

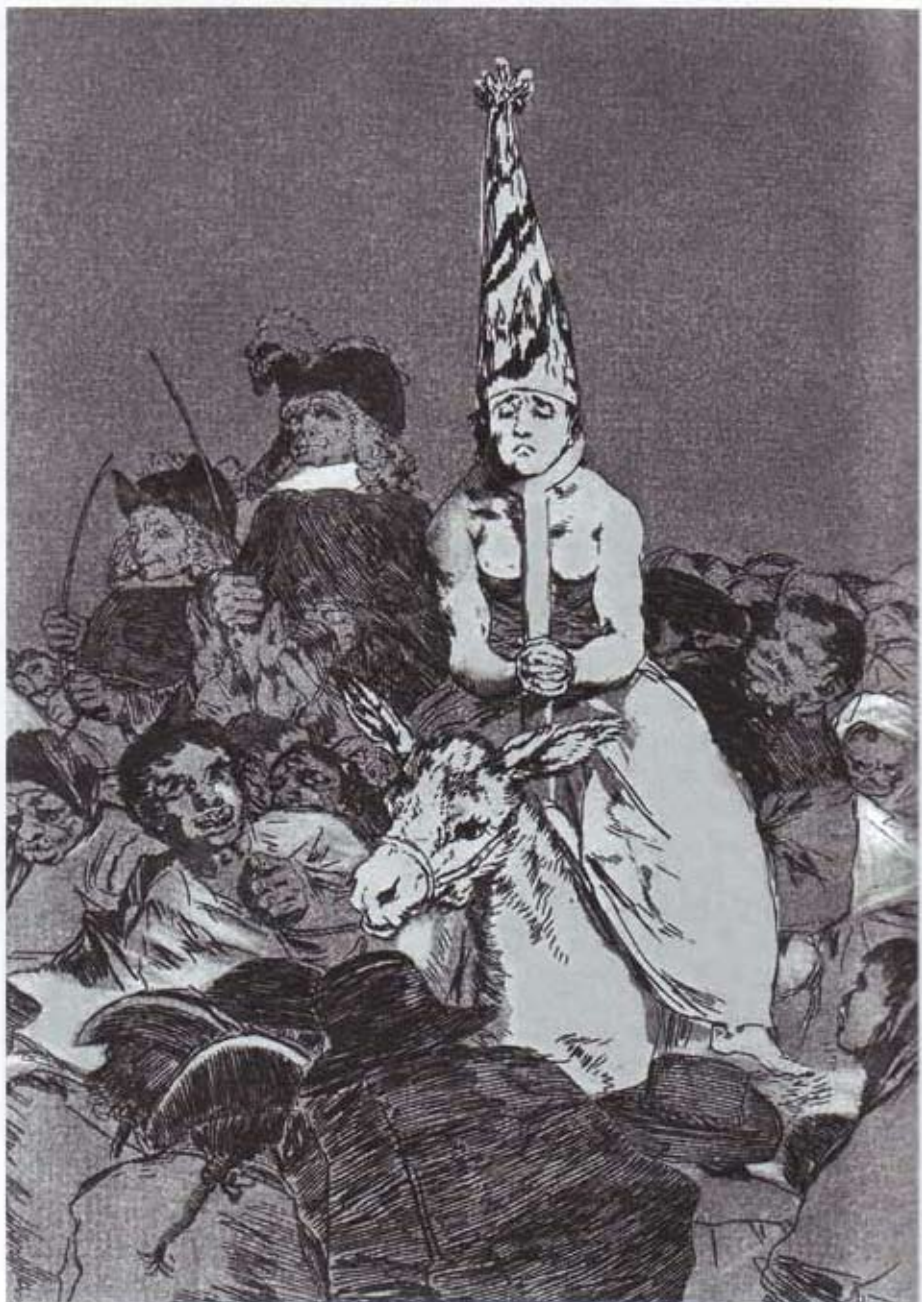
## Sibila Petlevski

### NOĆNI TRENING

#### NIGHT TRAINING

ilustracije / illustrations Francisco Goya y Lucientes, ciklus / cycles *Caprichos*

