

Adriana X. Jacobs

Dead Girls

The month of April features Bia, a girl with reddish hair and a string of pearls around her neck. You are the very spit and image, the teacher says, tearing April out. I take Bia home and tape her to my bedroom wall. Her tawny eyebrows crawl into the wood paneling. I tell her all my joys and sorrows. When I pray, her lips open and close, and her fingers move along the chain-link belt hanging around her waist. One day I find her inches from the floor, swinging toward the window. I put her back in her chair and tell her to sit still like a good girl. She swings her feet and peels the tape off the corners. Flat on her face she falls, tearing her nose and the end of April. I fold Bia into a little silver box. Her pearl necklace holds her down. A decade passes and a glory be. I am in the Uffizi and see her there, framed and suspended in one of the galleries. Her tombstone says that she was an illegitimate daughter of Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was sixteen when she was born. Her grandmother called her *the comfort of our court*. Bronzino painted her on wood in tempera grassa, a long-lasting mixture of oil and egg yolk, but fever killed her at the age of six. Next to Bia is a sister, a recompense, who looked just like her, they said, but she was strangled by her husband a month shy of thirty-four (I look nothing like her). I ask the guard if the girls ever try to get out, and he shakes his head. Bia's fingertips rub together, a crack in the frame splits open.

Tal Nitzán

DMNT

Every night names and words fly from Iris's head,
stars fall upside down, a final flicker,
gone, like a dream in the waking light.

Wrong, Iris thinks, a correct diagnosis
isn't half the cure ("diagnosis" hasn't vanished yet),
with chilling clarity she sees what is happening

but she can't be saved. Our lady of losses,
of words snatched away, our lady
of the fog.

Every night Iris wanes.
In the dark suburb, in one of the houses
a baby grows.

Translated from the Hebrew by Adriana X. Jacobs

טל ניצן

DMNT

בְּכֵל לִילָה פּוֹרְחִים מְרֹאֶשֶׁה שֶׁל אֵירִיס שְׁמוֹת וּמְלִים,
פּוֹכְבִים נוֹשְׁרִים בְּמִהְפֵּךְ, הִבְהוּב אֶחְרוֹן,
נְגוּזִים, כְּמוֹ תְלוּם בְּסִנְגְרֵי הַיְקִיצָה.

טְעוֹת, חוֹשֶׁבֶת אֵירִיס, דִּיאֲגְנוֹזָה נְכוֹנָה
אֵינָה חֲצֵי מְרַפָּא ('דִּיאֲגְנוֹזָה' עוֹד לֹא נֶעְלְמָה),
הִנֵּה הִיא רוֹאָה בְּדִיוֹק מְקִפִּיא-דָם מֶה קוֹרָה

וְאֵין בִּידָה לְהִנְצֵל. גְּבֻרַתְנוּ שֶׁל הָאֲבֹדוֹת,
שֶׁל הַמְּלִים הַנֶּחֱמָסוֹת, גְּבֻרַתְנוּ
שֶׁל הָעֶרְפֵּל.

בְּכֵל לִילָה אֵירִיס מְתַמְעֵטָת.
בְּאֶחָד הַבָּתִּים בְּפֶרֶךְ הַחֲשׂוּף
תִּיבּוֹק גָּדֵל.

Tahel Frosh

Clarice

On November 30 Clarice's throat lodged
in the teacher's diaphragm, her blindness cracking against the raised chest
She says *expanded* now

I don't know anything about Clarice. In my ribs
an ugly little bird nestles with a torn wing
I never had a Clarice

Not one. Maybe she rolls around between pencil cases and ring binders, between wit
and fear, down these long halls and walls
Who knows. Like that

Clarice sits in the mud and the voices she makes from whispers breathe
but she doesn't breathe she crafts flying creatures, and in a daze
she takes more sand and wets her hands

No. I don't know
to whom will I give this or that Clarice?
There is fog in the secret garden
and nothing can be seen but
a settling cloud and Clarice
with a key and a hand and a fence around her throat

She should be moving already. If she moves, she will appear on time
If she appears on time she will die,
she will die and the birds will come. If birds are even singing then.

Translated from the Hebrew by Adriana X. Jacobs

תהל פרוש

קלריס

בשלישים בנבמבר צנארה של קלריס נתקע
בסרעפת המורה ערונה נשבר מול חנה מורם
עכשו אומרת מרהיב.

אין לי משג מקלריס. שוכנת בין צלעותי
צפור קטנה, כעורה, מרוטת פנה
מעולם לא הייתה לי קלריס

כלום. אולי מתגלגלת בין קלמרים, קלסרים, בין שנינה
ופחד, לארף מסדרונות ארפים וקירות
לא יודעת. גם ככה

קלריס יושבת בטיט ובונה מלחשים קולות שנושמים
אינה נושמת בוראת יצורים שעפים, מסחררת
לוקחת עוד חול מרטיבה את ידיה

לא. אין לי משג
למי אתן אותה ואותה?
ערפל בגן הנעולים
ולא נתן לראות דבר לבד
מענן מתישב וקלריס
לצנארה מפתח ויד וגדר

שתזוז ככר. אם תזוז תופיע בזמן
אם תופיע בזמן המדיק אז תמות,
תמות ויגיעו צפרים. אם צפרים אז ישירו.