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IZBRANE PESMI

prevedel Jernej Županič

for Sarah, Lucas and Gil

za Sarah, Lucasa in Gila

*E allora? Eppure resta
che qualcosa è accaduto, forse un niente che è tutto.*

Eugenio Montale, »Xe nia II«

Like me, you sometimes waken
early in the dark
thinking you have driven miles
through inward country,

feeling around you still
the streaming trees and startled waterfowl
and summered cattle
swinging through your headlamps.

Sometimes you linger days
upon a word,
a single, uncontaminated drop
of sound; for days

it trembles, liquid to the mind,
then falls:
mere denotation,
dimming in the undertow of language.

Kot jaz se včasih prebudiš
prezgodaj, še v temi,
misleč, da si vozila dolge milje
po notrišnji deželi,

čuteč še vedno okrog sebe
bežeča drevesa in zatete vodne ptice,
poletnjeno govedo,
nihajoče v tvojih žarometih.

Včasih za več dni obvisiš
na kaki besedi,
na eni sami neoskrunjeni kaplji
zvoka; več dni

trepeta, za um tekoča,
in pade:
gola denotacija,
ki temni v povratnem toku jezika.

Suburbs

Wet Sunday afternoon; after the rain a bible wind ripples the sheet puddles on Station Road; along the hedges by the girls' school an elaborate birdsong streams through the wet scent of roses, like a new form of music evolving out of water.

The spiritual history of the suburb: Dutch paintings of parrots and cockatoos, Chinese damasks, Kraak porcelains, still-lives of spices and fruits, imported rhubarb, ginger, cochineal; bottles of gherkins and maple syrup on kitchen tables, ice-cream and lemons, radios talking to empty rooms, the way they do when the director is aiming for suspense in a fifties murder film – the suburb always has an abstracted quality, like a sentence learned by heart and repeated till the words are finally magical.

At night the suburb alters. The day-long, low-level action beneath the surface intensifies, like bad wood warping under veneer: the garden is stolen by foxes rooting in turned dustbins, emptiness takes form and approaches from the centre of the lawn, a white devil, smiling out of the dark, and the realisation dawns that I live in an invented place whose only purpose is avoidance, and what I would avoid, I carry with me, always.

Predmestja

Mokro nedeljsko popoldne; po dežju biblični veter kodra plahte luž na Postajni cesti; vzdolž živih mej ob dekliški šoli kompleksno ptičje petje nateka skozi razmočeno dišavo vrtnic, kot nekakšna nova oblika glasbe, ki se razvija iz vode.

Duhovna zgodovina predmestja: holandske slike papig in kakadujev, kitajski damast, porcelan iz Kraaka, tihožitja začimb in sadja, uvoženih rabarbare, ingverja, karmina; stekleničke kislih kumaric in javorovega sirupa na kuhinjskih mizah, sladoled in limone, radijski aparati, ki govorijo praznim sobam, kot ko skuša režiser ustvariti napetost v filmu o morilcu iz petdesetih – na predmestju je vedno nekaj abstraktnega, kot na stavku, ki se ga naučiš na pamet in ga ponavljaš, dokler besede končno ne postanejo magija.

Ponoči se predmestje spremeni. Celodnevna neintenzivna aktivnost pod površino se okrepi, kot se slab les ukrivi pod lakom: vrt ukradejo lisice, ki brskajo po prevrnjenih smetnjakih, praznina se uobliča in se približa s srede zelenice, bel hudič, ki se smehlja iz teme, in počasi se zavem, da živim v umetnem kraju, katerega edini smisel je izogibanje, in da to, čemur bi se rad izognil, vedno nosim s sabo.

We used to walk in the suburbs, spying into the houses of people we imagined were rich: interiors of perfect stillness, unbearably tidy; Imari bowls and baby grand pianos; gloves on hall tables; mirrors; paintings of boats and landscapes – the people, the trimmed lapdogs, even the space in the middle of each room seemed nothing other than an additional item of furniture, capable of being polished and insured.

In winter the suburb is Japanese. It is quiet and formal: stone tables and cryptomerias stand in the fenced yards, in tightly-stitched sleeves of immaculate snow. Nevertheless, something is missing: an absence that is only temporarily filled by the red of a post van in the lane, or the sound of footsteps crunching ice. At the edge of the wood, beyond what might reasonably be called suburb, on the already mythical rim of countryside, a pillar-box stands in a drift of the same whiteness, filling its space with a colour and solidity the suburb cannot emulate.

