



October 2017

Ibrahim Honjo

POEMS FOR DIOGEN

THE STONE

They never asked me

For my name

They wanted my identity card

Or its number

I did not have one

I said Stone

They laughed

Asked me where I was from

From the stone - I said

They asked for my age

Twenty pebbles – I answered

And showed them gray spotted pebbles

They are opening their hearts to me

I am closing the doorway on the invisible wall

Which divides us

And I am going away

HIGH TREASON

The mountain burst

As far as the eye can see

There are no roads

And roadmen with shovels

Travel to neighbouring Mars

The mountain burst

So that the gorgeous emptiness

Deceitfully and maliciously laughs

At tourists

All of them are smiling at her

And I am crying

For Mlaka's murmurs

Because I am taken by surprise

DISHARMONY

Blue

Blue

I am passing, crawling

By the azure sleeplessness

I harmonize hunger with winter disharmony

With ghosts and sycophants

Slander blue snows

I fall asleep in bear's pool of mud

In the morning I wake up with thorns in sight

I take bears as blood brothers

In some powerful blueness

And then using a stick made of a black thorn

I count the news

And line up illusions

Until the day comes

While from everything

Only disharmony is left

LETTER TO A WARRIOR FROM AN UPRIGHT TOMBSTONE

You have your big stone
Decorated with a picture of a soldier
You have your bow and arrow
Your sword and shield
You have your knightly clothing
You have it all
All that was yours
All that was left from you

You are independent on your soil
I am independent on what is not mine
You are foreign to yours
I am a foreigner to mine
I will never have my stone
Decorated with a picture of a soldier
I will never have my bow and arrow
No sword
No shield
No knightly clothing
Not even what was mine
Not even what will be left from me
I will only have a word
And what is left from it

You will eternally stand defending the homeland
And I will dream of the homeland
Where my footsteps were erased long ago
My stone will not be there
Nor my words
Nothing will be named after me
No words
No letters
Nothing will be known about me

No words

No letters

A word

Alone like that

Tiny

But very lethal

More lethal than a bow and arrow

More lethal than a sword

It will exist somewhere else

But that is not important to you

Just as your bow and arrow are not important to me

Your sword and your shield

With which you dreamt about freedom

They passed their judgment on you

He who lives by something dies by the same thing

You did not know

And you will never know

Freedom is something else

And nobody can give it to you

It is locked into a letter

Locked into a word

I know who keeps the key

And word

And letter

ENIGMA FROM THE STONE

Victors write history
You wrote nothing down
In morning twilight
About your battle
And your victory
You just left

Never a word about you
Never a letter
A small simple letter
Not in the Bosnian Cyrillic script
Not in Latin characters
Not in the Glagolitic alphabet
Not in the Cyrillic alphabet

Where did the letters go?
Where did the words go?
We know about you
You remained on your soil
Generous
For which one day you disappeared
In gray stone ashes

You left without a letter
And without a word
And left the colossal wound
For new generations
You left all your pain
Buried in silence

You are enigma from the stone
And enigma under the stone
Why did you so skillfully hide it all

You escaped from yourself
But you could not escape from us
We found you under this large stone coffin
He told us about you
And about your life

About your secrets
He told us about all your loves
About Stamena
About Kosara
About Jelena
About Ivana
About Jovana
And about...about ...about
We now know all we could find out
We know that it is not the end
And because of this we will discover every day
The enigma part by part

We discovered you
You resurrected in our letter
In our word
We won
We are writing history
And you are helping even unwillingly
In our victory

Now you know
You can run away from yourself
But you cannot run away from us.

SYMBOLS AND DILEMMAS 2

What are you doing in this dark evening
While you are praying
While you are serving him
While you are lying to us
While you are accusing us
And while you are judging us

What you are doing in this wretched evening
While you are praying
While you are uttering
Kill
Hate
Destroy
Set on fire
Cut somebody's throat
Rape
Rob

What are you doing in this poor evening
While you are pray
And utter all these destructive words
And glorify his name
Not fearing his judgment

I listen and see
And I don't know what that means
Where everything leads
I know the innocent will suffer
They will pay for who knows how many times
Because you need new billions
You need to build your new world
You build and the people pay, pay, pay
And building and paying never end
Because you need more, more and more

I know all your wishes and all your vices
I know all your plans and dreams and prophets
I know all about your greed and curse
I know all about your ignorance
And I am asking myself each day
Oh God, what are they doing

With my heart in your name

The sphinx of life never answered
The words sank into the walls of silence

I pray in my knowledge and ignorance
Oh God, stop them
Show them the path of love
And tell them that there are no “their” people
There are only people
All people are equal before you
Please God tell them the truth
And show them your ways
Rescue them and free them of greed and madness

