

FEED THE BEAST

Matjaž Bertoncelj



ebook



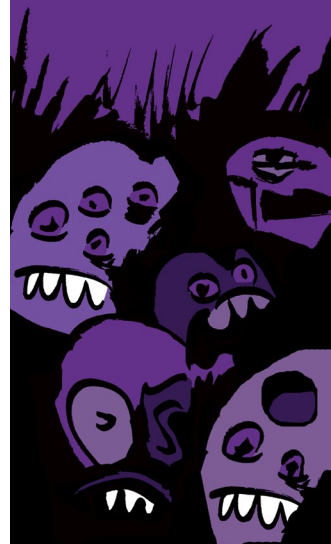




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Matjaž Bertoncelj



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Fragmentation of the Human Soul

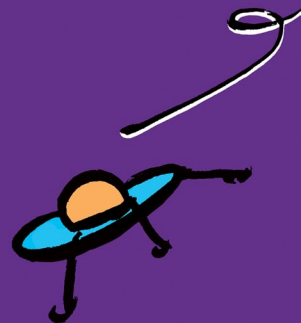
The comics of the second generation Slovenian author, Matjaž Bertoncelj, cannot be categorized into mainstream creativity. They belong to alternative comics not only because of their graphical approach, but more so for their choice of themes and way of storytelling. In fact, his comics do not have an intrigue, do not have the lead hero and characterisation and his works rarely have a classic narrative. Very often, his comics are mysterious, and sometimes they focus on the poetry and musicality that the reader seeks to indulge in. Bertoncelj's comics deal with moral issue and the transience of life, asking questions, but not giving answers.

Created in a time frame of fifteen-odd years, his comics, which average between one and six pages, partially neglect the traditional relationship between truth and reality. In a certain way, his work contains elements of postmodernism: discontinuation, fragmentation, modularity, heterogeneity and metatextuality. Bertoncelj deems that reality is ambiguous, but he suggests that simulacra are increasingly taking its place and making it unrecognizable.

Skilfully directing his means of expression, Bertoncelj usually thinks about the meaninglessness of human gestures that cause accidents to oneself or others, about human stupidity, the blindness of a community about to collapse, the futility of human efforts and entropy that will consume everything. Living in the modern world, he bitterly criticizes mindless consumerism and technological escapism which is increasingly reaching out looking for a simulacrum of happiness.

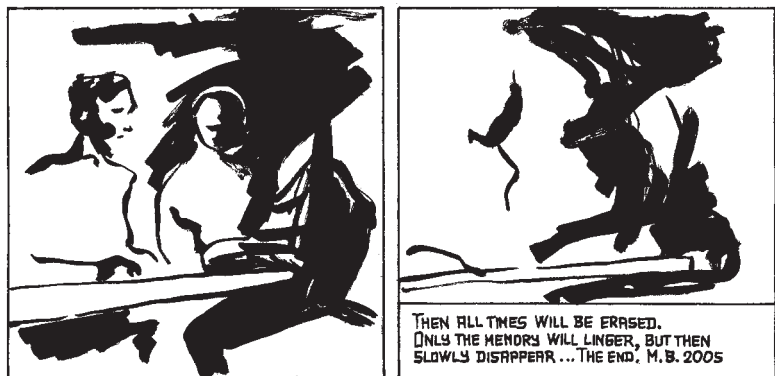


*Phantasmagoria and
onirism – elements of
Bertoncelj's reality.*



Although neither of his comics offers any kind of solution, there are still messages and lessons to be left from his work - there is no universal truth and spiritual fulfilment can only be found in ourselves, if one accepts that all in life is transient.

Bertoncelj's drawings are not beautiful and elegant, but very effective. Avoiding realism, the author offers a graphic quality that makes it possible to conceive a drawn object. Then, by destroying the structure of the present world, he seeks to more clearly convey feelings. Notable is the author's desire to focus not on graphical realization, but on the graphical narrative, which is the definition of comics as a means of expression. At the same time, Bertoncelj is a master of the relationship between black and white masses. Highlighting the places that need to attract attention, he knows that every lightning creates shadows, especially in the hearts of the protagonists and the world around them, putting stress on the darkness of the ambience.



The game of light and shadow is not only of graphic significance, but also a moral view of the world.

