

to črtomir and vitomil

simona semenič

the feast

*or the story of a savoury corpse or how roman abramovič, the character janša, julia kristeva, age 24,
simona semenič and the initials z.i. found themselves in a tiny cloud of tobacco smoke*

(draft translation)

*there are seven characters in this play, one of the seven characters is me
i, the seventh character in this play, step in front of you, respected (western) theatregoers, with a pipe
in my hand
i, the seventh character in this play, have no name, i'm a nameless character, a stranger, so to speak,
one could say john doe if this were an american play, but it's not, therefore i'm not john doe for this is
not an american play
this is a slovenian play, therefore i have no name, or perhaps, perhaps i'm all the names you want, or
the one you imagine when you see me
i step in front of you with a pipe in my hand, wearing a striped navy t-shirt
blue
white
blue
white
blue
blue like the sea
white like the snow
with a pipe in my hand giving off smoke
the pipe, not the hand
giving off smoke, i mean
towards you, respected playgoers
a tiny ribbon of gray smoke winds its way towards you, respected playgoers
a tiny ribbon of gray smoke and then
breathe in
breathe out
a tiny cloud of gray smoke
i step downstage
take a stern look at you
more or less stern, in fact, the only important thing here is that i look at you
meaning you, the honourable public
i look you in the eyes, as much as the stage lights permit me, it would be nice if they did permit me
i take a look at you
sternly
perhaps i smile at you
i clear my throat
you also clear your throat, distinguished spectator
the more i look at you, the more you're coughing
and then, then i look at the horizon
somewhere far beyond you
i look at the horizon and i put on a much more serious face than befits my navy t-shirt
blue
white
blue
white
blue*

*like the snow like the sea like the sky like the clouds
a much more serious face than befits my pipe
smoke in a ribbon and smoke in a cloud
a much more serious face than befits my thick gray beard*

a tiny ribbon of smoke

breathe in

breathe out

a tiny cloud of smoke

and then i present to you the characters from this play

the first character is

roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children and who has nothing to do with the real person roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children

the second character is

the character janša, janez janša, prime minister of the government of the republic of slovenia, who could step down but does not and who has nothing to do with the character janša, janez janša, prime minister of the government of the republic of slovenia, from the performance slovenian national theatre of janez janša

the third character

julia kristeva, aged 24, graduate of the university of sofia, who is to become a famous philosopher, psychoanalyst, feminist, sociologist and author, and in addition to all of the above, a wife and a mother, and who also has nothing to do with the 24-year-old girl of the same name, who was also destined to become all of the above and much more, which is not mentioned, neither above nor on wikipedia

the fourth

simona semenič, author of this text, who has nothing to do with the real person simona semenič, author of this text, even though she might want to

and the fifth

the initials z.i., where, "z" could, for example, represent the first letter of the name zlatan, and "i" could, for instance, represent the first letter of the surname ibrahimović, but the initials z.i. do not stand for the initials of the swedish football player bought by barcelona fc in the summer of 2009 for 69 million euros

there, i have already presented six characters from the play

the first one is me, the nameless one, then five of them with names and now it's the last one's turn the main character

the protagonist

the character screaming to be performed by a star

to be performed by a true star actress in one single nonchalant stroke

*this character is
(a small psychological pause)
this character is the corpse
and now it appears
the character named the corpse appears in the background
just slightly illuminated
just a little bit
it's standing back there
and standing*

*now that we've been introduced to the characters or personages
(i personally much prefer the term dramatis personae)
let me explain our whereabouts
yes, of course we are in the theatre, but this theatre is about to throw you a very special feast
a feast to which some eminent guests have been invited, we are going to sit them behind a table
(this of course doesn't mean that there has to be a real table on the stage, there can be, of course,
there can be a whole line of tables or a pile of them, the entire stage can be a table, the tables can
hang from the ceiling upside down or the other way around, there can also be a sign saying table in
one language or another, and there can be no sign anywhere and nothing anywhere; no table, no
chair and no soup tureen with delicious smelling stew, what i want to say is, the important thing is
that you, the distinguished spectator, can imagine our eminent guests having a feast in front of you
on the stage)
this feast is of a very special and also important sort
namely, our eminent guests are on the stage in front of you, respectable audience, they are feasting
upon the corpse
so, yes, dear theatregoers
every spoonful of the stew that the eminent guests put in their mouths, is a spoonful of the stew
cooked from the corpse
so the corpse you are looking at, this corpse is not a living character
(dramatis persona, if i had it my way)
this corpse once was a living character, once, before it ended up in the stew i'm about to serve at
tonight's feast
this character
character that's in front of you and that's being impersonated
(being breathtakingly impersonated)
by a true star actress
is a character that's actually cooked in the stew that's going to be devoured by the guests who are
present at tonight's special and important feast that's going to start any second now*

