



Goran Simić, Canada & Bosnia and Herzegovina

WHO AM I

1.

I dedicated myself to studying my enemy
on the other side of bank .

I read all books written by my enemy and then burnt them,
just to warm up my feet next to the fireplace.

It was pleasure pretend not to hear the request of the fictional characters
who begged me to give them a little bit more time,
so that they could get used to ash.

Their love proverbs Vocabularies ,

that we used to use for school teaching our square head pupils not to trust,
their round head friend bastards across the bank ,

Screamed in the fire.

But I would turn up the radio,

where you could listen to the our wordless hymns,

Ashamed of their songs that sounded like ours.

After I threw out the all CDs with enemy music,

into muddy river that separated us,

I heard mute fish singing.

I watched all their movies,

Searching for the hidden messages about difference between us and them.

Cheep propaganda talked through the fake tears of their mothers visiting mass graves .

They must have a huge budget for make up.

I was thinking and laughing watching for hundred time they colorless flags

Rain bleached them away.

But I couldn't deny the repulsive beauty of their side of the riverbank.

Where the future terrorist lovers were kissing under the blue sky.

But they stare at the stars

on our side of the river.

Occupied by my secret mission,

I went to the daycare to pick up my children that I don't have.

Come to pick them up after the Statutory day, I was told.

I sent flowers to the address of my darling that I don't have.

Come to pick up dry flowers next week ,I was told.

Than I find myself cry ,watching me in the uniform

In front of the mirror

wondering why my enemy smile strangely at me,

in the reflection.

NE KOPIRATI

2.

For Kahlid Ali Mustafa and Yitzhak Laor

We are riding the same bicycle the way that nobody knows
who is in control of the wheel, who is taking care of the pedals.

Our burning heads dive into the dawn while our fragile spines pretend
to be strong whenever our flat tires drive over the hungry soil
that chewed on so many generations of students who believed that
dust decides the difference between different colors on the flags.

If I ask my mother to wash my dark clothes in the sea water
for as long as the pain in my stomach has lasted,
if you ask your mother to wash your black clothes
as much as the length of your suspicion has lasted
both of us would wear just pure white clothes.

Just stupid fabric ready to embrace in the same way
a new born baby and a man ready to die.

We are riding on the same bicycle toward the sunrise
and pretend not to see pupils going to the school
with their backpacks that smell of fuel instead of fairy-tale books.

They wave to us with handkerchiefs soaked in fear
upon seeing one body with four hands and four legs

driving toward the place that used to be the homeland of a lullaby.

We wave back with our helmets too small to carry our heads.

We are riding on the same bicycle

through the devastated villages, houses built by the bricks

that some invisible hand replaced from the torn down Berlin wall.

A man waves to us with a death certificate, a woman waves to us

with baby diapers so transparent that we can read the expiry date

on the faces of future mothers.

The baby bed and the death bed seem the same

when the desert wind starts blowing in our face the sand

with no homeland and with no knowledge of the people

who ride the bicycle.

This is not the end of the ride we used to ride every day, I tell you,

wiping out the cement-heavy sand from your shoes.

This is just the beginning of the day, you tell me,

wiping out the dark clouds from my face.

And we get out from the flat tire bike to go in different directions

wondering on our way to our devastated homes:

Did we ride together some stationary bicycle in some foreign country?

Or the bicycle was real. As we are.

NE KOPIRATI

3.

There are ferocious winds that we give women's names

So that we can fear them

But there are also nameless winds.

There is a wind, which bows to the government by waving its flag
on the flagpole in front of the Parliament building,

There is a wind, which enters through the stomach of the Steel Plant
gnawing at the hungry workers

Then exits through the chimney like a black angel made of smoke,

There is a wind, which appears in front of the pauper's house

Where a mother hangs newly washed children's clothing on a clothes line

Before the smoke from the factory chimney falls on the children's white
undershirts,

There is a wind, which likes to tear the umbrella from the hand of a retired factory
bookkeeper

And drop it in front of the door of a woman waiting for her husband's return from
the Steel Plant,

There is a wind that enters through the pub's door, and quiver the blouses of girls
who found themselves at the bar on the workers' payday,

There is a wind that shamelessly lifts the skirt of a Steel Plant supervisor's wife
Who holds her husband's hand while he informs the workers about the plant's
closing.

