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New York & more...



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Poems by **Pavol Janik**, a virtuososo of Slovak Literature

(translated by James Sutherland Smith)

NEW YORK

In a horizontal mirror
of the straightened bay
the points of an angular city
stabbing directly into the starry sky.

In the glittering sea of lamps
flirtatious flitting boats
tremble marvellously
on your agitated legs
swimming in the lower deck
of a brocade evening dress.

Suddenly we are missing persons
like needles in a labyrinth of tinfoil.

Some things we take personally –
stretch limousines,
moulting squirrels in Central Park
and the metal body of dead freedom.

In New York most of all it's getting dark.

The glittering darkness lights up.

The thousand-armed lustre of the mega city
writes Einstein's message about the speed of light
every evening on the gleaming surface of the water.

And again before the dusk the silver screen
of the New York sky floods
with hectoliters of Hollywood blood.

Where does the empire of glass and marble reach?
Where do the slim rackets of the skyscrapers aim?

God buys a hot dog
at the bottom of a sixty-storey street.

God is a black
and loves the grey colour of concrete.

His son was born from himself
in a paper box
from the newest sort of slave.

**New York has been translated to 21 languages*

UNSENT TELEGRAM

Inside me a little bit of
a blue Christmas begins.
In the hotel room it's snowing
a misty scent – of your
endlessly distant perfume.
We're declining bodily
while in us the price
of night calls rises,
waves of private earth tremors
and the limits of an ocean of blood
on the curve of a lonely coast.

A DICTIONARY OF FOREIGN DREAMS

At the beginning it was like a dream.
She said:
"Have at least one dream with me.
You'll see – it'll be a dream
which you've never dreamt about before."

Descend deeper with me,
dream from the back,
dream retrospectively
in a labyrinth of mirrors
which leads nowhere.

The moment you come to the beginning of nothing
you'll dream an exciting dream.

Frame it
and hang it in your bedroom.

So it will always be before your eyes
because a dream which is removed from the eye
is removed from the mind
in the sense
of the ancient laws
of human forgetfulness.

Dream your own.

Dream your dream
which is reflected on the surface
of a frozen lake.
A dream smooth and freezing:

Grieving keys,
a downcast forest,
curved glass.
The tributes of mirrors.

The rising of the moon
in a dream of water.

Recoil from the bottom
of the mirror's dream.

In the gallery of dreams
then you'll see
a live broadcast from childhood
fragments of long-forgotten stories.

Because our obsolete dreams
remain with us.

Don't be in a hurry, dream slowly, completely
until you see the crystalline construction
of your soul
in which dreams glitter.
- intentionally and comprehensibly like flame.

Perhaps you've already noticed
that new dreams always decrease.
They wane.

Soon we'll light up
in the magical dusk
of the last dream
the despairing cry
of a starry night.

Pay a toll to the dream's
deliverance from sense.

You repeat aloud
the intimacies of secret dreams,
with the dull gleam
of your persistent night eyes
you explicate a mysterious speech of darkness.

You dream, therefore you exist!

*All these poems are excerpted from his book, *A Dictionary Of Foreign Dreams**

Mgr. art. Pavol Janik, PhD., (magister artis et philosophiae doctor) was born in 1956 in Bratislava, where he also studied film and television dramaturgy and scriptwriting at the Drama Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (VSMU). He has worked at the Ministry of Culture (1983–1987), in the media and in advertising. President of the Slovak Writers' Society (2003–2007), Secretary-General of the SWS (1998–2003, 2007–2013), Editor-in-Chief of the literary weekly of the SWS Literarny tyzdennik (2010–2013). Honorary Member of





the Union of Czech Writers (from 2000), Member of the Editorial Board of the weekly of the UCW Obrys-Kmen (2004–2014), Member of the Editorial Board of the weekly of the UCW Literatura – Umeni – Kultura (from 2014). Member of the Writers Club International (from 2004). Member of the Poetas del Mundo (from 2015). Member of the World Poets Society (from 2016). Director of the Writers Capital International Foundation for Slovakia and the Czech Republic (2016–2017). Chief Representative of the World Nation Writers' Union in Slovakia (from 2016). Ambassador of the Worldwide Peace Organization (Organizacion Para la Paz Mundial) in Slovakia (from 2018). Member of the Board of the International Writers Association (IWA BOGDANI) (from 2019). He has received a number of awards for his literary and advertising work both in his own country and abroad.

Pavol Janik's literary works have been published not only in Slovakia, but also in Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, South Korea, Spain, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, the United States of America and Venezuela.

James Smith Sutherland is a writer, critic, poet and translator.

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