

A TOO POWERFUL WORD

NOVEMBER 2021



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EVENING PRAYER BY MINAS KONSOLAS

Emiliya Ahmadova

Breaking Obstacles to Happiness

Some people do not grasp the meaning of true happiness. Others wonder if there is happiness in this world. When you look around, you see so much pain and suffering. People frequently undervalue happiness due to erroneous beliefs about it. Some people believe that happiness leads to sloth and selfishness, yet this is not the case. I feel empowered when my heart is full of delight. The joy motivates me to perform all my duties without feeling tired. It takes me less time to complete my tasks. I get inspired to write. The joy that makes a person happy acts as a motivational pusher or adrenaline, which energizes them to sing, run, say kind words to others, perform their usual duties, exercise, etc.

Research confirms that happiness improves productivity. For example, Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage*, indicates seven principles of positive psychology. According to those principles, when people are happy their productivity increases.

In her book, *Positivity*, Professor Barbara Fredrickson states that when people are happy or positive, they come up with better ideas and are more creative (Coursera).

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

Every human being has a different understanding or prerequisite for happiness. It all depends on the person's personality, needs, wants, or desires. That which makes one person happy might not be a source of happiness for another person.

Happiness is defined in different ways for different people: power, wealth, material things, position in society, control, leisure, hobbies, family, fame, attention, constant praise, admiration, etc. In my understanding happiness is true joy that makes you smile, fills your heart with love and hope, gives you an inner strength, and motivates you. At times, this joy makes one laugh, say funny things, smile, praise and thank the Lord, express gratitude, and be more compassionate towards others. The reasons behind that joy are elements that make one happy. Those could be family, good people in your life, hobbies, activities such as volunteering, loving relationships--the list is too long to set down here. Happiness is serenity, peace of mind, abundance, love, etc. Living a meaningful life makes one happy as well.

Life itself is a journey, with a destination that most try to get to. Most people pursue happiness or success. Yet Viktor Frankl, in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, said, "Don't aim at success--the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to other than oneself. "

One should prioritize happiness without persuading it, while making happiness-enhancing decisions and living a meaningful and fulfilling life. Yet, some only care about reaching their destination/goals. They get so tied up with attaining those goals that they are not fully appreciating or savoring the experiences. They don't pause to enjoy the fruits of their efforts. Some give more time to their career or business than to loved ones; at times marriages end because of this. They don't take time for leisure. When illness comes or old age finds them, they regret the missed opportunities or not living life meaningfully and to the fullest.

According to Professor Csikszentmihalyi, people are happiest when they are engaged in "meaningful flow experiences." (*Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience/Coursera*) These flow moments are characterized by certain features, such as distorted perception of time, lack of self-consciousness, and undivided focus on the present time or activity.

For example, when I work on my book, I feel relaxed. Yet, my mind is fully focused on the plot of my book. It seems as if time passes so fast. If during that time someone asks me a question, I will not hear what they say because I am deeply immersed into typing my story.

These flow experiences enhance the level of happiness because they make our lives more interesting and fulfilling. The state of flow happens when people become immersed in challenging activities, which stretch them to the limit and make them able to meet those challenges.

It is said that compassion can make one happy. Every human being has a need for love as well as a need to give. When those needs are met, we feel good. When people can bring something positive into society, they feel competent, useful, and capable.

When I show kindness towards others, I feel joyful; for example, for some time I had been volunteering at a retirement home. Seeing the residents' joy because of my presence and kindness towards them made my day brighter. I knew that I was doing something meaningful and good.

Michael Norton of Harvard University organized an experiment where money was given to some students. They were asked to either spend it on themselves or others. Those who spent it on themselves on that day didn't feel happy, but those who spent it on others did. (The Harvard Gazette)

Kylie Hamlin, Lara Acknin, and Liz Dunn, in an experiment with children rather than adults, also confirmed that givers are happier.

OBSTACLES TO HAPPINESS

As was mentioned before, people devalue happiness. They sacrifice their happiness for something else. For example, a stubborn person will pursue an argument for the sake of being right. This will cause problems in the relationship. At times you just must let go. You don't need to always be right in an argument.

Anyway, you are not going a trophy for being right!! Keep peace in your relationships!!!

At other times people will choose a higher-paying and stressful job over a job that they enjoy the most. Some might buy something for its monetary value instead of buying what they really like.

Another element that affects a person's happiness is the desire or pursuit of superiority for the sake of being powerful, wealthy, and/or famous. To my mind, this is a misguided notion. Do you think famous people have a peaceful life? They are always being bothered by others. They have no privacy. At times their safety is jeopardized.

It is not unusual for people who are feeling lonely and depressed to become avoidant. They avoid social interaction and become lonelier. This leads to psychological problems such as deepening of the depressed state, insomnia, obesity, etc. Avoidant people lose connections with their friends, which is not good. They keep their issues to themselves instead of trying to get emotional support or comfort.

To combat this, the best cure is to surround themselves with understanding and supportive friends. This is sometimes a very difficult thing to do, but it is highly recommended. Gratitude for the help of these friends should be expressed strongly. They must also practice self-compassion by being kind and compassionate to themselves.

Neediness affects the level of happiness as well, as opposed to healthy relationships that make one happy. Needy people put themselves in wrong situations. In some cases, they weaken themselves by building relationships with another person who does not really care about them, such as narcissists. They get attached quickly and yearn for love and attention. They might become psychologically damaged if those needs are not met.

Learn to love yourself, but not in a selfish way. You don't need to be in a relationship to feel happy or loved. Take care of yourself emotionally and physically. Get involved in activities that make your day brighter. Parents, nurture your children with love and keep them safe. Don't forget to encourage them and give deserved praise and affection. Hug them and spend

time with them. This way they will not become needy, and will have the self-esteem that will prevent them from running to the wrong people for affection.

Another obstacle to happiness is being over-controlling. This approach/mentality is moved by a desire to control situations, outcomes, and people--and when things do not go their way, they get angry, depressed, or feel miserable. This affects their health, relationship with people, and the quality of their decisions. This type of people doesn't accept views or input from others.

Avoid being over-controlling. You are not God. Therefore, you cannot control all outcomes. Go with the flow and let go of this poisonous mentality. Learn to trust, and give people the ability to express their own views and ideas. Let it go before it affects your life and relationships, both at home and in the workplace. No one wants to be controlled.

Professor John Helliwell studied happiness levels in other countries. He concluded that the more people agreed that others can be trusted, the happier they were. Therefore, there is a correlation between happiness and trust level. Trust is an important tool in building healthy relationships.

However, at times people who trust a lot get hurt or used by others. According to Helliwell, we should trust others in a way that maximizes our benefits. At the same time, people should minimize the chance to get hurt. (<https://brandgenetics.com/Coursera>).

One must take personal responsibility for one's own happiness. This will lead to development of internal control, removing the need for external control. Internal and external control are compensatory forces. It means that when someone has internal control, the desire for external control diminishes. However, when people don't feel good internally, they seek external control that negatively affects their level of happiness. Those who believe in God have a strong internal control, because their faith that God will help gives them hope and something to look forward to.

As you wake up every day, thank God for everything and PRAISE HIM. Expressing gratitude will improve your mood. Try to practice mindfulness by being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and senses without judging them, instead of thinking about the past or future.

There are many benefits to practicing mindfulness. It decreases stress, enhances the ability to deal with illnesses, and decreases depression symptoms, anxiety, and fatigue. It helps in the struggle to stay focused, and reduces high blood pressure. Mindfulness enhances creativity, and improves emotional intelligence, heart health, and the health of the immune system.

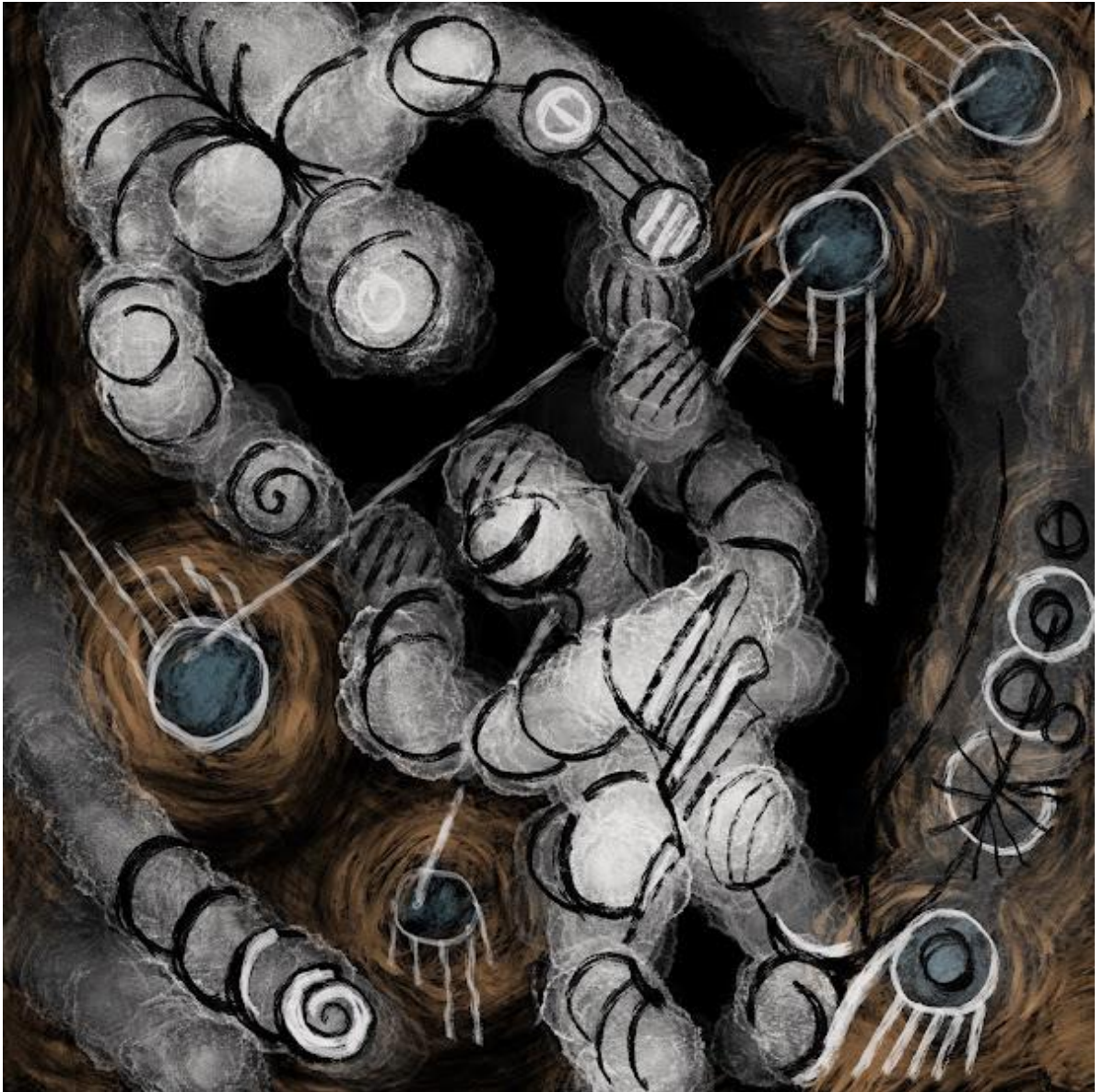
Here is one way find joy in life: every night before you go to sleep, write down two or more things that made your day better or gave you joy. If there is nothing good to recall, then write down three things that upset you and if something positive came out of it. For example, you might feel upset because it rained, and you couldn't meet your friends. Yet because of the rain, something positive happened. You were able to stay at home, relax, or do something that you couldn't do before. Maybe your house got cleaner!!!!

