

SAMPLE  
TRANSLATION

MILAN DEKLEVA  
AUDREY HEPBURN, CAN  
YOU HEAR THE BROOM  
OF THE BUDDHIST  
STUDENT?

PUBLISHED BY: CANKARJEVA ZALOŽBA, 2008

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ORIGINAL TITLE: AUDREY HEPBURN, SLIŠIŠ METLO  
BUDISTIČNEGA UČENCA?

NUMBER OF PAGES: 75

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Milan Dekleva: Audrey Hepburn, Can You Hear The Broom Of  
The Buddhist Student?  
Selected Poems

12:

as long as there is the word,  
the mountain will stand  
respectful in its height.

the splatter of waves will be touched upon  
by the fragrance of apricots, a gentle  
horror. sea currents will be guided  
by women,

whereas distance—

what can be said about events beyond the  
horizon of experience,  
as long as there is the word?

15:

dangerous is that day  
when the door creaks doubly,  
to exit and to enter.  
with us awaiting the strike of cold into the chest already contracted.

we're the roaming unrestrained by any faith  
(so i read in a book).  
is forlornness therefore more original  
than a pledge?

about forlornness, a liberty stripped to the  
bone, we speak  
if we have a home  
with a forgetful love locked in.

16:

in vain I seek tenderness, having frightened it badly.

(which is, of course, a metaphorical exaggeration.)

a cool, metallic trembling of cold.

in ecstasy, a state of displacement,

the feeling that a dry, crumpled leaf

has touched the truth.

20:

things are cute, embraced by myths  
and dreams of grandfathers,  
titillating in the light of the past,  
desolation, and death.

in the exposure of being,  
to the sun of the devastated skies  
things seem alive,  
revengeful, and cruel.

poems singing about the banal  
are poems about banality.  
poems rising above banality  
are banal poems.

the former are cute and dead, the latter cruel and alive.

25:

in autumn things are filled with silence,  
thus we can hear the distance: the cry of a cat  
hardened by love like rusk,  
a damp, watery look  
in ancestors' wedding pictures.

we're cold,  
because our hearts are becoming wind turbines,  
turning corn stubble into dry prose,  
yet only for a second, a surface of semblance.

the gigantic palm is quickly approaching.  
we don't know: will it crack us? protect us?  
we don't know. only we're growing warmer  
in this tightening anxiety.

22:

the magical silence in the poppy heads!  
a field full of starlings' laughter  
and a distant view of the freeway.

the mistresses out of breath, the sun delayed,  
the time of the unfaithful elapsing.  
somebody, hair unkempt, is fighting for life,  
while the screen is flashing with  
poppy heads.

7:

there's a sword somewhere, too keen in a hideous hand,  
elsewhere a kiss blunted into the rustiness of a stranger,

endeavour is travelling, getting tangled in the naked stars,  
the five-times-burnt-over black gore of a corpse pressing to the floor.

tourists are licking the replica of david's sling,  
socrates is digital, all white and stiff from hemlock.

nobody is nothing but the shadow of their name,  
before the final poem are mooses and the burning bush.

god is having a hard time. who would wish to be  
definite in everything without suffering for anything?

i am you, i am him, standing on the edge of a wood  
in the abundance of beauty, as kitschy as a nut roll,

as empty as eternity. i know not what i am,  
yet it's too much already being here. i'm leaving.



29:

on a tight platform of nighttime silence  
i'm awakened by a newspaper page.  
like a stray moth it brushes against my cheek.  
in its top right-hand corner above  
a pink line I read:  
sunrise 6:24 am, sunset 7:32 pm.  
what a moving local schedule  
at a countryside station  
of a provincial galaxy!

24:

in the nearness of death, there's  
little reality; pure illusions,  
actors wildly making love, headless,  
with tiny suns in their bellies.

age is the most human  
and most natural of all.  
more and more errors,  
a more and more bewildered rhythm of time

moving onward, onward, onward.  
in fall with a scythe and in spring  
with dew on the swollen shirt of seeds.

