

AMHARIC / FRENCH / ENGLISH

Moulou Mek

L'Homme de Ville

የ ከ ተ ጣ ው ሰ - ው ፣

ሰለ ሰዎችና ሰለ አይጮች በሐረግ ላይ ዓይነት ስፍራ አገኛለን ። የከተማ ሰው አለ ። የገጠር ሰው አለ ። የገጠሩ ሰው ከተረጎሮ የታደሰውን አይነት ሄሮ የወረሰ ይመስላል ። ሕይወት ከደርግ ጀምሮ የመሬት ቆይታ ሆኖበት በዚህ አይነት ሄሮው አስባብቃ ደረሰ ይቀጥላል ። ኃላፊ ሕይወቱን ሙሉ ሲቆይ ከነበረበት መሬት ውስጥ የመጠረጣጥ ታላቅን አገቅሶራጭ ይተኛል ።

ለእርሱ ዓለም ቀና ብሎ በሚመለከተውና ገጠሩን ከባባባው የሰማይ ክፍያ የተወሰነ ሆኖ ይታያል ። አገደዘው የሚኖርበት የገጠር መሬት ሀገሩን የሚወሰን ይመስለዋል ። በየቀኑ የሚቆይው የዚህ መሬት ጠፍጣፋነት የይምሰሰ ነው አገጁ በእውነት ከሆነ ድረስ ሱሰ ነው ብተሎት ከት ብሎ ይበቅባቸዋል ። ጣታ ነው ከሌሎች ገበሬዎች ጋር አሳት ከበው አሹቀ እየቃው የከተማውን ሰው ፊደል እያነሳ የሚያሳገጡት “የአላጌን በራሪ ምንጣ ፍን” ተረት አገደውነተኛ ታሪክ አርጋችሁ ብት ነገሩት ሳይቃወማችሁ በእርግጥ አገደሆነ አደርገ በመቆጠር የተነሳ አራሲችሁ ተረት ይሁን እውነተኛ ታሪክ ለመለየት ተቸገራላችሁ ። በኃላ ነው ከእርሻ ጋዶች ጋር ሆነው በአሸግሮ የሚከለክሏችሁ ።

“ ተር ሊራስ ? አገዳህ አይነት ወፍ አለ ? ጠረቃ ላይ ሰው አረረ ? ” ዋይ እነዚህ ከተጠቃሚዎች ራዲዮው በቀና ነው ።!

በአገደዘው አይነት ከተማን በየቀኑ ከሚገኘው ከሚያምታታው ተርኢት አራሱን አርቆ የገጠሩ ሰው ማዚና ዊ ሄሮ እየኖረ ራቀ ብለን አገደምና የው ጣፍ ሰማይ ጠቀባ ፍቀ ላይ ከሚኖረው ከዚህ ከተማ በውጭ ጋራ ሆነ በጤና ሄሮ አይሎ ሕይወቱን ይመራል ።

.....

በምቹው አሰጋው ላይ ሆኖ የከተማው ሰው ይገጠራራል ፣ ያዘጋጅ ፣ አይኑን እን ቀሰፍ ጣገቂያ በዓት ላይ ጢሰ አደርገ የዕለቱን ታላቅን ጥገቃ ለአራሱ ያቀርባል “ ይነሳ ? አይነሳ ? ” ትገሽ ቢተኛሰ ? ገና ከጠየቀ 2 ሰዓት ነው ። አያን ገን የተቋጠው አገቅሶፍሰ ከረዘመሰ ? የሥራ ሰዓት ያረፍደበት የለም እንዳ ? ምን ቸገረው ታዲያ ? አገዱ አይነት ምክንያት ረገሮ አርፍዶ ሥራ ሊገባ ይችላል ። አበቲ የመጀመሪያ ያውን የቀኑን ስጋራ ... ተላገት በማጠባና አሰባሰብ በመጋቱ ብዚት አገገፍገፍት ዳገም አሰጠሁም አላጠሰም ብሎ ነበር ። የሰካራም መሃላ ... ስጋራውን ለክብር በአገዱ ምክን ያት ሆነ በሌላ መጠት አይቀርም ።

.....

ገና ገህ ሲቀድ ወኞች የግለሰብ ፈጠታቸውን ሲለቁ የገጠረ ሰው ገበራ ነቀቅ ተነሳቷል ። የከተማው ሰው የተጻፈው እንቅስቃሴን ለመቀጠል ብርድ ልብሱን ሲከናኘን ገበራ ወደር ቀንበረን አሰማዎቻችን እርሻውን ጀምሯል ።

.

5 ሰዓት፣ ያረጉም ሰላም አቃጠለ . . . የከተማው ሰው ያለበት አሰጋ ላይ ተወራገጠ ። የሰላምን እጅጋቸው ያነሳ ወይ አያነሳ ? ። አለቃው ከሆነ ለሚደውሉት ምን ይለዋል ? ተላጎት በግምቦት የተነሳ ዛሬ ማንቀሳቀሱን ? ኖ ኖ ኖ በፍፍው ጥሪ ጌላ ሰላሙ ሰላችቶት ዘዎ አለ ። ከአሰጋው ተሸፈንጥሮ ዘሉ ወርዶ ሰውነቱን ዘረጋጋ ቀርብ ከሌላው መታጠቢያ ሂዶ የሚገኘውን ቀዝቃዛ ውኃ ጭንቀላቱ ላይ አንቀረቀረ በቸክላ ልብሶቹን አጥሶቶ ። አሰማዘ ። ወይንም ። አሰቲር ። የገዛሉትን ክራሻት አደርጎ ወደ ቢሮው ለመሄድ ከቦታ ወጧ ። መኪናውን እያሰነሳ ለአለቃው የሚደረደረውን የግርጌ ፈጽሞ ምክንያት እየፈጠረ መንገዱን ተያያዘው፣ ምንም እንኳን ቀዝቃዛ ውኃ ቢደፋበትም በቀዝቃዛው አሰክሶ የጋየው ጭንቀላቱ እንደ ደውሎ ያሰተጋባ ነበር ።

.

