

## Selected Poems

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*Adisa Bašić (Translated by Mirza Purić)*

### I SPEAK

It's not just *my* scarred face, *my* riven soul,  
*my* tormented body.

I also speak for three lepers  
one who is filthy  
four who are pitiable  
a thousand mutes  
two with a club foot  
ten who've never had a man  
five thousand cloistered ones  
and four whose heads are covered.

For three who are denied a job  
two who don't go to school for they *aren't whores*  
three hundred who've been raped for they *are whores*.

For a little one  
who believes she's leprous filthy pitiable mute.

And for one who is free  
who meekly waits  
to be born.

## TAMENESS

You love me mindlessly precisely because I'm *mad*.

I perform stunts in bed.

I cook naked.

I press the citrus squeezer on my mouth

and talk like Darth Vader

and you laugh.

When I smuggle bits of my madness outside  
in my hair, my bra, or under my tongue —  
that makes you sick.

Beyond our four walls  
even laughing out loud  
is quite, quite inappropriate.

## HEROINE

He's gone and gone and gone.

His smell evanesced from the clothes in the wardrobe.

Kids think they remember him.

Long hath he lain here before thee  
And after thee  
Long shall he lie ...

Underneath a virgin patch of grass.  
Underneath a layer of leaves.

He's gone and gone and gone.  
And you wake over a shriveled memory.  
His likeness: a pressed flower.

Profusely we praise your dignity.  
 You're the love we dream of.  
 You're the loyalty we wish for.  
 You're the picture that fits our frame.

And he's gone.  
 And gone.  
 And gone.

Nobody hears the night.  
 You bite your hands till you bleed.  
 Put fingers into yourself.  
 Bang your head on the headboard.

In your lonely bed, you know:  
 you don't remember him.

## DOMINATION

the well-groomed old man says  
*you will return the favor someday*  
*we'll celebrate once this is over*

kisses me on the mouth lest there's doubt  
 as to what he has in mind  
 and how he means to collect the debt

towering over me he hugs me like he owns me  
 as if we were in the poster  
 for a black-and-white film from his youth

we both pretend that  
 the threat frightens me  
 not him

## THE BODY LAUGHS, PENS A POEM

my body's betrayed me  
in every way imaginable  
it never seems to run out of ideas

it swells puffs up and flakes  
cricks sticks and contorts  
bleeds as it pleases  
it's creative — I must put up

*I do not have a body  
I am my body*

I read this sentence aloud

my body laughed from the heart  
across the lungs kidneys and ovaries  
all the way to the colon

it sat down  
and penned this poem

The poems “Govorim” (I speak), “Heroina” (Heroine), and “Krotkost” (Tameness) were published in the collection *Promotivni spot za moju domovinu* (2010, A promotional video for my homeland). The poems “Nadmoć” (Domination) and “Tijelo se smije i piše pjesmu” (The body laughs, pens a poem) were published in the collection *Košćela* (2020, Nettle tree). They were translated by Mirza Purić and edited by Si Sophie Pages Whybrew and Dijana Simić.