

THE MADNESS OF THE GAME

by

Nebojša Pop-Tasić

Wakefulness

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm standing before you, and there is no other way I can stand ...

And before I come to stand before you

I fall asleep.

And when I fall asleep –

I start dreaming.

And while I'm dreaming I wake up.

And when I wake up I start to play.

No more can I tell

dreams from wakefulness.

I can no longer tell

playing

from reality.

I'm standing here before you.

I am sleeping.

I am dreaming.

I am playing.

Playing on.

Ladies and gentlemen!

I'm standing on this stage

without of a homeland,

religion, God,

churches and mosques,

though myself a hypocrite.

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I sleep, I dream and I go on playing.

I saw Jesus

walk on water with ease, saying:

Brother, water is made for walking.

It is hard to walk on land.

I saw Jesus

use a single loaf of bread

to feed thousands of hungry men, saying:

Brother, I know how to feed the hungry.

I do not know how to feed those who are already fed.

I saw Jesus

heal the sick with one touch of his hand, saying:

Brother, curing a person is a child's play.

To heal a healthy person – that I cannot do.

I saw Jesus

resurrect the dead with ease, saying:

How can I revive the living?

So henceforth ...

I sleep, I dream and I go on playing.

I've seen a lot of shit,

a great deal of vileness, greed, stupidity,

blood, misfortune and other trivialities,

and if I were to turn all that into a portrait of happiness

I would be a great magician, just as everybody else.

I sleep, I dream and I go on playing.

I've seen a lot of exaltation and zeal,
of bulging pathos
followed by downfalls, brutal crashes,
patricides, infanticides, suicides,
of unclasped faces in sad ecstasy...
I saw a lot of good people
yet it does not mean they were not wicked.
The good are also the most humanitarian,
laughing, generous, charitable
and usually the most wicked.
That is why wickedness means a lot to me.
I've seen many clever people
but it doesn't necessarily mean they were not stupid.
Being stupid means being brave.
That is why fear means a lot to me.
I have seen cowards
who were brave killers.
I listened to liars preaching the truth.
I put my trust in men of honour
who kept stealing and cheating with an easy conscience.
It is so boring to list more ...
And who am I,
and who am I,
and who am I
to discharge the first shot?
Therefore
I sleep, I dream and I go on playing.

I used to believe in the metaphor,
in the parable, in theatre,
art and freedom,
and I believed that real life is trying to find
its meaning and value in all of that.

Now I only believe in plain words.

In a future with no future.

In a father without a father.

In a son without a son.

In a mother without a mother.

In a daughter without a daughter.

In a day with no day.

In a night with no night.

In land without land.

In the sky without the sky.

In life with no life.

In death with no death.

Yet still, just like before,

yet still, just like before,

yet still, just like before,

yet still, just like before,

I sleep, I dream, I play,

I play, I play, I play and I go on playing.

Playing on.

I stand here, and there is no other way I can stand ...

I insist.

I remain.

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I do not cease.

I exist.

I stand.

I sleep.

I persist.

I dream.

I remain.

I play.

I exist.

Playing on.

Thank you.

Dreams

The first dream

In my dreams I have never killed a man.

No, I was always the victim.

The victim of war, of raving soldiers,

of street gangs,

of deranged women,

of bullets gone astray,

of scissors,

knives,

gunshots

and spears.

Had I been running so much wide awake

as I was running away in my dreams,

today I'd be the winner of the Ljubljana Marathon Race.

In my dreams I did many great deeds:

I saved my friends' lives,

I jumped in front of bullets

meant for somebody else,

with my body I covered bombs

a moment before they blew up,

in the name of love I was flying and falling,

drowning and suffering;

the Turks, the Germans, the Americans

tortured me to make me confess

and betray, but I bravely held my tongue,
suffered electroshocks and poisoned needles;
women ugly as sin violated me;
I had to fight against giant rats
living in my mattress ...
In the morning it took me a long time to recover
and patch my wounds after the massacre in my dreams.

However, while wide awake
I found little cause
for such heroic deeds.
Not enough friends.
Not enough enemies.
While wide awake
I am usually annoyed
by price increases on cigarettes
and gas,
by stupidity,
by ads on TV,
by slow waiters,
slow drivers
and traffic lights,
by bureaucrats,
politicians,
football and basketball players,
by directors,
movies
and theatre performances,

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by swindlers,
liars,
intellectuals,
professors
and students,
by authors,
poets,
greedy managers
and poor workers ...
Now and again the least banality
drives me to despair.
I sit, gazing at everything, seeing nothing,
asking myself: Why does it have to be like that?
And I almost burst out crying.

And then, when I go out into the street,
I watch every passer-by,
searching in his face
to find the least reason
to become a mass murderer.

