

to črtomir and vitomil

simona semenič

sophia

or while i almost ask for more or a parable of the ruler and the wisdom

(draft translation)

*above the royal city
dark clouds
are gathering
gathering
many many years ago
and yet, not too many to be able to count them with the fingers of two left and two right hands
far far away
and yet, not too far to smell the blossoming linden tree in the midst of the square
in the midst of the royal city
there is a magnificent palace
in the magnificent palace, a royal hall
in scarlet
and
gold
in the royal hall
vladimir
the mighty ruler*

vladimir
mighty?
are you sucking up to me again, you louse?

*in the royal hall, minister bogomir
many many years ago
far far away
vladimir's spiritual advisor is standing by his ruler
looking at him somehow
upwards*

bogomir
sucking up?
milord, by no means
I was merely ascertaining

vladimir
mighty
that sounds good
vladimir the mighty

*gathering
the clouds
the air trembles
the air trembles as if the sky were on fire*

bogomir
my, how stuffy it's today

vladimir
a storm is coming
so?
you were saying?

bogomir
I've just come from the country, milord
the news is good

vladimir
what?

bogomir
things are going well for us

vladimir
going well - what?

bogomir
my messengers all report the same, from all parts of the country
disquiet
dissatisfaction
disagreement

*the air trembles
and then*

vladimir
disquiet?
dissatisfaction?

bogomir
disagreement
right

vladimir
so you believe the time has come, minister?

and then

bogomir

right
I believe the time has come
the people are dissatisfied enough
our time has come

vladimir
well done, minister
you deserve a reward
and so do your messengers

bogomir
thank you, milord
your praise is enough of a reward for my hard work
and above all
just to make it clear
above all, a better future is a reward enough
I won't deny I have been working hard
the path to raising the people's awareness has been long
but here we are now
and I am content that this time has come
and my effort has been rewarded
the people are dissatisfied to the point of madness
and it's getting worse
milord
if you know what I mean

and then

vladimir
I know, bogomir
you truly are a louse

bogomir
don't, milord
dignity!

and then
lightning
thunder
raindrops
and it's pouring

vladimir
I have to say I doubted you could make it in such a short time

to set the people at daggers drawn
wow, how well I've put it

bogomir
an excellent figure of speech, truly
my noble lord
however
if I might suggest
at daggers drawn is not exactly
how to put it
appropriate
yes, that's how I'd put it
not exactly an appropriate word
it's about awareness, milord
awareness of the crowd, which is not in a
how to put it
not in a position
yes, not in a position
to see the big picture

*bogomir stands still for a while
and then sternly
meaningfully
looks at the ruler
the rain is pouring*

bogomir
if you know what I mean

vladimir
did you check?
are you certain?
did you also do your hocus-pocus?

bogomir
milord!
you cannot dismiss spirituality in this manner
I did
the oracle blesses this undertaking

and pouring

vladimir

hm
hm
so, the time has come to deal with the barbarians in the east

bogomir
exactly, milord
we will finally be able to sweep them out along with their
how to put it
negative impact on our land
and then, nothing will stand in the way of the progress
if you know what I mean

vladimir
oh you louse
of course I know
to stem this disquiet

*people are running under the roofs
bustle and panic
panic, as if it weren't simply a storm
panic, as if it weren't simply a lightning
thunder
and water*

bogomir
dissatisfaction
disagreement
exactly

vladimir
to stem the tide of this putridity from within
wow, how well I've put it

*tide of the putridity from within
he did put it well*

vladimir
to stem the tide of this putridity from within
your spiritual hocus-pocus says to strike the barbarians with all our forces

bogomir
exactly
the people are dissatisfied, because they don't know who the culprit is
but now

when they get to know the culprit
and will be able to throw a stone at him
if you know what I mean

vladimir
so, with all the forces against the barbarians?

lightning
thunder
and water

bogomir
that's right
for they are
scum and villains and evildoers and heretics
and
and
they are evil itself
and the world must recognize that

vladimir
and if it doesn't, we are obliged to help
as you would put it, dear minister

bogomir
yes, well, I didn't mean to put it quite like that
there is no need
I mean
I mean to say
in some cases
I would say
words are redundant
among people
I mean
such as me and you
I mean
if you know what I mean

on a stone bench
in the royal city
sit two
many years ago and far away
sit two people
they sit on a stone bench along the royal river

*the river is surging
the rain is pouring
and pouring
and they are kissing in the rain
two people on a stone bench in the royal city
and they are kissing some more
and don't stop kissing
because of the rain
or lightning
or thunder
they are sitting and kissing
more and more
hungrily
and then they are undressing
and they are hardly kissing anymore
they are almost just undressing
undressing until they're naked
in the rain
and lightning and thunder
naked in the rain, they are fucking
on the stone bench
in the rain
in the midst of civilization*

vladimir
oh, you louse you
you ingenious louse
how I like you

*on a stone bench in the middle of the royal city
two people are making love
in the rain
in the midst of civilization*

bogomir
milord, do not go there
please, maintain your dignity in words as well

*bogomir clasps his hands
clasps his hands together
saintly
nods his head
saintly*

vladimir
you actually are a true louse
yeah, well, that's why I like you
dignity in words
sounds nice
cultivated

bogomir
hm
only, milord and ruler, one has to proceed wisely
intelligently
I mean ...

vladimir
I know what you mean
don't worry

bogomir
no, no, one really must proceed wisely
thoroughly reflect upon one's every move
also reflect upon who to reflect upon it with
if you know what I mean

vladimir
tiny little louse, really
of course I know
don't be afraid of branimir, I will handle him

bogomir
I didn't mean
milord

vladimir
of course you didn't
branimir is precious, loyal
and has a sense of diplomacy
however, it's true that he's
how to put it
not stern enough

stern

bogomir
right, right

he thinks too much

vladimir
and he's not tenacious enough

tenacious

bogomir
yes, he doubts far too much

vladimir
and he's not steely enough

man of steel

bogomir
and doesn't think with his heart

vladimir
yes
he doesn't think with his heart
nicely put

bogomir
as if he were, how to put it
some extension of the old forces
how to put it
he sympathizes
in a way
you know
well
with ungodliness
and, how to put it
if you know what I mean

vladimir
don't worry
leave him to me
you have more important things to do now
first we have to fix this war

bogomir
with all our forces

when the nation and language of one's own is to defend its honor and justice

vladimir
exactly
and above all wisely

*vladimir looks at me
the rain is falling
no, no, no
he doesn't look at me
two people are fucking on a stone bench along the royal river
he glances at me
the river is surging
vladimir glances at me*

vladimir
the world must realize they are evildoers
and branimir will be of great help to us in that
don't forget that, bogomir

bogomir
milord
your highness
by no means

*and then
while the rain is falling and the river is surging
many many years ago
far far away
in the royal hall
in scarlet and gold
enters branimir
a loyal minister and secular advisor, almost a heretic*

branimir
my lord and my ruler
I'm at your disposal
minister sir

*the loyal minister branimir first soldierly greets the ruler
an then the minister
sturdily
heel to heel*

and nods his head

bogomir
minister sir

*the ingenious minister bogomir returns a greeting in a spiritual manner
saintly
palm to palm
nods his head
it all passes by very
cultivated*

vladimir
branimir
here you are
greetings
are you also bringing some news?

branimir
my lord and my ruler
I'm bringing news, yes
not good
unfortunately
I think there's a great danger

bogomir
danger?

