

Lida meet lorry

By Asiya Wadud

after Parndorf

Her name was Lida. From the family of Rahm. Someone loved the baby and boarded her on a northbound lorry. They began their journey in Roszke. Revved the engine maybe, standing room only, undoubtedly. The man at the wheel, Mitko, I wonder where he keeps his own humanity. Tucked in a hull about his neat steady breathing. Maybe a wallet photo of his own mother to remind him he's still breathing. Shame he won't extend outstretched to the 71 asphyxiating.

Imagine for a minute the calm sure that bade them. Slick near the edges but a near god to keep them. Mothers outstretched. Arms that cupped them. Teeth that made the pleading sound, reunion. Heavy tongue envelop them. Papers that name them. Maybe Aamir. Maybe Hassan. Maybe empire. Maybe break back. And some the red sun. And among them those who bade the quick waters. Lida speaking. Her toddler brother underwing. Lida clenching for small air, just enough for a baby. Just enough to claim victory.

Mitko, 29, behind the wheel. What did he ever think of his mother? His own unflailing breathing? Mitko, you think he knows of Lida's failing ventricles? Of the shrift her father unfolds? Her name was Lida. From the family of Rahm. Someone loved the baby.

Now a container holds the bodies of the 71. They were all once breathing. Among them the able ventricles. Among them capacious atria. They were all named at birth. They were named on the day they were born. They were anticipated. Among them there were a likely many eyes. Some who loved the sun. Some the red earth. Some the green on which they cut their teeth. Some black forest. Each yearn their own yearn. Each mourn their own mourn. Each fought their own won. Everyone with some kin before them.

Didn't they all know the world as it was named? Bits of clothes, 17 travel documents. 40 cell phones. In a meat truck. In which the cooling system had been shut. In which the air ducts were blocked. In which god sepulchers light? What kind of rancor? The derelict is how they die. What kind of god won't see them? What kind of man drives a truck across the border forgetting his own mother? With each breath Mitko took could he not then name them? Name the diminished breaths of the 71? With each breath Mitko took could he not remember in his lorry some who loved the sun? Some like Lida who maybe yet to know the sun? Some like her toddler brother dying to show her the sun? Some like her mother who always seeks out the supple sun.

They began their journey in Roszke. Mitko, 29, behind the wheel. What did he ever think of his mother? His fissure of humanity? You think he knows of Lida's ventricles and atria, newborn heart the size of ripe walnut? Postage stamp the size of a loved beating heart. Of contours. Of countries. Of lorries.

You can say their names. They were named. Some mother. Some father, pushed the baby into the waiting new world. Some mother gripped the yolk sack between her teeth. Some father held the baby just the length of his musculature. Eyes glisten for this one, alive. Make to see life. And then name them. Maybe in their likeness. Maybe in earnest. Maybe to capture the fold. Maybe as a reaching. Maybe to know the baby came. And now 71 asphyxiating. In the end they know somebody still loved them? In the end they know they walk slick near the edges? They know others came before them? They remember their mothers' mouths gripped them? The disavowed. The vulgar. The sun moored. The failed marooned. The god come lately. The black sinister. The widow that grips tightlock the seal. The body in a state of repose. The body as it depreciates. The body at the end composed. Lida is a baby loved enough to bring on a lorry. From the family of Rahm. Someone loved the baby and boarded her on a northbound lorry.