

Poems, written in Slovenia during the work in the writers' residence in Ljubljana as part of the program «Ljubljana – UNESCO City of Literature»

Gala Uzryutova

Translation of Tobias Kite

we can say these things don't exist, we can deny everything.
anyway we talk about the intangible, and this can't be verified.
we can not return to the previous state – to the normal circle,
our salvation is to invent a new wheel to spin it,
and live the way we didn't live before.
but at one time it will not be the same, and we will not return to what it was.
we are not a nation of protest, says the Slovenian philosopher,
it's not in our nature.
frequent helicopters over Tivoli remind of the sky,
the flatland reminds conservatives, the mountains – leftist,
but there is no shouting in the mountainous country.
go out to the flatland – say,
go to the mountains – say,
the voice sounds different, although the words are the same.
these things do not exist, but we can deny it

to understand the Slovenian, you don't have to learn the language, you have to learn the hiking,
the local explains to me on the bus.
I climb the hills again and again,
I climb the hills again and again,
I climb the hills again and again,
the locals wave hiking sticks, as a weapon,
no vertex will stand.
there is an obstacle for everyone here,
you just choose it by your size and overcome it,
then you can choose more difficult obstacle and to overcome it,
without even making a victorious scream, without telling anyone about the conquest of a new
land,
but simply drinking a radler on a top
and going down silently,
quiet knights with a saluki on a leash.
rising to the next hill, I feel like I'm getting smaller and smaller,
and Slovenia – bigger and bigger.

it seems, it will never end.

I check – no, my shoes are still tight, I didn't decrease.

but the pants are already sagged – I need to be on the alert.

don't rush – the mountains will not go anywhere.

what is above is always seems closer than it is

For Tina,

who said to me

«I can't believe you went to Domžale»*

how to find a way out of your own house

to at least get mail?

the postman has already put the yellow bike on the porch

screaming

pošta! pošta!**

how to find a way out of your own house

go to the sound of his voice

pošta! pošta!

right left or straight

pošta! pošta!

which side is louder?

pošta! pošta!

there is someone's house everywhere you go

Domžale is everywhere

pošta! pošta!

when you come here

you straightway find other people's houses

when you live here, you still need to search for your own home

have you brought me the letter today, Dragan?

*Domžale (Slovenian) – the small city near Ljubljana, Slovenia

** pošta! pošta! (Slovenian) – mail! mail!

each Slovenian has two centimeters of the sea shore
per person – just two, can you imagine?
the girl explains in the Ljubljana center
reporting into the microphone
our population is two million
the length of the sea line is 46 kilometers
two centimeters of shore per person
if she had a megaphone
she could lead the demonstration
for a kilometer of the sea coast for each
but she's leading the city tour further

the big will never be bigger than the very big
she fits in the old red Volvo
which is located in the city of Škofja Loka*
which is located in Slovenia
this is the way we live
the way we are arranged
the way everything is arranged by matryoshka principle
the way it unfolds
the way it taken out
Škofja Loka Škofja Loka children shout
as if repeating the old counting
repeating the bells chanting
you lead
and I stay here
the small will never be smaller than the smallest

* Škofja Loka – the small medieval town in Slovenia

you need to be very brave to live in such silence
which amplifies all your sounds all your voices by several times
you even didn't set foot
and they already recognize you by the shuffling of old shoes

a child is not even born yet
and everyone already says what a loud like his father
the rooster has not yet crowed
and you already woke up
standing on a hill and you hear
the incomprehensible rattle
that is chattering, shaking the air
does anyone else hear this?
or does every sound have an address?
maybe it was delivered to me by mistake?
anyone?
finally at the foot of the hill you notice a girl
leading the scooter behind her – the rattling steed
she is jumping on it and the rattle is turning into a gallop
apples roll down a hill and turn right you turn left
if you say a word you will be found
because your voice is not as wheezing as Tomage's one
and not as rough as Marco's one
not as husky as Aleshe's one
but previously unheard here
do you recognize it by yourself?
- dober dan*
- good day

*dober dan (Slovenian) – good day

when it's midday in Stanjel* and people disappear,
the rustling of lizards is only heard.
they cross the road,
clink glasses in the cafe,
climb the walls,
pick grapes.
welcome to Stanjel, they repeat to those
who climbed the hill, and give their tails.
tear off and make a wish out loud,
tomorrow the tails will grow back again.
do lizards ever come down from the hill?
will at least one of them slide down
to the train station supervisor?

I was the only one who went out of the empty train here,
she was the only one who met me here.
but lizards crawl higher and higher,
I am tearing off the tail
and going down to the train tracks,
it's two more hours to the Ljubljana train.
someone is learning the Italian melody on the trumpet,
the wild vine is rustling the tile,
the tail is waiting in my hand.
the supervisor smokes, puts on a red hat, meets the train,
smokes and answers the phone,
smokes, puts on a red hat, meets the train.
if you had your own lizard,
would you tear off her tail every day,
watching the way it grows,
the way your desires grow?
I am handing the tail to the supervisor and getting into the train coach,
I do not hear what desire she made
because of the train noise, beating to the Russian rap beat from the teens's speaker

*Stanjel is a village in the Municipality of Komen in the Littoral region of Slovenia, located on the Karst Plateau