*bogomir, minister bogomir, smirks
smirks and meaningfully looks at vladimir
looks at vladimir, as if to say
did you see, noble lord, did you see, your highness, we are on a roll, everything is under control, for the
sake of the, your honor, for the sake of the future and, your honor, for the sake of the greater causes,
for the sake of the progress, your grace, did you see, my effort was not in vain, my raising awareness,
milord, do not, do not mention the expression at daggers drawn without dignity, it's, my noble lord, to
you and to me far too lowly, it's about, my lord and master, it's about justice, about honor, about our
nation, it's about, let me say, your highness, let me say greater cause, it's about, my mighty ruler, it's
about the state
thus bogomir looks at him, minister bogomir, thus he looks at vladimir
as if to say something roughly similar
and then
while the storm has started raging
while the river is surging
while two people are fucking on a stone bench*

vladimir looks at me

branimir
yes
there is talk of rebellion

vladimir
rebellion?
what kind of rebellion?

branimir
the dissatisfaction is increasing
people are, so to speak, on the brink of madness

people are, so to speak, on the brink of madness
says branimir
meaningfully nodding his head
(as if to say: sir, I bring truly important news, therefore I am important)

vladimir
so I hear, so I hear
what do you suggest, minister?

branimir
maybe, my lord, maybe you could do something nonetheless
yield on one end
if you yielded only on one end of the matter, sir

vladimir
what do you mean yielded

bogomir
really, what do you mean yielded

branimir
you know sir
yield on one end
I don't know how exactly just now
but yield, and then we break the news
you know, to every village, every settlement, every house
then we throw a ceremony
games
we pour
for instance

wine
sir
you know
you abolish one single trifle
and calm the people with a ceremony
my analysis shows

*and meaningfully nods his head
(as if to say: sir, I have done an important analysis, therefore I am important)*

vladimir
analysis?

branimir
there
the analysis shows three critical points
regressive fiscal policy
arbitrariness of the repressive apparatus
and
hm
privatisation of natural resources

*and then
then it stops pouring*

vladimir
uh-huh
and what's your advice, minister?

*the clouds disperse
and the sun shines*

branimir
if the two of us begin
if we begin

*minister branimir is forgetting minister bogomir
deliberately or accidentally forgetting
and then remembers him
deliberately or accidentally
and looks at him
and nods his head
as a sign of respect
the sun lit up the royal city*

branimir
so, if we begin with the fiscal policy

bogomir
taxes

*the people are peeping from under the roofs
slowly gathering in the open*

branimir
taxes
so, if we begin with that
I'd suggest we yield a little
the people are very poor, hungry even
you know
and then they feel discontent
if we fed them a little
is what I'm saying
feed them, throw a ceremony
send messengers across the country to report on on
on your generosity, sir
if you yielded a little here, for instance, then
you know
then we can press them on some other end

*first the children come out into the open
into the puddles
straight into the puddles
screaming and laughing
and then*

vladimir
where exactly should I yield, minister?
the court must live on something
I cannot yield anywhere
you want the messengers to go hungry?
the catchpoles?
you, the ministers?

*then the mother rushes after them
or maybe it's the grandmother
she does look somewhat aged
she rushes after them*

bogomir
milord, I completely agree with you
should we leave the royal palaces to rot?
should we cease to give gifts to the aristocratic families?
what about tradition, what about culture?
the people are hungry
hungry, hungry
who isn't hungry
everybody hungers for something, it's human, it's natural

*with a wooden spoon in her hand
with a wooden spoon in her hand she rushes towards the children
there are one, two, three, four, five of them
five children
muddy and wet
and then the wooden spoon
and they run away
screaming and laughing and crying
and this mother
or maybe it's the grandmother, because she really looks terribly aged
this mother is standing in a puddle
and swearing*

vladimir
so what do you suggest, branimir?

*the sun lit up the royal city
and it's already scorching
and the air is already trembling
and the puddles are already drying*

branimir
couldn't you at least ...
my lord, we have already discussed this
and you were prepared to think about it

bogomir
don't say it!

vladimir:
spiritual hocus-pocus?

bogomir

for the gods' sake!

*a girl
a tiny little girl
with an apple in her hand
in her mouth
in her hand
is walking
in the sun
jumping over puddles in the royal city
the puddles are drying*

branimir
if you at least cut the cattle contributions
contemporary practices of our northern neighbors...

bogomir
I asked you nicely not to say it
I shall not discuss this any more
not with anyone, ever
minister sir
can you possibly imagine
can you possibly imagine the poverty if we failed to sacrifice cattle to the gods?

branimir
contemporary practices...

*a young woman is holding a newborn baby in her arms
she's looking at it lovingly
she's looking at it fearfully
more lovingly than fearfully
and yet, fearfully
takes her breast from under her shirt and stuffs it into the baby's mouth
the newborn baby doesn't grab it immediately
it pouts its little lips and frowns
it puts its little hands on the naked breast
the young woman stuffs her breast into its mouth again
the newborn baby sucks on the breast
it's sucking
it's sucking
it's sucking
the young woman clenches her teeth
tears are running down her cheek
the newborn baby is sucking*

*sucking
and then frowns and spits the breast out
blood pours from its mouth
the young woman is crying
wipes the blood from her breast
wipes the blood from the baby's chin*

vladimir
shut up already
sacrifice is part of our...
is part of our...

*vladimir looks at me again
looks at me, as if expecting me to finish his sentence
sacrifice is part of our...*

bogomir
identity

there

vladimir
there
sacrificing cattle to the gods is part of our identity

*the young woman takes hold of her breast and stuffs it into the newborn baby's mouth again
the young woman in a little house near the magnificent royal palace
with a royal hall
in scarlet and gold
I cannot finish the sentence for you*

branimir
but you said, sir, that you were willing to think about it

*minister branimir is trying hard
branimir, minister branimir is really trying hard*

bogomir
minister, you are an ungodly man!
and totally without principles
your mentality can only bring us to decay
do fundamental
how to put it
fundamental values

yes, that's it
do fundamental values mean nothing to you?

vladimir
first, branimir
let us not stop where there is no path

*let us not stop where there is no path
while the tiny little girl with the apple walks in the sun
walks in the sun
jumping over puddles, which are less and less puddles and more and more mud
jumping over mud
and offering her face to the sun
the linden tree smells divine
he put it nicely again*

vladimir
I put it nicely again

bogomir
a picturesque figure of speech, truly

branimir
the repressive apparatus

bogomir
the catchpoles

branimir
the catchpoles

vladimir
continue

branimir
you don't want to hear

*I don't mind
when he looks at me
when he looks at me and says*

vladimir
go on

branimir
privatisation of natural resources

*offers her face to the sun
with an apple in her hand
and then
then*

bogomir
I'm not convinced that I know what you mean

vladimir
translate, minister

*a man with a crate of potatoes crosses the square
a ragged group runs after him
a dirty rabble
kids
sir, sir
give us a potato*

branimir
ehem
hm
a survey shows that the contemporary practices of our neighborneighbors
our northern neighborneighbors
have already changed
for instance, the rulers no longer claim the right of the first night
and all the other
nights
maybe, sir, in order to calm them
maybe you could abolish this, at least

*give us just one potato, sir
the man puts the crate of potatoes down
come here, you
you, you
a ragged girl with protruding teenage nipples comes closer
do come closer, will you
the man sticks his hand under her shirt
squeezing her tit that has yet to become a tit*

bogomir
ius primae noctis is a god-given right

minister sir, this is also unacceptable

branimir
our northern neighbors have arranged this in a more contemporary manner
if I might add
it's more a change of form

*squeezes her tit with one hand
holding a potato in the other*

bogomir
minister sir
form also matters
ius primae noctis is a ritual which anchors
how to put it
anchors, yes
which anchors the matrix of our community
my competence cannot, must not and will not concede to this
I'm sorry, your highness, for this eruption
but we have been through this and I don't see why we should go through it again

*while he's saying that
bogomir, minister bogomir
hits the table
or the wall
or maybe, if he's holding a stick, hits the stick on the floor
striking
rhythmically
minister sir
boom
even
boom
form
boom
matters
boom
ius primae noctis
boom boom
is
boom
a ritual
boom boom
which
boom*

anchors
boom
how to put it
boom boom
anchors
boom
yes
boom
which anchors the matrix
boom boom
of our community
boom boom boom
my competence cannot
boom
must not
boom boom
and will not concede to this
boom boom boom

vladimir
it's true
I'm the fornicator maximus
I should think I deserve a fresh body
now and then

fornicator maximus smiles

bogomir
milord
it's not that
it's about...