እርሻውን በገፋበት ጌላ የገጠረ ሰው ጥላውን ከዘረጋው ተሰቆ ዛፍ ቀረብ ብሎ ከጥቂት ጊዜ ስረፍት ጋደም አለ። የከተማው ሰው ምንጭን ሲገራ በለብሶ ጊዜ ገበራ ጫሰቱ የላከችለትንና ልጁ የሚያቀርብለትን አንድ ቀል አርጎ በጉሮሮው ገለበጠ ።

.

7 ሰዓት ሰላሙን በየአቅጣጫው ከአቃጠለ በጋላና ሰፍር ቀጥሮ የሌለው ሰፍና ማኪያቶ ገሰብጠ ስጋዬ የሲጋራ ፓኬት በሰከት ውስጥ ወርወሮ ቢሮው ውስጥ ጸ ተሰብሰበው የቀዝቃዛ የመጠጥ ሴት ጀብደቸውን በየተራ ከሚተርኩት የቢሮና የመጠጥ ጋደኛቹ ጋር ሠላ ምቹ ከተቀያየረና ለጸጠፈው አንድ ሁለት ከሮባፓንግን ከሰመቻ በጋላ ከሚሸከረከረው ወንበር ተነሳቶ የከተማው ሰው ከቢሮው ወጧ ።

.

መኪናውን አሰነሰቶ የሚያዘወትረው ምገብ ቤተ ማምረት ጀመረ ፣ የቀጠሮ ሰዓቷ መኪና ጋንታ መስከሰ አገጽ ሆኖ ያጠሉ ፀጠይን ከመቋቋም መከራ የመኪናው ቅርቅሮ ገሏል ። የእርሱም ጭቅላት አገዛዥ... የክላክቦች ክግሥርቶ የጥገሉ መኪና ነጂያች የተወገበት ማጣት መነጣጠይ የቆተሮች የቤንዚል ሽታ ከመቅበረት ወደ ቀይነት የሚለወጠው የተራራክ መብራት በማቀለሽለሽ መሰክ ወደ ገሮሮው አቀጣጣ የሚመጣው የግዙጫው አሰታሰብና ከሰብ በላይ የተጠጣው የጠየቀ ጠናና ሚኒያቶ በአጀብ ተሰብረው ይጠሉታል ። ሳውጣ ሳውጣ አይሉ ይጠሉታል ። የተራራኩ መብራት ወደ አረገጌጃ ተቀየረ ። ክላክቦች ጭቅላታችንን አገደገና አሰተገቡ ፣ የከተማው ሰው የመኪናውን የአጅፍራን ለቀ ቤንዚን ሰጠ 2 ሜትር አሰላላም የመኪናው " ኪርቡራተር " ታናና ኖሮ መኪናው ቀጥቶ ብሉ ቀረ ። የክላክቦ ጋንታ የሎክትና የሰደብ ወርጃብን ጭቅላታን ጽ አሰረው ሁሉንም ተቶ ከዘሠ ገሃነብ ለመውጣት የከተማው ሰው የመኪናውን በር ከፍቶ ሰውጣ አገደገፋ ተኛ የቀጠረት ሌሎች ባለ መኪናዎች ወደርሱ ሲያመራ ሲያያቸው የተደናበረው ጭቅላታ ሰብ ወደ እርሱ ሊነከሱት አገደገጡ የተጠላና የጅብ መገንባት አድርጎ ነው ያያቸው ። አገራ አውጭን ለማለት ሽገጠት አቀጣጣ ሰመርጥ ድገገት አገድ የተራራክ ፖሊስ ወደርሱ ሲጠጋው አገደገን በመሸነፍ መሰክ ወጣ ወረድ አድርጎ የሚያደርገው ጠፍቶት ሰውነት ሆኖ ቀረ ።

.

የገጠረ ሰው ወረረ ቀገብረን ሂደት አቅጥሮ አገረን ከሚገኝተው በራው ጠጋ ብሉ የከብቱን አገጽን አገር ወደ ላይ አገሰቶ ጥፍሮቹ መሃል የተሰጠውን አገደገ በጥንቃቄ ነቀሉለት አገደገጠና አይነት ደበሰ ደበሰ አድርጎ አጠገቡ ካለው ገጠሽ መራው የይጠይቁን አቀማመጥ በማየትም የምሳ ሰዓት አገደገረሰ በመገንዘብ ወደ ቤት አመራቸ።

.

በምሳ ሰዓት የከተማው ሰው ምንም አገገን የግዙጫው መጠጥ ባይለቀውም ከጌራ ጭቅላታ ማዘዙን አሰረሰው ፡፡ ጋላም ገብታው ላይ የቀረበለትን ምገብ በመመሰከት ስኪም

ባዘዘለት መሠረት መብላት የሚገባውን ምገብ መብላት ከሚገባው ከመብላት አስከ
ዘህ ረሃብ ያሳገባችውን ጠንቀቃውን ማስተናገድ ጀመረ :: ሲገራውን ለከገብ ከገረረ
ላይ ከወተረም በኋላ ** እቱ አገዳ ቦኛክ ሲሆን አለ አምባዚም ያሳባሉትን ምገብ
ለማወራረድ ::

.

