

change in his inner being. His whole life from his early childhood was now revealed to him. The most insignificant things, trifles, the playthings of his childhood, senseless jokes, and incidents – all passed before him. And it was not as though he were forming pictures, visualizing the incidents – it seemed to him that he was living his past life all over again. He was unaware of any physical measure of time and space and he saw no difference between the realities of his past life and his fateful dream. That also was present to him and he viewed it with the same sensations. Then a sweet, resplendent enchantment took possession of his soul and the wondrous figure of the young girl stood before him.

“All things with which our souls commune are real for us. And now, I am able to see that such things alone are truly ours. they do not leave us even at the time of our death!” he spoke aloud, interrupting his thoughts.

“Oh, how my blood burns!” He straightened himself in his anguish, wishing to change his position. But his strength failed him and his head sank into the pillow.

He was dead.

Janko Leskovar

A Thought for Eternity

1

In the village of Druškovac there lived a teacher called Đuro Martić. The people thought him a sick man, and though he didn't feel ill, nevertheless, he didn't feel quite the same as he had once. The blue veins stood out prominently, softened round his eyes and spread out over his temples and high forehead. His lips seemed to have faded away somewhere and his ears to have become thin and pale; yet he had no cough and was always diligent in his duties. What is more, the school superintendent, the “head gentleman” was completely satisfied with him.

Yet he was not a real teacher.

He was, it is true, good to the children, but sometimes he would be overtaken by some lassitude he knew neither the cause nor the name of, and he would be unable to shake it off for the whole of his lesson. If it had been permitted, it would have been best for him to send the children off home then, but this could not be. When he was in this condition he couldn't keep order in the school, he was impatient and irritable, and would sometimes call a child don-

key or blockhead, or get hold of him by the ear or hair.

Whenever this fit left him, he would be remorseful and resolve: never again; but he would soon commit the same mistakes again.

This probably happened to him as a result of overly strenuous exertion.

He was alone in the school, which worked half the day, and so he had to do several hours more teaching, and in winter there just was not enough daylight. There was always time and opportunity for some relaxation nevertheless; and yet there was something that wouldn't let him rest, something always drove him to think, think without pause, until at length his head began to ache. Then the nerves of his eyelids would begin to flutter, the veins on his temples to play, and in the end he would throw himself on his bed, completely exhausted. His servant Daša would beg him to get up, to get undressed, let him make the bed, and he would hear this, but for a long, long time he wouldn't move or speak a word, although he himself desired sleep.

He had an enormous longing for night, for it would bring him dreams, and he assigned to dreams a completely different meaning than the one his teacher of pedagogy in the teachers' school had once told him. As far as he could remember, even in his childhood his dreams had had a meaning, but for a long time he adhered to the theory that he had learned in the teachers' school.

But four years previously he had come to a watershed after which he had completely washed his

hands of the doctrine of Herbart and his followers. He was never able to say if he had really been sleeping; he was awake, or so it seemed to him. The night was dark, but he saw his father, coming back home, with a lamp in his hand. He came to the stream, which was swollen with the autumn rains. He crossed over the log, and was almost across; but his foot slipped, and he disappeared in the turbid, muddy water... There was a cold trembling about his heart. He felt his forehead, and it was covered in a chill sweat. Thank the lord, just a dream...

The next day, when the children were going out of school, he saw a man coming towards him dressed like a peasant from his own region. He felt shudders going over him. The fellow came up, and he looked into his face.

"I know, I know," he said thickly, "but where did you pull him out?"

"A bit below the log, he got stuck in the old willow."

From this time on, Đuro Martić gave himself over completely to the night in the bosom of which he found some secret life. His dreams were so vivid, so truthful, that he was often confused as to what was a dream, what was life. He had one quite unusual dream very often.

He had meetings with the departed.

They were all friends of his. With one he had eaten a meal regularly everyday, in a soup kitchen; he had died in the third course, and no one knew why. One had had his lungs eaten out by worms. The third might still have been alive if he hadn't killed him-

self. With this trio, who were now not so very thin, he had very frequent encounters. In the beginning he would know that he was dreaming, and he would say to them, "My friends, this is a dream, it is not possible, you are dead." But they would set about convincing him that it wasn't a dream, that it was life, real life. "The things you think of," they said, "for we are really here, here's my hand on it." And it seemed to him that it was truth indeed, and when once after such a dream he got up he was so confused that he didn't know where dreams stopped and life began. It was as if he had dreamed somewhere that his friends had died, and that in his sleep he had read about it in his teachers' journal. Then he went to look up that number of the teachers' journal, but couldn't find it. Then he tried to call up various memories to help him, but this confused him still more, and then he sat down to write a letter to Ivan's father in Rijeka, asking him to tell him what had become of Ivan, whether he was alive or dead. And he was just about to send off the letter, when his conceptions began working once again, his notions becoming clearer.

