

the third deeper fissure. of the memory

ioane, here it is - the room they chop children into
I feel young. so young.
I am here in this musty ward
among sweaty breasty women
in flowered print dresses
goitrous women
with thick hair on their legs and armpits
with what ease one talks here
of death
and men stinking of plum brandy
who climb on top of the women
(cause "the man climbs on top and then leaves")
after a few minutes it's over
if it has been anything else apart from
that spasm that reminds of death and disgust
you come here and you bring me oranges
you come here and you bring me oranges
three times you come here and you bring me oranges
you'd better take notes
to write ... a handbook on lame women mating

since I've been here I don't even
wash my teeth that often
I eat pretzels and cheese sandwiches
without caring whether or not I've got
leftovers between my teeth
whether my teeth are yellow or whether
my mouth – holy thing – smells like shit
my underwear I change it once every 3 or 4 days
and even then I don't have the heart
I feel fine in this warmth
with a fragrance of sex and chopped baby

toilets here remind me of the toilets
in the literature department in edgar quinet street
with huge pools of urine abstract paintings
on the walls drawn with the finger
drawn with menstrual blood and shit

(because „we'll become civilized when we don't
wipe our arses with the finger
and we also use toilet paper“)
toilets clogged with cotton tampons
condoms orange peelings

about myself I remember very seldom
I dream I'm in labour
it's a girl it's a girl and the doctor's voice
it's a girl and her name is maria or ioana
or andreea
then you come and you dress me up as a bride
you take me by the hand in the hall of the literature
department and you hold me in your arms
close close until the dream breaks
now I come and confess: this is an imaginary bed
only under the bed the tin basin
I keep the chopped baby in

they're probably lice. besides for about ten
minutes I watch the woman in the next bed
she speaks an unknown language
she mumbles
I see her kicking her leg repeatedly
with a piece of plastic to kill
some beetle a gluey sleep comes over me
in the second class waiting room, north(ern) railway station
waiting for the train to medgidia
right in front of you a fat gypsy woman
lifts her dresses above her head
she takes a white fish out from her sex
gives it to the controller instead of a ticket
here you have, maică, have something to pay your man with
and she throws the fish in your bra
she winks at you
I wake up wet / soaked with sweat (to liz: really wet in really a lot of sweat)
I feel the sheets the blankets around me
with the tips of my fingers
only not wake him up not to wake him up
but I wake up instead and I start to cry

deafly dryly

one doesn't write poems in here nor love letters
we very seldom think of men
and when we do we send them
without any shame somewhere where it's warm and well
a woman passes by me
the shaven skin of her armpit
is like the back of a pig.
I button up my shirt
I've hastily gathered my things
and stuffed them in two plastic bags
now I'm waiting to leave.
my traces are a few imaginary stains
of blood and pus left on the imaginary bed-linen
and this brown beetle
that I pass from one palm to the other
it can't be more than a beetle
pulled out of the dream ... then why do I feel it
as if it's walking under my skin?

(*fissures*, 2003, translated by adi urmanov)

recent history

this is how things stand:
mom will never
leave romania
dad will never
leave romania
if you die you'll never
leave romania

the shampoos I collect
from the bathrooms of your hotels, europe
all have the same perfume
like the lily-of-the valley eau de cologne
you used to buy in the tobacco shops
*can't you understand that things aren't so very different there
where you'll never go?*

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history is a piece of the wall

in a city at europe's center
history is the corner of a photograph

in every street urchin ragged and high
there's a part of me
in every dog haunted and starved
there's a part of me
in the men drunk and caked with vomit
the brave men of our people
reeking of urine rot and fear
there I am too and my name
is romania.

my wealth: a few hundred books
a red plastic basin
an old iron
a radio
a tea set
the color of earth
a proud and ruthless soul
a damned termagant skin
a bored God
lust like a lethal guilt

you walk down the streets
of a city at europe's center
my cowardice and lack of hope

the city

even these porcelain teeth
you see tumbling down the stairs
have more life than I
one single measure for everything:
the sluggishness with which we move
in this sea air,
among dozens of huge puppets
bones protruding through their rotten skin

the land lies around us
as far as you can see
cold suffocating earth
like a slice of dry cake dipped in tea

here everyone tries to sell us something
makeup socks recipes for getting thin salvation
we're as lonely and useless

as the posters of actors
in the union arts center halls
everything is sort of red
our life is sort of red
romania does this help you you to forget or to heal?
one day an armed man
will get on the tram
and kill me
because I'm not beautiful
because he doesn't like how I walk
because he doesn't like how I dress

românia. fin de siècle

at last I know the wickedness of gentle people
I know these men with moist, plump
hands, ready to caress anybody

there are days when
each of us
can turn contrary and mean
the decision not to die
to hold out
we've made it too
children of filth
guilty of having been born
between two centuries
between one long line for some meat
and another for eggs
for christmas live on tv
we've been shown people crushed
we grew up in the belly of the dog
that gorged itself on fresh brains
that night
today we discover that people
we believed in
went of their own free will
and handed over their friends to security
betrayal wants to become our role model
it gives us lessons in proper behavior:
don't have sex don't take drugs
don't write dirty words
be metaphysical
don't be suicidal
don't kill your parents

we wait obediently

for our life
to turn to paper

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your present is like the danube
your future is like the rhine
a pair of arms reaching out
twin arms
one blackened by stings
the other's skin ripped to shreds

europe. ten funeral songs

europe will swallow me
I'll become a european daughter
my life will be like
one of your many rivers
my sad europe
I wonder if your sadness
can equal my sadness?
do you have
enough room for my brain
for my carnivorous rats?
(my memory lasts as long
as the air in a 3-mm syringe)
but as for my face
is it more like a man's than a woman's?
the little children dead on our streets
or in our bellies poisoned and full of passion
will they have a place where they can string their silent beads
where they can to gnaw on their fingers

where they can to hang their scrawny spines?

(*europe. ten funeral songs*, 2005)

translated by

Adam J. Sorkin and Adrian Urmanov

fast food

I watch a story on children in north korea

so many things are told about these children
I get informed about how many there are and how poor
in less than a minute I swallow
statistics grams of food per capita per child per month
a few-years-old kid walks barefoot
mud up to his neck
struggles to scoop some water with a plastic bag
don't drink this, you can't drink this
the reporter insists
you'll get sick if you drink this filthy water
15 years ago a young woman in germany or great britain
was watching a story on children in romania
probably waiting as I am now
for the reporter to hand the child a drop of clean water
I wish I cared but I don't
they're so far away
they're so fucking far away
I go round the sun in my erratic
yet aseptic safety
I tell myself I'm being manipulated and I click off the tv

(privat space, 2009)

translated by
Adam J. Sorkin and Adrian Urmanov

vital space

I don't like poetry.
I don't like pork.
I don't like my job
my life
my lover.
I have no hope in life
I have no plans for the future.
I don't want a house
I don't want a car
I don't want children.
I can't work up any enthusiasm.
I don't long lifetime friendships
I don't pine for exotic vacations
I don't yearn to linger in your memory.
I don't like poetry
I don't do what I don't feel like doing.
I don't care if and when I hurt you
I'm not for social programs

I don't vote
I'm not afraid of death.
I couldn't care less about glue-sniffing orphans.
I couldn't care less about my own life.
in general I don't like
or wish for anything.
only a space where I can hear myself
breathe in and out. that's it.

("privat space", 2009)

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