



Salv Sammut

AN ILLUSION

I drove down Mtarfa road
To take the lane on my right
And turned to Ta' Qali whereabouts
Coming to Tal-Mirakli *wayside* chapel.

I saw new buildings on both sides,
Large villas with terraces and long drive-ins,
Front gardens with well-groomed dogs as sentries,
pent-houses and garages for modern cars.
The road was smooth for it had been covered
With a layer of tarmac and sleeping *police-men*
For drivers to speed with caution.

The sun blinded my vision and my mind

started to play illusionary tricks on me.

I saw a child chattering in a merry mood
Running earnestly or just jumping to and fro
As he left the narrow streets of his Lija village.
There were children under mothers' watchful eye.
He strolled into the narrow dusty lanes,
Plucking the english weed to taste its sourness
And chasing in vain colourful butterflies.
I saw him looking beyond the rubble walls
At cows mooing as they were milked in their sheds,
And listening to the cackling of the hens
In a nearby farm-house while a stray dog
Lifted one paw and pissed at his feet and walked away.
He had to step aside, pressing his back to the rugged wall
To let a horse-drawn cart pass by as the peasant
slowly tipped his *beritta* in a friendly mood.

The child played happily behind the chapel
With chipped pots and pans and built stoves of stones
Until it was time to eat bread with olive oil and tomatoes
And drink fresh water from jars of clay
While birds chirped somewhere in carob trees
And snails left their trails on stones and grass

Before they were picked and dropped into rusty tins.

A blast of a horn brought me back to my world
As an expensive car stood in front of my van.
I could not say that the driver was friendly
And his middle finger was not as complementary
As that of the peasant who wore his beritta on the side
While pricking the weary mule down the winding dusty lane.

I switched my gear and drove slowly away
From the world I knew of yesterday
to the one I know of today.

NEKOPIRATI

AS THE CROWS FLY

As the crows fly
They look down
At the buzzing human race,
So restless, so agitated.
People coming, people going;
Some entering and some getting out
From the railway station.
Few bump into each other
And many wait patiently
At the edge of the bus station queue.

And as the crows fly
They try to comprehend
The futility of mankind
In its eagerness to be moving,
Always on the go,
So concerned of how to live,
How to make life-ends meet;
Never free like them
To fly and glide among the clouds

Thoughtless of tomorrow,
Masters of the skies;
Always looking up at the infinity
Of the universal sky,
Never desiring to be part
of the complexity of MAN!

NEKOPIRATI

At the Theatre

The curtains are drawn
and the performer stepped out on the stage.
A hush is stirred
and from the dim light of the auditorium
the audience clapped
and shouted the approval of the act ...

But he remained silent!
And a tear shone on his cheeks!

He knew!
He knew that far away from recitals,
clappings of hands and applause
at the theatre,
there was HE alone
with the threatening of the winds,
groaning restlessly on a distant shore
of his existence.
And he wept in the reality of
how he was alone in the world he's living
and the double act he had to play ...

Now the curtains are drawn back,
the applause fades away,
and the lights ... are out ...

Do I have?

On the prelude of maturity
I stand with my hands outstretched
In the dark of a deep unknown.

My eyes are focused on something
That is not to my vision.
Then a quiver starts at my finger-tips
As a hand is gently laid on mine;
And to look is to find you.

Do I have to look up at the sky
To search for a lovely sun,
When it is enough to see it on your face?
Do I have to look up to the moon
When I could see it glistening in your eyes
As the clock of night chimes the hour
To end emotional moments?

Sweet love can tell of no secrets!

INDECISION

Shall I walk or shall I run or shall I stop?

Is it so difficult to decide

The decision I should take?

On which side of the road should I walk,

To the right?

To the left?

Upwards?

Downwards?

To stay in the middle,

An innocent by-stander,

Never deciding,

Never taking sides

Could be very convenient

In many circumstances.

But sometimes, also very easy

To be overrun from all directions –

By *Events!*

MYSTERY UNDERSTOOD

Running

After the emptiness of yesterday

To catch the echoes of tomorrow

In a race of no beginning-

No end.

Probing for the distant mystery

Trying to understand what

Is already understandable.

Feeling

The hand loosening its grip

From a body with a will

To go on living.

The desire to remove the nearby-distance

Between Light and Darkness,

Between the beginning and the end.

THE FLOWER THAT GREW

In the midst of a bush

I saw the shoot of a flower

Among thorns and thistles.

I watered it and saw it grow and bloom

Into a flower of enchanting scent

In the bush covered

With thorns and thistles.

NE KOPIRATI

THE TRAVELER

In the land of never lasting dreams

Where realism and surrealism

Often intersect

In a state of indecision –

Stands the traveler.

