

Translator's note: Because Hebrew grammar indicates gender, the speaker in Anat Levin's poem "Get Up" is clearly a woman, speaking to a woman who has lost a male lover. In the spirit of joyful inclusiveness, and with the poet's permission, I have de-specified the gender of the past lover and a possible future love. So that the "necessary body" may love those it loves. But I haven't changed the gender of the speaker, as I did not want to dilute her point of view as a woman. And at the end of the poem, both speaker and addressee are revealed: woman writers embracing the fairy tale incarnation of the princess as a doe - preferring not the stereotyped princess, but necessary and transformational beings with animal physicality. Women writing also figure in "Orphans" and "Tea."—*Lisa Katz*

Get up/Anat Levin

You will arise from love as from a serious disease
with five symptoms:
looking, lusting, touching, a "you," and you.
There's no remedy, get up. Open
all the windows, a fresh breeze will enter
to air the sheet, blanket, duvet cover, two pillowcases.
Set the table without a knife, spoons are enough.
Bake raspberry tarts in disposable pans.
Get up already, make appointments:
family doctor, dentist, a healer of hearts.
Erase every sign and symbol from your necessary body:
here you kissed, here trembled; tongues rioted.
Stop seeking this everywhere:
an ice cream parlor, book store, in a dream.
Erase all memories with a damp rag.
They peeled an orange, and offered you half, take it. Erase this.
Wait before writing letters.
Control yourself. Try not to lift receivers.
Longing is crime and punishment.
The carrot and the stick.
Did you get up?
Now stop trying.
They'll never see you again in the single mirror,
the broken look on your face.
Now you know the distance between love and loathe is short.
Oh,
this way or that, it will all be forgotten.
Not really, time doesn't heal, it just passes, just goes by.
Slowly, painfully, remove the hard crust from a bleeding heart.
What once beat strongly beats weakly now.
Afterwards you will rise, determined, and return to the dominion of your body,
all its chambers, all at once: turn on the lights.
Afterwards the seasons of your body will change too
and grow petals, foliage, branches, fruit.
Afterwards you will rewrite the book of women letter by letter,
you will be a doe again.

Orphans/Anat Levin

I've seen you cry three times:
once when they murdered Rabin,
once when our savings were lost,
and once after the fifth miscarriage.

The room was empty and you were empty
facing me. It was an hour impossible to fathom,
a body dug a grave within a body
to bury nothingness.

And if there had been a way home -
we couldn't find it, orphan parents
unadopted and without shelter,
with no one to point at us and say:

This one and that and these are mine and not others
(because we were chosen of all the parents).
Our mouths filled with ashes and gloom
no rest no consolation.

“And how can it be
that such great love
bears no fruit”
you asked.

Spring stood tall, as war, ready to break out,
and on the electric pole near the house
I saw a note, “Responsible woman
seeks infant

to care for.”
We began to save again,
letter by letter
strengthened by words.

Tea/Anat Levin

I'm afraid you'll fall asleep before me,
that I'll remain suspended alone in the dark,
in the starless twilight

I'm afraid you'll leave me,
that a woman with great knowledge or large breasts will tempt
you into her domain, that I won't know how to get you

back or a woman with a beautiful bottom (you're
practical, refined, believe in backsides)
will want to sit with you, at your place or hers

or

that I'll leave you, a forest ranger
will find me, whisper magic spells to me,
that I'll have to go

I'm afraid that after all this time,
after all the pain (the sterile time)
an ugly child will be born to us

I'm afraid a great war will blacken
heart, blood, skin,
or even just a minor war, and death will prevail

I'm afraid I'll never write again,
that the letters will wither, words
fall like leaves, the tree cut down

or that ink will dry up in the last pen
that I'll be stuck with memory without paper
or just crossword pages

that we'll be without work and without
a place to hide, wounded,
blinded, awakening in tears, I'm

afraid you'll die before me,
that all that was naked in me for you
will don the attire of a solitary woman

it's a cruel path, without turns,
perhaps, for a moment
we'll sip tea with biscuits.