



Athena Farrokhzad BIJELA SUITA



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# IMPRESUM

Goranovo proljeće

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# Athena FARROKHZAD

BIJELA SUITA

Sa švedskog prevela Željka Černok







Moja je obitelj stigla ovamo po marksističkoj idejnoj tradiciji

Moja je majka odmah napunila kuću ukrasnim patuljcima

Odvagivala prednosti i mane plastičnog božićnog drvca

kao da je to njen problem

Po danu je razdvajala duge i kratke vokale

kao da glasovi koji joj izlaze iz usta

mogu isprati maslinovo ulje iz kože

Moja je majka sintaksu oprala izbjeljivačem

S druge strane zarezala slogovi su joj bili bjelji

od norlandske zime

Moja majka nam je izgradila kvantitetnu budućnost

U podrumu kuće u predgrađu naslagala je konzerve

kao da će rat

Navečer je tražila recepte i gulila krumpir

kao da je njena povijest upisana

u popularnom švedskom složencu

Zamisli, ja sam sisala te dojke

Zamisli, trpala je svoj barbarizam u moja usta



\*

Moja majka je rekla: Izgleda da ti nikada nije palo na pamet  
da civilizacija potječe iz tvog imena

Moja majka je rekla: Tama u mom trbuhu jedina je tama kojom vladaš

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Ti si sanjar rođena da iskriviš i ravne oči  
Moja majka je rekla: Kad bi shvatila ove okolnosti kao olakotne  
lakše bi mi oprostila

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Nikada ne podcjenjuj što su sve ljudi spremni učiniti  
kako bi formulirali istine koje mogu podnijeti  
Moja majka je rekla: Ti od samog početka nisi bila sposobna za život



\*

Moja majka je rekla: Jedna je žena vlastitoj majci prstima iskopala oči  
kako majka ne bi vidjela kćerinu propast

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Privlači te metafizika  
Ipak sam te učio o važnosti proizvodnje  
još dok si imala mliječne zube

Moja majka je rekla: Tvoj je otac živio za sudnji dan  
Kao i tvoja majka, ali ona je bila prisiljena na druge ambicije

\*

Moja majka je rekla: U snu tvog oca zajedno ste pogubljeni  
U snu tvog oca dio ste genealogije revolucionara

Moj otac je rekao: Majka te hranila uvoznim srebrnim žličicama  
Tvoja se majka posvuda gurala  
frenetično te češljala da ti izravna koverče



\*

Moja majka je rekla: Nekada sam zavidjela traumama tvog oca  
dok nisam shvatila da su moje puno više vrijedne pozornosti

Moja majka je rekla: Potrošila sam cijelo bogatstvo na tvoje satove klavira  
Ali na mom ćeš sprovodu odbiti svirati

\*

Moja je majka uzela san iz očeve ruke i rekla:  
Nećeš biti slađi od svog tog šećera  
Napravi krug oko kuće prije nego što uzmeš inzulin

Moj otac je rekao: živim život, živim život  
svoje sam obavio  
Od slatkih dana mladosti ništa nije ostalo





\*

Majka je rekla mom bratu: Pazi se stranaca

Sjeti se da se nemaš čemu vratiti

ako se počnu neprijateljski ponašati

Moj brat je rekao: Sanjao sam tako čudan san

Da mi je zora umrla u očima prije nego što se san raspao

Čovječanstvo od šećera i koljiva

Kad sam se oprostio od svjetla sve sam znao

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Iz podjele stanica

iz genetskog materijala

iz glave tvog oca

Ali ne iz mene

Moj otac je rekao: Iz sukoba civilizacija

iz temeljnog antagonizma

iz moje umorne glave

Ali ne iz nje





\*

Moj otac je rekao: Da se moguće natjecati u žrtvovanju tvoja bi majka učinila sve da izgubi

Moja majka je rekla: Srce nije koljeno da ga možeš saviti kako hoćeš

Moj otac je rekao: Čak i pijetao koji ne kukuriječe može vidjeti izlazak sunca

Moja majka je rekla: Ali ako kokoš ne nosi jaja ona postane večera

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Tvoj se brat brijao i prije nego što mu je brada počela rasti

Tvoj je brat vidio lice terorista u ogledalu

i poželio peglu za kosu za Božić

Moj brat je rekao: Jednom želim umrijeti u zemlji

u kojoj ljudi znaju izgovoriti moje ime

\*

Moj brat je rekao: Nemoj misliti da mi imaš što za ponuditi





\*

Moj otac je rekao: O čijem to ocu pišeš

Moja majka je rekla: O čijoj to majci pišeš

Moj brat je rekao: Na kojeg se to brata odnosi

Moja baka je rekla: Ako ne požuriš s rezanjem povrća ništa od večere

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Onima koji imaju bit će dano

a onima koji nemaju bit će oduzeto

Moja majka je rekla: Uzmi još mlijeka prije nego što se ukiseli

Moja majka je rekla: Ne bi li bilo divno osjetiti

makar jednu ovakvu noć

materinji jezik u tvojim ustima





\*

Moj otac je rekao: Jednu žlicu za krvnike

jednu žlicu za osloboditelje

jednu žlicu za gomile koje gladuju

I jednu žlicu za mene

\*

Moja je majka pružila čašu svojoj majci i rekla: Sad smo kvit

Vraćam ti mlijeko

Moja baka je rekla: Tvoja majka potječe iz izlazećeg sunca

Dobila je ime po pupoljku jer se rodila u proljeće

Tvoja ti je majka dala ime po ratnici kako bi te opremila za zimu

\*

Moja baka je rekla: U Marghachu u proljeće menta raste uz potoke

Ima li što o tome u toj pjesmi koju pišeš

Moja baka je rekla: Ti šmrkavo derište

Dodi ovamo da te izmjerim isplest ću ti pulover





\*

Moja majka je rekla: Ako se ponovno sretnemo praviti ćemo se da se nismo poznavale  
kad si bila gladna a ja imala mlijeko