Jahala je na mazgi u širokoj suknji. Noge su joj visjele postrance, blijede, lagano smrežurane, kao izvučene iz vode. Između palčane kosti i pete prepoznatljiva je izduljena bora koja ponekad, posebice u samrtnika obliivenih hladnim znojem, već i sama po sebi može izazvati samilost, ovlažiti nam oči kao da gledamo drago lice kojem je tuga oduzela izražaj, a ne tek bosu stopalo u koje je život hodom upisao utor. Šareni tuljac s okruglom kičankom na vrhu, visoko, šiljasto pokrivalo za glavu, za koje bismo danas rekli da je u obliku preokrenuta korneta, umjesto kugle sladoleda pritisnulo je obrijanu žensku glavu. Vršak te neobične kape zabio se u neumoljivo plavetnilo španjolskog neba da bi pomoću žarkih boja, koje nisu bile nabacane tek tako, nego su, štoviše, tvorile neko znakovito šarenilo, prizivao što veći broj ljudi. Svjetina se okupljala, a mazga se kroz nju sve teže probijala. Razgoličene grudi sredovječne jahačice razdvajala je šipka oko koje su se s donje strane sklopili njeni prsti. Gornji je dio željeznim obručem učvršćivao vrat žene ophrvane čemerom kojemu nema pomoći, tako da se činilo da ovisi o *garoti* kao što bogalj ovisi o štaci, da bi klonula bez tog potpornja kao što klonu glave crnputih plemenskih ljepotica čim se oslobode ogrlica koje su im od



rođenja razdvajale pršljenove labudega vrata. U trenucima koji ne vode nikakvu izlazu, kad je sve privedeno svršetku na nepopravljiv način, položaj kapka na spuštenu oku i kut skupljenih usana tvori neku osobitu, silaznu geometriju. Crte nijema očaja odjednom izlaze iz kruga što su ga same opisale, napuštaju oval napačena lica.

Da nema metalnog prstena koji joj podiže bradu – pomislila sam gledajući prizor što ga je urezala u bakar Goyina ruka – možda bi lice žene na mazgi ostalo prazno, lišeno tragova ljudskosti. S njega bi nestalo očiju, obrva, nosa i usta. Sve bi se crte njezina lica izduljile u bolu, otopile i iscurile ispod preokrenuta korneta onoga smiješnog šešira na silu natakuta na ženinu glavu. Umrla bi prije smaknuća. Ovako u njezinu poniženju ima dostojanstva. Kad je stegne obruč *garote*, izdahnut će uzdignuta čela.

U jednom od sporednih hodnika britanske Nacionalne galerije smjestila se, skromno i nenametljivo, znamenita zbirka grafičkih listova koju je umjetnik nazvao *Caprichos*, slijedeći kozje stazice po kojima s penje ljudski duh u spoznaji svijeta, i to na tragu knjige koja se u Madridu pojavila 1665. godine pod naslovom *Diálogos de la pintura, su defensa*. Moj predak po majčinoj strani, čovjek koji se zvao Vincencio Carducho, a bio je pisac gore spomenutih dijaloga o slikarstvu, potaknuo je velikoga Goyu na genijalno djelo društvene kritike. Godine 1793, kad je umjetnik započeo ciklus, Španjolsku su potresale spletke. Carlos IV, koji je tada bio na vlasti, vukao je za nos narod potpomognut lukavstvom kojekakvih pripuza, raznih prostaka i kobasičara što su uvježbali umijeće dodvoravanja i tako se domogli položaja i novca. Dobro su znali kako treba s ruljom. Nakon svakoga skandala uslijedila bi proslava, svetkovina u kojoj su sredstva korištena namjenski, za užutkivanje već poprilično nestrpljive i razočarane gomile. Uostalom poznato

