

In ondeynk fun Maye Plisetskaya

Me zogt: ir guf iz haynt gevorn toyt...
Kalt-logish: ale gufim zaynen shterblekh.
Nor do, vos shayekh ir - di gantse logik
farvandlt zikh in umzinikayt glaykh
un in absurd, in meshugas afile!
Tut nor a kuk af ir in "Bolero":
ir yedes tselkhl otemt heys mit lebm,
un lebm shprits fun ale ire eyvrim
glaykh in farkhapte undzere neshomes.
Antsheydn shprits es, reysndik un hitsik -
un filt undz oykhet on biz gor mit khies!
Un s'trakht zikh: vos volt Markish ongeshribm,
ven er volt khochbi eyn mol zi derzen?..
An unikalste maystern, a berye -
un oykh a froy in fuln zin fun vort.
Nit vayblekh iz ir kunst afile - nor
legamre vayberish iz zi beteve.
Se tantst a froy mit froyen-kishef irn,
se flatern un flakern ba ir
i ale eyvrim, i der gantser guf.
Ir hert - dem lebm zingt ir guf a himen!
Ir zet - der gorer velt zi git zikh op!
S'iz nit keyn tants, nor a triumf fun lebm...
Un ot me zogt, az itst ir guf iz toyt?!
Kalt-logish - un absurd. Real - un zinloz.
Bagrifn vern haynt biz gor tsemisht...
Ikh fil, az troyerik ikh kon nit shraybm
un kon nit oysnitsn dos vort "geven".
Kol-zman se lebt di velt - aza mekhaye:
i zikh aleyn, i undz biz gor a traye,
vi tomid, tsvishn shtern hele, fraye,

In Memory of Maya Plisetskaya

The say her body died today.
Coldly logical—all bodies are mortal.
But here, with regard to her,
that logic turns into nonsense,
into an absurdity, even an insanity!
Just take a look at her in “Bolero”:
her every little cell breathes heat and life,
and life spurts from all of her limbs
right into our fascinated souls.
It spurts resolutely, stimulatingly, and hotly,
and completely fills us too with life.
And one thinks: What would Markish* have written
if he had seen her at least once?
A uniquely skillful virtuoso,
and also a woman in the fullest sense of the word.
Her art is not specifically womanly,
but nevertheless she is completely feminine by nature.
She is a woman dancing with all her womanly magic—
all her limbs and her whole body
flutter and blaze.
Do you hear?! Life sings a paeon to her body!
Do you see?! She gives herself to the whole world!
It's not a dance but a triumph of life.
And now they say that her body is dead?!
Coldly logical—and absurd!
Real—and senseless!
Concepts get completely mixed up these days:
I feel that I cannot write in sorrow
and cannot use the word “was.”
As long as the world lives—such a delight!--
completely faithful both to herself and to us,

tantst eybik undzer umshterblekhe Maye!

as always, our immortal Maya
dances forever among the bright, free stars!

*One of the greatest Yiddish poets of Russia,
the author of the famous poem "Tsu a yidisher tentsern"
("To a Jewish female dancer").