\*

Moj brat je rekao: Crno mlijeko zore pijemo te noću

\*

Moj brat je rekao: Prošlost je napad kojemu nema kraja

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Napiši ovako  
Za moju je budućnost moja majka sve žrtvovala  
Moram je biti dostojna  
sve što napišem mora biti istina

Moja baka je rekla: Napiši ovako  
Majke i jezici liče jedni na druge  
u tome što neprestano lažu o svemu



\*

Moja majka je rekla: Sve obitelji imaju svoje priče  
ali kako bi one izašle na vidjelo mora postojati netko  
tko ima jaku volju da ih iskrivi

Moja majka je rekla: Ti iskrivljuješ štetu svojom nesretnom laži  
Postoji zanimjelost koju nije moguće prevesti

Moj brat je rekao: Uvijek nešto nesavršeno ostaje neizbježno  
Uvijek nešto nepotpuno nedostaje

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Tvoja se obitelj nikad neće oporaviti od laži koje obavezuju  
Moj otac je rekao: Tvoja se obitelj nikad neće vratiti na krovove kada zahladi  
Moj brat je rekao: Tvoja se obitelj nikad neće ponovno roditi poput ruža poslije požara

Moja baka je rekla: Postoji vrijeme za sve pod nebom  
vrijeme za povratak na krovove kada zahladi



\*

Moja majka je rekla: Pistacije za one bez zuba

krunice za one bez Boga

tepihe za one bez doma

i majku za tebe

Moj otac je rekao: Posao za one bez posla

plaće za one bez plaće

dokumente za one bez dokumenata

i oca za tebe

Moj brat je rekao: Kablove za one bez žica

organe za one bez tijela

transfuzije za one bez srca

i brata za tebe

Moja majka je rekla: Kisik za one bez života

vitamine za one bez volje

proteze za one bez udova

i jezik za tebe





\*

Moja majka je rekla: Ponovno ću uzeti sve što mi pripada

Umrijet ćeš bez jezika

Bez jezika si došla, bez jezika ćeš i otići

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Pisao sam o kruhu i pravедnosti

i dokle god su gladni mogli čitati

bilo mi je svejedno kojim fontom pišem

Moj otac je rekao: Serif me bodu u prste.

Moj otac je rekao: Koliko otpora može pružiti čovjekovo salo

prije nego što udarci bičem ostanu zauvijek urezani

Moj otac je rekao: Ako zaboraviš abecedu

možeš je pronaći na mojim leđima

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Tek kad oprostiš onome tko te prijavio saznat ćeš što znači nasilje







\*

Moj otac je rekao: Bilo je ljudi koji su pogubljeni u zoru prije nego što su se razbudili

Moja majka je rekla: Bilo je ljudi koji su morali platiti za metke

kako bi smjeli sahraniti svoje kćeri

Moja majka je rekla: U koju nas je noć pobjednika ova pobjeda bacila

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Tvoj je ujak bio na pucketavoj telefonskoj liniji

Tvoj je ujak usavršio svoje usporedbe svakim udarcem bičem

Moj brat je rekao: Nemoj me ovdje pokopati

Pokopaj me tamo gdje je bičevanje virtualno

\*

Moj ujak je rekao: Sve ćeš zaboraviti

osim sjećanja kojeg ćeš se zauvijek sjećati

Sjećam se kako su prije rata vojnici žvakali mojim zubima

Agitatori vikali iz mog grla



Moj ujak je rekao: Za moja spuštена ramena

za moj neprekidan osmijeh

Za ovu hrpu kamenja koja je nekada bila moja kuća

Moj ujak je rekao: Postoji li i lokvica u kojoj rat nije oprao svoje krvave ruke

\*

Moj ujak je rekao: Bilo je ljudi koji su pogublјivani svake zore

Bilo je ljudi koji su ostali i vidјeli izvršavanje presuda

Moja majka je rekla: Zašto dozivaju Boga s krovova

Zar su zaboravili da je Bog bio taj koji je držao bič

kad su im majke mučili

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Pokaži mi čovjeka koji nosi svoje lice

i pokazat ću ti čovjeka koji lice ne zasluđuje



\*

Moj brat je rekao: Želim znati tko je to ponižavan zbog mene

Za koje sam sklonosti kriv

i koje me kazne čekaju

Moj brat je rekao: Uvijek će doći do nekog pokolja zbog znaka kojeg se nitko ne sjeća

\*

Moj ujak je rekao: Što će biti s nama nakon što se izborimo za slobodu

istim sredstvima koja su nas držala zatočenima

Moj otac je rekao: Tijela bez jasnoće, tijela bez sjena

Moj brat je rekao: Običaj klanjanja bit će zamijenjen veseljem naređivanja

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Postoji rat koji se odvija unutra

Postoji neprijatelj koji mi ispada iz ruku i usta





Moj brat je rekao: Postoji groznica koja raste sa svakim udarcem

Postoji stroj koji udara kad je isključen

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Nasilje je jezik u kojem ruka briljira

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Kad dajemo po mogućnostima i dobivamo po potrebi

Moja majka je rekla: Kad dajemo po mogućnostima i dobivamo po potrebi

Moj brat je rekao: Kad svim nepravdama i samoj povijesti dođe kraj

Moja baka je rekla: Kad budeš stara kao ja

onda će svim nepravdama i samoj povijesti doći kraj

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Nemoj me pokopati ovdje

Pokopaj me tamo gdje je sve vlasništvo izvlašteno

Ne stavlaj mi nadgrobni kamen, posveti mi svoj lagodan život





Moja majka je rekla: Bolje je sanjati da si mrtav  
nego umrijeti od svih snova koji su te izmislili

