ROSINA
NEGINSKY

JUGGLER

AND OTHER POEMS

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I would like to dedicate this work to Ethan Lewis:

‘Ethan was an unusual human being: a combination of an amazing kindness and dedication to others and of stunning creativity, intelligence, and depth. His soul was deep and multilayered, but his manner and appearance were light and easy. His passage on earth was short but his accomplishments and his contribution to culture are immense. That his spirit will always be with us.’

FOREWORD

To daub the lemon juice of language on the invisible ink of sublimity—the Symbolist quest may be, quaintly, figuratively so defined. Yeats 'apercu, albeit mystical, posits literal materials, "colours and forms," by which to "entangle…Divine Essence."[1] Like the painters from whom she draws inspiration, Rosina Neginsky plies a vivid palette, deep hues balanced by achromatics:

Through the golden haze of the day

A claret-colored scream,

…..

Through the golden haze of the day

The silver silence rustles.

Over and again she endows what we do not think to see (a scream; silence; continually, the soul), with colors—correct colors, one feels after initial surprise. Neginsky injects conventional synaesthesia with wit. A claret scream is cast in relief against the compound tones of atmosphere and silence, on which the cry manifests. Notwithstanding our bedazzlement, the poet convinces us as well. Reason reinforces strangeness: a hallmark of the genuinely uncanny.

Your soul is shaped

Out of emeralds of talent.

…a soul made of amber.

A nugget of silver.

The arresting imagery in this volume, Neginsky counterpoints through fluid prosody.[2]

She may take shape "From the marble of creativity"—a bold claim, though verifiable (note her frequent coupling of abstraction with substance.) *We* are not permitted to turn "marble with too much conceiving,"[3] or to become paralyzed, for she resists "a poetic of stasis."[4]

The poet plies more rhyme and patterned repetition than in prior collections. Hence, the typically short (often one-word) lines that might otherwise stall, convert to steps for passing on and along:

Mice,

Mice,

Mice

Caper.

Torn wall paper.

Falling apart walls,

Keener subtleties in sound scheme (here, crossing "C*aper*/*paper*/*apar*t with "w*all*/F*all*ing/w*all*s") accentuate the flow.[5] Music has been visualized in terms of "forms cut out of time." And though Pater's codicil attaches to "All art," thanks largely to Mallarme, we link "approach[ing] the condition of music" with

practitioners of Symbolism. Rosina Neginsky's frequent prosodic inventions, like her "open field" spatial manipulation of the page-plane [6] constitute what Yeats (again) called 'complex forms entangling Divine Essence.' More than (mere) vehicles, like bottles of blown glass filled with sand, *the verses appear refined from the material they convey*. This congruence of form and content is in one text allegorized:

An empty vessel fills itself with love.

In it love rustles, murmurs, seethes.

The vignette turns tragic:

The vessel cracks.

Through cracks love seeps.

And, alas, nothing seeps in.[7]

Neginsky incessantly apotheosizes the Symbolist ideal of "death-in-life and life-in-death."[8] But that expression is relieved by whimsy, as in "Unloved":

Bold red-haired

Sensual sensitive

Nicely boring

Satyr.

Your lust is alien to me.

Your soul bores me.

….

Sweet satyr!

Stop pestering me!

I do not love you a bit!

Elsewhere, since *What might have been is an abstraction Remaining a perpetual possibility Only in a world of speculation*[9],

Only in dreams

He caresses her

And reads Rimbaud in French.

And "How nice[ly]" that fictional donee accords with the real object of "his" affection:

How nice,

That she won't see him anymore

Under the Light of the Moon (2002) reads, plausibly, as a spiritual autobiography. This volume redirects its lyric mirrors upon us. That is, though self-reflecting—

I look into my poem,

And it, my line, my double

Comes out.

Refined, handsome, with a soul made of amber.

A nugget of silver.

—the works consistently—most consciously in the ekphrastic pieces triggered from unique reactions to de

Stael, Munch, Holbein—dramatize any *one's* perception: "I believe it is up to the reader to have his/her own emotions and associations. My interpretation is not that important. I am simply sharing it with you."[10] She might have qualified this comment—but 'tis the critic's task to refine; the artist has done quite enough. One might recast her words to focus on the nature of her importance, which entails *Modeling reaction for the auditor*, who brings "his/her own emotions and associations" to bear upon the canvas.

