Cover: Morse Clary
Inside the imprisoned gnaw their bars between violent waitings from without all appears almost monumentally quiet
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INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY SERBIAN POETRY

VASA D. MIHAIOLOVICH

Serbian literature—one of several written in Yugoslavia—has a history of almost a thousand years. Having originated together with other South Slavic literatures in the late ninth century, when the first rudimentary works were created for the purpose of serving the fledgling Christian church, it developed by stages through some of the most turbulent times in history. It flourished in the Middle Ages in the form of beautiful biographies of rulers and saints, only to be forced underground during the four-century-long winter night of the Turkish occupation. It surfaced again at the end of the eighteenth century along with the revival of the national consciousness and the independent state in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Since then, Serbian literature has shown a steady progress toward artistic fulfillment and cosmopolitan sophistication culminating in the 1961 Nobel Prize to its greatest living writer, Ivo Andrić.
In all these stages of development, poetry played an important, if not the most important role. During the high peak in the Middle Ages, it took the form of subjective spiritual poems (published for the first time as a whole in 1970, in a four-volume edition entitled Srbljak). During the long Turkish occupation, the only literature possible was the oral, of which poetry, both epic and lyric, was by far the most lasting value. In the nineteenth-century reawakening of the national consciousness, it was poetry that gave it the most eloquent expression. Poetry also furnished the most convincing proof of the viability of the reformed literary language created by Vuk Karadžić on the basis of the language spoken by the common folk. Some of the best literary works, such as the epic drama The Mountain Wreath by the greatest Serbian poet Njegoš, were written in the verse form. Later, poetry was always in the forefront of the struggle for innovation, experimentation, and cosmopolitanization of the once prevalently regional literature. Most recently, it was again poetry that won the decisive battle in an effort to reject the imposition of the highly unpoetic doctrine of socialist realism upon Yugoslav literatures. Thus, throughout the centuries Serbian poetry has been the most dynamic force in the shaping, preserving, and reawakening the national psyche and creative consciousness. Indeed, the Serbs speak most eloquently through poetry.

Modern Serbian poetry had its beginnings in the first decades of this century when it crossed its regional borders and borrowed from the leading European poets, notably the French. French symbolists greatly influenced the prominent poets of the time, especially Jovan Dučić and Milan Rakić, thus signalling the beginning of a strong foreign influence in the poets’ attempt to rejuvenate Serbian poetry and catch up with more advanced literatures. This trend was later manifested in the expressionistic and modernistic poetry following World War I and in the small but strong surrealist movement in the twenties. In the interwar years, Serbian poetry constantly strove to speak for the age while at the same time reflecting the most modern trends in world poetry. During World War II, due to the precariousness of the war struggle, it was again almost the only possible way of literary expression, although few works of lasting value were created.

As soon as the war was over, Serbian poets resumed their activity. The period from 1945 on is customarily called the period of contemporary Serbian poetry, World War II being a natural watershed in the history of Yugoslav people. At first, the connections with the past were somewhat tenuous because of the new revolutionary political system.
The emulation of the Soviet style in literature, with added native characteristics, was the order of the day. However, this experiment proved to be unsuccessful and short-lived. The beginning of the fifties saw the arrival of new poets who were resolute in their efforts to strike individual paths and forge new poetic idioms modelled after the best European poetry rather than remain within narrow esthetic confines. They rebelled against the deadening grip of socialist realism in the first postwar years, winning in the process a victory for a freer and more subjective expression. It is interesting that it was the Serbian young poets, supported by the representatives of the former surrealist movement, who were the most decisive force in this struggle.

There are many good poets in contemporary Serbian poetry. A brief survey will point out the most important ones as well as their works. Of the poets who wrote both before and after World War II, some added relatively little to their prewar opus, while others reached their full potential only after the war. Miloš Crnjanski (born 1893), one of the leading prewar modernists, published only one significant work after the war, a long poem called *Lament nad Beogradom* (1962, *Lament over Belgrade*). In this poem Crnjanski continued where he left off almost four decades before. Even though he showed little change in his basic approach to poetry, he added a wider scope and a richer experience to the elegiac, reflective quality of his poetry, full of vivid metaphors. With this poem, Crnjanski secured a prominent position in contemporary Serbian poetry. Stanislav Vinaver (1891-1955), another of the prewar modernists, also published only one poetry collection after the war, *Europska noc* (1952, *The European Night*), in which he added little new but confirmed his earlier poetic voice. Desanka Maksimović (born 1898) wrote her best poetry after the war. Her most recent book of poems, *Trazim pomilovanje* (1965, *I Seek Mercy*), evokes the reign of the medieval tsar Dusan and comments on his famous Code of Laws. They are among the best contemporary Serbian poems.

A very talented, dynamic, and prolific poet, Oskar Davićo (born 1909)—earlier an exponent of surrealism—reached his full potential only after the war. In numerous collections of poems he gave expression to his revolutionary spirit. He was a decisive figure in the victory of the modernists over the socialist realists in the 1950’s. His mastery of language—manifested in unexpected metaphors, paradoxical twists, and bold expressions—makes Davićo one of the most significant contemporary poets.

Among the younger poets several have already established a
strong personal poetic voice: Jovan Hristić (born 1933), Božidar Timotijević (born 1932), Ivan I. Lalić (born 1931), Borislav Radović (born 1935), Ljubomir Simović (born 1935) Branislav Petrović (born 1937) and Mirko Magarašević (born 1946). The emphasis in the following brief collection of contemporary Serbian poets is clearly on the younger poets. In introducing these poets to an English speaking audience for the first time, this small anthology already reveals an emerging and mature poetic vision that transcends national or political concerns.
Vasko Popa

DEPARTURE

tr. VASA D. MIHAILOVICH AND RONALD MORAN

I am no longer here
I have not moved from the spot
But I am no longer here

Let them enter
Let them look let them search

The mill in the shadow of the ribs
Grinds the ripe emptiness
The butts of cheap dreams
Smoke in the ashtray
I am no longer here

The moored boat swings
On the red waves
A few green words
Hang in the cloudy throat
I am no longer here

I have not moved from the spot
But I am already far away
They will hardly overtake me
The empty room begins to growl
I retreat into my skin
The ceiling begins to squeal
I fling it a bone
The corners begin to yelp
I fling them a bone each
The floor begins to howl
I fling him a bone too
One wall begins to bark
I fling him a bone too
And the second and the third and the fourth wall
Begin to bark
I fling each one a bone
The empty room begins to roar
And I am empty
Without a bone
Into a hundredfold echo
Of the roar I turn
And echo echo
Echo
Vasko Popa

THE GAME OF THE ASHES

tr. Vasa D. Mihailovich

Some are nights others are stars

Each night lights up its own star
And dances a black dance around it
Until the star burns up

Then the nights divide themselves
Some become stars
Others remain nights

Again each night lights up its own star
And dances a black dance around it
Until the star burns up

The last night becomes both star and night
It lights itself up
It dances the black dance around itself
Miodrag Pavlović

tr. Vasa D. Mihailovich and Charles David Wright

THE SONG OF THE BOGOMILS

They are looking for my head.

Everything that resembles a head
they throw in piles on the meadows
and trample with horses at night.
They open the windows of the earth
and take out the silver ore
that resembles a prophet's head,
to hang it on an oak branch.

They are looking for my head
and didn't even hear my pure word.

Like a snake without venom in its head
I lie in the gorges
unable to change my skin.
Oh drunken princes
who waylay me from the walls,
do you think that my word will not outreach
the puddle of my blood?
But I am close to the earth,
it remembers words better than blood;
embracing the elders I will tell to its bosom
all I know about love.
To behead the whole earth your sword
is too small.
Miodrag Pavlović

THE SINGER FROM AN ANCIENT WAR

Everything that once was,
will it ever be again?

The sky was the lovers' camp,
now a sooty cave is over me,
the hordes of brother-killers have passed.

The golden pines led to a temple,
now a rockpile of dried blood is there,
wild dogs are licking it.

The sunset once called me by name
like its flower,
the wind, with a harp in its hands,
went mountain-cragging
alongside me when I sang.

Now even the pits do not ask for my word
and the pines avert their heads from man.

Only in the homes of the hanged
they ask me to speak about the rope.

Who will wait now in the field for hope
to murmur under his ribs?
Who will find a new beginning for the song
and a better ending?
Ivan V. Lalić

τ' CHARLES SIMIC

VOICES OF THE DEAD

I

Voices of the dead. They are not dead. Who hears
The dead? Rain on the bronze gates of the morning.
The freshness of wild morning guarding doves
In the cobwebs of roses. I was that emptiness between them.

I was on a bank of a river lost for days, hours.
It doesn't matter. In time beyond this time.
And the river is wide. River from the blood of ancestors.
How to swim up its stream? Who has reached its mouth?

O dead ones, by this river I found a roofless house.
House left in a hurry. And a thin thread of smoke
Woven into mist that grows thicker and thicker.

House uncompleted. Then Winter began.
A window frightened by the strength of a storm woke me up.
Voices of the dead. They are not dead. Who hears them?

II

In the night distant fire blazes. Then another.
Butterflies of flame settle the rim of the night.
Third fire. Soon, a clear line of fire
Completed. Ring of sleep. Nobody gets through.

Chestnuts shake off their leaves in fear.
Men say: Autumn. Melisa, it is a camp
Of a great dead army, settled on a distant hill.
Alone, breathless and troubled, I listen for the bugle.

Instead of ringing brass, I hear early snows
Falling in empty woods. The fires remain.
When the earth evens a wrinkle on her forehead
Entire towns collapse. The fires remain. 
Ring around sleep. Has anyone heard the bugle?
Bugle beyond silence and the silence stronger.

III

Voices of the dead remain. Distant voices. Who hears
The dead? Perhaps, the color of old gold
And the foam of dark sea. Perhaps, like a storm
Lacking space. Perhaps, hushed after an illness.

Unknown, it doesn’t matter. Perhaps, soiled by war,
Dust. Or with a quiet noise like a sea-shell
Placed against the ear in a burning summer-afternoon.
It doesn’t matter. Voices beyond this game. Kindred words.

The buzzing of the spindle in the fairy lullaby
From a pure age. Dream disguised into an event.
Voices of the dead. Still they are not dead.

