

Milcho  
Manchevski

**FICTION**

# The Ghost of my Mother

# THE GHOST OF MY MOTHER

.....1.

Around 6:30 the winter ended.

.

.....2.

Have you heard the argument?  
Is there no offense in't?

.....3.

MOTHER

When you're anemic even the mosquitos won't bite you  
and your mother's not here  
gliding slowly across the sky, leaving a white trail  
in a big chair turned upside down while they're cleaning around you  
and you get a big marble...  
... as the phone line is your umbilical cord.

.....4.

...and they all talked about Joujou's orgasm.

.....5.

Smells like summer  
mild soft draft  
in which small scent hovers  
Smells like summer

.....6.

Superman & Robin Hood are still alive in Hollywood.

A folk song on Radio Ljubljana

19-20. 6. 83

.....7.

On October 21, 83, around 4 AM I had this morbid dream. It was so scary I woke up. There were some people from life after death. I was afraid to go back to sleep, but also to get up. I started reading a book. I read a chapter from "Belgrade for Beginners" by Bogdan Tirnanic. I knew it was an upbeat book and it would cheer me up. Then I fell asleep.

21. 10. 83

.....8.

The object of war is not simply to kill, but to convince the survivors to submit.

.....9.

He kissed her and said:  
- "Politics",  
like the newspaper.

&

„The question is,“ said Alice, „whether you can make words mean so many different things.“  
„The question is,“ said Humpty Dumpty, „which is to be master - that’s all.“

.....10.

UP TO 103

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.....11.

TASTES OF ROOMS

Some strange tastes  
of rooms  
come over me  
and pull me back  
to the childhood  
of huge things.

&

TOOTH, MOTH

What fear  
is  
so  
big  
to fill up  
a whole  
apartment?

&

Why does every room  
have to have  
twin-wardrobes?

.....12.

The attempt failed, but the autopsy gave interesting results.

&

Numerous substances provoke bitter taste in humans.  
From a paper presented at the 22nd Congress of  
the Anthropological Society of Yugoslavia

.....13.

SUMMER STREET

Windows open outwards like butterfly wings.  
And people between them swimming in the hot air.

.....14.

There are two sects in this religion. According to one there is no God, while according to the other there is no God.

.....15.

THE MANIFESTO OF THE CONCEPTUALISTS

This is the manifesto of the conceptualists.

Milco Mancevski, Emil Ansarov,  
Atanas Bogdanovski, Vanco Gjosevski,  
Hadzi-Angelkovski Gjorgji, Ljubomir Stojsavljevik, Miloje Radakovic, Sarkanjac,  
Dabic, Princevac Zanet, Vanja Ve, Peric Ljiljana,  
Petre Bogdanovski, A. Grcev, Pasoski Robi,  
Darka Stefanovska, Lidija P.,  
Ivan M., Tanja, Zorica Trpkovska, M, Polazar,  
J. Nikuljska

.....16.

Precisely with deference to these higher goals, an exceptional, insightful, highly original psychoanalytic study by Hugo Klain *The War Neurosis of the Yugoslavians*, in which the author analyzes the behavior of our veterans since 1943 and after the war had the bitter fate of most critical works:

.....17.

With a shriek birds flee across the black sky, people are silent, my blood aches from waiting.

.....18.

I SAW A NUN BEGGING

I saw a nun begging.  
God, I saw a nun begging.

.....19.

With a poem  
instead of sperm.

.....20.

Nobody's young no more!

.....21.

FEELING

Sometimes, at night, as I type in the empty apartment, my back to the door, I have a feeling there's someone behind me. Just like now.

.....22.

I am different.  
I can't stand pain.  
Pain hurts me.

.....23.

Bureaucracy is a new ruling stratum, 12-15 % of the population. Its main concern is to preserve the Status Quo at home and abroad. It favors change only if necessary to preserve its powers.

.....24.

NO POEMS

No poems  
for this world  
on this day  
of empty P.O. Boxes  
and C.O.D. air.

5. 4. 81

- I like the image of the world as forgotten by all, as waiting for a message that someone/something cares about it.
- It leaves a lot to your imagination.
- I like its simplicity, more images perhaps.
- Good rhythm. More poetic tension.
- Very different, but creative/imaginative.
- Probably the weirdest poem in the world, but I can relate to it.
- It makes me want to tear you into a hundred pieces and mail you C.O.D.

MARCUS' PORTRAIT

I hate sentimental novels, but Marcus' mother really died.

The entrance to our place was on the outside, up wooden stairs leading to a mini-porch, and through a screen door to a living room, then into two rooms, one of which was too small, and the other one on the way to the bathroom.

