

Ivica Prtenjača - V.B.Z. Translation Workshop

## Nauts

when we were astronauts in training  
we spun around at a breakneck speed  
in a shining sphere in the dark  
until our eyes ended up  
on the other side of everything  
when we were cosmonauts in training  
we had to endure with a smile  
the pin that pricked the left side of our chests  
the pin that bore the badge of a hero  
combusting in flames  
somewhere far away  
when we were astronauts in training  
our lady friends  
our future wives had to smile and  
tap their fingers on a burnt down cigarette  
their hands, red nails and  
the soft arm of a child intertwined  
when we were cosmonauts in training  
we had to sing with others  
eat with the chosen ones and dance as if  
we're already floating in a capsule  
through the depths of dark  
when we were astronauts in training  
we were told we must believe  
in ourselves and the future that was already there

that we had to go out there  
that we were the best of all of those  
who stood around us and now clapped  
we climbed the cross alone  
that's how mad we'd gone  
when we were cosmonauts in training  
  
good old earth do not cry we said  
good old earth do not be afraid  
the days passed oh  
stay put do not budge  
this is between us and the future  
between our capsule swirling  
along the edge of what  
can only mean  
you'll never see us again  
when we were in training  
we drove in the sun  
by the lake where the fishermen cast their  
shoulders into the sludge  
and muddy waters  
through the crowns in which the dry leaves  
quivered  
when we were in training  
we were already dying of boredom and the prospect  
of chasms in our lives  
we found ourselves beside  
a very old dog  
it's Rufus you said  
it's Laika  
I tried to cheer you up  
and then came a woman strapped with a bomb

stood between us and set herself off  
the vacuum sucked up all the bloom  
all the sudden future and our running had to stop  
when we were astronauts in training  
when we were cosmonauts in training  
the training lacked something  
only the ferns grew around us  
as we sat back into the evening splattered  
with mud  
large concrete blocks crumbling down  
and a cloud of dust and ashes rising into a very dark night  
and then came a woman strapped with a bomb  
with a fair face and a fixed gaze  
she set herself off  
and so it goes on for this whole afternoon  
the night  
the uncertain morning in a vacuum  
Rufus has lost a leg  
Laika is dead  
we have to accept it  
while on our faces  
in the dust the bluish images flash  
the flame and great clouds  
of ashes rise up in the end  
into that vast space  
and finally finally



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