

WIND OF FURY - SONGS OF FURY

Oksana Vasyakina
Translated by Jonathan Brooks Platt

*The sling of my rifle presses on the base of my neck and
in the hollow of my shoulder-blades...*

– Monique Wittig, "Virgil, No!"

I'll stitch the wounds on your body with my hair
and kiss them until they heal
My black-browed companion rises
my black-browed companion opens her eyes
And I see them like butterflies
moving fast in the dark
and flashing
She smiles baring sharp teeth in her strong mouth
We walk across the red dust
I can't see where your body ends
I can't see where your small hard fingers end
You say that beyond the horizon there might be something for us
and for other women like us
Slowly we move as fires flicker behind us and warm our backs
There are no nights they're finished
where thousands of hands dropped in desolate factories
There are no nights they're finished
where all the lovers fed on one another
There are no nights they're finished
where dragonflies and lightening bugs are transfixed by
the blaze
No nights
they've dissolved in the blaze
Now there is only red dust
The wind doesn't whip it up

The wind is finished
where becalmed seas have drunk their fill of oil
The wind is finished
where I breathed a confession of love in your ear
And you lifted your head
To meet my eyes
And we saw the blaze

I don't see any women on the dark squares
at night their transparent silhouettes wander in
mushroom-shaped treetops
in empty metro cars I squeeze a key into my tense and
sweaty palm
and I emerge from the underground passage
into the world of men
I see them in their clothes styled to look like military uniforms
above swim brackish eyes
they slip along my body
they give me a signal:
you're just a woman
you were born to disappear/you were born to dissolve into a
cloud of ashen fingers trembling with lust/you were taught to get
wet at the mere sight of their
terrible smiles/to sigh from their gaze that cuts your body/to
choke on it
I walk along narrow streets through the whisper of catcalls hey you
Across the squares I walk like I'm naked
Through dark parks I walk
trying to distinguish the shadows of trees
from the shadows of men
After a tender meeting with my beloved I'm walking

was summer so it wasn't hot he raped me for several hours
 and then when it was already getting light he brought me a
 bucket and a rag and told me to clean up the mess I couldn't
 stand up for a long time everything hurt no tears though I
 heard the birds singing outside my window in the dawn and him
 snoring on the other side of the wall he was sleeping I got up
 and mopped the floors

We are covered in a crust
 of blood and sperm

she stretched out her skin
 she lowered us into the earth

new breasts will grow
 new lips will grow
 new hair will grow
 black breasts black teeth
 black hair will grow
 new black with fury

awash in blood up to the vagina
 it will harden into a black scab
 an invincible armor
 it will grow into our meat
 and there will shine upon it
 like clean steel on a black ground
 long sharp spikes

we'll tuck our skirts into our belts
 so we don't soil them in the blood of our enemies
 so everyone we meet will see
 how our legs have gone red
 up to the vagina our legs are red

with the blood of rapists
 they won't be able to hide from the blood
 the wind will lead us in their tracks
 the wind of fury
 the wind of vengeance
 the wind lifting us
 sweeping the earth
 the wind of fury
 the wind of vengeance

motionless at the bottom of the plain
 they gaze into the distance
 women waiting for a new world

their hands will grow full with care
 the moist muteness between their legs will shudder into life

when at last just one returns
 from a walk in the heat
 from the smoggy city
 from the war
 from idle strolls along paths hard from the heavy tread of men

when they return

they will see that our eyes are dry we've learned to see thin
 bent shadows among the quiet trees
 our eyes see the plain settling under years of movement
 and the horizon rises above our heads
 they will see and will cover our eyes with their hands and
 our strained inflamed eyes will rest and grow moist

no one will touch us now
those who reached their hands toward us have stuck to our
 body and move with us
those who looked at us with lust have dissolved in our black
 blood
and choked on our black anguish
and without noticing have themselves become our body
those who saw us out of the corner of their eye sleep without
rest he sees before him he catches
the scent of our terrible body our heavy body

only the earth can bear our body
when it is covered with us and swallows us and explodes

And if I am not these bright-red

 Desperate poppies
Above the graveyard earth
 collapsed under the earth

 Then who

 Their procession
With tender petals like the fingernails of infants
 They touch the air on the wind

 And if I'm not them then who

Above the paternal grave fluttering like the flame of flowers
 Black flies land on my face
 The sticky steppe sucks in my gaze

Who am I
If not these bright-red poppies
 No not crimson
 Bright-red
 Translucent in the sunlight
They cast the shadow of threads upon the dry earth
 The blood has faded
The blood will grow up through the earth