

SONG: "Al Alba" by Luis Eduardo Aute.

If I would tell you my love
that I am afraid of sunrise
I do not know which stars are those
Hurting me like threats
The moon is bleeding out
At the edge of the scythe
I feel that after the night
There will come a longer night
Please do not leave me
My love, at sunrise.

Who's speaking? You have been hearing my voice through the eight episodes of *The Radical Flu*. But who's speaking? In Camus' *The Plague*, the narrator is the main character, and at the end of the novel we see the narrator and the protagonist, doctor Rieux, become one character.

In *The Radical Flu*, the narrator is a voice, which only becomes an actor at the end of the play. We are now at the end of the play. Am I the protagonist?

Am I Martin Tranmael, the fiery, blazing, intense socialist, defined in "Roses are Red" as "dynamite for the workers in Norway; he could speak on demand for thousands, a reckless giant with sparkling blue eyes and stray hair. When he opened his mouth, it was like the gates of hell opened, and out of it exploded a rain of lava that threatened to burn down the entire capitalist system..."

Am I Edvard Munch, sweet, neurotic Edvard, my friend, "a famous and notoriously reclusive painter" as he was introduced in *Ibsen, Ibsen, Ibsen...* the handsome, noble Edvard, paralyzed between fear and ambition, indeed a devout admirer of Ibsen, but also forever ready to take Ibsen's place in the Olympus of the greatest Norwegian ever. And who could blame him. Norway has made good business out of him, you can have your Munch t-shirt, your Munch tote bag, a first league artist, his peers being now Manet, Matisse, Van Gogh ... Edvard, you should be happy, painting was the only thing that mattered to you, and you are where you wanted to be. But happiness was not a talent that you possessed.

Am I Gustav Vigeland? No, I am certainly not Gustav, the godfather of my first child, Zenon.

Am I Johan Scharffenberg, "racist, medical doctor, psychiatrist, nationalist, lover of all practices ancient Greek - except drinking, bad poet, 49 years old", as he was introduced to us in *Bro Bro Brille*? I am certainly not, but I am sure Scharff would have had a thing or two to say about me, I would have been a delightful study object for him no doubt, belonging to the category of women, "those disgusting bodies".

A woman! Am I any of *The Radical Flu* very important women, Ingeborg Køber, Aasta Hansteen, Johanne Dybwad, Regine Stang, Ragna Nielsen? No, I am not any of them, even if I belong to the same generation as most of them and we could have appeared together in *Bro Bro Brille* or *No Steam Ahead*. But I wasn't there in 1918.

I am not Elsa Laula Renberg, I am not Johan Turi, I am not Daniel Mortenson in *Reaching Winter Grounds*.
Am I Gloria?

A woman lies buried under me,
I hear her soft whisper,
the rasp of her parchment wings
fighting the folds of my shroud.

A woman lies buried under me,
I emerge covered with mud.
Twigs fall from my eyes.
I rise, smell every flower
touch the four corners
and the burning trees.
In my own hands
My life.

No,
I am not Gloria, but I could be. Because like Gloria, I am dead. I am a woman, and I am dead.

Edgar Allan Poe said: "The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world"

I would have done anything for poetic effect, but I did not want to die.

As a female poet, as a new woman, as a free woman, as a woman in love, as a woman beloved, death was always at the corner of my eye. Still, I did not want to die.

I was the future's premature child. Born too early, gone too soon.

I was "The Lady" for Munch, and then for all my admirers, his friends, I was The Lady too - my admirers, my killers. I was Aspasia, the whore, for Strindberg, a sore loser who never forgave me for laughing at his erotic advances and choosing another man. Strindberg, the great poet and the small man who thought a free woman meant his enslavement.

I was "Ducha" - Soul, in Polish - for my husband, who was my killer too. I was God, holy, goodness itself, for my last lover, who was my killer too.

I was the mysterious Fru P. for whom Vigeland and Munch fought in Berlin. I was the woman Strindberg wanted to have jailed for prostitution "one dark evening, when she was roaming the streets". I was ... "Norwegian, very slender, with the curves of a Madonna of Trecento, with a laughter that drove men mad. Her name was Duchá and she drank absinth by the liter without getting drunk..."*

Only after death and even much much later they let me be an author and an intellectual on my own right; in life, I could only be defined by the effect I had on men, *muse* (when they

* Julius Meier-Graefe

considered I was good for their intellectual production) or *femme fatale* (when I was held responsible for their lack of control and dried-up inspiration).

