

Classic Poetry Series

Milosh Gjergj Nikolla

- poems -

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Millesh Gjergj Nikolla()

Autumn On Parade

Autumn in nature and autumn in our faces.
The sultry breeze enfeebles, the glowering sun
Oppresses the ailing spirit in our breasts,
Shrivels the life trembling among the twigs of a poplar.
The yellow colours swirl in the final dance,
(A frantic desire of leaves dying one by one).
Our joys, passions, our ultimate desires
Fall and are trampled in the autumn mud.

An oak tree, reflected in the tears of heaven,
Tosses and bleeds in gigantic passion.
'To live! I want to live!' - it fights for breath,
Piercing the storm with cries of grief.

The horizon, drowned in fog, joins in
The lamentation. In prayer dejected fruit trees
Fold imploring branches - but in vain, they know.
Tomorrow they will die... Is there nowhere hope?

The eye is saddened. Saddened, too, the heart
At the hour of death, when silent fall the veins
And from the grave to the highest heavens soar
Despairing cries of long-unheeded pain.

Autumn in nature and autumn in our faces.
Moan, desires, offspring of poverty,
Groan in lamentation, bewail the corpses,
That adorn this autumn among the withered branches.

Milosh Gjergj Nikolla

Blasphemy

The mosques and churches float through our memories,
Prayers devoid of sense or taste echo from their walls.
Never has the heart of god been touched by them,
And yet it beats on amidst the sounds of drums and bells.

Majestic mosques and churches throughout our wretched land,
Spires and minarets towering over lowly homes,
The voice of the hodja and priest in one degenerate chant,
Oh, ideal vision, a thousand years old!

The mosques and churches float through memories of the pious,
The chiming of the bell mingles with the muezzin's call,
Sanctity shines from cowls and from the beards of hodjas.
Oh, so many fair angels at the gates of hell!

On ancient citadels perch carrion ravens,
Their dejected wings drooping - the symbols of lost hopes,
In despair do they croak of an age gone by
When the ancient citadels once gleamed with hallowed joy.

Milosh Gjergj Nikolla

Broken Melody

Broken melody - tear sparkling in the eye
Of a woman loved...
Please past,
Jewel lost,
A trampled dream
Lips unkissed
In the broken melody.

With silent sobs the naked shoulders shake,
Their whiteness dazzling...
Stabbed, stabbed with remorse
For the moments of mindlessness,
For her ruined fate,
For the happiness lost
In the broken melody.

Face hidden in her hands in shame,
Remorsefully the woman weeps,
With heart despairing
(A broken guitar,
A voice stifled
On lips kissed by pain
In the broken melody).

Silent he stands beside the woman weeping
Scolding tears of shame
That dim her eyes.
Some money on the table quickly lays
And goes away,
Leaving the woman lost
In the broken melody.

But when another comes, lust mounts again,
The heated blood
Pounds furiously through the veins,
Benumbing mind
... and only gasps
And grants are heard
In the horrid melody.

Millesh Gjergj Nikolla

Final Songs

A sleepless night
Suffering
Luckless inspiration
Incomprehensible song
Solitude
Under the banners of melancholy

Millosh Gjergj Nikolla

Fragment

On the mercy of the merciless
The little beggar survived.
His life ran its course
In dirty streets,
In dark corners,
In cold doorways,
Among fallacious faiths.
But one day, when the world's pity dried up
He felt in his breast the stab
Of a new pain, which contempt
Fosters in the hearts
Of the poor.
And - though yesterday a little beggar,
He now became something new.
An avenger of the past,
He conceived an imprecation
To pronounce to the world,
His throat strained
To bring out the word
Which his rage had gripped
And smothered on his lips.
Speechless he sat
At the crossroads,
When the wheels of a passing car
Quickly crushed
And... silenced him.

Millosh Gjergj Nikolla

Poem Of Poverty

Poverty, brothers, is a mouthful that's hard to swallow,
A bite that sticks in your throat and leaves you in sorrow,
When you watch the pale faces and rheumy eyes
Observing you like ghosts and holding out thin hands;
Behind you they lie, stretched out
Their whole lives through, until the moment of death.
Above them in the air, as if in disdain,
Crosses and stony minarets pierce the sky,
Prophets and saints in many colours radiate splendour.
And poverty feels betrayed.

