

Martijn Benders

Sauseschritt



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artworks. Anything will be really appreciated,
thank you, dear reader for taking your time
to read this.

Martijn Benders, Mierlo, The Netherlands

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Notepad, voice.

A man sat thoughtlessly
in an empty room.

His hand rested on the notepad.
In it he just wrote
'humans are unclean creatures'.

He started counting on his fingers.

Already three days since
since he heard his dead
mother's voice
on the radio.

Novica Tadić

A small country

I felt miffed because I believed poetry was omnipotent ... don't we have an ocean? I hereby invent it. The Danube glistened greenish. Viki listened ecstatically to my latest teenage poem. I thought the chipped melon would drift past me just like it did to Attila József. But time only spewed fire and the metallic clicking so characteristic to our younger years. Much later, we saw each other again at the Lukacs swimming pool in Budapest. You couldn't tell she had spent years in prison. She's doing okay, she said. Is married. They cleared her criminal record, or at least promised to. We have one life and one death. This means in a small country: one pool, one authority and one projection room where the professional filmmakers gather. And the film on the screen is a study of the family tree where everyone is related to everyone else and the concepts TOP and DOWN are temporary, because an unforeseen change can turn everything upside down again and reveal that there has never been a change.

Meanwhile from the treadmill blood splashes - yes, we collect oranges. A few pictures with black borders: souvenirs, epitaphs. We quickly forget them and sunbathe on the edge of the volcano. HEY, HOW'S YOUR GUY DOING?.... GOOD BOY THANKS... Should I have said there was still time to save things? I stopped reading poetry to women. I don't believe poetry is a rescue package which you get out of a helicopter among the less fortunate. The poem is like a bloodhound: instinctively searching for its wounded prey. But it will keep changing shape and essence in its flight: try it, catch the real soul's fear in the act! You follow the trail of an interstellar mafia of probability, the trail of the Black Hand, spinning a cloud of gas cloud as if it were a Wheel of Fortune - that way within the cloud, carnage and a tourist trail can intersect. It tempts, with a believable image of the future, to having a gambling addiction.

Tag

I am lying on my deathbed. My little daughter comes in.

Runs towards me, touches my shoulder.

“Tag!” she shouts, “You’re it.”

She runs out again.

I try to get up.

But I will be it forever.

And I can’t tell her that.

So I pull the white sheet over my head,

because I only know how to hide.

They will carry me away like someone
good at playing hide and seek.

Love grief

My friend said: it will be fine, stay calm.
Study how to make yoghurt.
It will come all by itself after the infection.

Let it rest
in a friendly environment
with pleasant temperature.

My friend is a Turk.
They like to put yoghurt on everything.

I'm Dutch, I believe in plumping.
You have to rock a lot for that.

Turks know it as 'Ayran', but it has lower status.
You swim to paradise through the yoghurt lake.
Ayran they drink in hell, among politicians
and sheep intestines.

I tried it,
up to my neck I was in the yoghurt lake,
but I can't see a gate to heaven
without rattling it vigorously.

A hundred eyes

Some pockmarked girl who writes fakking good poetry
suddenly stands in front of me: 'Benders, it's done'.
She reads my work with the voice of Sunday lawnmowers
as if this really is the last time.

I used to wake up sometimes
with hundred eyes like a greenish fly.
From the kaleidoscope of my window, the black-and-white world
would reveal a black-and-white girl that I was going to colour in, all day.
At the end of the day, she rang the bell swearing.

It is wonderful to walk around forgotten.
It's great to live in a big city.

What are you doing to me, why are you rubbing your paws like that?
The avant-garde bubbled. You don't want Adolf Hitler suddenly
standing at your pyjama party. Maybe I was too young for
cover girls. These days I wake up,

as it is called, with one eye.
I slap on my white blankets and put on lead-black socks.
I avoid the window, the play of colours of the world
too excessive for the tunnel of love that is my eye

Occasionally I see the black and white girl walking,
but can't concentrate on her.
She walks by, she doesn't ring the bell.
It is lovely to walk around forgotten.

Slowly the world colours me,
agonisingly slowly, meticulously.
Someday I will be finished, perfect,
mannequin in the big world window.

Then I will see her again.
My wallflower, my assassin,
and even before I can rub my paws
her chameleon tongue shoots into my eye, the tunnel
of love, the swan hole, I feel

a white-hot cheese slicer in my head
that was it, this was what it was all about, fall into her arms,
without another single thought. An angel descends from

heaven, wings mow wildly through the light
and she, my panties, my butcher, changes colour contentedly
I sigh she can write fakking good poetry
and all my sufficient eyes snooze shut.

Cold

I turelur with two jumpers on
but should be wearing fifty like an owl.
The world's bursting with arrogant cities
who don't want to know about my cooing
because the night is one big
terrible jumper full of owls.

Wrell

Now that I am in towed in
by friends who mean well,
from a world that is not mine,
I slide felts across the bar and cock
against the cleavage of death
that refuses the tip of my soul.

Everything is prancing in the wrong direction.
Urinals shake out their dead ass heads
over emptied whistles. Closing time beckons.

You see a diamond lord swaggering
in the battery acid light of a facade.
The fog dense like wrell.

On a shoestring

It's christening death with postcards.
The humming of doom
over endless saved stamps
in grandma's drawer. The golden weights

chasing a heartfelt word,
a lone cocksfoot on a paragraph.

Blacker than death's monotonous chip fork,
lonelier than bicycle racks in the rain,

they demolish swimming pools again,
neighbourhood pubs lock up,
windows boarded up everywhere,
ticket machines, mudsocks.

Love in times of great poetry

Of course, some poets disappeared. But most stayed and wrote, and love poetry was back on the scene. The stricter the censorship, the more kleinkunst. Everything is becoming more local. There is Heinrich, founder of the love youth. And Wolfgang, who used to write cynical portraits now writes mostly stern sonnets with verse feet about little things that also want life space and stipulate it without that straddle.

Of course, poetry can't change anything. They are there, all of them. And under the great eagle flag soldiers kiss their girls under lamplight and poets write ever more diligently about ever more universal subjects: love, love the greatest force, the force that shafts everything.

**

'Where are the committed writers?', complains Comrade Yezhov in the Duma. His voice bounces off the walls. Of course, nonsense poets suffer in the Gulags. But where, oh where was the commitment? Did he have to denounce more useless people in order to get everything right?

He, who sacrificed his soul to give the people a voice?
He, who had more love for the Fatherland than for his life?

Where is the passion?

Where the sacrifice the poet brings to the community?

Ulrich and Ulrike together on the black moss and Ulrike thinks: the community is worth a holy death. How can it be that what is so familiar is so peculiar, how can childhood come so close into the flesh?

**

‘Poetry changes nothing!’ We see Remco Campert, Remco Campert and Remco Campert pulling someone up from a tub of water and as the man gasps for breath and noisily coughs the dew from his lungs coughs, he sees that it is himself, Remco Campert. Remco Campert and Remco Campert.

Poesie ist ein Akt der Bejahung.

**

Megaphone, bus shelter. *My love, take me to heaven. Never will we be the same again. My love, the stars sparkle. Love is the crown of grace of humanity, the holiest right of the soul, the golden bond that binds us to duty and truth, the redemptive principle that above all reconciles the heart to life, and is prophetic of eternal good.*

Mary, untangling the knots

Me, you, a goddamn scrappy moon,
side by side, talking about new love that never comes.

When I'm at home pulling jobs in bed I often think
of far too purple things, like sonnets with hoary

line breaks. Artificial joke, party, you asked
whether you sometimes hurt me, which was not your intention.

I know, the world is up in arms about you.
There's always a city with two heads in every bed.

This night with its slobbering stars I
don't think of you anymore, settle for the earth's bark.

which is old and reliable and also shacks up with everyone
but at least simultaneously, it doesn't need the magic of a sweetheart

and trembles only through its messy, tangled mane
(so no sonnet) untangles no Mary
(one city, two heads, one bed).

Twelve kilometres

Twelve kilometres you came cycling, after I had scolded your skin.
It had to end between us. We walked through the castle garden,
there was nothing to do: you live together, have kids, your life
for twenty years another one like that and I was only there for a moment,
a moment when you couldn't take it: an incident, a brief lump
in your throat. It didn't mean much. Twelve kilometres.

C.F H. Baroness of Tuyll van Serooskerken-Quarles van Ufford
once lived here. It is if we are apparitions, we glide
along furtive paths, and like a tree collapses in autumn
I too collapse in slow motion: every word swirls from my mouth,
into the forgiveness. Your problems mine, I have to disappear

but have nowhere to go. Baroness van Tuyll wouldn't be harmed
of me. Sometimes autumn may have sniping days,
always we are interrupted, snip-snap,
a ghost horde of forebears. A mob of foremothers,
a heart full of battlements and loopholes, castles
are also always fucked when it should be about love.

Her soul is made of crepe paper

I love her. She is strict
like a root canal treatment,
relentless as a constricted bum.

She gushes a nice round in my heart.
With a scalpel she skims my eyes
and sings with her clay-dry mouth:

Gouging, gouging, good-humoured gouging.
Gouge, gouge, good-humoured gouge.
You've lost the plot, little boy, you're....

Her soul is made of crepe paper,
mine of papier-mâché.

The moon has only fifteen minutes
to pop shine on the two of us.

The mortal, which no one wants to be reminded of
when they read a book with the delay of a plane.

At the funeral, the concrete mixer refused
service like a stubborn donkey.

Slowly, everything disappears
into the tie-dyed shadows.

Once upon a time

Wish I was too old for a broken heart. Old enough
to spoon soup. Everything about me creaks like a forest.
as if a train has run over it. How many deadlines

can my body handle? I pier on my bed.
Tile wisdom punches my grave. Don't think I'll make it,
something scrapes into that one diary that had
a lock on it, I strike down
like a flag. With plaques on my eyes

will I enter hellfire, my life
a slobbering firecracker that wouldn't go off
at New Year, rolling on the wet-splashed pavement,
in the clinical January rain, its powder
lost to stiff-frozen dog shit.

Loud boy

I can already see the ground falling on my head. I can see the feet,
the jellyfish and the knife. If you loved me so much
why am I alone here on the breach,
if you loved me so much why
do you bottle me like this, picture,
must I sometimes go all the way, must I sometimes
be the hare every night
in the white grave of my bed, all alone

the smartest of the class, the joker, the you-of-it of the you-of-it
a you-of-it of your you-of-it, loudmouth boy,

be nice to her, because she leaves me, she eludes me,
loud boy, treat her well, because
she needs you more than she ever needs you.

