

**Dorotea Šušak:**

Dorotea Šušak (born in 1996) graduated in Dramaturgy from the Zagreb University Academy of Dramatic Art. She is about to complete the two-subject graduate study in Anthropology and Comparative Literature at the Zagreb University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. She is an educator in reality psychotherapy and choice therapy. She is a doctoral student in the PhD study of Science of Literature, Theatre Study and Dramaturgy, Film Study, Musicology and Study of Culture at the Zagreb University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. She is a two-time recipient of the scholarship for excellence in the graduate and postgraduate studies. She is a two-time laureate of the Marin Držić National Award for the best dramatic texts. She has received the Radiofonton Award for the best radio drama text, as well as the award of Croatian National Theatre in Mostar for the best dramatic text. Her poetry has been included in several different editions and anthologies. She is the author, dramaturge and/or director of a number of theatre and other artistic projects at the independent and institutional scenes throughout Croatia and the region. She is a long-term activist in the field of social accessibility, quality of education and feminism. She is the executive director of the Centre for Women's Studies. She is an alumna of the OSCE/ODIHR Advocacy School on Gender and Politics, also of the American educational advocacy program Vital Voices under the name Intergenerational Fellowship on Women, Peace and Security in South Central Europe.

Anatomy of a Point***Do not let me disappear*****by Dorotea Šušak****I The breath could have been all of us**

Maybe with the Arvo Pärt's Da Pacem. Maybe not.

A line is formed by movement. If you move once and then again, it's possible, so, you're alive. And as you're trying to do so, the laws of physics help you, thus you keep moving until some external force compels you to detach from the established move. Even with that detachment, the continuation of the line is on your chest. If you give in to hysteria, the trunk and the centre of gravity preserved in the pelvis could completely yield to circularity, undulation and disruption until it ends up in an entirely harmonic dervish. Any disorganisation of the line leads to its re-



establishment through the recognition of the faces that appear in it. Faces are characters. There can be one or countless of them. All are part of the line. The ones perfectly straight or completely disrupted. And, at one moment, hysteric can become predictably hysterical, When it becomes predictable, is it really hysterical? I don't know. I don't have answers to all the questions. I don't have answers to all of the questions. When I learned that a line in motion is just a collection of points, then it seemed to me that it is possible to stand on them and breathe. Maybe even sit down and say, "My line stops here, but it stops only for a few moments". If you need a little more time because your lungs are very tired and you can't hold your breath for long, you just take your imprint and use it to thicken the point you're sitting on. The point is now bigger and more circular, giving you more space before it moves back into the line again. That's what I somehow thought. A point needn't be definitive if a new line is drawn from its centre. That's how I somehow thought. From the hips you can also move your knees. You only need to be more focused. More aggressive. Surrender, but to yourself, not anyone else. A line is not a stroke because I hate strokes. That's happiness for the line. When I was pregnant with you, life seemed much more certain. I will be and soon you will also be here. I'm going to do everything necessary for your well-being. A line is not a stroke because I hate strokes. That's happiness for the line. Life is not a stroke because I hate strokes. That's misfortune for life. I ran my fingers over the curvature of the skin that lined the inside of my body or at least everything that is beneath the breastbone. I traced the line of the winding, bright red coils. The stretch marks were first of a blood red colour, then softer pink, until some of them went completely grey or faded like some old, skinny women. It's a lie that it takes years for someone to turn grey. Some events make you disappear immediately and you lose colour. I love grey, women's hair. I love grey, men's hair. That's happiness for the hair. From some detachments in life, no round point can be wide enough to provide you with as much breathing as you really need. When you came into the world, you loved my



palms. The strokes on them aren't strokes because we don't like strokes. I would tell you naive parables about the lines of life. The seam that divides the thumb from the rest of the fingers. The seam by which the line of the index finger is sewn all the way to the opposite edge of the palm. The lines of life on the palms are tree growth rings, are stretch marks are, what are they? I don't know. I don't have answers to all the questions. I don't have answers to most of the questions. You were sliding down the slide, and when you suddenly sat on the ground after its edge, you cried only when you saw fear in my eyes. That's why I knew that at the moment when far more serious detachments happen to us, you must not find a source of fear in my eyes. I'll have my eyes closed, I promise. Where are you? In all of this, many have to leave their children. In all of this, many have to lose their children. In all of this, many have to leave first and hope their children will arrive after them. In all of this, many have to send their children first, hoping they will meet them. In all of this, many will never have children. In all of this, many hold their children's hands. In the forest, in the sea, on the edge, in the boat, in the electric fence, in the line, in the barbed wire, at the barrier, at the border, in the documents that don't exist, in the non-existence. In all of this, many have to be ready to put up with themselves in detachments and points, just so that their children can see the line. When you fall to the ground after going down the slide, you ought to be more focused. Move your knees with the hips. Get up. Climb the slide. Extend the line. Or, at least deepen the point. It seems to me that I have reached the centre of the earth? Does it look exactly the same to you?

II The breath is only me

Maybe with the drumbeats reminiscent of abdominal tremors. Maybe not.