** ገብራ አገዳ ዚራው ርብት አያውቅም ** አለች የገጠረ ሰው ሚስት ያቀረ
በችለትን ምገብ በማጣባት የሚባሉትን ባሏን ደስ እያላት በመመልከት ገብቷው ላይ
ያቀረቡችለትን ሁሉ ጥርገርገ አድርጎ በሰቶ ከወረሰ በኋላ ወደ ሚስቱ ዞር ብሎ
አይኑን ሲያንቀሳሳላቸው ወዲያው ገባትና ለአገሪቱ ይህናል ብላ ቆጥቧ ያስቀመጡ
ውን የቀጠለም ቀቀሰ ሂድ ብላ ከወጣ በት ይዘለት መጣች ::

.

የከሰዓት በኋላው ጊዜ ለከተማው ሰው አጅገ ተጋተብት በቦራ በሌላም አሳ
ክሳ የወደለው በርጩን እያከከ የሚያዘገውን እንቅልፍ በተደገገው ስፍ ለማባረር እያ
ጣሩ አለቃዎ ሥራ እንደሰጣት የምትጠባበቀውን ፀጠራውን ምንም አይነት የረገግ ሥራ
ሲያሠሩት ** የምርመራ ሥራ ስላላብኝ ለሥራ ጉዳይ ተያዘ ዋል ** በይሰኝ በማለት ቢሮ
ውን በቀላፍ ካሸገው በኋላ ከሰው ኑ ጀምሮ የተጠቃሚውን እንቅልፍ መለጠጥ ጀመረ ::

ፀጠራውን የቢሮውን በር በታገቧሁ ነው 12 ሰዓት መሆኑን ተረድቶ ሽግግር
ንና ክራሽቱን እያስተካከለ ከቢሮው የወጣው ::

ምሽቱ በመውደቅ ላይ ነው :: የሕንጻዎቹ ደግሞ መብራቶች ብሰጥ ደርገው
ይላሉ በየቀበሉው በየመጠጡ በት የሚያገረሩት የዘመኑ ዘረኖች አካራ አገዳሚውን ያጣ
ሩሉ ፣ የደንከራ ቦቶች የገንዳ ዘገጅት እየተካሄደ ነው :: የመኪና አይነቶች ካገዱ
መጠጥ በት ወደ ሌላው ይነጉዳሉ . . . የመጠጥ ጠርጫሾችና ብርጭቶች ይገጣሉ . . .
ሌቶም እየገፉ ሲሄዱ ርገጠኛ አጆች ያሳጠቡባቸው የመኪና መሪዎች እቀጣጣ በመሆን
በየመንገቱ ጥገ ወይም ከሌሎች መኪናዎች ጋር ይላተጣሉ : የምሽቱ ሄኖች በት
ብለው ያሰባካሉ :: መኪና ችው አናቱ ላይ የተላኩ ፓውዲዎች የሚነቱ ፀጥታ አሰከቧ
ሪዎች የአካባቢውን ጭላማ ይጠርጉታል :: የውገዳላችው አገራ አውጭን ጀምሯል ::

የመጠጥ ቤቷ ለመባቸው የሱቃቸውን በር ከፈተ ዘጋ ያደርጋሉ ። በአገደዘህ
አይነት የአይጥና ደመተ ጤ የታ ሲቀጥላ ገሀ ሌቀድ ይዘጋጃል ።

.

ከሌሊት ፀ ሰዓት ሲሆን የከተሞች ሰው የቤቱን በር በርገደ ከፍቶ ገባ
በምሽት የዚላውን ቢላውን ለመዘርጋት ቀጥታ ወደ መገታ ቤቱ ለመራ . . . ዳንገት
በምን አይነት አጋጣሚ አንደሆነ አይታወቅም ከጌዳው ለጥምዶት የነበረው አይጥ ወጥ
ወደ አምሳጠ ? መሰላ አገድ አይጥ ወደ ከተሞች ሰው አቀጣጣ ያመራል . . . ወፍ
ራዎ ደንደባም ገዢ አይጥ ነው ። ከተማ የማይታዩ . . . የገጠር አይጥ የከተ
ማው ሰው ጥቂት የሚያደርገው ጠፍቶ ተገንዳገደ ስለሆነ ባደበበው አመለካከት
ጭራቀ መሰሉ ታየው አውራው አፍጠባት ወደርሱ ይራመዳል . . . የከተማ ሰው ወደ
ጌላው ያረገፍጋል . . . ከቤቱ ወጥቶ ለመሮጥ ፈለገው ሰባቱን ለመጠና በሚገባበት
ጠው ቶኝ አጅ ጉያው ውስጥ የሽግጠውን ሽጉጥ መዘ አውጥቶ በአይጥ ላይ ለሰተካክለ
ነገር ገን አጁ በመንቀጥቀጥ የተነሳ የሽጉጡን ያታ ለመሰባ አሳገላም ። አይጥ
አፍጠ ወደርሱ ይራመዳል ። የከተማ ሰው ወደ ጌላው ያረገፍጋል ።

