

Spinoza iz gospodar Tomine ulice*

*In un mondo che
Non ci vuole più
Il mio canto libero-sei tu
E l'immensità
Si apre intorno a noi
Al di là del limite degli occhi tuoi*

(Lucio Battisti, „Il mio canto libero“)

„Poštovane dame, poštovana gospodo,

Večeras osećam posebno zadovoljstvo jer imam čast da pred uvaženom publikom održim predavanje sa zanimljivom temom ‚Kako nastaje portret‘. Pre nego što počnem, a posebno imajući u vidu najnovija, zastrašujuća dešavanja u svetu, želeo bih, iskrenosti radi, da ukažem na svojevrsnu varku kada je o meni reč. To naravno utiče i na slikarsko delo koje iz te varke proizilazi. Naime, odavno pokušavam da odgonetnem zašto me ponekad obuzima malodušnost. Posebno kada je preda mnom, u mojoj glavi lik osobe koji treba da naslikam. Kao što vam je poznato, malodušnost je jedna vrsta žalosti. Žalosni smo, jer o sebi mislimo gore nego što zavređujemo. Paradoksalno, u isto vreme nastojim da održavam bar prividnu veselost. I to mi uspeva! A kako i ne bi? Toliko toga mi daje za pravo da budem veseo. Mnogi događaji koji su se neočekivano zbili u prošlosti, ili pre kratkog vremena, doprinose osećanju veselja. I ono me, sva je prilika, naposletku i pokrene. Slutim, ipak, da veselost nije jedina sila nadahnuća.

* Komična aluzija na genijalnu Singerovu pripovetku *Spinoza iz Pijačne ulice*.

Spinoza of gospodar Tomina street*

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(Lucio Battisti, „Il mio canto libero“)**

“Ladies and gentlemen.

Tonight, I feel special pleasure because I have the honor to hold a lecture in front of this esteemed audience, with an interesting topic: ‘How a Portrait Is Created’. Before I start, and especially keeping in mind the latest, frightening events in the world, I would like, for the sake of honesty, to point out a kind of deception related to me. One which, of course, affects the painting that results from that deception. For a long time now, I have been trying to understand why I sometimes feel discouraged. Especially when in front of me, in my head, is the character of the person I need to paint. As you know, discouragement is a

* A comic allusion to Singer’s ingenious short story “Spinoza of Market Street”.

** *In a world like this
Nothing more to do
I’ve got a song to feel alive
It’s you
I see eternity
Shining in the skies
Far beyond the universe
Of your eyes*
(Tr. Peter Powell)

Uporno gajim veselje u sebi i trudim se da pratim tu ideju radosti, kako me lepa iznenađenja ne bi napustila. Dakle, svakako je reč o nekakvoj unutrašnjoj polifoniji.”

„Izvinite što prekidam Vaše izlaganje. Ne udaljavajte se od teme, gospodine Kruniću! Predavanje traje samo pola sata. Očekujemo sasvim jasne odgovore i objašnjenja o portretima koje slikate. Ne okolišajte! Kažite nam osnovne stvari, kada ste naslikali prvi portret, ali i koju reč i o ovim portretima koje ste doneli da nam pokažete.”

„Ah, nisam Vam ja baš jasan čovek, gospodine. Ko je u ostalom? Ipak ću pokušati da budem precizniji. U određenom razdoblju, vremenu najranije mladosti, jednostavno rečeno, počeo sam da patim od čudnih smetnji. Od svojevrsnih predosećaja koji su se javljali bez povoda. Talasa intuicije. Često se dešavalo da su me ti trenuci, i to ne baš u maloj meri, ispunjavali užasom. Nevešto sam govorio sebi kako je kucnuo čas da nešto učinim i izađem iz teskobne situacije. I pored takvog grozničavog opšteg stanja, ubrzo bi me obuzelo nekakvo hirovito uzbuđenje. Uzbuđenje koje bi se moglo uporediti sa osećanjem tražaća za blagom koje mu došaptava da će blago sigurno naći. Činilo mi se da na raspolaganju, nadohvat ruke, imam ogromno bogatstvo, jasno ne u novcu, već nešto što će mi pomoći u mom poduhvatu. I onda bi to osećanje planulo poput vatre. Odjednom, goreo sam od želje, i stavljao platno na štafelaj. Eto, tako je počelo.”

„Izvolite sada gospođo, Vi što uporno držite podignutu ruku. Pitajte me šta god želite. Pokušaću iskreno da odgovorim.”