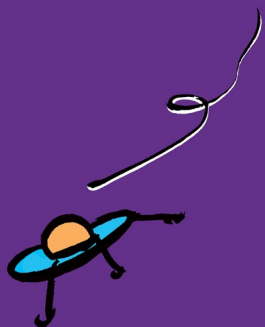
Excitement lies also in the titles of his comics. They often have a metatextual meaning and resemble the comments, so that at first glance they have nothing to do with the work. It is obvious that the author has a vision of a world in discontinuity and believes that one word or phrase would not be able to unite the whole comic or the idea behind it,

and he takes some of the symbolic values which have an important emotional or psychological place.

Like the titles themselves, the comics of Matjaž Bertonec may seem a little unclear at first glance. However, we must not forget what Bernard Hislaire (Yslaïre), the noted Belgium comics master, said: "I'd like my comics to be read as an opera, through emotions, even if the message is not very clear. Forget the plot and be carried away by emotion." If Hislaire's comics read like an opera, then Bertonec's 'haiku comics' certainly read like a minuet.

Aleksandar Manić, essayist and comics critic





**Matjaž
Bertoncelj**

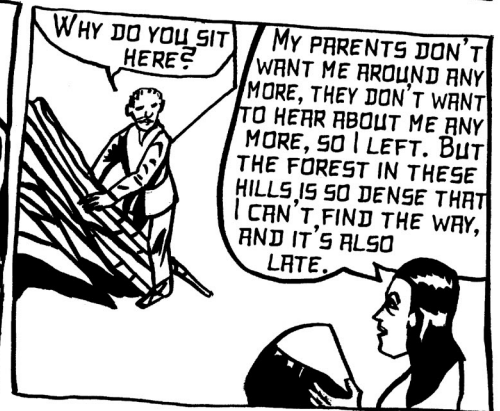
FEED THE BEAST





SEA NYMPH

BASED ON A CHINESE FAIRY TALE, MATJAŽ BERTONČELJ, 2005





MY PARENTS ARE LONG SINCE DEAD. EXCEPT FOR MY NEIGHBOUR VANG'S DOG WHO COMES AROUND FROM TIME TO TIME AND STEALS A PIECE OF MEAT, NOT A SOUL COMES TO ME, NOT EVEN A SHADOW OF THE DEAD.

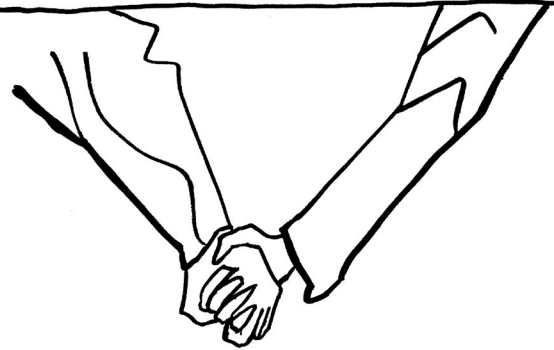


ISN'T IT HARD TO LIVE IN SUCH SOLITUDE?