. 5

በዚህ ጊዜ የገጠሩ ሰው ገረቤቶቹ ገበራዎች ጋር አሹቁን ሲቀዎ አምሽቶ
ወደ ቤቱ ተመለሰ ። አንቀሳፍ ያሽነፋቸውን ሳጆቹን ከሰማ በጌላ አሳገጠውን
አውቃ ከምጠባቀው ሚስቱ ወዳለችበት መገታ ቤት ሲያመራ ዳንገት አገድ አይጥ ከአ
ገድ ቀዳዳ ባቀ ባሉ ወደ ገበራው አቀጣጣ ያመራ ጀመር . . . የከተማ አይጥ ነው ።
ተገሻ አይጥ ፣ ሮምጃውን ሲያቋርጥ የገጠሩ ሰው አገደ ተገሻ ጠፍሶቶት መገንጠን
ቀጠለ ።

.... // // //// _...///

ከመላጌታ መክባባ

FRENCH

Amharique

Parlée par plus de 20 millions de personnes (et première langue pour la moitié d'entre elles), l'amharique est la langue officielle de l'Éthiopie comprise aujourd'hui par la population sur tout le territoire, ceci alors que l'on recense plus de soixante-dix langues différentes. Son nom provient de la province d'Amhara, sur les hauts plateaux d'Abyssinie. Elle s'inscrit dans une longue tradition littéraire, mais ce n'est en fait que dans la seconde moitié du 19^e siècle que l'amharique est devenue la langue de l'administration et du gouvernement qu'elle est aujourd'hui.

C'est une langue sémitique, au même titre que l'arabe et l'hébreu, mais suite à deux millénaires d'influences locales, il s'en est considérablement éloigné tant dans le lexique que dans la grammaire. L'écriture est syllabique et les voyelles y sont notées ; son alphabet n'est utilisé qu'en Éthiopie et est à peu près la même que celle du guèze, la langue éthiopienne classique devenue langue de la liturgie orthodoxe.

En Belgique, on compte de 600 à 800 locuteurs de l'amharique.

Moulou Mek

L'Homme de Ville

On peut dire des hommes ce qu'on peut dire des rats : il y a le rat de ville, il y a le rat des champs ; il y a l'Homme de Ville, il y a l'Homme des Champs. Le second spécimen humain semble avoir hérité d'une existence prédestinée: sa vie devenue dès sa tendre enfance synonyme de terre, s'écoulera ainsi jusqu'à ce qu'elle s'éteigne, et il reposera dans cette même terre qu'il n'avait cessé de creuser.

Le monde pour lui est limité par cette voûte céleste qui fait dôme sur l'étendue de sa région encerclée par l'horizon ; il croira encore sans effort que le domaine où il est enraciné fait partie d'un grand tout qui forme un pays, son pays. Mais allez lui dire que la platitude de cette terre qu'il s'entête à creuser n'est qu'apparente et qu'en réalité la terre est ronde, il vous rira au nez et, pendant la veillée autour du feu, grignotant son « ashouk » éternel, il racontera à ses camarades la toute dernière blague de ce farceur de citadin. Vous pouvez lui raconter l'histoire d'Aladin et son tapis volant comme si vous la teniez pour vraie. Il ne vous contredira pas sur le moment, il a trop de pudeur. Il fera semblant d'accepter et feindra une telle crédulité qu'il vous prendra l'idée d'aller relire votre « Mille et une Nuits » pour voir si vous même aviez le droit de douter quant à l'exactitude des faits !... C'est après à la veillée que l'Homme des Champs se paiera votre tête !... L'Amérique ? connais pas, la Tour Eiffel ? y a-t-il un oiseau pareil ? Les fusées dans la lune ? Ah ! ces citadins, jusqu'où ils n'iraient pas puiser leur farce...

Ainsi mis à l'écart des actualités toujours menaçantes des moyens de communications dont se repaît le citadin, l'Homme des Champs mène une vie équilibrée et sa proximité à la nature lui confère une force de corps et d'âme qui lui permet, comme on le verra plus tard, d'avoir le dessus sur le citadin, cet Homme de Ville qui, campé sur le piédestal de ses immeubles fragiles s'amuse à lui faire un pied de nez...

* * *

L'Homme de Ville s'étire et baille à n'en plus finir dans son immense lit douillet et considère le réveil qu'il avait lui même réglé la veille, comme son plus grand ennemi. Se lèvera-t-il, se lèvera-t-il pas ? Voyons, s'il y paressait encore un petit peu ? Il n'est que huit heures encore... il peut encore dormir jusqu'à la demie, oui, mais il craint que le sommeil interrompu qu'il se propose de continuer ne tienne pas cas de son horaire de travail. Qu'à cela ne tienne, il trouvera toujours une excuse... mais d'abord une cigarette... il avait tellement bu et fumé la veille qu'il avait juré de ne plus boire ni fumer, mais, parole d'ivrogne... il se fait vite une raison. On meurt bien de quelque chose. Bon, lui il mourra d'avoir trop bu, trop fumé...

* * *

Alors que l'aube essaie encore timidement de chasser la dernière étoile et aux premiers chants des oiseaux l'Homme des Champs est déjà sur pied. Et à l'instant même où l'Homme de Ville se recouvre de ses draps pour un second sommeil, Guebre en est à son troisième sillon.