*the character named the corpse is starting to move very very slowly
in the flash of light
back lights
front lights
and moving slowly from the back towards the front of the stage*

*only now, dear spectator, only now can you see it properly
maybe the corpse is wearing a regency dress
high-waisted, with a golden string below the breasts
the white muslin dress is refined by the golden trimmings above the breasts, at the end of the short
sleeves and of course on the edges of the top layer of the transparent fabric
the corpse may be called the corpse and may be cooked in that stew on the table, smelling so good
throughout the entire theatre hall, maybe this is true, yet it's still moving seductively, graciously and
excitingly, as if it weren't a corpse stewed in that dish which actually smells almost as seductive and
exciting
(if not gracious)*

*the corpse is moving towards the front, where i'm standing, but it's not moving towards me, it's
moving towards you, dear audience
everything is roaring because of this slow movement even though there's no music in the hall
it's moving for quite some time, taking its time in carrying out each step
the white muslin is softly rustling
the white muslin is rustling softly
towards you
more and more towards you
(and also towards me)
even though i've become unnoticeable in the meanwhile
the corpse steps to the front of the stage
and begins to speak very quietly*

my name is

*and stops
and waits
stops and waits because it's a star actress
because it can get away with it
because you, the honourable, will be eagerly waiting for its next word
eagerly and breathless
but the corpse doesn't begin to speak
it's standing there looking at you
with the head held high and maybe, maybe it's slowly raising the hands
the right one a bit above the head, the palm towards you
the left one in front of it, the palm towards the breasts
eyes wide open directed toward the horizon
the only thing that distinguishes it from a statue is that it's slowly moving its lips, as if it wanted to
say "my name is"
and maybe it's repeating that to itself, maybe it's repeating to itself "my name is"
while i'm clearing my throat
and announcing the first guest
announcing the first character*

at the feast we are hosting

roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children and who has nothing to do with the real person roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children

he enters

we shake hands

i show him to his place at the table

(the table that can be a table and can also not be a table)

i pull up a chair

(a chair that can be a chair and can also not be a chair)

i try not to let the smoke from my pipe drift directly over to him

but there's nothing i can do

the smoke from the pipe is as usual floating in tiny ribbons directly towards where you least want it to

directly into roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children and who has nothing to do with the real person roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children

roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children and who has nothing to do with the real person roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children

sits down

he's sitting

he's looking at you

he crosses his legs

he's smiling

he uncrosses his legs

he turns towards the table

i put on his napkin

i pour him a drop

maybe two

(maybe i pour him two drops)

maybe he drinks one

(maybe he drinks one drop)

i serve him the stunning stew out of the soup tureen

the steam is rising from the bowl in tiny ribbons

roman arkadyevich abramovich takes the spoon

ladles out the stew

blows on the stew

sips the stew

*his face softens
it's good
i'm satisfied
i'm very satisfied that he likes the stew
i can see tonight's feast is going to be a success
i pour another drop
maybe two
roman arkadyevich abramovich nods at me
roman arkadyevich abramovich is happily feeding himself
when he's full, he belches
or maybe he doesn't belch
if he belches, that's a sign for me to wipe his mouth with a napkin
then he throws money on the table
maybe this gesture is too obvious
because, after all, this is
roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the
owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children and who has nothing to do with the real
person roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is
the owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children*

*maybe he doesn't throw money on the table
maybe he sticks it into my shirt pocket
my blue and white striped t-shirt has a breast pocket
blue
white
the cloud the sea the snow the sky
maybe i have bank notes in there now
the cloud the sea the snow the sky
and then he exits*

*the corpse is still standing at the front of the stage, moving its lips
and then you hear it*

*my name is olena popik and i didn't want to die
i didn't want to die
don't ask me why i didn't want to die, because i won't be able to answer
i didn't want to die should be enough*