Moja baka je rekla: Nemoj me pokopati ovdje  
Pokopaj me tamo gdje menta raste uz potoke  
Napravi svečanu večeru, serviraj moje najbolje varivo

\*

Moj ujak je rekao: Rat nije završio  
Ti si samo prestao biti žrtva rata

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Nemoj me pokopati ovdje  
Pokopaj me tamo gdje se glazura civilizacije oljuštila  
Ispljuni moj jezik, vrati mi mlijeko



\*

Moja baka je rekla: Kad si od nekud to je neizbježno

Možeš reći tamo sam se promijenila

Ostavila sam hrpu kamenja

Ili nisam ja stvorena za ledene izlaske sunca

Ali ne možeš reći ja sam niotkuda

Ja nigdje ne pripadam

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Onaj koji putuje nepotreban je mjestu iz kojega je došao

Moja majka je rekla: Onaj koji putuje misli da je neophodan mjestu u koje dolazi

Moj otac je rekao: Onaj koji putuje nepotreban je mjestu u koje dolazi

Moja majka je rekla: Onaj koji putuje misli da je neophodan mjestu iz kojega je došao

Moj ujak je rekao: Onaj koji putuje ne zna ništa o mjestu

Moj otac je rekao: Još uvijek smo tamo iako nas je vrijeme razdvojilo od mjesta

Moja majka je rekla: Imamo onoliko mogućnosti koliko ih zaslužujemo



\*

Moj otac je rekao: Što se duže odmičeš od mjesta zločina, to se jače vežeš uz njega

Moja majka je rekla: Što više vidiš ranu, to se više gnoji

Moja baka je rekla: Što izgubiš na jednom mjestu dobiješ na drugom

\*

Moj ujak je rekao: Ne zaboravi da si hodala ovim ulicama kao dijete

Ne zaboravi da su jedino što se broji u revoluciji

kćerine sudske odluke između stihova

Moja majka je rekla: Ako ne govoriš nekome za koga si spremna napustiti jezik

nema smisla da govoriš

Moj ujak je rekao: Ako ne zadrhtiš dok prelaziš granicu

to što si prešla nije bila granica



\*

Moja baka je rekla: Kad sjedneš u sedlo drži čvrsto uzde

Ali kad tebe osedlaju

onda da si galopirala

Moja baka je rekla: Pripadnost je poput ogledala

Ako se razbije možeš je popraviti

Moja majka je rekla: Ali u odrazu fali jedna krhotina

\*

Moj otac je rekao: S obzirom na to da nitko tvoj nije pokopan u ovu zemlju

ova ti zemlja ne pripada

Moja majka je rekla: Tek kad mene pokopaš u ovu zemlju

ova će ti zemlja pripadati

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Poput zavoja mumije vežeš priče

Poput rijeke u kojoj teku sve prljave vode povijesti

Moja majka je rekla: Vrijeme će susresti tvoj jezik





Moj otac je rekao: Sve što pišeš bit će upotrijebljeno protiv tebe

Moja majka je rekla: S vremenom će sve biti okrenuto protiv tebe

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Kroz sve prolaziš u potrazi za nečim što bi mogla unakaziti

Moja majka je rekla: Samo onaj stih koji mi izazove suze

smatraš vrijednim zapisivanja

Moja majka je rekla: Slažeš pjesmu od mojih nedostataka

A onda kažeš da ja nemam što tugovati zbog te pjesme

Moja majka je rekla: O tebi tvoje grlo šuti

Moj otac je rekao: O tebi tvoja šutnja govori

Moja majka je rekla: Pričaj o onome što ne razumiješ

i za što nemaš snage

i to nisi ti

ni tvoje dno





\*

Moj otac je rekao: Tko zanimem u pjesmi o jeziku

Moja baka je rekla: Tko je razotkriven u pjesmi o žudnji

Moja majka je rekla: Tko je izdan u pjesmi o izdaji

Moj brat je rekao: Cijena nikada nije tako visoka kao onda kad ne vjeruješ da će netko platiti

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Pokaži mi čovjeka koji je napustio svoj jezik

i pokazat ću ti čovjeka kojeg nikakav jezik ne obuhvaća

Moj brat je rekao: Mi smo ništa drugo do zbroj ozljeda koje nam jezik nanosi

Zbroj ozljeda koje mi nanosimo

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Govori onaj jezik koji ti plaća kruh

Moja baka je rekla: Govori onaj jezik koji održava distancu od onoga što se dogodilo u riječima





Moj brat je rekao: Govori onaj jezik koji budi život u stroju

Moja majka je rekla: Govori onaj jezik koji je vrijedan toga što si me izdala

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Ti si pljunuta tvoja majka

Ti si sve što tvoja majka prezire

Moj otac je rekao: I žoharu

je njegovo dijete najljepše

Moja majka je rekla: Uklonit ću zaraženu gamad

Tamu iz ljudi

Moja majka je rekla: Postoji barbarizam koji nikada ne ispari

\*

Moj otac je rekao: Kad ti starost nadvlada tijelo ono će se odati

Kad izgubiš sve sposobnosti preostaje ti samo materinji jezik





Moja majka je rekla: Ako me ubiješ na ovom jeziku onda neka ti je

Moj otac je rekao: Napiši da te ovaj jezik ubija, piši na ovom jeziku

Moj brat je rekao: Povjerovat će ti ako te prepoznaju

Moj otac je rekao: Ako im ikada pružiš zadovoljstinu

da potvrde svoje predodžbe

odričem te se

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Tvoja razlika je nepomična i nijema

