

Balie-vrouw

Vliegen zal niet meer hetzelfde zijn. Niet na het eerste jaar.

We dachten dat we de hemel konden raken, maar raakten elkaar bij het waken, betrapten onszelf erop dat we naar de reistassen van onbekenden staarden, wisten dat wachten niet went. En toen ik later aan de balie stond, neigde ik dieper naar jou, zocht naar zekerheid en een zitplaats die daar te krap voor is. In je eentje schop je het doorgaans moeilijk tot held. Jij snapte perfect wat ik nodig had, legde het verschil uit tussen een plof-klank en een knal, waarop ik zichtbaar schrok. Er moet die dag iets rampzaligs langs mijn hoofd zijn gescheerd, dat zelfs mijn oren rood zagen.

Leen Pil

Dit is thuiskomen

De stad ligt stevig op haar plaats en toch verschuift ze. Een man fietst naar het werk, vindt zijn tweede adem, stuurt bij aankomst een bericht. Op de terrasjes is er plaats, we hebben ochtendlicht besteld op ooghoogte, drinken samen koffie ook al heeft de stad steeds minder dorst, we kijken naar een jonge moeder, een leven in een kinderwagen verandert je, afstand wordt een minder groot obstakel, we luisteren gesprekken af, een doventolk splitst aarzeling in knipperlichten, het zwaaien hoorbaar omdat we buiten zitten. Onze hand beweegt vanzelf. Alsof we in een draaideur staan.

Leen Pil

Le pont

*Le pont est mon nom
De la rue Dansaert à la chaussée de Gand
D'un côté les foulards, de l'autre les élégants*

*Je suis le pont du canal
Bobo et Momo sont sur un bateau
Personne ne tombe à l'eau*

*Je suis un symbole
On me traverse dans les deux sens
Dans les vapeurs d'essence*

*Mes deux rives dialoguent
Je ne suis pas infranchissable
Malgré les discours de haine je reste stable*

*Indifférent aux événements
J'accomplis sans relâche ma mission
Je tiens bon*

Tamara Swuine

The Little Black Dress

*It was my last day
I was moving away
Starting everything once again*

*On my own
Trying to be
Just me
Again*

*Leaving my life behind
Tears making marks on his face
His sorrow and empty gaze
His eyes, his hands
They all were begging me to stay*

*I had to be strong
To stand up to my decision
To allow myself to go away
I found an apartment
Where I promised I will move today*

*On my own
Trying to be
Just me
Again*

*And it started
The terror covered in fear came
Blasts, news, phones, footsteps
Panic surrounds us everywhere
One person came:
I was supposed to be there!
Second person:
I believe my cousin was there!
My friend:
My mom was there!*

*Phones went down
No one could communicate
Panic glowed on everybody's face
Electric air
And the sweet sun rising on my little black dress*

*I was with them
Listening
Handling hands
Borrowing cigarettes
In my little black dress*

*Faces, fears, the weirdness growing in the air
Covered in cigarettes smoke
Melting into cloudiness
Sunshine atmosphere
Sky didn't care!*

*With my little black dress
I was there
On my own
Trying to be
Just me
Again*

*And the blessing of evening finally came
And me on the empty street
With one piece of luggage in my hand*

*His eyes telling me to stay
Offers me the needed hand
Shelter
Having home again
Maybe just for one more day*

*But I left
In my little black dress*

Karolina Ciejka

A Figurine Tale

*I stayed with one family for generations
I was a precious gift offered by the great-grandfather
I remember Annabelle's mother
She was just a little girl
She took me into her tiny hands
With the fragility which the figurine deserves
She told me I am beautiful
Her big child eyes looked at me with sparks*

*I'd become a gift for Annabelle
She put me on her fireplace
I watched her everyday
First alone
Later when her family had grown
The dust covered me with time
But I didn't care
I was with them
In the familiar place*

*But on Tuesday no one from her family came
And then I see this one man
He took me away
I heard when he said
There is no more Annabelle
What? What happened to them?*

