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Ivo Andrić
**CONVERSATION WITH GOYA
BRIDGES
SIGNS BY THE ROADSIDE**

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Ivo Andrić

CONVERSATION
WITH GOYA

— — —
BRIDGES
— — —

SIGNS BY THE
ROADSIDE
(SELECTION)

Translated by
Celia Hawkesworth



Beograd
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‘Wherever I look there are poems –
whatever I touch is pain.’

(Ex Ponto, 1918)

INTRODUCTION

This volume represents a selection of the thoughts of the Yugoslav Nobel prize-winner, Ivo Andrić, on human life and the nature of art.

Andrić was an exceptionally private person who declined to give interviews or to make direct comment on his work. His statements are generally indirect, in the form of the large number of short stories and several novels on which his reputation is based. But he also kept notes all his life – on books, people, places, conversations and above all ideas provoked by his experiences and observations. These notes form an intellectual ‘diary’, which is the closest Andrić came to direct communication with his readers. He himself carefully selected the passages for publication in the volume entitled *Signs by the Roadside*. A more characteristic form of statement is ‘Conversation with Goya’, where the writer’s evident affinity with the work of the painter releases him from his usual reticence, enabling him to express his own views, without having to use the ‘I’ he dreaded. Andrić had such radical distrust of the pronoun that he often spoke in the first person plural even when he was clearly referring only to himself, in day-to-day conversation. The reason for this uneasiness was probably a combination of humility, an awareness that the person of the artist is of no consequence, a mere distraction from what he has to say; and a more indefinable conviction that individual ideas, like individuals, are of little intrinsic significance, but important only

in so far as they are related to others and together form an enduring humanity that transcends the limitations of time and space. Above all, Andrić was conscious always of a deep responsibility to words – spoken and written. For Andrić, words – the material of his creative work – once expressed, became enduring objects, with innate power for good or evil. Words were the material of Andrić's own individual struggle against transience, and one of man's most potent means of survival in a fundamentally tragic and hostile world. They must be used with the greatest precision and not lightly or carelessly transacted.

This sense of responsibility to words was closely related to the strong sense Andrić had that the mere activities that seem to fill our daily lives are not real life. The real, the enduring things are ideas and the works of artists, the accounts of past events, the stories and legends handed down through the generations.

Andrić could never understand why the facts of his life should be of any interest to his readers: in his later years he used to wonder why people were concerned to make museums of the house where he was born and the flat he lived in in Belgrade. 'There is nothing to see,' he would say, 'it is not as though I were Tolstoy and lived at Yasnaya Polyana ...'

Nevertheless a few facts about Andrić's life will help to provide a context for these reflections.

*

Andrić was born in Travnik, in the heart of the Bosnian mountains, on 9th October 1892. Travnik is the setting



CONVERSATION WITH GOYA

The first shadows of the still, warm afternoon were falling on the road. I was about twenty kilometres from Bordeaux. As I passed through Croix des Huins, I saw on the right the great columns of a radiotelegraph station. Towers of metal cobwebs, intricate as lace, solid as a city.

As I drove on, I kept thinking of the similarity between ancient, elegant cathedrals and these steel towers. These too have their permanent employees, who serve them as priests do churches. At night, like candles in a church, red or green lights burn along their whole length to warn aircraft flying in fog. Of course everything to do with these telegraph towers is 'rational' and serves a clearly defined practical purpose, while church towers are nowadays merely a luxury or a symbol. But, did they not themselves once arise out of need and were they not built on a 'rational' basis? Only their purpose has vanished, forgotten.

This analogy stayed in my mind, and made what we usually call *near* become exceptionally clearly connected in my thoughts with what we call *distant*; 'possible' with 'impossible'. Carrying in my eyes the image of those modern towers, in which a miracle occurs every instant, I felt that my thoughts and imagination could quite easily and rapidly cross over past time and departed people, and bring them to life.

I was still thinking about these great, as yet incomplete cathedrals of our time, when, wandering through the large

wine-growing town, I sat down wearily in front of a café in a suburb. There are suburbs like this in all the towns of the world. The drainage system there is still rudimentary, asphalt rare, and the streets bear the names of local poets or philanthropic doctors, known only within the boundaries of that borough. These districts in the process of coming into being, where nothing is yet established or permanent, where nothing arrests or disturbs your thoughts, are the most agreeable places for a stranger to rest and reflect.