People are frustrated right now because of the Covid pandemic. Quarantine, death, restrictions, poverty, and job loss are taking a toll on everyone. However, even in this situation there is something positive. For example, those who had never taken time to get involved in personal activities are now spending more time with their children and their partnerships.

Some have found time to read, remodel the house, etc. Others (like me) have taken up gardening.

We have learned to appreciate what had been lost and have started doing things differently. That is a positive thing.

Therefore, always look for positiveness even in difficult moments, instead of feeling sorry for yourself or being depressed. You will find a reason to smile. Most importantly, practice humility--and be humble and kind towards others.



THE EYES OF MEDUSA BY DASHA DELONE



NEST BY MINAS KONSOLAS

Aleksandar Popović

Rain

Cold shower
Puts the shackles
Of longing.

Invasion
Of raindrops tightens
The rusty padlocks
Of my abyss.

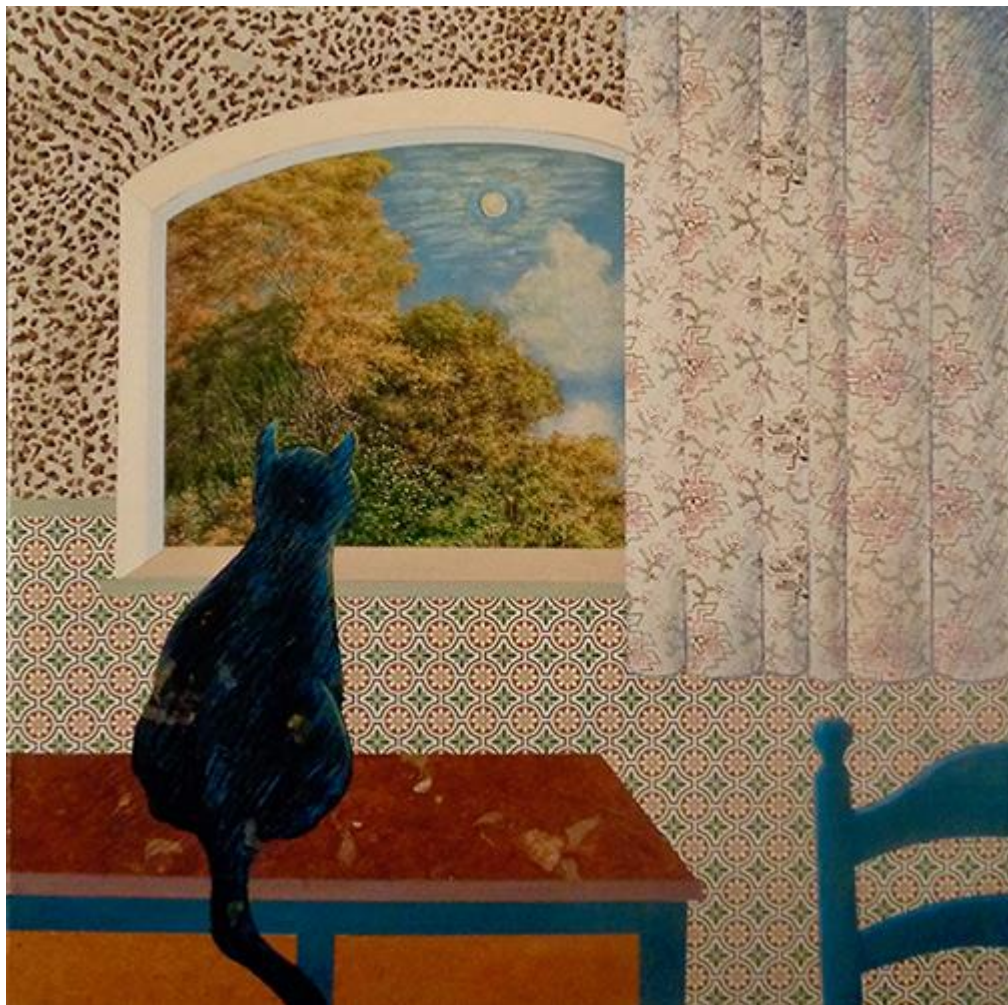
The immixture of mud
fouls the glass walls of souls.

Silence...groan...
Siberia in my chest
Ruins

And three vitrages.

The three vitrages
Of my heart.

Translated from Serbian by Danijela Trajković



PERUSING THE MOON BY MINAS KONSOLAS

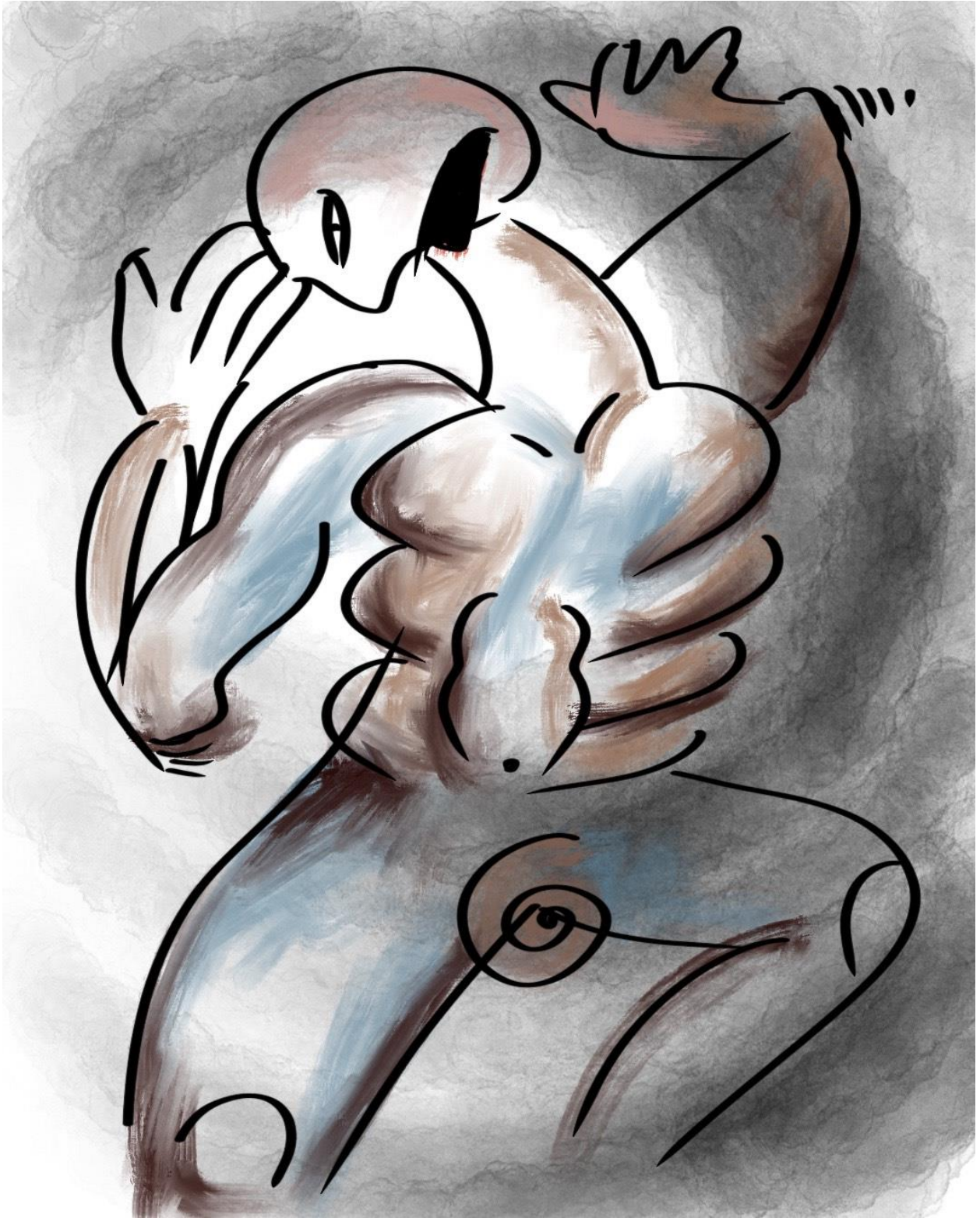
Melina Papa

Flash Back

I missed my poor, little home.
With the sunny shutters, which each time they opened,
they smiled broadly to the East Hill.
To this one, where we knitted our children's fairy tales,
without princes and princesses.
But with genuine, crystal clear children's voices.
I missed my favorite hill,
of evergreen memories.
Because there I planted sugar kisses upon my Mother's cheek,
while we were collecting the rarest wild flowers, hand by hand.
And my Mother, good-hearted as ever,
with these flowers,
adorned my curly hair.
Amaranth Spring to take root forever!
But why every time my Mind, goes by there,
needles embroider my childish soul