*I was abandoned
I feel alone
The whole generation was gone
And one day
I felt the sunlight on my face again*

*The man with a dark face
Put me on the blanket
On the Brussels' rainy day
He wanted to sell me there*

*But I wanted to be back with Annabelle
Be on her fireplace
I don't belong on that flea market stand!*

*Take me away
I want my life to be back again*

*The days passed by
While the rain covers my painted porcelain face
And my dark man
Takes me under the shelter
I don't feel the drops of rain on my secession dress
He becomes my friend*

*But after
I have been sold again
Handled to another unfamiliar face
Maybe it is just my eternal figurine way
To be passed away*

Karolina Ciejka

After the Attacks

*After the attacks you don't want to visit
And I do understand
I wish I could tell you that everything is the same
Just to force you to stay.*

*There is still a brocante on Sundays
There is still a jazz band there
Still a yellow cello plays*

*Brussels changed, yes
More fear, scared eyes
Never ending dusty rain*

*But there is still the brocante
There is still the yellow cello man*

Karolina Ciejka

Pink Chalk

(on Place de la Bourse)

*I last left dust on a child's hands
then this day I am picked up and taken into the street*

*dashed against stone, up the steps, across walls
dragged across asphalt, all the time making marks*

*marks of sorrow and distress and anger and shock
marks of incomprehension, signing 'WHY?'*

*I am passed from hand to hand and feel the different grips
a dry hand in the cool of March*

*the sweat in the heart of a tightly clenched fist
the salt left behind from a half-wiped tear*

*I am ground away to nothing and find myself
among hot wax and cut flowers, rubbed by shuffling feet*

*then built around and above me, the circus of grief
lights, stages, wires, mics*

*make-up for the faces explaining me to the world
from cameras out, and out, and out*

*I am scattered dust
April rain will come*

M. E. Grey

The Street Tetology: I

Istanbul, August '89

*I ran as fast as I could to the playground,
remembering all the days we spent there,
staring at the boys,
wishing they would ask us to play with them,
remembering that they never did.*

*I ran as fast as I could to the playground,
that day, just before we left.
Before we set sail, in that small wooden boat, for an unknown world.
An unknown country with unknown trees and unknown swings and
unknown houses and unknown streets.*

*I ran as fast as I could to the playground,
to catch you one more time in that swing.
To see your smile just one more time.
And be comforted by you, just one more time.*

*I ran and ran,
my playmate of the East,
To catch you one more time in that swing.
But the park was empty.
And the silence was loud
and the air was icy
and the lights almost out.*

*The supper was served.
And you were locked behind your doors
And I was locked behind mine.
My dear childhood friend,
My playmate of the East,
I always think of you when I think of
Istanbul.*

Maryam K. Hedayat

The Street Tetology: II

Antwerp, March 2016

*I am standing next to my bed in a pair of soft white cotton pyjama's
my mother bought me.*

*Soft, white cotton pyjama's covered with sparkling yellow stars
That my mother bought me.*

"Thank you!" I say, always with a big smile and a big hug

When she presents me with these presents.

Presents clearly not sold for my age group.

But clearly showing how she sees me.

A little girl in a pair of soft white shiny-starred cotton pyjamas.

I am standing next to my bed

And I feel like a child

Like a silly silly child

Unknowing of the ways of the world

Naive and small

Pretending to know her place in the world

But not knowing anything at all

Pretending she can see the world

But not seeing anything at all

I am standing next to my bed, feeling like a child

But not because of these shiny-starred pyjamas

Its because of the message, printed on my phone

and now printed in my memory

A message of madness and destruction

Coming from my capital

From the hand of my sweet and dear cohabitant

Sitting in our little house in our little capital

With her phone in her little hand

And her tears on her tiny cheeks

I am standing next to my bed, feeling like a child

Because just second ago

I was still in bed

*My old, childhood bed
Enjoying the first rays of the spring sun entering my room
Carefully hushing me awake,
Enjoying the warmth of the sheets,
smelling the freshness of the grass coming through the window,
waiting to be greeted and fed by grateful souls roaming the house
downstairs, invigoured by my welcome presence upstairs.*

