

# Translating short stories: a case study of Raymond Carver's 'Will you please be quiet, please?', selected stories

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**Translation of Short Stories –  
A Case Study of Raymond Carver's “Would You Please Be Quiet,  
Please?”;  
selected stories**

Diplomski rad

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## 1. Summary

The topic of this paper is the translation of short stories with examples from “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?”. Definitions of literary genres and styles related to the subject are provided. Various factors affecting the translation process are mentioned and discussed, with emphasis on the translation of culture-based terms and phrases. The relationship between culture and language is mentioned as an influence on the quality of a translation. General strategies for the translation of culture-based items are provided and briefly discussed. A case study of selected passages from the collection and three translations of short stories are included as an example.

Key words: literary translation, short story, translation of culture, culture-based terms, “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?”

## 2. Introduction

At first glance, Raymond Carver's collection "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please" does not seem to be a great challenge for aspiring literary translators. His style is simple and straightforward, almost journalistic, without complicated literary mechanisms and flamboyant verbosity.

However, since the stories are set in 1950s American suburbia, the language used is closely linked to that particular time and place, and it is full of idioms and culture based terms, which makes it harder for (source and target language) readers to understand and relate to. This is where the real challenge of translation lies and why the translator should seek guidance from numerous theories in the field of literary translation.

Although translation studies is a relatively new science, it is a result of practical experience, and theoretical advice it offers can help translators deal with confusing situations like the appropriate translation of culture based terms, metaphors, rhyme, idioms etc. The main issue is finding the balance between an accurate and an appropriate translation, i.e. making sure the solution is both correct and understandable to the readers.

In this paper I have provided a brief and simplified overview of some of the main theories in the field of literary translation, explained on some examples from Carver's collection. I have also discussed some of the particularly troublesome examples from various featured stories and offered my suggestions and compared them to the existing Croatian translation. The theories of translation cannot deliver universal solutions to the numerous issues and problems of translation, but they can serve as a good reference point and source of practical advice.

### 3. Elaboration

#### 3.1. Translation

### 3.1.1. Definitions

Catford defines translation as “the replacement of textual evidence in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (20). Newmark offers a similar explanation: “it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text” (5). Jakobson divided his definition of translation into three categories; intralingual translation (*rewording*), the reinterpretation of an utterance within one language, interlingual translation (also known as *translation proper*) is translation from one language into another and intersemiotic translation, interpreting words by means of non-verbal signs (Munday, 5). Hatim and Munday differentiate between translation as the process of transferring a written text from the SL into the TL, translation as the product of that particular process and the phenomena which are an integral part of both (32). In his high school textbook (1978), Ivir sums it up like this: “translating is rendering a certain message (thought, feeling, desire, and instruction) expressed in one language into an identical message in another language” (21). However, in one of his subsequent publications, he acknowledges the importance of cultural implications in translating; “every translation is an attempt of bridging the cultural gap” (1991: 15).

In order to convey a certain message successfully, the translator has to be able to understand the cultural content of the utterance (both explicit and implicit) and adapt it to the mindset of the TL reader (Ivir, 1991: 18). On a similar note, B. Jakovlev defines translation as a continuum of mental images, and an ideal translation should evoke the same responses in the minds of target language readers as in those of the source language readers. She believes that “a book should be translated as though the author of the original had written it in another language” (52). Clearly, understanding the communicative function of a text is equally, if not more important than choosing the appropriate words or grammatical structures. Pavlović therefore claims that an “ideal” translation (if indeed possible) “would be one managing to render the whole communicative value of a text into another language” (164).

### 3.1.2. Basic types of translation

There are many different typologies of translation based on various linguistic and other factors. However, the most basic division is that of Vladimir Ivir, who distinguishes between several types of translation depending on the agent, medium, and genre.

According to Ivir’s typology, the agent (or author) of a translation is either a human being or a machine. Machine translation was a very new concept back in the 1970s, and Ivir considered it to be ineffective; “polysemy and differences in word order between various languages proved to be the greatest obstacle to machine translation” (31). Despite of today’s technological

advancements, machines have thus far been unable to replace human translators, as proven by *Google translate*.

As a medium, a translation can be either written or spoken. Spoken translation is commonly known as interpreting. Otto Kade defined it as a kind of translation where “the SL text is presented only once and thus cannot be reviewed or replayed, and where the TL text is produced under time pressure, with little chance of revision or correction” (Munday, 200)

Depending on genre, translation can be roughly divided into two basic groups: literary and non-literary translation. Non-literary texts aim to “convey factual information”, while literary texts (and their translations) “affect one’s artistic sensibility and provoke an aesthetic response” (Ivir, 1978: 31). Considering the topic of this paper, most of my attention will be focused on literary translation.

### 3.1.3. Literary translation

Landers (2001:5) argues that “only literary translation lets one consistently share in the creative process”. Since literary texts affect the reader’s emotions, “*how* one says something can be as important, sometimes more important, than what one says” (7).

Newmark claims that the translation of serious literature is the most testing type of translation: “because the first, basic articulation of meaning (the word) is as important as the second (the sentence) and the effort to make word, sentence and text cohere requires continuous compromise and readjustment” (162).

According to Hassan (2011: 2), “A literary translation must reflect the imaginative, intellectual, and intuitive writing of the author”. Jiri Levy considered literary translation to be “both a reproductive and a creative labour with the goal of equivalent aesthetic effect” (Munday, 67).

Bassnett points out that it is important for translators to understand and appreciate the complexity of literary texts: “The failure of many translators to understand that a literary text is made up of a complex set of systems existing in a dialectical relationship with other sets outside its boundaries has often led them to focus on particular aspects of a text at the expense of others” (2002: 83).

Landers argues that translators, like writers, have an individual “style”: “As a subfield of literature – and literature is undisputedly an art rather than a science – translation is subjective in essence” (11). The *visibility* of the translator has long been debated, and translators are usually considered to be invisible or irrelevant. As Mona Baker states: “The implication is that a translator



cannot have, indeed *should not* have a style of his or her own, the translator's task being simply to reproduce as closely as possible the style of the original" (2000: 244).

However, she concludes it is virtually impossible for to translate a literary text without adding your own personal style to it: "it is as impossible to produce a stretch of language in a totally impersonal way as it is to handle an object without leaving one's fingerprints on it" (244).

### 3.2. Short stories

In order to begin the analysis of the translation of short stories, it is necessary to explain what a short story actually is. The Dictionary of Literary terms offers the following definition: "Narrative prose fiction shorter than the novel, usually not more than 15,000 words. Most

frequently a short story...focuses on a single character in a single episode, and, rather than tracing his development, reveals him at a particular moment” (130).

Perhaps the most accurate definition is the following: “it is a relatively brief fictional narrative in prose. It may range in length from ...500 to 15,000 words. It... has a definite formal development, a firmness in construction; however, it finds its unity...in effect, in theme, in character, in tone, in mood, even in style” (Harmon, 469).

Experts in the field of literary theory argue that the short story is very difficult to classify. Cuddon states: “(it is) a story that concentrates on a unique or single effect and (...) in which the totality of effect is the main objective” (605). Since the genre is so elusive and varies in length and themes, Cuddon concludes that its possibilities are almost endless, and it can “be concerned with a scene, an episode, an experience, a *happening*, an action...” (609) etc.

However, as Daniel Just explains: “although the short story as a genre usually portrays only a select aspect of a life experience, its format does not free it from an obligation to convey a clear message ...” (306). Readers usually expect a certain amount of depth, a message or a higher purpose from a literary work, or, in Just’s words, “a redemptive dimension beyond the everyday” (307), which is probably why literary critics reacted so negatively to the emergence of literary minimalism.

### 3.2.1. Minimalist short story

Minimalism emerged in the 1970s in America, and was also known as *dirty realism* (Gray, 723). Some of the most important representatives of this genre were Alice Adams, Frederick Barthelme, Ann Beattie, Raymond Carver, Brett Easton Ellis, Amy Hempel, Bobby Ann Mason, Chuck Palahniuk, Grace Paley, Mary Robison, Elizabeth Tallent, and Tobias Wolf. Gray elaborates: “What these writers honour and articulate are the lives of the working poor: people who have to sell their labour, or even their bodies, to live and who might, at any time, lose the everything including the basic dignities that make human beings human” (726).

#### 3.2.1.1. Main features of literary minimalism

In his critical overview of the differences between realist and minimalist literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Just singles out a few main characteristics of literary minimalism, as seen in Raymond Carver's short stories: “brevity, plain style and lack of resolutions, using almost exclusively very short descriptive sentences...monotony of narration...without transitions between sentences...relentless rhythm of thematic repetitions...with no epiphanies or consummations...lack of plot...paucity of information...absence of a clear ending” (726).

According to Gray, dirty realism was greatly affected by the works of Ernest Hemingway, especially in the “way the writer uses omission, the spaces between the words to catch evanescent, elusive feelings” (726). Michael Trussler states: “every truly minimalist work is an act of great daring; an effort to reveal or expose by way of negating the real” (24). In other words, literary minimalism can be understood as a movement that employs omission and contracted forms in order to convey a broader meaning, by means of association, or as Trussler concludes: “it is precisely this invisibility, this concentration on omission, this narrative strategy of implying rather than stating or explaining, that engenders the paradox of Carver’s writing” (28). Daniel Just sums it up like this: “with their brevity, ascetic style and lack of resolutions, Carver's minimalist short stories have often served as an...unstylized and even clumsy attempt to depict the...prosaic aspects of everyday life” (303).

In his essay “On Writing”, Raymond Carver himself disambiguates the main purpose and stylistic traits of the dirty realism: “It’s possible, in a poem or a short story, to write about commonplace things and objects using commonplace but precise language endow those things – a chair, a window curtain, a fork, a stone, a woman’s earring - with immense, even startling power” (48).

### 3.3. Equivalence in translation

Equivalence is a key notion in translation theory, and many experts have stated that a text should aim to achieve “an equivalent response” (Newmark, 48).

Nida presents two basic types of equivalence: formal and dynamic. Formal equivalence “focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content” (Munday, 39). It is oriented towards the source language and its structures. The most common example of formal equivalence

is the so-called gloss translation, which aims to explain the ST to the TL audience. In this case, poetry is usually translated by poetry, sentences by sentences etc. (Bassnet, 34) Dynamic equivalence is based on “the principle of equivalent effect...the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that...between the original receptors and the message” (Munday, 42). This approach aims to produce an equivalent effect, rather than recreate the original SL text.

When discussing what he refers to as “equivalent effect”, Newmark makes a distinction between two types of texts with respect to their potential for achieving an equivalent effect: semantic and communicative translation.

Semantic translation “attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original” (Munday, 44). In other words, semantic translation is oriented towards the ST. Or as Newmark himself phrased it: “the translator is...trying to render the effect the SL text has on *himself*, not on any putative readership” (48).

Communicative translation, on the other hand, “attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original” (Munday, 44). Since it is oriented towards the TL audience, this type of translation is “set on the reader's level of language and knowledge...more likely to create equivalent effect” (Newmark, 49). However, Newmark considers this type to be “undertranslated”, since older texts must undergo a certain simplification to make it more understandable to a modern audience.

While there have been many attempts to explain, define and elaborate on the nature, meaning and types of equivalence in translation, most of them detect two main polarities when it comes to achieving equivalence; staying faithful to the original or adapting the ST to the TL audience. The issue of equivalence can therefore never be fully examined or explained, since, as Bassnett states: “Translation involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages. Once the translator moves away from close linguistic equivalence, the problems of determining the exact nature of...equivalence aimed for begin to emerge” (Munday, 45).

For the purposes of this paper, however, I will avoid any further definitions and merely address the issue of equivalence regarding the translation of various lexical units. More specifically, Mona Baker's strategies dealing with non-equivalence on two levels; non-equivalence at word level and above word level. Equivalence at word level refers to the translation of various culture bound terms, words that carry different culturally defined connotations, which leads to

difficulties in translation. Equivalence above word level relates to the translation of idioms and collocations, which are also culturally defined.

### 3.3.1. Non-equivalence at word level

According to Mona Baker (and originally to David Cruse), there are four basic types of meaning of each word which determine whether another word is indeed its real equivalent. Those four types are:

#### a) Propositional meaning

The proposition meaning of a word is “the relation between it and what it refers to or describes in a real or imaginary world” (Baker, 13). This type of meaning can be judged as true or false.

#### b) Expressive meaning

The expressive meaning of a word or utterance is the complete opposite of the previous type. It cannot be deemed correct or incorrect because it “relates to the speaker’s feelings or attitude rather than to what words and utterances refer to” (Baker, 13).

#### c) Presupposed meaning

This type depends on the position of the word in an expression, and on the words that surround it. There are two types of these “co-occurrence restrictions” (Baker):

##### \*Selectional restrictions

These are directly linked to the propositional meaning of the word. For example, some adjectives are traditionally used to describe living beings (*dedicated, persistent, arrogant*), while others are normally used to describe inanimate objects (*sturdy, condensed, intricate*).

##### \*Collocational restrictions

Refer to collocations, which are arbitrary combinations of words not directly linked to their propositional meanings. For example, one can be in *excruciating pain* in English, but not in “*razapinjućoj*” boli (from the Latin origin of the word)<sup>1</sup>. Also, you can *practice law* in English, whereas the Croatian version would be closer to *dealing with the law* (*baviti se pravom*).

#### d) Evoked meaning

The last type “arises from dialect and register variation” (Baker, 15). A dialect may be defined as “a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by its pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, discourse conventions, and other linguistic features” (Solano-Flores, 2360).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://etymonline.com/?term=excruciate> accessed on April 9, 2013

### 3.4. Culture and translation

#### 3.4.1. Definitions of culture

Since translation is about conveying a message by means of a particular language, and languages are culturally defined, culture is obviously a key element that affects the quality and feasibility of translation, as well as its very existence. There would be no translation without words, and no words without a culture. Therefore it is important to understand what “culture” really is.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines culture as “behaviour peculiar to Homo sapiens, together with material objects used as an integral part of this behaviour. Thus, culture includes language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, and ceremonies, among other elements”<sup>2</sup>. Bratanić (1993: 18) states that culture in the broadest sense comprises two basic components: a) anthropological or social culture (beliefs, traditions, way of life, values etc.) and b) historically defined culture (consisting of various phenomena from the fields of history, geography, art etc.) Similar divisions have been made by authors like Brooks, who differentiates between “culture with a capital C”, which includes formal culture (literature, arts, institutions, history) and “culture with a small c” – practical, “way-of-life” culture (Čačija, 2004: 198).

Naturally, translation studies will most likely focus on the relationship between culture and language. According to Newmark: “I define culture as the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (94). In this sense, translation is largely dependent on the cultural environment, since languages are culturally defined. Ivir states that “culture and civilization include language...material culture and civilization and their extra-linguistic content have an important role on the translation process”. (64) As a result, learning languages always includes learning a culture: “Language can also be viewed as a reflection and an integral part of culture. Consequently, language learning almost always implies a certain degree of intercultural learning” (Čačija, 199).

Landers argues that the most successful translators are usually bicultural, instead of simply bilingual. Biculturality, in his opinion, surpasses linguistic ability, it includes “certain elements of the two cultures to which the merely bilingual are unlikely to ever be exposed” (77). The elements he mentions, like nursery rhymes, fairy tales, jokes etc. can be defined as culture-based or culture-bound terms.

### 3.4.2. “Culture” words or culture-bound terms

As House points out: “language as the most important means of communicating, of transmitting information...has therefore an overridingly important position inside any culture” (495).

Since language is such an important segment (as well as product of culture), there are clearly going to be some words and phrases which are very closely linked to a particular culture,

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<sup>2</sup> “culture.” Encyclopædia Britannica, from *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2003 Ultimate Reference Suite CD-ROM*. Copyright © 1994-2002 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. May 30, 2002.

and therefore hard to reinterpret in a different linguistic and cultural setting. These are usually referred to as culture-based terms or cultural words.

