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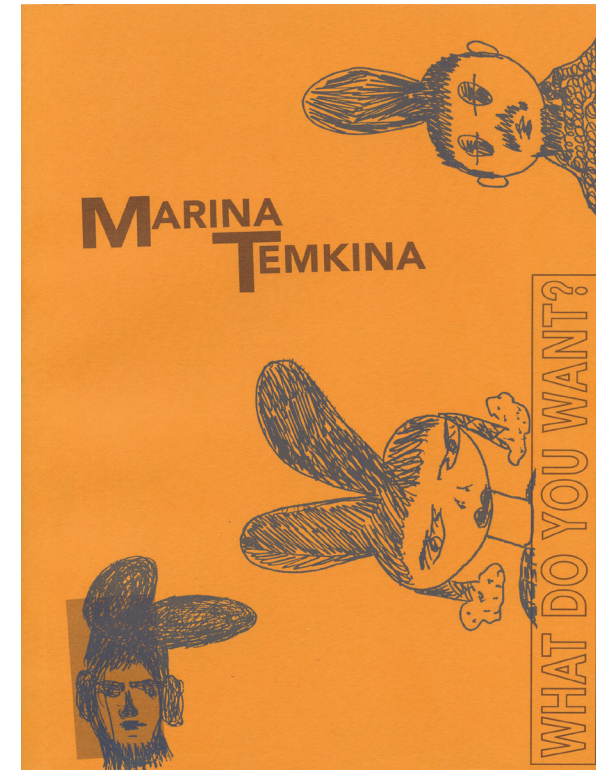
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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

© Marina Temkina 2009

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Translation of "Two Installations" © Alexander Stessin

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For Michel Gerard

I do not know how to be a
great artist. I know how
to be a normal-size artist,
just an artist, known-to-
some unknown artist, recog-
nized-by-some underrecognized
artist, famous-among-few
unfamous artist. I can live
with it, I mean, without it.

MT. Nov. 24, 00

Вместо предисловия

Я представляю себя танцующей на балу в вечернем платье из шифона с Куртом Вальдхаймом в элегантной нацистской форме, мы вальсируем на фоне фотографий увеличенных в полный рост котлованов открытых дистрофиков Дахау, груды трупов на улицах Варшавского гетто, полуживых мертвецов на этапах между лагерями.

Я представляю себя танцующей на балу в белом фраке с Лени Рифеншталь, она в платье в талию с плечами, укладка валиком, все нами любят, мы исполняем танго, прижавшись друг к другу, на фоне её *гениальных* документальных фильмов о фашистских съездах свежесбранных молодых мужчин с нежными шеями, тонкими запястьями тянущихся приветствовать вождя.

Я представляю себя танцующей на балу в лакированных лодочках с Эдиком Лимоновым, он как всегда загорелый, тонкий, очаровательно-провинциальный, со свастикой, с «калашниковым» за плечом, в кожаной поперек груди портупее, мы движемся слаженно под звуки счастливых оркестров 50-х на фоне фотографий обрубков тел убитых в Боснии, женских толп изнасилованных, беременных, простирающихся до горизонта.

In Place of an Introduction

I imagine myself dancing at a ball in a chiffon evening gown with Kurt Waldheim he is in an elegant Nazi uniform, and we waltz to a background of blown-up, life-sized photographs of pits full of dystrophics dug up at Dachau, bodies piled in the streets of the Warsaw ghetto, emaciated prisoners on the march from one camp to the next.

