
CAUGHT IN THE NET 106 - POETRY BY PAVOL JANICK (translated
into English by James Sutherland-Smith)
Series Editor - Jim Bennett for The Poetry Kit - www.poetrykit.org

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Descend deeper with me,
dream from the back,
dream retrospectively
in a labyrinth of mirrors
which leads nowhere.

The moment you come to the beginning of nothing
you'll dream an exciting dream.

from; *A Dictionary of Foreign Dreams*
by Pavol Janick

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1 - BIOGRAPHY: Pavol Janick

Mgr. art. Pavol Janik, PhD., was born in 1956 in Bratislava, where he also studied film and television dramaturgy and scriptwriting at the Drama Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (VSMU). He has worked at the Ministry of Culture (1983-87), in the media and in advertising. President of the Slovak Writers' Society (2003-07), Secretary-General of the SWS (1998-2003, 2007 -) and Editor-in-chief of the literary weekly of the SWS Literarny tyzdennik (2010 -). He has received a

number of awards for his literary and advertising work both in his own country and abroad.

2 - POETRY

NIGHT BUS

I admire the smiles
of the wax figures
and the drunks.

Their faith.
Their humility.
Their precision.
Their infallible wisdom
determined by the office of normalization.

I admire
their wallpapered souls
full of light and brocade.
Their responsibility and legality
surpassing
the price of taxis and wine.

I'm terrified by the indifference
with which they listen
to the heavy breathing of the last trolley buses.

SUMMER

The sun smashes our windows.
An urgent song reaches us from the street.

On the cellophane sky
steam condenses.
Unconfirmed reports are reproduced
about the wind.

The trees are the first to begin to talk
about the two of us.

AN EMERGENCY LANDING IN YOUR HAIR

Planes got it into their heads
that they were better than ships,

but pride comes before a fall.

The sadness of victory
is unbearable.

In the darkness of your hair
glitter the tiny wrecks
of airships
and to the bottom of your eyes
sink sparkling mysteries.

Speechlessly
- like the smile on your lips
I'm awaiting my opportunity.

A BIG CLEAR OUT

Towels are the things
which will survive us.

Shirts will remind us.

Suits and coats
will remain after us.

So many things,
to which will be added
just the dust
into which we change.

FAMILY STILL LIFE

I say in vain
to my wife
that she can't nag
genius.
So I've recorded this
in written form
for future generations
as advice for death and life, too.

A DICTIONARY OF FOREIGN DREAMS

At the beginning it was like a dream.
She said,
"Have at least one dream with me.

You'll see – it'll be a dream
which you've never dreamt about before.”

Descend deeper with me,
dream from the back,
dream retrospectively
in a labyrinth of mirrors
which leads nowhere.

The moment you come to the beginning of nothing
you'll dream an exciting dream.

Frame it
and hang it in your bedroom.

So it will always be before your eyes
because a dream which is removed from the eye
is removed from the mind
in the sense
of the ancient laws
of human forgetfulness.

Dream your own.

Dream your dream
which is reflected on the surface
of a frozen lake.
A dream smooth and freezing:

Grieving keys,
a downcast forest,
curved glass.
The tributes of mirrors.

The rising of the moon
in a dream of water.

Recoil from the bottom
of the mirror's dream.

In the gallery of dreams
then you'll see
a live broadcast from childhood
fragments of long-forgotten stories.

Because our obsolete dreams
remain with us.

Don't be in a hurry, dream slowly, completely
until you see the crystalline construction
of your soul
in which dreams glitter.
- intentionally and comprehensibly like flame.

Perhaps you've already noticed
that new dreams always decrease.
They wane.

Soon we'll light up
in the magical dusk
of the last dream
the despairing cry
of a starry night.

Pay a toll to the dream's
deliverance from sense.

You repeat aloud
the intimacies of secret dreams,
with the dull gleam
of your persistent night eyes
you explicate a mysterious speech of darkness.

You dream, therefore you exist!

YOU CAN TELL AN ANGEL FROM HIS FEATHERS

(For my parents who are not yet - departed-)

In my innermost display cases
all my glassy memories tremble.

At the end of silence to hear last year's rain
how it dictates whispering
its incomprehensible telegram
A pack of sad angels
howl in the light of the moon

The river falls from weariness,
the mortal spirit of water
in it falls with ease
to the bottom

I feel mercury in my veins
after the explosion of blood
- it's in my guts
supersonic angels
rise from the dead.

Their deafening engines
start up in my head.

