

# Mother Tongue

*by* Nora Nadjarian

Which language do you dream in,  
swear in, cry in, asked the questionnaire.  
How many languages do you swim in,  
drown in, breathe in, mime in?

Do you know how many tongues have adopted  
your voice? And when at night you stare  
at dark walls and one pair of lips  
comes closer, whispering in perfect German

*Ich bin deine Mutter -*

Or the night shadows enlarge into a Fritz Lang  
open scream and *Muttersprache* appears  
on the silent movie screen, then:  
what do you reply? In which language,

and how clearly, do you say: my mother tongue  
is somewhere in the recesses of my mind.  
I am not an orphan. I have a mother.  
She put me to bed one night

and went away. The film we made  
together has long been silent. But I still  
hear her voice in the keyhole of my heart.

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