I prayed and I am still praying
Does anybody hear my prayer?
Stone silence is echoing in my ears
Emptiness is settling in my look and soul
The worry for human beings is coming back as an unhappy thought
While the sphinx of life in me is asking again
People, what you doing to people in this dark evening
While you are praying to him
Uttering all these destructive words
What you are doing in my heart
On this planet soaked with blood for centuries
What you are doing in my heart and in his name

PAIN

From pain into a poem
From a poem into pain
If you become a poet
You will follow that path
Because it is the borderline of life
If you manage to control that borderline
You will remain a poet
Poet guardian of all difficulties
Poet guardian of all pain and indiscretion
If you succeed in locking pain in a poem
You will know how to control life
With letters and words only
You will be able to fight with yourself
In the great arena full of pain
You will be able to tame wild ideas
And survive in this madness
Where self-control lost all meaning
If you remain a poet
You will go from pain into a poem
From poem into pain every day
You will not spend money on unimportant things
You will not make money
You will be free from financial problems
But burdened with needlessness
Of your existence and your poems
That will be your biggest pain

MAGNOLIA

You are a Magnolia from rainy clouds
With half of the head in pink
And half in yellow

You are a fishhook for open eyes
Your legs are in torn shoes
And hands on your back

I said – I saw you somewhere
You turned into despair

I offered you my heart on a platter
And my soul at the knees
I offered you my rough hands
Cheese and ham sandwich
Blueberry tea
And a red apple
You refused
Your green frozen eyes
Were killing this day with greenery
It was horrible
Could we be friends -
I asked
You turned your head and went away
And went away
And went away

THE LEGEND ABOUT BUDDHA

Glory to you
Lord Buddha

ten centuries before my era
I joined the Proletarians
and I did not come to your meeting

you rewarded me with the sign of the Rat

and why is that Lord Buddha
as I am not a god
nor a fool
neither a wise man
Nor a servant
and I am not the thirteenth wonder of the world
since I was not the first

glory to you
Lord Buddha
from today on
we do not know each other anymore
the legend says so

THE LUNAR CYCLE

Millenniums passed
since Buddha was on the Earth
so let that as well be before me

astrology happened Buddha
before us

the Sun revolves
and our places are the same

the Far East has lunar astrology
and phases of the Moon

it deceives you and me
nothing affects us
because
we are inaccessible to everybody

YOU ARE EVERYTHING

You are the queen in a non-existent land
with no subjects and offspring
you are a thorn in youthful eyes
and iron on youthful lips

you are a stone on their soft hearts
and a block of ice in their bare souls
you are someone people can get by without
and someone they cannot get by without

you're a prostitute in all lives
and rain from wild clouds
and an overflowing river
and joy and a cry and echo
you undress to bare skin in bare times
on the podium of curiosity of wild boys

you were born naked in an even more naked country
more naked you rule boiling hearts
you dissipate nudity throughout the universe
not knowing anything about your nonexistent kingdom

you are the queen of all queens
who shamefully float above amorous looks
of beardless boys who live with one single thought
masturbating secretly and sighing in a non-existent country
for the non-existent queen
dreaming of her in her voluptuous nudity

you are the queen of love superior to all queens
you are all that a male imagination can conceive
you are a stumbling block for wanton young men
you are their suffering and their inexhaustible pain
you are someone people cannot and can get by without

now when you know how young men scatter their virginity

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and destroy unborn generations
submit yourself to them in blue dusk at the end of a cul-de-sac
and salvage everything you can
taking care not to lose any of your beautiful nudity

NEKOPIRATI

SUICIDE STREET

Do not go to that street at night
that is the street of suicide
it is the street of prostitutes
it is the street of fear and shame
it is the street – of madness

some other music is playing there
people are singing some other songs there
other sounds can be heard there
and a strange light
is covering the desert landscape

on the blind side of the street
the traces of non return are lit
framed in red bouquets
everyone has gone from that street
do not go to that one-way street
because it is the street of suicide

do not go to that street even during the day
there are homes without a name and number
with black graffiti from the ground to the roof
with broken window panes
and rotting doors
do not go to that street day or night
because you will disappear in one direction
they will eat you up and swallow you in a second
it is a street of suicide and prostitutes
a street of fear and shame
a street without a blink and breath
it is the endless one-way street
blinded street
where they eat human flesh
and drink human blood

IGNORANCE

I don't know what smelled nicer
her rounded breasts
or saffron on her blouse's neckline

I don't know whether her lips were thinner
than the bunch of just-picked violets
that I had given her that night

I remember her wonderful scent
like the most popular city park
where we drank off the long nights
while I was burning on my own feelings
in the dark dazzle of the stars
shadows of her black long hair
entangled by a gentle breeze
without asking for permission