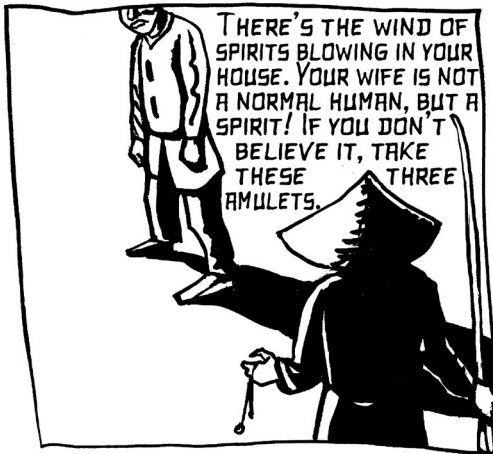
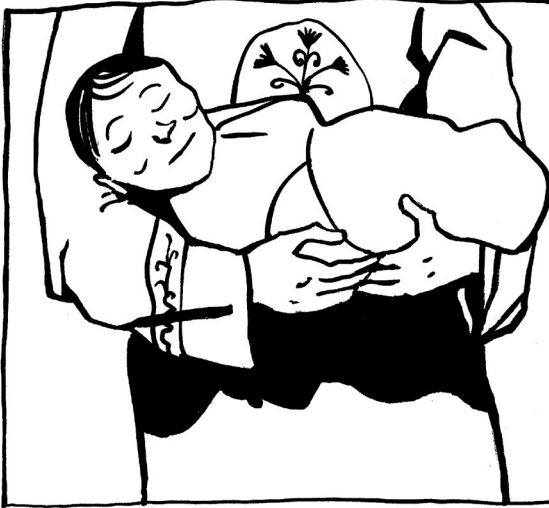
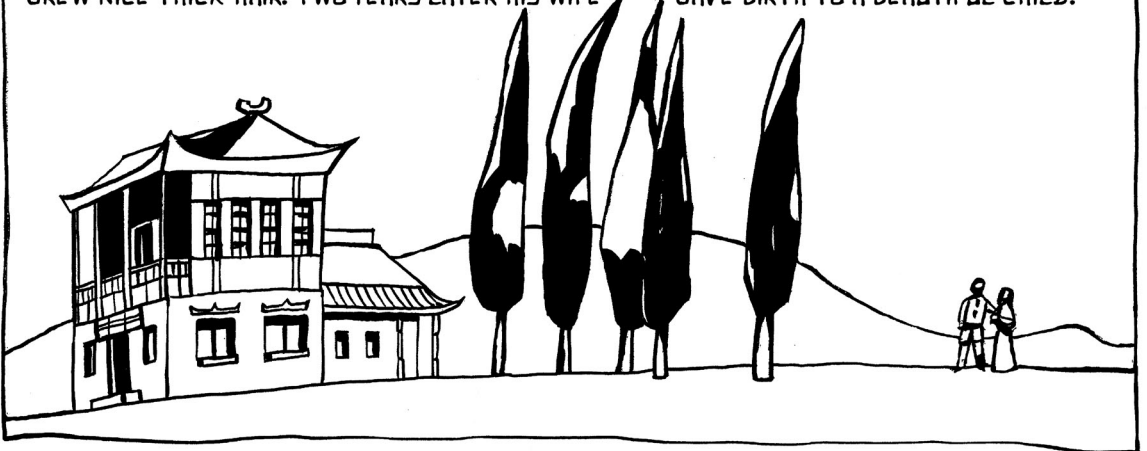
YES, SURE IT'S HARD, BUT WHAT CAN YOU DO? I HAVE TO CUT TREES IN THESE HILLS, AND THAT'S WHAT I LIKE TO DO. THEN I COME HOME, COOK SOME FOOD AND GO TO SLEEP. LOOK AT MY SUIT: IT'S TORN! THERE'S NOBODY HERE TO REPAIR IT. IF I GO TO SEE PEOPLE, THEY POINT FINGERS OR LAUGH AT ME.



I'M A SOUL WITH NO HOME. WHY NOT TRY TO FIGHT THROUGH THIS LIFE TOGETHER?



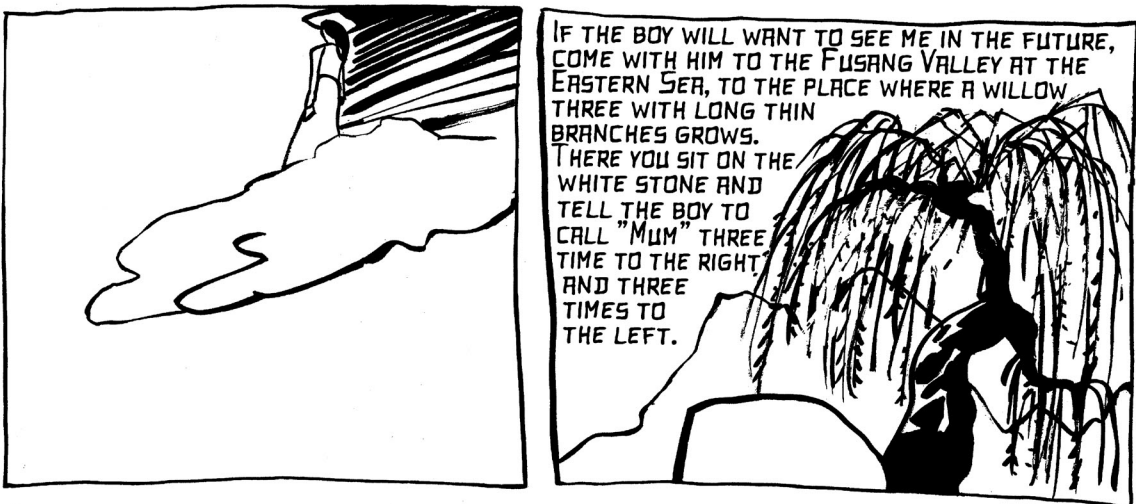
WHEN THE BALD MAN MARRIED HE GRADUALLY BECAME RICH. HE BUILT A BIG BRICK HOUSE. HE GREW NICE THICK HAIR. TWO YEARS LATER HIS WIFE GAVE BIRTH TO A BEAUTIFUL CHILD.