I lie in the night. Awake. Quiet. They are quieter.
I fall asleep and dream of drums. Ancient drums.
Great dark drums broken and left in the rain.

Ivan V. Lalić

WALL

This is the wall Melisa, the garden is beyond the wall.
The bees that buzz in it are your body.
There's no gate. Birds sprout in the sky.
They wear the red color of death and alight on the forehead

To peck the true dream that sleeps beyond sight.
My dream is bread Melisa. You are the rose in that bread.
The bread is beyond the wall, where the bees buzz.
I see red birds on the foreheads of passers-by
Who know nothing while they fill their bowls
With simple grub of the living, for the habit is stronger.
This is the wall Melisa, untouched by the violence of a cry
Which I stabbed like a knife between two stones.
The knife has broken, the bird flies around my shoulders
And the wall of your garden Melisa is the wall of weeping.

Ivan V. Lalić

DARK PROVINCE

Murmur round like gravel,
In long tunnel
sound of cracked hooves.
We hold on to voices, shoulders,
In darkness of a final world
drops of light whirl by,
Wick led by thin oil of memory, then still another.
We ride below roots, below ages,
Sharing our meal of bitter poppy with hungry shadows;
Our faces make us afraid, far off, at the exit.

Here somewhere all roads cross
Before the final parting, the track of the beast joins
The track of the angel in the terrible calm center:
Who falls behind will regret it,
Who goes on will regret it.
**Borislav Radović**

tr. Vasa D. Mihailovich

**WHITENESS**

A letter is a drawing of the long suffering of speech,
The sign of joy on the forehead of mute caves;
Emptiness is white: as old as thought,
Precise as a distant window in the evening,

A knee dancing around a fire and a mound.

---

**Borislav Radović**

**THE CLIFF**

The cliff happened in the corner of a sight
Or in the eye which thoughtlessly swallows
Everything, blue as the eye of the sea.
Cold has broken in two in this bread
That bleeds while we eat it
But a ship searches for its itinerary
On the toothy water and in the sharp sky.

The cliff happened in us, we in the cliff.
Rocks and noise fused into one at noon,
He, the lover of furrows and the chaser of hoofs,
Sings his nakedness.
Borislav Radović

THE PRIMEVAL BOND

Were we playing, and what kind of a game,
Or did we lose our way
In a common distant whirlpool
Where we were searching for a new tongue:

No one knows that, now others are searching for us

In the spur of a ditch and among rocks
Of taciturn toothy hills,
In places unusual for love:
Others, who will be silent about us;

But did they ever exist
Those signs of ours, incestuous pictures,
Or speechless we only
Lived in our mute tale
With an infallible sun in the nape,
You with gods, I with a stone plough,
Like two castrated sentences,

No one will know that.
Božidar Timotijević

tr. Vasa D. Mihailovich

HAND

Dead are the windows of this house
which merges with the lake in the distance,
the door has fallen silent and now only
the dry wind of summer sleeps in there.

And stealthily brings in a white hand,
a hand that offers no resistance,
but what is it doing with her there
at this hour of unconscious darkness?

How does her tenderness behave
in the empty rooms covered with spiderweb only,
didn’t she find a way to escape
and take a bath in the lake once again?

Božidar Timotijević

WATERS

Somewhere under the window and the bed
waters reigned.
Ugly waters dirtied by death
flowed through our ears.

We stood half-naked on the hill—
suddenly a beautiful sight:
a wave like tar, a dragon of foam
leaped over a child’s belly.
Is anyone waiting for you at the end of the road?
Is the sky empty without man?

Or are you dark because you know
Of an even darker sun on which it's Winter?

The gloom of the day that will not come
And how much ash remains from a single sun?

Is your glitter your speech? Did you shine
When they hung you by the tongue?

When my head fell in the mud,
You sent me greetings from heavenly gallows?

And while the executioner wove the rope,
What is it that I understood in your glow

So I keep silent before men that offer me bread,
And before judges ready to forgive me?
Ljubomir Simović

NOTATION IN GOLD

Among bloody candles I welcomed Winter 1254. Every night, to the chorus of wolves and blizzards, my vigil lasted as long as the path of the flame from the top to the bottom of the candle, when with crow’s feather I wrote the pages of monastic chronicle for the year 1235 of our Lord.

In this small cell
I recognize Summer by dust, Winter by snow-dust sifted through narrow cracks.

The candle above my blinded eyes, knotted like a finger of a leper with sharp nail of its flame, already for many years points to heaven and reminds me.

Over my head the bells sway
large like golden hay-stacks
once long ago in the village of Volujci.

I dream I do not exist, I dream that someone dreams of me and that the dawn is approaching, and that the time is coming for him to awake.
I was a bell-tower and blizzard of birds,
the ramparts and the chalice thrown from the ramparts;
    now it's in the sea and the sea is in it;
I was the king cleaning the boots of a boot-maker.
I was a pigeon on a marble helmet,
a clearing and the rope-maker weaving the rope
and the criminal hung by that rope.

I was a soldier raising his glass like a flag
and another one in the stable
on the top of a nurse who embraces him fainting.
In the grass, with flowers high to horse's belly,
I was the horse and its rider, night through which they ride,
I was the fields, the messenger and his evil tidings.

I was everywhere and everyone, seeking how to throw off my back
these troubles and animals, violence and flowers,
evil and inclination to evil,
    but early one sleepless
evening before a storm in Western Serbia I saw
a great flight of birds which, as they rose from a tree,
made it seem as if the tree had disappeared.
Branislav Petrović

HOW I FELT AS THE PILOT OF THE PLANE FROM WHICH ALBERT EINSTEIN WAS SCATTERED TO THE WINDS

tr. Celia Williams

Solemn, I felt solemn.
That wonderful old man, that handful of ashes.
The plane at full speed towards the stars
a splendid machine, faultless instruments.

We move away from the earth, from his workrooms.
From his physics, from his poetry, from his dog.
Farewell little girl with whom last spring,
under a false name,
I dined
under the limes!
Albert,
Uncle Albert, wave to the little girl!

He can't.
Reduced to his true dimensions.
Like a good written-composition:
concise.
You understand?!
ALBERT EINSTEIN
not like a packet of pudding!

I hold the handle I control the instruments,
the wings of the plane are my wings,
the machine the most excellent make rights itself
and now we fly slowly
parallel to his earth to his dream,
to his temporary dwelling-place.

Some boys, down on the earth, run after us,
(they fly bravely)
It all reminds one of spraying mosquitoes
in the marshy suburbs.
I am not a philosopher,
I am not a farm-worker—
I am an ordinary pilot—
and yet,
I am in excellent control of my nerves;
but,
when the employees of the undertakers’
opened the tiny chest,

and when the dust blew away,
like the death of a little bird,
when the world blew away!—
if there were no bottles of gin,
my friends,
anything could happen!

How did I feel?
Well how would you feel?

---

Branislav Petrovic

THE CONQUEST OF AUSTRALIA

tr. VASA D. MIHAILOVICH

The creator is visiting his abysses
the sun is his torch.
When he enters the region of man
there is a sight to behold:
nothing is as he has foreseen,
nothing is as he has left.
Branislav Petrović

THE SECOND PART OF GUN JOKES

tr. Vasa D. Mihailovich

Constellations!
I have been staring at the sky for two hours already.

And it is late, time for sleep,
but the head is not returning from above.

Branislav Petrović

THERE IS NO LONGER ANY DARKNESS . . .

tr. Vasa D. Mihailovich

There is no longer any darkness which I have not descended
searching for my gold.
Naked and poor I am falling into abyss.
Everything familiar and dear I have exchanged for unknown
celebrating my destruction in advance.

It’s all right for a mason: when he is bothered he builds houses.
It’s even more so for a doctor: when he is ill he treats people.
It is hardest for me my pure love—
words are deserting me in droves.
Behind our backs
far away
   the wolf’s jaws are combing
discords in our hearts.

In front of mirrors
   we perfect good-natured smiles
picking from our teeth the leftovers
   of inborn bloodthirst.

We hate the dignity of strength
   enviously piercing the days,
stringing them like pearls
   on the wolf’s luxuriant chest.

Each of us believes that in his chest
   speak the best voices
and dark blood streams most purely,
   but there, in place of a proud heart

   a shivering dwarf
crouches, picking flowers
   off the steep meadows
of fear.

   Let us forget
that we are hunted wolves
   whose ribs at birth were broken.
Our dreams will be more peaceful.
Mirko Magarašević

THE WOLF’S EYES

While the dawn falls in the middle of the cave
transforming the secret toys of the world
into the messages of light—
he is already far away.
Despising human values
he gallops in gracious steps
of his hunger.

In the evening he declares that the mountain
is his planetarium
in which the foot and the shoe are not
welcome.

Over night he sharpens his knives
for that hour before dawn
promising his she-wolf
that he will not be too violent,
that he will give advantage
to those in cottages
hoping that they will be again the first
to make a mistake
and provoke laughter under his forehead.
Therefore he feels like a mountain wind
when he passes through the gates
of the outfoxed reason,
quieting them with his slaughtering assault
and the steam of blood on the snow.
With a cat’s jump he advances through the woods across the scales of the past autumn searching for a tame dinner in the valley.

It sometimes happens that they twist his neck but he does not regret much because then he moves over into his killer.

Then he goes on multiplying in men’s own eyes.

---

**Mirko Magarašević**

**CAT’S DRIVE**

Galloping across the yard, I run up a tree he was chasing me with fire in his eyes; and when he reached me and stretched his paw without hiding the face of his intent I bristled up my fur pretending reluctance: that was the only way to attract his desire. Then it became all the same to me.

Now, I stretch my claw in the new seed skimming the fur on the other side of the mind.
Kenneth Bernard

ARAB SHRINE

by the mountainside
dark women dance to flutes
and roll their eyes

in the dust
a she-devil rises
with long black hair
and lustful eyes

a man cuts into his skull
runs shrieking with the blood

and where it falls
a rigid arm unlocks

Kenneth Bernard

HOME AGAIN HOME AGAIN

he spoke of power
at night power was where he put it
and how

the power she received was love
until she noticed how he put it
and why

they cradled in the night
from love to power
and when the rocking stopped
they took rags and wiped them clean
and slept to meet again another day
Every morning Delta D got up at six o’clock, took a cold shower, got dressed, ground coffee, sliced bread, fried two eggs and strung some peanuts for the squirrels that sat waiting for her on the windowsill.

