

VAAN NGUYEN

**CHAOS
FOR INNOCENCE
IN THE PYRENEES**

TRANSLATED BY ADRIANA X JACOBS

CHAOS

A fountain exits the city to water the village.

On the way—roadkill, a stoplight, a car

Overhead—helicopters hovering late at night

returning from the north.

Later,

the girl from Dimona arrives.

Later,

buildings in Beirut collapse.

This age is an ongoing epidemic, poetry's slaughter.

A bubble

of dying butterflies.

FOR INNOCENCE

A seagull and her hair, always seasons of sickness
In her cup
She serves a *tralalalala* spell from this toxic brew.
Hold him! For me.
Revolt—
He's naked.
Notes of eucalyptus and sage
Dung rise

I'll write on leaves because people are fed up.

Outside the window, foliage screens the noise
Sweat under the sun
Almost a breeze but no storm.

You taught me how to grab pomegranates
Before they fall
Careful, they are bursting on the ground.

The doors are locked again, they took the shoes
But left the laces.
This poem is written
For the sake of innocence.

I wish I could love you now
The sky is grey and two birds have taken off from here.
Tanks
Are standing quietly in the desert.

On the bus
From Abu Dis,
An old poet wonders
If his dead wife
Is his last one.

IN THE PYRENEES

We sat in an indoor pool in Firenze, staring
at two hunters dragging wild boars down autumn slopes
you met me without a map, with my high heels and combed hair
living with that guy who starved me
I am always living with someone
and hungry.

At the evening market, by the monastery, a seller pointed at his wares
a doll lying under a toy car
bang bang the peddler cried
then offered me panther milk
and a siren passed by
I thought about that stairwell in Tel Aviv, waiting for the shock of the Fajr
it's happening now
since the last Minister of War, I am someone else.