* * *

Onze heures. Ce sacré téléphone n'arrête pas de sonner. Que répondra-t-il ? Qu'il dort encore à cause de la bringue d'hier soir ? Non, dix fois non, sonne toujours, mon lapin !... A la sixième sonnerie l'appareil abandonne, découragé. L'Homme de Ville écarte les draps, s'assoit au bord du lit, essaie de bouger ses membres ankylosés. Il y parvient non sans peine, se met sur pied, fait quelques mimiques de 'gymnastique' comme il dit, va jusqu'au levier d'eau et noie sa tête dans l'eau froide... Quelle cravate va-t-il mettre ? voyons, la bleue ? surtout pas, c'est Guenet qui la lui a offerte et aujourd'hui il va rencontrer Emebet. Oui mais Emebet ne lui a jamais acheté de cravate, donc il peut mettre la bleue... Oui mais si ça lui prenait, à Emebet, fouineuse comme elle est, de lui demander la provenance de la cravate bleue... Ouf ! il peut toujours lui dire qu'il l'a achetée chez Untel. Mais le croira-t-elle ? Après ces graves élucubrations qui durent quinze minutes, il opte pour la vert-gris. Comme ça il est sur un terrain neutre, il n'aura de compte à rendre ni à Emebet ni à sa conscience. Bon, maintenant un petit scénario destiné à son chef de bureau. Encore quinze minutes de grande réflexion... « il a eu une panne de moteur, ça arrive, n'est-ce pas ? Et pourquoi ça ne lui serait-t-il pas arrivé à lui ? A bien considérer la chose, tiens c'est vrai, il a failli entrer dans un camion-citerne et c'est sa lucidité d'ivrogne qui l'a sauvé d'un fil... oui, il s'est toujours vanté partout que plus il a bu, plus il conduit avec attention... Alors ce matin avant d'aller au bureau il a fait venir un mécanicien qui lui aura révélé la gravité de la panne; alors, il a été obligé de faire remorquer sa bagnole jusqu'au garage et était pris pendant la grande partie de la matinée à courir après les pièces de rechange... »

Malgré la douche à l'eau froide, il s'aperçoit qu'il a mal à la tête, qu'il est encore un peu ivre. Il sort de sa demeure et instinctivement, il ouvre la portière de sa voiture mets la clé de contact et démarre...

Il a complètement oublié le scénario-excuse destiné à son chef de bureau et qu'il avait bâti un quart d'heure auparavant.

* * *

Après avoir entamé son cinquième sillon, l'Homme des Champs se dirige vers le grand arbre, se repose à l'ombre des grands feuillages et, au moment où le citadin entame sa cinquième cigarette, Guebre boit en le savourant son premier pot de lait frais que sa femme vient de lui envoyer et que son marmot lui tend...

* * *

Treize heures : après avoir abusé et désabusé de son téléphone, s'être gavé d'innombrables tasses de café, jeté deux ou trois paquets de cigarettes vides dans le panier de son bureau, présidé aux grands échanges de péripéties d'hier soir avec un groupe de copains qui sont venus lui rendre visite, et lutiné sa secrétaire, ayant bien sûr dicté deux ou trois correspondances, l'Homme de Ville se lève enfin de sa chaise roulante et sort de son bureau...

Son geste est presque synchronisé par l'habitude, sa main fouille sa poche droite ou gauche, elle sort un trousseau de clés, l'une ouvre la portière de sa voiture, l'autre la fait démarrer. Après un vrai exercice sportif, l'Homme de Ville parvient enfin à se faire une place parmi la chaîne des voitures presque immobilisées. Le soleil qui tape fort malgré les gaz d'échappement, l'air inondé de carburant brûlé à vide, ce feu rouge qui persiste à ne point verdir sont autant d'ennemis ligués contre ses sens. Il rendrait l'alcool ingurgité la veille par la portière mais la Dame dans l'autre voiture le regarde, inspirée, et Monsieur s'abstient, galanterie oblige... Enfin le feu rouge se décide, les klaxons annoncent cet heureux événement et rappellent à l'Homme de Ville qu'il faut démarrer, ce qu'il fait... mais malheur! A peine deux mètres, le moteur cale brutalement. Il sort de sa voiture en claquant la portière et en réponse à toutes les grimaces menaçantes des autres automobilistes à qui « ça n'arrive jamais à leur moteur de caler » il lève les deux bras au Ciel pour répondre à la confrérie qu'il n'y peut rien et demander au Bon Dieu ce qu'il lui a fait. Il ouvre le capot et se prépare à démonter les bougies mais il s'aperçoit hélas qu'il ne l'a pas son démonteur, et se rappelle seulement à l'instant que son cousin le lui a emprunté... Peste ! que va-t-il faire ? Il lève la tête d'un geste brusque: le soutien du capot glisse et lui tombe sur le crâne... les sirènes gueulent de plus belle... et ce sacré soleil qui tape de plus en plus fort, et ces automobilistes qui sortent à leur tour de leur tacot en claquant la portière. Son cerveau pas tout à fait dégrisé les voit sous l'apparence des loups hurlants et gesticulants. Il en a marre, il abandonne, l'Homme de Ville; advienne que pourra, il laisse son tacot où il est et se prépare à désertier l'endroit infernal. Mais un agent de la circulation se dirige vers lui... alors l'Homme de Ville, la rage au cœur, interrompt son mouvement de retraite et revient à son tacot, l'air malheureux, et obtempère. Il a déjà reçu deux tickets dont il ne s'est pas acquitté. Il ne veut pas en collecter un troisième...

* * *

L'Homme des Champs lève délicatement la patte droite de son bœuf d'attelage. Au huitième sillon la charrue traînassait un peu, entre les échancrures du sabot de la tête il retire un morceau de bois pointu. Comme pour s'excuser d'avoir pu lui faire mal; il caresse la bête... Le soleil s'est un peu écarté de son zénith ; « ça doit être l'heure du déjeuner » pense l'Homme des Champs qui a hâte d'aller retrouver sa chaumière, hâte de remplir son estomac qui crie famine...