Marcus lived next door. He was letting us borrow coffee cups from his garage. His father was famous because he'd made the sculptures in front of the library, on the little hill, where I was taking pictures, not even knowing they were by Marcus' father. Marcus was helping me write the credits for my film - I wrote them with purple crayon on the back of the house like graffiti, then shot them, but didn't use them, I wanted something slicker.

Marcus was painting, and we were doing all kindsa things. There was also this lunatic who was following the girls and whistling after them, plus got inside their place. Even I saw him once. The house was packed. There was stuff belong to all of us. Two slept in the living room, two with a dog in the little room, and the two of us in the room on the way to the bathroom. I woke up and saw his pale face at the door. I thought I was sleeping, so I fell back to bed, but I got up right away. He was gone, but I knew he been there.

Marcus was painting his mother's portrait. I didn't like the portrait. Marcus was letting us use his phone. When I was looking for my lost passport, I used Marcus' phone a lot. Once even my not-meant-to-be professor was visiting with Marcus. Once later he asked me what's happened with Marcus, since he used to be friends with the parents, and now the boy was all alone. Frank Paine's question surprised me.

Marcus had black curly hair and blue eyes. He was, actually, a good friend, but who was noticing that then. I was cramming film theory.

These weirdos lived downstairs. One of them was working himself to death, had an eagle-nose and moss for beard. He was a perfectionist and very delicate. We thought he was a virgin. The other one was even weirder. He was a regular guy, but always sorta smiling and tricky. At one point they had a fight, so they cooked every man for himself. Neither one ate your typical steak and veggies with milk.

I think Marcus knew them, but no way I can remember what their relationship was like. We were using their phone, too.

Marcus didn't finish the canvas with his mother's portrait. They knew she was gonna die, but I wasn't taking that seriously.

Later, Tori hung the unfinished portrait over the window, it fit nicely, but I still didn't like it.

11. 4. 1984

.....26.

Just how serious this activity can be is seen from the Black Happening of the poet Josef Honys (1919-1969), who arranged a fake funeral for himself as a "Mystification Event," invited his friends, and then in fact committed suicide unknown to the friends (23).

(23) \_\_\_\_\_

.....27.

Dialectical materialism, in the heat of the day, draws a pickax from its raincoat.

.....28.

SPIRAL JETTY

The work "Spiral Jetty,"  
which is under water today,  
achieved mythical status.  
The jetty represents  
a work of art,  
while  
the film  
and  
the essay  
accompanying it  
are documentary-critical works.  
Their existence creates  
the context  
for  
"Jetty,"  
and  
in a broader sense opens up the potential for this piece  
to function as a work of art.

18. 6. 84

.....29.

Eternity's a Five Year Plan:

.....30.

LOVE

I get up in the afternoon and light a cigarette which I'd quit long ago, while still in Skopje.

It's some kinda midnight. I smoke and get high in half an hour.

I watch MTV.

All I want is to watch MTV.

I smoke and get high.

I'm most active after midnight.

My life's dream is to watch MTV.

I watch MTV best when I get high and at night.

Sometimes I drink. Beer or gin. Instead of smoking. MTV remains. A constant.

I love MTV.

Sometimes, somewhere in the background, a desire to describe my love for MTV sparkles. Fortunately, that's where it remains.

Phew!

17. 6. 1984, Skopje

.....31.

NIGHT MISSION

Around the battery there was barbed wire, and a guard behind it. The leader signaled, and a partisan ran out of the column. With a knife, he accurately hit the German, who fell down without a sound. With quick strides, they ran to the wires, cut them and entered. Suddenly, a machine gun sounded. After the general surprise, and after a few comrades' deaths, everyone ducked. The machine gun was mowing down.



wiśki  
wiśki  
wiśki

# Wishes

Maria was mad at Nadia. If you didn't know them, you'd think Nadia was a monster. But she's only Maria's niece.

Among other sins, Nadia had told Maria that when Maria dies Nadia will take her tea set. The set was colorful, for tea, in white, green and gold.

Maria was always saying that it should be the way some very smart man had said, put the graveyard on the square, so everyone knows what's coming to them. Maria was seventy plus.

Nadia was thirtyish. And she had no children. Neither did Maria. She didn't take her tea set. Because she died first.

Nadia died first. At the funeral in St. Nicolas, during the meal after the burial, there was a couch fixed like a coffin or like a corpse, and on the chest there was a small pot of water. Or, was it boiled wheat? Like hands folded on the chest.

I think Maria was at the funeral as well. Or maybe not.

What matters is, she kept her tea set.

I took it recently. It was dusty.

She wasn't buried on the square. But, at least she kept the tea set till the end.

