

POËZIECENTRUM

# Gjoko Zdraveski

VERSOPOLIS

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Noord-Macedonië  
Gjoko Zdraveski

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VERSOPOLIS

**Gjoko  
Zdraveski**

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## de heer is mijn herder

1.  
tijdens mijn ijdel gepraat  
vergat ik  
mijn gebed.

elke keer weer raak ik  
god  
in de wachtkamer en bij de balie kwijt.

hij is een edelman:  
voor hem gelden geen pascontroles  
en geen vluchttijden  
van vliegtuigen.

hij en ik reizen altijd gescheiden  
en elke keer  
komen we  
apart weer thuis.

te luid klinken in mij  
de geluiden van vertrek en aankomst.

eeuwen van stilte hebben we nodig  
om elkaar opnieuw te vinden.

2.

fluisterend ben ik in mezelf op zoek naar jou.  
ik wil je roepen  
maar je niet verjagen.

tijdens mijn ijdel gepraat  
vergat ik  
mijn gebed.

ik vergat te zwijgen.  
rustig te zitten.  
te wachten.  
aan niets te denken.

en met gesloten ogen en een glimlach  
fluisterend naar je te roepen:  
de heer is mijn herder  
de heer is mijn herder  
de heer is mijn herder

## the lord is my shepherd

1.

I've forgotten my prayer  
amidst  
my iddle talk.

I keep losing  
god  
in lounges and ticket offices.

he's a nobleman:  
he's above passport controls  
and flight schedules  
for airlines.

the two of us always travel separately  
and always  
arrive home  
apart.

too loudly inside me ring  
the sounds of departures and arrivals.

we need centuries of silence  
to find each other again.



2.

with a whisper I search for you within.  
so that I may invoke you,  
and yet not drive you away.

I've forgotten my prayer  
amidst  
my iddle talk.

I've forgotten to be quiet.  
to sit still.  
to wait.  
to think of nothing.

with eyes closed and smiling  
with a whisper I invoke you:  
the lord is my shepherd  
the lord is my shepherd  
the lord is my shepherd

## бог е мојот пастир

1.  
си ја заборавив молитвата  
меѓу  
празнословието си.

секојпат одново го загинувам  
бога  
по чекалниците и билетарниците.

тој е благородник:  
за него не важат пасошките контроли  
и возните редови  
на авионите.

ние двајцата секојпат одделно патуваме  
и секојпат  
секој за себе  
дома стигнуваме.

прегласни се во мене  
звучите на тргнувањата и пристигнувањата.

ни требаат векови тишина  
за одново да се најдеме.

2.

низ шепот во себе те барам.  
за во исто време и да те повикам  
и да не те избркам.

си ја забравив молитвата  
меѓу  
празнословието си.

забравив да молчам.  
да седам мирен.  
да чекам.  
на ништо да не мислам.

замижан и насмевнат  
низ шепот да те повикувам:  
бог е мојот пастир  
бог е мојот пастир  
бог е мојот пастир

## woorden

we dachten  
dat we de woorden hadden overwonnen  
we dachten  
dat de stilte van een omhelzing  
genoeg was  
om de steden  
en de uren die we daar eenzaam doorbrachten  
te overbruggen

we dachten  
dat de gelofte om te zwijgen ons iets wijzer zou maken –  
in de ogen van babbelaars  
én in de ogen van degenen die we liefhebben  
en van wie de afwezigheid ons beangstigt

## words

we thought  
we had conquered the words  
we thought  
the silence of embraces  
was enough to rise above  
the cities and  
the hours we had passed  
lonely in them

we thought  
the vow of silence would make us wiser  
in the eyes of loudmouth  
and in the eyes of those we love  
and whose absence frightens us

## зборови

мислевме  
сме ги победиле зборовите  
мислевме  
тишината на прегратките  
е доволна за да се премостат  
градовите и  
часовите што осамени сме ги  
минувале во нив

мислевме  
заветот на молчење ќе нè направи помудри  
во очите на брбливците  
и во очите на оние што ги сакаме  
и чие отсуство нè плаши

## tekens

toen ik klein was  
oefende ik mijn onbeholpen handtekening  
op het beslagen raampje  
van de oude rode auto

tegenwoordig schrijf ik met mijn wijsvinger  
op het glas van de douchecabine  
tekens die ik niet begrijp

ik weet alleen dat ze komen  
uit mijn vroege kinderjaren

## symbols

when I was little  
I practised my inept autograph  
on the foggy window  
of the old red car

nowadays on the glass of the shower cubicle  
with my index finger I write  
symbols I do not understand