Poverty carries its own vile imprint,
It is hideous, repulsive, disgusting.
The brow that bears it, the eyes that express it,
The lips that try in vain to hide it
Are the offspring of ignorance, the victims of disdain
The filthy scraps flung from the table
At which for centuries
Some pitiless, insatiable dog has fed.
Poverty has no good fortune, only rags,
The tattered banners of a hope
Shattered by broken promises.

Poverty wallows in debauchery.
In dark corners, together with dogs, rats, cats,
On mouldy, stinking, filthy mattresses,
Naked breasts exposed, sallow dirty bodies,
With feelings overwhelmed by bestial desire,
They bite, devour, suck, kiss the sullied lips,
And in unbridled lust the thirst is quenched,
The craving stilled, and self-consciousness lost.
Here is the source of the imbeciles, the servants and the beggars
Who will tomorrow be born to fill the streets.

Poverty shines in the eyes of the newborn,
Flickers like the pale flame of a candle
Under a ceiling blackened with smoke and spider webs,
Where human shadows tremble on damp stained walls,
Where the ailing infant wails like a banshee

To suck the dry breasts of its wretched mother
Who, pregnant again, curses god and the devil,
Curses the heavy burden of her unborn child.
Her baby does not laugh, it only wastes away,
Unwanted by its mother, who curses it, too.
How sorrowful is the cradle of the poor
Where a child is rocked with tears and sighs.

Poverty's child is raised in the shadows
Of great mansions, too high for imploring voices to reach
To disturb the peace and quiet of the lords
Sleeping in blissful beds beside their ladies.

Poverty matures a child before its time,
Teaches it to dodge the threatening fist,
The hand which clutches its throat in dreams,
When the delirium of starvation begins
And when death casts its shadow on childish faces,
Instead of a smile a hideous grimace.
While the fate of a fruit is to ripen and fall,
The child is interred not maturing at all.

Poverty labours and toils by day and night,
Chest and forehead drenched in sweat,
Up to the knees in mud and slime,
And still the empty guts writhe in hunger.
Starvation wages! For such a daily ordeal,
A mere three or four leks and an 'On your way.'

Poverty sometimes paints its face,
Swollen lips scarlet, hollow cheeks rouged,
And body a chattel in a filthy trade.
For service in bed for which it is paid
With a few lousy francs,
Stained sheets, stained face and stained conscience.

Poverty leaves a heritage as well,
Not cash in the bank or property you can sell,
But distorted bones and pains in the chest,
Perhaps leaves the memory of a bygone day
When the roof of the house, weakened by decay,
By age and the weather collapsed and fell,

And above all the din rose a terrible cry
Cursing and imploring, as from the depths of hell,
The voice of a man crushed by a beam.
Under the heel, says the priest, of a god irate
Ends thus the life of a dissolute ingrate.
And so the memory of such misfortunes
Fills the cup of bitterness passed to generations.

Poverty in drink seeks consolation,
In filthy taverns, with dirty, littered tables,
The thirsting soul pours glass after glass
Down the throat to forget its many worries,
The dulling glass, the glass satanic,
Caressing with a venomous bite.
And when, like grain under the scythe, the man falls
To the floor, he giggles and sobs, a tragicomic clown,
And all his sorrow in drink he drowns
When one by one, a hundred glasses downs.

Poverty sets desires ablaze like stars in the night
And turns them to ashes, like trees struck by lightning.

Poverty knows no joy, but only pain,
Pain reducing you to such despair
That you seize the rope and hang yourself,
Or become a poor victim of 'paragraphs.'

Poverty wants no pity, only justice!
Pity? Bastard daughter of cunning fathers,
Who like the Pharisees, beating the drum
Ostentatiously for their own sly ends,
dropp a penny in the beggar's hands.

Poverty is an indelible stain
On the brow of humanity through the ages.
And never can this stain be effaced
By doctrines decaying in temples

Millosh Gjergj Nikolla

Resignation

In tears have we found consolation...
Our heritage in life has been
Misery... for this whole world
Is but a grave in the universal womb,
Where human reptiles are condemned to creep,
Their will crushed in the grip of a giant.
- An eye adorned in purest tears of profound pain
Shines from the far side of hell,
And at times, the reflection of a fleeting thought
Flashes round the globe
To give vent to awesome wrath.
But the head hangs, the sorrowful eyelids droop
And through the lashes wells a crystal tear,
Rolls down the cheek and splashes on the earth,
And in every splash of a teardropp a man is born
To take to the road of his own destiny.
In the hope of the smallest victory, he roams from land to land,
Over roads covered with brambles, among which he passes
Graves washed in tears and crazy folk who snigger.