Harvey offers a rather simple definition of culture-based terms, from a lawyer's point of view: “concepts, institutions and personnel specific to the SL culture” (2). More generally, however, they are “elements and phenomena which do not exist or are different in the target culture, and for which there are no adequate target language equivalence” (Pavlović, Poslek, 159). Newmark states: “cultural words are associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated...literal translation would distort the meaning” (84). Cultural words carry connotations that are defined and deeply rooted within their own cultural environment, since “the cultural connotations of linguistic items often depend on prototypical uses of such terms within a particular linguistic community” (Chan, 92).

#### 3.4.2.1. Categories of culture-bound terms

Since there is a relatively large number of culture-based terms in English, sometimes it is necessary to separate them into categories depending on the context in which they appear. Here I will add some examples of my own as well as those from “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please” into a classification originally outlined by Pavlović and Poslek:

##### 3.4.2.1.1. Ecology

This category relates to concepts dealing with various natural phenomena like landscape, flora and fauna.

###### a) Fauna:

*German brown, Irish setter*

###### b) Flora:

*alpha alpha meadows, levee, milkweed,*

##### 3.4.2.1.2. Everyday life

Refers to types of dwellings, household appliances, food, meals, clothes, means of transport, public services, etc. Since “WYPBQP” is a realistic (if somewhat depressing) depiction of everyday life in American suburbia of the 1950s, it is, logically, full of examples of culture-based terms which are related to various elements of everyday life. Here are some examples:

###### a) Types of dwellings:

*apartment building, condo, beach house, bungalow*

###### b) Food and beverage:



*Caesar's salad, pudding cake, pineapple sherbet, carton of half and half, cheddar cheese, a bowl of cornflakes flaked with brown sugar, apple pie topped with melted cheese, coleslaw, dill pickle, squash, cream soda, U-No bar, highball, Scotch over ice, casserole dish, sirloin, beef Tournedos, the relish plate, buttered rum, six-pack of beer*

c) Clothes

*twill slacks, black wing tip shoes, Florsheim, blouse that buttons in the front*

d) Household appliances

*coffee pot, burner, draining board, sunburst clock*

e) Public services

*the power company, AT&T*

### 3.4.2.1.3. Material culture

Refers to various products, especially trademarks unique to a particular culture. However, the effects of globalization has rendered these items somewhat less exclusively linked to a specific sociolinguistic environment.

a) Products and trademarks:

*Pepsi, Coke, Florsheims, hofbrau restaurant, twenty four hour coffee shop, paperback novel*

b) Units of measurement

This is also a sub-category I have added since the differences between metric systems are also a representation of cultural variety.

- Units of length: *inch, mile, acre*
- Units of weight: *pound, ounce*
- Units of volume: *gallon, pint, quart*
- Cooking measures: *cup, spoonful*

### 3.4.2.1.4. History

Comprises items that relate to historical events, institutions, functions, personalities, literature and famous quotations.

### 3.4.2.1.5. Religion

To a certain extent, this category overlaps with the previous one, since sacred religious texts can also be considered important historical documents, and they have had a vast influence on the development of languages and society.

#### 3.4.2.1.6. Economy

Terms that have to do with the stock exchange, money, commodities, as well as institutions directly connected to money:

*lien, pink slip, loan sharks*

#### 3.4.2.1.7. Political and administrative functions and institutions

Various political systems generate their own terminology, which can prove almost impossible to transmit into another culture (with a different political system):

*Congress, Republicans, Democrats, sheriff, district attorney*

#### 3.4.2.1.8. Education

Different school systems have their own nomenclature, which, in turn, leads to lexical gaps:

*high school, junior high, freshman, graduate, Professor, adult education*

#### 3.4.2.1.9. Forms of address

*Sir, Ma'am, lady,*

#### 3.4.2.1.10. Leisure and entertainment

Includes sports, games, places where people go, things they do, different mass media

a) games: *racquetball, dodge ball, snooker, shuffleboard*

b) places people go: *diner, hofbrau restaurant, 7/11, twenty-four hour coffee shop*

### 3.5. Strategies for translation of culture-bound terms

There are many strategies which deal with the translation of lexical gaps, i.e. words and phrases that are rather difficult to transmit from one language into another. I have chosen those by Mona Baker and Peter Newmark.

#### 3.5.1. Baker's translation strategies

##### 3.5.1.1. Translation by a more general word

Translating a precise and specific word with a more general one, for lack of an exact TL equivalent. Baker states that this strategy is universally applicable, since "the hierarchical structure

of semantic fields is not language-specific" (26). For example, I translated the term "U-NO bar" (WYPBQP, 75), as "čokoladice", since I thought that the particular brand was not relevant for the story, and that it would seem somewhat inappropriate to replace the original term with a modern variety like Mars bar.

### 3.5.1.2. Translation by a more neutral word

Authors choose certain words that reflect their feelings and opinions regarding a particular subject. These words fulfil what Newmark (39) calls the "expressive function" of a text - "to express his feelings irrespective of any response". This text-type is mostly used in literature, essays, autobiography etc. (Newmark, 39). A translator is sometimes forced to use words that are more neutral, and do not express an opinion regarding a particular subject. Baker (30) gives the example of the sentence "The panda is something of a zoological mystery" which was translated into Chinese as "The panda may be called a riddle in zoology". The word 'mystery' exists in Chinese, but it is traditionally associated with religion, so the translator thought it would not be appropriate to use it in the context of zoology.

### 3.5.1.3. Translation by cultural substitution

Baker defines this strategy as "replacing a culture-specific item...with a target-language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader" (31) This strategy can be very helpful when dealing with culture-bound terms, as it ensures the target audience gets the same mental image as the one intended in the original text. There is an example from WYPBQP (9): "He put on...black wing-tip shoes". While Đurđević translated this culture-bound term as "crne šiljaste cipele" (17), I decided to use "crne oksfordice". Oxford shoes may not be the same thing as wing-tip shoes, but they are similar, and familiar to the target language readers.

### 3.5.1.4. Translation using a loanword

This strategy is particularly useful when dealing with buzzwords and modern concepts (Baker, 34). A word is simply transferred into a target text, and it can sometimes be accompanied with a clarification in a footnote. A good example can be the word "shuffleboard", which Carver mentions in WYPBQP (115). Merriam-Webster defines it as "a game in which players use long-

handled cues to shove disks into scoring areas of a diagram marked on a smooth surface<sup>3</sup>. The game is not played or even remotely familiar in Croatia, so there is no cultural equivalent or any other way to translate it except by adopting the original word, followed by an explanation in brackets or in a footnote.

#### 3.5.1.5. Translation by paraphrase using a related word

A source-text term is replaced with a paraphrase by using a related word, as can be seen in the example of “sunburst clock” (WYPBQP, 7) which I have translated as “suncoliki sat”, since there is no real equivalent in Croatian, and such clocks are not particularly popular in Croatia.

#### 3.5.1.6. Translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word

This strategy is used when “the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized at all in the target language” (Baker, 38), and it comes down to disambiguation of a certain term. For example, Carver mentions the term “coleslaw” (16), which Đurđević translates as “salata od sjeckanog kupusa” (25), which is correct, especially according to the official definition (“a salad made of raw sliced or chopped cabbage”<sup>4</sup>), but not very relevant for the plot. I used the expression “miješana salata”, but “kupus salata” would also have been acceptable.

#### 3.5.1.7. Translation by omission

If a translator decides that a particular term or expression is not important for the overall plot, they can choose to omit it. The omission can relate to the whole phrase or just some of the elements. For example, in the story “Collectors”, Carver states (80): “It’s only a twelve-by-fifteen cotton carpet with no-skid backing from Rug City”. Đurđević used (109):”To je samo pamučni tepih, četrdeset sa šezdeset, izlizan još dok je bio u Gradu Tepiha.” I thought “To je samo omanji pamučni tepih s podlogom protiv klizanja iz Rug Cityja” sounds more natural in Croatian, and that the actual size of the carpet was not very vital for the plot.

#### 3.5.1.8. Translation by illustration

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<sup>3</sup> “shuffleboard.” Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, from *Encyclopædia Britannica 2003 Ultimate Reference Suite CD-ROM*. Copyright © 1994-2002 Merriam-Webster, Inc

<sup>4</sup> “coleslaw.” Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, from *Encyclopædia Britannica 2003 Ultimate Reference Suite CD-ROM*. Copyright © 1994-2002 Merriam-Webster, Inc

Sometimes a graphic representation of a particular concept is the easiest way to transfer the intended meaning to a target audience, but I have not used this strategy in my translation, so will not be going into further detail.

### 3.5.2. Newmark's translation procedures

Unlike translation methods, which refer to the translation of the entire text, procedures deal with smaller lexical units. Newmark's procedures are as follows: transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, synonymy, through-translation, shifts or transpositions, modulation, recognized translation, translation labels, compensation, componential analysis, reduction and expansion, paraphrase, other procedures (...), couplets, notes and glosses.

Transference is “the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure” (81). There is no adaptation involved, the word is preserved in its original form; for example *hofbrau*, *ambiance*, *coup d'état* etc. Newmark states that problems can arise with the translation of abstract mental words that are linked to a particular historical period, country or person (like *spleen*, *Enlightenment* etc.), he suggests that the word in question should be transferred and explained with a functional equivalent in the brackets.

Naturalisation “adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL” (82). For example, the English words *computer*, *image*, *blazer*, *groggy* have been adapted to Croatian as *kompjuter*, *imidž*, *blejzer* and *groggi*.

Cultural equivalent is “an approximate translation where a SL cultural word is translated by a TL cultural word” (83). English terms *solicitor*, *barrister*, *district attorney* have Croatian equivalents in *odvjetnik*, *advokat* and *okružni tužitelj*.

Functional equivalent “requires the use of a culture-free word...it is a cultural componential analysis and the most accurate way of translating” (83).

Descriptive equivalent is a procedure in which culture-based terms are explained by several words (Čačija, 2008:109).

Synonymy is “used for a SL word where there is no one-to-one equivalent and the word is not important in the text” (83).

### 3.6. Idioms

According to Seidl, idioms can be defined as “a number of words which, when taken together, have a different meaning from the individual meanings of each word” (13). Idioms are not only colloquial expressions, they can be used in various settings, including the Bible (*cast the*

*first stone*), and classical works like Shakespeare (*to be or not to be, all's well that ends well*).

There are three basic types of idioms:

- 1) Form irregular, meaning clear, like *give someone to understand, do someone proud*
- 2) Form regular, meaning unclear, as in *have a bee in one's bonnet*
- 3) Form irregular, meaning unclear, as in *be at daggers drawn, be at large* (Seidl, p. 13)

The Longman dictionary of English idioms offers a more elaborate typology of idioms, according to their origin:

- 1) Traditional idioms, which are familiar to most people and function as parts of speech. Some examples are *spill the beans, give up the ghost*.
- 2) Idioms in which actions stand for emotions, as in *hang one's head (in shame), throw up one's arms, wash one's hands of something* etc.
- 3) Pairs of words, idioms which are joined by *and* and *or*. These can also function as parts of speech, like *cats and dogs, hammer and tongs, etc.*
- 4) Idioms with 'it', where the pronoun does not refer to a word coming before it, as in *live it up, snuff it, beat it, etc.*
- 5) Allusions, words that have a special significance in the English language, like *Catch 22, Whitehall, Waterloo* etc.
- 6) Sayings, as *you can't take it with you, there's always next time, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, a rolling stone gathers no moss* etc.
- 7) Conversational phrases like *how do you do?, so to speak, now you're talking!*
- 8) Similes- idioms which compare a quality, condition, action etc. with a noun, like *as easy as pie, as dumb as a post, as cool as a cucumber, as right as rain, as poor as a piper* etc.

Baker points out that idioms can sometimes be misinterpreted if the translator does not recognize them to be idioms (66). Generally speaking, those idioms which are hard to understand and do not make sense in a particular context are less likely to be overlooked or misunderstood. According to Baker, misinterpretation usually occurs due to one of the following reasons:

- a) an idiom can be misleading if the translator only detects its literal meaning
- b) an expression similar to the SL idiom exists in the TL, but the two idioms appear in different contexts (66).

### 3.6.1. Strategies for the translation of idioms:

Baker lists five basic strategies that may serve as pointers in the challenging task of translating idioms:

- 1) USING AN IDIOM OF SIMILAR MEANING AND FORM

Martinović provides several examples of English idioms which can be translated into Croatian by using phrases of similar meaning and form: *one foot in the grave* (*jednom nogom u grobu*), *to hang by a thread* (*visjeti o niti*), *a wolf in sheep's clothing* (*vuk u janjećoj koži*), *to cry over spilt milk* (*plakati nad prolivenim mlijekom*) etc. (460)

## 2) USING AN IDIOM OF SIMILAR MEANING AND DISSIMILAR FORM

Some examples are: *bag of bones* (*kost i koža*), *a green Christmas* (*Božić bez snijega*), *straight out of the horse's mouth* (*iz prve ruke*), *an old flame* (*stara ljubav*), *dead hours* (*gluho doba noći*), *his number is up* (*odzvonilo mu je*), *no song no supper* (*tko ne radi ne mora ni jesti*), *let sleeping dogs lie* (*ne vuci vraga za rep*), etc. (Martinović, 461)

## 3) TRANSLATION BY PARAPHRASE

If there is no appropriate TL phrase which can be used to translate a particular idiom, one can always decide to use a paraphrase: *Jack of all trades* (*spretan čovjek*), *to tie the knot* (*oženiti se*), *to be on top of the world* (*sjajno se osjećati*), *skeleton in the closet* (*sramotna tajna*) etc.

## 4) TRANSLATION BY OMISSION

An idiom is simply ignored in the text.

## 5) TRANSLATION BY COMPENSATION

As Baker explains it: “one may either omit or play down a feature... where it occurs in the ST and introduce it elsewhere in the TT” (78). If an idiom is omitted in one place in the text, another one can be used somewhere else in the text, to compensate for the loss in translation.

### 3.7. Collocations

The Oxford Collocations Dictionary defines collocations as “the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing”. Baker states that collocations are simply “words set with other words in a more or less arbitrary way”.

Heylen adds: “collocations are cohesive, recurrent, arbitrary combinations of words...in which the (figurative) meaning of one part is contextually restricted to the specific combination” (page number).

There are two basic types of collocations, according to Roe: lexical collocation and grammatical collocation, also known as colligation. Lexical collocation is “the co-occurrence of nouns, adjectives, verbs or adverbs” (3). Some examples could be *strict rules*, *hard labour* and

*sheer luck*. Colligation could be defined as “the co-occurrence of nouns, verbs or adjectives with prepositions or certain features of grammar” (Roe, 3). For example, the comparative form of an adjective is usually followed by the word *than*.

Baker also notes that words differ in their so-called collocational range, i.e. “set of collocates...which are typically associated with the word in question” (49). Words can have a broad or narrow collocational range, depending on two main factors; their “level of specificity” (specific words have a relatively narrow collocational range) and “number of senses” (if a word has more than one sense, it will probably also co-occur with a larger number of words).

Problems with translating collocations:

Sometimes the translator fails to recognize the meaning of a collocation as a combination of words, which is different from the meanings of each individual word.

According to Mona Baker, these mistakes occur for several reasons:

- 1) The translator is heavily influenced by the ST patterning, and therefore does not realize that the translated collocation is “unnatural” or not typical in the TL.
- 2) The translator misunderstands the meaning of a ST collocation because of TL influence.
- 3) The translator is forced to choose between accuracy and naturalness.
- 4) The translator has to deal with so-called “culture specific collocations”, i.e. those that “reflect the cultural setting in which they occur” (54-62).

### 3.8. Examples of translation in “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?”

#### 3.8.1. Title

According to Landers, “a title should be changed only when it cannot be left unchanged” (140). He states that title changes usually occur because of various types of disparities between the source and target language, and the main objective of a title should be to make the work more



appealing to the potential audience, and to eliminate any “offputting otherness” of a certain work (140). Therefore, the literary translator should try to remain as faithful as possible to the original title, and only choose to alter it if it seems unnatural to the TL audience.

In the case of “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?” the book has been translated into many different languages, and naturally, the title has been somewhat changed in every version:

Spanish: ¿Quieres hacer el favor de callarte, por favor?<sup>5</sup>

(back translation: “Would you do me a favor and shut up, please?”)

