

Edvard Kocbek

RANE PESMI

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Edvard Kocbek (1904–81)

A member of the progressive Catholic intellectual wing in the 1930s, Kocbek had studied to be a priest. As a Christian and a socialist he took an active part in the Communist-dominated resistance movement in Slovenia during World War II. His failure to toe the new government's line after the war led to his silencing, however, despite his wartime contributions. Gradually he was allowed to publish his poetry as well as his memoirs. His chief concerns were with intellectuals in existential crises, freedom, spirituality, fear and courage. Much of his work displays a French influence. The Slovene texts and all the translations are from Edvard Kocbek, *Na vratih zvečer/At the Door at Evening*, trans. Tom Ložar (Montréal: The Muses Co./La Compagnie des Muses; Ljubljana: Aleph, 1990) 85–87, 113.

Glejte nelepo ženo

Glejte nelepo ženo, sklonjeno nad zemljo,
kako ji srce močno utripa in kako hitro
sope, ko gre mimo nas.

Nikdo ji ni odzdravil. Ko je izginila za
potokom, smo obstali kakor ujeti, stisnilo
nam je srce in otežilo korak.

Čudno bomo umirali, dragocenost smo izgubili.
Sveča nelep žene gori nenehno in napolnjuje
večerno cerkev z globoko tišino.

Na vratih zvečer

Mati hčerki zvečer
ko se odpravlja
vsa lepa in čista
mati hčerki na vratih
da bi jo ustavila
mati hčerki na vratih zvečer
da bi jo ustavila in povedala sporočeno iz davnine
mati hčerki na vratih zvečer
sporočeno iz davnine in danes osramočeno
in že jo stisne v grlu da ne zmore stavka
da ne zmore edinega rešnega stavka
kakor ga nobena mati ni zmogla
nobena mati hčerki na vratih zvečer
hčerki in njenemu zarodu
kajti hčerka se bo vrnila
vrnila se bo spremenjena
vrnila se bo s svojim sadom
tudi njo bo nekoč stisnilo v grlu
in njeno hčerko in hčerke hčerko
na vratih zvečer

Behold, an unbeautiful woman

Behold, an unbeautiful woman, bowed over the ground,
how loud the beating of her heart, and how quickly
her breath comes, as she walks past us.

No one returned her greeting. When she vanished on the other side
of the brook, we were left standing as if snared, our hearts
strangled, our step heavier.

Strange will our dying be, we have lost something precious.
The candle of the unbeautiful woman burns endlessly and fills
the church at evening with deep silence.

At the door at evening

A mother to her daughter at evening
as she is setting out
all beautiful and clean
a mother to her daughter at the door
that she might stop her
a mother to her daughter at the door at evening
that she might stop her and tell her
tell her the communication from antiquity
a mother to her daughter at the door at evening
the communication from antiquity today derided
and already her throat constricts and she can't manage the sentence
can't manage the one redeeming sentence
as no mother has ever managed
no mother ever to her daughter at the door at evening
to her daughter and her lineage
for the daughter will return
she will return changed
she will return with her own fruit
one day she too will feel her throat constrict
as we'll her daughter and her daughter's daughter
at the door at evening

Lipicanci

Časnik poroča:

lipicanci so sodelovali
pri zgodovinskem filmu.

Radio razlaga: milijonar je kupil lipicance,
plemenite živali so bile mirne
ves čas poleta nad Atlantikom.

In učna knjiga uči:

lipicanci so hvaležni jezdni konji,
doma so s Krasa, prožnega kopita,
gizdavega drnca, bistre čudi
in trmaste zvestobe.

In vendar ti dodajam, sinko,
da teh nemirnih živali
ni mogoče spraviti v razvidne obrazce:
dobro je, kadar sije dan,
lipicanci so črna žrebeta,
in dobro je, kadar vlada noč,
lipicanci so bele kobile,
najbolje pa je,
kadar prihaja dan iz noči,
kajti lipicanci so beločrni burkeži,
dvorni šaljivci njenega veličanstva,
slovenske zgodovine.

Drugi so častili svete krave in zmaje,
tisočletne želve in leve s perutmi,
samoroge, dvoglave orle in fenikse,
mi pa smo si izbrali najlepšo žival,
izkazala se je na bojiščih in v cirkusih,
prepeljevala je kraljične in zlato monštranco,
zato so dunajski cesarji govorili
francosko s spretnimi diplomati,
italijansko z zalimi igralkami,
španksko z neskončnim Bogom
in nemško z nešolanimi hlapci,
s konji pa so se pogovarjali slovensko.

Lippitzans

The paper says some Lippitzans
are starring in an epic. The radio reports
a millionaire's just bought some.

We hear the noble beasts were quiet
throughout the transatlantic flight.

Textbooks teach

they're gentle riding horses,
their home the Karst.

They're limber of hoof,
haughty in their canter, clever by nature,
obstinately loyal.