In her broad skirt, she was riding a mule. Her feet were hanging at the side, pale, lightly wrinkled, as if pulled out of water. Between the toe and the ankle there was that characteristic extended line that sometimes, particularly in mortals covered in cold sweat, could excite compassion all by itself, moisten our eyes as if we were looking at a dear face that had had its expression stolen from it by sorrow, and not just a bare foot in which life on the move had inscribed a furrow. The patterned roll with the round bobble on the top, that tall, pointed head covering that we might today describe as being in the form of an upside-down cornet pressed down on a shaved female head instead of a scoop of ice-cream. The tip of this unusual cap stabbed into the implacable blue of the Spanish sky, its brilliant colours, not just scattered around anyhow, creating a meaningful pattern, appealing to as many people as possible. The mob gathered round, and the mule found it hard to push its way through. The bared breasts of the middle-aged rider were separated by a bar around which her fingers were curled on the bottom end. The upper part with its iron hoop strengthened the neck of the woman, gripped by an affliction that there was no helping, so that it seemed she was as dependent on this garrote as the cripple on his crutch, that she would have collapsed without this brace, as the heads of black-skinned tribal beauties give way as soon as they are freed of the necklace that have kept the vertebrae of their swanlike necks apart ever since their birth. In moments that lead to no way out, when everything is brought down to its ending in some irremediable manner, the position of the lids on the drooping eye and the angle of the pursed lips create some distinctive geometry of descent. The lines of dumb despair at once depart from the circles that they have themselves described, forsaking the oval of the anguished face.

If there had been no metal ring to keep her chin up – I thought, looking at the scene that the hand of

vam je kako to ide. Inkvizicija je uvijek spremna proniknuti u opći jezik umjetničke poruke, pa je tako mogla razotkriti Goyin *idioma universal* koji se skrivao iza maske ludila. Oko glave usnula majstora letjeli su šišmiši i sove, što se lijepo vidi na četrdeset i trećem listu *Caprichosa*. Političke prikaze i moralne nakaze, poput ostalih rugoba duha i tijela, zna se, odlaze kad svane. Gomila čudovišta čiju golotinju obasjavaju zvijezde spremna je izjaviti: "Otići ćemo u zoru". Goya zapisuje njihovo obećanje na grafički papir, ali neugodna slutnja ostaje visjeti u zraku. Hoće li otići? Ja vas pitam, dragi moji – Hoće li ikada otići? – i s tom vas dvojbom privremeno ostavljam kako bih u najboljem društvu, dakle sama sa



Goya had incised in copper – perhaps the face of this woman on the mule would have remained a blank, deprived of traces of humanity. From it, the eyes, brows, nose and mouth would have gone. All the lines of her face would have lengthened in pain, dissolved, drained away from under this upturned cornet of that ridiculous hat crammed down by force on the woman's head. She would have died before her execution. As it was, there was dignity in her humiliation. When the hoop of the garrotte was pulled tight, she would expire with head held high.

In one of the side corridors of the British National Gallery, modestly and unassumingly, was located a celebrated collection of prints that the artist called *Caprichos*, following the goat track along which the human spirit climbs in its cognition of the world, in the steps of the book that appeared in Madrid in 1665 entitled *Dialogos de la pintura, su defensa*. An ancestor of mine on my mother's side, a man called Vincencio Carducho, the writer of these dialogues about painting, set the great Goya off on a brilliant work of social criticism. In 1793, when the artist started this cycle, Spain was riven by conspiracies. Carlos IV, then in power, had hoodwinked the people, abetted by the duplicity of an array of toadies, various vulgarians and sausage-makers that had exercised the art of flattery and had thus achieved position and fortune. They were very well aware of how to handle the multitude. After every scandal, there would be a celebration, a feast in which the resources were used to the point, for the silencing of the by now fairly impatient and disappointed rabble. Anyway, you know the way it is. The Inquisition was always ready to delve into the general language of the artistic message, and would easily have been able to uncover Goya's *idioma universal* hiding behind the mask of madness. Bats and owls flew around the head of the sleeping master, as can be very distinctly made out on the forty third sheet of the *Caprichos*. Political spectres and moral monsters, like other mockeries of spirit and body, it is known, depart at dawn. The mass of freaks whose nakedness is illuminated by the stars are ready to announce: "We are gone at dawn". Goya notes their promise on the paper of the print, but the embarrassing presentiment still hangs in the air. Will they really go? I ask you, my dears – will they ever go? – and I would leave you with this doubt when, in the best possible company, that is, my own, I walk around this London shrine of the arts once again. This time in memory.