Italian: Vuoi star zitta, per favore?<sup>6</sup>

(back translation: “Will you shut up, please?”)

German: Würdest du bitte endlich still sein, bitte?<sup>7</sup>

(back translation: “Would you please finally be quiet, please?”)

French: Tais-toi, je t' en prie<sup>8</sup>

(back translation: “Be quiet, please!”)

Croatian: Hoćeš li molim te ušutjeti, molim te? (Đurđević, 1996)

(back translation: “Will you please be quiet, please?”)

Russian: Не будете ли вы так добры помолчать?<sup>9</sup>

(back translation: “Would you kindly be quiet?”)

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<sup>5</sup>(<http://catalogo.bne.es/uhtbin/cgisirsi/CzUiginC3g/BNMADRID/291110433/13>)

<sup>6</sup> (<http://193.206.215.17/BVE/result.php>)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.amazon.de/W%C3%BCrdest-bitte-endlich-still-sein/dp/3596903904/ref=pd\\_sim\\_sbs\\_b\\_1](http://www.amazon.de/W%C3%BCrdest-bitte-endlich-still-sein/dp/3596903904/ref=pd_sim_sbs_b_1)

<sup>8</sup>(<http://catalogue.bnf.fr/servlet/biblio?ID=42310204&SN1=0&SN2=0&idNoeud=1.2.1.1.1&FormatAffichage=0&host=catalogue>)

<sup>9</sup> <http://magazines.russ.ru/inostran/2005/7/kar2.html>

Some adjustments have clearly been made in the translation of the title into various languages. There are some grammatical differences between the versions; the Spanish sentence is not gender-specific, while the Italian version is aimed towards a female interlocutor (*zitta* is the feminine form of the adjective *zitto*, meaning 'quiet' or 'silent'). The German sentence is longer and more complicated, as the translator decided to add the word “finally”, and keep both instances of “please” from the original text. The French version is short and simple, probably adopted directly from the original dialogue. Russian uses honorifics (in the linguistic sense), which makes the phrase sound like an extremely polite request, especially compared to the rude Italian rendering. The Croatian version seems to address a specific person whose gender cannot be distinguished. “Please” is also repeated twice, and in the same form (although “please” can be translated as “*molim te*” and “*molim*”), which is seldom used in colloquial speech. Generally, it seems that Russian, Croatian, and German translations are closer to the original form, while Italian and French are simpler and more direct.

The book has been named after the last story in the collection, which was entitled after an exclamation of a desperate husband to his unfaithful wife. After he found out that his wife had cheated on him with one of their friends, he went out and got drunk. When he got home, he locked himself into the bathroom, refusing to open the door (180):

He said, “Go away”.

She said, “Ralph, open up, please.”

He said, “Will you please be quiet, please?”

I have tried to preserve the natural, colloquial spirit of these sentences:

“Odlazi”, reče Ralph.

“Ralph, molim te, otvori” reče Marian.

“Daj molim te ušuti!” or “Molim te, umukni!”

The official translation by Đurđević reads:

“Rekao je, “odlazi”.”

“Rekla je, “Ralph, molim te, otvori.””

“Rekao je, “hoćeš li molim te ušutjeti, molim te?”” (221)

The translator chose to translate the sentence almost literally, and use it as the title of the entire volume. However, the phrase sounds unnatural in the target language, and one has to wonder why Đurđević decided to utilize it. The answer might be related to the symbolic meaning of the book. As Black notes in his analysis of the collection:

“The volume's second obsession is the failure of individuals to communicate with those who surround them, especially their spouses or partners. Lack of communication can only perpetuate the despair which too often pervades Carver's world and the relationships between its characters, and, indeed, it does so in many of the stories in *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*” (30)

When the sentence is uttered in the short story, it can be translated in a very basic, colloquial fashion. However, the silence in the title clearly relates to all the stories in the collection, since the characters are trapped in their inability to communicate with each other and verbalize their needs. In this broader sense, the existing Croatian title might be acceptable, but I still believe the phrase seems unnatural and too long, which can be quite repulsive to the potential readers. All things considered, my choice would be “Molim te, umukni!” (if the sentence is adopted from the original dialogue) or possibly “Tišina, molim!” (if it relates to the general message of the book).

### 3.8.2. Specific examples

In addition to the stories I have translated and featured in the Appendix, there are many examples of challenging phrases from other stories in the collection. I have finally decided to feature those “problems” of translation, explain what the difficulty was, and provide my solutions, comparing them to the ones from the official translation by Miloš Đurđević.

All of the examples will be listed according to a particular phrase (sentence), instead of the story they belong to.

#### 1. But some jokers like their quim fat

This is an example from “They’re Not Your Husband”. This particular story is about an overweight waitress Doreen and her unemployed husband Earl who, for lack of more relevant

preoccupations, forces her to go on a diet. There was a situation where two male customers were commenting on Doreen's figure, and Earl overheard their conversation:

“Look at that ass. I don't believe it.”

The other man laughed. “I've seen better,” he said.

“That's what I mean,” the first man said. “But some jokers like their quim fat.” (16)

I thought it was important to transmit the message in a way that would seem both likely and familiar to a Croatian reader, so here is what I did:

“Pogledaj to dupe. Ne možeš vjerovati!”

Drugi se nasmijao: “Vidio sam i bolje”.

“Pa to i kažem,” odvrati prvi. “Ali neki očito vole da ljulja”.

The ‘official’ translation reads:

“Neki zajebanti vole da su njihove pičke malo deblje.” (25)

Although the latter rendering is more faithful to the meaning of the original words (quim<sup>10</sup> is a slang expression for a vagina, and joker could be a name for a funny, entertaining man), I think the translator added unnecessary vulgarity to the entire situation, since the comment (if somewhat sexist) was generally playful and benign. Also, although I cannot base this claim on any evidence apart from personal experience and conversations with my colleagues, speakers of Croatian would find this sentence to be inappropriate and exaggerated, and somewhat foreign-sounding. The translator was heavily influenced by the ST sentences and the spirit of the English language.

2. I get all the exercise I need down there.

The following example is from the same story. Earl suggests Doreen should try to exercise more in order to lose some weight, to which she replies that her day job is exhausting enough as it is:

“I'm getting all the exercise I need down there,” she said. (18)

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<sup>10</sup> "quim." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 15 Mar. 2013. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/quim>>.

I once again tried to create a statement that would sound natural coming from a middle-aged Croatian waitress who was also a full-time mother and wife:

“Na poslu se navježbam preko glave”, rekla je.

Đurđević opted for:

“Sasvim dovoljno vježbam tamo dolje” – rekla je. (27)

Both versions make sense, but I feel mine is more precise, since it is somewhat unclear what “tamo dolje” is in the official translation.

### 3. If the shoe fits

The following example was perhaps the most challenging one in the entire book. It is from a story called “What’s in Alaska?”, where a young couple visits their friends, and they spend a pleasant evening talking and smoking a water pipe. At one point, Mary makes a casual remark about her husband Jack’s current bad mood, and he begins to protest:

“If I wasn’t on a bumner before you said it, it’s enough when you say it to put me on one.”

To which she replies: “If the shoe fits...” (62)

This is a fine example of wordplay, since it refers to two things; to the shoes Jack had bought just before they went out, and to the phrase “If the shoe fits, wear it” as “a way of suggesting that someone should accept a generalized remark or criticism as applying to themselves” (Siefing, 45), very appropriate to the whole situation. Naturally, this led to a problem; I had to preserve both the meaning of the phrase and the “shoe” reference.

Finally I decided to go for:

- Ako i nisam bio ubediran, dovoljno je da kažeš da jesam pa da se ubediram.

- Gdje ima dima... - rekla je Mary.

The translator may have done a better job in this case:

- Ako nisam bio mrzovoljan prije nego si to rekla, dovoljno da to kažeš pa da onda budem takav.

- Grebeš se tamo gdje te...žulja – reče Mary (79)

My solution was to use a proverb “Gdje ima dima, ima i vatre” (“If the shoe fits, wear it”), whereas the official translation takes the implicit reference to Jack’s new shoes into account. However, I later realized that while the shoe reference might have been sacrificed, I have managed to create a new connection between the original proverb and the setting of the story – the water pipe they were all smoking.

#### 4. What would Emily Post say?

The following example is also from “What's in Alaska?”. Helen is speaking with her mouth full, and Mary jokingly remarks:

“I don’t know what Emily Post would say about you.” (60)

Since Emily Post was an American expert (and writer) in the field of social etiquette<sup>11</sup> who would certainly frown upon a person speaking with their mouth full, her name could (hypothetically) be preserved in the TL text, which is exactly what Đurđević did:

“Ne znam što bi Emily Post rekla o tebi” (76).

However, Post lived in America at the turn of the 20th century, which means she is almost certainly unknown in Croatia, especially today. Also, the translator chose to retain the original name without any kind of clarification in a footnote or in brackets. That is why I decided to convey the idea of a person typically concerned with other people's manners and connect it to a relatively well-known Croatian pop culture (cartoon) reference:

“Jao, da te mama vidi...”

Perhaps my choice is not the optimal solution, but I believe it fulfils what Newmark (40) calls the “informative function” of a text, i.e. it conveys the intended message to the TL audience. The hypothetical 'average' reader of the translation would get the feeling that the sentence is uttered in a light-hearted way and not meant as actual contempt.

#### 5. We broke it in last night

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<sup>11</sup> "Emily Post". Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.

<sup>11</sup>Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2013. Web. 10 Apr. 2013

<sup>11</sup><<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/472019/Emily-Post>>.

In “What's in Alaska?” the hosts Helen and Carl invite their friends to try their new water pipe. At one point they admit that they have tried it out the night before. The passage reads as follows:

“We broke it in last night,” Helen said and laughed loudly. “She was still stoned when she got up with the kids this morning,” Carl said.

Spears defines the idiom “break something in” as “to make something fit by wearing or using it” (49), or, in other words, trying something out in order to become more familiar with it. I believe it is quite clear that the “it” in this idiom refers to the new water pipe. That is why I chose:

“Sinoć smo ju krstili”, reče Helen, i glasno se nasmije.

The word “baptized” is used metaphorically in this case, to signify introducing or using something for the first time. But the sentence clearly refers to the new water pipe. Đurđević used:

“Sinoć smo se razbili,” reče Helen i glasno se nasmije (78)

The expression “razbiti se” is used in colloquial Croatian to indicate intoxication (an equivalent English expression might be “to get wasted” (Spears, 2006:458), and it refers to the couple who had tried out the water pipe. Although intoxication is the logical result of using a water pipe, there is a slight difference in meaning between the two translations.

## 6. We'll clean up!

In “What's in Alaska?”, Jack suggests going into business with his neighbour Carl. He is certain that they could make a lot of money selling pumpkins;

“We'll clean up.” (63)

The Dictionary of American Slang (Spears) defines the expression “clean up” as: “to make a lot of money on something” (79). Since I could not remember a similar expression in Croatian, I chose to shift the emphasis from their personal profit to the quantity of the product they would be able to sell:

"Išlo bi kao halva".

“Ići kao alva” is a Croatian idiom meaning “to sell very well, to be in high demand” (Menac et. al., 2003:91). I prefer translating idioms with idioms, as it seems to help preserve the 'atmosphere' of the original TL text.

Đurđević chose a more neutral expression, closer to the meaning of the original phrase:

“Uspjet ćemo!” (80)

I believe both solutions are acceptable and accurate, only mine focuses on the goods they will be selling, whereas the official translation refers to their financial gain (success). Also, I tried to emphasize the fact that the entire idea is hypothetical and there have not been any real results, which is why I used a conditional sentence.

#### 7. He'll drop his cookies

In a story called “Night School” a young, recently divorced man meets two older women in bar. After a few drinks, they let him in on their plan; they wanted to break into the apartment of their literature teacher. The women revealed their intentions to the protagonist, since they needed his assistance. The three of them are plotting at the bar. Here is the entire passage:

“We need your goddamn car. Jerry, let's have three more. And a six pack to go.”

“Here's to Patterson,” the first woman said when the beer came. “To Patterson and his highballs.”

“He'll drop his cookies,” Edith said. “Drink up,” the first woman said (72).

This example was a challenge because of its ambiguity; the reader can't be sure who Edith is referring to. At first it seems they are talking about their teacher, when in reality she is warning her friend that the young man might vomit (Spears, 2006:39). Considering the informal nature of the expression and the setting where the conversation takes place, an appropriate translation might be:

“Mali će se izrigati”, reče Edith. “Hajde popijte to do kraja”, reče druga.

The translator, however, ignored the idiomatic nature of this phrase:

“Ispast će mu kolačići” – reče Edith. “Hajde, eksirajte to”, doda druga (91).

The reader of the official translation will probably be confused by this sentence, since the phrase does not have an idiomatic meaning in Croatian. The literal translation makes the whole situation even more vague and confusing, and the English idiom is lost.

#### 8. But put me down for saying....



“What Do You Do in San Francisco?” is about an unusual young family that moved from California to a small town on the East coast. The narrator of the story is a conservative middle-aged postman. This is what he thinks of the young woman:

“But put me down for saying she wasn’t a good wife and mother” (82).

His colloquial remark seemed quite clear:

“Ali jamčim da nije bila dobra supruga i majka.”

The translator disregarded the obvious context here; instead of focusing on the entire paragraph, where the postman was expressing his favourable opinions about the woman’s appearance, the translator chose to pay attention to the idiom “to put someone down”, which literally means “ukoriti nekoga” (“repress, crush someone or something”, according to Spears, 2006:125):

“No slobodno me ukorite ako kažem da nije bila dobra supruga i majka.” (103)

This changes the perspective of the narrator's story – whereas in the original context he seems quite opinionated and uninterested in the reader's opinion, the translation makes him seem insecure and timid – he is asking for the reader's understanding and approval.

9. If we ride on giant wings...

The story called “Will You Please be Quiet, Please” features a jealous husband who is determined to find out if his wife had cheated on him. She describes the time one of their friends offered her a ride to the liquor store by saying:

“If we ride on giant wings we can make it before the liquor store closes.” (169)

Now, the expression itself sounds very theatrical and archaic, like something out of a fairy tale. That is why the translator opted for this solution:

“Sa čizmama od sedam milja mogli bismo stići prije zatvaranja trgovina.”(208)

I have to admit this was extremely challenging to come up with an appropriate translation, and I did not remember Perrault's fairy tale at first. Rather, I decided to preserve the “wing” reference:

“Na krilima vjetra stignemo prije nego se trgovine zatvore.”

Although “wings of the wind” is not a fixed idiom in the English language, the expression sounds poetic and relates to haste and swift action. It is also mentioned in the Bible (Psalms, 18:10)<sup>12</sup>

#### 10. Seeing how they'd go for a little Rimbaud.

In “Will you Please Be Quiet, Please”, an English teacher tells her suspicious husband what she's thinking about:

“And about the class I'm going to have tomorrow. I was thinking of seeing how they'd go for a little Rimbaud – and she laughed. – I didn't mean to rhyme”. (168)

The official translation reads:

“I o satu o Rimbaudu koji imam sutra. Razmišljala sam čega li je vjesnik taj mali francuski pjesnik – nasmija se. – Slučajno je ispala rima.” (207)

My version is slightly different:

“I o sutrašnjem predavanju. Možda bi im bilo fora čitati malo Rimbauda (an alternative solution might be “Možda bi im sjela Rimbaudeova djela”) – nasmijala se. – Rima nije bila namjerna.”

I was considering two things; first of all, she was wondering how her students would react to Rimbaud's poetry, not his personality; the first sentence was about them, not the poet. Secondly, the rhyme was supposed to be unintentional, and the official translation is far too complex and formal to be coincidental. Also, the expression “how they would go for something” is very informal, and I believed that particular register had to be preserved. Spears (2006) states that “go for (someone or something)” means “to desire someone or something” (161), and I think my solution is more suitable for the overall context. Another important element in this case is the issue of the reader's cultural knowledge. As Čačija points out, the question is whether the TT reader, even if he is on the same academic level as the reader of the ST, will have different textual expectations and cultural knowledge (2008:108). In this case, if the TT reader is not familiar with the correct pronunciation of “Rimbaud”, the rhyme can easily be lost.

