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# *A Page of Wrinkles*

*poetry and childhood*

*a thematic selection  
of contemporary macedonian poetry*



*a cage of wrinkles*

**Poetry and Childhood**

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# a cage of wrinkles

*poetry and childhood*

A Thematic Selection  
of Contemporary Macedonian Poetry

Selected by:

*Angelina Banović-Markovska*

*Lulëzim Haziri*

(Authors writing in Albanian)

Translated into English and edited by

*Zoran Ančevski*

English language editor

*Adam Reed*



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## *A Cage of Wrinkles*

Inner images of life: childhood as a motif in Macedonian lyric poetry  
(a thematic selection)

When earlier this year I was asked to compile a selection of Macedonian contemporary poetry on the topic of childhood, I almost declined the offer. My inclination to marginalize things that are not in the immediate focus of my attention made me sceptical: is the motif of childhood (as a *topos* and phenomenon in Macedonian poetry) more interesting than the current redefining of cultural history? What would someone, who hasn't the time for his own memories, do with someone else's memories? However, this scepticism that underestimated the topic confronted me with the phenomenon of *inner image*, and from the present point of time I started observing myself in a past point of time. This self-projection into the past, this retrospective on the time of my childhood, made irrelevant all my presuppositions about the elitism of some privileged topics and made me stand up to the challenge.

This task required a theory different from the one I used in my previous essays – *a theory of consciousness*. It also required answers to some questions. What is that thing in us which is capable of overcoming oblivion? Is it some kind of *biographeme* which summarises our lyrical life – a dialogue with the past, some kind of giving and taking, a constant distancing from and returning to things which were, or simply facing the fact that the only thing we really possess is what we carry within ourselves?

In order to prove these assumptions, I started with the fact that poetic visions are usually sustained by the lost paradise of childhood, on archetypal symbols buried deep in the symbolic topography of past times, animated by our limitless ability to constantly reapply a transcendental *imago mundi*. Childhood memories are pillars that support the fragile architecture of the soul, however, they are also *a state of mind*, which leads to unnatural detachment of consciousness from identity. This detachment is actually *a duplication*, a specific brain activity connected both to philosophy and to psychology. Only in my memories, defined and determined by them, can I observe myself as someone else, and recognise my old self.

What does it mean in practice? In order to see an image different from the common one in the great mirror of life, the poet has to be *an operator*, someone who stores and cherishes the past in one's memory, as well as *a spectrum*, someone who projects oneself

in the poetic image. Only then can the poet find his “leaping”, his “dragging out”, his power to “trick all mirrors” as Derrida says, “*to keep his childhood and his desires alive, with that crazy and disappointing feeling of hope that he still hasn’t started to age*”<sup>1</sup> and that he will avoid the inevitable settling in the intimate *cage of wrinkles*.

There, in that sweet (self)deception of the poet, I sensed the paradox of a subtle poetics and recognised the narrated memory of the Macedonian poets. In their lyrical imagination, I saw a clear picture of the quest for a time lost, of yearning for the past and for the birthplace scenery, of the family ancestors and other powerful figures that had built their identity. I realised that the Macedonian poets keep the motif of childhood as an amulet that regenerates their bloodstream, as a specific lyrical topos which nourishes the roots and the life of the Balkan people, as well as the historical movement of its numerous ethnicities, of our common destiny.

Once I felt that the patina of the past can permanently bind me to the motif, I decided to make its frames more elastic. Besides verses about one’s yearning for one’s roots and birthplace, I started selecting those which recorded memories and symbols – anything that remained stored in the intimate, mental diary of our poets. I searched for traces of existential dramas, family stories and personal fates. I found verses about the dilemmas of identity. But most of the time, I tried to find “the genes of the soul”: its nationality, language, name, tradition, cultural identity.

The readers of this anthology may be surprised that some of the selected verses speak about the subtlest moments of our poets’ lives that refer to experiences connected to mournful topics of our history such as the exodus from our south, to the moving as an archetypical matrix, as a permanent signature of the Balkan identity. The topic of this year’s symposium on exile and the poetry (“Without the exile, who am I?”) coincides with those segments of this collection which speak about *leaving home*, leaving the ancient homeland and the linguistic and ethnical experience, which seems to be a constant topic in the Macedonian poetry.

Before I let you enjoy the selected poetry, I would like to state that this selection is by no means final. It didn’t have an ambition to be absolute because it presents only those verses that I could have access to in a short period of time. The very best poetry on childhood may have escaped my reach. Another selector will have to continue the list, enrich its opus and show the public the complete picture of this phenomenon. Still, I believe that this humble selection is enough to show that these verses are poetic images of our poets’ lives, of their personal life stories, of a specific, original, intimate realm of time and space. The inner images of our poets’ earliest years of life are a constant presence, a permanent heritage from childhood, a passport to their intimate memory. Their moulding into poetic expression is a fulfilment of their desires, a conquering of sentimentality, a quenching of their thirst. They ease our struggle to overcome transience.

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrase from: Jacques Derrida, “*The Survivor, the Postponing, the Leaping*”, in *Identity*, magazine for politics, gender and culture, volume 3, number 2, 2004, page 245.

Created from an inevitable time distance, they are not originals because they do not coincide with the relevant point of time, but with their thought-reality, with the *duplicated originality* produced by the memory. These images from our poets' childhoods are reliefs of the psyche, they are *thought imprints of their sensual impressions* which acquire linguistic and spiritual reality at the moment of reading. If it wasn't for this process, there would be no memory and no life. I therefore feel free to state that this selection reminds me of "the lost book of life", or at least of its segment that suggests that our existence is not a linear, but a mosaic structure with knots of emotions and reflexes. The selected verses of this selection are their cryptograms, their poetic equivalent, a lyric haven of the Macedonian sentimental thought.

*Angelina Banović-Markovska*

*(Translated into English: Blagorodna Bogeska)*



---

*Blaže KONESKI*

---

*A Cage*

Thirty years. And what has been done?  
Thirty broken jars.  
The child in me is undone  
and closed in a cage of wrinkles.

*The Children*

They flew away to no return  
our birds  
seized by the darkness  
of this huge commotion.  
The nest is forlorn,  
its warmth wasted,  
and even the thought for peace and order  
is but a crime.  
How we lied to them, how lowly we betrayed  
them, poor things,  
while leading them by the hand!  
And now the wave of this black chaos  
lifts them to nowhere,  
the same as us,  
and only one experienced moment  
of tender closeness  
still binds us with them,  
shining.

The moment of love between two betrayals.

*A Child, Sleeping By the Lake*

You are asleep, little one  
and the lake has sunk in deep thought –  
the lake ponders over your fate.  
You are asleep  
and the lake enters your soul with its silent swell  
as if invading a cove with white pebbles  
and translucent water.  
You are asleep  
but even the tiniest wrinkles of its surface  
are threads that lead to the loud waves  
born only once, rushing to lift you, carry you,  
weeping.  
Sleep, little one  
the lake creates your soul  
and designs your exciting future.

---

*Aco ŠOPOV*

---

*I Have Lived Long in This Place*

I have lived long in this place  
where mountain springs gurgle  
and the children catch butterflies,  
and the pines leaf through the silence of ages  
in their silent splendor.

I have lived long in this place  
and grown slowly dark with time.

Look, I say, look who you are:  
You can't recognize yourself.

These eyes were once deep pools  
your desires dived into them  
like cranes into sunlight,  
and now they are only two ravines  
where unpredicted rains spend the night.

These arms were ploughs delving  
the soft soil of your wonderings,  
and now they look like willow twigs,  
barren and yet reaching for water.

Sometimes, I say, you also played  
with butterflies like other children  
and their golden dust made  
the cherries blossom in your garden.

Why were you so careless  
to let all of them die between your fingers?

Why didn't you see that the utmost wisdom  
was to have one living butterfly  
one warm star on your palm  
that would brighten this place  
where you have lived for so long  
for so long, darkened with time?



---

*Mateja MATEVSKI*

---

*Field*

O sorrow in the colours of desire  
The green shadows of the willow  
barely moving  
embrace one another  
on the surface of the river  
on the river that moves stealthily  
on the drowsy river

Why is my vision blurred  
when beneath them the sand smiles?  
When the dreaming flock  
in the meadow  
look up at me in awe  
and the tiny dandelion  
waves its hand to me?

O sorrow for the gone childhood  
It is you who calls me back  
into my deep chasms  
of sleep

*Shingle*

Where are now those shingles on the eaves  
those slates that covered the steep roof  
The chimneys smoke against the grimy sky  
Small crumbs of which fall on the table of snow

Where are those shingles now those planks  
that descended along the path of the sun  
that melts the resin on the pine trees  
in the neck of the afternoon

I see my grandfather going down  
to my great-grandfather  
with his beard the colour of oak  
A fairy descends from a tall rock  
with the forest god on her shoulder

Darkness descends from the wolf's lair  
and creates the image of wholeness in itself  
hurrying towards the light  
that rises above our brows

We descend to the shingles  
of the eaves  
into the gentle embrace of the smoke  
in the trembling mist  
where the the blue tower of the sky melts and disappears

---

## *Ljuben TAŠKOVSKI*

---

### *Aunt Kate*<sup>1</sup>

Aunt Kate, in your small Voden<sup>2</sup> hands  
 Seven waterfalls were cascading  
 And we were small  
 We were small  
 We played with the moon on the veranda  
 And the Aegean licked our feet  
 Aunt Kate, the war came  
 And we grew suddenly old  
 The birds perished  
 And the fairies  
 That you caught in your traps  
 When seven waterfalls cascaded in your hands  
 In your small Voden hands, Aunt Kate.

### *The Lagadin Woman*

An old woman from the Aegean gathers her steps in the mud  
 And a crow's cry nibbles at her shadow  
 And like a hound sniffs at the pouring rain  
 Her child is dead  
 Grandma Grandma the night destroys our homes  
 And I cry in the roofless rooms  
 For my dead sister  
 For my dead sister  
 An old woman from the Aegean  
 Swells with tears tonight  
 And the moon, like a bitch  
 Sniffs after her.

<sup>1</sup> Common Macedonian name (translator's note).

<sup>2</sup> A city in Aegean Macedonia (translator's note).

---

*Ante POPOVSKI*

---

*The Bird of Childhood*

The bird of childhood.  
As soon as I think of it –  
it flies away to the heavens...

Now only in my dreams  
do I hear its flapping wings –  
its miraculous disappearance.

*To Imagine a Window*

This footpath should now turn to the left  
And start rising  
To lead you to a dry tree  
Where you should sit down sweating  
To remember your old home that is now no more,  
And in the air, in the light that breaks from behind the church,  
To imagine a window  
And in the window your little sister  
Calling for you to come in for dinner,  
To sit next to your father  
And watch how he breaks and kisses the bread,  
Saying Amen  
And then get up  
And bring in the dish with the first ripe cherries  
Picked in the garden.

This footpath should now turn to the left  
And start rising  
To the distant eons of childhood.

### *When the Cherries Blossomed*

We were too small, brothers and sisters  
and all winter long we prayed for our mother's health.  
In spring she got up and walked to the garden  
and the cherries started dancing on the boughs like children  
and our mother's voice shone among them  
as if a commandment from the Holy Book,  
as if the star of David.

And yet again I see now that cherry tree,  
shrunken, burnt out, dried of its sap,  
and the longer I look at it  
the louder I hear the known voice  
that heals souls  
and makes the fruits blush.

And yet again I depart from this garden  
with a hand over my mouth to conceal  
the words I wanted to whisper in my mother's ear

When I first left,  
when the cherries were in blossom.

### *Gazing at the Book of the Born*

I was leafing through the Book of the Born  
until I found the line  
with the letters of my name –  
a garland of dandelions made by the children in spring.  
I stood long above them and saw them running through the summer  
hiding in the tall grass,  
climbing the fruit trees –

made orphans before they learned to walk.

