

Two poems by Raquel Chalfi in translation

by tsipi keller

On the Shore, Tel Aviv, Winter 1974

A crocodile cloud swallowed a cloud-cloud.
All is clogged
and where did the war go?
The pier is painted yellow and red
with the inscription: Tel Aviv.
The drums of the depths are indifferent.
In the sky shadowy figures
slowly go berserk. An infinite wrestling arena
in slow-motion takes.
A crane rises above the luxury hotel
Hilton. And where did the war go.
A crocodile cloud swallowed a cloud-cloud. Where
did the war go. Up in the depths
soft clouds make love to planes.
The air fills the lungs
with spiky salt and laughter.
The sun, a fading photograph.
Shorebirds grayly peck the sand.
The sea — its muscles groan.
A lone woman, a synthetic kerchief
on her head what is she
in face of a thunderstorm.
The diving board, too, is painted orange.

An old woman, her lips attempt:

He was an angel

He was an angel

From the Songs of Crazy Dolores

1.

I am the child
above whose bed
Mexican gods laugh

Seasons go by, a sun reigns
and pyramids do not turn upside down

There are many antiquities in the land of *Mejico*
and I am the smallest among them

2.

I love Beli-Belik-Boom
(once I called him Le-Le-Le)
and I'll always love Le-Le-Le.
But Belik does not understand
what love is.

Belik is a strange man.
He wrote me a poem of love
yet refused to kiss my bare soul
under the *huppa*. It was a *huppa*
of a parachute
and he jumped with it out of there
down,
leaving me to freefall.

Of course I arrived before him.
Boom.

I managed somehow
to break my bones.
And I have a few memories left.

When I was broken
and a memory only
Belik would kiss me on my cheek (Le-Le-Le)
every evening.
Later he swapped me
for a cat.
When he photographed me
he would photograph me in double
exposure.
Somehow I managed to appear in the picture.
Boom.

3.
I am made of glass
and my father is a glazier
I tell you I'm as
transparent as a yogurt jar
without the yogurt
try to look through me just try
and you'll see that you can see everything
lean your head on me children
and your noses will be squashed flat
and your mouths will be pulled
like a down-in-the-mouth blowfish
take a look inside me I'm transparent
absolutely
I am made of glass
because my daddy is a glazier
and my mother dons a tulle dress
take a look children take a look
it will do you good
only be a little cautious please
yesterday someone looked through me too hard
and saw as far as the Bali islands
and he rode a blue whale in the Bali islands

and then my glass broke
into a zillion shards
and I was pricked and pricked and pricked
and I was all glass glass
in a zillion red puddles

4.
Dolores jumps rope
Dolores plays hopscotch

She looks into a kaleidoscope
tube builds
broken tunnels in a dream
Dolores lives her life backward
swings on a rusty groaning gate
looks for puppies to adopt
dead chicks to revive
diamonds buried in trashcans
in order to help refugees
hiding in a tunnel under
Keren Hakayemet Boulevard
on the other side of the world

Dolores jumps rope
always jumps rope
to the other side of the world

5.
I am Dolores-not-Dolores
I am in the dream of some god

It seems to me that my life is a life
but really it is only
a particle in the dream
of a sleeping god

who dreams me with love

Dolores-not-Dolores

I have to pinch myself hard
because the hour when images switch in his brain
is near

Yes Dolores no Dolores yes Dolores no
Dolores birds Dolores sea Dolores
a loose shoelace Dolores a broken blue glass a milky
way bathing a world
a white horse lost in the plain
tunnels inside time
time going backward
a snake shedding its skin a mobile of broken galaxies
suspended on fine transparent fiber

I have to pinch myself hard
because the hour when images switch in his brain is near
I must watch myself so I don't sink
in a dream
when he dumps me from his brain
like a crumb dropping
from indolent fingers

<http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6092-reality-crumbs.aspx>

