

BY YOUR BED

An empty birdcage hangs from the ceiling
of the room where I stand by your bed
in my paper dress
with a threaded needle between my fingers,
and I sew into the skin of your back
the pattern of our youth
as I travel your shape
like a moon,
like a river.

Beyond I can see strangers staring at us
with the eyes of those who do not understand,
and yet one day, they will eat our hearts
and treasure our bones
as if we were far more special
than they consider now.

But let me tell you – I am alive
and I will caress you as timid as you are,
and weave a blanket from my hair
to lay over you
while your breath comes to me
as from the fluttering wings of the bird,
now far away from this room,
searching for a new dwelling.

Þórdís Björnsdóttir

*Þórdís Björnsdóttir is a poet who lives and works in Reykjavik, Iceland. She published her first book of poetry, *Ást og appelsínur* (Love and Oranges), in 2004. She has written two books in cooperation with the American poet Jesse Ball, both published by Nyhil publishing house in 2006: "Og svo kom nóttin" (And then came the night) with poems by Þórdís and pictures by Jesse Ball; and "Vera & Linus", written in English and published simultaneously in Iceland and the U.S. She has also published numerous poems and one short story in various newspapers and magazines.*