

**Kamelia Spassova**

**Translated by Angela Rodel**

**Suitcase № 3: Photos of Luper**

*You're all locked up  
in my obscura's case.*

The voyeur in any case is not a passive observer,  
nor is he the only one observing –  
the portals of time shrink and stretch  
in the most natural way of all gateways.  
His gazes lie corpse to corpse,  
even the best ones click in his trap –  
after all, memories must be manufactured.

Some smile: handfuls of bashfulness,  
others show that they know:  
we are always naked – with our hats and shoes,  
our hidden thoughts appear on the negative,  
so he knows – we know –  
and see how he ravenously swallows us with his eyes.

Let him watch them, I am watching him.  
I fire pointblank,  
the camera blinks,

I slowly wind the film.

**Translated by Angela Rodel**

**On the List**

On some lists  
he's tucked in between Husserl and  
Ivan h. Hristov, who isn't the Ivan  
whom the postmen in Bdin think of from time to time,  
but simply some hajji, perhaps a newspaper patron  
from the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century  
for this Ivan it cannot be established  
when he was born  
or even when he died, not by the Academy of Science's archives,  
nor by the gigantic spider webs that sparkle  
at night, when they sip my blood and in the morning my veins are  
travelling paths pointing to a quick arrival  
yet if the power goes out unexpectedly or global crises kick off  
the cobwebs collapse, the data collapse, the fingers contract  
and then we once again decide  
who is the victim who is the spider  
while according to the list Jesus was born a few years  
before Christ and there is a year for his death.

**Translated by Angela Rodel**

**Title**

the most expensive chiseled  
letters  
are those on gravestones  
they go for a lev  
or a lev-fifty a piece  
the price depends  
on the company  
or the kind of folks you come across  
they carve out your name  
and don't dig any deeper  
that's enough  
for death to recognize you  
proof that you existed  
because in the end that's all you've got

that's why poets  
are also necrophiliacs

**Translated by Angela Rodel**  
**Footnotes**

as soon as I saw  
the dedication  
a ritual and baptismal certificate  
I wished

that I had written the book  
the table of contents also impressed me  
with its clarity of expression  
the layout itself  
its order and certain witty phrases

for a long time I searched for my name  
on the cover  
but in its place, carved out in a large font was:

we've buried the authors in the footnotes  
a gathering for the aggrieved  
5 p.m. on page 5

**Translated by Angela Rodel**  
**Symbols**

when we interchange  
the latin alphabet with the cyrillic  
we change identities  
we attune ourselves to the timetable  
to the weather forecast to the jury  
and other inevitable circumstances  
we've gone over to monkey-o-glyphics<sup>1</sup>  
so as to understand ourselves  
we've regressed, rebooted  
now we're waiting for a banana  
so we can continue  
to vegetate  
to give ourselves meaning  
as only we know how  
and to keep on with  
our monkey business

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<sup>1</sup> Bulgarians use the term *majmunitisa* or “monkey-o-glyphics” to refer to the strings of gibberish that appear when a program cannot correctly read a font, as frequently happens with Cyrillic fonts.

**Translated by Angela Rodel**  
**The Final Stop**

The overcoat, gray and considerate,  
moves over next to the beige slicker  
They sit like that in silence  
what is there left for them to say anymore  
they understand each other perfectly well with sighs

She clutches her bag fiercely  
so her false teeth and legs  
don't chatter  
He holds onto her, holds onto his cane  
holds out for clean and ironed underwear  
with his other hand he holds her hand  
when the stop comes

**Translated by Angela Rodel**  
**Plot № 17**

my reserved seat  
is a noah's ark  
built in case of  
unexpected storms, hurricanes  
or whatever kind of natural disaster  
I keep a blank sheet of paper there  
sharp pencils and books  
left to be read  
in another lifetime  
    I have everything I need  
    to continue your existence  
    and to be together with  
    your absence  
I bury the letters deep within me  
and wait for them to sprout  
I wait for the terrible thing to pass  
just don't forget, I keep telling myself,  
just don't forget, to dig yourself up

**Translated by Angela Rodel**  
**A Brief Apocalypse in the Library**

where the books meet in a row  
and the drawers have gathered all the entries  
it is most pleasant between two and four  
the light falls  
vertically  
so that someone's face  
becomes a photograph  
he who sees it  
knows peace

there the door always creaks  
it attracts all the mortals' gazes  
gathered into themselves between the lines  
and somebody's shadow  
slowly  
runs outside  
*this is the end*  
I think to myself solemnly  
and yet keep a hold of myself

a wind whips up a storm whips up  
the worlds break apart and fly off  
both the mortals and the books struggle  
with insanity, recharged  
in this movement  
I keep control of myself  
I hold one final page  
it is the only thing I see  
I read and delve deeper

but there's no way to do it  
for long  
the change is not noticable  
I know that panic has begun  
to drown me  
and I don't understand anymore and I can't  
but the shadow slips in  
sits across from me  
and everyone goes back to their places



**Translated by Angela Rodel**  
**In the tongue**

with pits in their tongues  
children laugh  
and quickly swallow  
whatever comes along  
everything is so simple  
when the joints are soft  
they don't wait, don't hold back  
nor bite nor chew  
they just stick their tongues out at you sometimes  
and if you are careful enough  
you can catch a glimpse  
of how the pit slowly  
swells up

Translated by [Antoine Cassar](#)

## Outpost

among the sunrise of pigeons  
crows or other migratory birds  
passing by the window  
ten by ten, ten by ten  
at equal intervals  
among these and the ball of blankets  
in which your body is buried  
warm and SWOLLEN with dreams  
    I count the clouds, the birds  
    the rhythm of your pulse  
    with careful attention  
    to their harmony:  
watching  
not to be woken, your dreams  
not to be pecked, the sky  
not to crumble down  
the dangerous are stalking us  
if they come, all will be over  
sounds and noises will connect  
words will flow and we are  
lost

**Translated by [Antoine Cassar](#)**  
**Promise**

promise me –  
not to put bread in your mouth  
not to wet your lips  
in water from springs and canals  
they must dry up  
your face should stretch, turn pale  
and illuminate  
not to talk with those you don't know  
or those you do know  
not even look at me  
not to open my albums  
not to read my diaries  
not to pry around in my closets  
not to mess around with my books  
either or either or  
promise  
not to leave

**Translated by Yuliyana Todorova**  
**From the bottom of the sea**

I am getting used to deafness from afar  
not realizing who's calling me and what for,  
I read mechanical gestures  
burnt out from long repetition  
so silently until they start smoking

stay longer, Sappho,  
your coast is deaf,  
because the muses sank long ago  
but the sea-weed hymns chant  
about all the drowned she-poets in the depth.