

Going home

Country: Slovenija

Category: Drama

Title: Pot domov

Company: RTV Slovenija

Author(s): Miha Mazzini (author) adapted by Ana Lorgar

Producer(s): Radio Slovenija

Director: Špela Kravogel

Sound engineer: Nejc Zupančič

Other key staff: actors: Boris Cavazza, Sebastian Cavazza, Jernej Gašperin, Matej Puc, Gregor Čušin, Maša Derganc, Maja Končar, Uroš Smolej, Saš

Language: Slovene

Length: 26:19

SUMMARY

The author refers to his story (written as a play) as 'A Tragedy of Confusions'. He was inspired and intrigued by the true story of 84-year-old Alois Dvorzac, a dementia sufferer, who – after a series of failed bureaucratic attempts – died handcuffed at the airport. He was on his way home to Slovenia, to his daughter, but could not remember anything. The story was selected to represent the United Kingdom at the Creative Europe Playwriting Award for POP Drama and was runner-up among 347 candidates. The ageing population, the growing number of dementia sufferers, and the cold, inhuman bureaucracy can cause agonising distress and generate deep, bitter and complex questions about humanity. In the play, Alois keeps returning to his childhood and youth, and to the time he visited Milan with his daughter and saw Giuseppe Perego's famous Madonnina statue (1774). The song 'O mia bella, Madonnina' (or Madunina in the Lombard dialect) was written in 1935 by Giovanni d'Anzi, a singer and pianist in the Pavillon doré. At that time, crowds of workers from the Italian south flocked to the north, bringing Neapolitan melodies with them. D'Anzi added a bit of irony to the song and it became the symbol of the city of Milan. Normally, dementia patients gradually lose touch with reality and their minds retreat to the earliest stages of their lives. However, with its strong emotional impact, the song is not only an intimate memory, but a metaphor for his daughter, whom he never saw again.

RTV Radio Slovenija

Radio Drama Department

Miha Mazzini

GOING HOME

Radio play

(Adaptation: Ana Lorger)

Music.

YOUNG ALOIS whistling to the music.

YOUNG ALOIS: Alenčika, look out the window. Can you see Maria on the dome of the church? The song I've been teaching you is about her... Let's sing it one more time, shall we? All right, daddy's going to sing it, okay? Oh well...

(singing along to the music)

Oh mia bela Madunina
che te brillat de lontan
tutta d'ora e piscinina Ti te
dòminet Milan sòtta a Ti
se viv la vita se sta mai coj
man in man.

Canten tucc: "Lontan de Napoli se moeur"
ma poeu vegnen chi a Milan!

O my beautiful Madunina you
who are shining from afar all
gold and so small you reign
over Milan beneath you life is
lived Nobody is ever lazy.
Everybody sings: "You die away from Naples" but
then they come here to Milan!

Alenka, this is going to be our song, okay? When we miss one another,
we'll just sing it to ourselves and remember the other one... I'll remember
you and you will remember your daddy. Lenčka, are you asleep? Oh well...

(sings along to the music again)

Oh mia bela Madunina
che te brillat de lontan
tutta d'ora e piscinina Ti
te dòminet Milan

O my beautiful Madunina you
who are shining from afar all
gold and so small
you reign over Milan

Airport, transit

POLICE OFFICER 1: Documents, please.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Thank you. Goodbye.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Documents, please.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Thank you. Goodbye.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Next! NEXT! Over here, please, sir!

ALOIS: Good afternoon.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Passport!

ALOIS: Just a moment.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Plane ticket?

ALOIS: Eh?

POLICE OFFICER 1: PLANE TICKET!

ALOIS: I'm not deaf.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Right. Give me your plane ticket!

ALOIS: I don't have it.

POLICE OFFICER 1: What do you mean you don't have it?

ALOIS: Can't find it.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Have you lost it?

ALOIS: I don't know.

POLICE OFFICER 1: What do you mean you don't know? This is an airport!

ALOIS: I'm sorry...

POLICE OFFICER 1: Where are you travelling to?

ALOIS: To Alenka.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Where?

ALOIS: To Alenka.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Never heard of that country. What country are you travelling to?