*dear spectator, if you didn't know before, from this moment on there's no doubt that in front of you
there is a corpse
a few lines further you'll realize this is an eastern corpse
in this play there are no western corpses, only eastern
(if such a thing as an eastern corpse even exists)
maybe i didn't want to die, because after a long while i wanted to*

no, no
no
maybe because i wanted to see my three-year-old daughter again, who stayed at home, in ukraine
again and again and again
maybe because i wanted
to see her blow out the candles on the cake for her tenth birthday
and if i didn't have money for the cake, no matter
maybe because i wanted
to see her for her tenth birthday
and twentieth
and so on
maybe not even because of that
maybe i didn't give a damn about my three-year-old daughter
or son
maybe it was not a daughter, but a son, who stayed home in ukraine
and maybe i never even thought about her or him
maybe i didn't want to die because i was only twenty-one
when they brought me to the clinic in mostar
when they brought me, half decayed, to the clinic in mostar
after the three years of business in slovenia, croatia and bosnia i was not worth a dime, so to speak
you know, at the beginning they would buy me for more than a 100 and more euros, at the end i'd
perform my thing for 5
eighteen, young and beautiful – is quite unlike a twenty-one year old past
sell-by date
stale
and spent
and ugly
and miserable
and sick, above all sick
but i could still get johns, don't fool yourselves that i could not
one can get you, always, nothing really bothers you, does it?
maybe i just wanted to live to celebrate my twenty-second birthday
i don't know why i didn't want to die
maybe i didn't want to die because i haven't yet experienced the kiss of a lifetime
maybe because of that
or simply because i wanted once more to get laid the way god intended it
or i wanted to fall in love once more
maybe i just wanted to fall in love once more
but i didn't want to die
just before i closed my eyes for the very last time
that is, closed my eyes for the very last time on november 2nd 2004
just before that i thought, no
no
i want to live

maybe, maybe i liked to eat sarma¹ and maybe i didn't want to die just so i could put sarma in my mouth once again
or vodka
or a cock
whatever
just to put something in my mouth
before i kick the bucket because of all those hiv viruses, hepatitises, syphilises and tuberculoses that i got at my gigs from all of your cocks
yeah, yeah, of course not from your cock
but from your neighbour's
i still have a valid passport, i've been dead for almost six years, but the passport is still valid
i bet you didn't know that
maybe just before i closed my eyes, for the very last time, then, on november 2nd 2004
maybe i thought about what i'd do next time at my next gig
maybe i imagined what i'd do when i again heard from his mouth suck me bitch
i'd push a long, just-sharpened knife into his guts
i easily imagined this thrust
i easily imagined the blade cutting into his skin
penetrating your soft inside
it's going fast, even though i'd prefer it to be going slowly
so i imagine everything in slow motion
while you are ending with orgasmic cries and i know that these are the only ones i'm never going to forget and i find that amusing
and you're looking at me and you can't believe what's just happened to you
and i find this highly amusing
you can't believe it because you were absolutely sure that i would take your suck me bitch even for the eight-thousand-one-hundred-and-sixty-first time and then the twelve-thousand-three-hundred-and-fifteenth time and then on my crutches for the thirty-six-thousand-nine-hundred-and-eleventh time

*at this moment, i start coughing
because she needs to be stopped, this stream of words needs to be stopped
to go on with the program
to feed the next guest
the guest i announced at the beginning
the next guest is the character janša
the character janša, janez janša, prime minister of the government of the republic of slovenia, who could step down but does not and who has nothing to do with the character janša, janez janša, prime minister of the government of the republic of slovenia, from the performance slovenian national theatre of janez janša
i announce him, but he doesn't show up*

¹ translator's note: sarma is a dish of grape, cabbage, monk's rhubarb or chard leaves rolled around a filling usually based on minced meat

