. “Of course. You’d rather be alone.” The stick thumped again but this time I didn’t bother to jump. Of course she could read my mind.

“Get me home now, dear boy, I need my bed.” She took my good arm, and I helped her up. “Next week, we’ll talk.” We started the shuffle to the street but then she stopped and put both her hands on the stick. “Hiding in your room and emailing a lovely young woman is not a life, sir.” The old eyebrows were doing their bunching thing. “I know what I say.” “Oh, yeah?” I was thinking, what’re you talking about? Butt out, lady, your creepy solitary life in your falling down house has nothing to do with me. I stared at her and she stared right back until I finally saw, like, oh yes, you do know.

I put little buddy across my chest and bowed. Then I gave her my good arm and I helped her to the other side of the street and up to her door, both of us pretty quiet.

I put her to bed, and I didn’t tell her but the whole time my mind was running on Sondra. I decided that was all right, though.

### Keith Garebian

### کیٹ غاربیان

Canadian poet, critic and biographer, living in Mississauga, Ontario (Canada). With 16 published books and various prizes (the first two-time winner of the Mississauga Arts Award for Writing, 2000 and 2008).

*Poète, critique et biographe canadien, vivant à Mississauga, Ontario (Canada). A son actif s’inscrivent 16 livres publiés et différents prix (le premier à avoir gagné deux fois le Mississauga Arts Award for Writing, 2000 et 2008).*

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### MISCELLANY OF POEMS

(extracts - *extraits* - extractos - مُقتطفات)

DEATH IN FIVE SEGMENTS

1

The vulture waits for the starving  
black child's eyes to close,  
day a blur of heat.  
The eyes have an awful longing,  
vulture's bare head poised to forage  
in their hungry sockets, pull out booty  
by its nerve ends.  
Everywhere the sandy wasteland grows,  
Somalia letting more death in.

2

Battered by a bomb in the dead of night,  
bodies, young and old, tangled in sheets  
lustrous in Lebanon's moonlight.  
Survivors' concerns are narrow:  
there are limits to what they can do  
in the horrible debris.

3

In Jerusalem, old men made of suffering drink.  
Women made of Ruth drink.  
Hope rises in bubbles of wine,  
fresh fruit on tables.  
Lovers remember burnished leaves  
erotic attachments.  
At the stroke of midnight  
rockets glare down at the city,  
every room a flaming arras,  
bodies rushing from the inferno.  
Father with his father  
on his shoulders, holding a young son's hand.  
Mother, huddled in a bathrobe,  
gagging on smoke. Age and gender  
have no connection  
with the order of things.

4

The smell of napalm in the morning,  
beloved by certain men, not God.

Men in love with the fury of bombs,  
 concussive or fire.  
 In villages and cities, civilian deaths  
 are collateral damage,  
 offshoots of shock and awe.  
 In such places -Vietnam, Baghdad, Nagasaki -  
 time lurches with woozy nausea,  
 falling hair, flaming skin, lost spectacles,  
 women clasping babies in a death grip  
 among the light-shuddering foliage.  
 The rage to burn, scar, obliterate  
 takes an eternity to die.

## 5

To stand outside history  
 is to stand outside time  
 where pain is a spectacle  
 or a fruit to be peeled  
 in small segments, coloured,  
 scented quarters.  
 But bodies are summer fruit  
 only in poems; in the real world  
 they are inventory of a butcher shop.

## TEOTIHUACAN

An old woman, wrinkled brown apple face,  
 offers authentic beads for sale,  
 her toothless mouth puckering pitifully.  
 The ground is broken, gritty,  
 worn by tourists who have learned to say  
 “*Non, gracias*” as the vendors swarm,  
 pleading for sales.  
 The pyramid’s small, broken stone steps  
 lead closer to the sun,  
 where boy hearts and virgins were carved for the god.  
 A young woman carries blankets  
 she has made from tassels of *agave*,  
 their bold colours, her anxious face  
 brighter than the stones and dark walls.  
 She has starving children,  
 her eyes plead *por favor*;

heart beating loud,  
 as I loosen the money pouch around my waist.  
 She wants to kiss my feet,  
 but I move away, her chest heaving with relief.  
 The sun god is ablaze.

### THE LAST QUEEN OF HAWAII\*

Doomed the moment her people  
 let Europe and America in,  
 Maui's body cut in two  
 by mangling machines in her invaded  
 country, dawn abdicating  
 all sweet fruit and fish  
 to industry of rampant aliens.

And they kept coming, sweeping  
 aside her royal coach, her gems  
 perfectly cut by centuries,  
 rubies like red tears washed down  
 with wine which lingers on the tongue  
 in a bitter after-taste.

The islands stolen by stealth  
 in a subtle costume drama  
 of cut-throat dances.

Heavy with Christianity, she labours  
 in her austere room, a song bird  
 singing to God, benison to herself.  
 The tramping of soldiers' feet  
 outside her polished door, a sign  
 of the cold, rigged legality of it.  
 The walls relinquish nothing,  
 everything waits in Iolani Palace  
 as she cuts up coloured squares  
 and patches, fabrics from her glory days,  
 choice clusters, dark earth  
 stretched to a cloudless horizon,  
 remembered sky of egg-shell blue.  
 Narrative breathes from mute patch-work,  
 in midnight's drag and star shudder.

\* *Queen of Hawaii from 1891-1893, when her country was usurped by America, Liliuokalani was a Christian scholar, songwriter, feminist, and lover of the world. After her arrest, she was kept under tight house arrest in her summer palace in Honolulu.*

**86- Keith Garebian**

٢١١- كيث غاربيان

She has shape but no power  
in her royal quilt, changing  
with each new patch of inner stress,  
pieces of her life trying to break  
out of her solemn cage and soar to the highest point  
where broad-backed leaves lift the sky  
over rugged earth.

These were only pieces, history  
in small messages of fine stitchings  
and patterns living backward.  
She couldn't mend the mistakes of the past,  
she was that past, transparent with misplaced love,  
unable to empower her patient dream  
with bible and aboriginal tales, plumeria  
blooming, broad leaves glistening  
in morose gardens, gunboats in the harbour.  
All her good and cherishable deeds ransacked  
by those who came after, telling  
the past is a point of no return,  
no miracle of faith, only sighs  
on the lips burning with loss.

**María Teresa Sousa Couto**

ماريا تيرزا سوسا كوتو

Spanish Argentinian short-story writer, born in Sabucedo, province of Ourense, living in el País Vasco. With several writings, and prizes.  
*Nouvelliste espagnole argentine, née à Sabucedo, province d'Ourense, vivant au pays basque. A son actif s'inscrivent plusieurs écrits et des prix.*

**NOMEOLVIDES**

( full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

La muerte es tan lenta... juguetea, me desarma día a día a pesar de que lucho por mantenerme erguida, por mantener en pie lo que muchos años me han dado, por mantener un rescoldo de la vida que yo cobije en mi seno. Son los recuerdos los que me mantienen, yo que he pasado tanto, ahora solo me queda recordar en el silencio porque a aquellos que amé y me amaron, que protegí y me protegieron se marcharon hace tiempo.

¡He perdido a tantos seres amados! Mi familia, mi gran hermosa familia, cuántos sueños, cuantas alegrías y también cuánto dolor cuando alguien se nos iba, como el pequeño Darío que nos lo mataron durante la guerra civil por el simple hecho de ser demasiado joven para ir a filas, nuestro niño, que se fue contento con su hermano y su tío a segar, emocionado por la aventura de viajar lejos de esta pequeña aldea gallega, a las tierras de Castilla, que fueron las que le acogieron para siempre cuando fue abatido por la bala de un desalmado que al grito de “si no es de los nuestros no será del enemigo” segó su joven vida, o Serafín que emigró para la Argentina prometiendo volver, promesa que nunca cumplió, lo perdimos también para siempre.

Fueron duros tiempos los de la guerra. El miedo, el hambre y la incertidumbre dominaba todo, las conversaciones y los corazones, pero aquí nunca nos faltó un fuego en el que compartir pesares pero también esperanzas de cambio, de paz.

Muchas anécdotas se dieron en aquellos tiempos duros, como el de nuestro refugiado que nunca jamás confesamos, el de aquel joven que llegó a la huerta de la parte de atrás con ojeras y ropas raídas, huía de la guerra y lo escondimos, solo quería vivir, estuvo escondido entre las maderas del techo, a pesar de que los que le persiguieron rebuscaron y rebuscaron, no pudieron encontrarlo, y nuestro joven secreto pudo vivir para contarlo, la última vez que lo vi fue cuando vino al sepelio del abuelo José, ya tan anciano como él y durante la larga noche del velatorio recordó con gratitud los duros días de cautiverio forzado entre telarañas.

¡Me duele tanto la ausencia de mi gente!, el dolor lo llena todo y es lo que hace que me encorve a pesar de mis denodados esfuerzos por mantenerme erguida, porque no, no quiero darme por vencida, a pesar de que veo como mis viejas amigas van desapareciendo engullidas por la soledad, la pena y finalmente por la muerte. Me estoy quedando sola, la vida se escapa de esta pequeña aldea, la ciudad con sus promesas se llevó a los jóvenes hace décadas, ahora solo vienen de vez en cuando convertidos en adultos de sienes plateadas y arrugas en la cara.

Por suerte yo recibo la visita de años en años de una niña a la que vi crecer durante los veranos, ¡cómo disfrutaba de los paseos por el campo con las vacas, del ordeño, de la fragancia de los nomeolvides plantados en la puerta, de dar de comer a las gallinas pero sobretodo de escuchar los sonidos tan diferentes de la ciudad donde había nacido! Ahora esa niña es una mujer, que se sienta en silencio y me observa con los ojos del ayer, a veces me habla y me cuenta sus recuerdos y yo que estoy muda me esfuerzo por prestar atención y por transmitirle mis recuerdos, a veces cierra los ojos y sé que lo que hace es recuperar aquellos días que compartimos, noto su nostalgia y melancolía porque es igual que la mía.

Sé que le duele mi decrepitud y en parte se siente avergonzada por el abandono al que me veo sometida, porque al igual que yo sabe que sin vida en mi interior la muerte avanza inexorablemente, sé que siente una mezcla de sentimientos encontrados, por un lado se siente ligada a mí a pesar de mi decadencia pero a la vez le gustaría no volver a verme para no enfrentarse a la pérdida de su propio pasado, resignado a unas simples piedras, madera y tejas que poco a poco se van precipitando, curvando indicando como muero lentamente.

Cada verano cuando se marcha pasa sus manos por mis deterioradas paredes mientras susurra un “por favor no te derrumbes” y yo desde mi silencio forzado grito a través de mis paredes, techo, suelos, piedras y maderas un “por favor vuelve”.

Ella se da vuelta, coge un ramito de nomeolvides y sonrío.

### Mary-Joe Freiji

ماری-جو فریجی

Lebanese student with several hobbies: acting, drawing, dancing and writing. Born in 1993, she hopes to be in Hollywood in 10 years!

*Étudiante libanaise passionnée d'interprétation, de dessin, de danse et d'écriture. Née en 1993, elle espère arriver à Hollywood dans 10 ans!*

!

### WHEN TEARS FALL

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

**WHEN TEARS FALL**

When tears fall,  
 And begin to crawl,  
 Slowly from my eyes,  
 To die on my lips,  
 I see all your lies,  
 And my dead feelings sailing in your ships...  
 Your ships of sorrow,  
 Leaving me in a dark deep hollow,  
 Your ships of death,  
 Stealing what was left of my breath...  
 You were my everything,  
 You were my anything,  
 I thought I loved you,  
 But you broke my heart in two...  
 Now I know I hate you,  
 At least that's what I think,  
 But when I close my eyes, I see you,  
 Smiling at me and giving me your attractive wink...  
 I hate that I still remember those days,  
 I hate that I still remember your dirty ways,  
 But what you did to me,  
 You can't be forgiven for, even by THEE...  
 Why did you break my heart?  
 Why did you take the biggest part?  
 Have I ever did you wrong?  
 You knew my love for you was strong!  
 When you left I didn't even bother to say Good-Bye,  
 But I bothered my heart to cry,  
 To cry out what was left of pain,  
 But it's coming back grain by grain,  
 Making me remember why we are apart...  
 I wish you'd leave me alone,  
 And one day from your love I'll be grown,  
 But that day will never show up,  
 And I will never grow up,  
 From that black love I chose,  
 And now we're both biggest foes...  
 If I loved you, I'd stop hating you,  
 But if I hated you, I can't stop loving you...  
 Although in body we're a million miles away,

And all we see when we hear each others names is gray,  
Our souls are so near,  
And that's what I only fear...

### I LOVE YOU STILL

I woke up in the middle of the night,  
And started to scream with all my might,  
'Cause that awful dream kept coming back to me,  
Kept coming back to haunt me...  
I see your sweet face floating high,  
Then your car passed by,  
And with a blink from you,  
The world turned into blue...  
We heard a strong sound,  
So we both turned to look at the ground,  
To find your car smashed,  
'Cause in the wall it crashed...  
Your death keeps hanging around my head,  
Making me role in my bed,  
And leaving my eyes wide awake,  
Praying for your sake,  
Then I stopped to look out the window,  
Then I stuck my nose in my pillow...  
Tears dug their way and landed on the ground,  
They fell silently without making a sound,  
I called your name over and over again,  
But I stopped and asked GOD: "Then...?"  
Then what? Lord, help me,  
Bring him back to me!"  
Then my voice faded away,  
And a light made its way,  
Through the window and onto my bed,  
Then I heard your voice which said:  
"Your tears make me bleed,  
'Cause my love for you won't end indeed,  
Don't ask HIM for my return,  
'Cause I never actually left,  
I know your heart still burn,  
'Cause death took me away from you by a theft,  
But one day we'll meet again,

**91- Mary-Joe Freiji**

٢٠٦ - ماري-جو فريجي

Sadly no one knows when...”  
My tears flooded my face,  
When your voice went away leaving a grace,  
I took your photo and looked at your smile,  
And my voice elevated in a while;  
“I loved you then,  
I love you still,  
I’ve always have,  
And always will...”