Not far from the café, in a field, beside materials dumped there after a recent building venture, a circus tent was being erected. I could hear the blows of hammers and men shouting, and, from time to time, the stifled whining of a hyena or some other animal from behind the bars of the menagerie.

These little suburban cafés, in which there is no furniture or ornament of any note, are more or less the same everywhere, and do not change with the times or fashion. The chairs, benches, wide-necked bottles and glasses of thick, opaque glass, the proprietor with his sleeves rolled-up and blue apron, all this has always been the same, everywhere, and all of it has been seen by generation after generation of patrons. In such a setting, you can always conjure up people, costumes and customs from different ages, and they will not clash with it in any way, or create any feeling of anachronism that might spoil the illusion.

‘Yes,’ someone said beside me, as though I had spoken my thoughts out loud.

It was the deep rasping voice of an old man in a dark green cloak of unusual cut. He wore a black hat, beneath which shone exhausted but lively eyes. Opposite me sat

Don Francisco Goya y Lucientes, the former first painter of the Spanish Court, resident in this town from 1819.

‘Yes...’

And we began a conversation that was, in fact, a monologue by Goya about himself, about art, and about general questions of human destiny.

If this monologue seems to you at first sight fragmented and disjointed, it is in fact held together by the inner bonds which link Goya’s life and his painting.

‘Yes, simple surroundings are the settings for miracles and great things. Cathedrals and palaces, in all their beauty and grandeur, actually represent only the withering and burning-out of what began in poverty and simplicity. The seed of the future lies in simplicity, while in beauty and brilliance there is only an unmistakable sign of decay and death. But people have equal need of both brilliance and simplicity. They are the two faces of life. It is impossible to keep them both in mind at the same time: when you look at one you always lose sight of the other. And if anyone does, in fact, see them both, it is hard for him, when he looks at one, to forget the other.

‘At heart, I have myself always been on the side of simplicity, on the side of deep, free life, devoid of glitter or form. Whatever people say and whatever I myself may have once thought or said, in the turmoil of my youth, that is how it is. That is the way I am, and that is what Aragon, where I was born, is like.’

As he spoke, I looked down at the table on which his right hand was lying, like something separate, living a life

of its own. A terrible hand, like some magic root-amulet, knotted, grey, strong, but dry as a desert hillock. It was alive, but with the invisible life of rock. It had neither blood nor sap, but was made of some other material of which the qualities are unknown to us. It was not a hand for shaking or caressing, for taking or giving. Gazing at it, I wondered in alarm how a human hand could grow like that.

For a long time I was not able to tear my gaze away from that hand, which lay motionless on the table throughout the whole conversation, like visible proof of the truth of what the old man was saying, in his gruff voice which came from his chest and only momentarily rose to his throat, like a flame which could not be put out or hidden.

And so he talked on, about art, about people, about himself, passing from one subject to another easily and simply, after a short silence that I did not interrupt except with a silent questioning in my eyes, forever fearful that the old man might vanish suddenly and capriciously, like a dream.

‘You see, an artist is a “suspicious character”, a masked man in the dusk, a traveller with a false passport. The face under the mask is wonderful, his status is far higher than is written in the passport, but what difference does that make? People do not like this uncertainty or this secrecy, and that is why they call him suspicious and hypocritical. And once aroused, suspicion knows no bounds. Even if the artist could somehow make his true self and his calling known to the world, who would believe that was his last word? And if he showed his real passport, who would believe he did not

have a third one hidden in his pocket? And if he took off his mask, wishing to smile sincerely and look straight in front of him, there would still be people who would beg him to be completely sincere and trustworthy, to throw off that last mask as well, the one that looked so like a human face. The artist's fate in the world is to fall from one insincerity into another and to go from one contradiction to another. And even those calm and happy artists, in whom these things are least obvious, even they waver constantly, forever trying to join two ends that never can be joined.

'When I was living in Rome, a friend of mine, a painter who was inclined to mysticism, once said to me: "There is the same abyss between the artist and society as between God and the world. The first antagonism is merely a symbol of the second."

'That was just his way of expressing himself. The truth can be told in several ways, but Truth is ancient and indivisible.

