

POETRY AGAINST LIGHT POLLUTION

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Sentimentally, I have to begin by translating a few verses from the Romanian national myth-ballad “Miorita” (The Little Ewe), Vasile Alecsandri variant (XIXth century), in which a shepherd compares his imminent death with a cosmic wedding:

“A star fell
at my wedding party,
the Sun and the Moon
carried my coronet,
my wedding guests
were pine trees,
the priests were
great mountans,
thousands of birds
were my singers,
and the stars
were my torches...”

I’m afraid that today, the same shepherd would say:

At my wedding party
the light pollution carried
my coronet...

I shall continue with an astropoem which I published in 2003 in the famous annual Astronomical Calendar by Guy Ottewell, edited in the USA by Furman University and Astronomical League.

LIGHT POLLUTION

The “electronomers”
are false replies
to the astronomers.
They solve eclipses
of bulbs and street lamps,
and make too many
pompous light imitations,
disturbing the Earth’s privacy.
What a prison
to the lights of Creation!
And the fire artifices!
What an affront
to the meteor showers!

Let's make more light
in our souls!
Let's leave the stars
to caress planets and comets!
Let's liberate the sky!

In 1995 the Romanian Society for Meteors and Astronomy (SARM) began an organized campaign for the international recognition of astronomical poetry as a distinctive genre called astropoetry, and some of the achievements of this movement were:

- the Meteor Contemporary Poetry Project, preserved in the electronic archive of the International Meteor Organization;
- astropoetry anthologies published by NASA and ESO;
- astropoetry shows presented at 14 editions of the annual International Meteor Conference, at the NASA Leonid Workshop in 2000 in Israel and at the International Astronomical Union Symposium 260 "the Role of Astronomy in Society and Culture" in 2009 (at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris).

In 2009 the SARM international electronic project "Astropoetry to the International Year of Astronomy" was considered "the largest ever tribute of astronomical poetry" in the official web site of that unique year.

As a consequence, in 2010 and 2011 SARM received the right to organize official programs for the first two editions of the Global Astronomy Month, based on astropoetry in combination with astrophotography and astronomical arts.

Some of the numerous creations of this movement were dedicated to the fight against light pollution as an attractive way to make sensible the public at large about this important theme.

Otherwise, life on Earth without heavenly pillars would be so false...

And now, a demonstration by Romanian astropoets that the astroverses can be precious weapons for humanity's consciousness against light pollution:

-Dominic Diamant :

I know a miracle
as great as the Universe;
It's a man, it's me!

-Zigmund Tauberg :

When a town is spectacularly illuminated,
It seems more civilized,
But those lights fade
The canopy of heaven,
And the price is too high
Against the dark sky...

-Dimitrie Olenici :

Any deviation from nature is not good.
The darkness comes with the speed of light.

-Dan Mitrut :

In this rubble without the Polar Star
Day by day we become more solitary.

-Irina Cristescu :

Dreams spread into the cosmic infinite
just as the celestial muses
accompany stars...

-Boris Marian (Mehr) :

I'm watching a star.
I ask her: "Who are you?"
She is blinking to me.

-Victor Chifelea :

Entropy!
The stars would die without exchanges
Of energy!

-Mircea Pteancu :

The light pollution does not destroy the sky,
but its image in us.

-Iulian Olaru :

I see moribund stars
in the artificial light of a street.

-Ion(ut) Moraru :

The luminous cloud covered
the useless sky,
so nobody asked why
the day is day
or the night is night,

and nobody believed that
the stars really existed.

-Valentin Grigore :

The dark sky means
the sky just as it was left
to be seen by people,
in order to become the main connection
between man and universe.

The pollution of the sky is not
only an exterior one,
but also an interior one.

The dark sky is
the sky that does not hide.

The sky's liberation
depends on
the people's transformation...

-Andrei Dorian Gheorghe :

littler luxury light
but more stars in the night

not artificial glory
but cosmic simplicity

-And a special guest, the famous astronomer David Asher
from Armagh Observatory, Northern Ireland :

Modern times have us wondering why
The nebulae of the deep sky
Are destroyed by bad lighting.
We better start fighting,
Else the beauty of night-time will die.

I shall end with a few verses which I wrote especially for this symposium:

My dear friends,
astropoetry beautifully reflects the sky!
Without the models given by stars
we could not fly!

But we need everybody's contribution
to stop that dangerous anomaly,
that monster of vanity
named light pollution!

So let's try to make
more dark-sky parks
saving the sky on Earth
as Noah's modern arks!