so i announce him again
the character janša, janez janša, prime minister of the government of the republic of slovenia, who
could step down but does not and who has nothing to do with the character janša, janez janša, prime
minister of the government of the republic of slovenia, from the performance slovenian national
theatre by janez janša
and then i see him, i'm the first one to see him
then you see him
(the corpse has given up in the meantime and is sitting at the front of the stage, maybe looking at
you, maybe it doesn't even feel like looking at you anymore, the important thing is, that the corpse is
now waiting)
the character janša has a beret on his head, it can be red, black or green, by no means colourful, and
is acting strangely
as if he's looking for something
walking to and fro, zigzagging and mumbling something into his beard
zigzagging and mumbling
this is what you will remember the character janša for
this and the beret, by no chance colourful
he approaches me, he stops
he touches his head and smiles, as if he's just found something important
a sigh of relief
so the character janša sighs with relief
all this (touching his head, smiling, sighing with relief) happens very fast, the character janša is
obviously hoping no one has noticed
not me, and least of all not you, honourably respected spectator
the character janša would give everything and even more than that at this moment for you not to
notice him desperately looking for his beret while it's safely on his respected head
the corpse couldn't care less for the character janša, maybe the corpse hasn't even noticed him yet,
maybe the corpse thinks that the character janša is actually roman arkadyevich abramovich, maybe
the corpse thinks that roman arkadyevich abramovich has been feasting till now, anyhow, the corpse
couldn't care less for the character janša, who hopes that no one has noticed his touching his head,
smiling, sighing of relief
the character janša takes off his beret, looking at me sternly
a tiny ribbon of smoke
breathe in breathe out
a tiny cloud
while sternly checking me out, he presses his beret to his chest, leaning slightly forward
while sternly checking me out, he presses his beret to his chest, leaning more and more forward
while sternly checking me out, he presses his beret to his chest and i'm afraid he's going to fall on his
face
because while pressing his beret to his chest he is leaning too far forward
i can see he wants to say something
i give him a smile to give him courage
he says "g"
and i smile again

*he says "g"
and we then repeat the same thing again
he gives me a gentle sign with his index finger
and i move closer to him
he gives me a gentle sign that he wants to whisper something in my ear
i press my ear to his mouth
he whispers a word
i move back
i look at him
he looks at me, meaningfully
he closes his eyes and nods
just like the lady whose weight scale showed 132 kilograms aka 291 pounds this morning, just for your information her scale can hold up to 180 kg aka 396 pounds, at the moment when her scale showed this number, the lady heard some oh-ing and ah-ing and aaah-ing and ooh-ing through the air vent, and those were, my honourably distinguished, those were terribly suspicious oh's and ah's and aaah's and ooh's, so very suspicious that she climbed a chair and pressed her ear up to the air vent and heard even more oh's and ah's and aaah's and ooh's, she heard so many of them that oh god help us her crotch became totally wet, god help us, well to sum up, the character janša closes his eyes and nods in exactly the same way that the 132-kilo lady closes her eyes and nods when she distressfully tells a third neighbour that she heard her neighbours sigh in a very strange way in broad daylight, and in the bathroom, for that matter, the character janša inhales and exhales in that same distressful way, the very same distressful way as the 132-kilo lady does when telling about the sexual escapade of her neighbours, she of course doesn't mention her wet crotch, she doesn't mention her hand on her wet crotch and of course she doesn't mention her orgasm, she just closes her eyes and nods
and distressfully exhales, the character janša
and then i'm left with nothing else but to distressfully exhale myself
i distressfully exhale and walk him to the table to serve him, i try to walk him there but he doesn't let me, he puts his beret back on his head and is again zigzagging the stage, as if he's looking for something
and mumbling
it seems that in the meanwhile the corpse has fallen asleep
i approach the corpse, move it a little using my foot
it awakens
and starts speaking, in the same position*

you were absolutely sure that the you could come for the thirty-six-thousand-nine-hundred-and-eleventh time for just a few euros
maybe i wanted to live just because of that
maybe i wanted to strike another match so that my grandmother could take me in her arms again
maybe because of that
or to go into the swingers club in tirana
or to found it if it doesn't exist
i wanted to found the first albanian swingers club

and i wanted to fuck all the inhabitants of the balkan peninsula, men and women of every possible religion

the character janša continues zigzagging around

i'm zigzagging behind him, because i want to serve him dinner, i'm in a hurry to serve him, i am in a hurry because other guests are coming, hungry and a bit less hungry or not hungry at all, just eager to get a bite, which is human nature isn't it?

dear distinguished audience

it's totally human nature to feed oneself

and i'm zigzagging around with the crazy character janša, who is getting louder and louder

my name is rudina qinami and maybe, besides that, i wanted something even more blasphemous, if anything more blasphemous even exists at all

now we hear him, the character janša

the character janša is repeating just one word to himself

gypsies

and we hear him, he's zigzagging and repeating this word

my name is rudina qinami and maybe i wanted to do something even more blasphemous in my life, but above all, i was sixteen and i wanted to live and if i had to choose my own death even at sixteen

getting shot by a kalashnikov at the hands of my father would've been the last in line

but, as the old albanian saying goes: the one who loves you, beats you

and maybe, maybe while dying, i became aware of an important fact namely that my father loves me

for he shot me in order to save my honour

which i lost when i drove in a car with my friend

who was not my husband and to whom i had not been promised, i had been promised to someone else

i wanted to live

and then i grab his arm

with a pipe in my hand i grab his arm and feed him

he's wolfing it down in a cloud of smoke and he's content

he's wolfing it down in a cloud of smoke, he's content and he wants more

and he wants more and i give him

more

the corpse is looking at him

slow motion

the character janša is in slow motion, i feed him in slow motion

the corpse is looking at the spoon, carefully watching the path of the spoon: mouth – bowl – mouth

