

# BITKOAN

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**other**words **druge**besede  
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Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union



**Vladimir Kopiel**

**BITKOAN**

**1 (Veles - Bitola, August 5, 2017)**

Mountains, mountains, mountains.

And behind these other mountains.

The air quite invisible at 40 C degrees,

and these stretched in a straight line, yes, 40 degrees everywhere

given to us all , all over, everyone to share,

to us all according to our non-needs, everyone's gift to non-labor

as if it were not quite un-dead, not quite visible transition

going from the Self-managing nirvana to the Capitalist nirvana

in this realm where stable living smoke still obfuscates the investments

as it spirales upward it disperses them so that they wouldn't irritate the eyes,

if you don't see them clearly, it means they don't visibly exist:

perhaps Goldman and Sachs are still in Marko's cave

and Dow Jones floats around like that Ohrid lake's eel.

The train doesn't know about it, as it is just a worm, recently imported from China

it tries to undergo a metamorphosis, and use the heat to change into a butterfly,

especially for the passengers who do not remember better than that.

It seems that half of the passengers are the experienced children of the railroads,

not only the retired, but the resilient youth as well

they just laugh it out when the controllers ask them for the ticket,

interrupted with that short psycho-pause which comes in as a tense comic relief,

as if the agent showed his fists and anger, but instead- they all started to laugh.  
As if they were all relatives of some sort scrounging for free ride  
in this small community where everyone knows the other  
better than say, the priest who knows the dead souls of the allsocialist care.

I don't know everyone and no one in particular and all that I know is  
to follow the curves of a very decent lady sitting  
a bit on the right from me; she is exposed to my caring gaze,  
snuggly sitting next to a youth, who in turn  
sleeps, comfortable, his mouth gapes open, as if he were on his way  
to paradise itself, after a copius breakfast, perhaps he also had some beers.  
And she is a bit hefty, right there above her knee  
where women stop paying attention to her looks abandoning desires to please,  
but she's lovely during these hundred and something kilometers of train's ride  
right for this trip nature offers us sensorial and human substance:  
these quite lovely breasts as they are still learning how to breathe  
her fine nose, eyes and her smile, her still small lower chins.

Yes, there is something warm about her, my eyes could tell,  
small faults of her body , however they comply, her body clean  
uncut like a diamond in the land of filigree  
with that timid natural glow at the part where the lips grow  
or where the organic sweat casually wettens her brow,  
those smalltime caddish messages of an airhostess on vacation,  
or from a relations manager sending them from her daddy's office,

or from a fantom uncle whose gorgeous niece is heading to Bitola  
no one knows exactly where and why she's off to, but she has that decided look  
that no microscopic mimicry can hide, cannot cheat that foreign observer  
she's already ready to stoop onto that Bitola's station, her both feet  
truly professional she drags them both into a single taxi  
then closes its doors innocent, and is off, her unknown fan waiting.

That sad end of a train ride but perhaps some happy beginning.  
Here I come again, my city, and should I say- here we go my dear Theme?  
You probably still keep certain scribes corrupt,  
those who carve their verses as if they were carving a voodoo-doll:  
move here and carve there, joyful action everywhere!  
Your centuries, my Lady, are totalling my age, or almost so,  
so let our idyll develop according to the age and times  
not like your once protected but then neglected Heracleion  
all sucked and dispersed now into dust, not the Earth's monetary trust.

Earth knows what we need, but she does not communicate that knowledge to the grapes.  
Grapes know as well but do not communicate as they always listen to the radio  
and to the TV as well figuring out the daily forecast  
before the rude weather and times arrive and destroy the crop.  
Peaches know the truth as well, however silent they are, half- eaten up  
and if they are not swallowed entirely by the circumstance, they suffer their inner core.  
That is fine, let them be silent, I will shut my mouth as well  
with the words trapped in my stomach, these were half-eaten too.

## 2 (Bitola, August 6, 2017)

If you throw a stone into a lake, the stone will not be bothered by that action.

The farther one goes South, the less he needs to introduce himself.

AS you walk down the promenade's path, your worries cease to exist

one tends to be innocent while observing all the legs and faces through the mist.

