

Sections from *Les Guérillères* – Monique Wittig

(translation by Ruth Wiggins)



in the golden spaces
of the in-between the forthright
greening of the desert they dream it
roll it on their tongues the immutable crows
the weapons are put to sleep & doze now in the
sun there is a sing-song of voices remembering
she is dead and she is dead and she • conspiracy
and revolution it is the zeal for combat the belly for it
the fierce heat of death of happiness blazes in their
 chests their nipples prickle with it in each breast a
 phoenix lifts and lifts and lifts • the virgins and the
 golden free one hears their wings unfold and beat O
 the birds the swimming sirens how translucent the
 edges of their wings the sky is bright with new
 suns winking green on green the violet un-
 troubled meadows are re-flowering there
 is hollering high laughter a bustle of
 activity they proclaim triumphant
 all gesture overthrown





Elsa Brauer extemporises – there was a time when you were not a slave. Remember. You head out alone, brimming with laughter, bathe bare-bellied in rivers. You say you have no memory of it. Remember. The wild briar blooms in the wood. Your hands are scratched from eating mulberries, raspberries straight from the bush. You run to catch leverets, skin and chop them with splinters of rock. Then you eat the lot, hot and bloody. You know how to dodge a bear on the path. Know the icy fear when you hear the wolves gather. But you can tough it out for hours in the treetops waiting comfortably for dawn. You say there are no words for that time, say it does not exist. But remember. Strive to remember. Or failing that, invent.





The girls are in the bushes and treetops searching out the nests of goldfinches, chaffinches, linnets. They find green canaries which they smother in kisses, hug tight to their breasts. They run singing, gamboling over rocks. Head home by the thousand to cosset their birds. In their excitement they hold them too closely. They run. Bend to gather pebbles which they throw far over hedges. They do not heed the cheeping. Running straight up to their rooms they draw the birds from their clothes, find them lifeless, heads slumped. Frantically they try to revive them, press them to their mouths, breathe hot breaths, prop up their floppy heads, a finger to their beaks. The birds stay dead. Then a hundred thousand girls weeping for green canaries. In a hundred thousand rooms, a hundred thousand homes.





The first swimmers to reach the estuary startle the flying fish into jumping. Their bodies are round and the colour of saffron. You can see them lifting high above the water. They rise. Fall back with a splash. Everywhere the fish start to leave the water. At a given moment the women gain the river bank. Hands feet arms legs colliding with fishy bodies making them sauté. Between the washed-out sky and churned-up river, the red bodies of fish jumping, pulling themselves clear.





Ursula Obi Antigone
Antigone Agnetha STOP the
symbols tear the heart surge! violence
rise from the blank page with all the swag-
ger of the exquisite NOW a great intoxicated
wing beat the bodies are pierced and torn
(intolerable) it is written in the breach • raze
the already manifest reveal instead the missing
text the new canon in all its myriad notation
• lacunae! lacunae! lacunae! against texts
against meaning what it is to write violence
off the page in an entirely other script
urgent threatening in the margins &
white spaces without mercy
all gesture overthrown



Ruth Wiggins's work has appeared most recently in *POETRY (Chicago)*; *Poetry Review*; *The Wolf*; and *Long Poem Magazine*. Her first pamphlet *Myrtle* was published by the Emma Press in 2014, and was runner-up in the Fledgling Poetry Prize. She keeps a sporadic blog (called *mudpath*) about walking, poetry and mud, where you can find more information about publications etc.