They heard my voice and recognized me, blushing,  
waving their hands to greet me,  
looking through me:

seeing how my day had grown dark,  
how my mother's breasts had become stone  
how grass had risen

through my bones.

At dusk I looked again at the Book  
and the letters seemed bleached and small,  
fallen asleep like children in the Book's linen,  
I covered them with the dark cover of my bitter days.

### *The Valley of Childhood*

The tolling of bells, in high spirit, rising above,  
and an old woman squatting at the gate, muttering prayers,  
crossing herself. Then the sound was gone  
and like a sign from God disappeared in the night.

A vivid memory of a young girl:  
a yellow scarf around her neck,  
watering the flowers on the porch,

singing. Scattering clear Slavic words  
against the blue of the sky  
and offering us, the children

red apples.

---

*Jovan STREZOVSKI*

---

*The Rare Cactus*

My grandfather brought a rare cactus  
from his pilgrimage.  
Once a year, in the middle of the night, it blossomed  
briefly  
and then withered.  
We were waiting for days on end  
for the moment when it would blossom  
and it all seemed to us a celebration  
'There,' my grandfather would say excitedly,  
'it blossomed and faded:  
It's all the same to it  
but year after year we observe it  
as a proof of our transience.'

---

**Jovan KOTESKI**

---

***Prisovjani***<sup>1</sup>

A few gardens in spring.  
A handful of graves on the hill  
and red clay chutes.  
The spring is a wordless secret,  
the white love stripped the earth naked.  
Two girls wash linen by the river  
to clothe the day with it.  
The years steal bits of life,  
I remain a stranger at home,  
leaning on the table by the wall.

***Retreat***

To return into my mother's womb,  
to sing in the kingdom of the angels;  
to reach the final depth of the universe.  
There all the beginnings are white, warm  
and the wing of Halley's comet weaves  
a bright nest for a newborn child  
washed by the tide of pure blood.

To return in the earth's womb  
to vanish in the vacuous kingdom,  
to fertilize the atoms of the barren ridge.  
I let the secret roots take me  
through the invisible windows  
from a sprig to a leaf, from a blue butterfly  
alight on a white thorn's blossom, to a wide yellow valley...

---

<sup>1</sup> A village near Struga (translator's note).



## *Common Life*

Spring in my village spreads like disease.  
 The grass tames the hedges that divide us,  
 the bread on the table is thin, the wine is bitter,  
 the girls' eyes are full of love.  
 The horses have galloped across three hills  
 and they may bring death back home.  
 – Isn't it time, mother? – That we depart.  
 The sky is a prolonged dream above the rocks.  
 The girls from my village are warm dewdrops  
 with baskets full of laughter gathered from the three hills.  
 They bring love home. With loud laughter.  
 Spring in my village spreads like disease.

## *Kališta*<sup>1</sup>

I descended the rock,  
 nothing new, nothing desperate.  
 The water was like a pearl,  
 a standstill of beauty,  
 time did not exist.  
 My mother far away breathes  
 heavily on the dry land  
 and may be dying.  
 And I pursued my quest  
 for a mild climate,  
 for a pair of dark eyes,  
 and reached the haze  
 above Kališta.  
 I entered Kališta  
 when the monastery bell  
 dreamt of silence  
 in a perfect trance;

<sup>1</sup> A village near Struga (translator's note).

I came when the stone  
touched upon eternity,  
when beauty like the lake's foam  
made my blood a turbid flow.  
It boils,  
it bubbles,  
it spills over  
from beauty. Now I can die!

### *The Stranger*

A stranger came to our home  
cautious of our bristling roosters  
and the calf that scratched its muzzle  
with its hoof.

He wanted to say, but didn't –  
If it weren't for the war  
you wouldn't have seen my nape,  
and I wouldn't have seen your snouts,  
the discus has been thrown between us  
dividing our burning hopes.

A stranger came to our home  
and we all turned into hatred,  
our paws stretched,  
our blossoming claws at the ready  
to defend ourselves. Oh, father,  
you troubled soul!

Life hurried by us  
like a stray horse from the Trojan war.

---

*Nuhi VINCA*

---

*In Search of Childhood*

I walked the first street from its beginning to its end  
But I found it nowhere: only a blossoming flower  
Spoke to me: look for it in the second street...

I walked the second street to its end  
And there a golden fruit tree  
That said: it has just passed by...

I walked down the third street crying  
And at the end I saw a forest whispering gently:  
You are not on the right path...

My childhood is turned into a fleeting moment:  
A flower  
A fruit tree  
A wet bough in autumn...

---

***Petre M. ANDREEVSKI***

---

***The Face of the Words***

When I asked my grandmother  
how to remember  
the face of the words,  
she looked back at me as if from afar,  
then hugged me and said:  
They have more than one face,  
just as our hardship  
is not one  
and lasts not but for a day!

So in the lap of my grandmother,  
my head on her colourful apron  
I recognized my homeland.

---

## *Vlada UROŠEVIĆ*

---

### *A Child Talking in Its Sleep*

A child talking in its sleep, at night,  
 knows words that are in no dictionary.  
 Our ear stops deaf before them;  
 our knowledge becomes a mere obstacle.

These are words-flintstones, words-clods  
 buried unspoken since eternity.  
 These are night-words, owl-words  
 drawn into the room by the night's dream.

These are words that come from darkness.  
 The instinct can only sense their forms.  
 Their meaning has long been emptied from them  
 but the words have no courage to follow.

### *The House of Childhood*

There was a house in the winter nights  
 full of dictionaries, phrase-books and world maps,  
 from where nightly, from the books, the Roman statues fled.  
 There was such a house in the late summer

when the neighbours were puzzled by the strange smell  
 of sea weeds that happened to circle around it.  
 There was such a house where only the heedless  
 could not feel the lull of the distant southern seas.

Does that house still puzzle the neighbours?  
Do the statues still fly from it?  
If it still exists – could you stay a moment in it  
and, asleep in its rooms, set sail across the seas?

### *The Golden Age, Childhood*

There were big flintstones  
that kept the fire imprisoned  
and smelled of long-forgotten wars when  
they hit one another

There were rails untravelled by the trains  
but the ear pressed against them  
could tell of the rumble of the cars  
that passed there years before

There were telephone poles that smelled of tar  
where buzzed celestial conversations  
brought from the wild outer space

There were empty snail shells in which  
the sea could still be heard  
that roared above while they lay in its depth

There were lexicons and etchings where a world  
spread copiously against the poverty  
and the gloom of the war that mastered our lives



There was a miraculous light which reflected  
even from the rusted nails and discarded vials  
full of dust and dry spiders

But there were also vile wizards whose sorcery  
betrayed it all for plastic and paper money  
and who lied to us that we would become adults.

### *Childhood*

Thermometres, dictionaries,  
alarm clocks ringing,  
mother-of-pearl boxes  
dolls and oranges.

Glass vials  
filled with insects,  
Zeppelins, angels,  
Turkish delights and rhinos.

Peddlers  
of colourful lollipops  
islands with hidden treasure  
and old picture postcards.

Expeditions, parrots,  
a world closed in a marble,  
watermelon lanterns,  
shells and butterflies.

Natives and volcanos,  
carriages and bats,  
evening lamps under arbours  
and a war – coming ever closer.



### *Children's Story of Summer*

Children on the hill sitting in the yellow grass.  
Behind the hill a wall. Behind the wall  
a lush garden, and then a hill again. A big  
cloud rises somewhere behind the hill.

Behind the hill – the coast of a sea.  
Behind the sea – an island full of blue and pink forests.  
Behind the forests – a tree with bitter roots.  
Behind the tree – a sage sitting in thought.

Behind the sage – a garden with familiar sights.  
Behind the garden – a wall, rising high.  
Behind the wall – a hill – yet again.  
And on the hill – children, sitting in the yellow grass.

---

*Mihail RENDŽOV*

---

*My Child Is Beautiful*

My child is beautiful, I said  
The child under my skin is beautiful, I said  
It stands still like a tall ship, I said  
It feels like a blue silk under my fingers, I said  
It is a fragile image of snow in my heart, I said  
A beautiful child,  
My child, I said.

Your child is mad, you said  
The child in your heart is mad, you said  
It sniggers at night, you said  
It becomes a moth in your dreams, you said  
It is a flame of sadness on your brow, you said  
The child is mad,  
Your child, you said.

My child tells me secrets, I said  
It lights fires in my pupils, I said  
It draws my image on a raindrop, I said  
And offers it to oblivion, I said

It's already forgotten you, you said

*Carpet*

It widens my pupils  
It enters my soul, rushing, luscious  
And I, unknowingly, utter:  
Destiny.

O mother,  
You who weaved your heartbeat  
Into the colourful moments of sadness and life  
Who never forgot my darkened body  
Nor my ill-fated lamb.

When I lie down on the carpet  
I feel two heavenly shafts of light  
Lifting me into the realm  
Of the eternal  
And infinite.

### *Untitled*

I was born very old.

In order not to be divided  
I ploughed my shadow before me  
And planted fruit trees over it.

From the kernel of each fruit  
I squeezed a word  
And so learned how to speak.  
The whole kin  
Learned from me.

And as I grew younger  
And as my body-earth  
Dripped away  
My fruit trees started dying  
And the fruits on them  
And the kernels  
In them.

When I approached my childhood  
I forgot how to speak.  
Now I am a nursling

Returning  
To its mother's womb  
To that purest drop of water  
Of the first procreating day:

Happy.  
Incorporeal.

### *On the Way Home*

On the way home  
Along the gravel road full of holes  
I was followed by  
My Little Things:  
The stone that they once threw at me  
The drop of blood that trickled from my nose  
The fruits that I stole at night  
The forest in which  
My bird escaped and hid  
(A few forgotten songs)  
The sins I committed  
In my own defense  
The angel I abandoned  
When quarreling with friends  
And the life I missed  
Looking God knows where  
And God knows for what.  
God knows where.

One night  
All my Little Things  
Came home  
But I was not there.

I got lost, they say  
Looking God knows where  
And God knows for what.

---

*Petar T. BOŠKOVSKI*

---

*Dispossession*

In the time of our childhood  
we had a game  
on one leg,  
hands crossed on the chest.  
And leaping we fought  
head against head,  
elbow against elbow,  
heap against heap,  
until we all fell  
except one  
remaining upright,  
the winner.

In the time of our adulthood  
I can't remember  
how this game  
became a textbook for our future  
a drill for our destiny.

As for the origin of the games  
the best know those who invented them,  
but who takes the children seriously?

*Growing*

This morning I scratched myself  
on a tree  
that I planted the year before.

I was as happy  
as we are at home when  
a child raises its hand against us  
for the first time.

*A Bed on the Porch*

The child doesn't go to sleep  
under his eyelids  
a bird's flight is trapped

Some ominous magic  
has been cast on the porch  
threads of fire wrapped into a cloth of air

Disease spreads through space  
and what you think you saw before  
you see it for the first time

The child doesn't want to cry  
but whom should it ask  
where the winds die

Barking rises up  
in the heart of the night  
and recoils back into itself

The sky rises up from the earth  
its body adorned with yellow wounds  
stolen from each of us

The child stares at the stars  
despite the warning that death will take him  
if he spots his own

But perhaps it's time  
for the earth to change and wake up  
after the song of the red cock in the yard

For no one knows what might happen  
now that the warm currents of sleep  
have not yet flooded the porch.

---

*Radovan PAVLOVSKI*

---

*Memory*

It dresses in embroidery and sprouts  
from the scorched mounds of the moon.  
A dirty child chasing fireflies.  
I killed a golden bird at sunset.  
I had indifferent, colourless eyes  
in childhood.

*The Children in the Yard*

The children in the yard  
bury their voices  
leave their cheerfulness to the toys  
and draw a magic tale  
over the soft soil  
Everything is a story to them.

*A Bitter Child*

A bitter child  
draws  
the shadows of birds in flight  
on a stone tablet  
and remains alone in the mountains  
like a pool of water.