WTF did you send me flowers?

WTF did you send me flowers?

No must have been that jerk from Tinder.

But he doesn't know my last name.

At best I would send you a monster.

A monster?

Yes a monster that comes lurking through
the keyhole with a green eye.

And that you then stand undressing.

The green light from the keyhole the only thing on you.

The monster doesn't see much, thinks it's Monday.

Goes back to the monster coffers to sample clocks.

Then what?

Then I have a carnivorous plant delivered
with a key tied to it.

All-Embracing Love

A word from the creator.
You call it gravity
but it is simply love, universal love.

The earth presses you against its bark,
it could easily crush you
or hurl you into space
but she doesn't. Lucky bastard.

Whining all the time. Backache, muscle ache,
depression. All-encompassing love!
You also have each other.
Fall into each other's arms. Embrace gravity.

What a beautiful country we live in!
Those who know the seven-mile boots of love
no longer turns his hand to a little love.

Love is not an opinion. So come and give me a kiss.

I could populate an entire Type IV exoplanet with opinions.
And even then they would constantly collide like penguins in love .

I want to slide across the moon in a bumper car with you.
You put your head on my shoulder, and your hand in mine
while I point my torch at the distant earth.

And suddenly your hand, your mortal hand
stops in the beam so that a shadow rabbit falls over Africa
and as we make weightless love I will secretly cross
my fingers behind your back to pray for everyone.

The revolution

Once there, finally, at long last, she moved
past unnoticed. The greengrocer displayed his fruit.
School cars left the car park. On television
the same games repeated as always. Yet something
was not the same. But no one could put their finger on it
The newspapers were just as superficial and pedantic as
before. On the internet the same hubbub about a genocide, far away.

Until someone pointed to the moon. Look, it's still just there.
Broad daylight. And there's a huge hole in it.
Who shot at us?

'Face trickery' says the emboldened scientist in
the talk show. 'A collective hallucination' says a
renowned psychiatrist.

But people turn off the television en masse. They throw their
wedding service to that one-eyed moon, golden teacups,
plates with frills, hundreds, thousands, the most expensive
porcelain. The whole air swarmed with the finest crockery.

The greengrocer laughing way too hard took off his wedding ring,
the driving instructor accelerated

a precious tapestry of porcelain fell to the earth's crust
in a benign bombardment
and that stupid cyclops moon just stood there
and nothing else happened.

So everyone turned on the television again. The greengrocer exposed
his fruit. School cars slid out of the car park
like heavy limousines.

Something was not the same. But no one could get their finger on it.
And that stupid cyclops moon just hung there, in the extinguished
light and no one escaped, and there was no one to be mad at.

On the moss bed of the cosmos

Suzanne and Martha and Janneke with their magnetic breasts
At alternate addresses. And Eva with the eyes that lit up like
headlights when you told something strange. And that you knelt like a deer
under those heavygerman headlights. Beautiful bluish headlights, from
an Audi perhaps, a fervent prayer, under beautiful blonde hair, under
a brilliant question. On a morning when you can't yet see a hand in front of

eyes. Copernicus himself designed Jeanine's hips. And Agetha
and Trudy with shopping bags bursting at the seams. They are
all still, somewhere here on earth, among hookers and retired
newspaper readers. MY FLAT IS NOT A HOUSE CASE she said her
apocalyptic eyelashes, my goodness, I should have been born in a cage

I know the secret of the Efteling parrot. My
antlers branch out through her daily bills.
I love how bills move like a kind of perpetual
mobile moving through the system. But eternal life they
not. If they did, spaceships could have flown on them.

So I kneel like a submissive deer
between her bills at an alternate address
and then she bares her magnetic breasts
and says she is actually a lesbian.

But youth is not simply a military campaign based on
athletics, Suzanne. A pinch of poetry and nothing else but the hard
strategy of the body. Eva, I could have had spaceships flying at you.
All worthy of fuel - times the postal code of hell.

Don't let love crush you

An uprising has broken out.

I lean out of the window. You are gesturing angrily at me.

Unripe pears on a far too stale tree,

I won't be fisted by love, my life is a somersault

in acrobat light, why does death always trot on like this?

Here, the only neighbourhood I know,

where I grew up and will die,

in a tired uprising like this

with kleinkunst everywhere.

Neighbourhood girl

You grew up together, dreamed of the same nuclear war.
Messed around in her teenage room. She played, but not guitar.
You did her, almost uninterested. Now, it had to be tough,
love didn't bother you - it was barely enough
having to fit into this world and years later, still
in each other's sight, we became squatters, the wall fell,
we had won, lost. We married

had children, masturbated in a hotel.
Then we knew. We came from the neighbourhood.
Drank the same milk. Hopeless nationalists
we would have been if we didn't have each other.

And now that we're forty something
for the first time really in my arms,
I feel the church tower pressing against my body
the woods, the puddles, the marble pits
everything the world can't top
except with that one bomb, which never came,

because the neighbourhood couldn't have it. Nobody wanted
a posturing mushroom on our sunset.

No one. And still I kiss her, while

in infrared the mill grinds, the trunk stands empty
and someone translates neighbourhood into neighbourhood, still
I feel her lips, her cherry mind, her voice.

Because she is the one for whom I am off choice.

At the Art Hotel

I, old wizard, stand at the desk and
have to pay fifty euros fine for smoking in the room.
'Smoking has been detected in the room.'

I say
'I have never smoked in my life
and the man looks at me and is scared
because such blatant lies
he knows from the news.

The squire there, a little man with a smokeless white suit
a huge nose and smokeless eyes, who knows how to
avoid me with surgical precision goes to the room and
starts listing: several cigarette butts in the windowsill, also
expressed on the windowsill, traces of ash

in the Jacuzzi, a distinct smell of smoke in the toilet
and, to top it all off, two empty packets of
Camel hidden under crisp bags
and several used condoms.

I say: something swirled in my soul, love, friend,
do you know about that?

Did your head ever glow like a cigarette
when you thought of her, your heart ever flake like ash
when she had to leave? I pull 50 euros out of my pocket

fold a plane, this is the MH17
I say, and I gently land it on the counter.

We will get to the bottom of this!
We will not rest until the end itself is boarding!

ITCH

I, a battalion commander, oversleep in a hail of bullets.
Sometimes a hand or a foot flies by. When the army collapsed in 1919
collapsed, we took cover in a small sleepy village.
'Men, from now on there is order again' I said then. Later
I was arrested and given a brilliant trial. One of the
spectators said 'the son of a lawyer, a reactionary'.
The war, a revolution, years of peace, exile - weekday
days in our age of turmoil. One day they chained my
hands to my feet and then suddenly my back began to itch.
I remember the exact spot: right under my shoulder blade.
At first I hardly felt it but later it became sheer agony.
Finally, it itched so badly that I almost went insane.
God-forsaken submarine of an air conditioner. And then I got married: a
thin woman with strong bones. We lived in a village and had
chickens. I think we loved each other. Then my son got sick
and died. My wife also died of grief. Then my hand
trembling: I became homesick. When my sister saw me for the first time
she could only exclaim 'Oh my God' I said 'Well, thirty-five years is
a long time'. Then we just stared at each other, two old wrecks,
glowing with rheumatism. Sometimes I philosophise about having
experienced a turning point in time. Then I remember, for instance, how
beastly my itching was. I can't even describe it.
I could only think: SCRATCHHHH! I never throw away dry bread.
My entire flat - under the bed, in the kitchen cupboards, on the table -
stuffed with pieces of bread that I wrapped in paper.

The expectation song

Don't let another dream come into your eyes.
Be careful not to erase my lines.

Close your eyes when you wish for something
As if to make you think,
don't let anyone see you for me.

I often became jealous of you.
Even from my own eyes.

How can I, a stranger,
still give you to a stranger.

The clouds

The whole godforsaken day
having to watch that skimming of the sky.

Never a face appears.
Not even a decent wrinkle.

Just
that hideous nursery blue.
It says everything, it says it all.

The House of the Dead

Of the whole family, only the two sisters were alive, one of whom had gone had gone mad. She thought the house had been moved to ancient Thebes, or perhaps Argos - she could not separate mythology, history and her private life, any more than past and present except for exception of the future. Later, she recovered. And it was she with whom I spoke, when I came to deliver a message from abroad, from their uncle, their father's brother. Only a muffled shuffling of slippers was audible from the room next door, as the elder sister continued talking:

We younger sisters are shuffling around this huge house.
They say younger, but we decay like old water in a well.
The last pumice of an ancient family.
The house keeps us dry. Selling it is not appropriate - we lived
our whole lives here, it carries our dead, you can't sell those.
Coffering them to another house to another neighbourhood - so
dangerous and tiring: they are used to it here,
one sleeps in the shade of the curtain
another under the table, another in the wardrobe
and another always modest and undemanding in the oil lamp
and one smiles nonchalantly behind the two crossed shadows
casting my sister's knitting needles on the wall.

The heavy furniture downstairs closed,
along with the large silver ashtrays that used to
reflected a welcoming environment,

sheets, silk blankets and bed linen, woollen clothes, handbags
and overcoats of us and the dead, all in one heap,

the ostrich feathers of mother's hat. The piano, the guitars
the flutes and the drum kit. The wooden horse
and the dolls of our childhood.

We nailed the rooms shut. We only kept
these two west-facing rooms on the top floor
with the corridor and stairs, of course, if we sometimes in the evening
want to walk through the garden or run errands.

Don't think we found peace. The house, so closed, so bare,
developed an eerie, fragile echo
at every movement of a rat, beetle or bat.

Every shadow in the depths of the mirror, every gnashing of teeth
of moth or woodworm is endlessly prolonged. You can clearly
hear the splitting of the tiniest spider's web, in the cellar, between
the pots, the sawing of rust between the hilt of knife and fork.

Then suddenly a loud bang as at the entrance downstairs
a rotten billiard cloth breaks.

Sometimes, when at the crack of dawn the rubbish man
passes through the suburb the clink of all the glass
bounces off the bronze bedheads.