'Sometimes even I find myself wondering: what kind of a calling is this? (for it *is* a calling, how else could it fill a man's whole life and bring him so much satisfaction and so much suffering?) What is this irresistible, insatiable striving to snatch from the darkness of non-existence, from the prison which the connection of one thing with another in this life represents, to tear from this nothingness or from these bonds piece by piece of the life and dreams of men, to give them form and fix them "forever" with brittle chalk on flimsy paper?

'What are a few thousand of our hands, eyes and brains compared to that endless empire from which, with a con-

stant, instinctive effort, we break off tiny pieces? But still, that effort, which appears to the majority of people, quite rightly, senseless and vain, has in it something of the great instinctive persistence with which ants build their anthills in busy thoroughfares, where they are doomed to be crushed and destroyed.

‘The hellish torment and incomparable charm of this activity make us feel that we are seizing something from someone else, taking it from one dark world into another, which we do not know, transforming it from nothing into something, without knowing what that something is. That is why the artist is “beyond the law”, an outlaw in the higher sense of the word, condemned to make superhuman and hopeless efforts to contribute to some superior, invisible order, disrupting this lower, visible one, in which one ought to live with the whole of one’s being.

‘We create forms, like a second order of nature, we arrest youth, retain a glance which in “nature” would have changed or vanished a moment later, we seize and separate lightning movements which no one would ever have seen and we leave them, with all their mysterious meaning, to the eyes of future generations. And not only that – we reinforce each of these movements and glances by a barely perceptible line or tone. This is not exaggerated or deceitful and it does not fundamentally alter what we portray, but lives alongside it like an unseen but constant proof that this object has been recreated for a more enduring, more significant life and that this miracle has taken place within us. This addition, which every work of art bears, like the trace of the mysterious cooperation between nature and the artist, is proof of the demonic



BRIDGES

Of all that a man is impelled to build in this life, nothing is in my eyes finer and more precious than a bridge. Bridges are more important than houses, holier, because more all-embracing, than places of worship. Belonging to everyone and the same for everyone, useful, built always rationally, in a place in which the greatest number of human needs coincide, they are more enduring than other buildings and serve nothing which is secret or evil.

Great stone bridges, witness of vanished ages when people lived, thought and built differently, grey or stained with the wind and rain, their sharply chiselled lines worn down, with thin grass growing or birds nesting in their joins and imperceptible cracks. Slender iron bridges, stretched from one bank to the other like a wire, shaking and resounding with every train that hurtles over them; they seem still to be waiting for their final form and perfection, and the beauty of their lines will be fully disclosed only to the eyes of our grandchildren. Wooden bridges on the way into the little towns of Bosnia whose furrowed planks sink and creak under the hooves of the village horses like the keys of a xylophone. And, finally, those tiny bridges in the mountains, nothing but a largish tree trunk or two logs riveted together, thrown across a wild stream that would be impassable without them. Twice a year in flood the torrent sweeps them away, but the peasants, blindly persistent as ants, cut, plane and build another. That is why one often sees beside those



SIGNS BY THE ROADSIDE

There are some traditional stories that are so universal that we forget when and where we heard or read them, and they live in us like the memory of some experience of our own.

Such a story is the one about the young man who, wandering through the world to seek his fortune, set out along a dangerous road, not knowing where it was leading him. So as not to lose his way, the young man took an axe and carved in the trunks of the trees beside the road signs which would later show him the way back.

That young man personifies the shared, eternal destiny of all mankind: on the one hand, a dangerous and uncertain road, and on the other our deep human need not to get lost, but to find our way in the world and leave some trace behind us. The signs we leave after us will not escape the destiny of everything human – transience and oblivion. They may never be noticed at all and perhaps no one will understand them. But still, they are necessary, just as it is natural and necessary that we should open our hearts and communicate with others.

If these small obscure signs do not save us from disorientation and all kinds of trials, they can at least make them easier, and help us in so far as they convince us that, in everything we do, we are not alone, nor the first, nor unique...

Preserve us, Lord, from the realisation of our dreams. Remove us from the object of our desires, for our body desires its own death.

*

It is only the active, with their aggression and inconsiderateness who move life forward, but it is only the passive, with their patience and kindness, who preserve it, making it both possible and bearable.

*

It is not death, but forgetfulness that solves everything. Forgetfulness, not only of concepts, words and faces, but of everything that exists and lives. Forgetfulness of the body and forgetfulness of time. Forgetfulness so as to rest and to live on in the body without memory, with a spirit without a name. Forgetfulness, death, but with the right to hope.

