

the philosophical egg



MONSTRUO
PRODIGIOSO,
QUE APARECEU
NO
REYNO DE CHILE.

LETTER TO MAYO

March 17th, 1967

My dear Mayo:

After reading your biographical pages, I realize how little I really knew you during those years in Paris. At the moment I feel somewhat envious of you. All those wonderful names you give us of *copains* and fellow workers not only evokes a certain nostalgia in me but also a kind of regret. Many of the individuals, artists all of them, I admired from a distance. I was too timid to force an acquaintance upon some one without good reason. Thus, it was only through the accident of Soutine being my neighbour downstairs (in the Villa Seurat) that enabled me to make his acquaintance, and by then his bohemian days were over.

As for you, my dear Mayo, you struck me as being the eternal bohemian. I never seemed to meet you in your working clothes, so to speak, though I knew you *did* work, *did* lock yourself up, *did* have a serious side to your nature.

You always struck me as being carefree, reckless, floating on the stream of time like a leaf. You were young, handsome, debonair, and usually surrounded by beautiful girls who seemed to hail from the sunny isles of Greece. You wore them like flowers in your button-hole.

When I read that you went through so much misery I could scarcely believe it. Of course, people said the same thing about me, I know. How does one smile on an empty stomach? (Maybe one learns to do so in order to survive). But I never dreamt that you could be starving or in need of money, I looked upon you as the prodigal son of an Egyptian cigarette king. I never knew, that as in my own case, you were regarded by your family as an outcast because you had elected to be an artist. (I remember reading in Chagall's "Ma Vie" that "artist" was one word he never heard pronounced in his native village of Pinsk or Minsk.)



Now that I think of it, it seems strange that I never thought of asking you for money. Or did I? Certainly I must have asked every one else I knew at that time. But then I was always fearful of asking a rich person for help. I dreaded to hear their flimsy excuses.

I learn that you are now a man of sixty, with a family. That too is hard for me to swallow. People like you never get old. But of course you are *not* old. So long as you continue to paint you are young, and the older you get the younger your painting will be.

You write about your latest approach to painting, and it tells me that you are honest, humble and sincere. Like Hokusai, perhaps, you are waiting to become one hundred years old before you reveal your true mastery.

Look at our friend Michonze. Did ever a painter show more patience, more fortitude than he? Only recently has he begun to get a little recognition, if sales and exhibitions mean recognition.

Picabia, Desnos, Crevel, La Riviere – what names! What legends have grown up around them! Or take Artaud, whom I met only once and that was to feel a cane laid across my back – because he mistakenly thought I was laughing at him.

It must be about thirty years now since we last met. We talk as if we were going to live forever. We work because it has become a habit. I sometimes wonder if I would really miss it were I to stop writing tomorrow. I don't think I would. I like to believe that I could spend the rest of my days doing nothing. But there is one thing I hope never to give up, and that is painting. To make a water color gives me a new sense of life. I don't want to become a painter, I just want to go on making water colors till I die.

I mention my love of painting, not to draw attention to myself, but to say once again that it is with painters I really feel at home. Painters rather than writers. And when a painter also writes I usually enjoy his writing more than the work of writers. Don't ask me why! Van Gogh's "Letters to Theo", for example, mean every bit as much to me as the novels of Dostoevski.

In saying this, I wish to convey the suspicion I have that you too would like to write. And I believe you can! Look at your friend Brassai. Has he not proved himself to be an excellent writer? You should ask him to write a few words about you. I must say, in passing, that he has a fantastic memory – far better than mine. I may remember the striped sweater you wore on a certain day but forget completely what you said. Not Brassai! He remembers everything.

Well, as my friend Perles used to say – "the important thing is to remember. Remember to remember!"

I will always remember you, my dear Mayo, not so much from the things you said to me, but from a certain look in your eye, a look that was an embrace, a look that took in not only me but everything about me, everything around me, including my hopes and aspirations, my ancestors and my reason for being alive.

Bless you, my friend, and long life to you! Don't get serious. Life is a privilege, not a problem.

HENRY MILLER
Pacific Palisades
California

Firmas de Iaroslav Serpan, en ruso y francés

Iaroslav Serpan

ALINEARSE

Aquel día, el primero de mi irización
nudo de la tarde, soplé en el huso oblongo
oh máscara indefensa,
simple tallo, ante mi lento deshojar.
Inundado, a la sombra entrecerrada de la uña,
su paisaje, más fino que cabello de niño.