Ne, tvoja razlika je izazvano čudovište koje traži svoj danak

Tvoja razlika je osuđena da ponavlja svoje pitanje

Moj brat je rekao: Jedini jezik na kojem možeš osuditi napad je jezik napadača

a jezik napadača je jezik koji je izmišljen kako bi opravdao napad





\*

Moj brat je rekao: Kao sukrivac među njima

kao njihova desna ruka

s prstima zastrašujuće crvenima

od krvi njihove civilizacije

Moj brat je rekao: Kad taština zamuti pogled

kad zamjeranje otvrdne srce

kad se nepravde okupe oko usta

Onda ćeš se sjetiti jednog ugriza preko drugog

\*

Moja majka je rekla: Izgovori moje ime kad pljuvačka padne

\*

Moj brat je rekao: I dalje ćemo uništavati

Bit ćemo onoliko osjećajni koliko i naše najosjetljivije točke

Nismo obavezni udarati glavom o zid

Mi smo u pokretu, mi ćemo izdržati





Moja baka je rekla: Posjekotina u zoru kroz koju se besana noć probija

Tama koju nije moguće uhvatiti

Sjećanje na nebesa na kojima su neki drugi mjeseci

\*

Moja baka je rekla: Gdje je taj vjetar koji će nas spasiti

Moja majka je rekla: Gdje je to mlijeko koje svaki udah traži

Moj otac je rekao: Gdje su te šibe koje smo si za leda vezali

\*

Moja baka je rekla: Možda ćemo se jednog dana

kad menta izraste uz potoke

ponovno sresti i reći jedna drugoj

da nikada nismo jeli bolju rižu sa šafranom

Moja majka je rekla: Možda ćemo se jednog dana

na drugoj strani ove nesretne laži

sresti i uobličiti frazu

za koju smo mislili da je rezervirana samo za druge





\*

Moj otac je rekao: Ti ćeš dati riječi mojoj bezličnoj čežnji

Postoji jedna riječ koja zadnja napusti čovjeka

Sutra sam joj jedan slog bliže

Moj otac je rekao: Neka budem kamen u tvojoj prački

neka moja usta budu usnice kojima se žališ

moja koljena slomljeni stupovi tvog poniženja

\*

Moj brat je rekao: Sjećanja bujaju u tlu

poput neuglednog korova

Koliko dugo moramo kopati po svojim stopama

da čujemo jadikovku korijenja

Moja baka je rekla: Čuvat ćete njihov prodorni krik

Presaditi ga u tlo

koje se kreće vašom nemirnom brzinom





\*

Moj brat je rekao: Svo to sjemenje osuđeno

da padne u ovo tlo i nikada ne procvjeta

Zbog njega će se zemlja raskoliti







Athena  
FARROKHZAD

WHITE BLIGHT

Translated by Jennifer Hayashida







My family arrived here in a Marxist tradition

My mother immediately filled the house with Santa knick-knacks

Weighed the pros and cons of the plastic Christmas tree

as if the problem were hers

During the day she distinguished between long and short vowels

as if the sounds that came out of her mouth

could wash the olive oil from her skin

My mother let bleach run through her syntax

On the other side of punctuation her syllables became whiter

than a winter in Norrland

My mother built us a future consisting of quantity of life

In the suburban basement she lined up canned goods

as if preparing for a war

In the evenings she searched for recipes and peeled potatoes

as if it were her history inscribed

in the Jansson's temptation casserole

To think that I sucked at those breasts

To think that she put her barbarism in my mouth



\*

My mother said: It seems it has never occurred to you that it is from your name  
civilization descends

My mother said: The darkness in my belly is the only darkness you command

\*

My mother said: You are a dreamer born to turn straight eyes aslant  
My mother said: If you could regard the circumstances as extenuating  
you would let me off easier

My mother said: Never underestimate the trouble people will take  
to formulate truths possible for them to bear

My mother said: You were not fit to live even from the start



\*

My mother said: A woman dug out her mother's eyes with her fingers  
so the mother would be spared the sight of the daughter's decline

\*

My father said: You have a tendency towards metaphysics  
Still I schooled you in the means of production  
when your milk teeth were intact

My mother said: Your father lived for the day of judgment  
So did your mother, but she was forced to other ambitions

\*

My mother said: In your father's sleep you are executed together  
In your father's dream you form a genealogy of revolutionaries

My father said: Your mother fed you with imported silver spoons  
Your mother was everywhere in your face  
frantically combed out the curls



\*

My mother said: For a lifetime I envied your father's traumas  
until I realized that my own were far more remarkable

My mother said: I have spent a fortune on your piano lessons  
But at my funeral you will refuse to play

\*

My mother took the dream out of my father's hand and said:  
All this sugar will not make you sweeter  
Walk a lap around the house before you take the insulin

My father said: I have lived my life, I have lived my life  
I have done my share  
Now nothing remains of the halcyon days of youth



\*

My mother said to my brother: Beware of strangers  
Remember that you have nothing to return to  
should they become dangerous

My brother said: I had such a strange dream  
That dawn died in my eyes before sleep had cleared  
A humanity of sugar and slaughter  
When I bid farewell to the light I knew everything

\*

My mother said: From the division of cells  
from a genetic material  
from your father's head  
But not from me

My father said: From the clash of civilizations  
from a fundamental antagonism  
from my tired head  
But not from her



\*

My father said: If it were possible to compete in martyrdom

your mother would do everything to lose

My mother said: The heart is not like the knee that can be bent at will

My father said: Even the rooster who does not crow gets to see the sun rise

My mother said: But if the hen does not lay an egg she will be served for dinner

\*

My father said: Your brother shaved before his beard started to grow

Your brother saw the terrorist's face in the mirror

and wanted a flat iron for Christmas

My brother said: Some day I want to die in a country

where people can pronounce my name

\*

My brother said: Do not think it is in your power to offer me anything





\*

My father said: Whose father are you rendering

My mother said: Whose mother are you rendering

My brother said: Whose brother is being referred to

My grandmother said: If you don't finish chopping the vegetables soon  
there won't be any dinner

\*

My father said: To those who have more will be given  
and from those who lack even more will be taken  
My mother said: Take some more milk before it turns

