

crossing the waters leave and arrive on time. No one seems to know whether they are coming or going and they don't like our Nobel Prize winning author drawing attention to this deranged beehive." He barely takes a breath.

"If you've a date in Constantinople," the song says, "she'll be waiting in Istanbul." I was remembering what Vefa said about Ozymandian melancholy. That could apply just as well to Istanbul as it does to Rome: Osmanli melancholy, beautiful women aging in gilded mirrors, the march of time.

"Young Turks, fearing jihad, erosion of democracy and the relentless grind of bottom feeding, confess they want to get out. Istanbul has changed. The exodus from the eastern provinces is choking our jewel of Byzantium. There are too many people and not enough room. No one can move. *Göte giren flemsiye açılmaz*, they say. "How can you open an umbrella if it is up your ass?"

He smiles and places his hands on the table. He is done.

"That's quite a speech. Are you a politician or a professor? Do you approach complete strangers in order to rehearse this lecture on Turkish culture?" I smile because I don't want to frighten him.

"Every tourist who comes to Istanbul wants to discuss politics and or Pamuk. We all have our answers ready." He laughs.

"I'll try to think of some new ones."

I get it. Doug, *Sweet Papa Lowdown's* sax player, is hanging out in the streets, reading comics and learning the language. He's calling their tour the *Bozuk Iptal* umbrella tour,

bozuk meaning broken and *iptal*, cancelled. This is the world of Orhan Pamuk, a phenomenal mystery set in ruin and beauty, the remains of occupation and imperial glory where East met West and everyone got lost.

"Pamuk is one of the privileged. He grew up in a house that bears the name of his ancestors. His is the legacy of Byzantine anachronism, which is as often as not the prerogative to be and do nothing, to wait like an old beauty for the elixir of love to revivify her mouldering body."

My new friend carries on talking but my mind wanders to my other agenda, Iman, who was betrayed by strangers. I want to bring up her name but am afraid to interrupt. Would that insult Turkishness?

When the world first saw Iman in the hotel in Tripoli, her headscarf had fallen off, her face was bruised, her eyes and lips swollen from crying. She showed us the rope burns on her wrists. There were other wounds but before we could see them a soldier disguised as a waitress had thrown her coat over her head. Then Iman was led out to a police car by Ghadaffi goons and driven to God knows what horrible destination. What were her parents thinking as they watched helplessly on the other side of the revolutionary war? I can't imagine.

Will this stranger help? Dare I ask?

MY NKVD VISIT: GOING HOME

Can I see another's grief,

And not seek for kind relief?

—WILLIAM BLAKE, "Songs of Innocence"

A foggy day

The end of winter—I am only

Two days old

I am Vladimir!

And I am now about six months old

I am in the arms of

My young mother who is walking

The slushy sidewalks of Leningrad—

I am happy with my mother's milk

When she has time to feed me—

VLADIMIR AZAROV

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

NINA BUNJEVAC



My mother, walking rapidly, almost running, this future Soviet Judge who passionately dreams of bringing the enemies of the Soviet people to heel, to Justice.

Yes! she's in a hurry—
 She needs to meet with
 The NKVD
 Because my father has been
 Arrested in the night—why?
 There's been all kinds of misdirection
 And confusion
 In our young Socialist State—
 A new honest powerful authority has
 Problems!
 Hurry hurry, mother! help
 My father!
 Help the NKVD do their holy
 Work, help them avoid
 Mistakes to
 Reach the shining peaks of
 Communism!



The door is closed behind us. I see a nice man who looks at me, smiles,
 Clucks his tongue! I am smiling at him, hearing his sweet speech:

“You cannot know this, you—
 Trusting daughter of our democratic life—
 The chameleon mask of our enemies is so dark
 Maybe he—that is, your former husband,
 Was drawn into an anti-Soviet conspiracy
 Against his will—but now he is our
 Real enemy—no one who is innocent
 Is arrested and sent to trial! yes! yes!
 Yes! and please stop! you are—
 Naïve!
 Stop—you foolish girl!”