Smudges of paint on the stone  
July is at its turn  
a secret holy teardrop  
gnaws at the child's soul.

### *I Want to Wander*

The open vowels  
are the great mountain ranges  
of your voice  
I want to wander  
through your life, burning  
I want to wander through fire  
through thirst and thunder  
through time's despair  
I want to wander  
through green grass  
from the tip of the nail  
to the top of the mountain  
I want to wander with the light  
with every part of the body  
with every word  
until heaven and earth come together  
I want to wander  
everyone to see me wandering  
dead or alive  
A wave clears the sight  
of the wandering child  
whose hair has grown white

***Celce***<sup>1</sup>

*For my mother Dostana's love when I was a child*

Not to break you  
hungry –  
the cuckoo's voice  
I wake you before sunrise  
I give you a morsel of bread  
and an amulet of forged metal  
to let you grow and blossom  
my child  
to let you travel the whole world  
to be a whole in the whole  
nothing to break you  
to remain strong  
and to embrace with all your heart  
what is beautiful  
anything you sow  
to grow in full strength  
and the song of your voice  
to be heard over the whole world  
If anything remains  
of the night's darkness  
to clad it in sunlight  
I've carried  
my mother's amulet  
since childhood  
wherever I've gone  
throughout my whole life.

---

<sup>1</sup> A protective rounded amulet forged from metal for luck (author's note).

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*Petko DABESKI*

---

*The Infantile*

Against all established theories of personality  
most unforeseeable is the portrayal  
of an infantile man

All angels and demons of childhood  
sing together in his church

And he holds no colour of the rain  
not a single drop of resistance  
except his own stubbornness

For at all times he's been given  
gifts for adults  
but has had features and whims of a child

---

*Bogomil Ćuzel*

---

*Growth*

You tore up the nappies  
broke the cradle and cried  
for you had to breathe

You severed the rope of rays  
of the heavenly swing

You swallowed the world as a morsel  
you slurped the shell of the sea  
for you had to grow  
and bear

the beating of time  
that swung at you with mammoth-like bones



### *The Landscape of My Street*

Mud-brick walls  
The women and girls hide behind  
Two-winged gates and a footpath  
Electricity poles  
Telephone poles, no  
Dust on the cobblestones  
That would make the sunflowers die  
Not a single tree in the muddy street  
And birds sing in the yards  
The sun descends on the eaves, on the roofs  
In winter snowflakes sift on the branches  
And cover them like lace on a bridal veil  
The yellow quinces are lined on the shelves,  
Keeping vigil, like soldiers at their post,  
There no pedestrian walks, the trickling water  
From the gutters enters the gardens like a snake  
It's a landscape of poverty in my childhood  
The sky leaden, the crows loud  
The swallows on the wires are like Morse codes  
A coffin carried out by four pairs of arms  
Every passer-by stops and touches the coffin  
I take his dreams to the season of blossoms

---

*Trajan PETROVSKI*

---

*I Have Lived Here Before*

I descend from Samuel's Fortress<sup>1</sup>  
along cobblestone alleys, down  
I don't even feel my own weight.

No one comes after me  
Only the houses surround me  
and whisper to me sorrowfully.

They keep a nice memory of me  
that once I lived here,  
my love pure, untainted.

Now I know I owe them  
and this city full of legends  
Let the church bells sound alarm.

*There Is a Secret Place*

There is a very secret place  
That only I know of.  
I often hurry to it in earnest  
And whisper my vows.

It's my mother's gift, my father's toil.  
A pond, all in blossom beneath the dark sky.  
That place needs a stronger bond,  
A wiry acacia, a thick hawthorn.

---

<sup>1</sup> An ancient fortress on the hill above Ohrid, built by Tsar Samuel (translator's note).

There I made my first steps  
Where the springs gurgle with ease.  
That place I keep as my secret  
In a chest filled with folded dreams.



---

## *Risto JAČEV*

---

### *When I Sing the Song Again*

When the sad child within me  
 sings the song again  
 about the angel treading on corpses  
 about the shadows of the fire mixed with ashes  
 take me quietly and carry me  
 to my father's eyelids in the St. Saviour's yard  
 or to the sheaves of singed wheat  
 to the thatched hut under the Greben<sup>1</sup>  
 or to the foam of stardust by our sea.

Take me into a basket fastened to the saddle of a turtle shell  
 with a warm kiss in a pure palm  
 like a son true to his father's home  
 like a cry from an eternally bleeding dream.

Take me, take me as a shadow  
 like an old man's shadow to the closed door  
 or bury me like a plagued wretch.

### *How to Reach the Summer Palace*

How to leap over the thick forests,  
 to cross the deep waters,  
 and to arrive at a place from where we were banished;  
 a place made of lichen and moss  
 of waterfalls and white houses.

<sup>1</sup> A mountain in Aegean Macedonia (translator's note).

How to reach the olive grove,  
to enter the dark homesteads  
of Vane's, Taško's or Ičko's<sup>1</sup>  
and into the small chapel where  
only the painted saints still pray today,  
to tell those few remaining  
to keep the village graves from ill,  
and their eyes from evil  
for they are our knowledge of home,  
name  
fatherland,  
and that only one cuckoo  
once a year flies across to leave but one feather  
like a broken wing of a swallow.

How to tell them to guard the roads from the plague,  
how to tell them what freedom is,  
wedding.  
O how to reach  
that summer palace of magic,  
by the blood-drenched forest  
where my wasted childhood still lies sleeping.

---

<sup>1</sup> Macedonian personal or family names (translator's note).

## *The Rodiv Church*<sup>1</sup>

When I want to see the small church  
where I was baptized  
and which is the only remaining after so long  
I close my eyes.

As a child with fearful eyes  
I watched the Northern star clad in yellow  
descending down the Rodiv forests  
where vipers lurked in the Barren Slopes.

Above me the song of junipers and ancient oaks.  
I saw, I heard it all, I cried.  
Blind eyes called me in the silence.

In the evenings I returned home bewildered  
for I could not explain it all:  
why as an answer of a stone thrown  
in a deep hole  
do we hear a thunderous echo?

Although now in exile, I am calm.  
After a few decades of life  
I started to believe in destiny.

And yet, why whenever I close my eyes  
Do I still see the small Rodiv church  
Where I was baptized?

---

<sup>1</sup> A place in Aegean Macedonia (translator's note).

*Not a Dream*

All night long we weep on the slope:  
me, a child, and my older sister, dead.  
All night no one to give us water  
just the moon and wilderness.

All night we weep, oh mother,  
who cast a spell on us, a look from evil eyes?  
As soon as the child saw his face in the water  
our house turned to rubble and ash.

---

*Risto VASILEVSKI*

---

*The Ritual Bread*

As if God Himself breathed soul into the dough,  
as if the prophets kept vigil over it,  
while mother mixed salt, flour and water  
to make the body of Christ from them.  
As if the saints adorned it after their dress,  
it grew under the lid  
as if a heaven supporting another.  
With a bright face,  
my mother looks at it from all sides,  
she shakes away the pollen of flour and ashes,  
she wraps it in linen  
kept only for it,  
to add to its warmth and whiteness.  
Then, clothed as if for saints' days or weddings,  
she places the bread in my father's arms  
and together they walk the distance to the Temple  
while she, behind him –  
proud and tall,  
neither walks the ground,  
nor regards the creek  
he watered the fields from,  
nor does he speak in his soft voice.  
They enter the Temple together  
as when entering a place  
where nothing is lost,  
but everything is won.

Then the ritual of cutting the bread  
in the form of a cross  
where wine is poured,  
turning it in a circle  
as when the Earth moves into seasons,  
and then back along the cheerful road  
from the Temple to the house.  
We, the children, seeing them from the door,  
quickly take our seats at the table,  
sharing its corners  
the way we have shared our destiny.

---

*Resul SHABANI*

---

*The Boat*

Its belly still shies off the water  
dyed in dry coloured clay;

It was Sunday.  
With no sails,  
With no clouds,  
With no rain,  
With no heat,  
It was neither dawn  
Nor  
Twilight,  
Nor noon.

It was Sunday and  
The seven in the boat's belly  
Came ashore.

Then they got off  
But the sand did not burn their bare feet  
They lifted the vessel above their heads  
And carried it on.  
They looked like headless bodies  
Who took the boat next to a wall  
And propped it against it  
Five hundred steps away from the lake.

The boat is not dead  
But it doesn't move any more  
For it has no legs  
And cannot sail out  
For the shore is far away.

They left it there forty years ago  
And it still defies decay.  
Bringing me memories of childhood.

### *My Daughter and My Son*

(...)  
And now sleep peacefully  
The tails of the letters have blackened the paper  
With the colour of suspicion that will turn yellow  
With time; only love will remain  
Among the leaves of the orange tree  
Like yellow pain. Now I know where  
The image of the lake and its beauty  
Has gone.  
Between the dream and my wanderings  
When the image follows me  
Love walks behind me on two legs  
and makes me hear the baby's cry.  
Time will come when on my back  
the hands I love the most will find rest.  
Sleep calmly now,  
The tails of the letters have blackened the paper.



(...)

And sleep restlessly now  
In my fear and in my painful yearning.  
The dove sings from one branch to another.  
The nightingale too. Time runs away like a thief  
Under the night's glimmer of stars, come and rest  
From the scorching sun. My love is the warmest  
Nest that even our tired stork seeks  
After coming back from flying around the world,  
My arm gives him the shelter of the eaves.  
Sleep restlessly now  
In my fear and in my painful yearning.

---

*Ramadan SINANI*

---

*The Old House*

Our house is  
An old house  
With a goat's tail  
It thought it had  
The world's wealth

We the children  
Wet our lips  
With thin milk  
And did not die easily  
As the European experts thought  
In those days

Our old house  
Gave us other joys too  
Such as  
It didn't get excited easily  
And didn't bother its hosts  
With sudden outbursts of anxiety  
And paid no heed to trifles  
Except with small hopes  
That it spun every evening  
Warming a little our dreams in the cold nights

...

Our house  
An old house  
With a goat's tail  
Was the only living and compelling joy  
And its bright hope was  
Having us the children  
An offspring of hardship  
With dreams smothered by pain  
The army of pleasure  
The joy of our parents

---

**Razme KUMBAROSKI**

---

***At the Kališta Fair***

*(For a child fallen asleep in the monastery courtyard)*

Everyone will come  
to the Kališta fair tonight  
Turks, Gypsies, Christians  
and the smoke will rise  
in celebration of life  
and the echo of the bells will bring warmth and closeness  
like a mother's heart  
Everyone sings and dances at the Kališta fair  
for health  
for relief of the mythical burdens of the soul  
for grafting mirth  
over the open wounds

Everyone sings  
at the Kališta fair tonight  
and keeps vigil over a lamb  
and a child sleeping in the yard  
thinking:  
how to bring health  
and wealth in the coming year.

---

*Todor ČALOVSKI*

---

*Nostalgia*

Standing at sunset  
I could hear someone's dumb weeping  
tearing off pieces inside me  
and holding them firmly in his hands

You haven't been here a long time  
to warm your heart, he says  
to keep yourself whole  
in this realm that cradled you for a thousand years

I look at the sky with awe:  
swathed in a blue veil  
I stretch out my arms like a palmer  
asking mercy for his sins

I remain there all night  
awake as before eternity  
only a tiny path among the stars  
reveals to me the threads of my heritage

O, how disconsolate, I say  
to live and not to know  
what silently disappeared, forever  
that you loved so dearly

*Rugs*

Whenever I think about the beauty  
that has kept the world together  
before me appears the face of my mother  
bent gloomily above the singing loom

in the room beneath the Galičnik<sup>1</sup> veranda  
weaving the folding rugs of life  
through the threads of her being

We stood around in quiet celebration  
while she tamed the colours of the weft  
pushing the shuttle between the threads of the warp  
as if giving voice to the house  
and defending it from the onslaught  
of the greedy fate of destruction

There was something inexplicable  
in the harmony of her movements  
that inhabited me with certainty  
defying all my fears  
and building eaves for my dreams

It may be that we do not read on time  
all messages and all beauty  
that our mothers have woven  
to ease the thunders with a smile  
and the quarrelling angels with a prayer

So when beyond the daily noise  
we discover new roads before us  
it is always necessary in an instant  
to cast a look behind us  
at those folded rugs  
where we see the light of our roots  
and hear the call of thickened time

---

<sup>1</sup> A mountain village in Western Macedonia (translator's note).