The little bells on the pierrot costume
that our young brother once wore on carnival night
- on the way back we were scared,
dogs barked, my dress got caught in a fence I ran
to catch up with the others: the moon pressed its face so
close to mine - I couldn't move anymore, the others were calling me
from behind the trees when I finally reached them
they all stared at me in bewilderment
for my face shone with many layers of dust gold,
with which they used to remove the old chandeliers
from the dining room or guest room mirrors gilded
with an elegant, finely carved corolla.

At least now we can hear how everything wears out
without seeing anything. Everything left us.

There are santies in this pure, cocky cold.
The rooms are suspended into the boundless night,
like two accelerated lamps on an entirely deserted beach,
their light briefly revealing, darkened then
pierces in their translucency the void
itself also being the void, the bitterly atoning noon
sinking its own shadows.

It's as if you cut flowers at dusk
- many flowers, for dining room vases and the bedrooms
of the dead - your hands full of yellow stains from the pollen
and the inevitable gossamer cobwebs
that cling to flowers as the pink afternoon hour
fades on the windows you feel how a knife
becomes blunter from the milk of flowers.

A nettlesome, strange sensation, of horror and slaughter,
a blind, delicate scent of boundless beauty
and naked absence. That's how it is. Everything left us.

That last day, the slave girls screamed and ran away -
a shrill cry still nailed into the shadowy passageway
like a hefty fishbone in the throat of an unknown guest.

They ran away
hands pressed to their expressionless faces
and when they reached the top of the marble staircase
they looked small, black and hunchbacked,
exposing their little faces,
carefully studying the steps so as not to fall
although they could dream the whole staircase from head to toe
with all its pauses, like a poem on the back of
a calendar page or one of those songs soldiers sing
when their brothers return from the front.

Some soldiers, handsome still, but also sad,
with big feet and hands, with lice in their underwear,
underground lights and fallen stars in their eyes,
something hard and ruthless around their mouths, something
very masculine and at the same time indifferent, as if
they were kissing too many corpses on crossed hands and foreheads,
they left their wounded comrades ironing through the ravine
or, above all, they nicked a sick man's water bottle
which he had used as a pillow.

The soldiers sang in the kitchen at night,
the scratching of knives against each other
looming towers of dirty dishes
huge chipped, bloodied bones of mythical beasts.

Sluggish witches with huge wooden paddles
ordering above their steaming cauldrons;
a woman in white robes kneaded from vapour
or three-masters, heavily rigged, swearing, sailors
the long beard of a blind man, transparent, a lyre on his knee -
maybe that's why mother wouldn't let us in:
sometimes we found a handful of salt behind the door
or the head of a cockerel, its comb
a mini sunset on a broken tile.

So we listened
behind the doors until well past midnight, until sleep overtook us
came tucking in red-fingered. Oh, the soldiers sang -

joked with the girls,
tore off their boots to rub their rough toes,
and later wiped wine from their fleshy lips
or scratched at their hairy chests
grabbed some tits at random and started
singing again. Even in our sleep, we heard them. They sang

the faces hiding behind their greasy hair
leaning on the wooden table where meat was being diced.
quietly, very quietly, so that superiors heard nothing,
then their Adam's apple went up and down

like a knot on a thick rope that was being
was pulled. A knot from a deep well up
a knot in your guts. And the women
started crying hysterically at this song,
tore off their clothes and begged, stark naked.
to be allowed on their laps, like sick children.

In better times, in a whiter house,
the hushed toys of dead children,
portraits, wedding dresses, pots and pans, all
filled, holes, with masks of fresh plaster,
all increasingly whitewashed by memory.

The massive soundlessness
of women's hair tumbling to their knees or the sound
of a falling shoe, far from the bed: at last

a place full of elusive solitude and sincerity.
A spring landscape, with freshly risen barley
beside a soured horse and a sweet little ashen donkey
next to a dog, a cow, two sheep in the lonely
shadow of a plough. But the soldiers

heard nothing, saw nothing, felt nothing
manly, carefree, drunk with deathly contempt,
sunk deep in their own songs - a song
not heroic, but not sad either, not even
faltering - a song they no doubt learned
from village women and now taught to girls,
returned from the front.

As the dusty messenger
gasped for air slumped at the step foot
and kissed the marble and wept and delivered his news
told in a masculine, slightly gritty tone

and the girls stood in the doorway with the apron before their eyes
together with mother, their matron, outside in the forecourt.
The nanny beside them like an oak into which lightning struck,
and the teacher, yellow as candle wax behind his thin beard.

A long fleshless hand gripped the strings of a harp,
the young girls whipped silently behind the windows,
hiding behind their dreams and suspicion.

Tables prancing
on their hind legs like horses,
and galleys glide across the trees at sunset,
their oarsmen bending and rising, bending and rising,
in a whipping rhythm and their chips
naked women, suspended by their hair,
who wail and shudder, gleaming, in the sea
until the foam of the galaxy
scratches behind the ship - and the messenger

proclaimed that the master had arrived
with boots and slaves, palanquins and banners,
and he had a wound in the middle of his forehead,
like a new, wondrous eye
from which death was watching us,
and the master saw the entrails of every landscape,
object or man, whether they were all transparent;
he could read the pulse of our blood, our fate,
the charred branches in the subterranean darkness,
the nerves of the water ramming the rocks,
brief throbs of guilt beneath clothes and skin.

They listened as petrified, frightened, heads bowed,
tearless like skeletons frozen in glass,
naked, brittle, without quarter.

‘Let the master come’ said the matron, ‘let him come
and be welcome. He himself is also made of glass. We know that eye,
have it ourselves, look there, in the middle of our foreheads.
We too know death to perfection. We see Him.
Welcome, glass master with your glass sword, welcome
back in your glass abode, with your glass children, pull the mass of
glass corpses after you, your glass booty, let bells ring,
you slave girls, why do you stand still?
Go, put down glass food, the glass chops, the glass fruit.
The glass master is coming. He is going to come!

Thus spoke the matron and on her temples
showed the hammering beat of her blood,
you could see her sweat before it formed,
before it melted on her pale cheeks.

Then she shook off her black apron, as if she chased away
a black bird. And the messenger fled.

An owl skimmed low over in the forecourt,
while it was morning. Night had not yet fallen,
the owl's shadow pressed indelibly above the gate.

The matron forgot to dress the children. She went to the bathhouse,
filled the bath with hot water, did not wash. Moments later
she locked herself in her room, made up her face in the mirror,
red, red, deep purple, like a mask, like a corpse, a statue,
murderer and victim at the same time. And the distant sun sank
yellow and fiery like a crowned adulterer
like gilded savage of another's power,
barbaric with lowliness, oppressive in its fear,
while bells tolled madly throughout the land.

Then the slave girls covered their faces again with their hands
and fled, small, black, hunchbacked, like black spots,
like flies in the season of swamp fever
under the stone rain of the colonnade,
leaving the great chamber like a nightmare upside down,
and the stones merely silenced and roiled
up more and more blood.

A red stream surrounded the house; we were cut off
from the outside world. Later, the world forgot about us, and feared
us no longer. Passers-by no longer crossed their fingers,
no longer spat their chests to banish the ghost.
The road close to our house grew dense with weeds, nettles, thorns,
even a few blue wildflowers, no longer looked like a road.

At night, when some overworked woman by the river
did her laundry, you could hear the pounding
of her mat beater on the soft wet fabric,
and no one said it was a knife
being driven into someone's flesh,
or that a secret hatch was rattling,
a corpse dumped in a ditch
from the north window - all that people said
someone was matting the laundry
and that they could even hear from the knocking
whether the material was wool or cotton, silk or linen,
and that they knew when a woman
bleached her daughters' outfits,
they could even envisage her marriage,
the pallor of the groom, how the bride blushed,
the intertwining of two bodies made unreal
by bed curtains of tulle, on their feet in the night breeze.

The feeling of something inescapable, incalculable,
like a lilt of music in the air
that you hear over and over again, and you don't know
from where, just above the trees?
From under the empty benches in the garden?
That bathhouse? Over the red river?

(Often at night, from the window, I would see the dresses
floating by themselves around the trees in the garden
billowing lightly as moonlight does to a shadow
and behind their white mist, behind their pale undulations,
you could then see the dried-up fountain with the bronze dolphin,
as if it wanted to dive into the white tide, one last time,
without leaving a trace, like a memory
becomes meaningless once someone is just too present)

And the garden,
to its furthest point, its darkest corner, sometimes shines and glows
when at night the great heliotropes shake their warm shoulders,
and an azure mist flickers under the noses of the statues,
as if they were secretly sniffing the moist scent of a rose bush.
In the end, life is so simple.

And so beautiful. Mother bends her head over her plate and cries.
Father places his hand on her shoulder. 'It's from happiness,' she says,
apologising. And we look through the window at the boundless transparent
night where a sliver of moon lies like a forgotten finger between the azure
pages of a serene, closed book.

There is a chill in the air, tonight. Autumn will come.
In a day or two, the windows will close. Maybe
nothing else, but there is plenty of wood for the stove,
and not just from the woods, we can use the old furniture,
solid doors, rafters, crates, gun butts, even
the cart grandfather left behind, many years back.

If you go, tell our uncle not to worry.
We are doing fine. Death is a soft mattress
to which we got used, stuffed with flakes, cotton
down and straw - it took on the shape of our bodies
- a death in itself, we feel secure,
in this austere, exquisite collateral.

But if you stay
I'll show you the fingerprints of the blood fountain
and the underground passage through which twelve bearded chiefs
dressed as women managed to escape with their pale leader,
who, though dead, still managed to lead them to the exit.

And on the other side, the entrance remained open, dumb, deep
and dark as an unknown error.

And the evening star - perhaps you noticed? The evening star, soft
like an eraser, kept rubbing the same spot, as if it were a mistake of ours -
what mistake? - it wants to erase; a faint sound can be heard as the eraser
moves back and forth, the error cannot be erased, tiny shreds of paper fall
glittering on the trees, it does not matter that the error cannot go away -
the movements of the star, soft, persistent, everlasting, the first and the last
rhythm, heavenly mighty but practical as a loom or verse,
back and forth, back and forth, the star.

Among the cypress trees, a golden pendulum between mournful threads, revealing an error, hiding an error, not ours, the error of the world, a fundamental error. An error of birth or death - are you actually listening?

Autumn nights erase with serene, general guilt, the guilt of us all, strengthening our secret friendship, a friendship with rhythm - yes, yes, the chill-dark sound of the bucket coming from the garden well, and a voice from under the trees saying 'I'll be back' and the breathlessness of a child trying to untie his shoes for the first time, the sound of a flute from the open window of a student, an amateur player, yet music that rises up and blends with the beautiful, senseless concert of the stars.