“Guten Morgen meine Zeitgenossen,” she said when she was outside, fastening the string to the window frame and going to sit on the pile of stones from which her husband wanted to lay a wall with built-in flowerboxes.

She liked looking at the squirrels. When the weather was good she sat on the terrace the whole day, fed the squirrels, and listened to the sounds of the woods. When the weather was good her brains were an unkindled plum pudding. She looked at the squirrels, cracked a peanut between thumb and forefinger, smiled as a squirrel took away the nut, and was amazed at his soft paws. This amazement was her only exertion and remained so for the whole day.
With rainy weather her activity increased. Rain ignited the rum and the woods smelled like the past. She wandered with her mother over the heath and ate rabbit turds, which she took for licorice drops. Her mother pinched her nose, pushed down her tongue and peered anxiously.

“How many?”
“Fifteen.”

At home she stood in front of the mirror, opened her mouth and gazed for a long time at that dark hole of hers in which the turds had disappeared. She bowed her head, but the turds didn’t roll back out. The darkness was greedy. Her father carried her into the garden on his shoulders and let her look into a bird’s nest. When he wanted to go away she pounded on his head and sang “tweet tweet birdie give me your eggs.” After that, in her room, she waited hours for the mother bird. The mother bird didn’t come and she put a red bead into her right nostril. The doctor took the bead out.

The neighbor lady had a little boy she gave milk to out of her breast. The boy laughed a lot and between his legs he had a finger without a nail. The bell rang and the neighbor lady walked to the front door. “Hold him tight” the neighbor lady said. She held him tight and pinched him long and hard on the finger without a nail. “A wasp bit him” she said. The neighbor lady kissed the crying boy, went looking for the wasp and laid a white veil with white flowers over the hood of the cradle. The hearts of the white flowers were little holes.

In the mist the woods smelled like the plane accident. The dead were unrecognizably mutilated. Vision narrowed to the terrace. Around the house was a wall which absorbed every sound, which didn’t even throw back her voice. Possibilities of communication were reduced to almost nothing. Youth had not existed. The future did not turn up. Only conversation “roll me over in the clover, roll me over and do it again.”

The insurance was merciful. A hundred thousand guilders for her father, a hundred thousand guilders for her mother. Two hundred thousand guilders at five percent. No one might touch it.

Her husband had no parents.
He was a cross between a banana and a peach. His skin didn't tan in the sun. His face stayed white in Spain. His nose turned red in Portugal. His flesh barricaded every approach. His parents lived in Zaandam. His sister lived in Haarlem. His father was a minister. His sister a librarian. She should point out to the parents that their daughter was a lesbian. No little ones to say Grandpa and Grandma from the daughter's side. Not from her side either. No child was going to take her from herself. But being fruitful she was still human. And the pill was too dictatorial. Her body didn't want to be told what to do. So mistakes were not ruled out.

In that case the children would say "Mr. and Mrs." and then brush their teeth. They would sign their letters "with friendly greetings." No further contact. No santa surprises to Zaandam. No Believers around at Christmas. She would be greatly relieved when the strange parents didn't like her any more. "In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister."

When it snowed the woods smelled like the future. Her whole family had died. She had no children. Her husband loved her from the grave. His picture stood between the pictures of her parents. On the photo his skin appeared light brown and sound. The barricade was lifted. He was finally within reach.

She traveled a lot. She rode through the whole world in a Bentley Continental, driven by a silent, taciturn chauffeur. She was separated from him by a glass wall. When she had enough of his back, she pushed a button and the glass wall became opaque. The chauffeur didn't notice when she pushed the button. Nor did it interest him. The body and the inside of the Bentley were his flesh and blood. She gave him written instructions.

She ate whenever she was hungry. She drank as much as she liked. She did not need much sleep. She stepped on no one's toes by not caring about them. She looked through a telescope when it was freezing weather, thereby performing a very useful service, because the stars were the future of mankind.

She lived in a brown wooden house on top of a hill. The walls were stone, ninety centimeters thick. When it stormed the world perished.
The road to the bottom was difficult to travel; it went past a steep abyss without any protection. It was a private road. Everyone that came to her had to pay a toll at the entrance.

She had many friends who often called her and whom she then invited for a visit. Those visits, however, never took place. Shortly before the time of arrival, when all preparations had been made, to the great disappointment of both parties, and for very valid reasons, the date had to be postponed.

The squirrels walked in and out and sat by her in the room. Young rabbits that weren't full-grown played on the terrace. Now and then a zoo loaned her a lion cub for the weekend. The cub didn't bite through her wrist when she put it in his mouth.

Many fingers without nails pointed toward her. Sometimes she chopped one off. A car stopped. A man opened the door. He had no face. He jumped out of the car, left the motor running, jumped on her. She had no face. They said not a word. She never saw him again. He died in an accident at the foot of the hill.

When she was traveling the neighbor lady fed the squirrels and rabbits. That neighbor lady had a black cat and an I.Q. just high enough for a complicated knitting pattern. She loved the black cat very much and lived in constant anxiety that something would happen to him. Indeed, every once in a while the black cat had a terrible accident. Every once in a while the chauffeur, furious, found the black cat among the eight cylinders. He put out the animal's eyes, twisted its neck and laid its corpse on the neighbor lady's steps. The neighbor lady went dumb from dismay and for weeks stared silently ahead. Every day of the neighbor lady's unspeakable sorrow, she visited her and spoke well of the black cat. "But did the neighbor lady know that the beast's great love had been the gardener's wife?"

A little before three o'clock she woke up. Her husband had pushed his chin against her shoulder and laid his right hand over her chest. The hand laid heavy on her ribs, making her breathing difficult, and she sat upright so that it fell back on the mattress. "A part of the body
falls from the trapeze.” She put her pillow against the wall, pulled up her knees, wrapped her hands around her shins and looked at her sleeping husband.

The blankets had slipped off him and the sheet covered only his toes. A moonbeam reached his pubic hair and she took a lock between her fingers, twisted it together and pulled on it. Her husband didn’t move. He now lay on his back and in the moonlight seemed paler than usual. He would be a pretty corpse.

She took both his hands, laid them across his heart, and bent over him. His navel moved gently up and down and once, when he inhaled, he sighed very deeply as if a big load had been laid on his chest. She held her palm in front of his mouth and felt the strong warm stream of air that he blew between half-opened lips. An angry hairless cat. He might have a terrible accident tomorrow morning. He might be dead tomorrow night. Buried by the end of the week. If that were so, by this time next month he would be unrecognizable. His mother would want to end her life. His father would want to pray and acquiesce. His weeping sister would let herself be rescued by her friend Alice. And all that because a white body with freckles on its back, a birthmark on its left hip, and many scratched-open pimples on its neck and shoulders had begun the process of decomposition so many meters beneath Amsterdam’s watermark.

She stood up and began to search for her pajamas. The top lay on the floor, the pants lay crumpled up between the sheets on the foot end. She tied the pant legs around her neck and again looked at her sleeping husband. The hand with which he scratched open the pimples slid away from his heart. “Fifteen drops of smoking red saltpetre on each finger, a bottle of Skin Tan over his body, ‘hero of my dreams’ in gothic letters.”

It was chilly in the room and she shivered, untied the pant legs, threw the pants on the bed and put on her peignoir. It was a black peignoir with a red collar that her husband had bought for her in Haarlem. She walked to the window and opened it wide. The woods were very still and smelled like wet leaves although it had not rained. Her parents had loved the woods. They were pulled charred from the airplane. They lay buried in Utrecht. She had searched the whole house for an authorization for cremation, finding under her father’s bed a
pile of “Schöner Wohnen,” under her mother’s pillow a ripped “All About Pain,” in the medicine chest an opened bottle of Slivovits, an unused bottle of wart tincture, an empty box of sleeping tablets holding a note written in her father’s hand “call up the old bag.”

No authorization.

So they weren’t cremated. They were buried against their will. In the auditorium the organ played Petrushka. Everyone gave the impression that they were at the fair. She too.

She sat with her father in the ferris wheel. She couldn’t fall out; he held her tight. She had a red balloon in her hand. Her mother stood below waving each time they passed with a purple balloon that also belonged to her. Five years old. Two balloons. A father who held you tight. A mother who waved at you. You couldn’t get enough of it.

Wart tincture!

The door-handle creaked when she pushed it down but her husband went on sleeping. Just breathed deeply. And she waited until he exhaled before she opened the door and crept into the hall. She did not turn on the light but put out her hands, her right foot meanwhile describing a short arc with each step.

The stone floor was cold on her bare feet so she started walking on tiptoes and pulled up the collar of her peignoir. In the basement she turned on the light, quickly shut the door, and walked slowly down the stairs.

She liked basements. They held for her the smell of the past, of events that had taken place before her birth or youth. Exciting events she had read about in superficial weeklies, events that made her shudder with emotion or abhorrence: the eruption of Krakatoa, the killing of the Czar and his family, the discovery of Victoria Falls, the great migration, the arrival of Einstein in the United States, the crash of ’29, the sinking of the Titanic.

She stood on the bottom step, squinted so that she saw her surroundings hazily, and sniffed until her lungs were entirely filled. “The suicide of Ivan Kreuger.” She jumped onto the wooden plank which lay before some shelves her husband had built, raised her eyebrows, and looked around.

On two shelves lay shriveled gold rennets and five empty flasks;
she read “Würzburger Stein Sylvaner” on the label. Next to the apples stood some empty Cologne pots in different sizes and thirteen jars of black cherry brandy she once found in her mother's larder where they had stood for years. She took a jar in both hands, “Alas, poor Yorick,” ate an apple, put the core in the neck of a flask. Two pips came loose and fell on the rim of the neck. She laid them in the palm of her left hand and shot them with her right middle finger in the direction of a medicine chest with a broken oval mirror in the door, standing on the floor next to a big brown sievescreen.

