

# DESCÂNTEC FOR MY SPLIT TONGUE

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*se descântă într-o livadă*

*cu apă neîncepută*

*cu trei smicele de alun*

*cu smoc de păr de cal*

*se descântă in an orchard*

*with untouched spring water*

*with three hazelnut branches*

*with a tuft of horse hair*

In the middle of the night we cross the train tracks behind Vasilica's house. For the reason any woman leaves casa ei noaptea. Crimson crusted on ankles, we walk. Grass high on waist. Greierii hit shins. Pădure, a long parenthesis. Peste două ore we reach the mauve light of Rahova or Ferentari or Sălaj. What I hear in the dark is descântec. Which is not a spell, nor incantation, nor rugăciune. In fact, it may be the opposite of prayer. Farmec assembled on a Tuesday evening in an orchard. Versuri și gesturi să alungi deochiul. To yellow the purple. To unbruise. But to fuse a split tongue, we still need blood blistering in the creek of another tomorrow. An entire hierology. A burning knowledge of sacred things that endure translation.

*se descântă într-o garsonieră*

*cu geamuri unse cu usturoi*

*cu trei ouă de găscă învelite în ziar*

*cu sandale rupte în picioare*

*se descântă in a small studio*

*with windows glazed with garlic*

*with three goose eggs in newspaper*

*with broken sandals on your feet*

Decades and a dream later, caut another descântec pe Drumul Taberei on hot July asphalt. One year after mamaie said Death had a green scarf and a leather jacket, I find her la o tarabă în Piața Progresul selling vișine. She fills a plastic bag for me with two kilos of sour cherries. But the only things I have to offer are Lipsă, Neliniște, Limbă Crăpată. Descântătoarea does not understand me. My consonants sweat in the plastic bag. I recall the unwritten contract, signed upon entering țara nouă: your family's language must die in three generations. Autopsy reveals natural causes, but we know better. Our vowels are wingless gargoyles on a building demolished acum câțiva ani. There isn't going to be a descântec for this. No spell to unsplinter our lips. No linguistic exorcism.

*se descântă cu coliva în tramvai*

*cu trei icoane de argint artisanale*

*cu busuioc și ruj maro pe buze*

*cu o oglindă întoarsă*

*se descântă with colivă in a tram*

*with three handmade silver icons*

*with basil and brown lipstick*

*with a reversed mirror*

The Holy means to burn. Or maybe it means to quench? Either way, Death has crafted a descântec for my split tongue and swears me to secrecy. *Descântecul nu trebuie spus nimănui, căci altfel își pierde leacul*, she says. Apropo, moartea e haioasă. Scurpă cuvinte ca semințe. As a side note, she tells me she is preparing a descântec to collapse every Instagram grid. Or at least that's what I understood. She repeats *ai moștenit pierderea*. You've inherited loss. *Hai, scoate limba*. Stick out your tongue. I cannot reveal what happens next, dar pot să spun that I will never have to cross those train tracks again. No more crimson, yellow, or purple. *Am împărțit crini albi pentru toți morții și vii*. For this, there's no translation. Which means her descântec worked.

*se descântă cu trei ligheane în curte*

*cu covorul roșu și păcatele pe sârmă*

*cu obiecte pe tavă la ruptul turtei*

*cu cap de lup sfințit cu vânt*

*se descântă with three basins in a yard*

*with red rug and sins on clothesline*

*with objects on a tray at baptism*

*with wolf head holy with wind*

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