And yes, I assure you, though dead, he led them inexorably to the exit. Even if we know that the exit is often just another kind of death. Necessary, deceptive, inescapable. So tell our uncle not to worry, there far away, in that disciplined Sparta of his. We are doing excellently, here in Thule. Only - mind you - he needs to know this: this really is the end of the road. He needs to know this. It really is the end.

'Yes, yes,' I muttered automatically and stood up. I hadn't understood single word.

A sense of magical terror had me in its grip, as if I was suddenly confronted with the decadence and enchantments of some archaic civilisation. Night had fallen. She took me to the stairs and lit the path down with her oil lamp. What had she actually told me? About that body that had abducted!

Could it be? No, Jesus, it couldn't be. And the house is not Agamemnons. Why was I trying to make sense of this insane woman? By now I was outside. I began to stride briskly, but when I heard my own footsteps I stopped. Something pulled together in my mouth, something unsatisfied, dissolving in my saliva through all this black uncertainty, as if I had bitten down on a pine cone. And yet, at the same time I felt something solid, rich, pure, that gave me a feeling of euphoria, and reminded me with mathematical precision of how easily I would overcome the problems at work tomorrow, something which had hitherto seemed insurmountable.

A harvest moon rose among the cypress trees. Behind my back I felt the dark mass of the house, like an enormous ancient tomb. And, if nothing else, I had learned what to avoid, what we should all avoid at all cost.

LECTURE TO READ IN
AN IRON LUNG

“She was beautiful all right, beautiful in a way that was at once seductive, demonic, and raspberry.” Stanisław Lem, *The Futurological Congress* (from the memoirs of Ijon Tichy)

You are a foot yourself

Few people know that there is a second Martijn Benders.
An orthopaedic shoemaker in Uden.
With him you are in good hands, it says.
His life must be hell. But he is smiling in the photo.

He never bought a book from me. Someday I want to
go to him. My foot is bothering me.
That can hardly be a coincidence.

I am sitting in a chair. The good hands of Martijn Benders
touch the bad foot of Martijn Benders.
Then he says: there is no such thing as a bad foot.

And I say: the only good hand is a severed hand.
In horror films, people are often still very religious
and that makes sense. You measure feet all day, I measure
how to deliver people to words.

Good words often, notwithstanding.
At least I trust that.

‘No,’ he says. ‘I don’t measure feet. I read them.
There are no bad feet. There are misunderstood feet.

Suddenly I understand, that’s what it’s all about. I thank him.
I stand up and title the poem. Yes, the title,
misunderstood foot of the poem.

Ode to the ice wick

Where the gut is the realm of left-wing hipster bacteria
which control the brain from the colons (we are butterflies!)
the ivory tower of the spine is the domain
of the true butterfly in the human body: the icewick.

You know it as the cold shiver
that creeps down your spine when a boundary
seeks you out; it's like someone is leafing through you,
reading you like a book. The Nazis sought the hollow earth,

the icewick your skin. The surface on which it dreams
of ripening. Anyone who has ever heard snow whistling

in the sun understands that this butterfly in the horn of your spine
cannot return: something nips it, again and again.

In the organ of your belly: the pirouette
love, time-warping love, it has no equal.

The icewick reigns supreme within the spine,
and shivers bring to life its frigid design.

What am I doing here

Art is all we have to reverse the destruction
which haste undoes.

Whenever I am on a stage I always think: what am I doing here?
I belong under a pool table in a dingy bar.

You have to be a huge asshole to
rather think than sing
or not to realise
that you are too old to write in paragraphs.

I admit

When you asked for poetry that interferes with the world
I thought: they've come to the right place. I am an armchair general
like no other. I meander completely in uniform, but it's boring
being the boss of the internet. The internet is too small for me.
They only hooked up one Type III planet.

Last week I put the American Zombie-Avantgarde on notice.
No response, I am used to it by now.

The supermarket of poetry is all about one thing: designing an
efficient walking route for your readers to design, so that they are
touched as much as possible by your zombie words.

In that supermarket, I have entrenched myself. And you are nothing
to me than chipped heads standing behind a barricade of spritzers,
washing powder and long fingers. And then I say, Cloud.

Cloud. Cloud. The best zombie word.

Wobble like a brand new zombie through your zombie magazine.
To tell you about the world. They are rushing headlines there.
You need to barricade this leaflet with art.

Stick something next to this, one of those spontaneous cases
of a sensitive soul who wants a better world.

And then readers come, finally, with love in luminous eyes
and clouds of death in their mouths, but I don't read it.

Because I am afraid, afraid of their world, where there is
nothing left to barricade, nothing to steer,

every walkway is efficient and all words are no longer distant
friends, but valid, lovely, stillborn neighbours.

The nutshell

For a long time, I fought the nutshell.
My dreams long spiral staircases in a nutshell.
Whoever I once loved, there was always the nutshell.
In the end, even the highest flights turn out to be
excerpts from themselves.

Of course, always the Big Bang
the universe had to start with.
Like catching a wall with a roll of wallpaper.
Even in something like God - nothing but a kind of nutshell -
I could not believe with verve. All good things come from above
until you go on the shovel yourself. I hated
criticism, frowning on everything in a nutshell.
Hated that her eyes were the sea in a nutshell.

But as I grow older and begin to chip away
I see life itself is just a nutshell, anyway.

It never became a letter

A few hundred sunsets. A few heartfelt words.
Sometimes they invite you in. The factory eyes.
But there are too many of them. You have a few
hundred words, a few heartfelt sunsets.

Do you know what it is?
Been so many meaningless people.
Never cured anyone with poems.

Dante is my dentist.
And I have golden collarbones.
And still I love you.
Just follow my lead.

The cunt

Sometimes five minutes seem
seem like hours.

Then hours
mere minutes again.

My best Playmobil heroes
are now located - god knows where.

Anxiously
I watch Discovery Channel.

It never became a letter

A few hundred sunsets. A few heartfelt words.
Sometimes they invite you in. The factory eyes.
But there are too many of them. You have a few
hundred words, a few heartfelt sunsets.

Do you know what it is?
Been so many meaningless people.
Never cured anyone with poems.

Dante is my dentist.
And I have golden collarbones.
And still I love you.
Just follow my lead.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM A WINDSHIELD WIPER

People in love do pace quite a bit. Pace kwaddabit. .
A windshield wiper sings in a halo of acid rain.
Swishy dialect from the foekepot family.

Soul of a windshield wiper:
catcalling in a darkroom.

The cock

The cock sponges through existence,
like its a hole in one.

A lengthy monologue.
Too critical
to be a fan
of criticism.

1. Unemployed for too long
2. Applying for jobs too short
3. A sympathetic outsider

And every day:
putting on the rits.

(Rits is the dutch word for zipper)

The clock

Fuck around a few billion times,
preferably from behind, on the cliffs.
One sees, on a sluggish hen-night
God's lawnmower racing across the stars.

What a cockelicock.
What a flockdick.

A venereal disease
is even more precise and moreover
less volatile.

Annie's room

From a rosy cloud of cigar smoke.
the heated gin sizzles into my gnome house,
above the reek from the fireplace spelling out new constellations
all wrong. 'I how of you'. 'Fish shit'.
'Hot Teddy in the Popcorn of an Irish Ton'.

Drinking whisky in the bedroom with stuffie, hey stuffie!
Public socks.
More public socks.
Leo, what a woo woo you are.

Mr Linear and the Lonely Noise

Mr Lineair is lying on his bed.
He wants to jerk off, but what
noise, what noise it makes.

Mr Lineair puts on a dirty film
with the sound on mute.

He pulls the sheet
over his head
and screams.

Mr Lineair
is lonely and unhappy.

In a dirty bed.
In a noisy bed.
In a dirty, noisy bed.

The headscarf

A horror film
about sensitive men in endless tunnels
with sunglasses on.

And nothing happens,
except being sensitive and beautiful
in a tunnel.

And a fat, pink mole
sings a song
at the end of the film
about love.

If the parachute doesn't work

You pull
on the last goddamn ring and nothing claps,
the endless forests below you zoom in
and you scream for that one girl, the only one
who was still hanging on your every sin - Ring! Ring!

Your mobile phone. You dig into your airtight suit.
It's the landlord. What an incredible schiess!

The green storms towards you.
Virgin green. Grease green.

A fidgety guy
orders Chinese in Chinese.

The government is no fan of coincidence as such
You may have a head. Weeds do not perish.

But the future fraks at us.
You say: elephant in a china shop.

We say: a million elephants in a million china cabinets.

Grunge

The Universe. Bit of a hustler.

Eating pancakes under the full moon
With a brilliant firstnammmullet,

suddenly becomes
suddenly becomes

pancaking
under a leaden moon panting.

Hairy jumpers. Wobblydunk.

Bare

Moonlight hung between the trees like a greasy mop.
On the grass lay a sleazy, inedible turd,
greenily dreaming about flies. Then she came up,
I let myself fill up and I said 'a little love is soon

as kittelike as bumpy goose. But she was already gone.
It was bare around me, barer than a stone
mossing in the sea for centuries. So barren.
Bare foul vases in pebbly moonlight. Bare form.

Bare comma in that poem that, long thought about.
Bare as the . in a faultless sentence

Mental

On my grave
an implausible canon dances the birdy dance.
William, John, Lord and William.

With beaks long as ladies' cigarettes
they pick from my rained-out diary
a slouch of a poem and then,

hardly dare to write it down
first William goes
then John
then Lord
then William with his eyes closed

reciting un-epilated
in one of those stomped-on voices
you know from local celebrities.

And then they tuff, arm in arm
to the next poet's grave.
William, John, Lord and William.

No encore do they grant.
So I'm doomed to stay and haunt
where many poets passed before.

Bondage

She called at five in the morning
to cat that she would come and kill me
if I stopped chatting.

A little exorcist thinks of washing dishes
or trash bags as Angersouls
strops through his blood.

The streets were full of gas.
We both had masks on
and she had Plath in her bag.

Which she read to me in the evening, outside
neighbours rattled pots, pans.
The Great Bear hung in the air
like the scimitar of Damocles.
Scorpions raced the streets,
bus clatter, cries. From my bottle
her squinting eyes hung to draw lash.
Bir, İki, Üç, Dört, Besz.

On her back a sugar skull.
All my oeuvre can be discarded
with so much backlight.

