



full stop

IRF Press

2017

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edited by
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Olena Lytovka
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IRF Press
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Sincerely,
IRF Press

This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.

Oscar Wilde

Life and poetry walk hand in hand. Life is inextricably filled with poetry, while poetry inevitably fills life. Poetry, the textual avalanche of emotions, contains our inner peaks and valleys: joys, elation, sadness and woes. Poetry carries a sparkle – the flicker of hope, the fire of unknown, the textual suspense. It may be disturbing, it may be blissfully euphoric, but it always embraces the world and the self. The thrill of poetic creation. We hope it will last.

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HOSSEIN ALIAKbari HAREHDASHT

fool stop

the reason i am writing this is

i am angry

i am but

fear not or

agitate or

replace with or add verbs

i terrorize only my own life

my very tiny life

my very stupid

adjectives plus nouns

i am a full stop

at the end of all sentences

paragraphs or

passages and

i keep my fingers crossed that

a poet will fall into a new sentence or

paragraph or

passage with no stops or

colons or

semicolons or

exclamations

for each punctuation mistake

half a point was subtracted from

my life

i am more than forty years old

am i

answer briefly and

avoid irrelevant discussion

will i pass?

as a child

i lived on a very humble morsel of existence

as invisible as a spider

if i had eight hands

i would use them all to eat

nothing much

though to eat

in youth

a will-barrow

to carry my dreams to a brick furnace

my family

a theatre of the classical tragedies

Romeo, Oedipus, Faustus

were looking in my eyes

each mourning in the mirror [emphasis added]

they even invited me to take rolls and

kill myself or

my father or

sell my soul for a kiss

though i had not kissed yet

i didn't know how to

isn't it funny?

answer briefly and

avoid grammatical mistakes

the reason i am writing this is

"i am not prince Hamlet

nor was meant to be

not an attendant lord" even

no none of these or

those mentioned in the previous stanza

i am an adult they said
but what could i be as an adult
you have only five minutes to
hand in your answer sheets

[time elapses]

ok time's up.

but now that we are friends
there is one thing still
confidential, yes
one little question;
would you sell your soul for a kiss?

Fool! Stop!
[pause]
who wouldn't
full stop



PETROS ZERVOS

Teresa Macri Reminisces

According to an unverified report, Byron, while in Athens, in 1810, offered 500 pounds for Teresa Macri, then a twelve-year-old girl. His offer was turned down. Byron's poem "Maid of Athens, ere we part" is supposed to have been inspired by the aforementioned incident. (See the Greek refrain of Byron's poem.)

I sat outside the winery,
in my grandfather's chair, and crooned
 a dirge for someone lost at sea
 to while away my afternoon.

The dirt road stretched its seething filth
 beyond the milky drip of figs
and, through the droop of vine leaves, light
 drenched the empty goldfinch cage.

A stranger with a stranger gait
heard my lithe strains, leaned on his cane,
 and turned a glittering eye that met
 my own inquiring frown. He seemed

weary, despite his youth, his face
 an eerie white in yellow light,
 his frizzy hair a sweaty mess
 that trickled down, and stung his lids.

He lumbered toward my lament,
and murmured "Maid, what is your name?"
I paused, blinked twice at him, and said
 "I'll tell you, if you play my game."

“What game?” “Buy ten carafes of wine
from me and bring them to a river
where sylphs are wont to roam and keen
among the reeds. I’ll take you there.”

He left his cane, and followed me
down the dirt road, carrying the carafes—
At length we reached some sick pine trees
that slouched along a beetle bluff.

He looked over the edge: the reeds
stood in clumps along the river
bank, crackling in the summer hiss.
“Here we are,” I whispered in his ear.

I picked up a few pine cones, trilled
to him “I throw, you catch: for each
pine cone you drop, you’ll quaff a whole
carafe.” “All right, you little witch.”

I hurled the first bunch, he dropped three.
Thrice-heartily he swilled. I hurled
more, he dropped two, and gulped the lees
of yet two more carafes. His gait

became a limber twirl, his right
foot seemed to soar above the strewn
pine needles, as he danced from side
to side, and plunged after the cones—

After the ninth carafe, his white
cheeks flashed a hue more sanguine than
the clouds above the sea that bide
the throb of every sunset vein.

I hurled another bunch, he tripped
over the edge, and took a small
tumble down the slope, into a clump
of reeds. Frogs leapt back in their pool

of slime, two sparrows flew away—
He reeled out of the reeds, his right
hand on his flank, and turned his eye
upon the gash trickling from his side.

