

Predrag Lucić

Çok Seni Severam

If I don't live to see St. Peter's Day
You
Go and marry again
And may the wedding be *galičko*
So I can hear you *ljepoto*
At the graveyard when they launch into *teškoto*.

All those dead lads
And me: possibly dead - possibly drunk
Laying there under the false name of
Atanas Parahodotov

And as you gather the dead wedding guests
I shall rise from somebody else's grave
But only if you tell me - you know what
If you tell me - like Nina Spirova
If you tell me
Çok seni severam.

Širok Sokak

Milton Manaki
Is caught in a cross-fire:
Bronze partisans
Fight knights of the Jedi

The war is raging
The Red Star versus
Lucas' Star Warriors
The revenge of the Sith
Or
The revenge of Tito
Whichever prevails!

And in the heat
Of the battle
A somebody-nobody
Neither a partisan nor a knight
A specimen of a sort
And a flabby one indeed
Enters the frame shouting:

Here's the Slovenian consulate
Photographing the premises
Is not allowed!

I lower my camera.
Hey Manaki do you hear this idiot?
- I say.

But Manaki hardly flinches
And silently takes his shot
Maybe he knows

Maybe he knows
That the day shall come
When some *chargé d'affaires*
Will order him in a flat voice
To put away his camera
For security reasons
And to step away immediately
Manaki

It's all ready for the final shot

The idiot is about to step into the frame
And I somehow fear that even Judgment Day
May feel very much like this:
Some junior clerk from St. Peter's Office
Will turn up and order everyone to part in peace
Since no gathering has been announced
Not even in the Kedron Valley
Or on the Mount of Olives
Or at the Golden Gate

And may angels pray as they should
That the wire be removed
Because if the municipal serviceman turns up
Then God help them
For Doomsday would be nigh

Man Is Not a Bird

I spin this story in my head about Siljan the Stork
Who is both here and there
As I walk towards the cape of Konjsko
Hoping for a trophy shot
Of the only European pelican

Naturally they don't wait for me to come too close
And chirp - "Birdy!"
They wave to me from the distance instead:
Many regards from the Lake of Prespa

But I am neither Siljan nor a stork
I am neither here nor there
I am nowhere to be precise

I can neither swim or fly
None of the two
As I'm neither a rosy pelican nor an ordinary one

As un-nestled as I am
I'm trying to figure out what Frans Lanting
Tim Laman
Quinton and Nigge
And all those folks
Who take pictures of birds in flight
For *National Geographic*
Might do in a moment like this?

And how much salt they carry with them
To sprinkle on the birds' tails?

The Murmur of Material

In Gevgelia there is a man
Who once was and has remained just a man
Even back then when one ought to have been
Either a Cro or a Srb
A Mac or an Alb

So what?
Someone will say.

Big deal!
Others will add.

And in the ensuing
Murmur of dissonant voices
I will yet again fail to hear
Have any of them really tried?

Filter Jugoslavija

On the red box of *Filter Jugoslavija*
Produced by the Prilep tobacco factory
The new letters
"Oriental"
Shine where "Yugoslavia"
Once used to be

And how can you now explain to brothers
Who hone hawthorn stakes
Driving them all the way from Potkoren
To Gevgelia into her dead soil

That you can no longer approach a kiosk
And ask for *Yugoslavia* and matches
And that nowhere
I mean nowhere
Can you sell
That ancient joke

So may they leave her ashes alone
Because Yugoslavia
Can no longer go
Anywhere
Can go nowhere
Not even up
In smoke

Trans. and notes by Damir Šodan

Notes:

Çok seni severam – on Turkish "I love you a lot", and is used as a refrain in a Macedonian folk song "Snoshti zaminav pominav", sung by Nina Spirova.

Galičko - comes from *Galičko Wedding*, a festivity held in Galičnik (1.600 m above the sea level on the mount of Bistra in west Macedonia) every St. Peter's Day (12 July) when a "bride" walks along the graveyard calling on the dear departed to rise and join the "wedding".

Ljepoto – on Croatian "My fair one".

Atanas Parahodotov - as the poem itself suggests, Atanas is an assumed name, whereas Parahodotov is a "surname" derived from Macedonian word "parahodot", a steamboat, and comes from yet another Macedonian folk song "Parahodot".

Teškoto - a type of "oro", a loud and a heavy reel,

Širok Sokak - the main street in the town of Bitola, Macedonia, where today a number of consulates and embassies are situated,

Milton Manaki (1882-1964) – Macedonian cinematographer and pioneer of former Yugoslav cinematography. His monument still stands in his native Bitola where he lived and died.

Siljan Roda, or *Siljan the Stork* – the hero of a Macedonian tale who left his home only to end up shipwrecked in some faraway country where he was transformed into a stork and destined to spend the rest of his life on the chimney of his house watching his family who are unable to recognize him.