

THE IRIS TREE

Justyna Bargielska

If love is looking for acknowledgment
then today is Wednesday. It's some sort of nightmare,
this bus. One has a turquoise cap, three teeth
and an equator for a waist, the second is in white, and asleep in the
stroller a baby with a cleft from here to there. What
acknowledgment are you looking for, love?

This is the acknowledgment I'm looking for, girl.
That you take this bus with that one in the cap,
with this one in white, with this child and with an iris tree.

BANG, BANG, AND SHE'S A BUTTERFLY

Justyna Bargielska

— Hold on, this is what's inside me for what it's worth —
she said, before she left. It's a long time since anyone's seen
such a dignified and fat naked woman on such a narrow ledge.

And what was it all about? Maybe just about this pot,
in which the division into realms disappears. Maybe about the room,
in which first the children were practicing, but after dusk the women
entered
and the wind moved the curtain outward, toward itself.

She stood there and looked to see if they were looking , but they
weren't.

And maybe only the rack of overcoats understood her a little,
maybe the clay, when it dried, turned its
kindhearted eye to her.

TO A DAUGHTER

Justyna Bargielska

Something that I'll never forget, something I can't
recall. April, spring, belly,
probably Sunday. I didn't touch you, he said,
but whenever you think of this afternoon,
you'll believe that I did.
And this is my gift, bigger than anything.

A POEM STARTING WITH "P"

Justyna Bargielska

The tongue in which my name means "more flowers,"
or "predator flies," or "a group of girls
flinging their titanic white
dresses onto the dragon grass which at night storms and takes
seminary beds," is there such a tongue? And is it yours?

Because, you know: elbows are so soft the sheets hurt them,
when resting my head in my hand I watch on your face
the history of conquests of smaller, prettier nations
by bigger, uglier nations; this very tongue
needs to lick quickly and tunefully, so they heal sooner
and can be hurt again.

THE LENGTH, THE DEPTH

Justyna Bargielska

Australians have their
gloomy life. When we go to bed
they on their side tell
one story after another, so each of us
has something to see ourselves in.

Fish get instructions from the center of the earth,
where they're to go and what for. In the tender ear
of the bay whole families, whole villages
go mad, and what's left
on the island is just a piggy, a devil
and a little bug who lives in salt.

NEW SHOES

Justyna Bargielska

A Polish man is taking a picture of a Chinese woman taking a picture
of her meal
in a Czech dining car. Does it remind you of us?
To me nothing reminds me of us.
I once sinned against you and it opened up
so many possibilities. I don't know what to turn my hands to.
Never in your life have you seen such thrilling
empty fields and flooded cemeteries.

So I put these hands of mine up to the elbows into I don't know what,
and the waiter is saying: at your own risk,
and stranger and stranger vehicles are coming out
of the fog toward us. There's only you and you are not.
And my job is to choose what to crash
into this train full of children.