I know that they come  
from a distant childhood



## знаци

кога бев малечок  
го вежбав својот невешт автограм  
на замагленото стакло  
од стариот црвен автомобил

денес на стаклото од туш-кабината  
со показалецот испишувам  
знаци што не ги разбирам

знам само дека доаѓаат  
од некое подалечно детство

je bent betoverend  
als een onhandige fee  
die beter wil dansen dan een herderin  
maar op de zoom van haar jurk trapt

je ruikt naar watervallen  
en kleurige vogels zingen in je haar

terwijl we elkaar omhelzen  
voel ik je hart helemaal  
**tot in mijn navel**

you're magical  
like a fumbling fairy  
stepping on her dress  
while outdancing the shepherd

you smell of waterfalls  
and woodland birds sing in your hair

while we cuddle  
I can feel your heart all the way  
**down in my navel**

## волшебна си

како смотана самовила  
што си го подгазува фустанот  
додека се надигрува со овчарот

мирисаш на водопади  
и шарени птици ти пеат во косата

додека се прегрнуваме  
срцето ти го сеќавам дури  
долу во папокот

## vrijheid

1.

mijn grootvader omheinde zijn erf  
en kreeg zo een lapje grond,  
maar verloor de wereld.  
daarna begon hij dat eigen lapje grond  
in kleinere stukjes te verdelen  
die hij tuintjes noemde.  
maar ik was een kind en hield het meest  
van de poortjes die ze met elkaar verbonden.

2.

we bakenen onze grond met palen af  
tekenen kaarten met grenzen  
en zetten daar mensen neer  
die onze tassen doorzoeken  
en ons vragen waar we heen gaan  
alsof ze dat echt belangrijk vinden.

*where are you going, gojko?*

vraagt een douanebeambte me om vijf uur 's morgens.  
ik ben nog niet echt wakker en zeg tegen hem: naar huis.  
maar ik denk:  
door de wereld  
of heen en weer? in de ruimte  
of in de tijd? nu  
of altijd en in de eeuwen der eeuwen?

3.

eeuwen zijn we verwijderd van de vrijheid  
omdat we nog altijd bezig zijn  
ons van vreemde ketenen te bevrijden. en in onze buik  
voelen we niet de sleutel van de cel  
waarin we opgesloten zitten.

we vergeten dat de koffie die we drinken  
om wakker te worden in het bezinksel zit  
dat je onder in het kopje ziet.

elke dag spreken we erover. we wagen het  
zelfs erover te zingen. alleen  
doen we dat ziek. met angst  
in plaats van met liefde.

## freedom

1.

my grandad enclosed his courtyard with a fence  
and thus won a plot of land,  
though he lost the world.  
and then he started to partition  
that plot of land and  
named the gardens.  
I was a child and I loved most  
the little connecting gates.

2.

we demarcate with poles – bounds,  
we draw maps with some boundaries  
and place people there  
that scan through our bags  
asking us where we are going  
as though it really mattered to them.

*where are you heading, gojko?*

the customs officer asks me at five o'clock  
in the morning, and I, still not fully awake, say to him: home.  
while thinking to myself:  
around the globe  
or up and down? in space  
or in time? now  
or always and forever?

3.

because we are still trying to free ourselves  
from other people's chains. and we do not feel  
in our guts the keys of the prison cell  
that holds us.

the coffee we drink  
to wake up is in the residue  
at the bottom of the cup

every day we talk about it. we even dare  
sing about it. it's just that,  
we do it ill  
full of fear, instead of love.



## слобода

1.

дедо ми со тараби си го омеѓи дворот  
и така доби парче земја,  
ама го загуби светот.  
а потоа почна и тоа свое парче земја  
да го преградува и  
да им дава имиња на бавчите.  
а јас бев дете и најмногу ги сакав  
вратничките што ги спојуваа.

2.

забодуваме колци-меѓници,  
цртаме карти со некакви граници  
и ставаме таму луѓе  
што ни буричкаат по торбите  
и нè прашуваат каде патуваме  
како да им е тоа стварно важно.

gdje se putuje, gojko?

ме прашува меѓничарот во пет часот  
наутро, а јас, уште неразбуден, му велам: дома.  
а си мислам:  
по земјава  
или угоре-удолу? во просторот  
или во времето? сега  
или секогаш и во вјеки вјеков?

3.

векови сме далеку од слободата.  
затоа што сè уште од туѓите синџири  
се ослободуваме. и не го чувствуваме  
во утробата клучот од ќелијата  
во која сме заробени.