My recollection is deliberate. It is not without reason, and is connected with an event that might interest

sobom, još jednom prošetala londonskim hramom umjetnosti. Samo ovaj put u sjećanju.

Moje je sjećanje namjerno. Nije bez razloga i vezano je uz događaj koji bi vas mogao zanimati. Naravno, ako imate za to strpljivosti i volje. Ako ste neskloni samostalno izvoditi zaključke, ako vam je tako lijepo da ništa ne biste mijenjali, onda prepustite drugima da sa mnom dijele malodušje.

Silazila sam širokim, mramornim stubama, ubrzanim korakom, svjesna da bi se uskoro moglo oglasiti zvonce koje podsjeća da je vrijeme za odlazak. Bilo je jesensko doba kad se rano, iznenadno obrušava mrak. A onda sam ih opazila: svih osamdeset crnih bisera Goyine bolesne mašte bilo je tamo pod slabim svjetlom, na nekom zidu gdje se činilo kao da im nije mjesto, kao da su ušli na mala vrata, kao da je onaj koji ih je postavljao pazio da se ne nađu nikome na putu. Prišla sam bliže prizorima koji su se otvarali pred mojim očima kroz tisuće crta i crtica ugriženih u bakar i uronjenih u duboku tamu akvatinte. Pa ipak, to nije bio crno-bijeli svijet.

"U prirodi ima isto tako malo boja kao i linija, postoji samo sunce i sjene. ja vidim samo dalje i bliže planove, ispupčenja i udubine. Daj mi komad ugljena i ja ću ti napraviti sliku" – rekao je Goya nekom prijatelju.

Često sam razmišljala o toj rečenici. Gledajući *Caprichose*, shvatila sam njezino značenje. U brazdama metala po kojem je grebala majstorova ruka bile su skrivene okrutne boje sredozemnog sunca. Možda sam već tada izvlačila određene paralele, uočavala nedopuštene sličnosti promatrajući grafički list na kojem je Goya prikazao poglavara magaraca koji ga bespogovorno, premda tužno slijede. Tko zna čije biste vi kuštrave sjedine i kukast nos prepoznali u liku papagaja za govornicom kojeg sluša "ushičena hrpa slaboumnika, jedva razumijevajući što im govori, lica iskrivljenih od udvornosti i laske? Možda doista "u tome ima nečeg od akademske sredine", kako je Goya zapisao ispod prikaza papagaja i njegovih slušača.

Udubljena u svijet *Caprichosa* dugo nisam zapazila da imam društvo, da je pokraj mene još netko zabavljen motrenjem. Tenisice velikoga broja izvodile su laganu vježbu: prsti-peta, prsti-peta. Tek je tiho, ritmičko škripanje gumenih

you. If, of course, you have the will and the patience. If you are inapt to draw your conclusions independently, if life is so pleasant for you that you would change nothing, then leave it to others to share this despondency with me.

I was walking down the broad marble staircase, with a rapid step, aware that the bell that marked closing time would soon ring. It was that period of autumn when dark can swoop down early and unexpected. And then I noticed them: all the eighty black pearls of Goya's febrile imagination were there, under a weak light, on some wall where they seemed to be out of place, as if they had come in the back way, as if the person who had placed them there had taken care they should be in no one's way. I approached the scenes that opened up in front of my eyes in a thousand lines and dashes scratched into the copper and immersed in the profound dark of aquatint. And yet, this was not black and white world.

"In nature there are as few colours as there are lines, there are only the sun and the shadows, and I see closer and further only planes, convexities and concavities. Give me a piece of charcoal, and I shall make you an image," said Goya to a friend.

