

Krešimir Bagić
A Language For Every Distance
Translated from Croatian by Mario Suško

A Palm Sways

A palm sways, and an olive tree sways with it.
Jacques Chirac and I wear the same tie.
He, around his neck, I, in my pocket.

I won't tell you my name,
for the one who doesn't recognize me
deserves every possible disdain.

A palm sways, and the sea sways with it.
Jacques Chirac and I read the same papers.
He, politics, I, the sport section.

When I was conceived, my dad drank down his sadness,
and my mother beat her belly in anger.
Despite all that, I turned out damn well.

A palm sways, and a seagull sways with it.
Jacques Chirac and I like the same yogurt.
He in the evening, I in the morning.

Like every unwanted child,
I learned the street lingo right away,
and that of the sailors, dock women, dollars.

A palm sways, and a tiger sways with it.
Jacques Chirac and I make the same statements.
He to those on the right, I, on the left.

That Slovenian has put it well:
even the communists sat in the same chairs
like other people. And used the same stairways.

A palm sways, and Velodromes with it.
Jacques Chirac and I do not know each other.
He roots for PSG, I am all for OM.

The day of the game I set the sea on fire first,
then the stadium seats. I am an arsonist fed
by the gulls screeching and the lions roaring.

A palm sways, and the arsonist sways with it.
Why have I mentioned Chirac in the first place?
Because of mercifulness and innate goodness.

For: I am perfect, I am a genius,
the Americans study my brain texture
for a new generation of computers.

A palm sways, and the genius sways with it.
When I win the league championship with my OM,
this continent will bear my name.

I will not tell you my name is Rolland Coubris,
for the one who has not recognized me yet
deserves every possible disdain.

A Donkey then a Star

Blaž told two stories. About a donkey then a star.

The first story, that about a donkey: there was a donkey
walked along the meadow, looking around, laughing and singing,
and all the animals followed him, but having lowered his eyes
he noticed a screw was missing from his sneaker, so he grew
very sad and cried, cried, and cried...

The second story, that about a star: once upon a time
there was a star fell into the fire, hurt itself and got
ill, so it went to a doctor, told him what ailed it and
turned off the lamp on his desk, which made the doctor
angry and refuse to treat the star...

Blaž told two stories. About a donkey then a star. And he
went to bed. His parents looked at each other lovingly
and turned on the tv.

Journey into Lightness

the air steals its lightness from my eyes
it's all right we are friends
whistling we conquer space
and return it to its beginning

we already taught a bird to be a holiday
to sleep while flying so we can feel
its feathers just like we do the leaves
in the wind
like we do redness in a fever

my breath goes back to an old mountain well
we drink ourselves there darkly
we embrace each other in the depth
we resemble each other like a drop and a thought
in the desert where no one could be an oasis

the air devastated my eyes
and now watches its mountain spring
become its body
itself become suddenly clear and cold
plain as an arrow shot at the sun

in return I stole its lightness
the earth lost its weight
words lost their weight
the space turned into a round dot

first I say a "bird"
then the bird says "I"
later on everything becomes possible

later on I-bird
can begin everything
everything that is not heavy

The Crystal

I watch a crystal on this dear moss-grown
face. Healthy green color inhabits my look
and veins. Long live the sky without clouds
and threatening smiles, I think, repeating
that piously and softly like a prayer.

The crystal, while I watch, goes from green
to blue, red, white... And the face? It vanishes,
sinks into a shadow, its features melt, go back
to childhood. I come closer, step back, squint.
I draw a rainbow in the dust no child runs under.
The sky is cloudless, without threatening smiles.

An impossible space grows impossibly fast.
No eyes of mine in the mirror any more, or the nose,
the hands, left eyebrow... Everything has become poetry.

-A flower slipped off my shoulder and fell into the water,
a traveler I keep admiring consoles me.

-Man, the sky blossomed up like April, I say,
and you talk about a shoulder you, in fact, do not have.

At the end the dust also inhabits the crystal
the forest we got lost in
never to return,
never to get separated again.
Is it possible for anyone to endure that?

