

Vladimir's Night

By

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1

Vladimir is at his summer mansion.

He is having dinner.

2

With Vladimir is his best girlfriend.

She loves him so much that she serves the meal dressed as a dog.

3

Vladimir says a blessing as a joke.

The dog laughs.

4

The food is Delicious and beautiful. Vladimir ponders:

Does food taste good when it is pretty, or the other way round?

What big cucumbers they sell in stores these days!

5

Vladimir has a great appetite.

After eating the last crumbs, he is very tired.

6

Vladimir is in bed. His lover is on the rug.

She is working on her speech:

Woof, Woof, Woof!

Perhaps one day she will become a minister, or a horse.

7

Above the bed is God, to secure the serving of sweet dreams,

And the stuffed head of a journalist Vladimir hunted a few years ago.

8

Before he falls asleep, Vladimir stares at his cupboard.

He always imagines seeing faces.

9

Is Vladimir asleep? Are the faces changing?

No, he is not dreaming!

Yes, the faces are changing! A mouth opens up!

10

What coming out of the closet?

Smiling socks and silly sweaters!

11

What is emerging from the drawer?

Scissors, pincers and the iron, gift of the Zemblan prime-minister,
Feel-Swell pills, Be-Gay caplets and a happy Izh gun, with a silencer.
Welcome, comrades, ticks the clowning clock.

12

Out of Vladi's bag leap a pair of iPhones, iPad, credit cards and pins.
Out spring the Be-Strong syringe and the delicious pralines.
Out pop important papers and pricey pens,
and all are joined by a jolly Uzi submachine.

13

The weapons missed each other so!
They hug and kiss, fondle and stroke.
Halt. Comrades, you make me sob,
clangs the tender clock.

14

So clean is Vladimir! We all want to get near!
What kind of frolics are in progress?
Is it a pajama party or, perhaps, a special congress?
And will there be room for all in the little leaders' bed?

15

It certainly is not a pajama party;

The comrades are eager to help our boy undress.

Stop, I'm ticklish, Vladimir giggles.

He did not laugh so hard since he was a little child.

16

The rumor of the party must have reached the meadow.

Look who is coming in through the window:

A kolkhoz pitchfork gripping a kolkhoz pitchfork.

He too deserves some fun after all that hard work.

17

Things begin to enter Vladimir's body.

Feeling stuffed, he recalls dinner.

18

Things begin to enter Vladimir's face.

He tries to call his mother, but she is dead.

19

Mister pitchfork likes the dog.

He impales her on his pitchfork, to be roasted later.

Will she taste good because she looks pretty, or the other way around?

20

Do the scissors think Vladimir is a Matryoshka?

They cut him open to see what hides inside.

21

Vladimir's belly is filled with complicated matter,

You cannot find a pin within that serpentine intestine pile.

Do not despair, dear Diner's Club, American Express and Master-
Card, soon Vladimir will be disemboweled.

22

Our labor bore fruit, the good midwives chime,

As Vladimir's soul, the glorious mosquito mouse,

Finally flies free from within its earthly cocoon.

23

Now that the dog is dead,

The little pitchfork wants to be Vladimir's best friend.

He shoves his head between the boy's buttocks and explores:

Such big cucumbers they sell these days in stores!

24

Flooded with pain and pleasure all at once,
Vladimir sways in a traditional women's dance.

25

Have courage, Vladimir, Great matriarch of Rus of yore
Push, mother, breathe and push: despite those aches of yours
You are as fecund as our great land.
No *Yukos* oil well had ever yielded more.

26

Rest now, tiny tyrant, gather strength.
There, you had enough.

27

Now, we'll pepper your wounds with salt,
Just like in that science class experiment,
When the muscles of dead fish shiver and convulse,
Live on, wake up – do not miss our merriment.

28

Vladimir has two legs,
Vladimir has one leg,
Vladimir has none:

He kindly donates them to his favorite gun.

29

Gouge his eyes and cut his nose,

We can make good use of those.

30

Look: the dog is not dead after all!

She is our private Lazarus, it is a miracle!

31

The loyal canine caresses her maimed master,

All the while wagging her tail.

Perhaps her loving tears will muster,

A happy end, as in a fairytale.

32

It's Philosophical, a thing within a thing,

Opines the thoughtful clock,

And Vladimir is hollow, let us shove her in,

And tightly sew the belly frock.

33

Buried alive, Like Peter's poor duck,

The dog could still be heard,
Wailing from within her tummy coffin.

34

Like the tragic wolf of bloody riding hood,
His abdomen cruelly crammed with stones,
Thus expired Vladimir, weighed down by his animal lover,
His luscious deputy, his deathly artificial daughter.

35

... Or maybe not! Not quite dead yet!
Vladimir is so resilient, still alert!
Hurrah, great leader! And even though it does not rhyme,
Let us carve his arms off.

36

And finally the head, a much contested treasure,
Coveted by so many faceless objects.

37

Where is he now, Vladimir?
In the head, still rich with nervous ticks and grimaces?
In the body, still compelling in its anatomic grace?
Or maybe in the soul, that gorges on its former residence?

38

Or maybe he's asleep, so still,

For all those stills, for real, are only stills.

Or maybe not. Remember dear, with Vladimir,

Things are not what they appear.