

BOSS

My father hasn't been to the capital in twenty years

Black lacquered shoes, black leather jacket – “kozha”, as he would say, His
black jeans, ambling through Vilnius,
Down his beloved Pylimo Street,
Carrying a black plastic bag
On which there is written, in large gold lettering:
BOSS.

In the bag: a bottle of rum and chicken kibinai.
He knows where once the city's most beautiful women lived,
One of them had a bevy of kids and grew all doughy, as he would say,
The other married a friend, and friends are sacred.
One of his friends was trying to save a girl trapped in a sewer
And drowned. Right over there, not far.
I say, “Dad, we have lots of time ‘til the train,
Maybe you want to go home and read a book,
Or visit someone, watch a movie?”
He says, “Why do I need books or movies
If I can get drunk enough in that time with
My foolish brother-in-law?”
We're still at the clinic and he winks at the old lady
Turning to see who wants to start drinking in the morning.

His sister's husband was one of the leading “bandits” of Vilnius, always
Wiggling out of harm's way, but when he met my aunt,
Next to her, a librarian, he didn't even dare to curse.
Now, both of them – father and uncle – are sixty-year-old bears
In declining health that shouldn't be cut by alcohol,
But what can you do, it happens.
“Vilnius is quite a dry town,” says my father. “As
soon as I arrive, I want to quench my thirst.”
I let him out in Old Town where, according to him,
You shouldn't set a sober foot. It swells with so many memories
That each corner wants to cry its story.
My father wants to be left alone, clear enough.
I let him off and follow him with my gaze, walking with his big BOSS bag.

“I'll call you later today,” I shout, as he grows smaller in my eyes.
He waves me off with his hand – “There's no reason to call so much.
Maybe, you know, I'll be tired today,” says the Boss,
As he ambles through his past.

That's how we say goodbye.
April. The sun up high.

ONLY GREY

If my hands were lines of verse
They would caress you with the clumsy fingers of letters
Trotting like horses over your aching neck
Like fingertips cantering over keyboards
Coloring the white screen with black thoughts.
To write on skin or not – such romanticism
Requires the metaphysics and meanings of tatoos from an album
In which all the world's symbols are visualized and explained.
No need for thought.
Emptiness is greater than any attempt to wipe it away
Like chalk from the sidewalk. We jumped hopscotch squares,
Higher each time, but someone lost the stone,
And we can't find our way to the future.
We exist in this time as if we have nothing to await
Unless winter stretches out for us its line of cocaine,
A path that keeps us from heading to grey.
Remember: only a grey greyer than grey.

A NAME

I still don't have a name for You, though white nights could define You
When they shine and their light travels through my screen
Like something transparent and true, like déjà vu.
A powerful moment, when the placement of your hands,
Your body's contours, remind you of everything: Maybe
something from another life,
Maybe something nostalgic wafting by.

I could call You inspiration –
So deep that I forget to exhale.
I could call You a vault under stars,
But that would be too small – you are the whole world.
I could call You a baobab holding up the centuries.
Likewise, a cactus flower fading within a week.
I could call You the view from an airplane window
When you can clearly see the city's canals,
The islands of green, the gaps of clouds –
Through clouds as if through a screen, the view
Opens and rivers unwind from the feet of hills.

I could call You mountains
I haven't yet climbed but whose peaks I see
From far away as I see the shadows of Your dragons
Creeping up to take me to you.

I could call You a gate,
A door, the hands of thoughts
Whose thumbs run across open lips.
I could call You electricity whose discharge
Travels through imagination's heated veins.

I could call You and call You, but You already have a name.
How can I erase it?

TOWER OF MELANCHOLY

I live in a high tower of melancholy right now,
At 6 am I just opened my window in order to see
If there is some sign from you and I found one.

There was a giant black horse in the velvet of water.
Its figure appearing clearer and clearer, sculpted by every wave
It was so exquisite until it started to
Transform into some beast with a bitch's muzzle
And I closed my window.

I went to the writing desk, which was in the morning
Shadow and sat down in a mysterious mood for writing. But
then the whole table appeared to be present by
An all illuminating light – I turned my head back to the sea
There was a big fire ball, flying through the window.

I screamed your name.
And woke up.

