

ALEŠ ŠTEGER

Translated from Slovenian by Brian Henry

Trumpet

Knotted four times between the pointer and the ring finger
The internal and the external side of the wind breathe.

The cheek puffs up in a grotesque grimace.
(Did the creator look like this before the creation?)

And from where the need to gauge the sound of emptiness?)
The knots in the fist are quietly stretched so they cover the view.

When the first tears, it hears a quiet fart of fear.
When the second tears, it calls on the chuckling rogue.

When the third tears, from the father's trumpet rush
Trenches, elephants, wedding guests, two dancers, Trotamora, a radio.

A mighty noise floods the world. It is not good all together.
No, it is not good all together. It must succeed in the last attempt.

When you blow the fourth time, the trumpet cracks mutely. Is someone set free?
But where. The father's radio only plays a little more loudly.

Ant

It clings to objects tenaciously.
They shift about slowly, it moves with them,
As if moving invisibly through the visible world.

Hair for a blade. The body of a beetle for wheat grain. Trace for trace.
So it rises, what you call home.
The border between the safety of tunnels and the unbearable expanse.

It returns from far away, always by the same way.
And it brings no messages. And no prophecies.
A period at the end of an increasingly intricate clause.

And there aren't names for this, which it is.
When lost in its own maze, only hope remains
That at least there are names for this, which it isn't.

Cat

Custodian of whose stone, whose breeze in his fur?
A smirking sphinx, a castrated transvestite in a fur coat.
When he lifts his tail, he still steers the sides of a cursed sky.
A skeptic preserving the world in his hallucinatory way.

He avoids bad weather, unknown pants legs, membership in political parties.
He'd rather sprawl like a mobster shot on a staircase,
In a cathedral of afternoon light, near the chirruping of angels,
Or he wriggles into the downy rings between space and time.

He has allowed himself to be stroked only twice.
He knows that people have more dogs than love.
When he closes his eyes, he falls through the barking in your heart.
When he opens them, gold dust sprays out of his eyeballs as out of cracked
amphoras,

Which lie too deep even for the divers with the longest breath.

Strobe Light

Negative selection between Red Bulls.
When it gleams against you, the dust of millennia glints on your tusks.
Fiercely they open and close gills.
They inspect rivals, weed with monkey tails.

Yet females were not delivered.
They breathe through cocktail straws on the side of life.
They wait and switch off. Measure and switch off.
No more reptiles, still no Lilith.

You are nestless, a rock closed the entrance to your cave,
A beast on the run before its helpless prey,
Not Rilke's and not Dante's tiger.
Restless, you are suckled by fear and anticipation.

Your stride from the steppe to the dance floor is therefore awkward.
But then it somehow starts one two one two three four.
Drum beats rush into the ear like the final judgment.
Light creates and destroys you, creates and destroys, creates and destroys.