

Jelena Vukićević

## WHERE DREAMS BLOOM IN SILENCE: FUTURE FORESTS AND TASKS OF REVERIE

The pines dream skyward.  
Roots cradle the earth.  
Leaves reach, weightless, into air.  
Branches speak without sound.  
Plants know how to be.  
They know how to wait.

Your body is a pine:  
rooted in shadow,  
gazing into light,  
a thought that does not move.

In every leaf: a flicker of light,  
a quiet song  
that glows,  
inward and unseen.

Beneath the hush of my branches  
already stirs what has yet to be.

Within me, forests grow  
that will one day sing  
in tongues not yet born.  
Silent forests,  
cradled in the breath of wind.  
The dream of a greenness still to come.

Jelena Vukićević

# BOTANIKA SNA: BUDUĆE ŠUME I ZADACI SANJARIJE

San borova se diže u visine.  
Korenje čuva zemlju.  
Lišće traži oslonac u vazduhu.  
Grananje je govor.  
Biljke znaju da budu. Znajū da čekaju.

Tvoje telo je bor:  
koren u tami, pogled u svetlu,  
misao koja stoji.

U svakom listu: svetlosni drhtaj,  
mala pesma koja se ne čuje  
ali svetli iznutra.

Ispod senke mojih grana  
šumi već ono što još ne postoji.

U meni rastu šume  
koje će tek pevati na jezicima što se još ne govore.  
Tihe šume, u zametku vetra.  
San budućeg zelenila.

Jelena Vukićević

## CONTOURS

I imagine you  
with a strawberry on your navel.  
I wrap around you like summer.  
Are you stretched out, warm?  
Do you play chess?  
Do you have a board at home?  
Do you like it?  
I have one.  
I could bring it.  
It's connecting.  
It's fucking.  
It's the same in every language.  
This film is beautiful.  
They've gone somewhere for three minutes.  
They've been gone three real days.  
And they drink lots of water.  
I'll calm you.  
I love you still.  
I ache.  
Where is your body now?  
You flicker on street corners.  
Belgrade nights know  
just how to show you you're insignificant.  
Everything is magnified and gleaming.

So then  
you're down south.  
It's probably colder than the cities.  
If there's cattle,  
it smells like earth and ground corn.  
Stars  
yes, there are stars there.  
The diacritics in your messages  
chime and rustle.  
When you say shepherd  
I see flocks guarded in the mountains.  
Because every one of your towns  
has a mountain,  
painted wooden planks,  
and at least one clock  
you took the battery out of.  
Time clots in your words  
becomes a scab that scars,  
a memory of a rusty nail  
grazing a leg mid-run.

Breathe in.  
Look straight ahead.  
Breathe deeply.  
I didn't leave you.  
Flowers tucked in.  
Technology tore us apart.

Marbled,  
hangovered,  
marble-wounded  
I like that typo.  
So tell me,  
Johančić,  
where did you get  
those sweet,  
crackling diacritics?

Then you see me.  
Ask if I still have the same number.  
You hum that I ran off in sneakers  
while you no longer run.

Jelena Vukićević

## OBRISI

zamišljam te s jagodom na pupku  
obmotavam te kao leto  
jesi li ispružena, topla  
igraš li šah  
imaš li kući šah  
voliš li šah  
imam ja  
mogu da donesem  
to je spajanje  
to je jebanje  
isto je na svim jezicima  
ovaj film je divan  
otišli su negde na tri minuta  
nema ih tri dana realnog vremena  
i piju puno vode  
smiriću te  
volim te i danas  
strepim  
gde ti je sada telo  
priviđaš mi se na ulicama  
beogradske noći znaju da ti objasne koliko si nebitan  
sve je uvećano i sjajno

dakle  
južno si  
verovatno je i hladnije nego u gradovima  
ako ima stoke  
miriše na zemlju i samleveni kukuruz  
zvezde  
da  
tamo ima zvezda  
dijakritici u tvojim porukama zvone  
šušte  
kada kažeš ovčar  
vidim čuvana stada na planini  
jer svaki tvoj grad ima planinu  
drvene farbane daske  
i barem jedan sat  
kojem si izvadila baterije  
vreme se u tvojim rečima zgrušava  
postaje krasta koja ostavlja ožiljak  
sećanje na zarđali ekser sa tarabe  
koji okrzne nogu u trku

udahni i gledaj pravo  
diši duboko  
nisam te ostavila  
ušuškano cveće  
tehnologija nas razdvojila

mramurna  
mamurna  
mramorna  
sviđa mi se taj tipfeler  
reci ti meni Johančiću  
odakle ti  
ti  
sladasni  
krekavi dijakritici