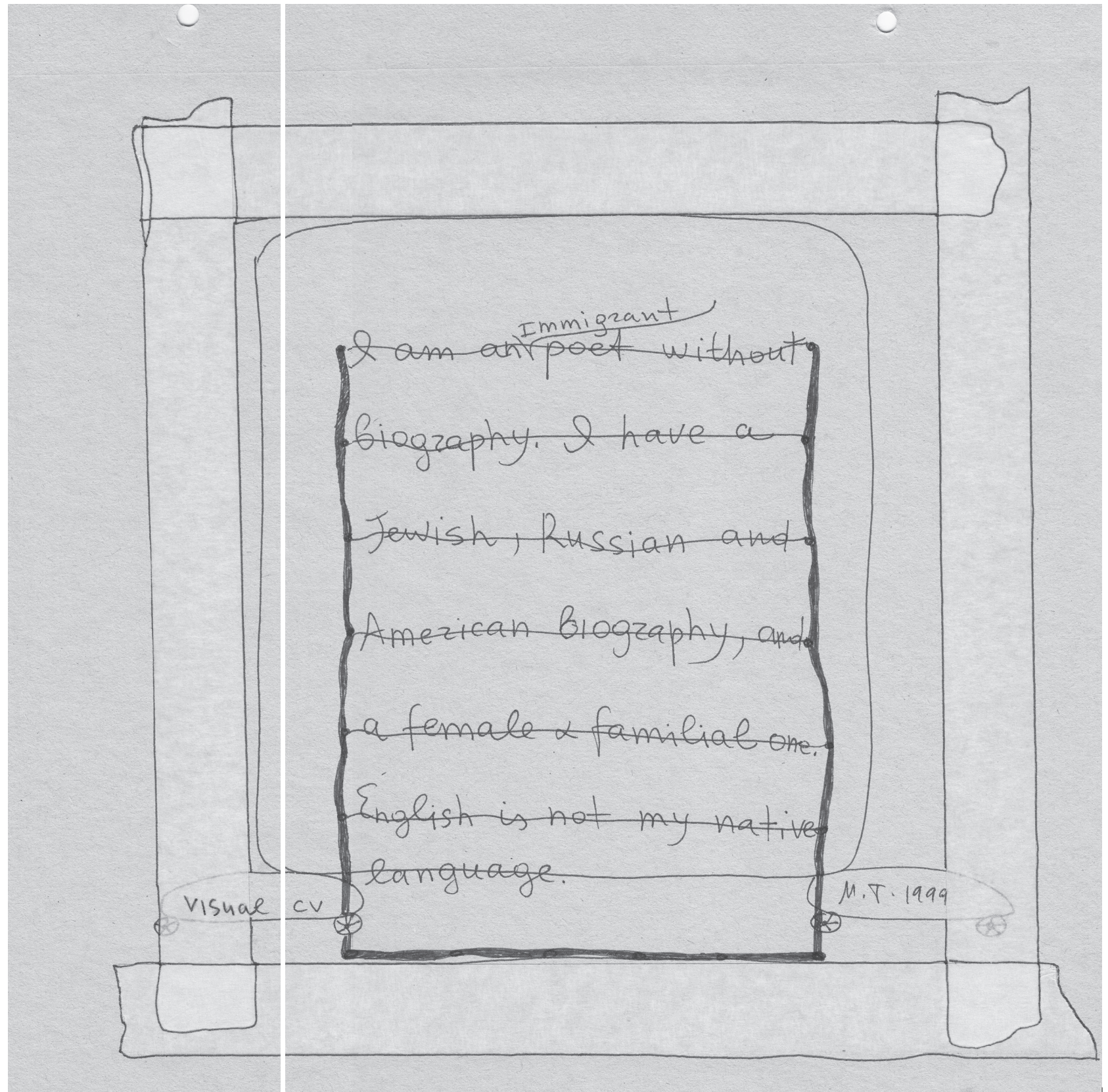
I imagine myself dancing at a ball in a white frock with Leni Riefenstahl, she in a dress with a pinched waist and squared shoulders, her hair styled in a wave, everyone admires us, and we tango, pressed against one another, in front of a screen showing her *ingenious* documentaries about fascist conventions with clean-shaven young men, their soft necks and gentle wrists stretching out to greet the great leader.

I imagine myself dancing at a ball in patent leather pumps with Eddie Limonov, he is tanned as always, thin, charmingly provincial, with a swastika and a Kalashnikov over his shoulder, a leather band strapped across his chest, we are swinging to the happy sounds of '50s orchestras, and in the background are photographs of the cut-up corpses of those killed in Bosnia, the bodies of raped women, pregnant, extending to the horizon.

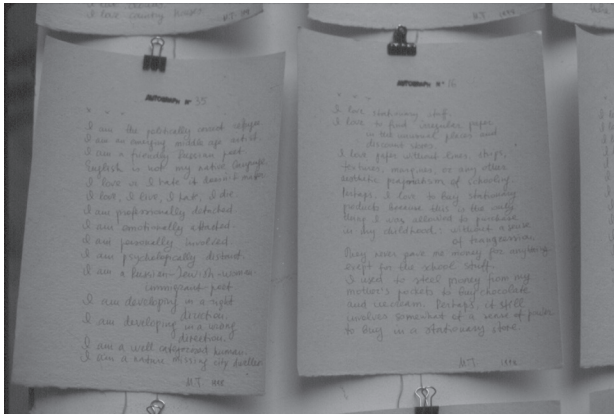
Я представляю себя танцующей на балу
16-летней, юной, в мини-юбке с блёстками и
полупрозрачной майке с Жириновским Владимиром
Вольфовичем после его избрания президентом, он,
похудевший от пережитых волнений, в костюме от Диора,
при свете прожекторов под открытым небом под радостное
«Во-ля-ре! о, о!» на глобусе, уставленном гигантскими
киноэкранами, где продолжается выгрузка тел
умерщвлённых в газовых камерах, закопанных живыми,
инвалидов, а в новостях бомбят в Чечне и погибают
по обе стороны военных действий, и зачитывают
приветственные телеграммы от глав правительств
европейских, и мы поздравляем друг друга с наступающим...

I imagine myself dancing at a ball
as a young sixteen year-old, in a sequin miniskirt
and a semi-transparent tank top, with Vladimir Wolfovich
Zhirinovsky, after his election to the presidency, in his Dior suit
he is slimmer after the stress of the campaign, illuminated
by the light of projectors under open skies and we dance
to the joyous "Vo-la-re, o, o!" on a globe festooned with gigantic
movie screens on which the unloading of bodies continues:
those killed in the gas chambers, those buried alive,
and the invalids, while in the news they're bombing again
in Chechnya, casualties are rising on both sides, congratulatory
telegrams from the heads of European States are read out loud,
and we wish each other a Happy New Year...

TRANSLATED BY VLADISLAV DAVIDZON



AUTOGRAPHS (English Writing Samples)



This series of poems was exhibited as a poetry installation at Florence Lynch Gallery, NYC, and Galerie Francois Barnoud, Dijon, France.

-
- I love funds.
- I love banks.
- I love production companies.
- I love Holocaust survivors.
- I love public lectures.
- I love movies.
- I love performances.
- I love slide shows.
- I love dresses and shoes.
- I love art shows.
- I love gallery owners.
- I love references.
- I love quotations.
- English is not my native language.
- I love to be positive.

