

Dmitry GOLYNKO

An Other's Mole

1
nothing to be proud of, mole on other's
shoulder, shoulder-blade or somewhere lower
jiggles absurdly, that author flames
profoundly, call won't go through
to number, given hastily
by unknown hotty, tenacious smooches
delivered from anonymous in AOL chat, paw
clutching whatever it can, earlybird got worm

2
in halfdark leaning arms on some-
one's shoulder sees mole on neck
jiggling, mole makes it impossible
to concentrate, gather thoughts re close
emotional bonds, yelling get outta town
jumps to embrace, the pastrami, sheez,
went down the wrong pipe, stash that
cash that out, hung out just fine

3
it's all read between the words
caught a buzz from very own memories
of the lowball, what's been said hit
home, hard enough to lower sense of
well-being, elevated sugar levels
in that glance thrown at waist
in lattice of moles, laying like ice
thinking cap on tight, bottom as usual

4
the forum closed for non-observance
of posting rules, bosom best
friend let loose muck-trolling, scary
to even touch the other's mole, scalding
not guaranteed, the forum-dweller beholds
splendid breast only as jpg, moderator's
decision a cause for sorrow, with that weakness
for flattery she'll do anything, just rile her up

5
mole dangling in front of eyes
recalling difficulties, the breakdown
of order that occurred at
the enterprise, workers' strike
in outlying neighborhood, dull-witted

decision to respect the law, lucky that
the mole is teeny-weeny, something
human in the mass suspended there

6

mole on her shoulder blade
disturbs him, not gonna dig down to that
not in a million years, brightish swimsuit
polkadotted, taken off, faded with
age, drying on a half-crumbled
windowsill, mole uncovered
wiggles, so many freebie pleasures
beyond verge of breakdown

7

our common tongue is slacke and laxe
the mole jiggles, a burp
from consumption of spoiled
foodstuffs, the tutelage of do-gooders
can drive to colic, maiden on knees
or hands, tail between legs from
passion, recognize in reflection neither
self, nor embrace, gums ache

8

scumbags around kiosk, illumination
struck like lightening, evening grind
on dance floor at town watering hole, too
late for organized resistance, gas burner
belches ochre flame, mole on pristine
skin shakes to rhythm of the entire
corpus' motion, strain to assume position
burn all bridges, entry hall unventilated

9

mole jerks, delivering
massive losses for amour-propre
and unjaded perception, entire
serving not yet expended, tart's
fiberglassy gaze trails working-class
fella, he coolly fades from view
guzzling ice-cream, life's carcass
crumbles, without PIN no way out

10

the artificial microclimate in the room
suffused with a sense of discomfort
for those assembled, film trailer, tossed
up for fileshare, addressee already
had it up to here with that, mole
sets off well developed ribcage to
perfection, lost in transit at forked path
called in from road, article unclaimed

11

brownish mole on saggy
waistline, evil incarnated in
series of mundane events, the offer
carries a purely advisory, peevish
character, according to the cloth
cut the arms reaching towards boozy
essence of proceedings, ringing
girlish voice breaks off at the sight

Translated from the Russian by Kevin M. F. Platt
In 6X6, № 28, 2013.

For Mercy Goods

1

for mercy goods, the queue
branches into three or four
strands, natters -- like a tape player
set to rewind, set to the back of the head
that glimmers in front of the square
the perspective advances, asks
in a whisper, "who's last in line?" he shouts,
offhandedly, "don't cut!" does the fat cashier
wear a scarf with polka dots?
or is it monotone? in the process
of paying off the massive debt
reinforcements loom, the well-trodden path

2

for mercy goods, they cram
crunch bustle
straddle crowd snap even
deadpan in the door
snook squelch in breaths
conk panic check
subscribe conclude in the tub
a filthy conscience wherein
a mother gave birth to swim in the park
tied up with a whiffet, its shit
sinks into the soil shotglass
tipped over the thud of time

3

mercy goods fucked up
good and proper, pawn them off on neighbors

and children will prosper with bonds
for silver futures
 long-haul truckers
gawk at the shaking naked hag
torn from her penthouse, didn't run
set out on her own, oily streams
on her tell-all panties, judging by the stitches
on her manufactured clothes,
 cot
gives a shit about rot, she sleeps on it like a night owl
or early bird, whether what she read
before bed was the last chapter, a wad of gum