His face flushes red!—I certainly do not know what to do at my Young age!
 Cry? The man is now hysterical. I am listening to Him shout:

“Stop—stupid girl!—you fool!
 You?—are you a future Soviet judge?
 Our future seer? defender of
 Socialism? Communism?!
 Stop! he is an enemy!
 Yes! he! he! he! your husband!
 He is on the other side! he’s a traitor! a renegade!
 A fifth column!
 I’m trying to open your blind eyes!
 Forget him, go to the University
 Get your Judicial Diploma!
 You are so energetic, smart!
 You could help us!
 Hey! listen! you are different—
 Your new husband—he is here!—
 Waiting for you in the hallway!”

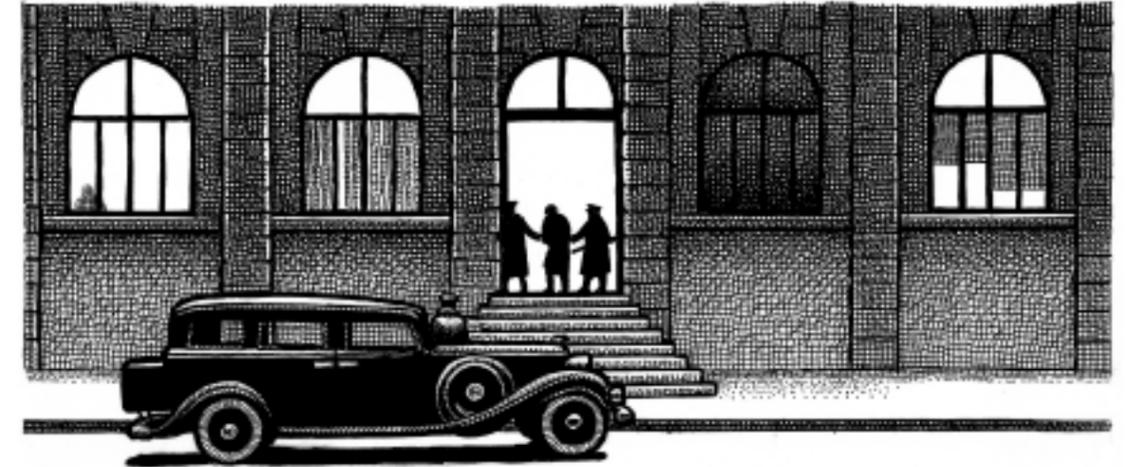
WHAT?! in her silence—she—my mother—lays me down on The NKVD table—
 I am surprised—I wait, lying on the secret Papers of the NKVD—without a word
 my mother goes to him! To the NKVD man—and—she S-L-A-P-S! his clean-shaven
 Pink cheek! so very very hard!—I shudder, peeing into my Russian nappy—oh
 poor kid!—my time to cry!



I am very happy!
 I am already one year old! I hear
 The lulling clacking sound of the carriage wheels!
 I am sitting on
 A small square table by the train window
 A metal spoon *pings* in the tea glass
 The tea is cold
 The naked early spring landscape flashes by—
 Leningrad—
 To the far East!



A long long long way—days days days
 So many days
 To Kazakhstan!



In the icy storm countryside of Kazakhstan a tall and not-too-Young Man appears—
 almost two years old! I can speak. I ask My mother: WHO IS THIS MAN?

Your father!
 He has come to us—under appeal, he
 Has exchanged his
 Leningrad jail cell for
 Kazakhstan in exile—
 And later—as a schoolboy you will
 Read in Russian history:
 Pushkin's revolutionary friends—they were
 Called Decembrists—tried to effect
 A revolution in Saint Petersburg
 In the early nineteenth century—tried to overthrow
 The Tsar, wanting a Republic, a Parliament!—
 They were exiled to Siberia—noble men—
 And their aristocratic loving wives went
 With them into that cold wild land!
 So your father has repeated history—he has
 Come to us in Kazakhstan—”

SPECIAL SECTION



CANADIAN NOIR

Noir has never been a genre so much as a tone, an overlay, a mood,
 and so one must resist the temptation to define what is meant by noir
 – rather we should look to what it means to writers.

Noir is a spectrum of an esthetic to be explored, from its hard-boiled
 home in crime fiction to its grim forays into horror, fantasy,
 and surrealism, to the dystopian shadows it casts in science fiction,
 to the mixture of desire and corruption it brings to erotica,
 on to the blood-spattered romance of the frontier,
 to the stark nihilism of literary realism.

add to this...