

Name, Family Name

Dedicated to Van Gogh's SHOES

We are a name and family name,
we're a pair of devoted shoes
always at one person's disposal.
As soon as he was born,
they put us on him:
first a family name and then name,
in order he could walk around the earth,
pass over borders,
step into dirt
and walk along the red carpet
while the ceremonial music plays...
If not us who can't stay in the same place for long
he wouldn't be able to make a single step
and he wouldn't manage to say about his feelings
to another pair of shoes
And he wouldn't manage to commit sins and
then confess them.
In short, he couldn't live at all...
Naturally we're getting older and worn-out
but still never disappear.
Though the one to whom we belong
sometimes throws us away and
takes a new shining pair instead of us
or just one of the pair.
For example:
Kostrowicki instead of Apollinaire,
Kvirkvelia instead of Graneli*,
Spencer instead of Chaplin,
Samuel Clemens instead of Mark Twan.
When women get married
they often start wearing one of their husband's boots
and nothing remains to us but to lie – obediently and
covered with dust – in the back of their wardrobes
with a little hope that sometimes they will remember us...

But mostly we stay with them until the end
and even when they to whom we belong disappear
we still stay here in this world as a proof
of their past existence.

We can't move any more but we show the new generation
where and for what reason they, to whom we belonged,
used to walk...

Sometimes they seem to have just one leg:
Shota, Ilia, Akaki, Vazha, Galaktion**...

Every time those, who come after, find
just one shoe of two and try to shine it...

That's it.

We are a name and family name
and we tried to be short describing our being
which in general is exactly what we said.

And – as nothing lasts forever –
sooner or later they will throw us away for the last time
and who knows, perhaps after that happens
everyone will become able to see the person whom
we used to carry around the world
for exactly what he was...

Shota Iatashvili

Translated by Anna Grig

* Tereneti Graneli (Kvirkvelia), a Georgian poet (1897-1934).

** Shota Rustaveli, a Georgian poet (1172-1216). Ilia Chavchavadze, a Georgian writer, poet, journalist and lawyer (1837-1907). Akaki Tcereteli, a Georgian poet (1840-1915), Vazha-Pshavela, a Georgian poet and writer (1861-1915). Galaktion Tabidze, a Georgian poet (1891-1959)