A little exorcist, however, thinks
about the weather forecast
and looks outside
to see the rain, the light
shooting back through the clouds.

@^#%\$&#%\$^&#%#^

Am so bothered by title gremlins.
Everywhere I start anything.
A bummer. A lump. Zoebel zoinks

Perhaps from a drudge mistress
something with a cocksfoot or a knife
Anyway, wherever I pen
immediately one of those cultural wheel clamps

of stuff. Man is a passer-by.
I must tolerate you. Apekool.

Readers salad long ago in the Fukkum.
Spats? Vegetables have spat every morning.
See above.

To the prick who invented a diaeresis for poetry

Thanks to that guy
I lost at least 120 hours of my life
on something completely trivial

..

Could have jacked seventy women.
Could have rebuilt the Twin Towers with matches.
But no.

There had to be and would
such a hema-thing on that e,

love of language they call it
a flock of retired teachers will stampede in
calling me a Sunday poet.

Damn.
Sunday poet then.

Seventy women.
I'll think of you, suckers.

Position

I am against everything.
Until I write a poem, then I'm in favour.
Seems logical to me.

In poetry, something must happen
before shit happens.

Love is for amateurs

Like surgeons probing the fault line. Or seismologists
Who buy celery. Like bottlejerks,
drifters, scalpers.

Hustling at the bakery
jostling at the furniture store
in front of the charity buffet
forcing at the lotto, especially the lotto,
maybe just the lotto

that one ping star
your hands the hands of a dead person
opening a sealed present, yes

all love
lasts a hundred years, movie stars wink, soldiers
shoot each other to death. And we

can't even line up, our happiness
so rickety that squirrels dream of it.

You have sex and you have love

You have snake people.
They shed and you uncover yourself.

You also have two snake people.
For the model citizen, we especially recommend love.

There is always something going on in love, especially for each other.
Sex fits in with that too, but enjoy in moderation.

For the average ugly citizen, we recommend porn. Horny
is the soppy Sunday afternoon of corporeality.

And then. For the Superburger. Sex and love.
Both at the same time. Be good for life.

So take your pick. Model, ugly, or super.
All super, of course. Supersuppels.

Notes from isolation

Since I have been mad at you it is as if everything is muffling itself,
my dictatorial voice and the walls mute each other, as if they want to
take me in scissors. Hear only footsteps on the mud floor, hope they
don't stop at my door, sing songs no one wants to record,
not even surveillance or the NSA.

What about you? Pear blossom in Appelscha.
Since I'm mad about you, it's like I'm standing
with my porn head at a boring party and all the wallflowers
want dattum, and I can't get it up because I see perfumed skulls
in their plexus solarium or left eye, help me, help me black
bright moon, if necessary I'll pull a lane through language.
And you? A greylag in Bloemendaal.

My room is monster of another room. For you I lived,
I will die. I can learn nothing from that distant voice. What I can
even Jesus spoils his soup cup with such a vermicelli smile, and the
alphabet is just a way too when you're in love. Six countries in
Ottomania have butterflies in their stomachs, one country
in Eastern Europe. My poetry is an isolation cell for ancient kings
who hate Gesamtkunstwerken. I locked them up for you.

And you? You suck them, carelessly, one by one, with your
topographic little mouth.

Hello, darling. Chaos is my pony.

A pocket comb to crest the starlets out of her mane.
Your earrings to hang from her tail.

Pressed lips,
for a bouncy kiss from the big pony book.
Want to stuff all your shoes full of fresh hay.

Putting them outside, in the gnarly darkness.
Lurk with you through the keyhole.

Let your eyes take root in mine.
Tomorrow, your hair galloping down your neck, you'll go
to your office unit your shoes smelling of fresh hay
only me and you know about the gnarly darkness.

Hortsik, dotted. Let your earrings ring.

Teens dont shag straight.

They rub against each other like sheepy clouds. .

A guitar tuner on stage
who finishes his drink before the first verse
looking at the audience with such a meaningful stare.

To be honest it all doesn't matter.
There is only love and the lingering butt of respect.

Up in the clouds

My little daughter is upset
because I have to write this poem with HER PEN.

She starts crying. I think: is this
poem worth that pain? Yes.

A poem is the millennial plan of a sensitive soul.
So I say: that pen is ugly.
The rabbit on the pen is an un-rabbit.

She starts hitting me.
But daddy is an experimental poet and not a weendaddy.

If you wanted a weenpappa, you should have been
born in the clouds.

But I don't tell her
I carry an inky black rainbow in my heart
because sometimes you have to protect
children against poetry.

Little poets who do not believe in the muse

You were right. Please save me.

I only write better because I'm so good at tormenting myself.

Me, unparalleled servant of all-encompassing moonshiners
that are assailed to make me small, but they don't understand
I must have been pissing through a needle for ages,
have been pissing through a needle for centuries,

all my love was the appeal
of a long extinct species.

Autumn must play by the rules

Everything screens at itself through leafless streets,
the state shines, is immortal.

Fallen leaves no more false for leave.

You darkly brill through fallen snow.

Death could take a leaf out of you.

Cigar makers have already given up, Hans Vlek wrote.

That was thirty years ago. Back then, love
still smelled of burnt letters. Everything screens
at itself through leafless streets,
the state shines, is immortal.

IF I WIN THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE YOU WILL
GO OFF MY BANGA LIST

Like a golden nettle, I will then stand in a cloud of ash and fallout.
People will say 'he pricked her', no more or less.

My name gurgles in the frailest of dolls' throats.
The grace with which I scrape - the grace of literature itself.

Your cement mouth
will anthologise a forest of great nobbelpeepers,
but my bedroom has earned its canon

and the golden nettle of golden silence shines
through a cloud of ash and fallout.

Autumn must play by the rules

Everything screens at itself through leafless streets,
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through a cloud of ash and fallout.

Euthanasia

I like to have sex with extinct species
and so go to the poetry afternoon.

Wrinkles, wrinkles, to browse through
but even then they see at most
an old cartoon, a bare playing card on a spoke.

You were carded in for the last time today.
Soon the nurse comes with her sweet croissant head
and you'll clatter like one sad primeval bird
through hell-lit corridors, it's all pointless, meaningless

the mill of a bird wobbling and warble-wobbling,
a parlour game dying out in slow motion.

Martijn Benders Day

I am reading a poem about Peter Piper who as far as I am concerned can drop dead because he doesn't read this poem anyway. A woman reacts shocked. She says she wants to learn to understand poetry. I don't believe her bullshit, don't understand what it has to do with Peter Piper. 'If you are try to understand my poem, then you are not Peter Piper,' I try in vain. She looks at me hurt. 'What an asshole for turning everyone into Peter Piper just like that because they don't read his poems.

I am on to her.

Library after library

she scours with predatory pass, looking for understanding.

She is a creature of necessity, just like me.

The invention of the evil genius of poetry afternoons.

She wants to make me a starlet, a necktared starlet.

But there is no talking to me.

I have a huge cosy bird head.

A drop of sweat slowly slides into a concrete mixer.

A drop of sweat glides agonisingly slowly into a concrete mixer.

Hear who knocks there, children.

Friend, don't hammer your poem.

You chase away primeval birds, otherworldly dragonflies.

Don't hammer your words. Be kind to a girl.

And if she wants to sleep with another tomorrow, forget that circus act.

Realise that the world cannot be hoeed away on paper.

Forget that every writer writes the same book over and over again.

I know them all, they eat clouds and poop out clouds.

They are knocking, but not knocking, they must always be knocking.

Goddamn

At the traffic light of death
troll the engines of love.

I am missing something in my life. The state.
A safe death in an overheard grave.

Hear who knocks there, children.

Friend, don't hammer your poem.

You chase away primeval birds, otherworldly dragonflies.

Don't hammer your words. Be kind to a girl.

And if she wants to sleep with another tomorrow, forget that circus act.

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Floor 13

“Death is for a long time. Those who think superficially say that it is forever. In any case, there is a long night of it. There is the forgetfulness and the loss of identity. The mind, even as the body, is unleashed and bursts and scatters. One goes down with death, and it leaves a mark forever.” R.A.Lafferty

The original poems in this chapter were printed at 1 point, creating a book within a book. Those will be reproduced on the end of this chapter for conceptual brevity.

Death takes a long time, especially if you are a shallow person, then it takes almost forever. You forget things and you lose your identity. The soul gets untied and then falls to pieces. Death is bad for you and can forever leave its mark on you.

A lump of flesh weighing at least a thousand kilos fell at Valerie's feet. 'It is always simple to say what human flesh is and what is not,' Valerie said, dipping the lacquered nail of her index finger into the lump of meat and then licking it off.

'Blood type AB. Ok. Who's the joker?'

Insanity is relative.

Insanity depends on who puts who in a cage.

Valerie stood in front of the ramshackle institute.
Someone had once again been careless with years.

Everywhere the smell of burning ducks, and in the square of love were now driving clown mobiles around, powered by smoke.

What is lacking in perfection is not that it repeats itself, but rather that at the first opportunity it stands still and time freezes.

All my life, I wanted to live in an introverted city.

In a curious tale of a diminutive figure, scarcely measuring thirty centimetres in height, beset with a pelt of beer and spiny thorns resembling a porcupine, appeared a nightmarish replica of a shrunk-en donkey. This curious creature, a mad dwarf, inquired after the whereabouts of the Chief Canon, and the presence of Mr Trakl. In response, the individual addressed with the query retorted, suspicious of the dwarf's intentions, "What object do you brandish from your trousers, if it can be regarded as such?" The dwarf, unflinching, replied that it was the canon, fashioned in the form of microfilm with infinitesimal characters inscribed on it. A million names, the dwarf suggested, adorned its surface, having filched it surreptitiously.

Trakl was summoned, despite his pressing obligations, and the dwarf posed the same inquiry, directing his attention to the Chief Canon. "You bear a striking resemblance to your father," remarked the dwarf. Trakl, incredulous, queried whether the dwarf was Herman. "Is that you, Herman? I recognise your voice. I would still recognise him if he was lying on the ground in a thousand pieces. What has happened to you?" The dwarf, identifying himself as Herman, produced the microfilm and presented it to Trakl.

Trakl, and the policemen present, were skeptical of the dwarf's claims, affirming that he could not be Herman. In response, the dwarf beseeched them to peruse the Canon for another name to identify himself. Alas, Trakl remained unconvinced, asserting that the dwarf could not be Herman or anyone else from the Canon. The dwarf, undeterred, replied that he had thought he was Herman but was uncertain.