•

I love bus stops.
I love train stops.
I love stop signs.
I love to stop.
I love to do nothing.
I love to stop and do nothing.
I love advice and advisers.
I love hints and guesses.
I love hypotheses and paradoxes.
I love descriptions.
I love distances.
I love focuses and blurred pictures.
I love good surprises.
I love concentration and carelessness.
I love purposes and fantasies.
I love projects and their absence.
I love critics, professional and profane.
I love summers.
I love summer vacations.

•

I love steps.
I love libraries.
I love pools.
I love statisticians.
I love extras.
I love bibliographies.
I love words.
I love constitutions.
I love words, words, words.
I love lines.
I love lanes.
I love cars & buses.
I love subway lines.
I love trains.
I love planes.
I love clouds.
I love country houses.

•

I love country houses.
I love trips.
I love tips.
I love songs.
I love musicians.
I love pianists.
I love singers.
I love paragraphs.
I love governments.
I love international relations.
I love Sovietology (let it rest in peace).
Sovietology was important
in getting a big piece of the pie.
I love tables.
I love roundtables.
I love conferences.
I love tables near country houses.

•

I love grass.
I love parks.
I love gardens.
I love mountains.
I love the country.
I love countries.
I love photographs.
I love landscapes.
I love TV screens.
I love monitors.
I love DJs.
I love raindrops.
I love snowflakes.
I love trees.
I love misfits.
I love misfits on grass.

•

I love grass.
I love to lie on grass.
To lie on grass is my favorite way
of killing time.
To lie on grass is the best way
of gaining and saving time.
To be situated on grass is the best way
for me to waste my spare time.
I love to be positioned on grass.
I love the flowers of grass,
the grass of grass,
the rub of grass,
the look of grass,
the laws of grass.
I love lawless grass.

•

I love translators.
I love magazines.
I love poetry magazines.
I love masters.
I love mentors.
I love poet-professors.
I love academic poetry.
I love bad poetry.
I love good poetry.
I love bad poetry more.
I love bad museums.
I love museum parking lots nation-wide.
Museum parking lots are bigger
than museums.
I love museum guards.
I love night guards.
I love window guards.
I love windows.

•

I love windows.
I love spaces.
I love basements.
I love buildings.
I love houses.
I love water towers.
I love mills.
I love attics.
I love roofs.
I love a roof over my head.
I love entrances.
I love exits.
I love lobbies.
I love lofts.
I love rooms.
I love my study room.
I want to keep my study room.
I want to be positive.

•

I love days.
I love weekdays.
I love vacations.
I love assurances.
I love life & medical insurance.
I love governments.
I love mornings.
I love evenings.
I love nights.
I love prisons.
I love statues.
I love public art.
I love lunch time.
I love lunches, business and otherwise.
I love dinners.
I love suppers.
I love drinks.
I love to be positive.

•

I love people.
I love men.
I love women.
I love children.
I love home.
I love nature.
I love world.
I love sky.
I love moon.
I love stars.
I love lakes.
I love forests.
I love cities.
I love friends.
I love relatives.
I love parents.
I love colleagues.
I love doctors.

•

I love cousins.
I love nieces.
I love uncles.
I love aunts.
I love cab drivers.
I love songs.
I love commercials.
I love TV sets.
I love CD players.
I love tattoos.
I love clocks.
I love watches.
I love minutes.
I love seconds.
I love years.
I love months.
I love weekends.

•

I love periods.
I love pauses.
I love branches.
I love headquarters.
I love bills.
I love notices.
I love papers.
I love deadlines.
I love to be positive.
I love to channel.
I love channels.
I love proposals.
I love requirements.
I love systems.
I love structures.
I love schools.
I love directors.
I love labels.
I love many things.

•

I love mirrors.
I love old mirrors and new mirrors.
I love dishes.
I love old dishes and new dishes.
I love towels.
I love old towels and new towels.
I love old and new.
I love fountains.
I love fountains, old and new.
I love toilets, old and new.
I love toilets titled "Fountain."
I love readymade, man-made
and organically made.
I love nature.
I love old nature and new nature.
I love culture, naturally.
Old culture and new culture.

•

I love fabrics.
I love textile fabrics.
I love textile designs.
I love many things.
I love to be positive.
I love judges.
I love bridges.
I love policemen.
I love traffic controllers.
I love landlords.
I love politicians.
I love tenants.
I love cats.
I love dogs.
I love birds.
I love melodies.
I love mice and rats.

•

I love projects.
I love different projects.
I love series.
I love unique series.
I love my shrink.
I love shrinks.
I love cells.
I love publishers.
I love editors.
I love musicians.
I love conductors.
I love composers.
I love opera.
I love tea.
I love different teas.
I love cookies.
I love tough cookies.

•

I love visual poetry.
I love English idioms.
I do not learn them, English idioms.
I cannot learn English idioms & use them.

For instance:

to turn out
to turn around
to turn on & off
to turn up & down
to turn left & right
to turn away & back
to turn here & there
to turn to me.

I love turning out, around &
on & off & up & down & left &
right & away & back & here & there.

•

I am a full-time daughter of my
Jewish mother.
I am a full-time mother, or I used to be.
I was a full-time wife.
I was a full-time and a part-time student.
I was a part-time & and a freelance employee.
I was a full-time poet only one year of my life.
I want to have more years
of being a full-time poet & and a full-time artist.
I do not want to have illusions.
I can chat only in Russian, my native language.
I am an example of how English becomes international.
Many people are against this.
English is not my native language.