My mother said: Wouldn't it be strange to feel  
a single night like this one  
my language in your mouth





\*

My father said: One spoonful for the executioners

one spoonful for the emancipators

one spoonful for the hungry masses

And one spoonful for me

\*

My mother handed the glass to her mother and said: Now we are even

Here is the milk back

My grandmother said: Your mother descends from the rising sun

She was named after the flower bud since she was born in spring

Your mother named you after a warrior to prepare you for winter

\*

My grandmother said: During spring in Marghacho mint grew along the streams

Does the poem you are writing reveal any of this

My grandmother said: You snot-nosed little mutt

Come here and I'll take your measurements and knit you a wool sweater





\*

My mother said: If we meet again we will not let on that we knew each other  
when you were hungry and it was I who carried the milk

\*

My brother said: Black milk of dawn, we drink you at night

\*

The past is an assault never to be completed

\*

My mother said: Write like this  
For my opportunities my mother sacrificed everything  
I must be worthy of her  
everything I write will be true

My grandmother said: Write like this  
Mothers and languages resemble each other  
in that they incessantly lie about everything





\*

My mother said: All families have their stories  
but for them to emerge requires someone  
with a particular will to disfigure

My mother said: You distort the injury with your unfortunate lie  
There is a muteness that cannot be translated

My brother said: There is always something imperfect that remains inescapable  
There is always something incomplete missing

\*

My mother said: Your family will never recover from the lie that binds  
My father said: Your family will never return to the rooftops when it cools down  
My brother said: Your family will never be resurrected like roses after a fire

My grandmother said: There is a time for everything under the sun  
time to return to the rooftops when it cools down





\*

My grandmother said: Pistachios for the toothless

rosaries for the godless

rugs for the homeless

and a mother for you

My father said: Jobs for the jobless

wages for the wageless

papers for the paperless

and a father for you

My brother said: Cables for the wireless

organs for the bodyless

transfusions for the heartless

and a brother for you

My mother said: Oxygen for the lifeless

vitamins for the listless

prostheses for the limbless

and a language for you





\*

My mother said: I will reclaim what belongs to me

You will meet death robbed of language

Speechless you came, speechless you will return

\*

My father said: I wrote of bread and justice

and as long as the starving could read

the font did not matter to me

My father said: The serif pricks my fingers

My father said: How much resistance can human fat bear

before the lashes of the whip become permanent

My father said: If you forget the alphabet

you will find it on my back

\*

My father said: Only when you forgive the one who has turned you in

will you know the meaning of violence





\*

My father said: There were those who were executed at dawn before sleep had cleared

My mother said: There were those who had to pay for the bullets

to bury their daughters

My mother said: Into what victor's night did this victory throw us

\*

My father said: Your uncle was there on a crackling phone line

Your uncle refined his metaphors with every lash of the whip

My brother said: Do not bury me here

Bury me where the lashes of the whip are virtual

\*

My uncle said: You will forget everything

except memory, which you will always remember

I remember that before the war the soldier chewed with my teeth

The agitator screamed with my throat



My uncle said: For my sloping shoulders  
for my constant smile  
For this pile of rocks that was once my house

My uncle said: Is there a puddle where war has not washed its bloody hands

\*

My uncle said: There were those who were executed at every sunrise  
There were those who remained and saw the sentences carried out

My mother said: Why do they invoke god from the rooftops  
Have they forgotten that it was god who held the whip  
when their mothers were tortured

\*

My mother said: Show me someone who inhabits their face  
and I will show you the one who no face deserves





\*

My brother said: I want to know who was humiliated for my sake

What affinities I am guilty of

and what reprisals await

My brother said: There is a slaughter that will always go on

for a sign no one can remember

\*

My uncle said: What will become of us when we have fought our emancipation

with the same means that imprisoned us

My father said : Bodies without clarity, bodies without shadow

My brother said: The habit of kneeling will be replaced by the joy of commanding

\*

My father said: There is a war that takes place in the guts

There is an enemy who rushes forth from my hands and lips



My brother said: There is a fever that escalates with every blow

There is a machine that hammers when turned off

\*

My father said: Violence is a language in which the hand excels

\*

My father said: When we give according to ability and receive according to need

My mother said: When we give according to ability and receive according to need

My brother said: When all injustices and history itself ends

My grandmother said: When you are as old as I am

Then all injustices and history itself will end

\*

My father said: Do not bury me here

Bury me where all property has been expropriated

Do not give me a tombstone, dedicate your halcyon days to me



My mother said: It is better to dream that you are dead  
than to die of all the dreams that invent you

My grandmother said: Do not bury me here  
Bury me where the mint grows along the streams  
Set the table for a feast, serve my most delicious stew

\*

My uncle said: The war has never ceased  
You have only ceased being the victim of war

\*

My mother said: Do not bury me here  
Bury me where the veneer of civilization has peeled  
Spit out my language, return the milk to me



\*

My grandmother said: When you are from a place it is inescapable

You can say I changed there

I left the gathering of stones

Or I was never intended for frost-ridden dawn

But you cannot say I am from nowhere

I belong to no place

\*

My father said: The one who travels is redundant to the place they came from

My mother said: The one who travels thinks they are essential to the place they come to

My father said: The one who travels is redundant to the place they come to

My mother said: The one who travels thinks they were essential to the place they came from

My uncle said: The one who travels knows nothing about place

My father said: We are still there, even if time has separated us from the place

My mother said: Our ceilings are as high as the floors warrant



\*

My father said: The farther you move from the scene of the crime,

the more you are bound to it

My mother said: The more you care for the wound,

the more it festers

My grandmother said: What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts

\*

My uncle said: Do not forget that you walked these streets as a child

Do not forget that all that matters in a revolution

is the daughters' decisions between the lines of the poem

My mother said: If you do not speak to someone for whom you can abandon language

there is no point in speaking

My uncle said: If you do not tremble when you cross a border

it is not the border you have crossed



\*

My grandmother said: When you sit up in the saddle you should grip the reins tightly