vladimir
identity

fornicator maximus smiles again

bogomir
right!
I'm sorry, minister sir
this must stop
this is going nowhere
and you criticize the catchpoles?
if it were true, what you're saying, the nation would not have been this unruly

uncultivated
unscrupulous
the catchpoles are too scarce
and the taxes are too scarce
and and
even the first nights are too scarce

boom

vladimir
I completely agree
the first nights are definitely too scarce
does this nation even marry anymore?
the last time I was brought a bride was
was
I don't even remember

the mud is drying
the mud is drying quickly
the ragged rabble is for a while watching the man with his hand on the tit that has yet to become a tit
watching
watching
then they jump on him
knocking him down with stones and arms and legs
blood spatters around
the potato rolls into a red puddle
the man is down
the rabble flees away
the girl with the tits that have yet to become the tits is picking up the potatoes in the middle of the
royal square next to the magnificent palace

bogomir
right, milord
yes
this is what we should be thinking about
why people aren't marrying
instead of making useless analyses
and surveys of the contemporary practices of the ungodly northerners

branimir
but a rebellion is being mentioned
we must act

vladimir

if a rebellion is being mentioned, we must find the culprit

bogomir
the culprit

*look at him, you see him, you see bogomir, the spiritual advisor and minister
look at him
you see him smirking again
can you imagine what he might want to eventually potentially possibly say now
can you imagine he might now want to say something like
we landed in a tub of butter, noble ruler
we are riding high, your royal highness
we've hit the nail on the head, mighty master
the stars are on our side, your majesty
he smirks in vladimir's direction
look at him looking upwards somewhere
as if vladimir were on the ceiling
I look upwards, too, to see what he's looking at
and then you look upwards, as well
and yet, there is nothing on the ceiling
only scarlet and gold
and yet he smirks upwards*

vladimir
we must find the enemy

bogomir
the enemy

branimir
uh-huh
so you see the solution in liberal diplomacy

*while the air is trembling
while the sun is burning
while the river is surging*

vladimir
my dear ministers
my left and my right hand
is there a need for another word?

*the ministers say goodbye
they nod to the king*

*palm to palm
saintly
heel to heel
sturdily
they nod at each other
palm to palm
saintly
heel to heel
sturdily
cultivatedly
civilised
vladimir
fornicator maximus is checking me out
and I am checking him out
the mighty ruler
many many years ago
and yet, not so many
far far away
and yet, not so far
in a magnificent palace
in the midst of a less magnificent royal city
while the girl, the tiny little girl with an apple in her hand
in her mouth
in her hand
jumps across a puddle that is not a puddle anymore
because it's drying quickly
really quickly
while the girl jumps across a puddle and sees something on the floor
in the drying mud
bends down
and picks up a knife
while the girl picks up a knife and cleans it
while the girl presses the knife into her fist
and, with an apple in her hand
in her mouth
in her hand
and a knife in her fist
jumps across the mud patches
vladimir puts his hands on my shoulders
puts his hands on my shoulders
looks at me
the mighty ruler
with his hands on my shoulders
in the royal hall*

*in scarlet
in gold
and then
slowly
slides his hands towards my neck
holding my throat
with both hands
presses my vein with his right thumb
not too hard
my name is*

vladimir
minister!
I know you are hiding behind the curtain

*there is no curtain here
why is there no curtain here
I'm thinking, while I'm looking at him
while he's still grabbing my throat
pressing my vein
it almost hurts
it's almost pleasant
I almost close my eyes and I almost ask for more*

vladimir
minister!

more

bogomir
your royal highness, I was just ...

vladimir
shut up already, you louse

bogomir
I beg your pardon, milord
not so
disrespectfully

*the ruler moves away from me
steps towards the minister
and yet
and yet*

he's looking at me
I am looking at him
more

vladimir
what was it you wanted, dear sir?

bogomir
the enemy

vladimir
yes

bogomir
the culprit

vladimir
yes

bogomir
we must work fast
I've heard
entirely by accident
certain rumours

vladimir
go on, say it, you louse, the clock is ticking

the clock is ticking
the clock is ticking
the clock is ticking
I repeat three times in a row
do you hear me?

bogomir
as far as the easterners are concerned, all according to the plan
however

vladimir
minister sir
you are wasting my precious time

*time is precious, time is money, time and tide wait for no man, time will consume all things including
itself, man measures time and time measures man, all my possessions for a moment of time, the early
bird catches the worm
do you hear me?*

bogomir
your grace
minister branimir allegedly wants to make a deal with the easterners

vladimir
what do you mean?
I don't understand

bogomir
he doesn't want to aggravate, he wants to alleviate

vladimir
why, that would mean...

bogomir
yes, that would mean a loss of our
how to put it?
liberty, milord

vladimir
no, no
we are too close to fortifying our authority now
it must not happen
we must act
in the name of the state
do you have any hard facts?
something I could hold on to?

bogomir
no, no, nothing certain
only rumours, as I told you

vladimir
I'm in a hurry, minister
I must save the state

*I'm in a hurry
the heat is getting unbearable
the air is trembling*

*trembling
and suffocating
the smell of linden tree is sweet, too sweet
the mud is drying quickly, too quickly
it's hardening too fast
I must save the state*

bogomir
and I am here to help you with this undertaking
milord
if you know what I mean

vladimir
and yet, I need him
I cannot sacrifice him
he's too important for
you know
diplomacy
besides, the people trust him

bogomir
noble lord
I think I can take care of that
if you give me the thumbs up
I'll arrange the necessary for the people to follow you

I must save the state

vladimir
what do you suggest?

bogomir
an immediate attack, milord

vladimir
yes, I agree
but first we must obtain reassurance from the allies

bogomir
there's no time, milord
I'm afraid it will be too late

I must save the state

vladimir
right
the messengers are ready?

bogomir
ready, milord

vladimir
let the news travel to every village, every settlement, every house
let them inform night and day, on all the fronts
you understand?

bogomir
I understand

vladimir
and let them be on their way immediately, top secret
branimir must not find out
you understand?

bogomir
I understand, your highness

vladimir
barbarian troops are gathering on our borders
they have begun hostile activities
we expect an attack any day now
I order the most diligent attention
I order the food be gathered for the army
are you writing?

barbarian troops are gathering on our borders
boom
they have begun hostile activities
boom
we expect an attack any day now
boom boom
I order the most diligent attention
boom boom boom
I order the food be gathered for the army

bogomir
I am

we shall bend to no one, we shall fight for our freedom and prevail, we shall not let the barbarians rob our nation, force it, rape our wives and daughters, this is the battle for our nation, for our freedom

vladimir
we shall bend to no one
we shall fight for our freedom and prevail
we shall not let the barbarians rob our nation
force it
rape our wives and daughters
this is the battle for our nation, for our freedom
did I put it well?

bogomir
very well, milord

vladimir
you recorded all?

bogomir
I did!

vladimir
send it!

*bogomir rushes off to serve the state
the nation
freedom
the sun is burning
it's hot as hell
the mud is drying quickly
hardening fast
minister bogomir is rushing down the stairs
from the palace
to the square
passes a beggar begging
minister bogomir throws him a coin
throws him a coin and rushes on to serve the state
the beggar picks up the coin and leaves
goes to the first inn
orders a piece of meat
and while ordering a piece of meat, pinches the waitress's ass
now he can pinch her
now he has a coin
the river is surging*

*a young tree floats by on the river
it looks like a linden tree and maybe even is a linden tree
but before one can find out, what it is, the river takes it away
the river is surging
a piece of roof floats by
it looks like a piece of roof and maybe even is a piece of roof
but before one can find out*

vladimir
this heat is unbearable
it's even impossible to breathe

*impossible to breathe
vladimir approaches me
steps in front of me
and looks at me
and then
he keeps looking at me
and ever so slow
and soft
soft as the devil, he's walking around me
looking at me
circling
and then
he's standing behind my back
and just
just smells my hair
my name is*

vladimir
minister

*branimir, minister branimir has entered
I haven't noticed him
I would say, if I may, that he entered sneakily
so that I couldn't have noticed him
the heat is unbearable*

branimir
sir, terrible news

vladimir
I've heard, barbarian troops are gathering along the border

branimir
right, sir
I don't understand
it didn't seem...
I don't know what I've overlooked

vladimir
we will have to strike

branimir
what do you mean?

vladimir
would you like me to draw you a picture?

branimir
wait a moment
there's nothing certain yet
there's no violence yet
nobody is threatening anyone
why strike

*and then
then minister bogomir crosses the square again
into the palace
up the stairs
into the royal hall
in scarlet
in gold
it's hot as in hell*

bogomir
the intimidation stops now
it's time for freedom

*he shoots
he shoots as if he had been repeating these two sentences all along the way
since he left the royal hall to serve the state down the stairs across the square and threw the coin to the
beggar and went on and then came back across the square into the palace up the stairs into the royal
hall
he utters these two sentences like this
like he had been repeating them all along the way
the intimidation stops now
it's time for freedom*

boom
no, no
minister bogomir doesn't hit the floor
I added that myself
boom

branimir
I'm not contradicting , it's true, it's true
the intimidation stops now
even though the intimidation is debatable
and it's time for freedom
I'm not contradicting
but...
the bloodshed
is it truly necessary?

