

# ONE - LINE POETRY

by

FLORENTIN SMARANDACHE

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## Preface

On a scenery of dead, pitch darkness, my new poems.

—

## Synapse

They whirl the many maggots of a thought.

—

## To Write Writing

I am living in one single word: writing.

—

## The Flight of the Bird in the Egg

As far as to the Latin Mother and the Dacian Father.

—

## Sarmizegetusa

The Dacians may be heard living among the vestiges of the  
fortress.

—

### Heroes

Bridges of bones they have built over the centuries.

—

### History

The graveyards are full with our forefathers' Ages.

—

### Bassarabia

Justice tortured at treadmill, a crown of fire on the forehead of  
Freedom.

—

### Ewe

The shepherds are coming down to the plain directly from the  
ballad.

—

### Ballad

All the firtrees from out woods are coming down into our lads.

—

### Ewes

The odes of the Romanian language are the tongues that ring the  
bells.

—

### At the Sheepfold

The dogs are barking at the stillness, the stillness is still.

—

Fairy Tale

The flowers are flooding the garden with longing and ballads.

—

The Great Romanian Wall

The flight is our hard currency

. Man Near Man

We are building the Great Romanian Wall of Ascension.

—

Cosmic I

In the canopy of the night heaven the stars are tiptoeing.

—

Cosmic II

The stars are seethed in the blue blood of the sky.

—

Terra

Taking bomb-pills for headaches.

—

Dawn I

The thick lip of the night is deflating from the yawns.

—

Dawn II

A sunrise is smiling into my face.

—

Dawn III

I pull through the window the white ropes of the sunrise.

—

Thermonuclear

The light in the sun is teeming as worms.

—

Morning I

The bees are awakening to the life in a yellow wonder!

—

Morning II

The net of nerves of the day is spreading all over.

—

My Love!

The light is singing at your window!

—

Lamp Fabric

It is the ballet of the bright scales of the Happiness.

—

Thirst

We are digging deep wells for the light.

—

Birth

The light is raising its laps to the girdle.

—

Vision

Are they, the birds blinded by the light?

—

Einstein

The infinite was touched upon by the remote end of a streak of  
light.

—

Carpenter

The morning light is flooring my rooms.

—

Inner Light

It is as if my navel is bound up with the sun.

—

The Wheels of the Hours

Are torn away from the central axletree of mankind.

—

Time

It is flowing into us it overflows.

—

Destiny

The watch of the Earth has its lid snapped up.

—

XX Century

I run and run and run to catch Time by the hand.

—

Immobile Point

Th eland runs astoundingly under my soles.

—

BDcesti (Pondshire)

The road is limping between deep ponds.

—

Road

Towards the infinite, my boulevard of inspiration.

—

Karma I

The everlasting Time opens the window for the very moment.

—

Karma II

I am darning with homes the tattered shirt of my destiny.

—

*E Pericolose Sporgersi*

Do not lean out of your time.

—

Irony

All our clothes are getting old on us.

—

Spring I

White poems on a branch, the waltz of the revival.

—

Spring II

The Orchard is welcoming us with laughter of buds.

—

Spring III

The Zephyrus is punching us gently with sharpened horns.

—

Spring IV

The mild cranes bring the warmth on their wings.

—

The Mites

They are hoisting the Immaculate banner of the hazy shades.

—

Revival

Innocent, diaphanous, the Spring at the exams.

—

Ingenue

Young carnations like coy schoolgirls.

—

Poem of Nature

The body of the day is weaves over the haze of the peak.

—

Summer I

Silence splashed by the chirrups of the crickets.

—

Summer II

Guffaws of leaves over the bookshelves of the river meadow.

—

Thunder



Like a twilight dragon, it gives birth to defeating.

—

Nature

It is snoring through the swamps resounding with croaking of  
the frogs.

—

Eclipse

The sun is dressing itself into mourning clothes.

