

FAREWELL TO BOHEMIA

we stay in the city
where the sea is
rivers are our streets
and the red poppies
burn out like lanterns in the dark

in borrowed shoes
and a dress that cost a few lats
(the string of pearls isn't real either)
she radiates a wonderful elegance
we meet often
in the city's darkness

her mouth gets bitter
from the cheap cigarettes
there's still a bit of wine
in the little plastic glass

in the morning
she, stunned by the night
goes away
the one I'll never meet
again

I don't want to sit
on that old daybed anymore
which has been touched by so many
unknown backs
every curve
like a fingerprint
gropes me shamelessly

on full-moon nights
I'll transform into a werewolf anyway
I'll tear greedily at a man's cool skin
I'll bite into his throat and howl

we children of the city
have been born evil
we're short of space
we have too little of ourselves
and the nights tear us to pieces
in the mornings we wander blindly
along the city's empty streets
and pretend that we see the sun

TWO PRIMARY COLOURS

all my most sensual sensations
have been put to sleep
sewn into an antique sofa with golden threads
it's so comfortable to lean my head here
there's sand from the sea in the cracks of the wooden floor
only cold water runs in the golden bath
there aren't even newspapers to replace the curtains
my neighbours in the house opposite
act out tragedies worthy of Mexican *telenovelas*
my imaginary world
is so primitive I'm disgusted by it
because you see through me just the same
alone I fight the darkness
the strange noise in my ears
life makes me harsh
there are only two primary colours –
burning fire and coal

he takes the woman away
into the darkness of night
and promises happiness
(the way this sounds makes even the most sceptical
want to believe)
light pours from the warm bodies
eyes flash like lightbulbs
when they catch the taste of the forbidden
bittersweet and strong

in the morning the kids still call their mom
and everything starts again from the beginning
we have to get up, get dressed, eat breakfast
walk to the tram
ride to work
there are so MANY
kilometres, unfamiliar faces, held-back words
unspoken doubts, lies and morals
between us

every night there's ice in her bed
through a thin layer of snow you can just
make out a man's face
we're only accidental passengers
on the way to the great NOTHING

*quiet your soul
calm down your conscience
the ice will soon be melted*

I am open
all the systems
that confirm I'm alive
are working well
my body's warm like a down quilt
and there's always someone in the room
Kuldigas Street smiles at me
Hamana Street grins
dogs and cats run riot out of joy
only old Antonina
sits in her place every day
and observes us
she dreams about her grandson in St. Petersburg
the one who left long ago
when she died
someone took the old chair
pulled a dark curtain in front of the window
swept the porch
now only her slightly crazy son
listens to the radio alone in the room
tries to make something out in the dark
chops firewood
and falls asleep

at first there was tenderness
milk-white light and no pain
just dazzling snow
which melted when it touched skin
we flow and peace carries me
grandmother is warmly tucked in
the cat is purring by my feet
I haven't slept for so many nights, but it means nothing
the cups have been washed
put on the kitchen shelf in pairs
let's go wash our little hands
let's find a buddy
let's pick up our toys
let's play nicely on the swing
it's OK, don't cry
dad will be home soon

the fog is so thick
that I can practically smell it
eyes look down from the sky
my kid is waiting for permission to come in
will the fog disappear
forever?

married women don't cry
they're lucky
at least there's someone beside them
and the ring on their finger is made of gold
married women don't complain
it's harder for others
others don't have their documents organized
others have no one to send text messages to
no one to buy tobacco or sweet snacks for

married women carry heavy grocery bags
married women do laundry for four people
married women go in the shower last
when the water's already cold

this winter we'll still manage somehow
the cat will warm us up
the children will sing
my aunt will bring last year's apples and potatoes
and pies too
this winter we'll still manage somehow
we'll squeeze closer together
and hang blankets over the windows
waiting for the sun to arrive

it'll be OK
he'll stop crying
he'll loosen his clenched fists
his nose will be wiped
his diaper will be changed
go Mama
hurry to work

ordinary people
in labourers' outfits
smoke their morning cigarettes
unusual women
with imagined refinement
drink coffee while walking down the street

now I'm married
I have to go to work
I'll see my children in the evening
I can manage everything
it's OK
maybe tonight
he won't cry anymore