

Beka Akhalaia – A Metamodernist Georgian Poet

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Abstract

A very intelligent and story like poetry by Beka Akhalaia amuses and saddens at the same time, but always charms its readers with its authenticity, naivety and vividness. Three verses are chosen by their likeness of composition and stylistic devices: “After January”, “There was one and there is no main Avenue” and “A dream” represents the insight of a poet, whose style of writing with symbols and enigmas, leads us into the sphere of Metamodernist poetry.

Keywords: Postmodernism, metamodernist, naivety, penchant, earnestness, enigmas

Introduction

Metamodernism is an old term by which a number of people describe what comes after postmodernism. It is mostly connected with the Internet Age and means that postmodernism rose to cultural philosophy. It describes our sense of ourselves in connection with the others. I seek some changes in our world.

The metamodern tendency in Georgia as in Europe, oscillates between postmodernism and metamodernism, including a desire for unity and wholeness and transcends the theory-oriented conception (characteristic of postmodernism) and associates with the novelties of the Internet Age.

Beka Akhalaia enters Metamodernist epoch, keeps with mythology and legend type sayings, typical of Georgian culture.

Bellow is given my translation of the poet’s three verses. As they are specific, I give them in full form.

Beka Akhalaia

After January

As they say it’ll get warmer after January,
grandpa Tom never remembers the kind of winter,
though, the cold won’t harm the two stately gentlemen,
nobody was ever frozen in front of the mantle.

(As they say, it'll get warmer after January).
A small debt, still (oh, yes!) is a debt,
though the usurer won't harm the two stately gentlemen,
nobody had ever died from a usurer's bullet yet.

(As they say, it'll get warmer after January),
they have to do something to while the time,
though, Scotch won't harm the two stately gentlemen,
fancy, they drink so much every time.

(As they say, it'll get warmer after January),
before hard drinking a taste of earth is left on the tongue rear,
though the death won't harm the two stately gentlemen,
they only fear if their wives hear.
As they say, it'll get warmer after January.

There was one and now there is no main Avenue
(A ballad on the fire)

Last night I flew a red rooster up,
nobody expected, it looked like a flash of anger
(yesterday I flew a red rooster up)
into the clear eyes. As to the seers,
the fire instantly caught the houses.

Last night I flew a red rooster up,
now what is the debris – only the tons of gravel,
(last night I flew a red rooster up)
exactly- the charcoal is left,
much time is needed to remove that all.

Last night I flew a red rooster up,
sent my people to the biggest building first-
(last night I flew a red rooster up)
the hotel we set on fire,
and then – the Town Hall.

Last night I flew a red rooster up,
the Town Hall was followed by the palace
(last night I flew a red rooster up)
of Mr. Sheriff, the lightly dressed Sheriff's wife
rushed out. The sheriff was out.

(Last night I flew a red rooster up)
then other houses were caught by the fire
a once flown up red rooster,
and in all this chaos,
and in all this squeal,
and in all this scream,
(you don't say so, I have poisoned neither my half-brother
nor killed my mother,
nor this town is Rome and...),
it has just come to my mind
to recite a rhyme
by a simple poet,
an unknown one.

A Dream

(from “ the Variations on Folklore Themes”)

Last night I dreamt a strange dream,
what was it, Mum?

Last night I dreamt a strange dream:
our Lombardy poplar had fallen down.

- That is your body, my boy, sure, it is,
oh, grief to your mother!

That is your body, my boy, sure, it is.
Omnipotent God, save us!

- Last night I dreamt a strange dream ,
What was it, Mum?

Last night I dreamt a strange dream:
The poplar had all its branches broken...

- These are your arms, my boy, what did you say?
Oh, grief to your mother!

It is a fire like story to my heart.

- Last night I dreamt a strange dream,
what was it, Mum?

Last night I dreamt a strange dream:
our vine was losing leaves...

- That is your topknot, my boy, sure it is,
they may summon you from the next world...

- Last night I dreamt a strange dream,
what was it, Mum?

Last night I dreamt a strange dream:
water had been floating a chest.