забораваме дека кафето што го пиеме  
за да се разбудиме е содржано во  
талогот на дното од шолјата.

секој ден за неа зборуваме. дури и  
да запееме се дрзнуваме. само,  
тоа го правиме болни. со страв  
полни, наместо со љубов.

#### 4. aarde. rood.

ik daal af in mijn ondergrondse vertrekken.  
in de fundamenteën. waar ooit  
mijn ouders iets hebben begraven.  
ik daal af, verborgen voor de hele wereld. en steel  
van mezelf de sleutel.  
beneden is het ijskoud. door de kou brandt er  
zelfs een vuur. ik voel hete kooltjes op mijn naakte huid  
en krijg kippenvel. van kou, van angst, van koorts.  
ik tast rond met een kaars in mijn hand.  
en zoek tussen de potten met zoetheid,  
met bitter en met zuur.  
ik woel in alles wat door me heen ging.  
in alles wat voor me langs ging.  
met een mes laat ik lucht ontsnappen  
zodat de stank eruit kan.  
ik haal de schimmel weg die zich er bovenop heeft gevormd.  
ik haal diep adem. proef met een vinger.  
ik open pot voor pot. haal de schimmel weg.  
ik haal diep adem. proef met een vinger.  
pot voor pot.  
tot ik ontdek waarom het zoveel pijn doet.  
en tot wanneer.

#### 4. earth. red.

I descend to my subterranean chambers.  
to the foundations. where back in the days  
my folks buried something.  
I descend stealthily, hiding from the world. I steal  
the key from myself.  
it's freezing down there. even fire is burning  
from the chill. it singes like coal on bare skin.  
and goose pimples. because of the ice, fear, foreboding.  
I reach out with a candle in my hand.  
I search through the jars of sweets,  
bitter, slightly liquorice.  
I sift through all that has passed through me.  
all that passed before me.  
I let the air out with a knife  
so that the stench may leave.  
I remove the mould spreading on top.  
I take a deep breath. get a taste with my finger.  
I open jar after jar. I remove the mould.  
I take a deep breath. get a taste with my finger.  
I open jar after jar. I remove the mould.  
until I find why it hurts so much.  
and until when.

#### 4. земја. црвено.

слегувам во своите подземни одаи.  
во темелите. таму кај што уште  
старите мои закопале нешто.  
слегувам од сиот свет скришум. сам  
од себе го крадам клучот.  
долу е цибурина. од студенилото дури  
оган гори. дури пече ко жар на гола кожа.  
и мравки лазат. од мраз, од страв, од јанса.  
буричкам со кандилце в рака.  
тарашкам по теглите со слатко,  
со горко, со поткиселено.  
чепкам по сето поминато низ мене.  
по сето поминато пред мене.  
со ноже пуштам воздух  
да излезе смрдеата.  
ја тргам мувлата што се фатила одозгора.  
вдишувам длабоко. со прст пробувам.  
тегла по тегла отворам. ја тргам мувлата.  
вдишувам длабоко. со прст пробувам.  
тегла по тегла.  
дур не најдам зошто толку боли.  
и до кога.

## onze blikken zijn dakloos

we weten niets van elkaar.  
we weten niets van de koorts en de schuld  
die verborgen liggen  
in de verstarde lachrimpels  
van de persoon tegenover ons. in het zweet  
van onze handen herkennen we niet  
de angst voor de dood en  
andere momenten van tijdelijk afscheid.

op 'hoe gaat het?' antwoorden wij  
'goed, dank je', maar vanbinnen vertellen we  
steeds opnieuw het verhaal  
dat ons uit onze droom losrukte.

onze blikken zijn dakloos en smeken  
de voorbijgangers om brood.

## our looks are homeless

we know nothing about each other.  
we know nothing about the foreboding and the flaw  
hiding in the wrinkle  
from the petrified smile  
of the person on the other side. in the sweat  
of our palms we cannot tell  
fear of dying and all other  
temporary goodbyes.

to “how are you?” we answer  
“fine, thanks”, and inside we continue  
to tell the story  
that that shook us awake from our dream.

our looks are homeless, begging  
for bread from passersby.

## погледите ни се бездомни

ништо не знаеме едни за други.  
не знаеме ништо за јансата и кабаеотот  
што се кријат во брчката  
од вкочанетата насмевка  
на тој спроти нас. во потта  
на дланките не го препознаваме  
стравот од смртта и  
другите привремени разделби.

на „како си?“ одговараме со  
„добро сум“, а во себе продолжуваме  
да си ја прераскажуваме приказката  
што нè скорнала од сонот.