*carefully watching and speaking
speaking and moving closer*

my name is rudina qinami
and maybe the only reason i wanted to live was to watch eurovision one more time
one more time
one more time i cry out
one more time i cry
i haven't cried enough
i ended up in the toilet
before i could see the bathroom
the ceiling
my mom
before i could perceive the light

*the character janša zigzags away
repeating his popular word, but looking content
he looks more content than before
and he's not looking for anything on his way out*

but i wanted to perceive the light
no, no, i didn't know that such a thing as light existed
or darkness
or a bathroom
or mom
but i had a sort of premonition of all these
i did, i did
a premonition of something you could call love

i'm running out of time, out of time, the corpse doesn't care but i know i'm running out of time

i cry one more time
i haven't cried enough
i ended up in the toilet
before i could see the bathroom
the ceiling
my mom
before i could perceive the light
but i wanted to perceive the light
no, no, i didn't know that such a thing as light existed
or darkness
or a bathroom
or mom
but there was a sort of premonition of all these

there was, there was
a premonition of something you could call love
you, who managed to cry more
and see the bathroom
and mom

*i'm running out of time, out of time
i would stop this avalanche of words
because i'm running out of time, because i have to serve the next guest
but the corpse ever so slowly continues to speak
maybe it lies down, maybe it lies down in an ancient-greece pose in its regency dress
and maybe the corpse thus lying down seems untouchable
and maybe that is why i cannot touch it
and maybe that is why i sort of dance around the corpse, but no, i do not mean to say i dance
i actually shift to and fro because i wish to stop the avalanche of words
a tiny ribbon of smoke
a tiny cloud
the cloud the sky the sea the snow
i shift, almost zigzag
maybe it seems like i am about to start zigzagging*

my mom didn't know i wanted to live
before she could find out, she pushed my head into the toilet and ran the water
i would celebrate my first birthday three months from today
and i couldn't even manage to take a breath
but i wanted to take a breath, i swear, i wanted to open my mouth and let the air in
and scream
but before i could, she pushed my head into the toilet and let the water run
bitch
she pushed my head into the toilet and ran the water
i hadn't even taken a breath yet when the water from the tank flushed me
water that is supposed to flush piss and shit
it flushed me, this piss and shit water flushed me and my gasping for air and my first scream were
muffled
with the water that is used to flush, as mentioned above, piss and shit
before i could cry
before she gave me a name
bitch
i died without a name
drowned in a toilet
because that bitch of my mother saw no other way out
out of sheer poverty she drowned me in a toilet
not even in a bathtub
because she couldn't afford another mouth to feed

as if that were an excuse to not name your child
i would like to introduce myself to you with my name and surname
and that
and only that is the reason why i'd want to die a bit later

i'm afraid i will run out of time

i announce the next guest

a female one

julia kristeva, aged 24, graduate of the university of sofia, who is to become a famous philosopher, psychoanalyst, feminist, sociologist and author, and in addition to all of the above, a wife and mother, and who also has nothing to do with the 24-year-old woman of the same name, who was also destined to become all of the above and much more, which is not mentioned, neither above nor on wikipedia

i try to announce the guest as loudly as possible

i choose a moment when the corpse is silent

silent, as if looking for words

julia kristeva, aged 24, enters, approaching me somewhat shyly

the corpse is silent and silent some more

when julia kristeva, aged 24, stops close to me, close enough that i can address her and yet too far away for me to address her with a normally pitched voice, i mean, she's so far away i have to shout a little, so when she stops, i nod at her

