

GREGOR STRNIŠA: THREE POEMS
translated by Michael Biggins

THE INFERNO: Part II. The Mountain

1.

Its two peaks are never obscured by mists.
The highest crags are clearly visible.
No one can say why, but still it seems
that mists perpetually enfold the mountain.

The sky is blue, without the slightest cloud.
The sand is yellow. It glows dully in the sun.
The desert all around is flat to the horizons.
The mountain, like the smell of dirt, is black.

It juts up from the plain like the fist of a giant
that lies mostly buried deep in sand,
at dusk it's like the head of a bull's carcass,
its forehead broad and flat, with hollow eyes.

3.

The wind is chained to the mountain like a wolf,
while silence wails in its depths.
Whoever enters it goes groping blindly
through the long, low trenches of the labyrinth.

Many wander into dead-end passageways.
Trapped in the narrows, they die of thirst and hunger.
Each of them starts raving in his death throes,
imagining he's living as he did before:

inviting friends to banquets, or picking
cool spheres of fruit from dewy trees.
The last echo of his own delirious laughter
falls like a white mask onto his lifeless face.

5.

In the mountain's depths, in its far-off heart,
in the final, narrowest chamber of the labyrinth,
the Minotaur stands waiting in the lofty dark.
Delirium's creature: human, with a bull's dark head.

Whatever happens here takes place in silence—
an encounter in a land of endless night,

a sudden recollection of a distant morning, snowy white,
an eye that glimpses you, but which you don't notice.

Only very few attain these regions.
And none of them has come back from the mountain.
Some perish in the maze from thirst and hunger,
the Minotaur impales the others on its horns.

Originals:

1. Vrhova nista nikoli zakrita od meglic. / Najvišje skale so razločno vidne. / Kdove zakaj pa se vseeno zdi, / kot da vso goro zmeraj ovijajo meglice. // Nebo je modro, brez najmanjšega oblaka. / Pesek rumen. V soncu motno žari. / Puščava okrog je vse do obzorja čisto ravna. / Gora je črna kakor vonj prsti. // Štrli iz tal kakor pest velikana, / ki sam globoko v pesku pokopan leži, / v večernih sencah pa se zdi kot bikova lobanja / s širokim čelom in votlimi očmi.

3. Veter je h gori kakor volk priklenjen, / v njeni notranjosti poje tišina. / Kdor vstopi, hodi slepo tipaje predse / skoz dolge, tesne rove labirinta. // Veliko jih zaide v slepih hodnikih. / Pod nizkim stropom od lakote in žeje umro. / V predsmrtnem boju se vsak zgubi v prividih. / Zazdi se mu, da spet živi naprej, kakor nekoč: // s prijatelji prireja gostije, z rosnega drevja / trga velike, hladne krogle sadja. / Zadnji odmev njegovega lastnega smeha / mu pade na mrtvi obraz, kot bela maska.

5. V globini gore, v njenem srcu daljnem, / v zadnji, najožji jami labirinta, / v mraku visokem stoji Minotaver. / Blodna pošast: mož s temno glavo bika. // Kar se zgodi, se odigra v tišini — / srečanje v kraju, kjer je zmeraj mrak, / hipen spomin na davno jutro, belo od snega, / oko, ki te zagleda, in ga ti ne vidiš ... // V te kraje pride samo malokdo. / Noben pa se še ni vrnil iz gore. / Eni v blodnjaku od lakote in žeje umro, / druge nasadi Minotaver na rogove.