*I am standing next to my bed feeling like a child
Because yesterday the image of the Sunday parade
Accompanied me all over the city
A city celebrated with that parade
A parade filled with colour and laughter
Filled with faces and chanting
Filled with hope and promise*

*I am standing next to my bed
Frozen like a child before a teacher
Not because of these pyjamas
But because this morning I woke up with confidence and hope
With fervour and determination
With love and aspiration*

*And now, i am standing here with my body numb and my eyes open
More open than they have ever been
For now is the first time I have lost hope*

*Hope that a parade can bring us together
Hope that the city is mightier than its enemies
Hope that the pen is mightier than the sword*

*Now i have lost hope and I have lost everything
Now I am a child in a white cotton pyjama
Now I can see the world and I don't know if i wanna be in it*

Maryam K. Hedayat

The Street Tetology: III

Brussels, April 2016

*In the early morning hour
With that shy creamy sun shining over my back
I receive the first inhabitant of this grey and lonely city
Click clack click clack
Her footsteps go click clack click clack
slow fast slow fast
Every day, the same rythm on my vast and mazelike back*

*Every day it's the same
But not today
Today is a different day
Today its not just her
Today i receive crowds I have never seen
Click clack click clack
Thump thump thump thump
Slow fast, fast, fast*

*Today the crowd is marching,
in black t-shirts and black trousers
Today the crowd is marching
with upside down crosses and slogans
Today the crowd is angry*

*Today the crowd is chanting
I understand the language
I don't undertsand the meaning
I undertsand the sadness
I don't undertand the hating*

*The streets are filling and filling
The footsteps faster and faster
The square fuller and fuller
The march louder and louder*

*Now they are screaming
And now they are shouting
I understand the words
I don't understand the meaning
I understand the sadness
I don't understand the hating*

*I see a boy, not older than three,
holding his mother's hand.
Her hijab is tightly wound around her face
her hand tightly around her sons'
I want to smile and tell her I m on her side
But she looks at the crowd and lets the slogans pass her by
I want to catch her eye and tell her I disagree
But she just looks at the crowd
And lets the slogans pass her by*

Maryam K. Hedayat

The Street Tetology: IV

Brussels, March 2017

I see people, not talking.

*I see streets that go over into one another
The one after the other into the other
With no beginning and no ending*

*In this dizzying maze of city streets,
I see people, not talking.*

*I see heads, not moving.
Lips, not touching.
Eyes, not following.*

*I see power, go to waste.
I see strength, migrating, from their bodies
Into the invisible gutters of the city streets.*

I see emptiness and disillusion.

*Maybe I see myself in the city streets.
Empty and disillusioned.*

Maryam K. Hedayat

Mona-Lisa's Tears

*For years I have been the guardian of this place.
Watched the comings and goings of travellers
who never thought to thank any God for arriving here in one piece.
My gaze - you might call it the male version of Mona-Lisa -
has rested comfortably on the ordinariness of this urban motion,
this urban emotion.*

*But here I am, with this tear perpetually tattooed onto my face.
A tear for those who will never again feel the salty taste
of their own tragedy;
a tear for those who have run out of tears to cry.*

*The urban emotion of this place is forever changed
from ordinary to existentially disorderly.
And my Mona-Lisa-eyes have become one with a city in mourning.
Not secretively smiling, but desperately holding the broken pieces
together.*

Sophia Bengtsson

Brussels is Waiting

*Wedding pictures on your cellphone
An Ethiopian cross around your neck
An overheated common room,
overlooking busy vegetable stands,
bustling tramtracks, men in kaftans.*

*Your Brussels is waiting
painting your nails is waiting,
scribbling notes in Tigrinya is waiting,
thinking of your husband in Italy-
He's waiting too..*

*Your Brussels is always just about to begin.
You never dreamt of this city.
Now all you dream about are dark seas and a fear of never arriving.
Your Brussels is waiting for hope to erase that fear.
You did arrive.
Brussels is for you.*