#### 11. Soft shoe stuff, facial expressions...

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-18-10/>

In “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?” the protagonist's unfaithful wife describes a mutual friend:

“You know how he could be so theatrical when he wanted? Soft-shoe stuff, facial expressions?” (169)

“Soft-shoe” generally refers to a kind of tap dancing performed in soft-soled shoes<sup>13</sup>. Of course, the words are used metaphorically in this context, in order to describe a person who pretends to be gentle, sensitive, and artistic. My choice was:

“Znaš da je sklon prenemaganju. Sjeti se samo njegovih teatralnih pokreta i grimasa.”

The translator wrote:

“Znaš kako je ponekad teatralan kad to želi? Šuljanje, grimase?” (208)

Although the general idea of the passage is conveyed correctly, Đurđević misunderstood the metaphorical meaning of the term “soft-shoe” as “tip toeing”. It is not a dramatic mistake, but the word “šuljanje” (sneaking) seems a little out of place in this context.

## 12. They're a slippery bunch

In the story “Signals”, a married couple celebrates their anniversary in a luxurious Italian restaurant. The husband is unhappy with the service and starts criticizing the waiters:

““They're a slippery bunch”, Wayne said.” (160)

After that he gives an example of a man he worked with for a while, who had a second job waiting tables in some restaurant. The man was later found stealing money from the till and fired from both jobs. The character is therefore implying that all waiters are dishonest and untrustworthy.

This is why I chose:

“Podmukla su oni sorta – rekao je Wayne.”

The translator, however, misinterpreted the term "slippery" as "clumsy" and wrote:

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<sup>13</sup> "soft-shoe". Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford University Press. 15 March 2013 <<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/soft-shoe>>.

“Kako su samo trapavi – reče Wayne.” (197)

Whereas the original passage was an unfair generalization about all waiters, the official translation refers only to those working in Aldo's restaurant, where this particular story takes place.

### 13. Don't blow a gasket

A couple is sitting in a restaurant in “Signals” and the husband is constantly picking a fight with his wife, to which she replies:

“Don't blow a gasket!” (162)

The American Idioms Dictionary states that “to blow a fuse of gasket” means “to become very angry, to lose one's temper”. Similar idioms are burst a blood vessel, blow your top, blow a fuse, flip your lid etc. (Spears, 2006). That's why I chose:

“Nemoj da te srce strefi.”

I have also considered “Što se pjeniš?” as an appropriate TL equivalent, since it is a very popular idiom in modern colloquial Croatian, but I finally decided that my first choice seemed 'older' and therefore closer to the vernacular of the 1950s.

The translator decided to use:

“Ne pravi se važan”. (199)

Although the character was indeed acting out a bit, one could hardly say he was showing off, and I feel that the gasket idiom was very easy to translate.

### 14. Sunburst clock

The original sentence reads:

“The sunburst clock over the television said half past eight.” (7)

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term “sunburst” denotes “a design in the form of rays diverging from a central point”<sup>14</sup>. In order to avoid a long, descriptive translation, I decided to use the word 'suncolik' to refer to something shaped like the sun:

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sunburst>

“Na suncolikom zidnom satu iznad televizora bilo je pola devet.”

The official translator chose:

“Sat iznad televizora, izbljedio od sunca, pokazivao je osam i po.” (14)

#### 15. Maybe I'm all wet

In the story “They're Not Your Husband”, Earl tries to convince his wife to go on a diet, but once he detects her hesitation, he tries to take back his suggestion by saying:

“Maybe I'm all wet.” (18)

The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms defines all wet as “mistaken; completely wrong”. Therefore I translated the phrase as:

“Možda griješim”.

Đurđević decided to use the expression “Bit će da sam grogi”(27). I must admit I was not familiar with the term 'grog', and I have never encountered it in speech or in writing. Klaić (503) defines it as “klimav, drhtav, nesiguran, slab, teturav, nemoćan” (based on the English word groggy). Therefore the translation has a completely different meaning from the original.

#### 16. You want something signed in blood?

The meaning of this phrase is quite clear, the person who utters these words is reluctant to make a promise or guarantee something. It appears in the story "Signals" when the wife is unwilling to give her husband a precise answer (p. 162). My translation was:

„Hoćeš da ti se zakunem pred Bogom?”

The translation reads:

"Hoćeš li izjavu potpisanu krvlju?" (199)

#### 17. Maybe he has something there. You don't know.

In the story “The Idea”, an old couple is secretly spying on their neighbour who stands in front of his own house and watches his wife undress. The narrator's husband seems less appalled by the entire situation than his wife, and suggests:

“Maybe he has something there. You don't know” (14).

My translation was:

“Možda on i nije tako lud. Nikad ne znaš!”

The official translation reads:

“Možda on tamo nešto vidi...otkud znaš” (22).

Both solutions are correct and acceptable, but there is a slight difference in meaning; my sentence refers to the idea of spying on one's own spouse, and the official version referred to the specific act of voyeurism.

18. Out living it up, Arnold?

Spears (2006:409) defines the idiom “live it up” as: “to have an exciting time; to do what one pleases — regardless of cost — to please oneself”. The original sentence was uttered by Arnold's wife in the story “Are You A Doctor?”. She called home, and when her husband did not answer, she asked jokingly:

“Out living it up, Arnold?”(30)

This is one of the rare examples where my solution is almost identical to the official translation:

„Bio si malo u životu, Arnolde?” (As opposed to "Krenuo si u život, Arnolde?",41)

The Croatian-English Dictionary of Idioms (Vrgoč, 514) states that “live it up” means “živjeti na visokoj nozi”, which is unfortunately not acceptable in this particular context, since it refers to a luxurious lifestyle for a longer period of time.

19. Except maybe Cary Grant.

In “The Idea”, the narrator tells her husband:

“Anybody comes looking in my window”...”they’ll have the cops on them. Except maybe Cary Grant” (14).

Cary Grant was one of the most popular actors of his time and also a very handsome man. However, he was famous in the 1940s in America, and I was not sure if the contemporary reader would be able to imagine the actor's dashing features. That is why I chose to use the name of a more modern equivalent:

“Da meni netko škilji kroz prozor...imao bi posla s policijom. Osim možda Georgea Clooneyja.”

The translator decided to preserve the original reference, which is more faithful to the source text and the historical setting of the story.

“Svakoga tko bi gledao kroz moj prozor...odvela bi policija. Osim možda Caryja Granta – rekla sam.” (22)

Although I can understand the reasoning behind both choices, I must say I still believe it is more important to create an appropriate image in the mind of the TL reader than to remain completely faithful to the original text, especially since in this case the short stories are not historically restricted to the 1950s.

20. They are home free

In the story “Are These Actual Miles?”, the protagonist reflects on his unfortunate financial situation and the upcoming bankruptcy hearing (150):

“Monday they'll be in court, home free – but word on them went out yesterday, when their lawyer mailed the letters of intention. The hearing on Monday is nothing to worry about, the lawyer has said.”

The idiom “(to be) home free” generally means “to be safe and without problems” (Spears, 2006:309) . Since the last sentence of the selected passage suggests that the hearing is not something to worry about, I thought the most logical solution was:

“U ponedjeljak odu na sud i na konju su – no vijest o njihovim dugovima proširila se još jučer kad je njihov odvjetnik poslao pisma namjere. Uvjeravao ih je da saslušanje u ponedjeljak nije ništa strašno.”

Đurđević, however, may have overlooked the idiom (185):

“U ponedjeljak će biti na sudu, bez kuće – ali opomena je stigla jučer, kad su od svog odvjetnika dobili pismo o namjerama. Ne morate brinuti oko saslušavanja u ponedjeljak, rekao je odvjetnik.”

The official translation therefore suggests that the couple will lose their house during the bankruptcy hearing, when in fact, the hearing is the first step in the process of going bankrupt, and its purpose is to review a person's application and establish whether bankruptcy is an appropriate

solution<sup>15</sup>. The meaning of “home free” is therefore idiomatic, not literal, and it should be translated accordingly.

## 21. Pink slip

In “Are These Actual Miles?”, the protagonist's wife Toni is getting ready to sell their convertible. He wants to make sure she has all the necessary papers:

““You're sure?” he says. “ Make sure. You have to have the pink slip.”” (186)

According to “The People's Law Dictionary” (Hill&Hill)<sup>16</sup>, a pink slip is “slang for official automobile registration certificate, due to its color in some states”. The Croatian equivalent would be “prometna dozvola”<sup>17</sup>, a document containing all the data regarding the vehicle (including the registration). That is why I chose:

“Jesi sigurna?- upita. -Provjeri. Moraš ponijeti prometnu.”

Đurđević misunderstood this particular example of slang:

“Sigurna si?” rekao je. “Provjeri. Moraš imati ružičaste gaćice.”

I have to admit I was shocked when I read this blunder. First of all, the translator completely disregarded the context (a conversation taking place immediately before the woman goes out to sell a car). Furthermore, he failed to recognize “pink slip” as a slang expression for something completely unrelated to female undergarments. Finally, and this is probably the worst part, this particular element completely changes the story. Whereas the original story follows a sleepless night of a jealous husband, the translation suggests that he intended for his wife to seduce a potential buyer in order to get a better deal on the car. The reader of the translation is thus misinformed and somewhat deceived, which is unpardonable.

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<sup>15</sup>Bankruptcy Basics, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, Nov 2011  
(<http://www.uscourts.gov/Viewer.aspx?doc=/uscourts/FederalCourts/BankruptcyResources/bankbasics2011.pdf>)

<sup>16</sup> <http://dictionary.law.com/Default.aspx?selected=1532>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.cvh.hr/cvh/registracija-vozila/sluzbeni-dokumenti.aspx>



#### 4. Conclusion

Although Translation studies are a relatively new science (which emerged in the 1960s), they are nevertheless prolific, in the theoretical as well as in the practical segment. Translators

usually base their theoretical knowledge on “hands on” experience, which is what I will try to do in this conclusion.

“Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?” does not seem to be a particularly challenging task for translators, since it is a collection of short stories written in the somewhat laconic style of literary minimalism. The sentences are short and colloquial, devoid of unnecessary embellishment and forced metaphors, Carver uses extreme simplicity to convey a deeper message. However, 'ordinary'

English is very idiomatic and full of implied and hidden meanings that sometimes prove to be more than the translator as a non-native speaker of English can handle. So what would be the makings of a successful literary translator?

Firstly, as I have mentioned in the introductory part of this paper, the aspiring translator should strive for biculturality. Ideally, a person should spend some time in an anglophone country, in order to become completely immersed in the 'source' culture and improve his or her understanding of the English language. Let us not forget that languages constantly grow and develop, and one must always follow the latest turns and innovations in source and target languages in order to successfully convey the message of the original to the TL audience.

Naturally, it is essential to pay special attention to linguistic accuracy and be fluent in all of the languages one works with. Although most young translators (especially while they are still in college) strive for excellence in the foreign language, it is equally important to have a good command of their native language. There are also other factors which affect the quality of a translation, like the deadline, which can limit the translator's ability to conduct all the necessary

research and prepare accordingly, resulting in notorious instances of mistranslation, like the classic “časna koncepcija” (for “immaculate conception”<sup>18</sup>)

Furthermore, aspiring literary translators should be avid readers, since reading improves a person's vocabulary, imagination, and understanding of literature. Some of the most revered Croatian literary translators were also writers (like Zlatko Crnković, Ivan Kušan and Tin Ujević), probably because it was easier for them to understand other writers and the message of their works. Of course, I am not suggesting that everyone interested in translating should take up writing, but being absorbed in literature is a logical prerequisite to a successful career in literary translation.

Finally, I have learned that there are no general prescriptive rules for successful translation; every book is special and should be approached with an open mind. A vast amount of strategies and principles has emerged from individual cases and cannot be considered irrefutable or all-embracing. However, a person translating a story into another language bears a great responsibility towards the readers of the target text, since they define if and how the public will understand and accept a particular work of art. In this respect, translators could be seen as conservators - their mission (because it is always more than just a job) is to recreate and restore the meaning of the original text and present it to a new audience in all its' glory.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://arhiv.slobodnadalmacija.hr/20041216/kultura01.asp>

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## Appendix A

### Are these actual miles?

Fact is the car needs to be sold in a hurry, and Leo sends Toni out to do it. Toni is smart and has personality. She used to sell children's encyclopedias door to door. She signed him up, even though he didn't have kids. Afterward, Leo asked her for a date, and the date led to this. This deal has to be cash, and it has to be done tonight. Tomorrow somebody they owe might slap a lien on the car. Monday they'll be in court, home free – but word on them went out yesterday, when their lawyer mailed the letters of intention. The hearing on Monday is nothing to worry about, the lawyer has said. They'll be asked some questions, and they'll sign some papers, and that's it. But sell the convertible, he said – today, *tonight*. They can hold onto the little car, Leo's car, no problem. But they go into court with that big convertible, the court will take it, and that's that.

Toni dresses up. It's four o'clock in the afternoon. Leo worries the lots will close. But Toni takes her time dressing. She puts on a new white blouse, wide lacy cuffs, the new two-piece suit, new heels. She transfers the stuff from her straw purse into the new patent-leather handbag. She studies the lizard makeup pouch and puts that in too. Toni has been two hours on her hair and face. Leo stands in the bedroom doorway and taps his lips with his knuckles, watching.

"You're making me nervous," she says. "I wish you wouldn't just stand," she says. "So tell me how I look."

"You look fine," he says. "You look great. I'd buy a car from you anytime."

"But you don't have money," she says, peering into the mirror. She pats her hair, frowns. "And your credit's lousy. You're nothing," she says.

"Teasing," she says and looks at him in the mirror. "Don't be serious," she says. "It has to be done, so I'll do it. You take it out, you'd be lucky to get three, four hundred and we both know it. Honey, you'd be lucky if you didn't have to pay *them*." She gives her hair a final pat, gums her lips, blots the lipstick with a tissue. She turns away from the mirror and picks up her purse. "I'll have to have dinner or something, I told you that already, that's the way they work, I know them. But don't worry, I'll get out of it," she says. "I can handle it."

"Jesus," Leo says, "did you have to say that?"

She looks at him steadily. "Wish me luck," she says.

"Luck," he says. "You have the pink slip?" he says.

She nods. He follows her through the house, a tall woman with a small high bust, broad hips and thighs. He scratches a pimple on his neck.

"You're sure?" he says. "Make sure. You have to have the pink slip."

"I have the pink slip," she says.

"Make sure.

She starts to say something, instead looks at herself in the front window and then shakes her head.

"At least call," he says. "Let me know what's going on."

"I'll call," she says. "Kiss, kiss. Here," she says and points to the corner of her mouth. "Careful," she says.

He holds the door for her. "Where are you going to try first?" he says. She moves past him and onto the porch.

Ernest Williams looks up from across the street. In his Bermuda shorts, stomach hanging, he looks at Leo and Toni as he directs a spray onto his begonias. Once, last winter, during the holidays, when Toni and the kids were visiting his mother's, Leo brought a woman home. Nine o'clock the next morning, a cold foggy Saturday, Leo walked the woman to the car, surprised Ernest Williams on the sidewalk with a newspaper in his hand. Fog drifted, Ernest Williams stared, then slapped the paper against his leg, hard.

Leo recalls that slap, hunches his shoulders, says, "You have someplace in mind first?"

"I'll just go down the line," she says. "The first lot, then I'll just go down the line."

"Open at nine hundred," he says. "Then come down. Nine hundred is low bluebook, even on a cash deal."

"I know where to start," she says.

Ernest Williams turns the hose in their direction. He stares at them through the spray of water. Leo has an urge to cry out a confession.

"Just making sure," he says.

"Okay, okay," she says. "I'm off."

It's her car, they call it her car, and that makes it all the worse. They bought it new that summer three years ago. She wanted something to do after the kids started school, so she went back selling. He was working six days a week in the fiber-glass plant. For a while they didn't know how to spend the money. They put a thousand on the convertible and doubled and tripled the payments until in a year they had it paid. Earlier, while she was dressing, he took the jack and the spare from the trunk and emptied the glove compartment of pencils, matchbooks, Blue Chip stamps. Then he washed and vacuumed inside. The red hood and fenders shine.