**YOU AND I WERE MEANT TO BE**

You and I were meant to be,  
All I could see was you & me,  
But you decided to walk away,  
Leaving me here remembering the day,  
The day we both hate,  
And now I am closing its gate...  
It was your day with the boys,  
And you were planning to make some noise,  
You left your hangout club,  
To visit that awful pub...  
You and your friends never stepped in it,  
But it was your day to pay it a visit,  
After half an hour you stepped aside,  
And directly my number you dialed...  
I was at the movies,  
Watching one of the oldies,  
I answered with a smile,  
But it faded in a while...  
You told me how much you loved me,  
And no matter what happens that your heart will always be with me,  
I heard the noise and asked what’s wrong at the club,  
You told me that you’re with the boys at the pub,  
This made me jump to my feet,  
And run to the pub’s street...  
When my friends and I entered,  
We found the place deserted...  
I stood searching for you from the door,  
Then I saw your body lying lifelessly on the floor,  
I looked at your pale face,

92- Mary-Joe Freiji

٢٠٥ - ماري-جو فريجي

Then I got closer in a slow pace...  
My tears started to fall,  
And I glued my self to the wall...  
I started to shout: 'Why?  
Why did u let him die?'  
Then I ran outside calling you and looking at the sky,  
'Please come back! I don't want to say goodbye!'  
Then my friends took me to my house,  
Where in my room I sat like a mouse,  
Crying and blaming my self for days,  
Praying to see your pretty face...  
One night I closed the windows,  
And in my pillow I stuck my nose,  
I called your name out loud,  
But nothing made a sound...  
Although a cool soft breeze cuddled my face,  
And a note fell on my bed on it the word 'my grace',  
I unfolded it and read:  
'You're wretched to loose me as a person,  
But lucky to win me as your guardian angel!'

Mihaerla Dordea

ميهايرلا دُرديا

Romanian authoress and critic, born in 1955 (Bucharest - Romania).  
With several works and prizes.

*Auteure et critique roumaine, née en 1955 (Bucarest - Roumanie). A son  
actif s'inscrivent plusieurs livres publiés et des prix.*

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DINCOLO DE TĂCERE/AU-DELÀ DU SILENCE

(extracts - *extraits* - extractos - مُقْتَطَفَات)

*Texts in Romanian and French.*

## UNU

Aș putea începe această confesiune cu „a fost odată”. Așa încep poveștile. Toate, la fel... Un vis cernut frumos în iarna universală, când gândul se topește în cuvânt. Povești. Da. Pentru că ceea ce s-a petrecut timp de nouă ani a fost ca o poveste.

Noi suntem o poveste, îți dai seama? -îmi spuneai uneori. O poveste adevărată cu un prinț, o principesă... Mai era și un rege... și o iubire. O iubire de poveste... Adiere de suflet, care din vis a devenit viață, cu bine și frumos, cu lacrimă și zâmbet, cu fiecare clipă transformată într-o minune!

Și chipul tău adus în prezent de pe porțelanul chinezesc al uni vas antic pe care îl contempul cu o sămânță de lacrimă încă neîncolțită, într-o galerie de artă sub cerul lucrurilor eterne. O poveste fără sfârșit! Curge încet în clepsidra timpului ieșit din calendar, nisipul amintirilor visate. Trec alunecând pe sub bolta visării sub vălul opac al blestemului de a căuta înțelesuri oculte. Pentru că nu știu unde începe, unde sfârșește, în zădărnicia mea de a o domoli, eternitatea. Nu știu unde ești, nu știu unde sunt, unde se află acea caleașcă a timpului în care încăpeam amândoi... nu știu cum să-mi explic toamna de anul trecut și cea de acum doi ani, și alte toamne și ierni care nu pot fi parte din trupul unei negații. Simt în mine clipa și știu că a fost! Și chiar așa! *A fost odată. A fost...*

## CHAPITRE UN

Je peux commencer cette confession par: "il était une fois". Tous les contes débutent comme ça. Tous.

Un rêve tamisé, avec délicatesse, en un hiver universel où la pensée fond en paroles. Des contes... Oui. Parce que ce qui s'est passé pendant neuf ans a été un conte de fées.

*Nous sommes un conte, tu sais?* - tu disais parfois. Une vraie histoire avec un prince, une princesse... un roi aussi. Et un amour. Un amour inhabituel! Un souffle de l'âme qui, du rêve, est devenu une vie réelle avec des joies et des tristesses, avec la splendeur d'une larme dans un sourire, chaque instant se transformant en miracle!

Ton image prend une forme maintenant: je contemple un vase antique de porcelaine chinoise avec un grain de larme pas germé, dans une galerie d'art sous le ciel des choses éternelles. Une histoire sans fin. Elle s'écoule doucement dans le sablier du temps brisé par le calendrier, le sable des souvenirs rêvés. Je glisse parmi mes pensées sous le voile opaque de la malédiction des significations occultes. Parce que je ne sais pas où commence, où se termine, dans ma vaine tentative de la modérer, l'éternité. Je ne sais pas où tu es, ne sais pas où je suis, ne sais pas où se trouve cette calèche du temps dans laquelle nous nous tenons tous deux. Je ne sais pas comment expliquer l'automne de l'année dernière et d'autres automnes et hivers qui ne peuvent pas faire partie de l'organisme d'une négation. L'instant existe même en moi, et je sais "qu'il a été une fois"...

#### Mohamed Rabie

محمد ربيع

Palestinian writer and professor of international political economy, born in Jaffa (Palestine). Studied in Egypt, Germany and the United States of America; holding a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Houston (1970), he taught at several Arab, European and American universities.

With several published works in Arabic and English, he conceived, in 1988, the idea for the US-PLO dialogue, drafted the original document that guided negotiations, and coordinated secret contacts that led the US government to recognize the PLO.

*Écrivain palestinien, professeur d'économie politique internationale, né à Jaffa (Palestine). A étudié en Égypte, en Allemagne et aux États-unis d'Amérique. Docteur en économie de l'université de Houston (1970), il a enseigné dans plusieurs universités arabes, européennes et américaines.*

*Avec plusieurs livres publiés en arabe et en anglais, il a conçu en 1988 l'idée du dialogue entre les États-unis d'Amérique et l'Organisation de Libération de la Palestine, écrit le document original qui a guidé les négociations, et coordonné les contacts secrets qui ont abouti à la reconnaissance de l'OLP par les États-unis d'Amérique.*

95- Mohamed Rabie

٢٠٢- محمد ربيع

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### السيرة الذاتية لمُخْتَرِب/FAREWELL

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

#### FAREWELL

I want to be free  
To fly so high  
Like a little bird  
That roams the old blue sky  
And never say why  
  
Go faraway places  
Enjoy the sunrise  
Stories of the simple and wise  
Listen to the whisper of the wind  
Discover the secrets of the sea  
And follow the steps of ant and bee  
  
I wonder and wonder why  
Have I waited so long  
Before I could even cry  
Let so many dreams grew old  
Fade in the dark  
And slowly die  
  
I want to forget the place  
Where smog is so thick  
It stuffs the nose  
And blinds the eye  
Where the air is wet  
The road is wet  
Men sweat, smell and smile  
But hearts are dry

**96- Mohamed Rabie**

٢٠١- محمد ربيع

I want to walk alone at midnight  
When the moon is full  
And dreaming is right  
Where stars are beautiful shy  
And clouds pace the sky

Where silence is longing  
And air is soft and dry  
Where dreams are born  
In a twinkling childish eye  
To live there forever  
And never fade or die

I want to be a little star  
In a beautiful night  
To shine and smile  
And make all things right  
For lovers to embrace  
With beauty and grace  
And make shadows run  
And hide their gloomy face

I want to be just me  
Naked without a leaf of a fig tree  
For all people to feel and see  
What it means to be truly free

Play, sing and dance  
Whenever I have a chance  
Read and write  
Laugh and cry  
And never, ever say why

السيرة الذاتية لمُعْتَرِب

97- Mohamed Rabie

٢٠٠- محمد ربيع

98- Mohamed Rabie

١٩٩- محمد ربيع

**Naira Kharatyan**

نيرا خرناتيان

Armenian poetess, journalist and piano teacher, born in 1962 (Armenia).  
With several writings and cultural activities.

*Poétesse, journaliste et institutrice de piano, née en 1962 (Arménie). A son actif s'inscrivent des écrits et des activités culturelles.*

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**ԱՐՏԱԳԱՂԹ/ ՏԱՂ ՎԵՐԱԴԱՐՁԻ**

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

*Texts in Armenian by the poet,  
and in Arabic by Mgr. Georges Yeghéyan.*

**ԱՐՏԱԳԱՂԹ**

Բառերի բույրը իմ հոգում,  
Ատղերի բույլը՝ երազում,  
Մեր ու կարոտը ձեզ թողած՝  
Ես հեռանում եմ քաղաքից:

100- Naira Kharatyan

١٩٧- نَيْرَا خَرَاتِيَان

Աշխարհի դեկը կորցրած,  
Ապրելու իմաստը լուռ պարպած,  
Ապտակի մորմոքը հուշերում՝  
Ես հեռանում եմ քաղաքից:

Օտարի բարքը մերժած,  
Դրացու ձեռքով խաչված,  
Հոգուս երգերը բաժանած՝  
Ես հեռանում եմ քաղաքից:

Տիրոջ սուրբ աջը՝ սատար  
Առաջ ձեզ՝ հետո ինձ թող լինի,  
Էհ , թողեք անցյալս ձեզ ընծա՝  
Ես հեռանում եմ քաղաքից:

Լռովա համբույրը աչքերիս ,  
Ընկերոջ պաչը այտիս,  
Գալու եմ դեռ , լավ իմացեք...  
Ես հեռանում եմ քաղաքից...

تهجير

...

### ՏԱՂ ՎԵՐԱԴԱՐՁԻ

Պատրանքների քարավանով լուռ հեռացար ,  
Կիսասօտար եվ կիսահայ՝ հոգնե՞լ ես քո երկվությունից ,  
Երագախաբ – տաք հուշերիդ բնակավայր  
Կարմիր – կանաչ տարիներդ  
Հատե՞լ ես քո գունագրկվող էությունից:  
Քեզ հետ մեկտեղ հայրենիքդ է մաս-մաս փախչում  
Քաղցր ու դաժան , թանկ ու էժան կամայական գերությունից...  
Դու՛ , որ տեսիլք – գունեղ երկրում տուն ես կերտում ,  
Թախիժ – արցունք՝ օտար գրկում,  
Չե՞ս ուշանում քո ապրելու Ջորությունից;  
Հորոտ – մորոտ ու անտերունչ քեզ են սպասում  
Խենթ օրերիդ վկաները, կիսակորուստ՝ մենությունից...  
Վերադարձդ շունչն է հողիդ ու արմատիդ  
Արշալույսդ քո՛ շենում է արեվելու ,  
Դու՛ եվ ստրուկ , եվ արքան ես բազմաչարչար Տերությունիդ:

102- Naira Kharatyan

١٩٥- نَيرا خَرْتِيان

نَشِيدُ العُودَة

### Nehas Sopaj

نهاس سوباج

Macedonian poet, prose writer and critic, born in 1954 (Macedonia).  
Professor at the University of Skopje, with several poetry books.

*Poète, écrivain et critique macédonien, né en 1954 (Macédoine).  
Professeur à l'Université de Skopje, il a à son actif plusieurs recueils de poèmes.*

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## MOARTA CASĂ/THE DEAD HOUSE

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

*In Arumanian and English.*

### MOARTA CASĂ

*Cându plâscâneashti chiritlu shi lu pustuxeashti horizontal  
mutrea câtră tu loclu iu sta anbitati trupurli fărà suflit!*

*Ea-uà oda iu s-discurmă suflitili fărà trup!*

*Ea-uà casa iu lj-cadi s-vearsà lăschea, cetsarli, grendzàli,  
vadili tsi li lărdzescu oclji mutrindului u regina!*

*Ea-li dzeadzitli a mănâljei a murghislui a curi lji crescu  
unglilili tsi ti bilescu! Ea-li cicioarili a bubusharlui*

*shi gollu cap a vurculoclui, ea-li vurculoatsili shi furiili,  
samuvilili shi tutà fanatazmologhia,*

*cu mintits perr ca palji cu neuà cându cârtsuescu*

*tu yarna! Ea-lji bərbâtslji, muljerli veduvi-mushatili,  
mushuteatsa tsi ti gâdică ca layi maghii!*

*Ea-li tutui creature tsi s-asâlighescu tu marshal a moartiljei  
cu vreari shi engrazmo, demuneasca dzeminami!*

*Ea-li lourli ascumti iu intră sh-essu mash shimironjlji  
Shi shuriconj!*

*Ea iurudii di pulj tsi fug iuva tu niturnari*

*tsi ti alasă totàna s-mirluseshtsà, s-mirluseshtsà*

*càndu inima-a ta nu-i yilie tsi s-frandzi, a tini shtii  
 cà tu niturnari aneardzim tuts, dado!  
 Ea cu arpit yini càtrà noi unà aroshi pirà  
 ti caplu a mel cu dauà cubitsi di locu pi pàltàri  
 pi casa pi cari s-asàlighescu pirdazlji a noaptiljei!  
 O dado a mea, càndu va s-anàstàseshtsà?*

### THE DEAD HOUSE

When the thunder strikes and slaughters the horizon  
 look at the place where dismal and drunk bodies sit!  
 This is the room where the bodiless souls rest!  
 This is the house where mud, stones and beams fall off the walls  
 the river pools widen when looking at the current!  
 Here are the fingers of darkness with long nails  
 trying to skin your body! Here are the legs of the scarecrow  
 and the bold head of the wizard, here are the witches and the aliens,  
 the fairies, the sorcerers and all the phantasmagoria,  
 with loose unkempt straw-like hair covered with icing  
 winter snow! Here are the men, the widows – heavenly beauties,  
 beauty that devours you with black magic!  
 Here are all creatures that start wailing  
 with love and hate, demonic ambivalence!  
 Here are the hiding holes of moles and rats!  
 Here is the flock of birds that migrate to nowhere  
 and leave you waiting, waiting  
 your heart is not made of glass to break, and you know  
 that we leave never to return, mother!  
 Here is the red flame, the fire  
 flying for my head, for my body with two cubic meters on its back  
 above the house with its night curtains drawn!  
 O mother, when would you defy death, resurrect?

