

ALBERT CAMUS AUSTUSEKS, MÄRTS 2020

Jüri Talvet

*Ole hea nüüd, kärmesti poodi tõtta ja turulegi:
osta WC-paberit, mitu pakki kohe, ja makarone,
võid ja moosi ja peeti, kaalikaid ja porgandeid,
jookse juba, hakka minema - enne kui turg tühjaks tehakse!*

Jooksen, teen ja toon. Ei selgu põhjus, aga jooksen,
teen ja toon. Erakorraline häda esmakordselt
Eesti riigis välja kuulutati. Teadlastegi suud on lukus,
põhjust nad ei tea. Inimesi aga sureb, hulkadena tõvve jääb!

Terved riigid asutusi, piire kinni panevad, ärihaidelegi
nahka pugunud on hirm ja tsaarid värisevad oma kremlites.
Paistab nagu oleks rahvaste suur ränne uuel tulekul,
pika keskaja uus algus - otsekui märk taeva karistusest!

Surm oma tantsule veab kõiki, taltsas elu äkki
mässavat näib oma peremeeste vastu - nende vastu, kes
hoolinud on ainult iseendast elukübemes,
sellest välja kiskunud kõik oma varandused!

Jookse juba, hakka minema - enne kui turg tühjaks tehakse!
Jooksen, teen ja toon. Põhjust ei paista, paistab aga,
et lugeda õige aeg on tulnud väikest raamatut,
enne kui maailma raamatukogude riuleilt see kaob!

Autor ei teada võinud ette oma surma 47-selt,
rohkem piiblist ja koraanist aga aimas,
mida inimhing saab teha hädas, nagu sõda (mis just läbi sai
ja mille süüst ei olnud keegi vaba). Lugegu siis need, kel kiri selge

ja need, kel pole, ette lasku lugeda! Pestagu käsi, kogu ihu,
ja hingege roojusest haritagu, ärgata üritatagu,
enne kui hilja, enne kui surm kutsub tantsule!
Küüslauku söödagu, põhjusi otsimata, tervetenagi!

Loetagu, ette lastagu lugeda lugu – pealkiri
kõlab isemoodi igas keeles, kuid sisu samaks jääb,
ja nagu "surm" on lühike, üksainus silp või paar,
välgatus, ja kadunud on kõik – sõna, milles koos on,

kokku köidetud on läbi iga elu hirm ja surm ja armastuse lootus:
Peste! Plague! – värisegu ärihaid ja tsaarid kremlites!

чума, प्लेग, 瘟疫! – küüslauku söödagu, hinge roojast haritagu!
mēras, maras, katk! – ses koos on hirm ja surm ja lootus!

HOMAGE TO ALBERT CAMUS, MARCH 2020¹

*Would you mind going right now to grocery and market:
buy toilet-paper, many rolls, and macaroni, noodles,
butter, jam, and beet, turnips, as well as carrots,
run, go fast, hurry up - before the market-place is emptied!*

I run, I do, I bring. No reason, but I run,
I do, I bring. For the first time ever in the Estonian state
state of emergency has been declared. Mouths of scientists are locked,
nobody knows the cause. But people keep dying, the infection spreads!

States shut offices, close borders. Even business-sharks
are filled with fear and tsars are trembling in their kremlins.
It looks as if a new grand migration of peoples is impending,
the start of the new long Middle Ages – a sign of punishment from heaven!

Death can drag everybody to its dance. All of a sudden tame life
seems to rebel against its lords - those who have cared
only of themselves in the tiny mote of life,
have pulled out of it their wealth and treasures!

Run, go fast, hurry up - before the market-place is emptied!
I run, I do, I bring. No reason can be seen, yet it seems
that right time has come to read a small book
before it disappears from library shelves of the entire world!

Its author could not foresee his own death at the age of 47,
yet, better than the bible or the koran he divined
what human soul could do in misery, such as war (that just had ended
and of whose guilt no one was free). Let then read those who can read

and let others read to those who cannot! Let hands be washed, all body,
and let soul be cleared of dirt, let awakening be tried,
before it's late, before death to dance invites!
Garlic let be eaten without cause, also by those in perfect health!

Let it be read to oneself and read to others – the book whose title
varies in any language, but its content is just the same
and is as short as "death", a sole syllable or just a couple,
a flash and all is lost – a word that keeps together,

in any single life binds fear, death, and hope of love:
Peste! Plague! – let business sharks and tsars in kremlins tremble!
Чума, प्लेग, 瘟疫! – let garlic be eaten, let souls be cleared of dirt!
Mēras, maras, katk! – it keeps together fear and death and hope!

¹ Translation from the Estonian by the author and H. L. Hix

Jüri Talvet (Pärnu, Estonia, born in 1945) is a poet, essayist, translator, academic. He graduated from the faculty of philology of the University of Tartu (in English philology, 1972). He got his PhD degree in Western Literatures by the University of Leningrad / Saint Petersburg (1981). From 1992 to 2020 he was the Chair Professor of World / Comparative Literature at the University of Tartu, where he also founded Spanish Studies. Today he is Professor emeritus.

He made his debut as a poet in 1981 with a book *Äratused* (*Awakenings*, Tallinn, 1981). Since then he has published in his native Estonian ten poetry books. In 2014 he published a major personal anthology of his poetic work, *Eesti eeleogia ja teisi luuletusi 1981-2012* (*Estonian Elegy and Other Poems*), with nearly 400 poems.

Translated books of his poetry have appeared in English (2008, 2010, 2018), Spanish (2002, 2010), Italian (2012, 2018), Romanian (2011), French (2011, 2016), Russian (2018), Serbian (2018), Catalán (2012) and Japanese (2019), besides a great number of smaller translated selections included in international magazines and anthologies.

As an essay writer and academic, he has published in Estonian a dozen books and article collections. Some of his essay books have appeared abroad: *A Call for Cultural Symbiosis* (Toronto: Guernica, 2005), *Un enfoque simbiótico de la cultura posmoderna* (Granada: Comares, 2009), *Una crida a la simbiosi cultural* (Valencia: Institut Alfons el Magnànim, 2009), *Meditazioni da U. Per una simbiosi culturale*. (Novi Ligure: Joker Edizioni, 2015), *Critical Essays on World Literature, Comparative Literature and the "Other"*. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), *Ten Letters to Montaigne. "Self" and "Other"*. (Toronto: Guernica, 2019).

He has been awarded Juhan Smuul Annual Literature Prize for Essay (1986), Juhan Liiv Poetry Prize (1997), Ivar Ivask Prize for Essay and Poetry (2002), International Naji Naaman Prize of Literature (for complete works, 2020), Annual Prize of the magazine *Akadeemia*, 2011 (essay) and 2016 (poetry translations), Annual Prize of the magazine *Looming*, 2011 (poetry), Order of Isabel the Catholic of Spain (for his activity in Spanish studies, 1992), Order of White Star of the Estonian Republic (2001), Medal of Tartu (2008), Order of the County of Alatskivi (2015), Grand Medal of the University of Tartu (2015), Medal of F. R. Kreutzwald (2016), etc. In 2011 he was elected as an active member of Academia Internationale Orient-Occident (Romania). Since 2016 he is Distinguished Guest of Salamanca y ordinary member of Academia Europaea.

Since 2006 he has participated in important international poetry and literature festivals in many parts of the world (Lithuania, Spain, Colombia, Slovenia, Belgium, Bolivia, Romania, Nicaragua, Peru, Italy, China, Cuba, Turkey, Japan, etc.)

(Cf. more data: <https://sisu.ut.ee/ewod/t/talvet>; <http://talvet.edicypages.com/es>)
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