

Three Poems by Slobodanka Strauss

Desert Storm

the cold hardened sand is still in winter
the water pushes up against it moving gently
wake up, wake up, it says the morning has come

one man goes to the river to cleanse
another to hide a violent crime against humanity
one contemplates by its banks
another takes his own life
and all these the river Jordan accepts

Verses with a Refrain

Randomness grows like weeds with no gardener
Uncertainty is as solid as the earth under our feet

Ignorance is as vast as the blue seas
No wonder our feet are bound by misery

The eagle's egg does not grow into a hawk
The acorn does not grow into a cypress

In the present I create my future
And I bless sit or curse it

Sometimes I have begun its destruction
Long before I ever touched it

The eagle's egg does not grow into a hawk
The acorn does not grow into a cypress

The echo of my desires in the woods
Come back to me years later

“Oh I remember you,” I say
“I remember our exact whisper”

The eagle's egg does not grow into a hawk
The acorn does not grow into a cypress

These tiny thoughts, fluttering of my mind
Airy nothings—tell me of my limitations

The eagle's egg does not grow into a hawk
The acorn does not grow into a cypress

Because

Because there will be an end
Because my shadow is dark and deep
Because terror is in the undercurrent
And because the sea will turn me out
Like driftwood, like dry bones, or
Broken claws, or shredded shells on the shore

Because there are no gates I could lean on
To protect me against an empty cup—
A diseased body, broken heart, disappointments—
Because my imagination is greater than my abilities
I will tell the autumn sunlight in my small garden
Write my words in the hope of creating art

-Slobodanka Strauss