"Yes, dead, they're all dead."

But it wasn't always like that. He did have his brighter days. Then it was as if he were reborn. He would breathe the mountain air in deeply, his nostrils would dilate, his chest expand, he would look with animation around the lovely countryside, and a smile could be seen upon his thin lips.

It was a Saturday, in the month of December, late in the afternoon. About a fortnight before, the snow began to fall and settled properly, and it was a bitter cold. The sky was uncannily bright, and the sun was still on the horizon, its golden beams sparkling on the snowy white.

Đuro Martić was in his room, singing something to himself. This was the third consecutive day he had been in a good mood. On Thursday he had been invited to lunch by the neighbouring landowner; the company had cheered him up and he himself had then been entertaining. At the beginning he had been morose. They were all plump, only he had been thin and yellow. Previously he had not given this a thought, but here his own personage emerged powerfully for the first time. His eyes kept looking at his thin legs and scrawny arms on which every little vein could be seen, and then he would steal a look at his neighbours; what stout arms and mighty thighs they had!

He frowned.

Then when he heard the gentlemen talking with great interest about foods, when he heard the expressions "piquant", "juicy", "marvellous fragrance", his bad temper started to fade away. "Piquant, juicy, fragrant," that was the way, he hadn't even considered it before; well, that Daša of his didn't know how to do things like that anyway.

The society, and "piquant, juicy and fragrant", rapidly put him in a good mood, and a smile came to his face.

A young lady teacher from a neighbouring village was sitting opposite him. They frequently looked at each other, and he felt that there was something livening him up. After the meal they had a long, long conversation. She told him that on the following Sunday she would come to Mass in his village with her girl-friend. This pleased him, and was probably the reason why he had been in such a good mood since Thursday.

She would come then. He felt he had to do something to stand out in the church. He found his bagpipes and sat near the old piano. He could still see his thin legs and scrawny arms, but with the first chords he forgot all about himself and the next day, and when he began to play Volckmar's Fantasy in D minor, he was completely lost. The majestic close, although this was not the first time he had heard it, confused him utterly. He repeated the same part two or three times, and then looked somewhere far, far away in the distance.

The bony knees and the scrawny arms disappeared from in front of him, and the room, and the snowy hills outside; he was in some emptiness of space where the final chords echoed long, long, receding further and further off until they disappeared altogether somewhere far in the distance.

A dull, disconsolate emptiness appeared in his spirit. That it had gone from him forever was impossible; he could hear it, feel it disappearing into the distance, far, far away, it had to be there somewhere.

He started.

Once again he could see his own scrawny arms, his thin legs, and through the window he could see the setting sun. It was already touching the snowy peak of Mt Kuna.

He rose and looked round him again.

Ah, it was all an illusion. The sun must have been below the horizon eight and a half minutes already. That is how long the light takes to reach us. From the Pole Star it takes thirty years. Thirty, thirty, oh look, thirty years it takes, too, for the light of our earth to reach the Pole Star. And so, according to this, this day would be seen at the Pole Star in thirty years time. Then this day had not gone forever, vanished, no, in thirty years time it would be seen at the Pole Star, in five thousand years in the Milky Way; further and further off in the universe, the lightpicture of this one day upon the earth would fall without end, without closure.

Oh, Lord, Lord, nothing decayed, nothing was lost, it was all, all of it, eternal. Oh, why was my head aching so much. When I die, perhaps my spirit, like a thought, will flit from star to star. Oh how marvellous, he would learn the past of all the ages, everything, all of it, would be noted down in the universe, nothing had died; the lightpicture of every moment of being was stamped upon the universe...

"Oh, sir, the lights," called Daša.

"Fine, fine."

"What will you eat for supper?"

"Nothing, nothing, leave me alone."

Duro Martić was sitting on the chair by the old piano again. His elbows were on his knees, his head dropped, and was supported by his hands. His eyes were closed, his breath came short. One lovely day, and it was somewhere off in space.

The golden gleam of the sun lay upon the earth. The green beech forest over there was very lovely, and the beautiful valley the brook ran through was dear, very dear. He had come back from school, and was alone in his room, they were all outside somewhere, working. The brilliant sunlight slanted into the room through a little window. In the shadow in the corner there was a crucifix hanging. There was such a solemn silence that anyone would have fallen prostrate in front of the cross. He was unutterably light of heart. The sunshine, the green wood, and the beautiful valley were all indescribably charming; he did not know why, but it was a sensation of innocence.