I squatted on the edge, and watched
him clamber up... He took my hand
and slurred “What is your name, dear maid?”
“My name is Zoe” I intoned.



ESTHER PUJOLRÀS

Yo, la peor de todas (Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz)

First Dream

My body is waiting for you, inert and delirious.
An odalisque in chains, atavistic and spiritual,
all flesh, white and wet, open and abysmal.

I feel your soldier hands on my breasts,
your mouth on my nipples, your weight upon
my bones. Crushed. Defeated. Calm.
I cannot move. But I still long for you.

Will you visit me again tomorrow?
I will lie in this very bed, with my hands above my head
and my eyes ready for the seduction.

The Letter

I sharpened the pencil with dexterity and love.
Athena-like, I rise and take the reins of the horse
that will lead me to your door. I will deliver it
myself. No messengers of God can interfere.
See my words? I know you cannot hear them.
Silence wove them for fear of the terrible readers.

I am not supposed to write desire. I am bound
by law to discretion and beauty. But in my prayer
corners of dark slip through the page and taint
my mind with impudent poetry.

The Answer

It was the devil one more time. He took my hand
and led me to the page. I will not do it again.
I promise. I will keep the lock of the cloister
between my legs and cover my hair with
bristles. I will walk ten thousand moons
every day and do my penance. Dirt I will eat
and spit. I will drown in misery. If people
see my shadow against the sun, they will
whisper that they have seen a sinner, a real one,
no Hollywood femme fatale, but a pure, solid
mad, evil woman.

With Blood, I Sign my End

I spread my juice on your lips and lick your face.
I take your hand and ask you to unlock me.
Sew me to your flesh, un-shape me, strip me of
life. Make me eternal. Kill me, if you like, but
come back to my bed every night and bless me
with your lust. I will play my part. With blood
from my mouth, I will write my sentence on
your back: I, the worst of them all.



ACHILLES SIMOS

Parallel Existence

Sometimes I dream
There was a second me
And that he could be
All the things I want to be
In this alternate universe of possibilities
Surpassing all difficulties
Untamed by fear and despair
Fragile yet unbound
By the chains of our frail reality
Reaching out to a higher purpose
Divinity, infinity, spiritual awakening
The powers of the mind and soul.
Questioning our own mortality
Is the means to find
The path to what has been hidden
In plain sight
Yet in the end I realize
When clarity comes
And all the answers
From my subconscious rise
That this parallel existence
I so desperately seek to find
Was always within me deep inside.



ALEKSANDRA TRYNIECKA

Running Through Endless Sunsets

We've been running
Through the endless sunsets:
Eyes on glimmering horizons
Interspersed with spotlights,
Flickers in our hair.

It was the reckless, breathless
Wish that pushed us onwards:
To intercept the twilight
In its' purple moment
Warmed by glowing hearts
Embraced by our skins.

We've been running,
Rushing into the exterior,
Onto melting hearts, sipping
On the brilliance, crumbled by
Desires, yearning to unlock,
Conquer, witness, stage
The glimpses of freedom
With wind in our hair.

It was curious rapture,
The elapsing struggle to keep
Evanescence on the palms of hands
Until endless sunsets, they burnt out
Our hearts into restless shapes
We carried away.



ANNA LINZIE

2016

Brace
Brace
Fore-and-aft
Before and after
Resilience
Uphill
Slope up
Headwind
Headstrong
We did get a heads up
A great many heads up
Cycling cyclical
Time and again
1933
Dumbing down
Going down
Not that route
Not that one
Go on up
Go high
Go high
They go low
Brace
Brace up



CAROL DIETRICH

Particle Physics

I ask you, What force becomes stronger with distance?

It is not the one that leads neutrons to decay,

Not gravity or electromagnetic chance,

The frivolity of Democritus' play.

Perhaps if I had seen a quark or its three pairs

I'd recognize up/down, top/bottom, charm or strange.

Regardless there's the stronger force of one who cares,

Who builds internally a universe deranged.

