

Poems

Olga Baryshnikova

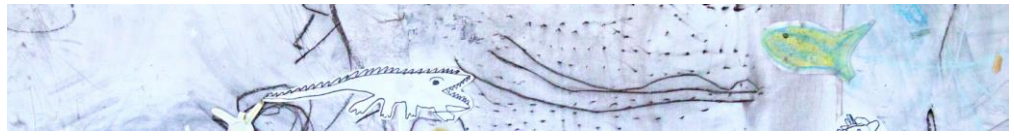
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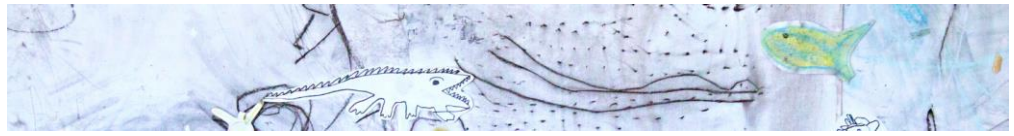
Double vision

I buy this beautiful, shiny, sleek,
 Civil war in Congo.
 With rape, blood, worn out women,
 Children with greasy guns.
 A lot of apps.
 I scroll. How pleasant this touch.
 I buy fires, floods.
 People run screaming. Dogs howl.
 An old woman is left behind, burnt.
 An old man cries unable to help
 But he needs to run. I cheer him “Run!”
 I sip destruction, land erosion.
 Animals lie down, heavily breathing
 Until ants take them apart,
 Leaving white brittle bones cleaned.
 I move into my dream home.
 On the patio, the breeze is cool,
 We see the mountains, ocean,
 The sea of refugees’ tents.
 We clink our glasses
 And stick our olive forks
 Into an eye of a balloon bellied boy.



Phibbs

Falling from above, the raindrops grew dreamy
 Of meeting blades of grass,
 Warm skins of cedars,
 Scent of poplar leaves.
 They dreamt of seeping through roots,
 Between rocks, nematodes,
 Through rich smelling soli.
 Were they surprised to bruise against concrete walls?
 Last year, trees still roamed here.
 As a drop of water, you could be lucky
 To fall into green arms.
 But no more – the forest soil
 Has died under the asphalt.
 As a drop of rain, where do I go now?



A Homeless Tree

With twigs sprayed in all directions,
 Matted hair of thin branches,
 With a pizza crust
 Stuck in the unshaven beard,
 A homeless tree stands on the patch
 Between 7-Eleven and the parking lot.

The tree protrudes its arms over the sidewalk,
 Encroaches on commercial leasehold,
 It offers the understanding of property rights,
 Apologies, profanities of bad breath.
 It insists it must stay:
 From here, it observes the unforgettable view.

Passers-by quicken their pace,
 Turn away faces, halt breathing,
 A police officer demands it to move,
 At least a few blocks down the street,
 But the tree remains where it stood.

It watches mountains
 Lined up at the soup kitchen,
 The streams of tail lights, floating faces -
 All of which is a joy.
 And a chickadee keeps returning
 To peck on its old toes.



7 pm

This is the house, in which we live.
 Green door
 Opens with a half of a key turn.
 With a twist,
 I take off my head, toss it up.
 (Never could reach those shelves)

I pull off my hands,
 Here -
 Lay still next to the telephone
 Fingers splayed anemone-like
 In brown water.

I unzip my skin
 Smoothly
 It takes the shape of a hanger
 And swings back and forth
 Softly creaking.

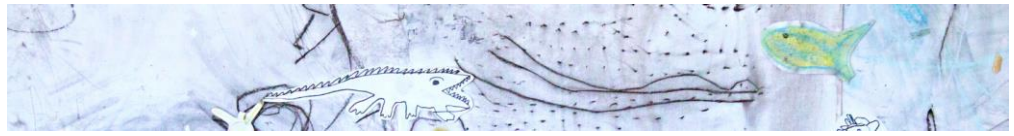
My feet go under the bench -
 A perfect old couple
 Fit to match and to oppose
 In every step.

I put my arms in the umbrella rack,
 Adjust them not to interfere
 With someone who might pass them by,
 Perhaps a cat.

My spine gives in to gravity
 And crumbles down
 Like a house made of sticks
 A pile of vertebrae, work for a broom.

Now I am ready.

Downstairs
 Where you are waiting
 We dance.



A Guru of Fallen Leaves

Teach me stillness
 Teach me how to lie with edges curled up,
 Stroking pebbles trapped in asphalt,
 Not attached to anything

Teach me how to follow the wind,
 Exhaust of an express bus,
 How to dance over cigarette buds,
 Ice cream wraps,
 Dropped pieces of paper

How to hover between sundry feet,
 To quiver in their rush,
 To lisp into emptiness

Teach me tenderness

Teach me how to surrender to gravity,
 How to swing in pendulum motion,
 Saying 'I love you'
 To no one in particular



Artist Bio

Olga Baryshnikova is a chemistry instructor at Capilano University. She holds an undergraduate degree in chemistry from St. Petersburg State University (Russia), an MSc degree from Texas A&M University (USA) and a PhD degree from the University of Alberta. During her career in chemistry Olga has always been an avid reader and has dabbled at creative writing. In her busy schedule, she is sometimes visited by a poem or two.