•

I am a politically correct refugee.
I am an emerging middle-aged artist.
I am a friendly Russian poet.
English is not my native language.
I love or I hate, it doesn't matter.
I love, I live, I hate, I die.
I am professionally detached.
I am emotionally attached.
I am personally involved.
I am psychologically distant.
I am a Russian-Jewish-woman-immigrant-poet.
I am developing in a right direction.
I am developing in a wrong direction.
I am a well-categorized human.
I am a nature-missing city-dweller.

•

I am an evolving mature adult.
I am losing illusions.
I am in a process of losing illusions
and gaining identity.
Life goes fast and fine.
I am trying to feel life.
I am in a process of trying to feel life.
I am in a different process of trying
to feel life.
Life goes too fast, and that is all right.
Everything I am trying to say
sounds like an exercise
in English as a second language.

•

I was a good daughter and a bad
daughter.

I was a good sister and a bad
sister.

I was a good wife and a bad
wife.

I was a good mother and a bad
mother.

I was a good girlfriend and a bad
girlfriend.

I was a good lover and a bad
lover.

I was a good friend and a bad
friend.

I was a good niece and a bad
niece.

I was a good aunt and a bad
aunt.

I was a good relative and a bad
relative.

I was a good distant relation
and a bad distant relation.

•

In my childhood I was not a "drawing child."

In our Soviet Jewish communal room
run by a single mother

to make art was out of the question.

Especially if you wanted to escape
from the usual derision.

In kindergarten, they did not like my
wild lines, doodles, and outrageous colors.

They tried to teach me how to draw cute little houses.

I was a lonely and unhappy child, polite and pleasing.

And I stopped making drawings.

I love drawing. It is a repressed desire.

I love to make drawings. It is my late fulfillment.

I love, I love, I love...

•

I make drawings because
it is much more fun than writing poetry.
I love to make drawings.
I love to make visual poetry opening
inner spaces into the outer.
The separation between visual & verbal
is an artificial division.
I make drawings & poetry
with the same hand, eye & mind.
I have in mind several visual projects
& poetry projects.
I hope to be able to realize them before I die.
I hope to have a happy life.
A very happy life.

•

I love stationary stuff.
I love to find irregular paper
in unusual places
and discount stores.
I love paper without lines, stripes,
textures, margins, and any signs
of schooling and aesthetic pragmatism.
Perhaps I love to buy stationary because
I was allowed to purchase it in my childhood
without a sense of transgression.
They never gave me money for anything
except for school stuff.
I used to steal money from my mother's pockets
to buy chocolate and ice cream.
It still involves a sense of power
to buy something in a stationary store.

•

At the moment, the cost of one of my drawings equals about 100 soups in a small café (next to Hot & Crispy) at Penn Station or at Cupcake Café on 9th Avenue. If one drawing is sold it could buy one soup every three days for the whole year. Half of this soup kitchen goes to Florence who will give half of her half to Carlo. I will give half of my 50 soups to Michel. This is a book-keeping-projection-autograph-project. Thank you for reading.

•

I love to be positive.
I love to be personal.
I love to be serious.
I can chat only in Russian.
I love to be intimate.
I love more things than I can love.
Love is not my problem.
I love to be alive. I love life.
I love to remember.
I do not like to memorize.
I love to commemorate puddles.
(cont.)

•

I love pillows.
They are my native pillows.
I do not sleep on them.
I just love them.
English is not my native language.
When you read me
you do not hear my accent.
I also love pillowcases and buttons.
I love pillows even more.
Otherwise, why as a refugee
would I carry such a big object
in my luggage?

•

I love immigrant interiors.
This is an internal interior.
This is a landscape without furniture.
This is a newcomer's still life.
This is a question: why have I left.
This is a question: where have I come from,
where have I come to.
This is a question of social status,
identity, language, money,
common sense, sanity,
and survival. This is the end.
This is the beginning.

•

I love nuts.
I love real nuts.
I love going nuts.
I love getting nuts.
I love directing nuts.
I love turning nuts.
I love all nuts.
I love almost all nuts.
I love many things.
I love too many things.
I love nuts not too much.
Nuts are not my problem.
I love to be personal.

•

I love umbrellas.
I love waterfalls.
I love wanderers.
I love dreams.
I love good dreams.
I love awards.
I love grants.
I love prizes.
I love questions.
I love good questions.
I love goals.
I love directions.
I love suggestions.
I love narratives.
I love to be pragmatic.
I love to be lighthearted.
I love, I love, I love...



You cannot make yoga in
this costume.

Jan. 10, 02
N.Y.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, M & M?



The exercise "What Do You Really Want" was taken from the book Be Careful What You Ask For, You Might Get It and played by Michel Gerard and Marina Temkina in Villarcoin, France, in August 1999. As an installation it was exhibited in Marina Temkina's show Engagement Time at Florence Lynch Gallery, 2000, and at a collaborative show with Michel Gerard, Rue de Leningrad, at Cimiasse et Portique, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Albi, France, 2003.

1.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– Money.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– A job that pays money.

2.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To succeed in my work.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– I want to be a full-time artist and have medical insurance.

3.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To repair my house in Villarcoin and build a studio there.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– I want to pay high taxes and have a pension plan.

4.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– Good health.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– I want to publish my new book in Russia.

5.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To be with you as much as possible, to have time together.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– A country house in the States.

6.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– I want to marry you.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To publish a limited-edition book of drawings with texts.

7.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To have a large studio in New York and a country house
in the US.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To stay together.

8.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To have a book published on my recent work.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To be your guest at your opening in an American museum.

