

Veronika
Dintinjana



Poetry Selection

*Translated from the Slovene
by Mia Dintinjana*

*Sample translation
English*

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ORIGINAL TITLES
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Nostos

1

The railway track is disappearing into fog.
The morning is calm.
Someone is scrubbing a grave with a hard-bristled brush,
leveling fresh gravel with a hand rake,
polishing the marble with a cloth,
making the waxed foliage shine
in a graveside floral arrangement.

I am not readying a grave,
the marks of time's passage are welcome here.

I imagine that at the end of the track
vanishing in the fog there is a kind of door.

That this grave is merely a stopping place,
an exit on the highway
that starts at the end of the Tržaška road;
the road map does not show the mileage,
nor are the stop-offs clearly named.

2

I love the hum of the engine.
Each rotational speed has its own sound,
you can hear how the wheels touch the road,
how the windshield rips the air.

How everything goes by.

I turn up the radio, step on the gas,
I do not let accelerations get too close to me,
the images of bloodstained and broken bodies
on scoop stretchers.

On the asphalt I feel so close
with memories of the car rides from my childhood,
counting the passing Citroens on the old road over Črni kal,
so close to the horizon with a pink haze caused by pollution,
close to everything, not just dying, fragile in the bodywork.

Beyond the ridge there is the sea that waits for us with fish eyes,
beyond the frontier, where our home was once.
(As once in the sea.)

The car wheels turn in place of prayer wheels.
From sheer gratitude that I have a body, space and time, money for diesel.
And a car.

I move my feet like playing an organ.
If you listen closely,
you can feel the vibrations of cracks in the asphalt, gravel on the road surface,
the tires sliding—

When the body moves faster than what it is made for.
As though someone were folding time into an origami bird.

3

Because of traffic jams, because of memories, or for no particular reason
I turn to the old road Postojna – Planina,
the endless bends, the red and yellow trees are not bare yet,
with hands on the steering wheel I imagine I can
affect the movement of physical objects – I slow down before a turn, the back end
swings out, the tires grip the surface, halfway out of the turn
I accelerate, I pretend that in another life I'm in a rally—
Not you, I say to myself, you always know when to pull back from the brink.
You sense the passages to the other side and turn away.
Freedom is not feeling the wind in your hair,
intemperate risk-taking, but the illusion
that you know when and how, and how much. And you are not aware
that only Providence or pure luck
keep you from the unpredictable.

4

This is my meditation of presence,
My ship, my extended body, the machine beyond my comprehension.

My share in the destruction of the world, the universal deluge.

In the middle of the night I head to the Coast. Just like that. Without purpose.

Instead of the familiar address, I make a turn uphill, I want to see the harbour.

The trees are full of fragrance. Not a soul in sight, the air is moist.

Cranes rise to the sky.

This is no longer my home, I have no one here.
I can sit in front of the apartment building, I cannot ring the bell.
There is no one to open the door. There are places you cannot
return to. As though in your absence

a sign was put up on your door: »Danger! High voltage.
No unauthorized access.«

Can anyone authorize you for the time that no longer exists?

I drive by my past
back to the old town, past the palm trees
not moving in the wind, the air still filled with softness.

There is no one on the pier,

I keep coming back. To the sea's edge.
Is this the point of departure? Is home

always some place out there?

5

Before I learned to drive,
I learned how to make origami cranes.
You take a sheet of paper, fold it in half,
fold again, on both diagonals, until the lines
reach out in all directions. Like the rose of the winds.
Then there are several steps I am unable to describe,
you must follow the movements. From the narrow flaps
the tail and the head emerge.
In the end, you spread the wings.

Saskia

To paint this woman, wife,
 her soft skin, her smell
 before she washes after a hard day,
 how it rises from the folds
 where parts of the body stick together.
 The way she puts up her hair,
 how every now and then a lock of hair escapes her, how
 she smiles. How her breasts tremble
 in laughter, in love, and after it. How,
 asleep, she does not suspect that you are sketching her imprints
 in the pillows, her wrinkles, all the moments
 of a small life compressed
 into a fleeting kiss of sunbeams on the skin.
 The marks of children she had borne on her belly,
 the marks of those miscarried or taken by God before their time,
 in the corners of her eyes and mouth,
 in the sharpness, the distant expression of her features
 shortly before dawn or when the day winds down again
 and sadness takes on the impenetrable, cold lustre of steel.
 To paint what is there in front of you, her as well,
 who has not left you, yet. Till death do you part.
 Do you understand what it takes? Through this,
 through *bare vulgar description*
 praise your wife, praise the skill of your hands,
 and the light. Praise also the dark and shadows,
 for they make the canvas become a painting.
 For they shape time into a life.
 Every hour and brushstroke are borrowed

from the Master of light and shadow,
things visible and invisible.