WE HAVE NEVER ALWAYS

We have never sailed on the lake, river or floated on top of the dead sea.
We have never been at a concert, cinema or exhibition together.
We have never said to each other: look, this is a genius picture!
We have never climbed on the top of the roof or mountain.
We have never gone around the world in the same boat.
We have never given flowers to each other or presents.
We have never felt how it's to move on the same dance floor.
We have never licked melting ice cream together.
We have never asked much about the roots of each other.
We have never combed each other's hair, gently and slowly.
We have never felt Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday together.
We have never worked together, fighting with passion.
We have never been skating, skiing, running, long walking together.
We have never lost in the forest or in the parking lot under shopping mall.
We have never went hunting, shooting, fishing or picking up berries.
We have never made food, coffee or tea or some other disaster.
We have never played cards or lost last money at casino.
We have never smoked weed, gone high with all other good or bad stuff.
We have never got dizzy, drunk or lost in the labyrinths of consciousness.
We have never called each other by phone.
We even don't have each others' telephone number.
So why do I feel knowing you so well?

Why do we feel knowing each other more than
thousands of years?

We have dived in each others' bodies, taking sunbathing of each others' heat.
We have been drawing inner maps, routes and movements.
We have seen so many pictures of moons and red sunsets.
We have climbed into each other, slipping down and starting again.
We have built a world in a world, it's spinning in us and around us.
We have painted blue flowers on each others' bodies.
We danced on the red bedsheet as bull and toreador changing our roles,
Dying, resurrecting, fighting again and again.
We have melted into each other's palms, becoming teenagers.
We have common roots, past lives and some secret knowledge.
We have stroked each other's hair with finger combs and shower brush.
We have felt Monday, Friday, Saturday and two Sundays together.
We inspired each other, weaving the carpets of words, everyday longer and bigger.
We went in to the curious, spoiled, ambitious, creative, itching territories.
We have lost in each other's forests and none of us wanted to be found.
We have been smiling, laughing, kissing, touching, and picking up pleasure berries.
We have drunk water, milkshakes, prosecco and some other bubbles of happiness.
We have played distances and proximities, opening cards to each other and
hiding again.
We smoked each others' lungs, went high by elevators under the ribs.
We got intoxicated and lost in the labyrinths of unconsciousness.
We know each other's name. We know it by heart. We know, how to write it, to spell it,
hear it, to swallow it.
It's tattooed on each other's skin.
It's called: my insomnia.

WHAT EVER I DO, I THINK IT'S YOU /30 me in 15 you

I went to a party and heard some nice music, I thought it was you
I opened a notebook for writing a poem and I thought it was you
I saw a slice of orange in the dark blue sky and I thought it was you
I met a lonely cat on my way home and I thought it was you
I swung up and down before going to sleep and I thought it was you
I smelt a black orchid around my neck and I thought it was you
I washed my face with cold water and I thought it was you
I went to bed leaving a candle next to my head and I thought it was you
I heard somebody's steps approaching me and I thought it was you
Somebody undressed me and laid next to me and I thought it was you
Somebody kissed my sternum and breasts and I thought it was you
Somebody touched my hip-bone with a big hunger and I thought it was you
Somebody came into me and got lost and I thought it was you
Somebody grew inside me, painful and pleasant and I thought it was you

I wrote you a message: Whatever I do, I always think that it's you.
You answered me: It wasn't me. So, it wasn't you.

DREAM POEM No. 3.

Let's build a tent in the yard.
Let's occupy the territories.
Let's share it.
Let's build the towers of sand,
Let's destroy it together.
If we play, we play, If
we loose, we loose, If
we win, we win.

Occupying each other
Doesn't need many agreements –
If I take half of your heart
Another half is still free
For old gardening habits.
If we play, we win,
If we win, we lose,
If we lose, we play.

We do remember by heart
What it means
To cut lands as slices of bread
For so many mouths
All of them are hungry and thirsty.
If we play, we lose,
If we lose, we play,
If we play, we win.

RED SILK EVIL

When I met you, a red silk evil obsessed me.
He told me: it's nice, but paradise apples will melt
As soon, as you taste them.
He told me, it's too nice – this beauty will cost you
Pulsing insomnia.
He told me, kick her, bite her, run away from her, beat her, smash her,
Provoke, pretend, don't give up, offence is defence.
He told me, play, enjoy, the goal is the process.
He told me, even if you fall down, all wounds will be healed. He
told me, I am the red silk, everyone will slide down me, I'll stay
untouched.