**Olga Maria Dey-Bergmoser Thompson**

أولغا مارييا داي-بيرغموزر ثامسون

Woman writer and multilingual translator. Born in the Netherlands, she grew up in Germany, and is living in Canada since 1963. Married to Reverend C.L. Thompson, tenor and short story writer. With several writings and prizes.

*Femme écrivain et traductrice. Née en Hollande, elle a grandi en Allemagne, et vit depuis 1963 au Canada. Mariée au Révérend C.L. Thompson, ténor et nouvelliste, elle a à son actif plusieurs écrits et prix.*

## YA ALLAH

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

It was one of those hazy summer afternoons and the huge whirring fans kept on providing a cool breeze. Yasmina, the only daughter of the local doctor, was crouched in her favourite easy chair, a book in her lap brushing up on Koranic interpretation. Her father and Abdul, who ran the estate, had left in the coolness of the early morning hours to see a terminally ill patient.

Yasmina's mother had taken the servants on a picnic to the bank of a remote brook knowing that with the conscientious gateman on duty, her daughter would be perfectly safe.

In the privacy of her home, Yasmina had dispensed with her long veiling shawl. She was even lovelier to behold in her immaculately white dress accentuating her shapely body enhanced by matching loose silk pants that were snugly ruffled around her ankles. But for seven bangles, she never wore any jewellery. Grateful for the comfortable lifestyle into which she was born, she did not believe in outshining others but opted for understatement instead.

Nor did she ever wear a watch but could almost precisely pinpoint the time of day from the type of activities usually going on around her.

The home seemed enveloped in an idyllic peacefulness beyond the reach of harm and evil when she heard some commotion. A cloud of dust

announced the arrival of a visitor or visitors. Perhaps someone was in need of medical attention? Yasmina hurried to the main entrance and opened the door. Somehow, she felt as if brushed by a rush of cold air when facing – judging by their attire – what seemed to be an officer and his assistant. The superior addressed her in a language she did not understand and leered at her in such a way she felt he was undressing her with his eyes. Frightened by his strange feverish glances, Yasmina fervently prayed Ya Allah. All Merciful ... and tried to quickly close the door.

He threw his shoulder hard against the door and sent Yasmina flying full force into the banister. Losing her balance from the impact, she bounced back like a ball – landing with a thud on the hallway marble floor.

The stranger ripped off her clothes, repeating: “My lovely dove, oh my lovely dove – I’ll make a woman out of you. I shall leave my mark in every nook and cranny of your body. There will be nothing left for anyone when I am through with you.”

Getting no reaction from her, he pulled her hair shouting: “Look at me, look me in the eyes.”

When he had finished, he quickly zipped up his pants, anxious to clear out. He asked his assistant to check the larder for any arrack. There wasn’t a drop of alcohol to be found. Utterly disgusted, they departed, leaving the girl for dead.

“At least, I didn’t have to shoot this lovely bird”, was all he commented, totally devoid of any shame, remorse or regrets.”

A little later, some marauders ‘combed’ the house, room by room. They hurriedly packed the loot and would have made a flawless exit but for an error of perception by the sharpshooter they had posted outside.

Yussuf had been plagued by an inexplicable restlessness. He, therefore, asked Abdul to stay overnight with the patient while he would return home, driven by a foreboding of tragedy. At the gatehouse, his strange fears were confirmed. He jumped out of the car but did not even have to take the gateman’s pulse to know he was dead. Saying a prayer, he gently closed his eyes but had to leave him there picturing Yasmina alone in the house. He raced to the house, and – as he had done for two decades – reached into his pocket for the keys when one of the marauders noticed him. Assuming Yussuf was pulling out a revolver, he aimed and shot the unarmed doctor right through the heart. The others came running and understood the situation. Nobody openly accused the sharpshooter but the silence that had fallen over the little troop said it all.

A few hours passed. The mother and her happy little entourage came home. They entered from the east wing but their singing abruptly stopped when they came to the foyer. Samira saw her husband and Yasmina and let out a scream and collapsed. Kisha, Yasmina's amah, sent all the servants but the eldest, to their quarters. She then took care of Yasmina. Her lovely charge defiled and deflowered – Yasmina who had not even known the innocence of holding hands with a man, nor felt the sweetness of a first kiss.

She vowed the servant to secrecy and cleaned up Yasmina while Fatima took care of Yussuf. Gradually, Samira came to but overcome by grief, words simply did not flow.

The amah discreetly withdrew and Samira bade her husband farewell. "Allah, give me strength. He was my life. Teach me how to go on without him." Then she went over to Yasmina. Such a young life – couldn't the All Merciful preserve the fruit of her all-consuming love for Yussuf?" Allah, please, have mercy," she wailed. "So far I have always asked your blessings for others. May I now ask you for a personal favour? Save my daughter. Don't let a mother's prayers fall on deaf ears."

Then followed the painful burial arrangements with no time to be lost, since in a hot climate speed is of essence. Also, in compliance with the Koran, the dead should be buried, as stipulated. Calculated from the time of death to the burial, an interval not exceeding two out of the daily five prayers must be adhered to, if at all feasible. With the telephone wires down and Samira not wanting to put any employee's life at risk, all preparations were done in house.

Instead of wailing, the little group proceeded in silence to Yussuf's favourite eucalyptus tree where they buried him. In normal times, with his popularity, he would have been put to rest with a rather extensive cortege, mourned by wailers.

Back inside the house, they stayed together in prayer until around four o'clock in the morning when there was once again commotion. They shivered. A voice thundered: "Open up. This is Major Jan Rafiq Van de Hoogeburg of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Regiment. My men need billeting. Some of my men are dying from thirst and hunger."

He was greeted by utter silence.

They could hear his knuckles hitting against the door.

"Open up. I shall ask you three times. I would hate having to use force."

Samira opened an upper floor window.

“Please, go away. This home has seen more tragedy in a day than any of us can digest in a lifetime.”

She could partly see the Major in the moonlight – a round happy face with very clean features and she was not afraid of him. He seemed to be the brave in action, tender in heart and noble in mind person – at least that was the impression he conveyed.

“Madam, I personally vouch for the integrity of all my men. They are fighters, not looters or rapists.”

“OK, Major, do you have a medical man under your command?”

“Yes, we have a surgeon – a very fine man, Madam. Is anyone wounded?”

Now tears started flowing. “My daughter – she is either unconscious or in a coma.”

With that, she opened the door.

Respecting the unwritten law of no physical contact, the Major respectfully bowed to her and had his men file in.

“Major, your men could occupy the rooms they need and we shall provide food as long as our supplies last. The doctor, please.”

“Madam, this is Dr. Abraham Gnadenreich.”

“We have a small emergency clinic.”

“A stretcher, please.”

Two men immediately stepped forward to transport the girl.

With delicacy, he asked the mother to follow him to be present during the examination.

Dr. Gnadenreich was very thorough in his examination and although he thought nothing could touch him anymore, he felt a special compassion for this beautiful stranger.

“The next two or three days will be very critical. She is suffering from a concussion combined with shock. Do not move her. She must rest absolutely quiet and flat. Keep her head low to facilitate the blood supply to the brain.

Also, we need a couple of blankets to keep her comfortably warm. There doesn't seem to be any brain hemorrhaging or crack of the skull. Don't be alarmed though if she can't remember anything when she regains consciousness.”

“Thank you, Dr. Gnadenreich.”

“Do you have any blood plasma in reserve?”

She pointed to the fridge.

“Just in case”, he reassured her.

Being used to treating exclusively war casualties, he hesitated.

“Do you want me to continue with the examination?”

“Yes.”

Deadly silence.

After a while: “Madam, please have a seat.”

“Don’t spare my feelings. If I had been home ...”

“No time for self-reproach or self-torment. We might have ended up finding both of you lying on the floor.”

He paused.

“Your daughter has been most brutally raped. There is a chance she may have lost consciousness beforehand.”

“Thank you, doctor. Her amah Kisha will continue with the first watch. If you or the other men need anything, please let me know.

“Good night.”

They wished for miracle happened. Early, one morning, Yasmina called out: “Baba, Baba! What happened?”

Kisha jumped to her feet, thanked Allah and told Yasmina that she had suffered a bad fall.

“And what about my parents?”

“I shall get your mother this very instant.”

Overjoyed, Samira hugged and kissed her daughter who had a rather blank look in her eyes.

“Where is Baba?”

“Away. Dr. Gnadenreich came to substitute for him for the time being.”

Yasmina looked around. The amah brought in a glass of her favourite mango juice and some vanilla ice cream. They had tried spoonfuls of tea and coffee earlier – both rejected by her system.

The doctor, too, was so pleased to see Yasmina recover and was amazed at his own special interest in this patient. After the loss of his wife, women – even if parading nude in front of him – would not even excite him but this angelic creature ‘with broken wings’ made his mind wonder. Yet they had never even looked into each other’s eyes or talked together.

It took another couple of weeks, and Yasmina started to help by looking after the instruments, taking care of the drug inventory and, eventually, assisting with minor interventions. But she looked so vulnerable and lost.

She no longer sang, lost appetite and seemed confused. The doctor and her mother devised a plan to get her eating. Samira would see to it that the doctor would get such helpings of her daughter's favourite foods that he couldn't possibly cope with it. She would serve the food in her husband's office. The doctor would barely touch his plate complaining it was so hard for him to eat alone. Yasmina did not seem to listen at first but then started talking to him and sharing with him. A strong bond developed between him, the mother and daughter.

Yasmina admired him and worked hard to please him.

A few months later, when she was doing much better, she felt nauseous and was told she was pregnant. Her world started spinning and tumbling. "All life is sacred", her father's voice reached her from afar. Her mother cradled her in her arms reassuring her that everything would be all right. "You don't know what life still has in store for you."

"Which man would ever want me after this?"

"A true gentleman would. Don't you worry about that. Leave the worrying to me."

People's heart went out to this lovely girl and one evening when she was sitting on the verandah, the doctor asked whether his company was welcome. She nodded.

"Yasmina, I feel for you and won't bother with trivialities saying 'I know what it's like' because I am not in your skin. We all have a cross to bear."

"Even you?"

"You really want to hear my story? I never talk about it."

"I would be honoured to hear it and learn about you."

"My mother and my lovely sister Sarah..." His voice suddenly seems hoarse.

"... were killed in a concentration camp. My father and I were shoved into a freight train, got separated and – he was never seen again."

"Oh, Dr. Gnadenreich, I am so sorry. What am I complaining about?"

"I chose medicine to help others – to heal myself while healing others. Then, I met Shula

"We got married without losing any time and about one year into the marriage she got pregnant. We were living in Tunis then and our happiness knew no end. Many nights we lay awake imagining what parental bliss would be like."

Anticipating some catastrophe, Yasmina averted her glances.

"Shula was about four months pregnant when..." He pauses.

"... when", he resumes, "a drunk driver snuffed out both lives."

Against all tradition, she rises and calms him with her hands.  
 “You see, Yasmina, Shula left off where you begin – starting your 4<sup>th</sup> month. By the way, is your mother nearby?”  
 “Did I say or do anything to offend you?”  
 “You never could I am sure.”  
 Beaming all over his face, with a boyish look in his eyes, he asks:  
 “You think she would mind joining us for coffee?”  
 Yasmina rises and returns with her mother.  
 “Doctor Gnadenreich?”  
 “Please, drop the formality. Would it be welcome if I were to ask you for your daughter’s hand – despite the age difference?”  
 Yasmina jumps up as if stung by a bee. “I couldn’t possibly accept. I am dama...  
 (Damaged goods, she wanted to scream in her tormented soul).  
 “Yes, you are una gran dama and I love you.”  
 “And I follow...”  
 “Yes, we both follow a sacred book - you, the Koran, and I, the Torah.”  
 That night, God was smiled seeing there was hope for mankind.

Oluwole Olawale M. (Fresh Mikky)

أُولُووَلِهْ أُولَاوَالِهْ إِمْ . (فَرِشْ مِيكِي)

Nigerian poet, born in 1986 (Ibadan - Oyo state - Nigeria). With several writings and cultural activities.

*Poète nigérien, né en 1986 (Ibadan - État de l'Oyo - Nigérie). Il a à son actif plusieurs écrits et des activités culturelles.*

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## IS THERE OPTION?

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

## 1

Is there any option?  
 We might have fallen apart  
 Waiving down into a deep pit  
 Where sorrow and sadyty  
 Have become a beautiful song  
 Hope and fate have drawned into an ocean  
 We have no pity on our future  
 There's no other option than to liquor  
 Vision have changed to that phantom masque  
 Which no one is ready to put on  
 But the remedy could be stranded  
 To promote the outermost feelings  
 The world itself spanned anticlockwisely  
 The longitude and latitude  
 Can't summone their bearings right  
 Why are we still driving the boat  
 That doesn't belong to the sea?