9.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To see you getting success and my sons to be happy and successful, too.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To lose weight and to be slim again.

10.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To lose weight, too.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To eat properly (non-dairy, no wheat, no sugar, organic, etc.)

11.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To make a lot of new works.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To exercise regularly.

12.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To make love more often with you.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– I want my son to be happier and to have a good relationship with him.

13.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To improve my communicative skills.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To sell my visual show and to have it reviewed.

14.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To appreciate my works more.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To accept and appreciate myself.

15.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To reduce my French accent.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To take half-hour vacations every day for stretching, yoga, and deep breathing.

16.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To ask the right price for my work.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To realize projects for the Archive for Jewish Immigrant Culture.

17.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To realize immediate needs:

- to find a strong gallery in NYC
- to make and show the project *Subsistence*
- to schedule a traveling show called *My American Decade* and to find writers and supporters for it.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To organize a successful conference at NYU in April on the ex-Soviet Russian-speaking community and to get money for it.

18.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To increase my teaching salary in 2000.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– I want to marry you after I realize at least 50% of this list.

19.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To exchange ideas and projects with you in a collaborative way and not to fight.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– I want to publish a poetry book in English.

20.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

- Following the book on my recent work in France (if it comes out), I want to have a monograph published in the States.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

- To begin writing and publishing essays and reviews in English (not sure, though).

21.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

- To have more fans and supporters among museum people in the States.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

- To find (create) collectors for my visual works.

22.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To have more collectors, the important ones.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– My own study/studio for writing, art and exercise.

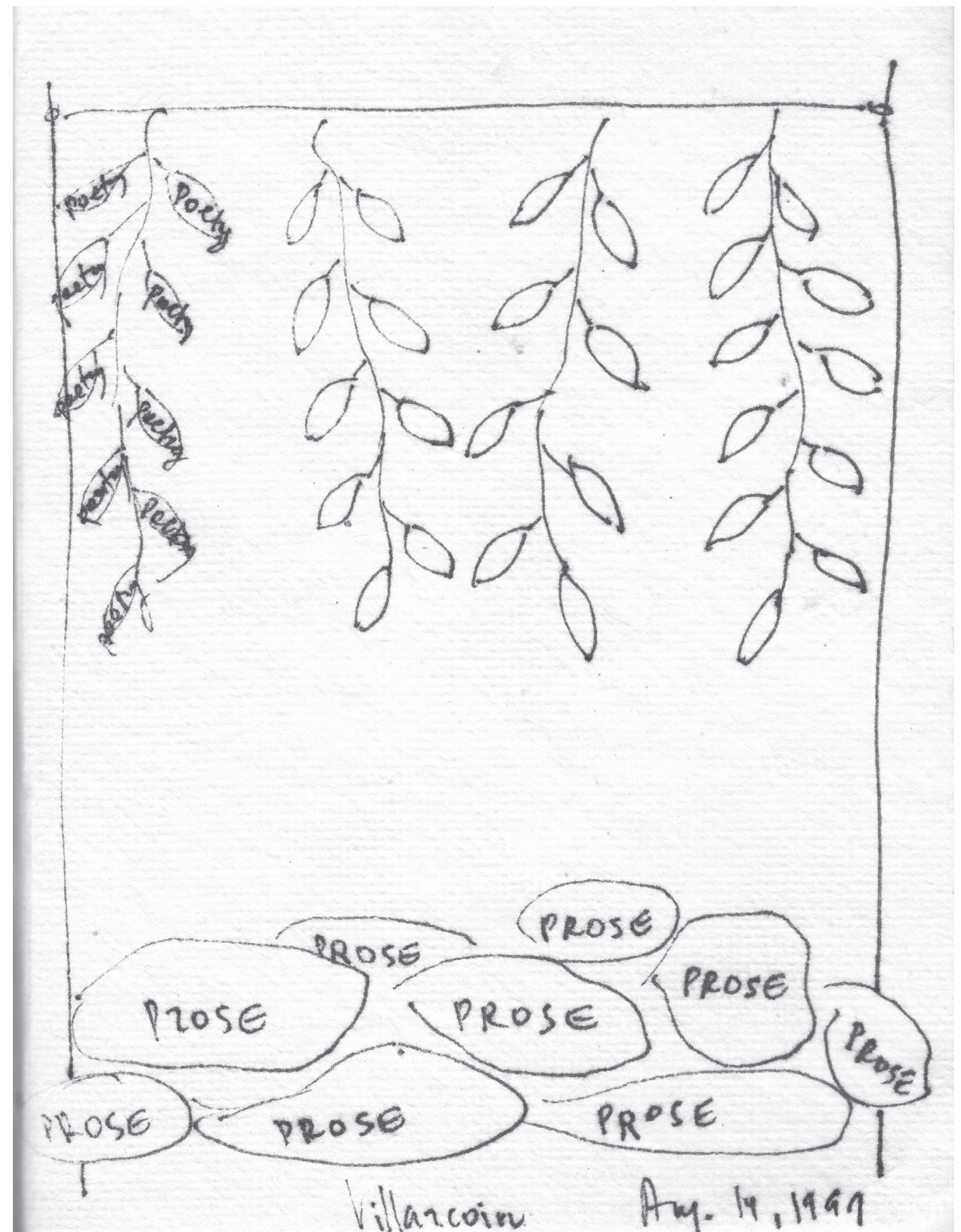
23.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MICHEL?

– To be able to prioritize within this list.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MARINA?