*

The worst thing is not that everything passes, but that we cannot and do not know how to come to terms with this simple, unavoidable fact.

*

At the worst moments, when the din around me is at its harshest, when the last traces of reason and kindness are

obscured and when every word and gesture expresses evil and misguided impulses, with a desperate movement of my mind, like lightning, I demolish the whole world, wipe out and abandon everything to oblivion, down to the last sign of existence. Then, over all that men have done and said, inexpressibly terrible things but now vanished and buried forever, reigns silence, not the dead, faceless silence of human habitations, but a great silence of outer space, a new world, built entirely of silence, a marvellous Jerusalem, a holy city, magnificent and enduring. Blocks of silence, arches and corners of silence, shadows and patches of light on the buildings and as far as the eye can see, a new world for those who have been defeated in this world, a paradise which remains after matter has burnt itself out in the form that we see and touch each day, and which poisons and crushes us at every instant.

Whoever succeeds in penetrating silence and calling it by its true name, has achieved the most that a mortal being can achieve. It is then no longer cold nor dumb, empty nor terrible, but it serves him and comes to his aid in all adversity, as in the traditional song where the hero caught a nymph by her hair and made her his blood sister, binding her to him forever. Whoever succeeds in warming solitude and bringing it to life, has conquered the world.

*

Whatever does not cause pain – is not life, whatever does not pass – is not joy.

*

In the respect that we have for the dead, as in the love and care that we all show for children, lies the inadequacy that always accompanies our respect, our love and our care for the living and for the adults around us.

*

Now that I have seen, heard, felt and got to know both the others, it is time to find a third place. A secret place, high up, where no one shrieks or sings, where all the threads and circumstances of life and death are drawn together, where no one wants or waits for anything, but where you sit beside what you have found, what you have waited for and achieved, by the boundless and impassable river of life, for a lifetime, without wishing or thinking of embracing it, halting or seizing it.

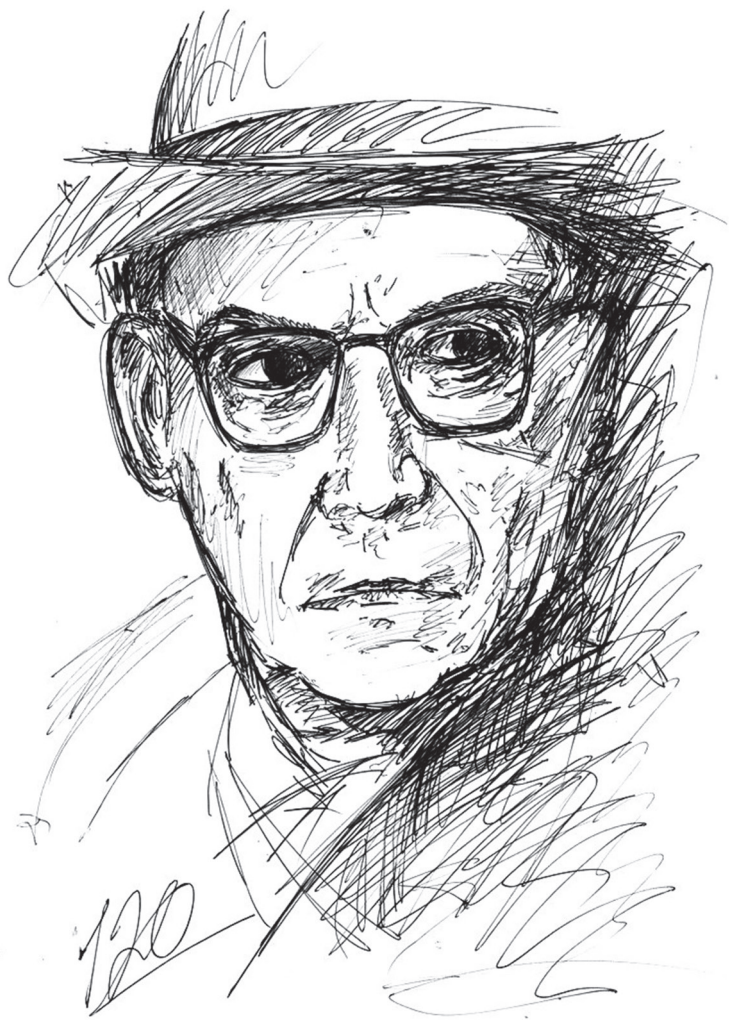
*

A person who does not know how to joke, and a society that cannot, dare not, or does not know how to laugh innocently, are doomed.