The mystery remains concerning six leptons:

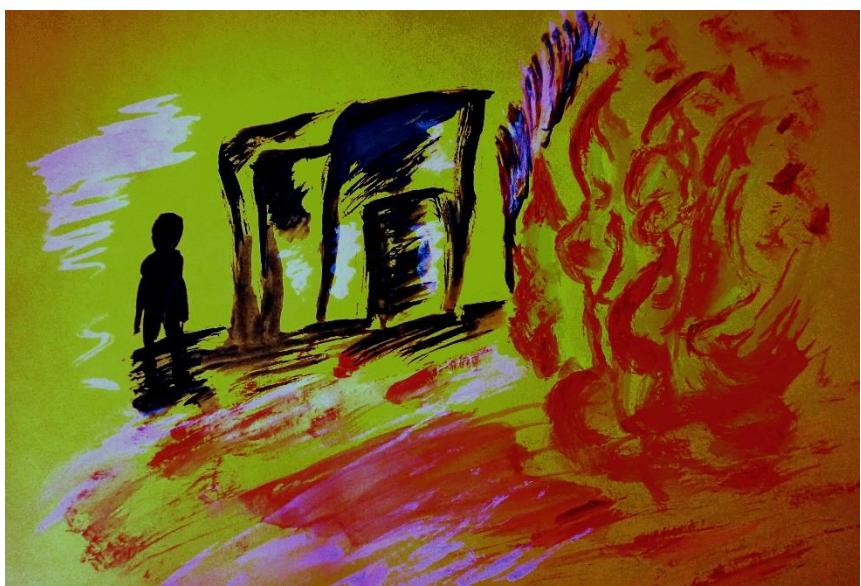
I cannot explain a particle, a charge, love.

The discrete amounts of energy crept upon

Now make me wonder what dark matter is made of

And why we believe so strongly in what we see —

God, grand, unified, theory, gluon, you and me.



DANIEL XERRI

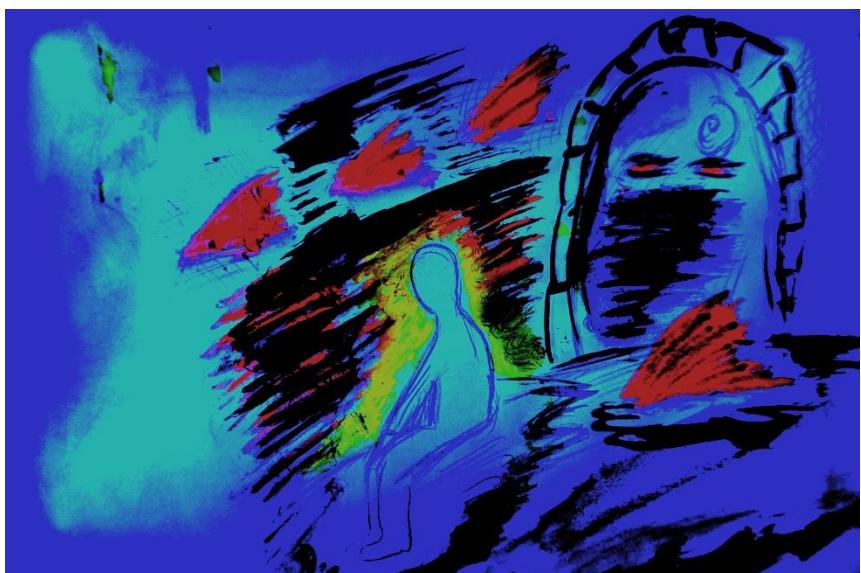
The Great Mannequin Warehouse

(In memoriam A.B.)

In the Great Mannequin Warehouse,
my mouth choked by ashen dust,
I saw them standing still in silence,
staring at a point far off in the distance,
staring without acknowledgement,
the flames wreathing them
in swathes of shadows.

Row upon row of the unwanted,
the broken and deformed
lined the walls of this old warehouse,
immemorial first footprint on Earth's crust;
rejects paraded like books
heaped for the burning,
stories no one wanted told.

'This is the great mannequin warehouse,'
said the custodian with a smirk.
'You're witnessing what all refuse to see:
the exiles of the Great Department Store
expelled from the windows for being—'
'God's forsaken!' was I quick to answer.
'...for being who they were meant to be.'



JIHÈNE GATI

The eye of Frankanistan

« Il n'y a point de plus cruelle tyrannie que celle que l'on exerce à l'ombre des lois et avec la couleur de la justice. » Montesquieu.

Frankanistan is sucking my body again

Lulling me in his remote den.

His head is so overinflated with evil

That it may blow to small monster skulls

His watery eyes get bigger and bigger

They cast me tenderness and anger

Frankanistan is complaining livelong.

Frankanistan is never wrong.

When his jaws open, he mutters inarticulate sounds

that even Shakespeare could not foreground.

I hate your multicolored skin

I hate your cheeky grin

Liberty is the right to be honest,

My assassin, I cannot trust.

Liberty is to speak without hypocrisy.

You are the master of falsity.