ALOIS: To Slovenia.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Is that even in the EU?

POLICE OFFICER 1: Oh. It is. But you need to have the plane ticket if you want to go to Slovenia.

ALOIS: I know. But...

POLICE OFFICER 1: Where did you fly from? From Canada?

ALOIS: Yes. I am Canadian. I was born in Slovenia and that's where my daughter Alenka is...

POLICE OFFICER 1: Listen, this is a formal point, not a place for confessions. Where is your ticket?

ALOIS: I'll buy it in the city.

POLICE OFFICER 1: This is air transit! Not a city!

ALOIS: I'm going to France by train and from there to Austria, then I'm going to call my daughter.

POLICE OFFICER 1: Are you kidding me, or something? This is an airport, not a railway station!

ALOIS: I see. So where should I, where should I go then?

POLICE OFFICER 1: This is air transit. You take the plane here! Where is your ticket?

ALOIS: I don't have it! I don't have it! Leave me alone already! Are you deaf or something? I already told you! I just want to see my daughter!

POLICE OFFICER 1: Who do you think you are to use this tone with me? Those days are over...

POLICE OFFICER 1: How did you get here?

ALOIS: What do you care?! None of your business! Who do you think you are?

POLICE OFFICER 1: Your conduct is completely inappropriate! Come with me, we'll talk in the office.

Airport, police office

POLICE O. 1: He didn't check any baggage into the system.

SENIOR P.O.: Right. Any hand luggage?

POLICE O. 1: Perhaps he left it somewhere. Nobody has alarmed us about that yet... SENIOR P.O.: Strange.

POLICE O. 1: He says he's going to Slovenia, but he doesn't have a ticket. However, he has 1400 Canadian dollars in cash on him.

SENIOR P. O.: That seems quite suspicious. Any cards?

POLICE O. 1: Just a debit card.

SENIOR P.O.: Right.

ALOIS: Good afternoon.

P. O. 1 (surprised): Good afternoon.

SENIOR P.O.: Good afternoon. Your name?

ALOIS: Alois Dvorzac.

SENIOR P.O.: Citizenship?

ALOIS: Canadian.

SENIOR P.O.: And you're travelling to?

ALOIS: To Alenka.

SENIOR P.O.: Answer the question, please. **Where** are you travelling to?

ALOIS: To Slovenia.

SENIOR P.O.: To visit whom?

ALOIS: Alenka.

SENIOR P.O.: What is your relationship with this person?

ALOIS: She's my daughter.

SENIOR P.O.: Her last name?

ALOIS: Oh, I don't know. Hmm, it used to be Dvoršak.

SENIOR P.O.: And what is her last name now?

ALOIS: Hmm, I'm not sure. I haven't heard from her for a long time and...

SENIOR P.O.: Permanent residence address of the previously mentioned person?

ALOIS: Excuse me?

SENIOR P.O.: Her address?

ALOIS: I'm not sure. Haven't seen her for a long time.

SENIOR P.O.: Telephone number of the previously mentioned person?

ALOIS: Excuse me?

SENIOR P.O.: Her phone number?

ALOIS: I don't know.

SENIOR P.O.: Check your phone. Even I don't know all my numbers by heart...

ALOIS: Yeah, I don't have, don't have a cell phone.

POLICE O. 1: You don't have a phone?

ALOIS: I left it at home.

POLICE O. 1: What are we going to do with him, chief?

SENIOR P.O.: It's late. Let him sleep, we'll deal with him in the morning.

YOUNG A. (singing): ...tutta d'ora e piscinina Ti te d'omet Milan...

...all gold and so small you reign over Milan...

YOUNG A.: Lenčka, are you asleep?

Police station, cell

POLICE O. 1: ... and then I told my son I'm not gonna do it anymore. Not gonna buy him new equipment every year. Then he says,

you know: "Do you want me to be the best of the best one day, so I can pay you back?"

POLICE O. 2: At least your son does something. Mine is in front of the computer all the time.

POLICE O. 1: Do you have to buy him a new computer every year?

POLICE O. 2: No.

POLICE O. 1: Then you don't have anything to worry about.

