

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

Miloš Petrović

Christ, an Optimist?

translation by Natalija Grgorinić & Ognjen Rađen

i sat nightly
drinking coffee, smoking
listening to jazz, thinking,
trying to write, talking
to myself staring into
wife's mirror, frequenting
the toilet, was happy and fulfilled when i
glanced by chance at one of many
photos of my son

time flies when you could use some
and vice versa

just the other day i was
pestered by some lady poet
reading to me not
half-bad verse

i lacked interest in
listening, let alone in conversation
is there a larry flint residing inside me, an assassin, or is this
merely a segue into middle age?

living in small towns is being one of the small people, hardly
any traffic—hardly any power of perception, no
surprises, apart from, so-called, acceptable or
good behavior—construed by the
patriarchal-liberal, swinger-proletarian media

lately watching too many movies
failing to star in
my own

in small towns people have the basic problem of

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

not admitting that they value his
penis more than her vagina and vice versa
small-minded as only mediocrities get,
small fries, petty gamblers and provincial maidens
teaching serbian literature

but what is essentially
my problem
do i have one?
indeed
each person on the planet has
a problem and
the biggest of misanthropes had

how many honest whores need to perish from
venereal or tropical diseases for the
actual buchenwald one to be born

it'll dawn in your creases and caves too
moisture will drip through your eyelids into
sweet awakening before the lift-off like the
first glass of wine of the evening, lack of patience,
a ring too big for its ring finger, as if i don't have
a beast fit for the cross

"no such thing as style, it only comes once you're dead"

(stoned on beatnik-dadaist iamb)

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

Christ, an Optimist?
(Part Two)

i sat nightly
and
mermaids arrived
necks clean
ears clean to
hook up limelight and
sterilizers

(/i wrote, my/
/head hurt/)

kids
good literature
honey is
the only thing of value to us

in this garden
where billboards are
road signs

kids
good literature
football
honey
great sax
is the only thing of value to us

here on st. wojtyła of oświęcim blvd. at
the right time
machines will buy us another
moment of life
for video and
parachutes of good hope

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

illusions cancel
the touch of their
arteries and balm

kids
good literature
football
honey
great sax and rhythm section
a big meal on a spring afternoon before wine
a couple of hundred of miles on a deep purple harley
a job you like and lots and lots of free time and good teeth is
the only thing of value to us

who taught us to lie? my
son who spent but two years on this planet
knows how to lie, who
taught him how?
no one but life
itself, freedom, flesh-interstate to his mother

(/every initiative starts with personal engagement/)

yearn, people are not the same they are
thoughtless and infectious not
the same are people

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a big meal on a spring afternoon before wine
a couple of hundred of miles on a deep purple harley
a job you like and lots and lots of free time and good teeth
inherited millions and cheroots, cuban
princesses on hotrod hoods embracing seedy guerillas is
the only thing of value to us

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

for whom did we piss water and vinegar
all truth bearers of history were
burned by the state or church
fuck 'em

why not curse why
not smoke why
not run and why
wash hands?
isn't washing hands of this or that
their usual occupation?
pardon me, but fuck 'em

who stuck us with dope and obsessive media who
sticks us with the rifle every now and then who
was it that sells us
prunes for plumes
who?

no, no we
who foretell, we are
marginal, ragged
drunks
junkies
saints-scrolls
living our moment of crisis
occasionally metering a rhyme
having to pay for everything
water, power, waste, hey, even waste
everything needs to be paid unless
you're crazy enough to go
live with your family in a
lupine lair, generate
your own power, wring out of
earth your water, sneak out
your own waste, snake out
your own poison, knit your own cable to
hang your ideas to dry

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

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a five bedroom town house: in brooklyn, los angeles,
paris or dorcol, with five hundred square feet for a library with a view is
the only thing of value to us

whatever will they do when
the entire population ends up in a
witness protection program
will we manage to cajole
a tiniest smile from the frown of justice or a
single tsk-tsk, i'm sure
she'll wipe her glorified ass with
her blindfold and find her (lucky) star in
some other cabbage patch

here, you officials of our unofficial life and
its exhausts, let me
shine your boots once more

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Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

a five-bedroom town house: in brooklyn, los angeles,
paris or dorcol, with five hundred square feet for a library with a
view, few
loyal friends with whom always one can
take an uncertain trip (of excess), a reasonably spotless reputation,
and less
pig brains is
the only thing of value to us

my personality is lagging behind, so is
my solution for risk

me, an unknown perpetrator,
will succumb to injuries
you may call me a
sea dog, a philatelist, he
who covers a bare foot
regardless

i'll reach the finish line
even if it's to wherever and back
a thousand miles, with you or empty, in a
casket or with a million krunas

what was the reason for inventing television, oh, god

is there a meaning to any of our handicaps if we
don't hide it and around it
don't sculpt our life's work—our character

water doesn't grasp
its flow and
in itself sweetly
hides
the indescribable desire
for itself

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

sun is no expert in
deserts
(it would get lost if you'd leave it in one)
and grasps not
its warmth

I am Destined, My Hurt One

i wait for the body
its weight
i wait for the body and
its freshness

she bursts
down the skylight

swinging
for days with
nails and
hips

i know that
automobiles
represent truth,
truthfulness

don't doubt me, i'll
give myself up
i'm given to you