« The eye-

The eye-

I hate

The eye. », Said I.
« Do not whine
Everything is fine. »
« But the ground was too dry. »
« Do not cry
Do not rise, never try
Do not sigh
Never say « No » or « Why »
Never reply or deny.
Just, lie,
And die. »
« But I,
I,
I,
I hate the eye.»



MARK WEGIERSKI

Post Cards from the Past

June 1986 — Montreal:

I visited you in Montreal, the city of your birth

You, a Polish-Canadian girl,

Me, a Polish-Canadian guy, born in Toronto

Both studying Library Science at the University of Toronto

We had met in September 1985

Me, a desperately unhappy, highly intelligent "hyper-geek"

Taking anti-depressants for years

You, clearly the most attractive woman in the program that year

With your dark hair and brown eyes reflecting your Polish-

Armenian heritage

Unexpectedly, you became interested in me — at least I was tall,

with blue eyes and light-brown hair

You initiated a program of serious reform

which we called a perestroika

It was the closest I had come

to being "cool" in my life!

You showed me the sights of your city,

Such as the Oratory, a massive church

Atop Mount Royal, where we could see the

Whole city spread out before us.

I remember you sunbathing beside the St. Lawrence River

Near the apartment where you lived.

That trip was the high point of our love;

I considered you VIRTUALLY a fiancée

But you saw things differently.

January 1987 — Toronto:

Dragging myself to classes in the always dreadful Toronto winter

I noticed that you were DISTANCING yourself from me

I thought of the earlier better times
New Year's Eve at the Copa nightclub
Listening to Duran Duran, your favourite group
Going to a performance of the musical Cats
The movies we had shared sitting side-by-side,
Seemed almost fittingly to tell our tale.
A Labyrinth, a Legend, a Ladyhawke, then Back to the Future
Where always innocent we would be Absolute Beginners
A concert at Massey Hall — by Larry Gowan — a small, intimate
venue
with superb acoustics

I had told you, "I want to spend my life with you, because you
have SAVED my life."

Formal engagement got sidetracked somehow
You had made a strange admonition —
"I do NOT want any jewelry from you, under any circumstances."
A serious instruction — or a provocation to do the opposite?
I guess I was too meek...

Friday, May 15th, 1987 was my last day with you
A bright, sunny day with blue skies and white clouds,
With a quite brisk breeze
It reminded me of the days I had spent in Montreal with you
We walked around downtown Toronto in the Spring
From the University of Toronto campus
To the Eaton Centre
There were only light affections that day — no "night"
We said our final good-byes
at a subway station's bus platform
in the late afternoon
Without even a final, truly long kiss
You were rushing away.

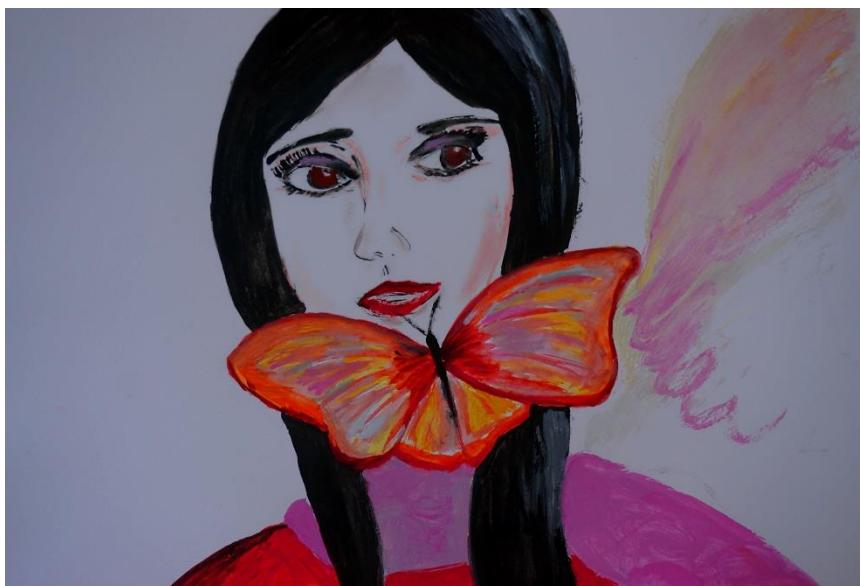
It took me years to get over the loss.

Those times can never return,
Except in memories and dreams.

What remains in one's soul
of the intensity of one's first real love?

I read memories as if they were post cards from the past
And read the lines one more time
And as I listen to the music of the era once again
I feel a twinge of regret that does still remain.
But I keep it in the past, in another place.