vladimir
by all means
can't you see, branimir, haven't you figured it out yet?
if we don't defeat them, they will defeat us
you wouldn't want your nation, our nation, my nation, you wouldn't want it to submit to
slavery, would you?

bogomir
we have only two options
either we the righteous are triumphant, or else the more violent barbarians

boom boom

branimir
but the barbarians haven't even started attacking
for the time being, the news only says they are gathering at the border
maybe nothing will happen
why strike first?
why be the first to shed blood?

vladimir
they haven't started yet, but they will
sooner or later they will!
what are you going to do then?
when the first innocent victims begin to fall
when our people begin dying
only because we weren't determined enough
what are you going to do then?

boom boom boom

branimir
I myself would not aggravate it yet
that's all I'm saying

vladimir
you are not stern enough

bogomir
you think too much

vladimir
you are not tenacious enough

bogomir
you doubt too much

vladimir
you are not steely enough

branimir
all of these?

vladimir
all of these and even more
you don't think with your heart

branimir
with my heart?

boom boom
boom boom

vladimir
this moment is key
the foe will grind us into dust
their army is much better equipped
not to mention how very ruthless
if we don't act now, if we don't act now as we should
then
then we remain in chains forever

don't you get that?
we are by no means letting this happen

branimir
mister bogomir, it's your turn

bogomir
meaning?

branimir
at this point, I'd expect you to say: by no means

by no means

bogomir
do you really feel communication of such kind is up to my standards?

by no means

branimir
by no means

vladimir
decorum, sirs, decorum
and focus
we have an important decision to make
important for us and for future generations
if we don't seize this moment, we will miss the history
we must shape the future in line with ourselves
in line with our people
do you understand?

branimir
I do, I do
but still
I still think we should find a more peaceful way
I still think maybe we don't need to shed blood
I think we have to do everything in our power to find common ground

bogomir
of course
beyond dialogue there is death

branimir

and yet?

bogomir
meaning?

branimir
I would expect you to finish the sentence
beyond dialogue there is death – and yet?

bogomir
your cynicism is totally inappropriate
I have finished my sentence

vladimir
so you propose a dialogue?

bogomir
with whomever it's possible
the persuaded are impossible to persuade

branimir
and yet – yet

*dusk is falling on the royal city
a family is sitting at the table
one
two
three
four
five
there are five
a family is sitting and waiting for dinner
there is a bowl of soup on the table
a carrot is floating in it
a turnip is floating in it
the father takes a knife
cuts the carrot in five
three smaller pieces, two bigger ones
cuts the turnip in five
three smaller pieces, two bigger ones
takes the salt
adds salt
something else is floating inside the bowl
you're looking and looking to see what it's, but you can't figure it out*

*you're looking some more
but meanwhile, the dinner has gone*

vladimir
I don't follow you two anymore
now is not time for this
it's time for action
it's time to do what has to be done
and if weapons are necessary – so be it

bogomir
so be it

vladimir
our future, the future of our nation is at stake

bogomir
the future of our nation

branimir
well, at least something good
at least the nation is somewhat appeased
though frightened
but my ruler, whatever you do at this moment, the nation will follow you

vladimir
your words are confusing me
I'm not sure I know what you mean to say

branimir
only that the so-called nation calls for a thorough reflection all the more

bogomir
you don't stop and you won't stop
can you not see there's no other solution?
that we are on our way to being crushed, to being suppressed?
and forever, may I add?

*the river is rolling
a shooting star flashes*

vladimir
and it's necessary to think beyond the borders of our conflict

bogomir
exactly
beyond the borders, they await our right decision
they are waiting for us to offer our hand
we can obtain allies in the south as well as the north
mister branimir, you are more aware of this particular situation
what do you say?

branimir
my first guess would be the north
the north is more reliable
and of course they are more interested in rejecting the barbarians
so that we can set our own governor in the east

vladimir
uh-huh
so that's it
have you anyone in particular in mind?

branimir
oh, sir, is there a need for any words?

vladimir
there isn't
we must think about the nation
so?
you think we could manage?
with the northerners?

meanwhile, darkness has descended on the royal city

branimir
my first guess would be yes
I think there shouldn't be any big problems

vladimir
what would it cost?

branimir
my first guess, as I was saying, would be one marriage

*and a shooting star flashes
make a wish*

bogomir
one marriage?
does this mean we should also accept their gods?

branimir
I'm afraid so
the two usually go hand in hand

vladimir
what does she look like?

bogomir
milord!

branimir
they say she's as beautiful as a shooting star

make a wish before it's too late

vladimir
that's what they also said about my seventh wife
but I ended up with a toothless butch with a moustache
you haven't seen her?

branimir
I haven't

bogomir
and how certain are you of this possibility?

branimir
quite certain

vladimir
it has to be verified
quickly
before we start the war
I don't know what you're waiting for
go, go
on your horse!
to the north!

bogomir
but to accept foreign gods?

vladimir
there's no time
just go!

*minister branimir is already in the saddle
is already leaving the royal city
is galloping through the night
to the north, to the north
and galloping
a tender face is gazing after him
long after minister branimir is gone
a tender woman's face
I would say, at first glance, that love is in the air here
I would say that this woman, almost a girl, is gazing after the minister for a very special reason
she's gazing after the minister and then draws the curtain
and then we don't see her anymore
the darkness fell upon the city*

bogomir
milord, I'm worried

vladimir
you don't have to worry about anything, everything is going smoothly, just as it has to
when branimir returns with favourable news, we strike
everything is as it should be

bogomir
no, no, milord
I think first we have to take care of some
how to put it
some business
I'm talking about an internal enemy, milord

vladimir
what internal enemy?

bogomir
I'm talking about the voices that are too loud
the voices that are not going to go silent just like that
and then, my respected, noble ruler
then I'm also talking about providing the nation with a greater satisfaction
if your wise authority is to
how to put it

strengthen in the years to come

vladimir
voices that are too loud?
that won't go silent just like that?
what are you talking about?

bogomir
you know what I'm talking about, milord
the instigators
the instigators of the people that need to be silenced
or, of course, if possible, made to cooperate

vladimir
I'm tired

*I'm tired, he says and looks at me
looks at me with a tired softness in his eyes
so that I have to believe him
I have to believe he really is tired
I think about approaching him
I make a step
and then another
I'm walking towards him*

bogomir
I understand, milord
but this has to be settled before minister branimir returns

*I'm standing in front of him
the mighty ruler
take a rest
I say
lie down and take a rest
and he looks at me, as if he heard
looks at me as if he wanted to respond
and then
he reaches for me with his hand
thumb on the jugular vein
pressing
looking at me
soft as the devil
and pressing
I almost ask for more*

vladimir
who are they, these instigators?