POLICE O. 2: Don't you think you're exaggerating a bit with this gun in your hand? This one is hundred, how could he possibly hurt us?

POLICE O. 1: Procedure is procedure, and we're here to implement it. What if anything goes wrong? Then they'll check the procedure from point to point and if they find out we didn't follow the procedure in just one point, it'll be our fault.

POLICE O. 2: I guess you're right. It's just that... POLICE O.

1: Dinner!

POLICE O. 2: Is he deaf now?

POLICE O. 1: DINNER!

POLICE O. 2: Maybe it's a trick.

POLICE O. 1: Just follow the procedure.

POLICE O. 1: Sir? Sir!?

POLICE O. 2: What the hell! He just collapsed!

POLICE O. 1: He's unconscious.

Hospital, emergency room

DOCTOR: Sir? Are you aware that you're in the pre-cardiac state? That you are about to have a heart attack? Your heart could fail at any moment.

ALOIS: I know, I know. I want to see my daughter...

DOCTOR: Should I call her?

ALOIS: I don't have her number. She's in Slovenia.

DOCTOR: Oh, I've been to Slovenia once. My husband went to a soccer game and took me with him. A nice city.

ALOIS: I came to Canada when I was still young. The city was demolished back then, but nature, the nature is beautiful.

DOCTOR: Let's get back to your health now. Why do you refuse to take any medication?

ALOIS: I don't want to.

DOCTOR: Are you sure?

ALOIS: Yes.

DOCTOR: The patient refuses treatment at his own risk. (to Alois) Are you going to sign the statement?

ALOIS: Yes.

DOCTOR: Look, I can't stop you... But please, think about it.

ALOIS: Yes.

YOUNG A.: Lenka...

Hospital, emergency room office

DOCTOR: Write this down... Age-related weakness... Dementia... code R54. Probably Alzheimer's... no, delete this, I didn't check it diagnostically. A very weak heart, pre-cardiac state, what's the code again?

NURSE: I24.9

DOCTOR: Thank you. Code I24.9. I keep the patient under observation and prescribe the following medications: Aspirin 300mg PO OD, Clopidogrel 300mg PO OD and Fondaparinux 2.5mg SC OD, but the patient refuses all of them at his own request and signs the appropriate form. I keep the patient under observation. Report completed at 20:45.

DR. (phone): Yes?... He did... what? He's paid twice as much as I am, but now I have to... Just a moment... (to the nurse) Let them take him to the ward.

NURSE: Right.

YOUNG A. (singing): Oh mia bela Madunina
che te brillet de lontan tutta dòra e piscinina
Ti te dòminet Milan sòtta a Ti se viv la vita se
sta mai coj man in man.

Canten tucc: "Lontan de Napoli se moeur"
ma poeu vegnen chi a Milan!

O my beautiful Madunina you
who are shining from afar all
gold and so small you reign
over Milan beneath you life is
lived Nobody is ever lazy.

Everybody sings: "You die away from Naples" but
then they come here to Milan!

Airport, transit

POLICE O. 1: Documents, please.

POLICE O. 1: Thank you. Goodbye.

POLICE O. 1: Documents, please.

POLICE O. 1: Thank you. Goodbye.

POLICE O. 1: Next! NEXT!

ALOIS: Good afternoon.

POLICE O. 1: Passport!

ALOIS: I don't have it.

POLICE O. 1: What the hell...

YOUNG A.: Can you see Maria on the dome of the church? Well, this song is about her...

Airport, police office

POLICE O. 2: I bought this gadget for the telly that shows everything you watch on the computer.

SENIOR P.O.: Wait what... so you play a film on your computer and watch it at the same time on the telly?

POLICE O. 2: Yup. It's brilliant, really. Computer is in the bedroom, the telly in the living room, just awesome.

SENIOR P.O.: So what do you need for it?

POLICE O. 2: Wi-Fi.

SOUND: A phone rings. Police officer 2 answers it and listens. He puts the receiver on his chest.

POLICE O. 2: Regarding that old man... SENIOR

P.O.: Yeah?

POLICE O. 2: The hospital wants to know who's going to cover the expenses.

SENIOR P.O: How should I know? Wait, let me talk... Hello?