Both shots misfired: the first pip against the sievescreen, the second against the wall. “My attacks are carelessly prepared and carelessly executed,” she thought. “I'm not even a good marshal.” She stooped down and opened the little door. Everything was still the way she found it two years ago—the Slivovits, the wart tincture, the empty box of sleeping pills, even the note “call up the old bag.” She took the wart tincture, shut the door, and with her incisors bit through the dark green wrapping around the cork. “I don't know how else,” she thought.

With a piece of wadding wound around the tip of a swizzle stick she brushed the tincture over the top side of the hand that he shamed himself with. After that, when she saw that the liquid was dried up, she cautiously turned his hand over and let the bottle drip empty on the fingertips and into the palm.

For a moment it looked as if he might awaken. He rubbed his feet against each other, shook his head a few times and opened his mouth wide, as if he couldn't get a breath. But then his navel moved peacefully up and down again. He lay completely still.

Setting the bottle on the floor, she took off her peignoir and slid between the sheets. She didn't know when the hand would turn black; perhaps in an hour, perhaps in a minute, perhaps not until tomorrow morning.

“I don't know how else,” she thought again, pulling the sheet over her face. She shut her eyes and waited until it would be time to get up, take a shower, prepare breakfast, string some peanuts, feed the squirrels, sit on the terrace.
Horst Bienek

ZEICHEN UND SÄTZE

Rauch in der Luft
   oder Feuer im Meer
   oder Blitze im Wald
Zeichen von gestern

Wir haben sie vergessen
niemand sieht sie
   wir reden miteinander
   Worte
   oder Sätze
   oder Rauch
   oder Feuer
die Gemeinsamkeit der Worte ist der Satz
die Gesamtheit der Sätze ist die Sprache

Wir reden
sind eingemauert
   in Sprache
reden
   verweilen beieinander
   im Dunkel

und das Moos wächst uns in den Mund
Horst Bienek

tr. H. W. NIESCHMIDT

SIGNS AND SENTENCES

Smoke in the air
   or fire in the sea
   or lightning in the forest
signs of yesterday

We have forgotten them
nobody sees them
   we talk with each other
   words
   or sentences
   or smoke
   or fire
the combination of words is the sentence
the totality of sentences is the language

We talk
are immured
   in language
talk
   remain with each other
   in the dark

and moss fills up our mouths.
Horst Bienek

DER BESIEGTE SIEGER

Ich komme nicht allein
mit mir sind viele
wir durchkämmen die Wälder
wir überqueren die Flüsse
wir setzen ihre Schiffe in Brand
wir sprengen ihre unterirdischen Tunnelsysteme
wir besetzen die Stadt
sie ergeben sich kampflos
wir nehmen ihnen die Waffen
sie wehren sich nicht
wir beschlagnahmen ihre Vorräte
sie protestieren nicht
wir mauern die Eingänge ihrer Häuser zu
sie rütteln nicht an den Türen
wir vergiften ihr Trinkwasser
sie singen hinter den Fenstern

Ich gehe fort
Vorher aber
werde ich noch von ihrem Wasser trinken
I do not come alone
many are with me
we comb the forests
we cross the rivers
we set fire to their ships
we blow up their underground warrens
we occupy the city
they surrender without a struggle
we take their arms
they do not resist
we confiscate their supplies
they do not protest
we brick up the doors of their houses
they do not rattle at the doors
we poison their drinking water
they sing behind the windows

I leave

But first
I am going to drink of their water
Manuel Durán

NOCTURNO SIN SUEÑO

De vez en cuando alzamos los hombros
al escuchar ese rumor secreto
que nos dice que el sueño
ha llegado a nosotros,
y seguimos andando,
soportando nuestros pasos,
nuestra sonrisa, el elevarse cadencioso
de nuestro brazo,
como un remordimiento,
como una nostalgia de la estatua que éramos.

Manuel Durán

LAS SOMBRAS INVITADAS

Las horas, los placeres y la angustia
han gastado los duros huesos de luz
que sostenían a las fuentes en las plazas de la ciudad.
Los hombres-sandwich salen a pasear por parejas.
En la azotea
un niño y un perro
saludan la llegada de las sombras invitadas.
Manuel Durán

tr. Don Thompson

NOCTURNE WITHOUT SLEEP

Now and then we shrug our shoulders
listening to the secret rumor
that sleep
has come for us,
and go on walking,
enduring our steps,
our smile, the rhythmic
swing of our arms,
like remorse,
a longing for the statue we used to be.

Manuel Durán

THE INVITED SHADOWS

Hours, pleasure and sorrow
have worn down the hard bones of light
that braced the fountains in the city plazas.
Sandwich men wander away in pairs.
On the flat roof
a child and a dog
welcome the invited shadows.
Manuel Durán

AL CERRAR LA PUERTA

Fugitiva y fría lógica
de la pared, repitiéndose
cuatro veces. El espacio,
como un pez sorprendido,
se agita débilmente
y agoniza en un rincón,
vencido.
Ahora está flotando,
indeciso todavía en su nueva forma,
vibrando al eco
de la puerta definitivamente
cerrada.

Quedan en pie
el hombre y la mujer,
desnudos ya
bajo una mirada implacable
cuatro veces repetida:
esbeltas semillas
de la gran fruta cuadrada.

Manuel Durán

LOS SABIOS

Las barbitas blancas ondean al viento
como discretas banderas. Pasean la mirada,
esa mirada inocente y terrible de pescado muerto,
por las calles de la ciudad,
por sus viejos libros,
por las estatuas de mármol de inmóviles barbitas blancas,
y la dejan suspendida en el espacio,
en que llueven, invisibles, las ideas puras.

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ON CLOSING THE DOOR

Fugitive and frigid logic
of the wall, repeating itself
four times. Space,
like a startled fish,
twitches
and dies in a corner,
defeated.
Now it is floating,
still unsure of its new form,
vibrating to the echo
of the slammed
door.

Already naked,
the man and the woman
stand
beneath an unrelenting stare
repeated four times:
slender seeds
of the large square fruit.

THE SCHOLARS

Their trim white beards flap in the wind
like discreet banners. Their gaze,
that innocent, terrible stare of dead fish,
wanders through city streets,
through their old books,
through marble statues with solid white beards,
and they leave it dangling in space
where pure ideas fall like invisible rain.
Alwin Nikolais

Photograph by Martha Swope
Modern Dance: An Interview
ALWIN NIKOLAIS

Mundus Artium: Improvisation plays an important part in the development of your dancers. Can you train someone to improvise?

Nikolaïs: Improvisation, whether it’s good or bad, depends upon the skill of the person doing it. We talk about sanity and insanity. Certainly an insane person could improvise, and certainly does, but we’re talking about improvisation from an esthetic point of view, where you place yourself in terms of extending into an environment to receive the impressions of what rests therein, and then with whom you make conversation, just as we’re making conversation now. In the instance of my dancers, they’re trained to do this. Not everyone can do it, because not everyone can open himself to that extent. To my mind, improvisation takes great sanity; sanity in terms of sensitivity, being present and aware of, and making choice of, even though the choice is so swift that you don’t have any consciousness of choice. Improvisation is unpredictable; I can tell my dancers to get up and improvise without giving them any subject, and the catalyst to the occurrence is a mystery; the curious thing is, if they try to do the same things twice, realizing the success of previous gestures, it’ll be absolutely dreadful.

Mundus Artium: How do you relate improvisation and the actual performance on the stage?

Nikolaïs: I am convinced that we’re concerned with communication here. Communication requires contact, it requires an interplay. I think perhaps it’s easier to do an improvisation than an actual performance. The individual himself is originating the talking, whereas in the performance, the expertise of the performer to interpret the words of somebody else
"Imago"

Nikolais Dance Theatre

Photograph by Oleaga
becomes the challenge at hand, and is not always successful. Performances vary greatly—for instance, I can have a group that can travel all over Europe and there are certain pieces that will be absolutely fabulously received and the rapport between audience and performer extraordinarily good—let’s say in Paris or Berlin—but take that same piece to Rome and it’s like playing tennis against a wet blanket. That tension doesn’t exist, it’s impossible to create. That these dancers might succeed better in an improvisation than in a performance is a matter of a difference between a performing skill and an improvisational skill, and also to a certain extent on the choreographed structure as against the rather free, more spontaneous and immediate live thing of an improvisation. In my pieces I use a lot of improvisation in the thing itself, but after many performances they tend to get set.

Mundus Artium: What then do you emphasize in the training of your dancers?

Nikolais: I try to find their own individuality first, and that’s not easy. You have to strip away all the surface junk—a twitch, for example, is not basic personality, it’s some unfortunate thing that happened to it. It takes many years to erase all that junk. That’s the process of any teaching, isn’t it, to get rid of all the junk. Usually the beginner is wonderful, very interesting. I get refreshed going back to beginning people, they teach me something new. Also, they refresh my own theories. And then there’s an intermediate ugly duckling period, where they’re so boring, so dull, so educated, you could kill them. All of a sudden something will happen, if it ever does, to relieve them of all that junk, and suddenly an artist appears. You never know if its going to happen or not, you can’t predict it.

Mundus Artium: How does the dancer or an actor see himself in relation to his audience?

Nikolais: The artist has to make love to his audience. In reality, it’s simply the fact of opening the channels,
"Sconario"—Nikolais Dance Theatre—Photograph by Oleaga
which is really what love is, basically—that you enter into me and I enter into you—not in the sexual sense, but we make ourselves available, one to the other. Then when you do that, plus make yourself available to the situations of other things that surround you, then the interplay between all this is evident. You start closing it off, and you start going towards insanity, and catatonics. I know that with my performers, I have to say, it is not sufficient that you be entirely imbedded in the thing you do—you must also be aware that that process is one that must be empathetically transferred out, so your edge is different, the leaning of the motion is different. It’s all very well that I sit here and weep, but to tell you that I’m weeping I must edge it over. There’s an electrical edge to the body that says, “Doll, I am telling you I am weeping, and I want you to know that I am weeping, and for what reason I am weeping”—this is a different thing. It’s like twisting; I can twist for the sake of twisting, but if I twist for the sake of looking I must also lean. I think you must lean psychically as well as physically towards the persons to whom you’re speaking. It’s a very simple thing—if I’m talking to you, my voice is carrying to you, but if I become very eager, I will lean physically and psychically toward you; the outpouring is done from every part of the body, including the ankles. A great performer will do this; he’ll lean toward his audience, and that’s what they call presence, projection or whatever.

