

Vasyl Slapchuk

Van Gogh's shoes

From the book *An Clock Hand Prick* (1998)

Biography

Vasyl Slapchuk, a famous Ukrainian writer, was born in 1961 in the village of New Zboryshiv in Volyn, Ukraine.

He is an Afghanistan war veteran.

Graduated from the Lesya Ukrainka Teacher Training College in Lutsk. Has a PhD degree in philology.

Slapchuk writes poetry, prose and critical articles, he is the author of over 30 books of various genres.

Slapchuk is the winner of the National Taras Shevchenko Prize (2004), the highest Ukrainian art award. Besides, he has numerous other literary awards, including prizes received in Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

Presently, Vasyl Slapchuk Lives in Lutsk, Ukraine.

* * *

Clay doesn't equal clay,
water isn't like water,
fire differs from fire.

Every time the potter lights his pipe,
his hands
start trembling.

Jugs by the wall
Are filled with
the end of the world.

* * *

Between the poles of the two hands
is the gray planet of the head
which life has been
turning
like
a globe.

* * *

At a tiny remote farm

a man lives
The legends tell
about him
that he
waded the road
three times;
the ones who hit that road
never came back.

* * *

I come to the village.
Three old apple trees
along the old street
greet my
One of them has a shorter shadow.
That's how
she remembers her childhood.

* * *

the sun
is bathing
in the village pond

a broken bottle

cut it in blood

mother says 'Come back home'

I rubbed my feet
with Van Gogh's shoes
again

it's getting dark
like after a punch

* * *

You let them
yell at you
to avoid beating.

You let them
beat you
to avoid death.

You let them
kill you
to avoid tortures.

You let them
torture you

to avoid
being tortured till the end of your life.

* * *

Only the beekeeper
who says 'my lady'
to the bee
knows the truth.
He knows that
it's not honey
but a sting

* * *

The ground under my feet
is like a potter's wheel —
my head spins.

For the potter,
all the pots are equal,
though one of them has
milk,
while the other is
just a piece of clay.

* * *

The bird's cry falls into the water
As food
for the haughty fish

A fish shows a fish
The way people scream.
People are deaf, though,
like after an explosion.

The bird's in pain.

* * *

To love each other is impossible
after so many years
of eating
from the same bowl.

It's impossible to say goodbye to each other
after so many years
of eating
from the same bowl.

* * *

With time,
it gets still harder to tell
those
who blew on screws
in order to make wind
from the Don Quixotes
who fought
the helicopter mills.

Already now
we honor them
as equals.

* * *

The wheel is always turned
to the water
with its shoulders.

The water turns the wheel
to see
its face.

The wheel will never
quench its thirst,

and the water will never know
that the truth is round-shaped.

* * *

Our kids go to school
Make us give them cash
to buy lunch and chewing gum
we drive cars
that splash mud from under the wheels
into the faces of the passers-by
when we meet
we ask each other
what time it is
we all have watches
but believe that we have time
in our hands

* * *

If a thousand beautiful women
appeared in front of me
I would not be impressed
Mr. Whitman
I can only be impressed
with one woman.

I know
Mr. Whitman
how to create the best people

I wish they were like that forever!

* * *

people
stirred the world up
in the eyes

forgot Mom's words
don't drive the horse, child
wait
let the forest
cross the road running

* * *

The jug, my younger brother,
sat down on my lap,
and the milk ran
through my fingers.

Once I'll say,

“O Lord!
I’m giving Your clay
Back to You”.

* * *

An empty bus will be
coming to me
every morning
It doesn’t
take me anywhere
just let me know
how lonely
I am.

* * *