

Ser Serpas  
*Guesthouse*  
14.02.2021 - 28.03.2021

This book is not a book. It's a cosmic abjection, chronologically framed through durational accumulation and insecurity whose qualities are best described, I think, in terms of a metallic aftertaste. It remains true that Ser Serpas never sits down with the intention to write a poem. Her missives are channeled in transition — walking, riding in cars and trains, and waking up from dreams. This volume begins where Carman ends, in the mid- July of 2017. At the start, she is leaving New York for Los Angeles. She then goes back to New York and then back and forth from LA to New York quite a bit, then she travels to Zurich, then back to New York again, then back to Zurich, then to Tbilisi, then Geneva, after which she goes back to New York, and later back to Tbilisi again via Paris, then back to Geneva with a brief recovery period in Los Angeles after moving and later back to Tbilisi. The last poems in this volume were written in Tbilisi at the end of 2020, under a 9 pm curfew in a year that required only small movements, ideally almost no movement at all. What could be demise and death might end another way. This is an ongoing story, the cycle of poems won't conclude until July of 2021. Coming soon, there will be an afterward and an addendum.

A guesthouse is an architecture of generosity and excess, both humble and extra extra. The poems contained in *Guesthouse* might be productively thought of as being—or at least being adjacent to— a feed or a stream or an exercising. Ser doesn't read books and doesn't have any favorite poets. This is repeated so often that it has become a mantra, one of several. There is something automatic, relentless, brutal and cruel going on in what ensues, but that isn't everything. Being hungover is a tool, as is what precedes it. There are various pills of various colors and descriptors, lately it's the booze pill / perfume pill / red pill cocktail. It's not difficult to observe a terrifying lucidity in the midst of all of this. A fixation on the volatile that slices like a blade through smoke. Not understanding obviously adds to the pleasure.

The double of this book, which is not a book, is the exhibition, *Guesthouse*, which is a book. Set to open on February 13, 2021 at LC Queisser gallery in the Plekhanovi neighborhood of Tbilisi, Georgia, it's anyone's guess if this date will hold. The main exhibition space, at 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street, is on the 2nd floor and, in order to access it from street level, one must ascend a curved staircase. As one moves from the street into the gallery's interior, they will encounter the final poem, *Palette Cleanser* (2020). The text was written on New Year's Eve and then written again in reverse on New Year's Day. The 25 lines are painted onto 25 sheets of clear newsprint used by Ser to squeeze the excess watercolor off her palette. The text can be read both forwards and backwards. She describes this final poem to be like a body. Specifically, she says, it's a body like the one of Bridgette Wilson as Melissa Margaret Marr in *House on Haunted Hill* (1999) which I take to mean a body that has been inexplicably atomized into architecture, evidenced in the film by a spray of cherry red blood in an upwards spiraling gesture.

Moving into the main exhibition space, a new series of language practice works in ink and water- color, titled *Alice (Language) Practice*, are hung on the walls, both behind gold frames and glass and also fixed directly into the plaster. You can sense a continuity with the hand of the artist involved in *Palette Cleanser*, but here the words are mostly not legible. Even when these works are dry they appear wet, the language becoming a melted, undone blur in the process. Their illegibility makes them not poems. There is some feeling of tie-dye in what you see, but it's more melancholic and irrational than decorative. I picture the third day of a bender, deep in the interior of the interior, followed by a string of the new glassy-eyed emojis. The palette of these works—iodine, wine, inky black, and blotchy aubergine—speaks to a time when the era of the wet didn't see its imminent takeover by the dry coming and our electrical present reality was, by some suspicious miracle, temporarily disabled.

—Nancy Lupo  
Tbilisi, January 2021