*

It is not shameful to be deceived in a great hope. The mere fact that such a hope could exist is worth so much that it is not too dearly paid for by disappointment, no matter how hard it is.

Celia Hawkesworth retired in 2002 as Reader in Serbian and Croatian at the School of Slavonic & East European Studies, University College London. She is the author of *Ivo Andrić: Bridge Between East and West*, Athlone Press, 1984. To mark the centenary of Andrić's birth, she edited a volume of short stories, *The Damned Yard and Other Stories* and produced a new translation of the novel *The Days of the Consuls*, both published by Forest Books, 1992. The stories were reissued in 1993 by Dufour Editions and the novel was reissued by Harvill Press as *Bosnian Chronicle*.



Ivo Andrić

RAZGOVOR SA
GOJOM

— — —
MOSTOVI

— — —
ZNAKOVI PORED
PUTA
(IZBOR)



Beograd
2014.
DERETA

„I što pogledam sve je pjesma,
i čega god se taknem sve je bol.“

(Ex Ponto, 1918)

PREDGOVOR

Ovo izdanje predstavlja izbor misli Ive Andrića, jugoslovenskog dobitnika Nobelove nagrade, o ljudskom životu i prirodi umetnosti.

Suviše zatvoren u sebe, Andrić nije voleo da daje intervjue i komentariše svoj rad. Njegovi iskazi su uglavnom posredni, izdvojeni iz mnogobrojnih kratkih priča i nekoliko romana na kojima je izgradio svoju reputaciju. Ipak, on je takom života pisao i beleške – o knjigama, ljudima, mestima, razgovorima i, posebno, o idejama koje je dobio na osnovu iskustva i zapažanja. Te beleške čine neku vrstu intelektualnog „dnevnika“, što je najbliže načinu Andrićeve neposredne komunikacije sa čitaocima. On je brižljivo odabrao odlomke za knjigu *Znakovi pored puta*. Još svojstveniji iskaz predstavlja „Razgovor s Gojom“, gde se zbog očigledne piščeve naklonosti prema delu ovog slikara on sâm oslobodio uobičajene suzdržanosti, omogućavajući mu da izrazi svoje stavove, ali da pritom ne mora da koristi ono „ja“ od koga je toliko zazirao. Andrić nije voleo ovu zamenicu, često je govorio u prvom licu množine, čak i u svakodnevnim razgovorima, kad je bilo jasno da se nešto odnosi samo na njega. Tu nelagodnost verovatno je imao zbog osećanja poniznosti i svesti da privatni život umetnika nije bitan, da odvlači od onoga što ima da kaže; držao se i uverenja da su pojedinačne ideje, kao i pojedinci, same po sebi beznačajne, ali da postaju važne samo ukoliko su povezane sa drugima, te zajedno

čine trajno čovečanstvo koje prevazilazi granice vremena i prostora. Iznad svega, Andrić je uvek gajio veliku odgovornost prema rečima – u govoru i pisanju. Smatrao je da reči – materijal za njegovo kreativno stvaralaštvo – kad se jednom izraze, postaju opipljive kao predmeti, sa unutrašnjom snagom za dobro i zlo. Reči su predstavljale materijal za Andrićevo ličnu borbu protiv prolaznosti, ali i jedno od najmoćnijih oruđa čoveka za opstanak u ovom u biti tragičnom i neprijateljski nastrojenom svetu. One se moraju koristiti krajnje precizno i ne smeju se olako ili bezobzirno trošiti.

Osećaj odgovornosti prema rečima je bio usko povezan sa Andrićevim uvreženim utiskom da obične aktivnosti koje naizgled ispunjavaju svakodnevicu zapravo nisu stvarni život. One prave, trajne stvari jesu ideje i dela umetnika, uspomene na protekle događaje, priče i legende koje se generacijama prenose sa kolena na koleno.