* * *

Au déjeuner, l'Homme de Ville, au régime, n'a pas le cœur à sauter l'apéritif, puis il considère avec tristesse le riche menu. Ah ! ce qu'il voudrait bien goûter ce ragoût... Non ! Ce serait aller trop loin. « Je ne me porte pas garant » a dit le médecin, son ulcère fera du sien... et cet autre plat auquel il attache un amour particulier ? Encore non ! Son foie jusque là ménagé « fera le con. » Ouf ! après tout, il n'a jamais eu un appétit débordant depuis sa dernière opération. Alors autant éviter ses plats favoris et suivre méticuleusement son régime. A trente ans, c'est déjà un petit vieux; une restriction par ici... une autre par là... s'il renonçait définitivement à fumer, à boire et s'il limitait ses sorties, il pourrait manger tout ce dont il a envie... oui mais, c'est du pareil au même, le régime ne ferait que changer de camp... les plaisirs de fumer et de boire, décide-t-il philosophiquement, valent bien ceux de manger.

Décidément, Guebre a l'appétit féroce, pense gentiment la femme de l'Homme des Champs, puis elle retourne à la cuisine lui ramener le reste de viande bouillie qu'elle comptait garder pour le repas du soir...

Que l'après midi a été long ! pense l'Homme de Ville, si sa montre devait s'user à cause du nombre de fois qu'il la consulte, sûr que l'horloger ferait un pont d'or... Il s'était pourtant répété que les boissons au déjeuner s'additionnant à la longue veillée de la veille n'étaient pas faites pour activer son dynamisme... Mais cet incorrigible représentant de Bacchus n'apprendra jamais... L'après-midi s'étirait, lui aussi s'étirait. Les tasses de café noir s'étaient succédées et les bouteilles d'eau minérale transforment son bureau en vrai dépôt de verrerie. Il s'était même abandonné à des sommes entrecoupés par la sonnerie du téléphone ou le clavier de la machine à écrire que la secrétaire à court d'inspiration faisait répéter le « Quick brown Jack jumps over the lazy fox » de son école de Commerce. La sortie rituelle du bureau. Il aurait donné gros pour aller directement chez lui et dormir tout son saoul, mais il a un rendez-vous « important » avec la fille qu'il a rencontrée à midi au restaurant ; il doit l'amener dans un café « drive-in », l'inviter à dîner, faire la tournée des Night Clubs etc... et il devra boire, boire, fumer et fumer encore...

La nuit commence à tomber. Les néons des buildings recommencent leurs clins d'œil ; les derniers tubes débordent des Bars et emplissent les rues. La tournée des dancings commence ; flots de voitures qui montent et descendent, les bouchons des bouteilles à liqueur sautent tour à tour, la boisson qui conduit heurte un poteau, les sifflets de trafic entament un air « déplaisant », les sympathies d'ivrognes dégénèrent en des bagarres soudaines et inutiles, les filles du soir lancent des rires idiots ; quelques coups de feu éclatent ; la sirène stridente d'une ambulance semble gémir et son gyrophare en balayant les rues surprend des couples vulgairement enlacés. Encore une autre sirène, celle-là de la police.

* * *

A deux heures du matin, l'Homme de Ville parvient à ouvrir la porte de sa demeure et se dirige droit vers sa chambre à coucher. Soudain, on ne sait par quelle coïncidence fortuite un rat, défiant la souricière qu'il avait pourtant tendue la nuit dernière trotte dans sa direction. C'est un rat aux proportions énormes de l'espèce que l'Homme de Ville n'a jamais vu : un rat des champs... L'Homme de Ville hésite un moment, fait marche arrière. Devant ce « monstre », il hésite ; l'envie lui prend de sortir de chez lui, de fuir, il se reprend, sa main tremblante va jusqu'à sa poche revolver, sort l'arme et vise le rat. Mais sa main tremble et le rat avance, l'Homme de Ville recule...

* * *

Au même moment l'Homme des Champs après une veillée avec les fermiers du coin entre chez lui, embrasse ses enfants que le sommeil a enfin vaincus et se dirige vers son lit. Soudain on ne sait trop par quelle coïncidence, un rat sort d'un trou et trotte dans sa direction. C'est un rat de ville, de l'espèce des rats de ville... un petit rat.

Sans interrompre sa marche, l'Homme des Champs l'écrase du pied comme une vulgaire araignée.

(Traduction : l'auteur)

Moulou Mek (nom de plume de Moulougueta Mekbib) est né à Addis Abeba en 1941. Dès les années 60, il écrit des nouvelles ainsi que des pièces en un acte. Il s'est également occupé de l'adaptation et de la représentation en amharique de pièces telles que *Caligula* d'Albert Camus ou *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* de Molière. Après avoir été journaliste à Addis Abeba, puis occupé un poste à l'Office National du Tourisme Ethiope, il est venu s'installer à Bruxelles pour travailler, jusqu'en 2001, au Secrétariat Général du Groupe des Etats d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique.

ENGLISH

Amharic

Spoken by more than twenty million people (for about half of whom it is their first language), Amharic is the official language of Ethiopia understood today by people all over the country, even though some seventy different languages are still extant. Its name comes from the province of Amhara, on the high plateaus of Abyssinia. It has a long tradition of written literature, but it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that it became the language of administration and government which it is today.