The dwarf was then queried about his whereabouts in the past 150 years. "On a hamster wheel," he retorted.

When asked if he meant the Canon's hamster wheel, the dwarf responded that it was a different hamster wheel entirely.

The tallest willows I would safeguard
as well as lampposts in murky evening light.

Don't wear out my meagre views
on slime dresses that weigh themselves down
on paper: a stone at their feet and into the plump,
or the river. I like to focus on stars, fluff, see a goosey
life ahead but please don't ruin my field of vision
with bobbing and clenched fists.

Not that blackpicking with death - spare me the lead life song
of shrinking pimps, girls of pleasure. Better bring some snow toes
here and not that eternally white nose of a stamping slogan gnome,
with its third-grade mausoleum arm
eternally splayed up...

To the invisible critics who stiff-arm themselves into my oeuvre.

Picking stones in a penal camp
is more fun than writing poetry.
At least you know your guards.

Knol

There you have Hemmes again,
with his lazy name. Hemmes.

Name lazy
as office dick. It is.

And lazy that he was. Holiday with too much money.
Holiday full of sharia. No way,
Haha, hemmes. Hemwompus.

THE FORK-LIFT TRUCK

Luuk, I want to ride around on your fork-lift truck.
Over the graveyard, Luuk. Over expensive gravel paths.

Crunching
under my rubber wheels
lie the dead in Jugendstil,
like a grappling arm at the fun fair
I lift their heavy garlands of flowers
into the sunbeams.

With my pin in the sky
I go driving, driving in circles, with my yellow trolley
Over expensive gravel paths, Luuk, over which
people walk like they're eggshells.

Eggshells, Luuk.
The cross the cheese.
The death, unclotted butter.

Regarding the little boy who fucked a seashell

There was once a little boy who befriended a beautiful seashell he called 'Shell'. Shell was an extremely beautiful shell. Big, white, and with an angelic noise. The little boy was actually an adult dentist, who had hung up his practice. His name was 'Olivier' and he was a gambling addict. He liked soft heads that were full of money. He hated cavities so he was utterly delighted with this flawless Shell. [His whole being rustled in the pointy holes and sometimes he would call a complete stranger to share the angelic murmur. But then it struck him again and again how such a phone was full of holes.

A hundred times paddling in one rain puddle

A hundred times paddling in one rain puddle
With you and your feet and your toes and your hand.

We both don't know anything about anything
but we say we love each other.

A hundred times paddling in one rain puddle
you and me and our

lidded toes, splattered toes, perfect
like rain that no longer needs to rain,

Have you ever wondered
how perfect rain is that no longer
needs to rain so much?

Crescent Pyramid of Stonewall English

'The nonchalant Benders' - NRC

'Benders is the language devil' -Arie

van den Berg, NRC 'A promising poet,

in possession of a cornucopia' - Rob Schou

ten, Awater 'Martijn Benders has something few

poets have: guts' - Erik Lindner, De Groene 'Which

superlative shall we put on the cover of the second edition?

Just pick one. This collection is dazzling in every way' - Edwin

Fagel, De Recensent 'Boog does it well. Benders does it better. More

sparkling. More vital' - Olaf Risee, Letterland 'Benders can proudly put the

epitetha I stuck on Borges on his own poetry' - Jo Willems, Culture Palace. 'I

keep wanting to write something about it on my own blog, but I just can't seem to

find the right angle!' Samuel Vriezen, Vriezen Finds 'His own poems sometimes

read like very good translations of English poems' - Ingmar Heytze 'You're a fok-

king good poet, Martijn' - Ton van 't Hof

The sock

Night after night, the sock speaks in its proppy little voice saying: 'hello we're going to outlive everyone!'

I know that inside is a talking skull. I want to kick it.

The most dog-eared poem ever written

All I want is to turn you
into crooked people, swishers.
Because the sky is mine.
All my poems territory drift.

Those with the right inclination
understands this poem is full of pi's.

The sock

Night after night, the sock speaks in its proppy little voice saying: 'hello we're going to outlive everyone!'

I know that inside is a talking skull. I want to kick it.

Death is called Charles or Frank

If I had been a waterfall I would never have wanted to be called Karl or Frank because that is what Death is called in this neck of the woods. And in this neck of the woods we don't know death, we only know The Sandman walking around with a pig-nosed pistol which, as far as we know, he has never fired. You can hear him coming from afar with his tinkling spurs. The Sandman looks like Lee Van Cleef with a gnome hat. There are eight deadly poppycock moons hanging over the forest and as he walks by, eight shadows creep in front of him that we call the octopus arms of sleep. The last thing you see is always the pink glow of the pig-nosed pistol he has never fired.

You never had a rope around your neck. Well, I'm going to tell you something. When that rope starts to pull tight, you can feel the Devil bite your ass. Nor do I believe in the Devil as a waterfall. A waterfall has the clouds as its ass, far behind it, the endless clouds. And who is ambitious enough these days to bite the clouds?

No, who says I am not a waterfall but an old man and that it is death that tinkles with bells and that there are no eight deadly poppie moons shining in this neck of the woods: who are you to tell a waterfall what belongs or does not belong? The eight octopus arms of sleep are doing their job properly, but it's that pink glow from the pig's nose gun that's breaks you up, Frank, Charles. And we all know that ammunition is scarce in this neck of the woods. There are two kinds of spurs, my friend. Those that come in by the door; those that come in by the window.

Since all cells in the human body refresh themselves every seven years, you only need to sustain a relationship for seven years to completely automatically cheat your own partner. Poetry is a kind of cheating with language. Words that seemed reliable suddenly turn out to be exciting. Such words are not always appreciated.

It sometimes baffles me to be the only human being
who has to write in eitalia
in order to still be lyrical.

Lyricism and intercourse share some core values. The penis is usually more lyrical than the cunt. A hallmark of lyricism is that a not very complicated movement can, will lead, indeed must lead.

O longsuffering, snicker not behind my back,
I cannot untie you to love, when I see you
I get the galaxy in my march, Marie.

Understandable people tend to understandable sex. Understandable poetry tends to appeal to understandable readers. To make an intelligible reader to become lyrical, a writer must exploit unusual openings, so that the reader suddenly finds themselves faces a hostile takeover and is forced into lyricism.

There was once a dentist who took his work home with him. Every time he had an orgasm he pulled a tooth at the same time out of love. His wife rarely laughed. When she did laugh you couldn't even hear the wind whistling and you knew that this relationship was not long-lived. Cheating is lyrical at first and mostly anecdotal in retrospect. Centralise me, O my love

The geranium

I threw her through the window at the bulky dirt
and she looked disfigured and shabby, foolish
and trusting, like a sick poodle.
Or a wizened aster late in September.
I took her back inside.
For another try -
vitamins, water, and whatever
hopeful nutritious substances,
So long on gin, bobbie pins, half-smoked cigars, dead beer,
Her shriveled petals falling
On the faded carpet, the stale
steak grease stuck to her fuzzy leaves.
(Dried-out, she creaked like a tulip.)

What she had to endure already!
The dumb dames shrieking half the night
Or the two of us, alone, both seedy,
Me breathing booze at her,
She leaning out of her pot toward the window.

Towards the end, she almost seemed to hear me -
that was frightening - so when
that snuffling cretin of a maid
tipped her into the bin with pot and all
I said nothing.

But so lonely was I
that I fired that shameless shrew a week later.

Theodore Roethke, translated back and forth through Dutch.

Telephoning with Escher II

Telephoning with Escher. Hello. Telephoning with Escher.

Maurice speaking. Hi Maurice. I want to die.

Telephone Escher, hello.

Maurice speaking. I was good with birds.

It's Maurice. Hello? Telephone Escher.

Telephone Escher, hello?

“She was beautiful all right, beautiful in a way that was at once seductive, demonic, and raspberry - Stanislaw Lem

Wintersleep

*Sleepwalkers don't sing songs,
and third couplets are for dongs, but still
never had anyone else - De Vries*

Two sleepwalkers challenge each other to a duel. Choose your weapon, says one. But the other says nothing and starts to moonwalk. One is leftist, the other extreme leftist. Two far-left sleepwalkers crack a doll. And with arms outstretched the living corpse of my childhood comes up the stairs, my first introduction to literature.

The other, Master van Zoeten, lies rooting in his sleep as his fishies died, his feet fell into a hibernation.

There is much in this world you can arm yourself with.
The love, the fear, the sheepishness.

But that one freshwater white humvis of Saturday literature
Master van Zoeten does not polish his visor for that.

Someone should write a poem about the demise of the duel
and how you used to want to face death wearing white gloves
just so everything wouldn't have a name.

Someone threw a phosphorus bomb into the aquarium
to be able to read small print rooting like sinners and bad poems.

Hylomorphism

Mindful of politics, let us point out the parasitic role of metaphor even within poetry. Lyricism is swagger. If a text contains enough swagger, if a person contains enough swagger - he gets away with everything. He starts using metaphors. The addiction to metaphors indicates a need to waste language.

Your language. my language. everyone's language.

The days when poets define what poetry is are far behind us in the Metaforum. A rose-burdoned rose. Comma, said the girl with the sulphur sticks.

Peter Jackson is a film director who started out filming zombies but soon switched to gnomes when he noticed that our society highly valued that. For over two decades he filmed gnomes, and the interaction of gnomes with other dumb creatures, but the zombies never really went away. Peter, after about ten years, had had enough of filming gnomes all the time, but everyone kept loving his gnomes, and in the last episode Peter got all *hyperderrida* and everyone turned out to be a zombie gnome who hacked at each other and whoopee, there were the eagles, the mighty eagles who came to the rescue.

Is Peter Jackson a metaphor for this book ? No...

I have not yet managed to invent a way to endow my language with mighty wings that at the last minute and without lyricism put Aristotle to shame. Enter the most beautiful gnome font here:

Serial fucker

I am a serial fucker, which means I don't fuck women all at once but in an order that makes sense to myself and to myself only. This is always accompanied by intervals, which are sometimes so immense that I suffer from loneliness and then I think: it's a good thing I am a serial fucker, otherwise it would be even worse. To be considered a serial fucker, you have to have had at least three women, and not all at once.