If only all of this could disappear somewhere, I would just take a cup of tea. I would drink it for a long time. The tea would have already cooled completely. It would happen so because I would drink it for hours. Drop by drop. Drop by drop. I'd especially focus on the taste that remains in the mouth after the epiglottis is closed. Drop by drop. To anyone warning me that "enough is enough" or "that something else needs to be done in life", or, the worst of all, "that I'm wasting time", I'd drink it on purpose at least one drop longer. I would emphasise that word incorrectly, just to make it clear how long it would actually take. I would pretend to be someone else and pretend to know all about the types of teas. I don't drink strawberry with vanilla because I'm sophisticated and because I'm no longer a child. I only drink the types of tea that fine people deserve. Fine teas. Fine people are finely dressed, have fine passports to enter all the fine doors, go to fine places, have fine names, drink fine tea, and everything around them is fine. When fine people get really upset or something not really fine happens to them, they don't have to run away in a fine way. They don't have to walk anywhere for days, and definitely don't have to run. They don't have to deny their children anywhere or deny them anything that is fine, and they certainly don't have to stay in the same clothes for long. They can change them as many times as it is necessary for them to feel good. Just the way they deserve. When fine people get really irritated, they swallow fine pills taken from fine boxes that look like they're keeping a lock of a child's hair or at least the first fallen tooth, not some psychotropic drug. And when they swallow their fine pill, sometimes even without the tea because the positive reinforcement of their usual activity forces them to do so quickly, instructing the brain to start salivating, then they feel fine. When the epiglottis closes, they even feel a little thirsty, so they take a sip of some fine tea. And if all this could disappear somewhere, I tell you, I'd just have a cup of tea. Some time ago, I had no idea that all goods could be both quite ordinary, but also quite luxurious. Luxurious floral arrangements, luxurious fabrics, luxurious soaps, luxurious shoelaces, luxurious



pillowcases, luxurious candles, luxurious hair mists, so what now? The world is made up of those who run away and wash their hair in water until it falls out strand by strand and those who stay and choose luxurious hair mists. Regardless, it's completely impossible to divide the world into "these" and "those" because it means nothing at all. The world can be divided into the old and new one. In the hallway of the old world, Mother Europe, Mother Africa and Mother Asia brush the teeth of their offspring. All the three mothers sometimes die for their children, and sometimes they let them die. Fathers can't even do that. They often run away somewhere. Wherever they go, I hear they like to go there with guns, even though afterwards it's supposedly not clear to anyone where they went. Full stop. A long, round dense point until someone quite pale and quite refined and quite luxurious steps into the "Tea Palace" and buys the "Ayurvedic Tea Tonic Collection". According to a legend, tea was discovered quite by accident when the tree leaves fell into the water that was boiling for the Emperor Shen Nong in China. It was in the 10th century BC. In the 6th century, Buddhist monks drank it in Japan. Tea only became present and popular in Great Britain in the 18th century. It reached Africa during the 19th and 20th century. Colonisers brought it. Regardless, tea is excellently produced in Malawi, Tanzania and Rwanda. A round point. If all of this could disappeared somewhere, I would just take a cup of tea.

III The breath is all of us

Maybe with the silence that often becomes too loud. Maybe not.

And tears catch the line. They tumble down in a weightless state along the shores of the cheeks. Some stop and cling with their tendrils to the lips and chin. Until they fall off the slide. When they fall off the slide, there is a deep puddle beneath you leading all the way to the centre of the earth. Ophelia's pond. The head can be



immersed in it, along with God's tears until the line of the leech pulls you all in. And the knees and hips and palms and round structures. Definitely the sharpness of the jaw and elbows, but also the gentleness of the cheeks and uterus. When you walk for days and sleep on the hard ground, lines appear on the body, such as you haven't recognised before. The musculature of the lower and upper legs rises through the edges of the thin skin. It looks as if the skin could be peeled off with gentle lines from the centre outwards, laterally without much effort, and certainly without using the nails. Like when you peel off the inner, mesh coat of the pomegranate after someone long ago tore off the bright-red covering above it. When someone tells you that you no longer go by the name you used to or that the sum of those letters doesn't guarantee civil rights and that you have no refuge or shelter, lines appear inside the chest, such as you haven't recognised before. The line that you stretch to sign is hard to get out of the wrist, but it can be pulled out with regular exercises and rehabilitation in a pool of mirroring water. When you are nameless and landless, you're still human. Then perhaps most in your essential sense. Do not let them convince you otherwise, no matter how much a shattered soul resembles the melted honeycomb. Not everything can be licked, something simply has to spill over the edge of the table. From the line into the point. In those moments, the line itself can scare the one who draws it. Pulls it. Strikes it through. Sometimes it seems to me that all my lines have the density of a trampoline. On the ECG they are knee and elbow shaped. Sharp in meaning. On the EEG, they are jagged and wrinkled like a crumpled tapestry or aggressively trimmed bangs. A line is not a stroke because I hate strokes. That's happiness for the line. Misfortune for the stroke. Mathematicians underline strokes. Statesmen underline strokes. Border guards underline strokes. Customs officers underline strokes. Controllers underline strokes. Rivers and forests without bridges underline strokes. No one's lands underline strokes. Strokes are sharp lines that have been emptied from shyness, childishness and spatiality. They remain and so does their flatness and fairness.



Strokes are best drawn with a chalk, “this far you may, one, two, three”. It is with the strokes that the need for a breath ends. With the horizontal ones laid on the wrist. The line, however, has no end unless you meet it with a stroke. Life has no end unless you meet it with a point. I spilled ink on the sand-pit with my elbow to make a spacious enough point for a big break. After it I decided to get up. I moved my knees with my hips. With my arms I climbed up the slide. The new descent won’t lead to a point or a stroke. Any shift will be welcomed until in the reflection I seem to be resembling myself before the departure. I took a cup of tea. Vanilla with strawberry. The new descent is going to draw a new line. And so all the way to the centre of warmth where neither colours, names nor refinement differ, but civility and incivility, serration and roundness, linearity and drawn strokes do.