

# New York & more...

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Poems by **Pavol Janik**, a virtusoso 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.*