Andrić nije shvatao zašto bi pojedinosti iz njegovog života zanimale ikoga od njegovih čitalaca: pod svoje stare dane se iščuđavao zašto se ljudi trude da naprave muzej od kuće u kojoj je rođen i stana u kome je živio u Beogradu. „Nema tu šta da se vidi“, govorio je, „jer nisam ja Tolstoj i ne živim u Jasnoj poljani...“

U svakom slučaju, nekoliko činjenica o Andrićevom životu mogu biti dobar putokaz da se objasni širi kontekst njegovih razmišljanja.

*

Andrić je rođen u Travniku, u srcu bosanskih planina, 9. oktobra 1892. godine. Travnik je bio i pozornica za



RAZGOVOR SA GOJOM

Toplo i mirno popodne spuštalo je prve senke na drum. Delilo me dvadesetak kilometara od Bordoa. Prolazeći kroz Croix des Huins ugledao sam desno od drumca velike stubove stanice za bežičnu telegrafiju. Kule od metalne paučine, fine kao čipka i tvrde kao gradovi.

Vozeći dalje, mislio sam neprestano na sličnost između vitih i prestarelih katedrala i ovih čeličnih tornjeva bežične telegrafije. I oni imaju svoje stalne službenike koji ih opslužuju kao sveštenici hramove. I u njima gore, noću, celom dužinom (zbog aviona koji lete u tami), crvene ili zelene lampe koje liče na sveće i kandila u crkvama. Naravno da je kod onih telegrafskih kula sve na racionalnoj osnovi i sve služi jasno određenoj praktičnoj svrsi, dok su crkveni tornjevi danas samo luksuz i simbol. Ali, zar i oni nisu nekad postali iz potrebe i bili građeni na racionalnoj osnovi? Samo se ta racionalna osnova pomakla, a svrha nestala, zaboravljena.

Ta analogija me stalno pratila i od nje se u mojim mislima neobično jasno i ubedljivo vezivalo ono što mi nazivamo blizu sa onim što zovemo daleko, „mogućno“ sa „nemogućnim“. Noseći u očima sliku tih modernih crkava, u kojima se svakoga trenutka dešava čudo, činilo mi se da i moja misao i moja uobrazilja lakše i brže prelaze i oživljuju prošla vremena i pomrle ljude.

Velike i još nesavršene katedrale našega vremena koje sam posle podne gledao u Croix des Huins bile su predmet toga razmišljanja još pred večer, kad sam lutajući po velikoj

vinarskoj varoši seo umoran pred jednu kafanu u predgrađu. Takva predgrađa postoje u svim gradovima sveta. Tu je kanalizacija još rudimentarna, asfalt redak, a ulice nose imena lokalnih pesnika ili lekara filantropa, poznatih samo u ataru te opštine. U tim kvartovima koji nastaju, gde još ništa nije utvrđeno ni stalno, gde ništa ne zaustavlja i ne buni misao, tu je za stranca najlepše mesto za odmor i razmišljanje.

Nedaleko od kafane, na jednoj utrini, pored građe odbačene sa poslednjih građevina, podižu cirkusku šatru. Čuju se udarci čekića, radnička vika i, s vremena na vreme, promuklo štekatanje hijene ili neke druge životinje iza rešetaka menažerije.

Ove male kafanice po predgrađima, u kojima nema nekog naročitog pokušaja ni ureda, jednake su manje-više svuda i ne menjaju se sa vremenom i modom. Stolovi, klupe, flaše sa širokim grlicem i čaše od grubog mutnog stakla, gazda sa zasukanim rukavima i modrom keceljom, sve je to oduvek i svuda tako, u sve su to gledali mnogi i mnogi naraštaji gostiju. Na tom dekoru mogu se uvek izazvati ljudi i nošnje i običaji iz raznih vremena, a da nimalo ne odudara ju od njega, i bez anahronizama koji bi kvarili iluziju i činili scenu neverovatnom.

– Da, gospodine – rekao je neko pored mene, potvrđujući moje misli kao da sam ih glasno kazao.

To je izgovorio dubokim hrapavim glasom stari gospodin u tamnozelenoj kabanici neobičnog kroja. Na glavi je imao crni šešir ispod kojeg se nazirala posve seda i retka kosa i sijale premorene ali žive oči. – Prema meni je sedeo Don Francisco Goya u Lucientes, bivši prvi živopisac španskog govora, a od 1819. godine stanovnik ove varoši.

– Da, gospodine...

