



MAREK TOMAN

Marek Toman was born on June 24, 1967, in Prague, Czech Republic. After having studied philosophy at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague he has been working in the Czech state radio as editor of literary programs.

M. Toman joined foreign service after this five year experience.

He is currently posted to the Czech Embassy in Tallinn, Estonia as Consul and Commercial Counsellor dealing with promotion of culture as well.

M. Toman is author of several books of poetry, several translations (both prose and poetry) and of many newspaper articles and radio programs.

The poems presented here have not been published yet.

+ + +

He is only doing his job
(they said about a barman
who wanted me to pay after the first pint)
of course, we all are -
a merchant is selling cedar in his cellar
with a cell phone on his side.
I am sticking my visas and
staring with my sticky green eyes
at you, behind the consulate counter
and someone else will lift a giant stamp over my head -
press me with the mercy of blood-pressure...
a soldier is only doing his job as well, even a murderer
and even a virus in the brain of a mad cow
and a butcher
not much saner
better not think about it...
but that is not enough, that is tragically little
because only when you get over
the claws of your career crushing you
only then love will press you -
get over
as I stepped over
drunken poet Marko Mägi
at the party on the Dvigatel factory roof
yeah, but I did not give him a hand...
then again
I opened a visa that you have to wait three days for
to an anonymous girl right away
so that she could get away to be fondled and fondle
and laugh to Italy which is jobless

+ + +

What have you done with your life
this question
is more important than how many “cultural projects”
you have stirred in the extramarital rings
of the cigarette smoke
over the Czech table of a universal
pubic hair of a typical Czech pub -
how many contacts
you have connected to ignite any aircraft engine...
how many people...
how many “cultural relationships”, “connotations”
and
shindigs, whatever you call it:
not, what have you done with your life
what you could have, what you should have
that question remains
when you drag the tugboats of your feet back
bare as a wound

+ + +

It is so easy to destroy love
(or rather abandon it as a bad law,
it is no time being pathetic,
I am pleading myself) -
just take it
and shake it and wear it out
sleep with it, eat it, take a bath together
in a washing machine
taste the rags that come out
come on, consume
until botulism kicks in inevitably...
Something will lie down
between love and you
as a sealed railway crossing
as a totalitarian borderline that
cannot be crossed
as the rebirth
when they tell you the child cannot be born
as the sword that once lay between the knight
and the virgin...
Inevitably
memories of the Belgian
with the odd name Zenon Koval come to mind
and I remember his smart remarks
on cigar smoking:
heaven, that is what you call the first third of a cigar
straw, that is what you call the second third
and when it comes to the final third
it is time to drop it
Some ash
lies between me and love
of course, burns
on our hands, connecting those two parallels
of the railroad
some love lies between me and you,
my love

+ + +

Your face is made
of handmade paper
after settling down in the sieves with molasses of
great sleep -
your face is made of veins
of railroad tracks
carrying the deportation trains as a hateful spit -
your face is the sleepers, your face is the sieve
through which you thrust our water
and I don't know
whether there will be gold on the bottom
or a rift in the railways after a flood
or just the empty hands
of the handmade paper of your face
which no train can ever bring back