Sophia Bengtsson

My City Has Become a War Zone

*Its people have become divided.
We don't speak to our neighbours any more.
Louiza doesn't speak to the Marollen any more
or Molenbeek for that matter.
They have different morals and values from us
and that's why they're destroying my city, my Brussels.
My city is under attack. I have to see if my friends and family are safe,
did their flight depart before the bombing happened or are they stuck on
their plane waiting to hear what happened?
Do I get to ask if they're safe, if they're ok?
Or were only non-muslims hurt you think?
Will I have to defend myself again before I get to hear if my family is ok?
They act like if the city bleeds, Molenbeek doesn't bleed with it.
Claiming that we're out dancing on the streets to celebrate.
It's time people embrace they're living in a melting pot.
Us second and third generation were born and bred here.
I know how it must look strange to not recognise the city you grew up in.
But try defending your worth and value here, in the only city you've ever
known. The place you too, call home.
My city has become a war zone.
Its people have become more and more divided.
Our neighbors won't speak to us anymore.
They think we don't share the same heartbreak
That we don't share the same pain.
This apathy and divide, this hate, this fear is destroying my city,
My Brussels.*

Samira Saleh

My Brussels is a Feasting Ground

*I am a sex worker,
My Brussels is a feasting ground
For men to consume and pick and choose from a woman's body.
Your Brussels is a man's world.
Where women get harassed and followed every day.
You think because I'm a sex worker, that makes it ok?
I start my work late at night
Outside of your gym where the cars pass by.
Today I look like Julia Roberts from Pretty Woman.
My sky high heels, but still this fur coat won't keep me warm
In these cold streets of Brussels.
I am shunned, looked down upon, ostracised from my community
So I can't and won't be protected from the dangers of this job.
People feel like I don't deserve respect because of my choice of work.
No one looks different or shames the men who come my way.
Isn't that strange and unfair, I mean isn't this a two-way street?
I deserve respect, I deserve to feel safe.
A woman's body is her own,
so please respect what I do with mine.*

Samira Saleh

Brussels, I don't Know

What To Say

*Brussels, I don't know what to say.
I don't know what to do or how to help.
How to pick the words to form a sentence that could soothe you.
You're so vulnerable right now.
I find myself defending your beauty, your history
Your diversity to people who don't know you.
Who have already formed their opinion of you.
Is everyone ok? Are my loved ones safe?
Facebook is doing more damage than good right now.
All I wanna know is what's going on, what happened?
Will somebody tell me?
But it isn't long until people bicker amongst themselves
About the potential background of the terrorist.
Can you believe it? Brussels Airport isn't fully evacuated yet
And in the comments under the news articles
people have already taken it upon themselves
to shun and shame who they think did it.
Debates on religion...whatever, I don't care.
I close the Facebook app, I shut the world out.
Today was gonna be a day spent in pyjama's at home.
Today I skipped class, I stayed at home all day in my pyjama's.
I shit the world out.
I go to bed and prepare, to start...all...over...again.
Paris, Brussels, 9/11. All...over...again.
The need to defend, to make others feel safe and comfortable
At your own expense. All...over...again.
The Muslim women with their scarves and the Sikh men with their turbans
Becoming public targets. All...over...again.
The articles, the bans, the divide, the fear, the hate, the uncertainty, the vulnerability,
the "how did this happen?", the "the enemy is amongst us!",
the soldiers on campus, the curfews, the lying politicians, the "je suis charlie's", the
filter of the Belgium flag on your profile pic, the hypocrisy, the European's life
weighing more than the life taken in Syria by the same terrorists,
the chaos, the hurt, the pain. All...over...again!*

Samira Saleh

My Brussels is...

*An old black and white photograph
A young boy holding his football, looking at his feet
Paved streets, the grey-blue colour brushing the skyline
Colourless traffic, the smell of horns, honking aromas
Stress crumpled like bedsheets for the Laundromat
The heavy chatter, passers-by minding their thoughts
Music enjoyable only to those unsettled minds
Anonymous chaos mixed with the simplicity of rural life
Chasing dreams held in side-view mirrors
Looking at the past
Familiarity, companionship, a place to look back at
A memory to carry
A story to tell.*

Tarik El-Haruati

My City is...

