

afraid of playing, searching for alternative ways to approach reality, divagations, manners with no warranty of utility. The unfaithful author Irina Petras¹, often non-feminine in a graceful manner,² reticent towards the huge infinites³ and definitive immortality,⁴ practicing an existential philosophy of trace⁵ and postulating fearlessly its its degradation in time, creates a strong effect on the reader, offering, practically, more than a book of literary recoveries, a cultural character. Memorable.

The Stained Glass and the Window – Review⁶ –

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This is the title of the book on contemporary poets I am currently working on.

This pair of terms, as it is apparent, recalls the oscillation between the poetry of modernity as transfiguration and the poetry of the last decades as transcription. The first – a transfiguration of the world in an attempt to seize its essence; the second – a transcription exhibiting the impossibility to seize any essence.

Adriana Teodorescu's poetry hesitates between the two attitudes, configuring its personal manner of facing the challenges of existence ("gloomy limitlessness in a field of feeble mirrors"). As a graduate of the Faculty of Letters of Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj (specializing in Romanian and French), she wrote her thesis on the work of Caragiale, entitled: *Carnavalul în opera literară caragialiană sau despre posibilitățile peștilor de a zbura* (The carnival in Caragiale's literary work, or the fish's ability to fly) (supervised by prof. univ. dr. V. Fanache), which won her the debut contest of the Cluj branch of the Romanian Students Union, becoming thus an author of the series *Biblioteca tânărului scriitor* (Young writers' library). Her further education, an MA in

¹ "Due to this very fact that I am not faithful, the world seems to me so damn mysterious. Unsolved. I let my mind open and I don't name my ignorance and my fear God". *Idem*. p. 240. Or: "I don't believe in the after life or in soul immortality, I don't believe that the responsibility for my on life may be put on others' behalf, be it people or gods". *Ibid.*, 249.

² "Brain is the thing I care the most". *Ibid.*, 218-219.

³ "I don't believe in love until death parts, in total friendships, in heart rending pains, in absolute fidelity (not only between sexes, but in general). In nothing absolute". *Ibid.*, 217.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁵ "I try to place myself in a *civilization of trace*". *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶ Adriana Teodorescu, *Approape memorie* (Almost memory) (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Limes, 2013), 88 p. ISBN 978-973-726-793-1

the History of images, History of ideas resulting the thesis *Două feluri de a aștepta viermii – sinucidere incompletă în Oblomov și Străinul* (Two ways of waiting for the worms – incomplete suicide in *Oblomov* and *The Stranger*), and her PhD on the subject of *Poetica morții ca principiu dialogic în opera lui Camus și a lui Sartre* (The poetics of death as a dialogical principle in the works of Camus and Sartre), both at the same faculty and coordinated by univ. prof. dr. Ștefan Borbély ensure the theoretical background for her poetry of insistent meditation, undermined by just as insistent and somewhat critical immersion in the threatened concrete everyday existence. Ștefan Borbély correctly observes the system of communicating vessels driving the work of the poet and essay writer: “Adriana Teodorescu comes close to Maurice Blanchot’s existential thematism – that she also cites –, she likes concreteness, she is attracted by the materiality of literature, writing with an imaginative effervescence almost like taken over from Jean-Pierre Richard, and an openness to poetry which betrays her interest in that direction”.

The poet’s placement in the world of the poem is on the edge: “Alone in front of a window”, she looks upon the world, emphasizing the pure and rather uninvolved description of details, while it also fantasizes about rich stained glasses in search for hidden meanings behind appearances: “I don’t know if I will ever find the Meaning: / I hear every day it is small and sly, chameleonic and protean, / it sleeps when I look for it, and howls when I shun it, / but I miss it and pity it like a god killed by its own enormity. / A host of ifs irrupt for a meaning / of which I beware lest they should drag me into a book”.¹ Oscillating between *sight* and *vision* (in the sense used by Ioana Em. Petrescu for instance), writing is a spacious metaphor of knowledge, marvellous just as much as it is superfluous: “If images could be detached from words, / they would be no more now than those colours running to and through each other”; “it has always been just an impression, my flesh covered in words”; “books call me in my sleep and sting me like some ribs on which / stands my flesh covered in words”; “a verb mimes like a child the meaning it doesn’t understand”; “and the crumbly writings spoil between my fingers, in my meat-greasy mind, / and I will return everything stolen, changed, foully keeping their shadows / in letters sent to you”; “and this could be the beginning of a book; a call of winter or a wake from a dream”.² The cascade of testimonies of distrust is partly played, for the word is challenged simultaneously with the shuddering return to its promising possibilities, proved also by the paradoxical negation of language as the means to reach the meaning: “I can only write alone. / Thus my words cannot be my family, we can’t do

