

SAMPLE  
TRANSLATION

GAŠPER TORKAR  
PROLONGED STAY  
SELECTED POEMS

PUBLISHED BY: LUD LITERATURA, 2014

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ORIGINAL TITLE: PODALJŠANO BIVANJE

NUMBER OF PAGES: 88

## Gašper Torkar: Prolonged stay

### Selected Poems

#### BIO

Gašper Torkar was born in Novo mesto in Slovenia. He is currently studying sociology and philosophy in Ljubljana. In 2013 his first collection of poems entitled *Prolonged stay* came out and was nominated for the best debut book/first collection at the Slovene book fair.

## Writing Unto Solitude

I would've had to discover poetry by age thirty,  
have had my first child with my second wife,  
gone bankrupt a third time, tried to ruin someone,  
to know what I was missing out on when alone.  
Don't forget what you are fighting for : that  
silence you allow others to break into.  
Trust, so you can hear them say :  
Now you've opened up to us, right ? You spoke  
and we listened to you. We listened to you  
and it was important and you deserved this  
after years of silence, after years of listening  
to our screaming, which we'll turn back to  
as jauntily as to a walk in spring time,  
while all these words will pain you like  
the stillness at the end of The Graduate.  
Or a perverse interest in suffering.  
When I am quiet, I hide nothing.  
When I am quiet, I reveal myself to the core.  
I have nothing left, not even my lucky matches,  
not even feeling jaded by a new melody,  
or the twelve-steps list of anonymous alcoholics :  
4.) we will undertake a thorough and fearless inventory  
of our moral state of being. I'm not prepared  
to surrender myself to the hidden hope  
that in fact we are perfectly fine. I hope  
we are mortal, that death comes as soon as it can  
and without discrimination. No, that's not what  
I wanted to say, I was angry & sorry to be so.  
That in all the days of our life we would admit  
to ourselves whenever we totally fucked up, today too.  
But now it's already dark outside & once more I've written  
myself to white-out. Somebody came & walked the dog  
so I'm alone in the house again, feeling quiet and calm  
like a smoker after a cigarette, like after the end  
of the poem.

## More

for K., 1 January 2013, 04.54

*The government is corrupt  
and we're on so many drugs with the radio on / and the curtain is drawn.  
GY!BE, The Dead Flag Blues*

Perhaps I would only want to remember summer days  
when the tree fell asleep, leaning against my back,  
or those hours when with soap in my palms I'd try to  
wash away my face as an excuse that the day is done

and that tomorrow it's all going to be different again,  
in need of renewal and tears between two wrecked cars.  
Turn on the radio so we can hear what happened between our eyes,  
in front of which occasionally in the darkened cinema hall,

the beaming face of Willem Dafoe came swaying in.  
The vomiting of the Portuguese flag on the road's edge  
forced you to think about your own death and parents  
who don't even know you scraped all the dust off the table

and shoved it into all the mucus membranes of your body.  
We were scientifically-mystical, biochemical, poetico-  
physical, to each other and also to ourselves.  
We danced longer. And hid out in the latrines.

Perhaps it is then (now) that hope starts  
for all possible survivals of the apocalypse  
that would make of these days merely feverish dreams,  
before the world breaks like the jam centre of a biscuit.

It is always others who die. The others in ourselves.  
While we are falling in love with days we cashed in  
with the return to our bed. Only then are we  
allowed to break down and fall ill and cry like in films

because the only thing we recognized in these days  
is the emerging memory that will endure, glow and hit you.

We were lucky to be born into this later period  
(like everyone before us), it gives us entry to

a sadness that others were unfamiliar with. But leaning  
through the rainy window you don't have the impression you  
are in the desert, unless that is its darkness on the other side of  
the street. We're in the twenty-first century & no one really knows

what that means. New York is without electricity & under water.  
Everyone is leaving for abroad & we've squandered other possibilities.  
Still we don't know from where such thoughts come, when it rains  
and the cities are filled with people who know that the world

in their hands will only last until the end of vulnerability  
and covert amazement and only till the end of the night.  
When I was able to breathe deeply and go for a walk:  
past the trees, market square and fountains, past the graffiti :

tatoos on the skin of the town telling us every time anew  
a story that sometimes, but more often not, contains the two of us.  
We have found the time and found the skin by the pale light  
and hair longer than ours, and all the sexual organs

and blood and worries and hair and wounded animals and fear  
and innocence and searching and music and each other  
and apparitions between the world and ourselves. All this laid  
into a gift that we'd never recognize from the outside.

## Palladium

I'd almost forgotten the sacred nonsense of the world.

(‘senselessness/absurdity’) (lahko tudi absurdity)

Where it begins and where it ends. As a poem does.

You want to say : we were there, but we didn't have

control over our verbs, they came and went

so naturally. As with really good poems.

I'd almost forget the beginning, the sand pit

and where it ends. I was convinced that I could stop

and that the glass would hold up under my small body.

Now I know : there the cracks are opening & also for

the time back then. The world's not forgotten; I'm coming

back with a slow, calm step, as though all the gentleness

I can muster gestures towards the peak of my powers

while pure concentration courses through my body.

The poem is such a space of poise. Lunch is [»place of focus« also good]

done with, and teas drunk, the chapter read.

Time for new shifts to new spaces.

We'll have to sit on the bench

and send a page a life off

on the digital sheet. But adress ourselves how ?

Like poems; they start from nothing & end with us.