28:

i can still remember the white  
blossoms of the chopped-down cherry tree.  
knowing now that sensibility  
is no contest of affection,  
no criterion applicable to the living.  
sensibility is a comparison  
bringing us closer to  
infinity,  
leaning over us like a mother,  
observing.  
at times kissing us,  
enchanted.

31:

the tips of the larches radiating  
in the cool november morning.  
how strange that the feeling of beauty  
has nothing to do with  
the creator's grand plan,  
but rather the evolutionary lag  
of conifers.  
is a lag  
the germ of divine play with man?

39:

i'm watching the little smile on the lips  
of your little granddaughter  
who you're tickling with love,

feeling the depth of time  
that brought us together,

the magnificent violet absence  
of your young shoulders among the pines,  
the sediment of luck in the cups  
of the failed moments,  
the heroism of days wasted.

and then what? we exchanged them  
for little shudders of devotion  
and unreasonable trust.

i'm watching the smile on the little lips,  
as thankful and transparent as water.

40:

we wear death like a cotton  
t-shirt:  
plenty of colors, a screaming sign.  
we loved each other even prior to this,  
and will in the future:  
when the maple sheds its leaves,  
it doesn't sell them,  
it gives them away to the spring  
impatience.

41:

i can't comprehend our complexity.  
i have no other word for love,  
i wrap myself around you into old age.

the sky is ever higher  
but our aspirations refuse to go dry.

42:

there's a difference between dying and wanting  
to renounce the beauty of the world.

an inhuman difference.

you're giving me one breath after another,  
but me –  
a mute, overgrown path.



46:

the effort in the apples,  
the yellow feeling that it's enough,  
that ripening is neither a pain  
nor a fulfillment.

together we stepped onto the threshold of the evening,  
suddenly quivering in a world too big –  
illusions are quick!

the fragrant apples  
are drying on the windows of the soul –  
spring is already far behind  
and it's hard to return from a distance.

55:

subscribed to miracles  
(C.O.D.),  
we're waiting impatiently  
with nowhere to store our sighs.

the coughing little men, besprinkled  
with the dew of a beijing summer night,  
lying on mattresses,  
had a mountain of patience in their eyes.

they had nobody to deliver  
the miracles to them,  
I had to step over them with care.

44:

rain is more than rain.  
the sky is more than sky,

yet only in the moments when love  
flows away into solitude  
when our hands stand in the way in a skin too tight.

66:

do you speak internet? a billboard assertively  
asks me alongside the road.

i speak the shadow on the lung,  
the footbridge stretched above the moon in the pond,  
the bedding in the abandoned stable,  
i speak what speech gives me,

strings of infinity  
in the tiny throats of words.

i speak less than love does  
because i'm still learning it,  
the entire sequences of forgotten fellini films,  
my mother's glance at my little hand  
that she's taking for a walk in barcola.

i speak the language that created me,  
thus encoding into myself a system of liberty,  
of mistakes and coincidences,  
i speak behind everybody  
to be the first to hurry into a poem,

i speak more than necessary,  
which is itself  
a posted nonsense.

70/71:

when you pull Bg2, making the bishop's eyes  
water in the draft of the longest diagonal,  
it strikes me that never in my life  
have I learned to lose,  
which is very funny  
because life is a chronotopia of defeats.

while sitting outside a small café  
in delft, catching the sun, hoping  
the shadow of the old church wouldn't fall  
on us, we laughed like mad. even the locals,  
used to everything, sitting on the thresholds  
of their houses would suspiciously  
observe the tears we persistently  
kept wiping away.

everything was funny: the wobbly,  
tied-around-the-waist facades, the creased  
yapping of puppies, the smoky facets of  
young backpackers' pupils  
and the deep blueness of vermeer's paintings  
solely resulting from the fact that, in delft,  
the sky floats at the height of one's eyes.

the funniest of all was our smiling,  
because it was no game or trip,  
but weightlessness of the existence  
in the total blackout of the cosmic center,  
into which we had  
happily  
slipped  
together.