## 2

Is there any option?  
 Than to travel the news  
 He stayed all night solitudes  
 In the midst of the humbles  
 The poor man stood nudely  
 While your blanket lied all alone  
 Breath that air out now  
 With mysteries behind the lies  
 Who can forge out his luxury or dreams?  
 Who can afford only to bend double  
 For the bakes that make the day funny  
 The sun is now friendly hot  
 And despised the hay that needs to dry  
 Why are you still affecting the dogma?  
 Can only search for others thought to exist  
 Are you still singing your brother's voices?  
 Let that air out my beloved!  
 So that you can walk without your foot  
 You can only succumb the world  
 To make the dent in life?

**Paul Mihalache**

بول ميخالاشيه

Romanian teacher and short-story writer, born in 1982 (Iasi – Romania).  
With one published book and several cultural activities.  
*Enseignant et nouvelliste roumain. Né en 1982 (Iasi – Roumanie). A son actif un livre publié et des activités culturelles.*

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## CUM O FI CHEMÂND-O PE CHARLIE?

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

*Texts in Romanian and English.*

## CUM O FI CHEMÂND-O PE CHARLIE?

*Nu întotdeauna adevărul este cel  
care duce la o mare descoperire  
(Ernesto Sabato – Despre eroi și morminte)*

Mă întreb dacă o voi întâlni pe Charlie pe una din aleile parcului atât de agitat ziua, plin de copii ademenind fără succes veverițe cu alune și nuci, cu turiști de toate vârstele, vânzători ambulanți, papagali care îți prevăd soarta în schimbul a doar cinci lei noi „Hai să-ți spuie Rico-Vrăjitoru’/ ce-ți rezervă viitoru’!” și fotografi cu animale împăiate ori costume de epocă, și atât de calm acum, în semiîntunericul răcoros și umed al nopților de noiembrie, prin vreo cafenea din cartier, sau pe Splaiul Dâmboviței numărând stelele. Niciodată nu ne-am dat întâlnire, nu ne-am făcut promisiuni, fiecare având viața lui interzisă celuilalt, dar mai presus de asta din convingerea tacită că legătura dintre noi e mai presus de cuvinte și că cea mai mică tentativă de schimbare – o privire înapoi, un cadou mai costisitor, o scenă de gelozie – ar năruți totul fără cale de întoarcere.

A trecut o săptămână fără s-o văd, astfel că ea – fără îndoială – așteaptă să fie găsită, sărutată pătimaș, dusă la un film, apoi la câteva pahare de Cuba-Libre, și, în final, în cămăruța aceea mică de deasupra

anticariatelor de pe Strada Artelor – numită așa după celebrul bulevard parizian – închiriată special pentru rarele noastre întâlniri nocturne, și în care niciodată vreunul dintre noi nu ar intra fără celălalt.

N-am știut niciodată cu ce se ocupă Charlie, dacă are familie, prieteni, nimic în afara unor imagini și chipuri stilizate de hibeze memoriei – fotografii care-i căzuseră din geantă pe 21 martie cu trei ani și jumătate în urmă, în ziua în care o cunoscusem, le ridicasem de jos, i le înapoiasem și ea acceptase să bem o cafea la o terasă din apropiere. Nici eu nu i-am vorbit vreodată de Carmen, despre munca la redacție, despre maică-mea, sau despre orice alt lucru care mă privea în mod personal, dar care nu avea legătură cu serile și nopțile petrecute împreună. Comentăm câte o piesă de teatru ori un film, îi dau să citească ultimele povestiri pe care le scriu, ne sărutăm îndelung, sau putem uneori să ne plimbăm până spre dimineață fără a ne spune un cuvânt, dar fără a resimți tăcerea ca incomodă ori plictisitoare. De fiecare dată încheiem prin a face dragoste câteva ore sau milenii – căci nimic din lumea exterioară nu poate ajunge la noi – și plecând pe rând, nu pentru a ne ascunde de ceva sau de cineva – deși ar fi fost, poate, mai prudent – ci pentru a evita despărțirile și formulele de rămas-bun. Unul dintre noi se îmbracă și pleacă fără un cuvânt, celălalt rămânând un timp încă întins, pierdut în toropeala aceea plăcută, iar apoi viața își reia treptat cursul ei obișnuit și steril.

Am văzut-o într-o zi, pe când mă duceam la serviciu, intrând prin dreapta într-o mașină luxoasă – un Rolce-Royce negru – dar am trecut mai departe, iar ea nu a ezitat nici o clipă, deși privirile ni se intersectaseră fugitiv.

Într-una dintre seri, la vreun an după ce o cunoscusem, am întârziat printr-o crâșmă mai mult ca de obicei, combinasem băuturile, și-am început să-i fac confidențe și să-i cer să-mi promită că nimic din ce avem nu se va schimba. Cu zâmbetul pe buze m-a rugat o singură dată să încetez, apoi, văzând că nu contenesc, s-a ridicat și a plecat lăsându-mă singur la masă, strângând cu putere paharul de vodcă în mâini, și țigara între buze. După seara aceea trei săptămâni nu am văzut-o, deși o căutam mai des ca de obicei, dar atunci când, într-un final, ne-am întâlnit într-o cafenea de pe Sada Kogălniceanu, nu mi-a reproșat nimic, și nici nu a lăsat să se înțeleagă din vreun gest cât de mic, sau vreo privire aruncată, că ar păstra vreo urmă de supărare.

O singură dată, după o absență de aproape două luni, mi-a cuprins fața în palme, m-a sărutat ușor, și mi-a spus că a fost plecată din țară. Da, mi-ai

lipsit, dar am fost obligată. Nu i-am răspuns, însă ea a știut, din privirea mea, că scurta explicație pe care nu i-o cerusem a însemnat pentru mine mai mult decât jumătate din nopțile petrecute împreună, și infinit mai mult decât cei șase ani de căsnicie cu Carmen.

Printre obișnuințele locurilor pe care le frecventăm se întâmplă să se nimerească vreunul dintre cunoscuții mei mai îndepărtați, sau poate de-ai ei, dar continuăm să ne ținem de mână, să ne sărutăm pătimaș, căci nopțile acestea ne aparțin și nimic nu le-ar putea destrăma vraja. Chelnerul ne întreabă câteodată ce servește soția dumneavoastră, iar noi îi răspundem cu un aer sobru Pinot Noire, și când pleacă ne privim și izbucnim amândoi în râs.

În ziua aceea de demult – cu fotografiile – nu făcusem cunoștință, nebănuind poate ce va urma – deși eu simțeam că o voi revedea – iar data următoare, în Parcul Cișmigiu, într-o noapte (întâlnindu-ne întâmplător?) mi-a spus că o cheamă Charlie. Charlie și mai cum? Charlie de la ce? Charlie și atât. Charlie a ta. E suficient.

Acum o săptămână văzusem la Notara *Ateptându-l pe Godot*. Pentru mine nu era prima oară, dar ea a fost impresionată până la lacrimi. Acum e destul de târziu, și toate spectacolele trebuie să fi început deja, dar nu contează - niciodată nu ne facem planuri: se întâmplă să avem chef amândoi de aceleași lucruri, sau pașii ne poartă spre vreun loc, fără chiar să ne dăm seama.

Merg de ceva timp, și mă întreb dacă o voi întâlni pe Charlie pe una din aleile răcoroase, pe malul lacului, sau pe podul mic – cum intri prin față la dreapta. Îmi aprind o țigară și o văd, cu pălărioara ei nostimă și elegantă în același timp, cu o crenguță subțire de castan în mână, privindu-mă ca un copil care se joacă, din spatele unui copac.

## CHARLIE

I wonder if I'm gonna meet Charlie along one of the park's alleys, so crowded all day long, filled with children unsuccessfully alluring squirrels with nuts, with all-ages tourists, hucksters, parrots forecasting your future for only two pounds *Let Rico-the-Wizard tell fortunes for you, young lady*, and photos with stuffed animals or costumes of the period, and so quiet in the humid and umbrageous gloom of the November nights, about who knows what café from the neighborhood, or on the cliff of the river, counting the stars. We have never made a date, or a promise: we used to have our own life, forbidden for the other one, but

above all, because of our wordless faith, that the connection between us is more than words can tell, and that any attempt of changing something – a look back, an expensive present, a jealousy scene – would ruin everything with no turning back.

A week passed and I didn't see her, so – I have no doubt about it – she must be waiting for me to find her, to kiss her passionately, to take her for a movie, then for few Cuba-Libres, and finally, in that small hallbed-room, beyond the *bouquinistes* from *Rue de Seine*, rented specially for our seldom nightly trysts, in which none of us would ever enter without the other.

I have never known Charlie's occupation, whether she has any family, friends – nothing but few images and faces stylized by the gaps of memory – pictures fallen from her handbag on Match 21, three and a half years ago, the day I first met her, I picked them up and gave them back to her, and she accepted to join me for a coffee, on a garden beside. Of course I didn't tell her about Carmen either, about my labour in the editorial office, about my poor mother, or anything else personal which would have no bearing on the evenings and nights spent together. We use to make remarks upon one or another play or movie, I read her my last short-stories, we kiss each other at large, or just walk silently, hand in hand, from dusk till dawn, but without feeling the silence as awkward or unentertaining. Every time we conclude the night making love for few hours, or millenniums – cause nothing from the outside world can reach us – and leaving in turn, not trying to hide ourselves from something or someone – even if, maybe it would be more cautious to do so – but for avoiding the breaking up, and good-bye words. One of us is getting dressed, and leaves wordless, while the other one still lies, rapt in that easy linger, till the life comes back step by step with her routinely, arid current.

I saw her one day, while I was coming back from work, getting in a luxurious car (on the right-hand) – a black Rolls-Royce, but I passed in the crowd, and she didn't hold back not so much as a single moment, even if our glances had crossed in a hurry.

One of those days, about one year after I had first met her, we stood longer in a grog mill, I mixed the booze, and I started to let my hair down, asked her to promise me that nothing from what we have will ever change. With the smile on her face, she entreated me to stop at once, then, noticing that I keep on pleading, she got on her feet, leaving me alone at the table, to clench the booze in my fists, and the cigarette between my

teeth. After that evening I didn't see her for three weeks, even if I was looking for her mere often than usually, but when we finally crossed our path, in a coffee house, in *St. Germain des Prés*, she reproached me nothing, and she didn't let me know (from one single gesture, or a glance) that she would keep any spice of anger.

Only once, after almost two months of stargazing absence, she caught my face in her hands, she kissed me softly, and she told me that she had been left aboard. *Yes, I missed you, but I had to.* I didn't answer her, but she knew from my glance that the succinct explanation that I hadn't asked for, meant for me more than half of the nights spent together heaps more than the six years of marriage with Carmen.

Among the regulars of the places that we hang out to, it happens to come across one of my distant kith and kin, or maybe one of hers, but we keep on holding hands, kissing passionately, cause these nights belong to us, and nothing could crumble their romance. The potman sometimes asks me *what does your wife wish to drink?* and I answer him so seriously that *Pinot Noire, of cause*, but after he leaves, we look each other in the eye, and to burst into laughter.

That day, long time ago (the day with the photos) we didn't make the acquaintance (even if I was sure that it couldn't be just a simple encounter), and the next time, one night, *dans le Parc de Belleville*, getting together (by chance?) she told me that her name is Charlie. *Charlie and?... Charlie from what?... Only Charlie. Your Charlie. It's enough.*

One week ago, we had seen à La Grande Comédie, la pièce *Le clan des divorcées*. For me, it wasn't the first time, but she was moved to tears. Now, it's quite late, and all the plays have already began, but I don't care: we never plan our time: it happens to be both in the tune for the same things, or we let ourselves going with the wind to who-knows-what places, sometimes even taking no account of the direction.

I have been walking for a while, and I'm asking myself whether I'm gonna meet Charlie along one of these umbrageous alleys, near the lake, or on the bridge, left from the entry. I light a cigarette and I see her, with her dainty and elegant hat, with a thin chestnut sprig in her hand, giving me a thievish look, as a child playing, behind a tree trunk.

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## LES YEUX BLEUS D'ALISSA

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

Alissa, ma fière tzigane au regard de braise... Quels étranges yeux couleur azur, si purs et si furieux! D'un bleu limpide ils n'étaient guère rassurants. Disons qu'ils n'invitaient pas au calme ni au repos. Ces yeux-là n'étaient pas faits pour le sable chaud des doux rivages, mais bien pour les soirs de tempête, les nuits de folie et les plus violents des naufrages. Ils avaient quelque chose de sauvage et de féroce en eux... Un étrange magnétisme en émanait qui me faisait rêver le soir, quand je m'endormais envoûté par cette démonsse...

Alissa apparaissait à notre coin de rue. Elle me suivait quand j'étais gamin et me jetait des pierres anguleuses. Elle me charriait devant la jeunesse du village. Elle se mêlait à nos jeux de garçons sans y être invitée et s'imposait parmi nous par la puissance de son caractère. Son origine et son sexe n'y faisaient rien : elle forçait naturellement le respect. Alissa jouait, cognait, me frappait. J'étais sa victime consentante ; elle était mon acariâtre bourreau.

Alissa grandissait, mûrissait et prenait forme. Leste et élancée, yeux de braise et peau tannée : cette sorcière me menait par le bout du nez. J'en rêvais le soir avant de m'endormir. J'imaginai son regard dans le clair de la lune. Elle me hantait. Sa présence comme son absence m'obsédaient. Ce n'était ni de l'amour, ni de la passion : c'était Alissa.

