

The Seventh Gesture	1
Day One—The Giving of Names	2
Day Two—The Light in Us	3
Day Three—The Kingdom with the Saints	4
Day Four—Lazarus's Case	5
Day Five—The Natural State	6
Day Six—The Crucifix	7
Day Seven—Blessings	8
Day Eight—The Crucifix	9
Day Nine—The Crucifix	10
Day Ten—The Crucifix	11
Day Eleven—The Crucifix	12
Day Twelve—The Crucifix	13
Day Thirteen—The Crucifix	14
Day Fourteen—The Crucifix	15
Day Fifteen—The Crucifix	16
Day Sixteen—The Crucifix	17
Day Seventeen—The Crucifix	18
Day Eighteen—The Crucifix	19
Day Nineteen—The Crucifix	20
Day Twenty—The Crucifix	21
Day Twenty-One—The Crucifix	22
Day Twenty-Two—The Crucifix	23
Day Twenty-Three—The Crucifix	24
Day Twenty-Four—The Crucifix	25
Day Twenty-Five—The Crucifix	26
Day Twenty-Six—The Crucifix	27
Day Twenty-Seven—The Crucifix	28
Day Twenty-Eight—The Crucifix	29
Day Twenty-Nine—The Crucifix	30
Day Thirty—The Crucifix	31
Day Thirty-One—The Crucifix	32
Day Thirty-Two—The Crucifix	33
Day Thirty-Three—The Crucifix	34
Day Thirty-Four—The Crucifix	35
Day Thirty-Five—The Crucifix	36
Day Thirty-Six—The Crucifix	37
Day Thirty-Seven—The Crucifix	38
Day Thirty-Eight—The Crucifix	39
Day Thirty-Nine—The Crucifix	40
Day Forty—The Crucifix	41
Day Forty-One—The Crucifix	42
Day Forty-Two—The Crucifix	43
Day Forty-Three—The Crucifix	44
Day Forty-Four—The Crucifix	45
Day Forty-Five—The Crucifix	46
Day Forty-Six—The Crucifix	47
Day Forty-Seven—The Crucifix	48
Day Forty-Eight—The Crucifix	49
Day Forty-Nine—The Crucifix	50
Day Fifty—The Crucifix	51
Day Fifty-One—The Crucifix	52
Day Fifty-Two—The Crucifix	53
Day Fifty-Three—The Crucifix	54
Day Fifty-Four—The Crucifix	55
Day Fifty-Five—The Crucifix	56
Day Fifty-Six—The Crucifix	57
Day Fifty-Seven—The Crucifix	58
Day Fifty-Eight—The Crucifix	59
Day Fifty-Nine—The Crucifix	60
Day Sixty—The Crucifix	61
Day Sixty-One—The Crucifix	62
Day Sixty-Two—The Crucifix	63
Day Sixty-Three—The Crucifix	64
Day Sixty-Four—The Crucifix	65
Day Sixty-Five—The Crucifix	66
Day Sixty-Six—The Crucifix	67
Day Sixty-Seven—The Crucifix	68
Day Sixty-Eight—The Crucifix	69
Day Sixty-Nine—The Crucifix	70
Day Seventy—The Crucifix	71
Day Seventy-One—The Crucifix	72
Day Seventy-Two—The Crucifix	73
Day Seventy-Three—The Crucifix	74
Day Seventy-Four—The Crucifix	75
Day Seventy-Five—The Crucifix	76
Day Seventy-Six—The Crucifix	77
Day Seventy-Seven—The Crucifix	78
Day Seventy-Eight—The Crucifix	79
Day Seventy-Nine—The Crucifix	80
Day Eighty—The Crucifix	81
Day Eighty-One—The Crucifix	82
Day Eighty-Two—The Crucifix	83
Day Eighty-Three—The Crucifix	84
Day Eighty-Four—The Crucifix	85
Day Eighty-Five—The Crucifix	86
Day Eighty-Six—The Crucifix	87
Day Eighty-Seven—The Crucifix	88
Day Eighty-Eight—The Crucifix	89
Day Eighty-Nine—The Crucifix	90
Day Ninety—The Crucifix	91
Day Ninety-One—The Crucifix	92
Day Ninety-Two—The Crucifix	93
Day Ninety-Three—The Crucifix	94
Day Ninety-Four—The Crucifix	95
Day Ninety-Five—The Crucifix	96
Day Ninety-Six—The Crucifix	97
Day Ninety-Seven—The Crucifix	98
Day Ninety-Eight—The Crucifix	99
Day Ninety-Nine—The Crucifix	100
Day One Hundred—The Crucifix	101

## Translator's Foreword

There are two things that are rarely talked about in childhood: sex and death. And this is why so many teenagers rebel, dye their hair, pierce their nose, become independent travellers, because there's a question they're too afraid to ask and an answer their parents do not know.

I have learned the answer, but it has left me stranded like a whale on the beach, it hasn't given me wings, as I expected, or it has but then it's placed me at the centre of a storm, under the net, and I only glimpse the silhouette of my freedom, like a butterfly on the wall of a roofless church, most of the time it's a burden, a weight I carry around. You see, we only begin to see when we learn that we are blind.

This was my experience translating this book, *The Seventh Gesture*, by the international Bulgarian author Tsvetanka Elenkova. I use the word 'author' lightly, for we are all translators, nothing begins with us, not even the life we give our children. We are called to translate and in the process to find meaning. Meaning is a tentative thing, open to interpretation. Do spiders fly, or do birds follow an invisible path? Is the experience of death akin to returning to the water from whence we came (a theory espoused by the Book of Genesis as much as by evolutionists, meaning again slippery, clothes turned inside out which no one notices)? This book taught me to find life in death, a dead tree bathed in light. This book taught me to follow the diffraction of light in a bruise, proving that we are indeed children of light (that teenager again before he dons a suit and tie and enters the world of make-believe). Or how about illnesses that come from outside and form a lump in our throat? Only after reading this book did I realise the storm has a face, a body, which tells us it's coming, like a scent.

Coincidence means things that happen together, not chance happenings. This is the only language I know and language, as any parent will tell you, is the ability to envisage the future, a dangerous gift, of course, like fire, but also beneficial.

I interpret coincidence and find meaning. A ladybird lands on the dashboard of our car I have seen before, again like a translation. I give it meaning and so I open my hand. To believe is to receive sight, but there needs to be some kind of catalyst, a revelation.

May this book (in translation—it doesn't matter whether you're reading it in English or Bulgarian) serve as a revelation, a gesture towards a country, Bulgaria, and its culture still unknown.

Jonathan Dunne

## Poetry's End

The living ideal of God's love precedes our love and holds in itself the secret of its idealisation.

*for my mother*

The living ideal of God's love precedes our love and holds in itself the secret of its idealisation.

VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV, *The Meaning of Love*

Strong white resembles black.

LAO TZU, *Tao Te Ching*