But when they saddle you up

then you should gallop

My grandmother said: Belonging is like a mirror

If it breaks you can repair it

My mother said: But in the reflection a shard is missing

\*

My father said: Since no one who belongs to you is buried in this earth

this earth does not belong to you

My mother said: Only when you bury me in this earth

will this earth belong to you

\*

My mother said: Like a mummy's bandages you bind up the story

Like a river where the dirty waters of history run

My mother said: Time will catch up with your tongue



My father said: Everything you write will be used against you

My mother said: In due time everything will be turned against you

\*

My mother said: You go through everything in search of something to disfigure

My mother said: Only the line that provokes my tears

do you consider worthy of notation

My mother said: You build the poem from my shortcomings

Then you say the poem is not mine to mourn

My mother said: It is about you your throat remains silent

My father said: It is about you your silence speaks

My mother said: You will speak of what you do not understand

and have no strength for

and it is not you

and not your ground



\*

My father said: Who is speechless in a poem about language

My grandmother said: Who is bared in a poem about desire

My mother said: Who is betrayed in a poem about betrayal

My brother said: The price is never as high as when you think no one will pay

\*

My father said: Show me someone who has abandoned their language

and I will show you the one who no language contains

My brother said: We are nothing but the sum of the harm inflicted on us by language

The sum of the harm we inflict

\*

My father said: Speak the language that pays for your bread

My grandmother said: Speak the language that keeps its distance

from what has taken place in words





My brother said: Speak the language that gives life to the machine

My mother said: Speak the language worth the price of betraying me

\*

My father said: You are the spitting image of your mother

You are everything your mother despises

My father said: Also in the eyes of the cockroach

its own child is the most beautiful

My mother said: I will remove infectious vermin

Darkness from humanity

My mother said: There is a barbarism that never melts into air

\*

My father said: When age has overpowered your body it will give itself away

When you have lost all ability only the mother tongue remains



My mother said: If you kill me in this language it is yours to keep

My father said: Write that this language kills you, write in this language

My brother said: You are credible if they recognize you

My father said: If you ever give them the satisfaction

of having their images confirmed

I will wash my hands of you

\*

My mother said: Your difference is immobile and mute

No, your difference is a conjured monster demanding its tribute

Your difference is doomed to repeat its question

My brother said: The only language you have to condemn the crime

is the language of the criminal

and the language of the criminal

is a language invented to justify the crime



\*

My brother said: Like an accomplice among them  
like a henchman among them  
with fingers alarmingly red  
from the blood of their civilization

My brother said: When conceit spoils the gaze  
when resentment hardens the heart  
when injustices rest around the mouth  
Then you will remember one bite through another

\*

My mother said: Say my name as the spittle lands

\*

My brother said: We will persist in laying waste  
We will be as sensitive as our most tender points  
We are not obligated to beat our heads against walls  
We are a grinding movement, we will persevere





My grandmother said: A wound at dawn where the sleepless night forces its way in  
A darkness that cannot be grasped  
A sensation of heavens where other moons rest

\*

My grandmother said: Where is the wind that will rescue us

My mother said: Where is the milk demanded by each breath

My father: Where are the switches we bound for our backs

\*

My grandmother said: Maybe one day  
when the night blooms along the streams  
we will meet and say to each other  
we have never tasted a more delicious saffron rice

My mother said: Maybe one day  
on the other side of this unfortunate lie  
we will meet and formulate a phrase  
we thought was reserved only for others





\*

My father said: You will articulate my faceless longing

There is a word that is the last to abandon humanity

Tomorrow I am one syllable closer

My father said: Turn into a stone for your sling

turn my mouth into lips for your lament

my knees to the crumbled pillars of your humiliation

\*

My brother said: Memories thrive on the ground

like a humble weed

How far must we dig in our traces

to overhear the lament of the roots

My grandmother said: You will guard their piercing peal

You will plant it in a ground

that moves at the pace of your restlessness





\*

My brother said: All those seeds sentenced

to fall into this earth and never bloom

It is for them the earth will split





## A PLACE FOR STRUGGLE

In the afterword to *Anttikeksiskväde* the Swedish poet David Vikgren writes about how language can both be used as an instrument of power and as a potential liberator. Vikgren quotes Nobel laureate Derek Walcott (*Partisan Review*, 1990) who says that “when one enters language one is faced with a choice and this choice encompass the political history of language, the imperialistic reach of language and the fact that one has either been oppressed by language or been forced to conquer it. Therefore language is no place of retreat, no sanctuary, not a place where one can make decisions. It is a place where one fights”. These theories of Walcott and Vikgren regarding “language as both use of force as well as a tool of liberation” is actualized in my reading of *VitSvit* (*White Blight*) by Athena Farrokhzad, her first book published in her own name. This collection of poems explores the dual nature of language. Just past the mid point of the collection I read: “My father said: Violence is a language in which the hand excels” and am reminded of the violence that language can be. The visual representation of the poems is that of printed strips from a Dymo machine with white letters on a black background. The family who “arrived





here in a Marxist tradition” are surrounded by the new language and has to relate to it: “My mother let bleach run through her syntax / On the other side of punctuation her syllables became whiter / than a winter in Nor-land”.

The narrator hardly appears in *White Blight* but remains an important part through the whole collection. It is mainly the family of the narrator who speaks, a retelling through short reports. Their stories are characterized by both simplicity and a twisting and turning of familiar expressions. The collection explores questions of heritage, responsibility, truth and language and manages to create an unsettling sensation through the twisted expressions. The repetitive form and the emphasis on the stories told by the family members surround the implicit narrator. There is a seriousness resting heavy on the stories; they contain memories and reflections on violence and torture, and also “words of wisdom” and appeals to the narrator/poet. The narrator’s presence becomes very clear and concrete but one never hears her speak. The narrator, as well as I, the reader, have to relate to the stories. The writer is the one listening to them and the poems put me in her shoes. The poems raise questions in me, questions about my own writing but also about all the stories in the



world and I, as a reader, am held accountable. I become the writer and have to take responsibility for the story, “Who becomes storage in a poem about treachery”?

