

Polina KOPYLOVA

Poems

I shed my shadow, like they shed their skin,
light permeating through
my flesh, might make you think:
that I do not exist here, since

one sees through me the scenery details:
the shaven grass, the shrubs, etcetera.
Invisible, if nothing else,
I live, but not for him.

No matter how long one stands like a wolf
under the spikes of a star,
the howling won't come from the mouth.
Only hair will bristle – time to cast the old coat,
and saliva will hang off the jowls,
while the dove-coloured clouds are covering up
both, the star and the daybreak. From dark until light
and again until night – the white mist
sets on wiry withers.
The solidified heart never rapidly throbs.
It will not skip a beat, even if
in the dark of a night someone
is to howl.

So as not to put an evil eye
upon a careless stranger,
who's walking on the pavement, by my side,
I try to look away, while through my breasts' constraint
I feel inside the triumph of trichinas devouring my darkened heart.
They might appear thinner than a hair or thinner than saliva's scanty string, but they
outnumber me, besides they are inspired
to win this battle through instinctive guilt –
the feeling over days and nights developed
and constantly imputed onto me.

No matter how much air you try to gulp or hoard
it's not enough. It's sliding down your throat.
This air – piercing cold – becomes a desert drought.
From cracks inside the heart it sweeps away the salt

to tickle and to scratch the larynx, while
you feel insulted by the world, in pain, and that insult
is too much to forgive, forget or drown down in wine.

Perhaps a potion should be used
instead of saying magic words
to turn all of yourself inside and out.
The matter crawls out through the pores:
as headless oozing swiveling slime
to roll up in a ball just in a second.

You can preserve it in a phial, dump down the drain, or soup
of your detested secret foe, when no one's there to look.

I am there, where we do not exist (and neither, therefore,
do I), however, the gaping glare opened into
a stream of beaming light –
neither this nor that. From the very first step
I know – I am there, where we do not exist.

There are brittle streets reflected in the windows' twilights,
in the crumbling of the boulder scum and shadows' ashes.
There are church bells, rings of trams and school bells, only
we do not exist.

Wherever I searched: astringent dusky darkness
of local bars; lit cubicles, and office buildings –
we were nowhere. I only saw the counters, the chairs
and the walls, still talking by themselves by force of habit.

They talk of dreadful weather, a recent sale,
a silly friend, a neighbor, or a cousin, and
listening to them so, suddenly I realize –
They are not here either,
forget about us.

There are lingering times:
whenever you look,
it's half past elev— on the clock,
it's the half of the third class.
Electronic or quartz,
Tacks or ticks
None are felt by the wrists –
Only watch bracelets tickle and move.

The life is lingering, it scares you with fullness

in our school and other schools as well.
The class is going on, or standing, actually, as
we are the flies stuck
in the amber's wall.
We are captive, tarred, pupated and eternal.

No matter how you try – you cannot even peek
to see the time that's slowly gaining speed –
the amber's melting, flies are getting out.
They strike the windows. Ringing all around.

Carried away by the river of darkness,
to the nether world gates and their arches,
back and forth through my mouth like a dolphin I breathe,
so that black waves don't heave over me.

When like a bobber I'm thrown on the sand
I will know at which circle's inferno I stand,
since the deeper – the smaller the grains,
since the smallest of demons has had them strained.

He will greet me right there, half an inch from the shore –
rigid cock, forked tail, and his chest rather thin.
Unlike the water behind my shoulder,
This devil, indeed, I invented him.

And those who don't dare
Invent themselves a devil
Can have their milk and honey,
And love that's not for me.

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LOAFING SONG

For Elena

It would be great to break a head
to a bottle of white, and have a sip
from fragrant neck. What would I do?
Oh, what the heck,
I'd sit a bit, and then, I'd go
with half a smile,
a bottle in hand,
purse at my elbow (rather tiny).
My luggage light,
I'd pass that night
The ring-shaped tunnels,
pitted streets...
I'd see that trouble's there for me.

Belongs to no one, trouble loafs,
it walks around everywhere.
The no man's trouble looks too hard.
and then, there is trouble of my own,
that largely stays so far unknown.

It would be great to have it weighed.
I'd walk beside, without touching it.
In my hand there's nothing but
a bottle of white.
I travel light
with bottle of white.

Translated from the Russian by Maria Petrenko