„Koga je predstavljao prvi portret koji ste naslikali?”

„Znate, svaka stvar može slučajno da bude uzrok velike radosti ili neizrecive žalosti. Ili čak požude. Nije da neću da Vam odgovorim na pitanje ko je bila ta osoba, ali ću Vam reći nešto važnije – da istu stvar, pa tako i istu osobu, možemo da volimo i da mrzimo. Tako i portret i model koga smo videli ili zamislili. Odnosno, koga sam sanjao.”

„Vi hoćete da ukažete na činjenicu kako ne možemo da se ustalimo u svojim osećanjima? Kako onda uopšte opstaje likovno umetničko delo čija je glavna osobenost da bude večno?”

„Opstaje. Jer onaj ko posmatra portret to i ne zna u trenutku dok ga posmatra! Kao što sam rekao, svaka stvar može da bude i uzrok nade, straha, čežnje. Bilo kog ose-

kind of grief. We are sad because we think worse of ourselves than we deserve. Paradoxically, at the same time, I try to maintain at least an apparent cheerfulness. And I succeed! And how could I not? I have so many things to be happy about. Many events that happened unexpectedly in the past, or a short time ago, contribute to my feeling of joy. And that, most likely, is what ultimately moves me. I suspect though that joy is not the only force of inspiration. I persistently cultivate happiness in myself and I try to follow that idea of joy, so that beautiful surprises do not leave me. So, it is definitely a kind of internal polyphony.”

“I am sorry to interrupt your presentation. Don't stray from the topic, Mr. Krunić! The lecture lasts only half an hour. We expect quite clear answers and explanations about the portraits you paint. Don't equivocate! Tell us the basics, when you painted your first portrait, but also a word or two and about these paintings you brought to show us.”

“Well, I'm not a very clear man, sir. After all, who is? However, I will try to be more precise. At a certain period, the time of my earliest youth, simply put, I began to suffer from strange disturbances. From a kind of premonition that appeared for no reason. Waves of intuition. It often happened that those moments, and not to a small extent, filled me with horror. I clumsily told myself that the time had come for me to do something and relieve the anxiety somehow. Despite such a feverish general condition, some whimsical excitement would soon overwhelm me. That excitement could be compared to the treasure hunter's feeling that he will find the treasure for sure. It seemed to me that at my disposal, at my fingertips, I had a huge fortune, clearly not monetary, but something that would be of help to me in my undertakings. And then that feeling would burst into flames. Suddenly, I was burning with desire. And I put a canvas on the easel. That's how it started.

“Yes, madam, you who keeps your hand up. Ask me whatever you want. I will try to answer honestly.”

“Who was represented in the first portrait you painted?”

“You know, each thing that happens can be the cause of great joy, or unspeakable sorrow. Or even lust. It's not that I don't want to answer who that person was, but I'll tell you something more important: that we can love and hate the same thing, and thus the same person. So it is with the portrait and model we have seen or imagined. Or, that we dreamed.”

“You want to imply that we can't have stabile feelings? How then does a work of art survive at all, when its main feature is to be eternal?”

ćanja. Razne ljude ista slika podstiče na različite načine. I vreme tu igra važnu ulogu. Jedan isti čovek u različitim trenucima doživljava suprotna osećanja. Nemojte zaboraviti, ljubav je ipak radost čiji uzrok dolazi iz spoljašnjeg sveta!”

„Stvarno nemam vremena za Vaše uporno izbegavanje odgovora i okolišanja oko teme. Napuštam predavanje, gospodine Kruniću.”

„Ako želite. Slobodni ste! Prvi portret koga se sećam, ili jedan od prvih, predstavljao je devojkicu koja je imala dvorac na glavi. U stvari, to i nije bio dvorac, već više kao stari grad na vrhu brega i u formi lavirinta. Samo su spoljašnje zidine odavale utisak da je reč o palati. Ne sećam se da li je to bilo noću ili danju – u svakom slučaju bio sam polusvestan – u ulici grad-zamka za koju sam bio potpuno uveren da je najuža ulica na svetu, sreo sam izvesnu osobu. Budući da moje slike ne predstavljaju ono što se desilo, već ono što pomoću stečenih slikarskih veština nastojim da sakrijem da se dogodilo, neću vam otkriti šta se tada zbilo u najužoj ulici na svetu. U želji da vam dočaram atmosferu, kazaću da je ulica bila široka samo pedeset tri centimetara! I da mi je, pored varljivog šuma morskog talasa, u glavi odjekivala legenda o pomenutoj ulici (nad kojom su se pružali ljupki, kameni lukovi). Taj mit je govorio kako uličicom nikada nije mogla da prođe osoba sa lošim namerama, jer bi se kameni zidovi još više skupili! Toliko dok ne uguše prolaznika. Dakle, ugledao sam tu osobu sa kojom nisam mogao da se mimoidem. Osim da možda prođem kroz nju kao duh. Nadahnut snažnim osećanjem nalik gušenju, naslikao sam portret devojkice sa gradom na glavi. Kako bih do kraja bio iskren, priznaću još nešto: nisam siguran da sam se ikada sasvim izvukao iz najuže ulice na svetu. Moguće je da sam zapravo i dalje tamo, zagledan, u želji da nekako ostanem čistog srca kako me zidovi ne bi prignječili.”