Onda me sretneš  
pitaš imam li isti broj  
pevušiš kako sam otišla u trkačice  
dok ti više ne bežiš

Jelena Vukićević

## BALL IN THE NETTLES

Tucked beneath the slopes of mountains,  
we learned to lick sunlight from glass  
and hide fingerprint smudges  
scratches on our right arms  
were to be concealed on the way home.  
The ball would roll into the nettles,  
and from there,  
we were no longer allowed to pass.  
The white walls of the hospital building  
never offered laughter.

I didn't know it was the last morning  
when I set aside my purple boots.  
You poured sand into my palms  
tiny gifts tucked into my coat's front pocket,  
a time of quiet thoughts.

I was leaving,  
agreeing to pain and bloodstained sheets;  
kindergarten is the family member  
that never grew up.

Today I gather nettles,  
and I see us  
running at dusk.

Death had already lodged  
beneath our cuticles.

Jelena Vukićević

## LOPTA U KOPRIVAMA

Ušuškani pod obroncima planina  
učili smo kako da ližemo sunce sa stakla i otiske prstiju  
ogrebotine na desnoj mišici  
da sakrijemo na putu do kuće  
lopta nam se zaustavljala u koprivama  
odatle nam nisu dozvoljavali dalje  
beli zidovi bolničke zgrade  
nisu poklanjali smeh

Nisam naslutila da je to poslednje jutro  
kad sam odložila ljubičaste čizme  
pustio si mi pesak u šake  
malene darove u prednji džep kaputa  
doba spokojnih misli

Odlazila sam  
pristala na bol i krevete sa krvavim flekama  
vrtić je član porodice koji nikad nije odrastao

Danas berem koprivu  
vidim nas  
trčimo u predvečerje

smrt nam se u zanoktice još onda zarila.

Jelena Vukićević

## ALL OUR CREATURES

Together, we gathered  
pebbles for the aquarium  
the smaller turtle lost an eye,  
the larger one smothered her.  
The white hamster  
spun his wheel day and night.  
I brought another,  
so he wouldn't be alone.  
I have something to tell you:  
our hamster is gone,  
from sorrow,  
as we say for the living.  
A few hours later, the second  
orange-colored.

We didn't know how to care for them,  
didn't know how to cradle dying hearts.  
Long ago,  
we had eaten each other's eyes,  
smothered each other with silence.

To avenge myself on the plural,  
I brought a falcon into our home.  
Now I was the one who caged the chicks.  
The neighbor's cat strangled them,  
I plucked the pigeons' wings  
the falcon had to eat every morning.  
I dreamed of a Harris's hawk,  
readied both him and myself for life.  
He became my eyes,  
became my hands,  
became my legs,  
became my body.

We killed you one morning in front of the building,  
as you tried, in secret,  
to slip a glass of water into the mailbox.  
I killed him the next morning.  
I wonder if the forest will forgive me:  
two turtles,  
two hamsters,  
one falcon.

Sakupljali smo zajedno  
kamenčiće za akvarijum  
manjoj kornjači nastradalo je oko  
veća ju je ugušila  
beli je hrčak  
danonoćno okretao točak  
donela sam još jednog  
da ne bude sam  
imam nešto da ti kažem  
otišao nam je hrčak  
od tuge  
kako kažemo za žive  
par sati kasnije i drugi,  
narandžaste boje.

Nismo umeli sa njima  
nismo umeli sa umirućim srcima  
odavno smo jeli jedno drugome oči  
gušili ćutanjima.

Da bih se množini osvetila  
uvela sam u dom sokola  
sad sam zatvarala piliće  
komšijska mačka ih je davila  
čerupala sam golubija krila  
soko se morao nahraniti svakog jutra  
maštala sam o haris jastrebu  
pripremala za život i sebe i njega  
postao je moje oči  
postao je moje ruke  
postao je moje noge  
postao je moje telo.

Ubili smo te jednog jutra ispred zgrade  
dok si krišom u sanduču  
pokušavao da uguraš čašu vode.  
Ubila sam ga narednog jutra.  
Pitam se da li će mi šuma oprostiti:  
dve kornjače  
dva hrčka  
jednog sokola.