For this reason, the last true rituals only happen here: the inhabitants of the suburb are compelled by an attention to detail that was once religious and is now quite meaningless. The suburb has its own patterns: arrangements of bottles on front steps and scraped ice on driveways, enactments of chores and duties, conversations at gates and hedges, sweeping and binding movements, arcane calculations of cost and distance. All this activity is intended to make it appear real – a commonplace – but its people cannot evade the thought, like the thought which sometimes comes in

Svojčas sva hodila po predmestjih in kukala v hiše ljudi, ki sva si jih predstavljala bogate: brezhibno nepremične, neznosno pospravljene interierje; sklede iz porcelana imari in otroške klavirje; rokavice na predsobnih mizicah; ogledala; slike čolnov in pokrajin – ljudje, frizirani naročni psi, celo prostor na sredi vsake sobe, so se zdeli kot zgolj nadaljnji kos pohištva, ki jih je mogoče zloščiti in zavarovati.

Pozimi je predmestje japonsko. Tiho je in formalno: za ograjami dvorišč v tesno zašitih rokavih brezmadežnega snega stojijo kamnite mize in kriptomerije. Pa vendar nekaj manjka: odsotnost, ki jo le za kratek čas zapolni rdečina poštarkega kombija na dovozu, ali pa zvok korakov, ki drobijo led. Na robu gozda, onkraj tega, kar lahko upravičeno imenujemo predmestje, na že skoraj mitološkem robu podeželja, stoji poštni nabiralnik v zametu te iste beline in zapolnjuje svoj prostor z barvo in trdnostjo, ki ju predmestje ne zna posnemati.

To je razlog, zakaj se tu odvijajo še zadnji pravi rituali: prebivalce predmestja žene pozornost do detajlov, ki je bila nekoč religiozna, danes pa je čisto brez pomena. Predmestje ima svoje vzorce: razporeditve steklenic na stopnicah pred hišami in odstrgan led na dovozih, uprizoritve opravil in dolžnosti, pogovore ob vratih in ob živih mejah, vehementne in vezane premike, magične izračune stroškov in razdalj. Vsa ta aktivnost zato, da bi izgledalo resnično – nekaj vsakdanjega –, a njegovi prebivalci se ne morejo otresti misli, podobne tistim, ki nas včasih obiščejo v sanjah,

dreams, that nothing is solid at all, and the suburb is no more substantial than a mirage in a blizzard, or the shimmering waves off an exit road where spilled petrol evaporates in the sun.

The recurring dream is also a memory: I step from the smoke and noise of a party in the suburbs, into a cool garden that smells of lilies and nicotiana; the stars are close, sparkling, cold, and I want to reach up and brush my fingers over their points. In one step I rise into the top branches of an apple tree, into the damp and the perfume, where a girl in a white dress is already standing, half in darkness, half in the light, lily-scented, as if she belonged to the garden, and could emerge and melt back into it at will.

There is no need to speak; each of us hears the other's thoughts; through the music and voices they all run together, not just sounds, but scents and scraps of vision: lights, moths, perfumes, tunnels, streams. Half ideas: the notation of a tendency towards the circular, a neatness I have known about for years, expressed in a strange algebra of place names and symbols on road maps.

After a while, in the dream and the memory, she is gone. I walk back indoors and the kitchen is empty, except for an absence where something has just occupied my place and left a glass of milk half-finished on the table, some angel of weights and measures who passed through and has only just left – I hear its engine running in the dark, a shining configuration of old gods, Pan-Shiva, Persephone-Ishtar, the Janus-Christ of thresholds and crossings, the imprint of a child who has

misli, da ni tu nič trdnega in da ni predmestje nič bolj snovno od fatamorgane v metežu ali od migetajočih valov nad avtocestnim izvozom, kjer pod soncem izhlapevajo lužice bencina.

Ponavljajoče se sanje so hkrati spomin: iz dima in hrupa zabave v predmestju stopim v hladen vrt, ki diši po lilijah in tobaku; zvezde so blizu, mrzle, utripajo, in rad bi se stegnil in s prsti pobožal njihove konice. V enem samem koraku se povzpnem na vrhnje veje jablane, v vlago in dišavo, kjer že stoji dekle v beli obleki, napol v temi, napol v luči, dišeče po lilijah, kot bi vrtu pripadala in bi se lahko po lastni volji zdaj prikazala iz njega in se zdaj zilila z njim.