she nods at me

doesn't even say good evening

julia kristeva, aged 24, is a shy character

julia kristeva, aged 24, is in fact a schoolgirl

who has no idea she's about to become famous

as far as she's concerned, everything is open to her

she could become the famous julia kristeva

or she could become a corpse

i give her a sign to sit

she's watching me questioningly while taking a seat

as if i need to explain to her what she's about to consume

dear julia kristeva, aged 24, just sit and enjoy

do not ask, just enjoy the feast

the corpse smiles

the corpse knows it has become famous

and maybe to see his face

maybe that's why i wanted to die a bit later

to see his face, when the police take him away

to see his face and the faces of those like him

those like him

those who watch

and those who look away

the clock will strike for them, it will strike
my name is fatonah khairkova
i was a grade school teacher
in herat, afghanistan
i had two children
if i had left my husband, the children would have stayed with him
and i didn't leave him
we were married for thirteen years
for thirteen years he beat me like an animal
for thirteen years i walked around with bruises and cuts
no, no, one doesn't beat an animal like that
that day, i went to the open market in the morning, when i returned, he scolded me for wasting time
he said he would deal with me later
later was in the evening, he rammed his knee into my stomach and was strangling me
i tore away
and then i poured kerosene on myself and lit a match
100 degree burns all over my body ended the intimidation, beatings and degradation
but not at once, not at once
i died after a couple of days, no sooner

julia kristeva, aged 24, is not sure whether she would like to eat
julia kristeva, aged 24, is in doubts about the feast
the corpse steps in front of her, it's showing off, as if to say, take, take, take me
am i not good to you? don't you like me?
julia kristeva, aged 24, is looking at me and she's looking at the bowl full of stew
the stew is still steaming
still smelling wonderful
wonderful wonderful wonderful the corpse sits down opposite julia kristeva, aged 24
maybe it spreads its legs
maybe it spreads its legs so wide that julia kristeva, aged 24, has a magnificent view of the corpse's
cunt
maybe the corpse spreads its legs so wide

and yet i would like to live

i start to feed julia kristeva, aged 24, she doesn't want to eat, at first she doesn't want to
i speak softly to her, like to a baby
julia kristeva, aged 24, turns her head away, turns it to the left and turns it to the right
the corpse is slowly and quietly repeating

i didn't want to die
i didn't want to die
i didn't want to die

*julia kristeva, aged 24, doesn't want to eat
she moves her head, left, right, no, no
the corpse is repeating in the same rhythm*

i didn't want to
i didn't want to
i didn't want to
i didn't want to

*i somehow manage to foist the first spoonful on julia kristeva, aged 24
and then the second
(maybe i produce a blue and white striped bib out of nowhere)
and then the third and the fourth*

i didn't
i didn't
i didn't

*while i'm spoon-feeding julia kristeva, aged 24, she gets her appetite
the more i spoon-feed her, the more she wants to eat
the more she eats, the hungrier she gets
the hungrier she gets, the more the corpse laughs and reiterates faster
the hungrier she gets, the more i breathe in and the more clouds there are above us
julia kristeva, aged 24, eats so much that she grows up in the process
she stops eating
the corpse stops laughing
the corpse stops laughing and looks at you, the distinguished spectator
the corpse sees you
you see the corpse*

i didn't want to die
my name is fatonah khairkova
your face is in front of me
your face and the faces of those like you
the face of you who are watching
and you who look away
but it's curtains for you
it's curtains for you

*i clear my throat
the adult julia kristeva, aged 24, clears her throat
you clear your throat
we all clear our throats*

while adult julia kristeva, aged 24, is clearing her throat, she is moving backwards to the back of the stage
the coughing gets quieter
then it disappears
i realize time is pressing, the corpse doesn't care about time, but time is pressing me, we have two more guests to get through, two more guests
i announce simona semenič
simona semenič, author of this text, who has nothing to do with the real person simona semenič, author of this text, even though she might want to
simona semenič enters
simona semenič shakes hands with me without looking at me
simona semenič waves to the audience
simona semenič sits behind the table
simona semenič produces a napkin out of nowhere (with blue and white stripes) and fastens it around her neck
i stand right by to perform some of my host duties, but simona semenič doesn't even look at me, she simply waves her hand and i hear "shoo, shoo"
and i hear "shoo, shoo" again
and i hear "shoo, shoo" again
three times i hear "shoo, shoo", three times she waves her hand at me, each time she waves her hand, i breathe out
and without me wanting to, a cloud floats towards her
i hear "shoo, shoo" one more time and this time the "shoo, shoo" is to the cloud, not to me
simona semenič serves herself the wonderful smelling stew
simona semenič is feeding herself
simona semenič is feeding herself while the corpse continues its monologue in a single nonchalant stroke