*while I almost ask for more
while soft as the devil he's pressing my jugular vein
a young man
coughing, looks at the stars
looks at the stars and takes notes
coughing
doesn't see anything else
not the river rolling
not the linden tree
not the luxurious palace
not the royal city
looks at the stars
coughing
and takes notes
make a wish, before it's too late!*

bogomir
the widow, more precisely, her daughters

*too late
I'm the widow
my name is*

vladimir
un-huh
they are still in the game?
I thought they would marry, so we'd have peace
and I wouldn't mind the first night
if you know what I mean

*my name is
too late*

bogomir
milord, be serious
key matters are at stake here
rebellion, instigation and above all
most importantly
disrespect to the institution of power
they are dangerous

especially now, in these
how to put it
in these delicate
sensitive
if you know what I mean
times

*a man approaches a little house
with his head bent between his shoulders
slowly
he approaches the little house
and then steps back a few steps
so he can look through the window
looks through the illuminated window
light inside the little house
the man looks at the house
and sees her
she doesn't see him
she's sweeping the floor
she's cooking
she's putting the bowl on the table
she sits at the table
she eats porridge
she's cleaning up
she's washing the dishes
she doesn't see him
he is looking at her
for a long time
for a long time
and then leaves
with his head bent between the shoulders*

vladimir
bring them in, then
I don't know what you were waiting for till now

bogomir
they are already here, milord

*my name is
I am a widow
my daughters are hope, faith, and love
my name is
I am an aristocrat*

*and I have to save the state
too late
I am of blue blood
blue, blue is the color*

vladimir
oh, you louse
behind my back!

bogomir
we are in a hurry, milord
we are standing on the threshold of history

vladimir
you put it very well

*he has put it well
and then
then enters hope
enters love
enters faith
into the royal hall
in scarlet and gold
in the middle of a magnificent palace
in a less magnificent royal city
many many
yet not so many years ago
far far
and yet not so far away
there was love
love is my youngest daughter
she likes to wear red, she says it's the color of love*

love
no, mother
red is the color of courage and passion
that's something else

*well, let us not split hairs, my dear
especially not now
not now, when it's too late
when you are in chains
because you are a threat to the fatherland*

*there was faith
faith is my middle daughter
she was born during the war
at the time when her father fought battles for king vladimir
I wanted to say, for our fatherland
I apologize
he fought battles for our fatherland
faith likes to eat apples
she's almost constantly holding an apple in her hand
but not now
do you see, do you see she's not holding an apple now?
there was hope
my eldest daughter is hope
hope was born among the poor people, a mere coincidence
with my big belly, I carried bread to the poor
pretty lady, pretty lady, pretty lady, they shouted after me
stinking and dirty and starving children and adults
I was disgusted, I tell you, I was disgusted, the bigger the belly, the harder it was to go
but a habit dies hard every thursday morning, ever since I can remember, I carry bread to the poor
I am an aristocrat
pretty lady, pretty lady, they hung on to my skirt, the neglected children with their eyes bigger than
their cheeks
and I hand out the bread until it's gone
I stand there, looking at them, thinking no, no, my world is not like that, my child is not going to be
born into this world
pretty lady, a dirty little girl clings to me forcefully, clings to my right arm, not wanting to let go, until
her mother forces her to
smile, smile
and then the pain in my stomach
hope wanted to get out
she was in a terrible hurry
and then plop
in that dirty mess
pretty lady, pretty lady
they reached their dirty hands towards my newborn baby
pretty lady
no, no, my child was not born into this world
I am an aristocrat
my name is
the color blue is the color of
the catchpoles bring forth all three of them
my name is
I am an aristocrat
my daughters are love, hope and faith*

in chains, as a threat to our fatherland, they stand before the mighty ruler vladimir

vladimir
greetings, my ladies
do you know why you are here?

hope, love and faith say nothing

vladimir
a tiny bit stubborn, are we?

*he says to them and looks at me
hope, love and faith still say nothing
stubborn
although I must say, this I have to say, I am surprised
especially by love
I would expect her to attack him and at least bite his nose off
I would expect her to start shouting
or at least unfold some theory on the uselessness of the state apparatus
or whatever she calls it
but nothing
nothing*

love
stubborn?

*she speaks quietly
very quietly
now I'm even more scared
love, my love, who loves the color red
red is the color of love*

love
stubborn?
you dragged us here like criminals and you ask us if we know why we are here
no, we don't know
and yes, of course we know
because you are a swine

vladimir
lovely girl, don't say that
such words
from this juicy mouth
don't

*the fornicator has awakened
the fornicator is excited by such words
such words from such a juicy mouth
he moves towards love
soft as the devil
and touches her
softly as the devil*

vladimir
such a lovely little girl

*the royal city is in total darkness
the air is not trembling
the air is standing still
the heat is not passing off
and the air is standing still
she's reading by candlelight
she's reading a huge book
she's reading about holding hands
reading about a kiss
reading about two sweaty bodies intertwining
she's reading a huge book by candlelight*

hope
leave her alone, you devil

vladimir
this is going to be fun

love
it's curtains for you, it's curtains for you
you might not know it yet
but it's curtains for you
you and your kind
it's curtains for you
this time has come

vladimir
meaning?

*love thinks the time has come, too
whatever that means*

love
meaning we will put an end to your stupidity
meaning the time has come for us to stand together
meaning to say no to you
meaning to say that was enough
meaning to take matters into our own hands
to think our own thoughts
to not let you trick us anymore
to resist

whatever that means
love speaks, ecstatically
with red cheeks
with chained hands
and with, how to put it, with love in her voice

love
with passion!

speaks ecstatically
with passion
and actually means what she says
whatever that means

faith
sir
we've done nothing wrong
why have you brought us here?
I suppose we have some rights

I suppose we have some rights, we are, after all, aristocrats
my name is
and I am an aristocrat
of blue blood like you
we are all of blue blood
I suppose we have some rights

bogomir
you are here because you instigate the people
miss faith, I have information that you were speaking today in the square, to the crowd

she reads by candlelight

faith

after the storm, I took a stroll through the city
it was so nice, the sun shining over the puddles
and the air was trembling
and the river was surging
it was truly beautiful
and I stopped at the square
and there was a crowd speaking about war
sir, the crowd spoke the time for war has come, for an attack, for bloodshed
sir
and then I spoke, too
I spoke about how it's too beautiful to make war
that it's too beautiful, you know, that we are all people, aren't we
that we cannot raise a hand against another human being

she's reading a huge book
she's reading a huge book about a kiss

love
you should have thrown an apple at someone's head
the rabble
so that they would understand

faith
love, please, come on
in this way, you cannot get anywhere
no
no
you cannot fight violence with violence
no and that's it
because then, you know, then there is no end to it

love
love and all that?

faith
yes, of course
don't mock me!

love
I don't mock you anymore
I gave up

vladimir
this is fun, really fun

one cannot ask for more fun on a wednesday night
yeah, well...

faith

mister ruler

I'm a peaceful person

I believe in reconciliation and I believe in the peaceful way and I don't agree with any sort of
violent communication at all

but look

instigating the people, those are serious charges

the solution lies in unity, the solution lies in the common ground

and if I say that, I am instigating?

bogomir

miss

we live in a difficult, groundbreaking moment

try to understand those things are important

it's about freedom

love

how much?

bogomir

excuse me?

love

what is the price of our freedom?

how many gold coins do you want in order to let us go?

we are talking about the same freedom, aren't we?

faith

love, shut up

shut up

no sir, I cannot understand

no matter how hard I try, I can't

hope

sir, you put us in chains

you sent fifteen catchpoles for us three

bogomir

because you are headstrong

and unpredictable

you were also gathering a crowd against the king today

hope

me?

oh, no sir

the king is not in my plans

love

because he's not important enough

faith

shut up

hope

I'm a teacher

I teach writing and reading and arithmetic

that's my crowd

bogomir

you are instigating!

I listened to you

don't lie to my face

you are under interrogation before the ruler

at least show some respect

hope

with all due respect

minister sir

mister ruler

I did speak

I speak every day

and I spoke today

that you produce hatred instead of bread

that you feed us with hatred instead of

faith

love!

love

love?

hope

no, knowledge!

faith
yeah, well

and bites an apple
yeah, well
doesn't bite an apple
but if she weren't in chains, she would definitely bite an apple at this point

hope
I spoke and people listened
minister sir
and mister ruler
with all due respect
but then
then one of your catchpoles came and dragged me away
madam, he said, go away while you are still in one piece
go away so the rabble will not hurt you
and before I could say anything, the troop of catchpoles drove away the crowd with whips
adults and children
as if
as if

love
red is the color of wrath, anger and hatred

red is the color of wrath, anger and hatred
my name is
I don't like the world I was born into
in which I gave birth to my three daughters
I'm far from liking it
when I was pregnant with the eldest, I remember thinking about it
what kind of person I am, to bring into a world I don't like, into a world I'm far from liking, what kind of
person I am to bring into this world a small human being
brave or cowardly?
would it be braver to say no, I won't give birth to another human being in this world
or would that be cowardly?
and then
then he approaches again
approaches me, the fornicator, circling around me
looking at me
and circling
and I'm not looking at him any more
I'm looking at the floor, waiting
smile, smile

*it's neither cowardly nor brave, my world is not this world
and I'm looking at the floor
and waiting*

bogomir
so you're not denying it?

love, hope and faith are not denying it

bogomir
so you're not repenting?

love, hope and faith are not repenting

bogomir
so you admit it?

love
admit what?