Mundus Artium: How long would dancers continue to dance privately, without an audience?

Nikolais: I think perhaps the dancer would do it longer than the actor. It’s curious, but the dancer’s ego is less than the actor’s. I have succeeded in changing dancers because of this awful thing of giving up the motion as a decoration of self, rather than lending the self to motion. It’s a very touchy thing with a dancer, and yet once they discover that when they
do that, they themselves are more brilliant, in their own personal shining, but it’s a dreadfully hard lesson to learn—one can hardly succeed in doing it.

Mundus Artium: You talked about drama as the art of emotion and dance the art of motion. Are they related to each other in any way?

Nikolais: Yes! Emotion, psychologically, I suppose is caused by change—if there’s no change, there’s no emotion. But I don’t know really when motion becomes emotion—I’ve talked about this to psychologists—my theory is that motion precedes emotion, and that emotion occurs as a result of motion. But in terms of drama—drama is created mostly out of conflict and resolution, whereas dance is not created out of conflict and resolution. I suppose—if I can go back to the music of Bach—it is not conflict; it’s the dynamics of juxtaposition of sounds; whereas most of our history of drama is created through actual psychical conflict. And I think that drama is in a great mess right now because it doesn’t know how to resolve the continuation of the art without dropping that process. The minute it does, it goes into abstraction, which is dance. So we might better study dance than drama. But the actor really practices situations of conflict and resolution. I think probably we’re trying to get away from conflict and resolution.

Mundus Artium: Do you think, as a future projection, that we’ll come to a point where dance, drama, and electronic music will come much closer together than they have in the past? Perhaps a new kind of opera?

Nikolais: Well, I think that opera might find the solution sooner than drama, but I don’t know how. Certainly the sounds of the composers working now—I must say I’m rather ignorant—not ignorant, but I haven’t had the time to see many things, particularly the European electronic composers. I’ve done several pieces using the voice, and the dancers do learn after a while to work the voice into an agreeable sound structure. But it’s very difficult. For instance,
"Tent"

Nikolais Dance Theatre

Photograph by New Arts Management Inc.
we do this thing called Scenario, and it’s all made up of motion. There are scenes of anger, of sadness, of terror: they’re all very playful, and should have the edge to it of rather frightening comedy, in a way, although we don’t mind if people laugh at the time they’re crying. It’s a disturbance. But the thing is to find esthetic structure in these things, and of course the great opera composers did. I wouldn’t discount that completely. I just think this is not the time for it now. Also I’m very much against finding the thing, because the thing you find now may also be unserviceable the next year. I find that happening to some of my works too, that whereas they were terrible exciting at one time, this next year they might not be, and you can sort of sense it in the audience, that, no, they don’t want this any more; they’d like something else.

Mundus Artium: Could multi-media show a new direction?
Nikolais: In a period of time when no one believes the one sense, I think multi-media is necessary, because we are living in such a cacophonus world, we have to go back to that primal business of being bombarded on all the senses, so they, like hundreds of scouts, bring in their varied messages, so they can be computed together. I think this is the reason why we go for this now, and that I sense seeing is not believing any more—what you see you don’t always believe. The ear is the thing of hearsay—what you heard is not always the fact. Psychologically all this has changed now. Now we have to hear, see, taste, smell, touch—otherwise we don’t believe. But I think that each one should make its own statement. I would like sometime to really work on, let’s say, motion that goes one way, then sound that goes another way—each is speaking of the same subject, but not necessarily independently, recognizing the other, but fortifying each other by the dimensions of their statement. I think this is one way it could be done.
K. Curtis Lyle

I WITNESS

I witness that there is none to worship except God —Bilal of Ethiopia

I witness that there is none
to worship but God
the ax breaker,
illegible quatrain,
insensible drone
and shadowy ambush
in the open field
I witness that there is none
to worship but God
the ax breaker, the
forceful, the various orbit
of the soul
I witness that there is none
to worship but God
the ax breaker, the two
ax breaker, quebracho,
consistent opposition
of the unyielding phrase
and the chroma of the soul
I witness that there is none
to worship but God
the ax breaker, the two
ax breaker, the three
ax breaker, the four
ax breaker of the cardinal points,
the patient interceptor
and elliptical producer
of uncut fission
I witness that there is none
to worship but God
the ax breaker, the two
ax breaker, the three
ax breaker, the four
ax breaking echo

K. Curtis Lyle

CADENCE

a woman's heart
is the deep well
in a black field,
the timeless step
of sufferings, inflammation, ti palm
and divine wailing along the dark cone
of toadstools
the life of silence and creation,
judgment and the necessity
for destroying
what is apparent
in the poem
as one into another
the children die heavy
where the old woman
had been born
had been born
in the heedless bird country
in the huddled bird country
in the orphan-come-home country
in the angles-of-our-hatred country
are the angelic-sounds-of-committed-regions country
and our loves in those same moments
view ecstatic veins
through the middle
of a woman's life
whispering
we are bird music
we are blood music
we are black music's
jugular children come home
in an afternoon of dead eagles
we are woman heart
we are woman life
we are woman-come-here
and crack-off our teeth
we are woman-come-here
and turn them to nails
we are woman-come-whirling
we are woman-come-here
and hollow our cheeks
we are woman-come-here
and weld our bones
in a cadence of mortar rounds
Peter Huchel

SCHLUCHT BEI BALTSCHIK

Am Abend hängt der Mond
Hoch in die Pappel
Das silberne Zaumzeug der Zigeuner.
Er gräbt es aus,
Wo unter Steinen
Pferdeschädel
Und Trensen schimmern.

Eine Greisin,
Die Stirn tätowiert,
Geht durch die Schlucht,
Am hanfennen Halfter
Ein Fohlen.
Sie blickt hinauf
Ins alte Zigeunersilber
Der Pappel.

Nachts hebt sie aus dem Feuer
Ein glimmendes Scheit.
Sie wirbelt es über den Kopf,
Sie schreit und schleudert
Ins Dunkel der Toten
Den rauchenden Brand.

Die Pappel steht fahl.
Die Schildkröte trägt
Mit sichelndem Gang
Den Tau in den Mais.
Peter Huchel

tr. Henry Beissel

CANYON NEAR BALTSCHIK

In the evening the moon hangs
High into the poplar
The silver bridle of gipsies.
It exposes
Where under stones
The skulls of horses
And bits glint.

An old woman,
Her forehead tattooed,
Walks through the canyon,
A foal
On a hempen halter.
She looks up
Into the ancient gipsy silver
of the poplar.

At night she lifts out of the fire
A glowing brand.
She whirls it above her head,
She screams and hurls
The smoking fire
Into the darkness of the dead.

Pale stands the poplar.
With sickle gait
The turtle carries
Dew into the maize.
NACHLÄSSE

Nachlässe,
Ungeordnet,
Auf Böden verstaubt,
Die Erben sind tot.
Und finstere Himmel,
Grau unterkellert
Von Wänden aus Nebel.
Die Kälte atmet
Dich an
in hallenden Gängen.

Später,
Im Sommer
Über den Stoppeln
Die Spindeln aus Licht.
Sie wickeln
Das rissige Garn
Galizischer Dörfer.
Ein Faden weht,
Dich bindend
Ans Verborgene.

Zwei Kannen,
Vergraben
In Erde und Feuer.
Es geht durch Wolken
Stürzender Asche
Die Stimme des Richters,
In Stille vernommen,
Wo an der Wand
Im dünnen Rauch
Die Erben stehn.
LEGACIES

Legacies,
In disorder,
Covered with dust in attics,
The heirs are dead.
And grim skies
Underpinned
By grey walls of fog.
The cold breathes
Upon you
In echoing passages.

Later,
In summer,
Above the stubble
The spindles of light.
They wind
The frazzled yarn
Of Galician villages.
One loose thread
Binds you
To what lies hidden.

Two cans
Buried
In earth and fire.
Through clouds
Of falling ash
The judge's voice,
Heard in silence
Where in the thin smoke
The heirs stand
Against the wall.
AM AHORNHÜGEL

Am Ahornhügel
Stürzt der Engel
Ins Feuer der Mittagsdistel.

Die Tonne der Worte ist leer.

Es blickt dich das Land
Mit den Augen
Der Toten an.
Der Abend
Füllt
Die Sümpfe
Mit brennendem Teer.
Peter Huchel

BY THE MAPLE HILL

By the maple hill
An angel plunges
Into the fire of midday thistles.

The threshing-floor of words is empty.

The land looks at you
With the eyes
Of the dead.
Evening
Fills
The bogs
With burning tar.
Yannis Goumas

HOTEL STATIONERY

poised in holy trinity
fingers hallow the vellum
honeycombed from avid writing

a previous client's hieroglyphics
cadence my words, groove my pen—
the sole respite: syllabic matching

Yannis Goumas

ALPENGLOW

cardiogram of alpine peaks

snow-circumflexed chalets
accent the mottled silence

between me & the celestial pantomime:
the licentious violet of living
Yannis Goumas

DETAIL

the fly
ears itself
from the thicket
of my arm
taking with it
the weight
of my gaze

i measure the infinite
with many seconds
of droning

Yannis Goumas

ON THE TIP OF THE TONGUE

the other side of the voice
seeks the word at its source
traveling deep in this desire—

dying a slow death
because of its strong will
to live
M. A. Serna-Maytorena

LUNES, MARTES . . .

La tarde invade de su geometría
el vaivén de los días.
Vierte, con saña insomne, tu silueta.

Y tu silueta cobra de repente
la importancia inaudita
de lo absoluto y su solución.

Me bañas,
me triangulas de nostalgias ilógicas,
de citas ilícitas y admoniciones
por no tenerte, por desear-te.

Me gira el vino de tu amor
en cerraduras por las que es prohibido el mirar
por eso del ‘buen tono,’ las ‘buenas maneras’
y la educación cuando se está casado, con hijos,
y se mantiene una posición respetable.

Me lo gira hasta que, aunque sin conocerte,
me eres caleidoscópica y envuelves como respuesta única.