Never have I faced the darkness of a wrong order. I have them in a row. They hunt me, and I like that, so I tend to leave clues with every woman. Once, for instance, I used a toothbrush, which I hid in the chimney. You have to be hugely into Dickens to make cheese out of that, but the serial fuck is really only bearable if it is accompanied by a bildung ideal.

And so I, the hunter, raise my hunters. And I am prey to intervals, which, as I get older, become longer and longer longer, until people will say: he no longer exists. He has fucked his last woman, left his last clue. I then think of a grand finale, that this time, for example, it turns out to be a man, or that I sit quietly waiting behind a bowl of flowers that haven't had water for exactly 923 minutes.

Take this longing off my tongue.
I have nothing more to say, honnepon.
Let your little sheet torment you
like you would do
for someone who could write.

Mondriaan plays Pacman (and cheats)

Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Banana. Ghost.
Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Banana. Ghost.
Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Banana. Ghost.
Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Banana. Ghost.

Strawberry. Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Ghost.
Strawberry. Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Ghost.
Strawberry. Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Ghost.
Strawberry. Strawberry. Strawberry. Banana. Spook.

Spook.Spook.Spook. Banana. Banana.

Spookje.Spookje.Spookje. Banana. Banana.
Spookje.Spookje.Spookje. Banana. Banana.
Spookje.Spookje.Spookje. Banana. Banana.
Spookje.Spookje.Spookjes.Banaan. Banana.

Mr Snail crawled into his little house
stuffing it with all his horns
as he swallowed his poppy eyes,
because he was sick of it all.

Mrs Snail went to her little house
and on her two little horns grew two little golden gloves
(on the other two bells of dew).
She rings them when it should be quiet.

The child snail sleeps
with her little horns so frail
in a shelly house oh so mangy,
slapping snores on kale leaf.

Mondriaan plays three in a row against Pollock

Yellow disc. Red disc. Yellow disc. Drop.
Bloody hell. Yellow disc. Red disc. Red disc.
Drip.

(In reality, Jack would walk like a stoned ape through the curtained world with his huge drip candle, Piet's world of curtains)
You Dutch are pretty fond of your curtains aren't you?

After Jack the Dropper has lit all of Piet's primary curtains he walks into one of the burning glass living rooms with his dripping candle and, to Piet's dismay, he drips the whole floor full of colourful starlets, screaming 'love is blind' all over again with each star, Americans, never been good at other people's games and how do you explain to a fried American with a dripping candle the ideology of glass curtains?

Greywashed

The warm mud of mortality
and you totally senseless in the middle of it.

As fog can erase the world
your smoky eyes will brood

like two starving mothercloaks
henning into the squalor of my soul.

The end of the search engine era

Googling yourself is terribly boring.

You are either barely findable, or, if you have a unique name, way too findable again. The internet never actually has anything interesting to say about you. It is depressing.

You used to have a lot of companies called AAAAAAAAAAAAA works. Then you were at the front of the phone book. But it is pointless to call your son AAAAAAAAAAAAAAnton.

You're only at the top if you look for it. And you want to be at the top precisely when you are not looking for it. After all, that's what about in life. I want to be on top with someone without her looking for me. Is that too much to ask?

Searching is restless. And it just doesn't help to have a name.

For a while, I thought it did.

For a while, I believed in that demonic card cabinet.

Once upon a time, there was a phone

Once upon a time, there was a telephone that only called itself.
For this reason, it soon became known as ‘the self-dialing phone’.

Other phones sometimes jokingly called it ‘the thinking phone’.
They should have known.
One panting call after another.

But to think is to stalk oneself, and that is why
silence plays a prominent role in almost all philosophy.

Beautiful

A sheep is beautiful.

A sheep is very beautiful.

A sheep also wants to be beautiful.

I think that is
the woolly difference
with clouds, which spend all day

in the havy sunlight
snuffing thought.

‘The heart is a little ball,
a little ball, a little ball. The heart
is a little ball that bears, sir’

Still life with criticism

A herd of elderly people, a snail trail.
Prakken with Piet. Prakken with the critique Piet.

the billiards avant-garde
the cycling avant-garde
the bingo avantgarde

Nappies, nappies. A canon of nappies.
Hullet. Goethe in a nappy.

The icy tile floor
one big yellow jumper.

Conversation with God

I say to God
there is so much terrible poetry
you do nothing at all about it.

I say
should I discuss poetry
with the architect of the toothache?

Discuss poetry
with regional celebrities
around the village pump,
rolled-up angel socks?

God says nothing back.
He stands on an overpass with a mirror egg as his head.

Martinus, can't you write a verse for me?

No, Martinus doesn't do that.

Martinus only writes world poetry for top experts.

Exquisite people who suck unbelievable points.

And I don't even know you.

Tell me your real name first.

The name is the ass of the identity.

You have a first name and a last name and a slit between them.

And every day a different monster looks through that slit.

On Monday a dirtcup, on Tuesday a toupee.

Wednesday a snoelmokker, Thursday a sockhokker.

Friday a ripple knot, Saturday a zombelwroet,

and only on Sundays the Great Oless Monster.

Only such a Sunday monster

writes bedtime poetry, like me.

The rest rhyme like old alarm clocks

predating even the snooze.

Rotten stars

We both have bones
and the story of our love
in the marrow. Blocking
each other's light no matter
how hard we try, deep inside

the fear of chattering bones,
those endlessly nodding bones,

Death shaking itself out
like a deck of cards
or a dog,

if you only live long enough,
I only think of you hard enough.

A booking slawdog.

Poetry and Cartoon Snow

The crescent of Mickey, no! Whore.
Poetry and cartoon snow. Now!

Blow. Cramps. Blood. Bang.
Shit you do in type balloons: talk.

Shit you do in talk balloons: snow.

I wanted to be that angel
televisions snow for.

#Dear Ronny,

I am writing to you while I am actually in the middle of a poem to Hellen. What there was for her about your body I should never have wanted to forget. It was as if there was a black fleshy hole between us, labelled 'I am not myself'.

In the end, there is no reason to imagine us a Hellen. Very little I have in common with Jack Spicer. But we have both a slaughterhouse where dwarves impaled on question marks smile from ear to ear, like Black Pete.

'It's hard to distinguish in hell between one human and another,' Jack said. But it is different with dwarves.

Another mechanical still life from the great factory of silence

The Robocop of Silence

is a cordon around his own work,
worth a book of explanations. Dangerous explanations.

There is

controlled sun in the sky for five minutes and 22 seconds.

There must be more extinction.

Cut yourself out for life

and yet know how to walk beside your shoes
to get to the essence: mastery. Ribbons.

That one thoroughbred band between the ploughed potatoes.

The Beauty of Heads

Some heads are mighty doors,
where wind whispers through every crevice.
Others, like miserable hovels,
boil liver and dog bones.

Some are lifeless, locked, and keyed,
while others are turrets where the soul commutes.
There are heads of silver, heads of gold,
and some remain unseen, shrouded in mystery.

But once, long ago, I knew a simple hut,
humble in every way, full of holes and cracks.
Through its windows, I smelled spring
long before it awoke.

And all the towers and doors of the world
could not match that finely crafted
leaky hut full of holes and cracks
through which sunlight ran rampant.

Poverty

A café where you can't smoke.

A train with pee bags.

An asshole with a cleat song on TV.

A chatty party with hip-birded elderly people.

A couple who, before dinner

ten minutes before dinner.

before dinner.

The drizzle

you cannot wake up from

because dreams are too grainy

to renounce.

Poetry is the form of government ghosts prefer.

“...yet another shop full of moths and champagne.”
[The Rev Harold Cod, English Shopping Guide]

Fonts should be forced to wear gloves.

There is a spiral staircase in the universe that opens into a tiny nest
within each candle flame.

“She believed that evil could not spring from good, but there existed
a murderer who dwarfed in loveliness patience and love for every man
she had ever known.”
[Zane Grey, Riders of the Purple Sage]

Fallen poems

All my milky prayers
will become fallen poems.

Fallen poems
that could tolerate
even flowers.

Herz

The mother called to her son, calling from afar
the mother called to her own son, calling from far away
She ran to the front of the house and called there
and unbuttoned her heavy bun of hair
A black flag fluttered in the wind.
She knotted the slender stars with her fingers.
a moonbeam across her face
And so she called to her beloved son
as she once called to her little child
she stood outside the house and spoke to the wind
Talking to the songbirds
The love cries of the wild geese
shouted through the wind-whipped reeds.

To the glowing fields of wild potatoes
To the saddled, huddled bulls
Under the velvet tree, the shadow of a well
she shouted to the leaping fish
to the surging rings of water -
Silence! Silence, you birds and branches!
Silence, for I am calling
Be quiet, I will speak now
Silence, sighing earth
Trembling fins, parasols of leaves.
Silence, deep hum of sap
gossipy talk oozing from atomic depths
brittle stomachs, chesty herds
Be silent, for here I call
I call to my own son!

The mother called to her own son
the cry rose, spinning
in the vortex of the universe
its blade glittering in the light
like the scales of a spinning fish
like saltpetre in the mines, iron on the road -
so the mother called to her own son:
come back, my dear son, come back
I call you, it is I, your own mother!
I call you, I, the bed of your stream!
I call you, I, your fountain, your spring!
I call upon you, the teat of your memory!
I call upon you, your tattered tent,
come back, my son, come back
I call you, I, your molten light!

Come back, my son, I keep hitting everything.
Scars and bags under my eyes, above my eyebrow
my calves, my thighs -
Things attack me, banging like three-pronged rams
The garden post, the chairs, the fence,
doors slam into me like drunks on a Saturday night
the light is broken, the switch is on
blood crawling through my skin like stoned birds
Scissors flail like metal crabs
matches jump like sparrows, the handle of the bucket
of the bucket is made of air
come back, my dear son, come back
I can no longer run like a young mother
My legs are ripe with wind

gnarled purple roots grow in my thighs
my toes swell with lime
my fingers stiffen, my flesh hard as a shell
like a snail's shell, a hardened slate
my branches are sickly, dry and quick to break -
come back, my son, come back.
I am enchanted,
wild, full of visions
they burst from my rotting glands
like a rooster on a winter's morning
pecking at frozen clothes on a fence.

I call to you, your own mother
Come back, my son, come back
tell me what all this means
bring it under control, tame the blade
summon the stubborn comb
for I am but two sandy eyes
Bubbles of light: like a dragonfly
which, as you well know, my child
has crystal apples on its skull.
I am two huge faceless eyes
and their sight is not of this world,
come back, my son, come back
and breathe life back into everything.