"Good luck," he says and touches her elbow.

She nods. He sees she is already gone, already negotiating.

"Things are going to be different!" he calls to her as she reaches the driveway. "We start over Monday. I mean it."

Ernest Williams looks at them and turns his head and spits. She gets into the car and lights a cigarette.

"This time next week!" Leo calls again. "Ancient history!"

He waves as she backs into the street. She changes gear and starts ahead. She accelerates and the tires give a little scream.

In the kitchen Leo pours Scotch and carries the drink to the backyard. The kids are at his mother's. There was a letter three days ago, his name penciled on the outside of the dirty envelope, the only letter all summer not demanding



payment in full. We are having fun, the letter said. We like Grandma. We have a new dog called Mr. Six. He is nice. We love him. Goodbye.

He goes for another drink. He adds ice and sees that his hand trembles. He holds the hand over the sink. He looks at the hand for a while, set down the glass, and holds out the other hand. Then he picks up the glass and goes back outside to sit on the steps. He recalls when he was a kid his dad pointing at a fine house, a tall white house surrounded by apple trees and a high white rail fence. "That's Finch," his dad said admiringly. "He's been in bankruptcy at least twice. Look at that house." But bankruptcy is a company collapsing utterly, executives cutting their wrists and throwing themselves from windows, thousands of men on the street.

Leo and Toni still had furniture. Leo and Toni had furniture and Toni and the kids had clothes. Those things were exempt. What else? Bicycles for the kids, but these he had sent to his mother's for safekeeping. The portable air-conditioner and the appliances, new washer and dryer, trucks came for those things weeks ago. What else did they have? This and that, nothing mainly, stuff that wore out or fell to pieces long ago. But there were some big parties back there, some fine travel. To Reno and Tahoe, at eighty with the top down and the radio playing. Food, that was one of the big items. They gorged on food. He figures thousands on luxury items alone. Toni would go to the grocery store and put in everything she saw. "I had to do without when I was a kid," she says. "These kids are not going to do without," as if he'd been insisting they should. She joins all the book clubs. "We never had books around when I was a kid," she says as she tears open the heavy packages. They enroll in the record clubs for something to play on the new stereo. They sign up for it all. Even a pedigreed terrier named Ginger. He paid two hundred and found her run over in the street a week later. They buy what they want. If they can't pay, they charge. They sign up.

His undershirt is wet; he can feel the sweat rolling from his underarms. He sits on the step with the empty glass in his hand and watches the shadows fill up the yard. He stretches, wipes his face. He listens to the traffic on the highway and considers whether he should go to the basement, stand on the utility sink, and hang himself with his belt. He understands he is willing to be dead.

Inside he makes a large drink and he turns the TV on and he fixes something to eat. He sits at the table with the chili and the crackers and watches something about a blind detective. He clears the table. He washes the pan and the bowl, dries these things and puts them away, then allows himself a look at the clock.

It's after nine. She's been gone nearly five hours.

He pours Scotch, adds water, carries the drink to the living room. He sits on the couch but finds his shoulders so stiff they won't let him lean back. He stares at the screen and sips, and soon he goes for another drink. He sits again. A new program begins – it's ten o'clock – and he says, "God, what in God's name has gone wrong?" and goes to the kitchen to return with more Scotch. He sits, he closes his eyes, and opens them when he hears the telephone ringing.

"I wanted to call," she says.

"Where are you?" he says. He hears piano music, and his heart moves.

"I don't know," she says. "Someplace. We're having a drink, then we're going someplace else for dinner. I'm with the sales manager. He's crude, but he's all right. He bought the car. I have to go now. I was on my way to the ladies and saw the phone."

"Did somebody buy the car?" Leo says. He looks out the kitchen window to the place in the drive where she always parks.

"I told you," she says. "I have to go now. I have to go to the bathroom."

"Wait!" he yells. The line goes dead. He listens to the dial tone. "Jesus Christ," he says as he stands with the receiver in his hand.

He circles the kitchen and goes back to the living room. He sits. He gets up. In the bathroom he brushes his teeth very carefully. Then he uses dental floss. He washes his face and goes back to the kitchen. He looks at the clock and takes

a clean glass from a set that has a hand of playing cards painted on each glass. He fills his glass with ice. He stares for a while at the glass he left in the sink.

He sits against one end of the couch and puts his legs up at the other end. He looks at the screen, realizes he can't make out what the people are saying. He turns the empty glass in his hand and considers biting off the rim. He shivers for a time and thinks of going to bed, though he knows he will dream of a large woman with grey hair. In the dream he is always leaning over tying his shoelaces. When he straightens up, she looks at him, and he bends to tie again. He looks at his hand. It makes a fist as he watches. The telephone is ringing.

"Where are you, honey?" he says slowly, gently.

"We're at this restaurant," she says, her voice strong, bright.

"Honey, which restaurant?" he says. He puts the heel of his hand against his eye and pushes.

"Downtown someplace," she says. "I think it's New Jimmy's. Excuse me," she says to someone off the line, "is this place New Jimmy's? This is New Jimmy's, Leo," she says to him. "Everything is all right, we're almost finished, then he's going to bring me home."

"Honey?" he says. He holds the receiver against his ear and rocks back and forth, eyes closed.

I have to go," she says. "I wanted to call. Anyway, guess how much?"

"Honey," he says.

"Six and a quarter," she says. "I have it in my purse. He said there's no market for convertibles. I guess we're born lucky," she says and laughs. "I told him everything. I think I had to."

"Honey," Leo says.

"What?" she says.

"Please, honey," Leo says.

He said he sympathizes," she says. "But he would have said anything." She laughs again. "He said personally he's rather be classified a robber or a rapist than a bankrupt. He's nice enough, though," she says.

"Come home," Leo says. "Take a cab and come home."

"I can't," she says. "I told you, we're halfway through dinner."

"I'll come for you," he says.

"No," she says. "I said we're just finishing. I told you, it's part of the deal. They're out for all they can get. But don't worry, we're about to leave. I'll be home in a little while." She hangs up.

In a few minutes he calls New Jimmy's. A man answers. "New Jimmy's has closed for the evening," the man says.

"I'd like to talk to my wife," Leo says.

"Does she work here?" the man asks. "Who is she?"

"She's a customer," Leo says. "She's with someone. A business person."

"Would I know her?" the man says. "What is her name?"

"I don't think you know her," Leo says.

"That's all right," Leo says. "That's all right. I see her now."

"Thank you for calling New Jimmy's," the man says.

Leo hurries to the window. A car he doesn't recognize slows in front of the house, then picks up speed. He waits. Two, three hours later, the telephone rings again. There is no one at the other end when he picks up the receiver. There is only a dial tone.

"I'm right here" Leo screams into the receiver.

Near dawn he hears footsteps on the porch. He gets up from the couch. The set hums, the screen glows. He opens the door. She bumps the wall coming in. She grins. Her face is puffy, as if she's been sleeping under sedation. She works her lips, ducks heavily and sways as he cocks his fist.

"Go ahead," she says thickly. She stands there swaying. Then she makes a noise and lunges, catches his shirt, tears it down the front. "Bankrupt!" she screams. She twists loose, grabs and tears his undershirt at the neck. "You son of a bitch," she says, clawing.

He squeezes her wrists, then lets go, steps back, looking for something heavy. She stumbles as she heads for the bedroom. "Bankrupt," she mutters. He hears her fall on the bed and groan.

He waits awhile, then splashes water on his face and goes to the bedroom. He turns the lights on, looks at her, and begins to take her clothes off. He pulls and pushes from side to side undressing her. She says something in her sleep and moves her hand. He takes off her underpants, looks at them closely under the light, and throws them into a corner. He turns the covers and rolls her in, naked. Then he opens her purse. He is reading the check when he hears the car come into the drive.

He looks through the front curtain and sees the convertible in the drive, its motor running smoothly, the headlamp burning, and he closes and opens his eyes. He sees a tall man come around in front of the car an up to the front porch. The man lays something on the porch and starts back to the car. He wears a white linen suit.

Leo turns on the porch light and opens the door cautiously. Her makeup pouch lies on the top step. The man looks at Leo across the front of the car, and then gets back inside and releases the handbrake.

"Wait!" Leo calls and starts down the steps. The man brakes the car as Leo walks in front of the lights. The car creaks against the brake. Leo tries to pull the two pieces of his shirt together, tries to bunch it all into his trousers.

"What is it you want?" the man says. "Look," the man says, "I have to go. No offense. I buy and sell cars, right? The lady left her makeup. She's a fine lady, very refined. What is it?"

Leo leans against the door and looks at the man. The man takes his hands off the wheel and puts them back. He drops the gear into reverse and the car moves backward a little.

"I want to tell you," Leo says and wets his lips.

The light in Ernest Williams' bedroom goes on. The shade rolls up. Leo shakes his head, tucks in his shirt again. He steps back from the car. "Monday," he says.

"Monday," the man says and watches for sudden movement.

Leo nods slowly.

"Well, goodnight," the man says and coughs. "Take it easy, hear? Monday, that's right. Okay, then." He takes his foot off the brake, puts it on again after he has rolled back two or three feet. "Hey, one question. Between friends, are these

actual miles?" The man waits, then clears his throat. "Okay, look, it doesn't matter either way," the man says. "I have to go. Take it easy." He backs into the street, pulls away quickly, and turns the corner without stopping.

Leo tucks in his shirt and goes back in the house. He locks the front door and checks it. Then he goes to the bedroom and locks that door and turns back the covers. He looks at her before he flicks the light. He takes off his clothes, folds them carefully on the floor, and gets in beside her. He lies on his back for a time and pulls the hair on his stomach, considering. He looks at the bedroom door, outlined now in the faint outside light. Presently he reached out his hand and touches her hip. She does not move. He turns on his side and puts his hand on her hip. He runs his fingers over her hip and feels the stretch marks there. They are like roads, and he traces them in her flesh. He runs his fingers back and forth, first one, then another. They run everywhere in her flesh, dozens, perhaps hundreds of them. He remembers waking up the morning after they bought the car, seeing it, there in the drive, in the sun, gleaming.

## Appendix B

### Signals

As their first of the extravagances they had planned for that evening, Wayne and Caroline went to Aldo's, an elegant new restaurant north a good distance. They passed a tiny walled garden with small pieces of statuary and were met by a tall graying man in a dark suit who said, "Good evening, sir. Madam," and swung open the heavy door for them.

Inside, Aldo himself showed them to the aviary – a peacock, a pair of golden pheasants, a Chinese ring-necked pheasant, and a number of unannounced birds that flew around or sat perched. Aldo personally conducted them to a table, seated Caroline, and turned to Wayne and said, "A lovely lady," before moving off- a dark, small, impeccable man with a soft accent.

They were pleased with his attention.

"I read in the paper," Wayne said, "that he has an uncle who has some kind of position in the Vatican. That's how he was able to get copies of some of those paintings." Wayne nodded at a Velasquez reproduction on the nearest wall. "His uncle in the Vatican," Wayne said.

"He used to be *maitre d'* at the Copacabana in Rio," Caroline said. "He knew Frank Sinatra, and Lana Turner was a good friend of his."

"Is that so?" Wayne said. "I didn't know that. I read that he was at the Victoria Hotel in Switzerland and at some big hotel in Paris. I didn't know he was at the Copacabana in Rio."

Caroline moved her handbag slightly as the waiter set down the heavy goblets. He poured water and then moved to Wayne's side of the table.

"Did you see the suit he was wearing?" Wayne said. "You seldom see a suit like that. That's a three-hundred-dollar suit." He picked up his menu. In a while, he said, "Well, what are you going to have?"

"I don't know," she said. "I haven't decided yet. What are you going to have?"

"I don't know," he said. "I haven't decided, either."

"What about one of these French dishes, Wayne? Or else this? Over here on this side." She placed her finger in instruction, and then she narrowed her eyes at him as he located the language, pursed his lips, frowned and shook his head.

"I don't know," he said. "I'd kind of like to know what I'm getting. I just don't really know."

The waiter returned with card and pencil and said something Wayne couldn't quite catch.

"We haven't decided yet," Wayne said. He shook his head as the waiter continued to stand beside the table. "I'll signal you when we're ready."

"I think I'll just have a sirloin. You order what you want," he said to Caroline when the waiter had moved off. He closed the menu and raised his goblet. Over the muted voices coming from the other tables Wayne could hear a warbling call from the aviary. He saw Aldo greet a party of four, chat with them as he smiled and nodded and led them to a table.

"We could have had a better table," Wayne said. "Instead of right here in the center where everyone can walk by and watch you eat. We could have had a table against the wall. Or over there by the fountain."

"I think I'll have the beef Tournedos," Caroline said.

She kept looking at her menu. He tapped out a cigarette, lighted it, and then glanced round at the other diners. Caroline still stared at her menu.

"Well, for God's sake, if that's what you're going to have, close your menu so he can take our order." Wayne raised his arm for the waiter, who lingered near the back talking with another waiter.

"Nothing to do but gas around with the other waiters," Wayne said.

"He's coming," Caroline said.

"Sir?" The waiter was a thin pock-faced man in a loose black suit and a black bow tie.

"...And we'll have a bottle of champagne, I believe. A small bottle. Something, you know, domestic," Wayne said.

"Yes, sir," the waiter said.

"And we'll have that right away. Before the salad or the relish plate," Wayne said.

"Oh bring the relish *tray*, anyway," Caroline said.

"Yes, madam," the waiter said.

"They're a slippery bunch," Wayne said. "Do you remember that guy named Bruno who used to work at the office during the week and wait tables on weekends? Fred caught him stealing out of the petty-cash box. We fired him."

"Let's talk about something pleasant," Caroline said.

"All right, sure," Wayne said.

The waiter poured a little champagne into Wayne's glass, and Wayne took the glass, tasted, and said, "Fine, that will do nicely." Then he said, "Here's to you, baby," and raised his glass high. "Happy birthday."

They clinked glasses.

"I like champagne," Caroline said.

"I like champagne," Wayne said.

"We could have had a bottle of Lancer's," Caroline said.

"Well, why didn't you say something, if that's what you wanted?" Wayne said.

"I don't know," Caroline said. "I just didn't think about it. This is fine, though."

"I don't know too much about champagnes. I don't mind admitting I'm not much of a ... connoisseur. I don't mind admitting I'm just a lowbrow." He laughed and tried to catch her eye, but she was busy selecting an olive from the relish dish. "Not like the group you've been keeping company with lately. But if you wanted Lancer's, "he went on," you should have ordered Lancer's."

"Oh, shut up!" she said. "Can't you talk about something else?" She looked up at him then and he had to look away. He moved his feet under the table.

He said, "Would you care for some more champagne, dear?"

"Yes, thank you," she said quietly.

"Here's to us," he said.

"To us, my darling," she said.

They looked steadily at each other as they drank.

"We ought to do this more often," he said.

She nodded.

"It's good to get out now and then. I'll make more of an effort, if you want me to."

She reached for the celery. "That's up to you."

"That's not true! It's not me who's...who's..."

"Who's what?" she said.

"I don't care what you do," he said, dropping his eyes.

"Is that true?"

"I don't know why I said that," he said.

The waiter brought the soup and took away the bottle and the wineglasses and refilled their goblets with water.

"Could I have a soup spoon?" Wayne asked.

"Sir?"

"A soup spoon," Wayne repeated.

The waiter looked amazed and then perplexed. He glanced around at the other tables. Wayne made a shoveling motion over his soup. Aldo appeared beside the table.

"Is everything all right? Is there anything wrong?"

"My husband doesn't seem to have a soup spoon," Caroline said. "I'm sorry for the disturbance," she said.

"Certainly. *Une cuiller, s'il vous plait*," Aldo said to the waiter in an even voice. He looked once at Wayne and then explained to Caroline. "This is Paul's first night. He speaks little English, yet I trust you will agree he is an excellent waiter. The boy who set the table forgot the spoon." Aldo smiled. "It no doubt took Paul by surprise."

"This is a beautiful place," Caroline said.

"Thank you," Aldo said. "I'm delighted you could come tonight. Would you like to see the wine cellar and the private dining rooms?"

"Very much," Caroline said.

"I will have someone show you around when you have finished dining," Aldo said.