SENIOR P.O.: Hello?... I don't know... How should I know that? Call us tomorrow, all the superiors will be here. Or perhaps you should call someone in Canada, he is Canadian after all. (...) I know, I know we sent him... but your business is not one of our tasks. I don't care if you have to take care of the papers right now!

The door opens and the head of Police officer 1 appears.

POLICE O. 1: Chief...

SENIOR P.O.: Yes?

POLICE O. 1: Chief, the weird old man is here again... ALOIS:

Good evening.

SENIOR P.O.: Is this shift never gonna end?! Call the social services!

POLICE O. 1: Right away.

YOUNG A.: Lenčika, shall we sing it one more time?

YOUNG A. (singing): Oh mia bela Madunina
che te brillet de lontan...

Oh my beautiful Madunina
you who are shining from afar

YOUNG A.: Lenčka?

Enters the SOCIAL WORKER.

SOCIAL WORKER: Who is this unfortunate man?

POLICE O. 1: This is his passport.

SOCIAL WORKER: Oh, a Canadian! What does he have to do with us?

SENIOR P.O.: He is old and sick. He has dementia. We can't put him in jail for that.

SOCIAL WORKER: Yes, I see, I see. However, our social services cannot take him, that would be against the rules, I'm sure you understand? Where should I put him? What am I to do with him? The taxpayers would shut us down if they found out we spent their money on foreigners.

SENIOR P.O.: Where should I put him? Are you joking? Whom should I call?

SOCIAL WORKER: Call the Canadian embassy, he is their citizen, isn't he?!

YOUNG A. (singing): Canten tucc: "Lontan de Napoli se moeur"
ma poeu vegnen chi a Milan!

Everybody sings: "You die away from Naples"
but then they come here to Milan!

Police station, cell

POLICE O. 1: Dinner!

POLICE O. 1: Follow the procedure!

POLICE O. 2: Don't be silly! The old man is quite friendly. POLICE O.

1: Aren't you, old man? You scared us yesterday

ALOIS: I'm sorry.

POLICE O. 2: It's okay, as long as it ended well.

ALOIS: Yeah, yeah. When can I go see Alenka?

POLICE O. 1: We don't know that.

POLICE O. 2: It's up to the superiors.

ALOIS: I didn't do anything. Why am I, why am I in prison?

POLICE O. 1: We don't know that either. We just work here.

POLICE O. 2: We're just doing our job.

ALOIS: LET ME GO!!!!

POLICE O. 1: What the hell! He's all over the floor, call an ambulance!

Hospital, emergency room office

DOCTOR: How is it possible that the police brought this man again today, the same man they brought yesterday and who should be resting at the ward?

NURSE: I'm sorry, but he just left...

DOCTOR: Are there any rules here or does everybody just do as they please? Did you call the ward right away yesterday?

NURSE: I did. I did, of course I did. He was already gone.

DOCTOR: Oh, come on.

DOCTOR: Okay. If it's necessary, escort him to the ward today. You are personally responsible that he gets there.

NURSE: I understand.

DOCTOR: Here we have the wrong man at the wrong place. Give me the number of those that brought him here.

YOUNG A.: Lenčka?...

Airport, police office

CANADIAN: Bonjour.

Good afternoon.

SENIOR P.O.: Ehm... good afternoon.

CANADIAN: From the commissariat...

SENIOR P.O.: Oh, oh, here are the documents...

CANADIAN: Thank you. Look, in such cases the High commissariat of Canada is happy to help our citizens make contact with individuals or organizations in Canada. However, it does not have any available funds for such purposes, namely to accept responsibility for transportation or moving costs, especially considering the current austerity measures.

SENIOR P.O.: Do I understand you correctly?

CANADIAN: Mr. Alois Dvorzac does not have any relative in Canada anymore. The nursing home, where he used to live, has been closed. I asked them to send you his file. Even so I am not sure if it's completely according to the rules, I can only hope I haven't exceeded my authority.

SENIOR P.O.: So what should we do with him now?

CANADIAN: Je ne sais pas... peut-etre ... I don't know, perhaps you should call the Slovenian embassy?

SENIOR P.O.: We did and they told us to call you.

