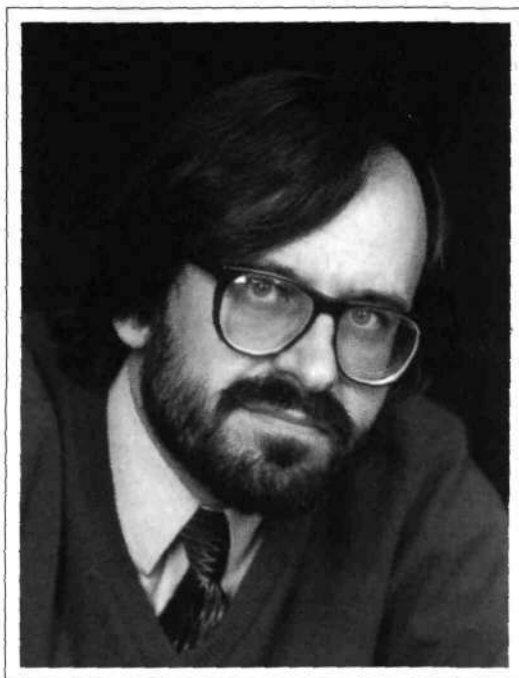


DJORDJEVIĆ, Milan



Milan Djordjević, born in 1954 in Belgrade, Serbia, is a poet, short story writer, essayist and translator. He has received numerous fellowships: The Heinrich Böll Foundation Fellowship and The Heinrich Böll House Residency, both in Germany; Fellowship of KulturKontakt, Vienna, Austria; The Civitella Ranieri fellowship, Italy, and The Fellowship of Maison des Écrivains Étrangers et des Traducteurs Saint-Nazaire, France. He has published the following collections of poetry: *With Both Sides of the Skin*, 1979, *Fly and Other Poems*, 1986, *Mummy*, 1990, *Amber and Garden*, 1990, and *Desert*, 1995. Also a book of short stories, *Mud and Clarity*, 1997, and a book of essays, *Flowers and Jungle*, 2000.

Milan Djordjević, rođen 1954. godine u Beogradu. Pjesnik, pripovjedač, esejist, prevoditelj. Primio je više nagrada: The Heinrich Böll Foundation Fellowship i Heinrich Böll House Residency, obje u Njemačkoj; Fellowship of KulturKontakt, Beč, Avstrija; The Civitella Ranieri fellowship, Italija, The Fellowship of Maison des Écrivains Étrangers et des Traducteurs Saint-Nazaire u Francuskoj. Objavio zbirke poezije *Sa obe strane kože*, 1979, *Muva i druge pesme*, 1986, *Mumija*, 1990, *Čilibar i vrt*, 1990, *Pustinja*, 1995, kratku prozu *Glib i vedrina*, 1997, i zbirku eseja *Cveće i džungla*, 2000.

MILAN DJORDJEVIĆ

Answers

You are trying to get the answers to your questions because you don't know who you are, where you are coming from and where you are going? You are trying to get exact answers in dreams of the Old Testament, in the unclear memories.

But, maybe the answers are in swallows of red wine whose dry taste is taking you to a bunch of grapes or to red earth of a Mediterranean island or the green banks of the Danube.

Maybe the answers are in the intoxication of inhaled smoke of Afghanistan hashish or in whitish houses on Tunisia's seashore, maybe in the wet insides of some mussel?

Or in the groaning of a woman, in all fevers and pleasures?
But those are not answers, those are not any answers.
The answers are in things that you will do, blind man!

They are maybe in the cutting of a tree in a Belgrade garden, in the squeezing of cherries that colour fingers a dark red?
Or they are in you, because you'll kill a friend in the next war.

And maybe one night, after a long storm, you'll discover in some lonely house next to the furious Atlantic that this world is a story narrated by someone very, very forgetful.

Someone who never repeats the story, someone who never, never will come, though people are inviting him, though they are waiting for him, as the burned Gobi is waiting for hot rain to fall.

The Painter

For Amy Sillman

Someone came from Eastern Europe, let's say, from Russia, someone
with bundles under the board of a ship, someone crossed the stormy Atlantic.
Someone fed people bread and bore a child who'll bear the painter.

The painter will feed herself with colours, with open eyes will look at the green
of tender Umbria and on the white will merge the colours of the hills and
sunflowers,
on the blue windows will draw the bunch of grapes, desperately will draw

the masculine and the feminine bodies, the interwoven meat, trees and plants.
All of us are frozen objects of history and we laugh, and cough, sneeze,
we all talk,
eat salmon, a green salad and lick ice cream, drink wine, stare at bright screens.

