

## **Katarína Kuchelová**

Translated by Ivana Hostová

### **All the Trees**

- 1     when she moved in that house  
      she first chopped down all the trees  
      sawed off all the branches extending from the neighbours'  
      let the sheep on the barren grounds and killed them every autumn  
      and locked the meet in a large electric freezer  
      the energy was running low, she started being sick  
      once she said she doesn't remember our childhood  
      little by little, she stopped recognising us  
      we started to fear next time it might be us who'd be locked in the freezer
- 2     in my first memory I look up  
      into a treetop  
      later I climbed all the trees in the neighbourhood  
      it was safe inside  
      I saw the soft treetops from above  
      I was tempted to lie down, I wanted to jump  
      now I walk headfirst on the roots

## **She Can Scream and Fly**

my mother is a bird

in a flock of birds that screams in the trees above

my mother can't talk, she can only scream

birds are invisible

they are hidden in the foliage, but they have besieged the city, we know

they are harmless

if they rose from the foliage all at once, they would make

a massive black shadow

my mother doesn't know she's a part of the flock

living with other birds, doing what they do

my mother doesn't know she screams

she doesn't even know she flies

my mum flies very well

she does all these things

the things we sometimes see some birds to

sitting down on a branch and flying up above the treetops

my mother can't be distinguished from the others

I just say one of those birds is my mother

my mother doesn't know she is a bird

she doesn't need to know

I can understand

sometimes she ruffles another bird's feathers

but she doesn't really know why

she forgets all about it right away and can't tell the bird from the rest of them

birds can mainly be heard in the evening, that's their time

people sitting on the benches

can hear the screaming filtered through the leaves, they say

what a wonderful atmosphere

my mother is a harmless part of the park

even though she thinks she has supernatural powers

maybe it's because she doesn't realise she can fly, I think

what I think is perfectly irrelevant

it's all in my head – as they say

birds do not communicate

one of them screams, then another, and the next one

it looks as if they were screaming together, but that's not true

they scream, because others scream

## **The Forest Sucks Everything In**

1       the dog has found a doe leg, we saw her alive not a long time ago  
          on one of the walks, an interrupted shyness  
          we don't move, or breathe  
          his prey is the rest of another's prey

2       I'll shoot them all  
          he says to his wife, but he is really talking to us  
          we have a joint memory, we remember the shooting in the street  
          you're all right, I'm all right  
          we don't breathe

          we share the street and plenty of other things, I'm sure

          but now we must concentrate on the differences

          my son will shoot your dog, he comes here to run

          from now on, any time we meet a jogger in the forest,

the man wants us to think

he is carrying a gun, from now on, we always

think that

3 and the cheek that touches the grass, is mine

and the dog is running with a bone from my leg

while I'm walking with the dog's heavy body in my arms

the boy hiding in the bushes believes his mum will find him

and it's always someone else

who scares him

and the forest sucks everything in

there are just the stains on the seat of the car

and the wipers don't agree with anything

that is going on right now

we don't breathe, or move, we hide

play dead

(from *He Knows What He'll Do*)

**Katarína Kuchelová** (1979) is a Slovak poet and writer. Her most recent book, the novella *Čepiec* (The Bonnet, 2019), has won several literary prizes in Slovakia. She has written four poetry collections: *Duály* (Duals, Drewo a srd 2019), *Šport* (Sport, Ars Poetica 2006), *Malé veľké mesto* (A Little Big City, Ars poetica 2008) a *Vie, čo urobí* (He Knows What He'll Do, Artforum 2013). Her poetry was translated into several languages, two of her books have been published in Spain and Ukraine.

**Ivana Hostová** (1983) is a literary critic, translator, editor and translation studies scholar based at the Institute of Slovak Literature of Slovak Academy of Sciences. In research and translation, she mainly focuses on contemporary poetry, her most recent book rendition being Donna Stonecipher's *Model City* (2015) published by Skalná ruža in 2019. She has written numerous articles on Slovak poetry and translation with one of the recent ones "Temporalities—Technologies—Transgressions" (*Porównania* 2:27) providing an outline of the post-2000 landscape of Slovak poetry for the English-speaking audience. Her editorial projects include *Communication, Compliance and Resistance in Inter-Contextual Encounters* – a special issue of *World Literature Studies* journal (2020; co-edited with Mária Kusá) or *Identity and Translation Trouble* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017). A selection of her papers on contemporary Slovak poetry *Medzi entropiou a víziou* [Between entropy and vision] came out in FACE publishing house in 2014. She is a member of European Society for Translation Studies and BASEES and of the editorial board of *Bridge: Trends and Traditions in Translation and Interpreting Studies* journal.