Un soir de printemps, nous rentrions d'une soirée bien arrosée. Alissa s'était surpassée sur la piste de danse. Ses jupons bleu-marine avaient voltigé autour d'elle sans dévoiler ses profonds secrets. Elle tournoyait

puis ralentissait le rythme pour finir par de charmantes ondulations. Elle offrait son corps à la foule pour le lui retirer. Elle tendait lascivement les mains puis les reprenait. Elle nous mimait le mouvement des vagues et l'ondulation des dunes. Nous avons terminé la soirée main dans la main, car Alissa était ma voisine. Nous rentrions ensemble à la maison...

Sur le chemin du retour la demoiselle mit fin à mon enfance. Sans m'avertir, elle se rua sur moi. Coriace même, elle ne fit pas attention aux épines piquantes des buissons. Elle me mordilla la nuque et me suçà les lèvres jusqu'au sang. Sauvage, elle m'enleva ma belle chemise en faisant voler tous mes boutons. Je m'abandonnai à ce doux supplice le corps enflammé. Elle pouvait éveiller un désir brûlant même dans une pierre morte. Elle animait le moindre de mes muscles et mon corps s'imprégnait d'elle. Elle me dévora de ses dents, maltraita ma peau, cogna mon corps contre les cailloux et prit plaisir à me voir crier et gémir.

Elle savait mon attirance pour elle. Je ne lui avais jamais rien dit ou montré, mais elle avait tout deviné. Ce soir-là commença une longue période d'ébats et de joie avec elle. Je ne pensais qu'à elle jour et nuit : son parfum, son allure, son corps. Ses yeux m'obsédaient. J'avais beau penser à mes prochains examens, à mon futur métier, à mes responsabilités de jeune homme, rien n'y faisait : je n'avais qu'Elissa dans la tête et dans mon corps. Je la retrouvais jusque dans les battements de mon pauvre cœur... Je ne lui donnais rien en échange : ni paroles, ni amour, ni promesses. Elle me soumettait le feu qui couvait en elle et la vie qui ruisselait de son corps. Elle m'offrait l'amour qui couvait dans son cœur. Mais ça, je ne le compris point. Je ne le lus pas dans le trouble de ses yeux, ni dans le frémissement de ses hanches. Je ne vis que la force de ses muscles et la hardiesse de ses ébats. Je compris très tard la douleur de cette tigresse, qui cherchait la douceur en moi.

Puis ce qui devait arriver arriva : son ventre devint rond. Alissa m'empoigna au tournant d'une ruelle pour m'annoncer la nouvelle. Un enfant avec moi ? Je ne m'étais jamais imaginé dans une telle situation. Je fus bien lâche, car je m'en entretins avec mes parents. Ma mère faillit s'évanouir, tout en se frappant le visage et en m'insultant et mon père devint rouge de colère. Sa petite tête cramoisie manqua d'exploser et j'eus peur pour le blanc des murs. Tandis qu'il s'emportait, moi j'imaginai les traces qu'une tête aussi rouge pouvait y laisser. Heureusement, me disais-je, l'intérieur était bien vide. Il n'y aurait pas eu plus de dégâts... Il me parlait de raison, de mariage arrangé et de reprendre son commerce. Il me parlait d'affaires et je ne parlais de rien.

Je l'écoutais me tracer ma vie. Silencieux comme une marionnette, j'acquiesçai. L'affaire fut vite réglée...

Alissa ne dit rien. Cependant, la veille de mon mariage elle m'attendit dans notre ruelle. Avec une douceur que je ne lui connaissais pas, elle me dit ces mots : « Annule ton mariage. Tu ne l'aimes pas et elle ne t'aime pas... Je t'en conjure, au nom de notre enfant qui va bientôt naître, ne fais pas de nous des malheureux... Sois courageux mon tendre ami, nous avons besoin de toi... Ne te laisse pas influencer par tes parents ; de cette union il ne sortira rien de bon... Je t'en conjure, pour notre enfant... ». Emue jusqu'aux larmes, elle s'enfuit dans la nuit. Lâche et impuissant devant la volonté paternelle, je me mariaï le deuxième jour, la mort dans l'âme.

Contrairement à toute attente, ma pauvre moitié a accepté son sort avec fatalité, sans crier. Elle était fine et j'étais pataud. Elle était brillante et j'étais un sot. Une étoile filante dans mon ciel était passée et avait déposé sur mon seuil de si belles vérités. Je n'ai pas compris et j'ai refermé ma porte. Je les ai laissés la salir et la punir. Son père et son frère la frappèrent violemment sur la place publique. Scandalisés au début, les habitants s'habituerent avec le temps à ce spectacle ; certains l'encouragèrent même par leurs commérages. Il faut croire que certaines femmes, aux charmes moins prononcés que ceux de la belle amazone, exultaient à la vue du châtiment.

A travers ma fenêtre, protégé par un rideau, je regardais ces scènes, impuissant. Ma fleur se fanait entre leurs mains rustres. Même si je ressentais mille piques dans mon cœur, même si mon âme souffrait le martyr, je ne pouvais intervenir : j'avais lié mon destin à une autre femme qu'Alissa, par bêtise, par lâcheté et par jeunesse... De plus, Raymonde ma femme, était allergique à la belle Alissa. Elle aurait fait une crise pour un simple coup d'œil intercepté. Alissa supportait sa peine, fière et la tête haute. Les gens du village commençaient à l'exclure de leurs activités ; quand elle arrivait, les têtes se détournaient, les conversations cessaient, pour reprendre de plus belle après son passage.

La fière Alissa refusa toutes les sommes d'argent que j'essayai de lui faire parvenir. Cher ange au regard terni, pleurant l'inconstant, toutes les nuits... Quelquefois on la voyait assise sur la colline, le regard perdu au loin... On racontait qu'elle se confiait à la lune, l'implorant de veiller sur l'enfant... L'ambiance devint insoutenable pour elle : elle quitta le village. Elle s'installa au sud, près du littoral, chez une parente éloignée.

Elle ne me dit pas adieu, mais je ne la revis jamais. Mon cœur fut comme lacéré à l'écoute de cette nouvelle : quelques mois plus tard, on me confia que mon amour était morte en accouchant d'un enfant mort-né. Suivant ses dernières volontés, son corps fut inhumé au sud. Ses parents ne s'en souciaient guère. Seuls quelques enfants, avec lesquels elle jouait jadis, la pleurèrent.

Cette nouvelle constitua un tournant dans mon existence. Je passai le plus clair de mon temps dans les tavernes et je négligeai mon commerce. Mon acariâtre femme, Raymonde, me menait la vie bien dure à la maison. D'ailleurs, j'y revenais de plus en plus tard.

Raymonde ne m'aimait pas. Engagée contre sa volonté, elle ne me l'a pas pardonné. Elle n'a jamais eu le moindre geste de tendresse à mon égard. Son visage se fermait dès que j'arrivai et se détendait quand elle me voyait filer. Avec le recul, je me dis que ce n'était pas une mauvaise femme, mais qu'elle n'avait pas eu beaucoup de chance dans sa vie, tout comme moi. Elle et moi avions ceci en commun : nous avions sacrifié notre passion sur l'autel des convenances. Notre maison était aussi animée qu'un tombeau : on y entraînait avec un silence religieux.

J'étais moi-même un mort-vivant : un pantin dont la vie ne tenait plus qu'à quelques fils, savamment actionnés par des parents consciencieux. Ils veillaient au grain et ne se souciaient guère du bonheur de leur fils, tant que les affaires marchaient. Je devenais taciturne ; mes souvenirs refluaient. J'essayai tout d'abord de les noyer sous des flots de larmes, puis sous des vagues d'alcools. Les brumes d'ivresse m'éloignaient de moi-même ; elles m'emportaient si loin du rivage que je pris goût à ces escapades salvatrices.

Je devins un triste hère, une relique d'humanité, une maison délabrée, hantée par un œil bleu... Cet œil semblait me dire « Tu as tout gâché. Ensemble nous aurions été heureux ». Lorsque j'émergeais le matin de mes cauchemars, je constatais avec douleur, que ma vraie vie était encore plus horrible que mes rêves... Comme un naufragé j'émergeais de mes draps, et je courais me perdre dans les bras d'une blonde ou d'une brune... Pour échouer au final sur la grève des marins maudits, après un passage bien arrosé sur quelque paquebot d'ivresse... Mon nez devint rouge et mon humeur maussade. Un soir, je commis l'irréparable.

Je savais par ouï-dire que ma femme entretenait une relation suivie avec un amant. Leur histoire avait débuté avant notre mariage. J'étais dépité à l'idée que mon amour était morte alors que mon épouse prenait librement plaisir avec son amant. Un jour je rentrai plus tôt que prévu pour

retrouver Raymonde dans les bras de son hurluberlu. D'humeur querelleuse, je le provoquai. Notre rixe évolua de coups de poings en coups de canne. Je finis par l'embrocher sur mon parapluie et m'effondrai ivre mort sur le sol, pour me réveiller bien plus tard dans un autre décor...

J'écopai d'une dizaine d'années de prison pour crime passionnel, non prémédité. Contrairement à ce qu'on pouvait penser, j'étais heureux dans cette pièce sombre. Je me sentais enfin acquitté, car, ainsi malheureux, j'avais le sentiment de m'être rapproché de ma chère Alissa. Je l'avais rejoint dans son destin écorché. Séparé de ma femme, sans argent et désavoué par mes parents, je me sentais libéré. Pour la première fois depuis mon mariage, je dormai tranquille, sans sentir le regard désapprouvateur d'Alissa. Je me figurai alors qu'elle m'avait pardonné... A elle-seule cette pensée réussissait à me combler d'aise : je dormais à poings fermés.

J'écoulais des jours paisibles, entre séances de lecture et promenades. Mon comportement exemplaire m'avait valu de nombreux privilèges, et, depuis le décès d'une tante éloignée, j'avais récupéré un petit pactole qui me permettait de rester en bons termes avec les geôliers. Trois années de félicité et d'oubli passèrent ainsi, jusqu'à son apparition dans ma vie.

Monsieur Lepli, nous avons une visite pour vous. Une jeune demoiselle. Je la laisse entrer ?

Je lissai ma moustache en attendant quelque distraction agréable. De petits bruits de pas m'avertirent de son arrivée. Une petite fille de huit ans apparut dans le couloir, accompagnée par un homme et une femme. Je la vis de loin et dans la pénombre, mais tout de suite je la devinai. Alors je baissai mes yeux de peur de rencontrer les siens : ceux de sa mère, sans aucun doute. Je n'aurais pu soutenir ce regard. Ma fille avait la peau halée de sa mère et les cheveux dorés de son père... Elle me salua en disant « Bonjour papa, tu me reconnais ? ».

Sa voix était celle d'une petite Alissa : suave, rauque et agressive à la fois. Je la reconnus instinctivement, dès son apparition, dès son entrée dans ma vie. Je sentis mon cœur comprimé par tant de souffrance. Les deux accompagnateurs l'amenèrent vers ma cellule. Elle avança sa main à travers le grillage de ma cellule. Je la pris et la gardai précieusement dans les miennes; sa douce chaleur anima mon cœur triste. Mes larmes ruisselèrent... Larmes de joie de la savoir encore vivante et larmes de peine sur notre destin brisé... J'inondais sa délicate paume de larmes et de baisers...

Je pensai à ce qu'aurait été notre vie à tous les trois : une vie de sensualité, d'amour et de bohème. Elle dut sentir mon émoi, car elle choisit ce moment pour détacher sa main de la mienne. Elle la referma un instant ; toute mon attention était accaparée par ce joyau. Puis elle l'éleva à hauteur de mes yeux et déplia ses doigts comme les pétales d'une rose.

Ce que je vis était vraiment étonnant. Sur l'index de ma fille était gravé un étrange tatouage : un œil d'un bleu très pur. Petite créature envoûtante, entourée de longs cils effilés, un œil espiègle me fixait avec insistance. Je sentis sa présence autour de moi: Alissa. Sur la surface de l'œil je vis le reflet du criminel que j'étais devenu. Dans la profondeur abyssale de ce bleu, je reconnus l'étendue de mes regrets. Instant éclatant de vérité. Désespéré, je relevai les yeux vers mon enfant ; je fus horrifié par la découverte que je fis.

A la place des yeux ma petite avait deux trous remplis d'une chair morte. Dans sa figure douce et mutine on ne voyait que ces deux yeux ternes et éteints. Ma jolie fille n'avait pas le regard de sa mère : elle n'avait pas de regard du tout, elle était aveugle de naissance... Je ne soutins pas cette vision et me mis à hurler de rage contre le mauvais sort et contre moi-même. Effondré sur le sol froid de ma cellule je pleurai mon Alissa, je pleurai ma vie ratée et je pleurai surtout pour ma pauvre petite fille orpheline et mutilée. Elle me cria de toutes ses forces d'enfant :  
Tu l'as tuée, je le sais ! Tu n'es qu'un lâche! Tu nous as abandonnées !  
Tu nous as laissées !

Elle étouffa dans le flot de ses larmes, puis reprit de sa voix d'enfant blessé :

Ma maman, elle, m'aimait ! Elle m'a donné son œil, pour que je puisse voir la lumière du jour... Depuis huit ans son regard veille sur moi. Mais je veux la venger de toi, assassin ! Je suis venue pour la venger ! Je te laisse son œil bleu, pour te hanter... Toutes les nuits et toutes les journées de ta vie, tu te rappelleras de ton crime, assassin ! Assassin sans cœur ! Assassin !