He has travelled quite a lot

From one state of mind

To another ... sometimes forlorn,

Oblivious of the obvious

Till one clear vision emerges

That clearly leads the path –

NEK KOPIRATI

THE ...

(Tribute to old Age)

The vision's almost blurred,
diagnosed by trachoma.

The ear not always tuned,
in most cases, out of convenience sake.

The lean and shaking hands,
not anymore of a strong grip.

The feet so heavy and faltering,
they have walked many paths before.

The heart that beats faster,
not with passion or enthusiasm.

The chair he sits upon in solitude,
lost in a labyrinth of reminiscences.

The dreams of past summer days,

and long nights full of stars.

The Sports he liked to play,
and the activities he enjoyed most.

The day his heart leapt
for the love of his life.

The ups and downs of family strives,
as children grew and left home.

The experience of failure and success,
along those long and winding roads.

The day his eyes will forever close,
as things presumed have all been done.

The chapters from his book of life will end,
and then, finally, he can rest in eternal peace.

THE LAST FLIGHT

This would be my last flight to Luxembourg;
No more waiting at the departure lounge.
I do not need to press my ears tight
Due to pressure altitude
On descending route.

Avenue de la Liberté will not see me
Strolling again on its pavement
Or crossing Pont Adolphe as I look down
At the trees in the Petrusse valley.
No sweet voices chanting from somewhere
In the Notre-Dame, to mellow the stress,
of a long exhaustive day.

I will not eat pizza once more at the Pizza-Hut
As I watch the crowd, like a busy bee,
passing by in the Place de l'Armes
While listening to the brass bands playing
In the middle of the square,
Giving concerts on cool summer evenings.

No more early breakfast besides the window

At the *Empire*, facing the railway station,
Scrutinizing the people hurrying to and fro.

For this solitary traveller, decided to stop,
Needed to consider that everything is done,
As he slowly, calls it, a day!

NEKOPIRATI

TIME

We chase Time to be on time
but Time always travels ahead of us;
so fast, so elusive to be clocked down.

Our life is conditioned by Time
and Time has absolute control
over our decisions, our actions,
our hows, our whens.

From birth Time starts the race
and ends only at death.

Time has no hesitation,
no patience to wait,
always moving very quickly
determined to keep the time.

Time changes,
not only the hours of the day,
the morning into night,
the dark into light,
the behaviour of climate change,
but also the moods of Man

and his environment,
until the Apocalypse comes
and Time stops abruptly
and all ... all shall meet our timely end.

NE KOPIRATI

titbits from an echo

Sleep gently sweet love.

The falling dew will fall

And glisten on the dry ground ...

Sleep on through the night,

Sail on in dreams that slowly fade,

Dance to my memory and sing

The tunes of passion and yearning ...

To dream is to live,

And to live is to survive ...

Let me haunt your days and nights,

Let me roam in your eternal youth,

Let me nourish the thought

That I will always wake up

Every morning and see you.

I feel the lips that open on mine ...

The eyes softly melting in an ocean of stillness ...

I love you till my mouth

Symbolise a desert of dryness

And to whisper is to feel the pain

Of whispering

I love you.

NE KOPIRATI

TRIBUNAL

When my legs falter in front of you
And from the darkness I see your silhouettes;
When from the cold tribunal table
Of infallibility I begin reciting my deeds
And a blank expression lingers on your faces;
When trembling I end my recital
And from the corner I see your lips moving -

Do not applaud me due to a code of ethics
For I will shame you with double hypocrisy!

But keep on silent,
Staring blankly at me, because from your silence
The true reality of my identity comes forth.
Thus, I can tell where I really stand
And whether tomorrow gives me another opportunity
Of once again falters in the second tribunal!

WOULD I BE?

Would I be what I am

if I had not been

a solitary pilgrim

in a life pilgrimage

of various diversities

of thoughts

of feelings

of trust

of doubts

of hope

of love

in a world of constant drifters ...

always pensive

always searching

for the mystified unknown.

WRITING A POEM ON A BUS

The mug of lager beer
Is empty and bare
In Eddie's Lounge ...
Maybe this evening
It will rest on a young girl's lips,
With her lover.
She might be dreaming
Of sharing
Their lives together;
With children
To call their own.
Maybe ...
Who knows ...

Still
It may be kissed
By the lips of a yearning prostitute,
Despised by the mod
She won't let seduce her
Due lack of enough money!

Maybe

It will also linger

Between my lips against this evening

As my trembling hand

Grasp it

In a sheer satisfaction

Of a moment!

And the juke-box

Play on the record

Of each artificial

Individuality.

NEKOPIRATI

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