Ni nama treba govoriti; vsak od naju sliši misli drugega; med glasbo in glasovi se vse stekajo, ne le zvoki, temveč tudi vonji in okruški vidnega: luči, večče, dišave, tuneli, potoki. Napol ideje: zapis o nagnjenosti h krožnemu, vestnost, za katero vem že dolga leta, izražena v čudni algebri krajevnihih imen in simbolov na zemljevidih.

Čez nekaj časa, tako v sanjah kot v spominu, dekleta izgine. Nazaj noter grem in kuhinja je prazna, v njej je le odsotnost, kjer je nekaj še pred trenutkom zasedalo moj prostor in pustilo na mizi napol popit kozarec mleka, nekakšen angel uteži in mer, ki se je oglasil ter pravkar odšel – iz teme slišim brnenje njegovega motorja, sijoče konfiguracije starih bogov, Pana – Šive, Persefone – Ištara, Janusa – Kristusa pragov in prehodov, odtis otroka, ki ni

never come indoors and never will, who stays out in all weathers, who will never grow up or die, who is always, in all circumstances, *out to play*.

In the late afternoon, the people indoors; catspaws of light on the honeydew leaves, sprinklers surging and hissing on deserted lawns. A mile away the abandoned railway station is buried in grapevine and cherry laurel, already half-surrendered to the woods, like a temple to some forgotten god; a half mile in the other direction, stone crosses and angels stand wrapped in graveyard lichens, lithe muscle snakes in ivy, water drips all evening from a rusting tap; this is another form of the same greenness, quieter, more familiar, but what makes it beautiful is what makes it dangerous, like the spirit of the fish pool which flares out and taints our children.

Sometimes I am beguiled by its most primitive identity: a place where I can grow plants; a warm kitchen where I can sit undisturbed, listening for the milk and the post, while the sun rises behind the apple tree and tissues of risen water stream in the grass beyond my boundary. Sometimes its simplicity is deception: the distance arrives in a thread of cool perfume between two curtains, and I think I am already present somewhere else, having made a journey of some kind, as if any journey could end somewhere other than here, in the suburbs, where everything is implied: city, warehouse district, night stop, woods emerging from mists, as if newlycreated, like those Japanese paper flowers which unfold in water, empty back roads at night where, momentarily, a sougning of wings passes close in the dark, followed by

še nikoli prišel noter in nikoli ne bo, ki ostaja v vsakem vremenu zunaj, ki ne bo nikoli odrasel ali umrl, ki je vedno, v vsakršnih okoliščinah, *pripravljen na igro*.

Pozno popoldne so ljudje znotraj; mačje šapice svetlobe na modro zelenih listih, škropilniki, ki se zaganjajo in sikajo po opustelih zelenicah. Miljo daleč je opuščena železniška postaja, pokopana pod trto in lovoričevcem, napol se je že vdala gozdu, kot svetišče kakemu pozabljenemu bogu; pol milje v drugo smer stojijo kamniti križi in angeli, oviti v pokopališke lišaje, sloke mišičaste kače v bršljanu, voda ves večer kaplja iz zarjavele pipe; to je druga oblika iste zelenosti, tišja, bolj domačna, toda lepa je zaradi istega, zaradi česar je nevarna, kot duh ribnika, ki se razlije in oskruni naše otroke.

Včasih me njegova najbolj prvinska identiteta preslepi: kraj, kjer lahko gojim rastline; topla kuhinja, kjer lahko sedim, ne da bi me kdo motil, in prisluškujem za mlekarjem in poštarjem, medtem ko se sonce dviga za jablano in tkiva narasle vode tečejo po travi onkraj moje meje. Njegova preprostost je včasih utvara: razdalja se pojavi kot pramen hladne dišave med dvema zavesama, in mislim, da sem že prisoten nekje drugje, potem ko sem nekako odpotoval, kot bi se moglo katerokoli potovanje končati drugje kot tu, v predmestjih, kjer je vse namig: mesto, industrijska cona, zavetišče, gozd, ki se prikazuje iz meglic, kot bi bil novoustvarjen, kot tisti japonski papirnati cvetovi, ki se odprejo v vodi, prazne lokalne ceste v noči, po katerih gre v temi za trenutek šelestenje

the tug of silence, the feel of grain fields shifting under the wind, a lamp in a window beyond, where someone has sat up all night, drinking tea, remembering something like this.