---

## *Atanas VANGELOV*

---

### *A Child*

A child ran across the lawn,  
heavy and unmoving in its peace  
soaked with last night's rain.

It didn't smile to the primrose,  
it pushed roughly aside the bowed down  
branches of the linden  
that stroked its lock of hair.

It stopped on the road,  
took off its sandals,  
wrung out its socks  
and ran to its adolescence.

Perhaps it will return in time,  
after years of hard work  
among the primroses, under the linden,  
but it will be autumn, it will rain,  
and the child, silently sobbing.

### *The Fledgling*

*For Živko Čingo, who so often  
spoke gently about his ancestors*

Grandpa found a fragile fledgling  
covered with yellow down that smothered  
the purplish flesh beneath.

Not looking sternly at me  
as he usually did,  
he put the bird before me  
without fearing that my little hands  
always in search of some  
permanent possession –  
would hurt it.

Grandpa was wise.  
For weeks on end I was taught  
only to touch the dear and expensive things,  
for months I learned about tenderness  
and slowly, but surely understood  
that love has  
neither time nor shape  
that would make it visible,  
for love is –  
life.

But Grandpa did start to fear.  
The bird could already fly about the house,  
and I grew mature more slowly.  
The bird scratched at the smooth windows  
with its tiny claws –  
it must have felt that freedom  
was somewhere beyond  
my love for it.



One day, Grandpa  
decided to push me into life.

He took me out to the fields  
and looking sternly into my eyes  
as when he had important things in mind –  
took the bird from his coarse sack,  
lowered the sky for it  
and said: this will be its home.

He didn't look at me again,  
nor gave me a stroke on the head...  
He let me silently, with no word of consolation  
run back home in tears.

---

*Eftim KLETNIKOV*

---

*A Gift*

In the New Heaven and on the New Earth  
once created as he promised to,  
The Creator called us one by one  
to show what little things  
he kept for each of us  
after the end of time and world.  
When my turn came  
he showed me a grain of sand.  
I was happy and said:  
Thank you God,  
I remember well that mountain.  
I ran along its side like a brook  
and here I come again  
to the spring,  
and You, to make that moment greater,  
clad me in child's apparel. Amen.

*Memory*

I don't know whether I feel sorry for  
the child who sat  
in the gold of the afternoon  
on the bank of a river  
several millennia ago,  
or for the river which,  
although running was not the same,  
which forgot the beautiful face  
that dissolved into nothing.

I sit and cry by the bright water,  
but I don't know  
was it many millennia ago  
or is it now,  
that I have the face of a child, aging,  
and I don't know if it is water  
or oblivion flowing,  
but I do remember  
the child and the river  
when I recline on the stone of pain.

### *Nothing*

I ask a child:  
— What are you doing?  
— Nothing, it says,  
and I see the circles of its being  
about to enter experience,  
widening in the void  
like late summer drenched with light.  
Or,  
as the wise would say –  
with holy abundance.

### *An Event*

I don't know how it happened  
and how I fell asleep last night  
on a swallow's wing.  
In the dawn of the new day  
I flew along the Nile,  
running away from autumn and frost.  
I didn't know my mother  
cradled me on a wing  
and suckled me with winged milk.

---

*Agim VINCA*

---

*Credo*

*(For my place of birth)*

They think of you as *démodé*  
That you are not worth a line  
They've always thought like that  
Both the old and the new cosmopolites.

They thought your time had passed  
That you'd become a worn out motif  
Though until yesterday they wore  
Rubber shoes wherever they went.

And traveled hundreds of kilometers  
Without stopping for rest  
Only to come back to you, blessed  
For weddings and holidays.

And they never felt tired  
And they never felt bored  
Because you and your warm hand  
Wiped the sweat from their foreheads.

Although the world has changed  
As well as the people in it  
You have remained the same  
You have remained what you were.

All those who proclaim you dead  
Are mistaken and wrong  
And forget, imagine  
Where they were born.

### *The Poplars in My Place of Birth*

You welcomed and greeted me again,  
my tall village women.  
I see you nodding and saying "hello"  
in your green language.  
You look at me cautiously and with slight reproach,  
but do not hate me.  
I approach you and we shake hands cordially:  
"Hello," my dear old friends,  
we haven't met long but haven't forgotten each other.

I know you and you know me:  
we grew up together,  
we waited together for the summer days and festivities.  
I, the traveller, have wandered the world alone  
and you haven't moved a bit.  
Magpies have made nests on you  
memories have nested in me,  
O living towers of my childhood.  
We haven't met long but haven't forgotten each other  
and now this unexpected meeting.  
Stand up in line as soldiers,  
you ancient guardians of this place:  
tall, slender, proud.  
You drink the sap from mother earth,  
the wind combs your long hair,  
the rain washes it.  
You were born here and here you'll die  
(upright, as only you know how to die)  
you old settlers of these banks,  
you, garlanded rebels.

I see you talking to the clouds  
and report to the earth:  
rain and thunder approaching.  
And if one of you falls in battle against the storm,  
the willows, your sisters, will lament the sacrifice.

At the entrance to the village,  
at the entrance to the world  
with your feet by the river  
with your heads in the sky  
and your vertical splendour  
O poplars, you exist eternally,  
O my sisters by the Drim river.



From the celestial springs, at high noon,  
On a dry hill,  
With parched shadows in its ravines,

While the birds flew over again  
And exercised their song again,

My mother engendered me,  
Neither in the sky, nor on the earth,  
But just like that, under a cloud,

With the celestial springs!



---

## *Mustafa SPAHIU*

---

### *The Shirt of Childhood*

*I am so proud to have grown up  
in my first white shirt*

The first shirt I had,  
a spring of desire  
my long shirt  
a thread of memory,  
my white shirt  
torn after the long journey...  
a friend from childhood  
a small cloud disappearing  
with the first lush spring...  
That shirt  
remains unforgettable.  
My children  
You cannot imagine  
how much I loved that shirt  
so much that I could look for it even in the fire  
I loved it as much as my mother's milk  
for it was the root of all my memories.  
No, you cannot imagine  
what a shirt it really was  
made beautiful by the hand of my mother  
adorned with flowers and lace  
with pearls and beads, with sleeves of magic,  
encrusted with gems and colours of the rainbow.  
My mother,  
my mother with her hands of gold  
sewed my miraculous shirt  
with threads from the white dawn

and buttons from the bright stars  
and pockets from real violets  
to protect me from sudden fever  
and adorned it with garlands of fruits  
to bring me luck in love  
and with twilight  
to bring me joy in summer  
and to herald the swallows  
the feasts of brightness  
weddings and girls' eyes sparkling  
with warmth...  
In the summer nights  
I adorned my white  
shirt  
with fireflies  
ladybugs and herbs  
and with a few butterflies  
and with the colour of the birds at harvest  
with some yellow flower leaves  
and with some stains of mountain cherries.  
So my shirt became more  
beautiful.  
It became magic...  
It also had hundreds of tiny lines  
like in Pablo Picasso's paintings...  
something like rows of flowers  
turning into stern patterns

where I kept the first kisses  
pressed over the whiteness...  
But now I haven't got strong wings  
to fly over  
those beautiful gardens  
those springs  
those oak forests  
and search for my shirt  
hung somewhere in the landscape  
in the shade...  
I am not a painter to bring it  
back to life on canvas  
with my brushes, panels and easels  
my shirt  
my white shirt  
with various decorations of thorns  
and designs with many leaves  
and cries of departure...  
It is kept safely  
among the best memories  
and no magic  
can bring back  
the old  
beautiful shirt  
before you...  
It flutters there  
on lines of tears  
stained with juice from soft pears  
and blackberries  
and a trace of the soft words  
of my good uncle Ahmet Gega...  
My shirt is a special shirt  
the rains are on it  
the sun's rays  
had the unrestrained right

to shine on it  
as well as some bees  
to rest upon it  
when returning from the sweet watermelon feast,  
ah, yes, the rainbow could alight upon it  
and seven kisses  
and a lonely partridge  
and through its sleeves  
I could let some clear springs trickle...  
Imagine  
thunder could not harm me  
because my beautiful shirt  
would turn into a lightning arrester  
nor could the summer heat  
because it could not even damage  
the miraculous embroidery  
on my shirt  
which at first was white  
and then  
as I told you  
changed colour  
and then was all in tatters  
once too long  
then too short  
O Lord  
I would like again  
to stretch my hand  
into the magic landscape  
and touch the shirt  
of my childhood  
I have a blazing wish  
to put it on again  
as before  
when I was barefoot  
yet full of desires...

---

## *Sande STOJČEVSKI*

---

### *The Peak*<sup>1</sup>

Here is a tooth of bone, I want another  
of silver. It wasn't done well, I knew,  
but I fell asleep with ease, the owl  
opens its lap for everyone.

I build like this, period.  
The same, again and again, my tired sister,  
I have no wit remaining, and would this  
ever be solved?

Above us the pure has cracked,  
the pure, the holy measure;  
and why not? Why not?

I want another of silver, I do.  
I want to build, period.  
I want to build, a period.

<sup>1</sup>In my childhood, when I pulled out a milk tooth, I would throw it over my shoulder, upon the roof, repeating three times: "Magpie, magpie, here is a bone tooth. Bring me a silver tooth." Strangely, in Europe and Germany, according to James Frazer, "It is a general rule among people that a pulled milk tooth is placed in a mouse hole. In that case, the child will not suffer from toothache. Or, the tooth should be thrown over one's shoulder, with the words 'mouse, give me your iron tooth for my bone tooth'." However, "Far from Europe, on the island of Raratonga in the Pacific, when a child's tooth is pulled, the following prayer is sung: 'Big rat! Small rat! / Here is my old tooth / Bring me a new tooth', and then the tooth is thrown over the thatched roof of the hut." The same ritual is held here, in the Balkans, in my village Studena Bara (author's note).

### *My Father between Winds*

I often saw you when I was a child  
and new: north and south  
were reflected in you, the earth  
hid some intention from us

and left it before your feet  
in the evening. The child, the neighbour  
and the homeland received a small  
shadow before the winds

appeared. You went out  
to the threshing-floor, became  
a man who was the only one to

raise his eyebrow to the cloud,  
to bear the look of Dru,  
hardly bending your knee. It's time!

### *Image*

The day slides by the house,  
it dances and runs in the fields,  
the water sings something of the past,  
it whispers a little, it mutters,  
and washes the words to the bank.  
Barefoot, the children wade in, and the old men,  
and stare at the flame far away,  
rejoicing by the willow's trunk.

And under the roof tiles, before it hides,  
a little devil,  
laughing its head off.

---

*Vele SMILEVSKI*

---

*I Paint the First Touch*

At first the child offers me his hand  
and that is the first touch  
of yellow on the canvas.

Then the child starts laughing and I start the search  
for all kinds of nuances on the palette  
that surge like waves, and splash  
thickly like a rainbow  
upon the curtain.

On the other side, by the glass,  
there is a scene where children  
wave handkerchiefs  
calling the name  
of the child I paint.

Distance is naked and resilient;  
all depends on the paints,  
on my own judgment  
about their hue  
and the long quest for them  
by the window.

I paint the first touch across a horizon  
which is an eye  
that wants to greet me  
in a small space in the garden lawn  
full of insects, full of  
forgotten dolls made of wax.

The child offers me his hand again  
and leaves a spot on the canvas  
of thick green paint  
that slowly trickles  
over the yellow.

