

sleep

I

five windows in a row

and a door to the daugava

a polish landlady

a man with gun

two milkmaids

chairman leitāns

caspar melchior balthazar

and I

in an important historical dream

the polish landlady with the deadbolt

the man with a deadly gun

two running milkmaids

chairman leitāns with sheep

caspar melchior balthazar

white as chalk

and I

busy in an important historical dream

the polish landlady fails to bolt the door in time

the man with the gun grabs her arm demands money

the two running milkmaids move off across the field toward the woods

chairman leitāns with sheep still in the pasture

caspar melchior balthazar outside white as chalk

and I

busy in an important historical dream that will determine

what will happen when I wake

in the house

with five windows in a row

and the door to the daugava

when I awaken

the afternoon

is cut as though by a knife

the corn crake cuts through the field behind the old barn

cut as though by a knife

I cannot remember

I cannot remember

why above the forest

chalked onto the sky by the sun

is an invisible

+c+m+b

avec que la marmotte

icy sorcery hamsun hamsun hamsun

a morsel a butcher's mongrel

a mother's heart

french bakery small hostelry

harridan raspberries

marmelade marble

mars jupiter universe infinity

goethe wagner god sleep immortality

and always with the marmot

Shoe

I lie naked

buried in my dress

dress wind sand

outside metaphors

someone's got my tongue

telling lies with it

quick vibrations that the mouth throws into warm summer air

round bombs

explode silently before reaching the ear

I lie by the sea

my body — my eternal home

a feeling conch shell between colored cardboard covers

once opened

there's nothing to read

algae and bits of amber

the murmuring conscience of the sea

tosses about a capzised shoe

someone's got my soul

living with it

autumn

the pond is full of leaves and days

I'd like to be a Russian

something forgotten between the floorboards

a little drop

of something unfathomably large

but I'm an exhausted Latvian

so large a part

of something small

summer in the country

a flight

in afternoon sleep

with a green airship above a shimmering river highway

where entering a different lane

shiny fish overtake the current

hot bubbles

the courage of a torn petal

along with July

above the sunken city

hanging suspended in wind

losing altitude

sacks of sand poured out in mid-river

long, serpentine grave mounds

shallow shoals of a sad dream

where with six bent pistons

air kicks fallen into water

a wingèd locomotive

with protruding eyes of faceted mirror

and knives of gray stems in webs cut apart

a straight awakening

on the shortest distance between a heron's neck and a sewage pipe

from the collection "Happy Lies" (1998)

buy me some yellow roses

nobody has betrayed me yet

can anyone say

where someone from nowhere

can possibly go

nobody has betrayed me yet

it all hangs fifty-fifty

push the right button

and the lifts will fall or soar

nobody has betrayed me yet

what an obtrusive refrain for life

it's no fault of the holes in the ground

if someone falls into them

nobody has betrayed me yet

except for myself

buy me some yellow roses

oh, how they stare at me

from the collection "Black Serpent's Bakery"(2003)

* * *

I

fear is like the berlin wall

that I can't get over

although

I've seen those who have

and it may have even been torn down already

in fact they may have never

even built it

fear was enough

II

what can it be compared with

fear is like the berlin wall

sometimes it seems like

it would be enough just to kill the sentinels

and I begin to stalk myself

without letting my guard down

III

fear is like the berlin wall

and I stand in front of it and scream

and scrawl

poetry

on the wall

if I don't get across

it will serve as the only evidence

that I have lived

IV

fear is like the berlin wall

I still believe

that I am

berlin

april

the earth has been set a-swinging

the earth has been set a-swinging

explosions of fear at each end of the swing

explosions of sap in stone in iron in wood

explosions of buds, the ice that blooms in floods

the earth has been set a-swinging

the earth has been set a-swinging

and I take no part

in memoriam

I realized only tonight

that they are all dead

I'm like an old person

left alone

in a world

populated by others

but my people are scattered here and there

they work get married build houses

read books play cards

drink and hang out by the Daugava

some of them are really dead

but what difference does it make

I've buried them

without farewells

without candles flowers or wakes

without even a grave

like nameless victims in a remote forest

and on a moonlit August night

as I climb out of my bed

as though out of a warm and habitual grave

I feel

neither longing nor loneliness

only sand from the seashore

that falls quietly and simply

onto the floor

from my sheet

the place where I meet them

where I receive their kisses

where finally there is no difference

between lies and love

can be called the beyond

but here

I've died every time

in order to live

* * *

if you find a street that begins

right here then take it

and if you see a woman who is

standing right here then love her

and if you hear a word that resounds right

here then say it

think positively and spatially

fear wrapped in timeless blue rags

wades the sea of time

far off, the coast of a rocky island

and transparent water are seen

bursting green bubbles and crustaceans crawling

around its naked toes

and you'll have time to live and die

before it comes ashore to dry

its wet clothing and reach out a hand

through the wall of your room

letting in

the slowly welling sea

you'll have time

if you march ahead without looking back

at the sea that quietly follows behind

wiping away your footprints

team of three

uncoil as you bend and pull your life behind you

by one railway – there will be

by the other

by a third

carved in a stone at the crossroads – there will be a station ahead

so there'll be a station

what's ahead isn't important

rather what remains behind

like long trembling rails

like harnessed snakeskins

uncoil as you bend and pull your life behind you

you see in a dream

three bright eyes

three little engines crossing the fields

early one winter morning on their way to school –

and cry when you wake

because you'll never know

which one was you

and bend your life behind you

with care

turn back the pages with black-and-white images of gods

breathe in the odor of paint

observe the solemn cruelty of stone snakes

don't think about printing houses

about the future of printing-presses

after laocoön & sons have been strangled

and the rattling ribbons have stopped

uncoil as you pull

sad as the lash of a coachman's whip

and understand –

what's ahead isn't important

but behind is the snow

my hands are so cold

that I could warm them with ice

the three wishes are hidden

out of fear

that they might come true

breath held back for so long

it emerges not as steam

but as silver

I don't have to choose any longer

I can be all at once

beautiful happy and smart