Millosh Gjergj Nikolla

Scandalous Song

A pale-faced nun who with the sins of this world
Bears my sins, too, upon her weary shoulders,
Those shoulders, wan as wax, which some deity has kissed,
Roams the streets like a fleeting angel.

A pale-faced nun, cold as a marble tomb,
With greyish eyes like the ashes of spent desires,
With thin red-ribbon lips, tightly pressed to smother her sighs,
A chilling image of her has lingered in my memory.

From pious prayers she comes and to her prayers she returns.
In downcast eyes, in lips, in folded hands her prayers repose.
Without her prayers what fate would be the world's?
Yet they cannot stop another day from dawning.

Oh, nun so pale, making love to the saints,
Consumed in ecstasy before them like an altar candle,
Revealing herself to them..., oh, how I envy the saints,
Pray not for me, for I am hell-bent with desire.

You and I, nun, are two ends of a rope,
On which two teams tug one against the other
The struggle is stern and who knows how it will end,
So, tug the rope, let the teams contend.

Millosh Gjergj Nikolla

Song Of Nobel Grief

Oh, noble grief of the suffering soul
That into free verse bursts out...
Would you perchance take comfort
In adorning the world with jewels?

Oh, noble grief in free verse,
Which sincerely sounds and resounds,
Will you ever move the feelings of men,
Or wither and die like the autumn leaves?

Oh, song worthy of noble grief...
Never rest! But with your twin,
Lamentation, sing out your suffering,
For time will be your consolation.

Milosh Gjergj Nikolla

Song Of Youth

Sing, youth, the loveliest song you know!
Sing the song that seethes within your breast,
Let your joy burst forth in passion...
Don't hold back your song! Let it soar.

Sing your song, youth. I beg you sing...
Let it seize you, kiss you, inspire you to love
With youthful ardour... Let the foaming wave of feelings
Which your song arouses surge over us.

Sing your song, youth, and laugh like children!
Let the sound of your voice rise to the heavens
And echo back to us again, from the envious stars.

For we adore you, as we adore the sun.
Sing, youth! Sing your joyful song!
Laugh, youth, laugh! The world is yours.

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Suffering

For some time now
I have seen clearly
How from suffering my eyes are growing larger,
The furrows in my face and brow are growing deeper,
And my smile has grown bitter...
...and I have come to realize
That the coming days
Will no longer be constructive ones
Of energy and work, but simply the passing
Of a waning life.

With time, I have come to see
How this treacherous life
Has singed
Each of my senses,
One by one,
Until nothing remains
Of the joy
I once had.

Oh life,
I did not know before
How much I dreaded
Your grip
That strangles
Ruthless.

But helpless now,
I gaze into the mirror and see
How from suffering my eyes are growing larger,
The furrows in my face and brow are growing deeper,
And that soon I will become
A tattered banner,
Worn and torn
In the battles of life.

Milosh Gjergj Nikolla

The Themes

Is there the theme of a poem among fading memories,
Among the happy memories of childhood innocence,
When the heart was full of worldly pleasures,
Desires, hopes and ever-sweet dreams?
Is there the fiery theme of a poem of love
Among the lingering memories of eager youth,
With sonorous rhymes and ardent vows,
Full of the lust for life and shouts of mirth?

On the pallid faces of fallen women
Loitering in doorways to sell themselves,
On their faces a tragic poem is carved
In tears and grief that rise to the heavens,

In dark corners where derision reigns
In disgust, and the insane jeer
At their wives and children,
There in revolt great themes await creation.

In hidden corners where fear dwells
And passivity lurks to smother life,
There in betrayal does the theme take its source
And with it, the poet pens his verse.

Throughout man's life do themes of all kinds
Come and go. Now the ultimate of themes has come,
Frightening in our fantasy - the paling of the face,
An ominous shadow, and the death knell tolls

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Under The Banners Of Melancholy

The banners
Of a mournful melancholy
Wave
Throughout our land...
Nor can it be said
That here live a people
Who are building
Something new.
Here and there in the shadow
Of the banners
An effort can be seen,
A gigantic struggle
To triumph over death,
To give birth to something great,
To bring a jinni to light!
But (oh, irony of fate)
From all that labour
Only a mouse is born.
And thus this comedy
Bursts our vein of humour,
And we ourselves
Burst into rage.
Over the threshold of each house
That contains a sign of life
Mournful melancholy
Unfolds its banner.

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