—

Only

A brushwood of sun, if it comes out into my sight.

—

Image

Haziness, as a white marble veil.

—

Sun in Seethe

Is overflowing its melted gold through the funnel of the day.

—

The Flowers

Have drunk away in the spring and now they are ripening in  
colors.

—

Early in the Morning

It has rained with daisies

—

Blue

The Irises sullied with shyness are casting color views.

—

Party

The dance of the flowers kissed by the butterflies.

—

Geography

The hill is climbing towards the sky on ramose foreheads.

—

Weather Forecasting

The horizon is kneading as a past of dough.

—

Hilarious

the lily is laughing with the lips opened to the ears.

—

The Fir Tree

Having a diploma in rightness, with its forehead into the sky.

—

Crickets

Oh! Yes! They are building a monastery of silence on the plain!

—

Bacovian I

The thunder threatens the white earth with a rain of lead.

—

Bacovian II

The aging lane blossoms under the grizzled rains.

—

The Sea I

Undressed of depths as a naked body of a girl.

—

The Sea II

With its hair disheveled by the seagulls is yelling in despair.

—

Excess

Flowers and leaves dizzy of the hoarfrost.

—

Painting

The canopy of heaven is plastered with silver clouds.

—

Song

The deserts are exhausting themselves on the roads with a smell  
of rottenness.

—

Swans

On the screen of the water, I admire a teleshow.

—

Show

In the open theater of the summer, gentle breezes are chasing  
one another.

—

Abundance

A cluster of sounds stripped from a melody.

Entropy

As a dying elephant, the river is flowing towards his death.

—

Polychromy

The colors have fallen asleep forgotten on the petals.

—

Royal

The locust tree is crowing itself - charming itself like a king.

—

### Tiredness

The alder trees are bending to the ground their heads heavy with  
deep sleep.

—

### On the Sidewalk of the Street

People covered with the dust of the worry for the morrow and  
with the shadows tied to their feet.

—

### Apotheosis in Red

Gathered by Hephaltos, the embers are burning into the  
poppies.

—

### Indecent

A dragonfly roaming naked among buds.

—

### Noon

The quietness is laying on the rock.

—

### Ascension I

The straight firtrees spring up towards the sky from our  
foreheads.

—

Ascension II

The birds in the sky stripping themselves of the shades.

—

Metathesis

Council of the mountains - the chronicler is the wave of the sea.

—

Apotheosis I

We breed birds for the wild blue canopy above.

—

Apotheosis II

The butterflies are setting on the apricot trees and so, the trees  
are in blossom.

—

Autumn I

The silence is rusting under the drizzling rain.

—

Herculean - Bath

During the silence, the glowworms are lightening the dark.

—

Autumn II

The Eminescian linden trees are in hemorrhage of leaves.

—  
Aphrodite

Burstings of mute carnations from the gown swishing on her  
body.

—  
Woman

From what kind of a swan have you ever come out?!

—  
Recondite

Your whispers of love are entombing me in sins.

—  
She-devil

You have poured the Hell into these sinful words.

—  
Victim

In the street, a woman is pulling me by my glances.

—  
Distance

Between you and me there are thousands of verses of light.

—  
Sign

You have forgotten your glance on a blushing carnation.

—

Bosoms

Rushing into my palms as two ablazed volcanoes.

—

You

Indifferently, you are bathing in the water of the mirror.

—

Ingenue

With seagulls in the hair, mistress over a fleet of flowers.

—

Rivulet spring

White birds spring out of me.

—

Sublimation

The spring I swim in, it is a spring of smoke.

—

Vision

The day is bathing in the hours.

—

Autumn III



Gone with the wind the leaves are talking deserts.

—

Rain

And so it is pouring the autumn melted tin!

—

Country Borough

Dogs with their muzzles in the dumb edge on the ditch.

—

Winter I

The wind is pulling the trees by their stripped ears.