A field, a mighty expanse  
that prepares itself  
to grow fruits  
in some strange spring  
taking shape  
on the canvas.



---

## *Katica KŮLAVKOVA*

---

### *Premature Awakening*

You do not wake in the same room any more.  
 And what used to be invisible is not the same.  
 There are changes even in your habit of awakening.  
 The objects you identify with  
 are not equally strange to you.  
 Each shape seeks a special mould  
 of consciousness.  
 The hunger for recognition is an open process:  
 Finnegans's wake.

The fruit on a cheap poster  
 unsettles the sediments below the larynx  
 makes them slippery and unstoppable  
 and transports you to childhood –  
     as if it were on one side  
     and you on the other  
     as if you were one without the other  
     you who shouldn't have –

you re-experience the excitement  
 of the eye and the pencil  
 when drawing grapes, pears, apples  
 overhearing the conversation  
 between the desire and the hand where  
 all future eroticism is gathered.

Childhood returns through a secret door  
 and reveals excess of life, excess of past:  
 something you cannot give up.

And you stop wondering why reality  
is not enough for dreaming  
and what is it which is not wakefulness  
but exists!

### *A Child's Confession*

"I don't know why  
I have a strange feeling  
that Judgment Day  
is coming nearer every day

and then I get goose bumps  
and shivers creep up my back  
and I become disheveled like a long  
very long thin thread  
full of knots, and I have no patience  
to untie them!"

"Then I calm down and unconsciously  
return to virtual reality  
in a time machine  
and continue to play  
in flights of fancy

for I don't know  
Mom –  
how else am I to survive!"

*Weltanschauung*

Do not give in!  
 You must take the distance  
 as an advantage  
 and describe that irritating soap foam of hope  
 in the soul which has entered you so many times  
 occupying you as if someone else's territory  
 adopting you as if adopting someone else's child  
 and smelling of musk at the same time.

You need that distance to continue life  
 that constant distancing from what was  
 that giving-taking  
 that unmistakable minus  
 that day of clarity, of ravine-like dark.

Climb the peak of yourself and withdraw  
 to the fertile soil of the foothills  
 to the apple groves that smell of parsley and mint  
 to the words that creep between your breasts –  
 tickling meaningful seed-bearing males –  
 to sights that run after you like hounds  
 to warning times  
 look behind, sound yourself  
 but do not stop  
 move higher, deeper  
 what you possess is only yours.

Extend the distance, burst into flames  
 from gazing at the same world, this world  
 from brushing against reality hastily –  
     the dissoluteness, the diving depths  
     the bunker for the clash with the imagined  
     the birth-house, the unresolved conflict  
     between the dream and the public opinion –

run away so far away until you freeze with the wish  
to return  
distance yourself so much that you lose your instance  
your youth  
for return.

### *The Smell of Morel*

*For my father*

Now I can't say  
that between me and the day  
when I first picked morel with my father  
there is a clear distance

now when I smell of morel  
more than of myself

when the years of life pass  
as they don't do in memory

when all is absent in its own way –  
the afternoon, the herbs  
he and I

when everything is fenced within me  
and every event has its own smell  
its own soul – which  
is beyond comparison!

The difference makes you die early.  
“Not yet, but nevertheless” yes.  
There wouldn't be a world, it wouldn't be  
if it were not different  
from everything else, and from my own

I.

From now on I'll need courage  
to visit the same places without him  
to remember and to look for more  
on a clear day

not those that he discovered for me  
but those that I'll smell for him.

### *Warm Blood*

I don't know how to tell  
a single tale  
calmly. Why, for example  
dote the hunter who saves Little Red Riding Hood,  
like any other small character  
necessary for the denouement,  
have to leave in the end?

How is it possible that in *The Red Flower*  
the ugly beast turns into a handsome young man?  
Which one of them is an illusion?  
Am I touched by the magic of change  
or the eerie feeling that I must suffer in disgrace  
before I become loved by someone?  
How many people in the world  
remain unchanged, men mostly  
because the woman is the one  
who connects them?

The man is desired for, the woman too  
and so the excitement of telling  
goes on endlessly  
the language becomes warm like blood

blossoming lasciviously  
hardening the obscene  
twisting like an eel  
perfect when naked  
without a shirt, a shell  
as if just born from the womb.

Oh, let my tale be shameless  
let disharmony be eternal,  
between the appearance and the essence  
there are tales of magic  
where everything is so real  
where there is nothing I could tell  
with calm and indifference!

---

*Dimo N. DIMČEV (Dina Cuvata)*

---

*The Years of Childhood*

How dear those years are to me!  
But how am I to clear  
One thing:  
You know, I had  
Two childhoods.  
Once I grew  
With the ancient Aromanian words,  
And while listening – I drank  
The Aromanian Sea.  
My second childhood  
Carries a bundle under its arm  
Of two hundred years.  
I have not grown old yet,  
I am still growing.

*With the Dead*

The dead are not among us.  
I am afraid of their words.  
The dead now say nothing.  
Only their curses remain  
That bind my soul  
To the years of childhood  
And press down on my thoughts.  
I can still understand  
Their words.  
But, alas, if I were to see them now,  
How would they come to terms  
With these new generations!

---

**Vesna ACEVSKA**

---

***A Child among Ripe Fruit Trees***

A child among ripe fruit trees  
In an unguarded orchard  
Where he discovers for the first time  
The fatal attraction  
Of lust.  
Since then Bacchus and Apollo  
Have always been within his reach  
And a peacock whose scream  
Lights up the empty sky.

***Practical Education***

The teacher speaks.  
The teacher reveals.  
Herodotus appears,  
Then Crassus, then Cyrus,  
In the midst of an icy field  
Open to all eyes.

The teacher speaks.  
The teacher reveals.  
The students in the field  
Are taught by Herodotus,  
Then by Crassus and Cyrus,  
One-two, they exercise  
From left to right  
Line by line, kin to kin  
Grid to grid.



The students speak.  
The students reveal.  
The world is so full of lines!  
Thin-straight, thin-slashed,  
Thick-straight, thick-slashed,  
One-two, left-right,  
Line by line, kin to kin  
Grid to grid.  
A remarkable rebus of lines.

The teacher speaks.  
The teacher concludes.  
Herodotus disappears,  
Then Crassus, then Cyrus  
Through a mythical sleet.  
Everyone holds his place.  
The bell rings.

---

*Naume RADIČESKI*

---

*Continued Calling*

In our unexpected world  
the main decisions divide more and more  
The quest intensifies – the loss grows

And when returning we continue the flight  
while there is something that keeps on calling  
from our crumbling memory  
There is even something that only occasionally  
lights the pale shadow of memories

What we expect is doomed to silence  
We experience the stars and the sea as eternally exiled  
and fall dumb before the same crucifix

In the moments we call memories  
something keeps stubbornly calling  
That's our calling  
That's our voice  
calling for us  
(But from where?)

---

*Aleksandar PROKOPIEV*

---

1.  
Sun, then snow.  
I peep out – all houses  
have grown small.
  
2.  
Washed child  
turbid clouds watching:  
“Dirty sky.”
  
3.  
What is more  
there, there behind the end?  
Only dragons.
  
4.  
Behind the wall  
my mother’s shadow hides.  
Still young.
  
5.  
Ah, if only I had  
a magic stick –  
I would’ve become a conductor!
  
6.  
Empty for five days  
the home has grown old  
for a whole year.

7.

Before going to sleep  
my great-grandma combs her hair.  
So as to be tidy for the next morning.

8.

Dogs and kids in the street.  
A goat in the yard:  
Gypsy ghetto.

9.

Rider on the Moon  
it's me in Ina's drawing.  
I am sailing down the river.

---

*Liljana DIRJAN*

---

*Shall We Make a House or Cheese*

Shall we make a house or cheese  
my father asks breaking the bread  
into pieces  
and then an afternoon of full bellies  
but our fears as tall as the ceiling  
attacking the vegetables  
planted into our souls  
which were sturdy and insightful  
now thrown into a prospect of building  
torn between bricks and words  
between morsels and bricks  
we mix mortar  
stick it into the gaps, the teeth, the cracks  
my mother enters  
propping the walls, her thoughts  
(but there are so many rounded forms)  
takes a piece of bread, her fingers wet  
and I see how she salts her womb with it

---

## *Nehas SOPAJ*

---

### *A Dawn and a Violet*

1.  
when I was young  
like a willow's sprig  
I wrote on a piece of paper  
          the thorns will flower  
but they became poisonous  
and plagued my life instead  
then I wrote  
a letter to Freedom  
          but she gave birth to a wolf  
that walked on two legs  
and sowed only death  
          and weeded my four-legged fatherland  
O man  
living corpse  
you who slowly die away but do not disappear  
          worn piece of clothing O eternally young blood  
          will you devour the universe one day  
          looking for your freedom

2.  
*the child is asking me*  
why is there half a moon  
tonight

O don't ask my child  
why tonight there is  
half a moon

*the child is asking me*  
is this half a part of  
the whole moon

yes child I say  
this half is a half of  
the whole moon

tell me then who ate  
the other half  
he asks

O child you ask too much I say  
who ate the other half  
say say the butterflies did

*now all the time the child*  
*runs after butterflies*  
*to kill*

---

*Zoran ANČEVSKI*

---

*For Aunt A.K.*

The countryside  
fills your eyes with age.

Therefore  
you need to cry, it's advisable.  
The rooting and sprouting in you  
reaches for rain.  
(you need to cry)  
There is neither wine  
nor fledglings in the blood  
that wing toward the heart.

When the sun sets  
the mountains  
appear unreachable and icy.

Therefore  
you need to cry,  
like a pruned vineyard in spring,  
you need to cry,  
(it's advisable)  
because  
crying  
fills your eyes with childhood.





It sticks its tongue out at  
    passers-by  
    readers  
    critics  
    professors  
    and students of literature,

but still asks its parents for sinecure.

This poem has acne  
constantly changes socks, gym-shoes and jackets.

This poem writes graffiti  
and has suicidal drives:  
it climbs the top of a building  
and attempts several runs.

Although it's angry with everyone  
this poem will grow up in the end  
but we must now admit:  
its anguish and pain will have a small gain.

---

*Vera ČEJKOVSKA*

---

*Playdough*

Space presses with strong fingers – playdough  
playful.

I splash clear foaming layers of toothpaste onto the blotches  
of playdough – playful space.

---

*Dragan KRUŠKAROVSKI*

---

*The Secret of Fasting*

Outside the morning makes a drawing  
with warm colours and the tip of a green leaf  
I still lack a name  
although I have seven bodies

Mother leaves a gentle word  
to watch over me and with a step of straw  
leaves the drawing  
My terrified fifth body  
grows blossoms of jasmine

My words will drink the milk  
from the pot with their eyes

Finally  
I must change the world  
I take some charcoal from the fire  
and start drawing on the wall

*Christmas Eve*

When Father divided the bread  
Constellations landed  
on the roof of our house  
At the table we had  
A jug of wine and a candle  
That shed light on the faces of our saints

It was a clear day  
The home snake slept under the threshold  
Hunting the new shape of the moon  
In its dreams

From too much beauty  
We could neither eat  
Nor drink  
We left untouched  
The wine and the bread on the table

A dinner for our family Spirit

### *In Our Attic*

In our attic I found my grandpa's  
crutch  
he used since he lost his leg  
on the twelfth day  
after St. Elijah's Day 1903.<sup>1</sup>

To provide for his need  
after he died  
I planted the crutch in the garden  
and in spring  
it took roots  
and blossomed.

So  
my family tree continued.

---

<sup>1</sup> A day when a major Macedonian uprising against the Turks occurred (translator's note).

*Memory in Six Frames*

The children descend to the river  
and wash the water of its bad dreams with their faces.

Green-haired girls rub their ripe bodies against a tree,  
and the tree takes on their shape.

A mad Nestor tears off pieces of his flesh  
and throws them in the sky to become birds.