It is fitting that at every hour of the day,
without hesitation, you take the pencil in your hand
and with a web of lines growing on the paper
testify to the light beyond time,
to the images on this, the shadow side.

Litteræ Slovenicæ 1991–2020

1991, Issue 79 (XXIX/1)

Contemporary Slovene Short Stories (English)

Authors: Drago Bajt, Andrej Blatnik, Branko Gradišnik, Drago Jančar, Uroš Kalčič, Jani Virk, Tomo Virk, Aleksander Zorn

1992, Issue 80 (XXX/1)

Intellektuelle über Slowenien heute (interviews and essays, German)

Authors: Drago Bajt, Ines Cergol Bavčar, Andrej Brvar, Milan Dekleva, Boris A. Novak, Boris Pahor, Jože Pogačnik, Denis Poniž, Marjan Rožanc, Dimitrij Rupel, Tomaž Šalamun, Marjan Tomšič, Aleksander Zorn

1993, Issue 81 (XXXI/1)

Cuentos eslovenos contemporáneos (short prose, Spanish)

Authors: Drago Bajt, Andrej Blatnik, Igor Bratož, Lev Detela, Drago Jančar, Milan Kleč, Mart Lenardič, Lela B. Njatin, Boštjan Seliškar, Jani Virk, Tomo Virk

1993, Issue 82 (XXXI/2)

Contemporary Slovenian Literature in Translation (Bibliographies)

1994, Issue 83 (XXXII/1)

La poésie slovène contemporaine (poetry, French)

Authors: Aleš Debeljak, Alojz Ihan, Brane Mozetič, Boris A. Novak, Jure Potokar, Tomaž Šalamun, Uroš Zupan.

1994, Issue 84 (XXXII/2)

Prežihov Voranc: The Self-Sown & Passion above the Principle. Two Short Stories (English)

1995, Issue 85 (XXXIII/1)

Vilenica Desetnica 1986-1995 (selection of prose and poetry, English/German/Italian/French/Spanish)

1995, Issue 86 (XXXIII/2)

Edvard Kocbek (selected poetry, English)

1995, Issue 87 (XXXIII/3)

Poesía eslovena contemporánea (poetry, Spanish)

Authors: Aleš Debeljak, Milan Dekleva, Alojz Ihan, Milan Jesih, Kajetan Kovič, Svetlana Makarovič, Brane Mozetič, Boris A. Novak, Jure Potokar, Tomaž Šalamun, Dane Zajc, Uroš Zupan

1996, Issue 88 (XXXIV/1)

Rudi Šeligo: ABBA. Auswahl aus Novellen (short prose, German)

1996, Issue 89 (XXXIV/2)

Nouvelles slovènes (short prose, French)

Authors: Andrej Blatnik, Berta Bojetu, Andrej Capuder, Drago Jančar, Vladimir Kavčič, Feri Lainšček, Lela B. Njatin, Boris Pahor, Jani Virk

1997, Issue 90 (XXXV/1)

Contemporary Slovenian Drama (English)

Authors: Evald Flisar, Drago Jančar, Dušan Jovanović, Ivo Svetina, Rudi Šeligo, Dane Zajc

1997, Issue 91 (XXXV/2)

Kajetan Kovič: Poems (English/German/Spanish/Italian)

1998, Issue 92 (XXXVI/1)

Žarko Petan: Aphorisms (English/French/German/Italian)

1998, Issue 93 (XXXVI/2)

Srečko Kosovel: Integrals (poetry, English)

1999, Issue 94 (XXXVII/1)

Veno Taufer: Poems (English/French/German/Italian/Spanish/Swedish)

1999, Issue 95 (XXXVII/2)

Nove poetas eslovenos contemporáneos (poetry, Portuguese)

Authors: Aleš Debeljak, Kajetan Kovič, Svetlana Makarovič, Brane Mozetič, Boris A. Novak, Tomaž Šalamun, Veno Taufer, Dane Zajc, Uroš Zupan

2000, Issue 96 (XXXVIII/1)

Dane Zajc: Scorpions. Selected poems / **Scorpions.** Poèmes choisis (poetry, English/French)

2000, Issue 97 (XXXVIII/2)

The Slovenian Essay of the Nineties (English)

Authors: Aleš Berger, Andrej Blatnik, Aleš Debeljak, Milan Dekleva, Niko Grafenauer, Alojz Ihan, Andrej Inkret, Drago Jančar, Dušan Jovanović, Miran Košuta, Marjan Rožanc, Tomo Virk, Uroš Zupan