Twelve  
Years  
Ago

ve

## Twelve Years Ago

Twelve years ago my aunt tells me that my father's life depends on the yogurt I should buy. I walk out into the summer street and let the dust get in between my toes. In my empty neighborhood, filled only with a summer afternoon, across the blacktop I see a girl angrily leaving a man, who stays on the edge of the park and mockingly calls for her to come back. Trying to forget, she turns to me, and I show her the way. As we walk, I timidly place my hand under her mini skirt. I don't touch her, my hand hovers there, in the air. Only, at one point, the tips of my fingers touch her flesh. She turns and gives me a glance with no reaction.

I take her by the hand and lead her home. We enter the green yard of my yellow house, as my hand is under her mini skirt, and my father and aunts on the ground floor. We enter the shadow with a smell of basement, I lock the downstairs door, and we climb the stairs. Before me, she enters the apartment of lukewarm air between the open doors. In the foyer, she turns to me and, wordless, takes off her panties. Then the T-shirt, and the bra, under which white tits come out, hemmed in by brown skin, that other people could've seen too. Finally, she takes off the brown mini skirt as well, under which I discover a cunt - hair. I look at the cunt. She has strong legs. Sits down and spreads them. Offers her hand, while I'm discovering her. I ride, rub my bone against her mound above the cunt, and she is my sister, while the aunts, distressed, gather downstairs in front of the door locked from inside with a silver aluminum key, and try to restore me to the time twelve years ago when my father is supposed to be dying.

My  
Grandf

# My Grandfather

It had snowed. I made a snowball (probably in the backyard) and went home (probably running up the stairs) because I had an idea. I had an idea to run into my grandfather's room. He was sitting on the bed to the right and reading a newspaper, probably yesterday's "Politika," which he would get from my uncle downstairs. He was bent like a donut over the paper. I ran in and threw the snowball at him. Bull's eye. When I'd played with the children, it was a big deal to hit somebody, and bull's eye was to hit someone on the head (just as I - many years later, an adult already playing in the street - hit the girl who was then in love with Cuba, yet a couple of years later she bears a son to a man from Stip). The bull's eye with my grandfather was really a bull's eye - the snowball hit him in the head. More precisely, in the forehead, it got in between his glasses and his eyes and got crammed there. The glasses were old, thick, plastic and held with scotch tape. The space between my grandfather's eyes and glasses filled with snow.

My grandfather didn't say a word. He just took off his glasses, slowly removed the snow, then wiped off his eyes, then glasses.

All without a word. He probably continued to read.

father

Fliq

# Flight

At the point when he double-hovers - between the dream and the reality, between the sky and the earth - he gets scared.

He falls asleep on a plane.

The rational trust disappears, transparent at first, then more so, then replaced by a simple, sound and wrong estimate: I am 30,000 feet above the firm ground in a steel container, and it has a beginning and end.

The fear is both simple and plain.

So, here, in the leather seats of first class, half-asleep (this "half" is very important), he very tangibly faces his fear.

Of death, not of flying. Of nothingness, non-being.

The avalanche is so simple that he's surprised he can stop it in reality: happy he is not, smiling even less, and only the worst half of his life is left, the one he will crown with soiled underwear, red eyes, hairy ears, helplessness (desperate helplessness, because there's no tomorrow), people running away from him, from his smell and from the mistress he carries on his shoulders because they don't want to watch her swinging as she rides on top of him.

Amid the avalanche, he remembers he doesn't have the stomach nor the time for children, and there's some vague sadness in that.

Vague, since he never wanted to have children.

Then he remembers his older colleague with a bald head. They are standing in the parking lot in front of the hotel, 3-4 in the morning, and he feels free or intimate enough to ask about children. (Strange, he always asks older colleagues whether one should have children. And when.) Or, perhaps, the slightly hunchbacked colleague offered himself, said it on his own. He said he was sorry he didn't provide that pleasure to his wife. Now, he already likes behaving like an old man, he walks like an old man, talks like an old man, likes being an old man - as a mutual co-worker once said.

The next day he is awake and on the ground. Because of the jet-lag, he's got a bit of dream in his reality, but pleasant, like a cloud in the eye.

And then he remembers that he'll fuck with women most beautiful, that he'll tenderly touch their faces with the tips of his fingers and with his lips, that he'll tell them from the depth of his heart they are beautiful, that he won't believe his luck he is with such most beautiful, slim, dark beauties - a deer in their walk, that as he feels their long, endless legs on his ribs, hips, thighs and shoulders, as he turns around to see whether they have straightened, or hold their feet at a 90-degree angle, as he rubs their torsos with his, leaving seven curly little hairs on their white tits, as they laugh with gusto and as he feels their insides on the tip of his dick - he is touching the sky.