The sun-bright prince of the insects  
raves disconsolately under a violet.

A disobedient train escaped the trails  
to play hide-and-seek with the children.

My grandpa harnessed an ashen shadow  
to plough the graveyard and sow stars.

---

*Jordan DANILOVSKI*

---

*There Is No More My No Room*

There is no more my No room  
Only mud traces  
Upon the books  
And the banks are different  
From that constant  
Turning of the wheels  
The stones  
The windows of air  
Of earth  
Subterranean and ethereal  
Reaching for notes  
Tunnels for escapes  
The draft in them  
The growing of the walls  
Their acoustics  
Against the tree-crowns  
And us  
Who once  
Resided in laughter  
Us who were  
Children in them

***Whisper***

Sweating children among the trees  
Laughter sways the trees  
And bends the time  
Once toward their birth  
Then toward their death  
And in the deep distance  
A huge  
Millstone  
That started off  
To grind everything

***My Room***

Walls  
Banks where I flow  
Splash over their whiteness  
Over the shelves  
And dirty  
From the mud of the books  
I wave my fists  
I scream at the windows  
At the pictures  
Of a child looking for a path  
And an old man guarding that path  
My lecherous body  
Dissolves in them  
Multiplies  
Seeks its Bethlehem  
Its way out



***Me***

I know  
They come  
From behind a mountain of anguish  
Children with ashen faces  
Desiring to see themselves

Me  
In a dim mirror

---

*Shazim MEHMETI*

---

*A Belated Memory of My Neighbourhood  
and of Alyosha's Daughter*

A naughty child as I was  
But not as naughty as Aziz's little devil  
In this old Jewish part of the city  
I crawled from one burrow to another  
Barefoot with a red whistle in my hand

This is my belated memory of my neighbourhood  
And of Alyosha's seventh daughter  
The beautiful Pivka with hair falling down her back  
That I enjoyed looking at  
She unleashed death from her bosom  
And made my body drunk with love

The Moon closed its eyes to avoid dizziness  
Before the excess in the dance of her legs  
While we quenched our desire with morning dew  
Were left sleepless or stood dumb in the rain  
We died so many times that we created life  
Through our cries of pleasure and moaning

This is my yellow memory of my neighbourhood  
Where the living grabbed everything life could offer  
Only Hadife the girl with a beautiful braid and without a scarf  
The youngest daughter of my neighbour to the right  
Could not look straight into life's eyes

All night she stood behind the curtain  
Bit her lips red and lush like cherries  
And when she'd see us naked as angels  
She'd die a thousand times during one night  
(She could neither escape the worm in her pillow  
Nor her dear father's strictness who loved her so much)

P.S.

I committed no sin  
And if you take me for a drunk then the whole  
neighbourhood stinks of grape brandy

---

*Slave Ġorġo DIMOSKI*

---

*Requiem**(In memory of my father Kiril)**An episode from childhood*

My childhood did not exist  
but was a saddled cloud  
galloping across the sky

And a wind that I tied  
To a tree And to your hands  
Your hands Father!

My childhood did not exist  
only footprints in the snow  
the white snow

And a flower that blossomed forever  
in the snow And in your eyes Father  
Your eyes Father!

My childhood did not exist  
only a spring that constantly  
murmured down the rocks

And a bird that sang upon the thorn  
with brightly shining wings  
And your voice  
Your living flame!

***Childhood***

the mountains melt. i rise  
above them. they have moving faces  
but remain silent. i become a field.  
here it is. i tread upon it.

---

*Tražče KACAROV*

---

*Wherever You Find Me*

Wherever you find me  
you take me with you  
wherever I turn  
I see only you

But I don't look for you  
you grow within me

Haven't I grown up enough  
to leave you behind

What you need to do now  
is to run to the old house and let me be

*Fear*

When small  
I kept my eyes open  
all night  
or just dreamt  
of being awake  
I feared  
for my dearest  
for their lives  
And they feared  
for something else

Today my son  
inherited the same fear  
His sleeplessness  
presses on me  
like a horrible memory  
in the dark of the room

I feel  
we'll live through our lives  
fearing something else

---

*Lulëzim HAZIRI*

---

*A Letter to a Classmate*

My dear classmate from the last row by the window  
I realize the years have made my yellow forgetfulness stronger  
Time's placed obstacles before my legs.  
I should remember our running down the corridors  
The joy when the bell would go off before time  
When we played truants  
When we smoked behind the school  
When we were called vagabonds, idlers, rascals  
When we were really bucked like a saw hitting metal  
But our teeth did not break

Do you remember how the language teacher lured us  
With words, us, the heretics and the anarchists  
But he failed to prove himself a man with his 100 kilos  
When in the graduation album  
He separated us  
Although we wanted to be together in the back of the album  
As we always were in the back of the classroom

But the math teacher who wore an Einstein badge on his lapel  
Looked surprised when he saw us devouring a chunk of bread  
During recess time  
We nibbled at everything we could

At our books desks teachers  
both in the morning and in the afternoon  
We ate them as we ate the dry bread  
As we ate the time  
That rang before our time  
Like the school bell.



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*Salajdin SALIHU*

---

*A Childhood without ID*

the day begins with mixing black tea  
with ethereal hellos full of cacophony  
with love moans of studs  
with conversations between garden keepers  
with war heroes that history does not recognize  
the day speaks in cold words of iron and concrete  
its shallowness is turned upside down in an hourglass

it's like macondo and yet it isn't  
the people suffer from insomnia  
love turns yellow with oblivion  
the morning blossoms like dire portent  
one more day buried in the people

everything smells of death  
love is only a rumour  
under tight clothes of morality  
naked dreams are being disturbed  
the apple of sin already bitten  
the garden of eden voluntarily evacuated

in a world without dimensions  
where time and space and creatures are placed together  
is hidden the lost identity  
of my childhood without ID  
where long ago antiquity stopped to breathe

---

## *Lidija DIMKOVSKA*

---

### *Kyrie Eleison*

The first cathedral I'd ever seen was in Katerini<sup>1</sup>  
 when we were shopping for denim skirts,  
 five blouses for a thousand drachmas + one free  
 winter sweaters in the middle of August and leather waistcoats,  
 Oh God, the Cathedral tolled at noon sharp,  
 Kyrie and I looked at each other eye to eye  
 my father said to me: We have collected the Greek scum.  
 But the sea was clean and Vasili was not ugly,  
 scum is scum, although he whispered tenderly  
 Sagapo.

In Katerini I insisted on having it my own way with the fragrant letters  
 lacking correct addresses. The women in the post-office  
 would cross out the name of my country  
 so where else could all those letters end  
 if not in their famous dump.

The Cathedral stands monotonously in place,  
 my faith in Him is weak, so I had to shout out in the middle of the street:  
Scum, Greek scum!

And Vasili said: I haven't been to Mt. Athos yet  
 but when I go I'll bring you an icon of the holy quartet: Wisdom, Faith,  
Love and Hope,  
 a snake bit my heart, a man with such freedom before God  
 cannot be classified under the word scum,  
 even though I cried when my sister decided to remain in Katerini  
 and give birth to Greeks. Cathedral, you could wake up at the other end  
of the world,

---

<sup>1</sup> Summer resort city in Greece (translator's note).

and still be called Cathedral, but I  
did not even have enough sun, did not try the blouses on  
but just turned to face Katerini and prayed:  
Eleison, Eleison Kyrie and stay in good health  
in clean places and in scum, whoever's, wherever.

*Translated by Peggy Reid and Ljubica Arsovska*

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*Suzana V. SPASOVSKA*

---

*Young Skin*

You study your skin

The wrinkles aren't deep yet

You follow them  
and see how they cross  
and merge into one another  
knitting a net  
to protect your body  
from bursting

You study your skin

The wrinkles aren't to be noticed yet  
and you see they are endless  
unless they encounter a scar  
where they plunge  
and save your body  
from bleeding

You study your skin  
and then you see  
that if you were not still young  
your pores would have bled away

You study your skin  
and then you see that when you grow old  
your skin will not be able  
to stop your blood from dripping out

Then you see  
that perhaps you won't even be able  
to look at yourself in the mirror

### *Heritage*

I am being born  
My mother greets me with love  
and fear for my health  
I receive her love  
and her fear

I grow up  
with my father's love of my frailty  
with my father's fear for my maidenhood  
I receive his love  
and his fear

I live  
and carry my mother's love and fear  
my father's love and fear  
and think –  
how much fear will my children carry

---

*Nikola MADŽIROV*

---

*Cold Mornings*

I don't understand  
the cold mornings  
my mother talks about

She tells me to cover  
even my head

I leave my feet  
bare

She pours ice in a pot  
and tells me  
to pull my knees  
to my belly

I don't understand  
the cold mornings  
my mother talks about

(it's so warm in her womb)

*I Was Three*

I remember well  
my flights from home  
in pajamas  
and in my father's  
three-times larger shoes

I still have the instinct  
only  
the shoes are now too small.

### ***Every Day***

Every day we rearrange  
the world:

*the mountains will be here,  
the cities there  
the rivers today  
will enter our room.*

And again the following day:

*Let the kites be in this sky,  
the truces somewhere else.*

Only we were involved  
in such games,  
nature placed us at the same place  
every day –

I was ready to fall asleep  
in a matchbox,  
you – in a violin case.

*Clock Hands*

Inherit your childhood from the photos.  
Transfer the silence  
that expands and withdraws  
like a flock of birds in flight.  
Keep in your palm  
the roughly circular snowball  
and the drops that trickle  
along your life line.  
Say the prayer  
with closed lips:  
the words are seeds falling in a pot.

Silence is learned in the womb.

Try to be born  
as the big hand of a clock at midnight  
and the seconds will immediately run before you.



---

*Vladimir MARTINOVSKI*

---

*10 Haikus*

\*

Fog. Two black spots on  
the steep white ridge: a man, and  
a woman with child.

\*

February night.  
An old lean tomcat cries like  
a newly born child.

\*

The sea stole a toy  
a child's shovel – the sea will  
make a new island.

\*

“What a salty soup!”  
— says a child tasting the sea  
for the first time ever.

\*

A toothless child  
tumbling down a deep ravine.  
Withering tulips.

\*

A pot, a carrot.  
And black buttons in the yard.  
The snowman has fled.

\*

Alone on a towel  
a chubby, a rounded child,  
nibbling at a stone.

\*

A small white ball  
feeds and fills itself with milk –  
a newly born child.

\*

Caught between two waves  
the boat seems to me as if  
a baby's cradle.

\*

Instead of children's  
babble, a village fountain  
gushes forth aloud.

## *The Flying Baklava*

Ah  
this  
kite too  
reminds me  
of those we made  
when we were children – of one  
that turned out to be horribly fearsome  
furtive – looking like a scarecrow in a distant field

But even the kite I see now – flying above  
the city pavements, above the high-rises  
slowly changes its original grimace

Rising above the dark clouds  
its face brightens (seems  
to be smiling)

This kite  
looks  
like  
a  
f  
l  
y  
i  
n  
g  
b  
a  
k  
l  
a  
v  
a  
w  
i  
t  
h  
a  
t  
a  
i  
l

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*Lindita AHMETI*

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*The Secret Bells*

Spring always hides some bells  
Among the flower beds in my grandmother's garden  
And then leaves  
I know that well  
I've heard the tinkling  
With my own ears  
(Let me just add that spring wakes up  
In this garden where a rainbow arches over the green)  
My mother says that it is a divine message  
For how else could she explain  
The gentle tinkling  
That wakes me up  
Before sunrise  
A few neighbours claim  
My mother's right  
(The women believe  
It's magic  
Or some kind of anomaly)  
And add that it should be looked into –  
The thing with the bells  
My father laughs  
And says there's no bells  
There's no tinkling  
That it's just an echo  
Coming from childhood  
That grabs spring by its tail  
As a warning  
My father says  
For the passing years

***We Were Children***

We were children  
We rejoiced in the sun  
When it would glue its bright face  
Upon the window  
And pierce the raindrops on the glass  
We walked at home  
With dew in our hair  
And the gentle words of our mother  
And played “fly away-fly away”  
Sadness did not exist then  
In our vocabulary  
We were children  
Who climbed common wooden ladders  
On the top of a hill  
To touch the moon  
And rode on the back of pride  
Along the street  
Because our father  
Was the strongest man in the world  
We were children  
And we did not notice that the days  
Were robbing us of our innocence

---

***Bujar GANIJA-PLOSHTANI***

---

***The Look of the Poet***

The world of childhood to the poet is but a small boat  
That sets off to the endless expanse of life  
Wandering off to goodness, love,  
Peace and unlimited justice.