When I got angry at you, thinking that you wanted to run away now,
Evil has slipped a red lipstick into my palm, so that you wouldn't touch my lips
And into another palm – a tooth brush, just in case I would like
To stab you next morning.
When you left, red evil lighted a chocolate cigarillo with one hand and poured wine
into the glass with another.
Oh, this red silk evil!

Oh, this red silk evil, who obsessed me after I've met you.
Oh, this red silk evil, who obsessed me before I've met you!

ENLIGHTENMENT

When you stood up wearing skinny jeans
And white Converse
Your black hair was falling down
Onto concrete floor of the contemporary art
center Maybe it was just a shadow of it
But I already knew you -
You've come from a disappearing country
You've come from a disappearing tribe
Constantly witnessing decay.

We were also almost disappearing from each others' sight
In the dusk of a gallery hall,
But then you asked somebody to turn on the light,
Because – you explained - you won't get to see these faces any more, -
My face was one of them
And maybe I could almost be deleted from your memory files,
But somebody turned on the light
And the table, where I was sitting, was illuminated the first.
I am placed on your palm, my future lover.

You are reading poetry about hands –
How the same hands might be Nightingales,
And the same hands can be gun trigger pushers,
How the same hands bore a wish to feed somebody
And the same hands bore a wish to kill somebody.
I am also being born from your hands –
From the way you squeeze my palm, wrist and elbow,
How your finger knots embed themselves onto my hand
And then – touching my red cheek with your fist.
You smiled saying:
You got some sun, darling.

Yes, love, I got burned under you're the heat of your lamp,
That's what I would like to answer, but it was too early to realize this,
As if I was keeping my fire matches for myself in order not to burn them all
At once, in order not to transform the sun into solarium.

It's just the beginning of our light stretch.
When time becomes flat and flows in
The horizon of sunset.
The beginning.
When motorways of light years are finally crossing
And allowing us to encounter each other.

NO WOLVES

The wolves are the wolves are the wolves and a rose.
 The rose is the rose is the rose and a fire.
 The fire is the fire is the fire and a body.
 The body is the body is the body and a shame.
 The shame is the shame is the shame and a house.
 The house is the house is the house and an end.
 The end is the end is the end and a choice.
 The choice is the choice is the choice and a female.
 The female is the female is the female and drums.
 The drums are the drums are the drums and a wolf.
 The wolf is the wolf is the wolf and a vulva.
 The vulva is the vulva is the vulva and a poetess.
 The poetess is a poetess is a poetess is a poetess and has no gender.

No gender is no gender is no gender and no body.
 No body is no body is no body and no shame.
 No shame is no shame and no shame and no drums.
 No drums are no drums are no drums and no fire.
 No fire is no fire is no fire and no rose.

No rose is no poetry.
 No poetry is no wolf.
 No wolf is no end.
 No end is no.

Most poems were translated from the Lithuanian by Rimas Uzgiris

Libretto for an opera-art installation

Honey, Moon!

Librettist **Gabrielė Labanauskaitė-Diena**

Composer **Gailė Griciūtė**

Stage director and author of installation **Julijonas Urbonas**

Producer **OPEROMANIJA**

World première: Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius, Lithuania in April 2018

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

"Honey, Moon!" is a workout by musical astronauts. A wedding of human being, honey, and the Moon. The opera is an exhibition of live sculptures, where everything is moving on a different scale. From *micro-* to *cosmo-*. The resonating vocal chords are responsive to muscular contractions of the bodybuilders. The surfaces of the performers' bodies and instruments evolve into planetary landscapes. The latter are rotating in the orbits of soundscapes the listeners can

engage with at any time. It is an open interplanetary route. Honey, the Moon,
honeymoon... Honey, Moon!

poisoned postcards they sent „How new mailmen were killed every day Touching

To each other“

(Patricia Lockwood, *Motherland, Fatherland, Homosexuals*, p. 11)

I WAKING UP

NARRATOR

Once upon a time

There lived a human being

Parents called it: SHE.

She did not necessarily think she was she,

But it was the name given to her by the
world Her identity, glued on her as a stamp.

In her dreams she was a whole post office.