I had often thought about this sentence. Looking at the *Caprichos* I realised its meaning. Hidden in the grooves of the metal that the hand of the master had scratched upon were the harsh colours of the Mediterranean sun. Perhaps I was even then drawing certain parallels, noting forbidden similarities, observing the print on which Goya showed the leader of the donkeys that followed him uncomplainingly if sadly. Who knows whose unkempt grey hairs and hooked nose you would recognise in the figure of the parrot at the rostrum being listened to by the enthralled mass of lamebrains, hardly understanding what he was telling them, faces all distorted in sheer flattery and ingratiation. Perhaps there really is "something of the academic milieu in this", as Goya wrote under his depiction of the parrot and his listeners.

Immersed in the world of the *Caprichos*, it took me some time to realise I had company, that there was someone else by my side amused in observation. Large sized sneakers did a gentle exercise: toe to heel, toe to heel. The quiet rhythmic squeaking of the rubber attracted my attention, but only for a moment. Well, good lord, we are all different. One person will absently tug a lock of hair, another scratch his chin, a third tap her foot. The body will

potplata privuklo moju pozornost, ali nakratko. Ta zaboga, svi smo mi različiti. Jedan odsutno vrti pramen kose, drugi češka podbradak, treći lupka nogom. Tijelo nikad ne miruje. kad se duh usmjeri na neki predmet i počne ponirati u dubine novoga, zanimljivog i nepoznatog, tijelo kao da obuzme strepnja, kao da ga prožme strah od napuštanja i osamljenosti, pa počne izvoditi kojekakve glupe kretnje ne bi li podsjetilo dušu, svoga rastresenog gazdu, da je još tu, da je vjerno i pomalo nestrpljivo poput psa koji s uzicom u zubima čeka da ga vlasnik povede u šetnju. Pa čovjek ima pravo škripati tenisicama dok gleda umjetnine, zar ne? Prsti-peta. Prsti-peta.

never be still. When the spirit is concentrated on some object, and starts delving into the depths of something new, interesting and unknown, the body is as if were overcome by angst, as if suffused with fear of being abandoned and left alone, and starts pulling off all kinds of silly movements to remind the spirit, its absent-minded master, that it is still here, that it is faithful and a little bit restive like some dog that waits leash in mouth for its master to take it out for walkies. Well, so a person had the right to squeak with his sneakers while he was looking at artworks, didn't he? Toe to heel, toe to heel.

"Well? And so what?" I thought when out of the corner of my eye I caught sight of the feet of a man.

Like me, he too had halted in front of one of the prints hung upon the wall, no frame, just glazed. There would have been nothing out of the ordinary about it if the feet had not been in such large sizes. It wasn't just any ordinary sneakers tapping, rather the kind that basketball players are forced to buy. I raised my glance and ... he really was tall. Huge all way round. He wore an old grey tracksuit that had gone baggy at the rear and knees, and a lined leather jacket over it. On his head he had a jazzy skiing cap with a bobble. He wasn't concerned about me. Not about anyone. He was lost in the scene that I had already left for the next. This was the scene of the woman condemned to death by strangulation, riding through Madrid on a mule turned to the curious mob, accompanied by two guards on horseback. Who knows what it was that kept him in front of this scene? If I felt like joking, I would say that he fancied the pointed cap with the tassel on the woman's head. I mean, the darkies are always keen on bright colours aren't they? He stuck out his chest, raised his chin. He went three steps backward, as if measuring up the work of art. He took a deep breath and then loudly and peremptorily let the air out through his mouth like a player who was getting ready to do a throw in. A few more times, he shifted the weight from toe to heel, with an only just audible muttering before he jumped the first time. I was taken aback. He gave a quiet whoop. Putting his right leg out to one side, the man started rocking. A throaty sound like groaning tautened the veins on his neck and descended towards his stomach. Bringing his feet together, he jumped at first slowly, and then faster and faster, very adroitly, as if he had long been exercising this frenzy in a special hidden place set aside for it, as if



– I? Što s tim? – pomislila sam u trenutku kad je krajičak mojeg oka uhvatio noge muškarca.