(The child, a white flower  
Runs with confidence  
Into the embrace of its family  
Carrying to them the gift of God).

In that boat of feelings  
Stretches a world of peace and love.  
A world of honesty and playful hues  
And faces adorned with the child's smiles.

And the poet hunts for every sound in this world  
With the open soul of a child  
And he raises the pain of a fallen friend  
To zenith heights.

And time only awaits him  
Adorning his future with smiles  
Where the child moves on through a white destiny.

---

*Iskra DONEVA*

---

1.  
What does a baby dream of  
when smiling in its  
sleep? The Milky Way.
  
2.  
Crunchy biscuit without milk  
I suck in my mouth.  
A mother breastfeeds a baby.
  
3.  
A small hot spring  
bubbling clear health –  
my first step.
  
4.  
From left to right  
I'm turning the pages  
learning to read.
  
5.  
With my grandpa's  
knife I cut an apple.  
Wisdom starts flowing.
  
6.  
The sun constantly  
follows the shadow  
of my youth.

---

*Bardhyl ZAIMI*

---

*Grandma*

She sits bent over, clad in a buttoned up embroidered robe  
that her sister brought her together with baked apples  
Her toes in the sandals are blue and cracked  
and look like the neck of a turtle that can hardly move

Her skin is ruffled like dry soil waiting for rain  
Like yellow papyri scorched by the bitter sun  
She tries to find harmony in her shallow body through pain  
Some Stamboul dry currents in her hands dyed with henna

Before her, the garden with a rusted iron fence  
An apricot in blossom, the fragrance of quince and red roses  
A stretch of concrete divides her from the summer apples  
And from the grandson who bathes in joy among the flowers

She has taken another path, to the garden of memories  
In the shade of the house, in an old photograph





## *Notes on the authors*

### **ACEVSKA, Vesna**

(b. 1952, Skopje)

Poet, short story writer, translator.

Poetry collections: *A Cliff to Jump from* (1993), *An Anchor for Noah* (1994), *Rehearsals* (1995), *Chaos in the Mirror* (1996), *A Tower in the Word* (2006).

### **ANDREEVSKI, Petre M.**

(b. 1934, Sloeštica, Demir Hisar, d. 2006, Skopje)

Poet, short story writer, novelist, playwright, translator.

Poetry collections: *Knots* (1960), *In the Sky and On the Earth* (1962), *Denizia* (1968), *Far Anvils* (1971), *Lauds and Complaints* (1976), *Eternal House* (1987), *Lachrymatory* (1999).

### **AHMETI, Linditë**

(b. 1973, Prizren, Kosovo)

Poet.

Poetry collections in Albanian: *Raspberries and Blues* (1993), *Adular Island* (1996), *Rainbow* (2000). In Macedonian translation: *Moon of Stone* (1998), *Blue Dream* (2002). Writes in Albanian.

### **ANČEVSKI, Zoran**

(b. 1954, Skopje)

Poet, translator, essayist.

Poetry collections: *Journey Through Broken Images* (1984), *Strategy of Defeat* (1994), *Line(s) of Resistance* (1998), *Translating the Dead* (2000), *Wild Peace* (2004).

### **BAKEVSKI, Petre**

(b. 1947, Kavadarci)

Poet, prose writer, playwright, critic.

Poetry collections: *Road to the Sky* (1972), *Land Lover* (1975), *The Cry of the Peacock* (1982), *The Torn Map* (1984), *The Face of Time* (1985), *Eyes Blurred with Insomnia* (1990), *The Shadow of Dream* (1990), *Living Stars* (1992), *Through the Golden Ring of the Sun* (1994), *In the Shadow of the Sword* (1994), *100 Sonnets* (1997), *Elegies* (1998), *Ballads* (1999), *My Ithaca* (2003), *The Heavenly Life of the Lyric* (2006).

### **BOŠKOVSKI, Petar T.**

(b. 1936, Ostrilci, Kruševo, d. 2006, Skopje)

Poet, novelist, essayist, critic, playwright, translator, editor.

Poetry collections; *Bed of Thorns* (1970), *Heavenly Stone* (1985), *White Wind* (1991), *The Second Sin of the East* (1994), *Critical Point* (2002), *Vratika* (2004).

**ČALOVSKI, Todor**

(b. 1945, Galičnik)

Poet, critic, essayist, translator.

Poetry collections: *Night in Which You Are Not* (1969), *Nocturnal Book of Hours* (1971), *The Sirdar's Ailments* (1975), *A Star in a Man* (1981), *The Core* (1984), *Threshold* (1988), *Pangs* (1994), *Gifts* (1994), *Galica* (1996), *Awakened House* (1998), *Supportive Voice* (2000), *Dawn* (2002), *Sun's Breath* (2005).

**ČEJKOVSKA, Vera**

(b. 1954, Skopje)

Poet, essayist.

Poetry collections: *Man and Door* (1975), *Multiplying of the Word* (1986), *The Experiment* (1992), *The Absence of the Mild One* (selection) (1993), *Edges* (2006).

**DABESKI, Petko**

(b. Volkovija, Tetovo, 1939)

Poet.

Poetry collections: *The Fourth Coordinate* (1987), *Parables* (1989), *The Bride's Chest* (1991), *Outside the Experiment* (1996), *Things above the Words* (1997), *Guardians of the Fortress* (1998), *Not All Is Haiku* (1999), *A Bundle of Metaphors* (2003), *The Deer Capriccios* (2005), *Parables and Capriccios* (2006, in ten languages).

**DANILOVSKI, Jordan**

(b. 1957, Debar)

Poet, novelist, essayist.

Poetry collections: *Fire-eater* (1982), *Motion, Space, and Time* (1984), *Internal Speech* (1986), *Multiplication of Silence* (1989), *Book of Darkness* (1996), *The Bed of Madness* (1998), *Mystic* (2000), *The Book of Navi* (2002), *Book OM* (2004).

**DIMČEV, Dimo N.**

(b. 1952, Dobrošani, Štip)

Poet, prose writer, writer for children, translator.

Poetry collections: *The Cry of Death* (1989), *Holy Hope* (1990), *My Dear Mother* (1996, poetry for children), *The Proud Shepherd's Son* (1999, poetry for children). Writes in Aromanian (Vlach) and in Macedonian.

**DIMKOVSKA, Lidija**

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Poet, essayist, translator.

Poetry collections: *The Offspring from the East* (1992), *The Fire of Letters* (1994), *Bitten Nails* (1998), *Nobel against Nobel* (2001).

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Poet, writer for children.

Poetry collections: *Engravings* (1979), *Project* (1982), *Cold Impulse* (1985), *The Last Manuscripts* (1988), *Byway* (1991), *Subjects and Arguments* (1994), *Forms of Passion* (1999), *Dark Place* (2000).

**DIRJAN, Liljana**

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Poet, translator.

Poetry collections: *Natural Phenomenon* (1981), *Living Weight* (1985), *Heavy Silk* (1997), *Wormwood Field* (1998).

**DONEVA, Iskra**

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Poet, essayist.

Poetry collections: *The Heart's Speech* (2000), *Who Will Warm the Birds* (2006).

**ĆUZEL, Bogomil**

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Poet, essayist, prose writer, playwright, translator.

Poetry collections: *Mead* (1962), *Alchemical Rose* (1963), *Peace Bearers* (1965), *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), *She/It* (2000), *Survival* (2003).

**HAZIRI, Lulĕzim**

(b. 1962, Gostivar)

Poet, publicist.

Poetry collections: *The Poem Is Born in Loneliness* (1989), *When the Gates Open with Ringing* (1995), *Exit from the Safari* (2005). Writes in Albanian.

**GAJTANI, Adem**

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Poet, translator.

Poetry collections: *Light in the Heart* (1973), *Oh, Song, Faraway Song* (1973), *A Song in a Dream* (1975), *From Flower to Flower* (1975), *Some Third Time* (1977), *Starfish* (1979), *Poems* (1980), *A Swan Song* (1982). Wrote in Albanian.

**GANIJA-PLOSHTANI, Bujar**

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Poet, essayist.

Poetry collections: *The Silence of the Poet* (2003), *Directed by the Soul* (2007). Writes in Albanian.

**JACEV, Risto**

(b. 1942, Dolno Rodevo, Voden, Aegean Macedonia)

Poet, short story writer, playwright, translator.

Poetry collections: *The Shepherd's Pipe and Magic* (1967), *The Death of an Angel* (1968), *Subterranean Shadows* (1973), *The Forest of Smoke* (1974), *The Sick Garden* (1976), *Dried Wells* (1984), *Gornica* (1984), *The Ghosts' Travelling Companion* (1988), *Twilight's Echo* (1988), *An Angel on Christ's Tomb* (1991), *A Stone for a Pillow* (1992), *The Prisoner of Darkness* (1996), *Thirsty Nights* (2000), *The White Saint* (2003), *Cold Darkness* (2005), *Words and Tears* (2006).

**KACAROV, Trajče**

(b. 1959, Štip)

Poet, short story writer, essayist, playwright.

Poetry collections: *Under the Arms of the Alarmclock* (1986), *Do You Follow Jorgé* (1991), *The Discrete Charm of Kus de Ru* (1993), *Mr. Nalče's Ragtime* (1997), *Willing Thoughts* (2006).

**KLETNIKOV, Eftim**

(b. 1946, Negrevo)

Poet, translator, essayist.

Poetry collections: *Blue Whirlpool* (1977), *Lights and Twilights* (1978), *The Eye of the Dark One* (1980), *Poems for Ognen* (1983), *Row and Wing* (1984), *Voices* (1987), *The Three-eyed* (1989), *Instants* (1992), *The Ancient Flash* (1993), *A Man and a Woman Facing the Stars* (1994), *The Living Stone* (2003), *The Great Ignorance* (2004).

**KONESKI, Blaže**

(b. Nebregovo, 1921, d. Skopje, 1993)

Poet, prose writer, essayist, linguist, translator, literary historian.

Poetry collections: *Land and Love* (1948), *Poems* (1953), *The Embroideress* (1955), *Poems* (1963), *Sterna* (1966), *Old and New Poems* (1978), *The Fountains* (1984), *Epistle* (1978), *Church* (1988), *The Golden Peak* (1989), *Seismograph* (1989), *The Heavenly River* (1991), *The Black Ram* (1993).

**KOTESKI, Jovan**

(b. Prisovjani, Struga, 1932, d. Skopje, 2001)

Poet.

Poetry collections: *Smiles before Dawn* (1958), *Land and Passion* (1958), *Evil Times* (1963), *Hardship* (1965), *Shadows* (1972), *Heraclea* (1978), *Malady* (1981), *Deed* (1985), *Living Ember* (1990), *Shivers* (1991), *Ralitsa* (1992), *Cradle* (1994), *Trail Reader* (1995), *Branches* (1997), *Devastation* (1999), *Molehill* (2000).

**KRUŠKAROVSKI, Dragan**

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Poet, journalist, editor.

Poetry collections: *Churchyards* (1992), *Palimpsest* (1999 – published posthumously).

**KUMBAROSKI, Razme**

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Poet, novelist, translator.