Still and all, son,
who can stuff these nervous beasts
into a facile resume?

By day, yes, there they are,
colts the blackest,
and while night reigns, yes,
they can be the whitest mares.

What's best, however,
is when day is coming out of night,
then they are blackwhite buffoons,
jesters of Her Royal Majesty
Slovenia's history.

Others have revered sacred cows and dragons,
millennial turtles and lions with wings,
two-headed eagles, unicorns, and the phoenix;
we chose the loveliest beast of all.

It proved its mettle in circuses and battle,
transported princesses and monstres of gold,
wherefore, though the emperor
in Vienna spoke French to canny diplomats,
Italian to the latest ingenue,
Spanish to the eternal God,
and German to the untutored help,
to his horses he always spoke
Slovenian.

Spomni se, otrok, kako skrivnostno
sta spojena narava in zgodovina sveta
in kako različna je vzmet duha
pri slehernem ljudstvu na zemlji.
Dobro veš, da smo zemlja tekem in dirk.
Zato tudi razumeš, zakaj so se beli konji
iz Noetove barke zatekli na naša čista tla,
zakaj so postali naša sveta žival,
zakaj so stopili v legendo zgodovine
in zakaj razburjajo našo prihodnost,
nenehoma nam iščecjo obljubljeno deželo
in postajajo zanosno sedlo našega duha.

Kar naprej sem na beločrnem konju,
mili moj sinko,
kakor poglavar beduinov
sem zrasel s svojo živaljo,
vse življenje potujem na njej,
bojujem se na konju in molim na njem,
spim na konju in sanjam na konju
in umrl bom na konju,
vse naše prerokbe sem spoznal
na skrivnostni živali,
in tudi to pesem sem doživel
na njenem drhtečem hrbtu.

Nič temnejšega ni
od jasne govorice
in nič resničnejšega ni od pesmi,
ki je razum ne more zapopasti,
junaki šepajo v svetlem soncu
in modrijani jecljajo v temi,
burkeži pa se spreminjajo v pesnike,
krilati pegazi vedno hitreje dirjajo
nad votlinami naše stare zemlje
in poskakujejo in trkajo,
nestrpne slovenske živali
še vedno budijo kralja Matjaža.

Remember, child, how enigmatically alloyed
nature is to the history of the world,
how variously tensed the spirit's spring is
in each people on the earth.

This being a land of games and races,
isn't it clear why the Ark's white horses
should take refuge in these parts
and become our sacred beasts,
clear why they entered our history's legend?
No wonder they trouble our tomorrows,
seeking ceaselessly for us our promised land,
becoming the ecstatic saddle of our soul.

You can always find me on the blackwhite horse, sweet son.
We grew up together, the beast and I,
as if I were a Bedouin chieftain.
I voyage on her my life through,
I fight on horseback, I pray in the saddle,
I sleep on my horse, I dream there,
all our prophecies I came to see
astride its mystery,
this song too came to me
atop its quivering back.

Nothing is darker
than clear speech,
nothing truer than the song
reason cannot get,
heroes hobble in the bright sun
sages stammer in the dark,
but my buffoons are turning into poets,
Pegasuses galloping ever faster, wings aflutter,
high above the caverns of our land,
jumping, thumping,
impatient Slovenian beasts,
trying still to wake Matjaž, the redeemer.

Kdor še ne zna zajezditi konja,
naj se čimprej nauči
ukrotiti iskro žival,
obdržati se svobodno v lahkem sedlu
in uloviti ubrano mero drnca,
prevsem pa vztrajati v slutnji,
kajti naši konji so pridirjali od daleč
in so daleč namenjeni,
motorji radi odpovedo,
sloni preveč pojedjo,
naša pot pa je dolga
in peš je predaleč.

Maharadža

Ti si zgodovina
od alg do mojega srca,
jaz sem prihodnost
od tvojega srca do alg,
ti prihajaš iz morja,
jaz iz črnega sonca,
srečujeva se na zemlji,
v klorofilu in krvi,
v peščeni uri si šepetava
staro pravljico,
maharadža sem,
skrivnostno sem izginil
z ljubezenskega divana
pred tristo leti,
ti pa si zvesta sveča,
ki mu še vedno sveti.

Whoever does not know yet how to mount a horse,
let him learn soonest
to gentle the brisk beast,
to balance freely in its light saddle
catch the harmonious measure of its canter,
but above all to persist in the presentiment,
for they have galloped in from afar, our horses,
and mean to go far,
engines break down,
elephants eat a ton,
our journey's long
and too far to go on foot.

Maharajah

You are history
from the algae up to my heart,
I am the future
from your heart all the way to the algae,
you come from the sea,
I, from the black sun,
we keep meeting on the earth,
in chlorophyll and in the blood,
in the hourglass we whisper to each other
this old tale,
I am a maharajah,
mysteriously I vanished
from the divan of love
three hundred and fifty years ago today,
you are the constant candle
still lighting his way.