

EDVARD KOCBEK: THREE POEMS
translated by Michael Biggins

BLACK SEA

All of our waters
tend toward you,
Black Sea.
Morning dew,
evening storms
and all our springs
purl toward you,
Tatar sea.
All the snows and snowslides
and all our floods
rush toward you,
Turkish sea.
With them
clumps of our good earth
and hallowed ashes
fall to your ocean floor,
Byzantine sea.
And with the earth
our bodies reach
their last stop in you,
merciless sea.
We are part of your algae now,
and part of your gluttonous fish.
We are one with your very depths,
Black Sea.

THE GENEROSITY OF POEMS

Throughout all times poets have been charged
with trying to fix in special words
fateful human events worthy of remembrance,
like solemn chroniclers,
so that young and old could learn them
by heart and sing them in sorrow
to the glory and betterment of all generations. And
yet, poets have always exulted
and mixed their sacred duty to history
with an unbounded lust for the play of the elements.
They've written their poems just as rain and snow
fulfill their duty in nature,

and like the careful sower sows the
 upturned earth in fall and reaps in summer.
 At this moment I feel a special generosity.
 It is fed by all that was
 and still remains in human worship,
 surpassing my recall and mingling with everything
 that lives in man's community and the imagination.
 Now I sense as never before that
 a poem is the combined force of all human
 talents, and that its exemplariness
 derives from the abundance of language.

GRACE

Tonight, when the sky
 suddenly flushed red
 and deepened
 into a nameless light,
 I shuddered.
 Blood began to flow
 noiselessly
 from a bottomless wound
 and deluged me.
 A gentle force
 took hold of me,
 and I began to come apart
 like linden wood
 on a summer evening.
 I raced up to the mountains
 and unhitched my fear
 which hovered behind
 mysteriously, like madness.
 The world was sanctified.
 And nowhere could I find
 a single dark thought
 to hide me,
 a single sin
 to assuage me,
 a single act of betrayal
 to save me.

Originals:

ČRNO MORJE. Vse naše vode / težijo vate, / Črno morje. / Rosa juter / in večerne nevihte / in vsi
 vrelci / žuborijo vate, / tatarsko morje. / Vsi snegovi in plazovi / in vse povodnji / hitijo vate, / turško
 morje. / In z njimi se trga / naša dobra prst / in s svetnim pepelom vred / pada na tvoje dno, / bizantinsko
 morje. / In z našo prstjo / se usedajo vate / naša telesa, / neusmiljeno morje. / V tvojih algah smo že
 / in v tvojih požrešnih ribah, / del tvoje globine smo že, / Črno morje.

DAREŽLJIVOST PESMI. V vseh časih so naročali pesnikom, / naj kot slovesni zgodovinoslovci / skušajo s posebnimi besedami uloviti / spomina vredne usodne človeške dogodke; / da bi se jih stari in mladi naučili / na pamet in jih prepevali za žalost, / v slabo in poduk vsem rodovom. In / glejte, pesniki so se vselej razigrali / in svojo sveto dolžnost do zgodovine / povezali z nezadržano slo po prvinski igri. / Napisali so pesmi kakor dež in sneg / opravita svojo dolžnost v naravi / in kakor marljivi sejavec poseje / zorane njive jeseni in jih poleti požanje. / V tem hipu čutim posebno darežljivost. / Hranjena je iz vsega, kar je bilo / in kar je ostalo v človekovem čaščenju / in presega moj spomin in se spaja z vsem, / kar živi z občestvom i z domišljijo. / Zdaj čutim, kakor tega še nisem, da je / pesem strnjena sila vseh človekovih / sposobnosti in da je njena vzornost / v presežnosti jezika.

MILOST. Ko se je nocoj nebo / nenadoma pordečilo / in se zatem poglobilo / v svetlobo brez imena, / sem vztrepetal. / Iz brezdanje rane / je začela teči / tiha kri / in me zalila. / Nežno nasilje / me je obšlo, / začel sem razpadati / kakor lipovina / v junijskem večeru. / Oddivjal sem na goro / in si odpel tesnobo, / približala se mi je / skrivno kakor blaznost. / Vse je bilo presveto. / In nikjer ni bilo / niti ene temne misli, / ki bi me skrila, / niti enega greha, / ki bi me pomiril, / niti enega izdajstva, / ki bi me rešilo.