

**Gordana Benić**

## **Summing Up Oblivion**

When souls return to bodies, you can really see those who walked the land by the sea  
Recognize four-thousand-year-old footsteps in the mud of abandoned beaches  
Pirates carved soap and dyed fabric with crimson of the shells. It was confirmed that they lived  
here at the time of the Carolingian rulers; then unexpectedly they vanished

His name was Ka, he was an architect or a builder, he described ominous wastelands and  
marvelous cities

He also got lost in the unknown direction

Tulio and Hera spent the night in Spljet; collected pottery, painted fabric and seals;  
everything they intended to load on the ship disappeared in the fire of port warehouses  
They didn't stir the ashes, the abandoned objects smoldered and poisoned the air

The apocrypha keep the memory of the noble Enio Andreis, the son of an ornamentist and  
decorative painter. He always liked ships; his father was the leader of heavenly boatmen  
We briskly rowed to the shore; in the middle of the night we heard a bang, like grains of sand  
vanished the cities of distant Africa. In ten days we sailed across the Mediterranean, we arrived  
before the emperor Diokles' palace

How romantic. You know, I recognize the arrangement of the rooms, even the small prison under  
the staircase; the bars went up and down. A vertical drainpipe hemmed with decorative astragal; a  
chiseled rope walled in the neighboring buildings

Schulz assumed it first; under the pressure of the city the ground moves too

They say: *the beast of the dark* comes with the depths

In this city everything is fake and no one cares about the street lights. Under the cathedral's bell  
there is no pendulum, nor did the smelter press in his seal. Unreal gothic façades, horses on the  
fountain, even poplars in the garden

Is this strange; glass carvers and modelers still make candlesticks for only 50 kroner; women sew  
velvet for liveries, one can make out many ornaments

Having arrived to this wasteland, the seafarers began building palaces in Moorish style. I was  
born there a thousand years ago. When I feel sad, I walk through the secret tunnel under the city;  
though I'm a shadow in a distant land of Bay

It is my honor to speak about the past life in which I was a turtle. For five years now I haven't  
been a turtle; it's really a long time when you have to gallop

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

## Star Readers

All of those nurtured on the wheat gathered together: it was getting dark and they passed along the main street

They paused under poplar trees, tall and gloomy; silent and very esoteric

You can meet such people on every step; they used to work in carpenter's shops, on barges and at docks of big ports. At heights where the depths of universe get cancelled and the stars look like the beads of plain bijouterie

Zapp and Fulvio walk into a large waiting room at a train station on the city's periphery; without turning their heads and without memories which could cost them their hearts ripped out

Fogs and snowstorms descend silently, but quickly; the history imagined by the train station fits into a cardboard suitcase and the sad sound of the accordion

Andrea and Hegel find a room in the wasteland of a baroque palace; the room is covered with wallpapers with flower pattern on them. Through the window they see a concrete fence from the sixties, a dark alley and passers-by from Sankt Petersburg

Retro future believes in robots; when they talk in front of cameras, they smile and say they are happy

He concluded: everything that ever happened should be considered again. Welcome to the magical world that knows no catastrophe

Star readers pretend that there's no danger from tall metal robots; zeppelins still fly over Manhattan and the Brooklyn Bridge, and pretty blondes wear chic hats

Mysterious disappearances happen; many people around the world have vanished. The bizarre Safmis family tells about trafficking in San Francisco

In evening hours the image of a goddess appears, she holds a message: Don't shoot at the queen of illusion!

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović

## **An Angel At My Table**

### I.

He often dreamed of going West and seeing regions they used to call *The Cloud of Secret*; he could follow the adventures of summer travels, dash past the cracked stars  
The only important and holy thing in his life was the surrealist painting called *Utopia in Blue*.  
Having said that he was satisfied with such a perspective of the world, Michael headed off into the delirium of western sides

He left so spirited, with a blueprint of geographic stations and red cards for yocker games; until the moment when he decided to leave for the shore forever  
It seemed that his wet hair reminded only of wilderness; from here on everything would be arrested in the straits where movement neither ceases nor stops. For unknown reasons the voices from ship bows multiply, screaming of spoiled brats, passengers' clamor, and sounds of the shore

Continents settled at the same table; the next generation didn't understand the ornithologists, nor could it imagine Loretta as a miracle maker of any kind. Incredible distances silently lay at the table, crammed up in the moldy corner of the woodwork. It smelled of sawdust and tools put down after an exhausting work

Distant cousins from the Bronx knew of great caravans heading for the mystical East and Marko Polo's mysterious travels. They didn't like the age in which they lived; it seemed, they would walk along dejected walls forever. And when they left the city, the spirit of anti-adventure easily clang to their anxiety

### II.

That Eugen Kohn can hear the deepest sounds of the sea, which is truly creepy. There are dark places in the forms of their fantasies: black ships coated with tar, sunset happenings surrounded with sulfur vapor

When a mud cloud covers shallow shores, many faces turned to the sky mix with each other. From a hundred meters distance they seem so little. From even greater distance cities of the Mediterranean also look like sand sculptures; abandoned to sea tides on some beach in California

Tomasina Dispora is hurrying to meet the gulls. It began to rain. Every drop is a black hole in which those who say nothing dwell: kilometers and kilometers of water  
What a shock, because of the lack of color even the closest things had disappeared. His vertex facing the stars, Marino Dor plunged down into the soggy soil; as if this were the last, miraculously survived, meter of the ground

A sea deity wakes up; some new creatures don't belong to the mortals, nor do they want to walk  
They must be floating, in search of the place where some power-wielder stepped on a snake with the tip of his shadow; the snake now crawls like a criminal, forced to retreat

Prepared to study the riddles of European cities, Stabat Mater of the new century said: That what humans or animals are afraid of when they walk at this age is just an illusion. The dust of light with which the universe probes that wonderful, unfinished world

### III.

A demigod owns the sky and it'll control the earth with darkness. It was called Pagard, the echo of opaque age. When finally, a planet lit by moonlight, set itself free from infinity, Pagard was mentioned in the first books of botany as a kind of weed

Mislav loved birds, for him the oldest trade was breeding songsters and bird keeping. He admired blackbirds and titmice, he could recognize any call from behind the hedge. He arrived to Asia probably some ten years ago, he was convinced that birds from all four sides of the world come there and that time in a moment reaches perfection

Barely visible to people, the asteroid called Mathilde is like a mirror; it floats in the stream of sunlight. The evening was dark blue, like never before. Gently and without a sound the last light evaporated from the sea. Perhaps angels also forgot to breathe from such beauty and emotion

Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović