Ndrek Gjini(01/10/1963)

Ndrek Gjini was born in Albania. After his graduation from the University of Shkoder in Albania, with a BA (Honours) in Language and Literature he worked first as a teacher and then as a journalist. During these years he published four books in the Albanian language, and many poems, reviews, essays and articles in Albanian newspapers and magazines.

In 2002, he moved to the West of Ireland. In 2004, he undertook a course at CCFE that led to a National Certificate in Print Journalism; at GMIT he earned a BA (Honours) in Heritage Studies.

In 2011 he received an MA in Writing at National University of Ireland, Galway. His research and teaching interests are in digital humanities, book history, textual studies and bibliography, scholarly editing, and 20th-century literature. His poems, short stories and reviews have been published in Journals and Magazines in many countries. Ndrek’s first collection of poems in the English language, The Death of Night, was published in 2011 by EMAL. He was selected to read at the Stroketown International Poetry Festival in 2011, and was a featured poet in the ‘Cyphers’ Magazine, Issue 71. His work has also been published in The Mayo Anthology (Present Tense), in 2006, and in the Writing4all Anthology, “The best of 2011”. ‘The Connaught Telegraph’, ‘Galway Advertiser’, ‘Galway City Tribune’, and ‘Sin’ are among other newspapers and magazines where his work has been featured. He has been invited to read at the Galway- Mayo Institute of Technology on both Galway and Castlebar campuses and at the Culture Night events.

During 2012-2013, he worked, as the Arts Office Assistant, in the Community and Culture Department of the Galway City Council. Currently he works for the Galway Education Centre and is the webmaster and editor of and Managing Editor of The Galway Review, ()
Calendar

My grandmother had a true calendar, a meaningful, eventful one. “You were born four moons after the heavy flooding which killed half of the town, twelve moons before the communists dynamited the church. It was just two moons after the grapes were ripened,” she used to say to me.

As a child, until I began school, I knew nothing of the fact that I was born on October 1st 1963.

A heartless man it must have been who invented the calendar, a man without memory, I think.

The names of days, weeks, months, years are meaningless things, only signs. Nothing more.

If I tell you my birthday with the current calendar, I tell you nothing about myself. But what if I use my grandmother’s calendar?

Ndrek Gjini
Challenge

If you live locked up
in the prison of hate
and feed your days
with the milk of love,
this means that you
have emerged victorious
from your great battle
against Satan’s spirit,
and reached out to collapse
the walls of malice.

Ndrek Gjini
Dark Feelings

Into the bog of bad habits,
I am swimming every day.
Mosquitoes, marsh plants and mud,
are pestering me, from my feet to my eyes.
From here, I can see only some slaves
building a statue for the devil.

An old bull-cart filled up
with all my broken years
stands on the shore of this bog
waiting for me to pull it.

Sleepwalking, I leave the bog,
and towards the bull-cart I go.
Pulling it through the mire
alongside of this bog land
its wheels begin to write
some very boring stories
on the mud’s umber paper.

While the night falls
the voices of frogs begin to be
the only cradle-song of my hopes.

Ndrek Gjini
There is a forest with lots of birds.  
Somewhere down,  
at the foot of this forest, is my home.  
In the distance lies a railroad, not far,  
and then the sea.

Some birds migrate from the forest each autumn  
and come back in the spring.  
I leave of my house every morning  
and return in the evening.  
A train passes by at the break of day,  
returns at noon,  
only to leave again just before midnight.  
The sea recedes from the shore  
whenever the moon is full  
and comes back with wild waves  
once the new moon begins.

In this come-and-go game,  
life revolves around itself perpetually.  
The first to tire out  
in this roundabout motion  
is going to be me,  
and one day I am going to take an endless break.

Ndrek Gjini
Gm Products

GM Products

(and maybe GM verse)

It must have been night, definitely,
when some mad scientists,
like crude thieves, broke in to God’s garden
and hastily began to make
fruits, vegetables, butter, even meat,
out of chemical substances.

Afterwards, other crooks
filled up all the shops with these
hermaphroditic products.

When all is said and done,
one thing still bothers me:
are we eating this food
or is this food eating us?

Ndrek Gjini
My mother did not die of old age, 
nor did any illness lay her low in bed. 
Her worries for us, the fugitives, 
broke her heart, 
and one day she decided 
to not breathe anymore.

Her last breath became wind, 
and it's blowing wild 
on this November day, 
whistling and singing to my ears, 
sometimes as a lullaby, 
other times a lament. 
And very often her voice in the wind 
says to me: 
‘Why so late my son?’

Ndrek Gjini
Lesson 1

Lesson 1

Acrostic

Try at least to go	right, not be right, since no one is
always right. While
value can be found in the everyday, as long as you traverse the roads of
every village, city, meadow, mountain or sky,
leaving behind empty bottles and full memories.

Drink clears the smog inside your head;
repeat this saying like you’re praying it. Drink
in pubs and wine bars as though they were temples,
newly built by the religion of joy, to please and
keep us closer to our souls.

Eat not just food, but good recollections too
at your travel trips and drink sessions, by grabbing
time before time grabs you.

Ndrek Gjini
Letter From Prison

Letter from prison

My dear friend!
This letter for you
I've written down
here in this green jail
where my word smells like grass,
and my dreams are getting wet in the rain.
Here, where the life and death
have no demarcation line.
Here, where the grass, the rain and flowers
are giving up the ghost
and being born again into a day
as if by magic.

Ndrek Gjini
Lucky Dogs

I witnessed a love moving from a man to a dog.

Some month ago, our neighbors got married. Happiness, kisses, flying in and out. It seemed like endless love.

Last week my neighbor’s scratched face, the blood dripping down his face like tears, killed my sleep. His screams and mad exit, were THE END signature of this love story.

Yesterday his ex-wife stopped her BMW in haste. She came out of her car passionately kissing a big dog.

Ndrek Gjini
On Holidays

I was looking through a recipe book
trying to find out how to cook a good fish.
I started to wonder...
what if a fish was looking up
a good recipe
on how to cook a man.

Delirious, I left the kitchen
and my feet brought me to the sea.
I splashed into the world of fishes
and forgot to eat; I felt no hunger at all.

Ndrek Gjini
The Death Of Night

Ndrek Gjini

The Death of Night

Selected poems

The death of night

The day is downing.
My insomnia and I
are gazing at this night’s body and eyes
waking its last moments of life.

Lamps glow inside and outside houses,
and neon lights on the roads and squares
are like bandages on its injured body.

The sun starts opening
the gates of light bit by bit
and the night’s last breathing
ends as a blissful spirit.

The night just died.
Let its soul rest in peace.
Amen.

The Balkan View

I have just passed
the Old City of Dubrovnik.
The beautiful hill of Cilipi,
like a green hand waves at me.
Then a small river near Gruda
guides me towards Herceg-Novii.
A checkpoint appears here,
like mouth of a gigantic bear.
then, after just 50 meters
another checkpoint
and then, another one.
After that sheep grazing in peace,
like small white flags
move on the stunning lawns of Bijela.
On the roads of Radovici
drunken soldiers and police officers
chew up war with their nonsense talk.
Near Kotorr a wonderful waterfall
stretches its hands towards the sea.
In Mjastori a cloud of gunpowder
swims slowly in the sky.
Then, while passing through Budva
the blue face of sea appears and hide
and then appears again as in a children’s play.
On the roadsides of Ulcinj
shadows of killed loves emerge
walking slowly, in silence.

These rare beauties of nature
can make not only the humans
of every race, nation and religion,
feel like flying towards eternity,
but birds, flowers, rivers and lawns also;
all together, in peace.
Yet, the war is the most ruthless
and powerful King
of this beautiful land.
The killings and the death
are the air, the drinking water,
and the daily bread and butter
of the inhabitants.
The only Balkan’s resident
enjoying full freedom is THE HATE.
It’s rich, powerful, and immortal.
It is the only citizen
living here with no fear.

.....

uncountable micro planets
are
circling around the earth
a heavy stone
on their shoulders time is full stop
the death appears exclamation mark
The parents do not die

Mainly the parents do not die.
They just feel lonely
when their children leave the nest,
and they start to miss their own parents.
They go to meet them
and forget to come back.
That's all.
Closed Doors

It happened years ago.
I left.
After I walked just two or three steps,
I heard the door
anxiously being closed.
I don’t know why
but ever since that moment
the sound that the door made
echoes in my ears
like the clang of a handful of pebbly soil
thrown on a coffin.
It was then
that I started to hate the closure of doors.
To me they sound like coffin lids.
Winter Eve

Cherry branches in my yard
swept by sea breeze,
swaying in the wind
like a drunkard's arms.
Leaves attempt to fly like birds,
realise their error then fall.
Horse-clouds run in a sky race
towards the horizon.
The sea squirms and turns
like a wounded tiger,
its mouth spewing masses of foam.
Trying to escape this violent cold
I begin to dream of summer heat.

Words and Waves

Words and waves
are the most heartless migrants.
The only thing they know
is the path of their escape.
They flee, just flee,
and never come back.
leaving behind memories
and debris.
Why I write

My little town
is a world in its own,
set apart from the wider world.

It is a town with no heroes,
but a town that never fell in love with fear.

The extent of its history is limited to
two or three poets,
an architect,
three blacksmiths,
and six stone-carvers.

I am a carved, walking pebble
of this heroless town,
not strong enough to fight—
that’s why I write.
Calendar

My grandmother had a true calendar,  
a meaningful, eventful one.  
"You were born four moons  
after the heavy flooding  
which killed half of the town,  
twelve moons before  
the communists dynamited the church.  
It was just two moons after  
the grapes were ripened, "  
she used to say to me.

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I knew nothing of the fact  
that I was born on October 1st 1963.

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who invented the calendar,  
a man without memory, I think.

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are meaningless things,  
only signs. Nothing more.

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with the current calendar,  
I tell you nothing about myself.  
But, what if I use  
my grandmother’s calendar?
Unfair World

A man and a tree died yesterday.
The man was killed by the tree
when a wild wind knocked it down.

Evening News:
Millions of people heard
about the death of this man.
Not a word was mentioned
about the death of the tree
or the millions of trees being killed by men.
War Against Doubt

Every time we believe,
we extend our lives a little bit.
Whenever we doubt, gravewards we go.
In this, belief/disbelief game
Old Age waits at our door,
while Death lies like a fox in ambush,
ready to lead us to the grave’s gate.

Not in vain an old man said:
“Do not open the door to doubt
in order that Death you may keep out.”
Game

There is a forest with lots of birds.
Somewhere down,
at the foot of this forest, is my home.
In the distance lies a railroad, not far, and then the sea.

Some birds migrate from the forest each autumn and come back in the spring. I leave of my house every morning and return in the evening. A train passes by at the break of day, returns at noon, only to leave again just before midnight. The sea recedes from the shore whenever the moon is full and comes back with wild waves once the new moon begins.

In this come-and-go game, life revolves around itself perpetually. The first to tire out in this roundabout motion is going to be me, and one day I am going to take an endless break.
On Holidays

I was looking through a recipe book
trying to find out how to cook a good fish.
I started to wonder...
what if a fish was looking up
a good recipe
on how to cook a man.

Delirious, I left the kitchen
and my feet brought me to the sea.
I splashed into the world of fishes
and forgot to eat; I felt no hunger at all.
Wires

I was fourteen
when our literature teacher said:
‘For today’s homework
you have to write a poem about your arms’.
The next day I stood up before the class and recited:
‘My arms are like very, very long wires
with which I can embrace the whole world.’
The teacher said: ‘Very good, great metaphor’.
He died peacefully
just a few years before the Wireless Era.
Lucky for him, he escaped the struggle
of all these wireless things,
even wireless loves.
Meanwhile, I mourn for the death
of my first great metaphor.
GM Products

(and maybe GM verse)

It must have been night, definitely,
when some mad scientists,
like crude thieves, broke in to God’s garden
and hastily began to make
fruits, vegetables, butter, even meat,
out of chemical substances.

Afterwards, other crooks
filled up all the shops with these
hermaphroditic products.

When all is said and done,
one thing still bothers me:
are we eating this food
or is this food eating us?
Lesson 1

Acrostic

Try at least to go
right, not be right, since no one is
always right. While
value can be found in the everyday, as long as you traverse the roads of
every village, city, meadow, mountain or sky,
leaving behind empty bottles and full memories.

Drink clears the smog inside your head;
repeat this saying like you’re praying it. Drink
in pubs and wine bars as though they were temples,
newly built by the religion of joy, to please and
keep us closer to our souls.
Eat not just food, but good recollections too
at your travel trips and drink sessions, by grabbing
time before time grabs you.

Lucky Dogs

I witnessed a love moving
from a man to a dog.

Some month ago,
our neighbours got married.
Happiness, kisses,
 flying in and out.
It seemed like endless love.
Last week my neighbour’s scratches,
and his blood dripping down his face
like tears,
killed my sleep.
His screams and mad exit,
were ‘THE END’ sign
of this Love Story.

Yesterday his ex-wife
stopped her BMW in haste.
She came out of her car
passionately kissing
her big dog.
The Train of My Life

It departed at 8:32 PM on October 1st 1963
from a maternity hospital
in a small town in North Albania,
stopped at a crèche to collect some cries,
toys, ink spilled on shirts and trousers,
a broken pencil.
Other stops included
dull classes with mountains of books,
copies, fights, loves, hates, mistakes,
first kisses, white dust from the chalk,
lost shoes on football pitches.
Then it stopped again
at different workplaces
where the head was not needed at all, just the arms,
because the bosses were the ones
who were always right.
This train passed through many
strange countries and cities,
regretful, unable to enjoy
the thrills and luxury that those places held.
During a long stop on a rainy island,
everything—feelings, memories, the body—
began to rust away beneath an endless rainfall.
The train will move on soon,
scheduled to arrive at? : ? ? ,
on an uncertain day of an uncertain month
during the 21st century,
but I hope not soon,
at a not decided yet graveyard.
Zero

I was with her. Together
we harvested the joy of life.
I do not know if it was Satan or God
that planted the thorn of hate in her soul.
However, when it became dark she left.
She locked herself into her dark house.
She rang.
‘Very quiet here,’
she said, ‘only me and solitude.’
I replied, ‘You are one, the solitude is zero,
so tell me what result will you get
when you multiply yourself with solitude.’

While answering her I was lightening the night,
and my head too, with some drinks,
celebrating with five of my friends.
How To Read The Wind

My mother did not die of old age,
nor did any illness lay her low in bed.
Her worries for us, the fugitives,
broke her heart,
and one day she decided
to not breathe anymore.

Her last breath became wind,
and it's blowing wild
on this November day,
whistling and singing to my ears,
sometimes as a lullaby,
other times a lament.
And very often her voice in the wind
says to me:
‘Why so late my son?’
The Smell of My Thoughts

My thoughts wear the smell of sunlight
every time it rains.
They wear rain’s smell
whenever the sun shines.
They wear the ice’s smell
whenever it’s hot,
and warmth’s smell they wear
during the days with frost.
The smell of flowers they wear in winter
in the summer they wear snow’s smell.
My thoughts are the only things that keep
my world and me in balance.
Without them I would fall down
like a rotten tree.
Dark Feelings

Into the bog of bad habits,
I am swimming every day.
Mosquitoes, marsh plants and mud,
are pestering me, from my feet to my eyes.
From here, I can see only some slaves
building a statue for the devil.
An old bull-cart filled up
with all my broken years
stands on the shore of this bog
waiting for me to pull it.

Sleepwalking, I leave the bog,
and towards the bull-cart I go.
Pulling it through the mire
alongside of this bog land
its wheels begin to write
some very boring stories
on the mud’s umber paper.

While the night falls
the voices of frogs begin to be
the only cradle-song of my hopes.
If you live locked up
in the prison of hate
and feed your days
with the milk of love,
this means that you
have emerged victorious
from your great battle
against Satan’s spirit,
and reached out to collapse
the walls of malice.
The house of my verses

Somewhere, inside my chest,
in the valleys of my heart
there is a house
decaying everyday.
The worms of nuisance
are gnawing its roof joists
and the chilly wind is kissing
its glassless windows.

The stones of its walls
are falling like rotten teeth
from an old man’s mouth.
Yet bashful it stands there
in its solitude, as a cherished nest
of my yet unborn stanzas.
I vowed to be my childhoods’ soldier

Last night, my sleep
slammed the door shut
and ran out in haste,
leaving my memories
and me in a desperate state.

The yearning of my youth
entered in calm,
and dragged me by hand
towards an abandoned house.

The morning came
and caught me there,
bewildered, shuffling through
some dark and bright files
of my childhood days.

I worshiped that journey
to this vanished house
because I miss its guilt,
and its pride,
I love going there
neither drunk nor sober,
as I vowed to be
my childhood’s soldier.
February

The frost under our feet
doesn’t cough that loudly,
yet it sounds more like
an old man’s mumbling.

The wind is not breathing
fast and chilly like last month.

Undressed trees
do not look that pretty
yet they seem shy, hiding within
thousands of pregnant buds.

It’s February,
the daylight
has emerged victorious
from its great battle
against dark.
The stone is my father.

Do you not know me?
I am the son of the stone.
Stone is the father and my vertebrae.
He raised me,
and taught me the art of patience.
Seasons come and go
as storks,
but the stone and my patience
like an ancient oath stand here.
The fortitude is our God,
and the fatherland our faith.

Letter from prison

My dear friend!
This letter for you
I’ve written down
here in this green jail
Where my word smells like grass.
And my dreams are getting wet in the rain.

Here, where the life and death
have no demarcation line.

Here, where the grass, the rain and flowers
are giving up the ghost
and being born again into a day
as if by magic.
The field and I

The field and I had cut our hair
last afternoon.
We had a shower by rain
last nigh.

Today, the field was woken up
by a kiss of the rainbow
Me, by my mother’s
phone-call.
Confession

I am not the one who killed the wolf.
Believe me.
Do you remember, long ago,
when some strangers came?
They were many.
With their axes and saws,
rushing toward the forest
and they cut all trees,
took them and fled.
And the wolf slinked
in a meadow covered with fog.
When the fog went away,
the wolf gazed at the murdered forest.
and died of anguish.
I'm not the one who killed the wolf.
Believe me.
Prison

Get your day,
put it in an office,
sat it down on a chair.
Say to it, obey the boss,
and your food is paid for,
Your rent is paid as well.
The drinks
at your dinners are paid too.
This is the prison.
The prison of soul
this kind of structural design has.
The rain

And the rain came,
no one can remember when.
Here, with us,
in us,
no one knows how long it's going to stay.
Making our nights starless,
our days grey.
and us walking fish,
in this soggy space which is rotting
everything.
I am a tree

I am a tree,
a walking tree.
The leaves of my thoughts and feelings
have their date of birth called ‘Spring’
and their date of death called ‘Autumn’.
I am a tree.
My green heartstrings
die and rise again within me,
again and again
until the wind of time
will knock me down.
The refrain of a pensioner.

Sitting on a bench, lonesome
in a corner of a park
he fills his lungs with green air
and idly he drinks the milk of light.

He rises slowly, and he puts the path,
as a fiction book, in his pocket
walking towards the gate of twilight
where his white-dream night lies ahead.

Every day he repeats this journey
without betraying the day, air or wind
until the twilight runs away from him
or the night locks him in forever.
My road's death

I am laying my road to rest into the grave, today.  
With it, I am laying to rest the mud, and the sun.  
There are no howls, no sighs.  
There is neither tears nor sadness,  
the silence, like an opened grave,  
is having coffee with me,  
after this funeral.
Walking by the seaside

While walking by the seaside,
sounds coming out of the waves' mouth
enable me, in less than half an hour's journey,
to meet myself when crying for a broken toy,
to talk to my mother who died years ago,
to hug my nephew who will be born next decade.
to wait in agony before my death
until my daughter will come back to me
to say goodbye,
to see my niece's tear-filled eyes
while she lays a bouquet of flowers on my grave.
The waves' tunes are not like our bodies
They are eternal,
like our souls,
like our dreams,
like our love.
We do have a sea inside
with great waves
which create incredible, eternal tunes.

That's why
we do not die, 
we just pass by. 
from earth to sky.

I'm not the black cat.

I am not the black cat. 
There were four of us; 
my grandmother, 
a black cat, 
a myth, 
and I. 
My grandmother often 
told us a myth. 
When you are ill, she said, 
if a black cat 
comes and sits on your bed 
it means that you 
will die soon. 
I was only six,
seriously ill.
Our black cat
came and sat on my bed.
I just remember
some crashes and screams
and a handle of the brush
hitting that poor cat.
Years passed.
My grandmother,
and the black cat,
died.

I,
and the myth,
not yet.
But, I am not the black cat.

Fugitive

Yes, I can go. I can leave right now.
An airplane or train ticket
for 10 or 15 pounds of flesh and bones,
including some clothes
and some necessary domestic things,
and ....good-bye.

However, I’m not gone,
as my memories and feelings
are disobedient. They never leave,
and I can’t dictate anything to them.

So, when you’ll see me leaving
don’t even think I’m gone.
It’s not me.
It’s just a heft of myself
escaping from fighting with me.
‘Stop’ signs

‘Stop’ signs horrify me.
Every time I look at them
I start thinking about a great disaster
which could happen, if those cold metal signs
with just four letters applied
to our thoughts, our feelings and our dreams.
All the roads within the world of our souls
would be trapped in big traffic jams.
Warning sirens, crashes, fires,
would appear everywhere
in this endless fast-moving network.
The world of our souls would go crazy,
and within a few days time
a sign with ten letters would appear,
‘Extinction’.
Walking not permitted

I know that,
when death will knock
at the door of my house
I will be in bed, in agony.

Oh, how much I would like
to be standing up,
when I will hear this unexpected knock.
Perhaps searching on my bookshelf
for a book to read,
or making a coffee for myself.

I would love be able to open the door
to this rare guest and invite it in.

However, God made us
unable to walk when we were born
and that’s why he wants us lame
when we are dying.

Death is indeed like birth,
a world full of mystery,
where walking is not permitted.
Swimming in blood and tears

It’s raining.
They are not raindrops there,
you are bullets.
Bullets from pistols, kalashnikovs, mitrailleuses
fired toward no one. (Sorry,
you are fired skyward.)
The gunners want to kill the sky.
Not God, no.
(At least they say so).
However, God owns the sky.
He doesn’t like the bullets.
Therefore, he turns those bullets
down here,
as if they were raindrops.
It’s not the Universe
that is gone crazy,
no, no.
It’s the humans. I mean the gunners.
There are no clouds in the sky
but still the rain is falling daily,
a rain of bullets.
My body, my soul and the sky
are swimming in blood and tears,
and again.... and again....
we still believe in God, 
because we hate war.

Memories from the war in winter

Kosove 1999

Some powerful bombs exploded.  
Black out.  
The power is cut off.  
There is no moonlight tonight.  
Inside and out, dark.  
There are neither candles  
nor lighters here in my house.  
My memory is shaking from the frost  
and like an abandoned pensioner  
is sitting on the bench of this night  
and talking to themselves.
My dreams, are grinning with no reason
like my handicapped neighbour.  
While this frozen night,  
overloaded with dead bodies,  
of murdered hopes, is moving slowly  
on the streets of this darkness  
towards the new century.  

The frost of oblivion  

The frost of oblivion  
has iced up all the tears in my eyes.  
My words are shaking as willows’ twigs  
on the surface of a river flow.  
My smile, bereaved, is dying within me  
. ........
While my body is converted to a statue
where behind it, after-midnight, drunkards vomit.
A shadow of a frightened man

Did you ever think
how weak are the valiant men,
the heroes, as we like to call them.
They rule brutally,
they shout and scream, they kill
because they are afraid.
They do not believe in themselves
and their ability to compete fairly
in the battle of this life.

In my hometown a proverb says:
‘To kill is not bravery;
he who forgives is twice brave’.
This was repeated very often.
Maybe that is why
whenever I hear the word ‘hero’,
in my mind's eyes I see
the shadow of a frightened man
suffering from paranoia.
Walking the streets

This evening I walk the streets
hand in hand with my grief.
I have left, locked in my house,
my disabled memories
and my crazy dreams.
So, the streets, my grief, and I
are ruling the world tonight.
Oh, you cannot imagine
how relaxed this walk is,
without those foolish memories
and those mad dreams.
My last breathe

... And my last breathe is ending slowly
blowing and blowing on some cinders
which have been burned out for quite some time.
With the hope that there remains a burning ember,
I persevere and strain in vain.
Learning difficulties

There were two years,  
only two years  
that I needed to learn  
how to speak.  
However,  
now another forty-five years have passed  
and I am not able to learn  
how to keep my mouth shut.
My ashes

My ashes
you are the faithful guard
of my dreams and my songs
which burn inside me like a sigh
My ashes
you are the silent witness
of my loves and my hopes
which die inside me, hugging solitude
My ashes
I light a candle and pray for you every day.

Our cruelty
We never thought, not for one moment,
that our earth felt, dreamt, loved like us
We rape its surface nonstop,
with our cruelty, like no one did in the past.

Our earth is upset; its heart is a banging saga.
Earthquake’s hammers are beating at her chest.
Its feelings are blowing up in volcanic lava.
and its dreams are fading as the icebergs melt.
Death And Rebirth Of Word

Teenage I was when I saw
violent creatures
with human faces
nailing the word
on a big cross.
I saw it dying
nailed there,
like Jesus.
Now I pray every day
for its rebirth,
Forgetting the crimes
of those violators and the sneering
of that heartless crowd.
Letterbox

While millions of doors’ mouths are starving for a bite of a letter from the fugitives, even once a year, our doors’ mouths are always full. They can hardly breathe because of the junk that they eat, hysterically, every single day.
In the pockets of my memory

There is such a big mess
in the pockets of my memory.
A stanza here, a line there,
scratched rhymes,
missformed metaphors,
broken assonances,
sunken carelessly above each other
within those pockets,
as if they were seeds
waiting to be sown
on the white fields of papers
on each Friday night
or at least on the mornings
of each Saturday.
There was just one key in our house.
This key was neither for the front door
nor for any money safe.
It was the key to a small cupboard,
where my mother kept her wedding clothes.

I remember her
opening that small cupboard every week,
cleaning those clothes,
putting quinces on them for a good smell,
talking with them as if they were her friends.

No one can remember when it was said that brides’ clothes from their wedding day should be preserved to be worn on their day of death.

I do not know how many centuries had travelled this feeling, this lesson until it comes to my childhood’s home.

However when my mother died, we dressed her in those clothes. With no doubt, she looked the most beautiful lady in world.

Looking through airplane’s window

An endless blue field down there, sowed with immeasurable white fumes. Some airplanes like silver worms moving in and out this sowed field.
Above, the sun,
like a solder’s chopped off head,
-fired up and thrown away.
Graveyard

If by chance you come
to visit the town of my verses
don’t go just to its pubs
to be drunk with rhymes, rhythms
alliterations and happy onomatopoeias.
Stall even for a short visit in its graveyard,
where are laid to rest hundreds of dead metaphors.
Some of them committed suicide because of fear,
and some other ones, lay there cut off oesophagus
from some bloody scissors
in the hands of several heartless-communist editors.
Please read in silence the epitaphs
on these gravestones,
and pray for their souls.
A ruthless rebel is my yearning

My eyes are not like doors
to just close and sleep.
A ruthless rebel is my yearning.
It desperately keeps fighting with my past.
I close my eyes to welcome sleep,
yet unconsciously
the pale face of the moon
and that of my mother’s
in the agony of her death,
walk the alleys of my memory.
Slowly. In silence. Keeping me awake.
A Cherry Tree

Spring.
The yearning and the birds are those
which showed me the path to my hometown.
The old house where I was born
is still here as an ancient oath.
My mother is dead.
My father has gone to live in the city.
The cherry tree in the yard has grown old
due to loneliness.
My childhood’s soul
has missed me deeply
and as revenge for my absence
has broken
with its fists
the windows of the house.
A branch of blossoming flowers
of this cherry tree
starts to tell me a story
from my youth.
The story is about my father being upset
whenever I used to take flowers from the tree:
‘Flowers are dreams of trees.'
They are the only children that trees have.
Breaking flowers from trees
is the same as if you steal
a child from a mother, ’
my father used to say.
I stand before the front door of the house
gazing at the cherry tree,
speechless, and motionless.
My soul and body are bound
by my childhood-memories’ chains.
My eyes are wet.
I do not understand,
if I am crying or if it is raining.