Elle commença en hoquetant mais termina son discours par un accès de rage et de colère. Assaillie de larmes, elle suffoquait. Les adultes qui l'accompagnaient se précipitèrent sur elle, la bordèrent, et, doucement, emmenèrent mon ange loin, bien loin de moi.

Depuis son passage, je fais des cauchemars. L'œil qu'elle m'a laissé se promène dans ma cellule. Le matin il se pose sur mon miroir. Quand je lis il sautille sur les mots. Dès que je m'endors il traverse ma paupière.

## 124- Racha Mounaged

١٧٣- رشا منجد

Le soir je crie tellement la douleur est cuisante ; souvent je me réveille assailli de remords. Je revois Alissa et ma fille (dont je ne connaîtrai jamais le nom). Je revois mon bonheur passé et je pleure mon malheur actuel. Je me noie dans l'œil d'Alissa sans jamais atteindre le fond de mes regrets.

Mais depuis quelques années la douleur s'est atténuée. L'œil se promène un peu moins et me laisse du répit. Il commence à vieillir, je crois. Personnellement je me suis habitué à sa présence. Quand certaines nuits il oublie de se rappeler à mon souvenir, je le cherche des yeux. Je crois que nous nous sommes apprivoisés. Avec une certaine lassitude, je me rends compte aujourd'hui que le temps érode tout, même les regrets.

## Serge Baril

سرج باريك

Canadian playwright and drama teacher; with several writings and cultural activities.

*Dramaturge canadien. Enseignant en art dramatique, il a à son actif plusieurs écrits et activités culturelles.*

## LE DERNIER VERS DE DAME SANDRINE

(description – *description* – descripción - )

### SYNOPSIS

Il s'agit d'une parodie de la littérature théâtrale d'un suspense constant où verve, texte et didascalie se confondent au milieu d'un véritable meurtre et mystère. Une approche, certes, légère quant aux conventions normalement respectées dans un cadre pourtant sévère où rimes, pieds et vers donnent le rythme d'une mesure dans la portée. C'est un régal pour les oreilles, une mine de références pour l'intellect, une fantaisie pour l'acteur et l'euphorie pour l'érudit.

Chercher qui a tué Dame Sandrine devient le but de cette histoire rocambolesque. Pourtant, il n'est que prétexte pour permettre à l'auteur de

## 125- Serge Baril

١٧٢- سرج باريل

valser avec les époques, les genres, les connaissances et les auteurs illustrent ce monde.

En fait, Le dernier vers de Dame Sandrine est une remarquable tribune du théâtre actuel sans pour autant délaissier ce qui nous a précédé.

## Silvia Miler

سيلفيا ميلير

Romanian poetess, born in 1963 (Gura Humorului – Romania). With several published works, and prizes.

Poétesse roumaine, née en 1963 (Gura Humorului – Roumanie). A son actif s'inscrivent des livres publiés et des prix.

( - )

## HOW TO MAKE A RAINBOW

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

To my godsons:

*Cristian, Alexandru, Crina and Vlăduț*

*Do you wanna make a rainbow?*

*It's noy easy, nor it's hard,*

*Pay attention, little fellow,*

*Just pick up that colour board!*

*Now, my child, we need some colours*

*From the fruits and from the flowers*

*From the sun, the sky, the veggie,*

*From the World we take what's magic!*

*What you need, my dear brother:*

*Seven colours – the same mother.*

*Call on them, they'll come together*

*They'll show you a rainbow splendor!*

**Red**

Over the fields, beyond the beds,  
The first sister appears next,  
If you call her, she'll be here  
Flushing, happy, she'll sit near,  
With her lacy flowered dress,  
All in red, in all her best  
Like a poppy, red as cherry  
Isn't it she makes you merry?

**Orange**

From Tibet, from far away  
A Shaolin monk makes his way,  
In his Orange-coloured robe  
Here with us to sit along  
He came honouring the call  
At the second sister's ball,  
Coloured like an orange fruit  
With his orange-like salute.

*Tibet: plane in South West China.  
Shaolin: Chinese monk.*

**Yellow**

As a star that shines so bright  
As the sun in all his might  
Down on us a fairy smiles  
In the moon above confides  
Upper high the glitter  
This is the third sister  
Yellow glimpse, so sparkling  
In her Golden wrapping.

**Green**

In the holy times, I'm sure,  
Comes the sister number four  
with the Christmas greenish trees  
With Santa and his reindeers,  
Many gifts she brings, and more  
For the children we adore,  
For the lambs – some grass of green  
For the trees – new leaves within!

**127- Silvia Miler**

١٧٠- سيلفيا ميلر

**Blue**

Beautiful, scented bluebottle -  
The queen's arms in which we cuddle,  
In her hair blue flowers wears  
In her eyes turquoise and pearls  
She is sister number five  
She comes forth with the sea tide  
Her aid willingly submits  
Our rainbow she completes.

*Turquoise: semiprecious stone of blue or greenish colour.*

**Indigo**

When autumn is in good moods  
Brings her basket filled with goods:  
Flowers, veggies, fruits delights  
From orchards, Gardens, vineyards  
In her silky, flouncy dress  
Sister number six is next  
Her favour is the sweet plum  
And her middle name is fun!

**Violet**

All perfumed and all coquette  
Is the sister violet  
Number seven, rather new  
In the colour sisterhood  
With her help we can now build  
a charmed bridge over the field  
We did finally succeed  
Our rainbow to fullfill.

*So you see, my little fellow?  
If you want to make a rainbow  
It's not easy, nor it's hard  
Just pick up that colour board!  
What you need, my dear brother  
Seven sisters-the same mother  
They came all, in rush, in haste,  
Gathered round to help create  
A wonder of dew and shade!*

**Simona-Grazia Dima**

سيمونا-غرازيا ديميا

Romanian poetess, essayist and critic, graduated in Romanian and English languages and literatures. With 12 published books and many awards and prizes (she won her first one at only eight!).

*Poétesse, essayiste et critique roumaine, graduée en langues et littératures roumaines et anglaises. A son actif s'inscrivent 12 livres publiés et différents prix (elle a en eu le premier à huit ans seulement!).*

(! )

**PUSTIIRE LUMINOASĂ  
A LUMINOUS DEVASTATION**

(extracts - *extraits* - extractos - مقتطفات)

*In Romanian and English.*

*English version by the poetess and Heathrow O'Hare.*

**PUSTIIRE LUMINOASĂ**

*Se dedică memoriei sacre a marelui Sfânt și Poet sufîit*

**Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī,**

*pentru care nu exista discriminare între oameni*

*L-am întrebat pe un copil ce mergea cu-o lumânare-n mână*

*–De unde izvorăște-acea lumină?*

*Suflând în ea, o stinse-ndată.*

*–Spune-mi unde s-a dus și-atunci îți voi spune  
de unde a venit.*

**Hassan din Basra**

Un soare-a fâșnit din plante, a străpuns norii  
cu un tăiș de obsidian,  
a prins să pâlpaie gălbui și violet,  
văzduhul i se calcina în jur, în așchii albe.

## 129- Simona-Grazia Dima

سیمونا-غرازا دیم - ۱۶۸

Un soare de opal, mai mic, din pieptul lui,  
sticli, încă mai fantomatic,  
apoi un altul, cât o sămânță de diamant,  
în miezul lui, se prăbuși în licăr.  
Pieri la fel.  
Se auziră sus bătăi de inimă,  
iar cerul, de-un incandescent albastru,  
nu mai mișca.  
Doar venele-i pulsau, vulcanic,  
în răstimpuri, nevăzute.  
Inexplicabil – pustiul fiind acum deplin –  
de unde se revărsa atâta lumină,  
de ce ploua cu-atâta bunătate și îngăduință,  
de parcă erai înfășurat  
în văluri onctuoase, de-o miere pură,  
de-o mângâiere părintească?

### PASĂRE DELICATĂ

Am văzut oameni trecând prin oraș  
cu fulare de lână împletite de-a lungul  
mai multor răstimpuri de pace.  
Parcă erau păsări vorbărețe  
zburând prin pomi de cireș.  
Orice zguduitoră violentă  
le-ar fi deșirat fularele  
și, dacă soarele ar fi sticlit  
ca un cuțit acid și-ar fi început  
să roadă în tot ce e carne,  
ei ar fi tăcut, luați de un vânt străin,  
prin crengi, spre cerurile  
ca tigăile afumate, spuzite de stele,  
fără fulare la gât, fără  
niciun cuvânt de îmbrăcat,  
fără nimeni care să spună:  
omul e o pasăre delicată,  
cu ochii limpezi, cu oasele subțiri.

### MAWLANA

Să mă primiți în casă,  
ca pe dervișul rotitor,

ca pe-un ascet fără lăcaș  
 ori ca pe jidovul rătăcitor.  
 Găzduiți-mă o zi, două,  
 dați-mi să mănânc piper, urzici,  
 cântați-mi la acordeon,  
 criticați-mă,  
 încredințați-mi spre educație  
 copiii în faptul serii,  
 trimiteți-mă după cumpărături  
 la băcănie și la piață,  
 spuneți-mi, cu drag sau fără,  
 Mawlana,  
 apoi voi pleca,  
 la un apus prăfos,  
 Mawlana,  
 lumea mea n-are centru,  
 centrul meu sunteți voi.

### DERVIȘ

Sufletul tras în trup,  
 ca djinnul în sticlă,  
 încrezător în salvare  
 (dervișul imun la mistere  
 va apărea la timp).  
 Sfășierea, căutarea lui,  
 în cofetăria lumii,  
 unde zaharicalele se prefac  
 fără milă-n alcooluri.  
 Câtă melancolie!  
 Căci, dacă-ncepi dimineața copil,  
 seara sfârșești bolnav  
 de alcoolismul de a fi,  
 îți renegi izul de aluat dospit  
 la călduțul viciu al vieții.  
 Sub lună, îți predai cătușele  
 și orice instrument de măsură  
 pentru un strop de iubire.  
 Îngenuncherea numai  
 e-a ta, de aceea  
 ai putea înainta  
 noaptea cu un pas,

când nu te vede nimeni.  
Și, dacă ziua vei părea același,  
vei aparține luminii  
pe care ai chemat-o.

### A LUMINOUS DEVASTATION

*Dedicated to the sacred memory of the Sufi Poet and Saint  
Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī,  
for whom no discrimination had ever existed.*

*I asked a child who walked holding a candle,  
"Wherefrom is that light?"*

*Instantly he blew it out.*

*"Tell me where's it now – then I will  
tell you where it came from."*

**Hassan of Basra**

A sunburst from the growing green stabbed,  
the clouds with an obsidian dagger,  
then it dimmed to pale purple and feeble yellow  
(while the burning air around was shot through  
with white slivers). A moment later, out of its  
breast, a smaller opal sun sparkled even more  
vaguely, and then, within its core, another one,  
not bigger than a diamond, began to shine,  
only to fade out in wavering gleams.  
Higher up, heartbeats could be heard  
and the incandescent blue gasped for breath.  
Its veins, though barely seen, were throbbing  
off and on, Vesuvian-wise.  
How to account – now that bareness reigned  
round about supreme – for all that light  
that had come pouring forth out of nowhere,  
and for the kindness and the mercy  
that flooded everything, making one feel  
wrapped up in velvety honied veils, or being  
gently stroked in a loving, paternal way?

**132- Simona-Grazia Dima**

۱۶۵ - سیمونا-غرازیا دیم

**A FRAIL BIRD**

I saw people passing through the city  
wearing woolen scarves which had been knitted  
during many peaceful spells;  
they looked like talkative birds  
flying in and out of the cherry trees.  
Any powerful shake would have  
unraveled their scarves and had the sun  
glistered like an acid knife,  
which started hewing all that was flesh,  
they would have fallen silent and let  
themselves be carried through the branches  
by an alien wind to skies resembling  
smoke-blackened pans studded with stars,  
having no woolen scarves round their necks,  
with no word to put on  
and none close by to say:  
“Man is a bird of the frail kind –  
his eyes are limpid; his bones thin.”

**MAWLANA**

Take me in your home,  
as if I were a whirling dervish,  
or a homeless monk,  
or the Wandering Jew.  
Shelter me for a day or two,  
give me pepper to eat,  
stinging nettles,  
play the accordion for me,  
criticize me, at sundown surrender  
your children to me for tutoring,  
send me to shop for you  
at the grocer's  
and at the food mart,  
call me, with heart  
and soul, or coldly, Mawlana,  
then, on a hazy dusk, I'll leave,  
Mawlana,  
my world has no centre,  
my centre are you.

### 133- Simona-Grazia Dima

١٦٤ - سيمونا-غرازيا ديمما

#### DERVISH

The soul is locked-up in the body  
like the *djinn* in the bottle,  
trusting salvation  
(the dervish, immune from mysteries,  
will appear in the nick of time).  
The heart-breaking search for it,  
in the world's sweetshop,  
in that particular spot where sweets  
turn ruthlessly into spirits.  
Such a melancholy turn!  
Since, if in the morning you set out as a child,  
you end up in the evening sickened  
by the alcoholic addiction of being,  
having denied yourself your own dough's taste,  
leavened by Life's lukewarm vice.  
In the moonlight, you surrender your handcuffs  
and whatever other gauging instruments in your  
possession for the sake of Love's crumb.  
Of your own choosing  
kneeling's all you've been left with –  
Hence the one step forward you may venture  
would be a worthy one only in the dead of night,  
as nobody will then be around to witness it.  
And if in the sunshine you'd look just the same,  
you deserve to belong to that very Light  
you have summoned.