—

Winter II

The frost is chattering its teeth because of the dark.

—

Scenery

The winter is frowning its icy eyebrows.

—

Winter Night

A snowfall of white angels.

—

Stillness

Maximum trend towards the absolute white.

—

Play

In the stove, the flames are laughing beyond the grates.

—

Niagara - Falls

The winter is weeping melting the snow banks.

—

A Thought from Phoenix

An upside down precipice mountain of longing.

—

Helsingor

The blind glance is sweeping the fleeting shadows.

—

Introversion

The shade is sinking deep into the smoked crag.

—

I Write

I wash the rust off the pen into the song of a skylark.

—

From a Fairy Tale

I often go to sleep on a mattress stuffed with dreams.

—

Vegetal

The plant of the remembrances is bending its stem.

—

Romance

Over the grass of the thoughts, the leaves of the forgetfulness.

—

Enlargement

I use enlargement glasses to see the hopes.

—

Now

My longing is snapshooting pictures of pain.

—

1987

My poor soul is fitting on foreign broadcastings.

—

News

Swishing, swishing in the world with their brightening scales.

—

Bahca I

The wine is dripping remembrance into the goblets.

—

Bahca II

I crack a bottle full with gloomy longings.

—

Mother

With her leavened by sleep eyes and old youthfulness.

—

Grandmother

Her hearing stuck to a romance.

—

Metaphysical Noose

I am hanged down serene obedient thoughts.

—

Play

I am running to catch the large circle of the sky.

—

Algebra

Abstract questions are passing by near me.

—

Illusion

the people are dressing the bright colors of the Happiness.

—

Hippy

Your long locks are arousing a gust of wind.

—

Book with Poems

The paper bird is slapping my eyes.

—

Poem

To syllabify silence, the brook starts.

—

Heraclitian

I am sitting down on the step of ever flowing days.

—

Thirsty

I am running on the streets to pick up a basket of words.

—

Refuge

A round into the childhood, the sweet cradle of expectations.

—

Bust

Poet of mine! Snowed all over with so many worlds!

—

To Paul Verlaine

Up, in the high spheres, the blue is heard playing the violins.

—

Agriculture

The kernels of the fulfillment's are breeding studs of dreams.

—

Nightfall

I am blowing fierily into my soul to prevent its parting.

—

Introversion

Irrational pains are slapping my inner living being.

—

Poetical Art

I am rowing with numbers and squares as a roamer on the  
streets.

—

Larousse

A scenery of shades that have reached over the earth.

—

Watchman

I am the watchman at the door of your heart.

—

Demiurgic I

A book is kindled written by the longing.

—

Junk Shop

I am endlessly sold by Hermes on a market with sorrows.

—

Ignoramus

To swim freely through ignorance.

—

Demiurgical II

A sacred hour I have grasped during the flight towards poetry.

—

Scriptorium

With the nib dipped into the ink of the light.

—

Dual Personality

I am far away from myself, at kilometers of doubtfulness.

—

Piousness

I came to engraft a white flower on the prayers.

—

From the Days of Yore

I am living in the poetry from the Age of Ovid.

—

Mythology

The sky for the stars: a noble-hearted tomb digger.

—

1988

It is snowing endlessly and the entire evil comes down from the  
Top.

—

Nocturne

The dark fastens tightly my eyes.

—

Address

I live alone in the coffin of my body.

—

Drunkenness

The roaming delusions are driving me at random.



—  
Radiography

I am feeling myself like a jail of my body.

—  
Solitude

Loneliness of lead and a solemn pitch-dark of bass sound.

—  
Zen

My inner heavy chasm in the balance of sufferings.

—  
Sunset

The reverse road of the light towards the sun.

—  
Ghost

The voice of the black evening, lamenting through the garden.

—  
Asymmetry

Under the rein of the destiny, the horses of life are limping.

—  
Ex-Politico I

I think the life is lived a billion times.