There is a wind that smothers the sound of children weeping in the neighbour's
apartment

While they pack their toys in moving boxes that will never be the same
And then abandon the apartment.

But there is also a wind that spoke in your voice
When you dragged me from the pub and brought me home,
And then washed the heavy Steel Plant metallic smell from my body.

That wind told me that you love me.
And this is the only wind I would like to name.

NEKKOPRATHI

4.

You bought me shoelaces at the flea market,

The day when matches became more expensive than dynamite.

They were too long, so I shortened them and from the remnants I made a ring.

The first one for our engagement. The second one for our wedding.

If I knew that my murderer would tie my hands with the same short shoelaces

I would have forged the ring from the golden crown on my tooth.

Then maybe my murderer with his finger on the trigger

While looking at my golden tooth, would not remember

That his wife's engagement ring was made of shoelaces

from his military boots.

The day I married you I dreamt that Angels smelled of the lilac tree.

The morning that they took me I dreamt that the same Angels,

have the form of spiders and that they live

in the wall calendar where they eat months and years for breakfast.

Who would have known that they would go to lunch through that dingy entrance,

Over there where long ago lied my golden tooth.

And that they would come back from the same darkness,

Quietly,

Like when they cross the black line between Thursday and Friday on the calendar.

So they could lie down on the net made of shoelaces,

And an relaxed watch another sunset.

Shoelace's shadows ,

Become shorter and shorter from one year to another,

and shinier,

than the wedding band, I noticed, with the pain.

NEKOPIRATI

5.

If we stay in bed today and don't go to the morning mass in the church

What will think the exuberant Sunday morning, watching us through the mute windows

How shamelessly we breathe into each other's faces.

What will say the alarm clock when I push it fall from the night stand

Before the trace of the night on my eyelids remains on my lips,

What will the suicidal roses say when you don't appear with your shears in the garden

While I leave the impression of my palm lines on your breasts,

What will say the stupid street that already forgot your husband's name, you in tears,

and the Plate number of the hearse that has been rotting in the car cemetery for a long time.

If my embrace looks to you like a nest,

What will say the confused church entrance door, which you only once crossed in your wedding dress

And so many times dressed in black

If our bellies get glued by sweat and reject to separate

What will the priest say when he doesn't see you on the widows' bench
And find somebody else is already sitting there

They will forget us as soon as new gossip became old
And some new woman in black sleep over morning Mass
Wrapped in lovers skin like an baby
Who doesn't know difference between diaper
And flag.

NEKOPIRATI

6.

Muddy shoes tied with two different laces,
Pair of dirty socks with Mickey Mouse picture,
Brown trousers with dry grass glued to them,
Belt,
Shirt soaked in blood and endless bullets holes
Loose tie with the image of a mosque at the bottom,
Pair of broken glasses without the lenses.

That's it .

Where is the man, I screamed

Where is the man, I shouted at The Official

Busy trying to put together pieces of the nameless skeleton

As if I am trying to solve the puzzle.

“You are not allowed to scream inside the Forensic Centre”,

I was warned by The Official 's shadow.

It was my longest walk from Death to the Exit door.

Outside,

Summer in the shape of golden ring smiling at me,

As if to an accomplice

As if nothing has happened

Leaving me with my darkness

To find out the answer to the bitter question .

NE KOPIRATI

7.

My beloved wife, where are you going so early in the morning
With a rose in one hand and a shovel in another.

My darling, I am going to bury you in our garden,
So I wouldn't have to look for you in other people's gardens,
Before you got devoured and chewed up by the bowels of military trucks,

These are the same boys who, until yesterday, had tattoos of their friends' names
on their shoulders

And now they are tattooing military ranks.