"We'll be looking forward to it," Caroline said.

Aldo bowed slightly and looked again at Wayne. "I hope you enjoy your dinner," he said to them.

"That jerk," Wayne said.

"Who?" she said. "Who are you talking about?" she said, laying down her spoon.

"The waiter," Wayne said. "The waiter. The newest and the dumbest waiter in the house, and we got him."

"Eat your soup," she said. "Don't blow a gasket."

Wayne lighted a cigarette. The waiter arrived with salads and took away the soup bowls.

When they had started on the main course, Wayne said, "Well, what do you think? Is there a chance for us or not?" He looked down and arranged the napkin on his lap.

"Maybe so," she said. "There's always a chance."

"Don't give me that kind of crap," he said. "Answer me straight for a change."

"Don't snap at me," she said.

"I'm asking you," he said. "Give me a straight answer," he said.

She said, "You want something signed in blood?"

He said, "That wouldn't be such a bad idea."

She said, "You listen to me! I've given you the best years of my life. The best years of my life!"

"The best years of *your* life?" he said.

"I'm thirty six years old," she said. "Thirty seven tonight. Tonight, right now, at this minute, I just can't say what I'm going to do. I'll just have to see," she said.

"I don't care what you do," he said.

"Is that true?" she said.

He threw his fork and tossed his napkin on the table.

"Are you finished?" she asked pleasantly. "Let's have coffee and dessert. We'll have a nice dessert. Something good."

She finished everything on her plate.

"Two coffees," Wayne said to the waiter. He looked at her and then back to the waiter. "What do you have for dessert?" he said.

"Sir?" the waiter said.

"Dessert!" Wayne said.

The waiter gazed at Caroline and then at Wayne.

"No dessert," she said. "Let's not have any dessert."

"Chocolate mousse," the waiter said. "Orange sherbet," the waiter said.

He smiled, showing his bad teeth. "Sir?"

"And I don't want any guided tour of this place," Wayne said when the waiter had moved off.

When they rose from the table, Wayne dropped a dollar bill near his coffee cup. Caroline took two dollars from her handbag, smoothed the bills out, and placed them alongside the other dollar, the three bills lined up in a row.

She waited with Wayne when he paid the check. Out of the corner of his eye, Wayne could see Aldo standing near the door dropping grains of seed into the aviary. Aldo looked in their direction, smiled and went on rubbing the seeds from between his fingers as birds collected in front of him. Then he briskly brushed his hands together and started moving toward Wayne, who looked away, who turned slightly but significantly as Aldo neared him. But when Wayne looked back, he saw Aldo take Caroline's waiting hand, saw Aldo draw his heels smartly together, saw Aldo kiss her wrist.

"Did Madam enjoy her dinner?" Aldo said.

"It was marvelous," Caroline said.

"You will come back from time to time?" Aldo said.

"I shall," Caroline said. "As often as I may. Next time, I should like to have your permission to check things out a little, but this time we simply must go."

"Dear lady," Aldo said. "I have something for you. One moment, please." He reached to a vase on a table near the door and swung back gracefully with a long-stemmed rose.

"For you, dear lady," Aldo said. "But caution, please. The thorns. A very lovely lady," he said to Wayne and smiled at him and turned to welcome another couple.

Caroline stood there.

"Let's get out of here," Wayne said.

"You can see how he could be friends with Lana Turner," Caroline said. She held the rose and turned it between her fingers.

"Good night!" she called out to Aldo's back.

But Aldo was occupied selecting another rose.



"I don't think he ever knew her," Wayne said.

## Appendix C

### The idea

We'd finished dinner and I'd been at the kitchen table with the light out for the last hour, watching. If he was going to do it tonight, it was time, past time. I hadn't seen him in three nights. But tonight the bedroom shade was up over there and the light was burning.

I had a feeling tonight.

Then I saw him. He opened the screen and walked out onto his back porch wearing a t-shirt and something like Bermuda shorts or a swimsuit. He looked around once and hopped off the porch into the shadows and began to move along the side of the house. He was fast. If I hadn't been watching, I wouldn't have seen him. He stopped in front of the lighted window and looked in.

"Vern," I called. "Vern, hurry up! He's out there. You'd better hurry!" Vern was in the living room reading his paper with the TV going. I heard him throw down the paper.

"Don't let him see you!" Vern said. "Don't get up too close to the window!"

Vern always say that. Don't get up too close. Vern's a little embarrassed about watching. I think. But I know he enjoys it. He's said so.

"He can't see us with the light out." It's what I always say. This has been going on for three months. Since September 3, to be exact. Anyway, that's the first night I saw him over there. I don't know how long it was going on before that.

I almost got on the phone to the sheriff that night, until I recognized who it was out there. It took Vern to explain it to me. Even then it took a while for it to penetrate. But since that night I've watched, and I can tell you he averages one out of every two or three nights, sometimes more. I've seen him out there when it's been raining too. In fact, if it *is* raining, you can bet on seeing him. But tonight it was clear and windy. There was a moon.

We got down on our knees behind the window and Vern cleared his throat. "Look at him," Vern said. Vern was smoking, knocking the ash into his hand when he needed. He held the cigarette away from the window when he

puffed. Vern smokes all the time; there's no stopping him. He even sleeps with an ashtray three inches from his head. At night I'm awake and he wakes up and smokes.

"By God," Vern said.

"What does she have that other women don't have?" I said to Vern after a minute. We were hunkered on the floor with just our heads showing over the windowsill and were looking at a man who was standing and looking into his own bedroom window.

"That's just it," Vern said. He cleared his throat right next to my ear. We kept watching,

I could make out someone behind the curtain now. It must have been her undressing. But I couldn't see any detail. I strained my eyes. Vern was wearing his reading glasses, so he could see everything better than I could. Suddenly the curtain was drawn aside and the woman turned her back to the window.

"What's she doing now?" I said, knowing full well.

"By God," Vern said.

"What's she doing, Vern?" I said.

"She's taking off her clothes," Vern said. "What do you think she's doing?"

Then the bedroom light went out and the man started back along the side of the house. He opened the screen door and slipped inside, and a little later the rest of the lights went out.

Vern coughed, coughed again, and shook his head. I turned on the light. Vern just sat on his knees. Then he got to his feet and lighted a cigarette.

"Someday I'm going to tell that trash what I think of her," I said and looked at Vern.

Vern laughed sort of.

"I mean it," I said. "I'll see her in the market someday and I'll tell her to her face."

"I wouldn't do that. What the hell would you want to do that for?" Vern said.

But I could tell that he didn't think I was serious. He frowned and looked at his nails. He rolled his tongue in his mouth and narrowed his eyes like he does when he's concentrating. Then his expression changed and he scratched his chin.

"You wouldn't do that," he said.

"You'll see," I said.

"Shit," Vern said.

I followed him into the living room. We were jumpy. It gets us like that.

"You wait," I said.

Vern ground his cigarette out in the big ashtray. He stood beside his leather chair and looked at the TV a minute.

"There's never anything on," he said. Then he said something else. He said, "Maybe he *has* something there." Vern lighted another cigarette. "You don't know."

"Anybody comes looking in my window," I said, "they'll have the cops on them. Except maybe Cary Grant," I said.

Vern shrugged. "You don't know," he said.

I had an appetite. I went to the kitchen cupboard and looked, and then I opened the fridge. "Vern, you want something to eat?" I called.

He didn't answer. I could hear water running in the bathroom. But I thought he might want something. We get hungry this time of night. I put bread and lunchmeat on the table and I opened a can of soup. I got out crackers and peanut butter, cold meat loaf, pickles, olives, potato chips. I put everything on the table. Then I thought of the apple pie.

Vern came out in his robe and flannel pajamas. His hair was wet and slicked down over the back of his head and he smelled of toilet water. He looked at the things on the table. He said, "What about a bowl of cornflakes with brown sugar?" Then he sat down and spread his paper out to the side of his plate.

We ate our snack. The ashtray filled up with olive pits and his butts.

When he'd finished, Vern grinned and said, "What's that good smell?"

I went to the oven and took out the two pieces of apple pie topped with melted cheese.

"That looks fine," Vern said.

In a little while, he said, "I can't eat anymore. I'm going to bed."

"I'm coming too," I said. "I'll clear this table."

I was scraping plates into the garbage can when I saw the ants. I looked closer. They came from somewhere beneath the pipes under the sink, a steady stream of them, up one side of the can and down the other, coming and going. I found the spray in one of the drawers and sprayed as far back under the sink as I could reach. Then I washed my hands and took a last look around the kitchen.

Vern was asleep. He was snoring. He'd wake up in a few hours, go to the bathroom, and smoke. The little TV at the foot of the bed was on, but the picture was rolling.

I'd wanted to tell Vern about the ants.

I took my own time getting ready for bed, fixed the picture, and crawled in. Vern made the noises he does in his sleep.

I watched for a while, but it was a talk show and I don't like talk shows.

I started thinking about the ants again.

Pretty soon I imagined them all over the house. I wondered if I should wake Vern and tell him I was having a bad dream. Instead, I got up and went for the can of spray. I looked under the sink again. But there was no ants left. I turned on every light in the house until I had the house blazing. I kept spraying.

Finally I raised the shade in the kitchen and looked out. It was late. The wind blew and I heard branches snap.

"That trash," I said. "The idea!"

I used even worse language, things I can't repeat.

## Appendix D

### Je li ovo prava kilometraža?

Auto je valjalo prodati i to brzo, pa Leo šalje Toni da to sredi. Toni je pametna i karizmatična. Nekada je prodavala dječje enciklopedije od vrata do vrata. Prodala ih je i njemu, iako nije imao djece. Kasnije ju je pozvao na spoj, a iz tog je spoja nastalo sve ovo. Posao je trebalo sklopiti u gotovini i to još večeras. Već bi ga sutra netko kome su dužni mogao zaplijeniti. U ponedjeljak idu na sud i na konju su– no vijest o njihovim dugovima proširila se još jučer kad im je odvjetnik dostavio pisma namjere. Uvjeravao ih je da saslušanje u ponedjeljak nije ništa strašno. Postavit će im par pitanja, potpisat će nekoliko papira, i to je to.–Ali obavezno prodajte kabriolet– rekao je – danas, *večeras*. Smiju zadržati mali Leov auto, nema problema. No, uđu li u sudski proces kao vlasnici kabrioleta, sud će ga sigurno zaplijeniti.

Toni se sređuje. Četiri su sata poslijepodne. Leo se boji da će se autosaloni zatvoriti. No, ona se ne žuri. Odijeva novu bijelu bluzu širokih čipkastih rukava, novo odijelo i štikle. Prebacuje stvari iz pletene u novu kožnu torbu. Proučava etui za šminku od gušterove kože pa i njega ubacuje u torbu. Već dva sata sređuje kosu i lice. Leo stoji na vratima spavaće i promatra ju, kuckajući prstom po usnama.

–Postajem nevozna zbog tebe. Nemoj samo stajati tamo. Radije mi reci kako izgledam.

–Dobro izgledaš. Zapravo odlično. Uvijek bih kupio auto od tebe.

–Ali nemaš novca–odvratila mu ona, buljeći u ogledalo. Zagladi si kosu, mršteći se. –I nisi kreditno sposoban. Zapravo si nitko i ništa –reče. –Zezam te– doda, gledajući ga u ogledalu. –Ne budi tako ozbiljan. Moramo to učiniti, pa ću to ja to srediti. Ako ti to kreneš rješavati, u najboljem ćeš slučaju dobiti četiristo dolara, i to nam je oboma jasno. Dušo, imao bi sreće ako ti *njima* ne bi morao platiti. Ponovno namjesti frizuru, mljacne i obriše višak ruža maramicom. Okrene se od ogledala i uzme torbicu. –Morat ću ići na večeru ili tako nešto. Već sam ti rekla da to tako ide. Poznajem ih. Ali ne brini, snaći ću se. Mogu ja to.

–Isuse, – reče Leo– zar si to morala reći?

Odlučno ga pogleda. –Poželi mi sreću.

–Sretno– reče. – Imaš prometnu dozvolu?

Kimnula je. Leo krene za tom visokom ženom malih, čvrstih grudi i širokih bokova. Počešao je prištić na vratu. –Jesi sigurna? Moraš imati prometnu.

–Imam ju – reče.

–Provjeri još jednom.

Zaustila je nešto reći, no umjesto toga baci oko na svoj odraz na prozoru i odmahne glavom.

–Barem me nazovi–reče Leo. –Javi što se događa.

–Nazvat ću. Daj mi pusu. Ovdje– pokaže mu na ugao iznad usne. –Pazi –reče.

Pridržao joj je vrata. –Gdje ćeš početi?– upita ju. Prošla je pokraj njega i zakoračila na trijem.

Ernest Williams gledao ih je sa suprotne strane ulice. Odjeven u bermude, s trbuhom koji mu je visio preko pojasa, promatrao je Lea i Toni i nastavio zalijevati svoje begonije. Tijekom prošlogodišnjih zimskih praznika, dok su Toni i djeca bili u posjetu kod njene majke, Leo je doveo kući neku žensku. U devet je sati sljedećeg jutra, te maglovite subote, Leo pratio curu do auta i nabasao na Ernesta Williamsa s novinama u rukama. Magla se digla, Williams je buljio, a zatim snažno tresnuo po nozi novinama.

Leo se pri pomisli na taj udarac pomalo stisne i upita: –Znaš li gdje ćeš početi?

–Krenut ću redom–reče Toni. –Idem do prvog salona, pa onda dalje redom.

-Počni s devetsto. Pa onda smanjij cifru. Devetsto je najniža početna cijena, čak i za gotovinsko plaćanje- doda Leo.

-Znam od čega trebam početi.

Ernest Williams okrenuo je crijevo prema njima, buljeći u njih kroz vodeni mlaz. Lea najednom spopade potreba za priznanjem.

-Samo provjeravam-reče.

-OK, OK - odvrati Toni. - Odoh!

Njezin je auto, barem ga smatraju njezinim, što dodatno pogoršava situaciju. Kupili su ga jednog ljeta prije tri godine. Htjela je neku zanimaciju kad su djeca krenula u školu, pa se vratila prodaji. On je šest dana tjedno radio u tvornici staklene vune. Jedno su vrijeme imali love do krova. Onda su potrošili tisuću na kabriolet, pa još tripot toliko dok ga nisu otplatili do kraja. Dok se ona presvlačila i šminkala, Leo je izvadio rezervnu gumu i dizalicu iz prtljažnika i olovke, šibice i kupone iz pretinca za rukavice. Zatim je oprao i usisao unutrašnjost auta, ispolirao haubu i branike.

-Sretno- reče i takne ju po laktu.

Kimnula je. Očito je već odsutna, u mislima je već usred pregovora.

-Stvari će se promijeniti!- dovikne joj kad je dospjela do prilaza. -Od ponedjeljka krećemo iznova. Ozbiljno.

Ernest Williams ih pogleda, okrene glavu i pljune. Toni ulazi u auto i pali cigaretu.

- Sljedeći tjedan! Sve će ovo biti davna prošlost! Odmahnula mu je i krenula na cestu. Ubacila je u brzinu, a gume su lagano zacviljele.

Leo si je u kuhinji natočio viski i iznio ga u dvorište. Djeca su kod njegove mame. Prije tri dana mu je stiglo pismo, mala prljava koverta s njegovim imenom na poleđini, jedino pismo tijekom cijelog ljeta koje nije zahtijevalo nikakvu uplatu. Zabavljamo se, pisalo je u tom pismu. Volimo baku. Imamo novog psa koji se zove Gospodin Šesti. Dobar je. Volimo ga. Bok.

Odlazi po još jedno piće. Dodaje led i primjećuje da mu se ruke tresu. Ispruži ruku iznad sudopera. Jedno ju vrijeme promatra, spušta čašu i pruža drugu ruku. Tada podiže čašu i vraća se van kako bi sjeo na stepenice. Prisjeća se kako mu je otac nekoć pokazivao jednu finu kuću, visoku bijelu katnicu okruženu stablima jabuka i visokom bijelom ogradom. -To je Finchevo- govorio bi udivljeno.

-Taj je barem dvaput bankrotirao. Pogledaj ti tu kuću.