And
just like before
I sleep, I dream and I go on playing.

The Second Dream

Tonight I dreamed about my dead girl-friend.
She was delightful.
Plainly dressed, quiet, serious.
We held hands,
we hugged, but we did it all in secret
when people weren't looking at us,
or when we were alone for a moment.
But then we said what the heck
and kissed without paying heed.
She being dead and I alive.
The plain was somewhat torn,
rivers and ships appeared unexpectedly,
roads led in a wrong, undesired direction
and I kept pressing the kisses into my memory
in order to remember them as long and as clearly as possible.
At the same time
I experienced them as something past,
and it made me sad.
Each kiss echoed like some future memory.
She was kissing me, hugging me and loving me
devotedly and listlessly, like – a ghost.
Tonight I dreamed about my dead girl-friend.
I woke up in a terrible rage.
I was overwhelmed by memories,
like mutinous seamen on the lower deck ...
First she cheated on me and then she killed herself.

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I woke up in a rage.

Mad, mad because I didn't kill her myself.

And then...

I go on sleeping, dreaming and playing.

The Third Dream

I dreamt
that I was ashamed
of my own mind
so much
that I voluntarily lost my mind.
And that the woman of my life
descended from this height of reason
in my company.
It was thus,
hand in hand,
step by step,
all dressed up
that we walked together
towards a park
where lunatics find their paradise.
Once there, we saw crazy people
as well as psychotic ducks,
frantic cows,
ecstatic cats,
Napoleon mice,
schizophrenic elephants,
penitent lions,
panic-stricken snakes,
boars botanists,
donkeys philosophers,
singing fish,

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raging sheep,
catatonic birds,
blabbering flowers
and neurotic trees.
And the two of us.
Both happy.
Like never before.

I sleep, I dream and I play on.

The Fourth Dream

Tonight we were on a plane.

The plane crashed

but we survived.

Just us two.

Me and ...

me.

Light as feathers,

during our flight we reflected on the fact

that the fall at that moment was our right

but also our duty.

We landed in the middle of a beautiful hill country,

in the vicinity of an old hotel.

While walking towards the hotel we heard that

many tourists were sorry about the plane,

but being the only survivors

it made us feel ashamed. Why nobody but us two?

Why didn't we die in the plane

just like the rest of the passengers?

We were also glad

that so many people should love nature

and went for walks outdoors.

In the meantime we reached the hotel.

The hotel had a long history.

It used to belong to a countess

who for a time was Salvador Dali's mistress.

In the reception hall there was her portrait

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painted by a great master.

Her face was covered by green film

and there were traces of yellow mould on her hands.

It was the portrait of a woman

who had been alive in her death for a long time.

“One never knows who one is

until one survives the crash of an airplane,”

I said.

“Or until Salvador Dali paints your portrait”, I answered.

The Fifth Dream

In my dreams I never
understood the meaning of the word love.

I was loved by one and by all,
by the living and the dead,

by men,

women,

children,

relations,

friends,

school-mates,

co-workers,

fellow townsmen,

fellow citizens,

insurance agents,

tradespeople,

corporations,

humanitarian organizations,

high officials,

by allies and enemies,

by those whom I loved

and those that I hated.

And everybody who used

this word in my dreams

wanted me to do

what I didn't want to do.

They loved me and wanted

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to break me in as if I was
a wild beast.

They loved me and wanted me
to keep quiet as if I was mute.

They loved me and told me
what they wanted to hear
from my mouth.

They loved me and wanted
to make me obey as if I were
a rebellious slave.

They loved me and wanted me
to love what they loved themselves.

They loved and despised me
as if I was worthless.

They loved me, rending my heart
as if I had none.

They loved me and hated me
as if they didn't love me at all.

In my dream this word was the reason why

I finally did the things I didn't want to do.

I cried when I wished to laugh.

I screamed when I wished to whisper tenderly.

I thrashed when I wished to caress.

I cut with a knife when I wished to touch.

I ran when I wished to go for a stroll.

I fell down when I wished to stand upright.

I moaned when I wished to sing.

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I strangled when I wished to hug.
And I hugged after I'd already strangled.

And just as I have already said:
I sleep, I dream and I go on playing.
Playing on.

The Sixth Dream

In my dreams I never understood
history and all those stories
about great wars
and great victories
and big defeats
and vast massacres,
about rapes,
and marching
and charging
and riding horses
and flying
and banners
and running away
and lying dead ...

As a man once
cleverly said:

It is a shame to be defeated
and an even greater shame
to be a winner.