YOUNG A.: Alenka...

Airport, police officer

SENIOR P.O.: I'm not sure you leaving the hospital by yourself was a smart thing to do...

ALOIS: I want to see my daughter...

SENIOR P.O.: Sure you do. But you don't know her current last name?

ALOIS: No.

SENIOR P.O.: Which town did she live in?

ALOIS: In Maribor.

SENIOR P.O.: *(to himself)*: Maribor... Almost 100.000 inhabitants. Hmm, two million in Slovenia. It's not exactly London, but... *(to Alois)* So you don't know if she still lives there?

ALOIS: No.

SENIOR P.O.: How old is this daughter of yours now?

ALOIS: What year is this?

SENIOR POLICE OFFICER sighs. Silence.

SENIOR P.O.: *(to himself)*: And to think I was worried that my old man took pills... SENIOR P.O.: Fuck.

YOUNG A.: My Alenčica...

Airport, police office:

IM. O.: Good afternoon.

SENIOR P.O.: Good afternoon.

IM. O.: I come from the Immigration office. What do we have this time?

SENIOR P.O.: Oh, this. Alois Dvorzac. Everything is according to the rules. We're putting him in a cell. These here are his hospital papers.

IM. O.: Right. Is he ill?

SENIOR P.O.: Very.

IM. O.: And old!
That's not going to work.

SENIOR P.O.: What do you mean?

IM. O.: According to the rules, the patients that are being transferred back to their home countries are required to have a medical attendant.

SENIOR P.O.: You mean a doctor?

IM. O.: A nurse would suffice.

SENIOR P.O.: Then provide him one.

IM. O.: We have used up the quota for this month.

SENIOR P.O.: What do you mean?

IM. O.: I'm afraid this man will have to wait until next month. I'm not sure why, but we had a whole lot of unwell people and the budget is spent.

SENIOR P.O.: Alois is spent too, he's heading to the grave. He is dying here, don't you understand?

IM. O.: So you'd prefer if he died in Canada or on the plane? In the air?

SENIOR P.O.: Where shall I put him for two weeks?

IM. O.: I don't know, but my hands are tied, such are the rules.
Who is paying for his medical attendant?

SENIOR P.O.: I'm begging you. If you don't take him, I have to put him in
the Asylum centre. He's 84. And ill!

IM. O.: I'd like to help you, but I cannot take responsibility. I could
lose my job!

SENIOR P.O.: But where should I put him?

IM. O.: He's Canadian. Call their embassy.

SENIOR P.O.: We already have. The only place left is the psychiatric
hospital. Actually, maybe they'll be able to help.

IM. O.: Well, good luck.

SENIOR P.O.: Yeah...

YOUNG A.: Lenčika...

Psychiatric hospital

PSY.; Mr. Alois, what's your daughter's name ?

ALOIS: Alenka.

PSY.: But you don't know her last name?

ALOIS: No.

PSY: Do you know if she's married?

ALOIS: No.

PSY.: I've been informed that there is nobody in Slovenia with her
first and her maiden name.

ALOIS: There is. That's not true! You're hiding her from me!

PSY.: Who is hiding her?

ALOIS: You!

PSY,: Me?

ALOIS: And your ilk!

PSY.: The nursing home where you were staying has informed us that you used to take... (*looking, silently counting*)... several different medications, three times a day. But now you refuse to take them?

ALOIS: Yes.

PSY.: Why?

ALOIS: I just want my daughter.

PSY.: When was the last time you saw her?

ALOIS: I don't recall.

PSY.: How old was she?

ALOIS: I don't remember.

PSY.: Was she still a little girl?

ALOIS: None of your business! Let me go!

PSY.: The Canadians told me you once attacked a server.

ALOIS: They're lying.

PSY.: You were prescribed an antipsychotic.

ALOIS: I'm not familiar with drugs. I'm an engineer. I want to see my daughter.

PSY.: The Canadians say you sometimes act more confused than you really are.

ALOIS: I'm... I'm... I'm not confused. I just want to see my daughter.

PSY.: But have you ever even seen her? (*Alois is silent.*) Listen... They called us because they don't have anywhere to put you. The system. If we don't admit you here at the psychiatric hospital, the only thing left for you is prison. I mean, the Asylum centre. According to your medical history, age and health condition, I'd advise you to stay here.

