**uljanIk**

(autobiographical review)

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At first, Uljanik was my father.

Ivo was a crane operator. That was his job. And that was all I knew about it. That and that he builds ships.

When I started school I learned a lot more. Men worked in Uljanik, and women worked in Astra. Every family lunch confirmed this to me - my dad, his cousin, and my cousin worked in Uljanik - mom, aunt, and sister worked in Astra (which made shoes). Uljanik then became an exciting place in my understanding of reality, full of problems with bosses and craftsmen, drunks and thieves, diligent workers and craftsmen, mutual aid fund, and endless union meetings - "Dynasty" of the working class. The Astra had the same weft, but we won't talk about it. In that period of my childhood, Uljanik was Mars and Astra Venus.

Today we are talking about Mars.

Uljanik was inevitable.

I knew there were other occupations. I visited the doctor, waited for the vet, talked to the postman, put up with the priest, waited at the miller, and doubted the accuracy of the butcher's scales, but the men of my family worked in Uljanik and I should have finished there, by all the rules. I didn't doubt it.

It didn't last long.

Uljanik was a thick strip of self-adhesive tape.

It was in the dresser drawer in the kitchen, right next to the backyard door. It's been there for years. I also found a few pieces in the garage. And they lasted. From Stojadin to Fiat Uno. I remember two versions - one with a blue inscription and one with black in a font more modern.

Uljanik was also the basic color for iron.

Sometimes grayish and sometimes bluish. Always in small nameless buckets. It was the best primer. It was important that it is not old - everyone agreed on that.

Not to mention the fences.

Dad's colleague talked about them. They drove to work together, while I was writing my math homework in the back seat. I had a class of physical education - that's why the old one drove me to school.

- This one is from Uljanik, this one is from Uljanik, this one is not, this one is from Uljanik and this one and this one and… no, this one is not…

As we drove through Galižana, his finger rose and fell and pointed at every fence of every house we passed like a lively conductor and a nameless symphony of "resourcefulness." Don't think that he recognized every pipe that came out of Uljanik - he knew those who smuggled them through the gate.

Most of the fences were gray.

The others were bluish or suspiciously brown.

Uljanik became a nightmare.

The crisis was the first adult word I learned. The devaluation came later.

The crisis has cut wages, reduced workers' rights, and eaten workers from within. On family lunches, crises and lamentations became the main dish. It was not good - neither on Mars, nor on Venus, and it lasted for years.

I didn't take it all seriously, and we don't even have to talk about empathy - say hello to the new teenager. The world has never met another one like him.

I don't like that guy, but to him, Uljanik was a purgatory where dreams go to die. Uljanik was the punishment for failure - the greatest sin. "If you do nonsense, you'll end up welding in Uljanik - you'll see!" "The only Uljanik to go to is the one where the concerts are - So watch out!"

I don't like that guy and luckily I haven't known him for a long time, but at least I understand him to some extent. He had different desires. But enough about him.

Another guy came. Messy and unpredictable - thirsty as a sponge of everything that can or must be absorbed.

The only Uljanik he went to was the one with concerts, and Tusta-guy from Uljanik was on the stage.

On the Labor Day´s rush on the Hydrobase, he saw Pino on stage attacking a piece of iron with a huge grinder and sparking in all directions like a ragged demon in a blue work suit - another guy from Uljanik.

One night in Padua, he managed to hold the attention of a group of friends with the story of his father, who came from Črnac near Varaždin, and then, after two-year military service in Belgrade, via Rijeka to Pula. A shoemaker by profession, he met the love of his life, Evelina, born in Loborica, but already a Galižan girl, on Venus. He didn't stay in Astra for long because he didn't want them both to share the fate of the same company - he was careful both in those times when we were better and when we were worse.

And in the end, here he is in Uljanik - a shoemaker retrained as a crane operator who retired from that job. He still enjoys it. He is 85 years old.

I like that other guy a lot, even though he had the same desires as the first one. He began to realize how intricate everything was and he liked it. He may not have finished where he wanted to, but he managed.

Proof of this is that you are currently reading his lines.

Which brings us to anticlimax.

The author of this text became a journalist at the end of the ballad.

There is nothing to write about the relationship between my journalistic career and Uljanik. I followed a couple of launches, and I remember the godmother on one of them looked like Cristal Carrington or Camilla Parker Bowles (I was too far away). I spoke with spokesman Markulinčić about the possible opening of Uljanik for tourists with an accompanying multimedia center in one of the hangars that are out of use (it did not happen). I did a couple of surveys with workers during which the only ones willing to talk were those who didn’t know what to say (the editor wasn’t happy). And that's it.

I did other things.

When Uljanik began to deteriorate irretrievably when workers without pay unsuccessfully chanted in the streets "Get up Pula!", to apathetic fellow citizens on the terraces of cafes, when - in other words - everything went to hell…

You know what?

I will not write about it.

Everyone wrote about it.

I will write this:

Uljanik is a brother.

Once you get a job and experience all aspects of working in a collective - everyday, persistent and productive (within the limits of your abilities) you do not need much to realize that your best intentions and efforts do not differ in the slightest from those of your colleagues in any other collective.

In positive things we are all equal, and in negative things we turn into completely different monsters - depending on our imagination, the quality of stomach acid, and the level of moral numbness.

Uljanik is a brother who was killed by monsters.

Unfortunately, he is not the only one, and there are plenty of mortally wounded - unaware of their terminal condition, they walk through Pula like an army of zombies in an invisible apocalypse.

They are not dangerous, but if you look a little closer, they will break your heart.