FRAME OF MIND (J) BY MINAS KONSOLAS



TARGET, A DIGITAL PAINTING BY DASHA DELONE

Jake Sheff

A Ronduet on Tulip Fest in Woodburn, Oregon (April, 2021)

“It troubled my conscience, he could see, to dupe so many people, my master especially, whenever I played the fool. ‘You mustn’t worry about that,’ he said. ‘The foolish world wants to be duped.’”

- Hans Jakob Christoffel Von Grimmelshausen, *The Adventures of Simplicius Simplicissimus*

A semilunar lebensraum,
Each petal’s pastel edge. If beauty’s boring,
Ask mystery for its loam
On loan. A spirit with a faulty o-ring
Hates to leave time’s waiting room.

But maybe tales of derring-do, or ramen,
Like this vendor’s, floor
Whatever the season’s a-blamin’
For making death too sure
Of itself...Tulips tutor every Brahmin.

It was like hearing ferrets speak:
Seeing one walk by leashed just now. A wintery
Year must hate this week:
The ebb of sleep and flow of light; the winery
And bloom, they say, are both in peak.

My daughter slides down the lit up slide; a beacon
On a trampoline,
She helps the clouds and songbirds beckon
Sun and rain, while the wind
Conspires to steal me with the donuts’ bacon.

A Rondo-Minuet Hybrid on My Daughter Learning Tae Kwon Do

“Can one be a saint without God? – that’s the problem, in fact the only problem, I’m up against today.” Albert Camus, *The Plague*

Her mind’s in ready stance. A brush
With beauty is a deadly brush: what dragons
Learn too late is plush
In her. She masters *poomsae*. What’s that fragrance?
That’s her mastery. No push

Is hard enough to silence her skull-crushing
Keup. It's not to brag
When I point out the sky's concussion
Had a telling lag...
It came on the heels of her axe kick! Confusion

Hates this third-grade student's skill,
Her *dojang* concentration. Every spreading
Block is logical –
Fearfully made, in fact – so punches heading
For her head wind up in school.

Elegant gales and ludicrous joules Achilles
Would envy can't be read
By *dobok*-wearing silly billies.
Then she bows, and dread
Is blown into my lesser heart's Antilles.

My Baby's Face During Babette's Feast

With gentle, geometric gratitude,
The anxiety that lives in her eyes reclines.
A little fishing village stocks her mood
With coffee beans and butter. History mines
The past on screen for suitors, hesitates...
Her eyelashes protest; there's porphyry
In her desires. Mine draw figure eights
Observing her through time's periphery.
Philippa sings; my baby's lips obsess
Me. Babette comes to Jutland; baby's brow
Gains tender powers only gods possess.
I'd pay ten-thousand francs to freeze right now,
When her expression lacks commodities
Film lovers love in the best comedies.

I Caduti

Hence childish hopes and dreams,
You devils that love to oversimplify
And flatter every eye
That can't see through you, go where self-esteem's
A peak to dwell on; ski
The myriad slopes that from a single spot

Descend through apricot-
And hubris-scented air. The wise attack
Where the fools bivouac
By steering clear of inner travesty.

That chain of being, being a chain
We call great, shackles the pain
Born in the madly swirling mist
Of each man's heart. The naturalist
In me prefers to see what lives
Beyond my world; the poet gives
A view. When time began, both prose
And poetry were one. But clothes –
Some empty clothes – broke them apart.
Now the world is dressed in art,
And art is duty bound to bind
Them back together in the mind
Of man, or else it fails. The cup
Of Ganymede is too high up
For me to drink, and I'm not rare
Enough in the right ways to bear
It. What's the right amount of things
Immeasurable? My inkling clings
To wisdom for the answer, not
Itself. You'll cauterize what's caught
By caution? I'll keep earth between
Two vaster planes. Though too unseen
For some, their border ruffians
With ease deflect our master plans
Before they do us harm. We fell,
Hephaestus-like, but with the whole
Wide world our Lemnos. Moral fractals,
Men behave like pterodactyls
Most of the time. I've seen the orf
Virus infect what Nephilim dwarf
On earth. The truth is, paintings muzzle
My inner voices, singers puzzle
Me, swapping strangers' inner eyes
With mine; I only recognize
What's true with art. The artist in
The man is proof that with a hin
Of the divine we're mixed! Each trope
Can be a tightrope and to cope,
Both things can be true. Men make
Allowances for the poor snake
To live in Ireland again:
This man could wash the rainbow's sin

Away; that man has ass's ears,
But for myself, the ass's fears
I fear the most. So very Jan
Van Eyck, the hopeful light I shine
In daydreams under a Tupelo
Fails at twenty-two below;
The temperature at which passions freeze
Is measured, not by man's degrees,
But rather, distance under God
And His decrees. My lightning rod
Is evidence: we're less sileni
Than constant moral miscellany,
So flourishing is within reach.
There are no windswept fads, but speech
Is something else. A bagatelle
Can tell me all I need as well
As any bloody chronicles
Or timeless annals. Nothing fills
My day with angels...Promised calm
Has never been the sacred balm
It claims to be. Where metal meets
The wood, I've seen the saddest feats
Of sacrifice; a casualty
In fields where they're too casually
Consumed. Too bright, too brief; our joys
Can seem, when Jesse's seventh boy's
The king of Yggdrasil, mere toys
To some. When dignity annoys
You, dawn-ful crimes and dusk-less days
Are coming. (Then mock-noon betrays
True midnight.) See: Aldebaran shares
An eye with me. Its freedom wears
Some falling snow, and wishes freedom
From itself. (It's to flee Rhadam-
Anthus, I guess.) There is a snow line
Where goodness and love in a slow line
Move about as well. Some clothe
What mental storage units loathe:
"The girl I give all my best kisses,
She always chooses Spanish cheeses,"
Is my best effort; pretty bad.
But I'm no poet, and I'm glad
To know it! My Andersonville
Prison is next to my free will,
Where some corrupt officials, ill
With pride, demolished wisdom's hill
For to build foolish houses. Girls

("Daughters of dagger-damage"), pearls
And other influential lights:
Would that I could not see those heights
Where powerfully value is flowing,
Where strongly value flows for knowing.
A fount of idiocy, I'd ask –
'Who killed perfection?' – in a mask,
Alcibiades-like, and lisp
So I'm not hated to a crisp.
The clouds have anasarca; spring
Will come again. She'll always bring
Reminders Notus blows away.
In Buchenwald, our memories say,
'This isn't us, and that's not us.'
To know itself, forgiveness prays
For help. There's sulfur in that gulf
Between each self and what its Delphic
dreams portend. I mow the lawn
To force equality. To yawn
At beauty's spontaneity:
It would make the meanest and greenest tree
Plaintive; be the most painless death.
There's knowledge in the eyes of Seth
That vice won't let me see. That apple
Eris threw in me; I'll grapple
With myself until I die.
Sallow was this morning's eye...
There's no one free; this semi-scourge
Lives in every demiurge,
And can't be killed. Don't look to fate;
None mitigate time's magistrate.
There's sucrose in the rose's red
That I won't hear until I'm dead.
The Garden of the Hesperides
Appreciates disparities
In peacetime and when bullets fly.
No one here but God knows why.
One small 'shall' is no big deal
To some. But when a flaming wheel
Goes by, you'll seek the special spear
Of Finn MacCool, in case you hear
The goblin singing, "Let me Blow
You (Mostly Peaceful) Kisses." Go,
Go visit history's lair, then quarrel
With your friend self-crowned in laurel.
The guillotine's favorite color mirrors
The shape of deadly nightshade's ears.

(That's fire's word for man.) A king
Getting chased by the rifles of spring
Discovers karma likes a geyser:
Mary's there; see how dawn eyes her.
Bitter is the dark and deep
The individual's right to sleep
In labor's peace and quiet won.
To lasso the abyss, my gun
Looks forward to snow, and with good cheer!
The day and I, in Joseph's gear,
Stay out of trouble telling jokes
To men who know how laughter yokes
Forgiveness, so they never laugh,
Unless my act is wisdom's gaffe.
(The fool has got the best shot at
Perfection; what is most shot at
By man.) When tempted not to own
Mistakes, quoth goodness, "Get you gone!"
When *nachas* leaves its seven gates
Wide open, goodness radiates.
With flaming laws, genetic fire,
Some believe what they desire
To be true too readily;
Fanatic genealogy
Won't admit it's wrong. We live,
Therefore we sin, and must forgive
The marriage – poetry and prose's –
For ending. Nothing decomposes
More than hate. Capital Hill
Will try to match that healthy hell
In Menlo Park, and light a match
For gradual eureka's to catch.
In Handel's *Water Music*, said
Promoters claim they'll raise the dead.
Destiny's resin, in its prime,
Drips from time, rabbinical time.
Stubborn ingratitude befalls
The holy wounded when God calls.
The lord is one, and He's most high:
I live this truth; for it I'd die.