Afiebrado revuelvo los libros, Investigo
en el *Debe* y el *haber* lo que debe de haber:

**tus señas.**

y ni siquiera tengo tu nombre,
tu teléfono o dirección.
The evening invades the geometrical swinging of the days.
It pours, with wakeful anger, your silhouette.

And your silhouette suddenly acquires the unspoken importance of the absolute and its solution.

You bathe me, you triangle me with illogical nostalgia, illicit trysts, with admonitions for not having you, for desiring you.

The wine of your love twists me through locks which are closed to my eyes because “it’s not done,” “it’s bad manners,” because education says so when one is married, has children, holds a respectable position.

Twists me until, even without knowing you, you become kaleidoscopic and surround me as the only answer.

Feverish I thumb through my books, investigating in *Assets and Liabilities* what should be there:

your address

and I don’t even have your name, your telephone, the number of your house.
"The Box of Fear"—16½ inches by 22 inches

ink and collage—Amalia Cortina A.
"The Box for Whispers"
18 inches by 22 inches

*ink and collage*

*Amalia Cortina A.*
M. A. Serna-Maytorena

MIÉRCOLES, JUEVES . . .

Hay días de alcohol
en que evaporado ya el espíritu
vagamos solos, sin sentido de orientación,
a seguras de cada paso, piedra y esquina.

Días en que el poro se extiende
hasta la angustia en busca del más mínimo polen.

Días en que reconstruimos desde el humo
pegado a la ojera de la mujer que pasa,
de la chimenea en que quemamos
las noches estivales y en el tizne
de los utensilios,

el ombligo del tiempo
sólo para olvidar, ya totalmente
recubiertos de su humor,

lo que andamos buscando.
WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY . . .

There are drinking days
when with the evaporation of the spirit
we roam in solitude, the sense of orientation lost,
certain of each step, each stone, each corner.

Days when our pores stretch out to anxiety
seeking to imbibe the smallest speck of pollen.

Days when we rebuild from the smoke
stuck to the eye-rings of the passing woman,
the smoke coming from the hearth in which we burn
the summer nights, or from the soot of utensils

the navel of time
only to forget, once covered by its mood,

what we are searching for.
M. A. Serna-Maytorena

VIERNES, 9 P.M.

La sombra mancha de si las cosas.

Nostalgica de amores
corre sobre los cuerpos
el capricho de su pezón de tinta.

El instante
es premura
por donde ruedan solos
los secretos.

Una muerte sin fechas
se desploma en el cuerpo presente
disuelto sobre el lecho.

Doloridos se redimen los sueños:
de golpe, con cabal
y hemisférica acidez,
disueltos, su pedernal y su agua,
como orgasmo perdido
en la misericordia del silencio.
The shadow stains things with itself.

Missing love
it runs on the bodies
the whims of her inky nipple.

The instant
is haste
through which secrets roll
alone.

A dayless death
collapses in the body
dissolved on the bed.

In pain dreams redeem themselves:
suddenly, with complete,
hemispherical acidity,
dissolved, its flint and its water,
like an orgasm lost
in the compassion of silence.
A bearded young man came up to me about nightfall, and he said, “What do you think you’re doing here, Man?”

I told him I was minding my own business.

He said, “That won’t do, Man. What is your business, anyway?”

I said, “I am retired. I used to be a bus conductor.”

He said, “I don’t like the bus service, Man.”

I said, “I don’t have anything to do with that now. I am retired. I don’t have anything to do at all.”

He frowned and scuffed his shoe on the walk. He acted like he hated doing what he had to do. Then he said, “When did you retire, Man?”

I told him four years ago.

Then he said, “I didn’t even like the bus service four years ago, Man.”

“Maybe you never rode on my bus,” I said. Then another one came up behind me and pushed me in the back, very gently. I heard him breathing, only I didn’t turn around to look. I didn’t care what he looked like.

Then the bearded one in front of me said, “How old are you, Man?”

I said, “Old enough to know more than I did when I was your age.”

He said, “That’s smart ass talk, Man.”

Then he grabbed my tie and pulled me forward. The man behind pushed me, and I fell down.

“He’s a smart ass, ain’t he,” the man behind me said.
"Yes, smart as hell," the one in front said.
"He ought to know better than to bad flap around here," the one in back said.
"He ought to know better than to bad rap," the bearded one in front said.

Then I got to my feet and the man in front hit me with his fist, right in the face, and my nose started bleeding. I thought, now the blood will run down on my tie. And it did, and I saw some blood on his hand, too, as he jerked at my tie.

The man twisted my tie all around my neck, so that he was almost hanging me. Why are they doing this to me, I wondered.

They didn't laugh or act mad or say anything. They just twisted me around in circles, so that after a little bit I was breathing hard and gasping for breath, because they were choking me with my own tie. By now, I could tell that the tie had twisted outside my collar, and two or three shirt buttons had come off, and there was even blood on my undershirt, where my outer shirt had pulled open. All my clothes were twisted around me, because of the way they were turning me around.

"I don't like his tie," one of them said.
"I don't either," the other one said.

They began to jerk on it once again, so that it hurt my neck. And then one of them hit me in the mouth with his fist, and I fell down on my back. He had broken a tooth loose from my bridge, and I spit it out with the blood.

"What are you doing here, Man?" the first one repeated. He was standing with his shoes about six inches in front of my face. I was lying on the sidewalk, and I was having trouble breathing.

"I don't know," I told him. "I don't have anyplace else to be. I don't have anything to do."

Then they were quiet for about a minute, not even moving their feet, and not speaking to each other.

Finally, the first one said, "I never did like the bus service, did you?"

"No, I never did," the other one said.

"And it ain't going to get no better," the first one said.

Then the first one stepped over my head, and both of them walked away together. I could hear their footsteps on the sidewalk for a few seconds.

Nobody had walked by while they were beating me up. Maybe
people were embarrassed by what was happening, and they felt it would have been awkward of them to interrupt.

But now people started walking by again. I could hear their footsteps slow down, sometimes, as they took a look at me before moving on. A couple of times, I told them I wasn’t drunk.

But they probably didn’t hear me, because I couldn’t talk very plain. Or maybe they heard, but didn’t believe me.

After a while, I crawled over to a trash bin, and pulled myself up to a sitting position. Then I sat there a while, leaning back against the wire trash can. I wished I could straighten my clothes and tie out, because they were so twisted they made it hard for me to breathe.

After a while, a policeman came up to me and said, “What are you doing here, Man?”

I looked up at him and said, “Two men just beat me up.”

“Are you sure you’re not drunk,” he said.

“No,” I said, “I’m not drunk.”

“We’ll see about that,” the policeman said. “But first, I got to go up the street there and check out on something. But let me give you some advice.”

“What,” I said.

“Try to get up and move on. If I was you, I would sure as hell just get up and move on. If I take you in, there’s bound to be trouble.”

It was getting pretty dark, and I couldn’t see the expression on the policeman’s face. His face was uneven and dark, like he was wearing a crooked veil that was glued to his face.

I tried to think of something to say, but before I could think of anything the policeman had moved along.

I put both hands flat against the cement and tried to push myself up. It was like pushing the slab of cement away from me and it was very heavy and out of balance and I was afraid maybe I was going to drop it and have it fall up and hit me in the face.

But somehow I got to my feet, and then I went over to the lamp post and leaned against it.

I hurt all over, and I was still bleeding a little bit, only not as much as before.

Then a funny thing happened: I couldn’t think of what I was doing here. I couldn’t think of where I was going. Maybe I didn’t have anything to do before, but now this was even more true.

I looked all around, but I didn’t recognize anything at all.

Then I realized something else. I couldn’t even think of who I was.
“Let me see,” I said out loud. Then I remembered saying that I had been a bus driver four years ago.

But I still didn’t remember who I was. I couldn’t think of my name, or if I had a family. I couldn’t think of any reason to be where I was now, or anywhere else.

Up the street there was a little confectionary with a dented metal sign in front. I was pretty sure this was the place where the cop had gone, so I walked up to the store and went in.

There was a short fat man with thick black eyebrows standing behind the counter. He was wearing a checked green sports shirt, open at the neck, where there were black curly hairs sticking out. He was chewing gum. He watched my feet, instead of my face, as I walked up to the counter. He seemed to be interested in how I took steps.

I stopped in front of the counter, and the man lifted his eyes so that he was looking at me. He reached under the counter, and brought out a baseball bat sawed-off to about eighteen inches.

I took a deep breath before I said anything. Then I said, “Did a policeman come in here a couple minutes ago?”

The man tapped the counter lightly with the club, and said, “Mister, why don’t you just go out that door you come in and keep moving.”

“Did the cop come in here?” I asked him.
“You got no business in here,” he said.
“I want to find the cop,” I said. “Two men beat me up just now.”
“Don’t you think I can see you have been in trouble?” he said. Then his black eyebrows seemed to grow thicker, right there before my eyes. The man was frowning even harder. “Don’t you think I can see?” he said.
“I just want to see the cop,” I said. “He said he was coming back, but he didn’t.”
“Mister,” the man said, holding his empty hand out, palm up. He lifted the palm up and down several times. “What are you doing here? You ought to be in a hospital. This ain’t no hospital.”
“Where’s the cop?” I asked him.
“Why don’t you take a hint?” he cried. “There ain’t no cop. Now get on out of here, before your blood starts dripping on my floor. You want to get blood all over my store? You know how blood sinks in wood? You think I can even afford lousy goddam linoleum or asphalt tile to cover my floor? Do you?”
I thought it was odd, the way he got mad at me, because I was the victim, not the criminal. It was odd.

"I can’t even remember what I am doing here," I said, turning halfway around. I expected the man to hit me on the back of my head, but he didn’t. Instead, he spoke in a lower, friendlier voice.

"Exactly," he said. "You belong in the hospital."

"Maybe you’re right," I said. "Why don’t you call an ambulance."

"You want me to call an ambulance?" he cried. "What with? I don’t even have a phone. You want me to leave my store? I’ll tell you something: they’d be in here stealing every goddam thing out of here. They’d clean me out. They’re out there right now, waiting for me to let up. Just a minute, just a second, is all it’d take. Bang! They’d be in here like that, and swarming all over, like bees over honey. Yes sir. Like bees over honey. They’d clean me out. They’re out there in the shadows, right now, waiting!"