Poput mene, i on se zaustavio ispred jednog od grafičkih listova obješenih na zid, bez okvira, samo pod staklom. Ne bi tu bilo ništa neobično da se nije radilo o nogama vrlo velikoga broja. Nisu pocupkivale obične tenisice, već takve kakve su prisiljeni kupovati košarkaši. Podigla sam pogled i ... stvarno je bio visok. Golem u svakom pogledu. Nosio je staru, sivu trenirku koja je postala vrećasta na stražnjici i koljenima, a preko nje podstavljenu kožnu jaknu. Na glavi je imao šarenu skijašku kapu s *copfom*. Nije ga bilo briga za mene. Ni za koga. Zadubio se u prizor s kojeg sam ja već prešla na slijedeći. Bio je to prikaz one žene osudene na smrt gušenjem koja je jahala Madridom na mazgi okružena znatiželjnom svjetinom, u pratnji dvaju čuvara na konjima. Tko zna što ga je zadržalo pred tim prizorom? Kad bi mi bilo do šale, rekla bih da mu se svidjela šiljata kapa s kičankom na ženinoj glavi. Mislim, crnci vole sve što ima šare, ne? Isprsi se, podigao bradu. Udaljio se tri koraka unatrag kao da odmjerava umjetninu. Duboko je udahnuo i potom zvučno, kratko ispustio zrak kroz usta poput igrača koji se sprema izvesti slobodno bacanje. Još je nekoliko puta prebacio težinu s prstiju na pete uz jedva čujno mumljanje prije nego što je prvi put poskočio. Bila sam zatečena. Tiho je podvrisnuo. Iskoračivši desnom nogom ustranu, muškarac se počeo njihati. Grleni zvuk sličan stenjanju napinjao mu je žile na vratu i spuštao se prema trbuhu. Skupivši noge, poskakivao je prvo sporo, potom sve brže i brže, vrlo spretno, baš kao da je dugo uvježbavao mahovitost na nekom za to predviđenu, skrovitu mjestu, kao da se pripremao za javni ispad u Nacionalnoj galeriji.

Ostala sam kao prikovana. Tako nešto nisam u životu vidjela. Golemi, snažni crnac u skijaškoj kapi s *copfom* skakao je u vis. To više nije bilo skakutanje. On je dipao kao po odskočnoj daski. Uhvatila sam mu pogled. Do tada se nisam bojala. U očima što su uzalud tražile žarište sabila se snaga miješalice spremne smožditi zidove zajedno sa mnom, zdrobiti me, utabati u prah. Pomislila sam da me zapazio, pa me napokon uhvatio strah. A on je i dalje skakao. Izvodio je to odmjereno, sporije, svaki put sve bliže stropu. Isprva tiho podvrisivanje postalo je

he had been preparing for a public outburst in the National Gallery.

I was riveted. I had never seen such a thing in my life. This vast, powerful black man in his skiing cap jumping up and down. It was no longer hopping. He was jumping as if he were on a springboard. I caught his glance. Up to then, I had not been afraid. In eyes that were vainly looking for some focus the strength of some concrete mixer ready to obliterate the walls and me with them, crush me, stamp me into dust were gathering. It occurred to me he had noticed me, and I was at last gripped by fear. And he kept on leaping. He did it measuredly, more slowly, each time increasingly close to the ceiling. The initially fairly quiet whoops were becoming louder. In the pauses between the strenuous leaps upwards, his two-metre body would shudder on the spot, muscles flickering, while a muttering more and more like some snarling in rhythmic phrases would emerge from this throat. Every part would end with a gulping of air, after which two intelligible words would follow. He would utter them as he breathed out, sending their sound back into the abdominal cavity: *Papa Legba*. When the deepest *baaa* reached the bottom of the man's diaphragm, then came the jump, and after it the final liberation of power in a yell that was this time so piercing and powerful that my legs fled down the stairs all by themselves. Even several floors lower, right in front of the exit, I could still hear the shrieks that the security men were running towards.