L'Utopico

Hence inborn sinful stain,
You clear and present flaw that mars each goal
And ought to be in jail,
Go dwell on Mars; by eminent domain
You'll grab that planet way
Before you wrench my target from my aim.
You'll dye your counterclaim
With colors none can see, but I'm no fool;
I'll steel the golden rule
So none can break it after yesterday.

I have no limits! Now I'm free
As God! No incivility
Within, no chains without. This ale
Brimms with more knowledge than does Yale.
And yet my cup half-empty stays
Full of injustice, a disgrace
In paradise, whose capital
Perfects what every dream makes whole.
Let's go there, where love's artisans
Draw pictures nature's partisans
Eat up. Let's go and meet their queen;
I hear her: clean calls unto clean.
She'll laugh at hell and worldly things;
Be kind to all; abolish kings.
Though some may see the blackest boot
Paint their whole kingdom black as soot
Before they go, what's fair is fair:
The queen just cares too hard to care
About some pesky incidents.
It's heavy with experiments;
Her purse, which from the commonwealth
Will unlearn greed. (If greed learns stealth,
She'll crush it, loving-husband-like.)
She'll teach each spike how not to spike.
She'll find that by reversing dawn,
The sky's Raynaud's phenomenon
Gives her a wound to heal. She'll ban
The consequence of a great tan.
And she'll adopt the child of Mount
Cyllene. The country will lose count
Of all the stars up in Heaven's lake:
We'll shake them until they're half-awake;

Stone, seaside ideas and wood
Encased in silver, gold and good
Misfortune. (That last part is key
To art, but not reality!)
She'll banish any person "blessed" –
Too sober or too neatly dressed –
Like all true art. She'll never deal
With any child of Semele
Directly. She'll claim Tony Hawk's
A beast on wheels; electroshock's
Her mode of moving. Acting young –
Reading Ayn Rand and Carl Jung
Will be examples – she'll make fate
Less glamorous; a fourth estate
Third-party-like in every way.
Mister Non-entity today
Will be tomorrow's Captain Kidd.
We'll do what Epimetheus did –
Just the good stuff! A Cambrian
Explosion only queens can plan
Will happen; the majority
Will will it! History's prophecy
Will vindicate itself and clone
The savior (a complete unknown);
Time's gal pals will fulfill it! Snugly
In my heart, I'll bind each ugly
Feeling, so none are ever felt.
Smelters will teach us how to smelt
Society for gold. A pure
And vegetarian allure
Will satisfy mysterious needs.
My nose will find whatever bleeds
For reasons I don't like, to save
It from an audio-tactile grave.
My chatelaine's electric eyes
Will never burn out or despise
My happy love's dictates. Her limb-
Dissolving rays will dissolve time
Eventually. She'll never be
Sad-mouthed, tough-nosed, rough-eared; you'll see!
Disasters will fill no more books.
The royal science's "Gadzooks"
Will lift what's too terrestrial.
What's not too intellectual
Will be arriving on three mules.
They'll plan to break the molecules
In our electric vows: half-men,

Who'll make the greatest simpleton
The son of Leopold Mozart by
Comparison. She'll pornify
The drabbest jobs. The queen will dress
My darg in drag, make time confess
To work schmerk in a body bag.
Declaring war on every plague,
She'll never lose a man, a dime,
Or single battle. Pantomime
Supreme, we'll kill it. Loneliness
Will only walk in twos and threes.
She'll bury every blunderbuss
In a mass grave. Oblivious
To dumb implausibility,
The past should pawn its chessboard; he-
Said-she-said only happens there.
"You'll legislate beyond repair,"
They'd plead. As if our guide is hate,
Or fear. I won't see them create
Creators like our queen! She'll sink
Her teeth into groupthink and drink
Its energetic death. "Reform
What you cannot possess": that warm
And happy phrase knows vanity
Peaks at the height of sanity.
Our glories will be pristine seas
And hearts; the teal and the tall trees
Will be the most pure they've ever been.
"A hygge with Hygeia then?"
You joke, but that's not too far off,
My friend. It's gone on long enough!
These fields let flowers bully flowers;
These clocks let days oppress the hours.
I still feel hunger's scaphoid pain;
I still see poverty, its rain
Deferred. I can't sing *Don't Debunk
My Kisses* without getting drunk
On jealousy first. Sir Jealousy, meet
Madam Not-yours. On beauty's feet,
No more glass slippers; the truth, gloved:
Be loving, lover; you are loved:
The lies we tell, half-jocular,
That slowly slice my jugular.
Some question me, I answer with
This comeback: Knowledge is a myth.
In Delos, Leto's children will be
Delos's property. Astilbe

Will grow for everyone. We'll read
The poetry that can't succeed
Without great readers, and preserve it.
We'll argue, 'This and that deserve it,'
Only for the right reasons! Grass
Will ink our desolation's mass...
It loves a paradox: our god;
Imagination's kind of odd!
I'll leave my natural load behind,
Forgetting vice with all my mind.
(How could we be knee-deep in wrong
And neck-deep in a happy song
At one and the same time? Man was;
Some ran here like a sailor does.)
My dreams will be predictable
As life; my judgment, perfect still.
And here's the queen: I needn't kneel;
She knows exactly how I feel.
"My scientists cry Gaia weeps,
Beseechingly, and doomsday creeps
Closer. Tomorrow's preachy mood
Will not allow the lassitude
Which has corrupted duty's soul
In all who came before us. You'll
Be so content with brotherhood,
Commandments will seem simply rude
If not the majority's command
Or written in each voter's hand
On something more alive than stone."
She loves tomorrow, that I'll own;
She loves it more than earth and sky,
So for this queen, I'll gladly die.



THROUGH THE THIN FROST BY MINAS KONSOLAS

Paul Illechko

Between the Zones

An African mask turns out to not be what it seemed
to be in reality a pattern of birds
and flowers a Persian design

the eye sees vagueness through its tarnished
lens like an out of focus camera the eye
sees strangeness and gleam

the streets are empty now it rained overnight
soaking the emergent greenery of the season
but the silence is still intensifying

we are all waiting for the device the mechanism
that will cleanse the air will burn away
the sickness that engulfs us

there is only one man visible he wears
a strange hat with no gloves his voice
is harsh as the meshing of gears

inside the house the lights are blazing set to
counterbalance the grayness of the day
the Tiffany lamp the ancient chandelier

the birds sang early today plump and outrageous
they fluffed and preened shaking
the drops from their plumage

all of us now inside in separate containment zones
the rain-drenched streets becoming rivers
borders between our nation states

and later when the sun returns we might venture
out blinking in the dazzling glare impaled
upon the sharpness of forgotten light.

Titanium

The beauty of nothingness
a titanium plated façade

that hides the inactivity no feelings
no consciousness no status

no gender this steel-cut
power-lathed doll strip-mined

and fracked this actress cracked
like a dog leashed a horse hobbled

so blank and empty a white canvas
or a tabula rasa all claims settled

for negative entropy all bank
accounts emptied out all lawsuits

forfeited eating from an empty

plate with a broken fork and no knife

a starvation diet of dirt
and metal shavings encased within

the purity of a titanium shell
oh such loveliness in a metal hell.

Colorblind Redemption

The alcohol flush of
the liver and kidneys
the field where a chord sounds
the rush to a feeding
the sweat and the muscle
the untouched white canvas
the disclosure of systems
the surviving inferior
the silence of the stranger
the scissoring of meta
the bruising of bodies
the negative destiny
was translated mechanically
with wire-line components
to an increase in tyranny
as voices are spoon-fed
while children obstruct us
from reaching our targets
in a Nevada motel
where pilgrims trace shadows
and the wisdom of solitude
is the ghost in the attic
but the tube was extracted
when the plastic was melting
and the smell was unbearable
as they wept through the season
and a stranger with cloud hands
with cream clots and coffee stains
was grateful for the outcome
for the colorblind redemption.



Tattooed Bruises (Light and Time)

Light without light as the lamps
are extinguished darkness creeping
craftily like a water snake
entering death's gullet

his pocket phrase was always a lament
was always a gesture of sadness
elevated an investigation
into the depths of paranoia

overnight he merged with
the assistant who bruised
too easily the whiteness between
tattoos gleaming with threatened dawn

cleanliness he said is foolishness
life is short and foolishness
is the fire that burns away
the scarcity of time and light

the leakage of time was iconic
spilling over into the lifelines of children
who would never be born whose bruises
would never vibrate to a deeper blue

time without time as the clocks are run
to rusted springs darkness victorious
as light fades to nothing as bruises
and tattoos are seen to be indistinguishable.