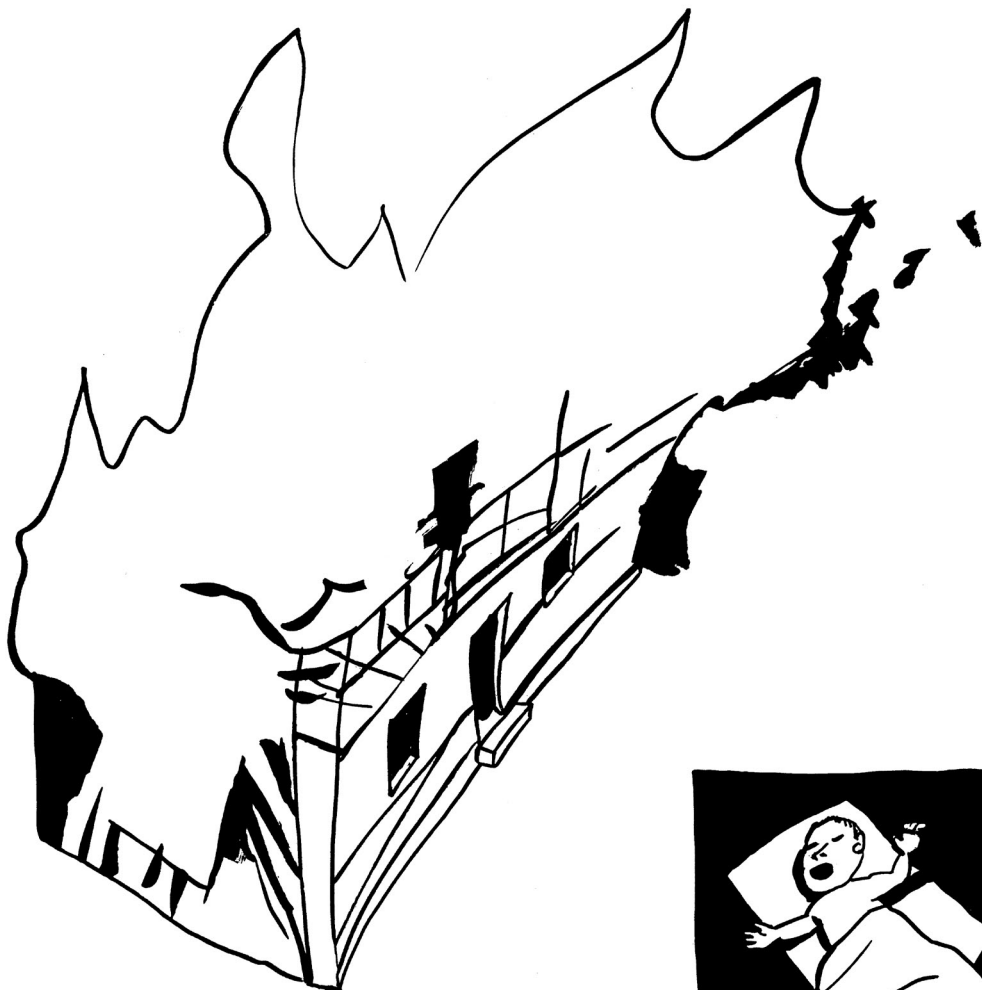


THERE'S THE WIND OF SPIRITS BLOWING IN YOUR HOUSE. YOUR WIFE IS NOT A NORMAL HUMAN, BUT A SPIRIT! IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT, TAKE THESE THREE AMULETS.

FIX ONE TO THE DOOR, ANOTHER TO THE DOORPOST, AND THE THIRD TO YOUR WIFE'S HEAD. THEN SHE WILL TELL YOU HERSELF.







THE HAPPINESS WAS LOST. HIS HOUSE BURNED DOWN TO THE GROUND, HE GOT ILL. HE STARTED TO CUT WOOD AGAIN, WHILE THE CHILD WAS CRYING OF HUNGER.



SO HE WALKED AND WALKED TOWARDS THE EAST
TO FIND THE MOTHER OF HIS SON.