No bankrot je značio potpunu propast tvrtke, kad si službenici režu vene i skaču kroz prozor, a tisuće završavaju na ulici. Leo i Toni još su uvijek imali namještaj. Oni su imali namještaj, a djeca su imala odjeću. To je bio izuzetak. I što još? Dječji bicikli, no njih su morali skloniti kod Leove majke. Prijenosni klima uređaj i ostale strojeve poput nove perilice i sušilice...to su im pokupili još prije par tjedana. Što im je još preostalo? Ne baš puno toga, većina se stvari davno istrošila i raspala. Ali nekad se dobro živjelo, bilo je tuluma i lijepih putovanja. Išlo se u Reno i na jezero Tahoe, vozeći 120 na sat sa spuštenim krovom, uz trešteći radio. Hrana, to je bila važna stavka. Prežderavali su se. Trošili su tisuće na luksuznu hranu. Toni bi išla u trgovinu i kupovala sve što joj padne pod ruku. -Ja sam oskudijevala kao dijete- govorila je- ali moja djeca neće- kao da je on to želio. Učlanjivala se u sve moguće čitalačke klubove. -Nismo imali knjige kad sam bila mala- govorila bi dok bi otvarala novu pošiljku knjiga. Učlanjivali su se i u vinil klubove kako bi primali najnovije ploče. Živjeli su kao carevi. Čak su kupili čistokrvnog terijera po imenu Ginger. Platilo ju je dvjesto dolara, a samo tjedan dana kasnije pregazio ju je auto. Kupovali su sve i svašta, ako ne gotovinom, onda na rate. Sve je prolazilo.

Potkošulja mu je mokra; osjeća kako mu se znoj slijeva niz pazuha. Sjedi na stepenicama s praznom čašom u ruci i promatra kako se mrak spušta na dvorište. Proteže se i briše lice. Osluškuj prometa na autocesti i pomišlja na to da ode u podrum, popne se na sudoper i objesi se vlastitim remenom. Shvati da je spreman umrijeti.

Vraća se unutra, spravi si jedno veliko piće, upali televizor i spremi si nešto za jelo. Sjedi za stolom uz čili i krekeri i gleda nešto o slijepom detektivu. Zatim posprema stol. Pere tavu i zdjelu, suši ih i sprema, a onda se prisili pogledati na sat.

Prošlo je devet. Nema je gotovo pet sati.

Toči si viski, dodaje vodu i odnosi piće u dnevnu sobu. Sjedne na kauč, ali osjeti da su mu ramena toliko ukočena da se ne može niti nasloniti. Bulji u ekran i polako pijucka, a uskoro odlazi po još. Ponovno sjedne. Počinje nova emisija- deset je sati- a on se upita: -Što se, pobogu, dogodilo?- i ode u kuhinju po još viskija. Sjedne i sklopi oči, kad ga trgne zvonjava telefona.

-Htjela sam te nazvati- reče Toni.

-Gdje si?- upita ju. Srce mu preskoči kad začuje zvuk klavira u pozadini.

-Ne znam, negdje. Na piću smo, a onda idemo nekamo na večeru. Tu sam s nekim voditeljem prodaje. Sirovina je, ali je u redu. Kupio je auto. Sad moram ići, krenula sam na toalet i ugledala telefon.

-Je li netko kupio auto? - upita Leo. Pogleda kroz kuhinjski prozor prema mjestu gdje ona inače parkira.

-Rekla sam ti. Moram ići.

-Čekaj malo, čekaj...zaboga! Je li netko kupio auto ili nije?

-Pripremio je čekove kad sam odlazila-reče. -Moram ići, sila mi je.

-Čekaj!- vikne Leo. Veza je pukla, još je neko vrijeme slušao monotono tuljenje telefona.

-Isuse Kriste- reče, držeći slušalicu u ruci.

Stade kružiti po kuhinji, pa se vrati u dnevnu. Sjedne pa se ustane. U kupaonici temeljito opere zube. Pa ih očisti zubnim koncem. Zatim se umije i vrati u kuhinju. Pogleda na sat i izvadi novu čašu iz seta s uzorkom igračih karata. Napuni ju ledom. Jedno vrijeme bulji u čašu koju je ostavio u sudoperu.

Izvali se na kauč koliko je dug i širok, pogleda prema ekranu i uvidi da ne može razaznati što ljudi govore. Okreće praznu čašu i poželi joj odgristi rub. Zadrhti i pomisli da bi mogao leći spavati, premda zna da će sanjati krupnu ženu sijede kose. U snu se uvijek saginje kako bi zavezao cipele. Kad se uspravi, ona ga gleda, pa se on ponovno sagne. Pogleda svoju ruku. Naočigled mu se skuplja u šaku. Telefon ponovno zvonit.

-Gdje si, dušo? - pita ju polako i nježno.

-U restoranu smo- odvrti snažnim i vedrim glasom.

-U kojem restoranu, srce?- upita ju. Protrlja oko dlanom druge ruke.

-Negdje u centru-reče- Mislim da je New Jimmy's. Oprostite- reče nekome sa strane-je li ovo New Jimmy's? Da, ovo je New Jimmy's, Leo. Sve je u redu, uskoro smo gotovi, pa će me dovesti kući.

-Dušo?- reče Leo. Drži slušalicu uz uho i lagano se njiše, zatvorenih očiju. -Dušo?

-Moram ići-reče Toni. -Samo sam te htjela nazvati. Uglavnom, pogodi koliko smo dobili!

-Dušo-reče Leo.

-Šesto dvadeset pet. Imam ih u torbi. Rekao je da nitko više ne kupuje kabriolette, bit će da smo rođeni pod sretnom zvijezdom- doda kroz smijeh. -Sve sam mu rekla. Mislila sam da je tako najbolje.

-Dušo- ponovi Leo.

-Što je?

-Dušo, molim te.

-Rekao je da suosjeća s nama. Ali rekao bi bilo što- ponovno se nasmije. -Rekao je da bi radije bio pljačkaš ili silovatelj nego bankrotirao. Ipak, nije tako loš.

-Dođi kući- reče Leo. -Pozovi taksi i vrati se kući.

-Ne mogu, rekla sam ti da smo usred večere.

-Doći ću po tebe- odvrti.

-Ne. Rekla sam ti da smo pri kraju. To je sve dio posla. Žele sve što mogu dobiti. Ali ne brini, ubrzo krećemo.

Uskoro se vraćam- i spusti slušalicu.

Nakon nekoliko minuta Leo naziva New Jimmy's. Muškarac se javlja: -New Jimmy's više ne radi- reče.

-Želim razgovarati sa svojom ženom- reče Leo.

-A ona radi ovdje, ili...? Tko je ona?

-Vaša gošća-odvrti Leo- tu je s nekim...poslovno.

-Poznajem li ju? Kako se zove?

-Mislim da ju ne poznajete- reče Leo- ne, ne, sve je u redu. Evo je, dolazi- doda.

-Hvala što ste nazvali New Jimmy's- reče čovjek.

Leo požuri do prozora. Nepoznati auto uspori pred kućom, pa ponovno ubrza. Leo čeka. Dva, tri sata kasnije, telefon ponovno zazvoni. S druge strane nema nikoga, čuje samo jednoličan ton prekinute veze.

-Tu sam!- zaurla u slušalicu.

Netom prije svitanja začuje korake na trijemu. Ustane s kauča. Motor je prigušeno brujao, a žaluzine su buknule pod svjetlošću farova. Otvorio je vrata. Ona ulazi u stan i nespreno udari u zid. Nasmije se. Lice joj je natečeno, kao da je spavala pod narkozom. Namješta osmijeh, tromo se saginje i uzmiče pred njegovom šakom.

-Hajde- reče opijeno. Ljulja se na mjestu. Zatim uzvikne i skoči, uhvati njegovu košulju i podere ju. -Bankrotirani!- vrišti. Istrgne se iz njegovih ruku, zgrabi njegovu potkošulju i razdere ju. -Kurvin sine- nastavi ga grebati.

On ju uhvati za zapešća, pa ju pusti i zakorači unatrag u potrazi za teškim predmetom. Ona se spotakne na putu u spavaću sobu. – Bankrotiran- promrmlja. Čuje ju kako pada na krevet i stenje.

Malo pričekaj pa se umije i krene u spavaću. Pali svjetlo, pogleda ju, a zatim ju počne svlačiti. Vuče ju i gura na sve strane dok ju svlači. Ona nešto govori u snu i pomakne ruku. On joj skine gaćice, pomno ih pregleda pod svjetlom, i baci u ugao. Podigne pokrivač i omota njeno golo tijelo. Zatim otvori njenu torbicu. Dok je proučavao ček, začuje automobil u prilazu.

Pogleda kroz prednji prozor i ugleda kabriolet. Motor je umiljato preo, a farovi su zasljepljujuće sjali. Zažmiri, pa ponovno otvori oči. Ugleda visokog muškarca kako obilazi auto i prilazi trijemu. Spušta nešto na trijem i kreće natrag prema autu. Nosi bijelo laneno odijelo.

Leo pali svjetla na trijemu i oprezno otvara vrata. Na prednjoj se stepenici nalazi njena torbica za šminku. Čovjek pogleda Lea preko auta, zatim sjedne unutra i otpusti ručnu kočnicu.

-Čekaj! - poviče Leo i krene niz stepenice. Čovjek zakoči i Leo stane pred svjetla. Kočnica škripi. Leo pokušava spojiti svoju rastrganu košulju i zataknuti ju u hlače.

-Što želite?- pita ga čovjek. -Gledajte, moram ići. Bez uvrede. Kupujem i prodajem aute, dobro? Gospođa je zaboravila šminku. Dobra je žena, vrlo profinjena. U čemu je problem?

Leo se naginje na vrata auta i promatra muškarca. Ovaj spušta ruke s volana, pa ih ponovno podiže. Polako kreće unatrag.

-Hoću vam nešto reći- započne Leo i ovlaži usne.

Upali se svjetlo u spavaćoj sobi Ernesta Williamsa. Podiže se roleta.

Leo odmahne glavom i gurne majicu u hlače. Odmakne se od auta. -Ponedjeljak- reče.

-Ponedjeljak- ponovi čovjek, živčano očekujući kakav nagli pokret.

Leo polako kimne.

-E pa, laku noć- reče ovaj i nakašlje se. -Samo polako, okej? Ponedjeljak, tako je. U redu onda.- Krene dalje pa nakon par metara ponovno stane. -jedno pitanje. U povjerenju, jel' ovo prava kilometraža? Čovjek zastane, pa se nakašlje. -Okej, uostalom, nije ni bitno. Moram krenuti. Ostajte mi dobro. Krene na ulicu, brzo skrene i nestane iza ugla.

Leo zatakne majicu u hlače i vrati se u kuću. Zaključa ulazna vrata i još jednom ih provjeri. Zatim ode u spavaću sobu, zaključa vrata i otkrije Toni. Gleda ju prije nego ugasi svjetlo. Skine se, pomno složi odjeću po podu i legne pokraj nje. Leži na leđima i rukom prelazi po svom trbuhu, razmišljajući. Gleda prema vratima, čiji obrisi postaju sve jasniji pod blijedim jutarnjim svjetlom. Ispruži ruku i dotakne njezin bok. Ne miče se. On se okrene postrance/na stranu i stavi ruku na njezin bok. Prstima prelazi preko njene kože i napipa strije. One su poput malenih cesta, i prstom ih prati na njenoj koži. Posvuda su, ima ih na desetke, možda i na stotine. Prisjeća se jutra kad su tek kupili auto. Vidi ga kako stoji u prilazu obasjan suncem.

## Appendix E

**Znakovi**

Prvi luksuz koji su si Wayne i Caroline odlučili priuštiti te večeri bio je posjet Aldovom restoranu, novom elegantnom lokalu na sjeveru grada. Prošli su kroz maleni ograđeni vrt prepun malenih skulptura gdje ih je visok, prosijed muškarac u tamnom odijelu pozdravio riječima: -Dobra večer gospodine. Gospođo.- i odškrinuo im teška vrata.

Kad su ušli unutra, Aldo im je pokazao svoju zbirku ptica – pauna, zlatne fazane, kineskog fazana, i brojne neimenovane ptice koje su letjele naokolo ili pak mirno sjedile na ogradi. Osobno ih je dopratio do stola, smjestio Caroline, te se okrenuo Wayneu riječima: -Ljupka dama. Bio je nizak, tamnopus, besprijekorno uredan čovjek s vrlo blagim naglaskom.

Bili su zadovoljni njegovom pažnjom.

- Pročitao sam da ima ujaka na visokom položaju u Vatikanu- rekao je Wayne. -Tako je uspio nabaviti kopije onih slika- nastavio je, kimnuvši prema reprodukciji Velasquezove slike na najbližem zidu.

-Preko ujaka u Vatikanu.

-Bio je šef sale u hotelu Copacabana u Rijuu- dodala je Caroline. -Poznavao je Franka Sinatru, a Lana Turner bila mu je dobra prijateljica.

-Stvarno?- čudio se Wayne. -Nisam znao. Čitao sam da je radio u hotelu Victoria u Švicarskoj i u nekom velikom hotelu u Parizu. Nisam znao za Copacabanu.

Caroline je lagano pomaknula torbicu kad je konobar postavio velike čaše na stol. Ulio je vodu u njenu čašu, pomaknuvši se zatim na Wayneovu stranu stola.

-Jesi li vidjela kakvo odijelo nosi?- rekao je Wayne. -Takvo se što rijetko viđa. Sigurno košta oko tristo dolara. Podigao je svoj jelovnik. Nakon nekog vremena rekao je: -No, jesi li se odlučila?

-Ne znam- odgovorila je. -Nisam odlučila. Što ćeš ti?

-Ne znam- odvratio je. -Ni ja nisam odlučio.

-Što kažeš na neko francusko jelo, Wayne? Ili ovo? Na ovoj strani. Prstom mu je pokazala na što misli, pažljivo promatrajući kako traži riječi, pući usnice, mršti se i odmahuje glavom.

-Ne znam- odgovorio je. -Ipak bih volio znati što naručujem. Jednostavno ne znam.

Konobar se vratio s papirom i olovkom i rekao nešto što Wayne baš nije shvatio.

-Još nismo odlučili- rekao je Wayne. Odmahnuo je glavom, no konobar je još uvijek stajao pored stola. -Dat ću vam znak kad odlučimo.

...



-Mislim da ću samo naručiti odrezak. Ti uzmi što hoćeš- rekao je suprugi kad se konobar udaljio. Sklopio je jelovnik i podigao čašu. Iza prigušenih glasova koji su dopirali s drugih stolova, Wayne je začuo ćurlikanje ptica. Opazio je Alda kako pozdravlja četvero gostiju, čavrlja s njima, smješka im se i kima glavom dok ih vodi prema njihovom stolu.

-Mogli smo dobiti bolji stol- rekao je Wayne. -Umjesto ovoga u sredini gdje svaki prolaznik može gledati kako jedeš, mogli smo dobiti stol uza zid. Ili neki u blizini fontane.

-Mislim da ću naručiti govedinu Tournedos- rekla je Caroline.

Nastavila je proučavati svoj jelovnik. On je izvadio novu cigaretu, zapalio ju i promotrio ostale goste. Caroline je i dalje gledala u svoj jelovnik.

-Za ime božje, ako ćeš to naručiti, zatvori jelovnik da može preuzeti naše narudžbe. Wayne je rukom pozvao konobara koji je otraga kratko vrijeme u razgovoru s kolegom.

-Nema što raditi nego klafrati s ostalim konobarima- rekao je Wayne.

-Evo, dolazi- rekla je Caroline.

-Izvolite?- Konobar je bio mršav čovjek rošava lica u prevelikom crnom odijelu s crnom leptir kravatom.

-...i mislim da ćemo naručiti bocu šampanjca. Malu bocu. Znae, nešto domaće- rekao je Wayne.

-Da, gospodine- odvratio je konobar.

-I to ćemo uzeti odmah. Prije salate i hladne plate- dodao je Wayne.

-Ma svejedno donesite i hladno predjelo- rekla je Caroline. -Molim Vas.