Freedom

I was a small child
when a bird flew into our house –
I caught it.
It was tweeting and tweeting
trying to flee.
‘Free it’, my grandfather said.
‘No’, I replied, ‘it is singing.
Let’s keep it in a cage’.
‘It is crying’, he said.
Birds sing only in the forest;
in the cage they just cry.
He opened the window.
I let the bird go.
Wet paint

3: 40 PM
A man got some paint, a brush,
and he painted the doors of the pub.
He got a “Wet paint” sign,
stapled it to the pub’s door,
and left.
10: 40 PM
There are dozens of ladies
entering carelessly through the doors of the pub.
Their faces are wet painted also,
though no ‘Wet paint’ signs appear on them.

1: 40 AM
The paint on the pub’s doors dried out,
while that on the ladies faces vanished.
Having my last drink, I wonder
how the ‘Wet paint’ signs
and the beauty of face-painted ladies
are just for temporary use.
Grandfather and Child

When the day took me for a walk towards the twilight,
I saw my son sowing a kiss on a young lady’s lips.
I felt old.
As if by magic, a grandfather grew within me.
After two minutes walk, my mother phoned,
‘How are you my son’, she asked;
and I felt young again, like a child.
My homeland

My homeland,
You and I
although faraway from each other
have the same pain,
the same dream,
the same destiny,
because the distance between us
doesn’t measure in miles
but with love.
The death of the book

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God,  
John the Apostle had said.  
But, then, the book appeared  
and the word was with us  
and the word was Us.  
... And after that  
a disease of greed emerged  
and the book became bazaar  
and the word became crooked.  
Now my soul feels pain  
while watching the death of the book.
The Snow

Lately, my home
is missing me deeply.
I received many greetings from it
by the wind's post.
I saw it in a dream last night
dressed as a bride.
'Bride's veil in your dreams
foretells snow',
my grandmother use to say.
In the morning,
my father phoned.
'Much snow has fallen
in our area’, he said.
Though very far from there
I started to feel cold.
Celebration

The past is memory,
dream is the future.
Only our imagination
can travel to their lawns.
So, there is only the present
where the body, feelings and dreams
can enjoy each other's worship.
Thus, to live means to celebrate
every moment, which the present gives us.
Coffinless

Once, the father had planted a tree.
The son told a coffin maker to cut it
to make a coffin for his father,
without planting any tree before
to replace it.
He is unaware that,
his funeral is going to be
coffinless,
and, maybe the funeral of his nephew
peopleless too.
The symphony of the eyes

The symphony of the forest
with sounds of leaves and birds' songs,
the symphony of the river flowing,
and that of the wind blowing
all through the snowy winters amaze me.

But the most splendid
and stunning symphony
is the symphony of the smiling eyes,
of my baby daughter.
Mothers are immortal

Mothers are immortal.
Their wishes for us become flowers
we meet with them every spring.
Their love for us becomes sun
we gather with them every summer.
Their worries for us become rain
we convene with them every autumn.
Their dreams for us become snow
we rally with them every winter.

Mothers are immortal.
Poets

This world is fucked up.
Up there the rich,
acting.
Down here the poor
suffering.
Poets in the middle
trying to fix this mayhem
with their verses,
while at one another's throats.
Running around the sun

I run toward the day.
The night runs towards me.
To remain fit
together we keep running
around the sun,
until I’ll become tired
and lay off for a long sleep.
Looking at some grey clouds

From one hill to another extended
some gray clouds like clothes hanging on wire.
They hide the sun in their pockets and sleeves
making the day feel sad and depressed.

The birds with their beaks are pecking at them
in search of illumination and unfettered horizons
Their love for light and for the clean blue-sky,
has earned them wings and blessed their flight.
I don’t like birthday celebrations

I don’t like birthday celebrations.
Many people, clutter, lighting candles
Just like a funeral.
This day indeed marks
just another step closer to our death..
What are these mysterious forces
pushing us to celebrate
the approach of our death
which doubtless it will come,
even without a party?
Autumn

Leaves are dying
on the wind’s arms.
Clouds are crying
and mourning for them.
The saddness of their death
is making the days fall early
and the sun sleep longer
into night’s bed.
It is growing light

The sun like inquisitive child
raises its head to observe;
in the beginning the tops of mountains
then tablelands, plateaus ...  
and after that, fields, houses, rivers,  
people’s faces ....

Its shined gaze
wakes up the day
like a impish child wakes up
a sleeping mom...

It is growing light
Two cemeteries

I have two cemeteries
within my house.

One on the ground floor,
in a very small room,
under the stairs,
where my shoes,
sole wounded from their run
through many rough roads
rest in peace.

The other one is in the attic
where dozens of my notebooks,
badly face scratched
with my handwritings are buried.

I know nothing about where
this mysterious power comes from,
yet it ties me so close
with these dead things
and thoughts.

However, on the first floor I sleep,
and the cemetery under the stairs
is my feather-bed,
and that in the attic
is my eider-down.