I mi smo nastavili razgovor, koji je u stvari bio Gojin monolog o sebi, o umetnosti, o opštim stvarima ljudske sudbine.

Ako vam se ovaj monolog i učini na prvi pogled izlomljen i nepovezan, znajte da se drži unutarnjom vezom kojom ga vezuje Gojin život i njegovo slikarsko delo.

– Da, gospodine, proste i uboge sredine su pozornice za čuda i velike stvari. Hramovi i palate u svoj svojoj veličini i lepoti u stvari su samo dogorevanje i docvetavanje onoga što je niklo ili planulo u prostoti i sirotinji. U prostoti je klica budućnosti, a u lepoti i sjaju neprevarljiv znak opadanja i smrti. Ali, ljudima su podjednako potrebni i sjaj i jednostavnost. To su dva lica života. Nemogućno je sagledati ih oba u isti mah, nego se uvek gledajući jedno mora izgubiti drugo iz vida. I kome je bilo dano da vidi oboje, teško mu je, gledajući jedno, zaboraviti drugo.

Ja, lično, bio sam srcem uvek na strani jednostavnosti, na strani slobodnog, dubokog života oskudnog sjajem i oblicima. Ma šta govorili ljudi i ma šta da sam mislio i govorio i ja sam jedno vreme, u bujnosti mlađih godina, to je tako. Takav sam ja, i takav je Aragon iz kojeg sam ponikao.

Dok on govori, meni pogled pade na sto na kome je ležala, kao nešto odvojeno i živo za sebe, njegova desna ruka. Strašna ruka, kao neki čarobni koren-amajlija, čvornovita, siva, snažna a suva kao pustinjska humka. Ta ruka živi, ali nevidljivim životom kamena. U njoj nema krvi ni soka, nego je to neka druga materija čije su nam osobine nepoznate. To nije ruka za rukovanje ni za milovanje, ni za



MOSTOVI

Od svega što čovek u životnom nagonu podiže i gradi, ništa nije u mojim očima bolje i vrednije od mostova. Oni su važniji od kuća, svetiji, jer opštiji, od hramova. Svačiji i prema svakom jednaki, korisni, podignuti uvek smisleno, na mestu na kom se ukrštava najveći broj ljudskih potreba, istrajniji su od drugih građevina i ne služe ničem što je tajno ili zlo.

Veliki kameni mostovi, svedoci iščezlih epoha kad se drugojačije živelo, mislilo i gradilo, sivi ili zarudeli od vetra i kiše, često okrzani na oštro rezanim ćoškovima, a u njihovim sastavcima i neprimetnim pukotinama raste tanka trava ili se gnezde ptice. Tanki železni mostovi, zategnuti od jedne obale do druge kao žica, što drhte i zvuče od svakog voza koji projuri; oni kao da još čekaju svoj poslednji oblik i svoje savršenstvo, a lepota njihovih linija otkriće se potpuno očima naših unuka. Drveni mostovi na ulasku u bosanske varošice čije izgledane grede poigravaju i zveče pod kopitima seoskih konja kao daščice ksilofona. I, najposle, oni sasvim mali mostići u planinama, u stvari jedno jedino oveće drvo ili dva brvna prikovana jedno uz drugo, prebačeni preko nekog gorskog potoka koji bi bez njih bio neprelazan. Po dva puta u godini gorska bujica odnosi, kad nadode, ta brvna, a seljaci, slepo uporni kao mravi, seku, tešu i postavljaju nova. Zato se uz te planinske potoke, u zatokama među stenama, vide često ti bivši mostovi; leže i trunu kao i ostalo drvo naplavljeno tu slučajem, ali ta



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ZNAKOVI PORED PUTA

Ima narodnih priča koje su toliko opštečovečanske da zaboravimo kad i gde smo ih čuli ili čitali, pa žive u nama kao uspomena na naš lični doživljaj. Takva je i priča o mladiću koji je, lutajući svetom i tražeći sreću, zašao na opasan put za koji nije znao kuda ga vodi. Da se ne bi izgubio, mladić je u debela drveta pored puta zasecao sikiricom znake koji će mu docnije pokazati put za povratak.