The boy listened
shook his head
with nostrils as big as buckets
He sniffed, his veined ears pricked at the sound
of the shouting voice, his body stiffened
as if he heard the footsteps of a hunter
or saw a plume of smoke in the forest as
the smoky blue forest wept
for its own fire, he turned his head
and heard the familiar voice calling
and suddenly he would freeze with fear -
saw that his body was covered with fur
that he had two cloven hooves
and stared at his fern-like skin
and the hairy apples on his knees
kneeling among the bright lilies.

He galloped towards a pool,
his chest ploughing through the ferns,
swirling flakes of foam to the ground;
his four black hooves
trampled all the flowers to death
and a little salamander lay
with its neck broken.
He hovered over the pool
staring into the moonlit water -
a beech tree with the moon in its hair
trembles - the pool shows a stag!

He rams his antlers into a tree
his neck full of ropey veins
roaring and with taut nerves
he tries to shout back
but only the call of a stag
his mother hears in the echo -
then he blows, blows the water monster away
blows, and in the swirl of his breath
in the liquid mist of the night
tiny leafy fish swim around
that now shoot apart, with diamond eyes

And now the son calls back
he roared with his head in his neck
the son calls back with his deer voice
trotting through the wild mist -
Mother, Mother
I cannot come back
Mother, Mother
don't call me, please
my nurse, my nurturer
my splendid spring froth
my roof under which I grew
Tent that protected me from the frost
Mother, my mother
Don't ask me to come
Mother, my mother
My only silky flower
My golden bird
Mother, mother.

I would come back
I would impale you on my antlers
dragging your old body along the ground
I would crush your breasts with my hooves
My horns would pierce you, I would bite you
I would kick your body parts
when I came back,
Mother, Mother
I would rip the soul out of your body
Humming flies would cling to it
The stars would stare in shame
At the soft lily of your slit
That once offered me such tender warmth
with its oil glow
Warmth as the breathing beast
ever gave to Jesus, you must
do not call me mother, my mother
you would petrify
you would die
if you saw your son coming

Each branch of my antlers
is a coil of golden rings
Every twig of every branch
is a bundle of burning candles
Every razor sharp point
is a beautiful candle of death
every lacy leaf of my antlers
is a golden altar cloth.
Believe me, you would die
if my floundering antlers
covered the sky
as on All Souls' Day
the graveyard is lit
with candles, leaf by leaf.
My head is a fossilized tree.
Mother, Mother
if I were to find you
you would burn to a black stump.

I would fire you up
like an old rag, mother.
Mother, Mother,
don't call me -
If I came back
I'd eat you up
and smash the house
with my thousand horns.
I cut the flowerbeds to shreds.
I'll tear up the trees
with my deer teeth.
I drink the well empty
in one gulp -
when I come back
I set fire to the house
and galloped away
to the graveyard
and there with my fine nose
dig up my father
rip the lid off his coffin with my teeth -
I would splinter his bones!
Mother, Mother
don't call me back
I cannot go back
If I went back
I would kill you.

So the boy cried with the voice of a deer.
and his mother said to him
Come back, come back, my son
I call you, I am your own mother
Come back, my son, come back
I make you sauerkraut soup, you can put onion rings in it
crunching between your teeth like stones between a giant's jaws
I give you warm milk in a clean glass
In my cellar a nest of fire-bellied frogs
In my cellar shines a giant green toad.
I will pour soft wine in giraffe-necked bottles
and with my stone fists I will knead bread - for I know
how to make such a small, frothy mik
with these Sunday pinches. Come back
Come back, my son, I have plucked bundles of feathers
from squawking geese for your feather bed
white fat dripping from their wounds
I laid your straw mattress out in the sun, shaken it out.
the swept yard awaits you, the table is set.

Aiiii mother, mother
I can't come back.
Don't give me your milk, your Sunday sips
Or your sweet goat's milk in a flowered glass.
Don't make my bed bouncy and soft
And leave the geese alone, will you -
Throw away the wine, pour it over my father's grave
and just weave these onion rings into a wreath.
Warm milk would be like vinegar in my mouth
A stone would crush the bread,
the wine in my glass would turn to blood
and every bedspring into a flame
the small chalice, a lily-blue sword
aiiii mother, aiiii, aiiii mother
I cannot return to my birthplace
Only the green forest can contain me,
the house is too small for my huge furry antlers
the yard no place for my horns
The trembling world tree of my branching antlers
with the stars on its branches, the Milky Way as its moss
I can only eat sweet smelling grass
the tender young grass is now my food
I can no longer drink from a flowered glass
only from a pool, a clean, clear pool!

I don't understand your strange words, my son.
you speak with the voice of a deer, the soul of a deer
runs through you, my poor boy.
When the turtledove cries, it cries.
When the little bird calls, it calls, my son.
Why am I the misfortune of creation?
Remember me, remember your little mother, my son?
I don't understand your pitiful crying, my son.
Don't you remember how happy you ran home
with your school report in your hand
cutting up frogs and sticking their guts on the garden fence
lost in aeroplane books and helping me with the laundry?
You were in love with Irene B.
and H.S., the artist, was your best friend, his beard
like a bunch of wild orchids. Don't you remember
how happy you were when your father
came home sober?

Aiii mother, don't do this to me. My darling, my friend.
They swam away from me, cold as fish.
That painter with his poppy voice, who knows
Where has he gone, mother, where is my childhood?
Do not speak of my father, wilting flowers
grow from his sandy flesh, he raps his yellow bones together
and waddles out of his grave, his hair, his nails
grow again as if it were spring. Aiiii, aiii.
Old William came, the coffin-maker, a doll-faced bantam.
He said, 'I'll take you by the feet, we'll put you neatly in the coffin.
But I was choking with fear, I had just come from Pest.
you used to go there too, by train... a death digger, the rails
were in knots. Aiii, I would cut myself to pieces
while the candle puddles cast shadows on your face.
Latzi, our new brother-in-law, the barber, shaved you.
The candles drooled like babies. Their insides
melted outwards, the glistening intestines,
the nerves open and exposed.

The choral society stood there with purple hoods
bellowing at your death like cattle and I touched
your forehead. Your hair was alive
I heard it growing, I saw the stubble
coming up on your chin and the next morning
your chin was pitch black, and the next day it was
prickly like a viper's ox tongue,
a slice of hairy melon, a yellow centipede
with the skin of a blue cabbage. Aiiii
I thought it would overrun the room
the courtyard, the whole world
your beard and hair, and the stars
humming in it like vermin.
Aiii, aiii. In the thick green rain
whinnied the red mares that twitched with fear
one kicked at your head, the other pissed helplessly
her purple cunt flapping like a hanged man's tongue.

The coachman cursed, the rain washed away the blaring
of the brass band, your mates stood sobbing,
blowing their noses. They stood and blew their noses
on the coffered wall of the chapel
blowing away the thick dust of desolation
with their hard, round, glistening horns;
a tune crept into the emptiness of rotting corpses
of petrified loves, mouldy old women
the mildewed militia of grandfathers.
Easter bells like saviors with fading wings,
marines stiff with salutes. They blew
chewing gum with pink teeth, the friends
with black, swollen liver lips, and you
you walked in front of them: That's it, boys! Fantastic!
Aiiii, don't stop playing - on your crossed hands
were two golden spiders, pulling silver threads
from your heart. The shoes in the cupboard
waiting for a suitable heir, your callous breadcrumb feet
seemed childishly small in those ridiculous white socks,
and your friends blushed in the swaying rain, the trumpets
hiccupped like steel Adam's apples, like the claws of a bird reptile,
like the teeth of Megalodon, brass glistened in the dark afternoon.

Aiiiii, mother, mother, don't talk about my father.
Leave him alone. His eyes stared out of the ground like buds.

The mother called to her own son
from far away,
Come back, my son, come back.
Come away from this stone world.
The iron bridges and tramlines, they long for your blood
they strike at you a hundred times a day, you never strike back.

I call to you, your blood mother
Come back my son, come back.

There he stood on the ridge of all time.
There he stood on the highest mountain known to creation.

There he stood at the Gate of Secrets -
The tips of his antlers played with the stars.

And with his deer voice he called, called
back to his mother who bore him -
Mother, Mother, I cannot go back.
I die three billion deaths every day
every trunk of my antlers is a double colonnade
every branch of my antlers is a high-tension wire
my eyes are freighter harbours, my veins filthy cables
my teeth iron bridges, my heart a roaring sea of monsters
every vertebra a flourishing city, my spleen a tuff barge
every cell a huge factory, every atom a solar system.

My testicles are the sun and the moon, the galaxy
is the marrow of my back. Every point in space a grain of my body.
Each galaxy a drop of my brain.

Son, my lost son, I still want you back.
Your mother's eyes, these dragonfly eyes, will not rest
rest until you come home.

For dying I come back, only for dying.
Just for death, mother, just for death.

And then you can lay me in my childhood home
and wash my body with your shriveled hands
and close my eyes with your swollen glands.
And when all the flesh falls from me,
and the stench will smell sweet for the flowers

I will become a foetus drinking your blood
then I will be your little boy again -
and that will only hurt you, mother
aiii, it will only hurt you.

Books of Martijn Benders:

Tract of the Sun

The podcast 'De Nieuwe Contrabas' features *Traktaat van de Zon*, a leaden, 712-page collected work. Chrétien Breukers and Hans van Willigenburg are surprised that this remarkable poet is not mentioned anywhere. The design of *Traktaat van de Zon* was inspired by the work of Swans, an experimental music group of which Benders is a loyal fan.

What the Piranha dreams about in the Lemonade Ditch

A 420-page philosophical book about fantasy, magic and the brainwashing techniques of modern society. According to Benders, what we call 'modern man' is a spawn of dark powers, who manage and control a huge bio-farm of humans. Through drugs and chemicals, this entity created a docile population that cannot concentrate and thus cannot think or read, and is barely able to formulate a coherent sequence of thoughts in succession. Through a meteoric devolution caused, among other things, by poor nutrition and manipulated receptors, a dystopia took shape that fantasy cannot escape. The book contains a number of hypotheses that are unique: for instance, the philosopher Heraclitus is said to have written not a philosophical work but 'the world's first trip report' on the Fly agaric, and Benders also has a hypothesis that it was a precursor of the fly agaric that caused fish to live on land through the Repetitive Movement Syndrome.