In her mind she was a castle with broken
windows. In her mouth she was a blossoming
meadow.

In her chest she was a thunderstorm of running horses.

In her arms she was all curiosity in the world

In her body she was a hard marble in the
hands Of the sleeping sculptor.

In her legs she was a tree implanted into the
ground. She never went out of her room.

And she knew: reality never matches her feelings.

But once she dreamt of a silver
citadel. And it was shining.

She was singing so loudly in it.

And she was laughing.

And running.

Her arms were

free Her legs were

free

Her mouth was wide opened.

She googled: silver citadel.

508 000 results, but none
were As in her dreams.

She asked her parents,

What was it, but they didn't know.

And then... She started to dream it every night.

CHORUS

Silver citadel
Bright in mind
One moon
Thousand miles

SHE

Away

CHORUS

Wrap you up

Turn gold into earth
Change mountain into
dust Unlimited meaning
What was too little,
Will become too much

SHE

Suspicion in the mind
Makes ghosts in the
dark Like sticky glue
Wear out
What is all about

CHORUS

Silver citadel
You stood up
Silver citadel
in your father's clothes
Silver citadel
and walked out of the room
Silver citadel
And walked out of yourself
Silver citadel
I never had any dolls
Silver citadel
I always played soldiers
Silver citadel
And trains and wars
Silver citadel
and distances
Silver citadel
And stairs to death

Silver citadel
I built so huge
Silver citadel
It's not easy to
reach Silver citadel
The end of the staircase

SHE
My mother said
Learn how to climb

Silver, silver, silver
Citadel

But she never answered,
Where, exactly, I should go

CHORUS
You shall emerge from the spaceless
Without any edges
To what can be loved.

SHE
I have a box of matches in my palm.

CHORUS
Let's sit.

SHE
No, thanks, my
dear.
It's time to quit.

NARRATOR
She burns her house and leaves without as much as a glance.

II

III MEETING A MONSTER

NARRATOR
But once you destroy
something It doesn't mean you
create Something new.
She was lost in inner doubts.

SHE
First, I should find my friends

There should be some friends
On internet I have almost 3000
friends (2710 if to be more precise)
And they all have addresses in virtual
space, Isn't it strange?
As if virtual space would have streets and houses.
In any case -
Where are they now?
Maybe I can't recognise them,
Because there they look nicer
And in reality they are
monsters?

NARRATOR

She reaches a megapolis.
A city from sweet postcards which say I
love NY, I love London, I love Berlin,
I love Paris, I love Tokyo, I love Vilnius,
I love Saint Petersburg, I love to love something
So, she reaches her own postcard city and...
She sees a monster on the bench.
He is eating something big, a giant piece of human leg or
something. And she comes closer.

MONSTER

Tuesdays are best.

SHE

Oh, hello.

MONSTER

I know it doesn't matter now.

SHE

Bon appetite.

MONSTER

I know I look like a monster,
But I am not, believe me.

SHE

Of course.

Not.

MONSTER

Not.

I am hot.

Not.

Not.

My mother is a Red Sea
A Red Sea, full of blood.
Everything around me is red.

SHE

Only the air is pink.

MONSTER

Yes, exactly.

SHE

So?

MONSTER

My mother was a Red Sea
A Red Sea, full of blood.
Everything around me was red.
I was a monster.
But not anymore.

SHE

Should I have a memory?

MONSTER

You will be different here.
Among the skyscrapers
And city, full of poets
They eat paper and they drink our blood

SHE

The poets are real monsters.
I loved a monster once.

MONSTER

Oh, yes,
indeed.
Was it me?
No?
Take an olive.

SHE

A moment of death I called him.

NARRATOR

She kissed a monster once on each
eye. And smiled with a serious smile.

SHE

Maybe the next time you could
use A balsam for your lips?

MONSTER

I stand on my red
shadow. You will
disappear?

SHE

Yes and then come back.

MONSTER

A cat's eye? A promise?

SHE

Maybe.
Or maybe not.
Goodbye, my
past.

MONSTER

That was also the day.
You owe me.

SHE

No.
Nobody likes you at school.

MONSTER

I can see you
Wherever you go
I have all cities, I am a monster
between two deserts.

NARRATOR

She leaves the space.
And last blood of memories
Dries away.

[...]

Translated from the Lithuanian by ...