4
perishable goods
don't sell fast enough
they spoil
from improper storage, at the bottom
the goods gather mold, resigned
to remain conditioned
to the marketing of goods, we are deprived
of tainted consumption, VTsIOM
tallies the polls, the public
opinion, in place of the beggar
we find a neurotic
buyer, be half-aware

5
for mercy goods they amass
pangs in the liver-- whether it's sunk in or not...
biochemistry doesn't prove a thing, the lamb
swindles the wave, a restless
rascal took a leak somewhere, shining reruns
of the past dim, neither ear nor snout
strikes sense into this sketch, eyelids
shut from fatigue, bursts out laughing
in plain sight, then wipes it off, the clients
of the hitmen start the meter,
due to a shortage of needles
they rearrange the pictures on the wall of fame

6
Mercy goods beaten to death
it's time to mosey on outta here--
in the gym, there's a grinning moron--
but, Vasya doing leg presses,
by the age of eighteen,
gave it up to nearly half her class, they tuck
the displaced in triage, keep a close
eye on the habit
of putting everything in quotes, no one's spending
on the lower standard of living

in the provinces, the hare gave it hot
and strong to the wolf, the shapes shine

Translated from Russian by Harry Leeds and John Westbrook.
The Broome Street Review, № 4, 2011.

Tension Rises

high tension
you will contrive to play with us
bends over, to
fix on one point

a pantomime character
got toasted in the sun
none too soon
intoxication sets in

to raise tension
blow the nose, a dried fruit
wrinkled is chewed
and the gruel crawls out

in due course, what in a goddess
doesn't satisfy a mortal is
a bad smell acquired by her
through self-contempt

tension will rise, should
you get the hots for, try it
those loosened by paradontosis
masticate in the subconscious

impresses an attraction
not to the usual filth, such as
blah, blah, to the particular
rhythm tapped out

envy raises tension
pissing envious
where slops on the sly
stream together

pulverized spanners
in the wrong works, still

in the company the joker
started his own bullshit

tension rises when the beam
of the searchlight goes blind, over their faces
the punch spreads
a small haematoma cloud

completely off his head he
got his brains set so straight, turned
all eyes on himself, having butted the punching bag
the fist moved back

the tension is increased by the weather,
slushy, a small piebald pooch
whimpers, pink tongue
roughens

in the moment of licking
unknown things, they bought
lots of booze and by agreement
without twisting arms

heightened tension threatens
in the anger of a being of the highest ranks
or a wench's laughter, gathering strength
from its habit of helplessness

to achieve a good chunk
chopped off, enough
to smooth out the place of removal
and level what is unnecessary

Translated from the Russian by Cilla McQueen and Jacob
Edmond

In Landfall, № 213, 2007.

Discussion of the process of translating the poem:

http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/kmko/11/ka_mate11_jedmond.asp

Founts of Joy

a stub, enclosed

stub detached, no piece of cake
sifting the chaff from the flour, the crew chick pants
two fuckheads find harmony by the beer
kiosk, subverted authority

beats retreat, made a grab
on the crest of success, sweet couple
downs the hooch, the artistic director
of a tight team lost his marbles

a stub detached upon his palm
the stricken cheek burns bright
bewailed unrighteousness, in response
will sound only Oh come now

environmental pollution, peepers
revolve, housepainter performs
atop stepladder, went to town
a fly circles the melon rind

Samaritan woman expelled
with a broom, hand crumples
Treasury bill, a stub attached
where the sun don't shine, shirtfront is wrinkled

the bookworm stood up and walked
ramen is ready, forced entry everywhere
hangover head, over the top
the sweatervest fits the figure

as it turned out

1

as it turned out, they went barbequing
former classmates, college buddies
packed the skewers, the rusty grill
Moldavian wine, marinated meat
a cooler of beer, two plastic bottles
of mineral water, even paper
napkins, home-made dill pickles
mosquito repellent, a tabloid for kindling
six packs of smokes, audiocassettes
inexpensive vodka, though not everyone relished
ethyl alcohol "Deluxe," pathetic finances
did not allow for "Russian Standard"
all-in-all a choice inventory, downed a screw-
driver prior to leaving, got into
a freshly painted Opel, the guy that drove it
lucky bastard who broke into small business

2

knew for sure why he took up space
besides him, the car fit four
three had tried themselves out in trade, in commerce
she still lived off her parents
here she alone represented the fair sex
lucky girl, she was tickled by it but also abashed
the presence of one of her girlfriends would have reduced

the uninvited intensity of attention towards her
but she had no use for the superfluous competition
moreover she had already practiced
intimate relations with three of those present
of differing duration but with the same result
with each partner she felt something wanting
she didn't try it with number four, what kicked in
the instinct of protection from the unnecessary, why
it lay dormant in the three other cases