—  
Ex-Politico II

The car of life on the most outlying streets.

—  
Loneliness

It is setting on the keys and begins weeping.

—  
Anti-karma

A river of life is flowing endlessly into the ocean of death.

—  
Anabasis I

I take a walk into my soul with my brain in my hand.

—  
Anabasis II

The road to the light is crossing through the darkness.

—  
Old Men

We are reaching the customs house of the winter with our faces  
in tatters.

—  
From the Computer

Abstract figures are jabbing into you to the hilt.

—

Patience

Brimful with expectations in the white flour of loneliness.

—

Golgotha

Everyone is carrying on the shoulders his own cross in  
accordance with his rank.

—

Little by Little

We are slipping into the death falling from the future.

—

Concillatio

A strange path in the chasm of my soul.

—

Comminatio

An octopus of horror was nestling into my soul.

—

Curse

My hands are locked with the fetters of failures.

—

### Self Portrait

The mirror of my face is scratched by anxiety.

—

### Nightfall I

As sick as the sorrow - the yellow is sighing.

—

### Nightfall II

Chained under lock and key, the stifled hour is basting.

—

### Spleen I

With dark night ring, the flowers have folded into themselves.

—

### Crow

With the night on its wings, dominating up on a lighted  
streetlamp.

—

### Moon I

Hoary old woman hanged up on the peak of the clouds.

—

### Spleen II

A colorless white is silent under the dead swan of the day.

—  
Moon II

A half-shut eye lightening sleeping shades.

—  
"Painting"

Anonymous birds running in the night.

—  
Awakening

The evening is soaring round the street lamp.

—  
Moon III

Entombing itself sweetly among clouds of apricot trees.

—  
Fiesta

Night after night, the moon is betrothing to the shadows.

—  
Moon IV

Limpid, half nibbled by the worms of the night.

—  
Stars

They are printed on the sky with minute small letters.

—  
Moon V

In a nightshirt, ripened and pregnant.

—  
Balance

At the end of the millenium, the broken vestige of the flight.

—  
Requiem

The wax of the sufferings is melted in the graveyards.

—  
Pray for the Dead

The dance of the crosses raises calls towards the immortality.

—  
Pain

The living being that is gnawing at our dreams.

—  
School

On the blackboard of the despair I am writing a new illusion.

—  
Mother

I beseech you, do not give birth to me again.

—  
Premonition

Congratulations to you my son, my son who will be no more  
borne!

—  
Apocalypse

Sky in blazing mauve fire and dead birds.

—  
In the Graveyard

The day when I'll render my soul to the spaces.

—  
Caput Mundi

All things begin and end into us.

—  
Testament

Do let in your Age a name written with letters of fire.

—  
Question

Why are we all searching for our grave into the sky?

—  
Album

Ages to be kept for ages.

—

Epitaph for the Poet

Nobody rests in this grave because he was born from poetry.

—

Language

We are crossing daily through tunnels of words.

—

End

Crushed down by the iron horses of the Apocalypse.

*"One-Line Poetry", Preface by OVIDIU GHIDIRMIC, Literary Criticist, Professor of Literature at the University of Craiova*

Started with the haiku volume "Clopotul tacerii" (The Bell of Silence), the classicisation process of paradoxism is continued in the present volume, "Through tunnels of words", containing one-line poems, that intends to reply to an older cycle, so ostentatiously advertized as "Poems with no lines". In the work of Florentin Smarandache we witness a dialectical of negation and internal polemic.

The title of the volume immediately captures attention. "Through tunnels of words", a metaphore of the last poem of the volume, wants to suggest the unidirectional going of the poetical speech through the tunnels of the words of poems.

The idea of writing one-line poems, may have come to Florentin Smarandache from Ion Pillat, one of the great romanian poets in the inter-war period, who wrote a volume actually entitled One-Line Poems in 1936.

