



Peyco Kanev

And tomorrow

Today, I will look in the mirror
to see only one unshaven beast.

Today, they'll offer me razorblades and
foam to prepare myself.

Today, they'll drag me out of the cell, and
we'll go out for my last stroll.

Today, I will read the newspaper with
my name in it, underlined with thick line,
and the time of my birth and death at the end.

Today, I'll dream of childhood, dandelions
and something lost forever -
teeth, nails and stolen virginity.

Today, I'll eat my last supper in secrecy,
happy for who I am and what I was.

Today, my time will be heavy as the Sphinx,
and I will wait for the night.

And tomorrow,

I will leave these golden bars behind,
I will walk between the guards of honor
and the people with dark faces,

and they'll scream: "Fry him like a dog",

but wouldn't they see that I am

god?

Lead off

I am still in the old dingy neighborhood,
waiting for the skies to turn into cashmere.
Ice-cream trucks play baroque symphonies,
outside, and the brown kids chase each other

in the dark with their whizzing lightsabers.
If I try to fry something I will eventually burn it,
and the avant-garde words from Cummings's "is 5"
crumble down on the wine-stained carpet.

I attentively prowl the streets late at night,
stalking the shadows that are drawing nearer.
Concealing myself in the Serbian liquor store,
where the celluloid shop boy sells me bottles

full of canned laughter. It will be like this
until the end – eventually – no coke or grass,
just this indescribable mouth in my head,
lispings in my good ear "Times must pass".

Camera Obscura

Light, please initiate me into your
occult philosophy. Tell me where
you come from when you penetrate
a dusty window in the morning and

find me staring into the nothingness.
Sometimes you show me very beautiful
things, and I try to comprehend.
Like a pair of beautiful female legs

semi-concealed in the twilight of
your brightly absence. How many stories
do we need so this moment could be
remembered forever?

The others have old photo albums.
The others have skies to cry beneath them.
But you can find me thoughtful,
staring into the darkness of this page.

Inexplicable

I am drinking whiskey from a tin can –
this line sounds so much like blues,
but let me tell you the rest.
This tin can is shiny and red- oh yes,
many years ago, my grandfather,
for many years, kept his pencils inside
and some small notebook in which he
scribbled late at night. Secret notes about
his past, I presume, then just a blink
of a supernova, and he was gone. After that,
my uncle stored in it his old German ‘Luger’,
which he cleaned almost every day. Maybe he
was afraid of loosing his prolonged quarrels
with cancer and immortality, maybe he wanted
to go on his own terms. My uncle was a great
admirer of Ernest Hemingway. He was gone
one summer Sunday morning. And now the can
is mine. I pour whiskey inside and drink it sitting
in the dark. No music, no light- just me and the old
whiskey, but it has some strange taste, almost like
rust from an old pistol and fading memories of words
never written. I lift it close to my ear and I can hear
the whizzing of the chilly mistral, that so long ago
licked the skin of my father. I sigh and say to
the time in my tin can: Please scholar me as you
collar me, because everything fills- Now and then.

Meat

I still remember the eagles
perched on the rocks
and, after that, leaping from the infinity
into the abyss to look for meat.

So majestically!
The smooth feathers and the shining talons,
pulsing against the Sun.

I still remember those eagles
from my dream.
So real!
Was I 5 or 8?
But I still haven't forgotten those creatures.

They were perching on my hands
and pecking at the pieces of meat
and, after that, they flew towards the empyrean,
but their feathered souls
stayed with me,

even now...

One of them sits on my left shoulder,
like some obscure critic,
frowning at these lines
and pecking at
the words that I'm writing.

Last word

I will lose everything into the swirl of myself.
I'll fade quickly away, then soon enough
I'll be gone. My legs will disappear, my knee:
gone; my right eye will start to blink before it
vanishes into the void. Between the hands of
a clock, the last sound will die, crucified by
silence. All turns white, gray, ashes.
If I have her hair do I really have her?
I have no time for questions. I erase myself
so slowly that nobody feels me anymore.
That's why I hasten to write these words so
at least she could remember that I ever lived.

Psalm

The Universe with all of its atomic tidiness is a bit incomprehensible. Metaphysics too. But I like physics more than the physicists. The world is full of geniuses and some others. The world is strange, like a movie shot in Technicolor, but there is too much red in it. Imagine the Crusades, imagine the Inquisition, imagine all of it until now. What if, like the fiction writers like to say, time starts to flow in the other direction? Imagine Galileo working with hexa-core processor, Henry VIII on Viagra, Einstein sweating in a Chinese fireworks factory. That's why I keep myself close to the agnosticism. This world was screwed up before time was time, even before emptiness gave any hints of vacuum. That's why I like the simple things. For example, in a gas station in Arizona, in some foreign language the American Indian at the counter tried to explain to me how to pay for the gasoline. I asked him in perfect Bulgarian whether he had read about the life of Ambroise Vollard. At the end we understood each other perfectly well in universal slang, and I continued west. Like I said, I like the simple things. Now, I think about the grass outside. About each leaf thirsty for a few drops of water in this dried world, painted in blood. I think of the world as an accordion, but I don't know how to dance tarantella or polka. I think about all this pain for which there is no vaccine. I have been in Silver City, New Mexico. The city still scratches the memories of a gold rush. I've been in the ghettos of New York. That's why I say that if we didn't die we wouldn't care about the time. That's why I love words. Everything is simple with words. But is there anything worse than a creature who lives only to write poetry? Where are Ovid, Boileau, Dante? Is it still alive, Gilgamesh's aspiration to achieve immortality? Listen, we live and die. Listen, into the light of this cigarette you can find more life than the whole universe. That is enough.

