

Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

A Sharp Double-Edged Luxury Object by Rodia Draghinescu

Translated by Adam J. Sorkin & Antuza Genescu

Cervena Barva Press

ISBN 978-0-9910091-2-1 \$17.00

Reviewed by Irene Koronas

A Sharp Double-Edged Luxury Object, poems will enchant and intrigue the reader. Very few books use language in the way Draghinescu does. Most experimental or contemporary poetry seems to me self-conscious. Reading Draghinescu's poetry is like slipping into warm water:

*"my loveliness flung her panties in the street
we made a decision to wear everything in the open
(the history of this movement and its glory can be toasted
at its memorial between the first bench in the military park
and the first bench in the tribunal
a clothesline with panties in royal black)"*

The first poem, Sight Doesn't Take Everything In, the reader will take a step back and adjust their perception. The poem's 3 D vision requires consideration and a willingness to be in the poem. At once, the sentence's tense is part of the present and the past at the same time. It also flings immediacy into another person and syntax. Another reason to read Draghinescu's poems with an open unfettered view is to see what a poem can be and become. We find sense in certain words that help to fuse the poem into its meaning and there are many meanings in the poems' relationship with words. Word like 'military park' and 'tribunal.' Are we about to be invited to a tribunal of sorts. The end of a relationship --that may or may not encompass everything? It will take much thought to connect the intention:

*"I'll exhaust myself saying aaaaaaaaaaaaaah into the gizmo
innermost essentials will prick my skin up to
and over my head among white scarves / veils
my scream thanks to which the most abstract of experiences
gets hypostatized in war rivers
will come into intimate contact with the image
of water within"*

And I love the word gizmo. Like the word contraption it confers and shutters with resentments. The poet continues using fragments, Dada deconstruction, or the ordinary as poetry, done in an extraordinary manner; the Surreal clips cut into the poem and form visions, collages, broken watches. The poem ticks. We get to envision how the poem rounds itself, winding timelessly:



Wilderness House Literary Review 9/2

*"so confusingly concrete I'll be swimming in myself
anyhow the silence outside has abandoned this place
when I write the word loneliness I write participation
in an inward fanfare of birds
in demonstrations of laid-off virginity
short words muscular pathways still remain
gray hair too (a tendency towards intellectualization
makes itself known in the synapse / thigh in debate versus buttocks)
miss photo so tall so special rendered real as much by affections
as by intelligent ideas"*

Disjunction works extremely well in the poem, yet, it flows into the next phrase with the ease of polished slashes and phrases. Rodica uses contemporary images, contemporary language with great skill and confidence. I don't get the sense that Rodica is different in her use of language. I get the sense that she is comfortable using all the nuances of modern poetry and how modern poetry can be made to sound like great poetry. Rodica is not afraid of words and using tense and words in her own tongue:

*"where it rains best color with fuji
so much imaginary plasma so much conscious flesh
felling the fact that it's a wrongly perceived concept
miss process with her navel thinking of an everyday brain
without the supernumeraries of mental principles
anyhow my loneliness can be said to be poetry
and poetry wears no panties"*

It would be a mistake on the readers' part to think this poem more than it is. In fact it is what it is in so many ways we get to read about anger, love, intelligent musing about our world and its trappings, its politics, its religions. I find it all there and the poet herself appears ready for the next poem, always ready to write and write she does with the brilliance of any writer I've ever read. Bravo:

*"but deep psychic phenomena instead
where the world parades with a bare bottom
and it won't depend on sight because sight doesn't take
everything in
in the final analysis I'm not even lonely
as I lie here under the nightlight"*

This is indeed a, "luxury object," a must buy. Writing at its best is not self-conscious. A poem need not contain the world but I think it speaks to everyone in a language the poets deems understandable. The contemporary reader will adore this universal book.

Irene Koronas: Poetry Editor: Wilderness House Literary Review,
Reviewer: Cervena Barva Press