vladimir
that you are threatening the security of our state

hope
of the state, excuse me
could you explain the meaning of the state
state – as in you and your two ministers?
pardon me
you, your two ministers, the catchpoles and the messengers
explain the state

bogomir
milord, don't try to communicate with them
it's below your dignity
these are wrongdoers
ungodly creatures
traitors

love
so many compliments, by jove
thank you, minister sir
that was the nicest thing I've heard in a while
anything else out of your mouth would be an insult

no, no
shut up!

hope
what do you want from us?

love
first to bed, then to the cross

shut up!

faith
shut up!

vladimir
lovely lady, that suggestion is not bad at all
at least the first part
I have to say I'm very tempted
to claim the opposite would be a lie

bogomir
you are here to explain why you're instigating the people
only an interrogation, at first

love
and then?

vladimir
it all depends on how well we get along
I truly hope we will get along well
we are, after all, civilised people, aren't we?

faith
I really don't get it
the three of us are a security threat?

bogomir
of course
you take matters into your own hands, bypassing us, bypassing the ruler, bypassing the state

hope
I apologize
but you still haven't explained the notion of state
because I, too, excuse me, but I don't understand this

bypassing you, yes, of course, what else, it's our intention
but bypassing the state?
explain state to me, then we can talk

*and then it flies towards her
flies directly at her face
bogomir's hand
first the left cheek
then the right cheek
blood drips from her nose
faith cries out*

bogomir
milord, how shall we continue?

vladimir
are you prepared to cooperate?

love
does this mean I need to suck you up?

*does this mean I need to suck you up?
does this mean I need to suck you up?
does this mean I need to suck you up?*

bogomir
such vulgarity!
such a lack of basic female decency
disgusting
truly disgusting
milord, I don't know if it's worth proceeding any further

vladimir
are you offering it?

*soft as the devil
the mighty ruler
with softness in his eyes
softness in his body
like the devil
circles around her
looking at her
and is still looking at her
and doesn't stop looking at her*

*circles around her for so long
soft as the devil
with all the softness the devil can possess
until she looks at the floor*

love
I was just asking

*and then he grins, the devil
mighty ruler
grins
and looks at me*

vladimir
you will suck it up this way or another
now I just want to know whether you will cooperate or not

hope
cooperation means what?

vladimir
I hear people listen to you

hope
not enough

*vladimir pretended like he didn't hear that
bogomir's hand shook again
his hand shook, but only slightly
he didn't raise it again
no one feels pain
pain*

hope
cooperation means what?

vladimir
to explain to the people some false truths that have been circulating in this past period

hope
explain what in particular?

bogomir
that we collect more taxes

this is a blatant false truth

hope

sir, people are starving to death, literally

you know, they drive them in carts past our house, the dead bodies

more every day

while you, excuse me, but you only want more

you want more taxes to pay for more catchpoles to collect more taxes

to do what, sir?

build another palace?

win another war?

vladimir

miss, I bow to your enthusiasm

your selflessness

but there are things that unfortunately

unfortunately

your pretty head cannot understand

love

this

no!

love

this

I said no!

faith

shut up!

love

this has passed just about every limit

you swine

what language are you speaking?

what are you saying?

that we should go

you stinking bastard

that we should go to the people and tell them the opposite of what we have been telling them
up till now?

tell them to lay down beside you, because it's their duty?

to pay taxes and drop dead in silence we should tell them that all your wars are absolutely
necessary

you piece of shit
you stinking piece of shit
do what you want

*he will, he will do what he wants
my sweet*

love
do what you want, it will not happen
not ever!

bogomir
milord
this is taking too long, we have no time
they will not say yes

vladimir
then, the standard procedure
maybe they will change their minds
little doves

*no!
no!*

bogomir
to the brothel with them?

vladimir
yes, to teach them something useful

*the mighty vladimir turns on his heel
turns on his heel and looks at me
looks at me as if he had something to add
as if to add that if their mother could not
teach them something useful, if their mother could not
looks at me like that, as if to say something like that
but doesn't say anything
I don't say anything either
I only look at him when he approaches
soft as the devil
steps behind my back
and strokes my hand with two fingers
from the shoulder to the elbow
softly as the devil*

*I say nothing
he says nothing
even minister bogomir says nothing
even faith
even hope
even love
faith, hope and love are in no position to say anything
faith, hope and love are in a brothel
men are sweating on top of them, taking turns
in line with the rules of behaviour
dignity
and order
first bogomir sweats
and sweats
for as long as he can
sweats, because it has to be done
sweats, because it's the right thing to do
sweats, because there must be order
and then
then his catchpoles sweat
one
two
three
four
five
and then love, hope and faith stop counting
and then even I stop counting
like I've stopped counting the birth pangs
I counted the first
and then the second
and then maybe ten more
but then, then you simply stop counting and wait until it passes
the catchpoles are sweating
sweating on top of faith
sweating on top of hope
sweating on top of love
and sweating
and sweating
the darkness has swallowed the royal city
only a single light, only a single candle
flickers
flickers
flickers
and then goes out*

and then the dawn breaks

branimir
my lord
news, news

vladimir
good it seems

branimir
very good
the northerners are going to support our
ehm
struggle for

vladimir
freedom, truth, justice

*now, I would like to tell you a story
I would like to tell a story about faith or hope or love
how it was when they were still little girls
but I can't
I can't talk about that any more
love, hope and faith are now lying on some cold floor
blood drying on their bodies
drying already
now I cannot talk about their childhood any more*

branimir
right

vladimir
and the cost?

branimir
nothing
except this wedding
not too great an expense

vladimir
how much?

branimir
a few thousand gold coins, four, to be exact

*the blood on their bodies is already drying
already coagulating*

vladimir
have you seen her this time?

branimir
my lord, I have
and I have to say...

vladimir
yes?

branimir
as pretty as a star, truly

make a wish

exuberant and soft
a man would want to...
well, let us forget about that, she's your future wife
she will already be brought by tomorrow, we must prepare for the ceremony
however, the ritual must be carried out their way, of course
I don't know how...

vladimir
bogomir?

branimir
yes, that
I'm afraid their practices are, as I said, more contemporary

vladimir
ah, leave it be, minister
nothing but hocus-pocus
it doesn't matter
what matters is that she's pretty

branimir
well, sir...
that I can guarantee with my life

vladimir
go now, prepare what is needed
I shall handle bogomir

*branimir goes
backs away
bowing
with a smile on his face
reaching from the left ear to the right one, the smile
there will be a ceremony!
far far away
many many years ago
into the royal halls of the mighty ruler vladimir
enters minister bogomir
almost bumping into branimir's behind, almost
bogomir's genitals almost bump into branimir's behind
this doesn't happen, however, because branimir is quick enough to turn around and greet him
sturdily
cultivatedly
and leaves the hall*

bogomir
my king and ruler
you wished?

vladimir
the news is good
the ceremony will already take place tomorrow
we can strike now

bogomir
the ceremony?

vladimir
yes, branimir is already taking care of it
the attack should take place immediately, so people can see this is real
it's of key importance now

bogomir
yes, milord
I shall fix all the necessary matters
I only want to know what this ceremony is all about
if you care to explain
I meant

I am sorry
but it seems this should fall under my jurisdiction
I mean
you know
I can see why minister branimir is taking care of it
if you know what I mean here

vladimir
dear minister
why?
because you are irreplaceable in some other matters
if you know what I mean here

*bogomir shines
shines like a star*

bogomir
yes, of course
of course
how could I be so

vladimir
stupid?

bogomir
I was going to say meticulous
of course
but still
the gods?

vladimir
we have had a long and heated discussion about that
but finally they gave up
we accept their gods and in retribution, we pay them a minimal fee

bogomir
uh-huh
so that's it
I didn't expect that

vladimir
only four thousand gold coins

bogomir

but, my lord and ruler
to take on the northern gods?
their so-called contemporary practices?

vladimir
minister sir
in the name of greater cause

explain greater cause

vladimir
just between us
and I ask you to keep it between us
the state treasury is to pay five thousand gold coins for the northerners
five thousand
between you and me, minister bogomir
if you know what I mean here

bogomir
uh-huh
and you say the northerners only get four thousand?

vladimir
right, bogomir
the treasury pays five, the northerners get four
between you and me, just to be clear

bogomir
my master
and the northerners will be our allies?
so we must sacrifice
sacrifice in the name of greater cause

explain greater cause

vladimir
freedom, justice, truth
minister sir

*we are discussing the same freedom, aren't we?
a thousand gold coins is the price of my freedom
we are discussing the same freedom?*

bogomir

right, of course
only four thousand, you say?
well, I have to say, respect
respect
this is in fact one of the better deals
respect, really

*bows to the greater cause
saintly*

vladimir
so we have a deal

bogomir
consider the first barbarian dead by our soldiers' weapons

vladimir
it's settled, then

*minister bogomir backs away towards the exit
backs away, bowing
saintly
vladimir approaches me
hard
quick
before I manage to draw a breath, he's already grabbing me*

bogomir
milord
another detail

vladimir
well, what is it, you insect?

bogomir
out internal enemy
if you know what I mean here

vladimir
have they softened yet?

bogomir
they are very very soft, milord
I have to say that

vladimir
uh-huh
what do you suggest?