„Smemo li da znamo da li je to ona ista devojkica koja stoji na terasi palate sa golubom u ruci?”

„Ako nekoga nisam zaboravio, ne znači da ću ga ponovo naslikati. Ili to učiniti a da svi primete. Toliko je toga što čovek želi ponovo da pokaže, ali da ostane skriveno. Kao što vidite, devojkica sa golubom u levoj ruci, koju vam sada prikazujem, uljudna je i krotka. Ljubaznost i uljudnost oličenje su želje da se dopadnemo drugima. Izostavljamo sve ono što se drugima ne bi moglo dopasti. Ne bih mogao da poreknem činjenicu da ja ne činim nešto

“It does survive. Because the person looking at the portrait does not know that at the moment he is observing it! As I said, everything can be a cause of hope, fear, longing. Any feeling. Different people are stimulated by the same image in different ways. And time plays an important role here. One and the same person experiences opposing feelings at different times. Don't forget, love is still a joy whose cause comes from the external world!”

“I really don't have time for your persistent refusal to answer and your equivocating. I'm leaving the lecture, Mr. Krunić.”

“As you wish. You are free. The first portrait I can remember, or one of the first, was a girl who had a castle on her head. In fact, it was not a castle, more like an old town on top of a hill and in the shape of a labyrinth. Only the outer walls gave the impression that it was a palace. And then, I don't remember if it was night or day—in any case, I was half-conscious—in the town-castle's street, which I was completely convinced was the narrowest street in the world, I met a certain person. Since my paintings are not a picture of what happened, but of what I am trying to hide with the help of my acquired painting skills, I will not reveal to you what happened then in the narrowest street in the world. To give you a better feel for the surroundings, I will say that the street was only fifty-three centimeters wide! And that, in addition to the deceptive noise of the sea waves, the legend of the mentioned street (over which lovely stone arches stretched) resounded in my head. That myth said that a person with bad intentions could never pass through there, because the stone walls would move even closer! Until they squashed the person. So, I saw this person that I couldn't get past. Except maybe to go through them like a ghost. Inspired by a strong feeling like I was suffocating, the portrait of a girl with a town on her head was created. To be completely honest, I'll admit one more thing: I'm not sure I've ever gotten out of the narrowest street in the world. It's possible that I'm still there, staring, wanting to stay pure-hearted so the walls don't crush me.”

“May we ask, is that the same girl standing on the terrace of the palace with a pigeon in her hand?”

“If I haven't forgotten someone, it doesn't mean that I will paint them again. Or do it without everyone noticing. There is so much that a man wants to show again, but for it to remain hidden. As you can see, the girl with the dove in her left hand that I am showing you now is polite

slično. Uljudan sam takoreći stalno. U slučaju devojke sa golubom, kada ste već tu, istakao bih nekoliko skrivalica. Ljupka devojka krije svoju desnu ruku. Razmislite zbog čega to čini. Da li prstima desnice čvrsto kao u kandži drži noge goluba kako taj neizvestan dobitak ne bi izgubila? Bolje vrabac u ruci nego golub na grani! Sećate se? E, pa ovaj golub je u devojčinoj desnoj ruci i izgleda kao da neće nikuda odleteti. Levom ga rukom lagano pridržava. Motiv goluba, u čijem se obličju pokazuje i Sveti duh, provlači se uostalom i kroz istoriju slikarstva. Najzad, golub jeste i simbol ljubavi. Primetili ste verovatno da devojka krije i kosu. Hmm... A njena usta su nameštena tako da je svakom, ko i samo na tren pogleda ovaj portret, jasno da ona nikada neće odati nikakvu tajnu. Neće nijednu reč moći da progovori! Da li je verna kao golubica? Da li je ona zapravo Ištar, boginja ljubavi? Pogledajte, glava joj je u oblacima, poštovani skupe! A oblak je ono što sakriva. Afrodita je u oblaku sakrila Parisa! Oblaci su i božanska tajna i neuhvatljivost. Oblaci se spuštaju i obavijaju Olimp kako bi bogovi mogli da vršljaju na zemlji!”