All of us are seeking a most sunny refuge or some rest in a forest clearing.
We are coming from wars or nightmares, from family triumphs or
shipwrecks.
We illuminate dark, untie terrible knots and cheer each other up.

We are coming from all parts of the world and we are looking at everything
with open eyes.

We are touching the moist noses of a dog, cat and nostrils of a white horse to feel
the world, to overcome fear, madness and death by giving them forms and
colours.

Translated by the author and Amy Sillman

Raven-haired Beauty

To Biljana Srbljanović

This simple poem is for you, raven-haired beauty.
This poem I dedicate to your sleepy eyes.
Long, I know, are the nights of solitude, wakefulness and insomnia.

Maybe listening to the sound of the washing machine
really is the same as listening to the beating of the heart,
the thunder of guns or the sound and the fury of history.

Days are stuffy or sunny darkrooms
which open their small and large doors
I walk through them and think of you.

And I see how you tremble over the words on paper
like a mother over a newly-born baby
who one day will have to leave her.

Not all of our comedies and tragedies have been played out,
not everything has been said or done, fragile raven-haired beauty,
the Laura of Belgrade, but the decline goes on.

While the ocean washes over the sands of Brittany,
I think of your fighting spirit and well-defined beauty,
of your sparkling and feverish eyes.

Real strength is in laughter, gentleness and love,
not in the crimes of leaders and idiocies of soldiers,
priests and voluble government poets.

This strength perhaps cannot move mountains,
nor heal wounds and stop the war or bloodshed,
but it can light the way through our darkness.

I know that you, too, have this strength, raven-haired beauty.
Not all plays of light and darkness have been played out.
Not everything has been said of our fall, which still goes on.

Translated by Evald Flisar

MILAN DJORDJEVIĆ

Odgovori

Tražiš odgovore na svoja pitanja, jer ne znaš ko si, odakle dolaziš i kuda ideš? Tražiš tačne odgovore u snovima iz Starog zaveta, u nejasnim sećanjima.

Ali, možda su odgovori u gutljajima crnog vina čiji te opori ukus vodi do grozda ili crvenice sredozemnog ostrva ili do dunavskih zelenih obala.

Možda su odgovori u opojnosti udahnutog dima avganistanskog hašiša ili u beličastim kućama u primorju Tunisa, možda u vlažnoj utrobi dagnje?

Ili u ječanju žene, u svim groznicama i slastima? Ali to nisu odgovori, to nisu nikakvi odgovori. Odgovori su ono što ćeš učiniti, slepi čoveče!

Oni su možda u posecanju stabla u beogradskoj bašti, u gnječenju ploda višnje što prste boji tamnocrveno? Ili su u tebi, jer u idućem ratu usmrtićeš prijatelja.

A možda ćeš jedne noći, posle dugotrajne olujine, u samotnoj kući kraj razjarenog Atlantika otkriti da je svet priča koju je izgovorio neko zaboravan.

Neko ko priču nikada ne ponavlja, neko ko baš nikada, nikada neće doći, mada ga prizivaju, mada ga uvek čekaju, kao što spržena Gobi čeka da topla kiša na nju pada.

Crnokosa

Biljani Srbljanović

Ova jednostavna pesma je za vas, crnokosa.
Ovu pesmu upućujem vašim snenim očima.
Znam, duge su noći samoće, bdenja i nesаницe.

Možda je slušanje rada mašine za pranje veša
stvarno isto što i osluškiivanje otkućaja srca,
grmljavine topova ili buke i besa istorije.

Dani su zagušljive ili osunčane tamnice
koje otvaraju svoja mala i velika vrata
pa kroz njih prolazim i mislim na vas.

I vidim kako drhtite nad rečima na hartiji
kao majka nad novorođenom decom
što će jednog dana morati da je napuste.

Sve naše tragedije i komedije nisu odigrane,
nije sve rečeno i učinjeno, krhka crnokosa,
beogradska Lauro, a propadanje se produžava.

Dok okean zapljuskuje pesak Bretanje,
mislim na vašu borbenost i oštru lepotu,
na grzničavost i blistanje vaših očiju.

Istinska snaga je u smehu, nežnosti i ljubavi,
a ne u zločinama vođa i gluposti vojnika,
sveštenika i brbljivih državnih pesnika.

Ta snaga možda ne može pomeriti planine,
niti zalečiti rane i zaustaviti rad ili krvarenje,
ali može osvetliti put kroz naše pomrčine.

Znam, i u vama je ta snaga, lepa crnokosa.
Još nisu odigrane sve igre svetlosti i mraka.
o našem padu nije sve rečeno, on i dalje traje.