2001, Issue 98 (XXXIX/1)

Lojze Kovačič: Fragmente der Wirklichkeit / Fragment de la réalité (prose, German/French)

2001, Issue 99 (XXXIX/2)

Современная словенская проза, поэзия, драма (prose, poetry and drama, Russian)

Authors: Andrej Blatnik, Aleš Debeljak, Evald Flisar, Drago Jančar, Dušan Jovanović, Uroš Kalčič, Lojze Kovačič, Kajetan Kovič, Marko Kravos, Tone Kuntner, Svetlana Makarovič, Boris A. Novak, Maja Novak, Tone Pavček, Tomaž Šalamun, Rudi Šeligo, Veno Taufer, Dane Zajc, Uroš Zupan

2002, Issue 100 (L/1)

Ten Slovenian Poets of the Nineties (poetry, English)

Authors: Primož Čučnik, Jurij Hudolin, Miklavž Komelj, Barbara Korun, Taja Kramberger, Peter Semolič, Brane Senegačnik, Lucija Stupica, Aleš Šteger, Uroš Zupan

2002, Issue 101 (L/2)

Feri Lainšček: Instead of Whom Does the Flower Bloom (novel, English)

2003, Issue 102 (LI/1)

The Key Witnesses: The Younger Slovene Prose at the Turn of the Millennia (English)

Authors: Andrej Blatnik, Aleš Čar, Dušan Čater, Polona Glavan, Mohor Hudej, Tomaž Kosmač, Mart Lenardič, Andrej Morovič, Maja Novak, Jani Virk

2003, Issue 103 (LI/2)

Boris A. Novak: The Master of Insomnia / Le maître de l'insomnie

(poetry, English /French)

2004, Issue 104 (LII/1)

Tales Growing up into Secrets. An Anthology of Contemporary Slovene Youth Literature (English)

Authors: Milan Dekleva, Mate Dolenc, Niko Grafenauer, Miroslav Košuta, Polonca Kovač, Feri Lainšček, Svetlana Makarovič, Marjana Moškrič, Desa Muck, Bogdan Novak, Boris A. Novak, Maja Novak, Slavko Pregl, Andrej Rozman-Roza, Primož Suhodolčan, Peter Svetina, Janja Vidmar, Dane Zajc, Lenart Zajc, Dim Zupan, Vitomil Zupan, Bina Štampe-Žmavc

2004, Issue 105 (LII/2):

Dane Zajc: Fuoco e cenere (poetry, Italian)

2005, Issue 106 (XLIII/1)

Fragments from Slovene Literature. An Anthology of Slovene Literature (prose, poetry and drama, English)

2005, Issue 107 (XLIII/2)

Glas v telesu: tri slovenske pesnice / La voix dans le corps: Trois poétesse slovénes / The Voice in the Body: Three Slovenian Women Poets (poetry, Slovene/English /French)

Authors: Meta Kušar, Maja Vidmar, Erika Vouk

2006, Issue 108–109 (XLIV/1–2)

On the Airwaves. An Anthology of Contemporary Slovene Radio Plays (English)

Authors: Andrei Hieng, Saša Vuga, Pavel Lužan, Vladimir Kocjančič, Frane Puntar, Rudi Šeligo, Franček Rudolf, Igor Likar, Goran Gluvić, Andrej Blatnik, Lojze Kovačič, Milan Jesih, Metod Pevec, Feri Lainšček, Evald Flisar, Ervin Fritz, Matjaž Kmecl, Tanja Viher, Peter Semolič, Vinko Möderndorfer

2007, Issue 109 (XLIV/1)

Milan Dekleva: Slepa pegica časa / Blind Spot of Time (poetry, Slovene/English)

2007, Issue 111 (XLV/2)

Tales Growing up Into Secrets. An Anthology of Contemporary Slovene Youth Literature (reprint, English)

2007, Issue 112 (XLV/3)

A Lazy Sunday Afternoon. A Collection of Short Stories by Slovene Writers Born after 1960 (English)

Authors: Norma Bale, Matjaž Brzlc, Nejc Gazvoda, Nina Kokelj, Miha Mazzini, Lela B. Njatin, Lili Potpara, Sebastijan Pregelj, Veronika Simoniti, Irena Svetek, Dušan Šarotar, Damijan Šinigoj, Suzana Tratnik, Orlando Uršič, Janja Vidmar, Lenart Zajc

2007, Issue 113 (XLV/4)

Andrej Skubic: Fužine Blues (novel, English)

2007, Issue 114 (XLV/5)

Vlado Žabot: The Succubus (novel, English)

