

# *ATROPHY 1*

## *HOUSE OF NAMES*

*Written by Ayrin Ersöz,  
inspired by the texts of Eduardo Galeano, Herakleitos,  
Italo Calvino, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault,  
Milan Kundera, Tomris Uyar; by the Old Testament;  
by the condition of the world and of herself*

Welcome to the house of names.  
Everything comes to the house of names.  
There is nothing without a name.  
Anything unnamed is nothing.  
Nothing can be nameless.  
Everything comes to the house of names.  
People, animals, objects...  
Everything...

Everything seeks a name for itself.  
Names present themselves;  
They make promises;  
    They tingle, so that they sound nice,  
    They jingle, so that they make sweet echoes.  
The house of names is always full.  
People, animals, objects...  
They try the names on.

I dreamt of the house of names.  
I tried a lot of names on myself.

God created Adam in his own image.  
In his own image...  
For Adam to name all the things God created,  
    For him to name them all,  
God laid them down in front of him;  
Animals, objects, woman.  
Adam named them all.  
He named them.  
He looked woman in the face,  
    And he named her.  
As Adam's children multiplied,  
Their fear  
    and oblivion multiplied.  
Life was at their face,  
    Death, at their back.  
They followed the chosen names.  
Those who enhance power

They made decisions,  
they evaluated,  
they gave meaning.  
Those who collect power  
They directed,  
they believed,  
they made others believe.  
Those who accumulate power,  
They drew borders,  
They cracked the face of earth.  
Those who retain power,  
They demonstrated,  
They made others watch.  
They wrote,  
They made others read what they have written.  
They dictated,  
They made others read what they have dictated.  
They reproduced their own images.  
They brought their own names under the sun.  
There was no place left under the sun for the names of others.  
They crammed them all into darkness.  
The names of nobodies were left in an unending, long night.  
Nobodies...  
Children of nobodies  
The owners of nothings  
Those that have nobody...  
Those that don't get light...  
Those that cannot be, although they could be,  
Those that have hands,  
arms,  
feet,  
instead of faces.  
Those that have numbers,  
instead of names.  
Those that are human resources,  
And not humans.  
Those that were made to believe that it is not possible  
To speak,  
To act,  
To exist.  
To speak,  
To act,  
To exist.  
Not possible...  
  
I throw away from my head  
the ones I catch,  
I carry on my head  
the ones I cannot catch.  
Eyes are better witnesses than ears, but

Visible things would not be misleading, if they were easily recognized.  
Truth likes to hide itself away.  
Behind images, in the darkness of names.  
Neither can it be told, nor kept secret.

They named me: Ayrin Kadirova Aliosmanova.  
Names have no light in them.  
They are dark.  
    Very dark...  
Nobody can tell where they are from.  
They signify but...  
    They cannot be seen,  
unless light falls on them.

Let my name come out of darkness.  
Let me have no shame.  
I, too, want to be like them.  
Lili, Maria, Milena, Daniela,  
Rositsa, Katya, Elena, Svetlana,  
Ludmila, Nadya, Petya, Anastasya,  
Natalia, Silvia, Zlatka...

The name list...  
The name list of the convincing committee...  
A name will be chosen from that list.  
The convincing committee will work until everybody is convinced.  
Everybody...  
If there really is nothing to be chosen,  
There is nothing to be chosen.  
Freedom of choice...  
Ayrin... A... Alina... I made my choice: Alina Kubratova Atanasova.  
    My father... My grandfather...  
    The living... The dead...  
    Everybody changed their name.  
Everybody was convinced  
except the convincing committee.  
It was changed again; the names of the living, the dead.

My image; a black and white photograph; my face is silent...nobody...  
And another name that represents me: Alina Kamenova Angelova.

They took the road, the nobodies  
With the inexhaustible sentiment of going away.  
They were already home, while on the road.  
They wanted to call the foreign land their homeland.  
They thought that their destination started at the border.  
Indeed, they themselves were the borders of the world.  
Their ties to the border were twiggy ropes.  
The places they arrived were the borders of the earth.  
The painted borders of the earth...

The image of the world on the shattered mirror...  
The cracked face of Earth...  
The cracked face of the planet Earth...  
The face that the sons of man made their own by cracking...  
The cracks that enslave, that bestow privilege...  
The cracks that hurt, that make bleed, that kill...  
The cracks that protect names  
    That erase names...  
The cracks that change my name again,  
Once I am on the other side of them.