I don't know why I tolerated this prank of the wind

BROTHERS BY DELUSIONS

We are brothers by delusions
inhabited in our bloodstream
like vegetation around surrounding hills
we mislead delusions with delusions
and fraternize with them
not knowing that we have the same blood
and that delusions have nothing to do with it
not knowing that we are the descendants of Abraham
not knowing and not wanting to look the truth in the eye
we are brothers by delusions
descendants of the same man and the same woman
originated in the same place at different times
from time immemorial walked from stone to stone
stumbled on anything and everything
on our own land we were
so why are we now what we have never been
why are we leaving from our own to someone else's history
when no man's history is so bright
why turn your back on your brother and call him a stranger
is it easier to be a stranger to a brother than to be brother to a stranger
wake up blood brother from your delusions
they don't bring any benefit to you or me
embrace like brothers as the Serbo-Croatian
or Croatian-Serbian
embrace the brother Bosnian and brother Slovenian
brother, Macedonian and Montenegrin
embrace with the strong brotherly embrace
because we are brothers in blood
do not let delusions divide us
to what we have never been
and what we will never be

nobody's candle burned until dawn

Chaos

That murmur what murmur in me
the echo of that in me resound
such as bells ringing in me
that the crack in me bursting
that shake the shivers in me
disturb my restlessness
What pains that tear me of
to tear you torment me
to murmur resound
to echo ringing
to rings sputter
to crack shivering
to join the riots
it is not Christmas sounds
but my laughter
how to overcome that laughter
how to untie knots heart
how to navigate when you do not know what resound in me
What rings
which is bursting
What you shivers
insanity, or a blank ego
or heroes not fully told story to me accounted
or wild past me pulling into the abyss

One morning

One morning, quite suddenly
someone will we announce
that the water carried away my crib
winds sweep away my park
rain wash away my tracks

one morning somebody would tell me
that my memories are covered with white
someone will tell me
someone third in me
that I lost myself

one morning
It will ask what happened to the boys
and why not their rate on Starry sky
and where is the sky

this will be a great morning if I wake up

HOW TO TOUCH ETERNITY

You look at me lovingly
I look at you crudely
and so we rock the light during the day

we come to love each other
I hug you so suddenly
you hug me more suddenly
and this day blooms

we come to love each other
you kiss me like a chance
I kiss you quite deliberately
a criss – cross day
of countless wild kisses

we come to love each other
you love me to no end
I love you even more
until night and day blend magnificently
into a thousand rainbow worlds

we come to love each other
and stay hugged in the grip of life
stay hugged until the world ceases to exist
stay hugged until we unite with the universe

we come to love each other
to come in contact with eternity
and be in love in all worlds

REBECCA ASKED ME TOO MUCH

She asked me am I a vegetarian
do I love Shania Twain and Oprah
am I Japanese from Hiroshima
did I play tennis in Alabama
with the chief of the Cherokee tribe
do I love Mexico and Pancho Villa
who is my favorite girl this century
she asked me more and more unrelated issues
and all made it complicated
she ruined my peace and tranquility on all planets

I loved just the upcoming moment
this sky above my head and in it
the weird people from the Moon
dancing strange dances
halfway between my eyes

the next day she left on a high-speed train
from Vancouver to San Diego or Santa Fe
I found her message on my twitter
hanging on a cloud
I did not know if the train went to San Diego or Santa Fe
especially the bright turquoise blue one

I looked in the mirror and fell in love with my face
smiled through a glowing glass
like crazy Tom in the unwritten story
I know it is a true story that exists somewhere
in another mirror at this moment

I am resting sitting on the dry grass in my backyard
I sent her a message about a new war

that has just started in the heart of Africa
and another in Ukraine

I was sorry about that

I would be happy if she came back on the first train
in my new story of the lost girl on planet Earth

I spoke into the mirror easily,
Rebecca...

welcome to this beautiful moment

I fly very happily in the future

NEKOPIRATI

DREAMS THAT CHANGED ANA

I'll trick you and take you to the North Pole, Ana
there I will look after you as little drops of water in my palm
there I'll warm you up with love
I'll make the most beautiful city of ice in all colors for us
and decorate it with crystal dreams
I will keep you away from all spells and all earthly evils
I'll build you a big ice aquarium
with a million blue fish and a million pearl shells
I'll make sleds from carved ice crystals
and drag them around the North Pole
up to the big ice star
while you dream our dreams
and hide us in them secretly

all will envy us that we have found shelter
for the two of us in unfulfilled dreams
coming true in unrationed bites of Mahalla
that always surprise
the playpen with large ice walls
that fire cannot melt

we'll sail on ice floes
that float toward Newfoundland
we'll play with penguins all night long
and eat fresh sea fruits
I will host the greatest earthly Ball
in your honor
once a month
we will dance with dolphins
and whisper to them the origin of life
in our undefined world
we will show them how we kiss each other
until the ice under our feet becomes
beautiful crystal figurines