The suburb accumulates accidents: books on topology or nomadism that looked interesting in the shop; overgrown gardens of mint and anchusa; out-buildings littered with clay shards and clotted rags, like the floor of an Egyptian tomb. Thick black liquors remain for years under the rims of jamjars and lemonade bottles, like fairy-tale recipes for invisibility or love.

Place is not important; even if the details are beguiling, the night is what matters: the constant of night in Chantilly or Cherry Hinton, a night that could be populated with creatures from Grünewald or Richard Dadd, but instead is revealed as the sinister playful kinship of everyday objects: wet lawns, dark hedges, cats walking on fence rims and plump, silent carp in fish ponds that might have been painted by Hiroshige; the scent of tobacco plants, the sweetness of my own mouth, a warmth moving on my skin, a sensation on my scalp of surfacing, now and always, into the moment.

I wake at night and hear someone moving in the dark, near the bed, or I see, quite clearly in the moonlight, a thin, malicious or joyful child who once belonged to me but has now gone over to collaborate in the being of those scavenger angels who haunt the suburbs, unconcerned with the notion that this space, with its locked doors and drawn blinds, belongs to my simple idea of order, which is nothing more than a notion of worthwhile and calculable risk.

kril, ki mu sledi vlek tišine, občutek žitnih polj, ki se premikajo v vetru, svetilka v oknu daleč, kjer je nekdo vso noč sedel, pil čaj in se spominjal nečesa, kot je to.

Predmestje kopiči naključja: knjige o topologiji ali nomadstvu, ki so bile v prodajalni videti zanimive; razrasle vrtove mete in volovskega jezika; gospodarska poslopja, nastlana s črepinjami lončevine in zlepljenimi krpami kot tla egipčanske grobnice. Gosti črni likvorji ostajajo dolga leta pod pokrovčki kozarcev in steklenic za limonado kot pravljичne recepture za nevidnost ali ljubezen.

Kraj ni pomemben; četudi so detajli varljivi, je noč tista, ki je pomembna: konstanta noči v Chantillyju ali Cherry Hintonu, noči, v kateri bi lahko prebivala bitja iz Grünewalda ali Richarda Dadda, a se namesto tega kaže kot zlovešče igrivo bratstvo vsakodnevnih objektov: mokrih zelenic, temnih živih mej, mačk, ki hodijo po ograjah, in zajetnih, molčečih krapov v ribnikih, ki so, kot bi jih naslikal Hiroshige; vonj tobakovih rastlin, sladkost mojih lastnih ust, toplina, ki se giblje po moji koži, občutek na lasišču, da prebijam gladino trenutka, zdaj in vedno.

Ponoči se zbudim in slišim premikanje v temi, ob postelji, ali pa vidim, v mesečini čisto jasno, vitkega, slabonamernega ali radostnega otroka, ki mi je nekoč pripadal, zdaj pa je šel sodelovat v bivanju teh mrhovinarskih angelov, ki strašijo po predmestjih, ne da bi si dajal opravka z idejo, da spada ta prostor s svojimi zaklenjenimi vrati in spuščeniimi žaluzijami v mojo preprosto idejo reda, ki ni nič več kot ideja smiselnega in izračunljivega tveganja.

Signal Stop, Near Horsley

Smoke in the woods
like someone walking in a silent film
beside the tracks.

A shape I recognise – not smoke, or not just smoke,
and not just snow on hazels
or fox-trails from the platform to the trees,

but winter, neither friend
nor stranger, like the girl I sometimes glimpse

at daybreak near the crossing, in a dress
of sleet and berries, gazing at the train.

Železniški semafor blizu Horsleyja

Dim v gozdu,
kot bi v nemem filmu kdo hodil
ob progi.

Oblika, ki jo prepoznam – ne dim, ali ne le dim,
in ne le sneg na leskah
ali lisičje steze od perona do dreves,

temveč zima, ne prijateljica
ne tujka, kot dekle, ki ga včasih ob svitu

ugledam ob prehodu, v obleki
iz sodre in jagodičevja, kako zre v vlak.

Septuagesima

Nombres.

*Están sobre la pátina
de las cosas.*

(Jorge Guillén)

I dream of the silence
the day before Adam came
to name the animals,

the gold skins newly dropped
from God's bright fingers, still
implicit with the light.

A day like this, perhaps:
a winter whiteness
haunting the creation,

as we are sometimes
haunted by the space
we fill, or by the forms

we might have known
before the names,
beyond the gloss of things.