The narrator/poet has an access to language but the poem is infiltrated by the family:

My mother said: Write like this  
 For my opportunities my mother sacrificed  
 everything  
 I must be worthy of her  
 Everything I write will be true

The position of the poet becomes loaded and the questions of heritage and truth gains their immediacy through the mother: “My mother said: All families have their stories / but to reveal them there has to be someone / with a particular wish to deface”. That quote brings to mind a similar but different wording by the American L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poet Lyn Hejinian: “Every family have their own collection of stories, but not all families have someone who can tell them” (from *My Life*). It is as if Farrokhzad creates a dialog with that quote, a conversation about family, narrative and truth. The stories in *White Blight* echoes of this dialog, they contradict each other, give just in order to take back. In Farrokhzad’s col-



lection the poet (“the narrator”) becomes the defacer and questions about who can, or have the right to tell their story, what should be told and who is lying surfaces: “My mother said: Whose mother are you rendering / My brother said: Whose brother is being referred to”?

Other people populate the collection. Besides Hejinian *White Blight* echoes other voices. The poems contain quotes and scrambled quotes by other poets like Paul Celan and Jila Mossaed, post-colonial thinkers like Édouard Glissant, but also references to the Bible. The questions of heritage and narrative become both deeper and wider through this literary heritage and the “family” of writers to whom the poet relates.

During a conversation with Faranz Arbabi, director of the play version of *White Blight*, in the fall of 2015, Athena Farrokhzad emphasized the importance of her work with poetry being a collective engagement. She has collaborated with the poet Linn Hansén and the author Kristofer Folkhammar in the G=T=B=R=G poetry collective. She has also contributed to the initiation of two artistic collaborations between Swedish and Palestinian and Iranian poets. In 2013 the Swedish poets traveled to Teheran to meet with six young Iranian poets, among them Rosa Jamaï, Roza Zarrin and Fateme Ekhtesari. This exchange eventually became a part of the Gothenburg Poetry Fes-



tival of 2013 headlined “Resistance from my desktop: Iranian poetry today” concerning questions about translation, freedom of speech and writing.

As I said, poetry as resistance is central in *White Blight*. The problems surrounding language and its double nature run through the collection. The stories are pitted against each other, illuminating the complexity: “My brother said: We are nothing but the sum of the harm inflicted on us by language / The sum of the harm we inflict“. The stories point both inward to themselves – as a way of the collection to take responsibility for what it is – and outwards towards the world, “the reality“. The language is the essence, the problem, the violence, but there is also a tenderness towards it: “My mother said: Oxygen for the lifeless / vitamins for the listless / prostheses for the limbless / and a language for you“. Poetry can be a language of liberation. Or as Walcott and Vikgren puts it: a strategy of resistance. In the end of the collection one senses certain hopefulness: “My father said: You will articulate my faceless longing / There is a word that is the last to abandon humanity / Tomorrow I am one syllable closer.“

*White Blight* is a place for struggle.

Pernilla Berglund



## ON THE AUTHOR

Athena Farrokhzad was born in 1983 and lives in Stockholm. She is a poet, literary critic, translator, playwright and teacher of creative writing. After several years of collaborative poetry projects and international collaborations she published her first volume of poetry in 2013, *Vitsvit* (*White Blight*) at Albert Bonniers förlag. The book circles around the topic of revolution, war, migration and racism, and how these experiences condition the lives of different members of a family. *Vitsvit* has been translated to several languages and turned into a play. The same year, her first play, *Päron*, premiered at Ung Scen /Öst.

Farrokhzad teaches creative writing at Biskops-Arnös författarskola, and has translated writers such as Marguerite Duras, Adrienne Rich, Monique Wittig and Nicole Bro-sard to Swedish. In 2015, her second volume of poetry, *\*Trado\**, written together with the Romanian poet Svet-lana Cârsteana, will be published.





## MJESTO BORBE

U pogovoru *Anttikeksiskväde* švedski pjesnik David Vikgren piše kako jezik može istovremeno biti instrument moći i oslobođenja. Vikgren citira Nobelovca Dereka Walcottta (*Partisan Review*, 1990.) koji kaže da „kad jednom uđemo u jezik, bivamo suočeni s izborom, a taj je izbor uvijek povezan s političkom povijesti jezika, s njegovim imperijalističkim dosegom te činjenicom da smo njime ili potlačeni ili da smo ga prisiljeni osvojiti. Stoga jezik nije mjesto povlačenja ili utočište, već mjesto gdje čovjek donosi odluke. Jezik je mjesto čovjekove borbe.“

Moje čitanje prvijenca Athene Farrokhzad, knjige *Bijela suita*, utemeljeno je na teorijama Walcottta i Vikgrena o „jeziku kao oruđu sile i oslobođenja“. U ovoj zbirci pjesama Farrokhzad istražuje dualnost jezika. Negdje u sredini zbirke pronalazim stih „Moj otac je rekao: Nasilje je jezik u kojem ruka briljira“ koji me podsjetio kako jezik može biti nasilan. Pjesme su vizualno prikazane kao da su otisnute na trakama uređaja za etikete, bijelih slova na crnoj pozadini. Obitelj koja je „ovdje stigla u marksističkoj idejnoj tradiciji“ biva uronjena u novi jezik u kojem se mora snaći: „Moja je majka sintaksu oprala izbjeljivačem