My beloved, do not leave your house. The house is a dear grave.

Between the four walls unfinished coffee is still smelling,

A cigarette smoke is kissing the window from inside.

There is nothing outside.

I only ask you to stop those workers' boots that keep on marching

From the bedroom to the children's room, and back,

So that the children wouldn't wake up too early and go to school

And meet in the classroom their crucified teacher.

Now I have to go, I need to bury you before the smell of gasoline gets stronger
then

The smell of roses. Before I start seeing you as the shiny bones on the shovel
In somebody else garden

NEKOPIRATI

8.

I collect November dry leaves to extract perfume in April
for you

Who sits at the corner of our bed to look outside through the window
Into the gray stomach of the sky that eats sparrows
to give birth to the owls.

But you don't see me anymore.

You don't hear the moles chewing the silence in the pillow

As I write messages over my skin

Using my own blood as neon ink.

The words of joy that I recite to your

Bounce back to my mouth in the shape of rotten flower roots

That I planted in your ears

Waiting for Spring to come.

Like an abandoned tin drum in the orchestra of violins,

Like a horse rider in the camel race

I waive to you with a black scarf from the starting point

Hoping it would turn to white
Sometimes before the finish line

Before I became ill
Waiting for November
To start smelling like April.

NEKOPIRATI

9.

So many times I moved from place to place,

That I don't even remember my first address.

I remember the cities because of the train tickets

And continents because of the stamps in my passport.

I don't even carry anything else in my suitcases
but city and road maps.

I don't even get surprised anymore when the suitcase bites me
when I try to close it.

I live in flight attendants' plastic smile when watching suspiciously
plastic rose in my hand.

I drink the train conductors' politeness
when asking me for the origin of my face scars.

From the plastic plate I eat somebody else bitter bread
with country of origin written on the bottom of each slice
that will eat me before I reach my stop.

My camera resists to catch up the sunny landscapes,
my pen is dead to describe
nameless stops and faceless people.

Pocket flash light is my guide
when thinking of my true love who agree to live in my imagination.

Behind me, blue snow falls from the sky,
on the streets that I have just passed.

In front of me Hotel rooms still chow the bones of the lovers
that walked away with new dreams.

Strangers pronounce the name of the country they come from
like they are pronouncing
the name of a terminal illness,
that one die from only in front of the turned off TV screen.

Strangers' voices sounds like telephones that don't ring in the hotel rooms,
like Email messages that appear on the computer screen as swallows
on the roof of the old family house.

Afterwards the same swallows turn into storks
after patiently waiting on the frozen chimney
and then leave
for some other roof.

Every strangers dive into the dreams with the old country anthem
on its lips
and wake up in a cold silence after pillow start smelling
on the flag bleached by the rain and wind.

I am also one of those in search of home
in search of the warmth in my mother's womb.

My first address.

NEKOPIRATI

10.

The war is over. I guess.

At least that's what the morning paper says.

On the front page there is a picture of the factory
that until yesterday produced only flags.

It is starting to make pajamas' today.

On the next page there is a report on the posthumous
awarding of medals and then there are crossword puzzles
and national lottery results
in which they regret to inform that this month
again nobody won the grand prize.

Pharmacies work all night again,
radio plays the good old hits
and it seems as if there never was a war.

I enter an old clothing shop
and on the hangers I recognize my neighbours:

There,

Ivan's coat. We used the lining for bandages.

Look,

Hasan's shoes. Shoelaces are missing.

And Jovan's pants. The belt is gone.

But where are the people?

I run along the main street

to look at myself in the shop windows

but the shop windows are smashed

and there are only naked mannequins

that will wear new pyjamas tomorrow

according to the morning paper.

Then I run into our apartment

and look at myself in the glass

on your picture on the wall

and I don't care if I am not the same anymore,

the one who cried when they were taking you away.

You told me you would come back

my love

when the war is finally over.

The war is over.

At least according
to the morning paper.

NEKOPIRATI

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