*The rush of mornings, half eaten bread with cheese and ham
Empty coffee cups and paper wraps filling the trash cans
My city has no time, for one with no watch on his arm.
One who sees the whole world in movement
Yet still, moving only from meal to meal then stands,
My city is constantly reminding me
That cold is my best friend and loneliness my sweet diary
My city is a place I know through the faces I see
From generous ones to the ones who flee
My city tells me a different story
One that only I know and I know that it cannot be told
Because the city doesn't see itself as me
My city is in the cup I hold
The receptacle of love I play like a violin boldly
There is worse than empty stomachs and roofless futures
Being at the mercy of others,
We all are, and my city knows.*

Tarik El-Haruati

Blocked by a Mental Cage

*Blocked by a mental cage
Saddened by not feeling sadness
Somewhere I could hear a child's complaints
His bubble blower was broken thus ending his playful chase
Elsewhere an elder was outraged
The lightbulb in his cellar gave up its last rays
Darkening the underground foundation of his house
I was caught in between the two sounds
In an in between space
The screen veiling me from feeling safe.
I realised that in a different world
I could've been the one to cause this despair
Yet somehow my thoughts were guided by a different pace
That of reaching a shared grace
And hopefully to graze on the fields of eternity
With the souls that left, hoping that their death
Will cause us to create a better place
Kids playing, elderly finding meaning
And me still in between, dreaming
That the road back and forth from cradle to grave
Will not be a path of ruin
But an homage
To the Mother who allows us to cut roads to find
In her forests and mountains
Play and meaning*

Tarik El-Haruati

March 22

*The news melted on me
Like soft waves from the sea
It was bound to happen
How could Brussels have let London, Madrid, Paris alone
bear the burden?
It is sunny outside
I might as well, just enjoy the ride
I will not bend my neck
But stand brave and tall among the wreck*

Tamara Swuine

Promises Were Fake

*Promises were fake
I do not understand my fate
The city landscape was not made for me
White stares tell me « you are not meant to be »
I walk alone
My heart turning to stone
All hope on me seems lost
But I must strive at any cost
On a sidewalk
The hard rock suddenly turns to chalk
With one soft gaze
In the Brussels haze
I come across a girl my age
Be my friend.
Our hands almost touch as I pass her by
Be my friend.
But I feel such a gap between us – why ?
Be my friend.
We are not strutting on the same stage.
And yet in Brussels we blend.*

Tamara Swuine

Brussels is My Country

*Brussels is my country
The city and its nineteen localities means the world to me
How would a map of my Brussels look
If it was not drawn by a geographer
But displayed only the streets that I took
And the time spent in places would make them bigger
The parts of Brussels where I have never been
Would be nowhere on my map to be seen ?
My Brussels is the tail of an elephant
In a rain forest where trees fall silent.*

Tamara Swuine

Haikuit Brüssel

*Kaart aangekomen
schrijf ik jou in potloodvorm
negen uur elf dit*

—

*Rise up in a dream
up the hill the foghorn blows
my street siren sings*

—

*ins Wasser fallen
wie aus heiterem Himmel
auf Wolke sieben*

—

*Gyrophare tourne
rouge dans un miroir noir
je ferme les yeux*

Filip Van Zandycke

Mijn stad

*Molenbeek is ook mijn stad
geenszins het al dan niet geknoopte gat
waar sommigen het voor verslijten.*

*Ze trumperen zich,
soit, die sommigen die zelf
zijn den erreur.*

*Meulenbeik, gij Voetkapoen,
't is nen honneur,
eije maa vast?
ge hebt uzelf niks te verwijten.*

Filip Van Zandycke

r:EVOLUTIE

*Welke
wind
waait
woede
weg?*

Filip Van Zandycke