At every point on the cracks of the face of Earth, the beginning and the end unite.  
    Just like a steel hoop...  
    Just like a golden ring...

Ring...  
One of the major inventions of the son of man...  
The woman figure that is pictured as an empty circle and  
That is skillfully engraved on metal.  
A dream that is worn on a finger...  
The ring of the son of man: an emptiness... an absence...  
He showed on the mirror the emptiness of the ring and said:  
Woman does not exist.

On a little island in the middle of the sea, I married a son of man.  
I accepted my new family name as a gift from the ring I wore.

January 31st, 2008: The judge called out "Ayririn".  
I won the lawsuit I had filed for my name.  
I got my name back after twenty-three years.  
The proof of my defeat;  
Being confined to a name, which, I thought, belonged to me.  
I had just woken up from my dream, that I realized I was still in the house of names.

Her name is nobody  
    The transparent body of the young woman...  
A lustful gaze,  
Pulls her out of the world of bodies, all of a sudden.  
As the gazes multiply, she burns up like a torch;  
Her body lights up.  
As the gazes become rare, her light fades away.  
Her body becomes unnoticeable again.  
Until a lustful gaze touches her again.

- Hey, what is your name?  
- Dancer  
- Who?  
- Dancer  
- Your name is dancer?  
- Dancer  
- Don't speak, you are a dancer

What's your name huh, I'm asking you for your name?  
- I told you; dancer.  
- What are you?  
A puppet?  
A toy?  
A slave?  
A laborer?  
Unemployed?  
A material?  
Who is a dancer?  
Who do you call a dancer?  
Those who are obsessed with seeing the material of an artwork  
on their own bodies,  
Those who condemn their image to perfection,  
Exhibitionists who want to look spiritual,  
Those who dance just because they need to dance,  
Those who dance just what they need to dance,  
Those who dance with love, with passion  
Also, those who use dance in place of something else,  
And those who do not, are called dancers.  
Dancers...  
The captives of movements  
Movements use dancers to create their own image.  
Every movement looks for perfect shadows of itself!  
That is why they like dancers.  
It's not because dancers are the owners of those movements or anything like that.

The house of names is looking for its name.  
And with passion...  
Whereas I am making up excuses to get away from the studio  
I am trying to lay off.  
Why?  
I am afraid to start.  
The emptiness of the studio scares me.  
A bare studio...  
I am afraid of dancing.  
That's why.  
What if I don't look like a dancing person on the stage,  
just a dancing person?  
What if I can't dance again, forever?  
What if I stay trapped into what I know?  
The passion for dance is like enslavement,  
It provokes the desire to escape.  
Dance has always given physical pain,  
Such a toil that could not be compared to the pleasure you get afterwards.  
Maybe that's why.

Every name has its images,  
its face.  
The face now stands before the name.

I look at people's images in the newspapers, magazines; on the television.  
Hundreds, thousands of faces,  
As if they are variations of just one face...  
The names and faces of my loved ones...  
I know each of them as faces,  
Not in any other form.

I want to see my face;  
I look at the mirror; at my image.  
At my eyes, that look at me from inside of me.  
Can anything still be inside, when I can look at the inside of it?  
My face at the mirror,  
Does not look like any other face.  
Is my face me?  
If I lived in a world with no mirrors;  
I would dream of my face. I would be so curious about it.  
I would dream of my face as the outer reflection of something in me.  
Then, if they gave me a mirror around the age of forty,  
I would be so scared, so terrified.  
I would see a face on the mirror that I never knew, never acknowledged; that was totally unfamiliar,  
I would realize that my face was not me.  
A face that represents me,  
    a name that signifies me...  
My face...  
    The veil over the truth,  
My name...  
    The visible sign of the veil,  
Everybody has a name, a face and  
    an invisible sign,  
My invisible sign,  
The self that I carved out of the world,  
A naked interface in purgatory;  
My real name.

Life gets heavy sometimes,  
    stone-heavy,  
Under the merciless gaze of Medusa.  
I can show the images I caught inside the shattered mirror;  
But everything I showed could have been different.  
Everything we see on stage,  
Everything we see indeed,  
Could have been totally different.  
Totally different...

THE END

Translation from Turkish: Ceren Yalın