„Ma, Vi živite u oblacima! U stvari, Vi živite u iluziji! Probudite se, gospodine Krunicu! Zna li šta su golubovi? Leteći pacovi, eto šta su! Vidim, pokušavate i nas da zaludite, a jasno Vam je da ovo nije vreme za iluzije.”

„Da, možete slobodno da mi kažete šta god želite. Neću vam uzeti za zlo. Ništa me ne može ni začuditi. Zna, neko vreme sam sumnjao u umetnost. Kao junak neke Singerove priče pitao sam se kakve svrhe ima umetnost kada se ljudska bića međusobno spaljuju u gasnim pećima ili namerno truju vazduh koji udišu njihova rođena deca. Odlučio sam čak i da stavim tačku na tu budalaštinu sa portretima. Međutim, ubrzo posle tog perioda potpune ogorčenosti, o čemu sam već govorio na početku predavanja, primetio sam da pojedini ljudi ipak imaju hipnotičku moć. Moć kojoj se ne možemo odupreti. I još nešto. Osim što su se uglavnom skrivali (Ko zna? Verovatno bežeći od sebe), primetio sam da oni počinju da žive i ispoljavaju hipnotičke veštine tek posle svoje smrti. Odatle na mojim slikama mnoga lica koja drugi ne vide samo zato što smatraju da su zaspali večnim snom.”

„Na koji način na Vas deluju? Pokušajte ipak da budete određeniji. Vreme Vam ističe...”

„Jeste li sigurni da ističe? Svakako da se vreme određeno za ovo predavanje uskoro završava, pa ću zato i požuriti. Skrivena bića su na mene delovala žestoko. Nekoliko pu-

and meek. Kindness and courtesy are the embodiment of the desire to please. We omit what others might not like. I couldn't deny that I didn't do something similar. I'm polite almost all the time. In the case of the girl with the dove, since you already asked, I would like to point out a few hidden elements. The lovely girl is hiding her right hand. Think about why she is doing so. Are the fingers of her right hand holding the legs of the dove firmly like a claw so that she will not lose her uncertain gain? Better a bird in hand than two in the bush! Do you remember that saying? Well, this dove is in the girl's right hand and it looks like it's not going anywhere. She is holding it gently with her left hand. The motif of a dove, in the form of which the Holy Spirit is also shown, runs through the history of painting. Finally, the dove is also a symbol of love. You have probably noticed that the girl is also hiding her hair. Hmm. And her mouth is set so that, to anyone who looks at this portrait even for a moment, it is clear that she would never reveal a secret. She won't be able to say a word! Is she as faithful as a dove? Is she in fact Ishtar, the goddess of love? Look, her head is in the clouds, dear friends! And clouds hide things. Aphrodite hid Paris in a cloud! Clouds are both a divine secret and elusiveness. The clouds are descending and enveloping Olympus so that the gods can rule on earth!”

“You are the one living in the clouds! In fact, you live in an illusion! Wake up, Mr. Krunic! Do you know what doves are? Flying rats, that's what they are, like pigeons! I see, you are trying to drive us crazy, and it is clear to you that this is no time for illusions.”

“Yes, feel free to tell me whatever you want. I won't hold it against you. Nothing can surprise me. You know, I doubted art for a while. Like a protagonist in one of Singer's stories, I wondered what the purpose of art is when human beings kill each other in gas chambers or deliberately poison the air that their own children breathe. I even decided to put an end to that nonsense with my portraits. However, soon after that period of complete resentment, which I already talked about at the beginning of the lecture, I noticed that some people still have hypnotic power. A power we cannot resist. And one more thing. Apart from the fact that they mostly hid (who knows? probably fleeing from themselves), I noticed that they come alive and show their hypnotic skills only after their death. That's why, in my paintings, there are many faces that others do not see just because they think they have gone on to their eternal sleep.”