*the heat is unbearable
the blood on their naked bodies has dried
has coagulated
the air doesn't tremble
the air stands still
as if it weren't breathing*

bogomir
I feel, milord, we must be wise
the situation is still hazardous
the sluts are
soft, I must say, but dangerous nonetheless
still
although we could
well, you know
we could turn the matter to our advantage

no

vladimir
oh, you louse
you have no problem with diplomacy
bring them in

*then
then he approaches me again
the fornicator maximus
sir, I say, sir, if you please, I say to him
I don't think he hears me
he's just looking at me
looking at my lips
looking at my neck
looking at my hands
looking at my breast
looking at my belly
looking at my thighs
sir, if you please
then he looks into my eyes
doesn't hear me*

looks into my eyes and smiles

softly

as the devil

and then presses his lips against my cheek

presses his lips against my cheek

and whispers

you are beautiful

the godmother swings her big ass in front of the fireplace, the godfather is looking at her, looking at her and drooling, noticeably drooling, drooling so bad that the saliva is running across his chin, while the godmother swings her big ass, left right, left right, the ass is shaking, how it's shaking, the milk pails shake, the godfather can't help himself, he steps towards the godmother, lifts her skirt, grabs her milk pails and fucks her from behind, the godmother is uttering high-pitched, slutty sounds

I almost feel pleasant

I almost feel pleasant hearing his breath from up close

so close

I almost feel pleasant feeling his chin against my cheek

I almost ask for more

I don't ask for more

I say no

but it's as if he doesn't hear me

he doesn't hear me

bogomir

there

the sluts are here

my lord and my ruler

he doesn't look at them

vladimir

he's still breathing right next to my breath

I am breathing right next to his

I breathe next to his breath, while hope, faith and love come in

hope, faith and love come in

red is the color of love

vladimir

greetings, young girls

red is the color of courage and passion

vladimir

I hear you did well

red is the color of wrath, anger and hatred

love
we have, thank you, milord
unfortunately we had no pleasure of your company

vladimir
you didn't ask

love
oh, our lord and master
you didn't say
next time...

vladimir
respected young girls
one has to earn my company
but you have not tried hard enough
I'd love to plough your field
oh, how nicely I've put it

bogomir
a picturesque metaphor, truly
but now it's too late
their field has been ploughed over and over

*and he is laughing
laughing at his wittiness
minister bogomir feels a sense of humour to be essential
minister bogomir is proud when he has a sense of humour
therefore he is laughing*

hope
what are you going to do with us now?

*faith stands there in the corner, as if unable to speak
faith cannot speak any more
I gave birth to faith in wintertime
she was such a tender
tender and chattering
blossom*

bogomir
again, it depends on you
if you are willing to cooperate...

hope
with the state?

bogomir
right, with the state

hope
first explain state

*and then it flies towards her
once
and again
a drop of blood from the nose
and already it dries*

hope
you will have to explain state
is it the thing that was screwing me all night long?

and then another one hits her

love
that thing was a pretty poor part of the state

*hits her
and love laughs
laughs in tears and cries in laughter
and then*

love
if that was the state, we are severely fucked

*hits her
hope looks at me
I look at her
I shout: no!
hope smiles at me*

love
if that was the state...

*hits her again
faith trembles*

*faith cannot speak
vladimir nods at bogomir
bogomir nods at the catchpoles
the catchpoles grab hold of hope
strip her
bare
so I can see the blood has coagulated
my name is
and I am an aristocrat
the catchpoles beat hope up
striking her bare body with whips
her young body
the flesh is ripping while blood squirts
hope screams in crying
hope cries in screaming
and they keep beating her
one, two, three, four, five of them with whips
the body twists
the flesh rips, the blood squirts
and then the five get tired
the body is lying there completely still
I gave birth to her amidst the smell of acacias*

bogomir
fucked, fucked
pardon me, milord
for the vulgarity

*minister bogomir laughs
minister bogomir has rediscovered his sense of humour*

bogomir
miss, what shall it be
how will you vote

*if this were a partisan movie, hope would have spat at him now
but this is not a partisan movie
it's a fairytale
taking place many many years ago
and far far away
hope doesn't spit at him
hope has no more strength to spit
hope doesn't say anything, doesn't do anything*

bogomir
are you going to say something?
have you changed your mind about cooperating?

*bogomir laughs, because he has a sense of humour
and then
then he takes hold of the whip himself
holds the whip and explains to hope what the state is
then he stops
three drops of sweat slip across his left cheek*

vladimir
so, girls
have you decided?

*no
I say
please don't
I say
he looks at me
as if he heard
maybe this time he did hear
then he repeats*

vladimir
my ladies
are you going to say something?

he didn't hear me

love
I don't think you want to hear

he didn't hear me

love
you don't want to hear
go on, hit us, there is nothing more you can do

*hope doesn't say anything, she cannot speak anymore
faith doesn't say anything, she has been unable to speak for a while now
I am trying, believe me, I am really trying
I shout at the top of my voice: no!
no!*

but he doesn't hear me

bogomir
your wish is my command

*and laughs when he hits her
I gave birth to love when it was hot
so hot you could not breathe
as hot as today
the linden tree smelled nice
the linden tree smelled as aromatic as today
I barely squeezed her out, she was huge
and ravenous
bogomir is hitting her
then the catchpoles
and more
and more
and more
and then a red orgy unravels before my eyes
red is the color
bogomir and the catchpoles are sweating in jets, the sweat from their bodies is mixing with blood,
which coagulates immediately
the blood coagulates immediately and there is new blood and it also coagulates
then they take knives
then they cut off faith's breasts
then love's
and last, hope's, hope, who doesn't feel anything anyway
they cut off their breasts, they laugh
because they have a sense of humour
and then
then they rub salt into their wounds
slowly
thoroughly
and then
I hear
I hear love mumble
salt is life
and then I don't follow anymore
cries mingle with laughing and crying
and I don't know anymore who laughs and who cries
and I don't know anymore
and I don't want to know anymore
this world is not my world
my name is*

*I am of blue blood
I am an aristocrat
vladimir looks at me
doesn't look at the bloody orgy, as if he weren't really interested
as if his mighty self is far above
he is looking at me
and you know, his look doesn't say anything
I would like to say the look is full of wisdom
understanding
I would like to say the look is full of love
but his look doesn't say anything to me
he's merely looking at me
and as if
as if he's waiting
as if he's waiting for me to say something
and I am speaking
I am speaking, but he doesn't hear me
can't you hear me, why can't you hear me
merely looking at me
and then again
sir, I am begging you
he looks into my eyes
smiles at me
softly
as the devil
presses his lips on my cheek
presses his lips on my cheek
and whispers
you are beautiful*

vladimir
that will do

you are beautiful

bogomir
that will do

vladimir
cut off their heads

bogomir
cut off their heads

*a girl is unwrapping a present
expectation in her eyes, her fingers tremble
one fold of paper
another fold
and then
a mirror
how nice, my picture
she exclaims
and attaches the mirror to the wall*

vladimir
into the river with them
and be careful that no one sees you

bogomir
consider it done

*and then the water takes them away
I am still here
my name is
I am an aristocrat
this world is not my world
my world is different
my name is
I am an aristocrat
I am of blue blood
we are all of blue blood
blue is the color of
blue is the color of wisdom
while the sun is rising
while the cock is crowing
while the dog is barking
while the baby is crying
while the husband's stick is up her ass in half-sleep
while the child eats bread and butter and honey
while she's still reading, even though her eyes are closing
while somebody laughs out loud
the boy of 23 is fixing a rope around his throat
and
whoosh
the sun has risen*

bogomir
there, it's all settled

blue is the color of wisdom

vladimir
have they found them?

