



Bogomil Gjuzel, born in 1939 in Čačak, is a Macedonian poet, essayist, prose writer, playwright, translator. Poetry collections: *Mead*, 1962, *Alchemical Rose*, 1963, *Peace Bearers*, 1965, *The Well in Time*, 1972, *The Wheel of the Year*, 1977, *Reality is All*, 1980, *Siege*, 1981, *Empty Space*, 1982, *Darkness and Milk*, 1986, *Destroying the Wall*, 1989, *Naked Life*, 1994, *Chaos*, 1998. He lives and works in Skopje.

Bogomil Gjuzel, rođen u Čačku 1939. godine, pjesnik, dramatičar, putopisac, esejist, antologičar i prevoditelj. Zbirke pjesma: *Medovina* (1962), *Alhemiska ruža* (1963), *Mironosci* (1965), *Bunar v vremeto* (*Bunar u vremenu*, 1972), *Trkalo na godinata* (*Točak godine*, 1977), *Stvarnosta e se* (*Stvarnost je sve*, 1980), *Opsada* (1981), *Prazan prostor* (*Prazan prostor*, 1982), *Mrak i mleko* (1986), *Rušejski go sidot* (*Rušeći zid*, 1988), *Gol život* (*Goli život*, 1993) i *Kaos* (1998). Živi i radi u Skoplju.

BOGOMIL GJUZEL

The End as Renaissance

The circle closing

Who throws you the rope?
Time itself, the season for change ...
Your own country.

You have stepped into it
tied your feet only
to swim the Adriatic
and sink like a torpedoed hull
to the bottom
stone-cold drunk

You have organized terrorist cells
with safe-houses in your body
beginning to explode

You have placed the noose
around your neck this perpetual halo
that hangs around you
now just a matter of time
when you will hang suspended
above an open pit

An Island in Land

"... the Republic of Macedonia is a landlocked country ..."

Who claims we have no sea?

Perhaps not now, dabbling at the threshold,
but once we had it roaring past the front porch
until it ran suddenly underground, taking our homes
and some of us as well, while the rest were shipwrecked.

How can we live without it?

Pushed farther inland, linked by loss,
we breathed it far across the mountain peaks.
White, blue, or black – always different,
always alike ... and we could touch it.

It's still here, locked in cavernous depths and cellars:
its tide bellows in our dreams, drifts us on the shores of the real:
its salt is drought, and the skies are bottomless high seas ...
Our country is an island left by the one Flood, on land,
a glacier caught among rocks softly melting our desires

for the antediluvian Ocean, too many traces left inside us.
This torrent, heaving thunders in our veins,
finally drinks in our salty blood. We, too,
suffer for spilling the blood of brothers.
What else could explain why the sea is so unfit to drink?

Translated by Peter H. Liotta

To my ex-Yugoslav Friends from FYROM*

How will we meet again, my friends?
Will we recognize ourselves, how
we are what we always were?

It startles me, for example, to see your faces
in the newspapers and journals
that are still available here, with articles

about or by you. How much older
you've become in these years, how
changed by all the meanwhile, mostly war.

Each of us knows it in a different way.
Hiding in a cellar, exposed to some internal
opposition. Only time accelerates in space,

fragmenting all our borders. We
are bastards in the quarrel's wake
among our European stepfathers

in world capitals, as our forefathers
were: coteries of tribe, nation, state ...
We speak our monologues to God

or to the grave. God, how my own face,
grown old, pulls the broken bits together
like a magnet. You can't see me,

perhaps – perhaps you never will.
We have eternity to catch up
with each other and our work.

We'll face each other on the Judgment Day
and pluck our eyes in disbelief,
drinking at the club named *Who Was Right?*

*FYROM is an acronym for the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia."

Dead Christ

*After the painting by Hans Holbein Jr.,
(1522) and the interpretation of Julia
Christeva**

They've just taken him down from the cross:
he is a corpse like any other corpse
bluish, cold, suddenly grown old, diminished, dried
with blackened wounds instead of nails

Perhaps they saw him like that – his mother,
Mary Magdalene, his disciples, the future apostles, etc.
“How could they believe that he would rise again?”
Hypolite asks himself (i.e. Dostoyevski himself in *The Idiot*)
“They must've run away in horrible fear ...”

Just as he would've run away
from the cross if he'd known
that he would really die crucified
and forsaken by his Father (“My God, My God, why hast thou
forsaken me?”)
that he would be taken down from the cross like a simple corpse

But only the truly dead Christ could rise
“from the gruesome abyss of sin and hell” (Calvin)
and through the death of his old body
could he make room for the eternally new and the communion
of the faithful

Though “God is dead, God himself is dead!” (cries Hegel)
His sacrifice is the “greatest love”
and “final renunciation of the self for the Other”
like a “victory over the grave Sheol” and “death of death”

His sacrifice was, actually, a gift to himself out of mercy,
and not a punishment and suffering – a reconciliation
through individual service to mutual atonement,
as is the meaning of the Hebrew “gha'al”:
“to redeem property and persons from another's ownership”

* Julia Christeva, *Black Sun*, Svetovi, Novi Sad, 1994.

That and such corpse they put in the grave
and presumably from there he disappeared the following day
but what if he in fact remained inside the grave
and was later joined there by his apostles (and by all of us?)
as Pascal interpreted it:
"Jesus Christ had no other place to rest on earth but in a grave
and only there did his enemies stop torturing him."

That is also the spring which suddenly appears
from my mother's grave to quench my future thirst!

Translated by Zoran Ančevski