Ion Pillat was one of the remarkable representatives of Romanian Traditionalism, a fine and cultivated spirit, of high artistic refinement, a world-range poet. Ion Pillat even provided a sui generis defenition of the one-line poem: "A single Panflute,



but how many echoes in the words". Yet Florentin Smarandache detaches himself from his prestigious model, both in conception and in poetic technique. The need for programatic delimitation is demanding, essential with Florentin Smarandache, who is a "reverse", "a rebours" spirit, only able to manifest himself through negation, opposition, both to others and himself, as we have seen.

In Ion Pillat time, the one-line poem was considered an "innovation", the more interesting when it appeared at a traditional school poet. Today we have a whole tradition of one-line poetry, including Florentin Smarandache, the "paradoxist". Ion Pillat's one-line poems, as all poems of the celebrated author of the volume "Pe Arges in sus" (Upstream on the Arges, 1923) - a memorable date in Romanian Literary History - is remarkable by the impeccable writing of the verse. This is because Ion Pillat was a thorough "calophile", an adept of "beautiful writing", while Florentin Smarandache has an obvious "anticalophilic" structure, and is disinclined to pay too much attention to form. Ion Pillat was an "apollinic" temperament: calm, detached, tranquil and balanced, while his modern counterpart, on the contrary, has a "dionysiac" temperament: troubled, eager, anxious, of vitalist frenzy. In his admirable "writing" Ion Pillat's one-line poems do not count on "paradox", which is the centerpoint of Florentin Smarandache's outlook and output.

In our opinion, the one-line poem is the touchstone any real poet, as it relies on synthesis - the major quality of the human spirit - and demand the art of extreme concision, of expressing the most in the fewest words: "Multum in parvo", as the Latin said.

The ultimate temptation in poetry is that of including the very essence of the world, of the whole universe, in a single line - a performance only achieved only rarely by poets such as Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe or Eminescu. A single line may make a poet immortal and his work last throughout ages. To give just one exemple at hand, Eminescu, the greatest Romanian poet, he would have been one of the greatest poets of all times even if he had written only the line "For the life of the whole world is but a dream of eternal death", the concluding line of the poem "Imparat si proletar" (Emperor and Proletarian). We have to acknowledge that never in the world literature has such a line been produced elsewhere. Almost all great romanistics said that "Life is a dream", but the life of the whole world is but a dream of death, is a thing only Eminescu said.

Looking at the whole life of the world from such a staggering perspective of the void, leaves one speechless, reduces one

to... silence. One's mind is pierced by such logic of the absolute!

One-line poem should strive to become concise and revealing apophthegmatic definitions, of gnomic sententiousness, attained by classical aphorisms. This is why the art of one-line poems is so difficult. No matter how modern in form, one line ppoems belong to an art that is essentially classical!

Florentin Smarandache's one-line poems, included in the volume "Through tunnels of words", contain almost nothing of the paradoxical

"inovations", with the exception of the "paradox" as such, which is not even... a "paradoxical" inovation. They are nether "non-literature", nor "non-poems", nor "grapho-poems", nor "picto-poems", but proper poems. A poet once waging ceaseless battle against the main literary tool is now relatively cozily installed in the "writing", as he tells us in the beginning, with a some resignation: "I am living in one single word: writing". No wonder! Only once do irrepressible "paradoxist" longings occur, when, through repetition, he comes to cut one word, indeed, the most troubling of all: "Quietness", as in the line "The dogs are barking the stillness, still-ness, still-" (<At the sheepfold>), which signifies a paradoxical lengthening of enchoes... of Quietness.

These one-line poems of Florentin Smarandache are not easy to group because of their thematic diversity and technique. We leave the pleasure of classification to the Romanian or American reader and any world over.