They loved me and they killed me. My Polish husband had already two children with a woman who was pregnant of the third, when he wrote to me:

"A nature such as mine can only consist in you, for you are my absolute, highest, most intimate ideal. [...] I shall write the most wonderful things, I shall extend into Heaven, I shall do all, all, all, but I need to feel that you love me."

"She had been queen of the realm of love, for no man had ever loved a woman more highly than he her."[†]

And I loved him. When Martha Foerder, the mother of five of his children, committed suicide after giving birth to the fifth, I brought him chocolate and cigarettes to prison. I had two children with him, but that was not my only contribution to his glory: I translated his work into Norwegian, supported him economically, and became the queen of the king of The Bohème, Stachu, Stanislaw Przybyszewski.

By 1899, he was tired of me and started new affairs with new women and the subsequent spread of his genetic material.

"She felt calm, relieved, almost happy. She stretched her arms out and breathed deeply, as if freed from an embarrassing thought ... He had put up an ivy wall for her life to force her to only see him, him, him. She now wanted to tear it down and open it to all winds."

I was trying to start life again by the time I met my final executor, Wladyslaw Emeryk. Like a lamb being taken to the sacrificial slaughter, my husband arranged for me and my young son to travel with Emeryk to Tbilisi, in Georgia. In the early hours of June 5, 1901, Emeryk shot me in the head and then shot himself. My son was there, still too young to read the words my killer had prepared for him:

"My beloved Zenon! I am taking your mother from you. You will hear the strangest things about her, but literature – both what has been written and what will surely be written – will not give you [...] the source of truth. For she was not of this world [...]. That she was the only one of the absolute Almighty's incarnations, that she was God, you will hear elsewhere. I wish only to say, to express myself in an earthly way, that she was holy. She was Goodness itself, she had a royal goodness which had grown from contempt. You alone were everything for her. [...] She believed that her goal, that her reason for being sent here – was to give birth to you. I am taking her from you. I am doing you a terrible, boundless wrong. Maybe your life will be ruined by it. I cannot do anything else, I cannot do anything else out of concern for her. In eternity, when we meet... "

Emeryk The Killer had words for my husband as well: " Stach! I'm killing her for her own good! She wanted to write to you that she knew I was going to kill her. She considered it necessary. She loved only you all her life."

[†] [Sing mir das Lied vom Leben und vom Tode ...] by Dagny Juel, 1898

"And now she heard only him, she saw only him, him everywhere. She felt his hand clasp his, she heard his voice whisper again and again, where he loved her, that she was everything to him, that no death, no grave could prevent him from following her always, in time and eternity."

I did not want to die. I wanted to live for my children and for my work. But *muse* or *femme fatale*, the truth is that I meant very little for those men supposedly tormented by my freedom. My husband did not attend my funeral nor took care of my son. In his private correspondence with his new mistress, he seemed satisfied about my being no more and complained about the high cost of a funeral in Georgia - I was buried namelessly because he would not pay. It was a woman, Maya Vogt, who arranged for having my grave marked with my name.

Not surprisingly, I was blamed for my death. My life was irregular, bohemian, indecent. I was the shame of my family. I was lascivious, sexually insatiable, adulterous. My executor had no other choice but to kill me: I troubled him. My work was mediocre, just a pale reflection of the geniuses I was lucky enough to spend time with.

Only Munch dared to play a different note in the general public shaming. In an interview for the newspaper *Kristiania Dagsavis*, he accorded me the status of intellectual and cultivated woman, serious about my writing. He was backed up in this evaluation by an unexpected party: women's voting rights champion Gina Krog, *Roses are Red*. A bronze bust of Krog is located at her grave at Vår Frelzers gravlund in Oslo - not far from the carrara monolith we hear talking in *Ibsen, Ibsen, Ibsen*.

My life was cut short and I could not be in Christiania in 1918. I could not be a character in *The Radical Flu*, but I can be its narrator. A voice. My voice.

I am Dagny Juel.

This is the end of *The Radical Flu*.

Support women.

Believe women.

Stop killing women.

Stop violence against women.

She did not die, she was assassinated.

If they touch one of us, we shall all respond.

Not one less.

It's going to fall, it's going to fall, Heteropatriarchy is going to fall.

It is not going to fall; we are going to push it over.

There is no revolution without sexual revolution.

Justice, Justice, Justice.