

ing my daughter's hair and letting it hang loose instead of braiding it as I do; dreams of her bathing my child, soaping her back, her chest with those narrow hands...

It became difficult to fall asleep. My husband didn't share my concern. I tried to warn some of the other parents, talked to the principal. No one listened. The pictures in our house remained unstraightened; my onyx elephants turned dull with dust. October came, but I did not care to replace the light bulbs as always on the first of each month.

I began to bring a book or a magazine to school. Sitting in the car after Andrea went inside, I waited for the woman to leave so I could follow and see where she lived. But she always stayed motionless until that morning when she looked at my daughter as we walked past her, and her lips drew apart in the familiar smile of my dreams. Andrea raised her hand and smiled back. My legs felt heavy when I went back to the car. I picked up the book I'd brought but couldn't follow the words. I closed it and laid it on the passenger seat, tracing the letters on the dust jacket with one finger.

That's when she made her move.

Ever so slowly she walked away from the building, her pale eyes on me through the windows of the car, closer, until I felt my fingers twist the key in the ignition, closer, passing in front of my car, her face turned toward me through the windshield, until I had pressed my foot against the accelerator and felt the car lurch forward, heard the thud that took the power from her as she crumbled like a paper doll, face down, thin arms crossed.

The accidents in our town have stopped.

But nobody has come to thank me. Only my husband visits me on Sunday afternoons and talks about things that don't matter in a hushed voice one brings to sickbeds. He won't bring Andrea; he says it would upset her. It won't be long until I can leave. I don't mind the wait. Our town is safe again and here it is quiet. Winterquiet. The walls of my room are white and bare; the mattress on my bed is firm. Every other day a tall doctor with glasses comes to talk with me. He doesn't ask me anymore why I did it. He doesn't need to: he knows all about bad luck and that one has to set an end to it.

Last summer several accidents happened in our town: an infant was forgotten on the roof of...

Poetry

Translated by Seija Paddon

Excerpts from Sirkka Turkka's *Tule Takaisin, Pikku Sheba*

(Helsinki: Tammi, 1987)

...

Life is a house swaying in the wind,
a vine circles its walls and porch,
laughter a quick cry.
The house must be sold soon, before it
falls,
the language you hear in the rooms is
already monstrous.
How I long for you sometimes when
lightning conceals
the sky, you are like Venice in
December, when

it rains.

Your neck is a barn door, a church wall,
it narrows upward when seen from
below
when you stand on a ladder, drive a nail
into a wall.

And the nail also reaches the sky
and the sky infinity, this will never
end,
a knife is thrust through the heart
now
like the nail through the sky.
These houses must be sold, the build-
ings
— I ponder, and the way hens always
cross

the road at Sannäs

and poplars stand in a row
like small, devout boys.

...

...

And I want you
to tremble at last
like a lake wet from rain
lifts summer onto its wings,
its swans
When they still linger a moment
above the trees in the park,
above all the beloved gold
When their colour is already
whiter than snow
whiter than the colour of parting.

Two Poems by Eila Kivikkaho

Summer Poem

I will not dress a child of mine
in silk.

Torn pants and a jacket of the wrong
colour
attire that won't hurt the eyes,
won't clash with the patchwork glim-
mer
of water, trees, paths, and land,
with what beauty is.

Stay away from silk, little-finger,
press your cheek against rough bark,
you its sister.

Dance

Anguish had bulk. Yes. It had.
But I cut it into small slivers,
danced with light, slim ankles
until it died.

In my tale
it shrunk
In my silence
again crept near

Thus I let words slide
like fine, fine sand,
the weight on the head fly
off the way dry leaves fly,
lose, whatever the cost
anguish, the only one ever dead.