

OUR CHURCH IS HERE



POEMS

MARCEL

INHOFF

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TEACHER

I learned to teach—
The moon turns red like
A fruit of the field

Blessed by god
This hunger is blessed too
You are my children

I think this book is like your foot
And I carry the cup from my mouth
We are the same

I

He fell into a pond
& Did not drown:
breathe water
and choke the air
I have a couple
good standing
and without fins
at all
and every time it rains

MIRONOSİTE

smell to accompany me, iron to sleep in
everything smells of metal
gray sky like lead

and my friends all liars.
everything is empty
don't explain to me.

CUMBERSOME

and
get involved

I know that the body
twisted like others
but I have an overview of the sky

I wonder,
It is as soon as the messenger
learns to fly?

It is slower than O Lord

Something in me is cumbersome
And to be in bad faith. step by step
And then jumping finally

JACKS AND POETS

Some silent, some *bavard*
four poets, plus one
met for meat

a bounce of the ball, ah!
not far from the street
this game is not won

our work is not done
we are not covered in *зола*
but we are all scarred

some little, some *viel*.
In literature, *der weg ist das ziel*
Жизнь прожить — не поле перейти

*Il vaut mieux faire envie
que pitié.* There's a pride
in poets and a quiet

insanity. I'm here. I can't flee.
I write what I see. I write what I don't.

NUN

god He talks to me when I sleep no one
understands. my mom and dad fuck
in the next room. I sleep with God

I have to find a language
that is better, that translates to me the Psalms
I need to go clean

I live in a monk's cell. There's a bed, a small shelf
and prayers scattered all over
like beer bottles and cigarette butts.

My thoughts are dirty
We do not know the night
I do not know my tongue and the colors of

my night terrors.
There is no salvation for me
This language is not at least

SALTY

I cannot marry.
You are my wife,
but I do not know.

The moon tastes salty.
Your holy name.
My palms smell of grass.

I cannot marry someone else.
You're just for me.
I entered my soul.

SUSANNE

shaking water
i saw apollon on the curb
a smoldering cigarette in the quiver
crackling. oh apollon –

a tremor in the water
the country shivers
and Susanne's laughter
hovering over the Wupper river

a strand of red hair
hanging on to the railings
falling, falling, drowning.

SUBURBS

There's no escaping the fact:
wood burns better than
a stack of green hats.

This is how we come by
essential truths: we
think, we probe, we are

illuminated, we are roasted
over a slow fire. I don't
like how, in here,

vodka is turning to coffee
these days – it makes me sound
like somebody's silly uncle.

In these suburbs of death
we stay sober all day
and dig for water by night.

THE SKY IS TOO BLUE

The sky is too blue
I found an angel's clotted blood
on my window sill
you can only find it

on mornings like this
when the sky is too blue
concrete is too rough
and the flowers across the street

are asking for your head
these should be the last days
the air is rich
with incense and sacrifice

the world is wound tight
it tastes like the end of something
but nothing ends here
and nobody leaves.

A COUPLE

We can't move! The young couple
declares with fresh faces and
arms broken in street brawls
and encounters with Gods.

Our church is here. They point
to a few chairs arranged in a circle
in an abandoned gym. *This is
our God and he will make*

*the world anew in a supple
orgy of fire and fierceness.*
It is also where they married.
Anytime the phone rings

both are struck by fears
of losing the other to unnamed
women and men and to
the darkness beyond their church.

We can't move! They tell the nurse
and everyone who will listen.
We can't leave this town. They are right.
A mouthful of darkness is already

waiting for them in every stranger
they meet. *Our church is here.*

NOTES

Mironosițe

title: Romanian, “myrrh-bearers”—in the Orthodox Christian tradition, refers to those individuals directly involved in the burial of Jesus, or who discovered the empty tomb following the resurrection.

Jacks and Poets

зола: Russian, “ash”

viel: German, “a lot”

der weg ist das ziel: “the journey is the reward”, a proverb attributed apocryphally to Confucius

Жизнь прожить — не поле перейти: “to live life is not to cross a field”, the last line of the poem “Hamlet” from *Doctor Zhivago* (English translation by Eleanor Rowe)

Il vaut mieux faire envie que pitié: “It is better to be envied than pitied”, a French rendering of a proverb attributed to numerous authors in antiquity, e.g. Herodotus



MARCEL INHOFF is completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Bonn. He is the author of the collection *Prosopopeia* (Editions Mantel, 2015), and numerous poems and essays in German and English. He is currently working on his first novel.



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On the cover: this modified scan of a 1948 woodcut by Gerhard Marcks depicts Orpheus and Eurydice in the afterlife; from the portfolio *10 Holzschnitte zu den Versen des Ovid*.

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