



Tsvetanka Elenkova

Six Poems

Translated by Jonathan Dunne

Tsvetanka Elenkova was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1968 and educated at the Russian High School and the University of National and World Economics. After a short stint in her opera-singer father's footsteps, she turned to her great love of literature. She co-founded *Ab, Maria*, the first independent literary magazine in Bulgaria after the fall of Communism and has proceeded to publish three poetry collections, the most recent of which, *The Seventh Gesture* (2005), is due to be published in Jonathan Dunne's translation by Shoestring Press in 2008. Her work has appeared in the sadly disappeared *Orient Express* (UK) and in *Absinthe* (US), and has been translated in a total of thirteen countries, from Argentina and Chile to Turkey and Ukraine. She translates from English and Greek into Bulgarian, including the anthology of Indian mystic poetry *Speaking of Siva* and Jonathan Dunne's selection of Raymond Carver's poetry *Luck*. She co-edits the Bulgarian publisher Balkani's series of *Modern English Poetry*.

The Wounds of Freedom

Some buy leather leads for dogs of a definite length. Others prefer automatic leads with a reel. You let the dog run at will but you decide when to retrieve it. I set mine free. But two or three times it ran away and came back covered in wounds, so now I set it free but only in my yard. My dog howls at the squirrels, in the evening at the moon. And when we pile firewood next to the fence it climbs up and jumps over it. And again comes back with wounds. After that I decided to keep it on a chain. For my dog to be free of wounds.

With Wings and Teeth

Where is the difference? Is it in the lack of plumage or of teeth? Only people, I think, are born without teeth and all their life hope for wings. Demons and angels must have created them. Some lose their teeth, others only have teeth left. If you're a treasure-hunter, you'll understand. But I never found anyone with wings. Only with *shards*, which tormented my grandmother and bent her double – dung-beetle. When we buried her with two lilies of the *valley*, when a grassblade *welled* up from the sprinkling, I saw them. Growing transparent.

Orpheus and Eurydice

Of all who lied to me, I believed all, but you most. Who lied to me the most. That part in hide-and-seek, when you pretend not to see your little friend, your child. It's the same when you let someone start or slip him a card. Then you shake his hand and kiss him on the right (or left) cheek. You – out of love for him. He – out of love for the game. In a similar situation Orpheus turned round and also didn't *spy* Eurydice. Didn't *spy* her. But she receded. They say, by the will of the gods.

Safety Valves

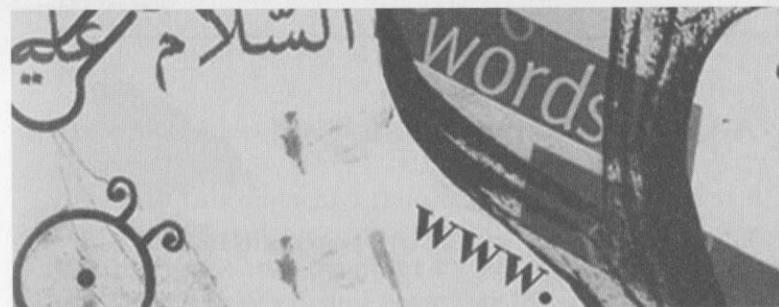
When I see how the air directly over a candle turns to liquid, how the air over asphalt when hot also turns to liquid, how the sea in the sun recalls heated asphalt (some say it's a mirage), I understand these tears in me, down below like a tree's peeled bark, up above like a pruned vine, are actually fire, which combined with air makes water. Only high up in the tree-tops, the crowns, where the breeze never ceases, only there are found clouds – white or grey stratus, or a heap of fire and water combined.

The Seventh Gesture

With finger on mouth, when you do not want to wake someone or the teacher walks in. He puts a finger to his mouth when he wants to quieten the class. Or he tells you straight to shut up. But what intrigues me most is the way it slides down, pulls away from the lips. After you've imposed the silence. Some just loosen their hand, others draw it out to point, others hold it longer like this. And a fold in the fingers, bliss from the tiredness of the unwonted gesture. This is how the Byzantine iconographers first painted them. The saints.

The Legend of Narcissus

Every evening he waited for her at the window. But he only ever saw himself and left. Till one day he decided to wait her out and stopped waiting. Leaning over the water, he flopped and started swimming. Not like people with their head above water but like fish. He came up for air once or twice, a dolphin or a whale, and then he sank for good. With eyes ever open inside the looking-glass. The rest carried on learning about evolution – how creatures emerged from the water on to dry land. The rest carried on interpreting the legend of Narcissus.



Tuğrul Tanyol

Four Poems

Translated by Ruth Christie

Tuğrul Tanyol is a well-known poet, critic and essayist in Turkey. He was born in 1953 in Istanbul and educated at the Catholic Lycée of St Joseph and the University of the Bosphorus. In 1985 he won the Necatigil Prize for poetry. To date he has published six books of poetry and written many reviews and critical essays. He teaches social sciences at the University of Marmara. His poetry is lyrical but controlled by a classical clarity. It has been said of him that 'he is a poet alive to the pitfalls of blind ideological allegiances'. He has been translated into Spanish, French and English and was the first Turkish poet to take part in the Trois Rivières poetry festival in Quebec.