3
she explained to herself, lack of experience
youth, curiosity, ants in, there was nothing
to regret, nothing to admire
they parked by the lake, on grounds allotted
to recreation outside city limits, the many fire pits
had already colored the earth brown, ochre, turned it
grayer than a detective's temples or an unpleasant memory
and just as vulgar, conforming to the taste
of the average consumer, mom with stroller
boss with gaunt model-quality wife
pensioner couple with miracle of technology radio
they got out, unloaded the victuals, went to forage
for wood chips, planks, sticks, her assistance
clearly not required, she grabbed a can of beer
with determination set out on a footpath
grumbling, I'm going into the bushes, so they don't bother her

4
with questions, men occupied with the quest for fire
generally pay no attention to women
her notification was left without proper response
about ten minutes later she clambered out on the overgrown
bank of a stream, even mobilizing her meager
arsenal of botanical knowledge, she hardly could have
named one tenth of the motley quivering mass
presented by the local flora, in her memory there surfaced
lily, water lily, buttercup, pansies, also the story
told by one of her recent lovers, of how he met
his first wife, she won his heart by reciting
without falter, the names of all the trees and shrubbery
later she turned out to be an ordinary bitch, he added
how sad, she lit up, had she been more assiduous
with the curriculum, the rammed knowledge
she would have seen the world as brimming with more

5
objects, but instead, a child of the city
disdaining to open to tiresome clatter
she stepped cautiously on the sloping, water-licked
rock, took off her tee, tore out a loose thread
the bastards, she thought, the crap they make
removed her jeans with the side pockets

polyester panties, folded the clothes on the grass
looked herself over, weight is the norm, body decent, yes
flat stomach, 34C, two defects
skinny hips, protruding pelvic bone
elongated nipples resembling cigarillos
as a girl, she was wildly ashamed of her figure
stayed away from mirrors, totally had a complex
her second, especially third experience reassured her
she understood, men are caught not by the soft curve of a hip
not by the perfect shape of the breast

6

but by something other, asymmetrical, sharp, particular
a male, carnivorous hand on her jutting haunch
persuaded she'd been a fool to keep herself back
she never passed for sex bomb, wasn't going like hot cakes
yet enjoyed stable, quite explicable demand
her thoughts shifted, time to stop milking the parents
time to settle down, find a decent job
a girlfriend from school offered her work as a bank teller
paid deservedly, she might even meet a rich client
still, she was scared of being cooped up all day
have a little more fun, a little more wee in the wee hours
on the other hand, it's time to get married, two-
three more years and pop go her looks
youth, spunk, know-how for the life of Reilly
then sadness bore down on her with all its weight
more or less like that time when a plastered lover

7

cruelly, brutally threw her down, what did I do to you
she asked by knee-jerk, seeing his twisted
absent expression, turned her head, it was useless
in the morning she let him have it, fucking pathetic drunk
for long time after she got the chills, felt gross
now also, she entered the total uselessness
of being here as well as of everything else
for the first time such shock, enlightenment, break through
in risk society, society of endless opportunities
social mobility, private initiatives
the set of winning combinations is so clearly finite
they, her friends along for the ride, just didn't succeed
selling themselves properly, getting their ass in gear
seizing a seat at the table, grasping the market trends
later she'll get taken out on the town not once and not twice
driven in a foreign make, brought along to a reception, wined and dined

8

but that's it for her former kicks, pleasure, contentment, she'll sooner
see the backs of her ears, fell asleep at the switch, let it slip by
don't be a drama queen, she said to herself, it'll settle, get back
on track, on your block too there'll be a party
compose yourself, don't fall to pieces

firmly decide what to do with that miserable pair
of jeans, she had managed to stain them
with olive oil, even Tide won't wash it out
pulled her clothes on, found the same
way back, one of her companions grunted to her
can you imagine, the skewers we took were too big
as it turned out, meant for another grill
she shrugged her shoulders, wasn't holding the torch
when they hauled the junk out of the closets
men are so childish, have to keep an eye on them
her stomach rumbled, she felt hungry as hell

remote port

the remote port is not responding
cheap thrills from every crack
accusations dog whoever
volunteers for punishment

pricked up his ears, light
reveals defects, crucial info
fell on deaf ears, a dudette
plops down on a chair

they withheld valuable goods
it went to his head, that diva
learned to hold out, please
don't hold your breath

