

DOIREANN NÍ GHRÍOFA
LUNULAE

Though it grew dark and darker,
how could we despair

when we remembered
the pale crescents at the base of each nail,

ten little moons to glimmer our grip,
slips of brightness that persist,

holding our hands
even in darkness.

Translated by Máirtín Coilféir

Dá dhuibhe is dá dhuibhe féin é
cé againne a chaillfeadh dóchas

nuair ba linne ba chuimhneach
na corráin ghile ag bun gach ingne

na deich ngealaichín a shoilsíonn greim,
na scoilteáin solais nach n-éagann choíche,

ach a bheireann ar láimh orainn
dá dhuibhe féin é.

A LETTER TO THE STRANGER WHO WILL DISSECT MY BRAIN

For months, you worked
scissors and scalpel

through elbow and knuckle,
ligament and lung.

I felt you gasp, the morning
you folded my face back like a mask.

For you, my head was unsealed
by chisel and skull key, so that today,

you may raise the calvarium
and see my brain there,

cold and grey, under dura mater
and spider-web membrane.

For this moment, dear stranger,
I leave you a gift, a double word—

foscladh—which can both open
and throw sheet lightning.

Know that when you unlock my brain
with your blade, synaptic flashes

will flare over your own grey landscape.
Your brain will blaze bright,

alive and wild, and I,
I will be the light.

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Le míonna anois, is tú a d'oibrigh
siosúr is sceanóg

ar uillinn is alt,
ar theannán is scamhóg.

An chnead a lig tú asat d'airíos í, an lá
a bhain tú dhíom m'éadan ar nós púicín.

Dhuitse a baineadh séala mo chinn
le siséal is eochair ghéar, ionas gur tusa

a thógfadh in airde inniu an bhaitis,
gur tú a dhearcfadh m'inchinn romhat,

ina léithe fhuar faoina máthair chrua
is snáth bog seicne ina timpeall.

Don mheandar sin, a strainséara mo chroí,
bronnaim ort dán, an focal débhrí seo—

foscladh—an oscailt fhéin
is an brat tintrí in éindí.

Óir nuair a shaorfas t'fhaobhar m'inchinn
seo chugat na splancracha sionapsaise

ag bladhmadh os cionn do dhomhainse léith.
Le gile a ghabhfas t'inchinnse

is le beos is le mire, nuair is mise
mé fhéin an solas.

CHARM AND A CAGE

For Friedrich Gustav Maximilian Schreck

Here, our gaze cannot break
because here, my screen binds our stares.

In this GIF, you exist, Friedrich, you do;
I click it to resurrect you, bringing you back

as Nosferatu, your grip firm on a splintered pane,
your nails clipped into cartoon blades.

In Slovakia, I know, it grew cold,
the day they filmed your castle stare. You wandered

away and found a forest there, where you lost yourself
in thornberries, in birdsong and sweet, cold air.

Decades later, in interviews, the crew still spoke
of how *peculiar* you seemed, how *weird*, this man,

calm only in the company of trees, but Friedrich,
dear Friedrich, your clenched jaw remembered

the trenches, didn't it, the screaming horses,
the bloodied bayonets, the stench of corpses.

There, there—now you can rest,
my handsome marionette. Your ghost

is safe, you mustn't fret—
I've saved you

here, in my screen, cherished
captive, peering back at me.

Translated by Máirtín Coilféir

Do Fhriedrich Gustav Maximilian Schreck

Anseo, níl aon teacht eadrainn ag grinníú a chéile
óir anseo, nascann mo scáileán le chéile stánadh ár súl.

Sa nGIF seo is beo dhuit, a Fhriedrich, is beo;
gliogálaim air is seo chugam aniar ó na mairbh tú

mar Nosferatu, greim daingean ar an bpána scoilte agat,
is do chuid ingne ina lanna gáifeacha.

Sa tSlóvaic, tá's agam, bhí sé fuar
lá an taifeadta is tú ag stánadh uait ó do chaisleán. B'sheo ansin ar fán thú

amach i dtreo na coille, go ndeachaigh tú ar seachrán i measc
chrainn na gcaor, ceiliúr éan is mil fionnuaire.

Na blianta dá éis is iad faoi agallamh, ba é a déarfadh an criú fós,
nár bh aisteach thú, nár bh áirid, an fear seo,

a shantaigh suaimhneas na gcrann ach, a Fhriedrich,
a Fhriedrich, a chroí, is ag cuimhneamh a bhíodh tú, is do ghiall go teann,

ar na trinsí, nach ea, is ar na capaill a scréach,
ar bheaignítí na fola, ar bhréantas na gcorpán.

Seo, seo—tóg do scíth anois,
a bhabliac álainn. Tá do ghósta

slán sábháilte, ná bíodh imní ort—
tá tú slán sábháilte agam

anseo, sa scáileán seo, a lao, a chime liom,
a ghliúcaí thall faoi gheasa agam.

FALSE FRIENDS

The Irish for history is star.
The Irish for teach is moon.
The Irish for light is loss.
The Irish for secret is ruin.

Perhaps this is why night skies
always catch our eye,
luring us to learn
by what light still shines.

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Ciall do stair? Ní hansa: réalta.
Ciall do múin? Ní hansa: gealach.
Ciall do las? Ní hansa: cailleadh.
Ciall do rún? Ní hansa: iarsma.

Gonadh aire sin a bheir
spéir oíche ar an tsúil:
go dtuigfí deis ar eagna
ar an drithliú.