When they take off
the deepest silence begins
in which perhaps I'll hear
distant pearls
how they pour on the parquets.

A morning confession of frozen tears
freezes me
in my yet more Autumn eyes.

SOMEONE LIKE A GOD

I,
You,
He
And someone else ...

- the fourth like a dimension,
the fifth a season in the year,
the sixth like a sense,
the seventh like a continent.

The eighth like a day of the week,
The ninth like a point of an octagon,
The tenth like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony,
The eleventh like a commandment,

The twelfth like a football player,
The thirteenth like an apostle,
The fourteenth like Friday the Thirteenth,
The fifteenth like Louis Quatorze,
The sixteenth like the fifteen,
The seventeenth like a sixteenth,
The eighteenth like the seventeenth century,

The twenty-second like an eye,
The thirty first like a thirty percent fall in bonds,

The thirty third like a tooth,
The thirty fourth like Christ's year,

- the unending like a god
and so just sexless,

the powerless
like one who makes love,

painless and therefore senseless,

unrivalled like a god
in the world who has no other gods,
ungodly like a god
who has neither a god beside him
or over him,

bottomless like a sky,
unrestrained like the wind,
boundless like thought,
immaterial like a ghost,

nameless bearer of an unknown name,

hopelessly faultless,

aimless like a perpetual runner,

childless like the father
of a crucified son,

unreasonable like death
and so just remorseless,

nationless like a god
of all people
and beings similar to them,

sightless and faceless,
legless, handless and wingless,
hairless and toothless,

safe as a harbour
for immortal wanderers,

without charge like a promise,

unparalleled in perfection,
derived in its own home,
unmediated like touch,
helpless like a deed,
dreamless like a night,
careless like a bird,

inconsolable like truth,
ungoverned as the oldest citizen in the world,

implicit as love,
without consequence like justice,

a creature without colour,
taste
and smell.

He wanders in space as if without soul,
a creator without parents,
a being without dwelling place,
a vagabond without address,

from beyond memory without work,
from time immemorial without bread,
forever he proceeds without footprints,

always thinks without considering
and always the same,

he breeds without hesitation,
gives birth without reason,
regardless of anything or anyone,

kills without dispensation
- everything and everyone,
since the beginning of the age of ages,

he abandons us without regard
for race, religion or conviction,

he always triumphs without battle,
judges without mercy,
punishes continuously
and then weeps without sorrow
over the spilt mother's milk
of the immaculate virgin,
who bore him a son
so he could give him
deviously and thoroughly to be crucified
at the hands of his chosen people,

so he rules the world without check,
an uncriticised despot,

he acts unceasingly without rest
and knows everything without consciousness,

he prays to himself without words,
he accepts himself without reserve,

he grants himself adoration without consideration,
he is blessedly silent about himself,

so continuously decides without witnesses,
without rhyme or reason,
with no way out,

wholly without himself,
headless,
heelless,
heartless,
with not a drop of blood,

without anything.

Redeem him
while there's time.

Perhaps his fate
awaits us, too –
cruel
towards all creatures
who have been surpassed by their own works.

KOSOVO

(for Ján Tužinský)

A burning
paper Goethe
prays

in Serb
for four hundred dead children

In Schiller's stone eye
gleams a tear of mercury

There's a Gypsy weeping
for a little Romany fairy
at the bottom of the Adriatic

Blood
has an irresistible color
of the bluish dusk of the sky
from which falls
light and glitterings
like a gust of May rain
to fertilize the wounded earth.

NEW YORK

In a horizontal mirror
of the straightened bay
the points of an angular city
stabbing directly into the starry sky.

In the glittering sea of lamps
flirtatious flitting boats
tremble marvelously
on your agitated legs
swimming in the lower deck
of a brocade evening dress.

Suddenly we are missing persons
like needles in a labyrinth of tinfoil.

Some things we take personally –
stretch limousines,
moulting squirrels in central Park
and the metal body of dead freedom.

In New York most of all it's getting dark...

The glittering darkness lights up.

The thousand-armed luster of the mega city
writes Einstein's message about the speed of light
every evening on the gleaming surface of the water.
And again before the dusk the silver screen
of the New York sky floods
with hectolitres of Hollywood blood.

Where does the empire of glass and marble reach?
Where do the slim rackets of the skyscrapers aim?

God buys a hot dog
at the bottom of a sixty-storey street.

God is a black
and loves the grey color of concrete.

His sun was born from himself
in a paper box
from the newest sort of slave.

3 - Afterword

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