But what *all* mean we by "own"? "We stand before a beautiful painting," Eliot writes,

> and if we are sufficiently carried away, our feeling is a whole
>
> which is not, in a sense, our feeling, since the painting, which is
>
> an object independent of us, is quite as truly a constituent as our
>
> consciousness or our soul.[11]

"Everyone talks about the painting 'Scream'"; as "In the room the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo."[12] Yet what transpires in genuine perception? When the act compasses *being confronted* by the art-object, *denn sa ist keine Stelle, die dicht nicht sieht: Du muft dein Leben ändern* (for there is not the least Of parts but sees you. You must change your life.)[13] The *piece* invokes, "devours, seduces,

smothers" the viewer, in no state, then, to merely "talk about" it.

And now I hear,

And now I see

"Scream."

Scream!

That most paradoxically abstract substance in contemporary poetry, technique, manifests as the measure of the artist's sincerity.[14] Rosina Neginsky reminds readers that we are also artists, for her works summon our *respons*ibility.

Ethan Lewis
University of Illinois
at Springfield

AMORE

A Dream

She whispers:

“Don’t love me.”

In response he embraced her
And read Rimbaud in French.
She came to him,
Face to face.

“Come for tea,”

Said she.

“Your company pleases me.”

“I'll come,” said his voice.

“I'm afraid,” said his eyes.

She departed.
Remembered:
The pale conversation,
And without it,
No here or there.
Only in dreams
He caresses her
And reads Rimbaud in French.
How nice

That she won’t see him anymore!

Сон

Она прошептала:

“Не любите меня”.

В ответ в объятия он заключил ее

И по-французски запел Рембо.

Она подошла к нему.

Глаза к глазам:

“Приходите на чай”, --

Сказала она.

“Мне ваша компания очень мила.”

“Приду” -- говорит глас,

“Боюсь”, -- говорит глаз.

Она отошла,

Вспомнила:

Разговор – тоска,

А без разговора --

Ни туда, ни сюда.

Только во сне он ласкает ее

И по-французски поет Рембо.

Как хорошо,

Что она больше не увидит его!

Love

Came galloping,
Waved,
Called,
And set you on its horse.

Burning, shining, promising,
It beckoned into illusion.
Everything began to move in you --
To dash headlong into illusion.

Love's horse is quick,
Love's steed rides hard,
Carries you too fast to hold on.

Thrown,
Your illusions shatter.
Love glowed red, excited,
And its beauty somehow vanished.

In a green mold of crimson passion
It covers you;
With the icy water of pain
It embraces you.

Любовь

На коне прискакала,
Рукой помахала,
Тебя к себе позвала,
И тебя, раз, с собой на коня.

Вся горит, светится, обещает,
Надеждой тебя обольщает.
Встрепенулась ты, пробудилась
Вся к иллюзии устремилась.

Ее конь скор,
Несет быстро,
Не за что ухватиться.

А когда ее тайны раскрылись,
Все иллюзии вмиг испарились.
Раскраснелась она, разыгралась,
Да краса ее растерялась.

Зеленой плесенью багровой страсти
Тебя заволакивает,
Айсберговой водой боли
Тебя окатывает.

Now you understand,
And passionately long to free yourself from Love's embraces.
Here it has relaxed its hold,
And spiked you with its dog-collar.
It squeezes its choker around your throat,
And repeats again and again:
"Remember, since I love you,
You are my slave.
I won't let you go, but
Will tie your hands with pity,
With passion shackle you
With habit inject you,
I flood you with lonely fear,
Teach you responsibility,
And drown you in words of love.
Should you turn away,
I will punish you with pangs of remorse,
Or avenge with torturous jealousy."

Everything in you struggles.
You need air, crave air—
Weak you are.
But It says:
"You will get used to it,
Love without air is just as fine."

Ты уже все понимаешь,
И страстно из ее объятий вырваться желаешь.
Тут она, раз, объятия облегчила,
Да ошейником тебя придушила.
Его вокруг горла зажимает,
Да приговаривает:
“Помни, раз люблю тебя,
Ты – моя раба.
Не выпущу я тебя.
Жалостью я тебе руки свяжу,
Страстью я тебя в кандалы закую,
Привычки подолью,
Страхом одиночества угощу,
К ответсвенности приучу,
И словами любви опою.
А отвернешься,
Угрызениями совести накажу,
Или мукой ревности отомщу”.

В тебе все борьба.
Тебе воздуха, воздуха --
Ты слаба.
А она:
“Попривыкнешь,
Любовь и без воздуха хороша”.

Unloved

Bold red-haired
Sensual sensitive
Nicely boring
Satyr.

Your lust is alien to me.
Your soul bores me.
Nice satyr!
I don't love you at all!