Taj mladić je oličenje opšte i večne ljudske sudbine: s jedne strane, opasan i neizvestan put, a s druge, velika ljudska potreba da se čovek ne izgubi i snađe i da ostavi za sobom traga. Znaci koje ostavljamo iza sebe neće izbeći sudbinu svega što je ljudsko: prolaznost i zaborav. Možda će ostati uopšte nezapaženi? Možda ih niko neće razumeti? Pa ipak, oni su potrebni, kao što je prirodno i potrebno da se mi ljudi jedan drugom saopštavamo i otkrivamo. Ako nas ti kratki i nejasni znaci i ne spasu od lutanja i iskušenja, oni nam mogu olakšati lutanja i iskušenja i pomoći nam bar time što će nas uveriti da ni u čemu što nam se dešava nismo sami, ni prvi ni jedini.

Sačuvaj nas, Bože, od ostvarenja snova. Udalji od nas ono što je predmet naših želja, jer telo naše želi svoju sopstvenu smrt.

*

Samo aktivni ljudi i njihova borbenost i bezobzirnost pokreću život napred, ali ga samo pasivni ljudi i njihova strpljivost i dobrota održavaju i čine mogućnim i podnošljivim.

*

Ne smrt, zaborav rešava sve. Zaborav, i to ne samo pojmova, reči i lica, nego svega što postoji i živi. Zaborav tela i zaborav vremena. Zaborav, da bi se moglo predahnuti i živeti dalje u telu bez sećanja, sa duhom bez imena. Zaborav, smrt sa pravom na nadu.

*

Nije najgore što sve prolazi, nego što mi ne možemo i ne umemo da se pomirimo sa tom prostom i neizbežnom činjenicom.

*

U najgorim trenucima, kad je graja oko mene na vrhuncu, kad se pomrače i poslednji tragovi razuma i dobrote i kad sve reči i grimase izražavaju samo zle i pogrešno upuće-

ne nagone, tada ja jednim očajničkim pokretom misli, kao munjom, uništım ceo svet, zbrıšem i survam u ništavilo sve, do poslednjeg traga postojanja. Nad svım onım što su ljudi radili i govorili, neopisivo strašnim, ali iščezlim i pokopanim zauvek, zacari se tišina, ne mrtva i bezlična tišina ljudskih naselja, nego velika vasiona tišina, jedan nov svet, sav od tišine, divni Jerusallm, božiji grad, nem, veličanstven i neprolazan. Blokovi tišine, lukovi i uglovi od tišine, senke i prosijanja na zgradama i u dnu vidika, jedan nov život onih koji su izgubili igru u svetu, raj koji ostaje pošto se izbesni materija u njenom obliku koji vidimo i dodirujemo svakog dana i koji nas truje i satire svakog minuta.

*

Što ne boli – to nije život, što ne prolazi – to nije sreća.

*

U poštovanju koje imamo za pokojnike, kao i u ljubavi i pažnji koje svi pokazujemo prema deci, sadržan je i sav onaj manjak koji stalno prati naše poštovanje, našu ljubav i našu pažnju prema živim i odraslim ljudima koji nas okružuju.

*

Sada, kad sam video, čuo, osetio i upoznao i jedno i drugo, vreme je da potražım treće mesto. Skrovito a uzvišeno mesto, gde se ne urla i ne peva, gde se stiču konci i uslovi

života i smrti, gde se ne želi i ne čeka, nego se sedi nad nađenim i dočekanim, nad nepreglednom i neprolaznom rekom života, celog života, u razmišljanju, bez želje i pomisli da se obuhvati, zaustavi ili zagrabi.

*

Teško čoveku koji ne zna za šalu i društvu koje ne ume, ne sme ili ne može da se bezazleno smeje.

*

Prevariti se u jednoj velikoj nadi nije sramota. Sama činjenica da je takva nada mogla da postoji vredi toliko da nije suviše skupo plaćena jednim razočaranjem, pa ma kako teško ono bilo.

*

Fizičke patnje svake vrste i jad laganog oronjavanja. Ali moralna beda je veća i teža od fizičke. Daleko veća, čak i kod onih kod kojih moralne vrednosti nisu nekad mnogo važile.

Učimo se da živimo stegnuta srca, oborena pogleda, bez plana, gotovo i bez nade, bez zračka utehe.

*

Sloboda, puna sloboda, to je san, san kome ponajčešće nije suđeno da se ostvari, ali jadnik je svaki onaj ko ga nikad nije sanjao.