There had been many such days, until one autumn morning his father took him into Zagreb to become a gentleman; it would be good for him one of these days.

The sun shone in Zagreb too, but without any magic; it was a different kind of shine than on one's native ground.

The days went past easily, and the years too. One spring day he was sitting in the little attic room in - Street. He placed his elbows on the table and propped up his head with his hands, and looked as if he had no thoughts, no feelings.

The door opened slowly, and the daughter of the landlord appeared. She shuddered, and made as if to go back, but could not. Irresolute, hesitatingly, she came in.

He did not lift his head, but could hear and feel everything. He could hear her light footsteps, the rustling of her dress, her breathing. She was shaking, she bent down, knelt.

"Forgive me, I am here, I am sorry, I can't stay long..."

And at this tears came to his eyes too and his voice quavered, he knelt down by her side, stroked her hair, her face, forehead, hands; she wiped away his tears, and they were running down her own face. And the Zagreb sun was long, magical and sweet in its shining.

Another morning he collapsed in his room again. Once again she came and knelt before him.

"Ah, why are you running from me, why are you avoiding me?"

He was dumb.

She stood up.

"Don't, don't," she cried in desperation. "You have taken everything from me, everything, everything."

And again, he had no words to comfort her.

"I understand. I am disgusting to you, improper, corrupted. Oh, I know, but you'll see. You'll see..."

She hurried away, and he followed her, wanting to bring her back, but she had gone.

He took his hat and went out, and returned the same evening.

The door of her room was open, people were going in and out. There had been an accident.

He went in unaware.

She lay there dead in front of him, spattered with blood.

He shook, and arose from the old piano.

"Oh, Lord, Lord, that day too is out there in space, and I shall meet it up there."

And her dress was open at the chest (at the shot they ran up and searched for the wound), and her bare breasts could be seen, and in between them there was a black wound, all spattered in blood. Her black eyes were open and gazed at him glassily.

Twelve struck on the clock of the village church; he didn't hear it.

He was bathed in sweat.

"Oh, lord, lord, and that is imprinted on the universe. Do I have to look at that again too?"

Yes, look at it forever. Sinners will then see nothing, nothing at all; they will look at their own iniquities, their victims, for ever and ever.

Cold began to shake him. He threw himself clothed and unconscious upon his bed.

He looked again at the open black eyes, the deathly pale skin, the spattered blood. ... He had stared and stared, and that picture would not move from in front of him. It was as if he had disappeared from the surface of the earth, there was never anyone,

never anything ... there was just her, lying in front of him, dead, spattered with blood. He stared into her dead glassy eyes and plunged into space.

The next day the young lady teacher did indeed come.

She had heard much of the teacher who lived alone with his servant, was never merry, and said little or nothing.

When she had first seen him on Thursday, a very unusual feeling had come over her. It was somehow pleasant when she thought that she would soothe him and put him in good spirits with agreeable conversation. And how happy she had been when she noticed that on the very first day he had become so cheerful in her company.

Something irresistible sent her into Druškovac that day, she kept on having the presentiment that something would happen.

She went at once into the church.

The organ started up, but at the very first chords, she was overcome by sadness and a sort of fear. The music was weird, extraordinary, and when he sang up there by the organ, the church was filled with confusion and disarray. She was dumbfounded, and tears coursed down her cheeks from compassion.

It was advent, and the teacher was singing the Easter "Hallelujah".

Đuro Martić had gone mad.

Antun Gustav Matoš

Camao

Getting out of the hospital, he composed some musician or other a couplet against the President of the Republic; in a week the whole of Paris was full of it. Taking his fee, he went to the station and asked where the first train went.

“To Switzerland.”

And next morning Alfred Kamenski arrived in Geneva.

His uncle, Petar Tkalac (he couldn't remember his father) had been a priest in Croatia. Having suddenly been made a canon, he achieved a rapid reputation for his Bukovac vintages and the Lucullan lunches to which he treated his political friends, not at all concealing from them his passionate love for his nephew, not even when he became a bishop, and when the malicious reproached him with this love.

Alfred was a very poor pupil, and his private tutors, among themselves, held him an idiot. The bishop was already despairing of being able to get his beloved boy into the theology department, when he heard him singing something in Latin. He peered through the window and in the garden saw the lad under an enormous chestnut, with his uncle's weighty breviary in his hands. It was impossible: the