Isosceles

In love with the way in which you raise your hem
and order me to dive into your salt lake

in love with the slide of cloth silkily across flesh
the grip of cold teeth in my shoulder as I caress
your pale isosceles with dexterous pressure

as you release the bruise to whisper unrepeatables
into a tongued whorl of ear

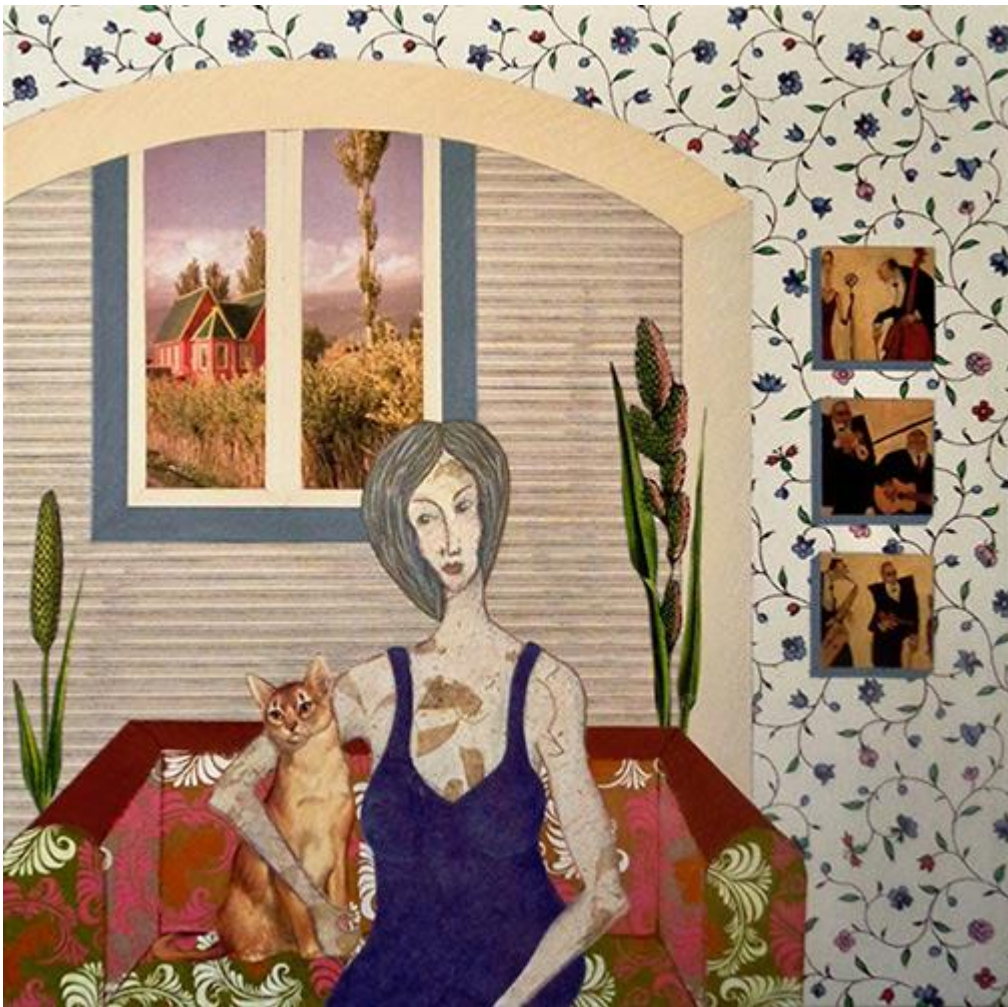
and together we scale the dream cliff

to the unobtainable plateau

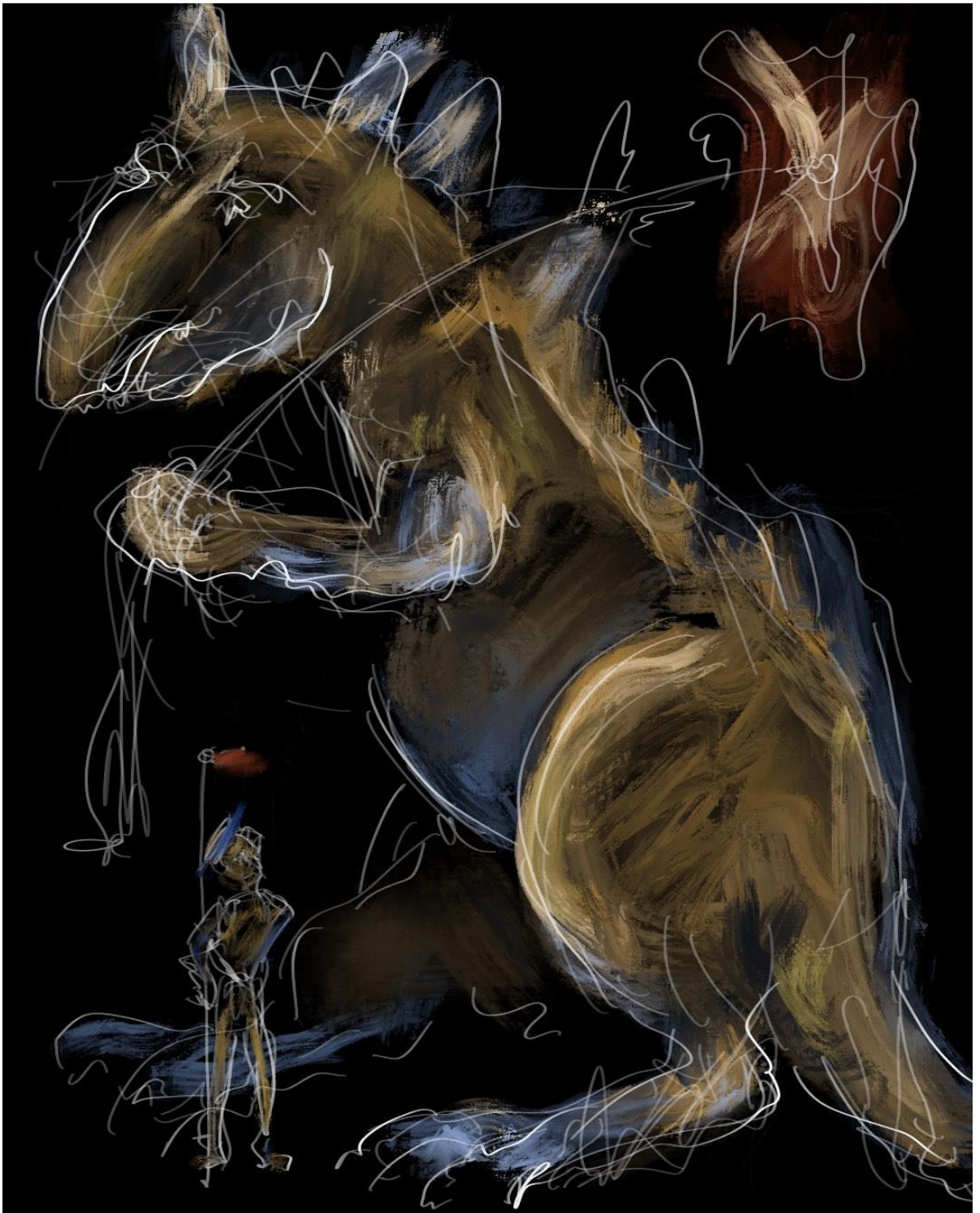
a place where we push away from shore
discovering the absolute coordinates
of where we might submerge

somewhere in this ocean there are rainbow fish
their hearts pumping visible through translucent flesh

my heart also pumping visible as our salts
combine into chemistry.



DUET BY MINAS KONSOLAS



THE DINO AND THE MAN BY DASHA DELONE

Cassandra Ioan

Self Portrait with Engagement

I look through the water trickles
that fill my sight
and gather in beads upon the face of my heart
dimming it.
You entrusted yourselves to one another
ocean meeting another ocean.
I sometimes wonder where are friends left
except for a perplexity field with disseminated lighting poles?
Suddenly they face a two – headed being.
The path to the individual is blocked.
Friends must address four ears,
smile to four eyes
with the same intensity. Only thus can they linger around.
But it will never be the same.

Self Portrait without Love

With the cut ear
I stay in the middle of the deafening noise
of the world.
Not a known face
to communicate or hang to.
I flow down river carried by the stream.
I grasp here and there
some dry branches
that slow down my flee.
They soon betray me.
I cry without ceasing
waiting for something to change:
either to die drowned in my own tears
or to reach a Robinsonic shore
on which I could be atoned
in exchange of taking care of a Friday.
Every man is important –
mirror against death,
partner and friend.
But today the mirrors are silent
and as in a desert
there is draught and waste land.

Self Portrait with Master

Your tongue splashes,

you multiply fish,
you dive for the pearl.
I play with the grey threads of your hair.
If we make love
it is not to render us closer
as every moment
encounters us woven
in the same pattern
a traditional Romanian peasant carpet
where my white breasts and your dark sharp eyes
your white flesh and my dark heart
make up
on the loom of days
our lives' ying – yang.

Self Portrait with Coffin Maker

The coffin maker is my friend
and we eat ice-cream on Sunday afternoon.
His hair and arms are full of sawdust.
I like to sit by his side
while he creates final chambers
for the souls who cannot fit here anymore.
Sometimes we sleep in these,
taming life and death.



THE SEA BY DASHA DELONE

Dilip Mewada

Sunku: beyond rhyme...

My tears
gave her a
shout but in vain...
neither
she slowed her
pace nor turned back...
to check
whether my
heart is alive...
after
such a harsh
love's departure...
it's now
very hard
to convince hearts...

Inverted Etheree/Count Down...

Once my lips had composed a verse brimming
with sheer romance on one of her cheeks

from that day onward she started
reciting that verse bashfully
standing in front of her
wooden framed full-length
dressing mirror
caressing
her long
curls...

Anna Canić

LITTLE DEATH IN LITTLE PARIS

Do not control me,
O perfidious world –
I'm not in the mood
"To see Paris and die"
I have other plans,
A different direction –
Taken out of the crowd
I'm a stranger to time and the winds.

Let me be,
O black-and-white realm –
You changed my name,
Not my vocation.
You changed his passions,
Not his name.
How can you imprison
An earthquake?
An anomalous zone
You'll never rule.