– To get the Guggenheim and the MacArthur Fellowships.



LAPEROUSE DRAWINGS

5 o'clock tea with milk, 9 times, please.

The old Line and Tone art paper is made by
Dennison National Co. in Holyoke, MA 01041.
I used to write to Joseph Brodsky there.

Biographical coincidences are the subject
matter of our show, *Rue de Leningrad*, in Albi,
France. It is the spring of 2003. This is the birth-
place of Jean Francois de Galaup de Laperouse
(1741-1788).

Laperouse traveled to St. Mauritius, a small island near Madagascar, where he met his future wife, whom he married 12 years later.

Laperouse Pass between Sakhalin and Hokkaido was discovered after traveling in the Pacific—Patagonia, Cape Horn, Brazil, Chile, Hawaii, then Monterey, CA, then the Philippines, Korea, Japan, and Siberia. Then Samoa and Australia, Botany Bay near Sydney, from which he planned to return to France but disappeared.

I am trying to find a way to get to the island next to it, La Reunion, where my partner can teach as a visiting artist. It has active and inactive volcanoes and frequent cyclones, sugar cane plantations and a mixed population of Creoles, Tamils, Afrikaners, Chinese, and others. Maybe I am looking for an escape.

La Reunion is a French colony and its population's diversity doesn't help the island in obtaining independence. Now they say that they belong to United Europe. I've heard that the international mafia lives on La Reunion. I wouldn't be able to escape in such a beautiful, confused and manipulated place.

Traveling helps to clear my mind about my own and human experiences, and to come to the expected conclusion that my life is relatively OK, my captain.

The fantasy of a long trip is like any other obsessive megalomaniacal idea of safety. It cures the fear that the land behind the Iron Curtain is a mirage.

ABANDONMENT ISSUES



WOMAN
• RUSSIAN-JEWISH-IMMIGRANT-POET
IN PERPETUAL IDENTITY CRISIS.
AND HER PRIVATE LIFE IS A MESS

YOU ARE MY SOLAR BATTERY
(A Public Poetry Project)



*Second Street Station, Bergen–Hudson Light Rail,
NJ Transit, Hoboken, 2004.*

ARE YOU WAITING FOR A TRAIN?
TAKE A MINUTE-LONG VACATION

YOU'RE A PART OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM
RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES

YOU ARE A PART OF THE UNIVERSE
OF PEOPLE NAVIGATING THE EARTH

SUN MAKES US GLOBAL
PLANETS AND PEOPLE COMMUTE

LOOK AT STARS
THEY DON'T HAVE
ADVERTISEMENTS

IN A SPACESHIP YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET IN
LOOK UP AT EARTH
PEOPLE ARE YOUR CONSTELLATIONS

THE TIME'S COMING WHEN SOMEBODY OVER THERE,
IN THE UNIVERSE, WILL BE LOOKING AT YOU

WHAT IS THE POSITION OF PLANET EARTH
WHEN THE MILKY WAY IS PARALLEL
TO THE HUDSON RIVER?

WHEN COMING AND LEAVING
NOTICE THIS POEM MOVING DOWN THE TRACK
TO GREET YOU

THE OLD MOON
THE NEW MOON
THE GROWING MOON
THE HALF-MOON
COMMUTING MOON

ARE YOU A LOCAL TRAVELER? GLOBAL? UNIVERSAL?
A DREAM TRAVELER? —ME TOO.

I AM ONE OF YOU: SPEEDING IN LIFE,
SOMETIMES WISHING TO STOP, TO CHANGE,
TO GO ON SLOWLY

SKY, THE SHRINE OF ALL FAITHS,
MEDITATES ON PEACE, ON LOVE,
ON YOUR HEAVENLY BODY

COMMUTING BETWEEN LINES OF THIS POEM
SOMETIMES TAKES A LONG TIME

YOU'RE AT THE SECOND STREET STOP,
BETWEEN THE HILL AND THE RIVER,
UNDER THE STARS' SCATTERED SUGAR

MY DESIRES, LIKE STARS,
ARE BIG AND SMALL

YOU'RE MY SOLAR BATTERY
YOU'RE MY SUGAR CLOUD
YOU'RE MY LIVING PSALM

YOU'RE MY RISING SUN
YOU'RE MY GREEN TREE
YOU'RE MY COUNTRY

YOU'RE MY SNOW, MY RAIN,
YOU'RE MY TRAIN,
MY EARLY MORNING, MY LONG DAY



ON CREAM PAPER
(Museum Annotations)

Nicolas Poussin's **Sheet of Studies of Animals, Figures, and Buildings** (c. 1635) made while he read *Natural History* by Pliny the Elder (1 c. AD). Brown ink on cream paper.

Untitled. Pen and brown ink with gray wash over red chalk sketch on paper, stylus outline squared in black chalk on cream paper.

By Charles le Brun (Paris, 1619—Paris, 1690).

Black chalk with brush and brown wash, lightly heightened with white on cream paper.

After Laurent de la Hyre (Paris, 1606—Paris, 1656).

Imagine: Poussinists vs. Rubenists on cream paper.

Untitled. Red and black chalk heightened with white chalk on cream paper.

Antoine Watteau (Valenciennes, 1684—Nogent-sur-Marne, 1721).

The Dream of Ossian, 1811-1812. Pen and brown ink with watercolor on paper: squared with graphite, framing line in pen and brown ink on blue paper.

Jean-August-Domenique Ingres (Montauban, 1780—Paris, 1867).