no holds barred, clawed at the walls
from multitasking, petted the babyface
museum gunk, what is
the origin of educational value

forced his opinion on, left
panting in underpants, shut one breach
by opening another, regularly
rang up the house

his knees shake just because
the dog lady messes with the little turds
it's been a long time nothing
between this husband and wife, pristine bedroom

misses no opportunity, got a head
on his shoulders, the adaptor doesn't adapt
held him to his word, committed
herself to the wrong person

she zonked out, the inflow
of refugees gathers steam, grimace face
multicolored smileys, the imbibed
makes itself known

beginnings remain, empty chatter
clogged the ears, did the right thing
according to women's logic, took to bitching
like an old bag

fallen looks, arms laid down
under pressure did not rust
need right approach to remote port
approachability is a major thing

lots of different things

1
the reader scrutinizes a pile of books
he found out lots of different things from them once
lots of information, many sensible theories, big idioms
lots of correct and precise observations
now these springs of doubt and anxiety
gather dust, piled up in the corner, on a chair
the reader is surprised at himself, what a bookhead
how many of them he managed to read through, sneezing

2
he flicks the dust off the top covers
he's been feeling too lazy of late
to read much, educational ardor
put on the back burner by
deadlines, he can absorb only
so much, now he values a book
not because of what the mind, the vanity of the author,
his genius had put into it

3
but for something else entirely, the condition
or the situation when the book lay
on his, the reader's, knees
on in front of him on the table, the book triggers
associations in his memory of the moment
in the past allotted to reading it
carefully, in snatches
unable to put it down, aslant

4
in his own way, he feels gratitude to each book
it allows him to remember the good and the ugly
this one here he read on the terrace
during a soggy summer, suffering from unrequited
and this one, blissful in a EuroNight
express train second class, a real picture
of beauty with natural goldylocks leaned her
head on his shoulder, fully at his disposal

5
these two books hooked up in his memory
the first one he was reading almost a decade ago
on a bench in an imperial park, his
twenty-year-old companion bent over
an Italian textbook, one passerby
an amicable middle-aged woman
was delighted, what a beautiful couple
wished them happiness, didn't help

6
it took years to separate, row after row
the second book he had read on that same bench
in that same park, roughly three months ago
now his girlfriend was about eighteen
not adept at reading, she tugged at him, fidgeted
a woman in her late fifties saw and warmly
decided to pay him a compliment, what
a lovely young lady you're with, didn't fail

7
to promise them happiness, but shot over
it's already two weeks that they went their ways
this book is associated with difficult moments
for hours he read it in the hospital waiting room outside
the office where the consultation was happening
a hopeless diagnosis given a person
very close to him, had to be confirmed
or overturned, the type kept blurring

8
one more book he took along while camping
with fellow students, they went kayaking downriver
another he packed for a trip
to America, convenient pocket edition
this one he borrowed but didn't return
because he forgot? because the owner never asked for it back?
A visiting girl of Turkmeni origin
left this one at his place after she stayed there

9
as a gift? a reminder? an indecipherable sign?
in his youth he read rapturously, devoured
serious works on history
philosophy, the humanities, sometimes
even the hard sciences, then there came
either exhaustion or arrogance, a foreign whodunit
from a best-selling series was laid aside at the most
suspenseful point, he never found out who the murderer was

10
the reader blows the dust away, some of the books
have nothing to do with anything, don't recall anything

he had read them as well, with interest, he decided
that illustrated coffee-table editions
belong elsewhere, moved them to
another space on the bookshelf, straw-colored light
the cellphone had been trilling insistently for some time now
he said, yeah, yeah, of course, I'll be there

monitoring weight

monitored weight, thick chunk
of liverwurst, regression to a state
flies upside down, the jackass
insists on more

first-comers fight
over crumbs, he lifted
the thing asking for it, opportunities
to chill out in the atrium

split their sides with, the fly
chows on anything that moves
a bitch yelps, the first stone
misses the bush

turned green from zeal, eyes
downcast, dawn
vomited on, the gold-digger
at the end of his rope on the prospect

made a killing, raincoat is dangling
off a hook, the last guy
in line nodded yes, a couple
legitimated their relations

beach chair is rented out
starsearch pigsty
on channel one, this gate
opens in

smearred with vaseline, font size
shrunk kind of to the max
harassment, torn at the top
a condom becomes a lifesaver

weight monitored, total freak-out
guy shakes his head
well sorry, jumped in and got mine
unruly cowlick slicked down

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and Matvei Yankelevich

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