Ana, if you dream about me tonight
pretend I'm holding you in my arms and kissing you
on our yacht of blue ice crystals
while the sun goes down in your heart
I'll bring you a handful of the most beautiful diamonds
hidden deep in the waters of Antarctica
and I will make the most unusual string of pearls for you
and dress your beautiful neck vividly
as I once did with oxeye daisies
I'll teach you how easy it is to love me
in all seasons
in all the constellations

Ana you know I do not lie to you
Keep hiding in your dream...
the one I enjoy most
and have a beautiful life
because I cannot hide from it
cannot protect against all Mahalla's dangers
life is too short to allow it to dissipate around Mahalla
but those dreams with you are something else

something that could outlive even myself

LEGEND ABOUT MY GRANDFATHER

My grandfather, whom I do not remember
has never had a fiddle
has never seen a piano
yet he played both at the same time

with a pitchfork he played the violin
with a hoe he chose the notes on the piano
he played better than Mozart and Beethoven

while playing he enjoyed invisible walls
in an imaginary castle
with him African and South American parrots were singing
deer and rattlesnakes were dancing the waltz
and Native Americans synchronized smoke signal rhythms
with each note
spreading peace on the planet

he taught his four hundred goats and three hundred sheep
to sing in the choir
when he played love songs
that he composed
picking pumpkins in the fall
and making brandy the first days of winter

about my grandfather the legend said
bears and lions smoked the peace pipe
and drank water from the same source

my grandfather was the first minstrel in Mahalla
also the first pianist and violinist
he played the violin that he made
out of the one maple tree that grew in front of our house
just to keep alive peace on the planet

so he made the biggest bridge between continents
that no one has ever used out of spite
they say when my grandfather shouted
from the top of the mountain
the world's army lined up in an instant
and paid respect to those who they murdered
in sign of support, my grandfather hugged his sweetheart
and kissed her until the apples didn't bloom in Mahalla
and peace with peace did not fertilize in peace

NEKOPIRATI

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ibrahim Honjo was born on April 16, 1948 in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Since January 1995 he has lived in Canada.

Honjo is a poet-writer, sculptor, painter, photographer, and property manager who writes in his native language and in English. His work has appeared in many magazines, newspapers, and on radio stations in Yugoslavia where he worked as an economist and journalist. He was also a book editor; newspapers editor; marketing director; and organizer of many poetry events and festivals. His poems have also been published in several magazines and radio stations in Canada and USA.

He is the author of 25 published books and one book with another author. His work is represented in more than 20 anthologies. Some his poems have been translated into: Italian, Spanish, Korean, Slovenian and German.

Honjo received several prizes for his poetry:

- Award for book “Stone to stone” 1976. Yugoslavia
- Word poetry life time Achievement Award 2010, Canada
- Several editors’ award and awards for excellence in Canada and US
- Pentasi B Award 2016, Ghana
- Several awards in India 2016

He attended to:

- Reckoning 2007, an appraisal of BC writing & publishing, Vancouver, Canada.
- Word on the Street (National Book and magazine festival) 209 Vancouver, Canada
- Africa Day Festival 2007 and 2008
- Pandora’s summer dream festival 3x,

- Denman car free festival Vancouver 3x.
- At least 20 poetry festivals in former Yugoslavia.(1971 – 1991.)
- Poetry Festival Pentasi B Accra, Ghana.2016
- Poetry festival in Jaipur India 2016
- Writers conference in Udaipur India 2016

PUBLISHED BOOKS IN YUGOSLAVIA

- “Taste of Bitter Herbs” 1971
- “Stone to Stone” 1976
- “All my Green Town Squares” 1990
- “Roots in the Stone” 1990
- “Stone Talk” 1991
- “Do not write this down” 1991
- “Sketches for Unborn” 1993. (Slovenia)

PUBLISHED BOOKS IN CANADA

- “Do not write this down” 2006
- “Roots in the Stone” 2008
- “Enigma from the Stone” 2009
- “Poems I didn’t want to write, some other dreams” 2011
- “Curse in the Stone” 2014
- “How to touch eternity down the Mahalla” 2016
- “Overture for Surviving in the World of Dreams” 2016

PUBLISHED BOOKS IN USA“

- “Enigma from the Stone” 2010
- “Threads of my Essence” (Autobiography) 2011

PUBLISHED BOOKS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

- “Letter on duty” 2014

“Poems I didn’t want to write” 2015

“Letters I won’t Send You” 2015

“There are the Times We Live in” 2015

“Excavations from Cosmic Dust “ 2016

“ Directing Winds” 2016

“ How to touch eternity down the Mahalla” 2016

“Someone in me demolishing the universe “2017

“ Reincarnation of the soul” 2017

PUBLISHED BOOK IN SERBIA

”West from Belgrade East from Vancouver” 2016

(Book published with poet Vesna Kerecki Sarac)

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