2007, Issue 115 (XLV/6)

Slavko Grum: An Event in the Town of Goga (drama, English)

2008, Issue 116–117 (XLVI/1–2)

Svetlana Makarovič: Samost / Aloneness / Alleinsein (poetry, Slovene/English/German)

2008, Issue 118–119 (XLVI/3–4)

Feri Lainšček: Muriša (novel, English)

2008, Issue 120–121–122 (XLVI/5–6–7)

The Dark Side of the Mountain. A Collection of Genre Short Stories (English)

Authors: Maja Novak, Miha Mazzini, Jani Virk, Gorazd Trušnovc, Vinko Möderndorfer, Andrej Morovič, Milan Kleč, Zlatko Zajc, Marijan Pušavec, Mate Dolenc, Tomaž Kosmač, Aleš Čar, Edo Rodošek, Lenart Zajc, Mojca Kumerdej

2009, Issue 123 (XLVII/1)

Decameton. Dieci poeti sloveni contemporanei (poetry, Italian)

Authors: Cvetka Bevc, Ivan Dobnik, Maja Vidmar, Cvetka Lipuš, Miha Obit, Primož Čučnik, Lucija Stupica, Jurij Hudolin, Miklavž Komelj, Andrej Hočevar

2009, Issue 124–125 (XLVII/2–3)

Boris Pahor: A Difficult Spring (novel, English)

2009, Issue 126 (XLVII)

Milan Jesih: Стихи / Pesmi (poetry, Russian)

2009, Issue 127 (XLVII)

Ivo Svetina: Scheherezade. Una opera occidental-oriental, 1988 (drama, Spanish)

2010, Issue 128 (XLVIII)

Tomaž Šalamun: Ko vdre senca / When the Shadow Breaks / Lorsque l'ombre force (poetry, Slovene/English/French)

2011, Issue 129 (XLIX)

Mate Dolenc: Sea at Eclipse (novel, English)

2011, Issue 130 (XLIX)

Lojze Kovačič: Basel. Drittes Fragment (novel, German)

2011, Issue 131–132 (XLIX)

Šestnajst slovenskih pesnic / Szesnaście poetek słoweńskich (poetry anthology, Slovene/Polish)

Authors: Alja Adam, Miriam Drev, Kristina Hočevar, Stanka Hrastelj, Alenka Jensterle Doležal, Barbara Korun, Taja Kramberger, Vida Mokrin-Pauer, Ana Pepelnik, Katja Plut, Barbara Pogačnik, Jana Putrle Srdič, Lucija Stupica, Nataša Velikonja, Maja Vidmar, Lučka Zorko

2012, Issue 133 (L)

Evald Flisar: Tres obras de teatro (drama, Spanish)

2012, Issue 134 (L)

Marjan Tomšič: Südwind. Geschichten slowenischer Ägypterinnen (short prose, German)

2013, Issue 135 (LI)

Maja Novak: Die Katzenpest (novel, German)

2013, Issue 136 (LI)

Zorko Simčič: El hombre a ambos lados de la pared (novel, Spanish)

2014, Issue 137 (LII)

Katarina Marinčič: Trois (short prose, French)

2014, Issue 138 (LII)

Marjan Rožanc: Of Freedom and God (essays, English)

2015, Issue 139 (LIII)

Davorin Lenko: Körper im Dunkeln (novel, German)

2015, Issue 140 (LIII)

Vinko Möderndorfer: Wie im Film (youth novel, German)

2016, Issue 141 (LIV)

Gabriela Babnik: La Saison sèche (novel, French)

2016, Issue 142 (LIV)

Josip Murn: Lonesome Poplar Tree: Selected Poems (poetry, English)

2017, Issue 143 (LV)

Kristina Hočvar: Auf den Zähnen Aluminium, auf den Lippen Kreide (poetry, German)

2017, Issue 144 (LV)

Veronika Simoniti: Teufelssprache (short prose, German)

2018, Issue 145 (LVI)

Ivan Cankar: Images from Dreams (short prose, English)

2018, Issue 146 (LVI)

Jana Putrle Srdić: Diese Nacht kommen Käfer aus der Erde gekrochen (poetry, German)

2019, Issue 147 (LVII)

Jure Jakob: Werkstückchen (poetry, German)

2019, Issue 148 (LVII)

Sebastijan Pregelj: A Chronicle of Forgetting (novel, English)

2020, Issue 149 (LVIII)

Veronika Dintinjana: Gelb brennt der Forsythienstrauch (poetry, German)

2020, Issue 150 (LVIII)

Nataša Kramberger: Blackberry Heaven (novel, English)

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