It is a semitic language, as are Arabic and Hebrew, but after two millennia of local influences it has diverged significantly from them both in its vocabulary and its grammar. The script is syllabic and the vowels are notated; the alphabet is used only in Ethiopia and is very close to that of Ge'ez, the ancient Ethiopian literary and ecclesiastical language which is now used for the Orthodox liturgy.

There are some six to eight hundred Amharic speakers in Belgium.

Moulou Mek

The Town Man

You can say about people what you say about rats: there's a town rat and a country rat; there's a Town Man and a Country Man. The second human specimen seems to have inherited a predestined existence; from earliest infancy his life seems synonymous with the earth, and will unfold like that until it's extinguished, and he will take his final rest in that same earth which he has never ceased to dig.

For him the world is bounded by this celestial veil which forms a dome over the extent of his region encircled by the horizon; he will also believe effortlessly that the domain where his roots are is part of a great whole which forms a country, his country. But try to tell him that the flatness of this earth that he's busy cultivating is only an illusion and that in reality the earth is round, and he will laugh in your face and, during the evening around the fire, nibbling his everlasting *ashouk*, he will recount to his friends the very latest hoot from this joker of a townee. You can tell him the story of Aladdin and his flying carpet as if you believed it. He won't contradict you then and there, he is too well-mannered. He will act as if he accepts it and will put on such an air of credulity that it will prompt you to go and re-read your *Thousand and One Nights* to see if you are right to doubt the precise facts yourself...! It is afterwards at the next late-night session that the Country Man will get his own back... America? Don't know it. The Eiffel Tower? Isn't there a bird of that name? Rockets to the moon? Ah, these townees, they'll go to any length to pull your leg....

Thus at one remove from the constantly alarming reality of the modes of communication which the town dweller revels in, the Country Man leads a well balanced life, and his nearness to nature gives him a strength of body and spirit which allows him, as we shall see, to have the upper hand over the Town Man, this urban creature who installed at the foot of his flimsy block of flats amuses himself by thumbing his nose at him....

The Town Man stretches in his huge comfy bed and yawns as if he'll never stop, and looks at the alarm which he himself set the night before as if at his greatest enemy. To get up, or not to get up? Let's see, what if he lazed on for a little bit longer? It's still only eight o'clock... he can still snooze till half past, yes, but he's worried that the interrupted sleep that he plans to resume may not take account of his work timetable. If that happens he can always find an excuse... but first a cigarette, he drank and smoked so much the night before that he swore never to drink or smoke again, but, when it's the drink talking... quickly he invents a reason. You have to die of something. Right, he'll die of having drunk too much and smoked too much....

When the dawn is still trying timidly to see off the last star and at the first song of the birds, the Country Man is already up and about. And at the very moment when the Town Man pulls up his covers for a second doze, Guebre is on his third furrow.

Eleven o'clock. This damn phone won't stop ringing. What should he say? That he's still asleep because of yesterday evening's binge? No, ten times no, ring on, my sweet!... at the sixth ring the phone gives up, discouraged. The Town Man draws back the curtains, sits on the edge of the bed, tries to move his stiff limbs. He succeeds, not without difficulty, stands up, has a stab at several "gymnastics" as he calls them, goes over to the tap and dunks his head in cold water... Which tie shall he wear? Let's see, the blue one? Definitely not, it's Guenet who gave it to him and today he's meeting Emebet. Yes but Emebet has never bought him a tie, so he can wear the blue one.... Yes but if it came into Emebet's head to ask, nosy parker that she is, about the provenance of the blue tie.... Oh, he can always tell her that he bought it at Untel's. But will she believe him? After these serious deliberations which last a quarter of an hour he opts for the grey-green one. That way he's on neutral ground, he won't have to give an account of himself either to Emebet or his conscience. Right, now for a little scenario destined for his boss. Another quarter of an hour of major reflection... "his engine conked out, it happens doesn't it? And why shouldn't it have happened to him? And when you think about it, goodness, it's true, he almost ran into a tanker and it was the quick thinking of the inebriated which saved him by a whisker... yes, he's always boasted to everyone that the more he drinks, the more skilfully he drives.... Then this morning before going to the office he called a mechanic who would have told him the full extent of the damage; then he had to get his motor towed to the garage and was busy for most of the morning chasing after spare parts...."

In spite of the cold shower, he notices he has a headache, that he's still a bit drunk. He leaves his house and automatically opens the door of his vehicle, puts the key in the ignition and starts up....

He has completely forgotten the excuse-scenario meant for his boss which he put together a quarter of an hour earlier.

After making a start on his fifth furrow, the Country Man makes for the big tree, takes a break in the shade of its dense foliage and, at the moment when the town dweller starts on his fifth

cigarette, Guebre savours a drink from his first jar of fresh milk that his wife has sent him and that his child is holding out to him....

One o'clock: after having used and abused his phone, guzzled innumerable cups of coffee, tossed two or three empty cigarette packets into the office bin, presided over major gossip about last night's pubcrawl with a group of mates who dropped in to see him, and fooled around with his secretary, having of course dictated two or three letters, the Town Man finally gets up from his revolving chair and leaves the office....

