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## Janik's New York

Pavol Janik, 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 (1983-87), in the media and in advertising. President of the Slovak Writers' Society (2003-07) and the Secretary-General of the SWS (1998-2003, 2007 - ). He has received a number of awards for his literary and advertising work both in his own country and abroad. The below poem was originally published in the Indian literary review, Kritya.

### 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 luster 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 hectolitres 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 color of concrete.

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

(Original Slovak translated by James Sutherland Smith)