ta sam se čak i zaljubio u svoje modele. Da ne dužim, poslednji put je to bila Lidija Litvjak, devojka-pilot. Majstor skrivanja i prerušavanja. Bila je crnka svetlih očiju koja je nekako uvek uspevala da nabavi hidrogen kako bi postala plavuša. Nazivali su je Belim Ljiljanom Staljingrada. Ili Belom Ružom. A ona je u stvari volela crvene ruže! Lili je bila najslavniji ruski borbeni pilot. Zamislite, rođena je u Moskvi, 18. avgusta 1921. godine i to na dan Sovjetske vazduhoplovne flote. Sudbina joj je dodelila mesto među oblacima. Navodno, Beli Ljiljan nije doživela 22. rođendan. Prvog avgusta 1943. godine, petnaest kilometara od fronta, u blizini grada Orela naletela je na grupu nemačkih bombardera. Lili ih nije primetila, jer su leteli iznad nje. I svi su odjednom nestali iza jednog oblaka. Niko nije ni video, ni čuo nikakvu eksploziju. Od tog trenutka nastale su bar dve priče. Neki su ispričali da je Lili prinudno sletela i da je ranjena preminula u svom avionu. Prema toj legendi sahranili su je nepoznati ljudi i njen grob je ostao neoznačen. Pričali su takođe da je preživela prinudno sletanje i da je odvedena u zarobljeništvo, da je uspela da pobjegne i da je i danas živa. Pre nekoliko godina, deca su se igrala u polju, baš na mestu gde se prema legendi srušio njen avion i videla zmiju kako nestaje u nekoj rupi u zemlji. Kada su počeli da kopaju pronašli su ostatke ženskog tela u pilotskoj uniformi. Da li je to bila ona, Beli Ljiljan? Ni forenzičari nisu uspeli to da dokuče. Ako pogledate desno videćete portret neustrašive Lili koja se nije plašila smrti. Ili kako se već naziva taj događaj.”

„Poštovani skupe, to bi bila moja kratka priča o portretima, malodušnosti i veselosti, ljubaznosti, hipnozi, kao i veštini skrivanja. Izvinite ako sam promašio temu. Zaista, možda su osećanja što proizilaze iz razuma moćnija od onih što se odnose na stvari koje posmatramo kao odsutne ili nestvarne. Tako je bar tvrdio moj omiljeni filozof. Mada, nisam više toliko siguran u njegove reči. Radije se opredeljujem za slobodu izbora. I kada je reč o posmatranju, a takođe i o osećanjima. Doduše, slažem se da su uzvišene stvari ujedno i neopisivo teške. Isto kao što su vrlo retke! Zato vam predlažem da i sami nešto naslikate.”

“How do they affect you? Try to be more specific though. Your time is running out...”

“Are you sure it's running out? Of course, the time given for this lecture will end soon, so I will hurry. Hidden beings acted fiercely on me. Several times I even fell in love with my models. To be terse, the last time was Lidija (Lily) Litvjak, a girl pilot. A master of hiding and disguise. She was a bright-eyed brunette who somehow always managed to find hydrogen peroxide to be a blonde. They called her the White Lily of Stalingrad. Or the White Rose. But she actually loved red roses! Lily was the most famous Russian fighter pilot. Imagine, she was born in Moscow, on August 18, 1921, on Soviet Air Force Day. Fate gave her a place among the clouds. Allegedly, White Lily did not live to see her twenty-second birthday. On August 1, 1943, fifteen kilometers from the front, near the town of Orel, she ran into a group of German bombers. Lily didn't bother with them because they were flying above her. And they all suddenly disappeared behind a cloud. No one saw or heard any explosions. At least two stories have emerged since then. Some said that Lily was forced to land and that, wounded, she died in her plane. According to that legend, she was buried by unknown people and her grave remained unmarked. They alternatively said that she survived a forced landing and was taken prisoner. That she managed to escape and that she is still alive today. A few years ago, children were playing in a field, right where, according to the legend, the girl's plane crashed, and they saw a snake disappearing in a hole in the ground. When they started digging, they found the remains of a woman's body in a pilot's uniform. Was that her, White Lily? Forensics did not manage to figure it out either. If you look to the right, you will see a portrait of the fearless Lily, who was certainly not afraid of death. Or whatever the event is called.”

“Dear friends, that would be my short story about portraits, discouragement and cheerfulness, kindness, hypnosis, as well as the skill of hiding. Sorry if I spoke off topic. Indeed, perhaps the feelings that arise from reason are more powerful than those that relate to things that we view as absent or unreal. At least that's what my favorite philosopher said. Although, I'm not so sure of his words anymore. I prefer freedom of choice. Both when it comes to observation, but also to feelings. However, I agree that sublime things are also indescribably difficult. Just as they are quite rare! Therefore, I suggest that you go paint something yourself.”