can you imagine that i wouldn't die
that i would live a little longer
can you imagine?
i can't

i can't imagine living even one second longer from the moment my toddler got torn from my arms
can you imagine a toddler being torn from your arms, a two-year-old child
being torn from your arms while you carry another baby in your tummy
who is so big already that it can no longer move
who is about to be born
who is warm and cosy and thinks it will be born any minute now into a warm and cosy world
can you imagine, how this being inside you is filling you with anticipation, how you can barely wait to touch it, to feel its touch, how you can barely wait to see these little knees and little elbows that are pressing you from within
can you imagine how meanwhile, while these little knees and little elbows are pressing you from within, how meanwhile another baby is getting torn from your arms, can you imagine, they tear him from your arms and, while laughing obstreperously, impale him with a bayonet

they find it amusing that your mouth utters an inhuman sound
they are entertained with you watching your baby, with you watching how his eyes run dry and how
his body runs dry and how you're not able to help him
then they throw you on the floor
and kick you again and again
and then they take turns at you, the first one penetrates you, then the second, then the third, and
then you don't count anymore, while they screw you and screw you and have fun and laugh and
shout victoriously when they come
but the baby inside you still thinks it will be born any minute now into a warm and cosy world
can you imagine?
it happened in june 1999 in gnjilani and i didn't want to live anymore
i wanted to die

*simona semenič stops feeding herself at the moment the corpse becomes silent
she is sitting there, lingering a little
lingering some more
and then takes another portion
(it seems the wonderful smelling stew is to her taste)
simona semenič is rushing her eating, she knows there is no time, there is no time
she stops eating
wipes her mouth with the napkin
blue
white
blue white
shakes hands with me without looking at me
(the cloud the snow the sky the sea)
and walks away
simona semenič walks away without looking at me or wanting to comment
i expected that she'd have something to say, i expected she would have to be forced to eat each bite
but simona semenič fed on the delicious stew as if it weren't made from a corpse
simona semenič feasted upon the corpse and maybe this was all she wanted to say
breathe in
breathe out
tiny cloud
the sky the sea
the snow the cloud
i have only one guest left
i announce him
the initials z.i., where, "z" could, for example, represent the first letter of the name zlatan, and "i"
could, for instance, represent the first letter of the surname ibrahimović, but the initials z.i. do not
stand for the initials of the swedish football player bought by barcelona fc in the summer of 2009 for
69 million euros
he enters
he enters and walks in a circle around the stage*

*walks in a circle around the stage and he is waving at you, distinguished spectator, waving at you all
the way around the stage
waving, even though he seems somewhat tired
even i'm tired of this feast
it seems there is no end to it
but the corpse is more and more vivacious*

why, why, why
that was the only thing that went through my head
and bam
and i wanted to pull myself up
and bam
a kick in the stomach
and i wanted to pull myself up
and bam
another kick
why
why
and bam
a stone in the shoulder
i'm pulling myself up
i feel the blood, it's dripping down my face
kick
stone
stone
stone
i lick myself
blood
bam
stone
bam
stone
it seems to me that
bam
collarbone
it seems
bam
broken
arm
broken
bam
stone
stone
stone

kick
kick
why
my name is
du'a kalil aswad
no
no
no
please
please
du'a kalil aswad
seventeen years old
please don't
bam
stone
kick
stone
bam
please
please let me live
no
no
no
please
it hurts
bones are breaking

*the initials z.i. sits down and eats
i serve him
and he is disgusted at eating, although he doesn't know he's eating a corpse
he is disgusted at eating, maybe because everything is in abundance
maybe the initials z.i. isn't hungry at all
but the initials z.i. is polite and spoonful after spoonful of stew disappears into his mouth
i have no work, the feast is happening on its own
i have no work and yet i'm tired
while the corpse bounces around ever more lively and doesn't want to stop
the initials z.i. stops eating
makes another circle
he's waving
and then he makes another circle and he's waving
and waving*

blood
sweet

no
it hurts
no
please
let me live
i haven't done
no
please
anything
no
wrong
no
stone
stone
stone
i want to live to see the sunrise while making love
my name is
suzan
my name is suzan
suzan abulismail
i wanted to live
never even thought about dying
i wanted to
see the end of the war
have a boyfriend
maybe i wanted to have a girlfriend
buy new trousers and a bag
laugh
cry, sometimes, cry, even cry
and laugh
my name is suzan
suzan abulismail
they call me suzy
they called me suzy and i wanted to live
it was the day for youth
the last day for youth
i was killed by a grenade on may 25 1995
i was born crying, while everyone else was laughing
maybe that is why i died laughing, while everyone else was crying
this is written in my diary
and then i really died laughing
when it went off, i was laughing and waving
waving
and laughing