-Da, gospođo- odvratio je konobar.

...

-Podmukla su oni sorta- rekao je Wayne. -Sjećaš se onog Brune koji je preko tjedna radio u uredu a vikendom konobar? Fred ga je uhvatio kako krade sitniš. Šutnuli smo ga.

-Hajdemo razgovarati o nečemu ugodnom- predložila je Caroline.

-U redu, može- pristao je Wayne.

Konobar je natočio malo šampanjca u Wayneovu čašu, Wayne ju je uzeo, kušao piće i rekao: -U redu, poslužiti će. Zatim je podigavši čašu, dodao: -U tvoje zdravlje, dušo. Sretan rođendan.

Kucnuli su se .

-Volim šampanjac- rekla je Caroline.

-I ja volim šampanjac- rekao je Wayne.

-Mogli smo naručiti bocu Lancera- rekla je Caroline.

-Pa zašto nisi ništa rekla ako si to željela?- pitao ju je Wayne.

-Ne znam, nisam razmišljala o tome. Ma i ovo je dobro.

-Ne znam baš puno o šampanjcu. Priznajem da nisam baš...poznavatelj. Zapravo sam totalni laik. Nasmijao se i pokušao uloviti njen pogled, no ona se zabavljala maslinom s hladne plate. -Za razliku od ljudi s kojima ti se trenutno družiš. No ako želiš Lancer- nastavio je -trebala si tražiti Lancer.

-Joj, zašuti!- rekla je. -Zar ne možeš govoriti o nečemu drugome? Podigla je pogled prema njemu pa je morao pogledati u stranu. Meškoljio se pod stolom.

...

Pitao ju je: -Želiš li još malo šampanjca, dušo?

-Može, hvala- odvratila je tiho.

-Za nas- nazdravio je.

-Za nas, dragi- ponovila je.

Promatrali su jedno drugo dok su pili.

-Trebali bismo ovo češće činiti- rekao je.

Kimnula je.

-Treba izaći s vremena na vrijeme. Potruditi ću se oko toga, ako želiš.

Posegnula je za celerom. -Kako hoćeš.

-Nije istina. Nisam ja taj koji...koji...

-Koji što?- rekla je.

-Briga me što ćeš učiniti- rekao je, oborivši pogled.

-Stvarno?

-Ne znam zašto sam to rekao.

...

Konobar je donio juhu, odnio bocu i čaše za vino, te ponovno napunio njihove čaše vodom.

-Mogu li dobiti žlicu za juhu?- zamolio je Wayne.

-Molim, gospodine?

-Žlicu za juhu- ponovio je.

Konobar je isprva izgledao iznenađeno, a zatim zbunjeno. Pogledavao je prema drugim stolovima. Wayne je iznad tanjura oponašao grabljenje juhe žlicom. Ubrzo se pojavio Aldo.

-Je li sve u redu? Ima li kakvih problema?

-Izgleda da moj muž nije dobio žlicu za juhu- rekla je Caroline. -Oprostite na smetnji- dodala je.

-Svakako. *Une cuiller, s'il vou plait*“, Aldo je jednoličnim glasom poručio konobaru. Kratko je pogledao Waynea a zatim objasnio Caroline: -Večeras je Paulova prva večer. Slabo govori engleski, no vjerujem da ćete se složiti da je odličan konobar. Momak koji je postavljao stolove zaboravio je žlicu. Aldo se nasmijao. -To je Paula sigurno iznenadilo.

-Ovdje je prekrasno- rekla je Caroline.

-Hvala Vam- odgovorio je Aldo. -Drago mi je što ste mogli doći. Biste li htjeli vidjeti vinski podrum i privatne blagovaonice?

-Vrlo rado.

-Poslat ću nekoga da vas malo provede uokolo kad završite s večerom- rekao je Aldo.

-Jedva čekamo- odvrtila je.

Aldo se lagano naklonio, ponovno pogledavši Waynea. -Nadam se da ćete uživati u večeri.

...

-Kreten- rekao je Wayne.

-Tko? O kome govoriš?- pitala je, spuštajući žlicu.

-Konobar- rekao je Wayne. -Konobar. Najnoviji i najgluplji konobar u ovom restoranu, i baš nas zapadne.

-Jedi juhu- rekla je. -Nemoj da te srce strefi.

Wayne je zapalio još jednu. Konobar je donio salate i odnio zdjelice s juhom.

Kad su započeli s glavnim jelom, Wayne je rekao: -I, što misliš? Ima li nade za nas ili ne? Spustio je pogled i namještao ubrus u krilu.

-Možda- rekla je. -Uvijek ima nade.

-Prestani muljati- rekao je. -Za promjenu mi izravno odgovori.

-Ne istresaj se na mene- upozorila ga je.

-Pitam te- rekao je. -Daj mi iskren odgovor.

-Hoćeš da ti se zakunem pred Bogom?

Rekao je: -Pa može i tako.

Rekla je: -Slušaj me! Dala sam ti najbolje godine svoga života! Najbolje godine!

-Najbolje godine *tvog* života?

-Imam trideset i šest godina- rekla je. -Večeras slavim trideset i sedmu. Večeras, ovog trenutka, odmah sad, ne mogu reći što ću napraviti. Jednostavno još moram vidjeti.

-Briga me što ćeš napraviti- rekao je.

-Zaista?

Bacio je vilicu i ubrus na stol.

-Jesi li završio?- pitala je pristojno. -Hajdemo popiti kavu i pojesti desert. Naručit ćemo neki dobar desert. Nešto ukusno.

Pojela je sve sa svog tanjura.

...

-Dvije kave- Wayne je prenio konobaru. Pogledao je u nju pa opet u konobara. -Kakve deserte imate?- pitao ga je.

-Molim, gospodine?- rekao je konobar.

-Desert!- rekao je Wayne.

Konobar je pogledao Caroline, a zatim i Waynea.

-Bez deserta- rekla je. -Nemojmo uzeti desert.

-Čokoladni mousse- rekao je konobar. -Šerbet od naranče- nasmijao se, pokazavši svoje loše zube.

-Izvolite gospodine?

-I ne želim nikakav organizirani obilazak- rekao je Wayne kad se konobar udaljio.

...

Kad su se ustali od stola, Wayne je spustio novčanicu od jednog dolara pokraj svoje šalice. Caroline je izvadila dva dolara iz torbe, izravnala novčanice i stavila ih pokraj njegovog dolara, tako da su tri dolara stajala u nizu, jedan do drugoga.

Čekala je s Wayneom dok je plaćao račun. Wayne je krajičkom oka spazio Alda kako pokraj vrata hrani ptice. Pogledao je u njihovom smjeru, nasmiješio se i nastavio bacati zrnje pticama koje su se okupljale oko njega. Onda je veselo protrljao ruke da bi ih očistio od zrnja i krenuo prema Wayneu koji se primjetno okrenuo na drugu stranu kad je vidio da mu se približava. No kad je Wayne ponovno pogledao prema Aldu, vidio ga je kako uzima Carolininu ruku, i uz lagani joj naklon ljubi zapešće.

-Je li gospođa uživala u večeri?- rekao je Aldo.

-Bilo je divno- rekla je Caroline.

-Hoćete li navratiti s vremena na vrijeme?- rekao je Aldo.

-Hoću- rekla je Caroline. -Kad god budem mogla. Sljedeći bih puta, ako dopustite, vrlo rado malo razgledala, ali sad stvarno moramo ići.

-Draga gospođo- rekao je Aldo -imam nešto za Vas. Trenutak, molim. Posegnuo je prema vazi koja je stajala na stolu blizu vrata, graciozno izvukavši iz nje ružu vrlo duge stabljike.

-Za Vas, draga gospođo- rekao je Aldo. -No budite oprezni. Ima trnja. Vrlo ljupka dama- rekao je Wayneu uz smiješak, te se okrenuo kako bi dočekao novi par.

Caroline je samo stajala.

-Idemo odavde- rekao je Wayne.

-Sad je jasno zašto je on mogao biti prijatelj Lane Turner- rekla je Caroline. Držala je ružu i vrtjela ju među prstima.

-Laku noć!- viknula je prema Aldu koji je bio okrenut leđima. Bio je zauzet odabiranjem nove ruže.

-Mislim da ju nikad nije ni poznao- rekao je Wayne.

## Appendix F

**Zamisli ti to!**

Završili smo s večerom i posljednji sam sat provela u mraku, gledajući kroz prozor. Ako je mislio doći večeras, već je trebao stići. I to odavno. Nisam ga vidjela već tri noći. No večeras su rolete na prozoru bile podignute a svjetlo upaljeno.

Večeras sam imala neki predosjećaj.

Onda sam ga ugledala. Na sebi je imao majicu i nešto slično bermudama ili kupaćim gaćama. Izašao je na stražnji dio trijema, osvrnuo se oko sebe i nestao u tami. Nastavio se kretati uz bočni dio kuće. Bio je brz. Da nisam pažljivo gledala, ne bih ga ni vidjela. Zaustavio se ispred osvijetljenog prozora i pogledao unutra.

-Verne- zazvala sam muža. -Verne, požuri, vani je. Požuri!

Vern je u dnevnom boravku čitao novine pred uključenim TV-om. Čula sam kako baca novine.

-Nemoj da te vidi!- rekao je. -Ne idi preblizu prozoru!

Vern uvijek tako govori. *Ne idi preblizu*. Valjda ga je malo sram gledati. Ali znam da uživa u tome. I sam mi je rekao.

-Ne može nas vidjeti ako je svjetlo ugašeno- uvijek mu kažem. Ovo traje već tri mjeseca. Točnije, od trećeg rujna. Tad sam ga barem prvi puta vidjela ovdje. Ne znam koliko to točno traje.

Te sam rujanske večeri umalo nazvala šerifa, dok nisam prepoznala posjetitelja. Vern mi je pojasnio o kome je riječ. Ipak mi je trebalo vremena da shvatim. No otad neprestano promatram, i mogu Vam reći da u prosjeku dolazi svake dvije do tri noći, ponekad i češće. Znala sam ga vidati i kad je kišilo. Zapravo, gotovo će sigurno doći kad kiši. No večeras je vedro i vjetrovito. Ima i mjesečine.

Kleknuli smo iza prozora. Vern se nakašljao.

-Pogledaj ga- rekao je. Vern je pušio, povremeno otrešajući pepeo na dlan. Držao se podalje od prozora kad bi otpuhivao dim. Vern stalno puši, neprestano. Uvijek drži pepeljaru nadohvat ruke, čak i kad spava. Ponekad se noću probudim i vidim da puši.

-Za ime božje- rekao je.

-Što to ona ima a druge žene nemaju?- pitala sam ga nakon nekog vremena. Čučali smo na podu, tako da su nam samo glave virile preko prozorske klupice, i promatrali čovjeka koji je stajao i buljio u vlastitu spavaću sobu.

-U tome je stvar- rekao je Vern. Nakašljao se tik do moga uha.

Nastavili smo promatrati.

Nazrela sam nekoga iza zastora. Vjerojatno se to ona razodijevala. No nisam mogla prepoznati nikakve detalje. Naprezala sam oči. Vern je nosio naočale za čitanje, pa je sve bolje vidio nego ja. Onda je netko povukao zastor, a žena je okrenula leđa prema prozoru.

-Što sad radi- pitala sam, unaprijed znajući odgovor.

-Za ime božje- rekao je Vern.

-Što radi, Verne?- ponovila sam.

-Razodijeva se- odvratio je, što misliš da radi?

Onda je netko ugasio svjetlo i muškarac je krenuo natrag hodajući uz bočnu stranu kuće. Otvorio je vanjska vrata i šmugnuo unutra, nakon čega su se pogasila i ostala svjetla.

Vern je kašljao i odmahnuo glavom. Upalila sam svjetlo. On je samo sjedio na koljenima. Zatim se ustao i upalio cigaretu.

-Jednom ću reći tom smeću što mislim o njoj- rekla sam i pogledala ga.

Suho se nasmijao.

-Ozbiljno- rekla sam. -Sasut ću joj sve u lice kad se jednom sretnemo na tržnici.

-Ja to ne bih učinio da sam na tvom mjestu. Za kog vraga bi to napravila? - odrezao je Vern.

No očito me nije shvaćao ozbiljno. Namrštio se i gledao u svoje nokte. Stisnuo je zube i suzio pogled kao i uvijek kad se na nešto koncentrira. Odjednom se razvedrio i počeo se po bradi. Ne bi ti to bila u stanju, zaključio je.

-Vidjet ćeš- rekla sam.

-Sranje- rekao je Vern.

Pošla sam za njim u dnevni boravak. Bili smo živčani. Uvijek budemo živčani kad ih gledamo.

-Samo čekaj i vidjet ćeš- ponovila sam.

Ugasio je cigaretu u velikoj pepeljari. Stajao je pokraj svoje kožne fotelje i na trenutak pogledao prema TV-u.

-Nikad nema ništa dobro na programu- rekao je. Zatim je dodao još nešto. Dodao je: -Možda on i nije tako lud. Zapalio je još jednu. Nikad ne znaš.

-Da meni netko gleda kroz prozor- rekla sam, došla bi mu policija na vrata. -Osim ako je George Clooney.

Slegnuo je ramenima. -Nikad ne znaš.

Bila sam gladna. Prvo sam pretražila kuhinjski pretinac, a zatim i hladnjak.

-Verne, hoćeš jesti?- viknula sam.

Nije odgovorio. Čula sam kako teče voda u kupaonici. No mislila sam da je gladan. Često ogladnimo u ovo doba noći. Izvadila sam kruh i meso i otvorila limenku juhe. Izvadila sam i kreker, maslac od kikirikija, hladnu mesnu štrucu, kisele krastavce, masline i čips. Sve sam to poslagala na stol. Zatim sam se sjetila pite od jabuka.

Ušao je u sobu u ogrtaču i flanelskoj pidžami. Kosa mu je bila mokra i zalizana a mirisao je po kolonjskoj vodici. Pogledao je prepun stol. Pita me: -Što kažeš na malo žitnih pahuljica sa smeđim šećerom? Sjeo je i raširio novine pokraj svog tanjura.

Pojeli smo užinu. Pepeljara je bila puna koštica maslina i opušaka. Kad je završio, nasmiješio se i rekao: -Što to tako fino miriše?

Otišla sam do pećnice i iznijela dva komada pite od jabuke s topljenim sirom.

-Ovo odlično izgleda- rekao je.

Ubrzo nakon toga, uzdahnuo je: - Ne mogu više jesti. Idem u krevet.

-Sad ću i ja,-rekla sam. -Samo da pospremim stol.

Bacala sam ostatke u smeće kad sam odjednom vidjela mrave. Poblizje sam pogledala. Dolazili su odnekuda ispod sudopera, u jednoj koloni, penjući se po kanti za smeće. Pronašla sam sprej u jednoj od ladica i pošpricala cijelu kantu, a i jedan dio ispod sudopera, koliko sam već mogla dohvatiti. Zatim sam oprala ruke i još jednom pogledala cijelu kuhinju.

Vern je spavao. Hrkao je. Za nekoliko će se sati probuditi, otići u kupaonicu i pušiti. Mali je TV pokraj kreveta bio upaljen, no slika je titrala.

Htjela sam mu reći za mrave.

Polako sam se spremala za krevet, popravila sam sliku i uvukla se pokraj Verna. On je spavao, uz uobičajene zvukove.

Neko sam vrijeme gledala televiziju, no na programu je bio *talk show*, a njih ne volim. Ponovno sam počela razmišljati o mravima.

Uskoro sam ih zamišljala po cijeloj kući. Došlo mi je da probudim Verna i kažem mu da sam imala noćnu moru. No umjesto toga sam ustala i otišla po sprej. Ponovno sam pogledala ispod sudopera, no tamo ih više nije bilo. Upalila sam sva svjetla u kući, tako da je cijela bliještila.

I dalje sam špricala sprejem.

Napokon sam podigla roletu i pogledala kroz kuhinjski prozor. Bilo je kasno. Zapuhao je vjetar i začula sam pucanje grančica.

-Smeće jedno- rekla sam. -Zamisli ti to!

Rekla sam i puno ružnih stvari koje ne smijem ponoviti.