

A VISIT TO SATAN

Chr. Smirnensky

In my life I never till now have imagined
to get such a compliment, yet -
I had been invited by Devil-the Magic,
at home, "For an absinthe", he said.

The candle was projecting his clear cut thin features
with halo of golden bright rays,
and sir Mephistopheles-the teacher of teachers,
was friendly observing my face.

In his eyes autumnal deep grief was hidden,
however he smiled and was proud:
"The spirits for me had been never forbidden,
my absinthe is genuine, no fraud.

The world mediocrity rules are so boring-
all over injustice and lies,
a good toast to you, and let spirits be pouring,
the Virtue is weaker than Vice.

Before millennia I joined this planet;
a comedy after was born:
I married the Truth, and God did not ban it,
but She then supplied me with horns.

Obsessed both by jealousy and desperate hatred,
my honour, I felt, being dead,
the honour of Man I humiliated
but never my own I had.

Intending by bravery to get some glory
I died many times for good goal
but no honour, no gold, and only much worry
I got in return for my role.

Defeated and tarnished one day I decided
attention of people to gain,
and raised a big poster, sublime and excited:
"My honour went down the drain!"

But nobody, strangely enough, was confounded,
all round applause I met:
"So, you are dishonoured! How noble that sounded!
Dishonoured, you honour shall get!"

One gentleman devotedly kissed me: "O, brother,
you too are as me, that is fine!"
Two ladies invited me one after another:
"Be my guest! The pleasure is mine!"

How nice! How beautiful! Always ready
to be praised by all abbots and kings,
I was indispensable, gallant and steady,
encircled by most pleasant things.

And now you can see me-how strong, how allmighty
I live here - as rich as a sheikh,
I know - I am lying, and stealing, and bribing,
dishonoured but always sleek."

The devil got silent. He fixed two pure absinthes,
said "Cheers, and have a good chance!"
And sighing as though I was absent,
he pierced me with his cunning green glance.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)