¹ “Nu știu dacă am să găsesc vreodată Sensul: / aud zilnic că e mic și viclean, cameleonic și proteic, / că doarme când nu-l caut și urlă când îl ocolesc, / dar mi-i dor de el și milă ca de un dumnezeu ucis de propria enormitate. / Până la sens irup puzderii de dacă / de care mă feresc să nu mă târască în vreo carte”. (translation of poetry excerpts by Emese Czintos)

² “dacă din cuvinte s-ar putea desprinde imagini, / ele n-ar mai fi acum decât acele culori fugind una din alta, una prin alta”; „mereu a fost doar o impresie carnea mea învelită în cuvinte”; „cărțile mă strigă în somn și mă înțepă ca niște coaste pe care stă / carnea mea învelită în cuvinte”; „un verb mimează ca un copil sensul pe care nu îl pricepe”; „și scrieri fărâmicioase se strică printre degetele mele, în gândul meu năclăit de carne, / și le voi înapoia toate furate, alterate, păstrându-le mișelește umbrele / în scrisori către tine”; „și acesta ar putea fi un început de carte; chemare a iernii sau trezire din vis”.

everything together as if we've always known each other.”¹ Silence itself, the withdrawal into muteness and immobility need words to exist. The tensions of the poem are perceived in the negation of the power of the word to translate the shudders of being and the reinforcement of the dependence on the same word. Distrust is obsessively uttered, a bulk of evidence collected from the concrete world, and also with the hope to be ultimately contradicted. The attitude is quite childish in fact, but charming by its freedom, by its barely explored, yet surrounding profoundness.

The poems record therefore a self-harassment (“leavening in the angular sliding of the self”) between contradictory attitudes (“all these years I’ve been so afraid that I can live without writing. / And slowly, on the edge – now – a book with a man that can’t make books”²). The long infinitives which still preserve in themselves the restlessness of the verb but have settled in the rest of a noun are a favoured instrument.³ Most of them denote exhaustion, closure, rejection, but do so with a frenzy underneath, which suggests that the poetic state is bookishly undermined, its truths are just as well just as many masks: “from a book we only have the yard to play, / to laugh, to make its fine wrinkles that don’t stay forever for others, or for us.”⁴ Senses are purposefully silenced – “I’ll stay in the dream and I’ll sleep”,⁵ the gaze is blinking, making the experience of knowledge programmatically ambiguous. The opening poem, dedicated “To Oblomov, for fear, in sleep” (“I mix up people with things, words hurt and don’t, the snail outside and the shell inside / I have plenty of boats and I house fallings asleep”⁶) promises a steamy perspective between sleeping and being awake, with “rivers of oblivion”, with the memory of “a very big child that climbs through air” and *pillows* everywhere (signs of oneiric worlds, of abandonment): “from old books they pass into colourful magazines, they flow on the rug, / then flow back to a me as a child and I see sleep, deep, sticky, I see sleep”.⁷ At this point comes the motif of the road: “A road open as a bird with whirls of waves and fallen tides, denied, / a road with pairless legs, / a road as a book in a field where poppies have fallen asleep, bowing to one another.”⁸ The metaphoric movement is rendered to the *legs* as strange messengers of contemplation, of immobility. Appearing for dozens of times in the book as an obsessive chorus, they compete with *memory*, *gaze* and even *death*, a fundamental topic in all of Adriana Teodorescu’s

¹ “Nu pot să scriu decât singură. / De aceea cuvintele mele nu-mi pot fi familie, nu putem face totul împreună ca și când ne-am cunoaște dintotdeauna”.