Yes, one is mighty innocent just do not tell his address,

at the table next to you, two sirens are taking a rest.

One of them is mighty beautiful, her nose is quite refined,

we all would love to give her orders without clothing well-defined.

Naked we walk the road of ignorance and innocent sorrow

how do we perceive it and how long should we in it wallow?

In front of Manaki's house where all steps converge and follow,

it becomes clear to us that time might lead us to the gallows.

Forget those bodies now, the best we hadn't seen yet,

and if some others come along, replacing these here, let them make the final step.

### **3 (Bitola, August 6, 2017, just before midnight)**

In the cafes and along the streets, the chairs have their legs  
and those who sit in them are also watching other legs that beg  
to be observed and touched like those old books  
which serve, along with these new ones, simply as the hooks.

And the bookstores elsewhere, these become the libraries here  
of some congressional tissue, these mini-skirts  
inspire the readers to write, in the manner of Sextus Propertius  
some would love to take on them an even harder plight.

#### 4 (Bitola, August 8, 2017)

After that huge seductive foreplay, the rain has seduced the city.

It was not aggressive rain so the cloud had meticulously swept the streets  
it was tired and sombre, the slow cloud, coming from Bazar,  
from the consuls' quarter and all possible meridians,  
it was thick with a certain patinum refusing to go away.

No seagulls on the horizon here. No bird on the horizon.

Slow invasion of the fumes from the Balkans,  
sombre advance of these dark nuances which fuse avec sunset, hues  
thicker than that thin espresso which watered down my time  
in the huge out of proportion bistrot full of people  
snugged comfortably just across from the "Epinal".

There's no reason to panic here, we are all in the promenade's land  
as if we were those walking in the fields a while ago, or , shhh...in a battlefield,  
all the inheritors of Byzantium, with a few freshly arrived Goths,  
post-modern Sarmatians and with a lot quite lucid Brits  
while followed around by a guy from the Cyclades, a proud Illyrian,  
coupled with that beautiful Maure girl and a gaudy Venetian  
who had just left the island of Ohrid in the spirit of "feragosto".

Oh, all our hopes are directed to heavens  
although it threatens to kill our Monday  
and spread its evil seed across the mapped-out city,  
while chasing thousands of adepts of Bitola's filigree moon  
into the stomach of its purgatorium followed by soft jazz and trash pop.

Yes, that will be the place for us to gather and howl for the oligarch to appear  
as he is well known as someone who brings us sunshine after the rainy season's gone  
he is the one to think up the business project, and how to exit depression in the most erotic way,  
so we know what to strive for, even if not originally from Strumica  
after the first clouds leave the sky and the most recent times become silent.

The silence reigned now after midnight, a while before morning hour,  
even the "RockKafana" became silent, a club so noisy which made an Irish poet  
change his lodging, next to mine where I'm writing my verse now,  
he got far away from the club, checked into the fourth floor with no elevator whatsoever.

And I remained here, in this chaos which is better than an idle  
and sad turmoil that has nothing to do with the skies.

The lightning took to writing and I followed,  
well, you can never be the winner when the public conduct the song.

## 5 (Bitola, August 17, 2017)

They have taken me to see the Poet today.

That “today” has turned into yesterday, as we stayed together for a while.

He does not publish. He just reads loudly.

Yes, he is just reading his poems. Loudly quite loudly

it feels all of his poetry.

Then he himself comments them: “That's strong! Very powerful!”

The event lasted longer than two hours, in the room above the museum

that private one of his, the most personal,

unknown and dignified, semi-empty,

but one of the paintings hanging in there is truly Byronesque,

with the dapper young Byron perhaps, in the left corner revealing his right half-profile

and on the right just in front of him, the left half-profile, there are Shelley perhaps, and She.

Yes, that's right: the eternal She. And all of them are beautifully painted,

they are in the first stratum and the rest is just horrible.

The background is kitch, the total loss of perspective.

That's one thing with art - it's hard to remain perseverant.

However, He wouldn't give up: once he started reading, he would go on forever!

Or he would play us the tape of one of his readings,

the public one, in a museum in a renovated boutique-store

And get it, once he was even invited to read in the president's office.