Toronto 2017



MELAHAT KÜÇÜKARSLAN EMIROĞLU

In You a Ho/me

When is the time you quit belongings? Attachments?

Home is attachments

Not shelter

Not enclosure

and not relations/relatives

Home is when you are really you are, actualize yourself. You are at home.

Feel like going back emotions you've generated yourself.

Home is you/Not attachments

Released from all attached things

Suspend

You are actually suspending

You are a suspended body

You are free

You are flowing

You are just YOU

Just an entity

You

Not me

Nor the other

Noone

You

Are

Not existing

Have not existed

Even not born

Will not die

You are just passing

Transmitting

Transforming
Converting
There is no comfort
 No comfort
 No comfortable place
 Its transitory
Its passing away in front of you every passing situation embedded
 in beings of states
You died before being born before living before die-ing, still being
 born within the life
 Life lives by itself
 There is no life still
 Take a breath
 You are a –becoming-home
 For another YOU.
Body shelters emotions of home
 You are an interior
 You have entrances
 YOU
 are
 A
 IN
 and in you a home
 is becoming again
How long will you be unattached?



SOPHIA EMMANOUILIDOU

The Insane

Of all the words wittingly whispered,
Few are indelibly engraved
With the fazed imprint
Of painful reminiscence.
The insane walks the tracks
Of labyrinthine sessions,
verbal exchanges,
confrontations, conflicts, collisions.

*Oh, yes! I do know now!
I get it all now!
Now I know!*

It is just me
Against a patched-up offensive set of rules.
My inmost turmoil in a bipolar fight
Stands against meticulously paved routes
Those augmented by a mighty force out there.
Still incomprehensible
To the aloof, weird me,
The words wander about.

*Crazy Jane has something to say!
Control it girl!
It is just a fit of something!*

My life almost wasted in couches
Of mental dilapidation.
Charged with the crime
Of seizures of deranged contemplation,
Bombarded by the didactics of the mainstream,

Intoxicated with chemistries
Of mind control.
And this little me
Still roams the dreams of multiplicity.

Like Don Quixote marveling at the icons of fantasy,
Unafraid, unsuspicious, unmalicious,
Leaning over the abyss of turreted thoughts,
Unaccompanied by the valor of Sancho Pancho.
Just Me! Defenseless and obliterated.
Wrapped tight in the white straps
Of an unlawful incarceration,
Staring at the mould on saturated ceilings
In a far off health dystopia
For the obscene.

*Jane is a bit wild!
She experiments with reality.
She's over the top for us all!*

Barred from any climactic discourse
With the likes of me,
Or the lovers of sincerity in verse,
I visualize the grandeur of a cave chamber.
Tiptoeing my trips through the stalactites,
Not touching the stalagmites beneath,
Caressing the sweat stained pillows of my wild youth,
Not perceived as a joyful difference
But as the frenzied, lurking danger
To a leveling powerful YOU!



TINNI DUTTA

Emancipation

Splendor of the blue sky
Sweet breeze of the dawn
Rays of sunlight
Fall upon us.

We feel energized, refreshed and
Move on life.

Life is full of blessings
Sweet ventures and harmonies
But like fleeting clouds
All of a sudden
Darkness appears
Fear and Solitude
Grief and pain
Revolves around us.

We become astounded and bewildered
We try to get shelter
In the bounty of Nature.

Nature sooth us
Put us to sleep
And slumber and lethargy
And goad us the
Highest self-realization
That is Emancipation.



TONY BROADWICK

A River And A Bridge

The place where a bridge came to build a home
A river had flown for ages.

As the bridge stepped into water
The river opened itself to embrace the guest
Thanking the powers above
For uniting old lovers.
Turned out, they were.

Theirs was a house
Of interdependence.
Of give and take.
The bridge played the roof
Sheltering the river,
The river, the floor
To lay it down.
Strangers never more.

With carts and people
Charging over it,
The bridge said,
A burden I must be!
A burden, never.
You're my partner.
You're a part of me.
The busy fishermen,
All these boats,
Back and forth
Connecting lovers.
Together we serve.
With you, I have a purpose,

Said the river.
I'm your bridge.
With you, I have a name.

No one knows when the rivers begin.
No one knows how long they'll flow.

The bridges get old
And sometimes they fall.

The bridge fell.
Time washed away its traces.

Alone, the river,
Gathered its memories
And changed its path.
It moved away and made new banks.

New fisherman found a living.
Some farmers moved closer,
New homes, new beginnings.
The river with open palms
Looking at the sky,
Awaits a new bridge.

Illustrated by Aleksandra Tryniecka

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