Psyche, Borne Away by Zephyrs. Black chalk with stumping heightened with white, framing line in black chalk on blue paper.

By Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (Cluny, 1758—Paris, 1823).

Arab Seen From Behind, Looking to the Left and Raising His Lance and His Shield (before 1810). Black chalk and charcoal with stumping. A study for the painting of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the ensuing revolt and defeat of the Turkish armies. The warrior's cloak, shield, spear, and hat identify this "Arab" as a Turk.

By Anne-Louis Giradet de Roussy-Trioson (Montargis, 1767—Paris, 1824).



NOBODY IS GOING TO COMPOSE AN OPERA
ON BORIS ELTZIN.

August 13, 1991, Villars coin, France

TWO INSTALLATIONS

1.

We will sew all the flags together.
Volunteer seamstresses/dressmakers
will start to sew in a cozy way, in a homey way,
with a woman's touch, while the guys, more handy with tools,
sit down in front of their sewing machines—work therapy
for the fall of triumphant Socialism.

We will sew all the flags together, those of all the nations,
big and small, even the tiny countries, and the really miniscule,
neutral, independent islands. And when everything is ready,
we'll spread them out on a football field on a clear day,
so that the sun may brighten the colors
while the clouds make the colors dimmer.

And we'll let the fans walk around barefoot in bliss,
let them scrutinize the stitches between the flags,
recognizing the ones they know and struggling to guess
the origins of those which are unfamiliar—what are these flags
we're walking on, sewn together in such a way
that you can't figure out where one country ends
and the next flag begins—especially in those places
where they've been imperceptibly joined
by the masterful female hand—those spots
are totally confusing—but if it's a sewing machine job,

well then, these are more easily made out.
And the flags lie prostrate, and the people wander
about the field, and there are empty rows of benches
standing like a labyrinth open to the spectators,
so you circle it again and again, and you turn your head
all over the place, and your eyes, and what not,
until, distracted by something from the outside,
you finally come to a stop.

And so we, too, enter, join in, take part in the action,
stare at the banners, panels, emblems,
straightening out the folds with our toes, the stripes,
the squares, the stars, the circles, the lions, the crosses,
the half-moons, the leaves, the vines, the wheat tassels...
until our time runs out. They ask us to put away the art—
it's time for the football game to start. We'll then
roll up this circus rug, fold it like a patchwork quilt,
drag it to the warehouse where they keep the inventory
together with a barricade of flagpoles with golden tops,
because the time has come to get on with the game:
the players, the fans all flock together, all of them angry;
someone is really anxious to beat someone else.

2.

We'll get an old alarm clock and take it apart,
for it ticks so loudly that you can't sleep, nor live with it at all,
so it's become a real nuisance to everyone. We'll take
the little screws, the wheels, the hands, the spring,
and the tin face, spread them all on the table, and meanwhile
turn our attention to the old radio—a trophy brought from Germany,
if anyone's still got one of those, or a modern transistor—
and start taking it apart: the diaphragm, the tuning knobs,
take off the cover box, the wood, the plastic, the pulleys,
shake it a bit—so parts fall out—and in some places
even make some effort and solder a wire or two.

Then we'll take the table with all the parts
and bring it outside, into the fresh air—to let things air out a while,
let them breathe a bit—put it in the shade in some corner,
and, meanwhile, we'll start on the old bike; we'll roll it out
of the basement, screwing off the handlebars, the rusty pedals,
the chain, the seat, taking the wheels off the frames, the tires,
the spokes, spreading all the parts out on the asphalt.

Then there is also the Singer—a pedal-controlled sewing machine—
that one hasn't been in use for a while either, only takes up space,
since the time of homespun "cool cat" outfits is long gone

(now you just put on what designers have conjured up, what mass production has churned out). The machine can barely be lifted, we struggle to carry it out, calling on our significant others to help us: heavy industry, the ornamented sides are cast iron—eternal decoration, no doubt—but even here we manage to have our way—the shuttle, the handle, the side-plate, then—separately—the gear; take it apart with the help of all sorts of screwdrivers, and a few knocks with a hammer, except for those parts that absolutely refuse to come off—tied together in spirit—just keep 'em where they are, it's even more interesting this way.

So, it gets you thinking, back in the old days they used to make tools intending them to last for ages, certainly to outlive the person who made them; they used to put a lot into making them, and there is no winning with them when you try to take them apart, you even feel a bit of regret that their time's run out, and yet they're still indestructible.

Here my thoughts get interrupted: the gates open, and our steam engine "Forward to Communism" rolls in, makes a stop, lets off some steam; here you can't get by without some outside help—you need a professional; the conductors dismount from the step and get right to it, taking the train apart. Of course, this time a more solid instrument is called for, as well as a more rigorous technical background, but then you take a look and you see the work is coming right along: the wheels, the axles, the seating compartments, the seats themselves, the windows with their frames, the doors, the toilets, the sinks, the luggage racks, the bronze upholstery, built-in ash trays, lamps, the klaxon, the exhaust pipe, the furnace, the oil tank, the coax box—all of these we'll spread out in the yard, though it's already pretty well packed.