ALOIS: I don't want to die here. I want to see my daughter.

PSY.: Why don't you take your drugs then?

ALOIS: Because...

He falls silent, the psychiatrist is waiting

ALOIS: ...my head... becomes weird... I just sleep and... I don't remember her... No, no, that's not true, I do remember, I do remember, but I don't have any strength... It's as if I remember her from my dreams, but not from, not from reality. I don't want that, that's horrible... horrible...

PSY.: Listen to me... I'll be honest with you. We can't have you here unless you're psychotic. Unless you have visual and auditory hallucinations. Otherwise, there's a prison. I mean the Asylum centre. But from what I've heard from you... Does your daughter even exist?

ALOIS: What kind of question is that?

PSY.: If Alenka doesn't exist, you can stay here. Otherwise, you have to go to prison. Please, think carefully.

ALOIS is crying.

PSY.: Sir? I didn't say anything that would make a person collapse! Sir? Mr. Alois! Nurse! Call an ambulance! Nurse!!!

Hospital, operating room

DOCTOR: Yes, please, uncuff the patient.

POLICE O. 1: I am not allowed to. Rules.

DOCTOR: You'll get electrocuted.

POLICE O. 1: No please, no.

DOCTOR: Am I supposed to just let him die?

POLICE O. 1: No.

DOCTOR: Uncuff yourself.

POLICE O. 1: I am not allowed to!

DOCTOR: This man is half-dead! Are you saying this man presents a threat
 even in a half-dead state?! Uncuff yourself!

POLICE O. 1: I shouldn't! It's against the rules!

DOCTOR: Well I'm following the rules for saving my patient's life.

DOCTOR: Three... two... one...

POLICE O. 1: No! No! No!

POLICE O. 1: AAAA! Stop it! Stop it! Stop! Stop! I'm uncuffing, I'm uncuffing
 myself right now! I'm uncuffing myself! Let me go!

DOCTOR: What about the rules? Three... two... one...

POLICE O. 1: Let me go! I'll uncuff myself! Let me go!

DOCTOR: Everything according to the rules! Three... two... one...

DOCTOR: Three... two... one...

DOCTOR: I don't think he'll make it...

ALOIS (singing): Oh mia bela Madunina
 che te brillet de lontan
tutta dòra e piscinina Ti te

dòminet Milan sòtta a Ti se
viv la vita se sta mai coj
man in man.

Canten tucc: "Lontan de Napoli se moeur"
ma poeu vegnen chi a Milan!

O my beautiful Madunina
you who are shining from afar
all gold and so small
you reign over Milan
beneath you life is lived
Nobody is ever lazy.

Everybody sings: "You die away from Naples"
but then they come here to Milan!

Morgue

MORGUE MANAGER and his ASSISTANT.

MANAGER: Okay. So this is... Alois Dvorzac.

ASSISTANT: Yes, sir. Nobody has come to collect his remains for over four months.

MANAGER: Right. If nobody came by now, they never will. However, we finally have legal basis to get rid of his body. It's taking up our resources. Take him to the crematory.

ASSISTANT: So... Scattering the ashes across the lawn?

MANAGER: Of course, that's the cheapest procedure, we can't do it any other way. There can be no grave as there's nobody to pay for it, right? Even this will be at our expenses, right? ASSISTANT: Hmm, Alois. It doesn't matter who you were, what you did, who loved you... In the wheels of this world, you have become a Nobody. A redundant man... I hope you at least get to rest in peace on the other side...

ALOIS (sing.): Oh mia bela Madunina

che te brillet de lontan
tutta d'ora e piscinina Ti te
d'ominet Milan s'otta a Ti se
viv la vita se sta mai coj
man in man.

Canten tucc: "Lontan de Napoli se moeur"
ma poeu vegnen chi a Milan! Terum.

O my beautiful Madunina
you who are shining from afar
all gold and so small
you reign over Milan
beneath you life is lived
Nobody is ever lazy.

Everybody sings: "You die away from Naples"
but then they come here to Milan!

THE END