Leave me alone,
O arena of rigid classics
And ugly novelties –

Paris is not for me,
Unless it's the "Little" one...
Same with the death.

SICK METAPHORS

The bride was no miss
With her veil naïve blue
Newly-wed had cuffs loose
And his bridges long burned

Here they let the words fade
And the melody melt
Sitting next to each other
On the dark solid chairs
Lost in candlelight
Only to feel...
Not existence, but life
Every step to get aim,
The new morning to shine
On the second part
Never in vain.

TO G.

Fairy Princess with angelic name
She's smiling
Gently like a caryatid
From the balcony of her sycamore tower
Surrounded by warmth of the family
With her own hand-made heaven around

Born of the same love
To be your best friend
Through distance and time
Like anchor of memories
In highs and lows always –
A Sister.

HIEROS GAMOS: SYZYGIES

I see you in my sleep
beside a falling star
I hear you in a whisper
of our sea

As within so without
Separation is a lie
Deep in your senses
dwells my universe

I know your soul,
your very essence
Reach out
Make a tough girl
Lack her strength

Forever is not scary
When you share it...

2021

The Thunder is no lightning's satellite
She just reminds him – it's not over
Gates will fall, the hourglass will turn
There goes the Power
Stronger than the lightning's pride
To join the Thunder to the Earthquake.

LOCKDOWN

Dark runs through the walls
disrupts all plans
imposes canons
takes away the weak
tears apart the united
and breaks the devout...

And I
I go on
Wisdom
seeking
for
Joy



HERE'S TO YOU BY MINAS KONSOLAS

Tomislav Domović

Associations

You say bread
I think of fullness

You say water
A dry tongue is poured with hope

You say air
Chestnuts fall down the lungs

You shout fatherland
Beautiful women wave the flags of solemn pupils

You stummer summer
In December crickets sing cypresses

You whisper body
Skins and old restlessnesses fall down the lips

You cry out love
All becomes a cry

Is It Possible?

How long can I last without your body?

The whole eternity
if you persuade God to preserve our bodies in eternity

The time to the last day
if that day will last as a previous life

A year
if you go on a long journey
or I end up in an open prison because
I broke all the windows on Kockica¹ in Prisavlje

A month
if it is possible to survive in the wreckage without water for 30 days

A week

¹ Kockica (Croatian for "Dice" or "Little Cube") is a 10-story mixed-use building located at Prisavlje 14 in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. It was originally built to house the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia, and currently serves as the headquarters of Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure and Ministry of Tourism of Croatia.

if you'll make it up to me for the wasted time

A day
if you were fishing the stars

An hour
if you would call me with tears for sixty minutes

A minute
if it's an interval you think of nothing

A second
if you don't want me to pine away

The Biblical Sea

Between her left and right leg
Between her left and right thighs
The universe is situated
It rests and the planets orbit
Like all my torn into halves bodies

I look her straight in the eyes
Slightly cheeky, slightly sadly
Her face glows
Both of a daredevil and a wanderer
Her legs spread like the Biblical sea
I enter the universe
Will be back in a few light years

*Translated from Croatian by **Danijela Trajković***





STAND YOUR GROUND BY MINAS KONSOLAS

Maurice Ferguson

Mahatma The Day of Hiroshima

For six years men have dropped.
Mere doves caught in a rattling
Crossfire of bullets.

And now it has happened,
A black snow settles over Asia, my Asia.

There are no words
To cool the crematoriums
And the fragrance of ritual
Or rhetoric does not
Divert the hungry jackal
From the shallow grave.

Yet, all we have are our words,
Mine seem like rain
That falls into the ocean
And turns to silent salt,
When I would rather they
Be seeds to brighten
Slums into outbursts of fruit
Or dawns of flowers to spring
Gardens in the frozen hearts of men.

I have dreamed
On the glistening peak
Where the lotus blossoms
That nations shook hands
Across the Maginot Line;
That leaders planted Europe
And Asia, my Asia, in ribbons
Of parks and forests.

But I am speaking from the heart
And the sickness men carry
Is a sickness in their heads
And my words fall on deaf ears
And I have lived too long
In the burnt ash of day.



By All The Light We Miss: After Reading Doerr

I am awestruck by all the things we miss
When we are standing on our feet.
Whole flocks of discoveries await
Those who will stop to stoop,
Bygone realms wait for any who kneel to dig.

Ditches and fencelines muster up
Universes we would never have observed
Had we not stumbled onto them:
Amoebic civilizations from mud puddles,
Avenues of sassafrass from birds' excreta.

I desire the tart jams my grandmother made
From damson plums and sand cherries,
The sweet jellies she mashed from fox grapes
That clustered in clearings beyond
The brush and brambles, off the beaten path.

But I will never find the vanished cellar
Of all her preserves. I have lost the whereabouts
Of crabapples, persimmons and mushy paw paws,
The sweet surprise of roadside dewberries,
All the light only our memories can capture.

I hunger for movies that transport me into
Lofty caves hidden behind waterfalls,
Movies whose reach extends beyond the bioluminescence
Of the deep, movies that follow those trails
Plodding turtles take on their journeys into Autumn.

I am tugged along by the universal shyness
Of orchids such as the pink lady slippers
My son and I discovered when we climbed
Sharp Top during a visit to the Peaks of Otter,
We dared not disturb their shy peacefulness.

I demand teachers who demand that our kids
Search far and wide for what grows from the unlikely place,
From the crack in the sidewalk to the murkiest depths,
To the edelweiss that splits alpine granite, yet have each child
Begin by knowing thoroughly all that is nearby.

I require songs that sing the words
Abandoned houses whisper and empty lots imply,
Choirs whose full-throated hosannas shout out

The muffled voices of ghost towns and mini-malls,
All the discards and disheveled progress left behind.

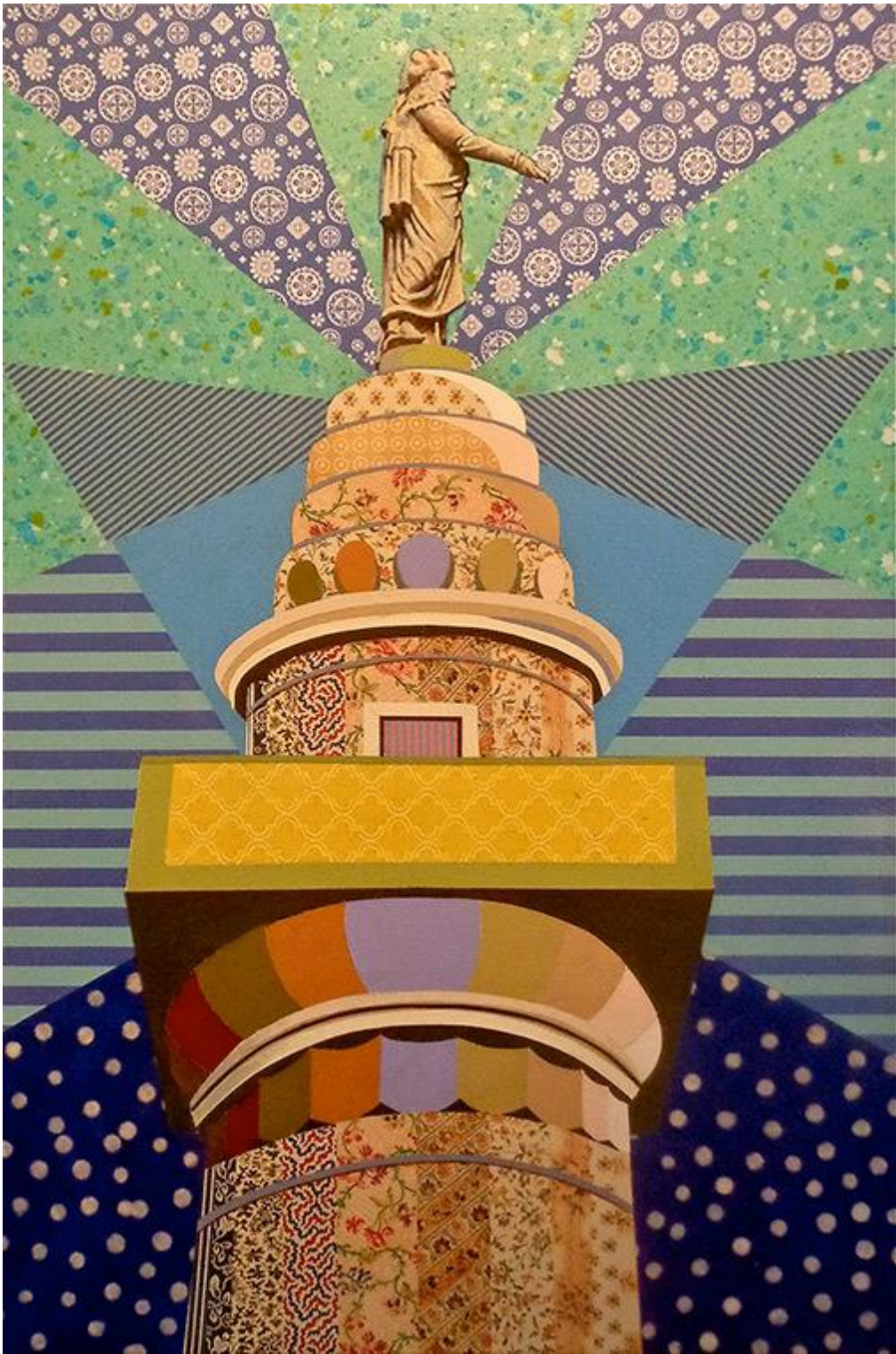
Our slight statures are but the fodder
Fang-toothed nature devoured, such as
My grandfather's cowpasture the cedars reclaimed,
That same force that grounded his barn rafters,
That same hand that toppled mighty Ozymandius.