погледите ни се бездомни, просат  
леб од случајните минувачи.



## het lichaam herinnert zich alles

je moet dagenlang stilzitten.  
en met gesloten ogen zwijgen. maar  
toch wakker blijven en observeren.  
je moet dagenlang, beetje bij beetje,  
geduldig de geest scherpen.  
zodat niets hem zal ontgaan: geen schram  
onder de neus, en geen kuiltje  
op de rug, en geen zenuwtrekje  
tussen top en teen.  
je moet je afzijdig houden en alleen  
observeren. zonder hartstocht en zonder partij te kiezen.  
zonder oordeel. zonder een steen te werpen. zonder woede,  
maar ook zonder vreugde. zonder verlangen. gewoon.  
rechttop. buiten ruimte en tijd.

en dan pas kun je beginnen.

want het lichaam herinnert zich alles.  
ook de angst van je moeder  
toen je je omdraaide  
in haar buik.

## the body remembers everything

you have to sit still for days.  
be quiet with eyes closed. but  
be awake and observe.  
for days on end you should, bit by bit,  
patiently sharpen the mind.  
not let even a scratch under the nose  
flutter away, not even a dimple  
along the back, a shimmer of the nerve  
from the top of the head to the heels.  
you should stand on the side and  
observe. bereft of passion of a supporter.  
free of judgment. no stone cast. no wrath,  
but no joy either. free of yearning. just as is.  
prostrate. outside space and time.

and only then can you start.

for the body remembers everything.  
even the fear of your mother  
as you were turning in  
her womb.

## ТЕЛОТО ПАМТИ СÈ

треба со денови да се седи мирен.  
со затворени очи да се молчи. но  
да се биде буден и да се набљудува.  
треба со денови, малку по малку,  
трпеливо да се остри умот.  
да не му побегне ниту еден јадеж  
под носот, ниту една морница  
по грбот, ниту една игра на нервот  
од врвот на главата до стапалата.  
треба отстрана да се биде и да се  
набљудува. без страст на навивач.  
без суд. без фрлен камен. без лутина,  
но и без радост. без копнеж. тукутака.  
простум. од просторот и времето надвор.

и дури тогаш може да се почне.

оти телото памти сè.  
и стравот на мајка ти дури  
додека си ѝ се превртувал  
во утробата.

droom. tijd. dood.

je droomde zo akelig over mij.  
je zegt dat ik deze dagen moet opletten  
als ik rijd. goed, ik zal opletten.  
al weet je dat de tijd niet lineair verloopt  
en dat elk moment waarop we doodgaan en geboren worden  
een herhaling is van vroeger.

**dream. time. death.**

you've had a bad dream about me.  
you tell me to be cautious when I drive  
these days. all right, I'll be cautious.  
yet, you know that time is not linear  
and all our deaths and births  
have already happened.

## сон. време. смрт.

си ме сонувала лошо.  
ми велиш да пазам деновие  
ако возам. добро, ќе пазам.  
иако знаеш дека времето не е линеарно  
и сите наши умирања и раѓања  
се веќе случени.

**het is niet makkelijk om aan deze zijde**

voortdurend tussen de woorden  
te moeten zoeken, om ze honderdmaal  
te wegen zodat ze niet te zwaar worden.  
om iedere verwarde glimlach te voorspellen  
van degene tot wie het woord is gericht, om een nieuw  
woord te vinden dat kan verzachten en verder verklaren,  
om voetnoten te bedenken en nieuwe betekenissen  
te verzinnen, om te aarzelen als je alleen bent  
en af te dalen tot in de wortel van het kwaad,  
om in de diepten te zoeken, alsof je  
alles moet weten, alsof alles je duidelijk moet zijn.

en waarom eigenlijk? alleen omdat het je gegeven is  
lief te hebben, en omdat je hoorbaar liefhebt?

**it is not easy on this side**

to be obliged to persistently choose  
between words. to measure them time  
and again so that none weighs too much.  
to anticipate each confused smile of the person  
the word is addressed to. to think  
of a new one that will alleviate, explain further,  
to come up with footnotes, to make up  
new meanings. to hesitate when alone  
and to lower yourself to the root of evil,  
to fumble into your depths. as if you should  
know everything. as if you should see it all clearly.

and why all this? just because you have  
the chance to love, and because you love dearly?