And his poems? He starts them rather well, in an anarchist manner,

like in “The Killer Poets” where the title speaks in itself  
and the rest, he says, is stylistically as great as the title.

Nice poem, how come I don't remember it.

And another one I remember somewhat,  
just similar to the first one as to its atmosphere, however it is different  
as it is nuanced and breaks its style set in two.

It is entitled “Skarani planini” in Macedonian,  
however it is not something that you would have thought<sup>1</sup>  
“skarani” means “at odds” , so the two mountains are at odds,  
there's nothing to do with sex or erotica but some tension in it,  
yes it flows and flows and flows and carries some hidden meaning it it  
at some point it is visibly bent or pent up  
as it invokes hope, our dubious element in verse which is worse  
than mentioning the name “Gabriel”. Now, Raven comes always as a better choice.

These two mountains start quarelling and the problem is right there,  
it is physical but also metaphysical, this gets a bit confusing,  
and as this bickering can last for quite a while the beasts run away from them  
and He nicely remembers all of them, loudly a bit irritated,  
but rendering them due respect: to all these foxes, woolves and lynx  
and to the smaller animals as well, they resemble us of a sort,  
the Poet would not mention this fact but I dare say it.

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1 “skarani” means “screwed”, “badly treated” or “forlorn” in Serbian, the language this poem was written in

He is not clear here because in a couple of lines He loses sense, my dear,  
or let us say I did not understand the meaning, however  
he returns to the poem's source  
and ends it exctatically, with his hand raised to havens.

How did he end up his performance? I have no idea as if I myself  
escaped that poem, in the company of those other beasts  
as they were leaving the mountain, that is, their own forests  
as well as those forests across, located in the other mountain.

That was a lot of animals for the day, lots of those around us.

Here they moved me again. Where do they run  
all these creatures, unaccustomed to authority  
to the heavy hand of the Poet  
which lifts itself up above us ordering justice  
whether we listen to him or not , it always does, or should we watch the invisible?

Now as I'm sitting half-awake in my city nook,  
in front of that quiet forest of the unscribed computer screen  
and my reliable eyes throw the steady gaze twinkling with letters  
and all these animals- could they be now situated in Your sweet embrace?  
Could it be the very light scintillating among those endless claws  
placed on the warm and sleepy pillow of that turmoiled summer  
which both connects and divides us somewhat like that February 29  
somewhat like the kisses the lips and the darkness fell over the river bank.

**6 (Bitola, July 23, 2017,)**

*Highways, With Peter and Charlie*

The falcon 's heart gets dried by the sun. However, once wet, the fish won't catch cold.

Our gaze does not question that hot shimmering air. At least that is the landscape where the icebergs  
are not in danger.

The nose and the ear suspect something that was known only by the stars  
they never show up during the day. They only take night flights and escapades.

The table has only four legs but we have had three guests at it,

Two guys from the North Balkans and a Muse from Seattle.

She and the First guy poured some mastika<sup>2</sup> and the Second some light-endowed drink.

And for each of them a glass of water is getting brewed, like they do with the Polar Cock's blood.

They'd like to taste a milk seed in a glass, they've read about it.

The First one is dreaming of sticking his fingers into someone's bag, he'd steal a deal and then disappear.

The Second has decided that for that action they need a bit of time so that they wouldn't get caught  
however, no sweat, easy task, they'll finish it off until the morning hour.

All over Bitola you find this delicious cheese with the crust fine as lace.

Everyone has to be satisfied here although they did not ask for satisfaction.

That's a bit like when a drunk man starts to sing, so that he should not get embarrassed  
the greasy cords you should cover with the petals of roses.

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<sup>2</sup> Mastika is a liqueur seasoned with mastic, a resin with a slightly pine or cedar-like flavor. A strong anise-flavoured drink, consumed chilled.

She would discuss Pyramus, and Thisbe. Also, what should she do or become in life ?

She would even share a tree, the branches which connect them with people.

*Yes, that's absolutely feasible, the Second guy says, that's how her other Three 'I'*

*personas come into being,*

while the First guy's listening to the flies buzzing around the knife, the chorus of leaves

encircling the waves.

Translated from Serbocroatian :

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