² “dospesc în alunecarea colțuroasă din sine”; “toți anii ăștia mi-a fost atât de frică că pot trăi fără să scriu. / Și-ncet, pe muchie – acum – o carte cu om ce cărți nu poate”

³ *neștire, înțelegere, murire, prăbușire, presimțire, devenire, nemurire, îngroșare, trezire, orbire, încercare, tăcere, putere, întrerupere, înmormântare, destrămare, tresărire, prisosire, atingere, alunecare, împrăștiere.*

⁴ “noi avem dintr-o carte doar curtea, în care să ne jucăm, / să râdem, să-i facem riduri fine care nu rămân pentru alții și nici pentru noi mereu”

⁵ “Am să rămân în somn și am să dorm”

⁶ “Încurc oameni cu lucruri, dor și nu dor cuvintele cu melcul în afară și cochilia înăuntru / Am multe bărcuțe și găzduiesc adormiri”

⁷ “din cărți vechi trec în reviste colorate, curg pe covor, / curg înapoi spre un eu copil și văd somn, adânc, vâscos, văd somn”

⁸ “Drum deschis ca o pasăre cu răsuciri de valuri și curenți prăbușiți, negați, / drum cu picioare desperecheate, / drum ca o carte într-un lan în care macii au adormit, adiind unul spre altul”

writing. Stopped “in death as in an empty cage”, legs are absent or uncertain, plenty and with “a bunch of names”. They only “carry” by illusion, they are letters and papers, escapes *from* with an oscillating address (“I’ve fit completely into what everyone calls years”; “you live for yourself / as if on a black beach / you sit in your name as on a blanket”; “when I grow up, I’ll hide until / age, like an illness, goes away”¹), for god himself is “full of lady birds”, childish and helpless. Death is approached in all its variants that the author of thanatology studies has encountered. Following a classification that I myself have drawn up in *Moartea la purtător* (Death at its carrier), Adriana Teodorescu interprets (as with a text or a musical score) the pondered death of Eminescu or Blaga, the “privilege of despair” of Cioran, the premature scent of death of old age, the *paraffin death* of young age, and even a shoulder-to-shoulder death, keeping vigil by close deaths. Finitude reveals thus both its discipline and its chaos in a poetry twisted in itself, of growth and recognition.

The poem as a “space of gathering for me and myself”, touched by a diffuse orphan state (“I’m a child long as a burnt down candle. / And from here I know no more”²), also employs terrible, miserable images, introducing, with the gestures of a child mad with the world, and in line with the poetry of the 2000s, *pus*, *worms*, *sores*, *trash* (“the senseless mind’s in your head as a trash can full of paper / the brain is baked, it’s like a nut”³), dark and bloody *fractures*. However, beyond all this, fear, horror, reticence, and introversion are murmured underground by irrepressible hope: “I’ve got heaps of pillows kept since childhood, thinned / like leaves in book pages, / pillows that multiplied in solitude, some eating their daughters and getting fat, / others sending them in the world, teaching them how to make hollows out of words, / to hide until eyes come to get the whole tree, / to find the places where their arrives wouldn’t have been noticed, because it had already been announced. / And now I stop and write myself: pillow, I open up a space where time will come / later...”⁴

Adriana Teodorescu’s evolution is to be followed, as she is a poetess with an already outlined character who will definitely have much more to say.

Translated by Emese Czintos

¹ “am încăput toată în ceea ce toți numesc ani”; „trăiești pentru tine / ca pe o plajă neagră / îți stai în nume cum pe o pătură”; „când voi fi mare o să mă ascund până când / și vârsta, ca o boală, îmi va trece”

² “spațiu de adunare dintre mine și eu” “sunt un copil lung ca o lumânare arsă. / Iar de aici nu mai știu”

³ “mintea fără vlagă îți stă în cap ca-ntr-un coș de gunoi plin de hârtie / creierul s-a copt și e deja o nucă”

⁴ “Am teancuri de perne păstrate încă din copilărie, subțiate / asemeni frunzelor în pagini de cărți, / perne ce s-au înmulțit solitar, unele mâncându-și ficele, îngrășându-se, / altele trimițându-le în lume, învățându-le să-și facă din cuvinte scorburii, / să se ascundă până vor veni ochi care vor primi copacul întreg, / să găsească locurile în care sosirea lor nu ar fi fost observată, căci era deja schițată. / Și acum mă opresc și scriu și eu: pernă, deschid un spațiu în care timpul va veni / mai târziu...”