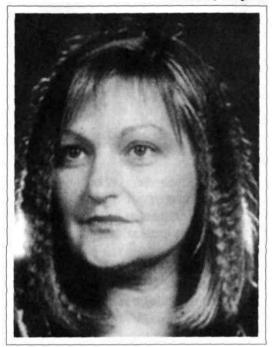
### DIRJAN, Liljana



**Liljana Dirjan,** a native of Skopje, Macedonia, graduated in philology from the Cyril and Methodius University and is currently editor-in-chief of the magazine Woman and a founder of the Macedonian Independent Writers' Collaborative. She has held fellowships from the Gulbenkian Foundation of Paris and the French government for study in contemporary art, language and Armenian literature. Her books include *Natural Occurrence*, 1981, *Net Weight*, 1985, *Wormwood Field*, 1990, and *Heavy Silk*, 1997.

Liljana Dirjan, rođena u Skopju, Makedonija, diplomirala je filologiju na univerzitetu Cirila i Metoda, trenutno je glavna urednica časopisa Žena. Ustanovila je Nezavisno makedonsko društvo pisaca. Dobila je stipendije pariške fondacije Gulbenkian i francuske vlade za studij suvremene umjetnosti, jezika i jermenske književnosti. Njene najznačajnije knjige su Prirodna pojava (1981), Živa mera (1985), Pelin pole (Pelin-polje, 1990), i Teška svila (1997).

## LILJANA DIRJAN

### The Balkans

I sit opposite this world spring – summer 1993 barefoot and neglected abandoned nursery broken bricks, shattered door curtains fluttering in the wind broken I scare away my new poems don't let them near to lick salt from my palm

### Tea in Asia

### For Kate

I'd just finished reading Flight from Byzantium when Brodsky opened the Bosphorus gate for me turquoise and emeralds poured from the horn and the rust from the tankers, the stench and the stink crowds of people, frog-like mosques their minarets like earth-sky missiles smells of lamb kebab, suet, baked sesame and chick-peas in the streets where dust and sweat day by day swirl poverty and life calico turbans, Edirne linen, Bursa silk henna and saffron, coal and smoke piss and turds and flies and HABDAL HABDAL said in passing, while jostling and gold, loads of gold and "bir bardak çai" from the shops and men's moustachioed faces and just as I finished reading A Room and a Half in this room and a half you rang up and said: "I leave for Cappadocia tomorrow" leaving me the tea you brought for me from Kathmandu and I said: "You'll have tea in Asia again" and so I mixed the two worlds in a gulp (brothers of a mother and sons of a father) of which only the nomads remain true relatives

## The old testament, again

Sixty kilograms of pure love, net femininity.

Jehuda Amichai

A woman's cheek grazes kisses on only one side of a man's face instant by instant, slowly, inch by inch after such a long, almost unbearable absence (as if outside the ears, the civilizations, the climates have changed)

in the darkness of the corridor the woman's face sniffs the man's face rambles along the hilly nose, the barren chin along the brocade of the skin, to the springs of the eyes, into the forest of the evebrows (salt, salt) then nibbles vellow camomile in the alley of the left ear (to Jericho, the ladder, the Leviathan, down to the Styx) suddenly the wind from the tundra shakes her legs and she loses touch with the ground Mongolian tea - hot oil Huns and Avars, hanging gardens night day, day night (the unbearable absence) to the tongue - a mast and a knot (sailors on the deck pulling ropes of cannabis) in the middle of the seeeeaaaa and jasmine drops on the floor of the World Down below all biblical beasts coupled silent, their eyes wet lie by their feet

### Home blues

#### Between

- a glass of water, please
- slice the bread
- where are my socks

she left her body invisibly in the kitchen the cutlery and plates still tinkling a voice said the food was not salty enough the wardrobe screeched in the next room the radio splattered news, visits of delegations then light music trickled it was a hot summer day outside she turned back to see in disbelief how tight her stripped off skin was and how transparent the silken epidermis and those tiny freckles like red – brown spikes that gave her the look of a trout then stepped further back almost in reach of the front door desiring to leave all her words and her skin behind but once outside, seized by the light she felt sorry, very sorry that where she was heading she couldn't sav aloud the names of the colours

# About the same, again

Yes, I write poems on electricity bills, on telephone impulses on water meters and late in the evening when my son is asleep and my husband out I write without paper before me in the dark chamber of the bedroom hearing the barking of the pack and the neighbours' nocturnal quarrel I leave some lines for my dreams whole stories dipped in thick resin from dark pine and pale birch I drip drop by drop filling vials, coffee spoons, pipettes and in the morning take on the shape of a tear-drop a perfect little masterpiece pre-ocean living water the start of the sweat of the day

Translated by Zoran Ančevski, Dragi Mihajlovski