I said, "I can’t walk to the hospital. I don’t even know where I am."

He said, "See? You don’t even know where you are. You admit it. So what are you doing in my store? Answer me that? So why don’t you just move along."

A woman’s voice called from upstairs. I couldn’t tell what she was saying, but the man understood, and he called back—without taking his eyes from me: "That’s all right, Honey. Everything’s under control!"

Then he said to me in a lower voice, talking faster: "That’s my wife. You better move on. She can’t stand the sight of blood. Goes all to pieces. She hates it even worse than I do!"

"I’m not drunk," I said.

The man looked surprised. He raised his heavy eyebrows, and said, "Who said you were? Did I say anything about drunk?"

"Where am I?" I said.

This made the man angry again. He said, "See what I mean? You don’t even know who you are. You don’t even know where you are. You don’t even know what you’re doing! Come on. Get a move on, before I bust your head open."

He hit the counter so hard with his club that it hurt the palms of my hands, which I had pressed against the edge. I had been leaning on the counter without realizing it.

Now I stood back and moved toward the door.

I said, "Where am I?"

I guess the man’s wife had called downstairs again, because he shouted, "It’s all right, Honey. He’s leaving."
I stepped outside, and now it was dark. I saw the letters on the street sign, but I couldn’t make out what they said. Several people were walking along the street here and there, but mostly they were in cars. The smell of carbon dioxide from the exhausts was strong and made the skin of my face feel hot and dry. A gust of wind rattled the dirty tassels of awning in front of my eyes.

I took two steps on the sidewalk and then stopped. Several times, I said in a loud voice, “What am I doing here?”

Then I thought of taking my wallet out. I could look in it to see who I was. The light that was shining through the windows of the confectionary was bright enough for me to read by. But as I reached into my pocket, the confectionary lights went out. I turned around and looked at the darkened windows, and I could see the outline of the proprietor’s head behind the window and the iron grill that protected it.

I walked on down the sidewalk towards a street light, but before I got there, two men stepped in front of me.

The first one said, “What are you doing here, Man?”

I said, “Who are you?”

The second one said, “I am the King of England, and this here’s my second cousin, the King of Russia.”

I said, “Russia doesn’t have a king.”

Then the first one said, “I think this is old smart ass who we just had a conversation with.”

The other one said, “Why, I believe you are telling the God’s solemn truth. It is old smart ass.”

“The bus driver,” the bearded one said, grabbing my tie.

“Who likes to dress up and wear ties,” the second one said.

The first one said, “He is the king of Smart Ass.”

The second one said, “Yes, I think you have identified him correctly. You get to hit him first.”

“Listen,” I said, “I forgot who I am.”

“You what?” the first one said, letting go of my tie.

“I can’t remember who I am,” I said. “I don’t remember anything. I don’t remember my name or even what I’m doing here.”

“We must’ve choked it out of him,” one of them said to the other one.

“You don’t remember nothing?” the first one said.

“No I don’t,” I said.

“This smart ass is crazy,” the first one said.

“Don’t let him fool you,” the second one said.
Then the first one clapped his hands together, like he was getting ready to go to work.

“What have we got here,” he said. He took the wallet out of my hand, and opened it up.

“Not much in the way of money,” the other one said.

“No, but at least this tells us who he is.”

“Who is he?”

“It says here, ‘King of the Smart Asses.’ ”

“Is that so? Well, it appears we were right.”

“So it does,” the first one said, throwing the wallet into the gutter.

The other one leaned over, but I couldn’t tell whether he picked up the wallet or not.

“Let’s not hit him no more,” he said, when he stood up. “My fist is getting sore.”

The other one said, “Okay. We’ll kick him instead.”

So one of them kicked me in the right hip, and I fell forward into the street. A car was coming, and it almost hit me. However, the driver honked his horn and swerved out of the way.

I didn’t move for a little bit, and by the time I did, the two men were gone. I reached all around me for my wallet, but it wasn’t there.

Another car honked as it went by, so I got upon the curb. I stepped up in front of a sign that said, “No parking or stopping anytime.”

Probably they had taken the wallet with them. I couldn’t even remember whether or not there was money in it.

I stood there for a few seconds, wondering which way they had gone. Now it was clear that I would have to find them. If I didn’t find them, I might never find out who I was. And if I didn’t find out who I was, I wouldn’t find out what I was doing here. Clearly, this was something I had to do right away.

I couldn’t go in both directions at once, so I continued in the direction I had been headed, hoping that this was a good guess.

By now, most of the stores were dark, but here and there a bar was open, or a laundromat, or a news stand.

As I walked past a bar, I stepped inside, and said in a loud voice, “I am not drunk.”

Several people in the booths paused and looked up at me. One man raised his glass in a toast, and said, “Neither am I.” Most of the people didn’t appear to notice me one way or another, however, so I left.

My head started hurting me, then. When I noticed it, an ambulance came by, with its siren whooping. All the cars pulled over to the
side to let it pass, and I went out into the street and called after the ambulance to stop, but it didn’t.

When I got back up on the sidewalk, I saw two men turn down a dark alley about a hundred yards ahead. I wasn’t sure, but they looked a little bit like the two men who had just beaten me up.

I hurried as fast as I could, and turned down the alley. It smelled like grease and old tires, and it was filled with a dim light from the moon overhead.

When I had taken a few steps, the two men stepped out of the shadows at the side, and met in front of me. I could see their faces a little bit, and they looked angry.

“What are you doing here?” one of them asked.

“He ain’t no retired bus driver,” the other one said. He was chewing on a toothpick, and after he said this he took the toothpick out of his mouth and dropped it on the ground.

“No, he lied to us.”

“He’s not King of the smart asses, either,” the first one said. His beard was coiled in the darkness, like dirty copper bushings.

“He ain’t king of anything smart,” the other one said. His voice didn’t sound right; it was like he was choking.

I said, “How about giving me my wallet back. You can keep the money.”

The first one said, “You think we want money? Is that it?”

The other one turned his head all around and looked at the dark brick walls. Then he said, “I’m scared. I wish we hadn’t never come up against this smart ass.

The first one said, “It’s too late now.”

“Too late for what?” the other one asked.

“All I want is my wallet back,” I said.

The first one said, “Man, you look awful.”

I said, “That’s because you beat me up. You probably broke my nose, and I know you broke my false teeth.”

The second one looked all around again, and said, “Let’s get out of here.”

The first one said, “And just where do you think we could go? Answer that?”

The second one hiccupped, and then he started crying. There was enough light from the street and the moon to see tears rolling down his face.

The first one whispered, “Stop that. You hear? Stop it.”
The second one said, "I can't."
The first one said, "Goddamit, Man, you got to! You hear?"
The second one nodded, but he didn't say anything.
Then the first one looked at me for a few seconds, and said, "Are you sure you don't know who you are? Or are you just shitting us?"
"I'm sure," I said.
The second one sniffed, and said, "Yeah, but can you believe him?"
I said, "Does it say who I am in my wallet?"
Just then the ambulance went by in the other direction on the street, its siren whooping as it went. The sound came and went almost as quickly as the beams of red light that had flashed briefly over the brick walls lining the alley.
Then it was silent, and I said, "What was the name in the wallet? You don't have to give it back to me. Just tell me what name is in there, so I will know who I am and where I am supposed to go."
The first one lowered his face and looked at me out of the tops of his eyes. Then he said, "Just what are you doing here?"
I said, "I don't know. If you tell me the name that's in the wallet, maybe I can remember. But I can't remember now."
The second one said to the bearded one, "Tell him it ain't the name. It ain't the name!"
Then the bearded one said to me, "Like he says, it ain't the name."
I said, "What are you talking about?"
"It ain't the name that bothers us," he said. "It's the picture."
I said, "Isn't it a picture of me?"
"Oh, it's a picture of you all right."
The other one said, "Show him! Show him!"
"All right," he said. "I will."
He threw the wallet down on the gravel, and I leaned over and picked it up.
"It's too dark to see in here," he said. "Take it out to the street. You can see it out there."
So I walked out, and then went a short way up the sidewalk to a street lamp. I opened the wallet, and there was a picture of a man covered with blood with his shirt torn open and his tie twisted all around his neck.
When I turned around, the two men were gone.
But shortly afterwards, a policeman came along and stopped to stare at me. He was chewing gum, just as the man in the confectionary had been. It gave him a busy, wholesome, efficient expression.
I just stared back at him, and finally he said, “What do you think you’re doing here?”
I didn’t answer him, so he came up and prodded me in the stomach with his club.
I said, “I’m looking for two men.”
He said, “What for?”
I said, “They are waiting for me to catch them.”
The cop shifted his club to his other hand, and said, “Now what is that supposed to mean?”
I said, “Also the man who owns that store down the block. The little confectionary with wooden floors. The man with heavy black eyebrows. He’s short and stocky.”
The policeman said, “What do you want him for?”
I said, “The same thing. He is expecting me to come back.”
The cop said, “I think you’re crazy. I’d better take you in. You got blood all over you, did you know that?”
I said, “Yes.”
“Well, you better move along is all I got to say.”
I said, “I don’t know where else to go.”
The cop stopped chewing his gum for a few seconds, and looked hard at me. Then he said, “Are you trying to cause trouble? Is that it?”
I told him I wasn’t trying to cause trouble.
He said, “Well, get a move on.”
I nodded and looked up above his head at the lights of a big airplane as it raced over the city.
Then the cop said, “What was it you meant, when you said those men were waiting for you to find them?”
“They want to know who I am. They want to see my picture.”
“Why don’t you just move along. Okay?”
He prodded me with his night stick and I started walking down the sidewalk again. When I was passing by the entrance to a dark alley, I heard someone hiss. I turned around, but I couldn’t see anybody.
Then a voice said, “Hey, old man. Hey, come here.”
I took one step toward the alley, and said, “What do you want?”
“You know who it is, don’t you?” the bearded man said.
I told him I did, and he said, “Come down the alley with us for a second, will you?”
I nodded and followed the two of them for a few steps. I couldn’t see their faces at all, now. But the second one seemed to be crying.
I could see that his hands were over his ears, as if he were afraid of hearing something I was going to say.