#### Victorita Dutu

فيكتوريتا دوتشو

Romanian poetess, born in 1971 (Bucharest – Romania). With several published works, cultural and artistic activities.  
*Poétesse roumaine, née en 1971 (Bucarest – Roumanie). A son actif s'inscrivent des œuvres publiées et différentes activités culturelles et artistiques.*

.( - )

## THE ONE I SHOULD BE

(extracts - *extraits* - extractos - مقتطفات)

It is as if I were  
Divided into two parts  
As if a lightening  
Penetrated the rock  
The rock would break  
Half of it would stand out  
Against the dark sky,  
The other half would crumble down  
Falling in blocks in the valleys,  
In the rivers...  
Half of the rock springing up  
In the darkness,  
The other half rolled  
To the border of tracks  
Beaten by the human race.

My words  
Shout inside me  
Like the sounds of a piano  
On which I have fallen  
Afraid of a dream.

Me...  
The life...  
I was floating  
And someone  
Was holding my hand  
Above  
The chaos!

He was floating  
On a curve  
His hands were infinite lines  
That reached  
The eye of God, eternally open.

The sights are only an apparent fire  
I see it as I see an illusion  
A shouted word  
That is

**135- Victorita Dutu**

١٦٢ - فيكتوريتا دوتشو

The empty sound  
Of the desert.

I can hear the fire burning  
I can hear the whistling of the flames,  
The cracking of the embers,  
The lights are burning....  
I hear the sound,  
The fire is burning in the fireplace,  
Outside the snow is falling silently.

I don't know what made me today  
Resemble to a violet tree  
In blossom  
Having green and blue flowers  
And it seemed that  
Through each leaf  
The wind was whispering me  
The word  
Whose meaning  
I could not utter.

The words are  
Only a ladder  
On which we step  
Like the sights  
That can reach the distance  
In a moment.

Half of myself would not live  
But would stay numbed on the grass  
This half would see nothing  
Of what happens in the world  
My mouth would seem to be tongue-tied  
My ears would seem to be deaf  
Could I not hear the shout of the light  
Its scream of pain  
While sank into a deep sleep  
Which is not faint?

I am like the mountain  
Which is ready to crumble down  
Only a wonder

### 136- Victorita Dutu

١٦١ - فيكتوريتا دوتشو

Keeps it upright.  
At the foot of the mountain  
There are only clouds  
And me alone wandering through the trees  
I should look for the ladder  
Hidden in the middle of the abyss,  
To get to the peaks.  
To get to the clouds.  
What makes me reach  
The top of the mountain?

I still believe that there  
The gate of the skies is open  
And I must hang my ladder on it.

You must answer me  
You must show me the sense  
The sense of words  
The impenetrable meaning  
Inside which I find myself  
And where I run,  
I run with wide open arms.

The child inside me  
Doesn't fall anymore  
Tripping over the things of the world  
The child inside me  
Has found his freedom...

### Yara Gharios

يارا غاريوس

Lebanese student with many dreams. Born in 1992 (Sarba - Lebanon), she waits her first release: "Des histoires de filles"!

*Étudiante libanaise passionnée de littérature. Née en 1992 (Sarba - Liban), elle attend son premier né: "Des histoires de filles"!*

: ( - ) ! ( ) "

**REVERSE**

( full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

Emily Krack was just your typical 17 year-old average girl with a huge crush on singer Justin Jacobs. Or so she seemed... You see, all of Emily's ancestors on her father's side had the special abilities of slowing, freezing and fast-forwarding time; but none of them could reverse it. Their gift was such a big secret that no one besides Emily's best friend Daphne knew about it, and Emily's school principal.

When she was 15, Emily had her heart broken by a boy, and started listening to love songs of Justin Jacobs. Although he was still new at the music career back then, Emily loved all of his songs, especially one about the love of his life being stuck in another dimension - she may have found it strange at first, but she quickly saw the sensitivity of it and loved it the most.

One day, Kate, Emily's aunt, who was the biggest shop addict anyone could imagine, was coming to visit from Denali. Her mom asked her to come with her to the airport in exchange for a ticket for the concert of Justin Jacobs, the following evening. Because she knew her aunt very well, Emily knew that she'd be in front of a mirror, probably fixing her make-up. As predicted, Kate was the only person in the airport's ladies' room, putting on lip gloss. After a small talk and lots of hugging, Kate went to find her sister, while Emily stayed to wash her hands. One of the small lamps on the mirror exploded, and Emily jumped of fear, accidentally freezing time, and hid in one of the restrooms.

When she got out, the room was very different and crowded. Emily wondered if she had accidentally changed time and went to the future. She ran straight to her father's work place; because they shared an ability, anytime one of them used it, both lived through it.

But as she saw her father, they both understood that she had gone back 3 years in the past and not in the future. It seemed to her father that only Emily was also able to reverse time. She tried unsuccessfully to go back to the future. Her father concluded that it must be because she just discovered a new gift. (Although she still could freeze time, that wouldn't help her go back to the future), Emily suggested staying in this time at least until she could go back on her own. The uncertainty of how long that would take however made them decide that she shouldn't miss any day of school. Taking that into account, Emily's parents signed her up at her school as an exchange student under the name of Millie Red.

On her first day, she was shaking from head-to-toe - she was going to be classmates with students 3 years older than she was - so much that she stumbled her way through her chemistry period, which was her first. Her partner, who was also her guide as an exchange student, offered to help her if she had any trouble in anything. He turned to her to present himself: "Hi I'm Justin Jacobs", he said. Emily was so surprised that she fell off her chair, feeling tongue-tied. Fortunately for her, the conversation with Justin kicked off pretty fast, and they quickly became friends.

A few weeks passed and Emily and Justin had become very close. So close in fact that he confessed his great passion for music to her. Already knowing he would be successful in that career, Emily wasn't a bit surprised, but acted like it. What had shocked her was the fact that he was keeping this passion a secret and wasn't intending to tell anyone about it, by fear of failing at it. Emily encouraged him into doing what he loved because: "fearing the future only stops you from doing what makes you happy, but if you're miserable then why bother to live?" Justin followed her advice and found a couple of weeks later a record company that had liked the songs he had composed.

Realizing that she was falling in love with him, Emily decided that she trusted Justin enough to tell him her secret gift. What Justin saw of that was that she would leave him when it would be time. Emily was surprised by his admitting that he was in love with her just like she was. Unfortunately, in the year Emily came from, Justin was dating another girl, so, as heartbreaking as it was, she had to tell him they couldn't be together. It hurt her even more when he begged her not to go back to her own time. As much as she wanted to stay, she couldn't; there couldn't be more than one Emily in one time.

Which was why, the next day, when Emily had regained full control over time, they said their farewell, and she left.

Emily cried her eyes out before leaving.

She landed in the garage of her house, the day after the one she had left. She was surprised to find her parents acting like she has only been out for a school trip or something. Of course, they should be expecting her to reverse time since they first knew about it 3 years ago.

Emily noticed that her aunt Kate had turned the radio on and it was like a punch in the stomach when she heard one of Justin's songs. But when she listened well, she recognized the lyrics; it was the song about the love of his life being stuck in another dimension, and the chorus went like this:

*You filled my heart with happiness  
 Showed me the way out of darkness  
 Never thought there would be a separation  
 Then you got stuck in another dimension  
 Since then I've been waiting  
 For the girl that makes my heart sing  
 Tell me 'no' I hear 'definitely'  
 Tell me 'love' I hear 'Millie'*

With a gasp from Emily, the radio went on announcing the break-up between Justin and his longtime girlfriend. Only then did Emily understand that Justin had been waiting for her to come back and find him for 3 whole years.

Holding her ticket in her hand, she ran out the house and Kate drove her to the stadium where the concert was held. But it had already started and the guards wouldn't let Emily in. She tried to explain to them, said that she was the one Justin was looking for, that she was Millie Red from his songs. The bodyguards, convinced at last, - because no one ever knew about Millie Red - sent her through a door in the back.

She ran as fast as she could only to find that this door led straight onstage. Emily found herself in front of a huge silent crowd staring curiously at her, and her stage fright took control of her.

She tried to run... but someone held her arm and stopped her right where she was. She turned and saw him; Justin, smiling at her. "You look exactly the same as when I last saw you", he said, still grinning.

"That's because, to me, you last saw me less than an hour ago." She replied.

20-year-old, different looking, older Justin. That wasn't fair; she was still 17, how could he want her when she was this much younger than he was?

Hope faded away, and tears suddenly started running down her face like waterfalls. Justin got worried and asked her what was wrong. She told him exactly what was on her mind. His answer was that he couldn't care less.

Still crying, Emily added: "What if it gets too much pressure for me and I can't take it anymore? I mean, you're obviously hugely famous - I told you so, by the way - and you have people stalking you all the time. I'm scared of that."

The happy smile on Justin's face turned even bigger as he quoted her: "Fearing the future only stops you from doing what makes you happy", and she finished his sentence with a smirk: "but if you're miserable then why bother to live? Yeah, I remember."

And then, as if there wasn't even any crowd, as if there wasn't anyone watching, Justin held Emily in his arms and started spinning her around, while everyone else went crazy, whistling and cheering.

Even you couldn't deny what Justin and Emily thought: life is better for those who live it as happily as possible.

### Yose Álvarez-Mesa

يوزة الفارز-مزا

Spanish poetess, with several published books, literary prizes and cultural activities.

*Poétesse espagnole. A son actif s'inscrivent plusieurs livres publiés, prix littéraires et activités culturelles.*

## SOBRE HORIZONTES

( full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

*las alas de la noche dibujan yermos horizontes  
donde dilapidar el infortunio  
bocanadas de aire agonizante  
cruzan la geografía de mi atmósfera  
deteniendo el atisbo de cualquier leve viento que erice los instantes  
transito las certezas sin saberlo del todo  
con los sentidos párvulos  
y es posible que nunca asuma que ya no hay vuelta atrás  
las alas de la noche dibujan yermos horizontes  
pero el instinto la engalana de brumas  
para sobrellevar el infortunio*

\*\*\*

*descorres las cortinas  
 me adentro en la espesura de una jungla de olvidos  
 pisaré tus pisadas  
 para que no haya huellas que delaten mis pasos  
 tómame de la mano  
 llévame tierra adentro hasta sentir que todo  
 se tambalea y cae  
 y si luego no quieres saber por qué he venido  
 escóndeme los ojos  
 y no me dejes ver lo que hay detrás*

\*\*\*

*a veces no percibo el tañido letal de los silencios  
 a la caza del eco  
 y sin embargo siento en la piel tu desmemoria  
 desgarrando el disfraz del desafecto  
 a veces ya no extraño tu hueco en las almohadas  
 a veces los intentos por llegar a otros puertos  
 fructifican durante unos instantes  
 aunque apenas me alejo de tu estela de ausencias  
 el brazo sepulcral del extravío tira de mí*

\*\*\*

*la belleza es eterna aunque muera cada día  
 es eterno el constante florecer de las camelias  
 es eterna la imagen de la niña durmiente  
 es eterna la frágil juventud del retrato colgado en la pared  
 sin embargo es efímero el sentir más profundo  
 la dicha y la desdicha viven entre paréntesis  
 con la levedad del tiempo abrazado al reloj*

\*\*\*

*me despedí de tu fotografía  
 me disparé en la sien tu última imagen  
 sólo había una bala en la recámara  
 así nunca podré  
 volver a suicidarme*

\*\*\*

*no alcanzo a penetrar tu agreste acantilado  
expuesto a la explosión del oleaje  
emboscado en las tormentas de la vida  
no me abres un resquicio entre la pesadumbre  
por donde introducir la paz y el equilibrio  
te quedas relegado al puro instinto  
oculto entre las costas escapadas  
aceptando el irremisible fin*

\*\*\*

*una cuerda que cuelga de la luna  
serpentea en el aire  
al compás de los vientos que entrecruzan  
el corredor helado de mi casa  
sólo alargar la mano  
y la cuerda me envolverá en su abrazo de nudo corredizo  
y el firmamento será mío  
y al fin podré sentir que el territorio  
es algo más que un hueco de mi talla*

\*\*\*

*al amparo del alba nos quitaron el nombre  
y llenaron nuestra casa de abandono  
nos dejaron a oscuras en una tumba anónima  
proscritos visitantes escombros en el escombros  
asomados al borde de los ojos  
vemos pasar la vida por delante  
con miedo a que nos pidan los papeles  
temiendo que ese miedo nos delate  
ábrenos un espacio dios de lo inalcanzable  
abre un espacio donde quepamos todos  
invéntate un país donde todos los nombres sean igual de propios  
busca en el mapa el soñado territorio  
donde poder sentirnos habitantes  
y hallarás tras las sombras y el asombro  
una legión de súbditos con voz e identidad*

\*\*\*

*llevas en la sonrisa el vuelo de un suspiro  
y en el andar un toque de nostalgia  
algún latido roto en la camisa  
y una gota de olvido en la mirada*

*saltas los rojos charcos con pies indiferentes  
cruzas entre las balas con el gesto blindado  
esquivas la humareda yendo a favor del viento  
atraviesas la vida sin miedo al descalabro*

*abres las alas y juegas a ser hombre  
cierras los libros y agotas las palabras  
vas de puntillas por los bordes del aire  
y pateas con fuerza las calles masacradas*

*llevas en el instinto una pizca de inconsciencia  
y en el talante la sombra de algún llanto  
el sobresalto prendido en la solapa  
y el eco de los sueños en los puños cerrados*

\*\*\*

*la noche cojea*

*una luna mulata entra por la ventana  
hasta arañar con sus guiños azules las bordes de los pies  
se desborda el aliento en el vaso  
mientras los dedos tratan de detenerlo*

*inútilmente*

*porque la vida pasa cojeando  
por el hueco entarimado del patíbulo*

\*\*\*

*puñales en los músculos  
nudos en las palabras*

*en el alféizar*

*ruidos de otras locuras impregnan el olor tajante de los pinos  
y trepan por las rejas como una enredadera*