History should
take note of the events
that never happened,
like great wars,
victories, defeats,
the massacres and rapes
that never were;

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of the people who
marched,
charged,
rode horses,
flew,
brandished their banners,
who flew away
and lay dead,
therefore of the people
who have never ever
lived among us and who
never
even
existed.

It would be the story about the fools
who are not us.

We could learn
from their foolishness.

Yet unfortunately
the historical fools are we,
and it is hard to explain to a fool
that he is stupid
if stupidity is his
only reason.

That is why we keep asking:

What time is it?

Fearing that we would miss
the train of history.

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I sleep, I dream and I play on.

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The Seventh Dream

It was the night when children were to be hurled into the elevator shaft.

In the morning all the residents gathered for the tenants' council in order to draw straws. There was a grey light and it emanated from people. Dust, turned into a stone-like coating.

Everybody was solemn and grave. We were sitting at desks like school children, throwing violet shadows across one another.

Mr Z, president of the tenants' council, greeted those entering and indicated by slight movements of the head on his stiff neck where they were to sit.

Mr K, who had lost both arms during the war, smiled and sat across from me. Two stumps protruded from his short-sleeved pale red T-shirt, and every time his body moved the stumps gave a slight jerk. They were the end points of his smile.

The parents whose children were represented by the straws held by Mr Z quietly conversed and nervously looked about. As it usually happens, the women were more nervous than the men. Like domestic animals smelling death. The men tried to level the expression on their faces with the possible fate: a slightly lifted chin, lips set rigorously, an officer's look, blunt and blank. And every time this ritual was covered by silence, or better deafness. It's what happens when air pressure suddenly increases and you can't hear anything really well except for your own breathing and thinking. The deaf silence continued even after the shortest straw had been drawn. At that moment the women's faces acquired the same expression as the men's – except for the face of the woman whose child had drawn the shortest straw. Her face quietly

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brimmed over as if all the muscles had slackened and the flesh was left hanging like some forgotten carnival mask.

After that it was necessary to wait until the child was put to sleep. The parents took their child to the top floor of the building where the others were already waiting by the elevator shaft. They handed the child over to Mr. Z who was holding it above the abyss as if he was a medicine man. In the atmosphere of general deafness the thoughts of the tenants gathered there seemed to condense and turn into some sort of singsong murmuring. Mr K's smiling stubs kept emitting some kind of music, an e-sound on a high note.

I felt the whole area quiver and noticed that in Mr Z's eyes a faint line began to glow, ending deep down at the bottom of the elevator shaft. It was not his fate, of course, and that is why the glow was vivid and peaceful.

Then all of a sudden – whoosh and the child began to fall. It happened hardly ever, or never, that the child woke up during the fall, made some sort of a noise or called for its mother. If it ever came to pass, the tenants' faces would be covered by some special film, they would acquire a shine and a reflection so that they would look very well in a photograph.

In the end the child's skull shattered at the bottom of the shaft, making a sound reminiscent of a pumpkin splitting in our mutual depth. In order to make the moment less dramatic than necessary, Mr Z immediately closed the trap of the shaft and pressed the button to make the elevator come. The awakened beast jingled, murmured and sighed as if it was stretching its limbs after a nice sleep or a good meal. The tenants, too, began to jingle the keys to their apartments and mumbled short sentences:

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- Let's go.

Or: It's over.

And they dispersed.

Everybody knew it had to be done or the elevator wouldn't work.

- We need to go to America, said Mr Z.

- To America? Why America of all places? I asked him, already seeing him in America, still looking the same, in dirty worker's overalls, during the meeting of an American tenants' council.

- Because, replied Mr Z, people over there are willing to pay for a ride in an elevator not only by somebody else's life but by their own as well. Over there, elevators hardly ever break down, and even when they do there is a life being offered voluntarily.

So I sleep, I dream and I play on.

I play on.

I stand here before you

because I'm sleeping and dreaming and fearing my dreams.

Fear makes me speak foreign languages.

I used to dream about wars I never participated in.

All my birthplaces had been demolished.

I dreamed about dangerous viruses and grave illnesses

named after generals,

politicians, bankers,

ordinary people and soldiers

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causing them.

I dreamed about dead relatives

who kept a terrible silence in my dreams.

Their silence made me wake up screaming.

I dreamed I could exist no longer.

I dreamed that God never noticed I was not there.

I dreamed that the human mind came from unknown heights.

I dreamed that man's stupidity came from unknown depths.

I dreamed that I wasn't dreaming and that my nightmares were my daylight.

I dreamed that my dreams didn't belong to me.

So what?

Then I dreamed that I could dream no longer.

So I play on.

I play on.

I dream no longer.

In daily papers can I find
everything I may dream about.

On TV.

On my PC.

In the WC.

From a DJ.

And I play on.