bogomir
they have
right before the dawn, a farmer pulled them out of the water
I sent the messengers immediately
to every house, milord
everybody knows the barbarians have murdered three young girls in cruel fashion
the people named them at once
the river martyrs, they call them

vladimir
river martyrs
picturesque, isn't it?

bogomir
you think so, milord?

vladimir
good idea you had there

bogomir
thank you, milord

vladimir
now shoo
you have a lot of work to do

bogomir
I bow to you, your highness

*the city is awakening
a cock jumps a hen
a dog jumps a bitch
a baby grabs a tit
a wife jumps a husband
a child jumps on the wooden horse
the city awakens to another hot sunny day*

branimir

it's all settled

vladimir
excellent, truly

branimir
there will be a ceremony, as there should be

vladimir
war?

branimir
it's coming along as it should
a few casualties on our side, more casualties on their side
since we found the bodies of the martyrs in the river, the nation has stepped together
the barbarians have obviously accomplished what we with our diplomacy were unable to
they tortured them so cruelly that the people are mad with unity

*the people are mad
with unity*

branimir
those who can, take up weapons, while the others are donating all of their possessions to the
army
the tax policy is no longer problematic
if you allow me to make a joke in spite of the difficult situation

vladimir
excellent, truly

branimir
it will be over quickly

vladimir
the sooner it's done, the sooner you can serve as governor in the east

explain state

branimir
I realise that all too well, sir

vladimir
the mob?

branimir
the mob is satisfied
it's fighting for freedom, for the future, and that is important
minister bogomir has fixed things as he should
news of the river martyrs has travelled like lightning, as one might say

we are discussing the same freedom, aren't we?

vladimir
good, really good

branimir
I have another suggestion, if you will allow me

vladimir
of course

branimir
based on my analysis...

vladimir
minister, is this necessary?

branimir
well, sir, you are right
as always
I suggest we prepare an additional ceremony

vladimir
what now?

branimir
I think the people would be very satisfied if the river martyrs would be proclaimed war heroes
in this war

*vladimir laughs
laughs because he thinks it's funny
the fornicator maximus laughs
minister branimir, almost a governor, laughs with him
minister branimir laughs because vladimir is laughing*

vladimir
why are you laughing?

branimir
I am laughing because
because you are laughing, sir

vladimir
well, get lost now
write a notice, write and send it
and make all the necessary arrangements

branimir
consider it done

*branimir bows and retreats, with his head held high
the ruler looks at him, not laughing anymore
doesn't look at me again
I am standing here, right next to him
the mighty ruler
I am standing here and must confess
in spite of everything
in spite of everything
I would like him to look at me*

bogomir
milord, everything is going smoothly

vladimir
so I hear

bogomir
will you really crown them as our war heroes?

vladimir
contemporary practices, you know

*pretty girls
with pretty heads
hold hands
there are nine
nine pretty heads
holding hands
under a big linden tree
under a big spreading linden tree
under a big spreading 20-year-old linden tree
and dancing*

*dancing faster and faster
and louder and louder
and dancing until they fall to the ground, rolling with laughter
pretty girls with pretty heads
under a 20-year-old linden tree*

bogomir
I have to confess I am rather jealous of that
how to put it
indeed, ingenious
yes, right, ingenious idea
if I may advise you...

vladimir
spit it out

bogomir
since we seem to be on this path of
one might say
on this path of contemporary practices, right
I should say
I mean
you know, since we seem to be on this path
then, I think, it would make sense to go all the way
if you know what I mean here

vladimir
no, actually I don't

bogomir
I mean, like this
you know
their mother, the mother of the river martyrs

vladimir
the widow?

bogomir
there
their mother, the respected widow
a highly esteemed person in our country
esteemed among the people as well as the noblemen
a wise aristocrat

vladimir
come on, skip this
what about her?

bogomir
milord, the mother is in mourning
her daughters have given their lives for their fatherland
and her husband before them, although it doesn't matter now
so
her daughters have given their lives for their fatherland
the barbarians tortured them in the most cruel fashion
girls in the prime of their youth
the mother is in mourning
I feel the state must make it up to her

vladimir
make it up to her?
you mean financially?

bogomir
oh, no, no
the widow doesn't need that
no
I mean with honor

vladimir
honor?
how?

bogomir
well, milord
what can be the greatest honor for a woman in this state?

*vladimir laughs
laughs like thunder
throws his head up
and laughs like thunder
bogomir laughs as well
now
I have to admit
now I am laughing, too
like thunder
I am laughing like thunder because I have a sense of humour*

vladimir
even though she's not a virgin?
minister sir, isn't it the will of the gods that the king can only lie with a virgin?

bogomir
milord
you know
contemporary practices

I am laughing because I am to become a queen

vladimir
I am beginning to like these contemporary practices more and more
what if she refuses?

explain state

bogomir
if she refuses?
what do you mean, milord?

*and now he looks at me
looks at me again
looks at me again, soft as the devil*

vladimir
you know I never force women
I am a king
a mighty ruler

*hot sunny day
and then
then
then this
this and nothing more
boy and girl
could be me and you
could be, but maybe not
boy and girl play in a sand-box
build a palace
a mighty sand palace
and then they tear it down
and then they rebuild it
the mighty sand palace
and then*

then
then they tear it down
but they rebuild it again
and again
and again
because the girl and the boy
who could be me and you
the girl and the boy only want to build a palace
a mighty sand palace

bogomir
this is precisely why, milord
you are the mighty ruler, while she has nothing left
except her blue blood
if you know what I mean here

vladimir
no
I don't get it any more
but you are entertaining
and if I take her
and thus show the people I favour contemporary practices

bogomir laughs

vladimir
and show how I treasure our heroes who died as martyrs
then

bogomir
right, milord
then our problems will be solved
if you catch...

vladimir
I understand

and then
then he approaches me
I say to him I will not
I say to him I will not become his wife

he doesn't hear me
he steps right next to me

*I can feel his breath on my cheek
stands right next to me
I will not become your wife
you cannot make me
he doesn't hear me
he rubs his cheek against mine
rubs it again
no
I say
and again
and then
runs his hand through my hair
strokes me
I close my eyes
no
with eyes closed
no
he kisses me
kisses my mouth
gently kisses my mouth
tenderly
softly
as the devil
no
he doesn't hear me
then he's kissing me
more and more
kissing my cheeks and forehead and hair
and kissing my neck
and stroking me
and I tell him no
although
more and more quietly
and less and less
madly
I breathe
with him*

bogomir
milord, everything is set
we are only waiting for you now

branimir
hurry, please

*a warm summer day
the sun is burning
a smell of cut grass
the air trembles
everything is as it should be
the linden tree smells nice
the people have gathered
to greet two new queens
one from the north
and the other one domestic
me
they will greet their king
escort their war heroes on their final journey
the river martyrs
love
hope
faith
they will escort them on their final journey
as they should*

bogomir
dearly beloved
mighty ruler
ministers
we are gathered here to honor the final journey of three young women
the river martyrs
who have
selflessly
given their lives for their fatherland
the enemy has murdered them in the prime of their youth
our gods in heaven
from whom every good gift originates
we are thanking you for our heroes
love, faith and hope
we are thanking you for the selfless souls
who have given their lives for greater causes
and have faithfully followed the call of freedom and justice
even in the midst of pain and suffering
our gods in heaven
we are humbly asking you to give them honor among you
so that we can accept our duties in line with their example
so that we can, in line with their example, fight for our place under the sun

*the nation kneels
the nation moves its lips in prayer
the nation believes
love, hope and faith have united the nation on their last journey
and then
then another ceremony starts
I am standing beside the ruler
I am standing beside the ruler before minister bogomir
bogomir puts on a solemn face
a solemn saintly face
he talks about
he talks about love
he talks about hope
he talks about faith
and we both say: I do
many many years ago
far far away
I say: I do
to vladimir
the mighty ruler
many many years ago
I am an aristocrat
far far away
I am of blue blood
my name is
sophia.*