Beneath the wake robin leaf a brown blossom dangles.
How divine this rarest of early blooming trilliums!
Lean down to glean that cluster of white blooms
Underneath the mayapple frond, lean down to find
Helgramites below old river stones.

Never omit the endemic to a specific place:
A bat found only in Bath County, Virginia,
A log perch found only in the north fork
Of the Roanoke River, those Venus fly traps
Found only in two counties of the Carolinas.

The praying mantis is emperor of the shrubbery;
The salamander governs the shade
While all the servants in this centaur's world
Find in their quests the nourishment
Of all that light they rarely see.





WASHINGTON MONUMENT BY MINAS KONSOLAS

Lorraine Caputo

AUTUMN ON THE ALTIPLANO

Sheening *chacras** of
quinoa, harvest gold, burnt
orange & scarlet.

Two young women sleep
on a low knoll near grazing
alpaca & sheep.
Their red *polleras** brilliant
against the yet-green pasture.

In yeards bundles of
totoras reeds dry in this
early autumn sun.

**chacras* – fields

**polleras* – skirts

IN THE HEADLIGHTS OF NIGHT'S JOURNEY

Massive pale bluffs
of folded rock

Brushling seeking
hold in fissures

Darkened white-washed
home sunken deep
into the earth

Black void below
sprinkled gold lights
of a village

Diamonds piercing
an ebony sky

Chill of this night
seeping into bone



BLUE BIRD BY MINAS KONSOLAS

Chad Norman

CORVID TEACHINGS

for cuzzin Val

I see
the mates
living closer
than ever,
autumn spreading
rapidly,

unlike
us
down here,
asked
to be distant
for a reason.

Few want
what you
in those
black feathers
have...

so I
stay away
from them,
the ones
without wings.

A STUDY OF HUNGER

Reunion in the blizzard
a cause I support today.

The hands on my arms
grew cold when the gloves
they were to enjoy
stopped giving any heat.

But in the wind and snow
another voice grabbed me:
"Go ask the sidewalk
what you need to know
now that it has been cleared,
or better yet
the shrunken snowman
in front of the home
where a part-time teacher
lives, leaves during what
the school-year has become
choosing to wear a coloured mask.

To have a call
for each black-feathered family,

one I use as a test
only during the winter months,
expecting little reaction
as my freezing lips
are able to pronounce
other than words,
only the sounds hunger hears,

another type of cause
when one crow at a time
is willing to leave the shelter
chosen where branches are trusted,
and the March winds of Nova Scotia
leave me smiling, knowing one crow
choosing to show is a sign
I accept about how long Spring
will take to join us, and it will be then
to build a nest can be what makes
this all a perennial welcomed memory.

BIRDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

How am I a part of this?
Any other lost one
could be at the path,
but snow holds us back.

Sadness is a ball inside,
no dancing, or any boy
trying to master the shot.

A weight I feel
and it hurts on days
when clarity kisses the poet.

Inside where both live
so far from the chase
for any money to pay
the bills, to worry over.

A glance up works
it is there in the trees

or on the wires, it is
the relief and escape.

And when the sun is out
it agrees, the crow families
tell of want, tell of how to
be part of a sunny hour
other than what enslaves,
to see how few clouds
can free the sky
ceilings.

above our painted

THE LONE CROW

I stand inside what is
supposed to be the home I own
hearing the first of the roost
when outside the sky is orange,
the colour of a morning
like so many other beginnings,
days that go on to be clear and calm.

What is heard takes me
to where I can look up,
there on the deck with a chill
any early riser can be woken by
where looking up has become
a religion I am glad to practice.

Out on the deck I am alone
with not only the roost's flow
having learned from each caw,
each dive and twirl as the miracle
of choosing a mate is visible,
but it is the lone crow I wait for
almost always seen at the end,
one I believe in the most, a teacher,
a brief lesson about the gift of mystery.

How to not know, and maybe it is good,
it is necessary to be alone
not only in the brightening sky

but here in the restful house
and even out there where it is
kind of divine, before anyone else
rises to end their night's dreamlike flights.

Pavol Janik

THE CONCERT

Do not be afraid of sudden outcries of the orchestra!
That does not mean the conductor
has seen my hand on your knee.
Allow a kiss.

Know that your sex outrages you only as much
as the music is anxious about the applause.

Translated into English by Pavol Janik Junior

CHRISTMAS

White angel shines like silica.
Glass panes are decorated with frost ornaments.
The time of wonders and transformations is here.
Most secret dreams will come true;
diamonds are pouring on us from the sky.

Behind the windows, the sparkling wind carries subtle chimes of Church bells from afar.
Christmas time with the scent of pine flew into our homes from the bright star.
Together we are everything we need.

Translated into English by Zuzana Sasovova et al.



BIOGRAPHY NOTES



Dasha Delone was born 1970 in Moscow. Live in Moscow and Montenegro. Studied arts at a number of art schools, as well as at Boris Trofimov's and Irina Borisova's workshops. 1994 – art director of a ceramics studio. Since 1996 works as graphic designer, drawing artist sculptor and painter. In 2006 Dasha Delone with friend established their own publishing company. Since 1991 Dasha Delone is a member of The International Association of Art, IAA/AIAP. In 2016 Dasha Delone and Dima Goryachkin created the art group DaDim and started work together. Dasha Delone is a painter, drawer, sculptor and author of livre d'artiste (artist's book) pieces. Her style of painting combines aesthetics and traditions such as naïve art, European surrealism, Old Russian frescoes and Russian avant-garde of the beginning of the XX century. The oniric space of Delone's paintings invites the spectator to the world of personal imagination and of cultural archetypes as well. The artist's universe is inhabited by lots of bizarre and at the same time easily recognizable creatures: dragons, fairies and faerie birds. In Delone's works our everyday reality acquires a new mysterious dimension, the childlike ingenuousness reveals philosophic depths. Delone's works are presented at The State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow; The Museum of Everything, London; Viatka Contemporary Arts Museum, Russia; Stara Lubovna Contemporary Arts Museum, Slovakia; Bulgakov Museum, Moscow; Fonticus City Gallery, Grohgnjan, Croatia and several private collections.



Minás Konsolas was born in Greece and has lived in Baltimore since 1976, where he graduated from the Maryland Institute, College of Art. He is the former owner of Minás Gallery, an outlet for poetry, both visual and verbal. The gallery, one of Baltimore's alternative art spaces, was a gathering spot for artists, writers and performers for twenty-two years. He subsequently sold his business and now works full-time from his studio in Charles Village. Konsolas has participated in two public mural projects for Baltimore City, in Greektown and at the Farmers' Market. His work has appeared in numerous literary journals, including *Little Patuxent Review* and *Passager*. His original artwork and reproductions are widely collected, locally, nationally and abroad. Konsolas is known for employing a variety of artistic styles and techniques, which allows his work to continually evolve. His constant focus is how light interacts with color and form.



Emiliya Ahmadova is an Azerbaijani author of Broken Chains, A Hell For All Seasons, My Twin Sister And Me, Broken Chains and Caribbean Tears. Her work covers social issues and

gives a voice to the voiceless. At times she writes articles. Some of them were published at <http://e-charity.gr/new/exclusive-interview-dr-juliet-skinner-coping-with-infertility/>
<http://e-charity.gr/new/depression-eng-text/>
<https://theorthodoxchurch.info/blog/news/changing-attitude-and-attaining-gods-grace-by-emiliya-ahmadova/>

As you know right now we are going through difficult times due to Covid. Many are distressed, depressed, angry etc. Knowing all of this she wrote a 4 paged article that might help people to find some happiness or deal with stress. In her article she teaches people how to lead a fulfilling life and find happiness. Emiliya was born in the city of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. Emiliya has diplomas in business management, as well as a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in human resources management. She also has International diplomas in the advanced study of the theory and practice of management, administration and business management, communications, hotel operations management, office management and administration, and Professional English from the Cambridge International College, in addition to a certificate in novel-writing. Emiliya likes being around people, adores travel, enjoys playing soccer, and relishes helping other people. Currently she is working on her 5th book. Along with writing scripts or books she writes articles.





Aleksandar Popović was born in 1982. He is a passionate folklore dancer and has traveled with his group KUD – KOLO the whole of Europe taking participation in many cultural manifestations representing the South Serbia folklore. He works for a Greek Construction Company „Dromos“ and writes poetry. Aleksandar lives in Vranje, Serbia.



Melina Papa was born in 1974 and lives in Agrinio. She is married and mother of two children. She has been teaching foreign languages since 2004, in the simple way she knows. She acquired the teaching permission for English and French by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Also, she knows Italian (level Superiore) and Spanish (level C1). In 2014, she completed the intensive one-year translation program, French-Greek-French in Athens. Her love for languages and translation led her to write her books titled- My Soul's Voice, The Flame of the Oil Lamp, Blue Dreams, The Caress of Flowers and The HeartCharmer. Some of her texts and poems are published in Greek Anthologies and Mexican, as well (Antologia Commemorativa, 19 y 20 de Julio, 2019 y Un Grito por La Paz Diciembre 2019) She obtained The Great Personality Award-2020, The World Icon Of Literature 2020 and The Noble Peace Personality Award, July 2020. She is a member of THE WORLD DIRECTORY OF LITERATURE, HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE.



Jake Sheff is a pediatrician in Oregon and veteran of the US Air Force. He's married with a daughter and whole lot of pets. Poems of Jake's are in Radius, The Ekphrastic Review, Crab Orchard Review, The Cossack Review and elsewhere. He won 1st place in the 2017 SFPA speculative poetry contest and a Laureate's Choice prize in the 2019 Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest. Past poems and short stories have been nominated for the Best of the Net Anthology and the Pushcart Prize. His chapbook is "Looting Versailles" (Alabaster Leaves Publishing).