I am in love with a grey wolf.
His lonely spirit,
Icy passion,
Enigmatic soul
Entice me.

Sweet satyr!
Stop pestering me!
I do not love you at all!

Нелюбовь

Лысый рыжий

Чувственно-чувствительный

Милый скучный

Сатир.

Твоя похоть мне чужда!

Твоя душа мне скучна!

Милый сатир,

Я совсем не люблю тебя!

В серого волка я влюблена.

Его одинокий дух

И ледяная душа

Прельстили меня.

Его айсберговая страсть

Меня обволокла.

Разгадка его -

Жизнь моя.

Милый сатир!

Перестань приставать ко мне.

Я совсем не люблю тебя!

Vessel

An empty vessel fills itself with love.
In it love rustles, murmurs, seethes.
The vessel cracks.
Through cracks love seeps.
And, alas, nothing seeps in.

The vessel empties itself of love.
Love lost Eros
Not to reach Agape
And here, life ends.

Without wings I enter nether worlds,
Expecting the afterlife of a worm.

I come down to the doom of worms.

~ 25 ~

Пустой сосуд заполнился любовью

Пустой сосуд заполнился любовью.

Она в нем шуршит, журчит, бурлит.

Сосуд трещит.

Чрез трещины любовь из него вытекает,

И, увы, никуда не втекает.

Любовь из сосуда вытекла.

Жизнь прошла.

Любовь от эроса ушла,

А до Агапэ не дошла.

Бескрылым вхожу я «в никуда»!

Судьба червяка ожидает меня!

Беда!

Voice

His voice flowing, flowing, flowing –
Indifferently scintillate river.
It listens to itself.
The eyes of a woman are
An excitement.
His voice is
A looking-glass reflection.

The voice is flowing, flowing, flowing,
It is a cold, waterless river.

As a memory of the past,
The woman keeps her eyes open wide.
Once there was love,
But now...
An emptied vessel
Lying in the old coffin,
Under the gray tombstone
In the quiet of a country church yard...
Without dreams...
Without inspiration...
Silent forever.

His voice is flowing, flowing, flowing.
How dull is the water!
How shallow is the river!

Голос

Его голос течет, течет, течет --
Равнодушно искрящаяся река.
Он слушает себя.
Глаза женщины – возбуждение.
Его голос – зеркальное отражение.

Его голос течет, течет, течет --
Река холодная,
Река бездонная.

В память о прошлом
Женщина широко раскрывает глаза.
Когда-то была любовь,
А теперь...
Опустелый сосуд,
Который под плитами серыми
В тиши кладбища сельского
В старом гробу лежит...
Без мечты и без вдохновения...
Навеки молчит.

А голос его все течет, течет.
Как мутна вода!
Как мелка река!

I Sit in the Armchair

I sit in the armchair,
From my eyes fall burning drops of salt.
My eyes are reddened with pain,
There is no limit to the salt.
You are standing in front of me,
And your soul is turning to stone,
Becoming colder and nastier.
You like to watch
People cry,
How their souls tear apart.

Your talk is derisive and clear:
“Your tears drop vainly,
My heart is empty
Without any compassion.
You want tenderness, passion?
You want love and fire?
You make me laugh!

You want me to be born again?
Think, why do I need all this fuss?
I am happy without your warmth,
In the soft chair by the fire,
In the lightless room.

В мягком кресле

Ты сидишь в мягком кресле,
Из глаз твоих капают жгучие капли соли,
Глаза покраснели от боли,
Но нету предела соли.

Ты стоишь перед нею,
И душа твоя все каменнее, холоднее, злее.
Ты любишь смотреть,
Как плачут люди,
Как у них разрываются души.

Ты говоришь насмешливо и ясно:
“Твои слезы текут напрасно.
Мое сердце спокойно и безучастно.
Ты хочешь нежности, страсти?
Ты хочешь любви и огня?
Да ты просто смешна!

Ты хочешь, чтоб я снова родился или переродился?
Ну, подумай, к чему мне вся эта возня?
Мне хорошо без тепла,
Мне мягко сидеть у камина
В комнате, где нет огня.
Мне сладостна музыка сплина,
Ведь так усыпляет она.

I love the comfort of music and *spleen*.
I like closing my eyes
To fall into a void,
Where there is no trouble
And lots of deep sleep.

But you constantly want something!
Either you want passion or soul,
Or your heart beats with sadness,
Unknown to me.
You want me to answer,
You want to start a fire in me?
Ah drop it!
I am so happy without it!”