I left this majestic edifice of British national shrine of art in which this discipline of some unknown cultural policy had gone wild. Outside, a cold violet dusk was falling, the kind that wraps some cities at the transition of autumn into winter. It was only at the crossing of two very busy streets that lay a whole block off that I felt my jaws slowly losing their cramp, and my limbs being slowly left by that uncomfortable feeling of high tension that had made me run, although at no time was it real fear, rather some primordial spiritual and physical shock at the encounter with an inexplicable phenomenon. I pressed the button at the traffic light, waiting for it to go green. Everything went on its own way again: passers-by, cars. A stretch of pricey shops had already closed their doors to customers. In the shallow entrance in front of a lighted shop-window defended by bars a London street-person was making his bed. He was just getting ready for rest while I was crossing the road. I could see him sitting on his blanket and

glasnije. U razmacima između napornih izbačaja u vis, njegovo dvometarsko tijelo podrhtavalo je na mjestu titrajući mišićima, dok mu je iz grla dopiralo mrljanje sve više nalik rezanju ritmičkih fraza. Svaka je dionica završavala hvatanjem zraka iza kojeg bi uslijedile dvije razgovijetne riječi. Skakač bi ih izgovarao u izdahu, vraćajući im zvuk u trbušnu šupljinu: "Papa Legba". Kad je najdublji "baaaa" dotaknuo dno muškarčeva ošita, uslijedio je skok, a iza njega konačno oslobađanje snage u urliku koji je taj put bio tako prodoran i silovit da su moje noge same poletjele niza stube. I nekoliko katova niže, neposredno pred izlazom, još se moglo čuti krikove ususret kojima su trčali ljudi iz osiguranja.

Napustila sam velebno zdanje britanskog nacionalnog hrama umjetnosti u kojem je divljao sljedbenik nepoznate kulturne politike. Vani se spuštao hladan, plavičast sumrak kakav obavija poneke gradove na prijelazu jeseni u zimu. Tek na raskrižju vrlo prometnih ulica koje se nalazilo čitav blok dalje osjetila sam kako mi se vilice oslobađaju grča, a udove polako napušta onaj neugodni osjećaj visoke napetosti koji me je natjerao na trk, premda ni u kojem trenutku to nije bio pravi strah već prije iskonska duševna i tjelesna potresenost pri susretu s neobjašnjivom pojavom. Pritisnula sam gumb na semaforu čekajući da se upali zeleno. Sve je opet išlo svojim tijekom: prolaznici, automobili. Niz skupih prodavaonica već je zatvorilo vrata kupcima. U plitkoj veži ispred osvjetljena izloga zaštićenog rešetkama prostro je ležaj londonski klošar. Upravo se spremao na počinak dok sam prelazila cestu. Vidjela sam kako sjeda na deku i zijeva, a potom odvrće drvenu nogu. Legao je na bok, pokrio se kaputom i stavio torbu pod glavu. Protezu je privukao uza se da mu bude nadohvat ruke, ako bi kome palo na um da mu je pokuša ukrasti. Starac s drvenom nogom bio je smiren. Napokon, imao je zato razloga. Natkriveno mjesto slično kutiji našao je prije drugih skitnica. I u mene se vratio mir. Obuzeo me sjetni spokoj, osjećaj blizak ravnodušju koji obuzima sve stanovnike velikih gradova, čak i one najčutilnije, najduševnije, ljude poput nas, koje ne bismo ni u snu nazvali beščutnima. Ipak, mora da je strah čučao u meni još od sučeljenja s tamnopusitim skakačem i samo je čekao neki, makar kako sitan povod, da izađe na površinu. Povod je imao oblik