/ S druge strane zarez a slogovi su joj bili bjelji / od nor-landske zime.“

Pripovjedačica se u *Bijeloj suiti* skoro pa i ne pojavljuje no ipak igra važnu ulogu u cijeloj zbirci. Glavna riječ je uglavnom prepuštena članovima autoričine obitelji, koji nam preporučavaju događaje u obliku kratkih izvješća. Njihove priče istovremeno obilježava jednostavnost i izvija- nje, izokretanje poznatih izraza. Knjiga se bavi pitanjima nasljeđa, odgovornosti, istine i jezika te uspijeva dubin- ski uznemiriti čitatelja. Repetitivna forma i naglasak na pričama članova obitelji (za)okružuju lik implicitne na- ratorice. Ozbiljna težina prožima priče; one se sastoje od sjećanja i promišljanja o nasilju i mučenju, kao i od „mu- drih izreka“ te zazivanja naratorice/pjesnikinje. Njezina prisutnost je veoma jasna i konkretna, no ona nikada ne progovara. Pripovjedačica, i ja kao čitateljica, moramo se pronaći u tim pričama. Autorica je ta koja sluša priče, a pjesme su te koje me stavljaju u njezinu kožu. Pjesme me navode na preispitivanje vlastitog pisanja, a time i svih ostalih priča koje postoje na ovom svijetu, te me one, kao čitateljicu, pozivaju na odgovornost. Sama postajem spi- sateljica i moram preuzeti odgovornost za priču; ja sam ta „u kojoj se pohranjuje pjesma o izdaji“.



Pripovjedač / pjesnik mora imati pristup jeziku, ali se u pjesmu upleće obitelj:

Moja majka je rekla: Napiši ovako  
 Za moju je budućnost moja majka sve žrtvovala  
 Moram je biti dostojna  
 Sve što napišem mora biti istina

Položaj pjesnikinje nabijen je pitanjima nasljeđa i istine koja bivaju izražena kroz lik majke: „Moja majka je rekla: Sve obitelji imaju svoje priče / ali kako bi one izašle na vidjelo mora postojati netko / tko ima jaku volju da ih iskri- vi“. Taj citat podsjeća na sličnu, ali različito formuliranu ideju američke L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E pjesnikinje Lyn Hejinian: „Svaka obitelj ima svoju zbirku priča, no nema svaka obitelj nekoga da ih ispriča“ (iz *My Life*). Kao da Farrokhzad ulazi u dijalog s navedenom misli, u razgovor o obitelji, priči i istini. Taj dijalog odjekuje kroz sve priče u *Bijeloj suiti*; one si međusobno proturječe, daju nešto samo kako bi to uzele natrag. U Farrokhzadinoj zbirci, pjesnikinja („naratorica“) je ta koja postaje oskrvniteljica i koja preispituje tko može, ili ima pravo, ispričati svoju priču, što treba biti ispričano a što treba ostati na varljivoj površini: „Moja majka je rekla: O čijoj to majci pišeš / Moj brat je rekao: Na čijeg se to brata odnosi?“ *Bijelom suitom* odjekuju i drugi pjesnički glasovi. Pjesme sadrže izravne i preoblikovane citate pjesnika kao što su





Paul Celan i Jila Mossaed, postkolonijalnih mislioca kao što je Édouard Glissant, kao i upućivanja na Bibliju. Pitanja nasljeđa i pripovijedanja se produbljuju i šire kroz književno nasljeđe i „obitelj“ pisaca s kojima se pjesnikinja poistovjećuje.

Kao što sam već napomenula, ideja pjesništva kao borbe ključna je u *Bijeloj suiti*. Problemi jezika i njegove dvostruke naravi provlače se kroz cijelu zbirku. Priče su usmjerenne jedna protiv druge, otkrivajući se u svojoj složenosti: „Moj brat je rekao: Mi smo ništa drugo do zbroj ozljeda koje nam jezik nanosi / Zbroj ozljeda koje mi nanosimo.“ Priče su istovremeno introspektivne – kako bi zbirka mogla preuzeti odgovornost sama za sebe – te okrenute prema van, prema svijetu, „stvarnosti“. Jezik je srž, problem, nasilje, no tu je i nježnost koja se gaji prema njemu: „Moja majka je rekla: Kisik za one bez života / vitamini za one bez volje / proteze za one bez udova / i jezik za tebe.“ Poezija može biti jezik oslobođenja. Ili, kako to Walcott i Vikgren kažu: strategija otpora. Na kraju zbirke ostaje određeni osjećaj nadanja: „Moj otac je rekao: Ti ćeš dati riječi mojoj bezličnoj čežnji / Postoji jedna riječ koja zadnja napusti čovjeka / Sutra sam joj jedan slog bliže.“

*Bijela suita* je mjesto borbe.

**Pernilla Berglund**





## O PJESNIKINJI

Athena Farrokhzad rođena je 1983., živi u Stockholmu. Pjesnikinja, književna kritičarka, prevoditeljica, dramska spisateljica i profesorica kreativnog pisanja. Nakon nekoliko godina djelovanja u okviru različitih pjesničkih projekata i međunarodnih suradnji, njezina prva pjesnička knjiga, *Bijela suita*, pojavljuje se 2013. godine u izdanju Albert Bonniers förlag. Knjiga se dotiče pitanja revolucije, rata, migracija i rasizma te propituje kako su ta iskustva uvjetovala živote članova jedne obitelji. *Bijela suita* prevedena je na nekoliko jezika i prilagođena za kazalište. Iste je godine premijerno izveden Farrokhzadin prvi dramski tekst, *Päron*.

Farrokhzad podučava kreativno pisanje na Biskops-Arnös författarskola, te je prevela na švedski, između ostalog, djela Marguerite Duras, Adrienne Rich, Monique Wittig i Nicole Brossard. Uskoro će se pojaviti njezina druga zbirka poezije *\*Trado\**, napisana u suradnji s rumunjskom pjesnikinjom Svetlanom Cârstea.







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