Poet and songwriter **Paul Iechko** is the author of three chapbooks, most recently “Pain Sections” (Alien Buddha Press). His work has appeared in a variety of journals, including The Night Heron Barks, Rogue Agent, Ethel, San Pedro River Review, Lullwater Review, and Book of Matches. He lives with his partner in Lambertville, NJ.



Casandra Ioan, born in Romania in 1981, is a poet, prose writer and translator. Her poems have been published in literary magazines in Romania: *Aiudul Literar*, *Inter Art*, *The Steps of the Prophet*, *ASTRA*, *Observator München*, *Băcăuan Life*, literary anthologies – *Inside the Word*, Radu Bărbulescu Press and *One, two, three* – poetical experiment together with the poets Adrian Stan and Sorin Anca (the editor of the literary magazine “Galateea”). She has won several national poetry prizes. She has made her debut with the volume *The Apprentice Hunter*, Limes Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca (2006). Subsequently she published a second book of poetry with Limes Publishing House in 2010 entitled *The Air Profile*. She later published two books with stories for children and in 2019 she published her travel diary *The Way of Pomegranates* which was published with Grinta Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca. Over time she has been poet in residence at Santa Fé Art Institute (2007), International Centre for Writers and Translators Rhodes, Greece (in 2012 and 2018), and Bells and Pomegranates Centre for Writers in Lijnian, Croatia in 2016. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Languages from “Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj -Napoca, Romania, and an MA in Irish Studies with the same institution. She lives in Aiud, Romania.



Dilip Mewada is a poet by avocation and teacher by vocation. He lives in Gandhinagar city of Gujarat state of India. He is conferred with B.Sc. (physics) and composes poems in Hindi and English languages. He has been writing Ghazals, Nazms, Haiku, Cinquains, Quatrains, Etheree, Tricube, Free style poems and many other forms of poems including rhymes since 2001. Besides two poetry books, he has co- authored many Hindi and English anthologies. He has been awarded with many national and international certificates for his outstanding poems. For more details one can contact him at – dilipmewada325@yahoo.com



ANNA CANIĆ was born in 1987 in Odessa (Ukraine). She graduated in philology from the International Humanities University in Odessa. Used to work as a cultural animator, playwright (author of 4 staged plays) and translator of 5 languages. Her poems, critic reviews and translations of poems were published in the literary anthologies in Poland, Serbia, Spain and Greece. Author of a historical fantasy novel "Sophia and Cassius". Currently working as a vice-editor-in chief of two art/culture magazines in Poland.



Tomislav Domović was born on August 1st, 1964, in Zagreb. His publishing of poetry from the mid-eighties was well recorded in all of the relevant magazines on the territory of the former states, and in the respectable radio show "Poezija Naglas" ("Poetry at loud"). He ran Zagreb literary tribunes, was an editor of "Prvotisak" ("First Print") rubric in "Slobodna Dalmacija" ("Free Dalmatia"); and as an editor signed and printed various poetry books for the "Perun" publishing house. He was affirmed young, as one of the most awarded young poets in the Former Yugoslav Republic: 1st place award "Mak Dizdar", for manuscript, 1985.; 1st place award "Mladi Graditelj" ("Young Builder") 1986.; "Goran", best manuscript book, Goranovo proljeće ("Goran's Spring"), 1987.; "Pečat varoši sremskokarlovačke" ("The Seal of Sremskarlovac County"), "Heretik na 10 Načina" ("Heretic in ten ways") - the best book award for authors under 30 years of age, Brankovo kolo 1988.; 1st place award of the jury and the public on "Festival jugoslavenske poezije mladih" ("The festival of Yugoslavian youth poetry") in Titov Vrbas, 1991. Critics find him at the top of Yugoslavian youth poetry of that time. In 1996., in independent Croatia, he has been awarded "The Order of Danica Hrvatska with the figure of Marko Marulić" for special merits as a youngest literate in the republic, and in 2017. he wins an "Olive branch coronal" ("Poeta Olivatus") at the Croatia Rediviva manifestation. His poems are enlisted into Croatian language textbooks, and he remains to exist in numerous panoramas and anthologies of modern poetry from which it is crucial to point out "Uskličnici" ("Exclamation Marks") of Tonko Maroević, Croatian literature from 1971. to 1996., from Šop to Domović. Until the present day he has published 17 solo collections, and alongside poetry, he writes and publishes reviews, short stories, movie scenarios, and plays. His collection of chosen poems soon will be published in Serbia in "Arhipelag" ("Archipelago") edition. He is a member of "Hrvatsko Društvo Pisaca" ("The Croatian Writers Society"), "Slavenska Akademija" ("The Slavic Academy") and the "Savez scenarista i pisaca izvedbenih dijela" ("The Society of screenwriters and writers of performance works"). He lives and creates in Karlovac as an independent artist.



Maurice Ferguson lives in Buchanan, Virginia with wife and a menagerie of stray animals. He retired after working 26 years for outpatient and inpatient substance abuse and alcohol treatment programs. Since retirement, he has volunteered at the V.A. Hospital, the Fincastle Jail and the Transitional Living Center. Over the years, he organized and conducted a poetry and prose contest for the Virginia Department of Corrections and collaborated with Janet Lembke in publishing a poetry anthology of prison writing titled “The Walls Crumble: A Prison Anthology.” He has published poems in several journals, including *Artemis Journal*, *Roanoke Review*, *Piedmont Review*, *Inlet* and *Foreword Magazine*. He, also, has been the literary editor for *Artemis Journal* for many years now. He keeps composition books with him at all times and keeps copious notes, some of which becomes the fodder for future poems. He participates in an ongoing poetry group that meets 1-2 times a month at Hollins College. He has read his poetry at numerous colleges, including James Madison, VMI, Virginia Wesleyan and Roanoke College.



Lorraine Caputo is a documentary poet, translator and travel writer. Her works appear in over 250 journals on six continents; and 18 collections of poetry – including *On Galápagos Shores* (dancing girl press, 2019) and *Escape to the Sea* (Origami Poems Project, 2021). She also authors travel narratives, articles and guidebooks. In 2011, the Parliamentary Poet Laureate of Canada honored her verse. Caputo has done literary readings from Alaska to the Patagonia. She travels through Latin America, listening to the voices of the pueblos and Earth. Follow her journeys at: www.facebook.com/lorrainecaputo.wanderer or <https://latinamericawanderer.wordpress.com>.



Chad Norman lives beside the high-tides of the Bay of Fundy, Truro, Nova Scotia. He has given talks and readings in Denmark, Sweden, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, America, and across Canada. His poems appear in publications around the world and have been translated into Danish, Albanian, Romanian, Turkish, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, and Polish. His collections are *Selected & New Poems* (Mosaic Press), and *Squall: Poems In The Voice Of Mary Shelley*, is out from Guernica Editions. And *Simona: A Celebration of the S.P.C.A.* will be out early 2021 from Cyberwit.Net (India).



Mgr. art. **Pavol Janik**, PhD., (magister artis et philosophiae doctor) was born in 1956 in Bratislava, where he also studied film and television dramaturgy and scriptwriting at the Drama Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (VSMU). He has worked at the Ministry of Culture (1983–1987), in the media and in advertising. President of the Slovak Writers' Society (2003–2007), Secretary-General of the SWS (1998–2003, 2007–2013), Editor-in-Chief of the literary weekly of the SWS Literarny tyzdennik (2010–2013). Honorary Member of the Union of Czech Writers (from 2000), Member of the Editorial Board of the weekly of the UCW Obrys-Kmen (2004–2014), Member of the Editorial Board of the weekly of the UCW Literatura – Umeni – Kultura (from 2014). Member of the Writers Club International (from 2004). Member of the Poetas del Mundo (from 2015). Member of the World Poets Society (from 2016). Director of the Writers Capital International Foundation for Slovakia and the Czech Republic (2016–2017). Chief Representative of the World Nation Writers' Union in Slovakia (from 2016). Ambassador of the Worldwide Peace Organization (Organizacion Para la Paz Mundial) in Slovakia (from 2018). Member of the Board of the International Writers Association (IWA BOGDANI) (from 2019). He has received a number of awards for his literary and advertising work both in his own country and abroad. This virtuoso of Slovak literature, Pavol Janik, is a poet, dramatist, prose writer, translator, publicist and copywriter. His literary activities focus mainly on poetry. Even his first book of poems *Unconfirmed Reports* (1981) attracted the attention of the leading authorities in Slovak literary circles. He presented himself as a plain-spoken poet with a spontaneous manner of poetic expression and an inclination for irony directed not only at others, but also at himself. This style has become typical of all his work, which in spite of its critical character has also acquired a humorous, even bizarre dimension. His manner of expression is becoming terse to the point of being aphoristic. It is thus perfectly natural that Pavol Janik's literary interests should come to embrace aphorisms founded on a shift of meaning in the form of puns. In his

work he is gradually raising some very disturbing questions and pointing to serious problems concerning the further development of humankind, while all the time widening his range of themes and styles. Literary experts liken Janik's poetic virtuosity to that in the work of Miroslav Valek, while in the opinion of the Russian poet, translator and literary critic, Natalia Shvedova, Valek is more profound and Janik more inventive. According to Sarita Jenamani, Secretary-General of the PEN International's Austrian Centre, Pavol Janik has his place in world literature. He has translated in poetic form several collections of poetry and written works of drama with elements of the style of the Theatre of the Absurd. Pavol Janik's literary works have been published not only in Slovakia, but also in Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, the United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela and Vietnam.