Ndrek Gjini
The Death Of The Book

In the beginning there was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God,
said John the Apostle.
But, then, the Book appeared
and the word was with us
and the word was us.
And after that
a disease of greed emerged;
the Book was haggled and bartered away
and the Word became crooked.
Now my soul feels pain
as I watch the death of the book.

Ndrek Gjini
The Field And I

The field and I

The field and I cut our hair
last afternoon.
We had a shower by rain
last night.

Today, the field was awakened
by the kiss of a rainbow—
Me, by my mother's
phone-call.

Ndrek Gjini
The Most Beautiful Lady

Whenever I look in the mirror
before leaving for work,
I remember my mother.

Her concept of beauty was wider than entire world.
'Be beautiful in your soul and your body
in your life and in your death’, she used to say.

And this was our strictest rule. Unbreakable one
as there was just one key in our house.
This key was neither for the front door
nor for any money safe.
It was the key to a small shelf,
where my mother kept her wedding clothes.

I remember her
opening that small shelf every week,
cleaning those clothes,
putting quinces on them for a good smell,
talking with them as if they were her friends.

No one can remember since it was said
that brides’ clothes from their wedding day
should be preserved to be worn
in their day of death.

I do not know how many centuries
had travelled this feeling, this lesson
until it comes to my childhood’s home.

However when my mother died,
we dressed her on those clothes.
With no doubt, she looked
the most beautiful lady in world.

Ndrek Gjini
The Rain

The rain

And the rain came,  
no one can remember when.  
Here, with us,  
in us,  
no one knows how long it's going to stay.  
Making our nights starless,  
our days gray,  
and us into walk-swimming fish,  
through this soggy space which is rotting  
everything.

Ndrek Gjini
The Smell Of My Thoughts

My thoughts wear the smell of sunlight
every time it rains.
They wear rain’s smell
whenever the sun shines.
They wear the ice’s smell
whenever it’s hot,
and warmth’s smell they wear
during the days with frost.
The smell of flowers they wear in winter
in the summer they wear snow’s smell.
My thoughts are the only things that keep
my world and me in balance.
Without them I would fall down
like a rotten tree.

Ndrek Gjini
The Train Of My Life

The Train of My Life

It departed at 8: 32PM on October 1st 1963 from a maternity hospital in a small town in North Albania, stopped at a crèche to collect some cries, toys, ink spilled on shirts and trousers, a broken pencil. Other stops included dull classes with mountains of books, copies, fights, loves, hates, mistakes, first kisses, white dust from the chalk, lost shoes on football pitches. Then it stopped again at different workplaces where the head was not needed at all, just the arms, because the bosses were the ones who were always right. This train passed through many strange countries and cities, regretful, unable to enjoy the thrills and luxury that those places held. During a long stop on a rainy island, everything—feelings, memories, the body—began to rust away beneath an endless rainfall. The train will move on soon, scheduled to arrive at? ? : ? ? , on an uncertain day of an uncertain month during the 21st century, but I hope not soon, at a not decided yet graveyard.

Ndrek Gjini
Unfair World

Unfair World

A man and a tree died yesterday.
The man was killed by the tree
when a wild wind knocked it down.

Evening News:
Millions of people heard
about the death of this man.
Not a word was mentioned
about the death of the tree
or the millions of trees being killed by men.

Ndrek Gjini
War Against Doubt

Every time we believe, we extend our lives a little bit. Whenever we doubt, gravewards we go. In this, belief/disbelief time-game Old Age waits at our door, while Death lies like a fox in ambush, ready to lead us to the grave’s gate.

Not in vain an old man said: “Do not open the door to doubt in order that Death you may keep out.”

Ndrek Gjini
Why I Write

Why i write

My little town
is a world in its own,
set apart from the wider world.

It is a town with no heroes,
but a town that never fell in love with fear.

The extent of its history is limited to
two or three poets,
an architect,
three blacksmiths,
and six stone-carvers.

I am a carved, walking pebble
of this heroless town,
not strong enough to fight—
that’s why I write.

Ndrek Gjini
Wires

Wires

I was fourteen
when our literature teacher said:
‘For today’s homework
you have to write a poem about your arms’.
The next day I stood up before the class and recited:
‘My arms are like very, very long wires
with which I can embrace the whole world.’
The teacher said: ‘Very good, great metaphor’.
He died peacefully
just a few years before the Wireless Era.
Lucky for him, he escaped the struggle
of all these wireless things,
even wireless loves.
Meanwhile, I mourn for the death of my first great metaphor.

Ndrek Gjini
I was with her. Together
we harvested the joy of life.
I do not know if it was Satan or God
that planted the thorn of hate in her soul.
However, when it became dark she left.
She locked herself into her dark house.
She rang.
‘Very quiet here,’
she said, ‘only me and solitude.’
I replied, ‘You are one, the solitude is zero,
so tell me what result will you get
when you multiply yourself with solitude.’

While answering her I was lightening the night,
and my head too, with some drinks,
celebrating with five of my friends.

Ndrek Gjini