"Listen," the first one said. "My friend here is all uptight, Man. And it's your fault. You and that damn picture of yours."

"It wasn't my fault," I said. "You two wouldn't leave me alone. That's what you wanted, for me to look all bloody and broken up. It serves you right, is the way I look at it."

"I don't know what you mean by right, Man, but I want you to do something: I want you to forgive my friend here, so he can go to sleep at night. He's a real nervous cat, dig? Man, he ain't never going to be with it, unless you forgive him."

"Why should I forgive him?" I asked. "I'll tell you something: I don't have feelings about him, one way or the other. I don't have any grudge against him, but I don't forgive him, either."

He was quiet a moment, and then he said, "Man, that ain't enough. You forgot something: my friend here has seen that picture. That's the reason he's all uptight. I mean, he's afraid you're maybe God or some damn body. I mean, that picture, Man, was like it was just taken about a half minute before, because it showed you all bloody and messed up, just the way you was then."

I just stood there and laughed when he said that, and he said "What is it you find so damn funny, Man?"

I told him everything was funny, and his friend hiccupped.

Then he was quiet for a few seconds, and I could hear him breathing. Then the first one said, "Man, if you don't forgive my friend, here, he's going to lose his damn mind. And I ain't about to let that happen. So I'm telling you something: you forgive him, right now, or I'm going to bust your damn head open."

"I see," I said. "Man," he said, "you damn well better see."

"Okay," I said. "I forgive him."

"You hear that, dumb ass?" the first one said to the second one. "You hear that?" he repeated.

"Yeah, I hear," the second one said.

"All right, Man," the first one said. "That should do it. So why don't you just haul ass. Okay?"

I thought a moment, and then I said, "No, I don't have anything better to do. I'm a retired bus driver, and I've got nothing but time."

"You don't have nothing better to do than what?" he said.
"Than kind of keep tab on you fellows. You know, keep in touch."
The second one groaned.
"Man, you're crazy," the first one said.
The second one said. "Come on, let's get out of here."
The first one paused a second, and then he said, "No, not just yet. First, you tell me how you feel now."
"It ain't no better," the second one said, turning his head away.
"Come on, let's haul ass."
"You mean, it didn't help, this bus driver friend of ours forgiving you?"
"Nothing helps," the second one said. "Come on. I want to go someplace and vomit and be quiet. I'm scared, and I don't know what of. No shit."
"I know what of," the first one said. Then he hit me in the face again, and knocked me down. He started kicking me, and after the third or fourth kick, I heard the second one start in again. He was pulling the first one away from me.
The first one said, "How's come you pulling me off him, Man?"
The second one said, "I just want to get out of this place, is all."
"Yes, but let me give this old man a couple more kicks."
"No!" the second one screamed. "No, no, no!"
"What's the matter'th you?" the first one asked.
Then there was the sound of the second one breathing fast, as if he'd been running, and then his voice whispering, "Christ, man, don't you see? The picture. The picture!"
For an instant they were both quiet, and I could hear the first one breathing in and out. He must have been looking at me.
"I'll tell you something," he said. "He probably didn't forgive you anyway. He was probably just saying that to save his ass."
"That's right," the second one said. "Come on, let's get going."
They started walking away, and the last thing I heard was the first one saying, "You know something, Man? He lied to us."
Then everything was quiet, and after a while I sat up and looked all around to see where I was. If I could figure out where I was, then maybe I would know who I was and what I was doing here in the first place, and where it was I was supposed to be going.
I stood up and was surprised that I felt so light and that my head was so clear. All I could remember was the two of them, so I started walking down the dark alley, weaving from side to side and going very slowly, wondering where they could have gone.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

KENNETH BERNARD has published poetry, fiction, plays, and essays in major American literary journals. He is a member of the English faculty at Long Island University.

HORST BIENEK is a German poet and novelist who was born in 1930. He studied with Brecht in 1951 before being sentenced to hard labor in the Soviet Union for political reasons. He returned to West Germany in 1955 where he has published two collections of poetry and prose: Traumbuch eines Gefangenen (1957), was war was ist (1966), and a novel, Die Zelle (1968). His novel received the Rudolf Alexander Schröder Foundation prize.

MIEKE BRANDT works for the Dutch National Translation Institute, and is currently translating part of a series of Dutch novels and stories for the Twayne Publishing Co. Miss Brandt lives in Huntington, West Virginia.

AMALIA CORTINA A. is an Argentine artist. She had her first one-woman show in 1964, and since then has participated in many important exhibitions. Her paintings and drawings are included in private and public collections throughout the world. She also composes experimental poetry through figures and forms. Her first book is titled The Angel of the Chairs.

ROLAND COSTA-PICAZO is an Argentine poet, translator, and essayist. He has published articles and poetry in Argentine periodicals (La Nacion and Cormanor y delrin), and has translated poetry both into Spanish and English. His Spanish version of the collected poems of W. H. Auden with introduction and notes will be published this year by losada in Buenos Aires.

MANUEL DURÁN was born in Barcelona in 1925. He left Spain during the Civil War, and was educated in Mexico and the United States. He is currently Head of Graduate Studies in Spanish at Yale University. In addition to publishing his own poetry, Durán has continued to work in the area of Latin American writing as an editor, critic, and anthologist. His own volumes of poetry include Ciudad asediada (1954), La paloma azul (1959), El lugar del hombre, and most recently, La piedra en la mano (1970).

YANNIS GOUMAS was born in Athens, Greece in 1940. He was educated in Switzerland, England, and the United States. He is the author of one novel, one volume of verse, and has published two anthologies of Greek poets translated into English and French. In addition, he is a composer, actor, and a popular television personality in Athens. His poems and translations have appeared in many journals throughout the world.
J. S. HENRIKSSON published her first collection of stories, *De Werkelijkheid van Delta D*, in 1970. She has received several literary awards for her short stories. Miss Henriksson resides in The Hague.

PETER HUCHEL is an East German poet who was chief editor of the influential journal *Sinn und Form* from 1948-1962. He has received numerous awards for his poetry, which has been published in Czech, Hungarian, Polish, English and Italian. His two most recent books of poetry are: *Chausseen Chauseen* (1963), *Die Sternenreus: Gedichte 1925-47* (1967).

IVAN V. LALIĆ (1931), a Serbian poet, graduated from the Law School at the University of Belgrade. Since 1955 he has published eight collections of poetry. A book of his poems was recently published in the United States. He has also translated extensively from English.

K. CURTIS LYLE is a poet and playwright who is currently Writer-in-Residence at Washington University in St. Louis. He is a former member of the Watts Writers Workshop.

MIRKO MAGARASEVIĆ (1946) is one of the most promising young Serbian poets. To date he has published two books of poetry. He is studying medicine at the University of Belgrade.

JACK MATTHEWS is the author of many short stories, poems, and essays. His latest novel is *The Charisma Campaigns* (Harcourt Brace). Other novels, also published by Harcourt, are *The Tale of Asa Bean, Beyond the Bridge,* and *Hanger Stout, Awake!* One of Mr. Matthews' short stories, "On the Shore of Chad Creek," was included in *The O. Henry Prize Stories, 1972,* and another, "Another Story," appeared in *The Best American Short Stories, 1970.*

VASA D. MIHAIOLOVICH is an associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He has written numerous articles and reviews and prepared anthologies of Yugoslav and Russian literature.

HANS-WERNER NIESCHMIDT has published translations of contemporary German poets in various journals. He is Professor of German at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

ALWIN NIKOLAIS is the director of the "Alwin Nikolais Dance Theater." He was born on Nov. 25, 1912 in Southington, Conn. In 1929 he entered the dance class of Truda Kaschmann and became the director of the Hartford Parks Marionette Theater. In 1937 Nikolais started his own school and dance company in Hartford. The war interrupted his activities and he was stationed in Europe from 1942 to 1946. In 1948 he was invited to join the dance faculty of the Henry Street Settlement, and the following year was
named co-director of the Henry Street Playhouse. It was there that Nikolais started putting on his own productions. In the 1950's his company began to tour the country. It rapidly gained international fame, and today the "Alwin Nikolais Dance Theater" presents regular performances in numerous countries of the world. Most of Mr. Nikolais' time is spent with the company. The only big outside project he has accepted is a multi-media spectacular for Hamburg in 1972.

MIODRAG PAVLOVIĆ (1928) is a poet, playwright, short-story writer, and essayist. Pavlović and Vasko Popa are generally considered to be the most significant contemporary Serbian poets. He finished a School of Medicine degree but later turned exclusively to writing. He is an editor in the Belgrade publishing house Prosveta.

BRANISLAV PETROVIĆ (1937) is one of the most exciting younger Serbian poets. A graduate of the University of Belgrade, he now works as a professional writer. He has published three books of poetry.

VASKO POPA (1922) is one of the leading contemporary Serbian poets. He has been publishing poetry since 1953, and so far has written five books of poems. In 1967 he received the coveted Austrian Lenau Prize for literature. His poems have been translated into many languages and a book of his poems has appeared in the United States in the Penguin "Modern European Poets" series. Popa is an editor in the Belgrade publishing house Nolit.

BORISLAV RADOVIĆ (1935) is a Serbian poet who studied at the University of Belgrade and is now a professional writer. He has published four books of poetry.

M.A. SERNA-MAYTORENA is a Mexican poet and professor of Spanish-American literature at Ohio University. He is the author of a book of poetry, Silencio desnudo, which was published by the University of Guadalajara in 1968. He has also edited and introduced La múltiple, a play by Castillo Jiménez. He has also published critical studies and essays on poetry and prose in many Mexican journals.

LIJUBOMIR SIMOVIC (1935), a Serbian poet and essayist, has been publishing since 1958, and has written four volumes of poetry. He is an editor at the studios of Radio-Television Belgrade.

DON THOMPSON has published translations in Contemporary Literature in Translation and Pan American Review. A chapbook, Toys of Death, was recently published by Sono Nis Press. Mr. Thompson is currently working toward an M.A. degree in the creative writing department at the University of British Columbia.

BOŽIDAR TIMOTIJEVIĆ (1932) studied literature at the University of Belgrade, and more recently he has served as an editor at various magazines and publishing houses in Belgrade. He has published six books of poetry, including some volumes for children.
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