We only attempt a very brief guideline. A first category deal with the nostalgia of the native land and Romanian culture. For those who have even a summary knowledge of Romanian culture, the popular ballad <Miorita> (Kind Sheep) is a beginning point. Starting from it, Lucian Blaga, one of the gratest Romanian poets and philosophers, established the "stylistic matrix" of Romanian spirituality in his essay, "Spatiul Mioritic" (The Mioritic Space, 1936). The Romanians were born in a "mioritic space", a pastorage space, that acts for them as a "matrix", moulding their sensivity. The "Miorita" ballad contains a specifical Romanian philosophical outlook, a "Mioritic" outlook on death, a Romanian "Weltanschauung". The Romanians, the ballad implies, saw life as a cosmic wedding, a lithurgical ritual involving the whole nature.

The Romanians' moral force, that of people at the cross-reads, in the way of all historical winds of change, is that of turning any tragic into a happy event. It is a unique, original vision of life. The "Miorita" is a bind of religion for the Romanians. So deeply does Florentin Smarandache believe in Romanian

spirituality that he gets to the pre-eminence of artistic creation that itself generates reality:

"The shepherds are coming down to the plain directly from the ballad" (Ewe). "The flight of the Bird back in the Egg" is the memorable title of another one-line poem, a title worthy of the father of modern sculpture, Brancusi, who captured not only the flight, but... the potential flight. This is the very little conceived in the best paradoxical tradition! The key-words of the Romanian spirituality are "doina" si "dor". "Doina" is a specific Romanian tune expressing the "dor", a complex feeling, that has no equivalent in other spiritualities or languages, and which, the same Lucian Blaga defined as "the melancholy of a soul, neither too heavy, nor too light, ascending and descending". The word does not translate. A Romanian-American writer, Florentin Smarandache is reached by the "dor" even in Phoenix: "An upside down precipice is the mountain of longing" (A thought from Phoenix, USA). The Latin essence of the Romanian people, the Getian-Dacian vestiges of Sarmisegetuza, the village of Balcesti, in his native Oltenia, Eminescu and Bacovia, as cultural landmarks, are all themes of meditation for Florentin Smarandache.

The influence of Bacovia, another great Romanian poet, the best representative of Romanian "symbolism", is visible in these one-line poems.

Moreover, Florentin Smarandache was characterised by Romanian criticism as a "Bacovia" poet, ever since his debut volume, "Formulas for the Spirit".

Many of these one-line poems are modelled on the pictorial Bacovian technique, of synesthesia and correspondence, chromatic pastels, indeed:

"The thunder threatens the white earth with a rain of lead" (Bacovian I); "The aging lane blossoms under the grizzled rains" (Bacovian II).

But even greater in this volume is the influence of Lucian Blaga's "expressionism". "Expressionism" means establishing relationship with the cosmic, the absolute, the unlimited, and is characterised by a violent imagism, by shocking metaphors:

"The stars are seethed in the blue blood of the sky" (Cosmic II);

"The light is raising laps to the girdle" (Birth);

"Do not lean of your time" (E pericoloso sporgersi).

Finally, we believe that the force-line of this volume consist of a metaphysical lyricism that places Florentin Smarandache in the contemporary trend of philosophical "pessimism" and "existentialism".

Concepts like "anxiety", "concern", "fear", specific to contemporary existential philosophy are widely illustrated in this volume:

"An octopus of horror was nestling into my soul" (Comminatio);  
"The mirror of my face is scratched by anxiety" (Self Portret);  
"Brimful with exceptations in the white flour loneliness"  
(Patience);  
"On the blackboard of the despair I am writting a new illusion"  
(School); "I live alone in the coffin of my body" (Adress).

Most of the one-line poems of the volume "Through tunnels of words" are, indeed, memorable:

"I beseech you, do not give birth to me again" (Mother) - here is an aphorism that not even the blakest of the world philosophers, Shopenhauer, would have dared utter!

Florentin Smarandache is also a great poet, that should not be seen merly from the perspective of theory, but this side and beyond "paradoxism".