His moves are almost synchronised from habit, his hand searches his right or left pocket, produces a bunch of keys, one opens the car door, another starts the engine. After a real sporting workout, the Town Man succeeds at last in grabbing a space in the line of almost stationary vehicles. The sun which beats down hard despite the exhaust gases, the air loaded with petrol fumes burnt on empty, this red light which lasts as if it's never going green, are all enemies in league against his senses. He would like to relieve himself of the alcohol downed the night before through the car doorway but the Lady in the other car is watching him, holding her breath, and Monsieur desists, gallantry demands.... At last the red light makes up its mind, the car horns announce the happy event, and remind the Town Man that he must get in gear, which he does... but misery! After barely two yards the engine grinds brutally to a halt. He gets out, slamming the door, and in response to all the threatening grimaces of the other drivers to whom "it never happens that *their* engine packs up" he raises both arms to Heaven to indicate to the assembled brethren that he can't do anything about it and asks the Good Lord what he's done to deserve this. He opens the bonnet and gets ready to disconnect the plugs but notices, unfortunately, that he hasn't got his disconnecter, and it is only at that moment that he remembers that his cousin borrowed it.... Blast! What's he going to do? He raises his head sharply: the bonnet prop slips, and it falls on his head.... The horns blare out even louder... and this cursed sun that beats down hotter and hotter, and these drivers who in turn get out of their old bangers, slamming their doors. His brain not altogether sobered up sees them like wolves howling and gesticulating. He's had enough, he gives up, the Town Man; come what may, he leaves his motor where it is and gets ready to abandon the hellish place. But a traffic cop is coming towards him... then the Town Man, with fury in his heart, interrupts his retreat and rejoins his vehicle, with an unhappy look, and complies. He's already been given two tickets which he hasn't paid off. He doesn't want to collect a third....

The Country Man gently lifts the right hoof of his draft bullock. At the eighth furrow the plough was slowing a little; from between the serrations on the leader's shoe he extracts a sharp splinter of wood. As if saying sorry for having had to hurt him, he strokes the beast.... The sun is a little short of its zenith; "it must be dinner time" thinks the Country Man, making haste back to his cottage, eager to fill his stomach which is rumbling with hunger.

At lunch the Town Man, on a diet, hasn't the heart to skip the aperitif, then contemplates the rich menu sadly. Ah, how he'd like to try this stew. No! that would be going too far. "I can't be answerable for you," the doctor said, his ulcer was down to him... and this other dish of which he is particularly fond? One more time, no! His liver, so far amenable, will start to play up. Urghh! After all, he's never had a big appetite since his last operation. Then he might as well avoid his favourite meals and follow his diet meticulously. At thirty

he's already like a little old man; one restriction here... another there... if he would give up smoking and drinking once and for all, and limit his evenings out, he could eat everything he fancied... yes, but it's the same difference, the diet would just be changing its target... the pleasures of smoking and drinking, he decides philosophically, are at least as precious as those of eating.

Decidedly Guebre has a hearty appetite, thinks the wife of the Country Man fondly, then she goes back to the kitchen to fetch him the rest of the boiled meat she had reckoned on saving for the evening meal....

How long the afternoon has been! thinks the Town Man, wondering if his watch is getting worn out from being consulted so many times, convinced the clockmaker must be diddling him.... Nevertheless he kept telling himself that his lunchtime drinks on top of the long boozing of the previous evening were not calculated to improve his dynamism.... But this incorrigible servant of Bacchus will never learn... The afternoon was stretching out, he would stretch himself too. The cups of black coffee have been left behind and bottles of mineral water are transforming his office into a bottle bank. He had even begun to sink himself in calculations, cut in half by the phone ringing or the typewriter keyboard where his secretary, short of inspiration, was repeating the "Quick brown Jack jumps over the lazy fox" of her school of commerce. The ritual exit from the office. He would have given a lot to go straight home and sleep off his drinking, but he has an "important" rendezvous with the girl he met at midday at the restaurant; he has to take her to a drive-in café, invite her to dinner, make a tour of the night clubs, etc... and he will have to drink, drink, smoke and smoke all over again....

Night begins to fall. The neon signs on the buildings resume their winking; the latest hits spill out of the bars and fill the streets. The round of dancing begins; fleets of vehicles go up and down, the corks of liquor bottles pop one by one, the drink that drives bumps into a post, traffic whistles set up a disagreeable atmosphere, the bonhomie of drunks degenerates into sudden and pointless scuffles, the ladies of the night beam stupid smiles; some shots ring out; the strident siren of an ambulance seems to cry in pain and its revolving light sweeps the streets and surprises couples crudely entwined. Another siren, this time the police.

At two in the morning, the Town Man succeeds in opening the door of his home and goes straight to his room to go to bed. Suddenly, by what chance coincidence no-one knows, a rat, in defiance of the mousetrap that had been set for it the night before, trots towards him. It's a rat of enormous proportions, the like of which the Town Man has never seen before: a country rat.... The Town Man hesitates an instant, takes a step back. Faced with this monster, he falters; he is overtaken by the urge to get out of his house, to flee; he takes hold of himself, his trembling hand reaches for his holster, takes out the revolver and aims at the rat. But his hand trembles and the rat advances, the Town Man falls back....

At the selfsame moment the Country Man after an evening spent with the farmers of the neighbourhood goes home, kisses his children who have been overcome by sleep at last, and makes for his bed. Suddenly, by what coincidence nobody can be sure, a rat comes out of a hole and trots in his direction. It is a town rat, like other town rats... a little rat.

Without interrupting his stride, the Country Man crushes it with his foot like a common spider.

(Translation: Paula Burnett)

Moulou Mek (pen-name of Moulougueta Mekbib) was born in Addis Ababa in 1941. Since the sixties he has been writing novels as well as one-act plays. At the same time he has produced adaptations into Amharic of plays such as Albert Camus's *Caligula* and Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. After being a journalist in Addis Ababa, then holding a post at the Ethiopian National Tourism Office, he settled in Brussels where he worked until 2001 at the General Secretariat for the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States.