

**Marko Pogačar**  
**Selected poems**

HISTORY

A forest fire, that's when a forest burns.  
from the southern sky heat falls onto the treetops:  
parcels of light wrapped into leaves  
gulp the trees like hens gulp dumb oats.  
at that moment the trees are finished  
but no one knows that yet. like a sow swallowing a fist.  
the flame already rustling in the pocket of a shirt, in its  
creases, and the day is definitely brighter.  
now on the horizon, its spine, its hairs  
there are two suns; the wider one sniffs through the dark.  
it keeps nothing for itself, it goes nowhere.  
uncompromising; it slows down only when smoke creeps  
into the blind oats. all things will come to their senses;  
everything around me will soon become sun,  
the sun thinks as it connects the branches to the air.  
down the tree trunk to the ground squirrels and snakes escape.  
heat, not knowing its own name, descends into a looser  
reality and the trunk pulses, crammed with the birds  
into a common madness. now from the trunk a beast bursts out.  
devours the bark and crests finally break the surface.  
in its profound silence the trunk now crows.  
it points to another day too keen on its passing.  
then heat rushes lower. it cowers, soundless,  
somewhere at the roots, a ceremony chased to its beginning,  
to wise youth. a desire for itself overwhelms the fire.  
it spreads through the tall plants like dawn on the darkened  
sky, a greeting through a full and empty room.  
it licks the leaves, licks the bark, licks the root, it licks  
a bit of everything. gets closer to one and the other.  
close to the short and the tall, it starts briefly  
then goes on with its bare labour. everything shakes now:  
between the air and the earth nothing stands anymore.  
some animals have left, others remained where  
they were. above them the whole forest shifts into something,  
impalpable, thermal water that cleans and opens, a  
filth that flees but doesn't disappear, it closes ranks.  
and everything's somewhere, everything's nowhere, and everything is illuminated.  
a forest fire that's when a forest burns. a fire  
is when it burns.

## PERMANENT REVOLUTION OF LOVE POETRY'S LANGUAGE. TO THE TIRED TROCKISTS

How, in the year 2007, to write love poetry?  
the time is dense with love.

everyone, namely, loves us moderately.  
the theory speaks of complete lack of movement.

the market says: if you talk about love,  
you talk about god, or vice versa.

Pogačar thinks: everything is god = god is nothing.  
a bomber loaded with dangerous meaning.

but somewhere in the corner of that love, when you press it against the wall,  
something unconditional grows.

a nature reserve of give and take.  
and in it a baobab through whose branches you climb up to the sky.

in the end you know: one thing more horrible than fascism  
is moderate fascism.

## ST. MARKO'S SQUARE

Something is happening, but I don't know what.  
a chest expanding and tightening,  
the vein walls constricting, those grooves, glands,  
releasing immense bitterness over Zagreb.  
that's what the sky is like these days: a nightmare  
without a bit of holiness. a sketchbook in which many things  
have and have not been drawn, the rustle  
of millions of legs on the move.  
nightmare, voices repeat, nightmare  
you repeat. the sharp stripes down which  
rain descends into its ruts; fingernails, surely fingernails.  
leaves tied around wrists, because it's autumn and these things  
painlessly pass. water is boiling  
in pots. dogs blossom black. those who approach me  
approach the blunt evil: nightmare, I repeat,  
nightmare, they repeat. the entire sky has

huddled into the clavicle, and in the sheer noise  
no one can hear each other. everything's new, and everything's foul,  
everything in Zagreb. eyes, plates, things  
across which we look at each other. all holy, all sharp  
all dogs, all our dense voices. the speech  
of a city eager to bite, pine trees, a flock, something  
in the air, under the ground, in the walls; something  
above us and somewhere else. something is happening,  
I don't know what.

#### WHAT IS A BRIM?

A brim is a category. an expression of tradition, an edge  
that is not to be crossed. its word is never  
rebutted: under the brim there is often a head,  
a house, a rare and arrogant nothing. the head, if  
a cow's, is pierced with a steel bolt. the cow  
is first chained to the damp walls of a barn, and then  
struck fiercely. the blood gushing is the blood of  
the homeland. homeland the cow had long claimed as its own.  
if the head is a chicken's, it is picked off with an axe.  
the chicken is simply taken, transferred somewhere else,  
placed on a chopping block and the neck is met with  
a quick cold blade. the chicken shouts for a while, but  
no one can hear it. a rabbit is slaughtered with literate, bare hands.  
the blood stays in the body and flows with its suspicious  
past. the ears, by which it hung from your hand, are calm,  
as if nothing can be heard in the woods, nothing  
is happening. fields are quiet. countries are quiet. the homeland  
from somewhere seeps, and people harvest grapes. the heat  
is unbearable. what is a brim and what is there under the brim?

#### TO MY NEIGHBORS (THIS MORNING MY FLESH IS A LOWERED FLAG)

Honey melts in tea, completely, unlike you with serious  
music, and unlike  
me in you,

the tense wire of the never-ending call, a crowded  
bar,

no place for you, and the elevators that are always broken,

the stairs unfold into eternity, like conversations about politics,  
and just as someone notices that totalitarianism and democracy

are only a question of numbers, someone pulls the  
plug,  
the picture disappears and everything starts again: voices

leaking through walls, and evening falls into your hands, like a  
miner descending into his pit, yet still, the  
shoes left at the door

prove the living exist. but what does it mean to live  
as winter comes scrolling like cold breath out of your throat,

and builds its nest in the dark alphabet; all those hurried unknown  
people with familiar names, an afternoon split in two, like Korea;

the tea and honey have already melted, inseparable,  
and this viscous liquid is love: how do I get to you; how do I reach you?

#### TECHNIQUE OF A POEM

The first Croatian president is slaughtered by oblivion  
his junta by too hot soup and the dead waiters  
who now ignore them; as I walk the city in the opposite  
direction of death, as I buy newspapers, buy coffee at  
a kiosk, I listen to my belligerent charm, to my soft character  
and Haustor, the band; an average Croat is slaughtered by co-existence,  
tolerance, with his mouth full of snow- wide and light smog eases  
down on him and takes him, together with all that fall, its  
morning dark, with water that rises up along your neck,  
water, material and soft; the church is slaughtered by constant quoting  
of Christ, by love, unconditional and lasting; a pig disappears on its  
own, cowers, into a puddle of breath, into a fistful of blood flowing  
before experience; a poem is slaughtered by Drago Štambuk; a mother  
as some detailed records describe; nothing remains nothing  
that shiny scorched sun.