### **Не е лесно од оваа страна**

да мора постојано да пребираш  
по зборовите. да премеруваш  
по стопати да не тежи некој премногу.  
да ја предвидиш секоја збунета насмевка  
кај оној кому му е зборот упатен. да смислиш  
нов што ќе разблажува, што ќе дообјаснува,  
да смислуваш фусноти, да измислуваш  
нови значења. да се сепнуваш сам кога си  
и да си се спушташ во коренот на злото,  
да си буричкаш во понорите. ко ти да треба  
да знаеш сè. ко да треба сè да ти е јасно.

и сето тоа зошто? само затоа што ти е дадено  
да љубиш, и затоа што љубиш гласно?

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Gjoko Zdraveski (1985) schrijft poëzie, kortverhalen en essays en werkt als professor Macedonische taal aan de Universiteit van Niš, Servië. Daarnaast werkt hij ook als literair redacteur voor *Reper* en is hij de poëziedirecteur voor het online tijdschrift *Blesok*. Hij is een van de meest opmerkelijke stemmen van de jonge schrijversgeneratie in Noord-Macedonië. Zijn debuutbundel *Palindrome with Double 'N'* (2010) is een ode aan de liefde in serene en tedere verzen. Hij inspireert zich op de paradox dat de liefde zelf overdadig en buitensporig is, maar toch toebehoort aan de kalme, serene, complete en verbonden mensen, aan zij die liefhebben. Hij gebruikt zeer persoonlijke en herkenbare situaties om de fasen en nuances van de liefde toe te lichten. Zijn tweede bundel *House for migratory birds* (2013) gaat over het oversteken van grenzen, over de vrees om te reizen, over de immigrant die reismoe is en besluit zich over te geven aan een queeste naar vrede. Hij schrijft over de tocht langs de horizontale as en de tocht langs de verticale as. De eerste tocht noemt hij de rivier en gaat over de overgang naar de buitenwereld. De tweede tocht noemt hij de zee en gaat over de tocht naar de binnenwereld wanneer het lichaam stilstaat.

Zijn werk is in meer dan acht talen vertaald en is opgenomen in verschillende bloemlezingen.

Gjoko Zdraveski (1985) writes poetry, short stories and essays and works as a Macedonian language teacher at the University of Niš, Serbia. Besides that, he also works as a literary editor of *Reper* and is the poetry editor of the online magazine *Blesok*. *Palindrome with Double 'N'* (2010) is a collection of love poems and is written in a tender-hearted, serene and simple way. Zdraveski bases his poetry on the paradox that love itself is overabundant and excessive, yet it belongs only to calm, serene, complete, and connected people, to those who love. He uses deeply personal and recognizable life situations to illuminate the moods and nuances of love. His second book of poetry *House for migratory birds* (2013) consists of poems about crossing borders, about the fear of travelling, about the immigrant who is tired of travelling and decides to devote himself to a quest of peace instead. He writes about the journey along the horizontal axis and the journey along the vertical axis. The first journey he calls the river and is about the transition into the outer space. The second journey he calls the sea and is about the journey into the inner world when the body is still.

His poems have been included in several anthologies of poetry by young authors and have been translated into Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bulgarian, Spanish, Czech and English.

Gjoko Zdraveski (Noord-Macedonië) is een van de veelbelovende dichters die werden geselecteerd voor Versopolis, een project dat de Europese uitwisseling van veelbelovend dichttalent wil bevorderen.

Versopolis is een samenwerkingsverband van 25 poëziefestivals en literaire organisaties uit verschillende landen van de EU. Versopolis promoot de fysieke uitwisseling van veelbelovend dichttalent op Europese poëziefestivals en bouwt een digitaal platform uit waar het brede publiek kan kennismaken met de geselecteerde dichters en de deelnemende partnerorganisaties.

Versopolis bestaat sinds december 2013 en promoot dit jaar intussen 250 Europese auteurs en hun poëzie onder het motto 'where poetry lives'.

De Vlaamse partner van Versopolis is Poëziecentrum dat in samenwerking met Felix Poetry Festival vier dichters uit de Versopolis poule op het jaarlijkse festival voorstelt.

Gjoko Zdraveski (North-Macedonia) is one of the promising poets selected for Versopolis, a project that aims to promote the exchange of poetic talent in Europe.

Versopolis is a collaborative venture of 25 poetry festivals and literary organisations from various EU countries. Versopolis promotes the physical exchange of poetic talent at European poetry festivals and is developing a digital platform where the public at large can get acquainted with the selected poets and the participating partner organisations.

Versopolis was founded in December 2013 and by now promotes 250 European authors and their poetry under the motto 'where poetry lives'.

The Flemish partner of Versopolis is Poëziecentrum, which presents four Versopolis poets at the Felix Poetry Festival each year.



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