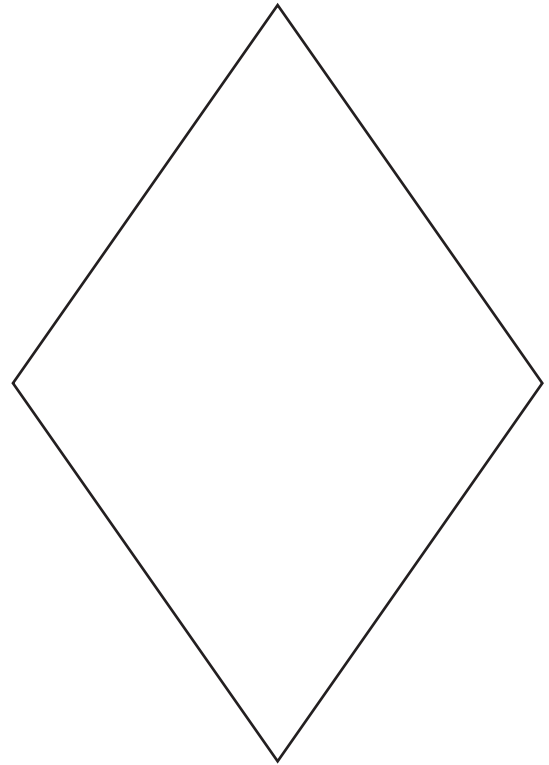


Maria Barnas
DIAMOND WITHOUT AN R (PROLOGUE)



Translated by Michele Hutchison

If it is true
that my mother
and it is true
that she doesn't
speak her
mother's tongue
then where
has mine
got to?

The fountain the hairdryer THE SCREAM

Does writing about what I want to
do rather than going there make me a coward?

SAYS THE COWARD

Does thinking that writing
is a form of action and wondering
if thinking should be replaced with
hoping make me an even greater coward?

YOU HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN TO POLAND
TO LOOK FOR THE MOTHERS SO
HOW CAN WE BECOME SOMEONE?

I let myself be held back by voices
that argue inside me even when silent

Shhh ... these things take time ...

THINGS?

For a conversation that flows
I need an open space

A NEW LANGUAGE!

hanging from almost invisible threads
that sway like those of a spider's web
now they have been snapped

Between the swaying and straining

and drops. I need good light
and sound that carries far
a courtyard where sounds go around.
Or is that what writhes inside of me

FEAR BEATEN TO PULP
AMBITION SOOTHED TO SLEEP
MAKING WAY FOR RANCOUR
TO FORCE MOVEMENT
INTO WHAT SEEMS DUMB DUMBED

Everything starts with visualisation

HA! AND YOU EXPECT
TO FIND A DIAMOND?

*We can exist
between the straining and swaying*

Do I expect too much from Poland?

YOU'RE ONLY A QUARTER POLISH

Poland means field.

YOU'RE A NATIONALIST AVOIDER
BECAUSE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO POLAND!

Shhh ... it is the mothers' country

YOUR POLAND DOESN'T EXIST

Dear Hidden Past, I'm looking for information
about my Polish grandmother and her mothers.
We don't know their names. Where should I start?

*Problem Poles a newsreader said
and it was clear he meant us.
Just keep your head down.*

A PROBLEM-WOLF HAS SNUCK IN
FROM POLAND, PROBLEM-FOUNTAIN
WE CAN NO LONGER LOOK AWAY!

*The wolf grins
because she knows better than
anyone that it is not her who is feared*

How can we make ourselves
heard if we keep falling apart
in an old fountain filled with patience
a hairdryer that might be a mirror
a scream that exercises rawness
and a fourth one nameless

{ }

DEAD!

Who hesitates to call themselves
a feminist these days?
And who because no man asks himself
that question?

WHO FOR DESPAIR AND WHO
FOR THE NOOSE THAT PULLS AND PULLS
UNTIL THERE IS NO BREATH LEFT NO WATER
TO DROWN IN WEIGHED DOWN BY STONES
NO SPELLS NO BUBBLE OF HOPE
IN THE THROAT THAT CHOKES. CHOKES!

*And who because women
are made up of inner voices
that seldom sound the same note?*

There is a woman I trust
because she is calm generous with her knowledge
of Lacan and the abyss he described
between the self and the I and Luce Irigaray
who said yes but

YESBUTYESBUTBUMMER

for some the divide is deeper
than for others who encounter
versions of themselves. On the street
in magazines on the news of course

they see themselves
and maybe
because her name is Rosemarie

We can use this as a base to explore from

ARE YOU STILL GOING TO JUMP?

One day our daughters will look in the mirror

YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A DAUGHTER

without a judgemental or condemning gaze
a field fields in which they recognize themselves

*a woman women they trust
like Rosemarie, Rosemarie*

The wolf is close. Eleven committees
have been formed to address the field's boundaries
and vagaries of predictability

*The creature slinks through back gardens and
sharpens its claws on the shed. Licks its clammy fur
before it lies down for the night
under the bed we have to sleep in*

A BUSH STRETCHES ITS SHARP
BRANCHES IN THE BELLY

And wolves never come alone

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Did you make that sound?
I can't cry like that

In the metro I dodge shadows
that look for themselves in my face.
Is that me? Doors swing open
from inside my heart. I drag them clattering
onto the platform down the stairs under
the roaring where bikes lie on bikes
dented bodies resting

WRECKS

There is the start of a woman on the roadside
small in the distance and wide as life
when the windscreen of a bus drags her with it
so that the line behind her
now fully carrying her bends
and ends beneath the horizon in a circle.

NOTHING IS CERTAIN AS LONG AS SHE

we

refracting light

rain colour

RAIN