Small revenge

I don't care about the metrics, the iambus
and the rhymes - I have read the classics and then
I've put them back on their dusty shelves:
we write about something that comes from the guts
and the nails as the flowers outside
explode...

The poetry, can I say that I don't care?

I prefer to drink alone in this room in front of
one candle
as the shadows in the corners sits and show us
their ugly faces;
ah, I know that the words are greater that we thought
and we will fall in their holes,
we will spill ourselves like ink upon the Chaucer's paper:
let me be myself while I read the classics,
let me be afraid in airplanes,
let me be bored in churches,
let me be silent before the tigers in my blood:
these words are too tuff for us to misspend them
just like the big boys during their time.

The rivers are flowing through me
and I burn like matchstick lighted by the words
of all Shakespeares ...
And today I am closer to insanity,
I am watching the black birds on the wires,
waiting for our degradation,
for our small defeat while we walk upon the land of
Dylan and Frost, especially on the thin ice
of Frost...

...find me one small torch,
not too big, just big enough to set this night on fire
and I can hear outside the young girls laugh,
never heard about the hunger of Villon or the madness of Pound,
please feed me so well and I'll never again use their words,
let me find a little warmth,
allow me to find my sunflowers
shaking in the wind

and under the sun
and the God of the Word not Death.

The ancient world

The night says 'Yes' to the day that follows.
Birds on the branches, motionless and silent,
waiting for the dawn. Everything here is so
far away from the modern world, where you
have to be successful to succeed. The trees
do not care about that, nor the mountains. They
will be here long after we are all gone. Eternity,
the quiet one, lives in the trunks and slowly
oozes down with the rosin. Here, the clocks don't
work and are not needed by anyone. Here
comes the wind and starts to blow in the green
crowns, as a warning. I take out my pencil and
notebook to write a haiku while there is still
t
i
m
e.

Part of the city

I guess I am nothing more than
a piece of old chewing gum stuck
at the shoe of some pedestrian
hurried in the night.

The gum lost its sweetness and was
thrown on the street by some child
who wished for some different
enjoyment in his life.

To be scraped from the sole of the shoe
and left on the street is not so bad,
but to have some dirty little stone in the
middle of the white, where the heart
is supposed to be.

That

Little thing in the night returning
from your travels. You are looking
for the wisdom that I couldn't find,
which either the old books or
the full glasses couldn't give me.
Then why is it so strange that:

- a) I'm trying to find your bright light
into the darkness
- b) I'm trying to uncover your blackness
into the blinding glow of the candle flame
- c) I'm trying to put on the counter scales two
equal pieces of your flesh but I always

manage to get to the sanctity of the morning
with a smile on my face. Is this the secret
I've searched for through these words?
Everything leads to that thing in the night.
And here on the wall, I have one blurry picture
in a frame that I sometimes pray to.

The shape of everything else

I will wake up when the sun is high in the sky,
and I will drink nothing but water.

And I will walk under the trees
until they become indignant of my eyes.

I will enter some old and big house with 22 doors
that will lead to nowhere.

And after that, I will go back to the point
where it began.

The old books give me some minor relief
that evaporates slowly in time.

I promise to all the small gods that I will be different,
and I will not carry too much cash in my pockets.

When I start to write all the words of the future,
I will not pray to Buddha or Christ, but to the potted plant.

In some holiday, I will go to the cemetery
to light a candle for all the dead of the future.

The sea will befriend me only as the deep water that it is
and not like the place where I engaged old age.

And this lonely view through the windows of the world
will not make me shiver any more.

Let me mention all of my former loves and tell them
that I don't remember anything else but the quietness.

Because the poetry of silence, my dearest,
is all that you have received, but never deserved.

Conspiracy theory

You walk your dog in the park. A black car passes. Then another one, and then another, but just the half of it. Strong smell of

gasoline. Perhaps this is why a red van stops next to you. Two guys rush out of it wearing masks – one with the face of Saddam

and the other like Balzac – and push you inside. And all goes by the numbers: duct tape over your mouth, sack smelling of poetry

on your head. They drive in an unknown direction. You hear all, but can't see. The ride is long and only the horns of the ships hint at your inevitable future.

Impossible calculations

It's quiet. I look down at my hands
and count the memories that have left their mark.
The one from my grandmother's
rusty scissors, the scar from the first
cigarette, two fingers crushed by the piano
in one southern city, the cut from the crooked
army knife and one from the cigar during one crazy
night. But, one day, I will see in my hands ocean of
wrinkles, in which the stones will sleep, in which
I'll swim to the end.

A moment

The black steel. The blistered paint. The brownish dust.
The rust. The humming. The wires mixed up like wet
spider web. The yellow tape around. The hot, orange sun.
The lonely birds. The gentle breeze. The young man
approaching carefully. The heavy boots. The small, grey
rocks. The shrieking of the gods. The fear. The young man
leaning forward. The eyes and the sweat. The trembling
fingers. The heavy suit. The memories of the high-minded
knights. The helmet. The pliers. The uncertainty. The seconds.
The hesitation. The vacillation. The flash of the Gordian
knot. The silence. The bomb disposal robot. The mechanical
sound. The extending of the metallic arm. The heavy body.
The lifting. The seconds. The beads of sweat dripping from
the forehead. The jamming. The silence. The static in the radio.
The orders. The memories of home and the baby crib. The pliers.
The decision. The short prayer. The stillness. The moment.
The cut. The blast. The silence. The silence. The silence.

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