- That is your coffin, my boy, sure it is,
 oh, grief to your mother!
That is your coffin, my boy, sure it is.
I wished to see your wife and children...
- Last night I dreamt a strange dream,
 what was it, Mum?
Last night I dreamt a strange dream:
A deer was bellowing, nearby, in the forest.
- That is your father, my boy, sure he is,
 oh, grief to your father,
that is your father, my boy, sure he is,
how I was sure, you would mourn over him...
- Last night I dreamt a strange dream:
the mooing of a cow passed the pasture.
- That is your mother, my boy, sure she is,
 Mother be cursed,
That is your mother, my boy, sure she is,

Who could not have given you immortality milk to suck!

Over a month ago I came across a magazine “Chveni Mtserloba” (“Our Writing”, March, 2014) and here I fell on (by chance) quite unusual verses by a young author Beka Akhalaia. Unlabeled, modest, yet rather strangely built verses, free, without any effort render the young man’s emotions. The author, unafraid, is creating his art. Self-consciousness, earnestness and discipline are the three stimuli, giving tragic, but sincere hues to his work.

The descriptions of the human beings, their surroundings, the atmosphere of the situation, impressed me greatly (as once did Mariana Moore, as she was then out of place) in different ways: simple, yet compound nature of story gives inherent thinking, preparing us to involve all ourselves in the relative.

New modern art which the poet deals with authentically and passes it by with dignity and pompousness, still undermines it with all his talent, happy and unhappy at the same time.

After January

The verse and the verse teller are full of hope for tomorrow. The feeling of cold does not do any harm to the two elderly people, by the fire. Neither debt nor the strong drink will injure their health, nor the death itself but the danger impending from their wives.

It is the plot

The plot develops. It is solved in description of January night (possibly) in front of the mantelpiece firelight, with Scotch drinking, with a taste of earth on the back of the tongue, after some discussions about weather, debts to the usurer and fear of wives.

Stylistically...

Repetition of starting phrase (as they say, it will get warmer after January...) gives a melodic effect to the utterance; the enumeration of existing problems gives a prosaic effect.

The climax

The danger coming from their wives (if they hear about their hard drinking).

There was one and now there is no main Avenue

What does the author mean by a red rooster? The aggressiveness? The opposed action? Fire? Yet, it is a willful self-expression, solution of something that shows the poet's performatism. The plot develops instantly. After a red rooster being flown, the fire spread and the main Avenue disappeared.

Stylistically...

The author uses repetitions of a phrase "last night I flew a red rooster up". It enriches the verse melodically. Besides it represents the speech of the author, who highlights the happenings in the city. The verse is rhythmical, intimidating and enjoying at the same time.

The climax

After all the squealings, screamings and chaos the poet modestly adds that he only wanted "to recite a rhyme."

The Dream

The verse represents variation of folklore. Mother and her son's dialogue reminds me of a legend about Surami Castle, where Mother questions her son who is getting built in the wall of the Castle, up to what point he is built in.

The plot

A young man dreamt a strange dream: his family poplar had fallen down; it had broken its branches; the vine had lost its leaves; the water had been floating a chest; in the forest a deer had been bellowing and on the

pasture a cow was mooing. He asked his mother to explain the meaning. The explanation was shocking.

Syntactically...

Beka is penchant for repetitions and represented speeches: “last night I dreamt a strange dream, what was it, Mum?” The dialogue is very sad, an impending danger and the voice of destiny threatens by a mooing cow and a bellowing deer. Coffin is **the climax**. As well the climax is Mother’s confession: she was unable to” give him immortality milk to suck”.

Two opposed parties, the asker and the answerer, make one whole and this unit represents conceptual philosophy of Georgian folk culture.

Conclusion

Beka Akhalaia has entered a new poetical tendency, stepped in Metamodernist auditorium with his peaceful nature, kind and emotional disposition towards his surroundings. All his lines are loaded with pearls of poetical literature, though sometimes unfortunate, but a mélange of discourse modes, emphasizing personal and impersonal data. He by and large maintains all traditional Georgian writing forms, as opposed to those found in transported poetry. That purity is explicitly felt in his poetry as his art is inextricable from life and fantasy.

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