Retomé mi solitaria lágrima en la octava
de labios sin medida. Así he congelado
este llanto vivo en la aureola del ánfora,
¡último huerto de mi alineación!
Por eso ante el duelo que dejan los despojos,
dirás, he destrozado la espiga de Epidauro
y he fecundado el rostro de mi esclava.
¡Ay! ¿Qué sangre podré lamer
para enriquecer mi vieja sepultura,
cuando, musa de mí, en el prisma de mi ojo
yo reuna los espejos de su cansancio,
olvidando mi sueño sobre un frágil escollo?

1944

Traducción de Ludwig y Beatriz Zeller

Enrique Gómez-Correa

LUDWIG ZELLER

Los deseos al horno
Y el faisán a su pluma
Todos atraídos por la palabra
Que se escapa de los labios del mago
Y que cae grave
Fiel a su ley.

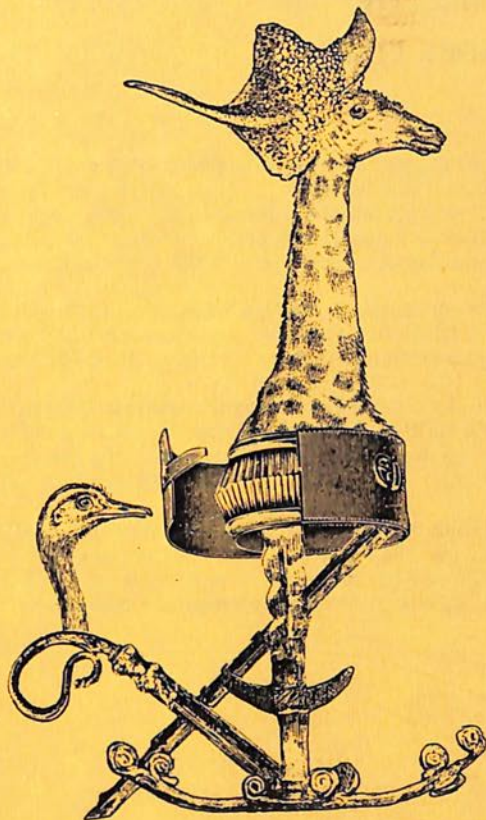
Los deseos al horno
Y el batracio a su torre de marfil
Al anillo que aprieta el dedo
Sin parar hasta que la sangre salta a borbotones
Sobre el rostro sólo visto en el sueño.

Los deseos al horno
Y el tigre a su selva de espanto
Donde un hombre cuelga innumerables tijeras en los
árboles
Arboles de la vida y la muerte.

*"¡Al mago! ¡Al mago!" –gritan–
"A ése que hace sacar la lengua
"Para leer los pensamientos en sus pálidos surcos!"
Y el mago vuelve impasible a su burbuja.*

Ahora es la luz y el fuego
Que despiden tu frente
O tus manos amigo Ludwig Zeller
Para aferrarse al amor
Al que nos conducen
Los deseos en el terrible juego
Del entrar y salir del horno.

Santiago de Chile, Marzo de 1982.



Collage by Ludwig Zeller

André Frédérique

IDÉE FIXE

Je suis capable de tuer mon père
si mon père flottait
et qu'il me faille un radeau
ayant la forme de mon père
pour flotter sur les eaux.

Je suis capable de tuer ma soeur
s'il fallait du sang rouge
pour peindre son coeur.

Je suis capable de tuer mes deux enfants
s'il fallait les soustraire à l'école
et qu'ils ne sachent jamais
la règle des participes.

Je suis capable de tuer Dieu
s'il me fallait mourir
afin qu'il me pardonne
et qu'il voie que tuer ce n'est qu'une habitude.

André Frédérique

IDEA FIJA

Soy capaz de matar a mi padre
si mi padre flotara
y yo necesitara un balsa
con la forma de mi padre
para flotar en las aguas

Soy capaz de matar a mi hermana
si necesitara sangre roja
para pintar su corazón

Soy capaz de matar a mis dos hijos
si hubiera que sustraerlos a la escuela
para que no supieran jamás
la regla de los participios

Soy capaz de matar a Dios
si tuviera que morir
a fin de que me perdone
y de que entienda que matar es tan sólo una costumbre

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