

## JÜRI TALVET

(Translation from the Estonian by the author and H. L. Hix, from the book  
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THIS DANCING SANTA ON 42ND STREET  
maybe in front of Mazzotti's shoe shop and  
*Maria means business* on a Hudson riverbank  
Maria Bartiramo to whom have you sold  
your soul? – answer! And  
a living Santa who wound you up  
to foot a Greek or Catalan *sardana*  
and to mutter occasionally into your beard  
something about the special shine of Mazzotti's shoes  
Maria d'Aquino the whiteness of your knees  
escapes for ever from the eyes of Giovanni  
He is just an old man even without  
his Santa's beard and bushy eyebrows  
or maybe it's you Walt who looked on Broadway  
for the thick necks of big young white men  
and when you couldn't find them any more  
then the warm eyes of small Puerto Ricans  
and when you couldn't find them either you sat down  
in your own yard under a lilac and wept  
and mumbled like Francesco *pace*  
*pace pace* and T. S. later and the ancient bards  
long time before them and before you  
*šānti šānti šānti* peace to my heart peace  
to your heart too Maria Macolata

## IT'S FUNNY TODAY ANNE SEXTON

a representative of Microsoft sent me by e-mail  
 a purchase offer As if her namesake  
 whose poems I translate had been resurrected  
 You Anne who in *The Fury of Overshoes*  
 long for your tiny kindergarten winter boots  
 and Man and Woman whom you compare  
 to a pair of doves who live together but  
 don't speak That precipice between  
 the genders that you couldn't leap  
 even though you said you were a witch who knew  
 to fly on a broomstick Now in your second or in  
 who knows what life you are simply a woman  
 a tame mute mistress of a man named Microsoft

## SNOWFLAKES DANCE AGAIN BEYOND THE WINDOW

As a precaution its lower half has been grated though it's  
 the fifth floor Fort Washington alley 245 In any event  
 for a hundred years no one has cleaned the windows  
 Surely fearing the FBI which today sent me an e-mail  
 alleging I had visited forbidden web-pages  
 The gypsy Melquíades knows them or anyway has taken note  
 of them mr Jefferson mr Negroponte messrs snowflakes  
 In fact the question is more complicated Brown  
 or green eyes A beautiful even glimmer of spring –  
 because the artist not only has blown apart clouds  
 above the boulevard of the old world or above  
 the intersection of Lepiku and Lai but even has  
 lavishly planted young women's legs in boots  
 The earth itself looks blue beneath them! (Only now  
 I notice it) You are nowhere else *Father come home*  
*at once!* And they leave behind no muddy footprints

AN UNKNOWN ARTIST whose signature  
 on the boulevard corner that need not  
 necessarily be in Paris if magnified  
 might perhaps read C Camot  
 has made of six persons who walk past  
 lavishly striped awnings over café  
 or shop windows who knows why  
 four slender-legged young women  
 whose legs are like nice flowers  
 evenly planted in boots of an early spring  
 or an early autumn The Sun that even in the  
 dense row houses on Fort Washington Street  
 has discovered a slit peeps in  
 to find the legs of the young women  
 plays piano on them Maybe one of them  
 is Joanna who has never been  
 to Europe and will never get the chance  
 to travel there This key disobeys  
 these two legs cannot be uprooted  
 for a dance as long as there drums  
 in the earth mother's head  
 this obsession:  
 how to find a job to keep  
 her American children fed

**Jüri Talvet** was born in 1945 in Pärnu (Estonia). A graduate of the University of Tartu (1972) and a PhD by Leningrad (St. Petersburg) University (1981), he has chaired since 1992 World / Comparative Literature at Tartu University, where he also founded Spanish Studies. In 2016 he was elected member of Academia Europaea. He has published a number of books of poetry and essay, of which selections in translation have appeared in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Japanese and Catalan. Since 1996 he has been the main editor of *Interlitteraria*, international journal for comparative literary research. He was awarded Estonian Annual Prize of Literature for essay (1986), Juhan Liiv Prize of Poetry (1997), Ivar Ivask Memorial Prize (2002) and Naji Naaman International Literature Honor Prize (2020).