and waving
and laughing
and waving
and i'm still waving, now that i'm a corpse, i'm still waving at you
at you and at that youth that died on may 25 1995 in tuzla
i wanted to live

the initials z.i. is still waving at you

honourable publicum

respected spectator

distinguished audience

the initials z.i. is still waving at you

and you no longer know whether it is the initials z.i. waving at you or if it is simona semenič or julia kristeva, age 24

as far as you are concerned, it could be the character janša or roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and the 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of chelsea football club and a father of six children and who has nothing to do with the real person roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and the 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of chelsea football club and a father of six children

as far as you are concerned, all of them could be standing or sitting on stage, all five of them

as far as you are concerned, dear spectator

(oops, yes, i apologize, by this "spectator" i mean a spectator of the male as well as of the female sex, although why i concede to the male sex being the generic one is maybe a matter of some other gathering, maybe some other feast)²

as far as you are concerned, dear spectator, they could all enter the stage right at the beginning and they could all feast together

actually, my distinguished spectatorship, wouldn't that be a pretty picture, all five of them behind the same table?

(about which it has already been stated that it could either be a table or not be a table)

my name is suzan

they called me suzy

the corpse has not yet come to a halt, the feast isn't finished

there is enough corpse for all of us, honourable audience

and it's repeating itself infinitely

in its regency dress

maybe lying down right at the front edge of the stage

maybe its eyes are sternly directed at you

repeating very quietly

² translator's note: english listeners/readers would not have the opportunity to see this as a problem since **spectator** is neither of male nor female gender, but in the original in the slovene language, the word **spectator** used throughout the play is used in the male gender

*whispering
or maybe not even whispering
because this*

*my name is markobašić ružica
my name is rukhsana naz
my name is dijana ninić
my name is shakila azizi
my name is radmila stolić
my name is hatin suruku*

*namely, this listing of names, you see
these names that the corpse is listing
these names that are the corpse
this listing can go on forever
and we got the picture, my distinguished respected audience
haven't we gotten the picture?
and then the punch line is just too strong
given that time is eluding us, dear spectator
(spectator in the generic gender, let me accentuate, so that there is no resentment, misunderstanding
or misinterpretation)
time is eluding us and we are near the end and this listing of names*

*my name is indira okanović
my name is maja bradarić
my name is mirela stan
my name is lejla atiković*

*is truly too strong a punch line, i mean, the corpse has told us what it had to tell us, and you and i, we
understand clearly, and yet
the corpse still lies at the front edge of the stage
looking you in the eye
maybe sternly
but, hand on my heart –
i put my hand on my heart or where the heart is supposed to be
i put my hand on my navy t-shirt
white
blue white
blue
i put my hand on my heart and
breathe in
tiny cloud
to put a hand on my heart, i think the corpse is watching you lazily
a bit hedonistically*

*the corpse isn't in a hurry
the corpse is lying at the front edge of the stage
lazily
a bit hedonistically
and maybe it's not even listing names
maybe it is just me and you, distinguished spectator, who hear the corpse uttering all those names*

my name is hitara antilsova
my name is morsal obeidi
my name is sofijanka jovanović perić
my name is elvira hurić

*because if the corpse were uttering all those names, then with this, we would have added a
redundant point to it all*

*which you, respected publicum, have no need for
isn't it true, you have no need for it?
the initials z.i. is still waving at you
i'm enjoying my pipe
(which could be a pipe, but quite possibly isn't a pipe)*

white

blue

white

blue

tiny ribbons of smoke

tiny clouds

sky sea clouds snow

i'm enjoying my pipe

looking at the horizon

*the corpse in its regency dress is nonchalantly lying at the front edge of the stage, looking at you just
as nonchalantly*

*the initials z.i. or simona semenič or julia kristeva, aged 24, or the character janša or roman
arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the owner of
the chelsea football club and a father of six children and who has nothing to do with the real person
roman arkadyevich abramovich, russian millionaire and 51st richest man on the planet, who is the
owner of the chelsea football club and a father of six children*

or maybe all of them together

are waving at you

tiny ribbons of smoke

tiny clouds

the snow

the sky

the clouds

the sea