*los labios empañados gritan algún silencio  
la mirada perdida se encuentra de repente  
con algo*

*nubes violeta inundan la memoria*

*de nuevo una certeza un recuerdo  
una chispa de cordura  
y el lápiz de escribir los días y los años  
se detiene a afilar su trayectoria*

*puñales en los músculos  
nudos en las palabras*

*el tiempo pasa de puntillas  
por los pasillos de los manicomios*

\*\*\*

*tienes los ojos vueltos hacia otra parte  
no buscan no interrogan no debaten  
no conversan convencen o combaten  
tal vez se hayan cansado de renunciar  
tienes los ojos ciegos como arrecifes  
varados en el fondo de la negrura toda  
sumidos en las profundidades como si fueran ciego  
tal vez para abrigarte en su oscuridad*

\*\*\*

*desde este amanecer  
no siento ningún otro amanecer*

*tal parece que el tiempo comenzase a nacer ahora mismo  
y sus aires neófitos aún no tuvieran fuerzas para mover relojes*

*tal parece que aquí en este abrazo indómito  
no existiera el después*

*y sin embargo pronto  
veré tus alamedas pasar por mi ventana  
y los ojos del tiempo  
se quedarán sin luz*

\*\*\*

*se equivocaron  
lo ha dicho el noticiario  
y un rasgueo en la piel teñida de amatista  
desafía al silencio*

*qué buena mala suerte  
 quien buscaba evidencias hasta bajo las piedras  
 no encontró más que el polvo del camino  
 y un hueco que no se llena con palabras  
 surge de la amenaza que no fue  
 se equivocaron  
 lo admiten y lo airean  
 como si hablásemos de una suma mal hecha  
 y un horizonte de pólvora y humo  
 se balancea sobre la magnitud  
 disculpen las molestias  
 se les devolverá todo lo despojado  
 padres hijos hermanos  
 los miembros mutilados  
 la algarabía de los niños jugando  
 se equivocaron  
 ¡contádselo a los muertos!  
 salid del cementerio y volved a vuestras casas  
 que todo fue un error de cálculo*

\*\*\*

*nada que decir  
 y tantas cosas  
 se quedan en el aire  
 nada que decir  
 y las palabras  
 se agolpan en los márgenes  
 el mutismo nos ata a la distancia  
 y en esas soledades por encima del mundo  
 otros pequeños mundos golpean el cristal  
 nada que decir  
 no los dejaré entrar*

\*\*\*

*te encuentro en el umbral de lo impreciso  
 desmigajando el reloj sobre los charcos  
 me miras con los ojos devastados*

*abres la boca y no te salen las palabras  
 tus sueños transeúntes se te caen de las manos  
 como gotas que sangran de una herida  
 ¡cuánto invierno te pasó por encima!  
 ¡cuánto indulto se escapó de tus botas!  
 el tiempo me devuelve una espiral desdoblada  
 sarmentosa deforme  
 abandonada en el barro de los días  
 me miras con los ojos que ya no tienen lágrimas  
 y recuerdas  
 ¡en tu boca se agolpa la derrota!*

\*\*\*

*¡cuántas veces te has ido para siempre!  
 cuántas veces en la fiebre mortal de tus ausencias  
 reviví y reavivé tu alejamiento  
 y hoy que vuelves al fin de los ensueños  
 se desparrama el aire en la memoria  
 y se desinfla el hueco del silencio  
 el ser que reviví ya no tiene latido  
 el sol que reavivé se desvanece*

\*\*\*

*centinela del aire que observas pesaroso los avances el tiempo  
 es hora de dejar pasar el viento  
 recubre tus despojos solitarios con el halo espumoso de la vida  
 atraviesa cualquier incertidumbre con la espada afilada del instinto  
 siente cómo el instante penetra por tus pies  
 enredados al suelo cadavérico  
 para dejarlos libres  
 vigilante de todo lo apilado en el fondo de la nada  
 desata los desnudos nudos de la memoria  
 déjate arrastrar por la marea de los días que quedan por vivir  
 ¡alguien te espera!*

\*\*\*

*tanto equilibrio roto ante los ojos...  
que el dolor se hace fuerte entre tus dedos  
los relojes postrados en el lecho encendido te corroen las piernas  
y excretas por todas tus fisuras la sal de los infiernos  
paseas los colores como si fueran gritos  
que tu garganta no puede retener  
mil espinas de pez se clavaron allí hace tanto tiempo...  
los pinceles se anudan a tus manos sangrantes y entreabiertas  
y dibujas tus alas mutiladas remendadas con hilvanes de viento  
para poder sentir la libertad*

\*\*\*

*flotas en el estanque de los náufragos con la sonrisa del que espera  
cautivo en ese océano que había de liberarte  
todas tus ilusiones atadas al tobillo  
hundidas entre las migajas empapadas de un amanecer  
que te ha sido negado  
meciéndose en la hostilidad de un sueño que jamás se cumplirá  
salir huir escapar del polvo y la tiniebla  
para poder llegar a ser un infeliz feliz de ser algo...  
pero esa vida mejor que llevaba tu nombre  
se esfumó sin poder verle la cara  
había que intentarlo  
ahora al menos una sonrisa ilumina tu cadáver*

\*\*\*

*agosto cae despedazado entre los ventanales  
justo allí donde las sombras se esfumaron  
lágrimas de papel manan de la pared  
y ruedan lentamente por el rostro del aire  
dejando estelas blancas en su viaje al abismo  
la noche desgrana un réquiem de alas negras  
la figura doliente se adormece entre un sopor de inútiles latidos  
y el peso de la melancolía se traslada de uno a otro párpado  
hasta sentir que nada es importante  
nada es importante...*

\*\*\*

*huele a mamá  
a pan a desconsuelo  
a lágrimas expuestas al olvido  
huele a papel antiguo  
a lápiz carcomido  
a momentos colgados del deshielo  
los días se trasladan exiguos de equipaje  
y van arrebatando olores a la vida  
con los que perfumar cada vacío  
huele a perplejidad  
a anochecer y a sueños  
a dormirse arropado en un deseo  
huele a otro despertar  
con la sonrisa nueva y el corazón crecido  
huele a un día distinto por el que echar a andar*

\*\*\*

*un agrietado espejo postrado en el olvido  
surge del polvo gris de las profundidades  
se sacude el sopor de la nostalgia  
peina su cautiverio con los dedos del aire  
se eleva hasta el trashuz de una ventana  
y observa el sol iluminando los charcos del invierno  
llenos de párvulas pisadas  
desfallecen las sombras prendidas a un suspiro  
un reflejo un chasquido el viento...  
... me miras y te miro  
tal vez pueda tener al fin tus alas*

\*\*\*

*no sé vivir los días  
me golpean con saña  
me empujan a las vías  
me ponen la pistola en la sien  
no sé soñar las noches  
me hunden en siniestros paisajes*

*me aferran a las fauces del miedo  
no me dejan volar*

*no sé cómo cortar los hilos  
que mueven este oscuro destino  
o disolver la amenaza y el pánico  
o poner sonrisas en mi boca*

*y en los instantes  
en los que el carcelero alza la mano  
busco desesperadamente un antídoto  
para su inquebrantable realidad*

\*\*\*

*me muevo entre las cifras de un reloj inclemente  
mientras la lluvia de las horas va borrando el barro de mis pies*

*arrastro un arsenal de desengaños atados a la espalda  
y tras ellos intuyo espacios sin barrotes*

*mundos de purpurina musgo y tierra mojada  
se han quedado en el limbo de los ojos*

*un río de mentira inunda los parajes inhóspitos  
y una gota insurgente de nostalgia  
que hiberna en las profundidades  
se deshíela*

*el reloj se detiene pero el tiempo no cesa*

\*\*\*

*detén la vida*

*un instante*

*ahora que parece ir más despacio*

*busca dentro de ti lo trascendente  
lo imprescindible*

*lo que deja una huella cuando se va alejando*

*siente el revoloteo de sus alas desnudas acariciando el ánimo  
no lo dejes pasar sin disfrutar su vuelo*

*dibújale a tus pies un intervalo  
respira lentamente el momento que desprende tu piel  
vierte sobre tus horas el elixir de ese mágico lapso*

150- Yose Álvarez-Mesa

١٤٧ - يوزه ألفاريز-مزا

*la inmensidad del tiempo no lo es tanto  
y cuando se haya consumido  
no te preguntará ¿quieres volver?*

\*\*\*

*no tengo sensaciones*

*se me escurrieron todas por los renglones inclinados de los calendarios  
cayeron al vacío como gotas de lluvia desde el infinito  
y se estrellaron contra el tránsito mortal del silencio que andaba por allí*

*hoy son imperceptibles manchas en el pavimento  
pisoteadas por el rítmico balanceo de una mecedora  
que se mueve al compás del inexorable tictac del tiempo baldío*

\*\*\*

**Yvan Racine Courtois**

إيفان راسين كورتوا

French poet, but also international model, pianist and globe-trotter. Born in 1973 (Royan - France), with several writings.

*Poète français, mais aussi mannequin international, pianiste et globe-trotter. Né en 1973 (Royan - France), il a à son actif plusieurs écrits.*

( - )

**NOTRE PÈRE QUI ETES AUX CIEUX  
REGARDE EN FACE ET TU VERRAS**

(full text - *texte intégral* - texto completo - الكامل )

**NOTRE PÈRE QUI ETES AUX CIEUX**

Bulle bleue suspendue en espace sans âge

Flottant dans l'air absent de ce noir paysage,

## 151- Yvan Racine Courtois

١٤٦ - إيفان راسين كُرتوا

Elle roule sur elle-même tel un ballon perdu,  
Rotations qui s'enchaînent, révolutions sans but  
Pour faire tourner les têtes autour de la planète  
Comme des petites billes sur le sol qu'on jette  
Sans se soucier alors de les voir se casser  
A trop vouloir y croire sans élan modéré.

Passion, terre adorée par nos âmes mesquines  
Piquant, creusant sa croûte d'une humeur taquine,  
Amour et inconscience façonnant le danger,  
Raison déraisonnable de notre humanité  
Telle une mère aimante ne pouvant se résoudre  
A se débarrasser de ses violents petits  
Qui jonchent son dos rond et son ventre meurtri  
Par leur habilité à faire crier la poudre.

Dépendance agressive dénotant le progrès  
Digne d'une sangsue agrippant un mollet,  
Suceuse de substance, ogresse de la vie,  
Elle use de sa bouche pour pomper sans merci  
La jambe nourricière porteuse de son groupe  
Dont l'esprit occupé à cracher dans la soupe  
Ne semble pas comprendre que l'odieuse ventouse  
Vole le corps entier sous l'habit de barbouze.

Pardonnant les offenses qui lui sont adressées,  
La sphère indulgente assiste nos métiers,  
Continuant à servir l'actionnaire boulimique  
De ses ressources ciblées par l'enfant colérique,  
Piètre maître déguisé en chef d'activité,  
Sauveur désigné des vieilles sociétés  
Qui composent le monde noble d'aujourd'hui,  
Producteur affairé, de menaces en délits.

Intelligence amère, Montre-nous le futur  
De ceux qui ne pansent pas la plaie ou la blessure!  
Dessine nos campagnes désertes et désertiques!  
Trace ces villes-là trop immenses, illogiques,  
Sans t'escrimer longtemps à dépendre la mer,  
La montagne, le vent, le tremblement de chair  
Lorsque la mort de l'homme impose la panique  
Du peuple délirant sous ton œil critique!

**REGARDE EN FACE ET TU VERRAS**

Tu ne pouvais pas savoir,  
Lorsqu'il voyait passer la voiture du roi,  
Son cœur imaginait être ce véhicule,  
Chose sans âme, vide, dont on sait prendre soin  
Quand on délaisse là l'homme bête qui a faim,

Tu ne pouvais pas comprendre,  
La fillette coquette se parait de couleurs  
Enfilant ses malheurs pour chercher dans la rue  
Son vacancier honnête, homme de pauvre vertu,  
Sale douleur qui guette,

Tu ne pouvais pas apprendre,  
Le vieillard aveugle mutilé par devoir  
Pour gagner de sa peine la pitié des passants,  
Travailleur acharné oeuvrant à chaque instant  
Détestable qui enchaîne,

Tu ne pouvais pas entendre,  
Ces balles de blancs haineux qui sifflaient dans les têtes  
Au mépris des familles grossissant leurs charniers  
Pour garantir la paix, honneur d'une industrie,  
Victoire, vaste défaite,

Tu aurais pu savoir,  
Ta douceur de vivre se paye en centimes  
Dans la poche des autres,  
Ceux que tu ne prenais pas pour ce qu'ils te sont,  
Modestes bras vaillants pour faire vivre ton peuple,

Tu aurais pu comprendre,  
Tes délires de peur ne sont que des broutilles  
Face au regard du monde noyé dans ses sueurs,  
Blanches banquises qui fondent,  
Espèces qui se meurent,

Tu aurais pu apprendre,  
Imposer au pouvoir, journalisme menteur,  
De rendre compte au peuple sans omettre de dire,  
Changement d'attitude, nécessaire ami  
Pour demander pardon aux forçats de l'horreur,

153- Yvan Racine Courtols

١٤٤ - إيفان راسين كُرتُولا

Tu aurais pu entendre,  
L'appel de la mort qui frôle,  
Hurlante tragédie des destins qui se croisent  
Sans vouloir se toucher, vieille crainte  
Attrapée par bien modeste rôle,

Tu voudrais mais tu ne le feras,  
Affairé de ton mieux  
Comme un dieu insouciant  
Partagé entre enfants et respect de tes lois,  
Arbitrage partial qui demain te perdra!

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