Septuagesima

*Nombres.
Están sobre la pátina
de las cosas.
(Jorge Guillén)*

Sanjam o tišini
dneva, preden je prišel Adam
poimenovat živali,

zlate kože, pravkar padle
izmed svetlih božjih prstov,
še vedno nadihnjenih s svetlobo.

Morda o dnevu, kot je ta:
zimski belina,
ki preganja stvarstvo,

kot včasih nas
preganja prostor,
ki ga zapolnjujemo, ali oblike,

ki smo jih morda poznali
pred imeni,
onkraj lošča reči.

Lost

The wood where I was gone
for ages, on those Sunday afternoons:

lost on purpose, looking for the lithe
weasel in the grass,

stopped in my tracks, the way you stop
for echoes. Gone into the cool

of summer, passing the line
where sunlight snagged in the nettles,

I wanted the pink-toothed
killer, the casual

expert, the tribal memory of one
who slips into the chicken runs of mind

and works his way with something of my own
bright rage towards the folly of the damned.

Izgubljen

Gozd, v katerem sem bil
v tistih nedeljskih popoldnevih celo večnost:

nalašč izgubljen, iščoč sloko
podlasico v travi,

zaustavljen sredi koraka, kot se človek ustavi,
da bi slišal odmev. Bil v hladu

poletja, prestopil črto,
kjer se je sonce ujelo v koprive,

hotel sem rožnatozobo
ubijalko, nonšalantno

strokovnjakinjo, plemenski spomin tiste,
ki smukne v kokošjo ogrado uma

in se trudi z bleščečim besom, podobnim mojemu, dokopati
do nespametnosti pogubljenih.

8 a. m. Near Chilworth

Something has crossed the fields,
a series of claw prints
filling with plum-coloured water;

the stations run for miles:
a single whiteness threaded to the sun;
out in the woods

song-thrushes shiver the snow
from hazels, and the after-stain
of vixen is an echo from the book

of stories children tell on journeys home:
half-disbelieving, fingering the glass,
matching each flake of snow with inward brightness.

Ob 8. uri zjutraj blizu Chilwortha

Nekaj je šlo čez polja,
vrsta odtisov krempljev,
ki se polnijo s slivovo modro vodo;

postaje se vrstijo milje daleč:
ena sama belina, prišita na sonce;
onkraj, v gozdu,

drozgi drgečejo sneg
z lesk, in preostanki madežev
lisice so odmev iz knjige

zgodb, ki si jih otroci pravijo, potujoč domov:
napol nejeverni, s prsti na šipah,
kjer z notranjo svetlobo sledijo vsaki snežinki.

Halloween

I have peeled the bark from the tree
to smell its ghost,
and walked the boundaries of ice and bone
where the parish returns to itself
in a flurry of snow;

I have learned to observe the winters:
the apples that fall for days
in abandoned yards,
the fernwork of ice and water
sealing me up with the dead
in misted rooms

as I come to define my place:
barn owls hunting in pairs along the hedge,
the smell of frost on the linen, the smell of leaves
and the whiteness that breeds in the flaked
leaf mould, like the first elusive threads
of unmade souls.

The village is over there, in a pool of bells,
and beyond that nothing,
or only the other versions of myself,
familiar and strange, and swaddled in their time

Noč čarovnic

Oluščil sem lubje z drevesa,
da bi zavohal njegovega duha,
in hodil po mejah ledu in kosti,
kjer se fara vrača k sami sebi
v vrtinčenju snega;

naučil sem se opazovati zime:
jabolka, ki dneve in dneve padajo
na zapuščenih dvoriščih,
praprotje ledu in vode,
ki me skupaj z mrtvimi zapira
v zarošene sobe,

kot slej ko prej označim svoje mesto:
pegaste sove v parih lovijo vzdolž žive meje,
vonj zmrzali na perilu, vonj listja
in beline, ki se plodi v luskasti
listni plesni kot prve, izmuzljive niti
razparanih duš.

Vas je tam čez, v tolmunu zvonov,
na njeni drugi strani pa ničesar,
ali pa le druge verzije mene samega,
znane in tuje in zadekane v svoj čas,

as I am, standing out beneath the moon
or stooping to a clutch of twigs and straw
to breathe a little life into the fire.

kot sem jaz v svojega, na prostem, pod luno,
ali sklonjene k šopu vejic in slame,
da bi vdihnile malo življenja ognju.