

volha hapeyeva

"Voíha Hapeyeva (b. 1982) is one of the leading Belarusian poets of today, as well as an active scholar. Loneliness, war and violence, self-analysis, the female body, and nature are a major part of this writer's consciousness.

At times deliberately shocking, she also depicts affection, as well as displaying a strong awareness of the richness of the Belarusian language, grammatical elements of which figure extensively in her work.

Her language is both lexically rich and seemingly spontaneous, at times rendered slightly opaque by the almost complete lack of punctuation. She is undoubtedly one of the most striking Belarusian poets of the present day."

Arnold McMillin, Prof.Em.

Get in Touch

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Volha Hapeyeva is an award-winning Belarusian poet. Her works have been translated into more than 10 languages. She has had poems published in the USA, Austria, Germany, Poland, Russia, Georgia, Lithuania, and other countries. She writes poetry, prose and drama, as well as occasional books for children.

Volha Hapeyeva has published 9 books to date, and has participated in numerous literary festivals and conferences, and international residency scholarships.

She collaborates with electronic musicians and visual artists to create audio-visual performances.

A member of the Belarusian PEN Centre and the Belarusian Writers' Union, She holds a PhD in linguistics; her research is in the fields of comparative linguistics, philosophy of language, sociology of the body, and gender issues in culture and literature.

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I never thought it this hard to wear a
dress
skirt heels necklace
without transforming into a tree at
Christmas
or to transform and not notice
it's really tricky
being inscribed in a body
which maybe didn't even want
to have me inscribed in it
and to be dressed just the way
that it is

maybe it wanted to be seen more by
those around me
and so my baggy shirts
enrage it
while I'm enraged by it in return
forgetting that every woman among us
and every man
was born naked

before the mirror in the hallway
I use my eyes to remember everything
we've been through
and it
looks at me sullenly
for today, once again, I am wearing
that doesn't quite fit

mandatory happiness
was being handed out
on some Straße yesterday
they ran up to me and said
you have such irregular eyes
do take some
I took it home,
stuck it in a cupboard
without reading the instructions
then it turned out
I have to live with it



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the heart regenerates
more slowly than other
organs
and is never renewed
completely
that's what it says in the
textbook

this means
I think
that everyone in there will
remain

the left side of one person's
body will be erased
a face will disappear
a new one growing in the
place of the old -
languages, years, names
will intermingle

in my garden of mutants
where we lost our way

Translated into English
by Annie Rutherford