yawning, and then unscrewing his wooden leg. He lay on his side, covered himself with a coat, and put a bag underneath his head. He drew his artificial limb up to himself, so as to have it at hand, just in case it occurred to anyone to attempt to nick it. The old man with the wooden leg was calm. And he had reason to be, after all. He had found a covered spot like a box before the other street-people. And peace came back to me too. I was overcome by a melancholy calm, a feeling close to apathy that overcomes the inhabitants of the great cities, even the most sensitive, the most spiritual, people like us, whom we wouldn't dream of calling insensitive. Still, fear must have been lurking in me since my encounter with the dark-skinned jumper and just been waiting for some reason to come out on the surface, however slight. This occasion bore the shape of a man. He had a woollen cap on his head, jeans and a leather jacket, and was not particularly tall, but he was young and black, and looked dangerous. I was walking down a street that did, it is true, belong to a quiet neighbourhood, but in the evening it seemed deserted, particularly on a stretch with a few chestnut trees that kept out the lighting. When I realised that this young man was coming towards me, with the swaggering walk typical of street thugs, it was already too late to run. It would only have spurred his hunting instinct. I paced evenly towards trouble, my look downwards, not raising it even when he stood in front of me. I put my arm down by my body, and he had nothing else to do but push the leaflet in the pocket of my coat. For he was handing out advertising materials, which I realised only at this close encounter. I was ashamed. He went on, yelling back: "Read it, and you won't have to walk the street with your head down any more!"

The flier said:

"It's not important that you are weak. Not important that you are a woman. Don't be afraid. Take things into your own hands. Call, or just show up for the night training. Rope Yard Rails 47".

Alongside the address, in the south east of London, were two telephone numbers, and the name of the Grand Master of some skill that I heard of for the first time was written. He was called Papa Legba.

Several years have passed since that event. I don't find things easy. Vincencio warns me from the grave:

"An educated person is unwilling to follow instructions, finds it hard to walk in the column of the asses.

muškarca. Nosio je vunenu kapu na glavi, traperice i kožnu jaknu i nije bio odveć visok, ali je bio mlad i crn i djelovao je opasno. Kretala sam se ulicom koja je doduše pripadala pitomoj četvrti, ali je uvečer djelovala pusto, posebice na odvojkju s nekoliko kestenova koji su zasjenjivali rasvjetu. Kad sam opazila da mi ususret dolazi mladić razmetljiva hoda kakav odlikuje ulične razbijače, bilo je kasno potrčati. Tako bih samo potaknula njegov lovački nagon. Koračala sam ravno prema nevolji spuštenu pogleda koji nisam podigla čak ni kad mi je prepriječio put. Opustila sam ruke uz tijelo, a njemu nije preostalo drugo nego ugurati letak u džep na mojem kaputu. On je, naime, dijelio propagandni materijal, što sam shvatila tek pri bliskome sučeljenju. Bilo me je stid. Pošao je dalje, doviknuvši: "Pročitaj, i više nećeš hodati ulicom pognute glave".

Na letku je stajalo sljedeće:

Nije važno što ste slabi. Nije važno što ste žena. Neka vas ne bude strah. Uzmite stvar u svoje ruke. Nazovite ili jednostavno dođite na noćni trening. Rope Yard Rails 47

Uz adresu koja je bila u jugoistočnom dijelu Londona stajala su i dva telefonska broja, a pisalo je i ime velemajestora neke vještine za koju sam prvi puta čula. Zvao se Papa Legba.

Od toga je događaja prošlo nekoliko godina. Nije mi lako. Vincencio me iz groba opominje:

"Intelektualac nevoljko slijedi naputke, teško mu je kročiti u koloni magaraca. Draži mu je teži put i radije skače poput kozoroga krivudavim stazama duha".

Hodam li i ja u povorci sivonja? Jesam li iznevjerila pretka? *Caprichosi* će kad-tad doći i u moj grad, a kad stignu, tako mi Boga, okrenut ću ona dva broja. Možda još nije kasno za noćni trening.

He likes the harder route, and is keener on jumping like a chamoix along the crooked paths of the spirit."

Am I too walking in the parade of the greys?  
Have I betrayed my forebear? The *Caprichos* will come to my town sooner or later and when they do, by the lord, I shall ring those two numbers. Perhaps it is not too late for some night training.