Poetry collections: *Zinda* (1982), *Water Passage* (1984), *Waterwheel* (1988), *Monastery* (1994), *Troy* (1998), *The Horse-shoe and the Evil Moon* (2003), *Poems about Cypress* (2007).

**ĀULAVKOVA, Katica**

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Poet, critic, essayist, translator.

Poetry collections: *Annunciations* (1975), *Act* (1978), *Our Consonant* (1981), *New Sweat* (1984), *Neuralgic Spots* (1985), *Wild Thought* (1989), *Thirsts - Leap Poems* (1989), *Domino* (1993), *Chasing the Evil* (1997), *Foreplay* (1998), *World in Between* (2003), *Blind Angle* (2004).

**MADŹIROV, Nikola**

(b. 1973, Strumica)

Poet and translator.

Poetry collections: *Locked in the City* (1999), *Somewhere, Nowhere* (1999), *Asphalt Sky* (2003), *In the City, Somewhere* (2004), *The Removed Stone* (2007).

**MARTINOVSKI, Vladimir**

(b. 1974, Skopje)

Poet, essayist, translator.

Poetry collections: *Sea Moon* (2003), *Hidden Poems* (2005), *Water and Earth and Fire and Air* (2006).

**MATEVSKI, Mateja**

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Poet, literary and theatrical critic, essayist and translator.

Poetry collections: *Rains* (1956), *Equinox* (1963), *Iris* (1976), *Circle* (1977), *Linden* (1980), *The Birth of Tragedy* (1985), *Distancing* (1990), *Black Tower* (1992), *Permeation* (1996), *The Ditch* (1997), *Inner Landscape* (2000), *Desire for the Whole* (2005).

**MEHMETI, Shazim**

(b. 1958, Gostivar)

Poet, prose writer.

Poetry collections: *The Lost Balance* (1991), *Destroying the House* (1992), *Graves and a River* (1993), *I Fear Barking* (1994), *I Have No Faith in Your Heaven* (1995), *Flying Rivers* (1999), *Birds from the Soul* (2001), *The Season of the Animal* (2004). Writes in Albanian.

**PAVLOVSKI, Radovan**

(b. 1937, Niš, Serbia)

Poet, essayist, travelogue writer.

Poetry collections: *Drought, Weddings and Migrations* (1961), *Korabia* (1964), *High Noon* (1966), *Through the Crack of the Sword* (1971), *The Sun Unknown to the Snake* (1972), *Feast*

(1973), *Seeds* (1975), *Lightnings* (1978), *Guards* (1980), *Plague* (1984), *Marena* (1986), *Foundation Stone* (1988), *God of the Morning* (1991), *Sound Rider* (1995), *The Offspring of the Sun* (1999), *Shield* (2001), *With One Eye* (2002).

### **PETROVSKI, Trajan**

(1939, Arbinovo, Ohrid)

Poet, prose writer, novelist, translator.

Poetry collections: *The Valley of Primroses* (1964), *The Singed One* (1967), *The Blessing of the Bread* (1969), *Twelfth Night* (1969), *Dogwood* (1971), *Neither Day nor Death* (1974), *The Peasants' Speech* (1980), *The Old Vineyard* (1983), *The Sphinx* (1985), *Conversations with Prličev* (1989), *Anatolian Winds* (1993), *Bosphorus Testament* (1996), *I Believe in Ohrid* (1996), *I Live in Asia* (2000), *The Speech of the Dervish* (2000).

### **POPOVSKI, Ante**

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Poet, essayist, translator.

Poetry collections: *Reflections* (1995), *Vardar* (1958), *Samuel* (1963), *Persistence* (1964), *Of Stone* (1972), *Arcanum* (1975), *Of Love* (1980), *Of Kin* (1981), *Blue Song* (1985), *Untitled* (1988), *Providence* (1995), *The Holy Song* (2001), *Two Silences* (2003, published posthumously).

### **PROKOPIEV, Aleksandar**

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Poet, short story writer, novelist, essayist.

Poetry collections: *The Rolling Image* (haiku, 1998), *A Poetical Diary: Anti-instructions for personal use* (2000).

### **RADIČEVSKI, Naume**

(b. 1953, Meščišta, Ohrid)

Poet, critic, essayist.

Poetry collections: *Existence and Motifs* (1975), *A Bright Sad Call* (1984), *Contrasts* (1992), *Transfiguration of Mankind* (2001).

### **RENDŽOV, Mihail**

(b. 1936, Štip)

Poet, translator.

Poetry collections: *The Emigrant of Fire* (1965), *Night Word Growing* (1967), *Where from This Side?* (1968), *On the Edge of the Dream* (1972), *Fear* (1976), *Midnight* (1979), *Nerez* (1982), *Auto-da-fe* (1985), *Phoenix* (1978), *Land, Deluge* (1991), *He* (1993), *Deck 33* (1994), *The Eternal, the Infinite* (1996), *I, Oxymoron* (1998), *Psalms* (2000), *Apocalypse* (2002).

### **SALIHU, Salajdin**

(b. 1970, Tetovo)

Poet, prose writer, essayist.

Poetry collections: *I'm Dying for Little Things* (1996), *The First Night After the Conquest* (1998), *The Honest Lie* (2004). Writes in Albanian.

**SINANI, Ramadan**

(b. 1944, Tetovo, d. 2007, Tetovo)

Poet, critic.

Poetry collections: *The Shar Pipes* (1990), *The Emblem of Freedom* (1995), *The Cry* (2001), *Ice and Fire* (2005).

**SMILEVSKI, Vele**

(b. 1949, Novo Selo, Demir Hisar)

Poet, essayist, literary critic.

Poetry collections: *A Painting Burning Out* (1974), *The Cage* (1978), *Breathe Deeply* (1985), *The Response of the Breath* (1987), *Scratches* (1992), *Fifty Poems* (2000), *Fifty Endpoems* (2004).

**SOPAJ, Nehas**

(b. 1954, Slupčane, Kumanovo)

Poet, prose writer and critic.

Poetry collections: *Green Poems* (1972), *Algae* (1973), *Greetings from the Moon* (1975), *In the Circle* (1979), *The Furious Chimera* (1980), *The Yellow Flowers* (1996), *Rain over Albania* (1999), *Algae out of the Sea* (2001), *Algae* (2004). Writes in Albanian.

**SPASOVSKA, Suzana V.**

(b. 1972, Rotterdam, Holland)

Poet, critic.

Poetry collections: *Love and Plot* (1996), *The Mortal Letter* (2002, electronic publication).

**SPAHIU, Mustafa**

(1948, Mučivrcë, Gnjilane, Kosovo)

Poet.

Poetry collections: *The Rainbow of Freedom* (1982), *The Bumblebees in the Green* (1984), *Children under a Rainbow* (1988), *My Meadow* (bilingual edition, 1988), *By the Spring* (1992), *Eyes Reflecting Childhood* (1994), *Yearning* (1996), *Alarm Clock Wound by Children's Dreams* (1996), *Clay Pipe Dances* (1999), *Nightingale's Songs* (2000), *The Child Is a Nightingale of the Hearth* (2005). Writes in Albanian.

**STOJČEVSKI, Sande**

(b. 1948, Studena Bara, Kumanovo)

Poet, essayist, literary critic, translator.

Poetry collections: *The King of the Swans* (1972), *Lanterns Through the Mist* (1977), *The Golden Bough* (1980), *Vespers* (1985), *Mount Abora* (1987), *Hunting a Flash* (1990), *Kuboa* (1993), *Skald* (1995), *Summit* (1996), *(Z)aum* (1999), *Trmka* (2001), *The World Is a Cobweb on Thorns* (2002).

**STREZOVSKI, Jovan**

(b. 1931, Podgorci, Struga)

Poet, prose writer, translator, writer for children.



Poetry collections: *Whispers* (1958), *Steps in Time* (1971), *Herbs* (1985), *A Cold World* (1991), *Braid* (1992), *A World in a World* (1996), *Rapture* (2000), *Brightness and Ashes* (2005).

### SHABANI, Resul

(b. 1944, Kališta, Struga)

Poet, prose writer, playwright.

Poetry collections: *Fish* (1975), *Hamlet With a Black Skullcap* (1978), *Lake Fairy, The Water-bringer of the Field, Oh America* (1989), *Invented Sin* (1996). Writes in Albanian.

### ŠOPOV, Aco

(b. 1923, Štip, d. Skopje, 1982)

Poet, translator.

Poetry collections: *Poems* (1944), *On the Gramos* (1950), *With Our Own Hands* (1950), *Lines on Hardship and Joy* (1952), *Merge with Silence* (1955), *The Wind Brings Nice Weather* (1957), *Non-being* (1963), *The Reader of Ashes* (1970), *Poems for the Black Woman* (1976), *A Tree on the Hill* (1980).

### TAŠKOVSKI, Ljuben

(b. 1931, Strumica, d. 1994, Skopje)

Poet, journalist.

Poetry collections: *Katerina* (1958), *South Sea Ballad* (1960), *A Girl from Kukuš* (1962), *There Is no Goodbye for Us* (1967), *Macedonian Rhapsody* (1969), *Ilinden* (1969), *Ljuben in America* (1970), *Pomegranate* (1981), *From Skopje to Chicago, from New York to Santiago* (poetry for children).

### UROŠEVIĆ, Vlada

(b. 1934, Skopje)

Poet, prose writer, critic, essayist, translator.

Poetry collections: *Another City* (1959), *Invisibility* (1962), *A Mannequin in the Landscape* (1967), *Summer Rain* (1967), *The Starry Scales* (1973), *The Diving Bell* (1975), *The Dreamer and the Emptiness* (1979), *The Compass of Dreams* (1984), *Hypnopolis* (1986), *Planet of Panic* (1989), *The Risks of the Trade* (1993), *Panic* (1995), *Mane, tekel, fares* (2001).

### VANGELOV, Atanas

(b. 1946, Bogdanci)

Poet, prose writer, critic, essayist, literary theoretician, playwright, translator.

Poetry collections: *The Land of the Flower* (1966), *Translation of the Mountain* (1970), *Dwelling* (1974), *Sights and Apparitions* (1977), *Legends* (1978), *Strictly Confidential* (1985), *A Voice from the Void* (1994).

### VASILEVSKI, Risto

(b. 1943, Nakolec, Prespa)

Poet, essayist, critic, translator.

Poetry collections: *Whispers* (1968), *Old Times* (1970), *Interpreting the Road* (1973), *Shaping* (1981), *The Hagiography of Kole F.* (1984), *Sick House* (1984), *Harvest* (1991), *An*

*Ode to Hades* (1993), *Playing with the Head* (1997), *Mirrors* (1998), *Fibre of the Evil* (1999), *Games and Praises* (2000), *Temple* (2003).

**VINCA, Agim**

(b. 1947, Velešta, Struga)

Poet, critic and literary historian, translator.

Poetry collections: *Phoenix* (1972), *The Ridge of Desire* (1975), *The Drim River Man* (1981), *Rags and Dreams* (1987), *Bad Time for Poetry* (1997), *The Lonely Sonnet* (2001). Writes in Albanian.

**VINCA, Nuhi**

(b. 1932, Velešta, Struga)

Poet, translator.

Poetry collections: *Southern Wave* (1967), *Lyrical Grasp* (1971), *There by the Lake* (1986), *At the Border Stone* (2000), *Te Deum Laudamus* (2003), *Lyrical Trilogy* (2003). Writes in Albanian.

**ZAIMI, Bardhyl**

(b. 1970, Tetovo)

Poet, essayist.

Poetry collections: *A Spool of Words* (2004). Writes in Albanian.

### *Note on the selector*

**BANOVIĆ-MARKOVSKA, Angelina**

(b. 1966, Skopje)

Theoretician of literature, professor at the Department of Macedonian language and literature at the Faculty of Philology “Blaže Koneski,” Skopje.

Published works: *Strategies of Interpretation* (1999), *Characters-Antagonists* (2001), *Hypertextual Dialogues* (2004), *Group Portrait* (2007).