After that we'll have to turn to advertising, make our appearances on the radio/TV, put some announcements in the papers, in order to find volunteers who are willing to participate in the project. Meanwhile, we'll call the neighborhood kids, teens with their rock music and long hair, let them have some fun, do some dancing. For them it'll be a visual experience and an opportunity to palm the things for which their grandfathers gave their lives away, went to jail, although some survived in the warm clothes which their grandmothers stitched for them; the dissidents used these imperfect devices to tune into the Voice of America on their shortwaves, putting their ears right up to the speaker, and waking up for work to the sound of this terrible fuzz and static. Let the young people also feel this, so they won't think life's a piece of cake, let them take their appropriate part in this project, leaving behind cigarette butts, empty beer bottles, gum wrappers, Coke cans, and probably also forgetting to take a couple of their audio cassettes, hypodermics, pills, condoms, and all their other multicolored crap.

And then, as a testament to our Futurist ancestors, I will perform the ritual with my own hand: throwing from a window, as from their ship's deck (or just taking them out in a pile), all the paperbacks, textbooks, anthologies, published to forever remain on the shelves of homes and libraries; but now an end has come to their eternal life, as it does for everything on this earth, including poems and pictures—so let the young generation gaze at the samples of the old life—for educational purposes—while it's still not too late.

At this point the trucks with the cement will show up; first, all this stuff will have to be shoveled out evenly, a framework will have to be put down, then some organization of all this old trash (arranged rather chaotically), but don't worry about order too much and don't get hung up on the sequencing. And as soon as these walls solidify, new technology will arrive—

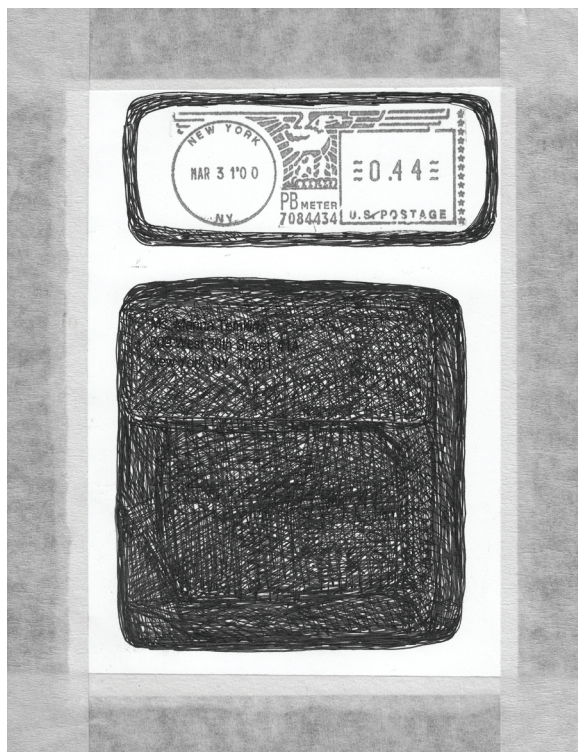
an aggregate from a chemical manufacturer with folded pipes
and remote controls—and it will flood this collection of objects
with polyester resin, to make it smooth on the surface
and to preserve all the details in recognizable form under
a transparent cover—to make it easy to see which detail comes
from where, from which mechanism—just like in a history museum.

Because soon all this will become outdated,
give way to newer materials, and at some point people
will have to take everything apart. So, while it's not too late
and we still have the means, we'll start by charging an entrance fee,
and (if, of course, our yard becomes a major place of attraction)
set up a ticket booth, hire a tour guide, open up a small business
of our own, because in this day and age it is hard for a poet
to make a living with her literary creation, not like in the old days,
when writing was a legacy for future generations,
in opposition to one's own society and government,
in heroic solitude, in isolation from the audience,
either not depending on the readers' market
or not seeing the need for bringing the reader into the discourse.
Even the government in ages past, though it got in the way,
nonetheless seemed to help in the perpetration of all this.

But as for us—miracle of miracles, would you just look at this—
we simply put our foot down, got our act together, and started
writing for today, not for eternity, for those living, like ourselves,
those who also dwell in their respective places
of abode to the sounds of alarm clocks ticking away at eternity,
those who live right beside us, in similar apartments,
some just like this one—twenty-five people in one communal place.
So, if, for instance, you overslept, or had a well-deserved day off,
where for once you could sleep to your heart's content,
the neighbor's alarm clock, quite unwittingly,
would destroy any hope of such a luxury.

And those who put these clocks together
according to scientific methods, provided all the technical instructions
and put them up for sale, must have borne a grudge toward humanity,
secret conspirators against the public's peace and well being,
who thought only of themselves, these egotists, never of their neighbors,
so the whole world has to wake up along with them,
all their male counterparts, all the women, and all the children.

TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER STESSIN



Marina Temkina was born in Leningrad and lives in New York City. She has published four books of poetry in Russian: Chasti chast' (A Part of a Part), V obratnom napravlenii (In Reverse), Kalancha (Watchtower), and Canto Immigranto. Her works are included in several international anthologies. She has published two artist books in collaboration with Michel Gerard: Observatoire Geomnesique and MoMA Duomo: Twelve Objects from Melancholia and The Broken Obelisk. Marina is also the artist/author behind several multimedia poetry installations.

What Do You Want? is Marina Temkina's first book in English.

This is the first edition of What Do You Want? by Marina Temkina. Nine-hundred and fifty copies were released to the world in 2009.

The covers were printed offset by Polyprint Design in New York City, then letterpressed on both sides on the Typographica at the UDP workshop at the Old American Can Factory in Brooklyn, New York.

The interior was printed, sewn and bound by McNaughton & Gunn in Saline, Michigan.

The text was typeset digitally by Don't Look Now! The type is Avenir. The book was designed by Don't Look Now! and Linda Trimbath in collaboration with the author.

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